

INSPECTOR. *(cont.)* Now I'll need some assistance, but I assume that this telephone is still dead.

(She picks up the receiver.)

"Hello...Hello!"

(It's obviously dead. She hangs it up.)

And I suppose no one knows where the murder weapon is?

(No answer. Everyone shrugs.)

All right, I would like all of you to go into the dining room and wait for me, and I urge you to keep an eye on each other. No one leaves! I'll call you for questioning one at a time, and believe me, this is not a joke.

(Everyone exits except GILLETTE, who closes the door behind them.)

GILLETTE. Good. Let's get down to business. I fear it's more complicated than I thought at first. They all have motives.

INSPECTOR. What are you talking about? Get in there!

GILLETTE. Surely *I'm* not a suspect.

INSPECTOR. Of course you are.

GILLETTE. But it's my house.

INSPECTOR. What has that got to do with it? If anything, it means you're a bigger suspect. You know the house inside-out and you knew about the hidden room.

GILLETTE. You know, when you think about it, you're just as much a suspect as I am.

INSPECTOR. I beg your pardon.

GILLETTE. It happens all the time in murder mysteries. The slightly odd "inspector" who arrives alone in the middle of the night and pretends to sort things out when in fact she intends to murder someone for some hideous crime that happened twenty years ago.

INSPECTOR. Oh nonsense.

GILLETTE. I don't see a badge.

INSPECTOR. I left it at the office.

GILLETTE. That's a likely story.

INSPECTOR. *You hid a murder and you're accusing me of stories?!*

(MARTHA walks in wearing her dressing gown. She is rather loopy from her sleeping pills.)

MARTHA. Hello...?

GILLETTE. *(alarmed)* Mother, what are you doing here?!

MARTHA. I heard a scream and it woke me up. At least I think it was a scream. It might have been a tea kettle.

GILLETTE. Mother, go back to bed. Right now.

MARTHA. Oh don't be silly. I am perfectly fine. How do you do. Are you a stranger?

INSPECTOR. Yes I am, I'm afraid.

MARTHA. Oh that's all right. I like strange men, don't I, Willie. Sometimes. If they're nice. Are you nice?

INSPECTOR. I like to think so.

GILLETTE. Mother, how many sleeping pills did you take?

(Embarrassed, MARTHA holds up four fingers.)

MARTHA. *(confidentially to the INSPECTOR)* They make me sleepy.

GILLETTE. All right, back to bed.

MARTHA. Oh, stop it!

(to the INSPECTOR) How do you do, I'm Martha Gillette.

INSPECTOR. How do you do. Inspector Goring from the Middlesex County Police Department.

MARTHA. *Oh, no!*

GILLETTE. Mother –!

MARTHA. I knew it would come to this, I just knew it.

INSPECTOR. So you know about the murder then?

MARTHA. Of course I know. How could I not know it when I was the one who –

GILLETTE. *Mother!* Don't say anything. Not a word!

MARTHA. Oh stop it. We knew it would come to this and I want to get it over with. *"It is a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done before. It is a far, far better place I go –"*

GILLETTE. Inspector, listen to me! I didn't want my mother to hear this, but...I killed Daria Chase. I'm turning myself in.

MARTHA. Willie!

INSPECTOR. Good God! Are you serious?

GILLETTE. Yes. She threatened to ruin my career and I couldn't just stand by and let her do it.

MARTHA. (*overlapping*) Oh stop being nonsensical. Inspector, I killed Daria Chase and he's trying to protect me.

GILLETTE. (*overlapping*) Mother, please. The Inspector can see that you couldn't do it. You're...you're too old.

MARTHA. Come over here and say that and I'll knock you down!

INSPECTOR. *Would you both be quiet!*

(MARTHA breaks down in tears.)

MARTHA. *Oh, Willie, how could I do such a thing! And I didn't mean to kill her! She just made me so angry!*

(*She sobs in his arms. GILLETTE looks up. There's something wrong here.*)

GILLETTE.You didn't "mean to"?

MARTHA. I only wanted to make her sick and teach her a lesson!

(GILLETTE pulls his mother aside and whispers to her:)

GILLETTE. Excuse us...Mother, you must have realized it would kill her.

MARTHA. No I didn't! I thought, "You can't treat my son that way! I'll make you suffer first. I'll make you sick as a dog!"

GILLETTE. But you stabbed her in the back!

MARTHA. What are you talking about? How could I stab anybody?

GILLETTE. You used the knife from the wall and then you... oh my God you didn't kill her.