

(A pause.)

FLORENCE Who is this witness?

INSPECTOR You'll know soon enough.

FLORENCE And he says he knows us both, does he?

INSPECTOR Yes.

FLORENCE Good. Let's wait then.

DANIEL Inspector, everything was against me and yet you're still trying to help me – why?

INSPECTOR I don't know – a flicker, a little nightlight in my head that never quite went out. But it's burnt right down now. One more setback, one more puff of wind and out it goes. For good. *(In a flash of contained anger.)* A man's been shot here, don't forget.

(A screech of tyres. Car doors bang outside.)

Now then, Corban, you stand there with your back to the door. You, Father Maximin, over here. Mme. Corban, you go to the top of the stairs. When I say 'come down,' you walk downstairs, without saying a word. This witness has no idea why she's been brought here. So her reaction will be quite spontaneous – and incontestable. Don't move, any of you! And not a word!

(FLORENCE has gone upstairs. The INSPECTOR moves towards the terrace. A policeman ushers in Mlle BERTON. She is a prim, self-righteous woman in her forties.)

Mlle BERTON I've never heard of such a thing in my entire life! I'm summoned to the police station and before I can turn round I'm bundled into a car and whisked off.

DANIEL The nurse!

INSPECTOR You keep your face to the wall.

Mlle BERTON Me, a respectable citizen of Chamonix! Well, Inspector? Perhaps you'd be good enough to tell me why I've been abducted like this. Your two men are acting like a pair of deaf mutes.

INSPECTOR Sit down, please.

- MLLE BERTON Now, what's the trouble? Let's make it brief. I've a pile of work waiting.
- INSPECTOR So have I, only mine won't wait. That's why you were hustled a bit. I'm sorry. I'm looking for someone who knows the people who live here. One of my men who's a neighbour of yours – understood you to say you had attended the wife. Is that right?
- MLLE BERTON Yes, I did. I came to give her an injection. I saw her up in her bedroom. Two weeks ago. On the Saturday.
- INSPECTOR Would you recognise them if you saw them again?
- MLLE BERTON Yes, of course I would! (*She gives a little giggle.*) Gracious, I didn't think this happened in real life.
- INSPECTOR (*calling to DANIEL*) Right. Turn round you.
- MLLE BERTON Why, M. Corban! Good morning.
- DANIEL (*warmly*) Mlle. Berton! I was never so pleased to see anyone in my whole life!
- MLLE BERTON (*a little taken aback*) Oh. Well, that's nice then.
- INSPECTOR You do recognise this gentleman as being M. Corban, you're sure of that?
- MLLE BERTON Absolutely sure.
- INSPECTOR (*he calls up the stairs*) Come down.
(*FLORENCE comes slowly down the stairs.*)
- MLLE BERTON (*in her best social manner*) Good morning Mme. Corban.
- FLORENCE Good morning.
- MLLE BERTON And how are we today?
- FLORENCE Very upset. My husband is dreadfully ill. He's just killed a man.
- MLLE BERTON How terrible for you.
- INSPECTOR Are you absolutely certain this is Mme. Corban?
- MLLE BERTON Yes, Inspector, of course I am.
- INSPECTOR (*exploding with rage, to DANIEL*) Well? Now will you give up?

- DANIEL They're all against me! All of them! It's no use – it's no use.
(He crumples up on the sofa.)
- FLORENCE Poor Daniel.
- MLLE BERTON I'm afraid I can't quite grasp what's going on.
- INSPECTOR He doesn't recognise his wife! And that's the least of his worries now!
- MLLE BERTON Dear me, how sad! Such a charming couple, so devoted –
- FLORENCE He needs a sedative of some sort. Couldn't you give him something?
- MLLE BERTON A course of shock treatment, that's what he wants. May I go now?
- DANIEL You're lying.
- MLLE BERTON *(to the INSPECTOR)* I am not going to stay here and be insulted! If you've finished with me, I'd be glad if you'd have me driven back to Chamonix.
- INSPECTOR Of course I will. I'm sorry you've been bothered, but it was very important.
(He goes out with MLLE BERTON.)
- MLLE BERTON *(as she goes)* Shocking business, shocking . . .
- DANIEL *(to FLORENCE, who is standing there smiling)* You've won, haven't you?
- FLORENCE Yes.
(MLLE BERTON comes back into the room, calling over her shoulder to the INSPECTOR off stage.)
- MLLE BERTON Excuse me a moment, Inspector. I've forgotten my handbag.
(She picks up her bag, opens it and the priest drops a white envelope into it. She skips out calling:)
I think I'll walk after all.
(She has gone.)
- DANIEL *(yelling)* Inspector! Inspector! Come back!