

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!

START

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 gazes at him.)

– be very careful my friend.

HANNAY. I'll remember that.

(He gazes back.)

ANNABELLA. Mr. Hannay?

HANNAY. Richard.

ANNABELLA. Richard.

HANNAY. Yes?

ANNABELLA. May I stay the night please?

(electricity between them)

HANNAY. Of course. You can – sleep in my bed.

ANNABELLA. Thank you.

HANNAY. I'll get a shakedown on the armchair.

ANNABELLA. *(raises an eyebrow)* As you wish. And one more thing –

HANNAY. Your haddock?

ANNABELLA. Mein haddock?

(She laughs.)

I have rather lost the taste for haddock. No! I need –

HANNAY. Yes?

ANNABELLA. A map of Scotland.

HANNAY. Scotland?

ANNABELLA. There's a man in Scotland who I must visit next if anything is to be done. An Englishman. He lives in a –

(looks around her)

– big house

HANNAY. A big house?

ANNABELLA. At a place called Alt-na-shellach.

HANNAY. I beg your pardon?

ANNABELLA. Alt-na-shell-ach!

HANNAY. Alt-na-shell-ach. And the Thirty Nine –

ANNABELLA. Bring it to my room.

HANNAY. Certainly.

ANNABELLA. Good night Richard. **END**

(Turns seductively away, disappears into the darkness.

HANNAY gazes after her. Confused and mesmerized.

Wishing he could go with her.)

HANNAY. Goodnight Annabella!

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.)

START 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. END

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

CROFTER. Ought not to say WHAT!?

(*Romantic music cuts out.*)

(*HANNAY and MARGARET spring away.*)

HANNAY. Listen!

PAMELA. Ow!

HANNAY. There are twenty million women in this island and I've got to be chained to you! I'll say it one more time. There's a dangerous conspiracy against this island and we're the only people who can stop it!

PAMELA. The gallant knight to the rescue!

HANNAY. Alright then you're alone on a desolate moor in the dark, manacled to a plain common murderer who stabbed an innocent defenceless woman four days ago and can't wait to get you off his hands! If that's the situation you'd prefer then have it my girl and welcome!

PAMELA. I'm not afraid of you!

(She sneezes.)

Atchoo!

HANNAY. Bless you.

PAMELA. Thank you.

HANNAY. Pleasure.

(For a second they are very close. They gaze at one another. They wonder what to do. He pulls her through the stile and wrenches her up. PAMELA squeals.)

START

PAMELA. OW!! You're horrible!!! You just don't care do you! You just walk into my life and look at me! I'm cold and I'm wet and I'm miserable and my wrist hurts and I didn't do anything to hurt you! You're utterly horrid and beastly and heartless! You don't care about anything except your pompous, selfish, horrible, heartless self! END

(The wind rages. HANNAY looks at her. She looks at him.)

HANNAY. Yes well, that's the kind of man I am, I'm afraid.

PAMELA. Well, God help your wife, that's all I can say!

HANNAY. Yes, God help her! ~

(They stand miserably chained together in the wind.)

(Scottish pipe music)