

# Side 3- HANNAY, Margaret, Crofter

THE 39 STEPS

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## Scene Thirteen: Crofter's Cottage.

*(HANNAY looks around the miserable cottage. The moaning wind rattles the windows. MARGARET racked with shyness. She points to the arm chair.)*

MARGARET. There's your bed.

*(HANNAY looks at the armchair.)*

HANNAY. Marvellous.

MARGARET. Could ye sleep there d'ye think?

HANNAY. I should coco.

MARGARET. Won't you sit down please whilst I go on with our supper.

HANNAY. Thank you.

*(He sits down. She busies herself with supper.)*

I say?

MARGARET. Yes?

HANNAY. You wouldn't have today's paper?

MARGARET. My husband has the paper.

HANNAY. Right.

*(MARGARET shyly lays the table.)*

So erm - been in these parts long?

MARGARET. No. I'm from Glasgow.

HANNAY. Glasgow?

MARGARET. D'ye ever see it?

HANNAY. No I never did.

MARGARET. Oh ye should. Ye should see Sauchiehall Street on a Saturday night with all its fine shops and the trams and the lights. And the cinema palaces and the crowds.

*(a faraway look)*

It's Saturday night tonight.

HANNAY. Well I've never been to Glasgow but I've been to Edinburgh and Montreal. And London.

MARGARET. London!

HANNAY. I could tell you all about London at supper.

MARGARET. *(suddenly entranced)* Could ye?

HANNAY. Certainly could.

MARGARET. *(face clouds)* No. John would nae approve o' that I doubt!

HANNAY. John?

MARGARET. My husband. He says it's best not to think of such places and all the wickedness that goes on there.

HANNAY. Or – I could tell you now.

MARGARET. Now?

HANNAY. If you wanted.

*(He gazes at her.)*

MARGARET. Aye. Ye could.

*(She gazes back.)*

*(Romantic music)*

HANNAY. What would you like to know?

MARGARET. Is it true that all the ladies paint their toe-nails?

HANNAY. Some of them.

MARGARET. And put rouge and lipsticks on their faces?

HANNAY. They do yes.

MARGARET. Do London ladies look beautiful?

HANNAY. They wouldn't if you were beside them.

*(MARGARET catches her breath. Turns to him. Their eyes meet. A moment of stunned sexual longing.)*

MARGARET. You ought not to say that.

*(The CROFTER bursts in. He carries an evening newspaper.)*

CROFTER. Ought not to say WHAT!?

*(Romantic music cuts out.)*

*(HANNAY and MARGARET spring away.)*

HANNAY. Oh I was – er – just saying to your wife that I prefer living in the town to the country.

CROFTER. God made the country.

HANNAY. Certainly did!

CROFTER. Supper ready woman?

MARGARET. Almost.

CROFTER. Then hurry yeself!

*(The CROFTER throws the paper on the table. HANNAY looks it. There is his photo on the front.)*

HANNAY. Do you mind if I look at your paper?

CROFTER. Suit yourself.

HANNAY. Thank you.

*(HANNAY picks up the paper. He reads it as nonchalantly as possible. The CROFTER watches him suspiciously.)*

CROFTER. Ye did nae tell me your name.

HANNAY. Oh – um – Hammond.

CROFTER. Mr O' Hum Hammond.

HANNAY. No. Hammond!

MARGARET. Here we are.

*(She produces the three single herrings on three plates.)*

HANNAY. Splendid!

CROFTER. I'll say a blessing afore we begin.

HANNAY. Good idea!

*(They all sit round the table. Close their eyes.)*

CROFTER. Oh most mighty and unforgiving father. Sanctify these bounteous and undeserved mercies to us miserable sinners. Make us bow on bended knee, make us truly thankful for all –

*(HANNAY opens his eyes. Tries to read the paper again.*

*MARGARET opens her eyes. Notices him reading.)*

– thy manifold blessings.

*(HANNAY notices her noticing him. Now she peeks at the paper. Sees the article. She realises who he is. Her eyes flash with panic.)*

And continually turn our loathsome hearts from wickedness –

*(HANNAY looks back at her. Reassuring her with his eyes.)*

*(The CROFTER opens his eyes and sees them gazing earnestly at each other. He twitches madly and finishes grace.)*

**CROFTER.** *(cont.)* – beat our gluttonous thoughts and lash our lustful desires as with a three-forked flailing stick pressing our bestial noses to the grindstone and blinding our eyes to the tawdry beads and baubles of all worldly wicked things. Amen.

*(They all look up utterly depressed.)*

**HANNAY & MARGARET.** Amen.

**CROFTER.** Ach!

*(He jumps up.)*

I just remembered I forgot to – er – lock the barn. I'll go and – lock it!

**MARGARET.** Right ye are.

*(He goes out, nonchalantly whistling. Almost immediately his mad paranoiac eyes appear through the window. HANNAY and MARGARET do not notice him. They start miming earnestly and passionately to each other. HANNAY touches her hands. Begging her to believe him. The CROFTER watches aghast! His eyes flash and seethe.)*

*(Music: brooding and tense)*