

1. INT. REGENCY THEATRE NIGHT.

A performance of Shakespeare's Macbeth at a smart, London theatre. Performing as Lady Macbeth is JANE WILKINSON, a very beautiful young woman. In real life far more vulnerable and gentle than the part she now plays. Macbeth is played by BRYAN MARTIN, a handsome hunk of a man, currently in love with JANE.

It is Act 2, Scene 2. Macbeth, holding two daggers and covered in blood, has just murdered Duncan. Lady Macbeth takes charge.

JANE

(Lady Macbeth) Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from
your hand./Why did you bring these
daggers from the place?/They must
lie there: go carry them, and
smear/The sleepy grooms with blood.

BRYAN

(Macbeth) I'll go no more:/I am
afraid, to think what I have done;
look on't again I dare not.

The AUDIENCE watches in rapt attention. High up, in a royal box, LORD EDGWARE is also sitting, sharply focused. A bad-tempered, bitter, eccentric man with a sneering mouth. Aged about fifty. Not enjoying the play.

Sitting with him in the box is his daughter, GERALDINE. Thin, pale, haunted eyes. Oppressed by her father's presence.

JANE

Infirm of purpose!/Give me the
daggers: the sleeping, and the dead,
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of
childhood,/That fears a painted devil.
If he do bleed,/I'll gild the faces of the
grooms withal,/For it must seem
their guilt.

LADY MACBETH reaches out for the daggers. A great stage moment. Her hands entwine MACBETH'S - his, sticky with blood. With the daggers on either side of them, the two kiss passionately.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

LORD EDGWARE begins a slow clap. His hand-claps ring out across the otherwise silent and enraptured theatre. People in the AUDIENCE turn to look up at the royal box in shame.

And still LORD EDGWARE claps. GERALDINE is embarrassed.

GERALDINE
(Whispered) Father!

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

Also in a box, opposite LORD EDGWARE, is THE DUKE OF MERTON. Young, handsome and idealistic. He is astonished and affronted by the interruption and brings up his opera glasses to see who is making the noise. Then he turns back to the stage...

CUT TO

MERTON'S P.O.V.

Carrying the knives, LADY MACBETH hurries from the stage, embarrassed and close to tears.

CUT TO

2. INT. JANE WILKINSON'S DRESSING ROOM NIGHT.

After the performance. Surrounded by flowers and good luck cards, JANE rounds on her cold-faced husband.

JANE
How could you do it? How could you embarrass me on my first night in front of all those people?

EDGWARE
Embarrassed? Who was embarrassed? I was the one who had to sit there and watch my wife cavorting in the arms of another man.

JANE
It's a play, George! It's William Shakespeare!

EDGWARE

It's nothing more than an excuse. An excuse for bestial behaviour and a chance to humiliate me in public.

CUT TO

3. INT. THEATRE CORRIDOR NIGHT.

GERALDINE is standing outside amongst the props and scenery, listening to the argument in complete misery. BRYAN MARTIN passes her and gives her a rueful look. He can hear it too.

JANE

(Voice only)

You knew what I was when you married me.

EDGWARE

(Voice only)

Yes. A second-rate actress. And what a fool I was!

CUT TO

4. INT. JANE WILKINSON'S DRESSING ROOM NIGHT.

The argument reaches his climax.

JANE

You admit it was a mistake? Well, I agree. So why don't we end this misery now? Please, George. I want a divorce!

EDGWARE

A divorce? You think I'll give you a divorce? Absolutely not!

JANE

(Faltering) But...? Why not?

EDGWARE

Because I am George Alfred St Vincent Marsh, fourth Baron Edg-

ware. That's why not. You are my wife and that is how you will remain!

JANE stares at EDGWARE, helpless, trapped.

CUT TO

5. EXT. POIROT'S APARTMENT DAY.

ESTABLISHING SHOT

Morning.

MISS LEMON

(Voice only)

No, no! That's not right!

CUT TO

6. INT. POIROT'S FLAT - OUTER OFFICE DAY.

DELIVERY MEN are still delivering large boxes of files as MISS LEMON opens up the office. She is making her way through the uncustomary mess, carrying the post. And she has noticed one of the boxes...

MISS LEMON

Cases solved. 1928 and 9. A to N.
(Poisons) This should be with the others over there.

With a sigh, she continues through...

CUT TO

7. INT. POIROT'S FLAT - INNER OFFICE DAY.

...to the inner study, where POIROT is behind his desk

MISS LEMON

Good morning, Mr Poirot.

POIROT

Ah, Miss Lemon! The last of the cases, they have arrived?

MISS LEMON

They're just delivering them now, Mr Poirot. But in quite the wrong order. I'm afraid I'm going to have to overhaul the entire system.

She remembers the letters.

MISS LEMON

Oh - and the post has come.

POIROT

Eh bien. Let us see what we have...

He opens the first letter, hands it to MISS LEMON.

POIROT

A letter from the bank. They congratulate me on my return.

MISS LEMON

They're probably hoping you'll open a new account.

POIROT opens the second letter.

POIROT

And what have we here? "An invitation to an evening with Miss Carlotta Adams."

MISS LEMON

The actress?

POIROT

I do not know this name.

MISS LEMON

I read about her in the paper. She's American. A comedy actress. She does impersonations...

POIROT

Impersonations...

He hands the invitation back to MISS LEMON.

POIROT

No, no no. This is not for Poirot. Why they invite me even, I cannot imagine.

That leaves one envelope left.

POIROT

And a telegram.

He opens it.

POIROT

Mon dieu, Miss Lemon. It is from the good Captain Hastings!

MISS LEMON

All the way from Argentina?

POIROT

No, no, no. This comes from Boulogne. He says that he takes the night train to London. He arrives...

POIROT consults his watch. He is obviously delighted.

POIROT

...in just two hours from now.

MISS LEMON

What about his wife?

POIROT

But of course she will be with him. Come! We must leave at once.

CUT TO

8. **EXT. LONDON STATION DAY.**

MISS LEMON and POIROT make their way through the crowded station, looking for HASTINGS. POIROT is in a hurry.

POIROT

Come, Miss Lemon. The train it is already in!

MISS LEMON

It's early...

POIROT

But where is Hastings? *Qu'il y a tant de monde..!*

MISS LEMON

There he is.

MISS LEMON points and we see a slightly older, more worldly-wise and somewhat downcast HASTINGS getting off the train. His luggage - and there's a lot of it - is being loaded up by a PORTER.

POIROT and MISS LEMON hurry forward for an emotional reunion.

POIROT

Hastings!

HASTINGS

Poirot - my dear chap.

POIROT

Mon cher Hastings.

A warm handshake.

POIROT

It was beyond all my expectations to see you again so soon.

MISS LEMON

Welcome home, Captain Hastings.

HASTINGS

Miss Lemon.

An awkward moment. MISS LEMON is unsure whether to shake hands or to kiss but finally chooses the more formal option.

POIROT

All this luggage?

HASTINGS

It's all mine.

POIROT

So you plan therefore to stay for a time?

HASTINGS

(Sadly) Yes.

POIROT

(Suddenly remembering) But where is Madame Hastings?

HASTINGS doesn't need to reply. His face says it all. POIROT and MISS LEMON are shocked.

CUT TO

9. INT. STATION BUFFET DAY.

POIROT, MISS LEMON and HASTINGS have had recourse to that most English of panaceas. Three cups of tea.

HASTINGS

It was fine to start with. We really were in love, you know. Maybe we were too much in love. Because after a while, once we got into a routine, we found there was nothing underneath it. We just had nothing in common. Anyway, she asked me to leave so...here I am.

An apologetic shrug from POIROT.

POIROT

Mon pauvre Hastings. It is the complete *catastrophe*.

HASTINGS

Oh - I don't know. We had a good time while it lasted and at least I've learnt a thing or two about the opposite sex, you know? What makes them tick.

POIROT

The ticking of women it has always been the mystery to Poirot.

HASTINGS

Well, there you are...

MISS LEMON

So where will you go now? Where will you live?

HASTINGS

I'm booked into The Palace at the moment.

A glance from POIROT.

HASTINGS

The Piccadilly Palace Hotel. But I suppose I'll have to start looking for a flat...if I can afford London prices.

MISS LEMON

Poor Captain Hastings! You need taking out of yourself. (To POIROT) I know! Why don't you take him to that show?

POIROT

A show?

MISS LEMON

Carlotta Adams. It's on tonight and everyone says she's most amusing. I'm sure you'll both enjoy it - and maybe you'll find out why you were invited?

POIROT

(To HASTINGS) *Mon ami?*

HASTINGS

I've no other plans.

POIROT

Then it is decided. My felicitations, Miss Lemon. It is an excellent idea.

CUT TO

10. INT/EXT. CAB/THE GAIETY NIGHT.

We start on a billboard reading: CARLOTTA ADAMS - FOR A LIMITED ENGAGEMENT. Then we drop down to the AUDIENCE arriving for the performance.

A cab pulls up. Inside is BRYAN MARTIN and JANE WILKINSON. They have been having a furious argument and she is close to tears.

JANE

Leave me alone, Bryan. Just leave me alone.

BRYAN

You invited me, Jane. Remember?

JANE

I thought we could still be friends.

BRYAN

Your husband was right about you, you know. You're completely heartless.

JANE

That's not fair!

BRYAN

Well, if we're going to be seen together in public, we might as well at least put on an act.

BRYAN gets out of the cab. He forces a smile to his lips and holds out a hand for JANE. She gets out of the cab...still tearful.

BRYAN

Jane...

He forces herself to smile. And it is true, they have already been seen by other THEATRE GOERS. They are forced to perform. JANE smiles...

POIROT and HASTINGS have just arrived. POIROT sees JANE, sees the fake smile. He is immediately taken by her.

HASTINGS

I say - isn't that Jane Wilkinson?

POIROT glances at HASTINGS.

HASTINGS

The actress. She's famous...even in Argentina.

POIROT and HASTINGS follow JANE and BRYAN into the theatre.

CUT TO

11. INT. THE GAIETY NIGHT.

The Gaiety is in sharp contrast to the Regency Theatre that opened the episode. It's brighter, more modern - not a theatre at all but a cabaret venue, perhaps like The Moulin Rouge with tables and chairs...waiters serving champagne etc in front of the stage. The dress-code is also more relaxed.

On the stage, CARLOTTA ADAMS is doing several impersonations in a series of sketches. She is a slim, attractive American, about the same age and the same build as JANE WILKINSON though with different hair colouring.

CARLOTTA

(As an aristocrat) Pour me a gin and tonic, Godfrey. And make it a large once. I've been in America, you know and I haven't had a drink in thirteen years.

Laughter and applause from the AUDIENCE - centring on one lady in particular. We feel this must be the ARISTOCRAT she is impersonating.

CARLOTTA

(As a Russian professor) President Roosevelt is ending prohibition? I don't believe it! What's the man doing? He must be drunk!

More laughter. We see a RUSSIAN PROFESSOR in the audience. His friends clap him on the back. CARLOTTA has obviously captured him perfectly.

CARLOTTA

(As herself) Meanwhile, in Berlin, the new Chancellor is prohibiting everything. (As Hitler - in German) I say this to you today! (As Hitler - in English) I will prohibit the Jews. I will prohibit the artists. I will prohibit the writers. I will prohibit

the liberals. And if you don't agree with me, I'll prohibit you!

More thoughtful applause from the audience. POIROT and HASTINGS both join it.

At another table, JANE WILKINSON is watching the show next to BRYAN MARTIN. Also at the table, with "a round, pleasant, vacuous face" - RONALD MARSH. About the same age as JANE, RONALD is LORD EDGWARE'S nephew. He is an impoverished theatrical producer. And finally PENNY DRIVER is a smart, hard-edged young woman, a friend of CARLOTTA'S who owns a hat-shop.

CARLOTTA claps loudly once, simulating a gun-shot.

CARLOTTA

(As herself) Good grief! Someone has shot Herr Hitler. So who do we call in?

A pause. And then CARLOTTA begins her next impersonation.

CARLOTTA

(As Poirot) Ah - but regard! There is a dead body on the floor. I will now have to use my little grey cells.

Laughter from everyone. They immediately recognize POIROT - his voice, his mannerisms, captured perfectly.

CARLOTTA

(As Poirot) But why has Monsieur Hitler been assassinated? Was it perhaps his politics? No, no, I think it was instead because of his ridiculous moustache...!

CARLOTTA twirls her own (imagined) moustache. Huge laughter from the AUDIENCE.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

JANE turns and notices POIROT. He is clearly not amused. Next to him, HASTINGS is trying to keep a straight face.

CUT TO

12. INT. THE GAIETY - POIROT'S TABLE NIGHT.

Later. The house lights have come up and POIROT and HASTINGS are leaving.

HASTINGS

Thank you, Poirot. I must say, her impersonations were pretty spot-on.

POIROT

You thought so? For me they were something of the exaggeration.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

Suddenly JANE WILKINSON is there...looking nervous and vulnerable.

JANE

Mr Poirot...?

POIROT

Madame?

JANE

My name is Jane Wilkinson. And...
(Pause) I know this isn't the right place, but I noticed you were here and...I wonder... I very much need your help.

HASTINGS glances at POIROT. He can see that POIROT has been very quickly smitten by JANE. But before they can proceed, CARLOTTA ADAMS makes a sudden appearance, coming through the audience. Off the stage, CARLOTTA is rather brash...

CARLOTTA

Jane!

CARLOTTA notices POIROT.

CARLOTTA

Hey - and the real Hercule Poirot! I didn't know you two were friends.

JANE
(Embarrassed) Carlotta...

CARLOTTA
I'm really glad you came to the show,
Mr Poirot. It's just great for the
publicity. Why don't you come over
for a drink?

POIROT is not impressed by CARLOTTA. But JANE pleads at him with her eyes.

POIROT
I would be happy to join you,
madame.

CUT TO

13. INT. THE GAIETY - JANE'S TABLE NIGHT.

CARLOTTA introduces POIROT and HASTINGS to RONALD MARSH, PENNY DRIVER and BRYAN MARTIN. JANE retakes her seat.

CARLOTTA
Look who I just found. Mr Poirot,
this is my best friend in London,
Penny Driver...who makes the most
wonderful hats.

PENNY
How do you do, Mr Poirot.

CARLOTTA
You must know Bryan Martin. And
this is Ronald Marsh...

RONALD
I'm a theatrical producer, Mr Poirot.
I'm trying to sign on Carlotta. How
did you enjoy the show?

POIROT
It was most...educational.

HASTINGS
I thought it was splendid.

POIROT

This is my friend and colleague,
Captain Hastings, who has just re-
turned from the Argentine.

RONALD

Well, please, sit down. Join us!
(Calling) Waiter! More champagne.

POIROT and HASTINGS sit down. A WAITER serves more champagne.

BRYAN

So what were you doing, sneaking off
to see Mr Poirot, Jane?

CARLOTTA

No! Don't tell us! You were hiring
him to help you bump off that
ghastly husband of yours!

JANE

Don't be absurd, Carlotta...

CARLOTTA

Why not? Mr Poirot's solved enough
crimes. I guess committing one
would be a cinch!

POIROT

The "bumping off" of husbands, it is
not my speciality, madame.

RONALD

No. But she has got a point, you
know. Get rid of Lord Edgware and
you'd be doing us all a favour!

JANE

I almost think I could kill him some-
times. Why does he have to be so
horrible and unreasonable? (Pause)
But you shouldn't talk that way,
Carlotta. You're embarrassing Mr
Poirot.

CARLOTTA

Well, you know us Americans. We
speak as we think.

PENNY DRIVER lifts her glass of champagne, breaking the slightly frosty atmosphere.

PENNY

Here's to you, Carla, darling. As deadly accurate as always.

RONALD

(Raising his glass) The deadly Carlotta Adams.

Everyone toasts CARLOTTA.

CUT TO

14. INT. THE GAIETY - FOYER NIGHT.

POIROT and HASTINGS are leaving the theatre together.

HASTINGS

We never got much theatre in Argentina, you know. Horse shows and cattle shows. But no actual shows if you know what I mean...

A movement behind them. JANE WILKINSON has followed them out.

JANE

Mr Poirot...

A pause.

JANE

I'm sorry. I couldn't talk to you back there...but I really do need your help.

POIROT

It is a matter that concerns your husband?

JANE

He's not really my husband any more. We live quite separate lives. But the thing is, you see, he refuses to give me a divorce.

POIROT

It is perhaps that he still has feelings for you.

JANE

Oh no. I don't think George has feelings for anyone. He's a queer man. His first wife ran away from him, you know. She died in complete poverty. And now...he enjoys tormenting me Mr Poirot. He really does!

POIROT

What is it you wish me to do, madame?

JANE

Could you talk to him? I know it sounds strange but there's no-one else I can turn to. If you could just tell him that you'd met me and let him know what he's doing to me... maybe coming from you it might mean something.

POIROT

Your husband, Lord Edgware...

JANE

He has a house in Regent Gate. He travels a lot but he's in England at the moment and...

JANE looks back into the theatre.

JANE

I have to go back. Will you do it for me, Mr Poirot? It's killing me, this whole business. I don't think I can bear it much more.

POIROT bows his head.

POIROT

I will visit your husband, madame, and see what I can do.

JANE

Oh thank you, thank you! I was so glad, when I saw you tonight...

JANE takes POIROT'S arm and seems almost to want to kiss him. Then she lets him go and hurries back into the theatre.

HASTINGS

Are you really going to see him, Poirot? It doesn't seem your sort of thing...

POIROT

Ah, but I have given my word, *mon ami*. (Glancing back) What did you make of this Jane Wilkinson?

HASTINGS

Attractive girl.

POIROT

Indeed yes. But it is the psychology that is of interest to Poirot.

HASTINGS

(Sceptical) Oh - I'm sure.

POIROT

En tout cas, you will accompany me.

POIROT walks out of the theatre. HASTINGS goes with him.

HASTINGS

You want me to come along?

POIROT

If you have the time to give to me...

HASTINGS

Of course. Anyway, it'll keep my mind off my own troubles.

POIROT

Le formidable Hastings! As always I depend on you!

CUT TO

15. EXT. REGENT GATE DAY.

ESTABLISHING SHOT

A handsome but slightly gloomy house in a smart street in London.

ALTON

(Voice only)

Monsieur Poirot and Captain Hastings, my lord.

CUT TO

16. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S STUDY DAY.

ALTON is a butler with a physical resemblance to BRYAN MARTIN. He shows POIROT and HASTINGS into a formal, book-lined study where LORD EDGWARE is waiting for them. He is not in a good mood.

EDGWARE

I can't give you a lot of time, Mr Poirot. I'm leaving for Paris tomorrow morning. There's a painting I wish to acquire.

ALTON is still at the door.

EDGWARE

Has the bank sent round those francs yet, Alton?

ALTON

I don't believe so, my lord.

EDGWARE

Well ring them and tell them to get a move on.

ALTON

Very well, my lord.

ALTON leaves, closing the door. EDGWARE picks up a letter.

EDGWARE

Now, in this note you sent to me, you said you were acting for my wife.

POIROT

That is so.

EDGWARE

I thought you were something to do with crimes. What do you want with me?

POIROT

(Delicately) Lady Edgware has asked me to approach you on the subject of her divorce.

EDGWARE

Yes?

POIROT

Her suggestion was that you and I should discuss it.

EDGWARE

There's nothing to discuss.

POIROT

You refuse, then?

EDGWARE

What are you talking about? I agreed to the divorce a month ago! Why are you wasting my time?

POIROT

But...I do not understand!

EDGWARE

It's very simple. The last time I saw her - it was at the theatre - it's true, I objected to the divorce. But then, thinking it over I changed my mind.

HASTINGS

So why haven't you told her?

EDGWARE

I have told her. I wrote her a letter. I told her I'd decided she could start proceedings after all ...and as far as

I was concerned the sooner the better.

POIROT

This is very curious. This I do not understand at all.

EDGWARE

Is this about money? Because if it is, you can tell her from me. She's not getting any.

LORD EDGWARE gets to his feet.

EDGWARE

Now, if you don't mind...

POIROT and HASTINGS also rise.

POIROT

One question please, Lord Edgware. This letter that you wrote. To where was it sent?

EDGWARE

To the stage door of the Regency Theatre. At the time I had no other address.

POIROT

And you posted it yourself?

EDGWARE

I have a secretary to do that for me, Mr Poirot. I'm a busy man. Too busy in fact to offer you any more of my time...

POIROT and HASTING exchange a glance.

CUT TO

17. INT. JANE'S APARTMENT DAY.

JANE WILKINSON has just heard the news from POIROT and HASTINGS.

JANE

You mean, you've managed it? Just like that? Oh, dear Mr Poirot!

JANE seizes hold of POIROT - an embrace.

JANE

You're wonderful. You've saved my life!

POIROT

It is kind of you to say this, madame, but in this instance I have done nothing.

JANE

(Releasing him) What do you mean?

HASTINGS

Lord Edgware told us that he wrote to you, a month ago, at the Regency Theatre, agreeing to the divorce.

JANE

I never got any letter!

POIROT

Tell me, madame. Would there have been anyone else at the theatre with access to your post?

JANE

Letters for me would be held at the stage door. Bryan sometimes got them for me. But you're not saying someone stole it, are you?

POIROT

It is a possibility.

JANE

Well, what does it matter anyway? I was going completely mad and then I met you and somehow everything's come out all right. Ellis! (To POIROT) I was invited out tonight and I said no - but with what you've told me, I feel a need to celebrate!

POIROT

I am glad that it turns out as you wish.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

ELLIS, a maid, comes into the room. She is young, slightly severe, and wears pince-nez.

ELLIS

Yes, ma'am?

JANE

I'm going out this evening after all, Ellis. Can you call Lady Corner and let her know?

ELLIS

Yes, ma'am.

JANE

And lay out something bright. The Dior. You know. The pink crepe.

ELLIS leaves.

JANE

Mr Poirot - I don't suppose you'd care to come with me tonight?

POIROT is pleased...still very smitten.

POIROT

This evening, madame, is alas not possible.

JANE

Another time, perhaps.

POIROT

I am at your service.

CUT TO

18. EXT. OUTSIDE JANE'S APARTMENT DAY.

POIROT and HASTINGS leave the flat.

HASTINGS

I say, Poirot! You were coming on a bit strong back there.

POIROT

But there is a quality in this Lady Edgware that is most attractive, do you not think, Hastings?

HASTINGS

Yes. But after what happened to me, I'd have thought you'd have been warned off the opposite sex.

HASTINGS looks at his watch.

HASTINGS

I'd better be getting back to the hotel.

POIROT

Yes, Hastings. But the reason that I am occupied tonight, it is that I hope you will dine with me.

HASTINGS

That's very kind of you.

POIROT

I prepare *le grand diner!* Come at eight o'clock, *mon ami*. Do not be late!

HASTINGS watches POIROT walk off.

CUT TO

19. INT. REGENT GATE - HALL EVENING.

Seven o'clock. The hall is overlooked by a gallery on the first floor, reached by a wide staircase. GERALDINE, the daughter of LORD EDGWARE is smartly dressed, going out. The door of the study opens and her father comes out.

EDGWARE

Where are you going, dressed up like a dog's dinner?

GERALDINE

I'm going to the opera. Don Giovanni. With the Dortheimers.

EDGWARE

Ghastly. Nouveau riche.

GERALDINE

(Offended) Father...

EDGWARE

You could choose your friends with a little more discretion.

GERALDINE

At least I have friends.

He calls.

EDGWARE

Miss Carroll! (To GERALDINE) I'm working tonight and leaving early tomorrow. So try not to disturb me.

GERALDINE

(Defeated) Yes, father.

As GERALDINE leaves, a severe, spinsterish woman comes down the stairs. This is MISS CARROLL, LORD EDGWARE'S secretary and most devoted servant.

MISS CARROLL

You called, sir?

EDGWARE

Yes. I want to dictate a letter. Do you mind?

MISS CARROLL

Oh no, sir. It's a pleasure.

MISS CARROLL follows him into the study.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

They are watched by ALTON, the butler. There is something sinister about him. He is deep in thought.

CUT TO

20. INT. JANE WILKINSON'S APARTMENT EVENING.

JANE WILKINSON is wearing her pink Dior outfit. There is a small case nearby. She looks at herself in the full length mirror. ELLIS is with her.

JANE

I'm ready to leave. Can you do the curtains please, Ellis?

ELLIS

Yes, ma'am.

ELLIS goes over to the curtains to draw them. And stops.

CUT TO

21. EXT. OUTSIDE JANE'S APARTMENT EVENING.

ELLIS'S P.O.V.

Across the road, the apartment is being watched. BRYAN MARTIN is standing at a corner, smoking a cigarette. As he looks up, the curtains twitch shut.

CUT TO

22. INT. POIROT'S KITCHEN NIGHT.

POIROT is putting the last touches to a sauce for the evening's dinner. MISS LEMON, smartly dressed, is with him.

MISS LEMON

That smells good, Mr Poirot. What is it?

POIROT

Une tourte à la cote de boeuf et aux rognons.

MISS LEMON

(Unsure) Oh. Is that another recipe from your aunt in Belgium?

POIROT

No. This is my own invention, Miss Lemon. A dish that I discovered during my retirement. The pudding of steak with the kidneys. The table is laid?

MISS LEMON

Four places.

The doorbell rings.

MISS LEMON

And there's the first guest.

MISS LEMON hurries out of the kitchen. We follow her to...

CUT TO

23. INT. POIROT'S HALLWAY NIGHT.

MISS LEMON opens the front door to CHIEF INSPECTOR JAPP.

MISS LEMON

Chief Inspector!

JAPP

Very good to see you again, Miss Lemon.

MISS LEMON

Come in.

JAPP comes in. MISS LEMON closes the door.

JAPP

Something smells good. Poirot cooking?

MISS LEMON

Steak and kidney pudding.

JAPP

Then this is just what he'll need!

JAPP reaches into his two coat pockets and pulls a bottle of stout out of each. MISS LEMON isn't entirely sure...

CUT TO

24. INT. PICCADILLY PALACE HOTEL - RECEPTION EVENING.

HASTINGS, dressed for dinner with POIROT, comes down into the lobby.

PAGEBOY

You're taxi's here, Captain Hastings.

HASTINGS

Oh. Thank you.

As HASTINGS heads for the door, he bumps into an elderly woman coming in. We barely glimpse her. Grey hair, a fur coat...pince-nez.

HASTINGS

Oh. Excuse me.

HASTINGS leaves. The elderly woman goes over to the reception.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Room 174.

RECEPTIONIST

Certainly, Mrs Van Dusen...

CUT TO

25. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S STUDY NIGHT.

LORD EDGWARE hands MISS CARROLL a pile of letters. There is a large pile of French bank notes on his desk.

EDGWARE

Thank you, Miss Carroll.

MISS CARROLL

Can I get you a night-cap, sir?

EDGWARE

What?

MISS CARROLL

I was going to get myself a hot drink
and I wondered...?

EDGWARE

What are you talking about, wo-
man? Are you suggesting I'd want to
have a drink with you?

MISS CARROLL

(Blushing) Sir, I...?

EDGWARE

You're getting airs above your sta-
tion, Miss Carroll. Maybe it's time
you started looking for another job.
Now get out.

MISS CARROLL is mortified, close to anger. But, biting her tongue, she meekly
leaves.

CUT TO

26. INT. LADY CORNER'S DINING ROOM NIGHT.

A large, elegant dining room in a house in Holborn. THOMPSON (the butler)
has just put the finishing touches to the table. SIR MONTAGU CORNER - a
rich socialite in black tie - looks on approvingly.

SIR MONTAGU

Thank you, Thompson. That's
excellent.

But then LADY CORNER bustles in. She glances at the table.

LADY CORNER

(Distressed) Monty...?

SIR MONTAGU

Yes, dear?

LADY CORNER

The table! It's set for thirteen!

SIR MONTAGU

Is it? (He counts) Oh yes. Well that's Lady Edgware, isn't it.

LADY CORNER

Is it?

SIR MONTAGU

Well yes. She cancelled, so I invited young Ross to join us. He accepted. But now she says she's coming. So that makes thirteen.

LADY CORNER

But it's bad luck, isn't it?

SIR MONTAGU

I'd say it's rather good luck. I've been wanting to meet her. She's very glamorous.

The doorbell rings.

SIR MONTAGU

The first guests.

SIR MONTAGU leaves the room. LADY CORNER stays behind. She looks at the table - worried.

CUT TO

27. INT. THE HAT SHOP NIGHT.

9.15pm. The hat-shop owned by PENNY DRIVER. Small and expensive. PENNY DRIVER is on her own. She has been working late. She takes down a hat from a stand. The hat is black, with a wide brim. We will see something like it very soon.

PENNY removes an enormous pin from the side of the hat. She holds it, deep in thought. There's a knock at the door. She looks up. BRYAN MARTIN is there. She goes to the door, opens it.

PENNY

Bryan...?

BRYAN

I had to see you.

CUT TO

28. EXT. MOFFAT STREET NIGHT.

Through the window of the hat shop we see BRYAN MARTIN and PENNY DRIVER having a quiet, tense conversation. We do not hear what they're saying.

CUT TO

29. INT. POIROT'S DINING ROOM NIGHT.

Nine twenty. POIROT, MISS LEMON, HASTINGS and CHIEF INSPECTOR JAPP (with his bottles of stout) sit at the table. The pie has been served.

HASTINGS

I'm not against marriage. Not really. Although I have to say, it does change everything and not always for the better.

JAPP

For better or for worse. That's what they say.

MISS LEMON

But you're happily married, Chief Inspector.

JAPP

I don't know about that, Miss Lemon. Now, my Emily...she just doesn't understand my work. She never lets me talk about murder at the dinner table. And her tidying! It's getting worse you know. Really, I sometimes wonder how I've managed to live with her these twenty-seven and a half years.

MISS LEMON

It's a shame you've never considered marriage, Mr Poirot.

POIROT

Ah but there were occasions, Miss Lemon, when I did have perhaps *la tentation*. The temptation. But now it is, I think, too late.

HASTINGS

Oh - I wouldn't say that, Poirot. If the right woman came along. Jane Wilkinson, for example...

POIROT

Comment?

HASTINGS

Well, I could see you took a fancy to her.

POIROT

(Changing the subject) Will you have some wine, Chief Inspector? A fine Beaujolais.

JAPP

It's all right, Poirot. I'll stick with my stout...

CUT TO

30. INT. THE CORNER'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM NIGHT.

9.30pm. A dinner party with thirteen at the table. The table is long, formally laid with crystal and silver. The room is lit only by candles...flickering light and shadow.

Prominent amongst the guests is DONALD ROSS, young, articulate, attractive. He's a writer, from Scotland, passionate about his work. He is sitting opposite JANE WILKINSON who is wearing a dress of pink crepe.

ROSS

I've been working on a play about the great war at Troy. Right from the start all the way to the Trojan horse and beyond. It will be like Sophocles, an epic, but for a modern, thirties audience.

A butler - THOMPSON - has been approaching the table throughout this, he now leans forward and speaks to JANE who has her back to us.

THOMPSON

Lady Edgware? You have a telephone call, ma'am.

JANE (?)

For me? (To ROSS) Excuse me...

She gets up.

CUT TO

31. INT. THE CORNERS' HOUSE - HALL NIGHT.

A clock in the hall shows the time: 9.31pm. JANE WILKINSON takes the call.

JANE (?)

Hello? Who is this?

THOMPSON walks past. He sees JANE WILKINSON on the phone, then disappears through a door...

CUT TO

32. INT. OPERA HOUSE - CRUSH BAR NIGHT.

A poster advertises DON GIOVANNI. It is the second interval and the CROWD is milling out of the doors...heading for the bar. RONALD MARSH is among them. He is looking for someone. He sees them...

It is GERALDINE MARSH. She is on her own. He goes over to her.

RONALD

The Dorthheimers?

GERALDINE

They're inside.

RONALD

Then let's go...

The two of them slip away guiltily together.

CUT TO

33. EXT. REGENT GATE NIGHT.

HIGH ANGLE

A WOMAN steps out of a telephone box and walks across the road. The WOMAN'S head is hidden by a black, wide-brimmed hat. But it looks like JANE WILKINSON.

The telephone box was opposite LORD EDGWARE'S house. JANE (?) rings the bell. It is opened by ALTON, the butler.

JANE (?)
You're Alton, aren't you? Is my
husband in?

ALTON
Yes, ma'am.

JANE (?)
Thank you.

CUT TO

34. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S HOUSE - HALL NIGHT.

9.35 pm. Seen from MISS CARROLL'S point-of-view. She had been going up the stairs with a glass of hot milk. She pauses on a gallery and looks back down. The WOMAN who has just come in is still masked by her hat.

JANE (?)
It's all right, Alton. I know the way.

ALTON
Yes, ma'am.

ALTON leaves. The WOMAN is on her own. MISS CARROLL continues up the stairs.

CUT TO

35. INT. POIROT'S DINING ROOM NIGHT.

POIROT, MISS LEMON, HASTINGS and JAPP have finished the steak and kidney.

JAPP

So how's the house hunting going,
Captain Hastings?

HASTINGS

I haven't had a chance to start yet.
I've looked at some of the prices
though. They've certainly shot up
since I left.

JAPP

Have you thought about Isleworth?
You can get a nice two-up, two-down
and a vegetable garden for the same
price as a flat round here.

HASTINGS

(Polite) I'll certainly think about it.

POIROT unveils an immaculate cheese board.

POIROT

Some cheese, Chief Inspector? We
have the *camembert*, *roblochon*,
Époisse...and here *un petit crottin*.

A brief pause as JAPP surveys the cheeses.

JAPP

You don't have any cheddar?

CUT TO

36. EXT. REGENT GATE NIGHT.

9.50pm. A taxi pulls into the street. GERALDINE MARSH and RONALD MARSH are inside it.

RONALD

I'll come in with you.

GERALDINE

No. I'll be all right.

RONALD

Wait!

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

The door opens and a shadowy figure slips out into the street and hurries away. It looks very much like BRYAN MARTIN.

RONALD

That was Bryan! What's he doing here?

GERALDINE

I'll be two minutes...

GERALDINE slips across the road and over to the house. RONALD waits.

CUT TO

37. INT. LADY CORNER'S DINING ROOM NIGHT.

JANE WILKINSON returns to her seat.

ROSS

You were gone a long time.

JANE (?)

Yes. I'm sorry.

ROSS

Not bad news, I hope.

JANE (?)

No. It was nothing.

CUT TO

38. INT. POIROT'S DINING ROOM NIGHT.

The dinner party comes to an end. JAPP is the first to leave.

JAPP

Well, thank you very much, Poirot. Nice bit of steak and kidney, I must say.

POIROT

Thank you, Chief Inspector.

JAPP

It's funny, you know. Here we are,
the four of us together again. But of
course, there's one thing missing.

MISS LEMON

What's that?

JAPP

The body! That's we normally meet.
But never mind, Poirot. As soon as
word gets round that you're back, I'm
sure one will turn up.

POIROT

Let us hope not, Chief Inspector.

FADE TO

39. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S HOUSE NIGHT.

The CAMERA slowly tracks along the silent corridor and into LORD EDGWARE'S study (somehow passing through the closed door).

LORD EDGWARE is lying dead on the carpet. He has been stabbed in the neck with a thin, stiletto-type knife. The French francs which were there are gone.

CUT TO

40. EXT. REGENT GATE DAY.

ESTABLISHING SHOT

The following day. There are POLICEMEN guarding the house as POIROT and HASTINGS arrive.

CUT TO

41. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S STUDY DAY.

JAPP is examining the body. Various other POLICEMEN are in the room. He looks up as POIROT and HASTINGS come in. We might notice that the French francs have gone.

JAPP

'morning, Poirot. So you got my message, then.

POIROT

Yes. And we came immediately.

JAPP

Looks like we spoke too soon last night! Stabbed in the back of the neck, some time around ten.

POIROT searches on the desk top.

POIROT

And the French francs, Chief Inspector?

JAPP

What francs?

POIROT

When we were here yesterday, Lord Edgware had commanded a sum of money from the bank.

HASTINGS

That's right. He was about to leave for Paris.

JAPP

Well, we haven't found any money. But I'd be interested to know what the two of you were doing here. Had he asked for your help?

POIROT

No, Chief Inspector. It was Lady Edgware who asked us to intercede on her behalf.

HASTINGS

She wanted her husband to give her a divorce.

JAPP

So that's the motive then, is it?

POIROT

The motive, Chief Inspector?

JAPP

Well, I already know it was her. I just wanted to find out why.

POIROT and HASTINGS exchange a look.

CUT TO

42. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM DAY.

JAPP, POIROT and HASTINGS confront a tearful MISS CARROLL and a slightly nervous, yet resolute ALTON.

JAPP

Now, Alton, I want you to tell my friends here exactly what you told me.

ALTON

Yes, sir. I answered the door just after half past nine. I'd heard the clock sound the half hour...that's how I'm sure of the time.

JAPP

Go on.

ALTON

It was Lady Edgware. She said she wanted to see her husband and that she could find her own way.

POIROT

You saw her go into the study?

ALTON

No, sir. But as I left, she was approaching the door.

HASTINGS

Was it you who found the body?

ALTON

Yes, sir. This morning at eight. I went into the study to open the curtains. That was when I called the police.

POIROT

Can you tell me, Monsieur Alton, what became of the French francs that your master demanded yesterday.

ALTON

(Nervous) The francs, sir? They came in the afternoon. I imagine he would have placed them in the safe.

MISS CARROLL

Lord Edgware's solicitor will have the combination.

POIROT

(To Alton) You have worked here for how long?

ALTON

About six weeks, sir.

POIROT

And you have met Lady Edgware how many times?

ALTON

Only once, sir. But I would have sworn it was her.

MISS CARROLL

It was her. I'd know her anywhere and I saw her quite clearly. (Pause) I'd taken some dictation for Lord Edgware and I was just on my way to bed. I have a room at the top of the house.

POIROT

And you were standing where, when Lady Edgware came in?

MISS CARROLL

On the landing.

POIROT

Will you be kind enough, please, to show me?

CUT TO

43. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S HOUSE - LANDING DAY.

MISS CARROLL stands on the landing with POIROT, HASTINGS and JAPP.

MISS CARROLL

I heard her speak with Alton. Then she crossed the hall and went in through there...

POIROT is already checking angles.

POIROT

Can you describe for me, mademoiselle, what she was wearing?

MISS CARROLL

She was dressed in black. A long, black coat and a hat.

POIROT

A hat?

MISS CARROLL

That was also black. Very modern. With a wide brim.

POIROT

I see. And after she went into the study?

MISS CARROLL

I'm sorry?

POIROT

There was no cry? You heard nothing?

MISS CARROLL

No. I told you. I went to bed.

JAPP

Who else was in the house that night, Miss Carroll? Apart from you and Alton.

MISS CARROLL

Only Geraldine. Lord Edgware's daughter. She's in her room now...

CUT TO

44. INT. GERALDINE'S ROOM DAY.

POIROT, JAPP and HASTINGS confront GERALDINE who sits languidly, smoking a cigarette.

GERALDINE

I didn't love my father. I suppose I could lie to you, but why should I? I hated him and if someone's gone and killed him, I'm glad. There you are!

JAPP

I wonder if you could tell us your movements last night, Miss Marsh?

GERALDINE

If you insist. I went to the opera. Don Giovanni at Covent Garden. I left at around seven and I wasn't back until well after midnight. When I got home I went straight to bed. Satisfied?

POIROT

You did not enter your father's study?

GERALDINE

No. There was a light on under the door but I didn't want to see him. I never wanted to see him.

JAPP

I don't suppose there's anyone who can corroborate your story? About last night...?

GERALDINE

You could talk to my cousin if you like. Ronald Marsh. He was at the opera. In fact, we had a drink together in the interval. But why are you wasting your time talking to me? Why aren't you talking to Jane?

POIROT

You mean Lady Edgware?

GERALDINE

Well, she was here, wasn't she? Miss Carroll saw her. And Alton. And if anyone had the guts to kill my father it was her. It seems to me, you've got an open and shut case!

CUT TO

45. INT. JANE WILKINSON'S FLAT DAY.

POIROT, JAPP and HASTINGS confront JANE WILKINSON. She has just heard the news.

JANE

Killed!

POIROT

Yes, madame.

JANE

(Recovering) Well...I suppose...I can't say I'm surprised. He wasn't a kind man or a good one. But it's still horrible. Nobody deserves to die like that.

Then JANE realizes.

JANE

But why are you here? Mr Poirot, you can't think...

JAPP

Can you tell us your movements last night, Lady Edgware?

JANE

(To POIROT) I told you. I changed my mind. I was going to stay in but in the end I went to that dinner in Holborn.

POIROT

To the house of Sir Montagu Corner.

JANE

Yes. There were at least a dozen people there. You can ask him. And there was a young writer...Donald Ross. He's writing a play about Troy. He was sitting opposite me.

POIROT

Madame, please, may I ask you to relate to the Chief Inspector your movements for the entire evening.

JANE

Certainly. I left here at about seven and I went first to the Piccadilly Palace Hotel.

HASTINGS

That's where I'm staying!

JANE

I had a meeting with an American lady. A Mrs Van Dusen. She's written a play - not a very good one - and we talked about it for about twenty minutes. At seven thirty I left and took a cab to Holborn.

POIROT

To the home of Sir Montagu.

JANE

Yes. I was there until after mid-night and then I came straight home.

JAPP

Did you leave the table at any time, Lady Edgware?

JANE

Yes. Once. I got a telephone call at about half past nine.

JAPP

And who was it?

JANE

That was the funny thing. A voice said, "Is that Lady Edgware?" and when I said it was, they laughed and rang off. I thought it must be some sort of hoax.

POIROT

This voice. It was a man or a woman.

JANE

A woman, I think.

JAPP

And apart from that one time, you never left the room?

JANE

That's right. (Pause) Chief Inspector - I was the last person to want my husband dead. Not after what Mr Poirot had told me. He was nothing to me any more. Nothing!

CUT TO

46. INT. JANE WILKINSON'S BLOCK OF FLATS DAY.

JAPP, POIROT and HASTINGS take the lift down.

POIROT

You see, Chief Inspector. Now it begins all to make sense.

JAPP

Not to me, it doesn't.

POIROT

But yes. Last night, Lady Edgware announces that she will not be

attending a dinner in Holborn. She will instead be on her own, at her apartment.

HASTINGS

In other words, she'll have no alibi.

POIROT

C'est ça! But it is only at the last minute that she changes her mind and so she disrupts the plans of the true killer.

JAPP

You mean...someone dressed up as her and went round to Regent Gate?

POIROT

It was, I believe, a deliberate attempt to incriminate her, yes.

HASTINGS

So it's lucky she went to that dinner after all.

The lift arrives. The doors open.

JAPP

Yes. But let's just be sure that she really did.

CUT TO

47. INT. SIR MONTAGU CORNER'S LIVING ROOM DAY.

POIROT, HASTINGS and JAPP confront SIR MONTAGU CORNER and his social-climbing wife, LADY CORNER. DONALD ROSS, the writer, is also there.

SIR MONTAGU

Oh yes, she was certainly here at my little soirée.

LADY CORNER

She was quite the life and soul of the evening, Monsieur Poirot.

SIR MONTAGU

She'd had good news. Something to do with her divorce.

ROSS

I think it was the fact that her husband had agreed to give her one.

POIROT

You were also here that evening, Monsieur...

ROSS

Ross. Donald Ross. I was sitting opposite her.

SIR MONTAGU

Lady Montagu and I are sponsoring Mr Ross while he writes his play.

LADY CORNER

A history of Troy. It's going to be quite an epic!

JAPP

Did she talk much about herself, Mr Ross?

ROSS

No. To be honest, I was the one who did most of the talking.

SIR MONTAGU

The word is that she's about to announce her engagement.

POIROT

Comment?

This is news to POIROT.

SIR MONTAGU

Yes. The Duke of Merton no less.

LADY CORNER

He's one of the richest men in England. He has properties all over

London. We'd love to have him for dinner here.

POIROT

They have known each other for some time, Lady Edgware and the Duke?

SIR MONTAGU

No. I believe they met very recently.

LADY CORNER

It must have been love at first sight.

While POIROT takes this in, JAPP takes over.

JAPP

Is it true that Lady Edgware took a telephone call while she was here?

SIR MONTAGU

Yes. It must have been...what? About half past nine.

ROSS

But she was only out of the room for a couple of minutes. I'm sure it wasn't any longer than that.

LADY CORNER

(Realising) She was the first to leave the table!

JAPP

I'm sorry, Lady Corner?

LADY CORNER

I mentioned it to my husband just before the guests arrived. There were thirteen of us to dinner that night and you know the old superstition.

HASTINGS

Yes. The first person to leave the table is supposed to...

SIR MONTAGU

(Sharp) Nobody believes that.

LADY CORNER

We had thirteen for dinner and she was the first to get up. It means she's going to die!

CUT TO

48. EXT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

WORKMEN are putting up a fresh sign on the theatre.

OPENING SOON. JANE WILKINSON AND BRYAN MARTIN IN "CRAZY MUSIC" - A NEW COMEDY. PRODUCED BY RONALD MARSH.

GERALDINE MARSH arrives at the theatre and goes in.

CUT TO

49. INT. RONALD'S OFFICE DAY.

RONALD MARSH is on the telephone in his cramped, dingy office. Posters on the wall. All very theatrical!

RONALD

(On telephone) Yes. I've got the money. Five hundred pounds.
(Pause) It's here, waiting for you. If you don't believe me, you only have to come round!

RONALD hangs up as an excited GERALDINE comes in.

GERALDINE

Ronald...

RONALD

Gerri, my dear!

They kiss.

GERALDINE

So how does it feel?

RONALD

What?

GERALDINE

To be the new Lord Edgware?

RONALD

No more creditors, for a start. It's splendid. Have you spoken to the police yet?

GERALDINE

Yes. They were at the house this morning. A Chief Inspector and this weird little French detective.

RONALD

Oh! That would have been Hercule Poirot. So he's on the case!

A brief pause. RONALD considers. Then, conspiratorially...

RONALD

Did you tell them where you were, last night?

GERALDINE

Yes. I said I was at the opera.

RONALD

That's right.

GERALDINE

Anyway, they weren't interested in me. It's Jane they want to see.

RONALD

Poor Jane. She's starring in my new play, you know. Or she was. Of course, if they arrest her...

GERALDINE

You can always recast.

CUT TO

50. EXT. POIROT'S APARTMENT DAY.

ESTABLISHING SHOT

MISS LEMON

(Voice over)

Here's one, Captain Hastings. On the
Old Brompton Road.

CUT TO

51. INT. POIROT'S OFFICE DAY.

MISS LEMON is looking through some estate agents' details with CAPTAIN HASTINGS and a mildly concerned POIROT.

HASTINGS

It's rather small.

MISS LEMON

Well what about the one in Cadogan
Place?

HASTINGS

I do appreciate your helping, Miss
Lemon. But I'm not sure I could live
in a basement flat...

A sigh from MISS LEMON. Then the doorbell rings.

MISS LEMON

I wonder who that can be?

MISS LEMON goes to answer the door.

POIROT

It is perhaps Lady Edgware.

HASTINGS

You think so?

POIROT

With the Chief Inspector, as you say,
breathing down the neck, she will
most assuredly be in need of my
assistance.

HASTINGS

You sound almost hopeful, Poirot.

But then MISS LEMON returns. With her is the actor, BRYAN MARTIN.

MISS LEMON

Mr Poirot...?

POIROT

Monsieur Martin!

BRYAN

I hope you don't mind my coming to see you, Mr Poirot. But I was wondering...I have something I was hoping you'd take on for me.

POIROT

Please, Monsieur...

POIROT waves BRYAN MARTIN to a chair. MISS LEMON leaves.

BRYAN

The thing is, you see, I have a friend - a lady friend. And she's being followed. She's sure of it.

POIROT

This friend of yours...

BRYAN

I can't tell you her name. Not yet. But I was with her the other day and I actually saw the chap. An ugly looking fellow. Clean-shaven. Glasses. And a gold tooth.

POIROT

You spoke to him?

BRYAN

No. He was there one minute. Gone the next. But since then I've seen him twice more.

HASTINGS

Good lord!

POIROT

And he is easy, of course, to detect. On account of the gold tooth.

BRYAN

Exactly. I know the whole thing sounds absurd, and I wish I could tell you more, but if the lady were to agree, could you look into it?

POIROT

Indeed, monsieur. I find the whole story most interesting.

BRYAN

Well - that's a relief.

BRYAN stands up.

BRYAN

I was very glad to run into you the other night, Mr Poirot. You remember. With Jane Wilkinson.

POIROT

Indeed...

BRYAN

I was thinking about her, you know. And about her husband. It was such an extraordinary thing for her to say. That she'd thought of killing him.

HASTINGS

Do you think she had it in her to commit murder?

BRYAN

I'm sure of it. I know her, you see. She's all very sweet on the surface. But she'd kill as easily as she'd drink her morning tea. Believe me!

POIROT

Perhaps you are unaware, Monsieur Martin, that the husband of Lady Edgware was indeed murdered last night.

BRYAN

(Shocked) What? Murdered? You're not being serious.

POIROT

It is not a subject about which I have the habit to joke.

BRYAN

But that's... My God! What I was saying just now. I didn't mean...

POIROT

It means therefore that this matter of yours, the man with the gold tooth...

BRYAN

Of course, yes. It'll have to wait.

POIROT

But you will speak nonetheless with your lady friend and if she wishes me to investigate on her behalf...

BRYAN

Thank you, Mr Poirot. I'm very grateful to you for your time.

BRYAN MARTIN leaves. POIROT and HASTINGS are left alone.

POIROT

And what, *mon ami*, do you make of that?

HASTINGS

It seems strange that he comes to you for help but tells you so very little.

POIROT

(A smile) The same thought had occurred also to me.

MISS LEMON comes into the room.

MISS LEMON

I didn't know you knew Bryan Martin, Mr Poirot. He's a wonderful actor.

HASTINGS

We met him at that cabaret at the Gaiety. Carlotta Adams...

MISS LEMON

The impressionist!

And suddenly POIROT is on his feet, shock in his eyes.

POIROT

Mon dieu! Mon dieu! But how could I have been so blind?

MISS LEMON

Mr Poirot?

POIROT

Telephone to the Gaiety Theatre at once, Miss Lemon. Ask them for the address of Miss Carlotta Adams. *Tout de suite!* Every minute is of value!

MISS LEMON hurries over to the telephone.

HASTINGS

What's the matter, Poirot? I don't understand...

POIROT

Do you not see, Hastings? Ah! But I have been slow. Imbecile! I only hope we may still be in time!

CUT TO

52. EXT. CARLOTTA ADAMS'S FLAT DAY.

A cab with POIROT and HASTINGS screeches round the corner and comes to a fast stop outside the mansion block where CARLOTTA has rented a flat.

CUT TO

53. INT. CARLOTTA'S FLAT - HALLWAY & STAIRS DAY.

POIROT and HASTINGS stride to the door of Carlotta's apartment and ring the bell. A pause. Then the door opens and a middle-aged woman, ALICE BENNETT comes out.

ALICE

Yes?

POIROT

You are the maid of Miss Carlotta Adams?

ALICE

Yes.

POIROT

We must speak most urgently with your mistress.

ALICE

She's still in bed. She always gets up late when there's a performance.

POIROT

You have spoken with her today?

ALICE

No. She's asleep...

POIROT

Quickly! We must see her...

CUT TO

54. INT. CARLOTTA'S LIVING ROOM DAY.

ALICE is knocking on a door in the smart but somewhat characterless room.

ALICE

Miss Adams? Miss Adams?

ALICE tries the door.

ALICE

It's locked.

POIROT

Hastings.

HASTINGS steps forward - then breaks down the door. ALICE stares.

POIROT

(To ALICE) You must call at once for
the police.

POIROT and HASTINGS go past a shocked ALICE into the room.

CUT TO

55. INT. CARLOTTA'S BEDROOM DAY.

CARLOTTA is in bed, seemingly asleep. POIROT and HASTINGS hesitate at the door.

POIROT

Mademoiselle...?

Then HASTINGS goes over and takes her hand.

HASTINGS

We're too late.

CUT TO

56. EXT. CARLOTTA'S FLAT DAY.

A short while later. The POLICE have arrived and with them CHIEF INSPECTOR JAPP. POIROT and HASTINGS watch as the body of CARLOTTA is carried out.

JAPP

I'd say it's an overdose, Poirot.
Veronal or something of the sort.

POIROT

The sleeping draught.

JAPP

Of course, it could have been
accidental.

HASTINGS

You mean, a coincidence.

POIROT

I think not.

JAPP

What are you saying then? That it was Carlotta Adams who went round to Regent House disguised as Lady Edgware...

POIROT

...and who then had to be silenced herself to ensure that the identity of whoever employed her remained secret. Yes.

JAPP

So the idea was to frame Lady Edgware from the very start.

POIROT

Yes, Chief Inspector. To ensure that she was hanged for a murder she did not commit.

JAPP

I just don't see it.

POIROT

Then let me show you.

CUT TO

57. INT. CARLOTTA'S BEDROOM DAY.

POIROT shows JAPP and HASTINGS a wig on a stand.

POIROT

You see the wig, Chief Inspector.

HASTINGS

It's the same colour and the same style as...

POIROT

...Lady Edgware. Yes.

POIROT opens a case and takes out make-up and shoes.

POIROT

The shoes, designed to increase the height. Make-up of the theatrical variety.

POIROT takes out a pair of pince-nez. Thick lenses and heavy gold frames.

POIROT

And these...

HASTINGS

Glasses.

POIROT

Pince-nez, Hastings.

POIROT holds them to his eyes.

POIROT

Powerful also. And yet these were not part of the disguise.

JAPP

If it really was a disguise. She was a performer, Poirot. All this could be part of her act.

JAPP notices a small golden box beside the bed.

JAPP

What's this?

JAPP takes the box and tastes the powder.

JAPP

Veronal. Just like I thought.

He passes the box to HASTINGS. HASTINGS reads an inscription.

HASTINGS

(Reading) "C.A. from P. November 10th. Sweet Dreams."

JAPP

November? That's nine months ago.
Well, there you are then. It proves
she was taking the stuff after all.

POIROT is unsure. He takes the box.

POIROT

Perhaps. And yet...

JAPP

Let's talk to the maid.

CUT TO

58. INT. CARLOTTA'S LIVING ROOM DAY.

A tearful ALICE is interviewed by POIROT, JAPP and HASTINGS.

POIROT

Can you describe to me, please, Miss
Alice, the movements of Carlotta
Adams yesterday evening?

ALICE

Well. She got in about six o'clock. I
don't know where she'd been...

JAPP

Go on.

ALICE

She spent the next hour writing a
letter. Then she got changed and left
here at about a quarter to seven.

POIROT

Do you know her destination?

ALICE

She didn't say.

JAPP

It wasn't to the theatre?

ALICE

No, sir. There was no performance
last night.

POIROT

How was she dressed?

ALICE

She was in black, sir. With a new hat.

POIROT

With the wide brim.

ALICE

Yes. She only bought it last week. From her friend, Miss Driver.

HASTINGS

Miss Penny Driver! She was at the theatre!

ALICE

She got back around midnight. She said she was very tired...

POIROT

She was not upset? Or distressed?

ALICE

No. She seemed more...pleased about something. Anyway, then she went straight to bed.

JAPP

Do you know if Miss Adams was in the habit of taking drugs to help her sleep?

ALICE

I can't really say, sir. I didn't know her too well. She'd only been here a few months.

POIROT

Mademoiselle Alice, the letter of which you spoke...

ALICE

It was to her sister, sir. Lucie Adams. She's over on a visit. Miss Carlotta took it with her when she left. She

was meaning to post it, I suppose, but then she forgot. She was always doing that.

POIROT

So where is the letter now?

ALICE

It's gone, I'm afraid, sir. I posted it myself this morning.

JAPP

You didn't see the address?

ALICE

It was somewhere in Bath, I think. I didn't really look.

JAPP

And you posted it this morning!

POIROT

Then once again we are too late.

CUT TO

59. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM DAY.

MISS CARROLL comes into the living room (where she was interviewed by POIROT). She is horrified to see ALTON with his feet up, reading a paper.

MISS CARROLL

Alton! What do you think you're doing?

ALTON

What does it look like?

He folds up the paper.

ALTON

Come on, Joyce. Why don't you come off your high horse just for once. The master's dead! And you and me - we'll soon be for the hook.

MISS CARROLL

Everything will continue as before.
Mr Ronald will move in. He's the
new Lord Edgware now.

ALTON

And will you fancy him as much as
you did the old one? (A sly smile) You
think I didn't know what was going
on?

MISS CARROLL

I will not listen to this!

ALTON

So have they arrested her yet? Lady
Edgware?

MISS CARROLL

The police apparently don't believe it
was her.

ALTON

What?

MISS CARROLL

They believe there may have been a
quite different motive for the
murder.

And now ALTON is scared. He bundles up the newspaper and leaves.

ALTON

Oh hell...!

MISS CARROLL

Alton? (Pause) Alton!

But MISS CARROLL has been left on her own.

CUT TO

60. EXT. POIROT'S APARTMENT DAY.

ESTABLISHING SHOT

MISS LEMON

(Voice only)

I'm sorry, Chief Inspector. Mr Poirot isn't here.

CUT TO

61. INT. POIROT'S STUDY DAY.

JAPP has come to see POIROT but has found instead HASTINGS and MISS LEMON.

JAPP

Don't tell me he's still got this bee in his bonnet about Lady Edgware. That someone deliberately set out to frame her for her husband's death.

HASTINGS

(Loyal) Well, it is still a possibility....

JAPP

I don't know how, but it seems to me that she's got him round her little finger. Maybe that's the sort of woman she is...

HASTINGS

I wouldn't have said that. I've never thought of women as the manipulative sex. It's certainly not my experience.

MISS LEMON

Anyway, Chief Inspector, aren't you forgetting something? Lady Edgware was at dinner when the murder was being committed.

JAPP

At Holborn, yes. But that's what I wanted to tell Poirot. You can drive from Holborn to Regent's Gate in five minutes. I've just done it myself. So if she'd had a cab waiting outside...

HASTINGS

But Donald Ross said she was only away from the table for a few minutes in total.

JAPP

He said she was away for quite a while. He could have lost track of the time.

MISS LEMON

Do you really have no other suspects, Chief Inspector?

JAPP

Oh. I've got plenty of suspects, Miss Lemon.

JAPP produces his notebook.

JAPP

There's Ronald Marsh, Lord Edgware's nephew. He's a theatrical producer and heavily in debt. He needed the money...not to mention the title.

HASTINGS

Well there you are. Money's the oldest motive in the book.

JAPP

And then there's Geraldine Marsh, the daughter. Her mother died after Lord Edgware abandoned her...so I doubt that she was very fond of her father either.

MISS LEMON

So it could have been either of them.

JAPP

It could have been. But I've got a feeling about this one. Jane Wilkinson killed her husband and I don't care how complicated Poirot wants to make it seem. You wait and see. This time I've got it right!

CUT TO

62. EXT. PARK DAY.

A beautiful sunny day. POIROT and JANE WILKINSON are walking together in the park.

JANE

Do you really think that somebody paid Carlotta to imitate me? To go to the house, dressed like me...?

POIROT

It is how it would seem.

JANE

But she didn't kill my husband...

POIROT

No, no. It was enough that she was seen there. Someone believed that you had the motive to be rid of Lord Edgware. They also believed that you would be at home on your own.

JANE

With no alibi. They wanted to see me hanged! (She shivers) I'm cold.

POIROT puts his scarf over her.

POIROT

It is why I must ask you, *madame*. Who is it, do you think, who would wish you ill?

JANE

You're asking who would want to see me dead! It's horrible to think that there could be anyone.

POIROT looks sympathetic.

JANE

Do I really have to name names, Mr Poirot?

POIROT

If I am to protect you...

JANE

Well, I suppose Geraldine has never liked me. After all, her father left her mother to marry me...and you know, her mother later died. It hasn't been easy for her.

POIROT

And what of Monsieur Bryan Martin?

JANE

Why do you mention him? (Pause)
We were lovers, Mr Poirot. For a short while...after I knew my marriage had fallen apart. I was so unhappy. And I turned to him.

POIROT

But then you met someone else.

JANE

It's always been my trouble. I fall in love too easily. First George - and that was a horrible mistake. Then Bryan. And now Percy.

POIROT

The Duke of Merton.

JANE

But this time I know I've got it right. He's so sweet and kind and he needs someone to look after him. We plan to get married, you know. At Westminster.

POIROT

Ah! The grand wedding!

JANE

I'm just scared all this business will frighten him off. He so hates scandal. Will you go and see him, Mr Poirot?

Will you tell him that it's all going to be all right?

POIROT

Once again you make of Poirot the ambassador...

JANE

I knew I could trust you the moment I met you. You really are my guardian angel and although I should be afraid, I'm not. Not while you're here.

POIROT

Worry not, madame. All will be arranged. You have my word.

The two stand close together...almost like lovers in the park.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

They are being spied on by BRYAN MARTIN. He is vengeful, angry...

CUT TO

63. EXT. LORD MERTON'S HOUSE DAY.

POIROT, alone, approaches a beautiful, modern 1930s house. The owner is clearly very rich...and very stylish.

CUT TO

64. INT. LORD MERTON'S STUDY DAY.

We last glimpsed the DUKE OF MERTON at the theatre (Scene 1). He inherited a fortune and has extended his wealth through hotels and property. He approaches POIROT enthusiastically - the sort of man who strides rather than walks - and shakes his hand warmly.

MERTON

Mr Poirot. It's a pleasure to meet you. Have you been offered coffee or tea?

POIROT

No, thank you.

MERTON

Please - sit down. I know why you're here, of course. This business of Lord Edgware. It really is the most terrible thing...that Jane should be involved! You know, I'm relying on you...we're both relying on you to sort it out. And if there's anything I can do to help...

POIROT

You could perhaps tell me, Monsieur, how it was that you and Jane Wilkinson met.

MERTON

It was at the theatre. I saw her in Macbeth. It was a wonderful performance! Her husband was there that night, by the way. He was a brute of a man. Despicable.

POIROT

Did you meet Lord Edgware?

MERTON

No. I never did. But judging from his behaviour even on that occasion, I can't help but think he deserved what he got...although that's a terrible thing to say.

POIROT

It does not seem strange to you that Lady Edgware should have chosen such a man to be her husband?

MERTON

Strange? No. The thing about Jane is that she really is the most innocent of creatures. I suppose that's one of the things that makes her so bewitching. (Pause) I won't lie to you, Mr Poirot. I'm glad at the way things worked out - and as soon

as there's been a decent interval, I plan to marry her.

POIROT

I wish you much happiness, monsieur.

MERTON

I hope we'll see you at the cathedral, Mr Poirot. Jane's told me how you've taken her side...and I want you to know. I appreciate it...

POIROT finds the invitation to be a painful one.

CUT TO

65. EXT. MOFFAT STREET DAY.

ESTABLISHING SHOT

BRYAN MARTIN makes his way towards the hat shop owned by PENNY DRIVER.

CUT TO

66. INT. THE HAT SHOP DAY.

PENNY DRIVER is serving a CUSTOMER. There are other ASSISTANTS in the shop.

PENNY

These are some of our latest models, just in from Paris...

The door opens and PENNY sees BRYAN come in. He obviously needs to speak to her. She calls to an ASSISTANT.

PENNY

Dorothy! Show Mrs Lester the Rose Descartes model. (To the CUSTOMER) Excuse me...

PENNY goes into a side office. BRYAN follows.

CUT TO

67. INT. THE HAT SHOP - SIDE OFFICE DAY.

BRYAN and PENNY together.

PENNY
What are you doing here?

BRYAN
I had to see you!

He kisses her - but she pushes him away.

PENNY
Not here! I have customers.

BRYAN
To hell with them.

PENNY
(Protesting) Bryan...!

PENNY recognizes that BRYAN is afraid.

PENNY
What do you want?

BRYAN
It's not working out the way we
thought it would.

PENNY
What do you mean?

BRYAN
I just saw Jane.

PENNY
She hasn't been arrested?

BRYAN
She was in the park! With Poirot!

PENNY
What...?

BRYAN
The way they were walking together
- you could almost imagine that the

two of them... (Pause) Anyway, she's got him lapping at her feet so I think you can take it that she's more or less off the suspects list.

A pause. PENNY takes this all in then comforts BRYAN.

PENNY

It's all right, Bryan. It's early days. She's going to get what she deserves. And she's not going to hurt us again.

CUT TO

68. EXT. POIROT'S APARTMENT DAY.

ESTABLISHING SHOT

CUT TO

69. INT. POIROT'S FLAT - KITCHEN DAY.

MISS LEMON is making tea. HASTINGS is with her.

HASTINGS

Has he said anything?

MISS LEMON

No, Captain Hastings. I think you'd better go and talk to him. I've never seen him like this!

HASTINGS leaves.

CUT TO

70. INT. POIROT'S STUDY DAY.

POIROT is sitting behind his desk, deep in thought. HASTINGS comes in.

HASTINGS

Poirot...?

HASTINGS comes in and sits down.

HASTINGS

Are you all right?

POIROT

Ah yes, Hastings. *Ca va. Ca va...*

HASTINGS

She has rather got to you, hasn't she.

POIROT says nothing. So HASTINGS takes his courage in both hands and continues.

HASTINGS

I know exactly how you feel, Poirot. It was the same with me. You get to a certain age and you think that romance has passed you by so when it does finally hit you it really bowls you over.

POIROT looks up.

POIROT

What is it of which you speak?

HASTINGS

Jane Wilkinson.

In the outer office, the telephone rings. MISS LEMON answers it.

POIROT

Hastings - I think of the murder of Lord Edgware and the questions to which there remain no answers. I think of the letter written by Carlotta Adams to her sister and of the pince-nez that were found in her handbag. But absolutely not do I think of Jane Wilkinson!

HASTINGS

(Doubtful) Well, if you say so...

MISS LEMON comes in.

MISS LEMON

Mr Poirot - that was Chief Inspector Japp. There's been a development!

CUT TO

71. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S STUDY DAY.

A wall safe stands open. POIROT, HASTINGS and JAPP are in front of it. MISS CARROLL to one side.

MISS CARROLL

Mr Trubshawe, the solicitor, opened it one hour ago. Nobody else had the combination. I felt I should ring you straight away.

POIROT

The French francs that Lord Edgware commanded - they are not here.

JAPP

How many francs are we talking about, Miss Carroll?

MISS CARROLL

A considerable amount. Lord Edgware was about to leave for Paris...

POIROT

...to purchase a painting. We were here when he demanded the money.

MISS CARROLL

Yes. He told the butler, Alton, to ring the bank.

JAPP

And where is Alton?

MISS CARROLL

That's why I rang you, Chief Inspector. He became very agitated yesterday when he heard that you hadn't yet made an arrest and this morning he failed to appear for work. I've just been to his room and it's empty. He's gone!

CUT TO

72. EXT. CARLOTTA ADAMS'S FLAT DAY.

A cab pulls outside the mansion block that we last saw in Scene 52. A young, pretty woman gets out of the cab. This is LUCIE ADAMS - CARLOTTA'S younger sister and like her, American.

She pays the CAB DRIVER and goes over to the front door, carrying a suit case. She has been travelling. She rings the bell. A pause. The door is opened by the maid - ALICE BENNETT.

ALICE

Yes?

LUCIE

I'm here to see Carlotta.

ALICE

I'm sorry...?

LUCIE

She's expecting me. I'm Lucie Adams. I'm her sister.

ALICE

Haven't you heard...?

LUCIE

What?

ALICE

Oh Lor'...!

LUCIE sees the shock in ALICE'S face and begins to understand.

CUT TO

73. EXT. MOFFAT STREET DAY.

ESTABLISHING SHOT

POIROT and HASTINGS go into the hat-shop.

CUT TO

74. INT. PENNY DRIVER'S HAT SHOP DAY.

POIROT and HASTINGS meet PENNY DRIVER. The shop is closed.

PENNY

I didn't know if I should call you, Mr Poirot. But Lucie insisted - when she heard you were on the case.

POIROT

And where is she now, please, Miss Driver?

PENNY

Upstairs. She had a terrible shock. She's in bed.

POIROT

She came to you, I think, because you were the friend of her sister.

PENNY

Yes. Carlotta was one of my first customers. She bought all her hats here.

POIROT has noticed the black hat that PENNY examined in Scene 28.

POIROT

Did you perhaps sell to her a hat of a design similar to the one I see here?

PENNY

Yes. That was one of mine. She bought it last week.

POIROT

And did you ever make to her a gift?

PENNY

I'm sorry.

POIROT

A box for the sleeping draught.

POIROT produces the golden box that he took from CARLOTTA'S room.

POIROT

(Reading) "C.A from P. November 10th. Sweet Dreams."

HASTINGS

The C.A. is Carlotta. The P could be Penny.

PENNY

Well it's not. I've never seen that before.

POIROT

There is one other thing I would wish to ask you, Mademoiselle. How well acquainted are you with Jane Wilkinson?

PENNY

Jane? Why do you want to know about her?

A slight shrug from POIROT.

PENNY

There was a man I was very close to and she took him away from me and when she'd finished with him she dumped him. There's nothing good I can say about Jane Wilkinson - but I thought it was Lucie Adams you'd come to see and if you don't mind, she's waiting upstairs.

PENNY turns and leaves.

CUT TO

75. INT. PENNY DRIVER'S APARTMENT DAY.

PENNY DRIVER has rooms over the shop. LUCIE ADAMS is not in fact in bed. She has got up to see POIROT and HASTINGS. PENNY looks after her. She is still shocked and tearful.

LUCIE

It couldn't have been an overdose. Carlotta never took drugs. She hated them.

PENNY

It's all right...

POIROT

Mademoiselle, can you explain to me how it is you come to be in England?

LUCIE

I came to visit Carla! She invited me. The show was doing well and she was so full of hope...

LUCIE fights back the tears.

LUCIE

I wanted to see a bit of the country before I joined her in London. I've been travelling for two weeks...but we stayed in touch.

POIROT

Your sister wrote to you a letter.

LUCIE

Yes. I have it here.

POIROT

You permit...?

POIROT nods at HASTINGS who takes the letter.

HASTINGS

(Reading) Dear little sister. I'm sorry this is so scrappy but things have been rather busy. The show is a success. Notices splendid. Box office good...

LUCIE

The whole of the first page is about the show.

HASTINGS reads the letter which is written on a series of sheets, each the same size.

HASTINGS

Right. It continues here... (Reading) I met Ronald Marsh the other night. He's a theatre producer and he tried to persuade me to come in on one of his new shows. I don't know though.

He drinks quite heavily and has no money of his own although it turns out he's the nephew of Lord Edgware (who sounds no beauty, I can tell you). Anyway, Ronald loved my revue and...

The letter now continues on a third sheet of paper. There is a very small tear in the left hand corner.

HASTINGS

...he asked me if I'd be interested in earning some money for a practical joke that would prove just how good I was. I laughed and said, "How much?" Lucie, darling, the answer fairly took my breath away. Ten thousand dollars!"

HASTINGS turns to the fourth page which concludes the letter.

HASTINGS

(Reading) After that, we laid our heads together and got down to details. I'll tell you how it went when you arrive in London. I can't wait to see you, little sister mine. Yours...

LUCIE

Carlotta!

PENNY

I don't understand. Why would Ronald Marsh pay Carlotta that sort of money? And where would he get it from? I mean everyone knew he was virtually broke.

POIROT

That is indeed the question.

POIROT reaches out and takes the letter from HASTINGS.

POIROT

(To LUCIE) Madame, you permit that I guard this letter for a little while.

LUCIE

(Tearful) If it will help, Mr Poirot.

POIROT

Courage, madame. I will return it to you and with it the truth concerning the death of your sister. You have the word of Poirot!

CUT TO

76. INT. POLICE BUILDING - CORRIDOR DAY.

JAPP marches down a corridor, followed by POIROT and HASTINGS. He has the letter.

JAPP

Well, Poirot. It looks as if I may have got the wrong end of the stick and that butler, Alton's in the clear. This is all the proof I need!

HASTINGS

You think Ronald Marsh killed Lord Edgware?

JAPP

Yes. He had the motive - money. And this proves that he hired Carlotta Adams to go to Regent Gate disguised as Lady Edgware. Then he killed her too.

POIROT

But at the time of the first murder, Monsieur Marsh, he was at the opera.

JAPP stops outside a cell door.

JAPP

According to Geraldine Marsh, yes. But there's something you don't know, Poirot. You see, I had an idea...

POIROT

I congratulate you, Chief Inspector.

JAPP

It occurred to me - Regent Gate is less than a mile from Covent Garden. Do you get my drift?

HASTINGS

You mean, he could have left in an interval...

JAPP

...and been back before the next act began. Exactly. So I went and asked around the cab drivers and this time I came up trumps. He and a young lady left Covent Garden between the second and the third act. The driver took them to Regent Gate and waited for them outside.

HASTINGS

Good lord!

POIROT

And where is Monsieur Marsh?

JAPP

He's in here.

CUT TO

77. INT. POLICE CELL DAY.

RONALD MARSH confesses to POIROT, HASTINGS and JAPP.

RONALD

All right. Yes. I did go to the house during the interval. Talk to Geraldine.

JAPP

She was in the cab with you, Mr Marsh?

RONALD

Yes. But she had nothing to do with it either.

POIROT

For what purpose did you return to the house?

RONALD

I needed money. My new production was about to go belly-up. I had a cash shortfall of just five hundred pounds and only twenty-four hours to find it. I met Geraldine at the opera and, bless her, she agreed to help.

POIROT

She offered you financial assistance.

RONALD

She had some pearls. They were a present from her father and she didn't want them. She said I could pawn them...it would keep me afloat for a few more weeks.

JAPP

So you went back to get them in the middle of the opera?

RONALD

Needs must, Chief Inspector. It was urgent. She had her key and let herself in. I waited outside.

POIROT

Why did you not admit this before?

RONALD

It's not the sort of thing you want to spread around. Anyway, I knew you'd all jump to the wrong conclusion...and I was right!

JAPP

I don't suppose you saw anything - while you were waiting outside?

RONALD

No. (Pause) Well, maybe. I don't know. I may have been mistaken, but just after Geraldine went in, the front door opened and I could have sworn I saw Bryan come out.

JAPP

Bryan Martin?

RONALD

It was dark, but it certainly looked like him.

POIROT

Monsieur Marsh, when you and I first met, it was in the company of the actress, Carlotta Adams.

RONALD

Yes.

POIROT

You said to me that you were hoping to engage her for the theatre. Subsequently you paid to her the sum of ten thousand dollars...

RONALD

What? What are you talking about?

JAPP

Are you denying it?

RONALD

Of course I am! Where would I have got money like that? And why should I pay her anything?

JAPP

Mr Marsh. We have it on record from Miss Adams herself that you paid her that sum.

RONALD

Well, if she told you that, I'm afraid she was lying. I never paid her a

bean! Now, if you don't mind, I'd like to go home...

CUT TO

78. INT. POLICE CORRIDOR DAY.

JAPP, HASTINGS and POIROT leave the cell.

JAPP

He's not going anywhere.

POIROT

Chief Inspector?

JAPP

Not until I've spoken to Geraldine Marsh!

POLICEMAN

Sir!

A POLICEMAN hurries towards JAPP and hands him a message. JAPP reads it.

JAPP

It's Alton. The missing butler. He's been spotted, trying to board a train at St Pancras Station!

JAPP hurries off. POIROT and HASTINGS follow.

CUT TO

79. INT/EXT. ST PANCRAS STATION DAY.

ALTON clutches a cheap suitcase and hides behind a pillar as POLICEMEN swarm across the station concourse searching for him. He chooses his moment, then makes a dash for it, heading out towards the road.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

It's then that JAPP - along with POIROT and HASTINGS - screeches to a halt in a police car.

HASTINGS

There he is!

JAPP

(Calling) Stay where you are!

ALTON looks at JAPP - ahead of him - and the POLICEMEN coming up fast behind. He sees an archway with a flight of steps leading up. He takes it.

JAPP

After him!

JAPP jumps out of the car and makes for the steps.

CUT TO

80. EXT. STATION ROOFTOP DAY.

ALTON bursts through a door and finds himself out on the Gothic rooftops of the station itself. Still clutching his case, he turns and runs.

Two POLICEMEN and JAPP follow him. The chase is a dangerous one with steeply slanted roofs, dangerous expanses of glass, perhaps sections where ALTON has to jump from one roof to another.

JAPP

Come back! You're going to fall!

But ALTON scrabbles up an even higher roof. The two POLICEMEN have him cornered. JAPP makes his way forward.

JAPP

All right. Leave this to me...

JAPP presses forward. He is close to ALTON now.

JAPP

Listen to me, Alton. This isn't doing any good. We can talk about this...

ALTON sees a second roof. He tries to jump for it - but misses and plunges down, perhaps smashing through a glass panel.

CUT TO

81. INT/EXT. ST PANCRAS STATION DAY.

A WOMAN screams as ALTON plunges down and hits the floor. We do not see the impact itself.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

POIROT and HASTINGS move forward and stand over ALTON who lies, badly hurt, on the floor. POIROT looks down. The suitcase has been broken open in the fall. French francs are scattered over the station concourse.

CUT TO

82. INT. MISS LEMON'S OFFICE DAY.

MISS LEMON is still at work on her files as HASTINGS and POIROT return. POIROT is a little put out by all the mess.

POIROT

The files, Miss Lemon. They are still not complete?

MISS LEMON

I'm afraid not, Mr Poirot. They seem to have mislaid March 1930. I don't know how anyone could lose an entire month!

HASTINGS

It's not after February?

MISS LEMON

No, Captain Hastings. Anyway, February was in the middle of June!

POIROT shakes his head and continues into his study. HASTINGS and MISS LEMON follow.

CUT TO

83. INT. POIROT'S STUDY DAY.

POIROT sits down behind his desk. MISS LEMON and HASTINGS have also come in.

MISS LEMON

You had a telephone call from Ronald Marsh, Mr Poirot. He rang to invite you to what he called a celebratory lunch.

HASTINGS

So Japp has released him already.

POIROT

It must indeed be this that he celebrates.

HASTINGS

Maybe it was Alton who killed Lord Edgware after all.

POIROT

No, no, Hastings. I think not.

HASTINGS

Well then - who?

A pause.

POIROT

Five questions, Hastings. That is all that stands now between me and the truth.

MISS LEMON

Five questions?

HASTINGS

Fire away...

POIROT

Lord Edgware, we know, changed his mind on the subject of the divorce and wrote a letter to his wife to acquaint her of the fact.

HASTINGS

He sent it to the theatre.

POIROT

It was posted in fact by Miss Carroll. But why did Lady Edgware not

receive it? To whose interest was it that the letter should not arrive?

HASTINGS

(Stuck) What's the second question?

POIROT

The telephone call that Jane Wilkinson received at the dinner at Holborn? It was *assurance* to find out if she was indeed there. But who made the call, and why?

HASTINGS

I'm afraid I can't help you there.

MISS LEMON

What's the third question, Mr Poirot?

POIROT lays the pince-nez on his desk.

POIROT

The third question concerns the pince-nez which were found in the bag of Carlotta Adams. Neither she nor Jane Wilkinson wore glasses such as these, so what is their purpose? To whom do they belong?

HASTINGS

That's a good question.

POIROT picks up the letter that LUCIE gave him.

POIROT

Next we come to the letter written by Carlotta Adams to her sister. She states quite clearly that it was Ronald Marsh who paid to her the ten thousand dollars. But Monsieur Marsh, he denies it, and it is true that he had not in his possession an amount such as this.

HASTINGS

So are you saying that Carlotta was lying?

POIROT

It is perhaps that she concealed the true identity of her employer.

MISS LEMON

What's the fifth question, Mr Poirot?

POIROT lays the golden box on his desk - next to the letter and the pince-nez.

POIROT

Who is "P"? You recall the medicine box given to Carlotta Adams?

HASTINGS

To C.A. From P.

POIROT

Who gave it to her? This I would dearly like to know.

MISS LEMON

I may be able to help you there, Mr Poirot.

MISS LEMON produces one of her beloved files.

MISS LEMON

My file on London jewellers. At least I managed to find that!

POIROT

(Pleased) Ah, Miss Lemon...!

MISS LEMON

A specialised piece like that should be easy enough to track down. I could start in Hatton Garden.

POIROT

Yes. This I entrust to you.

HASTINGS

So are you going to come to the lunch then? Ronald Marsh?

POIROT

No, no, Hastings. I have work to do here, in the apartment. So you must

be my eyes and ears, to see and observe in my place.

HASTINGS

Right. You can count on me!

CUT TO

84. EXT. JEWELLER'S SHOP DAY.

MISS LEMON checks an address on a sheet of paper. Ahead of her is a jeweller's shop. She goes in.

CUT TO

85. INT. JEWELLER'S SHOP DAY.

MISS LEMON stands by as a JEWELLER examines the gold box through an eye glass. He lowers it and shakes his head. Not one of his.

CUT TO

86. INT. POIROT'S STUDY DAY.

POIROT takes out the letter written by CARLOTTA ADAMS. For the first time he seems to notice the tear in the corner of the third page. He takes his magnifying glass out of the desk drawer and examines it closely. We see that the tear cuts across the first word..."he..."

CUT TO

87. INT. SMART RESTAURANT DAY.

RONALD MARSH is at the head of a table which brings together almost all our suspects...for the last time. JANE WILKINSON is there with her fiancé, LORD MERTON. BRYAN MARTIN has come with a subdued PENNY DRIVER. GERALDINE MARSH is at the table, as is DONALD ROSS.

HASTINGS has just arrived.

RONALD

Sit down, Captain Hastings. Mr Poirot couldn't make it, then?

HASTINGS

No. I'm afraid he had to work.

HASTINGS sits down between DONALD ROSS and JANE WILKINSON.

JANE

Captain Hastings...is it true that the police have made an arrest?

HASTINGS

I'm afraid not. They have the butler, Alton, in custody. But they haven't charged him.

MERTON

We just want this whole business to be over. It's as if it's suffocating us.

JANE takes MERTON'S hand.

JANE

Don't worry. Mr Poirot won't give up. I know he won't.

HASTINGS

That's right. You know...he's never failed yet.

ROSS

I don't suppose you remember me, Captain Hastings. Donald Ross. We met at Sir Montagu's.

HASTINGS

Oh yes. You're a writer.

RONALD

A great writer. I've just finished reading his first play. The Trojan Wars! It's going to be a smash! My friend Bryan Martin will be starring as Achilles.

GERALDINE

With Jane, I suppose, as Helen of Troy.

BRYAN

(To PENNY) I'd have thought Clytemnestra would have been more suitable casting.

PENNY

Sssh...

ROSS

Anyway, that's why I was invited today.

RONALD

We're all here to celebrate - freedom and independence. I suppose the toast ought to be to whoever did kill him. He - or she - did us all a favour.

JANE

No!

BRYAN

Oh come on, Jane! You can't say you weren't glad to see him go.

JANE

No. But any one of us sitting at this table could have killed him. And I won't drink to that. I simply won't!

A guilty silence. MERTON clasps hold of JANE.

CUT TO

88. EXT. JEWELLER'S SHOP DAY.

MISS LEMON comes out of yet another jeweller's shop. But this time she is followed by the JEWELLER. He points her to another shop a short way down the street. This shop is called ADDISON & SON.

CUT TO

89. INT. POIROT'S STUDY DAY.

POIROT is reading the third page of the letter through his magnifying glass. He sees something that we cannot. Now he compares the third page with the

second page. Something that he sees worries him. He picks up the pince-nez and ponders over them.

CUT TO

90. INT. ADDISON & SON - JEWELLERS' DAY.

MISS LEMON waits while MR ADDISON, the elderly jeweller, examines the gold medicine box.

ADDISON

Yes. This is definitely my work. I remember the inscription. It was commissioned only a few weeks ago.

MISS LEMON

Only a few weeks ago? But it's meant to be a souvenir of something that happened in November...that's nine months!

ADDISON

Yes, I wondered about that too.

MISS LEMON

Can you tell me who ordered it?

ADDISON opens a book of invoices.

ADDISON

Yes. It was a lady. (Searches) Here! A Mrs Van Dusen.

MISS LEMON

Van Dusen!

ADDISON

Yes. An elderly lady, if I remember rightly. Dressed in a thick coat and a scarf. Grey hair, I think. Oh yes- she was wearing pince-nez...

REACTION ON MISS LEMON. The mention of pince-nez is obviously significant.

CUT TO

91. INT. SMART RESTAURANT DAY.

The luncheon continues. DONALD ROSS is holding forth about his play.

ROSS

Don't misunderstand me. I enjoyed Private Lives as much as anyone. But Noel Coward is surely just a passing fashion. Light-hearted and forgettable.

PENNY

So where do your passions lie, Mr Ross?

ROSS

Well, at the moment, I have to say that I'm fascinated by the Judgement of Paris.

JANE

But Paris doesn't have any judgement at all when it comes to fashion! These days you have to look to New York and Milan.

A pause. Everyone realizes that JANE has committed a gaffe.

ROSS

I was referring to the judgement of the shepherd-boy, Paris. He gave the golden apple to Aphrodite and so sparked off the war with Troy.

JANE

Oh. That Paris!

JANE also realizes her mistake. A smile...

JANE

Why do we have to talk about theatre all the time? (To MERTON) Percy, you must be bored rigid.

MERTON

I'm never bored when I'm with you.

CUT TO

CLOSE ON ROSS & HASTINGS

ROSS

Paris...?

HASTINGS

Have you visited the city?

ROSS

Yes. (Puzzled) But the other day...

HASTINGS

What?

ROSS

I can't explain. Not now.

ROSS gives HASTINGS his business card.

ROSS

Could you ask Mr Poirot to give me a call. Perhaps this afternoon...

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

HASTINGS takes the card. Right next to him, BRYAN MARTIN has seen and heard the entire exchange. But to be fair, so has everyone else!

CUT TO

92. INT. THE HOTEL - RECEPTION AREA DAY.

POIROT and MISS LEMON are at the reception desk, waiting while the RECEPTIONIST looks through his files.

POIROT

Van Dusen. You are sure of the name, Miss Lemon?

MISS LEMON

Absolutely, Mr Poirot.

POIROT

It is the same woman that Jane Wilkinson met here at this hotel on the night of her husband's murder.

The RECEPTIONIST has found what he was looking for.

RECEPTIONIST

Here you are, sir. Mrs Van Dusen. Room 174. She booked in for one night.

POIROT

One night only?

RECEPTIONIST

Yes, sir. Actually, I do remember her now I think about it. An elderly woman. She had...

The RECEPTIONIST gestures - two fingers over his nose.

POIROT

Pince-nez.

RECEPTIONIST

I wouldn't remember her - only the maid said the bed wasn't slept in which seemed odd at the time.

MISS LEMON

Mr Poirot!

MISS LEMON has seen CAPTAIN HASTINGS come into the lobby.

POIROT

Ah - le bon Captain Hastings! How went the lunch.

HASTINGS

Well, it was very extravagant. They were all there. Bryan Martin and Miss Driver. Jane Wilkinson and even the Duke of Merton. Oh - and I bumped into that writer again. Donald Ross. He wanted you to call him.

POIROT

(Suddenly wary) *Comment?*

HASTINGS

Yes. He seemed puzzled by something and he gave me his card.

POIROT

When was this, Hastings?

HASTINGS

Half an hour ago?

POIROT takes the card. His face is grave.

POIROT

He asked me to call him in front of all the company?

HASTINGS

Yes.

MISS LEMON sees the alarm in POIROT'S face.

MISS LEMON

They have a telephone at the desk, Mr Poirot.

CUT TO

93. INT. DONALD ROSS'S FLAT DAY.

The telephone rings in the small, untidy apartment. A typewriter spilling out pages on the desk. Lots of books. DONALD ROSS answers it.

ROSS

This is Donald Ross. (Pause) Ah - Mr Poirot! Thank you for calling!

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

While DONALD ROSS talks on the telephone, the door slowly opens.

ROSS

I didn't want to bother you, but there's something that seems to me a

bit odd. In connection with Lord Edgware's death.

A FIGURE moves silently into the room.

ROSS

It was Paris that set me off. It suddenly got me thinking. Hold on a minute...

ROSS turns round, hearing something. He is shocked to see someone standing in front of him. A hand lashes out. It is holding a knife. ROSS cries out, drops the telephone and falls. The FIGURE leaves, softly closing the door.

CUT TO

94. INT. DONALD ROSS'S FLAT DAY.

Later. POIROT, HASTINGS, MISS LEMON and JAPP are reunited as the body of DONALD ROSS is carried out by POLICEMEN.

JAPP

Stabbed in the neck. The same as Lord Edgware.

HASTINGS

It actually happened while he was talking to you.

POIROT

Yes. But before he could explain to me what it was he wished to say.

HASTINGS

This is my fault, Poirot. I should never have let him leave.

POIROT

Not at all, *mon ami*. The fate of Monsieur Ross was settled the moment he spoke my name.

HASTINGS

Somebody at that lunch must have overheard him. They followed him home and then...

JAPP

But which one of them was it? And why? This chap was just a writer. A nobody. What could he have seen or heard?

POIROT

He managed to mention only the name of Paris.

JAPP

Paris...

POIROT

It must, I think, have triggered a memory that until then had been hidden.

HASTINGS

Wasn't Lord Edgware going to Paris? He said he was going to buy a painting.

POIROT

Tell me, Hastings. At this luncheon, who was the first to leave?

HASTINGS

It was Bryan Martin and Penny Driver. Then Jane Wilkinson and the Duke of Merton. No. Wait a minute. It was actually the other way round.

POIROT

The other way round.

POIROT walks on in silence, then suddenly stops.

POIROT

But of course, Hastings! Ah, but I have been foolish. After the year of the retirement it takes time for the little grey cells to function again. But it is so simple. The five questions...

HASTINGS

Poirot?

POIROT

The answers at last fall into place.

CUT TO

95. INT. HALL OUTSIDE JANE'S APARTMENT DAY.

A baffled HASTINGS watches as POIROT rings the doorbell. The door is opened by ELLIS, the maid we last met in Scene 18. She is not wearing her pince-nez.

ELLIS

Sir?

POIROT

You remember me...Mademoiselle Ellis, is it not?

ELLIS

Oh yes, sir. You're the detective who called.

POIROT

I am Hercule Poirot.

ELLIS

I'm afraid Lady Edgware isn't in, sir.

POIROT

It is not Lady Edgware I have come to see, Mademoiselle. It is you.

ELLIS is surprised.

CUT TO

96. INT. JANE WILKINSON'S APARTMENT DAY.

POIROT shows ELLIS the letter written by CARLOTTA ADAMS. HASTINGS is with him.

POIROT

Mademoiselle Ellis. I have here a letter and it would be of interest to

me to know if you would recognize the writing.

ELLIS

I'll just need to fetch my glasses...

POIROT

You will permit me...?

POIROT turns round and reaches for a shelf, his back momentarily obscuring what he is doing. A moment later he holds out a pair of pince-nez.

POIROT

They are right here.

ELLIS

Thank you, sir.

She puts them on and takes the letter. Studies it...

ELLIS

No, sir. I don't know this handwriting. What made you think I would?

POIROT smiles. The case is solved.

POIROT

I knew with certainty, mademoiselle, that you would not.

CUT TO

97. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

We finish where we began - on the bare stage of the theatre. Assembled are: BRYAN MARTIN, PENNY DRIVER, JANE WILKINSON, THE DUKE OF MERTON, GERALDINE MARSH, RONALD MARSH, MISS CARROLL.

POIROT is, of course, centre-stage. HASTINGS & MISS LEMON are to one side. JAPP prowls, waiting to pounce.

POIROT

The theatre. The performance. It is the key to the events that have taken place and that is why I have asked you to assemble here today - on the stage, for the final act of the

tragedy that was the death of Lord Edgware.

RONALD

The final act!

GERALDINE

Are you saying you know who killed him, Mr Poirot? Was it was one of us?

POIROT signals to her to wait a moment...a wag of the finger. He will come to that in time.

POIROT

Everyone of you here today had the reason to wish Lord Edgware dead.

POIROT turns to each of them in turn.

POIROT

For Monsieur Ronald Marsh it was a question of money. For Mademoiselle Geraldine, the chance to be free from a father she loathed. The Duke of Merton also knew that the death of Lord Edgware would allow him to marry the woman he loved.

BRYAN

I had no reason to kill him.

POIROT

Au contraire, Monsieur Martin, it is my belief that you had the greatest reason of all.

POIROT rounds on BRYAN MARTIN.

POIROT

You were in love with Jane Wilkinson, were you not?

BRYAN

Yes. But that was...

PENNY

It wasn't love. It was infatuation.
Bryan feels nothing for her now.

POIROT

You believe his feelings now are for
you alone.

PENNY

We're in love. Yes. We have been
since the day we met.

POIROT

And yet Jane Wilkinson stole him
from you. Even now you cannot
speak her name without the anger.
She is a woman you would be glad to
see hanged! Ah yes! To murder Lord
Edgware and then to frame her for
the death...that would be the
revenge indeed!

BRYAN

No! I never thought that!

POIROT

But you did! Why else do you come
to me with this cock and the bull
story of the man with the gold tooth?

HASTINGS

What - it wasn't true?

POIROT

It was like something out of the
cinema, Hastings. I saw that at once.
But the true reason for coming to
me...ah, that followed soon.

CUT TO

98. INT. POIROT'S OFFICE DAY.

FLASHBACK

To Scene 51. BRYAN consults POIROT and HASTINGS.

HASTINGS

Do you think she had it in her to commit murder?

BRYAN

I'm sure of it. I know her, you see. She's all very sweet on the surface. But she'd kill as easily as she'd drink her morning tea. Believe me!

CUT TO

99. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present.

POIROT

You came to poison my mind against Jane Wilkinson, to impress upon me the fact that she was a killer. You knew already that Lord Edgware was dead. And how did you know? Because you yourself had killed him the night before!

BRYAN staggers to his feet.

BRYAN

No! No! You're wrong!

POIROT

Why must you lie to me? You were seen leaving the house.

BRYAN

No!

POIROT

Yes!

CUT TO

100. EXT. REGENT GATE NIGHT.

FLASHBACK

To Scene 36. RONALD MARSH and GERALDINE MARSH are waiting in a cab outside LORD EDGWARE'S house. The door of the house opens and a shadowy figure looking very much like BRYAN MARTIN slips out.

RONALD

Wait!

POIROT

(Voice over)

You were seen just before ten o'clock by Monsieur Marsh who had returned from the opera with Miss Geraldine to retrieve a necklace of pearls.

CUT TO

101. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present.

BRYAN

No. You've got it wrong - for God's sake. It wasn't me.

POIROT

You deny that you lied to me?

BRYAN

No! All right. That stuff about the gold tooth. You're right about that. I was trying to incriminate her...

JANE

What?

BRYAN

You're heartless, Jane. You're as cold as ice. I loved you and you threw me over without so much as a second thought. (To POIROT) Yes, I wanted to see her hang!

POIROT

And you attempted to deceive Hercule Poirot to achieve that end.

BRYAN

But I didn't kill him. I never went near the house that night. I heard the news the next day. That's when I had the idea. I must have been mad.

POIROT

And I have punished you now for the attempt, Monsieur Martin.

BRYAN

You mean...you know it wasn't me.

POIROT

The figure seen by Monsieur Marsh was I think the butler, Alton, leaving with the French francs. There is the resemblance.

JAPP

What? He was hooking it with the money?

POIROT

Exactement. It is my belief that Alton came upon the body that night and not the following morning as he told us. He took the opportunity to steal the money and was leaving the house to place it somewhere safe.

HASTINGS

He thought Lady Edgware would be arrested for the murder.

POIROT

Precisely, Hastings. And it was only when it was discovered that Lady Edgware had the perfect alibi that he panicked.

JAPP

You mean, he realised we'd be looking for another motive.

POIROT

The theft of the money, yes. And so he fled.

PENNY

So you knew all along that it wasn't
Bryan.

POIROT

Monsieur Martin was not alone in
his dislike of Lady Edgware.

Now POIROT turns on MISS CARROLL.

POIROT

You, Miss Carroll. When I asked you
the identity of the woman you saw in
the hallway of Regent Gate...

CUT TO

102. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S HOUSE - LANDING DAY.

FLASHBACK

To Scene 42. POIROT and HASTINGS interview MISS CARROLL.

MISS CARROLL

It was her. I'd know her anywhere
and I saw her quite clearly.

CUT TO

103. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present.

POIROT

You were standing high up on the
landing, mademoiselle. The person
who entered the house that night
wore a hat with the wide brim. From
where you were it would have been
impossible to see the face...

MISS CARROLL

(Faltering) I saw her...!

POIROT

You saw, I think, what you wished to see. The woman who had wronged a man you had served well.

MISS CARROLL

It's true. She never deserved him.

POIROT

But Jane Wilkinson could not have killed him because as we now know Jane Wilkinson had changed her mind and gone to the dinner in Holborn.

JAPP

And the woman who called that night was actually Carlotta Adams.

POIROT

Yes. (Pause) But all the time I have been perplexed by the five questions. What happened to the letter that Lord Edgware wrote to inform his wife that he had agreed to the divorce? Who is the "P" on the little gold box? Who telephoned Jane Wilkinson at Holborn that night? How did a pair of pince-nez come to be in the handbag of Carlotta Adams? And why did Carlotta write that it was Ronald Marsh who paid her ten thousand dollars when it is impossible he could have afforded that sum?

RONALD

Do you have the answers?

MISS LEMON

Of course Mr Poirot has the answers. That's why you're here!

POIROT

Let us begin with the gold box. From the start I knew that there was something strange. The inscription referred to a date nine months ago...

MISS LEMON

But the jeweller told me that the box was brand new!

POIROT

I do not believe there existed this "P". There was no meeting in November. We are in the world of the theatre and the box was no more than a prop...

JAPP

...to make us think that Carlotta was taking Veronal.

POIROT

Now let us turn to the pince-nez. They were also found in the handbag of Miss Adams. But they, I think, were left there by an accident.

GERALDINE

But who by?

CUT TO

104. INT. JEWELLER'S SHOP DAY.

FLASHBACK

Not a scene we have seen. A WOMAN with her back to us, picks up the box from MR ADDISON.

POIROT

(Voice over)

By the woman who picked up the medicine box from the jewellery shop...

CUT TO

105. INT. PICCADILLY PALACE HOTEL - RECEPTION EVENING.

FLASHBACK

Scene 24. HASTINGS bumps into a mysterious WOMAN in furs, her face hidden by her pince-nez.

HASTINGS

Oh. Excuse me.

The WOMAN goes over to the RECEPTIONIST.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Room 174.

RECEPTIONIST

Your keys, Mrs Van Dusen...

POIROT

(Voice over)

It was the same woman who took a room for one night at the Piccadilly Palace Hotel.

CUT TO

106. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present.

POIROT

That woman was an American by the name of Mrs Van Dusen.

JANE

I met her! She was a writer. She wanted me to look at her play.

POIROT

No. The woman you met was not Mrs Van Dusen. For Mrs Van Dusen does not exist.

JANE

What? Then who was she?

POIROT

That is the question. The pince-nez...it is a simple disguise. The thick lenses and the heavy frame. Also the grey wig and the coat with the high collar...

JANE

Well, she had me completely fooled.
Are you saying she was part of this?

POIROT

Yes indeed. She was very much a
part of this. "Mrs Van Dusen" - the
creation of a cunning and cold-
blooded killer who was also the
consummate actress. (Pause) She
was your creation, madame.

JANE

(Shocked) What?

POIROT

(A little sad) Ah yes, madame. It is
all known to Poirot. The entire plan
by which you did indeed kill your
husband.

MERTON

Wait a minute! What are you
saying?

JAPP

So I was right! It was her after all!

HASTINGS

But, Poirot. It's impossible. You said
as much yourself!

POIROT

Not impossible, *mon ami*. Let me tell
you how it occurred.

CUT TO

107. INT. JANE WILKINSON'S APARTMENT EVENING.

FLASHBACK

To Scene 20. ELLIS watches JANE leave.

JANE

I'm ready to leave. Can you do the
curtains please, Ellis?

ELLIS

Yes, ma'am.

As ELLIS draws the curtains, we now see JANE pick up a small suitcase.

POIROT

(Voice over)

At seven o'clock, Jane Wilkinson leaves for the Piccadilly Palace House. But on the way there she makes a stop...

CUT TO

108. INT. PICCADILLY PALACE HOTEL - RECEPTION EVENING.

FLASHBACK

To Scene 24, this time revealing that the mysterious "Mrs Van Dusen" is in fact Jane Wilkinson, wearing the pince-nez.

POIROT

(Voice over)

...for when she arrives, she has changed her appearance with the grey wig and the pince-nez. She now takes a room in the identity of an elderly American woman.

JANE

Room 174.

RECEPTIONIST

Certainly, Mrs Van Dusen.

CUT TO

109. INT. ROOM 174 EVENING.

FLASHBACK

Inside the hotel room, JANE removes the grey wig, pince-nez and coat to reveal the pink Dior dress underneath.

POIROT

(Voice over)

Once she has reached the room, she removes the disguise while she awaits the arrival of another person she has arranged to meet that very night.

There is a knock at the door. JANE goes over to it and opens it. CARLOTTA ADAMS, dressed in black with a wide-brimmed hat, is revealed. The two of them greet each other. CARLOTTA comes into the room

POIROT

(Voice over)

And now it is time for the second disguise.

CUT TO

110. EXT. THE PICADILLY PALACE HOTEL EVENING.

FLASHBACK

A short while later. Dressed in JANE'S clothes, and wearing a wig, CARLOTTA comes out of the hotel and calls a cab.

POIROT

(Voice over)

The two women exchange clothes, as they have arranged beforehand. For Carlotta Adams plays a great practical joke. This evening she will be Lady Edgware!

CUT TO

111. INT. THE REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present. POIROT continues.

POIROT

It was all the time so simple and yet still I did not see until the chance remark of my good friend, Captain Hastings. "It was actually the other way round..." Those were his words.

HASTINGS

Yes. But...

POIROT

At that moment all became clear.

CUT TO

112. INT. THE CORNERS' HOUSE - DINING ROOM NIGHT.

FLASHBACK

Scene 30. The dinner party. DONALD ROSS is talking about his play to a woman who looks like JANE WILKINSON...

POIROT

(Voice over)

Always I had assumed that Carlotta Adams had been paid to take the place of Jane Wilkinson while Jane Wilkinson was at Holborn.

...but this time the CAMERA moves to reveal that it is really CARLOTTA ADAMS.

POIROT

(Voice over)

But of course it was in fact the other way round!

CUT TO

113. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present.

PENNY

It was Carla who went to the dinner at Holborn?

GERALDINE

That's impossible. Someone would have recognized her!

POIROT

I do not think so. With the wig and the clothes...Miss Adams was the most accomplished performer...

CUT TO

114. INT. THE CORNERS' HOUSE - DINING ROOM NIGHT.

FLASHBACK

To Scene 30. THOMPSON, the butler, makes his way towards a figure we only glimpsed before. Again, we clearly see that it is CARLOTTA ADAMS disguised as LADY EDGWARE.

POIROT

(Voice over) The room was lit only by candles. And you must remember also that no-one at the table had met the true Lady Edgware more than on one or two occasions.

THOMPSON

Lady Edgware? You have a telephone call, ma'am.

CUT TO

115. EXT. PHONE BOX NEAR REGENT GATE NIGHT.

FLASHBACK

We now reveal that it is JANE WILKINSON, wearing the black clothes and wide-brimmed hat of CARLOTTA ADAMS, who is making the call.

POIROT

(Voice over) Of course, it was still a grave risk and so it was essential for Lady Edgware to know that the deception had indeed worked. And it was for this reason that she made the call to the dinner at Holborn.

JANE

(On the telephone) Nobody's seen through you? That's wonderful, Carla! I knew you could do it!

JANE hangs up. Now we can see that she was indeed in the telephone box and is very close to LORD EDGWARE'S house. She walks towards it.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

And a FLASHBACK picking up Scene 33. JANE WILKINSON rings the bell. ALTON answers it.

JANE

You're Alton, aren't you? Is my husband in?

ALTON

Yes, ma'am.

JANE

Thank you.

POIROT

(Voice over)

The butler, Alton, had been there only a month. He would not know her. And even were he to doubt her it would be only his word against hers.

CUT TO

116. INT. LORD EDGWARE'S STUDY NIGHT.

FLASHBACK

To the murder itself. JANE WILKINSON comes into the room with the knife. LORD EDGWARE is searching for a book and has his back to the door. At the last minute, he turns. Too late. JANE lashes out. LORD EDGWARE dies.

POIROT

(Voice over)

And having so prepared her way, she strikes!

CUT TO

117. EXT. ROOM 174 NIGHT.

JANE WILKINSON, still in the black dress, returns to the hotel room. She takes out the gold box of powder and tips some into a glass. Moving quickly now she fills both the glasses with red wine. Finally, she slips the gold box into the handbag of CARLOTTA ADAMS.

POIROT

(Voice over)

But Carlotta Adams must not be allowed to tell her tale. Lady Edgware has arranged to meet her again at the hotel room. They will have a drink to celebrate the success of their practical joke.

There is a knock at the door. JANE looks round.

CUT TO

ANOTHER ANGLE

A short while later. CARLOTTA and JANE are sitting down, talking and laughing.

POIROT

(Voice over) At

the same time, Lady Edgware learns all the details that she must know if she is to pretend that she was indeed at the dinner at Hol-born.

CARLOTTA

...and I was sitting opposite this young playwright. Scottish. His name was Donald Ross. He went on and on about this play of his...it's all about the war at Troy.

CARLOTTA sips her wine.

POIROT

(Voice over)

Carlotta drinks her wine. An hour later, by the time she has returned

home, the Veronal will have had its effect. And the gold box which was placed into her bag and which we will find later will make us believe that always she was in the habit of taking this drug.

CUT TO

118. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present. POIROT rounds on JANE WILKINSON.

POIROT

You made two mistakes, madame. The pince-nez which you used to disguise yourself as Mrs Van Dusen you took from your maidservant Ellis.

HASTINGS

I say, Poirot. When you gave Ellis that letter to read...

POIROT

Indeed so, *mon ami*...

CUT TO

119. INT. JANE WILKINSON'S APARTMENT DAY.

FLASHBACK

To Scene 95. ELLIS reads the letter POIROT has given her.

POIROT

(Voice over)

I purposefully gave to Ellis the pince-nez from the handbag of Miss Adams. The fact that she was able to read the letter proved that they were indeed hers.

CUT TO

120. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

POIROT continues, confronting JANE.

POIROT

In all the changes of the costume,
you left the pince-nez in the bag of
Miss Adams instead of your own.

JANE

Did I?

POIROT

But more serious was your second
lunch with the young writer, Donald
Ross.

CUT TO

121. INT. SMART RESTAURANT DAY.

FLASHBACK

To Scene 91. The fatal lunch...

ROSS

Well, at the moment, I have to say
that I'm fascinated by the Judge-
ment of Paris.

JANE

But Paris doesn't have any judge-
ment at all when it comes to fashion!
These days you have to look to New
York and Milan.

POIROT

(Voice over)

It was the social gaffe to show such
ignorance of the Judgement of Paris.

CUT TO

122. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present. POIROT still confronts JANE WILKINSON.

POIROT

But only a few nights before, Monsieur Ross had described to you his play, the war of Troy. It was inconceivable that the woman who had known then of what he spoke could be so ignorant now.

JAPP

So he saw through her!

CUT TO

123. INT. DONALD ROSS'S FLAT DAY.

FLASHBACK

To Scene 94. DONALD ROSS answers the telephone (to POIROT). Meanwhile, the door creaks slowly open.

ROSS

This is Donald Ross. (Pause) Ah - Mr Poirot. Thank you for calling!

POIROT

(Voice over)

Malheureusement, he had announced his suspicions in the presence of Lady Edgware and she knew at once that he too had to be silenced.

DONALD ROSS spins round to see JANE WILKINSON standing behind him. Her hand comes up, holding a knife...

CUT TO

124. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present.

MISS CARROLL

So it was her all along!

JAPP

But wait a minute. In that letter Carlotta Adams wrote, she definite-

ly said that she'd been hired by a man.

POIROT

Indeed, Chief Inspector - that was cunning, that! Carlotta Adams had taken the letter with her but had neglected to post it. Lady Edgware discovered it in the exchange of the bags and decided to use it to her own ends.

CUT TO

125. INT. ROOM 174 NIGHT.

FLASHBACK

Another new scene. JANE WILKINSON is waiting for CARLOTTA. She has the letter out and we see her reading it. She looks from one page to another and suddenly she has an idea...

POIROT

(Voice over)

Carlotta wrote first of the meeting with Monsieur Ronald and then of the person who had paid her ten thousand dollars.

...JANE crumples up one of the pages.

POIROT

(Voice over)

But what if there was an entire page between these two descriptions - a page which Jane Wilkinson removed?

CUT TO

126. INT. REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present.

JAPP

A page missing? How do you know?

POIROT

Because Carlotta Adams left the indentation on the next page as she was writing.

POIROT shows JAPP the third page.

POIROT

There are words that you can see from the page before. They are faint, yes. But I have seen them and they do not appear in the pages that remain.

HASTINGS

But the third page still began with "He said". She was writing about a man.

CUT TO

127. INT. ROOM 174 NIGHT.

FLASHBACK

JANE WILKINSON continues to deal with the letter. She tears a small piece off turning "she" into "he".

POIROT

(Voice over)

Yes. But there is in the corner a small tear. At first it appeared to me as the carelessness. But in fact it was most carefully done.

HASTINGS

To turn "she" into "he"!

CUT TO

128. INT. THE REGENCY THEATRE DAY.

Back to the present.

POIROT

Exactly, Hastings. It was of Lady Edgware that Carlotta Adams wrote. It was she from whom the money had been received.

POIROT turns to JANE.

POIROT

You are a most remarkable woman, madame. The disguise, the letter and *surtout* to send Poirot to see your husband, to turn me into a witness that you had no motive for the murder. *Ma foi*, you made of me your cat's paw!

MISS LEMON

But it's true, Mr Poirot. There was no motive. If she was going to get a divorce...

POIROT

The divorce would have been of no use to her, Miss Lemon. It is why she pretended not to have received the letter from her husband.

HASTINGS

But why...?

POIROT turns to the DUKE OF MERTON.

POIROT

You are, Monsieur, I believe, of the Catholic religion.

MERTON

Yes, I am. How did you know?

POIROT

Jane Wilkinson told me that you intended to be married at Westminster. I assumed of course that she meant the abbey. But later you invited me to "the cathedral". Westminster Cathedral. Voilà! I knew then that you must be Catholic...

JAPP

...and he couldn't marry a divorced woman. So that's why Lord Edgware had to die.

MERTON

My God, Jane. Tell me it's not true!

JANE

I'm sorry, Percy...

JANE WILKINSON gets slowly to her feet. The mask has slipped and we see her for the cold-blooded, psychotic killer that she is. She smiles...

JANE

I really thought I'd get away with it, you know. (To POIROT) I thought I had you - the great detective - round my little finger. I've always had that, you know. A power over men.

POIROT

I wished only to protect you, madame. But I could not protect you from yourself.

MERTON

(Desperate) Jane...

JANE

I'm not going to deny it, Percy! Why should I? I've actually enjoyed it. All of it. Even being caught! I mean, it does put me centre stage - and who knows?

She begins to laugh.

JANE

Maybe they'll put me in Madame Tussaud's!

CUT TO

129. EXT. POIROT'S APARTMENT DAY.

ESTABLISHING SHOT

A few days later.

CUT TO

130. INT. POIROT'S OFFICE DAY.

JAPP and POIROT are there. HASTINGS has just arrived.

HASTINGS

Poirot? I came as soon as I got your message. What is it?

POIROT

It is this, mon ami. It arrived today for you.

POIROT hands HASTINGS an envelope. Mystified, HASTINGS opens it and takes out a banker's cheque.

HASTINGS

It's a cheque. Made out to me for... Good Lord!

JAPP

From the Duke of Merton, I understand.

HASTINGS

Yes. But...

POIROT

Following the arrest of Lady Edgware, the duke made contact with me. For him it was the narrow escape, and he felt it deserved, as he said, a substantial reward.

HASTINGS

But shouldn't this be addressed to you?

POIROT

No, no, no, Hastings. It was you who provided the vital clue.

JAPP

The other way round.

POIROT

And so it is to you that the reward
rightfully belongs.

MISS LEMON comes in carrying a tray with a champagne bottle and glasses.

MISS LEMON

(To POIROT) You've told him then! I
thought we ought to celebrate.

POIROT

It is enough, I think, for you to
purchase an apartment in London.

MISS LEMON

Or, of course, to go back to
Argentina.

POIROT

(Sad) Ah yes. That too.

HASTINGS

(Moved) Poirot. Miss Lemon. I really
don't know what to say.

JAPP

Then don't say anything.

JAPP hands out the champagne and takes a glass for himself.

JAPP

Bottoms up. I wonder how you say
that in Spanish?

The three friends drink.

END OF EPISODE