AIMEE (or AMY) MARTIN, late thirties. Co-owner, with her husband Chuck, of Martin Estates Wineries. The responsible one.

AIMEE: The dishes look absolutely delicious! Were you talking to Chuck? Is he Here?

DESIREE: Afraid not, darling. Just me, myself and I in here. By the way, I don't suppose you're expecting any rich eligible bachelors to your little do?

AIMEE: Still trolling for a wealthy husband, are you?

DESIREE: Darling, you make it sound so unbearably vulgar! I'm a woman still in her prime, you know, a poor widow, and I do have periods of terrible loneliness sometimes…

AIMEE: Not to mention periods of terrible debt. You do realize you have a shopping addiction problem.

DESIREE: I don't have a problem! A woman of my status deserves to present herself Well!

AIMEE: Whatever you say.

DESIREE: Besides, if you'd just take me on as a partner in the winery, I wouldn't –

AIMEE: (matter of fact) Not going to happen, Desiree. You didn't see fit to join Maman, Papa and me when we came here, you wanted to stay in France. You showed no interest in the winery whatsoever over the years until boom, one day your husband dies and all of a sudden family and the vineyard "mean everything to you"? It's too late now.

DESIREE: You were thinking about taking me on before, up until you married whats-his-name! I am your older sister!

AIMEE: I know. And I love you, despite your faults. But the only way you'd come into this winery is if I were to die. You might as well know now: by my will the winery will go to my youngest blood relative. If we don't have kids, and it's not looking like we will, it'll be yours. So if you stick around long enough you might have a chance to destroy it years from now.

DESIREE: But Aimee –

AIMEE: I keep telling you, go look for a job.

DESIREE DUFOUR, Aimee's extravagant older sister. The trollop.

DESIREE: Ah yes, little sister, you have done well for yourself. Quite well, indeed. You're so very proud of this Haut Prix, aren't you? But I'm sorry, darling, big award or not, this is still only a piddling family winery. (reading the bottle of wine) "Martin Estates, Aimee and Chuck Martin, co-proprietors". Maman and Papa must have been rolling over in their graves when you let that imbecile of a husband of yours in on the business! (coos to the bottle:) How many more awards you could have won if Maman and Papa had left the winery to me! And why the hell didn't they, anyway?

(AIMEE enters, DESIREE quickly puts down the bottle.)

AIMEE: The dishes look absolutely delicious! Were you talking to Chuck? Is he Here?

DESIREE: Afraid not, darling. Just me, myself and I in here. By the way, I don't suppose you're expecting any rich eligible bachelors to your little do?

AIMEE: Still trolling for a wealthy husband, are you?

DESIREE: Darling, you make it sound so unbearably vulgar! I'm a woman still in her prime, you know, a poor widow, and I do have periods of terrible loneliness sometimes…

AIMEE: Not to mention periods of terrible debt. You do realize you have a shopping addiction problem.

DESIREE: I don't have a problem! A woman of my status deserves to present herself Well!

AIMEE: Whatever you say.

DESIREE: Besides, if you'd just take me on as a partner in the winery, I wouldn't –

AIMEE: (matter of fact) Not going to happen, Desiree. You didn't see fit to join Maman, Papa and me when we came here, you wanted to stay in France. You showed no interest in the winery whatsoever over the years until boom, one day your husband dies and all of a sudden family and the vineyard "mean everything to you"? It's too late now.

DESIREE: You were thinking about taking me on before, up until you married whats-his-name! I am your older sister!

AIMEE: I know. And I love you, despite your faults. But the only way you'd come into this winery is if I were to die. You might as well know now: by my will the winery will go to my youngest blood relative. If we don't have kids, and it's not looking like we will, it'll be yours. So if you stick around long enough you might have a chance to destroy it years from now.

DESIREE: But Aimee –

BEATRICE BUTLER, Aimee's middle-aged housekeeper. The pessimist.

BUTLER: For someone else again?

MAC: Someone he'd met at the golf club, I think it was.

CELIA: No. That can't be.

DESIREE: The man's a cliche.

BUTLER: Celia, Celia... He was constantly playing around on Aimee, why do you think I was always telling you to stay away from him? Your poor mother would have killed me if she'd known. I have failed you.

CELIA: That may have been the case in the past. But this time it was real, he said So!

(there is a thunderclap)

DAMON: Excuse my interruption, but you said you'd been with Mr. Martin for the last three months? I'm sorry to tell you this, but he – let's say, made a pass at my business partner just two weeks ago.

CELIA: What?!

DAMON: If I hadn't walked in on them I'm not sure what would have happened. I told her to press charges but she refused.

CELIA: All this -- it's just not possible. He –

BUTLER: I am sorry you've had to go through this, Celia, but maybe in time you'll be able to look at this as another bad experience and try to move on with your Life.

CELIA: Not without ... (she bursts into tears and moves away)

DAMON: I'm sorry but I thought she should know the truth.

BUTLER: Life deals us some cruel blows; she might as well get used to it.
(the lights flicker a couple of times)

DAMON CHANDLER, co-owner of Double D Catering. The hunk.

AIMEE: How did it go, Damon?

DAMON: There wasn't much to say. I only arrived at the reception about a half hour before it was supposed to begin. Although he was very interested in my standing at the IPSC events.

CELIA: What's that?

BUTLER: The International Practical Shooting Confederation. Damon is a champion Shot.

DESIREE: Isn't that telling.

DAMON: But I generally leave my gun at the club.

MAC: And how do you just happen to know that, Butler?

AIMEE: Butler is a certified instructor with the Canadian Firearms Institute.

ANTOINE: You, too, have a gun? What is it with this country?

MAC: Did he ask you about your relationship with Chuck?

DAMON: Darla and I just cater here, that's all. More and more often lately, it's true.

AIMEE: Your food's so good. (to the others) We offered them a contract to supply appetizers for all our wine tasting events.

DAMON: Until Chuck reneged.

AIMEE: What!

DAMON: He didn't tell you?

JORDAN: Figures.

DAMON: He promised our company that catering contract, so based on that business we were finally able to update our kitchen and buy some new equipment. Then the day Darla and I went in to sign the contract Chuck said he'd changed his mind.

AIMEE: That's terrible.

DAMON: On top of that, he's been spreading it around that the food we served at the Zimmerman stag gave him food poisoning. We've lost three jobs that we know of because of that lie.

MAC: I heard he was completely plastered at that stag.

DAMON: He was. And that's what made him sick, not our food. And now we've lost all that business! I could have killed the guy. (dramatic music)

AIMEE: (a little weakly) I'll try to find a way to make it up to you both.

DAMON: Thanks. We'll –

(Suddenly all the lights go out. There is a loud bang, a shriek. A few panicky "What happened?" comments; then the lights flicker and come back up. AIMEE is slumped in an armchair)

JORDAN RENDELL, winemaker at Martin Estates (m or f). The whiner (no pun intended).

JORDAN: This looks marvellous, Aimee. Shall I start bringing up the wines?

AIMEE: Let's leave the award winner in the cellar fridge until the very last minute. I want it to be icy cold when the guests arrive.

JORDAN: Alright. Chuck back yet?

AIMEE: Not yet. I tried his cell but it goes to voice mail. He must have got stuck in Traffic.

JORDAN: (not believing it) Yeah. Of course.

AIMEE: Well where else would he be?

JORDAN: Anywhere else, if there's work to be done Knowing him he'll come sashaying in just as people are arriving and claim credit for it all.

AIMEE: Jordan.

JORDAN: Sorry.

AIMEE: You really don't like him, do you? Why not?

JORDAN: Why not? Oh, let me count the ways. He's lazy. He's arrogant. He's condescending: I'm the winemaker here but he seems to think he has a right to interfere in the process at every turn.

AIMEE: He's trying to learn. He didn't grow up in the vineyards like I did and he doesn't have your education. He's only been in the business the three years we've been married. Can't you cut him some slack?

JORDAN: Learning means asking questions and listening, not making disastrous decisions without consulting anyone. His constant interference with the winemaking process is costing us money! Remember when he ordered the wrong screwcaps for the Pinot Noir? That's not his job!

AIMEE: Granted, his strength isn't in the winemaking –

JORDAN: So he should keep his nose out of it!

ANTOINE DUMAURIER, a snobby wine critic from France: scarf, beret and glasses and French accent. The mystery man.

ANTOINE: And when did Dufour Estates become Martin Estates?

AIMEE: When I got married three years ago I agreed to change the name to include my husband.

ANTOINE: It is a big operation? And you operate it alone? No family members are Included?

DESIREE: Good question!

AIMEE: Good heavens, no one can operate a winery alone, as you must well know. We're not huge but I have the best winemaker in the peninsula and a devoted staff that's always looking for ways to make our wine the best. I couldn't be luckier.

ANTOINE: You must feel very honoured to win such a prestigious prize, a prize that has only been awarded twice outside of France.

AIMEE: Naturally. I always had confidence in our product but it is nice to have that confirmed by an objective panel.

ANTOINE: (aside) Objective -- hah!

DESIREE: You're not taking any notes, Monsieur DuMaurier. If you are recording this interview with my sister you should have said so.

ANTOINE: (flustered) I -- oui, I have a very good memoire. I will not forget.

(JORDAN enters with a second case of wine, deposits it.)

AIMEE: Now I'm afraid I must finish getting ready for my guests, Monsieur DuMaurier. Please feel free to join us for the reception and tasting.

ANTOINE: Merci beaucoup. I would not miss it.

CELIA NESBO, early twenties, niece of Beatrice Butler. The ingenue.

BUTLER: What in heaven's name is up? You have to tell me. (CELIA begins to tear up) Why did you want to get hold of Mr. Martin so badly?

CELIA: Because I'm pregnant! (thunderclap)

BUTLER: Pregnant!

CELIA: And I thought once he knew, he'd finally leave his "cash cow", as he called her, and be with me forever.

AIMEE: Oh my god.

DESIREE: He didn't know before?

CELIA: I told him on Monday that I thought I might be and I was going to do a test.

BUTLER: What was his reaction?

CELIA: He didn't believe me, I think he thought I was making it up. I was so mad, I could have killed him! (dramatic music) I had to let him know it was true so I texted him. I threatened to tell his wife. I thought maybe now he'd leave her, with a baby in the picture.

MAC: But he never answered.

ALEX: Would you? If you were in his situation and never paid attention to anyone else's needs but your own?

BUTLER: So now…

CELIA: My baby's father is dead and I don't know what to do. (BUTLER goes to comfort her)

DESIREE: Good lord.

BUTLER: Celia, Celia... it's okay. We'll deal with this.

CELIA: It's just all so – public. I feel so .....

BUTLER: Come here, pet. (BUTLER draws her to a corner chair where they continue to speak quietly)

MACKENZIE JAMES (MAC), business manager of Martin Estates (m or f). The upbeat one.

AIMEE: Yeah... But when you're a busy businesswoman you don't always have as much time to spend with your husband as you'd like. I was trying to figure out ways to slow down a little, maybe even go away on a holiday together. And as I said, maybe get some counselling. This is a nightmare. (a beat; she looks around) Is there anything else I should know? Might as well get it all over with.

MAC: I'm not sure this is the time, Aimee.

AIMEE: Oh no. What now? (MAC is silent) Come on, there's something else, isn't there? I promise not to pass out again.

MAC: Well.... (decides) Chuck had set up a company account and we had joint signing authority. Wednesday I got a call from the bank. He had been in to request his name be taken off the acount as signatory. The bank was calling me for my approval.

AIMEE: So?

MAC: So I raced down there to find out what the hell was going on. Aimee, Tuesday Chuck transferred one hundred and fifty thousand dollars of the balance to his personal account. He was embezzling: siphoning off a few thousand dollars a month into this supposedly business account that he put my name onto as well. Then he took that huge amount out and left my name on the account. The auditors are due next month and I'll be the one left holding the bag -- and heading to prison!

AIMEE: Oh my god.

MAC: I've never been so angry in my life. I could have killed him! (dramatic music. ALEX enters, discreetly)

ANTOINE: So did you? I am sure you must own a gun as well.

MAC: Don't be ridiculous. I'm not someone who would commit murder.

ANTOINE: But you do have a gun, n'est-ce pas?

MAC: A 9 mm, like Jordan. For the raccoons in my attic.

ALEX DOYLE, rival winery owner with designs on Aimee. The Don Juan.

ALEX: Hi, Mac.

MAC: Alex. Come in.

ALEX: Thanks. No one here yet, I guess. (watching MAC work) You exchanging your business manager title for caterer or something?

MAC: Just helping out. And what's your excuse for being early?

ALEX: It's easy when you're right next door.

MAC: You seem to be here an awful lot.

ALEX: So I'm neighbourly. Sue me. (a beat) You don't like me, do you? Why Not?

(AIMEE enters from the kitchen; ALEX makes himself unnoticeable)

AIMEE: Oh hi, Mac. (ALEX quietly moves over to her, taps her on the shoulder) Oh! (he presents her with the roses)

ALEX: (singing to “Happy Birthday”) Congratulations to you, congratulations to you, Congratulations dear Aimee…

AIMEE: Alex! What are you doing here already? And what are those for?

ALEX: Beautiful flowers for a beautiful lady. For you, of course, to congratulate you on the award.

AIMEE: Oh, Alex, you shouldn’t have!

ALEX: It is customary to give the donor a kiss.

DETECTIVE JULES CHRISTIE, officer investigating the death (m or f). The keen-eyed detective: trench coat and fedora.

(CHRISTIE enters, followed by CELIA)

CHRISTIE: The fatal wound was inflicted by a 9 mm pistol. Do any of you possess or have access to that calibre of weapon?

DESIREE: That's what mine is!

ALEX: And mine.

JORDAN & MAC: Mine as well.

BUTLER: That is the calibre of my private gun.

DAMON: Mine, too.

CELIA: Me too.

ANTOINE: "Et tu, Celia?"

CELIA: I used to have a stalker.

CHRISTIE: (bringing out a pistol in a plastic evidence bag) You're not exactly helping me narrow down the suspects. Let me put it this way: does anyone recognize this? (all look at it and give responses in the negative.) This 9 mm pistol was found not far from the body, slightly hidden under a vat. What about you, Mrs. Martin, can you identify it?

AIMEE: I think it's Chuck's. Was it manufactured in Florida?

(CHRISTIE examines the pistol)

CHRISTIE: Yes.

AIMEE: Then it must be his. He said he bought it in Miami.

DESIREE: Are there any fingerprints on it?

CHRISTIE: Only one set. Forensics will confirm but for the moment we are presuming they are Mr. Martin's.

MAC: A murderer wouldn't leave a weapon behind, would he?

CHRISTIE: Or she. Unlikely -- unless they were interrupted.

JORDAN: But if there's only one set of prints --?

CHRISTIE: You've all watched detective shows, I'm sure you know murderers can wear gloves. But again I need to stress, we are drawing no definite conclusions yet. Monsieur DuMaurier, I'd like to speak with you know.

ANTOINE: Finalement! (he exits with CHRISTIE)

MS/MR X, various roles: Constable, Coroner, Musician, Journalist, (m or f). Dressed completely in black, only adding small costume items such as a hat to differentiate each role. It should be extremely obvious it is the same actor every time.

BUTLER: Yes?

MUSICIAN X: I'm Lee Nohnmee, from "Jazzed Up". We're here to set up for the Reception?

BUTLER: I'm afraid it has been cancelled; there's been an accident.

MUSICIAN X: An accident? Is Mrs. Martin alright?

(AIMEE approaches)

AIMEE: I'm fine, Lee. I'm really sorry you didn't get any notice but it just happened. Send my business manager your invoice, we'll make sure all of you are paid, anyway.

MUSICIAN X: I'm so sorry. If you decide to reschedule at some point, give us a call; you have my card.

AIMEE: Thank you.

ALEX: It's still -- ? (he is interrupted by a thunderclap. "MUSICIAN X" gives him a dirty look.)

AIMEE: Good-bye.

MUSICIAN X: Good-bye. (exits)