

## **Characters**

Hazard (M)	A young, patient and professional detective sergeant
Chess (F)	A young, smart yet cynical detective constable
Alana (F)	A clever and insightful detective inspector
Hall (M/F)	A mysterious guest masquerading as a reporter
Melly (F)	The hotel's professional, patient, and smart manager
Ansem* (M)	The hotel's helpful and enthusiastic assistant manager
Sonia (F)	A conscientious and helpful receptionist
Gland (M)	A brusque mannered police coroner
Mike (M)	Doctor Gland's cheerful, good-natured assistant
Me (F)	An amiable, jolly, and helpful nurse
Bob (M)	A keen but eccentric porter (Harry – the wheelk – Wilkins in disguise)
Field (F)	An emotional and nervous member of the hotel staff
Izzy (F)	A caring and responsible member of the hotel staff
Stella/Ruth (F)	A furtive and clever thief posing as a member of the hotel staff
Medic 1 (M)	A bit tetchy and self-important (Can be doubled with police 1)
Medic 2 (M)	Quite impulsive and over eager (Can be doubled with police 2)
Legge (F)	A judge who is normally perky and sociable but upset in scene 2
Malek (M)	A professional and good-natured judge
Castro (M)	A calm and sympathetic judge
Rowan (M)	A straightforward and honest but easily unsettled contestant
Prisha (F)	A clever, manipulative contestant
Sue (F)	A fiercely competitive contestant
Lorenzo (M)	A tough but caring and conscientious security chap
Charlie (M/F)	An upbeat bomb squad officer (Can be doubled with police 3)
Police 1 (M)	A keen young officer
Police 2 (M)	An experienced officer
Police 3 (M/F)	An officer with a fear of missing out

All hotel staff wear name badges

27 characters without doubling / 24 characters with doubling

Bob's body is a doubling opportunity

\*Ansem should wear a smart jacket throughout the play

## Scene 1 – The lobby of the Radis Doré hotel

(Lights up. Tabs open. We are in the lobby of a large hotel, the Radis Doré. The manager, Miss Melly is discussing the guest list with the Assistant manager, Mr Ransom. There is a trophy and written on a board or banner is *Good mixers are welcome to The World Smoothie Making Championship*. There is a reception desk at up stage right. On the reception desk are two stand-up name plates. One has the words *Miss Y Melly, Manager* written on it. The other says *Reception*. Melly is at centre stage, talking to Mr Ansem. Sonia is on duty at the reception desk chatting to Bob, the porter. There are entrances at centre stage right, upstage centre, and downstage left.. Stella, wearing an apron, is dusting a potted plant that's on the reception desk)

**Melly:** (Indicating downstage left) How are things going in the palace room, Paul?

**Ansem:** (With enthusiasm) It's all very exciting. They're in the final stages of judging. It's the single fruit category now. The competitors can serve up anything they wish - absolutely any smoothie combination - as long as they use only *one* fruit as a base. Just *one* fruit. Can you imagine that?

**Melly:** (With good-natured irony) Barely.

**Ansem:** And, just to make it fairer, the judges choose the fruit. This year they're *bananas*.

**Melly:** Well, I hope that doesn't affect their judgement.

**Ansem:** What?

**Melly:** Oh, nothing. You seem to be very up to date with this whole smoothie thing.

**Ansem:** It's a bit of a passion of mine actually. They used to call me *Mister Smoothie* when I was at university. I could whip up a fruit or vegetable masterpiece at a moment's notice. Of course, taking the catering course at John Moore's meant that I had the very latest mixer technology at my fingertips.

**Melly:** Maybe Chef would let you create a few smoothies for the guests.

**Ansem:** Really? Do you think she'd agree to that?

**Melly:** I don't see why not, *Mister Smoothie*. We can't let that talent go to waste, can we?

**Ansem:** That'd be great. Thanks Yvette.

**Melly:** You know, Paul, hosting an event like this is really going to put this hotel on the map.

**Ansem:** It definitely will.

(A slight pause)

**Melly:** Where did you put the priceless glass exhibition?

**Ansem:** They're in the majestic room (**Indicates centre stage right**).

**Melly:** Okay. What about the two football fan clubs' conventions this afternoon?

**Ansem:** Oh, yes; the Arsenal and Tottenham fan clubs. I'm going to put both sets of fans in the majestic room as well. Is that okay?

**Melly:** Of course. I can't see any problem with that. There's plenty of space.  
**(Hall, carrying a suitcase, enters at upstage centre and approaches the reception)**

**Hall:** Oh, hello. I'm Avery Hall. I've got a room booked for two nights.

**Sonia:** **(Handing her a key)** Of course. You're here for the smoothie competition, aren't you?

**Hall:** Yes, I'm reporting on it for *Festive Food* magazine.  
**(Bob approaches Melly)**

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**Bob:** There's a late arrival for the smoothie thing, Miss Melly.

**Melly:** That's strange. It's almost over. Take the guest to the palace room and then take the bags up.

**Bob:** Right ho, Miss Melly.

**Melly:** And, you don't need to call me *miss*, Bob.

**Bob:** But, I didn't call you *Miss Bob*.

**Melly:** No, please, just call me Yvette.

**Bob:** **(Taking out his mobile phone)** I'll do that right away.

**Melly:** What are you doing?

**Bob:** I'm calling you a vet. Is your doggy sick?

**Melly:** No. Bob. I don't need a vet. *I'm* Yvette.

**Bob:** (Putting the mobile away) I did *not* know that. That's a lucky dog - having you as an owner.

**Melly:** (With a sigh) Okay. Bob. Look; don't worry about it. Just go and see to the guest, please.

**Bob:** Right ho, Miss Melly.

**(Bob escorts Hall to the palace room. Hall exits at downstage left and Bob, carrying the suitcase, exits at upstage centre)**

**Ansem:** I didn't know you had a dog, Yvette.

**Melly:** I don't have a dog. Well, I did have one, but he died over a year ago. He was called Bingo.

**(SFX. A scream from offstage cuts Melly off. The door at downstage left opens and Field and Izzy enter. They both wear badges with staff written on them. In an agitated state, they approach Melly and Ansem. SFX. We hear an excited hubbub from offstage)**

**Field:** (In tears) Oh, boss. It's awful. Something terrible has happened. It's just dreadful.

**Melly:** What is it, Heather?

**Field:** Mister Malek, the judge. He's just collapsed. I think he's dead.

**Ansem:** Oh, that's not good.

**Izzy:** (Comforting Field) He took a drink from his banana smoothie and conked out. Come and have a rest, Heather.

**Melly:** Sonia.

**Sonia:** Yes boss?

**Melly:** Phone for an ambulance. Tell them there's been a serious incident here. Oh, and we'd better have the police as well.

**Sonia:** Yes, boss.

**(Sonia picks up the receiver and taps at the numbers as Izzy and Heather exit at upstage centre. In a hurry, Melly and Ansem exit at downstage left. Lorenzo, the glass security chap, enters from centre stage right and approaches Sonia)**

**Sonia:** Hello. We have an emergency at The Radis Doré hotel. We'll need the police and a medical team. Yes. Thank you.

**(Sonia replaces the receiver)**

**Lorenzo:** Wow! That was jolly quick. How did you know about the emergency?

**Sonia:** Yvette told me. She's the manager.

**Lorenzo:** **(Confused)** Well, how did *she* find out. I've only just spotted it in there **(Indicates centre stage right)**.

**Sonia:** Spotted what? What have you spotted?

**Lorenzo:** I've found a suspicious package in the majestic room. I'm pretty sure it's a bomb.

**Sonia:** A bomb! Goodness! You're the security guy from the glass event, aren't you?

**Lorenzo:** Yes. I'm Lorenzo. I was sent by the Museo Del Vetro in Milan.

**Sonia:** You see, I was telephoning about what's just happened in the palace room. We think one of the judges might be dead.

**Lorenzo:** Oh, dear. I'm so sorry. It's all happening here, isn't it?

**Sonia:** It certainly is. What makes you think the package is a bomb?

**Lorenzo:** Well, for a start, it's ticking and when I looked inside, it's got wires attached to a sort of canister thingy.

**Sonia:** Yes; that does sound like a bomb. I think it'd be best if you get them all to evacuate the majestic room. I'll telephone for the bomb squad.

**(While Lorenzo and Sonia are talking, Stella slips unseen by them into the majestic room at centre stage right. Sonia picks up the telephone and taps the keys and Lorenzo exits at centre stage right, shouting his instructions towards offstage as he goes)**

**Lorenzo:** Alright! Listen to me. Everyone needs to leave this room in a calm and orderly manner.

**(SFX. A general hubbub and moving chair legs. A second or two after Lorenzo has exited, Stella enters from centre stage right carrying a small object that's wrapped in the apron that she's removed. Unseen by Sonia, she heads towards the upstage centre exit, takes her mobile phone out and taps a few keys)**

**Sonia:** **(Awaiting a reply)** Hurry up and answer, will you.

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**(Slight pause)**

**Sonia:** Oh, hello. This is the Radis Doré again. We're pretty sure we've got an unexploded bomb in one of our function rooms.

**(Slight pause)**

**Sonia:** Yes, I know. It's never a dull moment here.

**(Lorenzo enters from centre stage right, walking backwards, stands at the door and beckons folk to follow him out of the room. He delivers his lines rapidly and clearly. SFX. General low level hubbub and footfalls that continue for a second or two after lights down)**

**Lorenzo:** This way, please. Follow me to the car park. Thank you.

**Stella:** **(Urgently, confidentially)** Listen; it's Ruth here. The bomb hoax worked. Nobody noticed me in there. You'd better get down here now and take this from me while everyone's running around like headless chickens....

**(When Lorenzo sees Stella, she lowers her voice to a mumble so that we can't hear the rest of her conversation. Stella exits at upstage centre)**

**Lorenzo:** **(Urgently)** Come on, please. Let's hurry this up.

**(Lights down. Tabs close)**

## Scene 2 – The palace room of the Radis Doré hotel

**(Lights up. Tabs open. There are entrances at centre stage right, upstage centre, and downstage left. A table is at centre stage, its long side facing the audience. There are three chairs positioned behind it. In front of each of the judge's seats, on the table, are angle poise/desk lamps and notepads with pencils. There's a row of hard backed chairs positioned at downstage, their backs to the audience, suggesting the front row of the palace room's audience. A small table is at downstage left. It has a blender and three jars on it. Malek Mynah's body is in the stage left chair, his face down on the table. There are three identical glasses of yellow smoothie, one in front of each of the judge's chairs. The three glasses are almost full. Legg and Castro, both clearly shaken, are at downstage left. Melly is behind the table with Bob. Ansem is at upstage right)**

**Bob:** He doesn't look at all well, Miss Melly.

**Melly:** He's dead, Bob.

**Bob:** Oh, yes; that would explain it.

**Melly:** I want you to go and make sure that no one comes in here while we're waiting for the medics and police. They should be here any minute.

**Bob:** Right! Noone's to come in here. Does that include me?

**Melly:** No, Bob. You're allowed in here. I mean everyone except you and the medics.

**(Bob exits at centre stage right as Medics 1 and 2 enter at centre stage right. Carrying medical kits, they approach the table and check the body)**

**Medic 1:** **(Spoken to Melly)** No signs of life, I'm afraid to say.

**Medic 2:** **(Spoken to Medic 1)** I'm meant to say that. I'm the senior medic so that's my job.

**Medic 1:** **(Spoken to Medic 2)** Sorry. I just got carried away.

**Medic 2:** Well, don't. **(Indicating Malek)** He's the only one getting carried away today.

**(Sonia enters from centre stage right and approaches Melly. Ansem joins them)**

**Melly:** What is it Sonia?

**Sonia:** Sorry to but in, boss, but we've got an unexploded bomb in the majestic room. The bomb squad are on their way.

**Melly:** **(Aghast)** Oh, no. We'll have to evacuate the building.

**Sonia:** The emergency services chap said nobody is to leave this room. The majestic room's empty now. Izzy and her crew are getting the guests out of their rooms now. They're gathering in the car park.

**Melly:** Good work, Sonia. Go and wait for the police now.

**Sonia:** Right ho, boss.

**(Sonia exits at centre stage right)**

**Ansem:** Is this a coincidence, Yvette?

**Melly:** It does seem weird, doesn't it? This **(Indicates Malek)** and a bomb at the same time. It's almost as if someone's trying to nobble both events.

**Ansem:** Or discredit the hotel for some reason.

**Melly:** Why would anyone want to do that to us? It doesn't make sense.

**(Chess, carrying a dusting kit, Hazzard, and Alana enter at centre stage right. Alana joins Melly, Chess starts to dust the glassware on the table for prints and Hazzard joins Ansem, Legg, and Castro)**

**Alana:** I'm Inspector Sultana, this is Detective Sergeant Hazzard and Detective Sergeant Board. Nothing's been moved?

**Melly:** No; nothing. Miss Legge and Mister Castro here were sitting at either side of him.

**Legge:** **(Clearly upset)** Malek just took one sip and then he...he collapsed. I can't believe it.

**Castro:** **(Comforting Legge)** Now, now. Don't go upsetting yourself again, Pat.

**(Chess beckons Hazzard over to the table, confidentially. Hazzard joins her there. Their next twelve lines are spoken in loud whispers)**

**Chess:** Hey, Tripp. Who's he?

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**Hazzard:** That's Mister Ansem, Assistant Manager. Why?

**Chess:** Find out if he's married, will you.

**Hazzard:** Oh, not this again, Chess. I'm not your wingman, you know. Anyway, he's not wearing a ring, so that's something, isn't it?

**Chess:** Not every bloke wears a ring; I mean, you don't, do you?

**Hazzard:** I'm not married, Chess.

**Chess:** Well, that's not really surprising, but you can at least find out if he's available.

**Hazzard:** **(With a sigh)** Okay. I'll take a shuftly at his personnel file later.

**Chess:** Thanks, Tripp. I owe you one.

**Hazzard:** **(Wearily)** You owe me way more than one, Chess.

**(Chess blows Hazzard a kiss. Hazzard joins Castro and Legge)**

**Alana:** **(Spoken to Medics 1 and 2)** Do you know time of death yet?

**Medic 1:** Well, I think...

**Medic 2:** **(Interrupting)** No! Don't think. I do the thinking. Time of death, you say. Well, let me see.

**(Medic 2 examines the body briefly)**

**Medic 2:** Hmm. **(Spoken to Legge)** What time did he drink from this glass?

**Legge:** Er, about ten fifteen, I think?

**Medic 2:** **(Spoken to Medic 1)** And what time is it now?

**Medic 1:** **(Looks at wristwatch)** Ten past eleven.

**Medic 2:** Then, I'd say he's been dead no longer than fifty-five minutes – an hour at the most.

**Alana:** Er...thanks, I suppose.

**(Medics 1 and 2 exit at centre stage right)**

**Alana:** That was odd.

**Ansem:** Mister Castro told me that the three judges drank identical banana smoothies from identical glasses.

**Castro:** Yes. The drinks were prepared right over there, on that table.

**Ansem:** Each of the contestants used the same blender but a different jar...

**Castro:** ...So that there's no cross contamination, so to speak.

**Hazzard:** Tell me, Mister Castro; who selected the judges?

**Castro:** Well, the World Smoothie Society chose two of us and the venue selected the third one.

**Hazzard:** Who chose Pat?

**Castro:** Well, that'd have to have been the hotel because Malek and I were chosen by the WSS.

**(Legge starts to cry and Castro comforts her, leading her to a chair so that she can sit)**

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**Legge:** **(Crying)** Oh, poor Malek. I can't believe this is happening.

**(Hazzard crosses to the smoothie making table and, wearing gloves, examines the jars, sniffing them. Alana moves to the table, looks underneath it and removes a strip of sticky tape. She examines it)**

**Alana:** Hmm. That's interesting. Sticking tape.

**(Alana picks up Legge's angle poise/table lamp, replaces it on the table, picks up Castro's, replaces it, and then tries to lift Malek's but it's stuck fast)**

**Alana:** **(Spoken to herself)** Even more intriguing. Why is Malek's the only lamp that's fixed to the table?

**Hazzard:** **(Spoken to Ansem)** Are the finalists here? We'll need to speak to them.

**Ansem:** **(Calling offstage right)** Izzy! Can you bring the contestants in here, please.

**Hazzard:** Who set the room up for the competition?

**Ansem:** That was Bob.

**Hazzard:** Was he ever in here alone?

**Ansem:** Yes.

**Alana:** **(Spoken to herself)** What's this mark on the table, I wonder. A stain? It's directly in front of Malek's glass.

**(Izzy, Rowan, Prisha and Sue enter from centre stage right and Izzy indicates that they sit in the row of chairs. They do so. As they enter, Alana delivers her next line)**

**Alana:** Now, **(Reads Melly's name badge)** Miss Melly, I'll need you to make sure that no one leaves this hotel for the time being, and I'll have to see the personnel files for all your staff.

**Melly:** Oh, yes, of course, Inspector Sultana. Paul; can you get hold of the staff's files for the inspector, please.

**Ansem:** Of course, Yvette. I'll get them now.

**(Ansem exits at centre stage right. Chess finishes dusting and joins Alana who indicates that Castro and Legge should sit in the row of chairs. They do so as Izzy exits at centre stage right)**

**Alana:** Yvette? Your name's Yvette?

**Melly:** Yes.

**Alana:** You know, I thought I recognised you. You were Yvette Rivers when we were at college together.

**Melly:** **(Embarrassed)** Oh, yes. Married and divorced since then. It's Alana, isn't it?

**Alana:** That's right. Inspector Sultana to you though.

**Melly:** It's been a long time.

**Alana:** Not nearly long enough, I'd say.

**Melly:** Surely that's all in the past, Alana.

**Alana:** People don't change that much, Yvette. I haven't forgotten, you know.

**Melly:** **(Unsettled)** Well...er...this isn't really the time to be going over all that again.

**Alana:** You couldn't help yourself, could you? He was mine and you had to have him.

**Melly:** It wasn't like that, Alana.

**Alana:** You couldn't keep your hands off him, could you?

**Melly:** You've got it all wrong.

**Alana:** I bet he didn't stay around long though, once he discovered how cold you really are.

**Melly:** That's not fair, Alana. You remember; Nigel was timid back then. He came out of his shell with me, that's all.

**Alana:** You manipulated him. You had him eating out of your hand.

**Melly:** It's just that you were too possessive over him. He felt trapped. You kept him in a box.

**Alana:** Oh, so it was my fault, was it?

**Melly:** It was nobody's fault. I didn't make him do anything. He just wanted a bit of space, that's all.

**(Ansem enter at centre stage right, carrying a large box containing the staff's files. He hands it to Alana who hands it to Hazzard who, in turn, hands it to Chess. Medics 1 and 2 enter at centre stage right carrying a stretcher or gurney)**

**Melly:** **(Relieved)** Oh, good. The staff's files are here.

**Chess:** Why the heck have I ended up carrying this lot?

**Hazzard:** Who's the detective sergeant here?

**Chess:** I often ask myself that same question.

**(Medics 1 and 2 place Malek on the stretcher or gurney and exit with him at centre stage right)**

**Medic 2:** Let's get this feller over to Doctor Gland.

**Alana:** I wonder, Mister Ansem, would you take my two detectives with you and go through these files. Tripp; can you and Chess check if any of them have a record or appear on our data base.

**Hazzard:** Right you are, boss.

**Alana:** You'd better join them, Yvette. **(Sneeringly)** Make yourself useful.

**(Hazzard, Chess, Melly and Ansem move to the table at downstage left. Chess puts the box on the table and she and Hazzard begin to look through the files. Alana takes out her notepad and pencil. Sue, Prisha and Rowan stand and join her)**

**Alana:** So, you are the three contestants whose smoothies are here **(indicates the judges' table)**

**Rowan:** Yes, Inspector. I'm Rowan Botha, this is Prisha Kumar and Sue...

**Sue:** ...Playdel. **(Excitedly)** Was he done in, Inspector?

**Alana:** What?

**Sue:** Was Malek murdered?

**Alana:** Well, it's too early to say that.

**Sue:** Oh, are we the suspects? Oh, that'd be so cool, wouldn't it?

**Rowan:** Don't get carried away, Sue. I'm sure the inspector doesn't think we killed him.

**(Pause of two seconds)**

**Rowan:** (Uncertainly) Er...isn't that right, Inspector?

**Prisha:** Well, if you think about it, Rowan, yours was the last banana smoothie they tasted.

**Sue:** Oh, yes. Arrest him Inspector Sultana. He's got to be your man. Case over. Lock him up.

**Rowan:** What? No! I didn't do anything. I'd never met him before.

**Sue:** Wow. Who'd have thought it? And, you think you know someone.

**Rowan:** What are you talking about, Sue? I've never met you before either.

**Prisha:** We've only got your word for that, Rowan.

**Sue:** Prisha's right. So, it's just between you and me now, Prisha. Isn't it?

**Alana:** What? What are you talking about?

**Sue:** Well, if you're going to arrest Rowan and cart him off to jail, the world title goes to either Prisha or me.

**Prisha:** She's got a point there. I hadn't thought of that.

**Sue:** Arrest that man, Inspector.

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**Alana:** (Firmly) Nobody is getting arrested here. This investigation has only just started and you three will have to remain here in the hotel until it's completed.

**Sue:** I just knew there was something dodgy about you, Rowan. You've got shifty eyes.

**Rowan:** Stop this. You're being ridiculous.

**Sue:** They're too close to your nose. That's a criminal thing, you know. Isn't that right, Inspector?

(Prisha stands to one side, a smug expression on her face, clearly enjoying Rowan's discomfort)

**Rowan:** Why would I want to poison a judge?

**Prisha:** (Casually) Who said anything about poison?

**Sue:** Aha! Yes! Nobody mentioned poison, Rowan.

**Rowan:** **(Desperately)** Well, I...that is to say...I just assumed...

**Sue:** There you are, Inspector Sultana. A confession. Hoist by your own petard, Rowan. You're going down, laddie.

**Alana:** Will you just stop this pantomime for a moment. Go and sit down over there **(Indicating the row of chairs)**. I'll deal with the three of you later.

**(A downcast Rowan and smug Sue and Prisha sit. Alana reexamines the judges table' looking for clues)**

**Sue:** Of course, we could always share the title, Prisha, if there's no replay, so to speak.

**Prisha:** I would consider that an honour, Sue. And we'd split the prize money fifty-fifty.

**Sue:** Oh, that goes without saying, Prisha. I only hope they've got enough space on the trophy for both our names.

**(Ansem and Melly are looking through files as Hazzard, carrying a file, turns to Chess)**

**Hazzard:** **(Confidentially, aside)** He's single.

**(Chess punches the air triumphantly, mouthing the word yes. Hazzard takes a picture out of the file and shows it to Chess)**

**Hazzard:** **(Confidentially, aside)** He's got a bushy beard in this ID photo. What do you think?

**Chess:** **(Studying it)** I think it makes him look rugged. I'll make him grow it again when we're dating.

**Hazzard:** Goodness. You don't hang about, do you?

**Chess:** Tripp. I definitely think there's some bad blood between Melly over there and the boss.

**Hazzard:** Oh, come on, Chess; they've only just met. How can there be any bad blood?

**Chess:** Trust me on this. They were at college together. I heard them talking.

**Hazzard:** Really? That's interesting.

**Chess:** I think they fell out over some bloke called Nigel.

**Hazzard:** Juicy bit of gossip, I'd say.

**Chess:** And, a good sub plot, don't you think?

**Hazzard:** It's more of a back-story than a sub plot though.

**Chess:** (Both pronounced the same) Potato, potato.

**Hazzard:** You mean, potato, poh-tah-toe.

**Chess:** What?

**Hazzard:** That's how you're meant to say that.

**Chess:** Rubbish! There's no such word as poh-tah-toe.

**Hazzard:** It just means that two things can be the same, even if they sound different.

**Chess:** Nonsense!

**Hazzard:** No, seriously; it's from a Gershwin song.

**Chess:** (Sarcastically) Oh, well, then, it *must* be true, mustn't it? Gershwin said it. How could I ever have doubted you?

(Hazzard sighs and shakes his head weakly and wearily)

**Ansem:** According to his file, Bob started working here six months ago.

**Melly:** Yes; that's right, Paul. Why?

**Ansem:** (With sudden realisation) Your dog! He asked about your dog.

**Melly:** My dog?

**Ansem:** You told me that your dog died over a year ago. How would Bob know that you ever had a dog?

**Chess:** Well spotted, Mister Ansem. That could be a vital clue.

**Ansem:** Oh, thank you, Detective Constable Board. You can call me Paul though.

**Chess:** (Flirtatiously) Oh, I think Mister *Ansem* suits you very well.

(Ansem, feeling a little awkward, smiles to himself. Hazzard shakes his head in a resigned, despairing manner)

**Chess:** You should call me Chess. It's short for Francesca.

**Ansem:** Thanks, I will. Chess.

**Hazzard:** (Examining a document from a file) And this is interesting too.

**Chess:** What is it, Tripp?

**Hazzard:** (To Melly) Another member of your staff, Stella Jones, started working here the same day as your porter, Bob.

**Melly:** Oh, yes. Stella is of our cleaning crew. She has an excellent reference.

**Hazzard:** That's what interests me. I think I'd like to have a word or two with Bob and Stella, please, Paul.

**Ansem:** Yes, of course. I'll bring them here.

**Hazzard:** Thanks, Paul.

**Chess:** Hurry back, Paul.

**(Ansem exits at centre stage right)**

**Hazzard:** **(Sighing)** Oh, for goodness' sake. Why don't you just get his number?

**Chess:** **(Holding up a business card)** Already got it.

**(As they continue to examine the files, Charlie, a member of the bomb squad enters at centre stage right, wearing a heavy bomb-proof vest and helmet, and approaches Alana)**

**Charlie:** All clear out there now, Alana. The bomb was a fake.

**Alana:** Oh, thanks, Charlie. You know, between you and me, I think these two things are definitely connected. A mysterious death and a fake bomb.

**Charlie:** I wouldn't be at all surprised, Alana.

**Alana:** But, is *this* **(Indicating the judges' table)** the distraction, or is it the bomb that's meant to divert us?

**Charlie:** I wonder.

**Alana:** Or *both*, for that matter?

**Charlie:** Or neither?

**Alana:** What? How do you mean?

**Charlie:** No. Forget it. I got carried away there, you know, caught up in the moment. I might catch you later, Alana. We're down at The King's Head tonight. It's darts night.

**Alana:** Yeah. I'll try to make it, Charlie.

**Charlie:** That'd be great. Cheerio.

**(Charlie exits at centre stage right. Slight pause)**

**Alana:** **(Spoken to herself)** A distraction? Oh, yes. Priceless glass. Chess!

**(Chess joins Alana)**

**Chess:** Yes, boss?

**Alana:** Could you ask PCs Verne and Collins to get the fingerprints from all the staff.

**(Chess takes out her mobile phone, taps a few keys, pauses for three seconds, moves upstage, mimes a brief conversation, nods, and repockets her mobile)**

**Chess:** They're on to it boss.

**Alana:** Good. Thanks.

**(Sonia and Lorenzo enter at centre stage right. They approach Melly. Alana joins them)**

**Sonia:** I've got some more bad news, boss.

**Melly:** What is it, Sonia?

**Sonia:** When Lorenzo sent everyone to the carpark, someone stole a crystal egg from the majestic room.

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**Lorenzo:** **(Panicked)** It's a Faberge crystal egg - the centrepiece of the exhibition. It was on loan from Milan.

**Melly:** Oh, no.

**Chess:** Is it very valuable?

**Lorenzo:** It's valued at seven million euros.

**Hazzard:** Wow! That's just over six million, one hundred and four thousand pounds.

**Chess:** How the heck did you work that out so fast?

**Hazzard:** It's in the script.

**Chess:** Fair enough.

**Alana:** Well, that settles it; Malek's death must have been the distraction.

**Lorenzo:** What am I going to do? This is a nightmare.

**Alana:** Don't panic, Lorenzo. Everyone who was in this hotel when it was stolen is still here now.

**Sonia:** That's right. We've taken a register for everyone that was evacuated to the car park when we cleared out the majestic room and the guests' rooms.

**Alana:** So, that means that the egg is still here, hidden somewhere.

**(Ansem and Stella enter at centre stage right)**

**Ansem:** Here's Stella, but we couldn't find Bob.

**Chess:** Do you think he's done a runner?

**Alana:** That's not possible. We've got officers surrounding the hotel.

**Ansem:** I've checked and nobody's seen him.

**Alana:** Right. Chess! Can you and **(Looks at her name badge)** Sonia go and search for Bob, please. Recruit more staff if you need to.

**(Chess and Sonia exit at centre stage right)**

**Stella:** What do you want to ask me?

**Hazzard:** Did you know Bob De Bilter before you started working here?

**Alana:** Woah! Wait a minute. Bob de Bilter? Seriously? Is that his name?

**Melly:** Oh, yes. That's what it says on his Dutch passport.

**Alana:** Well, that's got to be fake, surely.

**Ansem:** Why?

**Alana:** You know, on children's telly: *Bob the builder. Can we fix it?*

**Ansem:** Can we fix what?

**Alana:** Oh, never mind.

**Hazzard:** Did you know Bob?

**Stella:** No. I'd never seen him before in my life.

**Hazzard:** Funny that the handwriting is identical on both your references. They're both in the same sepia ink and, to cap it all, both references misspell the word, *recommend*, adding an extra *c*.

**Stella:** You've got nothing on me, plod.

**Hazzard:** According to Bob's references, he was a taxi driver for two years on the island of Sark and yours claims that you were a bar steward at the Shaftsbury Hotel in Liverpool.

**Stella:** So what?

**Hazzard:** No motor vehicles are allowed on the island of Sark and the Shaftsbury Hotel is a temperance establishment.

**Stella:** A what?

**Hazzard:** It's a teetotal hotel; it doesn't serve any alcohol. Like Bob, you're a big fake.

**Chess:** Great detective work, Tripp. Very impressive.

**Hazzard:** You see, that's why *I'm* the detective sergeant.

**Chess:** And now you've spoiled the moment.

**Hazzard:** I think that the genuine headed notepaper from the Shaftsbury was a nice touch though, Stella. I'll give you marks for that.

**Stella:** **(Defiantly)** Listen, plod. I'm saying nothing until my lawyer's here.

**Alana:** A cleaner who has a lawyer. Interesting. You didn't do a very good job checking their references, did you, Yvette?

**Stella:** That idiot. I told him not to cut corners. Sloppy work.

**Hazzard:** So, you did know Bob, didn't you, Stella? If that's your real name.

**Lorenzo:** **(Indicating Stella)** I recognise her now. She was cleaning in the lobby earlier.

**Alana:** Where is it, Stella?

**Stella:** I don't know what you're talking about.

**Alana:** Where's the crystal egg?

**Lorenzo:** **(Suddenly remembering)** She was on her mobile. I caught a bit of her conversation: *Is he ready?*, she said.

**Hazzard:** I suppose that *he* could have meant Bob.

**Ansem:** But, if that was the case, who was she talking to?

**Alana:** Who indeed? Look, it's obvious to me that you and Bob are behind all this.

**Hazzard:** Yes. Bob must've been checking out the hotel for a while if he knew about Yvette's dog. When did the glass people book your hotel for the exhibition?

**Ansem:** It was last July.

**Hazzard:** There you are. You two have been planning this theft for well over a year.

**Stella:** I'm saying nothing.

**Alana:** How would they know where and when it was going to take place though?

**(Chess and Sonia enter at centre stage right)**

**Chess:** Looks like we've got another body, Inspector.

**Sonia:** It's Bob. He's dead.

**Stella:** **(Shaken)** No.

**Chess:** We found his body in a cleaners' cupboard. He'd been strangled with some of our crime scene tape.

**Ansem:** **(Shocked)** He's dead?

**Alana:** Was the cupboard locked or unlocked?

**Chess:** Locked. Sonia had to fetch her master keys from reception to open it.

**Alana:** Tripp, I want you to arrange to have his body taken to our coroner, Doctor Gland.

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**Hazzard:** Right you are, boss.

**Melly:** I can't believe this is happening.

**Alana:** Chess. You and Sonia are going to arrange a room by room search of this hotel for that egg. Miss Melly and Mister Ansem will assist you with that. Leave no stone unturned.

**(Tripp, Chess, Sonia, Ansem and Melly exit at centre stage right)**

**Alana:** **(Sinisterly, threateningly)** In the meantime, Stella, you and I are going to have a little chat, just the two of us.

**Stella:** No way, plod. I want my lawyer here.

**Alana:** No lawyer. Two people are dead now, Stella. If you don't want a life sentence, you'll take this last chance to make a deal.

**(Slight pause. Stella is defiant)**

**Alana:** You'll get at least twenty-five years in the clink. Think about it.

**(Slight pause, Stella sags visibly)**

**Stella:** **(Nods)** Okay. But, listen; I didn't kill anyone.

**Alana:** But, you know who killed Malek, don't you?

**(Stella nods with resignation. Lights down. Tabs close)**

### **Scene 3 – Doctor Gland’s morgue**

**(Lights up. Tabs open. Bob’s sheet covered body lies on a gurney or table at centre stage. His head and lower legs are visible. Alana, Chess and Hazzard are positioned behind the gurney/table. There’s a small table at down stage left with a car brochure, a pair of spectacles, and two drinking glasses on it. The car brochure has a picture of a Lamborghini on the cover)**

**Gland:** **(Spoken from offstage)** I’ll be with you in a moment. Don’t touch anything.

**Alana:** Okay, Doctor Gland.

**(Slight pause)**

**Alana:** So, no sign of the egg at the hotel.

**Chess:** Not a trace.

**Hazzard:** It’s got to be there somewhere.

**Alana:** Stella said that she handed it over to Bob after she’d nicked it.

**Chess:** Well, we searched his room and it’s not there.

**Alana:** There’s got to be another conspirator at that hotel.

**Hazzard:** Do you think so, boss?

**Alana:** Of course there is. Stella’s too scared to tell me who it is but look, someone killed Bob and that same someone is their partner on the inside.

**Chess:** It might be that security bloke.

**Hazzard:** Lorenzo.

**Chess:** Yeah. After all, he was meant to be guarding the glassware.

**Alana:** I’m not sure about that. I think it’s someone that has worked at the hotel for a while. They’d be able to give Bob and Stella the heads up about the glass exhibition.

**Chess:** But, Lorenzo could’ve done that.

**Alana:** They’d need to have access to the whole place, not just the majestic room.

**Hazzard:** Oh, yes; they’d have to have a key to the cleaners’ cupboard, wouldn’t they?

**Chess:** The killer might have used Bob’s key though.

**Hazzard:** The problem there is that Bob was found locked inside the cupboard along with his own keys.

**Chess:** Oh, yeah. I hadn't thought of that.

**Alana:** My money's on that idiot of a manager, Yvette.  
(**Chess and Hazzard exchange knowing glances**)

**Chess:** Why's that, boss?

**Alana:** Copper's instinct. She's shifty. I wouldn't trust her as far as I could throw her.

**Chess:** Do you think Stella, or whatever her name is, will spill some more beans?

**Alana:** She's got a record and her real name's Ruth Bliss, con artist and thief. She says that she knows who killed Bob but wants to cut a deal with us.  
(**Mike and Gland, wearing white coats, enter from upstage centre**)

**Gland:** Good afternoon all. This is my new assistant. He's Mike Hussen.

**Alana:** Oh, right. Keeping it the family then doc?

**Gland:** Keeping what in the family?

**Alana:** You know; your cousin working with you.

**Gland:** He isn't my cousin. I can't think what'd give you that idea.

**Alana:** But, I thought you said that he was your cousin.

**Mike:** Oh no. I see. Ha. My surname's *Hussen*. Mike...Hussen. I'm his assistant pathologist.

**Chess:** That isn't in any way confusing.

**Mike:** Just call me Mike though.

**Gland:** Can we just get on with this?

**Alana:** Yes, of course.  
(**Chess picks up the car magazine and flicks through it**)

**Gland:** I said not to touch anything.  
(**Chess returns the magazine to the table**)

**Chess:** Sorry.

**Gland:** (**Indicating the body**) Cause of death is strangulation. (**Spoken to Hazzard**)  
Now, have a look at the left leg  
(**Hazzard takes a close look at the leg on the left**)

**Gland:** No, no. Not that one. This one (**Indicates the corpse's left leg**).

**Hazzard:** But, isn't *this* the left leg?

**Gland:** (**Wearily, sighing**) It might very well be *the* left leg, but it's definitely this chap's *right* one.

**Hazzard:** (**Looking at the other leg**) Oh, right. Okay. What am I looking for?

**Mike:** Give it a rap with your knuckles.

(**Hazzard does so. SFX. A hollow sound**)

**Hazzard:** It's a fake leg. It's plastic or something.

**Mike:** Yes. Everything below the knee is a prosthetic.

**Alana:** Was it removed, Doctor?

**Gland:** Oh, yes. At some time, Mister Bob De Bilter here had most of it surgically sawn off and replaced with this false one.

**Alana:** So, this is all that's left of the leg?

**Gland:** Of the *left* leg.

**Alana:** All that's left of the left leg?

**Gland:** Yes.

(**Chess taps the leg. SFX. A hollow sound**)

**Chess:** It sounds hollow.

**Gland:** It is. There's a secret door, here, on the side of the leg.

**Mike:** We found this hidden inside.

(**Mike hands a small parcel to Alana who unwraps it to reveal a mobile phone**)

**Alana:** It's a phone. Here; (**Hands it to Chess**) see if you can find anything useful on this.

(**Chess presses a few keys on the mobile phone, examining the screen**)

**Alana:** So, you didn't find anything else in the leg?

**Mike:** No. Just the mobile phone.

**Chess:** There's a recorded message from this morning. Ten fifteen. Shall I play it?

**Alana:** That's the same time as Malek was poisoned. Yes. Play it, please.

(Chess presses a key on the mobile phone and we hear from offstage, amongst other background sounds, Legge and Malek's brief conversation as the final smoothies are placed on the judging table)

**Legge:** Well, this is the last smoothie, Malek. I think they've given you more than me.

**Malek:** Oh, have they?

**Legge:** Yes. The girl probably fancies you.

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**Malek:** (Good-naturedly) Nonsense. I can't think why we've got these stupid desk lamps. It's already very bright in here. We don't really need them.

**Legge:** These smoothies are very yellow, aren't they?

**Malek:** Of course they're yellow. What else did you expect from a banana smoothie?

**Legge:** Well, I certainly *didn't* expect yellow. It's only the banana's skin that's yellow.

**Malek:** Oh, yes. The banana is sort of off-white, isn't it?

**Legge:** Look; there's some bits floating in yours. I think you should dock marks for that.

**Malek:** I can't see any bits.

**Legge:** Look. I'll turn your lamp on and you'll see them floating there.

**Malek:** Nope. You must have better sight than me, Pat.

(SFX. Someone blowing their nose)

**Legge:** Well, down the hatch.

(There's a general background murmur for about four seconds and then SFX. Choking sound followed by SFX. Loud thud, then SFX. A scream)

**Alana:** Right. Turn it off, Chess. I've heard enough.

(Chess does so and then pockets the mobile phone)

**Hazzard:** That was Pat Legge talking to Malek.

**Chess:** Wow. Have you figured out who did it?

**Alana:** Yes. **(Taking a length of sticking tape from her pocket)** And I'm pretty certain I know how it was done. That mobile phone was stuck under the judges' table with this.

**Hazzard:** Why would Bob record that conversation though?

**Alana:** He did it to ensure his second accomplice's silence.

**Chess:** Are you saying that Pat Legge was also working with Bob?

**Alana:** Of course. He'd use this taped conversation to blackmail her – to make sure she wouldn't rat on him.

**Chess:** So Stella and Pat Legge were both working with Bob?

**Alana:** It certainly looks like it. I wouldn't rule out a fourth conspirator as well.

**Hazzard:** Yeah. Seven million euros is a lot of dosh.

**Chess:** Bob, with Pat's help, kills Malek for whatever reason and then someone bumps off Bob.

**Hazzard:** And that someone definitely isn't Pat because she's being watched by our officers at the hotel.

**Alana:** It makes you wonder though, doesn't it? I mean to say, if killing Malek was a distraction, it seems a pretty drastic one. Why not just set off the fire alarm or something?

**Gland:** Oh, now that you're here, I've had the tox results from the three banana smoothie glasses.

**(Gland takes a piece of A4 paper from his pocket and studies it)**

**Alana:** That was quick.

**Mike:** Oh, we can't afford to hang about. Got to keep the old plot jogging along, haven't we?

**Gland:** **(Reading from the paper)** The three smoothies contained bananas, vanilla, raspberry syrup, grapes, chocolate, strawberries, star fruit, cream, and Greek yoghurt.

**Chess:** No poison?

**Gland:** No; Not a drop in any of them. Nothing on the glasses either.

**Hazzard:** How is that possible? Malek was definitely poisoned, wasn't he?

**Gland:** Oh, yes. There's no doubt about that. Tetracyclibenzocyanide poisoning. It would take effect immediately.

**Alana:** **(Spoken to herself)** Tetracyclibenzocyanide?

**Hazzard:** Wow! That's a mouthful.

**Gland:** Oh, no. Much less than a mouthful. Somewhere in the region of 1mg would do the trick.

**Alana:** And there's no chance that he could have been poisoned before he drank the banana smoothie.

**Gland:** Absolutely no chance. The poison would finish him within seconds.

**Alana:** Is the stuff hard to get hold of?

**Gland:** You'd most likely only find it in a research laboratory of some kind.

**Mike:** Or at a medical school or college.

**(Hazzard' mobile phone buzzes. He takes it from his pocket and answers the call)**

**Hazzard:** Oh. Yes. Thank you. We'll be over straight away.

**Alana:** What is it, Tripp?

**Hazzard:** They've found another body at the hotel.

**(Hazzard pockets his mobile phone)**

**Chess:** Who's dead?

**Hazzard:** It's Felipe Castro, another one of the judges.

**Alana:** We haven't a moment to lose. We're going back to the hotel. Can you come with us Doctor Gland?

**Gland:** **(Grabbing his bag)** Yes, of course. Mike. You're coming with us. **(Shouting)** I'll need you too, Nurse Me.

**Chess:** Why? What's the matter with you, Doctor?

**Gland:** There's nothing the matter with me. I'm fit as a fiddle.

**Chess:** But, you said you'd need Mike to nurse you?

**Gland:** What are you gibbering on about?

**(Me enters carrying a medical kit)**

**Mike:** Oh, ha, ha. He means her **(indicates Me)**.

**Me:** It's my name. I'm *Nurse Me*. Sandra Me. He needs me too.

**Chess:** You know, I reckon Doctor Gland says all this ambiguous stuff deliberately.

**Me:** That's true. I think he only gave me the job because of my name. I'm not even a qualified nurse.

**Mike:** Yeah. I only came here to service the photocopier and now I'm his assistant. **(Cheerfully)** I've no idea what I'm meant to be doing; I really haven't a clue.

**Me:** That makes two of us, Mike.

**Mike:** **(With exaggerated politeness)** Well, after you, *nurse*.

**Me:** Oh, no. After you, *Doctor*.

**(Me and Mike laugh as they exit at centre stage right. Chess shakes her head in disbelief. Hazzard and Alana exit at centre stage right. Gland stops at centre stage right and turns to Chess)**

**Gland:** **(Indicating the small table)** Can you bring me the pair of glasses, please.

**(Chess moves to downstage left to the small table and hesitates as she tries to choose between the spectacles or pair of drinking glasses. She settles on the spectacles with a degree of uncertainty then, changing her mind, she picks up the two drinking glasses and hands them to Gland)**

**Gland:** Thank you.

**(Gland exits at centre stage right. Chess shrugs and exits at centre stage right. Lights down. Tabs close)**

#### Scene 4 – The palace room of the Radis Doré hotel

**(Lights up. Tabs open. Castro's body lies, covered by a cloth, at centre stage. Medic 1 and Medic 2 stand at either end of the corpse as Gland, Me, Mike, Hazzard, Alana, and Chess enter from centre stage right. Gland hands the two drinking glasses to Me who puts them on the small table)**

**Medic 2:** Oh, good; you're here, Doctor Gland.

**Dr Gland:** Has he been moved at all?

**Medic 2:** No.

**Dr Gland:** How long since the body was found?

**Medic 1:** They found him about...

**Medic 2:** **(Cutting him off)**...Twenty minutes ago.

**(Medic 2 glares at Medic 1 menacingly, shushing him with finger to lips)**

**Dr Gland:** Hmm. His lips are discoloured.

**Alana:** Do you think he could've been poisoned?

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**(Gland examines the corpse's eyes then, taking a torch from his pocket, trains it on the body's eyes)**

**Gland:** I'll need to get a better look. I'd like Hugh to hold this for me.

**(Alana takes the torch from Gland and trains it on the corpse's eyes)**

**Alana:** Certainly.

**Gland:** **(Irritated)** What are you doing? Give that back to me.

**(Gland snatches back the torch and hands it to Medic 2 who holds it while the doctor examines the corpse)**

**Alana:** But, you asked me to hold it for you.

**Gland:** Nonsense. I asked *Hugh* **(Indicates Medic 2)** to hold it.

**Chess:** **(Indicates Medic 2)** His name's Hugh. Of course it is.

**Me:** Naturally. (**Indicates Gland**) Guess who recommended him for the medic job?

**Chess:** That figures. Sandra? There's something a bit odd about Hugh, isn't there?

**(Smiling and with a questioning expression, Me points at herself and then at Medic 2)**

**Chess:** Not *you*, Sandra. I mean Hugh, him - the medic bloke.

**Me:** Hugh's got a delusional disorder. He thinks that there's two of him instead of one.

**Chess:** Two of him? Oh, that must be awful.

**Me:** It doesn't seem to affect his job, but it costs him a fortune in extra food and clothes.

**Chess:** Yes, I can imagine.

**Me:** Mind you, they do car share, so that saves him a bit of money.

**(Medic 1 goes to the small table and, after pouring fruit juice from the bottle/carton into the pair of drinking glasses, takes a glass to Medic 2. They both drink))**

**Gland:** It's definitely a poisoning. Tetracyclicbenzocyanide again.

**(Gland takes the torch from medic 2 and pockets it)**

**Hazzard:** I think we're going to have to shorten that name.

**Gland:** Mac Holleagues call it TBC.

**Hazzard:** Why don't you call it that?

**Gland:** (**Tetchily**) Because I don't do everything Mac does. I'm my own man.

**Alana:** Who's Mac?

**Mike:** Ha, ha. He's talking about Doctor Holleagues, *Mac Holleagues*.

**Chess:** Oh for goodness' sake. Holleagues doesn't even sound like a real surname. Is there much more of this stupid name stuff?

**Mike:** (**With a glance at the audience**) I fear so. You'll get used to it.

**Chess:** I mean, How the heck does he get away with it?

**Mike:** We're all wondering that.

**Alana:** Is it okay if we just get on with this?

**Chess:** Yes. Sorry boss.

**Alana:** So, someone's running around this hotel with deadly poison.

**Hazzard:** It certainly looks like that someone is killing off the judges.

**Alana:** But, that doesn't make sense. I mean, Pat Legge is a judge and she was working with Bob.

**(Medic 1 and medic 2 cover up the body completely and exit at centre stage right)**

**Gland:** Well, I'd best be off. I'll send you the full report, Inspector and we'll get the body off to my morgue as soon as we've got some room there.

**(Gland, Mike, and Me exit at centre stage right)**

**Alana:** Thanks, Doctor Gland.

**Chess:** Are you absolutely certain that Pat Legge was in on it?

**Alana:** Definitely. It was so simple and yet took a fair bit of planning.

**(Castro, Legge and Malek enter and sit in the three chairs behind the judges table. They are frozen in a tableau. Izzy and Field enter, carrying glasses and stand frozen at the other table, facing the audience. Izzy holds one glass and Field holds two. Alana, Chess, and Hazzard move to stage right, observing the flashback)**

**Alana:** That's Izzy Jones and Heather Field with the smoothies. Izzy brings Malek's to the table.

**(All unfreeze. Izzy and Field carry the three glasses to the table. Field places her two glasses in front of Castro and Legge while Izzy places hers in front of Malek then they return to the other table)**

**Alana:** Notice that there's a seemingly random stain on the table in front of Malek. That's where his glass should be placed. If it doesn't end up there, Pat would have to slide it onto the spot.

**Legge:** Well, this is the last smoothie, Malek. I think they've given you more than me.

**(Legge gently slides Malek's glass into place)**

**Malek:** Oh, have they?

**Legge:** Yes. The girl probably fancies you.

**Malek:** **(Good-naturedly)** Nonsense. I can't think why we've got these stupid desk lamps. It's already very bright in here. We don't really need them.

**Legge:** These smoothies are very yellow, aren't they?

**Malek:** Of course they're yellow. What else did you expect from a banana smoothie?

**Legge:** Well, I certainly *didn't* expect yellow. It's only the banana's skin that's yellow.

**Malek:** Oh, yes. The banana is sort of off-white, isn't it?

**Legge:** Look; there's some bits floating in yours. I think you should dock marks for that.

**Malek:** I can't see any bits.

**Legge:** Look. I'll turn your lamp on and you'll see them floating there.

**(Legge switches on the lamp and turns the shade towards Malek)**

**Malek:** Nope. You must have better sight than me, Pat.

**(Legge takes out her handkerchief, holds it over her nose, and pretends to blow it)**

**Legge:** Well, down the hatch.

**(Alana approaches the judges' table and stands behind Malek)**

**Alana:** The bulb of Malek's lamp was painted with the poison and when it heated up to 38<sup>0</sup>C, the poison sublimed into the air and Malek inhaled it as a gas. Neither Castro nor Legge would be within range of the poisonous gas and it would've dissipated after a few seconds anyway...

**Chess:** ...Leaving no trace...

**Hazzard:** ...But Pat pretended to blow her nose anyway, just to be on the safe side.

**Alana:** Exactly.

**(All three judges take sips, Malek collapses onto the table, choking horribly. Castro and Legge stand up in alarm. Izzy and Field look on in horror. Castro, Legge, Field and Izzy freeze for the rest of the scene)**

**Chess:** So, we've got Pat Legge and Stella for conspiracy to murder.

**Hazzard:** You mean *Ruth* not Stella.

**Chess:** You can be really picky; you know that, Tripp?

**Hazzard:** You mean, *pedantic*. I can be really pedantic. It's the details that matter, Chess. That's why I'm...

**Chess:** **(Wearily)**... You're the detective sergeant.

**Hazzard:** Precisely.

**Alana:** Have you two finished?

**Hazzard:** Yes, Chief.

**Chess:** Sorry, boss.

**Alana:** The poison acts in seconds. Right?

**Hazzard:** Yes.

**Alana:** Castro's been dead for half an hour at the most.

**Chess:** Right.

**Alana:** So, we must act fast. Chess. I want you and Stella to grab every staff member who has a key to the cleaners' cupboard, a complete set, or a master key. Be certain that they bring their bags with them.

**Chess:** Okay.

**Alana:** Bring them straight to the lobby and I'll meet you there. I want you, Tripp, to conduct a search of their rooms and any offices they use.

**Hazzard:** Will do, boss.

**Alana:** And bring Lorenzo too.

**(Chess and Hazzard exit at centre stage right. Lights down. Tabs close)**

## Scene 5 – The lobby of the Radis Doré hotel

**(Lights up. Tabs open. Ansem, Sonia, Field, Hazzard, Chess, and Lorenzo are on stage. Alana enters from downstage left. Ansem has a briefcase, Sonia a gym bag, Lorenzo a small backpack, and Field a tote bag)**

**Ansem:** What are you looking for?

**Hazzard:** We'll be asking the questions, Paul...

**Alana:** ...and you'll all be answering them.

**Chess:** Although, I'm sure *you've* got nothing to worry about, Paul. What *are* we looking for, boss?

**Alana:** A smallish spray bottle or atomiser of some description.

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**Chess:** Oh, I see. Look, Paul, I've been meaning to ask you something.

**Ansem:** Sure. Fire away.

**Chess:** Mister Castro told Tripp that the hotel chose one of the three judges.

**Ansem:** That's right. Yvette chose Pat Legge.

**Chess:** Do you happen to know why?

**Ansem:** I've no idea, Chess. I assumed that they were friends.

**(Melly, carrying a shoulder bag and Izzy with a tote bag enter from upstage centre and join the others)**

**Melly:** Sorry about that. The lift took ages.

**Hazzard:** Okay. Now that you're all here, I want you all to stand in a line, open your bags and put them on the floor in front of you.

**(They stand in a line facing the audience and, having opened their bags, place them on the floor. Starting at opposite ends of the line, Hazzard and Chess search through the bags)**

**Field:** **(Nervously)** Are we in trouble, Izzy?

**Izzy:** I don't know, but it reminds me of school. The head used to search our bags for ciggies and stuff.

**Sonia:** **(Cringingly)** I can, er, explain some of those items, Inspector. I'm just keeping them for a friend.

**(Hazzard searches Sonia's bag and suddenly pauses)**

**Hazzard:** Good grief! Your friend needs help, Sonia - urgent help.

**(The search continues and then, suddenly, Hazzard pausing at Melly's bag takes out a small spray bottle and hands it to Alana)**

**Hazzard:** Here, Chief.

**Melly:** **(Shocked)** What? That's not mine. That shouldn't be in there.

**(The other staff are amazed and horrified)**

**Alana:** I knew it. What did I say? A shifty customer we've got here. Not to be trusted.

**Ansem:** There's got to be a mistake.

**Alana:** Here, Chess...

**(Alana hands the bottle to Chess)**

**Alana:** ...get this over to Doctor Gland. I'm pretty certain it contains the same poison that killed Malek and Castro. And can you check it for prints as well.

**Melly:** That's ridiculous. Why would I kill them?

**Alana:** What goes around, comes around, Yvette. Before you head off, lock her in her room and put an officer on the door, Chess.

**Chess:** **(Handcuffing Melly)** Yvette Melly. I am arresting you on suspicion of murder. You do not have to say anything. But, it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence.

**(Chess leads Melly to upstage centre and exits)**

**Sonia:** That's a bit of a shocker.

**Hazzard:** It makes sense though. As manager, Yvette would make the perfect insider, so to speak. She could preplan everything.

**Alana:** She'd intended to bump off the other two partners as well as Bob so she'd have the whole seven million to herself.

**Hazzard:** Why kill the judges though?

**Alana:** I think that was done to distract us.

**Ansem:** Can we go now, Inspector?

**Alana:** Yes, Paul, but nobody is to leave this hotel until I say so.

**(All except Hazzard and Alana exit at upstage centre)**

**Hazzard:** Do you mind if I ask you a personal question, boss?

**Alana:** Of course, Tripp. We've worked together long enough for you to know that you can.

**Hazzard:** Promise you won't get cross.

**Alana:** That'll depend on the question, I think.

**Hazzard:** Have you got some sort of grudge against Yvette?

**Alana:** **(Gently)** I hope you're not questioning my professional integrity, Tripp.

**Hazzard:** No; of course not. It's just that Chess overheard you two speaking earlier.

**Alana:** Oh, that.

**Hazzard:** She told me what you said about Nigel.

**Alana:** The Nigel thing has nothing to do with Yvette being our prime suspect. You saw the evidence yourself. You found it in her bag.

**Hazzard:** Don't you think someone might have put it there to frame her?

**Alana:** Nonsense. I have an instinct for these things. She's as guilty as you can get.

**(A slight pause. Alana folds her arms and pouts petulantly. Tripp places his hands on his hips and raises his eyebrows sceptically)**

**Alana:** Alright! Alright, you nosey beggar. It was years and years ago when we were at college together. I cared very deeply for Nigel and she just...snatched him away from me.

**Hazzard:** I'm sorry, Alana. Did he stay with her?

**Alana:** Oh, she's been married since then - more than once I'd guess knowing Yvette, but I can tell that she's still got Nigel. She's always had him.

**Hazzard:** How do you know that, Alana?

**Alana:** I can smell him on her.

**Hazzard:** Really? You think that she's been carrying on a secret affair with Nigel for all these years?

**Alana:** **(Tetchily)** What? No! Are you making fun of me?

**Hazzard:** I...erm...no. I didn't mean to...

**Alana:** **(Coldly)** I think it's best if we stop talking about this now. Go and give Doctor Gland a call and see how things are progressing.

**Hazzard:** Yes, of course. Sorry.

**(Hazzard takes out his mobile phone, taps a few keys, and exits at upstage centre as Sonia enters from downstage left carrying a cardboard box. She approaches Alana)**

**Sonia:** This is for you, Inspector.

**(Puzzled, Alana takes the box from Sonia)**

**Sonia:** Before you called us all down here, Yvette asked me to give this to you. She said he belongs to you.

**(Alana turns the box around so that we can see *Nigel* written on the reverse side. She opens the box and peers in. Sonia takes a peek too)**

**Sonia:** It's a tortoise.

**Alana:** **(Tearfully)** Nigel.

**Sonia:** Oh, look; he's coming out of his shell.

**(Sonia reaches in and strokes him)**

**Sonia:** Hello, little fellow. Come on; don't be shy now.

**(Hazzard enters at upstage centre and approaches Alana and Sonia)**

**Hazzard:** Doctor Gland's about 90% sure it's the same poison and, more interestingly, there's a match for the fingerprints on the spray bottle.

**Alana:** Already?

**Hazzard:** Izzy's fingerprints are the only ones on the bottle.

**Alana:** **(Handing the box back to Sonia)** Of course! I should have known. I've been such an idiot.

**Sonia:** What is it, Inspector?

**Alana:** Sonia. I want you to get Izzy down here quickly.

**Sonia:** Certainly.

**(Sonia hands the box to Hazzard who, puzzled, peeks inside. Sonia exits at upstage centre)**

**Alana:** Meet Nigel.

**Hazzard:** Oh, yes; that makes total sense now.

**Alana:** I'm sorry about before, Tripp. I was a bit snappy with you.

**Hazzard:** That's okay, boss.

**Alana:** You see, Nigel is a bit of a sore subject for me. I've never made friends very easily and, you know, I'd had him all my life and he was always there for me.

**Hazzard:** **(Looking into the box)** Yes. I can imagine.

**Alana:** I think I might have jumped to conclusions with Yvette. Remember when she and Izzy arrived late here for the bag searches?

**Hazzard:** Yes.

**Alana:** They came down in the lift together, but everyone else took the stairs.

**Hazzard:** Oh, yes. I see. That's when Izzy slipped the bottle into Yvette's bag. She must've seen the chance to get rid of the poison and, at the same time, incriminate Yvette.

**Alana:** Right. I think Izzy's the fourth member of Bob and Ruth's little gang.

**Hazzard:** You think she did away with Bob and Castro?

**Alana:** It certainly looks that way. Also, do you recall Lorenzo saying he'd overheard part of Ruth's phone conversation in the lobby?

**Hazzard:** Yes. Ruth said, *Is he ready?*

**Alana:** It's more likely he misheard her saying, *Is Izzy ready?*

**Hazzard:** Of course. Ruth would have been talking to Bob at the time. Izzy's got to be our killer.

**Alana:** Yes. And that'll be three killers we've rounded up today.

**Hazzard:** Not a bad day's sleuthing, I reckon.

**(Slight pause)**

**Hazzard:** Hold on a minute. It was Izzy who gave Malek his smoothie though. If she were part of the poison plot, why would she make herself a suspect like that?

**(Sonia and Izzy, carrying her tote bag, enter from upstage centre and approach Alana)**

**Alana:** I think we can clear that up now that she's here.

**Hazzard:** We know what you've been up to, Izzy.

**Alana:** You might as well come clean. DS Hazzard is going to read you your rights.

**(Slight pause. Izzy's shoulders slump in defeat)**

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**Izzy:** **(With a sigh of resignation)** Okay, okay. I'm sorry. Yes; it was me. I did it.  
**(Izzy opens her bag and takes out two shampoo bottles, a toothbrush, and a couple of small air freshener spray bottles and hands them to Hazzard)**

**Izzy:** I didn't think they'd be missed. I mean, the hotel's got so many of them.

**Hazzard:** Wait a minute, Izzy. We're not interested in you nicking stuff from the hotel. Look at these air freshener bottles, boss.

**Alana:** Oh, yes. They're exactly the same as the poison spray bottle we found in Yvette's bag.

**Izzy:** What's this about, Inspector?

**Alana:** Do you use these air freshener sprays when you clean rooms?

**Izzy:** Yes. We always use those.

**Alana:** What do you do with them when they're empty?

**Izzy:** There's a recycling box on every floor. I put the empty ones in the box on the second floor.

**Alana:** So, you only clean on the second floor?

**Izzy:** Yes.

**Alana:** So, anybody could take an empty one out of the bin, remove the label and fill it with, let's say, deadly poison?

**Sonia:** **(Catching on with enthusiasm)** And pop it into Miss Melly's bag.

**Alana:** And it'd already have Izzy's fingerprints on it.

**Hazzard:** Oh, that's very clever, boss.

**Alana:** Yes it certainly is. Someone might be framing Izzy by making it look like Izzy is framing Yvette.

**Sonia:** Or, maybe it's a double bluff.

**Hazzard:** What do you mean Sonia?

**Sonia:** Well, maybe Miss Melly put the poison bottle in her own bag, complete with Izzy's fingerprints to make it seem that she's being framed by Izzy.

**Alana:** I'm not sure what she'd have to gain by that. **(Spoken to Izzy)** Whose idea was it to get the lift down to the lobby?

**Izzy:** Well, I was already in the lift and Miss Melly came in just before the doors closed.

**Alana:** Do you always take the lift?

**Izzy:** Every time. It's better than slogging up and down the stairs every day.

**Hazzard:** Well then, if someone is fixing you up, Izzy, Yvette's arrival in the lift must've been a lucky coincidence for them.

**(Chess enters from upstage centre and joins them)**

**Chess:** Yvette's down at the nick with Pat and Ruth. They'll be running out of cells if we carry on like this.

**Alana:** It's certainly been a busy day so far. And Ruth still won't talk?

**Chess:** No. She says she knows who killed Bob, but she wants a short sentence in exchange.

**Alana:** I'd have to see the chief about that.

**Hazzard:** Do you think DCI Gridlock would agree to a short sentence?

**Alana:** No chance. I think Gridlock's reply to that would be a *very* short sentence – just two words, I'd imagine.

**Chess:** Tripp? Didn't Castro tell you that the hotel selected one of the three judges?

**Hazzard:** Yes.

**Chess:** So, because Yvette chose Pat as a judge, you'd have to assume that they know each other.

**Hazzard:** I suppose so.

**Chess:** Funny that Yvette never mentioned that, isn't it?

**Hazzard:** Yeah. That's true. Come to think of it, Pat and Yvette haven't exchanged a word since we've been here.

**Chess:** So, we can't rule Yvette Melly out as a suspect just yet, can we?

**Hazzard:** Wait a second. I've just thought of something. How do you know Pat is the judge that the hotel selected?

**Chess:** Paul told me. Sonia; can you check Yvette's emails for me. See if there's one sent to Pat Legge.

**(Sonia goes to stand behind the reception, taps a few keys on a laptop and pauses)**

**Sonia:** Nope. No emails to Pat Legge. Hang on though; it could have been a letter that was sent.

**Alana:** Who posts the hotel's letters?

**Sonia:** Bob. He posted all the mail. That's weird. Someone's taken all my correction fluid from here.

**Alana:** How much correction fluid did you have there?

**Sonia:** Two whole bottles.

**Hazzard:** What are you thinking, boss?

**Alana:** It might be nothing, Tripp, but it's definitely worth keeping in mind.

**Sonia:** Do you think it's got something to do with all this?

**Chess:** It's either that or someone's making a heck of a lot of mistakes.

**Alana:** I think I've got it, or at least a part of it. For a start, that woman in the nick is definitely not Pat Legge.

**(Alana takes the box from Hazzard and moves to centre stage. She reaches into the box and fumbles around)**

**Alana:** **(Spoken to herself)** There's certainly a lot of leaves and stuff in here. Ah! Here it is.

**(Alana takes a white egg from the box and holds it up for inspection. It's approximately three inches high)**

**Alana:** Tripp! Tell everyone to meet me here in half an hour.

**Hazzard:** Right ho, boss. Chess; I'd like you to get Yvette, Pat and Ruth here as well.

**Chess:** Okay. **(Excitedly)** Are you going to do the big reveal thing, boss?

**Alana:** I'll tell you it all when you get back. C'mon. Chop, chop. No time to lose.

**(Hazzard and Chess both salute Alana playfully and exit at upstage centre. Sonia joins Alana at centre stage and shows her the egg)**

**Sonia:** **(Looking into the box)** Who's a clever boy then?

**(Lights down Tabs close)**

## Scene 6 – The lobby of the Radis Doré hotel

(Lights up. Tabs open. Six chairs have been arranged on the stage facing the audience. Ansem, Lorenzo, Yvette, Sonia, Field and Izzy are seated. Stella, Legge, Prisha, Rowan, Sue, Alana, Hazzard, Chess, and Sonia who's at reception, are standing. Police 1, 2, and 3, wearing uniforms, cover the entrances. They wear lapel microphones and earpieces. Excited mumbling fills the lobby. There's a whiteboard or blackboard at centre stage left, its face to the audience The box containing Nigel is on the reception desk along with the potted plant)

**Police 1:** (Speaks into lapel mic) All clear here, red leader.

**Police 2:** (Speaks into lapel mic) What?

**Police 1:** (Speaks into lapel mic) All clear, red leader.

**Police 2:** (Speaks into lapel mic) What are you doing? What's all this red leader stuff?

**Police 1:** (Speaks into lapel mic) I thought we ought to have code names.

**Police 2:** (Speaks into lapel mic) We don't need them and besides, I can see it's all clear. I'm standing just a few feet from you.

**Police 3:** (Speaks into lapel mic) What's my code name?

**Police 2:** (Speaks into lapel mic) Oh, for goodness' sake; you haven't got one.

**Police 3:** (Speaks into lapel mic) That doesn't seem fair Sarge. I should have one.

**Police 2:** (Speaks into lapel mic) None of us have them. Don't you understand?

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**Police 3:** (Speaks into lapel earpiece) Roger that, Sarge.

**Police 2:** (Speaks into lapel mic) And don't call me Sarge, Sam. Just use first names.

**Police 3:** (Speaks into lapel mic) Roger that, Roger.

**Police 2:** Oh forget it.

**Alana:** Alright; let's make a start on this. DS Hazzard and DC Board have been briefed by myself and will be making another arrest after I bring you all up to date.

**Sue:** What are you going to arrest them for?

**Hazzard:** Murder, Miss Playdel.

**Sue:** Oh, that'll be you then, Rowan. You're nicked, son.

**Chess:** We can also make an arrest for wasting police time, Miss Playdel.  
**(Sue mimes zipping shut her mouth. Lorenzo raises his hand)**

**Alana:** Yes, Lorenzo. What is it?

**Lorenzo:** Have you found the Faberge egg yet?

**Alana:** As a matter of fact, yes. We'll return it to you later.

**Lorenzo:** Oh, thank you so much, Inspector Sultana.

**Sonia:** See, Lorenzo; I told you it'd work out okay.

**Alana:** This case has been baffling from the outset.

**Hazzard:** We've arrested Pat and Ruth here, for conspiracy to murder Malek and, of course, theft. The mistake we made was thinking there was a fourth conspirator - someone who'd killed Bob and Castro.  
**(Prisha raises a hand)**

**Hazzard:** **(With a sigh)** Yes?

**Prisha:** Is it one of us here?

**Hazzard:** Yes, of course.

**Prisha:** Well, you should have started with that, shouldn't you?  
**(Alana, chalk or pen in hand, approaches the whiteboard/blackboard)**

**Alana:** My mistake was to assume that the three deaths were all connected. And, as I always say, never assume because it makes an *ass* of *u* and *me*.  
**(Alana writes ASS U ME on the board and there's general vocal approval)**

**Lorenzo:** Oh, that's very clever.

**Alana:** I like to think of that as my catchphrase.  
**(Prisha raises a hand)**

**Alana:** Yes.

**Prisha:** It's not a phrase though. A phrase doesn't contain a subject or verb and yours has both.

**Alana:** **(Through gritted teeth)** Thank you, Prisha. I'll bear that in mind.

**Chess:** Bob and Castro's deaths had nothing whatsoever to do with the judge's death or the theft of the Faberge egg.

**Alana:** Bob's fate was sealed from the moment someone at this hotel saw Ruth there disguised as Stella the cleaner.

**Hazzard:** That someone had already recognised Bob as the guy who'd stolen away his beloved girlfriend many years before.

**Chess:** It was only when he saw his old girlfriend, Ruth, that...

**Sue:** **(Interrupting)** *He.* Aha! It's a man then.

**Alana:** You've been warned, Miss Playdel. No blurting out.  
**(With a signal from Alana, Police 1 approaches Sue and handcuffs her)**

**Sue:** Hoy! What are you doing. Take your grubby hands off me.  
**(Police 1 examines his hands questioningly)**

**Prisha:** Well, it looks like I won't have to share the title with you after all, Sue.  
**(Police 1 exits with Sue at centre stage right. Chess shushes Prisha who mouths the word, sorry)**

**Chess:** As I was saying, when he saw Ruth, the girl he'd met and fallen in love with at university, he put two and two together.

**Hazzard:** Months before, when our killer started here at the hotel, he'd recognised Bob as the porter from his old uni days.

**Alana:** Once Ruth turned up, he figured out who she'd left him for all that time ago.

**Chess:** He also figured out that Ruth and Bob were up to no good since they hadn't acknowledged each other.

**Sonia:** Sorry to interrupt, Inspector, but can I have a go.

**Alana:** Oh, very well, Sonia. Seeing as you've helped us crack this case.

**Sonia:** Neither Ruth nor Bob recognised our killer because he'd had a great big bushy beard at university and, besides, he was much older.

**Hazzard:** So, undetected, he strangled Bob and, to put us off the scent, poisoned poor old Castro. Didn't you. Paul?

**Ansem:** What? You can't be serious.  
**(Police 2 and 3 stand behind Ansem, each with a hand on his shoulder)**

**Hazzard:** Deadly serious, Paul. You, Ruth, and Bob were all at John Moore's University in Liverpool, a campus that's right opposite the Shaftsbury Hotel.

**Sonia:** The hotel where Ruth had stolen the headed notepaper to forge her reference.

**Alana:** Bob, Ruth and Pat here had planned the theft of the egg ever since he learned that the glass exhibition was to be held here.

**Chess:** Bob and Ruth got jobs here and, as Bob's the one who posts the mail, opened Yvette's letter inviting the food columnist, Pat Legge, to be a judge.

**Hazzard:** He popped Yvette's letter into a different envelope; one that was addressed to his sister, Megan Wilkins...

**Sonia:** **(Indicating Legge)** ...That's her right there...

**Hazzard:** ...Who, pretending to be Pat Legge, helped Bob murder Malek and steal the egg.  
**(Field raises her arm, hesitantly)**

**Alana:** Yes?

**Field:** Why did they kill poor Mister Malek?

**Alana:** They did it because Malek knew that his fellow judge was definitely not Pat Legge.

**Chess:** Malek had been on a judging panel with Pat before, you see.

**Sonia:** Rather than exposing her as a fake, Malek wanted a share in the seven million euros in exchange for his silence.

**Alana:** So, Paul, your gruesome act of revenge took two lives and I'll bet Ruth was next on your list.  
**(Ansem looks directly at Stella who turns her eyes away from him)**

**Ansem:** Have you *any* idea what it feels like to discover that your girlfriend, the person you trusted most in the world, was having a tawdry affair with a crappy porter right under your nose?

**Melly:** In all fairness, Paul, the odds on any of us having experienced those particular circumstances are remote.

**Stella:** I'm sorry for hurting you, Paul.

**Ansem:** I hope you get life for what you've done, Ruth and I hope Bob rots in Hell.

**Prisha:** Ooh! Feisty.

**Melly:** You're a murderer, Paul. Couldn't you have forgiven her?

**Ansem:** I mean, the stinking porter - a petty thief. I'd kill him again if I had the chance.

**Field:** **(Puzzled)** But, he's already dead. You wouldn't need to.

**Izzy:** I can't believe you tried to frame me for the murders, Paul.

**Alana:** One thing that puzzles me, Paul; how did you know the egg was hidden in Bob's fake leg?

**Ansem:** The egg? What are you talking about?

**Sonia:** You didn't take the egg from Bob when you killed him?

**Ansem:** (On the verge of tears) No. I don't know and I don't care about the egg. I just wanted him dead. He stole my life, my happiness.

(Suddenly and without warning, Ansem breaks free, takes another spray bottle from his pocket, moves to Chess, grabs her arm and points the spray bottle at her face. There are gasps and screams)

**Ansem:** Shut up! Listen to me.

(The noise dies down)

**Chess:** In your arms at last, Paul. Not quite as I imagined though.

**Ansem:** I'm sorry, Chess, but this is the only way out for me.

**Chess:** Well, to be fair, you could have taken Tripp as a hostage instead.

**Hazzard:** (Ironically) Thanks a lot, *partner*.

**Ansem:** Be quiet! Anyone tries anything, and I'll spray this into her pretty little face.

**Chess:** Oh, shucks. You charmer.

**Ansem:** (Spoken to Alana) We're going to walk out of here and you're going to tell these goons (Indicates Police 2 and 3) to let me take your car.

**Police 3:** Goons?

**Police 2:** He means us.

**Police 3:** Oh. That is rude. You are a rude man.

(Alana gives Ansem her car keys)

**Ansem:** Good. Now, nobody move a muscle.

**Chess:** Well, I'll have to move, won't I?

**Ansem:** What?

**Sonia:** Yes; otherwise you'll have to carry her out, won't you?

(Ansem leads Chess towards upstage centre then stops)

**Ansem:** Er, which is your car, Inspector?

**Alana:** It's the dark blue Jensen Interceptor.

**Prisha:** Ooh. It's alright for some, isn't it?

**Alana:** (Defensively) I bought it second hand.

**Hazzard:** Give this up, Paul. You can't escape.

**Ansem:** Oh, really? Watch me. And don't try to follow me.

**Hazzard:** There's no poison in that bottle, Paul.

**Ansem:** So, you think I'm bluffing, do you?

**Hazzard:** Not at all. It's just that I took the poison spray from your pocket earlier and replaced it with a labelless air freshener.

**Alana:** That's true, Paul.

**Hazzard:** So, if you prefer Chess smelling of spring roses, go ahead and spray away.  
(Ansem, leading Chess, approaches the potted plant at reception and sprays the plant which immediately starts to wither and die. Sonia covers her face and Nigel's box as he does so)

**Lorenzo:** The plant's dying. That stuff works quickly.

**Ansem:** Nice try, Tripp. Do you want to see me use it on Chess?  
(Slight pause)

**Chess:** Er...he's waiting for an answer here, partner.

**Hazzard:** It was a rhetorical question, Chess. It doesn't need an answer.

**Chess:** *Please* take him, Paul (**Indicates Hazzard**). He's the detective sergeant. He'd make a more valuable hostage than me.

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(Ansem leads Chess towards upstage centre again as Hall appears at the entrance there. Hall points a handgun at Ansem and there's a standoff)

**Hall:** Let her go, Ansem. The game's up.

**Police: 3:** Who the heck are you?

**Police: 2:** And, more to the point, what are you doing with a gun?

**Hall:** I'm Avery Hall, an agent for Interpol. We've been tracking Harry – the whelk – Wilkins all the way from France and this is where he ended up.

**Alana:** Who's Harry – the whelk – Wilkins?

**Hall:** Europe's most wanted thief. You'd have known him as Bob De Bilter.

**Ansem:** Step aside, Avery. I won't hesitate to use this.

**Police 2:** And then what?

**Ansem:** What do you mean?

**Police 2:** Well, after you've poisoned that police officer, are you going to spray us all, one at a time?

**Lorenzo:** Oh, yes; that'd be a bit difficult, wouldn't it?

**Police 2:** We'd all have to keep still, you know, while you went from person to person...

**Hall:** ...And I would have shot you several times by then anyway.

**Chess:** Oh, come on, Paul. You're not going to kill me and you know it.

**(Shoulders slumping, Ansem drops the spray and releases Chess. Police 2 and 3 restrain and handcuff him and then lead him to centre stage. Hall, Chess and Hazzard join Alana. Sonia picks up the spray and gives it to Police 2)**

**Ansem:** I'm sorry, Chess and I'm sorry I let you down, Yvette.

**Melly:** I'm sorry too, Paul. Maybe you'll get a job in the prison kitchen whipping up a few smoothies for the other prisoners.

**Police 2:** That's not really the sort of job they give to convicted poisoners.

**Sonia:** How did he get the poison sprays?

**Hazzard:** Paul saw Bob spray it on the desk lamp and then took them from his room or from his dead body.

**Hall:** Harry – the whelk – Wilkins was tagged after he was released from a five year sentence in France fifteen years ago. Would you believe, he had his tagged leg sawn off and replaced with a fake one?

**Field:** Oh, that's got to hurt.

**Hall:** We tracked his leg to a beach on the French coast.

**Izzy:** Do you mean to say he'd thrown his leg in the sea?

**Hall:** Indeed. We think that's much more likely than him just leaving it there on the beach.

**Izzy:** Why didn't he just have the tag removed?

**Hall:** The tag doesn't send a signal unless it's attached to skin. He then fled to England and got himself a fake identity as Bob.

**Sonia:** So, that was when he met Ruth at university.

**Hall:** Along with his sister, Megan (**Indicates Legge**), and Ruth here, he planned the bomb scare, the murder of Malek, and the egg theft.

**Lorenzo:** That reminds me; can I have the egg now, Inspector Sultana?

**(Alana approaches reception and having fished the egg out from the box, hands it to Lorenzo)**

**Lorenzo:** (**Puzzled**) But, that's just an ordinary egg.

**Alana:** Surprisingly, that is the stolen Faberge egg, painted in layers of the correction ink stolen from Sonia and hidden in the tortoise's box.

**Sonia:** Ruth here never actually passed on the egg to Bob after the theft. She popped it in Nigel's box knowing that she could retrieve it later, after the search had ended.

**Stella:** No I didn't.

**(Lorenzo scratches the egg a few times)**

**Hazzard:** Didn't you?

**Stella:** Bob had the egg hidden in his fake leg when I last saw him.

**Lorenzo:** This is definitely a *real* egg.

**Alana:** Bang goes my big finale.

**(Melly takes the egg from Lorenzo, approaches reception, opens Nigel's box and looks inside. Alana joins her there)**

**Melly:** So, you're not a Nigel after all.

**Alana:** You're a Nigella.

**Melly:** Who'd have thought it, Alana?

**Alana:** Who indeed, Yvette?

**Melly:** It must have happened when she escaped a few months ago.

**Police 2:** We'll run Ansem and these two down to the station, Inspector.

**Alana:** Thanks, Roger.

**(Melly places the egg in the box. Police 2, 3, and Hall take Ansem, Stella and Legge to upstage centre and exit. Chess exits at centre stage right and immediately re-enters carrying a box)**

**Chess:** Tripp and I have bought you a little gift, boss.

**(Chess hands the box to Alana who peeks inside it)**

**Alana:** Thanks. Another tortoise.

**Hazzard:** To keep Nigel company.

**Chess:** You mean Nigella.

**Alana:** Thanks. Is it a boy or a girl?

**Chess:** We've no idea.

**Hazzard:** We didn't ask when we bought it.

**(Gland enters at upstage centre)**

**Gland:** Ah there you are Inspector Sultana.

**Alana:** Hello, Doctor Gland.

**Gland:** **(Looking around)** I see you've been doing the big reveal thing – your denouement.

**Chess:** What's up doc? I've always wanted to say that.

**Gland:** You may well ask that, DC Board. I'm wondering if any of you have heard from Mike or Nurse Me today.

**Hazzard:** No. Nothing.

**Gland:** They've both disappeared. Last thing I saw of them was this morning when they were swanning around town in a brand new Lamborghini.

**Lorenzo:** They don't come cheap.

**Gland:** I suppose they might have flown to Mike's villa on Mauritius.

**Chess:** Mike's got a villa on Mauritius?

**Gland:** Oh, yes. He bought it in an auction online yesterday. He paid four million dollars for it.

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**Hazzard:** Hold on a second. Which of you discovered that Bob had a prosthetic leg?

**Gland:** Oh, that was Mike.

**Hazzard:** Where you with him at the time?

**Gland:** No. As my assistant, he'd start the examination without me.

**Alana:** Now we know who ended up with the Faberge egg.

**Chess:** It's no wonder he and Sandra were so jolly all the time. I just assumed they were **(Using air quotation marks)** *self-medicating*.

**Hazzard:** Never mind about the egg, boss. You've caught three killers.

**Chess:** Make that two killers and whatever we book Ruth for.

**Alana:** I'm going to recommend you for a commendation, Tripp.

**Hazzard:** Thanks, boss.

**Alana:** And as for you, Chess.

**Chess:** Yes, boss?

**Alana:** How does Detective Sergeant Francesca Board sound?

**Chess:** **(Delighted)** Are you serious?

**Alana:** I'm going to recommend you for a promotion straight away.

**Chess:** That's brilliant. I can't wait.

**Hazzard:** **(Smiling)** Hey, Chess.

**Chess:** Yes?

**Hazzard:** Who's the detective sergeant here?

**Chess:** **(Together. Excitedly)** We are!

**Hazzard:** **(Together. Excitedly)** We are!

**Lorenzo:** I'm probably going to get the sack from the museum now.

**Melly:** How do fancy being our head of security here, Lorenzo?

**Lorenzo:** I'd like that a lot, Yvette.

**Melly:** Good. That'll mean you'll get to work alongside our new assistant manager, Sonia.

**(A delighted Sonia joins Lorenzo and they hug each other)**

**Lorenzo:** I'd like that even more.

**Sonia:** Hooray! I love happy endings.

**(SFX. Mobile phone ringing tone. Gland takes out his mobile phone and answers leaving short pauses for the caller's words)**

**Gland:** Yes. Oh, I see. I sort of expected that. I'll definitely think about it. Yes, I'll tell them. Goodbye for now. Thanks.

**(Gland pockets his mobile phone)**

**Sonia:** Is everything alright, Doctor Gland?

**Gland:** That was Nurse Me. She says she'd love me to join her and Mike at their new luxury home on Mauritius for an extended holiday.

**Alana:** What are you going to do?

**Gland:** Well, if you can't beat them, join them. That's what I say. I'm off home to pack.

**(Gland heads towards upstage centre entrance)**

**Hazzard:** We can't let them get away with this, boss.

**(Gland stops at upstage centre, delivers his next lines, then exits)**

**Gland:** O, I nearly forgot to say; you three are invited to stay as well. They've left four first-class return tickets at Heathrow for us.

**Chess:** Does anyone know if the UK has an extradition deal with Mauritius?

**Alana:** Let's assume that we don't. Yvette.

**Melly:** Yes.

**Alana:** Look after our tortoises, please.

**Melly:** Of course, Alana.

**Alana:** **(Hurriedly spoken to Chess and Hazzard)** We'll stop off at the nick and read Paul his rights, grab some clothes from home and then...

**Chess:** **(Triumphantly)** ...Extended holiday.

**Hazzard:** **(Shrugs)** Sounds okay to me.

**(Chess, Alana, and Hazzard exit swiftly at upstage centre. All wave to them and say their farewells as they exit. Prisha picks up the trophy,**

**admires it and exits with it at downstage right followed by an annoyed Rowan)**

**Sonia:** Have fun. Send us a postcard.

**(Lights down. Tabs close. The end)**