

early 40s and married. **FELIX** is histrionic and arch in a Lionel Barrymore/Sir Toby Belch sort of way. **MADGE** is flamboyant and wry in a Rosalind Russell smart-mouthed-gal-about-town sort of way.)

FELIX. Greetings and salutations!

MADGE. "What country, friend is this?"

FELIX. "It is Illyria, lady."

MADGE. "My brother, he is in Elysium. Perchance he is not drowned! What think you, Sailor?"

FELIX. "It is perchance that you yourself were saved." Ha!

(They all embrace and laugh.)

Merry Christmas! Here's to the revels. They shall be non-stop and very drunken. Do you realize that we've been on vacation for a mere two weeks and already I've missed you terribly.

SIMON. Thank you, Felix.

FELIX. Not you, you idiot. Aggie. I've been in love with her since I was uh oh, there's my wife.

MADGE. Keep talking, darling. It will sound so wonderful when it's repeated in court.

AGGIE. How was your time off?

MADGE. Luxurious. We went to a spa. Felix hated it.

FELIX. There was nothing to eat. Or drink! And we had to do some bizarre Buddhist exercise.

MADGE. It's called Yoga.

FELIX. I thought that was the white pudding stuff.

MADGE. That was yoghurt.

FELIX. It was like spoiled milk with the texture of bone marrow. It'll never catch on.

AGGIE. I can't get over this place, can you?

MADGE. He said it was something, but I had no idea.

AGGIE. Why would he build a castle on the Connecticut River?

FELIX. Why does Gillette do anything? The man is insane.

SIMON. I thought he was your best friend.

FELIX. And I repeat, the man is insane.

MADGE. He builds an awfully nice house, though. It would be excellent for a murder.

SIMON. Why a murder?

MADGE. It's isolated, there are loads of rooms for hiding the body, and it's on a river so you can drown people. What more do you want, an ax?

FELIX. *(nodding to the wall)* He has one.

SIMON. Two.

AGGIE. Three.

FELIX. As well as two broadswords, a garrote and a brace of pistols. If Connecticut is ever attacked by Rhode Island, this house will be the first line of defense.

(They laugh. At which moment, GILLETTE enters down the stairs, dressed for the evening.)

~~GILLETTE. And the snow fell gently upon the little stable. And there, in front of it, was a manger made of wood, and in the manger was a boy-child -~~

~~FELIX. And his name was Sherlock Holmes.~~

~~AGGIE. William!~~

~~MADGE. Willie-boy!~~

~~GILLETTE. Madge, dear! And Aggie!~~

~~AGGIE. How is your wife? Are you in pain?~~

~~GILLETTE. Oh, it's much better, thank you for asking.~~

~~Simon, how are you?~~

~~SIMON. It's good to see you, sir.~~

~~GILLETTE. I see you've all arrived safely, despite wind and weather.~~

~~SIMON. It's getting pretty dicey out there.~~

~~GILLETTE. "Blow winds," eh? "and crack your cheeks."~~

~~FELIX. "Spout / Till you have drunk blood at the pipes, drowned the cocks!"~~

~~GILLETTE. "But even then the morning cock crew loud
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away."~~

END