

ANNABELLA. Mr. Hannay –

HANNAY. How do you know my name?

ANNABELLA. I saw it in the lobby.

HANNAY. Ah, yes.

(Telephone rings.)

HANNAY. Hello. There's the telephone.

ANNABELLA. Don't answer it, please!

HANNAY. Why not?

ANNABELLA. Because I think it is for me.

(HANNAY picks up the phone. It goes on ringing. An awkward moment for the actors.)

ANNABELLA. Please don't answer!!

(HANNAY drops the phone on its cradle. The ringing continues then stops.)

HANNAY. Now look here –

ANNABELLA. Yes?

HANNAY. Am I allowed to know your name?

ANNABELLA. You don't want to know my name.

HANNAY. Don't I?

ANNABELLA. Schmidt.

HANNAY. Schmidt?

ANNABELLA. Annabella Schmidt.

HANNAY. So what's the story Annabella Schmidt?

ANNABELLA. Mr. Hannay?

HANNAY. Yes?

ANNABELLA. May I be very impertinent for a moment and ask for something to eat?

HANNAY. But of course. Would you care for some haddock?

ANNABELLA. Haddock would be wunderbar thank you.

HANNAY. Nothing like a spot of haddock. Now look here –

ANNABELLA. Yes?

HANNAY. It was you who fired that revolver in the theatre, wasn't it? It wasn't a great show but it wasn't that bad.

ANNABELLA. It was a diversion. There were two men in the theatre trying to shoot me.

Start

#1

HANNAY. You should be more careful in choosing your gentlemen friends.

ANNABELLA. No jokes Mr. Hannay, please!

HANNAY. Beautiful mysterious woman pursued by gunmen. Sounds like a spy story.

ANNABELLA. That's exactly what it is. Only I prefer the word 'agent' better.

HANNAY. 'Secret agent' I suppose? For which country?

ANNABELLA. I have no country.

HANNAY. Born in a balloon, eh?

ANNABELLA. Mr. Hannay please! I am being pursued by a very brilliant secret agent of a certain foreign power who is on the point of obtaining highly confidential information VITAL to your air defence. I tracked two of his men to that Music Hall. Unfortunately they recognised me.

HANNAY. Ever heard of a thing called persecution mania?

ANNABELLA. You don't believe me?

HANNAY. Frankly, I don't.

ANNABELLA. They are in the street this moment. Beneath your English lamp-post. Take a look why don't you?
But be careful!

(HANNAY peers through the blind. The two clowns appear. They wear sinister trilbies under the single glare of a street light. HANNAY turns back.)

ANNABELLA. Now do you believe me?

(HANNAY peers through the blind again. The men are still there.)

HANNAY. You win.

ANNABELLA. Mr. Hannay, I'm going to tell you something which is not very healthy. It will mean either life. Or death. But if I tell you, then you are – *(She gazes at him.)*
– involved!

(The sound of a 30s police car in the distance.)

HANNAY. Involved?

ANNABELLA. You wish to be – involved?

(HANNAY marches to the blind again. Peers through. The men are there, but slightly late. HANNAY sighs irritably. He turns back to ANNABELLA.)

HANNAY. Tell me!

ANNABELLA. Very well. Have you ever heard of the –

(She lowers her voice.)

– Thirty-Nine Steps?

HANNAY. What's that a pub?

ANNABELLA. Your English humour will not help Mr. Hannay! These men will stick at nothing. And I am the only person who can stop them. If they are not stopped, it is only a matter days, perhaps hours before the top secret and highly confidential information is out of the country. And when they've got it out of the country God help us all!

HANNAY. What about the police?

ANNABELLA. *(laughs harshly)* The police! They would not believe me any more than you did! With their boots and their whistles! It is up to us, Mr. Hannay! I tell you these men act quickly! You don't know how clever their chief is. I know him very well. He has a dozen names! He can look like a hundred people! But one thing he cannot disguise. This part –

(lifts her little finger)

– of his little finger is missing. So if ever you should meet a man with no top joint there –

(She hooks her little finger into his.)

– be very careful my friend.

HANNAY. I'll remember that.

(She gazes at him. He gazes back.)

ANNABELLA. Mr. Hannay?

HANNAY. Richard.

ANNABELLA. Richard.

HANNAY. Yes?

end

#2

Start

Scene Thirteen: Crofter's Cottage.

(HANNAY looks around the miserable cottage. The moaning wind rattles the windows. MARGARET is overwhelmed with shyness. She points to the armchair.)

MARGARET. There's your bed.

(HANNAY looks at the armchair.)

HANNAY. Marvellous.

MARGARET. Could ye sleep there d'ye think?

HANNAY. I could sleep anywhere right now.

(MARGARET blushes.)

MARGARET. Won't you sit down please whilst I go on with our supper?

HANNAY. Thank you.

(He sits down. She busies herself with supper.)

I say?

MARGARET. Yes?

HANNAY. You wouldn't have today's paper?

MARGARET. My husband has the paper.

HANNAY. Right.

(MARGARET shyly lays the table. He watches her.)

So erm – been in these parts long?

MARGARET. No. I'm from Glasgow.

HANNAY. Glasgow?

MARGARET. D'ye ever see it?

HANNAY. No I never did.

MARGARET. Oh ye should. Ye should see Sauchiehall Street on a Saturday night with all its fine shops and the trams and the lights. And the cinema palaces and the crowds.

(a faraway look)

It's Saturday night tonight.

HANNAY. Well I've never been to Glasgow but I've been to Edinburgh and Montreal. And London.

MARGARET. London!

HANNAY. I could tell you all about London at supper.

MARGARET. *(suddenly entranced)* Could ye?

HANNAY. Certainly could.

MARGARET. *(face clouds)* No. John would nae approve o' that I doubt!

HANNAY. John?

MARGARET. My husband. He says it's best not to think of such places and all the wickedness that goes on there.

HANNAY. Or – I could tell you now.

MARGARET. Now?

(He gazes at her.)

HANNAY. If you wanted.

MARGARET. Aye.

(She gazes back.)

Ye could.

(Romantic music)

HANNAY. What would you like to know?

MARGARET. Is it true that all the ladies paint their toe-nails?

HANNAY. Some of them.

MARGARET. And put rouge and lipsticks on their faces?

HANNAY. They do yes.

MARGARET. Do London ladies look beautiful?

HANNAY. They wouldn't if you were beside them.

(MARGARET catches her breath. Turns to him. Their eyes meet. A moment of stunned sexual longing.)

MARGARET. You ought not to say that.

(The CROFTER bursts in. He carries an evening newspaper.)

CROFTER. Ought not to say WHAT!?

(Romantic music cuts out.)

(HANNAY and MARGARET spring away.)

end

HANNAY. I didn't do it!

PROFESSOR. Of course you didn't do it Mr. – Mr. Hannay.
I suppose it's safe to call you by your real name now?

HANNAY. Quite safe.

PROFESSOR. Jolly Good. But tell me – why did you come all the way to Scotland to tell me about it?

HANNAY. Because I believe she was trying to tell you about some secret top secret air ministry...secret and she was killed by a foreign agent who was interested too.

PROFESSOR. Really? Well I'm so glad you told me! And risking your life into the bargain! How can I ever thank you?

(HANNAY smiles modestly. Then presses on urgently.)

HANNAY. The thing is professor, she was looking for something!

PROFESSOR. Yes?

HANNAY. Something called –

PROFESSOR. Go on.

HANNAY. The Thirty-Nine Steps! If we can find out what the Thirty-Nine Steps are then –

(The professor stands. Still smiling.)

PROFESSOR. So – let me get this quite clear – oh I'm so sorry – you must be exhausted! Do take a seat Mr. Hannay.

(He stands. Proffers him his own armchair. HANNAY sits rather awkwardly. The PROFESSOR smiles.)

PROFESSOR. Better?

HANNAY. Thank you.

PROFESSOR. So did she tell you what this foreign agent looked like?

HANNAY. There wasn't time. Oh! There was one thing. Part of his little finger was missing.

PROFESSOR. Which little finger?

HANNAY. This one I think.

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Start

(holds up a little finger)

PROFESSOR. Are you sure it wasn't – this one?

(He holds up his own little finger. It is cut off at the knuckle.)

HANNAY. I'm not sure. I think –

(The professor pulls out a gun. HANNAY gasps!)

PROFESSOR. Mr. Hannay – I'm afraid I've been guilty of leading you down the garden path. Or should I say – up. I never can remember.

HANNAY. It seems to be the wrong garden alright.

PROFESSOR. Yes. I'm afraid it does. Mr. Hannay, you've forced me into a very difficult position. You see I live here as a respectable citizen. My very best friend is the Sheriff of the County. You must realise my whole existence could be jeopardised if it became known that I was not – how shall I say – not what I seem. You see there's my wife and daughter to think of. But what makes it doubly important that I simply can't let you go is that I'm just about to convey some very vital information out of the country. Oh yes, I've got it alright. I'm afraid poor Annabella would have been far too late. So it seems there is only one option, Mr Hannay.

(He cocks the gun, aims point blank at HANNAY.)

~~*(MRS JORDAN walks in.)*~~

~~*(Jitterbug music.)*~~

~~*(She takes in the gun. Doesn't flick an eyelid.)*~~

~~**MRS JORDAN.** I shall be serving lunch directly, dear. The Sheriff has to go at three. Will Mr Hammond be staying?~~

~~**PROFESSOR.** I don't think so dear.~~

~~*(MRS JORDAN smiles and leaves.)*~~

~~*(Music stops.)*~~

~~**PROFESSOR.** Unless of course you decide to join us.~~

~~*(Lights a cigarette in a black holder.)*~~

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~~HANNAY. For lunch?~~

~~PROFESSOR. Very good, Mr. Hannay. You see you're just the kind of man we need. Sharp. Intelligent. Cold-blooded. Ruthless. When the war comes these will be the exact qualities we need.~~

~~HANNAY. War?~~

~~PROFESSOR. Oh yes! We'll have quite a show of it.~~

~~HANNAY. And what if I don't believe in those qualities?~~

~~PROFESSOR. What other qualities are there?~~

~~HANNAY. Well...human qualities.~~

~~PROFESSOR. Human qualities! What human qualities?~~

~~HANNAY. Loyalty, selflessness, sacrifice...~~

~~(pause)~~

~~...love...~~

~~PROFESSOR. (He laughs a cruel laugh.) Love!? Oh please Mr. Hannay! When have you ever loved anyone? It's not in your nature, old sport. Never has been, has it? You have no heart, do you Hannay! But you know this.~~

end

~~(HANNAY sits shocked. How does the professor know his deepest fears?)~~

~~So sad, isn't it? No one to love. No one to care for. No home to go to.~~

~~(The professor comes close to HANNAY, pinned in the armchair. Blows smoke into his face.)~~

~~But there is you see. There is – our home!~~

~~HANNAY. Our home?~~

~~PROFESSOR. That is the only place you will find 'love' old chum. Where you really and truly belong.~~

~~(We notice a German accent subtly emerging from the professor's cultured British tones. HANNAY stares in horror as the truth starts to dawn.)~~

~~Oh we will give you love, Hannay. And in return? You will love us!! The master race. On our great unstoppable march. Commanded eternally by destiny itself!! Well old sport? What do you say?? Will you join us? Hannay!??~~

#4
Start

Scene Twenty-Five: The Dark Moors.

(HANNAY appears with PAMELA. They are handcuffed together as they cross the dark moors. He is pulling her after him.)

HANNAY. Come on!

(PAMELA sinks in a bog.)

PAMELA. I'm stuck! I can't move!

HANNAY. Yes you can!

(HANNAY pulls at her handcuff. Pulls her out.)

PAMELA. Ow!!!

(calls out)

Help!

HANNAY. (pushes his hidden pipe into her ribs again) Listen! One more peep out of you, I'll shoot you first and myself after. I mean it! Now come on!

PAMELA. Now I'm in a puddle!

HANNAY. So you are.

(He pulls her out. She shrieks.)

PAMELA. I'm soaked through!

HANNAY. I never said it'd be easy Pamela, my dear.

(takes deep breath)

Smell that heather! Makes you glad to be alive doesn't it!

PAMELA. Lovely, yes.

HANNAY. Come on!

(He pulls her after him.)

PAMELA. Will you stop doing that!

(He starts to whistle Mr. Memory Theme.)

And do stop whistling! Look what are you doing all this for? You can't possibly escape! What chance have you got, tied to me?

HANNAY. Keep that question for your husband if I were you.

PAMELA. I don't have a husband!

HANNAY. Lucky him! Come along!

(whistles again)

What IS that tune! Right. Under this stile.

PAMELA. Ow!

(He drags her under a stile. She gets jammed. He comes tries to help. She gets more jammed. Now he gets jammed. They become entwined. All the while they banter away.)

HANNAY. We seem a little stuck.

PAMELA. Is that so?

HANNAY. Hang on.

PAMELA. What?

HANNAY. If you go – then if I go – no that doesn't work – wait a minute – let's start again –

PAMELA. I say what is the use of all this?

(HANNAY pulls. PAMELA squeaks.)

Ow!

(HANNAY whistles.)

And please stop whistling! Those policemen will get you as soon as it's light you know, as soon as daybreak dawns.

HANNAY. They're not policemen.

PAMELA. Oh really? So when did you find that out?

HANNAY. You found it out yourself. I'd never have known that was the wrong road to Inverary! They were taking us to their boss with the little finger missing and God help either of us if we meet him!

PAMELA. So you're still sticking to your penny novelette spy story!

(They are now completely entwined. He rounds on her.)

HANNAY. Listen!

PAMELA. Ow!

end