Room 314

A Comedy in Two Acts

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Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis is an original play consisting of two acts. Using the traditional structure and plot constructs of a murder mystery, the thesis also incorporates elements of comedy to create a unique work. A young couple on their honeymoon hears a strange noise from the room next door and attempts to find an explanation. As they search for a satisfactory conclusion, Emma and Peter meet some of the other guests at the hotel, making new friends and encountering new challenges along the way. This thesis attempts to answer the question “can an actor tell a good story with her own words?” and present a solid working draft of a play that tells such a story.
Room 314

A Comedy in Two Acts

By

Hannah E. Blough
CHARACTERS

TONY WALKER: A waiter at the hotel.

PETER BROWN: A young accountant, who is happily and newly married.

EMMA BROWN: A young former sales girl, who is also happily and newly married.

JACK EVANS: A mystery man who seems uncommonly content to stay tied to a chair.

MRS. CLARICE DAVIES: A well-to-do woman with a flair for the dramatic.

AGNES JONES: A cockney chambermaid at the hotel.

NEVILLE CLARKE: A guest at the hotel who is caring for his ailing wife.

SPECIAL CONSTABLE ALFRED HARRIS: A local “hobby bobby”—a volunteer police officer.

TIME
1950s

SETTING
A resort hotel in Bath, England; Spring.
ACT ONE

AT RISE

A darkened hotel room. There is an entrance to the room on one wall, with a door to a bathroom on the wall opposite. There are double doors in the upstage wall leading to a balcony. Two armchairs sit beside the window with a table between them. A large bed sits against the wall with the bathroom door, with a settee at the foot of it. There is a writing desk with chair, nightstands on either side of the bed, a large armoire, and several lamps. There are rich drapes on the windows leading to the balcony. The overall feel is one of luxury and good taste.

(Peter is sitting on the settee at the end of the bed, dressed in a nightshirt, and clearly waiting for something.)

PETER
   (calling towards the bathroom door)
Are you all right, darling?

EMMA
   (from offstage)
Oh yes, quite all right! Nearly finished.
   (She finally re-enters, rather shyly, in a lacey yet modest negligee and robe.)
Hello.

PETER
   (looking at her appreciatively, but not wolfishly)
Hello.

(She doesn’t look at him.)

PETER (kindly)
You look lovely.

EMMA
Thank you.

PETER
It’s a rather comforting thing to have such a beautiful wife.

EMMA
   (turning towards him)
Say it again.
PETER
Which part?

EMMA
Just “wife.”

PETER
Wife.

EMMA
(sighs) I do like that.

(They exchange smiles.)

PETER
I love you, darling.

EMMA
I love you too, Peter.

(He makes a slight move in her direction, and she quickly moves away.)

EMMA
I had such a marvelous time today.

PETER
Did you? I’m glad.

EMMA
I did. Everyone I wanted to be there was there, and there were really only a few people there that I didn’t want. And I managed to avoid those quite handily, I thought.

PETER
You are a marvelous evader when you wish to be.

EMMA (rather proudly)
I am, aren’t I? Comes from years of practice.

PETER
Oh there’s an art to it, is there?

EMMA
Absolutely. One has to be subtle, you know. That is, if one wishes to avoid hurting anyone’s feelings. If someone were to notice they were being evaded, it would defeat the purpose.
PETER
(settling into an armchair)
Fascinating. Have you ever evaded me?

EMMA
(evading eye contact)
Of course not.

Truthfully?

Well….

Ah ha! I knew it!

Perhaps once or twice.

At your mother’s birthday last year?

Maybe.

You did. I could tell.

If I did, it was because you deserved it.

Oh? And what had I done?

EMMA
(finally looking at him)
I specifically asked you to wear a pink rose to match my dress, and you arrived with a peach carnation! Horrid.

PETER
They’d run out of pink roses!

EMMA
No self-respecting florist “runs out” of pink roses. You forgot.
PETER
Well perhaps I did. I still don’t see what’s so horrid about peach and pink. It’s not as if you had to wear the peach. As I recall, I brought you some sort of white flower, didn’t I?

EMMA
You did. Which is one reason I decided to forgive you.

PETER
Yes, well, I’m sure I’m very grateful.

EMMA
As you should be.

PETER
In any event, I enjoyed today as well.

EMMA
I hoped you would. I tried so hard to make it special.

PETER
You succeeded wonderfully. I’ve never had a better time at a wedding.

EMMA (smiling)
You’re sweet.

PETER
Not as sweet as you.

(They exchange smiles: hers shy, his inviting.)

PETER
You can sit down, you know.

EMMA
Oh. Right.

(She crosses to settee and sits primly.)

PETER
(stands and crosses to sit beside her)
Are you tired at all from the trip?

EMMA
A bit, I suppose.
It has been a rather long day.

Yes. Very eventful.

Mmhmm.

Good though.

Yes.

(She has gone back to not being able to look at him.)

You seem cold, darling.

I’m all right.

Are you sure?

Here, let me warm you up.

I’m really quite warm already.

You’re shivering.

Well I’m not cold.

Is everything all right?

Perfectly.

You seem…
EMMA
(jumping up)
…Oh!

PETER
What?

EMMA
I forgot to call mother!

PETER
You what?

EMMA
Mother will be worried sick; I was going to call her as soon as we arrived.

PETER
(beginning, just slightly, to lose patience)
I’m sure she’s fine.

EMMA
You don’t know mother. I must call her right away
   (Crosses to phone and lifts the receiver. There is no dial tone.)
   The phone’s out of order.

PETER
What?

EMMA
It isn’t working. I’ll just have to go down to the front desk then.
   (She moves to the door and unbolts it.)

PETER
(standing)
You’re hardly dressed for it.

EMMA
(looks down)
Bother.
   (moves towards bathroom)
It won’t take me a minute to throw something on.
PETER
(steps between her and bathroom)
Don’t be ridiculous. You can call her in the morning, I’m certain the phone will be repaired by then.

EMMA
It will only take me a minute to go down and call her from the front desk. I don’t want her to be anxious.

PETER
I’m sure she isn’t.

EMMA
Why wouldn’t she be?

PETER
Well she knows you’re on your wedding trip. I’m sure she doesn’t expect you to call.

EMMA
Of course she does. Any self-respecting mother would.

PETER
My mother doesn’t.

EMMA
Well that’s different.

PETER
And what precisely do you mean by that?

EMMA
I only meant that your mother doesn’t have quite the same concern for you that mine does for me, that’s all.

PETER
Oh that’s all? I’ll have you know that my mother has the utmost concern for me.

EMMA
I never said she didn’t. I just said that mine is more concerned.

PETER
That’s absurd. My mother is just as concerned as yours is. As a matter of fact, she’s probably sitting by the phone this very instant, praying I’ll call so she’ll know I’m still alive.
EMMA
My mother is most likely pacing the floor in a blind panic.

PETER
Mine is just rocking herself in a corner, numb from the pain of her anxiety.

EMMA
Mine is in tears as we speak she’s so worried. She’s practically inconsolable.

PETER
Mine’s having hysterics.

EMMA
Mine’s running in circles.

PETER
Mine’s in a dead faint.

EMMA
Well there’s no need to be dramatic.

(PETER looks at her in surprise and is momentarily lost for words.)

EMMA
A dead faint indeed. No one faints because her daughter hasn’t called.

PETER
(finding his voice)
Maybe your mother wouldn’t, but mine would.

EMMA
My mother is too sensible to faint like that.

PETER
Oh I see. The woman who’s in a blind panic is too sensible to faint!

EMMA
I never said she was in a blind panic.

PETER
You most certainly did.

EMMA
I most certainly did not. That would be ridiculous.
PETER
This entire conversation is ridiculous.

(EMMA opens her mouth to reply, but is stopped by the sound of a crash on the other side of the wall.)

EMMA
Did you hear that?

PETER
Don’t try and change the subject.

EMMA
I thought I heard something.

PETER
That’s no way to end an argument.

EMMA
No, I really did hear something.

PETER
(Sighs) What kind of something?

EMMA
A kind of thud.

(something thuds again)

There! Did you hear that?

PETER
They probably just dropped something next door.

EMMA
Twice?

PETER
Why not? You’ve never dropped anything twice?

EMMA
I suppose so.

(Muffled voices can now be heard through the wall)

EMMA
What’s that?
I don’t know.

It’s sounds like people fighting.

They’re probably just picking up where we left off.
(crosses to her)
Let’s leave them to it, shall we? I don’t want to argue anymore.

No.

It’s silly to fight over mothers anyways.

Yes.

(She crosses to wall just as PETER reaches her.)

I say we just drop the whole thing.

Mmhmm.

(She presses her ear against the wall.)

What are you doing?

Trying to hear.

That’s not very polite.

Something doesn’t seem right.

Just let them have their argument in private, if that’s what they’re doing.
EMMA
It sounds ugly.

PETER
Arguments usually are. Why don’t you come away from the wall? It’s getting awfully late.

EMMA
(looks at him)
Late?

PETER
Yes. Rather time to be thinking about going to bed.

EMMA
(puts her ear back to the wall)
I couldn’t possibly sleep with this going on.

PETER
Well, darling, I didn’t exactly mean sleep.

EMMA
I’m telling you, there’s something wrong in the next room.

PETER
There’s something wrong in this room!

What is it?

PETER
I’m standing here in my nightshirt and you’re over there with your ear pressed against the wall!

EMMA
Peter, I’m serious.

PETER
So am I. I beginning to feel rather silly, wearing this thing for no apparent reason.

EMMA
Go and put something else on then.

PETER
Go and put….Is that is how you suggest I spend my wedding night? By going and putting something else on?
EMMA
You’re the one who said you felt silly. I don’t see what’s so remarkable about suggesting you put some clothes on.

PETER
(crossing to chair to retrieve trousers)
Very well, Mrs. Brown. If that is what you wish…

EMMA
Oh hush. I’m trying to hear.

PETER
(rather pettishly putting trousers on over nightshirt)
Why don’t you go out on the balcony? Perhaps they’ve left their door open.

EMMA
What a marvelous idea!

(She goes to balcony and opens the doors.)

PETER
I wasn’t actually serious, you know.

(With the doors open, the voices are louder, but still too muffled to be understood.)

EMMA
(sighs) I still can’t make out what they’re saying.

PETER
It’s probably a sign that you aren’t meant to be listening.

EMMA
Don’t be loathsome.

PETER
I’m…

(There is a scream from next door.)

EMMA
He’s killed her!

PETER
What on earth…?
EMMA
There was a man’s voice and a woman’s voice, and now he’s killed her!

PETER
What could possibly lead you to that conclusion?

EMMA
Why else would she scream?

PETER
I can think of a dozen reasons, none of which include murder. Maybe she saw a spider.

EMMA
In the middle of a row?

PETER
Why not?

EMMA
(She opens her mouth to respond, but pauses and closes her mouth again. After thinking a moment:)
It wasn’t that kind of a scream.

PETER
Oh no? And you’re certain you know an “oh help I’m being murdered” scream when you hear one?

EMMA
I just know.

PETER
I think there’s a strong possibility that you may be a little overwrought from today’s excitement. Maybe you ought to lie down.

EMMA
I don’t want to lie down. I want to find out who killed that woman!

PETER
Darling, no one’s been killed. Please, come lie down and let me get you a glass of water.

EMMA
I can’t just lie down when a woman lies dead in the next room!

PETER
Emma, no one is…
(He is interrupted by the door bursting open. A man staggers into the room, covered in blood. EMMA screams.)

BLOODY MAN

Oh. Sorry.

(He begins to back out of the room. PETER pulls him through the door and shuts it behind him.)

PETER
(as he is grabbing MAN)
Now hang on a minute! What do you mean by barging in like that? Who are you?

BLOODY MAN
Well…you see…there’s been some sort of mistake. I seem to have the wrong room, that’s all.

EMMA
(notices blood)
Peter!

PETER
Just a minute, Emma.
(to MAN)
Now look here…

EMMA (urgently)
Peter!

PETER
What?

EMMA
(crossing to PETER and whispering in his ear)
It’s him!

BLOODY MAN
Pardon?

PETER
What do you mean it’s him?

EMMA (loudly)
That’s the murderer!
What?  

Look at all that blood! He did it!  

I don’t understand…  

Get him!  

With what?  

I don’t know, just don’t let him escape!  

Now hang on…  

(He is cut off, as PETER jumps him.)  

Really there’s no need for that…  

Stop struggling!  

I’m not!  

Hold him, Peter!  

I’m not trying to get away!  

(PETER punches him.)  

Ow!  

(The MAN collapses into chair, holding his jaw.)  

That hurt!
EMMA

Peter!

BLOODY MAN

I wasn’t even fighting you!

PETER

I think I broke my hand.

EMMA

Oh you poor darling, are you hurt? You were so brave.

BLOODY MAN

Brave?!

PETER

I’m all right. We should probably tie him up though.

BLOODY MAN

You must be joking.

EMMA

(untying the belt from her robe)
Here, use this.

PETER

You’d better do it. I don’t think I can move my fingers.

(EMMA grabs the MAN’s hands and ties them behind the chair.)

BLOODY MAN

You’re really making a terrible mistake.

EMMA

There. Now what should we do with him?

PETER

Well now, let’s just take a moment to think things through.

BLOODY MAN

Yes, heaven forbid we do anything rash.

EMMA

Was he speaking to you?
BLOODY MAN

Sorry. Don’t mind the man in the chair.

EMMA

(turning back to PETER)

What were you saying, darling?

PETER

Perhaps we ought to see what he has to say for himself.

EMMA

I don’t see what good that would do. It would be all lies, most likely.

PETER

Still, we might just learn something.

EMMA

Perhaps. (thinks) Very well.

(She turns to MAN and takes on the role of an interrogator.)

How do you explain all this?

BLOODY MAN

As I was trying to say earlier, I was merely looking for my own room and came in here by mistake.

EMMA

Why are you covered in blood?

BLOODY MAN

Blood? (looks down) Oh. I have no idea.

PETER

Were you in some sort of fight?

BLOODY MAN

No, just dinner. I was coming back to my room and opened your door by mistake. It is as simple as that.

EMMA

It seems awfully suspicious to me.

BLOODY MAN

It’s the truth, I assure you.

EMMA

Well I don’t believe you. I think you killed her.
BLOODY MAN
Why would I come in here if I’d just killed someone? And whom exactly did I kill?

EMMA
I don’t know whom, but she was in the room next door. And how should I know why you would come in here? I’m not a cold-blooded killer.

Neither am I.

That’s immaterial.

EMMA
Hold on, Emma, his story seems plausible. After all, it is rather doubtful that a murderer would go bursting into someone else’s room just after committing a murder. We don’t even know if there’s been a murder.

EMMA
What about the blood?

Blood doesn’t always point to death.

EMMA
He’s a murderer, Peter, I know it.

PETER
I think we ought to go remind ourselves of the facts before we proceed any further. We seem to be finding it difficult to keep a level head.

EMMA
(gives him a look)
Well, fact number one: there’s been a murder.

PETER
I thought we’ve established that we can’t reasonably call that fact number one.

EMMA
Why ever not?

PETER
Because that’s jumping to conclusions. And conclusions aren’t facts.

Very logical.
EMMA
Well what do you call fact number one?

PETER
Fact number one: you heard something next door.

EMMA
An argument.

PETER
Fact number one: you heard something that sounded like an argument.

EMMA
And a thud.

PETER
And a thud. Which came first?

EMMA
Um…the thud.

PETER
Then the thud really ought to be fact number one, and the argument is fact number two.

EMMA
All right, and fact number three is that I heard a woman being murdered.

PETER
Really, Emma. The best you can say is that you heard a woman scream.

EMMA
Yes but she was dying. It was a death scream.

PETER
You can’t possibly know that.

EMMA
Couldn’t we just assume it? For the sake of the list?

PETER
What good is a list of facts if we include assumptions?

BLOODY MAN
Perfectly useless.
You see?

No, I don’t.

I’d simply feel better if we were only including those facts we ourselves can verify.

(sighs) Very well. We’ll leave it at a scream. For now.

How very magnanimous.

to PETER

You’re a very lucky man.

That’s sweet.

Emma!

What?

Let’s return to the list. After the scream, fact number four is what?

Should we include our argument about the scream?

No, let’s skip over that.

Then I think fact number four is that this man burst into our room.

Right. And then fact five, you told me to grab him.

Fact six, you did.

Rather absurdly.
Fact seven, I hit him.

BLOODY MAN
Quite unnecessarily.

EMMA
Fact eight, I tied him up.

PETER
And there we are.

EMMA
Where are we, exactly?

BLOODY MAN
Sitting in a room with a man tied to a chair.

EMMA
(shoots him a look)
(to Peter) What should we do now, I mean?

PETER
Well now that we have the facts straight, we can move on to drawing conclusions.

EMMA
Should I be writing this down?

PETER
I suppose you can if you’d like.

EMMA
I would. That would make it more official.

PETER
Go on then.

BLOODY MAN
Yes. Let’s make it official.

EMMA
May I borrow your notebook?

PETER
Certainly. It’s in my coat pocket.
EMMA

Thank you.

(She crosses to his coat and retrieves the notebook, along with a pencil.)

This is rather fun, you know.

BLOODY MAN

That’s probably because you aren’t tied up.

EMMA

You should have thought of that before you went around killing people.

I didn’t…

PETER

…Don’t bother with him, Emma. Let’s return to our conclusions.

BLOODY MAN

I do apologize. So silly of me to muddle up your conclusions with the truth.

(EMMA sits back down on settee, poised with pencil over the notebook.)

EMMA

If you’re quite finished, I’m ready.

PETER

To begin, I think we can safely conclude that something unpleasant occurred in the room next door.

EMMA

Good. What else can we conclude?

PETER

Well…I’m not sure. In fact, I’m really not certain we can draw any more conclusions at all with these facts alone.

EMMA

Then what should we do?

PETER

I think it’s time we let the police settle this.

BLOODY MAN

Settle what?
PETER
Something isn’t quite right about this whole thing. Someone needs to get to the bottom of what happened next door.

BLOODY MAN
Then why don’t you go and see?

EMMA
What did you say?

BLOODY MAN
Why don’t you go next door and ask what happened?

PETER
I don’t wish to impose.

BLOODY MAN
But it isn’t an imposition to keep me in this chair?

PETER
That’s different; you came in here uninvited.

EMMA
I think we should go next door, Peter.

EMMA
(sighs) Very well. I will go knock on the door.

EMMA (smiling)
Thank you.

(PETER crosses to the door and exits, leaving it open. EMMA follows him to the door and stays in the doorway, watching him down the hallway. There is the sound of quiet knocking.)

PETER (from offstage)
There’s no answer.

EMMA (calling to him in a loud whisper)
Try again!
(Soft knocking is heard from offstage.)

There was no one there.

And the door was locked?

I didn’t try the handle.

You should have.

That’s breaking and entering.

Not if the door isn’t locked.

That’s not true. Which is why we can report this man to the authorities.

You said that before. Must we really involve the police? I want to solve this ourselves.

We’re hardly qualified to handle this sort of thing, Emma.

Not that there’s anything to handle, since this is a simple case of mistaken room identity.

I really think it’s time to call them.

Oh all right.

I’ll just go down to the front desk and use the phone there.

Oh no you won’t.

Emma, you just agreed we’d call the police.
EMMA
Yes, but you’re not leaving me alone here with a murderer.

PETER
I thought we’d established that there’s no way we can know if he’s a murderer.

BLOODY MAN
And I’m really not a murderer.

EMMA
Regardless, I do not want to be left alone with someone who could very possibly be a killer. And until someone can prove otherwise, I choose to maintain that he is most certainly a murderer.

PETER
That is most illogical of you.

EMMA
No, it isn’t.

BLOODY MAN
Yes, it is. But that’s all right.

PETER
Very well then, you go and fetch the police while I stay here with the potential murderer.

EMMA
Certainly not. What if he were to get free and attack you? I could never live with myself.

PETER
Emma, I am perfectly capable of looking after myself.

EMMA
You say that now. Wait ‘til you’ve been murdered.

PETER
I’m the one who put him in the chair!

EMMA
A lucky punch. You can’t count on that sort of thing happening twice in one evening.

BLOODY MAN
She’s quite right. Lovely woman, your wife.

PETER (to EMMA)
You really are beginning to frustrate me.
EMMA
Why? Because I don’t want to see you killed?

PETER
(sighs) Then we shall just both have to go down and call the police.

EMMA
And leave him alone? What if he were to escape? Someone has to stay and guard him.

PETER
(pinching the bridge of his nose and choosing his words carefully)
Emma. Darling. Do you…can you perhaps see how you might possibly be misconstrued as being just a trifle unreasonable?

EMMA
How so?

BLOODY MAN
I believe that’s a no.

PETER
Do you mind?

BLOODY MAN
Sorry.

PETER
Emma. You do realize that if neither of us goes to fetch the police, then both of us are by default forced to stay here with a murderer rather indefinitely.

EMMA
I thought you said you didn’t think he was a murderer anyways.

PETER
I don’t. But I was using your logic.

EMMA
You shouldn’t do that. You’ll only confuse me.

PETER
Emma…

BLOODY MAN
You shouldn’t confuse the poor woman.
PETER (sharply)
Look here, I am going downstairs to call the police, and that is the end of this discussion.

EMMA (hurt)

Peter…

PETER
Enough, Emma.
(softening a bit)
I’ll be back soon, there’s nothing to worry about.

(He exits.)

BLOODY MAN
Not a very affectionate man, your husband, is he?

EMMA
That’s none of your business.

BLOODY MAN
He certainly doesn’t speak to you very kindly.

EMMA
That’s none of your business either.

BLOODY MAN
Why on earth did you marry him?

EMMA
If you must know, I married him because I happen to love him. Now if you wouldn’t mind, I’d rather just sit here quietly.

BLOODY MAN
Suit yourself.

(They sit quietly for an uncomfortable period of time. There is a knock at the door, which causes EMMA to jump.)

EMMA
Who could that be?

BLOODY MAN
I don’t know. I can’t see through doors.

EMMA
There’s no need to be condescending.
(knock)

BLOODY MAN

Still there.

EMMA

What should I do?

BLOODY MAN

See who it is, I suppose.

(knock)

EMMA

(knock)

EMMA

(going to door)

Who is it?

Who’s there?

Who is…

(The door is thrust open by MRS. DAVIES.)

DAVIES

I’m terribly sorry to intrude, but I need to use your telephone. Mine’s out of order and I’ve just had the most terrible shock.

BLOODY MAN

It seems to be a night for shocks.

EMMA

Ours is out of order as well, I’m afraid.

DAVIES

Oh dear. Then I suppose you will just have to run down to the front desk.
EMMA
For what, exactly?

DAVIES
Well to tell them about the murder, of course.

EMMA
Murder?

DAVIES
Yes! There was a murderer in my bedroom.

EMMA
Oh how awful.

DAVIES
And I simply cannot stay in that room any longer knowing that a murderer has tainted it, so I shall just wait here until the management can move my things.

EMMA
Well you see, the thing is…

DAVIES
It isn’t a problem that I remain here, is it?

EMMA
Not at all, it’s just that….

DAVIES
Because I cannot bear the thought of being in a room where a murderer has stood, breathing the same air that has passed through his lungs.

EMMA
Of course not. It’s only that…

DAVIES
Even to think of it makes me positively ill. Nauseous, to put it plainly.

EMMA
Quite understandably.

DAVIES
So it is simply out of the question for me to return to my room.

EMMA
It’s just that he’s here.
DAVIES
I beg your pardon?

EMMA
The murderer. He’s here.

(EMMA steps aside so DAVIES can see BLOODY MAN. DAVIES sinks into a chair.)

DAVIES
Oh.

EMMA
We caught him.

BLOODY MAN
I’m not actually a murderer.

DAVIES
Don’t be ridiculous. Of course you are, I saw you.

EMMA
Saw him? You mean you actually saw the crime?

DAVIES
Well no, not exactly. But I saw him afterwards.

(She gazes off into the distance, as if picturing something.)

He was standing over my bed, silhouetted against the open door, with a knife clenched in his fist, drenched in blood.

(She shudders.)

BLOODY MAN
It wasn’t me.

EMMA
What did you do?

DAVIES
I shut my eyes again and just lay there, paralyzed. I could hear him moving about the room but I was too afraid to try and see what he was doing. When I finally gathered strength enough to look again, he was standing in the doorway. But this time, there was no knife.

EMMA
He must have hidden it in your room somewhere! How ghastly.
DAVIES
Precisely.
(to BLOODY MAN)
That was most ill-mannered of you.

BLOODY MAN
But I didn’t…

EMMA
Oh hush. Of course you did.
(turning to DAVIES)
Then what did you do, Mrs.? Miss…?

DAVIES
Mrs. Mrs. Clarice Davies.

EMMA
How do you do, Mrs. Davies? I’m Emma Brown.

DAVIES
How do you do? Well I just watched him walk out, closing the door behind him. I’ve never felt such terror. All I could do was lie there, thinking all the while that he would come back any minute and murder me in my bed. I don’t know how long I remained frozen, but finally, after much thought, I concluded that it was my duty to get up. After all, I couldn’t let him get away.

EMMA
You’re so brave.

DAVIES
So I tried to telephone for help. And when I realized the telephone was out of order, I got dressed and came out into the hall. I heard your voices and came over here.

EMMA
I’m certainly glad you did. My husband left me alone with a murderer.

DAVIES
How un-chivalrous of him.

EMMA
I agree completely. I don’t know what’s gotten into him. He was almost rude to me!

BLOODY MAN
They’re newlyweds, you see.
DAVIES
Are you?

EMMA
Yes, as a matter of fact.

DAVIES
That explains quite a bit.

EMMA
What do you mean?
(There is a knock at the door.)

Oh what now?
(calling towards door)

Who is it?

PETER
It's me, Emma.

EMMA
(crossing to door and opening it)
Are the police on their way?

PETER (entering)
No, I…(sees DAVIES) who is this?

DAVIES
Mrs. Davies.

EMMA
She’s staying just down the hall. The murderer was in her room.

PETER
I see. And how did she come to be in our room?

EMMA
Her phone wasn’t working, so she came to use ours.

PETER
They must be out in the whole hotel.

DAVIES
What do you mean?

EMMA
Aren’t the police coming?
PETER
No. I tried to phone them, but there was no service at the front desk. I couldn’t find the concierge either. No one seemed to be around.

DAVIES
How odd.

BLOODY MAN
Odd indeed.

(There is a knock at the door.)

EMMA
Well now who is it?
(calling towards door)
Who’s there?

VOICE
Room service, madam.

EMMA
Room service? We didn’t order any, did we?

PETER
With all this chaos I can’t remember. Perhaps we did.

EMMA
You’d better let him in, then.

PETER
Right.
(opens door)
Hello. We don’t remember ordering anything.

WAITER
(entering with wheeled cart)
You didn’t, sir. Compliments of the management. It’s hotel policy to offer a dessert tray to those occupying the honeymoon suite.

(EMMA makes a move towards tray, but stops herself so as not to reveal BLOODY MAN)

EMMA
Oh how nice. Thank you so much.
PETER
Yes, thank you.
(A light bulb goes off in PETER’s head.)
Emma! We can send him for the police!

WAITER
Police, sir? Is anything the matter?

DAVIES
I should say! There’s been a murder!

WAITER
A murder? How dreadful.

EMMA
Isn’t it though? It’s been awfully exciting.

WAITER
Who’s been murdered?

EMMA
We don’t really know, actually. It’s the woman next door. But we’ve caught the murderer.

WAITER
(referring to Mrs. Davies) Her, madam?

EMMA
No, no. Don’t be silly.
(She steps aside to reveal BLOODY MAN.)
Him.

WAITER
Oh. Well then who is she?

EMMA
This is Mrs. Davies. She’s staying just down the hall.

DAVIES
The murder weapon is hidden in my room.

WAITER
Are you his accomplice, then?

DAVIES
I most certainly am not! He hid it there quite against my wishes.
WAITER

Beg pardon, madam.

PETER

Would you mind fetching the police?

WAITER

Certainly, sir.

(BLOODY MAN begins to laugh.)

EMMA

What’s so funny?

(BLOODY MAN gives her a look.)

BLOODY MAN

You all are.

PETER

I don’t see how.

BLOODY MAN (laughing)

Of course you don’t. Which is why, in part, it’s so amusing.

DAVIES

You don’t make a bit of sense.

BLOODY MAN

You just don’t understand in slightest the mess you’re all in, and it’s terribly comical.

PETER

The way I see it, you’re the only one who is any kind of mess.

BLOODY MAN

Am I?

EMMA

What on earth are you talking about? Of course you are. You’re the only one who’s murdered anyone this evening.

(BLOODY MAN laughs louder.)

PETER

Now look here, pull yourself together.
I can’t help it.

DAVIES
You’d better go quickly, young man. It seems that he’s beginning to crack. He might become dangerous.

BLOODY MAN
Oh, it isn’t me you have to worry about.

EMMA
Just what do you mean by that?

BLOODY MAN
Don’t you see? You’re all in it now.

PETER
What do you mean?

BLOODY MAN
You’re all accessories to murder.

DAVIES
That’s preposterous.

BLOODY MAN
Are you certain?

DAVIES
Of course I’m certain! None of us has had anything to do with it.

BLOODY MAN
On the contrary, you’ve helped to conceal a criminal.

EMMA
No, we haven’t. We’ve captured a criminal.

BLOODY MAN
That’s not how the police will see it.

WAITER
What are you talking about?

BLOODY MAN
Can’t you see how this looks? You’re all implicated in the crime.
BLOODY MAN
You don’t think I’d be so stupid as to just stumble in here accidentally, do you?

PETER
Just how exactly do you figure that?

BLOODY MAN
If you go and get the police now, they will enter this room and find a man covered in blood tied to a chair, a young couple, an old woman, and a hotel employee. Just the makings of a ring of jewel thieves.

WAITER
Jewel thieves?

DAVIES
Old woman?

EMMA
Oh dear.

BLOODY MAN
In the next room, the police will find a woman in an evening dress, but with no jewelry. The obvious implication is of a jewel theft gone wrong. And now you’re all implicated.

PETER
I don’t see how.

BLOODY MAN
Oh it’s all perfectly straightforward. You two were here to take the jewels after I stole them. I passed them to you to avoid suspicion.

EMMA
No, you didn’t.

BLOODY MAN
You, Mrs. Davies, are my cover. I told the people at the front desk I was here visiting my grandmother. You conveniently allowed me to hide the knife in your room after the robbery went sour.

DAVIES
Grandmother, indeed!

BLOODY MAN
And you, were the inside man. You scoped out the guests to choose the perfect target and arranged all of our rooms.
WAITER
I never!

EMMA
Peter, what can we do?

PETER
Calm down, darling. This whole thing is too bizarre. I can’t believe the police would fall for something like that.

BLOODY MAN
You might be surprised. I’ve often seen this sort of thing.

EMMA
You see, Peter? We’re all going to be arrested.

WAITER
I shouldn’t think so. We’ll most likely be questioned, but there’s no reason for any of us to be arrested.

BLOODY MAN
Never underestimate the incompetence of the judicial system.

DAVIES
He’s right. Everyone knows inspectors only make a muddle of everything.

EMMA
Peter, I don’t think we can risk it. We’d better just let him go.

PETER
We can’t let a murderer go free, Emma. That wouldn’t be right.

EMMA
But I don’t want to be arrested!

PETER
We aren’t going to be arrested.

DAVIES
How can you be so certain?

EMMA
Exactly. You can’t be sure of that. I say we just let him go, and when the police find her in the morning we tell them that we were asleep and didn’t hear a thing.
PETER

But that would be an actual crime. We could be convicted of lying to the police and withholding evidence.

EMMA

But if we all keep our mouths shut, there won’t be anything to tie us to the crime, and no one would ever know. Please, Peter. This isn’t fun anymore.

PETER

I know. We’ll figure something out.

DAVIES

Come to think of it, letting him go does seem to be the best option. He did hide the knife in my room, and I certainly don’t want to be implicated.

WAITER

I won’t say anything. I’ve my job to think about.

BLOODY MAN

I think it’s an excellent idea, Peter.

PETER

Now hold on a minute, something’s not right. If we let him go, what’s to stop him from just killing us all?

EMMA

Oh dear. I hadn’t thought of that.

BLOODY MAN

I wouldn’t do that.

PETER

But we’ve only your word for that. And I don’t mean to be rude, but your word isn’t worth much.

BLOODY MAN

Now look here…

(Someone screams outside the door.)

DAVIES

Another murder!

EMMA

Peter!
PETER
Now, Emma, we don’t know that…

EMMA
Well go and see!

PETER
Do we really need something else to deal with?

EMMA
What if someone calls the police?

PETER
You may have a point.

(PETER opens the door and exits into the hall. A moment later he re-enters, bringing with him a rather frightened looking CHAMBERMAID who is clutching a stack of towels. He leads her to a chair, and EMMA closes the door behind them.)

PETER
Just take a few deep breaths, try to calm down. That’s it.

CHAMBERMAID
‘Orrible. Oh it was ‘orrible!

PETER
There, there. I’ll get you a glass of water.

(He exits to the bathroom.)

DAVIES
Now what was so horrible? Has someone else been killed?

CHAMBERMAID (shudders)
All that blood! It was everywhere!

DAVIES
You see!

WAITER
Try not to think about it.

CHAMBERMAID
‘Ow can I ‘elp it? I’ll never forget it. Never.
EMMA
Oh, this is awful.

WAITER
Come on, now. Buck up. It’ll be all right.

CHAMBERMAID
Tony? What are you doing mixed up with all this?

WAITER
Just delivering room service. What were you doing?

CHAMBERMAID
She’d called down for towels. I was just bringin’ ‘em up.

BLOODY MAN
Of all the rotten luck, eh?

(PETER enters from bathroom with glass of water.)

PETER
Here you are, drink this.

CHAMBERMAID
(taking the glass)
Thank you, sir.

PETER
Don’t mention it.

(EMMA has been pacing agitatedly while listening to all this. She is clearly distraught.)

EMMA
Peter, what are we going to do? What are we going to do?

PETER
It’s all right, Emma.

EMMA
No! No it isn’t all right! Now we have another accomplice!

CHAMBERMAID
What do you mean?
EMMA
Don’t you see? They were in it together!

DAVIES
Of course!

PETER
Who was?

EMMA
The waiter and the maid! They were both inside men!

BLOODY MAN
Now you’re thinking.

WAITER
Now look here…

CHAMBERMAID
I didn’t do nothin’…

PETER
Now, Emma…

EMMA
It all makes sense! He was going to take her body away on the cart, and she was going to clean it all up with the towels!

DAVIES
Precisely!

WAITER & CHAMBERMAID
No, I wasn’t!

EMMA
But the police will think you were!

PETER
Really, darling, I don’t know about that. It’s so farfetched.

EMMA
Yes, but don’t you understand? The truth is always farfetched when it comes to theft and murder! Otherwise they wouldn’t put it in the newspapers!

DAVIES
She’s absolutely right.
EMMA
Of course I am! The police will believe his story and we’ll all be hanged for murder!

(She bursts into tears)

DAVIES
Well, now, I don’t know that I’d go quite that far.

PETER
Emma, now you’re just getting hysterical.

EMMA (still sobbing)
Of course I’m hysterical! I’m going to be arrested on my wedding night in nothing but a nightgown!

PETER
Would you like to go and change?

EMMA (wails)
No!

PETER
All right, all right. Just a suggestion.

BLOODY MAN
Rather an insensitive one.

EMMA
Most insensitive.

DAVIES
Haven’t you any tact?

PETER
Of course I have!

(There is a knock at the door.)

EMMA (wailing again)
Now who is it?

PETER
I don’t know!

BLOODY MAN
There’s no need to raise your voice at her.
EMMA
Is the whole hotel going to come in here?

WAITER
Highly unlikely. We’re pretty full up at the moment. I don’t think everyone would fit.

(EMMA sobs.)

PETER
That wasn’t funny.

WAITER
I thought she was serious.

(knock)

DAVIES
I don’t think we can just ignore the fact that there’s someone at the door. We shall have to open it at some point.

PETER
(sighs) Very well. Everyone just…stay where you are!

(He crosses to door and opens it. An unassuming MAN is on the other side, wearing pajamas, bedroom slippers, a bathrobe and large spectacles. It is DR. CLARKE, but they don’t know that yet.)

CLARKE
Excuse me, I don’t mean to be rude, but would you mind keeping the noise down? My wife and I are trying to sleep.

PETER
Oh. Yes, well, I’m terribly sorry about that. Of course we’ll be quiet.

CLARKE
Thank you. Normally I wouldn’t’ve come over, it’s just that my wife has been ill and she needs her rest.

PETER
(starting to close the door)
Perfectly understandable. We didn’t realize we were being so loud.

CLARKE
You weren’t really, but her ears are much more sensitive since she’s been ill.
PETER
How unfortunate. Please accept our apologies.

CLARKE
No, no. No need for that, I’m really dreadfully sorry to interrupt.
(He peers into the room.)
Are you having some sort of party?

PETER
(trying harder to close the door)
Something like that.

CLARKE
Here now, why is that man all bloody? And why is he tied to a chair?

EMMA
It’s no use, Peter. He shall just have to come in.

PETER
(dragging the MAN inside)
I’m terribly sorry about this.

CLARKE
What do you think you’re doing?

EMMA
He tried to keep you out of it. You shouldn’t have peeked. It’s rude. Now we have another accomplice.

CLARKE
Accomplice? To what?

WAITER
Murder.

CLARKE
Murder? Now see here…

DAVIES
It’s no use. We’ve looked at it from every possible angle. We’re all deliciously in it, I’m afraid.

(Everyone begins to speak over everyone else.)

CLARKE
But I haven’t done anything…
None of us has…

I don’t like this; I don’t like this at all….

I would work the nightshift today….

Peter, I want out of this…

I know, dear, I know…

I really ought to get back to my wife…

No one’s going anywhere until we figure this out….

There’s nothing to figure out! We’re all going to hang!

Hang?!

Emma, don’t be hysterical…

This is too much…

I want to leave, let me out….

You can’t keep me here against my will…

(To BLOODY MAN)
This is all your fault!

You should’ve let me go…
Everyone try and calm down…
PETER

I can’t!
EMMA

Blood…so much blood…
CHAMBERMAID

There’s no need to panic…
PETER

I’m not panicking!
EMMA

I should teach you a thing or two…
WAITER

Go ahead and try it…
BLOODY MAN

Get away from him!
PETER

I think I may need to lie down…
DAVIES

‘elp! Oh someone ‘elp!
CHAMBERMAID

Someone get me out of this!
EMMA

Everyone just CALM DOWN!
PETER

(There is a knock at the door. They ALL freeze.)

Open up! Police!
VOICE

Peter! It’s the police!
EMMA

I heard, Emma.
PETER
Open this door!

What should we do?

I don’t know. Let me think.

We can’t just let him in; we haven’t worked out our stories yet.

What do you mean, ‘stories’? Shouldn’t we just tell the truth?

‘oo would believe that?

(knock)

Police!

We have to do something!

I’m thinking, I’m thinking!

I really don’t see why we don’t just let him in.

We’ve been through all that!

Maybe you should just ask him to leave.

Perfect! What a marvelous idea.

Let’s go out on the balcony!

Emma! Don’t be ridiculous!
Don’t shout at me, Peter!

Yes, Peter, don’t shout at her.

You keep quiet!

(knock)

Open the door this instant!

Would someone just open it already?

Maybe we should. It could be exciting.

I’ve had enough excitement!

Oh come now, Emma. Where’s your adventurous spirit?

That’s Mrs. Brown to you!

We can’t just leave him out there.

And why can’t we?

Maybe if we all keep very still, he’ll think we’ve gone to sleep and go away.

(They all turn to him.)

No? Just a thought.

I think we’re going to have to let him in.

This is my hotel room, I’ll let him in when I see fit!
(knock)

VOICE

For the last time, open this door!

PETER

Emma, I think we’re going to have to let him in.

EMMA

Oh dear.

(PETER crosses to the door, and grabs the handle)

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT
ACT TWO

AT RISE Everything is exactly as it was at the end of Act One. Everyone is in the same position.

(knock)

VOICE
Open the door this instant!

CLARKE
Would someone just open it already?

DAVIES
Maybe we should. It could be exciting.

EMMA
I’ve had enough excitement!

BLOODY MAN
Oh come now, Emma. Where’s your adventurous spirit?

PETER
That’s Mrs. Brown to you!

WAITER
We can’t just leave him out there.

CHAMBERMAID
And why can’t we?

BLOODY MAN
Maybe if we all keep very still, he’ll think we’ve gone to sleep and go away.
(They all turn to him.)
No? Just a thought.

CLARKE
I think we’re going to have to let him in.

PETER
This is my hotel room, I’ll let him in when I see fit!

(knock)

VOICE
For the last time, open this door!
PETER
Emma, I think we’re going to have to let him in.

EMMA
Oh dear.

(PETER crosses to the door, and grabs the handle. The knocking at the door becomes more insistent.)

VOICE
Open this door!

PETER
I am, I am!
(He does)

(A police CONSTABLE has been leaning against the door, attempting to force it open, causing him to stumble into the room rather than enter. This is not the entrance he was planning, so he must take a moment to gather himself before speaking. His first words are therefore flavored with overcompensation.)

CONSTABLE
Now what’s all this?

(PETER hits him on the back of the head with a lamp, and the Constable collapses to the floor. All react at once.)

EMMA
Peter! …

DAVIES
Good hit! …

WAITER
There’s no need to destroy hotel property…

CLARKE
Why did you do that? …

BLOODY MAN
That seems highly unnecessary…

PETER
(stopping them)
Everyone be quiet! I’ve had enough!
(Everyone stops and looks at him. Peter drags the Constable to a chair and struggles to get him into it. He finally succeeds, and looks around for something to tie him up with. Not finding anything, he takes off his trousers and uses them to tie the Constable’s hands behind his back. Slightly out of breath by this point, he turns back to the group.)

PETER

Now.

EMMA

Why did you do that, Peter?

PETER

Well we couldn’t just leave him in the hall, but we didn’t know what to say to him. It seemed like the best option.

DAVIES

It was at the very least decisive.

PETER

Thank you. As I was about to say, the fact is that we appear to have a dead woman in the next room. And we have eight people in this room. I think it’s just about time we sort a few things out.

EMMA

What sorts of things?

PETER

Who we all are, why we’re all here, things like that.

CLARKE

And just what gives you the authority to take charge of everything?

PETER

This is my hotel room, and my honeymoon, and I give myself the authority!

BLOODY MAN

That hardly seems democratic.

(PETER crosses to BLOODY MAN.)

PETER

That’s enough from you.

(Peter takes off BLOODY MAN’s tie, and uses it to gag him.)

Much better.

(He crosses to settee and sits)
CONT.
Let’s start with a round of introductions, shall we? My name is Peter Brown. I am an accountant, I live in London, and I am here on my honeymoon.

(to Mrs. Davies)
And you?

DAVIES
Oh. Well. My name is Clarice Davies. I currently reside in Axbridge, Somerset, and I’m a writer. Serial fiction in ladies’ magazines, that sort of thing. I am here because it is the anniversary of my husband’s death, and I always come here on the anniversary of my husband’s death.

WAITER
Antony Walker. Originally from London, but now a proud resident of Bath. I’m a waiter here at the hotel.

CHAMBERMAID
I’m Agnes Jones. I’m from right here, and I work as a chambermaid ‘though I’m trainin’ to be a secretary.

CLARKE
My name is Neville Clarke. I am a physician, and I am here with my wife for a rest cure.

EMMA
Well my name is Emma Brown. I used to work at a perfume counter, but now that I’m married I shall be a housewife.

PETER
I know who you are, Emma.

EMMA
Yes, but they don’t.

DAVIES
And now we do. Pleased to meet you.

EMMA
Likewise.

PETER
Now that we’ve all been properly introduced, it’s time for some tougher questions.

CHAMBERMAID (nervous)
What sort of questions?
PETER
All we have to go on at the moment is some vague idea about a dead woman and blood and things of that sort. But what do we really know?

CLARKE
Nothing whatsoever.

PETER
Exactly. And I for one would like to know a bit more than nothing. Now, who has actually seen the body?

(BLOODY MAN makes noises behind his gag)

CHAMBERMAID
I s’pose I did.

PETER
Good. What exactly did you see?

CHAMBERMAID
I don’t know…there was so much blood.

WAITER
We know about the blood, Agnes. Did you see anything else?

CHAMBERMAID
No, not really. I stopped just in the doorway, and she was lyin’ there in ‘er evening dress…

EMMA
Oh the poor thing. What if she had planned on going out?

DAVIES
What sort of evening gown?

CLARKE
I hardly see how that matters.

DAVIES
I thought you wanted to know things.

PETER
Important things.

EMMA
Evening dresses are extraordinarily important.
Not to murder investigations.

You don’t know that. What if she was killed for it?

Killed for an evening dress?

No one would kill for an evening dress.

That isn’t true. There’ve been evening gowns I would’ve killed for.

Emma!

No, not really!

Well then how was that relevant?

I just think evening gowns are important!

Very well. Agnes, do you remember what sort of gown it was?

It was green. Some sort of shimmery material.

Sounds lovely.

Was her hair done?

(BLOODY MAN makes more noises.)

How could that possibly matter?

It tells us if she was coming in, or going out.
CHAMBERMAID
It was all done up, I think. The way she was lyin’ it was ‘ard to see.

CLARKE
So what does that tell us?

EMMA
I don’t know, now that I think about it. She could have been on her way out, but then, she could have just come in and been killed before she had a chance to take her hair down.

PETER
Does either choice seem more likely?

EMMA
It’s difficult to say. Clarice? Oh. May I call you Clarice?

DAVIES
Of course.

EMMA
Thank you. What do you think, Clarice?

DAVIES
I would need to see her before I said anything conclusively.

(The Constable begins to stir.)

CHAMBERMAID
I think ‘e’s comin’ to!

EMMA
What do we do now, Peter?

PETER
I haven’t thought that far ahead.

DAVIES
Oh splendid! We shall all have to improvise! I should be writing this down, it would make such a wonderful story.

PETER
Everyone just try to stay calm and let me do the talking.

(ALL adlib their assent.)
(The Constable wakes up and looks around painfully. He blinks at them all a few times and then tries to move his arms. When he finds that he can’t, he speaks.)

CONSTABLE
What is the meaning of this? Let me out of this chair at once!

PETER
I’m afraid we can’t do that just yet.

CONSTABLE
Who are all of you? What’s going on?

PETER
Well you see, Inspector…

(And it begins. The following monologues are spoken one on top of another. The chaos ends with all saying the word “murder.”)

PETER
My wife and I are here on our honeymoon. And I can’t honestly explain how this has all happened. I suppose it started when my wife heard a scream, which she insisted was a woman being murdered, well you know how women are. So inclined to be dramatic. I had just about calmed her down when that man over there showed up. And what with the blood and all, well, things did look a bit suspicious. The point is that now I’m a bit more inclined to believe there’s actually been a murder.

EMMA
Well the first thing is I heard a dreadful scream, and I just knew the poor woman had been killed. I mean, one can just sort of sense these sorts of things. And after all, I wasn’t looking to be involved with a crime of any sort; I’m on my honeymoon. But when one hears a murder one has to find out what happened. But then this man came in here, all covered in blood and he’s been saying the most dreadful things and then all these other people showed up and now we’re all mixed up in murder!

DAVIES
I have suffered a shock. I am not accustomed to being woken to find a man standing over me with a knife. Nor am I accustomed to having my hotel room used as a storage facility for murder weapons. It is extraordinarily unseemly. But regardless of the inconvenience, not to mention the risk, to myself, I attempted to seek out the authorities. Now this rather impertinent young man has had the audacity to imply that we may all be implicated, and I assure you I have no intention of being accused of murder!

CLARKE
There’s been a dreadful mistake. I was just minding my own business, trying to get a few hours of sleep when my wife and I were awakened by a dreadful noise coming from this
CONT.

room. Now I’m not usually the sort of man who seeks out confrontation, but my wife has been terribly ill and she must have rest. So I came over here simply to ask them to try and lower their voices, and instead find myself dragged into the room, forced to stay here against my will, and accused of murder!

WAITER

I don’t have the slightest idea what’s going on in here. I showed this couple to their room earlier, and seeing as it’s their honeymoon the manager told me to bring up these desserts and champagne. Simple drop off he said. Then out of the blue comes bloody men tied to chairs and people getting hysterics and who knows what else and I’ll tell you one thing, this was not part of my training. Nobody ever said anything about dealing with lunatics, and only lunatics go around yelling about murder!

CHAMBERMAID

This has got nothin’ whatever to do with me. I was just doin’ what I was told. Bring up clean towels he says, all right says I, up I go. And then when I get there, ‘ow was I supposed to know there’d be blood all over the floor, hmm? Nobody told me to bring a mop. The lady just wanted towels. So naturally I screamed, I mean, who wouldn’t’ve? And next thing I know I’m getting dragged in ‘ere and that woman’s saying I’m an accomplice and I’ve never had nothin’ to do with murder!

PETER

What happened to letting me do the talking?

CONSTABLE

Murder? What murder?

PETER

I beg your pardon?

CONSTABLE

Why is everyone talking about a murder?

EMMA

You mean, that’s not why you’re here?

CONSTABLE

No. I haven’t heard anything about a murder. Who was murdered?

DAVIES

We haven’t figured that part out yet.

EMMA

All we know is it’s the woman next door.
PETER
Why are you here, if it’s not about the murder?

CONSTABLE
We had a complaint about the noise.

Oh.

PETER
I was called in to get to the bottom of it.

EMMA
I don’t want to be hanged!

CONSTABLE
Who said anything about a hanging?

EMMA
You did!

PETER
Emma…

EMMA
I did not.

WAITER
She’s a bit overwrought. Wedding day excitement and all.

CONSTABLE
Oh.

EMMA
You want to get to the bottom of it all, and at the bottom of a murder is a hanging and I don’t want to hang!

CONSTABLE
That’s only for the murderer. Are you saying you’ve killed someone?

EMMA (beginning to get completely hysterical)
No!

PETER
That’s not what she meant at all.
CHAMBERMAID
Careful or she’ll faint.

DAVIES
Here, Emma. Sit down and try to take a few deep breaths.

(DAVIES leads EMMA to the settee)

EMMA
This is too horrid!

WAITER
Maybe she ought to lie down.

PETER
Yes, Emma. Put your feet up.

EMMA
I don’t want to! I just want everyone to go away!

DAVIES
Be a good girl now and lie down.

CONSTABLE
Will someone let me out of this chair?

PETER
Wait just a minute, won’t you?

EMMA
I can’t breathe.

DAVIES
Just calm down.

WAITER
Think of pleasant things.

CHAMBERMAID
Like kittens!

EMMA (sobbing)
I’m allergic to cats!

WAITER
Well done, Agnes.
CHAMBERMAID

How was I s’posed to know?

WAITER

Just go and sit down somewhere, you’re not helping.

CHAMBERMAID

Fine.

(She frowns and sits angrily in a chair.)

PETER

(sitting by EMMA)

Darling, you really must try and calm yourself.

EMMA

I can’t! I can’t!

(MRS. DAVIES leans over and calmly slaps her. EMMA stares at her in shock and then lies there quietly, sniffling from time to time.)

WAITER

Why didn’t we think of that?

DAVIES

(taking out a handkerchief and handing it to Emma)

I don’t know. It seemed perfectly obvious to me.

PETER

Are you all right, darling?

EMMA

Mhmm.

I insist you untie me at once!

PETER

Not just yet. We have things to think through first.

CONSTABLE

This is unheard of.

DAVIES

Is it? Are there standards for murders and such?
CONSTABLE

(hesitates) I don’t rightly know. Murders are usually left to our inspectors.

WAITER

You aren’t an inspector?

CONSTABLE

No, sir. I am Special Constable Alfred Harris.

PETER

Special Constable?

DAVIES

A hobby bobby?

CONSTABLE (frowning)

Now then, I can’t say as I’m partial to that particular expression. This country relies heavily on her volunteers.

DAVIES

I meant no offense. I was just asking.

CONSTABLE

It’s a sensitive subject.

CLARKE

Is this really the time to discuss that?

PETER

No. We need to get back to our inquiry.

CONSTABLE

Then you must untie me so I can begin.

PETER

Not your inquiry. My inquiry.

EMMA

Peter, hadn’t we better let the police take over?

PETER

No. I want to finish what I started.

(Emma looks at him, surprised, but pleasantly so.)
CONSTABLE

I must insist…

(Peter takes the handkerchief from Emma and stuffs it in the Constable’s mouth.)

PETER

Now where were we?

DAVIES

We were discussing the significance of the dead woman’s hair.

PETER

Right. And what can we conclude?

EMMA

We can’t conclude anything without seeing her.

PETER

Then we shall have to move on to another line of inquiry.

DAVIES

Why?

PETER

Because we can’t come to a conclusion on the hair business.

DAVIES

Not without seeing her.

PETER

As you said.

DAVIES

But we could if we saw her.

PETER

I don’t see…

EMMA

Why didn’t we think of that before?

WAITER

Think of what?
DAVIES
It’s really the next logical step.

PETER
What step?

EMMA
We must have a look at her.

PETER
Out of the question.

(The Constable makes noises behind his gag.)

DAVIES
How else are we to solve this puzzle?

EMMA
We should have identified her ages ago.

PETER
I don’t want you looking at dead people.

DAVIES
It’s the only way to move forward.

EMMA
I’ll be fine, Peter.

WAITER
I would like to know who she is.

DAVIES
Yes, and maybe Dr. Clarke could tell us something.

CLARKE
Me?

EMMA
Of course! You’re a doctor, aren’t you?

CLARKE
Yes of course, but I’m not a coroner.
EMMA
You’ll still be able to tell us more than we could discover ourselves. Let’s all go and look at the body.

PETER
(gesturing to BLOODY MAN and CONSTABLE)
We can’t just leave these two in here alone.

(BLOODY MAN speaks behind his gag.)

DAVIES
Let’s bring the body in here then.

EMMA
Excellent. We can use the room service cart!

CHAMBERMAID
(pacing)
I don’t like this. I don’t like this one bit.

WAITER
Oh calm down, Aggie. There’s nothing to get so worked up about.

CHAMBERMAID
I don’t want to look at that body again.

WAITER
Then you just wait in the toilet.

CHAMBERMAID
By myself?

WAITER
Well, you’re the only one who has a thing about corpses.

CHAMBERMAID
I think you’re being perfectly ‘orrid, Tony. I never asked to get mixed up in all this.

WAITER
You’re not mixed up in anything yet, so be a good girl and wait in the other room!

CHAMBERMAID
Fine.

(She exits into the bathroom and shuts the door.)
WAITER

Now about the body.

PETER

Oh very well. Help me with the cart.

(They empty the cart of its desserts, and start to wheel it out of the room. CLARKE makes a move to go with them.)

PETER

If you wouldn’t mind, doctor, I think someone should stay here with the ladies.

CLARKE

Oh. Of course.

EMMA

Hurry back, Peter.

PETER

I shall. Be sure to lock the door after us.

(PETER and WAITER exit. EMMA crosses to the door and bolts it.)

EMMA

I hate waiting.

DAVIES

So do I. (looks at desserts) Seems a shame to let all this go to waste.

EMMA

A terrible shame.

(They sit on the settee with a plate each and begin to nibble on the desserts.)

DAVIES

You’ve been awfully quiet, Dr. Clarke.

CLARKE

I’m still rather confused by this whole business.

DAVIES

I don’t see what’s so confusing about it. We’re trying to solve a murder mystery.

CLARKE

Yes, I’m aware of that. However, I don’t know how I’ve managed to get involved.
EMMA
You came and knocked on our door.

CLARKE
Well yes, I now the actual manner…

DAVIES
It's all quite simple when you think about it.

CLARKE
(sighs) Would you mind terribly if we just waited quietly? I’m developing the most terrible headache.

DAVIES
I suppose a little quiet could do us all some good.

(They all sit in silence as the women continue munching.)

DAVIES
I came here on my honeymoon, you know.

(CLARKE sighs again.)

EMMA
Did you, Clarice?

DAVIES
I did. My husband never enjoyed particularly good health, poor thing. About the time of our wedding he was practically a convalescent. We decided to combine a rest cure and a honeymoon, and the hot springs at Bath seemed a most logical option.

EMMA
It doesn’t sound as though it would be a pleasant trip.

DAVIES
It was miserable. Rained the entire time. And along with the terrible weather, I had to learn to be a wife and nursemaid all in one dreary week.

EMMA
How awful.

DAVIES
I certainly thought so at the time. But I don’t know. Sometimes I think misery bonds people more surely than happiness. After surviving our honeymoon, nothing seemed to be able to shake my husband or I. For the thirty-one years of our marriage, no matter
what went wrong, we only had to say “Bath” and we’d remember what we could overcome.

EMMA

How beautiful.

DAVIES

We weren’t always happy, but we were always sure of each other. And I think that counts for something.

EMMA

I think that’s wonderful, Clarice. It’s almost as though you wrote it.

DAVIES

I did. I put it in one of my stories.

EMMA

Oh.

DAVIES

It’s true though.

EMMA

I believe you. And you said that is why you’re here now?

DAVIES

It is. Ever since Nigel passed away, I’ve come back here every year on the anniversary. Just to remember.

(EMMA takes DAVIES’ hand.)

EMMA

No matter how horrid everything else may be, I’m glad to have met you.

DAVIES

As am I.

(They exchange smiles. There is a knock at the door. The woman start and look to the door.)

EMMA

Do you suppose that’s them?

DAVIES

I do hope so.
EMMA  
(getting up and crossing to door)  
Who is it?  

PETER  
It’s me, Emma. You can unlock the door now.  

(EMMA unlocks the door and opens it. PETER and the WAITER enter with the cart, across which lies a form under the tablecloth.)  

DAVIES  
Whatever took you so long?  

WAITER  
It was quite a job getting her on the cart.  

How ghastly.  

EMMA  
I warned you, Emma. Corpses are dreadfully unpleasant things.  

PETER  
Oh, I’m all right, Peter. Let’s have a look at her.  

It isn’t a very pretty sight.  

WAITER  
Of course it isn’t. She’s dead.  

DAVIES  
I just didn’t want you to be taken unawares.  

And we certainly appreciate that.  

EMMA  
Do let’s get on with it.  

PETER  
I didn’t realize you were capable of such morbid curiosity.  

EMMA  
I imagine I’m capable of more than you might think.
DAVIES
You two can discover the depths of each other’s personalities later. That’s what marriage is for after all. Right now we have a murder to solve.

(She crosses to the cart and removes the tablecloth. A woman who was clearly beautiful in life is draped over the cart, dressed in a bloodstained evening gown. EMMA gasps and buries her head in PETER’s shoulder; DAVIES stares at the body in surprise.)

PETER
(holding EMMA)
It’s all right, Emma.

EMMA
It’s horrible!

PETER
I know. I do wish you hadn’t looked.

EMMA
(picking her head up to look at him)
No, it isn’t that. We know her!

We what?

EMMA
Don’t you recognize her?

I certainly do.

DAVIES

CLARKE
What?

EMMA
You know her too?

DAVIES
Yes, I do. I had dinner with her last night.

PETER
You did?

DAVIES
Well, in a manner of speaking. We were both in the restaurant at the same time.
EMMA
(to WAITER)
Then you must know her as well!

WAITER
I’m afraid not. I haven’t worked since Thursday.

CLARKE
Then she must have checked in sometime after that.

DAVIES
Clearly. How do you know her, Emma?

EMMA
We saw her in the lobby when we registered.

PETER
Did we? I can’t recall.

EMMA
Yes, we did. I distinctly remember it.

DAVIES
What was she doing?

EMMA
She looked as though she was waiting for someone.

WAITER
Waiting?

EMMA
Yes. She was dressed to go out, and it seemed as if she was waiting for someone to pick her up.

DAVIES
Maybe it was that man she was dining with yesterday!

PETER
What man?

DAVIES
I haven’t the faintest idea. I only know that I saw them at dinner together.

EMMA
Well, what did he look like?
(The door opens, and a man in an expensive suit stumbles into the room. Everyone looks at him in shock. Almost instantly, he falls on his face. There is a knife in his back.)

DAVIES
Like that.

(They all stand in stunned silence. CLARKE crosses to the body to check his pulse. DAVIES turns away, and the WAITER crosses to the settee and sits. EMMA quietly takes PETER’s hand.)

EMMA
Peter?

PETER
Yes, Emma?

EMMA
I don’t think I want there to be another murder.

PETER
I completely agree with you.

EMMA
This is not the sort of thing I had planned for.

PETER
Of course not.

EMMA
One does not take into account the possibility of murder when one is setting an agenda for one’s honeymoon.

PETER
Certainly not.

EMMA
I think the whole business is just awful.

PETER
I’m not arguing with you.

(EMMA thinks for a moment, and then looks at PETER.)

EMMA
You should have let me go and telephone mother.
PETER

(dropping her hand)
What’s that got to do with anything?

EMMA
If you had just let me go and telephone mother like I wanted, I wouldn’t have been in the room to hear her scream.

PETER
I don’t see…

EMMA
And if you had come with me, like any self-respecting gentleman would have, then neither one of us would have been here to see the murderer, and we wouldn’t be in this mess at all.

PETER
I hardly think that’s fair, Emma. As we established earlier, it wasn’t necessary for you to call your mother.

EMMA
We established no such thing! It was very necessary to call her. I hate to think what she’ll say now when she finds out about all this.

PETER
(to himself)
Something most unkind, I shouldn’t wonder.

EMMA
What was that?

PETER
Nothing. I was only wondering what my own mother will say.

EMMA
She’ll probably be too hurt that you haven’t called sooner to say much of anything.

PETER
I doubt that. My mother is too sensible to hold a grudge.

EMMA
Well so is mine! Infinitely too sensible!

PETER
Oh no, I am not getting involved in another comparison of mothers. The last one ended in a murder.
You’re impossible.

Possibly.

That’s quite enough, both of you. All this talk of mothers and murders. Really, we have more important things to deal with.

Dr. Clarke? What can you tell us?

Well, this man is dead.

Something we don’t already know, I mean.

There is no need to be rude. It could have been a flesh wound.

With a knife in his back?

One never knows.

Never mind. Is there anything else you can tell us?

As I said before, I am not a coroner. The only thing I can say with any measure of certainty is that he was stabbed very shortly before he died.

Then the murder must not be very far away!

You’re right; he hasn’t had time to get far.

Perhaps we should go and look for him.

I don’t think that’s very wise. What if that’s what he wants?
EMMA
Do you mean he might want to kill us, too?

DAVIES
What a horrid idea.

PETER
I don’t know, I simply think we must consider the possibility.

EMMA
What should we do then?

PETER
I think for the time being, we must stay here and see what else we can puzzle out.

CLARKE
What else can we possibly discover on the little facts we have?

DAVIES
Oh lots of things, I’m sure. We just have to find a good place to start.

WAITER
Such as?

DAVIES
Suppose we start with the man in the chair.

EMMA
He was the start of all this, after all.

PETER
I believe you’re right. Yes, let’s see what he has to say for himself.

(He crosses to BLOODY MAN and removes the gag from his mouth. BLOODY MAN reacts to its absence, possibly stretching his mouth or trying to swallow properly.)

EMMA
Well, Mr. Evans?

BLOODY MAN (frowning)
Well, what?

DAVIES
What do you have to say for yourself?
BLOODY MAN

Nothing, until you let me out this chair.

PETER

I’m afraid that’s not possible just yet. We need to get a few details straightened out first.

BLOODY MAN

I am in no frame of mind to have a good chat while I’ve lost all feeling in my hands.

PETER

The sooner you answer my questions, the sooner you might be able to get up.

BLOODY MAN

Why don’t you let the constable ask me the questions? I’ve no obligation to answer to you.

EMMA

Now look here, Mr. Murderer Evans. This is Peter’s investigation. And you will answer his questions, or…

(She stops to think.)

Or…we’ll never let you go.

BLOODY MAN (smiling ever so slightly)

That’s quite a threat.

EMMA

And I couldn’t be more serious.

WAITER

You know, I don’t think that’s a very logical threat.

EMMA

Of course it is.

PETER

Emma, your logic is…your own.

EMMA

Who else’s would it be?

PETER

Never mind.

(EMMA gives him a puzzled look, but turns to BLOODY MAN.)
EMMA
Well, Mr. Evans? Are you going to answer his questions, or no?

BLOODY MAN
I don’t think I will.

EMMA
I don’t think you’re a very nice man.

BLOODY MAN
That’s not a very kind thing to say. You don’t know a thing about me.

EMMA
I know you’re the sort of man who burst into rooms without knocking and involves innocent people in murders. That’s something.

BLOODY MAN
If that’s what you wish to believe.

EMMA
But that’s exactly what you’ve done! It doesn’t require what one might call a stretch of the imagination. I don’t think I could have imagined something so horrible.

BLOODY MAN
I’m not so sure. You seem to have an exceptionally vivid imagination.

EMMA
It’s all so unpleasant. You’ve completely spoilt my honeymoon.

BLOODY MAN
I wouldn’t go so far as to say that. After all, this is just the first day, isn’t it? You have plenty of time to make up for this evening.

EMMA (starting to tear up)
Not if we’re in prison.

DAVIES
Let’s try not to think about prison, hmm?

EMMA (sniffling)
It’s rather hard to think of anything else. And I don’t see how we can avoid it if we can’t figure anything out.

BLOODY MAN
(sighs) You needn’t cry about it. I’ll answer your husband’s questions. I’m tired of this chair, anyways.
EMMA (brightening immediately)

Thank you.

BLOODY MAN

Go on, Mr. Brown. What do you want to know?

PETER

To start off, what is your occupation, Mr. Evans?

BLOODY MAN

I seem to find myself unemployed at the moment.

PETER

Then what was your last position?

BLOODY MAN

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that I am habitually unemployed.

PETER

 Somehow I don’t find that surprising. Do you have any particular trade at all?

BLOODY MAN

No. Not particularly.

PETER

Very interesting. Where is your permanent residence?

BLOODY MAN

Nowhere, I’m afraid.

PETER

Something of a nomad, are we?

BLOODY MAN

Yes, I rather like the sound of that.

PETER

Do you indeed? What brings you to Bath?

BLOODY MAN

Nothing in particular. Just sightseeing I suppose.

PETER

Sightseeing. Really?
I like sightseeing. One sees so many sights.

What makes you think that?

Just an impression.

I assure you that nothing could be further from the truth. I just happen to be one of those unfortunate fellows who have nothing particularly distinguishing about them.

For you, that may prove to be unfortunate indeed.

How ominous that sounds.

It was open to interpretation.

And I interpreted it ominously.

This is fascinating. Rather like watching a tennis match, isn’t it?

Shh. I’m trying to listen.

How do you explain your presence here this evening?

Quite easily.

Oh come off it, Evans. We’ll never get anywhere at this rate.

Very well. I’m a guest in the hotel; my room is just down the hall. I was coming back from a late dinner and I saw the door to the next room open. I stopped to see if anything
was the matter, and when I looked in the door I saw a woman lying there, covered in blood. I rushed in to see if there was anything I could do. I knelt to feel for a pulse, but she was already dead. I went to the phone to call the police, but it was out of order, so I rushed in here to use yours. Then I was attacked and tied to this chair.

PETER
That’s not at all the story you gave us earlier.

EMMA
Immensely suspicious. Besides, what about the story you gave us afterwards, about being a murderer?

DAVIES
Yes, I’m most interested in hearing that particular story.

BLOODY MAN
Oh that. Well when you insisted on keeping me captive, I was forced to spin an elaborate tale of murder and theft in an attempt to intimidate you into letting me go. I’m afraid it rather backfired, as it seems to have just made you insist on making everyone a prisoner.

EMMA
A convenient story!

DAVIES
If it was in fact just a story, you certainly seemed to revel in it.

BLOODY MAN
Of course I did. You all were such fun to take in.

CLARKE
I find that offensive. Taking advantage of peoples’ agitated state. Bad form, I should say.

BLOODY MAN
Oh do try and grow up, Clarke. This isn’t secondary school. You are going to be lied to at some point. Facts of life I’m afraid.

WAITER
The point is, Mr. Brown, what are we going to do about him?

PETER
Do?

DAVIES
Yes. Do. What are we going to do with him now?
PETER
I’m afraid I haven’t the foggiest idea.

EMMA
What?

PETER
I’m sorry, darling. This is a bit past my experience, you know. I thought something he said might point us in a new direction, but I’m not really sure what comes next.

DAVIES
For pity’s sake, Peter.

WAITER
Does anyone else have any suggestions?

BLOODY MAN
I suggest you let me go.

CLARKE
Perhaps the constable has something to say.

EMMA
(to CONSTABLE)
Do you?

(The CONSTABLE tries to say something. DAVIES crosses to him and takes out the handkerchief)

DAVIES
What was that?

CONSTABLE
You’re all a lot of lunatics!

EMMA
That isn’t helpful at all.

WAITER
Maybe we ought to gag him again.

CONSTABLE
Oh no you don’t!
(General pandemonium. All talking at once, trying to decide what to do next, ad lib, etc. The CONSTABLE tries to talk over them, get them to let him go, etc. In the middle of the chaos, there is a sharp knock on the door. ALL snap their heads to the door and freeze.)

DAVIES
There’s always something.

PETER
Who is it?

VOICE
Room service!

WAITER
Room service? But I already brought the room service.

EMMA
Let’s see who it really is then.

PETER
Emma, don’t!

(She has already gone to the door and is opening it.)

EMMA
Who is it really?

(She is forced back into the room by a food cart pushed by a woman in a waiter’s uniform.)

WOMAN
(Releases the cart and pulls a gun. She speaks with an American accent)
Everyone stay where you are!

DAVIES
That’s the best entrance line you could come up with?

WOMAN
Shut up!

EMMA
Who are you?

WOMAN
It doesn’t matter.
(She crosses to the female corpse and bends over it, still covering the room with her gun.)

DAVIES
Just what do you think you’re doing?

WOMAN
None of your business.

PETER
You’re threatening us at gunpoint, which would seem to make it our business.

WOMAN
(waving the gun around)
Everyone just shut up!

CLARKE
I suggest we do what she says.

EMMA
Peter, I don’t like this.

(The WOMAN points the gun at EMMA.)

CONSTABLE
Emma, it would probably be best if you kept quiet for now

EMMA (quietly)
All right.

PETER
Now, let’s everyone just keep calm.
(to WOMAN)
Why don’t you put the gun down?

WOMAN
No! And I’ll thank you to keep quiet, just like this Emma person. I don’t want anyone trying to give me orders. So you just sit tight!

PETER
Very well. There’s no need to get so upset.

WOMAN
Everyone just stay still and keep your hands where I can see them.
EMMA
This is like a scene from the cinema. A horrible cinema.

PETER

EMMA
I can’t help it.

WOMAN
(to EMMA)
Don’t think I won’t use this. I know what I want and I’m prepared to get it.

DAVIES
What do you want?

WOMAN
(wheeling around to her)
What do you think I want?

DAVIES
I have no idea, which is precisely why I asked.

WOMAN
Don’t play stupid with me. I want the jewels!

EMMA
What jewels?

DAVIES
What in heaven’s name are you talking about?

WOMAN
I want the jewels from the body!

SEVERAL VOICES
What?

WAITER
Nobody took any jewels off the body.

WOMAN
Well then how come they aren’t there? Hmm? She was wearing them earlier, and now they’re gone.
BLOODY MAN (in an American accent)
Shut up, Jenny.

EMMA
You know her?

WOMAN
What do you mean, “shut up, Jenny”? Don’t you tell me to shut up. I’m here to save your hide. You shut up.

BLOODY MAN
You’re going to ruin the whole thing. Just get out of here!

WOMAN
I’m not leaving without the jewels, Jack. I don’t care what you say.

EMMA
But we really don’t have them!

WOMAN
Do I look stupid to you?

DAVIES
We’re telling the truth, we don’t know about any jewels.

WAITER
I’m going to give you just three more seconds…

EMMA
Wait a minute!

ALL
What?

EMMA
He has them!

ALL
Who?

EMMA
Evans!

BLOODY MAN
Me?
PETER

Emma, what are you talking about?

EMMA

Don’t you remember? When he told us the story about the murder? He mentioned jewels! Well how would he know about them unless he took them?

BLOODY MAN

I didn’t take them!

WOMAN

Oh you didn’t? Well then who has them, Jack?

BLOODY MAN

How should I know? I’ve been tied up in here for hours!

WOMAN

It was your job to take them. You really mean to tell me that you didn’t?

His job?

EMMA

Would you just get out of here, Jenny?

PETER

Wait just a minute, I want to hear this. What do you mean it was his job?

WOMAN

That’s what he does. I find the mark, he takes the jewels. Only he botched it up wonderfully this time.

You’re jewel thieves?

EMMA (making a discovery)

WOMAN

What else would we be?

EMMA (slightly crushed)

I was only asking.

WOMAN

(to BLOODY MAN)

Do you have them or not, Jack?
I can’t believe you, Jenny.

(pointing the gun at him)
Answer my question, do you have them or not?

Don’t you point that thing at me! I taught you how to shoot it!

(to CONSTABLE)
Do something!

What do you want me to do? I’m tied to a chair!

(DAVIES crosses to CONSTABLE and unties him.)

There. Now shoot her!

I don’t have a gun!

What?

I left it at the station. I’ve never needed it before.

And you call yourself a constable!

Well I am just a volunteer!

You two! Shut up!

That’s enough, Jenny! Put the gun away.

Not until I get the jewels.
I have them.  

Why didn’t you say so?

Because you came in waving that thing around! I didn’t want to give them to you while you were being so ridiculous.

That is the dumbest thing I’ve heard in my entire life.

Just untie me.

I don’t think I want to.

Jenny, come untie me so we can get out of here. I’ll make it up to you later.

You bet you will.

Peter, stop them! We can’t just let a couple of murderers walk away!

What do you mean, murderers?

Do you not see the two bodies in the room?

Of course I see them. But I didn’t have anything to do with them.

A likely story.

It doesn’t matter. Just untie me, Jenny.
WOMAN
(crossing to BLOODY MAN and untying him)
You have some explaining to do, Jack. I don’t know how you managed to ruin everything.

BLOODY MAN
(standing rather unsteadily and trying to shake feeling back into his limbs)
We didn’t exactly allow for murders.

WOMAN
(moving to help him stand)
We’ll just have to think of that next time.

(They start to cross towards the door.)

EMMA
Peter, do something!

(PETER takes a step towards them, somewhat hesitantly.)

WOMAN
(pointing the gun at him)
Not another step. Everyone just stay where you are.

(PETER stops. The WOMAN and the BLOODY MAN continue towards the door. It is thrown open from the hall by the CHAMBERMAID. She bursts into the room, holding a gun of her own.)

CHAMBERMAID
No one move!

WAITER
Agnes?

CLARKE
What is going on?

EMMA
Peter?

PETER
I have no idea, Emma.

DAVIES
I thought she was in the toilet!
CHAMBERMAID

I was. But I left.

WAITER

I thought it was too quiet in there.

PETER

What do you want, Agnes?

CHAMBERMAID

I want the jewels!

CONSTABLE

Not this again.

CHAMBERMAID

They’re mine, and I want them back.

EMMA

What do you mean, they’re yours?
    (pointing to the dead woman)
Aren’t they hers?

CHAMBERMAID

No. They’re mine. She took them from me.

CLARKE

I am so confused.

DAVIES

Now I think we all are.

PETER

Can we please put the guns away?

CHAMBERMAID

Not until I get what’s mine.

WAITER
    (gesturing to BLOODY MAN and WOMAN)
Well then you’re going to need to speak to them.

CHAMBERMAID
    (wheeling around to face the couple)
Give them to me!
WOMAN

Not on your life.

BLOODY MAN

Do you know what we went through to get them?

CHAMBERMAID

I don’t care. They’re mine!

DAVIES

Well they are thieves. I’m not sure that makes much of a difference.

CHAMBERMAID

(still to couple)
Don’t make me shoot you for them.

CLARKE

Haven’t we had enough killing? We already have two dead bodies.

PETER

Exactly. Which seems to increase the odds of there being another one if we aren’t careful.

EMMA

Don’t say that! We don’t even know who the man is, we can’t add another.

DAVIES

I told you, it’s the man she was having dinner with.

EMMA

No, you just said he looked like the man she had dinner with.

DAVIES

I meant that it was him.

CHAMBERMAID

What did you say?

DAVIES

The second dead body had dinner with the first dead body last night.

CHAMBERMAID

That isn’t possible.

DAVIES

Of course it’s possible. It’s true.
CHAMBERMAID.

No. No it isn’t.

(She rushes to the dead man and turns him over onto his back.)

DAVIES

I assure you that it is.

(The CHAMBERMAID crumples to the floor in tears. PETER quickly goes to her side and takes the gun from her limp hand. The BLOODY MAN and WOMAN attempt to sneak out the door, but PETER levels the gun at them and the CONSTABLE uses his Billy club to hit the gun out of the WOMAN’s hand and quickly retrieves it from the ground.)

CLARKE

What is going on here?

EMMA

Be careful with that, Peter.

PETER

I’m being careful, Emma.

WAITER

(referring to CHAMBERMAID)

I think she knew him.

DAVIES

I think you’re right.

CHAMBERMAID (crying)

Jerry! Jerry!

CONSTABLE

(to BLOODY MAN and WOMAN)

You two have a seat.

BLOODY MAN

Oh please. Couldn’t I just stand?

CONSTABLE

Fine.

(to WOMAN)

But you sit down.

(She does.)
Who is it, Agnes?

My husband.

Oh no! But who killed him?

I think she did, Emma.

How horrible.

I thought it was one of you. I just wanted the jewels. He gave them to me, but he took them back to give to her. The tramp.

No.

I didn’t mean to kill her. If she’d just given them back to me I would have left her alone. But she laughed. Said she’d earned them. I couldn’t help myself.

You’d better not say anything else until we get you to the station.

Come along now.

If you two wouldn’t mind bringing our jewel thieves along, I think it’s time we brought in an inspector.

Passed time, if you ask me.

More than happy to oblige.
(CLARKE and WAITER each take a thief by the arm and lead them out the door.)

CONSTABLE
(tso DAVIES)
Madam, if you’d be so kind as to come along and give a statement.

DAVIES
Certainly.

(DAVIES exits after the men and the thieves.)

CONSTABLE
And if you two wouldn’t mind coming as well, after you change of course.

PETER
We’d be glad to.

CONSTABLE
Thank you.
(to CHAMBERMAID)
This way, madam.

(CONSTABLE and CHAMBERMAID exit. PETER and EMMA stand looking at each other.)

PETER
Well that was unexpectedly eventful.

EMMA
Yes. I suppose we’d better change.

(She starts towards her suitcase.)

PETER
(stopping her)
Emma. Come here.

(She goes to him and he embraces her. They stand like that for a moment.)

EMMA
Do you know what Clarice said while you were gone?

PETER
What?
EMMA
She said that misery bonds people more surely than happiness.

PETER
Did she?

EMMA
She did. And if that’s true, then I think we shall be very well bonded after tonight.

PETER
I certainly hope so.

(EMMA tilts her head back to look at him.)

EMMA
I do so love you, Peter.

PETER
And I love you more.

(He kisses her.)

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT

END OF PLAY
References


