

Generic Radio Workshop Script Library [\(BACK\)](#)**Series: Suspense****Show: The Whole Town's Sleeping****Date: Jun 14 1955**CAST:The Suspense Team:

ANNOUNCER

2ND ANNCR (1 line)

CBS ANNCR (1 line)

The Drama:

NARRATOR

LAVINIA

FRANCINE

MRS. HANLON

DETECTIVE

HELEN

DRUGGIST

OFFICER

and small crowds of POLICE and MOVIEGOERS

NOTE: Another version of this play aired on Suspense, Aug 31 1958. This transcript includes some material from the '58 broadcast in brackets.

MUSIC: "SUSPENSE" THEME ... THEN IN BG, OUT AT [X]

ANNOUNCER: And now tonight's presentation of Radio's Outstanding Theater of Thrills -- SUSPENSE.

Tonight, the story of terror in the streets. We call it, "The Whole Town's Sleeping." So now, starring Miss Jeanette Nolan, here is tonight's SUSPENSE play, written by Ray Bradbury, [X] "The Whole Town's Sleeping."

MUSIC: FOR A GENTLE INTRODUCTION ... THEN IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: It was a warm summer night in the middle of Illinois country. The little town was deep far away from everything, kept to itself by a river, and a forest, and a ravine. In the town, the sidewalks were still scorched. The stores were closing, and the streets were turning dark. Screen doors whined their springs and banged, and there was the sound of Grandma Hanlon's swing hammock across the street.

SOUND: SQUEAK OF HAMMOCK

NARRATOR: On her solitary porch, Lavinia Nebbs -- age thirty-seven,

very straight and slim -- sat with a tinkling lemonade in her white fingers ...

SOUND: TINKLE OF ICE CUBES IN GLASS

NARRATOR: ... tapping it to her lips, waiting.

FRANCINE: (OFF, CHEERFUL) Here I am, Lavinia!

NARRATOR: Lavinia turned. There was Francine, at the bottom porch step. She was all in snow white ...

SOUND: FRANCINE'S FOOTSTEPS ONTO PORCH

NARRATOR: ... and didn't look thirty-five. [X]

LAVINIA: I won't be a minute, Francine. I'll just lock the door.

FRANCINE: All right.

SOUND: LAVINIA GETS UP AND LOCKS THE DOOR ... FRANCINE AND LAVINIA LEAVE THE PORCH AND WALK THROUGH A SWINGING GATE TO THE STREET DURING FOLLOWING--

FRANCINE: Oh, I do like your dress, dear.

LAVINIA: Why, thank you, dear.

FRANCINE: You look so well in that color. I'm afraid I could never wear it. It makes me look sallow.

LAVINIA: No, it doesn't; I'm sure not. Of course, I've always loved you in white.

FRANCINE: (CHUCKLES SELF-CONSCIOUSLY)

SOUND: FRANCINE AND LAVINIA STOP WITH--

MRS. HANLON: (OFF) Evening, ladies.

LAVINIA: Good evening, Mrs. Hanlon.

FRANCINE: Good evening.

MRS. HANLON: (OFF) Where are you ladies going, all dressed up so pretty?

LAVINIA: To the Majestic Theatre, Mrs. Hanlon.

FRANCINE: Robert Mitchum's playing in "Not as a Stranger."

MRS. HANLON: (OFF) Won't catch me out on a night like this. Not with the Lonely One strangling women. Lock myself in with my gun, that's what I'm gonna do.

LAVINIA: I wouldn't worry, Mrs. Hanlon.

MRS. HANLON: (OFF) [Oh, you wouldn't, wouldn't you?] What about Eliza Ramsell? You think she's not worrying? Lock myself in with my gun. That's what you ladies should do.

SOUND: MRS. HANLON'S WALKS INTO HER HOUSE VIA THE SCREEN DOOR WHICH OPENS AND SHUTS, OFF ... FRANCINE AND LAVINIA WALK DOWN THE STREET DURING FOLLOWING--

LAVINIA: (CHUCKLES) So silly. Silly old woman.

FRANCINE: (UNCERTAIN) Lavinia, you - you don't believe all that gossip about the Lonely One, do you?

LAVINIA: (DISMISSIVE) A lot of silly old women who haven't got anything better to do than talk.

FRANCINE: Well, just the same, Hattie McDollis was killed a month ago, and Roberta Ferry the month before. And now Eliza Ramsell disappearing--

LAVINIA: Eliza Ramsell walked off with a traveling man, I bet.

FRANCINE: But the others -- strangled.

LAVINIA: Oh, Francine.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS UP ... THEN OUT BEHIND--

MUSIC: IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: They reached the edge of the ravine that cut the town in two. Stood there. Behind them were the lighted houses. Ahead -- deepness, moistness, fireflies and dark.

The ravine had to be crossed to reach the movies. Deep and black as it cut into the hills. Then a creaking bridge to cross over the stream. Then one hundred and thirteen steps up the steep and brambled bank to the other side. The ladies stood there, looking down. [X]

SOUND: NOCTURNAL BACKGROUND OF CRICKETS, FROGS, BIRDS, ET CETERA ... IN ALL RAVINE SCENES

FRANCINE: It won't be me coming back tonight, Lavinia; it'll be you. Oh, I'd never, never walk there alone at night. Never.

LAVINIA: Bosh!

FRANCINE: Well, you can say, "Bosh!" -- but it'll be you alone on the path, not me. Oh, Lavinia, I - I do wish you didn't live on this side. Don't you get lonely living by yourself in that house?

LAVINIA: (CHUCKLES) Old maids love to live alone. Come on, we'll take the short cut.

FRANCINE: I'm afraid! [The ravine scares me.]

LAVINIA: Oh, come on. Don't be so silly. I'll hold your hand.

MUSIC: IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: Lavinia, cool as mint ice cream, took the other woman's arm and led her down the dark, winding path, into cricket warmth and frog sound and mosquito-delicate silence. [X]

FRANCINE: Oh, let's run, Lavinia. Please?!

LAVINIA: No! Why should we?

MUSIC: IN BG

NARRATOR: If Lavinia hadn't turned her head just then, she wouldn't have seen it. But she did turn her head -- and it was there.

MUSIC: UNEASY ACCENT ... THEN BUILDS IN BG

NARRATOR: Back among a clump of bushes, half-hidden, but laid out as if she had put herself there to enjoy the soft stars, lay Eliza Ramsell, her face moon-freckled, her eyes like white marble. Then Francine saw it, too, and the women stood on the path for a frozen second, not believing what they saw.

FRANCINE: (SCREAMS)

MUSIC: UP, FOR A HUGE ACCENT ... THEN IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: Lavinia held [on tightly to the shuddering] Francine. And the policemen were all around in the ravine grass.

BIZ: POLICE MURMUR, IN BG

NARRATOR: Flashlights darted about [around the shadows of the ravine], voices mingled, and the night grew on toward eight-thirty. [X]

DETECTIVE: You, uh, didn't move her, ladies?

LAVINIA: Of course not.

FRANCINE: Oh, no. We couldn't touch her. How could we?

DETECTIVE: And there was nobody? You didn't hear anything -- sounds, anything unusual?

LAVINIA: No. Nothing.

DETECTIVE: Mm hm.

FRANCINE: It's - it's the Lonely One, isn't it? He did it, didn't he?

DETECTIVE: Couldn't say, ma'am.

FRANCINE: We - we knew her, you know. She was a friend of ours.

DETECTIVE: Oh, I'm sorry. [That's too bad.] Well, I'll have one of my men walk you across the ravine.

LAVINIA: That won't be necessary, thank you very much. We'll be all right.

FRANCINE: Oh, Lavinia--!

LAVINIA: Come along, dear.

MUSIC: IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: And they crossed the ravine, each with her own thoughts, fears. And the creek waters under the bridge whispered ... "I'm the Lonely One. I'm the Lonely One. I kill people."

Then, they were at the top of the stairs, and bathed in safe light from the street lamp. [X]

SOUND: FRANCINE AND LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS, IN BG NOCTURNAL BACKGROUND OF CRICKETS, ET CETERA, FADES OUT DURING SCENE

FRANCINE: I've never seen a dead person before.

LAVINIA: It's only a little after eight-thirty. We'll pick up Helen and get on to the show.

FRANCINE: The show?! Oh, Lavinia, you don't mean it.

LAVINIA: Of course I do. We've got to forget this. It's not good to remember.

FRANCINE: But Eliza's back there--

LAVINIA: We need to laugh. We've got to pretend that nothing happened.

FRANCINE: But she was our friend--!

LAVINIA: We can't help her. There's no good brooding about it. I'm going to get it out of my mind, and you should, too. Now, if we hurry, we won't miss too much.

MUSIC: BRIEF TRANSITION ... THEN OUT BEHIND--

SOUND: FRANCINE AND LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS UP TO HELEN'S PORCH, THEN

OUT DURING FOLLOWING-- (LONE BIRD CHIRPING IN BACKGROUND)

HELEN: I thought you'd never come! You're an hour late!

FRANCINE: Well, [Helen,] we--

LAVINIA: (INTERRUPTS) Someone found Eliza Ramsell dead in the ravine.

HELEN: (STARTLED GASP) Oh, no. Eliza--? Who found her?

LAVINIA: Oh, we don't know.

HELEN: Oh, how awful. Did you see her? Was it terrible?

LAVINIA: Let's not talk about it.

HELEN: Oh, I really think I should lock myself in my house. I don't think we better go tonight.

LAVINIA: Of course we will! It's the last showing today. (CHUCKLES) Besides, the Lonely One can't kill three ladies [all at once]. There's safety in numbers. Anyway, it - it's too soon. The murders come a month separated. Come along, Helen.

HELEN: (RELUCTANT) Well-- Oh. (RELENTS, MOVING OFF) I'll get a sweater. You wait for me.

SOUND: HELEN'S FOOTSTEPS AS SHE ENTERS HOUSE ... SCREEN DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS

FRANCINE: (LOW) Why didn't you tell her? About us finding Eliza?

LAVINIA: (LOW) Why upset her? Time enough tomorrow. I told you, tonight we've got to forget. (FIRM) We're going to the show and let's not talk about it any more. Enough's enough.

MUSIC: BRIEF TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: The ladies walked downtown, and stopped at the drug store, which was a few doors from the theater. Lavinia bought a quarter's worth of green mint chews, and the druggist dropped the mints into a sack with a silver shovel. [X]

SOUND: MINTS DROPPED INTO PAPER SACK

DRUGGIST: You looked mighty cool this 'noon, Miss Lavinia, when you was in. So cool and nice someone asked after you.

LAVINIA: Oh?

DRUGGIST: Yeah. Man sitting at the counter. He watched you walk out and he says to me, "Who's that?" Just like that, he said it. "Why, that's Lavinia Nebbs, prettiest maiden lady in town, I says." "Beautiful," he says, "Beautiful. Where's she live?"

FRANCINE: You didn't--! You didn't give him her address, I hope? You didn't!

DRUGGIST: Well, maybe I shouldn't have. I didn't give him the exact address. I said, "Over on Park Street, you know, near the ravine." Kinda casual.

FRANCINE: (EXHALES, HORRIFIED)

DRUGGIST: I'm sorry.

FRANCINE: What did he look like?

DRUGGIST: Oh, not much, I guess. Wore a dark suit. Pale, kinda thin. Probably nothin' but a stranger passin' through. I'm sorry, Miss Lavinia.

SOUND: HANDS OVER BAG OF CANDY

DRUGGIST: Here, no charge for the peppermints.

LAVINIA: Don't be silly, Mr. Briggs. Here.

SOUND: DROPS QUARTER ON COUNTER

FRANCINE: Well, I know what we're going to do right now! We're going straight home! That man asking after you-- You're next, Lavinia! You want to be dead in that ravine?!

LAVINIA: (LIKE TALKING TO A CHILD) It was just a man, that's all. It doesn't mean a thing!

DRUGGIST: That's what I figured. Nothin' to worry about.

FRANCINE: Nothing to worry about!

SOUND: LADIES' FOOTSTEPS AS THEY EXIT THE STORE, DURING FOLLOWING--

LAVINIA: I'm not going to miss the movie. You two can do what you want. I'm going.

HELEN: Well, I think we should all go home.

FRANCINE: So do I! She's right, Lavinia.

LAVINIA: No, she's not!

FRANCINE: Yes, she is!

BIZ: ALL THREE LADIES ARGUE SIMULTANEOUSLY

MUSIC: TOPS THEM FOR A TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: They argued for five minutes, then the three of them went to

the theater -- Francine and Helen, reluctantly; Lavinia, head high, self-possessed, cool.

In the auditorium, they sat in the odor of ancient brass polish, waiting for the second show to begin. And the lights began to fade. [X]

BIZ: MOVIEGOERS MURMUR, THEN GROW SILENT... SOMEONE COUGHS ...
POLITE APPLAUSE BEGINS WITH--

MUSIC: CHEESY MOVIE FANFARE ... CONTINUES IN BG

FRANCINE: (HUSHED, URGENT) Lavinia?

LAVINIA: What?

FRANCINE: As we came in, a man in a dark suit followed us. He was thin; I think he had a pale face. He just came in and he's sitting behind us.

HELEN: (UPSET) What? What?

LAVINIA: (ADMONISHES) Oh, Helen.

HELEN: What man?

FRANCINE: The man behind us. It's the one Mr. Briggs said was in the drug store. Behind us now!

HELEN: (NERVOUS) Oh?

FRANCINE: I - I'm calling the manager. It's him.

BIZ: MOVIEGOERS MURMUR BEHIND--

FRANCINE: Oh! Stop the movie! Stop it! Put on the lights! It's the murderer! The Lonely One! He's here! Put on the lights! Lights!

MUSIC: BIG ACCENT, FOR A BRIEF TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: The drug store clock said eleven twenty-five. They'd come out of the theater feeling new. And now they were laughing at Francine. And Francine was laughing at herself. [X]

BIZ: HELEN, FRANCINE AND LAVINIA LAUGHING

LAVINIA: You see how silly it was? All that riot for nothing.

HELEN: When you were running up the aisle screaming, "Lights!" -- honestly, I thought I'd die!

FRANCINE: Oh, that poor man!

HELEN: The theater manager's brother from Racine! Oh, Francie!

FRANCINE: Well, I did apologize.

LAVINIA: Now, you see what a panic can do? And all for nothing.

FRANCINE: We shouldn't have stopped for sodas, though.

LAVINIA: Wasn't that a wonderful picture? Will you ever forget--?

MUSIC: TOPS HER FOR A BRIEF TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: The streets were [midnight] clean and empty. Not a car or a truck or a person was in sight. The ladies walked under a flickering neon sign, buzzing like a dying insect. The sounds of their heels sharp on the baked pavement. [X]

SOUND: LADIES' FOOTSTEPS, IN BG

LAVINIA: First, we'll walk you home, Francine.

FRANCINE: Oh, no, I'll walk you home.

LAVINIA: If you walked me home, you'd have to come back across the ravine alone. I know you. If a leaf even fell on you, you'd drop dead.

FRANCINE: Well, I - I could stay the night at your house.

LAVINIA: No, it's all settled. First, I'll take you home, and then Helen.

MUSIC: BRIEF TRANSITION ... THEN OUT

SOUND: LADIES' FOOTSTEPS COME TO A HALT

FRANCINE: Lavinia? Helen? Stay here with me tonight. It's late. Mrs. Murdock has an extra room.

LAVINIA: No, thanks. I don't sleep well away from my own bed.

FRANCINE: Oh, please, Lavinia, please. I - I don't want you dead.

LAVINIA: (TALKING TO A CHILD AGAIN) Now, you've got to stop this. I mean it. I promise I'll call you the very minute I get home.

FRANCINE: Now, will you? Will you really?

LAVINIA: I promise.

FRANCINE: And, Helen, you make her promise you to call.

HELEN: I will.

FRANCINE: Well, good night. Be careful.

SOUND: FRANCINE WALKS INTO HER HOUSE

LAVINIA: (BEAT, TO HELEN) Now, I'll walk you home.

MUSIC: IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: The court house clock struck the hour, but the sounds went across a town that was empty. Emptier than it had ever been before. Over empty streets and empty lots and empty lawns the sound went. [X]

SOUND: HELEN AND LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS AS TOWN CLOCK FINISHES CHIMING MIDNIGHT

LAVINIA: (COUNTS CHIMES) Ten ... eleven ... twelve.

SOUND: HELEN AND LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS OUT ... (LONE BIRD WHISTLES IN BG)

HELEN: I don't suppose it's any use asking you to stay [with me], Lavinia?

LAVINIA: There's no reason for me to.

HELEN: You've acted so strangely tonight.

LAVINIA: I'm just not afraid, that's all. And I'm curious, I suppose. Of course, I'm using my head. I mean, logically, the Lonely One can't be around. Not now, with the police [discovering Eliza's body] and all.

HELEN: Did you ever think that maybe your subconscious doesn't want you to live any more?

LAVINIA: You and Francine! Honestly, Helen!

HELEN: Well, I feel so guilty. I'll be drinking a cup of coffee just about the time you get to the ravine -- and, oh! -- with that awful bridge in the dark. You will call us the minute you get home, won't you? I won't sleep a wink if you don't.

LAVINIA: (WITH EXASPERATED FINALITY) I'll call. Now, good night.

MUSIC: IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: Lavinia Nebbs walked down the midnight street, down the late summer silence.

SOUND: LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS, IN BG

NARRATOR: She saw the houses with their dark windows, and far away she heard a dog barking. She thought to herself--

LAVINIA: (TO HERSELF) In five minutes, I'll be safe at home. In five minutes, I'll be phoning Francine and Helen. They're so silly. Like old hens. (CHUCKLES) Old! I'm older than either of them. I'm--

OFFICER: (OFF, SINGING WORDLESSLY, GROWING CLOSER BEHIND--)

NARRATOR: She heard a man's voice singing away among the trees and she walked a little faster.

SOUND: LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS QUICKEN, IN BG ... OFFICER'S FOOTSTEPS APPROACH

NARRATOR: And then, coming down the street toward her in the dimming moonlight was a man. [X]

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS OUT

OFFICER: Well, look who it is. What a time of night for you to be out, Miss Nebbs.

LAVINIA: (RELIEVED) Officer Kennedy! Oh, I'm so glad it's you.

OFFICER: Something wrong, Miss Nebbs?

LAVINIA: No. Nothing at all. I'm - just glad it's you.

OFFICER: You know you shouldn't be out now.

SOUND: DISTANT TRAIN WHISTLE, IN BG

LAVINIA: I know. I've been to the movies. It is late.

OFFICER: Yeah, come on. I better see you home.

LAVINIA: Oh, no. I can make it fine.

OFFICER: Ah, moon's going behind the trees. Be pretty dark.

LAVINIA: I'm not afraid of the dark, Mr. Kennedy.

OFFICER: You sure you'll be all right?

LAVINIA: Quite sure, thank you.

OFFICER: All right, tell you what. I'll wait here till you cross, and if you need help, just give a yell and I'll come a-running. I'll check by your house later, on my way back.

LAVINIA: Thank you. Good night.

OFFICER: Good night.

SOUND: LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS AWAY ... CONTINUES IN BG

MUSIC: IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: As she walked away, she thought--

LAVINIA: (TO HERSELF) I won't walk in the ravine with any man. How do I know who the Lonely One is? No, thank you.

SOUND: LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS OUT BEHIND--

NARRATOR: Then, the ravine. She stood on top of the one hundred and thirteen steps. Down the steep, brambled bank that led across the creaking bridge a hundred yards and up through the black hills to Park Street [and home].

SOUND: NOCTURNAL BACKGROUND OF CRICKETS, FROGS, BIRDS, ET CETERA

LAVINIA: (TO HERSELF) Three minutes from now, I'll be putting my key in the house door. Nothing can happen. Nothing.

SOUND: LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS START SLOWLY DOWN STEPS BEHIND--

NARRATOR: She started down the dark-green steps into the deep ravine night [counting as she went]. [X]

SOUND: LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS AND NOCTURNAL BACKGROUND CONTINUES UNDER FOLLOWING--

LAVINIA: (TO HERSELF) [One, two, three, four] ... five, six, seven, eight, nine ... (CONTINUES TO COUNT STEPS IN BG)

NARRATOR: The ravine was deep. And the world was gone, the world of safe people in bed, the locked doors, the town, the drugstore, theater, lights -- everything was gone. Only the ravine existed, and lived, black and huge, around her.

LAVINIA: (BREATHLESS, TO HERSELF) ... twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-one. Nothing's happened, has it? No one around, is there?

Remember that old ghost story you told each other when you were children? About the dark man coming into your house, and you upstairs in bed?

"And now he's at the first step coming up to your room. Now he's at the second step. Now he's at the third, the fourth, the fifth step."

(GASPS) How you laughed and screamed at the story!

"Now the horrid man's at the twelfth step, opening your door. Now he's standing by your bed." (STARTLED, A HALFHEARTED SCREAM)

SOUND: LAVINIA'S FOOTSTEPS HALT

LAVINIA: (BEAT, TO HERSELF) What--? Was it--? There, at the bottom of the steps.

A man, under the light.

No. He's gone.

He was waiting there.

(EXHALES) But it's nothing. It can't be. Nothing. Nothing on the bridge.

Fool! That story I told myself. How silly.

Shall I call Mr. Kennedy?

Did he hear me scream? Or did I scream? Maybe I only thought I did. (REALIZES) Then he didn't hear me at all.

I'll go back up. Go to Helen's and sleep there tonight.

No! It's nearer home now. Don't be silly.

Wait.

SOUND: LAVINIA TAKES A STEP ... WHICH ECHOES

LAVINIA: (GASPS)

SOUND: LAVINIA TAKES ANOTHER STEP ... ANOTHER ECHO

LAVINIA: (SHUDDERS, TO HERSELF, SLOWLY) Someone's - following me. Someone's on the steps behind me. I don't dare turn around.

SOUND: LAVINIA TAKES ANOTHER STEP ... ANOTHER ECHO

LAVINIA: (TO HERSELF, SHAKEN) Every time I take a step, he takes one.

SOUND: ANOTHER STEP, ANOTHER ECHO ... NOCTURNAL BACKGROUND FADES OUT ... SILENCE

LAVINIA: (CALLS, DRY THROAT, WEAKLY) Officer - Kennedy? Is that you? Is it?

MUSIC: IN BG ... SLOW AT FIRST, BUT BUILDING FASTER AND FASTER, IN AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING--

NARRATOR: The crickets were suddenly still. The crickets were listening. The night was listening -- to her. Then there was a sound.

Only a woodchuck, surely, beating a hollow log.

But it was Lavinia Nebbs. It was most surely the heart of Lavinia Nebbs. She went down the steps faster, faster! Run! She heard music. In a mad way, a silly way, she heard the surge of music that pounded at her, rushed, plunging her faster, faster, down, down into the pit of the ravine.

SOUND: LAVINIA'S RUNNING FOOTSTEPS, IN BG

LAVINIA: (BREATHLESS, TO HERSELF) Only a little way! Across the bridge! Run! Run! Don't turn! Don't look; if you see him, you'll not be able to move! Just - run!

MUSIC: SLOWS AND CHANGES TO LOW TYMPANI, BEHIND--

NARRATOR: And across the bridge -- up the path, between the hills -- the top of the path, the street -- and, even with the light, the fear swirled about her. Closing in. Pressing.

MUSIC: SLOWLY FADES OUT BEHIND--

LAVINIA: (BREATHLESS, TO HERSELF) If I get home safe, I'll never go out alone. I was a fool! Never again! If You let me get home from this, I'll never go out again alone. I promise. Please. Please. Let me-- Please! Give me - give me time to get inside and lock the door -- and I'll be safe!

SOUND: LAVINIA'S RUNNING FOOTSTEPS ONTO FRONT PORCH ... KEY RATTLES IN LOCK

LAVINIA: (GASPS, BREATHLESS, RELIEVED, TO HERSELF) Oh, safe at home. Safe. Safe at home.

SOUND: DOOR UNLOCKS ... KNOB TURNS ... DOOR OPENS, THEN SLAMS SHUT

LAVINIA: (TO HERSELF) Listen -- not a sound. Oh, wait.

SOUND: DOOR LOCKED AND BOLTED

LAVINIA: Wait. (EXHALES IN RELIEF, LONG PAUSE, TO HERSELF) The window.

SOUND: LAVINIA'S CAUTIOUS FOOTSTEPS TO WINDOW

LAVINIA: (BEAT, CHUCKLES IN NERVOUS RELIEF)

MUSIC: LOW TYMPANI ... IN BG, OUT AT [X]

LAVINIA: (TO HERSELF, SHAKEN BUT CALMER) Why, there's no one there at all. Nobody.

There was no one following me at all.

Nobody running after me. How silly.

If a man had been following me, he'd have caught me! I can't run as fast as a man.

I wasn't running from anything, except me.

The ravine was safer than safe.

SOUND: LAVINIA'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS AWAY FROM WINDOW

LAVINIA: (TO HERSELF, RELIEVED) Ohhhh, it's nice to be home, though. Home's the really good warm safe place, the only place. [X]

NARRATOR: She had just put her hand out to the light switch when she heard it behind her in the blackness.

SOUND: SLIGHT MOVEMENT

LAVINIA: (STARTLED GASP)

NARRATOR: Just a movement.

LAVINIA: (TERRIFIED) What--? (SWALLOWS HARD) What--? (WITH GREAT EFFORT) Who -- is it?

SOUND: A MAN'S FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY APPROACH

LAVINIA: (SHUDDERS IN FEAR, WHIMPERS)

SOUND: MAN'S FOOTSTEPS STOP

MAN: (LOW, LOVINGLY) Beautiful. [So beautiful.

LAVINIA: (BEAT, SHUDDERS, SCREAMS)]

MUSIC: TYMPANI ACCENT, THEN TO A FINISH

ANNOUNCER: SUSPENSE! ...

MUSIC: "SUSPENSE" STING ... THEN IN BG, OUT AT [X]

ANNOUNCER: ... in which Miss Jeanette Nolan starred, with Paula Winslowe, Eve McVeagh and Bill Conrad in tonight's presentation of Ray Bradbury's "The Whole Town's Sleeping," adapted by Antony Ellis. [X]

Next week, the story of a fishing cruise and bait that was a life insurance policy. We call it, "Over the Bounding Main." That's next week on--

MUSIC: "SUSPENSE" STING

ANNOUNCER: SUSPENSE!

MUSIC: CLOSING MARCH ... IN BG, TILL END

2ND ANNCR: SUSPENSE is produced and directed by Antony Ellis. The music was composed by Lucien Moraweck and conducted by Wilbur Hatch. Featured in the cast were Tom McKey, Florence Walcott, Tom Brown and Will Wright.

CBS ANNCR: Thursday night, THE WHISTLER brings mystery on the CBS Radio Network.