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# An Innocent Little Murder

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*English translation  
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# **An Innocent Little Murder**

*English translation by Anne-Christine Gasc*

Involuntary adultery can easily lead to involuntary manslaughter, but getting rid of the body of evidence is a whole different matter...

## **Characters**

Emily  
Carter  
Nathan

*Alternate version of this play is available for 2 women and 1 man.*

## Act 1

*A bo-ho living room looking well lived-in. A mobile phone left on the ground rings in the empty room. Emily enters, visibly preoccupied. Her hands are covered in blood. She looks at the phone but doesn't pick up.*

**Emily** – Ah shit ...

*The mobile phone stops ringing. Emily takes a handkerchief, delicately picks up the mobile phone and drops it in her pocket. She quickly tries to tidy the room a little. She picks up a blood-stained blouse off the ground, and examines it, aghast.*

**Emily** – Oh no, this isn't happening...

*The doorbell rings. She stuffs the blouse under a sofa cushion. The doorbell rings again.*

**Emily** – Coming!

*She disappears from view to open the door and returns following Carter, her husband.*

**Carter** – I'm sorry, I locked myself out again. Nothing's going right today. I was assigned a legal aid case, a woman accused of murder. You're going to love this. A DIY enthusiast who cut up her husband in three pieces with a jigsaw. And you won't believe... *(He stops when he notices Emily isn't listening.)* Are you sure you're alright? Still thinking about the subject of your new play?

**Emily** – I am actually, but that's not the problem...

**Carter** – You're scaring me. What's wrong? Don't tell me your mother's coming to dinner?

**Emily** – No, no, don't worry...

*Carter sits on the sofa.*

**Carter** – Then it can't be that bad. Speaking of dinner, what do you want to eat? I don't really feel like cooking anything... We could order sushi and eat watching telly?

**Emily** – Yes... Well, no... I'm not really in the mood, actually.

**Carter** – I wasn't aware one had to be in the mood to scoff down a couple of tuna rolls... *(He sits next to her on the sofa and kisses her.)* It's not like I'm asking you to shag me senseless, right now, on the living room carpet. *(Seeing her lack of enthusiasm)* Right... Maybe later then... I'll order two dinner menus. At least with sushi there's no risk of food getting cold...

**Emily** – Unlike dead bodies...

*Carter is visibly surprised when he hears the morbid reply.*

**Carter** – Right... You can tell me all about your problems while we wait for the delivery, and I'll do my best to rekindle your spirits... (*He takes his mobile and calls the restaurant.*) Oyster or plum?

**Emily** – What?

**Carter** – The sauce, for your sushi! Do you want oyster sauce or plum sauce?

**Emily** – Yes...

*She gets up from the sofa and paces around the room.*

**Carter** – One of each, then... (*To the person on the phone*) Yes, home delivery. Two California menus. Yes, 9 Dudley Gardens... So, one oyster and one plum. Very well, thank you... (*He puts his mobile away.*) Half an hour... Come, sit next to me. Daddy will make it all better... (*He moves a cushion to make room for her and sees part of the blood-stained blouse sticking out. He pulls out the blouse.*) What the hell is this? What happened? (*Noticing the blood on her hands*) Are you hurt?

**Emily** – No, I... It's not my blouse, and it's not my blood either...

**Carter** – Whose blood is it, then?

**Emily** – Carter, listen, I think I may have killed someone...

**Carter** (*in disbelief*) – You think you...? What are you talking about?

**Emily** – No, I mean... I don't think... I'm sure I did...

**Carter** – Emily, this doesn't make any sense. People don't go around killing other people. Look at me for instance. I've often wanted to kill your mother but I've never done it. You know why?

**Emily** – No...

**Carter** – Because I'm not a killer, that's why! I don't act impulsively. I think things through. I measure the pros and the cons. And I conclude that, all things considered, twenty years in prison would be too high a price to pay for the fleeting pleasure of strangulating your mother.

**Emily** – It seems that women have a much harder time resisting their impulses.

**Carter** – Listen, Emily, I work with criminals all day at the central criminal court—and believe me, you don't fit the profile at all.

**Emily** – That's what I thought too... Until earlier today.

**Carter** – It's the subject of your new play!

**Emily** – Pardon?

**Carter** – The story of a man who comes home from work, and his wife tells him she killed his mistress? You want to test your idea on me, is that it?

**Emily** – For fuck's sake Carter, I killed someone, do I have to spell it out for you?

**Carter** – You keep saying that, but you don't get to just call yourself a killer... You have to prove it.

**Emily** – I do...?

**Carter** – You have no idea how many people confess to crimes they didn't commit. Just last week, I was defending a Boy Scout accused of murdering a priest. You're not going to believe this, but half a dozen other scouts were claiming they did it too... I had to fight the other lawyers to convince the judge that my client was the guilty one.

**Emily** – I see... And how did you do that?

**Carter** – Quite easily... My client was the only one who knew under which tree the holy man's body was buried.

**Emily** – So?

**Carter** – So? Where is the body?

**Emily** – The body is in the next room, in the kitchen.

*Carter appears to suddenly grasp the gravity of the situation.*

**Carter** – In the kitchen? You're not serious...

**Emily** – Why don't you have a look?

*Carter looks in the direction of the kitchen, hesitates, but doesn't go.*

**Carter** – But... What happened? Never mind... Who is it?

**Emily** – It's... Tessa.

**Carter** – Tessa?

**Emily** – Tessa.

**Carter** – Oh no... Not Tessa ...

**Emily** – You were hoping for someone else?

**Carter** – Oh my God, Emily... Tell me this isn't true...

**Emily** – I'd love to... Unfortunately...

**Carter** – It's joke, isn't it?

**Emily** – That's her blouse you're holding. Look... Her initials are embroidered inside the collar.

*Carter looks at the cufflinks, aghast.*

**Carter** – PS...

**Emily** – Tessa Sanchez. Do you know anyone who still embroiders their initials on their clothes these days, apart from kids in primary school?

**Carter** – But Emily... I mean... Why?

**Emily** – It was an accident...

**Carter** – An accident? You mean... like a household accident?

**Emily** – Something like that, yes...

**Carter** – Well, go on! You were trimming the hedge in the garden, didn't see her peeing in the bushes and you cut off her... carotid? If it's anything like that, no need to worry, it wouldn't be considered a crime. With a good lawyer...

**Emily** – Yeah, no, it didn't happen exactly like that...

**Carter** – So how did it happen then?

**Emily** – It was more like... manslaughter.

**Carter** – What do you mean?

**Emily** – We had a talk.

**Carter** – A talk? You mean an argument?

**Emily** – Yeah, sure... An argument...

**Carter** – You had a violent argument, and then...?

**Emily** – Violent enough for me to kill her. Hang on, I feel like I'm already under interrogation.

**Carter** – I'm sorry... Pure force of habit.

**Emily** – In any case, I killed her.

*Carter is crushed.*

**Carter** – And it's all my fault...

**Emily** – What?

**Carter** – Well, indirectly, but still...

**Emily** – How is it your fault?

**Carter** – I won't let you down, Emily. Crimes of passion have a low conviction rate, you know.

**Emily** – A crime of passion? Do you mean... do you think that... Tessa and I?

**Carter** – You killed her because I slept with her, didn't you?

**Emily** (*bewildered*) – You slept with Tessa?

*A moment of hesitation.*

**Carter** – That's not why you killed her?

**Emily** – I didn't know you slept with her!

**Carter** – Oh, it was a long time ago...

**Emily** – How long ago?

**Carter** – I can't even remember... Maybe six months... give or take...

**Emily** – You call that a long time ago... Next you'll tell there's a statute of limitations?

**Carter** – It was... an accident.

**Emily** – But of course... a household accident?

**Carter** – It wasn't even an affair, Emily... It was only one time. I wasn't even in love with her...

**Emily** – Oh good, I feel much better already... Knowing my husband sleeps with women he doesn't love.

**Carter** – Not women! Just Tessa, I swear. It was a misunderstanding! I mean, Tessa! Seriously, can you see me with Tessa!

**Emily** – Steady, don't forget she's my best friend.

**Carter** – Don't forget you killed her...

**Emily** – So how did it happen, then?

**Carter** – It was... a misunderstanding.

**Emily** – I see... A sort of accidental adultery...

**Carter** – Exactly!

**Emily** – I've never heard a more fucked up excuse. Is that your legal defense strategy?

**Carter** – Hang on, let's each stick to our roles. You committed a crime, not me. So now you're the one who's going to have to deal with the police.

**Emily** – Because you're planning on calling the police?

**Carter** – Why, what do you suggest we do?

**Emily** – I was planning to call the police—until now. But now that I know Tessa is your mistress, no one will believe it was an accident!

**Carter** – So this is my fault? And stop calling her my mistress. We only slept together once!

**Emily** – Doesn't matter. It'll still look like revenge. Premeditated, even. I'm going away for life!

**Carter** – We'll tell them...

**Emily** – What? About your accidental adultery?

**Carter** – Hey! At least I didn't kill anyone!

*A beat.*

**Emily** – So, what do we do?

**Carter** – What do you mean, we?

**Emily** – I thought we were in this together? You cheat on me with my best friend, and after I kill her you'd wash your hands of it?

**Carter** – But you didn't know I slept with her when you killed her!

**Emily** – Let's not split hairs.

**Carter** – Actually, why did you kill her?

**Emily** – It's really stupid.

**Carter** – I'm listening...

**Emily** – Well... Okay... So she said she really didn't like my last play.

**Carter** – Your last play? *Hiroshima*?

**Emily** – Okay, maybe it wasn't my best one.

**Carter** – It bombed.

**Emily** – How kind of you to remind me...

**Carter** – I told you it needed a different title... And you killed her for that? Because she didn't like a play that everyone thought was shitty?

**Emily** – I think it rekindled the rivalry we've had for years. Tessa and I have always competed—for everything, including boys. I remember once in secondary school...

**Carter** – Whatever. What happened?

**Emily** – It came to blows. She slipped and hit her head on a corner of the table.

**Carter** – The amount of blood on her blouse would indicate a sharp object was involved, rather than blunt force trauma.

**Emily** – Blood was pouring out of every orifice. Eyes, nose, ears. She convulsed for 15 minutes at least. And then nothing.

**Carter** – And you didn't think you should call 999?

**Emily** – You know what it's like, I say 15 minutes but maybe it was just a few minutes or even a few seconds, who knows. I was panicked. I froze. I didn't realise what was happening. When I decided to call for help, it was already too late... (*The doorbell rings. Emily looks worried.*) You think that's them now?



**Carter** – Who? The ambulance?

**Emily** – The police!

**Carter** – If you didn't call them...

**Emily** – The neighbours might have heard something.

**Carter** – Oh wait, it must be Nathan...

**Emily** – Nathan? Tessa's husband? How would he already know?

**Carter** – He doesn't know. He called me an hour ago. I completely forgot. He said he wanted to talk to me about something important. I told him to stop by...

**Emily** – We shouldn't let him in.

**Carter** – He's going to find that strange. I told him I'd be home.

**Emily** – You're right... OK, you answer the door. I'll hide in the kitchen.

**Carter** – We should tell him everything, don't you think? Get it over with...

**Emily** – Tell him what? That his wife's body is lying on the kitchen floor in a pool of blood? Do you really think that's the best way to break it to him that he's a widower?

*The doorbell rings again.*

**Carter** – OK, I won't be long, we'll figure it out after.

**Emily** – Just make sure he doesn't come in the kitchen.

*Emily goes to hide in the kitchen. Carter goes to the front door, after tucking the blouse back under the cushion.*

**Carter** – Coming!

*Carter returns with Nathan.*

**Nathan** – I'm sorry to drop by at such short notice. Tessa isn't here, is she?

**Carter** – Tessa? Why on Earth would she... no, why?

**Nathan** – I thought I saw her bike downstairs, never mind. Nothing looks more like a bike than another bike, don't you think?

**Carter** – Yes... Sure...

**Nathan** – And Emily?

**Carter** – Yes, yes, she's here, but... she's working. On her new play. And you know her, when she's writing...

**Nathan** – I understand... Especially since her last play was such a failure... What was it called again?

**Carter** – *Hiroshima.*

**Nathan** – That's right. No wonder it bombed.

**Carter** – Surely that's not what you wanted to talk to me about...

**Nathan** – I'm really sorry to bother you. I know it's not the right time, but it's important.

**Carter** – But of course! It's no bother at all, that's what friends are for... Do you want something to drink?

**Nathan** – No thank you... I'm OK...

**Carter** – Good... *(Nathan looks at him, surprised.)* No, I mean... Please, sit down... *(Nathan is about to sit on the sofa, next to the cushion hiding the blouse.)* Err... no, why don't you sit over there.

*Carter points Nathan to a stool or a low bean bag that looks uncomfortable.*

**Nathan** *(sitting down)* – OK...

**Carter** – It's just that, these sofas, you know what they're like... It's easy to fall asleep. I'm a little tired and... I want to be really present for you... *(He grabs a seat similar to Nathan's and sits down.)* So, what is it that you wanted to tell me that's so important?

**Nathan** – So... You're not going to believe this... I just found out Tessa was cheating on me.

**Carter** – Really? And you didn't know?

**Nathan** – Well... no. Why, did you?

**Carter** – But of course not! I mean... And do you know who with?

**Nathan** – Not really.

**Carter** – Oh good, that's good...

**Nathan** – What do you mean, good?

**Carter** – No, I mean, wouldn't it be worse if you knew who it was?

**Nathan** – I don't know...

**Carter** – And it doesn't even really matter, right? What matters is that she's cheating on you.

**Nathan** – Yes... Well yes, you're right. But it would be worse if she cheated with someone I know.

**Carter** – Yeah...

**Nathan** – Can you imagine? Finding out your wife is cheating on you with your best friend?

**Carter** – What? What are you talking about...?

**Nathan** – No, don't worry. I could never do that to you.

**Carter** – Thank you.

**Nathan** – So anyway, it's over. I'm divorcing her.

**Carter** – Hang on, wait a minute... Isn't it a little early to make such a decision? Maybe it was an accident...

**Nathan** – An accident? What do you mean? Do you think people hit on each other by mistake? Absentmindedly? And when things get hot and heavy, they just call the insurance company and let them sort it out?

**Carter** – No, of course not, but...

**Nathan** – And then, when she comes home, the wife casually says to her husband: oh, by the way, I meant to tell you, I had a little accident, I rear-ended the neighbour's husband.

**Carter** – She rear-ended the neighbour's husband?

**Nathan** – No, but I'm just saying! It's an example. Are you sure you're OK? This story seems to be upsetting you more than me.

**Carter** – I'm worried about you. As a couple you were so... When we said Tessa and Nathan, it was...

**Nathan** – Like saying Emily and Carter.

**Carter** – So now when you tell me you're breaking up...

**Nathan** – Goes to show... Nothing lasts forever.

**Carter** – That's true... Well, I mean...

**Nathan** – Anyway, I'm never sleeping under the same roof as that bitch ever again.

**Carter** – I understand, of course...

**Nathan** – And I can count on you for my divorce, right?

**Carter** – Are you sure? I don't know if... I'm friends with you both, it could become awkward.

**Nathan** – Are you kidding? You're my friend! Tessa is more Emily's friend. We were friends long before we met them!

**Carter** – That's true...

**Nathan** – Bitches, every last one of them... Well, not Emily of course.

**Carter** – For sure.

**Nathan** – Although, they are two sides of the same coin, you know...

**Carter** – Come on... Not all women... I assure you that Emily ...

**Nathan** – Oh just you wait, when I serve her the divorce papers she won't know what hit her. After all, you're a killer, right?

**Carter** – Pardon?

**Nathan** – As a lawyer! You're a killer, aren't you? At least, that's your reputation.

**Carter** – It is?

**Nathan** – Paloma told me. You know, you handled her divorce.

**Carter** – I did?

**Nathan** – Yes, remember? She was married to a dentist. Big practice in an upscale neighborhood. Apparently, dental work was only one of the reasons his patients opened their mouths. Anyway, long story short, apparently you left him with nothing.

**Carter** – That's an exaggeration... And that's not what lawyers are for, you know... A divorce is first and foremost the failure of a life partnership. Lawyers are there to make the separation less painful...

**Nathan** – Come on, don't be so modest. I know you're a killer. And let me tell you, I want you to bleed Tessa dry.

*Emily returns, wearing a blood-stained apron.*

**Emily** – Hello.

**Nathan** – I thought you were writing your next successful play?

**Emily** – I was also doing some cooking at the same time...

**Nathan** – Really...

**Emily** – Fun fact, writing and cooking have a lot in common... Both require good ingredients. A proven recipe. A little salt. A little spice. Then you let it simmer...

**Nathan** – I see... I didn't know you were a foodie as well... What's your signature dish?

**Emily** – Deer burgers.

**Carter** – Her famous secret recipe. No one's allowed in the kitchen when she's preparing it.

**Emily** – And you, how are you?

**Carter** – Tessa is no longer with us... I mean, Nathan... He's no longer with Tessa...

**Emily** – No?

**Nathan** – I just found out the bitch was cheating on me. Did you know anything about it?

**Emily** – Me? But of course not! Why would I know anything about it?

**Nathan** – Sisters before misters, don't think I don't know what it's like. Always ready to cover for each other. Or offer a couch to crash on...

**Emily** – I promise, Nathan, it wasn't like that... Come on! We're friends. How can you think that I...

**Nathan** – I'm sorry, I'm letting the emotions get the better of me... I don't know what I'm saying anymore.

**Carter** – Do you want to stay here for a bit, until you feel good enough to go home? And we can talk again in the morning, with clear heads. What do you think?

**Nathan** – Home? I told you, it's out of the question! Actually, since you're both here, I want to ask you a favour...

**Emily** – Yes...?

**Nathan** – Would you mind if I slept here tonight?

**Carter** – Well...

**Nathan** – I'll find a solution tomorrow... Or I'll go and stay with my mother. But tonight, right now... (*He starts to sob*) I need to feel supported... And you're my only friends...

*Carter walks towards him to give him a hug.*

**Carter** – Yes, of course ...

**Nathan** – I knew I could count on you... I can't face talking to my mother right now. She hated Tessa. She always said he was a man-eater. Unfortunately, she was right, of course. But I can't bear her preaching to me right now. But with you...

**Carter** – But of course, we're here for you. Aren't we, Emily?

**Nathan** – You're true friends. It means so much to me...

*Nathan leans into Carter for a hug.*

**Carter** – Don't worry about it... It's not that bad... Well, I hope it isn't...

**Emily** – Right, I'll leave you boys to it, that deer meat isn't going to grind itself...

*Carter watches her leave, horrified.*

**Nathan** – I swear, if she was standing right there in front of me, I don't think I could control myself... I'm having burger meat fantasies of my own right now. Fucking animal.

**Carter** – Come on, don't say that...

**Nathan** (*wiping his tears*) – I am so sorry to drag you into this.

**Carter** – Are you feeling better?

**Nathan** – A little... I think I'll take that drink now...

**Carter** – Err... Yes... What would you like?

**Nathan** – A glass of tap water will be fine. Don't get up, I'll get it from the kitchen.

**Carter** – No!

**Nathan** (*surprised*) – Oh right, I forgot... the secret recipe for the deer burgers.

**Carter** – You need something stronger, trust me.

**Nathan** – I don't know if...

**Carter** – I'll have one with you. I need a drink too.

**Nathan** – You do?

*Carter removes a bottle and two glasses from a cabinet. He fills the glasses and raises his for a toast.*

**Carter** – We're stronger than that, aren't we? (*Breaking down*) We'll get through this...

*He bursts into tears and now it's Nathan's turn to walk towards him to console him.*

**Nathan** – I knew you were a friend but I really had no idea it would affect you that much...

*Carter gets a hold of himself.*

**Carter** – Let's toast. It won't make Tessa come back but we'll feel less tense.

*He empties his glass in one gulp. Nathan decides to do the same.*

**Nathan** – Wow... Strong enough to raise the dead...

**Carter** – If only...

**Nathan** – What is it?

**Carter** – Potato liqueur.

**Nathan** – Oh yes, it's... We can really taste the... Actually, it doesn't taste of anything, does it?

**Carter** – No.

**Nathan** – But it does clear out the old airways...

**Carter** (*absentmindedly*) – Yes...

*Silence.*

**Nathan** – How could I have been so fucking stupid...?

**Carter** – Pardon?

**Nathan** – With Tessa! I didn't see anything coming...

**Carter** – She might come back... Maybe this is all just a nightmare, any moment now we'll all wake up.

**Nathan** – I really don't think so... Remember when you asked me if I knew who it was?

**Carter** – Who?

**Nathan** – The one Tessa cheated with!

**Carter** – Oh yes, and do you?

**Nathan** – More like who they are...

**Carter** – How do you mean?

**Nathan** – I guessed the password for her so-called work laptop, and I accidentally stumbled on her dating site account...

**Carter** – A dating site...?

**Nathan** – TwoNightStands.com... She's not cheating on me with a man, Carter, but with hundreds of them!

**Carter** – No?

**Nathan** – She's a full-on sex addict, I tell you. Old, young, fat, thin, blond, brunette... She's not picky when it comes to that. She sleeps with anything that moves.

**Carter** – Really...?

**Nathan** – Men and women, for that matter...

**Carter** – No...?

**Nathan** – I am discovering a whole new side to her... And their pussies...

**Carter** – Oh because she also takes pictures of...

**Nathan** – No, I mean... their cats. On their profile pictures. They all have cats. She hates cats.

**Carter** – Of course. That would be too far, there are limits, after all.

**Nathan** – Yeah well, Tessa's pushed the limits so far, they're more like a horizon.

**Carter** – Really?

**Nathan** – You should see her chat history... Good grief. I'm not joking when I say I'm discovering a whole new side to her. Because with me, it was always rather plain vanilla...

**Carter** – Yes, with me as well... I mean, with Emily.

**Nathan** – You should be careful. You think you know them, and then one day...

*We hear the sound of an electric knife, or hedge trimmer, or chain saw...*

**Carter** – She's trimming the hedges...

**Nathan** – For the garnish?

*The sound increases in volume and intensity.*

**Carter** – Maybe I should go and have a look... I'll let you find the guest room...

**Nathan** – Of course. Don't worry, I know the way... Thanks again, for everything.

*Nathan leaves. Emily returns.*

**Emily** – Where did he go?

**Carter** – I strangled him and dumped the body in the tub until we decide what to do next. Might as well get rid of all annoying witnesses.

**Emily** – You didn't?

**Carter** – Of course not! What about you? What on earth is going on? What's all this noise?

**Emily** – I couldn't leave her in the middle of the kitchen floor.

**Carter** – So what did you do?

**Emily** – I stuffed her in the freezer. Just until we decide what we want to do with the body.

**Carter** – And then you decided to do some yard work? In the kitchen?

**Emily** – No, but... She wouldn't fit in one piece...

**Carter** – Oh dear God... I can't believe this... How did we get here, Emily? That's it, I'm calling the cops.

*He takes out his mobile.*

**Emily** – Do you want to send me to prison?

**Carter** – That's where criminals belong, isn't it?

**Emily** – But I keep telling you, it was an accident.

*He changes his mind.*

**Carter** – Are you sure she's dead?

**Emily** – Do you mean, am I sure she was really dead before I cut her in three pieces with the hedge trimmer?

**Carter** – I'll take “Things I Ever thought I'd hear from the woman I married”.

**Emily** – Remember our vows... For better or for worse... You should have thought about that before.

**Carter** – Before what?



**Emily** – Before cheating on me with Tessa...

**Carter** – You've lost your mind, Emily. You need help. You said so yourself, it was involuntary manslaughter. We'll plead temporary insanity.

*Carter calls the police.*

**Emily** – Don't do that...

**Carter** – It's the only solution, trust me.

**Emily** – You'll be charged as an accomplice.

**Carter** – How so?

**Emily** – His wife is here and you haven't told him anything.

**Carter** – But why would I have helped you kill her?

**Emily** – Because she was cheating on you too! You wanted revenge.

**Carter** – What do you mean, she cheated on me?

**Emily** – I overheard you talking earlier. I knew about her account on that website...

**Carter** – So you knew everything?

**Emily** – You know, when it comes to getting laid, women like to gossip... Makes you wonder if they don't cheat on their husbands just so they can share all the juicy details with their friends. Must be their gatherer-instinct: gather the men, then sit around with their friends to trade stories.

**Carter** – And you didn't tell me?

**Emily** – Why would you need to know? It would only have made you uncomfortable with Nathan...

**Carter** – I see, so you wanted to protect me. Regardless, that doesn't give me a reason to kill Tessa.

**Emily** – Really...?

**Carter** – Why would I have killed her?

**Emily** – Jealousy, of course. Just like Nathan...

**Carter** – What are you talking about now...

**Emily** – You thought you were the only one. You couldn't bear the idea that you were just one among many. And when I told you I wanted to kill her, you offered to help. With her dead, there would be no trace of your transgression.

**Carter** – You are completely out of your mind, Emily!

**Emily** – We both are. Birds of a feather and all that. I can just picture the headlines: “Evil couple dismember best friend's wife's body and store it in the freezer while dining with the widower in the next room”.

**Carter** – You're not thinking of telling that version of the story to the police, are you? Just to drag me along with you? It's monstrous!

**Emily** – But I won't have to say anything! That's what the judge will think. Even if I maintain that I was acting alone, he'll think I'm trying to protect you.

*He seems uncertain.*

**Carter** – You think?

**Emily** – Either way, it'll be the end of your career. No one will want their divorce handled by someone who dismembers his mistress with a hedge trimmer.

**Carter** – Unfortunately, you have a point...

**Emily** – And don't forget the part where you'll have to tell the judge that you cheated on me involuntarily.

**Carter** – But that part's true, I swear!

**Emily** – Involuntary adultery? Run it by me, see if you can convince me...

**Carter** – It was that weekend where you were in Liverpool for the premiere of *Hiroshima*, actually. I had to drive to Brighton to be in court, but the trial got postponed.

**Emily** – You can just say that you didn't want to witness the flop in person...

**Carter** – Either way, we were both meant to be away. So the house was supposed to be empty.

**Emily** – Tessa had asked me for my keys, so she would have somewhere to take one of her lovers. So it was you?

**Carter** – Of course not! I came home during the night. I didn't know you had let her use the house... and our marital bed, to shag one of her floozies!

**Emily** – It's the only double bed in the house... So?

**Carter** – So I went to bed immediately after coming home.

**Emily** – With Tessa...

**Carter** – I knew there was someone in the bed, but I thought it was you! I thought maybe you decided to come home right after the play ended. I knew it would flop so I wasn't surprised...

**Emily** – Thank you for the vote of no confidence...

**Carter** – I was very quiet, I didn't want to wake you up.

**Emily** – But in the end your partner woke up nonetheless.

**Carter** – Tessa's tart left at some point during the night. And apparently, she was ready for seconds.

**Emily** – So you were subbed in, is that it? You came in at half time...

**Nathan** – She must have thought I was him. It's only the next morning that I realised she wasn't you. Although, I did think something was off.

**Emily** – Why, because it was better?

**Carter** – Of course not... Let's just say it was different... And I couldn't figure out why you insisted on calling me Alex69.

**Emily** – She pulled out all the stops, is that it?

**Carter** – It's just that... I forgot what it was like...

**Emily** – Go on, add insult to injury...

*Nathan returns.*

**Nathan** – I'm sorry... Could you lend me a toothbrush? I left in such a hurry. I hadn't planned...

**Emily** – Sure, just remember, try not to jump in the wrong bed tonight... You never know...

**Nathan** – Err, sure...

**Emily** – I'll leave you to it... You must have lots to talk about... Compare notes...

*She leaves.*

**Nathan** – Whatever did she mean?

**Carter** – I have no idea... Actually, I do...

**Nathan** – What?

**Carter** – She's accusing me of cheating on her.

**Nathan** – And... is it true?

**Carter** – It was... an involuntary adultery.

**Nathan** – Involuntary adultery...? Is that a joke?

**Carter** – No.

**Nathan** – Okay...

**Carter** – I came home one night. There was a woman in my bed. It's only the next morning that I realised it wasn't my wife.

**Nathan** – Are you fucking kidding me?

**Carter** – Absolutely not.

**Nathan** – Carter, no one is going to believe this. Certainly not your wife...

**Carter** – You're right. It's totally unrealistic.

**Nathan** – It's shame, though. Can you imagine? Guilt-free pleasure.

**Carter** – And without consequences...

**Nathan** – Was is worth it?

**Carter** – I...

**Nathan** – Cheating without knowing, is not really cheating. (*They both burst into nervous laughter, but Nathan stops abruptly.*) But... if Tessa ever told me a story that stupid she'd really be taking me for a fucking idiot...

**Carter** – Yes, of course... But... Don't you think that part of being a couple means being able to forgive the other person?

**Nathan** – Forgive? I'd kill her, believe me.

**Carter** – A figure of speech, I imagine.

**Nathan** – You've never wanted to kill someone?

**Carter** – Well...

**Nathan** – If Emily cheated on you, for example, could you kill her?

**Carter** – Why? Do you know something I don't?

**Nathan** – No, no, of course not...

**Carter** – So... you've never cheated on Tessa then?

**Nathan** – No... Well... That depends on what you mean by cheating.

**Carter** – Is that so?

**Nathan** – I mean, technically...

**Carter** – I see... Do blowjobs count, that kind of thing... ?

*Emily returns.*

**Emily** – It'll be a few minutes. I spilled the beans.

**Carter** – Spilled the beans? So you've decided to confess everything?

**Emily** – No, I meant the beans for dinner...

**Nathan** – Oh, that's right... the deer burgers...

**Carter** – I'll go freshen up...

*Carter leaves. Embarrassed silence.*

**Nathan** – You didn't tell him?

**Emily** – Tell him what?

**Nathan** – Our little indiscretion, on New Years Eve.

**Emily** – But of course not! Why do you ask?

**Nathan** – I don't know... He's acting weird...

**Emily** – That's not why, don't worry about it.

**Nathan** – No, but because we've never spoken about it... I was a little drunk. You too... It didn't mean anything, right? It was just... an accident.

**Emily** – Oh, not you as well... What it is with you both and your accidents...

**Nathan** – I'm sorry for bringing it up, I shouldn't have...

**Emily** – Don't worry, it's already forgotten...

*Carter returns, looking a little out of sorts.*

**Carter** – So, let's eat this deer then.

*The doorbell rings.*

**Emily** – Who could that be...?

**Carter** – The police?

*Nathan, puzzled by their strange behaviour, looks at them, worried.*

**Emily** – I'll get it... If I'm not back in five minutes, call my lawyer...

*Carter glances at Nathan with a meaningful look, to reassure her.*

**Carter** – A private joke.

**Nathan** – OK...

**Carter** – Do you like deer meat?

**Nathan** – Yes, well...

*Emily returns with a package.*

**Emily** – It's the sushi delivery.

**Carter** – Oh right, I completely forgot.

**Nathan** – You ordered sushi as well?

*Embarrassed silence.*

*Black.*

## Act 2

**Nathan** – Your burgers are really excellent, Emily. Congratulations.

**Emily** – Thank you... I apologise for the lead shot that almost broke your tooth. It doesn't matter how careful you are picking them out, there's always a couple left.

**Nathan** – It's not that easy to remove all trace of a crime, is it? I had no idea you were a hunter...

**Carter** – Me neither, actually...

**Emily** – Well, nowadays it's not something you brag about.

**Nathan** – So you really killed this poor animal yourself?

**Emily** – Oh you know, I'm only starting out... I only have a small rifle.

**Nathan** – Yes, that's very true...

**Emily** – No I mean, I use a small caliber. Nothing wrong with my rifle...

**Nathan** – But a deer, that's quite a large animal. Don't you need a large caliber to shoot one?

**Emily** – Let's say it was more like... an accident.

**Nathan** – An accident? Well, what do you know...

**Emily** – I was returning from a hunting trip where I didn't catch anything... With Tessa, actually. And on the way back this deer ran across the road, right under the car.

**Nathan** – Maybe it was a suicidal deer. Looking to end its miserable stag life.

**Emily** – Yes, maybe...

**Nathan** – You're really full of hot air...

**Emily** – Pardon?

**Nathan** – No, I mean, you spend a lot of time outside, getting fresh air... hunting, golfing...

**Carter** – You play golf, too?

**Emily** – Yes, I've started playing again... a little...

**Nathan** – And... do you really play golf with Patricia, or was it just an alibi you gave her for her dates with her lovers?

**Emily** – No, no, we really play golf together, I promise. She's very good, actually...

**Nathan** – Yes... And from what she tells me, the 18 holes in Epping Forest is worth the trip...

**Carter** – You should take me with you one of these days, Emily. I'd love to try a little golf, too.

**Nathan** – And you'll have to give me that burger recipe. Oh no, that's right... that's also a secret.

*Embarrassed silence.*

**Carter** – Does anyone want more beans?

**Nathan** – No thank you... really... I can't stomach anything else...

**Emily** – If you want to go and rest your head, don't mind us.

**Nathan** – With everything that's happened I don't think I'll be able to sleep for a while... but it's nice to know that in these horrible times you can count on your friends.

**Carter** – Consider this your home, Nathan...

**Emily** – Dessert, anyone?

**Carter** – We have Cornettos in the freezer...

**Nathan** – Thank you, I'm fine... I'll go wash my hands, if I may...

*He gets up.*

**Emily** – Use the bathroom, the kitchen is rather messy...

*He leaves. Emily helps herself to another burger.*

**Carter** – Nice to see you taking this so well... I see it hasn't spoiled your appetite...

**Emily** – Starving myself to death wouldn't change anything.

**Carter** – Why did you tell him you were a hunter?

**Emily** – I don't know... It just came out. I had to find something to keep him from going in the kitchen.

**Carter** – And what's with these burgers? What are they made of? Or is it better if I don't ask...?

**Emily** – No, no... That's really deer meat... Organic, free-range deer meat...

**Carter** – Also, we'll have to talk about this golf thing later, because it sounds fishy to me...

**Emily** – Of course, I have nothing to hide...

**Carter** – Except for a body... So I'll ask you one more time: is this a joke? Because if it is, it's in really poor taste. May I remind you that the widower is in the room next door.

**Emily** – Go check in the freezer yourself if you want. But be warned: it's not a pretty sight.

**Carter** – You're right... See no evil... Hear no evil...

**Emily** – You won't be able to say you didn't see or hear anything... We're not talking about frozen babies, shoved among Tupperware of frozen leftovers. This is a 6-foot-tall woman split in three 2-foot segments ...

**Carter** – You're a monster... Preventing the lawful burial of a body, do you know what that gets you? Do you want me to spend the best years of my life in prison?

**Emily** – Mutually assured destruction, Carter. If I fall, you fall. You have to help me!

*Nathan returns.*

**Nathan** – I'm going to call her.

**Carter** – I don't think that's a good idea.

**Nathan** – I'm going to have break up with her at some point!

**Carter** – You sure you don't want to think about it a little longer?

**Nathan** – All the thinking's been done. I'll never forgive her for what she did to me.

**Emily** – Sure, but talking to her can wait until tomorrow, no?

**Nathan** – If I don't come home tonight, she's going to wonder what happened. She might even call the police.

**Carter** – Ah yes, in that case... Maybe you should let her know.

**Emily** – Given the state she's in I don't think she'll call the police, but sure...

**Nathan** – The state she's in?

**Emily** – I mean... She might already suspect that you know, and feel uncomfortable about the situation.

**Carter** – Don't you think it'd be better if you went home? Tomorrow is another day...

**Nathan** – I'll never be able to sleep under the same roof as this bitch again.

**Carter** – You think you're in the right state of mind to talk to her?

**Nathan** – Look, I'm not going to discuss how we split our assets or who gets custody of the dog. I just want to tell her to contact my lawyer. Aka you.

**Emily** – Oh, so you're going to handle their divorce?



**Carter** – I don't know... Yes... Nathan asked me...

**Emily** – Right... So if you insist on calling her now... do you want to be left alone?

**Carter** – If you want, you call her from the...

**Emily** – Not the kitchen.

**Nathan** – You don't have to leave, I'd like you to stay actually.

*He calls Tessa on his mobile. We hear a phone ringing in the next room.*

**Nathan** – That's weird, it sounds like it's ringing next door...

**Emily** – Must be mine.

**Nathan** – Aren't you going to get it?

**Emily** – Yes, yes, sure...

*She leaves. Carter gives Nathan a puzzled look.*

**Nathan** – She's not picking up...

**Carter** – Well... I'm not surprised.

**Nathan** – Why do you say that?

**Carter** – If she saw you were calling, and if she knows why you're calling her, and... she probably isn't going to pick up.

**Nathan** – It's her... Tessa? I know everything. What do you think? Oh please, don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about. Yes, your 18<sup>th</sup> hole, that's right. What's your username on TwoNightStands.com again? Oh yes, Tessa327. Hard to believe there are 326 other bitches with the same loser first name. You piece of shit! Is that all you have to say? You little fucker. It's over, Tessa327. Next time you want to talk to me, talk to my lawyer. And guess what? You've already met him, it's Carter. Yes, Carter! That's right, Emily's wife, your best mate. Didn't see that one coming, did you? Have a good night, you piece of shit! (*He puts his mobile away.*) Right, that's done. I feel better now I got it all out...

*Carter is aghast.*

**Carter** – Who was that?

**Nathan** – What do you mean, who was that? Her! Who do you think?

**Carter** – Tessa? What did she say?

**Nathan** – Not very much, actually. What could she say? She sounded strange. I think I'm going to take an aspirin... I feel a headache coming on... Can I get a glass of water from the bathroom?

**Carter** – Of course.

**Nathan** – Bitch...

*Nathan leaves. Emily returns.*

**Emily** – Are you OK? What happened?

**Carter** – You really took me for a ride, didn't you?

**Emily** – What?

**Carter** – Nathan. He just spoke to Tessa on the phone.

**Emily** – It was me.

**Carter** – What?

**Emily** – Tessa's mobile! It was in her pocket so of course, it's still there now... I picked up when he called, to avoid raising suspicions...

**Carter** – Really? So that's why he said she had a strange voice.

**Emily** – I did like they do on the telly. I covered the speaker with a handkerchief.

**Carter** – You are certifiably insane...

**Emily** – But now we have an alibi. I couldn't have killed her an hour ago if he just spoke to her on the phone.

**Carter** – Unless the police decide to trace the location of the call and find that it came from our kitchen.

**Emily** – Do you think they'll look that closely?

**Carter** – This is a serious crime. They might.

*Silence. Emily pretends to be on the verge of tears.*

**Emily** – If you knew how much I'm sorry... If only I could go back in time, just an hour... Unfortunately that's not possible...

**Carter** – Did you really kill her because she didn't like your play?

*A beat.*

**Emily** – Yes... Among other things...

**Carter** – What other things?

*A beat.*

**Emily** – She told me she slept with you.

**Carter** – I see... Why didn't you tell me before?

**Emily** – I wanted to see if you would tell me first...

**Carter** – So you didn't believe her either when she told you it was a misunderstanding.

**Emily** – She didn't tell me it was a misunderstanding. That's the problem...

**Carter** – Bitch... I'm going to kill her!

**Emily** – I've already done that... I'm only asking you to help me get rid of the body. If you love me... Do you love me?

**Carter** – Of course I love you. How do you not know that?

**Emily** – I do know that.

**Carter** – What about me? Do you believe me, that I slept with her by mistake?

**Emily** – I'm trying... You have to agree that's more difficult...

**Carter** – What can I do to prove how much I love you...

**Emily** – You've already done enough. But you're right, there is zero chance of me not going to prison. And I don't want to be the reason you're going down with me. I'll call the police.

**Carter** – No, wait!

**Emily** – What?

**Carter** – I don't want you to go to prison for years and years.

**Emily** – So what do we do?

**Carter** – I'll help you get rid of Tessa...

**Emily** – How do we do that?

**Carter** – You know, as a lawyer, I've had many clients share trade secrets with me over the years. Including a few foolproof ways to fit a six-foot-long body through the drain of a bath tub, after a night soaking in a bath of acid.

**Emily** – I see...

**Carter** – But first we have to get rid of him.

**Emily** – Get rid of him?

**Carter** – He can't be here running around!

**Emily** – Oh, you scared me...

*Nathan returns.*

**Nathan** – What's with the faces? Is there a problem?

**Carter** – No, no, of course not.

**Nathan** – I tried lying down a bit, but I can't sleep.

**Emily** – How about we open a bottle of something to take the edge off?

**Nathan** – I don't know if I can, I just took some pills... I don't think you can mix them?

**Carter** – Come on, one small drink after dinner never hurt anyone.

**Nathan** – You know what, why not? It'll help digest the deer... Tasty, but a little rich, no?

*Carter pours three glasses and discretely slips a pill in one of them.*

**Emily** – Oh, you're going for the lighter fluid again, good choice...

**Nathan** – Potato liqueur...

**Carter** – A specialty from Sodgibbon.

**Nathan** – Sodgibbon?

**Emily** – Carter has an uncle there. A man of the cloth. He distills it at night in the illegal still he setup in the church crypt.

*Nathan, miles away, isn't really listening.*

**Nathan** – I wonder where she could have met her lovers.

**Emily** – There's plenty of hotels everywhere.

**Nathan** – She was so stingy. I really doubt it. In fact, I'm convinced that if she signed up on that site, it was just so she wouldn't have to pay for gigolos. Because trust me, judging by the photos of her conquests, she wasn't too picky about the goods...

**Carter** – Thanks...

*Nathan looks at him, intrigued.*

**Emily** – Why did you use the past tense?

**Nathan** – Pardon?

**Carter** – You said: she was so stingy.

**Nathan** – Because she's dead to me.

**Carter** – Come on, don't say that...

**Nathan** – Either that, or she had a friend who let her use her flat... Women are quick to cover for each other in situations like that, aren't they? Present company excluded, of course, Emily...

*Emily tops her glass.*

**Emily** – Come on, stop thinking about it... Have another drink instead.

**Nathan** – I don't know what's... Just a few moments ago I couldn't sleep, but now I'm crashing... I think I'll go lie down...

*He falls to the ground.*

**Emily** – Looks like the headache pills kicked in, in the end...

**Carter** – More like the sleeping pill I spiked his drink with.

**Emily** – You didn't...?

**Carter** – Now we have all the time we need to get rid of the body.

**Emily** – His?

**Carter** – No, Tessa's! Help me take him to the guest room. He's going to sleep until tomorrow morning and when he wakes up, he'll be officially widowed.

**Emily** – We even spared him the complications of a nasty divorce.

**Carter** – So really, we're doing him a favour.

*They drag him by his feet backstage and return immediately.*

**Emily** – And for Tessa, what do we do?

**Carter** – A tub full of acid will take too long.

**Emily** – Especially if Nathan wants to take a shower tomorrow morning...

**Carter** – You're right...

**Emily** – We'll bag Tessa in three bin bags. And we'll take her for a walk in the forest...

**Carter** – Or a zoo. I saw that in a film once... We throw her in the lion's enclosure and Bob's your uncle.

**Emily** – How do you propose we walk past security at London Zoo with three large bin bags?

**Carter** – We could take her at night?

**Emily** – Hampstead Heath will do just fine. I have a shovel in the shed outside.

**Carter** – And for... Tessa, do you want help?

**Emily** – I've already done most of it, I'll finish it. It's just too messy...

**Carter** – As you wish...

*She leaves.*

**Carter** – I hope I'm not making a mistake... Anyway... it's too late now. Another one, for the road...

*He pours himself another glass and gulps it down. His mobile rings.*

**Carter** – Hello... (*Stunned*) Tessa? If this is a joke it's really not funny. Is that you Emily? Sorry Tessa, is that really you? No, no, of course I'm not surprised, but... Well, a little actually... Oh, you left your mobile here. Yes, she told me about your... discussion. But why did you have to go and tell her? Anyway, now it's done... I guess she had to know, eventually... OK, I'll tell her... Right. Thanks for calling. By the way, have you spoken with Nathan? Yes, I think he may suspect something. Yes, something like that... OK, bye Tessa... (*He hangs up*) Bitch... She really had me going...

*Emily returns with bulging bin bags.*

**Carter** (*not giving anything away*) – So, that's it? It's done?

**Emily** – Yes. Took me longer than I thought, the frozen pieces had started to stick to the sides of the freezer... I had to use an ice pick...

**Carter** – Poor Tessa... I'm feeling all sorts of emotions seeing her like that, bundled like the recycling on pick up day...

**Emily** – I don't know how to thank you. This is an incredible proof of love.

**Carter** – Does that mean I am forgiven for this involuntary adultery?

**Emily** – Of course... You've showed me how much you love me.

**Carter** – And I forgive you for putting our best friend in my bed without telling me, OK?

**Emily** – There's two more bags.

**Carter** – I'll help you...

**Emily** – Are you sure?

**Carter** – For better or for worse... remember?

*They leave. Nathan enters, in a trance.*

**Nathan** – Is anyone here? Where did I put my phone?

*He looks at the bin bags with curiosity. Looking for his mobile, he lifts a cushion on the sofa and finds the blouse covered in blood with cufflinks... Intrigued, he slowly comes out of his torpor. He opens one of the bin bags and closes it immediately, horrified... The other two arrive with two more bags.*

**Emily** – Nathan, what are you doing here?

**Carter** – I thought you were asleep?

**Nathan** – No... I mean, yes... I just came looking for my mobile...

**Emily** – We were just taking the rubbish out...

**Nathan** – I'm going back to bed. Don't mind me...

*He leaves, visibly scared.*

**Emily** – You think he suspects something?

**Carter** – Maybe we should wack him off too?

**Emily** – I didn't know you were ready to kill for me. I'm almost scared...

**Carter** (*exhilarated*) – You know that Tammy Wynette song? *Stand by your man!* (*Singing*) Doin' things that you don't understand. But if you love him you'll forgive him. Even though he's hard to understand.

**Emily** (*worried*) – Listen, I need to tell you something...

**Carter** – Don't tell me you killed someone else!

**Emily** – No, that's the thing... I mean, yes, but...

**Carter** – Poor Tessa... She was a friend, you know. I'd like to say one last goodbye. Which bag is the head in?

**Emily** – I wouldn't do that if I were you...

**Carter** – I think we need to talk, don't you think...?

**Emily** – OK, it's not Tessa in the bin bags.

**Carter** – What do you mean, not Tessa? You killed someone else?

**Emily** – No, I mean, I didn't kill anyone... How could you even believe such a thing?

**Carter** – I don't know what I believe anymore... (*He opens one of the bags and his smile freezes.*) No... This is horrific... So you really killed someone?

**Emily** – Of course not! I mean yes, but...

**Carter** – What's this I'm looking at?

**Emily** – The deer...

**Carter** – The deer? But Emily, you're not a hunter... Or is that another thing you kept from me?

**Emily** – I don't hunt, don't worry. But the story about the deer, that's true.

**Carter** – No kidding... I'd love to hear it...

**Emily** – I was with Tessa, actually. We had just finished playing golf.

**Carter** – Oh yes, golf, I forgot... Let me guess, somewhere between the seventeenth and the eighteenth hole, you killed a deer with a golf ball?

**Emily** – We were on our way home. As we drove through Epping Forest, we hit a deer. We almost died, if you must know. Because hitting a 200-pound animal at sixty miles an hour causes a lot of damage even when you're driving a large 4x4.

**Carter** – Yes, I can imagine...

**Emily** – We ended in the ditch... Tessa had a mild concussion.

**Carter** – And then?

**Emily** – Still alive, I decided to go to the vet.

**Carter** – Tessa?

**Emily** – The deer! We put the deer in the boot. But when we got to the vet, he had died of his wounds.

**Carter** – Who?

**Emily** – The deer!

**Carter** – Oh, right...

**Emily** – Since he was already in the car, we didn't know what to do with him. That's when Tessa had the idea to turn it into mince...

**Carter** – A great idea... But why this whole rigmarole?

**Emily** – While we were cutting it up, Tessa confessed that she slept with you...

**Carter** – Clearly something must have inspired her as she was butchering the deer... And what did she tell you? Because unlike me, she knew she was in her best friend's bed.

**Emily** – Yes, that's why she was feeling guilty. It was weighing on her conscience.

**Carter** – Her conscience? Tessa?

**Emily** – You're right, looking back I think she may have just wanted to humiliate me... All the while hiding behind the fact that it was an involuntary adultery... like you say.

**Carter** – And then?

**Emily** – Eventually she admitted she knew exactly what she was doing... and that in all probability, so did you...

**Carter** – The bitch... I swear that...

**Emily** – Anyway, it came to blows.

**Carter** – So the blood on your blouse...

**Emily** – No, that's the deer, when we put him in the boot...

**Carter** – I see...

**Emily** – Then we made up. I gave her one of my shirts and she left.

**Carter** – And then?

**Emily** – When you came home, I was angry at you. Because you hadn't told me. I felt betrayed. Cheated.

**Carter** – I'm sorry. But I swear that I didn't know that she...



**Emily** – That's when I had an idea. It just popped in my head. Cutting up this poor animal made me lose my sense of reality. I found a recipe in Woman's Own.

**Carter** – Woman's Own?

**Emily** – To get back at you. I told you I killed her. To see how you'd react. After that, one thing lead to another...

*We hear a police siren. Carter sees the blouse sticking out from one of the bin bags.*

**Carter** – Nathan... He saw the bags and the blouse... He must have called the police...

*Someone knocks violently on the door. Nathan enters, holding a large knife.*

**Nathan** – Don't come near me, bunch of sickos...

**Carter** – Calm down, we can explain. It was just a stupid joke...

**Emily** – It's okay, it's not Tessa in the bin bags.

**Nathan** – Don't move, or I shoot!

**Emily** – That's a knife...

**Carter** – Let me open one, look, you can see for yourself.

*He shows him the contents of one of the bin bags.*

**Nathan** – Oh my God, what is that?

**Emily** – It's a deer! Look! All that hair.

**Nathan** – Tessa also had a lot of hair!

**Carter** – Not that much...

**Nathan** – How would you know?

**Off** – Police!

**Emily** – You called them, it's best if you talk to them.

**Carter** – It might be tricky...

**Nathan** – OK...

*Nathan leaves.*

**Emily** – I'm sorry. I was stupid. But I felt betrayed...

**Carter** – It's my fault... I should have told you right after it happened. But I didn't think you'd believe me, you know...

**Emily** – We were both foolish.

**Carter** – Goes to show, sweeping things under the carpet is never a good solution... It always comes back blowing in your face...

**Emily** – Agreed. That's why you should also tell him.

**Carter** – Who?

**Emily** – Nathan! For Tessa.

**Carter** – It doesn't matter—she cheats on him with anyone and everyone.

**Emily** – Yes, but you're his best friend...

*Nathan returns.*

**Nathan** – Everything's sorted, they're gone. I'm sorry, I don't know what took me.

**Carter** – We're all a little confused, tonight... It must be the full moon...

**Nathan** – I didn't know it was a full moon.

**Carter** – If it isn't, it sure feels like it should be.

**Emily** – I'll leave you to it, I think you have things to talk about...

*Emily leaves.*

**Nathan** – What does she mean?

*A beat.*

**Carter** – I slept with Tessa.

**Nathan** – What?

**Carter** – I swear, it was... totally involuntary.

**Nathan** – So that story you told me earlier, that was you... and Tessa?

**Carter** – I wanted to tell you for a while, but I didn't know how.

**Nathan** – But how is that even possible?

**Carter** – Emily, that bitch, let her use our marital bed for her trysts...

**Nathan** – Yes, that makes sense... And I don't want to know more... You're my best friend after all, right?

**Carter** – Thank you, Nathan.

**Nathan** – We all make mistakes, especially when we've had too much to drink.

**Carter** – I was stone cold sober.

**Nathan** – Yes well, that's not the point. Tessa is the bitch here. Good thing she's not in my field of vision right now, I could actually kill her!

**Carter** – Don't worry, you don't just up and kill someone... But if you need a lawyer, I'm here for you... For your divorce, I mean...

**Nathan** – Thank you... Right, I think I better go. You must have things to talk about, too... I'll spend the night at my mother's. I'll tell her I locked myself out.

**Carter** – Take care of yourself... Tomorrow is another day... For everyone...

*Nathan leaves. Emily returns. They sit on the sofa and remain silent for a while.*

**Emily** – Was it really involuntary?

**Carter** – Let's say... voluntarily involuntary, then.

**Emily** – Alright, I'll pretend to believe you.

*They embrace.*

**Carter** – On the plus side, my sex drive got a boost...

**Emily** – Yes, I noticed. I wonder what it was.

**Carter** – We should do this more often.

**Emily** – Do what? More blind dates in our marital bed...?

**Carter** – Why? Do you have other friends who come to our flat for their sleazy hookups?

**Emily** – I was thinking the other way around. You must have friends who cheat on their wives... I'm one behind, not that anyone's counting...

**Carter** – Sorry, all my friends are faithful...

*They kiss.*

*Black.*

## Epilogue

*Three suitcases are lined up against the wall in the living room. Emily comes in from the street, and removes her raincoat.*

**Emily** – Honey! Are you there?

*Carter arrives.*

**Carter** – So, how'd it go?

**Emily** – They love the play. They want to setup a stage production after the summer holidays.

**Carter** – What? But that's amazing!

**Emily** – And they found the perfect title.

**Carter** – *An Innocent Little Murder*... Sounds better than *Hiroshima*, doesn't it?

**Emily** – Probably because it rings so true...

**Carter** – Almost...

*They kiss.*

**Emily** – So in the end, all is well that ends well.

**Carter** – I always believed in you... Even when your stories were obviously tall tales.

**Emily** – In the end, this ordeal has brought us closer together. I promise I'll never lie to you again.

**Carter** – And I promise I won't keep anything from you.

*Emily notices the suitcases.*

**Emily** (*worried*) – What's with the suitcases? Are you leaving me? After what you just said, I thought...

**Carter** – They're Nathan's. He asked if he could spend the night here. I don't think it went very well with Tessa... He didn't have anywhere to go.

**Emily** – He's such a pain in the ass...

**Carter** – We owe him that much...

**Emily** – OK... But just for one night...

*The doorbell rings.*

**Carter** – That must be him...

**Emily** – OK, I'll get the champagne.

**Carter** – To celebrate Nathan's divorce?

**Emily** – To celebrate my play finding a producer! We'll just have to celebrate with him.

*Emily leaves. Carter goes to open the door and returns with Nathan.*

**Carter** – You don't look OK. Did you have an argument?

**Nathan** – Listen, Carter... I think I made a big mistake...

**Carter** – You're scaring me, Nathan... What kind of mistake?

**Nathan** – I think I killed Tessa.

**Carter** – Come on, I've heard that one before. Try something else!

**Nathan** – We had a talk, the two of us. It escalated quickly. I told her to leave the house immediately.

**Carter** – And then.

**Nathan** – Then... well she went to pack her bags. That's when things sort of took a turn for the worse.

**Carter** – Sort of?

**Nathan** – I was cutting a roast chicken... With a knife in my hand and ... I got carried away.

**Carter** – Where is she? In hospital?

**Nathan** – Unfortunately it was too late to get help. I just wanted to scare her. He stepped towards me to dare me. I raised my arm in a reflex and... I cut her carotid

**Carter** – Oh my God... The nightmare continues. So, but where is she?

*Nathan points to the suitcases with his eyes.*

**Nathan** – Err, well... In the suitcases...

**Carter** – No?

**Nathan** – I'm going to be in need of your counsel, Carter.

**Carter** – My counsel? You mean as a lawyer? Don't get your hopes up, Nathan. Even a killer lawyer like me... There's no way we can pass this for a household accident...

**Nathan** – I was thinking more about passing it through the drain after a night in a bathtub full of acid...

**Carter** – I'm going to have to talk to Emily about this...

*Emily returns, looking delighted, waiving a bottle of champagne.*

**Emily** – Champagne!

*The two men look at her, dumbstruck.*

**Black.**

## *About the author*

Born in 1955 in Auvers-sur-Oise (France), Jean-Pierre Martinez was first a drummer for several rock bands before becoming a semiologist in advertising. He then began a career writing television scripts before turning to theatre and writing plays. He has written close to a hundred scripts for television and as many plays, some of which have already become classics (*Friday the 13th*, *Strip Poker*). He is one of the most produced contemporary playwrights in France and in other francophone countries. Several of his plays are also available in Spanish and English, and are regularly produced in the United States and Latin America.

Amateur and professional theatre groups looking for plays to perform can download Jean-Pierre Martinez's plays for free from his website La Comédiathèque (<https://comediatheque.net/>). However, public productions are subject to SACD filing.

## Other plays by the same author translated in English

### Comedies for 2

EuroStar  
Heads and Tails  
Him and Her  
Is there a pilot in the audience?  
Last chance encounter  
New Year's Eve at the Morgue  
Not even dead  
Preliminaries  
Running on empty  
The Costa Mucho Castaways  
The Joker  
The Rope  
The Window across the courtyard

### Comedies for 3

A brief moment of eternity  
A simple business dinner  
An innocent little murder  
Cheaters  
Crash Zone  
Fragile, Handle with care  
Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>  
Ménage à trois  
One small step for a woman,  
one giant leap backward  
for Mankind  
The Way of Chance

### Comedies for 4

A Cuckoo's nest  
A hell of a night  
A Skeleton in the Closet  
Back to stage  
Bed and Breakfast  
Casket for two  
Crisis and Punishment  
Déjà vu  
Family Portrait  
Family Tree  
Four stars  
Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>  
Gay friendly  
How to get rid of your best friends  
Is there a critic in the audience?  
Is there an author in the audience?  
Just a moment before the end of the world  
Lovestruck at Swindlemore Hall  
One marriage out of two  
Perfect In-laws  
Quarantine  
Strip Poker  
Surviving Mankind  
The Deal  
The Fishbowl  
The Perfect Son-in-Law  
The Pyramids  
The Smell of Money  
The Tourists

### Comedies for 5 to 6

All's well that starts badly  
Christmas Eve at the Police Station  
Crisis and Punishment  
Critical but Stable  
In lieu of flowers...  
King of Fools  
Traffic Jam on Graveyard Lane

### Comedies for 7 or more

At the bar counter  
Backstage Comedy  
Blue Flamingos  
Check to the Kings  
Christmas Eve at the Police Station  
False exit  
In flagrante delirium  
Just like a Christmas movie  
Miracle at Saint Mary Juana Abbey  
Music does not always soothe the savage beasts  
Neighbours'Day  
Nicotine  
Of Vegetables and Books  
Offside  
Open Hearts  
Reality Show  
Save our Savings  
Special Dedication  
Stories and Prehistories  
The House of Our Dreams  
The Jackpot  
The Performance is not cancelled  
The Worst Village in England  
Welcome aboard!  
White Coats, Dark Humour

### Collection of sketches

Enough is Enough  
Ethan and Eve  
For real and for fun  
Him and Her  
Killer Sketches  
Lost time Chronicles  
Open Hearts  
Sidewalk Chronicles  
Stage Briefs  
Stories to die for

### Monologues

Happy Dogs  
Like a fish in the air

All of Jean-Pierre Martinez's plays are available  
to download for free from his websites:

<https://comediatheque.net/>  
<https://jeanpierremartinez.net>

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