

The Diary of Sophronia Winters

(MUSIC ... SUSPENSE THEME)

THE MAN IN BLACK: Suspense! Tonight, "The Diary of Sophronia Winters" starring Agnes Moorehead and Ray Collins.

(MUSIC ... AN ACCENT AND OUT)

ANNOUNCER: "Suspense!" is presented for your enjoyment by Roma Wines. That's R-O-M-A, Roma Wines, those excellent California wines that can add so much pleasantness to the way you live, to your happiness in entertaining guests, to your enjoyment of everyday meals. Yes, right now, a glassful would be very pleasant as Roma Wines bring you--

(MUSIC ... SUSPENSE THEME)

THE MAN IN BLACK: Suspense! This the Man in Black, here for the Roma Wine Company of Fresno, California who tonight from Hollywood bring you as stars Miss Agnes Moorehead and Mr. Ray Collins. Miss Moorehead and Mr. Collins will appear in a study in terror written especially for them, and for "Suspense," by the distinguished radio playwright Lucille Fletcher. But, before we take you to the scene of our drama...

(MUSIC ... OUT)

THE MAN IN BLACK: ... let's conjure up a scene of our own.

ANNOUNCER: Let's imagine ourselves in sun-drenched Havana, dining in the gay Club Montmartre.

(MUSIC ... FOR DINING AND DANCING)

ANNOUNCER: As you listen to the music, you put down your wine glass to tell our host how much you enjoy his hospitality. Part of the credit belongs to Cuba, he smilingly acknowledges, but part of the credit belongs also to YOUR country -- for producing this excellent wine which adds so much to our enjoyment. For this is Roma Wine from California in your own U.S.A. Now, it is a fact that connoisseurs of many other lands know the excellence of Roma Wines -- made in famous wineries located in the heart of the choice wine districts of California.

(MUSIC ... OUT)

ANNOUNCER: But millions of Americans ALSO know these things -- and have made Roma, by far, America's largest selling wines. Here at home, Roma Wines are truly inexpensive. No duty, no overseas shipping costs to pay. And, for only pennies a glass, your meals, your entertaining, can have the added delight of superb Roma Wines. You will find them of truly excellent flavor and character -- fine products of age-old wine-making skill, perfected by modern quality controls and tests. Ask for R-O-M-A, Roma Wines, made in California for enjoyment throughout the world.

(MUSIC ... SUSPENSE THEME)

THE MAN IN BLACK: And now, with "The Diary of Sophronia Winters," and with the performances of Agnes Moorehead and Ray Collins, we again hope to keep you in -- Suspense!

(MUSIC ... THEME OUT ... HARMONIUM PLAYS THIS STORY'S SIGNATURE HYMN -- "WHEN MAN'S WORK IS DONE")

SOPHRONIA: February 1st, St. Petersburg, Florida. I, Sophronia Winters, have hereby begun this diary because, on this date, I feel for the first time that I've begun to live. Diaries are no good unless one has thrilling experiences. For forty years, I've never had what could really be called a thrilling experience. But Papa's death has changed everything.

(MUSIC ... CHANGES TO HOPEFUL ROMANTIC STRINGS)

SOPHRONIA: Here I am in beautiful St. Petersburg with everything to start life anew -- money in my purse, two suitcases full of new clothes, and a gorgeous new permanent wave. And Florida is really the land of romance. It doesn't matter whether you're seventeen or seventy -- there are parties and dances and bingo games and flirtations for all. My landlady, in fact, tells me that people often become engaged and even married to perfect strangers overnight. I'm still shy, of course, but, just the same, it's such fun and so thrilling. To think one's fate may be just around the corner!

(MUSIC ... UPBEAT DANCE TUNE, THEN UNDER)

SOPHRONIA: February 3rd. Oh, diary, it IS beginning! This morning, when I came out of my lodging house to go down to the beach, I noticed a man -- a thrilling-looking man -- sitting across the street on a bench. It was just as

though he were waiting for me -- because when I came out, he sort of started up as though he knew me. Of course, I didn't speak first but I - I knew the minute I started down the street that he was following me. Well, I got to the beach and sat down with my magazines and, suddenly, there he was, strolling toward me with a broad smile.

HIRAM: Well! Sitting out here all by your lonesome?

SOPHRONIA: (nervous delighted chuckling) Oh, yes, yes, I am.

HIRAM: Been down here in St. Pete long?

SOPHRONIA: Oh, just three days.

HIRAM: Three days? That's a long time. It's a wonder I didn't spot you before.

SOPHRONIA: Oh ho! Oh, Mister--?

HIRAM: Johnson's the name. Hiram Johnson. I came from Green Harbor, Maine. Run a big hotel up there summers. Uh, that's my whole history in a nutshell.

SOPHRONIA: Oh, my name's Sophronia. Sophronia Winters.

HIRAM: Sophronia?

SOPHRONIA: Yes.

HIRAM: Well, you know, that's quite a coincidence. My sister-in-law's name was Sophronia.

SOPHRONIA: Oh?

HIRAM: Sophronia Johnson. You ever heard of her? She looked quite a bit like you, too.

SOPHRONIA: Sophronia Johnson?

HIRAM: Mm hm.

SOPHRONIA: No. No, I'm afraid I haven't. Who was she? Someone very famous? I'm so ignorant about these things. (chuckles)

HIRAM: Oh, that's all right. Say, look at that sun, will you? I'd say it was

pretty nearly time for lunch. (FADES)

(MUSIC ... CAROUSEL MUSIC)

HIRAM: You know, Sophronia, it's kind of mysterious, us finding that nine-point starfish on the beach together. My sister-in-law Sophronia used to collect nine-point starfishes. To think your name's Sophronia and you find a nine-point starfish with me. Well, it - it kind of draws us together, huh?
(FADES)

SOPHRONIA: Diary darling, he IS wonderful. Strong, kind, warm-hearted, so generous. I feel as though I know him completely. As though I'd known him all my life.

(MUSIC ... GENTLE, MUTED VERSION OF "HERE COMES THE BRIDE")

HIRAM: What's the good of waiting, Sophronia? I've got to be back at the hotel in a week. We may never see each other again.

SOPHRONIA: Oh, Hiram, don't say that. I - I couldn't bear it.

HIRAM: Then let's do it right away. Tomorrow. There's a parson out on Coral Avenue who'll do the job for us. We could take a nice moonlight drive out to the alligator farm. Afterward, have a nice short dinner. Then climb on board the Orange Blossom tomorrow night for Maine.

SOPHRONIA: (thrilled) Maine! Oh, it's all so wild! So mad! So thrilling. But what would your family think? Wouldn't they be shocked?

HIRAM: Oh, my family's all dead. I'm my own boss.

SOPHRONIA: I'd have to help you run that big hotel. I - I wonder whether I could do it, meeting all those people--

HIRAM: Oh, don't worry about that. Just - think of Maine. The big dark pine woods, the sand, the bay -- and the two of us alone together.

SOPHRONIA: (sighs) The two of us. Alone together.

(MUSIC ... WEDDING MUSIC UP GRANDLY, FADING TO SOUND)

SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE, TRAIN RUMBLES DOWN TRACK

SOPHRONIA: February 7th, on board the Orange Blossom. I was married in a wedding dress of Alice Blue moiré with a thrill of white organdy at the collar and wrists. And a rhinestone belt buckle. Hiram sent me talisman roses. I'm pressing one precious flower between the pages of this diary for luck.

SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE FADES ... THEN CRICKETS CHIRPING, TRUDGING FOOTSTEPS

HIRAM: You'll see it beyond this bend in a couple of minutes. Bags heavy?

SOPHRONIA: No, not particularly, dearest. Oh, I can't get over that taxi man at the station. Imagine his insolence, saying he didn't want to drive us up--

HIRAM: There's the place!

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS STOP

SOPHRONIA: (excited) Oh, wait a minute! Wait a minute! I don't want to look until I put down these bags. Now, where?

HIRAM: There! Through those big pines.

SOPHRONIA: (disappointed) Oh. It is - big, isn't it?

HIRAM: (proudly) Hundred and twenty-five rooms.

SOPHRONIA: (amazed) So many fire escapes and balconies and porches and towers.

SOUND: TRUDGING FOOTSTEPS

SOPHRONIA: I, er, I stayed in a hotel like that once years ago with Papa. It was very fashionable then.

HIRAM: My grandfather built that place fifty years ago. It hasn't been changed much since.

SOPHRONIA: Well, of course you've put in modern plumbing.

HIRAM: Not yet.

SOUND: IRON GATE CLANKS AND SQUEAKS OPEN

HIRAM: Well, here we are. Walk in.

SOUND: DISTANT LOW OMINOUS NOTE

SOPHRONIA: What - what's that?

HIRAM: Just a fog horn out in the bay.

SOPHRONIA: Fog?

HIRAM: We get it almost every night in this kind of weather.

SOPHRONIA: Oh.

SOUND: GATE SWINGS SHUT AND LOCKS

SOPHRONIA: What are you locking the gate for?

HIRAM: Why not? There's nobody coming in after us. Or - going out again for a while.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS

SOPHRONIA: But I thought you said the hotel--

HIRAM: The hotel's empty.

SOPHRONIA: Empty?

SOUND: WOODEN DOOR CLICKS AND SQUEAKS OPEN

SOPHRONIA: (nervous) Hiram!

HIRAM: (annoyed) What is it now?

SOPHRONIA: Hiram darling, I know it sounds silly but let's not go in there tonight. Let's - let's wait until morning.

HIRAM: Why?

SOPHRONIA: Oh, just because - it's so dark and empty. There's not a light in the whole place and no one's expecting us. What'll we eat? And where'll we sleep? Let - let's stay in the village just for tonight.

HIRAM: (curt) I've got things to eat and a place to sleep. Come on!

SOUND: GRABS HER ARM, FORCES HER INSIDE

SOPHRONIA: (in pain) Oooh! Oh, my arm! Hiram!

SOUND: DOOR SLAMS SHUT

SOPHRONIA: (shocked) Hiram!

HIRAM: You remember my telling you down in Florida about my sister-in-law Sophronia? Well, that's her. Over there on the wall. Take a look at her.

SOPHRONIA: Hiram, darling, just now you hurt me! Do you realize that? You twisted my arm.

HIRAM: (grim) I said, take a look at her. Tell me what you see.

SOPHRONIA: (at a loss) Well, I-- Why, the - the glass is very dusty. She must have died many years ago. But her face is sweet -- it's very sweet. Her eyes - - something very sad and wistful about her eyes.

HIRAM: (crisp) She was a murderess. She was hanged in Portland twenty-five years ago for the murder of my bother Ephraim.

SOPHRONIA: What?

HIRAM: Here, in the lobby of this hotel. She murdered him in cold blood with an axe! That fire axe hanging over there on the wall.

SOPHRONIA: (horrified) Oh!

HIRAM: It was a summer day. There were guests sitting on the front porch in the rockers. It was just after lunch. My bother Ephraim was sitting at the desk, counting his loose change. My mother was crocheting an antimacassar in that old wicker rocking chair. Sophronia - came downstairs - humming a hymn.

SOPHRONIA: (unnerved) Oh, don't, don't, Hiram. Please, don't tell me any more.

HIRAM: Why not?

SOPHRONIA: Well, it - it - it makes me nervous to hear it like this in this big shadowy lobby. And your eyes, Hiram-- Hiram, you're acting so strange. What's the matter with you, Hiram? I - I know it was a terrible tragedy but it happened twenty-five years ago.

HIRAM: Don't touch me, Sophronia!

SOPHRONIA: Don't--? Don't touch you?

HIRAM: Do you remember - what I said to you in Florida?

SOPHRONIA: What did you say? You-- You said a million sweet and wonderful things to me, Hiram.

HIRAM: I said you resembled my dead sister-in-law. Look at her again. Look at her closely -- Sophronia.

SOPHRONIA: But why? Oh, no! I can't! It's too horrible. I can't look at her face with any pleasure now, knowing she was a murderess.

HIRAM: You're afraid to look! Is that it?

SOPHRONIA: No! No, I'm not afraid!

HIRAM: You--

SOPHRONIA: Hiram! Please! My arm! (pause) Oh, very well. I'll look.

HIRAM: Now -- Stand there, quietly. Like that. Um, take off your glasses. Ah! That's all I wanted to see. That's all I wanted... (FADES)

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM PLAYS A HYMN)

SOPHRONIA: February 12th, Green Harbor Hotel, Maine. I can't understand it. I try to fathom it but my head aches and my heart is heavy. The hotel is deserted, unchanged and apparently uninhabited for twenty-five years. Wash bowls and pitchers still stand in the empty rooms, covered with spiders and cobwebs. Dust is everywhere. And the printed regulations on the walls are tattered and yellow with age. A row of broken rocking chairs on the front

porch faces emptily out to sea. Can he mean this to be my home? He's downstairs now in the shabby parlor off the lobby playing the harmonium.
(FADES)

HIRAM: (muffled voice from behind door) Sophronia?

SOPHRONIA: (startled) Yes-- Yes? Yes, Hiram?

HIRAM: Sleeping?

SOPHRONIA: No, dear.

SOUND: (DOORKNOB JIGGLES)

HIRAM: Well, why is your door locked? (too pleasant) Er, come out. I want to show you 'round the place.

SOPHRONIA: It's - it's all right, dear. I've - I've seen it. I've - I've seen just about everything.

HIRAM: No. No, you haven't. You haven't seen the grounds at all.

SOPHRONIA: The grounds? But, Hiram, it's after midnight.

HIRAM: I want to show you where my sister-in-law Sophronia - is buried.

SOPHRONIA: Oh, no-- Not tonight, dear. Please, it - it's so late and I have a headache.

HIRAM: (angry) Open the door, Sophronia! I want you to come NOW!

SOPHRONIA: No! No, I shan't! Now - now, go away and let me alone! I won't! I won't! I won't!

SOUND: (DOOR UNLOCKS)

SOPHRONIA: (weakly) I won't. I won't.

SOUND: (DOOR SWINGS CREAKILY OPEN)

SOPHRONIA: (terrified) Ohhhhhh! (begins to weep)

HIRAM: There's no use carrying on like that. You see, I've got passkeys to all the doors. (FADES)

SOUND: (CRICKETS CHIRP, FOOTSTEPS TRUDGE, FOG HORN BLOWS IN THE DISTANCE)

HIRAM: (quietly intense) And beyond, where those four birches are standing is where my sister-in-law Sophronia was laid away twenty-five years ago. It was the biggest funeral in the neighborhood. Folks crowded outside the gate by the dozens trying to get a look but we wouldn't let them. Buried her ourselves. Without a service. Out here by herself on the grounds. Ephraim - is buried in town. But not Sophronia! I had a feeling that I'd have to keep an eye on her even then.

SOPHRONIA: Keep an eye on her?

HIRAM: Oh, I knew she was one of those restless sleepers who wouldn't stay quiet in her own grave. I knew before the year was out she'd find some way to start roaming around, hunting for mischief again. She was a young she-devil to the core, Sophronia. They could hang her till doomsday -- and it wouldn't do any good.

SOPHRONIA: You mean - you mean, you - you think she - haunts this hotel?

HIRAM: No, no. Not this hotel. She never had any use for IT -- dead or alive. No. She makes for the warmer climates. She was always a cold-blooded little fish, freezing and shivering all the time. It's places like California and Texas -- and - Florida -- she makes for.

SOPHRONIA: Florida?

HIRAM: Yep. That's one of her favorite haunts. Particularly around St. Pete. She likes the flowers and the sun - and - the romance.

SOPHRONIA: (shivers) Hiram, Hiram, I feel cold. Do you mind if I go inside now?

HIRAM: Just a minute. I - I haven't explained everything. You think I'm crazy, I guess. Crazy. But I'm a lot smarter than some people give me credit for. Because, you see, I HAVE found her now - three times.

SOPHRONIA: (gasps)

SOUND: (FOG HORN)

HIRAM: Do you, um, see that grove of birches over there? Under every one of them's a grave. I've found her wandering the Earth in disguise - three times. And I've killed her - three times.

SOPHRONIA: (exhales deeply)

HIRAM: And it still doesn't do any good. She's still restless.

SOPHRONIA: You mean--? You mean, you've killed three different women?

HIRAM: So, now, I keep another grave to remind her. It's waiting now. Would you like to see it -- Sophronia?

SOPHRONIA: No! No, Hiram, no, please! Please!

HIRAM: Are you afraid to see it, Sophronia?

SOPHRONIA: No, I-- No, I-- Hiram, you don't mean to say that - that you think - just because my name happens to be Sophronia that--? And that I look a little like--?

HIRAM: Think what, Sophronia?

SOPHRONIA: Nothing.

SOUND: (FOG HORN, WATER, FADES)

SOPHRONIA: (in a desperate choked whisper) February 14th. My mind is made up. I've made a terrible mistake. I must get away from this place. I must get away from Hiram as quickly as I can. I shall wait for dusk - when he generally sits down in the parlor - and plays the harmonium. (coughs) I can hide. I can hide - a little earlier - in one of the deserted rooms. And then - when his back is toward the lobby, slip out the front door. (FADES)

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM PLAYS THE SIGNATURE HYMN)

SOUND: (DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS)

SOPHRONIA: (coughs, sniffles, wheezes -- increasingly worse as she goes)

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM STOPS)

HIRAM: (from off) Sophronia?

SOUND: (SOPHRONIA TRIES THE FRONT DOOR)

HIRAM: (apprehensive) Sophronia! Sophronia!

SOUND: (HIRAM'S HURRIED FOOTSTEPS)

HIRAM: (closer, relieved) Oh! Oh, there you are. (pleasant) Why, what's the matter? Anything wrong?

SOPHRONIA: (sniffling, coughing, weakly) No, Hiram.

HIRAM: You didn't want anything outside, did you? Because if you do, you'll have to ask me to get it for you. You see, I always keep this front door locked.

SOPHRONIA: Yes. Yes, Hiram. (continues to cough under following)

HIRAM: And the back door, too. And all of the doors leading out into the porches and the fire escapes, and a good many of the windows. Makes one feel safe - from thieves and peeping toms. (off her coughing, sympathetic) Oh. You've got a cold. That's too bad.

SOPHRONIA: Yes. Yes, I must have caught it last night. Outdoors. The damp.

HIRAM: You ought to be in bed. A good one. The only good bed in the house is in my sister-in-law Sophronia's old room.

SOPHRONIA: Oh, no, no, Hiram! I'm all right. I'm all right. It's - it's just a little head cold.

HIRAM: Oh, little head colds often develop into pneumonia. It's too bad I didn't think of that before. You might have slept in it from the very beginning. Here. up these stairs.

SOUND: (FOOTSTEPS UP STAIRS)

HIRAM: Why, what's the matter? Are you so weak?

SOPHRONIA: No. No, I'm all right.

SOUND: (DOOR UNLOCKS)

HIRAM: This room's the - cleanest in the hotel, too. I've always had a sort of suspicion about that.

SOUND: (DOOR SWINGS CREAKILY OPEN)

HIRAM: There. You see? I've kept everything as it was.

SOPHRONIA: (loud gasp)

HIRAM: What's the matter?

SOPHRONIA: Ah - nothing. Nothing. It's - it's just--

HIRAM: Seems kind of - familiar?

SOPHRONIA: Oh, no, no. No. It's - it's just that it seeing it so clean -- seeing it as though someone were living there. As - as though they'd only just stepped out - out for a moment.

HIRAM: It's just as she left it that afternoon when she walked down to murder my brother.

SOPHRONIA: (whimpers)

HIRAM: You see her needlework on the table with her needle sticking in it? Her hymn book still open? She was very fond of singing hymns, Sophronia was. Had a nice voice, too. I used to accompany her.

SOPHRONIA: (whimpers)

HIRAM: I'll turn down the bed for you. Then you can get undressed while I go and make you some hot tea.

SOPHRONIA: No. I - I don't want any.

SOUND: (ANOTHER DOOR SWINGS CREAKILY OPEN)

HIRAM: Here's the closet. You can put on one of Sophronia's dresses, darling.
(FADES)

SOUND: (TICKING CLOCK)

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM PLAYS THE HYMN)

SOPHRONIA: Diary, I'm beside myself. Oh, I shall go mad. I shall go mad! Two hours have passed since he locked the door on me. Night has fallen. I'm alone. Alone in this horrible room with its hideous little mementoes of death. Oh, I'm sitting here at her little wicker table, trying to be calm, trying to write this. Somehow, when one writes about a thing, it doesn't appear so real. My hand has just brushed against her needlework, her hymn book -- I can't bear having them near me!

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM STOPS ABRUPTLY)

SOPHRONIA: (to herself) I must get them out of my sight. Anywhere. In that closet or bureau drawer.

SOUND: (KNOCK AT THE DOOR)

HIRAM: (muffled voice from behind door) Ready for your tea?

SOPHRONIA: No, I-- Yes, Hiram.

SOUND: (DOOR SWINGS CREAKILY OPENS)

HIRAM: Oh. Why aren't you in bed? You'll take worse cold, you know.

SOPHRONIA: Oh, I - I'll get in bed in a minute. First, I--

HIRAM: Ah! Brushing up on your needlework again.

SOPHRONIA: My needlework?

HIRAM: You've - you've got it in your hands.

SOPHRONIA: Have I? Oh, yes. Yes, so I have. (quickly) Oh, but I - I wasn't working on it, Hiram! I swear I wasn't! I - I - I've never done a stitch of needlework in my whole life. I don't know one embroidery stitch from another. Now, let me show you. Look, look, I didn't even know how to hold the needle!

HIRAM: Now, get into bed, Sophronia. You're feverish.

SOPHRONIA: (rapidly, increasingly tearful) Before we go on, Hiram, before you go on thinking I-- We've got to have an understanding. You - you've got to let me explain. I was born in 1892 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. My name IS Sophronia, that's true, but they named lots of people Sophronia. I - I was named for my grandmother. She'd just died and--

HIRAM: (skeptical) Yes.

SOPHRONIA: (faster) Oh, no, no. You've got to listen to me! I lived in Kalamazoo all my life. My father was vice president of the Kalamazoo First National Bank. Everybody in town knew him. And they know me. If you'd only just write a letter or send a wire out-- I never heard of Green Harbor my whole life. I never went anywhere.

HIRAM: Now--

SOPHRONIA: (almost incoherent) For almost ten years, I stayed home, day in and day out -- nursing Papa -- he had a stroke. I worked out at our house. (slow and desperate) It was a red brick house with green shutters! (weeps) (FADES)

SOUND: (TICKING CLOCK)

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM PLAYS THE HYMN)

SOPHRONIA: (despairing) February 15th. I live only from moment to moment, listening to each creak upon the stairs. (coughs) Oh, my cold is growing worse. I've been in bed all day. It's night now.

SOUND: (FOG HORN BLOWS)

SOPHRONIA: The fog horn has begun to blow again. (FADES)

SOUND: (TICKING CLOCK)

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM PLAYS THE HYMN)

SOPHRONIA: (agitated) February 19th. I woke up early this morning after a wretched night and the date was burning in letters of fire in my brain. If he's planning to kill me, it'll be today. But the hours have been crawling on. It's almost midnight. Why does he torture me like this?

SOUND: (FOG HORN BLOWS)

SOPHRONIA: I would rather be dead than sit here in this room one moment longer. If he doesn't come in five minutes, I shall force him to come, I shall beat on the door. (collects herself) No. No.

SOUND: (FOG HORN BLOWS)

SOPHRONIA: Rather, let me sit quiet, praying that he doesn't come. Oh, I want to live. I want to live.

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM STOPS)

HIRAM: (distant) Sophronia?!

SOPHRONIA: (whispers to herself) It's come.

HIRAM: (distant) Sophronia?! Come downstairs! I want you to sing me a hymn!

SOPHRONIA: (to herself) Sing? Sing? He never asked me to sing for him before. (realizes) But SHE sang. (calls out) I - I can't sing, dear! I - I told you that long ago!

HIRAM: (distant) Did you?! Well, I'd forgotten!

SOPHRONIA: (calls out) And besides - how can I come downstairs when my door's locked?!

HIRAM: (distant) It's unlocked! Try it!

SOPHRONIA: (whispers, stunned) Unlocked? Oh, no. How could it?

SOUND: (FOOTSTEPS TO DOOR WHICH CREAKS OPEN EASILY)

SOPHRONIA: (horrificed, to herself) Oh, it is! It is and I never knew it - I never knew it.

HIRAM: (distant) Coming?!

SOPHRONIA: (angrily, to herself) Oh, he unlocked it sometime when I was just sitting. Why didn't I try it a few more times?

HIRAM: (distant, angry) Sophronia!

SOPHRONIA: (calls out) Yes? Yes, Hiram! I'm coming.

SOUND: (DOOR CREAKS WIDER, SLOW FOOTSTEPS, TICKING CLOCK RECEDES)

SOPHRONIA: Hiram? Where are you?

HIRAM: (off) In here! In the parlor!

SOPHRONIA: What are you doing there, Hiram?

HIRAM: (off) Waiting to hear you sing!

SOPHRONIA: You at the harmonium?

HIRAM: (off) Yes!

SOPHRONIA: All right. I'll sing. I - I haven't sung in years but I might as well. I'll sing for you out here in the hall. My voice will carry better.

HIRAM: (off) It always DID carry better in the hall, didn't it, Sophronia? So you remember THAT, too? Of course you KNOW both the front and back doors are locked.

SOPHRONIA: Yes. Yes, Hiram, dear.

HIRAM: (off) Shall I sing, too, Sophronia? Would you like me to sing along with you?

SOPHRONIA: If it pleases you, Hiram.

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM PLAYS THE HYMN, SLOW AND STATELY)

HIRAM AND SOPHRONIA: (Hiram sings the first line, then Sophronia joins in)

Work for the night is coming
Work in the morning sun
Work for the night is coming
When man's work is done

Work while the daylight darkens
Work in the summer sun
Work for the night is coming--

SOUND: (HIRAM'S HEAD BLUDGEONED BY FIRE AXE)

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM STOPS)

HIRAM: (screams)

SOUND: (HIRAM'S BODY HITS THE FLOOR ... SILENCE)

SOPHRONIA: (gasps, sings weakly) When - man's work - is done ...

(MUSIC ... GRAND, FULLY ORCHESTRATED VERSION OF THE HYMN ... THEN OUT)

SOPHRONIA: There's only one more page. Shall - shall I read it to you?

NURSE: Yes. Yes, go ahead.

SOPHRONIA: March 22nd. I've been sick, I think, for a very long time. The pages of my diary are blank but I shall take you out again, poor diary, today, and start you over again.

No. No, I shall never look back at the other pages. I shall only write on and on about this nice, quiet place - so that no one reading this diary will ever know -- that I did it. (chuckles happily)

(MUSIC ... SAD ACCENT ... UNDER)

SOPHRONIA: But I DID do it, diary. I was smarter than he. When I opened that door at the head of the stairs and -

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM PLAYS THE HYMN)

SOPHRONIA: - heard the music, when I saw the fire axe still hanging on the

wall - (laughs merrily) - I was so cautious. So terribly cautious. I tiptoed like a little mouse even as I sang the hymn into that room where he was playing. If a reflection of that axe had so much as glimmered across the wood- - If he had turned-- But I was clever, so much cleverer than he. I kept on singing. (laughs) Ah! And now - now, I'm free! Free as a bird! I'm free and he shall never catch me now. Not this time - or ever again. Because he's dead.

Isn't he, nurse?

Nurse? Isn't my dear brother-in-law Hiram really dead?

(MUSIC ... HARMONIUM OUT - A BRIEF ACCENT, THEN OUT)

NURSE: Yes, miss. He's dead. And now I'll thank you to hand me over that diary. The doctor doesn't approve of the patients writing anything.

(MUSIC ... FOR A GRAND FINISH ... OUT)

THE MAN IN BLACK: And so closes "The Diary of Sophronia Winters" starring Agnes Moorehead and Ray Collins, tonight's study in ...

(MUSIC ... AN ACCENT)

THE MAN IN BLACK: Suspense! "Suspense" is produced and directed by William Spier.

ANNOUNCER: It's my job, it's my privilege, to tell you how much pleasure and enjoyment you can add to everyday living by serving Roma Wines - with meals, when entertaining or any time. And, in hot weather, let me suggest Roma Wine "Cooler-Offers." Just put ice cubes in a tall glass. Half fill it with your favorite Roma Wine. Then fill it up with sparkling water. For a sweeter drink, just add sugar and stir. Ahhhh, that, my dear people, is really something! And it's so simple, so good, and so inexpensive. It's a fact -- the cost of Roma Wines is only pennies a glassful. Get Roma Wines today, enjoy them regularly. If your dealer is temporarily out, please try again soon. Just be sure you ask for R-O-M-A, Roma Wines, America's largest selling wines -- made in California for enjoyment throughout the world.

THE MAN IN BLACK: Agnes Moorehead appeared through the courtesy of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and is currently being seen in their production "Dragon Seed." Next Thursday, same time, in an unusual feature performance, "Suspense" will bring you, in his first appearance as an acting storyteller, the noted American novelist and playwright Mr. Ben Hecht. Sharing honors with Mr. Hecht

as star of the performance will be Mr. Fredric March. You won't want to miss hearing Fredric March and Ben Hecht in "Actor's Blood" which will be next week's tale of --

(MUSIC ... AN ACCENT)

THE MAN IN BLACK: Suspense!

ANNOUNCER: Presented by Roma Wines, R-O-M-A -- made in California for enjoyment throughout the world.

(MUSIC ... BERNARD HERRMANN'S SUSPENSE THEME)

ANNOUNCER: This is CBS, the Columbia Broadcasting System.

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