

Marreau and the Bloody Carpet

A detective comedy in two acts by Rob Farrow

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Reformed after computer crash by scanning, OCR & hand-checking :: Modified ending as per performance

FIRST PERFORMANCE : **The COURT THEATRE, PENDLEY, TRING :** **20th April 1994**

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Dramatis Personae

Hemlock Marreau	The famous continental detective.
Hermione Guile	His new secretary and assistant.
Simpson	His friend.
Georgina Beale	A prospective client
Sir Percival Vere	A wealthy businessman
Larkspur Simmel	An actress
Charles Framell	A banker, senior partner in F & P.
Eleanor d'Aspre'	Fiancee' of Charles Framell
George Priggs	A banker, partner in F & P.
Jane Priggs	His wife.
Professor Hearty	A professor, colleague of Framell
Felicity Timms	A secretary.
Agnes Stark	An accounts clerk
Chief Supt.Farmer	The ubiquitous policeman.

Act I Scene 1

As per Marreau & the Chocolate Policeman settee, two armchairs, table, 2 chairs.

Marreau is sitting in an armchair [S.R.] reading a newspaper

Simpson is peering out of the window [S.R.]

Hermione Guile enters, she is very severe in dress and attitude.

Hermione [*Trips over carpet*] Bloody carpet !

[*Marreau looks up, Hermione darts a withering look at him*] Marreau !

Marreau [*Flinches*] Yes Hermione ?

Hermione You're slouching again !

Marreau Am I ? Oh dear !

Hermione And what do you think you're doing Simpson ?

Simpson I - er.

Hermione For Heaven's sake man, can't you find something more constructive to do than staring out of the window like a dejected goldfish ?

Simpson I - er. I was watching that little squirrel.

Hermione Squirrel ? Do you mean to say that there's vermin on our lawn ?

Simpson Er - well I wouldn't call him vermin, he's rather sweet.

Hermione Huh, I'll see about that ! [*Exits*]

[*Pause*][*Marreau sighs*]

Simpson Urm, Marreau ?

Marreau Yes Simpson, what is it ?

Simpson I know Miss Guile is very good at her job.....

Marreau [*Flatly*] Very efficient.

Simpson And she's very intelligent.

Marreau Indeed she is.

Simpson But ... [*Pause*]

Marreau Yes Simpson, out with it.

Simpson Don't you find that she's just a little bit.....

[**FX: A shot**]

Simpson Good God !

Marreau What was that ?

Simpson She's shot the squirrel !

[**FX: A shot**]

Simpson Twice !

Marreau Dear me, poor little squirrel.

Simpson Gwendolyn would never have done a thing like that.

Marreau I am afraid Miss Guile is not like Gwendolyn.

Simpson You can say that again.

Marreau Did you not apprehend me then ?

Simpson [*Confused look*] No I meant

Marreau What have I done Simpson ?
Simpson [*Baffled*] I don't know Marreau, what have you done ?
Marreau Employing Miss Guile, I am beginning to think it was a big mistake.
Simpson I'd say. - Can't you - um - [*whispers*] sack her ?
Marreau I made the mistake of agreeing to a two year contract.
Simpson Two years !
Marreau I know - it is like a sentence.
Simpson [*Slight pause*] Which sentence is that, Marreau ?
Marreau What ? No, no, like a prison sentence

[*Hermione re-enters*]

Hermione What's like a prison sentence ?
Marreau [*Jumps*] Oh, er -
Simpson [*Trying to extricate Marreau*] You shooting the squirrel - Marreau was just saying that it was like - er - a sentence - um - of death - sort-of, so to speak, sort of thing. Weren't you Marreau ?
Marreau Yes, yes. Precisely.
Hermione Quite right. Got to teach the little perishers a lesson.
Simpson Well, that squirrel certainly won't be scampering across our lawn again in a hurry.
Hermione Are you completely stupid Simpson ? Of course he won't, he's dead.
Simpson I know, it was a joke.
Hermione Oh. You should know by now Simpson that jokes are wasted on me. I do not see any purpose in having a sense of humour.
Marreau Purpose ? Must everything have a purpose ?
Hermione What ? I sometimes wonder about you Marreau, of course it must !
Simpson What's the purpose of earwigs then, Hermione ?
Hermione Earwigs ?
Simpson Yes, you know little brown insects with
Hermione I am well aware of what an earwig looks like, thank-you Mr. Simpson.
Simpson So what's their purpose ?
Hermione [*Slightly flustered*] I am far too busy to stand here discussing earwigs or any other insect for that matter. Some of us have to work for a living.

[*Hermione sweeps out*]

Marreau Oh Gwendolyn, Gwendolyn !
Simpson Where-for-art-thou Gwendolyn ?
Marreau Just so. How long is it Simpson ?
Simpson [*Looks askance at Marreau*] [*Pause*] Pardon ?
Marreau How long has she been gone now?
Simpson Oh, I see - Urm - ten days, including today.
Marreau Ten days.
Simpson I kept hoping she'd change her mind about marrying Mexi.
Marreau I know, I never thought she would really leave us.
Simpson We haven't had a case for ages either, have we.
Marreau No, I think the criminal classes must all be on holiday.
Simpson Really - I didn't realise they took holidays - where do they go Marreau ?
Marreau Simpson, whilst your complete naivete' is one your most endearing qualities - at times like this it can be a little wearing.
Simpson I miss Gwenders. I mean I know she used to pick on me rather, but it was all in fun really.
Marreau Indeed.

Simpson And she'd never have shot a poor defenceless little squirrel.
Marreau No, I think she quite liked little furry animals actually.
Simpson Two years, Marreau ! Why on earth did you sign that woman up for two years ?
Marreau She had impeccable references.
Simpson I'm not surprised, they were probably only too pleased to get rid of her.

[FX: Door bell]

Marreau I wonder who that can be.
Simpson Old sour-face will probably frighten them away whoever they are.
Marreau I really do not think you should refer to her as old sour-face, appropriate though it may be.

[Hermione enters]

Hermione There is a woman to see you Mr. Marreau.
Marreau A 'woman' do you mean a 'lady'
Hermione That's debatable.
Simpson That was almost a joke, Hermione.
Hermione Not an intentional one I assure you.
Marreau Well show her in, would you Hermione.
Hermione As you wish. [*Hermione exit, O/S*] Mister Marreau will see you now.

Marreau I wish she'd call me Monsieur Marreau not Mister Marreau.

[*Georgina Beale enters, she is swathed in clothes and heavily made up.*]

Georgina Oh, Monsieur Marreau, I'm so pleased to meet you.
Marreau Please; take a seat, how can I help you ?
Georgina My name is Georgina Beale, I'm married to Henry Beale, have you heard of him ?
Marreau Wait, the name does ring a vague bell.
Georgina You may have read his name in the newspaper.
Marreau Oh ?
Simpson I say is he the chap who's gone missing along with £50,000 from some Merchant Bank or other ?
Georgina Yes. Framell & Priggs he worked for - the police are convinced he has absconded with the money - but I know he hasn't. I'm worried for him. [*whimpers slightly*]
Simpson I say Marreau, this sounds jolly interesting.
Marreau Indeed Simpson, I think at last my little red cells are being called upon !
Georgina So you'll take the case, Monsieur Marreau ?
Marreau My fee for this kind of work is ten guineas a day - plus expenses.
Georgina [*Close to breaking down*] Oh dear, I can't afford that kind of money, I don't earn that in a month.
Marreau [*Getting up to show her out*] Oh dear - well I'm afraid
Simpson Hold on Marreau, we don't need the money
Marreau We don't ?
Simpson Of course not - you know I've got loads.
Marreau You have ?
Georgina My sister thought you might do it as a favour - for old time's sake.
Marreau Your sister ?
Georgina Gwendolyn - she used to work for you.
Marreau & Simpson Gwendolyn !!!

Marreau Why did you not mention this before - you are Gwendolyn's sister ?
Georgina Yes.
Simpson Of course - you were at the wedding, I knew I'd seen you before somewhere.
Marreau *Nom d'un nom dun nom! Sacre Bleu! Quel idiot!* Of course, I should have recognised you immediately !
Georgina So will you reduce your fees.
Marreau My dear, I would not dream of charging you anything.
Georgina Oh, Monsieur Marreau - I am so grateful.
Marreau [*Calls off*] Miss Guile !
Simpson What on earth do you want her for, Marreau ?
Marreau I think she will be able to give valuable assistance !
Simpson Oh ?
 [*Hermione enters*]

Hermione [*Curtly*] Yes, whatever's the matter ? - I am busy you know.
Marreau Make a pot of tea would you, and pop out and get us some cream cakes.
Hermione What? I am not employed to run around getting cakes - it is not in my contract.
Marreau [*Noise of exasperation*] Well what about the tea ?
Hermione I'll have to look into that - but very well - this time, if you insist.
Marreau [*Sarcastically*] A thousand thanks.
 [*Hermione exits*]

Simpson I'll go and get the cakes.
Marreau Good for you Simpson.
Georgina Please don't bother on my account.
Simpson For Gwender's sister it'll be an honour.
 [*Simpson exits*]

Marreau So Georgina - do you mind if I call you Georgina ?
Georgina Please. I would be offended if you called me anything else.
Marreau So what can you tell me about your husband's disappearance ?
Georgina It was four days ago -
Marreau Let me see that makes it Monday the - um - tenth
Georgina Yes that's right. I'd made him breakfast as usual; bacon, eggs, sausage mushrooms, black pudding, baked beans.....
Marreau Sacre bleu !
Georgina ... fried bread and tomatoes. - And he ate it, kissed me goodbye and [*Sobs*] that's the last time I saw him.
Marreau Please Georgina, do not upset yourself - I'm sure your husband has come to no harm.
Georgina Oh, Monsieur Marreau, I pray he's alright, but I truly fear for his safety.
Marreau I am sorry I have to ask this question - but do you have any money problems ? You did say that you earn very little.
Georgina No - we were comparatively well off - I earn very little, but Henry is quite well paid and we've got a little nest-egg in the bank, but I can't get at it because they've frozen Henry's account.
Marreau This little how-you-say 'Nest-egg' it is one made by Fabergé, oui?
Georgina Fabergé ? I'm sorry I don't follow - Oh I see, no; a nest-egg means a bit of money saved up.
Marreau Aha - one of your funny little English sayings that your sister used to be so good at translating for me.

Georgina Yes - Gwendolyn's been very supportive since Henry's disappeared. I'm so glad she suggested I come to you.

Marreau So what else can you tell me ?

Georgina Nothing really - It's come out of the blue - I can't really believe it's happening.

Marreau You say the police suspect your husband of absconding with the money what do the bank think ?

Georgina Well Mr. Priggs came to see me, he was very nice really - considering the circumstances. He said that he would be astonished if Henry had done it but that he couldn't really come to any other conclusion.

Marreau Hmmm.

Georgina What do you mean "Hmmm", Monsieur Marreau.

Marreau I do not have a lot to go on, do I ?
[Hermione enters with pot of tea]

Hermione Here is your tea Mr. Marreau - I've looked into my contract and there's no mention of my making tea - so don't expect me to do it again.

Marreau It is not a lot to ask, Miss Guile - an occasional cup of tea.

Hermione You may not consider it a lot to ask but it interrupts my carefully planned routine. I trust I may resume my work unhindered now.

Marreau Oh, very well.

[FX: Door bell]

Hermione Oh, not again. I didn't realise you'd have so many visitors - it is most disruptive.

Marreau Miss Guile - I am Marreau the Magnificent, many people require my expert advice.

Hermione I suppose I had better answer it. *[Exit]*

Georgina She doesn't seem very happy here.

Marreau She is not the only one - things just have not been the same since your sister left us.

[Chief Superintendent Farmer enters]

Farmer Monsieur Marreau, remember me ?

Marreau Oh Mon Dieu! Superintendent Farmer, whatever brings you here ?

Farmer By 'eck - Mrs. Beale - you're here already !

Marreau Would you kindly explain yourself, superintendent.

Farmer Chief superintendent now.

Marreau No doubt thanks to my success in solving the Curse of Cardiff.

Farmer Quite right, Monsieur Marreau - I be most grateful.

Marreau So why are you here ? And how do you know Madame Beale ?

Farmer Well they've gone and got me investigatin' this-'ere Framell & Priggs business that's how I know Mrs. Beale.

[Simpson enters with sticky buns]

Simpson Hello all - Superintendent Farmer - how nice to see you again ! What are you doing here.

Farmer Chief (Superintendent).....

Marreau Let us not go through all that again - you will be pleased to know Simpson, that our friend here has had yet another promotion.

Simpson Oh jolly good. - Couldn't find any cream cakes - sticky buns alright ?

Marreau I am sure we will make do with sticky buns.

Farmer I likes sticky buns - are they the ones with the little currants in them ?

Simpson Oh, I don't know, I'll have a look [*pokes about in bun*]

Marreau I would say they are definitely the sort that have currants in them -

Simpson Gosh, [*Plucks out currant*] you're right Marreau how did you know that ?

Marreau Surely, Simpson, you remember the case of the Danish Pastry, where our only clue was a collection of crumbs in the pocket of the deceased - and that from this I deduced the murderer, motive and method.

Simpson Urm - [*Pause*] no - can't say that I do !

Marreau Yes you do Simpson, the case revolved around a spotty dick I seem to remember -

Simpson Oh Gosh, yes, I do remember that

Marreau Well surely, this proves that my knowledge of cakes and associated comestibles is second to none.

Farmer You really do know your stuff don't you Mr. Marreau.

Marreau Indeed, Chief Superintendent, that is why I am Marreau the Magnificent.

Georgina It's wonderful to have someone as eminent as you helping me prove my husband's innocence, Monsieur Marreau.

Marreau Please, Georgina, call me Hemlock.

Farmer Well, anyway, I've got a few bits of information you might find interesting.

Marreau Really, please do enliven us.

Farmer Right you are - Well, in that there office of the missing Mr. Beale, one of my sergeants - bright lad he is - he's gone and found some traces of blood

Georgina [*Gasps*] Oh !

Marreau Blood ? Was there much ?

Farmer A fair bit

Georgina [*Gasps*] Oh !

Farmer A little puddle of it as you might say.....

Simpson I say !

Georgina [*Distraught*] Oh, Monsieur Marreau, they've killed him ! They've killed my Henry !

Marreau Please, Georgina, do not upset yourself, we do not know yet whose blood this is do we Farmer ?

Farmer Indeed, no sir, that we don't - but we have been working on the assumption that it probably is Mr. Beale's and that he's been horribly murdered

Georgina [*Gasps*] Oh ! [*Wails*]

Simpson Oh dear. [*Sits next to Georgina*] Never mind Georgina, we'll find whoever's done it. [*Comforts Georgina*]

Marreau So you no longer suspect Mr. Beale of absconding with the money ?

Farmer Well it's like this - if Mr. Beale really has been horribly murdered as we think, then that would seem to rule him out as a suspect and would suggest the involvement of a third party as they say

Marreau Indeed ...

Farmer However, if it turns out that this here blood don't belong to Mr. Beale, then we're back to thinking that he probably did nick the money, and what's more that he "did someone in" - as we call it - in his office into the bargain.

Marreau But who might this 'someone' be ?

Farmer Well that's just it, isn't it. That don't really add up. So we are inclining to the feeling that as I said, Henry Beale has been horribly murdered.

Georgina [*Wails*]

Marreau Dear, dear, dear - this is a most unfortunate turn of events - have you any more details for us ?

Farmer Well, actually, I wanted to have a word with Mrs. Beale here, and ask her whether her husband had big feet or not ?

Georgina What ?

Farmer What size shoes did your late husband wear, Mrs. Beale ?

Georgina [*Wails*]

Simpson I say, I don't think you should start saying 'late' like that, you're upsetting Georgina.

Marreau Indeed, Chief Superintendent, you should not jump to conclusions in this manner.

Farmer Begging your pardons. You be quite right of course - we don't know for sure that he's dead - [*casually*] just seems very likely that's all. So anyway - can you tell me his shoe size, Mrs. Beale.

Georgina [*Sobbing*] Yes, of course; size eight.

Farmer Oh, now that be very interesting.

Marreau Oh ? Why is this ?

[FX: Telephone ring] [*Hermione is heard answering it offstage*]

Farmer Well some of my boys, they found some footprints, but they ain't no size eights, these be size ten at least.

Marreau Aha ! An important clue I think.

[*Hermione enters*]

Farmer Just what I been thinking.

Hermione A telephone call for you, Chief Superintendent.

Farmer I wonder what that be then. [*Exits with Hermione*]

Georgina Oh, Monsieur Marreau - my poor Henry - he never hurt anyone, and someone's gone and killed him.

Marreau We do not know this for sure, Georgina.

Simpson No, he might be alive and well

Georgina Oh Mr.Simpson, I do hope you're right - But if it isn't his blood they've found, whose else could it be ?

Marreau A question which is at the heart of this mystery, I would venture to say.

Simpson I mean, look on the bright side, they haven't found his body or anything yet.

[*Farmer re-enters*]

Farmer Urm, I wonder if you'd accompany me down the mortuary, Mrs. Beale, we've got a horribly murdered person we'd like you to identify !

Simpson Ah

Georgina [*Wails*]

[[Blackout]]

Act I Scene 2

Scene :The same. Marreau is sitting on sofa, contemplating.
Simpson is reading a newspaper.

Marreau This is very sad, Simpson.

Simpson It's terrible Marreau, poor Georgina.

Marreau Just so, and having her nest egg frozen like that, things must be very uncomfortable for her.

[FX: Door bell]

Simpson Well, you never know, the body they've found may not be her husband after all.

Marreau I fear you are - how you say - grasping at hay there Simpson, I think we shall find that Henry Beale is no more.

[Hermione enters]

Hermione There are two gentleman to see you, Mr. Marreau.

Marreau Aha ! Show them in, show them in !

Hermione Very well. *[Exits]*

Marreau I wonder if they have anything to do with this most interesting case....

[Framell & Hearty enter]

Framell Hello, Monsieur Marreau, I am Charles Framell, senior partner of Framell and Priggs.....

Marreau I am delighted to make your acquaintance. I presume you are here concerning the Henry Beale incident.

Framell Just so, just so. Terrible business. Thought he was a thief you know - for a while - now it looks as though the poor chap got himself killed. Bad show. Dashed bad show. This gentleman is Professor Hearty, a colleague of mine.

Hearty *[Superior]* You have heard of me I should imagine, I'm quite famous.

Marreau No, I cannot say that I have.

Hearty I wrote a thesis that has become the acknowledged handbook on faeces.

Marreau I am afraid that I have not made a study of faeces theses.

Hearty I am surprised. I say - you know you remind me of someone I knew at school.

Marreau *[Dismissive]* Do I really - *[To Framell]* Monsieur Framell, how would you like me to help ?

Framell Well, Marreau, you're supposed to be quite good at this detecting lark.

Marreau "Quite good !!!" Marreau the Magnificent is not "Quite good" he is - how do you say - *[searches for word]*

Simpson *[After a moment]* Magnificent, Marreau ?

Marreau Quite. Precisely. Magnificent.

Framell Yes, well, I wondered if you would take on the case - see who's behind this damnable business.

Marreau Aha - you wish to hire my services.

Framell That's about the long and short of it. I mean I know the police are doing what they can, but I can't say that I'm terribly impressed by Chief Supt. Plod who's running the show.

Marreau Plod ? His name is Farmer.

Framell What ?

Marreau I think you'll find the Chief Superintendent's name is Farmer.

Framell Oh, yes, I see, very amusing.

Marreau Amusing ? Simpson, why does Monsieur Framell think this is amusing ?

Simpson Dashed if I know, Marreau.

Framell I just called him Plod, it's a derisory term, it's oh never mind. Look are you going to take this damned case on or not ?

Hearty Marron ! That's it Henry Marron - the chap I knew at school - you know you're just like him - could be his brother !

Marreau [*Flatly*] Really, how fascinating. [*To Framell*] Monsieur Framell, if you wish to hire my services, I am most willing to consider it.

Framell Oh, right. Jolly good. How much do you charge ?

Marreau My fee is twenty guineas a day - plus expenses.

Simpson Twenty ?

Marreau Quiet Simpson.

[*Simpson moodily moves b/s and sits at table, starts nonchalantly reading paper*]

Framell That seems a little steep !

Marreau And if I recover the money for you I shall expect a ten percent reward.

Framell Good lord. That's daylight robbery !

Marreau Well do you wish to retrieve your fifty thousand pounds or not ?

Framell [*Slight pause*] Very well - I'm surprised you get any business at all with those terms though, Marreau.

Marreau I might say the same about your interest rates, Monsieur Framell !

Framell Dashed impertinence.

Marreau Are the terms agreed then ?

Framell Very well [*Holds out hand, Marreau shakes it*]

Hearty Are you sure you're not related to Marron - he was always sticking his nose into other people's business too !

Marreau Sticking my nose..... !!! - My name, Professor Hearty, is Marreau, Hemlock Montrachet Etienne Boniface Marreau - now will you please be quiet and allow me to discuss this problem with Monsieur Framell.

Framell Yes, pipe down Maurice, we have more important things to talk about than your old school chums.

Hearty Ha ! Hardly a chum. Sworn enemies we were.

Marreau Wait one moment - [*thinks*] Hearty - Hearty, did you write "*Detritus, Rotting and Putrescent Matter*"

Hearty Yes, that was one of mine.

Marreau A most interesting book, though I disagreed with you on the subject of maggots.

Hearty You are entitled to your opinion of course - even if it is wrong.

Marreau Perhaps we could discuss it some time.

Hearty By all means, but you'll soon realise that I'm totally correct in my conclusions.

Marreau I too am confident that I am correct (when I say).....

Framell Could we return to the business in hand ?

Marreau Of course, so what can you tell me about this case that I will not already know ?

Framell Probably very little. The theft came as a complete shock to us; I'm afraid with Beale going missing like that we just assumed that he'd absconded with the money.

Marreau Aha. But now you believe this to be unlikely.

Framell Yes, I suppose so.

Marreau Is there anyone else in the firm who you suspect may have done this - or been in - in shallots with the thieves ?

Framell Shallots ?

Simpson [*Looking up*] Cahoots.

Framell Aha - cahoots.

Marreau Yes, cahoots - that's the word - well ?

Framell No, not really - no-one springs to mind anyway.

Marreau I believe that the theft took place on Monday

Framell Yes, that's right.

Marreau About what time - to the best of your knowledge.

Framell We think it must have happened at lunch time - it was one of the secretary's birthday so most of the staff had gone round to the local Lyons Corner House for some cream cakes. Apparently Beale was going to join them after he'd cleared up what he was working on - but he never turned up.

Marreau Aha, I see.

Simpson [*Puts paper down*] [*Enthusiastically*] I love cream cakes.

Marreau Did you go to the Corner House or stay in the office ?

Framell I was out for the day - the only people who remained in the office that lunchtime other than Beale were my partner George Priggs, and his assistant Mrs. Stark.

Marreau Thank you for this information. I trust I will be able to investigate the scene of the crime without hindrance.

Framell Yes of course - though I should wait until old Plod's finished mucking about.

Simpson Farmer.

Framell As you wish. Look I must get off.....

Marreau I trust I shall see you again, Mr. Framell, when I visit your offices.

Framell I should think so - I've got a lot of things to sort out with this damned theft - so I'll probably be there for several days.

Marreau Indeed, Au revoir, Monsieur Framell

Framell Good day, Monsieur Marreau, Mr. Simpson [*Simpson nods*] Coming Maurice ?

Hearty I'll catch you later.

Framell Very well [*Exits*]

Marreau Professor Hearty, you are not leaving also ?

Hearty In a moment, I wanted to have a word with you on your own.

Marreau Concerning the maggots, oui ?

Hearty No, we'll discuss that another time.....

Marreau Oh ?

Hearty It's uncanny - You know you could be old Marron's double - come to think of it, he went into business as a private investigator too.

Marreau [*Flatly*] Did he, how interesting.

Hearty Didn't do very well though and went abroad or so I believe.

Marreau Is this fascinating biography the reason for your remaining here, Professor, or do you have something genuinely interesting to tell me ?

Hearty Oh, yes, I see, it's just that I heard Priggs and Beale having a right ding-dong the other day.

Marreau A ding-dong ? They are campanologists ?

Hearty What ?

Simpson [*Coming d/s*] He means they were having an argument, Marreau.

Marreau I see, do go on ...

Hearty Yes, and it sounded pretty ill tempered I'd say. Priggs threatened to sack Beale.

Marreau Oh ?

Hearty Yes but it was what was said next that was most interesting.

Marreau Indeed, and what was this ?

Hearty Beale said that Priggs wouldn't dare sack him, knowing what he knew.

Simpson Gosh ! I wonder what he knew.

Hearty I don't know, but it must've been pretty hot stuff, 'cause Priggs backed down immediately calling him an "evil little twister".

Marreau This is most important information, Professor, thank-you.

Hearty Not at all Marron.
Marreau [*Emphatically*] Marreau !
Hearty Sorry, my mistake.
Marreau If that is all Professor, I am very busy.
Hearty Yes of course. Well I'll be off then - by the way, whatever happened to your friend Peter Jenson ?
Marreau I don't know I lost..... [*realises slip*] who ? I do not know any Peter Jenkins.
Hearty Jenson. Urm - Sorry, of course, I'm thinking of Marron again.....
Marreau Good day, Professor.
Hearty Good day, Marreau [*Exit*]

Simpson [*Innocently*] Funny that you and this chap you're like have such similar names.
Marreau Highly amusing I am sure.
Simpson I mean Hemlock Marreau, Henry Marron, not a million miles apart are they.
Marreau Significantly different I would say. Anyway I do not wish to hear that name again.
Simpson Right-oh. [*Pause*] You struck rather a hard bargain with old Framell didn't you ?
Marreau [*Mock innocence*] Did I ?
Simpson Especially as you're already working on the case anyway.
Marreau Um.

Simpson And you told Georgina that you charge ten guineas a day - and then tell him that you charge twenty. I don't quite understand, Marreau.
Marreau Suffice it to say that I am not terribly fond of bankers - particularly I am not fond of bankers who have charged me a ludicrous amount of interest on a small loan I once required.
Simpson What were you doing borrowing money, Marreau.
Marreau I think that is my concern, actually Simpson.
Simpson Oh, yes of course, sorry, didn't mean to pry - but if you ever want any money just ask me - I've got loads of the stuff.
Marreau Simpson - that is the second time that you have said you have a lot of money - where on earth have you got so much money from ?
Simpson Oh, father gives me a pretty generous allowance - far more than I can spend so it just keeps mounting up.
Marreau What exactly does your father do, Simpson ?
Simpson [*Somewhat surprised*] Do ? [*Pause*] Well he.....

[*Hermione enters*]

Hermione Will you be wanting anything more, Mr. Marreau ?
Marreau How do you mean, Hermione.
Hermione My contract clearly states that if we are not actively investigating a case then Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays can be taken as half days - do you recall ?
Marreau Ah yes.
Hermione Well today being Friday - I should like to leave now.
Marreau Oh, very well - if you must.
Hermione Thank-you. [*Exits*]

Simpson Were you drunk when you signed that contract, Marreau ?
Marreau I was tired Simpson, I could not be bothered to read all the small print it was forty pages long !
Simpson Good grief. Have you got a copy of it ?
Marreau Somewhere.

Simpson Would you dig it out for me Marreau - there must be something in there I can find as a reason to sack her.

Marreau By all means - be my host.

Simpson Guest.

Marreau What have you guessed, Simpson ?

Simpson No - I - oh never mind.

[A knock at the door]

Marreau See who that is would you Simpson.

Simpson It's not in my contract, Marreau !

Marreau WHAT !!!

Simpson Only a joke, Hemlock - [Going to door]

Marreau Ah, I see, I'm sorry Simpson [*Simpson goes O/S*] I fear that Miss Guile is destroying my sense of humour.

Simpson [*Offstage*] Gosh ! Hello !

[*Simpson re-enters with Larkspur Simnel, a flamboyant actress*]

Larkspur Hello all ! Larkspur Simnel, call me Larky, everybody does. Larky by name, larky by nature, that's me

Marreau Sacre Bleu! You are the Miss Simnel, star of "Flutterings in the bushes"

Larkspur For my sins.

Simpson I say weren't you in that rather riské show at the Palladium.....

Larkspur Do you mean "Get in the cupboard, darling" ?

Simpson Yes - that's the one.

Larkspur Yes, did you see it ?

Simpson I'll say - you were awfully good

Larkspur Thank-you darling.

Simpson Especially the bit with the fan.

Larkspur You naughty boy - if you were a gentleman you'd have discretely looked away at that point.

Simpson [*Flushing*] Yes, well, of course I did - I mean - I wouldn't - I just sort of caught a glimpse - so to speak.

Larkspur Of course you did, darling. [*Simpson is completely embarrassed by now*]

Simpson No, honestly, I did, I.....

Marreau So, Miss Simnel, to what do we owe this unexpected delight ?

Larkspur Larky - call me Larky, darling - the reason I'm here is because of this farce over at Framell and Priggs.

Marreau Oh ? And what is your connection with this incident ?

Larkspur Well, I bank with them, and I went in to withdraw some money and they told me that until this business is sorted out everybody's accounts have been frozen.

Marreau This is most strange - a bank of their standing should not treat its customers in this way

Simpson Especially not over a piffling fifty thousand.

Marreau & Larkspur Piffling ?

Simpson Well I know it's quite a bit, but hardly enough to get in a tizzy about.

Marreau [*Marreau gives Simpson a strange look, a mixture of curiosity and vexation*] Yes, well, be that as it may, how do you wish me to help, Miss - er - Larky.

Larkspur I think there's something fishy going on.

Marreau Fishy ? Fishy ? I cannot see the connection with the little swimming things.

Simpson No, Hemlock, fishy means - um - er - suspect - sort of thing.

Larkspur Very suspect, I'd say. I've got a nasty feeling that if they can't get this fifty thousand back they're going to be in big trouble.

Marreau How do you mean ?

Larkspur I've no proof - it's only rumour - but the word going round is that they're going to the wall.

Marreau The wall ? Which wall ? Ah, you mean Wall Street - they are going to open an office in New York, oui?

Larkspur You really are a hoot, Marreau - you ought to have a stage show.

Marreau [*Offended*] What ?!

Larkspur Oh, don't get all uppety, I think you're sweet

Marreau Sweet ?

Larkspur With your funny accent.....

Marreau Funny accent !

Larkspur And those old-fashioned clothes

Marreau WHAT !!!

Larkspur Very smart though

Marreau [*Somewhat appeased*] Oh, Thank-you.

Larkspur Do you really not know what "going to the wall" means ?

Marreau I thought I had already said what it meant.

Larkspur [*To Simpson*] He really is priceless isn't he ?

Simpson I suppose so - [*Pause*] - What does "going to the wall" mean, Larky ?

Larkspur [*Stunned*] What ? [*Slight pause*] [*Incredulously*] It means going bottom up

Marreau Bottom up ?!!

Larkspur Bankrupt - they're going bankrupt.

Simpson Great Scott !

Marreau Mon Dieu - why did you not say this in the first place ?

Larkspur I did.

Marreau So they are in contact with Wall Street to try and raise more funds, *n'est-ce pas* ?

Larkspur What ? No - forget about Wall Street.

Marreau But you said.....

Larkspur I didn't

Simpson You did, Larky, you said

Larkspur I know what I said, I'm an actress for God's sake - I spend my life remembering what I say - just forget about Wall Street !

Marreau Very well. [*Pause*] What was all this about bottoms being up ?

Larkspur [*Exasperated*] Aaagh !

[FX: Door bell]

Simpson I'll get it [*Goes O/S*]

Marreau Are you in pain, Miss Simnel ?

Larkspur Only in the neck !

Marreau Would you like me to massage it for you ?

Larkspur I don't think that will be necessary, thank-you Monsieur Marreau.

[*Simpson re-enters with Percy*]

Simpson Sir Percival Vere to see you Marreau.

Larkspur Percy !

Percy Larky !

Larkspur Whatever brings you here.

Percy Oh, I just bumped into old Maurice Hearty, he said Marreau was investigating F & P's bit of trouble.

Larkspur Are you Marreau ? Are you *already* investigating this case ?
Marreau Indeed I am, Miss Simnel, and your revelations have been most enlightening.
Percy What revelations are those, Larky ?
Larkspur [*Sharp look at Marreau*] Oh, nothing really.
Marreau [*Realises his slip*] No, I was using the term in its most general sense.
Simpson Larky says F & P are going bankrupt !
Percy WHAT !!!
Larkspur & Marreau Eek ! [*or noises to that effect*]
Marreau [*Through clenched teeth*] Simpson you fool !
Simpson Oh, gosh, have I said something wrong ?
Percy Whatever are you thinking of, Larky ? You can't go around saying things like that !
Larkspur Well Percy - it's the truth - well it's what's rumoured anyway.
Percy It better not be true - I've got a fortune sitting in that damned bank !
Marreau You have not heard these rumours then, Sir Percival.
Percy No, I haven't - and I suggest you don't repeat them or you might find yourself on the wrong end of a slander suit.
Marreau I understand.
Percy But if you're right, I'm glad you've told me - I'd better take *some* of my money out at least - just to be on the safe side.
Larkspur I don't think you'll have much luck there, Percy.
Percy What ? Whatever do you mean, Larky ?
Larkspur I tried to make a withdrawal yesterday and they wouldn't give me any said they'd frozen everyone's accounts.
Percy What ! This is outrageous - they'd better not try to freeze my account or I'll severely unfreeze parts of Framell's anatomy.
Simpson Oh I say.
Percy I'm going to go there now and sort this out.
Marreau I think I will come along with you.

[[**Blackout**]]

Act II Scene 1

Scene: The offices of Framell & Priggs. A desk with chair behind. A side table S/R. Two other chairs against the wall S/L. This may be adapted to suit. The desk is on a rug which has had several bottles of cochineal emptied on to it.

[[*Offstage, spoken quite loudly*]] [*Felicity is a very 'fluffy' demure secretary*]

Felicity I'm really not sure that you should.....

Marreau I am Marreau the Magnificent - I may go where I please....

[*Marreau enters, with Felicity fluttering round him. Simpson follows in*]

Marreau So, Mademoiselle.... ?

Felicity Timms, Timms; I'm Miss Timms - Felicity - Felicity Timms.

Marreau So Mademoiselle Timms, this is the scene of the crime, oui ?

Felicity This is where poor Mr. Beale [*sob*] worked, yes.

Marreau And where he died it would seem - n'est-ce pas ?

Felicity [*Wail*] Yes, poor Henry. Never hurt anyone. [*Wail*]

Marreau Thank-you Miss Timms. Tell me where were you when the crime was committed ?

Felicity Well if it was at lunchtime like we think - then I was at the Lyons corner house - it was my birthday - and [*sobs*] I was having ever such a nice time then [*sobs*] this goes and [*Wails*]

[*Simpson comforts her*]

Simpson Now, now, don't upset yourself. Can't be helped. No good crying over spilt milk. *Que sera-sera* and all that. Keep your pecker up.

Marreau Alright Simpson, That's enough platitudes for now !

Simpson Oh right.

Marreau Thank-you for your time, Miss Timms, I shall not detain you any (longer)....

[*Agnes enters, she is very surly and officious*]

Agnes What on earth are you doing in here Timms ? Who are these people ? You know this office is out of bounds since the - incident !

Felicity [*Wails*] I only.....

Marreau Nowhere is out of bounds - as you say - to the Great Marreau !

Agnes And who is the Great Marreau may I ask ?

Marreau I am ... and you are... ?

Agnes Agnes Stark. Mr. Priggs personal assistant, and as such I require you to leave this office immediately.

Marreau Does the name "Marreau" mean nothing to you ?

Agnes Apart from being a large green vegetable, I can't say that it does.

Marreau Well you may be interested to know that I am Marreau, the greatest detective mind the world, and I have been hired by none other than your employer, Monsieur Framell, to discover the perpetrator of these evil deeds.

Agnes [*Not impressed*] Oh, I see. Well I suppose you'd better carry on then.

Marreau I believe you did not go to the Lyons corner house with the rest of the staff.

Agnes That is correct - my position you see - I do not mingle with the lower staff.

Felicity She doesn't.

Marreau I see, so you were here all through the lunch hour ?
Agnes I was.
Felicity She was.
Marreau I think you can probably leave us now, Miss Timms.
Agnes Yes, run along Felicity.
Felicity I'll be in the next office if you want me again. [*Felicity exits*]
Marreau So, it would seem you were here when the robbery - and possibly a murder took place - am I right ?
Agnes I suppose so, though I knew nothing of it.
Marreau You witnessed nothing untoward ?
Agnes Nothing, I assure you. I have told the police all this once already.

[*Farmer enters with Georgina*]

Farmer By 'eck, this is getting more confusing all the time.
Marreau Ah, Chief Superintendent ! What news have you got ?
Georgina It wasn't Henry !
Marreau What was not Henry.
Georgina The body. It wasn't Henry's !
Marreau This is very good news.
Simpson I'd say. I bet you're as chuffed as little apples, Georgina.
Georgina It's wonderful - I'm sure now that Henry's still alive.
Farmer I wouldn't be so sure about that, Mrs. Beale, after all there's still all that blood to account for. [*Indicating the bloodstained carpet*]
Marreau Indeed. And there is still no sign of your missing husband, Georgina.
Georgina I know, but I just feel that he is still alive.
Agnes Will you be requiring me any more or may I continue with my work ?
Farmer Ah, Mrs. Stark.....
Agnes Yes ?
Farmer I wonder if you'd come down to the mortuary with me, have a look at this body ?
Agnes Why on earth do you want me ?
Farmer Well, it's like this; we think the 'orribly mutilated corpse what we've got lying down there on the slab might be your husband.
Agnes Agghhh ! [*Faints*]
Marreau That was not terribly tactfully handled, Farmer.
Simpson Shall I throw some water over her ?
[*Felicity re-enters*]

Felicity What's happened ? [*Gasp*] There's not been another murder has there ?
Marreau Quite possibly.
Felicity [*Sees Agnes*] [*Gasps*] Oh ! Who's killed Mrs. Stark ?
Marreau What ? No-one.
Simpson She's just fainted.
Felicity Why's she fainted ?
Farmer It looks as though someone's killed her husband.
Felicity [*Shrieks*] Geoffrey !?
Marreau Geoffrey ?
Farmer Mr. Stark's name was Geoffrey - how did
Felicity [*Hysterical*] No, no, he can't be dead, not Geoffrey ! [*Faints*]
Farmer By eck !
Marreau What a remarkable reaction !

Simpson Shall I throw some water over both of them ?
 Georgina Felicity and Geoffrey were having an affair, Henry told me. The whole office knew apparently - except his wife of course.
 Marreau I am getting confused.
 Simpson I'll get some water shall I ?
 Farmer By 'eck, I didn't know about this affair business.
 Agnes [*Coming round*] Water ! I need some water.
 Simpson Told you so.
 Marreau Get her some water, Simpson.
 Simpson [*Going off stage, muttering*] That's what I was (going to do in the first place)

[*Agnes Remains on the floor but sits up*]

Agnes [*Gasping slightly*] You say - you think - Geoffrey may have been - killed ?
 Farmer I'm afraid so. Mrs. Beale thought she recognized him.
 Georgina Do you remember - we met at the office party ?
 Agnes Yes - yes. Are you sure it's him Georgina ?
 Georgina Well I'm not positive but I'm pretty sure.
 Agnes Oh Geoffrey ! Why would anyone want to kill Geoffrey ?

[*Simpson returns and immediately throws water over Agnes*]

Agnes What the..... !!!
 Marreau Oh Mon Dieu !
 Agnes What the Hell do you think you're doing ?
 Simpson I - erm - I thought you.....
 Agnes [*Getting up*] I wanted a drink of water you oaf !
 Simpson Oh, I see, Gosh - sorry !

[*He nonchalantly dribbles the remaining water on Felicity's face*]

Felicity [*Coming round, props herself up on one elbow*] What happened ?
 Agnes What's she doing on the floor [*Stands, points at Felicity*]
 Marreau Erm !
 Simpson Miss Timms fainted too, Mrs Stark.
 Agnes Why ?
 Farmer When she heard that your husband had died.
 Agnes Why ?
 Georgina [*Trying to change subject*] I think it was just a bit of a shock after all the other things that have happened.
 Felicity [*Sitting up*] Yes that's right.
 Agnes Oh, I see
 Farmer And of course because she was having an affair with him !

[*Felicity Jumps up*]

Agnes	What !	Felicity	Oh no !
Marreau	You fool, Farmer !	Agnes	You bitch ! [<i>Lunges at Felicity</i>]
Felicity	Help !	Marreau	Restrain her, Simpson !
Simpson	Righty-oh !	Farmer	I was only.....
Agnes	[<i>Restrained</i>] Let me at her !	Felicity	Keep her off me !
Marreau	[<i>Shouts</i>] Silence!!		

[*The commotion subsides*]

Georgina You idiot, Farmer !

Farmer [*Offended*] But it's true ! That is why she fainted !

Agnes You little tart !

Felicity I'm sorry, Agnes it just happened. [*Sobs*]

Farmer Anyway Mrs. Stark will you come down the mortuary with me - just to make sure it is your husband we've got on the slab. Or perhaps Miss Timms could come instead.

Agnes [*Regaining composure*] I will identify my husband - if indeed it is him.
[*Agnes & Farmer exit*]

Felicity This is terrible ! Geoffrey's dead and now I'll probably lose my job as well !

Simpson Why will you lose you job ?

Felicity Because old Stark-face knows that I've had an affair with Geoffrey.

Georgina Well you weren't very discrete about it were you, Felicity.

Marreau We are straying from the subject - there must be a connection between Geoffrey's death and the robbery - but I cannot see what it can be.

Simpson Perhaps that's Geoffrey's blood on the carpet.

Felicity [*Wail*] Oh ! Poor Geoffrey !

Marreau I think that is unlikely - unless Mr. Stark has also been dead since Monday !

Simpson Oh yes, I suppose so - so that probably is Henry's blood on the carpet !

Marreau I'm afraid so.

Georgina I still believe he's alive ! I think I'll go home, it's upsetting me being here in Henry's office.

Marreau Indeed my dear, do not worry - Marreau the Magnificent is on the job !

Georgina I'll try not to - you will let me know if anything happens.

Marreau Of course.

Georgina Thank-you again for helping

Marreau Not at all.

[*Georgina exits*]

Simpson I hope you can find him, Marreau; she looks so upset.

[*Percy enters*]

Percy Damned fool !

Marreau What ? Who is a damned fool, Monsieur Vere ?

Percy That Priggs fellow - says I can't have any of my money at the moment.

Simpson I say !

Felicity We've been told not to let anyone withdraw any money until this trouble has been sorted out.

Percy Ludicrous !

Priggs [*Offstage*] [*Calls*] Miss Timms. Miss Timms would you come here a moment ?

Felicity I'd better go.

Marreau Indeed. Would you tell Monsieur Priggs that I would like a word with him ?

Felicity Yes sir. [*exits*]

Percy You won't get any sense out of that damned idiot.

Marreau We shall see.

Percy I tell you - when this whole debacle is over I'm moving my money to another bank - one that treats its customers a little better.
[Priggs enters]

Priggs Sir Percival - I couldn't help overhearing what you just said - Please reconsider - we're simply following company policy.

Percy Pretty damned stupid policy if you ask me.

Marreau Tell me, Monsieur Priggs - what is the reasoning behind this action.

Priggs We don't want people to panic and withdraw all their money - it would cause us - um -
[pause] - a little trouble.

Simpson You mean you'd go plop !?

Priggs Plop ? What do you mean "plop"

Simpson I mean.....

Marreau *[Cutting in]* What Simpson means is that it would be financially injurious to your investments.

Simpson No *[Slight pause]* I meant

Percy *[To Simpson]* Keep quiet you idiot !

Simpson Oh, gosh - I see. Yes - that's what I meant.

Priggs Well yes - it would be a little tricky - some of the investments are long term and it wouldn't be in our clients best interests.

Marreau Indeed - I understand.

Priggs Anyway Sir Percival, I'm sure we can come to some arrangement
[Framell enters, he's drunk]

Framell What's that you're saying George ?

Priggs I was asking Sir Percival not to withdraw his money once this trouble is over.

Framell Ha ! He can try !

Percy What ? What the Devil are you talking about Framell ?

Framell *[slurred]* I said you can try to get your money out - see how far you get !

Priggs What are you saying Charles ?

Percy Are you drunk, man ? Explain yourself 1

Marreau Indeed, I think an explanation is most definitely in order.

Framell Oh, you want me to explain do you ? Alright I'll explain - we're up the Khyber, old man. We're halfway up the flaming Amazon without a paddle !

Marreau The Amazon is nowhere near the Khyber Pass !

Simpson Good heavens - d'you mean you're.....

Framell Bankrupt - Bust - Cap-bloody-put.

Percy Oh my God ! I'm ruined !

Framell You and me both, old son - and Georgie here - you're ruined too, old bean.

Percy *[Lunges at Framell]* You damned thief - what have you done with my money ?

Priggs What in Heaven's name has happened Charles ?

Framell The de Zootfontein mine - no gold - not a scrap - not a damned glister !

[[Blackout]]

Act II Scene 2

Scene: The same. Marreau and Simpson are at the desk going through papers.

Marreau It is incredible is it not Simpson.

Simpson Unbelievable - such a stupid mistake.

Marreau Indeed, they obviously did not do their research properly

[Eleanor enters]

Eleanor Hello; Monsieur Marreau I presume.

Marreau Indeed that is my privilege.

Eleanor I am Eleanor d'Aspre', I am engaged to be married to Charles Framell.

Marreau Very pleased to make your acquaintance. This is Mr. Simpson...

Simpson Hello !

Eleanor I say, I think I recognise you.

Marreau This is not surprising - my photograph has often appeared.....

Eleanor No, not you - Mr. Simpson.

Simpson Really - I don't recall... (ever meeting you)

Eleanor No, we've not met - didn't you do something heroic in the Transvaal ?

Marreau You are mistaken - Simpson was heroic in India - to everyone's surprise I might add.

Eleanor No it was definitely Africa. Something to do with a mine.

Simpson Oh that ! The Diffendorf mine. I'd almost forgotten about that

Eleanor Of course, the Diffendorf - I remember now

Marreau Comment ?

Simpson Hardly heroic though.

Eleanor You ran into a collapsing mine with tools to dig out the trapped men

Simpson Well yes....

Eleanor ... and rescued all sixty.

Simpson True, but ...

Eleanor Including my cousin.

Simpson Really ?!

Eleanor Yes, he was the foreman, said he'd never seen anything so brave in his life

Simpson Oh well, there you go. Couldn't leave all those men down there though, could I ?

Eleanor Our family is eternally grateful to you.

[Jane enters]

Jane Am I interrupting ?

Eleanor Hello Jane. [Blanks Marreau] This is Mr. Simpson, do you remember I told you about that brave man who saved my cousin's life.

Jane Really ! Mr. Simpson I'm so pleased to meet you !

Simpson Oh I say - Gosh - Likewise I'm sure.....

Marreau Hello, I am Marreau..... !

Jane [To Simpson] Weren't you frightened ?

Simpson Urm - Can't remember really - I s'pose I was a bit.....

Marreau The great Belgian detective.....

Jane Well I think you were very brave.....

Simpson No, no, no - not at all - just did what came naturally.....

Marreau I am going to solve this case for (you).....

Eleanor I never thought I'd meet you in the flesh....

Simpson Oh I say! - Well here I am...

Marreau Am I right in thinking that you are Monsieur Priggs' wife ?

Jane Oh hello - Yes, that's right - I'm afraid poor George has taken this bankruptcy terribly badly.

Eleanor So it's official is it? Our family seems to be plagued by ill fated mines.

Jane Apparently the company hasn't actually been declared bankrupt yet, but unless they find some gold by the end of the week - that's it.

Simpson I was looking at the mine survey - I'm not surprised they expected to make a fortune - virtually a certainty, I'd say.

Jane Do you know about these things then Mr. Simpson ?

Simpson Oh, you know, did a spot of prospecting in my earlier years....

Marreau I never knew this Simpson !

Simpson Sort of thing all the chaps my age did at the time.

Eleanor So you think they weren't foolhardy committing so much of the bank's resources to the scheme ?

Simpson Well if you're asking me - I think their mistake was not putting enough in, oh and sinking the main shaft in the wrong place of course.

Eleanor & Jane What ?

Simpson The main shaft - the seem obviously lay half a mile to the South.

Marreau Why did you not tell me this before ?

Simpson I did, I said they'd made a stupid mistake.

Marreau I thought.....

Eleanor Are you saying there is gold there but they're digging in the wrong place ?

Simpson Well yes, but they should have dug through to it by now.

Jane But you say the seem lies to the south

Simpson Yes that's right

Jane They're digging northward !

Simpson [*Laughing*] Oh good heavens - they'll never find any over there - no wonder !

Jane You mean if they sank a shaft half a mile to the south they'd hit gold ?

Simpson Straight into the motherlode I'd say.

Jane So it's all that idiot Stark's fault !

Marreau Stark ? Do you mean Agnes Stark ?

Eleanor No her husband Geoffrey - he was chief surveyor - he told them where to sink the shaft.

Simpson The man must be an idiot.

Marreau A dead idiot most probably !

Eleanor Yes I heard that they think he's been killed.

Jane Serves him right ! He's nearly driven poor George to suicide.

Eleanor I must tell Charles about the mine immediately !

Jane I'll come with you and tell George. [*Eleanor & Jane exit*]

Marreau I just hope you are right Simpson, I would not like to be in your slippers if you've falsely raised their hopes.

Simpson No, I'm pretty certain Marreau. Got a bit of a nose for gold - comes from having so much of the silly stuff I suppose !

Marreau Silly stuff ?

[*Farmer & Agnes enter*]

Farmer Ah - there you be Monsieur Marreau - well we've identified the corpse haven't we m'dear ?

Agnes [*Sad*] Yes, yes it's him - it's Geoffrey.

Marreau You have my deepest sympathy Madame Stark.

Simpson Mine too.

Agnes I wish people would stop mentioning mines !

Marreau Does it appear he was murdered, Chief Superintendent ?

Farmer Oh aye, little doubt about that - horribly murdered 'e was. Horribly.

Agnes [*Sobs slightly*] Horribly.

Marreau How horribly was that then ?

Farmer Very horribly. That there fish was stuck right into him ! [*Simpson clutches stomach*]

Marreau *Comment!* What do you mean a fish ?

Farmer One of them sword-fishes it was - right through 'im - 'orrible !

Simpson Excuse me [*Exits clutching stomach*]

Marreau You are telling me that Monsieur Stark was stabbed to death with a swordfish !

Farmer Aye that be right !

Agnes Please ! I'm trying not to think about it.

Marreau Most peculiar ! Just one thing Madame Stark; when did you last see your husband?

Agnes Wednesday morning - he's been away in Cambridge for a few days - he was due back today.
[*Sob*]

Marreau Thank-you, sorry to distress you. Any more news about Henry Beale, Chief Superintendent ?

Farmer Not as yet there ain't, but I'll let you know soon as I hears anything.

Marreau You may as well go home, Madame Stark, there is nothing for you to do here, and it would probably be better for you to rest.

Agnes There are some things I feel I should tell you

Marreau Oh ?

Farmer What be that then ? [*Sits*]

[*All except Agnes now seated*]

Agnes I suppose you know by now that Geoffrey was the Chief Surveyor for this project.

Marreau Indeed we have just learnt this fact.

[*Simpson re-enters*]

Agnes Well he was being blamed for them failing to find any gold.

Marreau This is not surprising - having made such a costly mistake.

Simpson I'd say - had he got the map upside down !

Agnes No, you're wrong - he didn't make any mistake - he told them they were digging in the wrong place - but they wouldn't listen to him - said they'd had an independent expert to look at the site who said that Geoffrey was wrong.

Marreau Aha ! Most interesting, an independent expert you say.

Farmer I'm not following this at all !

Marreau Do not worry yourself Chief Superintendent, I will explain it to you with little pictures later.

Farmer Oh right-you-are.

Marreau Madame Stark - do you know who this independent so-called expert was ?

Agnes A friend of Mr. Framells, some professor or other.

Marreau Does the name Hearty mean anything to you ?

Agnes Yes ! Yes, that was him. Professor Hearty.

Farmer By 'eck Monsieur Marreau, how comes you knew that ?

[**FX: Offstage phone rings**] [*Phone is answered*]

Simpson I say isn't he the maggot man ?

Marreau Quite so. Is there anything else you wish to tell me, Madame Stark, for instance who may have wished to kill your husband.

Agnes I really don't know - but I think it must have something to do with this damned mine.
[Framell enters]

Framell Chief Superintendent, Scotland Yard on the telephone for you.

Farmer Oh, right, by 'eck, I wonder what they want. [Exit]

Framell There's all sorts of things going on out there !

Marreau Oh ?

Framell Yes, Timms collapsed when she heard that Stark's murder had been confirmed ...

Agnes Little trollope !

Framell Now your secretary - what's her name ?

Marreau Miss Guile.

Framell She's out there bossing everyone around.

Simpson Sounds like old sour-face !

Marreau Whatever is Hermione doing here ? Does she want to see me ?

Framell No, she doesn't know you're here - apparently she has some money saved with us - she's giving poor old George a right ear-bending !

Simpson I can imagine.

Marreau This is a strange coincidence.

Framell I suppose it is - Oh - I'd like to apologize for my outburst earlier - bit of 'Dutch courage' you-know. Things getting to me !

Marreau Indeed, I'm sure everyone understands the pressure that you are under.

Framell You wait till I see Hearty again

Marreau Quite ! I wanted to talk to you about him.

Framell Oh ?

Marreau Why did you ask the Professor for a second opinion on the mine ?

Framell It's a little embarrassing - we had reason to believe that Stark was - er taking instructions from a rival....

Agnes WHAT ! That's ridiculous - Geoffrey would never have done a thing like that.

Framell I realise that now but ...

Marreau But what, Monsieur Framell ?

Framell The information came from a very - let me say impressive - source.

Marreau And who was this impressive source ?

Framell [Pause] Sir Percival Vere. He suggested I talk to Hearty - said they were at university together.....

Agnes So you ignored Geoffrey - and now look where you are ! It serves you damn-well right
[Storms off]

Framell Agnes !
[Priggs enters]

Priggs Excuse me everyone - Charles, I've cabled Pretoria, told them to dig half a mile to the south as Mr. Simpson advised.

Framell Jolly good. I think I'd better go and have a word with Agnes, calm her down [Exit]

Priggs [To Simpson] I just hope you're right Mr.Simpson, it's our last chance.

Simpson Oh, I'm pretty confident.

[Hermione enters]

Hermione [To Priggs] Don't just walk away when I'm talking to you Priggs ! [Sees Marreau]
[Surprised] Oh ! Mr. Marreau, Mr. Simpson - I didn't know you were here.

Marreau We did not expect to see you either Hermione.

Hermione Priggs here says I can't take any of my money out !

Priggs Not until this business is sorted out I'm afraid [Goes b/s, sits]

Marreau I am a little surprised that a lady of your - how shall I say social standing should have money invested in a Merchant Bank.

Hermione I should imagine you are - It was money I was left in a will by a former employer.

Marreau Oh ? May I ask who this former employer was.

Hermione I think that is my business.

Marreau Would it perchance have been the Earl of Stringmoor ?

Hermione [*Slight gasp*] Yes - how did you know ?

Simpson Old Squiffy ! You used to work for Squiffy ?

Hermione It was my honour to do so, yes.

Simpson Poor old Squiffy -

Marreau Yes, most unfortunate the lift doors shutting like that !

Hermione Horrible !

Marreau and the lift moving on Tell me, did they ever recover his head ?

Hermione Yes, they found it wedged in the machinery four floors 'up !

Simpson Excuse me ! [*Clutches stomach, exits at speed*]

Hermione Please - I'd rather not discuss it - I find it very distressing ...

Marreau And you were working for him at the time ?

Hermione Yes, I was with him when it happened - I saw it all !

Marreau Mon Dieu! I am not surprised that it upsets you to recollect it.

Hermione I had nightmares about it for months. Kept seeing him being lifted off the floor till he hit the roof then uh - it was just too horrible !

Marreau Well quite.

Hermione He was such a thoughtful man ...

[Simpson re-enters]

Marreau So the Earl left you a good deal of money did he ?

Hermione A generous amount - he was very fond of me.

Simpson I find that hard to believe, Squiffy always went for *pretty* girls !

Hermione Thank-you Simpson !

Simpson Oh, sorry - didn't mean to insult you - but I mean - you're not exactly beautiful, are you Hermione ? Not if one's being honest !

Marreau There is no need to be quite so honest all the time Simpson. One should occasionally - how you say - fob - when talking of a lady's appearance.

Simpson Honesty's the best policy that's what I always say - and, well, I think even Hermione will have to admit that she's distinctly plain !

Marreau Oh, Mon Dieu !

Hermione If you two have quite finished insulting me ! [*Exits in huff*]

Marreau I fail to see that I said anything amiss, you should be more tactful Simpson.

Simpson If she can call me stupid, I can call her plain !

Marreau A fair point I must admit !

[Jane & Eleanor re-enter]

Jane That policeman's just gone rushing off saying something about Henry Beale.

Marreau *Vraiment!* This is most interesting.

Eleanor I must say he's not like any senior policeman I've ever met before.

Simpson No, bit of a one-off is old Farmer.

Jane More like a village bobby.

Marreau Bobby who ?

Jane What ?

Simpson A bobby is a policeman, Marreau.

Marreau Which Bobby is a policeman ?

Simpson All of them.

Marreau All people called Bobby are policemen ?

Simpson No, no, no - all policemen are bobbies.

Marreau WHAT ! Do not be ridiculous - I know of several policeman who are not called Bobby !

Eleanor Is this going to go on for much longer ?

Simpson It's a nickname Marreau, A bobby is a nickname for a policeman -

Marreau No - wait one moment - I distinctly recollect Gwendolyn telling me that a bobby is a shilling.

Simpson That's a bob.

Marreau Well surely a bob and a bobby are the same thing n'est-ce pas ?

Eleanor Oh my God - any chance of sorting this out before one of us dies ?

Marreau Bob, bobby what is the difference ?

Jane Monsieur Marreau, may I explain ?

Marreau Please do. My little red cells - they are on the point of explosion.

Eleanor You're not the only one !

Jane Policemen are called Bobby after Sir Robert Peel who invented them.

Marreau [*Stares at Jane as though she's a Martian*] [*Long pause*] Surely then they should be called Peelies or Peelers or something of the like !

Simpson Yes - that's right they are !

Marreau Aggggh ! Your stupid, stupid English language ! I give up !

Priggs [*Getting up, coming d/s*] Yes, well ! I wonder what the news is about Beale.

Marreau [*Calming down*] Indeed. Monsieur Priggs - I believe you did not get on very well with him.

Priggs Who ? Beale ?

Marreau Of course, who else.

Priggs I don't know what you mean. I had nothing against old Beale - a good, honest worker I always found him to be. Not exactly bright but competent and good natured enough.

Jane Yes - I can't think why you should think that George had anything against him he was a most inoffensive little man.

Marreau So, what do you say Monsieur Priggs, to the fact that you were overheard arguing with him - and that you called him an "evil little twister" ?

Priggs What ! That's rubbish man ! I don't think I've ever had any cause whatsoever to so much as raise my voice to him. Who on earth told you this ?

Marreau A certain Professor of our mutual acquaintance.

Priggs Hearty ! I should have guessed ! That man is corrupt !

Marreau This case - it is confusing - I feel there are blind alleys everywhere I look.

Priggs Well, I hope you're not thinking of giving up, we could do with that fifty thousand back - not to mention clearing up Starke's death and Beale's disappearance.

Marreau No, do not worry - Marreau the Magnificent never gives up.....

[Percy hovering near doorway]

No matter how many obstacles there may be I shall persevere !

Percy Talking about me are you ?

Marreau No, Sir Percival.....

Percy I could have sworn I just heard my name mentioned.

Marreau You are mistaken; however as you are here, I would like you to answer a couple of questions.

Percy Oh ? What sort of questions.

Marreau What evidence had you that Starke was betraying the company ?

Percy Oh that.

Eleanor Yes, Percy, if it wasn't for you we'd never have got mixed up with that Hearty fellow.

Percy It was Hearty himself I'm afraid - I went to university with him you know absolute genius he was - starred first in Greats - anyway about six months ago I bumped into him again and he told me about this mine in the Transvaal and how the company that owned it were about to dig in the wrong place.....

Marreau The wrong place being in fact the right place n'est-ce pas ?

Percy So it would seem. And I put two and two together and realised it was the mine that F & P were financing

Marreau Aha, and you thought that your money was in jeopardy.

Percy Jeremy ?

Simpson [*Not at all sure*] Jeopardy ?

Percy Oh yes - precisely - especially as Hearty said that this Starke fellow was being paid by the Smaalsbord Mine Company to give duff information so that they'd be able to take over the de Zootfontein for next to nothing.

Simpson I say that's a bit off !

Eleanor I don't follow, we ended up digging in the wrong place *after* receiving this information.

Priggs Don't you see it was all a plan by Hearty - Starke was right, but Hearty's advice made us change our plans. We started digging in the wrong place - I bet he owns part of one of the rival mines.

Percy Do you mean that Hearty's a crook ? That he is responsible for this fiasco ?

Marreau Just so - I think we had better get the Chief Superintendent to arrest Professor Hearty at once.

Percy Oh dear !

Marreau What is the matter, Sir Percival ?

Percy I'm afraid you may have a little difficulty there, I've just seen him off on a liner bound for Venezuela.

Marreau [*Furious*] Merd!

[[**Blackout**]]

Act II Scene 3

Scene: The same. The following day. Simpson is seated at the table, Marreau is standing.

Simpson So what's happened to Georgina's husband - and why did Hearty murder poor old Stark.

Marreau No, no, no, no, no, no, no, there you are wrong my friend - Professor Hearty is a criminal genius, a cunning and corrupt man but he did not murder M. Stark and I do not believe he is responsible for Henry Beale's disappearance either.

Simpson How do you know he didn't kill Stark ?

Marreau Because for the entire period that covers the possible time of Stark's death, Professor Hearty was with Charles Framell -

Simpson So when did Stark die ?

Marreau Undoubtedly some time on Wednesday - Madame Stark saw him off in the morning but he never arrived in Cambridge, and the police report agrees with this.

Simpson Gosh - so the blood on the carpet can't be his because that was there on the Monday !

Marreau Yes indeed - oh dear, this suggests that it is poor Monsieur Beale's blood on the carpet after all. We had better continue our search for the murderer and for poor Georgina's husband - alive or dead.

Simpson Has Farmer been in touch with you - about that telephone call he received ?

Marreau Indeed - a false alarm I fear. Oh well, we must persevere.

[Percy enters]

Percy Talking about me again ?

Marreau No, Sir Percival, why do you keep thinking this ?

Percy I must be imagining things - anyway Marreau, do I take it that Stark was completely innocent in this affair ?

Marreau Totally innocent.

Simpson If you'd listened to him instead of Hearty you'd all be rich now !

Percy [*Slowly*] Good grief - what have I done.

Marreau I beg your pardon - are you admitting to something ?

Percy No, no - don't get me wrong, I didn't murder old Stark - well I didn't stab him with that fish at any rate.

Marreau So what do you mean.

Percy Listening to that damned scoundrel Hearty - getting him involved and to my eternal shame, slandering Stark - saying that it was his fault the mine was a disaster. No I didn't physically kill him but my actions led inexorably to his murder I'm sure.

Marreau But how can this have led to his death ?

Percy There are some pretty unstable characters around here you know.

Marreau Oh ? Please explain.....

[Larkspur enters]

Percy [**To Marreau**] Well here's one of them ! [**To Larkspur**] Larky, dear, lovely to see you !

Larkspur Hello darling ! Got it all solved then Marreau ?

Marreau I am beginning to draw certain conclusions.

Larkspur Does that mean I'll be able to get at my money soon ?

Percy Yes, we could all do with that, Marreau.

Marreau I think that will rather depend on whether they hit gold or not.

Simpson Oh, they'll do that alright.

Percy I wish I could share your confidence, Mr. Simpson.

Larkspur Well I hope they do it pretty quickly - I'm desperately short of cash.

Simpson I can lend you a few bob if you need it.
Larkspur I'm afraid I need more than a "few bob" - more like a hundred pounds.
Simpson That's no problem - will notes do or would you rather have sovereigns ?
Marreau Sacre Bleu !
Larkspur You're an absolute sweetie ! Notes will be fine.
Simpson Righty-ho ! Here you go then [*Gets wad out of wallet and counts ten notes out*]
Marreau Do you always carry that amount of money around with you Simpson ?
Simpson Oh no, it varies quite a bit.
Larkspur Thank-you so much, Mr.Simpson - I won't forget it. I'd better get off and pay some bills then. Thanks again...[*Exits*]

Percy I say - um - I don't suppose - er - you could see your way clear to - um -
Simpson [*Good natured*] Do you want some as well Sir Percy ?
Percy Well, you know, with my account being frozen and everything.....
Simpson Of course, say no more - do you want a hundred as well ?
Percy Absolutely, I wouldn't dream of asking normally but
Simpson Don't worry here you are [*hands out another ten notes*]
Percy This really is most Christian of you - I'll pay you back as soon as I can.
Simpson [*As Percy exits*] Fine. Whenever you're ready.

[Farmer enters]

Farmer By 'eck, I've got some interestin' information for you now.....
Marreau Really Chief Superintendent and what is this ?
Farmer That blood we found on the carpet
Marreau Yes do go on
Farmer Well, it looks like it belonged to Geoffrey Stark.
Simpson Good Heavens !
Marreau But how can this be ? Monsieur Stark was alive and well on Wednesday
Farmer Aye, that be right.
Marreau But the blood's been there since Monday.
Farmer No, that's not right.
Marreau But your sergeant found it
Farmer Aye that be right.
Marreau So surely it must have been there on Monday.
Farmer No, you're wrong there -
Marreau Explain yourself Chief Superintendent.
Farmer Well we didn't find the blood till Thursday - did we !
Simpson Oh I see !
Marreau Oh, Mon Dieu! Why did you not tell me this when you first mentioned it ?

[FX: Offstage phone rings][*Answered*]

Farmer Well I - urm - well I didn't see as how it mattered - I thought we'd just overlooked it before.
Marreau Overlooked it! There must be half of one of you English galleons there.
Farmer Aye, I must admit, I was a bit surprised that no-one had spotted it before !
Marreau [*Under breath*] Sacre Bleu! Quel idiot!
Farmer I'll be on me way then I reckons I'll solve this one before you do this time Monsieur Marreau.
Marreau Somehow I think you are wrong !
Farmer Oh well, good luck ! [*Exit*]

Simpson Well that's a bit of a turn up isn't it, Marreau !
Marreau I do not believe what an idiot that man is !
Simpson Really ? I thought he was dashed clever, finding out whose blood it was like that.
[Percy enters]

Percy I say Marreau, have you heard about old Beale ?
Marreau What about him ?
Percy Mrs. Beale's just telephoned - they've found him in a hospital in Watford !
Simpson Great Scott !
Marreau Zut Alors! This is most intriguing - In hospital you say; is he badly injured ?
Percy No, apparently he's alright but can't remember anything that happened since Sunday.
Simpson Georgina must be over the moon !
Marreau I hope his memory comes back to him - his evidence would be most useful !
[Felicity enters]

Felicity Mr. Marreau, there is a telephone call for you
Marreau Aha ! More news of Mr. Beale perchance ! [Exits]

Felicity Mr.Simpson - Mr. Priggs wondered if he could have a word with you about the mine in his office.
Simpson Good grief ! He's got a mine in his office ?!!!
Felicity No - He'd like to have a word with you in his office about the mine.
Simpson Oh, I see - yes of course. Excuse me, Sir Percival.
Percy Of course [Simpson & Felicity exit]

[This next section should not be rushed]
[Percy wanders over to desk, flicks through papers, something catches his eye]

Percy Good grief ! [Looks hard at paper] I think Marreau better see this immediately

[Goes towards exit, he stops as he sees someone in the doorway]

Percy What the devil ! What d'you think you're doing ! No !!!

[He backs up, a cloaked figure enters audience must not see who]

Percy What are you going to do - I know who you are - I know what you've been doing - I

[The cloaked figure raises its arm.....]

Percy NO !!!

[The arm comes down and stabs Percy, he falls dead to the floor]
[The cloaked figure takes the piece of paper from Percy and withdraws]

[[Blackout]]

Act II Scene 4 - Denouement

Scene : The same. Shortly afterwards. The entire cast is assembled. Percy has been propped up in a chair or is lying somewhere.

Marreau I am glad that you have all been able get here at such short notice.

Hermione I don't know why you wanted me here Marreau....

Marreau Hermione you are my secretary - you should be taking notes and helping me if I forget anything.

Hermione I'm not at all sure that that's in my contract.

Simpson It is !

Hermione Excuse me, Mr. Simpson, but how would you know ?

Simpson I read it last night - Section B Clause 32 Item 4 -

Hermione Oh alright.

Marreau Thank-you. If I may continue.

Framell Yes get on with it man - it's a pity you couldn't have discovered the fiend who's behind all this before poor old Percy got murdered.

Marreau Unfortunately - I could not have done so - it was Sir Percival's murder that allowed me to make the connection which led me to the answer !

Priggs So at least old Percy didn't die in vain then.

Marreau Just so.

Jane So are you going to tell us who the murderer is ?

Marreau All in good time, Madame Priggs.

Larkspur Don't take too long darling, I'm on at the Windmill at five.

Simpson I say have you got any tickets ?

Larkspur Of course darling - see me afterwards.

Agnes Will you two shut up and let Mr. Marreau get on - I want to know who killed my Geoffrey.

Felicity [*Wail*] Oh ! Poor Geoffrey !

Agnes I'll "Poor Geoffrey" you in a minute, you little cat !

Felicity [*Squeak*]

Eleanor For Heaven's sake, Agnes - Geoffrey's dead, you can't undo his affair with Felicity.

Georgina At least my Henry's still alive.

Marreau Yes this is one of the few pieces of good news, however, unfortunately M. Beale's loss of memory means that he is of very little help to this case. Tell me Madame Beale, this magnesia, do the doctors know how it was caused ?

Georgina Magnesia ? Oh, do you mean amnesia -

Marreau Ah yes...

Georgina It seems he was given some sort of drug.

Marreau Indeed; and this drug, do they know how was it - how you say - administrated ?

Georgina Orally - in a drink probably.

Farmer That be right - some sort of allud - um - hallucy - er - sort of mind-bending drug it were !

Marreau As I suspected.

Priggs Is this all mixed up with that devil, Hearty ?

Marreau Only incidentally - as you will see. Before explaining the whole case to you, I would like to satisfy myself on a few points Monsieur Framell ?

Framell Yes ?

Marreau Am I right in believing that you acted as executioners to Lord Stringmoor ?

Framell I beg your pardon !!!

Priggs I think he means executors, Charles....

Framell Oh I see - Yes, that is correct, but what the devil (has that got to do ...)

Marreau And am I right in thinking that a number of people in this room were beneficiaries of that will.

Framell Well yes....

Simpson I say, do you mean old Squiffy had something to do with all this ?

Marreau Unwittingly yes, I believe he did.

Simpson Good Heavens !

Farmer Well beat me round the head with a stick of celery -

Hermione What are you getting at Marreau ?

Marreau Of course Hermione, you were one of these beneficiaries, were you not ?

Hermione You know I was....

Simpson [*Excited*] I say Marreau - do you mean Hermione did it ! Did she ? Shall I hand-cuff her ? Shall I..... ?

Hermione You come near me Simpson and you'll wish you'd got off as lightly as that squirrel did ! Of course I didn't murder anyone !

Marreau Indeed, I do not believe you did.

Simpson [*Disappointed*] Oh.

Marreau There was an obvious mistake to be made when investigating this case - and Chief Superintendent Farmer made it.

Farmer By 'eck - I thought I might.

Marreau I nearly made it too, but being of superior brain power I saw the trap.

Farmer What was this-'ere mistake then Monsieur Marreau ?

Marreau Trying to link the crimes.

All: What ?

Marreau There were four crimes, firstly the fraud over the mine, secondly the theft of fifty thousand pounds, thirdly the murder of Geoffrey Stark and finally that of Sir Percival Vere.

Framell What are you getting at Marreau ?

Marreau Four crimes - four criminals !

All: What ?

Marreau The fraud we now know was a brilliant plan by that evil genius, Professor Hearty - and it may have worked if these other events had not taken place. Hearty was after a far greater prize than fifty thousand pounds - the de Zootfontein mine is worth at least twenty times this amount !

All: Gosh ! [*General murmuring*]

Priggs So come on then man, who did the other crimes ?

Marreau Monsieur Priggs, are you really so eager to know ?

Priggs Yes, of course I am

Marreau It bothered me, this story of your argument with Beale, why should Hearty tell me this, it was in his interests to get the theft cleared up so that he could continue with his own fraudulent plans without the police stumbling about ...

Priggs What are you saying, man ?

Marreau There was no theft was there, Monsieur Priggs, it was an invention by you to give your company a little extra time by freezing everyone's accounts. When Beale refused to help you, you decided to make him the escaping goat ! Am I not correct ?

Priggs [*Pause*] Alright yes - yes - dammit ! I admit it !

Jane George, how could you !

Georgina You tried to get my poor Henry blamed !

Priggs I'm sorry Mrs. Beale - It was only to try to keep the company going.

Marreau And as it happened, with my colleagues help, you succeeded !

Priggs I suppose I did - ha !

Marreau I am not actually sure what crime you have committed, but whatever it is it pales into insignificance beside the two others we must now consider !

Priggs Well I trust you do not believe that I am responsible for those !

Marreau Indeed I do not - for I know precisely who the murderers are !

Framell Well spit it out man !

Marreau Tell me Mr.Framell, this office was locked after the theft, oui?

Framell Yes.

Marreau And who had keys to it ?

Framell Well there were only two apart from Beale's own, I had one which I gave to the police and his secretary had the other which she kept in her desk.

Marreau His secretary being Mademoiselle Timms ?

Framell Yes, that's right, Felicity, isn't it ?

Felicity Yes sir. But anyone could have got the key from my desk.

Marreau Madame Stark you saw your husband on Wednesday morning as he left to go to Cambridge - is this correct ?

Agnes It is.

Marreau When I telephoned Cambridge I discovered that he was in fact not due there until the following day -

Agnes But why did he tell me that.....

Marreau Because he had an assignation planned !

Agnes An assignation ?! Who with ? [*Looks at Felicity*] Not you !

Felicity No !

Marreau Oh yes, Mademoiselle Timms, indeed with you !

Felicity I was in love with Geoffrey ! I wouldn't kill him !

Marreau Not only in love with him, but carrying his baby, yes ?

Agnes WHAT !!!

Felicity How did you know ? How on earth did you know ?

Simpson Gosh !

Marreau Would I be right in thinking that when you confronted him with this information he didn't want to have anything more to do with you ?

Felicity He used me ! That was all he wanted me for - told me to go to Hell when I asked him to divorce Agnes - I didn't mean to kill him.

Marreau You didn't mean to kill him ? How do you accidentally kill someone with a sword fish ?

Felicity I was just protecting myself - it was the first thing that came to hand !

Marreau But what on earth were you doing with a sword fish in the first place ?

Felicity We came into this office for a quiet talk - when we started arguing he went to hit me - I picked up the nearest thing to me and hit him with it - he just laughed, so I sort of poked him with it ! Oh it was horrible - I didn't realise how sharp its nose was !

Simpson I think you'll find it's called its bill.

Marreau You are expecting us to believe that there was a sword fish just lying about in the office ?

Georgina Oh yes, there would have been - Henry does a lot of deep sea fishing - he caught a couple of sword fish a few weeks ago and had them stuffed - he was going to have them mounted so that he could have them on his wall.

Marreau *Zut Alors !* I wish I had known this earlier - it may have saved poor Sir Percy's life !

Georgina Oh dear !

Marreau Now tell me Mademoiselle Timms - how did you dispose of Monsieur Stark's body ?

Felicity I - er - I - um

Marreau His body must have been far too heavy for you to move unaided - so tell me who was your accomplice ?

Felicity [*Slight pause*] I'm not saying anything.

Marreau You did indeed have an accomplice, and it was this person who committed the second murder - the murder of Sir Percival Vere.

Priggs So who was it Marreau ?

Marreau Do you remember I said that Lord Stringmoor's will has a bearing on this case ?

All: Yes. {{ Farmer No }}

Marreau I believe Sir Percy had stumbled across this will and had realised the connection that I also made when I saw a copy of the will.

Framell What connection - I must have read that will a hundred times, I can't think of anything.

Marreau Simpson, I believe you were an acquaintance of Lord Stringmoor -

Simpson Old Squiffy - yes I knew him quite well.

Marreau Would I be right in thinking that he had had a number of affairs -

Simpson Oh gosh yes - hundreds of 'em - 'specially when he was younger

Marreau And were you aware of any illegitimate children ?

Simpson Now you mention it - yes - long before I knew him of course - two girls I believe.

Marreau By two different mistresses ?

Simpson Oh probably - they never lasted very long.

Marreau One of these mistresses was a maid by the name of Alice Timms -

Felicity How on earth did you know that ?

Marreau And the other.....

Hermione Was my mother - alright I admit it - yes, I helped Felicity and I killed that idiot Vere - we grew up together didn't we Fliss.

Felicity Oh Hermy, You said we'd get away with it !

Simpson I thought you said Hermione didn't do it, Marreau.

Marreau Got to keep the tension up Simpson !

Simpson Oh I see !

Farmer I'd better do a bit of arresting then !

Marreau Indeed.

Hermione No-one's arresting me ! [*Produces sword fish*] Don't anybody move ! This fish has killed once already !

Farmer Now don't you go doin' nothing silly

Simpson Not so fast Hermione - [*Producing second swordfish*] You forgot it's mate !

Hermione Damn !

Simpson *En Garde !*

[*A swordfish fight ensues*] [*After a considerable battle, Hermione yields - or is stabbed*]

Marreau Well done Simpson !

Framell I'd say ! And well done Marreau, got 'em all banged to rights !

Simpson Except that scoundrel Hearty !

Marreau Do not worry my friend - he has escaped me for the moment only - I feel our paths will cross again. We have not heard the last of Professor Maurice Hearty !

[[**Blackout**]] [[[**Curtain**]]]

Marreau returns in *Marreau and the Sword of Carthage*