

Rear Window

(Drama) (1954)

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Major Characters

Jeff Jeffries.....James Stewart
A successful international news photographer who finds himself stuck for several weeks in his New York City apartment with a broken leg.

Lisa Fremont.....Grace Kelly
Jeff's beautiful, intelligent, sweet and rich girlfriend, who works in the New York fashion industry.

Stella.....Thelma Ritter
Jeff's nurse, hired by his insurance company, who helps him to recover during the time his leg is healing.

Thomas Doyle.....Wendell Corey
A friend of Jeff's and a New York City police detective.

Lars Thorwald.....Raymond Burr
A mysterious neighbor who lives across the courtyard from Jeff, whose strange behavior is the focus of this movie.

Plot Summary

This film is the story of Jeff Jeffries, a New York photographer who finds himself stuck in his apartment for several weeks while recovering from a broken leg. Since he can barely move because of his cast (the hard plaster cover designed to help heal a broken leg or arm), Jeff spends much of his time looking out his rear view window, into the back courtyard and various apartments of his neighbors. One particular apartment that catches his attention is that of a man named Lars Thorwald, whose behavior over the course of several days is so strange that Jeff becomes convinced that he has actually murdered his own wife. He has no real evidence or proof to support this, but he soon becomes obsessed with Thorwald, and because he is a photographer, Jeff begins to secretly look into Thorwald's world as if he were trying to expose or uncover a major story.

The other key people in Jeff's life slowly but surely decide that Thorwald is in fact a murderer, including his nurse Stella, who always senses trouble, and his beautiful girlfriend Lisa, who is determined to find out what really happened, even if that means secretly sneaking into Thorwald's apartment. The problem is that nobody has actually seen the murder or even the body of Mrs. Thorwald, and thus police detective Doyle, an old friend of Jeff's, sees no reason to believe anything illegal or wrong has happened. While its true that Jeff saw Thorwald acting strangely, including using a large knife and saw in behavior that looked like he may have been cutting up a body, Doyle keeps reminding Jeff that people

do all kinds of strange things in private that they couldn't explain in public. For Doyle, this is all about nothing, and for the film viewer, it's just not clear what is going on, or at least not clear until the end...

A Quick Note on Alfred Hitchcock: This movie was directed by the British film maker Alfred Hitchcock, who is considered the best director of suspense movies in the history of the movies. Hitchcock worked from the 1920s to the 1970s, and was so famous that his own face was recognized throughout the world (He in fact often put himself in his own movies for one short scene, including in this one, where he can be seen winding a wall clock in a neighboring apartment). Many Hitchcock fans consider *Rear Window* as one of his very best films.

Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know

*Jeff and Stella Discuss love, marriage and Lisa,
as he impatiently recovers from his broken leg.*

Do you feel tired and run down?

If a person is "run down," they feel exhausted or out of energy.

Do you have that listless feeling?

Another word to describe a feeling of being tired or with low energy.

For what? :: Getting rid of that cast.

"To get rid of" something is to eliminate it or perhaps throw it away.

A "cast" is the hard plaster material that doctors put on a broken leg.

How did you get to be such a big editor with such a small memory? :: Thrift, industry and hard work...and catching the publisher with his secretary.

"Thrift" refers to careful planning and management, especially of money, and in this context, "industry" is steady, hard work toward a goal.

Next Wednesday, I emerge from this plastic cocoon.

"To emerge" from somewhere is to come out from it. A "cocoon" is a tight fitting protective covering, usually produced by an animal.

Must be rough on you thinking of me wearing this cast another whole week.

A useful adjective meaning hard or difficult.

That one week...is gonna cost you a big assignment.

Note that "going to" --> "gonna" in rapid speech. An "assignment" is a specific job or task that is given to a person for work.

There's no point in even talking about it. :: Come on, where?

If there is "no point in" doing something, it is considered useless to do it because it will fail or not work. "Come on" means everything from "hurry up" to, as in this case, "stop fooling around and be serious."

Kashmir. Got a **tip** from the bureau chief this morning.

Kashmir is a region between India and Pakistan that is still the subject of great political tensions between these countries. A “tip” is a piece of information given to one person that might help solve a crime or lead to other useful information. A newspaper’s “bureau chief” is the reporter in charge of an office for that paper in a particular country or city.

The place is about to go up in smoke.

If a place or region “goes up in smoke,” it explodes in great violence.

Stop sounding stuffy.

If a person is “stuffy,” they are snobby, self-righteous or look down on others.

I can take crutches from a jeep or water buffalo.

“Crutches” are long wooden supports that fit under the armpit to help people walk. A “jeep” is a small car with a removable roof that is used in the military, and a “water buffalo” is a large wild animal found in Africa.

You’re too valuable to the magazine for us to play around with.

In this case, “to play around with” means to use in a silly or not serious enough manner.

You asked for something drastically different, you got it!

If something is “drastic,” it is extreme, often in a dangerous way.

It’s **about time** you got married, before you turn into a lonesome and **bitter** old man.

If something is “about time,” it is something that should have already taken place and is in fact happening too late. If a person is “bitter,” they are angry and resentful over what has happened in the past.

Can’t you see me rushing home to the garbage disposal...and **nagging** wife?

A “garbage disposal” reduces food into little pieces before it is washed away down sewer pipes. If a person “nags,” they constantly whine or complain in a disagreeable manner.

Wives don’t nag anymore. They discuss. :: Is that so?

An interesting little question, that when said in the right tone, suggests that the speaker does not believe what has just been said.

New York State sentence for a peeping Tom is six months in the work house.

In law, a “sentence” is the punishment for a crime, and a “peeping Tom” is a person who spies on others, often by secretly looking into their bedrooms through a crack in the curtains. A “work house” is a prison, but this is rarely used anymore.

In the old days, they used to put your eyes out with a red hot poker.

"The old days" is a common way of referring to the distant past, or perhaps a time when the speaker was much younger. "To put somebody's eyes out" is a very violent way of referring to the removal of a person's eyes, perhaps with the use of a pointed object. A "poker" is a long pointed metal rod for stirring wood in a fire.

Any of these bikini bombshells you're always watching worth a red hot poker?

A "bikini" is a type of sexy two-piece bathing suit, and a "bombshell" is a slangy word for a very sexy woman.

How's that for a bit of homespun philosophy?

If something is "homespun," it is simple and made or created at home.

Reader's Digest, April 1939. :: Well, I only quote from the best.

Reader's Digest is a popular American magazine for people who don't like to read serious magazines. "To quote" a magazine article is to use the exact words written in the article.

I should have been a gypsy fortune-teller instead of an insurance company nurse.

A "gypsy" is a person from an Eastern European/Indian ethnic group that is known for continuously travelling from one place to the other without actually settling down in one place. A "fortune-teller" is a person who, in theory, can predict your future.

I got a nose for trouble... You heard of that market crash in 1929? I predicted that.

If a person has a "nose for" something, they can predict it before it arrives. The 1929 "market crash" refers to the dramatic fall or collapse in the price of company stocks listed on the Stock Exchange.

I was nursing a director of General Motors.

"To nurse" a person is to take care of them while they are sick or injured. "General Motors" was and still is the biggest American car company.

"Kidney ailment" they said, "nerves" I said.

A "kidney" is an important organ that helps the body get rid of urine or piss. If a person has "nerves," they are extremely nervous.

"Overproduction," I says, collapse.

In economics, "overproduction" is the problem of producing too many goods that cannot be sold. If the stock market "collapses," the price of the average stock falls dramatically in a short period of time.

I can see you in court now surrounded by a bunch of lawyers with double-breasted suits.

Expensive suits that are popular with businessmen.

You're pleading....and the judge says "Congratulations, you just gave birth to three years in Dannemora."

"To plead" is make a case in court, or more generally, to beg for something (Dannemora was a New York State prison).

You've got a hormone deficiency. :: How can you tell that from a thermometer?

A "hormone" is a chemical that travels through the body's bloodstream, and if you have a "deficiency," you don't have enough of it.

A "thermometer" is a long thin device that is used to measure body temperature when put in a person's mouth.

Do you ever heat that stuff? It gives your circulation something to fight.

The "circulation" of blood in the body is the process of the blood traveling through the body's veins.

You're kidding. She's a beautiful young girl and you're a reasonably healthy young man.

"To kid" a person is to talk in way that is not serious, or perhaps in a way that is just joking around.

Some of the world's happiest marriages have started under the gun, you might say.

If something is done "under the gun," it is done under great pressure (note that a "shotgun marriage" is a marriage that is arranged in an extreme hurry, perhaps because the bride is already pregnant).

She's too beautiful. She's too sophisticated.

"Sophisticated" is good adjective for a person who is very educated or experienced in the arts, science or business (the opposite of naïve).

She belongs to that rarefied atmosphere of Park Avenue.

"Rarefied" means from a very high level, or in this case, from a very select or high level group. Park Avenue, in New York, is one of the richest streets in the United States.

Can you imagine her tramping around the world with a camera bum who never has more than a week's salary in the bank?

"To tramp" is to travel or wander on foot, but this verb is rare today (To *traipse* around, which is to travel without direction, is more common)

A "bum" is a person who has little or no money and lives on the streets.

If she was only ordinary!

A somewhat negative word for average or typical.

A new dress, a lobster dinner and the latest scandal.

The exposure to the public of behavior that is considered illegal or immoral, often by powerful people such as politicians.

The honest thing for me to do is to just call the whole thing off.

“To call off” a wedding or party is to cancel it.

They ought to come together, wham! Not sit around analyzing each other like two specimens in a bottle.

“Wham” is an interesting word that is supposed to be the sound of an explosion or something exciting. A “specimen” is a particular animal, plant or other biological being that is used for studying, often in a laboratory.

There’s an intelligent way to approach marriage. :: Nothing has caused the human race so much trouble as intelligence.

“To approach” something is to go toward it, or in this case, to deal with it.

We’ve progressed emotionally. :: **Baloney!**

“To progress” is to move forward or make progress. “Baloney” is a fun way of saying something you just heard is nonsense or bullshit (Baloney is literally a type of cheap sandwich meat).

Now, they read a lot of books, fence with a lot of four syllable words, psychoanalyze each other...

In this case, “to fence” is to argue, though it usually refers to the sport where people fight each other with long knives that are called foils.

“To psychoanalyze” a person is to try and understand their behavior by analyzing their childhood, in order to better understand where their emotions come from.

You can’t tell the difference between a petting party and a civil service exam.

In this context, “to pet” is to engage in sexual touching. A “civil service exam” is a test that people must take if they want to work for the government.

When I married Myles, we were both a couple of maladjusted misfits.

If a person is “maladjusted,” they have serious psychological problems that makes it difficult for them to get along well with others. A “misfit” is a person with psychological problems that often gets into trouble by engaging in violence, crime or disagreeable behavior.

I’ll spread a little common sense on the bread.

“To spread” butter on bread is to cover the bread in butter with a knife.

Lisa’s loaded to her fingertips with love for you.

If a person is “loaded” with something, they are filled with it.

Jeff tries to gently convince Lisa that his lifestyle is not meant for her, and thus they are probably not meant to get married.

Window shopper.

A person who likes to look at store windows, but not necessarily buy anything.

Anything else **bothering** you?

“To bother” a person is to annoy, trouble or irritate them.

Your love life? :: Not too active.

Note that when people refer to a person’s “love life,” they probably mean their sex life!

That depends on the quote. There’s the airplane ticket over, import duties, hidden taxes, profit, mark up.

In this context, a “quote” is the price of a product. “Import duties” are import taxes, and the “mark up” of a product is how much more a retail store charges for a product than what they bought it for.

A steal at \$1,100!

If something is “a steal,” it is considered super cheap.

They ought to list that dress on the stock exchange!

“To list a company on the stock exchange” is to make it a public company so that its stock can be bought and sold.

It’s just a run-of-the-mill Wednesday.

If something is “run-of-the-mill,” it is ordinary or typical.

It’s opening night of the last depressing week of LB Jeffries in a cast!

The “opening night” of a play is the first night it is performed, and a “cast” is a hard plaster covering put on a broken leg or arm.

That’s because I bought out the house.

In this context, “to buy out the house” is to buy every available ticket for a play, concert or other type of event.

I picked that up in Shanghai, which has also seen better days.

If a place has “seen better days,” it is probably going through difficult times.

It’s too ornate. I’m sending you up a plain, flat silver one with your initials engraved. :: That’s no way to spend your hard earned money.

If something is “ornate,” it is fancy, over-decorated and probably too expensive. A person’s “initials” are the first letters of their first and last name. If a letter is “engraved,” it is burned into a surface. “Hard earned” money is money that you have to work hard to get.

There’s a corkscrew right over there.

The object with which waiters open bottles of wine.

Here, I'll do it.

Note that the contracted form of "I+will" is the only verb tense that describes an action that you are going to do in the immediate future.

I can't think of anything more boring or tiresome than what you've been through.

If something is "tiresome," it is boring or exhausting. If a person has "been through" something, they have experienced it.

Have a pleasant dinner, Mr. Jeffries.

A gentle way of saying nice or agreeable.

I had to dash to the Waldorf for a quick drink with Madame Dufrene.

"To dash" someplace is to go there in a hurry. The "Waldorf" is a very famous and expensive hotel in New York.

Then I had to go to 21 and have lunch with the Harper's Bazaar people.

"21" is a club, and "Harper's Bazaar" is a fashion magazine.

Then I had two fall showings, 20 blocks apart.

In this case, a "showing" is a fashion show where models display the latest clothes. A "block" is the area of houses or buildings between two streets.

She looked wonderfully cool. She had on the most divine Italian hand-printed...

"Cool" is still widely used as a colloquial adjective for good, excellent, popular, etc (Though "wonderfully" is never used as an adverb with this word). "Divine" means of exceptional quality or excellence (or literally, God-like), and if something is "hand-printed," it is decorated by hand, and not machine.

I think I planted three nice items in the columns about you today.

"To plant" a news story in a newspaper is to make sure it gets published in order to get wanted publicity for a person, and not necessarily because it's a real news story. A "column" is a regularly published essay or piece of opinion by the same author.

Someday you might want to open up a studio of your own.

A "studio" is a work shop for a photographer or other type of professional worker.

Can you see me driving down to the fashion salon in a jeep wearing combat boots and a 3-day beard?

A "salon" is a small but stylish shop. A "jeep" is a small car with a removable roof that is used in the military. "Combat boots" are a type of boot or shoe that goes up to one's knee that is used by soldiers in war.

Wouldn't that make a hit.

If a song is a "hit," it is very popular and played a lot on the radio.

Miss Lonely Hearts. :: Well, at least that's something you'll never have to worry about.

A "lonely heart" is a lonely person who is often trying to find a lover, but without success.

Miss Torso, the ballet dancer. She's like a queen bee with the pick of the drones.
If a person has "the pick of" a group of things, they get to choose which one they want. A "drone" is a worker bee that serves the queen bee.

I'd say she's doing a woman's hardest job; Juggling wolves.

"To juggle" is to throw several balls into the air at the same time without dropping them, or more generally, to try and control several things at once. A "wolf" is a beautiful but dangerous wild animal.

She picked the most prosperous looking one.

If a person is "prosperous," they make a lot of money.

She's not in love with him or any of them. :: How can you tell that from here?

Note that in the right context, "to tell" means to know.

You said it resembled my apartment, didn't you?

"To resemble" means to look like or be similar to.

It's enchanting.

An excellent adjective meaning magical and very emotionally moving.

That's your opinion; You're entitled to it.

To be "entitled" to something is to deserve it or have a right to it.

It's ridiculous to say that it can only be done by a special private little group of anointed people.

If a person has been "anointed," they have been specially chosen.

I made a simple statement, and I can back it up if you'd just shut up for a minute.

"To back up a statement" is to support it with logic, evidence or proof.

If your opinion is as rude as your manner, I don't think

I'd care to hear it. :: Come on, now, simmer down.

If a person is "rude," they are very impolite, crude or mean.

When a person doesn't "care to" do something, they don't want to do it. "To simmer down" means to calm down, though this is now rare.

I can't fit in here, you can't fit in there.

"To fit in" to a place means to be able to live comfortably there.

According to you, people should be born, live and die on the same spot!

A "spot" is a small marking or stain, or more generally, a small area.

Did you ever get shot at? **Run over**? Sandbagged, because somebody got unfavorable publicity from your camera?

To be “shot at” is when someone tries to shoot you with a gun. If a person is “run over” by a car, the car drives directly over them, and if a person is “sandbagged” they are fooled into thinking a situation is safe when in fact it is very dangerous.

Those high heels; They’ll be great in the jungle.

“High heels” are women’s shoes that make women appear taller (and perhaps sexier) than they really are. A “jungle” is an area of thick tropical vegetation, famous for snakes, insects and other scary animals.

And those nylons and those six ounce lingerie.

“Nylons” are women’s stocking or coverings worn on their legs. An “ounce” is 1/16th of a pound, and “lingerie” is women’s underclothes.

If there’s one thing I know, it’s how to wear the proper clothes.

“Proper” is a somewhat old-fashioned adjective meaning correct or appropriate.

You don’t have to be deliberately repulsive just to impress me I’m wrong.

“To do something “deliberately” means to do it intentionally or on purpose, and “repulsive” is a powerful adjective that means disgusting.

You just have to **face it**; You’re not meant for that kind of life.

“To face” something is to accept the truth or reality of it.

A lesser man would’ve told me it was one long holiday and I would’ve awoken to a rude disillusionment.

“A lesser man” is a poetic way of saying a man who is not as strong or brave. In this case, “rude” means shocking, and “disillusionment” means great disappointment.

If you want to get **vicious** on this thing, I’d be very happy to accommodate you.

“Vicious” means violent or brutal, like a wild animal. “To accommodate” a person is to do one’s best to satisfy their desires or needs.

It’s deflating to find out the one way that I can be part of it is to take out a subscription to your magazine.

If something is “deflating,” it makes you feel sad or disappointed (Today this is fairly rare, and it’s much more common to say *demoralizing*, which means the same thing). A “subscription” to a magazine is payment for the benefit of receiving it in the mail for a certain period of time.

There’s nothing wrong with you; You’ve got this town in the palm of your hands.

When a person has a town “in the palm of their hands,” they are probably rich and perhaps even famous, and are able to enjoy the city as they wish.

Couldn't we just keep things status quo?

The "status quo" is a widely used Latin expression which means the current situation, or as things currently are.

It's stiff right here.

If a muscle is "stiff," it is rigid, hard or tight, as opposed to loose.

Jeff convinces himself that the neighbor has committed murder, but Lisa doesn't believe it and Doyle finds the idea ridiculous.

Your eyes are all bloodshot. You must have been watching out that window for hours.

If a person's eyes are "bloodshot," they are red from being so tired.

You keep your mind off of her. :: She sure is the "eat, drink and be merry girl."

"Eat, drink and be merry" is an old expression to describe how people should have a good time (To be merry is to be very happy).

Yeah, she'll wind up fat, alcoholic and miserable.

"Miserable" is a sad little adjective which means extremely unhappy.

Isn't there anybody in the neighborhood who cast an eye in her direction?

"To cast an eye" on a person is to look at them, in this case with possible romantic interest.

Are him and his wife splitting up? I just can't figure it.

If a couple "splits up," they separate. Here, "to figure" means to understand, though more often it means to think or believe.

He went out several times last night carrying his sample case; what would he be selling at three in the morning? :: Flash lights, luminous dials for watches.

A "sample case" is a small suitcase in which a salesman will carry samples or examples of the products he sells. If something is "luminous," it shines light, and a "dial" is the face of a watch or other similar device.

His personal effects. He's going to run out on her, the coward!

A person's "personal effects" are their clothes, jewelry and other things they carry with themselves. "To run out on" a person is to leave them for good, often without warning them. A "coward" is a person with no courage, or perhaps somebody who is always scared.

The shades are all drawn in the apartment.

"Shades" are curtains, and if "drawn," they are shut to keep light out.

That's no ordinary look. That's the kind of look a man gives when he's afraid somebody might be watching.

In this case, "ordinary" means typical or average.

"Uh-oh, uh-oh." Great conversationalist.

A great "conversationalist" is a person who speaks well in conversations.

Take those binoculars out of the case.

A device for more clearly seeing things that are far away.

I'll be glad when they crack that cast and I can get out of here.

Here, "to crack" means to break open.

I'm not exactly on the other side of the room. ∴

Your mind is. When I want a man, I want all of him.

A person's "mind" is their thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc.

What's interesting about a butcher knife and a small saw wrapped in newspaper? ∴ Nothing, thank heaven.

A "butcher knife" is a scary and sharp knife used to cut meat. A "saw" is a jagged-toothed tool used to cut wood.

"Thank heaven" is another way of saying Thank God.

Why hasn't he been in his wife's bedroom

all day? ∴ I wouldn't dare answer that.

"To dare" to do something is to courageously (or arrogantly) decide to do it even though it's very dangerous or could cause great problems.

What do you think? ∴ Something too frightful to utter.

"Frightful" is a somewhat old-fashioned word for scary, and "to utter" words is to say them, often quite quickly.

That would be a terrible job to tackle. Just how would you start to cut up a human body?

"To tackle" a job is to do it or deal with it successfully.

"To cut up" something is to cut it into little pieces.

Jeff, if you could only see yourself!

This is Lisa's gentle way of saying

"You're acting like a complete idiot."

Every little thing you see is diseased!

A rare but powerful adjective meaning sick or dying.

Do you think I consider it recreation?

"Recreation" refers to sports, games and other activities that are done to enjoy oneself (as opposed to work).

I want to find out what's the matter with the salesman's wife; Does that make me a madman?!

A "madman" is a fun little word for a crazy or insane man.

She's an invalid. She demands constant care.

An "invalid" is a disabled person who cannot take care of themselves.
Note that in this case, "demands" means to be in constant need of.

Maybe she died. :: Where's the doctor? Where's the undertaker?

An "undertaker" is a person who prepares dead bodies to be buried.

She could be sleeping under sedatives.

A "sedative" is a pill that helps people calm down or sleep better.

I've seen bickering and family quarrels and mysterious trips at night and knives and saws and rope.

"To bicker" is to argue in a annoying or unpleasant way. A "quarrel" is a serious argument.

He walked along the corridor and street and backyard.

A "corridor" is a narrow passage way, often between buildings.

He's being clever! He's being nonchalant.

"Clever" is an excellent word meaning very smart or skillful.

If a person is acting "nonchalant," they are being very casual or unemotional, even in a high stress situation.

A murderer would never parade his crime in front of an open window.

As a verb, "to parade" means to show off or perform in public view.

For all you know, there's something more sinister going on behind those windows. :: Oh, no comment.

"Sinister" is a serious adjective meaning evil, or deadly in a way that is perhaps not obvious or apparent at first. "No comment" is what a person will say to a reporter if they do not want to answer a particular question (A comment is a statement).

OK, chief, what's my next assignment?

In this context, "chief" is another word for boss.

You have to be here and see the whole set-up.

The "set-up" of an apartment or place in general is what it looks like, or perhaps the total situation that can be seen.

I figured a detective would jump at the chance of something to detect.

A "detective" is a person who secretly investigates people and often tries to solve crimes. "To jump at the chance" to do something is to act super quickly to be able to do it, and "to detect" is to investigate, or to notice.

It happens to be my day off.

A person's "day off" is a day they do not go to work.

I usually took my best pictures on my day off. I'll **drop by**.

"To drop by" is a very common way of saying to go to a particular place, often without calling or telling the person you're visiting in advance.

Bless your heart Stella. Gee whiz, look at this!

"Bless your heart" is an emotional way of saying thank you ("To bless" a person is to thank them or wish them good fortune). "Gee whiz" is an old but still used and gentle way of expressing surprise or other emotion.

An old, ornery friend of mine.

An interesting word for someone who is easily irritated or cranky.

He better get that trunk out of here before it starts to leak.

A "trunk" is a large container and if it "leaks," it has a hole which lets out water or other liquids.

Don't do anything **foolish**! :: I'm just going to get the name off of that freight truck.

If a person is "foolish," they do something that should have been seen as very stupid or destructive. A "freight truck" is a truck that carries goods such as furniture and large pieces of equipment.

I'll keep an eye on the alley.

"To keep an eye" on a person is to watch them over a period of time, and an "alley" is a narrow passage way between houses or other buildings.

Everything this fellow has done has been **suspicious**.

"Fellow" is a word for guy or man. If a person does something that is "suspicious," it looks like it may have been illegal, or perhaps just strange.

Doyle, don't tell me he's an unemployed magician amusing the neighborhood with his sleight of hand.

"To amuse" people is to entertain them, and perhaps to make them laugh. "Sleight of hand" is an expression from magic that refers to a trick in which the eye sees something that can't possibly be real.

"All right, officer, do your **duty**. Go over and pick him up."

An "officer" is usually a police officer or somebody in the military.

A person's "duty" is that which they are required or forced to do because of their job or position. In this case, "to pick up" a person is to arrest them and charge them with a crime.

Jeff, you've got a lot to learn about homicide.

An important legal word for murder, or the killing of an innocent life.

Morons have committed murder so shrewdly it takes 100 trained police minds to catch them.

A "moron" is an excellent and fun insult word for a very stupid or even retarded person. To do something "shrewdly" is to do it with great skill.

That salesman wouldn't just knock his wife off after dinner and toss her in the trunk and put her in storage.

"To knock off" a person is a fun and slangy way of saying to kill them. "To toss" something is to throw it with energy.

Most everything's been done under panic. This is a 1,000 to 1 shot.

If something is a "1,000 to 1 shot," this means there is a one in 1,000 chance that it will actually happen.

You think I made all this up?

"To make up" a story is to tell it as if it were true, when in fact it was totally invented or created as a work of fiction.

Well, Jeff, I've got to run along.

"To run along" is to leave, often quickly.

I won't report this to the department. Let me poke into it a little on my own.

In this case, the "department" is the police department where Doyle works. "To poke into" something is to investigate it or research it a little bit ("To poke" is to stick one's finger into something).

No sense in you getting a lot of ridiculous publicity.

"Publicity" is coverage in the media, such as TV or newspapers.

Not until you showed up! :: It will wear off, along with the hallucinations. See you around.

"To show up" is to arrive, and if something "wears off," it fades or disappears over time. A "hallucination" is an image that a person on certain drugs will see, even though it doesn't really exist.

Lisa decides that Jeff is right about the neighbors, but Doyle reminds him that no one has seen a body, a crime or any evidence of anything.

He has a six month lease.

A "lease" is an agreement to rent an apartment for a period of time.

He's quiet, drinks, but not to drunkenness.

Note that in many contexts, the verb "to drink" means to drink something alcoholic. "Drunkenness" is the loud and disagreeable state of being drunk or inebriated from alcohol.

He pays his bills promptly, with money earned as a costume jewelry salesman. Wholesale.

To do something "promptly" is to do it right on time or quickly. In economics, "wholesale" involves selling goods to retail stores (while *retail* involves selling directly to consumers).

He kept to himself.

A way of saying he didn't talk much to others.

Who said they left then? :: The building superintendent and the tenants.

The "superintendent" of a building takes care of all the maintenance, such as electrical, plumbing and heating problems. A "tenant" is a person who rents an apartment or room in a house.

Flat statements, no hesitation. They jibe to the letter.

A "flat statement" is a calmly said declaration or sentence. "To hesitate" is to delay or slow down while trying to decide what to do. If two statements "jibe," they agree with each other.

Did they have signs on their luggage saying "Grand Central or Bust"?

"Grand Central Station" is the main train station in New York City, and "Grand Central or bust" on a sign is a slangy way of saying that you need to get to grand Central or you will end up in great trouble.

This is a pretty convenient guy, this superintendent.

If something is "convenient," it is handy or well adapted or suited for a particular situation (It is rarely used as an adjective for people).

It's a second hand version of an unsupported story by the murderer himself!

A "second-hand version" of a story is one that is told to one person, and then retold to another person. If a story is "unsupported," it is not backed up as true by any facts or evidence.

Search Thorwald's apartment! It must be knee-deep in evidence!

A key legal term for anything—from a gun to bloody clothes to bank or phone records—that could be used to prove or disprove a crime.

What he doesn't know won't hurt him!

A much loved expression which people say when they want to secretly do something that somebody else will probably never know.

If I were caught in there, they'd have my badge in 10 minutes!

A "badge" is a metal device that can be worn on a shirt to identify membership in an organization such as the police (This is Doyle's way of saying that if he went in Thorwald's apartment, he could lose his job).

They don't care about a couple house rules, and if they don't find anything, the fellow is clear.

"House rules" are specific laws or regulations that an organization makes for itself. If a person is "cleared" of a crime, they are no longer suspected of having committed it.

At the risk of sounding stuffy, I'd like to remind you of the Constitution and the phrase, "Search warrant, issued by a judge."

If a person is acting "stuffy," they are being snobby or looking down on others. The "Constitution" is a written document that is considered the highest law in the US. A "phrase" is an expression or set of words, and a "search warrant" is an official document approved by a judge that allows the police to search a house. "To issue" a warrant is to sign it.

He knows his Bill of Rights verbatim.

The "Bill of Rights" is the first 10 amendments or changes to the US Constitution, and includes the right to free speech, religion, etc. "Verbatim" means word for word.

"I have a friend who's an amateur sleuth..."

An "amateur" is a person who is not a professional and a "sleuth" is a slangy word for detective.

He'd throw the New York State Penal Code right in my face, and it's six volumes.

The "penal code" refers to all the criminal laws of a state. A "volume" is a separate book that is part of a set of books.

What do you need before you can search? Bloody footsteps leading up to the door? :: One thing I don't need is heckling.

"To heckle" a person is to harass or criticize them in public, often in front of an audience during a performance.

How did we ever stand each other for three years in that plane during the war?

If two people "can't stand each other," they don't like each other (Note that it's always used in the negative or as part of a question).

It looks like Thorwald's pulling out tonight.

In this case, "to pull out" from a place is to leave it.

Goodnight, you idiot.

An excellent insult word for moron, jerk, fool, dummy, etc.

Even his wife's alligator handbag. He had it hidden in the dresser.

An "alligator handbag" is a purse made of alligator skin. A "dresser" is a piece of furniture with drawers for storing clothes.

Women don't keep their jewelry in a purse, getting all twisted and scratched and tangled up.

If something is "twisted," it is turned tightly in on itself, and if it is "tangled up" with something else, it is tied or connected to it, often with legs or arms wrapped around each other.

A woman going anywhere...always takes makeup, perfume and jewelry.

"Makeup" is another word for cosmetics such as lipstick and eye liner.

I'm with you, sweetie. Tom Doyle has a pat answer, though.

In this context, to be "with" a person is to agree with them.

A "pat answer" is a well used and standard answer that is given in all types of different situations.

According to those witnesses. :: Well, I have a pat rebuttal for Mr. Doyle.

A "rebuttal" is a counter-argument, especially in a debate.

Don't be too hard on him. He's a steady worker.

:: He doesn't sound like much of a detective.

To be "hard on" a person is to strongly criticize them or treat them poorly or roughly. A "steady" worker is an employee who is hard working and can be counted on.

I'm going to stay with you. :: Well, you'll have to clear that with my landlord.

"To clear" a plan with a person is to get their approval for it.

I won't be able to give you any pajamas.

A useful word for the warm clothes people wear to bed

This is an overnight case, anyway. Compact, but ample enough.

An "overnight case" is a small suitcase for a short trip. If a case is "compact," it is very small or tightly compressed. "Ample" means sufficient or big enough.

Isn't that amazing?! :: I'll trade you—My feminine intuition for a bed for the night.

If something is "amazing," it is incredible or so fantastic that it's hard to believe. "Feminine intuition" is a feeling or sense that supposedly some females have which allows them to see things others can't, or perhaps even know what's going to happen in the future.

I'll go along with that.

"To go along with" something is to agree to do it.

Where does a man get inspiration to write a song like that? :: He gets it from the landlady once a month.

"Inspiration" is strong desire or creativity that is caused by the works or actions of somebody else (Here, Jeff is saying the real inspiration for this song is simply to make money to pay the rent).

It's utterly beautiful. I wish I could be creative. :: Sweetie, you are.

You have a great talent for creating difficult situations.

"Utterly" is an interesting adverb meaning completely or totally.

Surprise is the most important element of attack.

In this case, an "element" is a part, section or factor.

You're not up on your private eye theatre. When they're in trouble, it's always they're girl Friday who gets them out of it.

To be "up on" something is to be knowledgeable about it. A "private eye" is a detective who works for himself and not the police. A "girl Friday" is a female assistant who does lots of different jobs from secretary to messenger to shopper.

Is she the girl that saves them from the clutches of the seductive show girls and the over passionate daughters of the rich?

A person's "clutches" are their hands and arms as they try to hold on tightly to something. If a person is "seductive," they are very attractive or alluring, and usually in a sexy or romantic sort of way. "Show girls" are girls who dance on stage (They are most common in Las Vegas). If a person is "passionate," they show great emotion and desire.

He never ends up marrying her. That's strange. :: **Weird.**

"Weird" is an excellent adjective meaning strange, odd or bizarre.

Why don't I slip into something more comfortable? :: By all means.

"By all means" is an interesting little phrase which means "Absolutely; Go right ahead and do what you would like."

What else have you got on this man Thorwald? :: Enough to scare me that you wouldn't show up in time and we'd lose him.

In this context, "to have a lot" on a person is to have a lot of information on them which could prove they have done something illegal. "To show up" is a common way of saying to arrive.

I'm just warming some brandy. Mr. Doyle, I presume?

"Brandy" is a type of sweet liquor. Here, "I presume" means "I assume that you are....Mr. Doyle"

Mr. Doyle, that can only lead to one conclusion. :: Namely?

Here, a way of saying "...and that conclusion is?"

You figured that out?

"To figure out" a crime or mystery is to solve it.

People do a lot of things in private they couldn't possibly explain in public. :: Like disposing of their wives?

"To dispose of" something is to throw it away or get rid of it.

Your logic is backwards.

This is Doyle's way of saying that Jeff is trying to see if Thorwald has done anything that might look like a crime rather than looking to see first if there is any reason to think a crime took place.

In real life, it's still a fairy tale.

A children's story that usually has super natural beings like monsters.

I don't know how many wasted years I've spent tracking down leads based on feminine intuition.

"To track down" something is to look for it over a period of time, and a "lead" is a piece of evidence or something that will help a person solve a crime or mystery.

I take it you didn't find the trunk and all this is from an old speech you made at the Policeman's ball.

A "ball" is a large party where there is often a lot of dancing.

What did you find in the trunk? A surly note to me? :: Mrs. Thorwald's clothes. Clean, well packed, not **stylish**, but **presentable**.

"Surly" means bitter, arrogant or irritable. If a person's clothes are "stylish," they are considered nice looking and in fashion. If somebody is "presentable," they are dressed well enough, although not necessarily in a very stylish way.

You didn't take them off to the crime lab?

A police laboratory where evidence such as blood and bullets are examined to see who could have committed a crime.

If I had been careful piloting that reconnaissance plane during the war...

"Reconnaissance" is the act of looking over large areas of territory, usually in order to help plan some kind of military action.

...you wouldn't have had the chance to take the photos that won you a medal and a good job and **fame** and money.

"Fame" is the state of being famous.

You're through with the case? :: There's no case to be through with, Miss Fremont.

To be "through with" something is to have finished it.

Cheers.

What you say as you lift your glass before drinking, to either thank or acknowledge the presence of another person.

If you need any more help, consult the yellow pages in your directory.

"To consult" a book is to look up information in it. The "yellow pages" is a telephone directory with the name of most businesses in a community, and a "directory" is a book of information with a list of names.

A neighbor's dog is killed, Jeff is convinced again, and thus Lisa takes the investigation into her own hands, with terrifying results...

Much as I hate to give Doyle too much credit, he might have gotten a hold of something when he said that was pretty private stuff going on out there.

“To give credit” to a person for having done something positive is to acknowledge that they are the ones who deserve the praise or thanks for having done it.

I wonder if it’s ethical to watch a man with binoculars and a long-focus lens? Do you suppose it’s ethical even if you prove he didn’t commit a crime?

If something is “ethical,” it is morally acceptable. “Binoculars” are a device that allow you to clearly see things that are far away by making them appear bigger. A “long-focus lens” is the part of a camera that allows one to take clear pictures of things that are far away.

I’m not much on rear view ethics.

If a person is “not much on” something, they don’t really like it.

You and me....plunged into despair, because we find out a man didn’t kill his wife!

“To plunge” into something is to dive down into it. “Despair” is great sadness or misery with a feeling of little or no hope.

We’re two of the most frightening ghouls I’ve ever known.

A “ghoul” is an evil being or monster that feeds on dead bodies, or more generally, anybody who loves horrible or morbid things.

What ever happened to that old saying “Love Thy Neighbor”?

A “saying” is an expression, and “thy” is old (17th century) English for “your” (This saying comes from the Bible).

I think I’ll start reviving that tomorrow.

“To revive” something is to bring it back to life or give it energy.

A preview of coming attractions!

An expression that is used when you are about to show a sample of something (from a movie to a piece of clothing) that will be released to the public in a complete version later.

I will rephrase the question; “Do you like it?”

“To rephrase” a question is to ask it in different words.

It’s been strangled! The neck is broken!

“To strangle” a person is to cut off their air supply by crushing their neck.

In the whole courtyard, only one person didn’t come to the window to look.

A “courtyard” is a area in the back of or next to a building, often designed in a way so that people can relax outside.

He’s washing down the bathroom walls. ∴ Hmm, must have splattered a lot.

If blood “splatters,” it scatters or shoots off in drops in all directions.

He has to clean up those stains before he leaves.

A “stain” is a mark or spot from things like food, blood or dirt.

Nobody ever invented a **polite** word for a killing yet.

A nice word for well mannered and respectful.

You haven’ spent much time around cemeteries, have you?

The place where dead bodies are buried.

Mr. Thorwald could scarcely put his wife’s body in a plot of ground about one foot square, unless of course he put her in standing on end.

“Scarcely” means hardly, a “plot” is a small piece of land, and if a body is “stood on end,” it is standing head up (as opposed to lying down).

My idea is she’s scattered all over own.

If a body is “scattered,” it is found in little pieces in many different places.

I’ve handled enough of those red pills to put everybody in Hackensack to sleep for the winter.

“To handle” something is to deal with it or take care of it, and Hackensack is a city in New Jersey.

Of course I don’t have a shovel!

A tool for digging dirt and making holes.

I’m not **squeamish**! I just don’t want you to end up like that dog.

“Squeamish” is an excellent word to describe a person who is easily made nervous or sick when they get a shot, see blood and other such things.

Shall we vote him in, Stella? :: Unanimously.

If a vote is “unanimous,” then every person votes the same way.

Go on, pick it up. You’re curious.

Note that in this context, if a person is “curious,” they are eager to learn about a situation or mystery.

A little business meeting to settle the estate of your wife.

“To settle an estate” is to officially agree on who should get what property that is left behind; after a person has died.

Quit **stalling**, Thorwald, or I’ll hang up and call the police.

“To stall” is to try and delay, wait or hesitate before taking a specific action. “To hang up” a phone is to put it down or end the call.

If I see him coming back, I’ll signal with a flash bulb.

“To signal” is to communicate with non-verbal signs, such as lights.

A “flash bulb” is the part of a camera that makes a sudden flash of light when taking a picture in the dark.

Precinct Six, Sergeant Algood.

A “precinct” is a part of a city for which a police or fire department is responsible. A “sergeant” is a high ranking or high level police officer.

Hello, a man is assaulting a woman at 125 West 9th Street, second floor at the rear. Make it fast!

“To assault” a person is to physically attack them, although in criminal law, it actually means only to threaten to attack.

Why doesn't she turn him in?

“To turn in” a person to tell the police where they are hiding.

She'll got herself arrested.

If a person is “arrested,” they are taken to jail by the police and officially charged with a crime.

Unless he is dumber than I think he is, he won't wait until his lease is up.

A person's “lease” is the contract they have to rent an apartment for a certain period of time, and if it is “up,” that period of time is over.

Get my billfold on the table. I'm going to bail Lisa out of jail.

A “billfold” is another word for a man's wallet, and to “bail a person out of jail” is to pay money to the government as security so that a person who has been charged with a crime can be free until they go to trial.

This is a first offense burglary. That's about \$250.

A person's “first offense” is the first crime they have been charged with and convicted of committing, and “burglary” is the legal term for breaking into a house in order to steal the contents inside.

When those cops see Lisa, they'll even contribute!

“Cops” is a very common slang word for the police.

Look, don't louse up my night with another mad killer stuffing a grisly trunk.

“To louse up” something is to make it worse, or ruin or destroy it. In this context, if a person is “mad,” they are crazy. “To stuff” a trunk is to try and put as much stuff as possible into it, and “grisly” is a dramatic little adjective that means very bloody, disgusting or horrible looking.

She went to get evidence and she came out with evidence.

An important word in law that refers to anything from blood to guns that would serve to prove or disprove that somebody has committed a crime.

He killed a dog last night because the dog was scratching around in the garden.

If a dog is “scratching around,” it is digging up things in the ground.

His possessions are still in the apartment!

A person's “possessions” are the things that they own.

You think it was old “ham bones?” :: Yep, in sections.
 Another word for the physical parts of a whole.

If that ring checks out, we’ll give him an escort.
 In this case, to “check out” means to be consistent with a theory (in this case that Thorwald is a murderer). An “escort” is a person who accompanies somebody else, often at night, in order to protect them.

Give me your 38!
 Note that many guns are known just by a number.

You got enough for a search warrant now?
 A “search warrant” is an official document signed by a judge that allows police officers to search the home of a person they have strong reason to believe may have committed a crime.

Thorwald’s ready to take us on a tour of the East River.
 The East River in New York is famous as a place where gangsters dumped the dead bodies of people they killed.

He said the dog got too inquisitive, so he dug it up.
 If a person is “inquisitive,” they are always searching for answers to crimes or other types of mysteries.

I hope it’s going to be a hit. This is the first release.
 In music, a “hit” is a popular song that is played a lot on the radio.
 A song’s “release” is the act of making it widely available to the public through sales and play on the radio.

I can’t tell you what this music has meant to me!
 One way of saying “This music has meant so much to me...”

Rear Window

Some Potential Questions for ESL Class Discussion

1. Did you feel a little bit like a voyeur (one who shamelessly spies on others, often in their homes), when you were watching this movie?
2. Was Thorwald's behavior really that suspicious?
3. Can "female intuition" really help solve crimes?
4. Are Jeff and Lisa a good couple?
5. How would this movie be different if it were made today, instead of 1954?
6. What did you like and not like about this film?