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SF PERUSALS

MURDER IN THE STUDIO

by Agatha Christie

SAMUEL FRENCH

samuelfrench.co.uk

ISBN 978-0-573-13016-8

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The three plays making up *MURDER IN THE STUDIO* were first written as plays for radio and performed on the BBC. They may be presented together in any order and either in "live radio" format or in a traditional stage presentation set in the locations of the scripts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERSONAL CALL

by Agatha Christie

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PERSONAL CALL was first performed on the BBC Radio Light Programme on Monday, 31 May 1954 and produced by Ayton Whitaker. The cast was as follows:

FAY ..... Jessie Evans
JAMES BRENT ..... James McKechnie
PAM BRENT ..... Mary Wimbush
MRS. LAMB ..... Joan Sanderson
EVAN CURTIS ..... Hamilton Dyce
MARY CURTIS ..... Janet Burnell
MR. ENDERBY ..... Norman Chidgey
INSPECTOR NARRACOTT ..... Edgar Norfolk
WITH ..... Sulwen Morgan, Cyril Shaps, Peter Claughton, Dorothy Clement, Alan Reid, Hugh David, and Ruth Cracknell

CHARACTERS

FAY

JAMES BRENT

PAM BRENT

MRS. LAMB

EVAN CURTIS

MARY CURTIS

MR. ENDERBY

INSPECTOR NARRACOTT

OPERATOR

STATION ANNOUNCER

FIRST PORTER

SECOND PORTER

WOMAN

MAN

Scene One

(The confused noises of a cocktail party are heard. For further dialogue see Appendix Chatter Band A.)

VOICES. *(Jumbled.)* "Hullo Pam, you're looking wonderful. Marriage seems to agree with you."

"Come on in, old man. So glad you could make it."

"Pam's about somewhere."

"Darling, have you heard about Mona?"

(A telephone rings. It is unheeded for a moment or two then **MRS. LAMB***, a housemaid, answers it.)*

MRS. LAMB. 'Ullo, 'ullo... Yes, Kensington 34598... Wot? ... Just a moment, please. I can't 'ear you.

(A door shuts and the cocktail party fades into the background.)

'Ullo, yes?

OPERATOR. Can Mr. James Brent take a personal call, please, from Newton Abbot?

MRS. LAMB. I'll try and get 'old of 'im but there's a party going on.

(The door opens. A surge of noise. Scraps of conversation are heard. For further dialogue see Appendix Chatter Band B.)

VOICES. "Mary, it's lovely to see you. It's been simply ages."

"Hullo, Johnnie, you must meet my wife. She's somewhere about."

"Cocktail, or would you rather have sherry?"

MRS. LAMB. Please, sir – please –

JAMES. We certainly are, but how we're ever going to manage on this travelling allowance I don't – eh, what?

MRS. LAMB. You're wanted on the phone, sir.

JAMES. What now? Who is it?

MRS. LAMB. It's a personal call, sir, from something Abbot.

JAMES. People will ring up at the most inconvenient moments. John, get Mona another drink. Hullo, Lois, lovely to see you. Pam's about somewhere –

(The party noises fade as the door shuts.)

Hullo?

OPERATOR. Is that Mr. James Brent speaking personally?

JAMES. James Brent speaking.

OPERATOR. Just a moment, please.

(The **OPERATOR** *connects the call.)*

Go ahead please. Mr. Brent is waiting.

*(***FAY** *is put through. Her voice sounds remote and rather unearthly.)*

FAY. Hullo James?

JAMES. Who's speaking?

FAY. Don't you know?

(She laughs, mockingly.)

It's Fay...

JAMES. Who did you say? Sorry, the line's bad and there's a lot of noise going on here.

*(***FAY** *speaks again, sounding nearer.)*

FAY. It's Fay...

JAMES. *(Startled.)* What did you say?

FAY. It's Fay, James? Don't you remember?

(There is a pause.)

JAMES. *(Upset.)* Who are you? Where are you speaking from?

FAY. I'm at Newton Abbot station. Where you left me.

JAMES. What's that? *(Angrily.)* Who is this?

FAY. I told you. I'm Fay... You remember – Fay? I'm waiting for you to come and meet me.

JAMES. Meet you? What do you mean?

FAY. I'm waiting at the station. At Newton Abbot.

JAMES. Look here, one of us is mad. What are you talking about? And who are you?

FAY. How often have I got to tell you that I'm Fay!

JAMES. If this is a practical joke, let me tell you that it's a very heartless and silly one.

FAY. It isn't a joke, James. I'm here – waiting. You'll have to come.

JAMES. Look, this is absurd. How dare you pretend –

(The door opens. A surge of party noise. For dialogue see Appendix Chatter Band C.)

PAM. So that's where you are, darling. Telephoning! For goodness' sake come back, people are pouring in. We want some more cocktails mixed.

(Her voice becomes concerned.)

Why – darling. What is it?

(The telephone receiver is slammed down.)

JAMES. *(Furiously.)* A cruel, silly, practical joke! You'd think people had something better to do.

(The door is shut. The party noise fades.)

PAM. Darling, what is it? Who was it ringing up?

JAMES. *(Irritably.)* How should I know? But I'm going to try and find out.

(He picks up the telephone receiver and dials.)

Can you possibly carry on for a few minutes without me, Pam? I'll be along as soon as I can, my sweet.

PAM. Yes, of course.

(There is a pause.)

PAM. You're really upset, aren't you, darling? What did whoever it was say?

OPERATOR. Operator. Can I help you?

JAMES. Oh, operator, yes. My name's Brent. Kensington 34598. You put through a personal call to me just now. Can you tell me where it came from?... Yes... Yes... You'll ring me back?... As soon as you can...

(He replaces the telephone receiver.)

Sorry Pam, but it really made me see red.

PAM. But who was it?

JAMES. I'll tell you all about it later. Do go now, darling. The party will be getting out of hand.

PAM. It's being a great success – that's really the trouble. All right, darling, I'll cope. But do come soon.

JAMES. Yes, I will.

(The door opens. Party noise is heard briefly before the door shuts and it fades. For dialogue see Appendix Chatter Band D.)

(Softly.) Fay... I wasn't dreaming it, she said Fay. And it was her voice too... Who the devil can have been playing a trick on me?

(The telephone rings. **JAMES** *answers it.)*

OPERATOR. Mr. James Brent?

JAMES. Yes.

OPERATOR. I have made enquiries. No personal call has been put through to you today.

JAMES. What? But I can assure you –

OPERATOR. No personal call has been put through to you.

*(***JAMES** *hangs up the telephone.)*

JAMES. *(Shaken.)* But I don't understand. I don't understand... I heard her...

(The door opens. Party noise is heard briefly before it closes.)

PAM. *(Crossly.)* Really James, if you've finished telephoning you might come along. You just stand there looking as though someone had socked you on the head!

JAMES. I really am sorry, Pam. I'm with you.

PAM. Who was it who rang you up?

JAMES. Oh – just somebody trying to be funny.

PAM. What did he say?

(She has a slight change of tone.)

Or was it a she?

JAMES. I don't know... I mean, it was a she... It was nothing particular.

PAM. *(Uneasily.)* Darling, you're not leading a double life, I hope? I shouldn't like that at all.

*(***JAMES***' tone is a little forced.)*

JAMES. You're the only woman in my life, Pam. I can assure you of that.

PAM. You'd have to say so anyway! But something seems to have shattered your morale.

JAMES. *(Bitterly.)* I just don't like silly jokes.

PAM. Well come on, back to the scrimmage. By the way, I asked Evan and Mary in for bridge tomorrow. I haven't seen Mary for ages and one can't talk at a show like this. Is that all right?

JAMES. Yes dear, quite all right.

(A swell of noise as **JAMES** *and* **PAM** *rejoin the party. For further dialogue see Appendix Chatter Band E.)*

Hullo Evan, not seen you for ages. I hear you're coming in to bridge tomorrow? Good show...

(The party fades.)

Scene Two

(The sounds of a railway station. The scream of an express engine is heard rushing through the station.)

FIRST PORTER. Mind them cases, Joe.

FAY. Porter!

FIRST PORTER. Yes ma'am, what is it?

FAY. Please can you tell me where I can find –

(The sound of shunting trains briefly drowns out her voice.)

FIRST PORTER. Sorry ma'am, couldn't hear you. What did you say?

FAY. The telephones?

FIRST PORTER. Out by the booking office. Over the bridge.

FAY. It's a trunk call I want.

FIRST PORTER. The first box.

FAY. Thank you.

SECOND PORTER. Hullo Bert? Seen a ghost?

FIRST PORTER. 'Tis funny, you saying that. That woman was asking me the way to the telephone boxes – reckon as I've seen her before somewhere. And seems to me as when I saw her, 'twas something to do with a death. I can't just call to mind –

(A train is heard coming into the station. The **STATION ANNOUNCER** *calls.)*

ANNOUNCER. All stations to Plymouth stopping. Newton Abbot. Newton Abbot. From Plymouth. Stopping train to Plymouth.

(The station noises fade.)

BUTTER IN A LORDLY DISH

by Agatha Christie

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BUTTER IN A LORDLY DISH was first performed on the BBC Radio Light Programme on Tuesday 13 January 1948 and produced by Martyn C. Webster. The cast was as follows:

SIR LUKE ENDERBY K.C. . . . . . Richard Williams
LADY ENDERBY . . . . . Lydia Sherwood
JULIA KEENE . . . . . Rita Vale
SUSAN WARREN . . . . . Thea Wells
MRS. PETTER . . . . . Dora Gregory
FLORRIE PETTER . . . . . Jill Nyasa
HAYWARD . . . . . Janet Morrison
A PORTER . . . . . David Kossoff

CHARACTERS

SIR LUKE ENDERBY K.C.
LADY ENDERBY
JULIA KEENE
SUSAN WARREN
MRS. PETTER
FLORRIE PETTER
HAYWARD
A PORTER

Scene One

(The confused noises of a London street are heard. "Star," "Standard," "The News." A distant door opens and bangs and street noise fade. **FLORRIE** *calls in a clear cockney accent.)*

FLORRIE. Hi, Mums?

MRS. PETTER. That you, Florrie?

FLORRIE. Yes.

(A door opens.)

MRS. PETTER. Hello dear.

FLORRIE. *(Sniffs.)* Is my nose telling me there's somethin' good for tea?

MRS. PETTER. Fish and chips.

FLORRIE. H'm, good.

(The door closes.)

Oh drat! What's all these suitcases doing here? Doesn't half clutter the place up.

MRS. PETTER. It's Mrs. Keene's things.

FLORRIE. Oh, the lodger. She going away?

MRS. PETTER. Yes, but she's not going to take these with her – only one small case.

FLORRIE. Why?

MRS. PETTER. Because she's not certain yet where she'll be. She'll let us know where she wants all this sent.

FLORRIE. Seems peculiar to me – going away and not knowing where she's going.

MRS. PETTER. What do you mean?

FLORRIE. I'll bet she's off for the weekend with someone.

MRS. PETTER. Now don't talk like that. It's not nice.

FLORRIE. All right, but if you ask me, there's something fishy about our Mrs. Keene.

MRS. PETTER. Now stop it, Florrie. She's a very nice lady. Always speaks so pleasant.

FLORRIE. That's the kind that gets things from shops without paying for them. Confidence tricksters, they call them. Mind she pays you before she waltzes off.

MRS. PETTER. She has paid me, right up to tomorrow and a bit over for leaving the cases and sending them on. So you ought to be ashamed of yourself for being so suspicious.

FLORRIE. All right – but I know what I know.

MRS. PETTER. What do you know?

FLORRIE. Well, it was last week. I was going along from Park Lane into Berkeley Square and there was a party on at one of those big houses, you know, cocktails and sherry and all that.

MRS. PETTER. Well!

FLORRIE. Well, who should I see coming out with a tall, handsome man but our Mrs. Keene. Dressed up to the nines, fox furs and one of those flyaway black velvet hats. I will say she looked a treat, but it's odd, you'll admit.

MRS. PETTER. What?

FLORRIE. Going to swell society houses all dressed up and lodging here with us just off the Pimlico Road. It doesn't fit, somehow.

MRS. PETTER. And I suppose you've got some far-fetched notion to account for it.

FLORRIE. If you ask me, she's in with one of those gangs of society burglars.

MRS. PETTER. The nonsense you talk.

FLORRIE. She goes along to places and finds out where the stuff is kept, and when the house is likely to be empty, and passes the word on to the gang.

MRS. PETTER. And if you ask me, you go too much to the pictures! Gangs, indeed!

FLORRIE. Well, gangs aren't only on at the pictures. You read about them in the newspapers, too.

MRS. PETTER. Nonsense.

FLORRIE. Come off it, Mum, you like a nice little bit of crime yourself.

MRS. PETTER. Talking of crime, is that an evening paper you've got there?

FLORRIE. Yes.

MRS. PETTER. Is the verdict out on that taxi driver case?

FLORRIE. No, not yet. Just the judge's summing up.

MRS. PETTER. Oh!

FLORRIE. You know, I don't see what use judges are. They don't seem to say anything useful or tell the jury what they ought to do.

MRS. PETTER. How'd you mean?

FLORRIE. Well, listen to this, "Whereas Sir Luke has stated in the case for the prosecution", etcetera, etcetera, "In which case the prisoner is undoubtedly guilty – but at the same time you must take into account the contention of the defence, that the prisoner had not the necessary knowledge to," etcetera, etcetera, "In which case you will have no alternative but to acquit the accused." Why doesn't he tell them if the prisoner's done it or not?

MRS. PETTER. Perhaps he doesn't know.

FLORRIE. Well, he's the judge, isn't he? Fancy if you had weather forecasts like that.

(She speaks in an exaggerated voice.)

If the weather improves tomorrow, it will be warm and sunny. If, on the other hand, the depression spreads, it will be wet and cold.

MRS. PETTER. Might as well have a weather forecast like that, for all the good they are. Ruined my best hat last Sunday, listening to what they said.

FLORRIE. Now, I like a man like Sir Luke Enderby, the one who was prosecuting. Gave it to the jury hot and strong, he did. Beautiful it was, especially that bit about doing their duty, however painful, and how people like the prisoner were a menace to society.

MRS. PETTER. I remember Sir Luke Enderby in that blonde on the beach murder.

FLORRIE. Yes, that's the man.

MRS. PETTER. All about those poor girls being lured to their death by a sadistic murderer. That was a good murder, that was. I don't like this taxi murder so much.

FLORRIE. No, it's a bit dull.

MRS. PETTER. But of course, he did it all right.

FLORRIE. Yes, but he looks such an insignificant little chap. Now Garfield, the blonde on the beach murderer, he was really good looking.

MRS. PETTER. Now you be careful, Florrie.

FLORRIE. Why?

MRS. PETTER. That's what all those poor girls thought – they let him pick them up as easy as easy. You be careful of these flash, good looking fellows that try to pick girls up.

(A knock at the door is heard.)

FLORRIE. That must be Mrs. Keene.

(She calls.)

Come in!

(The door opens. **JULIA** *speaks in a charming voice.)*

JULIA. Good evening, Mrs. Petter.

MRS. PETTER. Good evening, Mrs. Keene.

JULIA. Good evening, Florrie.

FLORRIE. Evening.

JULIA. I wonder if I might use your telephone Mrs. Petter?

MRS. PETTER. Why, certainly, Mrs. Keene. Come in.

JULIA. Thank you.

MRS. PETTER. Do you want the book?

JULIA. No, I know the number.

(There is a slight pause.)

It isn't foggy outside, is it, Florrie?

FLORRIE. Just a bit – not much.

*(***JULIA** *is heard dialling.)*

JULIA. It will be all right in the country, I hope.

MRS. PETTER. You going to the country?

JULIA. Just for the weekend.

MRS. PETTER. Well, I'll just – come on, Florrie.

(The door closes.)

JULIA. Hullo? Is that nineteen Chishold Gardens?... Can I speak to Sir Luke Enderby please?... Oh, I see... No, no message... No name...

(Her voice fades as we flip to the other side of the call.)

I'll ring again later...

(There is a click as **HAYWARD** *replaces the receiver. His voice is elderly and rather gloomy.)*

HAYWARD. No message. No name. She'll ring again later. Another of them!

(The front door bell is heard ringing.)

There's the front door. First the telephone, then the door! If it's not one thing, it's another.

(The front door opens and the sound of a London residential square is heard. **SUSAN** *is a brisk young woman with an astringent manner.)*

SUSAN. Good afternoon, Hayward.

HAYWARD. Good afternoon, Miss Warren.

(The front door closes.)

HAYWARD. Lady Enderby isn't in yet, but she's expecting you.

SUSAN. Oh, that's all right. Sir Luke's still at the Old Bailey, I suppose?

HAYWARD. Yes madam, will you come in to the drawing room?

(There is a slight pause. They are heard moving through the house.)

SUSAN. How's the rheumatism, Hayward?

HAYWARD. It's been bad lately, what with the telephone and answering the door.

SUSAN. Oh I'm sorry.

HAYWARD. These large houses are very inconvenient. I said to her ladyship only yesterday, how different it would be if we could have a nice flat.

SUSAN. A nice flat wouldn't take all Lady Enderby's nice things.

HAYWARD. Ye-e-es, her ladyship has got some nice things. She's out at the sale rooms this afternoon.

SUSAN. Oh, so that's where she is! There'll be even more lovely things presently. No hope of that nice flat, Hayward.

HAYWARD. No.

SUSAN. It's more likely to be an even larger house.

HAYWARD. Oh, don't suggest that, madam. Would you care for the evening paper?

SUSAN. No thanks. I'll amuse myself with a book.

HAYWARD. Right, madam.

SUSAN. What's this one? *Ogden on Criminal Jurisprudence*. That's Sir Luke's, I suppose.

HAYWARD. Yes.

SUSAN. A bit heavy for me.

(The front door opens and closes. Someone is heard approaching.)

HAYWARD. That's either her ladyship or Sir Luke.

SIR LUKE. Well, well, look who's here!

SUSAN. Hello Luke.

SIR LUKE. Lovely to see you, Susan. Where's Marion?

SUSAN. At the sale rooms.

SIR LUKE. That will mean more Buhl cabinets and Aubusson carpets and Chinese bronzes! *(Quietly.)* Any telephone messages for me, Hayward?

HAYWARD. A lady rang up just now, sir. She didn't leave her name or a message.

*(***SIR LUKE** *speaks rather falsely.)*

SIR LUKE. I wonder who that could be.

SUSAN. *(Ironically.)* I suppose you couldn't possibly guess.

HAYWARD. Shall I bring in tea, sir?

SIR LUKE. Yes, please.

HAYWARD. Thank you, sir.

(The door closes softly.)

SUSAN. Do you encourage them to ring you up here?

SIR LUKE. I don't know what you mean!

SUSAN. Come off it, darling. I mean your various lady friends.

SIR LUKE. Aren't you well aware, Susan, that you're the only girl I've ever loved?

SUSAN. I'm aware that you're never at a loss for an answer! How did the case go?

SIR LUKE. The case?

SUSAN. Haven't you just come from the Old Bailey?

SIR LUKE. Oh, that. Guilty. Couldn't have been any other verdict. Why the jury wanted to stay out two hours and a half, I can't imagine.

SUSAN. No indeed. After your masterly speech the jury should have brought him in guilty without bothering to leave the box!

SIR LUKE. After all, he did shoot the taxi driver.

YELLOW IRIS

by Agatha Christie

SAMUEL FRENCH

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YELLOW IRIS was first performed on the BBC National Programme on Tuesday 2 November 1937. The original broadcast was featured with music composed by Michael Sayer and lyrics by Christopher Hassall. The cast was as follows:

HERCULE POIROT.....Anthony Holles
PAULINE WEATHERBY..... Evelyn Neilson
SEÑORA LOLA VALDEZ..... Martita Hunt
BARTON RUSSELL.....Sydney Keith
ANTHONY CHAPPELL.....Frank Drew
STEPHEN CARTER.....Peter Scott
WAITER.....Dino Galvani
CLOAKROOM ATTENDANT..... Audrey Cameron
COMPÉRE.....Bernard Jukes

CHARACTERS

HERCULE POIROT
PAULINE WEATHERBY
SEÑORA LOLA VALDEZ
BARTON RUSSELL
ANTHONY CHAPPELL
STEPHEN CARTER
WAITER
CLOAKROOM ATTENDANT
COMPÉRE

Scene One

(The restaurant of the hotel Jardin des Cygnes. Mixed restaurant chatter is heard.)

PAULINE. *(Urgently.)* Waiter! Waiter!

WAITER. Mademoiselle?

PAULINE. Where can I telephone? It's desperately urgent.

WAITER. The telephone, mam'selle, is in there.

PAULINE. Thank you.

(The restaurant chatter fades.)

Scene Two

(The hotel lobby. The porter's bell from the front desk is heard. The **CLOAKROOM ATTENDANT** *speaks efficiently as* **SEÑORA LOLA VALDEZ** *arrives.)*

ATTENDANT. Good evening, madam. Can I take your cloak?

LOLA. Yes, please.

ATTENDANT. Thank you, madam.

LOLA. Tell me, the telephone – where is it?

ATTENDANT. The telephone, madam? Just outside this cloakroom, on your right, madam.

LOLA. Ah yes. Thank you. *(Quietly.)* Is it private? I have a very important personal message to give. I would not like anyone to –

ATTENDANT. Quite private, madam. On your right as you go out.

LOLA. Oh, thank you.

(Fade.)

Scene Three

(The study of **HERCULE POIROT**. *The telephone rings.)*

POIROT. Hélas! Never is there peace.

(He calls.)

Jules! Jules! Le téléphone!

(There is no reply. The telephone continues to ring.)

Zut alors!

(He lifts the receiver.)

Hallo!

*(***PAULINE** *speaks, disguising her voice.)*

PAULINE. *(Urgently.)* Is that Monsieur Hercule Poirot? Is that Hercule Poirot?

POIROT. Hercule Poirot speaks!

PAULINE. Monsieur Poirot, can you come at once – at once? I'm in great danger, I know it!

POIROT. Who are you? From where are you speaking?

*(***PAULINE** *sounds more distant.)*

PAULINE. At once… It may be life or death! The Jardin des Cygnes…at once…table with yellow irises –

(The line goes dead.)

POIROT. Hallo! Hallo!

(He rattles the receiver.)

Hallo! *(Quietly.)* The Jardin des Cygnes, hein? There is something here very curious.

(Fade.)

Scene Four

(Restaurant at Jardin des Cygnes. Mixed restaurant chatter and music.)

["YOU'RE GOOD FOR MY BAD HABITS"]

CHORUS

YOU'RE GOOD FOR MY BAD HABITS,
I CAN'T REMEMBER NOW
THE WAY TO SAY, "OH! BLIMEY!"
TRY ME – NO KIDDIN' –
YOU'RE GOOD FOR MY BAD HABITS,
YOU'VE DONE THE TRICK SOMEHOW,
AND ALL WITHOUT A SINGLE ROW.
FOR YEARS I'VE WAITED
FOR SOMEONE THAT LOVED ME YET HATED
ME BITING MY NAILS.
YOU GAVE ME SOMETHING TO CARE FOR,
AND THEREFORE
I WENT BACK ON THE RAILS.
YOU'RE GOOD FOR MY BAD HABITS,
IF I COULD MARRY YOU,
YOU'D FIND THAT I COULD DO GOOD TOO.

VERSE

SOME PEOPLE LIVE IN A CHRONIC HURRY,
NOTHING BUT WORRY
ALL THE DAY THROUGH
BUT LIFE WILL MOVE IN A NEW DIRECTION
WHEN THERE'S AFFECTION
TO GUIDE YOU.

(The **CHORUS** *reprises over the following dialogue.)*

WAITER. Buona sera, Monsieur Poirot. Welcome to the Jardin des Cygnes. You desire a table, yes?

POIROT. No, no, my good Luigi. I seek here for some friends – perhaps they are not here yet.

WAITER. It is a big party?

POIROT. Non – non. Ah, let me see, that table in the corner with the yellow irises!

WAITER. Yes?

POIROT. A little question, if it is not indiscreet. On all the other tables there are tulips – pink tulips. Why on that one table have you yellow irises?

WAITER. A command, monsieur – a special order. No doubt to please one of the ladies.

POIROT. But of course. And the table is…?

WAITER. Mr. Barton Russell's table – an American. Rich, oh là là, so rich!

POIROT. Aha, and one must study the whims of the ladies, must one not, my good Luigi?

WAITER. Monsieur has said it.

(Light applause is heard at the end of the number.)

POIROT. But tiens, I see at the table an acquaintance of mine. I must go and speak to him!

(There is a pause.)

Bon soir! Bon soir! Is it not my friend Anthony Chappell?

CHAPPELL. By all that's wonderful, Poirot, the police hound. Come and sit down. Let us discourse of crime. Let us go further and drink to crime!

POIROT. Thank you, mon cher Anthony.

(An instrumental version of "You Live In My Heart" underscores the restaurant chatter.)

CHAPPELL. There's a glass there!

POIROT. A little only…

CHAPPELL. Now tell me what you're doing here. There isn't a dead body in the place – positively not a single one!

POIROT. You seem very gay, mon cher?

CHAPPELL. Gay? I'm steeped in misery, wallowing in gloom. *(Confidentially.)* You hear this tune they're playing?

POIROT. Yes?

CHAPPELL. You recognise it?

POIROT. Something perhaps to do with your baby having left you?

CHAPPELL. Not a bad guess, but wrong for once. "You Live In My Heart" – that's what it's called!

POIROT. Aha!

CHAPPELL. *(Mournfully.)* My favourite tune – my favourite restaurant and my favourite band. And my favourite girl is here and she's dancing it with someone else!

POIROT. Hence the melancholy?

CHAPPELL. Exactly. Pauline and I, you see, have had what the vulgar call "words." That's to say, she's had ninety-five out of every one hundred. My five are, "But darling, I can explain!" Then she starts in again with her ninety-five and we get no further. I think I shall poison myself!

POIROT. Pauline?

CHAPPELL. Pauline Weatherby. Barton Russell's sister-in-law. Young, lovely, disgustingly rich. This is Barton's party. D'you know him?

POIROT. Non, I have still the pleasure. Who else is at this party?

CHAPPELL. You'll meet 'em in a minute. Forgive me, Monsieur Poirot, but that girl's going to sing.

POIROT. And this being your favourite tune – perhaps the lyric has a special message?

CHAPPELL. Perhaps!

["YOU LIVE IN MY HEART"]

I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ADORE YOU
SOON AS I SAW YOU.
UNDER THE MOON
THIS NEW ROMANCE
HAS ONLY JUST STARTED,
WHY MUST WE BE PARTED
SO SOON?
YOU LIVE IN MY HEART,

AND YOU'RE A PART OF ALL THE LOVELINESS
I SEE.
YOU LIVE IN MY DREAMS,
EVEN THE SCHEMES
I MAKE ARE FASHIONED FOR YOU ONLY.
YOU LIVE IN MY HEART,
NO MATTER HOW THE WAVES OF OCEAN ROLL BETWEEN.
RIGHT – RIGHT FROM THE START,
I'VE ALWAYS HELD YOU CLOSE FOR YOU TO LIVE
IN MY HEART.

(Warm applause and mixed chatter is heard.)

(Sighing.) Ah, well!

POIROT. A very "affecting" lyric, mon vieux – but before it, you were telling me who was at this party apart from the charming Miss Weatherby.

CHAPPELL. Oh yes, of course. Well, there's Lola Valdez – you know, the South American dancer in the metropole show. Stephen Carter, he's in the diplomatic – very hush, hush – known as Silent Stephen – he's… Hullo, here they come. Here's somebody I want you to meet –

(There is a pause.)

Barton Russell – Monsieur Hercule Poirot.

RUSSELL. What, is this the great Monsieur Poirot? I'm very glad to meet you, sir. Let me introduce Señora Valdez.

VALDEZ. How do you do?

POIROT. Enchanté, mademoiselle!

RUSSELL. And Miss Weatherby.

POIROT. Enchanté, mademoiselle!

PAULINE. How do you do!

RUSSELL. Won't you sit down and join us? That is unless…

CHAPPELL. He's got an appointment with a body, I believe. Or is it an absconding financier?

POIROT. Ah, my friend, do you think I am never off duty? May I not for once seek only to amuse myself?

CHAPPELL. Perhaps you've got an appointment with Carter here? The latest from Geneva! Stolen plans must be found or war declared tomorrow!

PAULINE. *(Cuttingly.)* Must you be so completely idiotic, Tony?

CHAPPELL. Sorry, Pauline.

POIROT. How severe you are, mademoiselle!

PAULINE. I hate people who play the fool all the time.

POIROT. Ah, then I must converse only of serious matters!

PAULINE. Oh no, Monsieur Poirot, I didn't mean you!

POIROT. Ah, bon.

PAULINE. Are you really a kind of Sherlock Holmes and do wonderful deductions?

POIROT. Ah, the deductions – they are not so easy in real life. But shall I try?

PAULINE. Yes, do!

POIROT. Now then, I deduce – that yellow irises are your favourite flowers?

PAULINE. Quite wrong, Monsieur Poirot. Lily of the Valley or roses!

POIROT. *(Sighs.)* A failure. Never mind, I will try once more. This evening, not very long ago, you telehphoned to someone.

PAULINE. Quite right!

POIROT. It was not long after you arrived here?

PAULINE. Right again. I telephoned the minute I got inside doors.

POIROT. Ah, that is not so good. You telephoned *before* you came to this table?

PAULINE. Yes.

POIROT. Decidedly very bad.

PAULINE. Oh no, I think it was very clever of you. How did you know I had telephoned?

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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