

MISS CASEWELL. (*in a deep, manly voice*) Afraid my car's bogged about half a mile down the road – ran into a drift.

GILES. Let me take this. (*He takes her case and puts it right of the refectory table.*) Any more stuff in the car?

MISS CASEWELL. (*moving down to the fire*) No, I travel light.

(GILES moves above the armchair centre.)

Ha, glad to see you've got a good fire. (*She straddles in front of it in a manly fashion.*)

GILES. Er – Mr. Wren – Miss – ?

MISS CASEWELL. Casewell. (*She nods to CHRISTOPHER.*)

GILES. My wife will be down in a minute.

MISS CASEWELL. No hurry. (*She takes off her overcoat.*) Got to get myself thawed out. Looks as though you're going to be snowed up here. (*taking an evening paper from her overcoat pocket*) Weather forecast says heavy falls expected. Motorists warned, etcetera. Hope you've got plenty of provisions in.

GILES. Oh yes. My wife's an excellent manager. Anyway, we can always eat our hens.

MISS CASEWELL. Before we start eating each other, eh?

(*She laughs stridently and throws the overcoat at GILES, who catches it. She sits in the armchair centre.*)

CHRISTOPHER. (*rising and crossing to the fire*) Any news in the paper – apart from the weather?

MISS CASEWELL. Usual political crisis. Oh yes, and a rather juicy murder!

CHRISTOPHER. A murder? (*turning to MISS CASEWELL*) Oh, I like murder!

MISS CASEWELL. (*handing him the paper*) They seem to think it was a homicidal maniac. Strangled a woman somewhere near Paddington. Sex maniac, I suppose. (*She looks at GILES.*)

(GILES crosses to left of the sofa table.)