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The Thin Man Goes Home

By Robert Riskin

What about Asta? He'll have to go in
the baggage car, won't he?
Why should he have
any special privileges?
- He'll ride with us and like it.
- But those are the rules, aren't they?
Well, we'll camouflage him
under your coat.
Out of sight, out of mind.
It's a cinch.
Two to Sycamore Springs, please.
- Nick. Asta. Catch him.
- Here, you get them. Asta.
Asta. Asta.
Excuse me.
Asta.
All right, come on.
Here, here, what's going on?
Nick Charles.
- Hi, Clancy.
- Nick, I'm surprised at you.
I thought you could handle the stuff.
- I tripped. I was chasing my dog.
- Oh, sure.
Clancy, I've had nothing
but a swig of cider all day.
- Nicky, are you hurt?
- I think he hurt his head, Mrs. Charles.
- He's saying he's only been drinking cider.
- And it's true.
He's going down to visit his folks,
they don't like drinking.
Now, let's get down to the train
and get comfortable.
- Camouflage, you know.
- Oh, yes.
Thanks, Clancy.
Pardon me.
It's cozy, isn't it?
That's French for "bottoms up."
- Tickets, please.
- Nicky...
...do you really like cider?
Like it? I love it. Why, just the pure,

natural juice of the apple.

- What could be better, for instance?

- A dry martini, for instance.

That horrible stuff. Almost took
the lining off my stomach.

Why do you care? It didn't show.

- Good gracious!

- What's the matter?

- Nicky.

- Blockbuster.

Upsy-daisy.

- Tickets, please.

- You know, mammy, I don't think...

...you're taking this reform movement
of mine very seriously.

Not very.

You just wait. A couple of weeks
on this cider, and I'll be a new man.

Well, I sort of liked the old one.

That's the nicest thing
you've said to me...

...since I got my head caught
in that cuspidor at the Waldorf.

That wasn't the Waldorf.

That was the Astor.

- Asta?

- Astor.

All animals must go in the baggage car.

That's not an animal,
that's my fur coat.

If it can wag its tail,
it goes in the baggage car.

So it was going to be a cinch, eh?

Very well.

Credit me with an error.

Hey. Hey, mister.

When you pass the kitchen
will you ask the chef to warm this up?

I don't dance, bub.

Body temperature.

Good grief. Are you on milk now?

I'm warming this up for a friend.

I beg your pardon.

Why, if it isn't Nick Charles.

Where did you drop in from?

You sure are a sight for sore eyes.

- Hi, Brogan.

- Cut off my legs and call me Shorty.

- Small world, ain't it?

- Ain't it?

- Ain't it. Where you going?

- We're off on a little vacation.

- Sycamore Springs.

- I get it. I get it. I'll play dummy.

You're on the wrong horse, Brogan.

This is Mrs. Charles.

Oh, sure, sure.

How do you do, Mrs. Charles?

- What are you doing these days?

- Traveling in postcards.

- Pardon?

- Postcards. Postcards. Seasonal greetings.

Say, I cover Sycamore Springs.

I'll look you up on the way back.

That will be nice.

- Well, so long.

- So long.

Nick, how am I doing?

Swell. But stick close to me
in Sycamore Springs.

Right. How's my postcard chatter?

All right. But look, don't those greeting
cards have some poems or mottoes?

- I think so.

- Yeah.

- Memorize a few.

- You mean, like:

Roses are red, violets are blue

A happy birthday's what I'm wishing you

Yes, that's it. Roughly.

I get it.

"Willa Wanna."

Desdemona, Minnetonka, Nipiwana.

How far is that baggage car anyway?

Oh, I imagine it's somewhere between

Pocahontas and Sitting Bull.

Well.

- Any suggestions?

- Make like an eel, mama.

More people.

Oh, I'm sorry.

Oh, my cigar.

- And that was my last one too.

- Excuse me.

- Would you please let me pass?

- Why should I?

Well. How'd you like to be married
to that type?

Oh, excuse me.

- My word.

- I'm so sorry.

Why don't you look where you're going?

Darling, are you sure you're rubbing
these people the right way?

The blockbuster.

- What the...?

- It was him.

That was my foot!

My foot!

- Will you please let us through?

- Well!

Oh, certainly.

Make way for this lady
and her baby.

Make way, she wants
to get to the dining car.

Make way for the mother. Follow me.

Bad strategy, Asta.

You forgot to protect your rear flank.

Nicky.

I still don't understand what
gave you this sudden desire...

...to go back to Sycamore Springs
after all these years.

Well, it'll make a nice vacation,
won't it?

A chance to see Mother, Dad.

I'll bet they're anxious to see you,
and not just the family.

Whole town will probably turn out.

After all,

you are the local boy who made good.

Now, darling, come, come.
Oh, don't be so modest, Nicky.
Won't it feel good to get a pat
on the back from your old man?
A pat on the back?
What would I do with it?
Don't kid me. If your father
gave you a pat on the back...
...you'd pop your vest buttons
all over the parlor rug.
You just don't know my vest buttons.
Look.
Darling, see it?
The old windmill.
It's still there.
When I was a little punk,
that was my secret hideaway.
Good heavens. What secrets were you
hiding in those days?
Corn silk, detective stories and... Look.
Right there was
the little old schoolhouse.
Once on Halloween,
I burned it down slightly.
That must have handed
your father a big laugh.
Yes, he just roared all the way
to the woodshed with me.
Nicky...
...you never got along,
you and your father, did you?
Never got along? I wonder whatever
gave you that impression.
Oh, he's never come
to see us in New York.
Well, he's pretty busy, you know.
Of course, there is one other little thing.
- He thinks I play too hard.
- Indeed?
And drink too hard.
Wonder whatever
gave him that impression.
Sycamore Springs. This is you, folks.
Well. We're very much obliged to you.

- Buy yourself a little smoke.

- Thanks, but...

- Compliments of the pup.

- Spitz?

No, just growls.

That's funny.

- Wonder if they got my letter.

- Of course they did.

There's your reception committee.

It's Crazy Mary.

She's a town character.

- Hello, Mary. Remember me?

- Yes. Nick Charles.

Yes, that's right. Darling, this is Mary.

- Hello, Mary.

- My wife.

Poor woman. Where's the baby?

I heard you had a baby.

- All aboard!

- Baby.

Baby. Baby.

What's he gonna do now?

I don't know.

Desdemona.

That's Crazy Nick.

He was always like that.

Asta. No.

Let's surprise them, huh, sweet?

- It's a surprise.

- The doctor isn't in.

- No?

- But you can go to Dr. Clayworth.

He's just down the street.

- Is Mrs. Charles in?

- She's in the kitchen.

- What's cooking, Ma?

- Oh, just making a little tea.

- Nick. Nick, my darling!

- Hiya, Ma.

Oh, how wonderful that

you could get here for your birthday.

- Wasn't it?

- Nora.

- Hello, dear.

- Darling.

What a lovely suit. Why didn't you tell me you were coming?

- Didn't Dad get my letter?

- Why, no.

He didn't say anything to me about it.

Wait a moment. That's what he must have meant...

...when he said there'd be two extra for dinner.

Oh, your father. Where's Junior?

We didn't wanna take him out of school.

He's in kindergarten, loves it.

Oh, he must be simply huge by now.

Hello, Asta. Oh, I'm so excited.

Come along, I'll get you two settled.

You know something...

...I believe the plan is going through.

- For the hospital?

- Yes. Isn't it wonderful?

Nora, they're going to build a hospital for the doctor...

...with a laboratory for research work. Something he's dreamed of all his life.

Why, good heavens, Hilda.

What are you doing there?

Take the bags upstairs.

- Are you all right?

- Why, of course I'm all right.

This is my son, the famous detective.

What is the matter with you, Hilda?

Detective?

- This is all your fault.

- Mine?

It behaves like this when there's excitement in the house.

You mean that this table hasn't been fixed yet?

If you wanna make yourself useful, fix it.

- There's a screwdriver in the kitchen.

- I don't need one.

I've got a gadget in my pocket

that'll do anything...
...from manicuring to safe-cracking.
- Safe-cracking. Nicky.
Now, how did this get in here?
Come along, help me with the tea.
And take off your pretty hat.
Just a little elbow grease.
There we are.
Now...
That's the last time
that'll ever come down.
- Well, doctor.
- Oh, Nora, dear.
Sorry I missed you at the station.
That's all right.
I managed to get him here.
Yes, so I see.
- Hiya, Pop.
- Hello, son. Well...
...let's get him on his feet.
- Come on. Up you come.
- You know, I was just fixing this table.
Yes, I know. And I suppose
that's furniture polish?
- That, Dad, is cider. Taste it.
- I don't have to. I believe you.
- One swallow.
- Lf you say it's cider, it's cider.
- Please, Dr. Charles.
- Oh, well.
Why, Nick. This is cider.
What a dinner. What a dinner.
Ma, I'm glad to see that you still have
that same old magic touch with the skillet.
- It was delicious, Mother.
- Just sort of thrown together.
Sure, just thrown together.
She's been over that stove for hours.
Oh, now don't pay any attention
to him, Nick.
Hilda, bring the coffee in here.
Dad, that certainly is fine news
about the hospital.
Yes. Sam Ronson's going to make

a recommendation...

...at the next meeting of the board.

And a recommendation from him

is as good as an order.

- Who's Sam Ronson?

- The town banker.

He has a hand in everything here.

I suppose he's what you'd call a typhoon.

Don't you mean "tycoon," Mother?

Typhoon is a sort of big wind.

Well, that's Sam Ronson.

Nick, tell us something

about your work in New York.

Yes, Nick, do.

Have you gone to work?

What are you doing?

Oh, same old thing.

So you're still a policeman.

Well, I'd hardly put it that way.

- No? How would you put it?

- I'd say that Nick was more of a genius.

My Nick?

You see, Nick doesn't actually work
with the police.

In fact, people call on him who think
he's better than the police.

He's paid very large fees because his
work is important. Extremely important.

My dear Nora, I didn't say
it wasn't important.

You implied that you

didn't think it was very important.

You gave the impression you thought that
Nick walked the streets swinging a club.

- If I gave that impression, I'm sorry.

- Oh, sure. A very handsome apology.

If Nick thinks it's important to be
a policeman...

...that's all that matters, I suppose.

- But you don't know what he does.

- Darling.

Why don't you pop out to the kitchen
and speed up the coffee?

Some cases Nick solved were

considered absolutely impossible.

Darling, let me show you the view
from the front porch.

- It's beautiful in the moonlight.

- The Wynant murder?

Or the Fingers O'Toole case?

The slaughterhouse mystery?

Or take Stinky Davis.

- Stinky Davis?

- Stinky Davis?

The Stinky Davis case illustrates
what I mean about Nick.

Yes, I'm sure it does, Nora.

Do you still take two lumps in your
Stinky...? I mean, in your coffee?

Just imagine:

strangulation, no fingerprints, no clues.

- The police were baffled.

- Of course.

All they had were four bodies.

What did they do?

They dumped the whole thing
in Nick's lap.

I see.

Nobody suspected Stinky,
because he'd been a cripple...

...since nitro went off while he was
cracking a canister in Salt Lake.

Everybody thought it was Rainbow Benny.

But Nick knew...

...that Rainbow was an expert with
the shiv. Strangling was out of his line.

Smart Nick. They turned the heat
on Slasher Martin...

...who ran a dice joint in Chinatown.

Slasher had an alibi with Squinty Burke
and Studsy Green. That took care of him.

But all the time Nick was certain
that Stinky Davis was the killer.

Why? Because he had him
pegged right away...

...for a two-timing, double-crossing rat.

Would the police listen to Nick? No.

They told him it was a hophead theory.
Wild as loco buttons...
...because Stinky was a cripple
and couldn't navigate.
Nick got the brushoff
from the police.
They coldshouldered him out.
But did that stop him?
No, sir. He knew the case was hot...
...and he was set to cook
on the front burner.
He said, "Stinky, you're the two-timing,
double-crossing rat...
...who strangled Knobs McClure,
Greasy Joe...
...and Horse-faced Dan
and Denver Mike."
And then he turned his back on Stinky.
And the trick worked.
Stinky got up out of his wheelchair
and tried to strangle Nick...
...with a wire he'd hidden in his mouth.
But just in time, Nick turned around,
gave him the old one-two...
...and knocked Stinky colder
than an ice flounder.
Stinky wasn't a cripple at all. He was
just using it to cover up his crimes. Now...
...what do you think of that?
- Well, if Nick suspected...
...that Stinky wasn't a cripple, why
didn't he have him examined by a doctor?
The whole thing's so silly.
Dr. Charles...
...you are impossible.
Now, you see. You've upset her.
Spirited little thing, isn't she?
Well, you know how women are.
No, how are they?
Mother, come here.
Isn't he beautiful?
Mother, what's wrong between
Nick and his father?
- Hasn't Nick ever told you?

- No, he's seldom talked about it.

It seems silly, but the
doctor had his heart set...
...on Nick becoming a doctor
so they could work together.

That's how the whole idea
for the hospital started.

- But Nick had a mind of his own.

- And became a policeman.

Yes, that's about it.

I wish he could do something to
impress his father while he's here.

Is there any crime in Sycamore Springs?

Gracious, no. The only excitement we ever
had was a runaway horse last Christmas.

There's nothing Nick wants more
than a pat on the back from his father.

- Lf he got that, he'd pop a button.

- Did he admit that?

No. You know Nicky.

We were married three years
before he told me he loved me.

Well, if you're looking for crime
in Sycamore Springs...

...you'll have to commit it yourself.

- I wonder.

Nicky always says that there's a skeleton
in nearly every closet.

If you rattle it hard enough,
something always happens.

But would Nick like it if you went
around rattling people's skeletons?

Oh, he'd be furious.

But if some crime did break,
it would be a wonderful chance for him...

...to show his father
what a great detective he is.

Studying hard, junior?

Oh, hi.

Guess I must have dropped off.

- Would you like to lie here?

- No, no, stay where you are.

I don't want to disturb you while
you're working on your lessons.

I'll pull up one of these chairs.

- Can't I help you?

- No. You've made enough effort.

I was just thinking about a little gal by the name of Alice Brody.

We used to come out here on hot summer nights and play on her banjo.

The boys used to write their names on it.

She married a brewer from Milwaukee.

What did he play, the bull fiddle?

No, she was very fond of beer.

- You sure I can't help you with that?

- No.

No, you might get all sweaty and die.

Well, hello there.

Nick, you old son of a gun.

Why didn't you let me know you were in town?

- Oh, hello, Bruce.

- Hello, Nick.

Well, looks like the old days.

Yeah. Darling, meet an old schoolmate.

Bruce Clayworth. Mrs. Charles.

- How do you do?

- How do you do, Mrs. Char...?

Well, I'm certainly glad to meet you.

- Now I know the secret of Nick's success.

- Yes. If it weren't for her money...
...I probably would've had to go to work like you, Bruce.

What do you do, Mr. Clayworth?

I'm a small-town doctor.

Always will be, I guess.

Nick had the right idea. "Get where the money is, and it'll come to you."

- That's what he said.

- Did I say that?

Well, he was always the smart one anyway, Mrs. Charles.

What are you doing now?

You here on a case?

No. No. We're just visiting the folks.

Now, let's see something of you while you're in town.

- I've gotta run. I'm gonna have a baby.

- Drink milk.

Oh, not me. Down at the hosp...

He was always a clown, Mrs. Charles.

He used to put us in stitches.

- Goodbye.

- Goodbye.

Goodbye.

How would you like to put me in
stitches, papa?

Well, if it isn't little Nicholas Charles.

Old home week.

It's Mrs. Peavy, isn't it?

- Well, hello.

- You've grown.

Yes, in all directions.

You remember my nephew,

Willoughby?

- Oh, yes, of course. How are you?

- How do you do?

He seems to have grown too.

- And I suppose this is Mrs. Charles.

- Yes. I'm Mrs. Charles.

I'm so sorry. This is my old schoolteacher,
Miss Peavy. And Willoughby Peavy.

- How do you do?

- How do you do?

Willoughby is working
out at the plant now.

Are you in town on a case, Nicholas?

No, I'm just trying to get a little rest.

I daresay there's plenty of evil
in Sycamore Springs.

And it's your duty to ferret it out.

Well, I daresay.

Hew to the line. Let the chips
fall where they may.

Asta. Asta. Asta, no.

What a nasty little dog.

- Come along, Willoughby.

- Oh, don't hurry away.

I hope I see you again, Mrs. Charles.

Without your dog.

Darling, is that why you burned

the schoolhouse down?

Why did you shoot your mouth
off about me for?

Hush up. I just told them you
work at the plant.

I didn't tell them what you were doing.
Having trouble with that?

Very funny, I'm sure.

Children!

Hello, Mother.

I saw all those people stopping, Nicky.
You're getting to be
quite a public character.

Yes, I feel like a public something.

It's funny, they all assume
he's working on a case.

- Mind if I come in?

- Not at all, Laurabelle, come along.

- Don't be long.

- No.

- Who's this?

- It's Laurabelle Ronson.

She's the daughter of that typhoon
I was telling you about.

- You're Mrs. Charles, aren't you?

- Yes.

Oh, I knew it. I knew it when I saw you
from the car. I felt it here, inside.

- Laurabelle goes to dramatic school.

- Oh, I see.

- And this is your famous husband.

- Yes.

He looks all right when you get
him dressed up.

You're here on a mystery. A deep,
deep mystery in Sycamore Springs.

I feel it here, inside.

Well, I'm sorry to disagree
with your insides, Miss...?

Just call me Laurabelle.

But I'm really just here
for a little rest.

You must pardon Nick, Laurabelle. He's
been working hard in the city. He's tired.

Oh, yes, I know how these geniuses are.
All nerves.

But I realize you can't talk about it,
even if he is here on a case.

- No. No. We mustn't talk about it.

- In fact, we don't have to.

Everything is so frightfully
hush-hush these days. But I know.

And I think it's wonderful.

Good gracious.

Who's making that racket?

That's Tom Clayworth. I promised to drive
him to the train. He's leaving for Boston.

Has he got his discharge
from the Army yet?

Yes. Since he came back from the South
Seas, he's been as nervous as a cat.

- Poor boy.

- And so jealous.

Why, he won't even let
another man talk to me.

- I haven't said anything.

- I must take my leave now.

But we're going to see a lot
of each other. I'm sure. I feel it here.

- Inside?

- Yes.

And don't forget, Laurabelle,
we mustn't talk about it.

Oh, I understand, Mrs. Charles. And
your secret couldn't be in better hands.

It's all over town, Mrs. Charles,
that Mr. Charles is here on a case.

- If you could give me a little statement.

- I never discuss Mr. Charles' activities.

He happens to be out now.

But Mr. Charles is in town,

Mr. Charles is a detective...

...and you can draw
your own conclusions.

Thank you.

"In an interview with Mrs. Charles
by the Sycamore Springs Evening News...

...she raised an eyebrow and said,

'I never discuss Mr. Charles' activities...
...but you can draw
your own conclusions.'"
Now that's a lot of malarkey.
Why, I've known Nick Charles for years.
If there was anything going on in this
town, he'd be the first to let me know.
Look at that. Nick Charles is in town.
Paper says he's here on an investigation.
He's after us. We gotta get that painting
and get out of here.
The painting hasn't come in yet.
I was at Crumps this morning.
I can't understand that. Are you sure
you asked for the painting of the windmill?
Of course I'm sure.
- Well, then why...?
- Now, Edgar, calm down. We'll get it.
Well, I don't like that flatfoot
snooping around town.
- We'll go down there now.
- All right, all right.
Mister.
Oh, how do you do?
- How much is this?
- This?
Oh, you don't want this.
Oh, gracious me, no.
- But I do want it.
- No, no, I can't sell that.
That's by one of our local boys.
It just came in.
I have a standing offer
for all of his work.
- Some crazy woman thinks he's a genius.
- But I happen to like it.
That old windmill has a certain
sentimental association for my husband.
And I'd like to give it to him
for his birthday tomorrow.
How much does
the other woman pay you?
Fifty dollars. She buys all of his work.
- I'll give you 60.

- I beg your pardon?

I said, I'd give you \$60 for it.

But you'll never make money paying \$60 for a \$50 painting.

But I don't want to make any money.

My husband spent his whole youth in that windmill.

And he's sentimental about it.

Tomorrow is his birthday.

- Can't you understand that?

- Yes, but I promised her.

- She'd be awfully mad at me.

- Don't worry about that.

Yes, but I like to keep my promises if I can.

- Ten. Fifty.

- I wish I'd gone into some other business.

Sixty. There you are.

Oh, don't worry about that.

- Thank you. Good day.

- Good day. And happy birthday.

- Has it come in yet?

- Yes. Has what come in yet?

- The painting.

- Painting? Oh, I have a lot of paintings.

There's the Barefoot Boy,

The Stag at Dawn...

...and Waiting for the Robert E. Lee, all of them bad.

No, no. Don't you remember me?

I'm the woman who collects Bertons.

You were expecting another one in today.

Oh, that. Well, I just sold that.

Sold it. To whom?

To that woman who was just in here with a birthday.

You... You old fool.

I knew she'd be mad at me.

There goes your painting.

Well, somebody's going to pay plenty for that picture before we're through.

And it isn't going to be me.

- Oh, good evening, Willoughby.

- Mr. Charles.

You looking for clues?

No, I'm not. But my pup seems to have found something.

Yeah.

Well...

Come on, Asta. You've had enough botany for one night.

"I never discuss Mr. Charles' activities. You can draw your own conclusions."

There you are.

I thought you were never coming.

- Something happen?

- Nothing.

- I'm just glad to see you, that's all.

- Oh, well.

Has papa's little hunchy-punchy-bunchy been having a busy time?

- Well, l...

- We mustn't tire ourselves out, must we?

What have you got behind your back?

The paper. I couldn't find it.

Father, does the old woodshed still stand in its sheltered nook amongst the trees?

Yes, Nick.

And does the trusty razor strop still hang behind the door?

Oh, no, no. I use an electric razor now.

Well, necessity is the mother of invention.

Now, you're gonna get it where Nellie wore the beads.

No, Nick!

Not here in front of your parents!

- Stop it!

- "You can draw your own conclusions."

- Nicky!

- This'll teach you the power of the press.

A fine son you've brought up.

A wife beater.

A brave boy. I've wanted to do that to Mother for 40 years.

I dare you.

Who can that be?

Well, one way to find out.

- Are you Mr. Nick Charles?

- Yes.

I wonder if I could talk to you
for a few minutes.

You see, there's something
I've gotta get off my mind.

He's dead, Nick.

- Don't move him, Dad.

- No.

Is that you, Nick?

- Brogan?

- Yeah.

- Where are you?

- Here. Here in the bushes.

- Did you hear a shot?

- No.

- That's funny, neither did I.

- Why, something happen?

- Nicky, what is it?

- Darling, it's Mr. Brogan. You remember?

He was just coming to call on us.

What's he doing in the bushes?

Why, I...

- He was lighting a cigarette.

- Yeah.

Will you come up to the house with us?

A man has just been shot.

The bell rang. I opened the door.

He keeled over.

Mother, Dad, this is an old friend of mine.

Mr. Brogan.

How do you do, Mrs. Charles?

How do you do?

How do you do, sir?

Time and tide wait for no man.

Nick, you'd better

phone Bruce Clayworth.

He's the official coroner in this town.

He lives just down the street.

- Yes. What's his number?

- 148.

You know, doctor,

this is just typical of Nick.

Wherever he goes, you always

find bodies. It's just typical.

Is Dr. Clayworth there?

Just a moment.

- Dr. Clayworth.

- Yes?

- Phone for you.

- All right.

Thank you, Mrs. Hobby.

- Hello?

- Hello, Bruce. This is Nick Charles.

A man's just been shot over here.

- What? Well, who is it?

- I don't know. Will you notify the police?

Yeah, sure I will, Nick.

And I'll come right over too.

I'll be through here in just a minute.

Now, Nick, I don't want to seem
too personal.

But if you tell me you don't know anything
about this thing, all I can say is baloney.

Mac, it happened just as I said.

The bell rang, I went to the door, the boy
started to say something and was shot.

- Did you ever see him before?

- No.

His name's Peter Berton.

Yes, I know. I know that, Dr. Charles.

I was just telling you.

He lives at Tom's Auto Court.

I know that too. Just because
you've gotten used to me, Dr. Charles...

...doesn't mean I don't have a brain.

I can handle more than traffic.

Then handle it

and let's get it over with.

I'm not used to policemen
in my living room...

...or people messing around
in my laboratory.

- I like peace and quiet.

- Good for you. Tennyson says:

Peace shall pipe on her pastoral hill

A languid note and watch her harvest ripen

Thanksgiving.

Nick, did it occur to you somebody
might've been trying to shoot you...

...and hit the boy instead?

- Well, that's an angle.

He might have taken a shot at you
and missed.

And a miss is as good as a mile.

Mr. Brogan, if it isn't too much trouble...

...would you mind telling me

where you came from?

Why, I'm a friend of Nick's. Get it?

And I was just passing by. Get it?

- So I thought I'd just stop in.

- Get it?

Do you usually drop in the bushes?

Well, can't a fellow stop

to light a cigarette?

If Mr. Charles can be of any help

to you, Mr. MacGregor...

...I'm sure he'd be only too glad.

- No, I'm on a vacation.

Besides, you can't just barge in
on another man's case.

You could be called in as a specialist,
couldn't he, Father?

Of course a man could be called in
as a specialist. You told me so.

- Well, if I need any help, I'll ask for it.

- That's the right spirit.

The safety of this community
couldn't be in better hands.

- Who'd like some cider?

- Nick. Oh, Nick, here's the bullet.

I don't know about such things,
but I imagine it was fired from a.45...

...or something in that general field.

- Well, give it to Mac. It's his show.

- Thanks.

- I'll send this to a good ballistics expert.

- Nick's a good ballistics expert.

I'm a ballistics expert who's
on a vacation. Who'll have cider?

Very little water in mine.

- Is the cider in here?

- Yes, sir.

- Hilda?

- Yes, sir.

How about some glasses?

- Hilda?

- Yes, sir.

- Suppose you do the honors?

- Yes, sir.

- Thank you, sir.

- Yes, sir.

What's the idea? We ain't had a vacancy
in two months.

You have now. Peter Berton's just
been shot.

Peter Berton's been shot?

Number 19 with a bath and shower.

I want to ask a few questions
about him.

Know nothing about it.

Less you notice in this business, the better
it is. Mum's the word around here.

Mum's the word.

Well, I always said
something would happen to that boy.

Yeah? Why?

Bad-tempered and ornery.

He had a fight the other night.

- A fight, huh? With whom?

- Don't know the name.

The other fellow ended up
with two black eyes like a raccoon.

- What was the fight about?

- Can't say for sure.

But like as not it was
over that Laurabelle Ronson.

She was traipsing over here
all the time.

- I said, mum's the word.

- Mum's what word?

Yep?

Yep. Nope.

- Was that MacGregor?

- Yep.

- Is he on his way?

- Yep.

Okay. When he comes,

I'll be in number 19.

I hope you haven't touched anything
in there.

- Nope.

- We clean once a day. In the morning.

- You two had better stay here.

- Yes, sir.

And remember, mum's the word.

"Cubana Perfecto."

"Boston Children's Home."

Why don't you girls go to bed?

I'm worried. Something might have
happened to him.

Nonsense. Nick's old enough
to take care of himself.

To think that I fell for that cider routine.

He's probably got the case
half-solved by now.

But where can he be?

He's probably turning that auto camp
upside down.

It's possible he might
be turning a drink upside down.

Not on your tintype.

When Nick puts his mind on a thing,
he never makes a false step.

That's my boy.

Well, let's see, Asta.

Where shall we put it?

I really shouldn't give him
a birthday present at all.

Sneaking off like that, getting drunk...
...without me.

Running into an old sweetheart.

If all his old sweethearts
were laid end to end...

...I'd use them as a sidewalk.

But he's a pretty good guy.

He keeps us in dog biscuits.

I hope he likes it.

"Nora, darling, what a lovely surprise."

Darling, what time is it?

It's almost 11:

Oh, boy, I'm late
And I've got a date
Deep in the heart of Texas
I'll choose a tie
Then I must fly
Deep in the heart of Texas
Deep in the heart of Texas
Darling, where's my belt
with the gold buckle?
Buckle, buckle, who's got the buckle?
Buckle down, Winsocki
Buckle down, down, down
There it is, right in front of you.
Deep in the heart of Texas
Some detective.
Deep in the heart of Texas
Don 't tell my tomato
I got a date with a potato
Deep in the heart of Texas
Goodbye, mama
I'm off to Yokohama
Nicky. What is this sudden epidemic
of kisses for?
For my birthday, remember?
Deep in the heart of...
You know what that is?
Remember that old mill I pointed out to
you from the baggage car? Well, that's it.
What a pain in the neck
that turned out to be.
Full of snakes, skunks, poison ivy
and a truant officer.
Gives me the shudders
just to look at it.
How dear to my heart
Are the scenes of my childhood
Deep in the heart of Texas
- Hilda, take this out and burn it.
- Don't you like it?
No.
Can't say I blame you.
Hilda, what are you doing

with that picture?

Mrs. Charles told me to burn it.

Let me see.

Why, I think it's very pretty.

It's just the thing to give

to the bazaar at the hotel.

It's all right with me.

- I'll tell Miss Laurabelle you're here.

- Thank you.

Miss Laurabelle!

Miss Laurabelle!

- I hope I'm not disturbing you.

- Oh, it's all right.

You came to talk to me

about Peter Berton, didn't you?

Yes, and you're very brave to see me

at a time like this.

Oh, it doesn't matter.

People are born, people die, life goes on.

Poor Peter.

At least he has outsoared

The shadow of our night

Envy, pain and hate can touch him not

That's Shelley. I always turn to the poets

for comfort in all my sorrows.

Yeah, me too.

Now, about Peter.

I just wanted to ask you a few things

about his friends, his family.

He was alone. He had only me.

Well, he must have talked about

his family, though. His childhood?

He talked of nothing.

Our souls and spirits communed.

Words would have been empty.

Meaningless.

Yes, I can understand that.

- Cigarette, Mr. Charles?

- Thank you, no.

- A cigar?

- I've rather lost interest in cigars.

Father has some very good ones.

A special brand he keeps all for himself.

- A special brand?

- Yes. Won't you try one?

"Cubana Perfecto."

Well, yes, yes, this does interest me.

Thank you.

You and Peter saw quite a good deal of each other?

Yes. Fellow artists, you know.

That fight he got into recently must have been rather distressing to you.

- Fight?

- Yes.

- He gave somebody a pair of black eyes.

- I know absolutely nothing about that.

Is that so? Your father didn't approve of Peter, did he?

Poor Dad. So provincial, you know.

He just didn't understand.

Oh, I tried again and again to explain to him how platonic and beautiful it was.

But he just made scenes.

I thought he was gonna have a stroke or something. It was awful.

- You poor child.

- Oh, and it wasn't only Dad.

No one understood what Peter and I meant to each other.

Why, Tom Clayworth made such a fuss if I even...

Well, you wouldn't be interested in all that.

On the contrary. What about Tom?

Well, you know what an emotional type Tom is. And so jealous.

Why, if he heard I spoke to Peter, he'd hit the ceiling.

- Did he ever hit Peter?

- Oh, no.

- Were you afraid he might?

- Well, you see...

Oh, Mr. Charles, Tom had nothing to do with Peter's death. I know that.

But the last time you went out to see Peter...

...wasn't it to warn him that Tom

was jealous? Perhaps made threats?
You're quite wrong, Mr. Charles.
Was it to warn him against your father?
- My father?
- Yes, he didn't want you to see Peter.
He made violent scenes about it.
You told me so.
You... You tricked me
into telling you that!
Tricked you? Say, what do you think
this is, Miss Ronson, a parlor game?
A man has been murdered.
Your father threatened Peter, didn't he?
That isn't true. You must believe me.
I swear it!
- I believe you.
- No, you don't.
You're trying to trick me
into telling you more. I won't.
And I won't listen to your accusations.
Get out!
Go on, get out!
I'm sorry if I upset her, Mr. Ronson.
What do you want here?
I wanted to talk to Laurabelle
about Peter Berton.
- What about Peter Berton?
- Well, for one thing, he's dead.
And you think my daughter killed him?
Well, no, but I wanted to ask her
a few things about him.
Who his friends were...
...and who his enemies were.
Why did you object to him
seeing your daughter, Mr. Ronson?
- Who says I objected?
- Your daughter.
I'm not responsible
for what Laurabelle says.
She is a girl
with a very vivid imagination.
Why should I object to him?
That's what I would like to know.
Now look, Charles, I'm just as interested

in seeing justice done as you are.
But I think you ought to be careful.
I know that you don't want to hurt
innocent people.
You don't want to damage
good reputations needlessly.
That might be harmful to
the whole community. Your own family.
Your own father might have ambitions
and plans that could be ruined.
You mean my father's ambition
for a hospital might be blocked?
Just think that over, Charles.
Yes.
I will think it over, Mr. Ronson.
I will indeed.
And I'll also think over what you were
doing in Peter Berton's cabin...
...the day he was killed. Good day.
Well, hiya, Mac. Right on the job, I see.
Say, that was a dirty trick
changing those numbers.
I didn't find out I was in the wrong cabin
till this morning.
- That was just the Halloween in me.
- Well, this isn't Halloween.
- Say, I thought you were on a vacation.
- I just thought I'd help a bit.
Well, you didn't happen to run
into anything, did you?
- Are you keeping an eye on Crazy Mary?
- Why Crazy Mary?
Well, as I remember, she used to go
on the warpath at times, didn't she?
How does anybody get into her shack
to talk with her?
Nobody does, except Doc Clayworth.
Last time I tried I got conked
on the head with a coffeepot.
- No.
- Say, talking of the devil...
- Hello, Nick.
- Hiya, Bruce.
Hello, Mac. How are you?

I was telling Nick you're the one who could get him in to talk to Mary.

- Oh, sure, any time, Nick.

- Thanks. How did the autopsy come out?

We found that that bullet entered the boy's back...

...through the large rhomboid on the left...

...and was stopped by a sternocostal joint on the right.

- That tells us a lot, doesn't it?

- Yeah. Does it?

Well, Mac, keep pitching.

Bad ones. Always gave me his bad pictures to sell. Never his good ones.

Just higgledy-piggledy, that's what he was. Yes.

You know, artists are all like that.

They keep their good pictures and sell their bad ones.

It seems a good artist is just naturally higgledy-piggledy.

Maybe that's why he's a good artist.

Or maybe it's reversed.

How much did you usually get for his paintings?

Whose paintings?

The boy we're talking about.

Higgledy-piggledy.

Oh, yes, that one. Fifty dollars a picture.

Could you have gotten more for his better ones?

Gracious me, yes. Twice as much.

Three times.

I guess the boy was loaded, huh?

- He was what?

- He had no economic problems.

Yes, or else maybe he was just, you know...

Higgledy-piggledy?

Yes, I'm sure he must've been.

Well, thank you very much.

Goodbye, now.

I beg your pardon?

I said, goodbye, now.
"Goodbye now"?

There's no sense to that.
Obviously it's now. I mean,
you wouldn't say, "Goodbye tomorrow."
Or, "Goodbye two hours ago."
You've got hold of something there,
brother.

I've got hold of some...?
I haven't got hold of anything.
And I'm not your brother.
If he's on official business, why
doesn't he let somebody know about it?
Why the mystery?

Besides, we have a perfectly good
police department of our own.
Well, what do you want me to do?
I just want to give you
a word of advice.
I have reason to believe that
Mr. Ronson is not at all pleased...
...with his interfering in people's lives.
It's upsetting the town. It might be
better if you asked him to leave.
To leave? But he's my son.
He's just a meddling fool,
that's what he is.

- Did Ronson say that?
- No, no, no, that's my opinion.
Have you talked with Ronson about this?
- No, but I have reason to believe...
- What you believe doesn't interest me.
I think I'll be leaving.
I think you're making
a great mistake, doctor.
You've been working on that
hospital project of yours for years.
I know your heart's set on it,
and it's practically a reality now.
It would be a shame if,
at the last minute, it fell through.
Tatum, I think you're a stinker.
I think Tatum is
a two-timing, double-crossing rat.

Now, now, now, Mother, Mother.
We mustn't spoil Nick's birthday.
Now, you must smile. Now, smile.
No, no, nice pretty smile. That's right.
That's beautiful, Ma. Thanks, Dad.
That's lovely, Mother.
One, two, three, four...
Don't be a cad. Why, this makes me
feel as if I were in short pants again.
That I want to see.
- Here goes.
- Oh, make a wish.
Oh, yes. All right.
Here's luck to Dad's hospital.
Don't tell your wish.
It may not come true.
Well, this one will.
Hang onto your hats.
A man. There was a man.
- Where?
- In your room.
- Who was it, Hilda?
- It was dark. I couldn't see.
I walked in, and there he was.
- What happened?
- It was the table you fixed.
It's fainted again.
Come out of there.
- It's me, Nick.
- Well, for the love of...
- Did you see anyone?
- No, I stepped into the bushes for a bit.
- Why, Brogan!
- Why? What's up?
Somebody's been casing my room.
- I must have missed him.
- You certainly did.
I'm sorry. But I got the dope from Boston.
You were right about the kid.
I got it all written out here.
- Nick!
- It's Mr. Brogan, dear.
I'll let you have this lot
at a dollar a dozen.

- Good evening, Mrs. Charles.
- Lighting a cigarette again?
No, no, I was just going to ask him
to have some cake with us.
Well, of course. He can't stay
out here in the bushes.
There's tricks to every trade,
as the saying goes.
I had 3000 maternity cards announcing
the birth of a baby girl.
All of a sudden, everybody starts
having boys.
Here I am stuck with a lot of cards.
It's practically impossible to sell
boys' cards for girls' cards.
Especially when the picture was of a stork
wearing a hat with a diaper in his mouth.
The diaper was what we call
a breakaway. Get it?
Nicky, how long have you known Brogan?
Darling, did I tell you how pretty
you looked for my birthday dinner?
No, you didn't. Nicky, has Brogan
got a police record?
Well, I meant to tell you.
Honey, your hair is tinged with
the russet shades of a beautiful autumn.
Look, you're holding something back
about Brogan.
He's a definite criminal type.
I can tell by the shape of his head.
Well, yes, there was a little something
about an old lady...
...who was found in a trunk once.
And your ears are like the twin petals
of a budding rose.
Later, darling. Now, look,
I've got this all figured out.
Brogan was in the bushes the night
the murder was committed, check?
He was there again tonight when
our room was ransacked. Double check.
Nicky, he's our man.
And something's got to be done.

- And that's not it.
- Not even on my birthday?
Oh, well.
Oh, darling, don't you see? He'll get away if you don't get busy.
- I'm on my vacation.
- Oh, Nicky, you're driving me crazy.
This case is serious and all you do is fuddle around and guzzle cider.
I'll switch to prune juice.
All right, if you're going to neglect your duty, I'm not.
Brogan is mixed up in this, and I'm going to find out how and why.
Mr. Brogan, have you any greeting cards for a man going to bed?
- No, but...
- You'd better start working on them...
...because that's where I'm going.
- Well, I guess I'd better mosey along too.
- Excuse me.
Must you go, Mr. Brogan?
There's still some cake left.
Thank you, Mrs. Charles.
But you know the old saying:
"A man's eyes are often bigger than his belly."
- Good night.
- Good night. What a nice man.
I didn't mean to talk business at your party, Nick.
But you know, there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.
- Nora knows who committed the murder.
- Yeah, who?
- You.
- Me?
- Boy, that is interesting.
- Look, I think she's gonna trail you, see? So give her a little exercise.
Take her for a nice long walk.
- I've got something I wanna do.
- I get it.
- Nicky, I think I'll go for a little walk.

- Want me to go with you?
No, no, I'm just going to the drugstore.
- Good night, Nicky.
- Good night, darling.
- Now, try to get to bed early.
- You know me.
Hello, Bruce? Nick Charles.
Busy?
How'd you like to take me out
to Crazy Mary's?
Nick, remember when
we used to come up here fishing?
Boy, you sure caught the big ones.
- It's all in a flick of the wrist.
- I guess I never did flick right.
Stay in the car till I call. You're liable
to get conked on the head. Oh, Mary.
Mary, it's me, Dr. Clayworth.
Hello, Mary. I just wanted to talk
to you for a minute, huh?
Get out of here. Get out.
- Now, now, Mary. Nobody will hurt you.
- I don't want him around here.
Why didn't you tell me
he was with you? Get him out.
- He wants to ask you a few questions.
- I'm not answering any questions.
You leave me alone. Do you hear?
You leave me alone.
I don't want to answer any questions.
Now get out.
I want to talk to you
about Eleanor Morgan.
Eleanor Morgan?
I have a lot of information, Mary.
From Boston.
- You know about Eleanor Morgan?
- Yes.
- Nobody knows about Eleanor Morgan.
- I do, Mary.
- Peter know you were his mother, Mary?
- No.
- But I watched over him best I could.
- Sure you did.

Who do you think killed him?

How should I know?

He fought with somebody at the auto camp. Gave him a couple of black eyes.

Who was that?

- It was Bill Burns, out at the plant.

- What was the fight about?

- I won't tell you nothing. Get out.

- I'm trying to help you.

No. Nobody's trying to help me.

They're all against me.

I know what they're after.

They're not gonna get it.

I know somebody that will get it for me.

If anybody else comes nosing around, they'll get something they don't like.

- Now get out!

- Now, all right, Mary.

All right, we're going, we're going.

Holy smoke! Peter Berton's mother?

Well, where does the Eleanor Morgan come in?

That's the name she used at the hospital in Boston where he was born.

And later, when she turned him over to the children's home, she used Berton.

Hiya, Mac. What delayed you?

For a guy who's on his vacation, you certainly buzz around a lot.

I looked for you, Bruce.

Wanted you to come here.

- Nick couldn't get anything out of her.

- Oh, yeah?

Well, I'll get something out of her.

He got something out of her.

There, okay?

Hello.

How are you?

- Hi, cutie.

- Hi, babe.

- Hello, sister.

- Gentlemen, I...

Say, ain't you in that burlesque show at the Grand?

There's my uncle. I've gotta go now.

- Goodbye, cutie.

- Goodbye.

Yes, sir?

Let's see now. Where was I going?

Oh, yes. What time's the next train to New York?

- 10:

- Thank you.

That man who was just here.

- He was asking about a train, wasn't he?

- Yes, ma'am. The 10: 14 to New York.

Give me a cup of coffee
and two aspirins.

Hello, Mr. MacGregor.

I'm so glad you're here.

Always glad to see a member
of the Charles family.

There's a man here.

I want you to arrest him.

- What for?

- Does it have to be for something?

No, no.

You just pick out anybody at all,
and I put him in jail for life.

But this man's gonna leave town.

Look, Mrs. Charles, I had a little
business with your husband a while ago...

...and I got a big headache out of it.

I can't arrest anybody for you unless
they do something to get arrested.

Get that? They've gotta do something.

I think you're being
very technical, Mr. MacGregor.

Make that four aspirin.

I've been looking for you.

Okay, take your time. Take your time.

This is the ball you need, you know.

- What's she doing in here?

- What's the idea?

- I'm sorry.

- Looking for somebody?

Hey, what are you doing in here?

- There she is again.
- We could offer her some assistance.
- Say, what have you got against me?
- Oh, I'm so sorry.
Sorry, lady, but we don't allow
no unescorted females in here.
Isn't that an old-fashioned
point of view?
- I mean, after all, times have changed.
- She's with me, bartender.
Two beers, and hurry it up.
I hope you don't mind
my barging in like this.
That's quite all right.
Poolrooms are so informal.
Well, I wanted to talk to you.
You see...
As a matter of fact,
I've been following you.
- You've been following me?
- Ever since you left the house.
It's silly, I know, but my wife
has got her heart set on a picture.
One you bought
at the Crump Art Shop.
And I'd like to buy
that painting from you.
Painting? Oh, the windmill.
Yes. Personally, I don't like it,
but my wife is keen about it.
- I'm prepared to pay you a good price.
- A good price?
- Say, \$500.
- Five hundred dollars!
Why, I only paid \$60 for it.
You can't make any money
paying \$500 for a \$60 painting.
Well, money doesn't matter when it
comes to making the little woman happy.
That's a fine quality
in a husband, Mr...?
Draque, Edgar Draque.
Then it's a deal?
- Well...

- Fine, can I get the painting now?
Well, not now. I'll get it for you later.
I'll bring it to you.
Well, I'd like to get it
as soon as possible.
I'm stopping at
the Sycamore Springs Hotel...
Sycamore Springs Hotel.
That's where they're holding the bazaar.
That's right.
I have to leave town tonight.
And I'd like to get
the painting before I go.
You beast!
This man insulted me!
Break it up in there. Hold it,
you guys! Break it up there!
My, my.
Cut it out, will you? Come on.
Give me the police department, please.
There's no use denying it.
You did have a fight with Peter Berton.
Yeah.
Looks to me as if you got more
than your share.
All I'm asking is,
what was the fight about?
Well, Mr. Charles, it seems to me...
...that's nobody's business
but Berton's and mine.
Now that he's dead...
...it's only mine.
Why didn't you like him?
Well, I like people that are
straightforward and honest.
I want to be able to peg them.
If I can't peg them...
...I don't like them.
I see.
Well, if that's all you're going to ask me,
I think I'll be going along.
The fact that the boy's dead
doesn't seem to have made...
...very much impression on you.

- Why should it?

Death hasn't endowed him
with any new virtues, has it?
Well, that's a little brutal,
but honest.

Do you...?

You know of anyone who might
have had cause to kill him?

The way he was cutting
throats at the plant...

...it might have been a number of people.

- What about you?

Mr. Charles, when you've got anything
on me, you can serve your papers.

But until that time,
I figure my time is my own.

- What did he want?

- Just wanted to ask me a few questions.

Questions about what?

Come on, Asta.

Nicky! Come on, come on.

Don't stand there stargazing.

We've got to hurry.

- Hurry? Where to?

- We're going to a dance.

- He offered me \$500 for it.

- Five hundred dollars for a dance?

- It was there under your nose all the time.

- Under my nose?

I had him thrown in jail,
but he might get out.

- Then he'd get the painting.

- Painting?

Sycamore Springs Hotel.

I figured as long
as I had one man arrested...

...I might as well have him
locked up too.

Did you do all this on cider?

I thought you'd be proud of me,
killing two birds with one stone.

- Two birds?

- Yes, they're both in jail.

- Who's the other?

- Brogan.
- Brogan's in jail?
- Yes.
- Oh, Mr. Charles.
- Mr. Charles. Buy mine.
Oh, sure, sure.
I'll split my business up among you.
Give them to the boys.
- Good evening, Mr. Charles.
- Oh, hello.
I bet you think I'm a silly girl
for behaving the way I did.
- You were right to be angry with me.
- I'm not angry with you.
- Aren't you, really?
- No. Here, I'll prove it to you.
- I'll take all your tickets. There.
- You can prove it even better...
...by dancing with me.
- All right, put me down for a dance.
- Do you jitterbug?
- No, put me down for a slow polka.
Was that necessary? Do you have
to shine up to him like that?
Oh, Tom, you're impossible.
Nicky, it's gone.
- What's gone?
- The painting I gave you.
- The painting you gave me?
- I mean, the painting I didn't give you.
- Come again?
- For your birthday.
The painting that you gave me
but you didn't give me for...
I beg your pardon? I didn't understand.
- Gracious me, what are you doing in here?
- Remember me?
- I'm looking for the windmill painting.
- Windmill.
Everybody's looking for
the painting of the windmill.
Now you get out of here.
Goodness gracious!
All a painter has to do nowadays

is to get killed, and he becomes a genius.

- What? Did you say the painter was killed?

- Yes. Peter Berton.

- All higgledy-piggledy.

- Was that painting by Peter Berton?

Gracious me, yes.

Everybody's been after that painting.

First the blond, then Sam Ronson,
and now you.

- Sam Ronson?

- Yes.

- Where is it?

- I sold it to the blond.

Well, Mr. Crump,
what was the blond's name?

Mrs. Edgar Draque.

She lives here in the hotel.

Draque. Why, that's the name
of the man who offered me the \$500.

- Wait here.

- Where are you going?

- To do business with the blond.

- You think she'll give it to you?

I can try, darling. Anything for art.
I'll be right back.

- No. I think I'll go along and chaperone.

- Well...

Oh, hello, sailor.

- Why aren't you dancing?

- I haven't got any tickets.

- Here.

- No dance tickets? Of course you have.

- There you are. And here's your partner.

- Gee, thanks!

Nicky!

Nicky!

What's the number
of Mr. Draque's room?

- 124.

- 124. Thanks.

- Good evening.

- Evening. Willoughby.

- Hello.

- I see you've decided to stay in town.

I never had any intention of leaving.

- By the way, Tatum.

- Yeah?

When the hospital's built, you must come in and have my father treat your nose.

- There's nothing wrong with my nose.

- There will be.

Oh, pardon me.

Come in, come in, dear. It's Mrs. Draque.

How do you do, Mrs. Draque?

Well, you certainly got right down to business.

I found her on the floor.

She was out cold. Somebody had conked her before I got here.

- What about the painting?

- It's gone.

- We're going after it.

- Glad to have met you, Mrs. Draque.

- Clerk.

- Yes, sir?

- You better have someone go up to 124.

- What's wrong?

- Mrs. Draque is indisposed.

- Oh, my.

Now, let me think. Let's see.

Peter Berton painted it.

Everybody wanted it.

Draque offered 500. Mrs. Draque got it.

She got conked.

Let's see, now, who else wanted it?

Crazy Mary said she knew somebody who would get it for her.

That might be it.

There's Ronson.

Ronson. Ronson said he wanted it too.

Yes.

There's the doc.

- I'd love to.

- As soon as I check...

- Bruce, excuse me. Are you busy?

- We're gonna have a dance.

How'd you like to take me

for another ride?

- Well, I'd like to, but...

- That's fine. Come on, let's go.

- Where are we going?

- To Crazy Mary's.

- That's where we belong.

- Come on, Asta.

Dr. Clayworth's going to miss
all the dances.

Don't worry about me.

I'm not much of a dancer anyway.

Nick was the one the girls
always wanted to dance with.

I hear he also played the banjo.

- She's dead.

- Nicky.

Nicky, look.

Shot with her own gun.

Hey, that's one way
of destroying fingerprints, huh?

- Certainly is. Yes.

- We'd better call MacGregor.

Asta. Asta, what is it?

That's it. Your birthday present.

Asta, you'll get an extra bone for this.

Nicky!

- Hey, what are you doing up at this hour?

- I came down to ask you that.

Well, I was just concentrating
on this little gem.

Funny thing to concentrate
on at this hour of night.

Why don't you tackle it in the morning
when you're fresher?

Say, you're pretty fresh right now.

You know, this has to be
solved by morning.

- We're in the home stretch.

- How's it look for the finish?

Well, I'm not passing out
any tips just yet.

Secret.

Worried?

Say, you are worried, aren't you?

Oh, I've handled trickier shows
than this.

But your old man wasn't
in the audience watching you.
That's it, isn't it? Or part of it anyway.
You'll get it.

You may not be any great shakes
as a detective, but you're lucky.
You'll solve it.

And your father will be proud of you.
He'd better be. Unless he wants to hear
that Stinky Davis story again.

No, no, no.

Not that, dear. Not that.

- I'll be waiting for you, darling. Good luck.

- I'll need it, sister.

And don't call me sister.

Sit down. Make yourself comfortable.

I demand to know
why we were brought here.

- Nick Charles' orders.

- I demand to see Nick Charles.

- Where is he?

- Search me.

I demand to know what those people
are doing in my laboratory.

- I don't know.

- Where's Nick Charles?

- I don't know.

- You don't know much, do you?

No, but I don't have to.

Mrs. Green's little boy's
just swallowed 50 cents.

I'll get it, Hilda.

Hello, sister. Nick Charles here?

- Who wants him?

- Yeah, who wants him?

- Is your name "sister"?

- Where's Nick Charles?

- He's a friend of ours.

- What do you want?

- Pull in your ears, pop.

- Listen, you. You behave...

- You leave him alone.

- Look, bub, he sent for us.
- What's your name?
- My name's Slugs Lannigan.
- His is Finnigan. Mickey to you.
- Yeah.

Well, why didn't you say so?

Go on in there and sit down.

And keep quiet.

- Is it always like this, Nora?

- Always.

You have my deepest sympathy.

- Mrs. Charles, where is your husband?

- I don't know.

Why don't you sit down and take it easy.

I'll just make some cocoa

to quiet their nerves.

Cocoa? What a break.

Why is it necessary to herd us all
into a room like this?

For a very simple reason.

This is the way he always works.

And this time he has
a very special reason.

Whatever he does,
no matter how idiotic it may seem...
...nobody ever outguesses him for long.

Just wait, you're going
to be mighty proud of him.

I've seen him work on situations
like this that looked hopeless...
...when suddenly the guilty party cracks
up and starts trying to shoot his way out.

He's not going to turn this place
into a shooting gallery.

That's the way these things usually
wind up. It's called the payoff.

I usually duck under the sofa
when it starts.

It's outrageous. Treating people
in this high-handed fashion.

Where is he?

Oh, he's probably arranging
a few surprises for us.

Right now it may be part of a strategy

of nerves to keep us all on edge.

But when the stage is set,
he'll make a dramatic entrance.

I'm usually nervous too.

But this time I'm not.

- You see, I know who it is.

- You do?

Well, who is it?

Wouldn't you like to know?

There he is. And mighty
beautiful timing, I'd say.

- Hiya, Slugs. Mickey.

- Hello, Nick.

- Got them, huh?

- All here.

- Good. Suppose you unwrap them, huh?

- Sure.

Sorry I had to keep you all waiting.

I just want to ask you
a very few simple questions.

Nothing really difficult or involved.

Just some little things.

And I'm sure you'll all want to help.

Mr. Draque, do you like it?

A genuine Berton, Mrs. Draque.

By the way, how's your head?

That mean anything to you, Willoughby?

- To me, no.

- It will.

- Does it mean anything to you?

- No.

- Sure?

- Of course I am.

All right. I'm just asking.

- Ronson's cooked.

- Mr. Crump, that mean anything to you?

Gracious me, yes. Squidgy, isn't it?

- Worse than that.

- Precisely. Yes, yes.

Now, I'm about to demonstrate
something to you.

And in order to do it,
the room will have to be dark.

I hope you don't mind my taking

a few ordinary precautions.

But sometimes people

have a habit of carrying firearms.

- So, Mac, will you take over?

- Everybody's going to be searched.

- Frisk them.

- Yes, sir.

He can't do that.

There won't be a payoff.

- Now, look here, this is going too far.

- Nick, stop being absurd.

These people aren't criminals.

They're respectable citizens.

- They don't walk around with guns.

- Here's one.

As superintendent of the plant,

I handle the payrolls.

- I need it for protection.

- This is a .45 Army Colt.

- The same kind of gun killed Berton.

- Let me out of here! I've got to get out!

- You've got to let me out of here!

- Wait. Take it easy.

You can't hold me.

You've got nothing against me.

- I've got an appointment.

- Your appointment will have to wait.

- It can't wait. Really, it can't.

- With whom was your appointment?

- I can't tell you.

- Well, I'm afraid you'll have to stay then.

I wonder if she's acting.

- Where did you get this?

- That?

I bought that at an auction.

It's just an antique. You can't fire it.

- Just an antique, huh?

- Here's another one.

Well, quite an arsenal

for a peaceful community.

- Well, what's your story?

- Why, I need it working around the bank.

Well, we're not around the bank now,

Mr. Tatum.

I'm sure you can spare it
for a few minutes.

Charles, if you can't vindicate these
actions, I'll see that you go to jail.
I'll keep that in mind, Mr. Ronson.

- Dad, I'm going to use your fluoroscope.
- All right.

Slugs, will you close those curtains,
please?

And, Mickey, you might keep
an eye on the Draque family.
If you'll all gather around the fluoroscope
here, I'll proceed to the demonstration.

Mr. Ronson, just move
in here close, will you?

Yes, and you too, Willoughby.
And Bill Burns.

All right. Now if someone will
just close those curtains.

All set?

- Anybody know what that is?
- Golly. I got a bargain, two pictures.
And I don't mean the windmill
or this little dog down here in the corner.
Look closely.

Willoughby, don't you recognize that?

- Good heavens.
- Holy smokes.

All right, open the curtains.

Well, Willoughby?

- It's part of the plans for the propeller.
- That's right.

A foreign power would pay
a lot of money for that.

- Well, they couldn't be stolen.
- Why not? This was.

Well, we've protected
ourselves against it.

The plans are divided
into five different parts.

Nobody is allowed to see
or to work on more than one part.

Is that so?

Oh, Slugs. Let's have

those other four paintings.

- Here they are, Nick.

- And tell them where you got them.

Why, where you told me. In Anthony
Croner's art gallery in New York.

Anthony Croner.

Known to his intimates as Tony.

Make a note of that, Mr. Draque.

Oh, Mr. Crump.

Do you recognize these?

Gracious me, yes. Why those
are the pictures I sold to her.

Thank you.

And under these four
innocent-looking paintings...

...are the designs for the other parts
of your propeller. Surprised?

Yes, I am.

Bill, will you tell me now
why you fought with Peter Berton?

Well, he tried to push me
out of my job. Always making trouble.

- What kind of trouble?

- Angling for somebody else's job.

He was always doing that.

He should have been fired.

- Why wasn't he?

- That's what I'd like to know.

He must have had a drag somewhere.

Willoughby would just switch him
from one department to another.

See what I mean? The finger's
on him now. But my money's on Brogan.

Thank you. Oh, I'm sorry to be late.

I was up at Mrs. Stanton's.

You know, that baby's about due.

Well, I'm glad you came.

I'm going to need you.

- Shall we search him for weapons too?

- Sure. Everybody's doing it.

- Well, I surrender then.

- Here's something.

- Is that loaded?

- Well, just with blanks.

Bruce, we're trying to get
all the facts about Peter Berton.
How he lived and how he died.
By the way, when I phoned you...
...after Berton was shot,
where were you in your house?
Well, let's see, I...
Oh, sure, I remember.
I was working on my stamp collection
all that evening in my study.

- No one disturbed you during the evening?
- No.
- Well, I had one patient.
- But you didn't hear the shot?
- No, I didn't.
- No.

All right, Willoughby. Maybe you'd
like to explain to us now about Berton.
The boy just didn't seem
to get along with people.
You could have discharged him,
couldn't you?
Yes, but he seemed
such a nice, honest chap.
Well, he was a very good workman.
Why don't you tell the truth? You were
told to take care of him. You had orders.

- Orders! From whom?
- From someone higher up.
Someone on the board of directors.
Mr. Ronson.
I gave no orders.
The boy was recommended to me.

- I asked Willoughby to look after him.
- Willoughby, you better speak up.
I refuse to be held responsible for this.
I wanted to let him go.

- Mr. Ronson wouldn't let me.
- That's a lie!
Oh, is it, Mr. Ronson?
I think we both know better than that.
What time was it
when we got out to Crazy Mary's?
- You mean the last time?

- Yes.

- About midnight.

- How long had she been dead?

About half an hour.

Not more than an hour.

- How does that check with you?

- Me? What do I know about it?

- You ought to. You were in her shack.

- I? In her shack?

Certainly. After you bopped Mrs. Draque on the head.

Sit down, goldilocks.

You bopped her, grabbed the painting and took it to Mary's.

- I never heard anything so absurd.

- Look here, Nick.

You're making some rather serious accusations.

Sam Ronson wouldn't do a thing like that.

Dad, I know this is going to sound a little fantastic... ..but I'm going to tell you a little fairy tale.

Once upon a time in this town, about 20-odd years ago... ..a local playboy ran off to Boston with a young housemaid to get married. Unfortunately, the housemaid wasn't quite right in the head.

Well, in Boston, the playboy got into a barroom brawl and was killed... ..leaving the housemaid in a very tough spot.

It seems a baby was on the way.

Now, the dead playboy had a big brother. But brother wanted no part of it.

So the housemaid had to go to a county hospital in Boston to have her baby.

And the records show that later she placed him in the children's home there... ..under the name of Peter Berton.

Shall I go on, Mr. Ronson?

No. No, you win, Nick.

Perhaps you'd rather tell us
about it yourself.
I tried to help her. But she was so...
So irrational.
The boy grew up in the orphanage.
When he was of age, I sent for him
and got him a job here in the plant.
He didn't seem
quite well-balanced to me.
Crazy Mary kept hounding me.
I didn't want any scandal
for my daughter's sake.
Well, everything went on all right
until Crazy Mary discovered...
...that her boy was
mixed up in a racket...
...to copy some propeller designs.
She wanted to stop him.
But she was helpless without revealing
to him that she was his mother.
However...
...when the boy up and got himself killed,
there was something she could do.
She could protect his good name.
So she blackmailed Mr. Ronson into
removing the evidence against her boy.
This painting.
He took it to her last night after
he removed it from Mrs. Draque's room.
- Is that true, Mr. Ronson?
- Yes. But I didn't kill Crazy Mary.
No, but you slugged me.
- Why, you small-town thug!
- Here!
Now, now, Mrs. Draque!
Keep on doing what you've been doing.
I'll have the cocoa in a few minutes.
Well...
Now, we know the technique that was
used to deliver the paintings.
Berton copied the plans,
painted over them...
...and placed the paintings for sale
with Willie Crump.

Mrs. Draque bought them...
...and, through her husband, they were delivered at Tony Croner's in New York. A nice, safe arrangement. Very little danger...
...and lots of money in it for everybody. Thousands.
What?
- Does that surprise you, Mrs. Draque?
- Tell him nothing, honey.
You mean you haven't told your honey how many thousands...
...Croner gave you every time you delivered one of these?
- That's a lie.
- Well, I just don't think...
...you should have been cheated, Mrs. Draque. After all, you took a big risk. And now you're involved in a murder.
Oh, no.
I didn't have anything to do with that. I only bought the paintings...
...and turned them over to Edgar...
- Shut up.
- You're blabbing like he wants you to.
- I'm not getting mixed up in any murder. You didn't tell me it was gonna be anything...
Someone's always hitting that poor Mrs. Draque. Draque, you arranged the scheme to steal these plans...
...through someone here in Sycamore Springs. Someone who lives here and is well-regarded in the community.
- When we find who that individual was...
- Nick! Look out!
Gracious me!
Here you are, Nick. It was exactly where you said. There's one cartridge missing. Ladies and gentlemen, this is a rifle called the Nambu. It's used by Japanese snipers

in the Southwest Pacific.
It has long range and great accuracy.
And this one's equipped with a silencer.
Many of them were brought back
by our boys as souvenirs.

- My brother Tom brought that gun back.
- Right.
- You're not trying to imply he...?
- I'm not implying anything.
- I agree that it was his gun.
- I think that's as good as implying it.
I agree with Bruce, Nick.
These people are my friends.
A little while ago, you had us believing
Sam Ronson was guilty.

- Ronson's just a red herring.
- I don't care if he is a red herring.
I'll never believe Sam Ronson
killed anybody.
He didn't kill Mary, Dad. When he arrived
at her shack, she was already dead.
How do you know that?
He took the painting to her.
That was the evidence she wanted.
Had she been alive, she would have
destroyed it immediately.

- She never got her hands on it.
- Let go of me.
You got no right to bring me here.
I haven't done anything.
Tom, I tried to get away.
They wouldn't let me.

- What's the big idea?
- Come in, Tom, and join the party.
We're trying to catch a murderer.
Bruce, according to your autopsy report...
...Peter Berton was shot
with a .45 revolver.
The bullet entering the large left rhomboid,
puncturing the posterior lobe...
...of the left lung and the lower lobe
of the right, lacerating the parenchyma...
...grazing the aorta and lodging
against the 12th right costal rib.

- That's your boy.
- In other words...
...it entered about here, passed
all the way through his body...
...and ended up down there. Is that right?
- That's right.
Well, that's very strange.
Because for a .45 revolver to get
that amount of penetration...
...it would have to be
fired almost point-blank.
And for a bullet to have traveled
downward at such an angle...
...the revolver would have to have
been fired...
...by some little gremlin hanging
from our porch roof.
Well, there was no little gremlin.
So he couldn't have been shot
with a revolver. No.
The bullet that killed Peter Berton
was fired from a rifle.
From a distance and at an elevation.
A rifle equipped with a silencer.
A rifle like yours, Tom.
Which has one bullet missing.
- What are you driving at, Nick?
- Simply this.
Bruce, you switched bullets on us
at the autopsy.
It was a Japanese rifle bullet
you removed from Berton's body...
...but it was a .45 revolver bullet
you handed MacGregor.
What's the answer?
Well, I did that to protect Tom.
Because everybody knew how jealous
he was of Berton on account of Laurabelle.
- You thought Tom might've killed Berton?
- No. But what was I to think?
He had been raving
around the house that night.
Oh, indeed.
Mrs. Hobby, on the night of the murder...

...when I phoned Dr. Clayworth
to come over, where was he?

- He was upstairs, sir.

- You're quite sure of that?

Yes, sir. I remember distinctly
of going to the stairs to call him.

How long before that
had Mr. Berton left the house?

- Well, just a few minutes, sir.

- That's all. Thank you.

So I was right, Bruce.

- Berton was at your house.

- Well, I told you I had a patient, Nick.

But you withheld the fact
that the patient was Berton.

It seems that you were not downstairs
in your study as you said.

Well, I might have, for a minute...

Are you trying to blame this on me?

Bruce, when we went out
to visit Crazy Mary the first time...

...you stood outside and called to her.

- What's the matter with that?

- That's the only way you can get in.

- But last night you didn't call.

- You just barged right in. Why was that?

- I didn't just barge in. I...

Well, I was excited, I guess.

I don't know why I didn't.

I'll tell you why. Because it would
have been silly to call to a dead woman.

You knew she was dead.

Because you'd killed her.

- I think you're crazy.

- What was your business with Draque?

- I never had any business with Draque.

- You called on him at his hotel.

- I checked on that.

- Well, that is professional.

He was a patient of mine...

A patient?

- Is that right, Draque?

- That's right.

Is it true?

He's never been sick a day
since I've known him.

Thank you.

Draque gave you a chance
to pick up some important money.
And you talked that bumble-brained
Berton kid into carrying out the scheme.

When the news got out I was here
on a mysterious investigation...

...Berton got into a panic. Decided to
come to me, make a clean breast of it.

That would have cooked your goose.

When Berton left you and came here...

...you rushed to your brother's room,
grabbed his rifle...

...and as Berton reached us,
you shot him.

- You're a liar.

- No, you're the liar, Bruce.

You lied about your association
with Draque...

...about being downstairs
when Berton was shot.

You knew Crazy Mary was dead.

You switched bullets at Berton's autopsy.

I told you, I did that to protect Tom.

Miss Ronson, where was Tom

the night that Peter was murdered?

He was in Boston.

I phoned him that night.

So you weren't protecting Tom,

you were protecting yourself.

Any other answers, Bruce?

Yeah, I've got one more.

You were always the smart boy, Nick.

You knew all the answers.

You caught the big fish.

You beat me at everything.

It'll be different this time. It's gonna
be a tie. You've got me, but I've got you.

- You haven't the nerve to pull the trigger.

- Haven't I?

- No.

- Get him, gentlemen!

- Drop it, Bruce!
- Let me alone!
- Drop it or I'll...
- Take your hands off me.
I forgot to tell you. Brogan removed
the firing pin from that gun.
- No, you can't beat me again.
- Get him out, men.
Let me at him.
You can't beat me again!
Mr. Charles.
I've been wanting to do this
ever since you got here.
May I have your autograph?
It's for my mother in Walla Walla.
Gee, thanks!
That was wonderful, Nick.
Great work, my boy.
Well!
Why, Nicky. I do believe
you've popped a button!