

Audition Piece for Jellaby

(Jellaby enters the dawn-dark room with a lamp. He goes to the windows and looks out. He sees something. He returns to put the lamp on the table, and then opens one of the french windows and steps outside)

Jellaby: *(outside)* Mr Hodge!

(Septimus comes in, followed by Jellaby, who closes the garden door)

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 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.

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: (*sighing*) 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 keep the fire up until three o'clock. There was a loud altercation upstairs, and...

(Lady Croom enters the room)

