

**PLUM.** A Revolver . . .

**WHITE.** Ahhhhhh! A snake! Oh, no. It's a Rope.

*(Then:)*

**BODDY.** In your hands you each have a lethal weapon.

*(They gasp.)*

**BODDY.** You all came tonight because you believed the evidence against you was so terrible that you would do anything to keep it a secret. I'm putting that theory to the test.

**WADSWORTH.** You are?

**BODDY.** Mr. Wadsworth here is the only other person who knows your secrets; and it's costing us all dearly to keep him quiet.

**GREEN.** What do you mean?

**BODDY.** I wouldn't have to double your payments if I didn't have to pay Mr. Wadsworth for his silence.

**ALL.** Wadsworth?!

**WADSWORTH.** That's a lie!

**BODDY.** He may look suave and charming . . .

**WADSWORTH.** Thank you . . .

**BODDY.** But really he's conniving and manipulative.

**WADSWORTH.** False!

**BODDY.** Why do you think he's called the police?

**PLUM.** *(To WADSWORTH:)* You called the police?

**WADSWORTH.** Only because HE instructed me to do so!

**BODDY.** Did I?

*(Then:)*

Ladies and gentlemen . . . if you can manage to get rid of Mr. Wadsworth, I'll have no need to increase your blackmail or expose you to the police.

**PLUM.** Get rid of?

**PEACOCK.** *(To WHITE:)* Does he mean . . . kill him?!

**BODDY.** In fact, if you can eliminate Wadsworth . . .

**WHITE.** Yes, I think that's what he means.

Start  
Here

**BODDY.** . . . Who not only knows all of your secrets, but also mine—then I will eliminate your blackmail altogether and be done with this terrible business once and for all.

**WADSWORTH.** You would never!

**PLUM.** But why make us do it, Boddy?! Why don't you do your dirty work yourself?

**GREEN.** Yeah!

**BODDY.** Why should I when the six of you are so uniquely motivated . . . and armed?

**SCARLET.** What a patriot.

**WADSWORTH.** After all I've done for you!

*(To GUESTS:)*

He's a liar! I'm one of you! I'm not a butler! I'm an indentured servant!

**BODDY.** A familiar refrain.

*(Darkly:)*

Don't make a scene, Wadsworth. It's over.

*(To GUESTS:)*

The police are on their way. Now's your chance. The only way for you to end your blackmail and avoid finding yourselves on the front pages is for one of you to kill Wadsworth . . . NOW!

**Stop Here** *(He switches off the lights. BLACKNESS. CHAOS. SCREAMS. A GUNSHOT. MORE CHAOS AND SCREAMS. Lights.)*

*(BODDY lies on the floor. Prone. Face down. EVERYONE else is spread throughout the Study.)*

**WHITE.** It's Mr. Boddy!

**WADSWORTH.** *(Enormously relieved:)* Oh thank God.

**SCARLET.** Is he breathing?!

*(They rush to him in a hubbub.)*

**PLUM.** *(Cutting off the hoopla:)* Stand back, I'm a doctor!

*(They move back. PLUM gives BODDY a cursory examination.)*

**PLUM.** He's dead.

**WHITE.** Who had the gun?

**PLUM.** I did.

**PEACOCK.** So you shot him!