

Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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The Mystery of the Tattered Trunk

By
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From an original story by
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The Mystery of the Tattered Trunk was originally produced by the Children's Theatre Company in the 1984-85 season.

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Characters:

- Kate McGrew
- Bob Carmichael
- Margaret Rodney Beckworth
- Lionel Beckworth
- Gerald Rodney III
- Vladimir Bolevsky
- Konstantin Demerovitch
- Yantaria Mirova
- Olga Yevenska
- Omar
- Mute
- Simone LaSalle
- Hector Frye
- Lady Beatrice Marley
- Lord Clive Marley
- Captain Sinclair Warren
- Chief Purser Higgins
- Sigrid Nordstrom
- Miss Vera
- Roland
- Felice
- Radio Reporter

Ensemble: Corps de Ballet, Stewards, The Voyagers

The dock at the berth of the luxury liner Lavinia. Deep night; fog. Sounds of the harbor.

An old, tattered trunk is seen abandoned on the dock amidst other pieces of cargo. The trunk bears numerous international touring stickers and a newly-stenciled label which reads "BALLET NEVA" in both English and Cyrillic alphabets.

As house lights fade the trunk is slowly hauled away by a pair of DOCKWORKERS as the preset lights of the looming ship in the background and the forestage slowly fade to Blackout.

Act One, Scene 1

In the blackout, the harbor sounds segue into the sudden blare of the ocean liner's signal horn. Shouts and shrieks from an unseen crowd and music from a distant band. The din rapidly crescendos and is joined by the voice of a British RADIO REPORTER. Camera flashes pierce the darkness and lights quickly follow to reveal the first-class passenger deck and gangplank on board the Lavinia.

It is mid-day, late August, 1928 in the port of Southampton, England. PASSENGERS mill about the deck, waving to well-wishers on the unseen dock below and tossing confetti and streamers. STEWARDS move through the crowd delivering messages, flowers, fruit baskets, etc. HIGGINS, the chief purser, stands at the top of the gangplank and will check passports against the clipboard he holds and will also issue cabin keys.

RADIO REPORTER Dateline: 23 August, 1928, Southampton, England. Ladies and gentlemen -- how might I describe the excitement? A most animated crowd - certainly no less than a thousand in number - have gathered this afternoon on the pier below. Jeremy Jenkins here on deck, bringing you the launching of Britain's poshest new man liner, the S.S. Lavinia. We've heard the ship's signal, heralding its imminent departure and final boarding of its illustrious passengers.

Camera flashes from below and applause from the unseen crowd precede the appearance of KATE at the top of the gangplank. As REPORTER continues, KATE greets and hands her passport to HIGGINS, is issued her cabin key and the return of her passport before she then steps clown onto the deck as BEA and CLIVE [who is laden with BEA's knitting gear], conduct the same business with HIGGINS.

REPORTER Yes, and whom should I see approaching our microphone but the courageous American girl, Miss Kate McGrew – who single-handedly thwarted the dastardly plot which jeopardized the national security of the Commonwealth. *(He calls KATE to him.)* Miss McGrew? Miss McGrew - might I impose upon you to share a word with our listeners at home?

KATE steps up to the REPORTER, obviously somewhat uncomfortable with her celebrity.

KATE Uh. . . hello. How do you do?

REPORTER On behalf of every man, woman, and child in the free world, let me respond to that with a resounding: "We're doing very well indeed, thanks to you, Miss Kate McGrew!"

KATE Oh, it wasn't all that special. Anyone might have done the same.

REPORTER Ah, but Miss McGrew, Scotland Yard does not award a special commendation to just "anyone". Now tell us, what are your plans in the future?

KATE After seeing the sights in New York City with my Aunt Bea and Uncle Clive. . . .

REPORTER Meaning, of course, Lord Clive and Lady Beatrice Marley?

KATE That's them. After that I'll enroll at Emmett College for Women.

REPORTER Ah, but here are Lord and Lady Marley. Your ladyship must be tremendously proud of her niece.

BEA I am, and I always have been. *(BEA hastily steps away with KATE ; REPORTER grabs CLIVE's arm.)*

REPORTER But to be honored by Scotland Yard. . . .

CLIVE *(Wrestling with BEA's knitting bag.)* Scotland Yard? Yes, jolly good fellows. Some in my club. Clever chaps all.

REPORTER's voice begins to fade as BEA, CLIVE, and KATE'S conversation take over.

REPORTER There, ladies and gentlemen -- a rare interview with the Lady and Lord who have for years been termed perhaps the most publicity-shy peers of the realm. . .

BEA Good Lord, will there never be an end to all the cameras and reporters! I only hope we can make the crossing with a bit more peace and quiet.

KATE Me, too. I intend to do nothing but rest.

STEWARD *(Tapping CLIVE on the shoulder.)* Lord Marley?

CLIVE Yes?

STEWARD *(Offering a huge fruit basket.)* This is for you, sir.

CLIVE *(Obviously unable to take it.)* Bea? Would you?

BEA Of course, dear. How splendid! Thank you, young man. *(She takes the basket as STEWARD steps to KATE.)*

STEWARD Miss Kate McGrew?

KATE That's me.

STEWARD Telegram.

KATE Thank you. *(Opening it.)* Oh, it's from Mother and Dad!

BEA And here this basket is from Brian and Lydia. Oh, we've the most thoughtful children, haven't we, Clive?

KATE *(Running to the rail to wave.)* How I wish they could come with us! *(Calling.)* Goodbye, Lydia! Goodbye, Brian! Promise you'll write!

CLIVE and BEA join KATE who, with her "Hawkeye" camera, tries to take a photo from the rail. They wave and call as RADIO REPORTER picks up the focus again with the appearance of MRS. BECKWORTH at the top of the gangplank, followed by LIONEL and, in the rear, GERALD. The men take care of the business with HIGGINS while MRS. BECKWORTH almost immediately descends on the REPORTER.

REPORTER And here - the newly-wedded American socialite Margaret Rodney Beckworth.

BEA *(To CLIVE.)* Oh, of all the luck - Margaret Rodney!

MRS. BECKWORTH *(To REPORTER.)* Hello, Mr. Jenkins. Lovely afternoon, isn't it?

REPORTER Is it true, Mrs. Beckworth, that you married your husband within ten short days of your first encounter?

BECKWORTH Well now, I guess that proves there is such a thing as love at first sight.

REPORTER I'm told you met at a gambling casino called "La Cravate Noir"?

BECKWORTH That means "Black Tie". It's terribly chic. Now, I'm not a gambler myself; I was there for fundraising function. *(Her voice fades as BEA's overrides.)* Now I have strived to make the name of Margaret Beckworth synonymous with social responsibility. And although I have never been one to boast, I believe. . . .

BEA *(Over MRS. BECKWORTH.)* Oh, please, my dears - I'm not quite up to an encounter with Margaret Rodney just yet.

KATE You know her well?

BEA Well enough.

CLIVE Then do run along to the cabin, Bea, and have yourself a nice rest. Kate and I will cover for you.

BEA Would you?

KATE and CLIVE serve as a "screen" until BEA reaches an exit: KATE holding the fruit basket and CLIVE the knitting.

CLIVE *(Urging her to hurry off.)* Hup, hup, cheerio. . . . off with you. *(BEA is off. He calls after her as an afterthought.)* Oh, Bea - your knitting...!

LIONEL and GERALD approach MRS. BECKWORTH.

BECKWORTH Lionel- lamb, look here. We're on the radio.

LIONEL What?

REPORTER (*Taking LIONEL'S arm.*) Don't you agree, Mr. Beckworth, that 1928 seems an excellent year in the American stock market? Have you any financial advice you might share with us?

LIONEL Sure. Buy Beckworth.

REPORTER (*Disappointed.*) Oh. Thank you.

LIONEL steps away; taking MRS. BECKWORTH with him, followed by GERALD.
REPORTER's voice fades.

REPORTER You've been listening to an exclusive interview with Lionel Beckworth, one of America's foremost figures in the world of high finance, sharing his years of shrewd expertise...

BECKWORTH Will you look who's there! Why, it's Lord Marley! Yoo-hoo! (*She rushes over to CLIVE and KATE.*) I'm Margaret Beckworth; perhaps your wife Lady Beatrice has spoken of me?

CLIVE As a matter of fact she has, Mrs. Beckworth.

BECKWORTH Really? I am truly flattered. Oh, please tell me she's on board too, I've got to see her; I want to show her my new diamond.

KATE She came down with a sudden headache and went directly to her cabin.

BECKWORTH Oh? And who are you, child? Are you someone?

LIONEL Good Lord, Margaret, don't you read the newspaper?

BECKWORTH Every day - the society column.

LIONEL Well, try the front page sometime - you'd be amazed.

CLIVE My niece from America: Kate McGrew.

BECKWORTH Pleased to meet you. And this is my brand new husband Lionel and my precious son, Master Gerald Rodney III. (*GERALD sulks.*)

KATE (*Offering her hand to shake.*) How do you do? (*GERALD doesn't respond.*)

BECKWORTH (*To CLIVE*) Now, Lord Marley, if she's your niece, does that mean she's a Lady, too?

CLIVE I don't quite follow.

BECKWORTH You know: a Lady, like your wife?

KATE No, Mrs. Beckworth, I'm just a regular girl.

BECKWORTH Oh, no offense intended; after all, I'm not a lady either.

LIONEL stifles a laugh. A sudden uproar from the unseen crowd on the dock below and a series of camera flashes as SIMONE LASALLE appears at the top of the gangplank, with her press agent HECTOR FRYE taking photographs of her with his camera. A NEWSREEL REPORTER is also there. RADIO REPORTER takes over the focus again.

REPORTER Ladies and gentlemen - this sudden surge of excitement you hear is precipitated by the appearance of none other than the ravishing silent screen star from France. . .

ALL (*In unison with RADIO REPORTER.*) Simone LaSalle!

SIMONE has been standing at the top of the gangplank calling "Au Revoir !" and blowing kisses to the crowd below. HECTOR takes SIMONE by the arm and guides her toward the RADIO REPORTER.

REPORTER (*Calling to her.*) Miss LaSalle? Miss LaSalle, this is most unexpected. Your name does not appear on the passenger list.

SIMONE (*In a thick French accent.*) No. That is because...

HECTOR Perhaps I can explain.

REPORTER You are. . . ?

HECTOR Hector Frye. I have the honor to be Miss LaSalle's new personal manager. And it gives me great pleasure to announce to the world today that Miss Simone LaSalle, after much thoughtful deliberation, has decided to move to Hollywood and pursue a career in the industry's latest development: the talking motion pictures.

REPORTER How extraordinary! But why all the secrecy?

SIMONE Well, that is because. . . .

HECTOR *(Covering the microphone.)* There are still a few contractual problems we've yet to iron out with her former manager. It was best to book her passage under an assumed name.

SIMONE What a mean old Frenchman was my boss; he did not want to let me go.

HECTOR But now that Miss LaSalle is safely on board, we don't expect any unpleasantness. Come now, Miss LaSalle, we have more photographs to take before we set sail.

SIMONE Okay. *(To RADIO REPORTER.)* Au Revoir, au revoir. *(To HECTOR.)* Hector, find me my lipstick, will you?

As RADIO REPORTER resumes narrative, HECTOR quickly goes through his shoulder bag and finds her lipstick for her. HIGGINS leaves his post at the gangplank and approaches HECTOR and SIMONE. HECTOR deals with his camera equipment as SIMONE applies lipstick.

REPORTER *(Fading as HIGGINS speaks.)* Ladies and gentlemen, we've just been speaking with Miss Simone LaSalle, more covered than usual, in a stunning array of diamonds, pearls, sapphires, topaz. . . .

HIGGINS *(To HECTOR.)* I beg your pardon, sir. Passports, please?

HECTOR *(Handing passports to HIGGINS.)* Certainly. Say, how about a photo of you giving Miss LaSalle her cabin key? Wouldn't you like to have your picture in all the newspapers? Sure you would. Step right over here. . . Simone?

SIMONE Oui?

HECTOR *Posez-vous, s'il vous plait. (With one hand on HIGGINS' shoulder and the other behind SIMONE's head, he guides her puckered lips to the side of HIGGINS' face.)* That's it. Now hand her the key. Hold it. . . hold it. . .

HECTOR shoots the photograph. CAPTAIN WARREN appears and looks on with interest for a moment.

CAPTAIN Higgins?

HIGGINS Captain Warren! You must excuse me, Miss LaSalle. . .

CAPTAIN *(To SIMONE, with surprise.)* Miss Simone LaSalle?

SIMONE Oui.

CAPTAIN *(Introducing himself.)* Captain Sinclair Warren.

SIMONE *(To HIGGINS.)* But I thought you were the Captain. . .

CAPTAIN Had I known you were sailing, I'd have been here earlier.

SIMONE Merci , Captain.

CAPTAIN Do pardon me a moment. . . *(To HIGGINS.)* Higgins? Which passengers have yet to board?

HIGGINS The Ballet Neva.

CAPTAIN *(Offering him a handkerchief.)* Back to your post then.

HIGGINS *(Wiping the red lip mark off his cheek.)* Aye, aye. *(To HECTOR. The sound of the crowd heightens below.)* Your cabin key, Mr. Frye.

HECTOR Could you spare a minute for a photo, Captain Warren?

Sudden surge of cheers and applause from crowd.

CAPTAIN I'm afraid I must decline. Our Russian guests have arrived at last.

REPORTER . . . the Ballet Neva, as we all know, fled Russia after the Great Revolution and has been performing on tour ever since. This will mark its first voyage to the States where it will premiere "The Ice Maiden."

CAPTAIN has interceded in HIGGINS' check-in procedure and ushers the Russians down onto the deck during the REPORTER'S preceding narrative. CAPTAIN shakes hands and welcomes BOLEVSKY and DEMEROVITCH ; MIROVA lags slightly behind with her maid OLGA, who accepts from a STEWARD a bouquet of flowers and a note for MIROVA.

REPORTER Mr. Demerovitch? Ladies and gentlemen: I give you the premier danseur of the Ballet Neva - the handsome and talented Konstantin Demerovitch. Is it true, sir, that "The Ice Maiden" marks your debut as a choreographer?

DEMEROVITCH And I also dance the leading role.

REPORTER Which is. . .

DEMEROVITCH The King of Flames.

REPORTER Rumor has it that "The Ice Maiden" shall be the most spectacular production in the history of your company.

DEMEROVITCH That is an understatement.

BOLEVSKY *(Barking to DEMEROVITCH.)* Konstantin, come!

REPORTER *(Gesturing for BOLEVSKY.)* Ah, the great impresario Vladimir Bolevsky! Would you. . . .

MIROVA *(Urgent, to BOLEVSKY.)* Vladimir! Pre-e-tee syoo-dah!

BOLEVSKY *(To REPORTER.)* There is not time. *(To MIROVA.)* What is the matter, Yantaria? *(Russians huddle and speak in urgent whispers.)*

HECTOR *(To SIMONE.)* Simone, get over there with the Russians; I want a picture of this. Stand between Miss Mirova and the maid.

MIROVA *(To BOLEVSKY.)* Puh-STOI-tyuh, Vladimir. SLOO-shay. . .

BOLEVSKY Nyeh byuh-spuh- KOI-tyes.

BECKWORTH *(Approaching BOLEVSKY.)* Mr. Bolevsky, I've been such an admirer of yours; allow me to introduce myself, my name is...

HECTOR What's that woman doing? *(Gently nudging MRS. BECKWORTH.)* Would you mind moving out of the way, Madame?

BECKWORTH I beg your pardon?!

HECTOR Please, this'll only take a minute.

BECKWORTH Why, I never in all my born days. . . *(KATE has positioned herself with her own camera and takes a photograph.)* I declare, of all the rude...

MIROVA *(Pointing at KATE.)* Vladimir ! The camera! The girl took our photograph!

OLGA NO-zhuh moi!

MIROVA *(Reaching towards KATE.)* Give to me that camera!

BOLEVSKY slashes out with his cane, hitting KATE'S camera and causing it to fall to the floor and break.

BOLEVSKY *(Looking at HECTOR.)* Mademoiselle Mirova only gives the photos when she is prepared.

HECTOR Well, I didn't get anything. . . this woman was in the way.

When BOLEVSKY shattered the camera, CLIVE dropped the knitting bag, letting it topple over, as he sternly marches over to the Russian.

CLIVEE I say, old man. . . isn't your boiler a bit over-stoked?!

KATE I'm sorry, Mr. Bolevsky. I didn't know

BOLEVSKY I didn't mean to break your camera. . . of course, I will pay you.

CLIVE *(To KATE.)* Bad show, Kate - all your snaps ruined. . .

ANNOUNCEMENT *(From P.A. System.)* All ashore that are going ashore. Attention, passengers. The launching ceremony will commence presently on the upper observation deck.

A young Swedish cruise director has entered carrying streamers and packages of confetti.

SIGRID Streamers! This way, ladies and gentlemen. . . .

BECKWORTH Come along, Lord Marley -- we don't want to miss this, now do we?

CLIVE *(As MRS. BECKWORTH drags him astray.)* Coming, Kate?

KATE *(Regarding the knitting.)* I'll just get Aunt Bea's knitting.

CLIVE and MRS. BECKWORTH exit, followed by LIONEL and GERALD.

BOLEVSKY Steward!

HIGGINS May I be of service, Mr. Bolevsky?

BOLEVSKY Please show the maid to her cabin.

HIGGINS Certainly, sir. You are Miss Mirova's servant?

OLGA I am Olga.

HIGGINS This way, please.

BOLEVSKY *(Thrusting MIROVA'S bouquet at her.)* Olga -- a servant's place is inside the cabin, yes? Go. Stay there.

OLGA Dah , Monsieur Bolevsky.

MIROVA (*As OLGA and HIGGINS exit.*) Soon I will be there, Olga.

DEMEROVITCH (*To HECTOR; eyeing SIMONE.*) You know, we do not all of us dancers shun publicity. You may take my photograph with Mademoiselle LaSalle any time you wish it.

BOLEVSKY (*As he exits with MIROVA.*) Konstantin Demerovitch? Come!

DEMEROVITCH (*Mimicking OLGA.*) Dah, Monsieur Bolevsky.

BOLEVSKY Now!

DEMEROVITCH (*Sarcastically.*) I hear, Oh Master Impresario, and obey. (*To HECTOR.*) Au revoir, Monsieur. (*Kissing SIMONE'S hand.*) Mademoiselle.

SIMONE (*Watching DEMEROVITCH exit.*) Quel charmant.

HECTOR (*Exiting.*) Come along, Miss LaSalle.

SIMONE freezes when she hears a CHILD's voice.

CHILD Miss?

SIMOME (*Turning.*) Oui?

CHILD (*Approaching KATE.*) An autograph?

SIMONE But of course. . .

CHILD Please, Miss McGrew?

HECTOR (*Calling from offstage.*) Simone?!

SIMONE (*A little annoyed as she goes off.*) Oui, oui, oui -- I'm corning. . . !

KATE (*Finishing signing the autograph book.*) There you go.

CHILD When I grow up, I want to be a detective too.

KATE If that's what you want, then I hope someday you are. (*CHILD rushes off in the direction of the others. KATE speaks to herself, adopting the voice style of the RADIO REPORTER, using a pair of knitting scissors as a "microphone".*) But tell us, Kate McGrew, what do you want to be when you grow up? Well, I don't expect Mr. Bolevsky to ask me to join the Ballet Neva, and my career as a photographer has been interrupted, and I certainly don't think I'll take up knitting. What a mess!

The deck is empty now, except for KATE and a strange, turbaned man who turns around and observes her. The distant sounds of the dedication ceremony offstage. KATE crouches to gather up the knitting debris from the deck floor as OMAR stealthily approaches her, his gaze intent upon an object on the floor. Just as he stoops to pick it up, KATE notices the small black clutch purse and picks it up instead.

KATE Hmm. Aunt Bea's purse. (*KATE suddenly notices the stranger's presence.*) Oh! (*At first OMAR's look is quite dark with disappointment. He covers his presence beside her by picking up a pair of knitting needles from the floor.*) I . . . I didn't notice yore were here.

OMAR You were not meant to.

KATE (*Puzzled by the response.*) No?

OMAR An element of surprise is the very essence of my life. I am a magician, you see.

KATE A magician?

OMAR (*Handing her the knitting needles.*) I am called "Omar".

KATE Oh, thank you. (*She dumps the needles in the bag and offers her hand.*) I am very pleased to meet you, Mr. . .

OMAR Just "Omar". And the pleasure is entirely mine, Miss McGrew.

KATE (*Slightly disappointed.*) Oh. You know who I am too?

OMAR Does that bother you?

KATE I'm just not used to the attention, that's all.

OMAR Perhaps that is one reason why many detectives wear a disguise.

KATE Oh, I doubt I'll ever be so famous as to have to wear a disguise.

OMAR A woman so young and gifted as you should not discount the possibilities in the future.

KATE *(With a laugh.)* You sound like a fortune teller, Mr. Omar. *(OMAR raises an eyebrow and smiles.)* Are you?

OMAR I am many things, Miss McGrew. A magician, a mystic, a mind reader, a mesmerist. . .

KATE A hypnotist, you mean?

OMAR It is similar.

KATE No offense intended, Mr. Omar, but I've never been much a believer in things like that.

OMAR But hypnosis is a science. By inducing a state of trance, one may exercise a certain influence over the will of his subject. It is not a trick, Miss McGrew; it is very real.

KATE And how, exactly, is a trance induced?

OMAR I would ask you to simply look into my eyes. Or if that makes you uneasy, this crimson spot on my forehead.

KATE A Hindu caste mark. Do you come from India?

OMAR Afghanistan. But India - there is a land full of wonder. Strange and different peoples. Lovely people. Temples of marble, where the air is heavy with incense and precious oils. Voices at prayer, murmuring voices, as the warm sun shimmers on lilies gently floating in quiet pools for meditation. . .

KATE *(Gazing at his caste mark; a drone.)* Yes. . . lilies. . . flowers. . . red poppies. . . I see fields of poppies. . .

OMAR Blossoms bowing softly in the breeze. The poppies look like rubies in the light. They seem to glow.

KATE Yes...

OMAR And the wind over the rubies gives a sound like a whisper. A distant whisper.

The MUTE, a man dressed also in Eastern garb, appears at OMAR's signal and tiptoes toward KATE.

KATE Bees. The rubies sound like bees in a meadow.

OMAR A meadow of shimmering rubies.

As MUTE reaches for the purse in KATE'S hand, the distant crowd sounds crescendo with screams and applause as the ship's horn blares. KATE suddenly "snaps out" of her trance with a gasp of fright as MUTE leaps back a step. OMAR holds KATE by the shoulders to comfort her .

OMAR Don't be frightened, Kate McGrew. The ship is ready to depart.

KATE *(Seeing the confetti and streamers fall.)* The ceremony. . . yes, of course. *(She shakes her head to clear her mind.)* Well, Mr. Omar , it seems I owe you an apology.

OMAR You do?

KATE For doubting your abilities. You had me mesmerized.

OMAR Not entirely.

KATE *(Noticing the MUTE standing near.)* Oh. Hello. *(MUTE bows in reply.)*

OMAR My assistant. You must forgive him; he does not speak.

KATE You mean he doesn't speak English?

Another blare of the ship's horn drowns out any reply OMAR may offer.

OMAR May I help you with your bag?

KATE No need; it's more bulky than it is heavy. If you'll excuse me, I really ought to try and find my uncle.

OMAR The much-respected lord Marley.

KATE That's right. *(A somewhat nervous smile.)* You know quite a lot, don't you? *(OMAR returns the smile and bows.)* It was most fascinating to make your acquaintance, Mr. Omar. Good day.

OMAR Good day, Miss McGrew. *(KATE nods to MUTE then exits. OMAR watches her and finally turns to the MUTE as he steps nearer.)* Watch them. All of them. But above all, keep a sharp eye on the young American girl.

MUTE exits after KATE as OMAR rubs his chin in thought. Lights slowly fade to Blackout.

Act One, Scene 2

Later that afternoon. A first-class cabin with bed; vanity table with mirror, glass cosmetics tray, a radio, lamp, and perhaps a chair. Porthole windows to exterior deck with curtains. A suitcase is at the bottom of the bed.

KATE opens the door and enters her cabin, dumps the knitting bag on the bed which tips over and spills its contents somewhat. She turns on the lamp, adjusts the radio volume, surveys the room, removes her wristwatch and places it on the cosmetics tray on the table.

KATE *(To herself.)* Golly! Look at the time!

She opens her suitcase, finds a frock and a hairbrush which she tosses on the vanity tray, partially draws the curtains over the windows and takes the dress into the bathroom with her. The sound of running water into a washbasin and KATE humming a tune.

The curtain stirs at the window and a hand, arm, and finally a head poke through the opened window. It is the MUTE. He begins, to maneuver his body into the room but, halfway in, he notices the door to the corridor slowly swing open and so he quickly retreats and disappears from view.

BECKWORTH (Peering in; very softly.) Yoo-hoo?

Seeing no one, she repeats her call and also knocks extremely quietly upon the door jamb. Satisfied that KATE is quite occupied in the bathroom, MRS. BECKWORTH immediately descends upon the girl's suitcase and takes inventory. Annoyed at how commonplace its contents are, she moves to Bea's knitting bag and is about to snoop through it just as KATE enters from the bathroom and immediately ceases her humming at the sight of MRS. BECKWORTH.

KATE Mrs. Beckworth?

BECKWORTH (Whirling around to see her.) Katie! (A brief, awkward pause.) Well. . . so this is your cabin! How luxurious! Well, your door was just as wide open as it could possibly be, and I did call out ever so loudly, but I imagine you simply were unable to hear me while in the powder room.

KATE Is there anything I can do for you, Mrs. Beckworth?

BECKWORTH Why, aren't you sweet to ask, but no, Katie, I just stopped in for a chat with my neighbor - good old Southern etiquette, that's all. And I'm tickled to death to learn it's your cabin that's right next door to ours!

KATE Is it really?

BECKWORTH Why, yes! You know, Katie, I do feel it's important for us Americans to, well, you know - stick together. I declare this is one big floating League of Nations -- French, Russians, Hindus. Anyway, I'm just as pleased as punch to have you near.

KATE It's awfully kind of you to say so, Mrs. Beckworth.

BECKWORTH I know.

KATE Yes. Well. . . I'm dreadfully afraid that, unless there is something in particular you wanted, I'm in a bit of a hurry and. . .

BECKWORTH *(Quickly interrupting.)* Bless my soul, how the time does fly! I just know you'll forgive me if I dash, Katie, but I simply can't spare another second of my time. I've got to fetch my men and get along to dinner.

LIONEL *(A gruff call from the corridor.)* Margaret?! Margaret! Where the devil are you?

BECKWORTH stiffens and utters a groan, almost as a reflex at the sound of LIONEL'S voice, but then instantly puts on a smile for KATE'S benefit.

BECKWORTH Why, I do believe I hear my sweetheart beckon.

LIONEL Margaret?!

BECKWORTH *(A call.)* In here, Lionel-lamb!

LIONEL *(Appearing in the doorway.)* I might have known. Margaret, shake a leg; we're going to be late.

BECKWORTH I was about to do just that, darling.

LIONEL No doubt.

BECKWORTH Honestly, Lionel - you'll have plenty of time for a cocktail before dinner commences, if that's what's troubling you.

LIONEL It's that precious son of yours what's troubling me, Margaret.

BECKWORTH Our son, dear. What's the matter?

LIONEL You tell me. He's been belly-aching about our cabin for the past ten minutes and I'm about ready to strangle him, that's all.

BECKWORTH Why, my poor Gerald's more than likely suffering a touch of seasickness, is all.

LIONEL Well, whatever it is, just go deal with it, would you please?

BECKWORTH *(To KATE.)* We'll chat again real soon, Katie.

MRS. BECKWORTH exits.

LIONEL Listen, kid. Don't let my wife get to you; know what I mean? If that happens, you just let me know and I'll take care of it.

KATE I don't expect I'll ever need to.

LIONEL Don't bet on it - it's a real long shot. And it's double or nothing with Gerald. *(A slight pause.)* See you later, kid. *(LIONEL turns away with a sigh as if heading for battle.)* Ain't we got fun.

KATE looks after him, puzzled, then closes the door and locks it. She goes to her suitcase and closes it, then tidies up the knitting on the bed.

KATE *(During the preceding activity.)* Now what in the world was that all about? And what was Mrs. Beckworth doing in here in the first place?

BEA *(Knocking at the door.)* Kate? Are you there, Kate?

KATE *(Opening the door.)* Come in, Aunt Bea.

BEA My dear, hadn't you better get ready?

KATE I've been trying to, but I was interrupted by the Beckworths.

BEA Oh, you poor thing. Clive said you had my knitting gear and I thought I'd get it out of the way.

KATE And your purse, too.

BEA I beg your pardon?

KATE *(Showing it to her.)* It was with your knitting.

BEA Well, it isn't mine; I have my purse.

KATE Whose then, I wonder.

BEA Why not have a look inside and see if there's any identification.

KATE *(Opening the purse as BEA gathers her stuff.)* Well, there's certainly nothing of value in here: a key, a few coins - shillings, a lace handkerchief. . . oh, it has a monogram: "M.R.". And here's a crumpled piece of paper. . .

BEA *(Looking up and cocking her head.)* Now what's that, Kate?

KATE A note, I think.

BEA No dear; that sound, I mean.

KATE Oh, I left the tap running in the bathroom.

BEA I'll get it.

KATE Thanks, Aunt Bea. *(BEA exits into the bathroom as KATE reads the note.)* Hmm - - what dreadful writing; I can barely make it out. "I know your secret. You cannot escape me. You will obey all instructions I send you."

CLIVE *(Suddenly bursting into the room.)* Kate!

KATE jumps in fright, dropping the purse into the knitting bag beneath it.

KATE Folly, Uncle Clive! You scared me half to death!

CLIVE Frightfully sorry, my girl. I say, pity our not connecting earlier. Beckworths wouldn't let me go. Kidnapped on the high seas, what?

KATE has retrieved the purse from the knitting bag and closes it, placing it on the vanity. BEA returns in the room. KATE takes her dress and goes into the bathroom to change.

CLIVE Ah, there you are, Bea. Been looking high and low. Could you lend a hand with this blasted tie? I never can seem to get it right.

BER Because you've always had me about to do it for you.

CLIVE Is that it? I always thought it a devilishly clever means to be near you, my dear. *(He leans forward and gives BEA a kiss.)*

BEA Oh, Clive . . . do be still for a moment now, can't you? *(Calling into the bathroom as she ties CLIVE's tie.)* Did you find any identification then, Kate?

KATE Only the monogram on the handkerchief.

BEA "M.R." , you said?

KATE That's right.

BEA It isn't much to go on, is it? There could be any number of women an board with those initials.

CLIVE Here now, would you mind letting the old man in on this?

KATE It's that purse on the vanity, Uncle Clive. I found it on deck. and I don't know whose it is.

CLIVE Well, then, I can only suggest you turn it over to the purser.

BEA *(With a smile.)* Oh, really, Clive! Kate can give it to Captain Warren; we're at table with him tonight.

KATE *(Returning into the room.)* Dinner at the Captain's table? That's swell!

CLIVE So we'd best press on; mustn't keep the good man waiting , eh?

KATE You go on ahead; I'll be there in a flash.

CLIVE *(To KATE, as BEA exits past him.)* Mind you, don't get kidnapped on the way by the dreaded "M.R.B." *(He winks and disappears.)*

KATE "M.R.B."?! Oh -- Margaret Rodney Beckworth! *(A thought.)* Margaret Rodney Beckworth? Of course! Take off the dunce cap, Kate -- Margaret Rodney is "M.R.,"! She's just remarried so she still has her

old monogram on her handkerchiefs. I'll bet she was in here looking for her purse. (*KATE picks up a hairbrush.*) Well, some big mystery that was, Kate. Except. . . what about that note? "I know your secret. You cannot escape me." Could somebody be threatening Mrs. Beckworth?

A young steward, BOB CARMICHAEL, appears at the open door and knocks.

BOB Pardon me. Miss McGrew?

KATE Yes?

BOB Hi. I'm Bob Carmichael. Your steward.

KATE You are? Well, how do you do? (*She offers her hand and they shake.*)

BOB Fine, thanks. And you?

KATE A bit rushed, to tell you the truth.

BOB I know what you mean. I've been pretty busy myself, getting this and that for all your fellow celebrities.

KATE "Fellow celebrities"? You flatter me, Mr. Carmichael.

BOB Are you kidding? (*They exchange a look in silence for a moment.*)
Anyway, I just stopped by to offer you my services and let you know the evening's agenda. (*He shuffles through the papers on his clipboard.*) At dinner, you're to be seated at. . . .

KATE The Captain's table. I know.

BOB You do? Oh, of course -- detectives have a way of knowing things, don't they? So I suppose you know about the ballroom dancing afterwards.

KATE Yes. But there is one thing I don't know.

BOB What's that?

KATE How do you get to the dining room?

BOB Allow me to escort you.

KATE Oh, would you? I'd be awfully grateful, Mr. Carmichael.

BOB Please - the name's "Bob".

KATE *(Heading for the door.)* Alright. "Bob". If you call me "Kate". *(KATE turns off the light switch.)*

BOB Don't forget your purse.

KATE Oh - thanks for reminding me.

BOB Can't let a lady go about without her purse.

KATE You're so right. But I never carry one myself.

BOB You don't?

KATE Never.

BOB Then whose is that?

KATE Exactly.

KATE closes the door and lights quickly fade.

Act One, Scene 3

The ballroom; after dinner. There are two or three tables with chairs at the perimeter of a dance area. Upstage left is a bandstand/stage platform; stage right is an entrance which leads to the offstage dining room. At this entrance there also is a pedestal supporting a life-size statue of Lavinia.

In the blackout there is music and laughter. Lights rise on PASSENGERS laughing, dancing, drinking as an all-female BAND plays a contemporary dance tune. ROLAND and FELICE, an

exhibition dance couple, dominate the floor. LIONEL is present, observing, and calls for a STEWARD to bring him another whiskey. GERALD sulks nearby. KATE and CAPTAIN enter from the dining room ; BEA and CLIVE follow them. When KATE notices LIONEL, she excuses herself from the CAPTAIN and approaches LIONEL. KATE still carries the mysterious purse.

KATE Mr. Beckworth?

LIONEL Hi, kid. Something I can do for you?

KATE Actually , I'm looking for your wife.

LIONEL In "The Little Girl's Room". Is it important?

KATE I think this is her purse and I wanted to return it.

LIONEL I'll give it to her, kid.

KATE No, that's okay, I can wait.

LIONEL No – I'll take it; I don't mind.

BECKWORTH (*Appearing.*) Well, hello, Katie dear! Weren't you a vision sitting up at the Captain's table with all eyes in the room agog at you.

KATE (*Showing the purse.*) Mrs. Beckworth, is this yours?

BECKWORTH Is that a purse?

LIONEL No, Margaret, it's her tobacco pouch. Of course it's a purse - yours! Take it!

BECKWORTH Mine?

LIONEL Of course.

KATE Isn't it?

BECKWORTH Whatever made you think it was?

LIONEL Margaret, you had it on our honeymoon. Take it!

BECKWORTH Mine disappeared - remember? At one of all those casinos you dragged me to.

KATE Disappeared? I hope you didn't lose much.

BECKWORTH All my cash. And ever since, Gerald and I have been forced to live entirely out of Lionel's pocket.

GERALD Speaking of cash, Lionel - could you advance me a sawbuck from my allowance?

LIONEL No dice!

GERALD Aw, c'mon.

BECKWORTH Later, Gerald.

GERALD But Mama. . . .

BECKWORTH Now, Gerald, you heard your papa. . . *(Taking him by the arm and spitting out her words in hushed, severe tones.)* Don't you ever beg for money in public again! There are other times and better ways, you hear? *(Turning back to KATE and LIONEL.)* Now, Gerald, where are your manners? Ask the celebrated Miss McGrew to dance.

GERALD Come on, kid; let's kick up some dust.

GERALD and KATE dance briefly and most awkwardly. The purse flies out of KATE'S hand onto the floor at the feet of BOLEVSKY, MIROVA, and DEMEROVITCH, who are entering. As BOLEVSKY rushes down to pick the purse up, GERALD rushes over and grabs it and returns it to KATE. BAND finishes playing. Applause.

VERA Thank you, thank you. And let's have another hand for our young exhibition dance couple: Roland and Felice. *(ROLAND and FELICE bow.)* And now, your cruise director, Miss Sigrid Nordstrom.

SIGRID There will be shuffleboard and deck tennis tomorrow at ten. Also there will be the cardboard piggy competition on the sundeck. And now I give you Captain Warren.

CAPTAIN I'll be brief. We have more for you to eat, plenty to drink. . .

DRUNK That's right! Ha prohibition here!

CAPTAIN . . . and music and dancing through the night. (*SIGRID whispers in his ear.*) Yes, and for those who tire of dancing, we have the motion picture, "Son of the Sheik". . . (*A couple of WOMEN squeal and exclaim: "Rudolph, ahhh!"*)

SIGRID That's right, ladies, the late Rudolph Valentino in his final screen appearance. Nine-thirty in the cinema.

CAPTAIN Thank you, Miss Nordstrom. Enough talk. Miss Vera and Her Voyagers await; so then -- as the immortal bard says in "Romeo and Juliet", Act I, Scene v: "Come, musicians, play."

Applause as CAPTAIN steps down and makes his way across the dance floor as BAND begins to play a tango. GERALD makes a bee-line for KATE.

DEMEROVITCH (*Stepping in front of GERALD.*) May I have this dance, Miss McGrew?

KATE (*As DEMEROVITCH takes her away.*) Wow!

GERALD Hey, what's the big idea?!

LIONEL Lost your girl, Gerry?

GERALD I haven't lost anything. And don't call me "Jerry".

We see DEMEROVITCH whirl, dip, and pivot KATE about and, in the process, we see that KATE is quite an accomplished dancer herself. Due, in part, to the nature of the tango DEMEROVITCH, at times, is seen with the purse in his hand.

There are other tangoing couples besides DEMEROVITCH and KATE and LIONEL and MRS. BECKWORTH: SIMONE LASALLE and CLIVE, BEA and CAPTAIN, BOLEVSKY and MIROVA, HECTOR and SIGRID, among others. The purse is seen in every couples' hands during the tango. OMAR and MUTE stand and observe for a while and then disappear from view.

GERALD stands at the edge of the dance floor and tries as best he can to maneuver his way into the dancers, but is blocked from doing so, much like a pedestrian attempting to cross a busy street of traffic. BOLEVSKY and MIROVA, as they dance, linger very near DEMEROVITCH and KATE -- indeed it may appear that, once or twice, MIROVA reaches for the purse when DEMEROVITCH swings it in her vicinity. This is interrupted, however, by GERALD'S eventual success at getting onto the floor [spin disrupting the activity and calling attention to himself] and the young man lurches toward MIROVA and BOLEVSKY, causing them to nearly collide with him. GERALD taps BOLEVSKY on the shoulder and clears his throat.

GERALD Ahem.

BOLEVSKY Yes?

GERALD I'm cutting in.

BOLEVSKY You are what?

GERALD It's an American custom. It means "Hand over the girl".

GERALD takes MIROVA in his hands as BOLEVSKY stands dumbfounded. MIROVA looks at him with a mixture of confusion, despair, and fear. BOLEVSKY shrugs his shoulders & moves off the dance floor. The tango does not continue very long, but for the remainder, MIROVA does everything she can to keep GERALD from stepping on her feet. The dance ends to applause and various PASSENGERS mill about in preparation for the next dance. SIMONE and CLIVE return to a table. SIMONE removes her fur stole as CLIVE pulls a chair out for her. They are joined by BEA and CAPTAIN and KATE, who has been abandoned somewhat brusquely by DEMEROVITCH who immediately marches up to BOLEVSKY and MIROVA at the edge of the dance floor.

DEMEROVITCH (Very angry.) I warned you there would be trouble, Bolevsky.

BOLEVSKY Quiet, fool!

MIROVA Do not fight. Please, Konstantin - calm yourself. Go get for me my shawl. Will you, Konstantin? I am old. . . .

DEMEROVITCH What? Am I to play your servant now as well?

BOLEVSKY Enough! Do as Yantaria asks. Go. We do not need your help.

DEMEROVITCH You don't? *(A slight pause.)* Very well, Bolevsky, I go. But you may regret how you dismiss me so. Maestro! *(To MIROVA, sarcastically.)* "Your imperial Majesty"!

DEMEROVITCH angrily stomps through the ballroom and out. BOLEVSKY notices that the PASSENGERS have turned their attention to them and that VERA and the band are waiting to announce the next dance.

BOLEVSKY *(Hoping to make a joke of it all.)* Dancers. . . always they are so temperamental, no? *(PASSENGERS chuckle and BOLEVSKY laughs and shrugs.)*

VERA And now a little favorite of mine called "My Baby's Gone Away, But That's Okay, I Ain't His Mother". Ready, girls?

KATE *(As CAPTAIN offers his arm.)* Keep an eye on the purse, Uncle Clive -- okay?

CLIVE Like a hawk, my girl.

HECTOR *(Stepping up to the table.)* Lady Marley, dare I presume. . . ?

BEA Oh, I'm getting tired of this Lady Marley nonsense. My name is Bea and I'd be delighted to dance with you, young man. Let's do it.

The band has begun to play and COUPLES dance. KATE and CAPTAIN, BEA and HECTOR, BOLEVSKY and MIROVA, and now GERALD with SIGRID. MRS. BECKWORTH looks petulantly at LIONEL, who downs another whiskey and is beginning to show the effects of his drinking. CLIVE offers his arm to SIMONE for another dance.

CLIVE Encore, Mademoiselle?

SIMONE Ah, oui , merci , Monsieur. You speak French?

CLIVE Un peu. Ma femme et moi, et les enfants, bien sur , nous avons passe plusieurs etes au sud de la France.

SIMONE *(Suddenly holding him very close.)* Oh, please, Lord Marley, do not speak to me in French. If I am to be a success in the talkies I must learn the English, oui?

CLIVE If you insist.

SIMONE *(Kissing CLIVE on the cheek.)* Merci!

LIONEL walks up to them.

LIONEL How you doing, Miss LaSalle? Clive? I was wondering, old fellow, if you'd like to play a bit of cards later on.

CLIVE Bridge?

LIONEL What would you say to a few sporting rounds of poker?

CLIVE Poker?

LIONEL Smoking lounge? Ten-thirty?

CLIVE Sounds bully, Lionel. Bully.

LIONEL Say, Miss LaSalle -- does your manager ever indulge in any gambling?

SIMONE Ha! I'll say! I mean, Monsieur Beckworth the entertainment business is always a gamble, no?

LIONEL If it's like any other business.

Dance ends to applause. HECTOR immediately returns BEA to the table. CAPTAIN and KATE remain talking silently to one another on the dance floor. LIONEL speaks with HECTOR who takes SIMONE away from the MARLEY'S table, taking SIMONE's fur, too. KATE approaches her Aunt and Uncle after LIONEL, HECTOR, and SIMONE have left.

BEA *(To CLIVE.)* Did you have a pleasant dance with Miss LaSalle? Do let me wipe that lip rouge from your cheek , dear.

CLIVE Tried to polish up my French, but she'd have none of it. Only wanted to speak English.

As BEA takes a handkerchief from her purse and wipes CLIVE'S cheek, KATE searches about the table.

KATE The purse! Uncle Clive, where's the purse?!

CLIVE Why, it's right here.. . oh, bother! Is it on the floor?

CLIVE and KATE get down on their hands and knees and search about. HECTOR returns, carrying the fox stole of SIMONE's.

HECTOR Lord Marley, what are you doing on the floor?

CLIVE Looking for a purse.

HECTOR This one? (HECTOR lifts the fox's head to reveal the purse lodged in its mouth.) Miss LaSalle's fox has been a bit of a thief, it seems.

KATE (Taking the purse from HECTOR.) Thank you, Mr. Frye.

HECTOR steps away to meet SIMONE at another table. A drum roll from the band as CAPTAIN steps up to make another announcement.

CAPTAIN Ladies and gentlemen -- one of your fellow guests has generously offered to perform for you tonight. In the words of the bard of Avon from As You Like It, Act Five, Scene Four: "A great magician." I give you -- Omar!

Another drum roll and the lights dim. A puff of smoke and OMAR and MUTE are revealed in a spotlight's beam which will follow OMAR throughout his performance.

OMAR Magic is a thing of mystery. Some magic may be easily explained; some not. And perhaps the simplest of tricks are those which appear to us the most mysterious. Let us begin with something simple. Mrs. Beckworth? Your scarf, if you please?

BECKWORTH My pleasure, Mr. Omar. (She gives OMAR her scarf and he performs the standard trick of transforming its color and pattern. He restores the

scarf to its original form and PASSENGERS applaud.) Now wasn't that amusing!

OMAR From a scarf we progress to. . . (*Spotlight moves across the room and rests on OLGA, who nervously holds her arm up to hide her face from the glaring light. She carries a large, embroidered shawl.*) . . . a shawl.

BOLEVSKY and MIROVA turn suddenly and, upon seeing the maid, move swiftly toward her as OMAR also approaches her.

BOLEVSKY Why are you here? You must go. Go at once!

OLGA The shawl. Konstantin Demerovitch told me to bring it.

OMAR If you will permit me. . .

BOLEVSKY What?

OMAR The shawl. . . may I?

BOLEVSKY Yes, yes -- take it! You go now, Olga.

OMAR May she not remain?

MIROVA No!

BOLEVSKY (*Severely, as OLGA swiftly exits.*) She is a servant. She has no business here.

OMAR (*To MIROVA.*) Will you wear the shawl, Mademoiselle? (*MIROVA, slightly hesitant, obliges. OMAR gently takes her hand.*) You have nothing to fear. (*He looks deeply into her eyes.*) I see a distant land; a distant time. I see the homeland. Russia. I see a woman with smiles of happiness - great joy - before the fear and sorrow, before the hate and persecution.

MIROVA (*Pulling her hand away.*) Nyet! No more.

BOLEVSKY Please, the memory, it gives to us great pain remembering the days before the revolution.

OMAR An article of clothing may tell a story in the textile, the weave, the dyes employed, the pattern of its embroidery. . . .

KATE Then one might say you're actually less a Houdini and more a Sherlock Holmes.

OMAR A bit of both, Miss McGrew. A history can be drawn from a common object as if it were a record of its journey, like a passport. May I borrow your passport, Mr. Frye?

HECTOR Huh? Uhh. . . sorry, I seem to have left it in my other jacket.

OMAR Very well, then. A photograph.

HECTOR Haven't got that, either.

OMAR No? And you, always flashing the camera?

HECTOR I've got the night off. A fellow can't be working all the time, can he?

OMAR That would depend upon his line of work.

CLIVE *(A call to OMAR.)* Will any photograph suffice? Bea's got one, haven't you, dear?

BEA Well, yes, you know I always carry that photo of. . .

OMAR Your ladyship, please. Not another word. May I? *(He holds out his hand and BEA gives him a photograph she has taken from her purse.)* Your children, Brian and Lydia, last summer on holiday at the estate of prime minister MacDonald.

CLIVE Astonishing!

BEA How could you know?

OMAR That is the Sherlock Holmes of it. Now I give you the Houdini. *(He shreds the photograph before them.)*

BEA Oh, I wish you hadn't. . . !

OMAR You needn't be alarmed, your Ladyship; if I may borrow your knitting a moment. . . .

BEA *(Giving it up reticently.)* Do take care, won't you? I've labored the past four days. . . . a most intricate pattern . . . oh, dear.

OMAR places the photograph pieces onto the knitting, closes the knitting together, then opens it again and a restored photograph is revealed. Applause.

SIMONE What? What did he do? I couldn't see, Hector.

OMAR Ah - Mademoiselle. . . *(Taking SIMONE's hand as he speaks.)* Quel dommage. Puts-j'essai encore une fois? Ca serait ma plaisir, mais j'aurai besoin de votre assistance.

CLIVE *(To KATE.)* He's asking Miss LaSalle if she'd help him with another.

SIMONE *(A nervous giggle.)* Huh? Oh, mais oui, Monsieur Omar.

OMAR *(Holding up her bracelet.)* The lady's bracelet.

SIMONE *(Holding her wrist in surprise.)* How did you get that from me?

HECTOR Hey, now you be careful. . . .

SIMONE Let him, Hector; it is not real. . . I mean, really that valuable.

OMAR Indeed? Then you won't mind if I *(He holds the bracelet in the palm of his hand and makes a fist. A shower of glitter falls from his hand.)*

HECTOR Where is it? What have you done? Don't try to fool me. Where's that bracelet?

SIMONE Relax, Hector -- he'll bring it back. Won't you?

OMAR Ask your manager instead, Miss LaSalle. Did he not give it to you in the first place?

SIMONE Oui.

OMAR I suspect there might be more where that came from.

HECTOR What do you mean?

OMAR You don't know? Then let us have a look in here. . . (*OMAR reaches into HECTOR'S inner breast packet.*) . . . *voila, Monsieur.* (*OMAR pulls out the bracelet to applause.*) You may not have a passport in your pocket, Mr. Frye, but a trinket such as this might get one very far indeed. (*OMAR hands the bracelet back to SIMONE. PASSENGERS chuckle.*)

HECTOR (*With a smile.*) You're quite a card, Mr. Omar.

OMAR "Card", Mr. Frye? I take my cue. (*MUTE hands OMAR a deck of cards.*) May I ask for your assistance, Mr. Rodney?

GERALD With the cards? Sure; I can deal with them. (*GERALD laughs at his wit; SPECTATORS groan.*)

OMAR Concentrate on the cards, young man. (*GERALD pulls a card from the deck, shows it to the other PASSENGERS.*) It is a joker.

GERALD (*As SPECTATORS applaud.*) Big deal - - the cards are probably marked.

OMAR I sincerely hope not. They are your stepfather's cards.

LIONEL (*Reaching into his coat pocket.*) What?!

OMAR And now, ladies and gentlemen, my assistant and I thank you for your kind participation and bid you a good evening. (*OMAR and MUTE bow to applause.*)

KATE But no, Mr. Omar. You can't end yet.

OMAR Miss McGrew?

KATE Encore! Encore! (*KATE leads the PASSENGERS in a call for an "encore."*)

OMAR Very well. If you insist, One more. For you, Miss Kate McGrew.

KATE Thanks. I have this purse. (*KATE rises to take it to him; OMAR holds up his hand as a signal for her to remain.*)

OMAR If you please, Miss McGrew, I would prefer that you pass it to me. To diminish your influence over it -- to make it more of a challenge.

KATE Alright.

The purse is passed among virtually EVERYONE in the room before it reaches OMAR. Both OMAR and KATE closely study the faces as the various people hold it.

OMAR (*Holding the purse.*) Good. It feels to me now as though the purse were never yours. (*OMAR pauses for a moment.*) It was made and purchased in France.

KATE Which city?

OMAR Calais. Just across the English channel.

KATE Yes...?

OMAR That is all.

KATE But what about its contents?

OMAR Ah, young lady -- Omar is a magician, yes; but a gentleman as well. A woman's purse – I would not dare to describe its secrets. But, I would not disappoint you utterly. . . . (*OMAR hides the purse behind his cape momentarily and opens it again to reveal a bouquet of flowers.*) Flowers, Miss McGrew - from a gentleman admirer. (*KATE takes the bouquet to applause.*) And the purse returned as well. (*He hands her back the purse and bows again to all.*) Thank you.

OMAR goes through the group, shaking hands with those who assisted him with the performance. CAPTAIN goes to OMAR and silently converses with him. Dance music resumes and COUPLES fill the floor. KATE makes a loud announcement to BEA and CLIVE.

KATE Will you excuse me?

BEA Off somewhere, Kate?

KATE I'm just going out onto the deck for a while.

BEA Would you like some company?

KATE No thanks, Aunt Bea. I'd rather be alone.

KATE slowly exits past BOLEVSKY, MIROVA, LIONEL, MRS. BECKWORTH, SIMONE, HECTOR, OMAR, and MUTE – nodding to each as she passes, holding the purse up before her as an obvious lure. Lights slowly fade on the ballroom while dancing; music continues into the Blackout.

Act One, Scene 4

An isolated section of deck. Moonlight; a mist rises up from below the railing to create an eerie atmosphere. Sounds of the band and laughter in the distance. KATE stands alone at the railing, looking out to sea. She sighs impatiently and turns around to regard the two doors which lead out onto the deck.

KATE Alright, "M.R." , here's your chance. Come and get your purse. You can trust me. I won't tell a soul you have a secret.

LIONEL *(Stumbling out the door.)* Oh, hi, kid - want a drink? *(He offers her his flask.)*

KATE No thanks, Mr. Beckworth.

LIONEL Didn't think so. Well, don't mind if I do. Hell, we've all of us got our little flaws, haven't we? Temptations. . . weaknesses. . . I ought to know, I've built a whole career around 'em.

KATE What do you mean?

LIONEL Business, Kate McGrew. I'm talking dog eat dog. I'm talking what have you got, how bad do I want it, and how can I get it and make a killing in the process. Now do you know what I mean?

KATE *(Not sure; somewhat uncomfortable.)* Uhhh.. .

LIONEL Take that purse for example.

KATE *(Nervously.)* This purse?

LIONEL Give you twenty bucks for it.

KATE What?

LIONEL Alright then -- fifty. A hundred? Give you a hundred dollars for that purse.

KATE But you know it couldn't possibly be worth that much.

LIONEL Do I? I don't know what's inside it. Or maybe I do, but it's worth it to me. Or maybe I know I could sell it to somebody else for two hundred. Or. . .

KATE But what if it isn't mine to sell?

LIONEL So what? You've got it. Most of the stuff I buy and sell each day I've never even seen. It's nothing but numbers - and paper. Just so much paper. But we can't live without that green paper, can we? *(He takes another swig from his flask. BOB appears.)*

BOB Evening, Kate. Mr. Beckworth.

KATE *(Relieved to see him.)* Oh, Bob.

BOB Could I get you anything? A drink, Mr. Beckworth?

LIONEL *(Stumbling away.)* No need. Pack my own. G'night.

KATE Goodnight, Mr. Beckworth.

BOB gives a soft whistle of amazement as they watch LIONEL exit.

BOB Whew Everything okay, Kate?

KATE Fine. I was waiting for someone else when he came along.

BOB (Slightly crestfallen.) Oh.

KATE But I don't think she's going to show up after all.

BOB Oh - you were waiting for a woman?

KATE Yes. Why not stay a minute and chat?

BOB Sure, Kate.

KATE Tell me about the ship. How did it get its name?

BOB Lavinia?

KATE Yes. Who is she?

BOB You really want to know?

KATE Of course. Why not?

BOB It's just not the best of bedtime stories, that's all. Lavinia's a character in one of Shakespeare's plays. A girl who had her hands chopped off and her tongue cut out.

KATE How come?!

BOB She witnessed a crime, and the villain - a woman, to be exact, did it to keep Lavinia from speaking or writing about it. That's her statue in the ballroom. . . (KATE shudders.) . . . what is it, Kate; are cold? Let me get you a blanket.

KATE No, it's just that Lavinia story gave me the heebie-jeebies.

HECTOR appears.

HECTOR *(Clears his throat.)* Hello?

KATE Huh? Oh, Mr. Frye. Good evening.

HECTOR Pardon me if I'm interrupting. . . .

BOB Not at all.

HECTOR Young man, Miss LaSalle is feeling a bit under the weather; could you go to her cabin and see what she needs?

BOB Right away.

HECTOR Much obliged.

KATE *(As BOB rushes off.)* Goodnight, Bob.

BOB *(Offstage.)* 'Night, Kate.

HECTOR I thought I saw that Omar fellow come this way.

KATE I haven't seen him.

HECTOR So tell me, what did you think of "Omar the Magnificent"? Pretty good, huh?

KATE Oh, I don't know.

HECTOR He was sharp enough with the cards. I'd like to get the lowdown on them before I play poker with Beckworth.

KATE Well, I hope you find him. Goodnight, Mr. Frye.

HECTOR Same to you, Miss McGrew. *(He exits. KATE sighs and looks at her wristwatch.)*

KATE Okay, 'M.R.' – I'm giving you five more minutes and then I'm taking your old purse back to my cabin and going to be 'M.R.'... 'M.R.'... *(A gasp of realization.)* 'M.R.' – 'Om – Ar!' Omar! A stage name taken from his real initials? Wait! A stage name, Kate! A stage

name...! (*KATE hears the sound of one of the doors slowly open. She turns around and looks at the darkness in the doorway.*) Hello? Who is it? Who's there?

From out of the doorway appears a FIGURE holding a blanket in front of him. He rushes out and descends on KATE, covering her with the blanket. They struggle. The sound of BOB's voice approaching.

BOB (*Offstage.*) Kate? Kate? (*The FIGURE rushes off through the door. KATE is not hurt, only shaken. BOB enters, carrying a blanket.*) Kate? Oh, good – you're still here. I thought I'd bring you a blanket after all... oh, you've already got one.

KATE I'll say.

BOB Miss LaSalle wasn't in her cabin. Need any aspirin?

KATE No thanks. But there is something I would like.

BOB Name it.

KATE A passenger list?

BOB Sure. They'll be printed in the morning.

ANNOUNCEMENT (*Over the PA system*) Steward Bob Carmichael, please. Paging Stewart Carmichael to cabin twelve, please.

BOB Gotta run, Kate.

KATE See you tomorrow, Bob. (*He is off.*) Wow - now that sure was a close call! At least I've still got the purse. But what's in it they're after? The note? No - the key! (*KATE lets the blanket drop to the floor as she opens the purse.*) The key! It's gone! But how? I never let go of... Oh, Kate, you big chump -- they got it in the ballroom! At least half a dozen people had their hands on this purse long enough to reach in and take it. So, then -- "M,R." has her key, and kept her secret. But if that's true, who was just here? Obviously someone doesn't know the key is missing - and they want it pretty bad. Better watch your step, Kate. Better watch your step.

KATE looks around nervously, and then quickly exits. MUTE appears through the other door. He picks up the blanket KATE left abandoned on the floor. SIMONE enters, peering about. MUTE bows to her and exits after KATE. SIMONE stands on the deck alone as lights fade to blackout.

Act One, Scene 5

The deck. Mid-morning: "bouillon time". There is a breeze and, as the scene progresses, the sky will rapidly become overcast and the wind will rise and develop into a thunderstorm.

As lights rise, however, various PASSENGERS stroll leisurely in sporting outfits, or jog, or gaze over the railing at the sea. Perhaps a dog is being exercised. A STEWARD bustles about serving beverages. BEA and CLIVE sit in deck chairs; she knits as he dazes with his face covered by a magazine.

KATE enters, wearing a tennis outfit and carrying a racquet in her hand. She looks up and down the deck before noticing her aunt.

KATE Oh, hi Aunt Bea.

BEA Been playing deck tennis, dear?

KATE Tried. It's too windy for a proper game, but Gerald Rodney wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

BEA Well, best go change out of those wet clothes; this breeze is a magic carpet for germs.

KATE I will, Aunt Bea, just as soon as I meet up with Bob.

BEA (Looking up from her knitting.) Who, dear? The cabin steward?

KATE (Nodding her head.) Uh-huh.

BEA Oh, bother! I've dropped a stitch.

KATE I'm sorry ; I've distracted you.

BEA Oh, my fault , entirely. These intricate patterns require attention.
Drop one stitch and you're obliged to start anew.
KATE Like a mystery?
BEA After a fashion. Yet in a mystery, you're seldom the only one who's
knitting.

BOLEVSKY enters and greets KATE and BEA.

BOLEVSKY Good morning.

BEA Mr. Bolevsky.

KATE Good morning. (*KATE steps away to wait for BOB, but halts at
BOLEVSKY'S command.*)

BOLEVSKY Wait! Don't go.

KATE Sir?

BOLEVSKY That was not right.

KATE I beg your pardon?

BOLEVSKY See how dark the clouds? Not a morning.

KATE Oh, but that's just an expression. It's another way of saying "hello".

BOLEVSKY Should I not then say "hello" and speak more right?

KATE I honestly don't think it matters.

BOLEVSKY It does matter. "Hello, Miss McGrew." (*He bows and then tilts his head
up toward her, smiling.*) Yes?

KATE (*Returning the smile.*) Yes. Hello, Mr. Bolevsky. (*BOLEVSKY stands
erect again and he and KATE look at one another briefly. KATE feels
somewhat awkward.*) I . . . I hope you have a pleasant day. . . despite
the weather. (*With a nod of her head, KATE makes a move to step away
as BOLEVSKY quickly pulls out a silver cigarette case.*)

BOLEVSKY Miss McGrew. . . cigarette?

KATE Oh, no thanks, Mr. Bolevsky; I don't smoke. (*BOLEVSKY grunts as he tightens his cigarette.*) But what a swell cigarette case that is!

BOLEVSKY A gift. What is the word. . . a memory. . . ?

KATE A memento, you mean?

BOLEVSKY A memento, yes. I have it now many yews. From before we escape to Paris.

KATE Is it pure silver?

BOLEVSKY I think so, yes.

KATE Then it must be awfully valuable.

BOLEVSKY It is not the silver that makes it so.

KATE No, of course not. It's the memory. And it's engraved.

BOLEVSKY The words -- can you read them?

KATE Read Russian? I'm afraid not.

BOLEVSKY (*Reciting, as KATE looks on.*) "kvlah-DEE-mir-oo, f'bah-LYET-yeh tee nah-RO-doo KREEL-yah, shtob oo-le-TET fsyeh pe-CHAH-lee Tvai-YAH, Nuh-TAHL-yuh."

KATE 1917 - that much I recognize.

BOLEVSKY Yes. 1917.

KATE The Russian Revolution.

BOLEVSKY (*A bitter memory.*) Yes. (*Translating, to change the subject.*) "To Vladimir." Me. "In the ballet. . . you give wings. . . for to fly away from all sadness. Yours, Natalia."

KATE She must have been a very special friend, your Natalia.

BOLEVSKY She is, still. *(He clears his throat, then thrusts the case toward KATE.)*
Now you try.

KATE *(Holding up her hand to refuse it.)* But the alphabet's completely
different.

BOLEVSKY No - some letters are the same: the letter "A", and "B" - but that
makes the sound of "V" in the Russian, and. . .

KATE What about the letter "M"?

BOLEVSKY Yes, it is the same.

KATE And the letter "R"?

KATE has moved nearer to BOLEVSKY and cranes her neck to get a glimpse of the inscription again as MIROVA appears, very distraught. In her hands she nervously wrings a white lace handkerchief.

MIROVA Vladimir?!

BOLEVSKY *(Seeing MIROVA's urgent look.)* Please you will excuse me.

KATE groans at being interrupted at this crucial moment. BOLEVSKY steps to MIROVA; BOB appears and goes to KATE.

MIROVA I can't find it, Vladimir!

BOLEVSKY What?!

MIROVA I looked everywhere!

KATE'S eyes have rested on MIROVA's handkerchief as BOB attempts to speak to her. BOLEVSKY and MIROVA continue to converse silently.

BOB *(Handing KATE the passenger list.)* Sorry if I kept you waiting, Kate..

KATE (Not taking the list from him.) Oh, thanks Bob. Wait a minute?
BOB Sure. What's up?

KATE A handkerchief, Bob!

BOB Huh?

KATE casually drifts closer to the Russians, her eyes glued to the handkerchief, hoping to catch a glimpse of a monogram. BOLEVSKY and MIROVA notice KATE , who smiles awkwardly and then suddenly sneezes.

BOLEVSKY Gesundheit.

KATE Thank you.

BOLEVSKY and MIROVA stand and wait for KATE to do something. She sneezes again, twice.

BOLEVSKY &
MIROVA Gesundheit.

BOB (Stepping up to KATE.) Here you go, Kate.

KATE (looking at the handkerchief he hands her.) Huh?

BOB You wanted a handkerchief, right?

KATE (Disappointed.) Oh. Thanks, Bob.

BEA (Calling from her chair.) Kate?

KATE Yes, Aunt Bea?

BEA Didn't I warn you about catching a chill?

KATE I'm fine. . . really.

BOLEVSKY has taken MIROVA's arm and begins to lead her away as MRS. BECKWORTH enters, with SIGRID on her arm, followed by LIONEL and GERALD. MRS. BECKWORTH'S loud salutation causes everyone to freeze and look at her.

BECKWORTH Well, hello to you all!

CLIVE *(Awakening with a start.)* Huh?! What the devil. . . ?!

BECKWORTH Mr. Bolevsky. . . Miss Mirova. . .we've been talking about you all morning.

BOLEVSKY *(As MIROVA squeezes his arm.)* Talking about us?

BECKWORTH Mm-hmm - about a little. . . "scheme", shall we say, Sigrid?

SIGRID Ja. A scheme. But not so little.

BOLEVSKY "Scheme"? Say what you mean.

BECKWORTH Now I don't know what you thought of Mr. Omar's little show last night, but I had to stop and ask myself - was it art?

BOLEVSKY Art? Of course not!

BECKWORTH My point exactly. Which brings us to my little scheme.

BOLEVSKY *(Relieved.)* Oh... your scheme...

BECKWORTH It was not art. But the ballet is.

BOLEVSKY You are asking us to perform on this boat?

BECKWORTH Of course, you wouldn't be expected to perform for free, heavens, no! We could raise a tidy sum for a gala on your opening night in New York City.

SIGRID Ja. You may use the ballroom for rehearsals; the ballet will be at seven- thirty.

BOLEVSKY Tonight?!

SIGRID Tonight, ja.

BECKWORTH And my Gerald can help with the scenery, and Lionel. . .

LIONEL I could help with the ticket sales, Margaret.

BOLEVSKY Wait! It is not so simple. I must ask the dancers.

BECKWORTH Why? Is your ballet some kind of Soviet commune? I thought you made the decisions.

BOLEVSKY *(Holding back his anger.)* I do, but.. .

BECKWORTH Well, then?

BOLEVSKY *(A long pause; finally, but unwillingly.)* We perform.

MIROVA Vladimir!

BOLEVSKY But three pieces only! Very brief!

BECKWORTH Oh, Mr. Bolevsky, I'm just tickled!

SIGRID I will go tell Captain Warren. God dag.

SIGRID exits as HECTOR and DEMEROVITCH enter.

HECTOR *(His arm around DEMEROVITCH's shoulder.)* Money?!
(BECKWORTHS and BOLEVSKY turn their heads at the word.) Well, I should say so! Why, Charlie Chaplin has millions!

DEMEROVITCH suddenly stops when he sees BOLEVSKY. With a strange smirk, he keeps his eyes on BOLEVSKY as he loudly continues conversing with HECTOR.

DEMEROVITCH And so, Hector, my friend - you think maybe I, too, could be a moving picture star?

HECTOR I'll say this much, Konstantin -- when I saw you doing the tango, I couldn't help but think of the late, great Rudolph Valentino. What Hollywood needs is someone just like you to take his place as the foreign-lover type.

DEMEROVITCH I find this very fascinating. (*Stepping up to BOLEVSKY.*) Oh, hello, Vladimir. Yantaria. I just now have had a most interesting talk with my friend Hector about. . . .

BOLEYSKY Dah , Konstantin Demerovitch. We could not help to hear. But I remind you of your contract with the Ballet Neva.

DEMEROVITCH Ah, yes. But I am now wondering if such an agreement would be...

HECTOR (*Helping DEMEROVITCH find the word.*) "Legal"? "Binding"?

DEMEROVITCH Thank you, yes -- "binding" in America.

MIROVA How dare you to say such a thing, Konstantin?

DEMEROVITCH The thought of my own million American dollars could make me dare to say many things, Yantaria. What is your price?

MIROVA (*Angrily moving away.*) BO-zhuh moi , Konstantin! Pe-re-STAHN-tyuh! (*DEMEROVITCH shrugs and chuckles.*)

HECTOR What did she say?

BOLEYSKY Another time, Mr. Frye. We get ready now for the rehearsal, Konstantin.

DEMEROVITCH What? Rehearsal?

BECKWORTH Your manager has graciously offered to have you dance tonight.

DEMEROVITCH What?!

BOLEVSKY We will start with the pas de deux from the Pushkin, and then follow with. . .

DEMEROVITCH Why was I not consulted?

BOLEVSKY You were too busy making new friends.

DEMEROVITCH I will not stand for it! No! I refuse to dance!

BOLEVSKY *(A threatening growl.)* Demerovitch. . . .

DEMEROVITCH I will not dance, do you hear?

BECKWORTH But you have to! It's a benefit for the ballet!

DEMEROVITCH I don't care about. . .

BECKWORTH A benefit! It's for your own good!

DEMEROVITCH Ha! For my own good, you say? You are telling me to dance for myself, but not for you?

BOLEVSKY Enough! You will dance!

DEMEROVITCH Then I dance. But I dance for me, as the woman says. Dance what I want. What I like. My work. My choreography. My ballet...

MIROVA *(A gasp.)* Konstantin!

DEMEROVITCH . . . "The Ice Maiden"!

BECKWORTH What? Did he actually say, "The Ice Maiden"?

BOLEVSKY *(Glaring, very measured.)* "The Ice Maiden", Demerovitch?!

A moment of tense silence. MIROVA has grasped BOLEVSKY'S arm. DEMEROVITCH's wild defiance fades under BOLEVSKY's stare. He turns away with a mixture of pride, fear, and shame.

BECKWORTH *(Hopefully.)* Mr. Bolevsky? You can't refuse!

BOLEVSKY I don't see how I can. "The Ice Maiden" it shall be, if that is your wish. *(DEMEROVITCH turns back to BOLEVSKY in surprise.)*

BECKWORTH Hallelujah! What an event! What a magnificent event!

MIROVA But Vladimir, my costume. . . .

BECKWORTH Yes! Your costume! (To the GROUP.) I've read it's simply encrusted with gems!

HECTOR Is that a fact?

MIROVA But Vladimir. . . .

BOLEVSKY Not now, Yantaria. Come. (To DEMEROVITCH as he and MIROVA start off.) Rehearsal at noon, Demerovitch. Kindly inform the corps de ballet.

DEMEROVITCH Vladimir, I

BOLEVSKY Dah?

DEMEROVITCH (Strangely meek and apologetic.) Where?

BOLEVSKY The ballroom.

BOLEVSKY and MIROVA are off. DEMEROVITCH turns to exit in the opposite direction.

HECTOR Hey, Konstantin. . . .

DEMEROVITCH (Exiting.) Not now.

HECTOR (Following DEMEROVITCH off.) Tell me more about your ballet. . .

BECKWORTH My, oh, my! A world premiere ballet!

GERALD Yes, Mama - you stand to make a lot of money for your reception.

BECKWORTH That's not all, Gerald. Your mama craves publicity.

LIONEL You're amazing, Margaret.

BECKWORTH I know. (Consulting her appointment book.) Well, back to work. . . (A sudden cry.) Mah jongg! (All leap at the cry.) Oh, Lady Bea - I'll bet you were afraid I had forgotten the game I promised you.

BEA Not at all. But since you have so much to do...

BECKWORTH Don't I, though! But those of us who are us always have our little social obligations, haven't we? Lionel?

LIONEL *(At BOB'S side.)* Sorry, Margaret. I've got the telegraph office reserved.

BECKWORTH Oh. Well, Gerald can play for my husband until he returns.

GERALD *(As MRS. BECKWORTH drags him off.)* Mama – I don't know if I can play mah jongg.

BECKWORTH Oh, honestly, child - is there anything you can do?

BEA *(Calling after MRS. BECKWORTH.)* We'll be with you straight away.

LIONEL turns to BOB who has silently been conversing with KATE.

LIONEL Say, kid, I'm in a hurry. Where to?

BOB Right this way, Mr. Beckworth.

KATE I'll wait here, Bob.

BOB and LIONEL exit. KATE looks over the passenger list.

BEA Well, I'm afraid I've finished. Fetch me the scissors from my bag, would you, Kate?

CLIVE *(Seeing KATE'S list in her hand.)* Now what's that you've got there, my girl?

KATE hands him the list as she hands BEA something without looking.

KATE A passenger list.

CLIVE *(Looking it over as KATE steps beside him.)* So many travelers. Boggles the mind.

BEA What's this, Kate? You've handed me a key.

KATE Huh?

BEA *(Offering the key to KATE.)* You've given me a key instead of my scissors.

KATE *(Taking it; beside herself with excitement.)* A key! A key! I wasn't looking. . . it felt just like. . . it was in your bag. . . oh, Aunt Bea - is it yours?

BEA No, dear.

KATE Then it must be the key from the purse! It hasn't been stolen after all!

CLIVE What's all the excitement, Kate?

KATE When you came into my cabin and startled me yesterday? I dropped the purse into Aunt Bea's knitting bag. Obviously, the key fell out and it's been in there all along.

BEA *(Rising from her chair.)* Much as I hate to say it, Clive: Margaret Beckworth is waiting.

CLIVE Yes, love.

BEA *(As she and CLIVE start off.)* Kate? I'm obliged to say it again: please do go change. You're going to catch your death.

KATE I will.

BEA and CLIVE have reached the door as GERALD appears. When KATE hears them speak his name, she hides.

BEA Why, Gerald - we're just on our way.

GERALD Well, go right ahead. She's in the salon.

CLIVE You're not joining. . . ?

GERALD No!

GERALD stomps away from them ; BEA and CLIVE shrug and exit. GERALD looks around, sees no one, and starts off. BOB enters from the opposite direction, carrying a book.

BOB (A call.) Kate?! (A sudden "Shhh!" from KATE alerts BOB to her hiding place just as GERALD whirls about in their direction. He doesn't see KATE, but briskly marches up to BOB.) Oh, hello, Mr. Rodney.

GERALD Kate McGrew?

BOB I beg your pardon?

GERALD Didn't I hear you call her name?

BOB Did you?

GERALD Where is she?

BOB Don't you know?

GERALD If I did, would I be asking you?

BOB Probably not. Well. . . do you see her anywhere'?

GERALD No.

BOB Any idea where she might be?

GERALD Her cabin?

BOB Good guess. It's that way.

GERALD I know where it is! I'm not stupid.

GERALD exits. KATE quickly steps out of hiding as BOB hands her the book.

BOB Here's the Russian dictionary you asked for, Kate. Sorry, but I've got to run. There's a storm coming up. You'd better get below.

GERALD (Offstage; approaching.) Hey, you! Boy!

KATE *(Taking the book and hiding again.)* Thanks, Bob!

BOB *(As GERALD approaches again.)* Forget something, Mr. Rodney?

GERALD Yeah. I forgot to mention to keep your distance from Miss McGrew.

BOB But I'm her steward.

GERALD Right. You're a servant on this here ship, and that makes you my servant too. Just don't you get too "eager to please" with her.

BOB Are you trying to tell me. . . ?!

GERALD I ain't "trying" anything. I'm telling you: leave Kate McGrew alone!

KATE *(Angry, as she bursts out of hiding.)* Shame on you, Gerald Rodney! How dare you talk to my friend like that?

GERALD You were hiding? You were hiding from me?

KATE I'm sorry, Gerald, but I couldn't think of any other way to have you leave me alone.

GERALD You were hiding. You were treating me like some child. Like an idiot. And I'm the one who's supposed to be ashamed?

KATE I said I was sorry.

GERALD Oh, you'll be sorry, alright. You, . . . Mama. . . "Lionel- lamb". . . you'll all be sorry for the way you've been treating me. Just you wait and see! *(GERALD turns and starts off as OMAR and CAPTAIN enter. To the two men.)* And you, too!

OMAR and CAPTAIN look with surprise as GERALD exits. The sky crackles with lightning and CAPTAIN steps to BOB. KATE hides the key in her hand behind her back as OMAR steps up to her.

CAPTAIN Is there a problem here, Carmichael?

BOB I hope not, sir.

CAPTAIN Then come with me. We've got to clear the decks and see to our passengers. There's always trouble in a squall. *(To OMAR and KATE.)* I must ask that you go below at once.

OMAR Thank you, Captain Warren.

KATE Right away, sir.

CAPTAIN *(As he takes BOB off.)* "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!" Which play, Bob?

BOB "King Lear", sir?

CAPTAIN Good lad! Act III, Scene ii. . . . *(They are off.)*

OMAR May I escort you, Miss McGrew?

KATE Uhh. . . no thanks. . . I. . . I've forgotten something. You go on ahead.

OMAR As you wish.

OMAR starts off as MUTE enters. A flash of lightning and a great thunderclap startle KATE so that she raises her hands to her ears, displaying the key in her hand. MUTE points to her and appears to be on the verge of saying something but OMAR quickly gestures to him for silence. OMAR and MUTE swiftly exit, OMAR speaking silently to his partner. KATE watches them exit and, confident she is alone, goes to her hiding place and gets the dictionary and the racquet she left beneath Aunt Bea's deck chair. SIMONE appears, stumbling along the windblown deck, calling.

SIMONE Hector? Hector!

KATE Miss LaSalle!

SIMONE I thought I saw Hector. . . I think I'm lost..

KATE Are you okay?

SIMONE Oui. . . no. . . no, I am not.

KATE What is it? Can I help?

SIMONE I seem to have lost the key to my trunk, and without it I cannot...

KATE A key? The key to your trunk? (*Showing the key to SIMONE.*) Is this it?

SIMONE (*Taking it.*) I cannot be sure. . . How. . . ?

KATE Don't be afraid to say if it is, Miss LaSalle. You can trust me.

SIMONE Trust you? (*SIMONE suddenly screams at the sight of an approaching figure enveloped in raingear.*) Ahhhhhh!

HIGGINS Please, ladies, you've got to get below. Captain's orders.

KATE Oh, it's you, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS (*Taking SIMONE by the arm.*) Come with me, please.

SIMONE Let me go! Who are you?

HIGGINS Higgins!

KATE Go with him, Miss LaSalle. I'll be right there.

As HIGGINS and SIMONE head toward the door, KATE turns to fetch her book and racquet. Suddenly MRS. BECKWORTH lurches out the door and heads, gasping, for the railing.

BECKWORTH Oh, God, I feel like I'm going to die!

HIGGINS (*Turning to fetch MRS. BECKWORTH.*) No, Mrs. Beckworth! Come away from there!

SIMONE (*Shrieking, clutching on to HIGGINS.*) Don't let go! Please!

BECKWORTH My pills! I've got to have my seasick pills!

KATE It's alright, Mr. Higgins - I'll take care of Mrs. Beckworth.

HIGGINS Get her away from the railing - it's too dangerous!

SIMONE Don't leave me!

HIGGINS *(Taking SIMONE inside.)* I'm right here, Miss LaSalle.

KATE *(Leading her away from the railing.)* Your pills, Mrs. Beckworth - where?

BECKWORTH My cabin.

KATE I'll be right back.

KATE rushes down the deck and out. MRS. BECKWORTH slumps against the wall.

BECKWORTH Oh, Lionel. . . Gerald. . . where are you? Mama needs you. Mama's going to. . . *(She suddenly straightens up, clutches her mouth, and heads for the railing as KATE reappears.)*

KATE Your cabin key, Mrs. Beckworth! I need your cabin key!

Suddenly a body dressed in a gown drops through the air before MRS. BECKWORTH's eyes and into the water below. MRS. BECKWORTH screams hysterically.

BECKWORTH A woman! A woman just fell overboard! Oh, God! A woman!

KATE quickly grabs a life preserver and tosses it over the railing, then grabs MRS. BECKWORTH and drags her to the door.

KATE Quick! Tell the Captain! Tell someone! Anyone! Get help!

BECKWORTH *(Disappearing.)* Help! Help!

KATE sees the alarm box and runs to it, smashes the glass, and pulls the lever. A loud, pulsing siren. She runs to the railing and leans over to see if she can spot the body. A FIGURE, dressed in raingear as HIGGINS had been before, appears on the level above and descends the ladder near KATE. KATE sees him and, thinking it's HIGGINS reaches for him.

KATE Mr. Higgins? Mr. Higgins – help!

The FIGURE starts up the ladder again and shakes KATE's grip lose by giving a kick with his leg. The sound of voices approaching and BOB enters, seeing KATE losing her balance from the kick from the FIGURE. FIGURE hops down to deck level and runs off as another STEWARD appears on the level above.

BOB Kate!

STEWARD (To escaping FIGURE.) Hey, you - wait!

KATE Bob! Help! Help me!

KATE grabs onto a rope and swings out beyond the railing with a scream. BOB tries to reach her, but cannot, KATE begins to lose her grip and BOB grabs KATE'S tennis racquet and reaches out to her; she grabs it and is pulled in to safety as CAPTAIN, HIGGINS, and STEWARDS surround her in confusion. Music rises over the pulsing alarm as lights quickly fade to Blackout.