

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S



The Man in the Brown Suit

Tracy Wells

Adapted from the novel by Agatha Christie

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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The Man in the Brown Suit

MYSTERY/THRILLER. Adapted from the novel by Agatha Christie. After her father dies, Anne Beddingfeld heads for London in search of adventure but soon finds herself drawn into a world of secret agents, international criminals, deception, murder, and intrigue. After witnessing a man fall to his death from a train platform in London, Anne picks up a mysterious note that reads, "17.1 22 Kilmorden Castle." The next day, a woman is found murdered at a member of Parliament's estate, Mill House, and a "man in a brown suit" is identified as a suspect. Anne travels to Mill House, where she finds a film canister and learns that "Kilmorden Castle" is the name of an ocean liner due to set sail on January 17. Anne immediately books passage and travels to Cape Town, South Africa in search of the mysterious "man in the brown suit," but her search is thwarted by "The Colonel," a criminal mastermind and agent provocateur. An intricate, multifaceted mystery complete with deception, disguises, impersonation, and even a little romance.

Performance Time: Approximately 120 minutes.



Agatha Christie, circa 1925

About the Story

Agatha Christie was born in southwest England to a wealthy family. Growing up, Christie enjoyed reading mystery novels by Wilkie Collins and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Christie's *The Man in the Brown Suit* was first published in the United States and in the United Kingdom 1924. In 1922, Agatha Christie, along with her husband Archie Christie and Major E.A. Belcher, took an around-the-world trip to promote the 1924 British Empire Exhibition. Major Belcher served as the inspiration for the character of Sir Eustace Pedler. Christie wrote, "Never, to this day, have I been able to rid myself of a sneaking fondness for Sir Eustace." The character of Colonel Race appears in three other Agatha Christie novels, including *Sparkling Cyanide*, *Cards on the Table*, and *Death on the Nile*. The author of 66 detective novels and 15 short story collections, Christie is best known for her bestselling novel *And Then There Were None* and her play *The Mousetrap*.

Characters

(11 M, 9 F, 14 flexible, extras)

(Without opt. roles: 10 M, 7 F, 13 flexible, extras)

(With doubling: 8 M, 6 F, 8 flexible, extras. Tripling possible.)

ANNE BEDDINGFELD: Amateur adventurer and detective; daughter of a renowned archaeologist; female.

CHARLES BEDDINGFELD: Anne's absent-minded father, a famous archeologist; has messy hair and wears mismatched clothing with one boot and one dress shoe, male.

HARRY RAYBURN: One of the aliases of John Eardsley, the son of a Sir Laurence Eardsley, a wealthy South African mining magnate; also known as "the man in the brown suit" and Harry Lucas; male.

COLONEL RACE: A distant cousin of Sir Laurence Eardsley who became wealthy when he inherited Sir Laurence's fortune; a wealthy ex-Army Colonel who works for the British government as a spy; friend of Suzanne Blair; male.

SIR EUSTACE/LADY EUNICE PEDLER: A wealthy member of Parliament; a criminal mastermind known as "The Colonel"; flexible.

GUY PAGETT: Sir Eustace Pedler's secretary; male.

SUZANNE BLAIR: A wealthy society lady and friend of Colonel Race; befriends Anne Beddingfeld while sailing on the "Kilmorden Castle" ocean liner; female.

ARTHUR MINKS: Secret agent who is a master of disguise and poses as various characters including Count/Countess Paulovitch, Rev. Edward Chichester, Miss Pettigrew, and Jane; when in disguise, Minks is unrecognizable and is able to take on voice and mannerisms of other characters; male. *[Note: One actor may play all five roles or different actors play the roles, including a female or non-binary actor to portray Miss Pettigrew and Jane. See optional roles below.]*

LYDIA DAVIES: Reporter for the "Daily Budget"; female.

INSPECTOR MEADOWS: A Scotland Yard detective responsible for investigating the death of an unknown woman found at the Mill House; male.

DUTCHMAN/WOMAN: Anne's kidnapper, an agent of "The Colonel"; has a red beard if male; flexible.

SERVANT: Works for the Dutchman; flexible.

NADINA: Alias of Anita Grünberg, a secret agent in the service of "The Colonel," an international criminal and provocateur; poses as a "Russian" ballerina; murdered at Mill House; wears a ballerina costume; female.

L.B. CARTON: A man who mysteriously dies at the Hyde Park Tube station; Anita Grünberg's husband; male.

MR. FLEMMING: London lawyer handling Charles Beddingfeld's estate; male.

CAROLINE JAMES: Cook at the Mill House; wears a belt with a ring of keys on it; female.

MARY: Anne's stewardess on the "Kilmorden Castle" ocean liner; female.

STEWARD/STEWARDESS: Works on board the "Kilmorden Castle"; flexible.

STATION OFFICIAL 1-2: Officials of the London Underground; flexible.

JEANNE: Nadina's French dresser at the theatre; female.

MONSIEUR/MADAME DUBOIS: Theatre manager; flexible.

LIBRARIAN: Attends Charles Beddingfeld's funeral service; flexible.

DR. SAMUELS: Would like to marry Anne Beddingfeld; male.

VICAR: Vicar at Charles Beddingfeld's funeral service; male.

TICKET SALESPERSON: Sells tickets for the "Kilmorden Castle" ocean liner; flexible.

KODAK EMPLOYEE: Tries to develop a roll of film Anne has dropped off; flexible.

STUDENTS 1-3: University students; flexible.

EXTRAS: As Onlookers, Londoners, Mourners, Ship Passengers, Ship Stewardesses, and Townspeople.

Optional Roles

COUNT/COUNTESS PAULOVITCH (opt.): Alias of Arthur Minks; a secret agent in the service of "The Colonel," an international criminal and provocateur; wears a hat; flexible.

REV. EDWARD CHICHESTER(opt.): Alias of Arthur Minks; posing as a missionary on board the "Kilmorden Castle" ocean liner; male.

MISS PETTIGREW (opt.): Alias of Arthur Minks; posing as Sir Eustace Pedler's secretary; wears thick glasses and sensible boots; female.

JANE (opt.): Alias of Arthur Minks; a stewardess on board the "Kilmorden Castle" ocean liner; female.

NOTE: For flexible roles, please change the script accordingly.

Options for Doubling

For doubling, suggestions are listed below. Tripling is possible.

NADINA/MARY (female)
JEANNE/CAROLINE JAMES (female)
DUBOIS/SERVANT/STEWARD (flexible)
STUDENT 1/ STATION OFFICIAL 1 (flexible)
STUDENT 2/ STATION OFFICIAL 2 (flexible)
STUDENT 3/ TICKET SALESPERSON (flexible)
CHARLES BEDDINGFELD/INSPECTOR MEADOWS (male)
LIBRARIAN/LYDIA DAVIES (female)
DR. SAMUELS/L.B. CARTON (male)
MR. FLEMMING/VICAR (male)
KODAK EMPLOYEE/ DUTCHMAN (flexible)

Costumes

All attire should be reflect the mid-1920s. Staff of the "Kilmorden Castle" ocean liner should wear uniforms. For Act II, characters should dress in lighter attire such as linen dresses and suits.

Setting

London and Cape Town, South Africa, mid-1920s.

Sets

Note: The sets may be as simple or elaborate as your budget allows. Since there are multiple locations, simple set pieces may be used to indicate setting. Minimal set requirements for each scene are listed below. If desired, a large set piece could represent the London Tube, the "Kilmorden Castle" ocean liner, and locations in South Africa.

Nadina's dressing room. There is a stool and a dressing table with assorted makeup and hair items for Nadina. In addition, a stuffed chair sits to one side with a coat rack for costumes.

Street near the University. There are trees, a park bench, a brick entrance, etc.

Graveyard. There are several tombstones. Some tombstones are more ornate than others. There is a simple tombstone or what looks like a mound of dirt for Professor Beddingfeld's grave.

London Tube station. A raised platform is upstage. On one side are the tracks for the train, which are not visible to the audience. A bench or two are placed at intervals. A clock, advertisements, and maps of train routes are on the walls.

Mill House. The entry door to the house is SL. The interior has a sofa, a side chair, a side table with a lamp, etc. There is a window with a window seat.

Streets of London. Two booths are present: a shipping office/ticketing booth and a Kodak film developer.

Deck of the "Kilmorden Castle." A railing is upstage. There are groupings of chairs and small tables about the deck.

Room 17. There is a bed and a bedside table with a clock and a lamp. A large trunk is on the floor near the bed.

Deck of the "Kilmorden Castle," evening. The deck is decorated for a fancy dress party. There are candle-lit tables covered with tablecloths. Party lights are strung about. Additional party décor may be present.

Docks, Cape Town, South Africa. There are a few wooden pillars with rope strung between them. Crates and/or suitcases are stacked up.

Dutchman's home. The room is divided into two halves by either a wall or a partition. The room has a table and two chairs on one side of the wall and a single wooden dining chair on the other.

Hotel patio, Cape Town, South Africa. There are lounge chairs, tables with umbrellas, and potted flowering plants.

Hotel (exterior), Rhodesia, early evening. There are chairs and a couple of small tables with candles. There are a number of carved wooden animals for décor. Note: *[This hotel should look different than the previous hotel.]*

Henry Rayburn's home. There is a large window CS with burlap or straw window coverings. At CS is a rustic-looking sofa, a wood coffee table, and a chair.

Streets of Johannesburg, South Africa. There are streetlights, park benches, and shop fronts, including a curio shop.

Curio shop. The entry door to the shop is SL. The rest of the scene is the interior. At CS are two chairs and a small desk and chair. Shelves displaying assorted curios adorn the room. A large wooden giraffe and a stack of small cases is SR.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Backstage at a theater in Paris

Scene 2: Streets near the University

Scene 3: Graveyard

Scene 4: Interior of the London Tube

Scene 5: Mill House

Scene 6: Streets of London

Scene 7: Deck of the "Kilmorden Castle"

Scene 8: Room 17, the "Kilmorden Castle"

Scene 9: Deck of the "Kilmorden Castle"

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: Docks, Cape Town, South Africa

Scene 2: Home of the Dutchman

Scene 3: Patio of a hotel, Cape Town, South Africa

Scene 4: Hotel at Bulawayo, Rhodesia

Scene 5: Hotel at Bulawayo, Rhodesia

Scene 6: Home of Harry Rayburn

Scene 7: Streets of Johannesburg

Scene 8: Curio Shop, Johannesburg

Props

Roses
Calling card
Silky robe, for Nadina
School books
Satchels
Wristwatch, for Anne
Long black coat, scarf, and hat, for Anne
Assorted flowers, for Mourners
Bible, for Vicar
Hat, for Doctor
Briefcase, for Mr. Flemming
Legal paper
Newspaper
Long brown overcoat, pants, and a
brown fedora, for Harry Rayburn
Fake beard, for Harry Rayburn
Small slip of paper, for Anne
Police credentials, for Inspector
Meadows
Small notepad and pencil, for Inspector
Meadows
Bag, for Lydia Davies
Reporter's notebook and pencil, for
Lydia
Piece of paper, for Official 2
Broom, for Caroline James
Belt with a ring of keys on it, for
Caroline James
Bag, for Anne
Reporter's notebook and pencil, for
Anne
Slip of paper, for Anne
Roll of film
Leather-bound diary and pen, for Guy
Pagett
Hat, for Rayburn
Money
Blanket
Large bag, for Suzanne
Folding deck chairs, for ocean liner
Plate with toast under a cloche
Glass of ginger ale
Camera, for Suzanne
Robe, for Anne
Trunk (large enough for Rayburn
to hide inside)
Elegant dress attire, for Anne and
Suzanne
Slip of paper, for Rev. Chichester
Drink glasses (several)
Suitcase
Letter
Scarf
Ropes
Handkerchief
Tray of drinks
Book
Torn dress, for Anne
Notepad and pencil, for Miss
Pettigrew
Assorted carved wooden animals
Crumpled note, for Colonel Race
Large wooden giraffe
Teacup
Blanket
Tray with a soup bowl and spoon
Telegram, for Suzanne
Telegram, for Anne
Case, for Pagett
Telegram, for Sir Eustace
Sheet of paper and pen, for Sir
Eustace
Map
Shoulder bag, for Anne
Compact with powder puff
Revolver (fake), for Anne
Pistol (fake), for Colonel Race
Film tin with rocks inside

Film tin with diamonds inside

Special Effects

Ballet music

Applause

Flickering lights in the Tube station

Sound of a subway train approaching

Flash of light when Carton falls on the tracks

Loud buzzing/crackling sound

Sounds of the sea for scenes on board the "Kilmorden Castle"

Loud commotion

Knock at the door

Sound of several people shouting/fighting

Gunshot

*"I have some information no one knows
about a man no one suspects."*

—Anne

ACT 2

Scene 1

(BEFORE RISE: Music from the end of a ballet is heard. In costume, Nadina enters in front of curtain, performs the last few steps of the ballet, and then poses. Applause is heard. She bows/curtsies as roses are thrown onstage. Nadina picks them up, bows once more, waves to the audience, and turns as the curtain opens. AT RISE: Nadina's dressing room, backstage at the ballet. A dressing table and stool are present, upon which sits various makeup and hair items. A chair is also present as is a costume or coat rack on which hangs a silky robe. Nadina enters backstage, carrying a handful of roses. She turns back to the audience as Dubois enters, in a hurry.)

DUBOIS: Bravo! Bravo! Bellissima! Magnifique, Madame, simply magnifique!

(Dubois takes a hold of her shoulders and kisses both cheeks.)

NADINA: (Smiles half-heartedly, tries to extricate herself from his grip.)
Merci, Monsieur Dubois.

DUBOIS: Don't forget, tonight is the reception for the theater patrons and their families. They want nothing more than to share in the glow of your triumph onstage tonight...and they'll pay handsomely for it, too!

NADINA: (Sighs.) Is that really tonight? I'm terribly exhausted.

DUBOIS: It's part of your contract...

NADINA: (Resigned.) Yes, of course, Monsieur Dubois. Let me get changed and I'll be down.

DUBOIS: Excellent! I'll have a car waiting. (To offstage, calls.) Jeanne! (Jeanne enters, holding a calling card.) Your mistress is waiting.

JEANNE: Très bien, Monsieur.

(Dubois exits. Jeanne approaches Nadina and helps her into the robe.)

NADINA: Merci, Jeanne.

JEANNE: Très bien, Madame. There's a gentleman waiting to see you. (Holds out the calling card.)

NADINA: A gentleman? (Hands Jeanne the roses. Takes the card and reads it.) Count Paulovitch.

JEANNE: You know this gentleman, Madame?

NADINA: Ah, yes...an old friend. Please send him back.

JEANNE: Très bien, Madame. (Exits.)

NADINA: *(To herself, smiling slightly.)* Count Sergius Paulovitch. I wonder what he's doing in Paris.

(Count Paulovitch enters, removes his hat, and bows.)

COUNT: Madame Nadina, this is a pleasure, indeed.

(Nadina holds out her hand. Count goes to kiss it, but Nadina pulls her hand back.)

NADINA: No need for such formalities, Count Paulovitch, nor for using our mother tongue when we speak to each other.

COUNT: I don't know why we would, seeing as though neither of us speaks a word of Russian. *(Count and Nadina laugh.)* You were quite the success tonight. I congratulate you.

NADINA: All the same, I am disturbed. *(Looks around nervously. Leans in.)* My position here in Paris is not what it was. The suspicions aroused during the War have never died down. I am being continually watched and spied upon.

COUNT: But no charge of espionage was ever brought against you.

NADINA: "The Colonel" lays his plans too carefully for that. *(Sits.)*

COUNT: Long live, "The Colonel"! *(Sits in the chair.)* Did you hear he plans to retire? To retire! Just like a doctor or a butcher or a plumber —

NADINA: Or any other businessman. *(Touches up her makeup and/or takes her hair down.)* It shouldn't surprise us. That is what "The Colonel" has always been...an excellent man of business.

COUNT: Has he? Do we even know that he's a man? I've never laid eyes on him.

NADINA: Man, woman, what does it matter? He has organized crime just as another man might organize a boot factory. He's done it all: jewel robberies, forgery, espionage, sabotage, assassination.

COUNT: True. There is hardly anything he has not touched.

NADINA: Wisest of all, he knows when to stop. The game begins to get a little dangerous, so he retires gracefully with an enormous fortune!

COUNT: Must be nice for him. Meanwhile, he leaves the rest of us at loose ends, holding the bag. All of his crimes have been perpetrated by his agents. He is the master of finding a scapegoat!

NADINA: If you want to do a thing safely, don't do it yourself. That's always been his motto.

COUNT: All his agents incriminated to the hilt, and not one of us has anything on him.

NADINA: *(Mysterious smile.)* Not one?

COUNT: He's always been superstitious about that. The story is that years ago he went to one of those fortune-telling people. She prophesized a lifetime of success but declared that his downfall would be brought upon by a woman.

NADINA: A woman, you say?

COUNT: I suppose now that he's retired, he'll marry. That fortune-teller was probably referring to some young society beauty who will disperse his millions faster than he acquired them.

NADINA: *(Smiles, knowingly.)* No, it won't be a young bride that will bring him down.

COUNT: No? How can you be so sure?

NADINA: You said that none of us had anything on "The Colonel," but you were wrong. *(Turns to face Count.)* I, a woman, have had the wit and courage to double-cross him.

COUNT: You?! I didn't think you had it in you!

NADINA: Nor will he. *(Leans in.)* Do you remember the De Beers diamonds?

COUNT: Of course! At Kimberley, in South Africa, just before the war broke out. I had nothing to do with it. The case was hushed up for some reason. Quite a haul, I heard.

NADINA: A 100,000 pounds worth of stones! Two of us worked it. The plan was to substitute some of the De Beers diamonds for some sample diamonds brought from South America by two young prospectors, causing suspicion to fall on them.

COUNT: Very clever.

NADINA: "The Colonel" always is. Well, I did my part, but I also did one thing "The Colonel" had not foreseen. I kept back some of the South American stones. One or two are unique and could easily be proven never to have passed through De Beers' hands. If these diamonds were to see the light of day, it would clear the two young men immediately.

COUNT: Which would put the blame squarely on "The Colonel."

NADINA: Exactly! I have said nothing all these years and have been content just knowing I had the diamonds, but now things are different. *(Stands.)* I want my price...and I want it big. I travel to London tomorrow to see "The Colonel."

COUNT: *(Glancing around the room.)* And I suppose you carry these diamonds with you at all times?

NADINA: *(Chuckles.)* I am no fool. The diamonds are in a safe place where no one will dream of looking for them.

COUNT: I would never accuse you of being a fool, Nadina. But "The Colonel" will not take kindly to being blackmailed.

NADINA: I am not afraid of him. There is only one man I have ever feared...and he is dead, killed in a war. He was a man from my native home of South Africa. A man who once...loved me.

COUNT: You know your business best, but if I were you, I should fear "The Colonel" far more than any disillusioned lover. He is a man who is particularly easy to underestimate.

NADINA: Don't worry, I will not go alone. My husband is joining me in London. He's taking the Tube.

COUNT: Safe travels to London, then. Give "The Colonel" my best.
(Bows, exits.)

NADINA: *(To herself, smiles.)* I'll give "The Colonel" much more than that.

(As lights fade to black, Nadina sits at her dressing table.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: *Street near a university, daytime. There are trees, park benches, a brick entrance, etc. Anne is standing CS, waiting. She looks at her watch.*)

ANNE: (*Impatiently.*) Where is he? (*Student 1-3 walk by, conversing. Anne approaches them. To Students.*) Have you seen Professor Beddingfeld? He teaches "Primitive Man" in the Anthropology Department?

STUDENT 1: No, sorry.

ANNE: He's pretty hard to miss. His clothes never match and he's usually wandering lost in thought, not paying any attention.

STUDENT 2: I definitely haven't seen anyone who fits that description.

ANNE: (*Looking around for him.*) If he doesn't hurry, we're going to miss this week's episode of... (*Dramatically.*) ..."The Perils of Pamela!"

STUDENT 3: I just saw it at the cinema last night! It's a great episode. Pamela climbs to the top of the Empire State building and has to parachute off the top.

ANNE: Did the Master Criminal of the Underworld catch her?

STUDENT 3: Doesn't he always? But you know her hero will come to her rescue in the next episode.

ANNE: (*Dreamily.*) What I wouldn't give for a life like Pamela's...full of adventure and romance.

STUDENT 1: And peril. Don't forget the peril.

ANNE: An easy trade for excitement and love.

STUDENT 2: If you say so.

(*Students 1-3 exit.*)

ANNE: (*To herself, looking around.*) Not that there's much romance or adventure to be found around here. (*Sighs.*) I guess I'll just have to settle for seeing it on the big screen. (*Annoyed.*) That is, if my father will ever get his head out of the Paleolithic Era. (*Professor Beddingfeld enters, staring upward in thought, muttering to himself. He is wearing mismatched clothing and one boot and one dress shoe. His hair is a mess.*) Papa! There you are! (*Approaches Beddingfeld and begins to fuss over him, smoothing his hair, tucking in his shirt, straightening his tie, etc.*)

BEDDINGFELD: Oh, hello, Anne, dear. Where did you come from?

ANNE: I've been here for more than an hour. Did you forget about our plans?

BEDDINGFELD: Plans?

ANNE: The cinema! To see the latest episode of "The Perils of Pamela"!

BEDDINGFELD: Oh, right.

ANNE: *(Pointing to his feet.)* One boot and one loafer? *(Chuckles.)* Really, Papa? That's awfully absentminded...even for you.

BEDDINGFELD: Who has time to worry about footwear when there's been another amazing discovery at the Broken Hill Mine in Rhodesia?

ANNE: What did they find?

BEDDINGFELD: An antique skull that could actually be from the Mousterian period! There are undoubtedly certain resemblances to the Java skull, but this is quite a find...quite a find, indeed! *(Coughs. Takes Anne's hand and leads her toward the exit.)* In fact, we must make plans to travel to Rhodesia right away. There's no telling what might be discovered in those mines. Incalculable finds!

ANNE: What about money, Papa? You can't just leave your classes. We have bills that need to be paid.

BEDDINGFELD: I can't be bothered with something as trivial as money...not at a time like this!

ANNE: But what about "The Perils of Pamela"?

BEDDINGFELD: Is she a friend of yours? If so, she's welcome to join us if she can make herself useful.

ANNE: No, Papa, I mean our plans for tonight...the cinema.

BEDDINGFELD: Right. Just let me ring up the shipping offices in London to see when the next liner is sailing to Rhodesia.

(Beddingfeld starts to pull Anne offstage, stops, drops her hand, and doubles over into a coughing fit.)

ANNE: Papa, are you all right?

BEDDINGFELD: *(Through his coughing.)* I'll be...all right...just give me a minute. We must get to...Rhodesia. *(Collapses, unconscious.)*

ANNE: Papa!

(As lights fade to black, Anne kneels beside him and tries to revive him.)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: A graveyard, a few days later. Several tombstones are present, some more ornate than others. There is a simple tombstone or a mound of freshly piled dirt for Professor Beddingfeld. Anne is standing near the gravesite, wearing a long black coat, scarf, and hat. Dr. Samuels, Librarian, and other Mourners are present, each holding a flower. At CS, apart from the other Mourners, is the Vicar. He is holding a Bible, delivering the final portion of the funeral service.)

VICAR: (To Mourners.) We therefore commit this body to the ground.
(Anne mimes picking up dirt from the ground and sprinkling it on the gravesite.) Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and hope of the Resurrection to eternal life.

ALL: Amen.

(Mourners lay their flowers on the gravesite, approach Anne to give their condolences, and exit. Dr. Samuels is speaking to the Vicar. Librarian approaches Anne.)

LIBRARIAN: (To Anne.) He was a good and kind man.

ANNE: Thank you. Yes, he was.

LIBRARIAN: You got any other family? Maybe an aunt or uncle?

ANNE: No. It's just always been Papa and me.

LIBRARIAN: Had he any insurance? Are you going to be comfortable?

ANNE: No insurance, I'm afraid. Papa knew about a great many things, but money wasn't one of them.

(Dr. Samuels and Vicar look over and listen.)

LIBRARIAN: What are you going to do now that he's gone?

ANNE: I have no idea. These last few days with the funeral...I haven't had a moment to think about it.

LIBRARIAN: Well, if it's money you need, I could always use help down at the library. I know how much you love books. I'm sure I can find some extra money in the budget for an assistant librarian.

ANNE: Thank you. I'll let you know.

(Librarian exits. Vicar approaches Anne.)

VICAR: You know, my wife is getting older and is in need of some help around the house. If you need some place to stay, I'm sure we can take you in as a companion helper for her.

ANNE: Thank you, Vicar, but I'm sure I'll be all right.

(Vicar nods and exits. Dr. Samuels approaches Anne.)

DR. SAMUELS: I couldn't help but overhear your troubles, Miss Anne.

ANNE: Oh, I don't think of them so much as troubles, Dr. Samuels, more like opportunities.

DR. SAMUELS: Well, then, I have an opportunity that might interest you.

ANNE: Let me guess...you suddenly have an opening for a nurse?

DR. SAMUELS: No. A wife.

ANNE: *(Confused.)* You have an opening for a wife?

DR. SAMUELS: *(Flustered.)* Yes. I mean, no. I mean... *(Takes a deep breath and looks Anne in the eye.)* Will you marry me?

ANNE: Marry you? You can't be serious!

DR. SAMUELS: I am.

ANNE: But you must be nearly 40 years my senior!

DR. SAMUELS: Plenty of men marry younger women. It's not uncommon. Girls always go for doctors.

ANNE: You were there at my birth!

DR. SAMUELS: *(Proudly.)* Delivered you myself! Didn't even have to use the forceps.

ANNE: But you can't possibly love me. You hardly know me!

DR. SAMUELS: True, but a wife would be a great help to a general practitioner.

ANNE: *(Rolling her eyes, sarcastically.)* How romantic.

DR. SAMUELS: I don't see what romance has to do with anything. It's simply a proposal of marriage. You're an orphan with no money to speak of, and I need a wife to help keep my house and perhaps take care of some clerical tasks at the office. It's a win-win.

(Mr. Flemming enters, carrying a briefcase.)

ANNE: Sorry, Dr. Samuels, but I'm afraid I could never marry a man unless I loved him madly.

DR. SAMUELS: But, my dear child, if you don't marry me, what will you do?

ANNE: Have adventures and see the world.

DR. SAMUELS: Miss Anne, you don't understand the practical difficulties of what you plan to undertake.

ANNE: Yes, I do, Doctor. I'm not a sentimental school girl. I'm a hardheaded mercenary shrew! You'd know it if you married me!

DR. SAMUELS: (*Hopefully.*) Then you'll reconsider?

ANNE: No!

DR. SAMUELS: Very well. (*Tips his hat, starts to walk away, and stops.*) If you're interested in the office work, I'm sure I could find a place for you. How are you at filing medical charts?

ANNE: I wouldn't know, and I'm not going to find out. I've just now decided that I'm leaving town.

DR. SAMUELS: How are you going to do that without any money or family to help you?

ANNE: I don't know. I don't have it all worked out yet. (*Gets an idea.*) Maybe I'll be a reporter! I'll travel the world uncovering mysterious plots and reporting on them.

DR. SAMUELS: That's a pretty big dream. Not very practical, I must say, but I wish you well. Where will you go first?

ANNE: London. If exciting things happen anywhere, they happen in London.

FLEMMING: I should say so!

(*Flemming approaches Anne.*)

ANNE: Oh, are you from London, sir?

FLEMMING: I am, indeed. My name is Mr. Flemming. I'm your father's lawyer.

DR. SAMUELS: (*To himself.*) A lawyer! Of course! Girls always go for the lawyers. (*Shakes his head and exits.*)

FLEMMING: (*To Anne.*) I'm sorry to hear of your father's passing, Miss Beddingfeld. I'm a great admirer of his.

ANNE: Are you a student of archeology yourself?

FLEMMING: A hobbyist, mostly. But I've read everything your father has ever written.

ANNE: You may have been the only one.

FLEMMING: Ah, maybe so...at least that's the picture his finances paint.

ANNE: I didn't think he had any finances to speak of.

FLEMMING: He doesn't. (*Opens his briefcase and hands Anne a piece of legal paper.*) Eighty-seven pounds.

ANNE: (*Looking at the paper.*) I don't understand.

FLEMMING: Once the house is sold and your debts are paid, that's how much your inheritance will be.

ANNE: Eighty-seven pounds!

FLEMMING: I know. It's quite a shock.

ANNE: (*Excited.*) I had no idea there would be this much money! What wonderful news.

FLEMMING: You do understand the value of money, do you not? We are talking about 87 pounds. That's it. Nothing more.

ANNE: Yes, I understand. This will be plenty enough to get me to London and tide me over for a few days until I plan my next move.

FLEMMING: Eighty-seven pounds won't last long in London, I'm afraid.

ANNE: That's all right. I'll find a job when I get there.

FLEMMING: You have no living relatives?

ANNE: I'm all alone in the world. *(Realizes.)* Just like Pamela!

FLEMMING: Pamela? Is she a friend of yours?

ANNE: *(Smiles, knowingly.)* In a way. Pamela is someone who throws herself into adventure, no matter what dangers she may face. I hope to be just like her one day.

FLEMMING: You don't let anything get you down, do you, Miss Beddingfeld?

ANNE: How can I? I have no need to wallow in the sadness behind me when there is so much excitement ahead of me.

FLEMMING: Well, you're right about one thing: Exciting things do tend to happen in London. *(Picks up his briefcase, tips his hat.)* Good day, Miss Beddingfeld.

ANNE: Good day, Mr. Flemming. *(Flemming exits. Anne approaches her father's gravesite. She takes off her coat, lays it near the grave, and picks up a flower. She stands up straight, ready to face her future. She takes off her hat and throws it to the wind. To herself.)* Anne the Adventurous! *(Nods, smiles.)* I like the sound of that. *(Throws one end of the scarf over her shoulder, dramatically.)* Episode one: "A new beginning in London"!

(As lights fade to black, Anne puts the flower in her teeth and raises an arm dramatically.)

Scene 4

(AT RISE: Tube station, London. A raised platform is upstage. On one side are the tracks for the train, which are not visible to the audience. A bench or two are placed at intervals. A clock, advertisements, and maps of train routes are on the walls. The lighting is dim and flickers occasionally. L.B. Carton is seated on a bench CS, reading a newspaper. The newspaper obscures his face. Anne enters.)

ANNE: (To herself, excitedly.) A London Underground Tube station. It's so beautiful! (Thinks.) Well, not beautiful, so much as dingy and dirty. But, still, it's everything I hoped it would be. (Points or crosses to various areas of the scene.) There's the platform where the passengers wait to board. And there are the tracks. (Bends down, cupping a hand to her ear, listening.) Wouldn't want to take a tumble down there. You can hear the electricity from the tracks buzzing. (Approaches Carton.) And there are the benches where the passengers wait for their train. (Leaning over Carton.) Where are you headed today, Sir?

CARTON: (Dropping his newspaper a bit.) None of your business. (Brings the newspaper up again.)

ANNE: (Trying to read the paper over his shoulder.) Any good news stories today?

CARTON: (Agitated.) Scram, will you? (Crosses to stand on the platform. Lights flicker.)

ANNE: (To herself.) Someone's cranky this morning... (Wrinkles her nose.) ...and smelly! (Waves a hand in front of her nose.) What is that musty odor? It's so familiar. (Thinks.) Moth balls! His overcoat simply reeks of them, which is odd, since it's been cold for weeks and the smell should've worn off by now. (Realizes, excitedly.) Unless he's just come from abroad...somewhere warm. Maybe India, where he's a tea merchant! (Harry Rayburn enters, unseen by Anne or Carton. He is wearing a long brown overcoat, pants, and a brown fedora. Lights flicker. Anne is standing halfway between Rayburn and Carton, still unaware of Rayburn. Lights flicker. Trying to be heard over the sound of the train, calls loudly.) Excuse me, sir, but are you a tea merchant from India?

(Carton turns to look at Anne, a look of agitation on his face. However, when he sees Rayburn, his face changes to that of fear. He slowly raises a hand and points to Rayburn.)

CARTON: (Fearful, shakily.) You!

(Lights flicker.)

ANNE: *(Confused.)* Who?

(Just as Anne starts to turn around to look behind her, the lights flicker, and Carton takes a step back, crying out as he falls onto the rails. Anne turns quickly back to look at the rails as a bright flash of light comes from the rails and the sound of a loud buzzing/crackling sound is heard. The rest of the lights go out, causing the flash to illuminate Anne and Rayburn. When the lights come back up, Rayburn is gone and Anne is frozen in place, horrified. Station Officials 1-2 rush on and pull Carton up from the "tracks.")

OFFICIAL 1: *(To Official 2, as they are pulling Carton up.)* Protect his head.

OFFICIAL 2: Got it!

(Station Officials 1-2 lay Carton on the platform. Rayburn, wearing a fake beard, enters and rushes past Anne.)

RAYBURN: Let me pass, please. I am a medical man.

ANNE: Of course.

(Anne steps aside. Rayburn rushes to Carton and kneels down beside him. Note: During the following, Londoners enter and form a crowd of Onlookers.)

RAYBURN: *(To Onlookers.)* Please, give me some room!

OFFICIAL 1: *(To Onlookers.)* You heard the man! Give him some room!

(Station Officials 1-2 take a couple of steps back. Rayburn leans over Carton, listening to his heart. Slight pause. Rayburn sits up.)

RAYBURN: *(To others, somberly.)* I'm afraid he's gone.

ANNE: Gone?

(Rayburn stands.)

RAYBURN: There's nothing to be done.

(Londoners begin to crowd around Carton. Slowly, Rayburn takes a few steps away from the body and then quickens his pace as he starts to exit. As he exits, he drops a small slip of paper. Anne sees this and rushes to pick up the paper.)

ANNE: *(Holding up the slip of paper. To Rayburn, calls.)* Excuse me, Doctor, I think you dropped something! *(Rayburn is gone. Looks at the paper.)* "17.1 22 Kilmorden Castle." *(Looks up.)* What a bunch of nonsense. *(Wrinkling her nose.)* There's that smell again. *(Brings the*

paper up to her nose, sniffs it, and recoils in disgust.) Mothballs! Don't tell me the Doctor has recently traveled abroad as well! *(Thinks. Looks at the paper again.)* How unusual. I'd better hang on to this for safe keeping. Something tells me there's more to this paper than meets the eye.

(Anne puts the paper in her pocket. Inspector Meadows enters and approaches Anne. He shows her his credentials.)

MEADOWS: Inspector Meadows, Scotland Yard. *(Puts his credentials in his pocket.)* Tell me, were you here when the accident happened?

ANNE: Yes. I was standing right over there when the man fell onto the tracks.

(Meadows jots down some notes on a notepad with a pencil from his pocket.)

MEADOWS: And was there anyone else down here with you who may have seen what happened?

ANNE: I don't think so. I didn't see anyone. *(Thinks.)* Although I did have a feeling that someone was coming up behind me just before the man fell.

MEADOWS: I was told there was a doctor here who confirmed the man's death.

ANNE: He hurried off without giving his name. But as he was leaving, he dropped— *(Starts to take the paper out of her pocket and stops.)*

MEADOWS: What? What did he drop?

(Anne quickly stuffs the paper back into her pocket.)

ANNE: It turned out to be nothing. Probably a leaf that got caught on his glove.

MEADOWS: All right. That's all I need for now. Thank you for your time.

(Meadows closes his notebook and approaches Carton. Carrying a bag, Lydia Davies enters and approaches Anne.)

LYDIA: *(To Anne.)* Were you here when the man fell on the tracks?

ANNE: Yes, I was, but I already spoke to the detective.

LYDIA: Oh, I'm not from Scotland Yard. I'm Lydia Davies.

ANNE: From the "Daily Budget"? You're my favorite reporter! I'd love to be a reporter myself.

LYDIA: That's great. *(Takes out her notebook and pencil.)* Now, would you mind if I asked you some questions?

ANNE: Of course not! Fire away.

LYDIA: So the man was standing on the platform and then just suddenly fell back onto the tracks?

ANNE: That's right.

LYDIA: Do you think it was an accident?

ANNE: I am positive. Something alarmed him and he stepped backward blindly.

LYDIA: What alarmed him?

ANNE: That I don't know. But there was something. He looked panic-stricken.

LYDIA: And just how do you think this...accident is connected to the murder over at Mill House?

ANNE: Murder? What are you talking about?

LYDIA: A woman was found strangled at Mill House. They found her just a short while ago.

ANNE: How awful! Who was the woman?

LYDIA: She's thought to be a foreigner, but so far she hasn't been identified.

ANNE: That should be easy enough if you found her in her own home.

LYDIA: That's the thing. She wasn't in her own home. Mill House belongs to Sir Eustace Peddler.

ANNE: Sir Eustace Peddler? Why does that name sound familiar?

LYDIA: He's a member of Parliament.

ANNE: Oh. *(Realizes.)* Oohhh!

LYDIA: Exactly.

ANNE: Where is this Mill House, exactly?

LYDIA: It's just up the road at—

(Holding up a piece of paper, Official 2 breaks through the Crowd.)

OFFICIAL 2: I've found something!

(Anne and Lydia rush over to Official 2 and Inspector Meadows.)

ANNE: What is it?

MEADOWS: *(To Official 2.)* Hand it over.

(Inspector Meadows snatches the paper out of Official 2's hand.)

OFFICIAL 2: I found it in the dead guy's pocket. It looks like an order to view a property.

LYDIA: What property?

MEADOWS: The Mill House.

ANNE: The same place that woman was found murdered!

LYDIA: Two deaths in one day: a woman strangled and a man dead on the tracks of the London Tube. Inspector, can I have a comment?

Looks like we've got ourselves a mystery.

ANNE: Exciting things do happen in London!

(As lights fade to black, Lydia gives Anne an odd look.)

Scene 5

(AT RISE: *The Mill House. The entry door to the house is SL while the rest of the scene is the interior. A sofa, a side chair or two, side tables with lamps, etc. are present. There is a window with a window seat. The stage is dark except for a spotlight on the door. Caroline James is in front of the door, sweeping the stoop. She has a ring of keys on her belt. Anne enters, carrying a bag with a notebook and pencil inside. Anne is unseen by Caroline. Anne is holding a slip of paper.*)

ANNE: *(To herself, looking at the paper.)* Mill House. Marlowe. Buckinghamshire. *(Looks up at the house.)* This looks like the place. *(Approaches Caroline.)* Excuse me?

(Caroline looks up and immediately becomes angry.)

CAROLINE: Go! Get out of here! This is private property.

ANNE: I...I'm just here to see the house.

CAROLINE: Gawker, are you? You wanna get a look at the place they've been talking about in the papers? Or worse yet...you're another reporter trying to get a scoop so you can sell more papers? Well, you're not welcome, do you hear me? Go away!

ANNE: I understand the house is available to rent? *(Holds out the piece of paper.)* I have an order to see the property.

(Caroline takes the paper from Anne and looks at it.)

CAROLINE: Oh, I see. *(Sheepishly.)* Sorry, miss, I beg your pardon. These newspaper people have been pestering me ever since it happened. Of course, the house is available, if you still want it.

ANNE: Why wouldn't I want it?

CAROLINE: Well, on account of the...unpleasantness that occurred here.

ANNE: *(Playing dumb.)* Was there a fire? Water damage?

CAROLINE: No, everything is in perfect order, I assure you. My name's Caroline James. My husband and I are the caretakers of this home. It's in tip-top shape, you have my word.

ANNE: Then what is this unpleasantness you speak of?

CAROLINE: *(Aghast.)* Surely, you've heard about the foreign woman who was found strangled?

ANNE: *(Playing dumb.)* I think I may have read something about that.

CAROLINE: *(Indicating the house.)* Well, this is the place where she died!

ANNE: *(Playing dumb.)* You don't say!

CAROLINE: Terrible business. Lady had barely stepped foot in the house when she was killed.

ANNE: What do you mean?

CAROLINE: Oh, she was like you...came to see about renting the place around three o'clock. Said her name was Mrs. De Castina. I'm not in the habit of accompanying prospective tenants, so I opened up the house for her and went back to my work. A few minutes later, a young man arrived.

ANNE: A young man? What did he look like?

CAROLINE: He was tall, broad-shouldered, with a bronzed face and light grey eyes. *(Remembers.)* Oh! And he was wearing a brown suit.

ANNE: Did he, by any chance, have a beard?

CAROLINE: Oh, no, miss. The man in the brown suit was clean-shaven.

ANNE: And you let him in the house, too?

CAROLINE: He said he was a friend of the lady's and was only late because he had to stop at the post office to send a telegram. How was I to know he wasn't telling the truth?

ANNE: No, of course, you did the right thing. There was no way to know.

CAROLINE: Five minutes later, the man suddenly reappeared, handed me the keys, and explained that the house would not suit them. I didn't see the lady, but I assumed she had gone on ahead.

ANNE: A reasonable assumption.

CAROLINE: Truth is, the man...he looked like a man who had seen a ghost. I thought he had taken ill.

ANNE: How unusual.

CAROLINE: I discovered the body a short while later when I went in to do my dusting. Quite an unexpected fright, let me tell you...just lying there right in the sitting room.

ANNE: You poor thing!

CAROLINE: So, you still want to see the house? I wouldn't if it were me. I won't set foot in there after dark for nothing. Why, I'd leave this place altogether if Sir Eustace hadn't begged me to stay.

ANNE: I thought Sir Eustace was in Cannes. Isn't that why the house is available to rent?

CAROLINE: So he was, miss. Came back home when he heard the news. Offered to pay us double to stay on. *(Pulls out keys.)* Shall I open up the house, then? Or have I frightened you off?

ANNE: I've come all this way. I might as well have a look.

CAROLINE: Suit yourself. *(Unlocks the door, swings it open, and steps aside.)* I'll be over in the garden, tidying up if you need me.

(Caroline takes her broom and exits. Anne enters through the door. As she does, lights come up on the scene. Note: For the following, Anne wanders around for a few minutes, touching items, looking for clues, etc.)

ANNE: *(To herself.)* Pretty standard sitting room. Comfortable sofa, chairs, end tables. Mrs. James was right about one thing: This house is in tip-top shape. *(Sits on a chair, opens her bag, and pulls out a notebook and pencil.)* I guess the first thing a real adventurer would do would be to make a sketch of her surroundings. *(Looking around as she sketches.)* Not sure what I'm looking for. It's not like there's going to be dusty footprints or a trail of blood. *(Stands.)* I don't know what I was thinking, coming here. There aren't any clues left that the police haven't already uncovered. *(Puts the notebook in her bag. As she goes to put the pencil in her bag, she drops it, and it rolls toward the window seat.)* Well, would you look at that? This house is so old, the floors are uneven. It's a good thing the cupboard under the window seat wasn't open or else my pencil would've rolled right in! *(Approaches the cupboard and opens it. The pencil rolls in.)* Yep, just as I thought. *(Anne gets on the ground and reaches into the cupboard.)* Wait a minute! What is that I'm feeling back there? *(Reaches deeper into the cupboard and pulls out a roll of film.)* Why, it's a roll of film! Now this is a find! *(Sits up and rubs her hand across the film.)* Not very dusty. It couldn't have been laying here long. *(Stands and looks at the roll of film.)* But who dropped it? The foreign woman? The man in the brown suit? *(Sniffs the roll of film.)* And why does it smell like mothballs?

(Meadows enters, followed by Caroline. Anne quickly stuffs the roll of film in her pocket.)

CAROLINE: Sorry to interrupt, miss, but the Inspector insisted on taking a second look at the crime scene.

MEADOWS: Miss Beddingfeld, how curious that you should be here at Mill House.

CAROLINE: *(Looking from Meadows to Caroline.)* You know each other?

MEADOWS: Miss Beddingfeld was at the Tube station when that man fell to his death on the tracks.

CAROLINE: She was?

MEADOWS: She was the only witness, it turns out.

CAROLINE: *(To Anne.)* You sure you're here to see the house, or are you just another one of those scheming—?

(Lydia enters, with a notepad and pencil in hand.)

LYDIA: (*Announcing.*) Reporter from the "Daily Budget" here!

CAROLINE: How did you get in here?

LYDIA: The door was wide open. I figured you were ready to answer some questions now, Mrs. James.

CAROLINE: Not now, not ever! Now, go away! (*Approaches Lydia and tries to shove her out the door.*)

LYDIA: What do you think the connection is between the man who died in the Tube station and the woman who was strangled at Mill House?

CAROLINE: I don't know, and I don't care. Now get out of here!

(*Caroline stops pushing Lydia and points to the door.*)

LYDIA: (*To Meadows.*) Sources originally thought the Tube victim could've been the killer, but that theory has been proven false since they were found dead at nearly the same time. Do you have a comment, Inspector Meadows?

MEADOWS: We're investigating every potential lead.

LYDIA: And why, exactly, did you ask Miss Beddingfeld to join you here?

MEADOWS: I didn't. She was already here when I arrived.

LYDIA: Is that so? Tell me, Miss Beddingfeld, what brings you to Mill House today?

ANNE: I was thinking about renting it.

CAROLINE: Yeah, right.

LYDIA: Are you here because the Tube victim had an order to view this house?

ANNE: No...yes...maybe?

CAROLINE: I knew it!

LYDIA: Are you just a concerned citizen, or do you have a deeper connection to the crime, Miss Beddingfeld?

ANNE: Just a concerned citizen, I assure you. After witnessing what I did at the Tube station, I just had to see for myself what was so special about the Mill House.

LYDIA: And did you find anything?

ANNE: No. I can honestly say that there appears to be nothing out of order in this room.

CAROLINE: Just the way Sir Eustace likes it.

MEADOWS: Very well. I'll just take another look around for myself and then I'll be on my way. (*Starts to look around.*)

LYDIA: Any other comments for the "Daily Budget"?

ANNE: Only that I hope someone finds the mysterious man in the brown suit.

CAROLINE: I'm sure the police will catch him in no time. Now, let's go.

(Caroline takes Lydia's arm and escorts her to the exit.)

ANNE: And if the police can't catch him, I will!

(As lights fade to black, Anne pulls out the roll of film and smiles.)

Scene 6

(AT RISE: *The streets of London. Two booths are present: a shipping office/ticketing booth and a Kodak film developer. Additional set pieces indicating city streets may be present. Ticket Salesperson and Kodiak Employee are in their booths. Londoners can be milling about, shopping, sitting on benches, etc. Sir Eustace Pedler and Guy Pagett enter. Pagett is carrying a leather-bound diary and pen. Unseen by Pagett, Rayburn is loitering about, listening.*)

PAGETT: *(To Sir Eustace.)* At 11:30 you have a meeting with Mr. James to discuss the winterization of the gardens.

SIR EUSTACE: All right.

PAGETT: And at one o'clock, you have an appointment with an Inspector Meadows to go over your statement regarding what happened at Mill House while you were in Cannes.

SIR EUSTACE: I don't see how I could possibly be any help since I wasn't here when it happened.

PAGETT: Well, it is your house.

SIR EUSTACE: That appears to be more my misfortune than my fault. I shouldn't be subjected to this inquiry.

PAGETT: You know how the police are, sir.

SIR EUSTACE: A bunch of fools, all of them!

PAGETT: Sir Eustace, lower your voice, please! Your constituents might hear you!

SIR EUSTACE: Do you work for me, or do I work for you, Pagett?

PAGETT: Well, technically, as an elected member of Parliament, some might say you work for me... *(Trails off and looks at Sir Eustace, who is annoyed.)* I work for you, sir, of course.

SIR EUSTACE: I should say so, Pagett. Luckily, for you, I am a kind and forgiving man.

PAGETT: Very forgiving, sir.

SIR EUSTACE: And kind. Didn't I just send you on a trip to Florence just last week?

PAGETT: *(Nervously.)* Yes...yes, of course, sir. Florence...I definitely enjoyed my time in Florence. So kind of you.

SIR EUSTACE: That's right, Pagett, and don't you forget it! Now, what else is on my calendar for today?

PAGETT: You have tea with Augustus Milray at four o'clock. He wishes to discuss the final details of your upcoming trip to South Africa to deliver those documents to General Smuts.

SIR EUSTACE: Not Milray! Is there a bigger bore in all of Parliament than Monotonous Milray? Doesn't he realize South Africa is on the brink of revolution?

PAGETT: I have a feeling that's why he'd rather you go than himself.

SIR EUSTACE: Very well, although I don't see why he wants to meet again. Everything is finalized except the tickets for our passage. (*Sees ticket booth.*) The shipping office for the "Kilmorden Castle" ocean liner is right over there. We may as well get our tickets squared away.

PAGETT: Very good, Sir Eustace.

(Sir Eustace and Pagett approach the ticketing booth. Anne enters and approaches the photo booth.)

ANNE: (*To Kodiak Employee.*) I'd like to process this roll of film, please. (*Lydia enters. Calls.*) Lydia Davies, hello!

LYDIA: Oh, hello there, Miss Beddingfeld.

ANNE: How's the story coming along?

LYDIA: A lot of dead ends right now, I'm afraid.

ANNE: I was hoping we might cross paths again. I have some details on the Mill House murder that might interest you.

LYDIA: Do you, now? Let's hear it. (*Takes out her notebook and pencil.*)

ANNE: Not so fast. If I help you, I'm going to need your help in return.

LYDIA: Not so sweet and innocent, are you? Okay, spill it. Tell me what it is you want.

ANNE: I want to be a reporter with the "Daily Budget."

LYDIA: And what makes you think I can help you with that?

ANNE: You're the best reporter the "Daily Budget" has! With your recommendation, I'll have no trouble landing a job.

LYDIA: You've certainly got spunk. Tell me, what information do you have that I don't already know?

ANNE: I have some information no one knows about a man no one suspects.

LYDIA: Is that so? What man?

ANNE: There was a doctor at the Tube station...a bearded man who appeared out of nowhere and disappeared just as quickly.

LYDIA: What doctor?

ANNE: He didn't give his name to the police, but he dropped a piece of paper as he was rushing off...a piece of paper with two words and some figures written on it that smells like mothballs!

LYDIA: So what if it smells like mothballs?

ANNE: So that piece of paper could only have smelled like mothballs because it was originally in the possession of another man—a very interesting man, a man who smelled like mothballs.

LYDIA: And who, do you suppose, is the mothball man?

ANNE: The man who died on the tracks!

LYDIA: Interesting, indeed, but tell me...how do you know the paper smelled like mothballs?

ANNE: Because I'm the one who found it. *(Takes the paper out of her pocket.)*

LYDIA: Very good, Miss Beddingfeld! You do think like a reporter. Let me see that paper.

ANNE: I don't think so. It's my find. *(Holds it close to her chest.)*

LYDIA: *(Smiles.)* My, my, you are a bright girl. Quite right to hang on to it. And you have no qualms about not handing it over to the police?

ANNE: Inspector Meadows has no idea what he's doing.

LYDIA: So true! Well, Anne, here's what I can do for you: Keep working on this line of thinking. If you get anything—anything that's publishable—send it along and you'll get your chance. *(Starts to exit.)* There's always room for talent at the "Daily Budget"!

ANNE: Thank you!

(Anne watches as Lydia exits.)

KODAK EMPLOYEE: Hey, miss!

(Anne approaches Kodak booth.)

ANNE: Yes?

KODAK EMPLOYEE: You've made a mistake, I think. This roll is unexposed.

ANNE: Unexposed?

KODAK EMPLOYEE: There're no pictures on it.

ANNE: Really? That's odd. Let me see.

(Kodak Employee shows Anne. Unseen, Rayburn enters and crosses behind Sir Eustace and Pagett. Rayburn tosses something on the ground and then moves away from them. Sir Eustace and Pagett turn.)

SIR EUSTACE: *(To Pagett.)* Great! Our tickets to South Africa will be ready in a few moments. At least now I won't have to listen to Milray go on and on about which liner I should travel on.

PAGETT: Once the tickets are printed, we'd better head back to Mill House so we aren't late for your meeting with Mr. James.

SIR EUSTACE: Does Mr. James work for me, or do I work for him?

PAGETT: Well, technically—

(Pagett stumbles over the item Rayburn tossed and "falls" to the ground. Pagett cries out and holds his ankle.)

SIR EUSTACE: See, that's what you get for being cheeky.

PAGETT: My ankle! I think I've sprained it!

SIR EUSTACE: Would you stop howling and get off the ground? What would the constituents think if they see the secretary of a member of Parliament lying on the ground like an oaf.

(Pagett stands, shakily.)

PAGETT: My apologies, Sir Eustace.

SIR EUSTACE: Why don't you head home, and I'll get the tickets.

PAGETT: Yes, Sir Eustace.

(Pagett limps off. Sir Eustace turns back to the ticket booth. Before he can say anything, Rayburn approaches him.)

RAYBURN: Excuse me, Sir Eustace, but Mr. Milray sent me. I am to accompany you to South Africa as your secretary.

SIR EUSTACE: But I already have a secretary.

RAYBURN: Where is your secretary now?

SIR EUSTACE: He's had an accident and has been injured.

RAYBURN: Are you so sure it was an accident?

SIR EUSTACE: Why wouldn't it be?

RAYBURN: Let's put it this way: With South Africa on the brink of revolution, Milray would not be surprised if an attempt were made to get your secretary out of the way. That is why you must say nothing to anyone as to my accompanying you on this trip.

SIR EUSTACE: Fine, but why didn't Milray discuss this with me himself? I'm to meet with him this afternoon.

RAYBURN: That meeting's been canceled.

SIR EUSTACE: Well, that is good news, isn't it? Very well, then. I suppose you can accompany me. *(Looking at Rayburn questioningly.)*

Although it might be a good idea if I knew my new secretary's name.

RAYBURN: Harry Rayburn seems quite a suitable name.

(Pause.)

SIR EUSTACE: *(Looking at him warily.)* If you say so. I suppose I'll see you on the ship, then.

RAYBURN: Yes, Sir Eustace, you certainly will. *(Tips his hat and exits.)*

SIR EUSTACE: *(To himself.)* Curious encounter, but if it saves me from a meeting with Milray, then it's all right by me.

(Sir Eustace goes to the ticket counter, picks up his tickets, and exits. Holding film, Anne crosses away from Kodak booth.)

ANNE: *(To herself.)* An unexposed roll of film...how curious! If only I knew where to go next in search of clues.

TICKET SALESPERSON: *(Calls.)* Tickets! Get your tickets here for England's most luxurious ocean liner, the "Kilmorden Castle"!

ANNE: The "Kilmorden Castle"! It looks like I've found where I'm headed next! *(Puts the roll of film in her pocket, takes out the piece of paper, looks at it, and approaches the ticket counter.)* Where does the "Kilmorden Castle" sail to?

TICKET SALESPERSON: Cape Town, South Africa, leaving from Southampton on the seventeenth.

ANNE: The seventeenth? *(Looks at the paper. To herself.)* This is it! This must be what the paper is referring to. "Kilmorden Castle" departing on the seventeenth. *(To Ticket Salesperson.)* How much is it?

TICKET SALESPERSON: First-class, 87 pounds.

ANNE: Eighty-seven pounds! Why, that's the exact amount of money I've got. The coincidence is just too much. This has to be it! *(Takes out some money and slaps it on the counter.)* First-class, please. *(The Ticket Salesperson readies the ticket. To herself, facing the audience.)* Look out, man in the brown suit! Anne the Adventurer is hitting the open water. Episode two: "The 'Kilmorden Castle.'"

(As lights fade to black, Anne turns back to the booth.)

Scene 7

(AT RISE: Deck of the "Kilmorden Castle" ocean liner. Sounds of the sea. A railing is upstage. There are groupings of chairs and small tables spaced about the deck. Rev. Edward Chichester is standing, looking over the railing. Pagett is seated. Passengers and Stewardesses mill about. Looking ill, Anne enters, supported by Mary and wearing a blanket around her shoulders.)

MARY: Just a little bit farther, Miss Beddingfeld.

ANNE: (*Agitated.*) You should've just left me in my room. I would've died quicker down there.

MARY: You're just seasick. You'll feel much better on deck, I promise.

ANNE: Seasick? I don't think so. I'm dying, I tell you. Dying!

MARY: We've hit some choppy waters, that is true, but there's smoother weather ahead.

ANNE: Lies, all lies!

MARY: The fresh air will do you wonders.

ANNE: The air smells like raw fish and dying dreams.

MARY: (*Chuckles.*) Feeling sorry for yourself?

ANNE: Yes!

MARY: I know right now it seems as if you'll never recover, but I've seen people much worse than you, and two days later, they were the life and soul of the ship.

ANNE: (*In jest.*) You're a liar and a fiend.

(*Mary lowers Anne into a chair.*)

MARY: Why don't you let me get you a little dry toast and ginger ale? I'm sure you'll be feeling better in no time.

(*Mary tucks the blanket around Anne and starts to exit.*)

ANNE: (*In jest.*) I hate you, Mary! You're a terrible stewardess.

MARY: No, you don't, Miss Beddingfeld. And I'll have you know, I'm a fabulous stewardess.

(*Mary chuckles and exits. Suzanne enters, carrying a large bag. She is followed on by a Steward, who is carrying a chair.*)

SUZANNE: (*To Steward, indicating chair. Points.*) Just put it right over there.

STEWARD: Right here, Mrs. Blair? *(Puts the chair down where she pointed.)*

SUZANNE: No, that won't do at all. *(Points to another spot.)* Try over there.

STEWARD: Here, Mrs. Blair? *(Puts the chair where she pointed.)*

SUZANNE: Let me give it a try. *(Sits, wiggles around, sighs.)* Well, that is just awful, isn't it? *(Stands and points to a spot close to Anne.)* Put it over there.

STEWARD: How is this, Mrs. Blair?

(Steward puts the chair where Suzanne indicated. Suzanne sits.)

SUZANNE: This will be fine. Thank you.

(Steward nods and exits.)

ANNE: *(Groans.)* When will this horrible rocking back and forth cease?

SUZANNE: You'll feel better soon.

ANNE: *(Unconvinced.)* So, I'm told.

SUZANNE: *(Flippantly.)* And, of course, if you don't improve and end up dying, then you'll give the rest of us the excitement of a funeral at sea!

ANNE: How wonderful for you.

SUZANNE: My, but you are a dramatic one, aren't you? *(Chuckles.)*

You're going to be fun. I already know we're going to be fast friends.

I'm Mrs. Clarence Blair. But you may call me Suzanne.

ANNE: *(Looks up, interested.)* Suzanne Blair! I've heard of you. You're known all over England as one of the smartest women of the day.

SUZANNE: My reputation precedes me, I see. And you are?

ANNE: Anne Beddingfeld.

(Anne wearily holds out her hand. Suzanne takes one look at it then pulls her hand back.)

SUZANNE: I should think a formal greeting isn't necessary on this occasion, wouldn't you say?

ANNE: Oh, right. *(Wipes her hand across her forehead and then tucks it under the blanket.)*

SUZANNE: So, what is a young woman such as yourself doing all alone on this ship?

ANNE: *(Sits up straighter, perking up a bit.)* I'm a reporter, or at least I want to be. *(Thinks.)* I guess for now you could say I'm an "adventurer."

SUZANNE: How exciting! I'd like to think I'm a bit of an adventurer myself. *(Thinks.)* Or maybe I'm a troublemaker. *(Shrugs.)* Either way. *(Colonel Race enters and looks around.)* And here comes my partner in crime now! *(Waves her hand, calls.)* Colonel Race, over here!

(Colonel Race approaches Suzanne and Anne.)

COLONEL RACE: Hello, Suzanne. *(Indicating Anne.)* And who is this enchanting creature?

(Mary enters, carrying a tray with a plate of toast under a cloche and a glass of ginger ale, and approaches Anne.)

ANNE: Enchanting? Doubtful. I hardly feel human, let alone enchanting.

COLONEL RACE: Everyone feels like that the first couple of days, but the fresh air on deck will help you feel better in no time.

MARY: That's just what I told her. *(Lifts the cloche and places the food and drink on the table.)* Your toast and ginger ale, Miss Beddingfeld.

(Anne takes the glass of ginger ale.)

ANNE: *(In jest.)* I still hate you, Mary.

MARY: No, you don't.

(Mary chuckles and wanders off to serve other Passengers.)

SUZANNE: *(To Anne.)* What a great stewardess.

ANNE: Yes, she is. Just don't tell her that. *(All chuckle. Anne drops the blanket down to her lap.)* If I'm being honest, the fresh air is really helping.

SUZANNE: Being shut up in those stuffy cabins would kill anyone. You have an outside cabin, I hope?

ANNE: No.

SUZANNE: My dear girl, you've got to change! There's plenty of room. A lot of people got off the ship when we docked at Madeira. Talk to Mary. She'll get it straightened out for you. *(Calls.)* Mary!

(Mary approaches.)

MARY: Yes, Mrs. Blair?

SUZANNE: Do you have any outside rooms available for Miss Beddingfeld? I'm sure she'd feel much better in an outside room.

MARY: One of my passengers on D-deck disembarked on Madeira, so his cabin's available: cabin 13.

ANNE: (*Panicked.*) Oh, no! Not 13!

COLONEL RACE: (*Smirks.*) Superstitious, are we?

MARY: Cabin 17 on the starboard side was available this morning, but I think it's been allotted to someone. Still, as the gentleman's things aren't in it yet, I daresay he wouldn't mind changing.

ANNE: That sounds wonderful.

MARY: (*Pointing to Pagett.*) I see the gentleman's secretary right over there. I'll go and ask him now.

SUZANNE: Thank you, Mary. (*Mary approaches Pagett. To Anne.*) See? Problem solved.

COLONEL RACE: It's smooth sailing ahead for Miss Beddingfeld!

(*Suzanne takes a camera out of her bag and stands.*)

SUZANNE: In the meantime, why don't we take some photos of this gorgeous scenery we're passing?

COLONEL RACE: If we walk over to the other side of the ship, we should be able to get a nice view of the Grand Peak of Tenerife.

SUZANNE: Ooh, that sounds lovely! Do you think I could get a good photograph of it?

COLONEL RACE: (*Chuckles.*) You haven't managed to get a good photograph yet. Why start now? (*Holds out his hand to Anne.*) Miss Beddingfeld, would you like to take a walk around the deck with us?

ANNE: I'm not sure if I'm up for it.

COLONEL RACE: Let's give it a try. You can lean on me for support.

(*Colonel Race helps Anne to stand. Commotion breaks out between Pagett and Mary.*)

PAGETT: (*To Mary, shouts.*) That cabin was reserved for Sir Eustace Pedler!

ANNE: (*To herself.*) Sir Eustace Pedler, the owner of the Mill House, is onboard this ship? That can't be a coincidence!

MARY: (*To Pagett.*) It's all right, sir. We can just as easily fix up cabin 13 for you instead.

PAGETT: But I don't want 13. I want 17!

MARY: Cabin 13 is quite a bit larger, sir.

PAGETT: Cabin 17 is the one I want, and that's the cabin I'm going to get!

(Rev. Edward Chichester turns away from the railing and approaches Pagett and Mary.)

CHICHESTER: *(To Mary and Pagett.)* Are you referring to cabin 17 on D-deck?

MARY: We are.

CHICHESTER: Well, then, let me help put this argument to rest. Cabin 17 is mine. I reserved it this morning.

PAGETT: I don't think so.

CHICHESTER: Are you calling me—a member of the clergy—a liar?

PAGETT: I think I am!

ANNE: *(To Colonel Race.)* Who is that fellow?

COLONEL RACE: That's the Rev. Edward Chichester. He's a missionary on his way to South Africa.

ANNE: I don't want to cause trouble. I'll just stay in the cabin I have now.

SUZANNE: Nonsense! If you're to be a reporter someday, you'll have to learn to stand your ground...might as well start now. Now, let's get you looking presentable. *(Takes the blanket from Anne, straightens her clothes, and fixes her hair. Steps back to survey her work.)* There! Now, march over and get your room!

(Anne approaches Mary, Pagett, and Chichester.)

ANNE: Oh, please, I was told I could have cabin 17. I've been rather ill, you see, and I've been told that cabin is just the thing for a poor, sick girl like me. Rev. Chichester, is it?

CHICHESTER: Yes...

ANNE: You won't deny an ill woman her accommodations, will you?

CHICHESTER: Well, I...

(Anne releases Rev. Chichester's hand. He looks at his hand with disgust and wipes it on his pants.)

ANNE: *(To Pagett.)* And Mister...?

PAGETT: Pagett. Guy Pagett. I'm the secretary for Sir Eustace Pedler, member of the British Parliament.

(Suzanne approaches the group.)

SUZANNE: Oh, right! I didn't realize Sir Eustace was on board. He and I are old friends. I can assure you he won't mind if Miss Beddingfeld takes room 17.

PAGETT: Mrs. Blair, of course. *(Takes a step back.)* Miss Beddingfeld, was it? She may have the room.

ANNE: Thank you, Mr. Pagett. *(Pagett exits, slightly miffed. With a pout.)* Reverend?

CHICHESTER: Very well. *(Exits, upset.)*

MARY: Great, then it's settled. *(To Anne.)* I'll have your things brought to room 17 immediately.

ANNE: Thank you, Mary.

MARY: *(Starts to exit. To herself but loud enough for Anne to hear.)* What a fine stewardess you are, Mary! I could never have gotten that room without you. Why, thank you, Anne. You are too kind. Too kind! *(Exits.)*

COLONEL RACE: *(To Anne.)* So, if you're superstitious about numbers, I would suppose that 17 is now quite lucky for you?

ANNE: *(Chuckles.)* I suppose it is. *(Remembers the paper.)* Seventeen! *(Takes a step away and pulls out the sheet of paper. To herself.)* The numbers on the slip of paper that the doctor dropped in the Tube station...it's not the day of departure...it's the room number! *(Thinks.)* That must mean the "one" refers to the time—one o'clock! And the 22? *(To Colonel Race.)* What is the date today?

COLONEL RACE: It's the 21st.

ANNE: *(Excitedly.)* So that means tomorrow is the 22nd!

SUZANNE: *(Chuckles.)* She knows her numbers!

ANNE: *(To herself.)* Room 17...one o'clock...on the 22nd! *(Smiles.)* I don't know who the man in the brown suit is expecting to meet in room 17, but he's going to find Anne Beddingfeld, like it or not!

(Blackout.)

Scene 8

(AT RISE: "Kilmorden Castle," room 17. There is a bed and a bedside table with a clock and lamp. A large trunk is on the floor near the bed. Wearing a robe, Anne is seated on the bed. Mary is standing nearby, waving a hand in front of her face.)

MARY: I've changed all the linens, sprayed some perfumes, but it's no good, Miss Beddingfeld. I cannot remove this odor from your room.

ANNE: (*Sniffs.*) There's something really familiar about this smell...

MARY: The smell of dead rats is familiar to you? (*Quickly.*) Not that I'm saying there are dead rats in here...there are not. I don't know what the smell is.

(*Anne rises.*)

ANNE: Asafoetida! [*Pronounced as-uh-fet-i-duh*]

MARY: What on earth is that?

ANNE: Asafoetida! I worked in a hospital dispensary during the war for a short time. We used it as a digestive aid.

MARY: Well, whatever this... (*Slowly, pronouncing the word.*) ...as-a-foetida is, there's no way you can sleep in this room tonight. There's a cabin on C-deck you could move into just for the night, anyway.

ANNE: No way. I'm staying right here. The smell's not that bad. (*Coughs.*)

MARY: Miss Beddingfeld, I must insist—

ANNE: I'm fine, Mary, really.

MARY: All right. But just so you know, I'm turning in for the night. You can't change your mind in an hour and expect the night stewards to change your room. Not everyone is as nice as I am.

ANNE: (*Chuckles.*) I'll keep that in mind.

MARY: Goodnight, Miss Beddingfeld.

(*Mary exits. Anne rushes over to the clock.*)

ANNE: It's nearly one o'clock! (*Takes a slip of paper out of her robe pocket. Reads.*) "Room 17, one o'clock, the 22nd, 'Kilmorden Castle.'" (*Looks around.*) This is the room. It's almost the day and time, and I'm on board the ship. If something's going to happen, it'll happen any minute! (*Puts the paper away, turns back the blankets on the bed, and jumps into bed. Sitting upright, she pulls the blankets up to her chin and waits.*)

Pause.) Any minute now... *(Silence.)* Aaaaany minute... *(Silence. Anne waits and then sits up. Angrily.)* Would it just hurry up already?

(A loud commotion is heard. In a panic, Rayburn enters.)

RAYBURN: Save me! They're after me!

ANNE: Now we're talking! *(Gets out of bed and opens her trunk. Indicating trunk.)* Here, get inside. *(Rayburn gets inside the trunk. Anne shuts the lid, rushes to her bed, and pulls up the blankets. Knock at the door. Calls.)* Come in!

(Jane enters.)

JANE: I beg your pardon, miss, but I thought I heard you call out.

ANNE: No, I didn't. And now you've interrupted my sleep.

JANE: Sorry, miss. I truly thought I heard something. There's a gentleman who's stumbling about, rather drunk, and we're afraid he might wander into one of the ladies' cabins and frighten them.

ANNE: No stumbling drunk gentlemen in here.

JANE: Glad to hear. Sorry again for the interruption.

ANNE: Don't let it happen again, Miss...?

JANE: Jane. I'm the night stewardess. My apologies again for disturbing you.

(Jane exits. Anne listens to make sure Jane is has left and then opens the lid of the trunk.)

ANNE: *(To Rayburn.)* Drunk, are you? That explains it. Come out at once. *(Nothing happens.)* I said, come out at once! *(Nothing happens. Looks in the trunk.)* Dead drunk and sound asleep, are we? *(To herself.)* Now what am I going to do? *(Looks in the trunk and notices something.)* Is that...blood? *(Touches Rayburn and becomes alarmed.)* It is blood! I've got to get him out of there. *(Uses all her strength to get Rayburn out of the trunk and onto the floor. She takes off his coat to assess him and finds a wound on his arm.)* Why, he's been stabbed!

(Anne pulls some items out of her trunk to dress the wound. After she does, Rayburn awakens, startled, and tries to move away from her.)

RAYBURN: Let me go!

ANNE: Keep still. You've been stabbed. I need to finish tending to your wound.

RAYBURN: (*Trying to stand.*) Thank you, I don't need anything done for me.

ANNE: That's a nasty wound. You must let me dress it.

RAYBURN: You will do nothing of the kind!

ANNE: (*Annoyed.*) It appears you forgot your manners when you entered my room *uninvited* in the middle of the night.

RAYBURN: Then I should relieve you of my presence.

(*Holding his arm, Rayburn heads to the door. It is obvious he is weak and in pain. He falls down on the bed. Anne approaches him.*)

ANNE: Don't be a fool. If you leave now, you'll bleed all over the ship, and whoever stabbed you will find you quite easily by the trail of blood you leave behind.

RAYBURN: (*Sighs.*) Very well. I suppose I'll allow you to dress my arm.

ANNE: (*Sarcastically.*) How kind of you. (*Retrieves her supplies and goes back to work dressing his wound.*) So, who stabbed you?

RAYBURN: I'm sorry, but I'm not going to tell you that.

ANNE: Why not?

RAYBURN: (*With a smirk.*) As they say, if you don't want something broadcast to the world, keep your mouth shut.

ANNE: You don't think I can keep a secret?

RAYBURN: I don't think, I *know*.

ANNE: Well, then, perhaps I'll do a little broadcasting about the strange man who found himself in my room, bleeding and begging me to save him.

(*Rayburn rises.*)

RAYBURN: I have no doubt you will.

(*Rayburn starts to exit. Anne rushes to him.*)

ANNE: How dare you! (*They stare at each another for a moment. Relaxes.*) You haven't thanked me yet for saving your life.

RAYBURN: (*Darkly.*) I wish you hadn't. I'd be better off if I was dead and this whole thing was behind me.

ANNE: A simple "thank you" would suffice.

(*Rayburn heads toward the door and stops.*)

RAYBURN: I shall not thank you, not now or at any other time, but I acknowledge the debt. Someday I will pay it.

ANNE: Aren't you at least going to tell me your name?

RAYBURN: *(Smiles.)* Now, where would be the fun in that? *(Exits.)*

ANNE: *(To audience.)* Anne the adventurer, Episode three: "The Mysterious Midnight Stranger." *(Smiles as lights fade to black.)*

Scene 9

(AT RISE: Deck of the "Kilmorden Castle," evening. The deck is decorated for a fancy dress party, with candle-lit tables covered in tablecloths. Party lights are strung about. Additional party décor may be added if desired. Passengers are milling about enjoying the festivities. Passengers are dressed either in costume attire or elegant dress attire. Arm in arm, Anne and Suzanne enter, dressed for the party.)

SUZANNE: I'm so glad to have met you, Anne. I've decided that you and Colonel Race are the only two people on board who don't bore me to death.

ANNE: (*Chuckles.*) Well, I hope I'm not a bore today. I didn't sleep well last night, and then this morning, I came back to my room to find it ransacked and my belongings thrown everywhere. It took Mary and I ages to clean it up.

SUZANNE: Such odd happening's on this ship! Last night, some idiot of a steward woke me up to return a roll of film I dropped yesterday.

ANNE: In the middle of the night? How odd.

SUZANNE: Even worse, he did it in the most melodramatic way. He stuck his arm through the ventilator above my bed and dropped them neatly in the middle of my tummy! I thought it was a bomb!

ANNE: That is unusual...and a little bit exciting!

SUZANNE: Such is my life, dear Anne. Such is my life. (*Chuckles.*) So, tell me...what's in South Africa that makes Anne Beddingfeld leave the comforts of home?

ANNE: Well, for starters, my father was anxious to go there...before his sudden death.

SUZANNE: (*Realizes.*) So you must be Professor Charles Beddingfeld's daughter!

ANNE: You know him?

SUZANNE: Heard of him? He's very famous in archeological circles.

ANNE: Do you frequent such circles? I wouldn't think that would be your scene.

SUZANNE: Darling, I frequent all the circles. Every scene is my scene.

ANNE: (*Smiles.*) See, this is why you're such fabulous company.

SUZANNE: So are you going to Broken Hill to dig up more skulls?

ANNE: (*Mysteriously.*) I may, though I may have other plans as well.

SUZANNE: What a mysterious minx you are! You must tell me why you're really here.

ANNE: Well, I have been thinking it would be nice to have someone to confide in, and I do think I might be able to trust you.

SUZANNE: Oh, you can!

(Anne looks around to make sure no one is eavesdropping, takes Suzanne by the arm, and leads her to one side.)

ANNE: *(To Suzanne, stage whisper.)* It all started in the Tube station in London...

(Sir Eustace and Pagett enter.)

PAGETT: *(To Sir Eustace.)* There's no room in your cabin to work, Sir Eustace. It's full of trunks.

SIR EUSTACE: I thought you had spoken to the steward about getting an extra cabin for the trunks?

PAGETT: I did. I requested cabin 17, just like you told me to.

SIR EUSTACE: Great. That cabin is right next door to mine. It will be easy to move the trunks next door. Well done, Pagett.

PAGETT: I didn't get 17.

SIR EUSTACE: I thought you just said you had?

PAGETT: I only said I had requested it. Apparently, that missionary Chichester and some girl called Miss Beddingfeld had also been promised cabin 17. The girl won out in the end.

SIR EUSTACE: Well, is there another cabin available that we might move the trunks into?

PAGETT: The stewardess said 13 and 28 were open.

SIR EUSTACE: Did you secure one of them?

PAGETT: You told me to get cabin 17.

SIR EUSTACE: Only because it was available and right next door. Thirteen and 28 will suit our purposes just fine.

PAGETT: Well, why didn't you say that, then? I nearly came to blows with Chichester over that cabin!

SIR EUSTACE: My secretary...fighting with a missionary! Now that would've been something! *(Chuckles.)*

PAGETT: Speaking of Chichester, I think I saw him coming out of cabin 17 just after they moved Miss Beddingfeld's belongings into the room.

SIR EUSTACE: *(Sternly.)* Are you trying to imply there is some torrid affair going on between Miss Beddingfeld and a member of the clergy?

PAGETT: Well, I...

SIR EUSTACE: That is the sort of accusation that will get a man like you in a great heap of trouble, Pagett. I suggest you keep such thoughts to yourself. I won't have a secretary of mine causing controversy on this ship, do you understand?

PAGETT: Yes, Sir Eustace.

SIR EUSTACE: (*Looking around.*) Speaking of my secretaries, have you seen my other secretary, Rayburn, since we boarded?

PAGETT: I have not, which proves my theory that you did not need another secretary for this trip. (*Proudly.*) The one you already had was perfectly fine.

(*Colonel Race enters and approaches Suzanne and Anne.*)

SIR EUSTACE: (*Indicating Colonel Race.*) Who is that man talking to Mrs. Blair?

PAGETT: Why, that's her friend, Colonel Race.

SIR EUSTACE: Race, you say? Never heard of him.

PAGETT: They say he's from the Secret Service.

SIR EUSTACE: That's why the women are flocking to him then...can't resist a hired gun. Say, who is the girl Mrs. Blair and the Colonel are talking to?

PAGETT: That's Anne Beddingfeld, the one who stole cabin 17 right out from under us!

SIR EUSTACE: So, that is Miss Beddingfeld. Interesting...very interesting. (*Watches Anne, Colonel Race, and Suzanne.*)

COLONEL RACE: (*To Anne, flirtatiously.*) It appears the fresh air has done you a world of good, Miss Beddingfeld...a world of good, indeed.

ANNE: I am feeling better. Thank you, Colonel Race.

SUZANNE: (*To Anne, aside.*) You know, I do think Colonel Race has his eye on you. He seems to admire you very much.

(*Rev. Chichester enters, reading a slip of paper.*)

ANNE: There's Rev. Chichester. I really must speak to him and apologize for my behavior yesterday. He is such a man of principle, I would hate to think I offended him. Excuse me.

(*Anne approaches Rev. Chichester.*)

COLONEL RACE: (*To Suzanne, as he watches Anne approach Rev. Chichester.*) Was it something I said?

ANNE: I do hope you've forgiven me over cabin 17.

(*Rev. Chichester tries to put the paper in his back pocket but unknowingly drops it instead. Note: Sir Eustace sees this, and over the next couple of lines, he*

stealthily approaches behind Anne and Chichester, picks up the paper, and returns to Pagett.)

CHICHESTER: *(Coldly.)* I consider it unchristian to hold a grudge.

ANNE: Wonderful! Then I'll consider it forgotten. Is this your first visit to South Africa?

CHICHESTER: To South Africa, yes. But I have worked the last two years amongst the cannibal tribes in the interior of East Africa.

ANNE: How thrilling! Have you had many narrow escapes?

CHICHESTER: Escapes?

ANNE: From being eaten by the cannibals.

CHICHESTER: You should not treat sacred subjects with such levity, Miss Beddingfeld.

ANNE: *(Raised eyebrow.)* Forgive me, Reverend. I didn't know cannibalism was a sacred subject.

SIR EUSTACE: *(To Pagett.)* Let's see what that missionary was so anxious to stuff in his back pocket.

PAGETT: Sir Eustace, must I remind you that you're a member of Parliament? You can't go about the ship stealing from the clergy!

SIR EUSTACE: I didn't steal this from him. I merely picked it up off the ground. It could be nothing...a harmless piece of trash. We'll never know unless we open it. *(Opens it.)*

PAGETT: Very well. What does it say?

SIR EUSTACE: *(Reads.)* "Don't try to play a lone hand, or it will be the worse for you."

PAGETT: That's an odd message for a parson to have.

SIR EUSTACE: I couldn't agree more. I should probably give it back to him and see how he reacts. *(Sir Eustace and Pagett approach Rev. Chichester. Holding out the paper.)* You seemed to have dropped something, Rev. Chichester.

(Rev. Chichester snatches the paper from Sir Eustace and tucks it in his pocket.)

CHICHESTER: Only a...a fragment of a sermon I was composing.

SIR EUSTACE: *(With a devious smile.)* Interesting sermon. *(Chichester moves away from the group. To Anne.)* And you must be the new guest of cabin 17. Miss Beddingfeld, is it?

ANNE: Yes, indeed. And you are the oft-mentioned Sir Eustace Pedler.

SIR EUSTACE: I hope those mentions have been kind.

ANNE: Of course. I think you know my friend, Mrs. Blair. She speaks very highly of you.

(Anne looks back at Suzanne and Colonel Race, who are approaching her.)

SIR EUSTACE: Does she now? *(As Suzanne approaches.)* Mrs. Blair, how good to see you.

SUZANNE: You as well, Sir Eustace. May I introduce my good friend, Colonel Race?

COLONEL RACE: How nice to meet you, Sir Eustace.

(Colonel Race and Sir Eustace shake hands.)

SIR EUSTACE: You as well, Colonel Race. *(To Suzanne.)* How long has it been, Mrs. Blair? Two years?

SUZANNE: At least! I think the last time we saw each another was in Italy, wasn't it?

SIR EUSTACE: That's right!

SUZANNE: I just loved Italy. The people there are so obliging. When you ask them for directions, instead of them directing you right, then left, then right again, they take you by the arm and walk all the way there with you!

SIR EUSTACE: My secretary, Pagett, was just recently in Florence. I sent him on a little vacation there a few weeks ago. *(Pagett looks nervous.)* Was that your experience in Florence as well, Pagett?

PAGETT: Um...yes...well...yes, I suppose so. Excuse me, but I have to go. *(Quickly exits.)*

SIR EUSTACE: You know, whenever the subject of his trip to Florence comes up, Pagett acts so odd. I am beginning to suspect him of having committed some dark deed there!

(All chuckle.)

SUZANNE: Perhaps he murdered someone there. I hate to say it, but he has that kind of face.

COLONEL RACE: A murderer's face?

SUZANNE: If there is such a thing, yes!

SIR EUSTACE: I must admit, he does have that look about him, but he really is the most law-abiding and respectable young man I have ever met...annoyingly so, at times.

COLONEL RACE: Has he been under your employ for some time?

SIR EUSTACE: *(Sighs, as if the weight of the world is on his shoulders.)* Six years.

COLONEL RACE: *(Sarcastic.)* You say that so enthusiastically. *(Chuckles.)*

SIR EUSTACE: If you knew what a bore he was, you would know these past six years have felt closer to 20.

SUZANNE: Then let's talk of something more interesting. *(To Colonel Race.)* You must've led an interesting life, Colonel Race. Surely, you have a story or two for us? Perhaps something from your time in South Africa since we shall be docking there tomorrow?

COLONEL RACE: I suppose I have. Would you like to hear a story about the time I had to run for my life from a bloodthirsty lion, or perhaps you'd like to hear about a case of smuggled diamonds?

ANNE: Diamonds?

SUZANNE: Diamonds!

COLONEL RACE: Diamonds it is, then. *(Clears his throat, leans in.)* This was a couple of years ago in Kimberley, just before the war. Quite a big case. You might remember the case, Sir Eustace. You might even have been in South Africa at the time. The De Beers diamonds?

SIR EUSTACE: I remember.

COLONEL RACE: Most of you have probably heard of Sir Laurence Eardsley, the great South African mining magnate. He was more of a gold miner, but his son, John, had discovered a brand new mine full of rough diamonds hidden somewhere on the rocky floor of the jungles of South America. John and his friend Harry Lucas claimed to have discovered beds full of diamonds of every color: pink, blue, yellow, green, black, and the purest white.

SUZANNE: Remarkable!

COLONEL RACE: John Eardsley and Harry Lucas traveled from South America to Kimberley, South Africa, to submit their gems for inspection. Just as they arrived, a robbery took place at De Beers. Packets of De Beers diamonds, each worth over 100,000 pounds, were being inspected before they were shipped to England. One of the packets was found to be open and inside—

ANNE: What? What was inside?!

COLONEL RACE: Sugar cubes!

ANNE: Sugar cubes! Oh, my!

COLONEL RACE: Exactly how suspicion came down on John Eardsley, I do not know. Perhaps because he had been wild at Cambridge and his father had to pay his debts more than once. Anyhow, John Eardsley was arrested and in his possession was found a portion of the De Beers diamonds.

(Rayburn enters, unseen by the group.)

SUZANNE: John Eardsley did steal the diamonds, then. He was guilty!

COLONEL RACE: The case never went to court. Sir Laurence Eardsley paid a sum equal to the missing diamonds and De Beers did not prosecute. No one knows how the robbery was committed, but the knowledge that his son was a thief broke the old man's heart. He had a stroke soon afterward.

ANNE: What happened to John Eardsley?

COLONEL RACE: He enlisted in the war, fought there bravely, and was killed, wiping out the stain on his name. As for his father, he suffered a third stroke and died about a month ago. Having no other heirs, his vast fortune passed to his next of kin, a distant cousin whom he barely knew.

SIR EUSTACE: Who is Sir Laurence's next of kin, Race, do you know?

COLONEL RACE: I should say so! I am his next of kin! *(Smiles.)*

SUZANNE: Did you hear that, Anne? Colonel Race is positively loaded.

ANNE: *(To Colonel Race.)* And what happened to his friend? Harry Lucas, was it?

COLONEL RACE: No one knows. He disappeared shortly after the case was closed.

(Anne sees Rayburn, startles, and gasps.)

ANNE: There he is!

SUZANNE: Who?

ANNE: Him!

(Anne points at Rayburn. The others turn to look at him. Rayburn startles at being seen and quickly exits.)

SIR EUSTACE: *(Indicating Rayburn.)* Oh, him? That's my other secretary. Goes by the name of Harry Rayburn. *(To Anne.)* Why did he startle you so?

ANNE: My mistake. I thought he was someone else. Suzanne, may I speak with you please? Alone.

SUZANNE: Of course. *(Smiles at Colonel Race and Sir Eustace.)* Gentlemen, please excuse us.

(Suzanne takes Anne by the arm. They move away from the others and are deep in conversation.)

SIR EUSTACE: Quite a story there, Colonel. It seemed to get the women all flustered.

COLONEL RACE: Diamonds always do, Sir Eustace. *(Chuckles.)*

(Colonel Race exits with Sir Eustace. Note: During the next few lines, the Passengers start to exit.)

SUZANNE: *(To Anne.)* So, the man who was stabbed last night – the one who came into your room unannounced and hid in your trunk – that is the man who startled you just now? Sir Eustace's secretary?

ANNE: Yes, Harry Rayburn.

SUZANNE: You've really gotten yourself in deep, haven't you, Anne? You see a man fall down on the tracks in a Tube station, and now you're halfway around the world searching for his killer.

ANNE: Don't you find it odd that the man who was stabbed should also be connected to Sir Eustace?

SUZANNE: Why is that odd?

ANNE: Because that woman was strangled in Sir Eustace's home!

(Mary enters, approaches several Passengers, and tells them to exit.)

SUZANNE: That's right, although I can't imagine Sir Eustace is tangled up in this himself. I've known him too long for that, but perhaps one of his associates is. Perhaps that stewardess is involved.

(Note: Mary crosses by Anne during next line, but is unseen by Anne.)

ANNE: Who, Mary? Can't be. Mary is wonderful.

MARY: *(To Anne and Suzanne.)* The party is over, ladies. Please make your way back to your rooms. *(Smiles at Anne.)* And I know you don't hate me, Miss Beddingfeld. *(Smiles, approaches another Passenger, and exits.)*

SUZANNE: *(To Anne.)* No, the one who came to check on you last night while the man was still in your trunk. Don't you think it's odd she happened to come by just then? And you already know the story of her looking for a drunk man was false.

ANNE: Now that you mention it, her face did seem a little familiar, although I may have seen it about the ship if she had been working. But she was awfully tall...perhaps the tallest woman I've ever seen.

SUZANNE: Exceptionally tall, you say? Could it have been a man in disguise?

ANNE: Maybe.

(Rev. Chichester starts to exit.)

SUZANNE: *(To Anne, indicating Rev. Chichester.)* Rev. Chichester is awfully tall...

ANNE: So, he is. Now that I think about it, he does look an awful lot like that stewardess.

SUZANNE: Put him on your list of suspects then. There's Rev. Chichester, Sir Eustace's secretary, Pagett—

ANNE: And perhaps Sir Eustace himself.

SUZANNE: Don't forget about his other secretary, Harry Rayburn.

ANNE: Oh, no. It can't be him. He's not a murderer.

SUZANNE: You don't even know him!

ANNE: I just know, all right. Rayburn is a lot of things—rude, ungrateful, mysterious—but he's not a murderer. He's just misunderstood. He just needs someone to care for him.

SUZANNE: *(Smiles.)* And I'm sure you're ready to sign up for the job.

(Anne takes out the slip of paper.)

ANNE: *(Changing the subject.)* But what does all this have to do with the man in the brown suit? And what about the slip of paper I found? *(Reads.)* "Kilmorden Castle.' 17.1.22"?

SUZANNE: *(Looks at the paper, excitedly.)* That's not a 17. That's a 71, see? *(Points at the paper.)* "1, 71, 22." *(Looks at Anne.)* That's my cabin number, Anne! And last night, at one o'clock on the 22nd, that tin of films was dropped out of the vent onto my bed!

(Anne takes a step back.)

ANNE: You're not involved in this somehow, are you, Suzanne?

SUZANNE: No, of course not. Remember, cabin 71 wasn't my original room. The cabin was booked by a "Mrs. Grey," which turned out to be a pseudonym for the famous Russian ballerina Madame Nadina, only she never showed up.

ANNE: Because she was dead! *(Excited.)* Don't you see? Mrs. Grey, Madame Nadina, Mrs. De Castina...they're all the same woman, the woman who was strangled at Mill House!

SUZANNE: I think you may be right.

ANNE: And I'd bet anything that the tin in your room doesn't contain films. I bet that tin is filled with—

ANNE/SUZANNE: Diamonds!

ANNE: See, I knew I was right to confide in you!

SUZANNE: Let's head back to my room and take a look at that tin right now!

ANNE: I'll be right there. I just want a moment in the fresh air to help me process everything I've learned tonight.

SUZANNE: All right, but hurry!

(Suzanne rushes off. Anne is alone on the deck. The party lights dim, casting shadows. Note: During the following, Sir Eustace enters, all in black. He appears as a moving shadow to the audience. Unseen by Anne, Sir Eustace slowly creeps up behind her.)

ANNE: *(To herself.)* The man in the brown suit...he must be somewhere on this ship, but who is he? Could he be Rev. Chichester or maybe Sir Eustace, after all? Perhaps Colonel Race should be a suspect? Or maybe the mysterious—and I must admit, somehow alluring—Harry Rayburn is the culprit at hand? *(Shivers.)* If that's even his name...Rayburn. *(Thinks.)* Not the first Harry I've heard about tonight. But the other Harry, Harry Lucas, where is he? Could Harry Lucas and Harry Rayburn be one in the same? What is it about Rayburn that both scares me and intrigues me? And why am I so attracted to him?

(Sir Eustace grabs Anne. Anne screams and Sir Eustace puts a gloved hand over her mouth. He uses one arm to hold her and his other to try to strangle her. Anne fights back. They struggle. Just as Anne's starting to weaken, Rayburn enters and punches Sir Eustace, who falls back. Anne falls to the ground. Rayburn kneels down by Anne.)

RAYBURN: You're hurt!

(Sir Eustace stands, shakily, and rushes off. Rayburn chases after him. Where Sir Eustace has exited, a cloaked Pagett, in shadow, enters. A moment later, he falls. Note: It should appear to the audience that this is the same man who attacked Anne earlier, falling from his injury.)

ANNE: *(Calls, weakly.)* Did you hit him again?

RAYBURN: There was no need. I found him collapsed by the door.

ANNE: *(Sits, holding her head.)* Who is he?

RAYBURN: Let's see. *(Drags Pagett into the light.)* My goodness! It's Pagett! I never would've suspected— *(Looks at Anne.)* You didn't see him when he attacked you?

ANNE: No, I didn't.

(Rayburn tries to help Anne up and then turns Anne to look at Pagett.)

RAYBURN: Where do you come in to all this, I wonder? And how much do you know?

ANNE: I know a lot more than you think, Mr. Rayburn. Or should I say... *(Dramatically.)* ...Mr. Lucas!

(Startled, Rayburn steps back as if punched.)

RAYBURN: Where did you get that name?

ANNE: Isn't it yours? Or do you prefer to be called, "The Man in the Brown Suit"?

RAYBURN: *(Takes a step toward Anne, menacingly.)* Don't you realize you're in my power this minute? I could take you by the throat like this! *(Swiftly before Anne realizes what he is doing, Rayburn steps behind her, puts one arm around her middle and another around her neck. Half tenderly, half menacingly.)* I could squeeze the life out of you and then fling your body overboard. What do you say to that?

ANNE: I say, you're bluffing.

RAYBURN: *(Releases her.)* Does nothing frighten you, Miss—?

ANNE: Beddingfeld. Anne Beddingfeld. The only thing that scares me is a life of boredom.

RAYBURN: Somehow I doubt you shall ever live a life like that. *(“Kicks” Pagett.)* What should we do with him? Throw him overboard? On second thought, he's not worth it.

ANNE: You shrink away from a second murder, then?

RAYBURN: A second murder?

ANNE: The woman at Mill House? Madame Nadina. Your accomplice, perhaps? Or an old lover?

RAYBURN: *(Darkly.)* Kill her? No. Sometimes I thought I could have—maybe even meant to—but, no, it wasn't me.

ANNE: Then I suppose there's nothing more to be said except goodnight.

RAYBURN: Goodnight and goodbye, Miss Beddingfeld. *(Starts to exit.)*

ANNE: Goodbye? That sounds so final. *(Rayburn stops and turns back. Anne approaches him.)* I'm sure we will see each other again.

(Note: Anne is face to face with Rayburn, close enough that they could kiss.)

RAYBURN: Not if I can help it! *(Turns and exits.)*

ANNE: *(Laughs.)* Anne the Adventurous, episode four: "Anne finds true love!" *(Lights fade to black. Curtain. Intermission, opt.)*

[END OF FREEVIEW