

LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME - BAINES AUDITION PIECE 1

Baines, Sybil & Arthur – Book pages 6/8

BAINES: Not the Podgers, my lord?

ARTHUR: I suppose so. Then you have heard of him?

BAINES: But naturally, my lord. The man is famous.

ARTHUR: (gloomily) Oh, is he?

BAINES: Hardly a week passes, my lord, without some evidence of his extraordinary powers of divination into the past, the present and the future.

SYBIL: There, you see Arthur.

BAINES: Only the other day he discovered that a certain noble peer had contracted an unfortunate marriage in his extreme youth which he regretted in his maturity.

ARTHUR: Well, what of it ? There's nothing wrong in that.

BAINES: Nothing at all, my lord, except that the noble peer in question omitted to discard his former wife before acquiring his present one. I understand the case is to be heard at the next sessions.

ARTHUR: You think he's infallible?

BAINES: Without question, my lord. A wonderful man indeed. A wonderful man.

ARTHUR: Well, you needn't look so pleased about it. He's coming here today.

BAINES: Here, my lord?

ARTHUR: That's what I said.

BAINES: (drawing himself up proudly) I have nothing to fear, my lord.

ARTHUR: I don't care about you. It's not your hand he's going to read. It's mine.

BAINES: (startled) Yours, my lord?

ARTHUR: Julia is bringing him with her. She wants to find out before it's too late if I shall be a suitable husband for Miss Merton.

BAINES: I see, my lord.

SYBIL: I couldn't help it, Arthur. She'd arranged it all before I knew.

ARTHUR: It's not your fault, Sybil, I know.

SYBIL: And if your conscience is clear, we have nothing to worry about.

ARTHUR: Yes, but that's just the point. Is it? Baines!

BAINES: My lord?

ARTHUR: You may be able to help us, Baines. You've served me a very long time.

BAINES: Man and boy, my lord, for twenty years. Ever since that terrible day in the gun-room, when your lordship's father inadvertently removed himself by cleaning a loaded sixteen-bore sporting gun.

SYBIL: Oh, how dreadful!

BAINES: It was indeed, miss. The gun-room required complete redecoration. The mishap occurred after his lordship had returned home from duck-shooting. His late lordship was excessively fond of the sport, although he could never hit anything, owing to an unfortunate obliquity of vision caused by his being a diplomat in the foreign service during his early years. I am told it was a pretty sight to see the ducks playing without fear around him.

ARTHUR: Never mind your reminiscences, Baines, we're wasting time. They'll be here soon.

BAINES: I beg your pardon, my lord, I was carried away. You suggested I might be of service, my lord.

ARTHUR: Yes. Now, in order to meet this crisis which may presently be upon us, I'd like to know if you can recall any reprehensible actions I may have committed during the last twenty years, and which might confound me when this redoubtable Mr Podgers arrives.

BAINES: You wish to know now, my lord?

ARTHUR: Yes, of course I do. I've only got about ten minutes.

BAINES: I will consider, my lord.

(ARTHUR and Sybil wait anxiously)

ARTHUR: Come on! I haven't been as dastardly as all that.

BAINES: (with slight reproach) I confess I cannot recall anything which might be termed a misdeed, my lord.

SYBIL: (joyfully) Nothing at all ?

BAINES: No, miss. A few peccadilloes, that is all.

ARTHUR: Podgers doesn't count peccadilloes ?

BAINES: Oh, no, my lord. Forgery, larceny, burglary and bigamy are the things he unhesitatingly exposes.

ARTHUR: Well, I can confidently say I've never committed any of those. Er . . . you don't think . . . ?

(To Sybil) Excuse me, darling. (He whispers to Baines) Could he?

BAINES: Oh, no, my lord. There would be insufficient space on the hand for those.