

concerned . . . something to do with these paintings.

CHARLES Not real paintings of course . . . copies. (*Pointing to PIERRE.*) He supplied them.

MARGARET They're in it together.

PRAATT So, the thick plottens yet again. What are your real and proper names?

ELIZABETH Don't say anything, Pierre. This is all a ghastly misunderstanding.

PIERRE (*in his real voice*) It's no use, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH Pierre . . . Please!

PIERRE The game's up, Elizabeth, can't you see?

ELIZABETH (*in her real voice*) Fool! Well you're not 'aving me!

(*ELIZABETH runs for the hall door.*)

PRAATT Grab her, Thompson!

(*THOMKINS tries to hold ELIZABETH but she stamps on his bandaged foot and he hops away, howling. He falls into the chair by the fire. ELIZABETH opens the door to the hall and tries to rush out, but she rebounds off BUNTING who is just entering. CHARLES grabs hold of ELIZABETH.*)

ELIZABETH Let go! You can't prove a thing.

CHARLES Well done, Bunting, old chap. Arrived in the nick of time!

(*BUNTING looks confused, then queasy. He exits rapidly down the hall.*)

Bit like the old Keystone Cops eh, Sergeant?

(*THOMKINS is still incapacitated on the chair.*)

PRAATT Hold on to her, Major. Pull yourself together, Thompson. You were saying, Mister Marseillaise?

PIERRE Elizabeth and I were working together. Two years ago we sold these paintings to Missus Bagshot . . . except before dispatch we swapped the originals for these copies. Dorothy found out. She tried to blackmail us.

PRAATT So you mortally killed her.

PIERRE I didn't . . . we didn't. We haven't killed anyone!

PRAATT I think that's for me to decide.

CHARLES I told Mildred these were copies. Blighter must have overheard.

PRAATT You incurably murdered them both to save your own skins. As I suspected from the start.

PIERRE We haven't hurt anyone!

PRAATT I don't think that will wear in a court of legal law. You should be more careful. You know what put me on to you? When you returned and claimed that there was a trifle in the safe . . . the ramblings of a mad man. (*Proudly.*) And so I conclude my conclusions. A classically conducted investigation of a case which will be recorded in the annals of most criminal crime . . . the two young innocents . . . murdered to death. Take him out, Thompson . . . I'll man-handle Miss Hardly-Trumping.

(*THOMKINS escorts PIERRE into the hall. PRAATT follows with ELIZABETH.*)

Good afternoon all.