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GILES, TROTTER, MRS. BOYLE
MOLLIE, MAJOR METCALF,
CHRISTOPHER, PARAVINEINI

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GILES. (*moving right of the arch up right*) Er - this is Detective Sergeant Trotter.

TROTTER. (*moving to left of the large armchair*) Good afternoon.

MRS. BOYLE. You can't be a sergeant. You're too young.

TROTTER. I'm not quite as young as I look, madam.

CHRISTOPHER. But terribly hearty.

GILES. We'll stow your skis away under the stairs.

(GILES and TROTTER exit through the archway up right.)

BEAT 21 ↑
BEAT 22 ↓

MAJOR METCALF. Excuse me, Mrs. Ralston, but may I use your telephone?

MOLLIE. Of course, Major Metcalf.

(MAJOR METCALF goes to the telephone and dials.)

CHRISTOPHER. (*sitting at the right end of the sofa*) He's very attractive, don't you think so? I always think that policemen are very attractive.

MRS. BOYLE. No brains. You can see that at a glance.

MAJOR METCALF. (*into the telephone*) Hullo! Hullo!... (*to MOLLIE*) Mrs. Ralston, this telephone is dead - quite dead.

MOLLIE. It was all right about half an hour ago.

MAJOR METCALF. The line's gone with the weight of the snow, I suppose.

CHRISTOPHER. (*laughing hysterically*) So we're quite cut off now. Quite cut off. That's funny, isn't it?

MAJOR METCALF. (*moving to left of the sofa*) I don't see anything to laugh at.

MRS. BOYLE. No, indeed.

CHRISTOPHER. Ah, it's a private joke of my own. Hist, the sleuth is returning.

(*TROTTER enters from the archway up right, followed by GILES. TROTTER moves down centre while GILES crosses to left of the sofa table.*)

TROTTER. (*taking out his notebook*) Now we can get to business, Mr. Ralston. Mrs. Ralston?

(*MOLLIE moves down centre.*)

GILES. Do you want to see us alone? If so, we can go into the library. (*He points towards the library door up left.*)

TROTTER. (*turning his back to the audience*) It's not necessary, sir. It'll save time if everybody's present. If I might sit at this table? (*He moves up to the right end of the refectory table.*)

PARAVICINI. I beg your pardon. (*He moves behind the table to the left end.*)

TROTTER. Thank you. (*He settles himself in a judicial manner centre behind the refectory table.*)

MOLLIE. Oh, do hurry up and tell us. (*She moves up to the right end of the refectory table.*) What have we done?

Best Best 22↑
23↓

TROTTER. (*surprised*) Done? Oh, it's nothing of *that* kind, Mrs. Ralston. It's something quite different. It's more a matter of police protection, if you understand me.

MOLLIE. Police protection?

TROTTER. It relates to the death of Mrs. Lyon - Mrs. Maureen Lyon of twenty-four Culver Street, London, West two, who was murdered yesterday, the fifteenth instant. You may have heard or read about the case?

MOLLIE. Yes. I heard it on the wireless. The woman who was strangled?

TROTTER. That's right, madam. (*to GILES*) The first thing I want to know is if you were acquainted with this Mrs. Lyon.

GILES. Never heard of her.

(*MOLLIE shakes her head.*)

TROTTER. You mayn't have known of her under the name of Lyon. Lyon wasn't her real name. She had a police record and her fingerprints were on file so we were able to identify her without difficulty. Her real name was Maureen Stanning. Her husband was a farmer, John Stanning, who resided at Longridge Farm not very far from here.

GILES. Longridge Farm! Wasn't that where those children...?

TROTTER. Yes, the Longridge Farm case.

(*MISS CASEWELL enters from the stairs left.*)