

VERA: *(Incisively.)* I think you are both behaving like a pair of children.

(They look at her rather sheepishly.)

LOMBARD. Sorry, teacher.

(VERA speaks scornfully to BLORE.)

VERA. Of course, Captain Lombard isn't the unknown. The Unknown Owen is Armstrong – and I'll tell you one very good proof of it.

BLORE. Oh, what?

VERA. Think of the rhyme.

“Four little soldier boys – going out to sea. A red herring swallowed one, and then there were three.”

Don't you see the subtlety of it? A red herring? That's Armstrong's pretended suicide, but it's only a red herring – so really he isn't dead!

BLORE. That's very ingenious.

VERA. To my mind, it's absolute proof. You see, it's all mad because he's mad. He takes a queer, childish, crazy pleasure in sticking to the rhyme and making everything happen in that way. Dressing up the Judge, killing Rogers when he was chopping sticks; using a hypodermic needle on Miss Brent, when he might just as well have drugged her. He's got to make it all fit in.

BLORE. And that might give us a pointer. Where do we go from here? **Stop**

(BLORE goes to mantelpiece and reads:)

“Three little soldier boys walking in the zoo. A big bear hugged one and then there were two.”

He'll have a job with that one. There's no zoo on this island!

(He laughs but it is cut short as he sees the big bear rug on which he is standing. He edges off the rug and turns to LOMBARD.)

I say, Captain Lombard, what about a nice bottle of beer?