

APPLETASTIC

# **APPLETASTIC**

**A mystery play**

**by**

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## APPLETASTIC

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# APPLETASTIC

## Urban dictionary definition of:- Appletastic

**‘a cute person who has rosy red apple cheeks, falls often, and is quite silly’**

### Synopsis

The play is about Rose and Roger Dunstable who have bought and modernized a house in which Roger lived as a child to the age of around seven. They engage Miss Percy and Miss Pilsworth to work on the very neglected large back garden. It soon becomes clear that the sight of an apple tree bearing rosy red apples seems to stir something in Rogers memory, but what? The arrival of their son and daughter-in-law enthused by family research takes the story of discovery forward. During the garden renovations a human skeleton is unearthed in the garden. As the story twists and turns giving the audience laughter and intrigue, it contains red herrings to keep them guessing. At the close of the play, all is sensationally revealed with unexpected twists in which the Dunstable family are left in total surprise.

### The set

The set is a simple box style to fit the stage. The door and window to be set to suit your stage. The window needs to be operational and placed in good view of all the audience. Drapes or a window blinds needed to dress and be operational for the window. The general look and décor of the set is a minimalist style in an old house which has been modernized. The set needs to be dressed and furnished in a minimalist modern style to include an arm chair, a sofa (*if the sofa is not large enough, another chair will be required*) and a coffee table. A large copy of a black and white portrait photograph will be required, (*a male around fifty years of age*), ideally of the father, grandfather, uncle or brother of the person who is acting the character Roger Dunstable. Or a photo that would suffice and back up the story of the play. Although an old photo, it needs to be framed in a modern minimalist style to suit the décor.

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## Cast

9 characters consisting of :- 5 female, 3 male and 1 either gender.

Roger Dunstable.....Husband of Rose  
Rose Dunstable.....Wife of Roger  
Miss Georgia Pilsworth.....Partner of Emma  
Miss Emma Percy.....Partner of Georgia  
Matt Dunstable.....Son of Roger and Rose  
Lucy Dunstable.....Wife of Matt  
Professor Mary Southwood ..... Archaeologist and Historian  
Inspector Thompson..... Police Detective  
Doctor Palmer.....Forensic Anthropologist (*of either gender*)

## Synopsis of scenes

### **Act I**

Scene one.....Friday morning  
Scene two.....Friday afternoon  
Scene three.....The following day – Saturday  
Scene four.... The following evening – Sunday

### **Act II**

Scene one.....Tuesday morning  
Scene two.....Tuesday evening  
Scene three..... Wednesday morning  
Scene four.....Ten days later (Friday)  
Scene five.....That Friday evening

**Character Personalities, Information and Costume Suggestions**

**Roger Dunstable:-** Playing age early sixty . Husband of Rose and father of Matt. He needs to be a little clumsy and silly in ways but cute with it. He dresses a modern casual style for a man of his age. Has some rosiness to his cheeks, but not overdone and must look natural. This will help to back-up the dialogue and title.

**Rose Dunstable:-** Playing age late fifty to early sixty. Wife of Roger and mother of Matt. She is just a normal run of the mill wife. She dresses in a modern casual manner suitable for her age.

**Miss Pilsworth:-** Playing age over thirty five. She is a civil partner to Miss Percy. She is quite a hard, stern, forthright and butch type in character. Her costume should reflect this characterization by the wearing of more masculine type clothing.

**Miss Percy:-** Playing age over thirty five. Civil partner to Miss Pilsworth. Quite a soft delicate person in character, walks daintily and shows sincerity and kindness. Her clothing is delicate, very feminine and suitable for a lady of her age. She has gardening gloves and an apron to accompany her outdoor attire for the scenes in which she is at work in the garden.

**Matt Dunstable:-** Playing age late twenties to early thirties, (*or as long as the age complies with being a son of Roger and Rose*). Married to Lucy. Quite a joking personality. He could have a milder touch of rosiness to his cheeks than those of Roger. He wears quite modern clothing to suit his age. Also needs some clothing suitable for garden work.

**Lucy Dunstable:-** Playing age late twenties to early thirties, could be younger or a little older, (*or as long as it complies with being the wife of Matt*). A usual daughter-in-law with no special characteristics to her manner . Dresses in a very modern way which suits her age and build. The use of simple dresses could help with quick side of stage costume changes where needed.

**Mary Southwood:-** Can be of any age. A professor in archaeology and history. She can have a little eccentric side to her in her dress and manner.

**Inspector James Thompson:-** Can be any age. A plain clothes detective. Quite ordinary in his manner.

**Doctor Palmer:-** Can be of any age, either male or female. Quite official looking suiting their job and speaks in knowledgeable and educated manner.

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## Act I Scene one

### Friday Morning

The scene opens in bright daylight. Sun can be shining through the window. Roger is on a step ladder, the foot of which is hidden by an arm chair. He is about to hammer a nail into the wall to hang a photograph portrait picture. Holding the nail between his finger and thumb at a place where there is already a small hole in the wall, he uses the hammer to mime knocking in the nail.

**ROGER:** *(retracting his hand shaking it)* Oww! You ffffffflipping thing! *(Looking at his thumb as he descends from the ladder.)* Why do you always get in the bloody way of the hammer?*(Standing off the ladder, he looks at the hammer and speaking to it bitterly.)* I hate you, you damn useless lump of metal. *(Still behind the arm chair, throws the hammer in temper onto the floor and hits his foot. He screeches out.)* Yeee oww! *(Limping and hobbling out from behind the chair.)* You damn ruddy object, *(in temper, kicking the arm chair on speaking the following,)* I could kick you from here to Kingdom come. *(Hurting his toe.)* Yee oww! Oh bloody, bloody, sod and flaming hells bells! *(Sits angrily in the arm chair sucking his thumb and having the injured foot resting on his other knee, rubbing it with his spare hand. Wincing and frowning painfully.)*

*Rose enters hurriedly.*

**ROSE:** Did I hear some building terminology?

**ROGER:** *(releasing his thumb; angrily)* What you heard was some choice swearing! And if you weren't in the house it would have been very choice swearing!

**ROSE:** I know you're useless at D.I.Y. It comes to something when you can't even hang a picture!

**ROGER:** *(placing his foot on the floor; grimacing)* That flaming hammer has a will of its own. Always seems to find my finger or thumb. *(Sucking his thumb again.)*

**ROSE:** No good blaming the tools. It's the operator that's at fault. And you should be using a screw not a flipping nail!

*Roger pulls a face at Rose after her comment.*

**ROGER:** *(releasing his thumb)* I had to make the pilot hole with something! Not keen on that picture anyway. Even with the new modern frame to fit this rooms décor.

**ROSE:** *(picking up the picture and looking at it, so the audience can view it)* It's a family heirloom of yours. You've always had it.

**ROGER:** Can't think why. *(Raising his foot again and caressing it with his hand.)* On my birth certificate it states; father unknown. And I was about seven when my older brother of twelve months suddenly disappeared one night.

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**ROSE:** *(with puzzlement)* How can anyone just disappear overnight!

**ROGER:** *(shrugs his shoulders)* One of life's mysteries I suppose. *(A little saddened.)* And never answered as my mother died a week after his disappearance!

**ROSE:** *(placing the picture down)* Seems odd that. You having no relations.

**ROGER:** Odd it maybe, but the fact still remains that I have no relations other than those of my own creation.

**ROSE:** But if your brother just disappeared as you say, he could turn up at any given moment.

**ROGER:** *(firmly)* Look, Rose. My father is a mystery, my mother was an orphan, my brother Phillip I'm sure died. That's it, end of story.

**ROSE:** Does it upset or distress you in any way losing Phillip and your Mother when you were so young?

**ROGER:** Suppose deep down there are some regrets but what can I do about it. Life goes on and it was all a long time ago now.

**ROSE:** *(picking up a screwdriver and screw)* Is that why you were so keen to buy this house?*(Goes up the step ladder.)* The last place you saw Phillip and the house you were taken away from the day your mother died.

**ROGER:** *(standing; a little subdued)* I suppose so. Maybe I felt Phillip might just suddenly appear again. *(Slight pause.)* This house is the only connection I have with any family. *(Moving to the window with a limp then looking out of it.)* Odd really; now I'm here, I'm not so sure it means anything.

**ROSE:** I'm sure in time it will mean something to you. *(Pointing to a little hole in the wall.)* You're not as useless as you think. You've made a pilot hole for the screw! *(Offers the screw to the hole and proceeds to screw it in.)*

**ROGER:** I can't help thinking that buying this house has been all a mistake.

**ROSE:** Too late for regrets now. We can't afford to move again. *(Descends the ladder after fixing the screw.)*

**ROGER:** I have this niggling in the back of my brain as to whether it was wise to buy this house in the first place.

**ROSE:** *(hanging the picture)* Maybe in time it will be the wisest move ever made.

**ROGER:** *(turning away from the window)* How do you mean?

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**ROSE:** Answers to questions. Who were your parents? And where's your brother? Once locals know who you are; all sorts of information may be brought to our doorstep.

**ROGER:** *(preparing to remove the ladder)* And knowing my luck, it will be all bad. *(Exiting with the ladder.)*

**ROSE:** *(gathering the tools etc)* You have to expect some worms crawling out of cans, it's inevitable. *(Exiting with the tools.)* Unless you're really unlucky, the positives will supersede those worms.

**ROGER:** *(entering)* I've been unlucky for sixty years, no reason for it to change now. *(Goes over to the window, looking out.)*

**ROSE:** *(entering)* What sort of attitude is that? It's not been all bad. We met, have had a son and earned enough to own our property. There are many worse off than us!

**ROGER:** I know all that, but it's been such bloody hard work! Some lucky so and so's seem to land good fortune on every corner they turn. I'm a nobody and will never inherit as much as a door knob!

**ROSE:** *(goes to Roger and turns him by the arm to face her)* Listen to me, Roger Dunstable. You've worked hard and earned your money. It may not have come by an easy route, but you can hold your head high with the satisfaction of knowing you've got here by your own doing.

**ROGER:** *(softly subdued)* I know, you're right of course. *(Looking around the room.)*

**ROSE:** Now you've retired early, we can do what funds enable us to do.

**ROGER:** I'm not sure about this minimalist look. I know it's the trend for twenty ten, but it seems so hostile, characterless; I'm not sure it would feel cosy on a cold, wet, winters night.

**ROSE:** *(moving away)* The house was in such a bad state, it needed to be fully modernized. *(Sits and start to thumb through a magazine.)*

**ROGER:** *(turns to look out of the window again; quietly)* Rosy red apples!

**ROSE:** What?

**ROGER:** That cranky old apple tree out there. It has rosy red apples.

**ROSE:** Can't get to them through the neglected undergrowth.

**ROGER:** I can just remember mother planting that tree just before she died. This is the first time I've seen the fruit. *(With thought.)* It has; rosy - red - apples.

**ROSE:** Why do you keep repeating, 'rosy red apples?'

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**ROGER:** (*turning back into the room and sits*) We used to sing a rhyme. (*Sings in rhyme.*) Rosy - red apples. Rosy - red apples. Hanging - on - the tree. (*Stops singing.*)

**ROSE:** Perhaps it's stirring a distant memory?

**ROGER:** Only because the three of us sang that silly rhyme.

**ROSE:** The three of you?

**ROGER:** Mother, my brother Phillip, and me.

**ROSE:** Oh - I see.

**ROGER:** There were a lot of fruit trees out there then. Apples, pears and plums and just on the left hand side was the outside privy. August and September were always tricky with wasps feeding off the fruit. Damn things always found you whilst the trousers were around the ankles and unable to run away!

**ROSE:** There's a great clump of ivy on the left hand side. It's probably covering that old privy.

**ROGER:** (*brightly*) How are we going to tackle that wilderness out there? We're not really gardeners.

**ROSE:** I've been pro-active on that score. I have asked Miss Pilsworth and Miss Percy to do the work.

**ROGER:** (*semi alarmed*) Butch and Sundance!

**ROSE:** They're keen horticulturists and like nothing better than to earn a little doing so. I suppose it helps to compensate any shortfall they have running that little small holding of theirs.

**ROGER:** Honesty, Rose. Even I know they're just a pair of nosy meddlers.

**ROSE:** That as maybe, but they're cheap.

**ROGER:** (*rising and begins to pace about*) Butch and Sundance here, in our home. (*Shudders.*) The thought runs chills up my spine. You do realize nothing will be private anymore? Sundance, Miss Percy, she's a right perceptive creature. She's the sort that can tell you what you're thinking before you've even thought. As for Butch, She lifts a 25 Kilo bag of chicken feed as if it were a kilo bag of sugar!

**ROSE:** Have you a better suggestion?

**ROGER:** (*eagerly*) Yes. Keep them as far away as possible. Matt and I will clear that mess out there and plant grass seeds or scatter turfs. (*Sits on a arm of a chair.*)

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**ROSE:** Oh, Roger. You silly thing. You sow grass seed and lay turfs. And by the time you and our son destruct and make an effort to reinstate the back garden we shall be both dead!

**ROGER:** What do you mean, “we shall be both dead?”

**ROSE:** You never finished decorating Matthews room after he was born. We left that house three weeks ago and there was still a Thomas the Tank Engine roll of wall paper to hang. Matt is now married and has a home of his own!

**ROGER:** *(a little coy)* I ran out of wallpaper paste.

**ROSE:** Ten years ago, one of the kitchen cupboard doors fell off. It was still off the day we left. You were supposedly going to renew that cupboard!

**ROGER:** *(with a little adoring smile)* I couldn't understand the assembly instructions. Everything seemed to be inside out and upside down.

**ROSE:** The simple truth is that you never finish anything you start. And when you do start, you make a right pigs ear of it. My mind is made up, Miss Pilsworth and Miss Percy will do the work for us. In fact, I've already asked them to call.

**ROGER:** *(getting up and looking out the window; restlessly abrupt)* When?

**ROSE:** For tea this afternoon. Apparently they do very little on Friday afternoons.

**ROGER:** *(turning firmly and almost in child like temper)* Well they're not touching that apple tree. It might be old, it may be shabby and neglected, but it stays. Butch Cassidy is not getting her hands on it!

**ROSE:** *(goes to Roger and hugs him)* Of course not my darling. *(Looking into his eyes and observing his face.)* That little paddy has made the rose rise in your cheeks, it makes you look so cute and cuddly. *(Giving him a tight loving hug.)*

### Blackout – curtain

### Scene two

### Friday afternoon

The scene opens in bright light with no beam of sunlight through the window. A mobile phone is heard ringing off stage. On the coffee table there are four cups and saucers with spoons.

**ROSE:** *(off stage, answers the phone)* Matt! How nice to hear from you. *(Enters into the room.)* Still some things to unpack. . . “Dad?” He's fine, *(crossing to the window; looking out)* I think! He's seems to be talking to an apple tree at the moment whilst wielding some stick thing at the undergrowth. *(With a wincing reaction.)* Ooops! It would appear the weeds are fighting back! *(Peering out more intent; chuckles.)*

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Reading his lips; I think they have given him a hurt . . . *(turning into the room)*.  
“Today?”. . . How long for? . . . That would be wonderful, Matt. Look; I have to go,  
we've got visitors arriving at any moment . . . Okay, will see you both later. Bye love.  
*(Ending the call. She turns to look out the window looking for Roger, who has  
disappeared from view.)* Now where's he gone?

*The door bell rings. Rose goes off stage to answer it. A door is heard opening.*

**ROSE:** *(off stage)* Good afternoon ladies. Please come in.

**EMMA:** *(off)* Thank you very much.

**ROSE:** *(off)* I expect you'll be interested to see what we've done?

*Georgia and Emma enters as the door is heard closing off stage.*

**GEORGIA:** Looks very different in here from when I last saw it.

**ROSE:** *(entering)* We were fortunate to employ good builders.

**EMMA:** *(looking around)* You have done such a lot to the old place my dear.

**GEORGIA:** *(looking about, not liking the minimalist look)* When are they coming  
back to finish it then?

**ROSE:** *(startled)* It's all finished.

**GEORGIA:** *(surprised)* Looks bare as a birds backside to me.

**EMMA:** And you decided on a modern interior?

**ROSE:** Yes. Clean and simple.

**GEORGIA:** Is the rest of your furniture in storage?

**ROSE:** No. This is all of it.

**GEORGIA:** Looks like a Doctors waiting room.

**ROSE:** *(nervously)* Please sit down. I'll go and find Roger. *(Turn to exit.)* Like any  
man, always disappears just when you want them. *(Exiting.)*

**EMMA:** *(going to the window and looking out)* I'm not sure such a modern design  
always works in a old house. What do you think this is, Victorian? *(Returns to sit on  
the sofa.)*

**GEORGIA:** *(sitting in a chair)* About then I'd say. *(Looks around.)* Where do you  
sweep the dust under? You always have to have things to sweep the dust under.

**EMMA:** The minimalist design allows for very quick cleaning.

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**GEORGIA:** *(trying to get comfy)* Either the bones in my backside are poking out, or this damn chair is uncomfortable. *(Still fidgeting and looking across to Emma.)* What's your arse like?

**EMMA:** Quite comfortable. Your discomfort is probably due to residing in that battered old arm chair of yours with loads of cushions.

**GEORGIA:** I see no virtue in getting a numb bum whilst watching television. *(Looking around.)* I do suppose they have some money?

**EMMA:** When I told Mrs Dunstable our rates, she was quite happy with them. *(Looking at the wall picture.)* I'm sure we won't have any problem with money here.

**GEORGIA:** *(still fidgeting)* You're probably right. *(Glancing at Emma.)* What's caught your eye?

**EMMA:** *(indicating)* The picture over there. Reminds me of someone.

**GEORGIA:** *(standing to look)* Would look better in a proper frame, that modern thing does nothing for an old photo. *(Crossing to look closer.)* Suppose it is a photo? *(Inspects it thoroughly. When Rose enters with Roger, she just gives a quick glance and returns her focus back onto the picture.)*

*Rose enters followed by Roger.*

**ROSE:** Found my husband at last. *(Gesturing to Emma.)* This is, Miss Percy.

*Roger goes and shakes the hand of Emma.*

**ROGER:** *(with a slight reservation)* Thank you for coming today.

**ROSE:** *(with a gesture to Georgia)* And, Miss Pilsworth.

*Georgia swings around and grabs Roger by the hand shaking it vigorously and not letting go. Roger shows a great worrying alarm.*

**GEORGIA:** Nice to meet you again. We met briefly the other day if you remember?

**ROGER:** *(looking at his hand, eyes wide)* Yes, I do remember. *(Firmly; not amused.)* How could I forget it!

**GEORGIA:** Good show. *(Letting go of his hand and turning quickly pointing to the picture.)* Is this creature something to do with you?

**ROGER:** *(a little unsure)* I understand a distant relation of mine.

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**GEORGIA:** Thought as much. It the eyes you know, has a shifty look about them. Of course I'm only an amateur on such things, but old Em's there is a real Wizard on such matters.

**ROSE:** *(interrupting)* I've put the kettle on. Is every one fine with tea, or would you prefer coffee?

**EMMA:** *(give beverage preference for Georgia and herself)* . . . would be very nice. Thank you.

*Rose gesturing to Roger to chat with the two ladies on exiting. Rose Exits.*

**ROGER:** *(gesturing to Georgia to sit)* Please, sit down.

*Georgia goes to sit in the previous chair she sat in, stops and hesitates before deciding to sit next to Emma.*

**GEORGIA:** *(to Emma, slightly aside)* I'll take your word for it that my backside will be more at home on this one.

**ROGER:** *(intrigued but cautious)* You were saying about Miss Percy being a Wizard? *(Sits in the arm chair that Georgia sat in.)*

**EMMA:** What George was implying Mr Dunstable. . .

**ROGER:** *(interrupting and puzzled)* George?

**GEORGIA:** *(with jollity)* Georgia, but everyone calls me George.

**ROGER:** *(a little taken aback)* Yes - I see. *(Returning to the conversation.)* You were explaining about being a Wizard?

**EMMA:** I'm quite adept at finding things out and solving mysteries. I'm almost ashamed to say, I'm very observant and miss very little.

**GEORGIA:** *(proudly)* Old Em's can sniff a lie out like a fart in a lift!

**ROGER:** *(a little shocked)* Oh! Amazing! *(Placing his left ankle on his right knee and rubs it.)*

*Rose enters with a tea tray laden with the tea and/or coffee, milk, sugar.*

**ROSE:** *(brightly)* Here we are. *(Placing down the tray.)* So, what have you been talking about?

**EMMA:** *(indicating)* We started discussing that photograph.

**ROSE:** It's a ancestor of Rogers. Although he doesn't like it much. *(Begins pour the*

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*Beverages.*) Milk for everyone?

*Georgia and Emma indicate their choice. During the following dialogue the tea is poured by Rose. Rose hands it to everyone and offers the sugar. Roger on receipt of his tea, puts his foot back down to the floor. Emma and Georgia hold onto their drinks. Rogers is placed on the coffee table. Rose leaves hers on the tray until instructed in the script.*

**EMMA:** And you don't know who it is? (*Gets up and moves to the picture, looking with interest.*)

**ROSE:** Not a clue. Could be his father, grandfather, or uncle Tom Cobbly.

**EMMA:** (*with great observation*) He is definitely somebody.

**ROGER:** (*a little sarcastic*) We all know it's somebody!

**EMMA:** You miss understand me. There's an air about him, not quite the usual man in the street if you know what I mean. Look closely at the faint background, you can see things. Interesting things, important things maybe? Most ordinary people are photographed against a plain or uninteresting background. (*Turning.*) Can't your relations give light on who he is, or might be?

**ROGER:** (*plainly*) Since about the age of seven I've had no relatives.

**ROSE:** There was; or is, your brother.

**GEORGIA:** (*keenly*) Was? Is? Something afoot there Em's.

**ROGER:** (*a little subdued*) I had a brother called Phillip. He was about a year older than me. He fell ill and was in bed for about ten days or so. Fever I think. Anyway, he was very weary and quite helpless. I said good night to him and the next morning he was gone.

**GEORGIA:** (*enthused*) Dead?

**ROGER:** (*mellow*) No, just gone! His bed was empty and all made tidy. I asked mother where he was and she just said, "he's gone away for a while." I took it to be hospital. Then, just about a week later she died.

**EMMA:** (*keen interest*) And what about Philip?

**ROGER:** (*calmly*) Never saw him again. I'm sure he died and mother couldn't tell me. After her death I lived with various families. I was about eleven when finally lived with the same family until I left school and decided to go it alone. (*With a little abruptness.*) And wherever I went, that picture came with me. (*With semi anger.*) And now - I'm sick of the thing.

**ROSE:** (*assuredly*) I still believe Phillip may suddenly turn up out of the blue.

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**EMMA:** It's quite possible. You see, after your mother's death, Philip would have been homed like yourself. In the nineteen fifties it was quite common for siblings to be separated when going into care. (*Moves across to the window to look again.*)

**GEORGIA:** Maybe Phillip went and lived with his father after your mother died, and your father couldn't cope with you as well.

**ROGER:** We didn't know who our father was.

**EMMA:** Have you tried to find out? Parish registers or record offices?

**ROSE:** (*in a slight defeated way*) Roger says it might unearth nasties which he'd sooner not know about. (*Looking at the tray.*) I forgot the plate of biscuits. (*Exiting to collect the plate.*)

**ROGER:** (*firmly*) Now, if you don't mind can we discuss the wilderness of our back garden.

**GEORGIA:** (*with enthused aggression*) Chop the lot down and start again. Better than piddling around trying to save things.

**ROGER:** (*quite stern*) Do what you like but the apple tree stays.

**GEORGIA:** (*abrupt*) The thing is riddled with Canker! (*Milder.*) Old Mrs Mortimer who was here before you asked for our opinion. It was plain to see it needed the chop! For one reason or another she never got to having the thing down. Then of course she sold the place to you folks.

**ROGER:** (*almost child like moody*) I don't care if it's riddled with canker, full of beetles or the apples have got maggots. The tree stays.

*During the following line. Rose enters with the plate of biscuits and offers to Emma, who declines.*

**EMMA:** (*turning back into the room; soothingly*) May I suggest a little judicial pruning to remove dead wood and any crowded or crossing branches. The next apple crop will benefit greatly from it and may help to prolong the life of the tree.

**ROGER:** (*resigning*) Well - that maybe. (*Firmer.*) But when you do, I want to be there watching. I don't want butch, I mean branches removed needlessly.

*Rose offers the biscuits to Georgia.*

**GEORGIA:** (*eagerly*) Ah, don't mind if I do. (*Takes the plate with gusto from Rose. Looking at the plate wide eyed.*) I say, smashing plate of goodies. Think we can do it justice don't you?

*Rose picks up her tea and moves toward the picture, peering at it.*

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**GEORGIA:** *(looking at her laden hands.)* Err - I say. Would someone care to take something from me? I seem to be in a spot.

*Roger rises and tries to take the plate of biscuits.*

**GEORGIA:** *(retracting the biscuit plate)* Not the goodies. *(Offers the cup.)* Take this. *(During the following dialogue, she can nibble at some not liking them and replace them before trying others. Also, some can be consumed if wished.)*

**ROGER:** *(grabbing two biscuits before he sits)* Will there be weeks and weeks of upheaval out there? *(To show some clumsiness, when trying to consume a biscuit. When putting it to his mouth could break and drop some bits down over him. As an additional option at a later point, the other biscuit, he dunks it letting it go into his tea and then try to hook it out with his finger.)*

**EMMA:** *(returns to her seat)* I wouldn't think so. A week, no more than two.

**ROSE:** *(remembering and turning)* Oh, Matt phoned. They're coming tonight and staying for a week. Says he has a lot of holiday allowance to use up and we could probably do with some help.

**ROGER:** I shan't say no to that.

**EMMA:** Is that your son?

**ROSE:** Yes. He and his wife Lucy are coming. *(Moving to a chair.)* Any extra help won't go amiss with that wilderness out there. *(Sits either on the arm or in the chair.)*

**EMMA:** Did I see him here the day you moved in?

**ROGER:** *(almost through gritted teeth)* I see our arrival wasn't unnoticed then?

**GEORGIA:** Em's got a nose like a ferret and eyes like a hawk. *(Up-beat.)* Not much she misses!

**ROGER:** *(a little aside)* Better watch what I do then.

**GEORGIA:** *(proudly affirming)* There's not much goes on without us knowing about it.

*Roger biting his lip a little perturbed at her comment.*

**ROSE:** Have you lived here long?

**EMMA:** About fifteen years or so now.

**GEORGIA:** Had an old aunt living here. Died and left the place to me. Super little pad for Em's and me, smallholding, chickens and things. Can put your name on a Turkey or Goose for Christmas if you like?

**ROGER:** *(hesitant, almost distant)* Err - well - thank you. We'll let you know.

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**GEORGIA:** We sell plenty of fresh veg all year round too.

**ROSE:** (*slightly curt*) Very enterprising of you. (*Inquiring.*) Did it take long to be accepted in the community as new comers?

**EMMA:** It took a little while.

**GEORGIA:** They knew who I was, being the niece of a well established resident. Although I very rarely came here.

**EMMA:** The locals were a little sceptical of us at first. We were not quite what they were expecting.

**GEORGIA:** (*abrupt*) Two women living together as wife and wife, civil partnership and all that stuff.

**ROSE:** Have you known each other long?

**EMMA:** Quite some years now.

**GEORGIA:** Seems like an age at times. And then, it's appears quite recent. Time's a funny old thing.

**ROSE:** And did you meet through horticulture?

**EMMA:** Oh, no. I was a secretary and George was working for a landscaping firm. Her firm had been employed to landscape the grounds of my work place. I saw her out of the window digging holes, humping great rocks, or swinging a sledge hammer. I felt such a warm fondness and I became besotted with her.

**ROSE:** (*pleasantly*) How nice. And you felt the same, Miss Pilsworth?

**GEORGE:** (*quite stern*) Not in the least. For me, it took several months to get real feelings for Em's. It was a slow growing affection for me, like the development of mould!

**ROSE:** (*a little taken aback*) I see. (*Brightly.*) Sometimes it's better that way, don't you think? Too many these days rush into relationships without letting a strong bond grow slowly and naturally between them.

**GEORGIA:** I couldn't agree more with you on that one.

**EMMA:** We gained much respect - accepted I suppose. Once I had solved a murder.

**ROGER:** (*alert; intrigued*) "A murder!"

**EMMA:** A burglar shot a woman by mistake. He had the gun just to frighten you see, not to

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actually use it. Whilst waving the thing around in a warning manner, he tripped and shot her. The Police beavered for days trying to find him, with no results of course. I soon got to the bottom of things and arranged to meet him. The Police arrived a few minutes later.

**GEORGIA:** (*happily proud*) Old Em's here was having a drink with the fellow in the local bar discussing world affairs. When the police arrived, she just calmly and quietly said, "here's your murderer Inspector."

**ROSE:** (*brightly*) Weren't you at all frightened?

**EMMA:** Not in the least. You see; he had no idea I systematically worked things out by putting two and two together and listening to a little local gossip of course. I just confirmed things by a few well thought out questions. Once I knew his identity it was just a matter of informing the Police.

**GEORGIA:** (*chuffed*) Amazing, isn't she? (*Gently inquiring.*) What brought you folks to live here?

**ROSE:** A pilgrimage I suppose. This was the house Roger lived in as a child. The house where his brother disappeared from and mother had died. Whilst we were looking for property elsewhere one day, we detoured and came via this village. Roger wanted to show me where he was born. To our amazement there was a for sale board outside this house and we decided to buy it.

**ROGER:** (*getting up; a little unhappy*) Beginning to think it's the worst thing we've done now. (*He takes the plate away from Georgia abruptly then moving to exit; quite stern.*) The past ought to be left where it is, in the past. (*Exit.*)

**GEORGIA:** Is your husband all right? He seems unsettled if you don't mind me saying. We had a dog like that once, Vet discovered he had worms.

**ROSE:** (*mortified*) Well I don't think Roger has worms! (*More worriedly.*) The old apple tree out there seems to have rattled him. I think it's stirring something deep seated in his memory.

**EMMA:** (*inquisitively*) You said his mother died here. Is she buried in the Churchyard?

**ROSE:** We've no idea where she is. And Roger tends to be a bit prickly on churning up the past.

**EMMA:** I assume this house would have belonged to the big estate at one time?

**ROSE:** It's not mentioned on the deeds and Pippin Court is quite a distance from here.

Unfortunately there is some haziness to the ownership prior to nineteen sixty. The original deeds were lost or destroyed or something, can't quite remember what our solicitor said now.

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