

Mad Gary's Fruit and Nut Case

a murder mystery by

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Cast (in order of appearance)

Principal

Tommy - Peaches Father M 40+
Pepper - Peaches Mother F 40+
Peaches - The Bride F 18 - 25
Lionel - The Bridegroom M 18 - 25
Mr Looselips - Lionel's Father M 40+
Mrs Looselips - Lionel's Mother F 40+
Maggie - Waitress F any age
Inspector Mad Gary Grasslover - M any age

Audience

Max M/F
Sam M/F
Jo(e) M/F
Bobby M/F
Willy M
Lucy F

Production Notes : The principal characters perform all the action in the first act. During the interval six audience members are selected to be suspects and told their character names. The remaining members of the audience are given forms to use during act two when they are asked to decide who they think is the murderer. During act two, Mad Gary interviews each of the suspects in turn who are called onto the stage and given pages from the script containing their lines. Whilst he considers the evidence the surviving cast collect the forms from the audience and Mad Gary is seen sampling the fruit salad as he writes his report. At the climax Mad Gary stands to reveal the murderer but drops dead before he can announce the name. Tommy grabs the report and reads out the name of one of the audience members who has guessed the correct answer. The killer is named and called back onto the stage where Tommy reveals the clues and the killer adds the motive.

ACT 1

LIONEL and PEACHES wedding reception. On stage is a long table at which are seated, from left to right, MRS LOOSELIPS, MR LOOSELIPS, PEPPER, TOMMY, PEACHES and LIONEL. On the table are glasses and wine bottles, plates and cutlery; the meal having just finished. MAGGIE enters and collects the plates and cutlery. MRS LOOSELIPS is bored and irritated. MR LOOSELIPS is playing cards with his wine glass making brrmm brrmm noises as he does so. PEPPER is tremendously drunk and is using all her energy just staying upright. TOMMY smiles amenably at MAGGIE and assists when he can. PEACHES and LIONEL stare lovingly into each others eyes. MAGGIE completes her task and starts to exit but then remembers her manners. She turns back smiles at TOMMY and politely curtsies, dropping everything as she does so. She screams.

TOMMY: That's alright Maggie. Don't worry about it my love. Leave it for now. If you could just fetch the, you know? (*MAGGIE nods and exits. TOMMY stands and addresses the audience, who are the guests at this reception*). Well, ladies and gentlemen, if I could just have your attention. Thank you. I would just like to say...

PEPPER: Bottoms up!

TOMMY: I would just like to thank you all for coming here today to celebrate the wedding of my lovely daughter, Peaches, to Lionel. I would like to welcome Lionel's mother and father and, of course, my dear wife Pepper. Typical for these occasions, Pepper always dresses to kill. Those who have been round to ours for dinner will know she cooks the same way, (*pause for laughter*) but don't worry, the catering today was provided by the venue. Just for your information the seating arrangement has been specially organised with all of the people that bought large presents being placed towards the front and those that bought cheaper smaller presents at the back. (*Pause*) There is a special thanks for Uncle Fred at the back who bought the oven glove. (*Pause*) Peaches would like to ask Uncle Fred if she could have the other glove for their silver wedding anniversary. Anyway, thank you to everyone for coming here today and helping make this special day for Peaches and Lionel even more, well, special. (*MR LOOSELIPS applauds wildly. No one else does.*) Thank you Mr Looselips. I know that this is a special day for you as well. We've known each other in business for many a year. Me the humble market trader, you the proprietor of the biggest, most prestigious, fruit and veg wholesaler in the whole of (*local place*). Who would have imagined, all those years ago, when I bought my first crate of Spanish oranges, that my little girl and your little boy would one day be joined together, bringing our families together through marriage and, if I might dare to suggest, opening the possibly of a closer business arrangement as well.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Over my dead body!

MR LOOSELIPS: That could be arranged.

TOMMY: The fruit and veg business is not an easy living, but it is my life and I have stood on (*local place*) market, rain or shine for 20 odd years. There have been many changes during that time. Tomatoes have to be on the vine, mushrooms have rude sounding names and everything has to be organic. Supermarkets are driving down prices putting our farmers out of business and life for the little man has never been so hard. But for all those 20 years the people of (*local place*) have stood by me and I am proud to have served them. When I first started with my little stall I had no idea that I was here for the long term, but it's been a good life and during that time my little Peaches has grown from bouncing baby to the beautiful little thing you see before you now. (*PEACHES stands and bows revealing that she is at least eight months pregnant*). Thank you to everyone who has made my life so joyful and God bless my little girl.

PEPPER: And all who sail in her.

TOMMY: Please raise a glass. To Peaches and Lionel!

MR LOOSELIPS: Peaches and Lionel.

PEPPER: Whatever.

They toast.

TOMMY: And may all their troubles be little ones.

PEACHES: Oh Dad! That is so corny.

LIONEL: I don't get it.

TOMMY: No, but you will lad.

TOMMY and PEACHES share the joke.

MRS LOOSELIPS: What does that mean?

TOMMY: Well, you know. It is their wedding night.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Well yes but, obviously...(she nods at PEACHES' belly.)

PEACHES: Mmmm. This wine is really nice.

PEPPER: Well said that girl. More wine now, Here, wench!

TOMMY: Don't you think you ought to pace yourself a little dear?

PEPPER: Pace myself? You make it sound like I'm running a marathon. This is a big day for me. I don't see it so much as losing a daughter but more *(joyfully)* losing a daughter! Where is that wench? More wine! More wine! More wine!

MAGGIE brings in some more wine.

MR LOOSELIPS: Never could understand marathon runners. What's wrong with taking the car?

TOMMY: Oh, I did a half marathon. It was fun.

PEPPER: Fun run. Two words that do not belong in the same sentence.

PEACHES: But you dropped out of that race dad.

TOMMY: I know but only because the guy in front was making fun of me. *(To MRS LOOSELIPS, who isn't really interested)* I was trundling along in last place and this guy in front of me says 'what's it like to be last?' so I dropped out so that he would know.

PEACHES: You going in for it again this year then?

TOMMY: Yes, why not. It's good exercise. Good for the heart.

MR LOOSELIPS: I'll tell you what is good exercise.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Here we go.

MR LOOSELIPS: The old horizontal jogging, you know what I mean?

TOMMY: Sorry?

MR LOOSELIPS: Rumpy Pumpy. That's the only exercise I need.

MRS LOOSELIPS: And for you, like jogging, it is a very solitary experience.

MR LOOSELIPS: Mind you, I can think of another form of exercise.

TOMMY: What's that?

MR LOOSELIPS: Dancing! Wouldn't you say so Pepper.

PEPPER: What?

MR LOOSELIPS: I bet you know all the moves.

PEPPER: Oh yeah. I can dance. I love dancing. Let's dance. I wanna dance.

TOMMY: Later darling. We are waiting for the Ceremonial Fruit Salad.

MR LOOSELIPS: You gotta know how to pony.

PEPPER: I'm sorry?

MR LOOSELIPS: Like Bony Maronie.

PEPPER: Ah!

MR LOOSELIPS: Mashed Potata.

PEPPER: Do the alligata.

MR LOOSELIPS: Put your hand on you hip

PEPPER: Let your backbone slip

MR LOOSELIPS: Do the watusi.

PEPPER: Like my little Lucy.

MR LOOSELIPS laughs manically.

PEPPER: *(Singing the chorus from Land of a Thousand Dances*)*Na na-na-na-na na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na na-na-na-na I need somebody to help me say it one time. Na na-na-na-na *(She stops as she notices MR LOOSELIPS has started to sob.)*

MRS LOOSELIPS: Pull yourself together!

MR LOOSELIPS becomes pensive. PEPPER wonders why the fun stopped and consoles herself with drink.

PEACHES: I'll dance with you later Mr Looselips. If my husband will allow it.

LIONEL: Aw, fnrhh.

PEACHES: Would that be alright with you my husband?

LIONEL: Aw yes. Fnnrhh. You can do whatever you like.

PEACHES: I plan to dance all night.

PEPPER: (*Singing*) I could have danced all night*.

LIONEL: Aw, well I'd like to but I can't really dance.

PEACHES: That's alright. Willy will dance with me.

LIONEL: Fnr! Willy is here?

TOMMY: You invited Willy, Peaches?

PEACHES: Yeah. Why not.

TOMMY: It's a bit funny isn't it? Inviting your ex boyfriend to your wedding.

PEACHES: Lionel doesn't mind. Do you Lionel?

LIONEL: Er, fnr, well...

PEACHES: See.

TOMMY: Well I'm still not sure it's a good idea.

PEACHES: But Dad. I love Willy.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Apparently!

TOMMY: Peaches!

PEACHES: Lionel knows I love Willy. Don't you Lionel?

LIONEL: Well, hrrmph.

TOMMY: Peaches, I don't think...

PEACHES: But I chose to marry you didn't I Lionel? That's why you don't mind me having Willy here.

LIONEL: I er, fnrrh.

PEACHES: I can have Willy wherever I like, can't I. (*Sternly.*) That was our agreement, right?

LIONEL: Well, er, yes.

PEACHES: You see.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Lionel. You and I need a talk.

TOMMY: *(To MR LOOSELIPS.)* Girls eh? What can you do?

MR LOOSELIPS: *(Who has been in a world of his own.)* Girls?

TOMMY: Well, daughters, I mean kids, you know.

MR LOOSELIPS: Yes girls. Daddy's little girl. *(And off he drifts again)*

MRS LOOSELIPS: Pull yourself together!

There is an embarrassed silence, broken by LIONEL unaware that everyone is listening to him.

LIONEL: Will it really be tonight?

PEACHES: Lionel! Not now!

LIONEL: No not now. Tonight?

PEACHES: Yes, keep your voice down.

LIONEL: Oh boy!

MRS LOOSELIPS: What's he saying?

PEACHES: Nothing.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Am I to understand...

PEPPER: More Wine!

MRS LOOSELIPS: I think we need an explanation here. From what I gather, I believe that...

PEPPER: Wine!

MRS LOOSELIPS: Oh, give the woman a drink will someone. Now then young woman, when I agreed to allow you to marry my Lionel it was because I believed...

TOMMY: I wonder what has happened to the fruit salad.

PEACHES: Shall I go to see?

TOMMY: *(Shouting.)* Maggie! The Ceremonial Fruit Salad!

MR LOOSELIPS: *(Suddenly.)* Of course you can't move for elephants now.

TOMMY: I'm sorry?

MR LOOSELIPS: *(local)* Park. It used to be nice. Can't move for bloody elephants now.

TOMMY: Are you sure?

MR LOOSELIPS: You must have seen them. They even spill out into the town

TOMMY: Elephants?

MR LOOSELIPS: Taking over the bloody place. It would be alright if you could understand them. You would think they would take the time to learn the language.

TOMMY: Are you sure you mean elephants?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Ignore him. His brain is so tiny the slightest upset sends him barmy.

PEPPER: Makes perfect sense to me. *(To MR LOOSELIPS.)* Here. Have another drink.

TOMMY: Do you know. I think this is the proudest day of my life. And to see so many people here, *(looking into the audience)* my dear friend Max, who has stood with me on the market for so many years. Competitors maybe, but friends first and foremost. And Sam. Is Sam here yet? Sam who I haven't seen for so very very long. Are you here Sam? Do you remember when we were children. The scrapes we used to get into. Then, when we got home Mum would look at us and say 'What have you been up to Sam?' I suppose that because I was the youngest I always got away with it. Ah, happy days!

PEACHES: I've had a really wonderful day Dad.

TOMMY: So have I.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Me too. Only it wasn't this one.

MR LOOSELIPS: Big eared bastards! *(This outburst seems to snap him out of his world.)*

MAGGIE enters with the Ceremonial Fruit Salad.

TOMMY: Ah! Now here we go!

MAGGIE puts the large bowl on the table and serves the table starting with MRS LOOSELIPS. As she serves MR LOOSELIPS is transfixed by her bottom, leaning back in his chair to get a better look, tipping over backwards as she finally serves LIONEL. TOMMY helps MR LOOSELIPS back up. MAGGIE exits.

TOMMY: Well, tuck in everyone. *(They do.)* Beautiful isn't it. Always the finest quality fruit from Looselips Wholesale. I am so honoured to be associated with the family behind *(local place)* most prestigious fruit and veg wholesaler!

MRS LOOSELIPS: Hmmm.

TOMMY: It's family firms that makes this country great. Wouldn't you say so Mrs Looselips?

MRS LOOSELIPS: I don't know about family. There would be no firm without me.

TOMMY: Well, you are the brains behind the business. Everyone knows that.

MRS LOOSELIPS: The brains, the brawn, the lot. I don't get any help.

TOMMY: Oh, I thought you had staff?

MRS LOOSELIPS: You mean that stupid bimbo that does our advertising? Useless cow. He took her on. We don't have any warehouse men, we don't have any drivers, but my husband employs an advertising executive!

MR LOOSELIPS: Nice posters though.

MRS LOOSELIPS: What?

MR LOOSELIPS: Nice posters

MRS LOOSELIPS: Oh you're back with us are you?

MR LOOSELIPS: Nice colours.

MRS LOOSELIPS: What do we need with posters?

MR LOOSELIPS: Very nice.

TOMMY: Good slogans too. 'You don't have to go ape to enjoy a nice grape'

PEACHES: 'It might not be the Copa Cabana. But you can have a banana'

PEPPER: 'Covered in mud. It's a Looselips spud'

MR LOOSELIPS: I can't say I remember that one.

PEPPER: Waste of money, advertising.

TOMMY: Oh, I don't know. If advertising doesn't work explain to me why millions of people every morning have a 'yogurt drink' and think they enjoy it.

PEACHES: Don't worry Mrs Looselips. You'll get some help about the place now.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Oh?

PEACHES: Yes, I'll make sure Lionel pulls his weight.

TOMMY: (*Finishing his bowl.*) Well, that was fantastic, You can't beat the finest quality local produce. Now, if you'll excuse me a moment. I think I'll just pay a visit.

TOMMY exits.

LIONEL: What time is it?

PEACHES: Why?

LIONEL: I'm just wondering how long to go.

PEACHES: How long to go?

LIONEL: What time do you usually go to bed?

PEACHES: Oh, not until late. Sleep is for wimps.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Happy, healthy, well rested wimps.

PEACHES: You are just going to have to be patient, Lionel.

LIONEL: Oh boy! Can I take pictures?

PEACHES: What?

LIONEL: So I can be reminded of your beauty wherever I go.

PEACHES: Oh, OK. Can I take pictures?

LIONEL: Why?

PEACHES: So I can have them enlarged.

LIONEL: Aw.

PEACHES: Only joking.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Yes, well. I'm sure you'll be comfortable. We're having the Granny flat made ready for when you come back from honeymoon. Tonight, you will just have to make do in Lionel's room.

PEACHES: Oh well. It's very generous, Mrs Looselips, but I think I prefer to stay at home.

PEPPER: What?

PEACHES: It'll be a bit of a squash I know but it will be nice to have Mum on hand for, you know (*she indicates her belly*), 'cos I'm sure Lionel will have lots of high power business meetings and trips abroad to meet suppliers and, well, a girl has to party (*she winks in the general direction of the audience*).

PEPPER: You're not moving out?

PEACHES: No Mum. You're not getting rid of me quite yet.

PEPPER: Arrrgggh! (*she slumps forward, the others think she has fainted but she has, in fact, passed on*).

MRS LOOSELIPS: But we've got everything arranged. We're even going to have it decorated while you're away.

PEACHES: I'm sorry to put you out, Mrs Looselips. I'm sure you went to a lot of trouble, but it's hard for a girl to leave her mum.

MR LOOSELIPS: It is for some.

PEACHES: Lionel. Help me pick Mum up. (They raise PEPPER's head) Mum? Mum? What's wrong with you?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Here. Let me have a look. What... Oh dear. Um, she's not breathing I think...

PEACHES: She's not?

MR LOOSELIPS: What's happening?

MRS LOOSELIPS: She's dead!

PEACHES: Mum? Mum?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Pepper?

LIONEL: Er. Um.

PEACHES: Mum?

MR LOOSELIPS: What's going on?

MRS LOOSELIPS: She must have had a heart attack.

PEACHES: Oh, it's my fault! I'm to blame. It was the shock of not losing me!

MRS LOOSELIPS: Has she ever had an attack before?

PEACHES: No. Never! She's never ill.

MR LOOSELIPS: Is she?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Very strange.

PEACHES: What a thing to happen on my wedding day.

MRS LOOSELIPS: I'm sorry Peaches. Look, I'm really not very good at this sort of thing. Um, would you like me to go and fetch your father?

PEACHES: Quick lets get her in the garden.

MRS LOOSELIPS: What?

PEACHES: I'm not going to let it spoil Dad's day.

MRS LOOSELIPS: You're not serious.

PEACHES: He's been looking forward to this day for so long. I don't want to spoil it for him.

MRS LOOSELIPS: But he'll have to know sometime.

PEACHES: Of course. I'll tell him later. Let him enjoy the rest of the evening first.

MRS LOOSELIPS: I can't believe I'm hearing this.

PEACHES: A few hours won't make any difference. Come on Lionel. (*LIONEL and PEACHES start to drag PEPPER off the stage. To the audience*) Don't any of you say anything to my Dad. (*They exit with PEPPER.*)

MRS LOOSELIPS: I've never seen such madness. I knew she was a bit of a slapper but I didn't think she was such a heartless cow.

MR LOOSELIPS: What?

MRS LOOSELIPS: She has just lost her mother and she carries on like nothing has happened. I don't think this has anything to do with not spoiling her dad's day, it's all about her. I wouldn't be surprised if she took off on her honeymoon tomorrow without even mentioning the fact that her mother has passed on.

MR LOOSELIPS: Don't you think Tommy might notice?

MRS LOOSELIPS: She'll make up something. Make out she's gone off somewhere, anything to cover it up until she has gone, and then guess who will have to deal with everything. Oh, I blame you for all this.

MR LOOSELIPS: Me?

MRS LOOSELIPS: They are simply not in our class. I should have forbidden the marriage. But no, you said it was a great opportunity for the boy.

MR LOOSELIPS: Well, he wasn't exactly spoiled for choice was he?

MRS LOOSELIPS: What do you mean?

MR LOOSELIPS: The only relationship he had with anyone of the opposite sex before Peaches was with the woman on his sat. nav.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Well...

MR LOOSELIPS: I saw him outside the house once. She had said "You have reached your destination" and he was trying to get her to come in for coffee.

MRS LOOSELIPS: He should have had more guidance from you. It is a father's duty to make sure his son understands the ways of the world.

MR LOOSELIPS: I tried to get him to join that dating agency. Did you see the form he filled in. Under the section 'What sort of woman are you looking for' for hair he wrote 'Preferably' (*pause*) for eyes he put 'see above'. I was beginning to think he would never find a girl.

MRS LOOSELIPS: All the more reason to be suspicious. When she turned up with that lump in front of her and blaming Lionel, I should have seen straight through her. The scheming little floosie. I should have known that idiot boy of yours couldn't have been responsible.

MR LOOSELIPS: Floosie?

MRS LOOSELIPS: I'm not going to let it happen. If we can keep them apart tonight we can get the marriage annulled. That will wipe the smile of the little harlot's face.

MR LOOSELIPS: Harlot? Is that the cabaret?

TOMMY returns

TOMMY: Hello. Where is everyone.

MR LOOSELIPS: Well, the thing is, old chap...

MRS LOOSELIPS: Just taking some air.

TOMMY: I can't say I blame them. It's a lovely evening. I think this is the best day of my life. Well, apart from the day I married Pepper of course.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Ah, ha ha.

TOMMY: What a day that was. I can remember every detail.

MR LOOSELIPS: The thing is, Pepper's...

TOMMY: Oh yes, the reception was...

MR LOOSELIPS: Dead

TOMMY: Oh no. It was really lively. Hundreds came from all over the country. I danced and danced all night. Over did it a bit to be honest.

MR LOOSELIPS: Stiff.

TOMMY: As a board the next day. Couldn't move a muscle.

MR LOOSELIPS: She's passed on.

TOMMY: Passed on what? It won't be on having another drink that's for sure. Not if I know my Pepper.

MR LOOSELIPS: What's the matter with you. I tell you she...

MRS LOOSELIPS: Oh. Here they are now.

LIONEL and PEACHES return.

TOMMY: Hello sweetheart. Mum not with you?

PEACHES: No She's having a little walk to clear her head.

MR LOOSELIPS: I think we can say that it is pretty empty of thoughts right now.

TOMMY: Oh, well, I think I might go and join her.

MRS LOOSELIPS: (*Quickly*) Very interesting building this isn't it?

TOMMY: I'm sorry?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Interesting, er, walls.

TOMMY: Well yes. If you like dirty (*peering*) whatever colour that is.

MRS LOOSELIPS: I like the way they have retained the original features.

TOMMY: Of the walls?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Well, all of it.

MR LOOSELIPS: Are you OK?

MRS LOOSELIPS: I mean, from the outside it looks, well you know what it looks like.

TOMMY: Well, yes I suppose so.

MRS LOOSELIPS: But, inside it has been transformed into something that er..

TOMMY: Into what?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Is so, er. Ahem. Functional.

TOMMY: Yes. Anyway, I think I'll just go and find Pepper.

PEACHES: She's gone home.

MR LOOSELIPS: The place from whence she came.

TOMMY: Home?

PEACHES: Yes. She said she felt a little tipsy. So she's got a taxi.

TOMMY: Oh.

PEACHES: But you weren't to let it spoil your evening.

TOMMY: Oh. Right. She actually got a taxi?

PEACHES: Yes.

TOMMY: There was one outside was there?

PEACHES: Well, she was going to get one in town.

TOMMY: I think I had better go and check. She could be wandering around for hours. The state she was in she'll probably end up in *(local)* Park.

MR LOOSELIPS: And get trampled by the elephants.

TOMMY: I'll just go and...*(He gets up)*

PEACHES: It's alright Dad. I'll go. It's my fault. I should have made sure she was safe. You stay here and enjoy the party. *(She makes nodding movements into the audience as if indicating to someone that they should go out with her.)*

LIONEL: I'll come with you. *(He stands)*

PEACHES: No!

LIONEL: Why not?

PEACHES: Sorry. No, you stay here. You'll need your energy for later. *(She winks at LIONEL then nods again into the audience before exiting)*

LIONEL: Oh boy. *(Peering into the audience)* Willy? Is that you? Now just a minute. *(He makes a movement towards the front of the stage but is then gripped by violent convulsions and in a particularly spectacular fashion, dies)*

TOMMY: Lionel? Son? *(He goes to him)*

MR LOOSELIPS: Not another one.

TOMMY: I think he's...dead.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Oh the useless boy.

MR LOOSELIPS: I think of it as not so much losing a son as, wait a minute, Lionel!

TOMMY: Oh what a tragedy!

MRS LOOSELIPS: Idiot! He can't do anything right.

TOMMY: Mrs Looselips, your son has just...

MRS LOOSELIPS: Oh well, we'll just have to stick him outside.

TOMMY: What?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Let's not let it spoil Peaches big day.

TOMMY: Not let it spoil her day! I think the fact that her husband of a few hours has just dropped dead might just take the edge of it for her. I mean, I think she may be a tad disappointed about the way things have turned out, if you don't mind me saying.

MRS LOOSELIPS: We'll tell her that he's gone for a walk.

TOMMY: Mrs Looselips. He's dead!

MRS LOOSELIPS: Yes, yes. We'll tell her later. Let her enjoy the party first. It must have cost you a packet to hire this place, no point in wasting your money. Come on, lets get him out of here.

TOMMY: You're not serious?

MRS LOOSELIPS: It might sound a little strange, but you'll thank me at the end of the day. Give us a hand then.

TOMMY is incredulous but helps MRS LOOSELIPS remove LIONEL.

MR LOOSELIPS: *(To himself)* Do you know. I think that there's something going on here. First Pepper, then Lionel. Do you know what? I don't think they are really dead. It is just some weird game. Or they are trying to confuse me. What can they be up to? *(To audience)* What could they possibly hope to gain? Why on earth am I asking you?

MAGGIE enters.

MAGGIE: Hello. All on your own?

MR LOOSELIPS: Well I was. Until the most beautiful woman in the world walked in.

MAGGIE: Who's that then?

MR LOOSELIPS: You of course.

MAGGIE: Oh Mr Looselips!

MR LOOSELIPS: You could make an old man very happy

MAGGIE: How would I do that then?

MR LOOSELIPS: You want me to draw you a picture?

MAGGIE: You old devil!

MR LOOSELIPS: You angel! If I said you had a beautiful body would you hold it against me?

MAGGIE: What's got you all frisky? What's in that fruit salad?

MR LOOSELIPS: It's you, Maggie. you drive me mad with desire. I want you. I need you.

MAGGIE: Mr Looselips! Behave yourself.

MR LOOSELIPS: Maggie. Listen to me. You are in grave danger.

MAGGIE: Go on with you.

MR LOOSELIPS: Haven't you noticed a lot of funny goings on?

MAGGIE: Not nearly enough to be honest. When you consider this is supposed to be a comedy.

MR LOOSELIPS: There's some sort of conspiracy going on here. Maggie you have to help me. You are the only one I can trust.

MAGGIE: How much wine have you had?

MR LOOSELIPS: I need you to go outside and see what's going on. Can you do that?

MAGGIE: Go outside! Certainly not. My place is in here.

MR LOOSELIPS: Alright then. But if you can't do that then please be with me.

MAGGIE: I've got my work to do.

MR LOOSELIPS: Stay with me Maggie, hold me tight.

MAGGIE: You randy old thing

MR LOOSELIPS: Maybe I am. Randy maybe, old certainly, thing, an entity, object, or creature that is not or cannot be specifically designated or precisely described. Come on Maggie, the time is right for us now!

MAGGIE: I think you are being very silly. I'll go and put the coffee on. I think you're ready for it.

MR LOOSELIPS: Ready for it? Yes, I'm ready for it.

MAGGIE: Would you like it now?

MR LOOSELIPS: Oh yes Maggie. I would like it now.

MAGGIE: OK. I'll make a bit of space on the table (*she picks up the fruit bowls*).

MR LOOSELIPS: We're going to have it on the table?

MAGGIE: Yes, Why not?

MR LOOSELIPS: But what if Mrs Looselips comes back?

MAGGIE: Well she can have some as well.

MR LOOSELIPS: As well?

MAGGIE: Yes. She told me she likes it.

MR LOOSELIPS: She does?

MAGGIE: Yes. Everyone likes it.

MR LOOSELIPS: They do?

MAGGIE: Yes.

MR LOOSELIPS: You mean we're all going to have it together?

MAGGIE: Yes.

MR LOOSELIPS: Even Pepper and Lionel?

MAGGIE: I guess so.

MR LOOSELIPS: Wow! I never expected anything like this.

MAGGIE: Well, if you will excuse me (*she exits*).

MR LOOSELIPS climbs on to the table and begins to remove his clothing singing "Kiss" by Prince in a high squeaky voice. He has dropped his trousers and is standing in his boxers as TOMMY and MRS LOOSELIPS return.*

MRS LOOSELIPS: Oh my God!

MR LOOSELIPS: Ah, there you are. Just in time. The party is just starting (*His hands are on the waistband of his boxers*).

TOMMY: Mr Looselips. Are you OK? Look. This is very stressful for all of us. Come on down (*He helps MR LOOSELIPS down off the table*).

MR LOOSELIPS: Come on down, the price is right!

TOMMY: Put you trousers back on eh?

MR LOOSELIPS: He he he. Donald, where's yer troosers (*He starts to do a jig*)
Oh, the wind blows high, the wind blows low...*

PEACHES enters.

PEACHES: It's OK Dad. Mum is...what the...

MR LOOSELIPS: Ah Peaches, what a beautiful pear.

PEACHES: Are you alright Mr Looselips?

MR LOOSELIPS: Me? Never better. I feel on top of the world. I have never felt so well in all my life. I feel great, I feel marvelous. I feel stupendous.

TOMMY: I don't have a good feeling about this.

MR LOOSELIPS: I feel like a million dollars. I feel brilliant,

TOMMY: You know what's going to happen don't you

MR LOOSELIPS: I feel amazing, fabulous.

TOMMY: Any minute now

MR LOOSELIPS: I feel stupendous, vibrant, I've never felt so alive, I feel...a little unwell actually. *(He becomes very stiff then drops to the floor, dead.)*

TOMMY: Told you.

PEACHES: Mr Looselips! He's dead!

MRS LOOSELIPS: Like father, like son.

TOMMY: That's a little callous don't you think?.

PEACHES: What do you mean, like father, like son?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Oh. Yes, sorry. Didn't mean to break it to you like that.

TOMMY: I'm sorry Peaches. Lionel was taken ill whilst you were out. I'm afraid he, he didn't make it.

PEACHES: Oh no. My Lionel. Not my Lionel. Oh woe is me. Oh woe, oh woe *(then suddenly regaining her composure)* Oh well. It was good while it lasted.

TOMMY: This is a tragic day. Mr Looselips senior and junior. I'm just pleased that my Pepper wasn't here to see this.

PEACHES: Ah.

TOMMY: What?

PEACHES: About mum.

TOMMY: Yes.

PEACHES: She didn't actually go to get a taxi.

TOMMY: She didn't try to walk it did she? Not in her state.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Yes, she could get assaulted. Get it - assaulted. Pepper. Salt and Pepper? Oh never mind.

PEACHES: No. She wasn't exactly in a state for walking, I agree.

TOMMY: So?

PEACHES: She hasn't actually gone home.

TOMMY: So where is she?

PEACHES: Propped up against the bins outside.

TOMMY: What? Bring her in.

PEACHES: I don't think that is a good idea.

MRS LOOSELIPS: She's copped it as well Tommy. She was the first to go.

TOMMY: Pepper?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Yes.

PEACHES: I'm sorry Dad.

TOMMY: My Pepper! Gone! What is going on here?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Hmm. I wonder. Three deaths in one night. Bit of a coincidence isn't it.

PEACHES: You seem to be taking this very calmly Mrs Looselips.

MRS LOOSELIPS: What's the point in getting hysterical. Not much we can do for them now is there. May they rest in peace.

MR LOOSELIPS vibrates on the floor as the final death throes shake his body.

PEACHES: We've all suffered such terrible losses tonight. A husband, a wife, a son when will it all end?

MRS LOOSELIPS: I'd start getting worried if I were you, there is one relationship missing from that list you just gave.

PEACHES: My goodness! You're right. Oh, oh...

TOMMY: Are you suggesting someone planned this?

MRS LOOSELIPS: Well, what do you think?

TOMMY: But who would want Lionel, your husband and my wife dead? What could they wish to gain? And even if someone did want to kill them how could they have managed to get to all three of them?

PEACHES: You don't think...?

TOMMY: What?

PEACHES: Might it have been something we ate?

TOMMY: It could be. Yes. Here we are looking for conspiracy theories and it could be something as simple as food poisoning. It might have been the fish! Pepper had the fish. Mr Looselips had the fish. Oh. Oh crikey. I had the fish!

PEACHES: Lionel didn't have the fish.

TOMMY: No? Oh thank you, thank you Lionel for your aversion to high protein food.

MRS LOOSELIPS: He did have prawns. He had the prawn cocktail.

TOMMY: Yes but Pepper didn't have a starter.

PEACHES: Well what did we all have, I don't know the potatoes? The carrots?

MRS LOOSELIPS: (*Haughtily*) It will not have been our produce.

TOMMY: Well look. There's only one thing that we've all had. One thing that I can say for certainty that we have all eaten. The fruit salad.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Well if it was the fruit salad it must have been tampered with. That produce left our warehouse in tip top condition.

PEACHES: But who would...?

TOMMY: Wait a minute.

PEACHES: Do you mean...?

TOMMY: If someone has tampered with the salad. If it is a deliberate act. Then. Then we have been...poisoned.

PEACHES: But who would...?

TOMMY: Murdered! It's true. My wife has been murdered.

PEACHES: And my husband.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Yeah, yeah. Mine too. The point is. We've all eaten the fruit salad. So, if we look at this from a logical point of view, if we have all eaten the fruit salad, and the fruit salad contains a deadly poison, then it follows that the poison that has killed three of us thus far must, by its very nature, cause our own demise. But this is not the case, as I am not dead. You can tell that I am not dead, because I talking. I am not dead, you are not dead, Peaches is not dead.

TOMMY: I'm beginning to see a bit of a pattern here.

MRS LOOSELIPS: So I don't think it is necessarily wise to point the finger at the fruit salad. Six of us ate it, but only three of us met with our demise.

TOMMY: Shouldn't be long now.

MRS LOOSELIPS: I mean do you feel unwell? Because I don't. I feel absolutely fine, rather well as it happens.

TOMMY: I think they might be the fateful words.

MRS LOOSELIPS: Therefore, I would conclude that it cannot be the fruit salad because hrrrrfmmmmrrppppaahhh (*and she is dead*).

TOMMY: Another one bites the dust.

PEACHES: I thought it would never end.

MR & MRS LOOSELIPS have a quivering death throe.

TOMMY: This has gone far enough. I think we had better call the police.

PEACHES: Don't you think you would be better getting an ambulance? We've all eaten the fruit salad. I think Mrs Looselips little theory about it not being the fruit salad has just been blown out the window.

TOMMY: Yes, yes, you're right. I'll do it right away (*He exits, MAGGIE enters with the coffee*).

MAGGIE: Here we are (*seeing MR & MRS LOOSELIPS*) Oh!

PEACHES: Sorry Maggie. I don't think we need so much coffee.

MAGGIE: What happened with Mr and Mrs Looselips?

PEACHES: They became ill quite suddenly. Has anyone else had the fruit salad?

MAGGIE: No. (*unconvincingly*) It's just for the top table.

PEACHES: Hmm. Well, that's something.

MAGGIE: I made quite sure no one else had it. Tommy made it quite clear that no one else was to touch it.

PEACHES: Yes, OK Maggie.

MAGGIE: Is there something wrong with the fruit salad.

PEACHES: Possibly.

MAGGIE: Oh. Do you feel ill at all?

PEACHES: No actually, I feel fine.

MAGGIE: Really?

PEACHES: Yes.

MAGGIE: Are you sure?

PEACHES: Yes. But that is a worry in itself. Both Mr and Mrs Looselips said they felt fine just before they died.

MAGGIE: How strange.

PEACHES: I'm sorry?

MAGGIE: Er. How strange that they died so suddenly.

PEACHES: Maggie, are you OK?

MAGGIE: Me, yes. Ha ha, whatever makes you ask (*she laughs nervously*)

TOMMY enters.

TOMMY: They are on the way. Here, lets move these bodies.

TOMMY drags of MR LOOSELIPS whilst PEACHES and MAGGIE take off MRS LOOSELIPS. TOMMY and PEACHES return to the stage.

PEACHES: Dad. I think Maggie has poisoned the salad.

TOMMY: What? Why on earth would she do that?

PEACHES: I don't know but she is acting very suspiciously. She kept asking if I felt OK. She knows something.

TOMMY: Because she asked you if you are OK?

PEACHES: How well do you know her?

TOMMY: Well, not that well I suppose. But I've known her a long time.

PEACHES: She seems very fond of you.

TOMMY: Maggie?

PEACHES: It's always Tommy says this and Tommy says that.

TOMMY: What are you suggesting?

PEACHES: Nothing. I'm sorry Dad. Are you sure she can be trusted.

TOMMY: I see no reason why not. What a mess this is, I can't think straight anymore.

MAGGIE and MAD GARY enter.

MAGGIE: Inspector Grasslover is here sir.

TOMMY: At last! (*local place*) finest. (*To PEACHES*) Mad Gary will get to the bottom of what is going on here.

MAD GARY: Move back, move back, there's nothing to see.

TOMMY: Sorry?

MAD GARY: I've always wanted to say that.

TOMMY: This is no time for messing about inspector. This place has been the scene of a terrible crime this evening.

MAD GARY: I know, I've been listening. Actually, I've been here from the very beginning. Why anybody would pay good money to see this tosh is beyond me.

TOMMY: I'm talking about the murders!

MAD GARY: Oh yes, the murders. I believe that this is a complex and intricate case. There could be many red alleys many blind herrings. This is the sort of case that only the finest detective could solve.

PEACHES: Is he around at all?

MAD GARY: You are very lucky that I am available. Yes, I have no doubt that a criminal mastermind has been at work here, it will take all my reserves of reasoning to come up with the answer to this one. Did you do it Tommy?

TOMMY: No.

MAD GARY: Damn! (*To PEACHES*) How about you?

PEACHES: Me? Of course not. Don't be ridiculous.

MAD GARY: I'll take that as a no as well.

PEACHES: What?

MAD GARY: Never fear, Grasslover is here. The killer is in this room I'm sure of it. Don't worry good people. I will get to the bottom of it. I will leave no stone unturned. I will look in every nook. I will look in every cranny.

PEACHES: Dad?

TOMMY: Yes Darling.

PEACHES: Why do they call him Mad Gary?

MAD GARY: I will check out every clue, I will search high and low I will follow every by way, every path you know. Climb every mountain, ford every stream. Follow every rainbow, till you find your dream. A dream that will need, all the love you can give. Everyday of your life, for as long as you live*.

TOMMY: I have no idea

MAD GARY: One of your guests is not all they seem to be. One of your guests is hiding a guilty secret. One of your guests is about to get more than what they bargained for. I intend to find out who that is. Let me have the guest list Tommy, I want to draw up a short list of the likely suspects. (*To the audience*) Better get yourselves a drink ladies and gentlemen. It's going to be a long night.

INTERVAL

ACT TWO

As before

MAD GARY: I trust you have all refreshed yourselves? Anyone try the punch? Mmm? Tommy, better get the stomach pump just in case. Now down to business. As I suspected, the murderer is amongst us. I have eliminated Tommy, Peaches and Maggie from my inquiries. You may find this strange. You may think that you have spotted a motive for any one of them. But I am here to tell you that it cannot possibly be one of them for this rather contrived reason. They have all eaten willingly from the fruit salad and they wouldn't do that if they if they knew it contained poison!

PEACHES: So it is true?

MAD GARY: Yes, I can confirm that someone has been at the fruit salad but I suspect the poison was administered before the salad was made. That means that it is possible that not all of the types of fruit contain poison. You have seen Tommy and Peaches eat from the salad and Maggie has admitted to me that she had been helping herself before she brought it out to the table.

TOMMY: Maggie ate the fruit salad?

MAGGIE: I'm sorry sir. I ain't had no tea and it looked so nice.

PEACHES: Is that why you were so worried about it?

MAGGIE: I didn't want to admit that I had disobeyed your father.

MAD GARY: This small indiscretion is unimportant. That is not the crime that I am here to investigate. Which particularly item contains the poison we can determine later, but I am satisfied that there is no need for the ambulance and that Tommy, Peaches and Maggie are not only innocent, but have escaped with their lives by sheer good fortune. The shocking truth, ladies and gentlemen, is that the murderer is in the room!

PEACHES: But if the poison was administered before the salad was made then it could have been put in at any time, not necessarily tonight.

MAD GARY: Shut up clever dick! Do you want to wander around (*local place*) randomly interviewing people? Does Miss Marple ever say 'the murderer is in this room, or possibly at home having dinner or maybe even at the pictures? No well, keep your trap shut then. These people have paid good money here tonight, the very least we can do is accuse one of them of being a cold blooded killer. Ladies and gentlemen, I say this to you. Take a look at the person beside you ladies and

gentlemen. Do they look like a murderer? Do they have the cold, hard stare of a killer? Are they still awake? When you came back in you were given a form with the names of my six suspects. Later you will have a chance to vote for who you think is the murderer, but first you must hear the evidence. Does that person beside you have a form with six names on it. If so you are safe. If not, then they are one of the suspects and you could be sat next to a killer! Right! To business! Where's Willy? Let us start with you.

WILLY takes the stage. MAD GARY hands him a page of the script with his lines on it.

MAD GARY: So. You are Peaches ex boyfriend. The Willy we have been hearing so much about. The Willy that Peaches misses so much. Not as big as I was led to believe. So, tell me. Why come today? Why torture yourself? Why put yourself through the misery of seeing the woman you loved hitching herself to another man?

WILLY: I wanted to be part of Peaches big day.

MAD GARY: Ahhh! Isn't that nice? To show that there's no hard feelings?

WILLY: Yes

MAD GARY: How do you feel about Peaches now?

WILLY: Desperately sad for her.

MAD GARY: Sad? Why?

WILLY: She has just lost her husband. On her wedding day.

MAD GARY: Doesn't that mean that now you can have her to yourself. Doesn't that make you happy?

WILLY: We had a good time together but it was over. She loved Lionel and I was happy for her.

MAD GARY: Have you got a new girlfriend?

WILLY: No.

MAD GARY: Why not? You're a handsome lad.

WILLY: There's plenty of time.

MAD GARY: But surely, a lad like you. You would have plenty to choose from. Girls must be beating a path to your door.

WILLY: Not really.

MAD GARY: I put it to you that you have got a girlfriend, haven't you?

WILLY: No.

MAD GARY: You have. And your girlfriend is Peaches isn't it?

PEACHES gasps

WILLY: No.

MAD GARY: Come on. You still seeing her aren't you?

WILLY: No.

MAD GARY: Yes you are. And what is more, that (*pointing to PEACHES' belly*) is yours isn't it.

WILLY: Well I suppose it could be.

MAD GARY: Aha!

WILLY: I did notice that one of the cushions was missing of the sofa before I came out.

MAD GARY: One minute. (*MAD GARY walks over the TOMMY and addresses him*). How come he gets a joke? God knows there are precious few funny lines in this thing. Feeble as that joke was, you'd think it could have been given to one of us. Don't you think so. We've gone to the trouble of coming to rehearsals, learning our lines, well some of us have anyway. So how come someone gets plucked out of the audience and is given a sheet of paper and they get the first half decent joke all night? There's no justice, Oh well. (*He returns to WILLY*) Right. Don't get clever with me. Are you still seeing Peaches or not?

WILLY: Alright, Alright, I can't stand it anymore. No more lies, I'm sorry Peaches, I have to tell the truth. I love her yes, I love her. I wish it was me she had married today. But she has a heartless streak, she has married for money and not for love. It breaks my heart but I am not responsible for this terrible crime. Please believe me. I did not poison the salad.

MAD GARY: I'm not sure I do believe you Willy. Oh, but you had better go and sit down. You must be drained after that emotional performance. There isn't a dry seat in the house.

WILLY returns to his seat.

MAD GARY: Right, who shall we have next? Hmm, Lets have Jo(e) next

JO(E) takes to the stage, MAD GARY gives him/her a copy of the script with the lines.

MAD GARY: So. You're Jo(e) are you?

JO(E): Apparently.

MAD GARY: What do you mean apparently?

JO(E): It's what is says here.

MAD GARY: Don't get clever, right. I'm going to ask you again and the answer you are going to give is yes OK? Right. Are you Jo(e)?

JO(E): Yes, OK.

MAD GARY: YES! Just say yes!

JO(E): Yes.

MAD GARY: Thank you. Well, I don't think you are Jo(e)

JO(E): I wish you people would make your mind up.

MAD GARY: What do you say to that?

JO(E): Look am I Jo(e) or not? I'm quite happy to go and sit down again.

MAD GARY: Come on. Admit it. Your name isn't really Jo(e) is it.

JO(E): Well it's not really no. You do understand how theatre works don't you? I mean is your name really Mad Gary Grasslover?

MAD GARY: Give me that. *(He grabs the script) I thought so (He hands it back)* Just read what it say on there. No more ad-libbing OK? *(into the audience)* Margaret *(or well known member of the group)*, for goodness sake, couldn't you have spotted that this one was a trouble maker. Couldn't you find anyone else. Oh, well let's get it over with. *(To JO(E))* Right, I put it to you that you are not Jo(e) but you are, in reality, Bernie!

JO(E): Gash

MAD GARY: What?

JO(E): That's what it says. Gash.

MAD GARY: Give it here. (*He grabs the script*) Gasp! It says gasp. It's a stage direction. Like this. (*He demonstrates*) Gasp. You understand? (*He hands back the script*).

JO(E): It says gash.

MAD GARY: Oh, never mind. I say you are Bernie, owner of the second biggest fruit and veg wholesaler in the whole of (*local place*) and you are here incognito.

JO(E): In what?

MAD GARY: Cognito.

JO(E): What if I am?

MAD GARY: So you admit it. What are you doing here? And how did you get in?

JO(E): I was invited.

MAD GARY: Exactly. You were invited by Mrs Looselips weren't you? With whom you have been having an affair for the last ten years! (*If JO(E) is played by a woman then 'lesbian affair'.*) So, all is not as it seems is it? What happened? Did it all go wrong? Did you fail to warn her not to eat the fruit salad? Interesting!

JO(E): Maybe for you. I'm starting to get a little bored myself.

MAD GARY: I can see I'm going to get nothing out of you. Interview over. You may sit down. Please God let it be one of the others!

JO(E) returns to the audience.

MAD GARY: Two down, four to go. Let's hope it gets easier. Excuse me (*He downs a glass of wine*) OK Let's have, I don't know, Sam.

SAM takes the stage and is given a script.

MAD GARY: Right. Could you tell us your reason for being here today.

SAM: Tommy is my brother.

MAD GARY: Oh is he. Is he really? Is that so?

SAM: Yes.

TOMMY: Yes.

MAD GARY: OK. Good. Well. Why did you kill all these people here today?

SAM: I didn't

MAD GARY: Ha! So you say, so you say!

TOMMY: Is everything alright Inspector

MAD GARY: Well, it obviously isn't this one is it? Where is the possible motive?

TOMMY: So why name Sam as a witness then?

MAD GARY: I don't know. Six seemed like a good number of suspects to have. I just had to make up the numbers. Oh wait, I have an idea. *(To SAM)* You're jealous aren't you? Jealous of the success Tommy has had. Everyone in *(local place)* knows him and now his daughter has married the biggest fruit and veg magnate in the whole of *(local place)*. It pushed you over the edge didn't it? You poisoned the fruit salad in a fit of jealous rage didn't you?

SAM: No

MAD GARY: I thought you might say that.

SAM: I'm not jealous of Tommy. Why should I be?

MAD GARY: It's a good little fruit stall.

SAM: I'm Director General of a multi-national finance corporation. Fruit and veg isn't really my thing.

MAD GARY: You are?

SAM: Yes.

MAD GARY: Oh well, it was just an idea.

SAM: Er.

MAD GARY: What?

SAM: Er.

MAD GARY: Er?

SAM: Yes.

MAD GARY: Er?

SAM: Yes.

MAD GARY: Say it again.

SAM: Er.

MAD GARY: (*Into the audience*) Give this one a membership form Margaret, we can't afford to let talent like this slip through our fingers.

SAM: Er.

MAD GARY: Yes, yes. We got er. we all heard er. What is it?

SAM: I was late arriving. I couldn't have tampered with the fruit salad. It was already on the table when I arrived.

MAD GARY: Yes, but we've already established that someone could have got at any of the fruit before it arrived here.

SAM: So you mean, it doesn't necessarily have to be someone in this room?

MAD GARY: Yes it does have to be someone in this room, for the reasons that I think I made perfectly clear before. Now, will you please go and sit down before I lose my argument, er I mean lose my temper.

SAM returns to the audience.

MAD GARY: (*To TOMMY*) You might have told me that you were the brother of a financial high flyer!

TOMMY: You mean you believe all that?

MAD GARY: It wasn't true?

TOMMY: I haven't a clue. We haven't seen each other for years. Last I heard, Sam went door to door selling insurance.

MAD GARY: Great! Oh well, I'm not re-interviewing, I'm moving on. Lets have Lucy.

LUCY takes the stage and is given a script.

MAD GARY: *(Immediately stuck by LUCY's beauty)* Well hello!

LUCY: Hello

MAD GARY: What brings a lovely girl like you to a place like this?

LUCY: I was invited

MAD GARY: Oh you sweet thing. Hadn't you anything better to do on a night like this?

LUCY: No.

MAD GARY: With your looks? You must have men lined up to take you out.

LUCY: Not really

MAD GARY: No? What is the matter with young men these days? Isn't there anyone wooing you?

LUCY: No.

MAD GARY: Nobody?

LUCY: No.

MAD GARY: What are you doing later?

LUCY: I don't know.

MAD GARY: How about a little drink. I know a discreet little place.

LUCY: What would you wife say Inspector?

MAD GARY: Oh that's alright. We have a very open relationship.

LUCY: You do?

MAD GARY: Yes. Once I'm out in the open, I forget about our relationship.

LUCY: I don't think so.

MAD GARY: Well how about a bite to eat? I mean we could go out. I don't mean eating here, I don't think that would be wise.

LUCY: I don't think anywhere would be wise Inspector.

MAD GARY: Are you sure?

LUCY: Positive.

MAD GARY: Well, maybe you might change you mind later. So, what is your relationship to ... any of these people.

LUCY: I work for Mrs Looselips. Or I did. I did their advertising for them.

MAD GARY: Really

LUCY: Yes. I wrote their slogans. 'Looselips. Less on the hips' That's one of mine.

MAD GARY: Very good. How did you get into that sort of thing?

LUCY: It's the first thing that came along after I qualified

MAD GARY: Qualified?

LUCY: From the RA.

MAD GARY: RA. Rat's Arse? What's RA?

LUCY: Royal Academy.

MAD GARY: Royal Academy? You qualified from the Royal Academy?

LUCY: Yes.

MAD GARY: Then what the f.. What brings you to (*local place*)?

LUCY: I'm from here originally. I came for a look and fell in love with the place.

MAD GARY: What do you mean you came for a look? You don't remember it.

LUCY: I was very young when I left.

MAD GARY: You didn't fancy Milan? Paris?

LUCY: There's time for that.

MAD GARY: Yes, well. I dare say. In the meantime (*he gives her a card*) if you ever have any trouble give me a call and I'll be round in a flash.

LUCY: Wouldn't I be better calling 999?

MAD GARY: Not if you want a personal service, you know what I mean. Thank you Lucy. You can sit down.

LUCY returns to her seat.

MAD GARY: What a lovely girl. Right. Lets have Bobby next. Call Bobby.

TOMMY: Call Bobby.

PEACHES: Call Bobby. (*This call could be repeated by anyone in the wings, sound and lighting, front of house staff in the auditorium, the more the merrier*)

MAD GARY: Well come on. Come on.

BOBBY takes to the stage and is given a script.

BOBBY: Hello

MAD GARY: So. How did you come to be here today?

BOBBY: Lionel invited me.

MAD GARY: Lionel invited you. Why?

BOBBY: We're old friends.

MAD GARY: You're old friends. How did you meet?

BOBBY: I was employed by Mrs Looselips.

MAD GARY: You were employed by Mrs Looselips.

BOBBY: Is there an echo in here?

MAD GARY: I'm trying to pad the script out. It's going too quick. At this rate we'll be finished before they've tidied the bar. We'll talk slowly. (*He starts talking very slowly*) Why did you leave Mrs Looselips employment?

BOBBY: (*At normal speed*) I would rather not say.

MAD GARY: *(At normal speed)* Say it slowly

BOBBY: What?

MAD GARY: Slowly.

BOBBY: Oh. *(Slowly)* I would rather not say.

MAD GARY: That's better *(Slowly)* I bet you would rather not say. You were sacked weren't you?

BOBBY: Er.

MAD GARY: *(At normal speed)* Oh not you as well. Stop it with the 'ers' OK? We've all had enough of 'er' *(Slowly)* Sacked for stealing weren't you eh?

BOBBY: Alright. *(An extraordinarily long pause)* I admit it.

MAD GARY: Hah! Stealing from your employer is a serious business. *(Speaking at normal speed)* Oh, I can't stand this. Let's speak normally, they'll just have speed up in the bar. Would I be right in thinking that Mrs Looselips wouldn't have known you were here today?

BOBBY: No. But Lionel wanted me here.

MAD GARY: Got a grudge against Mrs Looselips haven't you?

BOBBY: I didn't kill her.

MAD GARY: Maybe you intended just to make her ill. Misjudged the amount of poison.

BOBBY: I wouldn't harm Lionel.

MAD GARY: How do I know that. He worshiped you but what did you ever do for him eh? You stole from his family. Is that how you repay him? Stealing is a crime and it doesn't matter whether it is a couple of apples or the Crown Jewels. The effect on people is the same, they feel violated, damaged. And the CPS? Crown Prosecution Service? What a joke. 'The matter is not serious enough' they say. 'A waste of resources' Oh, it might be a couple of apples today but let them get away with it and it will be mugging old ladies in the street next, mark my words. People like you make me sick. If I had my way we would bring back flogging, that would make you think twice about stealing apples wouldn't eh? That would make you think twice before you help yourself to something that doesn't belong to you. How

do you feel now eh? I could get a whip and do the job right now. Would you like that eh? Would you?

TOMMY: Steady on Inspector.

MAD GARY: What? *(To BOBBY)* Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I got carried away. I've got an apple tree that overhangs the roads and kids are constantly... Anyway, please go and sit down. I hope I didn't offend you. There won't be any more questions. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time.

BOBBY returns to the audience

MAD GARY: So. That leaves us with just one suspect. This one is going to surprise you Tommy. You are such a good natured man it is inconceivable to you that any of your friends would turn against you, but this is a hard world we live in. Time for the final suspect. It's your friend from the market. Come on Max, your turn.

MAX takes to the stage and is given a script. Inexplicably, MAD GARY starts to talk like Hercule Poirot

MAD GARY: So. Ve 'av 'ere, Max ze Market Trader, non?

MAX: Why are you speaking in that ridiculous accent?

MAD GARY: I felt it vould aid ze investigation if I adopted ze persona of 'ercule Poirot. I feel it iz time to get ze litle gray cells vorking. You 'av a market stall as well I believe.

MAX: Yes

MAD GARY: You sell ze same things as Tommy. Pommes et, er other stuff.

MAX: I sell fruit and veg, yes.

MAD GARY: Izn't that a litle, 'ow you say, difficult.

MAX: No, why?

MAD GARY: Surely you cannot both make a living in zis petite town.

MAX: I think we both do OK.

MAD GARY: Zoot alors! Ze people of *(local place)* must like their apples and pears. Ze fruit bowls of *(local place)* must be overflowing. Ze vegetable racks must

be stuffed wit le onion, le cabbage, le pomme de terre. But ‘owever much ze locals may like their fresh produce, things are different now. Wouldn’t you zay?

MAX: Not really.

MAD GARY: *(Letting the accent slip)* Not really! Tommy has married into the biggest wholesaler in *(local place)*! Doesn’t that worry you at all?

MAX: What happened to Hercule Poirot?

MAD GARY: I got sick of the French accent.

MAX: I think he was from Belgium.

MAD GARY: Are you trying to be clever?

MAX: No

MAD GARY: Good. I wouldn’t advise you to try to be clever with me. Hah, you have to get up early to outwit Gary Grasslover! *(MAD GARY casually perches on the table putting his hand into the fruit salad bowl. He pulls it out, attempts to shake it dry then pulls a hankchief out of his pocket. As he does so he spills coins all over the stage. TOMMY and PEACHES, and possibly MAX, help him pick them up. Finally normality is restored.)* Sorry, who are you again?

MAX: Max.

MAD GARY: Oh yes. Max. It appears to me that you have the biggest motive of all. You have the most to lose from Tommy and Looselips joining forces so to speak.

MAX: But me and Tommy are old friends.

MAD GARY: Friends yes, but business is business. With his daughter married into the family, Tommy is guaranteed the freshest produce, the best prices. You won’t be able to compete with that will you?

MAX: I’m sure Tommy would be fair.

MAD GARY: Oh don’t come the innocent. This would be the end for you and you know it. Yes. You have a motive, definitely, a very strong motive. Perhaps the strongest of all. Hmm. Please return to you seat. Time for me to think.

MAX returns to the audience.

MAD GARY: So ladies and gentlemen, there we have it. Six suspects and one of them is the murderer. I said Max has the biggest motive. It is true that Max's business would be likely to suffer with the preferential treatment that Tommy would be bound to receive from Looselips Wholesalers, but what of the others? Sam doesn't appear to have anything to gain but there were inconsistencies in the story. And was Sam late, and, if so, why? And does it matter? And what about Jo(e)? There certainly appears to be a motive here. Not only is Jo(e) in the same business as the Looselips but there is also the little matter of the affair with Mrs Looselips. Love can drive the most reasonable of people into doing all kind of vile acts! Speaking of love, there is Willy. It seems that Peaches can't get enough Willy! Do you really believe that their relationship is over? And Lucy. A graduate of the Royal Academy, slumming it in (*local place*) because she just happens to like it round her. Does that pretty face hide a guilty secret. And last, but not least Bobby. Lionel's little friend who was caught with a hand in the till. It could be any one of them, but it is only one of them. We have reached the moment of truth! But first, a little fun. You all have forms with the suspects names on. I want you to put a tick against who you think is the killer. Don't forget to put your name on the form. There could be a small prize for the first one out of the hat with the correct answer. Now Tommy and Peaches are going to collect your forms whilst I write out my report.

TOMMY and PEACHES enter the auditorium and collect the forms. Meanwhile Mad Gary sits at the top table and writes his report. Whilst he is doing this he idly eats from the fruit salad. When all the forms are collected TOMMY and PEACHES return to sit at the table whilst MAD GARY stands up to read his report. During this speech TOMMY looks through the forms and picks one at random that has named LUCY as the killer.

MAD GARY: Ladies and gentlemen. You have all had a chance to take a guess at who you think is the killer and Tommy is now sorting them out so that we can pick a luck winner at random. But police work is more than just guess work. We have to analyse the facts, we have to consider every possibility. When you have eliminated the impossible, what you are left with, regardless of how incredible it may seem, is the truth. In preparing my report I have drawn on my years of experience as a police officer. Some of you may be lucky enough to have plumped for the same person and for that I congratulate you. So who is it? The jealous sibling? The disgruntled former employee? The lover? The mysterious beauty? The rival? The boyfriend? At last we have reached the moment of truth. Without further ado and without dilly dallying around, I shall get right to the point, and state quite plainly and clearly and succinctly that the person responsible for the heinous crime, this appalling occurrence, this tragedy on a day that should have been a day full of joy is...is...arghh.

MAD GARY drops to the floor clutching his throat. TOMMY rushes to him.

TOMMY: Mad Gary, Mad Gary. He's...dead.

PEACHES: The report, the report.

TOMMY: What?

PEACHES: The report. He wrote the killer's name in the report.

TOMMY: *(Grabbing the report)* Yes, yes. Of course. The killer is, the killer is *(TOMMY announce the name of a member of the audience who has guessed correctly. If there are no correct guesses skip to TOMMY's line Lucy!)*

PEACHES: What are you talking about? That isn't even one of the suspects.

TOMMY: Oh, yes. *(Reading the report)* {audience member} knows who the killer is. Well {audience member}, perhaps you could enlighten us.

The audience member will now (hopefully) shout out "Lucy". If not - you're on your own!

TOMMY: Lucy!

PEACHES: Oh my God!

TOMMY: Well then Lucy. I think you had better come back up here.

LUCY takes to the stage and is given a script.

TOMMY: So, what do you have to say for yourself?

LUCY: It's a fair cop.

TOMMY: Really? Are you sure?

LUCY: Yeah, I done it alright. You got me bang to rights.

TOMMY: But why?

LUCY: Doesn't it say in the report.

TOMMY: Oh yes. *(Reading)* The murderer is Lucy. Mr Looselips suits his name. He has been dropping clues from the beginning. He became upset at the mention of the name Lucy when Pepper was singing, he acted strange at the mention of daughters and hinted that he had one who had gone away. Then there is the fact that he employed Lucy when it was Mrs Looselips who normally handled all the business affairs. Yes, the evidence was there that Mr Looselips knew that Lucy was his own daughter.

LUCY: It's true. I am Lucy Looselips!

TOMMY: And the motive I guess, jealousy?

LUCY: I was their first child but they were poor. They couldn't afford to keep me and put me up for adoption. I've had a good life, my new parents were very rich and gave me everything I needed but I had to know who my real parents were. A few years ago I tracked them down. I wrote to my mother expecting her to be delighted but she replied telling me never to contact them again she didn't want to know me. So I went to see my father. He knew who I was right away but we never spoke of it. Anyway, he gave me a job and I thought that he was binding his time to welcome me back into the family. Then that idiot Lionel announced he was marrying and he was overjoyed. He forgot all about me. Lionel was going to inherit everything. That was the final straw, I couldn't let that happen. He has no rights. It all belongs to me! So I decided to wipe you all out in one go so it would all be mine. I'm sorry Tommy. I poisoned your plums.

TOMMY: Ooh me plums!

LUCY: My cursed luck that it didn't work. Didn't you eat the plums?

TOMMY: Well, personally I detest plums and I don't think Peaches is too keen either.

PEACHES: Eurch! Plums. Nasty.

LUCY: OK?

TOMMY: Yes great.

LUCY: Did I do it right?

TOMMY: Perfect. I think you had better wait here whilst we, er wait for reinforcements.

LUCY: What?

TOMMY: Please take a seat. (*Quietly, to LUCY*) I'll let you out the back later. (*To audience*) Well, ladies and gentlemen. That is the end of our little murder mystery. If you guessed correctly well done. Otherwise, better luck next time. Either way, next time you are on (*local place*) Market and you fancy a bit of fruit and veg, remember Tommy and Daughter, (*they hold hands*) incorporating Looselips wholesale, the best, and now the biggest, fruit and veg in the whole of (*local place*)!

END

WILLY's Lines

MAD GARY: So. You are Peaches ex boyfriend. The Willy we have been hearing so much about. The Willy that Peaches misses so much. Not as big as I was led to believe. So, tell me. Why come today? Why torture yourself? Why put yourself through the misery of seeing the woman you loved hitching herself to another man?

WILLY: I wanted to be part of Peaches big day.

MAD GARY: Ahhh! Isn't that nice? To show that there's no hard feelings?

WILLY: Yes

MAD GARY: How do you feel about Peaches now?

WILLY: Desperately sad for her.

MAD GARY: Sad? Why?

WILLY: She has just lost her husband. On her wedding day.

MAD GARY: Doesn't that mean that now you can have her to yourself. Doesn't that make you happy?

WILLY: We had a good time together but it was over. She loved Lionel and I was happy for her.

MAD GARY: Have you got a new girlfriend?

WILLY: No.

MAD GARY: Why not? You're a handsome lad.

WILLY: There's plenty of time.

MAD GARY: But surely, a lad like you. You would have plenty to choose from. Girls must be beating a path to your door.

WILLY: Not really.

MAD GARY: I put it to you that you have got a girlfriend, haven't you?

WILLY: No.

MAD GARY: You have. And your girlfriend is Peaches isn't it?

PEACHES gasps

WILLY: No.

MAD GARY: Come on. You still seeing her aren't you?

WILLY: No.

MAD GARY: Yes you are. And what is more, that (*pointing to PEACHES' belly*) is yours isn't it.

WILLY: Well I suppose it could be.

MAD GARY: Aha!

WILLY: I did notice that one of the cushions was missing of the sofa before I came out.

MAD GARY: One minute. (*MAD GARY walks over the TOMMY and addresses him*). How come he gets a joke? God knows there are precious few funny lines in this thing. Feeble as that joke was, you'd think it could have been given to one of us. Don't you think so. We've gone to the trouble of coming to rehearsals, learning our lines, well some of us have anyway. So how come someone gets plucked out of the audience and is given a sheet of paper and they get the first half decent joke all night? There's no justice, Oh well. (*He returns to WILLY*) Right. Don't get clever with me. Are you still seeing Peaches or not?

WILLY: Alright, Alright, I can't stand it anymore. No more lies, I'm sorry Peaches, I have to tell the truth. I love her yes, I love her. I wish it was me she had married today. But she has a heartless streak, she has married for money and not for love. It breaks my heart but I am not responsible for this terrible crime. Please believe me. I did not poison the salad.

MAD GARY: I'm not sure I do believe you Willy. Oh, but you had better go and sit down. You must be drained after that emotional performance. There isn't a dry seat in the house.

WILLY returns to his seat.

JO(E)'s Lines

MAD GARY: So. You're Jo(e) are you?

JO(E): Apparently.

MAD GARY: What do you mean apparently?

JO(E): It's what it says here.

MAD GARY: Don't get clever, right. I'm going to ask you again and the answer you are going to give is yes OK? Right. Are you Jo(e)?

JO(E): Yes, OK.

MAD GARY: YES! Just say yes!

JO(E): Yes.

MAD GARY: Thank you. Well, I don't think you are Jo(e)

JO(E): I wish you people would make your mind up.

MAD GARY: What do you say to that?

JO(E): Look am I Jo(e) or not? I'm quite happy to go and sit down again.

MAD GARY: Come on. Admit it. Your name isn't really Jo(e) is it.

JO(E): Well it's not really no. You do understand how theatre works don't you? I mean is your name really Mad Gary Grasslover?

MAD GARY: Give me that. *(He grabs the script)* I thought so *(He hands it back)* Just read what it says on there. No more ad-libbing OK? *(into the audience)* Margaret *(or well known member of the group)*, for goodness sake, couldn't you have spotted that this one was a trouble maker. Couldn't you find anyone else. Oh, well let's get it over with. *(To JO(E))* Right, I put it to you that you are not Jo(e) but you are, in reality, Bernie!

JO(E): Gash

MAD GARY: What?

JO(E): That's what it says. Gash.

MAD GARY: Give it here. *(He grabs the script)* Gasp! It says gasp. It's a stage direction. Like this. *(He demonstrates)* Gasp. You understand? *(He hands back the script)*.

JO(E): It says gash.

MAD GARY: Oh, never mind. I say you are Bernie, owner of the second biggest fruit and veg wholesaler in the whole of *(local place)* and you are here incognito.

JO(E): In what?

MAD GARY: Cognito.

JO(E): What if I am?

MAD GARY: So you admit it. What are you doing here? And how did you get in?

JO(E): I was invited.

MAD GARY: Exactly. You were invited by Mrs Looselips weren't you? With whom you have been having an affair for the last ten years! *(If JO(E) is played by a woman then 'lesbian affair'.)* So, all is not as it seems is it? What happened? Did it all go wrong? Did you fail to warn her not to eat the fruit salad? Interesting!

JO(E): Maybe for you. I'm starting to get a little bored myself.

MAD GARY: I can see I'm going to get nothing out of you. Interview over. You may sit down. Please God let it be one of the others!

JO(E) returns to the audience.

SAM's Lines

MAD GARY: Right. Could you tell us your reason for being here today.

SAM: Tommy is my brother.

MAD GARY: Oh is he. Is he really? Is that so?

SAM: Yes.

TOMMY: Yes.

MAD GARY: OK. Good. Well. Why did you kill all these people here today?

SAM: I didn't

MAD GARY: Ha! So you say, so you say!

TOMMY: Is everything alright Inspector

MAD GARY: Well, it obviously isn't this one is it? Where is the possible motive?

TOMMY: So why name Sam as a witness then?

MAD GARY: I don't know. Six seemed like a good number of suspects to have. I just had to make up the numbers. Oh wait, I have an idea. *(To SAM)* You're jealous aren't you? Jealous of the success Tommy has had. Everyone in *(local place)* knows him and now his daughter has married the biggest fruit and veg magnate in the whole of *(local place)*. It pushed you over the edge didn't it? You poisoned the fruit salad in a fit of jealous rage didn't you?

SAM: No

MAD GARY: I thought you might say that.

SAM: I'm not jealous of Tommy. Why should I be?

MAD GARY: It's a good little fruit stall.

SAM: I'm Director General of a multi-national finance corporation. Fruit and veg isn't really my thing.

MAD GARY: You are?

SAM: Yes.

MAD GARY: Oh well, it was just an idea.

SAM: Er.

MAD GARY: What?

SAM: Er.

MAD GARY: Er?

SAM: Yes.

MAD GARY: Er?

SAM: Yes.

MAD GARY: Say it again.

SAM: Er.

MAD GARY: (*Into the audience*) Give this one a membership form Margaret, we can't afford to let talent like this slip through our fingers.

SAM: Er.

MAD GARY: Yes, yes. We got er. we all heard er. What is it?

SAM: I was late arriving. I couldn't have tampered with the fruit salad. It was already on the table when I arrived.

MAD GARY: Yes, but we've already established that someone could have got at any of the fruit before it arrived here.

SAM: So you mean, it doesn't necessarily have to be someone in this room?

MAD GARY: Yes it does have to be someone in this room, for the reasons that I think I made perfectly clear before. Now, will you please go and sit down before I lose my argument, er I mean lose my temper.

SAM returns to the audience.

Lucy's Lines

MAD GARY: *(Immediately stuck by LUCY's beauty)* Well hello!

LUCY: Hello

MAD GARY: What brings a lovely girl like you to a place like this?

LUCY: I was invited

MAD GARY: Oh you sweet thing. Hadn't you anything better to do on a night like this?

LUCY: No.

MAD GARY: With your looks? You must have men lined up to take you out.

LUCY: Not really

MAD GARY: No? What is the matter with young men these days? Isn't there anyone wooing you?

LUCY: No.

MAD GARY: Nobody?

LUCY: No.

MAD GARY: What are you doing later?

LUCY: I don't know.

MAD GARY: How about a little drink. I know a discreet little place.

LUCY: What would you wife say Inspector?

MAD GARY: Oh that's alright. We have a very open relationship.

LUCY: You do?

MAD GARY: Yes. Once I'm out in the open, I forget about our relationship.

LUCY: I don't think so.

MAD GARY: Well how about a bite to eat? I mean we could go out. I don't mean eating here, I don't think that would be wise.

LUCY: I don't think anywhere would be wise Inspector.

MAD GARY: Are you sure?

LUCY: Positive.

MAD GARY: Well, maybe you might change your mind later. So, what is your relationship to ... any of these people.

LUCY: I work for Mrs Looselips. Or I did. I did their advertising for them.

MAD GARY: Really

LUCY: Yes. I wrote their slogans. 'Looselips. Less on the hips' That's one of mine.

MAD GARY: Very good. How did you get into that sort of thing?

LUCY: It's the first thing that came along after I qualified

MAD GARY: Qualified?

LUCY: From the RA.

MAD GARY: RA. Rat's Arse? What's RA?

LUCY: Royal Academy.

MAD GARY: Royal Academy? You qualified from the Royal Academy?

LUCY: Yes.

MAD GARY: Then what the f.. What brings you to (*local place*)?

LUCY: I'm from here originally. I came for a look and fell in love with the place.

MAD GARY: What do you mean you came for a look? You don't remember it.

LUCY: I was very young when I left.

MAD GARY: You didn't fancy Milan? Paris?

LUCY: There's time for that.

MAD GARY: Yes, well. I dare say. In the meantime (*he gives her a card*) if you ever have any trouble give me a call and I'll be round in a flash.

LUCY: Wouldn't I be better calling 999?

MAD GARY: Not if you want a personal service, you know what I mean. Thank you Lucy. You can sit down.

LUCY returns to her seat.

Bobby's Lines

BOBBY: Hello

MAD GARY: So. How did you come to be here today?

BOBBY: Lionel invited me.

MAD GARY: Lionel invited you. Why?

BOBBY: We're old friends.

MAD GARY: You're old friends. How did you meet?

BOBBY: I was employed by Mrs Looselips.

MAD GARY: You were employed by Mrs Looselips.

BOBBY: Is there an echo in here?

MAD GARY: I'm trying to pad the script out. It's going too quick. At this rate we'll be finished before they've tidied the bar. We'll talk slowly. *(He starts talking very slowly)* Why did you leave Mrs Looselips employment?

BOBBY: *(At normal speed)* I would rather not say.

MAD GARY: *(At normal speed)* Say it slowly

BOBBY: What?

MAD GARY: Slowly.

BOBBY: Oh. *(Slowly)* I would rather not say.

MAD GARY: That's better *(Slowly)* I bet you would rather not say. You were sacked weren't you?

BOBBY: Er.

MAD GARY: *(At normal speed)* Oh not you as well. Stop it with the 'ers' OK? We've all had enough of 'er' *(Slowly)* Sacked for stealing weren't you eh?

BOBBY: Alright. *(An extraordinarily long pause)* I admit it.

MAD GARY: Hah! Stealing from your employer is a serious business. *(Speaking at normal speed)* Oh, I can't stand this. Let's speak normally, they'll just have speed up in the bar. Would I be right in thinking that Mrs Looselips wouldn't have known you were here today?

BOBBY: No. But Lionel wanted me here.

MAD GARY: Got a grudge against Mrs Looselips haven't you?

BOBBY: I didn't kill her.

MAD GARY: Maybe you intended just to make her ill. Misjudged the amount of poison.

BOBBY: I wouldn't harm Lionel.

MAD GARY: How do I know that. He worshiped you but what did you ever do for him eh? You stole from his family. Is that how you repay him? Stealing is a crime and it doesn't matter whether it is a couple of apples or the Crown Jewels. The effect on people is the same, they feel violated, damaged. And the CPS? Crown Prosecution Service? What a joke. 'The matter is not serious enough' they say. 'A waste of resources' Oh, it might be a couple of apples today but let them get away with it and it will be mugging old ladies in the street next, mark my words. People like you make me sick. If I had my way we would bring back flogging, that would make you think twice about stealing apples wouldn't eh? That would make you think twice before you help yourself to something that doesn't belong to you. How do you feel now eh? I could get a whip and do the job right now. Would you like that eh? Would you?

TOMMY: Steady on Inspector.

MAD GARY: What? *(To BOBBY)* Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I got carried away. I've got an apple tree that overhangs the roads and kids are constantly... Anyway, please go and sit down. I hope I didn't offend you. There won't be any more questions. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time.

BOBBY returns to the audience

Max's Lines

MAD GARY: So. Ve ‘av ‘ere, Max ze Market Trader, non?

MAX: Why are you speaking in that ridiculous accent?

MAD GARY: I felt it would aid ze investigation if I adopted ze persona of ‘ercule Poirot. I feel it iz time to get ze little gray cells vorking. You ‘av a market stall as well I believe.

MAX: Yes

MAD GARY: You sell ze same things as Tommy. Pommes et, er other stuff.

MAX: I sell fruit and veg, yes.

MAD GARY: Izn’t that a little, ‘ow you say, difficult.

MAX: No, why?

MAD GARY: Surely you cannot both make a living in zis petite town.

MAX: I think we both do OK.

MAD GARY: Zoot alors! Ze people of (*local place*) must like their apples and pears. Ze fruit bowls of (*local place*) must be overflowing. Ze vegetable racks must be stuffed wit le onion, le cabbage, le pomme de terre. But ‘owever much ze locals may like their fresh produce, things are different now. Wouldn’t you zay?

MAX: Not really.

MAD GARY: (*Letting the accent slip*) Not really! Tommy has married into the biggest wholesaler in (*local place*)! Doesn’t that worry you at all?

MAX: What happened to Hercule Poirot?

MAD GARY: I got sick of the French accent.

MAX: I think he was from Belgium.

MAD GARY: Are you trying to be clever?

MAX: No

MAD GARY: Good. I wouldn’t advise you to try to be clever with me. Hah, you have to get up early to outwit Gary Grasslover! (*MAD GARY casually perches on*

the table putting his hand into the fruit salad bowl. He pulls it out, attempts to shake it dry then pulls a hankkerchief out of his pocket. As he does so he spills coins all over the stage. TOMMY and PEACHES, and possibly MAX, help him pick them up. Finally normality is restored.) Sorry, who are you again?

MAX: Max.

MAD GARY: Oh yes. Max. It appears to me that you have the biggest motive of all. You have the most to lose from Tommy and Looselips joining forces so to speak.

MAX: But me and Tommy are old friends.

MAD GARY: Friends yes, but business is business. With his daughter married into the family, Tommy is guaranteed the freshest produce, the best prices. You won't be able to compete with that will you?

MAX: I'm sure Tommy would be fair.

MAD GARY: Oh don't come the innocent. This would be the end for you and you know it. Yes. You have a motive, definitely, a very strong motive. Perhaps the strongest of all. Hmm. Please return to you seat. Time for me to think.

MAX returns to the audience.

Murderer's Lines

TOMMY: So, what do you have to say for yourself?

LUCY: It's a fair cop.

TOMMY: Really? Are you sure?

LUCY: Yeah, I done it alright. You got me bang to rights.

TOMMY: But why?

LUCY: Doesn't it say in the report.

TOMMY: Oh yes. (*Reading*) The murderer is Lucy. Mr Looselips suits his name. He has been dropping clues from the beginning. He became upset at the mention of the name Lucy when Pepper was singing, he acted strange at the mention of daughters and hinted that he had one who had gone away. Then there is the fact that he employed Lucy when it was Mrs Looselips who normally handled all the business affairs. Yes, the evidence was there that Mr Looselips knew that Lucy was his own daughter.

LUCY: It's true. I am Lucy Looselips!

TOMMY: And the motive I guess, jealousy?

LUCY: I was their first child but they were poor. They couldn't afford to keep me and put me up for adoption. I've had a good life, my new parents were very rich and gave me everything I needed but I had to know who my real parents were. A few years ago I tracked them down. I wrote to my mother expecting her to be delighted but she replied telling me never to contact them again she didn't want to know me. So I went to see my father. He knew who I was right away but we never spoke of it. Anyway, he gave me a job and I thought that he was binding his time to welcome me back into the family. Then that idiot Lionel announced he was marrying and he was overjoyed. He forgot all about me. Lionel was going to inherit everything. That was the final straw, I couldn't let that happen. He has no rights. It all belongs to me! So I decided to wipe you all out in one go so it would all be mine. I'm sorry Tommy. I poisoned your plums.

TOMMY: Ooh me plums!

LUCY: My cursed luck that it didn't work. Didn't you eat the plums?

TOMMY: Well, personally I detest plums and I don't think Peaches is too keen either.

PEACHES: Eurch! Plums. Nasty.

LUCY: OK?

TOMMY: Yes great.

LUCY: Did I do it right?

TOMMY: Perfect. I think you had better wait here whilst we, er wait for reinforcements.

LUCY: What?

TOMMY: Please take a seat. (*Quietly, to LUCY*) I'll let you out the back later. (*To audience*) Well, ladies and gentlemen. That is the end of our little murder mystery. If you guessed correctly well done. Otherwise, better luck next time. Either way, next time you are on (*local place*) Market and you fancy a bit of fruit and veg, remember Tommy and Daughter, (*they hold hands*) incorporating Looselips wholesale, the best, and now the biggest, fruit and veg in the whole of (*local place*)!

Music Credits

*Land of a Thousand Dances written by Chris Kenner
published by Longitude Music Co.

*I Could Have Danced All Night written by
Frederick Loewe and Alan J Lerner published by
International Masters Publishers.

*Kiss written by Prince Rogers Nelson published by
Universal Music Corp on behalf of
Controversy Music

*Donald Where's Yer Troosers written by Neil Grant
and Andy Stewart published by Peter Maurice Music

*Climb Every Mountain written by Richard Rogers
and Oscar Hammerstein published by Hal Leonard.

