

THE HOPEFUL DIAMOND CAPER

A play in Two Acts

Written by Patricia Winter & Carl Megill

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SYNOPSIS

It's 1939 aboard the S.S. Princess Susan. A host of interesting characters are setting sail for an unknown destination. The Baroness Priscilla Montegue is the focal point of this trip, since the rich Baroness wears the expensive and world renowned Hopeful Diamond ring. The Baroness, a strong and powerful woman is accompanied by her pitifully, whipped wimp of a husband, Baron Bernard Montegue.

Joining the Baron and Baroness are Captain Stubing and his faithful right-hand girl, Julie, who commandeer the ship during the entire trip due to a workers strike.

Many of the passengers would love to get their hands on the Baroness' priceless gem, including an Italian mobster and his moll, a down-on her-luck opera singer and a married couple who just retired from being world famous private detectives.

Unfortunately, the diamond ring is stolen and the detectives volunteer to find the culprit. After questioning each of the possible suspects, the thief is revealed in an exciting climax, but not before the thief pulls out a gun. The least likely passenger saves the day, the thief is placed in custody and the Hopeful Diamond is returned to its rightful owner.

Cast of Characters

Baroness Priscilla Montegue – A snooty, 60 year old woman. She is strong, flirtatious, and very rich. She always carries a small, white Maltese named **Duchess**.

Baron Bernard Montegue – The Baroness' husband, around 60; a pathetic wimp who kowtows to all of the Baroness' wishes. He speaks in a very henpecked voice.

Captain Stubing – The handsome head of the S.S. Princess Susan is in his 50's. His biggest problem is his bad lisp, which causes him to spit when he speaks.

Julie – The social director in her 20's. She's a sickening, bubbly woman; always smiling, in a good mood, effervescent; nothing gets her down.

Fingers aka Francesco Graziano – A thief, around 50, who has been in and out of jail several times. He speaks with a heavy Italian accent.

Pinky – A diminutive, mousey woman. Fingers sidekick, also around 50. She is shy and unsure of herself and a bit of an airhead.

Madame Figueroa – A woman, in her 50's; a retired opera singer who has known elegance, but her wardrobe shows she has fallen on hard times.

Dick Thinman – A distinguished gentleman in his 50's. A world famous detective, suave, sophisticated and speaks with a British accent.

Dora Thinman – Dick's wife, in her 50's. She has an insatiable sexual appetite and is constantly hitting on her husband.

Extras – of various ages.

ACT I, Scene 1

At Rise: We are aboard the luxury liner S.S. Princess Susan. It is 1939. The passengers arrive stage right as they make their way on to the main deck. A railing runs across the front of the stage with a life preserver on it center with the name of the ship on it. The Baroness enters first, carrying her dog and sporting the Hopeful Diamond ring on her hand.

BARONESS

Bernard, do hurry. Come on. Move along. We haven't got all day. Can't you see I'm exhausted? Duchess and I need a rest. Don't we poopsie?

(The Baron enters carrying way too much luggage. He struggles to make it to center stage.)

BARON

I'm coming right behind you.

(Readjusts the bags.)

Just a moment.

(One bag falls. As he bends to pick it up, another falls.)

Ahhh!

BARONESS

(Turns to see him fumbling.)

Oh, heavens, Bernard. You are impossible.

BARON

I'm so sorry, my darling. I am trying. Give me a second. It's just these bags.

BARONESS

Really, Bernard, you are quite an unnecessary spectacle of yourself. You look like a circus clown trying to juggle his balls.

1-1-2

BARON

(Shooting the audience a look and then looks down at his genital area.)

Sorry, my love. Just a bit of a juggling act trying to maneuver all these bags.

(He puts the bags down.)

There we are. That's a relief.

(He rubs his arm.)

BARONESS

Well, don't just stand there.

BARON

Here, let me take Duchess for you.

BARONESS

Absolutely not. She's fine.

(Strokes the dog, but makes sure her diamond ring is visible.)

How do I look? I feel completely disheveled after such an arduous journey. And my dress is a ruin.

BARON

No, my love, it's fine.

BARONESS

How about my makeup? I suppose I look rather clownish myself. I need to find the ladies.

BARON

You look beautiful.

BARONESS

All right then, why don't you make yourself useful and check us in. And, be certain we have the Royal Suite. And see if you can find a steward to take our bags.

The Captain enters stage left.

1-1-3

BARONESS

There's the captain. I must go introduce myself.

BARON

Give me a moment and we can be presented together.

(He picks up the bags again.)

BARONESS

Yes, I suppose that would be more appropriate. Off with you then.

BARON

(Frustrated)

Of course.

The Baron exits stage left past the Captain, struggling with the bags. The Baroness walks near the Captain and makes sure her diamond ring is prominently displayed.

BARONESS

So, Duchess, what do you think my little angel?

Captain Stubing spies the Baroness and walks towards her. She straightens herself as she prepares to present herself.

BARONESS

Good day, Captain.

(He hands her a handkerchief. She laughs.)

What on earth is this for?

CAPTAIN

I have a problem.

1-1-4

BARONESS

(SCOFFS)

What problem could a handsome and obviously well mannered and distinguished looking gentleman have? Whatever it is, it can't be of any consequence.

The Captain bows.

BARONESS

If I may, I am Baroness Priscilla Montegue.

CAPTAIN

(Lisps and sprays)

It certainly is a pleasure to meet you Baroness.

The Baroness covers her face with the hanky.

BARONESS

Oh, my.

CAPTAIN

Welcome aboard the S.S. Princess Susan, Baroness. We've been looking forward to meeting you.

BARONESS

(Disgusted)

Can you please stop doing that?

CAPTAIN

Certainly.

BARONESS

I am here with the Baron Montegue, but we seem to be having a problem finding a steward.

The Baroness continues to hold the hanky up whenever the Captain speaks.

1-1-5

CAPTAIN

I know, we have no stewards.

BARONESS

(Shocked)

No stewards? Why not?

CAPTAIN

A strike. But, the good news is we have a social director.

(He calls stage left)

Oh, Julie!

Julie, the social director enters stage left.

JULIE

Yes, Captain Stubing?

CAPTAIN

Baroness, this is Julie, our social director. Julie, the Baroness Montegue.

Julie rushes over to shake the Baroness' hand.

JULIE

What a pleasure it is to meet you, Baroness.

BARONESS

Charmed, I'm sure.

CAPTAIN

Julie, I'm afraid I have some bad news for you.

JULIE

What could it possibly be? It's such a glorious day. Nothing could make it go wrong.

1-1-6

CAPTAIN

Julie, there has been a union strike and none of our employees will cross the picket line. How did you make it through?

JULIE

Oh, I just thought that was a bunch of people there to see their friends and family off. Come to think of it, I thought it was strange when they spit on me. But, then I just thought they were your relatives, Captain.

CAPTAIN

Well, I'm afraid you are going to be tasked with doing everything; even navigate the ship while I sleep and take my afternoon naps.

JULIE

Is that all there is, Captain? Why, don't you worry about a thing. You can count on me.

CAPTAIN

I knew I could. Now, go along with the Baroness and help her find the Baron and take their bags to their stateroom.

(Notices the Baroness' ring)

Baroness, I notice you are wearing your famous Hopeful Diamond. Would you like me to lock it in the ship's safe?

BARONESS

Don't be silly, Captain. What good is there in owning the world's most precious jewel, if it can't be shared with the world?

JULIE

Wow, that is one beautiful diamond. Do you think I could ever own a gem like that?

BARONESS

(Chuckles)

Only if you stole it from me.

1-1-7

They both laugh as they make their way stage left. Julie exits, but the Baroness remains onstage, petting Duchess and showing off her ring.

Fingers and Pinky enter stage right. They stop center stage.

FINGERS

(Italian accent)

We was lucky to get on this here cruise on such short notice. Pinky, if we play our cards right, this could be the ticket. Our ticket. We pull off this job and it's easy sailing from here on out. You and me on Easy Street.

PINKY

Fingers, I don't like the water and I don't know why we couldn't of found our next score somewhere else.

FINGERS

I'm telling ya, Pinky, this is the BIG one. You gotta trust me. Look around. We got stooges everywhere...easy pickens. And look, Pinky, speaking of stooges, there she is.

(Points towards the Baroness)

Check THAT out, why dontcha?

PINKY

What, that lady with the mutt?

FINGERS

Exactly. Check out the hand that's petting the mutt.

(Pinky moves to get a closer look.)

PINKY

Ohhh...

FINGERS

Yeah, kinda leaves ya speechless, right, Pinky? D'ja ever see a rock like that before?

1-1-8

PINKY

No, Fingers, can't say that I have. But, what if it ain't real?

FINGERS

Oh, it's real all right. Each and every one of a-them carats is speaking to me. It's the famous Hopeful Diamond and it's why we're here.

PINKY

I aint never seen nothing like that before.

FINGERS

Well, you play your cards right and soon you're gonna see it up close and personal.

PINKY

Whatever you say, Boss. Just tell me what I gotta do.

FINGERS

For now, find out what room we're in and anything else that might be useful. I'm gonna do what I do best...mingle...with my eyes, my ears and my fingers.

Fingers and Pinky exit stage left. Madame Figueroa enters stage right. The Captain enters stage left. She spies the Captain and walks over to meet him center stage.

MADAME F

(Clears her throat)

Excuse me, Captain.

CAPTAIN

(Lisping)

Yes, is there something special you need?

MADAME F

(Slightly disgusted by the spray)

Oh!

1-1-9

CAPTAIN

(Hands her a hankie)

Sorry.

Madame F protects herself with her hankie.

MADAME F

Could you tell me where I can check in?

CAPTAIN

Certainly.

(He notices who she is.)

Wait a minute, I recognize you.

MADAME F

You do? Who am I?

CAPTAIN

You're Madame Figueroa, the great opera singer.

MADAME F

(Humbly)

Yes, I am.

CAPTAIN

I saw you, oh, it must be twenty years now, in Paris, when you appeared at the Palais Garnier.

MADAME F

Why, Captain, you flatter me...and splatter me.

(Holds up the hankie.)

CAPTAIN

And, yet, I don't recall seeing you since. Have you retired?

1-1-10

MADAME F

Unfortunately, yes.

CAPTAIN

What a shame.

MADAME F

Yes, I'm sailing in hopes to find some work; possibly, as a singing waitress.

CAPTAIN

But, you were the only opera singer who could hit that fantastic note. No other singer has ever been able to achieve it.

MADAME F

Ah, you mean the Madame F above the major. It was my claim to fame.

CAPTAIN

Can you still hit that note?

MADAME F

Yes, but I...

CAPTAIN

Would you sing it for me now?

MADAME F

(Embarrassed)

I couldn't.

CAPTAIN

Oh, please. It would mean so much to me.

MADAME F

Well, I guess just this once.

1-1-11

Madame F inhales deeply and lets out a note so high; everyone on deck gets blown back to the wall, or is knocked over. Even the Captain holds on for dear life.

CAPTAIN

(Straightening himself)

Oh, Madame Figueroa, that was wonderful. You still have it.

MADAME F

Unfortunately, that's all I do have. Where do I check in?

CAPTAIN

Right this way.

The Captain escorts Madame Figueroa off stage left.

Dick and Dora Thinman enter stage right.

DORA

Come on, Dickie, tell me. Please tell me.

DICK

Really, Dora, you're becoming a bit of a bore.

DORA

Oh, Dickie, please tell me. Say it. Say those three words I've been longing to hear.

DICK

Okay, please...shut...up!

DORA

(Upset)

Oh, Dickie, you don't love me.

1-1-12

DICK

(Exasperated)

Of course I do.

DORA

Then why won't you say it? Say you love me. Say it.

DICK

Oh, for crying out loud. I love you. I love you. I love you. Are you satisfied?

DORA

Now you're just saying it to shut me up.

DICK

Well, apparently it's not working.

The Captain approaches. He meets Dick and Dora center stage.

DICK

I say, ol' boy, you're the captain, aren't you?

DORA

Oh, Dickie, you're so astute.

DICK

I am Dick and this is my wife, Dora. We are the Thinmans.

CAPTAIN

(Lisping)

I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to have you aboard the S.S. Princess Susan, Mr. and Mrs. Thinman.

DORA

Oh, Dickie, is it raining?

1-1-13

DICK

I think the captain has sprung a leak.

The Captain hands them both a hankie.

CAPTAIN

Sorry.

DORA

(Wipes the spit from her face.)

I would think a towel would be more appropriate.

CAPTAIN

Say, are you THE Dick and Dora Thinman, the world famous sleuths?

DICK

Yes, that would be us, but we've retired.

DORA

That's right, Captain, my husband and I no longer solve crimes. We just travel the world now. It's just me and my little Dickie.

(She hugs his arm and giggles.)

DICK

Don't mind her, Captain. She always giggles when she says, "Dickie."

CAPTAIN

Well, welcome aboard.

DICK

Thank you.

Dick and Dora try handing their hankies back.

1-1-14

CAPTAIN

Oh, please keep them. I'll be speaking with you later.

Julie enters stage left carrying everyone's bags. She drops them and claps her hands.

JULIE

Attention, everyone. The Captain has invited all of you to join him for cocktails tonight.

Everyone lets out a happy "Yay."

JULIE

Now, I'll be dropping off your bags in your staterooms. Have a pleasant and cheerful day.

Julie exits stage left. Fingers and Pinky enter stage left.

CAPTAIN

Well, if you'll excuse me, I have some ship's stuff to attend to.

DORA

I hope it's a way to stop his saliva storm.

The Captain exits stage left. Dick spies Fingers and Pinky.

DICK

Dora, don't look now, but isn't that Fingers Graziano and his moll, Pinky?

DORA

How can I tell if you don't want me to look? Sometimes your instructions are very confusing, Dickie.

DICK

Just look casually.

Dora strolls around the deck inconspicuously and makes her way back to Dick.

DORA

It sure is. Do you think they're doing it?

1-1-15

DICK

Doing what?

DORA

You know...

(rotates her hips)

...the motion with the ocean.

DICK

(Sighs)

Can't you think of anything else?

DORA

Sorry, Dickie, it must be the sea air. It does something to me.

DICK

I'm going to do something to you, if you don't knock it off.

DORA

(Disappointed)

Promises, promises.

DICK

What are two of Europe's most famous jewel thieves doing aboard this ship? We better keep a close eye on them.

DORA

But, Dickie, you promised me, once we retired we would just relax and have fun. You know... fun?

DICK

Fine, go to the cabin. If I'm not there in five minutes, start without me.

Dora thinks about this for a moment.

1-1-16

DORA

(Happily)

Okay.

She skips off stage left. Dick observes Fingers and Pinky.

CURTAIN

1-2-1

ACT I, Scene 2

Lounge: Cocktail tables with two chairs each are scattered about the stage. At the table upstage right are the Baron and Baroness. Upstage left are Fingers and Pinky. Downstage right is

Madame F. Downstage center is Dick and Dora. Downstage right is Lois and Anita. Extras can be at the bar which is along the back wall center.

Time: It is later that evening. Everyone is dressed formally.

FINGERS

(Eyeing the Baroness' ring)

Look, Pinky, that Baroness, she's wearing the ring tonight.

PINKY

I don't know, Fingers. Do you really want to risk going back to prison again? I won't be able to come see you on visitor's day. I'm taking tap dance lessons.

FINGERS

To tell you the truth, Pinky, I'd rather you not come see me anyway. Remember the last time you come? I tell you to bring me a cake with a file in it.

PINKY

So? I did what you asked.

FINGERS

No, you brought me a file with a cake in it.. I'm gonna go talk to the Baroness.

Fingers crosses to the Baroness' table.

FINGERS

Ahem, excuse me, but aren't you Baroness Montegue?

BARONESS

Why, yes, I am. This is my husband the Baron.

BARON

Pleased to meet you.

1-2-2

FINGERS

Yeah, yeah, I'm Fingers Grazi...I mean, Francisco Graziano.

BARONESS

Charmed.

Baroness extends her hand with the ring on it. Fingers takes her hand and draws the Baroness' attention away.

FINGERS

Say, isn't that Douglas Fairbanks?

The Baroness and baron both look away. When they do, Fingers pulls out a jeweler's eye and examines the ring.

BARONESS

Why, yes, I do believe you are right. He's so handsome...and a REAL man, unlike this...

She nods her head in the Baron's direction who is slouching in his chair.

BARONESS

Sit up straight, Bernard. Be a man. Don't be a wimp all your life.

BARON

Yes, my precious, I'll do my best to please you, lamby-kins.

FINGERS

(Laughs)

Yeah, men, can't live with them, can't shoot them.

BARONESS

(Finds this amusing)

What did you say your name is again?

FINGERS

Francisco Graziano of the Sicilian Grazianos.

BARONESS

Oh, I do believe I've heard of your family. What is it they do again?

FINGERS

Life assurance.

BARONESS

Don't you mean, life insurance?

FINGERS

Take your pick.

(Spies Duchess)

And, who is this?

BARONESS

This is Duchess. Isn't she adorable?

FINGERS

Yeah, the cat's meow. No offense.

PINKY

Hey, Fingers, here comes the captain.

FINGERS

Oh, maybe they got some kind of announcement about when we are going to eat. Excuse me.

Fingers walks back to his table. Julie enters stage left carrying a plunger.

JULIE

(Bubbly)

Hi everyone. How's everybody doing?

DICK

My head is clogged.

DORA

Oh, Dickie, I told you I'd take care of that later.

DICK

I'm talking about the toilet, Dora.

JULIE

Not anymore, Mr. Thinman. It's all fixed, along with the other twenty-one clogged toilets.

The Captain enters and stands center stage.

JULIE

Attention, everyone, the Captain has an important announcement to make.

Everyone takes out their hankies and holds them to their faces.

CAPTAIN

Thank you, Julie. Folks, due to the strike, we have no entertainment for you. But, then, our ever efficient Julie came up with this magnificent idea. She suggested we bring out the Victrola and some records, so at least you can dance. Doesn't that sound like fun?

Some like it. Some don't.

BARONESS

It's just deplorable. I booked a cruise on a luxury liner without any luxuries.

DORA

Dickie, that Baroness is very annoying. Have you ever heard anyone complain so much? Have you? Huh? Have you?

DICK

Can these hankies be used as gags?

MADAME F

Me thinks the Baroness doeth protest too much.

BARONESS

Bernard, are you going to let her speak to me that way?

BARON

It's a free country, turtledove.

BARONESS

We're on a boat!

BARON

It's a free boat, turtledove?

BARONESS

(Sighs)

Ugh, go get me another drink and be quick about it.

BARON

(Stands)

Yes, my pet.

He slinks away to the bar.

JULIE

Please everyone. Let me put on some happy music to help you relax.

Julie puts a record on the Victrola. It's a light and peppy tune. She snaps her fingers and taps her foot, but no one is in the mood for dancing.

DICK

I suppose you want to dance, Dora.

DORA

Yes, Dickie, I want to do the mattress mambo with you.

1-2-6

DICK

The what?

DORA

You know, the Posturepedic Polka.

DICK

Huh?

DORA

The Sealey Samba.

He still doesn't get it.

DORA

Dickie, I want to make love.

DICK

Can't you think of anything else? You have a one track mind, Dora. You're unrelenting obsession with sex is becoming more than annoying, it's becoming downright pathetic. The way you throw yourself at me all the time is borderline disgusting.

DORA

So, is that a no?

DICK

(Stands)

Come on.

DORA

(Stands)

To our room?

1-2-7

DICK

No, to introduce ourselves to the Baroness. Maybe that will take your mind off

(Spelling)

S-E-X.

DORA

Oh, Dickie, just spelling it makes me swoon.

They walk to the Baron and Baroness' table.

DICK

Oh, excuse me, Baroness, I don't believe we've been introduced. I'm Dick Thinman and this is my wife Dora.

The Baroness gives Dick an admiring eye, while she completely ignores Dora.

BARONESS

Delighted, I'm sure.

She extends her hand to show off her ring.

DORA

Oh, this must be the famous Hopeful Diamond. Isn't it incredible, Dickie?

Dora grabs the Baroness' hand and moves it from side to side to assess the stone.

Oh, it is SO beautiful.

DICK

I say, quite remarkable.

DORA

Aren't you nervous about wearing it in public like this? You know, Dickie and I are retired detectives and something this magnificent is a magnet for thieves.

1-2-8

BARONESS

(Ignores Dora)

I'm not nervous at all, but I do get weary. With the ring on my finger and Duchess in my arms, it's a bit much; and everyone needs to take a look.

DORA

I'm sure.

BARONESS

(Stands and takes Dick's arm.)

Detective, you'll keep me and my Precious safe, won't you?

DICK

(Flattered)

I'll certainly do my best.

Dora grabs his other arm and after a mean tug-of-war, she pulls him away.

DORA

Dickie, she was flirting with you.

DICK

Whew, am I in one piece?

(He sees Dora is upset.)

Just remember those three little words.

DORA

I love you, too, but I'll certainly never own anything like that; not on our pithy income. And we worked so hard all our lives. It just doesn't seem fair and she has some nerve.

They return to their seats, as does the Baroness. The Baron returns with the Baroness' drink and sits.

Julie stakes center stage.

1-2-9

JULIE

Attention, everyone, as you know, I have been tasked with taking care of everything from scraping barnacles off the bow to cleaning out the bilge pumps. And I've been loving every minute of it. But, right now I have a choice between turning down all your beds and making three hundred and fourteen dinners. Which should I do first?

EVERYONE

Go fix our dinners!!!

JULIE

You betcha.

Julie exits cheerfully.

The Captain walks over to Madame F.

CAPTAIN

Madame F, would you like to meet the Baron and Baroness Montegue?

MADAME F

(Surprised by the spray)

Oh, I'd prefer you to stop spritzing on me. Has anyone ever told you how annoying that is?

CAPTAIN

Yes, several times folks have spoken to me about this. It's a glandular thing.

MADAME F

Well, take me over to the Baron and Baroness. Maybe you can introduce me to them without drowning all of us.

CAPTAIN

Certainly.

They walk over to the Montegue's table.

CAPTAIN

Baron, Baroness, have you met Madame Figueuroa, the famous opera singer?

1-2-10

The Baron and Baroness quickly raise their hankies.

BARONESS

No, we haven't.

The Baron stands behind his chair and bows.

BARON

It's a pleasure to meet you Madame Figueroa.

BARONESS

(Skeptical)

An opera singer? Really?

MADAME F

I've been retired for some time now.

CAPTAIN

She must sing for you sometime. She hits a note so high, it will blow you away, literally.

The Baroness stands and grabs the Baron's arm to move away from the spray, as does Madame F.

BARONESS

I suppose you must perform for us sometime.

MADAME F

May I?

(Goes to pet Duchess, but sees the ring.)

My goodness isn't that incredible.

BARONESS

(Holds the ring up)

I suppose you want to examine it? Everyone does.

1-2-11

MADAME F

It's so beautiful. It's extraordinary.

BARONESS

Yes, so many carats. My finger is numb and my arm aches.

BARON

My poor darling. Why don't you and the Duchess have a rest?

MADAME F

I used to have great wealth and jewels much like yours. But, unfortunately, I had to sell them. I've never owned a diamond like that. Amazing. It would make a very nice retirement fund. I wouldn't be looking for work.

BARONESS

(Bored)

Really? Work? At your age? I believe I shall have a rest. Baron?

She takes the Baron's arm.

BARON

Of course, my sweetness. Let me get a bottle of champagne and bring it to the room and then we can...and then we can...

BARONESS

And then we can what? Spit it out.

BARON

You want me to talk like the captain?

BARONESS

Good lord, no. Just tell me what it is we can do when you return to the room with a bottle of champagne.

BARON

I thought we could have an evening of romance.

1-2-12

BARONESS

(Laughing)

Oh, Bernard, we haven't been romantic up until now, why spoil a good thing? Why don't you stay here and get us both another drink? I'm going to the room to freshen up. They will be serving dinner soon.

BARON

Of course, love of my life.

BARONESS

(Laughing as she exits)

Romantic evening. Oh my, that was a good one. Romantic evening.

(Baroness exits)

The Baron walks to the bar.

BARON

A Shirley Temple and a triple zombie for the Baroness.

Fingers and Pinky walk up to the Baron.

FINGERS

Say, uh, Baron, I couldn't help notice the Baroness has left. Will she be joining us for dinner?

BARON

Oh, yes, she'll be back. She just wanted to freshen up.

FINGERS

Yeah, interesting.

(Fingers nudges Pinky with his elbow.)

PINKY

Excuse me, Baron, but does the Baroness keep her Hopeful Diamond in the ship's safe?

1-2-13

BARON

No, she's peculiar.

FINGERS

(Soto)

Listen to the pot calling the kettle black.

PINKY

What pot? I thought you wanted me to find out where the Baroness keeps her ring.

(Fingers pushes Pinky to the side)

FINGERS

What my stupid friend wants to know is if the ring is insured. I'm in the insurance game, you know?

BARON

The Baroness hardly ever takes off her ring, except for at night. She's a restless sleeper and has learned the sheets don't get ripped up as much if she takes the ring off.

FINGERS

Excellent idea.

PINKY

Yeah, excellent.

BARON

And, as far as insurance is concerned, she has more than enough. I made sure to that.

FINGERS

I'm sure you did, but isn't it risky for her to leave the ring lying around in the room?

BARON

She keeps it in her dresser drawer.

1-2-14

FINGERS

Dresser drawer, huh?

BARON

Yes, she used to tie it to Duchess, the dog's neck, but the poor thing couldn't move.

FINGERS

That's an interesting story, Baron, but we're going to talk to that opera singer. Suddenly, you've become quite boring.

PINKY

Yeah, boring.

Fingers and Pinky make their way over to Madame F's table. The Baroness enters stage left.

BARONESS

Well, did you get our drinks?

BARON

Yes, my love.

(Notices Duchess is missing)

Where are Duchess and your ring, my love?

BARONESS

Oh, they were receiving more attention than me, so I left them both in our cabin.

BARON

Good idea, Lambchop.

They sit at their table. Fingers and Pinky walk center stage.

FINGERS

Hey, Pinky, did you hear that? She left the ring in her cabin. This would be a perfect opportunity for us to take care of business.

1-2-15

PINKY

You're right, Fingers. What business is that?

FINGERS

Ya know, Pinky, sometimes you can be dumber than dandruff. To steal the Hopeful Diamond, you stooge. Come on.

They start to exit stage left.

CAPTAIN

Excuse me everyone.

Everyone holds up their hankies.

Because of the strike, we have no entertainment. Our orchestra is back in Sussex, but our ever efficient Julie has suggested we make our own music. So, we have set up a microphone, a

Victrola and a large assortment of records for anyone who wishes to sing. So, who would like to be first?

Everyone ignores him.

CAPTAIN

Come on, there must be a spark of talent in this room somewhere. I'm sure everyone here can sing a song that's their favorite.

(Notices Fingers and Pinky trying to sneak out)

Oh, Mr. Graziano, would you like to sing like everyone else?

FINGERS

Are you kidding? If I sang like everyone else, I'd have my vocal chords surgically removed. I'd rather have hot poker sticks stuck in my eyeballs while bamboo shoots were shoved under my fingernails.

PINKY

Yeah, otherwise, we had a lovely evening.

1-2-16

FINGERS

It don't look like we are going to get fed anytime soon. I don't want to hear any word dealing with food, so we're going to call it a night. Ciao.

PINKY

Ciao? I thought you didn't want to hear any word dealing with food.

Fingers rolls his eyes as he and Pinky exit stage left.

CAPTAIN

Doesn't anyone want to sing?

Dick and Dora stand and walk to the Captain.

DICK

If you'll excuse us, Captain, the wife and I wish to retire for the evening.

DORA

Oh, Dickie, does that mean...?

DICK

Yes, Dora, a brisk run around the deck before turning in. You may lace my exercise footwear.

DORA

Oh, Dickie, you've never called it THAT before.

DICK

When we dock, I'm getting you some serious therapy.

DORA

You do care, Dickie.

She snuggles to his arm as they exit. Madame F stands and approaches the Captain.

1-2-17

MADAME F

I believe I will call it an evening, too. I'm exhausted and starved. This is worse than when our Opera Company was on the Titanic. At least we ate in the lifeboat. Okay, it was our sheet music, but we ate.

Madame F exits stage left. The Baron stands and walks with his knees together.

BARON

(To the Baroness)

Excuse me, love of my life, but Mother Nature calls.

He begins to exit.

BARONESS

Well, tell her to get you a new personality.

The Baron laughs as he exits.

CAPTAIN

Well, it looks like it is just the two of us.

BARONESS

Yes, it does.

(Stands and takes his arm)

You certainly look handsome in that Captain's uniform. Do ship's captains make a substantial wage?

CAPTAIN

Well, not enough to afford the Hopeful Diamond.

BARONESS

Why don't we take a walk around the deck and we can discuss it. I have my hankie.

(She displays her hankie.)

And, there's a full moon.

1-2-18

CAPTAIN

You think the Baron would mind?

BARONESS

Mother Nature has called him. We safely have an hour.

The Baroness and Captain exit, arm in arm, stage left. Julie enters greasy and disheveled stage right to an empty room.

JULIE

Hey, where did everyone go? Sorry there won't be any dinner. The oven exploded in my face. But, don't worry. I'll be around later to put mints on everyone's pillows. Sweet dreams.

She exits stage left.

The LIGHTS dim as suspenseful MUSIC swells to a climax. Then...

BARONESS

(Offstage.)

AHHHHHHH!!!!!!

She enters stage left dressed in her nightgown and stands center stage.

BARONESS

The Hopeful Diamond has been stolen!

The stage goes black.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

2-1-1

ACT II, Scene 1

At Rise: The dining room has been cleared of the tables. Several chairs remain on stage. The Captain is pacing back and forth talking to himself.

CAPTAIN

This is terrible. This is preposterous. This is me feeling my own spit.

(Takes out a hankie and wipes his face.)

What am I to do?

Dick and Dora enter stage left.

DICK

Perhaps I can help, Captain Stubing.

CAPTAIN

You?

DICK

In case you've forgotten, I am Dick Thinman and this is my very needy and apparently, insatiable wife, Dora.

DORA

(Giggles)

Oh, Dickie.

CAPTAIN

(Still spitting)

That's right, you are the infamous Dick Thinman, retired detective. Fabulous.

DORA

Oh, Dickie, I have something in my eye.

DICK

A cinder?

2-1-2

DORA

No, Stubing spit.

(Wipes her eye.)

DICK

Perhaps that's why they call sailors "Gobs."

(Laughs)

With your permission, Captain, I would like to conduct the investigation into the disappearance of the Hopeful Diamond.

CAPTAIN

An excellent idea, Mr. Thinman.

DICK

You can call me Dick.

DORA

People call you that all the time anyway.

CAPTAIN

Do you want me to call you Dick because we're becoming close?

DICK

No, because you spit when you say Thinman.

CAPTAIN

Okay, Dick.

(Winks)

What is your strategy going to be?

2-1-3

DICK

(Begins pacing)

I'm going to question each of the passengers one at a time.

CAPTAIN

Capital idea.

DICK

Beginning with you.

CAPTAIN

Me?

DICK

Where were you when the Hopeful Diamond disappeared?

CAPTAIN

(Coyly)

Well, the Baroness and I were strolling around the deck and expressing our delight in the salt sea air.

DORA

Oh, Dickie, I'm going to stand over there where it's drier.

DICK

Good idea, my dear.

Dora stands stage right.

DICK

Now, Captain, what time did you and the Baroness part company?

CAPTAIN

I would have to say around 12:30.

2-1-4

DICK

Interesting, since the diamond wasn't reported missing until two a.m.

CAPTAIN

What are you insinuating, Mr. Thinman?

DICK

That there are ninety minutes you can't account for.

DORA

(Sings dramatically.)

Dah, dah, DAH!

CAPTAIN

So, you're saying you think I'm a suspect?

DICK

No, I'm saying you spit too much. But, I won't know the truth until each person on this ship has undergone the Thinman scrutiny.

DORA

(Blushes)

Oh, Dickie.

DICK

I said "scrutiny."

DORA

(Disappointed)

Oh.

DICK

Now, Captain, let's proceed. Back to those ninety minutes. Where exactly did you take the Baroness?

2-1-5

CAPTAIN

More like she took me. We took a stroll around the deck.

DICK

For over an hour?

CAPTAIN

Well, no, we sat and admired the sparkling stars. In fact, I said to the Baroness, “Don’t you love how the stars sparkles?”

DICK

And what did she say?

CAPTAIN

Nothing, she was too busy wiping her face.

DICK

Did the sparkle of the stars remind you of any other sparkles?

CAPTAIN

Yes, her eyes. Quite hypnotic.

DORA

What a romantic thing to say. Dickie, say something romantic to me.

DICK

(Frustrated)

Sit down and be quiet.

DORA

(Swooning)

It’s like receiving a dozen roses.

2-1-6

DICK

Is that all you did was admire the stars?

CAPTAIN

No, we talked...mostly about her husband. What a sorry sack he is.

DICK

Really? How so?

CAPTAIN

She said he seems like a bumbling idiot, but he has a very dark side.

DICK

Did she elaborate?

CAPTAIN

No, we walked back to her cabin. I handed her a few hankies and told her I wanted to express my appreciation for a wonderful shipside stroll. And then the Baron opened the door and dragged her into the room.

DICK

Hmm. Interesting. Captain, would you please send in the Baroness?

CAPTAIN

Am I free to go?

DICK

Yes, Captain, you're free to go and salivate elsewhere.

The Captain exits stage left.

DORA

So, sounds like the Baroness was flirting...again.

DICK

Well, she has a certain flair.

DORA

The only flair she has is in her nostrils.

DICK

Really, Dora, why are you so jealous of other women?

DORA

Because, you're so handsome, any lady who comes in contact with you makes me jealous. Remember that lady who was on your arm last week? I was furious.

DICK

That was a ladybug.

DORA

But she was giving you those ladybug eyes.

(Flashes her eyes)

DICK

Ugh.

DORA

You know, Dickie, anyone of the passengers could have stolen the ring.

DICK

And, who do you think may have stolen it, Dora?

DORA

Any one of the passengers could have stolen the ring.

DICK

That's what I'm asking you. Who do you think could have stolen the ring?

DORA

Any one of the passengers could have stolen the ring.

2-1-8

DICK

Thanks for narrowing it down for me.

The Baroness enters stage left.

BARONESS

Excuse me, Mr. Thinman, but the Captain said you wanted to see me.

DICK

Yes, Baroness, come in. Dora and I are hoping to discover what happened to your ring.

BARONESS

Oh, thank you.

(She walks and stands next to Dick)

It would mean the world to me to have the world's smartest and handsomest detective solve this horrible misfortune.

Dora steps between them.

DORA

Hey, what about me? I'm not chopped liver.

BARONESS

You're right. You're a horrible misfortune, too.

The Baroness pushes Dora to the side.

DICK

Baroness, are you sure the ring is not misplaced in your suite?

BARONESS

Yes, the Baron and I tore the wallpaper off and ripped down the drapery. It is nowhere to be found.

Dick starts pacing back and forth with Dora close at his heels.

2-1-9

DICK

Where did you see it last?