

# Brewster's Millions

by

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from an original story by

George Barr McCutcheon

# Brewster's Millions

## Characters

in order of appearance

Montgomery Brewster – 26 at start of play. A likeable young New Yorker.

Tramp – Strictly from the Dick Van Dyke school of Cockney accents.

Barman – Friendly London pub landlord.

Archie – One of Monty's "Sons of the Rich" pals. A barrister who has never practiced.

Mack – Another Pal. Can be quite arrogant.

Frank – Another Pal. Knows Monty quite well.

Nopper – Another Pal. Feels like he is not in same class as the others but Monty is very fond of him.

Charlie – Another Pal. Bit spoilt.

Waiter – Typically fawning.

Solicitor 1 – Formal and cool.

Solicitor 2 – Mirror image of Solicitor 1.

Mrs Grey – Kind and generous. Treats Monty like a son.

Peggy – Like sister and brother, she and Monty don't realise the love they have.

Barbara – Object of Monty's affection. A cold fish.

Executor – A bit of an enigma.

Artist – As bohemian as they come.

Mrs Deville – Fashionable and aware.

Butler – Long suffering.

Censor – Slimy.

Robber 1 - Bemused by Monty's attitude.

Robber 2 – As above but a bit more willing to take it at face value.

Policeman – Suspicious but a public servant.

Barbara's father – A decent man unlucky in business.

Riviera Hotel Manager

Croupier

Ship's Captain – Experienced and patient.

All Characters are played by six actors as follows:

1 Montgomery Brewster

2 Tramp, Mack, Executor, Censor, Police Line up

3 English Barman, Charlie, Mrs Grey, Artist, Robber 1, Mr Drew

4 Archie, Solicitor 1, Butler, Robber 2, Police Line Up, Ship's Captain

5 Frank, Peggy, Policeman

6 Nopper, Waiter, Solicitor 2, Barbara, Mrs Deville, Police Line Up, Croupier, Hotel Manager

## Synopsis of Scenes and Characters

Action takes place in 1932 and 1933

Scene	Place	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3	Actor 4	Actor 5	Actor 6
1	London Bus Stop	Monty	Tramp				
2	London Pub	Monty		Barman			
3	Monty's Club	Monty	Mack	Charlie	Archie	Frank	Nopper Waiter
4	Solicitor's Office	Monty			Solicitor 1		Solicitor 2
5	Boarding House	Monty		Mrs Grey		Peggy	
6	Central Park	Monty					Barbara
7	Solicitor Office	Monty	Executor		Solicitor 1		Solicitor 2
8	Apartment	Monty		Artist			Mrs Deville
9	Apartment	Monty	Mack			Frank	Barbara
10	Apartment	Monty			Butler Solicitor 1		Solicitor 2 Butler
11	Barbara's House	Monty					Barbara
12	Apartment	Monty			Butler	Frank	
13	Barbara's House	Monty	Censor				Barbara
14	Street	Monty		Robber 1	Robber 2		
15	Police Station	Monty	Line up	Line up	Robber 2	Policeman	Line up
16	Apartment	Monty		Mr Drew			Mrs Deville
17	Barbara's House	Monty		Mr Drew			Barbara
18	Apartment					Peggy	Mrs Deville
19	Yacht	Monty		Mrs Grey		Peggy	
20	Yacht	Monty	Mack	Charlie	Archie	Frank Peggy	
21	Riviera Hotel	Monty				Peggy	Manager
22	Ballroom	Monty	Mack	Charlie	Archie	Frank Peggy	Manager
23	Casino	Monty		Mrs Grey	Archie	Peggy	Croupier
24	La Scala	Monty		Mrs Grey	Archie	Peggy	
25	Yacht	Monty	Mack	Charlie	Archie	Frank	
26	Yacht	Monty			Captain		
27	Southampton	Monty	Mack	Charlie Mrs Grey	Archie	Frank Peggy	
28	London Hotel	Monty				Peggy	
29	London Pub	Monty		Barman			
30	Piccadilly Circus	Monty	Tramp Executor	Mrs Grey	Solicitor 1	Peggy	Solicitor 2

If an interval is required it should be between scenes 18 and 19.

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## Scene One

*A bus stop in London. Monty is consulting a timetable and looking about him. A tramp approaches.*

MONTY: Say, can I get a bus to Piccadilly Circus from here?

TRAMP: Sure you can, guv'nor. Every ten minutes.

MONTY: I don't suppose you know the cost, do you?

TRAMP: As it 'appens, I do. Threepence.

*Monty examines his change.*

MONTY: Hmm.

TRAMP: 'Fraid I can't 'elp yer if you ain't got it, I ain't got it to give yer.

MONTY: No, I have it. I have too much.

*Monty exits leaving the tramp looking bemused.*

## Scene Two

*A London pub. A barman is cleaning glasses. Monty enters.*

BARMAN: Good evening, Sir.

MONTY: Hello. How much is a beer?

BARMAN: Rather depends on which one you have in mind, Sir.

MONTY: Well, that depends on the cost. What have you got for ten pence?

BARMAN: I'd recommend a pint of best for a shilling.

MONTY: No good. I only have ten pence to spare.

BARMAN: It will be a pint of mild then.

MONTY: Very well. Whatever that is.

*The barman produces the drink as he speaks.*

BARMAN: If you don't mind me saying, Sir. You don't look like a man who is down on his luck.

MONTY: I'm not. At least I hope I'm not. I'll know soon enough.

*He hands over a shilling to pay for the drink.*

BARMAN: Oh, you had a shilling after all.

MONTY: No, I need the change from that to go with the penny I have here for my bus fare to Piccadilly Circus. Then I will be flat broke. Not a single penny in the world.

BARMAN: You seem quite happy about it.

MONTY: Oh, I am. I worked hard to achieve absolute poverty.

BARMAN: Congratulations.

MONTY: Thank you.

BARMAN: Excuse my curiosity, but whatever drove you to achieve such a feat?

MONTY: Heck, I don't suppose it will matter if I tell you. It's not like anyone can say I haven't kept to the letter of the agreement. It all started one year ago today, my twenty-fifth birthday...

### Scene Three

*Monty's Club in New York. Archie, Mack and Frank are attempting to hang a banner which has the words "Happy Birthday".*

ARCHIE: The difficulty is, finding some way to suspend the thing without causing any damage.

MACK: So speaks a lawyer.

FRANK: Not one who has ever troubled the law courts.

MACK: Something for which the innocent shall be forever grateful.

ARCHIE: As you well know, Frank, we "Sons of the Rich" go to great lengths to avoid doing any actual work.

FRANK: Someone should explain that to Monty.

ARCHIE: Quite.

MACK: I believe that his grandfather has a very firm grip on the money.

FRANK: True, but none of us are actually rich at present. We all survive on the promise of riches to come.

*Nopper and Monty enter*

ARCHIE: Here he is. Happy Birthday old man.

MONTY: Thanks Archie. Mack, Frank. Is Charlie not here?

*Charlie enters*

CHARLIE: Sorry. Got held up.

MONTY: Not to worry. You are here now.

ARCHIE: Gentlemen, we are here to celebrate the twenty-fifth birthday of Mr. Montgomery Brewster. I ask you all to join me in drinking to his long life and happiness.

*All raise glasses and sing "For he's a jolly good fellow". During this an electric bell sounds.*

MACK: Hello, is it the police?

FRANK: What a nuisance. I want to hear his speech.

CHARLIE: Speech! Speech!

NOPPER: It's the waiter ringing up. I'll go to see what he wants.

*Nopper exits.*

MACK: He is probably just warning us about the noise.

FRANK: Already? We've hardly got started.

*Nopper returns.*

NOPPER: It's a message from your grandfather, Monty.

MONTY: Please tell him that it is after banking hours. I will see him in the morning.

NOPPER: Right, you are.

*Nopper exits.*

MACK: Grandpa doesn't like Monty to be out after dark.

FRANK: Has he sent a perambulator to take Monty home to bed?

*Nopper returns.*

NOPPER: Apparently, your grandfather is unwell.

MONTY: In that case, please send my condolences and inform him I will call to see him in the morning.

NOPPER: Of course.

*Nopper exits.*

CHARLIE: Speech!

MONTY: Gentlemen, you seem to have forgotten for the moment that I am twenty-five years old this day, and that your remarks have been childish and wholly unbecoming the dignity of my age.

ARCHIE: Monty you are quite right. Gentlemen let us not forget that we are the "Sons of the Rich" and that Monty's grandfather is enormously wealthy!

*Nopper returns.*

NOPPER: Apparently, he really is quite poorly.

MONTY: This is ridiculous. Tell him I will come as soon as we are finished here.

*Nopper exits but the actor immediately returns as the waiter.*

WAITER: I'm terribly sorry, sir. I was trying to explain to the gentleman.

MONTY: What is it?

WAITER: I'm afraid your grandfather has passed away.

MONTY: Oh, gosh.

## Scene Four

*Monty's solicitor's office.*

SOLICITOR 1: Well, I think we can safely say that Mr Brewster is no longer a man with prospects.

SOLICITOR 2: Indeed. His grandfather's fortune has turned him into a very eligible bachelor overnight.

SOLICITOR 1: I do hope he spends wisely.

SOLICITOR 2: That is rather up to him.

*Monty enters.*

MONTY: Gentlemen, I am sorry if I kept you waiting. I was half-way to the bank before I remembered that I need never step foot in the place again!

SOLICITOR 2: Um. Yes, I suppose you are right.

MONTY: I apologise if that sounds callous. The thing is, I have lived such a humble life, I am quite giddy with my change of fortune. Of course, I will miss my grandfather.

SOLICITOR 1: I understand that you were brought up in a lodging house?

MONTY: That's correct. My parents both died when I was young. My grandfather had no idea of how to raise a child so placed me with Mrs. Grey who acted as a kind of nanny-landlady.

SOLICITOR 1: Wouldn't it have been easier for him to have employed a nanny to look after you at the manor house?

MONTY: The truth is, he wanted to avoid seeing me. He didn't like to be reminded of my mother. It was quite a scandal at the time, you see. He never approved of his son's choice of bride, and they eloped to be married. I came along, er, rather shortly afterward.

SOLICITOR 1: I see.

SOLICITOR 2: Well, at least your grandfather has made amends for any coldness he may have shown you during his life. He has left the majority of his estate to you. The house and some other effects go to other relatives but you are to inherit precisely one million dollars.

MONTY: Golly!

SOLICITOR 2: As it is all very straightforward the money is available to you immediately.

MONTY: Really?

SOLICITOR 2: Yes.

MONTY: No special clause?

SOLICITOR 2: No.

*Monty looks puzzled.*

MONTY: Are you sure?

SOLICITOR 2: Quite sure.

SOLICITOR 1: Is something wrong?

MONTY: No. Nothing. Thank you. Goodbye then.

SOLICITOR 2: Good day.

SOLICITOR 1: Goodbye, Sir,

#### SCENE FIVE

*Boarding House. Mrs Grey and Peggy are darning socks. Monty enters.*

MRS GREY: Hello dear. You're late.

MONTY: I'm sorry Mrs Grey. I should have warned you.

MRS GREY: It's not a problem. Would you like me to fix you something to eat?

MONTY: Oh no, don't go to any trouble.

MRS GREY: It's no trouble. You look famished.

MONTY: I'm afraid I've had a few drinks.

MRS GREY: I know, dear. That's what I meant.

MONTY: I can't hide anything from you, can I?

MRS GREY: I hope not! Well, if I can't fix you anything then I'm off to bed. Goodnight, Monty.

Goodnight, Peggy.

MONTY: Goodnight.

PEGGY: Goodnight.

*Mrs Grey exits. As soon as she leaves Monty whispers to Peggy.*

MONTY: Peggy! We are rich!

PEGGY: Rich? What do you mean?

MONTY: Grand Papa has left me one million dollars.

PEGGY: Your grandfather has died?

MONTY: Oh. Yes. Last night. I should have mentioned it at breakfast.

PEGGY: Oh, no. What terrible news.

MONTY: What? Oh, er, yes. Terrible.

PEGGY: Very sad.

MONTY: Yes. So, so sad.

PEGGY: Why didn't you tell Mother? I suppose I had better tell her.

MONTY: Just a moment. I want you to help me decide how to make the best use of my inheritance.

I mean, I don't suppose your mother would want to move house, but we could do a lot with this place.

PEGGY: But it is your money, Monty. Don't you want to spend it on yourself.

MONTY: But there is so much. One million dollars! I can't begin to think how to spend it. At least let me clear the mortgage.

PEGGY: No, Monty. Don't let Mother hear you speaking like that.

MONTY: But she has been like a mother to me. I think of her as my mother and you as my sister.

PEGGY: I know, Monty. But I'm sure you don't want to cause offence.

MONTY: Is there no way she couldn't come by a little windfall?

PEGGY: Put the idea out of your head. If you want to make Mother and me happy then just promise to spend your money wisely.

MONTY: Oh absolutely. I have always been most prudent when it comes to money. I promise that will never change.

PEGGY: That's better. By the way, a telegram came whilst you were out this morning.

*She gives Monty the telegram which he reads.*

MONTY: Oh, gosh.

PEGGY: What is it?

MONTY: My uncle has died.

PEGGY: Oh, no. What terrible news.

MONTY: What? Oh, er, yes. Terrible. I mean. I had no idea he even existed. But I am, apparently, named in the will and the executor wants to see me tomorrow morning at my solicitor's office.

PEGGY: It's a shame he couldn't have seen you today.

MONTY: Yes, killed two birds with one stone.

PEGGY: Oh!

MONTY: Oh, I beg your pardon. Not a very good idiom to use, in the circumstances. Well, I suppose I had better get a good night's sleep if I'm going to have to face those two again tomorrow.

PEGGY: Yes. Goodnight, Monty.

MONTY: Goodnight, Peggy.

*Pause.*

MONTY: Morning!

PEGGY: Good morning.

MONTY: Well, I'm off to my solicitor's again. I think I'll walk through Central Park.

PEGGY: Goodbye, Monty.

MONTY: Goodbye, Peggy.

## SCENE SIX

*Central Park.*

MONTY: I love Central Park. It is so quiet and peaceful. A place of tranquillity in the bustling city.

*There is the roar of a car engine and honk of a horn.*

BARBARA: Look out!

MONTY: Why, Barbara!

BARBARA: Oh, hello, Monty. You're the third person I've nearly run over this morning!

MONTY: I should be flattered to be flattened by you.

BARBARA: Your gallantry deserves reward. Can I give you a lift somewhere?

MONTY: Aren't you afraid that people will talk about us?

BARBARA: Who cares? I fancy we can stand it.

MONTY: You're a thoroughbred, Barbara.

BARBARA: Where shall we ride?

MONTY: Well, I need to... *(he looks at his watch)*, gosh, I'm late. Here, let me.

*Monty pushes Barbara into the passenger seat and drives the car at speed. Sounds of roaring engine, squealing tyres etc. Members of the cast shout "Look out", "Hey" etc.*

BARBARA: I believe you are kidnapping me.

*Police whistles and shouts of "Stop".*

BARBARA: Monty Brewster, this is positively dangerous.

MONTY: Well, they need to get out of the way.

BARBARA: I don't mean for them, I mean for us! We will get ourselves arrested at any moment.

MONTY: We're here. *(The car screeches to a halt)*. Many thanks, Barbara, you are a life saver.

*Monty kisses her cheek and rushes off.*

BARBARA: Well, I say.

## SCENE SEVEN

*Solicitor's Office*

SOLICITOR 1: Do you think we have been had?

SOLICITOR 2: *(Actor is changing from role of Barbara)* Hold on.

SOLICITOR 1: What?

SOLICITOR 2: Just a tick. Right. What was that?

SOLICITOR 1: Do you think we have been had?

SOLICITOR 2: How so?

SOLICITOR 1: No Executor, no Mr Brewster. What's going on?

SOLICITOR 2: I'm sure they will be here shortly.

*Monty bursts into the office.*

MONTY: Gosh, am I too late?

SOLICITOR 1: Good morning, Mr Brewster. You have the appearance of someone who has been driving.

MONTY: More like flying.

SOLICITOR 2: There is no sign of your uncle's executor as yet. Quite unprofessional in my view.

*The executor enters.*

EXECUTOR: Gentlemen, please excuse my tardiness. I was early so I took a stroll in Central Park to pass the time and was nearly run over by a madman. *(There is a flash of recognition between the executor and Monty and both look sheepish).* I, er, had to take some time to clean myself up.

SOLICITOR 1: Not to worry, you are here now.

EXECUTOR: I thought it best to come in person so that I might explain the special clause.

MONTY: Ah! Yes, a special clause. This is where we have a special clause. Please go ahead.

EXECUTOR: Thank you. I am charged with disposing of the estate of your mother's brother, Mr Brewster.

MONTY: I didn't know she had one.

EXECUTOR: When your parents were killed, he offered to act as your guardian, but your grandfather wouldn't hear of it. As you will no doubt be aware, he opposed the marriage of his son to your mother and was determined that you would know nothing of her side of the family. Your uncle wrote to you, care of your grandfather, but we assume that he destroyed the letters. As a result, your uncle hated your grandfather with every fibre of his body.

MONTY: Well, that is understandable, I suppose.

EXECUTOR: Your uncle had no other relatives so he left everything to you. But his hatred of your grandfather was so acute he inserted a clause to prevent you from benefitting from both wills.

MONTY: You mean I have to refuse the one million dollars my grandfather left me in order to get the money my uncle left me?

EXECUTOR: Not quite. When your uncle died your money was held in trust pending the death of your grandfather. You were only to be notified of your inheritance once your grandfather had passed on, and then the special clause comes into effect.

MONTY: So, what is the clause?

EXECUTOR: That you will only inherit your uncle's fortune if you agree to squander any money left to you by your grandfather.

MONTY: Squander?

EXECUTOR: So that you have nothing to show for it.

SOLICITOR 2: Extraordinary.

MONTY: Well, that shouldn't be too difficult.

SOLICITOR 1: What is the estimated size of the uncle's estate.

EXECUTOR: At least seven million dollars. Probably more.

MONTY: So, I have to spend one million dollars to get seven million dollars!

EXECUTOR: Yes, but you must dispose of it completely within one year of your grandfather's death.

MONTY: By my 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.

EXECUTOR: That is correct. You will be sole heir to your uncle's fortune providing that you meet me at 6pm on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1933 at Piccadilly Circus in London without a penny to your name.

SOLICITOR 2: London!

EXECUTOR: Correct.

SOLICITOR 2: Why London?

EXECUTOR: Let me just ask the testator. Oh, he isn't here.

SOLICITOR 2: There is no reason to be rude.

MONTY: I could spend a million dollars right now. There are houses in New York that would cost that much.

EXECUTOR: But then you would have a house to show for you money. You must have no assets and no money. Not a single penny.

MONTY: Ah.

EXECUTOR: I will read you the full terms (*he takes out a sheet of paper*). Monty must present himself at the appointed time with no money or possessions other than the clothes he is wearing. He can spend the money however he wishes subject to the following conditions.

1. No reckless gambling.
2. No idiotic Board of Trade speculation.
3. No endowments to institutions of any character.
4. No indiscriminate giving away of funds.
5. No more than ordinary dissipation.
6. No excessive donations to charity.

Furthermore, Monty must not disclose his situation to anyone other than the solicitors acting on his behalf. That is the three of us, gentlemen.

SOLICITOR 2: This is ridiculous.

EXECUTOR: Of course, you are free to ignore all this. I'm sure you could live very comfortably on the money left to you by your grandfather.

MONTY: It's a gamble. A big one.

SOLICITOR 1: I advise you to take your time to make up your mind.

MONTY: I'll do it!

SOLICITOR 1: Are you sure?

MONTY: I believe that even my grandfather would advise that it is a risk worth taking.

SOLICITOR 1: In that case, I congratulate you on your bravery.

SOLICITOR 2: Is that what it is?

EXECUTOR: Well done, young man. I shall see you in London in a little less than one year.

#### SCENE EIGHT

*Monty's apartment. An artist is doing that thing with his hands as he reimagines the room. Monty enters.*

MONTY: Ah, Paul. You're here.

ARTIST: You have a very beautiful apartment, Mr Brewster.

MONTY: I would hope so. It is the highest rent per calendar month of any property in New York.

ARTIST: Er, yes. Beauty doesn't necessarily require wealth, but it often helps.

MONTY: So, what do you have in mind?

ARTIST: Well, there is much that I can do with such a beautiful space but I'm afraid I would have to charge you five hundred dollars if you want me to do the whole apartment.

MONTY: Five hundred dollars!

ARTIST: I'm sorry if it sounds expensive.

MONTY: Five hundred dollars won't even pay for the paint, man. I insist that you triple your price. I want the very finest materials.

ARTIST: Oh. Well, in that case I will re-calculate.

*Mrs Deville enters.*

MRS DEVILLE: Mr Brewster?

MONTY: You must be Mrs Deville. Thank you so much for coming to see me.

MRS DEVILLE: It is my pleasure. What a lovely apartment.

MONTY: I'm planning to have the ball in this room. There will be a huge table in the centre of the room and the biggest chandelier you have seen in your life hanging over it. The champagne reception will be in the room next door and all the other rooms will be furnished so that my guests can mingle.

ARTIST: What about your bedroom? I would suggest one of the rooms overlooking the park.

MONTY: I don't need a bedroom in this property. I still have rooms at Mrs Grey's. I pay her a retainer so that I have somewhere to hide myself away should I want a bit of time to myself. I expect to retire to Mrs Grey's most evenings but I can have a Castro Convertible here just in case.

MRS DEVILLE: A Castro Convertible?

ARTIST: It is a kind of folding bed that doubles as a sofa.

MRS DEVILLE: What will they think of next?

MRS DEVILLE: You mention a ball. Do you mean you are planning something grander than a simple dinner party?

MONTY: But of course, Mrs Deville. I wouldn't have troubled you with arranging a mere dinner party. I want at least sixty guests.

MRS DEVILLE: Isn't it less than a month since your grandfather died?

MONTY: Please don't think me callous. There is a reason for my extravagance.

MRS DEVILLE: It doesn't matter what I think, but others might think it a little early to be putting on such a grand event.

MONTY: But they will come all the same.

MRS DEVILLE: Oh, yes. They'll come.

MONTY: In that case make it as grand as you like. Three thousand dollars a head.

MRS DEVILLE: Goodness gracious.

MONTY: Hmm. Perhaps that would be beyond the boundaries for ordinary dissipation. All right, but no less than five hundred.

MRS DEVILLE: I'll see what I can do, Mr Brewster.

MONTY: Thank you Mrs Deville. Now then, Paul. Where the devil am I going to be able to buy a Castro Convertible?

#### SCENE NINE

*The apartment. The sound of music and laughter coming from the main room. Monty is talking to Frank in a side room.*

FRANK: It sounds like people are having fun.

MONTY: I hope so, Frank. Otherwise, they might not come next time.

FRANK: You are planning another?

MONTY: Once a month is the plan. I've a chef arriving from Paris in time for the next one. And an orchestra from Hungary, a French singer and a military band. I like to cater for all tastes. Of course, it won't all be grand balls. I'll still be having dinner parties and after play parties just for the Sons of the Rich.

FRANK: This must be costing you a fortune.

MONTY: Well, what's money for, anyway?

FRANK: And this lovely house is just for day use. I understand you still return to your old lodgings each night.

MONTY: Yes, I have trouble sleeping anywhere else.

FRANK: Are you sure that is the reason?

MONTY: What else would it be? (*Changing the subject*) Did I tell you that I bought a car?

FRANK: I didn't know that you drove.

MONTY: I can drive all right, just ask Barbara.

*Barbara enters.*

BARBARA: Ask me what?

MONTY: I was just telling Frank about my new car.

BARBARA: Yes, and what a ridiculous thing it is. Fourteen thousand dollars they are in the showroom.

MONTY: Yes, well I need a powerful motor in order to learn. Once I've mastered how to drive, I will change it for a more sensible model.

*There is a crash and screams from the other room. Mack rushes in.*

MACK: The chandelier! It has crashed onto the table.

MONTY: Is anyone hurt?

MACK: No, but the chandelier and table are ruined.

MONTY: Oh dear. Never mind, we will just have to replace them before the next ball.

BARBARA: Oh, Monty! (*She exits*)

MONTY: Barbara? What's the matter?

## SCENE TEN

*The apartment. A few days later. Monty is sitting reading a newspaper. The butler enters.*

BUTLER: The mess is all cleared up now, Sir. You may arrange for the new chandelier to be fitted.

MONTY: Thank you.

BUTLER: The servants are not terribly happy about the extra work brought about by your entertaining. They had threatened to strike for more pay.

MONTY: What?

BUTLER: It is the times we live in I am afraid, Sir.

MONTY: Well, I hope you told them they can have more pay.

BUTLER: Yes, Sir, I... I beg your pardon.

MONTY: I'm sure they are all worth more than I am paying them.

BUTLER: No, Sir. I told them in no uncertain terms that they are very lucky to have jobs and if they didn't like it they could go and join the welfare queue.

MONTY: Damn. Well, look. If anyone asks for more money again you are to refer to me, understood?

BUTLER: Yes, Sir. Have you finished with the newspaper, Sir?

MONTY: Yes. Burn the damn thing.

BUTLER: Has something perturbed you, Sir.

MONTY: Yes. Some blasted know-it-all calling himself "the censor" has written a letter condemning my lifestyle.

BUTLER: I wouldn't let it worry you, Sir.

MONTY: I wouldn't care, but he also said a few things about Barbara Drew.

BUTLER: Why would he involve her?

MONTY: He seems to think that he is a rival for her affections.

BUTLER: What a cad!

MONTY: Would you get me my solicitor on the telephone?

BUTLER: Of course, Sir.

*The butler fetches the telephone and immediately passes the receiver to Monty.*

MONTY: Hello, Ripley?

*Solicitor 2 appears on stage at the other end of the telephone line.*

SOLICITOR 2: No, this is Grant.

MONTY: Is Ripley there?

SOLICITOR 2: *(With a look at the actor playing the butler).* Um Yes.

MONTY: Good. Fetch him for me, would you?

SOLICITOR 2: Right. Yes. OK.

*With a series of gestures and muttered obscenities the actors playing Solicitor 2 and the butler swap places.*

SOLICITOR 1: This is Ripley.

MONTY: Ah, good. I need your advice and I don't trust Grant's judgement.

*The actor who is now temporarily playing the butler makes an angry gesture.*

SOLICITOR 1: Very well. Go ahead.

MONTY: I wonder whether it would in any way breach the terms of the will if I were to marry. You see, I am very fond of Miss Drew and I fear she might be getting away from me...

*During the last part of Monty's sentence, the actor playing Solicitor 2 has marched over to Solicitor 1 and grabbed the receiver from him.*

SOLICITOR 2: Stick to your knitting! *(He slams the phone down)*

MONTY: I say! Hello? Are you there? Oh. He's gone.

*Monty goes to hand the receiver to the butler but both actors are on the other side of the stage. Both rush over and fight over who takes the receiver from Monty.*

#### SCENE ELEVEN

*Barbara Drew's House. Barbara is reading a book and occasionally glancing at her watch, irritated. Monty enters oblivious to her mood.*

MONTY: Barbara, you look so lovely sat there at the window.

BARBARA: Well, I thought I'd watch the sun go down.

MONTY: What? But the sun won't be going down for hours, it is only two, er, three fifteen.

BARBARA: Yes, and you were due here at two.

MONTY: May I use the telephone?

BARBARA: The tele... Yes. Help yourself.

*Barbara is even more irritated. Monty, oblivious to this makes a call.*

MONTY: *(Into telephone)* Hello? Yes, I'd like to place a bet. *(Barbara sighs)* Yes, it is Monty Brewster. It is for the big fight in San Francisco tonight. Three thousand dollars on Matthews. Yes, I know he is the underdog but I read that he is a very good amateur and a local hero. I fancy him to win. Well, I don't care. The undefeated champion has to lose at some point, doesn't he? That's right, three thousand. Thank you. *(He hangs up).*

BARBARA: Throwing away more of your money, Monty.

MONTY: I have a good feeling about this one.

BARBARA: And I suppose that, if you lose, you will forget it in a flash.

MONTY: Let us not quarrel. I have asked you to see me because I have something very important to say.

BARBARA: Do you, now? Very well, I'm ready.

MONTY: I love you, Babs.

BARBARA: Oh!

MONTY: I thought you knew that. One day I plan to marry you but now I hear about this "Censor" chap. Is it true that I have a rival?

BARBARA: Well, Monty.

MONTY: Yes.

BARBARA: You know that I am fond of you.

MONTY: Yes.

BARBARA: But.

MONTY: What?

BARBARA: I don't know if it is enough to marry you.

MONTY: And the Censor?

BARBARA: As it happens, I haven't even met the gentleman yet, but this is about us, Monty. You have changed so much since your grandfather died. It feels like I hardly know you.

MONTY: I haven't changed, Babs. Not really. I think your love for me will grow in time.

BARBARA: Is that so?

MONTY: Yes. Maybe not straight away, but in a year, maybe. Then you will see that I am just the same old Monty. Perhaps a few weeks short of a year, even.

BARBARA: A year, Monty?

MONTY: A little under.

BARBARA: Isn't that rather a long time?

MONTY: It isn't really. Is it?

BARBARA: You are really not making a lot of sense.

MONTY: I'm sorry.

BARBARA: It seems to me that you are not terribly serious.

MONTY: I am, Babs. Believe me.

BARBARA: Well, you will have to give me time to think about it.

MONTY: Yes, of course. Take as much time as you like.

BARBARA: A little under a year, presumably.

## SCENE TWELVE

*The apartment the following morning. Monty is reading a newspaper. Frank enters.*

FRANK: Monty, you old devil!

MONTY: What? Oh hello, Frank.

FRANK: Where on Earth did you get that tip?

MONTY: Tip?

FRANK: Nopper told me about the boxing match. I wish I'd had the bottle to follow your lead.

MONTY: You mean he won?

FRANK: Of course! Isn't it in your paper?

*Monty turns to the sports page and sighs.*

FRANK: I've got to hand it to you. Everything you touch turns to gold.

MONTY: So it would appear. Do you know, I think I might start investing in the stock market?

FRANK: Why not. With your luck you will make a fortune.

*Monty turns to the business pages.*

MONTY: Hmm. Lumber and fuel looks like a good investment.

FRANK: Lumber and fuel? Are you crazy? Shares are at an all-time high. There is only one way to go and that is down.

MONTY: That settles it. Lumber and fuel it is.

FRANK: You are either a genius or a madman.

MONTY: Which do you think it is, Frank?

FRANK: I'd back you for genius. So long as it isn't my money.

*Butler enters.*

BUTLER: Your cab is here, sir.

FRANK: You getting a cab? Where's your motor?

MONTY: I had a bit of a bump. It's, um, broken.

FRANK: Can it be mended?

MONTY: It is a bit too broken for that.

FRANK: Wow, that car cost you a fortune.

MONTY: *(Said with a satisfied smile)*. Yes, and there is also the compensation I had to pay to the pedestrians I ran over.

## SCENE THIRTEEN

*Barbara Drew's House. Barbara is being visited by the Censor.*

CENSOR: Thank you for agreeing to see me, Miss Drew.

BARBARA: How could I refuse? You were so generous at the charity bazaar.

CENSOR: It so happens that your charitable inclinations are something close to my own heart. I was so pleased to have learnt of your presence at the bazaar.

BARBARA: How nice. And it certainly got you noticed. I understand that you have been in New York for less than three weeks but you are already the talk of the town.

CENSOR: I don't pay much attention to talk, but I feel I must be the luckiest man in town to have made your acquaintance.

BARBARA: Oh, Mr Grimes. You make me blush.

CENSOR: Please call me Rodney.

BARBARA: Of course, and you must call me Barbara.

CENSOR: Delighted.

*An intimate look between them is disturbed by Monty's entrance.*

MONTY: Sorry, Babs, your maid said you had company, but I just had to see you. (*Seeing CENSOR*)

Good God, Grimes!

CENSOR: Brewster.

MONTY: What the hell are you doing here?

CENSOR: Please mind your language in front of a lady.

MONTY: Barbara is no lady...

BARBARA: What!?!

MONTY: She is my... friend.

CENSOR: And mine.

MONTY: Oh no you don't. Not with Barbara.

BARBARA: What is this rudeness, Montgomery?

MONTY: I don't mean to be rude, Barbara, but I must protect you from this man.

BARBARA: I don't need your protection.

MONTY: I have done a bit of digging into his past since he arrived in town and started calling himself "The Censor". How many times have you been married, Grimes? Is it two or three times?

CENSOR: None of your business.

MONTY: Each wife wealthier than the last. He's after your money, Babs.

CENSOR: How dare you?

BARBARA: This is a very serious allegation.

MONTY: It is a matter of record. Do you know that his father was familiar with the VC?

BARBARA: The Victoria Cross?

MONTY: The Vigilance Committee. He was up for an impressive variety of crimes and the son is following in the father's footsteps.

CENSOR: This has gone far enough. I will leave my card with your servant, Miss Drew. Please feel free to contact me at your leisure.

*Censor exits.*

MONTY: Good riddance. That is the last you will hear of him.

BARBARA: Does it occur to you, Monty, that you have been carrying things with a pretty high hand? Where did you acquire the right to decide to whom I may speak?

MONTY: Oh, come now, Babs. I've not been quite as unreasonable as that. And you now know yourself that Grimes is the worst kind of a bounder.

BARBARA: I know nothing of the sort. You say that about every man who gives me a smile.

MONTY: You know that is not true, but a woman in your position will attract the worst sort.

BARBARA: And it never occurred to you that I was equal to the situation. I suppose you thought Mr. Grimes had only to beckon and I would joyfully answer. I'll have you know, Monty Brewster, that I am quite able to choose my friends, and to handle them. Mr. Grimes has character and I like him. He has seen more of life in one year of his strenuous career than you ever dreamed of in all your pampered existence. His life has been real, Monty Brewster, and yours is only an imitation.

MONTY: *(Weakly)* Babs. I can't take that from you. Please say you don't mean it.

BARBARA: You are exasperating! Please leave me alone before I explode!

*Monty exits leaving a small box containing a diamond necklace. Barbara notices it, picks up the box and takes out the necklace. She weeps.*

BARBARA: *(To herself)* Oh. You crumbled at just the wrong moment. I admired you for standing up for yourself but then you let yourself down. I cannot love a man who is weak when it is time to be strong. I will never allow myself to love you, Monty Brewster.

#### SCENE FOURTEEN

*The street close Barbara Drew's house. Two robbers lurk in the shadows and pounce on Monty as he passes. One of them has a gun.*

ROBBER 1: Throw up your hands!

ROBBER 2: Stop where you are.

MONTY: What do you want?

ROBBER 1: Put up your hands, I said.

*Monty does.*

ROBBER: Not a sound out of you or you get it good and proper. You know what we want. Get to work, Bill; I'll watch his hands.

*Robber 2 searches.*

MONTY: Help yourselves, boys. I'm not fool enough to scrap about it. Don't hit me or shoot, that's all. Be quick about it, because I'll take cold if my overcoat is open long. How's business been to-night?

ROBBER 2: Fierce! You're the first guy we've seen in a week that looks good.

MONTY: I hope you won't be disappointed. If I'd expected this I might have brought more money.

ROBBER 1: I guess we'll be satisfied. (*Putting on a posh accent.*) You are being awfully nice about it. Perhaps you'd be so kind as to tell us next time you are passing.

ROBBER 2: (*More sincere.*) It's a pleasure doing business with you. I'll leave you the cab fare home for your honesty.

ROBBER 1: (*Sarcastic.*) Do you want us to call you a cab?

MONTY: No, thank you, I think I'll walk.

ROBBER 1: Well, just walk south a hundred steps without lookin' 'round or yellin' and you can save your skin.

MONTY: Thank you. I will.

*Monty starts to walk away putting his hand in his pockets when he stops and turns around.*

MONTY: I say. You two have been rather careless. You've left a roll of three hundred dollars in my coat pocket.

ROBBER 2: Say that again.

ROBBER 1: He's foolin' us, Bill. Trying to trap us.

MONTY: No, I'm not. This is on the level. You over-looked a roll of bills in your haste and I'm not the sort of fellow to see an earnest endeavourer get the worst of it. Look, I'll put my hands back up. (*He does.*)

ROBBER 1: Take your coat off and leave it on the ground. Then move away.

*Monty does as he is told. Robber 2 digs into the overcoat pocket and pulls out the roll of bills.*

ROBBER 2: Well, I'll be blowed!

ROBBER 1: (*Finally acknowledging Monty's reasonableness.*) Leave the coat there, Bill. We don't want this gentleman to freeze to death.

*Robber 2 drops the coat to the floor and both robbers exit. Monty puts his coat back on and exits whistling happily to himself.*

## SCENE FIFTEEN

*Police Station the following morning. All actors except Monty and the policeman are in a line-up with only Robber 2 being a recognisable character. Policeman enters followed by Monty.*

POLICEMAN: This way Mr Brewster. We've rounded up a few suspects.

MONTY: (*Looking at ROBBER 2.*) Why, hello, Bill

ROBBER 2: Er...

POLICEMAN: Do you know this man?

MONTY: Of course. This is Bill. I saw him last night, just before I was robbed.

POLICEMAN: We picked him up last night and detained him when he was unable to account for himself.

MONTY: Oh dear. Bill, I have told you before, you need to take more water with it.

POLICEMAN: Are you sure this isn't one of the men who robbed you?

MONTY: Of course. You might as well let all these people go. I'm quite sure that none of them are the men you are looking for.

*All except Monty and Robber 2 exit.*

ROBBER 2: I don't understand. Why didn't you tell him it was me?

MONTY: Because you were kind enough not to cut my throat.

ROBBER 2: You're a real gentleman. We spent some of what we got from you but I'd like to give you back what's left.

MONTY: Keep it. You need it more than I do. But use it for something worthwhile. You'll still have enough to set yourself up. Why not try it?

ROBBER 2: I will, sir. Thank you.

## SCENE SIXTEEN

*The Apartment. Mrs Deville is seated, reading. Monty enters.*

MONTY: Oh, Mrs Deville. I didn't know that you were here.

MRS DEVILLE: I hope you don't mind me waiting. I wanted to discuss the arrangements for your next dinner party.

MONTY: I will be honest with you; I'm growing tired of these dinner parties. The same people, the same flowers, the same things to eat, and the same inane twaddle in the shape of talk. Who cares about them anyway?

MRS DEVILLE: That is a little ungrateful, after all the work I put into them.

MONTY: Oh no, Mrs Deville, not at all, but I'm sure you know what I mean. They were a dreadful bore, which only goes to show what a great success they were. And I am grateful to you for that, but it is time to move on. We must have a grand ball. And a cruise.

MRS DEVILLE: Let us concentrate on the ball for now.

MONTY: I've had some ideas about that. There's a Hungarian orchestra I have heard are rather good.

MRS DEVILLE: Really? Where are they based?

MONTY: Hungary, of course. But I will bring them over. And there is a contralto who is the absolute toast of Paris who must come too.

MRS DEVILLE: You are certainly cut out for the millionaire lifestyle.

MONTY: Why not enjoy it while it lasts?

MRS DEVILLE: I'm not saying I disapprove. I will start the plans.

MONTY: Thank you.

*Mrs Deville exits as Barbara's father enters. They acknowledge each other in passing*

MRS DEVILLE: Mr Drew.

MR DREW: Mrs Deville.

MONTY: Why, Mr Drew. Are you here with Barbara?

MR DREW: I asked her to come but she said she was busy. She asked me to give you this.

*He hands Monty a small box. Monty turns his back on Mr Drew, opens the box and takes out the necklace he gave to Barbara.*

MONTY: I suppose I was expecting this, Barbara. I guess that's the end of it.

MR DREW: What was that?

MONTY: Oh, nothing. Did you wish to speak to me about something Mr Drew?

MR DREW: Yes. I came to warn you. You have no doubt heard about Spillings Bank?

MONTY: No. What of them?

MR DREW: They've gone under I'm afraid.

MONTY: Gone bust?

MR DREW: Yes, I hope you didn't have any funds placed with them.

MONTY: I did. This is fantastic news.

MR DREW: Fantastic? Oh, you mean unimaginable. It is true, I'm afraid. I hope you haven't lost too much.

MONTY: One hundred K, but it is a start.

MR DREW: I have to warn you that the situation at Spillings has caused quite a bit of panic. People are withdrawing their money and keeping it under their pillowcases for fear of losing it all together. Spillings may not be the only bank to go under if things continue.

MONTY: Well, the majority of my savings are in your bank, Mr Drew. I'm sure that my money is safe enough with you.

MR DREW: I hope so, Monty. I really do.

MONTY: You mean it might not be?

MR DREW: The panic has spread far and wide. Even my customers are nervous.

MONTY: They are withdrawing their money?

MR DREW: Not yet. I believe they are waiting to see what the major accounts holders do.

MONTY: You mean people like me?

MR DREW: You are the biggest of them all.

MONTY: So, If I leave my money in my account then everyone else will do the same?

MR DREW: I believe so.

MONTY: In that case, of course I will leave it. Naturally.

MR DREW: But I have to warn you, you could lose it all. If Spillings can go under, so can I.

MONTY: Nonsense. Not only will I leave my money in there, I will double it. I have money in other accounts which I will transfer to you immediately.

MR DREW: Are you sure?

MONTY: Absolutely. But you must promise me one thing.

MR DREW: Of course.

MONTY: Barbara must not hear of this. Not a word, do you promise?

MR DREW: But, surely...

MONTY: Not a word. Or I withdraw everything.

MR DREW: All right. If that is what you want?

MONTY: I do.

#### SCENE SEVENTEEN

*Barbara Drew's House. Sound of a party in a room off stage. Barbara enters followed by her father. Both are furious.*

MR DREW: Will you stop behaving like a spoilt child and have the good grace to speak to the young man?

BARBARA: Please, father. I invited him at your insistence but I would rather not have to talk to him.

MR DREW: Look, I understand that you've had a tiff. I expect that is why you gave me that small box to return to him, but he is a good man. You could do a lot worse, believe me.

BARBARA: It's more than a tiff. I never wish to see him again.

MR DREW: Now, look here. If it wasn't for that young man you wouldn't even be having a party.

BARBARA: What on Earth do you mean?

MR DREW: I cannot tell you, I made a promise.

BARBARA: A promise? How about making a promise to me? How about thinking about your daughter and what she wants for once in your life? I'm finished with Montgomery Brewster and that is the end of it.

MR DREW: (*With a quiet rage.*) If that is your point of view, Barbara, then I wish you to know mine. If it weren't for that open-hearted boy, we would be ruined. Instead of giving dinner parties you'd be giving piano lessons. When he heard that the bank was in trouble he didn't hesitate to help out. His heavy investment saved us, and he will always be welcome in my house. You had better get used to it!

*Mr Drew storms out, leaving Barbara in tears. After a moment, Monty enters.*

MONTY: Babs? I thought you must be in here.

BARBARA: I don't wish to see you.

MONTY: Then why did you invite me? (*Monty is encouraged by Barbara's silence.*) Look, I don't know what I have done to offend you so much, but whatever it is, I am sorry. (*Getting bolder.*) I am sure that you will find it in your heart to forgive me. We'll look back at this quarrel and laugh, when we are married.

BARBARA: When we are married? Have you forgotten that you require my consent?

MONTY: I'm sure you will be willing when the time comes.

BARBARA: Oh, I see it now. You mean to force me into it. What you did for my father is just part of your big scheme.

MONTY: What I did for your father?

BARBARA: He told me about that business at the bank. But he didn't see the game you were playing. Believe me, Montgomery Brewster, he would have torn up your cheque in an instant if he had suspected that you were trying to buy his daughter.

MONTY: I wasn't trying to buy you!

BARBARA: I see it all now. You were not slow to grab the opportunity, were you? No, I expect that you were over the moon when you saw your chance to ingratiate yourself with my father.

MONTY: Miss Drew, stop. I had believed that you were just angry at me and that you would one day learn to love me as I have loved you. But I understand now that sort of man you believe me to be. If that is how you think of me then I realise that there is no hope for us. I will waste no more of your time. You need have no fear that I will trouble you again.

*Monty exits*

#### SCENE EIGHTEEN

*Monty's boarding house. Peggy enters with Mrs Deville.*

PEGGY: Do come through, Mrs Deville. Please excuse our humble little house, nothing like as grand as Monty's apartment.

MRS DEVILLE: Oh, but it is utterly charming, my dear Peggy. And it is where Monty chose to be to recuperate. How is he now?

PEGGY: Still quite weak. He refuses to get out of bed.

MRS DEVILLE: I remember when my husband had appendicitis. It knocked the stuffing out of him for sure, though it didn't affect him as badly as it seems to have done poor Monty.

PEGGY: Do you know he has drawn up a will? He has left me just enough money to pay for his funeral.

MRS DEVILLE: Goodness, he is in a bad way.

PEGGY: I really don't know what to do. I went to see Barbara Drew and begged her to come to visit him. I know they had that silly argument but I hoped that she still felt some affection for him, but she was as cold as a fish.

MRS DEVILLE: Well, at least he still has you.

PEGGY: I will always stand by him, of course, but I think what he really needs is a wife.

MRS DEVILLE: And?

PEGGY: Oh, Mrs Deville. He is like a brother to me and surely he can take his pick from all of the most beautiful society ladies.

MRS DEVILLE: Not if he goes on spending the way he has been. I'm afraid I have some rather bad news.

PEGGY: Oh, no!

MRS DEVILLE: We tried to cancel the ball but everyone insisted on still being paid the full amount. The caterers, the serving staff and as for that dreadful Hungarian Orchestra and the contralto from Paris.

PEGGY: What?

MRS DEVILLE: I don't know where he got the idea that they were any good but as well as booking them for the ball he also financed a tour of concert halls all over the United States of America. The reviews are terrible and ticket sales non-existent. He will lose a fortune.

PEGGY: Oh dear.

MRS DEVILLE: And poor Nopper. He thought he saw a chance to turn Monty's fortunes around, and Monty trusted him, of course, but the investment turned out to be a disaster and now Nopper has disappeared.

PEGGY: Nopper has disappeared?

MRS DEVILLE: Yes.

PEGGY: What do you mean?

MRS DEVILLE: He felt such shame at having lost Monty's money, he left town. No one knows where he is.

PEGGY: That's awful.

MRS DEVILLE: I'm sorry, my dear, but you are going to have to tell Monty. He cannot go on spending like this.

PEGGY: I don't know if he will listen to me.

MRS DEVILLE: You are probably the only person in the world that he would listen to. Please, Peggy, you must tell him to forget about this ridiculous idea of hiring a yacht and sailing around the Mediterranean.

PEGGY: I will try.

MRS DEVILLE: By my reckoning, he still has about half the money his grandfather left him intact. If he goes ahead with this boat trip I am sure it would just about wipe him out.

PEGGY: I will tell him exactly that.

MRS DEVILLE: Good. Whatever else happens, this sailing trip must not go ahead.

#### SCENE NINETEEN

*Aboard the yacht at sea. Monty, Mrs Grey, Peggy, Archie, Mack, Frank and Charlie are on board along with the ship's captain and crew. Peggy and Mrs Grey are stood, rocking side to side with the ship's motion. Monty enters forgetting to rock.*

MONTY: Hello, ladies. Enjoying the sea air?

PEGGY: Yes, but the sea is quite choppy.

MONTY: Eh?

PEGGY: *(Under her breath.)* Rock!

MONTY: Eh?

PEGGY: (*Under her breath.*) Rock!

MRS GREY: (*Under her breath.*) We are on a boat!

MONTY: Yes, Mrs Grey. I know we are on a boat. Oh. (*He starts to rock.*)

MRS GREY: I suppose we might as well make the most of it, Monty, but you know my feelings about this trip.

MONTY: (*With a cheeky grin.*) But still you came.

MRS GREY: To keep an eye on you.

MONTY: Well, I'm glad you did, both of you.

PEGGY: You didn't give us much choice. I hated having to tell you that half your grandfather's fortune was gone, I thought that it would throw you into an even deeper depression, but it seemed to have the opposite effect.

MONTY: It made me remember that life is for living, Peggy. I wasn't achieving anything holed up in that bedroom. The sea air, with all my friends beside me, is just what I need.

PEGGY: Very well, but what will you do when all the money is gone?

MONTY: I'll get a job, if it comes to that. There are plenty of people who owe me a favour. But let us not worry about the future, let us, instead, enjoy our trip. I've a whole library of books that I have been saving to read on rainy days.

PEGGY: I'm surprised you can save anything.

MONTY: Oh, I feel like I am about to receive a lecture.

PEGGY: (*Smiling.*) Class dismissed, for the time being.

## SCENE TWENTY

*On Board. Archie, Mack and Frank are chatting.*

ARCHIE: Well, I don't mind saying, it is rather nice to get Monty back.

MACK: What do you mean?

ARCHIE: Well, all those big parties he was throwing were all well and good but I missed having him to ourselves. Just the Sons of the Rich, like it used to be.

FRANK: Except that Nopper isn't here.

MACK: Damn shame that.

FRANK: Plus, we have the women.

ARCHIE: Yes, but he could hardly sail away without Peggy and her mother, after everything they have done for him.

FRANK: And all the crew.

ARCHIE: Yes, yes. But still it feels a bit more like old times.

MACK: Seems to me that there is more crew than passengers.

FRANK: There needs to be a sizeable crew on a yacht as big as this.

MACK: That's the other thing. The yacht seems far too big, for the number of passengers.

FRANK: I wouldn't have fancied crossing the Atlantic on anything smaller!

*Charlie enters.*

CHARLIE: I say. A most extraordinary thing happened a while back. It put me into a bit of a predicament. I just wondered what someone else might have done.

ARCHIE: (*Teasing.*) I'd have married her, Charlie.

CHARLIE: Oh, be serious. The thing is, I was out on the deck when one of the ship's crew fell overboard. He was fiddling about doing something with the rigging, and he must have just lost his grip.

MACK: How awful!

CHARLIE: I know. One moment he was there and the next there is a splash, and he is floundering around in the water. The thing is, I had never set eyes on him before, he was a complete stranger, otherwise I might have jumped in after him.

MACK: You didn't just leave him there!

CHARLIE: Of course not! I ran off to find the captain immediately. The problem was, that I couldn't find him, I think he must have been sleeping, so, in the end, I informed another crew member, who told someone else, who went off to get the ship turned around, so we could head back to where the poor fellow fell in.

ARCHIE: I felt the ship turning, let us go and see what is going on.

*The four of them rush up to the deck and peer out to sea.*

FRANK: Look (*Pointing.*) Do you see? There is a body in the water.

MACK: Thank God!

ARCHIE: They are sending a rowing boat out to him, look.

MACK: I cannot believe you didn't jump in to save him, Charlie. You are the strongest swimmer amongst us.

CHARLIE: How was I to know that he wasn't a strong swimmer himself?

ARCHIE: They've reached him. Wait a moment. There are two chaps in the water. Good God.

ALL: It's Monty!

ARCHIE: Bravo Monty!

MACK: Well done, old chap.

ARCHIE: I hope they make it back to the yacht safely.

FRANK: Here he is!

ARCHIE: That was quick!

*Monty enters looking very wet.*

MONTY: Hello there, sorry about the delay to your journey. We'll be on our way again in a moment.

*Frank changes into Peggy and rushes over to hug Monty.*

PEGGY: Monty, you were so brave.

MONTY: I say, Peggy. You'll get soaking wet doing that.

#### SCENE TWENTY-ONE

*Riviera Hotel. The Hotel Manager greets Monty, Mrs Grey and Peggy as they enter.*

MANAGER: Good afternoon. Welcome to the Côte d'Azur, Riviera Hotel. Do I have the pleasure of addressing Mr Brewster?

MONTY: Yes. That's me. This is Mrs Grey and her daughter, Miss Grey.

MANAGER: Delighted to meet you. Mrs Grey, Miss Grey. We have put you in the Provence Suite.

MONTY: And where am I?

MANAGER: Er. The Saint-Tropez Suite.

MONTY: And Archie?

MANAGER: Um. Monaco?

MONTY: Frank?

MANAGER: Monte Carlo.

MONTY: That is the same as Monaco.

MANAGER: No, it isn't.

MONTY: Yes, it is.

MANAGER: OK. Well, Nice then.

MONTY: Like the biscuits?

MANAGER: Exactly.

MONTY. What about Mack?

MANAGER: Erm, Mack, Mack, Mack, Mack. Got it. Antibes.

MONTY: Hmm. And that leaves Charlie.

MANAGER: Ha. (*Triumphantly.*) Cassis!

MONTY: Damn. So how about Herbert?

MANAGER: Herbert?

MONTY: Yes.

MANAGER: Who the... Who is Herbert?

MONTY: The ship's captain.

MANAGER: But he isn't staying at the hotel!

MONTY: Yes, he is. And so is the first mate, the second mate, the cook, the boilerman, the guy I fished out of the med, all of them.

MANAGER: Right. Well. They will be staying on the lower floors where the rooms have numbers not names. All right?

MONTY: Fair enough, old chap.

MRS GREY: Monty. Peggy and I will just go to freshen up.

MONTY: Of course, I will see you at dinner. I just need to have a word with my man here.

*Mrs Grey and Peggy exit.*

MONTY: Now then. This is the Riviera Hotel on the French Riviera, yes?

MANAGER: The Côte d'Azur, yes

MONTY: What?

MANAGER: Yes, sir. The French Riviera.

MONTY: Well then. Where is it?

MANAGER: Where is what, sir?

MONTY: The Riviera.

MANAGER: Well, it is all around you, sir?

MONTY: Well, I haven't seen it.

MANAGER: What, exactly, have you been looking for, sir?

MONTY: Well, flowers of course. Mrs Deville told me that the Riviera means only one thing and that is flower fighting.

MANAGER: Oh. You mean the Bataille de Fleurs. The carnival.

MONTY: Yes, that's it.

MANAGER: It is very spectacular. Something not to be missed.

MONTY: Great.

MANAGER: You missed it. It was last week.

MONTY: Last week? You mean it isn't all year round?

MANAGER: It is a very grand affair, sir. C'est magnifique! C'est superbe! It costs a packet!

MONTY: Really? Let's have another one then. Arrange it for tomorrow.

MANAGER: It's impossible. The Bataille de Fleurs is a national holiday. Everybody is back at work now.

MONTY: Let them have another holiday. Monty Day. I shall pay their wages.

MANAGER: Everyone?

MONTY: If that is what is required.

MANAGER: The carriages will need to be brought out of storage and decorated. The gendarmes will require overtime. The Mayor will have to be bribed.

MONTY: Bribed?

MANAGER: This is France, sir. You cannot expect an official to do anything unless you make it worth his while.

MONTY: Fair enough. Very well. See to it all. It must be spectacular. Impressive. Out of this world.

#### SCENE TWENTY-TWO

*The hotel ballroom. Archie, Mack, Frank and Charlie are drinking.*

ARCHIE: Well, that was spectacular.

MACK: Impressive.

FRANK: Out of this world.

ARCHIE: I think it is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

FRANK: It must have cost Monty a fortune.

MACK: I'm sure it did. *(With a knowing look to the audience.)* Even to create something representative of it for, say, a theatrical production, would be very, very expensive.

FRANK: Indeed. Better to cut straight to the Masked Ball.

MACK: Exactly.

*Monty enters holding his mask;*

MONTY: I say, chaps. Why aren't you in your masks?

ARCHIE: We were just going to get ready.

*Archie, Mack and Frank exit. Charlie continues to drink.*

MONTY: Come along, Charlie. Don't you want to join in with the fun?

CHARLIE: Fun? You call this fun?

MONTY: Oh, come on, old man. You are not still upset about that man overboard business, are you? You did the right thing, going to find the captain. If you hadn't, I would have drowned along with that poor sailor.

CHARLIE: Everyone seems to think I should have jumped in to save him.

MONTY: Well, if you had and no one saw you then it would have been you that would have drowned.

CHARLIE: What does it matter? You are the hero. It is always you.

MONTY: Don't be like that old man. Aren't you enjoying the trip?

CHARLIE: No. I'm bored.

MONTY: Bored? After a day like today?

CHARLIE: I'm not interested in flowers.

MONTY: What are you interested in, Charlie?

CHARLIE: Women, Monty. I like women.

MONTY: Well, there are plenty of women in the town.

CHARLIE: I cannot understand a word they say.

MONTY: Surely some of them speak English.

CHARLIE: They all speak English. But not proper English like we speak in New York.

MONTY: Well, look. We are going onto Italy next. I'm planning a trip to see the opera in Milan. Maybe someone there will take your fancy.

CHARLIE: It is no good Monty. I've only clapped eyes on one decent broad in weeks, but she only has eyes for one man and it isn't me.

*Charlie exits. Mack, Archie and Peggy enter wearing masks. The hotel manager enters with a tray of drinks.*

PEGGY: Oh, come on, Monty. Put your mask on. We can all see it is you!

*Monty puts his mask on. Music. Lights dim. They each take a drink and the men each take it in turns to link arms with Peggy and half drink, half dance. The hotel manager exits and his place is taken by Charlie wearing a mask and a drink in each hand which he downs. The business with Peggy continues until it is Charlie's turn. He pulls her to him and kisses her on the lips. She screams. Lights up. Monty pulls off Charlie's mask.*

MONTY: Charlie! What the Hell do you think you are doing?

*Charlie looks at Monty, then Peggy and runs off.*

MONTY: *(To Peggy.)* It is all right, my darling. My darling Peggy. Monty is here. He will always be here.

#### SCENE TWENTY-THREE

*A Casino in Monte Carlo. Mrs Grey, Peggy, Archie and Mack are playing roulette at an imaginary table. Speech is improvised as they place small bets, the croupier spins the wheel and there is mild disappointment or pleasure. After a few spins, Monty enters.*

ARCHIE: There you are Monty. You don't look too happy. Want to try your luck at roulette instead?

MONTY: I might as well. I've had no luck at all at Blackjack.

ARCHIE: Never mind, old chap.

MONTY: At this rate, I will leave Monte Carlo with four times as much as when I arrived!

ARCHIE: Eh?

MONTY: Forget it. Here you are. All on 17.

PEGGY: No, Monty, not all of it!

MONTY: Why not? All or nothing.

*The croupier spins, Monty wins. Impvise more spins with Monty continuing to win.*

PEGGY: Monty, stop now. This cannot go on forever.

MRS GREY: Let him carry on. His luck might hold for a while yet.

PEGGY: Mother! I cannot believe you are encouraging him!

MONTY: Double on black. Spin the wheel.

*More spins. Monty continues to win until:*

CROUPIER: That's it. The bank is broken.

MACK: Monty Brewster. The man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo!

*All cheer. Monty gathers his money.*

PEGGY: Well done. It is a good job you didn't stop when I asked you to.

MONTY: I wish I had.

PEGGY: Why? You would have been down by several thousand.

MONTY: Yes, Peggy, but I would have won your respect.

#### SCENE TWENTY-FOUR

*La Scala in Milan. Monty, Peggy, Mrs Grey and Archie occupy a box. We hear about the last 90 seconds of Si Vendetta, the Act Two Finale of Verdi's Rigoletto. The four of them are enthralled and clap wildly with cries of "Bravo!" from the men when it is finished.*

ARCHIE: Wonderful, Monty, just wonderful.

MRS GREY: How clever of you to get us a box. It is as if we are the only people in the theatre.

MONTY: We are the only people in the theatre. They were not due to perform tonight but it is the only night we could be here, so I got them to do a performance just for us.

PEGGY: Oh, Monty!

MONTY: What's the matter, Peggy? Aren't you enjoying it?

PEGGY: Of course, but how much has this cost?

MONTY: Well, I had to do something with all that money I won in Monte-Carlo.

PEGGY: To think, I read in a magazine that most people who actually live in Milan cannot afford to go to the opera. It makes me feel ashamed.

MONTY: Is that true? I've just had a wonderful idea! I will get them to do another performance, tomorrow night, with free entrance for anyone who lives in Milan.

ARCHIE: This is all very well, Monty but, at this rate, you'll be flat broke by the time we dock back in New York.

MONTY: What of it, Archie?

ARCHIE: Well, we Sons of the Rich all have our fortunes to look forward to but by the time we receive ours, yours will be all spent.

MONTY: I will be all right.

ARCHIE: I mean, none of us would turn our back on you, but...

MONTY: Turn your back on me. What are you talking about? I don't want your charity.

ARCHIE: I'm not saying that you do, or that you would.

MONTY: It sounds to me like that is exactly what you are saying.

MRS GREY: Boys, don't quarrel.

ARCHIE: What I *am* saying, Monty, is that I think it would be a good idea if we started to head home.

MONTY: Back to New York?

ARCHIE: Yes. It has been a wonderful trip but it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Best all-round if we head back.

MONTY: I'm not going to New York. Not yet. We are off to Egypt next. A trip to Cairo, then we'll sail to Gibraltar, a quick trip to Morocco, then I fancy a trip up to Northern Europe. Don't you want to see England? We shall be there in time for my birthday.

ARCHIE: Really, Monty. It is all too much. I was speaking to the others earlier, and they all agree with me. We want to go home. Charlie especially. He can barely look you in the face after what he did.

MONTY: It is Peggy he should be apologising to.

PEGGY: There's no need, Monty. I'm sure it was out of character.

MONTY: Well, I will tell you what, old man. If my friends want to go home then they shall. I will happily put you all on a steamer. Just choose which port you want to leave from and I will make it my next port of call.

ARCHIE: But, Monty...

MRS GREY: Shh. The third act is about to start.

*Music. The beginning of Rigoletto, Act Three.*

#### SCENE TWENTY-FIVE

*Monty's cabin on the yacht. Monty, Mack, Frank, Charlie and Archie are arguing.*

ARCHIE: Just where is the boat heading for right now?

MONTY: I told the captain to set a course for Alexandria. We've been sailing all night but, if you are quick you might be able to catch him before we pass Tunis. I'm sure you will be able to pick up a steamer from there in a day or two.

ARCHIE: But you promised that we could choose a port from which to sail to New York.

MONTY: Oh, very well. I don't mind a detour to keep the peace. What is it to be? Algiers? Gibraltar?

ARCHIE: Boston.

MONTY: Eh? Is there a Boston on this side of the water?

ARCHIE: There is only one Boston in the universe, so far as I know. It is a large body of intellect surrounded by the rest of the world.

FRANK: As in Boston, Massachusetts.

MONTY: Yes. Thank you for the clarification, Frank.

FRANK: It was Charlie's idea.

MONTY: I might have known

CHARLIE: It wasn't just me.

MONTY: It is out of the question.

*The sea is getting rougher. All actors start to sway in unison.*

ARCHIE: But you promised!

MONTY: Within reason, Archie.

MACK: I knew he wouldn't go for it.

FRANK: It looks like it is going to have to be Plan B, then.

MONTY: Plan B?

*The sea is now getting very rough. The actors are barely able to keep upright.*

ARCHIE: What's going on?

MONTY: We must be out into the Mediterranean. I've heard the sea can be a bit choppy at this time of year.

CHARLIE: Choppy! I'd say we were in danger of capsizing!

*They are being dragged in one direction then another and have to shout to be heard.*

MONTY: What is Plan B?

FRANK: We munity! We tell the captain to head straight for New York.

MONTY: He won't listen to you. He only takes instructions from me.

FRANK: He'll listen to us if we tell him that is your wish.

MONTY: But I will tell him that it is not my wish.

FRANK: You won't be able to if you are locked in your cabin. Come on, chaps.

*With great effort, Mack, Frank, Charlie and Archie pull each other out of the cabin and mime locking Monty inside.*

MONTY: *(Holding onto something to steady himself.)* You won't get away with this!

CHARLIE: I bet you one thousand dollars you won't be able to get out.

MONTY: You're on! A thousand dollars for doing nothing. I'll take that bet any day.

*There is a loud crash. Blackout.*

#### SCENE TWENTY-SIX

*Monty's cabin. All is calm. The captain and Monty are looking gloomy.*

CAPTAIN: I'm sorry, Mr Brewster. She's taken quite a battering.

MONTY: Is there nothing that can be done?

CAPTAIN: My recommendation would be to sail to Gibraltar and see if we can undertake some repairs.

MONTY: Is there nowhere closer?

CAPTAIN: The propeller shaft is snapped in two. Gibraltar is the nearest port with the necessary facilities.

MONTY: I see. Well, I suppose we still have time to sail to Gibraltar then full steam to London.

CAPTAIN: That's the thing. Since the storm relented there has been no breeze at all. We've barely moved for the last few hours. If the wind picks up we could make Gibraltar in two to three days but, until then, we will just have to wait. We could be here for weeks.

MONTY: Weeks! But I need to be in London on my birthday.

CAPTAIN: We are in the hands of the Gods, I'm afraid.

MONTY: I guess that's that then.

CAPTAIN: Don't be too downhearted, Mr Brewster. We've plenty of food and wine on board. You can have a very pleasant birthday party on board.

MONTY: I'm not bothered about having a party. Do you think we have any chance of making Southampton by the 25<sup>th</sup>?

CAPTAIN: That I cannot promise. In fact, I have to admit that it is most unlikely.

MONTY: Then, I'm finished.

CAPTAIN: It is possible that a steamer from Gibraltar could get you there in time.

MONTY: But first, I have to get to Gibraltar.

CAPTAIN: I'm afraid so. Even if we docked at Tunis, I doubt if you could find passage.

*A blast from a ship's funnel.*

MONTY: What was that?

CAPTAIN: Oh, just the funnel.

MONTY: But it can't be us. We haven't any steam!

CAPTAIN: By Jove, you're are right!

*They rush up to the deck and stare out to sea.*

MONTY: What is it?

CAPTAIN: A tramp steamer.

MONTY: What does that mean?

CAPTAIN: It doesn't operate to a schedule. It can go anywhere.

MONTY: What flag?

CAPTAIN: British.

MONTY: God save the King! Quick. Send the distress signal.

CAPTAIN: I cannot do that!

MONTY: Why not?

CAPTAIN: If they come to our aid, they will be entitled to claim salvage.

MONTY: So what?

CAPTAIN: You do not own this yacht, Mr Brewster. I have to protect the interest of the owner.

MONTY: How much is it worth?

CAPTAIN: About two hundred thousand dollars.

MONTY: In its current state?

CAPTAIN: Well, about one hundred thousand, I suppose.

MONTY: Right. (*Calculating.*) I'll give you one hundred and sixty-three thousand and the captain of that tramp steamer can keep it if he can get us to Southampton by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month!

CAPTAIN: Mr Brewster, this is madness. What is so important about the 25<sup>th</sup>?

MONTY: I cannot tell you, but please, Captain, I beg you!

CAPTAIN: (*With a shrug and a shake of the head.*) Quite mad.

#### SCENE TWENTY-SEVEN

*Southampton. Monty, Frank, Charlie, Mack and Archie are stood on the dock.*

MONTY: We made it!

ALL: Hooray!

MONTY: Listen, chaps. Sorry if things got a bit out of hand. You'll understand soon I promise you.

ARCHIE: That's all right, Monty. Though I don't understand the big rush to get to Southampton when we now have to wait for the next boat to cross the Atlantic.

MONTY: You, have to wait. Peggy, her mother and myself will be going to London. I have a very important appointment to keep, tomorrow.

ARCHIE: I have to admit, I don't envy you. I'm quite looking forward to being home.

CHARLIE: Monty, I just wanted to apologise for my behaviour with Peggy.

MONTY: Let's put it behind us, Charlie, and say no more about it. Just watch yourself around women when you've had a few drinks in future.

CHARLIE: I will.

MACK: Thanks, for everything, Monty. Will you be staying over here for a while?

MONTY: I don't think so, Mack. I'll be home before you know it.

FRANK: Is there anything we can do for you before we say goodbye?

MONTY: Actually, Frank, yes. Please send a telegram to Nopper. Tell him that it is time to sell everything. My clothes, my belongings, everything. Then use the money to pay off the servants. But tell him he must do it immediately. He knows what to do, I left him with specific instructions.

FRANK: You are not making a lot of sense, Monty.

ARCHIE: No change there, then.

FRANK: I thought Nopper had disappeared. That is why he didn't come with us.

MONTY: I tracked him down. I couldn't persuade him to come on the trip but, as things have worked out, it is good for me to have someone I can trust back home. You can reach him at my apartment.

FRANK: I wish you would tell us what this is all about, Monty.

MONTY: If things go according to plan, then it will all start to make sense in a couple of days. Until then, you are just going to have to trust me.

MACK: Always, Monty, always.

FRANK: Come on then, chaps. We mustn't hold the ladies up any longer.

*They look at each other puzzled.*

ARCHIE: Yes, come on then.

*Charlie becomes Mrs Grey, Frank becomes Peggy, Archie and Mack exit.*

PEGGY: Monty, why aren't we going back with the others?

MONTY: I have an appointment in London tomorrow and I wanted you to be there with me, Peggy.

PEGGY: In London. Who do you know in London?

MONTY: Well, no one, actually. It is a bit complicated. But anyway, we'll get a train tonight. We have two rooms at a little hotel waiting for us and perhaps we can get to see some of the sights tomorrow?

MRS GREY: Two rooms, Monty. Are you sure you don't mean two suites?

MONTY: No, two rooms in a comfortable and clean, but modest, hotel. Prudence is my new philosophy.

PEGGY: Well, if that is true, then I am very glad to hear it.

*Monty and Peggy look into each other's eyes dreamily.*

MONTY: We'd best make a move. or we'll miss the train.

#### SCENE TWENTY-EIGHT

*Breakfast room at the London Hotel. Monty and Peggy are seated at a table.*

MONTY: Are you sure you won't come out with me? There is so much to see in London and we needn't spend a penny.

PEGGY: No, I had better stay with Mother.

MONTY: Is she going to be OK?

PEGGY: I'm sure she will. She slept like a baby last night. I think after all those weeks of luxury she was happy sleep sharing with me in a modest little room. We'll come and join you later though.

MONTY: Don't forget. Piccadilly Circus, six o'clock on the dot.

PEGGY: We'll be there, but Monty, aren't you going to change before you go out? I do believe that you are wearing the same clothes as yesterday.

MONTY: And the day before. The truth of the matter is, this is all I have. I gave everything else to the ship's crew as a thank you for the inconvenience I caused.

PEGGY: Oh.

MONTY: And, by now, Nopper will have sold off all my possessions in New York and used the proceeds to pay off my staff, so I'm really flat broke. I have nothing but the clothes I am wearing and a few coins in my pocket.

PEGGY: Is it true? Is it – gone?

MONTY: I'm back where I was a year ago.

PEGGY: Oh.

MONTY: I didn't want the million, Peggy. I know that you think the same as the others. That I was a fool. A year ago, I was a man with prospects, now I am not even considered a man. I am nothing. A fool, a dolt, a criminal, even. But not a man. Peggy, would you feel any better of me if I told you that I was going to start all over again? I will be a new Monty Brewster. Or, rather, I will be the old one again. The one you once knew.

PEGGY: The old Monty. It would be good to see him again.

MONTY: And you wouldn't desert me?

PEGGY: How can you even doubt?

MONTY: Peggy. Child. Will you...? Will you...I mean? Do you care enough for me to.. to...?

PEGGY: To start all over again with you?

MONTY: Yes! Can you trust the prodigal who has now returned? Without you, it all means nothing. You do love me, don't you Peggy? Tell me that is what I can see in your eyes, feel in your presence.

PEGGY: How long have you known?

MONTY: How long has it been?

PEGGY: Always, Monty. All of my life.

MONTY: And I too, Peggy. All of my life! How long did it take me to see what was right in front of me? How foolish to believe that you were like a sister. You were my first love, Peggy, and you will be my last. I won't squander your love, Peggy. I will treasure every atom of it.

PEGGY: And our love will grow stronger as we build a new life together.

MONTY: You don't mind that the money is gone?

PEGGY: I will not be poor as long as I am with you.

MONTY: Peggy, will you marry me?

PEGGY: Of course, Monty.

MONTY: And do you think we can live under your Mother's roof?

PEGGY: She will be as happy as I am to have the old Monty back.

MONTY: Peggy! I am the happiest man alive!

PEGGY: And I, the happiest girl!

#### SCENE TWENTY-NINE

*The pub from scene two.*

MONTY: And that is how I ended up in London, with just enough bus fare to get to Piccadilly Circus.

BARMAN: And, why you had a pint of mild rather than a pint of best.

MONTY: Yes. Whatever they are.

BARMAN: And you are quite sure everything is accounted for.

MONTY: Oh yes, I sat up last night finishing off the accounts and I had a telegram from Nopper this morning to confirm he had taken care of everything at that end. Money in – One Million Dollars, Money Out – One Million Dollars minus threepence which is accounted for. Balance, zero.

BARMAN: Well, it is the most remarkable story I have heard in my life.

MONTY: I'd thank you to keep it to yourself. At least until shortly after six.

BARMAN: Hadn't you better be going, sir? You don't want to be late.

MONTY: That would be foolish. Thank you, barman. I can honestly say that is the most disgusting drink I have had in my life.

BARMAN: A pleasure, sir. Good luck.

#### SCENE THIRTY

*Piccadilly Circus. The two solicitors wait for Monty.*

SOLICITOR 1: I do hope he is not late.

SOLICITOR 2: What does it matter if he is? We know he has kept his side of the bargain. Mr Nopper telephoned me this morning to say that everything had been taken care of at his end. We know that Mr Brewster arrived in London last night. It is the executor that we need to be concerned about.

SOLICITOR 1: Is this Brewster now?

*The tramp from scene one enters.*

TRAMP: Spare some change for a cup of tea guv?

SOLICITOR 2: I don't think Mr Brewster has sunk quite as low as this.

TRAMP: I'm right parched, I am.

SOLICITOR 1: I'm sorry, I don't have any coins on me.

TRAMP: I don't mind notes.

SOLICITOR 2: Move along, there's a good man.

TRAMP: A shame. I thought you looked like right gentlemen.

*The tramp shuffles away but remains on stage.*

SOLICITOR 2: So much for the British being reserved!

*Monty enters.*

MONTY: Oh boy, am I pleased to see you two!

SOLICITOR 1: You don't need to doubt our reliability.

MONTY: Of course. Now, I have done a complete breakdown. *(He hands Solicitor 1 a sheet of paper.)* Original capital one million. Unfortunate gains such as a misjudgement on lumber and fuel, a boxer with a glass jaw who, inconceivably, won a prize fight, etcetera, one hundred and sixty thousand and forty dollars. Disbursements including everything from a broken-down ship to personalised stationary, one million, one hundred and sixty thousand and forty dollars. Balance on hand, no million, no hundred thousand and no dollars and no cents. Gentlemen it is all gone.

SOLICITOR 2: Well done, Mr Brewster.

SOLICITOR 1: Yes, that all seems to be in order.

*We hear a clock strike 6 o'clock.*

MONTY: Well?

SOLICITOR 2: Well.

SOLICITOR 1: Well.

MONTY: Is something wrong?

SOLICITOR 1: I hardly know how to tell you. We haven't heard anything from Mr Jones, the executor of your uncle's will for several months.

MONTY: What?

SOLICITOR 2: He seems to have disappeared.

MONTY: Disappeared. How can he?

SOLICITOR 1: He simply cannot be found. I have no explanation for it. I have sent telegrams but they have not been picked up. He never advised us of his travel arrangements for coming to London, but I had assumed we would travel together. In the end we couldn't afford to leave it any longer so made our own way here, hoping that there had been some misunderstanding.

MONTY: Is that possible?

SOLICITOR 1: The appointed time has come and gone. I am beginning to fear the worst.

MONTY: The worst?

SOLICITOR 2: When we were unable to contact Mr Jones, we started to make enquiries. About three months ago, Jones started to turn all your uncle's securities into money. The whole lot is now cash.

MONTY: And?

SOLICITOR 1: I think we have to face facts. There can be no doubt now. Jones has stolen your money.

MONTY: I always felt that something would go wrong, but I never imagined this.

SOLICITOR 1: I can't tell you how sorry I am.

SOLICITOR 2: We both are:

MONTY: So, it has finally happened. It was always much too strange to be true. Even at the beginning it seemed like a dream and now I am awake. What a fool I was to take it seriously.

SOLICITOR 1: You had no real choice.

MONTY: Well, perhaps it is good to spend some time in wonderland even if you have to come back to reality eventually. I've had my fun and this is the end of it.

*Peggy and Mrs Grey enter.*

PEGGY: Here we are, Monty.

SOLICITOR 1: Miss Grey, Mrs Grey.

SOLICITOR 2: How do you do?

MRS GREY: Nice to meet, Mr, er...

MONTY: These are my solicitors, Mrs Grey.

MRS GREY: What are they doing here in London?

PEGGY: What is going on, Monty?

MONTY: Oh, Peggy. Something terrible has happened.

PEGGY: Tell me everything, Monty, you can trust me to be brave.

MONTY: When I asked you to marry me, it was on the assumption that I could give you whatever your heart desired. I have been expecting a fortune. The arrangement was that it would be delivered to me here at six o'clock, but that time has come and gone. It seems I have been made a fool of. Peggy, in spite of appearances I never meant that you should marry a pauper.

PEGGY: I don't understand. You never mentioned any arrangement. You had me believe that you had no money and no prospects. You tried to test my love for you?

MONTY: No, child, not that. I was pledged not to speak of the money I expected, but when I looked into your eyes at breakfast this morning, I could see that you loved me and I couldn't delay any longer. My heart would not allow it. I had to know if it was true, that you felt the same for me as I for you.

PEGGY: I know you love me, Monty, and I love you with all my heart. From my perspective, I can't see that it changes things. I expected to marry a pauper, as you call it, and I am to marry a pauper. It makes no difference to me.

MONTY: But you don't understand, Peggy. I haven't a penny in the world.

PEGGY: You hadn't a penny when I accepted you. I am not afraid. I believe in you and I shall not give you up.

MONTY: I do love you, Peggy. I love you with all my heart.

MRS GREY: Well, this is all very nice, and I will be delighted to have you as my son-in-law, Monty, but we do have the small problem of how do we get back to New York?

PEGGY: *(Cheerfully.)* Let me see how much I have. *(She opens her purse.)* Oh. Sixpence! *(Noticing the tramp, she goes over to him and hands him the coin.)* Here you are. I am sure you will make much better use of this than any of us could manage.

TRAMP: God bless you, miss. You are a real lady. *(The tramp then speaks in an American accent.)* As I always knew you were, Miss Grey.

SOLICITOR 1: *(Aghast.)* Jones?

*The tramp then reveals himself to be Jones, the executor.*

EXECUTOR: Yes, indeed. I am Jones, the executor of your uncle's will, Mr Brewster. Please forgive me for any alarm that I might have caused but your uncle was quite specific in his instructions. There had to be no doubt that all the money was gone and my little disguise has allowed me to satisfy myself to that effect. You will not be marrying a pauper, Miss Jones, I cashed in everything and have in my possession a number of cheques that, once endorsed, will net your husband-to-be a little over seven million dollars.

PEGGY: Seven million!

MRS GREY: The Lord be praised!

SOLICITOR 1: Congratulations, old boy!

SOLICITOR 2: Well done.

MONTY: Well, I was all prepared to start again with nothing, but I don't mind saying this is a better option. There is just one thing, Jones.

EXECUTOR: Yes?

MONTY: Do you think we could get that sixpence back for a taxi to the bank?

*Laughter, Lights change. Executor become Mack, Solicitor 1 becomes Archie, Solicitor 2 becomes Nopper. Music: The Wedding March. Nopper becomes Monty's Best Man and Peggy walks as if down the aisle wearing a bridal veil. Music segues into church bells. Blackout.*

The End