

IF IT QUACKS LIKE A DUCK (2)

Plot Summary - Chapter by Chapter Breakdown

Notes: We have left several details of this story vague, so you can give them a personal touch. You can tailor this outline in several of the following ways to make it unique, without changing the main plot. 1) Detective Inspector David Adrian may be involved romantically with Sergeant Sylvia Hunter. 2) The story may be set in any seaside town, village or community of your choice. 3) Constables Xavier and Durable may assume a larger role in the story. 4) If using another poison than ricin, Robert Lucas could still be alive when Inspector Adrian arrives on the scene. 5) Dr. Dallier may have seen through Ariadne's pretense to be a schizophrenic, assuming two different personalities when convenient.

Part One - Rising Tension

Chapter One

CH 1/ Scene 1 – Detective Inspector David Adrian lives in Gorey on the Isle of Jersey. There is not much happening in the small seaside community. His sergeant, Sylvia Hunter, assists him in the conduct of all investigations. She is a “smart cookie”, according to her boss. The two constables who work at the police station are keen to impress the inspector. Given that he was used to living at the *White House Inn* since his arrival on the island, Mrs. Harris, the owner, has offered him to stay on as one of her permanent lodgers. The guests and lodgers are mostly retired folks who prefer living at the *White House* to living at the local retirement home.

CH 1/ Scene 2 – David Adrian finds the people of Gorey friendly and attentive to their wellbeing. Most of them have taken up a sport or take long walks along the village shores. The Castle of Orgueil, standing proud on the island's east promontory, is the subject of numerous tourists' visits. It is an enormous feudal fortress constructed in the Middle Ages, which Inspector Adrian has taken the time to visit on a few occasions since his arrival on the island. He finds the old edifice and its grounds inspiring in many respects. During one of these visits, early one morning, he hears someone cry out. He thought the scream came from the small garden overlooking the beach and the Gorey community below the fortress's walls.

CH 1/ Scene 3 – When he reaches the garden in question, he finds a young woman dressed in a bridal gown standing over a man dressed in a morning suit. Inspector Adrian assumes the man to be the groom. The young bride turns to the inspector and throws herself in his arms. She is obviously distraught. He pushes her back gently and goes down on his knees to ascertain whether the man is alive or dead. When he returns his gaze to the woman, she is gone. She has presumably disappeared down the passage leading to the garden and down the stairs toward the path that will get her back to the village.

CH 1/ Scene 4 – Not wanting to chase her through the maze of corridors and possible hiding places furnishing the castle and grounds, Adrian takes his cell phone out of his jacket pocket and calls his sergeant, Sylvia Hunter, at home. Sylvia sounds as if she is still asleep when she answers the phone. As soon as she hears Adrian's voice, she sits up and listens. Adrian asks her to get Dr. Ross to come to the castle's garden and to have the forensic team standing by. A man has *died suddenly* on the morning after his wedding. His bride has fled the scene.

CH 1/ Scene 5 – Upon examining the content of the man's pocket, Adrian pulls out his drivers' license and discovers that Mr. Robert Lucas was a resident of Gorey at the time of his death. He was thirty years old. Adrian shakes his head. As he glances over the wall bordering the garden, he sees the bride running down the path leading to the village below the castle.

Chapter Two

CH 2/ Scene 1 – When Dr. Ross, ME, reaches the gardens, he is a bit out of breath. It's a long way up from the roadside to where Adrian is standing over the body. Dr. Ross kneels down by the body and shakes his head. He tells Adrian this man was truly too young to die so abruptly. As for the time of death,

there is no question; the man died in the last half-hour. What killed him? Dr. Ross would have to perform an autopsy before being sure, but he believes Robert Lucas died of a massive heart attack.

CH 2/ Scene 2 – Detective Inspector Adrian arrives at the station that morning to find his two constables deliberating on the sort of coffee they should order for their “boss”. Adrian has to smile. He usually drinks his coffee at the *White House* before leaving for work. This morning he did not have a chance to have breakfast yet. He tells them that black with a dash of cream will do the trick. Constable Durable brings the inspector’s coffee and tells him that he checked with the on-line marriage registry and found out that Robert Lucas and Ariadne LaJoie were in fact married yesterday. The reception was held at the local hotel-restaurant. About fifty people attended the ceremony and enjoyed the reception until the wee hours of the morning, when the bride and groom disappeared, supposedly to their honeymoon suite in the hotel.

CH 2/ Scene 3 – As soon as Sergeant Sylvia Hunter arrives at the station, Adrian asks her to accompany him to the hotel where the wedding reception took place and where they should find the bride in the honeymoon suite. The hotel is quiet at this hour of the morning. Everyone is asleep, except for the night watchman. Inspector Adrian asks the man if he has seen the bride go back to her suite in the last half-an-hour. The watchman says that no one has come by the desk in the last three hours at least. The last of the wedding party left around two in the morning. After that everything returned to normal.

CH 2/ Scene 4 – When the watchman let the inspector and his sergeant into the ballroom where the reception took place, Adrian was glad to see that it had not been cleared or cleaned yet. He goes directly to the head table where the bride and groom were sitting. There are only liquor glasses, a few dessert plates and empty coffee cups left on the table. He takes some of the evidence bags he had grabbed at the station before leaving and puts the groom’s coffee cup in one of the bags as well as his liquor glass. Sergeant Hunter, meanwhile, gathers all the name cards from the head table and a bag of candied almonds that has been left in front of the groom’s place setting. She bags the almonds and gathers the other bags from Adrian.

CH 2/ Scene 5 – Next they go up to the honeymoon suite. The room is empty. The bed has not been slept in. Everything is intact. Adrian concludes that no one has been in this room since it was readied for the bride and groom the evening before. The champagne bottle is still standing in the ice bucket; the bowl of strawberries is still untouched. Going to the wardrobe and bathroom, Sergeant Hunter notices that the bride and groom’s clothes or luggage are not in the room. It is as if the couple never intended to spend the night in this suite.

Chapter Three

CH 3/ Scene 1 – When Dr. Ross comes up with his preliminary autopsy report it is obvious that he is not happy. He is puzzled. He tells Inspector Adrian that Robert Lucas did in fact die of a massive heart attack, but what could have caused the attack is not known. Robert Lucas was a healthy young man. His heart was in perfect condition. He was not overweight. The alcohol level in his blood was slightly elevated, which is normal for a groom who just had dinner with his bride, family and friends during his wedding reception. The heart attack must have been provoked by a “foreign substance” introduced to the blood stream. Dr. Ross says that he will know better when the “tox” report comes back from the lab.

CH 3/ Scene 2 – Meanwhile, Sergeant Sylvia Hunter is looking for the bride, Ariadne LaJoie – Mrs. Lucas now. Sgt. Hunter found out that Ariadne lived with her family in Calais, France, before being engaged to Robert. Her parents attended the ceremony and reception and as coincidence would have it, they had opted to staying at the *White House Inn* instead of the hotel where the reception had been held. Sgt. Hunter makes her way to the *White House* and soon finds Mr. and Mrs. LaJoie enjoying one of Mrs. Harris’s famous breakfasts on the terrace of the hotel. Ariadne is not with them.

CH 3/ Scene 3 – When Sgt. Hunter informs the parents of their son-in-law’s sudden death and of their daughter’s disappearance, they are altogether amazed and shocked. Mrs. LaJoie can’t think where her daughter would have gone. “Surely not back to Calais,” she concludes. Ariadne had left her apartment in Calais soon after she was engaged to Robert. When asked where the couple lived prior to their wedding, Mr. LaJoie tells Hunter that he had leased a property for the two of them on the hillside overlooking the

beach. Mrs. LaJoie confirms that Robert and Ariadne had some luggage with them when they arrived at the hotel before the wedding. Mrs. LaJoie does not know where they intended to spend their honeymoon.

CH 3/ Scene 4 – When Sgt. Hunter calls Inspector Adrian and tells him that Ariadne is not at the apartment her father had leased for them, and that Mrs. LaJoie could not tell her where the newlyweds intended to spend their honeymoon, Adrian decides to have a look at the apartment's address mentioned on Robert's drivers' license. Robert's parents died in a car accident in France years before. The young man came to the Isle of Jersey to get away from painful memories. Adrian is doubtful he will find much at Robert's former residence, but he's going to have a look anyway.

Part Two - Main Action

Chapter Four

CH 4/ Scene 1 – Inspector Adrian makes his way to Robert Lucas's former residence. The afternoon is hot and clammy. He stops at the grocers and buys an orange to quench his thirst. While in the shop he asks the owner if he knows the young man on the photograph he shows him. The grocer shakes his head, but then says that he indeed knew Robert for a few years. He was a good man. He is sorry that he died. No, he did not know where he lived, but it must have been close to his shop because Robert would always stop by on his way home after work.

CH 4/ Scene 2 – When Adrian reaches Robert's apartment, he rings the intercom. The flat has been re-let since Robert left. The young woman who opens the door on the second floor is none other than Robert's bride. Inspector Adrian pushes the door open when Ariadne did not want to let him in. She steps back as Adrian closes the door behind him. He does not understand why Ariadne should pull such a stunt. Her husband just died and she takes refuge in his old apartment – what is this? Ariadne looks terrified more than anything else. She tells Adrian that she does not remember what happened. After leaving the reception it's all a blank.

CH 4/ Scene 3 – Adrian does not believe a word of it. He asks if she is renting the old flat herself. Yes, she is because it's closer to her place of work. She is an accountant and sometimes pulls some late nights at her employer's office. Adrian tells her that she has to accompany him to the station where she'll need to make a formal statement. When he tells her that her parents are worried about her and it would be good to give them a call, Ariadne tells the inspector that she has no parents. She always lived in foster homes since she was five. Adrian does not show his utter bafflement but is starting to wonder if the young woman is running on all cylinders.

CH 4/ Scene 4 – When Ariadne arrives at the police station with Adrian, her parents are waiting for her. She stares at them blankly. Mr. and Mrs. LaJoie ask their daughter why she ran away. Ariadne tells Adrian that she does not know these people. Why should she tell them anything? Adrian leads the young woman away to an interview room where Sgt. Hunter will keep her company while the inspector interviews the parents. He asks them if Ariadne was adopted or if she lived in foster homes since she was five years old. They answer in unison that no, their daughter was born in Calais and has lived most of her life with them.

CH 4/ Scene 5 – In the interim, Dr. Ross comes back to the station and wants a word with Adrian. The latter would like to have Dr. Ross wait until he's finished interviewing Ariadne, but Dr. Ross tells him, he will want to hear what he has to say before he goes to the interview room.

Chapter 5

CH 5/ Scene 1 – Once he's heard what Dr. Ross had to say, Adrian frowns and says, "So murder it is then, Doctor?" Dr. Ross smiles and says: "If it quacks like a duck, walks like a duck, it must be a duck," which is one of Adrian's favorite dictums. Adrian then asks how he found out Robert Lucas was poisoned. Dr. Ross tells him that ricin is a fast-acting poison which, in this case, was administered using the pin of his lapel flower. "But how did you find out?" Adrian asks. "I found a pin needle mark at the base of his neck and the vial that used to contain the poison in the victim's fob pocket." This is not only murder but pre-meditated murder. And his prime suspect is apparently suffering from amnesia.

CH 5/ Scene 2 – Before he starts interviewing Ariadne, Adrian asks Sgt. Hunter to find Dr. Dallier, the local psychiatrist and ask him when he could interview Ariadne. Adrian is not comfortable with this amnesia business. He saw how distraught the young woman was when he first found her in the castle's gardens. He has a hard time believing this sudden change in her behavior.

CH 5/ Scene 3 – Ariadne repeats her previous statement. She does not remember Robert and her getting married. She does not remember these people in the reception area. She does not believe them to be her parents. Yes, she bought a bridal gown a month ago. She and Robert will be married in a month from today. No, she does not remember meeting the inspector in the castle's gardens. The interview is nearly concluded when suddenly Ariadne burst out in a loud scream, puts her hands to her face and says that she wants to see her husband. That someone must have killed him.

CH 5/ Scene 4 – When things quiet down, Ariadne is taken to the cell in the basement of the station where she will wait for Dr. Dallier's arrival. Adrian is forced to believe that the young woman suffers from a personality disorder. She may have killed her husband, not knowing she did it. Which proposition does not sit well with Sgt. Hunter. Dr. Ross has left his autopsy report on the inspector's desk. Hunter picks it up and reads it. She knows the type of boutonniere Dr. Ross is describing. The tip of the flower is inserted in a vial containing a small amount of water and preservative, which maintain the flower's freshness for several hours. The vial is sealed around the stem so the liquid cannot escape and drip onto the suit jacket. But what intrigues the sergeant is the fact that Dr. Ross found the vial in the fob pocket.

CH 5/ Scene 5 – Dr. Dallier interviews Ariadne at length and concludes that she is suffering from a mild personality disorder probably exacerbated by her husband's death. She needs to enter psychiatric care immediately – for observation only – while the investigation is continuing. He will talk to the parents of the bride and report to Inspector Adrian later.

CH 5/ Scene 6 – Meanwhile, Hunter and Adrian need to find out when the poison was administered. Was the dose in the boutonniere sufficient to kill the man? Was there some trace of the poison found in the blood? Could someone else have poisoned him with the liquor or coffee? All those are questions that need to be answered. For some odd reason, Adrian does not believe Ariadne could have killed her husband. What would be her motive?

CH 5/ Scene 7 – When Constable Durable and Xavier delve into Ariadne's background; they find out that she was the young driver who killed Robert's parents in France. She was only sixteen at the time and the court's records had been sealed.

Part Three - Resolution

Chapter Six

CH 6/ Scene 1 – With this new information in hand, Adrian decides to interview Mr. and Mrs. LaJoie again. They tell him that yes, their daughter made a grave mistake but that they never imagined Robert Lucas being the son of these poor people. Adrian wonders if Robert revealed who he was after the wedding and perhaps was intending to do away with Ariadne during their honeymoon. Maybe his plan backfired.

CH 6/ Scene 2 – When Adrian receives Dr. Dallier's interim report, he has to accept the facts – Ariadne is still afraid of anyone finding out about her driving accident. She, herself, did not know Robert's parents were the victims. However, when Ariadne's other personality surfaces, she confesses to having killed those people in the car and to have taken a certain pleasure in poisoning Robert with ricin. No one would ever know how he really died....

CH 6/ Scene 3 – Adrian is very sad to learn of Ariadne's state of mind. She will be interned in the psychiatric hospital, probably for life, and her "real" self will never know why. On the other hand, there is still something nagging at the back of his mind. "Why was the vial found in the fob pocket?" Besides, why

would someone of Ariadne's mental disposition bother with replacing the vial in the fob pocket? Why not just discarding it once she had used the flower and pin? And where is the actual boutonniere and pin?

CH 6/ Scene 4 – Adrian is far from being satisfied with Dr. Dallier's explanation. He wants to find the flower and its pin. But now, three days after the murder, chances are that he or the forensic team will never find them. Yet, they did. The chief forensic officer came back to the station the next morning bringing with him a yellow rose with its pin still protruding from the side of its stem. However, the pin does not show any trace of ricin.

CH 6/ Scene 5 – This puts another slant on the entire investigation. Adrian returns to the morgue and has a chat with Dr. Ross. The latter shows him the pin prick at the base of Robert's corpse. There's no doubt in the ME's mind that ricin is the poison that caused the heart attack, which ultimately killed the young man. There's no escaping the conclusion, Ariadne was alone with her husband in the castle's garden – or was she? – and she must have pricked his neck with the flower pin.

CH 6/ Scene 6 – Adrian returns to the station and asks Sgt. Hunter to accompany him to the *White House Inn* where he wants to interview Ariadne's parents again. They are packing their suitcases when the two of them get there. They apparently want to return to Calais as soon as possible to engage a solicitor friend of theirs to defend their daughter at her trial. They can't believe this rigmarole about a personality disorder. Ariadne has always been a well-balance young lady. The car accident marked her, of course, but from there to say that she killed her husband, is ridiculous.

CH 6/ Scene 7 – Adrian and Hunter listen to the parents patiently and then Adrian tells Mr. LaJoie that he should never have left the vial of ricin in the fob pocket of his son-in-law. His finger prints are on it. Besides which, the French police found the ricin solution in his garden shed. Adrian tells Mr. LaJoie that he probably used his own flower and pin and that's the reason why they could not find the lethal boutonniere in the garden. Why has he kill Robert Lucas, that's what Adrian wants to know.

CH 6/ Scene 8 – Refusing to speak without his attorney present, Adrian and Hunter have to wait until the next ferry brings the lawyer to the station to find out why a father would commit murder. Finally, Mr. LaJoie tells the inspector that his son-in-law was not good enough for his daughter. He was a no-good-for-anything young fellow. He already borrowed money for their honeymoon and he even had to pay for their apartment. "He was a leech, I tell you. She's much better off without him."

CH 6/ Scene 9 – Months later, during her father's trial, Ariadne admitted under oath that she saw her father commit the crime and she could not bring herself to let him pay for it. That's the reason why she faked her personality disorder.

(###)