

Time for Murder



Script

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HAZ THINK FAIS
TEATRING
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CHARACTERS

MOLLIE RALSTON
CHRISTOPHER WREN
MRS. BOYLE
METCALF
MISS. CASEWELL
MR. PARAVICINI
SERGEANT TROTTER
PERIOD: THE FIFTIES.



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THREE BLIND MICE

Three blind mice

Three blind mice

See how they run

See how they run

They all ran after the farmer's wife

Who cut off their tails with a carving knife

Have you ever seen such a thing in your life as

Three blind mice

Three blind mice

ACT I

A Radio Broadcast

 TRACK 1

SCENE 1:

A lounge at the Monkswell Hotel. It is late evening.

The hotel has lost the charm it used to have a long time ago. At the back you can see a long window and to the right a spacious arch leading to the lobby, the front door and the kitchen; next to the window, on the left hand side there are the stairs leading to the bedrooms.

The decoration is the usual style for a hotel lounge. On the right hand side there is a French-style fireplace. All the furniture is quite antique and old fashioned. On the left hand side there is a table with a radio and a telephone on it.

The radio is on, playing some music in the background. Mollie comes on stage and changes the radio station to the news.

RADIO BROADCASTER: *“... According to Scotland Yard, the murder took place in Paddington at 24, Culver Street. The victim was called Maureen Lyon. The police are very interested in questioning a suspicious person who was seen at the place of the murder wearing a dark coat, a white scarf and a red hat.”*

Mollie: Oh my Lord!! A murder!!

(Mollie is painting the main hotel wall chart, a bit stressed out)

Mollie: Actually, it looks very good *(Looking at the sign from the distance, suddenly she notices something)*

Oh! How silly I am! I forgot to write the “S”. What was I thinking of? Anyway, it doesn’t really matter... Monkwell... It doesn’t sound that bad. *(She looks at her watch)* It’s so late!

Mollie rushes off stage right and returns with a handful of letters and starts to look at them one by one.

Mollie: Mrs. Boyle will stay in the Pink room, Metcalf in the green one, Ms. Casewell in the blue bedroom, and Mr. Wren in the red one. I wonder what they look like. Should I trust them? Well, in any case they are bringing luggage, so if they don’t pay the bill I will keep their belongings.

Radio Broadcaster: I repeat: according to Scotland Yard, the victim was called Maureen Lyon; the police are very interested in questioning a suspicious person who was seen wearing a dark coat, a white scarf and a red hat.

We see a young man wearing those clothes through the window.

And now, the weather: it is likely to keep snowing for some days and the temperatures...

The Guests Arrive

🔊 TRACK 2

The bell rings. Mollie switches off the radio.

Christopher: Hello! You must be Ms. Ralston?

Mollie: *(Off stage)* ¿How do you do?

Christopher: Nice to meet you! I’m Mr. Wren.

Mollie: Nice to meet you, Mr. Wren.

Christopher: Oh! You don’t look like I had imagined you. I thought I would be meeting a fat and ugly widow with a military attitude. And look at this lounge, isn’t it lovely?

Mollie: (*Interrupting*) Well, my grandmother had it specially designed back in the 19th century...

Christopher: And the fireplace? Is it made with real oak? (*Excited about the chimney's beauty*)

Mollie: (*Trying to take control of the conversation*) Yes, it was brought down especially from Scotland...

Christopher: I can't believe it; I haven't seen one like this for a long time!

Mollie: Yes, it's very beautiful and it works perfectly! (*Ironically*) Do come closer to the fireplace to get warm, Mr. Wren.

(Christopher gets closer to the fireplace. Mollie takes his coat and starts cleaning up the table while Christopher stares at her)

Christopher: It must be tough to run a hotel by yourself. Aren't you married?

Mollie: No, for the moment I haven't found anyone interesting enough to fall in love with.

Christopher: Well, I think that everybody is interesting because you never get to know anybody well enough.

Mollie: You are such a sensitive person; you must be a poet?

Christopher: Not really!

Mollie: Maybe a painter?

Christopher: But you were close. I am studying architecture...

Mollie: Goodness me, that is so interesting Mr. Wren... (*Mollie interrupts him. At that moment the bell rings with insistence and Mollie has to leave to go to open the door*) Excuse me for a moment, Mr. Wren.

Mr. Wren waits for her next to the staircase. The door opens and Mrs. Boyle appears looking at the house with dissatisfaction.

Mollie: (*Very enthusiastic*) Good evening. My name is Mollie Ralston, you must be Mrs. Boyle? (*Offering her hand*)

Mrs. Boyle looks at her hand with disdain but doesn't shake hands.

Mrs. Boyle: Nobody came to pick me up at the train station.

Mollie: I'm sorry, I'm here by myself, today is the hotel's opening day.

Mrs. Boyle: Don't you have permanent service?

Mollie: No, just a cleaning lady who comes in twice a week.

Christopher: Don't you think it is a lovely hotel Mrs. Boyle?

Mrs. Boyle: ,I thought I was coming to a real hotel. Who are you, young man?

Christopher: Christopher Wren *(He offers his hand)*

She rejects it and gives him her suitcase instead.

Mrs. Boyle: Which one is my room, Ms. Ralston?

Mollie: The pink one Mrs. Boyle. Please let me take you to your room.... *(In that moment the bell rings again)*

Mrs. Boyle: Pink? I hate the colour pink...

Christopher: Don't worry Mollie; I will take care of it. Come with me Mrs. Boyle, I will show you your beautiful pink room....

Christopher and Mrs. Boyle leave.

Ms. Casewell enters.

Ms. Casewell: Good evening, oh, nice lounge...

Mollie: You must be...?

Ms. Casewell: I'm Miss. Casewell. I have to get rid of this cold. The news said that it won't stop snowing for the next few days, we might get isolated here.

Mollie: Just in case things turn bad, I have enough food in the larder.

Ms. Casewell: Yes, of course... that's better than eating each other. *(With a malicious laugh)*

Mollie: Apart from the bad weather, any other important news from London?

Ms. Casewell: The usual politics... Oh! And that horrible murder!

Mollie: I think I heard something about it on the radio... let me take your coat...

Ms. Casewell: Don't worry; I can manage it by myself. *(She takes her coat off and offers her the newspaper)* It doesn't say much...

Mollie: *(Reading the newspaper while Miss. Casewell hangs up her coat)* "The police are very interested in interrogating the suspect. Not too tall, dark coat, white scarf and a red hat."

Ms. Casewell: It could be anyone, but it seems to be a sexual maniac.

Mollie: That's frightening! I imagine you would like to go to your room. I will take you there *(She tries to carry her suitcase, but it is too heavy)*

Ms. Casewell: Don't worry; I think I am stronger than you...

Mollie exits followed by Ms. Casewell, right at that moment the bell rings again.

Commandant Metcalf enters, and takes off his coat and his hat.

Com. Metcalf: *(Shaking Mollie's hand)* Nice to meet you. It's snowing non stop! For a moment I thought I would never reach the hotel. If it keeps snowing like this, tomorrow there will be more than one meter of snow outside! *(He approaches the chimney)*

Mollie: The house is in perfect conditions, and I have enough food in the larder.

Right at that moment Mrs. Boyle comes down the stairs, very angry.

Mrs. Boyle: Ms. Ralston! The radiators are cold, there's no hot water, the room is very dirty, and someone left this there.

Mollie: Ah! There it was! That's why I couldn't find it!

Com. Metcalf: Excuse me, it smells like there's something burning...

Mollie: The pudding!!!

She stops for a moment, completely confused, and then runs to the kitchen.

Mrs. Boyle: And now, where are you going?

Mollie: To the kitchen, I'd better check the pudding...

Mollie exits to the kitchen.

Mrs. Boyle: *(Smiling at Metcalf)* Hello!

Com. Metcalf: *(Saluting)* Metcalf, at your service!

Mrs. Boyle: I am glad to get to know someone respectable in this mediocre hotel. mad

An Unexpected Guest

🔊) TRACK 3

The bell rings.

Mollie: *(Off stage)* I'm coming!

Paravicini: Buona sera... eh... Where am I?

Mollie: At the Monkswell Hotel.

Paravicini: *(Kissing Mollie's hand)* Mamma Mía! How lucky I am! A hotel! And with a young and beautiful hostess!

Mrs. Boyle: A beginner!

Paravicini: I guess you don't have a free room for an old man who got lost in the snow.... I had the misfortune to crash my Rolls-Royce, I thought I would freeze to death, but suddenly I saw some light! *Madonna mia!* A hotel! I thought, I'm safe!

Mollie: I'm sorry; I fear the only free room we have left is very small. I've just opened today and I'm not prepared for any unexpected guests.

Mrs. Boyle: That's quite obvious...

Paravicini: Oh, never mind, I've only brought this small suitcase with me; as long as I have a warm bed to sleep in tonight, it's enough.

Mollie: Ok, I will get your room ready; I'm not expecting anyone else to arrive; including you, we are already six in the hotel.

Paravicini: Yes, I am the surprise visit! *(With an evil laugh)*

A Call from the Police

🔊) TRACK 4

The telephone rings and Mollie picks it up.

Mollie: Yes? Hello... yes, this is the Monkswell Hotel...what? You are speaking to Ms. Ralston. Who? London police, Scotland Yard..? Oh yes, of course, Commissioner Hogben, but I fear it will not be possible to get here. The roads are blocked, there's no way of getting here... yes, ok... Why? Hello! ... Hello!

The three guests react with surprise. Paravicini drops his suitcase on the floor.

Mrs. Boyle: *(Surprised)* The police?

Paravicini: The police?

Com. Metcalf: *(Raising his voice, incredulous)* The police?

Paravicini: Why did the police call, Ms. Ralston?

Mollie: They called saying that they will send an officer *(She looks out of the window)*, but I don't think he will be able to get here.

Paravicini: *(Changing the conversation)* Ms. Ralston, would you be so kind as to show me my room?

Mollie: Of course, please follow me.

They both leave.

Mrs. Boyle: This is just perfect! Now an unexpected visit from the police... who knows what illegal business this woman is up to.

Com. Metcalf: Oh come on, I guess it will just be a routine visit.

Mrs. Boyle: I really don't like these inconveniences; luckily you are here to protect us, Metcalf... You are so handsome...

Mollie comes downstairs.

Mollie: Mrs. Boyle, I've just checked the radiator in your room and it works perfectly.

Com. Metcalf: *(Trying to avoid Mrs. Boyle)* Excuse me Ms. Ralston, can I make a phone call?

- Mollie:** Yes, of course. *(Pointing at the telephone)*
- Com. Metcalf:** It's a private conversation. Do you have other telephone?
- Mollie:** Yes, there's one next to the service stairs.
- Com. Metcalf:** Thank you very much.

The Guests Get to Know Each Other

🔊 TRACK 5

Com. Metcalf leaves, and there is an uncomfortable silence between Boyle and Mollie.

- Mollie:** I'm just thinking it smells like something's burning in the kitchen, I'd better go and take another look at the oven.

Mollie leaves. Mrs. Boyle takes a seat by the chimney to write her letters. Just in that moment Ms. Casewell comes down the stairs, she turns on the radio, but doesn't notice that Mrs. Boyle is there as well.

- Mrs. Boyle:** Ehem, ehem...
- Ms. Casewell:** *(Surprised)* Oh! Sorry, I didn't know you were here.
- Mrs. Boyle:** And you are...?
- Ms. Casewell:** Casewell, Leslie Casewell.

What cheek, aoverseas

Miss. Casewell turns on the radio. Christopher comes in.

- Mrs. Boyle:** Would you mind turning down the volume? There's no way of concentrating here.
- Ms. Casewell:** *(Ironically)* Oh dear, I'm so sorry!
- Mrs. Boyle:** Is there no other moment to listen to it?
- Ms. Casewell:** No, they are playing my favourite song.
- Christopher:** In the library there is a sepulchral silence.

Out of complicity, Christopher turns up the radio's volume and invites Ms. Casewell to dance. Mrs. Boyle cannot take it anymore and ends up going to the library to read.

- Christopher:** That's great! We got rid of her. That was so funny!
- Ms. Casewell:** I can't stand that fat cow._
- Christopher:** Let's try to find a way of kicking her out of the hotel.
- Ms. Casewell:** With this snow? I don't think she would leave even if someone wanted to kill her._
- Christopher:** *(Looking out of the windows)* The snow is so wonderful; it makes you forget all your pains.
- Ms. Casewell:** Not me.
- Christopher:** How tragic! What is it you can't forget?
- Ms. Casewell:** Icy water in the sink, cold, blood, screams, hunger, fear...

A Police Sergeant Calls

 TRACK 6

- Christopher:** *(Looking out of the windows enthusiastically)* Look, look, look, look! A man is approaching the hotel skiing. How exciting! Mollieeee!!!

Right at that moment, the man skiing bumps against the windows. The bell rings and Mollie comes to open the door.

Trotter enters.

- Trotter:** How do you do? Are you Miss. Ralston?
- Mollie:** Yes, did you hurt yourself?
- Trotter:** I'm Sergeant Trotter, from the London Police, Scotland Yard. *(Christopher and Ms. Casewell react with surprise)*
- Ms. Casewell:** Any troubles with the law? I hope you are not selling alcohol without a license!
- Trotter:** No, it has nothing to do with that. Where can I put the skis?
- Mollie:** I will take them down to the cellar.
- Christopher:** Don't worry Mollie; I will take care of that. *(Christopher takes the skis and leaves)*
- Mollie:** Well, then. What is it?

Trotter: The issue that brings me here directly affects your own security. Excuse me Ms....

Ms. Casewell: Casewell.

Trotter: Would you mind leaving us alone?

Ms. Casewell: No, not at all.

Miss. Casewell leaves.

The Story of Longridge Farm

🔊 TRACK 7

Trotter: This case is involving the murder of Mrs. Lyon, Maureen Lyon. (*Miss Casewell comes back, standing still behind the door, and listening in on the conversation*) She lived in London at 24, Culver Street. You may have heard about it or read something in the newspapers. The murder took place yesterday.

Mollie: Yes, I have read something.

Trotter: First of all, did you know Maureen Lyon?

Mollie: No, it is the first time I've heard the name.

Trotter: Maybe you knew her with another name. Her true name was Maureen Stanning, she was the owner of the Longridge farm, which is not so far from here.

Mollie: The Longridge farm! Isn't it the place where those children...?

Ms. Casewell enters.

Miss. Casewell: Those three children...

Trotter: That's right. The Corrigan's, two boys and a girl. They were adopted by a cruel couple who abused them.

Mollie: What?

Trotter: Those kids were abused day and night. They didn't get food, they were cold, and they couldn't go outside to play with other children. They were forced to work on the farm.

Miss. Casewell: Those people were monsters

- Trotter:** Correct, in fact the youngest boy couldn't bear the situation and died.
- Mollie:** Poor little boy, it was a horrible case.
- Trotter:** The couple was sentenced to prison. He died and she was released ten years later. Yesterday, she was found strangled.
- Ms. Casewell:** Do you know who did it?
- Trotter:** Not yet, we are still investigating. The thing is that we found a notebook with two addresses written: one was 24 Culver Street and the other one... Was the Monkswell Hotel.
- Mollie:** What? My hotel?
- Trotter:** Yes, and it would seem it isn't a coincidence.
- Ms. Casewell:** Why not? What do you base your suspicions on?
- Trotter:** There was something else; there was a drawing of three little mice and the lyrics of the song three blind mice on the woman's body. Underneath it said: "This is the first one" **(Silence)** Do you remember the song?
- Mollie:** **(Singing)** Three blind mice, three blind mice...
- Ms. Casewell:** Is it connected to those three children? Which one died?
- Trotter:** The youngest.
- Mollie:** And what happened to the other two?
- Trotter:** The girl was adopted and we can't find her. The oldest one should now be around 22 years old. He left the army and nothing is known about him since then. According to the psychologists he was schizophrenic. I mean mentally ill...
- Mollie:** Do you think he is the one who killed Mrs. Maureen Lyon?
- Trotter:** I think so.
- Mollie:** And do you think he is going to come here to commit another murder?
- Trotter:** That's what I'm trying to find out.

Trotter Starts Investigating

🔊) TRACK 8

Com. Metcalf enters.

Com. Metcalf: Ms. Ralston, the telephone is not working.

Mollie: Half an hour ago it worked perfectly.

Com. Metcalf: I guess it is because of the snow.

Ms. Casewell: That's just perfect! So now we are totally isolated.

Trotter: Ms. Ralston, Can I take a look at the house?

Mollie: Yes, of course.

Com. Metcalf: I'll go with you.

Com. Metcalf and Trotter leave. We hear someone playing the "Three Blind Mice" song on the piano.

Mollie: What a horrible song!

Ms. Casewell: Who is playing it?

Mollie: Mr. Paravicini, he asked me earlier if I had a piano at the hotel.

Ms. Casewell: Did he tell you where he came from last night?

Mollie: Who, the piano?

Ms. Casewell: No darling, Mr. Paravicini. I think he is a parasite. He uses make up, powders his face and I think he wears a wig. I'm sure he is an old pervert.

Mollie: In any case, whoever is playing that song, it sounds horrible.

Ms. Casewell: Don't you like it? Perhaps it reminds you of a terrible childhood...

Mollie: I had a happy childhood... didn't you?

Ms. Casewell: No, I didn't. But we have to carry on and try to forget the past.

Mollie: Sometimes it's hard to forget the past.

Ms. Casewell: I will not let anything from my past affect my present.

Trotter and Metcalf enter.

Trotter: Well, upstairs everything is in order. Nothing suspicious except for the telephone being cut off, because you received the police commissioner's phone call, didn't you?

Mollie: Yes, of course, I guess the line got cut by the snow storm.

Trotter: *(Takes Mollie to the front stage to have a private conversation with her)* Or maybe someone cut the line on purpose.

Mollie: Cut the line? Why would anyone do that?

Trotter: Ms. Ralston, can you tell me what you know about your guests?

Mollie: Not a lot, *(Nervous)* anyway even if that maniac wants to come here to kill us, he or she will never reach the hotel until the snow melts.

Trotter: *(Intriguing)* Unless he or she is already here...

Mollie: Here? Don't be silly...

Trotter: I'm not being silly; just think about it, all the guests arrived this evening, some hours after the murder. They all had enough time...

Mollie: Except Paravicini, all of them had made a reservation.

Trotter: Yes, so what? These murders were already planned a long time ago. I'm going out to check the telephone wire.

Trotter leaves.

A Murderer Strike Twice

 TRACK 9

Mollie: *(Obviously affected)* This is ridiculous. *(To Ms. Casewell and Mr. Metcalf)* Dinner will be ready at eight o'clock.

Com. Metcalf: Are you ok Ms. Ralston? Do you need help with the dinner? I was an excellent cook in the army.

Mollie: No thank you, I will take care of it. But I will probably need some more firewood. If you need me I will be in kitchen.

Mollie is about to leave.

Ms. Casewell: *(To Mollie before she leaves)* Would you mind if I take a look at your cellar? We will need some wine to cheer up a night like this_

Mollie: Yes, as you please.

Mollie goes to the kitchen.

Com. Metcalf: *(To Miss. Casewell)* I think Ms. Ralston is a bit tense... the truth is that the case at that farm was really frightening.

Ms. Casewell: I was just a little girl when all that happened.

Com. Metcalf: Nevertheless, I still recall it with a vivid memory. I followed the case in the newspapers when I was working in Edinburgh. *(Lost in his thoughts)* Oh! It's getting dark; I'd better go out to get some firewood.

Mrs. Boyle: I am freezing to death in the library, the radiators are still cold. *(She notices Miss. Casewell)* I see you are still here...

Ms. Casewell: Don't worry, I was about to leave.

Ms. Casewell leaves.

Mrs. Boyle turns the radio on, picks up the newspaper and sits down to read it.

Radio Broadcaster: *"To understand the mechanics of fear, you must observe its effect on the human mind. Imagine yourself in a room, it is getting dark and a door opens slowly behind you, revealing a mysterious shadow."*

Mrs. Boyle can't take it anymore and changes the station. The dining room door opens slowly and you hear someone whistling the tune of the "Three Blind Mice". Mrs. Boyle turns around, frightened.

Mrs. Boyle: *(Relieved)* Oh! It's you; I can't find any good radio stations... *(She goes over to the radio and tries to tune in to the music station; a hand from behind the door switches the lights off)*

Mrs. Boyle: But, what are you doing? Why did you switch the lights off?

There are some panic screams and a struggle with the radio playing very loud. Then you hear a body falling on the floor. Mollie comes in from the hall and suddenly stops, shocked.

Mollie: *(In the dark)* Who turned the lights off, and why is that radio so loud?

She turns on the lights and approaches the radio to turn it off, immediately she sees the dead woman on the floor, next to a chandelier and screams as the curtain falls.

ACT II

Murder in the Library: Trotter Investigates

 TRACK 10

The curtain rises. Mrs. Boyle is lying on her back, with only her legs showing. Mollie is sitting on the couch next to Paravicini and Christopher.

Paravicini: Ms. Ralston, somebody's murdered Mrs. Boyle! How did it happen? Are you ok?

Mollie: *(In shock)* The radio was too loud.

Paravicini: Yes, that's true. The radio was so loud I thought that my eardrums were going to explode, and suddenly I heard Ms. Ralston scream.

Mollie: *(In shock)* The radio was too loud.

Christopher: But what did you see?

Mollie: *(In shock)* The radio was too loud.

Trotter enters.

Trotter: Someone in this house has murdered Mrs. Boyle. I've just taken Miss Casewell's and Metcalf's statements. I have recommended them not to leave their rooms. Now I'd like to continue with you. *(Putting the chandelier carefully in a plastic bag)* *(Intimidating)* Miss. Ralston, try to remember...when it happened, where were you, on this floor, or on the top floor? Was the noise close by, or far away? Where did it come from?

Christopher: Sergeant Trotter! Stop it, please! Can't you see that she's not alright?

Trotter: You're right, I'll leave her alone.

Christopher's Account

🔊 TRACK 11

TROTTERTrotter: Let's continue with you, Mr. Wren. Where were you when you heard Miss. Ralston scream?

Christopher: I was in my room.

Trotter: Were you in your room the whole time?

Christopher: No, I went downstairs to leave your skis in the cellar and then I went back to my room to wash my hands.

Trotter: What did you say?

Christopher: I went to wash my hands!

Trotter: Then why did nobody see you going upstairs?

Christopher: Because I used the service stairs, closer to my room.

Trotter: I understand.

Paravicini's Version of Events

🔊 TRACK 12

TROTTERTrotter: Mr. Paravicini, it's your turn.

Paravicini: You already know. I was playing the piano.

Trotter: Did anyone else hear you playing?

Paravicini: I don't think so, I was playing very, very softly... with this finger.

Christopher: Ah, so you were playing "three blind mice"!

Paravicini: Yes, it's a very well-known song. In fact, there was somebody whistling it.

Trotter: Whistling it? Where?

Paravicini: I am not sure, maybe in the hall, or maybe on the stairs.

Trotter: *(To Christopher)* Mr. Wren, did you hear any whistling? Or is Mr. Paravicini lying?

Christopher nods.

Paravicini: Don't be ridiculous! Lying? (*Ironically*) Why would I lie about something like this?

Trotter: You tell me! There is something strange about your story.

Paravicini: Oh, Really?

Trotter: For example, where were you going when you had the car accident?

Paravicini: I was going to a friend's house near here.

Trotter: Can you tell me your friend's name and address?

Paravicini: No, I can't. I have to protect her identity.

Suddenly Paravicini starts whistling "Three Blind Mice".

Mollie: Stop! That song is awful!

Miss. Mollie is Questioned

🔊) TRACK 13

Trotter: Ms. Ralston, can we continue with the questioning?

Mollie nods affirmatively.

Trotter: Folks, that's all for the moment. Go back to your rooms and close the doors while I question Miss. Ralston.

Christopher and Paravicini leave.

Trotter: Mr. Paravicini was playing the piano and Mr. Wren was in his room. So, where were you?

Mollie: I was in the kitchen and then went to the living room. The lights were off and the radio was very loud. When I turned the lights on, I saw Mrs. Boyle lying on the floor. I started screaming and then Christopher and Paravicini arrived.

Trotter: That's all?

Mollie: I think so.... Sergeant Trotter, this is driving me mad... (*Thinking*) Sergeant Trotter, What conclusions have you made so far?

- Trotter:** Not many; First: I know that Maureen Lyon, the woman who abused these children, is dead. And second and most important one: The judge that gave them in custody was murdered here. *(Pointing to the corpse)*
- Mollie:** So you believe that the murderer is one of the older children from the farm?
- Trotter:** Yes, and everything points in the same direction. By now, the young man should be in his twenties. He has dark hair and has mental problems.
- Mollie:** Yes, I know that everything points to Christopher, but I don't think he did it. It could be someone from the children's family.
- Trotter:** Their real mother was an alcoholic. Their real father was a sergeant in the army working in a foreign country.
- Mollie:** A sergeant in the army? And what happened to him?
- Trotter:** He's probably retired now, if he's still alive.
- Mollie:** Yes, but maybe he came back to this country and went crazy when he found out that his wife was dead and that his children were abused.
- Trotter:** Then the murderer could be an older person...
- Mollie:** Just a moment, when I said that the police had called, Metcalf seemed to get very nervous about it.

With a special effect, suddenly we see CMetcalf through one of the walls.

- Com. Metcalf:** No, I didn't hear Miss. Ralston scream. I was outside the house collecting some firewood. When I came back, all the lights were off in the living room. *(Silence)* I have nothing else to say.

He disappears, the wall turns opaque again.

- Trotter:** *(Thinking)* Mmm... Metcalf... I'm not sure, but I think there's still another possibility. Do you remember there was a girl?
- Mollie:** That's true, the sister.
- Trotter:** We know that Mrs. Lyon's murderer was hiding under a red hat and a dark coat. So, it was impossible to see if it was a man or a woman.

Mollie: Are you talking about Ms. Casewell?

With a special effect, suddenly we see Ms. Casewell through one of the walls.

Ms. Casewell: I heard Miss. Ralston scream when I was in the cellar, looking for a bottle of wine for dinner. **(Silence)** Then I ran upstairs. **(Pause)** The bottle? Hmm... in all the excitement I'm not sure where I left it. I really don't know what I did with it. **(Pause)** No, I don't have anything else to say.

She disappears and the wall turns opaque again.

Trotter: She's a little too old to be the murderer, but there are always exceptions, even you.

Mollie: **(Doubting)** Me?

Trotter: You are the right age.

Mollie: That's ridiculous.

Trotter: Do you think so? Where were you yesterday, Ms. Ralston?

Mollie: **(Surprised)** Yesterday? I was here all day getting things ready for the guests.

Trotter: Can you prove it?

Mollie: **(Doubting)** Yes... well, no... Yes, of course... Actually, I was here alone.

Trotter: Alone? So no one can confirm your story. Can you prove that you were not in London yesterday visiting Maureen Lyon?

Mollie: No, I can't.

Trotter: So, you don't have any defence?

Mollie: What do you mean?

Trotter: **(Raising his voice)** You tell me! Did you kill Maureen Lyon?

Mollie: Of course not! I never...

Ellipsis. Black out.

Miss. Casewell is Investigated

🔊) TRACK 14

When the lights turn on again we see Ms. Casewell sitting on the couch and Christopher playing with the radio.

Trotter enters grumbling.

Trotter: (*Sees Christopher*) Oh! Mr. Wren, I was looking for you. Where did you put my skis?

Christopher: (*Scared*) What? The skis? I... I..... I left them in the cellar, are they not there?

Trotter: What do you think? Why do you think I'm asking?

Christopher: Alright, sergeant, calm down... I will go and look for them.

Christopher leaves.

Ms. Casewell: (*Ironically*) Good! So you'll stay with us a little longer... I'm afraid there are no rooms left...

Trotter: Very funny. Let me get a few things clear. What's your full name?

MsISS. CaswellASWELL: (*Tturning back*) Leslie Margaret kath... (*Sshe notices something*)

Trotter: Leslie Margaret...? You look as if you'd seen a ghost.

Ms. Casewell: Yes, perhaps a ghost from the past.

Trotter: Did that ghost bring you here?

Ms. Casewell: I'm sorry, but that's very private... I have to go.

Trotter: You didn't answer my question. What is your full name?

Ms. Casewell: I already told you, Leslie Margaret Katherine Casewell.

Christopher enters with a ski pole while Miss. Casewell passes by.

Christopher: Sergeant Trotter, I've found your ski pole! (*He sees Miss Casewell*) What's wrong with her? Sergeant Trotter?

Trotter's Plan

 TRACK 15

Trotter goes down to the audience with a lantern, while it gets dark on stage and Christopher leaves.

Trotter: *(Speaking to the audience)* Can you pay attention, please? I've just noticed something that I should have seen before. How blind I was! I think I've found the solution. Remember when Mrs. Boyle was found dead and I took all the guest's statements? One by one, each of them told me what they were doing at the time of murder.

Mollie was in the kitchen. Mr. Paravicini was playing the piano. Mr. Wren was going to his room. Miss Casewell was in the cellar choosing a bottle of wine and Metcalf was outside collecting firewood.

(Thinking) I can't verify these statements. Five of them are true and one of them is false. I have an idea to find out who lied. Each of the guests will repeat what they were doing at the time of murder. But this time, the roles will change:

Mr. Wren will go to the kitchen; Miss. Casewell will go to Christopher's room. Mr. Paravicini will go outside to collect some firewood, Metcalf will go to the cellar and Mollie will play the piano. And most important, I will play Mrs. Boyle's role myself. That way I can stay alone with the murderer. *(He turns back to the stage)* Ok, do you all understand?

Everyone: Yes!

Trotter: Are you all ready?

Everyone: Yes!

He goes back to the stage.

Trotter: Mollie, when I count to three, start playing the piano. One... two... three.

Mollie starts playing "three blind mice". Trotter turns the lights on.

Mollie's Identity

 TRACK 16

Trotter: Mollie! Mollie!

Mollie enters.

Mollie: Yes, what's happened? Oh have you discovered the murderer?

- Trotter:** Yes.
- Mollie:** And who is it?
- Trotter:** Don't you know that, Miss. Ralston.
- Mollie:** Me?
- Trotter:** Yes, you. Why didn't you tell me everything from the beginning? That wasn't very intelligent.
- Mollie:** I don't understand.
- Trotter:** The police are not stupid, Miss. Ralston. It's quite obvious that you know everything about the case of Longridge farm. You even knew that Mrs. Boyle was the judge on the case.
- Mollie:** **(Affected)** Why are you doing this to me? I just wanted to forget.
- Trotter:** To forget your real name? Rose?
- Mollie:** How do you know my real name?
- Trotter:** I also know that you were the children's teacher.
- Mollie:** But... Who are you? How do you know all that information?
- Trotter:** You knew those children were suffering and you did nothing to stop it.
- Mollie:** **(Nervous)** I couldn't do anything. I got sick and by the time I went back to school that poor boy was already dead **(She closes her eyes)** dead, dead.... Ohhhh, how could I let it happen?!
- Trotter:** It's unacceptable. That needs to be punished. **(Takes out a gun)**
- Mollie:** British police don't carry guns.... Who are you?
- Trotter:** You're correct. The police don't carry guns, but then again, I am not a police officer. I lied to you. I'm not Sergeant Trotter and I cut the telephone line. Do you know who I really am? I'm George, one of the three children.
- Mollie:** Oh my god! George! **(Looks around desperately while Trotter points at her with his gun)**
- Trotter:** Don't scream, or I will shoot. You know what? Maureen Lyon killed my brother. Going to jail was not enough for her crime. I promised myself to kill everyone involved one day, and you are the only one left.

Mollie: You can't shoot me, everyone will hear the shot and you won't escape.

Trotter: I don't care if I escape or not, but you are right; I should strangle you.

Trotter starts to strangle Mollie while humming the "Three blind mice" song. At that moment Miss. Casewell and Metcalf arrive.

Com. Metcalf: Stop! Police! *(There is a struggle between the two)* Mr. George Corrigan you are under arrest. *(He puts the handcuffs on him)* You are accused of the murders of Mrs. Maureen Lyon and Judge Boyle, the attempted murder of Miss Mollie Ralston, illegal possession of weapons and pretending to be a police officer.

Ms. Casewell: George, George! Don't you recognise me? I'm Kathy, your sister. We used to play and swim together.

Trotter: *(Broken)* Kathy? Is it really you? But what are you doing here?

Ms. Casewell: I came to England looking for you; I didn't recognise you until I saw you playing with your hair like you used to do.

Trotter: But where have you been all this time, Kathy?

Ms. Casewell: It doesn't matter now because we are together again. They're going to take care of you. And make sure you never hurt anyone again.

Miss. Casewell and Trotter stand beside the door.

Com. Metcalf: Are you ok, Miss. Ralston?

Mollie: He tried to kill me.

Com. Metcalf: Calm down, everything is under control. Now his sister is with him. The poor guy's gone crazy. I'd suspected he was the murderer since the police called.

Mollie: Oh yes? You didn't believe that he was a police officer?

Com. Metcalf: I knew he wasn't, Miss. Ralston, because I am the real police officer.

Mollie: You?

Com. Metcalf: Yes, I pretended to be the real Metcalf but when Trotter arrived, I got very confused. I tried to call London's police station to identify Trotter but the telephone didn't work.

Mollie: But... is Miss. Casewell his sister?

- Com. Metcalf:** Yes, it seems that she recognised her brother because of his habitual gesture from his childhood. When she realised that he was not a police officer, she decided to tell me about it and we acted in time. *(He gets closer to the window)* Look at that! It has stopped snowing.
- Mollie:** Snow, damn snow! I'm already sick and tired of being isolated here.
- Com. Metcalf:** Yes, I can imagine that running a hotel in the middle of nowhere could be too much for a woman to do alone.
- Mollie:** I may move to London.
- Com. Metcalf:** *(Meanwhile Trotter is taken away under arrest)* London? Perhaps you need to think about it, Miss, London is full of crazy people. *(Starts humming "Three blind mice")*.

THE END

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