

## MONTY NAVARRO & MISS SHINGLE AUDITION SIDES

*At rise, we find MONTY NAVARRO in a Prison Cell. The ninth, and current, Earl of Highhurst, HE is youthful and quite dashing, even under such circumstances. HE sits down at a writing desk and takes a sheaf of papers out of the drawer. HE lifts a pen and begins to write.*

### #1b – Our Story Begins

#### MONTY

*(As HE writes:)*

Pentonville Prison. Nineteenth of October, nineteen hundred and nine. This is the memoir, and perhaps final confession, of Lord Navarro, ninth Earl of Highhurst. It is a fact of life that no one ever really tells the truth about himself. But in the event of my execution, while I still have time, I have decided to leave behind a purely factual record of events. I suppose one could call it "A Gentleman's Guide... To Murder."

*(After a moment:)*

Or should I say – "Love and Murder." My story begins, as stories often do, with a quite unexpected visitor.

#### SCENE 1A

*(MONTY enters a small sad Parlor, decorated to make the most of meager means. His affect is much younger, his manner far less assured.)*

*Grieving, HE gazes at a portrait of his mother. The doorbell clangs rather insistently. MONTY opens the door and MARIETTA SHINGLE, an eccentric woman of a certain age, barges in from the cold. MUSIC fades out.)*

#### MISS SHINGLE

If there's a sorrier street in all of Clapham, I'm sure I've never seen it.

#### MONTY

Pardon me, madam, but do we know one another?

*(MISS SHINGLE removes her outer garments, making herself quite at home.)*

#### MISS SHINGLE

Only since the moment you were given birth by your sweet mother.

#### MONTY

You knew Mother? I... I've only just returned from her funeral.

**MISS SHINGLE**

My poor dear Isabel, bless her soul.

*(Grabs his face affectionately.)*

Look at himself, all grown up and handsome as the devil.

*(MISS SHINGLE takes a seat, exhausted from her journey.)*

**MONTY**

How is it you knew Mother, Missus... ?

**MISS SHINGLE**

Miss. Shingle. Marietta Shingle... ?

**MONTY**

Of course! Miss Shingle! She spoke of you often—and how she looked forward to your letters!

**MISS SHINGLE**

And I hers, I assure you.

*(Removing her hat.)*

You were going to offer me a spot of tea, were you?

**MONTY**

You must forgive my manners, Miss Shingle. Mother always had a kettle on.

**MISS SHINGLE**

And if you could spare a biscuit or two, I'm sure I wouldn't mind.

*(MISS SHINGLE takes in the faded gentility of the parlor for the first time and shakes her head sadly.)*

I knew you and your mother were having a rough time of it, but I didn't know it had come to this. Have you any prospects, love?

**MONTY**

Mother always dreamt I should go to Oxford or Cambridge somehow.

*(Realizing sadly:)*

It seems rather unlikely now.

**MISS SHINGLE**

There's nothing your mother wouldn't have done for you.

**MONTY**

I hardly know how I shall go on without her.

**MISS SHINGLE**

*(SHE eyes him admiringly.)*

You rather favor your father... physically, I mean.

**MONTY**

Did you know my father? He died when I was but seven.

**MISS SHINGLE**

Only met him once, love. Castilian, you know. As dashing a face and figure as you will ever see.

*(A heavy sigh.)*

Tell me, love, what do you know of your *mother's* family?

**MONTY**

Mother never spoke of them. Must've been curs and mountebanks. Horse thieves, at the very least.

**MISS SHINGLE**

Well, not exactly. Have you heard of the D'Ysquith family?

*(MUSIC starts under scene.)*

**#2 - You're a D'Ysquith****MONTY**

The D'Ysquiths? Why, yes, of course, hasn't everyone?

**MISS SHINGLE**

Then you've heard of Highhurst Castle?

**MONTY**

Of course.

**MISS SHINGLE**

You're aware, then, of their position? Their vast wealth and influence?

**MONTY**

Yes, yes, what's it got to do with me?