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# Murder by Death

By Neil Simon

- Do you think they'll come, sir?  
- They'll come, all right.  
Here. Stamp those and mail them.  
It's ringing.  
Would you walk Myron the other way?  
My leg looks like a tree in this fog.  
Come on.  
What a godforsaken spot to get lost.  
It's true. I saw a much better spot  
a few miles back.  
Hello?  
Good.  
Tell them we're lost.  
- The phone's dead.  
- Why'd you say "hello"?  
- I could've sworn-  
- What?  
- Sounded like somebody snipped the wire.  
- Really?  
What did it sound like?  
Snip.  
- Some fog, eh, Pop?  
- I've already heard the weather report.  
Drive, please.  
It's as thick as pea soup.  
Not a soul around for miles.  
Know what I think?  
Perfect place for a murder.  
Conversation like television set

**on honeymoon:**

Unnecessary.  
Where are we going, anyway, Pop?  
Who is this Mr. Twain?  
What'd he mean, "dinner and a murder"?  
Questions like athlete's foot:  
After a while, very irritating.  
To stop car, please.  
- What's wrong?  
- Stop car, please.  
To shut engine off, please.  
Listen.  
I don't hear nothing.  
What do you hear?

- Double negative and dog.  
- So it's a dog. So what?  
If not mistaken...  
...dog belong to Mr. Dick Charleston.  
- Who's Dick Charleston?  
- I am.  
You don't happen to have seen  
a little white- Wang!  
A white Wang?  
Sidney Wang! What are you  
doing in this godforsaken spot?  
No doubt, same as you.  
Looking for bridge that lead  
to home of host, Mr. Lionel Twain.  
You too, huh?  
Must be important to invite  
two such detectives.  
Excuse, please, to introduce  
Japanese son, Willie.  
Japanese?  
But I thought-  
Mrs. Wang and I  
couldn't have children.

**Willie:**

Careful on this road.  
It's treacherous.  
Treacherous road like fresh mushroom.  
Must always-  
Idiot! Not finish mushroom story.  
You're idiot!  
Sorry, but I see nothing.  
This fog's as thick as bouillabaisse.  
- Nuts!  
- I beg your pardon?  
Nuts, nuts! There are  
no nuts in my chocolate!  
You let that imbecile in the shop  
give you raisins.  
He didn't have any nuts.  
- The man in the shop?  
- That's the reason I took the raisins.  
Never mind.  
We'll soon be there for dinner.

Hot soup.

Something is not right  
in all of this, huh?

I can feel it in my bones.

- In your what?

- In my bones.

Buns? You have buns?

You bought buns  
and didn't tell me?

- Where are the buns?

- No, monsieur.

The bones in my body.

You shouldn't speak with an accent  
when you know I'm hungry.

If you ask me, Sam,  
this is a wild goose chase.

- Nobody asked you.

- Yes, they did.

You asked me back there  
if I thought-

That was then. This is now.

Nobody knows  
what tomorrow will be.

That's the way it is,  
whether we like it or not.

Sam, I really worry  
about you sometimes.

Cut the malarkey.

This trip is strictly business.

- What do you got on Twain?

- He was born in San Francisco in 1906.

His mother was Catholic,  
father an Orthodox Jew.

They separated two hours  
after the marriage.

- Any children?

- Yeah, one daughter, 32.

Her name's Irene,  
but she goes by Rita.

Just like a dame.

Don't stop, angel. You're doing fine.

He was arrested in 1932  
for selling pornographic bibles.

Charges were dropped when the

church didn't turn over the bibles.  
There's nothing on him until '46  
when he was picked up in El Paso...  
...for smuggling a truckload  
of rich, white Americans...  
...into Mexico to pick melons.  
He was sent to the state hospital  
for mental observation.  
I think we picked ourselves  
a queer bird, angel. Anything else?  
Yeah. Get this, Sam.  
Twain has one interesting physical  
characteristic. He has no pinkies.  
No pinkies?  
Twain's only got eight fingers?  
No, no. He's got 10.  
He just doesn't have any pinkies.  
- You did your homework good.  
- Thanks.  
- Where'd you dig that up?  
- I wrote Twain and asked.  
Good thinking.  
- What's the matter?  
- Wouldn't you know, out of gas.  
I saw a station  
about five miles back, Sam.  
I want you to know I'm gonna be  
waiting for you, baby.  
Here's the bridge, Pop.  
Doesn't look safe to me.  
One way to find out.  
Drive across.  
Aren't you gonna come with me?  
Weight of two men  
may be too much for bridge.  
Then why do I get to drive?  
Because I smart enough  
to get out first.  
I'm not gonna make it.  
It's gonna collapse.  
Not worry.  
Father find other way to house.  
I made it, Pop!  
I made it!

Good! Good!

Now come back and get adopted father.

Look at invitation.

What number of house?

- Two-two...

- Correct.

2-2, Twain's house.

Continue.

- Did you see that?

- No.

Neither did I.

Stop! Do not move.

Something's wrong here.

- What is it?

- Do not ask questions. Do as I say.

When I tell you jump, you jump.

One, two, three...

...jump!

Holy Shanghai!

Nice counting.

But how'd you know?

Look on ground.

Even had correct shoe size.

Someone gone great trouble...

...to make welcome guests

not so welcome.

Ring bell, please.

Are you nuts?

Someone's trying to kill us.

Yes. Should make exciting weekend.

Ring, please.

I wish it was Monday morning.

Well, here goes.

They're killing someone in there!

- Calm yourself.

- Didn't you hear her scream?

No. You heard scream.

More experienced ear heard doorbell.

Listen again.

Mr. Twain has

macabre sense of humour, yeah?

Good evening.

We have been expecting you.

But in what condition?

Roof in need of repair.  
Indeed. I'm afraid  
the house is falling apart.  
- May we come in, please?  
- I'm sorry. I thought you were in.  
You are Mr. and Mrs. Charleston?  
Not quite.  
I am Inspector Wang  
of Catalina, please.  
This adopted son, Willie.  
I trust you had a pleasant journey  
despite the storm?  
Strange weather.  
Storm only outside when inside.  
That. That's just one  
of Mr. Twain's little toys.  
An electronic device.  
Mr. Twain,  
as you will soon discover...  
...prefers his atmosphere murky.  
- May I have your bags, sir?  
- No, no.  
Son will get bags.  
That is why I adopted him.  
Very good, sir.  
One moment, please,  
while I close the door.  
Now, if you will follow me,  
I will show you to your room.  
Very large house.  
No other servants?  
I'm not sure.  
I've never seen anyone.  
Mr. Twain asked me to see  
that you're made comfortable...  
...and to say he'll  
join you after dinner.  
After dinner?  
Host not have dinner with guests?  
No. Mr. Twain prefers to eat out.  
- Wait, please. What that?  
- That? It's nothing. Just the cat.  
That cat?  
You feed cat dog food?

I'm afraid he's  
a very angry cat, sir.  
Mr. Twain had him fixed,  
and he didn't want to be.  
Big house, huh, Pop?  
Big house like man  
married to fat woman:  
Hard to get around.  
Here we are.  
I'm sure you'll find this suitable.  
- It's a cold house.  
- I've taken care of that.  
You'll find a nice, cosy fire  
in your room.  
It's a bit smoky, sir.  
I'm afraid that fireplace  
hasn't been used in years.  
- At least the bed will be warm.  
- If you wish anything, please ring.  
- Where buzzer?  
- It's behind the bed, sir, there.  
Dinner will be at 9:00...  
...and Mr. Twain  
likes his guests to dress.  
The doorbell. Excuse me.  
Wow! What a creepy guy.  
Why would anyone want to hire  
a blind butler?  
For one thing, very cheap.  
How butler know  
how much he get paid?  
Drink this. You'll feel better.  
If Myron hadn't barked,  
we'd have missed the statue falling.  
It wasn't meant to kill.  
It's a warning.  
Somebody's trying  
to frighten us. Why?  
Whatever his reason,  
he's doing well.  
- Why hasn't anybody answered?  
- Don't ring it! Knock, don't ring.  
I won't, I promise.  
- What is it now, Myron?



- Up there, Dora. Look.  
- A blind butler.  
- Don't let him park the car, Dickie.  
Good evening.  
We have been expecting you.  
We let ourselves in.  
Dick and Dora Charleston.  
Good evening.  
We have been expecting you.  
Your room is ready,  
if you'll just follow me, please.  
Don't mind him. It's just the cat.  
- We left our luggage in the trunk.  
- I'll get it later...  
...when I park the car.  
- Was that Mr. Wang's car out front?  
- Yes. They're resting in their room.  
I've put you in the same wing  
as Mr. Wang.  
Isn't that nice?  
We're in Wang's wing.  
Not many people come  
to the manor these days.  
It's nice to hear guests again.  
- Thanks. You are?  
- Bensonmum.  
Thank you, Benson.  
Bensonmum.  
My name is Bensonmum.  
- Bensonmum?  
- Yes, sir. Jamesir Bensonmum.  
- Jamesir?  
- Yes, sir.  
- Jamesir Bensonmum?  
- Yes, sir.  
- How odd.  
- My father's name, sir.  
What was your father's name?  
- Howard Bensonmum.  
- Howard Bensonmum?  
Leave it. I've had enough.  
Here we are.  
The late Mrs. Twain's room.  
She died in here.

- Oh, dear.

- Died of what?

She murdered herself  
in her sleep, sir.

- You mean suicide?

- Oh, no.

It was murder, all right.

Mrs. Twain hated herself.

We keep this room locked.

- Why is that?

- Mr. Twain loved her very much.

He's kept her room just as it was  
the night she choked herself...

...nine years ago.

Madam loved it here.

She said it was  
the cheeriest room in the house.

- The doorbell.

- That was Mrs. Charleston.

- I thought she was here.

- I am.

I will not stay in this filthy room.

Very well, madam.

I'll attend to it during dinner.

- Thank you, Benson, sir.

- Mum!

- What?

- Bensonmum. Ma'am.

Baking flour.

- What?

- This dust is baking flour.

And these cobwebs- Candied sugar.

All placed here for the purpose  
of frightening us.

And that mouse-

Obviously a mechanical toy.

- Silly.

- What is?

I am. It's real.

- Stop the car. We're here.

- That's why I stopped.

- Open my door.

- You have chocolate on your face.

The candy bar's on your face.

- Imbecile, that's my moustache!  
- Lick it and see.  
Wipe it off.  
My hands are sticky.  
Hold still, please.  
Sloppy.  
All in good time.  
Yes?  
Who's there?  
Who's there, I say?  
Filthy neighbourhood.  
Didn't I say "jump"?  
"Un, deux, trois, jump."  
Why don't you listen?  
- Leave me alone.  
- Sloppy.  
Who are you?  
You must be the new kitchen maid.  
I hope you can cook.  
Answer me. Speak up.  
What's that?  
I can't hear you.  
A little shy, are you?  
Never mind.  
There will be 10 for dinner.  
Here is the menu.  
Is that understood?  
And dinner will be at 9:00.  
When I want you, that bell on the wall  
will ring three times.  
All right. Get to work.  
Operator.  
I am saying, "Hello, hello."  
- It's dead, sir.  
- What?  
Who is? Who are you?  
The butler, sir.  
The butler, eh?  
I thought as much.  
That phone has been out of order  
for the past week, sir.  
Is that a fact?  
And I say that this wire  
has been snipped not one hour ago...

...as you can plainly see.  
What is your name?  
Your little jest escapes me.  
I am Monsieur Milo Perrier.  
He was injured  
by a falling gargoyle...  
...while standing  
in Chinese footprints.  
We rang, a woman screamed...  
...a mouse ran through the door.  
As you can plainly see,  
I miss nothing.  
Since we can't call a doctor...  
...I will need a cold compress  
and hot chocolate, "n'est-ce pas?"  
We don't have "n'est-ce pas," sir.  
Just Hershey's.  
I'll call the maid.  
I'll fetch it for you myself, sir.  
In the meantime, if you'll be  
good enough to follow me to your room.  
Get up. Get up.  
There's something about him  
I do not trust.  
Notice how his eyes  
never look at you.  
He's blind, monsieur.  
Nonsense.  
There's the house now.  
- What's the matter?  
- My feet are killing me.  
Why didn't you tell me we needed oil  
before I went back for gas?  
I gave you \$50  
and the gas was \$5.00.  
Maybe you'd come back. Maybe not.  
I couldn't risk it.  
- Don't you trust me, Sam?  
- Trust you?  
The last time that I trusted a dame  
was in Paris in 1940.  
She said she was going to get wine.  
Two hours later,  
the Germans marched into France.

I'm sorry, Sam.  
Sorry nothing.  
Give me my change.  
Dinner will be at 9:00.  
I'll have the maid  
bring your chocolate.  
- One moment, my good man.  
- Sir?  
Thank you. That will be all.  
He's blind, all right.  
Those were my funniest faces.  
It's not exactly  
the Copacabana, is it?  
I don't feel good about this.  
Maybe tonight your luck runs out.  
Maybe so. There's a number  
on the wall for all of us.  
If tonight's the night  
they pick mine, so be it.  
After you, sweetheart.  
- First, kiss me, Sam.  
- I don't kiss.  
Just this once, Sam.  
I don't like kissing.  
Now leave me alone.  
My God!  
- He's dead!  
- I beg your pardon?  
Sam Diamond is lying out there.  
He's been crushed to death.  
I'm going to faint.  
Catch me.  
Madam. Madam, where are you?  
Hold it right there.  
Freeze, blinky!  
Get your hands up.  
Turn your face to the wall.  
All right, angel.  
You can get up now.  
Turn around, Jeeves.  
Your concrete Christmas present came  
two seconds early, no thanks to you.  
I apologize for  
any unfortunate mishap, sir.

- May I put my hands down?  
- Don't test your luck, Shakespeare.  
I got your invitation to dinner...  
...but I didn't realize  
I'd be the main course.  
I had a kid brother  
who got it the same way...  
...working on a case like this  
two years ago.  
That boy would've been 63  
on Tuesday.  
For two cents, I'd take this-  
Get him away from me! Get him away.  
Get him away before I stuff him  
like a tiger trophy...  
...his limey pals  
like to hang up on saloon walls.  
Please.  
He has a dreadful temper,  
hasn't he?

**9:**

Is everything ready?  
I don't smell anything.  
Very light on the seasoning,  
are you?  
Put the soup in a tureen  
and keep the squabs on low.  
I'll serve cocktails.  
When you hear the bell,  
bring out the chilled asparagus...  
...and turn up the flame  
on the squabs.  
Have you got that?  
You didn't tell me how I look.  
No different than always-  
Ravishing.  
- Do you love and adore me?  
- I love and adore you.  
- You have the best tush in high society.  
- Years of horseback riding.  
Getting to bottom of things?  
- Ah, Wang. You remember-  
- Of course.

- Nice to see you, Ah Wang.  
- Always a pleasure.  
What a beautiful gown.  
Tell me where you got it.  
This? This an old dress.  
Had it for years.  
Please to meet adopted son, Willie.  
East meets West  
in a most bizarre setting.  
I didn't know you were invited.  
You know Wang.  
I had the pleasure  
of dining in Shanghai...  
...many years ago with Inspector Wang.  
You remember. Yes.  
You had "hong ching chu"  
and I had "kow dung woo fong."  
My wife, Dora. Inspector Perrier.  
I'm sorry. Our room is so dusty.  
My fault.  
I should have blown first.  
May I present my secretaire  
and chauffeur Marcel Cassette.  
- Recovered from your accident, Marcel?  
- But how did you know?  
From the way you bend.  
Your right side  
smashed in by a Citroen.  
I detected a slight  
metallic sound...  
...so I think you have  
an artificial hip. Steel?  
Aluminum. You're as quick as ever,  
Charleston.  
And you, Charleston...  
...did not approve of  
Mrs. Charleston dying hair blond?  
I beg your pardon?  
Mrs. Charleston hair red.  
You have blond hairs on shoulder.  
That means she has dyed red hair  
to blond then back again to red.  
Or else you have been-  
So sorry. Wang is wrong.

Shall we go to dinner, please?

- Boy, Pop, you sure put your-

- Shut Japanese mouth.

It must be ghastly

to have a hip removed.

- Does it hurt?

- Only in damp weather.

- Are you all right?

- Pay no attention. You'll spoil him.

Get up. Get up.

- As I was saying, Mr. Charleston-

- Hey, Pop.

A treacherous road

like fresh mushrooms-

I know. Dog stick tongue

out of picture.

Treacherous road

like fresh mushrooms.

He's a charming fellow.

African death mask.

Died in some tribal ritual.

Wonder where others are.

Others?

What others?

Invitation to dinner and murder

finally clear to Wang...

...with appearance

of Monsieur Perrier.

It's obvious that the world's

greatest detectives were invited.

Five of us, darling.

Three are here.

Two have not yet arrived.

- Miss Jessie Marbles of England.

- And-

Sam Diamond of San Francisco.

I know who you all are.

The lady in the dress is my secretary

and mistress, Tess Skeffington.

- Sam, don't.

- I'm sorry, sweetheart.

She doesn't like it

when I'm brutally honest.

Then again, we're all



in a brutal business.  
Never considered murder  
to be business, Mr. Diamond.  
Is that right, Mr. Wang?  
Maybe not for you, since you put your  
money in vegetables in the late '30s.  
Our friends don't know  
that you own 50 percent...  
...of the bean sprouts and the bamboo  
shoots grown in China.  
You can imagine how much  
chicken chow mein...  
...goes into his pot each year.  
- Do I have the figures right?  
- Right.  
What does this have to do  
with anything?  
Or you, Mr. Perrier.  
You work both sides  
of the big drink.  
Pretty good pickings,  
solving crimes for barons...  
...and putting your fees  
into Swiss banks.  
Three trips a year buys  
a lot of hot chocolate.  
See here, Diamond-  
You see here, Mr. Charleston of  
New York, Palm Beach and Beverly Hills.  
Crime's a hobby to you, isn't it?  
It's a game to wile away the time  
while you wait for room service...  
...while your wife's dough buys  
martinis and your \$300 suits.  
That's nice, when all  
you gotta do...  
...is give your wife a grab now  
and then and take the dog for a leak.  
Sorry to shock you, but I never  
went to finishing school.  
My school is the streets...  
...and the barrel of a revolver  
is my teacher.  
I get \$50 a day in expenses

when I can get them, gentlemen.

I owe Miss Skeffington three years  
back pay. Ain't that right?

- I don't care about the money.

- Neither do I.

If one of you would be  
so kind as to give my friend...

...a glass of cheap white wine,  
I'm going down to find the can.

I talk so much sometimes,

I forget to go.

Please excuse Sam.

He was shot in the head last week.

He shouldn't be  
out of the hospital.

- I think he's damned honest.

- Dickie, language.

Miss Jessica Marbles and nurse.

Miss Marbles.

So we finally meet.

I've admired you ever since  
I was tiny little detective.

Thank you, Mr. Wang.

I am Jessica Marbles.

This is Miss Withers, my nurse.

She's been with me 52 years.

I have to take care  
of the poor dear now.

Are you all right, Miss Withers?

Do you want your medicine now?

She's off. I could use  
a good, stiff shot, Mr. Charleston.

I believe booze, as you call it,  
is your department.

- My pleasure, madam.

- Who's the old geezer?

Jessie, baby!

- You have a bullet hole in your back.

- You should see the other guy.

Quiet, please.

Observe strange sound.

My God, it's the face.

It's coming from the face.

He's going through

his final moments.

- What could it mean?

- It means dinner, sir. We have no gong.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I'd like to make a toast.

Our host, Mr. Lionel Twain,  
is indeed a most unique man.

**One:**

He's succeeded in gathering...

...the world's greatest detectives...

...to investigate a crime

not yet committed.

**Two:**

A bridge that almost collapses,  
falling statues.

Does he mean to kill us?

Not yet. He could've done that  
at any time.

He's merely trying to whet  
our appetites for the game.

**Three:**

instead of one?

Because he intends

to take us all on...

...a feat that no criminal mind  
has yet attempted.

Before this hellish  
weekend begins...

...I propose that we toast...

...to either a most beguiling  
and charming man...

...or to an insidious,  
fiendish madman.

- Bottoms up.

- One moment.

**Point four:**

An ancient, tasteless, colourless  
and odourless Oriental herb...

...that kills instantly.

Observe, please.

Great Scott, Mr. Wang.  
You saved our lives.  
Not quite, Mrs. Charleston.  
Bon appetit.  
Since Wang was the one who could  
detect poison, only he was tested.

**Point five:**

Mr. Twain is both beguiling  
and fiendish.  
- Get a doctor, quick.  
- No, no. It's all right.  
My wine is not poisoned.  
It was just a bad year.  
Good work, Mr. Wang.  
We must all be on our guard  
through every course of the meal.  
You're all forgetting one thing.  
This makes the butler suspicious.  
He poured the wine.  
How would he know which  
one to serve the poisoned glass to?  
That's very simple.  
Blind people have  
a very keen sense of smell.  
Since we're Anglo-Saxon  
and Mr. Wang's son is Japanese...  
...it wouldn't be hard  
to sniff out the Chinaman.  
See here.  
That's a tacky thing to say.  
It's a tacky world,  
Mr. Charleston.  
- Isn't that right, angel?  
- That's right.  
Quiet, please.  
Butler approaches.  
I apologize. I'm having  
communication problems with the cook.  
Who poured the wine?  
Mr. Twain, sir.  
It was left for me  
in the refrigerator.  
I was told to give Mr. Wang

the glass with the sticky stem.

And you didn't ask why?

I was lucky to find

the refrigerator.

- If I may serve the soup now?

- By all means.

Yes, I'm famished.

One moment.

- Where is the soup?

- In your dish, sir.

There is nothing in my dish

but my dish.

- I don't understand, sir.

- Here, take the spoon.

Taste it for yourself.

I see what you mean, sir.

If you'll excuse me, I'd better  
have a little talk with the cook.

Murder by starvation.

Maybe that's his game.

- What do you think?

- I don't know. Ask the moose.

He's been watching

since we came in.

Ten people for dinner,

and I'm serving them hot nothing!

You can't get good help today.

You're fired, you understand?

Fired!

I want you out,

do you hear? Out!

And stay out.

Something just occurred to me.

- The seating's all wrong.

- How so?

- I'm sitting next to Dora.

- So what?

- She's your wife.

- Exactly.

The husband's never seated

next to the wife.

I should be on the opposite side.

Will you trade?

- Now, Mr. Charleston?

- Now, Mr. Wang.  
Another test that could  
have cost us our lives.  
Saved only by the fact  
that I am well-bred.  
Lucky it wasn't me.  
I'd have been chopped liver.  
Silence, please. Do not panic.  
No person move from place.  
Someone just came in.  
I hear footsteps.  
Wait! Quiet, everyone!  
- I smell something.  
- What is it?  
Good God! Franks and beans!  
I'm afraid that's all we have,  
sir.  
You know how I get  
when you touch me there.  
My hands are in my pockets.  
- They're my pockets.  
- Sorry.  
Dickie, behave yourself.  
Good evening,  
ladies and gentlemen.  
I'm your host, Lionel Twain.  
Good God, what an entrance!  
A bit theatrical, Miss Marbles,  
but I do so love illusion.  
Please forgive my hat.  
I'm losing my hair.  
I thought Twain was  
an older man, say 72, 73.  
Seventy-six to be exact,  
Mr. Diamond.  
How do I look so young?  
Quite simple.  
A complete vegetable diet,  
12 hours' sleep a night...  
...and lots and lots of makeup.  
- I trust you're all comfortable.  
- Comfortable, Mr. Twain?  
Is that what you call poisoned wine  
and near decapitation?

No. I call it inspiration.  
You haven't explained the mechanical  
and culinary attempts on our lives.  
Merely games, Monsieur Perrier.  
Pitting wits with you,  
so to speak.  
Pit your wits with me  
and you won't have wits to pit with.  
You're spitting on the nurse.  
Sorry, old lady.  
Crazy broad should be in bed.  
We have been here four hours...  
...and there hasn't been  
a hot dinner or a corpse.  
- I must therefore bid you adieu.  
- I bid one adieu as well.  
No one is leaving this house.  
What meaning of this, Mr. Twain?  
I will tell you, Mr. Wang,  
if you can tell me...  
...why one of the most brilliant  
minds of the century...  
...can't say prepositions  
or articles.  
"The," Mr. Wang.  
"What is the meaning of this?"  
That what I said.  
What meaning of this?  
The meaning of this is...  
...that I have decided to prove,  
beyond any doubt...  
...that the greatest criminologist in  
the world is sitting at this table...  
...and you are all looking at him.  
No, don't look at each other!  
Look at me! I'm the greatest!  
I'm number one!  
To me you look like number two.  
Know what I mean?  
- What does he mean?  
- I'll tell you later. It's disgusting.  
In all your adventures,  
monsieurs and madames...  
...none of you has ever had

an unsolved murder.  
Your reputations exist  
on this single fact.  
But what would the world say  
if the five greatest detectives...  
...found themselves trapped  
in a house, shut off from the world...  
...only to discover  
a dead body...  
...stabbed 12 times in the back  
with a knife...  
...and not one of you able  
to solve the crime?  
- You mean murder?  
- We're talking shop.  
Yes, murder, Mrs. Charleston!  
On the stroke of midnight...  
...someone in this house  
will be murdered.  
Left out one small detail,  
Mr. Twain.  
Who victim?  
"Is the." "Is the."  
"Who is the victim?"  
That drives me crazy!  
- Sounds like a short ride to me.  
- Does it?  
Well, we shall see who is sane  
and who is crazy around here.  
Mr. Wang...  
...the victim is here at this table  
at this very moment...  
...and so too, ladies and gentlemen,  
is the murderer.  
- Murder-poo?  
- Yes, dear.  
We're going to have  
a lovely murder-poo.  
Push her wheelchair down the driveway.  
We got business.  
- You know who's gonna get it?  
- Intimately.  
- And how it'll be committed?  
- Definitely.



And what time  
murder take place?  
"The" murder. Precisely.  
It's not my business, but doesn't  
that mean you're the murderer?  
No wives. I refuse to  
discuss this with wives.  
All fingers do point to you.  
Not much of a challenge.  
Shall I make it more interesting?  
One million dollars  
to the one who solves the crime.  
Wagered against your reputations.  
One million dollars, tax-free.  
In addition, the paperback rights  
and the film sale.

**It's 11:**

...just one hour before death  
strikes someone in this room.  
See you at midnight.  
See here, Mr. Twain!  
- He's gone!  
- No, he's not. He's down there.  
Fast little bunny, ain't you?  
I've never moved, Mr. Diamond.  
I'm still down there.  
A stunt with mirrors.  
Is that so?  
Willing to risk seven years' bad luck?  
Try it, Mr. Diamond.  
It's your funeral, butterball.  
Wait. Sometimes it doesn't work.  
You've won this round,  
Mr. Diamond.  
My turn comes at midnight.  
I hope he knows  
how to stop that thing.  
Anybody offering a million bucks to  
solve a crime that ain't happened...  
...has lost more upstairs than hair.  
What do we do?  
Sit and wait to be butchered?  
And what has happened

to the butler?

Why has he not returned?

With our dinner?

- Go look for him.

- No!

- No one to leave this room.

- Why not?

Twain say victim at this table.

If we stay together, crime  
cannot be committed without witnesses.

He's right.

You're one smart Chinaman.

Let's join hands. The chain's stronger  
if the links are unbroken. Join hands.

Stop that.

- Stop it, I said.

- What is it, Diamond?

She's giving my palm the finger,  
the dirty broad.

Naughty, naughty, Miss Withers.

- Good God!

- What?

Look!

- What's she doing?

- She's screaming.

- What's happened?

- Something wrong in kitchen.

- With our dinner!

- Patience.

- Is someone there?

- Someone with dinner?

Cook cannot speak or hear.

I think butler is dead.

My name is Yetta.

I don't work Thursdays.

Ask her if she sleeps in.

We'll investigate.

Someone must go.

Not alone. Mr. Charleston,

Mr. Diamond, stay.

Miss Marble, Mr. Perrier and Wang,

we'll investigate.

That's right,

just let it all out.

Here. Oh, dear.  
Careful, Wang!  
Fingerprints.  
- Where?  
- Yours.  
Here, take my handkerchief.  
- Is he-?  
- He look like-  
Seems like.  
Touch nothing!  
Fingerprints.  
Quite so.  
Pencil.  
No pulse.  
No heartbeat.  
If condition does not change,  
this man is dead.  
No signs of foul play.  
Hold on!  
What's this?  
What do you make of this, Perrier?  
Poison, "n'est-ce pas?"  
Not "n'est-ce pas." Cocoa.  
So at last we have our murder.  
Not quite. Twain say murder victim  
sitting at our table.  
Butler not at our table.  
Butler only killed to divert us  
from real murder still to come.  
Look!  
One of the knives is missing.  
The butcher's knife, I'll wager.  
- The others are in danger.  
- What's exact time?  
31 and 56 seconds.  
Fifty-seven, fifty-eight-  
Tell me when to stop. 59, 60-  
28 minutes to main murder.  
Back to dining room.  
Must all be together at midnight.  
One moment!  
Handkerchief.  
- What is it?  
- A bill.

Everything here has been rented:  
The butler, the food, the chairs.

- You mean-?

- Yes.

This entire murder  
has been catered.

It's Twain's doing.

The man is mad.

Mad, yes, but no fool.

I only hope we are in time.

Door locked.

Diamond probably locked  
it from the inside.

Good thinking on Diamond head.

Diamond, it's Perrier.

It's all right. Open up.

Diamond? Charleston?

Are you in there?

Go back to kitchen, get dining  
room key from pocket of dead butler.

Don't say "dead butler." It's bad  
enough I have to reach in his pocket.

Holy merde.

Miss Skeffington!

Miss Skeffington!

Miss Withers!

- He's gone.

- Who?

The butler's body is missing.

Here's the key.

- Where you find key?

- In his pocket.

- What pocket?

- The butler's.

- Butler gone, but pocket there?

- Exactly.

Someone stole him

but left his clothes.

Open the door.

Something is very wrong here.

Hello. Where is everyone?

Room filled with empty people.

I'll try the other door.

It's locked from the inside.

Both doors locked  
from inside, yet no way out.  
I don't like it one bit.  
I like it,  
but don't understand.  
Maybe other way out of room,  
secret passageway perhaps.  
Wrong. There are no  
secret passageways, Mr. Wang.  
- You spoke?  
- Not me.  
I spoke.  
There! Voice come from cow  
on wall!  
Moose! Moose, you imbecile!  
What have you done  
with the others, you short madman?  
Stumped already.  
Need some clues, Mr. Perrier?  
I need no clues from you. I find my  
own, you demented lollipop!  
Man who argue with cow  
is like train without wheels.  
- Soon get nowhere.  
- I'm sick of fortunes!  
- Man who's sick of fortune-  
- I said I was sick of this!  
- Quiet, gentlemen, please!  
- Cow talk again.  
In need of a hint, Miss Marbles?  
"You all mistake what you assume  
"They never left the dining room"  
"Count the numbers one to 10"  
"Turn the knob and try again"  
What does that mean,  
they never left the room?!  
- They did.  
- Do not mistake what you assume.  
- Back out in hall.  
- What for?  
We assume others not here,  
but cow say they are in dining room.  
Let us look once more.  
Please close door, Mr. Perrier.

- I can't see what good-  
- Quiet.  
Seven, eight, nine, 10.  
Miss Marbles, be so kind  
as to open door.  
Where were you?  
We was worried.  
Where were you?  
Here. Didn't you say not to leave?  
- You have not left this room since?  
- Certainly not.  
Answer simple...  
...but question very hard.  
- Where's the butler?  
- Completely murdered.  
Poisoned. One of  
the butcher's knives is missing.  
We came back here,  
but the doors were locked.  
I went to get the key from the butler.  
His body was gone.  
He'd been stripped  
and his clothes left.  
I don't understand. Why would anyone  
want to steal a dead, naked body?  
Well, dear,  
there are people who-  
That's tacky. That's really tacky.  
Then we returned here...  
...opened the door,  
but the room was empty.  
You were all gone.  
The moose had told us not to assume  
that you'd left the dining room.  
So we counted to 10  
and tried it again.  
And here you were.  
I'm not one to use hyperbole,  
but I'll tell you this.  
For the first time in my life,  
I had the ca-ca scared out of me.  
I like her.  
I really like her.  
- Gunshots, monsieur.

- Gunshots, Pop.  
Gunshots, Dickie.  
This time Charleston and I will go.  
Everybody else stay here. Let's go.  
What do you make  
of all of this, Wang?  
Is confusing.  
"It"! "It" is confusing!  
Say your goddamn pronouns!  
Open the door.  
- Good God!  
- What is it?  
He's back.  
And au naturel.  
I don't get it. First they steal  
the body and leave the clothes.  
Then they steal the clothes  
and bring the body back.  
- Who would do that?  
- Possibly a deranged dry cleaner.  
What about the gunshots?  
Why shoot him  
when he's been poisoned?  
We heard shots, but I don't see bullet  
holes. Not on his head or chest.  
- Look all over him.  
- All over his body?  
Somebody has to.  
I'm standing guard.  
I'll stand guard. You look.  
We'll take turns.  
You look over the first dead  
naked body, I'll look over the second.  
Hurry up.  
We only got eight minutes.  
See anything?  
No, I don't see  
a bullet hole anywhere.  
- Hold it. I see something.  
- What is it?  
Forget it.  
Not a bullet hole.  
If he wasn't plugged,  
what about the shots?

- Divide and conquer.  
- What?  
Another diversion.  
He gives us meaningless clues,  
dangles red herrings...  
...bedazzles us with banalities...  
...while seconds tick away  
towards the terrible murder.  
You're good. Not my kind of cop,  
but smart, and you smell good.  
You're not a pansy,  
but what the hell are you?  
Classy, I suppose.  
- Dames fall for a guy like you.  
- I don't see-  
Ever make it with a waitress?  
A waitress.  
Big, fat waitress.  
I don't know about society dames...  
...but you ain't had it till you  
made it with a big waitress.  
If you're ever interested,  
you give me a call.  
Bizarre little twit.  
I'm still not sure about this guy.  
- What are you doing?  
- I have to wash-  
I'll be out in a minute.  
I'll go ahead.  
I'll tell the others.  
You're never gonna  
believe this, folks.  
All right, where are you?  
What the hell is going on here?  
Wash up later.  
We got problems.  
Locked from the inside.  
That can only mean one thing...  
...and I don't know what it is.  
You're never gonna believe-  
I'll be out in a minute.  
I don't remember  
closing that door.  
What happened?



What were the gunshots?  
Did anybody leave  
since we were gone?  
- It happened to you too.  
- Where's my Dickie?  
Sorry. Where's my husband?  
Two minutes to midnight,  
if anyone is interested.  
It ain't possible, I say.  
Eight people in a dining room  
can't turn into an empty room unless-  
- Unless what, Sam?  
- Unless it never happened.  
I see your point, Diamond.  
When is a room with people  
not a room with people?  
- When it is two dining rooms.  
- Exactly!  
Two dining rooms?  
Two dining rooms, two everything.  
Twain electronic genius.  
He's devised  
a way to move the room...  
...silently, in the flash of an eye...  
...to be replaced by  
an exact duplicate.  
- I knew it all the time.  
- Please.  
I'll demonstrate.  
I'll walk out the door...  
...close it, knock three times, enter,  
and you will all be gone. Observe.  
I have it figured out.  
There are two of everything.  
Dickie, that's old news.  
Everybody take their seats.  
- I'm scared, Sam. Hold me.  
- Hold yourself. I'm busy.  
Take the same seats  
from before.  
Forty seconds!  
I'm very worried about Mr. Perrier.  
I'll look for him.  
No. Sit, please.

No one to leave room.  
The other door.  
It's locked. I can't open it.  
Hurry, man!  
We have 15 seconds!  
Move your hand, chauffeur.  
Don't ask.  
- Why are you wearing the butler's outfit?  
- I said don't ask! I don't know.  
It all happened too quickly.  
The cook.  
Where's the cook?  
- She's gone.  
- Never spoke.  
Ten more seconds.  
Quickly, sit and join hands.  
Impossible for murder  
to happen without witnesses.  
Three... two... one!  
It's over.  
We're safe and sound.  
That's probably the cook.  
Come in.  
The poor woman's deaf.  
I'm sorry. I forgot.  
Come in!  
Not sound like cook to me.  
Mr. Twain.  
You appear to be wrong.  
Nobody here murdered.  
Please to come in.  
Is he dead?  
With that in him,  
in the long run he's better off.  
- Touch nothing!  
- Stop that.  
We're experienced  
criminologists.  
I find it insulting and redundant  
to say "touch nothing."  
- Quiet, woman.  
- Up yours, fella.  
Most amusing. Bickering detectives  
like making giant lamb stew:

- Everything go to pot.  
- Be quiet!  
Shut up, all of youse!  
Nobody move!  
- Stay where you are!  
- What is it?  
I have to go to the can again.  
I don't wanna miss nothing.  
I'm going too, Sam.  
I'd rather do this alone, Tess.  
Thanks anyway.  
The cook.  
What, darling?  
It's obvious.  
The cook murdered him.  
The butler's dead.  
All of us were in this room.  
No one could get in.  
That leaves the cook. Right?  
Wrong.  
What makes you certain of this?  
To drive a knife that far up a man's  
back, you need a strong arm.  
And this arm don't look  
that strong to me.  
- Is that her arm?  
- It ain't the pussycat's tail.  
Don't be alarmed, miss.  
It ain't real.  
For that matter,  
neither is the cook.  
I found this  
before I got to the can.  
Got a little surprise  
for you folks.  
- Look!  
- A mannequin!  
A dummy,  
perfect in every detail...  
...with the exception of not being  
able to make her speak.  
Hats off to the man  
with the shiv in his back.  
Except that he's dead,

he's no dope.  
Nice going, Sam.  
I hope you realize that  
someone in this room is a murderer.  
For sake of ladies present...  
...may we return to drawing room?  
My son will cover up Mr. Twain.  
- Why do I do the work?  
- Your mother not here to do it.  
Come, please.  
Excuse me.  
I'm getting a headache. Isn't there  
a way to turn off that machine?  
Maybe some gadget  
outside the window.  
It's raining this time.  
Let's get to business  
and sort the facts.

**It is now 12:**

The doors and windows  
will open at dawn.  
One of us will be  
a million dollars richer...  
...and one will go  
to the gas chamber to hang.  
One, Monsieur Perrier? Why not two?  
We all have associates.  
Why not six or eight?  
I don't trust any of youse.  
Maybe I'm a patsy set up for a fall,  
but I'm not falling for youse.  
Not even me?  
Why don't you fall in love with  
the Jap kid and get off my back?  
Can we get back to case, please?  
Time is late and my eyes  
are getting tired.  
- Thought they always looked like that.  
- Knock it off!  
Sorry. This case is getting  
on my nerves. I'm sorry, slanty.  
Thank you. Now then, facts,  
please, facts.

Mr. Twain predicts murder. Predicts  
victim to be at table, correct?

Correct.

This is official.

Correct.

Predicts murder to take place at  
midnight and number of stab wounds.

How, if he not in collaboration  
with murderer?

- What if Twain did it himself?

- Murdered himself?

For what possible reason?

And how?

The motive is simple: ego.

If we weren't to solve this,  
he'd be the world's best detective.

With an ego like his, that he died  
for it is a small price to pay.

Any man who can create  
this chamber of electronic marvels...

...would be able to devise a machine  
to stab him in the back 12 times.

That was wonderful.

I'm so proud.

- Let's go to bed, quickly.

- One moment.

Very interesting theory...

...but you overlook  
one very important point.

- And that is?

- It's stupid.

It's most stupid theory

I ever heard!

- Do you have a better one?

- Yeah, much better one.

You see, I have been  
doing my homework.

For example,

I have information...

...that your wife's  
portfolio of stocks...

...was seriously depleted  
in financial crisis.

In short, you are flat broke.

You've been borrowing for two years...  
...at 17% interest  
from Mr. Lionel Twain.  
Broke? Is this true?  
I was saving it for your birthday.  
One million dollars would buy...  
...great many tight suits,  
would it not?  
- See here, Wang-  
- Dead broke?  
Almost, darling.  
I have \$1.17 and some stamps.  
But I didn't murder Twain.  
You do believe that?  
- We'll talk. We'll see.  
- It could have been any one of you.  
Each one of us was out  
of that room at one time...  
...giving ample opportunity  
to commit the crime.  
As for motives,  
there's more than ego and cash.  
For example, revenge.  
Meaning what, Mr. Charleston?  
I'm not the only one who's had  
a past experience with Twain.  
He was quite a ladies' man in his day.  
Are you suggesting  
someone here-  
Was once in love  
with Lionel Twain.  
He was engaged to and jilted...  
...Miss Jessica Marbles.  
Jesus H. Christ!  
Jilted 54 years ago at the altar.  
Left her there  
in that same tweed outfit.  
- Is this true, Jessie?  
- I was not jilted.  
I walked out on him.  
He wanted to fool around  
before the wedding.  
And being the lady you are,  
you refused.

Not completely. But it got out of hand.  
He was horrid, but I didn't kill him.  
That's good enough for me.  
What about you?  
I'm not a Frenchy!  
I'm a Belgy!  
And as for other motives,  
how about patricide?  
The killing of one's own parent?  
You mean that Lionel Twain was  
the father of someone in this room?  
He wasn't my father.  
He was my uncle.  
He was very good to me.  
He would take me to the circus  
and give me candy.  
We stopped going  
when I was about 26.  
I'm sorry, Sam.  
Twenty-six?  
What kind of a circus was it?  
Forgive me, but I was talking about  
patricide, not uncle-cide.  
Twain may have been your uncle...  
...but he was the  
illegitimate father of...  
...Monsieur Sidney Wang!  
It not true.  
I was adopted.  
I have my papers.  
That is why I have adopted  
all my children.  
I was wondering.  
He loved me very much...  
...but he was not very observant.  
One day when I was 19,  
he called me to his study...  
...noticed for first time I was  
Oriental, and kicked me out.  
- I could have-  
- Killed him, Wang?  
As easily as you,  
Monsieur Perrier.  
Lionel Twain killed

the only thing you ever loved:  
Marie-Louise Cartier.  
Your sweetheart?  
My poodle.  
He was a most cruel man.  
Monsieur would come to France  
every season...  
...to hunt poodles.  
The day they brought...  
...her bloodied collar to me,  
I vowed I would-  
- Knock him off?  
- Yes, gladly, if I had the chance.  
But I did not.  
Someone here beat me to it.  
There's more than one reason  
that we was invited here.  
Not only was Twain testing  
us as detectives...  
...but we all have motives  
for doing him in.  
Have not yet heard  
your motive, Mr. Diamond.  
My motive is unimportant.  
Let's say that I hated him enough  
to kill him.  
You are closed man, Mr. Diamond.  
You hide many things.  
Could it be that Mr. Twain  
discover your secret?  
I don't know what  
you're talking about.  
We know different,  
do we not, Miss Skeffington?  
Twain picked up Sam in a gay bar.  
I was working on a case. Working.  
Every night for six months?  
I got 50 bucks a day and expenses.  
I hate them queeries.  
Twain...  
...had Polaroid pictures  
of Sam in drag.  
I was in disguise.  
Lots of dames go in those joints.



I never kissed nobody.  
I never did nothing to a man  
that I wouldn't do to a woman.  
And I didn't kill Twain.  
Bitch.  
Most interesting.  
All had perfect motives  
for killing Twain.  
Wonder which one  
was one who done it.  
We still have  
the night to get through.  
If anyone's going to solve this,  
I say we get a good night's sleep.  
And I suggest  
we all lock our doors.  
One of us is a mad killer...  
...and not to be trusted.  
Who do you think is the murderer?  
Must sleep on it.  
Will know in morning when wake up.  
What if you don't wake up?  
Then you did it.  
Go sleep, please.  
- Good night, Dad.  
- Should have adopted pussycat.  
Should I turn off the steam, Pop?  
Not steam.  
Someone just put  
deadly snake in room.  
Wake me when it come near bed.  
I want you to know, Dickie,  
if you're the murderer...  
...I'll still love you.  
It wouldn't be right for us  
to make love, but I'd love you.  
No fear of that, pet.  
Let's see what we have here.  
We have one missing, dead,  
naked butler...  
...one host with  
a knife in his back...  
...and one scorpion  
crawling up our sheets.

- Is that what that is?  
- They can kill instantly.  
I suggest we don't move.  
For how long?  
Quite possibly  
for the rest of our lives.  
Good heavens!  
I know who the murderer is.  
Solvey-poo?  
Yes, Miss Withers.  
The murderer is-  
Good God! Gas!  
I'm sorry. I can't help it.  
I'm old.  
No, no. The other kind of gas.  
The kind that kills.  
- Sometimes my gas-  
- It's seeping in through the vent!  
It's locked from the outside.  
Help!  
Doesn't smell that bad to me.  
Help!  
Did I do right, Sam,  
telling them about the gay bar?  
Perfect. They took the bait like a dumb  
halibut. Let them think I'm a pansy.  
While they're suspecting me,  
one of them will let his pants down.  
Why do you keep all those naked  
muscle men magazines in your office?  
Suspects.  
Always looking for suspects.  
What's that ticking sound I hear?  
"That ticking sound is a bomb  
that will go off in 30 seconds.  
- Signed, the murderer."  
- The door!  
"P.S. The door is locked."  
I'm sorry about this, Tess.  
- Me owing you all that money too.  
- That's all right. What will we do?  
I got an idea.  
I don't know if this will work.  
Turn around!

- I'm turned.  
- Whatever you do, don't turn back.  
- If anything-  
- Do as I say.  
- I will, Sam.  
- Good. Because I think I'm gonna cry.  
- What are you doing in my bed?  
- There's no place to sleep.  
Sleep in the car,  
you chauffeur.  
Unfair. I will tell everyone  
you wear a toupee.  
- They already know.  
- Why do you wear it?  
I didn't know you knew.  
Certainly I know.  
It's a terrible toupee.  
A bomb. Across the hall.  
Quickly, the door!  
It's locked from the outside.  
You look taller to me.  
Why is that?  
Monsieur, I'm not getting taller.  
If you aren't getting taller,  
there's one alternative.  
The room is getting shorter!  
The ceiling is coming down!  
- What'll we do?  
- I don't know!  
But this is exactly how  
they make goose liver pate.  
Not so fast, please.  
Do not cross out Wang name.  
Cross out "snake" instead.  
Nice shot, Pop. Sure wish you  
weren't such a heavy sleeper.  
And now...  
...if you please.  
One million dollars...  
...Mr. Bensonmum.  
Banzai, Pop!  
Very clever of you, Mr. Wang.  
Oh, yes.  
As you can see, I can see.

So I see.  
Tell me, as the only survivor,  
how did you deduce it was me?  
Went back to theory  
seldom used today:  
Butler did it.  
I hadn't thought of that.  
How do you account for  
my dead body?  
Body made of plastic,  
same as plastic cook.  
While we examine plastic butler...  
...you murder Lionel Twain.  
You're a clever little  
laundry man, Mr. Wang.  
But not quite clever enough!  
I'll take that one million dollars,  
Bensonmum...  
...alias Irving Goldman.  
Irving Goldman?  
Yes.  
Irving Goldman was the attorney  
of the late Lionel Twain.  
Lionel Twain died five years ago.  
His body was discovered  
in Goldman's filing cabinet.  
Am I correct, Mr. Goldman?  
Yeah. Correct, Miss Marbles.  
But how did you escape  
the poison gas?  
Quite simple.  
I covered my mouth...  
...and let Miss Withers here  
breathe in all the gas.  
- Sicky-poo.  
- Yes, dear, I know.  
- The million dollars, please.  
- I wouldn't, Goldman.  
Or is it Goldman?  
Actually, it's Mr. Marvin Metzner.  
Marvin Metzner?  
Very good, Mr. Charleston.  
But how did you know?  
The bill in the dead butler's hand

stating the weekend had been catered.  
- Only an accountant would keep that.  
- Get the money and let's go.  
Goldman died  
last month while skiing.  
He jumped 200 feet  
into a low-flying plane.  
I can't wait much longer.  
You've not lost your touch,  
Mr. Charleston.  
But how did you elude  
the deadly scorpion?  
We didn't.  
He stung Dora.  
- We have 15 minutes to reach a doctor.  
- Explain later.  
We'll make it. Never fear.  
The prize money.  
Belongs to me, monsieur.  
Marcel, being one of  
the world's strongest men...  
...stopped your ceiling from crushing  
us at four feet, five inches.  
It may be months before  
we're able to straighten again...  
...but a million dollars  
will buy a lot of back braces.  
Eh, Miss Irene Twain?  
Daughter of Lionel!  
What?  
I prefer to be called Rita.  
But how did you know?  
Never underestimate  
a Frenchman's nostrils, Miss Twain.  
At dinner tonight...  
...I smelled your Chanel No. 5.  
You did away with all of them:  
Metzner, Goldman  
and your father.  
If you had your way...  
...you'd do away with all men,  
would you not, Miss Twain?  
Men who have made you suffer...  
...because you were

born with brains...  
...talent, money, everything  
but that which you most desired:  
Beauty.  
It is a statement of fact...  
...that as a man you are passable,  
but as a woman...  
...you are a dog.  
That's your opinion, big boy.  
And now my money, please.  
With luck, I can still  
make dinner at Maxim's.  
I'd just order  
a tuna sandwich...  
...because that dough is mine.  
That's right, I'm alive.  
Miss Skeffington  
dropped your bomb down the john.  
It blew up as she flushed.  
The seat missed her head by an inch.  
I'm all right, J.J.  
J.J.?  
That's right, folks.  
He outsmarted us all.  
Sitting behind that desk  
is the real Sam Diamond.  
My name is Loomis.  
J.J. Loomis. I'm an actor.  
I do impressions.  
I did the Carson show  
six times last year.  
Diamond hired me for the weekend.  
Miss Skeffington  
is Vilma Norman.  
She's a cocktail waitress  
at the Water Bed Motel in Carmel.  
Diamond hated all of you.  
You're getting big money, and he  
had that office in San Francisco.  
If he proved he was number one,  
he'd get your clients.  
But since I put  
all the pieces together...  
...I figure that money belongs to me.

Isn't that right, Mr. Diamond?  
Wrong.  
That would've been so obvious,  
a child could have guessed.  
No, colleagues.  
What you seem to overlook...  
...is the most simple  
and direct solution.  
That I am indeed Lionel Twain.  
You've all been so clever  
for so long...  
...you've forgotten to be humble.  
You've tricked and fooled  
your readers for years.  
You've tortured us with  
surprise endings that made no sense.  
You've introduced characters at the  
end that weren't in the book before!  
You've withheld  
clues and information...  
...that made it impossible for us  
to guess who did it.  
But now the tables are turned.  
Millions of angry mystery readers...  
...are now getting their revenge.  
When the world learns  
I've outsmarted you...  
...they'll be selling your \$1.95 books  
for 12 cents.  
It's checkout time,  
ladies and gentlemen.  
I have your bills ready.  
Credit cards will be accepted.  
- Even the scorpion was a fake?  
- Everything. The bridge, the maid.  
- But you're sure about the scorpion?  
- Positive.  
Even the fog. He made that with  
a dry ice machine. See.  
How awfully unromantic.  
Then if he really  
was Lionel Twain...  
- ...you must really be Sam Diamond.  
- That's right, baby.

I was in disguise,  
in disguise, in disguise.  
You work hard for  
50 bucks in this racket.  
I guess that means we won't  
see each other again.  
Well, that depends.  
I'll be around if you need me.  
All you gotta do is whistle.  
- You know how to whistle, don't you?  
- Certainly. What do you mean?  
Never mind. Forget it.  
You ruined it.  
I don't understand.  
Was there a murder or wasn't there?  
Yes. Killed good weekend.  
Drive, please.