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# TEN DAYS BEFORE THE WEDDING

by Lindsey Barbee

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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## CHARACTERS

MRS. KINROSS.

NANCY KINROSS (her Daughter).

PEGGY WAYNE (her Niece).

MISS MINNA WAYNE (her Sister).

MADGE TREMAINE (a Friend of NANCY'S).

MISS BURNS (a Secretary).

MRS. HAGGERTY (a Scotch Housekeeper) } (Servants belonging to Dallochry  
TIBBY (a Scotch Parlourmaid) } House).

A COOK

A KITCHENMAID } Mrs. KINROSS' Servants.

A TWEEENIE

MRS. HOBART (a Marmalade Factory Hand).

MRS. CAMERON (a Marmalade Factory Hand).

EARLY CLOSING, AND SEVERAL OTHER SIGHTSEERS (non-speaking parts).

## SCENES

ACT I. The Ante-Room to the Banqueting Hall, Dallochry House, Dallochry, Scotland.

ACT II. The same.

ACT III. The same.

*The Action of the Play is continuous.*

Act I takes place about seven o'clock, on a late April day, and the other two Acts follow on, with no lapse of time between them.



# TEN DAYS BEFORE THE WEDDING

## ACT I

*The action of the Play takes place in the oak-panelled Ante-room of the Banqueting Hall of Dallochry House, Dallochry, Scotland.*

*Dallochry is situated a few miles from Dundee, about ten miles from the coast.*

*The Ante-room is, practically speaking, two rooms: an outer and an inner room. The Outer Room, which is the back portion of the ante-room, is a smaller square room, compared to the Inner Room, which occupies the greater part of the stage.*

*On the back wall of the outer portion, there is an archway c. leading to the hall, and an archway c. down stage, leading to the Inner Room. On the L. of this lower archway is a wall that runs parallel with the front of the stage.*

*In this wall, facing the audience, is the door of a cupboard, that opens outwards (down stage therefore), towards the audience. The cupboard is empty, and about 3 feet 6 inches deep.*

*In the back wall of the cupboard is a door that opens upstage into a dark secret passage. In the secret passage are hanging a pair of black velvet curtains, that are hanging close to one another, so that a person can pass between them, and be immediately out of sight.*

*On the wall L. is a double door, leading to the Banqueting-Hall, and the other part of the house.*

*On the R. of the C. archway is a wall that runs parallel to the front of the stage, and in the middle of this wall is a secret panel, size about 2 feet 6 inches square. The panel is made to slide back from L. to R., and is supposed to work by touching a spring.*

*Behind the panel is a grey-coloured safe door, with a movable handle, and ten letters painted round the handle, to indicate that the safe is opened by means of the handle, and a code, or combination of letters.*

*On the R. wall, near the safe, is a small casement window, to open outwards. The sill of the window must be at least 5 feet 6 inches from the ground.*

*The room is furnished with old-time furniture, and Persian rugs are on the parquet flooring.*

*A writing-table is set R.C. with two chairs set in front and behind it: one to face the audience, and the other with its back to the audience. On the writing-table is a telephone, two candlesticks, ink-stand, two blotters, pens, etc.*

*A low-backed chair is set L.C. Another chair down L. with a wooden footstool in front of it.*

*A high-backed chair, on castors, is set in front of the cupboard door L.C., and facing the audience.*

*On the L. wall, above and below the door leading to the Banqueting-Hall, are two tables, with large candelabra on each, and some books.*

*Under the window R. is a cabinet, and a chair just above it. In the R. corner, above the cabinet and chairs, is a grandfather clock. There is a mirror on the wall R. below the cabinet.*

*Under the sliding panel, therefore directly under the safe, is a shallow table, with nothing on it.*

*In the Outer Room, chairs and cabinets to adequately furnish. There is an electric standard lamp in the Outer Room, and an electric switch, just left of the doorway C. leading to the hall.*

*There are two standard lamps (electric) in the Inner Room, one on the extreme R., the other on the extreme L. They operate from the switch in the Outer Room.*

*The action starts about 7 p.m. of a late April day. The lights outside the window suggest that the sun has set, and the scene gradually grows darker and darker, until the lamps are lit, later in the Act.*

*(When the CURTAIN rises, MRS. CHARLES KINROSS, an elderly rather hard-faced woman, is seated at a writing-table R.C. almost facing the audience. MRS. KINROSS is a domineering, strong-minded, and determined sort of woman. At the moment she is addressing a number of envelopes. At the same table, seated with her back to the audience, is MADGE TREMAINE, a rather thick-set girl of 20. MADGE speaks with a Scotch accent, and is one of the indoor studious type of girl, full of learning, with a cynical outlook on life in general. She has rather a pale face, and her dark straight hair is brushed back off her forehead. It is shiny from the use of brilliantine. She wears a pair of dark horn-rimmed spectacles. At the moment, she is busy helping MRS. KINROSS, putting invitation cards for a wedding, into the envelopes that MRS. KINROSS is addressing.)*

*After the CURTAIN has risen for a moment or two, a Raven is heard off R. cawing three times.)*

THE RAVEN (off R.). Caw—Caw—Caw.

MRS. KINROSS. There's that bird again. It's a rook, isn't it, Madge?

MADGE (with a Scotch accent). No. I think it's a raven. I've noticed it before to-day, on that tree yonder.

MRS. KINROSS. Have you? Sure it's the same bird, Madge?

MADGE. I couldna say that, but whatever bird it is, I didna hear it greet afore.

RAVEN (off). Caw—Caw—Caw.

MADGE. There. It's greetin' agen. They do say, it's an ill omen that is aboot, when just ane of them does it.

MRS. KINROSS. Oh, you Scotchies. I thought you were *far* too material to worry about those sort of tales.

MADGE. It's a tale I've heard tell. It seems to me, that nothing ill could happen here, all is so calm and peaceful. It is that—that's a fact.

MRS. KINROSS. Yes, it's a beautiful place. It seems a shame, Madge, to keep you indoors, helping me. You should have joined the other two, fishing.

MADGE. I can see nae fun in catchin' fish that dinna want to be caught.

MRS. KINROSS. My dear, it will be a miracle if one *is* caught. Still, you're a guest. It's not right to keep you finishing those invitations like this.

MADGE. I suppose there always is a muckle lot to do before a weddin'.

MRS. KINROSS. Yes, and the nearer one gets to the day, the more work one seems to have to do.

MADGE. Let me see, how many mair days is it noo?

MRS. KINROSS. Ten days more, and all the excitement will be over; except Nancy's and Alban's of course.

MADGE. Nancy doesn't seem over-excited. I hope she will be fond of her man, and that she'll find happiness with him.

MRS. KINROSS. Happy. Of course she'll be happy—she's got to be. Alban is going to be a very rich man when he comes into the title.

MADGE (*in a loud whisper*). I shouldna like ma dead ancestors to hear, but to my way of thinkin', siller's nae everything, Mrs. Kinross; it's mere dross.

MRS. KINROSS. It has a good deal to do with happiness. (*Rather emphatically.*) Yes, I've guided her to the right man, and a title one day. She has me to thank for that.

MADGE. Is that a fact?

MRS. KINROSS. I know it.

MADGE. I'm thinkin' that marriage is a great problem these days. Girls of to-day are mair concerned in the income of marriage than of the outcome.

MRS. KINROSS. There will be plenty of outcome, because the income will be there one day. I saw to that.

MADGE. It's rather like winter and spring uniting, though, isn't it?

MRS. KINROSS. Oh, I don't know. Alban may be a bit older, but that's an advantage, these days.

MADGE. Is that a fact?—Are ye sure?—How so?

MRS. KINROSS. I think so. Some of these young men to-day forget they are married, every time they see a pretty girl.

MADGE. And others have it brought home to them, with full force.

MRS. KINROSS. You have very cynical views, Madge, for one

so young. I should try to shed them, if I were you. Men don't like cynics.

MADGE. Men—what do I want with men? (*With rising anger.*) It's always men where women are concerned (*she rises and turns towards the audience*), when there are so many books in the world to study and be fond of—that's a fact. (*She goes down to the extreme L. and picks up a book from the table down L. against the L. wall.*)

MRS. KINROSS (*not quite knowing what to say*). Yes—of course—very useful things, books.

(*At this moment, NANCY KINROSS, a pretty fair-haired girl of 21, dressed in short skirt, jumper, and Wellington gum-boots, enters c. with her cousin, PEGGY WAYNE, a tall girl, some four or five years older than NANCY. She is also dressed in the same manner as NANCY, and both are carrying fishing-rods, landing-nets, and creels slung over their shoulders.*)

NANCY (*as she enters*). Hullo! Still fugging indoors! (*She goes c., followed by PEGGY.*)

MRS. KINROSS. My dear! Somebody has got to send out all these invitations.

NANCY. I wouldn't bother. Why ask such a lot of people? (*NANCY takes off her creel.*)

MRS. KINROSS. Not bother! But you want presents, don't you?

NANCY. Do I? I don't know. Not if they don't want me to have them.

(*PEGGY takes NANCY's creel, fishing-rod and landing-net.*)

Thanks, Peg.

(*PEGGY takes them up stage, leaving them in the L. upper corner of the hall, and places the creels on a chair up L.*)

MRS. KINROSS. Of course, everyone who gets an invitation, whether they accept or not, will have to send you a present; that is if they want to be invited to my house again.

NANCY (*going over to the chair L.C. and lolling on the arm*). What a threat! Poor people! Everyone is much too hard up, these days, to buy useless wedding presents.

MRS. KINROSS. Nancy, really. (*She rises and goes to NANCY L.C.*) Here am I, working away for your benefit, to give you a nice wedding, with lots of people, and lots of presents, and—and

NANCY. I know, Mum, it's awfully good of you, but why such a lot of fuss? I'd much rather have it all nice and quiet, and comfy. That's why I got you to take this house for it—right away from everywhere.

MRS. KINROSS. What an idea—a quiet wedding! What would Alban say? Remember, he's half of the wedding.