

MARSHA
LYNETTE

VIRGIL

66

LET'S MURDER MARSHA

PERSIS. (*starts after him just as MARSHA returns minus glasses*) Perhaps I'd better eat—that drink had the *oddest* taste. . . ! Almost like . . . gin . . .

MARSHA. (*smiling in almost sinister fashion*) Yes, I suppose it did. After all, even plain water isn't *entirely* tasteless. It's all a matter of degree.

PERSIS. (*very uneasy near her, if unsure why, starts backing away toward dining room*) Uh, yes. Yes, to be sure. . . !

MARSHA. (*ominously*) I've never been surer!

PERSIS. Uh . . . of course you haven't . . . uh . . . none of us has. . . ! (*turns and dashes off to dining room*)

MARSHA. (*claps her hands and dances about*) Revenge! Revenge! Revenge!

LYNETTE. Marsha, darling, you simply *must* calm down!

MARSHA. Calm down? Now? At my moment of total triumph?

LYNETTE. Darling, there's something I should tell you about that bottle—

MARSHA. Mother, don't you understand? I've *done* it! (*points to VIRGIL*) *We've* done it! Odorless, tasteless, undetectable—and very soon, mortal agony!

LYNETTE. Oh, but darling—

VIRGIL. (*starts to stir*) Mmmmph . . . oooh . . . what—where—my head hurts—why am I on the floor?

MARSHA. (*helping him to his feet*) Be calm, Virgil, be calm! It's all over! We've won!

LYNETTE. Marsha—

VIRGIL. Won? You mean—? Your husband and that woman—? They're—? (*He stops, too horrified to finish.*)

MARSHA. Well, not *yet*, of course, but I'm sure it's

only a matter of minutes till they curl up and fall over and writhe about on the floor. That last part is my favorite.

LYNETTE. Marsha—

MARSHA. (*finally paying attention*) Yes, Mother, what is it?

LYNETTE. There's something I must tell you, tell both of you—but—before I do, there's something *you* must tell *me* . . . *Why, darling, why?*

VIRGIL. Why what?

LYNETTE. (*impatiently*) *You're not darling!*

VIRGIL. Sorry.

MARSHA. But Mother—why what?

LYNETTE. Why did you want to murder your husband? And that Devore woman?

MARSHA. Believe me, Mother, if you knew what *I* know about them, you'd murder them, too!

LYNETTE. (*very surprised and curious*) Know about them? You don't mean—that he and she are—were—?

MARSHA. Oh, Mother, if you only knew what they had planned for tomorrow morning!

LYNETTE. Tomorrow morning?

VIRGIL. Down by the bay.

LYNETTE. (*as it becomes—she thinks—clear*) Oh, *that!*

MARSHA. Mother! You *know* what they were planning to do?!

LYNETTE. Why—of course I knew! Tobias told me all about it last week!

MARSHA. (*aghast*) And you didn't tell *me*?!

LYNETTE. How could I? He said it was a surprise!

MARSHA. (*backing from her*) Mother! How could you! Your own daughter! And not a word of warning!

LET'S MURDER MARSHA

LYNETTE. But if I had warned you, it would have spoiled everything! And after all, you certainly had it coming to you!

VIRGIL. (*totally shocked and scandalized*) *What kind of a mother are you?!*

MARSHA. Coming to me? Coming to me? But I've always been so nice to him, so caring, so devoted—!

LYNETTE. Of course you have! That's why he decided to *do* it!

VIRGIL. What! Take Marsha down to the bay, pretending he'd found a new crab restaurant, take her to the end of the pier, raise the champagne bottle, and—?!

LYNETTE. Why *not*?! I thought it was very clever of him to think of it!

MARSHA. *Mother!*

LYNETTE. Oh, darling, look at it from Tobias' point of view: Year after year, giving you such silly little presents on your birthday—meaningless things—a pair of earrings here—a bottle of perfume there—he just couldn't stand it any longer, and decided he had to do something that would knock you dead! And about *time*, if you ask *me*!

(*MARSHA can stand no more; staring at her mother in horrified disbelief, she clutches her temples and starts screaming, over and over, wordlessly, louder and louder; TOBIAS and PERSIS, of course, come rushing into the room in reaction to the sound, see her, and—with MARSHA constantly screaming—we have the following dialogue/action:*)

TOBIAS. (*rushing for MARSHA*) Good heavens!

PERSIS. (*standing dumbfounded*) What's happened?

TOBIAS. (*wrestling with MARSHA, who is trying to*