



SEPTIMUS Thank you, Jellaby. I was expecting to be locked out. What time is it?

JELLABY Half past five.

SEPTIMUS That is what I have. Well—what a bracing experience!

*He produces two pistols from inside his coat and places them on the table.*

The dawn, you know. Unexpectedly lively. Fishes, birds, frogs . . . rabbits . . . *(he produces a dead rabbit from inside his coat)* and very beautiful. If only it did not occur so early in the day. I have brought Lady Thomasina a rabbit. Will you take it?

JELLABY It's dead.

SEPTIMUS Yes. Lady Thomasina loves a rabbit pie.

*Jellaby takes the rabbit without enthusiasm. There is a little blood on it.*

JELLABY You were missed, Mr Hodge.

SEPTIMUS I decided to sleep last night in the boat-house. Did I see a carriage leaving the Park?

JELLABY Captain Brice's carriage, with Mr and Mrs Chater also.

SEPTIMUS Gone?!

JELLABY Yes, sir. And Lord Byron's horse was brought round at four o'clock.

SEPTIMUS Lord Byron too!

JELLABY Yes, sir. The house has been up and hopping.

SEPTIMUS But I have his rabbit pistols! What am I to do with his rabbit pistols?

JELLABY You were looked for in your room.

SEPTIMUS By whom?

JELLABY By her ladyship.

## JELLABY - SEPTIMUS

SEPTIMUS In my room?

JELLABY I will tell her ladyship you are returned.

*He starts to leave.*

SEPTIMUS Jellaby! Did Lord Byron leave a book for me?

JELLABY A book?

SEPTIMUS He had the loan of a book from me.

JELLABY His lordship left nothing in his room, sir, not a coin.

SEPTIMUS Oh. Well, I'm sure he would have left a coin if he'd had one. Jellaby—here is a half-guinea for you.

JELLABY Thank you very much, sir.

SEPTIMUS What has occurred?

JELLABY The servants are told nothing, sir.

SEPTIMUS Come, come, does a half-guinea buy nothing any more?

JELLABY *(Sighs)* Her ladyship encountered Mrs Chater during the night.

SEPTIMUS Where?

JELLABY On the threshold of Lord Byron's room.

SEPTIMUS Ah. Which one was leaving and which entering?

JELLABY Mrs Chater was leaving Lord Byron's room.

SEPTIMUS And where was Mr Chater?

JELLABY Mr Chater and Captain Brice were drinking cherry brandy. They had the footman to keep the fire up until three o'clock. There was a loud altercation upstairs, and—

*Lady Groom enters the room.*

~~LADY GROOM~~ Well, Mr Hodge.