

**Characters**

|              |   |                                                        |
|--------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Gridlock (F) | - | A Sharp-witted police inspector                        |
| Gland (M)    | - | A brusque and serious yet mischievous pathologist      |
| Yutu (F)     | - | A young and smart assistant pathologist                |
| Juleee (F)   | - | A young, clever yet cynical detective constable        |
| Fox (M)      | - | A young, impulsive yet good-natured detective sergeant |
| Lois (F)     | - | The glamorous and soulful widow of Colonel Bentlie     |
| Mike (M)     | - | A highly professional police constable                 |
| Ann (F)      | - | An amiable and helpful eye witness                     |
| John (M)     | - | A nervy but resourceful police constable               |
| Norman (M)   | - | The straightforward owner of a stud farm               |

The role of the body in scene 1 is a doubling opportunity

### Scene 1 – Dr Gland’s mortuary

(Tabs open. Lights up on Dr Gland’s mortuary. A cloth covered body is on a table or gurney at centre stage. A table at downstage right has a box of surgical instruments, a small photograph, a wallet, and a man’s wedding ring on it. A whiteboard on a stand with a marker pen and a board wiper is at upstage right. Two dining chairs are against the wall at upstage left. A pull drawer filing cabinet is against the wall at downstage left. Wearing a white coat, Gland is standing behind the gurney. Entrances are at stage right, upstage centre, and stage left. There’s the suggestion of an external window at upstage left. Juleee and Fox enter at upstage centre)

**Juleee:** Hi, Doc.

**Gland:** Good morning, D.S. Fox, D.C. Chase.

**Fox:** Morning, Doctor Gland. This is Colonel Bentlie, then?

**Gland:** Indeed it is.

(Gland lifts the cloth for the detectives to view the body’s face then replaces it)

**Gland:** Meet Colonel George Henry Bentlie. Fifty-four. Acute coronary syndrome for the last ten years of his life.

**Juleee:** Popped his clogs on the train, didn’t he?

**Gland:** That’s not exactly how I’d have put it, D.C. Chase, but, yes, he passed away in a first-class carriage on the 12.40 from Chippenham to Paddington. At first glance, it looked like a massive heart attack.

**Fox:** But, let me guess; you think it’s something else?

**Gland:** Precisely, D.S. Fox. It’s my view that, at some point on his train journey, His Lordship ingested some Tetracyclibenzocyanide. It would have acted quickly and, to a lesser practitioner than myself, appear to indicate heart failure.

**Fox:** Tetracyclibenzocyanide. That’s a bit of a mouthful.

**Gland:** Oh, dear me; no. It’d take *much* less than a mouthful. 1 mg of the stuff would do it.

**Juleee:** Murder then?

**Gland:** Very possibly. Either that or suicide.

**Fox:** Suicide?

**Juleee:** Why do it in such a public place though?

**Gland:** The *why* and the *where* are matters for yourselves, detectives. At this moment, the *how* is my only concern. His personal effects are on the table there.

(Juleee and Fox approach the table and examine its contents)

**Fox:** This is everything he had with him at the time of death?

**Gland:** Other than his clothes. I expected Yutu (**Pronounced as *you two***) to bring *those* here.

**Juleee:** (**Puzzled**) Really?

**Gland:** Yes. Yutu should have brought them.

**Fox:** *We* haven't got them.

**Gland:** **(Impatiently)** I am aware of that.

**Fox:** But, you said we should've brought them.

**Gland:** I said no such thing.

**(Wearing a white coat, Yutu enters at upstage centre. She is carrying a bag containing Lord Bentlie's clothes. She hands it to Gland)**

**Gland:** Ah; here's *Yutu* now. It's about time you got here.

**Yutu:** Sorry, Doctor Gland. Traffic's bad.

**Juleee:** Ah; I see. Your *name's* Yutu.

**Gland:** Oh, there's one more thing. I checked with his doctor and he informed me that the colonel needed to take his heart tablets four times a day.

**(Carrying the bag, Gland exits at stage right. Yutu then joins Fox and Juleee)**

**Yutu:** Actually, Yutu isn't my given name. It's a pet name. Everyone's always called me Yutu. I'm his new assistant.

**Juleee:** I'm Juleee and this is DS Fox.

**Yutu:** It's nice to meet you, Juleee, DS Fox.

**Fox:** Oh, please call me Freddy.

**Yutu:** Sure. Good to meet you, Freddy.

**Fox:** It's certainly a pleasure to meet you too, *Yutu*.

**(They share a little laugh at this)**

**Juleee:** Oh, knock it off, lover boy. We haven't got time for your pathetic flirting.

**Fox:** **(Embarrassed)** What? I...I was *not* flirting.

**Yutu:** **(With mock disappointment, pouting)** Oh, that's too bad.

**Fox:** **(Taken aback, uncertain)** Oh; Is it?

**Yutu:** Yes.

**Fox:** I suppose I was then.

**(Fox and Yutu share a warm smile. Gland re-enters at stage right. He is carrying a realistic looking fake cat and he's holding a piece of A4 paper. SFX. A cat's meow)**

**Juleee:** **(Affectionately.)** Hello there, little cat.

**(Juleee reached to stroke the cat but is stopped by Gland)**

**Gland:** I wouldn't let her get too close. She's a bit unpredictable. A bit irritable.

**Juleee:** Why? Does she scratch?

**Gland:** I was talking to the cat.

**Juleee:** **(Ironically)** Oh, that's charming.

- Fox:** You say that Colonel Bentlie was found dead in his seat on a train?
- Gland:** Correct. When the body was found, a ticket inspector pulled the emergency cord to stop the train. Luckily, the train pulled up just a hundred yards or so from Swindon Station. The station master was informed and telephoned the local police station. Constable Hatt soon boarded the train and examined the body.
- Juleee:** Who discovered the body?
- Gland:** Ann Oldchap.
- Fox:** Did Constable Hatt get his name?
- Gland:** Get whose name?
- Fox:** The elderly gentleman.
- Gland:** What elderly gentleman? What the blazers are you gibbering on about?
- Juleee:** You just said that an old chap found the body.
- Gland:** Indeed. She did. She was sitting in the seat across the aisle from the colonel.
- Fox:** She?
- Juleee:** **(With a deep sigh)** Wait! I've got it. Her surname is *Oldchap*, isn't it? That's the witness's name: *Ann Old – chap*.

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- Gland:** Of course it is. You must learn to listen more carefully, D.S. Fox. Anyway, Missus Oldchap gave Constable Hatt a statement. Inspector Gridlock has already seen this.
- (Gland hands a piece of A4 paper to Fox who peruses it)**
- Gland:** Now, I really must go and feed little Catty here.
- (SFX. Contented purring. Gland strokes the cat affectionately and, still carrying it, exits at stage right)**
- Juleee:** **(Spoken to Yutu)** Welcome to the annoyingly cryptic world of Doctor Gland.
- Yutu:** **(With a smile)** The good doctor does enjoy his little wordplay jokes. You know; I think he only gave me this job because of my name.
- Fox:** He is the best police pathologist in the West Country, so we just have to put up with his annoying ambiguities.
- Juleee:** I never took the doc for a cat person.
- Yutu:** Doctor Gland found the cat mooching around the bins yesterday. The poor little thing was soaking wet and shivering. He decided to adopt her.
- Fox:** So, he has got a soft side after all.
- Juleee:** What does Missus Oldchap's statement say?
- Fox:** **(After glancing at the paper)** Well, it seems that she saw the ticket inspector approaching her seat, walking through the carriage, checking the tickets and, as the inspector came closer, the colonel suddenly reached into his inside jacket pocket and

said, *Oh no; not again*. Then he closed his eyes and slumped forward. Missus Oldchap left her seat and alerted the approaching ticket inspector to this.

**Yutu:** *Oh no; not again*. I wonder what he meant by that?

**Juleee:** **(Points to the table)** Wait a minute. Doctor Gland said the colonel took heart tablets four times a day and yet no bottle of tablets were on his person when he croaked it.

**Fox:** Oh, yes; he might've meant: *Oh no; not again*. *I've forgotten to bring my tablets*.

**(SFX. Sounds of a car pulling up on a gravel road. Yutu moves to the window at stage left)**

**Yutu:** Colonel Bentlie's wife has just arrived.

**Fox:** Inspector Gridlock broke the news to her earlier. She's here to identify the body.

**(Juleee joins her at stage left)**

**Juleee:** Wow! Nice wheels. She drives a vintage Bentley. That's worth a bob or two.

**Yutu:** And look at the number plate. That wouldn't come cheap either.

**Juleee:** **(Reading the plate aloud)** L – O – I – 5 – N – Zero – 1.

**Yutu:** Clever. It spells *Lois number 1*.

**Juleee:** Ha. Lois Bentlie arrives in Lois's Bentley.

**Fox:** With an ego that size, I expect she'd need a big car.

**(Fox picks up the photograph and the wedding ring from the table)**

**Fox:** This is a photo of his wife.

**(Fox hands the ring to Juleee)**

**Fox:** We'd better give her this, I suppose. Look, Juleee; I think it'd be best if it was just you here with her when she identifies the body.

**Juleee:** **(Indignantly)** Oh, right. That's the sort of old sexism we've been trying to stamp out in the police force. You think this isn't a suitable job for a bloke. It's because I'm a woman and we're meant to be naturally more sensitive and caring.

**Fox:** No; It's because I don't want to do it.

**Juleee:** Why do I have to do it then?

**Fox:** **(Smugly)** Whose the detective sergeant here?

**Juleee:** **(With a sigh)** I ask myself that question all the time.

**Fox:** Anyway, I'd better be on my way. Inspector Gridlock wants me to update her on all this.

**Yutu:** And I'll give Doctor Gland a hand in there.

**Fox:** **(Hopeful, hesitant)** I'll see you two later.

**Juleee:** Are you talking to both of us just your new girlfriend here?

**Fox:** What? I meant... **(Aside)** Why do you have to embarrass me all the time, Juleee?

**Juleee:** It's one of the perks of the job.

- Yutu:** I'll see you later, Freddy. Good luck with Missus Bentlie, Juleee.
- (Juleee gives Fox a gentle push with her elbow and jerks her thumb towards Yutu. She mouths the words, *go on then*)**
- Fox:** **(Hesitantly)** I was just wondering, Yutu; what time do you finish work here?
- Juleee:** **(Patting Fox on the back)** Attaboy.
- Yutu:** Six O'clock. We can meet at The King's Head about seven if you'd like.
- Fox:** Great. See you later.
- (Juleee gives him a thumbs up and Fox smiles broadly and exits at stage left. Also smiling, Yutu exits at stage right. A heavily pregnant Lois enters from upstage centre. She freezes as she notices the wrapped body on the gurney. The body holds her fixed stare for the next six sentences)**
- Juleee:** Missus Bentlie. I'm Detective Constable Chase. I am very sorry for your loss.
- Lois:** Thank you. **(Absently)** Call me Lois.
- Juleee:** If you feel up to it, Lois, I'd like you to confirm that this is your husband, Colonel George Bentlie.
- (Lois nods weakly and approaches the gurney as Fox pulls back the cloth from the body's face. Lois stares at the body and, after a pause of three seconds, replies, struggling to keep control of her emotions. Fox covers the face again)**
- Lois:** Yes. That's my George. Was it his heart?
- Juleee:** I think you'll need to talk to our police pathologist, Doctor Gland about that. **(indicating stage right)** He's still conducting his investigation.
- Lois:** **(Abstracted, spoken to herself)** He was always forgetting to take his tablets. I had to keep reminding him about it. Oh, George. We had so little time together and he was so excited about the baby.
- (Juleee signals that Lois should sit on one of the chairs. She does so and Juleee sits next to her)**
- Juleee:** Can you tell me why your husband was going to London on the train?
- Lois:** He was going to see an exhibition at The Imperial War Museum. Once a soldier, always a soldier, I suppose. He was fascinated with all that military stuff.
- (Juleee gives the ring to Lois)**
- Juleee:** You can take the ring, Lois, but Doctor Gland will have to keep the other things until the investigation's over.
- (Lois takes the ring)**
- Lois:** **(Reflectively)** Just a year-and-a-half – that's all we had together. We met in the champagne tent at Ascot, fell hook, line, and sinker for each other, spent the weekend together in his London flat, and, next thing you know, we've flown to Vegas and got hitched.
- Juleee:** I hope you don't mind, but I've got a couple of questions to ask you, Lois.
- (Lois nods her assent)**
- Juleee:** Did your husband have a current will?

**Lois:** Yes. It's back at home. I stand to inherit everything – his fortune and more land and property than you can shake a stick at. It's all worthless now without George.  
**(Uncertainly)** That...that is what you were going to ask me, wasn't it?

**(Juleee nods and Lois is struck by a worrying thought)**

**Lois:** **(Aghast)** Oh, no! It wasn't his heart. You think he was murdered, don't you?

**Juleee:** I'm afraid it's looking that way.

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**Lois:** Who would want to kill George?

**Juleee:** I was hoping you might shed some light on that, Lois.

**Lois:** **(Horried)** You don't think I did it, do you?

**Juleee:** Did your husband have any enemies?

**Lois:** I can't think of any.

**Juleee:** Who else would inherit any money from your husband?

**Lois:** Well, our cook and housekeeper, Susan, will get a generous yearly income and my husband's business partner, Norman, will get George's half of their company. Norman and George owned Marden Stud farm near Marlborough. I'll need to go now. I have people to contact about this.

**(Lois stands then Juleee stands. Carrying the cat, Gland enters from stage right)**

**Juleee:** This is Doctor Gland. He is carrying out the post-mortem investigation.

**Gland:** My deepest condolences, Missus Bentlie.

**(Lois freezes as she sees Gland, a look of profound shock on her face. She stares at him for three seconds)**

**Lois:** **(Spoken to herself)** No. That's not possible. It can't be.

**Juleee:** Is everything alright, Lois?

**Lois:** I really must be going. I...I must go.

**Juleee:** Of course, Lois. It's important that you mention nothing about our suspicions.

**(Lois nods agreement and exits at upstage centre. Yutu then enters from stage right)**

**Gland:** What was that about?

**Juleee:** I think she's still in shock.

**(SFX. The sound of a landline telephone ringing. Gland, carrying the cat, exits at stage right to answer it. Ringing stops. Fox enters at stage left, carrying a box of papers. He places them on the table)**

**Yutu:** Goodness! That was quick, Freddy.

**Fox:** Oh, Inspector Gridlock's office is right next door. Just **(Points towards offstage left)** the other side of that wall.

- Yutu:** Next door. That must save you a lot of time.
- Juleee:** **(With a knowing glance at the audience)** It certainly does speed things up.
- Fox:** Right. This box contains the contents of Colonel Bentlie's bureau.  
**(He starts to remove papers and a diary, handing the first two to Juleee, the third and fourth to Yutu, and keeping the diary for himself)**
- Fox:** That's his will and the marriage certificate for you to have a shufty at, Juleee. You've got some personal correspondences, Yutu, and I'll take his diary.  
**(Juleee and Yutu peruse their papers. Gland enters from stage right, without the cat this time. Fox removes a pill bottle from the box and hands it to Gland who examines them)**
- Fox:** There was this bottle of heart tablets in the colonel's bureau. Do you think these are the pills he forgot to take with him on the train?
- Gland:** Yes. It's most likely. D.S. Fox. I've just taken a call from Inspector Gridlock. She said she'd forgotten to tell you that she wants you to interview Mike Hatt.
- Fox:** What? This is no time for jokes, Doc.
- Gland:** This is no joke, D.S. Fox. She says that Mike Hatt can shed more light on Colonel Bentlie's murder.  
**(Confused, Fox looks offstage right. SFX. A cat's meow. Juleee looks up from her perusing, smiles broadly, and nods knowingly)**
- Fox:** **(Bewildered)** This is getting weird. Are you feeling okay Doctor Gland?
- Juleee:** He's at it again, Foxy. You're doing it again, you naughty doctor, aren't you? Constable Hatt was the first of us plods on the scene and his first name is *Mike*, isn't it? *Mike Hatt*.
- Gland:** Of course it is. That's what I said. Constable Hatt is on his way here and should be arriving soon.  
**(A slight pause as Gland has a thought)**
- Gland:** It's most likely a coincidence, but the colonel here is the second poisoning we've had this week. I've got the body of a veterinary surgeon in there **(Indicates stage right)** who received a fatal sting from a patient's pet duck billed platypus.
- Juleee:** A duck billed platypus?
- Fox:** Oh, yes; they're the only poisonous mammal. They have venomous spurs on their back legs that inject a mixture of peptides that can be fatal if the victim has certain pre-existing conditions.
- Gland:** You're absolutely correct, D.S. Fox. Very good.
- Juleee:** How the dickens do you know that, Foxy?
- Fox:** Oh, you'd be surprised at how much I know.
- Juleee:** I definitely would. What condition did the vet have?
- Gland:** Sadly, it seems that the vet, Doctor Mills, had a lung disorder.
- Juleee:** Who found his body?

- Gland:** His veterinary nurse, Molly, found him dead on the floor of his surgery. The platypus's carrying case was open on the examination table, but the beast was still inside it.
- Yutu:** If it's an accident, why is the vet's body with us?
- (Unseen by the other three, Gridlock enters at stage left holding a filing cabinet drawer)**
- Gland:** Inspector Gridlock wants us to be 100% sure there's nothing suspicious about it considering it's the second poisoning this week.
- Gridlock:** And this filing cabinet drawer is the proof that our poor vet was, in fact, murdered.
- Juleee:** Hi, boss.
- Gland:** Good morning, Janet. Glad that you can join us. Proof you say?
- (Gridlock places the drawer on top of the filing cabinet and the others gather around her at downstage left)**
- Gridlock:** Good morning all. This drawer is from our vet's surgery. It has a pull handle very much the same as this one here in Doctor Gland's room. When I inspected the scene of Doctor Mill's death, I noticed that, just here **(Slips her hand under the handle)**, there was the residue from sticking tape that had been used to attach something.
- Yutu:** What was it?
- Gridlock:** Well, I believe that a sharp pin or tack smeared in poison was stuck under this pull handle. Help me reenact this, Fox.
- Fox:** Right you are, boss.
- Gridlock:** The vet opens the top drawer to take out the platypus owner's file.
- (Fox opens the top drawer in Doctor Gland's filing cabinet)**
- Gridlock:** His fingers would immediately come into contact with the hidden deadly pin.
- (Fox cries out in pain and jerks as if his whole body is in the grip of a sudden spasm of pain. Clutching his chest dramatically with one hand and extending the other with fingers splayed, he staggers around the room gasping and hamming it up enormously. He then collapses in a heap on the floor)**
- Juleee:** **(Wearily)** Oh, for goodness sake. You big ham.
- (Yutu applauds enthusiastically and Gland, hands on hips, shakes his head in a show of disapproval. Fox then stands and takes a bow)**
- Yutu:** And the effects of the poison on his lungs would kill him instantly.
- Gridlock:** Exactly. Oh, I'm sorry; we haven't been introduced, have we?
- Fox:** This is Yutu. She's Doctor Gland's new assistant.
- Gridlock:** Nice to meet you, Yutu.
- (Gridlock offers her hand and Yutu shakes it)**
- Yutu:** Same here, Inspector.
- Gland:** Yutu here is the best qualified assistant I've ever had. She's a former researcher from the University of Hong Kong.

**Fox:** Impressive.

**Juleee:** (**Aside – to Fox**) Not just a looker then, Foxy? You’ve done well there.  
(**Fox smiles and nods smugly**)

**Juleee:** (**Aside – to Fox**) Punching well above your weight, I’d say.  
(**For a moment, Fox appears indignant**)

**Yutu:** So, you’re saying that he was murdered?

**Gridlock:** Precisely. Whoever put the poisoned pin on the handle knew exactly which drawer he would open when examining the platypus. It was the drawer that contained all the customers with surnames starting with A to G.

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**Juleee:** And the platypus’s owner’s file was in that drawer.

**Gridlock:** Yes. Mister Liam Clarke is the animal’s owner. So, the poison on the pin was the same mixture of peptides as a platypus’s poison.  
(**A slight pause as Gridlock draws breath**)

**Gridlock:** Phew! That was a bit of a tongue twister, wasn’t it? The killer immediately removed the pin when the body was discovered. So, come on detectives, *who* is our killer?  
(**Gland smiles to himself and nods his head sagely, Fox and Yutu appear thoughtful for three seconds then Juleee raises her hand enthusiastically**)

**Juleee:** Oh, oh; pick me, pick me. I know the answer.

**Gridlock:** Enlighten us, Juleee.

**Juleee:** (**Excitedly**) It has to be the veterinary nurse, Molly. She was the one who found him and the one who arranged his appointments. She would know that he’d have to pull out that particular drawer for the platypus file and then, when she discovered the body, removed the poison pin and disposed of it.

**Gridlock:** Full marks, D.C. Chase. I found the pin in the flower bed outside the surgery’s window where she had thrown it as soon as she had removed it.

**Yutu:** How did you know it was there, Inspector?

**Gridlock:** The window is a very old sash design. Painted over many times and difficult to open and close. In her hurry to dispose of the pin, Molly hadn’t been able to close it properly.

**Yutu:** And, because it’s a particularly cold November, you thought it odd that the window was open at all.

**Gridlock:** Yes, indeed, Yutu. You’re going to fit in well around here.

**Fox:** That’s brilliant, boss. Smart thinking.

**Juleee:** (**Aside – to Fox**) What a suck up. You big creep.

**Gridlock:** Nobody other than Molly entered that room until myself and Constable Haywayne arrived. Unfortunately, it seems that Molly’s done a runner now. Disappeared.

- Juleee:** But, she doesn't know that you've found the poisoned pin, does she?
- Gridlock:** No she doesn't, Juleee. Constable Haywayne is staking out the flower bed as we speak. She's bound to show up there to retrieve it. Then he'll nab her.
- Fox:** So, two poisonings.
- Gland:** Different poisons used though.
- Gridlock:** Indeed. Different poisons but the *same* case. I am now 100% certain that Colonel Bentlie and our vet were murdered by the same person or persons.
- Fox:** Why though? What's the motive, boss?
- Gridlock:** Money, of course. Anyway, Constable Hatt will be able to shed more light on that when he gets here. I've asked him to bring our train witness, Missus Oldchap. I think she knows more than appears in her statement.
- (Uniformed constable, Mike and eyewitness Ann enter from upstage centre. Mike approaches Gridlock. Yutu exits at stage right swiftly)**
- Mike:** You wanted to see me, Inspector Gridlock.
- Gridlock:** Yes, Constable. Bring Missus Oldchap into my office next door. We can talk there.
- (Mike nods)**
- Gridlock:** **(Spoken to the others)** Keep me up to date, team.
- (Mike, Gridlock, and Ann exit at stage left. Juleee, and Fox peruse their documents)**
- Juleee:** Well, the will checks out. Lois gets the houses, the land, and four million quid. His business partner, Norman Foreman, inherits the stud farm and his housekeeper, Susan, gets forty thousand a year and the gatehouse.
- (Juleee scrutinises a clause in the will. Yutu enters at stage right)**
- Fox:** We need to speak to Susan and Norman as soon as possible.
- Yutu:** There's a letter from their doctor requesting Lois to go for a foetal ultrasound.
- Juleee:** A what?
- Fox:** That's an x-ray of the baby in the womb.
- Yutu:** Not an x-ray. They use sound waves instead.
- Juleee:** She got you there, didn't she? Clever clogs.
- (Yutu holds an ultrasound image for the others to see)**
- Yutu:** And here's the ultrasound picture.
- Fox:** This is from Colonel Bentlie's diary, written four months ago: **(Reading aloud)** *Doc telephoned this morning with the best of all news. Lois is pregnant. Words can't express what this means to me.*
- Yutu:** **(Sadly)** That's so sad. He'll never get to see his child grow up.
- (Fox puts his arm around Yutu to comfort her)**
- Juleee:** Knock that off, lover boy. We've got work to do here.

(Fox removes his arm reluctantly. Gland exits at stage right then immediately enters at stage right. He is now carrying a fake handgun which he places on the table before he moves to the whiteboard)

**Yutu:** (Suddenly angry) We've got to catch the scumbag who did this.

(Gland speaks his next lines as he writes *Molly, Lois, Norman Foreman, and Susan Playdell* on the whiteboard. Yutu, Fox, and Juleee watch him do this)

**Gland:** Have no fears on that score, Yutu. Inspector Gridlock always catches the villains.

(Gland draws the figure of a cat next to the names on the whiteboard)

**Juleee:** Three of the suspects would cash in big time when Bentlie kicked the bucket.

**Fox:** But, so far, we have no idea of a motive for the vet's murder. Juleee; pop over to Lois's place and interview the housekeeper, Susan and, when you've finished there, find Norman Foreman at Marden stud farm and talk to him.

**Juleee:** (Ironically) Oh, yes; of course. Right away. Would you *also* like me to renew your library books, collect your laundry, do your shopping and feed your dog while I'm at it?

**Fox:** I haven't got a dog.

**Juleee:** (Ironically) Oh, why didn't you say so. I'll swing by the R.S.P.C.A. on the way back and pick one out for you. Then you'll have a dog *and* a dogsbody (Points to herself), won't you?

**Fox:** Alright. Okay. I get it. Would you *please* do those two things for me, Juleee? Pretty please with a berry on top.

**Juleee:** Very well. I suppose so. And it's a *cherry* on top – not a *berry*.

(Juleee exits at upstage centre. Fox notices the cat drawing on the whiteboard)

**Fox:** What's the cat drawing for, Doc?

**Gland:** That's our little friend in there (Indicates offstage right). I have a feeling she's the key to this whole tangled mess. If only she could speak.

**Fox:** Why have you got this gun?

**Gland:** I was carrying out some ballistics tests yesterday and I'll need to return it to the armoury.

(Fox moves to the table, picks up the fake handgun, weighs it in his hand and then, striking a cool pose, aims it at Gland)

**Gland:** Don't worry; it's not loaded now.

(Slight pause as Gland considers this)

**Gland:** At least, I *think* it isn't.

(Very cautiously, Fox places the gun back on the table)

**Gland:** Would you mind giving Catty her milk, Yutu. It's in the fridge.

**(Yutu nods and exits at stage right)**

**Fox:** Catty? Is that what you're going to call her?

**Gland:** I might.

**Fox:** Hey, Doc; can I ask you something?

**Gland:** By all means.

**Fox:** We all just call you Doc. What is your first name?

**Gland:** Yes.

**Fox:** No; I'm asking you. What's your first name.

**Gland:** That is correct. A remarkably good guess, D.S. Fox.

**Fox:** What?

**Gland:** Indeed.

**Fox:** **(With a weary sigh)** Oh; of course it is. Your name is *Wat*.

**Gland:** It is. My parents named me after Wat Tyler, the leader of the 14<sup>th</sup> century peasants' revolt.

**Fox:** Naturally.

**(SFX. A landline telephone rings. Gland exits at stage right and the ringing stops. We hear his half of the conversation from offstage right)**

**Gland:** Ah; hello, D.C. Chase. Disappeared you say? That can't be a coincidence. Yes; I'll inform D.S. Fox right away.

**(A pause of four seconds as Gland listens)**

**Gland:** Very well. I'll tell Inspector Gridlock that. Cheerio.

**(Gland ends the call and enters at stage right)**

**Fox:** What's happening? What did Juleee say?

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**Gland:** Well, she's just about to interview Mister Foreman at the stud farm. There's a bit of a surprise with the housekeeper, Susan, though. She's disappeared. Lois Bentlie told Juleee that she hasn't seen hide nor hair of Susan for a couple of days now.

**Fox:** First Molly and now Susan. Both disappeared into thin air. That can't be a coincidence, can it?

**Gland:** It certainly isn't and it's further proof that these two deaths are indeed connected.

**(As Gland and Fox talk, Lois, dressed completely in black and totally unrecognisable from earlier, slips in at upstage centre. Unseen by Gland and**

**Fox, she exits at stage right. SFX. A Cat's angry hiss followed by SFX. A cat's loud meow. We hear Yutu's voice from offstage right)**

**Yutu:** (Startled) Stop! Get off her. Help!

**Fox:** (Urgently, concerned) Yutu!

**Gland:** Stop!

**(Carrying the cat, disguised Lois enters swiftly at stage right and heads for the upstage centre exit. Gland blocks her way. Fox exits at stage right and re-enters immediately with a distressed Yutu. Lois moves to the table, grabs a fake scalpel and holds it to the cat's throat. Gland, Fox, Yutu, and the cat freeze)**

**Lois:** (Disguising her voice) Get out of my way or I'll stick her.

**Gland:** You are not leaving here with that cat. Give her to me.

**(Lois moves to the upstage centre exit again and Gland blocks her way once more. Lois threatens Gland with the fake scalpel)**

**Fox:** Are you okay, Yutu?

**Yutu:** Yes. Just a bit shaken.

**Gland:** There is no way you are leaving with her. You're going to kill her anyway, aren't you?

**Lois:** (Disguised voice) Of course. Step aside.

**(Fox moves to the table, picks up the fake handgun and points it at Lois)**

**Fox:** Give him the cat. Just do it.

**(In a panicked state, Lois removes the pet's ID capsule from the cat's collar, gives the cat to Gland, and exits rapidly at upstage centre)**

**Fox:** Phew!

**(Fox places the fake handgun on the table and Gland places the cat in the drawer on top of the filing cabinet)**

**Gland:** There, there, Catty. You're alright now. We can keep an eye on you here.

**Yutu:** Why take the scalpel?

**Fox:** What do you mean?

**Yutu:** Why use the scalpel and not the handgun?

**Gland:** A good question.

**Fox:** And who was that anyway? Why try to take the poor cat?

**Gland:** I find it strange that the intruder removed that little ornament from Catty's collar.

**(Yutu is suddenly struck by a thought)**

**Yutu:** I don't think it's an ornament. Have either of you ever owned a pet cat or dog?

**Fox/Gland:** No.

**Yutu:** Neither have I. I think that cannister contained a piece of rolled up paper with the cat's name written on it. It's an ID capsule. We wouldn't have known that. I saw one on a friend's cat once.

**Gland:** Well, you're safe and sound now, Catty.

**Fox:** She does seem remarkably calm, Doc, after all that kerfuffle.

**Gland:** She's a very serene creature. Very relaxed. Very calm and...

**Yutu:** ...Unmoved?

**Gland:** Indeed.

**(Yutu strokes the cat)**

**Yutu:** And you've still got eight of your nine lives left.

**(Lights down. Tabs close)**

**Scene 2 – Dr Gland’s mortuary**

**(Tabs open. Lights up on Dr Gland’s mortuary. The stage set as at the end of Scene 1. The body has now been removed from the table or gurney at centre stage though a cloth is still draped over it. The cat is still in the vet’s drawer from scene 1 which remains on top of the filing cabinet. Gridlock, Gland, Yutu and Fox are on stage. Juleee enters at upstage centre carrying a rolled up A4 sized document)**

**Juleee:** Well, it looks like Norman Foreman is off the hook.

**(She hands the document to Gridlock who first opens then peruses it)**

**Juleee:** He hasn’t got a motive to speak of. He’s rolling in it anyway. He says the colonel met Lois at the stud farm though. That suggests Norman and Lois already knew each other before George met her.

**Fox:** Suspicious.

**Juleee:** Yeah. I think we can leave his name on your whiteboard for the moment, Doc. This is how it went at the stud farm.

**(Lights down as Norman, carrying a rolled up A4 document, enters from upstage centre and positions himself centre stage with Juleee. Gland, Gridlock, Fox, and Yutu stand upstage observing Juleee’s flashback conversation with Norman. Lights up)**

**Juleee:** Mister Foreman.

**Norman:** Yes.

**Juleee:** I’m detective Chase. Can I ask you some questions about your late business partner?

**Norman:** Of course.

**Juleee:** How long did you know Colonel Bentlie for?

**Norman:** Nearly thirty years. We were in the army together. When we retired, we bought the stud farm. We both loved horses you see.

**Juleee:** How well do you know Lois?

**Norman:** **(Defensively)** What’s that supposed to mean? What are you driving at?

**Juleee:** I have to ask these questions, Mister Foreman. Every little detail is important.

**Norman:** **(Gently)** I’m sorry. I suppose I overreacted. Lois often used to turn up at the stud farm. She seemed to get on pretty well with George. He was a gentle chap, you know. I got the impression that she didn’t trust blokes, but she took to George immediately.

**Juleee:** So, you get George’s half of the stud farm now?

**(Norman hands the document over to Juleee who peruses it as she listens to him)**

**Norman:** Yes. I know what you must be thinking and I know you’re just doing your job, but I inherited something in excess of six million pounds and a couple of London properties from my mother. I hardly need to bump off my oldest friend for financial gain.

**Juleee:** Yes; I see that. Can I keep hold of this will?

**Norman:** Of course. I'm fairly sure it will eliminate me as a suspect.

**Fox:** That's what you think, matey. We're watching you.

**Juleee:** Knock it off, Foxy. This is *my* flashback. *You're* not in this.

**(Fox mouths the word *sorry* then mimes zipping his mouth closed)**

**Juleee:** That's it. Done.

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**(Norman remains standing at centre stage. Juleee dismisses him with a wave of her hand)**

**Juleee:** **(In a loud whisper)** Go on; beat it.

**(Norman exits at upstage centre)**

**Gland:** Very interesting, D.C. Chase. I think that confirms our suspicions about one of the suspects, Janet.

**Gridlock:** Indeed it does, Wat.

**(Gland moves to the whiteboard and wipes away Lois's name)**

**Yutu:** Why did you do that, Doctor?

**Gland:** Ah; wait and see, Yutu.

**Gridlock:** We've got to save *something* for my big reveal.

**(SFX. The sound of a landline telephone ringing from stage right. Gland exits at stage right to answer it. We hear his side of the conversation from offstage)**

**Gland:** Oh; I see. Yes. I will inform Inspector Gridlock immediately.

**(Gland ends the call and enters at stage right)**

**Yutu:** What is it, Doctor?

**Gland:** That was Mister Foreman's secretary from the stud farm. It seems that, as we speak, Norman is being admitted to the Royal United Hospital in Bath. He is in a coma.

**Fox:** Goodness. What happened?

**Gland:** Shortly after you left, Juleee, Mister Foreman was kicked in the head by one of the horses.

**Yutu:** That can't be an accident, surely. Sounds like someone wanted to silence him for good.

**Fox:** Blimey! It's all kicking off, isn't it?

**Gland:** Not the *best* choice of phrases, given the circumstances, but, yes, the case is certainly taking a new direction.

**(Gland moves to the whiteboard and wipes away Norman Foreman's name)**

**Gridlock:** I've interviewed Missus Oldchap and I'm now certain that I know *exactly* how Colonel Bentlie was killed. Move this out of the way, Fox. Juleee and I will set up the train seats.

**(Fox and Gland move the empty gurney/table to an upstage position. Gridlock and Juleee place the two chairs side by side at centre stage. The chairs represent the seats on a train. Juleee sits in one of them)**

**Gridlock:** Ready?

**Juleee:** Yes. I'll be Colonel Bentlie. You can be the ticket inspector, Foxy.

**Fox:** Splendid. **(Shouting as he approaches the chairs)** Ticket's please! Let's see those tickets. Come on now. Tickets! Tickets!

**Juleee:** As a *mime*, Foxy. Do it in mime.

**(Fox nods. Gridlock narrates the incident and Fox acts it out in mime. As usual, he hams it up enormously, exaggerating everything greatly. Juleee sighs deeply and shakes her head)**

**Gridlock:** It was the second ticket inspector that was the imposter. She removed the poisoned pill bottle from Colonel Bentlie's jacket pocket, placed a gold wedding ring on his finger and pulled the emergency cord to stop the train.

**Juleee:** Clever. So, Colonel Bentlie had taken his pill at the usual time but had no idea his tablets had been swapped for poisonous ones.

**Fox:** Shh! You're supposed to be dead, Juleee. You can't speak.

**(Closing her eyes, Juleee slumps to one side, her tongue protruding from her mouth in a grotesque manner)**

**Gridlock:** The pretend ticket inspector then returned to the toilet where she had been hiding since boarding the train, removed her uniform, threw it *and the pills* out of the window, and exited the train as just another passenger in Swindon.

**(Fox mimes opening the toilet door, entering the room and, with great difficulty in such a confined space, removing the ticket inspector's uniform, opening the window and throwing it out)**

**Fox:** That's why he didn't have any tablets on him when his body was searched.

**(Fox wipes his forehead with his hand)**

**Fox:** Phew! I could do with a lie down after that.

**(Fox lies down on the empty gurney. The cloth that covered the body is still draped over it)**

**Juleee:** So, the *real* ticket inspector had already inspected the colonel's ticket. That was why he said, *Oh, no; not again*. It was nothing to do with forgetting his pills.

**Gland:** So, who was this fake ticket inspector?

**(Gridlock approaches Stage left and calls off)**

**Gridlock:** Constable Hatt! Can you bring Missus Oldchap in here.

**Mike:** **(Spoken from Offstage)** Right ho, Inspector.

**(A pause of four seconds before Mike and Ann enter at stage left)**

**Gridlock:** Missus Oldchap; Can you see the ticket inspector that pulled the emergency cord in this room?

**(Ann points at Yutu)**

**Ann:** That's her.

**Juleee:** That's a shocker.

**(Fox sits up and appears surprised but remains on the gurney)**

**Fox:** What?

**Gridlock:** Yutu is, in reality, Molly Jones, the deceased vet's secretary.

**(Yutu attempts to run towards upstage centre but is stopped from doing so and restrained by Mike)**

**Gridlock:** Molly here has been working with her sister, the missing housekeeper, Susan Playdell. Together they fabricated the most complex and convincing lie, a lie that, if we swallowed it, would make them very rich.

**Gland:** That's where the cat comes into it all, isn't it, Inspector?

**Gridlock:** It is. You see, the colonel never had a wife. The marriage certificate, the wedding ring on his finger, the photo – all fake.

**Juleee:** What about the colonel's diary entry about Lois being pregnant? The ultrasound picture?

**(Gridlock moves to the filing cabinet and strokes the cat)**

**Gridlock:** Lois was certainly pregnant. *This* is Lois **(Points to the cat)**. This is the Lois that Colonel Bentlie left everything to in his will. Every word we've read about Lois refers to this lovely little cat and *not* to a wife. Lois the cat must've given birth to her kittens ages ago. You do the next bit, Wat.

**Gland:** Of course. Doctor Mills was the cat's vet and his nurse. Molly knew all about the colonel's devotion to his cat. She hatched a plan with her dear sister, the colonel's housekeeper, Susan. Molly would kill Colonel Bentlie on the train and Susan would slip seamlessly into the role of a beloved wife, Lois.

- Juleee:** Ah. Susan switched the colonel's heart tablet bottle for an identical one full of poisonous pills. Devious.
- Gland:** And that number plate was a stroke of genius, I think. Susan and Molly must've bought a personalised car number plate from Auto Trader.
- Juleee:** L – O – I – 5 – N – Zero – 1. Lois number one.
- Gridlock:** Then all they had to do was attach it to Colonel Bentlie's classic Bentley.
- Juleee:** They invented a wife. The Lois that I interviewed is the missing Susan.
- Gridlock:** She is. Even as we speak, Constable Haywayne is bringing her here. She is under the impression that we wish to hand over her husband's personal effects.
- Fox:** How did you know that Susan and Molly were sisters, boss?
- Gridlock:** Remember when I met Molly? I shook her hand, didn't I?

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- Juleee:** Yeah; I thought that was a bit odd. You don't do that as a rule.
- Gridlock:** I noticed that she has a stubby little thumb, exactly like the woman who claimed to be Lois. The scratch marks on her wrist had been given to her by the real Lois when she tried, *unsuccessfully* to drown her in the canal.
- Gland:** That's why little Catty here was soaking wet when I found her. I thought it was strange because it hadn't rained in days.
- Fox:** This also explains why Molly didn't try to get the poison pin back. She was right here when you told us about Constable Haywayne's stake out.
- Juleee:** I suppose that, once Molly had killed the cat's vet and destroyed its records, there was nothing to suggest that the feline Lois had ever existed.
- Fox:** And Molly must've faked her amazing qualifications to land the job here with you, Doc.
- Gland:** She wanted to be right here during our investigation, checking on our progress or, as she hoped, our *lack* of progress. Clever.
- (Uniformed constable, John and Lois enter at upstage centre. Lois quickly senses the danger and, grabbing John by the arm, pulls a fake handgun from her bag or pocket and aims it at his head)**
- Yutu:** They know everything, Susan. We've got to scarper and fast.
- (Unseen by Yutu or Lois, Fox lies down on the gurney again, covers himself in the cloth, and remains still and hidden from view)**
- Lois:** Don't worry, sister dear. Anybody moves a muscle and I'll blow this plod's head off.
- John:** **(Panicked)** Don't shoot me. I have a wife and children.

- Juleee:** You lying toad, John. You told me you were divorced.
- John:** **(Pleading)** I beg you. Don't kill me. You're going to be a parent yourself. My kids need me.
- Juleee:** It's a fake bump, you numpty. She's not up the duff. I say we let her shoot him, boss. Please.
- (With the gun to John's head, Lois moves cautiously towards Yutu. Still facing the audience, she stops next to the gurney)**
- Gridlock:** It's over, Susan. You won't get the money now. You might as well put the gun down.
- Lois:** Forget it, plod. Molly and I are not spending a minute in prison.
- (Suddenly, Fox throws off the cloth, reaches out and grabs the fake handgun from Lois. He climbs down from the gurney and points the weapon at her. There is general surprise as John handcuffs Lois)**
- Fox:** **(Triumphantly)** Aha! You didn't see that coming, did you, Lois?
- Juleee:** She's *not* Lois, you muppet.
- (Molly has worked her way to the table and, unseen by the others, has picked up Doctor Gland's fake handgun and points it at Fox)**
- Yutu:** Put the gun down, Freddy or I'll shoot you dead.
- Juleee:** **(Pointing at John and Yutu)** We sure can pick 'em, can't we Foxy
- (Fox points the fake handgun at Yutu)**
- Yutu:** Drop it, Freddy.
- Fox:** You know I can't do that, Yutu.
- Juleee:** *She's Molly!* Am I the only one keeping up with all of this?
- Fox:** Was it all a lie?
- Yutu:** You mean you and me, Freddy? No. That bit was true. I wish I hadn't been attracted to you, but it just happened.
- Fox:** Give it to me, Molly. That gun isn't loaded. Is it, Doctor Gland?
- Gland:** That's right.
- (A slight pause as Gland considers this)**
- Gland:** Well, I'm *pretty sure* I emptied it after the ballistics test.
- Juleee:** *Pretty sure?* That's comforting. **(Indicating John)** You can always test it out on that lying ratbag. Go on, Freddy. Shoot John.
- John:** I *didn't* lie to you, Juleee.
- Juleee:** Too late now, John.

- John:** No. I was lying to *her* (**Indicating Lois**). I *am* divorced and I've never had any kids. I said all that stuff so she wouldn't shoot me.
- Fox:** It did make you sound a bit pathetic, John – a bit of a wimp.
- John:** I'd sooner be a wimp than *dead*, Fred.
- Juleee:** Fair enough. You're forgiven, John.
- Yutu:** Alright; that's all very sweet, but I want you to release Susan otherwise I'm going to start shooting people. Release her now.
- (John walks towards Yutu and stops when the fake handgun is pointing at his chest. He holds out his hand, palm upwards, in readiness to receive the fake handgun)**
- John:** No.
- Yutu:** (**Shocked**) What?
- John:** I said no.
- Gridlock:** This is no time for foolhardiness, Constable Haywayne.
- Juleee:** Be careful, John.
- John:** Give it to me, Molly. Give me the gun.
- Yutu:** (**Panicked, angry**) Back off, plod or I'll pull this trigger. I'm not bluffing.
- Lois:** She will. She's already killed the vet. She's got nothing to lose.
- Yutu:** That's really not helping, Susan. Back off, plod.
- (Yutu's voice becomes weaker during her next five sentences as her resolve crumbles)**
- Yutu:** No! I will shoot you. I will. I'll pull this trigger. Back off.
- (Yutu breaks down, sobbing quietly and hands the gun to John. John passes it to Gridlock who then pockets it. Mike handcuffs Yutu)**
- Gridlock:** Take them in and book them, Constable Hatt.
- (Mike nods and exits at upstage centre with Lois and Yutu, speaking his next lines as he does so)**
- Mike:** Molly Jones and Susan Playdell. I am arresting you for the murder of Colonel George Bentlie. 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.
- (Juleee approaches John and gives him a hug)**
- Juleee:** That was the bravest thing I've ever seen, John. I'm sorry for the stuff I said earlier.
- Gridlock:** Excellent work, Constable Haywayne. You'll get a commendation for this.

**John:** Just doing my job, Inspector.

**Fox:** Great work, John. You're a hero.

**Gland:** Hmmm. Now that I think about it, Constable Haywayne assisted me with the ballistics test yesterday.

**John:** **(Hastily)** Yes, Doctor. I don't think they need to hear about that now.

**Gland:** Ah, yes; I remember now. He loaded and then unloaded the handgun we were testing.

**John:** Bang goes that commendation.

**Fox:** I've been wondering, boss; who tried to kill Norman Foreman? Molly was here with us at the time. It can't have been her.

**Juleee:** Must've been Susan then.

**Gridlock:** Nobody tried to kill Norman Foreman. It was a coincidence.

**Fox:** Really?

**Gridlock:** Of course. It would be *much* weirder if there *weren't* any coincidences. After all, Norman was on a stud farm surrounded by horses. That makes it much less unusual. It's only the *timing* that makes it seem suspicious.

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**Fox:** I just assumed it was an attempt on his life.

**(As she says her next two sentences, Gridlock moves to the whiteboard, wipes it clean and writes ASS – U – ME on it)**

**Gridlock:** Detectives should *never* assume anything, Fox. It makes an *ass* of *you* and *me*.

**Ann:** Oh, that's very clever, Inspector.

**Gridlock:** Thank you, Ann. I like to think of it as my catch phrase.

**Fox:** Excellent, boss.

**Juleee:** Creep.

**Fox:** I wish *I* had a catch phrase.

**Juleee:** Something puzzles me though, boss. Norman said that Colonel Bentlie had met Lois at the stud farm. That's where their relationship began.

**Gridlock:** Yes; both those things are true. Norman was telling you about a stray cat that used to turn up at the farm. Think about what he *actually* said to you.

**(Juleee looks upwards and towards her right as if remembering Norman's words. We hear Norman speaking his lines from offstage)**

**Norman:** Lois often used to turn up at the stud farm. She seemed to get on pretty well with George. He was a gentle chap, you know. I got the impression that she didn't usually trust blokes, but she took to George immediately.

**Juleee:** Oh, yeah; I see that now.

**Gland:** **(Spoken to the cat)** And you, little lady, are going to be a very rich cat. The colonel's solicitor will sort that out for you.

**Fox:** And, remember: *Don't be scared, be prepared.*

**(Puzzled, they all look at Fox)**

**Juleee:** What are you gibbing on about, Freddy?

**Fox:** I'm trying out a catch phrase. What do you think?

**Juleee:** You *really* don't want to know what I think.

**Gridlock:** I'd give it a bit more thought if I were you, Fox. In my opinion, we could all do with a drink down at The King's Arms. First round's on me.

**(All nod and express approval)**

**Ann:** Does that include me, Inspector?

**Gridlock:** Of course, Ann. The more the merrier.

**(Gland approaches the cat and strokes her)**

**Gland:** She's falling asleep. **(Loud whisper)** You have a little snooze, Catty. I won't be gone long.

**Gridlock:** Ready, Wat?

**Gland:** Yes, Janet. Let's go.

**Juleee:** That cat's turned you into a big softy, Doc.

**Gland:** Nonsense.

**(Gland waves and blows a little kiss to the cat. All except Fox and Juleee exit at upstage centre. Fox and Juleee speak their next lines on stage before they exit at upstage centre)**

**Fox:** Oh; what about this one? *If you wanna catch the crook, do it by the book.*

**Juleee:** Or, how about this one, Freddy? *Stop your stupid rhymes and help me solve some crimes.*

**(Fox seems to be considering this until Juleee leads him offstage)**

**Juleee:** Come on, partner. The beer isn't going to drink itself.

**(Juleee and Fox exit at upstage centre)**

**(Lights down. Tabs close. The end)**