

PETER #1 (w/Christine)

PETER. Have you cheered up a bit?

CHRISTINE. A little.

PETER. Splendid. Cheering up damsels in distress is my speciality. Now I hate to return to a rather morbid subject, but who is — was...?

CHRISTINE. Selwyn Piper.

PETER. You don't mean Selwyn Piper, the crime writer?

CHRISTINE. Yes.

PETER. But this is absolutely marvelous! I've read everything he wrote. I've always wanted to meet him. *(His face falls)* Only now that I have it looks as if I never will. Yes, I've been a Piper fan for years. I always put the book down just before the last chapter then I pop into bed and lie awake until I've worked it out. Then I get up and finish it to see if I was right. Fantastic, isn't it? For a whole month there's only been that wall between Selwyn Piper and me and I never knew it. *(His manner suddenly becomes serious.)* You're in a bit of a mess, aren't you.

CHRISTINE. Yes, I suppose I am.

PETER. You didn't kill him, did you?

CHRISTINE. No, I didn't.

PETER #1 (w/Christine)

PETER. Thank goodness for that. Not that I thought you did. You're far too obvious. You were alone with a body, looking disgustingly guilty, your scarf in the dead man's hand... We've got to find another suspect — it's our only hope.

CHRISTINE. But ...

PETER. Don't argue. Leave everything to me. Now the first possibility is that I did it.

CHRISTINE. You?

PETER. Well, I've just turned up from nowhere.

CHRISTINE. Next door.

PETER. Your mustn't be so trusting. I've no motive, no connection with the corpse. In a book I'd turn out to be the murderer every time. I'm not, mind you, but I'm such a good bet that I'm almost surprised that I'm not. But I've let you out, so it's only fair you do the same for me. And who does that leave?

CHRISTINE. The woman.

PETER. Suede jacket and glasses. You rang the bell...

CHRISTINE. And she opened the door. She said she'd heard shots. Then she went to phone for a doctor.

PETER #1 (w/Christine)

PETER. When did you discover the phone was out of order?

CHRISTINE. I didn't. She told me it was.

PETER. Ah! A clue. *(He picks up the receiver.)* Just as I thought. A perfectly beautiful dialing tone. She's a very naughty lady. Was she wearing gloves?

CHRISTINE. Yes, I think she was. White gloves.

PETER. You handled that gun, didn't you?

CHRISTINE. I picked it up.

PETER. Are you *sure* you typed his novels?

CHRISTINE. I wasn't thinking clearly. It was a reflex action.

PETER. My God! We can't let you go to court — you won't stand a chance. You must have some idea who she was.

CHRISTINE. No... Yes, I might have.

PETER. Well?

CHRISTINE. Imogen!

PETER #1 (w/Christine)

PETER. Who?

CHRISTINE. Imogen Piper. His wife. They're separated, but she telephone him the other day, demanding a divorce — or else. And he refused.

PETER. He told you this?

CHRISTINE. Yes.

PETER. There we are — everything fits! She wanted a divorce. There's her gun, and she came here disguised. Motive, opportunity, means. It's a perfect case. (*His face falls.*) It must have been somebody else.

PETER #2 (w/John & Christine)

PETER. Your behavior hasn't been entirely free from oddity.

JOHN. That's rich, coming from you.

PETER. But I am an odd chap generally. Your oddness stands out like a penguin in a row of nuns. To have timed her actions to the minute, as Mrs. Piper did, she'd have needed to know a good deal about Selwyn's routine. The question is: how did she know?

JOHN. Certainly not from me. I knew very little of Selwyn's routine. I was only here, oh...

CHRISTINE. Once a fortnight.

JOHN. Well, perhaps. But anyway, I haven't seen Imogen for years. Yes, it must be. Years.

PETER. And isn't it a coincidence that you're here, now, by appointment?

CHRISTINE. One which you asked for.

JOHN. Now really...

PETER. Don't take it personally, old man. She's only looking at it from the legal angle.

JOHN. I protest at this ridiculous attempt to implicate me.

PETER. But if you had planned everything with Imogen it would be jolly useful to be on the spot just after the police. You could give them a prod in whatever direction you wanted.

PETER #2 (w/John & Christine)

JOHN. This has gone far enough.

PETER. If you found that line in a novel, you'd refuse to publish it. Miss Scott, when Selwyn told you about Mrs. Piper, did he say whether she had a special boyfriend?

CHRISTINE. Well — he thought she wanted a divorce to marry someone else.

PETER. Are you a bachelor, Douglas?

JOHN. What the hell has that to do with you?

PETER. I've got an aunt who's getting desperate. Yes, John, the police will do their damndest to establish a connection between you and Imogen. Do you think they'll succeed?

JOHN. No, they won't.

PETER. Ah! You've been too discreet.

JOHN. Nothing of the sort.

PETER. That you haven't been discreet.

JOHN. I will not answer any more of your pertinent questions. I've only put up with them so far for Imogen's sake, because I am sure she is as innocent as I am.

PETER #2 (w/John & Christine)

PETER. Yes. That's the conclusion I'm coming to. You say you haven't seen her for years?

JOHN. Yes.

PETER. Then would it be fair to say that you hardly ever think of the lady?

JOHN. More or less.

PETER. Yet when I told you there was a woman here, the first thing you said, and I quote, was "Imogen"!