

THE SECRET ADVERSARY
(A TOMMY AND TUPPENCE
ADVENTURE)

A full-length mystery by
David Hansen

Based on the novel by Agatha Christie

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www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com
424-703-5315

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MISS PRUDENCE "TUPPENCE" COWLEY, 20s.

MR. THOMAS "TOMMY" BERESFORD, 20s.

WHITTINGTON, 30s.

MR. CARTER, 40s.

MR. JULIUS HERSHEIMMER, 30s.

COUNT BORIS STEPANOV, 50s.

MRS. RITA VANDEMEYER, 40s.

CONRAD, 30s.

ZELIG, 30s.

IRISHMAN, offstage voice.

AMERICAN, offstage voice.

ANNETTE/MISS JANE FISH, 20s.

YOUNG WOMAN, 20s.

BELLMAN

SERVANT

HOUSEWOMAN

HOTEL MAID

The play was originally written for a cast of five—two women and three men—but producers are welcome to cast as many or as few actors as they deem appropriate. Suggested multiple casting:

ACTOR 1: Tommy

ACTOR 2: Tuppence

ACTOR 3: Bellman, Whittington, Carter, Servant, American (voice), Zelig

ACTOR 4: Hersheimmer, Stepanov, Conrad, Irishman (voice)

ACTOR 5: Housewoman, Rita, Annette/Jane, Hotel Maid, Young Woman

SETTING

1921. The action takes place in London and various sites about England.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Secret Adversary was presented as an Educational Outreach Tour for Great Lakes Theater in Cleveland, Ohio, February 2016, directed by Lisa Ortenzi. The cast and company for the production was as follows:

THOMAS "TOMMY" BERESFORD – Devon Turchan
PRUDENCE "TUPPENCE" COWLEY – Deborah Cluts
RITA VANDEMEYER (et al) – Brittini Shambaugh Addison
SIR JAMES PEEL EDGERTON (et al) – James Rankin
JULIUS HERSHEIMMER (et al) – Ray Caspio
Rehearsal Stage Manager – Diana Lehotsky
Set and Property Design – Terry Martin
Costume Design – Esther Montgomery Haberen
Sound Design – Richard Ingraham
Dance Choreographer – Carli Taylor Miluk-Markiewitz
Combat Choreographer – Kelly Elliott
Dialect Coach – Chuck Richie
Assistant Director – Chennelle Bryant-Harris
Producing Artistic Director – Charles Fee
Production Manager – Chris Flinchum
Director of Educational Programming – Lisa Ortenzi
Director of Educational Services – Kelly Schaffer Florian

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(At rise, the set is neutral: a street in London. Soon enough, and with great speed, it will become a cafe, then a park, then a Tube station, and so on. The set is changed with great alacrity and skill by the company so as to break the forward movement of the story as little as is possible.)

(Enter from opposite, TOMMY [22] and TUPPENCE [22], two bright young things, stylish if a little down-at-the-heels.)

TUPPENCE: Tommy, old thing!

TOMMY: Tuppence, old bean!

TUPPENCE: Where are you off to?

TOMMY: Haven't seen you for centuries. Come and chew a bun with me.

(They turn to the audience – breaking the fourth wall – to direct address.)

TUPPENCE: It had been some time. He, Mister Thomas Beresford –

TOMMY: She, Miss Prudence Cowley –

TUPPENCE: Just "Tuppence," if you please.

TOMMY: Last seen in service during the war –

TUPPENCE: Who wasn't?

TOMMY: –doing poor service as a nurse in the Voluntary Aid Detachment –

TUPPENCE: Getting reproved by the matron for sneaking to the pictures in the company of a convalescing childhood friend, Lieutenant Thomas Beresford – Take a bow, Tommy –

TOMMY: Suddenly running into each other in front of the Dover Street Tube exit.

(They return to their scene, and take seats at a table.)

Must have been five years.

TUPPENCE: You look positively skint.

TOMMY: Nonsense. Rolling in cash.

TUPPENCE: Shocking liar.

(Enter BELLMAN.)

TOMMY: Tea and buns.

TUPPENCE: Tea and toast. Separate pots, mind.

(Exit Bellman.)

Job hunting?

TOMMY: There aren't any and if there were they wouldn't give them to me. What do I know? Nothing.

TUPPENCE: Rich relations?

TOMMY: I'm desperate.

TUPPENCE: So am I! It's no good, I shall have to go home. Father has the delightful idea that short skirts are wicked and that smoking is immoral. Heaved a sigh of relief when the war took me off. *(Pause.)* Money! Money! Money!

TOMMY: Same here.

(Enter Bellman, serves tea.)

TUPPENCE: There's three ways to make money. To be left it, to marry it, or to make it. First is out, I'm same as you. Marriage is my best chance. I'm not sentimental, you know.

TOMMY: If people knew you were rich they might not like you.

TUPPENCE: What's so jake about being liked? Anyway, all the boys I meet are as hard up as I am.

(Tommy tears into a bun.)

TOMMY: (*Sighs.*) The inspiring fantasy of baking, the stale reality of bread.

TUPPENCE: What remains? To MAKE money!

TOMMY: Right. How?

TUPPENCE: Let's be adventurers!

TOMMY: Certainly. How?

TUPPENCE: We could commit crimes for people.

TOMMY: You'd get caught.

TUPPENCE: No I shouldn't, I'm too clever.

TOMMY: Modesty was always your besetting sin.

TUPPENCE: Don't rag. Look here, Tommy, shall we really? Shall we form a business partnership?

TOMMY: A company for the stealing of diamond necklaces?

TUPPENCE: Trading under the name Young Adventurers, Ltd.!

TOMMY: How do you propose we get in touch with would-be employers?

TUPPENCE: Advertisement. Take this down.

(Tommy searches for pencil and paper as Tuppence goes on.)

"Young officer, twice wounded in the war – "

TOMMY: Certainly not.

TUPPENCE: "Two young adventurers for hire. Willing to do anything, go anywhere. Pay must be good. No reasonable offer refused."

TOMMY: Phrased like that, I can't imagine receiving anything but unreasonable offers.

TUPPENCE: Yes, that's ever so chic! "No unreasonable offer

refused!" *The Times*, I think, reply to box so-and-so.

(Tommy looks earnestly at what he has written.)

TOMMY: Shall we try it, Tuppence? Just for the fun of the thing?

TUPPENCE: You're a sport, Tommy! Let's drink to success!

TOMMY: The Young Adventurers!

(They clink their teacups.)

TUPPENCE: Well, I must return to my palatial suite at the youth hostel.

TOMMY: Cheers. When shall we meet again?

TUPPENCE: Twelve o'clock tomorrow. Piccadilly Tube station. Unless you have a conflict?

TOMMY: My time is my own.

TUPPENCE: Good-bye, old thing.

TOMMY: So long then.

(Tommy exits as Tuppence addresses the audience. To audience:)

TUPPENCE: Bus fare was out of the question, so I made my way across St. James Park.

(Enter WHITTINGTON, a somewhat nervous man.)

WHITTINGTON: Excuse me? I happened to overhear your conversation with the young gentleman in Lyons'.

TUPPENCE: Well? What of it?

(Whittington offers Tuppence his card.)

WHITTINGTON: I mean no disrespect. My name is Whittington. If you want work, I have work to offer you. One hundred down and all expenses paid.

TUPPENCE: The nature of this work?

WHITTINGTON: Nominal. Just a pleasant trip to Paris. You would attend a charming pensionnat—a boarding school. Madame Colombier's.

TUPPENCE: For how long? What other...conditions?

WHITTINGTON: Three months, no conditions, except you would be going in the character of my niece, er... Could you pass as an American?

TUPPENCE: Reckon I might.

WHITTINGTON: Excellent, then.

TUPPENCE: One moment, please. You seem to be taking my consent for granted. These terms are far too liberal. I cannot see how I am worth that amount of money.

WHITTINGTON: Indeed? I require a young lady of sufficient intelligence, talent and discretion.

TUPPENCE: Oh, I am terribly, terribly discreet. And what name shall I be traveling under?

WHITTINGTON: Miss Jane Fish.

TUPPENCE: (*Laughs abruptly.*) Ha! Oh, I uhm. Yes?

WHITTINGTON: What's so funny.

TUPPENCE: I—nothing.

WHITTINGTON: Why did you laugh when I said that name?

TUPPENCE: Jane...Fish?

WHITTINGTON: What's your game? You know about Jane Fish!

TUPPENCE: Do I?

WHITTINGTON: Playing with me this whole time, cat and mouse. Who told you, was it Rita? I am sure it was Rita.

TUPPENCE: Rita? No, Rita knows nothing about me.

WHITTINGTON: But you know the name Jane Fish. Who are you really? How much do you want?

TUPPENCE: Oh. Well! Let us say a little something down, and a fuller discussion later?

WHITTINGTON: Blackmail, eh?

TUPPENCE: Payment of services in advance.

(Whittington reaches for his billfold.)

WHITTINGTON: I see. And here I thought you were a meek little thing with enough brains for our purposes. We will start at fifty, and come to that address tomorrow at the same time to discuss the rest of this arrangement.

(Tuppence counts the money.)

TUPPENCE: "Au revoir."

WHITTINGTON: Au revoir. Very good.

(Exit Whittington.)

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* Bus fare? What will poor Tommy think when I arrive tomorrow in a taxi!

(Enter Tommy.)

TOMMY: Am I dreaming, Tuppence, or do I really behold a large quantity of five-pound notes being waved about in a dangerous fashion? What did you do, hold up a bank?

TUPPENCE: I have entered into a conversation with a certain gentleman who apparently told me much more than he should. To secure my cooperation and to keep my silence, I have been handsomely rewarded. And now, an eminent physician recommends unlimited hors d'oeuvre, Lobster a l'Americaine, Chicken Newburg and Pêche Melba, let's go and get them!

TOMMY: Now look here. What is this all going to lead to?

TUPPENCE: More money.

TOMMY: What I mean is, what is your next step? You can't bluff him forever, and anyway, blackmail?

TUPPENCE: Nonsense. Blackmail is saying you'll tell unless you're given money. I can't tell because I don't know anything.

TOMMY: He'll want something next time.

TUPPENCE: What do we have to go on? Let's be sleuths in earnest.

TOMMY: There's no one to sleuth.

TUPPENCE: We have a name, don't we, the woman he wished me to impersonate. Ah-ha! We will run an advertisement, a different one. "WANTED, any information respecting Jane Fish. Apply, Y.A."

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* So we did! It wasn't a day before we had two responses.

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* Our first response was from an "A. Carter" —

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* Surprisingly enough, not his real name.

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* — we went round to meet him at 27 Carshalton Gardens.

(Enter CARTER, a lean man with a tired manner.)

CARTER: The Young Adventurers. Do sit down, both of you.

(They all sit in silence for a moment.)

TOMMY: Well, er.

TUPPENCE: What we want to know—that is, would you kindly tell us, er...

TOMMY: What do you know about Jane Fish?

CARTER: What do you know about Jane Fish?

TUPPENCE: I don't see what that has to do with it.

CARTER: No? But it has, you know, it really has. You placed the advertisement.

TUPPENCE: Tommy? We can't, can we?

TOMMY: What little we know this man is welcome to.

TUPPENCE: Tommy?

TOMMY: Yes, sir. As soon as I came in the room, knew I'd seen you before, when I was with British Intelligence during the war. It's coming to me...Lord...something—

CARTER: (*Stopping him:*) Yes, that will be enough. Now who will tell the story?

TOMMY: Fire ahead, Tuppence. This was your plan.

TUPPENCE: I see. Well. The silly truth of it is, we know nothing. I was approached by a strange man in St. James asking me to take a post as a woman named "Jane Fish." I wanted more information about what I would be getting into, and so we placed the ad.

CARTER: You are a curious young couple. All right, how about it? You want adventure, work for me. No official recognition, you know, but all expenses paid and a handsome salary.

TUPPENCE: What shall we do?

CARTER: Find Jane Fish.

TOMMY: Yes, but who is Jane Fish?

CARTER: Do you remember the seventh of May, 1915?

TUPPENCE: The sinking of the Lusitania!

CARTER: Jane Fish was on the Lusitania.

TOMMY: Bless her soul.

CARTER: That can wait. She survived. We have reason to believe that a certain document was passed to her on the deck of the ship during those brief minutes after being struck by those German torpedoes. One of our men had been secreting these papers from America in an oilskin packet. When his body was discovered, the packet was missing.

TOMMY: Sir, these papers...?

CARTER: It was the draft of a secret agreement—a treaty—call it what you like, drawn up in the United States, a neutral country at that time.

TUPPENCE: A treaty to end the war? A full three years before it did?

TOMMY: We never had word of treaty negotiations.

CARTER: What they call "Secret Diplomacy." It is nearly always bad policy.

TOMMY: All my friends. Lost.

CARTER: To the present, if you please.

TUPPENCE: Millions lost!

CARTER: That will be quite enough of that. One thousand innocent men, women and children perished aboard the Lusitania. As a result of that tragedy, the war entered a different phase. The treaty as it had existed could no longer be ratified by England. But if it were to resurface today, stating clear conditions for having ended the war much sooner than it did, it would mean disaster.

TOMMY: To the party in power, you mean.

CARTER: That's a cynical way of looking at it. Yes, the Labour Party would find this opportunity to achieve a majority in

Parliament irresistible, but a Labour Government at this juncture would be a grave danger, and not merely for British trade. (*Beat.*) You are aware there is Bolshevist influence at work, creating present Labour unrest?

TUPPENCE: So the Tories would have us believe.

CARTER: Believe it. Bolshevist gold is pouring into this country for the specific purpose of creating a Communist revolution. And there is a certain man whose real name is unknown to us who is working in the shadows for his own ends. The Bolshevists are behind the Labour Party. But who is behind the Bolshevists? We do not know, only that he is spoken of by the unassuming name of "Mister Brown." Possibly the finest criminal mind of the age. I don't quite like this, you know. You're such bright, young things. I shouldn't like anything to happen to you.

TOMMY: I'll look after her, sir.

TUPPENCE: And I'll look after him.

CARTER: Well, then. Tommy and Tuppence. Look after each other.

(Exit Carter.)

TUPPENCE: (*To audience:*) Mister Carter further informed us that our story confirmed his belief that Jane Fish was alive, and that the Bolshevists, too, had no idea where either she or the draft treaty were.

TOMMY: They were willing to go so far as to present an imposter Jane Fish as proof that they did have these dangerous papers in their possession.

TUPPENCE: And that false Jane Fish may have been ME!

TOMMY: We also received a second response to our advertisement, sent via the Ritz Hotel!

TUPPENCE: How swank!

TOMMY: "Dear sir, I should be glad if you would call round somewhere about lunchtime—"

TUPPENCE: Ha ha! Free food.

TOMMY: "—Yours truly, Julius P. Hersheimer."

TUPPENCE: A German?

TOMMY: More like an American of unfortunate ancestry.

TUPPENCE: By the by, Tommy— who is this "Mr. Carter from British Intelligence," really?

(Tommy whispers in her ear.)

(Impressed:) Oh! Come then, we'd better get a taxi.

TOMMY: Another taxi!

TUPPENCE: All expenses paid!

(Enter JULIUS, mid-twenties, pugnacious but pleasant.)

JULIUS: Howdy, gangsters! Sit right down and tell me all you know about my cousin, Jane.

TUPPENCE: Your cousin!

JULIUS: Sure thing. Jane Fish.

TOMMY: You don't know where she is?

JULIUS: Be darned if I do. Say, don't you?

TUPPENCE: We advertised to receive information, not to provide it.

JULIUS: I guess I can read. Wait a minute! Don't expect to demand ransom or any funny business like that.

TOMMY: We haven't kidnapped your cousin—we are also trying to find her.

JULIUS: All right, I guess I was a mite hasty there. You can ask your questions.

TUPPENCE: When did you last see her?

JULIUS: Never have.

TOMMY: What?

JULIUS: Nope. My father was real steamed when my aunt decided to marry a plain old school teacher. See, he piled it up in oil and steel and then on Wall Street, but my old man swore his own sister would never see a penny of it.

Well, when he died last fall and I got the dollars, I tried to fix things, you see? Within the family. The man I hired to find them told me they both were dead, but that they had left a daughter—Jane—and that she had been on the *Lusitania* when it was torpedoed. That's the last I heard and decided to take matters into my own hands. I went up and down with Scotland Yard and they sent a man around to get her photograph.

But say! You're not after her or anything? If so, I won't hesitate to buy her off.

TUPPENCE: Heavens, no, good sir!

JULIUS: Okay, then. What about some lunch?

(Bellman enters, hands Julius a telegram and departs.)

(Reading:) Huh. There's another man from Scotland Yard waiting for me downstairs. What do they want this time? I hope they haven't lost that photograph of Jane, it's the only copy in existence.

TUPPENCE: Do you know the name of the other man? Who arrived earlier?

JULIUS: Sure thing, it was on his card. "Inspector Brown."

What do you call a fellah with a name like that?

TOMMY: Unassuming.

(Exit Julius.)

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* At that, it appeared as though we had each been trumped by this mysterious "Mister Brown," and the best part of it was that in an instant we were all fast friends.

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* We revealed to Mister Julius Hersheimer the whole history of our joint venture, about which the American declared himself "tickled to death."

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* He got us each an apartment at the Ritz so we could get right down to work in finding his cousin!

(Tommy and Tuppence immediately sit down. Tommy reads a paper and Tuppence plays Solitaire. Tuppence looks antsy.)

Dash it all, Tommy, we have to do something for our money.

TOMMY: My union, Tuppence, does not permit me to work before eleven.

TUPPENCE: What do we have to go upon?

TOMMY: Absolutely nothing.

TUPPENCE: Wrong! Two distinct clues. First, we know one of the gang – Whittington!

TOMMY: Not much of a clue.

TUPPENCE: But he did provide the second – a woman named Rita. I propose she was the one who was following the courier who was bringing the draft treaty from America!

TOMMY: How do you make that out?

TUPPENCE: Someone had to have known Jane Fish had those papers.

TOMMY: O, Sherlock!

TUPPENCE: Now we need to hunt through the survivors of the Lusitania until we find her.

TOMMY: We will need a list.

TUPPENCE: We have a list!

TOMMY: We have a list!

(Tuppence reveals a sheaf of paper.)

TUPPENCE: I wrote to Mr. Carter for just such a list yesterday and got his reply this morning. How's that for clever little Tuppence?

(Tommy looks over the list.)

TOMMY: Full marks for industry, zero for modesty. Oh dear.

TUPPENCE: Yes, very few first names. All Mrs. or Miss.

TOMMY: Hmm. Well, there's nothing for it. We'll start with London. Note any addresses for women who live in London while I put on my hat.

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* Shortly we were bound for The Laurels, Glendower Road, Number 7.

(Tommy takes out a notepad, knocks, and a SERVANT answers.)

TOMMY: Good morning, Hampstead Borough Council, New Voting Register. Mrs. Edgar Keith lives here, does she?

SERVANT: Yaas.

TOMMY: Christian name?

SERVANT: Missus? Eleanor Jane.

TOMMY: Thank you, good morning.

(Tommy closes his notebook and the Servant exits.)

Child's play.

TUPPENCE: Yes, and only seven hundred and sixty to go.

(Tommy takes out his notepad, and heads for a different entrance.)

(To audience:) By early afternoon we had a Gladys Mary and also a Marjorie, a long lecture on universal suffrage from an American woman named Sadie, and also the most delicious steak and chips from this delightful little place in Battersea, before—

(HOUSEWOMAN comes to door. Tommy is a bit less enthusiastic than before.)

TOMMY: Good afternoon, Lambeth Borough Council, Voting Register. Looking for a Mrs. Vandemeyer—need to get her proper Christian name.

HOUSEWOMAN: Marguerite.

TOMMY: *(Repeating:)* Margaret.

HOUSEWOMAN: No, no—Mar-Gyur-Reet.

TOMMY: Ah, the, uh, French way. Marguerite. I see. *(Pause.)* Had her down as "Rita," is that, er...

HOUSEWOMAN: She's mostly called that, yes, but—

TOMMY: That's enough. Good afternoon!

HOUSEWOMAN: Thought you were here about the situation.

TOMMY: Excuse me?

HOUSEWOMAN: I'm taking my retirement. Mistress looking for a new girl.

TOMMY: I see. Good afternoon!

(Housewoman exits as Tommy goes to Tuppence.)

TUPPENCE: Oh, Tommy!

TOMMY: You heard?

TUPPENCE: Yes! It's so lovely to think of things and then for them to really happen!

(Enter Whittington and BORIS.)

Speaking of!

TOMMY: What?

TUPPENCE: Hush.

(Tommy and Tuppence take hands and do their best to make themselves unnoticed as Whittington and Boris discuss heatedly.)

WHITTINGTON: Who knows? You may have met him already?

BORIS: Children's talk! "Mister Brown." Invented by the Inner Ring to frighten us.

WHITTINGTON: You never know. He may be one of us.

(Whittington and Boris exit.)

TUPPENCE: Quick, follow them! I daren't, he'll recognize me.

TOMMY: All right! Meet you back at the Ritz then.

TUPPENCE: Yes.

(Pause.)

My hand, Tommy. I need my hand.

TOMMY: Right.

(Tommy lets go of Tuppence's hand.)

The Ritz!

(Exit Tommy.)

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* So Tommy was off on his adventure. But what about poor Tuppence? I went straight

back to the Ritz and sent a telegram to Mr. Carter about this Mrs. Vandemeyer—and about the position of housemaid I overheard them speaking of.

The morning brought no word from Tommy, which was odd—but I also received this note:

(Enter Carter.)

CARTER: You have made a splendid start, but I should like to once again point out the risk you are running. These people are incapable of pity or mercy. If you decide to continue, you will find everything arranged. You have now lived two years with Miss Dufferin, The Parsonage, Llanelly. Mrs. Vandemeyer can apply to her as a reference. Good luck to you.

(Exit Carter.)

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* I returned to the scene of the day before and rang for number 20. The housemaid ushered me into a room with a large fireplace, and standing near it, a woman who had no doubt once been beautiful.

(Enter RITA, an exquisite figure yet hard and menacing.)

RITA: Sit. How did you hear I wanted a parlourmaid?

TUPPENCE: Through a friend who knows the liftboy, ma'am.

RITA: I see. Is there anyone who can provide a reference?

TUPPENCE: Miss Dufferin, The Parsonage, Llanelly. I was with her two years, ma'am.

RITA: You can come at once?

TUPPENCE: Yes, ma'am, today if you like.

RITA: It's an easy place, I am out a good deal. What's your name?

TUPPENCE: Prudence Cooper, ma'am.

RITA: Very well, Prudence. Cook will show you where everything is.

(Exit Rita.)

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* I set about to my duties with little issue. Mrs. Vandemeyer entertained many colorful guests, and as parlourmaid I had the opportunity to receive their names and scrutinize their faces. I recognized Count Boris Stepanov as the man Tommy and I had seen with Whittington the other day. I listened attentively at the door as they enjoyed a moment on the balcony.

(Tuppence steps out, though she is visible, as Rita and Boris step in.)

RITA: Really, Boris, you are absurdly suspicious. Nobody dreams I have any connection with our mutual friend, Mister Brown.

BORIS: Heavens, Rita! Anyone could hear. Your persistent recklessness will ruin us.

RITA: Ha! Notoriety is the best way of disarming suspicion.

BORIS: In the meantime, you are going about everywhere with Peel Edgerton. He is the most celebrated King's Counsel in England, and a renowned criminologist.

RITA: What of it? I may need his assistance some day.

BORIS: They say Peel Edgerton can smell a criminal. You believe you can deceive him?

RITA: I take orders from one man – Mister Brown. Besides, Sir James Peel Edgerton is extremely rich.

BORIS: It is always money with you. Sometimes I believe you would betray us all if the price was right.

RITA: Let us not quarrel, Boris. We shall have some drinks.

(Rita and Boris exit, enter Tuppence.)

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* Sir James Peel Edgerton! Everyone knew his name. It was said he might one day be Prime Minister.

(Enter SIR JAMES, a man of power and magnetism. Sir James clears his throat. Tuppence, surprised, sees him and curtseys. Sir James smiles.)

SIR JAMES: Not been doing this long, eh?

TUPPENCE: Mrs. Vandemeyer tell you that, sir?

SIR JAMES: The look of you told me. Good place here?

TUPPENCE: Very good, thank you, sir.

SIR JAMES: But there are plenty of good places nowadays.

(Enter Rita.)

RITA: Sir James! *(To Tuppence:)* What day do you usually go out, Prudence?

TUPPENCE: Friday is my usual day, ma'am.

RITA: And that is today. Typical. It makes no difference to me, as I shall not be dining at home. *(To Sir James:)* This way, Sir James.

(Exit Rita, Sir James following. He turns to Tuppence to add:)

SIR JAMES: A change does no harm sometimes. Just a hint.

(Sir James exits.)

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* On my afternoon out I inquired for Julius Hersheimer at the Ritz. I told him all about my letter to Mr. Carter and my new work situation.

(Enter Julius.)

JULIUS: Bully for you, Miss Tuppence! Fancy you a menial.

TUPPENCE: But what about Tommy, have you seen him?

JULIUS: I figure you had! Those clowns down at the office tell me Beresford hasn't been here since Wednesday, is that so?

TUPPENCE: You don't know where he is?

JULIUS: I haven't had one darned word from him.

TUPPENCE: That's bad, Julius. I think we need some assistance, and I have an idea and I think it will work.

JULIUS: Put me wise.

TUPPENCE: This morning I happened to encounter a very important Member of Parliament, and a successful lawyer—

JULIUS: See here, we don't want any lawyers mixed up in this.

TUPPENCE: It could do no harm.

JULIUS: He can't help us any.

TUPPENCE: Well, I think that he could.

JULIUS: So darned plucky! All right, miss. We'll have it your way.

TUPPENCE: (*To audience:*) Another point for Tuppence! Mr. Hersheimer called a car around and soon we were on our way to Carlton House Terrace.

(*Enter Sir James.*)

SIR JAMES: I understand you have a message for me? Ah, it is you, isn't it. Not a message from Mrs. Vandemeyer, I suppose?

TUPPENCE: Not exactly, oh and this is Mr. Hersheimer, Sir James Peel Edgerton.

JULIUS: Please to meet you.

SIR JAMES: Please, sit down.

TUPPENCE: Sir James, I dare say this is the most awful cheek coming here like this, as you are a very important person and Tommy is very unimportant.

(Sir James looks to Julius.)

SIR JAMES: Tommy...?

TUPPENCE: No, that's Julius. I'm telling it badly. At the first. Why did you warn me away from Mrs. Vandemeyer?

SIR JAMES: That is not exactly what I did say.

TUPPENCE: I know, lawyers are dreadfully careful about what they do say. Can't we just add "without prejudice" first and get on with it?

SIR JAMES: Without prejudice then, if I had a younger sister forced to earn a living, I should not like to see her in Mrs. Vandemeyer's service. That is all I can tell you.

TUPPENCE: Thank you, Sir James, for your candor. But there is a very good reason I am in Mrs. Vandemeyer's service, and if it is all right with Julius here I would like to explain the entire thing.

SIR JAMES: Yes, tell me all about it. Start with Tommy.

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* And so we laid our cards on the table, all of them. Tommy, Mr. Carter, Mrs. Vandemeyer, Julius himself, and of course, Miss Jane Fish.

SIR JAMES: Hmm. As you arrived, young lady, I was just packing for a few days' fishing in Scotland. But there are different kinds of fishing.

JULIUS: So you'll help us?

TUPPENCE: *(To Julius:)* And you didn't want to come.

SIR JAMES: Oh? And why was that?

JULIUS: I reckoned finding our friend would be petty

business for someone like you.

SIR JAMES: I see. But this petty business bears directly on a very big business. If this boy is alive, he may have very valuable information to give us.

TUPPENCE: But how do we find him? I've thought of everything.

SIR JAMES: Have you thought of simply asking Mrs. Vandemeyer?

JULIUS: And if she won't tell?

TUPPENCE: I am guessing she can be bribed.

SIR JAMES: Oh?

TUPPENCE: Something I overheard, about money. It wouldn't surprise me.

JULIUS: That's where I come in! You can count on me for one million dollars, yes, sir!

SIR JAMES: Mr. Hersheimer, that is a very large sum.

JULIUS: I guess it'll have to be. But I can deliver the goods with enough to spare for your fee.

SIR JAMES: (*Flushed.*) Young man, there is no question of a fee.

JULIUS: Oh. Sorry. Mite hasty there.

SIR JAMES: There is no time to be lost. Mrs. Vandemeyer is out tonight?

TUPPENCE: I think so, but not late.

SIR JAMES: All right. Stay out until nine-thirty. I will arrive at ten, with Mr. Hersheimer. Very pleasant meeting with you both.

(Exit Sir James.)

TUPPENCE: Isn't he a duck, Julius? Isn't he just a duck?

JULIUS: He proved me wrong, all right. Good luck, and I will see you tonight with Sir James!

(Exit Julius.)

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* It was all I could do not to return to Mrs. Vandemeyer's before the appointed time. At Sir James' suggestion I had a good dinner – a really good dinner – before entering the house promptly at nine-thirty.

(Enter Rita with a handbag.)

RITA: You?

TUPPENCE: Bit of a toothache, ma'am. Just heading to make some tea.

RITA: How unfortunate for you. You had better go to bed.

TUPPENCE: I shall be all right in the kitchen.

RITA: Cook is out. So you see. You had better go to bed.

TUPPENCE: I don't want –

(Rita draws a revolver.)

RITA: Damned little fool! Do you think I don't know?

TUPPENCE: Come now, you can't shoot me. Everyone would hear.

RITA: I'd risk that. Clever girl. You deceived me, all right. But this where I'm on top and you're underneath. Step back. That's right. Now put your hands above your head.

(Tuppence does as she is told. Rita sets down the revolver and opens her handbag. She removes a little stoppered bottle and puts one drop into a glass, then fills it with water from a pitcher.)

TUPPENCE: What's that?

RITA: Something to help you sleep.

TUPPENCE: I shan't drink it, I'd much rather be shot.

RITA: It is not a poison! It is a sleeping draught. I would prefer not to have the trouble of tying you and gagging you. That is the alternative and I can be very rough.

(Tuppence throws herself on her knees, hysterical.)

TUPPENCE: It's poison! I know it's poison! Please, don't make me drink it!

RITA: Get up, you driveling idiot.

TUPPENCE: *(Overcome, ad lib:)* No, please! Please, no! Don't make me do it! Please!

RITA: Drink it at once!

TUPPENCE: Promise it won't hurt me!

RITA: Of course, don't be a fool.

TUPPENCE: Very well.

(Tuppence takes the glass, stands, throws the water in Rita's face and picks up the revolver.)

Now who's on top?

RITA: *(Furious:)* Not a fool, then!

TUPPENCE: Let's just...sit down, then. And talk.

(Rita sits.)

RITA: Oh, talk? What about.

TUPPENCE: Money.

RITA: What do you mean?

TUPPENCE: Perhaps you meant to kill me just now, perhaps not. If you did kill me, that wouldn't be practical. Revenge is too, too unsatisfactory. But money? There's nothing unsatisfactory about money, is there?

RITA: Do you think I would sell my friends?

TUPPENCE: Of course!

RITA: For a paltry hundred pounds or so, I'm sure.

TUPPENCE: One hundred thousand.

(Pause.)

RITA: Bah. You?

TUPPENCE: Not me. A friend of mine. An American businessman. He'd pay you that without a murmur.

RITA: What does he want to know?

TUPPENCE: Where is Jane Fish?

RITA: I do not know...but I could find out.

TUPPENCE: Good. Do that. One thing more.

RITA: Well?

TUPPENCE: Who is Mister Brown?

RITA: *(Shaken:)* No one knows who Mister Brown is.

TUPPENCE: You do.

RITA: What makes you think that?

TUPPENCE: I don't know. But I'm sure.

RITA: Swear that my name shan't be brought into it.

TUPPENCE: I swear. And once he's caught, you'll be out of danger.

RITA: How? How shall I be? You're sure about the money?

(Behind Tuppence enter Julius and Sir James. Rita shrieks. Rita points to the two men and faints. Sir James takes immediate action and goes to examine the fallen woman.)

SIR JAMES: It's her heart. Let us get her feet up. *(To Julius:)*

Get a brandy, and quickly or she'll slip through our fingers.

(Julius exits. Sir James and Tuppence work to help her into a chair. Sir James checks Rita's pulse.)

TUPPENCE: I guess any chance of cross-examining her is out of the question for now.

(Enter Julius with a brandy. Sir James takes it, and waves it under Rita's nose.)

And she was just about to disclose the identity of Mister Brown.

JULIUS: She was?

SIR JAMES: Indeed?

(Rita is not reviving. Sir James sets the brandy aside.)

TUPPENCE: The money was the trick.

JULIUS: A million?

TUPPENCE: A hundred thousand.

JULIUS: That's all right, too. Splendid, Miss Tuppence!

SIR JAMES: She'll do now. It is only a matter of waiting until she revives.

TUPPENCE: We will have to wait, too.

JULIUS: She won't want to make tracks away from the dollars.

TUPPENCE: She might. She seemed very frightened of Mister Brown.

SIR JAMES: You're right. We must not leave. We have an important witness, and she must be safeguarded. I suggest you go to bed, and that Mr. Hersheimer and I share the vigil.

(As Sir James speaks, Rita revives briefly and only Tuppence sees it.)

RITA: *(To Tuppence:)* Don't...leave...

(Rita faints.)

JULIUS: Let's get this chunk of lead into the next room.

(Each man takes an arm, and as they make it through the door Julius doubles back to fetch the brandy.)

TUPPENCE: *(To audience:)* We three settled in for a night vigil. First order, I directed Julius to the kitchen for cold pie and three plates. We speculated on Mrs. Vandemeyer's plans for flight, and who may have tipped her off.

As the hours crawled by, the magic of the night began to take hold on me.

(Enter Julius.)

JULIUS: Tuppence, are you all right?

TUPPENCE: I can't stop thinking that Mister Brown is here, in this flat – right now!

(Enter Sir James.)

JULIUS: Of course! The omnipotent Mister Brown.

SIR JAMES: You don't believe in Mister Brown, do you Mister Hersheimer.

JULIUS: No sir, I do not. He's a bogey, a front. I think he's someone like that Russian fellah, Stepanov, or Whittington.

SIR JAMES: I disagree with you. Mister Brown exists.

TUPPENCE: I feel he's here!

SIR JAMES: With due deference to your feelings, Miss Tuppence, I do not see how it is humanly possible for anyone to be in the flat without our knowledge.

TUPPENCE: Sitting up at night is always rather jumpy.

(Julius and Sir James exit.)

(*To audience:*) At dawn, Julius drew the curtains and we beheld the slow rising sun over the city. It was going to be a gorgeous day! We would find Tommy, AND Jane Fish—

(*Enter Julius and Sir James.*)

SIR JAMES: She's dead!

TUPPENCE: No!

JULIUS: Her heart?

SIR JAMES: Who saw her last alive?

TUPPENCE: In the middle of the night she revived a bit, I gave her the brandy, and she went back to sleep!

SIR JAMES: (*To Julius:*) Now do you believe Mister Brown exists?

JULIUS: I reckon I do.

TUPPENCE: The window is open—

JULIUS: Did he come along the balcony...?

SIR JAMES: We must search for anything of value that may be of worth to us.

(*They search.*)

TUPPENCE: She has been burning papers in the grate.

SIR JAMES: Very good, Miss Tuppence.

(*Julius finds a small photograph and exhibits surprise. He pockets it without a word, and almost immediately picks up the small stoppered bottle from before.*)

JULIUS: Hey, what's this?

(*Tuppence takes the bottle.*)

TUPPENCE: The sleeping draught! It's EMPTY!

(*Exit Sir James.*)

(To audience:) The cause of death was heart failure due to overdose. After completing our statements with the police—and thanks to Sir James that ordeal was brief—Mr. Hersheimer and I returned to the Ritz. We were more or less back where we had begun.

JULIUS: Miss Tuppence, do you think I'm ever going to find Jane? I'm fed up and got half a mind to head back to the States right away.

TUPPENCE: You musn't! We've got to find Tommy!

JULIUS: Beresford. Right. That's so. Say, there's something I'd like to ask you.

TUPPENCE: Yes?

JULIUS: You and Beresford. What about it?

TUPPENCE: I'm not sure I understand and anyway you're wrong.

JULIUS: No?

TUPPENCE: Certainly not. Tommy and I are friends—nothing more.

JULIUS: I see. Well. Supposing we never find Beresford and all this business fiddles out. What are you going to do?

TUPPENCE: I don't...I don't know.

JULIUS: What about marriage. Got any views on the subject?

TUPPENCE: If I can find someone rich enough to make it worth my while. That's frank, isn't it?

JULIUS: Sure thing. What about me, then?

TUPPENCE: I didn't mean—oh, I couldn't!

JULIUS: Why not?

TUPPENCE: It would seem so unfair.

JULIUS: I'm calling your bluff. I admire you immensely. You've got pluck. Say the word, and we'll run round right away to some high-class jeweler and fix up the ring business.

TUPPENCE: I can't!

JULIUS: Because of Beresford.

TUPPENCE: No, no, no! I mean. No, thanking you very much, I think I had better after all say no.

JULIUS: Think it over. This is your room.

(Exit Julius.)

TUPPENCE: *(To herself:)* You little fool. No use sniveling. I'm fond of Tommy, of course I'm fond of Tommy, I've known him all my life. There's no need to be sentimental about it. And I may never see him again!

(Knock at the door, Bellman enters.)

BELLMAN: Telegram for Miss Prudence Cowley.

(Bellman goes.)

TUPPENCE: *(Reads:)* "Come at once, Boat House, Ebury, Yorkshire, great developments...Tommy!" Oh, Tommy! Dear, sweet fool!

(Tuppence exits.)

(Tommy enters and sits, dining. Bellman follows almost immediately and brings him a plate, heaped with food.)

TOMMY: Ta, old boy. Save some time and bring me the dessert menu with haste.

(Enter Julius.)

Julius, old brick! You must try this sole à la Jeannette, it's monstrous.

JULIUS: Holy snakes! Is that really you?

TOMMY: Who should it be?

JULIUS: We thought you were dead, pal!

TOMMY: Who, Tuppence? Where is she?

JULIUS: Dropped her here about an hour ago. Must be shopping. But shed that British calm and get down to it. Where have you been all this time?

TOMMY: If you are not too put off by my eating and spouting, it's going to be a long story and I am ravenous.

JULIUS: Fire ahead!

(Tommy launches into his tale for the audience, as Julius exits.)

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* I followed our man Whittington and his associate—at a judicious distance—to the mean streets of Soho. They led me down a cul-de-sac and I spied them mount the steps of a rather evil-looking house. Whittington gave a peculiar rap on the door, said a word or two to the doorkeeper and they went inside.

(Tommy looks about, heads right up to the "door" and gives a "peculiar rap" to it. A villainous-faced man, CONRAD, enters.)

CONRAD: Well?

TOMMY: *(Slightest hesitation:)* Mister Brown?

CONRAD: Upstairs.

(Exit Conrad.)

TOMMY: And I was in! The house was beyond filthy, wallpaper hanging in strips, every angle a mass of cobweb. I leisurely took the stairs, and from one of the hallway doors, I heard a low murmur of voices.

ZELIG: *(Off:)* Is he here?

BORIS: *(Off:)* Impossible for him to be present.

TOMMY: Foreigners! Germans, and Russians, I thought.

ZELIG: (*Off:*) Money is essential.

IRISHMAN: (*Off:*) I can guarantee a reign of terror in Ireland that will shake the British Empire to its foundations.

TOMMY: And an Irish Republican! How vast is this conspiracy?

AMERICAN: (*Off:*) Mister Brown has authorized that I inform you of our agreements from the National Union of Miners, of Railwaymen, the Society of Engineers –

TOMMY: They were plotting a general strike, the likes of which we've not yet seen! Every British worker laying down his tools at once, the entire economy of Great Britain would come to a crashing halt! And the date they set –

BORIS: (*Off:*) The 29th of this month.

TOMMY: In only one week's time!

BORIS: (*Off:*) At this time the document will be revealed and published and broadcast. The result will be immediate. Revolution will be declared and the government will be broken.

ZELIG: (*Off:*) One week? That is rather soon.

BORIS: (*Off:*) I know. But the Labour leaders chose the date themselves, and we cannot be seen to be controlling their hand too much.

AMERICAN: (*Off:*) Union men are honest working men.

(Enter Conrad, unseen by Tommy.)

BORIS: (*Off:*) Every revolution has had their honest men. They are soon disposed of afterwards.

(Conrad clouts Tommy over the head and he collapses. ZELIG enters, and he and Conrad put Tommy into a chair and bind

him. As Tommy regains his consciousness, Zelig hands him a glass of something strong to drink.)

ZELIG: Drink.

(Tommy drinks what is offered, and gags a bit.)

Feel better?

TOMMY: Yes, thanks!

ZELIG: My young friend, you are lucky your head is so thick. Conrad struck hard.

TOMMY: Oh, Conrad, is it?

ZELIG: Do you have anything to say before you are put to death?

TOMMY: Simply lots of things.

ZELIG: Speak! How did you get in?

TOMMY: Dear old Conrad here. You really ought to have a better watchdog.

CONRAD: He gave the word!

TOMMY: Yes, how was he to know? But his hasty action has given me the pleasure of seeing you face to face.

ZELIG: Dead men tell no tales.

TOMMY: I should have a great objection to dying. Besides, why haven't you killed me already? Because you don't know how much I know.

CONRAD: You hellhound of a spy! We will kill you now!

TOMMY: How did I know your password, Conrad? You don't suppose I came up those steps and said the first thing that came into my head?

CONRAD: *(To Zelig:)* We have been betrayed!

TOMMY: There you go! Use your brains.

ZELIG: English swine, tell us what you know!

TOMMY: Tell! Speak! Drink! It is as though every word in German is a verb. I will make you an offer.

ZELIG: You will make us an offer?

TOMMY: Yes. My life and liberty for the papers brought over from America on the Lusitania.

ZELIG: You know where they are?

TOMMY: Not in the least, but I have a theory, and I am pretty sure in my facts. Set me free and I will produce the papers.

ZELIG: Produce the papers and we will set you free.

TOMMY: Now how can I search for them if you have me tied up here? Attach little Conrad here to my person if you must.

ZELIG: Unacceptable.

TOMMY: Then bring me the girl.

ZELIG: What girl?

TOMMY: Jane Fish, of course.

ZELIG: What – why would you want to see her?

TOMMY: I need to ask her one question. When I have her answer, I know I can produce those papers.

ZELIG: (*Laughs.*) Ask her a question. I see. Conrad, take him upstairs. He knows nothing.

TOMMY: Wait a minute! About the girl –

ZELIG: Yes, you want to know what the girl knows. We will ask...Mister Brown.

(Exit Zelig and Conrad.)

TOMMY: (*To audience:*) They brought me up the stairs to an

attic room, filthy and windowless. My dear chum Conrad lit a hissing gas burner and I was left alone. The place was like a tomb, I knew no one would hear me if I screamed. The walls were no comfort, just one grotesque painting depicting a scene from Faust—Faust with Mephistopheles, old Scratch himself putting me in mind of the sinister Mister Brown. I pounded at the door, but it was obvious they would only come for me in their time. My first, greatest fear was that they meant to starve me. I am not the man to endure a hunger strike.

That sour-faced brute Conrad was utmost in my mind. When he returned I would do my best to pay him back and solid.

(Tommy looks for something to use as a bludgeon. He examines a chair, looks about, and chooses to take the large, framed painting from the wall. He stands behind the door and waits, with the painting above his head.)

(His waiting becomes uncomfortable, and he checks his wrist-watch. He stands with the painting held lower before giving up and setting the painting down.)

It was no use. Nine o'clock became ten, and it was clear there would be no Conrad; worse yet, no dinner!

(He makes himself a bed.)

I fell asleep in moments, and could barely recover my senses as I heard the sound of a key in the lock.

(Tommy looks at his watch again.)

(To himself:) Ooh-ah, I hope it's breakfast.

(Enter ANNETTE, a young woman, with a tray.)

Are you Jane Fish?

ANNETTE: Annette, monsieur.

TOMMY: Oh! Française?

ANNETTE: Oui, monsieur! Monsieur parle Français?

TOMMY: Not if I can help it, is that breakfast?

(Annette nods as he sits before the tray and begins to eat. As he does, she turns to go.)

It's not the Criterion, but what is. Wait a sec.

(Annette stops.)

What are you doing here? Don't tell me you are Conrad's niece or anything, I won't believe it.

ANNETTE: I do the service, monsieur.

TOMMY: I see. And that name I asked about, have you heard it?

ANNETTE: I have heard the name Jane Fish.

TOMMY: Is she in this house?

ANNETTE: Oh no, monsieur. I must go.

TOMMY: Look here, Annette. I want you to help me get out of this.

ANNETTE: Impossible. There are three of them on the floor below.

TOMMY: Three, huh? I see. But you would help me if you could?

ANNETTE: Of course not, monsieur. They are my people and you have spied upon them.

TOMMY: They're a bad lot, Annette.

ANNETTE: I dare not, monsieur.

TOMMY: What about this other girl, Jane Fish? She needs to be safe from them, too.

ANNETTE: You came to look for her, yes?

TOMMY: You know something about her?

ANNETTE: No, no, just the name –

(Annette suddenly notices the vacant place on the wall where the painting had been hanging, and screams. She looks about desperately, and seeing it against the wall by the door, breathes an uncomfortable sigh of relief. She looks at Tommy strangely and exits.)

(Tommy picks up the painting, examines it front and back, and rehanges it as he speaks to the audience:)

TOMMY: Days passed, drearily. I saw only Conrad and Annette, and she no longer engaged me in conversation, no matter how charming I was. The confinement was driving me mad! Perhaps I should have counted myself fortunate, because on the third day –

(Enter Zelig and Conrad.)

ZELIG: Bind him.

(Conrad ties Tommy's arms.)

TOMMY: What the devil – ?

CONRAD: Thought you had bluffed us. You know less than a kitten. Your number's up, you bastard swine.

TOMMY: Good speech, Conrad. But why the bonds? Just cut my throat without delay?

ZELIG: You will not speak to us with that tone again. This isn't "the Ritz," is it?

TOMMY: How did you know – ?

CONRAD: What? Nothing smart to say now? Ha! We'll be back for you soon.

(Exit Conrad and Zelig. Tommy looks desperate and confused. How do they know who he is? Annette enters quietly as Conrad

calls from outside.)

(Off:) Come out of it, Annette! He doesn't want any supper tonight.

ANNETTE: (*Calling:*) Oui, oui, je sais bien. I must get the other tray.

(Annette looks Tommy in the eye, and goes over to him.)

(Calls out:) You have tied him up well, hein? He is like a trussed up chicken!

(Annette puts a penknife into Tommy's hands, which are tied behind his back, then she exits.)

(Tommy cuts his bonds as this dialogue continues.)

CONRAD: (Off:) Annette! Come on!

ANNETTE: (Off:) Mais me voila.

CONRAD: (Off:) If you cannot be trusted to follow instructions, you must give me the key to that room.

(Tommy goes to take the painting off the wall again, and holds it high above his head by the door.)

ANNETTE: (Off:) Je suis désolée.

(Conrad enters.)

CONRAD: (*Entering:*) "You're sorry." I'm sorry.

(Tommy brings the painting hard onto Conrad's head, knocking him to the ground. Zelig enters.)

ZELIG: Gott im Himmel!

(Tommy and Zelig engage in fisticuffs. In the confines of the small room, Tommy manages to get the best of each of these captors.)

TOMMY: You got one thing right—this hasn't been the Ritz.

(Exit Tommy, followed swiftly by Conrad and Zelig. Tommy

enters, relaxed, from another entry. To audience:)

First things being first, I slipped into a Turkish Bath to make myself presentable, found myself a hearty breakfast, and headed to Whitehall to meet with "Mr. Carter," describing to him each of the faces I had seen at the meeting.

(Enter Carter.)

CARTER: The Russian leader must have been the Count Boris Stepanov. He is in town as an unofficial envoy of their new Bolshevik regime. And your Irishman, he's a prominent Unionist M.P. The German is a bit of a mystery...still, you've done very well. The 29th is the date, you say. That does give us very little time. *(Beat.)* We can deal with the general strike, but if that treaty turns up, England will be plunged into anarchy.

TOMMY: Anarchy!

CARTER: We will investigate the house, I will be surprised to find anyone there.

TOMMY: One of them made a crack about "the Ritz." I think they found out about me. But how?

CARTER: May have been an accidental remark. Regardless, be more careful from this out.

TOMMY: I take a lot of killing, sir.

(Exit Carter and enter Julius.)

JULIUS: Bully for you! Reads like a dime novel.

(Enter HOTEL MAID.)

TOMMY: But where the deuce is Tuppence?

JULIUS: *(To Hotel Maid:)* Say, miss. That young lady I dropped off a couple hours back—

HOTEL MAID: Caught a taxi for her, sir. Heading for Charing

Cross. And she left this for you, sir.

(Hotel Maid hands Julius a letter and departs.)

TOMMY: Perhaps this will tell us what she is up to.

(Tommy reaches for the letter but Julius self-consciously puts it in his pocket.)

JULIUS: Oh, this has nothing to do with it, I'm sure. Something else I asked her about.

TOMMY: Oh?

JULIUS: See here, I better put you on the trolley. I asked Miss Tuppence to marry me this morning.

TOMMY: Oh. Well. That's all right. That's quite all right. We have been pals. For years! Nothing more. Tuppence always said she was looking for a...for a...

JULIUS: A daddy, a swell, a fellah with a lot of kale. Miss Tuppence put me wise to that right away. Now I'm not saying she's a gold-digger –

TOMMY: Certainly not.

JULIUS: After all, she did at first refuse.

TOMMY: I see. Wait, what? Refused? Refused?

JULIUS: Just rapped out a "no" without any kind of reason. But she'll come round.

TOMMY: What does she say in that letter!

(Julius takes out the letter.)

JULIUS: "Dear Julius, It's always better to have things black and white...I cannot think of marriage until Tommy is found. Let's leave it till then...and so on... Tuppence." Huh.

TOMMY: I see! Well.

JULIUS: Hmn.

TOMMY: So. Nothing there about what she is up to.

(Enter Hotel Maid.)

HOTEL MAID: Mr. Hersheimer? Mr. Julius Hersheimer?
This just arrived for you.

(Tommy receives it.)

TOMMY: I'll take this one.

(Hotel Maid goes.)

(Reads:) Gadzooks! It's from Sir James Peel Edgerton... "Come Manchester Midland Hotel immediately, JANE FISH FOUND."

JULIUS: I'll call a taxi.

TOMMY: You know Sir James Peel Edgerton?

(Enter Sir James.)

SIR JAMES: Delighted to make your acquaintance, Mister Beresford. I have heard so much about you from Miss Tuppence that it seems I already know you quite well.

TOMMY: Thank you, sir.

SIR JAMES: Well, it is fortunate for all parties that we have found the young lady.

JULIUS: Yes, where is she?

SIR JAMES: She was knocked down in a street accident. She's not seriously hurt; a bruise and a cut or two, slight injuries to the head. On recovering consciousness, she gave her name as Jane Fish!

(YOUNG WOMAN enters and sits. Her face is partially obscured by bandages.)

Miss Fish, this is your cousin, Mr. Julius Hersheimer.

JULIUS: How do, Cousin Jane?

YOUNG WOMAN: Are you really Uncle Hiram's son?

JULIUS: Sure thing.

YOUNG WOMAN: They tell me my memory went. Years lost out of my life. It seems there has been no time since we were being hustled into those boats.

JULIUS: See here, Jane. There's something we want to know about. A man aboard that big boat with some mighty important papers on him.

(The Young Woman looks to one man, and then another, unsure how to answer.)

It's all right. Mr. Beresford here was sent from the British Government to get those papers back, Sir James Peel Edgerton is a Member of Parliament. You can tell us the whole story.

YOUNG WOMAN: The man—this letter—he said it would have a better chance with me, because they would save the women and children first.

SIR JAMES: Just as we thought.

YOUNG WOMAN: But it's all so long ago, and they told me the war is over. What do they matter now?

JULIUS: I guess history repeats itself, Jane. The whole caboodle over those papers has started all up again. Can you hand them over to us? Right away?

YOUNG WOMAN: I haven't got them.

TOMMY: You haven't got them?

YOUNG WOMAN: I hid them. I didn't feel safe. People seemed to be...watching me. It's the last thing I remember before waking up in the hospital.

SIR JAMES: What do you remember?

YOUNG WOMAN: In the confusion on the quay I slipped

away. I took a car and looked around to be sure no one followed us.

There was a path by the side of the road. I told the driver to wait. The path led to the cliff, down to the sea between big yellow gorse bushes. There was a hole, a small hole in the rock, just small enough to fit my hand through. I took the oilskin packet from around my neck, and put that envelope through just as far as my arm could reach.

I marked the place in my mind. There was a queer boulder in the path, for all the world it looked like a terrier sitting up begging. I took the car to the station and caught a train. I began to feel scared again on the train. The man opposite me winked at the woman sitting next to me. I rose to exit the compartment but the woman called me back saying I'd dropped something. When I turned to look, something hit me—here.

I don't remember anything more until I woke up in the hospital.

SIR JAMES: Thank you, Miss Fish. I hope we have not tired you.

JULIUS: So long, cousin Jane. I'll be back in two shakes of a dog's tail and soon I'll show you the time of your life in London before we head back to the States. So hurry up and get well!

(Young Woman exits.)

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* She lost her memory! No wonder those thugs laughed when I said I wanted to ask her questions.

SIR JAMES: The boat train to Holyhead stops at Chester at 12:14. If you start at once I think you can catch the connection. Shame I can't come with you. I am due to speak in Parliament

at two o'clock. It is unfortunate.

JULIUS: I imagine we can manage on our own.

SIR JAMES: You are still young, Mr. Hersheimer. Remember to never underestimate your adversary.

(Exit Sir James.)

JULIUS: He thinks Mister Brown might come along and take a hand. I'm ready for him.

(Julius slaps his pocket.)

I carry a gun. Little Willie here travels round with me everywhere.

(Julius sits.)

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* My. Ten minutes later we were on the train, bound for Chester.

(Tommy sits opposite Julius.)

JULIUS: Say, did you ever make a darned fool of yourself over a girl's face?

TOMMY: Can't say that I have. Why?

JULIUS: For the last two months I've been making a sentimental idiot of myself over Jane—ever since the first moment I clapped eyes on her photograph. Guess I'm ashamed to admit it, but I came here determined to find her and take her back as Mrs. Julius P. Hersheimer.

TOMMY: Oh!

JULIUS: Yeah, well, one look at her in the flesh and I was cured.

TOMMY: Oh? I thought her a very...good-looking girl.

JULIUS: Sure. But not like in her photo. I guess romance is a mighty queer thing.

TOMMY: I suppose it is...if you can come over here in love with one girl and propose to another within the fortnight.

JULIUS: Hey now, don't be hasty. I'm just a fellah who wants things to work out. I figure that if two people are suited to each other, and see the whole thing practically and businesslike—

TOMMY: If you ask me, we're all too businesslike nowadays. "Money, money, money!"

JULIUS: Cool down, son. Don't get so heated.

TOMMY: I feel heated.

(Tommy rises. To audience:)

We didn't speak too much after that, and I had plenty of time to cool before we reached Holyhead.

(Julius rises.)

JULIUS: Taxi!

TOMMY: We took the road to the bay, and watched very carefully so as not to miss the path.

JULIUS: Well, there it is!

TOMMY: We let the taxi go and headed down the narrow path.

JULIUS: Sure this is the right one?

TOMMY: *(To Julius:)* Look at all the gorse in the hedges, remember what Jane said?

(Tommy turns suddenly.)

JULIUS: What is it?

TOMMY: I don't know. I keep fancying someone is following us.

(Julius pats his pocket.)

JULIUS: If there is, I'll give Little William here some exercise.

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* These Americans. We continued following the path as it ran along side of the cliff by the sea.

JULIUS: Look there! If that doesn't beat the band.

TOMMY: *(To Julius:)* What's up?

JULIUS: Don't that boulder look all the world like a begging dog?

TOMMY: Well...it's what we expected to see, isn't it?

JULIUS: Push on. Maybe we'll find that hole in the cliff.

TOMMY: What about that crevice there?

JULIUS: That's it!

TOMMY: But...it's impossible! Think of it: birders, picnic parties, thousands of people passing by over the past five years. It can't be there.

JULIUS: Well, here goes.

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* Julius reached in—

JULIUS: It's a tight fit.

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* This thing was too easy.

JULIUS: I don't feel anything.

(Tommy retrieves a packet and puts it into Julius's outstretched hand.)

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* But just when I had given up any hope—

JULIUS: Gee whiz!

TOMMY: *(To audience:)* With a flourish Julius withdrew a small discolored packet!

(Julius waves the packet around.)

JULIUS: Ha ha! It's the goods all right!

(Julius opens the packet with a penknife.)

TOMMY: *(To Julius:)* You would have thought the stitches to have rotted.

JULIUS: What does a "draft treaty" even say?

(Julius removes a single sheet of paper and holds it out.)

TOMMY: *(Reading the paper:)* It says... "WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF MISTER BROWN."

JULIUS: How in tarnation did he get ahead of us?

TOMMY: Was there a spy at the door in the hospital?

JULIUS: He may have found them months ago.

TOMMY: No, that won't wash—he would have published them! There's nothing for it, I must get back to London and warn Mr. Carter.

(Exit Julius.)

(To audience:) We took the midnight mail back to the city, dreading our duty, but it had to be done. We stopped at the Ritz before dawn, haggard and pale, intending to rush out straight again to see the chief.

(Enter Bellman.)

BELLMAN: Mr. Beresford?

TOMMY: Yes?

BELLMAN: Message, Mr. Beresford.

(Bellman hands Tommy a telegram and exits.)

TOMMY: "Gravest apologies, young woman washed ashore near Yorkshire Coast, coat with handkerchief marked P.L.C. Believed to be Miss Tuppence. Foul play suspected. Please contact regarding financial restitution, no more can be done."

A. Carter."

Those devils! I'll never rest till I hunt them down!

(Enter Julius.)

JULIUS: Let's make tracks, son. Say, what's the matter with you?

(Tommy hands Julius the telegram.)

What's all this? They done her in? I suppose...now that they have the treaty, she wasn't good to them any longer. *(Beat.)* Well. I'll be darned. She sure was the pluckiest little girl.

TOMMY: Oh, get out, damn you! I LOVED her! I'd have stood by and let her marry you, but it wouldn't have been because I didn't care!

JULIUS: See here.

TOMMY: Oh, go to the devil. Tuppence is my girl. I'll never forget, when I was in hospital during the war, and then she walked in a nurse's kit... It was like a miracle. I've always loved her. Go look after your cousin.

JULIUS: All right, son. I'll go. I don't blame you.

(Julius takes photograph from his pocket, looks at it.)

If I knew she was lost, I would give it all up and move on myself.

(Tommy peers at the photo.)

TOMMY: Where did you find that?

JULIUS: This? Oh. It's my photograph of Jane. I found it in Rita Vandemeyer's home the night she died. I was afraid to share it with anyone because —

TOMMY: That's not Jane. That's Annette!

(Exit Julius. To audience.)

I wrote a letter to our Mister Carter, letting him in on a few of my suspicions. First, that the girl in Manchester was a plant, and that the packet we found was a sham.

(Exit Tommy. Enter Carter, reading a letter.)

CARTER: *(Reading:)* "I think I know where the real Jane Fish is located, and the papers—and I believe there is a chance that Tuppence is still alive. But if our enemies know the papers have been recovered, these ladies' lives aren't worth an hour's purchase. They must have the chance to flush out Mister Brown themselves."

Still on the case. Remarkable.

(Exit Carter. Enter Tuppence and Annette, who sits. Tuppence paces.)

(Tuppence looks to Annette as if to speak, and Annette is attentive. But Tuppence does not speak. Then:)

TUPPENCE: I am very sorry I cannot speak French.

(Annette shrugs.)

ANNETTE: Je suis désolé que je ne peux pas parler anglais.

TUPPENCE: I mean, I know what I have done, why they are keeping me here. I wish you could tell me why you are.

ANNETTE: C'est une longue histoire.

TUPPENCE: I keep hoping Tommy will come bursting in and save the day.

(A commotion outside the door.)

CONRAD: *(Off:)* What have you done?! You know the plan!

ZELIG: *(Off:)* We have been betrayed! Let us go in.

(Enter Zelig with Julius right behind, with "Little Willie" in Zelig's ribs.)

TUPPENCE: Julius! How did you –

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