

Scene Three: Hannay's Flat. Night.

(We hear HANNAY's voice in the dark.)

HANNAY. Never can find the switch. Dammit!

(HANNAY pulls the switch on the standard lamp.)

(Lights up on HANNAY's armchair and table. Various ladders, sheets, paint pots revealed.)

ANNABELLA. Turn it off! Quickly!

(HANNAY turns off the light. Now the room is illuminated by street lighting coming through the window. Maybe a flashing neon hotel sign. She runs to the window. Looks out.)

ANNABELLA. Sheisse! *(looks at HANNAY)* Bleint!

HANNAY. Sorry?

ANNABELLA. Bleint!

HANNAY. Bleint?

ANNABELLA. *Bleint! Bleint! Pull the bleint!!*

HANNAY. Oh blind! Of course. Sorry. Blind. Yes.

(Pulls blind down. It snaps back. Pulls it down again. It snaps back. Pulls it down harder. It stays. He walks away. The blind snaps back. He pulls it, wrestles with it, jams it ferociously.)

HANNAY. Sorry about that.

ANNABELLA. Now the light Mr. Hannay!

HANNAY. Light. Right.

(He switches on the light. She marches to the drinks cabinet. Pours herself a drink. Downs it in one.)

Have a drink why don't you?

ANNABELLA. Thank you.

(Pours herself another. Downs it.)

For you?

HANNAY. Thank you.

(ANNABELLA pours another. Downs this one too.)

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.

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 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.

(Turns seductively away, disappears into the darkness.

HANNAY gazes after her. Confused and mesmerized.

Wishing he could go with her.)

HANNAY. Goodnight Annabella!