

Side 2 - clowns, HANNAY

THE 39 STEPS

29

Scene Eight: Edinburgh Station. Day.

SALESMAN 1. Wonder what won the two o'clock at Windsor.

SALESMAN 2. I'll get a paper.

SALESMAN 1. I'll go to the lavatory.

(They get up. Squeeze round each other.)

SALESMAN 1. Excuse me. Sorry. Sorry.

SALESMAN 2. Sorry. Sorry.

HANNAY. Sorry.

(SALESMAN 1 exits. SALESMAN 2 sticks his head out of the window. Whistles through his teeth. SALESMAN 1 immediately on as a PAPERBOY in peaked cap.)

PAPERBOY. Evenin paper! Latest news! Evenin paper!
Latest –

SALESMAN 2. Evenin paper please?

PAPERBOY. Evening paper sir? Thankoo sir!

(gives him a paper)

SALESMAN 2. *(gives him a penny)* Thankoo.

PAPERBOY. Evenin paper! Latest news! Evenin paper!
Latest –

(immediately back on as SALESMAN 1)

SALESMAN 1. Excuse me. Sorry. Sorry.

SALESMAN 2. Sorry. Sorry.

HANNAY. Sorry.

(SALESMAN 1 sits down.)

SALESMAN 2. Hello.

SALESMAN 1. Hello.

SALESMAN 2. *(opens paper)* Good Lord!

SALESMAN 1. What is it?

SALESMAN 2. Been a woman murdered in a fashionable
West End flat!

(HANNAY freezes.)

SALESMAN 1. All these sex dramas. Don't appeal to me!
What won?

SALESMAN 2. What won what?

SALESMAN 1. The two O'clock at Windsor.

SALESMAN 2. Two O'clock at Windsor?

(Turns paper over. They read the back. HANNAY peers at the front.)

Bachelor Boy.

SALESMAN 1. Good.

SALESMAN 2. At seven-to-four on.

SALESMAN 1. Not so good.

(SALESMAN 2 back to front page. HANNAY sits quickly back.)

SALESMAN 2. Where was we? Ah yes. Stabbed in the back she was. Portland Mansions. Portland Place.

SALESMAN 1. By the BBC? That's the place to put someone to sleep!

(Both SALESMEN laugh. Wink at HANNAY.)

What was she like? One of the usual?

SALESMAN 2. *(reads)* Well-dressed woman about thirty-five. Terrible!

SALESMAN 1. Terrible!

(They look at HANNAY.)

HANNAY. Terrible!

SALESMAN 2. The tenant Richard Hannay is missing.

SALESMAN 1. You do surprise me!

SALESMAN 2. *(reads)* Approximately thirty-seven. Dark wavy hair. Piercing blue eyes. Pencil moustache.

(HANNAY hides his moustache with his hat.)

HANNAY. Sorry?

SALESMEN. Yes?

HANNAY. Might I have a look at your paper?

SALESMAN 1. Certainly.

HANNAY. Thank you.

(HANNAY takes the paper. Pores into it. Looks up to see both men staring at him. They grin unnervingly.)

SALESMAN 2. Think I'll pop out to the buffet car. Finished?

(snatches paper from HANNAY)

Fancy anythin'?

SALESMAN 1. No thank you.

HANNAY. No thank you.

SALESMAN 2. Biscuit?

HANNAY. No, thank you!

(SALESMAN 2 leaves the compartment.)

SALESMAN 2. Excuse me. Sorry. Sorry.

SALESMAN 1. Sorry. Sorry.

HANNAY. Sorry.

(SALESMAN 1 glances out of the window.)

SALESMAN 1. Good Heavens! Place is stiff with police!

(HANNAY freezes. SALESMAN 1 calls out.)

Excuse me Constable! Caught the West End murderer yet?

(SALESMAN 2 appears in a police hat.)

POLICEMAN. We'll catch him, don't you worry sir!

SALESMAN 1. That's the spirit!

(POLICEMAN changes into porter's hat.)

PORTER. All aboard for the Highlands! Next stop the highlands!

(Changes into policeman hat.)

POLICEMAN. Anything suspicious let us know sir!

SALESMAN 1. Oh yes. Don't you worry!

(POLICEMAN changes into porter hat.)

PORTER. All aboard! All aboard!

(SALESMAN 1 puts on paperboy hat.)

PAPERBOY. Final edition sir? Final edition.

(PORTER changes into SALESMAN 2 hat.)

SALESMAN 2. No thank you!

(SALESMAN 2 puts on porter hat.)

PORTER. All aboard! All aboard!

(PAPERBOY puts on salesman hat.)

SALESMAN 1. Alright, alright!

(PORTER puts on policeman hat.)

POLICEMAN. Keep your eyes peeled won't you sir!

SALESMAN 1. Certainly will constable!

POLICEMAN. Don't forget sir!

SALESMAN 1. No I won't constable.

(changes into paperboy hat)

PAPERBOY. Read all about it!! Read all about it!!

(POLICEMAN puts on porter hat.)

PORTER. All aboard! All aboard!

(PORTER puts on police hat.)

POLICEMAN. Anything suspicious, let us know sir.

(PAPERBOY changes into SALESMAN 1.)

SALESMAN 1. Will do, constable.

(POLICEMAN puts on porter hat.)

PORTER. All aboard! All aboard!

(SALESMAN 1 changes into MRS HIGGINS hat.)

MRS HIGGINS. Is this the 9.41 to Reading?

PORTER. Platform Twelve!

MRS HIGGINS. Thankoo!

(MRS HIGGINS puts on paperboy hat.)

PORTER. All aboard let's be havin' yer!

(blows whistle)

PAPERBOY. Read all about it!! Read all about it!!

PORTER. All aboard! All aboard!

(blows whistle)

PAPERBOY. Final Edition! Final Edition!

PORTER. All aboard! All aboard!

(blows whistle)

(HANNAY can't take any more.)

HANNAY. Oh just get on with it!!

BOTH CLOWNS. Thankoo!

(Train shrieks. Chugs out of the station.)