

- FLORENCE I'd rather tell you what happened –
- INSPECTOR For the time being, I'm making the decisions. Would you mind?
- FLORENCE Very well. Father Maximin, will you explain –
- INSPECTOR (*interrupting*) Father Maximin will have his say in a moment. (*Indicating the kitchen.*) Perhaps you wouldn't mind waiting in here, both of you.
- MAXIMIN Come along.
- (*He leads her out. The INSPECTOR looks piercingly at DANIEL.*)
- 
- INSPECTOR Right. Now, let's make some sense out of this.  
~~rigmarole.~~
- DANIEL ~~Rigmarole is right.~~ That woman forces her way in here and claims to be –
- INSPECTOR Do you mind if I sit down?
- DANIEL No, do . . .
- INSPECTOR You were saying?
- DANIEL Yes, well, it's like this. Just after you left I was sitting here quietly when suddenly in comes
- INSPECTOR Do you mind if I smoke?
- DANIEL (*disconcerted*) Er – no, no. In comes a totally unknown priest –
- INSPECTOR Would you like one?
- DANIEL Er – yes.
- INSPECTOR (*offering him a cigarette and lighting it for him*) Your nerves are in a bad state, aren't they?
- DANIEL Can you wonder? That girl has the face to say –
- INSPECTOR All right. I've sent in one report about you. I'm prepared to send in another. Now, let's begin at the beginning. You are Daniel Corban. Born at Metz, twenty-eighth November, 1928. I do wish you'd sit down. ~~There's no need to worry. I'm here.~~
- DANIEL Yes, I'm sorry.
- INSPECTOR You've no family, is that right?

DANIEL No, I never knew my parents. I was brought up at the St. Joseph Orphanage at Nancy.

INSPECTOR Ever been in trouble with the police?

DANIEL No – never, I swear! Never!

INSPECTOR (*easily*) ~~Don't get so excited.~~ I believe you. Go on.

DANIEL Last May, I met a wonderful girl called Elizabeth Marcellin. We got married three weeks later in Juan. We honeymooned in Venice. Two weeks ago we came here and then, as I told you the other day –

INSPECTOR You're both living in such perfect bliss that she leaves you. ~~Quite.~~

DANIEL (*soberly*) Yes, there is that . . .

INSPECTOR She comes home again and it suits you not to take her back. And there we are!

DANIEL No! That woman isn't Elizabeth. She says she is, but she's lying!

INSPECTOR But why in heaven's name should she want to impersonate your wife?

DANIEL God knows. (*Thoughtfully.*) I think I <sup>have</sup> ~~leave~~ an idea though . . . that so-called priest saw me as a likely victim and he tipped her off. She means to convince you, and everybody else, that she's my legal wife and then she'll be entitled to my money.

INSPECTOR Why? Are you very rich?

DANIEL No. But I've enough to live on.

INSPECTOR Then it doesn't make sense, does it?

DANIEL (*dashed*) No, I suppose not.

INSPECTOR Unless you have undeclared assets, ~~salted away~~ – have you?

DANIEL No, certainly not.

INSPECTOR Or – expectations?

DANIEL Expectations?

INSPECTOR A legacy, perhaps?

DANIEL Who from? I haven't any relations. (*Suddenly.*)

Wait a minute! I've got it! My wife's uncle! He's a millionaire. She mentioned some time ago that he was dangerously ill! That's it!

INSPECTOR Has he died yet?

DANIEL I don't think so. At least – I don't know . . . but he'll die sometime, and Elizabeth inherits all his money.

INSPECTOR (*enigmatically*) Curiouser and curiouser.

DANIEL (*mopping his brow*) Look, I'm scared. If she's cool enough to pass herself off as my wife, she won't stop at that. Before long she'll manage to become my widow. An accident, anything – it's happened before . . . and she'll be free to do as she likes!

INSPECTOR (*ruminating*) Hm. But how about your wife – your real wife? Is she going to stand by while another woman collars her fortune?

DANIEL That's why we've got to get her back. It's a matter of life and death.

INSPECTOR I dare say, but where are you going to find her?

DANIEL I'll advertise in the newspapers – I'll send out an SOS on the radio. She's got to come back, I need her more than ever now.

INSPECTOR Oh, now look here, this is all utterly fantastic. How *can* that girl pass herself off as someone else, I ask you?

DANIEL I don't know. But there's a highly organised gang behind her, I'm certain of that. My God, they're a cool bunch. You should have seen the way she sat there, waiting for you. Calm as anything, ~~she was~~.

INSPECTOR I'm curious to hear her side of it. She'll have to produce a watertight story, won't she?

DANIEL It's up to you to trip her up, then. And you'd better find my wife quickly. So long as Elizabeth isn't here, that woman can do as she likes. How long does it take to get an SOS on the radio?

INSPECTOR It isn't as simple as that. I'll have to get permission from Surete Headquarters in Paris.

DANIEL Then get it. (*He hands him the telephone.*) Here.

- INSPECTOR           At my own risk? No thank you. I'm not making any telephone calls until I get one concrete piece of evidence against this girl.
- DANIEL               Evidence! I had some photographs, only that priest stole them. If he is a priest, which I doubt. Why don't you investigate him, for a start?
- INSPECTOR           That should be easy enough. We'll see what we can do. Now, you go upstairs and lie down, while I question the woman. You look worn out.
- DANIEL               I'm all right. I feel fine now. I'll stay while you question her. She'll soon crack and I want to be there when she does.
- INSPECTOR           I hope you won't be disappointed.
- DANIEL               It shouldn't be difficult, surely?
- INSPECTOR           (wryly) Oh no. ~~Simple as pie~~. Too simple. I don't like it.
- DANIEL               What do you mean?
- INSPECTOR           I deal in facts. I don't interpret them. I listen. And I wait.
- DANIEL               (shortly) Well, don't wait too long. I'm desperate.
- INSPECTOR           (amiably) I think I'll see the priest first. (*He opens the door and calls.*) Father Maximin?
- (MAXIMIN comes in.)
- So sorry to bother you, Father. Just a few questions. For the record, you know. You have your papers on you, have you?
- MAXIMIN             (producing them) Yes. If you'd care to ring up the Bishop of Chambray.
- INSPECTOR           There's no hurry.
- DANIEL               Ring him now!
- INSPECTOR           Don't give me orders, do you mind? (*To the PRIEST.*) You'll excuse my checking up, won't you?
- MAXIMIN             Of course. You're only doing your duty. I'm afraid this poor fellow isn't at all well . . .
- DANIEL               Why, you two-faced —