DOLLY BANTRY P 21-23

*(**CRADDOCK** leaves. Or pretends to leave. Instead he lingers, listens.)*

DOLLY. *(Conspirationally.)* I presume she was murdered!

MISS MARPLE. What makes you say that?

DOLLY. Why else would your *friend* be clumping around?

*(**MISS MARPLE** smiles. Begins to knit.)*

MISS MARPLE. It's funny. I only met Mrs Leigh once. If I'm honest, I didn't really take to her. But it's still such a pity... How little we know of when our own end will come.

DOLLY. She was rather bossy...

MISS MARPLE. I hope the murderer isn't on a spree. I'd have no friends left at all.

DOLLY. I'm not bossy.

(Beat.)

MISS MARPLE. Apparently, she had a strawberry daiquiri...?

DOLLY. So, she was poisoned?!

MISS MARPLE. Tell me exactly what you saw.

DOLLY. Heather Leigh was chattering away to Marina Gregg, and then someone sneezed and Heather Leigh must have startled and spilled her drink. Heather Leigh looked mortified but Marina played the gracious hostess and –

MISS MARPLE. Ah. Handed over her own drink.

DOLLY. Oh! Oh, I see! Heather Leigh was killed...but really someone was going for Marina Gregg!

MISS MARPLE. That poor woman.

DOLLY. She must be terrified they'll try again.

MISS MARPLE. I meant... [poor Heather]

DOLLY. Jane?

MISS MARPLE. Hmm? Never mind.

(Silence.)

Did you get to speak to Miss Gregg?

DOLLY. Actually, she'd invited me for tea, before the party!

MISS MARPLE. You didn't tell me.

DOLLY. It was just a courtesy cuppa. They had bought my home, after all. Oh, remind me to tell you about the Tennyson.

MISS MARPLE. Did you mind? Going back to Gossington...

DOLLY. Do you know, I thought I would, but once I met Marina... Oh, you should have seen her.

MISS MARPLE. What was she like?

*(***MARINA GREGG** *appears. Loveliness itself.)*

MARINA. *(Greeting* **DOLLY.***)* Mrs Bantry... This must be so difficult for you, seeing total strangers marching around your home.

DOLLY. Not at all. I'm so excited it's you!

MARINA. I *knew* I would like you. Your home, it has such character.

DOLLY. Your home now. I do hope you'll be happy here.

MARINA. I could feel it, even as we were coming up the drive: that at last, I had found somewhere peaceful, somewhere that I could be divinely happy.

*(***JASON** *appears.)*

And meet most of the reason why. My beautiful husband, Jason Rudd.

JASON. There's only one beautiful person round here.

(Awkward.)

MARINA. *(Rescuing the situation.)* I was just telling Mrs Bantry how I hoped it wouldn't be painful for her, seeing the changes we'd made to her home.

DOLLY. You really mustn't give it another thought. Once my husband passed away, this was far too large for me to live in alone. And it's not as if I would have been here much anyway. My children both have children of their own now and not a nanny in sight, and you know what it's like with babies –

JASON. Where's that damn butler? He was meant to be getting the tea –

*(**JASON** rings the bell.)*

DOLLY. Is it true you're making a new film?

MARINA. Yes, at Hellingforth Studios.

DOLLY. Oh, I am glad. I was afraid that you'd disappeared from the picturehouse for good.

MARINA. The truth is, there aren't many great roles when you're no longer a slip of a girl... But this picture, this part... I couldn't resist.

JASON. You're gonna be just great, honey.

MARINA. Jason has written the film himself. It's a beautiful story, all about Catherine of Aragon. It's really *(Moved.)* very moving indeed.

DOLLY. And you're playing Catherine? How splendid. Now, how did she end up? *Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived.* Oh yes, that's right. Those poor women. All that kerfuffle, just to have a son!

*(**JASON** rings the bell violently.* **ELLA ZIELINKSY** *appears.)*