

# **SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL**

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# 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**

**COMPÈRE**



## 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 telephoned 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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