

PARAVICINI. (*moving down right*) I left Major Metcalf in the dining-room. (*He opens the door down right and looks in.*) Major Metcalf! He's not there now.

GILES. I'll try and find him.

(*GILES exits up right. MOLLIE and MISS CASEWELL enter from the stairs. MOLLIE moves to right of the refectory table and MISS CASEWELL to left of it. MAJOR METCALF enters up left from the library.*)

MAJOR METCALF. Hullo, wanting me?

TROTTER. It's a question of my skis.

MAJOR METCALF. Skis? (*He moves to left of the sofa.*)

PARAVICINI. (*moving to the archway up right and calling*) Mr Ralston!

(*GILES enters up right and stands below the arch. PARAVICINI returns and sits in the small armchair down right.*)

START

TROTTER. Did either of you two remove a pair of skis from the cupboard near the kitchen door?

MISS CASEWELL. Good Lord, no. Why should I?

MAJOR METCALF. And *I* didn't touch 'em.

TROTTER. Nevertheless they are gone. (*to MISS CASEWELL*) Which way did you go to your room?

MISS CASEWELL. By the back stairs.

TROTTER. Then you passed the cupboard door.

MISS CASEWELL. If you say so – I've no idea where your skis are.

TROTTER. (*to MAJOR METCALF*) You were actually *in* that cupboard today.

MAJOR METCALF. Yes, I was.

TROTTER. At the time Mrs. Boyle was killed.

MAJOR METCALF. At the time Mrs. Boyle was killed I'd gone down to the cellar.

TROTTER. Were the skis in the cupboard when you passed through?

MAJOR METCALF. I haven't the least idea.

TROTTER. Didn't you see them there?

MAJOR METCALF. Can't remember.

TROTTER. You must remember if those skis were there then?

MAJOR METCALF. No good shouting at me, young fellow. I wasn't thinking about any damned skis. I was interested in the cellars. *(He moves to the sofa and sits.)* Architecture of this place is very interesting. I opened the other door and I went on down. So I can't tell you whether the skis were there or not.

TROTTER. *(moving down to left of the sofa)* You realize that you, yourself, had an excellent opportunity of taking them?

MAJOR METCALF. Yes, yes, I grant you that. If I wanted to, that is.

TROTTER. The question is, where are they now?

MAJOR METCALF. Ought to be able to find them if we all set to. Not a case of "Hunt the Thimble." Whacking great things, skis. Supposing we all set to. *(He rises and crosses right towards the door.)*

TROTTER. Not quite so fast, Major Metcalf. That may be, you know, what we are meant to do.

MAJOR METCALF. Eh, I don't get you?

TROTTER. I'm in the position now where I've got to put myself in the place of a crazy cunning brain. I've got to ask myself what he wants us to do and what he, himself, is planning to do next.

I've got to try and keep just one step ahead of him. Because, if I don't, there's going to be another death.

MISS CASEWELL. You still don't believe that?

TROTTER. Yes, Miss Casewell. I do. Three blind mice. Two mice cancelled out – a third mouse still to be dealt with. *(moving down centre, with his back to the audience)* There are six of you here listening to me. One of you's a killer!

STOP