Dangerous Obsession

A Play

N. J. Crisp

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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DANGEROUS OBSESSION

First presented at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley.

Subsequently presented in London by Mark Furness and John Newman, Dina and Alexander E. Racolin and Martin Birrane by arrangement with Louis Benjamin for Stoll Moss Theatres Ltd at the Apollo Theatre on 9th November, 1987, with the following cast of characters:

Sally Driscoll	Carol Drinkwater
John Barrett	Dinsdale Landen
Mark Driscoll	Jeremy Bulloch

The play was directed by **Roger Smith**
Designed by **Shelagh Keegan**

The action is continuous, and takes place in the conservatory of the Driscolls' home—a large, luxurious Georgian house, in an enviable setting in the Home Counties.

Time: the present.

ACT I Late afternoon on a hot day in late summer

ACT II Immediately following

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ACT I

The conservatory of the Driscolls' house in the Home Counties. Late afternoon on a summer's day

As the House Lights dim music commences—Ravel's La Valse

The CURTAIN *rises on the conservatory of a very expensive, secluded house in the Home Counties. There is a hint that the house is Georgian in period*

The conservatory itself is Victorian, its iron framework solid and elaborate. With its high arched roof there is a Gothic feeling about it. Roller blinds slanting upwards across the roof area can be used to shield the interior from direct sunlight, and these roller blinds are drawn across the roof now

To the left, french windows lead into the drawing room of the house itself. The other sides of the conservatory are almost entirely of glass. There are two or three windows which can be opened to admit fresh air, all at present closed. There are floor length curtains which can be drawn at night; at present they are open. (Or venetian blinds which can be used for the same purpose. If so, these are "down", but the slats in the "open" position). To the right, a door, standing open, a key in the lock on the inside, leads out into the garden

Outside the conservatory, flowering shrubs mask any view of the grounds of this house. In the distance, a wooded hill can be seen

The conservatory itself is a pleasant relaxing area and furnished appropriately in a light, modern style; a couch, comfortable chairs, a low glass table, standard and table lamps, a refrigerated drinks cabinet, near which is a push button telephone extension on one of several wall fitments. Cacti and indoor plants here and there provide a luxuriant atmosphere

The conservatory is empty. The music is coming from a compact disc player which stands on one of the wall fitments

After a moment or two, Sally Driscoll enters from the garden, carrying a small watering can. She is a striking woman with a splendid figure, clad only in a swinsuit and sandals. She hesitates, thinks about pouring herself a drink, decides to postpone it, and begins to water the indoor plants. Intent upon her task, and with the music—to which she unconsciously jigs slightly in time with the rhythm—she neither hears nor sees the man who appears outside, and stands looking at her through the glass. This is John Barrett

John's business suit is neat but not expensive. He wears a collar and tie and carries a large briefcase. Not a conventionally good looking man, he gives the impression of being mild, rather ordinary, pedantic, self-deprecat-

ing, but his face is capable of assuming other expressions which can be inexplicably dangerous

Just now, John merely studies Sally's swimsuit clad figure in an expressionless way, as if committing her body to memory

As Sally moves from plant to plant, John drifts along the outside of the conservatory so that, whether by accident or design, she does not notice him. Finally, when Sally stands erect, and brushes a wisp of hair back, he seems to take a breath, and taps on the window with one fingernail

Sally does not hear this either. She looks round at the plants, decides that she has finished, puts the watering can down, and is about to move to the drinks cabinet. Meanwhile, John has moved again, and is standing in the doorway to the garden. He raps on the glass pane of the door more loudly. Sally hears this, swings round, startled, and stares at the figure in the doorway. John gives her a nice apologetic smile

John I did ring . . .

John's voice is gentle, and Sally does not catch what he says

Sally What?
John I was explaining . . .
Sally (*higher*) Pardon?
John (*louder*) The bell was probably drowned by Ravel's *La Valse*.
Sally Who? Just a minute (*She switches the disc player off with a sharp movement. She feels off balance, and at a disadvantage*) Yes?
John I rang the front door bell, but I expect . . . (*He points at the now silent compact disc player*)
Sally Oh, yes.
John I could hear the music . . .
Sally I've only just come in.
John Lovely weather, isn't it. (*He loosens his tie, warm*) Overdue though, after so much rain of late.
Sally (*wary, curtly*) Yes, well, what can I do for you?
John John Barrett.
Sally Barrett?
John Yes.
Sally You must have the wrong house.
John I believe not.
Sally Do you mean Bartlett? There's a Bartlett near the golf course. Otherwise, ask at the post office.
John What for?
Sally The person you want. No one called Barrett lives near here.
John I am not seeking my namesake.
Sally Your what?
John I am John Barrett.
Sally Oh, you . . . I see . . .
John May I come it?
Sally I'm afraid you've chosen a bad time.

John I had hoped this might prove a convenient moment to call.
Sally No. (*Referring to his briefcase*) And if it's double glazing . . .
John No.
Sally We're not interested.
John It's not.
Sally Well, whatever it is, leave a leaflet or something, and I'll show it to my husband . . .
John I have no leaflets . . .
Sally (*pointedly*) . . . who will be home any moment.
John I'm not selling anything.
Sally No door-to-door salesman ever is. Whatever it is, we don't want it. OK?
John Materially, you appear to have everything anyway.
Sally Right, Then please go.

Sally closes the door on John, leaving him outside, and turns away

John walks away the way he came, and out of sight. After a moment, he reappears, walks back, and opens the door

John If you would allow me to step inside and explain . . .
Sally No. Is that clear?
John I wish you would.
Sally Our alarm system would not only raise the dead, it's connected directly to the police station. (*Her hand hovers over the panic button, which is on the wall near the french windows*) I only have to press this.
John I have realised, of course, that you don't remember me.
Sally We've never met.
John We danced together, you and I . . .
Sally I warn you, for the last time . . .

Sally is about to press the button, when John's words percolate

We what?
John A less than memorable experience, for you, I'm sure.
Sally Danced?
John I'm not very good, You were, though. Possibly it's the dinner jacket.
Sally What are you on about?
John I was wearing one at the time.
Sally With or without, you've made a mistake.
John Torquay.
Sally What about it?
John Torquay was the venue.
Sally Torquay?
John Yes.
Sally I assure you, I've never been to Torquay in my life. I wouldn't dream of going to . . . (*She breaks off as a dim recollection finally stirs*) . . . oh, you mean . . . Torquay . . .
John Yes.
Sally Some sort of . . .
John Conference.

Sally One weekend.
John Long weekend. Friday till Monday.
Sally Long weekend. At that hotel. And on the last night . . .
John There was a gala dinner, followed by dancing.
Sally And that was when . . .
John I had the pleasure. Between courses too, for those so inclined.
Sally Sorry?
John Dancing. Although we didn't. Only after dinner.
Sally No. Yes. So we were . . .
John On the same table. Quite.
Sally Of course! You're *that* . . . er . . .
John John.
Sally Yes. *That* John!
John And Jane.
Sally Sorry?
John My wife.
Sally Yes! John and Jane! Yes!
John Yes!
Sally Well, well.
John May I?
Sally Oh, yes. Please. Come on in, of course.
John Thank you. (*He comes into the conservatory*)
Sally Do forgive me, John.
John Please don't concern yourself.
Sally It's just that I meet so many people . . . you know how it is . . .
John It is a phenomenon I have observed frequently.
Sally Sorry . . . what is?
John The necessity to remind people who I am.
Sally John, the fault is mine, you took me by surprise, I was thinking of other things . . . oh dear . . . I hate lame excuses . . .
John Please. I do understand.
Sally Can I offer you a drink?
John Thank you.
Sally I think I feel like one myself.

John puts his briefcase down beside the couch. Sally moves to the drinks cabinet

What would you like? No, don't tell me. (*Guessing hopefully*) You're a gin and tonic. Are you?
John That's right.

John joins Sally at the drinks cabinet

Sally You see? It's all coming back.

Sally, who has not started mixing the drinks, smiles at John, and he smiles back

John I'm glad.
Sally We'll begin again from here, yes?

John That would be difficult.
Sally Why?
John Memories.
Sally Oh?
John That weekend—I remember every trifle.

Due to their proximity and John's steady gaze, Sally becomes very aware that she is only wearing a swimsuit still, and moves away

Sally Excuse me, I think I'll . . . (*She picks up an elegant housecoat, which is lying across the back of the couch, and slips it on, feigning being chilly*) Surprising, the chill in the air as the sun goes down, isn't it.

John is about to mop his face with his handkerchief. He returns it to his breast pocket

John Yes, isn't it. Shall I carry on?

Sally, buttoning her housecoat, looks towards him

Sally Carry on?
John The drinks.
Sally Oh . . . yes . . .thank you . . .
John Are you still a gin and tonic too?
Sally That's me.
John With ice and lemon.
Sally Yes.
John We remember each other's drinks. That's a promising start, don't you think?

Sally sits on the couch, and glances over her shoulder at John in a speculative fashion

Sally Of what?
John Renewing our acquaintance perhaps? (*He hands Sally her drink*)
Sally Thank you. You'll be able to . . .
John (*indicating her drink*) Would you like to try it?
Sally I'm sure it's fine. (*She takes a deep swallow*) Just right.
John Good. (*He returns to the cabinet to finish mixing his own drink*) You were saying?
Sally Was I?
John Be able to . . .?
Sally Oh, yes. Meet my husband again too. He's probably on his way home.
John Such was my presumption.
Sally Oh, I see. So . . .
John Perhaps I should close the door.
Sally Why?

John moves across towards the door to the garden

John Since there's a chill in the air.
Sally It's all right. I'm fine now.

John I think I should. You're not wearing much, change of temperature and so on. (*He closes the door, but remains near it, looking admiringly towards the house itself*) I like your house.
Sally Yes, it's quite nice.
John Delightful. Secluded and yet convenient for everything. (*He points at the french windows*) That will be the drawing room . . .
Sally Yes.
John Or is it two rooms?
Sally No, it's L-shaped. Though it's on two levels.
John Oh, yes, I see. And beyond?
Sally (*turning to look towards the french windows*) The hall, dining room. Mark's study, breakfast room, kitchen, laundry room . . .

While Sally is looking away from him, John deftly turns the key in the lock of the door to the garden, and pockets the key. By the time Sally looks back towards him, John has left the door and is on his way to the cabinet to collect his drink

. . . shall I draw a plan?

Sally finds that John is not at the door, and looks over her other shoulder to find him at the drinks cabinet

John No, I can visualise it now.

Sally rises and moves away from the couch

Sally Do sit down.
John Thank you. Where would you . . .?

Sally indicates the couch

Thank you. (*He sits on the couch. Indicating his glass*) And for your hospitality.
Sally My pleasure.
John A house this size, several acres of ground, the swimming pool, it must take a lot of keeping up.
Sally I do have help.
John Of course.
Sally I like room to breathe. I like space.
John Oh, yes. Space is nice.
Sally Besides, we're obliged to do a good deal of entertaining.
John Socially?
Sally Some. Mostly business.
John Your husband's hostess. Charming the men while not making the wives jealous.
Sally (*amused*) Something like that.
John Behind every successful man . . . and so forth.
Sally It's still true.
John He's fortunate to have such a partner. I've been looking forward to this meeting. Recalling that delightful evening.
Sally Torquay, you mean.

John Yes.
Sally John, I think it's time I admitted something. (*She sits on a chair to the left, near the french windows*)
John You don't really remember much about it.
Sally No. (*Eyeing him*) Did I babble on?
John Certainly not. You... entertained... me most charmingly. You were enchanting.
Sally I must have been on automatic.
John You exaggerate.
Sally And we talked about...?
John Many things.
Sally Personal matters?
John Fleeting references. In passing.
Sally How fleeting. Come on. For instance?
John Oh, singing your husband's praises, for example, how brilliant he was, full of ideas.
Sally Oh, no...
John How different it was in the early days when you first met, money problems, lack of capital...
Sally (*appalled*) In front of Mark?
John No, he was dancing with my wife at the time.
Sally Thank God for that. (*She shakes her head, picks up her glass, looks at John's glass*) You've hardly touched yours.
John One lasts me a long time,
Sally Wine with meals?
John A glass.
Sally No wonder you remember everything. I think I'll top mine up. (*She takes her glass to the drinks cabinet, gives herself more gin and tonic*) What I don't understand... there was a reception on the first night when everyone was introduced... I remember that.
John We arrived late. Missed the reception.
Sally Oh, I see.
John The rest of the weekend was very intense. My wife remarked that we only seemed to meet in bed.
Sally (*returning to her chair*) I expect she was glad to get away.
John I think she rather enjoyed it.
Sally Really? It was my idea of hell. Nothing to do except try and be nice to some of the most appalling, dreary people I've ever... (*hurriedly*)... I don't mean you, of course.
John No, no, of course not, naturally.
Sally Anyway, when the last day arrived, I thought "Thank God" and had a drink or two to celebrate. That was at lunchtime.
John Lunchtime.
Sally Before dinner, I had another drink... or two... or... I don't know. And I expect the wine flowed at dinner.
John Your husband was most hospitable. He wouldn't allow me to contribute, even to the very costly old brandy he insisted we partook of afterwards.

Sally I didn't have brandy—did I?
John (*nodding*) With every appearance of enjoyment.
Sally No wonder. We don't get on, brandy and me. It's a miracle I could stand up, much less dance.
John I do assure you, no one would have known.
Sally It's not a complete blank. I remember . . . which dress I wore. (*She hesitates, thinking*)
John Most elegant, if I may say so.
Sally . . . going down to the ballroom . . . the table for four . . . it was just four . . .?
John We'd been put together, perhaps by chance.
Sally But the rest . . . (*She shakes her head*) . . . not until the next day, the ghastly drive home, feeling awful . . . I hope you don't think I usually drink like that.
John I think—you possess great beauty.

Sally stands, glances at her watch, moves to the french windows as if looking to see if her husband has arrived

Sally Mark shouldn't be long now. It was him you came to see?
John Not exclusively. I was anxious to see you too. But my business is with him.
Sally Hence the briefcase. (*Playfully*) You are selling something.
John (*smiling*) A concept, let us say, to which he may care to give some attention.
Sally Well, I'm sure he'll be only too glad to help you if he possibly can.
John That's what I'm here to find out. He may not wish to discuss it.
Sally He most certainly will. I shall make sure of that.
John Than I shall rely on your good offices.
Sally (*making conversation*) Do you live far away?
John In linear terms, some nine miles. Millers Wood.
Sally It sounds familiar.
John The big estate.
Sally Oh, yes, of course.
John Convenient for the railway station.
Sally Yes. Very.
John Bungalows and town houses. We chose one of the former. It had the advantage of a large additional room in the roofspace with dormer windows and a pleasant outlook to the front.
Sally It sounds rather charming.
John The railway line does run fairly close to the bottom of the garden, but with double glazing one scarcely notices the passing trains.
Sally No.

There is a silence during which nothing at all can be heard save birdsong in the garden. John seems unaware of the silence, perfectly content merely to sit. Sally feels obliged to say something

You should have looked us up before.

John The possibility was mooted when we parted that evening.
Sally Then why didn't you get in touch?
John When I raised the subject with my wife later, she advised against it.
Sally Why?
John She made the point that, while we'd all got on terribly well that evening, in reality we were complete strangers moving in very different circles, and you might regard such a call as something of an imposition.
Sally What utter nonsense. I'm sorry, but she was quite mistaken.
John I did venture to disagree with her myself, but she reminded me that you would no doubt telephone us should you wish to see us again. I found that a telling point.
Sally Yes, but . . . did we have your phone number?
John You asked your husband to take it.
Sally Well, I'm sure I did if you say so . . . I can only apologise . . .
John There's really no need.
Sally I simply don't remember . . . and it must have slipped Mark's mind too.
John I quite understand, I assure you.
Sally We really only ever get the weekends to ourselves.
John And I'm intruding on one of them.
Sally Not at all.
John Once I've spoken to him I shall leave you in peace.

There is another silence, during which, with deliberation, John takes a small sip of his drink, and puts the glass down again, while Sally covertly eyes his movements

Sally Tell me about . . . your wife . . .
John Jane.
Sally Jane. Do you have children?
John Like yourselves, no.
Sally We're considering it.
John So you said—then.
Sally Oh, God, I did babble on. Is there anything I didn't tell you?
John It was a long evening. We shared a number of confidences.
Sally But I don't remember yours. It's not fair.
John Mine, I dare say, were scarcely worth committing to memory. Which are you considering? Whether? Or when?
Sally What? Oh, a baby. When. I really want one.
John Then why not now?
Sally Oh, Mark thinks we should wait. Until he could spend more time at home. He's away a lot. Business pressures. The usual. I'm working on it. Does your wife . . . does Jane work?
John As a beauty consultant.
Sally Perhaps I should consult her.
John That would be an act of supreme supererogation.
Sally Are you planning to have children?
John We waited for some long time. Too long in our case.

Sally Why?
John It's interesting how we speak of spending time, isn't it. As if the account were bottomless, to be drawn on indefinitely. Not so. As the poet reminds us, "The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, moves on: nor all your Piety not Wit shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."
Sally I don't accept all that fatalist stuff.
John Fate overtakes us, whether we like it or not.
Sally No. We can change it, if we want to.
John Even the past?
Sally The past is how we perceive it.
John The past is a series of events which cannot be changed.
Sally But the results can be modified, given the will. You don't have to just sit back and accept it.
John Yes, I think I might agree with that.
Sally I believe . . . (*She breaks off, listening*) Was that a car?

There is the faint sound of a car coming to a stop on a gravel drive

Yes. (*She gets up, crosses to the drinks cabinet, deftly mixes a dry martini, in a jug*)

There is the sound of the front door closing

Mark (*off*) Sally? Sally?
Sally (*calling*) Out here, darling. Ready for your drink?
Mark (*off*) Gasping. Shan't be a minute.
Sally (*calling*) There's an old friend called to see us.

John gets up and moves away from the couch

Mark (*off*) Really? Who is it? Is that you, Clive, you old devil?
Sally (*calling*) No, it's not Clive. Come and say hullo.
Mark (*off*) Just coming.

Sally pours the dry martini into its glass, leaves it on the cabinet, and crosses to the french windows

Mark enters

Sally meets him and embraces him warmly

Mark is immaculately and expensively suited (John's neat suit looks baggy in comparison), good looking, outgoing—just this side of hearty—possessing the energy and confidence of the sucessful man

John is in a position where he is not in Mark's immediate line of sight

Sally Hullo, darling.
Mark I thought I'd never make it.

They kiss briefly. Sally draws back a little

Sally Traffic?
Mark Unbelievable.

Sally goes to the drinks cabinet and hands Mark his drink

Sally Say hullo to our visitor.

John turns and faces Mark. There is a perceptible moment of awkwardness as Mark appears not to recognise John. Sally fills in the moment, or almost

Sally You remember John Barrett, darling. Torquay, John and . . .
John Jane.
Sally Jane.
Mark (*breaking into a pleasant smile*) Yes, of course. How are you, John?
John Very well, thank you, Mr Driscoll.
Mark Mark, please. Well, this is a pleasant surprise. (*He smiles; sips his drink*)
John Thank you.

Mark becomes aware of the drink in his own hand, and the fact that John hasn't got one in his

Mark I'm sorry. What would you like to drink?
John Your wife very kindly did the honours earlier.
Mark Well, have another. Keep me company.
Sally He's a slow drinker, darling.
Mark Oh, yes, of course, I remember. Well, whenever you're ready John, just say the word.
John You're very kind.
Mark Do sit down, please. Well, how are things with you, John?
John Not on your upward curve, far from it.
Mark Let me see, weren't you thinking of setting up on your own, or something?
John The initial capital required proved too formidable a problem.
Mark You have to believe in yourself, take a chance.
John How do you . . .? . . . if I may ask? . . . when it comes to raising capital?
Mark Self generated from cash flow.
John Self generated. I see.
Mark (*about his drink*) I think I feel like the other half. (*To John*) Are you quite sure?
John Not yet, thank you.
Mark (*to Sally*) Darling?
Sally No thanks.

Mark crosses to the drinks cabinet and pours his second dry martini

Mark Well, what have you two been talking about?
John Torquay, mostly.
Mark Reminiscing, eh?
Sally John had to remind me, I'm afraid. I owned up. You know what I was like.
Mark Yes, you were a bit under the weather afterwards, weren't you.

(*He returns to his previous position and sits*) It must have been something you ate.

Sally No, it wasn't.

John It could well have been, you know.

Sally John, don't be gallant. I got pissed.

Mark Just the same, it was a jolly nice evening.

Sally So I gather.

John One I shall long remember. A veritable landmark.

Sally You're overdoing it, John.

John By no means.

Mark nurses his drink, takes a look at his watch. Sally breaks the silence, good hostess style

Sally John's really come to see you, darling.

Mark Oh?

Sally He thinks you may be able to help him.

Mark Concerning?

Sally A business matter. (*To John*) Where did you put your . . . oh, here it is. (*She lifts the briefcase. It is heavier than she had anticipated*)

Good lord . . . sorry . . .

Sally hands the briefcase to John, who rests it on his knees

Heavy.

John I thought it wise to come fully prepared.

Mark is eyeing the briefcase with some dismay, although John makes no move to open it

Mark John . . .

Sally (*making to rise*) Well, it's time I changed, so I'll leave you two in peace.

John (*firmly*) Please don't go.

Sally John, if you want to talk business . . .

John You may have an opinion about the matter in hand. I'd very much welcome your views.

Sally (*uncertainly*) Well . . .

Mark (*politely but firmly*) John, forgive me, but I had no warning of this . . .

John To be candid, I feared you might not be prepared to see me.

Mark Of course I would, given some notice, but not when confronted by a fat briefcase without knowing what it's all about . . .

Sally Mark . . .

John I shall be only too happy to explain in full.

Mark Yes, I'm sure. (*Reasonably*) John, I've just got home. I've shut my office after a long hard week. We have people coming.

Sally Darling, I promised John you'd talk to him.

Mark I will. Gladly. At my office when I can set an hour aside. All right?

John When would you suggest?

Mark My secretary makes my appointments. Ring her.
Sally Mark, surely you can spare a few minutes . . .
John No, please. It will take much longer than a few minutes.
Mark (*amiably*) Well, that's settled then.
John Yes. (*He takes another of his delicate sips*)

Mark watches him. John sets his glass down—still with some drink in it. Sally, put out, feels obliged to make amends

Sally Perhaps next week . . . no, the week after . . . you'd like to bring Jane over for dinner one evening.
John I fear that will not be possible.
Sally Well, we go on holiday then. When we come back. Yes?
John The date is immaterial.
Sally Please, John. You'd be more than welcome.
John My wife was the victim of an accident.
Sally (*in a hushed tone*) Victim? You mean . . .?
John A car accident.
Sally Was she . . . I mean . . .?
John (*shaking his head*) The outcome was a tragic one, I'm sorry to say.
Mark Oh, no . . .
Sally How terrible. John, I'm so sorry.
John Thank you.
Sally You should have said something before . . .
John It didn't arise, and—it still isn't easy.
Sally No, of course. I do understand. I am so desperately sorry, John. I know that's useless, but . . . I don't know what else to say.
John The results of past events can be modified, you said, given the will. How would you set about modifying the results of that accident, I wonder?

There is a pause. Sally, at a loss, looks at John. John's eyes are fixed on his glass. After a moment, he takes yet another delicate, careful sip, which finally empties his glass

Sally How long ago was . . .

Sally breaks off, as John looks at her

. . . I'm sorry . . . you did say . . .
John No, no, if you wish to know more, I have no objection.
Sally It's just that . . . it was so unexpected . . .
John The accident?
Sally Hearing about such a dreadful thing.
John It appears to be open to question if you even remember her.
Sally I wish I did, John . . . truly . . . I'm sure Mark does.
Mark Yes. of course. She was very interesting to talk to.
John Yes, she was a good conversationalist. She made up for me.
Sally Were you with her? I mean, when it . . .
John No. (*To Mark—looking towards him*) She may have mentioned the work she did . . .

Mark Yes, the beauty business. She seemed very enthusiastic about it. Promotion in the wind, wasn't there?
John She took it seriously, as she did everything she undertook. (*To Mark*) Do you ever use public transport?
Mark What?
John Trains. Buses.
Mark No. Can't stand it.
John I prefer it.

There is another hole in the conversation, as John continues to gaze reflectively at Mark

Mark Just as well someone does, I suppose.
John Quite so. Consider the traffic jams if all we commuters took to the roads.
Mark Yes.
John It was, therefore, perfectly convenient for Jane to use the car. We only had the one, of course.
Mark But then you only needed one.
John Exactly. In fact, even when we went out together, Jane nearly always drove. She was a very careful driver, and I am a good passenger.
Sally Mark's terrible. He hates it.
Mark But you're more dashing than careful, darling.
Sally Nonsense. I've never had an acci... (*She checks herself*) You're the same with everyone.
John However, I digress with extraneous detail.
Sally No, no... please... you were saying...
John Explaining.
Sally Explaining.
John That Jane always took the car.
Sally For her work.
John Also to attend the product meetings her company called from time to time. Once she became a supervisor, they became more frequent.
Sally I see.
John At various seaside locations. Although not Torquay.
Sally No.
John Presumably because it was too far.
Sally Yes.

Mark is wearing the expression of a man who is finding this account tediously long winded

John She enjoyed such excursions. She looked forward to them.
Sally But you didn't go with her.
John (*tapping his briefcase*) I used the opportunity to work late.
Sally I see. And it was when she was...
John On her way back. I was working in the large upstairs room which I believe I mentioned...
Sally Yes.
John ... when a police car drew up outside. The day had been wet and

miserable and it had been dark for some long time, but I was not concerned. After such meetings, she frequently returned home very late. I remember idly wondering what a police car was doing in our close. Then the doorbell rang. And again as I hurried downstairs.

Sally How awful.

John Yes. It must be an unpleasant duty for the police. I couldn't help feeling sorry for them.

Sally No, I meant . . . for you . . .

John It was a shock. A great shock.

Sally It must have been.

John Yes. It was.

John seems to have reverted to his occasional condition of apparent catalepsy. Sally feels that she has been left to carry too much of the burden, and gives Mark a meaning look. Mark's expressive gesture conveys "nothing to do with me", and also boredom. Sally gives him a nasty look, and turns back to John assuming a sympathetic expression

Sally John, did you ever . . .

John (*interrupting*) Do you know, I think the other drink you offered would be most acceptable, if it's not too much trouble.

Sally (*standing up*) Of course not. The same again?

John Please. (*He stands up for no apparent reason, walks past Sally towards the french windows with his briefcase, then pauses*) Would I be right in supposing there is a cloakroom off the hall?

Sally Oh . . . yes . . . I'll show you . . .

John No, please. I'm sure I can find it.

Sally It's no trouble . . .

Mark Sally, he can't miss it. He doesn't need a chaperone to go to the loo.

John moves to the french windows, but pauses to look at the push button telephone

John Is this one of these ingenious telephones which stores the most used ten numbers?

Sally Yes.

John A friend has one. Your husband's office number, I expect . . .

Mark Fortnum and Mason's . . .

Sally My mother . . .

Mark Harrods . . . Asprey's . . . Gucci's . . . Tiffany's . . .

Sally Do you get the bills? No. All right?

John And nine for nine, nine nine. For swiftness in an emergency.

Sally Yes.

John The same thought occurred to my friend. I expect this is a high risk area.

Sally It is. So we take precautions.

John Very wise. Well, if you'll excuse me . . . it must be the gin . . .

Sally manufactures a smile for him

John smiles back, turns, and goes through the french windows and out of sight

Sally picks up John's glass

Mark For Christ's sake make it a small one.
Sally He'll be all right. He's only had the one.
Mark He drinks like a bloody old woman. If you give him more than a thimbleful, he'll sit here all night.
Sally You kept pressing him to have another.
Mark I didn't know he was going to drone on and on did I?
Sally Mark, that's horrible. His wife's been killed . . .
Mark All right, I'm sorry about that. But it's nothing to do with us. What the hell are we supposed to do about it?

Sally crosses to the drinks cabinet and refills John's glass

Sally The least we can do is listen to him.
Mark I'd have thought you'd had enough of that at Torquay. You were stuck with him all evening.
Sally I don't remember . . .
Mark Lucky you.
Sally He was saying how kind and hospitable you were . . .
Mark What else could I do? Some fool had put them on our table . . .
Sally You're not being very kind now.
Mark (*rationally*) Look, possibly he needs to talk to someone, although he hasn't shown any emotion that I can see . . .
Sally That could be just his way. It's all bottled up inside.
Mark What? There's nothing inside John Barrett, except a little man with a unique capacity for boring the arse off everybody.

Sally glances towards the half open french window

Sally Mark, keep your voice down.
Mark (*complying*) A boring little man with an equally tiresome little wife.
Sally She's dead. For God's sake show some feeling.
Mark How can you feel for someone you didn't know?
Sally But we did . . . well, you did . . . I suppose I must have talked to her as well . . .
Mark Not much. You left that duty to me.
Sally Well, anyway . . .
Mark If you remembered her, you'd know. Sort of insipid pretty, clinging vine type, desperately trying to be intelligent, with nothing whatever to say.
Sally The job she had, she can't have been all that dim.

Mark rises and moves to Sally at the drinks cabinet

Mark Darling, how many brains do you need to flog make-up? Come on.
Sally Anyway, just he polite to John when he gets back. (*She glances automatically towards the french windows, before she returns to the*

couch, where she sits) I mean that, Mark.
Mark Have you taken to him?
Sally He was quite nice before you arrived.
Mark Oh, Sally, really . . .
Sally I didn't find him boring at all. A bit strange perhaps . . . more than a bit sometimes . . .
Mark Haven't you realised what this is all about? (*He returns to his former chair and sits*)
Sally He wanted to talk to you . . .
Mark Yet he deliberately contrived to see you first.
Sally Why should he do that?
Mark To try and get you on his side.
Sally Side? What side? For what?
Mark He wants to borrow money.
Sally You don't know that.
Mark The hint was dropped. Finance. Remember? He's on the make.
Sally No, surely . . .
Mark Think about it. We met once. Suddenly, out of the blue . . . why? What else?

Sally does think about it and somewhat reluctantly finds it could be logical

Sally I suppose it's possible.
Mark Money, and you know it.
Sally Even so, if he does need that kind of help . . .
Mark There's no "if".
Sally Perhaps he's in difficulties because he's let things go since the death of his wife.
Mark And you wonder why he should want to talk to you first. Sally, it's a con.
Sally (*uncertainly*) It depends how much he needs . . . we could afford to . . .
Mark If he's short of cash, there are banks. We're not bloody money-lenders. Just get rid of him nicely. You're good at that. OK?
Sally (*subdued*) Yes, all right.
Mark And make it quick. I'm hot, I want a shower . . . God, it's boiling in here. Let's have some air.

John has appeared the other side of the french windows. He stands in a position where Sally and Mark cannot see him. We should feel that he might have been there for some time

Mark takes off his jacket, puts it down, moves to the door, tries to open it, tugs at the handle

(*Tightly*) Sally, where is the key, please?
Sally In the door.
Mark It is not in the bloody door, or I wouldn't ask, for Christ's sake.

Sally rises and crosses to join Mark at the door. While their attention is

on the door, John removes the key to the french windows from the inside, and places it in the keyhole on the outside

This done, John retreats out of sight

Sally It was there.
Mark Sally, what have you done with it?
Sally I don't understand . . . I unlocked it when I went out to sunbathe . . .
Mark Oh, Jesus . . .
Sally I haven't touched it. Why should I?
Mark Now you're not only wiped out for entire evenings, you can't even remember where you put bloody keys.
Sally (*strained*) It was there. I know it was.
John (*off*) I used the guest towel. I hope that was all right.
Sally (*too brightly*) That's what it's there for.

John comes in through the french windows

Mark Everything all right, old chap?
John Fine, thank you. (*He sits down on the couch*)
Sally (*handing John his glass*) Your drink, John.
John Thank you.

Sally sits on the chair to the left, with her drink, and takes a deep swallow. She needs it. Mark continues to search for the key

Sally John . . .
John Yes?
Sally I suppose you didn't notice, when you closed the door . . .
John Yes?
Sally If the key was in the lock?
John Key?
Mark The key must have been in the lock, darling, or you couldn't have unlocked it. (*To John*) Sally's lost the key. Not to worry. (*He opens one of the windows*)

The birdsong becomes louder

You don't mind some fresh air?
John No.
Mark That's better. (*He loosens his tie*)
John (*to Sally*) You won't feel the chill again?
Sally No.
Mark Chill? In here? She's not that cold blooded.
John Earlier, she did.
Sally Only for a moment when I came in.

Mark moves to the drinks cabinet to retrieve his drink. He looks at Sally speculatively

Mark Not lying out there starkers again, I hope.
Sally No.
Mark (*to John—indicating*) We get yobs lurking in the woods over there

with binoculars. She was the local peep show. I think they were selling tickets.

Sally I was wearing a swimsuit. (*She goes to unbutton her housecoat*) Perhaps you'd care to check.

Mark Don't be silly, darling. I believe you. I'm glad you remembered, that's all.

Sally Do you want to make a big thing of this, Mark?

Mark No, dear. It was a mild attempt to amuse John, no more.

Sally (*to John*) Were you amused, John?

John I beg your pardon? By what?

Mark Sally, leave it.

Sally subsides. Mark decides that he might as well replenish his drink. Sally holds her glass out towards Mark.

Sally And for me, if you please.

Mark It's still half full.

Sally Because the ice has melted. I would like a fresh one, if it's not too much trouble.

Mark Yes, dear. Coming up. (*He takes her glass with none too good a grace and uses another one in which to pour a fresh gin and tonic for her*)

John Fascinating, to listen to the constant twittering.

Sally What?

John Of the birds. In your garden.

Sally Oh, yes.

John Such a happy sound. Quite idyllic.

Sally They're marking out their territory.

Mark Like dogs, peeing.

John May not both enjoy their task? They certainly appear to go to it with a will.

Sally You're a romantic, John.

Mark hands Sally her drink then moves until he is standing beside John, looking down at him

Mark (*significantly*) Well, John . . .

John Yes?

Mark Cheers.

John Oh, yes. Your continued good health.

John takes another of his infuriatingly small sips. Sally takes a good swallow. Mark catches her eye, and indicates his watch significantly. Sally gives him a hard look, but turns to John putting on a nice smile, about to speak

John Half past six.

Mark What?

John The time.

Mark Good lord, is it as late as that?

John According to my watch.

Mark I had no idea. (*To Sally*) Well, darling . . .

John Has yours stopped?
Mark Must need a new battery.
Sally You'll have to take it in, darling.
John Twenty six days ago, it was.
Mark What was?
John The accident. Late on the Sunday.

Sally stands and moves towards John

Sally John, it you feel the need to talk about it . . .
John I do rather.
Sally I wonder if we're the right people.
Mark We hardly knew her.
Sally It might be easier with close friends . . .
Mark (*pointedly*) Or your doctor.

John reacts to this remark with a look

John I went to him for some sleeping pills. I found myself lying awake . . . thinking . . . waiting for the dawn.
Mark Very sensible. You must have a good night's sleep.
John Do you ever find difficulty in sleeping?
Mark Me? No.
John My doctor diagnosed depression.
Sally Well, that's only natural . . .
John And offered me some anti-depressants.
Sally I'm sure you'll find that, after a while . . .
John Which I declined.
Sally Why? If your doctor thought you needed them . . .
John Would they 'cancel half a line" or "wash out a word of it"?
Sally They'd have helped you to cope.
John By blurring, masking, an anodyne for the pain.
Sally There's nothing wrong with that, John.
John It seemed to me that, however disagreeable the emotions experienced, they were part of what we are, the life we lead, and should be faced, if reluctantly.
Sally You're very strong if you can do that.
John I found that concentrating on something else was of assistance.
Sally You mean your work?
John The matter I came to discuss with your husband.
Mark And so we shall, old chap. (*Pointedly*) When we have more time at our disposal.
John That weekend, she had been to Bournemouth. The police supposed she must have taken a wrong turning on her homeward journey.
Sally Why?
John The minor road where it occurred would have taken her out of her way. It was, of course, dark at the time, and raining hard.
Sally It's easy to miss road signs in those conditions. I've often done it.
John According to the police, the skid marks indicated that she had been driving at an excessive speed given the conditions prevailing.

Sally Perhaps she was in a hurry to get home. Realised she was on the wrong road . . .
John And put her foot down. Became careless.
Sally (*uneasily*) Not necessarily. We don't know how it happened.
John On a bend. Due to the weather perhaps, there was little traffic. Only the other vehicle involved. The skid marks showed that the car had crossed the crown of the road when it entered the bend.
Sally (*subdued*) People do make misjudgements, John. God knows, I have, now and then. Usually, we get away with it . . .
John But sometimes not.
Sally I do think you should try not to brood about it.
John Forget her?
Sally No. The circumstances. No one can really know.
John It is known that the car left the road, turned over, twice it seems, and finally hit a tree. It was, of course, a write-off.
Sally And even though she was strapped in . . . I mean, if she was careful . . .
John Always.
Sally Sometimes, if a crash is bad enough . . .
John It's chance if one survives or not.
Sally Yes.
John Just bad luck.
Sally John, it's happened. Going over and over it can't be good.
John And yet, I can't help feeling responsible.
Sally You musn't.
John But I do.

Sally sits beside John

Sally You couldn't be responsible. You weren't there.
John But had I behaved differently, it wouldn't have happened.
Sally How can you say that?

Mark's successive drinks are beginning to have some effect

Mark Raking over the past, no point.
John You never do that.

Mark moves to the drinks cabinet and tops up his drink. (*Note: this is when the actor exchanges his glass for the "exploding" prop glass*)

Mark Senseless. What use are regrets? You can't change anything. It's over and done with. Gone. Forget it. Face the future. Look forward. Get on with your own life.
John Yes.
Mark That's my advice.
John Thank you.
Mark Best thing, believe me.
John I'll consider it. (*He leans forward, sips his drink, replaces his glass*) Well, I expect you're waiting for me to go.
Mark (*relieved*) No, no . . . still, if you must . . .

Sally stands up expectantly

John I haven't finished my drink, though.
Mark Don't worry . . . if you'd rather, leave it . . .
John I would prefer to, yes.
Mark Good. I mean, no problem.

John hugs his briefcase which is on his knees

Well, marvellous to see you again, old chap . . .
Sally It's been so nice . . .
John Yes.
Sally You must come again.
John (*unlocking his briefcase*) However, before I finally depart, there is one thing I would like you to see.
Mark John, there's nothing I want to look at. Not now. My office. By appointment. OK? Have you got that? (*He circles the couch until he is beside John*)
Sally Mark, please . . .
Mark Well, for Christ's sake . . .
Sally (*to John*) I'm sorry . . .
John Don't apologise. I understand entirely.
Mark About time. I've tried not to be rude, but you don't seem to listen.
John I listen, Mr Driscoll. I listen very intently.
Sally (*to John*) Perhaps it would be best if you did go.
John I shall be glad to.
Sally I'll show you out.
John There's no need. I'll leave the way I came. (*He stands up, his briefcase still unlocked*)
Sally You can't. The door . . .
John I think I can tell you where the key is.
Sally Where?

John indicates the floor. Sally and Mark stare at the floor, while John crosses to the french windows, closes them and locks them. He holds up the key, and slips it into his pocket

John With this one.

Sally and Mark register that they are now locked in. Mark glares at John

Mark What the hell do you think you're doing?
John (*he puts his hand into his briefcase*) It does not suit me to postpone our talk, Mr Driscoll.
Mark We'll damn soon see about that . . .

Mark breaks off as John takes a gun from the briefcase, and levels it at him. Sally draws her breath in sharply, shocked

John You will see this, Mr Driscoll, like it or not.

Mark blinks, unable yet to take it in. John swivels the gun and points it at Sally

Sit down.

Sally sits down on the couch abruptly

(*To Mark*) And you.

Mark sits down in "his" chair

Thank you.

John puts his briefcase down, never taking his eyes or gun off Mark. Mark tries to clear his head

Mark What do you want?
John A little of your time.

John moves towards the windows, switching on table and standard lamps as he goes. His movements are unhurried as he keeps Mark covered.

Mark I know. It's not real. It's one of those replicas, isn't it.
John I would advise you not to rely on that theory.
Mark (*to Sally*) It's some sort of stupid joke. He's trying to frighten us. Where would he get a real gun?
John I purchased it.

As he speaks, John is steadily closing the curtains (or closing venetian blinds). When he comes to the open window, he closes it, and the birdsong diminishes

(*About his actions*) In case there are any yobs with binoculars, optimistically waiting. I would prefer we were not observed.
Mark (*uncertainly*) Bought it where?
John A gunsmith's.
Mark You're lying.
John I dislike lies, Mr Driscoll.
Mark You can't walk in off the street and buy a handgun, just like that.
John I have a licence for it. (*He shows his licence*) My hobby is shooting. I belong to a gun club.

John has finished closing the curtains or blinds, taking care to stay well clear of Mark. The outside light is blotted out. The light from the lamps is less good, the effect sinister

This is a point two two calibre Smith and Wesson revolver. (*He smiles at Mark benevolently*) Lethal when aimed accurately. I flatter myself I have become fairly proficient. However, to ensure that any wound proves fatal, I have filed the noses of the bullets flat, and cut a cross in each one.
Mark (*a bit high*) Dum-dum bullets?
John Home made, but effective.
Sally (*strained*) May I get another drink . . . please?
John By all means.

Shakily, Sally rises and moves towards the drinks cabinet

(*To Mark*) Of course, I am now behaving unlawfully by using it in such a fashion. I accept that entirely.

While John is speaking, Sally shoots a quick glance towards him. His attention seems not to be on her. Furtively, she presses the panic button. Nothing happens. Losing control, she dabs at it again and again

John (*regarding her mildly*) I fear I rendered your alarm system inoperable when I visited the cloakroom.

Sally, gasping, moves to the adjacent french windows, and tugs at the handle uselessly. John begins to move towards her

John It won't open, you know. It's locked.
Mark (*starting to rise*) Sally . . .
John (*to Mark*) Stay where you are, please.

Mark does not quite rise, but remains tense. As John approaches Sally she shrinks away

It's all right. You're in no danger—not as yet. Come and sit down.

John grips Sally's arm firmly and leads her back to the couch. When he releases her, she sits down in her former position

There's no way out, you see. You may as well accept that, and let us get on.
Sally (*a fearful plea*) Mark . . .
Mark It's all right, darling.
Sally It's not all right . . .
Mark Just keep calm. There's nothing to worry about.
John (*an observation*) You shouldn't make such a promise, Mr Driscoll. We shall have to see about that.
Sally (*to Mark*) You hear? Please, do something . . .

Mark stands up, still holding his glass. His natural authority has returned

Mark (*to John*) You're in trouble, you know that.
John I think not.
Mark You do know. Unless you're raving mad.
John To your observation, am I raving?
Mark All right. You've put on a good show. Why, God only knows.
John He certainly does. There I agree.
Mark But it's over. Finished.
John Is it?
Mark Unless you want to find yourself in the hands of the police.
John I wouldn't like that, no.
Mark Right. (*He is gaining confidence by the second*)
John But who would inform them? You?
Mark The second you leave.
John You have that option. Should you be in a position so to do.
Mark Oh, for Christ's sake, we've had enough of your long winded crap.
John Yes. My wife used to chide me about that. In jest, you understand.

Mark John, you should have taken the drugs your doctor prescribed, you're disturbed. For your own sake, you should go and see him again, as soon as possible.

John I do have another appointment with him on Monday.

Mark That's good.

John I may not be able to keep it.

Mark You must. He'll help you, he'll know what to do . . . isn't that right, Sally?

Sally Yes . . . yes . . . Mark's right, John.

Mark You needn't tell him about this.

John Oh, no. I wouldn't tell him.

Mark So, provided you hand over those keys, and go now, we're prepared to forget all about it.

John But we haven't concluded our business yet.

Mark We will, John. When you're feeling better, we'll meet again then.

John You might change your mind.

Mark I won't, I promise you.

John No. I would prefer not to rely on your word.

Mark Right. You've had your chance. If you don't put that toy away and get out at once . . . (*pointing to the telephone*) . . . I'm sending for the police.

John I have explained, it's not a toy. I would be obliged to prevent you.

Mark You can stop pretending, John. All right, you had me going at first, but you? An insignificant little nobody like you, trying to behave like some desperate gunman? All that stuff about dum-dum bullets!

John You found that a trifle too much?

Mark Come on! Please. You didn't really think you could keep it up, did you?

John I feared the first shock might not last long.

Mark Well, that's something, if you realise that. You're not completely unbalanced.

John I'm aware of that.

Mark Right. Give me the keys.

John I can't do that.

Mark If you don't, I shall phone for the police. They'll lock you up. Do you understand?

John Oh yes.

Mark Well?

John All I ask is that you give me an hour or so.

Mark Then it's the police. I've warned you, but if you won't listen . . . (*He starts to move*)

The moment Mark begins to move, John fires. Mark ducks instinctively to a half crouching position at the deafening explosion. The glass in his hand shatters, its contents spray and splatter. There is the sound of splintering glass. There is a strangled shriek from Sally

Jesus Christ . . . (*He lifts the glass in his hand and looks at it. He is holding the stem, the glass itself is in fragments. Appalled*) You could

have killed me.

John Remember that, Mr Driscoll.

John fires again, just above Mark's head. With the explosion of the gun, the curtains (or blinds) behind Mark twitch, and there is the sound of glass shattering. Mark ducks again, and is on his knees, half sprawling, head bowed, thoroughly undignified. Sally, terrified, has flung herself face down deep into the couch. John surveys Mark

Just remember that.

Black-out

ACT II

A few moments later

John is standing in his previous position. Sally is still face down on the couch. Mark, completely sober now, is crouched, head bowed

John You believe me now, I trust.
Mark (*scarcely audible*) Yes.
John More clearly, please.

Mark moistens his lips, manages to speak a little louder, if hoarsely

Mark Yes.
John Yes what?
Mark I believe you.
John (*to Sally*) You?
Sally (*muffled*) Yes.
John Sit, Mr Driscoll. Make yourself comfortable.

Mark levers himself to his feet, stumbles the pace or two to the chair and collapses into it. Sally slowly sits up

Let us take a few moments to regain our composure. Try a few deep breaths, Mr Driscoll. You will find it helps, I think. (*He unhurriedly takes off his jacket, switching his gun from one hand to the other as he withdraws his arms from the sleeves. This done, he drapes his jacket neatly across the back of his chair with care*)

Mark and Sally gaze at him fixedly, as if semi-hypnotised

Mark What are you after?
John Your close and undivided attention.
Sally Why? What for?
John (*to Mark*) Which I trust you are no longer disposed to refuse.
Mark No.
Sally Then . . . (*She clears her throat*) . . . then what?
John Can you predict the future? For I can't. (*He places his briefcase on a table near the chair to the left. He half opens the briefcase, puts his free hand inside then appears to change his mind*) No, let us talk first. (*He sits in the chair*)
Sally You do realise . . .
John Yes? Realise what?
Sally The friends we invited . . . (*She gives Mark a look of appeal*)
Mark They'll be here soon . . . any minute . . .
John (*looking at his watch*) This early?
Mark We asked them to come early . . .

Sally For drinks.
John (*sceptically*) Really.
Mark If they ring and there's no answer . . .

Mark breaks off as John levels the gun at him

John There won't be. We shall sit quietly until they go.
Sally They'll think it strange . . . especially if they walk round here, and find the curtains drawn (blinds closed).
John Why should they do that?
Sally You did.
John (*mildly*) But I knew you were in. (*Pointing*) The yobs' binocular view from the woods.
Sally John, they're close friends. I phoned them this afternoon, and said we'd be in.
John Do you know, I think you're trying to get rid of me.
Sally I'm trying to explain . . . they won't just go away . . . they'll be worried . . . think something's wrong . . .
John How nice to have such concerned friends.
Mark No answer . . . the curtains drawn (blinds down) . . . on a bright sunny evening . . .
John Yes, I do agree that would look odd.
Mark They'll send for the police . . .
Sally That's what we're trying to explain . . .
John I did grasp that, thank you.
Sally Well, then . . .
John Allow me to explain in turn. One, I don't believe you.
Mark It's true, I swear it.
John Two, should you not be lying, it is a matter of sublime indifference to me whether the police are summoned or not.

Mark and Sally exchange glances of defeat. John studies them gravely

You think I'm mad, I expect.
Sally Oh, no, . . . no . . .
John Deranged.
Mark Good heavens, no . . .
John To be humoured.
Sally Not at all. You mustn't think that.
John Oh, I see. This occurs all the time in your lives. You find such behaviour perfectly rational.
Sally It's our fault. We didn't realise how much you wanted to talk to us, did we, Mark?
Mark No. Didn't quite understand.
John I did ask. Politely, I believe.
Mark Oh, yes.
John You refused.
Mark Sorry about that. Thoughtless of me.
John It was, rather.
Mark You know how it is, John . . . never enough time . . . mind on other

things... business... people coming... should have made time... quite wrong...

John Who was?

Mark (*hurriedly*) Me. I was. Not you, of course...

John So you find my behaviour perfectly normal.

Mark Oh, yes. Absolutely.

John smiles. Sally, more in control of herself than Mark, gives her husband a none too friendly look and turns to John

Sally John, the way any of us act, there's always a reason. In your mind, there must be a very good one.

John There is.

Sally We're quite ready to sit and talk about it quietly, for as long as you like. Try and help you.

John I'd appreciate that. Thank you.

Sally A quiet talk between friends.

John You pretend friendship?

Sally We are your friends, John, believe me.

Mark That's right, old chap.

Sally We only want to try and help you.

John You're most kind.

Sally Trust us, John, please.

John I'll try.

Sally We understand now why you brought that with you.

John glances at his gun, which is casually aimed in Mark's direction, as if scarcely aware of it

John I did hesitate. I have a Beretta automatic as well. But on the whole, I prefer this one. It just feels right. Comfortable. And I calculated that six shots would be ample for my purposes.

Sally You were afraid we might try and put you off.

John I was right.

Sally Yes. But we've both apologised. We'll listen, we'll do anything you say.

John Truly?

Sally I promise. So you see, the reason you felt you needed it doesn't apply any more. With friends you don't need it.

John There's a hole in your curtains (venetian blinds).

Sally It doesn't matter.

John Was the glass valuable?

Sally No.

John I was obliged to demonstrate, you understand.

Sally Yes, I know... but now...

John Four shots left. But then, two would suffice.

John looks from Sally to Mark, and back again. Mark looks sickly

Should it come to that. I look upon it as a lie detector. I suggest you do the same.

Sally decides that she isn't going to get anywhere with that ploy

Sally May I fetch myself another drink?
John By all means.
Sally Thank you. I need one. (*She stands up*) Mark?
John He does *not* need one.

Sally takes her glass to the drinks cabinet. She is very conscious of the nearby telephone

(*To Mark*) How would you describe your marriage?
Mark What?
John A lifestyle to be envied, a beautiful wife. Not bad, good, idyllic, what?
Mark Oh, yes, marvellous, idyllic.
John (*pointing the gun*) Idyllic, no. I've heard you, I've seen you.
Mark (*shrinking*) I don't know what you want.
John The truth.

John looks towards Sally. Sally's hand has been near the telephone. She hastily withdraws it, and continues making her drink

What do you say?
Sally Nothing's perfect.
John So he has faults.
Sally Who doesn't?
John (*to Mark*) Tell me her faults.
Mark Oh, come on, John . . .
John Tell me.
Sally Go ahead, Mark. I know what they are anyway.

Sally indicates the telephone, silently urging Mark to keep John's attention away from her. Mark cottons on

Mark Well, silly little things, you know . . . nothing much.
John None in bed?
Mark Oh, no, fine in that department . . .
John Entirely satisfactory.
Mark Yes.
John Terrific even?
Mark Yes, terrific.
John Mr Driscoll, I don't want you merely to echo me.

Sally takes her opportunity to remove the telephone receiver, and press the memory button and then button nine

Mark I don't know what you expect me to say . . . in bed, it's great . . .
John But you've had other women.
Mark Before I was married . . .
John Many?
Mark I don't know . . .
John Why? Did you lose count?

Mark It's a long time ago . . .
John (*nodding*) It must have been a lot. How did they compare?
Mark I don't remember.
John You are required to remember, Mr Driscoll.
Sally Tell him, darling. I'd be interested to hear.

Sally returns to the couch and sits down with her drink

Mark Sally's the best.
John In what way?
Sally Well, darling?
Mark I can't analyse it . . . just the best . . .
John Even after years of marriage.
Mark Yes.
John Exciting, fulfilling etcetera. Still.
Mark Yes.
John (*to Sally*) Would you provide him with a similar reference?
Sally He's a good lover.
John In what sense?
Sally Skill, Technique.
John That has a pejorative ring, somehow.
Sally I get a good orgasm. Is that what you want to hear?
John My curiosity is not prurient.
Sally In that case, why do you want to know?
John There is a good reason.
Sally I'm sure there is, John. Tell us about it.
John You may replace the receiver.
Sally What do you mean?
John Button nine for emergency. But no anxious operator is tracing the call, nor informing the police. Put it back.

Sally rises slowly, moves to the telephone, lifts the receiver, listens to it, replaces it

I removed the incoming wires from the master junction box in the hall long ago.

Sally returns to the couch and sits down, defeated. With the death of the hope that help is on the way, both she and Mark feel that they are inexorably trapped with this dangerous lunatic

I am a little mad, you know. Just a little. But then I think there is a touch of what we call madness in all of us. (*To Mark*) You immediately blamed your wife for losing the key.
Mark Which key? Oh . . . well . . .
John She hadn't, but you took it for granted. Why?
Mark She tends to mislay things.
John One of her faults.
Mark It's nothing. She's a bit forgetful, that's all.
John I thought your attitude rather unkind.
Mark I get a bit irritable sometimes . . . it's not important . . .

John This forgetfulness—would a contributory factor be that she drinks too much?
Mark She doesn't.
John No?
Mark She likes a glass now and then, that's all. Most of us do.
John (*to Sally*) Do you think you drink to excess?
Sally Sometimes. You know that.
Mark Special occasion, darling, that's all.
Sally How do you know what I do when you're not here?

The sharpness of her manner amuses John

John Quite so.
Sally (*angrily*) Yes, we pick at each other. Satisfied?
John For the moment.
Sally How long does this go on? Do you intend to sit here all night?
John It will be over, one way or another, long before darkness falls. A typical marriage, then.
Sally If you like. Was yours all honey and bliss?
John I was content. In truth, I was constantly surprised at my good fortune. I have certain attributes, I believe, trust, loyalty, perseverance, but perhaps they are on the dull side.
Sally I didn't find you dull.
John At Torquay? You don't remember.
Sally This afternoon. Before . . . (*referring to the gun*) . . . things changed.
John Not dull?
Sally No. Strangely interesting.
John Peculiar, more likely.
Sally I felt I'd like to know you better.
John How nice.
Sally I still would. As you were then.
John I am no different.
Sally You are. We can't talk normally, become real friends, not while you're sitting there . . . with that in your hand.
John (*glancing at the gun, absently*) But I need it.
Sally You think you do, I accept that. But it frightens me, John . . . just looking . . . it . . . frightens me . . .
John Regretfully, a degree of fear is a necessary component of our conversation.
Sally No, John, not any more. We've seen you . . . demonstrate . . . it. You don't have to . . . point it . . . all the time. You could put it away now, so that at least we can't see it. Will you, John? For me? Please?
Mark (*leaning forward*) Yes, why don't you do that old chap.

John points the gun sharply at Mark. Sally gives Mark a look. She feels that her plea was making an impression, and that Mark's intervention has spoiled it. She looks back at John

Sally Then we'll all sit and talk for as long as you like. We can't be friends, John, unless we all behave as friends.

Mark That's right, old chap. Bound to make us nervous, looking down the barrel of a gun. Don't want any accidents to happen, do we?

John I have been trained to handle firearms with care, Mr Driscoll.

Mark Oh, yes, of course, I'm sure, no question . . .

John It will not go off by accident. Only, as previously, by design.

Mark Well, fine . . . fine . . . but you said you wanted to talk, and that's fine too . . . looking forward to it . . . but if we're all on edge . . .

John I'm not, Mr Driscoll.

Mark Not you, no . . . but we are . . . right, Sally?

Sally Definitely.

Mark Which makes it hard to keep one's mind on what's being said, do you see?

John I had assumed that the prospect of being shot, like that of being hanged, would concentrate the mind wonderfully. My filed down bullets would expand as they enter the body, tearing, ripping, destroying vital organs. But I expect you know that.

Mark Yes.

John (*to Sally*) It was four weeks ago today she departed for her weekend.

Sally Your wife . . . yes . . .

John I had a late meeting in town. When I returned home, she had gone. My supper was in the oven. She had left a brief note, instructing me what to do. It was a casserole. I recall enjoying it greatly, reading as I ate, a bad habit my wife discouraged when we were together. I was accustomed to her periodic absences, and while part of me missed her, another part quite relished being alone, briefly as I imagined, doing as I chose, as and when I chose. (*To Sally*) Is that a contradiction?

Sally Sometimes I feel like that.

John I knew a man once. When he was thirty, quite a serious eyesight condition was diagnosed. He wasn't aware of it. Eyesight being so subjective, he imagined everyone else saw as he did. I suppose marriage is rather like that.

Sally Yes, I expect it is.

John I find myself dwelling on that weekend, when my world changed so drastically, yet everyone else went about their business as though nothing had happened. I expect, for you, it was just another weekend.

Sally Yes.

John What were you doing?

Sally I'm not sure.

John I'd like to know. Try and remember.

Sally Four weeks . . . I think that was when we had a barbecue.

John Which day?

Sally Sunday.

John Outdoors?

Sally Yes.

John A few friends; a lazy afternoon; swimming in the pool; sunbathing; drinks on the terrace; that kind of occasion.

Sally Yes.

John You must be hardy people. It rained most of that Sunday. I told

you that.

Sally Oh . . . well . . . it couldn't have been then . . .

John I think not. Do try and hear what I say.

Sally Oh, yes, I remember now.

John The weekend in question.

Sally Yes. We were supposed to go to the wedding of a dear friend of mine.

John Supposed to?

Sally My mother rang, I think it was the Tuesday before. She'd heard she had to go into hospital for tests the following Monday. I was worried. She was afraid it was cancer.

John So you didn't go to the wedding.

Sally It was more important to be with my mother.

John Of course. Where does she live?

Sally Norfolk.

John Did your husband accompany you?

Sally No.

John He went to the wedding.

Sally She's my friend, not his. He's only met her once or twice. Why do you want to know all this?

John Constructing a picture of what others were doing helps. Bear with me. So he did what? Stayed at home?

Sally Some last minute business had come up. Since I wouldn't be here, he decided to fly to Jersey and deal with it.

John (*taken aback*) Jersey?

Sally Mark has some clients there.

Mark Do a lot of business with them.

John (*to Sally; trying another tack*) Did you drive to Norfolk?

Sally Yes.

John The Audi Turbo in the drive, that would be yours, perhaps.

Sally Yes.

John What was the result of the tests?

Sally It was a false alarm.

John I'm glad.

Sally So was I.

John It must have been very worrying.

Sally It was.

John Yet you found it hard to remember when this worrying period occurred.

Sally I'm not very good at dates—when things happened.

John No. (*To Mark*) You had a Mercedes Coupé at Torquay, I believe.

Mark Yes.

John I recall admiring it. Still the same one?

Mark Waiting for delivery of a new one.

John Ours was a hatchback. I don't suppose you noticed it.

Mark No, not really.

John Three days after the accident, I retrieved her suitcase. Unlike my wife, it was undamaged. I went into our bedroom to hang the contents

up in her wardrobe. When I opened the door, it was as if she were beside me. The smell of her, the faint trace of her perfume. I expect I became upset. Clumsily, in my haste, I knocked several garments off their hangers. When they fell, they dislodged a small writing case, tucked away out of sight. The contents spilled out. (*He reaches into his briefcase, and withdraws a single sheet of notepaper*) Envelopes, writing paper, and this, written in her hand. It begins... (*reading*) "Oh, my darling..."

Sally (*uneasily*) John, don't, please...

John gestures her to be silent, and continues reading

John "It seems so long since I have seen you. How long will it be, my love? This weekend, you will be in my thoughts every moment. I do realise how difficult it is for you. I could come home Saturday night, but I have told J. I have to stay till Sunday. Just in case you find that you can get away, even if only for a few hours. You know where I shall be." (*He lays the notepaper down on the table. To Sally*) It wasn't written to me. That will be obvious to you.

Sally Yes.

John It was a considerable shock.

Sally You didn't know?

John No.

Sally You had no idea?

John None. You seem dubious.

Sally I think... people... usually do. They may prefer not to... or choose to ignore it...

John Possibly women's instincts are keener for these things. I can only speak for myself.

Sally That letter doesn't sound as if... well... it was a casual thing.

John No. A love affair of some long standing.

Sally She must have changed...

John Towards me, you mean.

Sally Yes.

John Being wise, too late, yes.

Sally And you didn't notice?

John I was blind to the cause. You wear that sceptical look again.

Sally No, no, I'm just listening.

John You feel my suspicions should have been aroused.

Sally I can't answer for you. You don't even sound angry.

John I wish she had confided in me.

Sally Suppose she had?

John Were I certain her true happiness lay elsewhere, I would not have stood in her way.

Sally Perhaps she didn't know what she did want.

John On the evidence of that... (*He points to the letter*)... she did.

There is a silence. Sally has about run out of things to say to try and keep John calm, and gives Mark a meaningful look, indicating that it is his

turn. Mark shrugs almost imperceptibly. Sally turns back to John, and is about to say something, when the silence is broken by a long ring on the front door

It seems you were speaking the truth. (*He gets up, switches off the lights, and moves to the back of the couch*) A good omen. I'm glad.

John presses his gun into the back of Sally's neck. Sally tenses, very frightened

(*Softly*) I wish to continue our conversation. You will remain silent.

Sally nods her head fractionally. John looks towards Mark

Both of you.

Mark, rigid, nods. The gun remains glued to Sally

The doorbell rings again. Then a knock. Soon after, the sound of footsteps on gravel approaching the conservatory

(*Whispering*) Make no sound.

Lady Visitor (*off*) Hello... anyone at home?... Mark?... Sally?... Hello. Hello, anybody there?... Mark?... Sal?

There is a knock on the conservatory door. Then the visitor tries the door

Well, really, she might have telephoned! They must have gone out!

The footsteps recede. There is the faint sound of a car door slamming then the faint sound of a car starting up and driving away

John (*switching the lights back on*) All is well. (*Speaking normally*) If they telephone, they will get the number unobtainable tone and assume your line is out of order.

John's deadly manner, and the contact of the gun on Sally's neck, have aroused again a state of intense fear in Sally and Mark

(*To Sally; with some agitation*) Where were we?

Sally swallows and speaks with a little difficulty

Sally About your wife's feelings.

John Oh, yes. There is more I wish to tell you.

Sally looks at Mark despairingly

Are you listening?

Sally Yes. Yes, listening, John.

John It occurred to me eventually that her letter was unfinished. Therefore, she might have heard from the man in question, a telephone call perhaps, when it was known I would be at the office. Feasible, would you not agree?

Sally I don't know.

John An enquiry revealed that, although she had attended the product meetings, she had not taken advantage of the room provisionally booked

for her at the hotel, saying she preferred to stay with friends nearby. I found that significant. Would you?

Sally Unless you had friends, wherever it was.

John Bournemouth. We do not. What then?

Sally Some other hotel.

John But, a large seaside resort is brimming with hotels. Hopeless. Where to look?

John's manner makes it plain that he is expecting—or demanding—an answer from Sally

Sally Her suitcase. Something in there.

John Nothing.

Sally I don't know.

John I, too, was at a loss. Yet I felt impelled to continue. Can you understand that?

Sally Yes.

John (*to Mark*) You too?

Mark Quite understandable . . .

John Natural?

Mark Natural, yes . . .

John In the circumstances.

Mark Yes.

John Thus far, we all concur. I went again to look at the wrecked vehicle, which had of course been removed to a garage. The nearside had been extensively damaged, door-frame and roof buckled and crushed, the driver's side rather less so. I searched the interior, cutting my hand slightly in the process. The windscreen and instrument panel were shattered. The glove pocket was intact, but misshapen and jammed. With the aid of a tyre lever, I contrived to prise it open. Inside, was this. (*He takes a sheet of paper from his briefcase*) A hotel bill. (*He gazes at Sally expectantly*)

Sally Where she'd stayed.

John A hotel on the coast but well outside the town.

Sally And that told you . . .

John That she had taken a double room.

Sally In her name?

John Mrs Barrett, yes.

Sally Perhaps they didn't have any singles.

John I determined to investigate that possibility, and drove to the hotel. I have hired a car until the insurance formalities are complete.

Sally Yes.

John It was a pleasantly secluded place of a kind, I fancied, lovers might select in the hope of privacy.

Sally I see.

John Hotels, I am given to understand, are not notably forthcoming in response to the kind of enquiries I wished to make. Porters and waiters, however, given certain inducements, I suspected, might prove more obliging.

Sally And they were.

John A man had arrived Friday, and occupied a single room on the same floor. He was seen with my wife in the bar, they ate at the same table. When they vacated their rooms on the Sunday, they did not leave but sat talking in the lounge, where they took tea, and later adjourned to the bar before finally departing. (*To Sally*) You appear somewhat surprised.

Sally They could tell you all that?

John You doubt it?

Sally If I was buying information, I wouldn't trust hotel porters on the make. Why should they remember all that about two strangers?

John When they left, and in fact before, they attracted some attention. My wife appeared distressed. There seemed to be some disagreement between them. The man had registered as Roger Price, of London.

Sally Do you know him?

John The name means nothing to me. You, perhaps?

Sally Me? No.

John Have you come across him by chance, Mr Driscoll?

Mark Roger Price? No.

John The porter who carried the luggage, my wife's suitcase, and Mr Price's weekend bag, saw them leave in the car together. Yet later, after the accident, my wife was the only occupant. There was no man's weekend bag. (*To Sally*) What does that suggest?

Sally She dropped him somewhere.

John Where?

Sally How do I know?

John But he found his own way, while she drove on alone.

Sally Apparently.

John Why, do you suppose?

Sally I don't know.

John Preferring not to be seen together, perhaps.

Sally Possibly.

John Which might suggest they lived not too far apart, and wished to arrive back home separately.

Sally Not necessarily. Perhaps he lived nowhere near you, Bristol, anywhere. I really don't know.

John The hotel register records Mr Price of London, not Bristol. The porter had helpfully provided an approximate description of Mr Price, but it was really rather vague. It would fit a great many men. You, for one, Mr Driscoll.

Mark Really.

John Yes.

Mark What about it?

John What indeed.

Mark You said his name was Price.

John I said he registered as Roger Price.

Mark I don't see what you're getting at.

John Have you seen my wife at all since we met at Torquay?

Mark No, of course not.
John Never?
Mark I've just told you. Never.
John It struck me, you see, that the change in her could, in retrospect, be dated from Torquay.
Mark And you're trying to make out . . . this is ridiculous.
Sally John, excuse me . . .
John Yes?
Sally I think you said it was around then she'd been promoted.
John Which called for her to be away more often . . .
Sally In that case . . .
John . . . and provided her with the opportunity to conduct her relationship.
Sally Yes, but probably with someone she'd met in her new job. That often happens you know.
John Or, by fortuitous chance, with someone she already knew.
Mark You needn't look at me. Find this Roger Price.
John I believe I have.
Mark Oh, for Christ's sake, you must be bloody . . .

Mark's aggression dies in the face of the gun barrel

John Bloody what, Mr Driscoll?
Mark It wasn't me. It couldn't have been, and you know it.
John No, but I am open to persuasion.
Mark The man you want was the one with your wife that weekend, right?
John I doubt if there was more than one.
Mark I was in Jersey. If I was in Jersey, I couldn't have been with your wife.
John That would seem to follow.
Mark Well then. Satisfied?
John (*to Sally*) The note continues overleaf. (*He offers her the notepaper*) You might care to glance at it.
Sally It's hers . . . private . . . I don't want to . . .
John And I must insist.

Sally reluctantly takes the note, turns it over, reads it silently

Read it aloud.

Sally, tight faced, turning to look at John, finds herself looking at the gun

Read it.
Sally (*reading, in a flat voice*) "We can't go on like this. I must see you soon. Mark, my darling, if you love me as much as you say . . ." (*She stops reading*)
John Perhaps the telephone rang at that point. (*He faces Mark*) Is that correct?
Mark She wasn't writing to me. I don't know.
John (*indicating the letter*) Mark . . . not Roger . . . (*indicating Mark*) . . . Mark. Do you see my point?

Mark Mark's a common enough name. If you're going to pick on the first man you know called Mark . . . for God's sake, I was in Jersey! Sally, you saw the ticket, tell him.

Sally Yes, I did.

John Your memory for small details has abruptly improved.

Sally I saw the tickets on the hall table just before we left, and told Mark not to forget them.

John You left together?

Sally I dropped him at the airport.

John The possession of tickets does not mean they are to be used.

Sally John, listen . . .

John We could consult the airline, I suppose, and ask if they were or not . . .

Sally Will you listen! I drove Mark to the airport. I saw him go into the terminal.

John I don't doubt that. His white Mercedes Coupé is a highly conspicuous vehicle which he might well prefer not to use when keeping assignations.

Mark I wasn't keeping any assignation! I was in Jersey!

John I must take leave to doubt that, without some proof.

Sally John, I've just remembered something.

John You *are* improving.

Sally Mark rang me from Jersey to ask how my mother was.

John That was thoughtful of him. When?

Sally Oh . . . it was . . . Saturday afternoon . . . the day after I arrived at my mother's . . .

John What was said?

Sally Just about my mother, and I asked how things were going in Jersey.

John (*to Mark*) Where were you phoning from?

Mark My hotel.

John Where was this hotel?

Mark St Helier.

John Its name?

Mark The Grand.

John May I see the hotel bill?

Mark I don't have it.

John Come now. A business trip, you need the bill to claim your expenditure against tax.

Mark My client paid it, just as I pay for him when he's in London.

John I suppose we could contact the Grand Hotel, or I could oblige you to tell me the name of your client and telephone him . . .

Sally John, can't you see you've made a mistake?

John . . . but I'm sure you've briefed him as to what to say.

Sally Stop it, John. Please, for your own sake, stop it. You've brooded over this until it's become an obsession.

John I expect you're right. It has.

Sally We understand. Truly we do. You felt driven to try and find this man. But you don't know who he is. You really have no idea. You decided it must be Mark, with nothing to go on at all.

John (*mildly*) There was some evidence.

Sally What evidence? A christian name, shared by God knows how many men. Whatever you're told, you refuse to believe it.

John You think I should?

Sally Yes, John. For yourself, not us. Your own state of mind. Because you *want* to think it was Mark, you come up with one far-fetched explanation after another, to avoid the truth. That it wasn't. But it's all in your own head, John. It's not real. If you go on like that, you'll drive yourself in . . .

John Insane?

Sally . . . into an even deeper state of depression.

John Do *you* believe him? Do you genuinely believe him?

Sally Yes.

John I have given you every opportunity, Mr Driscoll. But I hardly expected a frank admission.

Sally Oh, my God, not again . . .

John (*to Mark*) For I believe you have very urgent reasons to lie indeed.

Sally (*standing up; facing John*) You're out of your mind! Do you hear me?

Mark (*aware of the constant gun*) Sally, please . . .

Sally He is. It's no use trying to reason with him. He is insane.

John (*gently*) Let us put that to the test. (*He takes another piece of paper from his briefcase*) This was not easy to come by. My avaricious porter claimed he risked losing his job. It required considerable compensation to soothe his fears. It is a photostat of Mr Price's bill. On that Saturday, Mr Roger Price made a telephone call. The account is admirably detailed. (*He hands the paper to Sally*) Is that your mother's telephone number?

Sally looks at the bill. She does not answer. John's soft repetition is deadly. The gun lends emphasis

Is it? Is it? Is it?

Sally Yes.

John (*taking the bill*) Thank you. You are not, I hope, about to assert that one Roger Price also happened to telephone you at your mother's home on the same afternoon.

Sally No. (*She sits on the couch*)

John Good. My credulity has its limits. (*He moves a little, and stares at Mark very hard*) You will no doubt wish to withdraw your plea of innocent. I must warn you that any further lies or deceit will be taken into account and will weigh heavily against you, when the time comes to bring these proceedings to a conclusion.

Sally is gazing fixedly at Mark. There is a long pause

Sally So it was her.

John You knew?

Sally That there was someone. Not who.

John How?

Sally I could tell.
John Experience. It's happened before.
Sally He has other women.
John You don't mind.
Sally (*tiredly*) That's how he is.
John You accept it.
Sally If you like.
John What is termed an "open marriage" I believe.
Sally It's the one I've got. (*She picks up her drink and drains the glass*)
John You do mind.
Sally The first time, a lot.
John Did you take it up with him?
Sally He swore it wasn't important, it would never happen again.
John (*a statement*) But it did.

Sally nods tiredly

And?
Sally He lied.
John Now?
Sally I don't ask.
John You prefer not to know.
Sally So long as he doesn't flaunt it, or get involved. He knows the rules.
John Suppose he does get involved.
Sally He knows better.
John What does that mean?
Sally Just that. There are limits.
John He seems to have transgressed those limits this time.

Sally stands up, facing John

Sally (*flaring up*) Who the hell do you think you are? Playing God almighty, with a gun in your hand . . .
Mark (*muttering*) Oh, Jesus . . .
Sally . . . prying and bribing . . . are you playing out some fantasy about being the smart private detective digging up the truth?
Mark Don't, Sally . . .
Sally Is that what it is? Perhaps you should have been one. You seem to be bloody good at it.
Mark (*a helpless half moan*) Sally . . .

John ignores Mark completely at this stage

John I would remind you that someone died.
Sally That was an accident.
John Accidents have causes. And the only fantasy in which I indulge is that I could go back in time, when I would decline my invitation to Torquay.
Sally (*subsiding*) All right, all right.
John Will you tell me something?
Sally What now?

John He has other women.
Sally Well?
John Do you indulge in the same freedom with the opposite sex?
Sally Once. For revenge.
Mark (*taken aback*) You?
Sally Yes, me! (*To John*) It didn't work.
John He appears to have been oblivious until now.
Sally Him knowing wasn't the point. A private revenge. For me. Inside. But it didn't make me feel good. That's how it didn't work. (*She moves and sits in the chair to the left*)
John (*reflectively*) Ah, yes. Revenge. A primitive instinct we are told. But then, beneath the fragile veneer lies the original animal, its basic drives like any other, reproduction and self-preservation. We may constrain and inhibit but when they falter, we get rape, theft, violence, murder. In crisis, the adrenalin flows unbidden, fitting us for the fight or the flight, whichever may preserve self. Isn't that so, Mr Driscoll?
Mark I haven't thought about it.

John moves until he is close to Mark

John My wife and that weekend. She had told you it was coming up.
Mark Yes.
John But, owing to the wedding, you couldn't get away.

Mark is very aware of Sally looking at him. He meets her eyes, and looks away

It would have aroused suspicion.
Mark Yes.
John But with your wife's decision not to go, you contacted mine, and invented a trip to Jersey.
Mark Yes.
John To account for your absence.
Mark Yes.
John Why bother? Your wife would be far away in Norfolk.
Mark (*almost inaudibly*) Sally might . . .
John Speak up, man.
Mark Sally might have phoned.
John In short, a sound cover story.

Mark looks away, trying to avoid Sally's eyes

Airline tickets left lying around to add a little gloss, and your wife took you to the airport.
Mark Yes.
John What then? Your precise actions.
Mark I went to the desk . . .
Sally Excuse me.
John Yes?
Sally Do you mind if I add a bit to the precision?
John Please do.

Sally When we said goodbye, he said "I'll give you a call from Jersey."
John A nice touch. (*To Mark*) The desk.
Mark To say I'd be travelling another time.
John Then?
Mark Phoned.
John My wife.
Mark Yes.
John To confirm the coast was clear. Go on.
Mark Jane arrived. We drove to Bournemouth.
John Jane drove?
Mark Well . . .
John You hate being driven.
Mark Yes.
John Straight to the hotel?
Mark Jane had an evening meeting. She dropped me off, and I took a taxi.
John When you became Mr Price etcetera. Separate rooms, arriving independently, the Jersey invention—you went to a great deal of trouble to conceal the affair.
Sally I'm not surprised.
John Oh?
Sally No.

John looks at Sally speculatively, then returns his attention to Mark

John And yet you left together, having attracted staff gossip.

Mark is reluctant to speak

Well?
Mark It wasn't a terribly good weekend.
John Why? Were the bedtime frolics not up to your expectations?

Sally seizes her glass to drink but finds that it is empty. John seems not to be looking at her

Do please give yourself a refill.

Sally gives John a look, stands up, and moves to the drinks cabinet. John watches her

I wish I liked it myself. Perhaps it would dull the pain for me too.
Sally You're really enjoying yourself aren't you.
John Not especially.

Sally bangs bottles etc. angrily as she speaks

Sally Oh, come on. You're loving it. You've decided he's to blame for everything.
John You find him blameless?
Sally No, I don't. He's a cheating, lying bastard, the pig.
John Amen to that.
Sally It takes two, for Christ's sake.

John I'm aware of that.

Sally Your marriage couldn't have been so bloody perfect, or she wouldn't have got mixed up with him, in the first place. She looked you in the eye and lied, she came home from him and slept with you, she cheated on you too. You seem to forget that.

John By your own account, you found a casual affair unrewarding. In that respect, Jane resembled you.

Sally gives John a look, crosses and sits down again with her drink

It would have to have been important. Meant something. A great deal. (*Turning back to Mark*) Why was she so distressed?

Mark What you said.

John In your words, not mine.

Mark She was beginning to take it all too seriously.

John But surely it was serious. She was in love with you.

Mark She may have thought she was . . .

John And in return you loved her.

Mark I was very fond of her . . .

John Fond? (*He snatches up the letter from the table and thrusts it under Mark's nose*) "Mark, my darling, if you *love* me as much as you say . . ." Not, as *fond* of me, as you say. You told her you loved her.

Mark Only the way people do . . .

John In the heat of copulation. But not to be taken seriously. (*He puts the letter on the table again*) To you, Mr Driscoll, she was merely a good screw, conveniently to hand, whenever you could make yourself available.

Mark You're twisting everything . . . I cared for her . . .

John So you did love her.

Mark In a way, perhaps . . .

John We advance, if slowly. You loved her "in a way".

Mark Yes.

John What did she expect other than "your way"?

Mark Not expect exactly . . .

John She was taking it all too seriously. How? (*Pause*) I asked you how.

Mark She wanted to tell you.

John Confess, as it were?

Mark Not exactly . . .

John What then?

Mark She sort of talked about being together.

John You mean divorce and remarriage. Well?

Mark Yes.

John But you were not agreeable.

Mark I tried to explain . . .

John You refused.

Mark Yes.

John Why?

Mark I didn't want to break up my marriage.

John Oh, I see. Yet you had conducted a long standing affair . . .

Mark It had all got out of hand.
John Words of love had been exchanged.
Mark Not the same . . .
John The same as what?
Mark I've been married a long time. I love Sally . . .
Sally Bullshit.
Mark Darling . . .
Sally Bloody bullshit.
John Is that a passing observation, or do you wish to intervene?
Sally You want to know why divorce is out? I'll tell you why.
John Please do.
Sally My father left me a lot of money. Mark had ideas and a huge overdraft. The friendly bank had turned nasty. He stood to lose everything. I used that money to back him, finance his plans.
John Appearances suggest his plan paid off.
Sally It's still my money. I own more of the business then he does. Divorce, and I pull out. He's sunk. Back to square one. Love in a bed-sit wouldn't appeal to my Mark. That's why.
Mark Darling, that's not true . . .
Sally (*to John*) The only reason.
John Quite why, escapes me, but you must love him a great deal.
Sally I did. At this moment, no, not very much at all.
John What strange creatures we are.
Sally Aren't you the same? All this, what you're doing now, isn't that out of jealousy? Betrayal by someone you loved, yet can't help loving still?
John A little, perhaps. But mostly anger. Resentment at the way she was treated.

John moves until his gun is a few inches from Mark's head. Mark flinches

I am not convinced you have told the whole truth about the cause of my wife's distress.
Mark I have. I tried to explain . . . she got upset.
John And there was nothing else?
Mark No.
John I find that difficult to believe.
Mark What else could there be?
John It is your place to tell me.
Mark Nothing. I swear to God.

John moves away from Mark a little, removing the immediate threat of the gun. Mark wipes his face, shakily

John Yes, it is rather hot in here, isn't it.
Mark If we could have a window open . . .
John No. We must all try and endure it. Why, having been so careful, did you leave the hotel with my wife?
Mark She still wasn't herself . . . I was worried about her . . .
John Where did you go?

Mark The station.
John Which station?
Mark Bournemouth. We sat in the car talking. She became calmer . . . when I thought she was all right, I caught the train.
John And that is a full and truthful account.
Mark Everything, I . . . (*He breaks off*)
John Swear it. Quite.
Mark I honestly believed she'd be all right . . . if I'd dreamt she'd be involved in an accident . . .
John What would you have done?
Mark I'd never have let her go.

John nods and turns to Sally

John Were you here when he arrived home?
Sally No. I took my mother into hospital Monday morning. She was being kept in for a few days. I got home Monday night.
John How was he? In good spirits? Downcast? What?
Sally Quiet. He wasn't feeling well.
John Did he explain why?
Sally He'd banged his head. Cut it.
John Did he see a doctor?
Sally I thought he should, but he said he'd be all right.
John How did it happen?
Sally He took a taxi from the air . . . (*She breaks off*)
John The airport?

Sally nods

I think not. (*He turns to Mark*) Where then?
Mark Waterloo.
John Go on.
Mark Someone ran out in front of the cab . . . the driver braked suddenly . . . I was thrown forward and banged my head on the partition . . .
John Did you take the number of the taxicab?
Mark No.
John Not in case you wished to press a claim for your injuries?
Mark It was nothing. Just a bang on the head.
John So you didn't bother.
Mark I just wanted to get home.
John Yes, I'm sure you did. (*He circles thoughtfully as he continues*) When the police eventually arrived on the scene of the accident, followed by an ambulance, they found my wife behind the steering wheel. Her seat belt was not properly secured. (*He gazes at Sally, expecting a response*)
Sally Perhaps that's why she . . . (*She changes tack*) . . . if the seat belt didn't restrain her when it happened . . .
John Yes. Although as I learned more, studied the wrecked vehicle, I began to wonder. The driver's door had sprung open and was jammed in that position. The car had turned over and over after the impact.

Why then, if her seat belt was not secure, had she not been thrown out? (*Again he gazes expectantly at Sally*)

Sally (*subdued*) That might not have saved her.

John As I have mentioned, the damage was far more extensive on the passenger side than on the driver's. The nature of her injuries, if she were not in the passenger seat, were difficult to account for. I took these puzzling aspects up with the police officer concerned. He told me that, after a violent collision, such things quite often defied logical analysis.

Sally Well, he should know.

John However, he lacked certain information which happily is at our disposal. (*He moves behind and close to Mark once more. He touches the back of Mark's head lightly with the barrel of the gun, before removing it a couple of inches*)

Mark flinches. Not only his face and neck, but every muscle in his body is rigid with fear approaching terror

You have lied for the last time, Mr Driscoll.

Mark I haven't . . . I've told you everything . . .

John You did not drive to Bournemouth station.

Mark I did . . .

John Had you left my wife there, she would have taken the main road out of Bournemouth. The accident occurred in the New Forest.

Mark She must have got lost . . .

John The road led across country from your hotel, which was well to the east of Bournemouth.

Mark Perhaps she went back to the hotel . . . I don't know . . . I wasn't there . . .

John You were there, Mr Driscoll. You were driving.

Mark No . . . no . . . I wasn't . . .

John (*deadly*) When handling firearms, Mr Driscoll, it is important to remain cool and relaxed. Your persistent lying is making me tense. The trigger mechanism is very light.

Mark No . . . please . . .

Sally Mark, for God's sake, whatever it is, tell him.

John Listen to your wife, Mr Driscoll. A dum-dum bullet would enter your head, expand, and blow it apart. Listen to her.

Mark All right . . . all right . . .

John You left the hotel and entered the New Forest.

Mark Yes . . .

John You had been drinking heavily in the bar beforehand.

Mark One that's all.

John Several dry martinis. It was raining heavily. Darkness had fallen early, you were driving fast.

Mark She wouldn't stop crying . . . I wanted to get her home . . .

John And then?

Mark Suddenly, I saw headlights coming at me . . .I tried to swerve . . .

skidded . . . there was a terrible bang . . . oh, God . . . it was like a kaleidoscope . . . everything turning, revolving . . .

John After it stopped? Go on.

Mark I was knocked out . . . seconds . . . minutes . . . I don't know . . .

John After that?

Mark I put my hand out to Jane . . . touched something wet . . . blood . . . spoke to her . . . she didn't answer . . . I undid her seat belt to try and bring her round . . . when I moved her, I saw her face . . . and I realised she was dead . . .

John And then you panicked.

Mark Yes! All right! I didn't know what I was doing! (*He turns his head during this outburst, and finds the gun inches from his face. Turning away he continues more quietly, in a sad, defeated kind of way*) . . . Jane was dead. There was nothing I could do for her.

John But you knew that when the police did arrive, you'd be breathalysed, you'd face charges.

Mark (*dreamlike*) I pulled Jane across into the driver's seat. She was a dead weight. I tried to do up the seat belt. I thought I had. But her body kept falling sideways. I groped around in the back, and found my weekend bag. That's it.

Mark stands up, moves a little. John follows him

John There was another vehicle involved. That did not concern you.

Mark I could just see it through the trees. It had skidded and gone into a ditch. But the driver had got out. He was sort of wandering about, as if he was dazed, but he seemed to be all right.

John An elderly gentleman, I believe.

Mark I couldn't see him clearly. I don't know.

John So you left.

Mark Yes.

John How did you intend to get home?

Mark I didn't know. I walked away, into the forest. Just away. Anywhere. I came across a stream, and tried to stop my head bleeding. Then a path. It led through a plantation to a road. There was more traffic there, but no one wanted to stop. I started walking. A lorry driver picked me up.

John Your head bleeding. Drenched with rain as well, you must have cut a strange figure.

Mark I said my car had broken down, I'd banged my head on the bonnet, trying to fix it, and I wanted to get to a garage. He dropped me at one near Southampton.

John And after your friendly lorry driver left?

Mark Does all this matter?

John We have the meat. We may as well have the trimmings.

Mark It was late. I didn't know if there were any trains. I phoned for a taxi. He brought me home.

John A nice long job for him. (*To Sally*) Do you have any questions?

Sally No.

John I do. (*To Mark*) How do you propose to pay?
Mark Pay?
John For what you have done.
Mark Money? (*A flicker of hope*) You want money?
John In all justice, you must pay somehow. I ask for suggestions.
Sally How much do you want?
John You have already bought him. Why should you pay again?
Sally It's my money. How much?
John Money would not be a suitable recompense. I am leaning towards—a life for a life. (*He seems prepared to shoot Mark without more ado*)
Mark (*brokenly*) No . . . please . . .

Sally rises

John (*to Sally, sharply*) Stay where you are.
Sally You can't . . . cold blooded murder? . . . you wouldn't do that . . .
John Believe me, it would be a pleasure.
Mark Sweet Jesus . . . no . . . I'll do anything.
John Anything?
Mark Just don't . . . that's all . . .
John You agree to anything?
Mark Whatever you say . . .
John (*to Sally*) You too?
Sally Yes.
John (*indicating Mark*) For this object?
Sally He didn't mean her to die . . . it was an accident . . .
John Because of him, a life was extinguished.
Sally Killing him isn't the way.
John It is the one immediately open to me. (*To Mark*) But you say—anything but that?

Mark nods, almost unable to speak. John fetches a chair, puts it down, sits Mark in it, facing Sally and presses the gun barrel to Mark's head

You had my wife. I did not have yours.

Mark looks at Sally haggardly. Sally's face is stony

An eye for an eye. Your choice, Mr Driscoll.
Mark Sally . . . he means it . . . he's mad.

Sally stares at Mark wordlessly

(*Brokenly*) Sally . . . please . . .

Sally shakily unbuttons her housecoat, takes it off, throws it down. Mark turns his head, looking away from Sally

John (*prodding Mark's head with the gun*) You will watch, Mr Driscoll.

Mark's sagging head moves until it is directed at Sally again

You will remain seated. (*Referring to the gun*) If you value her life, you will not move. But you will watch. Do you hear me? Do you?

Mark Yes.

John circles towards Sally. Sally lies down on the floor. John kneels beside her, reaches across her as if about to lower himself... Then he picks up the housecoat, and holds it towards Sally

John (*quietly*) Put it back on.

Sally rolls her head, and looks at John

Put it on.

Sally, bewildered, takes the housecoat, stands, puts it back on

My business is not with you... (*He moves to a position directly behind Mark*)... but with him.

Mark (*half sobbing*) No...
John You deserve to die.

From here on, Mark is making half sobbing noises, in terror, hysterical

Mark No... for pity's sake...

Mark would rise if he could, but his legs will not support him. Besides which, John's free hand clamps on his shoulder. Mark falls on to his knees in front of the chair, cowering, helpless. Sally makes to move towards John

Sally Please... stop it... please.

Momentarily, John's gun swings to threaten Sally

John Do you wish to join him?

Sally stops where she is. Mark attempts to crawl away, his speech a mixture of sobbing and half gibberish

Mark No... oh, sweet Jesus help me... no...

Mark's crawl takes him behind the couch, where he falls on his face. John follows relentlessly, his gun aimed at Mark's head. Sally is frozen where she is, one knuckle in her teeth, trying not to gag

John You will hear the explosion as I fire...
Mark (*half lost in sobs*)... I'm sorry... please forgive me... please...
John ... and a moment later, it will be over.
Mark (*more sobs than words*)... no... no... Oh Jesus...

John fires, once, twice, and then again, three deadly explosions. Sally emits a sound, a terrible prolonged moan.

John You may look at him now.

Sally bows her head, turns it away in a horrified negative

He's not hurt.

Sally looks at John without comprehension

See for yourself.

Mark's head rises from above the couch as he weakly pulls himself up. His hair is dishevelled. His collapsed face is wet with tears. He still does not know what has happened. Sally moves and helps him to his feet. His legs are wobbly

Sally Here . . . come on.

John places the gun on the low table, and puts his jacket on

John Those three shots were blanks.

Sally guides Mark round the couch

Sally Sit down . . . it's all right . . .

Mark sits on the couch dumbly, elbows on knees, head bowed. Sally remains standing

John The remaining bullet is real.
Sally Haven't you finished yet?
John Not quite.
Sally This is what you came for, isn't it. To degrade him, humiliate him. What more do you want?
John My wife was pregnant. About two months, it seems, from the foetus.

Sally stares at John. John's words have penetrated into Mark's mind. He lifts his head dully.

Mark Pregnant?
John I think you knew that.
Mark No . . .
John I think she told you that weekend.
Mark (*dully*) No . . . she didn't tell me . . .
John Well, perhaps not.
Sally (*to Mark; bitterly*) You gave her a baby?

There is no response from Mark

You gave her a baby?
John In fact, it may have been mine. We shall never know. Some two months before the accident, she turned to me just for a few days, for comfort, I expect. You did not make her happy, Mr Driscoll. (*He takes a cassette recorder from his briefcase and presses the "rewind" control*)

Sally watches him. Mark wipes the tears from his face with his hands, becoming more aware

Now, let us see. The microphone is quite sensitive. (*He presses the "play" control*)
Recorder John: No, let us talk first.
Sally: You do realise . . .
John: Yes? Realise what?
John Good. (*He presses the "fast forward" control, stops it and presses the "play" control*)
Recorder Mark: Jane was dead. There was nothing I could do for her.

John (*pressing the stop control*) Fine. (*He removes the cassette, places it in his pocket. Then he puts the cassette recorder, letter and papers into his briefcase, and closes it*) I shall edit the tape so that it merely comprises your statement. (*He crosses to the curtains* (*blinds*) *and moves round the room, opening them*)

Daylight enters the room but the sun has declined meantime, and the light is much duller than previously

(*Switching off the lights*) The police would not accept it as evidence of course, and I should certainly get into hot water for the manner in which it was obtained. But what I can discover, the police may confirm. Causing death by dangerous driving, would be the charge I believe. A prison sentence, I fancy. (*He completes his tasks, takes the key to the french windows from his pocket and unlocks them*) I shall reconnect your telephone, in case your friends do call.

John exits through the french windows

Sally (*gazing at Mark*) Did she tell you? Did she tell you about the baby?

Mark No. That's the truth, Sally.

Sally Is it? How can I ever know whether you're speaking the truth or not?

Mark (*dully*) It's the truth.

John comes back in

John May I use your telephone?

Neither Sally nor Mark reply. John takes silence for consent and lifts the receiver

Thank you. (*He continues to speak, as he taps out the number and listens to the ringing tone*) You must send me the bill for the damage I have caused to your property, of course. (*On the telephone*) Extension four three two, please. (*pause*) Hullo, Jane . . . how are you feeling? . . . good . . . good . . .

Sally swings round, and stares at John. Mark's eyes seek John

. . . anything you want . . . ? . . . all right, my dear . . . see you soon. (*He hangs up*)

Sally Jane?

John places a coin beside the telephone

John For the phone call.

Sally You said she was dead.

John Oh, no. I'd never have said that. I subscribe to the dictum that you should always speak the truth unless you happen to be a very good liar. Which I am not.

Sally You did . . .

John I said the outcome of the accident was tragic. It was. When your husband walked away, she was in a coma, on the brink of death. Her

life was despaired of. She came out of the coma a few days ago. Whether she will ever fully recover is uncertain. She will need much care.

Sally Death by dangerous driving . . . that's what you said . . .

John In the second vehicle was a passenger. An elderly lady who died from her injuries in hospital. Her husband was too dazed and shocked to do anything. A passing motorist found them eventually and drove to a telephone. But there was a needlessly long delay before an ambulance arrived. Mark Driscoll, to save himself, had walked away. And my wife's child was deprived of its chance of life. All of us must accept responsibility for the consequences of our own actions. (*He consults his watch then picks up his briefcase*) I must leave you. It is later than I had intended. (*He turns towards the door leading to the garden*)

Mark leans forward and picks up the gun

Mark You've forgotten this.

John turns and sees Mark holding the gun

John Oh, yes. Thank you. Under the terms of my licence, it must remain in my possession. (*He moves towards Mark*)

Mark stands, raises the gun, and aims it at John

Mark Now it's my turn.

John stops

Mark's terror has been replaced by blind fury

You've had your fun, you bastard. Let's see how you like it. Sally, the cassette. It's in his pocket.

Instead, Sally moves quietly towards Mark

Sally Mark . . . please . . .

Mark Get the bloody cassette.

Sally, close to Mark now, gently tries to take the gun from him

Sally Don't, please . . . let him go . . .

Mark And be sent to prison, finished?

Mark sweeps Sally aside violently. She sprawls on the the couch

(*To John*) Give it to me.

John makes no move but simply stares at Mark

I'll use it Barrett. I mean that.

John takes out the key and holds it up

John Do you? I wonder. (*He turns and walks to the door*)

Mark extends his gun hand, aiming at John's back

Sally Mark, don't.

Mark pulls the trigger. There is a click. John turns and faces Mark. Mark

looks at the gun blankly, pulls the trigger several times. There are more clicks

Mark, don't you see? He was lying. He wanted you to do that.

Mark sits. John walks back, takes the gun from Mark's limp hand

John I spoke the literal truth. (*He shows them the bullet*) There. You see? The bullet filed flat, the cross cut into it. (*He puts the gun into his briefcase and closes it*) I had removed the charge.

Sally You knew. Everything that's happened. You knew it would.

John I could not know. I surmised.

Sally Will you give me the cassette?

John For his sake?

Sally For mine. It would damage my life nearly as much.

John It is not for the police, unless you force me.

Sally I don't understand.

John My wife does not know I am cognisant of her affair. Were I to hand this to the police, she would. I do not want her to. She needs peace, and love and serenity. For her sake, I could not invoke the forces of justice. It had to be in private. Between us. (*He looks at Mark*) I shall not use the tape unless you report my own unlawful acts, committed today.

Sally We shan't.

John Well, then, there's an end to it. I shall leave you together. (*He moves to the compact disc player*) As though I had never been.

John switches on the compact disc player. The music of Ravel's La Valse *resumes*

John goes through the door to the garden: begins to circle the conservatory

Sally turns slowly, and looks at Mark

John pauses, on his way out, at the spot where he paused on his arrival, and again looks into the room. Then he moves on and out of sight

Mark and Sally remain where they are as if part of a tableau. La Valse *ends with its final four beat bar*

The CURTAIN *falls*

FURNITURE AND PROPERTY LIST

On stage: Conservatory with glass panels
Couch. *On it:* elegant housecoat
Chairs
Low glass table
Other small tables
Table lamps, standard lamp
Drinks cabinet
Telephone on wall fitment
Compact disc player on wall fitment
Cacti and indoor plants
Curtains or blinds
"Panic button" on wall near french windows
Other dressing as required

Off stage: Small watering can (**Sally**)

Personal: **John:** Briefcase. *In it:* revolver, cassette player/recorder with tape, letter, 2 hotel bills. Handkerchief. Gun licence
Sally: watch
Mark: watch

LIGHTING PLOT

One interior setting. Practical fittings required: table lamps, standard lamp

ACT I

To open: Bright, summer afternoon sunshine

Cue 1	**John** switches on table and standard lamps *Snap on covering spots*	(Page 1)
Cue 2	**John** closes curtains (blinds) *Decrease general lighting*	(Page 23)
Cue 3	**John:** "Just remember that." *Black-out*	(Page 26)

ACT II

To open: As end of Act I

Cue 4	**John** switches off lights at master switch *Cut covering spots*	(Page 36)
Cue 5	**John** switches lights on *Snap on covering spots*	(Page 36)
Cue 6	**John** opens curtains (blinds) *Daylight enters*	(Page 53)
Cue 7	**John** switches off lights *Snap off covering spots*	(Page 53)

EFFECTS PLOT

ACT I

Cue 1	As House Lights dim *Ravel's* La Valse *plays*	(Page 1)
Cue 2	As CURTAIN rises *Birdsong. Continue intermittently throughout Act*	(Page 1)
Cue 3	**John:** " . . . I might agree with that." *Car draws up on gravel. Front door opens and closes*	(Page 10)
Cue 4	**Mark** opens window *Birdsong increases*	(Page 18)
Cue 5	**John** closes window *Birdsong decreases*	(Page 23)
Cue 6	**Mark:** " . . . but if you won't listen . . ." *Gunshot fired, breaks glass*	(Page 25)
Cue 7	**John** fires again *Gunshot, curtains (blinds) twitch, glass breaks*	(Page 26)

ACT II

Cue 8	**Sally** turns to John *Front door bell rings*	(Page 36)
Cue 9	**John:** "Both of you." Mark nods *Door bell rings. Footsteps on gravel*	(Page 36)
Cue 10	**Visitor:** " . . . must have gone out!" *Footsteps recede. Car door slams. car starts, drives away*	(Page 36)
Cue 11	**Mark:** " . . . no . . . no . . . Oh, Jesus . . ." *Three gunshots*	(Page 51)
Cue 12	**John** switches on cassette player *Dialogue as per script page 52*	(Page 52)
Cue 13	**John** switches on compact disc player *Ravel's* La Valse *plays*	(Page 55)