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THE MOUSETRAP

TROTTER. I see. What I'm getting at is that anyone who's been following you around might know very well that you were coming here. Now, there's just one thing I want to know and I want to know it quick. Which one of you is it that has some connection with that business at Longridge Farm?

*(There is a dead silence.)*

You're not being very sensible, you know. One of you is in danger – deadly danger. I've got to know which one that is.

*(There is another silence.)*

All right, I'll ask you one by one. *(to PARAVICINI)* You, first, since you seem to have arrived here more or less by accident, Mr. Pari—?

PARAVICINI. Para – Paravicini. But, my dear Inspector, I know nothing, but nothing of what you have been talking about. I am a stranger in this country. I know nothing of these local affairs of bygone years.

TROTTER. *(raising and moving down to left of MRS. BOYLE)* Mrs—?

MRS. BOYLE. Boyle. I don't see – really I consider it an impertinence... Why on earth should I have anything to do with such – this distressing business?

*(MAJOR METCALF looks sharply at her.)*

TROTTER. *(looking at MISS CASEWELL)* Miss—?

MISS CASEWELL. *(slowly)* Casewell. Leslie Casewell. I never heard of Longridge Farm, and I know nothing about it.

TROTTER. *(moving to right of the sofa; to MAJOR METCALF)* You, sir?

MAJOR METCALF. Metcalf – Major. Read about the case in the papers at the time. I was stationed at Edinburgh then. No personal knowledge.

TROTTER. *(to CHRISTOPHER)* And you?

**CHRISTOPHER.** Christopher Wren. I was a mere child at the time. I don't remember even hearing about it.

**TROTTER.** (*moving behind the sofa table*) And that's all you have to say – any of you?

(*There is a silence.*)

(*moving centre*) Well, if one of you gets murdered, you'll have yourself to blame. Now then, Mr. Ralston, can I have a look round the house?

(**TROTTER** exits up right with **GILES. PARAVICINI** sits at the window seat.)

**CHRISTOPHER.** (*rising*) My dears, how melodramatic. He's very attractive, isn't he? (*He moves up to the refectory table.*) I do admire the police. So stern and hardboiled. Quite a thrill, this whole business. *Three Blind Mice.* How does the tune go? (*He whistles or hums it.*)

**MRS. BOYLE.** Really, Mr. Wren!

**CHRISTOPHER.** Don't you like it? (*He moves to left of MRS. BOYLE.*) But it's a signature tune – the signature of the murderer. Just fancy what a kick he must be getting out of it.

**MRS. BOYLE.** Melodramatic rubbish. I don't believe a word of it.

**CHRISTOPHER.** (*stalking behind her*) But just wait, Mrs. Boyle. Till I creep up behind you, and you feel my hands on your throat.

**MRS. BOYLE.** Stop... (*She rises.*)

**MAJOR METCALF.** That'll do, Christopher. It's a poor joke, anyway. In fact, it's not a joke at all.

**CHRISTOPHER.** Oh, but it is! (*He moves above the armchair centre.*) That's just what it is. A madman's joke. That's just what makes it so deliciously *macabre.* (*He moves up right to the archway, looks round and giggles.*) If you could just see your faces!

(**CHRISTOPHER** exits through the archway.)

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