

Pawn Seven murders, madam.
 Letitia Anyone I know?
 Pawn No, I mean yes. Most of your relatives.
 Letitia Oh, pshaw. They're no loss. What about my vile sister, Doreen, the so-called Lady Bishop. Is she among the victims?
 Pawn Oh dearie me, no, madam. Her ladyship is alive and well and about to join us if these old ears do not deceive me.
 Letitia Oh, what a bore. I wonder what sort of grand entrance she'll make tonight?

The flat with the painted door shakes violently then Doreen's hand bursts through the canvas. Pawn exits L

Doreen, dear.

Letitia and Doreen shake hands. Doreen's hand then feels round the canvas in search of the non-existent handle

You're looking as radiant as always. Why haven't you kept in touch?

Doreen (off) I felt something had come between us.

Letitia You're damn right. You stole Reggie, turned me into an alcoholic, and melted down my Tupperware.

Doreen appears at the top of the stairs

Doreen (moving down the stairs) Don't be bitter, Letitia.

Letitia I warned you never to mention my operation. Haven't I paid enough?

Doreen Why don't you lie down?

Letitia No! I'm going to lie down.

Doreen Sorry. Would you like a drink?

Letitia But when the will is read tonight, I shall have the last laugh.

Doreen I haven't a clue what I say now.

Letitia I want to see you suffer, Doreen. You're going to suffer like you made me suffer when you ironed out my pleated skirt. Just you wait. Ha-ha-ha-ha! (She turns to go up the stairs then turns back) Did I say the bit about the Tia Maria?
 Doreen I don't know.

Daphne enters L

Daphne Mother, Pawn said that Aunt Letitia had arrived. Is she here?

Doreen No, she's having a lie down.

Letitia Tell Pawn to—

Daphne But I must speak to her. The inspector says she might be in great danger.

Doreen She'll be asleep now.

Letitia Tell Pawn to bring me a Tia Maria. Ow! Don't pinch, Thelma. It's very spiteful.

Letitia exits

Daphne But see here, Mother. Another bishop is missing from the board!

ACT II

The Lights come up on stage to reveal Violet in the wheelchair, and Rose behind it

Rose Violet, Violet, summat right g . . .

They realize their error and change places

Violet, Violet, summat right gradely's appened. Colonel and t' wife are dead.

Violet Eeccc.

Rose You know what this means, don't you?

Violet Nay.

Rose More brass for us!

Both cackle and rub their hands

Well, let's . . .

Violet is still cackling so Rose waits for her to finish

Well, let's stroll round t' garden afore supper.

Violet Shall we take t' lift to t' ground floor?

Rose Ay, same as always. Open t' gates, Vi.

Violet wheels Rose off L

There is the sound effect of lift gates opening, then screams. The Lights fade to Black-out

Pawn enters L, carrying one red suitcase and switches on the standard lamp.
 Pause

The Lights come up full to illuminate the entire stage

Pawn goes to the window and starts drawing the curtains. One draws normally but the other sticks and rips in half as he tries to tug it. He throws the piece of material out of the window

Mrs Reece, as Lady Bishop's extrovert sister Letitia, enters L. She wears a large cloak and wide-brimmed hat and carries a cigarette holder and the second red suitcase

Letitia Pawn, darling! (She drops her case on his foot) It's been an absolute age since I saw you. I've been rushing from Rome to Hollywood appearing in some of the world's most expensive films, and now here I am back at chilly old Checkmate Manor to see if Reggie's left me any moolah. What have I missed?