

LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME - PODGER'S AUDITION PIECE

ARTHUR: Mr Podgers, please wait.

PODGERS: My lord, I have an appointment . . .

ARTHUR: (interrupting) What was it you saw in my hand?

PODGERS: I've already told you, my lord. A happy marriage . . .

ARTHUR: Not that ! There was something else - something you didn't tell me. I must know what it was.

PODGERS: What makes you think I saw more in your hand than I told you?

ARTHUR: You have an expressive face, Mr Podgers. What you saw was catastrophic. I insist upon knowing what it was.

PODGERS: Lord Arthur, the duchess will be wait . . .

ARTHUR: I don't care if a dozen duchesses are waiting. I shall not allow you to leave this room until you've told me what you saw.

PODGERS: You will be wise not to insist, my lord.

ARTHUR: But I do ! If it's money you want, I'll pay you well.

PODGERS: How well?

ARTHUR: A hundred pounds.

PODGERS: Guineas?

ARTHUR: Very well. Guineas. I'll send you a cheque tomorrow. Now tell me.

PODGERS: I saw . . . blood on your hand, Lord Arthur.

ARTHUR: Blood ? What do you mean—blood?

PODGERS: Do you still wish me to go on?

ARTHUR: Yes, of course I do. You can't just stop like that. Whose blood?

PODGERS: That I am unable to tell you, my lord. (He smiles) Let us hope it will be that of a person of no importance.

ARTHUR: Are you trying to tell me I'm going to - kill somebody?

PODGERS: Precisely, my lord. At some date in the future you will commit murder.

ARTHUR: Murder !

PODGERS: Would your lordship care for a brandy and soda? I find that generally helps in cases like yours.

ARTHUR: Do you often tell people this sort of thing?

PODGERS: No, not often, but now and again, naturally.

ARTHUR: But I don't believe you. I refuse to believe you. It's utterly fantastic!

PODGERS: Yes, my lord, that is what they all say, but you will get used to the idea in time.

ARTHUR: But I don't want to kill anybody. I've never dreamt of such a thing. Besides, I wouldn't even know how to go about it.

PODGERS: The ways and means will doubtless present themselves when the moment arrives, my lord. Now, if you will excuse me . . .

ARTHUR: No, Mr Podgers, please wait. Mr Podgers, are you really serious? Do you give me your word you saw this awful thing in my hand?

PODGERS: I not only give you my word, I am also infallible.

ARTHUR: And - there is no escaping it?

PODGERS: No, my lord.

ARTHUR: Murder! But I can't possibly do a murder. I'm being married next week.

PODGERS: Oh, don't let it interfere with your arrangements, my lord. It's possible you may have many years of married bliss before the unhappy event takes place.

ARTHUR: Do you think I would marry now - with this hanging over my head? No, I must give Sybil up - yet how can I explain to her ? How can I tell her that the man she loves . . . ?

PODGERS: Do not despair, my lord. There is also the chance that fate may have ordained you to do the deed before next Thursday in which case you may marry Miss Merton with a clear conscience.

ARTHUR: Before - before? Yes, you are right. Since I must do this awful thing, it is my duty to do it before we are married. Then I can devote my life to her, knowing she will never have to blush for me, or hang her head in shame.

PODGERS: (moved) You are noble, my lord.

ARTHUR: (convinced that he is) No, no. It is the simple choice between living for oneself or living for others. I must not allow selfishness to triumph over love. I have no right to marry till the thing is done. By the way, you did say only one?

PODGERS: Oh, yes, my lord. Only one.

ARTHUR: And there's nothing else in my hand?