



AUDITION PACK

Taunton Thespians

'The Mirror Crack'd' by Agatha Christie
Adapted by Rachel Wagstaff

Presentation & read through

Monday 2nd December

Audition dates

Monday 9th December

Tuesday 10th December

At 7.30pm at The Place



Audition form

About the production

Agatha Christie's 'The Mirror Crack'd'. A new adaptation by Rachel Wagstaff

This is a fresh, new, adaptation of the classic Agatha Christie story, set in the 1960's, that adheres closely to the original story. Miss Marple, although indisposed and confined to a chair, proves pivotal in gaining the confidence of all the various suspects and unravelling the crime.

This play is a beautiful mix of intrigue and wit with a fast paced modern feel to a vintage 'Christie' crime story. It has all the classic characters as well as the usual twists and turns before the delightfully crafted conclusion.

Director: Sue Meredith & Martin Jevon

- **Rehearsals: Tuesday & Thursday**
- **Performances: Tuesday 11th to Saturday 15th March 2025 at Tacchi Morris theatre with a Saturday matinee**

Responsibilities: in line with the Thespians' Production Document, actors are expected to arrive promptly for all rehearsals, photo shoots and publicity activities as called in the rehearsal schedule and to learn their lines and moves according to production schedule. Everyone is expected to behave with consideration and respect to everyone involved with the production. Cast and crew must be members of the Society.

About you

- **Name:**
- **Phone number:**
- **Email address:**
- **Age (if under 18):**
- **Preferred role or roles:**
- Examples of previous acting roles:
- Holiday dates or other absences during rehearsal period:

If not cast, would you be prepared to take on a backstage position? Or front of house?

About the acting roles

Pen Portraits

Miss Jane Marple: Elderly, quiet appearance, deceptively astute.

Playing age: Elderly

Cherry Baker: Bustling, talkative, caring and capable.

Playing age: Any age

Chief Inspector Dermot Craddock: Old fashioned style of policeman, a bit pompous.

Playing age: Any age

Heather Leigh: A rather silly woman, bossy and tactless but inoffensive.

Playing age: Middle aged

Cyril Leigh: A man of few words, devoted husband who understands his wife's foibles.

Playing age: Middle aged

Dolly Bantry: Miss Marple's friend who was the lady of the manor until widowed. Well spoken albeit slightly giddy at times.

Playing age: Middle aged +

Marina Gregg: A faded "A list film star" with a crisis of confidence. Totally self obsessed

Playing age: Middle aged

Jason Rudd: Marina's latest husband. Very indulgent to his wife, stands no nonsense from the staff.

Playing age: younger middle aged.

Ella Zielinsky: Marina and Greggs secretary. Very disenchanting and world weary

Playing age: any

Lola Brewster: Rising star, hoping to take over from Marina. Pushy

Playing age: Younger

Audition Pieces Below

Cherry Baker	Pages 4-6 and 29-34
Cyril Leigh	Page 68
Dermott Craddock	Pages 29-34 and 57-58
Dolly Bantry	Pages 29-34 and 54-58
Ella Zielinsky	Page 104
Giuseppe Renzo	Page 77 and Pages 105-106
Heather Leigh	Pages 44-45
Jane Marple	Pages 4-6, 29-34 and 54-58
Jason Rudd	Pages 56-58 and 107-108
Lola Brewster	Page 31 and Pages 68-72
Marina Gregg	Pages 44-45, 54-58 and 107-108

CHERRY. What was the play?

MISS MARPLE. I don't remember.

Oh, of course. It was *A Doll's House*. You get so caught up with how very trapped Nora feels that you'd forgive her almost anything. And yet, to walk out on your children...

CHERRY. I've never seen it.

Right. I'll get yer breakfast.

(**CHERRY** leaves.)

(*Silence.*)

(**CHERRY** returns.)

I thought I'd push the boat out and do your eggs boiled today.

MISS MARPLE. Lovely.

CHERRY. Oh! I forgot your tea.

Sorry. I'm at sixes and sevens today.

MISS MARPLE. Are you all right?

CHERRY. Sorry, Miss, it's just...

MISS MARPLE. What's happened?

(*Pause.*)

CHERRY. I know it's daft but whenever something bad happens... I lost my sister, a few years ago now, mind, and... but it's still her I want to tell, and then, it's like I've lost her, all over again.

MISS MARPLE. Yes.

Grief, it casts such terribly long shadows.

(Beat.)

CHERRY. Them eggs'll be done by now.

(CHERRY goes.)

(Silence.)

(CHERRY returns.)

The eggs have only gone and cracked! I'll have to start again.

MISS MARPLE. Actually, I'm not hungry.

Losing a sister as a child must be terribly lonely.

CHERRY. The thing is, I don't know if I'm making a memory from a photograph or if I actually remember her. I can't even remember what it was like to be held by her, or if she even – sorry. Here's me harping on, and you got enough on your plate, what with your gammy leg...

MISS MARPLE. I've plenty of time to listen.

(Silence.)

CHERRY. It's just, I don't know anyone round here and...

MISS MARPLE. What's happened, dear?

CHERRY. ...I dunno...

MISS MARPLE. You've been here a week. How many people have called round in all that time?

CHERRY. ...?

MISS MARPLE. If you have a secret that's troubling you... I've no one to tell.

CHERRY. It must be 'orrible, being old.

Not that you're...

MISS MARPLE. I've never felt "old" before. But being stuck in this chair...

It's an awful thing, Cherry dear, to feel alone with your cares.

Tell me what's upset you.

CHERRY. ...It was at the drinks party yesterday. You see -

(The sound of the doorbell.)

MISS MARPLE. It's probably just a travelling salesman. Go on.

CHERRY. Well, thing is -

(The doorbell rings again. Then the sound of the front door opening. CHIEF INSPECTOR DERMOT CRADDOCK appears. CHERRY intercepts him.)

Sorry, can I help you?

CRADDOCK. I'm looking for Miss Marple -

MISS MARPLE. Dermot! What a lovely surprise.

CRADDOCK. You're always so quick to the door. I thought something must have happened to you.

MISS MARPLE. I had a silly fall. This is Cherry. She's been looking after me. Cherry, this is Inspector Craddock.

CHERRY. Inspector...?

MISS MARPLE. His parents were friends of mine.

CRADDOCK. Chief Inspector now, actually!

MISS MARPLE. Oh.

CRADDOCK. What?

MISS MARPLE. No. That's very good news. Just like your father.

CHERRY. She got it from Giuseppe, I think his name is.
The butler.

(We see everything reconstructed, as described.)

(GIUSEPPE appears, holding a tray of drinks. MARINA goes to him. They laugh at something together. MARINA very clearly picks her own drink.)

MISS MARPLE. She definitely chose it herself?

(DOLLY nods.)

Who did you see approaching Miss Gregg between the time of Miss Gregg picking her drink and Heather Leigh drinking it?

CHERRY. I'd been told to stand in the corner with me tray and look "unobtrusive". *(Looks down.)*

MISS MARPLE. Did you see the feet of anyone going near Miss Gregg?

CHERRY. Well, yeah, but -

DOLLY. Heather Leigh marched over to Miss Gregg and started some dull-as-death story -

(HEATHER far too close to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. - when I heard that you were coming over to do *Antony and Cleopatra!* Oh, I was mad with excitement and then on the very day of the opening night, I went down with a rotten head cold. But I wasn't going to be beaten, so I put on a lot of make-up and stood in line for hours and you came right up to me and gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

(A look of frozen horror on MARINA's face. She quickly puts back on a smile.)

MARINA. How kind of you, to go to so much trouble.

CRADDOCK. And that's when the drink was spilled.

DOLLY. (*Simultaneously.*) No.

CHERRY. (*Simultaneously.*) Yes.

(*Beat.*)

DOLLY. Don't you remember? That was when Lola Brewster arrived.

(*LOLA appears.*)

HEATHER. Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

(*MARINA goes to LOLA.*)

MISS MARPLE. Lola Brewster?

DOLLY. Oh Jane, don't tell me you haven't heard of her. She's been in all those films with those angry young men.

CRADDOCK. What did they say to each other?

DOLLY. I didn't catch it, but it didn't exactly look as if they were the best of friends.

(*CRADDOCK turns to CHERRY.*)

CHERRY. I was in me corner.

MISS MARPLE. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Have you spoken to Miss Brewster?

CRADDOCK. I wanted to talk to you first.

DOLLY. To get the gossip?

(*Touché.*)

I had a little chat with Lola, actually, at the party –

CRADDOCK. I'm sure you did –

MISS MARPLE. What did you make of her?

DOLLY. She was a dear.

LOLA. (*Goes to DOLLY.*) Hi. I'm Lola. And you are...?

DOLLY. Dolly Bantry. I'm no one important, except I used to own this place.

LOLA. We're all important to ourselves. (*Smiles.*) You're one up on me, anyway. I wasn't actually invited.

DOLLY. Aren't you making a film with Miss Gregg?

LOLA. Sure, but she seems to have no idea who I am.

DOLLY. Who are you playing?

LOLA. Anne Boleyn.

DOLLY. Oh! The next wife!

(*Beat.*)

If you don't mind my asking, why did you come, if you weren't invited?

(*Conspiratorial.*) I came to look at the bathrooms.

LOLA. I thought it might be good to meet Marina away from the pressure of the set. Actually, (*Equally conspiratorial.*) I'm terrified. I've never worked with anyone famous before.

DOLLY. But aren't you famous, dear?

LOLA. Not like Marina. Mind you, no one's famous like Marina.

(**LOLA disappears.**)

MISS MARPLE. Why go to a party when you haven't been invited?

CRADDOCK. Can we concentrate on the events?

MISS MARPLE. We all experience events differently.

CRADDOCK. Going back to what happened...

DOLLY. Well... (*To* **CHERRY.**) You started to go over to Miss Gregg, with your tray... But then you stopped...?

CHERRY. I was gonna offer her a vol-au-vent. But I lost my nerve.

CRADDOCK. Why?

CHERRY. She's ruddy famous.

CRADDOCK. Then what happened?

CHERRY. Miss Gregg went to talk to her secretary, but then you... (*To* **DOLLY.**) – sorry, I didn't catch your name.

DOLLY. Mrs Bantry. I used to own Gossington Hall.

CHERRY. Right. Well, you collared her. Something about –

DOLLY. I'd hardly say collared –

CHERRY. Toilets.

DOLLY. I went to congratulate Miss Gregg on her bathrooms.

CHERRY. Marina carried on to Miss wotshername.

DOLLY. Zielinsky.

(Beat.)

Miss Zielinsky put Miss Gregg's necklace straight.

CHERRY. Marina went back to that woman. Heather Leigh.

DOLLY. And then –

CHERRY. (*To* **DOLLY.**) Are you telling this story or am I?

MISS MARPLE. You're both doing very well.

CHERRY & DOLLY. Ta / Thank you.

(Beat.)

CRADDOCK. And then?

CHERRY. Miss Zielinsky sneezed –

(MARINA and HEATHER are conversing happily. JASON nearby. ELLA sneezes.)

(Quickly.) And she spilled her drink all over her dress...

(We see HEATHER spill her drink over MARINA's dress.)

DOLLY. Heather Leigh looked mortified. Marina was doing everything she could to make Mrs Leigh feel better about the whole thing...

CHERRY. She was so nice about it too.

(MARINA graciously hands her drink to HEATHER.)

DOLLY. And Heather Leigh knocked it back like a common bricklayer!

(HEATHER raises the glass to her lips. In the present day, CHERRY cries out.)

CHERRY. One moment, she was chattering away, and then... I mean, I know people die and all that, but it was so...you know?

MISS MARPLE. *(Gently.)* Is that what you wanted to tell me, earlier?

(Beat. CHERRY looks down. Nods, quickly.)

DOLLY. *(To CRADDOCK.)* So, who poisoned the drink?

CRADDOCK. My investigation is confidential.

DOLLY. You mean, you haven't a clue.

CRADDOCK. Thank you. You've been most helpful –

MISS MARPLE. You told me to ask about Tennyson.

DOLLY. Oh. Yes. It was after that tedious story –

(We see, replayed:)

HEATHER. And you gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone! Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

*(Music. * The sound of a mirror shattering.
We can see the look of frozen horror on
MARINA's face.)*

DOLLY. “The mirror crack'd from side to side;

‘The doom is come upon me,’ cried

The Lady of Shalott.”

MISS MARPLE. You mean curse.

DOLLY. I beg your pardon?

MISS MARPLE. Curse. Not doom.

DOLLY. Oh. I prefer doom.

CRADDOCK. I don't think this is the time for a poetry discussion –

DOLLY. The point is, *if* you're interested, Heather Leigh was babbling on, and Miss Gregg's eyes began to wander – well, who can blame her – and then suddenly, on Miss Gregg's face there was a look of absolute terror.

CRADDOCK. Who was she looking at?

DOLLY. I don't know. I was looking at her.

CRADDOCK. She must have caught sight of someone. Who did she see?

DOLLY. *(Exasperated.)* I just told you...

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CRADDOCK. (*Irritated.*) I'll go.

(**CRADDOCK** lets in **CYRIL LEIGH**.)

Mr Leigh. I'm so sorry. I got caught up –

CYRIL. Yes. But I have to tell you –

(*The doorbell goes again. Beat.*)

CRADDOCK. Excuse me.

(**CRADDOCK** goes off to answer it, muttering
"It's like Piccadilly bloody Circus!")

(**CRADDOCK** lets in **LOLA**.)

LOLA. Your sergeant told me to come here...?

CRADDOCK. Miss Brewster. Just a few questions, if I may?

CYRIL. Sorry. Could I just –

CRADDOCK. Do forgive me, Mr Leigh, but I'm afraid I really need to interview Miss Brewster. I'll call round later, all right?

CYRIL. But –

CRADDOCK. If you'll excuse me.

(*Beat. CYRIL leaves, reluctantly.*)

MISS MARPLE. Perhaps, my dear, we could all do with a cup of tea. Dermot, could you put the kettle on?

LOLA. Oh yes please! If it's not too much trouble?

(**CRADDOCK** sighs, goes, muttering under his breath.)

MISS MARPLE. Did you find your handbag?

LOLA. No, but I told you –

MISS MARPLE. You seemed so upset.

CHERRY. She got it from Giuseppe, I think his name is.
The butler.

(We see everything reconstructed, as described.)

(GIUSEPPE appears, holding a tray of drinks. MARINA goes to him. They laugh at something together. MARINA very clearly picks her own drink.)

MISS MARPLE. She definitely chose it herself?

(DOLLY nods.)

Who did you see approaching Miss Gregg between the time of Miss Gregg picking her drink and Heather Leigh drinking it?

CHERRY. I'd been told to stand in the corner with me tray and look "unobtrusive". *(Looks down.)*

MISS MARPLE. Did you see the feet of anyone going near Miss Gregg?

CHERRY. Well, yeah, but -

DOLLY. Heather Leigh marched over to Miss Gregg and started some dull-as-death story -

(HEATHER far too close to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. - when I heard that you were coming over to do *Antony and Cleopatra!* Oh, I was mad with excitement and then on the very day of the opening night, I went down with a rotten head cold. But I wasn't going to be beaten, so I put on a lot of make-up and stood in line for hours and you came right up to me and gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

(A look of frozen horror on MARINA's face. She quickly puts back on a smile.)

MARINA. How kind of you, to go to so much trouble.

CRADDOCK. And that's when the drink was spilled.

DOLLY. (*Simultaneously.*) No.

CHERRY. (*Simultaneously.*) Yes.

(*Beat.*)

DOLLY. Don't you remember? That was when Lola Brewster arrived.

(*LOLA appears.*)

HEATHER. Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

(*MARINA goes to LOLA.*)

MISS MARPLE. Lola Brewster?

DOLLY. Oh Jane, don't tell me you haven't heard of her. She's been in all those films with those angry young men.

CRADDOCK. What did they say to each other?

DOLLY. I didn't catch it, but it didn't exactly look as if they were the best of friends.

(*CRADDOCK turns to CHERRY.*)

CHERRY. I was in me corner.

MISS MARPLE. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Have you spoken to Miss Brewster?

CRADDOCK. I wanted to talk to you first.

DOLLY. To get the gossip?

(*Touché.*)

I had a little chat with Lola, actually, at the party –

CRADDOCK. I'm sure you did –

MISS MARPLE. What did you make of her?

DOLLY. She was a dear.

LOLA. (*Goes to DOLLY.*) Hi. I'm Lola. And you are...?

DOLLY. Dolly Bantry. I'm no one important, except I used to own this place.

LOLA. We're all important to ourselves. (*Smiles.*) You're one up on me, anyway. I wasn't actually invited.

DOLLY. Aren't you making a film with Miss Gregg?

LOLA. Sure, but she seems to have no idea who I am.

DOLLY. Who are you playing?

LOLA. Anne Boleyn.

DOLLY. Oh! The next wife!

(*Beat.*)

If you don't mind my asking, why did you come, if you weren't invited?

(*Conspiratorial.*) I came to look at the bathrooms.

LOLA. I thought it might be good to meet Marina away from the pressure of the set. Actually, (*Equally conspiratorial.*) I'm terrified. I've never worked with anyone famous before.

DOLLY. But aren't you famous, dear?

LOLA. Not like Marina. Mind you, no one's famous like Marina.

(**LOLA disappears.**)

MISS MARPLE. Why go to a party when you haven't been invited?

CRADDOCK. Can we concentrate on the events?

MISS MARPLE. We all experience events differently.

CRADDOCK. Going back to what happened...

DOLLY. Well... (*To* **CHERRY.**) You started to go over to Miss Gregg, with your tray... But then you stopped...?

CHERRY. I was gonna offer her a vol-au-vent. But I lost my nerve.

CRADDOCK. Why?

CHERRY. She's ruddy famous.

CRADDOCK. Then what happened?

CHERRY. Miss Gregg went to talk to her secretary, but then you... (*To* **DOLLY.**) – sorry, I didn't catch your name.

DOLLY. Mrs Bantry. I used to own Gossington Hall.

CHERRY. Right. Well, you collared her. Something about –

DOLLY. I'd hardly say collared –

CHERRY. Toilets.

DOLLY. I went to congratulate Miss Gregg on her bathrooms.

CHERRY. Marina carried on to Miss wotshername.

DOLLY. Zielinsky.

(Beat.)

Miss Zielinsky put Miss Gregg's necklace straight.

CHERRY. Marina went back to that woman. Heather Leigh.

DOLLY. And then –

CHERRY. (*To* **DOLLY.**) Are you telling this story or am I?

MISS MARPLE. You're both doing very well.

CHERRY & DOLLY. Ta / Thank you.

(Beat.)

CRADDOCK. And then?

CHERRY. Miss Zielinsky sneezed –

(MARINA and HEATHER are conversing happily. JASON nearby. ELLA sneezes.)

(Quickly.) And she spilled her drink all over her dress...

(We see HEATHER spill her drink over MARINA's dress.)

DOLLY. Heather Leigh looked mortified. Marina was doing everything she could to make Mrs Leigh feel better about the whole thing...

CHERRY. She was so nice about it too.

(MARINA graciously hands her drink to HEATHER.)

DOLLY. And Heather Leigh knocked it back like a common bricklayer!

(HEATHER raises the glass to her lips. In the present day, CHERRY cries out.)

CHERRY. One moment, she was chattering away, and then... I mean, I know people die and all that, but it was so...you know?

MISS MARPLE. *(Gently.)* Is that what you wanted to tell me, earlier?

(Beat. CHERRY looks down. Nods, quickly.)

DOLLY. *(To CRADDOCK.)* So, who poisoned the drink?

CRADDOCK. My investigation is confidential.

DOLLY. You mean, you haven't a clue.

CRADDOCK. Thank you. You've been most helpful –

MISS MARPLE. You told me to ask about Tennyson.

DOLLY. Oh. Yes. It was after that tedious story –

(We see, replayed:)

HEATHER. And you gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone! Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

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CRADDOCK. She must have caught sight of someone. Who did she see?

DOLLY. *(Exasperated.)* I just told you...

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(The below, overlapping:)

MARINA. No -

JASON. How dare you?

CRADDOCK. I can have him arrested -

JASON. You have no idea -

CRADDOCK. Questioned, at the police station -

JASON. Who the hell tried to kill her -

MARINA. That's enough -

JASON. You couldn't stop a murderer if he was standing right next to you!

CRADDOCK. You may well be a powerful man in your walk of life but I have to remind you that we are all equal in the eyes of the law -

MARINA. Jason -

JASON. Why don't you just come out and say it? You think I tried to kill my wife!

MARINA. Honey. I told them about Sam.

JASON. What? Why?

MARINA. They wanted to know why I had to send my girls away.

JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

(JASON takes MARINA's hand. He turns back to CRADDOCK.)

If this gets out -

CRADDOCK. This is a confidential investigation -

JASON. I mean it. If either of you ever breathes a word -

CRADDOCK. Yes?

(Another stand off.)

MISS MARPLE. Miss Gregg. I can assure you we both understand that some things are too painful to be made public. This will go no further. Will it, Dermot?

CRADDOCK. You have my word.

MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

JASON. Right then -

MARINA. Could I... Could I have a minute?

JASON. You heard her -

MARINA. Alone?

JASON. ...I'll be right outside.

(JASON kisses MARINA. He turns to usher out MISS MARPLE and CRADDOCK.)

MARINA. Oh, Detective Craddock, why don't you stay and watch the filming?

(JASON leaves. CRADDOCK helps MISS MARPLE off. MARINA, alone, stares at her face in the mirror in her dressing table. She cries.)

(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

CHERRY. She got it from Giuseppe, I think his name is.
The butler.

(We see everything reconstructed, as described.)

(GIUSEPPE appears, holding a tray of drinks. MARINA goes to him. They laugh at something together. MARINA very clearly picks her own drink.)

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(DOLLY nods.)

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(*LOLA appears.*)

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(Beat.)

Miss Zielinsky put Miss Gregg's necklace straight.

CHERRY. Marina went back to that woman. Heather Leigh.

DOLLY. And then –

CHERRY. (*To* **DOLLY.**) Are you telling this story or am I?

MISS MARPLE. You're both doing very well.

CHERRY & DOLLY. Ta / Thank you.

(Beat.)

CRADDOCK. And then?

CHERRY. Miss Zielinsky sneezed –

(MARINA and HEATHER are conversing happily. JASON nearby. ELLA sneezes.)

(Quickly.) And she spilled her drink all over her dress...

(We see HEATHER spill her drink over MARINA's dress.)

DOLLY. Heather Leigh looked mortified. Marina was doing everything she could to make Mrs Leigh feel better about the whole thing...

CHERRY. She was so nice about it too.

(MARINA graciously hands her drink to HEATHER.)

DOLLY. And Heather Leigh knocked it back like a common bricklayer!

(HEATHER raises the glass to her lips. In the present day, CHERRY cries out.)

CHERRY. One moment, she was chattering away, and then... I mean, I know people die and all that, but it was so...you know?

MISS MARPLE. *(Gently.)* Is that what you wanted to tell me, earlier?

(Beat. CHERRY looks down. Nods, quickly.)

DOLLY. *(To CRADDOCK.)* So, who poisoned the drink?

CRADDOCK. My investigation is confidential.

DOLLY. You mean, you haven't a clue.

CRADDOCK. Thank you. You've been most helpful –

MISS MARPLE. You told me to ask about Tennyson.

DOLLY. Oh. Yes. It was after that tedious story –

(We see, replayed:)

HEATHER. And you gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone! Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

*(Music. * The sound of a mirror shattering.
We can see the look of frozen horror on
MARINA's face.)*

DOLLY. “The mirror crack’d from side to side;

‘The doom is come upon me,’ cried

The Lady of Shalott.”

MISS MARPLE. You mean curse.

DOLLY. I beg your pardon?

MISS MARPLE. Curse. Not doom.

DOLLY. Oh. I prefer doom.

CRADDOCK. I don’t think this is the time for a poetry discussion –

DOLLY. The point is, *if* you’re interested, Heather Leigh was babbling on, and Miss Gregg’s eyes began to wander – well, who can blame her – and then suddenly, on Miss Gregg’s face there was a look of absolute terror.

CRADDOCK. Who was she looking at?

DOLLY. I don’t know. I was looking at her.

CRADDOCK. She must have caught sight of someone. Who did she see?

DOLLY. *(Exasperated.)* I just told you...

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MISS MARPLE. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... I too once had hopes of a family...

CRADDOCK. (*Uncomfortable.*) Jane –

MISS MARPLE. (*Indicating CRADDOCK.*) I looked after this poor chap on occasion but, well, time goes by...

MARINA. Yes. Time goes by.

(**MARINA** and **MISS MARPLE** both momentarily caught in their own thoughts, their own losses.)

(*Catching herself.*) If you'll excuse me –

CRADDOCK. Of course.

MISS MARPLE. Could you not have children of your own?

MARINA. I'm sorry... (*To CRADDOCK.*) Who is this woman?

CRADDOCK. Nobody. Well, she's my aunt. Well, not really my aunt but –

MISS MARPLE. Dermot feels sorry for me because I've no family of my own. But you adopted, I believe...?

MARINA. It's common knowledge.

MISS MARPLE. So does that mean you couldn't have children of your own?

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. And so you took in two girls...

MARINA. You've clearly been reading the gossip columns.

MISS MARPLE. But you sent the girls away.

MARINA. Is that what people think?

I became unwell.

MISS MARPLE. Was there anything in particular that triggered your illness?

MARINA. ...My work can be very demanding at times...

MISS MARPLE. Of course.

What were the girls like?

MARINA. I don't see...

MISS MARPLE. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to intrude. I suppose you don't really think about them now...

MARINA. Of course I think about them! Alice, she was really fun. Full of life. Charlotte was a sweet, sweet soul. The most loyal little kitten I ever met.

MISS MARPLE. I think it might be vital we find them now. Don't you think?

MARINA. It can't have been anything to do with them.

MISS MARPLE. Are you sure?

MARINA. ...Those girls loved me.

MISS MARPLE. Even though you sent them away?

MARINA. It wasn't like that. They didn't want to see me but [they'd never] -

MISS MARPLE. Because they felt...rejected?

MARINA. No!

MISS MARPLE. Then...ah. Replaced.

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. You had a baby?

MARINA. I told you, I don't have children...

MISS MARPLE. No?

(CRADDOCK goes to speak. MISS MARPLE stops him.)

(Silence. MARINA can't hold back the tears.)

MISS MARPLE. Oh my dear. I'm very sorry.

What happened to your baby?

MARINA. ...The doctors told me he wasn't right in the head. My husband – at the time, his name was Peter – he thought it best if we kept it from the world, so no one would write nasty stories.

I tried to look after him, my baby, Sam, but... Then I, I wasn't very well, so Peter insisted we send the girls away. I wanted them to be happy. I thought it was the best thing for them.

Then Peter left us, and my poor boy, he was so...

They said it would be better to let him be in a place where he'd be cared for... I went to visit him, whenever I could, but... They didn't even let me take him home, at the very end.

MISS MARPLE. (*Gently.*) When did he die?

MARINA. Six months ago. That's why Jason brought us here. To start again.

MISS MARPLE. Who's they?

(*Silence.*)

My dear... Who wouldn't let you take your child home?

(**JASON** comes in. Sees **MARINA's** tear-stained face.)

JASON. Is there a problem?

MARINA. No. No, I'm just –

JASON. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Inspector, I warned you –

CRADDOCK. *Chief* Inspector.

(*To MARINA.*) Is it your husband who frightens you?

(The below, overlapping:)

MARINA. No -

JASON. How dare you?

CRADDOCK. I can have him arrested -

JASON. You have no idea -

CRADDOCK. Questioned, at the police station -

JASON. Who the hell tried to kill her -

MARINA. That's enough -

JASON. You couldn't stop a murderer if he was standing right next to you!

CRADDOCK. You may well be a powerful man in your walk of life but I have to remind you that we are all equal in the eyes of the law -

MARINA. Jason -

JASON. Why don't you just come out and say it? You think I tried to kill my wife!

MARINA. Honey. I told them about Sam.

JASON. What? Why?

MARINA. They wanted to know why I had to send my girls away.

JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

(JASON takes MARINA's hand. He turns back to CRADDOCK.)

If this gets out -

CRADDOCK. This is a confidential investigation -

JASON. I mean it. If either of you ever breathes a word -

CRADDOCK. Yes?

(Another stand off.)

MISS MARPLE. Miss Gregg. I can assure you we both understand that some things are too painful to be made public. This will go no further. Will it, Dermot?

CRADDOCK. You have my word.

MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

JASON. Right then -

MARINA. Could I... Could I have a minute?

JASON. You heard her -

MARINA. Alone?

JASON. ...I'll be right outside.

(JASON kisses MARINA. He turns to usher out MISS MARPLE and CRADDOCK.)

MARINA. Oh, Detective Craddock, why don't you stay and watch the filming?

(JASON leaves. CRADDOCK helps MISS MARPLE off. MARINA, alone, stares at her face in the mirror in her dressing table. She cries.)

(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

MISS MARPLE. Poor Charlotte. She'd seen the deliberate spill... But seeing Mr Renzo cut that cable... She must have been terribly confused.

CRADDOCK. So why didn't she tell the police?

(**MISS MARPLE** looks to **ELLA**.)

ELLA. She told me about the lamp, and I said I'd tell them but –

(**ELLA** takes **MARINA's** hand.)

I'll take care of it, okay? I'll tell the police and –

MARINA. No!

ELLA. They have to know –

MARINA. Of course. Just – not yet, okay? Give me some time.

ELLA. You're not safe. If Giuseppe tries again –

MARINA. I need you to trust me here... Don't think I don't see it, the way you care for me...just as I care for you...

(**MARINA** strokes **ELLA's** face.)

ELLA. You...care for me?

MARINA. You know I do. I've got this, Ella, darling. Just, don't say anything to anyone yet. All right?

(**ELLA** nods. **MARINA** kisses **ELLA**. Turns back.)

Oh, who was it who saw? So I can thank them.

ELLA. A fan, I guess. Here, she left her details. Cherry Baker.

(**ELLA** interrupts, brings scene back to:)

Oh God...

DOLLY. Oh! So that's why you sent Mr Renzo to find Cherry!

(The sound of the lamp falling.)

GIUSEPPE. Nineteen years, I follow her everywhere.

MISS MARPLE. All those years, he's had to put up with –

GIUSEPPE. *(Annoyed.)* Smoked salmon with cream cheese and a dash of lemon. No pepper. Not even a sniff.

MISS MARPLE. Why would one stay? Having to cater for every whim, anticipate every demand?

GIUSEPPE. Three cubes of ice; the faintest sliver of lime.

CRADDOCK. Some people know their place in the world.

GIUSEPPE. I love Marina. Love.

MISS MARPLE. Always on the outside, tolerated only because he was useful... That must have been very lonely indeed.

GIUSEPPE. I keep her safe, I keep her...clear.

MISS MARPLE. Clear...from what?

CRADDOCK. We've already been through that –

MISS MARPLE. He would have been there, when she had the baby. All these years, living with her secrets, and her demands –

CRADDOCK. So why not just leave?

MISS MARPLE. He knew too much. She wouldn't let him.

CRADDOCK. Surely all this begs the question, why now?

MISS MARPLE. Perhaps something happened, the final straw. Or perhaps he felt safe here. On a little island, the other side of the world...

CRADDOCK. But why would she protect him?

MISS MARPLE. Because she couldn't bear to lose him. Her devoted butler, always at her side. The only person who has ever been a constant.

LOLA. You sent Giuseppe, to kill Charlotte...?

MARINA. I didn't know! I didn't know!

MISS MARPLE. And when he came back empty handed –

(Dark. Eerie. The shadows of trees. GIUSEPPE appears.)

MARINA. Did you do it?

(GIUSEPPE hands the gun to MARINA.)

GIUSEPPE. I would do anything for you – [but]

MARINA. Giuseppe...sweetie...

GIUSEPPE. It is impossible. Either I live with your secrets crushed against me, or I live knowing I am the one who sent you to the gallows.

MARINA. You promised you'd never tell a soul...

GIUSEPPE. The other woman, I understand how much she hurt you. But this girl...?

MARINA. What are you saying?

(Beat.)

GIUSEPPE. I will leave now, though it will pain me the rest of my years, not to walk where you walk. But I swear to you, I will never speak a word, not to a soul, not anyone.

MARINA. I want to believe you...

GIUSEPPE. You know I love you. I have always protected you.

MARINA. Protected me? From what?

GIUSEPPE. The gossip, newspapers, the letters –

MARINA. What letters?

GIUSEPPE. Alice and Charlotte, they wrote, again and again. I got rid of the letters.

MARINA. ...You told me they wanted nothing more to do with me.

GIUSEPPE. You asked me to keep you clear from all that. And Mr Rudd, he -

MARINA. He meant from stories getting out! Not from my daughters!

GIUSEPPE. I didn't know -

MARINA. How could you do that to me?

GIUSEPPE. I lie to everyone for you. Your husbands, newspapers, the police. And now, you ask me to kill a girl! All these years, I put up with your shit, thinking I'm the lucky one, but look at you. Look at who you really are.

(GIUSEPPE grabs for the gun. In the tussle, it goes off. GIUSEPPE falls.)

MARINA. No. No... I didn't mean to... Giuseppe.

(GIUSEPPE is dead. MARINA cries.)

I really didn't mean to.

MISS MARPLE. Did you mean to put the rat poison into Miss Zielinsky's atomiser?

(CRADDOCK looks at MISS MARPLE. She gives him the atomiser.)

ELLA. You tried to kill me?

MARINA. I didn't want any of this...

ELLA. At least Giuseppe doesn't have to spend the rest of his life knowing how little you actually cared for him.

MARINA. I care... I care...

(ELLA walks out. Turns back. Looks at MISS MARPLE. Seeing her anew.)

GIUSEPPE. You okay?

MARINA. All these ghastly people I've never met, who think they know me –

GIUSEPPE. The only way is to drink through the pain. What'll it be, Madam?

MARINA. What have you got, Sir?

GIUSEPPE. A strawberry daiquiri, or a strawberry daiquiri, or a strawberry daiquiri.

MARINA. I think I'll have a...strawberry daiquiri.

(GIUSEPPE indicates that the choice is hers! She chooses one at random.)

I do try to be gracious but...

CRADDOCK. Everyone struggles with – obligations.

(He catches MISS MARPLE's eye.)

So, you chose a drink and then...

MARINA. Mrs Leigh came to talk to me, so I set my glass down –

CRADDOCK. Before you'd taken a sip?

MARINA. I never touched it. You see –

(HEATHER goes to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. Oh Miss Gregg, do you remember me?

MARINA. I meet so many dear people... *(Puts her glass down.)*

HEATHER. *(Getting closer and closer to MARINA.)* Well, it was a few years ago now. I was mad with excitement, when I heard that you were coming over to play Cleopatra, and then on the very day of the opening, I went down with influenza! But I wasn't going to be

beaten. I put on my best dress and I stood in line for hours and hours and hours, and you were so lovely to me, when it was my turn for your autograph. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

MARINA. How kind of you to go to so much trouble. You're here today because...

HEATHER. (*Annoyed.*) I'm Chair of St John Ambulance.

MARINA. That's just wonderful, Mrs...

HEATHER. Leigh. Heather Leigh.

(**LOLA** *appears.*)

(*Slightly abrasive.*) Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

HEATHER. But you will come back, won't you?

(**MARINA** *turns back to the present.*)

MARINA. I didn't mean to be unkind but it can be very difficult, dealing with fans...

CRADDOCK. How long did you leave your drink there?

MARINA. Just a minute or two. I greeted Lola, and then went back to rescue Jason.

(**MARINA** *goes to JASON, who is with HEATHER.*)

JASON. (*Whispers to MARINA.*) The second it's getting too much for you, just nod and I'll wrap things up -

CRADDOCK. Is he always so...

MARINA. My husband would never do anything to hurt me.

(**JASON** *goes.*)

CHERRY. What was the play?

MISS MARPLE. I don't remember.

Oh, of course. It was *A Doll's House*. You get so caught up with how very trapped Nora feels that you'd forgive her almost anything. And yet, to walk out on your children...

CHERRY. I've never seen it.

Right. I'll get yer breakfast.

(**CHERRY** leaves.)

(*Silence.*)

(**CHERRY** returns.)

I thought I'd push the boat out and do your eggs boiled today.

MISS MARPLE. Lovely.

CHERRY. Oh! I forgot your tea.

Sorry. I'm at sixes and sevens today.

MISS MARPLE. Are you all right?

CHERRY. Sorry, Miss, it's just...

MISS MARPLE. What's happened?

(*Pause.*)

CHERRY. I know it's daft but whenever something bad happens... I lost my sister, a few years ago now, mind, and... but it's still her I want to tell, and then, it's like I've lost her, all over again.

MISS MARPLE. Yes.

Grief, it casts such terribly long shadows.

(Beat.)

CHERRY. Them eggs'll be done by now.

(CHERRY goes.)

(Silence.)

(CHERRY returns.)

The eggs have only gone and cracked! I'll have to start again.

MISS MARPLE. Actually, I'm not hungry.

Losing a sister as a child must be terribly lonely.

CHERRY. The thing is, I don't know if I'm making a memory from a photograph or if I actually remember her. I can't even remember what it was like to be held by her, or if she even – sorry. Here's me harping on, and you got enough on your plate, what with your gammy leg...

MISS MARPLE. I've plenty of time to listen.

(Silence.)

CHERRY. It's just, I don't know anyone round here and...

MISS MARPLE. What's happened, dear?

CHERRY. ...I dunno...

MISS MARPLE. You've been here a week. How many people have called round in all that time?

CHERRY. ...?

MISS MARPLE. If you have a secret that's troubling you... I've no one to tell.

CHERRY. It must be 'orrible, being old.

Not that you're...

MISS MARPLE. I've never felt "old" before. But being stuck in this chair...

It's an awful thing, Cherry dear, to feel alone with your cares.

Tell me what's upset you.

CHERRY. ...It was at the drinks party yesterday. You see -

(The sound of the doorbell.)

MISS MARPLE. It's probably just a travelling salesman. Go on.

CHERRY. Well, thing is -

(The doorbell rings again. Then the sound of the front door opening. CHIEF INSPECTOR DERMOT CRADDOCK appears. CHERRY intercepts him.)

Sorry, can I help you?

CRADDOCK. I'm looking for Miss Marple -

MISS MARPLE. Dermot! What a lovely surprise.

CRADDOCK. You're always so quick to the door. I thought something must have happened to you.

MISS MARPLE. I had a silly fall. This is Cherry. She's been looking after me. Cherry, this is Inspector Craddock.

CHERRY. Inspector...?

MISS MARPLE. His parents were friends of mine.

CRADDOCK. Chief Inspector now, actually!

MISS MARPLE. Oh.

CRADDOCK. What?

MISS MARPLE. No. That's very good news. Just like your father.

CHERRY. She got it from Giuseppe, I think his name is.
The butler.

(We see everything reconstructed, as described.)

(GIUSEPPE appears, holding a tray of drinks. MARINA goes to him. They laugh at something together. MARINA very clearly picks her own drink.)

MISS MARPLE. She definitely chose it herself?

(DOLLY nods.)

Who did you see approaching Miss Gregg between the time of Miss Gregg picking her drink and Heather Leigh drinking it?

CHERRY. I'd been told to stand in the corner with me tray and look "unobtrusive". *(Looks down.)*

MISS MARPLE. Did you see the feet of anyone going near Miss Gregg?

CHERRY. Well, yeah, but -

DOLLY. Heather Leigh marched over to Miss Gregg and started some dull-as-death story -

(HEATHER far too close to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. - when I heard that you were coming over to do *Antony and Cleopatra!* Oh, I was mad with excitement and then on the very day of the opening night, I went down with a rotten head cold. But I wasn't going to be beaten, so I put on a lot of make-up and stood in line for hours and you came right up to me and gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

(A look of frozen horror on MARINA's face. She quickly puts back on a smile.)

MARINA. How kind of you, to go to so much trouble.

CRADDOCK. And that's when the drink was spilled.

DOLLY. (*Simultaneously.*) No.

CHERRY. (*Simultaneously.*) Yes.

(*Beat.*)

DOLLY. Don't you remember? That was when Lola Brewster arrived.

(*LOLA appears.*)

HEATHER. Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

(*MARINA goes to LOLA.*)

MISS MARPLE. Lola Brewster?

DOLLY. Oh Jane, don't tell me you haven't heard of her. She's been in all those films with those angry young men.

CRADDOCK. What did they say to each other?

DOLLY. I didn't catch it, but it didn't exactly look as if they were the best of friends.

(*CRADDOCK turns to CHERRY.*)

CHERRY. I was in me corner.

MISS MARPLE. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Have you spoken to Miss Brewster?

CRADDOCK. I wanted to talk to you first.

DOLLY. To get the gossip?

(*Touché.*)

I had a little chat with Lola, actually, at the party –

CRADDOCK. I'm sure you did –

MISS MARPLE. What did you make of her?

DOLLY. She was a dear.

LOLA. (*Goes to DOLLY.*) Hi. I'm Lola. And you are...?

DOLLY. Dolly Bantry. I'm no one important, except I used to own this place.

LOLA. We're all important to ourselves. (*Smiles.*) You're one up on me, anyway. I wasn't actually invited.

DOLLY. Aren't you making a film with Miss Gregg?

LOLA. Sure, but she seems to have no idea who I am.

DOLLY. Who are you playing?

LOLA. Anne Boleyn.

DOLLY. Oh! The next wife!

(*Beat.*)

If you don't mind my asking, why did you come, if you weren't invited?

(*Conspiratorial.*) I came to look at the bathrooms.

LOLA. I thought it might be good to meet Marina away from the pressure of the set. Actually, (*Equally conspiratorial.*) I'm terrified. I've never worked with anyone famous before.

DOLLY. But aren't you famous, dear?

LOLA. Not like Marina. Mind you, no one's famous like Marina.

(**LOLA disappears.**)

MISS MARPLE. Why go to a party when you haven't been invited?

CRADDOCK. Can we concentrate on the events?

MISS MARPLE. We all experience events differently.

CRADDOCK. Going back to what happened...

DOLLY. Well... (*To* **CHERRY.**) You started to go over to Miss Gregg, with your tray... But then you stopped...?

CHERRY. I was gonna offer her a vol-au-vent. But I lost my nerve.

CRADDOCK. Why?

CHERRY. She's ruddy famous.

CRADDOCK. Then what happened?

CHERRY. Miss Gregg went to talk to her secretary, but then you... (*To* **DOLLY.**) – sorry, I didn't catch your name.

DOLLY. Mrs Bantry. I used to own Gossington Hall.

CHERRY. Right. Well, you collared her. Something about –

DOLLY. I'd hardly say collared –

CHERRY. Toilets.

DOLLY. I went to congratulate Miss Gregg on her bathrooms.

CHERRY. Marina carried on to Miss wotshername.

DOLLY. Zielinsky.

(Beat.)

Miss Zielinsky put Miss Gregg's necklace straight.

CHERRY. Marina went back to that woman. Heather Leigh.

DOLLY. And then –

CHERRY. (*To* **DOLLY.**) Are you telling this story or am I?

MISS MARPLE. You're both doing very well.

CHERRY & DOLLY. Ta / Thank you.

(Beat.)

CRADDOCK. And then?

CHERRY. Miss Zielinsky sneezed –

(MARINA and HEATHER are conversing happily. JASON nearby. ELLA sneezes.)

(Quickly.) And she spilled her drink all over her dress...

(We see HEATHER spill her drink over MARINA's dress.)

DOLLY. Heather Leigh looked mortified. Marina was doing everything she could to make Mrs Leigh feel better about the whole thing...

CHERRY. She was so nice about it too.

(MARINA graciously hands her drink to HEATHER.)

DOLLY. And Heather Leigh knocked it back like a common bricklayer!

(HEATHER raises the glass to her lips. In the present day, CHERRY cries out.)

CHERRY. One moment, she was chattering away, and then... I mean, I know people die and all that, but it was so...you know?

MISS MARPLE. *(Gently.)* Is that what you wanted to tell me, earlier?

(Beat. CHERRY looks down. Nods, quickly.)

DOLLY. *(To CRADDOCK.)* So, who poisoned the drink?

CRADDOCK. My investigation is confidential.

DOLLY. You mean, you haven't a clue.

CRADDOCK. Thank you. You've been most helpful –

MISS MARPLE. You told me to ask about Tennyson.

DOLLY. Oh. Yes. It was after that tedious story –

(We see, replayed:)

HEATHER. And you gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone! Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

*(Music. * The sound of a mirror shattering.
We can see the look of frozen horror on
MARINA's face.)*

DOLLY. “The mirror crack'd from side to side;

‘The doom is come upon me,’ cried

The Lady of Shalott.”

MISS MARPLE. You mean curse.

DOLLY. I beg your pardon?

MISS MARPLE. Curse. Not doom.

DOLLY. Oh. I prefer doom.

CRADDOCK. I don't think this is the time for a poetry discussion –

DOLLY. The point is, *if* you're interested, Heather Leigh was babbling on, and Miss Gregg's eyes began to wander – well, who can blame her – and then suddenly, on Miss Gregg's face there was a look of absolute terror.

CRADDOCK. Who was she looking at?

DOLLY. I don't know. I was looking at her.

CRADDOCK. She must have caught sight of someone. Who did she see?

DOLLY. *(Exasperated.)* I just told you...

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MISS MARPLE. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... I too once had hopes of a family...

CRADDOCK. (*Uncomfortable.*) Jane –

MISS MARPLE. (*Indicating CRADDOCK.*) I looked after this poor chap on occasion but, well, time goes by...

MARINA. Yes. Time goes by.

(**MARINA** and **MISS MARPLE** both momentarily caught in their own thoughts, their own losses.)

(*Catching herself.*) If you'll excuse me –

CRADDOCK. Of course.

MISS MARPLE. Could you not have children of your own?

MARINA. I'm sorry... (*To CRADDOCK.*) Who is this woman?

CRADDOCK. Nobody. Well, she's my aunt. Well, not really my aunt but –

MISS MARPLE. Dermot feels sorry for me because I've no family of my own. But you adopted, I believe...?

MARINA. It's common knowledge.

MISS MARPLE. So does that mean you couldn't have children of your own?

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. And so you took in two girls...

MARINA. You've clearly been reading the gossip columns.

MISS MARPLE. But you sent the girls away.

MARINA. Is that what people think?

I became unwell.

MISS MARPLE. Was there anything in particular that triggered your illness?

MARINA. ...My work can be very demanding at times...

MISS MARPLE. Of course.

What were the girls like?

MARINA. I don't see...

MISS MARPLE. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to intrude. I suppose you don't really think about them now...

MARINA. Of course I think about them! Alice, she was really fun. Full of life. Charlotte was a sweet, sweet soul. The most loyal little kitten I ever met.

MISS MARPLE. I think it might be vital we find them now. Don't you think?

MARINA. It can't have been anything to do with them.

MISS MARPLE. Are you sure?

MARINA. ...Those girls loved me.

MISS MARPLE. Even though you sent them away?

MARINA. It wasn't like that. They didn't want to see me but [they'd never] -

MISS MARPLE. Because they felt...rejected?

MARINA. No!

MISS MARPLE. Then...ah. Replaced.

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. You had a baby?

MARINA. I told you, I don't have children...

MISS MARPLE. No?

(CRADDOCK goes to speak. MISS MARPLE stops him.)

(Silence. MARINA can't hold back the tears.)

MISS MARPLE. Oh my dear. I'm very sorry.

What happened to your baby?

MARINA. ...The doctors told me he wasn't right in the head. My husband – at the time, his name was Peter – he thought it best if we kept it from the world, so no one would write nasty stories.

I tried to look after him, my baby, Sam, but... Then I, I wasn't very well, so Peter insisted we send the girls away. I wanted them to be happy. I thought it was the best thing for them.

Then Peter left us, and my poor boy, he was so...

They said it would be better to let him be in a place where he'd be cared for... I went to visit him, whenever I could, but... They didn't even let me take him home, at the very end.

MISS MARPLE. (*Gently.*) When did he die?

MARINA. Six months ago. That's why Jason brought us here. To start again.

MISS MARPLE. Who's they?

(*Silence.*)

My dear... Who wouldn't let you take your child home?

(**JASON** comes in. Sees **MARINA's** tear-stained face.)

JASON. Is there a problem?

MARINA. No. No, I'm just –

JASON. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Inspector, I warned you –

CRADDOCK. *Chief* Inspector.

(*To MARINA.*) Is it your husband who frightens you?

(The below, overlapping:)

MARINA. No -

JASON. How dare you?

CRADDOCK. I can have him arrested -

JASON. You have no idea -

CRADDOCK. Questioned, at the police station -

JASON. Who the hell tried to kill her -

MARINA. That's enough -

JASON. You couldn't stop a murderer if he was standing right next to you!

CRADDOCK. You may well be a powerful man in your walk of life but I have to remind you that we are all equal in the eyes of the law -

MARINA. Jason -

JASON. Why don't you just come out and say it? You think I tried to kill my wife!

MARINA. Honey. I told them about Sam.

JASON. What? Why?

MARINA. They wanted to know why I had to send my girls away.

JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

(JASON takes MARINA's hand. He turns back to CRADDOCK.)

If this gets out -

CRADDOCK. This is a confidential investigation -

JASON. I mean it. If either of you ever breathes a word -

CRADDOCK. Yes?

(Another stand off.)

MISS MARPLE. Miss Gregg. I can assure you we both understand that some things are too painful to be made public. This will go no further. Will it, Dermot?

CRADDOCK. You have my word.

MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

JASON. Right then -

MARINA. Could I... Could I have a minute?

JASON. You heard her -

MARINA. Alone?

JASON. ...I'll be right outside.

(JASON kisses MARINA. He turns to usher out MISS MARPLE and CRADDOCK.)

MARINA. Oh, Detective Craddock, why don't you stay and watch the filming?

(JASON leaves. CRADDOCK helps MISS MARPLE off. MARINA, alone, stares at her face in the mirror in her dressing table. She cries.)

(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

MISS MARPLE. Oh my dear. I'm very sorry.

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JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

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MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

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(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

ELLA. You saved my life.

(Beat. Then ELLA goes.)

CRADDOCK. *(To MARINA.)* Why didn't you just confess? Wouldn't it have been simpler than having to...

MARINA. What's more simple than the desire for life? And death. It overwhelms everything.

... *(To JASON.)* Did you know, all along?

JASON. I didn't want to believe it. But I heard what that woman said, knew what it meant and... I know how much you loved your boy.

MARINA. You wanted me to let you hang for me.

JASON. I love you.

MARINA. You've made every decision for me.

JASON. I try to make life easier for you, that's all.

MARINA. You can't medicate shame.

You brought me here, to help me forget. I don't want to forget Sam. How could I ever forget that I abandoned my son?

JASON. I thought, if you could just...start again... and acting, it always made you happy...

MARINA. What is happy? I mean, without the care of family, what are we?

JASON. I'm your husband.

MARINA. I'm just an image in a magazine, on a poster, a screen... I've only ever been what you imagine me to be.

JASON. You're a beautiful woman –

MARINA. And when I'm not?

JASON. Marina –

MARINA. "Beauty" doesn't cure anger. And it doesn't cure grief.

CRADDOCK. You're not the only one who has lost the person they love. It does not turn us all into murderers.

MARINA. I think I became a murderer the second I discovered what caused my son's condition.

(Silence.)

MISS MARPLE. I cannot put my hand on my heart and say that, had I found myself in your position, I too would not have done the same.

(Silence.)

LOLA. I wish I'd known.

MARINA. I do love you, Alice. I always did.

You will tell Charlotte, won't you? Tell her I...

(LOLA flings herself into MARINA's arms.)

My darling girl...

And Jason...

I'm so sorry I wasn't the woman you wanted me to be.

JASON. No. I'm the one who should be sorry. All these years, I thought I was the only one who really knew you, but you're right... I saw a delicate woman, tearing herself apart, standing still... and I thought, if I just cleared the path before you, you'd find where you wanted to go... but all I was doing was sending you in the direction that I had chosen for you. I never stopped to ask you. Maybe, because I was scared that if I did, the answer wouldn't be me.

MARINA. I was never delicate.

JASON. Yes. I know that now.

I see you, Marina. And I will love you, to the grave.

I had a little chat with Lola, actually, at the party –

CRADDOCK. I'm sure you did –

MISS MARPLE. What did you make of her?

DOLLY. She was a dear.

LOLA. (*Goes to DOLLY.*) Hi. I'm Lola. And you are...?

DOLLY. Dolly Bantry. I'm no one important, except I used to own this place.

LOLA. We're all important to ourselves. (*Smiles.*) You're one up on me, anyway. I wasn't actually invited.

DOLLY. Aren't you making a film with Miss Gregg?

LOLA. Sure, but she seems to have no idea who I am.

DOLLY. Who are you playing?

LOLA. Anne Boleyn.

DOLLY. Oh! The next wife!

(*Beat.*)

If you don't mind my asking, why did you come, if you weren't invited?

(*Conspiratorial.*) I came to look at the bathrooms.

LOLA. I thought it might be good to meet Marina away from the pressure of the set. Actually, (*Equally conspiratorial.*) I'm terrified. I've never worked with anyone famous before.

DOLLY. But aren't you famous, dear?

LOLA. Not like Marina. Mind you, no one's famous like Marina.

(**LOLA disappears.**)

MISS MARPLE. Why go to a party when you haven't been invited?

CRADDOCK. (*Irritated.*) I'll go.

(**CRADDOCK** lets in **CYRIL LEIGH**.)

Mr Leigh. I'm so sorry. I got caught up –

CYRIL. Yes. But I have to tell you –

(*The doorbell goes again. Beat.*)

CRADDOCK. Excuse me.

(**CRADDOCK** goes off to answer it, muttering
"It's like Piccadilly bloody Circus!")

(**CRADDOCK** lets in **LOLA**.)

LOLA. Your sergeant told me to come here...?

CRADDOCK. Miss Brewster. Just a few questions, if I may?

CYRIL. Sorry. Could I just –

CRADDOCK. Do forgive me, Mr Leigh, but I'm afraid I really need to interview Miss Brewster. I'll call round later, all right?

CYRIL. But –

CRADDOCK. If you'll excuse me.

(*Beat. CYRIL leaves, reluctantly.*)

MISS MARPLE. Perhaps, my dear, we could all do with a cup of tea. Dermot, could you put the kettle on?

LOLA. Oh yes please! If it's not too much trouble?

(**CRADDOCK** sighs, goes, muttering under his breath.)

MISS MARPLE. Did you find your handbag?

LOLA. No, but I told you –

MISS MARPLE. You seemed so upset.

LOLA. I know it's stupid. Just sentimental reasons.

MISS MARPLE. Have you managed to come up with any yet?

LOLA. ...

MISS MARPLE. You see, unless you tell us what was in your bag, it looks very suspicious.

LOLA. But, he might think something that's not true.

MISS MARPLE. He's a very clever man. He'll see beyond appearances.

(CRADDOCK has returned. MISS MARPLE indicates he shouldn't speak. Eventually.)

LOLA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* There was a knife. In my bag.

CRADDOCK. Why?

LOLA. My father gave it to me. Before he died.

CRADDOCK. Did you have it with you at Gossington?

LOLA. What? No!

CRADDOCK. But you took it with you to the studios.

LOLA. Look, I...

CRADDOCK. Yes?

LOLA. There's a murderer on the loose. I thought it might be a good idea to protect myself.

CRADDOCK. Is this your knife?

(CRADDOCK takes out an enlarged photograph of Lola's knife/takes out the knife carefully, with his handkerchief.)

LOLA. Thank God! Where did you find it?

CRADDOCK. Miss Gregg's dressing room. Stabbed through a picture of Miss Gregg.

LOLA. God! But that was nothing to do with me! Someone stole my bag! Why would I bring it to your attention if I was gonna do something like that?

CRADDOCK. If Marina died, you would be the star of the picture.

LOLA. It would be called off. Jason's doing this for her... The way they all run after her.

MISS MARPLE. Miss Brewster, when did your father die?

LOLA. Last summer.

MISS MARPLE. It's wretched, losing a parent. You feel so alone in the world.

LOLA. Yes.

MISS MARPLE. Oh – which father are we talking about? Your own father or one of your adoptive fathers?

LOLA. I beg your pardon?

(MISS MARPLE shows LOLA the film magazine she took from the studios.)

MISS MARPLE. It says here that you were born in England. Whereabouts?

LOLA. I don't see –

MISS MARPLE. I expect you've wondered about her your whole life. The woman who took you from your home and then discarded you.

LOLA. ...How do you know?

MISS MARPLE. Why else would you mind all this so much?

(Beat.)

LOLA. I just wanted to see her again.

MISS MARPLE. Why haven't you told her who you really are?

LOLA. ...That first day, at the readthrough –

(MARINA appears. LOLA stares at her. LOLA goes to MARINA. Tentative; shy.)

LOLA. Marina...?

MARINA. And you are?

LOLA. You don't remember me...?

MARINA. I'm afraid I meet so many dear people...

LOLA. You really don't remember me.

MARINA. Should I?

Oh yes. Weren't you in one of those gritty modern thrillers?

(MARINA disappears.)

LOLA. Marina called herself my mother for five years. She didn't even recognise me.

MISS MARPLE. I imagine Miss Gregg sees so many people, she has stopped really looking.

And perhaps you have changed a great deal since then. I expect Giuseppe didn't recognize you either –

LOLA. I know, but –

MISS MARPLE. And you've changed your name.

LOLA. Yes. My name was Alice, but –

MISS MARPLE. So it's hardly surprising that Miss Gregg didn't recognise the little girl she gave up twelve years ago...

LOLA. ...I was so frightened that someone had taken the knife to hurt her, and it would all be my fault.

MISS MARPLE. Why did she adopt you?

LOLA. Why don't you ask her?

CRADDOCK. Miss Brewster –

LOLA. Look. She'd been trying for a baby for years. I guess she decided that we would have to do.

CRADDOCK. We?

LOLA. My little sister, Charlotte, came too. We had everything... Clothes and toys and a beautiful house... and "Mommy".

MISS MARPLE. I believe she cared for you very much.

LOLA. We should have stayed with our real mum. At least there was no pretence.

MISS MARPLE. Pretence?

LOLA. There were eight of us in a slum. Mum wrote to them all, all the movie stars, begging them to adopt her kids. Marina was the only one dumb enough to say yes. So Charlotte and I were packed off.

MISS MARPLE. (*Gently.*) It must have been very unsettling, losing a second mother.

LOLA. We're not allowed to...

CRADDOCK. My enquiry is confidential.

(*LOLA scratches intermittently at her arm.*)

LOLA. She fell pregnant. She had no need of us after that.

MISS MARPLE. I'm sure it was more complicated than that.

CRADDOCK. What happened to you?

LOLA. Paid off, and re-adopted. Made to swear never to say a word.

I wrote to her – for years. She never wrote back.

CRADDOCK. So, you're angry with her. The mother who discarded you –

LOLA. Okay! But I'd never have hurt her.

GIUSEPPE. You okay?

MARINA. All these ghastly people I've never met, who think they know me –

GIUSEPPE. The only way is to drink through the pain. What'll it be, Madam?

MARINA. What have you got, Sir?

GIUSEPPE. A strawberry daiquiri, or a strawberry daiquiri, or a strawberry daiquiri.

MARINA. I think I'll have a...strawberry daiquiri.

(GIUSEPPE indicates that the choice is hers! She chooses one at random.)

I do try to be gracious but...

CRADDOCK. Everyone struggles with – obligations.

(He catches MISS MARPLE's eye.)

So, you chose a drink and then...

MARINA. Mrs Leigh came to talk to me, so I set my glass down –

CRADDOCK. Before you'd taken a sip?

MARINA. I never touched it. You see –

(HEATHER goes to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. Oh Miss Gregg, do you remember me?

MARINA. I meet so many dear people... *(Puts her glass down.)*

HEATHER. *(Getting closer and closer to MARINA.)* Well, it was a few years ago now. I was mad with excitement, when I heard that you were coming over to play Cleopatra, and then on the very day of the opening, I went down with influenza! But I wasn't going to be

beaten. I put on my best dress and I stood in line for hours and hours and hours, and you were so lovely to me, when it was my turn for your autograph. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

MARINA. How kind of you to go to so much trouble. You're here today because...

HEATHER. (*Annoyed.*) I'm Chair of St John Ambulance.

MARINA. That's just wonderful, Mrs...

HEATHER. Leigh. Heather Leigh.

(**LOLA** *appears.*)

(*Slightly abrasive.*) Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

HEATHER. But you will come back, won't you?

(**MARINA** *turns back to the present.*)

MARINA. I didn't mean to be unkind but it can be very difficult, dealing with fans...

CRADDOCK. How long did you leave your drink there?

MARINA. Just a minute or two. I greeted Lola, and then went back to rescue Jason.

(**MARINA** *goes to JASON, who is with HEATHER.*)

JASON. (*Whispers to MARINA.*) The second it's getting too much for you, just nod and I'll wrap things up -

CRADDOCK. Is he always so...

MARINA. My husband would never do anything to hurt me.

(**JASON** *goes.*)

MISS MARPLE. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... I too once had hopes of a family...

CRADDOCK. (*Uncomfortable.*) Jane –

MISS MARPLE. (*Indicating CRADDOCK.*) I looked after this poor chap on occasion but, well, time goes by...

MARINA. Yes. Time goes by.

(**MARINA** and **MISS MARPLE** both momentarily caught in their own thoughts, their own losses.)

(*Catching herself.*) If you'll excuse me –

CRADDOCK. Of course.

MISS MARPLE. Could you not have children of your own?

MARINA. I'm sorry... (*To CRADDOCK.*) Who is this woman?

CRADDOCK. Nobody. Well, she's my aunt. Well, not really my aunt but –

MISS MARPLE. Dermot feels sorry for me because I've no family of my own. But you adopted, I believe...?

MARINA. It's common knowledge.

MISS MARPLE. So does that mean you couldn't have children of your own?

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. And so you took in two girls...

MARINA. You've clearly been reading the gossip columns.

MISS MARPLE. But you sent the girls away.

MARINA. Is that what people think?

I became unwell.

MISS MARPLE. Was there anything in particular that triggered your illness?

MARINA. ...My work can be very demanding at times...

MISS MARPLE. Of course.

What were the girls like?

MARINA. I don't see...

MISS MARPLE. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to intrude. I suppose you don't really think about them now...

MARINA. Of course I think about them! Alice, she was really fun. Full of life. Charlotte was a sweet, sweet soul. The most loyal little kitten I ever met.

MISS MARPLE. I think it might be vital we find them now. Don't you think?

MARINA. It can't have been anything to do with them.

MISS MARPLE. Are you sure?

MARINA. ...Those girls loved me.

MISS MARPLE. Even though you sent them away?

MARINA. It wasn't like that. They didn't want to see me but [they'd never] -

MISS MARPLE. Because they felt...rejected?

MARINA. No!

MISS MARPLE. Then...ah. Replaced.

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. You had a baby?

MARINA. I told you, I don't have children...

MISS MARPLE. No?

(CRADDOCK goes to speak. MISS MARPLE stops him.)

(Silence. MARINA can't hold back the tears.)

MISS MARPLE. Oh my dear. I'm very sorry.

What happened to your baby?

MARINA. ...The doctors told me he wasn't right in the head. My husband – at the time, his name was Peter – he thought it best if we kept it from the world, so no one would write nasty stories.

I tried to look after him, my baby, Sam, but... Then I, I wasn't very well, so Peter insisted we send the girls away. I wanted them to be happy. I thought it was the best thing for them.

Then Peter left us, and my poor boy, he was so...

They said it would be better to let him be in a place where he'd be cared for... I went to visit him, whenever I could, but... They didn't even let me take him home, at the very end.

MISS MARPLE. (*Gently.*) When did he die?

MARINA. Six months ago. That's why Jason brought us here. To start again.

MISS MARPLE. Who's they?

(*Silence.*)

My dear... Who wouldn't let you take your child home?

(**JASON** comes in. Sees **MARINA's** tear-stained face.)

JASON. Is there a problem?

MARINA. No. No, I'm just –

JASON. (*To* **CRADDOCK.**) Inspector, I warned you –

CRADDOCK. *Chief* Inspector.

(*To* **MARINA.**) Is it your husband who frightens you?

(The below, overlapping:)

MARINA. No -

JASON. How dare you?

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JASON. Why don't you just come out and say it? You think I tried to kill my wife!

MARINA. Honey. I told them about Sam.

JASON. What? Why?

MARINA. They wanted to know why I had to send my girls away.

JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

(JASON takes MARINA's hand. He turns back to CRADDOCK.)

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(Another stand off.)

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CRADDOCK. You have my word.

MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

JASON. Right then -

MARINA. Could I... Could I have a minute?

JASON. You heard her -

MARINA. Alone?

JASON. ...I'll be right outside.

(JASON kisses MARINA. He turns to usher out MISS MARPLE and CRADDOCK.)

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(JASON leaves. CRADDOCK helps MISS MARPLE off. MARINA, alone, stares at her face in the mirror in her dressing table. She cries.)

(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

ELLA. You saved my life.

(Beat. Then ELLA goes.)

CRADDOCK. *(To MARINA.)* Why didn't you just confess?
Wouldn't it have been simpler than having to...

MARINA. What's more simple than the desire for life? And death. It overwhelms everything.

... *(To JASON.)* Did you know, all along?

JASON. I didn't want to believe it. But I heard what that woman said, knew what it meant and... I know how much you loved your boy.

MARINA. You wanted me to let you hang for me.

JASON. I love you.

MARINA. You've made every decision for me.

JASON. I try to make life easier for you, that's all.

MARINA. You can't medicate shame.

You brought me here, to help me forget. I don't want to forget Sam. How could I ever forget that I abandoned my son?

JASON. I thought, if you could just...start again... and acting, it always made you happy...

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JASON. I'm your husband.

MARINA. I'm just an image in a magazine, on a poster, a screen... I've only ever been what you imagine me to be.

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MARINA. And when I'm not?

JASON. Marina -

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CRADDOCK. You're not the only one who has lost the person they love. It does not turn us all into murderers.

MARINA. I think I became a murderer the second I discovered what caused my son's condition.

(Silence.)

MISS MARPLE. I cannot put my hand on my heart and say that, had I found myself in your position, I too would not have done the same.

(Silence.)

LOLA. I wish I'd known.

MARINA. I do love you, Alice. I always did.

You will tell Charlotte, won't you? Tell her I...

(LOLA flings herself into MARINA's arms.)

My darling girl...

And Jason...

I'm so sorry I wasn't the woman you wanted me to be.

JASON. No. I'm the one who should be sorry. All these years, I thought I was the only one who really knew you, but you're right... I saw a delicate woman, tearing herself apart, standing still... and I thought, if I just cleared the path before you, you'd find where you wanted to go... but all I was doing was sending you in the direction that I had chosen for you. I never stopped to ask you. Maybe, because I was scared that if I did, the answer wouldn't be me.

MARINA. I was never delicate.

JASON. Yes. I know that now.

I see you, Marina. And I will love you, to the grave.



Audition form

About the production

Agatha Christie's 'The Mirror Crack'd'. A new adaptation by Rachel Wagstaff

This is a fresh, new, adaptation of the classic Agatha Christie story, set in the 1960's, that adheres closely to the original story. Miss Marple, although indisposed and confined to a chair, proves pivotal in gaining the confidence of all the various suspects and unravelling the crime.

This play is a beautiful mix of intrigue and wit with a fast paced modern feel to a vintage 'Christie' crime story. It has all the classic characters as well as the usual twists and turns before the delightfully crafted conclusion.

Director: Sue Meredith & Martin Jevon

- **Rehearsals: Tuesday & Thursday**
- **Performances: Tuesday 11th to Saturday 15th March 2025 at Tacchi Morris theatre with a Saturday matinee**

Responsibilities: in line with the Thespians' Production Document, actors are expected to arrive promptly for all rehearsals, photo shoots and publicity activities as called in the rehearsal schedule and to learn their lines and moves according to production schedule. Everyone is expected to behave with consideration and respect to everyone involved with the production. Cast and crew must be members of the Society.

About you

- **Name:**
- **Phone number:**
- **Email address:**
- **Age (if under 18):**
- **Preferred role or roles:**
- Examples of previous acting roles:
- Holiday dates or other absences during rehearsal period:

If not cast, would you be prepared to take on a backstage position? Or front of house?

About the acting roles

Pen Portraits

Miss Jane Marple: Elderly, quiet appearance, deceptively astute.

Playing age: Elderly

Cherry Baker: Bustling, talkative, caring and capable.

Playing age: Any age

Chief Inspector Dermot Craddock: Old fashioned style of policeman, a bit pompous.

Playing age: Any age

Heather Leigh: A rather silly woman, bossy and tactless but inoffensive.

Playing age: Middle aged

Cyril Leigh: A man of few words, devoted husband who understands his wife's foibles.

Playing age: Middle aged

Dolly Bantry: Miss Marple's friend who was the lady of the manor until widowed. Well spoken albeit slightly giddy at times.

Playing age: Middle aged +

Marina Gregg: A faded "A list film star" with a crisis of confidence. Totally self obsessed

Playing age: Middle aged

Jason Rudd: Marina's latest husband. Very indulgent to his wife, stands no nonsense from the staff.

Playing age: younger middle aged.

Ella Zielinsky: Marina and Greggs secretary. Very disenchanting and world weary

Playing age: any

Lola Brewster: Rising star, hoping to take over from Marina. Pushy

Playing age: Younger

CHERRY. What was the play?

MISS MARPLE. I don't remember.

Oh, of course. It was *A Doll's House*. You get so caught up with how very trapped Nora feels that you'd forgive her almost anything. And yet, to walk out on your children...

CHERRY. I've never seen it.

Right. I'll get yer breakfast.

(**CHERRY** leaves.)

(*Silence.*)

(**CHERRY** returns.)

I thought I'd push the boat out and do your eggs boiled today.

MISS MARPLE. Lovely.

CHERRY. Oh! I forgot your tea.

Sorry. I'm at sixes and sevens today.

MISS MARPLE. Are you all right?

CHERRY. Sorry, Miss, it's just...

MISS MARPLE. What's happened?

(*Pause.*)

CHERRY. I know it's daft but whenever something bad happens... I lost my sister, a few years ago now, mind, and... but it's still her I want to tell, and then, it's like I've lost her, all over again.

MISS MARPLE. Yes.

Grief, it casts such terribly long shadows.

(Beat.)

CHERRY. Them eggs'll be done by now.

(CHERRY goes.)

(Silence.)

(CHERRY returns.)

The eggs have only gone and cracked! I'll have to start again.

MISS MARPLE. Actually, I'm not hungry.

Losing a sister as a child must be terribly lonely.

CHERRY. The thing is, I don't know if I'm making a memory from a photograph or if I actually remember her. I can't even remember what it was like to be held by her, or if she even – sorry. Here's me harping on, and you got enough on your plate, what with your gammy leg...

MISS MARPLE. I've plenty of time to listen.

(Silence.)

CHERRY. It's just, I don't know anyone round here and...

MISS MARPLE. What's happened, dear?

CHERRY. ...I dunno...

MISS MARPLE. You've been here a week. How many people have called round in all that time?

CHERRY. ...?

MISS MARPLE. If you have a secret that's troubling you... I've no one to tell.

CHERRY. It must be 'orrible, being old.

Not that you're...

MISS MARPLE. I've never felt "old" before. But being stuck in this chair...

It's an awful thing, Cherry dear, to feel alone with your cares.

Tell me what's upset you.

CHERRY. ...It was at the drinks party yesterday. You see -

(The sound of the doorbell.)

MISS MARPLE. It's probably just a travelling salesman. Go on.

CHERRY. Well, thing is -

(The doorbell rings again. Then the sound of the front door opening. CHIEF INSPECTOR DERMOT CRADDOCK appears. CHERRY intercepts him.)

Sorry, can I help you?

CRADDOCK. I'm looking for Miss Marple -

MISS MARPLE. Dermot! What a lovely surprise.

CRADDOCK. You're always so quick to the door. I thought something must have happened to you.

MISS MARPLE. I had a silly fall. This is Cherry. She's been looking after me. Cherry, this is Inspector Craddock.

CHERRY. Inspector...?

MISS MARPLE. His parents were friends of mine.

CRADDOCK. Chief Inspector now, actually!

MISS MARPLE. Oh.

CRADDOCK. What?

MISS MARPLE. No. That's very good news. Just like your father.

CHERRY. She got it from Giuseppe, I think his name is.
The butler.

(We see everything reconstructed, as described.)

(GIUSEPPE appears, holding a tray of drinks. MARINA goes to him. They laugh at something together. MARINA very clearly picks her own drink.)

MISS MARPLE. She definitely chose it herself?

(DOLLY nods.)

Who did you see approaching Miss Gregg between the time of Miss Gregg picking her drink and Heather Leigh drinking it?

CHERRY. I'd been told to stand in the corner with me tray and look "unobtrusive". *(Looks down.)*

MISS MARPLE. Did you see the feet of anyone going near Miss Gregg?

CHERRY. Well, yeah, but -

DOLLY. Heather Leigh marched over to Miss Gregg and started some dull-as-death story -

(HEATHER far too close to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. - when I heard that you were coming over to do *Antony and Cleopatra!* Oh, I was mad with excitement and then on the very day of the opening night, I went down with a rotten head cold. But I wasn't going to be beaten, so I put on a lot of make-up and stood in line for hours and you came right up to me and gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

(A look of frozen horror on MARINA's face. She quickly puts back on a smile.)

MARINA. How kind of you, to go to so much trouble.

CRADDOCK. And that's when the drink was spilled.

DOLLY. (*Simultaneously.*) No.

CHERRY. (*Simultaneously.*) Yes.

(*Beat.*)

DOLLY. Don't you remember? That was when Lola Brewster arrived.

(*LOLA appears.*)

HEATHER. Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

(*MARINA goes to LOLA.*)

MISS MARPLE. Lola Brewster?

DOLLY. Oh Jane, don't tell me you haven't heard of her. She's been in all those films with those angry young men.

CRADDOCK. What did they say to each other?

DOLLY. I didn't catch it, but it didn't exactly look as if they were the best of friends.

(*CRADDOCK turns to CHERRY.*)

CHERRY. I was in me corner.

MISS MARPLE. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Have you spoken to Miss Brewster?

CRADDOCK. I wanted to talk to you first.

DOLLY. To get the gossip?

(*Touché.*)

I had a little chat with Lola, actually, at the party –

CRADDOCK. I'm sure you did –

MISS MARPLE. What did you make of her?

DOLLY. She was a dear.

LOLA. (*Goes to DOLLY.*) Hi. I'm Lola. And you are...?

DOLLY. Dolly Bantry. I'm no one important, except I used to own this place.

LOLA. We're all important to ourselves. (*Smiles.*) You're one up on me, anyway. I wasn't actually invited.

DOLLY. Aren't you making a film with Miss Gregg?

LOLA. Sure, but she seems to have no idea who I am.

DOLLY. Who are you playing?

LOLA. Anne Boleyn.

DOLLY. Oh! The next wife!

(*Beat.*)

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(*Conspiratorial.*) I came to look at the bathrooms.

LOLA. I thought it might be good to meet Marina away from the pressure of the set. Actually, (*Equally conspiratorial.*) I'm terrified. I've never worked with anyone famous before.

DOLLY. But aren't you famous, dear?

LOLA. Not like Marina. Mind you, no one's famous like Marina.

(**LOLA disappears.**)

MISS MARPLE. Why go to a party when you haven't been invited?

CRADDOCK. Can we concentrate on the events?

MISS MARPLE. We all experience events differently.

CRADDOCK. Going back to what happened...

DOLLY. Well... (*To* **CHERRY.**) You started to go over to Miss Gregg, with your tray... But then you stopped...?

CHERRY. I was gonna offer her a vol-au-vent. But I lost my nerve.

CRADDOCK. Why?

CHERRY. She's ruddy famous.

CRADDOCK. Then what happened?

CHERRY. Miss Gregg went to talk to her secretary, but then you... (*To* **DOLLY.**) – sorry, I didn't catch your name.

DOLLY. Mrs Bantry. I used to own Gossington Hall.

CHERRY. Right. Well, you collared her. Something about –

DOLLY. I'd hardly say collared –

CHERRY. Toilets.

DOLLY. I went to congratulate Miss Gregg on her bathrooms.

CHERRY. Marina carried on to Miss wotshername.

DOLLY. Zielinsky.

(Beat.)

Miss Zielinsky put Miss Gregg's necklace straight.

CHERRY. Marina went back to that woman. Heather Leigh.

DOLLY. And then –

CHERRY. (*To* **DOLLY.**) Are you telling this story or am I?

MISS MARPLE. You're both doing very well.

CHERRY & DOLLY. Ta / Thank you.

(Beat.)

CRADDOCK. And then?

CHERRY. Miss Zielinsky sneezed –

(MARINA and HEATHER are conversing happily. JASON nearby. ELLA sneezes.)

(Quickly.) And she spilled her drink all over her dress...

(We see HEATHER spill her drink over MARINA's dress.)

DOLLY. Heather Leigh looked mortified. Marina was doing everything she could to make Mrs Leigh feel better about the whole thing...

CHERRY. She was so nice about it too.

(MARINA graciously hands her drink to HEATHER.)

DOLLY. And Heather Leigh knocked it back like a common bricklayer!

(HEATHER raises the glass to her lips. In the present day, CHERRY cries out.)

CHERRY. One moment, she was chattering away, and then... I mean, I know people die and all that, but it was so...you know?

MISS MARPLE. *(Gently.)* Is that what you wanted to tell me, earlier?

(Beat. CHERRY looks down. Nods, quickly.)

DOLLY. *(To CRADDOCK.)* So, who poisoned the drink?

CRADDOCK. My investigation is confidential.

DOLLY. You mean, you haven't a clue.

CRADDOCK. Thank you. You've been most helpful –

MISS MARPLE. You told me to ask about Tennyson.

DOLLY. Oh. Yes. It was after that tedious story –

(We see, replayed:)

HEATHER. And you gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone! Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

*(Music. * The sound of a mirror shattering.
We can see the look of frozen horror on
MARINA's face.)*

DOLLY. “The mirror crack'd from side to side;

‘The doom is come upon me,’ cried

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MISS MARPLE. You mean curse.

DOLLY. I beg your pardon?

MISS MARPLE. Curse. Not doom.

DOLLY. Oh. I prefer doom.

CRADDOCK. I don't think this is the time for a poetry discussion –

DOLLY. The point is, *if* you're interested, Heather Leigh was babbling on, and Miss Gregg's eyes began to wander – well, who can blame her – and then suddenly, on Miss Gregg's face there was a look of absolute terror.

CRADDOCK. Who was she looking at?

DOLLY. I don't know. I was looking at her.

CRADDOCK. She must have caught sight of someone. Who did she see?

DOLLY. *(Exasperated.)* I just told you...

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CRADDOCK. (*Irritated.*) I'll go.

(**CRADDOCK** lets in **CYRIL LEIGH.**)

Mr Leigh. I'm so sorry. I got caught up –

CYRIL. Yes. But I have to tell you –

(*The doorbell goes again. Beat.*)

CRADDOCK. Excuse me.

(**CRADDOCK** goes off to answer it, muttering
"It's like Piccadilly bloody Circus!")

(**CRADDOCK** lets in **LOLA.**)

LOLA. Your sergeant told me to come here...?

CRADDOCK. Miss Brewster. Just a few questions, if I may?

CYRIL. Sorry. Could I just –

CRADDOCK. Do forgive me, Mr Leigh, but I'm afraid I really need to interview Miss Brewster. I'll call round later, all right?

CYRIL. But –

CRADDOCK. If you'll excuse me.

(*Beat. CYRIL leaves, reluctantly.*)

MISS MARPLE. Perhaps, my dear, we could all do with a cup of tea. Dermot, could you put the kettle on?

LOLA. Oh yes please! If it's not too much trouble?

(**CRADDOCK** sighs, goes, muttering under his
breath.)

MISS MARPLE. Did you find your handbag?

LOLA. No, but I told you –

MISS MARPLE. You seemed so upset.

CHERRY. She got it from Giuseppe, I think his name is.
The butler.

(We see everything reconstructed, as described.)

(GIUSEPPE appears, holding a tray of drinks. MARINA goes to him. They laugh at something together. MARINA very clearly picks her own drink.)

MISS MARPLE. She definitely chose it herself?

(DOLLY nods.)

Who did you see approaching Miss Gregg between the time of Miss Gregg picking her drink and Heather Leigh drinking it?

CHERRY. I'd been told to stand in the corner with me tray and look "unobtrusive". *(Looks down.)*

MISS MARPLE. Did you see the feet of anyone going near Miss Gregg?

CHERRY. Well, yeah, but -

DOLLY. Heather Leigh marched over to Miss Gregg and started some dull-as-death story -

(HEATHER far too close to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. - when I heard that you were coming over to do *Antony and Cleopatra!* Oh, I was mad with excitement and then on the very day of the opening night, I went down with a rotten head cold. But I wasn't going to be beaten, so I put on a lot of make-up and stood in line for hours and you came right up to me and gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

(A look of frozen horror on MARINA's face. She quickly puts back on a smile.)

MARINA. How kind of you, to go to so much trouble.

CRADDOCK. And that's when the drink was spilled.

DOLLY. (*Simultaneously.*) No.

CHERRY. (*Simultaneously.*) Yes.

(*Beat.*)

DOLLY. Don't you remember? That was when Lola Brewster arrived.

(*LOLA appears.*)

HEATHER. Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

(*MARINA goes to LOLA.*)

MISS MARPLE. Lola Brewster?

DOLLY. Oh Jane, don't tell me you haven't heard of her. She's been in all those films with those angry young men.

CRADDOCK. What did they say to each other?

DOLLY. I didn't catch it, but it didn't exactly look as if they were the best of friends.

(*CRADDOCK turns to CHERRY.*)

CHERRY. I was in me corner.

MISS MARPLE. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Have you spoken to Miss Brewster?

CRADDOCK. I wanted to talk to you first.

DOLLY. To get the gossip?

(*Touché.*)

I had a little chat with Lola, actually, at the party –

CRADDOCK. I'm sure you did –

MISS MARPLE. What did you make of her?

DOLLY. She was a dear.

LOLA. (*Goes to DOLLY.*) Hi. I'm Lola. And you are...?

DOLLY. Dolly Bantry. I'm no one important, except I used to own this place.

LOLA. We're all important to ourselves. (*Smiles.*) You're one up on me, anyway. I wasn't actually invited.

DOLLY. Aren't you making a film with Miss Gregg?

LOLA. Sure, but she seems to have no idea who I am.

DOLLY. Who are you playing?

LOLA. Anne Boleyn.

DOLLY. Oh! The next wife!

(*Beat.*)

If you don't mind my asking, why did you come, if you weren't invited?

(*Conspiratorial.*) I came to look at the bathrooms.

LOLA. I thought it might be good to meet Marina away from the pressure of the set. Actually, (*Equally conspiratorial.*) I'm terrified. I've never worked with anyone famous before.

DOLLY. But aren't you famous, dear?

LOLA. Not like Marina. Mind you, no one's famous like Marina.

(**LOLA disappears.**)

MISS MARPLE. Why go to a party when you haven't been invited?

CRADDOCK. Can we concentrate on the events?

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CRADDOCK. Going back to what happened...

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Miss Zielinsky put Miss Gregg's necklace straight.

CHERRY. Marina went back to that woman. Heather Leigh.

DOLLY. And then –

CHERRY. (*To* **DOLLY.**) Are you telling this story or am I?

MISS MARPLE. You're both doing very well.

CHERRY & DOLLY. Ta / Thank you.

(Beat.)

CRADDOCK. And then?

CHERRY. Miss Zielinsky sneezed –

(MARINA and HEATHER are conversing happily. JASON nearby. ELLA sneezes.)

(Quickly.) And she spilled her drink all over her dress...

(We see HEATHER spill her drink over MARINA's dress.)

DOLLY. Heather Leigh looked mortified. Marina was doing everything she could to make Mrs Leigh feel better about the whole thing...

CHERRY. She was so nice about it too.

(MARINA graciously hands her drink to HEATHER.)

DOLLY. And Heather Leigh knocked it back like a common bricklayer!

(HEATHER raises the glass to her lips. In the present day, CHERRY cries out.)

CHERRY. One moment, she was chattering away, and then... I mean, I know people die and all that, but it was so...you know?

MISS MARPLE. *(Gently.)* Is that what you wanted to tell me, earlier?

(Beat. CHERRY looks down. Nods, quickly.)

DOLLY. *(To CRADDOCK.)* So, who poisoned the drink?

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DOLLY. You mean, you haven't a clue.

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DOLLY. Oh. Yes. It was after that tedious story –

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CRADDOCK. She must have caught sight of someone. Who did she see?

DOLLY. *(Exasperated.)* I just told you...

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(The below, overlapping:)

MARINA. No -

JASON. How dare you?

CRADDOCK. I can have him arrested -

JASON. You have no idea -

CRADDOCK. Questioned, at the police station -

JASON. Who the hell tried to kill her -

MARINA. That's enough -

JASON. You couldn't stop a murderer if he was standing right next to you!

CRADDOCK. You may well be a powerful man in your walk of life but I have to remind you that we are all equal in the eyes of the law -

MARINA. Jason -

JASON. Why don't you just come out and say it? You think I tried to kill my wife!

MARINA. Honey. I told them about Sam.

JASON. What? Why?

MARINA. They wanted to know why I had to send my girls away.

JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

(JASON takes MARINA's hand. He turns back to CRADDOCK.)

If this gets out -

CRADDOCK. This is a confidential investigation -

JASON. I mean it. If either of you ever breathes a word -

CRADDOCK. Yes?

(Another stand off.)

MISS MARPLE. Miss Gregg. I can assure you we both understand that some things are too painful to be made public. This will go no further. Will it, Dermot?

CRADDOCK. You have my word.

MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

JASON. Right then -

MARINA. Could I... Could I have a minute?

JASON. You heard her -

MARINA. Alone?

JASON. ...I'll be right outside.

(JASON kisses MARINA. He turns to usher out MISS MARPLE and CRADDOCK.)

MARINA. Oh, Detective Craddock, why don't you stay and watch the filming?

(JASON leaves. CRADDOCK helps MISS MARPLE off. MARINA, alone, stares at her face in the mirror in her dressing table. She cries.)

(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

CHERRY. She got it from Giuseppe, I think his name is.
The butler.

(We see everything reconstructed, as described.)

(GIUSEPPE appears, holding a tray of drinks. MARINA goes to him. They laugh at something together. MARINA very clearly picks her own drink.)

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DOLLY. *(Exasperated.)* I just told you...

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MISS MARPLE. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... I too once had hopes of a family...

CRADDOCK. (*Uncomfortable.*) Jane –

MISS MARPLE. (*Indicating CRADDOCK.*) I looked after this poor chap on occasion but, well, time goes by...

MARINA. Yes. Time goes by.

(**MARINA** and **MISS MARPLE** both momentarily caught in their own thoughts, their own losses.)

(*Catching herself.*) If you'll excuse me –

CRADDOCK. Of course.

MISS MARPLE. Could you not have children of your own?

MARINA. I'm sorry... (*To CRADDOCK.*) Who is this woman?

CRADDOCK. Nobody. Well, she's my aunt. Well, not really my aunt but –

MISS MARPLE. Dermot feels sorry for me because I've no family of my own. But you adopted, I believe...?

MARINA. It's common knowledge.

MISS MARPLE. So does that mean you couldn't have children of your own?

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. And so you took in two girls...

MARINA. You've clearly been reading the gossip columns.

MISS MARPLE. But you sent the girls away.

MARINA. Is that what people think?

I became unwell.

MISS MARPLE. Was there anything in particular that triggered your illness?

MARINA. ...My work can be very demanding at times...

MISS MARPLE. Of course.

What were the girls like?

MARINA. I don't see...

MISS MARPLE. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to intrude. I suppose you don't really think about them now...

MARINA. Of course I think about them! Alice, she was really fun. Full of life. Charlotte was a sweet, sweet soul. The most loyal little kitten I ever met.

MISS MARPLE. I think it might be vital we find them now. Don't you think?

MARINA. It can't have been anything to do with them.

MISS MARPLE. Are you sure?

MARINA. ...Those girls loved me.

MISS MARPLE. Even though you sent them away?

MARINA. It wasn't like that. They didn't want to see me but [they'd never] -

MISS MARPLE. Because they felt...rejected?

MARINA. No!

MISS MARPLE. Then...ah. Replaced.

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. You had a baby?

MARINA. I told you, I don't have children...

MISS MARPLE. No?

(CRADDOCK goes to speak. MISS MARPLE stops him.)

(Silence. MARINA can't hold back the tears.)

MISS MARPLE. Oh my dear. I'm very sorry.

What happened to your baby?

MARINA. ...The doctors told me he wasn't right in the head. My husband – at the time, his name was Peter – he thought it best if we kept it from the world, so no one would write nasty stories.

I tried to look after him, my baby, Sam, but... Then I, I wasn't very well, so Peter insisted we send the girls away. I wanted them to be happy. I thought it was the best thing for them.

Then Peter left us, and my poor boy, he was so...

They said it would be better to let him be in a place where he'd be cared for... I went to visit him, whenever I could, but... They didn't even let me take him home, at the very end.

MISS MARPLE. (*Gently.*) When did he die?

MARINA. Six months ago. That's why Jason brought us here. To start again.

MISS MARPLE. Who's they?

(*Silence.*)

My dear... Who wouldn't let you take your child home?

(**JASON** comes in. Sees **MARINA's** tear-stained face.)

JASON. Is there a problem?

MARINA. No. No, I'm just –

JASON. (*To* **CRADDOCK.**) Inspector, I warned you –

CRADDOCK. *Chief* Inspector.

(*To* **MARINA.**) Is it your husband who frightens you?

(The below, overlapping:)

MARINA. No -

JASON. How dare you?

CRADDOCK. I can have him arrested -

JASON. You have no idea -

CRADDOCK. Questioned, at the police station -

JASON. Who the hell tried to kill her -

MARINA. That's enough -

JASON. You couldn't stop a murderer if he was standing right next to you!

CRADDOCK. You may well be a powerful man in your walk of life but I have to remind you that we are all equal in the eyes of the law -

MARINA. Jason -

JASON. Why don't you just come out and say it? You think I tried to kill my wife!

MARINA. Honey. I told them about Sam.

JASON. What? Why?

MARINA. They wanted to know why I had to send my girls away.

JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

(JASON takes MARINA's hand. He turns back to CRADDOCK.)

If this gets out -

CRADDOCK. This is a confidential investigation -

JASON. I mean it. If either of you ever breathes a word -

CRADDOCK. Yes?

(Another stand off.)

MISS MARPLE. Miss Gregg. I can assure you we both understand that some things are too painful to be made public. This will go no further. Will it, Dermot?

CRADDOCK. You have my word.

MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

JASON. Right then -

MARINA. Could I... Could I have a minute?

JASON. You heard her -

MARINA. Alone?

JASON. ...I'll be right outside.

(JASON kisses MARINA. He turns to usher out MISS MARPLE and CRADDOCK.)

MARINA. Oh, Detective Craddock, why don't you stay and watch the filming?

(JASON leaves. CRADDOCK helps MISS MARPLE off. MARINA, alone, stares at her face in the mirror in her dressing table. She cries.)

(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

MISS MARPLE. Poor Charlotte. She'd seen the deliberate spill... But seeing Mr Renzo cut that cable... She must have been terribly confused.

CRADDOCK. So why didn't she tell the police?

(**MISS MARPLE** looks to **ELLA**.)

ELLA. She told me about the lamp, and I said I'd tell them but -

(**ELLA** takes **MARINA's** hand.)

I'll take care of it, okay? I'll tell the police and -

MARINA. No!

ELLA. They have to know -

MARINA. Of course. Just - not yet, okay? Give me some time.

ELLA. You're not safe. If Giuseppe tries again -

MARINA. I need you to trust me here... Don't think I don't see it, the way you care for me...just as I care for you...

(**MARINA** strokes **ELLA's** face.)

ELLA. You...care for me?

MARINA. You know I do. I've got this, Ella, darling. Just, don't say anything to anyone yet. All right?

(**ELLA** nods. **MARINA** kisses **ELLA**. Turns back.)

Oh, who was it who saw? So I can thank them.

ELLA. A fan, I guess. Here, she left her details. Cherry Baker.

(**ELLA** interrupts, brings scene back to:)

Oh God...

DOLLY. Oh! So that's why you sent Mr Renzo to find Cherry!

(The sound of the lamp falling.)

GIUSEPPE. Nineteen years, I follow her everywhere.

MISS MARPLE. All those years, he's had to put up with –

GIUSEPPE. *(Annoyed.)* Smoked salmon with cream cheese and a dash of lemon. No pepper. Not even a sniff.

MISS MARPLE. Why would one stay? Having to cater for every whim, anticipate every demand?

GIUSEPPE. Three cubes of ice; the faintest sliver of lime.

CRADDOCK. Some people know their place in the world.

GIUSEPPE. I love Marina. Love.

MISS MARPLE. Always on the outside, tolerated only because he was useful... That must have been very lonely indeed.

GIUSEPPE. I keep her safe, I keep her...clear.

MISS MARPLE. Clear...from what?

CRADDOCK. We've already been through that –

MISS MARPLE. He would have been there, when she had the baby. All these years, living with her secrets, and her demands –

CRADDOCK. So why not just leave?

MISS MARPLE. He knew too much. She wouldn't let him.

CRADDOCK. Surely all this begs the question, why now?

MISS MARPLE. Perhaps something happened, the final straw. Or perhaps he felt safe here. On a little island, the other side of the world...

CRADDOCK. But why would she protect him?

MISS MARPLE. Because she couldn't bear to lose him. Her devoted butler, always at her side. The only person who has ever been a constant.

LOLA. You sent Giuseppe, to kill Charlotte...?

MARINA. I didn't know! I didn't know!

MISS MARPLE. And when he came back empty handed –

(Dark. Eerie. The shadows of trees. GIUSEPPE appears.)

MARINA. Did you do it?

(GIUSEPPE hands the gun to MARINA.)

GIUSEPPE. I would do anything for you – [but]

MARINA. Giuseppe...sweetie...

GIUSEPPE. It is impossible. Either I live with your secrets crushed against me, or I live knowing I am the one who sent you to the gallows.

MARINA. You promised you'd never tell a soul...

GIUSEPPE. The other woman, I understand how much she hurt you. But this girl...?

MARINA. What are you saying?

(Beat.)

GIUSEPPE. I will leave now, though it will pain me the rest of my years, not to walk where you walk. But I swear to you, I will never speak a word, not to a soul, not anyone.

MARINA. I want to believe you...

GIUSEPPE. You know I love you. I have always protected you.

MARINA. Protected me? From what?

GIUSEPPE. The gossip, newspapers, the letters –

MARINA. What letters?

GIUSEPPE. Alice and Charlotte, they wrote, again and again. I got rid of the letters.

MARINA. ...You told me they wanted nothing more to do with me.

GIUSEPPE. You asked me to keep you clear from all that. And Mr Rudd, he -

MARINA. He meant from stories getting out! Not from my daughters!

GIUSEPPE. I didn't know -

MARINA. How could you do that to me?

GIUSEPPE. I lie to everyone for you. Your husbands, newspapers, the police. And now, you ask me to kill a girl! All these years, I put up with your shit, thinking I'm the lucky one, but look at you. Look at who you really are.

(GIUSEPPE grabs for the gun. In the tussle, it goes off. GIUSEPPE falls.)

MARINA. No. No... I didn't mean to... Giuseppe.

(GIUSEPPE is dead. MARINA cries.)

I really didn't mean to.

MISS MARPLE. Did you mean to put the rat poison into Miss Zielinsky's atomiser?

(CRADDOCK looks at MISS MARPLE. She gives him the atomiser.)

ELLA. You tried to kill me?

MARINA. I didn't want any of this...

ELLA. At least Giuseppe doesn't have to spend the rest of his life knowing how little you actually cared for him.

MARINA. I care... I care...

(ELLA walks out. Turns back. Looks at MISS MARPLE. Seeing her anew.)

GIUSEPPE. You okay?

MARINA. All these ghastly people I've never met, who think they know me –

GIUSEPPE. The only way is to drink through the pain. What'll it be, Madam?

MARINA. What have you got, Sir?

GIUSEPPE. A strawberry daiquiri, or a strawberry daiquiri, or a strawberry daiquiri.

MARINA. I think I'll have a...strawberry daiquiri.

*(GIUSEPPE indicates that the choice is hers!
She chooses one at random.)*

I do try to be gracious but...

CRADDOCK. Everyone struggles with – obligations.

(He catches MISS MARPLE's eye.)

So, you chose a drink and then...

MARINA. Mrs Leigh came to talk to me, so I set my glass down –

CRADDOCK. Before you'd taken a sip?

MARINA. I never touched it. You see –

(HEATHER goes to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. Oh Miss Gregg, do you remember me?

MARINA. I meet so many dear people... *(Puts her glass down.)*

HEATHER. *(Getting closer and closer to MARINA.)* Well, it was a few years ago now. I was mad with excitement, when I heard that you were coming over to play Cleopatra, and then on the very day of the opening, I went down with influenza! But I wasn't going to be

beaten. I put on my best dress and I stood in line for hours and hours and hours, and you were so lovely to me, when it was my turn for your autograph. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

MARINA. How kind of you to go to so much trouble. You're here today because...

HEATHER. (*Annoyed.*) I'm Chair of St John Ambulance.

MARINA. That's just wonderful, Mrs...

HEATHER. Leigh. Heather Leigh.

(**LOLA** *appears.*)

(*Slightly abrasive.*) Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

HEATHER. But you will come back, won't you?

(**MARINA** *turns back to the present.*)

MARINA. I didn't mean to be unkind but it can be very difficult, dealing with fans...

CRADDOCK. How long did you leave your drink there?

MARINA. Just a minute or two. I greeted Lola, and then went back to rescue Jason.

(**MARINA** *goes to JASON, who is with HEATHER.*)

JASON. (*Whispers to MARINA.*) The second it's getting too much for you, just nod and I'll wrap things up -

CRADDOCK. Is he always so...

MARINA. My husband would never do anything to hurt me.

(**JASON** *goes.*)

CHERRY. What was the play?

MISS MARPLE. I don't remember.

Oh, of course. It was *A Doll's House*. You get so caught up with how very trapped Nora feels that you'd forgive her almost anything. And yet, to walk out on your children...

CHERRY. I've never seen it.

Right. I'll get yer breakfast.

(**CHERRY** leaves.)

(*Silence.*)

(**CHERRY** returns.)

I thought I'd push the boat out and do your eggs boiled today.

MISS MARPLE. Lovely.

CHERRY. Oh! I forgot your tea.

Sorry. I'm at sixes and sevens today.

MISS MARPLE. Are you all right?

CHERRY. Sorry, Miss, it's just...

MISS MARPLE. What's happened?

(*Pause.*)

CHERRY. I know it's daft but whenever something bad happens... I lost my sister, a few years ago now, mind, and... but it's still her I want to tell, and then, it's like I've lost her, all over again.

MISS MARPLE. Yes.

Grief, it casts such terribly long shadows.

(Beat.)

CHERRY. Them eggs'll be done by now.

(CHERRY goes.)

(Silence.)

(CHERRY returns.)

The eggs have only gone and cracked! I'll have to start again.

MISS MARPLE. Actually, I'm not hungry.

Losing a sister as a child must be terribly lonely.

CHERRY. The thing is, I don't know if I'm making a memory from a photograph or if I actually remember her. I can't even remember what it was like to be held by her, or if she even – sorry. Here's me harping on, and you got enough on your plate, what with your gammy leg...

MISS MARPLE. I've plenty of time to listen.

(Silence.)

CHERRY. It's just, I don't know anyone round here and...

MISS MARPLE. What's happened, dear?

CHERRY. ...I dunno...

MISS MARPLE. You've been here a week. How many people have called round in all that time?

CHERRY. ...?

MISS MARPLE. If you have a secret that's troubling you... I've no one to tell.

CHERRY. It must be 'orrible, being old.

Not that you're...

MISS MARPLE. I've never felt "old" before. But being stuck in this chair...

It's an awful thing, Cherry dear, to feel alone with your cares.

Tell me what's upset you.

CHERRY. ...It was at the drinks party yesterday. You see -

(The sound of the doorbell.)

MISS MARPLE. It's probably just a travelling salesman. Go on.

CHERRY. Well, thing is -

(The doorbell rings again. Then the sound of the front door opening. CHIEF INSPECTOR DERMOT CRADDOCK appears. CHERRY intercepts him.)

Sorry, can I help you?

CRADDOCK. I'm looking for Miss Marple -

MISS MARPLE. Dermot! What a lovely surprise.

CRADDOCK. You're always so quick to the door. I thought something must have happened to you.

MISS MARPLE. I had a silly fall. This is Cherry. She's been looking after me. Cherry, this is Inspector Craddock.

CHERRY. Inspector...?

MISS MARPLE. His parents were friends of mine.

CRADDOCK. Chief Inspector now, actually!

MISS MARPLE. Oh.

CRADDOCK. What?

MISS MARPLE. No. That's very good news. Just like your father.

CHERRY. She got it from Giuseppe, I think his name is.
The butler.

(We see everything reconstructed, as described.)

(GIUSEPPE appears, holding a tray of drinks. MARINA goes to him. They laugh at something together. MARINA very clearly picks her own drink.)

MISS MARPLE. She definitely chose it herself?

(DOLLY nods.)

Who did you see approaching Miss Gregg between the time of Miss Gregg picking her drink and Heather Leigh drinking it?

CHERRY. I'd been told to stand in the corner with me tray and look "unobtrusive". *(Looks down.)*

MISS MARPLE. Did you see the feet of anyone going near Miss Gregg?

CHERRY. Well, yeah, but -

DOLLY. Heather Leigh marched over to Miss Gregg and started some dull-as-death story -

(HEATHER far too close to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. - when I heard that you were coming over to do *Antony and Cleopatra!* Oh, I was mad with excitement and then on the very day of the opening night, I went down with a rotten head cold. But I wasn't going to be beaten, so I put on a lot of make-up and stood in line for hours and you came right up to me and gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

(A look of frozen horror on MARINA's face. She quickly puts back on a smile.)

MARINA. How kind of you, to go to so much trouble.

CRADDOCK. And that's when the drink was spilled.

DOLLY. (*Simultaneously.*) No.

CHERRY. (*Simultaneously.*) Yes.

(*Beat.*)

DOLLY. Don't you remember? That was when Lola Brewster arrived.

(*LOLA appears.*)

HEATHER. Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

(*MARINA goes to LOLA.*)

MISS MARPLE. Lola Brewster?

DOLLY. Oh Jane, don't tell me you haven't heard of her. She's been in all those films with those angry young men.

CRADDOCK. What did they say to each other?

DOLLY. I didn't catch it, but it didn't exactly look as if they were the best of friends.

(*CRADDOCK turns to CHERRY.*)

CHERRY. I was in me corner.

MISS MARPLE. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Have you spoken to Miss Brewster?

CRADDOCK. I wanted to talk to you first.

DOLLY. To get the gossip?

(*Touché.*)

I had a little chat with Lola, actually, at the party –

CRADDOCK. I'm sure you did –

MISS MARPLE. What did you make of her?

DOLLY. She was a dear.

LOLA. (*Goes to DOLLY.*) Hi. I'm Lola. And you are...?

DOLLY. Dolly Bantry. I'm no one important, except I used to own this place.

LOLA. We're all important to ourselves. (*Smiles.*) You're one up on me, anyway. I wasn't actually invited.

DOLLY. Aren't you making a film with Miss Gregg?

LOLA. Sure, but she seems to have no idea who I am.

DOLLY. Who are you playing?

LOLA. Anne Boleyn.

DOLLY. Oh! The next wife!

(*Beat.*)

If you don't mind my asking, why did you come, if you weren't invited?

(*Conspiratorial.*) I came to look at the bathrooms.

LOLA. I thought it might be good to meet Marina away from the pressure of the set. Actually, (*Equally conspiratorial.*) I'm terrified. I've never worked with anyone famous before.

DOLLY. But aren't you famous, dear?

LOLA. Not like Marina. Mind you, no one's famous like Marina.

(**LOLA disappears.**)

MISS MARPLE. Why go to a party when you haven't been invited?

CRADDOCK. Can we concentrate on the events?

MISS MARPLE. We all experience events differently.

CRADDOCK. Going back to what happened...

DOLLY. Well... (*To* **CHERRY.**) You started to go over to Miss Gregg, with your tray... But then you stopped...?

CHERRY. I was gonna offer her a vol-au-vent. But I lost my nerve.

CRADDOCK. Why?

CHERRY. She's ruddy famous.

CRADDOCK. Then what happened?

CHERRY. Miss Gregg went to talk to her secretary, but then you... (*To* **DOLLY.**) – sorry, I didn't catch your name.

DOLLY. Mrs Bantry. I used to own Gossington Hall.

CHERRY. Right. Well, you collared her. Something about –

DOLLY. I'd hardly say collared –

CHERRY. Toilets.

DOLLY. I went to congratulate Miss Gregg on her bathrooms.

CHERRY. Marina carried on to Miss wotshername.

DOLLY. Zielinsky.

(Beat.)

Miss Zielinsky put Miss Gregg's necklace straight.

CHERRY. Marina went back to that woman. Heather Leigh.

DOLLY. And then –

CHERRY. (*To* **DOLLY.**) Are you telling this story or am I?

MISS MARPLE. You're both doing very well.

CHERRY & DOLLY. Ta / Thank you.

(Beat.)

CRADDOCK. And then?

CHERRY. Miss Zielinsky sneezed –

(MARINA and HEATHER are conversing happily. JASON nearby. ELLA sneezes.)

(Quickly.) And she spilled her drink all over her dress...

(We see HEATHER spill her drink over MARINA's dress.)

DOLLY. Heather Leigh looked mortified. Marina was doing everything she could to make Mrs Leigh feel better about the whole thing...

CHERRY. She was so nice about it too.

(MARINA graciously hands her drink to HEATHER.)

DOLLY. And Heather Leigh knocked it back like a common bricklayer!

(HEATHER raises the glass to her lips. In the present day, CHERRY cries out.)

CHERRY. One moment, she was chattering away, and then... I mean, I know people die and all that, but it was so...you know?

MISS MARPLE. *(Gently.)* Is that what you wanted to tell me, earlier?

(Beat. CHERRY looks down. Nods, quickly.)

DOLLY. *(To CRADDOCK.)* So, who poisoned the drink?

CRADDOCK. My investigation is confidential.

DOLLY. You mean, you haven't a clue.

CRADDOCK. Thank you. You've been most helpful –

MISS MARPLE. You told me to ask about Tennyson.

DOLLY. Oh. Yes. It was after that tedious story –

(We see, replayed:)

HEATHER. And you gave me your autograph, as if I mattered more than anyone! Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

*(Music. * The sound of a mirror shattering.
We can see the look of frozen horror on
MARINA's face.)*

DOLLY. “The mirror crack'd from side to side;

‘The doom is come upon me,’ cried

The Lady of Shalott.”

MISS MARPLE. You mean curse.

DOLLY. I beg your pardon?

MISS MARPLE. Curse. Not doom.

DOLLY. Oh. I prefer doom.

CRADDOCK. I don't think this is the time for a poetry discussion –

DOLLY. The point is, *if* you're interested, Heather Leigh was babbling on, and Miss Gregg's eyes began to wander – well, who can blame her – and then suddenly, on Miss Gregg's face there was a look of absolute terror.

CRADDOCK. Who was she looking at?

DOLLY. I don't know. I was looking at her.

CRADDOCK. She must have caught sight of someone. Who did she see?

DOLLY. *(Exasperated.)* I just told you...

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MISS MARPLE. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... I too once had hopes of a family...

CRADDOCK. (*Uncomfortable.*) Jane –

MISS MARPLE. (*Indicating CRADDOCK.*) I looked after this poor chap on occasion but, well, time goes by...

MARINA. Yes. Time goes by.

(**MARINA** and **MISS MARPLE** both momentarily caught in their own thoughts, their own losses.)

(*Catching herself.*) If you'll excuse me –

CRADDOCK. Of course.

MISS MARPLE. Could you not have children of your own?

MARINA. I'm sorry... (*To CRADDOCK.*) Who is this woman?

CRADDOCK. Nobody. Well, she's my aunt. Well, not really my aunt but –

MISS MARPLE. Dermot feels sorry for me because I've no family of my own. But you adopted, I believe...?

MARINA. It's common knowledge.

MISS MARPLE. So does that mean you couldn't have children of your own?

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. And so you took in two girls...

MARINA. You've clearly been reading the gossip columns.

MISS MARPLE. But you sent the girls away.

MARINA. Is that what people think?

I became unwell.

MISS MARPLE. Was there anything in particular that triggered your illness?

MARINA. ...My work can be very demanding at times...

MISS MARPLE. Of course.

What were the girls like?

MARINA. I don't see...

MISS MARPLE. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to intrude. I suppose you don't really think about them now...

MARINA. Of course I think about them! Alice, she was really fun. Full of life. Charlotte was a sweet, sweet soul. The most loyal little kitten I ever met.

MISS MARPLE. I think it might be vital we find them now. Don't you think?

MARINA. It can't have been anything to do with them.

MISS MARPLE. Are you sure?

MARINA. ...Those girls loved me.

MISS MARPLE. Even though you sent them away?

MARINA. It wasn't like that. They didn't want to see me but [they'd never] -

MISS MARPLE. Because they felt...rejected?

MARINA. No!

MISS MARPLE. Then...ah. Replaced.

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. You had a baby?

MARINA. I told you, I don't have children...

MISS MARPLE. No?

(CRADDOCK goes to speak. MISS MARPLE stops him.)

(Silence. MARINA can't hold back the tears.)

MISS MARPLE. Oh my dear. I'm very sorry.

What happened to your baby?

MARINA. ...The doctors told me he wasn't right in the head. My husband – at the time, his name was Peter – he thought it best if we kept it from the world, so no one would write nasty stories.

I tried to look after him, my baby, Sam, but... Then I, I wasn't very well, so Peter insisted we send the girls away. I wanted them to be happy. I thought it was the best thing for them.

Then Peter left us, and my poor boy, he was so...

They said it would be better to let him be in a place where he'd be cared for... I went to visit him, whenever I could, but... They didn't even let me take him home, at the very end.

MISS MARPLE. (*Gently.*) When did he die?

MARINA. Six months ago. That's why Jason brought us here. To start again.

MISS MARPLE. Who's they?

(*Silence.*)

My dear... Who wouldn't let you take your child home?

(**JASON** comes in. Sees **MARINA's** tear-stained face.)

JASON. Is there a problem?

MARINA. No. No, I'm just –

JASON. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Inspector, I warned you –

CRADDOCK. *Chief* Inspector.

(*To MARINA.*) Is it your husband who frightens you?

(The below, overlapping:)

MARINA. No -

JASON. How dare you?

CRADDOCK. I can have him arrested -

JASON. You have no idea -

CRADDOCK. Questioned, at the police station -

JASON. Who the hell tried to kill her -

MARINA. That's enough -

JASON. You couldn't stop a murderer if he was standing right next to you!

CRADDOCK. You may well be a powerful man in your walk of life but I have to remind you that we are all equal in the eyes of the law -

MARINA. Jason -

JASON. Why don't you just come out and say it? You think I tried to kill my wife!

MARINA. Honey. I told them about Sam.

JASON. What? Why?

MARINA. They wanted to know why I had to send my girls away.

JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

(JASON takes MARINA's hand. He turns back to CRADDOCK.)

If this gets out -

CRADDOCK. This is a confidential investigation -

JASON. I mean it. If either of you ever breathes a word -

CRADDOCK. Yes?

(Another stand off.)

MISS MARPLE. Miss Gregg. I can assure you we both understand that some things are too painful to be made public. This will go no further. Will it, Dermot?

CRADDOCK. You have my word.

MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

JASON. Right then -

MARINA. Could I... Could I have a minute?

JASON. You heard her -

MARINA. Alone?

JASON. ...I'll be right outside.

(JASON kisses MARINA. He turns to usher out MISS MARPLE and CRADDOCK.)

MARINA. Oh, Detective Craddock, why don't you stay and watch the filming?

(JASON leaves. CRADDOCK helps MISS MARPLE off. MARINA, alone, stares at her face in the mirror in her dressing table. She cries.)

(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

MISS MARPLE. Oh my dear. I'm very sorry.

What happened to your baby?

MARINA. ...The doctors told me he wasn't right in the head. My husband – at the time, his name was Peter – he thought it best if we kept it from the world, so no one would write nasty stories.

I tried to look after him, my baby, Sam, but... Then I, I wasn't very well, so Peter insisted we send the girls away. I wanted them to be happy. I thought it was the best thing for them.

Then Peter left us, and my poor boy, he was so...

They said it would be better to let him be in a place where he'd be cared for... I went to visit him, whenever I could, but... They didn't even let me take him home, at the very end.

MISS MARPLE. (*Gently.*) When did he die?

MARINA. Six months ago. That's why Jason brought us here. To start again.

MISS MARPLE. Who's they?

(*Silence.*)

My dear... Who wouldn't let you take your child home?

(**JASON** comes in. Sees **MARINA's** tear-stained face.)

JASON. Is there a problem?

MARINA. No. No, I'm just –

JASON. (*To* **CRADDOCK.**) Inspector, I warned you –

CRADDOCK. *Chief* Inspector.

(*To* **MARINA.**) Is it your husband who frightens you?

(The below, overlapping:)

MARINA. No -

JASON. How dare you?

CRADDOCK. I can have him arrested -

JASON. You have no idea -

CRADDOCK. Questioned, at the police station -

JASON. Who the hell tried to kill her -

MARINA. That's enough -

JASON. You couldn't stop a murderer if he was standing right next to you!

CRADDOCK. You may well be a powerful man in your walk of life but I have to remind you that we are all equal in the eyes of the law -

MARINA. Jason -

JASON. Why don't you just come out and say it? You think I tried to kill my wife!

MARINA. Honey. I told them about Sam.

JASON. What? Why?

MARINA. They wanted to know why I had to send my girls away.

JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

(JASON takes MARINA's hand. He turns back to CRADDOCK.)

If this gets out -

CRADDOCK. This is a confidential investigation -

JASON. I mean it. If either of you ever breathes a word -

CRADDOCK. Yes?

(Another stand off.)

MISS MARPLE. Miss Gregg. I can assure you we both understand that some things are too painful to be made public. This will go no further. Will it, Dermot?

CRADDOCK. You have my word.

MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

JASON. Right then -

MARINA. Could I... Could I have a minute?

JASON. You heard her -

MARINA. Alone?

JASON. ...I'll be right outside.

(JASON kisses MARINA. He turns to usher out MISS MARPLE and CRADDOCK.)

MARINA. Oh, Detective Craddock, why don't you stay and watch the filming?

(JASON leaves. CRADDOCK helps MISS MARPLE off. MARINA, alone, stares at her face in the mirror in her dressing table. She cries.)

(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

ELLA. You saved my life.

(Beat. Then ELLA goes.)

CRADDOCK. *(To MARINA.)* Why didn't you just confess?
Wouldn't it have been simpler than having to...

MARINA. What's more simple than the desire for life? And death. It overwhelms everything.

... *(To JASON.)* Did you know, all along?

JASON. I didn't want to believe it. But I heard what that woman said, knew what it meant and... I know how much you loved your boy.

MARINA. You wanted me to let you hang for me.

JASON. I love you.

MARINA. You've made every decision for me.

JASON. I try to make life easier for you, that's all.

MARINA. You can't medicate shame.

You brought me here, to help me forget. I don't want to forget Sam. How could I ever forget that I abandoned my son?

JASON. I thought, if you could just...start again... and acting, it always made you happy...

MARINA. What is happy? I mean, without the care of family, what are we?

JASON. I'm your husband.

MARINA. I'm just an image in a magazine, on a poster, a screen... I've only ever been what you imagine me to be.

JASON. You're a beautiful woman -

MARINA. And when I'm not?

JASON. Marina -

MARINA. "Beauty" doesn't cure anger. And it doesn't cure grief.

CRADDOCK. You're not the only one who has lost the person they love. It does not turn us all into murderers.

MARINA. I think I became a murderer the second I discovered what caused my son's condition.

(Silence.)

MISS MARPLE. I cannot put my hand on my heart and say that, had I found myself in your position, I too would not have done the same.

(Silence.)

LOLA. I wish I'd known.

MARINA. I do love you, Alice. I always did.

You will tell Charlotte, won't you? Tell her I...

(LOLA flings herself into MARINA's arms.)

My darling girl...

And Jason...

I'm so sorry I wasn't the woman you wanted me to be.

JASON. No. I'm the one who should be sorry. All these years, I thought I was the only one who really knew you, but you're right... I saw a delicate woman, tearing herself apart, standing still... and I thought, if I just cleared the path before you, you'd find where you wanted to go... but all I was doing was sending you in the direction that I had chosen for you. I never stopped to ask you. Maybe, because I was scared that if I did, the answer wouldn't be me.

MARINA. I was never delicate.

JASON. Yes. I know that now.

I see you, Marina. And I will love you, to the grave.

I had a little chat with Lola, actually, at the party –

CRADDOCK. I'm sure you did –

MISS MARPLE. What did you make of her?

DOLLY. She was a dear.

LOLA. (*Goes to DOLLY.*) Hi. I'm Lola. And you are...?

DOLLY. Dolly Bantry. I'm no one important, except I used to own this place.

LOLA. We're all important to ourselves. (*Smiles.*) You're one up on me, anyway. I wasn't actually invited.

DOLLY. Aren't you making a film with Miss Gregg?

LOLA. Sure, but she seems to have no idea who I am.

DOLLY. Who are you playing?

LOLA. Anne Boleyn.

DOLLY. Oh! The next wife!

(*Beat.*)

If you don't mind my asking, why did you come, if you weren't invited?

(*Conspiratorial.*) I came to look at the bathrooms.

LOLA. I thought it might be good to meet Marina away from the pressure of the set. Actually, (*Equally conspiratorial.*) I'm terrified. I've never worked with anyone famous before.

DOLLY. But aren't you famous, dear?

LOLA. Not like Marina. Mind you, no one's famous like Marina.

(**LOLA disappears.**)

MISS MARPLE. Why go to a party when you haven't been invited?

CRADDOCK. (*Irritated.*) I'll go.

(**CRADDOCK** lets in **CYRIL LEIGH**.)

Mr Leigh. I'm so sorry. I got caught up –

CYRIL. Yes. But I have to tell you –

(*The doorbell goes again. Beat.*)

CRADDOCK. Excuse me.

(**CRADDOCK** goes off to answer it, muttering
"It's like Piccadilly bloody Circus!")

(**CRADDOCK** lets in **LOLA**.)

LOLA. Your sergeant told me to come here...?

CRADDOCK. Miss Brewster. Just a few questions, if I may?

CYRIL. Sorry. Could I just –

CRADDOCK. Do forgive me, Mr Leigh, but I'm afraid I really need to interview Miss Brewster. I'll call round later, all right?

CYRIL. But –

CRADDOCK. If you'll excuse me.

(*Beat. CYRIL leaves, reluctantly.*)

MISS MARPLE. Perhaps, my dear, we could all do with a cup of tea. Dermot, could you put the kettle on?

LOLA. Oh yes please! If it's not too much trouble?

(**CRADDOCK** sighs, goes, muttering under his
breath.)

MISS MARPLE. Did you find your handbag?

LOLA. No, but I told you –

MISS MARPLE. You seemed so upset.

LOLA. I know it's stupid. Just sentimental reasons.

MISS MARPLE. Have you managed to come up with any yet?

LOLA. ...

MISS MARPLE. You see, unless you tell us what was in your bag, it looks very suspicious.

LOLA. But, he might think something that's not true.

MISS MARPLE. He's a very clever man. He'll see beyond appearances.

(CRADDOCK has returned. MISS MARPLE indicates he shouldn't speak. Eventually.)

LOLA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* There was a knife. In my bag.

CRADDOCK. Why?

LOLA. My father gave it to me. Before he died.

CRADDOCK. Did you have it with you at Gossington?

LOLA. What? No!

CRADDOCK. But you took it with you to the studios.

LOLA. Look, I...

CRADDOCK. Yes?

LOLA. There's a murderer on the loose. I thought it might be a good idea to protect myself.

CRADDOCK. Is this your knife?

(CRADDOCK takes out an enlarged photograph of Lola's knife/takes out the knife carefully, with his handkerchief.)

LOLA. Thank God! Where did you find it?

CRADDOCK. Miss Gregg's dressing room. Stabbed through a picture of Miss Gregg.

LOLA. God! But that was nothing to do with me! Someone stole my bag! Why would I bring it to your attention if I was gonna do something like that?

CRADDOCK. If Marina died, you would be the star of the picture.

LOLA. It would be called off. Jason's doing this for her... The way they all run after her.

MISS MARPLE. Miss Brewster, when did your father die?

LOLA. Last summer.

MISS MARPLE. It's wretched, losing a parent. You feel so alone in the world.

LOLA. Yes.

MISS MARPLE. Oh – which father are we talking about? Your own father or one of your adoptive fathers?

LOLA. I beg your pardon?

(MISS MARPLE shows LOLA the film magazine she took from the studios.)

MISS MARPLE. It says here that you were born in England. Whereabouts?

LOLA. I don't see –

MISS MARPLE. I expect you've wondered about her your whole life. The woman who took you from your home and then discarded you.

LOLA. ...How do you know?

MISS MARPLE. Why else would you mind all this so much?

(Beat.)

LOLA. I just wanted to see her again.

MISS MARPLE. Why haven't you told her who you really are?

LOLA. ...That first day, at the readthrough –

(MARINA appears. LOLA stares at her. LOLA goes to MARINA. Tentative; shy.)

LOLA. Marina...?

MARINA. And you are?

LOLA. You don't remember me...?

MARINA. I'm afraid I meet so many dear people...

LOLA. You really don't remember me.

MARINA. Should I?

Oh yes. Weren't you in one of those gritty modern thrillers?

(MARINA disappears.)

LOLA. Marina called herself my mother for five years. She didn't even recognise me.

MISS MARPLE. I imagine Miss Gregg sees so many people, she has stopped really looking.

And perhaps you have changed a great deal since then. I expect Giuseppe didn't recognize you either –

LOLA. I know, but –

MISS MARPLE. And you've changed your name.

LOLA. Yes. My name was Alice, but –

MISS MARPLE. So it's hardly surprising that Miss Gregg didn't recognise the little girl she gave up twelve years ago...

LOLA. ...I was so frightened that someone had taken the knife to hurt her, and it would all be my fault.

MISS MARPLE. Why did she adopt you?

LOLA. Why don't you ask her?

CRADDOCK. Miss Brewster –

LOLA. Look. She'd been trying for a baby for years. I guess she decided that we would have to do.

CRADDOCK. We?

LOLA. My little sister, Charlotte, came too. We had everything... Clothes and toys and a beautiful house... and "Mommy".

MISS MARPLE. I believe she cared for you very much.

LOLA. We should have stayed with our real mum. At least there was no pretence.

MISS MARPLE. Pretence?

LOLA. There were eight of us in a slum. Mum wrote to them all, all the movie stars, begging them to adopt her kids. Marina was the only one dumb enough to say yes. So Charlotte and I were packed off.

MISS MARPLE. (*Gently.*) It must have been very unsettling, losing a second mother.

LOLA. We're not allowed to...

CRADDOCK. My enquiry is confidential.

(*LOLA scratches intermittently at her arm.*)

LOLA. She fell pregnant. She had no need of us after that.

MISS MARPLE. I'm sure it was more complicated than that.

CRADDOCK. What happened to you?

LOLA. Paid off, and re-adopted. Made to swear never to say a word.

I wrote to her – for years. She never wrote back.

CRADDOCK. So, you're angry with her. The mother who discarded you –

LOLA. Okay! But I'd never have hurt her.

GIUSEPPE. You okay?

MARINA. All these ghastly people I've never met, who think they know me –

GIUSEPPE. The only way is to drink through the pain. What'll it be, Madam?

MARINA. What have you got, Sir?

GIUSEPPE. A strawberry daiquiri, or a strawberry daiquiri, or a strawberry daiquiri.

MARINA. I think I'll have a...strawberry daiquiri.

(GIUSEPPE indicates that the choice is hers! She chooses one at random.)

I do try to be gracious but...

CRADDOCK. Everyone struggles with – obligations.

(He catches MISS MARPLE's eye.)

So, you chose a drink and then...

MARINA. Mrs Leigh came to talk to me, so I set my glass down –

CRADDOCK. Before you'd taken a sip?

MARINA. I never touched it. You see –

(HEATHER goes to MARINA. JASON joins them.)

HEATHER. Oh Miss Gregg, do you remember me?

MARINA. I meet so many dear people... *(Puts her glass down.)*

HEATHER. *(Getting closer and closer to MARINA.)* Well, it was a few years ago now. I was mad with excitement, when I heard that you were coming over to play Cleopatra, and then on the very day of the opening, I went down with influenza! But I wasn't going to be

beaten. I put on my best dress and I stood in line for hours and hours and hours, and you were so lovely to me, when it was my turn for your autograph. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life.

MARINA. How kind of you to go to so much trouble. You're here today because...

HEATHER. (*Annoyed.*) I'm Chair of St John Ambulance.

MARINA. That's just wonderful, Mrs...

HEATHER. Leigh. Heather Leigh.

(**LOLA** *appears.*)

(*Slightly abrasive.*) Sorry, I don't mean to prattle on, it's just it meant such a lot to me.

MARINA. I'm so glad. Now, do excuse me. I really must say hi to my co-star.

HEATHER. But you will come back, won't you?

(**MARINA** *turns back to the present.*)

MARINA. I didn't mean to be unkind but it can be very difficult, dealing with fans...

CRADDOCK. How long did you leave your drink there?

MARINA. Just a minute or two. I greeted Lola, and then went back to rescue Jason.

(**MARINA** *goes to JASON, who is with HEATHER.*)

JASON. (*Whispers to MARINA.*) The second it's getting too much for you, just nod and I'll wrap things up -

CRADDOCK. Is he always so...

MARINA. My husband would never do anything to hurt me.

(**JASON** *goes.*)

MISS MARPLE. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... I too once had hopes of a family...

CRADDOCK. (*Uncomfortable.*) Jane –

MISS MARPLE. (*Indicating CRADDOCK.*) I looked after this poor chap on occasion but, well, time goes by...

MARINA. Yes. Time goes by.

(**MARINA** and **MISS MARPLE** both momentarily caught in their own thoughts, their own losses.)

(*Catching herself.*) If you'll excuse me –

CRADDOCK. Of course.

MISS MARPLE. Could you not have children of your own?

MARINA. I'm sorry... (*To CRADDOCK.*) Who is this woman?

CRADDOCK. Nobody. Well, she's my aunt. Well, not really my aunt but –

MISS MARPLE. Dermot feels sorry for me because I've no family of my own. But you adopted, I believe...?

MARINA. It's common knowledge.

MISS MARPLE. So does that mean you couldn't have children of your own?

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. And so you took in two girls...

MARINA. You've clearly been reading the gossip columns.

MISS MARPLE. But you sent the girls away.

MARINA. Is that what people think?

I became unwell.

MISS MARPLE. Was there anything in particular that triggered your illness?

MARINA. ...My work can be very demanding at times...

MISS MARPLE. Of course.

What were the girls like?

MARINA. I don't see...

MISS MARPLE. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to intrude. I suppose you don't really think about them now...

MARINA. Of course I think about them! Alice, she was really fun. Full of life. Charlotte was a sweet, sweet soul. The most loyal little kitten I ever met.

MISS MARPLE. I think it might be vital we find them now. Don't you think?

MARINA. It can't have been anything to do with them.

MISS MARPLE. Are you sure?

MARINA. ...Those girls loved me.

MISS MARPLE. Even though you sent them away?

MARINA. It wasn't like that. They didn't want to see me but [they'd never] -

MISS MARPLE. Because they felt...rejected?

MARINA. No!

MISS MARPLE. Then...ah. Replaced.

MARINA. ...

MISS MARPLE. You had a baby?

MARINA. I told you, I don't have children...

MISS MARPLE. No?

(CRADDOCK goes to speak. MISS MARPLE stops him.)

(Silence. MARINA can't hold back the tears.)

MISS MARPLE. Oh my dear. I'm very sorry.

What happened to your baby?

MARINA. ...The doctors told me he wasn't right in the head. My husband – at the time, his name was Peter – he thought it best if we kept it from the world, so no one would write nasty stories.

I tried to look after him, my baby, Sam, but... Then I, I wasn't very well, so Peter insisted we send the girls away. I wanted them to be happy. I thought it was the best thing for them.

Then Peter left us, and my poor boy, he was so...

They said it would be better to let him be in a place where he'd be cared for... I went to visit him, whenever I could, but... They didn't even let me take him home, at the very end.

MISS MARPLE. (*Gently.*) When did he die?

MARINA. Six months ago. That's why Jason brought us here. To start again.

MISS MARPLE. Who's they?

(*Silence.*)

My dear... Who wouldn't let you take your child home?

(**JASON** comes in. Sees **MARINA's** tear-stained face.)

JASON. Is there a problem?

MARINA. No. No, I'm just –

JASON. (*To CRADDOCK.*) Inspector, I warned you –

CRADDOCK. *Chief* Inspector.

(*To MARINA.*) Is it your husband who frightens you?

(The below, overlapping:)

MARINA. No -

JASON. How dare you?

CRADDOCK. I can have him arrested -

JASON. You have no idea -

CRADDOCK. Questioned, at the police station -

JASON. Who the hell tried to kill her -

MARINA. That's enough -

JASON. You couldn't stop a murderer if he was standing right next to you!

CRADDOCK. You may well be a powerful man in your walk of life but I have to remind you that we are all equal in the eyes of the law -

MARINA. Jason -

JASON. Why don't you just come out and say it? You think I tried to kill my wife!

MARINA. Honey. I told them about Sam.

JASON. What? Why?

MARINA. They wanted to know why I had to send my girls away.

JASON. Oh, sweetheart.

(JASON takes MARINA's hand. He turns back to CRADDOCK.)

If this gets out -

CRADDOCK. This is a confidential investigation -

JASON. I mean it. If either of you ever breathes a word -

CRADDOCK. Yes?

(Another stand off.)

MISS MARPLE. Miss Gregg. I can assure you we both understand that some things are too painful to be made public. This will go no further. Will it, Dermot?

CRADDOCK. You have my word.

MARINA. *(To CRADDOCK.)* Thank you. *(To MISS MARPLE.)*
And thank you, Mrs...

MISS MARPLE. Miss. Jane Marple.

(The two women look at each other. A moment.)

JASON. Right then -

MARINA. Could I... Could I have a minute?

JASON. You heard her -

MARINA. Alone?

JASON. ...I'll be right outside.

(JASON kisses MARINA. He turns to usher out MISS MARPLE and CRADDOCK.)

MARINA. Oh, Detective Craddock, why don't you stay and watch the filming?

(JASON leaves. CRADDOCK helps MISS MARPLE off. MARINA, alone, stares at her face in the mirror in her dressing table. She cries.)

(Suddenly, a sound. MARINA startles, frightened.)

Is someone there?

ELLA. You saved my life.

(Beat. Then ELLA goes.)

CRADDOCK. *(To MARINA.)* Why didn't you just confess?
Wouldn't it have been simpler than having to...

MARINA. What's more simple than the desire for life? And death. It overwhelms everything.

... *(To JASON.)* Did you know, all along?

JASON. I didn't want to believe it. But I heard what that woman said, knew what it meant and... I know how much you loved your boy.

MARINA. You wanted me to let you hang for me.

JASON. I love you.

MARINA. You've made every decision for me.

JASON. I try to make life easier for you, that's all.

MARINA. You can't medicate shame.

You brought me here, to help me forget. I don't want to forget Sam. How could I ever forget that I abandoned my son?

JASON. I thought, if you could just...start again... and acting, it always made you happy...

MARINA. What is happy? I mean, without the care of family, what are we?

JASON. I'm your husband.

MARINA. I'm just an image in a magazine, on a poster, a screen... I've only ever been what you imagine me to be.

JASON. You're a beautiful woman -

MARINA. And when I'm not?

JASON. Marina -

MARINA. "Beauty" doesn't cure anger. And it doesn't cure grief.

CRADDOCK. You're not the only one who has lost the person they love. It does not turn us all into murderers.

MARINA. I think I became a murderer the second I discovered what caused my son's condition.

(Silence.)

MISS MARPLE. I cannot put my hand on my heart and say that, had I found myself in your position, I too would not have done the same.

(Silence.)

LOLA. I wish I'd known.

MARINA. I do love you, Alice. I always did.

You will tell Charlotte, won't you? Tell her I...

(LOLA flings herself into MARINA's arms.)

My darling girl...

And Jason...

I'm so sorry I wasn't the woman you wanted me to be.

JASON. No. I'm the one who should be sorry. All these years, I thought I was the only one who really knew you, but you're right... I saw a delicate woman, tearing herself apart, standing still... and I thought, if I just cleared the path before you, you'd find where you wanted to go... but all I was doing was sending you in the direction that I had chosen for you. I never stopped to ask you. Maybe, because I was scared that if I did, the answer wouldn't be me.

MARINA. I was never delicate.

JASON. Yes. I know that now.

I see you, Marina. And I will love you, to the grave.