

Alt-Na-Shellack: Professor's Study. Night.

MRS JORDAN. Ah! Here we are. My husband's study. Wait here if you would please. I'll fetch him directly.

(She exits. PROFESSOR JORDAN appears at speed in his armchair.)

PROFESSOR. Mr Hammond! So sorry to have kept you.

HANNAY. It's quite alright.

PROFESSOR. So – you're from Annabella Schmidt?

HANNAY. She's been murdered you know!

PROFESSOR. Murdered!!!? How dreadful!

HANNAY. And now the police are after me!

PROFESSOR. I'll get rid of them don't you worry Mr – Hannay. I suppose it's safe to call you by your real name now?

HANNAY. Quite safe.

PROFESSOR. But listen. Why did you come all the way to Scotland to tell me about it?

HANNAY. Because I believe Annabella was trying to tell you about some secret top secret air ministry secret secret and she was killed by a foreign secret agent who's after it too. She was looking for something called – ah yes! The Thirty-Nine Steps!

PROFESSOR. The Thirty-Nine Steps?

HANNAY. If we can find out what the Thirty-Nine Steps are then –

PROFESSOR. So – tell me Mr Hannay – did she happen to tell you what this foreign agent looked like?

HANNAY. There wasn't time. Ah yes! Wait! There was one thing. Part of his little finger was missing.

(Holds up a little finger.)

This little finger I think.

PROFESSOR. Are you sure it wasn't -

(Pause: Holds up stump.)

- this one? *(He holds up his own little finger. It is cut off at the knuckle.)*

HANNAY. I'm not sure I think -

(Sees the stump. Gasps! The PROFESSOR pulls out a revolver.)

PROFESSOR. Mr Hannay. I'm afraid you've forced me into a very difficult position. You see I live here as a respectable citizen. My very best friend is the Sheriff of the County. So my whole existence would be ruined if it "came out" that I was not "what I seem". But what makes it doubly important that I simply cannot let you go is that I'm about to convey some very vital information out of the country. Oh yes! I've got it alright. I'm afraid poor Annabella Schmidt would have been far too late. In her great mission to save humanity! Her beloved people!

(Laughs.)

Ha ha ha! So I'm afraid there is only one option, Mr Hannay.

(Aims revolver at HANNAY.)

Unless of course you care - to join us.

(Lowers revolver.)

HANNAY. Join you?

PROFESSOR. When the var comes.

HANNAY. Var?

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