

Stagescripts

Preview Script

The Lady Vanishes

A comedy thriller adapted by Derek Webb

from the novel by Ethel Lina White, on which the classic Hitchcock film was based

The Lady Vanishes

by Ethel Lina White, adapted by Derek Webb

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Synopsis

The classic 1938 Hitchcock film 'The Lady Vanishes' was based on a novel called 'The Wheel Spins' by Ethel Lina White. The film took various liberties with the plot, including introducing a propaganda element involving Nazis. This stage adaptation goes back to the original novel and tries as much as possible to capture the 1930s feel of the White's novel. Much of the comedy will be derived from playing up to the attitude of those mid-war years in terms of character and accent.

The play has been written so that there is a continuous sense of action, moving seamlessly from one scene to the next as far as possible. The various different 'sets' are all on stage throughout and lit as appropriate.

The story: Iris Carr is a wealthy socialite and we first meet her as she faints with sunstroke waiting for a train to take her back to the UK after holidaying in Eastern Europe. Once on the train she is in a compartment with a 'honeymoon couple', an austere Baroness, a formidable looking 'Doctor', and an elderly lady with an eclectic dress sense, Miss Froy.

Iris befriends Miss Froy who tells her that she was a governess for an important family in Moldavia, but is now between jobs and is journeying back to England to spend some time with her parents.

Shortly after, Iris falls asleep and, when she wakes, is surprised to find that Miss Froy is no longer there. But, when Iris asks the others where Miss Froy has gone, she is astonished when they deny she was ever there. Unable to comprehend this, she goes in search of Miss Froy and meets up with Max Hare and his friend, a Professor, also from Britain. Together they agree to help Iris find Miss Froy but soon begin to doubt her word as they are met with denial from everyone they talk to.

Then the Doctor announces that he has found Miss Froy... she was in the next compartment all the time. Delighted, Iris rushes to the compartment only to discover that it's an entirely different woman altogether, a certain Frau Kummer, who is dressed as Miss Froy. "That's not Miss Froy!" declares Iris at the end of Act One.

In Act Two, Iris enlists the help of the Reverend Barnes' wife who remembers seeing Miss Froy, but, to Iris' dismay, she identifies Frau Kummer as Miss Froy. Max, it seems, is Iris' only ally. He encourages her to try to remember any clues, and Iris remembers a story Miss Froy told her about her previous employer, who was accused of corruption by the political opposition.

Max produces a local newspaper he found in the restaurant car that has an article about the murder of a prominent newspaper editor opposed to the ruling party. Miss Froy's employer was accused of the crime, but released because he had an alibi, being at the time in his hunting lodge. Max suggests that perhaps Miss Froy has been kidnapped because she is a witness that her ex-employer's alibi is worthless, but dismisses the idea as pure fantasy. He encourages Iris to forget all about 'Miss Froy'.

By now Iris is beginning to doubt herself and fears she may be going mad. But then she remembers that Miss Froy wrote her name in the dust on the compartment window where she was sitting. Meanwhile, the Doctor has convinced the Professor and others that Iris should be taken to one of his care homes in Trieste when the train arrives, for her own safety.

The Doctor has another patient, wrapped in bandages in the next compartment and Iris, convinced that it is in fact Miss Froy, threatens to go to the British Embassy in Trieste. The doctor suggests to the professor that she be given a sedative by force. He convinces Max of her desperate need for sleep; to that end, Max brings her soup laced with a sedative, which she drinks and falls asleep. But when she awakes as they approach Trieste, in a half-daze she staggers into the next compartment and tears at the bandages of the patient, to discover that it is indeed Miss Froy!

The last scene takes place at Trieste station with the arrest of the Doctor and Frau Kummer, but not the Baroness. We understand more about why other passengers were reluctant to confirm that they had seen Miss Froy. And the play ends with a happy outcome for Max and Iris.

Characters (6m, 9f, 2m/f : doubling possible)

Principals (4m, 7m)

- **Iris Carr** : 20s-30s, wealthy, headstrong, but very likeable and sociable
- **Miss Froy** : 50s-60s, warm hearted, gregarious and generous
- **Max Hare** : 20s-30s, cheerful, very capable
- **Todhunter** : 40s-50s, blustering, domineering, actually Lord Brown incognito
- **'Mrs Todhunter'** : 40s-50s, actually Mrs Parmiter, having an affair with Lord Brown
- **Miss Evelyn Flood-Porter** : 50s-60s, very opinionated, rather overbearing
- **Miss Rose Flood-Porter** : 40s-50s, her sister, less overbearing but just as opinionated
- **Mrs Barnes** : 30s-40s, his wife, she wears the trousers, a definite chatterbox
- **The Baroness** : 50s-60s, austere, dominant, a character you don't want to mess with
- **The Doctor** : 40s-50s, Eastern European 'doctor', rather creepy, bearded
- **The Professor** : 30s-60s, slightly pompous, but warm, doesn't like to be proved wrong

Support (2m, 2f, 2m/f)

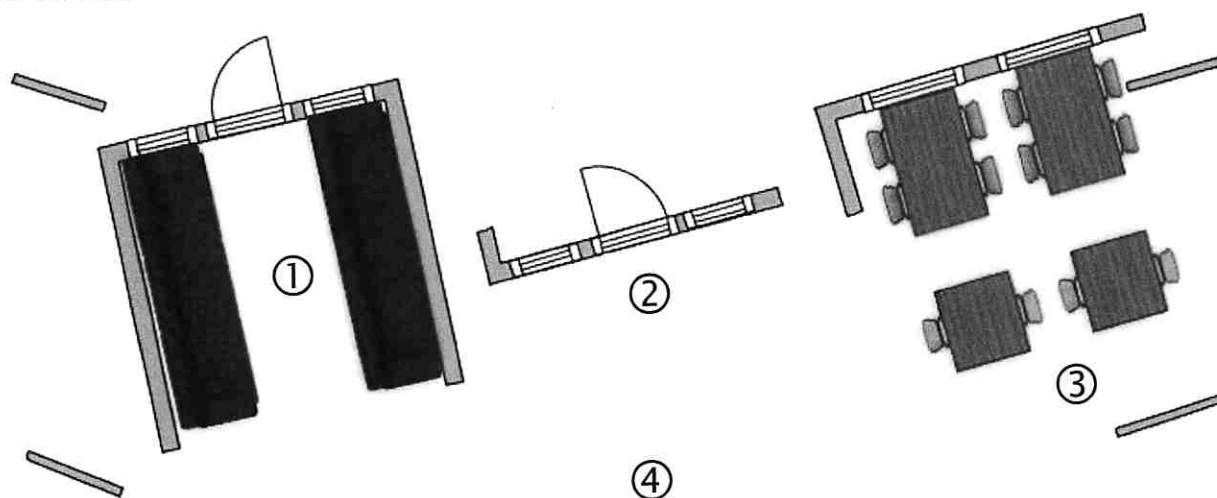
- Reverend Kenneth Barnes : 30s-50s, amiable, but rather ineffectual and sickly
- Frau Kummer : 30s-50s, stern Eastern European, hardly a barrel of laughs
- Waiter : 30s-50s, friendly, tries to be helpful, but probably quite lazy
- Nun : 30s-50s, slightly mysterious and anonymous character
- Border Official : 30s-50s, small part in one scene (m/f)
- Porter : 40s-50s, small part in last scene (m/f, non-speaking)

Doubling Arrangement:

- Waiter, Border Official and Rev Barnes
- Frau Kummer and the Nun
- Todhunter and the Porter

Set

The suggested set plan has four distinct acting areas: (1) Inside Compartment, (2) Corridor with Compartment Exterior, (3) Restaurant Car, and (4) Station Platform. With the lighting and sound cues shown in the script the suggested set plan here allows for the action to be virtually continuous with one scene merging seamlessly with the next.



- (1) Inside Compartment: Two upholstered banquette seats face each other with walls behind on which are luggage racks, route maps, pictures, lights etc. The upstage 'exterior' wall has windows with blinds and a door, the window of which is practical with a leather strap to lower it.
- (2) Corridor (with Compartment Exterior): Facing the audience is the outside of a compartment as seen from the train's corridor. There is a sliding door (practical) and two fixed windows which have lowered blinds (also practical).
- (3) Restaurant Car: Has four visible tables, other can disappear into the wings. There is a small section of return wall (panelled) and two fixed windows in the rear wall. The curtains of these windows could be fully or partly drawn. On each table is a brass lamp with shade, a menu and condiments etc.
- (4) Station Platform: The downstage centre area forms the station platform in Moldavia and also at Trieste.

ACT ONE

Scene 1

DSC Station Platform. In the distance SFX: a steam train is passing through the station. As the lights come up a group of people are discovered standing on the platform with suitcases: Iris Carr, Todhunter, 'Mrs Todhunter', Miss Rose Flood-Porter, Miss Evelyn Flood-Porter, Rev. Kenneth Barnes and Mrs Barnes.

It is a very bright, sunny day and evidently very hot. A woman fans herself. People are looking out for the expected train, Iris Carr among them. There is a suitcase beside her and, sitting on top of it, a hat and a small travel bag. She looks at her watch and is clearly agitated. She wipes her hand across her forehead. She looks up. Suddenly, without warning, she collapses on the platform, knocking over the suitcase. The people around her rush to help.

Rev Barnes What happened?

Mrs Barnes She's fainted.

Rev Barnes I'm not surprised, in this heat.

Miss Evelyn FP Can someone fetch some water?

Miss Rose FP Water.

Iris begins to stir.

'Mrs Todhunter' It's all right, I think she's coming round.

Miss Rose FP That's good.

Todhunter Are you all right, my dear?

Iris *(Groaning, then gradually with help raising herself to a sitting position).* I feel awful. Was I attacked? It's like someone hit me on the back of the head.

Miss Evelyn FP It's a touch of sunstroke, that's all.

Miss Rose FP Sunstroke.

Iris That's all?

Rev Barnes You could probably do with some aspirin.

Iris Oh, yes please...

Rev Barnes Sorry I haven't got any...

Iris What? Then why did... don't worry I've probably got some in my bag. *(She looks round).* My bag! Where is it? *(She begins to panic).* What's happened to it! I can't lose that... it's got everything in it! My tickets... my passport!

Miss Evelyn FP What does it look like?

Miss Rose FP Oh, you know what a passport looks like, Evelyn!

Iris It was sitting on top of my suitcase.

Rev Barnes *(Holding out her small travel bag).* Is this what you're looking for?

Iris Oh, yes, thank you! *(She takes the bag, opens it and checks its contents).* Oh, thank goodness it's all here. I couldn't afford to lose it; I've got to get back to England.

Rev Barnes I'll help you up, shall I?

Iris Thank you.

Mrs Barnes Here comes the train now.

SFX: from SL a steam train is heard entering the station. As the volume increases, pan the sound to SR and fade lights to black.

Scene 2

USR Railway compartment. SFX: fade up the sound of a train at speed, perhaps with a little strobe lighting which fades as the lighting comes up on the 'compartment'. Iris is discovered sitting in the compartment opposite Miss Froy, who is by the window, wearing a tweed suit. Sitting next to her is the couple who were on the platform: Todhunter and 'Mrs Todhunter'. Opposite them is the Doctor who has a black beard, and sitting next to him is the Baroness, dressed in black with a veil. All six of them lightly jiggle up and down, and sway gently side to side in sync with each other, simulating the movement of the train. This movement can gradually subside as the SFX fade.

Todhunter How are you feeling now? Bit better, eh?

Iris Oh, yes thank you very much.
Miss Froy Have you not been well?
Iris No, I fainted on the platform at Chisinău. *(Pause)*. It's terribly stuffy in here. Do you mind if I open the window?
Miss Froy No, of course not.
Iris *(Leaning forward toward the Baroness)*. You don't have any objections do you?
Baroness *(In Romanian)*. Ce zici?
Iris Sorry?
Todhunter Hold on, I'll do it. *(He gets up and pulls at the leather trap holding the window up, then lets it down with a bang)*.

SFX: the sound of the train increases.

Baroness *(In Romanian)*. Nu!

The Doctor fumes, stands up abruptly, goes to the window and pulls it back up. SFX: the train sound decreases.

Doctor Ze Baroness prefers ze window shut!
Iris Oh, but I really do need some air. I have a terrible headache coming on.
Doctor Ze Baroness prefers it shut!
Todhunter I say, that's a bit selfish, isn't it?
'Mrs Todhunter' Shh dear, we don't want to make a fuss.

Mr Todhunter looks slightly abashed and settles back in his seat.

Miss Froy Perhaps you should close your eyes for a bit, dear, try and get a little sleep.
Iris Yes, you're probably right. Perhaps I should.
Miss Froy What caused you to faint on the platform?
Iris Sunstroke, I think.
Miss Froy Oh, you poor dear. Still that's not something you'll have to worry about back in England, is it?
Iris That's very true. I've had a great time exploring all those out of the way places, but I'll be glad to be back home and have a nice cup of tea.
Miss Froy A cup of tea! Yes, that's exactly what you need to put you to rights. Come on, I'll treat you to what passes for tea in the restaurant car.
Iris *(Laughing)*. Thank you; that would be lovely.
Miss Froy My name's Winifred Froy, by the way.
Iris Joy, that's a nice name.
Miss Froy No, Froy. *(She spells her name out and writes it with her finger on the slightly dusty window of the carriage as she does so)*. F-R-O-Y.
Iris Well I'm very pleased to meet you, Mrs Froy. I'm Iris Carr.

They both get up and move towards the front of the compartment.

Miss Froy Oh, it's Miss Winifred Froy, not Mrs.
Iris Oh, I see.
Miss Froy I'm an English governess in Moldavia; just going back to England for a holiday with my parents.
Iris Your parents?
Miss Froy Yes, I'm not so old that I don't have parents, you know.
Iris No, I wasn't suggesting...
Miss Froy Of course not! Right, shall we go?
Iris Oh, yes. Which way is it?
Miss Froy Just a couple of carriages along. Not far. Come along, let's get that cup of tea.
Iris Right.

Miss Froy, followed by Iris, step out of the 'compartment'.

Miss Froy Just glance in at the next compartment as we go by... and I'll tell you something.

Fade to black. SFX: fade up a train travelling at speed. Slow, train-like, stroboscopic lighting begins as the actors make their way to the Restaurant Car.

Scene 3

USL Restaurant Car. There should be two windows at the back of the Restaurant Car, the curtains of which could be part drawn. In front of each window is a table with a white tablecloth on it and four chairs. There is a brass table lamp with shade, together with condiments and a menu card, on each table. Similar tables, with two seats each are arranged downstage across the 'corridor'.

As the lights come up in the Restaurant Car, Miss Froy and Iris are settling down into seats either side of a DS table. Again they lightly jiggle up and down, and sway gently side to side, simulating the movement of the train. This movement can gradually subside as the SFX fade.

Miss Froy Well, what did you think?

Iris What happened to the poor devil? The whole face was completely bandaged. Can't be very comfortable stretched out on the seat like that either.

Miss Froy It's all they could do, the train doesn't have proper facilities for hospital patients.

Iris Even so... And why's the nun in there?

Miss Froy She's not a nun, she's a nursing sister.

Iris Oh, I really pity the patient then. That nun looked frightful.

A waiter enters from SL. He is holding a tray which he is having to balance as he walks down the speeding train. He has a French accent.

Waiter And what can I get you, madame?

Miss Froy A pot of tea for two, please.

Waiter Bien sur.

He exits, SL.

Iris Why on earth didn't they pull the blind down? It must be ghastly enough to be in that state, without being made into a spectacle. I mean it really can't be very pleasant for him at all. *(Beat)*. I suppose it is a 'him'?

Miss Froy It's actually a woman. The doctor was telling me about it. She was injured in a motor smash, and there's a risk of serious brain injury. So the doctor's rushing her to Trieste, for a tricky operation.

Iris Is the doctor the man with a black beard in our compartment?

Miss Froy Yes, and very clever he is too.

Iris Is he? He's very rude I know that. If you ask me, I'd rather have a vet.

Their conversation is interrupted by Mrs Barnes making her way through the Restaurant Car from SL. She is having some difficulty walking with the movement of the train and puts her hand on Iris and Miss Froy's table to steady herself.

Mrs Barnes Oh, excuse me, bit of a bumpy ride at the moment, isn't it?

Miss Froy Yes.

Mrs Barnes *(Seeing Iris)*. Oh, hello... aren't you the young lady who fainted at the station?

Iris Yes.

Mrs Barnes It was my husband Kenneth who helped you up. Reverend Barnes that is. I'm Mrs Barnes. *(Beat)*. Well obviously I'm Mrs Barnes if the Reverend Barnes is my husband. *(She giggles)*. I didn't catch your name?

Iris Iris Carr. And this is Miss Froy.

Miss Froy Hello.

Mrs Barnes And are you recovered now?

Iris Nearly thanks. But I still feel a little woozy.

Mrs Barnes I'm not surprised. Kenneth is a very poor traveller too. He couldn't face making his way along here. So I've come to see what's happened to the teas we ordered... over twenty minutes ago now.

Iris The waiter was here only a...

Mrs Barnes *(Interrupting)*. It really is dreadful service, don't you think?

Iris Well, I...

Mrs Barnes *(Interrupting)*. I knew you'd agree.

Iris It's not a case of...

Mrs Barnes *(Interrupting)*. You'd think they would be better organised, wouldn't you?

Iris You must have passed...

Mrs Barnes *(Interrupting)*. I'll be glad to get back to England and get some decent service for a change.

Iris That's not always...

Mrs Barnes *(Interrupting)*. Everyone I've spoken too feels much the same. It's really not good enough. Life's too short to have to hang around waiting for people, don't you think? We need to be getting back home, some of us have urgent business to attend to.

Iris I'm not sure I...

Mrs Barnes *(Interrupting)*. The Misses Flood-Porter feel much the same. As do that young pair of honeymooners, Mr and Mrs Todhunter.

Iris I don't think I know...

Mrs Barnes *(Interrupting)*. Oh you must!

Iris No I don't think...

Mrs Barnes *(Interrupting)*. Of course you do.

Miss Froy The gentleman who let down the window for you, my dear.

Iris Oh, right.

Mrs Barnes Anyway, I could stand here chatting all day if you let me...

Iris I'm sure...

Mrs Barnes I expect you think me a fearful gossip.

Iris I wouldn't presume...

Mrs Barnes But I really have to find that waiter. So if you'll excuse...

Iris With pleasure. *(Mrs Barnes exits, hurrying off, SL)*.

Iris Oh, thank goodness. Has she really gone?

Miss Froy Yes, you're safe now, my dear.

Iris Oh, she really is too much. My head feels ten times worse now.

Miss Froy A cup of tea will soon put you to rights I think.

Iris I hope so.

Miss Froy I'm sorry, by the way, for not backing you up.

Iris Backing me up? When?

Miss Froy In the compartment, when you wanted some air. It was stuffy I know. But I didn't like to interfere, because of the Baroness,

Iris Do you mean that frightful old woman in black opposite me?

Miss Froy Well, granted, she is rather overbearing.

Iris Like Mrs Barnes?

Miss Froy Yes, but in a different way. And I really am under an obligation to her.

Iris An obligation? How?

Miss Froy There was a muddle about my seat on the train. I'd booked second class, you see, but there wasn't any seats left, and the Baroness paid the difference so I could travel in her compartment. It really was most kind of her.

Iris You speak the lingo, obviously?

Miss Froy Passably, yes, and I'm determined to improve. The Baroness speaks English too actually, though you wouldn't know it. She chooses not to.

Iris The more I hear about her, the more I dislike her. How do you come to know her?

Miss Froy She's a member of the family that I was Governess for. It's not wise to mention names in public, but the family's one of the most important in the country, believe me. These remote districts are still very feudal you know, and centuries behind us... You have no idea of the power of my late employer. What he says goes. He hasn't even got to speak. A nod is enough.

Iris That's terrible... degrading!

Miss Froy I know. But it's in the atmosphere. And, after a while, one absorbs it and grows, how shall I say, spineless?

Iris And you're actually planning to go back again, after your holiday?

Miss Froy Yes, but not to the castle where I was before. It's rather awkward but I wanted another year to learn the language.

Iris I don't think I could get to grips with another language.

Miss Froy Of course you could, my dear. I speak ten, you know, including English. At first, when you're in a strange country, you can't understand a word. You flounder and struggle, so unless you want to drown, you've simply got to pick it up. And by the end of a year you're as fluent as a native.

Iris I wouldn't be, I'm sure. I expect foreigners to speak English.

Miss Froy Well when you're off the map, so to speak, they may not. And then you might find yourself in a terrible fix.

Iris I suppose you're right. So what will you do when you go back?

Miss Froy I've been engaged to teach the children of... well, let's call him 'the leader of the opposition'.

Iris I see.

Miss Froy The truth is there's a small but growing Communist element which is very opposed to my late employer. In fact they've accused him of corruption and all sorts of horrors. I don't ask myself if it's true, it's not my business. I only know he's a marvellous man with wonderful charm and personality. Good breeding shows, you know...

Iris Yes...

Pause.

Miss Froy Shall I tell you something rather indiscreet.

Iris *(Laughing)*. Oh, the more indiscreet the better!

Miss Froy The thing is I was terribly anxious to say goodbye to my employer... I think I wanted to assure him that going over to the enemy, so to speak, wasn't treachery. His valet and secretary said that he was away at his hunting-lodge, but I somehow felt they were just saying that to put me off seeing him.

Iris So what did you do?

Miss Froy I lay awake until early morning. And then, before it was light, I heard water splashing in the bathroom. The castle's very primitive in many ways, you know. The bedrooms are huge and full of antique furniture, all gilding and peacock blue velvet, but only one bathroom between them all.

Iris So what did you do, Miss Froy?

Miss Froy I crept out, like a little mouse. And...

Iris Yes?

Miss Froy I met him in the corridor.

Iris Yes?

Miss Froy So, there we were, man and woman, me in my dressing gown... and him in his bathrobe, and his hair all wet and rough...

Pause.

Iris Yes?

Miss Froy Well...

Iris Yes, what happened next?
Miss Froy He was charming. He actually shook my hand and thanked me for my services.
Iris (*Sighing*). Is that it?
Miss Froy Well, yes, don't you think that's extraordinary?
Iris Extraordinary, yes. Almost as extraordinary as what has happened to our tea.

The waiter enters.

Miss Froy Ah, talk of the devil.
Waiter Your tea, Madame. (*He puts down two cups and saucers, a small teapot, sugar bowl and milk jug*).
Iris Thank you.
Waiter (*Putting the bill down on the table*). L'addition, Madame.
Iris What? Oh, the bill. (*She picks up the bill and looks in her handbag for some money*).
Miss Froy This is my treat, my dear.
Iris Nonsense. Let me get it. (*She hands a note to the waiter*). Oh, that's all right; keep the change.

The waiter smiles and exits.

Miss Froy That was rather a generous tip my dear. A very generous tip in fact.
Iris Was it? I haven't really got to grips with all these different currencies yet.
Miss Froy No, I can imagine.
Iris Have you travelled much, then?
Miss Froy Only in Europe. Mother doesn't really like me going so far from home, but she believes the younger generation shouldn't be denied their freedom.
Iris The younger generation? Oh, I see what you mean.
Miss Froy Still I've promised to stick to Europe. Although whenever I'm near a border, I just ache to hop over into Asia.
Iris Is your mother very old, then?
Miss Froy No, she's eighty-four years young. Father is seventy-seven. He never let her know that he was younger than her, but it leaked out when he had to retire at sixty-five. She was terribly upset... it makes me feel like a cradle-snatcher, she said. (*Beat*). Oh, I'm so pleased I'll be able to see them both again soon!
Iris (*Pouring some tea into a cup and adding milk*). Shall I pour yours?
Miss Froy Yes, please, my dear.
Iris (*Pouring Miss Froy a cup then picking up her own*). I am so looking forward to this. (*She sips the tea and her mouth turns up in distaste*). Oh, that is truly dreadful!
Miss Froy (*With trepidation she picks up her cup and sips the tea*). I have to agree. Shall we go back to the compartment?
Iris I think I'd better. My head is starting to thump again.
Miss Froy (*Getting up*). When we get there, I should have a good sleep if I were you. I think I have some sedative in my bag. That'll help.
Iris That sounds a very good idea. Thanks.

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. Train-like stroboscopic lighting appears as the actors make their way to the 'corridor'.

Scene 4

USC Corridor. From the audience point of view, what we can see is the outside of a compartment: two windows with blinds either side of a sliding door. The corridor itself is in front of the compartment, and imagined, and since it is in reality only half a metre wide, the actors need to squeeze past each other. As the lights rise on the corridor, Miss Froy and Iris are making their way SL to SR, only to be met by the Misses Flood-Porter. Miss Froy manages to squeeze past Miss Evelyn with great difficulty and she comes face to face with Iris.

Miss Evelyn FP Oh, hello again.
Iris Hello.

Meanwhile, Miss Rose is trying to squeeze past Miss Froy with difficulty

Miss Rose FP Hello!

Miss Evelyn FP Seems we're meeting everyone on this train.

Miss Rose FP Everyone.

Miss Rose is now standing behind Miss Evelyn, and effectively blocking Iris' progress.

Miss Evelyn FP We've just seen that couple again...

Miss Rose FP Honeymoon couple.

Miss Evelyn FP Well we assume they're a...

Miss Rose FP Honeymoon couple. So much in love.

Miss Evelyn FP She looks like a film star, don't you think?

Miss Rose FP Film star.

Iris Sorry, what film star?

Miss Evelyn FP Of course, might not be a film star.

Miss Rose FP Not necessarily, but could be.

Iris I'm not sure who you mean exactly.

Miss Evelyn FP They were on the platform when you had your fainting fit.

Miss Rose FP Fainting fit, on the platform.

Miss Evelyn FP Definitely newly married. You can tell.

Iris They may not be married. Anyone can buy a wedding ring.

Miss Evelyn FP Oh no, surely not.

Miss Rose FP Can't be.

Iris I still can't place them.

Miss Froy I think they're talking about the couple in our compartment. The Todhunters.

Miss Rose FP Todhunter yes, that's it.

Miss Evelyn FP Then they are married. If they were having an affair they would be Smith or Brown.

Miss Rose FP Not Todhunter. Wouldn't be right.

Iris No, I'm sure. But perhaps you could excuse me...?

Iris pushes past the Flood-Porters as the lights fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. Train-like stroboscopic lighting appears as the Flood-Porters make their way to the Restaurant Car.

Scene 5

USL Restaurant Car. As the lights rise, the Flood-Porters enter the Restaurant Car and settle down in one of the tables by a window, simulating the movement of the train as before. The tea cups etc left by Miss Froy and Iris are still on the DS table.

Miss Rose FP What was her name again?

Miss Evelyn FP Who?

Miss Rose FP That girl.

Miss Evelyn FP Girl?

Miss Rose FP The one we just spoke to.

Miss Evelyn FP No idea. Did she say?

Miss Rose FP I thought so. Maybe not.

Miss Evelyn FP Maybe not then.

The waiter enters, having difficulty in walking backwards as he is shepherded by Mrs Barnes towards the table that the Flood-Porters are sitting at.

Mrs Barnes Twenty minutes! Twenty minutes! It really is not good enough.

Waiter Désolé, Madame. I will bring it immédiatement.

Mrs Barnes Just make sure you do. Bring it to me here. I'll take it to our compartment myself.

Waiter Certainment, Madame.

The waiter dives round Mrs Barnes to go, but she calls him back.

Mrs Barnes Oh, and before you go, you can take these ladies' order.
Waiter Bien sûr
Miss Rose FP Oh, it's all right, we don't want anything.
Miss Evelyn FP Anything at all.
Waiter D'accord.

The waiter exits, beating a hasty retreat as Mrs Barnes takes a seat.

Miss Evelyn FP Problem with the waiting staff, Mrs Barnes?
Mrs Barnes Tired of waiting I can tell you. Poor Kenneth is feeling really low and expecting some tea, and I've got enough on my mind without having to worry about chasing up waiters.
Miss Evelyn FP Oh, we're sorry to hear that.
Miss Rose FP We both are.
Mrs Barnes It's Gabriel you see.
Miss Rose FP Gabriel?
Mrs Barnes Our son. We named him after the Archangel. Would you like to see a photo?
Miss Rose FP Of the Archangel?
Mrs Barnes Of our son.
Miss Evelyn FP Oh, yes of course.
Miss Rose FP We'd like to.
Mrs Barnes *(Reaching into her bag and taking out a photo).* Our son.
Miss Evelyn FP Lovely.
Miss Rose FP Very nice.
Miss Evelyn FP A bonny baby.
Miss Rose FP Bonny.
Mrs Barnes Not any longer. *(She puts the photo back).*
Miss Rose FP Sorry?
Mrs Barnes I got a telegram just as we were about to board the train. He's with my mother-in-law in Bath and not very well at the moment.
Miss Evelyn FP Nothing serious I hope?
Mrs Barnes I don't know... I hope not. It could be flu. Oh, I don't know why we came really. But Kenneth so wanted to do this trip. He said we really needed a holiday, and Gabriel was too young to bring, and he'd be fine with his mother. And I can't understand it because Kenneth gets terrible travel sickness sometimes, so it makes no sense if you think about it.
Miss Evelyn FP Well, you're on your way home, now.
Miss Rose FP Won't be long.
Mrs Barnes No, I suppose not. But it's the not knowing that's most difficult. And I haven't mentioned it to Kenneth because I don't want to worry him.
Miss Evelyn FP Perhaps you could telegram when we get to Trieste?
Miss Rose FP Trieste, yes.
Mrs Barnes Yes, you're right. You're right, of course you are. *(She stands, and exits SL).*
Miss Evelyn FP But aren't you going to wait for...
Miss Rose FP The waiter?

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. The lights rise in the compartment.

Scene 6

USR Railway compartment. Iris is asleep. The Doctor and the Baroness sit next to her. Miss Froy's seat, and the other seats opposite, are empty. As the SFX of the train fade, Iris stirs.

Iris Oh... *(She wakes fully and yawns, then looks around her).* Oh, where are we?
Doctor We are in a train, can you not tell?
Iris *(Evidently annoyed at his tone).* I know that. I mean where exactly are we?

Doctor Ze next stop is Trieste.

Iris I must have fallen asleep.

Doctor You've been snoring for the best part of an hour. It has been most irritating.

Iris Oh, right, sorry about that. Still I feel a lot better for it. That sedative Miss Froy gave me certainly did the trick. *(She looks at the empty seat next to her)*. But where is she?

Doctor Who?

Iris Miss Froy. She came back with me from the restaurant car.

Doctor I know not what you mean.

Iris Miss Froy. She was sitting here next to me. An English lady.

Doctor You make mistake. No English lady was sitting there.

Iris Of course there was. An old lady wearing a tweed suit... and she had a hat with a feather in it.

Doctor I know of no such woman.

Iris Of course you do. We talked and then we went to the restaurant car and had tea together. She was here!

Doctor You are mistaken, I zink.

Iris I know she was here. *(She turns to the Baroness)*. You saw her, didn't you?

Baroness *(In Romanian)*. Ce zici?

Doctor Ze Baroness' English no good.

Iris Evidently. *(She sees that the rest of the compartment is empty)*. And where's that couple?

Doctor Ze Todhunters?

Iris If that's their name.

Doctor They went to the restaurant car, about twenty minutes ago.

Iris Oh, so you admit they were here, do you?

Doctor Of course. Because they were.

Iris But not Miss Froy.

Doctor No, because she was not.

Iris Look I don't know what your game is, but I know what I know. And she must be somewhere on this beastly train.

Doctor So you say.

Iris Oh, this is madness!

Doctor Madness. Yes, zat could be it.

Iris How dare you! *(She stands and storms out of the compartment)*.

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard.

Scene 7

USC Corridor. Max Hare and the Professor are standing in the corridor chatting when, as the lights rise, Iris rushes into the Professor, not looking.

Professor Steady on!

Iris Oh sorry... So sorry. It's just...

Max Yes?

Iris I don't know what to do.

Max Can I be of help?

Iris Oh, I do hope so.

Max Try me.

Iris It's all rather complicated. I'm in a jam. At least it's nothing to do with me. And I'm sure there's been some terrible mistake. But I can't seem to make these people understand.

Max That's all right. I speak the lingo.

Professor May I offer my services as interpreter?

Iris Well, that's awfully...

Max *(Interrupting)*. He's no good. He only knows grammar. I can swear in the vernacular, and you may need a spot of profanity.

Iris Well, it's not the language so much that's the problem. Although it is a miserable language and if I could talk it, I'm sure it would be easier but...

Max Now come on, what's it about?

Iris An Englishwoman has disappeared from the train. She's a real person, but the Baroness says... at least the doctor says...

Professor You said an English lady?

Iris Yes, Miss Froy. She's a governess.

Professor And she's vanished, you say?

Iris Yes. She was sitting opposite me, and now she's not.

Max Perhaps she's gone for some air...

Iris Disappeared into thin air, more like. She was there one minute and now she's not. And the Doctor says she never was.

Max Never was what?

Iris There.

Professor Hmm. And at what time precisely did she leave her seat?

Iris I've no idea. I was asleep. Then, when I woke, she wasn't there.

Professor Then the first step is to interview the other passengers.

Iris But they deny having ever seen her! They say she was never there. They tell me she doesn't exist! But she does. I know she does.

Professor Who is in your compartment?

Iris There's me, a Doctor, a Baroness, a honeymoon couple, at least I think they are. And there was Miss Froy.

Professor Then we shall interview them again. If the lady doesn't return during that time, I may consider calling the guard and asking for an official examination of the train.

Iris Oh thank you... thank you so much.

Max Yes, good show, Prof. Let's find the lady shall we? My name's Hare... Maximilian Hare... just call me Max, if you like. What's yours?

Iris Iris Carr.

Max Mrs?

Iris Miss.

Max Good. *(Pause)*. I'm an engineer out here. Building a dam up in some mountains.

Iris What fun. I'm nothing.

Professor Let us start with a description of the lady in question.

Iris Oh, I'm hopeless at that sort of thing.

Max Just try.

Iris I can't tell you much. You see there's nothing much about her to catch hold of. She's middle-aged and ordinary and rather, er... colourless, really.

Max Tall or short? Fat or thin? Fair or dark?

Iris Medium. But she said she had fair curly hair. *(Alter to suit the actress playing Miss Froy)*.

Professor Said? Didn't you notice for yourself?

Iris No. But I think it looked faded. *(Beat)*. I remember she had blue eyes, though.

Max That's something.

Professor Not very enlightening though, I'm afraid.

Max What was she wearing?

Iris Oh, tweed, flecked with brown. A swagger coat, finger-length with patch pockets and stitched cuffs and scarf. The ends of the scarf were fastened with small blue bone buttons and she wore a natural tussore short-blouse stitched with blue, a different shade... with a small blue handkerchief in the breast pocket. I'm sorry I can't remember many details...

Max You seem to have remembered rather a lot.
Iris Clothes I can remember. Not people. Her hat was blue too, with ahstitched brim and Recamier crown, with a funny bright-blue feather stuck through the band...
Professor Stop! Now that you've remembered the hat, can you not make another effort and put a face under it?
Iris No I can't remember any face. You see I had such a frantic headache.
Max Let's get on with questioning the other passengers, shall we then?
Iris Oh, please, let us.
Professor We'll start in your compartment. That is where the lady disappeared from, so that should be the focus of our investigations. Come...

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard.

Scene 8

In the compartment, Todhunter and 'Mrs Todhunter' are sitting side by side, as are the Doctor and the Baroness. As the lights fade up, The Professor, Max and Iris arrive at the compartment. They all simulate the train motion as before.

Iris Two English gentlemen have come to make enquiries about Miss Froy.
Professor Will you kindly allow me to enter? *(He goes to the opposite end and stands by the seat Miss Froy had occupied, whilst Iris and Max remain outside).*
Professor I understand that there was an English governess in the seat here. Who can tell me anything about her disappearance?
Doctor I have already told Miss Carr that there was no English woman here.
Iris But there was!
Professor Miss Carr... please! You are absolutely certain, Doctor?
Doctor Of course.
Iris The Baroness, Professor. Miss Froy told me that she paid for her to move up to first class. She said she was very kind to her.
Professor Ah, right, I will try and ask her that... Baroneasă , ati putea să confirmați...
Baroness *(In halting English).* It is not needed for you to translate. I can understand you perfectly.
Iris *(Looking at the Doctor, then back to the Baroness).* I thought you didn't speak much English. It seems to me pretty good.
Baroness Zere is much you do not know.
Iris So what about bumping up Miss Froy's ticket, then. Do you admit you did that?
Baroness I know not what you mean by 'bumping up' her ticket.
Iris She said there was a muddle about her seat and you paid the excess for her to travel in first class.
Baroness Zat was most charming of me. I am most happy to hear of my generosity. Unfortunately I know nothing of it. But the ticket collector may be able to refresh my memory.
Iris Oh this is impossible...
Professor Perhaps you... Mr and Mrs...?
'Mrs Todhunter' Todhunter.
Professor Perhaps you may be able to shine some light on the subject of Miss Froy's disappearance.
Doctor Supposed disappearance.
Todhunter I'm afraid we don't know what the young lady is talking about. Do we darling?
'Mrs Todhunter' No.
Iris But you must.
Todhunter I am afraid there is no 'must' about it. We know nothing of your missing lady.
Doctor I zink what ve have here is a classic case. You fainted at the station did you not?
Iris Yes, a touch of sunstroke. It's given me a most terrible head.

Doctor Exactly. Zat blow of the sun explains all. It has all ze, 'ow you say... 'allmarks. It has given you the delirium. You saw someone who is not there. Afterwards you went to sleep, and you dream. Then, presently, you awake and you are much better. So you saw Miss Froy no more. She is nothing but a delirium; a dream.

Iris No... I'm not... I...

Max Let's go back to the restaurant car shall we, and talk things over...

They are interrupted by a nun/nursing sister who enters from SL.

Nun Doctor, could I have a word? The patient...

Doctor Of course. *(He gets up and goes to the door).* If you vill excuse me... If I can be of any further assistance, please you vill ask me and I vill help you if I can.

The Doctor exits stage left with the nun.

Max Come on Iris, I could do with a drink...

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. Train-like stroboscopic lighting appears as Iris, the Professor and Max make their way to the Restaurant Car.

Scene 9

USL Restaurant Car. As the lights fade up, Iris is sitting with the Professor at the table by the window. Max appears from SL and joins them.

Max That waiter chappy is bringing the drinks in a minute.

Iris You'll be lucky.

Max What do you mean?

Iris He takes an eternity.

Max You were probably unlucky.

Iris Probably.

Professor Well, Miss Carr?

Iris Well what?

Professor What do you say to what we heard? I think we may accept that as final don't you? I just hope you feel better soon.

Iris I'm afraid it's not so simple as that. As far as I am concerned the matter's by no means ended. Why should you imagine I'm telling a lie?

Professor I do not. I am convinced it is simply your mistake.

Iris Why won't you believe me. It's not fair!.

Professor Well, since you've raised the point of fairness, you must admit that the weight of evidence is against you. I have to be fair too you know. Can you explain why all four people should lie?

Iris I can't. Unless the Baroness started the lie and the others are backing her up. In that case it's only her word against mine. And as I'm English and you're English and this concerns an Englishwoman, it's your duty to believe me.

Professor You mustn't confuse patriotism with prejudice. Besides your insinuation is absurd. What motive would the Baroness have for telling a lie?

Iris I don't know. It's all such a mystery. No one could want to injure Miss Froy. She's too insignificant.

Max Well, if she is on the train she'll turn up sooner or later I'm sure.

Iris I hope so. *(The waiter enters and she sees him coming).* Well, at least our drinks have turned up!

The Todhunters enter from SR and makes their way through the carriage. They stand aside to let the waiter through, and exit SL. The waiter puts three glasses on the table.

Waiter Your drinks, Mademoiselle, Monsieurs.

Max Thank you. *(The waiter doesn't move.)*. Yes, thank you. *(The waiter smiles but still doesn't move)*. What? Oh... *(He realises what is needed and digs in his pocket for some coins which he deposits in the waiter's outstretched hand)*. There. OK, now?

Waiter Merci, monsieur. *(He starts to exit)*.

Iris Stop!

Waiter *(Stopping and turning to face Iris)*. Yes, Mademoiselle?

Iris Do you remember me?

Waiter Remember?

Iris Yes I was here earlier.

Waiter I... I think so.

Iris And do you remember that I was with another lady?

Waiter I think so. Only I cannot be so sure. I see many people in my work.

Iris Well, you'd remember her. She had a hat with a big feather in it.

Waiter It is possible. But I cannot be sure.

Iris Thank you.

Waiter Thank you, Mademoiselle. *(He waits a second, then exits)*.

Max At least you were spared having to tip him again!

Iris Well, what do you think, Professor?

Professor He couldn't be sure.

Iris But he didn't deny having seen her.

Professor True, but that's like trying to prove a negative.

Iris Oh, why won't anyone believe me! I met Miss Froy after I got on this train. If it was the sunstroke as that doctor claims, that was before I got on the train. And if Miss Froy is only a dream as they say, then I've dreamed the station and the train and everything.

Max True.

Iris *(Standing)*. Oh, it's enough to drive anyone mad!

Professor Well...

The Todhunters enter from SL.

'Mrs Todhunter' All I'm saying is...

'Mrs Todhunter' stops talking as she realises they are close to Iris who, having stood up, is now blocking the gangway.

Todhunter Excuse me...

Iris moves aside and the Todhunters make their way through the carriage, exiting SR.

Iris *(Vehemently, but under her breath)*. And I am not mad! It's absurd. I am awake and I'm here on this train. So I did meet Miss Froy... only I am up against some mystery I don't understand and I have to fight a pack of lies. Well, all right then, I will! We'll get in touch with the English Consul when we reach Trieste and he'll hold up the train for a thorough examination. Oh, you'll see.

Professor I will concede that the possibility does exist that there is a Miss Froy. But I have to say...

Iris *(Interrupting)*. You don't believe me!

Professor I didn't say that.

Max Oh cheer up, Iris. Unless your Miss Froy was invisible, other people on the train must have seen her.

Iris Of course they must!

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. Train-like stroboscopic lighting appears.

Scene 10

USC Corridor. Todhunter and 'Mrs Todhunter' are standing in the corridor.

Todhunter We are just going to have to be careful, that's all. There are far more English people on this train than I ever imagined there would be. Someone's bound to recognise you or me.

'Mrs Todhunter' Is that why you denied having seen that English lady?

Todhunter I could hardly admit it, could I? If I hadn't repudiated her, I should have had to make a statement at Trieste. Can't you see the headlines? "Englishwoman lost on Continental Express. Photograph of Mr Todhunter, blah, blah...". And how long before the English press got on to my identity, eh? One of the penalties of fame, I suppose... *(Pause)*. I have my reputation to think about, damn it!

'Mrs Todhunter' What about me?

Todhunter You're not in the public eye as much as I am. *(Beat)*. But you're entirely too beautiful to remain anonymous.

'Mrs Todhunter' I should never have come away with you like this.

Todhunter Why are you so suddenly anxious to get back to your husband?

'Mrs Todhunter' Well, to be brutally frank, we are all of us out for what we can get. And he can give me more than you can.

Todhunter A builder! Cecil Parmiter the builder can give you more than I can, a successful barrister? Don't make me laugh!

'Mrs Todhunter' Yes. Without doubt. Cecil provides me with a generous allowance, competent servants and a beautiful house to live in. I'm risking everything.

Todhunter Oh, don't say that.

'Mrs Todhunter' What do you want me to say? I'm starting to think it was all a terrible mistake. You simply swept me off my feet and made me feel so desirable I couldn't resist you. But it has come to naught.

Todhunter Come to naught? What the devil so you mean?

'Mrs Todhunter' I was expecting...

Todhunter *(Interrupting)*. What? What were you expecting? That it would be endless nights of passion?

'Mrs Todhunter' I think our little 'adventure' has shown me another side of you.

Todhunter What do you mean?

'Mrs Todhunter' It's just that your standards are so... fastidious. I've found it a strain to live up to them. I can never relax, or be natural without being conscious of your criticism or impatience.

Todhunter What balderdash!

'Mrs Todhunter' Balderdash it might be, but it's true. And...

Todhunter Yes?

'Mrs Todhunter' And on top of that you snore!

Todhunter How ridiculous...

'Mrs Todhunter' It's just not turning out as it should. I thought...

Todhunter *(Interrupting)*. Yes, what did you think? That I would ask you to marry me, is that it? That this trip was a prelude to marriage... that I would divorce my wife and make you Lady Peveril Brown?

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. Train-like stroboscopic lighting appears.

Scene 11

USL Restaurant Car. Iris, Max and the Professor are still sitting where they were in Scene 9.

Max Perhaps we have to face facts, Iris.

Iris Oh, don't you start! I thought you were my friend.

Max I am your friend, but...

Iris *(Interrupting)*. No, I won't let the matter rest. There are others... *(She notices the Flood-Porters entering from SR)*. These ladies... *(Addressing them)*. You'll help me find Miss Froy, won't you? She's English.

Professor May I explain? Miss Carr here...

Miss Evelyn FP Yes we have met.
Miss Rose FP Earlier.
Miss Evelyn FP And at the hotel.
Miss Rose FP With a group of others.
Miss Evelyn FP Other young people.
Miss Rose FP Other loud young people.
Professor Yes, well, the point is that Miss Carr here says she met an English governess called Miss Froy...
Miss Evelyn FP Yes we heard.
Professor But now she says she's disappeared.
Miss Rose FP So we hear.
Iris Well have you seen her?
Miss Evelyn FP Who?
Iris Miss Froy!
Miss Evelyn FP Sorry, no, don't know who you're talking about.
Miss Rose FP No idea.
Iris What? Of course you do. We had to squeeze past you earlier.
Miss Evelyn FP No, sorry. We have no recollection of your companion.
Miss Rose FP None at all.
Miss Evelyn FP Someone may have been with you, but I was not wearing my glasses.
Miss Rose FP Neither was I.
Miss Evelyn FP So you can understand that we shall not be able to help you. It would be against our principles to identify someone of whom we were not sure.
Miss Rose FP Most unfair.
Iris But isn't it against your principles not to raise a finger to help an Englishwoman who may be in danger?
Miss Evelyn FP Danger? What could happen to her on a crowded train? Besides, there are plenty of other people who are probably more observant than we are. There's no reason why we should be penalised just because we are English.
Miss Rose FP English.
Miss Evelyn FP I am so sorry, but we must go...
Miss Rose FP Simply must.

As they set off, SL, they meet Mrs Barnes entering.

Miss Evelyn FP Oh, hello Mrs Barnes, how's that husband of yours? Better I hope?
Mrs Barnes Why, yes, I think so. He's sleeping now, so I thought I'd stretch my legs.
Miss Evelyn FP We're pleased to hear it.
Miss Rose FP Very pleased.

The Misses Flood-Porter exit SL and Iris turns to Mrs Barnes.

Iris And I suppose you haven't seen Miss Froy either?
Mrs Barnes Was that the little lady in tweed, with a blue feather in her hat?
Iris Yes!
Mrs Barnes Why of course I remember her. You were having tea with her when I was trying to find that ridiculous waiter. *(Beat)*. You haven't seen him, have you?
Max Is he lost too now?
Iris *(Throwing him a filthy look, then carrying on)*. No, I'm sorry. But you say you remember Miss Froy?
Mrs Barnes Yes, of course.
Iris *(Standing quickly, she shakes Mrs Barnes' hand)*. Oh thank you. Thank you so much. You don't know what this means to me!
Mrs Barnes I'm glad. But why are you thanking me?

Iris You've helped prove I'm not mad!

Mrs Barnes (*Looking at Iris, curiously*). I am so glad, my dear. Now, if you'll excuse me... (*She exits SR*).

Iris (*Turning to the Professor*). Well, are you convinced now?

Professor The question is unnecessary, it was simply a matter of getting corroborative evidence. I'm sorry to have doubted your word in the first place. It was due to the unfortunate circumstances of your sunstroke.

Iris The Flood-Porters didn't want to be drawn in, that was clear. But why did the Todhunters, the Doctor and the Baroness all tell lies about her?

Professor It must be some misunderstanding. Or perhaps...

Max I know! I've got it! She's disguised as the doctor. That black beard is so obviously false!

Iris (*Shaking her head in frustration at him*). You're not amusing. Because you seem to forget that besides being a real person, Miss Froy is still missing. We must do something.

Professor Admittedly. But it's a perplexing problem, and I do not care to act without careful consideration... (*He stands, and starts off SL*).

Max He means he wants to smoke. (*He calls to the Professor as he exits SL*). All right, Prof, I'll take care of Miss Carr while you squeeze out some brain juice!

Iris (*Sitting down opposite Max*). It's such a relief.

Max Have I got it right? Is this Miss Froy a complete stranger to you?

Iris Of course.

Max Yet you're nearly going crackers over her. You must be the most unselfish person alive. Really, it's almost unnatural.

Iris But I'm not. It's rather the other way round. That's the amusing part. I can't understand myself a bit.

Max Well, how did it start?

Iris In the usual way. She was very kind to me... helpful, and all that. I felt vulnerable somehow, because of the sunstroke, I suppose. And her presence was so... I don't know... reassuring. So that at first, I missed her because she wasn't there anymore. And then, when everyone declared I dreamed her, it all turned to a horrible nightmare. It was like trying to explain that everyone was out of step but myself.

Max Hopeless. But why did you have to prove that she was there?

Iris Oh, can't you understand? If I didn't, I could never feel that anything, or anyone, was real again?

Max Yes, I think I follow...

Iris (*Picking up her empty glass*). I think I could do with another drink.

Max I'll get it. (*He stands*).

Iris When do we reach Trieste?

Max Twenty-two ten.

Iris And it's five to six now! Forget the drink. We mustn't waste any more time. We must find her!

Max (*Noticing somebody about to enter from SR*). Oh-oh...

Iris What is it?

Max It's that doctor.

Iris What does he want now?

Doctor (*Entering*). I have some good news for you.

Iris Oh, what?

Doctor Your friend has returned to the compartment.

Iris Miss Froy?

Doctor Indeed.

Iris What! Oh, how marvellous. Where was she?

Doctor All ze time she was so near. In the next compartment, talking with my nurses.

Iris Yes. *(She laughs)*. that's just where she would be. The first place I should have looked, but didn't!

Max Hmm, seems all very rum. Sure it's the right one?

Doctor She is the lady who accompanied Miss Carr to the restaurant car? A little short lady... not young, but not very old... with a blue feather in her hat?

Iris Yes that's her... that's Miss Froy!

Max But why was there all the mystery? No one knowing a thing about her and all that?

Doctor Ah, that was because we did not understand Miss Carr at first. She talked so fast and she talked of an English lady. Now the lady is German, may be, or Austrian, I do not know... but she is not English.

Iris Not English?

Doctor No, indeed. She speaks perfect English, but then she speaks many other languages too.

Iris Well yes, she could be. I made the same mistake, myself, at first. She looks so English, but she could be anything, and she speaks loads of languages. Come on, Max, and you shall meet her.

Max I'll get the Professor.

Iris Oh yes, do! *(Calling off)*. Professor! Come on, they've found the old girl!

Iris Oh, I can't tell you how pleased I am.

Professor *(Entering)*. What is it?

Iris We've found Miss Froy! You must come and meet her. She'll be thrilled when she hears of the sensation she's caused!

Professor A desire to attract attention seems a feminine characteristic.

Iris Oh, trust you! *(She laughs)*. Come on!

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. Train-like stroboscopic lighting appears as the Doctor, Iris, the Professor and Max make their way to the compartment.

Scene 12

USC Corridor. As the lights fade up the Doctor is making his way to the compartment. He is closely followed by Iris, Max and the Professor.

Doctor She is just along here.

Iris Oh yes, I can see her! I'd recognise that hat anywhere. There she is! At the end of the corridor! *(She pushes past the Doctor)*. Miss Froy! I am so glad to see you again...! *(She stops, mid step)*.

Max What is it?

Iris *(Turning round very slowly she looks back at Max and the Professor, her voice choked with emotion)*. That's not Miss Froy!

Blackout.

END OF ACT ONE

INTERVAL

ACT TWO

Scene 1

USC Corridor. Iris, the Doctor, Max and the Professor are where they were at the end of Act One, but they are now joined by Frau Kummer wearing the same clothes, and the hat, that Miss Froy was wearing earlier.

Iris You are not Miss Froy!

Frau Kummer No, I've not heard that name before. I am Frau Kummer as I told you when we had tea together.

Iris That's a lie! I've never seen you before. You're a complete stranger.

Frau Kummer A stranger, certainly, such as one meets on a journey. But we talked together, only a little admittedly, because your head it ached so much. Surely you remember?

Professor Ah...

Iris *(Turning to the Professor)*. This is not Miss Froy.

Professor The lady has told us that herself. In fact, with the exception of yourself, no one appears to have heard the somewhat uncommon name of 'Froy'.

Iris But she's wearing her clothes! Why? What's become of Miss Froy? It's a conspiracy that's what it is. She says we had tea together, but we didn't. The waiter knows. Send for him.

Max Why not call it a day – and get some rest, Iris?

Iris You don't believe me either! It's like being in some sort of terrible Hitchcock thriller!

Max I...

Iris Mrs Barnes! She'll back me up!

Professor I'll fetch her. Why don't you all go back to the compartment and I'll meet you there? *(He exits SL)*.

Doctor Is all zis really necessary? Frau Kummer has explained who she is and what happened. Can you not simply accept ze facts?

Iris No I can't! Because they are not the facts. This woman is an imposter!

Frau Kummer I am sorry but I most strenuously object to being called names.

Iris Object all you like. You are not Miss Froy and I know it.

Max Sadly Iris, it seems that others don't...

Iris Oh, you're just like all the rest.

Max That's not fair.

Iris You'll see. Mrs Barnes will back me up – just wait!

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. Train-like stroboscopic lighting appears as the actors make their way to the Restaurant Car.

Scene 2

USL Restaurant Car. Fade up lights in Restaurant Car as the Professor enters from SR. Just off stage SL are the Flood-Porters.

Professor Ah, ladies, could I have a word? Have you seen Mrs Barnes?

Miss Evelyn FP *(Offstage)*. Yes, she's here with us. We were about to have a spot of lunch.

The Flood-Porters enter followed by Mrs Barnes.

Professor Ah, Mrs Barnes. I wonder could I perhaps trouble you for a couple of minutes? Something has cropped up.

Miss Evelyn FP If it's about that hysterical girl again, my answer I'm afraid would be 'no'.

Professor It's actually Mrs Barnes that I was hoping might be able to help.

Mrs Barnes Me?

Professor Yes, indeed. I think you might be able to settle things once and for all.

Mrs Barnes How exactly? I've said all I know, I believe. Well, one can't be sure can one? I mean one never knows what one doesn't know, does one? I mean that wouldn't make sense would it?

Professor Quite.

Mrs Barnes So what is it, Professor?

Professor More trouble for you I'm afraid. That very emotional young lady now wants you to identify someone.

Miss Evelyn FP An identification parade, is that it? Like the police do?

Professor Not exactly.

Miss Evelyn FP I'm not sure that's a good idea. It can lead to all sorts of complications.

Miss Rose FP Complications.

Professor Then you'll no doubt be glad that I'm not asking you, Miss Flood-Porter.

Mrs Barnes *(Becoming quite jittery with her speech even more mercurial than ever)*. What is it you want of me, Professor? I'll help if I can. Of course I will. Only too pleased to.

Professor Then I wonder if you would mind coming with me to her compartment?

Mrs Barnes Certainly. Who do you want me to identify? Is it the kind little lady with the feather in her hat?

Professor I seem to recollect the feather.

Mrs Barnes I thought it was very fetching myself, didn't you?

Professor I really couldn't say. *(Pause)*. Mrs Barnes, are you all right? You look very pale. Not ill I hope?

Mrs Barnes Oh, no. It's my husband who is ill. But I'm bearing his pain for him, so he can sleep.

Professor A kind of absent treatment?

Mrs Barnes You could call it that.

Miss Evelyn FP Well, I call it silly. He's far stronger than you are, Edna!

Professor I am truly sorry to worry you on this matter but, in my opinion, the girl is hysterical and wants to be in the limelight. She says now that the lady is not the original one, who according to her, is still missing.

Miss Evelyn FP We'll hope she is the right one, for your sake. If not, she'll keep you hanging about at Trieste and you'll miss your connection to Milan.

Miss Rose FP Miss your connection.

Mrs Barnes *(Covering her eyes and shaking her head)*. Oh, I do hope not. My husband wants to get this wretched journey over. Still, one has to do one's duty, whatever the cost.

Miss Evelyn FP But it's so futile. If she exists at all, this missing lady is either lying low and has given the girl the slip for some reason of her own, or it's all moonshine.

Miss Rose FP Moonshine.

Professor Indubitably the latter.

Rev Barnes *(Offstage, SL)*. Edna?

Mrs Barnes Kenneth! *(Enter Rev Barnes)*. This is my husband. Did you think I'd deserted you, Ken? I didn't think you fancied any lunch.

Rev Barnes No, I didn't, but then again I thought perhaps it might...

Mrs Barnes *(Interrupting)*. We'll get a little something in a few minutes. I have to identify someone first.

Rev Barnes Shall I come with you, my dear?

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. Train-like stroboscopic lighting appears as the actors make their way to the compartment.

Scene 3

USR Railway compartment. The Baroness is sitting in her usual place, next to the Doctor. The Todhunters are absent. Frau Kummer is sitting where Miss Froy was. Iris is obstinately standing by the entrance and Max is hovering 'outside'. He looks SL.

Max Here they come now.

FX/SFX: a muffled cry is heard from the next door compartment.

Iris What was that?

Doctor You will excuse me...

The Doctor hurriedly gets up from his seat. Iris has to move to let him out, as does Max. The Doctor exits SL. Max then sits where the Doctor was.

Max No point in standing.

Iris No I suppose not. *(She too sits, opposite him).* Mrs Barnes remembered Miss Froy when all the rest pretended they'd never seen her. I know she couldn't tell a lie. So I don't care two hoots for all the others. I'm banking on her.

From SL the Professor enters with Mrs Barnes and the Rev Barnes.

Professor In here.

He indicates the compartment and Rev Barnes moves forward and enters the 'compartment'.

Rev Barnes Ah, if I'm not mistaken it's the young lady who collapsed on the platform.

Iris That's me.

Rev Barnes And I understand that you want my wife to identify a friend of yours.

Iris Yes please.

Rev Barnes Edna, my dear, is this the lady in question?

Mrs Barnes *(Going closer to Frau Kummer).* Yes, that's her.

Iris What? But...!

Rev Barnes *(Holding out his hand to Frau Kummer).* I am very pleased to make your acquaintance.

Frau Kummer *(Taking his hand).* And I yours.

Iris I...

Rev Barnes Yes?

Pause..

Iris I... I'm sorry to be such a crashing bore... I'm all right now.

Mrs Barnes Perhaps you should lie down, dear. Really, perhaps you should.

Rev Barnes Shall we have a word with the Flood-Porters? They have a reserved compartment and I'm sure you could sleep there.

Iris No, no it's quite all right, thank you.

Rev Barnes Well, if you're sure...

Iris Absolutely.

Mrs Barnes Come on, Kenneth, let's get you some lunch, shall we? If we can find that waiter, that is.

The Barnes exit SL and the Professor steps inside the 'compartment'.

Professor Satisfied?

Iris *(Looking from the Professor to Miss Kummer and back again).* I suppose so.

Professor Good. And I must say the idea of lunch appeals to me too. Are you coming, Max?

Max No, you go ahead. I'll be along later.

Professor As you please. *(He exits SL).*

Max Are you sure you don't want to eat?

Iris Positive.

Max Come along here then, there's something I want to show you.

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard. Train-like stroboscopic lighting appears as Max and Iris make their way to the Corridor.

Scene 4

USC Corridor. Max and Iris enter from SR. Max stops and the two of them stand, leaning forward as if on the safety rails in front of the windows of the train.

Iris So, what is it you have to show me. Something to prove I'm completely mad?
Max Perhaps, quite the opposite...
Iris The thing is I'm now so terribly confused I hardly know what day it is.
Max Tuesday.
Iris Is it? Are you sure *(She laughs)*. You see what I mean?
Max Yes!
Iris Would you do me a favour?
Max Of course.
Iris Would you go over it with me? So I can get it straight in my mind.
Max If it would help.
Iris Oh, yes!
Max Well, we have one piece of evidence. Do you remember what you said the lady told you about her employer and how important the family was?
Iris Yes.
Max And how the lady...
Iris Miss Froy.
Max Let's just call her 'the lady' for the moment.
Iris All right.
Max How the lady in question is going back to work for someone who is violently opposed to her previous employer...?
Iris Yes?

Max glances up and down the corridor before pulling a folded newspaper page from his pocket which he hands it to Iris.

Max Here. It's yesterday's Moldavian Newspaper. I found it in the Restaurant Car.
Iris *(She looks at it, perplexed)*. But it's all in foreign!
Max Here... *(He takes the paper back.)*. Let me read it to you.
Iris That's no good. I won't understand a single word.
Max I'll translate it.
Iris Right... Or, well just give me the gist...
Max Well, we've got one definite fact. I can make an accurate guess as to her employer. According to this report, what the, the lady, told you about her boss is right. It seems a certain head of one of Moldavia's most notable families is facing charges of bribery, tampering with contracts, and things like that. And the latest is he's accused of bumping off the editor of the revolutionary rag which brought the charges. But, here in the stop press, it's discovered he was actually at his hunting-lodge at the time. So the charges have been dropped. The feudal system, it seems, is still alive and well in these remote districts.
Iris But it proves me right! How could I know all about her employer, unless Miss Froy told me? And there's something else. When I told Miss Froy about my sunstroke the Baroness was listening. She couldn't know about it in any other way. So Miss Froy was there in the carriage with me.
Max I'm afraid that it only proves that Frau Kummer was there. She told you about her employer, and perhaps a spot of family history when you were having tea with her. Later on, you mentioned your sunstroke to her...
Iris *(Interrupting)*. But...
Max Let's go over it again. You suggest that the Baroness got rid of Miss Froy, never mind how, and that the other passengers, for some reason or other, would back her up.

Iris But it seems such a clumsy plot... Dressing up some one quite different and passing her off as Miss Froy.

Max But that bit was an eleventh hour twist. Remember, you upset their apple-cart, barging in at the last minute. When you made a fuss about Miss Froy, they denied her existence, at first. You were just a despised foreigner, so they thought they could get away with it. But when you said that other English people had seen her, they had to produce some one, and...

Iris *(Interrupting)*. You really are rather marvellous!

Max Wait before you hand out bouquets. Let's move on to the English crowd. The Misses Flood-Porter, what are they like?

Iris They've been to the right school and know the best people.

Max Are they decent?

Iris Well, I don't particularly like them and I don't think they like me too much either, but yes, they'd do the decent thing.

Max Then I'm afraid that's one against Miss Froy. Now, we'll pass the honeymoon couple, who are presumably not normal, and come to the vicar's wife. What about her?

Iris I don't know.

Max Remember you're on oath and I'm believing you.

Iris Well, I don't think she could tell a lie.

Max And I don't think she has any axe to grind. She said Frau Kummer was the lady who accompanied you to tea. Don't you think we must believe her?

Iris I suppose so... yes.

Max Well, then, the weight of evidence is against Miss Froy. But, however convincing it may sound, I'm going to wash out the lot. To my mind, the whole point is: motive.

Iris What do you mean?

Max I understand Miss Froy was quite small beer. Would she be mixed up in any plot?

Iris No, I can't imagine that.

Max Any enemies?

Iris No, she boasted of being friends with everyone.

Max It's hardly a motive for murder, but was the family annoyed because she was going to teach in the opposition camp?

Iris No. She told me how her employer shook hands with her when he said good-bye and thanked her for her services.

Max Well, is it clear to you now? Unless you can show me a real motive for a high life conspiracy against a poor but honest governess, I'm afraid there's an end of Miss Froy. Do you agree?

Iris You must be right. One can't go against facts.... Yet, she was so real. *(Pause)*. You've won. There is no Miss Froy.

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard.

Scene 5

USL Restaurant Car. The lights fade up in the Restaurant Car as the Professor enters from SR. The Flood-Porters are where they were last seen. An USL window table is occupied by the Rev Barnes and his wife, who are looking at the menu.

Miss Evelyn FP That didn't take long, Professor.

Miss Rose FP Not long at all.

Professor No, a positive identification I'm pleased to say.

Miss Evelyn FP Not surprised. So the missing lady isn't missing after all?

Professor So it would seem. Mrs Barnes has positively identified Miss Froy. Except of course she's not Miss Froy after all, but actually Frau Kummer.

Mrs Barnes buries her head in her menu.

Miss Evelyn FP You've lost me.

Miss Rose FP And me.

Professor The woman with the feather in her hat who Miss Carr claims is the missing Miss Froy turns out to be Frau Kummer.

Miss Evelyn FP Who isn't missing?

Professor It seems not.

Miss Rose FP So there is no Miss Froy?

Professor That appears to be the case. Except I'm not sure Miss Carr accepts it.

Miss Evelyn FP Not surprised.

Professor And neither of you ever saw Miss Carr with the lady in question?

Miss Rose FP We said we didn't.

Professor You knew Miss Carr from the hotel, I understand.

Miss Evelyn FP Yes.

Miss Rose FP We did.

Professor Could I ask you what opinion you formed of her?

Miss Rose FP Don't ask me, I'm prejudiced. So, perhaps, I shouldn't be fair.

Miss Evelyn FP We know nothing about her.

Miss Rose FP Nothing.

Miss Evelyn FP But she was with a party of near-nudists, who drank all day and night, and were a complete nuisance.

Miss Rose FP Complete nuisance.

Miss Evelyn FP The noise was worse than a pneumatic road-drill. And we came so far especially to get perfect rest and quiet.

Professor I quite understand your feelings. The point is, at the hotel, did she strike you as hysterical?

Miss Evelyn FP I only know there was a disgraceful scene on the lake. Two women screaming about a man.

Miss Rose FP She was one of them.

Professor I can't say I'm surprised. But perhaps, as the Doctor suggests, she is suffering from slight delirium as a result of sunstroke.

Miss Rose FP (*Beginning to fidget*). Suppose she is telling the truth?

Professor What, that Miss Froy is still missing, and Frau Kummer is impersonating her? Her story is too unfounded for me to credit it. But even if the vanished governess weren't a myth, I cannot conceive any cause for anxiety on her behalf. Her disappearance must be voluntary, because if she had come to any harm, or met with an accident, it would have been notified at once by an eye-witness.

Miss Evelyn FP Exactly. The train is so crowded that if she knew the ropes, she could play 'hide and seek' indefinitely with the ticket-collector.

Professor Therefore, if she is hiding, she must have some strong personal reason for it. My own feeling is never to interfere with private issues. It would be extremely tactless and inconsiderate of us to start a general search for her.

Miss Rose FP Well, yes.

Professor And neither of you good ladies saw Miss Carr with this mysterious Miss Froy, did you?

Miss Rose FP (*Starting to look at her hands*). Oh my hands are so smutty. What a dirty train this is. If you'll excuse me, I'd better wash them... (*She exits rapidly, SR*)

Miss Evelyn looks hard at the Professor, studying his face, before finally deciding to speak.

Miss Evelyn FP I couldn't mention it in front of my sister, she is so sensitive on the subject, but we recently went through a nerve-shattering experience. And I don't see that we did an ounce of good.

Professor What exactly do you mean?

Miss Evelyn FP We live in a very quiet neighbourhood, close to the cathedral. It was ruined for everyone when a terrible person came to live there. A war profiteer; at least, I call them all that. One day, when he was racing about in his car, drunk, as usual, he knocked down a woman. We saw the accident, and our evidence got him six months' imprisonment. It was a very bad case.

Professor I congratulate you on your public spirit.

Miss Evelyn FP We were quite pleased with ourselves too, until he came out. After that we were marked people. This man – aided by his two boys – persecuted us in every kind of way. Windows were smashed, obscene messages chalked on the gates. We could never catch them in the act, although we appealed to the police and they had a special watch kept on the premises. After a time it got on our nerves. It affected my sister most, as she was terrified lest one of her pet animals might be the next victim. Luckily, before it came to that, the man left the town.

Professor I see. I'm sorry to hear that.

Miss Evelyn FP So, can you blame us, that we made a vow never to interfere in anything again... unless it's a case of cruelty to animals or children.

Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard.

Scene 6

USR Compartment: As the lights fade up, Iris is discovered on her own in the compartment. She is sitting opposite where Miss Froy sat. She jiggles up and down as before, looking out of the window. As the SFX fade out, Max arrives at the 'door'.

Max All alone.

Iris Yes, thank goodness.

Max Where is everybody?

Iris Don't know. Maybe they've all gone for lunch.

Max Mind if I join you?

Iris Be my guest.

Max *(Sitting down in what was Miss Froy's seat).* Well, are you planning to stop off at Trieste?

Iris *(Stiffly).* No.

Max But are you sure you're fit to go on? The Professor's not sure you are.

Iris I know. He's talking about me going to some nursing home.

Max When did this happen?

Iris Earlier. He said he'd had word with the Doctor who suggested I had a good night's rest, before I continued the journey: "for my own benefit"... that's a laugh!

Max I see.

Iris So what about you? What do you think?

Max To be frank, I'm worried stiff about you.

Iris Why?

Max Hanged if I know. *(Beat).* Well, I like you... Anyway, cheer up you'll soon be back with your friends.

Iris Not if the Doctor has his way. Anyway, I don't want to see any of them. I don't really want to get back. I've no real home. And nothing seems worthwhile anymore.

Max So what do you do with yourself?

Iris Nothing... Oh, play about, mainly.

Max With other chaps?

Iris Yes, we all do the same things. Silly things. There's not one real person among the lot of us. Sometimes, you know, I get terrified. I'm wasting my youth. What's at the end of it all?

Max My life's really very different from yours. I never know where I'm going next. But it's always rough. And things happen. Not always pleasant things either. If I could take you on my next job, you'd get a complete change. You'd go without every comfort a refined home should have, but I'd lay odds you'd never feel bored again.

Iris It sounds lovely... are you proposing to me?

Max No, I...

Iris *(Laughing)*. Why not? Lots of men do. And I'd like to go to a really rough place.

Max Fine. So let's get down to business. Got any money?

Iris Some. A few thou. Just chicken-feed really.

Max Suits me. I've none at all.

Iris So you're planning to live off my money?

Max Sounds like a good idea.

Pause.

Iris Tell me, what sort of mind do you have exactly?

Max Fair to middling, when its lubricated. It works best on beer.

Iris Could you write a detective novel?

Max No. Can't spell.

Iris But could you solve one?

Max Every time.

Iris Then suppose you give me a demonstration. You've been very clever in proving that Miss Froy couldn't exist. But, if she did, could you find out what might have happened to her? Or is that too difficult?

Max *(Bursting out laughing he stands up and rubs his chin with this hand)*. Well... let me see... *(He paces up and down the compartment)*. Ah!

Iris Yes!

Max No, that wouldn't work...

Iris Oh...

Max *(Pacing up and down, flashes of inspiration touch him, then disappear. Finally)*. Ah, yes!

Iris Yes?

Max I think I've got it to fit. Bit of jiggery-pokery in parts, but it hangs together. So, would you like to hear a story called: 'The Strange Disappearance of Miss Froy'?

Iris I'd love to.

Max Then I'll begin. *(He sits.)*. But, first of all, when you boarded the train, was there one nun next door or two?

Iris I don't know. How should I know? I only glanced in on the way to have tea.

Max Think.

Iris I only noticed one. She had a horrible face, I remember that.

Max Hmm, my story demands a second one later on.

Iris Well that's not to say there isn't another one.

Max True.

Iris Go on then.

Max I haven't started yet. The nun thing was only a preamble. Here goes...

Iris I'm all ears!

Max Miss Froy is actually a spy who's got some information which she's sneaking out of the country. So she's got to be bumped off. And where better than on a train journey?

Iris You mean, they've thrown her out of a window onto the track?

Max No, don't be silly...

Iris Me?

Max No, if they'd chucked her on the line, her body would be found and awkward questions asked. That's why she's got to disappear. On a journey a lot of valuable time will be wasted before it can be proved that she's even missing.

Iris What do you mean?

Max At first people will think she's missed her connection or stopped in Paris for a day or two to shop. So, by the time they get busy, the trail will be stone cold.

Iris So is the whole train in the plot?

Max Hardly.

Iris Who then?

Max Just the Baroness, the Doctor and the nuns. But, of course, there'll be a conspiracy of silence. None of the passengers who are local would dare to contradict the Baroness. So there must have been some dirty work at the station over her reserved seat. They had to make sure she would be in the Baroness's compartment and at the end of the train.

Iris But what's happened to her?

Max Aha, that's where my brain comes in...

Iris Yes?

Max Miss Froy is where the Doctor says he found her.

Iris In the compartment next door?

Max Yes, but covered with rugs and disguised with bandages and things!

Iris How? When?

Max When you conveniently dropped off to sleep. No doubt the Doctor asks Miss Froy if she could render some service next door. And being an obliging creature she goes.

Iris She would. I know she would.

Max And the second she enters the compartment she gets the surprise of her life. To begin with the blinds are down and the place is in darkness. She smells a rat, but before she can squeal, the three of them set on her.

Iris Three of them?

Max Our friend... *(he puts on an accent)*, ze Doctor, ze Nun and...

Iris Who? Not the Baroness?

Max No, the patient.

Iris The patient?

Max Of course! The patient is one of the gang. One of them pins down Miss Froy, the other throttles her so she can't shout, and the Doctor gives her an injection to make her unconscious.

Iris Yes...

Max Oh, and the nun you saw is actually a man... that's why you thought she looked so ugly.

Iris And what about the patient?

Max Well, by now, you've unearthed some English people who will remember Miss Froy, and you've roped in the vicar's wife. So they have to produce someone to prove you wrong. So down come the blinds again and the so-called patient changes clothes, and, hey presto: Miss Froy, complete with feather and hat!

Iris It could happen, you're right! *(Pause, and then in a quiet voice)*. What will happen when they reach Trieste?

Max Oh this is the part my readers will adore. The real Miss Froy will be put in an ambulance and taken to a remote house by a deserted lake or something. You know the sort of thing... black oily water lapping a derelict quay. Then she'll be bundled up, weighed down with lead or rocks and dumped in the mud and ooze.

Iris How awful!

Max Yes, But I'm not altogether ruthless. I'll let them keep her drugged to the bitter end, so the poor old dear'll know nothing about it.

Iris Then we can't waste any time!

Max *(Laughing)*. Oh, how I wish I had you to listen to my golf stories! You've got just the right reaction!

Iris What do you mean?

Max I made it up! (*Beat.*). It's the best I could do in the circumstances, but it's not really what happened.

Iris It isn't?

Max No, of course not.

Iris You made it up?

Max Yes.

Iris But it could have happened just as you described it.

Max No, don't be fanciful. The whole thing's ridiculous.

Iris So you're not going to help me?

Max The patient in the next compartment is undoubtedly real. And, if we were to go storming in there, the Doctor would have us thrown off the train, and rightly so.

Iris Yes, you're right... (*She slumps back in her seat*). But there is one thing that rings entirely true...

Max What's that?

Iris That newspaper report. It says that that head of the family couldn't have murdered the other chap because he was away at his hunting lodge at the time.

Max And?

Iris And he wasn't! Because Miss Froy met him in the early hours and he shook her hand. So she's a witness... a very important witness that needs to be silenced!

Max Well...

They both settle back into their seats.

Iris Well, what do you think.

Max I think...

Iris Yes?

Max I think I could do with something to eat! Care to join me?

Iris No, I'm really not hungry at the moment. Maybe later.

Max All right. And, we'll talk it through with the Professor.

Iris That won't be any good.

Max What do you mean?

Iris He's like everyone else. He doesn't believe me. He'll have me shunted off to a nursing home with that Doctor if I don't watch it.

Max (*Standing up and going to the 'door'*). I'll go and have a word with him.

Iris If you want. But I'm not going anywhere with that Doctor, and that's final! Directly we get to Trieste I am going to the British Embassy.

Max Don't be such a silly goat... what for?

Iris To tell them all that's been going on, of course..

Max Oh, Iris, Iris...

Iris Don't you 'Oh, Iris' me! Are you with me or against me, Max? Are you stopping off at Trieste?

Max No, and neither are you!

Iris I see. Then you didn't mean what you said about liking me, and all that.

Max I certainly meant, all that.

Iris Well, if you don't come with me to the Embassy, I'm through with you.

Max Can't you realise I'm your only friend?

Iris If you were a friend, you'd prove it.

Max Wish I could. As your best friend, I ought to knock you out, so that you'd stay put for the next twenty-four hours, and rest your poor old head.

Iris Oh, I hate you! For heaven's sake, go away!

Max Alright, I'll catch you later. (*He exits SL*).

Iris *(Standing up then pacing up and down the compartment, muttering to herself). Oh, Miss Froy... Miss Froy.... (Eventually she sits back down but in the seat that Miss Froy had occupied.). Miss... (she sees something on the window), FROY! So you were here! Here's where you wrote your name! F-R-O-Y!*

From SL the Baroness, the Doctor and Frau Kummer enter, chatting amongst themselves.

Frau Kummer Well, that was a particularly bad meal.

Doctor Most disappointing...

As they reach the compartment 'door', Iris rushes out, nearly knocking the Baroness over. Fade to black. SFX: the sound of a train travelling at speed is heard.

Scene 7

USL Restaurant Car. The lights fade up in the Restaurant Car to find the Professor sitting at a DS table finishing a bowl of soup. As Max enters, the Rev Barnes and Mrs Barnes are sitting eating at an USL window table and the Todhunters are now at a DSL table. As before the occupants of the Restaurant Car jiggle slightly in time with the motion of the train.

Professor I'm afraid you've virtually missed the lunch sitting. I only just got my order in in time.

Max *(Sitting down opposite the Professor).* Oh, it doesn't matter. But what's this about letting that Doctor cart Iris off to a nursing home?

Professor It's for her own good, my boy. She is clearly delirious and the Doctor says she really ought not continue the journey alone. He's taking his patient to a hospital in Trieste and he has kindly offered to take Miss Carr to a nursing home he can recommend until she has recovered her, er... equilibrium.

The waiter enters from SL carrying a tray on his upturned hand, balancing against the motion of the train. He is about to reach the table, which the Professor and Mad are sitting at, when Iris rushes in. She runs full tilt into the waiter who drops the tray and its contents.

Waiter Mon Dieu, vous êtes fou!

Professor I'll second that.

Iris Oh, I'm sorry, so sorry! Here, let me help you...

Iris kneels down and helps pick up the crockery from the floor and replace it on the tray. The waiter, grumbling, exits SL.

Professor To what do we owe this most theatrical entrance, Miss Carr?

Iris I've got proof!

Professor Proof? Proof of what?

Iris That Miss Froy was on the train!

Max How, Iris? What have you got?

... in this Preview Script, the rest of the play has been deleted from here ...

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