



Scripts.com

The Cat and the Canary

By Walter DeLeon

How much farther?
Soon now.
Anyone else living round
the old Norman place,
besides Miss Lu?
Who?
That woman, the Creole who
was with him when he died.
Do you know her?
Hmm.
Anyone else living there?
No people.
There it is.
Here.
Come back for me
in two hours, hmm?
Uh-uh.
No more ride
for you tonight.
Tomorrow.
But listen...
Oh.
How do you do,
Mr. Crosby?
How are you, Miss Lu?
Are the others here?
Not yet.
Clock's fast.
It stopped when
the master died.
You let it remain just
that way for 10 years?
Nothing has been
changed here.
Everything is
just as he left it.
He would've
wanted it that way.
Yes, and everything will be
the way he wanted it tonight.
We'll read his will
in the library at midnight,
just 10 years
from the time he died.

But that's the end, Miss Lu. A dead man can't stop the clock forever. There'll be a change from now on.

Yes.

You ought to be glad. It must've been rather lonely here all these years. I'm never lonely. I've got my friends. Friends?

Yes, my friends! From the other world. There are always murmurs. The house is full of murmurs. They tell me things. Oh, you believe in spirits, huh?

Well, have they told you that the heirs and I have to stay here all night? I've prepared for it. Some of them are coming now. You've got sharp ears, Miss Lu. Why, it's not at all involved. We are second cousins once removed. Our great aunt Elizabeth was very...

Well, how should I put it, very, uh... Prolific?

Well, at any rate, she had a large family. Twenty-nine. Don't exaggerate, darling. Thirty.

What are you talking about? Crocodiles! Alligators, to you.

Why did old man Norman want
to live in this dismal place?
Well, of course, Cyrus
was somewhat eccentric.
What you mean
is plain cuckoo.
Young man, have you no
respect for a dead relative?
None whatever,
unless of course he happened
to make me his sole heir.
I doubt that.
Cyrus always professed
a great weakness for me.
Yeah, you said
he was eccentric.
Say!
There it is, just as Mr. Norman
put it there 10 years ago.
Exactly as he
put it there.
Hello, this envelope
has been tampered with.
Both of them.
Somebody must have opened
the safe and read the will.
How could they? Nobody knows
how to open the safe but you.
Well, I didn't do it.
You aren't suspicioning
me, are you, Mr. Crosby?
Well, if anyone tried to
change it, he wasted his time.
I made a duplicate of the
will, at Mr. Norman's request,
and put it in the vault of the
Trust Company in New Orleans.
Someone at
the front door.
See who it is.
And mind you,
say nothing about this.
Good evening.
So, you're still here.

Hello.

Wait.

Huh?

I know Miss Tilbury, and you,
Miss Cicily, but who are you?

Fred Blythe,
one of the family.

You must be the old boy's
housekeeper they talk about.

I was very devoted
to Mr. Norman,
which is more than
his family can say.

Really?

I don't think I'm going to like it here.

Shh. Don't say
a word.

Are we the first
to arrive?

Lawyer Crosby is
in the library.

What happened?

Sometimes they get
into the machinery.

Sometimes who gets into
the machinery, Aunt Sue?

How should I know?

Oh, so it's you,
Miss Tilbury. Cicily.

Evening, Fred.

Hello.

Excuse me.

Hello. Hello, Charlie,
nice to see you again.

Thanks, Mr. Crosby.

Same here.

He's pretty, isn't he?

Does he belong to us?

Yes, dear, second cousin twice
removed on his father's side.

Hello, Aunt Susan.

Charlie.

This is your
cousin Cicily.

I'm so glad.
How do you do?
And here's Fred.
Oh...
Do we have to
shake hands?
Oh, come now, boys, whatever
the quarrel is between you two...
No quarrel
on my side.
No?
Mmm-mmm.
All right,
skip it.
When are you going to read the will?
As soon as
the others arrive.
What others? Of course, there's Joyce.
Yes, Joyce Norman.
Joyce... Is she the one that
draws pictures for the magazines?
Mmm-hmm. The other's
Wally Campbell.
Wally Campbell,
the actor?
On the radio?
The original
flutterbrain.
Well, maybe I'm going to
like this place after all.
Hey!
I'm not really frightened,
I'm just naturally nervous.
Eating in restaurants
all the time,
up half the night
playing Chinese checkers.
Besides, this is
my first sea voyage.
You seem like the jolly type,
Clarence. Do you like jokes?
You don't mind if I
ramble on, do you?
It kinda keeps my mind

off the malaria germs.
Anyway, here's one.
A farmer had a cow, see,
but he couldn't afford to feed
it alfalfa, so he fed it sawdust.
He saved a lot
of money, all right,
but he sure wasted
plenty of time
getting the splinters
out of the milk.
Doesn't that just...
Splinters, milk.
Don't you get it?
Hmm. Heard it last year.
Jack Benny Program.
Yes, Cyrus Canby Norman died
in that room across the hall,
hating all his
close relatives.
Well, he certainly
didn't hate me.
And if Cyrus turned against any of
us, I know where to put the blame.
It was the influence
of that...
What is it,
Miss Lu?
Mr. Campbell is here.
Introducing your favorite
and mine, Wally Campbell.
May I join the party?
I was invited.
I hear old Uncle Cyrus's
ghost is holding bank night.
Oh, I'm sorry,
just a pleasantry.
Hello, Mr. Crosby.
Hello, Wally.
This is your cousin,
Miss Susan Tilbury.
I'm charmed. How do you do? He's the actor.
Your cousin,
Cicily Young.

How do you do?
Fred Blythe
and Charlie Wilder.
Nice to see you.
Thanks, thanks.
Well, where's
the leading lady?
Leading lady?
Young man, did you inherit the streak
of insanity that runs in this family?
What was that
leading lady crack?
Oh, nothing really, but all
this, midnight, the alligators...
I mean, the heirs,
and the family lawyer
all gathering to hear
the reading of the will.
It reminds me of a lot of melodramas
and murder mysteries I played in.
It does?
Thanks.
And in every one
of those plays,
there was a leading lady, young,
beautiful, modern, charming...
Would you take this
for me, please? Thanks.
Well, I got here.
Oh, I'm terribly sorry
to be so late.
Oh, dear Aunt Susan.
And Cicily. Well, this is like old times.
Charlie, they told me
you weren't coming.
It's good
to see you.
And, Fred.
Hello, honey.
And...
Well, of all people,
Wally Campbell.
Well, don't you
remember?

The little girl you took to a
high school dance and deserted.
You used to
call me the twerp.
The twerp?
Joyce Norman! Say, when did
you grow up and get pretty?
Have I kept you waiting?
I'm so sorry.
That's all right, my dear.
Now, shall we proceed?
What a house.
Isn't it?
That's Uncle Cy.
Hello, Uncle Cy.
They tell me he was so
crooked that when he died,
they had to screw him
into the ground.
Shh. Quiet.
Oh, sorry. Here you are, Joyce.
Thank you,
Charlie.
Now as soon as we're all
comfortably settled, we'll begin.
Here.
Thanks.
Mr. Norman made his will
in two parts.
I will now read the contents
of envelope number one.
Oh, tell me. Tell me.
Miss Lu? Miss Lu?
Tell me the name, Master.
The name.
Miss Lu!
What?
What was that noise,
like a gong?
It's the warning.
It came just before
the master died.
You know, I've been thinking
there's no use in my staying here.

After all, I've never inherited
anything, except hay fever.
So if nobody objects, I think
I'll swim back to the mainland.
You're going to
stay right here...
Yeah, but I can...
I have a million
questions to ask you.
Yeah, well, ask her one for
me about those seven bells.
They are the spirits.
They mean
seven may live.
There are eight people
in this room.
One will die
before morning.
I feel very faint.
Yeah, well, it's been nice knowing
you all but honestly, it's hot in here,
I have to get
some air. I...
Now, wait, wait.
Stop all this, Miss Lu.
Do you want to frighten these
ladies out of their wits?
There's not much
danger of that.
It has happened.
The insane asylums
are full of people who've lost
their minds through fright.
Oh, may we hear
the will, please?
Yes, let's hear it.
I'll bet you two to one
that Joyce is the heir.
What's that?
Oh, did I speak
out of turn?
What was at the back
of your remark?
Oh, why,

nothing.

Come on,

you know something.

Oh, nothing

really.

Well, it's just that in practically every mystery play I've been in, the leading lady turns out to be the heir.

You have the power.

Yes, I... Me?

There are spirits

all around you.

Well, could you put some in a glass with little ice?

I need it badly.

Don't you ever

stop babbling?

Attention, please.

Usual date and so on.

"I, Cyrus Canby Norman,

being of sound mind and body,

"do hereby bequeath all my money,

bonds, securities and estate

"under the following

provisions.

"Whereas I believe a streak of insanity to be in the family,

"in the event that the heir

hereinafter named

"should prove to be

of unsound mind,

"or if said heir

should become insane

"or should meet death

within a month of inheriting,

"then my estate

is to be given to the person

"whose name is contained

in envelope number two."

Was that

his idea or yours?

What's wrong with it?

Well, that will is practically an invitation to commit murder.

Murder?

Certainly.

What's behind that "meeting death or insanity within a month of inheriting"?

That's easily explained.

Mr. Norman was afraid that the shock of inheriting the fortune might prove too much for an unbalanced brain.

And it's also a strong encouragement to the number two heir to do everything possible to unbalance the brain of the number one heir.

Fred, come off. You're talking a lot of nonsense.

Yeah? Murder is committed frequently for less money than old Cyrus left.

That, gentlemen, is precisely the reason why the name of the alternative heir was sealed in this envelope, so that no one should know his identity.

Yeah?

You know who it is, don't you?

Naturally, I drew the will.

"I therefore will that my entire estate be divided equally

"among such descendants of mine of sound mind and body

"who are assembled in my library at midnight

"on the 10th anniversary of my death,

"who bear the surname of Norman."

Norman?

Well, I'm the only one here with that name.

What did I tell you?

I knew it.

It becomes my pleasant duty to proclaim you the sole heiress of the Norman fortune

and the new mistress
of this old house.
And I sincerely trust that this
second envelope shall never be opened.
Thank you.

Oh, it's wonderful,
Joyce, I'm so glad.
Thanks, Charlie.

I congratulate you
with all my heart, Joyce.

Well, that's sweet
of you, Fred.

It's so unexpected,
I can hardly believe it.

I wish I
couldn't believe it.

I'm sorry, Cicily.

You're not
a bit sorry.

I know I shouldn't be
if I were the heir.

Well, I congratulate you, dear,
with definite reservations.

Oh, thanks, darling.

Well...

Well, aren't you
going to congratulate me?

Oh, sure. I'll do
more than that.

I'll recommend a nice,
quiet bombproof cellar to you
for the next 30 days.

Thanks.

Here are the keys
to the house, Miss Norman.

Oh, well, won't you
remain as my housekeeper?

Mr. Norman told me to give
this letter to the heir
after the will was read.

How did he know
you'd be here?

I told him I would be.

It's the first

I've known of it.
Well, what do you
suppose...
That's probably
about the buried treasure.
Buried treasure!
What are you
talking about?
Yeah, well, there's always a
buried treasure, isn't there?
You know a pot of gold, or
a diamond necklace, or a...
Don't pin me down.
It's very peculiar that you
should mention a necklace.
Yeah? Why?
There was one.
See!
Well, did somebody
tell you about it?
Now let me think. Oh, it
must have been my mother.
The last time you saw your
mother, you were three years old.
Yeah, I was
just...
I doubt if you'd remember the conversation.
What sort of a necklace
was it, Aunt Susan?
Diamonds and emeralds,
worth a fortune.
After Cyrus had it made,
it was stolen.
Who stole it?
Well, don't look at me.
I just got here.
I've never believed
it was stolen.
I always thought Mr. Norman
hid it here in this house.
Why would he
do that?
Because he
was a nut.

There's food
in the dining room.
I don't want
anything to eat.
Personally, I've changed
my plans and I'm leaving.
That's impossible, there are no
more trains out until morning,
even if you could
get to the mainland.
Why can't we
get to the mainland?
Because of members of Local Number
2 of the Bayou Canoe Paddlers
and Putt Putt Pushers Union
won't putt after midnight.
You mean we've got to stay
here whether we like it or not?
I arranged it that way and I think
you'll all be very comfortable.
So shall we eat,
drink and be merry?
For tomorrow,
we...
It's on the house.
My house, come on.
Cicily.
I could
use a drink.
Yeah, I could, too.
I think I could stiff.
Might as well be a live
stiff as a dead stiff.
Since we are all to be prisoners in this
terrible house until tomorrow morning,
I suggest that you and I sleep together.
I suggest we all
sleep together.
Miss Lu knew we'd have to stay here and...
Oh, Miss Lu.
I don't know much
about the house yet,
but are there rooms
for everyone?

Yes, Miss Norman. The main
bedroom, your bedroom, is here.
Mr. Campbell, at the head of
the stairs, Lawyer Crosby...
What happened?
They do that when you don't pay
your bill. Are you all right?
Yes, of course, but...
Well, how am I?
I'm all right, I always
shake this way. Don't...
Well, what in the world's
the matter, Miss Lu?
Miss Lu?
Did you have to break one
of those old crystal glasses?
I didn't break it.
It was knocked out of my hand.
Come on.
Don't take it so big.
Go ahead.
Keep your shirt on.
I'm just telling you,
you keep away from Joyce.
What's the matter? Not afraid of a
little healthy competition, are you?
I'm not afraid of anything you've
got to offer. I'm just warning you.
Yeah?
What's this all about? I wouldn't know.
Better ask Fred.
Why blame it on me?
Two grown men,
it's too absurd.
Fred, I want to
talk to Charlie.
Oh?
I'll just be a minute.
Same old Casanova.
Well, I'll be in the
dining room, if you need me.
Now, Charlie,
once and for all...
Joyce, why

do you hate me?
I don't hate you,
Charlie, I...
You were in love
with me once.
No.
Yes, you were.
Darling, can't we...
We had this all out
a long time ago, Charlie.
Give me another
chance, Joyce.
I won't fail you this time,
I swear I won't.
You can forget that girl.
No, it wasn't just that,
it was...
We can't
thrash it out tonight.
Tomorrow, then.
Tomorrow is better.
Yes, tomorrow is
much better.
Here you are, Cicily.
Oh, thank you, Wally.
You know, I've always wanted to be
an actress and now, just think of it,
some of the same blood that flows
through my veins flows through yours.
Yeah, it's gruesome, isn't it?
Let's change the subject.
I may not see you people
in the morning,
I have a luncheon
engagement in New Orleans.
I have to get up early.
Early? Well, you certainly don't
expect to sleep in this terrible house.
Don't big, empty houses
scare you?
Not me, I used to be
in vaudeville.
Oh...
Here.

Oh, Wally, you give me
such a comfortable feeling.
First this old house
gave me the creeps.
But with you here,
I don't know what fear is.
That's right, nobody's afraid
of an old house except a coward.
Turn out the lights.
What is it?
I don't know.
He's coming
toward the house.
Oh, Cicily.
What are you doing?
It's the only way
to stop a scream.
Oh, is that so? With me, it's for sneezing.
With me,
it's for screaming.
Oh, I didn't...
I got it. Hold it.
Cicily!
She's all right.
She's okay.
We thought we heard
some shots.
We thought we did, too. Well,
hadn't we better investigate?
Say, maybe you're right.
You may be wrong, though.
Well, I want
to go, too.
No, you'd better stay here
with Cicily. Come on, Wally.
Oh, no. I'm awfully sorry.
I screamed...
What is it?
Could I talk to you
a moment, sir?
Well, come in.
I don't want to
alarm you folks, but...
But what?

I'm the head guard
over at Fairview.
Fairview?
The insane asylum?
Yes, ma'am. One of our patients
got away from us this afternoon.
That's all
we needed.
Well, anyway, he'll
feel right at home here.
Is he a dangerous
maniac?
Yes, ma'am, he's...
He's a killer.
Oh!
How did he escape?
I wish I knew.
We followed him into the
bayous, but then we lost him.
But you took a couple of shots
at something out in the garden.
I thought I saw him,
but the shadows fooled me.
What does the poor
fellow look like?
Say, don't waste any
sympathy on him, mister.
He'd just as soon rip you wide open as not.
Oh, please, please. There
are ladies are present.
Oh, I'm sorry, ma'am.
We're still waiting to
hear what he looks like.
Oh. Well, he's about 40,
but strong as a tiger.
He has sharp teeth and long
fingers and fingernails like claws.
And when he's violent, he crawls
around on all fours like a...
Like an animal?
Yes, sir, like a cat.
What some guys won't do for a laugh.
Look!
Scat!

That's a good joke
on us, all right.
Yeah, I'll say.
That's better.
Well, I guess
I'll be moving on.
Maybe he isn't
even around here.
But if I were you,
I'd stay in the house
and be sure that all the outside
windows and doors are locked.
I agree with you, locked
and nailed. I'll handle that.
Won't we?
I'll be around
the neighborhood
and let you know
if we get the Cat.
The what?
Uh, the Cat. That's what
the other inmates call him,
but they're all crazy.
Well, good night.
Good night.
Listen, I don't think we better say
anything about this to Joyce or Cicily.
That's right, there's no
use in frightening them,
too.
That's a fatheaded
suggestion of yours.
If there's any danger,
they ought to know it.
Well, somebody ought
to go down and lock
the cellar doors
and windows, anyhow.
Yeah, well I'm going.
I'm... Don't rush me.
I'm going to ask you all
not to tell the girls.
Have I
your promise?

Good heavens, do you think I'm
the type that can't keep a secret?
It's understood, then?
Hey, what's going on?
What are you all
talking about?
Nothing.
Nothing.
Well, I'm going to bed.
Good night, all.
Good night.
If you're going to lock up the
cellar, you'd better do it now.
That's right.
Oh, that's right.
Is anything
the matter?
No, nothing's
the matter.
Except there's a maniac
loose in this house
and we'll all be
murdered in our beds.
That a girl. Hold it
right there. Stay there.
Well, where's
that cellar?
Oh, say, in case I don't come up in
about five minutes, better make it four,
or even three, you...
Is there a Brother Elk
in the house?
I'm not an Elk, but I
used to be a Girl Scout.
Oh, good, then you can
start a fire with sticks
in case our feet freeze.
Come on.
Well, everything's fine.
Well, don't you people
want anything more to eat?
Uh-uh.
What's going on?
Oh!

Why...

You go ahead. I'll be with you in a minute.

Listen, Joyce...

Uh-huh?

You know how it is in a play, when
just before the first act is over
somebody always comes
to the beautiful heroine
and tells her that she's in great
danger, and sometimes she is?

What are you
talking about?

Yeah, I know it sounds
kind of silly, but...

Keep your eyes
open, baby.

Thanks.

Well...

Say, why don't you go to the
library? It's much nicer in there.

The library, nicer?

What are you...

Well... Well,
there's a lamp there.

It hasn't got the jitters
like these lights.

Can't do more
than explode.

Hey! I'm scared.

Aren't you coming?

Did you find out? Can
we go through that way?

Uh-huh.

Oh, well...

Well, I'll be
seeing you, I hope.

This is the door
all right, but it won't open.

The key, honey.

One turn...

Oh.

Here's a switch.

Won't switch.

You want to go first?

Yeah! No, no.
Certainly not. Ladies always go first.
Oh.
Go ahead.
Thanks.
I think it was awful funny
what Miss Lu said
about the spirits
being all around you.
What's funny about it?
Well, I mean, I'm psychic,
too. I was in a trance once.
I know, I know. When
are you coming out of it?
Just kidding.
It's awful spooky
down here.
Do you believe
in reincarnation?
Huh?
You know, that dead people come back?
You mean like
the Republicans?
Shh, listen.
What's the matter?
That noise.
Well, what kind
of a noise?
It sounds like
wheels going around.
Shh. Watch that step.
Watch that...
Hey!
Hold my nose.
I'm screaming!
I can't.
Why can't you?
It's got me. It's got
my hands. It's got me.
What?
It's got me. I...
Cheese!
You're not hurt?
No, this one here.

Look, look.
Hurry, hurry.
Oh.
My knee.
Oh, you're not hurt. Come
on. We've got work to do.
That window's barred.
I like that.
I hear it now.
What? That noise you just heard.
It's in there.
Oh, that's it.
A home electric plant.
They're nothing but trouble.
How come you know?
We had one
down on the farm.
I used to fix it so the lights would go out
when my boyfriend
was calling on me.
Oh, yeah? Did anything happen
when the lights went out?
He always went to sleep.
Wally?
Oh, Mr. Crosby.
Hello, Joyce.
You here alone?
I don't want to worry you, but
there's something you ought to know.
Well, won't it keep
until morning?
Tomorrow may be
too late.
You know, Mr. Norman
was a very eccentric man,
and I've just
made a discovery.
I've been going through some old
papers of Mr. Norman's and I...
And I've found something which... Well...
It convinced me it would be dangerous
for you to be left here alone.
Mr. Crosby, really.
Don't laugh, Joyce. I know what

I'm talking about, believe me.
I'm alarmed.
I want you to
take me seriously.
Joyce, you're in danger,
great danger.
Thank heaven I can
tell you who they...
I've heard so much about ghosts
and spirits tonight that I...
I'm getting jittery.
I'd rather not hear...
Mr. Crosby?
Mr. Crosby?
Oh. Where did
Mr. Crosby go?
I haven't
seen him, miss.
But he must have
passed you in the hall.
I haven't seen
anyone.
Wally. Charlie! Aunt Susan! Wally Campbell.
Coming.
Did someone call?
Are you sure Mr. Crosby
wasn't in the dining room?
Positive.
And you didn't see him
as you came downstairs?
I did not.
What's wrong?
Well, it's unbelievable.
A few moments ago
I was sitting there,
Mr. Crosby was over there
talking to me and suddenly he...
He vanished.
Vanished?
But, Joyce, people don't just vanish.
Well, Mr. Crosby did.
I ran to the door
and Miss Lu was there.
I swear nobody

left this room.
Are you sure
he was in here?
Well, of course.
You must've heard
him talking to me.
I only heard you,
talking to yourself.
Well, I'm afraid the strain of
excitement's been too much for you, Joyce.
When a woman starts
talking to herself,
when she sees people vanish
right in front of her...
Oh, good heavens,
what am I saying?
You're inferring
rather plainly
that Joyce is
losing her mind.
Really? Oh, dear.
You mean you
don't believe me?
Why, certainly
we do.
Certainly.
But you do believe Mr. Crosby
disappeared in front of me?
Well, if that's my
imagination, where's Mr. Crosby?
Well, he's probably out
in the garden with Fred.
Come, Cicily,
let's go to our room,
pile the furniture in front
of the door and go to bed.
With a house full of maniacs,
what good is the bed?
There must be
some explanation.
Look, where was Crosby
standing when he disappeared?
Exactly where Wally is now.
Can you still see me?

Wally, do go outside and see
if Mr. Crosby's with Fred.
Outside?
I'll go...
Oh, but, don't you
think I... I'll go.
Charlie, you look upstairs
in Mr. Crosby's room.
All right. We'll find
him. Don't worry. Yeah?
"You will open this envelope tonight
in my room, where you are to sleep."
That's the room
where he died.
Oh, I didn't
hear you come in.
The room is ready for you, if
you aren't afraid to sleep there.
Unpack my bags, please.
I'll be right in.
Have they found
Mr. Crosby?
Nobody's going
to find Mr. Crosby.
The demon in this house
has got him.
Don't say such things.
Fred?
Oh, Fred?
Is that you, Fred?
Are you catching cold? Your
voice sounds a little hoarse.
Fred?
Oh, it's you.
What do you want?
I was...
Hello. Have you
seen Crosby?
No.
When did you come in
from the garden?
Who told you
I was out there?
Well, I was just...

Why, everybody.
Everybody was wrong.
What's your game,
Campbell?
My game?
Well, I shoot
between 90 and 100.
I used to hook my drives
but now I slice my putts.
Have you tried that...
Whatever you're trying to do,
keep away from Joyce.
Let her alone, see?
Just let her alone.
I'll put these
in the top drawer, miss.
Thank you.
When did Uncle Cyrus
give you this?
Ten years ago tonight, just
before he died on that bed.
It's no use, miss, trying
to keep it to yourself.
Keep what to myself?
The thing that frightened you
just before you ran in here.
Oh, that was
only my imagination.
It was a warning.
I don't believe
in spirits, Miss Lu.
You're afraid.
You're afraid the demon that got
Mr. Crosby is coming after you.
Why, that's absurd.
What is it?
Hello.
Oh, Charlie,
what is it?
Well, it's...
Miss Lu, aren't you
through in here?
Yes.
Well...

Joyce, you'd better
lock your door tonight.

Why?

Oh, just to be
on the safe side.

Perhaps I'd better
sleep in the library.

Oh. Why should
you do that?

In case you need me.

Why should I need you?

I don't know.

You might get nervous
or something.

What about? Everyone seems
to be acting so strangely,
I'm beginning to think
I'm losing my mind.

Well, anyway,
if you want me, call.

Thanks.

Oh, and, Joyce, don't
forget your promise to...

See you tomorrow.

Oh.

Don't worry
about a thing.

You don't have to
lock it, I'm here.

No, I'm rather glad
you are here, Wally.

Oh, really?

Yeah, it's nice seeing each other
again like this after all these years.

Mmm-hmm.

How you feeling?

Oh, I'm all right.

I'd feel better if they'd find Mr. Crosby.

Wally, tell me,
what's going on?

What are you
all driving at?

Oh, I don't know.

I don't know.

But whatever it is,
I just want to tell you
that I'll protect you.
There isn't anything living
that I'm afraid of, hardly.
Oh! It's only
the clock.
Oh.
Oh, I thought
my time had come.
I'm awfully sorry. I guess
this house is getting me.
Now what was I saying? Oh, yes.
I'm not afraid of...
You know I'm lying,
don't you?
I'm scared stiff.
But I'm always
like that.
I'm always nervous just
before I go into action,
so scared or not, you're
gonna get protected.
You always did fight for
me, didn't you, Wally?
Even back there
in Wickford.
Remember when you used to
carry my books to school?
Yeah, what a
racket that was.
Yes, and the time Big
Jim Daley pulled my hair
and you flew at him and
what a terrible beating...
He gave me.
I'll never forget it.
Seems I always got licked fighting for you.
Well, maybe
it was worth it.
Cicily!
Oh, listen, Joyce, if there's a
rumpus or anything, don't come out.
You just sit tight and yell like the devil.

Well, what
will you do?
Why, I'll...
I'll run and get help.
Don't worry.
I don't worry
when you're around, Wally.
Oh, really?
Mmm-hmm.
Thanks. Good night.
Good night.
Good night.
It just makes my heart ache to see her.
I'm afraid she's
beginning to break.
Who, Aunt Sue?
Joyce.
All she needs
is one more shock.
A remark like that
wouldn't sound very well,
in case you happened to be the second heir.
If Cyrus hadn't been utterly incompetent,
I'd have been
the first heir.
What's that?
Mr. Crosby?
No, sir. This is
Hendricks, from the asylum.
Can I be of any
service to you?
I thought
you'd gone.
I can't
leave, ma'am,
till my men come back for me with the boat.
Oh. Well, have you
seen Mr. Crosby?
He's the grey-haired gentleman
you were talking to a while ago.
No,
I haven't.
He disappeared.
He couldn't have gone far,

unless he went swimming.

Would you mind looking
about the grounds for him?

It'll be a
pleasure, ma'am.

Thank you
so much.

Well, if you need me,
just call.

My room is
right up there.

Thanks, Fred. I guess
I'll be pretty safe tonight
with all the men
guarding me.

Charlie just told
me the same thing.

So he was here.

Leave it to him to
get anywhere first.

Shh!

I wouldn't do that if
I were you, beautiful.

Do what?

Entertain any more people
in your room tonight.

I won't.

Have you read
the letter?

No, I haven't.

Wally, come in
here a minute.

"You will open this
envelope tonight in my room,
"where you are
to sleep."

Don't do it.

Why not?

I don't know. My Aunt Minnie brought me up
to always bite
half dollars.

Look, Miss Lu says that

Mr. Norman gave this to her.

But how do we

know he did?
Maybe Miss Lu
is in cahoots
with someone who wants to know
exactly where he can find you tonight,
while you're alone.
But who would
that be?
Well, the person whose name is
in the envelope that Crosby has.
Whoever it is
would become the heir,
in case you were
out of the way.
Wally, that's a
horrible thought.
Yes, it is,
isn't it?
I got goose pimples.
Even my goose pimples
have goose pimples.
Let's get a gulp
of fresh air.
I'll bet there hasn't
been any fresh air
in this house
for a long time.
There. That's better.
Yes.
Oh, you're going to...
I thought I would as long as you're here.
"To my unknown heir,
man or woman,
"because I can take no
earthly possessions with me
"I am compelled to
leave them to you.
"Your hour
will come, too."
"In your brief
span of life,
"enjoy the glittering symbols of
the world, which I now renounce."
Ooh, that gives

me the creeps.

Here's a verse. It's
a little more cheerful.

"Find the number
beneath the vine.

"The sparkling gems
will then be thine.

"O love, what number rhymes with mine?"
It's a silly
little verse.

Yeah.

Say, Wally, it's the key to the necklace.

Yeah.

"What number
rhymes with mine?"

Well, it ain't 10.

Nine. "Beneath the vine."

That must be outdoors
in the garden.

Why does he
say "o love"?

What does love
have to do with it?

Love, affection, Venus,
the goddess of love.

Say, is there
a statue of Venus
around this joint anywhere? I don't know.

Wait.

Look.

The fountain.

Cupid. Sure. Venus' little problem child.

Let's go.

Let me get my jacket.

Wally.

Hmm?

Look.

How funny.

How comforting.

Come on.

Which way?

Up there at the
end of the hall.

Shh.

There's someone in
Mr. Crosby's room.
Maybe it's
Mr. Crosby.
What are you
doing in there?
Waiting.
What's she
waiting for?
Certainly will be glad to get
out of this terrible house.
Well, here's love.
The vine. The vine.
Beneath the vine.
Yes, the vine.
Do you suppose we have
to dig it up by the roots?
I don't see
any number nine.
Look, look, the knobs.
Yeah. Maybe he meant the ninth knob.
Where do they start? I don't know.
One, two, three,
four, five...
Six, seven,
eight, nine.
Wait a minute. Here's one that's loose.
Now that we got it, what
are we going to do with it?
I don't know.
Turn it, pull it.
Nothing happens.
Well, Uncle Cyrus
was left-handed.
Would that make any difference? No.
Well, maybe.
No, I guess the old boy was kidding.
It's no good.
Oh, dear.
Hey, look.
Say...
What's the matter?
Something soft.
Here, I'll get it.

No, I... Let me.
Say...
Wow!
I bet there's a catch
in this somewhere.
Oh, Wally!
Say, wouldn't it be a good
idea to put it back in there
where it'll be safe
until daylight?
Well, I don't know... No, I
think it'll be safer with me.
Come on, let's go.
Isn't it terrific?
Terrific.
Thanks for
everything, Wally.
Uh, say, if you're gonna sleep
with those pebbles tonight,
you'd better
take the gun.
You used to be quite a
shot with an air rifle.
Remember the time
you shot the hole
in old Scrooge's
silk hat?
I haven't fired
a gun since...
Did you know
this was empty?
Empty?
How do you
like that?
Hey, wait a minute, I
was out there all alone.
Never in my...
Oh. I guess I'm beginning to see things.
What is the matter?
I don't know, only...
I guess, I think.
What's that?
Think nothing of it.
Now, what were

you saying?
Keep talking.
It wasn't important.
It was only that I think
every woman is happier
when she has
a lot of...
Oh, be careful.
A cat.
Of all the ridiculous
things I ever saw in my life.
You with the chair,
creeping up to the window.
Wham! And a cat.
Take it easy.
Joyce! Joyce!
Aunt Sue is
loose again.
Joyce! Joyce, are you there? Open up.
Yes. In a minute.
Come on.
Wait. My mother brought me
up never to be caught twice
in the same
lady's bedroom.
Joyce!
Joyce,
what happened?
Just a minute.
Open the
door, Joyce.
Are you all right? Oh, yes, I am all right.
It was so silly.
What?
I wanted to get a breath of
fresh air and the window stuck.
I broke it just as I was trying to open it.
Oh, is that all? How did you get the...
But then I got all tangled up
in the curtain with the cat.
The cat. Miss Lu, will
you please take your cat?
Now I promise to
go straight to bed

and I won't disturb you any more.
Well, that window is barred,
so I guess it's all right.
Good night.
Oh, wait for me, Fred. Good night, dear.
Good night.
Did you say the
window stuck?
Yes, it stuck.
Okay.
Wally. Wally!
Come in.
Pretty good, huh?
Ouch!
Riding boots.
I suppose your Aunt Minnie
taught you that cute trick.
No, I got that one
from her boyfriend.
Oh, I'm sorry.
Well, I guess
I'll run along.
Do you want me to
lock the shutters?
No. Just don't make
any more noise.
Oh. Well, good night.
The road's clear. Be sure
and lock the door after me.
Don't worry,
I will.
Good night, beautiful.
I didn't mean
to be cross.
I'm getting so nervous, I could holler.
Would you like something to
quiet you? A sleeping powder?
No, thanks. I have one in my bag.
Well, how about
letting me have it?
Good night, Wally.
Never mind the powder.
Who wants to sleep?
Open! Please!

Please, Wally!
Joyce, open up.
Open the door.
Haven't you got
another key?
It's locked on the inside. What's happened?
We don't know.
She's alive,
thank heaven.
Miss Lu, get
a little brandy.
Please help! Please, oh,
please! Help me! Wally!
What happened, baby?
I don't know. My eyes were closed.
It was a hand! It came from the dark.
I felt it.
For heaven's sake, do try to be coherent!
Well, it touched me!
The necklace.
It's gone.
What necklace?
Well, the necklace.
Wally and I, we found it in the garden.
Hanging from a
tree, I suppose.
It's true,
we did find it.
But it's gone.
The hand took it.
Hand. What hand?
Oh, I don't know.
Just a hand.
It came out
of the wall.
Oh. We'd better
send for a doctor.
An alienist
would be better.
The poor child's gone stark staring mad.
Shut up.
Every one of you thinks
just the same as I do,
that Joyce has

lost her mind.
But I haven't.
You must believe me.
How can we, Joyce?
After all, when someone starts concocting
a story about a hand
coming out of a wall...
You can't...
You don't really
think that I...
Susan's right.
Every one of you feels exactly
as she feels about me, only...
Only they haven't got
the courage to say it.
I don't.
I know you
don't, Wally.
I've been through enough
tonight to drive anyone mad.
But I'm not.
Now listen.
Wally and I found the necklace
that Cyrus left me in the garden.
Then he said good night to
me and I got ready for bed.
Someone was watching me. I know that now.
Someone who was trying to frighten me.
Then...
Just as I was
falling asleep,
I felt somebody
in the room.
I opened
my eyes,
a long claw-like hand
came out of the wall!
And it came nearer and nearer to me...
I couldn't move
and it touched me.
Very sad.
You'd all like to prove that
Joyce is crazy, wouldn't you?
Because that would give you another

chance at old Norman's dough.
That's pretty rotten talk, Wally.
Well, that's the way I feel.
Personally,
I believe Joyce.
You believe that
fantastic story?
Haven't you clucks ever heard
of secret passageways and panels?
Panels.
Well, how else could
the hand that Joyce saw
come through
the wall?
Let's see this.
It came from
right there, Wally.
Well, there's
nothing here.
Wait a minute.
This is loose.
Hey, what's this?
Listen, baby,
don't be surprised
if we discover an
old skeleton in here.
Crosby.
He's dead.
What a terrible thing.
Poor Mr. Crosby.
It might just as well
have been any one of us.
Can you imagine
being in bed
with a hand reaching for your throat?
Quiet! Where's Joyce?
Miss Lu and Wally took
her into the dining room.
The poor kid. What she's been through.
Isn't anybody going to do something?
Well, if you mean isn't anybody
going into that dark passage
to argue with a maniac, the answer is no.
You know, I doubt very

much that it was a maniac.
Whoever it was in that secret
passage acted quite sanely.
That's right.
What would a lunatic
want with a necklace?
Don't ask me.
You've got to be loony
to answer that question.
Just what's in
your mind, Fred?
Well, I...
Wait a minute.
If somebody's trying to
drive Joyce out of her mind,
it's no
impromptu affair.
Well, one of our little family
party has called the turn
on everything that's happened here tonight.
Uh-huh,
Wally Campbell.
That's a lot
of hooey.
Yeah? Don't
you remember
he wanted to bet you that
Joyce would be the heir?
Yeah.
Well, he was with Joyce when
she located the necklace.
But he wasn't with her when it was taken.
And he knew
where to find
that secret panel
in the wall, too.
If you're hinting that Wally
Campbell murdered Mr. Crosby,
I don't
believe it!
Neither do I.
Oh, darling,
are you better?
Yes, I'm all right but

what were you saying?
Go on. I want
to hear it.
Well, I was just...
Go ahead, Fred.
I'm just saying,
suppose Wally knew
that his name was in that second
envelope. As the alternate heir?
Well, that's ridiculous. How could he know?
How could anyone?
Someone knew.
Both envelopes
had been opened
before Lawyer Crosby
got here tonight.
Now I know what happened to Crosby.
There must be
an entrance
to that secret passageway from this room.
What?
Yeah.
Crosby knew the danger Joyce was in,
and while he was
warning her...
Somebody pulled him in behind
the panel and strangled him.
The explanation
is so obvious
to anyone with
an ounce of brains.
You don't have to get insulting about it.
It was a
pleasure.
Maybe you and I had better
finish this conversation outside.
All right. Fine.
Hey, now. Cut it.
Listen, you gave Wally plenty of reason
for any crack he could
think of. Now cool off!
A fight won't prove who killed Crosby.
That's the important
thing right now.

There's that clock.
It isn't
the clock.
Oh.
Five.
Six.
The warning
has come again.
Oh.
Nothing can
stop it.
Oh.
Last time that gong rang, Mr. Crosby...
All right, take
it easy, Cicily.
I'm going
to my room.
If Charlie will walk
upstairs with me.
Certainly.
And we'll be glad to have you,
Joyce, if you care to join us.
Thanks.
Listen, everybody, until
we can notify the police,
nobody, under
any circumstances,
is to go into that room
where Mr. Crosby is.
Who wants to?
Whether you want to or not, that's the law.
Meanwhile, I'll try to find Hendricks
and send him
for the police.
You know this whole thing
has a phony ring to me.
A killer who thinks he's a cat.
Have you ever seen a man who
looked and acted like a cat?
A woman, yes.
But a man...
Anyway, how do we know a
lunatic escaped from an asylum?
Well, the guard,

Hendricks.
Yeah, but how do you know he is a guard?
Just because he wears a cap and a badge?
You can rent them
at any costumers.
All right. But why?
To frighten you out of
your beautiful wits, baby.
Yes. But why
should he?
Why should he?
I don't know.
I wish I knew who
that next heir is.
Maybe it's a woman.
Let's see. What
women have we?
There's Miss Lu.
Miss Lu,
how about her?
She must know a lot
about that secret panel.
Why has she lived here all these years
if she didn't
expect to...
What's the matter?
I'm going into
that bedroom
and get that envelope
out of Crosby's pocket.
The name of the second
heir is in that envelope,
and the name of the second heir
is the name of the murderer.
Oh, if it turns out to be
my name, I'm only kidding.
Wally, please
don't go in there.
Suppose we've
been overheard?
Suppose the murderer knows
you're on the right track?
What good would
an empty gun be?

But it isn't empty now.
I found the bullets.
Where?
In Miss Lu's
room. Here.
You keep it. Well...
Well, legs,
let's get going.
Oh, Wally, how
can you joke?
I always joke
when I'm scared.
I kind of kid myself
into being brave.
Ain't that silly?
Uh-huh.
Oh, easy,
baby, easy.
I remember a situation
almost like this
in an old play
called The Fatal Hour,
or She Should've
Known Better.
At the end of
the second act,
the leading man takes
the heroine in his arms
and kisses her.
Then, filled
with new courage,
he starts out
after the villain.
And of course, he comes
back in the third act?
Oh, sure.
No, in the third act he's
found dead in the bathtub.
Oh, well, that
was just a play.
I'll leave
the door open.
Say, if anybody comes down, don't
let them know what I'm doing.

Wally!
Wally, what
is it? Wally!
Somebody please! Wally.
What's happened now?
I don't know.
I don't know. Look, is he badly hurt?
He's got a
swell bump.
It's hard to say whether somebody hit him
or whether it
came from a fall.
What was he
doing in here?
He came to get the... To get my jacket.
Charlie?
Hmm?
It's gone.
What?
Crosby's gone.
Oh.
Who could've done
such a thing?
The one who
killed him.
The law can't convict you of
murder if there's no corpse.
Help me up.
Who did it?
I haven't the smokiest idea. I was just...
What became
of Crosby?
Are you sure
you don't know?
I'm not sure
of anything.
Just when I get the
whole thing figured out,
it goes and gets itself
all balled up again.
We saw Crosby fall to the floor, didn't we?
Yes. He was dead, wasn't he?
Yes.
Uh-huh.

Ah-ha!

What is it, Wally,

what is it?

How do we know

he was dead?

He was,

wasn't he?

Well, I suppose he was,

but that doesn't prove it.

I couldn't swear he was

dead, neither could you.

Could you? What are you getting at?

Maybe the whole thing was only a plant.

Maybe he was faking all

the time to frighten you

and waiting in there to wallop me.

Oh, no, Wally.

No. You don't think

much of that?

No.

Neither do I.

Oh, Charlie, did you find Hendricks?

Yes. He said the police can't

reach here until morning.

He's still waiting

for his own men.

They're lost somewhere in the bayou.

The telephone.

Either you don't know the

nearest telephone is 20 miles away

or else you should know more about

this thing than is good for you.

Who? Me?

Same place.

Why don't they

have a telephone?

People going around here

bopping each other on the head,

they need

a phone.

What is it?

Nothing, I just wanted to

make sure you were all right.

Thank you, Charlie.

I can't stand
another minute.
Oh, that's just what
they're hoping for, honey.
But you can take it. Come
on, roll with the punches.
Let's go over here by the
fireplace and relax. There.
You know,
what this party needs
is more drinks
and more laughs.
I'll tell you.
I'll bring a bottle of
Scotch from the dining room
and we'll sit around here and
drink Scotch and make wry faces.
You get it?
Scotch and rye?
Here. I don't need a
gun with jokes like that.
Look, you play Jesse James
and I'll play, well...
Well, I'll play like I'm
getting a bottle of Scotch.
Come on, relax.
All right.
Whoever it is,
speak or I'll fire.
Speak or I'll fire.
I knew it. Joyce!
Joyce!
Joyce, look here.
Wally?
Wally, where are you?
Wally?
Wally!
Joyce, I found it,
the clue. I...
Joyce.
Joyce!
Joyce!
No, you don't.
One killing

is enough.
Bringing guns and
scaring women's one thing,
murder's something else.
I'm all washed up.
Where's that necklace?
That's all I want
out of this.
Joyce!
I wouldn't do that if I were you, Charlie.
Charlie!
Don't move.
You robbed me
of my inheritance.
I was the old
man's favorite.
I should have
been his heir.
I am the
next heir.
Stop.
I've waited 10
years for this.
You poisoned old man
Norman's mind against me.
I've always
hated you.
And now
I've got you.
Don't come
any closer.
Don't take
another step.
Joyce! Joyce!
Wally!
Where are you, Joyce?
Joyce, are you
all right?
Yeah, she's
all right.
Oh, boy. Some fun.
Hold it. Miss Norman, tell me...
Oh, don't ask me
questions, boys.

Wally, Mr. Campbell
here, is the real hero.
Mr. Campbell, what was the clue you found?
Hold it.
You'll get a better picture of
me from a front angle, Rembrandt.
I knew all the time that whoever
killed Crosby was the second heir.
And you found the
second envelope?
I found it in the coat that
was covering Crosby's body
in the secret passage.
It was Wilder's coat.
Say, you better get
a couple of shots
of Miss Norman
and me together.
You're liable to need them very soon
for your page
of social events.
Yeah?
Congratulations.
How did you know... Do you
intend to live in your house,
Miss Norman?
No, it's
Miss Lu's now.
I'm giving
it to her.
How did you know the
Cat was Charlie Wilder?
Well, I found something earlier in
the night on the floor in the hallway.
What,
a weapon?
Patience.
You know,
I always suspected that the
Cat was wearing a make-up.
As an actor I've often used sponge rubber
in putting on a
character make-up.
So, gentlemen, when I found

this piece of sponge rubber...
Sponge rubber?
Have you got it?
Let me get a picture of it. Of course,
my good man.
Shove off.
There they go.
Why don't we get started?
Bye.
Goodbye, Joyce.
Bye, Wally.
Goodbye. Bye.
Wally. This rubber, it must
have fallen out of my coat.
It's the eraser I use
when I'm sketching.
What was that?
What did you say?
Oh, that's funny. She says
that's the eraser she...
Huh? What?