

ALIBIS

SOLVEDD: (Continued.) There! Now everyone, act casual!

He leans nonchalantly against the legs. DOORBELL.

MONIQUE: (In false cheerfulness.) Coming! (Turns to others.) This ought to be good!

MONIQUE opens the door on THE STRANGER. She is a little old lady dressed in an excruciatingly bright dress. She wears long dangling earrings and a variety of artificial fruit atop a giant sombrero. She is clutching a colorful umbrella and a handbag. MONIQUE takes one look at her and screams in terror.

SOLVEDD: (Rushing forward.) Monique, what is it? Are you all right?

MONIQUE: I am sorry, monsieur. It was just an attack of bad taste. I will be all right.

STRANGER: (To Solvedd.) Ah, buenos noches, señor!

JACQUELINE: Oh, dear God, not **another** accent!

STRANGER: Me llamo Monica Sanches Marina de Corozona Ibuela Olando de Smith.

SOLVEDD: Pardon me?

HOPE: (Stepping forward.) Let me handle this, gentlemen.

JACQUELINE: You mean to tell us that **you** speak Spanish?

HOPE: My father used to own a small country near Bolivia. (Turns to *STRANGER and speaks slowly.*) Buenos noches, señora! Cuanto te ayuda?

STRANGER: Ah, hablas español! Bueno!? Donde este la jujera, por favor?

SOLVEDD: What did she say?

HOPE: I'm not quite sure. Either she has lost her dentures, or she wants someone to paint her house.

JACQUELINE: I thought that you understood Spanish?

HOPE: Well, not **fluently!** The Bolivians did more shooting than speaking.

SOLVEDD: Does this mean that this woman can't understand a word we're saying?

BY PETER KENNEDY

JACQUELINE: I wouldn't be surprised. None of us have understood a word **you've** said all evening.

SOLVEDD: We have to get her out of here. What if she finds out about Prima?

STRANGER: Prima? Prima esta aqui? Porque no esta en el telefono?

TANLEY: Really, doesn't anyone have the decency to tell this woman that Prima is dead?

SOLVEDD: (*Smiling at STRANGER, who is beaming happily.*) Why frighten the poor woman? She might think we're all a bunch of murderers. Besides, she obviously can't understand a word we're saying. (*Leans forward to STRANGER.*) Isn't that right, dear?

STRANGER: (*Takes banana off hat and mimes telephone.*) I call Prima with telefono. Ring ring!

HOPE: Telefono! That means "telephone."

JACQUELINE: How clever of you, darling. I'm sure that none of us could have figured that one out.

HOPE: This is the woman that I spoke to on the telephone earlier. I'd recognize that voice anywhere.

SANDY: What tipped you off? The sombrero?

SOLVEDD: You are positive that this is the woman that you spoke with on the phone, Miss Trite?

HOPE: I'd swear to it!

TANLEY: Even so, Solvedd, we still have absolutely no idea who this woman is.

MONIQUE: I think that I can answer that, monsieur. Just yesterday, Madam Donna dismissed Cookie.

SANDY: (*Hungrily.*) Cookie?

MONIQUE: Cookie. (*Pause.*) The cook.

EVERYONE: Ahhhhhh!

SOLVEDD: Go on, Monique.

MONIQUE: What I was going to say, monsieur, is that this woman may be the new cook.

SANDY: Good heavens, it's about time she got here. I'm starving!

SOLVEDD: That doesn't seem right. Surely if this woman was the new cook, she would have been here much earlier. We've been here for hours!

TANLEY: Perhaps she was held up by the storm.

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