

RICHARD HANNAY - Side

About forty (we're game for anyone who *reads* 30-45). Attractive (which is in the eye of the beholder). Pencil moustache. English accent.

*(Seated in the armchair is **RICHARD HANNAY**. About forty. Attractive. Pencil moustache. He addresses the audience.)*

HANNAY. London. 1935. August. I'd been back three months in the old country and frankly wondering why. The weather made me liverish, no exercise to speak of and the talk of the ordinary Englishman man made me sick. I'd had enough of restaurants and parties and race meetings. No pal to go about with – which probably explains things. Hoppy Bynge lost in the Canadian Treasury, Tommy Deloraine married off to a blonde heiress in Chicago, Chips Carruthers eaten by crocodiles in the Limpopo. Leaving me. Richard Hannay. Thirty-seven years old, sound in wind and limb. Back home. Which was no home at all if you want to know. Just a dull little rented flat in West One. Portland Place actually. And I was bored. No more than bored. Tired. Tired of the world and tired of – life, to be honest. So I called my broker. He wasn't in. Dropped into my

club. Full of old colonial buffers. Had a scotch and soda, picked up an evening paper, put it back. Full of elections and wars and rumours of wars. And I thought – who the bloody hell cares frankly? What does it all matter? What happens to anyone? What happens to me? No-one'd miss me. I wouldn't miss me. I could quite easily just –

(He takes a slug of scotch. Knocks it back.)

And then I thought – wait a minute! Come on Hannay! Pull yourself together man!

Find something to do, you bloody fool! Something mindless and trivial. Something utterly pointless. Something –

(He has a brainwave.)

– I know! A West End show!¹ That should do the trick!

Second Side for Richard:

PAMELA. Morning.

HANNAY. What's the idea! How did you get out of these?
Why didn't you run away?

PAMELA. I did. Then just as I was going I – well, I discovered you'd been speaking the truth. So I thought I'd stay.

HANNAY. May I ask what earthquake caused your brain to work at last?

PAMELA. Two policemen came here last night. The ones from the car. I overheard them telephoning. They're not policemen!

HANNAY. I know they're not policemen! I said they weren't policemen!

PAMELA. Sorry.

HANNAY. So what did they say?

PAMELA. Oh – um – yes! A lot of stuff about – something with a number. Um – twenty – thirty...Thirty! Thirty –

HANNAY. Nine!

PAMELA. Thirty Nine! That's right. Thirty-nine –

HANNAY. Steps!!!

PAMELA. *Thirty-nine steps!* How did you know that? Someone's going to warn them!

HANNAY. *WHAT?*

PAMELA. How can you warn steps?