

MARSHA VIRGIL
TOBIAS PERSIS

LET'S MURDER MARSHA

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TOBIAS. Good, then it's all settled. (*to BIANCA*) Miss Devore *will* be staying, Bianca.

BIANCA. Very good, sir. (*exits to kitchen*)

TOBIAS. (*stands*) Shall we join the others in the dining room?

PERSIS. (*stands on:*) All right, let's.

(*MARSHA and VIRGIL instantly—while the others' backs are to them—rush to archway, do a perfect in-unison about-face, and each raises right foot and holds it in mid-air until TOBIAS and PERSIS, moving around left end of sofa, see them, and then MARSHA and VIRGIL bring right foot down as if they'd been seen in mid-step and enter room again, smiling brightly.*)

MARSHA. Well, we're back!

TOBIAS. (*to PERSIS*) I'd like you to meet my wife Marsha, and our neighbor Virgil Baxter.

VIRGIL. (*with a gallant bow*) Happy to meet you, Miss Devore . . . (*MARSHA surreptitiously elbows him.*) . . . or whoever you are!

MARSHA. (*trying to hide his goof, makes one of her own*) Oh, don't be so formal. Call her Persis! (*realizes*) Or something.

PERSIS. (*bewildered*) Have we met before?

VIRGIL. Uh—no, but—uh—

MARSHA. But *everybody* knows the famous interior decorator!

VIRGIL. Yes! Hear your name all the time, everywhere! You must be a marvel.

TOBIAS. But how did you recognize her face?

VIRGIL. (*not quite sotto voce to MARSHA*) Your turn.

MARSHA. Saw it in the paper!

LET'S MURDER MARSHA

TOBIAS. Really? *I never saw it in the paper.*

PERSIS. Neither did *I.*

VIRGIL. (*quickly*) Well, you've both been so busy!

MARSHA. (*to TOBIAS*) Advising clients—

VIRGIL. (*to PERSIS*) Decorating interiors—

TOBIAS. Well, that's true enough, I daresay.

PERSIS. Oh, I'd love to see my picture—do you still have the paper?

VIRGIL. (*to MARSHA*) Do we?

MARSHA. (*to VIRGIL*) Nope.

VIRGIL. (*to PERSIS*) Nope.

TOBIAS. What a shame! (*moves toward bar*) Shall we all have a drink before dinner?

PERSIS. (*moving after him*) That sounds like a lovely idea. (*TOBIAS will go behind bar, and she will sit on right bar stool, angled toward archway.*)

MARSHA. What would you like, Virgil?

VIRGIL. Something *strong!*

MARSHA. (*as tense as he is*) *I know what you mean!*

PERSIS. (*as TOBIAS fixes drinks*) Mister Baxter, what is *your* line of work?

VIRGIL. I'm a pharmacist—and please, call me Virgil.

PERSIS. I wouldn't think pharmacists would be much interested in interior decorating.

VIRGIL. Uh—not professionally, of course—but—it's just—your photo was so striking. In the paper. When I saw it there. (*He has now moved to sit on left bar stool, angled to face her, TOBIAS mixing drinks between them behind bar, MARSHA moving to left end of bar.*)

PERSIS. I'd certainly like to see a copy—when exactly was it?

MARSHA/VIRGIL. Friday!/Saturday!

TOBIAS. (*looks up from his mixing*) *Both days?*

MARSHA. It was a two-part story!

PERSIS. Oh, how delightful! In which paper?!

MARSHA/VIRGIL. The Times!/The News!

PERSIS. *Both papers?!*

VIRGIL. Well, it wasn't an *exclusive* interview.

PERSIS. Interview? *I* didn't give any interviews last week.

MARSHA. Are you sure?

TOBIAS. (*now putting drinks onto bar top*) Of course she's sure!

VIRGIL. Say, maybe they interviewed you earlier—

MARSHA. And ran the story later! (*She and VIRGIL grab up drinks and take healthy gulps.*)

PERSIS. (*picking up her own drink*) Still and all—thank you, Tobias—it all sounds rather odd.

VIRGIL. Well, a *lot* of the news is weird lately.

MARSHA. (*before TOBIAS or PERSIS can query further*) Listen, darling, why don't you take Persis to the dining room and show her where she's to sit?!

TOBIAS. Can't that wait till dinner?

MARSHA. You made *me* do it with *Virgil*—!

TOBIAS. (*caught*) Uh—so I did! Well—Persis—if you'd like—?

PERSIS. (*caught in same trap*) I—I suppose we'd better. I mean, if *they* had to do it—? (*sets drink on bar, gets down from stool*)

TOBIAS. (*moves from behind bar to archway*) Come along, my dear, it's not far.

PERSIS. (*moving to join him*) Be back in a moment!

MARSHA. (*as PERSIS and TOBIAS exit*) There's no rush! (*The instant they are gone, rushes to VIRGIL at bar.*) Now do you understand why I called you? They're planning to *murder* me!

VIRGIL. You should call the police, Marsha!

MARSHA. I tried that. They wouldn't come.

VIRGIL. Whyever not?

MARSHA. Who knows?! Maybe this isn't a high-crime-