

John
Porterhouse
Barbara

RUN FOR YOUR WIFE

45

PORTERHOUSE. Now, you spoke to me earlier concerning your husband and we've done a check on all the nearby hospitals—

BARBARA. It's all right. I've contacted him.

PORTERHOUSE. Oh good, but there's still one or two things I'd like straightened out.

JOHN. (*Walks down with false nonchalance behind settee to DL.*) Hello, darling!

BARBARA. (*Amazed.*) Sweetheart! (*Hurries over to John and embraces him.*)

JOHN. Sorry I'm a bit late.

BARBARA. How on earth did you get here so quickly?

JOHN. No traffic.

BARBARA. Darling, your head!

JOHN. (*Chuckling.*) It's nothing.

BARBARA. John, this gentleman's from Streatham Police.

JOHN. (*Stops chuckling.*) Streatham Police?

PORTERHOUSE. Detective Sergeant Porterhouse.

JOHN. (*Crosses in front of settee to Porterhouse at DRC.*) Jolly good. Well, I'm back now, safe and sound. Fit as a fiddle. Thanks for calling.

PORTERHOUSE. If I could just clarify a couple of points, sir.

JOHN. (*Backs away and sits C of settee.*) Well, I'm not feeling too good, actually. Banged the old head, you know.

PORTERHOUSE. Yes. Handbag, wasn't it?

BARBARA. Handbag.

JOHN. (*Hesitates.*) Handbag?

PORTERHOUSE. (*Steps in to R. end of settee. Refers to notes.*) John Smith, Casualty Department, Wimbledon Hospital. Concussion and bruising. Cause of damage, lady's handbag.

BARBARA. (*Moves in and sits L of settee.*) Johnny!

(JOHN looks blankly at Barbara. HE then looks closely at Porterhouse's notebook.)

JOHN. *(Finally.)* What a coincidence!

PORTERHOUSE. Coincidence, sir?

JOHN. Two John Smiths. Both getting their heads bashed. On the same day.

BARBARA. This one's not you, then?

JOHN. No. Mind you. "John Smith" – common name. *(Refers to Porterhouse's notes.)* Well, you can see it's not me. This fellow got involved with an old lady, two muggers and a handbag. I banged my head on an old oak beam.

PORTERHOUSE. So you weren't in Wimbledon in the early hours of this morning—

JOHN. *(Broadly.)* No.

PORTERHOUSE. —driving your taxi?

JOHN. *(Goes to say "no" but stops.)* Taxi?

PORTERHOUSE. *(Refers to notes.)* Says here this bloke's occupation is a taxi driver.

BARBARA. No!

JOHN. *(Looks blankly at Barbara, then looks at notes and once again "studies" them. With amazement.)* What a coincidence! *(Suddenly.)* Ah!

PORTERHOUSE. What, sir?

JOHN. According to your notes, this Mr. Smith was released from Wimbledon Hospital at 8:30 a.m. this morning.

PORTERHOUSE. That's right.

JOHN. Couldn't be me then. I was in the country at that time. I rang you, didn't I, darling, from the farm.

BARBARA. Yes, there's something peculiar about that farm though.

(JOHN rises with BARBARA and breaks DLC.)