

LOMBARD. Do stop thinking about your stomach, Blore. This craving for food and drink will be your undoing.

BLORE. But there's plenty of beer in the kitchen.

LOMBARD. Yes, and if anyone wanted to get rid of you, the first place they'd think of putting a lethal dose would be in a nice bottle of beer.

(From outside comes the sound of a motorboat hooter.)

BLORE. What's that? A boat! A boat!

(They rush towards the balcony. BLORE runs out first. A scream is heard followed by a thud.)

VERA. Oh, God!

(VERA puts hands over eyes. LOMBARD, revolver in hand, rushes to the window and looks out.)

Start

LOMBARD. Blore's got his.

VERA. How?

LOMBARD. A booby trap – all set – a wire across the door attached to something above.

VERA. Is he?

LOMBARD. Yes. Crushed. Head stove in. That great bronze bear holding a clock, from the landing.

VERA. A bear? Oh, how ghastly! It's this awful childishness!

LOMBARD. I know. God, what a fool Blore was!

VERA. And now there are two.

LOMBARD. Yes, and we'll have to be very careful of ourselves.

VERA. We shan't do it. He'll get us. We'll never get away from this island!

LOMBARD. Oh, yes, we will, I've never been beaten yet.

VERA. Don't you feel – that there's someone – now – in this room – watching us, watching and waiting?

LOMBARD. That's just nerves.

VERA. Then you do feel it?

LOMBARD. (*Fiercely.*) No, I don't.

VERA. Please, Philip, let's get out of this house – anywhere.
Perhaps if that was a boat, they'll see us.

LOMBARD. All right. We'll go to the top of the island and wait for relief to come. It's sheer cliff on the far side and we can see if anyone approaches from the house.

VERA. Anything's better than staying here.

LOMBARD. Won't you be rather cold in that dress?

VERA. I'd be colder if I were dead.

LOMBARD. Perhaps you're right.

(He goes to the window.)

A quick reconnaissance.

VERA. Be careful, Philip – please!

LOMBARD. I'm not Blore. There's no window directly above.

(He goes to the edge of the balcony and looks down. He is arrested by what he sees.)

Hullo, there's something washed up on the rocks.

(VERA joins him.)

VERA. What? It looks like a body.

(LOMBARD speaks in a strange new voice.)

LOMBARD. You'd better wait in there. I'm going to have a look.

(He exits off the balcony. VERA comes back into room, her face full of conflicting emotions.)

VERA. Armstrong – Armstrong's body –

(LOMBARD enters from the balcony very slowly.)

LOMBARD. It's Armstrong drowned – washed up at high water mark.

VERA. So there's no one on the island – no one at all except us two.

LOMBARD. Yes, Vera. Now we know where we are.

VERA. Now we know where we are?

LOMBARD. A very pretty trick of yours, with that wire. Quite neat. Old Wargrave always knew you were dangerous.

VERA. You –

LOMBARD. So you did drown that kid after all.

VERA. I didn't! That's where you're wrong. Please believe me. Please listen to me!

LOMBARD. I'm listening. You'd better make it a good story.

VERA. It isn't a story. It's the truth. I didn't kill that child. It was someone else.

LOMBARD. Who?

VERA. A man. Peter's uncle. I was in love with him.

LOMBARD. This is getting quite interesting.

VERA. Don't sneer. It was hell. Absolute hell. Peter was born after his father's death. If he'd been a girl, Hugh would have got everything.

LOMBARD. Well-known tale of the wicked uncle.

VERA. Yes – he was wicked – and I didn't know. He said he loved me, but that he was too poor to marry. There was a rock far out that Peter was always wanting to swim to. Of course, I wouldn't let him. It was dangerous. One day we were on the beach and I had to go back to the house for something I'd forgotten. When I got back, I saw Peter swimming out to the rock. I knew he hadn't a chance, the current had got him already. I flew towards the beach and Hugh tried to stop me. "Don't be a fool," he said. "I told the little ass he could do it."

LOMBARD. Go on. This is interesting.

VERA. I pushed past him – he tried to stop me, but I got away and rushed down. I plunged into the sea and swam after Peter. He'd gone before I could get to him.

LOMBARD. And everything went off well at the inquest. They called you a plucky girl, and you kept discreetly quiet about Hugh's part in the business.

VERA. Do you think anyone would have believed me?
Besides, I couldn't! I really was in love with him.

LOMBARD. Well, it's a pretty story. And then I suppose
Hugh let you down?

VERA. Do you think I ever wanted to see him again?

LOMBARD. You certainly are an accomplished liar, Vera.

VERA. Can't you believe the truth when you hear it?

LOMBARD. Who set the trap that killed Blore? I didn't –
and Armstrong's dead. I've broken most of the
Commandments in my time – and I'm no saint. But
there's one thing I won't stand for and that's murder.

VERA. You won't stand for murder. What about those
natives you left to die in Africa?

LOMBARD. That's what's so damn funny – I didn't.

VERA. What do you mean?

LOMBARD. For once – just once, mark you, I played the
hero. Risked my life to save the lives of my men, left
them my rifle and ammunition and all the food there
was – and took a chance through the bush. By the most
incredible luck it came off – but it wasn't in time to save
them. And the rumour got around that I'd deliberately
abandoned my men. There's life for you!

VERA. Do you expect me to believe that? Why, you actually
admitted the whole thing.

LOMBARD. I know. I got such a kick out of watching their
faces.

VERA. You can't fool me with a stupid lie like that.

(LOMBARD completely loses his temper.)

LOMBARD. Blast you!

VERA. Why didn't I see it before? It's there in your face –
the face of a killer –

LOMBARD. You can't fool me any longer.

VERA. Oh –

(VERA sways forward as if fainting. LOMBARD runs to catch her. She wrests the revolver from him.)

Now!

(LOMBARD backs away.)

LOMBARD. You cunning little devil!

VERA. If you come one step nearer, I'll shoot.

LOMBARD. You – young, lovely, and quite, quite mad.

Stop

1943 Ending Commences Here

(LOMBARD makes a movement to VERA, she shoots, he falls. She rushes to him, her eyes full of horror. The revolver falls from her hand. Suddenly a low laugh is heard coming from the study. VERA turns her head slowly. The laughter grows louder as the study door opens. WARGRAVE enters. He carries a rope in his hand.)

WARGRAVE. It's all come true. My Ten Little Soldiers plan – My rhyme – my rhyme –

(VERA stifles a scream.)

(Angrily.) Silence in Court! If there is any more noise, I shall have the Court cleared. It's all right, my dear. It's all right. Don't be frightened. This is a Court of Justice. You'll get justice here.

(WARGRAVE locks the doors to the dining room and the hall.)

You thought I was a ghost. You thought I was dead. Armstrong said I was dead. That was the clever part of my plan. Said we'd trap the murderer. We'd fix up my supposed death so I should be free to spy upon the guilty one. He thought it an excellent plan – came out that night to meet me by the cliff without any suspicion.