

GILES. (*moving to right of the refectory table*) Stop frightening my wife at once.

MOLLIE. It's silly of me. But you see – I found her. Her face was all purple. I can't forget it...

PARAVICINI. I know. It's difficult to forget things, isn't it. You aren't really the forgetting kind.

MOLLIE. (*incoherently*) I must go – the food – dinner – prepare the spinach – and the potatoes all going to pieces – please, Giles.

(GILES and MOLLIE exit through the archway up right. PARAVICINI leans on the left side of the arch and looks after them, grinning. MISS CASEWELL stands by the fireplace, lost in thought.)

start  
TROTTER. (*rising and crossing to left of PARAVICINI*) What did you say to the lady to upset her, sir?

PARAVICINI. Me, Sergeant? Oh, just a little innocent fun. I've always been fond of a little joke.

TROTTER. There's nice fun – and there's fun that's not so nice.

PARAVICINI. (*moving down centre*) Now I do wonder what you mean by that, Sergeant?

TROTTER. I've been doing a little wondering about you, sir.

PARAVICINI. Indeed?

TROTTER. I've been wondering about that car of yours, and how it happened to overturn in a snowdrift (*He pauses and draws the right curtain.*) so conveniently.

PARAVICINI. Inconveniently, you mean, don't you, Sergeant?

TROTTER. (*moving down to right of PARAVICINI*) That rather depends on the way you're looking at it. Just where were you bound for, by the way, when you had this – accident?

PARAVICINI. Oh – I was on my way to see a friend.

TROTTER. In this neighbourhood?

PARAVICINI. Not so very far from here.

## THE MOUSETRAP

**TROTTER.** And what was the name and address of this friend?

**PARAVICINI.** Now really, Sergeant Trotter, does that matter now? I mean, it has nothing to do with this predicament, has it? *(He sits at the left end of the sofa.)*

**TROTTER.** We always like the fullest information. What did you say this friend's name was?

**PARAVICINI.** I didn't say. *(He takes a cigar from a case in his pocket.)*

**TROTTER.** No, you didn't say. And it seems you're not going to say. *(He sits on the right arm of the sofa.)* Now that's very interesting.

**PARAVICINI.** But there might be – so many reasons. An *amour* – discretion. These jealous husbands. *(He pierces the cigar.)*

**TROTTER.** Rather old to be running round with the ladies at your time of life, aren't you?

**PARAVICINI.** My dear Sergeant, I am not, perhaps, quite so old as I look.

**TROTTER.** That's just what I've been thinking, sir.

**PARAVICINI.** What? *(He lights the cigar.)*

**TROTTER.** That you may not be as old as you – try to look. There's a lot of people trying to look younger than they are. If somebody goes about trying to look older – well, it does make one ask oneself why.

**PARAVICINI.** Having asked questions of so many people – you ask questions of yourself as well? Isn't that overdoing things?

**TROTTER.** I might get an answer from myself – I don't get many from you.

**PARAVICINI.** Well, well – try again – that is, if you have any more questions to ask.

**TROTTER.** One or two. Where were you coming from last night?

**PARAVICINI.** That is simple – from London.

**TROTTER.** What address in London?

PARAVICINI. I always stay at the Ritz Hotel.

TROTTER. Very nice, too, I'm sure. What is your permanent address?

PARAVICINI. I dislike permanency.

TROTTER. What's your business or profession?

PARAVICINI. I play the markets.

TROTTER. Stockbroker?

PARAVICINI. No, no, you misunderstand me.

TROTTER. Enjoying this little game, aren't you? Sure of yourself, too. But I shouldn't be too sure. You're mixed up in a murder case, and don't you forget it. Murder isn't just fun and games.

PARAVICINI. Not even this murder? *(He gives a little giggle, and looks sideways at TROTTER.)* Dear me, you're very serious, Sergeant Trotter. I always have thought policemen have no sense of humour. *(He rises and moves to left of the sofa.)* Is the inquisition over – for the moment?

TROTTER. For the moment – yes.

PARAVICINI. Thank you so much. I shall go and look for your skis in the drawing-room. Just in case someone has hidden them in the grand piano.

*Lead*  
*(PARAVICINI exits down left. TROTTER looks after him, frowning, moves down to the door and opens it. MISS CASEWELL crosses quietly towards the stairs left. TROTTER shuts the door.)*

TROTTER. *(without turning his head)* Just a minute, please.

MISS CASEWELL. *(pausing at the stairs)* Were you speaking to me?

TROTTER. Yes. *(crossing to the armchair centre)* Perhaps you'd come and sit down. *(He arranges the armchair for her.)*

*(MISS CASEWELL looks at him warily and crosses below the sofa.)*

MISS CASEWELL. Well, what do you want?