

## **JOHN #1 (w/Christine & Peter)**

**JOHN.** Good evening, Christine. How have you been keeping? Is Selwyn still working you hard? I hope so, because... *(He sees PETER.)* Oh!

**CHRISTINE.** This is a very good friend of mine – Peter....

**PETER.** Fletcher.

**CHRISTINE.** John Douglas.

**JOHN.** How do you do?

**PETER.** How are you? Excuse me, I'll just pop off and slip a jacket on.

*(PETER goes off through the main door.)*

**JOHN.** Yes... *(To CHRISTINE.)* Where's Selwyn?

**CHRISTINE.** Mr. Piper had to go out. Something turned up quite suddenly.

**JOHN.** Will he be back soon?

**CHRISTINE.** I'm not sure. Mr. Fletcher will know.

**JOHN.** Will he?

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**CHRISTINE.** I'm sure he will.

**JOHN.** I take it he's gone *home* for his jacket?

**CHRISTINE.** Yes, he has. He lives next door.

**JOHN.** I see. Have you known him long?

**CHRISTINE.** A while. Let me get you a drink.

**JOHN.** Thank you.

**CHRISTINE.** I'm sure he won't be long.

**JOHN.** Who? Your very good friend, or Selwyn?

**CHRISTINE.** Both. It is pink gin, isn't it? With no ice?

**JOHN.** Yes. I say, I hope Selwyn remembered my appointment. I was beginning to think I got the right time but the wrong author. *(He laughs nervously.)*

**CHRISTINE.** Actually, it's right author, wrong time.

**JOHN.** I beg your pardon? Oh, I see what you mean. I'm five minutes late.

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**CHRISTINE.** Er – how's the golf?

**JOHN.** The golf? Oh, not too good, I'm afraid. I've been so damn busy lately. The other day someone asked me what my handicap was and I said "work". What was it that turned up?

**CHRISTINE.** I beg your pardon?

**JOHN.** You said something had turned up. Quite suddenly. I was wondering what it was.

**CHRISTINE.** I'm sure you were. I know I am. You see, he didn't tell me.

**JOHN.** He just left?

**CHRISTINE.** Yes.

*(PETER enters. He has taken off his dressing gown and he carries his tie and his jacket.)*

**PETER.** There. Wasn't long, was I? Excuse me while I put on my tie. I always dress for dinner.

**JOHN.** Of course. Are you also a very good friend of Selwyn's, Mr...?

**PETER.** Fletcher. No, I'm more of an admirer. Of his books, you know.

**JOHN.** As his publisher, I can safely say I do know.

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**PETER.** Yes. Belton, Gleeson and Douglas. Would you mind?

*(He gives JOHN his jacket. JOHN takes it, looking stupefied.)*

**JOHN.** Have you any idea where he's gone?

*(A pause while PETER considers the metaphysical implications.)*

**PETER.** No. I don't know him well enough.

**JOHN.** It really is most important that I see him. There's his new book to discuss and the film rights... *(He takes his drink from CHRISTINE.)* Thank you. Look, there's nothing wrong is there?

**PETER.** Why? Should they be?

**JOHN.** No, of course not. But you seem to be... Nothing's happened, has it?

**PETER.** Excuse me. Is my tie straight?

**JOHN.** It's about the only thing that is.

## **JOHN #2 (w/Selwyn)**

**JOHN.** Where's Imogen?

**SELWYN.** She's through there, laid out on the bed.

**JOHN.** I'm not surprised. She's been through a hell of a lot in the past hour.

**SELWYN.** Rather more than you imagine.

**JOHN.** What?

**SELWYN.** She's dead.

**JOHN.** Dead?

**SELWYN.** I killed her. Poisoned her whiskey. *(He drinks appreciatively.)*

**JOHN.** My God, Selwyn... !

**SELWYN.** My dear fellow, you appear shocked. Isn't it what we always intended?

**JOHN.** You fool! You'll never get away with it.

**SELWYN.** The question is not whether *I'll* get away with it, but whether *we* will.

**JOHN.** I had nothing to do with it.

## **JOHN #2 (w/Selwyn)**

**SELWYN.** Then go to the police and say, "I took part in the first attempt to kill Imogen, which, I'm pleased to say, failed, but I took no part in the second attempt, which, unfortunately succeeded". I can just visualize their constabulary cynicism.

**JOHN.** But I wasn't even here. I was at Imogen's.

**SELWYN.** Prove it.

**JOHN.** How can I?

**SELWYN.** Do as I tell you and everything will be all right. The plan is exactly the same. She committed suicide. The only thing that's changed is the venue.

**JOHN.** I refuse to have any part of this.

**SELWYN.** Very well. I shall tell the police that you killed her. It'll be my word against yours and I'm much more convincing than you are.

**JOHN.** You bastard! You ... !

**SELWYN.** That'll do, John. You've no choice. We stick to the same story about my return to life.

**JOHN.** And where was I when Imogen died?

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**SELWYN.** Here.

**JOHN.** You mean I actually saw her do it?

**SELWYN.** No. After Christine and Fletcher left, Imogen confessed to my murder. She seemed one degree under, so you suggested she go into the bedroom to lie down. Then I recovered from my faint and, after you'd recovered from the shock, you went into the bedroom to tell Imogen, and found her dead.

*(A pause, while John concentrates miserably.)*

**JOHN.** I'll never convince anyone; I've only just learned the first story.

**SELWYN.** Don't worry, I'll be here, holding your hand.

**JOHN.** I don't like it.

**SELWYN.** I was speaking metaphorically. But you don't have to like it. Just do it.

**JOHN.** But — but how did she take the poison?

**SELWYN.** In her Scotch, just as before.

**JOHN.** Add the blanks in the gun? Is that the same story?

## **JOHN #2 (w/Selwyn)**

**SELWYN.** Just as we rehearsed it. (*Offering the dish of nuts.*) Have a nut?

**JOHN.** Something's bound to go wrong.

**SELWYN.** With any luck.

**JOHN.** What?

**SELWYN.** I thrive on the unexpected. And there is an unexpected quality about my next-door neighbor.

**JOHN.** You're mad, Selwyn. Stark, staring, bloody mad.