

ACT 1, SCENE ii

This scene takes place the next afternoon. Mrs. Boyle is still complaining, but Major Metcalf is happy with the excellent breakfast and lunch and tells her so. Mrs. Boyle is writing a letter and Major Metcalf is reading when Wren enters and quickly exits again to seek quiet in the library. Soon after, Miss Casewell enters and turns the radio up loudly enough to force Mrs. Boyle out of the room. Wren again enters claiming to have fled Mrs. Boyle in the library. Wren and Miss Casewell talk, and she lets slip that she had a poor, deprived childhood too awful to think about.

The phone rings, and the local police superintendent claims he is sending a policeman over and that Giles should follow his orders. At the mention of the policeman, Miss Casewell flees the room clearly upset. Once again, Mrs. Boyle enters to complain about the heat, leading Giles to rush off and put more coal in the furnace. Mrs. Boyle tells Mollie that Wren's story and name sound "fishy" and she thinks Mollie should check his references. Paravicini enters and warns Mollie that she should get references before she lets guests stay. He tells her that she can never tell who is a murderer, robber, madman, etc. At the same time he continues to leer suggestively at Mollie. Later, Mollie lets it slip about the police calling. At the news, Mrs. Boyle is disturbed; Metcalf is incredulous.

Paravacini, who has been attending the fire, is startled enough to drop the poker.

Just then, Sgt. Trotter arrives on skis. Major Metcalf goes to use the phone and discovers that the line is dead. After his entrance, Trotter assembles everyone to tell them that he has been sent to provide police protection and alleges that someone present may be connected to the murder of a woman

In London. The murdered woman was a local woman, who with her husband, was imprisoned for a number of years in connection to a child-neglect case. The woman and her husband were found guilty of actions that resulted in the death of one of the three children who had been mistreated while in their foster care. Clues left at the scene of the murder indicated that there may be two more possible victims. Trotter claims that the murderer may be one of the other two children who survived, a young man and woman—both in their twenties. Clues left at the scene have led Trotter to the guest house. Trotter asks everyone present if any of them have any connection to the child's death so many years ago, but all present deny it. At that, Trotter goes off to search the house, and the guests begin to speculate about the murder and the possible identity of the murderer. Metcalf says that he knows that Mrs. Boyle was the magistrate who sent the children to live with those foster parents.

Sgt. Trotter returns from inspecting the house and states that he is going to phone his supervisor with a full report. When told that the phone lines are dead, Trotter remarks that they may have been cut. He sends Giles upstairs to check the other extension but not until he has mentioned that the killer may be among the guests. With everyone out of the room,

Trotter follows the telephone wire and crawls out the window searching for a cut end. Mrs. Boyle returns to the room and rushes over to close the open window. Just then, someone else enters the room. The lights are turned off and a scuffle and gurgles are heard. Mollie enters, turns on the light, and Mrs. Boyle's body is seen on the floor.