

THE LAST FLIGHT OF THE ELECTRA

A Drama

by

Colin Speer Crowley

© "The Last Flight of the Electra"
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Aileen Craigmore - about 70 - white - a proud, strong, imperial-looking woman of statuesque bearing, jealously protective of her status and her privacy

Sandra Houser - 30's-40's - any race - the dedicated, loyal, rather obsessive secretary of Aileen Craigmore, filled with inner certainty and conviction

George Vale - 30's-40's - Black - the wry, caustic business manager of Aileen Craigmore, who would be able to find something amusing even about the Apocalypse

Richard Kresge - 40's-60's - white - a working-class police officer in Scarsdale, New York who isn't much impressed by the wealthier people he protects

Rocio Martino - about 70 - Hispanic - a beaten-down, unsteady, generally drunk handyman with something vaguely sympathetic and even earnest about his nature

TIME

One evening in December of 1968.

PLACE

The living room of Aileen Craigmore's house
in Scarsdale, New York

The house of Aileen Craigmore is one of those large residences that could potentially be given its own zip code and that retains what one might regard as an imperial distance from the rest of the world, thanks to a long driveway - or at least, that is how we would envision the property. We are only exposed to the living room in the house. It nevertheless says a great deal that the living room itself is enough to give us this overall impression.

Aside from that to which we aren't exposed, here is what we know and see:

First, the living room is very large and spacious, with one main door leading out into a long hallway just beyond. We will occasionally hear the front door of the house at the end of this hallway open and close.

Second, the furniture in the room is opulent, if not particularly numerous. It includes a large couch (or two?), some chairs, a large desk (with a phone), a liquor cabinet, and a storage bench.

Third, there are many framed objects on the living room wall - although we notice pointedly that very few of them are pictures of people. The vast majority of wall decorations are framed newspaper clippings of aviation feats and a large number of blown-up copies of magazine covers for some publication called "Women of America." One framed magazine cover - the largest, as if by pointed design - broadcasts a black-and-white picture of famed aviator Amelia Earhart that seems to overawe the set in some mighty way. There are absolutely no pictures of what appears to be a family - none anywhere, in fact - not even propped on any table or desk - and indeed, the room itself, though a "living" room, seems more like a showpiece than it does a place of human warmth and relaxation.

Last but not least, our view of this imposing room is somewhat diminished by a large number of moving boxes strewn about the set - although even they seem to be arranged in an organized way that brings a certain degree of respectability. Still, the boxes dominate our vision and indicate someone very much in the process of departure. The characters will have to navigate these boxes as they meander about the stage.

A NOTE ON STRUCTURE

"The Last Flight of the Electra" is a full-length, one-act play, intended to be performed without intermission.

THE LAST FLIGHT OF THE ELECTRA

At first, the stage is dark and silent, until, slowly, we hear the accumulating noise of A PLANE IN FLIGHT.

The sound of the plane GROWS and GROWS in volume until it feels as if we were sitting in the plane ourselves.

Suddenly, we hear RADIO STATIC broadcast from some corner of the stage. It is labored and sporadic, indicating poor reception - perhaps what one might even consider labored breathing of sorts. A FEMALE VOICE rises amidst the static - barely discernible, but discernible enough for us to hear some anxiety in its tone.

FEMALE VOICE

KHAQQ calling Itasca...

STATIC, STATIC, STATIC...

FEMALE VOICE

(More forcefully and insistently.)
KHAQQ calling Itasca...

STATIC, STATIC, STATIC...

FEMALE VOICE

Do you read, Itasca?

STATIC, STATIC, STATIC...

MALE VOICE

We read you, KHAQQ.

FEMALE VOICE

Can you hear us, Itasca?

MALE VOICE

We can hear you, KHAQQ. Can you hear us?

FEMALE VOICE

Are you there, Itasca?

MALE VOICE

Can you hear us, KHAQQ?

FEMALE VOICE

Please come in, Itasca - take bearing on us and report in half-hour. I will make noise in mic - about 100 miles out. We must be on you, but cannot see you.

(A beat.)

Gas is running low...

(A beat.)

Unable to reach you by radio...

(A beat.)

We are flying at 1,000 feet...

MALE VOICE

Earhart on, now says running out of gas.

FEMALE VOICE

KHAQQ calling Itasca...

MALE VOICE

Only half-hour of gas left.

FEMALE VOICE

We are circling but cannot hear.

MALE VOICE

She can't hear us at all.

FEMALE VOICE

Are you there, Itasca?

MALE VOICE

Earhart can't hear us.

The WHIRR of the PLANE takes a terrifying turn, as the PLANE descends, descends, descends, descends, descends... until... a HUGE EXPLOSION as the plane CRASHES into an unseen ocean.

A SPOTLIGHT appears on the stage, strategically directed at a framed magazine cover that contains a black-and-white photo of Amelia Earhart. She is situated in a striking, stalwart pose, looking off into the distance, perhaps even in a mystical way, as if spying some horizon no one else can see. The SPOTLIGHT holds a moment upon this picture before growing and growing - until, before too long, the LIGHTS have risen broadly upon the stage and the set is revealed to us.

We are in a spacious living room in an opulent house - a mansion, we can only assume - with a certain museum-like quality about it that does not exactly imply warmth. A very large number of moving boxes are scattered about the room - but even these, it appears, have been organized in such a fashion as to appear rather elegant. One would think, the arranger did not want to do any injustice to the general opulence of the room. Indeed, every moving box is sealed most securely.

For a moment, our eyes rest upon the living room, giving us a chance to absorb the room's walls - all dominated by framed newspaper clippings of aviation feats and a large number of framed magazine covers for a magazine called "Women of America."

After the moment expires, the door to the main hallway of the house opens and a young woman enters - SANDRA HOUSER. SHE appears to be in HER 30's, but, being rather simple in nature - "drab" might be the less charitable term - and seemingly devoid of make-up or any other accouterments, it is hard to tell HER real age. SHE could be a well-aged woman in HER late 20's or a younger 40-year-old whose simple life has spared HER face from weathering too much. Regardless, we sense a bit of the monkish about her - perhaps the librarian - someone enameled in an aura of duty and diligence.

Returning to the action, SANDRA enters, carrying a series of crisply packed papers and carrying a small folder under HER arm. SHE puts the papers neatly on the large desk, preceded by a large chair, that, sitting at the end of the room, reminds us somehow of a throne. SANDRA turns and can't help but catch the eye of Amelia Earhart in the photograph on the wall. SANDRA stares noticeably at the picture for a moment, as if contemplating something deep in HER mind.

The moment is soon interrupted when the hallway door briskly opens and an erect, proper-looking woman of about 70 enters - clearly having a place to be and having something to do when SHE gets there. HER name is AILEEN CRAIGMORE.

CRAIGMORE

Good evening, Sandra.

SANDRA

Good evening, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

I've been so busy, I've barely seen you today.

SANDRA

There is a lot to do before your big move.

CRAIGMORE

(Indicating the papers on the desk.)
I suppose those are the mortgage papers?

SANDRA

Yes, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

Good. Bring me my nightcap, please.

SANDRA

White Horse?

CRAIGMORE

Four Roses.

SANDRA efficiently nods and goes to a corner of the stage, where we notice a smart-looking liquor cart - though perhaps "carriage" is a better term considering the number of shimmering bottles it contains. CRAIGMORE sits at the desk and grabs a large pen - a very large pen, indeed - more like a knife than a pen - and proceeds to hack away at the papers with it. SANDRA returns with a drink, which SHE places in front of CRAIGMORE. CRAIGMORE reaches for the drink and sips it without even looking at it, as if knowing exactly where it will be located.

SANDRA

Ben Reiner called again today, from *The Post*.

We sense a small interruption to the steady nature of CRAIGMORE's crossing, as if this mention of a name has struck HER rather uncomfortably - but SHE recovers quickly.

CRAIGMORE

Did he leave a message?

SANDRA

He only asked for me to call him back to schedule the interview.

CRAIGMORE

It must be pleasant, indeed, to have sufficient emptiness in your life to spend most of it calling and harassing other people. I can only assume that journalists like Mr. Reiner go through telephones faster than they do typewriters. Were there any other calls?

SANDRA

Only the movers, to confirm the date next week.

CRAIGMORE

Good - I am sick of navigating a maze of cardboard.

SANDRA

Also, Father O'Deery came by and asked about you after you left today for lunch with Congressman Murphy. He noticed you weren't in church last Sunday.

CRAIGMORE

Nor have I been in church for the last thirty or so Sundays. If the Lord is as observant of our sins as Father O'Deery, we have nothing to fear.

SANDRA

We never do have anything to fear, because He loves us anyway.

CRAIGMORE

From that, I merely deduce that God has extremely bad taste.

SANDRA

I don't think God would ever consider love in bad taste.

CRAIGMORE

Love, Sandra, is the most frightening thing of all.

SANDRA

Yes, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

Did we ever get the draft of my biography for the new edition of "Who's Who?"

SANDRA

(Removing a paper from the folder under HER arm.)
Yes, Mrs. Craigmore - it came in just yesterday.

CRAIGMORE

Read it, please - I might learn something about myself.

SANDRA

(Reading.)

Aileen Craigmore - entrepreneur, magazine executive, aviator, and philanthropist. One of the more prominent faces in the world of print, Craigmore began her career in finance in New York, where she became the first female vice president at The Bank of New Amsterdam. Subsequently, she served for 10 years as Editor-in-Chief of the magazine "Women of America," the fourth most popular women's publication in the United States, which she grew to a circulation of 6.5 million. She was previously married to British industrialist Alexander Craigmore, with whom she founded The Craigmore Institute for Social Research. Craigmore was also an early female aviator, flying alongside Katherine Stinson, Viola Gentry, Louise Thorden, and Amelia Earhart. She is currently retired and lives in Scarsdale, New York.

CRAIGMORE

I must say, it makes life seem rather short.

SANDRA

Should I ask them to edit the end - about living in Scarsdale?

CRAIGMORE

Not at all, as I consider it no one's business where I choose to live - and frankly, I enjoy the diversion.

SANDRA

Yes, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

Now, tell me the agenda for next week.

SANDRA

(Removing another paper from the folder and reading.)
On Monday, there's the call with the National Organization of Women about your speaking at their fourth annual fundraiser and the lunch at The Wings Club in New York City. On Tuesday, you have the appraiser coming for your Model Y Roadster Ford and the cocktail reception with Mayor Lindsay and Senator Javits. On Wednesday, you have the funeral service for Mr. Sulzberger and your call with the Amelia Earhart Society about your potentially joining their board next year. On Thursday, you have the meeting of the Ford Foundation's Task Force on Women and Entrepreneurialism and on Friday you have the movers coming and your reservation at The Waldorf...

(Looking up.)

...or at least, I thought you did.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, I had meant to tell you about that...

SANDRA

I called The Waldorf today to confirm your reservation for the month and they said that you had canceled it.

A series of PLAYFUL KNOCKS sound from the hallway door.

CRAIGMORE

(With perhaps some exasperation at the playfulness.)
You may enter, Mr. Vale.

A good-looking Black man enters carrying a briefcase - about 30 or so - named GEORGE VALE. HE very much looks the part of a well-dressed, young professional climbing up the greasy pole of the corporate world, but HE punctures this stereotype with a rather devilish way about HIM.

VALE

Welcome back, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

Thank you, Mr. Vale - for that and for entering unannounced.

SANDRA

(Explaining.)
I left the front door open for Mr. Martino.

VALE

How was Barbados? It was Barbados, wasn't it?

CRAIGMORE

So the signs said - but then all the Caribbean looks the same to me.

VALE

I suppose it would when all you visit are the beaches and the ocean.

CRAIGMORE

If you are asking if the trip was pleasant, Mr. Vale, then it was. Ms. Gentry and I had a fine time. There was no one to disturb us.

VALE

Why, that makes me feel positively unwelcome.

CRAIGMORE

Never you, Mr. Vale.

VALE

Now that is reassuring.

CRAIGMORE

I mean you would never feel unwelcome.

VALE

You don't know the looks I get withdrawing this much money from a bank.

VALE removes a large envelope of what appears to be cash from HIS coat pocket and hands it to CRAIGMORE.

CRAIGMORE

Thank you for your sacrifice, Mr. Vale.

VALE

I'll miss not having the chance to demonstrate my magnanimity further when you fly out next week.

SANDRA

You mean next month, Mr. Vale - on the 15th.

VALE

Ah, yes, of course... the 15th... next month.

VALE noticeably turns and looks at CRAIGMORE queerly. We can tell SHE senses HIS glance, but purposefully does not respond or acknowledge it. An awkward pause descends, finally punctured by a LOUD SOUND of A CLAY POT BREAKING outside. A SHOUT - involving what appears to be a swear word - accompanies it.

CRAIGMORE

Check on Mr. Martino, would you, Sandra?

SANDRA hurriedly exits.

VALE

You haven't told her?

CRAIGMORE

That's the second clay pot he's broken.

VALE

When were you going to say something?

CRAIGMORE

I wouldn't mind so much, if the sound were less piercing and the swearing less pronounced.

VALE

I thought you would have let Sandra know about your plans to leave early, considering the way things are.

CRAIGMORE

And how exactly are they, Mr. Vale?

VALE

For you, clinical.

CRAIGMORE

And for Sandra?

VALE

Terrifying.

CRAIGMORE

I am not a very sentimental person, Mr. Vale - as even you know from our year or so of acquaintance. I don't like long goodbyes, especially when they're watered with tears. I understand it will be difficult for Sandra - and in my own way, it will be difficult for me, as well - though I don't intend to make a show of such things. Then again, there are many difficult moments we face in life and, like an open wound, they are all better cauterized quickly, rather than be allowed to bleed out onto the carpet. I don't understand the point of drawing out the inevitable when, either way, the result will be the same. This time next month, I will be living in Scottsdale and Sandra will be here in New York.

VALE

Hanging off the Brooklyn Bridge.

CRAIGMORE

Really, Mr. Vale.

VALE

Really, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

Sandra will go on with her life.

VALE

What life?

CRAIGMORE

I do not deny that Sandra has spent the better part of three years with me, but...

VALE

That's twenty-one years, in dog years - which also happen to be her years, when you come to work at five in the morning and you leave passed eleven at night. Sandra doesn't have a life outside of any of this. You are her life - everything here is her life -

VALE (CONT)

right down to the ice in your glass. She looks after every little thing here as if she gave birth to each one of them. Imagine that - a mother with ten-thousand children - and in one fell swoop, you're going to take them all away from her. That's quite an empty nest to roll around in.

CRAIGMORE

Sandra has known I'd be leaving for quite some time now.

VALE

There's a difference between knowing something will happen and colliding with it head-on. I know I'm going to die, but I won't be losing any sleep over it just yet. I might even manage to convince myself that some scientific serum will make me immortal in the meanwhile - until, one day, I'll look up and see the grim reaper coming down the road to shake my hand. Sandra hasn't had to face the facts of your departure yet - which, granted, is one benefit of working thirty hours a day - but when she does have to face the reality, it won't be pretty.

CRAIGMORE

I didn't know you were so sentimental an advocate for my secretary.

VALE

I just don't want her talking to me at 2am when she has no one left to talk to.

CRAIGMORE

Considering what you charge by the hour, Mr. Vale, I rather doubt she'd be able to afford you.

VALE can't help but be amused.

VALE

You never answered my question before.

CRAIGMORE

That was probably intentional.

VALE

When are you going to tell her?

CRAIGMORE

Tonight - and what's more, I will give her this weekend off as well... so this will be our final moment together.

VALE

I'll have the paramedics on standby.

KNOCK, KNOCK! It's the front door - and in near-immediate response, as if SANDRA were waiting at the door for

this moment, we hear the FRONT DOOR
OPEN and SANDRA's VOICE.

SANDRA's VOICE

Good evening, Officer Kresge.

KRESGE'S VOICE

Hello, Sandra - Mrs. Craigmore is expecting me.

VALE

(To CRAIGMORE, nodding in the direction of SANDRA's VOICE.)
Goodness! Where will you get that type of efficiency in
Scottsdale?

SANDRA enters through the hallway door,
followed by a large, burly man in a
police uniform - RICHARD KRESGE. HE
seems to tower over the premises in a
rather grand way, but has a genial
nature that mitigates any feelings he
might have of inferiority.

CRAIGMORE

Hello, Officer Kresge.

KRESGE

Evening to you, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

Indeed to us all - and in that regard, your stopping by is much
appreciated.

KRESGE

For you, ma'am - anything - especially now that you'll be
leaving us. I'll have to open my map and find another street to
parole in Scarsdale. You know, I've been watching your place
pretty regularly for, ohhh, about five years now - stopping by a
few times a day, courtesy of the Scarsdale Police Department and
at the request of your late husband, God rest his soul - and
never once have you called me by my first name. I figure with
you heading off to Glendale in a few weeks...

CRAIGMORE

Scottsdale.

KRESGE

Scottsdale, yeah - that maybe I could get you to use my first
name... just once.

CRAIGMORE

Which is?

KRESGE

Richard, but you can call me Dick.

CRAIGMORE

I most certainly shall not.

VALE

Good try, Dick!

CRAIGMORE

"Familiarity breeds contempt," Officer Kresge - or haven't you heard?

KRESGE

Oh? Who came up with that, then?

VALE

(Looking at CRAIGMORE playfully.)
Aileen Craigmores.

SANDRA

Geoffrey Chaucer.

KRESGE

I could have sworn it was my ex-wife.

CRAIGMORE

You have your updated report, I presume.

KRESGE

I do at that, Mrs. Craigmores - but I'm afraid it doesn't leave much to chew over. We checked with your neighbors and reviewed reports of activity in the area and there's no further lead as to who might have broken into your house and looked through your boxes - especially in the manner involved. We did ask quite a few questions in town - and will keep asking them, believe me - but we have very little to go on. Of course, we'll continue to make sure we have an officer stationed at the entrance to the street, should you need to use your emergency button, and we won't remove him until you leave for Glendale.

VALE

Scottsdale.

CRAIGMORE

That is very much appreciated, Officer Kresge - even though your update itself is less so.

KRESGE

I'm sorry, ma'am - but again, we'll keep a good watch - and in fact, tonight, I so have the honor.

CRAIGMORE

I am flattered.

KRESGE

Leonard called out sick, so I will be stationed just a bit down the street... all night.

SANDRA

I'll get you a coffee to take with you.

KRESGE

Now that is most kind and considerate.

SANDRA

How would you like it?

KRESGE

As my old man said, I like my coffee like I like my women.

VALE

Black?

KRESGE

Light and sweet.

SANDRA exits through the hallway door.
KRESGE turns to make sure SHE is safely gone and then turns back to CRAIGMORE.

KRESGE

Now, you know what we really think about that break-in.

VALE

What - you mean Sandra?

KRESGE

It is the most likely conclusion - no signs of forced entry, no odd sightings, so few things disturbed.

VALE

(To CRAIGMORE.)

Good God - not only are you taking away her children, but she'll have to give up her life of crime, as well!

CRAIGMORE

As I have already made clear, Officer Kresge, your suppositions regarding Sandra are entirely unfounded - and worse, they're inept. I am of the suspicious sort and Sandra is the last person I would ever suspect of such a thing. She is entirely loyal to me - and besides, she knows what's contained in my boxes. It doesn't make sense that she'd open ones just bulging with old papers when there are precious antiques in the others. I told you before - someone must have broken into my house, started to rummage through the boxes, and been scared away by something - perhaps the lights from one of your regular patrol cars - but too fast enough for them to close my boxes with sufficient care.

CRAIGMORE (CONT)

Sandra has nothing to do with this whatsoever. It's my intuition and my intuition is seldom wrong.

RING, RING! It's the phone - and just like with answering the front door, a PHONE in the hallway is swiftly picked up by SANDRA, as if SHE were waiting there for it to ring.

SANDRA's VOICE

Mrs. Craigmores residence.

VALE

(As before, to CRAIGMORE.)

I ask again - where in Scottsdale?

SANDRA enters through the hallway door.

SANDRA

It's Ben Reiner again.

CRAIGMORE

Tell him I am indisposed.

SANDRA nods and exits. We hear HER muffled VOICE talking on the phone in the background, as:

VALE

Is that man still calling?

CRAIGMORE

Like the IRS, he won't leave me alone.

KRESGE

("Hair-assed.")

Why, it sounds like you're being downright harassed.

CRAIGMORE

(Correcting HIM.)

Harassed.

KRESGE

(We can't tell if HE's joking or not.)

You tell him, ma'am!

VALE

Mr. Reiner has been pestering Mrs. Craigmores about a freelance article he's writing for *The Post* on the 30th anniversary of Amelia Earhart's disappearance.

KRESGE

Well, now, I'm not the historical sort, but I rather recall CBS already did a special on that three years ago - which means this Reiner fellow is a bit late.

CRAIGMORE

This January is the thirtieth anniversary of Amelia Earhart being declared dead, as opposed to the actual anniversary of her disappearance. She was declared dead by the United States government on January 9th, 1938. That is the anniversary to which Mr. Reiner is referring.

KRESGE

Look at you, ma'am - a walking encyclopedia.

CRAIGMORE.

Hardly - I just knew Amelia Earhart rather well.

SANDRA enters from the hallway door, carrying a cup of coffee in a Styrofoam cup, which SHE hands to KRESGE.

SANDRA

Mrs. Craigmore knew Amelia Earhart back in the mid-20's.

KRESGE

Now, that's a small world for you.

CRAIGMORE

The world was and remains quite large - it was the number of female pilots that was small.

SANDRA

Mrs. Craigmore and Amelia Earhart met in Massachusetts at the Boston chapter of the American Aeronautical Society.

KRESGE

You don't say.

SANDRA

Amelia was living in Melford with her mother at the time after she dropped out of MIT.

KRESGE

On first-name terms, I see!

SANDRA

Oh, well, no - but I did try to take up flying myself at one point because of her.

VALE

Yes, Sandra did try, you see, but her flying career never got up off the ground.

CRAIGMORE

(Referencing HIS bad joke.)
It's just as well you're a business manager, Mr. Vale.

SANDRA

Oh, yes, I've always loved Amelia Earhart - ever since I was ten years old and first learned about her. I did a school project on her and I haven't stopped studying her since. I've read about every book there is on her. You can imagine how thrilled I was to learn that Mrs. Craigmore knew her so well.

CRAIGMORE

Granted, I ended up setting my sites less over the Pacific and more over Madison Avenue.

VALE

All things considered, much the safer route.

KRESGE

(To CRAIGMORE, looking at the Earhart pictures.)
Ah, so you have this picture because you knew Amelia Earhart.

SANDRA

(Pointing to one picture of a large class of aviators.)
There's even a picture of Mrs. Craigmore and Amelia together.

CRAIGMORE

(A little annoyed.)
Thank you, Sandra.

SANDRA turns to a framed newspaper clipping on the wall.

SANDRA

That's a newspaper clipping from a group of female aviators who went to visit Louise Thorden in a hospital in Cleveland. Thorden was a famous female aviator and she almost died from appendicitis. This was in 1932. All these female pilots across America flew to Ohio to visit her at City Hospital and a group photo was taken.

KRESGE

I didn't know you were famous, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

Fortunately, I wasn't - I flew for pleasure, not fame - and even by the time of that picture, I had given up flying. I was only there because Amelia invited me. Aside from her, no one else would have known me from Adam.

KRESGE

(Referencing HER gender.)
Oh, I think they'd at least have known you from Adam.

SANDRA

(Pointing at the picture.)
There's Amelia Earhart and there's Mrs. Craigmore.

KRESGE

(Reading the caption.)
"Aileen Kosterman."

CRAIGMORE

My maiden name.

KRESGE

(Looking even closer at the picture.)
That doesn't look much like you, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

Thank you, Officer Kresge - every woman loves to be reminded she doesn't look like she did when she was 30.

KRESGE

(Rather amused by HER reaction.)
I just mean that there's a shadow covering your face.

CRAIGMORE

Regardless, when you have an idea of who looked through my boxes, I will reward you with a full accounting of my younger days with Amelia Earhart. For now, it seems that is unlikely - unless you can otherwise oblige me by revealing that the Scarsdale Police Department has now within its power the ability to arrest pesky journalists.

KRESGE

I'm afraid not, ma'am.

VALE

You mean "not yet" - Nixon isn't announcing his cabinet until Tuesday.

KRESGE

Ohhh, politics is usually my cue to leave.

CRAIGMORE

Goodnight, then, Officer Kresge.

KRESGE

Goodbye, then, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, indeed - and thank you for your service... Richard.

VALE

Dick.

KRESGE salutes HER with the Styrofoam cup and exits through the hallway door.

CRAIGMORE

(To SANDRA, dying to ask.)
What did you tell Mr. Reiner?

SANDRA

I told him he could try calling tomorrow.

VALE

(To CRAIGMORE, mysteriously.)
You don't think he's calling for a chat about Amelia Earhart, I gather.

CRAIGMORE is about to respond, when...
CRACK! Another POT has SMASHED on the ground outside. This time a CRY accompanies the smashing. CRAIGMORE nods to SANDRA - "please check on him" - and SANDRA hurriedly exits.

VALE

You trust her completely, then.

CRAIGMORE

I do believe I said as much, yes.

VALE

Didn't Sandra hire that man out there?

CRAIGMORE

She did, yes.

VALE

Funny choice, then, for one you trust so "completely." I tell you, the man is not quite all there upstairs. I doubt downstairs is doing much better.

CRAIGMORE

I trust Sandra, Mr. Vale - for who's to say Mr. Martino wasn't the better choice for a lower budget? He's been here two weeks and will only be here two weeks more. He's my temporary groundskeeper, employed to prepare the house for the market. I'm not hiring a confessor who will lift my soul into Heaven. Mr. Martino will come and go, like everything else in life - but at a higher velocity - and so his unpleasantness, if rather loud, is also rather bearable. Sandra undoubtedly knows this - as she knows me - and so I trust her... completely.

The door to the hallway clumsily bursts open and in comes an equally clumsy MAN. HE is about 70 - HIS face weathered like a weathervane atop some

old building in the Outer Hebrides and HIS gait unsteady. HE is also a bit drunk, thanks to a noticeable slurring of speech - though HE retains enough cognizance to be able to get away with it... barely. The MAN is painfully cradling HIS hand, which is wrapped in cloth and stained red with blood - courtesy of a bad cut from a splintered pot. HIS name is ROCIO MARTINO and HE speaks with an accent. SANDRA enters behind HIM, helping to hold HIM up.

CRAIGMORE

Sandra, what happened?

SANDRA

Mr. Martino cut his hand.

ROCIO

I was trying to pick up the broken pieces of the pot to put them together.

VALE

If you read about Humpty Dumpty, you'd have known the foolishness of your endeavor.

CRAIGMORE

I am sorry, then, Mr. Martino - but really, it is best that you take care of yourself in the kitchen.

VALE

(To ROCIO, meaning the blood.)
This is a new carpet, you know.

SANDRA

(To CRAIGMORE, explaining.)
He wanted to apologize.

ROCIO staggers towards CRAIGMORE and almost falls on HER desk. HE swoops down clumsily like a vulture spying a mouse on the ground and gets a little too close to HER face.

ROCIO

I'm sorry, Mrs. Craigmore.

The alcohol breath is enough to wilt flowers at 20 paces, prompting CRAIGMORE to sit back in HER chair. ROCIO stumbles, with SANDRA's help, over to a nearby couch.

VALE

(Sing-songy, reminding CRAIGMORE.)
Completely!

CRAIGMORE glares again, as ROCIO
collapses onto the couch.

ROCIO

You won't fire me - right, Mrs. Craigmores?

CRAIGMORE

Of course not, Mr. Martino - as long as you get the job done.

ROCIO

You see I want to!

CRAIGMORE

So you say, Mr. Martino.

ROCIO

I work late now.

CRAIGMORE

You drop pots now.

ROCIO

But I work late, and tomorrow - no pots!

CRAIGMORE

Preferably, Mr. Martino.

(To SANDRA.)

Please, Sandra - would you escort Mr. Martino into the kitchen
and see he is taken care of?

SANDRA nods and helps ROCIO to rise.

ROCIO

I keep working tonight!

CRAIGMORE

That will not be necessary.

ROCIO

I want to, because I care!

CRAIGMORE

(Not wanting to argue with a drunk man.)
Thank you, Mr. Martino.

SANDRA helps ROCIO hobble through the
hallway door.

VALE

He doesn't need a job, he needs a coffee.

CRAIGMORE

Perhaps, yes - but now is not the time for one, as it is getting rather late.

VALE

(Taking the hint.)

Ah, it appears I have outworn my welcome.

CRAIGMORE

Your welcome and your suit both, Mr. Vale.

VALE

I should be going, then - which makes two of us.

(Looking mysteriously offstage, referencing SANDRA.)
Goodbye, Sandra!

CRAIGMORE

Goodnight, Mr. Vale.

VALE

Remember the medics.

VALE smiles and exits through the hallway door.

SANDRA'S VOICE

Oh, Mr. Vale - you're leaving.

VALE'S VOICE

Yes, Sandra - have a good night.

SANDRA'S VOICE

Thank you, sir.

A moment later, SANDRA enters through the hallway door.

CRAIGMORE

How is Mr. Martino?

SANDRA

He is resting in the kitchen.

CRAIGMORE

Please call a cab and have him brought home, as it is getting late. Neither his brain nor his hand is in any state to drive the rest of him. He can pick up his car here tomorrow.

SANDRA

I can drop off Mr. Martino on my way home.

CRAIGMORE

Thank you, yes - and please, get me another nightcap.

SANDRA

(Intrinsically being able to read HER.)
I'm sorry, Mrs. Craigmores - another headache?

CRAIGMORE

Don't you be sorry, Sandra - it's always everyone else who causes them.

SANDRA takes CRAIGMORE's glass off the desk and goes to the liquor cabinet to prepare another drink, as:

CRAIGMORE

When I was young and I first started flying, I fancied I did it for all sorts of reasons - as one does. Your mind navigates to thoughts of the rolling expanse of nature below, of the crystal clarity of God's stratosphere, of the freedom of the human soul embodied in weightless flight - and so on and so forth... only to discover, looking back, I only loved flying to escape the people on the ground. We have such simple motives behind so many magical things in life, if we're brave enough to look clearly at ourselves. To be honest, I stopped flying when I finally realized why I was doing it. It did so take the magic out of things and make me feel like such a coward - and believe me, one doesn't often feel a coward at 30,000 feet above ground.

SANDRA smiles and hands MRS. CRAIGMORE the drink.

CRAIGMORE

Have a drink yourself before you go.

SANDRA nods and goes to the bar, where SHE pours HERSELF a quick drink.

CRAIGMORE

You may sit.

SANDRA sits and sips HER drink, as CRAIGMORE watches HER thoughtfully.

CRAIGMORE

How long have you been my secretary, Sandra?

SANDRA

Four years.

CRAIGMORE

I thought it was three.

SANDRA

Four years - in thirty-one days.

CRAIGMORE

I trust you in that, Sandra - as with everything - and even more than that, I appreciate you... thank you. Your loyalty means a great deal to me, even though I'm not one to acknowledge such things. I realize I can appear very standoffish, though I didn't use to be that way. There was a time it was different - but people, and times, both change... or perhaps "mature." I know I have not expressed my appreciation enough to you, but I do appreciate you - very much. After my husband died, you have been the one constant in my life - you and Ms. Gentry. I don't know what I would have done without you. You are the person I will miss most when I move to Scottsdale. I want to make sure you have this, to help until you find a new job.

CRAIGMORE has reached into a desk drawer and removed a thick envelope - clearly stuffed with money. SANDRA just stares lamely and doesn't move.

SANDRA

I told you, Mrs. Craigmore - I would move with you.

CRAIGMORE

That would be far more than I have a right to expect.

SANDRA

It's not a bother, it's...

CRAIGMORE

No, Sandra - it's time for a new chapter in life with some new characters in it. I sometimes wonder if you use me like I once used flying - to escape people.

SANDRA

You're a person.

CRAIGMORE

Of a sort, perhaps.

SANDRA

I don't want to leave you.

CRAIGMORE

(Ignoring this, extending the money.)
Here, this is for you - and so very well deserved.

SANDRA

(Disturbed, putting down the drink and rising.)
Can we please talk about this later?

CRAIGMORE

(Pointedly.)
No.

SANDRA
Why not?

CRAIGMORE
Mr. Vale was right.

SANDRA
About what?

CRAIGMORE
About my leaving next week for Scottsdale.

SANDRA
Oh.

CRAIGMORE
I changed my reservation so that I'm now leaving on Monday.

SANDRA
Monday?

CRAIGMORE
Mr. Vale will take care of my appointments for next week.

SANDRA
Mr. Vale?

CRAIGMORE
Yes - and as for Mr. Sulzberger's funeral, I'm afraid it will have to do without me. As Mr. Sulzberger is already deceased, I didn't expect it would offend him.

SANDRA
Mr. Vale will handle your appointments?

CRAIGMORE
I knew you would be distraught and I feel it is better to have a clean break, rather than force you to come back here all of next week. Take some time for yourself, Sandra. Go on a cruise, like I just did. Drive to the Catskills or the Poconos. Do something to get away from this house. It will do you good - and it will do me good also to know you are moving on.

SANDRA
Yes, but... but why did you...?

CRAIGMORE
There were many different reasons I decided to leave early. I knew it would upset you, but I also feel it is the right thing to do. I'm sorry it comes so abruptly for you. Again, I like clean breaks - clean landings, you might say - so let us together make this very clean indeed and remember the flight we both enjoyed together.

RING, RING! It's the phone again. At first, SANDRA doesn't seem to notice... RING, RING! Still, SHE doesn't move... RING, RING! CRAIGMORE coughs rather loudly, waking SANDRA from HER stupor. SHE goes to answer the phone, as if only half alive. SHE has become a ghost before our very eyes.

SANDRA

(As if having forgotten the normal, expected greeting.)
Hello.

(A beat - then to CRAIGMORE.)
It's Mr. Forrester.

CRAIGMORE

Thank you, Sandra - I will take this call in private, please.

SANDRA

In private?

CRAIGMORE

(Gesturing the way out.)
Please.

SANDRA nods absent-mindedly and makes for the exit. SHE completely lacks HER former vim and vigor, as if all the air has been drained out of HER. One senses CRAIGMORE is impatient with HER slow departure time - but then, just before SANDRA is about to exit...

CRAIGMORE

Oh, and Sandra - I won't need your services anymore tonight... thank you.

SANDRA

Thank you, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

Goodbye - and be well.

SANDRA painfully opens the hallway door and exits. We can sense CRAIGMORE shudder to HERSELF. We're not quite sure what SHE expected out of this exchange, but we sense SHE has found it taxing. Then again, perhaps SHE would have found anything involving any human emotion taxing. CRAIGMORE takes a deep breath - as if blowing any vestige of human emotion out from HER body - and turns HER attention to the telephone.

CRAIGMORE

(Into the phone.)

You were supposed to call earlier, Chuck - when no one else was here.

(A beat.)

I'm sure you did, Chuck - but then, I'm not paying you to adhere to your schedule. I would hope you have the self-discipline to manage that for yourself. Anyway, what's done is done... or should be... which brings us to Mr. Reiner. I told you what I learned from my contact at the magazine.

(Another beat.)

I'm 100% certain, Chuck - and with all the internal turmoil they're undergoing, this is the perfect time for him to cause mischief. There is an awful lot of rummaging through an awful lot of papers - and I do mean awful. I just know that's what Mr. Reiner is after. He's as interested in Amelia Earhart as I am in the politics of Indonesia.

(Another beat.)

I'm glad to hear it - because, if - or when - the article comes out, I expect swift action. I will be in Scottsdale by then and have no interest in having my new house swarmed by reporters. I trust you will be prepared. I want the piece immediately challenged and a lawsuit brought against the publisher. If you can't manage that, I'll find someone else who can - and for what I pay... I can.

Something prompts CRAIGMORE to look up.
SHE notices the hallway door is slightly ajar.

CRAIGMORE

(Into the phone, very carefully.)

Good, Chuck... very good... but now, if you excuse me, I really must go. We'll talk tomorrow.

CRAIGMORE hangs up the phone.

CRAIGMORE

Sandra?

Slowly, the hallway door opens, and SANDRA enters. SHE carries a large tote on HER arm.

CRAIGMORE

You were listening to my phone call.

SANDRA

I was waiting for you to end, so I could talk to you.

CRAIGMORE

There is nothing further that needs to be said.

SANDRA

You said you wanted a clean landing - which is what I want, too. I want... to come clean.

CRAIGMORE

"Come clean?"

SANDRA

I want you to know that I was the one who rummaged through your boxes when you were away.

CRAIGMORE

(Not interested in beginning any drama.)
Now, Sandra...

SANDRA

I didn't intend it to cause so much trouble - and it wouldn't, if I had re-sealed the boxes better.

CRAIGMORE

Please - don't.

SANDRA

I'm sorry, Mrs. Craigmore - really, I am!

CRAIGMORE

Honestly, Sandra - this is not exactly what I had in mind with a clean landing, throwing this confession my way at the last minute. I don't like messiness - I don't like problems - such that, even if I could have been a Catholic priest, the last place you would have found me is in the confessional. You might as well just have left and let it be. It would have been better that way, for both of us. Besides, I can't begin to imagine what would have possessed you to rummage through... papers... old papers at that... unless it's symptomatic of what is otherwise a sad obsession for me and my affairs.

SANDRA

(Mysteriously.)
I was looking for something.

CRAIGMORE

For God's sake, Sandra...

SANDRA

His, among others.

CRAIGMORE

What were you looking for?

SANDRA pauses, as if conscious SHE is about to cross a Rubicon over which there is no returning.

Well?
CRAIGMORE

SANDRA reaches into HER tote and takes out what seems like a large, folded piece of paper - clearly worn. SHE hands it to CRAIGMORE. CRAIGMORE unfolds the paper, revealing a large map of some sort of island.

A map?
CRAIGMORE

A map... of Gardner Island in the South Pacific.
SANDRA

(Having had enough of this.)
CRAIGMORE
Sandra, please - just go.

But Mrs. Craigmores...
SANDRA

I said go, Sandra.
CRAIGMORE

The forcefulness of this command stuns SANDRA for a moment. We sense HER perhaps waver again - and seemingly give in. SANDRA turns and makes to exit, but then stops... thinks... and turns... but CRAIGMORE doesn't notice. As if unable to bear the sight of SANDRA anymore, SHE has turned HER chair away from HER and reaches again for HER drink. SANDRA stares at CRAIGMORE for a moment.

(With great inner strength.)
SANDRA
I know who you are, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE quickly turns the chair back to face Sandra.

You're still here, Sandra.
CRAIGMORE

I said I know who you are - who you really are.
SANDRA

CRAIGMORE

I'm warning you, Sandra - I want you out of this house in ten seconds - you and Mr. Martino - or else...

SANDRA

I've known who you are for quite some time.

CRAIGMORE

I don't understand what you mean by that.

SANDRA

I think you do.

CRAIGMORE

Tell me, then - exactly who am I supposed to be?

SANDRA

(After a beat.)

You're... you're Amelia Earhart.

A loud pause descends upon the stage, as CRAIGMORE considers SANDRA for a moment.

CRAIGMORE

What did you say?

SANDRA

I said you are Amelia Earhart.

CRAIGMORE

I knew Amelia Earhart, Sandra - but besides that...

SANDRA

No, you are Amelia Earhart.

CRAIGMORE

This is not a time to joke.

SANDRA

I knew you were Amelia Earhart from the moment I met you. That's why I applied for the job here.

CRAIGMORE

You were interviewed by Mrs. Maseby, not I. You barely met with me during the interview process.

SANDRA

No, I met you before that - almost a year before, though I don't blame you for not remembering. It was at a meeting of the Early Flyers Club in Long Island. There was a celebration of Amelia Earhart's life. I was there when you spoke about her. I remember shaking your hand afterward, thrilled to be touching someone who was so close to Amelia Earhart and who knew her so well - and I

SANDRA (CONT)

remember looking into your eyes and it suddenly dawning on me who you were... so alike her... so much alike... so much so that when you posted that job for a secretary, I knew I had to apply for it and work for you.

CRAIGMORE

Sandra...

SANDRA

You don't have to lie to me, Mrs. Craigmore - not to me.

CRAIGMORE

You looked into my eyes, you said - and you just "knew."

SANDRA

God whispered to me and told me who you are.

CRAIGMORE

In that case, God made a terrible mistake.

SANDRA

God doesn't make mistakes.

CRAIGMORE

How can you say that? Just look at all the people He's created.

SANDRA

Please, Mrs. Craigmore - just tell me the truth.

CRAIGMORE

I will, Sandra - I'll tell you the truth - and the truth is that you are simply deluded... sad and deluded. I hate for our relationship to end like this - but it has to end.

SANDRA

I'm not finished.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, Sandra - you are.

SANDRA

I'm sorry, I know I'm not delivering this well. I had wanted to do this better and more planned before you left - but now that you're leaving on Monday, I have no choice.

CRAIGMORE has taken HER hand and surreptitiously reached under HER desk to press a large red button.

SANDRA

The button doesn't work, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

(Dread washing over HER.)

What?

SANDRA

I cut the wire before coming back to the room.

CRAIGMORE

(Backing up the chair in fear.)

You did what?

SANDRA

Please, Mrs. Craigmore - I would never dream of hurting you... but then I don't want you to hurt me. I know how private you are and I know this would be hard for you, as it is for me. I need to be able to have my say. I have that right after working for you so long and I deserve to know the truth.

CRAIGMORE

Amelia Earhart died over thirty years ago during the last leg of her around-the-world tour when her Lockheed Electra ran out of fuel and plummeted into the Pacific Ocean.

SANDRA

That's not how we see it.

CRAIGMORE

By "we", I suppose you mean you and God - your favorite companion.

SANDRA

I do, in part - but more besides, including a number of other people.

CRAIGMORE

I see - but then again, madness is often found in crowds.

SANDRA

Not these crowds, Mrs. Craigmore - because they include people beyond repute. You remember Joe Glossier - aviator and former air force fighter pilot. He spoke also at that event in Long Island and he knows who you are, too. He has friends who worked in the wartime Office of Strategic Services - friends who know things. Amelia Earhart's plane didn't plummet into the Pacific Ocean. That was a ruse by the United States government, designed to launch a rescue operation in the South Pacific so we could see whether the Japanese were arming the Marshall Islands for a potential invasion of California. Your disappearance - the disappearance of a woman of international renown - was an excuse to allow our ships to enter those waters and spy on the Japanese. Even the weather report of the time - the claim that there was bad weather that prevented you from landing at your next stop - was faked. The bad weather wasn't observed by anyone other than a single pilot who was sent out to search for you and

SANDRA (CONT)

who was told to make a fake report. Your plane didn't plummet into the ocean. You landed on a nearby island - probably Gardner Island. That was the plan all along - to land on the island, so the United States government could search for you - which they did - and then rescue you - which they didn't.

CRAIGMORE

And why didn't they "rescue" me?

SANDRA

Because the Japanese got to you first - and from there, I don't know... but you probably spent the war in a Japanese prison camp, like so many American soldiers.

CRAIGMORE

In all this, you forget that Amelia Earhart was accompanied by a navigator - so I suppose he magically survived, as well, and is living happily in a condo in Mahwah.

SANDRA

We've looked for Fred Noonan, but haven't found him - so we presume he is long dead. It's just as likely he was executed by the Japanese - as you could have been, but you weren't. There are even islanders in Majuro in the Marshall Islands who recall seeing a woman who looked like Amelia Earhart and a man who looked like Fred Noonan in Japanese custody before the war. Joe Glossier traveled to the Marshall Islands and interviewed them a few years ago - six people in total. He has everything on tape - including a recording of a former colonel in the US Army who says he saw Amelia Earhart with American forces in Manila shortly after the Japanese surrender.

CRAIGMORE

I see - and this island landing theory of yours is where your rummaging through my bags comes into play and your obsession over this old map of Gardner Island.

SANDRA

Yes, Mrs. Craigmores - because I remember catching a glimpse of the map before and wanted it... as evidence.

CRAIGMORE

It didn't occur to you that my husband was a flyer during the war and that this map is one of his papers.

SANDRA

The map was included with your papers.

CRAIGMORE

When you're married, Sandra, things tend to combine.

SANDRA

It's not only that, but it's also about what's on the map.

CRAIGMORE

The map shows a small island with a few small airfields.

SANDRA

Exactly - airfields!

CRAIGMORE

Which makes sense for someone who was a pilot.

SANDRA

Not for this island.

CRAIGMORE

Oh, Sandra? Why? Why?

SANDRA

Because Gardner Island doesn't have any airfields.

CRAIGMORE

Sandra...

SANDRA

There are no airfields on Gardner Island - and yet the map marks places to land. Why would there be a map of Gardner Island in your possession? Why would your husband even have a map for a strategically unimportant island that made no contribution to the war effort? Why would the map mark areas to land where there are no landing fields - unless the landing was meant to look like an emergency landing?

CRAIGMORE

More importantly, why, in the name of God - if you'll excuse the name-dropping - even if Amelia Earhart did survive, why would she return with a fake identity?

SANDRA

I can only imagine, Mrs. Craigmores - but then, spending years in a Japanese prison camp... whatever you must have endured there... It must have been harrowing for you. No wonder you are so reserved, so private, so controlled. Perhaps that's why you insist on your street being patrolled. Perhaps that's why you installed your emergency button. Who could blame you for wanting to return home to a quiet life?

CRAIGMORE

Quiet life? You saw my schedule for next week!

SANDRA

You hide in plain sight, Mrs. Craigmores - like a clue that's too obvious to be a clue. No one tries to know you because you're everywhere and so people think they do know you - but they

SANDRA (CONT)

don't... not really. You speak to well-wishers behind a lectern or a dinner table or some other fog of formality - and that's all you do have... just "well-wishers." You have no photographs of your family or friends on the walls or on your tables. You have no family to speak of - no brother, sister, cousin, aunt, or anything in-between. You even married a man who was isolated from his own family. Why is that? You have no friends - except Ms. Gentry - and she was Amelia Earhart's best friend. It makes sense she's the one person who knows who you are and has stayed silent out of loyalty.

CRAIGMORE

So I come back to America - and what, Sandra... invent a new identity for myself?

SANDRA

No - you stole someone's identity.

CRAIGMORE

Ah - I'm a thief, as well, I see.

SANDRA

You stole the identity of Aileen Kosterman.

CRAIGMORE

Now we come full circle, because I am Aileen Kosterman.

SANDRA

No...

CRAIGMORE

Don't tell me no, Sandra.

SANDRA

You were all very close - you, Aileen Kosterman, and Ms. Gentry. You must have admired Aileen very much to take her identity when you returned from the war - but aided by the United States government, that's what you did - and you lived with her name until you married your husband. That explains why there are hardly any photographs of you before twenty years ago. The photograph on the wall is one of the few exceptions - and there Aileen Kosterman's face is blocked by a shadow. That's one of the few images of Aileen Kosterman before the war. We even checked newspaper clippings from Cortland.

CRAIGMORE

Cortland?

SANDRA

Nebraska. That's where Aileen Kosterman grew up, wasn't it?

CRAIGMORE

You mean, that's where I grew up.

SANDRA

And lived until you went to college.

CRAIGMORE

And lived until I went to college.

SANDRA

And then after college?

CRAIGMORE

I moved to New York - to Ardley.

SANDRA

There are no records of you in Ardley.

CRAIGMORE

Since when do they even keep records in Ardley?

SANDRA

I checked and I can't find any records of you anywhere in Ardley - or anywhere else in Westchester County - until October, 1946 when you got that job at the bank.

CRAIGMORE

The problem with conspiracies, Sandra, is that they are like oranges rolling downhill - constantly picking up speed until, in the end, they splatter fantastically.

SANDRA

Aileen Kosterman was never in Ardley.

CRAIGMORE

Even the idea that the United States government would assist in such a farce...

SANDRA

They did - because you did them a service and you wanted your privacy... and...

CRAIGMORE

And?

SANDRA

Because of the Russians.

CRAIGMORE

Ah, it was only a matter of time before they showed up.

SANDRA

The Cold War was starting and Japan was an important ally against the Russians and the Chinese. It wouldn't look good to trot out the imprisonment and abuse of Amelia Earhart at the hands of the Japanese authorities.

CRAIGMORE

You have an answer for everything, don't you?!

SANDRA

I have more answers for my story than you have for yours.

RING, RING! CRAIGMORE and SANDRA freeze suddenly, as if this intrusive sound has completely disoriented their universe. For a moment, THEY both stare at the phone. RING, RING! Then, like leopards in heat, THEY both dive for the phone at the same time. SANDRA answers it first - although "answers" is only a half-truth. SHE has just picked it up. SHE and CRAIGMORE stare at EACH OTHER for a moment. A FAINT VOICE is heard from the other end of the phone. SANDRA puts the phone to HER ear and cautiously answers.

SANDRA

(Into the phone, as if now finding it difficult to utter the name "Craigmore.")
Mrs. Craigmore's residence.
(A beat.)
Hello, Ms. Gentry.

CRAIGMORE noticeably perks up in HER seat.

SANDRA

(Into the phone.)
No, I'm afraid Mrs. Craigmore isn't here right now.

We can sense CRAIGMORE is about to leap across the desk and grab the phone. SANDRA seems to sense this and steps backward.

SANDRA

(Into the phone.)
I'm not sure when she'll be back, but will ask her to give you a call.

We see defeat flood over CRAIGMORE's face.

SANDRA

Of course - always happy to help.

SANDRA is about to remove the phone from HER ear when we see a thought possess HER.

SANDRA

Just one more thing, Ms. Gentry...

(A beat.)

I know who she is.

(A beat.)

I said - I know who she is.

An unbearable pause hangs pendulously
in the air, broken by...

SANDRA

She hung up.

SANDRA returns the phone to the
receiver.

SANDRA

(Ironically.)

Odd - she never asked me who I thought you were.

CRAIGMORE

Probably because she was frightened by a certain madness in your
voice.

SANDRA

No - I don't think so. I think Ms. Gentry knows exactly who I
think you are, because she knows who you are. God knows who you
really are, as well. You can't be anyone other than who and what
you are, no matter how hard you try.

CRAIGMORE

There you go, Sandra - your God this and your God that. You talk
about God and then you freely break His commandments. "Thou
shalt not lie" is the phrase I recall from Sunday school. You
told Ms. Gentry I was out of the house.

SANDRA

I told her Mrs. Craigmore was out of the house.

CRAIGMORE

Let me be clear, Sandra - and then you may leave - as in leave
me alone! I am not Amelia Earhart. I have never been Amelia
Earhart. Save some miracle from God - in whom I don't believe
anyway - I will never be Amelia Earhart. I have been, I am now,
and I forever will be Aileen Kosterman. That's who I was born
and that is how I will die - my husband's surname excluded. Now
that we've established my identity, let us turn to yours - of
which I thought I knew much, but now discover I know so little.
I look at you now and I don't know who you are. I thought I did,
but clearly I don't. Still, I do know what you are - because
that is even clearer to me than it's ever been. Are you deluded?
Most definitely. Are you mentally disturbed? Most likely. Are
you simply stupid or malicious? Perhaps. But there is one thing

CRAIGMORE (CONT)

above all of which I have God-like assurance and that is that you are inexcusably, insanelly, and tragically wrong. Even worse than that, you are a disappointment to me. For almost four years, I misjudged you terribly. In doing so, I feel I have somehow misjudged myself. That is the most painful part of all and the crippling legacy you leave behind.

(Pointing majestically to the exit.)

Now, Sandra - I want you out of my house.

SANDRA just stares and doesn't move.

CRAIGMORE

I said - I want you out of my house.

SANDRA still doesn't move.

CRAIGMORE

Sandra... get out!

SANDRA

You are Amelia Earhart.

CRAIGMORE

I'm warning you, Sandra...

SANDRA

You can't hide it from me.

CRAIGMORE

I'm Aileen Kosterman.

SANDRA

No, you're not.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, I am!

SANDRA

No, you're not.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, I am!

SANDRA

No, you're not!

CRAIGMORE

You're insane!

SANDRA

Aileen Kosterman is dead!

CRAIGMORE

I most certainly am not!

SANDRA

Aileen Kosterman died almost thirty years ago in a car accident in Sterling, Nebraska!

CRAIGMORE

Sandra!!

SANDRA

You returned from wherever you were living at the time, maybe to see family, maybe to see friends - and you died in a car accident! Sterling, Nebraska is only twenty miles to the east of Cortland! Ailene Kosterman died there in a car accident on July 8th, 1932!

(Pulling old newspaper clippings out of HER tote.)

I have newspaper clippings!

CRAIGMORE

(Recoiling from the sight, as if a vampire seeing garlic.)
Oh, my God!

SANDRA

(Reading a clipping.)

"Death of local female pilot..."

CRAIGMORE

Stop it, Sandra!

SANDRA

(Reading a clipping.)

"On Thursday, July 8th, local police reported..."

CRAIGMORE

It could have been another Aileen Kosterman!

SANDRA

In Johnson County, Nebraska - population 9,000?

CRAIGMORE

People have cars and people travel!

SANDRA

People who spell "Aileen" with A-I?

CRAIGMORE

Stop it, Sandra - stop, stop, stop!!

CRAIGMORE is now violently pounding the desk in front of HER - unable to bear anymore. SANDRA reaches into HER tote bag and, with one great swing of HER arms, brings a tape recorder down onto

the desk in front of CRAIGMORE. HER actions seem as artfully choreographed as any ballet dance. SANDRA presses a button on the tape recorder. A LOUD, STATIC-RIDDEN RECORDING plays with SANDRA'S VOICE and with an unidentified MALE VOICE. The MALE VOICE seems shaky and in pain.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

Please state your name.

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

I am Monsignor Joseph J. McClanahan.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

What is today's date?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

Today is Tuesday, August 6th, 1968.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

Where am I interviewing you?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

At my house, in Arvada, Colorado.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

Please state a little about your background.

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

I'm retired now, but I was pastor of The Church of the Resurrection in Rumson, New Jersey for many years. Before that, I was President of St. Mary's College in Somerset for twenty years - before it became St. Mary's University. I was also President of the New Jersey Association of Colleges and Universities in the late 1940s. I am a trained psychologist with a doctorate from the University of Louvain.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

Did you ever know Amelia Earhart?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

Yes, I knew her, and I still do.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

You still do? Is she still alive?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

Yes, she is - but not under her real name.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

How do you know that?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

Because I helped repatriate her from Japan after the war.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

Please tell me how that happened.

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

I was very close to Archbishop Spellman.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

Francis Joseph Spellman, Archbishop of New York?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

That is correct - and I also knew His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, from when I was ordained a priest in Belgium in 1929. I taught him how to speak English.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

Go on.

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

I was appointed by Archbishop Spellman to work with the American government and repatriate Amelia Earhart in secret back to the United States after the war.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

Why would Archbishop Spellman ask that of you?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

Archbishop Spellman was appointed by His Holiness as the Apostolic Vicar for the United States Armed Forces, responsible for working with the military.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

What exactly were you commanded to do?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

I was commanded to go to where Amelia Earhart was being held in Japan and bring her back home and, in the process, help her transition into a new identity.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

Where does Amelia Earhart live now?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

She lives in Scarsdale, New York.

SANDRA'S VOICE (FILTERED)

What name does she go under?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

She now goes by Aileen Craigmores.

SANDRA's VOICE (FILTERED)

How was that name chosen?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

She was an actual woman who died many years before. Her identity was used because she would have a track record of birth, college, and so forth - should there be any questions. She only had two living relatives - two distant cousins - and they were both given a great deal of money by the government. They're both dead now.

SANDRA's VOICE (FILTERED)

Did you keep in touch with Aileen Craigmores?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

Yes, for many years I was her pastor - until I moved to Colorado three years ago.

SANDRA's VOICE (FILTERED)

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

Only that it's a pity her mother and sister never knew she survived.

CLICK! SANDRA presses a button and stops the tape recorder.

SANDRA

Monsignor McClanahan died two months ago. He was ill with cancer then, but he gave me this final interview. You attended his church in Rumson sometimes - didn't you? I remember meeting him once or twice when I first came to work for you.

CRAIGMORE scoffs and shakes HER head angrily.

CRAIGMORE

You are a fool, Sandra.

SANDRA

You heard the tape, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

Do you know who Monsignor McClanahan is?

SANDRA

I know he was respected by Archbishop Spellman and that...

CRAIGMORE

He was a liar - always a liar! You're right - I attended his church in Rumson for a while - too long, in fact - because he was such a fraud. He was also a fanciful braggart - claiming to know this person and that. I'm sure he taught the Pope English

CRAIGMORE (CONT)

and Chiang Kai-shek French. He didn't just leave the church in Rumson. He was thrown out. He was thrown out and fled to Colorado because he was stealing from the offering and diddling little altar boys. There you have it... a dying man... living an isolated life in Arvada, of all places... trying to make a name for himself on his deathbed and just happy some semi-decent person is even condescending to talk to him! I can just imagine what leading questions you used to guide him in his answers. You have proven nothing, except your own desperation!

CRAIGMORE makes to grab the tape recorder, as if to toss it away - but SANDRA swiftly snatches it instead. Just then - KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK! A sudden pause descends upon the stage as CRAIGMORE and SANDRA register the sound. A look of relief crosses CRAIGMORE's face, not unlike that you would see from a hostage when the police arrive on the scene.

CRAIGMORE

("Aren't you going to get it?")
It's the door, Sandra.

SANDRA just stares, as... KNOCK, KNOCK!

CRAIGMORE

I'll get it.

CRAIGMORE starts to rise, but SANDRA backs up against the door to the hallway reflexively, as if to block it.

VALE's VOICE

Mrs. Craigmores?

CRAIGMORE

Thank God - Mr. Vale!

The hallway door opens and VALE enters again with his briefcase.

VALE

I thought the door would be locked at this time of night.

CRAIGMORE

Fortunately, no - and with that, we are very glad to see you.

VALE

(Noticing SANDRA looking glum.)
Are we?

CRAIGMORE

Yes, we are.

VALE

Well, I came back because I forgot to get your signature on the agreement with the bank, especially since you'll be...

VALE peers cautiously at SANDRA.

CRAIGMORE

Leaving on Monday.

VALE

Alas, it is so.

CRAIGMORE

Sandra knows and has taken it rather poorly.

VALE

Ah, well - that is not entirely unexpected.

CRAIGMORE

I will sign the paper now, Mr. Vale - and then, if you would, please drive both Sandra and Mr. Martino home. Sandra was going to drive him, but it turns out neither is in a fit state right now. I wouldn't want anything to happen to them - certainly, not a car accident...

(Eyeing SANDRA.)

...in Sterling or elsewhere.

VALE surveys the scene oddly. HE then reaches into HIS briefcase, withdraws a piece of paper, hands it to CRAIGMORE, and SHE signs. The silence is extremely uncomfortable and seems to be prolonged with a rather long signature on CRAIGMORE's part. SHE then hands the paper back to VALE, who puts it back in the briefcase.

VALE

(Looking over at SANDRA.)

I have another matter to discuss... in private.

CRAIGMORE

Please, Sandra - get your coat and wait for Mr. Vale.

Deflated - or perhaps simply unsure what to do - SANDRA pauses, but then obeys. SHE puts the tape recorder in HER tote and exits the room, as if an invisible force were slowly pushing HER towards the exit. The hallway door closes with great finality. VALE is

about to speak, but CRAIGMORE motions HIM to speak softly.

VALE

You seem a bit... perturbed.

CRAIGMORE

"A bit" would be an understatement.

VALE

It seems I really should have had the medics on standby - but perhaps not for Sandra.

CRAIGMORE

Let us say it has been a rather unpleasant experience, but one that shall very soon be ending.

VALE

Indeed, so it shall... Mrs. Earhart.

CRAIGMORE's face falls about a thousand feet through the floor. VALE grins wildly and plops HIMSELF down on a chair perhaps a little too comfortably. THEY stare at EACH OTHER for a moment.

CRAIGMORE

You know?

VALE

She told me - when you were on your cruise.

CRAIGMORE

I can't believe this.

VALE

It was after her fifth or sixth drink, as I recall.

CRAIGMORE

I would have thought that could have only improved her.

VALE

Granted, it was a fool's errand, taking her out - but she did rather insist. I couldn't think of an excuse quickly enough to say "no." Where are those annoying visits by relatives when you really need them?

CRAIGMORE

So you know, Mr. Vale - but do you believe?

VALE

Believe - like, in God?

CRAIGMORE

You know what I mean.

VALE

Ohhh, I don't know.

CRAIGMORE

You don't know?

VALE

Perhaps it's more that I don't care about the name on the checks, as long as they don't bounce.

CRAIGMORE

I sense that you're enjoying this, Mr. Vale.

VALE

You have to admit, it's all rather amusing.

CRAIGMORE

For you, perhaps.

VALE

For me, of course! When I speak, I do tend to speak for myself, as opposed to speaking for other people. I consider that an unfair and uncompensated use of my vocal cords. Yes, Sandra sat me down at Rizzuto's on Park Street one night and told me that you were - and still are - Amelia Earhart. She also told me about the group of people who believe it along with her - the air force colonel and the psychology professor and someone else who works in the Pentagon. They have phone calls every Monday - did you know that? That explains why Sandra always made sure to leave before eleven on Monday! Here I thought it was because she'd turn into a pumpkin! Anyway, they have this phone call at midnight every Monday and they spend it talking about you. Eerie feeling, I must say - the idea that a few nutjobs are whispering on their phones about you in the dark of the night. They even meet together once a quarter. The last time was this past summer in Philly. She told me all about that - right down to the name of the hotel - which I have since forgotten. I figure Sandra would have to tell you everything tonight in light of the revelation of your hasty departure.

CRAIGMORE

Hasty?

VALE

You're leaving because of Ben Reiner, of course.

An exhausted CRAIGMORE just waves HER hand dismissively. SHE sits back in HER chair. Perhaps SHE hopes there is no back to it and SHE will be sucked into a void far from this time and place.

VALE

Now, I confess I made a little bet with myself when I was returning to the house. I thought "How far has Sandra gotten with her story in these past twenty minutes?" She gave me an earful in two hours - but twenty minutes? Granted, the good thing about betting with yourself is that you're assured to win either way - but it's enjoyable all the same. So I thought about it and I think I know the answer, so let's see!

CRAIGMORE

Let's not.

VALE

Obviously, she told you that you're really Amelia Earhart and that you didn't really crash into the Pacific Ocean and that the whole thing was a ruse by the United States government to...

CRAIGMORE

Yes.

VALE

All right - and I also suppose she got through the bit about how you were found by the Japanese and likely imprisoned and then rescued after the war and given a new identity, also by the...

CRAIGMORE

Yes.

VALE

Okay, good - and I also, also suppose she explained that you took the identity of a personal friend of Amelia Earhart's, Aileen Kosterman - perhaps as some tribute to the old chum and aided by the fact that the Kosterman family is about as small as Sandra's social circle - but that, in fact, you cannot really be Aileen Kosterman, because Aileen Kosterman died in a car accident in Sterling, Nebraska on July 9th, 1932.

CRAIGMORE

July 8th.

VALE

(Pointing at HER, in mock accusatory fashion.)

Aha!

CRAIGMORE

I listen closely.

VALE

Indeed you do - so just to recap... Sandra told you that Amelia Earhart didn't really die in the Pacific, that she was imprisoned by the Japs, that she came back to the States, that she - or you - took the name of Aileen Kosterman, that the real Aileen Kosterman died in a car accident... the mention of which was presumably complemented by news clippings?

CRAIGMORE

She started to read a few, yes.

VALE

Glorious - and did she also show you her vintage copy of the class yearbook from Cortland High School - 1916 - where there's a picture of the graduating class and there in the back row, towering over everyone else and identified clearly by the nearby legend, is Aileen Kosterman - a young woman with black hair who looks absolutely nothing like you?

CRAIGMORE just stares at VALE glumly.

VALE

I see she didn't get to that part yet.

CRAIGMORE

No, she did not.

VALE

Now, I will admit - that bit got me thinking.

CRAIGMORE

I recommend you had best not think anything at all.

VALE

Perhaps not - and besides, Sandra didn't get as far as I thought, so I owe myself \$100.

(Suddenly.)

Did she get to the dying Monsignor?

CRAIGMORE

Yes.

VALE

Okay, well... there's still more.

CRAIGMORE

For the record, my hair was dark brown, not black.

VALE

Ah, well, it certainly looks black in the picture.

CRAIGMORE

Also, the photographer made me stand on a riser - which didn't make sense, as I was already taller than the others.

VALE

Unfortunate, then, that, of the few yearbooks that even had pictures in 1916, you got a bad photographer.

VALE looks at CRAIGMORE mysteriously - or, indeed, mischievously. SHE stares back at HIM for a moment, unsure of

whether to ask HIM what else lies in store. SHE soon decides against that approach.

CRAIGMORE

I think it is time for you to leave, Mr. Vale.

VALE

You mean time for Sandra and the drunk handyman to leave.

CRAIGMORE

I think you and I both know what I mean.

VALE

Oh, I think we're past a world of presuming.

CRAIGMORE

Explain, Mr. Vale.

VALE

Well, you're apparently Amelia Earhart, Sandra is even loonier than either of us thought, and me...

CRAIGMORE

Goodnight, Mr. Vale.

VALE

Look, there's no need to rush things.

CRAIGMORE

"Rush," things?

VALE

Yes - after all, the night is young.

CRAIGMORE

Do you think this is funny, Mr. Vale?

VALE

Funny "ha-ha" or funny as in "funny?"

CRAIGMORE

Look, Mr. Vale...

VALE

I merely ask for clarification, because my answer would be different based on it.

CRAIGMORE

For God's sake - this insane, deluded woman cut the wire of my emergency button.

VALE

I admit that's a bit suspicious.

CRAIGMORE

It's more than that, it's...

VALE

What's it like, Mrs. Craigmore?

CRAIGMORE

What is what like, Mr. Vale?

VALE

Being able to be whoever you want to be - on your own time, on your own terms.

CRAIGMORE

What are you saying, Mr. Vale?

VALE

I'm not saying - I'm asking.

CRAIGMORE

Then you're asking a ridiculous question.

VALE

No, I'm not at all - because I'm not presuming you are Amelia Earhart or anything... but this whole matter of who you are - or even who Sandra is - or, hell, who any of us are - does rather get me to wondering... What's it like to be able to choose who you are? What if you were Amelia Earhart - just presuming, that is? What if you truly were Amelia Reborn? It's technically possible, if what Sandra says is true. The United States government has done crazier things than switch a famous woman's identity. Also, never mind Aileen Kosterman - whoever she is. You could have come back and chosen to be anyone. You could have chosen to be Doris or Daisy or Deidre or Dana. You could have chosen to come from Iowa or Connecticut or Florida or Utah. You could have chosen to dress rich and sound smart and get invited to all the cocktail parties or you could have chosen to wear glasses and read books and lecture on the subtextual references in Elliot's verse. What's more, everyone would recognize you as whoever you made yourself to be. You could walk into a store and say "This is who I am!" and it'd be "Hi, Phyllis, the "philosophess" from Philly!" Yes, indeed - that's who you'd be. Now me, if I walk into a store - or your bank, dare I say - I'm always a Black man... but you? You could be a different person every day of every week.

The hallway door opens abruptly and SANDRA enters, again carrying HER tote.

CRAIGMORE

Impeccable timing, Sandra - Mr. Vale was just leaving.

VALE

Ah, indeed, yes - I do see it is rather that time again.

CRAIGMORE

(To SANDRA.)
Mr. Martino is ready to depart?

SANDRA

(Having regained some gumption.)
I don't need to go with Mr. Vale, Mrs. Craigmore. I'm perfectly capable of driving Mr. Martino and myself home tonight.

CRAIGMORE

I don't think that would be a good idea.

VALE

I must say, Sandra seems perfectly well to me.

CRAIGMORE

(Giving HIM a death glare.)
Mr. Vale...

VALE

You're not in distress - are you, Sandra?

SANDRA

No, Mr. Vale.

VALE

Well, there you go.

CRAIGMORE

Nonetheless, I feel...

VALE

Besides, I wouldn't want to interrupt your conversation.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, but...

VALE

I'll leave you to it, then!

(To SANDRA.)

Goodnight, Sandra.

(To CRAIGMORE.)

Goodnight, Mrs... eh...

VALE gives a vague gesture with HIS hands and exits out the hallway door. A moment later, the FRONT DOOR of the house OPENS and CLOSES, as VALE departs the house. The CLOSE of the door resonates like a thunderclap.

CRAIGMORE

So... you told Mr. Vale.

SANDRA

Yes.

CRAIGMORE

You told him about this nonsense.

SANDRA

I told him who you really are.

CRAIGMORE

Did you... tell anyone else?

SANDRA just stares at HER.

CRAIGMORE

Did you tell anyone else?

SANDRA still just stares.

CRAIGMORE

Sandra, I'll ask again...

SANDRA

Do you believe in fate, Mrs. Craigmore?

CRAIGMORE

I believe in choices, Sandra - like your choice now, to be honest or to deceive.

SANDRA

Well, I do believe in fate - guided by God, though other people may think it's someone or something else. Still, I can't help but feel there's this pull in the universe - like the tide pulls the moon - even if it terrifies us or we don't even know where we're being pulled. I sometimes wonder if this moment now with you is some great, final pull in my life - some great wave that's swept me out to a far shore - some realignment of place that puts me where I was meant to be. It is not easy for you to go through all this tonight, I know - but believe me when I say it isn't easy for me either.

CRAIGMORE

Somehow that provides little comfort to me.

SANDRA

You know, it wasn't until I was twenty that I learned "Sandra" is short for "Cassandra." I suppose you know this, but Cassandra was the Trojan priestess in Greek mythology condemned by the god Apollo to know the truth but never be believed. Eventually, she became mad from it all and tore out her hair. I don't know if that is my fate or not, but I do know the truth about you. There is perhaps one fate that would have been worse for Cassandra than the one she was given - and that's, through fear, she never tried to say anything at all.

CRAIGMORE

(Ironically.)
I truly feel for you, Sandra.

SANDRA

I don't expect you to feel anything, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

Then there's that, Sandra - calling me "Mrs. Craigmore" when I'm apparently Amelia Earhart. You believe I'm someone else and yet you don't even call me what you believe I am. Perhaps somewhere, someway, in the back of that mind of yours - or what's left of it - you know the truth. You know that you're suffering from some mental mirage and that your thoughts have been taken over by... something. I don't know what, Sandra - but you should have some idea, shouldn't you? You believe in demons, I presume? You believe in Jesus exorcising them from bodies? Maybe, just maybe, there's a demon inside of you, suffocating the part of you that's still sane and maybe, just maybe the sane part peeps its head out of its prison window now and then to make itself known before the demon comes and...

(BANG on the desk.)

...swats it inside again!

SANDRA

Calling you "Mrs. Craigmore" is a hard habit to break

CRAIGMORE

I was expecting a better explanation than that - since you seem to have an explanation for everything else.

SANDRA

I do have an explanation, but you wouldn't like it.

CRAIGMORE

I appreciate that you suddenly care about my feelings.

SANDRA

I call you "Mrs. Craigmore" out of respect.

CRAIGMORE

Respect!

SANDRA

Because it's what you want to be called.

CRAIGMORE

That is good of you.

SANDRA

(Quickly adding.)
...but that doesn't make you anything other than who you are. Words can't change that. Belief can't change that. A listing in

SANDRA (CONT)

"Who's Who" can't change that. Even the United States government can't change that.

CRAIGMORE

I am myself always, Sandra - because I make myself what I am each and every day of my life. The same goes for you, for me, for everyone else in the world who are actually thinking, breathing, independent persons. We decide who we are and that is something the rest of the world must accept.

SANDRA

That's where you're wrong, Mrs. Craigmore - because God makes us who we are and we can't change that. It doesn't matter how many coats of paint you lay on top of yourself. There's still something underneath it all that's unchanging - and that's the part that God made and that God owns.

CRAIGMORE

God again!

SANDRA

Yes - and again and again.

CRAIGMORE

I'm sorry, Sandra - God doesn't own any of this body.

SANDRA

That is not your body, Mrs. Craigmore - it is God's body and your soul is renting it... and what's more, you're behind on your rent! We all are - but God lets us stay there anyway. That's His mercy. The least we can do is give Him the respect of honoring the home He's allowed us.

CRAIGMORE

In that case, Sandra - what is your home exactly? We've talked a great deal about me - who I am - or who you think I am - or who you think I think I am - but not about you. Where were you born? Where's your high school yearbook? What maps are in your desk drawer and where exactly do they lead? You're so obsessed with my life - or Amelia Earhart's life - or both of our lives - but your life? What is it? Where is it? Could it be you're so obsessed with me because your own miserable life is so horrifyingly empty that you can't bear to look down another darkened hallway and so you distract yourself by peeping endlessly into other people's homes - turning on every light switch you can find, examining every picture on the wall, dissecting every little crack on the ceiling?

SANDRA

My life is full, because of Him.

CRAIGMORE

The old refrain of every cowed housewife.

SANDRA

I am not cowed.

CRAIGMORE

Then what are you?

SANDRA

I am who God made me to be.

CRAIGMORE

That is the most frightening part of all.

SANDRA

It is only frightening if you don't embrace it.

CRAIGMORE

Go forth and embrace it, then - but frankly, who cares? Who cares if you are true to who you think God made you to be? Who cares if you think someone else is not? You stand there obsessed about who I am and you declare yourself some latter-day prophet, compelled to seek the truth... but why? Why even bother to tell the truth - especially when it doesn't matter? If you believe I'm Amelia Earhart, then what's the point? What does it benefit you? What does it benefit me? What does it benefit anyone else in this big, problem-filled world of ours? Why do you feel compelled to harass me about this?!

SANDRA

Because it's the truth.

CRAIGMORE

You need a better reason than that.

SANDRA

Do I?

CRAIGMORE

Yes - you do! Even if I were Amelia Earhart - which I'm not - what is the point of this exposition? Nobody does anything for the sake of truth - myself included. We'd be fools if we did. We are people, Sandra - and people need a reason for doing something - a reason that benefits them - a reason that fulfills a need of their own. That's what makes us do what we do and think what we think and speak what we speak. I say again - no one does anything for the pure sake of truth. The fact you claim to do so is simply another sign of your delusion. This is a blatant reality of the human condition. You call it "original sin", don't you? Well, that's where we diverge - because I'm not prepared to say it is sinful. It - like the rest of the world - just is what it is what it is. There is no right or wrong in it - there is only reality - like the grass being green and the clouds being white. No one cares otherwise unless it gets in the way of our own pleasure. The world is nothing but a void of blind, pitiless indifference. So let me ask you again - why do

CRAIGMORE (CONT)

you care so much about who I am? It isn't because you care about "the truth" but because there's something sick and selfish inside of you that seeks to benefit from tormenting me! Maybe it's to stroke your ego that you above all others have "found" Amelia Earhart. Maybe it's because you want to sell this sordid tale to some publisher and see your name in print. Maybe it's because you're a demented sadist who enjoys spreading chaos and pain in other people's lives. I don't know - but whatever it is, it is deep inside of you and you alone! It is not some inner light propelling you to the truth or some light whisper from an oddly distant almighty! You are just another ugly knot of selfishness and corruption, like all the rest of us - but you're just jealous, because we do it better!

A thunderous pause descends upon the stage, as SANDRA considers CRAIGMORE for a moment. It seems SHE is processing something in HER mind. The pause continues - until...

SANDRA

Yes.

CRAIGMORE

Yes what?

SANDRA

That's the answer to your question before.

CRAIG

My question?

SANDRA

You asked me if I told anyone else, besides Mr. Vale.

CRAIGMORE

(Dreading the answer.)

Who, then? Who did you tell?

SANDRA just stares, as if questioning whether SHE should be so forward - but then some force inside compels HER to speak.

SANDRA

Ben Reiner.

CRAIGMORE

(Repeating lifelessly.)

Ben Reiner.

SANDRA

Yes.

CRAIGMORE

You told Ben Reiner about this... this... drivel?!

SANDRA

I'm sorry, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

How could you, Sandra?!

SANDRA

I'm sorry, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

How could you do this to me?!

SANDRA

(Maybe third time's the charm.)

I'm sorry!

CRAIGMORE

Do you know who Ben Reiner is - do you?

SANDRA

I know, I know, but...

CRAIGMORE

Is that what he wants to interview me about?

SANDRA

I don't know, but...

CRAIGMORE

You don't know! You know everything else, it seems, but not the consequences of your own selfishness and stupidity! Reiner and that damn newspaper have always been after me - always! When I ran the magazine, every little wrinkle in every little report was peeled back to see what scandal lived in the fold! A newsroom full of men who couldn't stand the fact that a woman was running a magazine rather than just reading one! For years and years, I tip-toed, tap-danced, and waltzed around a parade of fools at *The Post* and now this... this! Here I was thinking Ben Reiner wanted to interview me about some old scandal at the magazine long gone and buried... but no... no... no! Now he has this story tucked in his back pocket! I can't believe it! Someone who I thought was loyal - someone who I thought I could trust - has gone and stabbed me in the front!

SANDRA

Oh, Mrs. Craigmore...

CRAIGMORE rises in fury.

CRAIGMORE

What could have possessed you to talk to him, Sandra!?

SANDRA

He stopped by the house when you were on your cruise and...

CRAIGMORE

That explains why he's been calling so relentlessly this week!

SANDRA

He stopped by and I didn't even know who he was at first and I answered the door and I told him you were away - but he was very persistent and he seemed like such a nice man and...

CRAIGMORE

"Nice man!"

SANDRA

Yes, because...

CRAIGMORE

My God, Sandra - if I knew you were such a fool, I never would have hired you! You have laser vision that can spy Amelia Earhart waving at you through 100 miles of innuendo and circumstantial nonsense, but you can't recognize a snake at your feet, bearing his fangs and hissing at you!? You'd think someone who reads Genesis should know better! It looks like damn, stupid Eve plucked the apple yet again, didn't she? Then again, it could be neither she nor you are indeed "stupid." This circles us back to the point I made before. You didn't make a mistake! You did this deliberately! You do want your name in lights! You do want your moment in the sun! I see you now, Sandra - I see exactly who - or what - you are!

SANDRA

You're wrong, Mrs. Craigmore - I didn't do it for fame or to benefit myself! I know I shouldn't have talked to Mr. Reiner, but I felt I couldn't help it! I had kept this secret inside of me for so long about who you are! It sat inside me... festering... festering... me always wanting to tell you... for four years! I thought to myself "maybe I was wrong" so I kept looking and investigating - the news clippings - the Monsignor - more besides - and everything told me I was right! I thought one day you would tell me, as we grew closer - like how Ms. Gentry knows - but no! Why? Why didn't you just tell me? Why didn't you trust me? I gave my whole life to you, Mrs. Craigmore - everything! I have never given myself to anything else - no one, except God! I handled all your calls, arranged all your papers, organized your whole life for you! I deserved the truth from you - deserved it - but you never told me! Do you have any idea how painful that has been for me!? There I was... hurt... confused... and then this man comes along... seeming so nice... telling me all he cares about is the truth and suddenly my eyes light up... The truth! I know what he means! That's all I care about, too! He seemed even interested in my thoughts - imagine that! I've spent four years giving my life to you and you never showed much interest in anything I had to say that didn't

SANDRA (CONT)

involve something immediately convenient for you! Then this nice man appears who cares about the truth and wants to hear me out... and... and... I just told him! Before I knew it, I had told him everything that I knew! I told him everything and it felt like my soul was liberated - finally liberated!

CRAIGMORE approaches SANDRA menacingly.

CRAIGMORE

You showed him the clippings?

SANDRA

Yes.

CRAIGMORE

You showed him the yearbook?

SANDRA

Yes.

CRAIGMORE

You played the McClanahan recording?

SANDRA

Yes.

CRAIGMORE

Oh, God - and the map! That's why you took the map!

SANDRA

Yes, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

(Grabbing and shaking SANDRA.)
What else did you show him? What else, Sandra - what else?!

SANDRA

Well, I...

CRAIGMORE

What else?!

SANDRA

Only a few other things...

CRAIGMORE grabs a letter opener from a pen holder on HER desk and brandishes it.

CRAIGMORE

I could kill you, Sandra... I could kill you!!

VALE

Kill?

CRAIGMORE and SANDRA turn in shock to find VALE has entered again through the hallway door.

CRAIGMORE

Mr. Vale!

VALE

(Mirroring HER tone.)
Mrs. Craigmores!

CRAIGMORE

What are you doing here... again?

VALE

I'm trying to test my hypothesis, that, in one night, the third time really is the charm.

CRAIGMORE

In this case, I hope your hypothesis is correct, so we can put an end to this rather unsightly experiment.

VALE

In all honesty, I didn't leave the last time - and wouldn't have, considering the delicate mental state of our God-fearing friend here...

(To SANDRA.)

If you'll forgive the expression.

(To CRAIGMORE.)

...so I just sat in my car.

CRAIGMORE

You've been here the whole time?

VALE

Yes - but I enjoyed the look on your face when you thought I was leaving. I thought it would be nice to see your reaction when you're not getting what you want from a situation. I know it was a little wicked of me, but, since you are only signing one more check for me, I figured I could finally take the risk. I confess the moment was entirely worth it for me.

CRAIGMORE

I can imagine what you think about this moment.

VALE

A close second, most definitely.

CRAIGMORE

Alongside knowing I'm Amelia Earhart, I suppose you know that Sandra told Ben Reiner about the situation.

VALE

(Eyeing SANDRA.)
 Actually, I didn't know that - but in light of it, I can understand the urge to repurpose the letter opener.

CRAIGMORE

Yes... exactly... and as "what is done, is done", this, too, is done...

(To SANDRA.)

...and you, Sandra, will leave.

SANDRA

But Mrs. Craigmore...

CRAIGMORE

Leave now and I will not press charges for the map.

VALE

(Approaching SANDRA to take HER by the arm.)
 I'll drive you home, Sandra.

CRAIGMORE

Oh, God, I forgot about...

A LOUD GASPING SOUND emits from some distant corner of the house.

CRAIGMORE

Him.

It's ROCIO MARTINO in some apparent distress.

ROCIO'S VOICE

Help me!

SANDRA

(As if having forgotten herself.)
 Mr. Martino!

VALE

Oh, yes, I was going to ask where he was.

CRAIGMORE

(To SANDRA.)
 Well, don't just stand there - find out what's wrong!

SANDRA pauses briefly, as if not wanting to leave - but eventually SHE rushes out through the hallway door. CRAIGMORE and VALE speak quickly, sotto voce.

VALE

Ben Reiner?

CRAIGMORE

Unfortunately.

VALE

That's not good.

CRAIGMORE

(Putting back the letter open in a pen holder.)
It's worse than "not good."

VALE

Well, she doesn't have much evidence of anything positive about your being Amelia Earhart, save a weekly call with a group of nuts - so any damage would be limited.

CRAIGMORE

Perhaps, but still enough for someone to cause trouble, especially if they want to cause trouble.

VALE

Well, in this case, it might be wise to recall that it's easier to prove a positive than prove a negative.

CRAIGMORE

Which means what exactly?

VALE

This means it's easier to prove you are Aileen Kosterman rather than proving you're not Amelia Earhart.

(Looking at HER queerly.)

For most of us, that would not be difficult to do.

CRAIGMORE

Et tu, Mr. Vale?

VALE

I'm just saying...

CRAIGMORE

(Talking fast - as if wanting to get this over with.)
Look, Mr. Vale, I was born to a small, dull family in a small dull town. My father drank for a living and beat my mother and also beat me. My mother died when I was nine and the beatings became worse. I didn't go out much because of the bruises - that and because I stuttered - terribly. I stood on the riser in that picture because my father hit me and I tripped and I broke my leg and I didn't want my cast to be in the picture. I took up flying so I could be free - somewhere I didn't have to worry about people hearing my stutter - somewhere where a man couldn't hit me. I moved far away from my father and lived here, there, and everywhere - never long enough to make a mark or to make

CRAIGMORE (CONT)

friends, which was the whole point. Slowly, I fixed my stutter and, after the war, I moved to New York. I found I had a knack for finance and I thrived at a local bank, where I met my husband, who was one of our largest customers. My husband and I married and he purchased "Women in America", where I became Editor-in-Chief. Eight years ago, my husband died, leaving me a substantial fortune, and I became free and independent, for the first time in my life. I actually started to enjoy getting up in the morning, believe it or not... until this! Now tell me - are there any other questions I could answer for you?

VALE

Yes! Why didn't you tell Sandra all this?

CRAIGMORE

Because I have spent my life not wanting to have to explain myself to anyone and I'm not going to let some bland little nonentity tear me down now!

Suddenly, the hallway door opens and SANDRA enters, helping ROCIO enter, as well. HE is gasping for breath and holding HIS chest tightly.

CRAIGMORE

Mr. Martino!

ROCIO

I feel... out of breath...

SANDRA

Here, lie down on the couch.

SANDRA has helped ROCIO over to the couch, where HE sits.

ROCIO

I have a tightness in my chest.

CRAIGMORE

It sounds like a heart attack.

VALE

Do you have an aspirin?

SANDRA

Yes.

SANDRA goes to a small cupboard and removes a container of aspirins, as...

VALE

(Bending down to ROCIO.)
What else are you feeling?

ROCIO

(Pointing to HIS chest.)
I have... a pain... here.

VALE

Do you have pain anywhere else aside from your chest?

ROCIO

No... just here... my chest.

SANDRA returns with an aspirin and a glass of water.

SANDRA

Here - take this, Mr. Martino.

ROCIO takes the aspirin with a trembling hand, but quickly drops it.

VALE

(Pointing on the floor.)
It's over there.

ROCIO

Please help!

SANDRA

(Putting the tablet in HIS mouth.)
Here you go!

SANDRA brings the water up to ROCIO's mouth and HE takes a sip.

VALE

(To ROCIO.)
Just lie down and try to take deep breaths.

VALE and SANDRA help ROCIO to lie down on the couch.

CRAIGMORE

We should drive him to the hospital.

VALE

It'd be better to call an ambulance.

SANDRA

I'll call...

VALE

(Insistently.)
No, I'll do it.

VALE rushes over to the phone in the room, picks it up, and is about to dial when... HE stops and listens queerly for a moment. Slowly, confused, HE hangs up the phone.

CRAIGMORE

Well?

VALE

The phone's dead.

CRAIGMORE

It was working earlier.

VALE and CRAIGMORE look accusingly at SANDRA.

SANDRA

I didn't touch the phone wire!

VALE

The power is on throughout the neighborhood, so, whatever it is, it must be limited to this house. Anyway, Officer Kresge is down the street. We can have him come and take a look at Rocio and make the decision. The good news is that I seriously doubt this is a heart attack.

CRAIGMORE

Then what do you think it is?

VALE

A panic attack.

CRAIGMORE

A panic attack?

VALE

A panic attack can be brought on by many things - including a few too many gallons of alcohol. Besides, Mr. Martino had a small episode last week when I threatened to fire him for not showing up for work on Tuesday. I sat with him for about half an hour and he calmed down quickly. Then you consider the fact that he started feeling symptoms while at rest and that the pain is only in his chest and not his shoulders or his arms or any of the other extremities.

(A beat - registering CRAIGMORE and SANDRA's looks.)
My brother is a doctor.

ROCIO starts to sit up again.

SANDRA

Mr. Martino, lie down!

ROCIO

I start to feel better.

VALE

No, keep lying down - and stay still.

CRAIGMORE

Here, Mr. Martino - rest your head on this.

CRAIGMORE goes to ROCIO and helps HIM lay back down. SHE gets a couch pillow and puts it under HIS head. HER face is very close to HIS. ROCIO looks at CRAIGMORE gratefully and shakes a "thank you" at HER. We notice that SANDRA has stopped and is looking very closely at CRAIGMORE and ROCIO. VALE notices this, too, and stops to watch. ROCIO slowly lies back and closes HIS eyes, taking deep breaths. CRAIGMORE becomes conscious of the fact that SANDRA and VALE are staring at HER.

CRAIGMORE

What is it?

SANDRA

You don't recognize him.

CRAIGMORE

(Snapping.)

Of course I don't recognize him.

SANDRA

I knew you wouldn't.

All of a sudden, we see a revelation come over CRAIGMORE's face - perhaps SHE "should" recognize HIM.

VALE

Perhaps you should take another look.

CRAIGMORE turns and peers intently at ROCIO lying on the couch, wondering if SHE should know HIM.

SANDRA

You still don't recognize him, do you?

CRAIGMORE looks back at SANDRA queerly, desperately not wanting to shake HER head "no."

SANDRA

If you were Aileen Kosterman, you'd know who he is.

CRAIGMORE turns to VALE sharply, as if to say "what role do you have in all of this?"

SANDRA

Mr. Martino and Aileen Kosterman knew each other many years ago. They worked at the same general store when Aileen Kosterman was going through flight school in Omaha.

CRAIGMORE

You can't possibly know that.

SANDRA

I spoke to the store owner.

VALE

He's ninety-six years young, as of last October.

SANDRA

I used my Labor Day weekend to interview him last summer.

CRAIGMORE

You expect me to believe that?!

SANDRA

It took me two years to find someone who's still alive and remembered Aileen Kosterman before the war. I told you there's hardly anyone who remembers her. I spoke with Mildred Planner last year, who was a secretary at that flight school in Omaha. She remembered Aileen Kosterman, but then didn't feel she was close enough to Aileen for Aileen to remember her - but then Mildred Planner did say she remembered Aileen worked at Plinsky's General Store. Believe it or not, it's still there on Fort Street in Omaha. It's still there and Mr. Plinsky still owns it and still runs it. He remembered Aileen Kosterman and he also remembered Mr. Martino.

CRAIGMORE

For God's sake, you can't expect me to remember someone I worked with almost fifty years ago!

SANDRA

You can when he's so distinct - his name, his accent.

VALE

Besides, it's not all about his name and his accent.

CRAIGMORE

Riddles, more riddles.

VALE

Aileen Kosterman had a relationship with Rocio Martino.

SANDRA

Oh, but...

VALE

(Taking HER arm and silencing HER.)
Briefly.

CRAIGMORE

(Dumbfounded.)
What?

VALE

It's all in the recorded conversation with Mr. Plinsky.

CRAIGMORE

(To SANDRA, suddenly dawning on HER.)
So... that's why you hired him.

SANDRA, as if shamed, turns away -
prompting VALE to step in.

VALE

In fairness, Sandra indicated it wasn't hard to find Mr. Martino. Unlike you, he apparently has quite a lot of records about him - courtesy of several different police departments. Small incidents, a shoplift or two, mainly when he was young - but anyway, he's lived in Westchester since 1955 and was arrested for public drunkenness two years ago. You won't be particularly surprised that Detective Sandra Houser has all those records mimeographed in triplet.

(To SANDRA.)

By the way, did either Mildred Planner or Mr. Plinsky say anything about Aileen Kosterman having a stutter?

SANDRA

(Taken aback by this.)
No.

VALE

(Eyeing CRAIGMORE.)
Ah... interesting.

CRAIGMORE looks long and hard at the reclining figure of ROCIO. We sense HER searching HIS face for... something. We can't tell if SHE is trying to remember HIM or just buying for time, trying to

think how to extricate HERSELF from this situation.

SANDRA

Even now, you still don't remember him.

VALE

More to the point, he doesn't remember you either.

ROCIO groans loudly again.

CRAIGMORE

(Almost lifelessly.)

You should go get Officer Kresge.

VALE

(To SANDRA.)

Grab your coat.

SANDRA

I'm not leaving.

VALE

Yes, you are.

SANDRA

I'm not leaving!

VALE

Yes - you are.

There is something intense in the way VALE is looking at SANDRA that gives HER pause. SHE seems to sense that HE is hinting at something. Slowly, understanding, SHE nods HER head.

VALE

Get your coat.

SANDRA grabs HER tote and hurriedly exits through the hallway door. VALE stares for a moment at CRAIGMORE, who has returned to staring intently at ROCIO. CRAIGMORE soon shifts HER gaze to VALE.

VALE

I told you there was more.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, you did - and more and more... and more... which is not hard when you comb through fifty years.

VALE

Oh, I don't know - but I do know it seems you knew some people at least - some times and in some ways.

SANDRA enters again, quickly putting HER coat on and carrying HER tote.

SANDRA

Ready!

VALE

(To CRAIGMORE.)
We'll be back.

CRAIGMORE

Is that a promise or a threat?

VALE smiles mischievously and heads for the door. SANDRA exits and VALE follows - but then HE turns around quickly and noticeably nods to CRAIGMORE in the direction of ROCIO. We sense HE is communicating with HER that some opportunity may exist to establish HER identity one way or the other. We sense that CRAIGMORE registers this sense. VALE exits through the hallway door. A moment later we hear the FRONT DOOR OPEN and CLOSE. A dead, terrible silence descends - but it's not too silent. Some labored breathing from ROCIO punctures the silence with a gasping, throaty sound. CRAIGMORE stares at HIM for a moment and slowly approaches HIS body, as an archaeologist would approach some new and fascinating find. CRAIGMORE stares at ROCIO for a moment. Eventually, ROCIO opens HIS eyes. Perhaps HE has sensed HER staring at HIM.

CRAIGMORE

Are you... feeling better?

ROCIO

I think so.

CRAIGMORE

That's good.

ROCIO

Yes - is very good.

CRAIGMORE

Mr. Vale and Sandra are getting some help.

ROCIO

Oh, I do not want to be a bother to anyone.

CRAIGMORE

You're not at all. We just want to make sure you're all right.

ROCIO

You and your people take very good care of me.

CRAIGMORE

We simply found you a couch for you to lie on.

ROCIO

Ah, you remember... the Bible... the Samaritan by the road... many people do not even do that.

CRAIGMORE

Perhaps, Mr. Martino - but still...

ROCIO

Rocio - you please call me "Rocio."

CRAIGMORE

I appreciate your kind words, Rocio - but I don't feel they are particularly deserved. You must be about my age and you should not be working so late at night. I know you are behind with the work and I know you don't want to be fired - but really, you should not be exerting yourself so. You should be taking better care of yourself and, more importantly, I should have insisted you take better care of yourself. I apologize for that, as there was a time in my life when I would have been more conscious of this sort of thing. Half the work you're doing as it stands should be done by a younger man.

ROCIO

(Rising, fearfully)

Oh, no - no - I do the work!

CRAIGMORE

It's all right, Rocio. You can finish the flower beds and leave - and I will pay you for the rest anyway.

ROCIO clutches HIS chest again.

ROCIO

Ah, it hurts again!

CRAIGMORE

Please, lie back down!

CRAIGMORE hurriedly goes to ROCIO and lays HIM back down.

ROCIO

I am cold, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

I will get you a blanket, Mr. Martino.

ROCIO

Rocio.

CRAIGMORE

Rocio.

CRAIGMORE goes to a storage bench in the room and removes a long, shimmery blanket. SHE gently places it over ROCIO and bends down to tuck in the blanket around the sides. Again, the face of CRAIGMORE and the face of ROCIO are close together. CRAIGMORE looks up and finds ROCIO looking at HER. SHE stares back at HIM for a moment.

ROCIO

You are beautiful woman, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

Thank you, Rocio.

ROCIO

Is funny - I have been working here three weeks and do not see you so close.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, well, I have a tendency to keep my distance, you see - from everyone.

ROCIO

I thought perhaps it was because you do not like me or... maybe you look down on me.

CRAIGMORE

Why would you think that?

ROCIO

Well, you... you are a fine lady... and me... I am... I am just drunk... always drunk. When I'm not drunk, I'm not much good - but then when I'm drunk, I'm not much better. I just don't know it, so... drunk is best. You are put together very well and you have here good life - very good. People, they respect you - and they should - and me, they should not. I am not fool - I know this - and is okay, because I still stand. I stand on my feet,

ROCIO (CONT)

even when they are shaky - and they are shaky. Still, I stand on them and no one ever gives me free money.

CRAIGMORE

I respect that, Rocio.

ROCIO

Thank you, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

I came from very humble beginnings myself.

ROCIO

Aha, there is hope for me yet - at seventy!

ROCIO cackles a wheezy cackle.

CRAIGMORE

Rocio?

ROCIO

Yes, Mrs. Craigmores?

CRAIGMORE

Aileen. Please, call me "Aileen."

ROCIO

All right - Aileen.

CRAIGMORE

Do you recognize me?

ROCIO

Do I recognize you?

CRAIGMORE

Do you remember me? Do you remember someone named Aileen?

ROCIO

Aileen...

CRAIGMORE

Someone from... long ago?

ROCIO

I'm not sure... should I?

CRAIGMORE

In all truth, I didn't notice it myself, Rocio - not initially - but now that I have had the chance to look at you - actually look at you and consider your face, as opposed to look up briefly from my desk or pass you casually in the garden - I do think I recognize you. It took me a while to place it in my

CRAIGMORE (CONT)

mind, but I do recognize you. You used to live in Nebraska, didn't you... in Omaha?

ROCIO

I lived in Honey Creek, but worked in Omaha.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, that's right - you worked in Omaha.

ROCIO

At a few places - a movie theater, a drugstore, a general store...

CRAIGMORE

Yes, Plinsky's General Store, wasn't it?

ROCIO

Yes, that is right - Plinsky General Store.

CRAIGMORE

I think... I think I worked with you there.

ROCIO

You did?

CRAIGMORE

Yes, I'm certain of it.

ROCIO

You are also from Nebraska?

CRAIGMORE

Yes, Cortland - but moved to Omaha for flight school. I used to fly planes when I was young.

(A beat.)

I worked also in Plinsky's General Store.

ROCIO

You did?

CRAIGMORE

Yes.

ROCIO

I only work there a few months when I was very young.

CRAIGMORE

Which is why it may be hard for either of us to remember.

ROCIO

Are you sure you work there?

CRAIGMORE

Yes, Rocio - I'm sure, and I do remember you.

ROCIO

I remember some girls some time at the register. I was in the back, bringing in the boxes.

CRAIGMORE

Do you remember their names?

ROCIO

I think, eh... Gloria... Lupita... Ellen...

CRAIGMORE

Ellen?

ROCIO

I think.

CRAIGMORE

You mean Aileen.

ROCIO

Maybe Aileen.

CRAIGMORE

Yes.

ROCIO

Was that you?

CRAIGMORE

I think so.

ROCIO

Oh, it is hard... hard for me to remember...

CRAIGMORE

Well, after all, it was a very long time ago.

ROCIO

Is even longer when you spend most of it drunk!

ROCIO looks intently at CRAIGMORE
again.

ROCIO

(As if trying it out for size.)
Aileen.

CRAIGMORE

Yes.

ROCIO

(As before, with more fortitude.)
Aileen.

CRAIGMORE

Yes.

ROCIO

It is amazing.

CRAIGMORE

Yes, it is.

ROCIO

I think I remember.

CRAIGMORE

I am so glad - because it is very important to me.

ROCIO

I think now and I do remember Ellen... or Aileen... Aileen... yes... You were very nice, very kind... spoke very well... and yes, you were in school! I thought it was school-school, but you say it was flight school. That is all I can remember. I remember that and I remember her - you - standing at the cash register all day. You were good with numbers - very good - and I was bad with numbers - very bad. I carry boxes, not ones - but you... you were good with the numbers. I remember you spoke well and were good with the numbers.

CRAIGMORE

That's right, Rocio.

ROCIO

I remember Aileen now, but not your face.

CRAIGMORE

A person's face can change over fifty years.

ROCIO

Yes... is true... but still... I do not remember.

CRAIGMORE

There's even more for you to remember besides a face.

ROCIO

More?

CRAIGMORE

We were closer than just acquaintances... weren't we?

ROCIO

We were?

CRAIGMORE
Yes, we were.

ROCIO
I try to remember.

CRAIGMORE
Try, please, yes - because we were close... very close... though briefly.

ROCIO
Close?

CRAIGMORE
Close.

ROCIO
When you say "close"...

CRAIGMORE
I mean - were you sleeping with anyone at the time?

ROCIO
(Slowly understanding.)
You mean...

CRAIGMORE
(Nodding.)
Sleeping.

ROCIO
I was... sleeping... but who, I don't remember.

CRAIGMORE
Please try.

ROCIO
Mostly, when I sleep like that - I also drink.

CRAIGMORE
Yes, but...

ROCIO
I did much sleeping when I was young, so... I don't know.

CRAIGMORE
(Forcefully, almost a command.)
You and I slept together, Rocio.

ROCIO
We did?

CRAIGMORE
Yes, we did.

ROCIO

I don't remember.

CRAIGMORE

How could you not, Rocio?

ROCIO

Well, I... like I say... I drink then and there were other girls... too many... too many... I leave Omaha because one I get pregnant and I...

CRAIGMORE

(Almost as if teary about HIS lack of memory.)
Oh, Rocio...

ROCIO

Please, Aileen - I try to remember.

CRAIGMORE

It meant something to me at the time.

ROCIO

No, please - I will try!

CRAIGMORE

You needn't bother, Rocio.

ROCIO

I think I remember... I think I do!

Suddenly, ROCIO starts coughing loudly and violently.

CRAIGMORE

It's all right, Rocio! It doesn't matter. It's all right. Calm down.

ROCIO

Again... my chest...

CRAIGMORE

Deep breaths, Rocio - deep breaths.

ROCIO

Yes, deep... deep...

CRAIGMORE

I didn't mean to make you upset.

ROCIO

No, no, is my fault - my old head.

CRAIGMORE

Here, this will help to calm you down...

CRAIGMORE rises and goes over to the liquor cabinet. SHE pours out a quick drink from a vodka bottle. SHE then hurries back to ROCIO and hands HIM the drink.

CRAIGMORE

I'm not endorsing it, but here - to calm your nerves.

ROCIO nods and takes the drink. HE takes a gulp and makes a face - clearly, it's very strong. CRAIGMORE sits next to ROCIO on the couch - very close indeed.

CRAIGMORE

It's all right - truly - if you don't remember anything.

ROCIO nods and takes another sip from the drink. CRAIGMORE stares at HIM expectantly, as if waiting for HIM to say something. ROCIO senses HER presence bearing down on HIM. HE thinks and takes another drink. The drink is almost empty now. CRAIGMORE takes the drink and puts it aside. We notice that ROCIO's hands are trembling. CRAIGMORE takes THEM both in HER own hands.

CRAIGMORE

I'm glad, Rocio, that we could have this time again together. It's very special to me.

ROCIO nods slowly.

CRAIGMORE

I remember something you said to me.

ROCIO

Something I said... to you.

CRAIGMORE

"El amor es un rayo de luna."

ROCIO

I... said that?

CRAIGMORE

Actually, you and Bécquer.

ROCIO

Bécquer?

CRAIGMORE

The poet - Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer.

ROCIO

Oh, yes...

CRAIGMORE

You used to read poetry.

ROCIO

You remember that about me.

CRAIGMORE

I do.

ROCIO

I fall very far since - and I see it now, looking up at you.

CRAIGMORE

You don't remember... at all?

ROCIO looks at HER intently again,
almost fiercely.

ROCIO

Yes. I do... I do remember... I do remember!

Suddenly, the PHONE RINGS loudly and obnoxiously. This brings CRAIGMORE and ROCIO out of THEIR stupor. CRAIGMORE is annoyed at first, but then remembers the phone isn't supposed to be working. SHE stares at it for a moment, thinking, thinking, thinking to HERSELF - until the RINGING dies.

ROCIO

Are you... all right?

CRAIGMORE

The phone... it's working.

With that, the FRONT DOOR of the house opens. CRAIGMORE quickly rises and grabs the nearly empty glass. SHE backs away from ROCIO and hides the glass behind HER back. The hallway door opens soon after. VALE and SANDRA enter, followed by OFFICER KRESGE. As usual, SANDRA carries HER tote.

KRESGE

We meet sooner than I thought, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

It would appear to be so, Officer Kresge.

VALE

(Indicating ROCIO.)

Here is Mr. Martino.

KRESGE

(To ROCIO.)

I understand you have been unwell, sir.

ROCIO

Oh, yes, but better now - much better.

KRESGE

I understood you were in some distress.

VALE

You don't feel any tightness in your chest?

ROCIO

A little, but is better.

KRESGE

All the same, it would be good to have you checked out at the hospital. I can drive you there.

ROCIO

Thank you... I go.

VALE

Where is your coat, Mr. Martino?

SANDRA

I'll get it - it's in the kitchen.

SANDRA exits through the hallway door.
KRESGE helps ROCIO to rise from the couch. ROCIO coughs, prompting KRESGE to smell the strong alcohol on HIS breath.

KRESGE

My, sir - I see you have been sampling the libations tonight.

KRESGE starts to lead ROCIO to the hallway door, but ROCIO pulls back and turns to CRAIGMORE. Meanwhile, SANDRA re-enters, carrying a coat. SHE and VALE watch intently.

ROCIO

I see you Monday, Aileen.

CRAIGMORE

I'm afraid not, Rocio.

ROCIO

Oh?

CRAIGMORE

I will be leaving on Monday.

ROCIO

(Terribly disappointed.)

But I thought you leave next month.

VALE

(Pointedly using HER first name.)

"Aileen" changed her plane reservation.

ROCIO

Oh, then... I will not see you.

CRAIGMORE

(Articulating very clearly, as if for public consumption.)
No, Rocio - but we will stay in touch. I would like to stay in touch very much. It would do us both good to reminisce further about our times together. It was very special being reacquainted with you.

ROCIO smiles and walks (or hobbles) over to CRAIGMORE. HE takes one of HER hands in HIS hand and kisses HER hand.

ROCIO

El amor es un rayo de luna.

ROCIO smiles at CRAIGMORE, but, rather than leave, HE just stares into HER eyes. The pause becomes a bit much, prompting KRESGE to approach ROCIO.

KRESGE

Come along now, sir - it's quite late.

KRESGE takes ROCIO by the arm and leads him to the hallway door. SANDRA puts on HIS coat for HIM, as ROCIO smiles inanely, drenched in happy thoughts.

ROCIO

(Pointing over at CRAIGMORE, announcing to the world.)

You know, Mrs. Craigmores is very great woman!

VALE

Oh, definitely.

ROCIO

No, no, you don't understand, but I tell you...

VALE

Yes, tell us.

ROCIO

You not believe this, but she and I... we know each other... many years ago.

VALE

You don't say?

ROCIO

Oh, yes - when we were young - we know each other - very, very, very closely.

VALE

Small world!

KRESGE

Actually, the world is quite large, I'm told - it's the female pilots that are few.

(Cheekily, to CRAIGMORE.)

Isn't that right, Mrs. Craigmore?

ROCIO

Oh, she - she is too good not to be on the ground.

VALE

Well said, Rocio.

ROCIO

(With a big, happy wave of HIS arm.)

Goodnight!

VALE

(Just so.)

Goodnight!

KRESGE is about to usher ROCIO out the hallway door, when...

CRAIGMORE

Officer Kresge?

KRESGE

Yes, Mrs. Craigmore?

CRAIGMORE

I need you to come back inside when you get Rocio in the car.

KRESGE

Oddly enough, Mrs. Craigmores, I was going to do just that. You see, I received a message on my car radio just as I pulled into your driveway. It seems your friend Viola Gentry called the Scarsdale Police Department a few minutes ago. She claims she called your house earlier and was told you were out and then recently tried to call again, without any answer. She's been mighty worried about you. I told the station you've been here the whole time, but thought, in light of everything with the boxes and all, I would check on you. I'll be back as soon as I get Mr. Martino here in the car.

KRESGE leads ROCIO out through the hallway door. We hear the FRONT DOOR OPEN and CLOSE shortly thereafter. CRAIGMORE still has the almost-empty glass behind HER back. VALE and SANDRA look at EACH OTHER oddly.

CRAIGMORE

Is that all you can say?

VALE

We didn't actually say anything.

CRAIGMORE

Precisely my point! I think I'm owed more than a glance, at this point.

SANDRA

Mrs. Craigmores...

CRAIGMORE

(Blowing up suddenly.)

Don't, Sandra - don't you dare say another word to me! I don't want anything more from you! No more lies, no more suppositions, no more innuendos - nothing! You heard what Mr. Martino said - you both did! We knew each other in Omaha! We were close... very, very close! You heard it for yourself! When you hear other things, you get out your tape recorder and you record! Well, record that - record that and put the transcript in the filing cabinet you're keeping on my life!

CRAIGMORE has reached into SANDRA's tote and removed the tape recorder. SHE slams it down on the desk. SANDRA yelps in concern for the tape recorder's wellbeing.

CRAIGMORE

(Blaring on, to SANDRA.)

At this point, all I can say is "thank God" - because He must actually exist after all! I thought about what you said about Mr. Martino before you left and I had a chat with Mr. Martino

CRAIGMORE (CONT)

when you were out. For the first time, I actually looked at his face and I recognized him - like you said I should. For damn good reason, I have spent most of my life staying away from people - but now how ironic it is that this whole ridiculous business of my being Amelia Earhart is solved by my actually knowing someone! Well, I know him - Rocio Martino - and he knows me - Aileen Kosterman - and you, Sandra Houser... you need to figure out who the hell you are! I know full enough, but it seems you're still the one in self-discovery - and while you're at it, you can contact your new friend, Ben Reiner, and tell him that, should there be any questions as to who I am, he can talk to Rocio Martino and leave me the hell out of it!

A loud pause descends, after CRAIGMORE finishes HER ringing declaration. It holds in the air in tense expectation of a reply. We sense CRAIGMORE feels a moment of triumph. VALE and SANDRA exchange a heavy, knowing look. CRAIGMORE sees this. We can tell HER confidence turns to uncertainty. SANDRA seems embarrassed for HER and can't look CRAIGMORE in the eye.

CRAIGMORE

What is it now?

SANDRA

I'm sorry, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

It's too late for that.

VALE

That's not what she meant.

CRAIGMORE

What do you mean?

SANDRA

Mr. Vale lied to you before.

CRAIGMORE

"Lied?"

SANDRA

He lied about Mr. Martino and Aileen Kosterman.

CRAIGMORE

You said that we both knew each other, in Omaha - and we did.

SANDRA

Yes, but Mr. Vale lied about your having a relationship. Mr. Plinsky said Aileen Kosterman stuck to herself and barely talked to anyone.

VALE

In short, there was no relationship for Mr. Martino to remember - yet some minutes with you and he somehow remembers one. It's a most immaculate conception.

CRAIGMORE

(Slowly, letting this sink in.)

I see.

SANDRA

(A beat.)

I'm sorry, Mrs. Craigmore.

CRAIGMORE

(Suddenly realizing.)

I take it the phone also was working the whole time.

CRAIGMORE looks to VALE for an answer. HE just stares back silently in reply, answering the question for HER. CRAIGMORE has frozen under thoughts so deep and pendulous SHE can't move out from under them. VALE approaches CRAIGMORE. HE reaches behind HER and removes the glass from HER hand, as if knowing exactly where it is. HE takes the glass and sniffs its contents.

VALE

Hm... Russian water.

VALE puts the glass aside on a nearby table. We now notice that KRESGE has entered and has been listening intently. It seems SANDRA and CRAIGMORE barely notice HIS presence. SANDRA is staring relentlessly at CRAIGMORE, as CRAIGMORE has taken to staring off into space. VALE smiles a "hello" at KRESGE and approaches HIM rather casually.

VALE

It's a long story, officer.

KRESGE

I'll bet you I've heard longer ones.

VALE

Ohhhh, I wouldn't be so sure about that.

VALE turns and surveys the scene again, wondering if anyone will do or say anything - but no one does.

VALE

(Unclear to whom this is directed.)
I think we're about done here.

VALE slowly, calmly, as if approaching some wild animal, walks over to SANDRA with HIS arm extended.

VALE

Come on, Sandra - it's time to leave.

SANDRA

(With quiet determination.)
No.

VALE

Sandra...

SANDRA

(HER eyes suddenly flaring)
No!

VALE

Jesus...

SANDRA

No!!

VALE

Look, it's all over now! What else do you hope to get out of this whole thing?

SANDRA

I told you - the truth!

VALE

Sometimes, Sandra, we're not meant to know every little truth in the universe! Surely, you, as the reader of the Bible - a book full of mysteries - can understand that! There's a whole bunch of things we don't know and we can't know. As you might say, just leave it to God to sort out. You've made your point. You've gathered the evidence and got your indictment. Ben Reiner will write his article in *The Post*. Besides, you'll be forced to leave here anyway whether you want to or not. You'll even be lucky if you won't get 30 days in the county jail for rummaging through those damn boxes. Still, you emerged more of a winner than any of the rest of us. Take your trophy and go home! Go home and get yourself a brand new life. This is your chance and you'd be a damn fool not to take it.

SANDRA
I'm not doing this for a trophy!

KRESGE
(Moving towards SANDRA.)
It's time for you to go now.

SANDRA
(Backing away.)
No... it isn't... it isn't!

KRESGE
Ma'am, please...

SANDRA
Don't touch me.

CRAIGMORE
(Like a thunderclap.)
It's all right.

Suddenly, SANDRA, KRESGE, and VALE
freeze and turn to CRAIGMORE.

CRAIGMORE
I would like to talk with Sandra for a moment, please... alone.

VALE and KRESGE exchange an uncertain
glance.

KRESGE
Are you sure, Mrs. Craigmores?

CRAIGMORE
Am I ever not sure, Officer Kresge?

VALE
We'll be in the kitchen if you need us.

Slowly, if uncertainly, VALE and KRESGE
exit through the hallway door. Another
pause descends. CRAIGMORE considers
SANDRA for a moment, unsure exactly
what to say or how to say it, but
clearly ruminating in HER mind.

SANDRA
Thank you, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE barely acknowledges this.
Instead, SHE turns and sits behind HER
desk, as SHE did at the start of the
play. SHE thinks for a moment - and

then speaks, as if nothing in the world has happened at all.

CRAIGMORE

Bring me another nightcap, please.

SANDRA

Four Roses?

CRAIGMORE

White Horse.

SANDRA methodically goes to the liquor cabinet. SHE pours a small glass of whiskey, walks over to CRAIGMORE, and places the drink in front of HER on the desk. CRAIGMORE nods and takes a sip of the drink - still ruminating. SANDRA stands rather diligently as if awaiting some great, imperial verdict from on high.

CRAIGMORE

You talked about the truth before, Sandra...

SANDRA

Yes, Mrs. Craigmores.

CRAIGMORE

Do you always feel the truth is... warranted?

SANDRA

I feel truth is always better.

CRAIGMORE

Better, yes - but not always a necessity?

SANDRA

I don't understand.

CRAIGMORE

Some people may know the truth and others may not - and there may be a good reason for that. Perhaps your identity is changed because others are trying to do you harm - but even then, you're not unknown to the world. The people who love you - who care for you - they know the truth - and that's enough. You might even say that God knows the truth - and that's also enough. The rest of the world may know nothing - but then the rest of the world typically knows very little anyway. God and the people who matter know and that is enough for there to be truth.

SANDRA

What are you saying, Mrs. Craigmores?

CRAIGMORE

I am a private person, Sandra - a private person who does not want her life invaded by the outside world. I want to go to Scottsdale and live in the shadows of the mountains. That's where I've always wanted to be, as it is so much like living in the sky, except further south and more grounded. I hope you understand me. Yet with you and your relentless digging, I can't have that life. With your group of Amelia Earhart friends, I can't have it. With Ben Reiner, I can't have it. I don't have many more years to live and that life is the one thing I ask for - the one safe landing.

SANDRA

(Repeating absent-mindedly, in deep thought.)
A safe landing.

CRAIGMORE

If you dig something up, Sandra, you can still put it back - just as we ourselves are put back. We come from the earth and we return to the earth - "ashes to ashes and dust to dust." You have dug up many trinkets in the ground. You can put them back in the ground anytime you want. You can even destroy them anytime you want. No one needs ever see them again - only you, in your mind - just like the people in life we are privileged to know who die and who are buried and who leave behind nothing on Earth but the memories we have of them.

SANDRA

I don't understand.

CRAIGMORE

Would you consider doing that, Sandra - throwing the trinkets of my life that you've dug up? Would you throw them away... if I told you the truth? Would you even deny you ever found them... if I told you the truth?

SANDRA, slowly understanding, just
stares at HER.

CRAIGMORE

I understand, Sandra, why the truth of who I am is necessary for you - and I understand why you deserve it - but the world? The world doesn't deserve anything. Let it keep turning, as long as you know what the truth really is.

SANDRA stares blankly at CRAIGMORE,
unsure what to say.

CRAIGMORE

Well, Sandra - can I tell you the truth - and if I do, can I trust you?

SANDRA

Of course you can trust me.

CRAIGMORE

Can I really trust you?

SANDRA

You always could trust me.

CRAIGMORE

Then will you keep my secret?

SANDRA

Well, I...

CRAIGMORE

Will you bury all the trinkets you have dug up and tell your friends and Ben Reiner you were wrong?

A long pause, as SANDRA ponders this in HER mind - until:

SANDRA

(As if a great, psychic relief.)
You'll tell me the truth?

CRAIGMORE

Yes, I will - the whole truth.

SANDRA

Everything?

CRAIGMORE

Everything.

SANDRA

Then I will say... nothing.

CRAIGMORE

Thank you, Sandra.

SANDRA

It's true then... isn't it?

CRAIGMORE

Yes, Sandra... it's all true.

SANDRA

You are Amelia Earhart, aren't you?

CRAIGMORE

Yes, Sandra... I am.

SANDRA

Please... say it.

I am Amelia Earhart.

CRAIGMORE

Please say it again.

SANDRA

I am Amelia Earhart.

CRAIGMORE

You did land on Gardner Island, didn't you?

SANDRA

Yes, I landed on Gardner Island and, no, my plane didn't crash into the ocean. The original plan to land on Howland Island was all a ruse, like you said. I purposefully went off course and landed with Fred Noonan at Gardner Island, but the Japanese had been tracking us. Within a day, we were arrested by the Japanese military. Fred Noonan died of disease - I think typhoid - in another prison camp. I was liberated at the end of the war and at first no one knew who I was. I didn't tell anyone - I didn't want to - until, one day, a soldier recognized me. I denied being Amelia Earhart - again and again and again - until I couldn't deny it anymore. I didn't want to go back out into the world - not after everything I had seen, not after everything that happened. I wanted to be left alone and live a quiet life, away from everything and everyone.

CRAIGMORE

And then?

SANDRA

CRAIGMORE slowly shakes HER head.

No.

CRAIGMORE

No?

SANDRA

No more, Sandra - not yet - until you do what you have to do.

CRAIGMORE

Of course.

SANDRA

I'm trusting you, Sandra.

CRAIGMORE

You can trust me, Mrs. Craigmores.

SANDRA

Good.

CRAIGMORE

SANDRA starts backing towards the desk.

SANDRA

Like I said, I always knew you were Amelia Earhart - always - ever since that first day I shook your hand on Long Island. I knew you were Amelia Earhart. I've wanted to hear you say it for so long now. I can't tell you how much I admire you and how much you mean to me. I will do what I promised. I will tell Ben Reiner that I was wrong. I will tell my friends that I was wrong. If anyone asks, I will deny everything. You're right - it's not their right to know. I know - you know - and God knows - and that's it for me - except...

CRAIGMORE

Except?

SANDRA is now backed up against the desk. SHE reaches behind HER and picks up the tape recorder. SANDRA presses a button on the tape recorder, which produces a loud CLICK. In an instant, we understand - the tape recorder had been recently turned on by HER. SANDRA brings the tape recorder up to HER chest as if carrying a baby.

SANDRA

Please, Mrs. Earhart - I want to keep this.

CRAIGMORE

(Slowly HER fear and rage rising.)
What is that, Sandra?

SANDRA

I want to keep it, as a memento.

CRAIGMORE

Were you recording me, Sandra?

SANDRA

To hear you say "I am Amelia Earhart," after all these years...

CRAIGMORE

(Reaching out HER hand.)
Give me the tape recorder, Sandra.

SANDRA shakes HER head like an insistent child.

CRAIGMORE

Give me the tape recorder.

SANDRA shakes HER head again.

CRAIGMORE

Give it to me!

CRAIGMORE starts to walk towards SANDRA. SANDRA begins to back away in fear, visibly trembling. SHE is backing away from the hallway door towards a side of the room. CRAIGMORE is approaching the hallway door.

SANDRA

I promise you I will tell Ben Reiner and my friends that...

CRAIGMORE

(Increasingly vicious.)

Give me the tape recorder, Sandra!

CRAIGMORE is now next to the hallway door. The hallway door starts to open...

KRESGE'S VOICE

Mrs. Craigmores...?

CRAIGMORE doesn't miss a beat and shuts the door again on KRESGE. SHE hurriedly locks the door and starts to move again towards SANDRA.

CRAIGMORE

I'm warning you, Sandra...

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK!

KRESGE'S VOICE

Mrs. Craigmores!

VALE'S VOICE

Are you all right?

SANDRA

(Calling out to THEM, delirious with joy.)

I told you, Mr. Vale... she's Amelia Earhart!

CRAIGMORE

Give me the tape recorder - now!!

SANDRA

No!

CRAIGMORE

Give it to me!

SANDRA

No!

Give it to me!!

CRAIGMORE

CRAIGMORE lunges violently for SANDRA and grabs HER by the arm. SANDRA makes to escape, but CRAIGMORE reaches for HER and grabs HER again by HER shirt. The KNOCKING from the hallway door grows and grows as KRESGE and VALE try to break it down. SANDRA cries out as CRAIGMORE grabs HER hair and pulls HER back. SHE and CRAIGMORE tussle back and forth, flinging EACH OTHER here and there and everywhere.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

One quick twirl and SANDRA lets go of the tape recorder and it flies onto the couch. CRAIGMORE rushes for the tape recorder, but SANDRA grabs HER. CRAIGMORE and SANDRA gnaw and scratch and tug, crashing into everything in sight. Lamps fall, liquor bottles break, furniture is overturned.

KNOCK!! KNOCK!! KNOCK!!

Eventually, SANDRA and CRAIGMORE fight their way over to the desk. SANDRA pushes CRAIGMORE against the desk and tries to hold HER down. SANDRA and CRAIGMORE scratch and claw, knocking everything off the desk. Eventually, CRAIGMORE rises from the desk and grapples with SANDRA.

KNOCK!!! KNOCK!!! KNOCK!!!

With one great spasm of energy, CRAIGMORE throws SANDRA onto the ground in front of the desk. SANDRA suddenly cries out in shock and pain. SHE is now face down on the floor. CRAIGMORE rushes over to SANDRA to prevent HER from rising and turns HER over. SHE pauses. A large, sharp object is sticking out of SANDRA's chest - the letter open that fell from the desk. It has stabbed HER through the heart. The front of SANDRA's blouse is covered in blood. CRAIGMORE looks at HER for a moment in shock.

Suddenly, the hallway door bursts open. KRESGE and VALE rush in. THEY see CRAIGMORE on the floor with the bloodied, prostrate SANDRA and THEY freeze. CRAIGMORE looks at THEM desperately, not knowing what to say. SHE looks down again at SANDRA, who is still breathing - barely. For a moment, CRAIGMORE and SANDRA exchange an ambiguous glance. CRAIGMORE is clearly upset. SANDRA raises HER head with what little strength SHE has remaining. It seems SHE wants to say something. SHE looks deep into CRAIGMORE's eyes.

SANDRA

I know who you are.

For a moment, SANDRA just stares eerily at CRAIGMORE. All at once, HER head slumps back and SHE is dead. A long pause descends upon the stage. CRAIGMORE considers SANDRA with disbelief. KRESGE walks over to SANDRA and kneels beside HER. HE takes HER wrist in HIS hands and listens for a pulse.

KRESGE

She's dead.

KRESGE drops SANDRA's wrist, leaving CRAIGMORE mired in dark thoughts. KRESGE sighs weightily and reaches into HIS belt buckle, where a walkie-talkie is lodged. HE presses a button on the walkie-talkie and speaks into it.

KRESGE

Scarsdale PD, I need some support... for a homicide.

Hearing this, CRAIGMORE looks up - but is so overwhelmed by thoughts and feelings, the power of speech is robbed from HER. She barely even manages a response. KRESGE goes to HER and tenderly helps HER rise.

KRESGE

Please, Mrs. Craigmore... sit down.

CRAIGMORE, remembering the tape recorder, slowly makes HER way toward the couch. SHE is about to sit and take

the tape recorder in HER hands, when...
too late! KRESGE swoops down and takes
the tape recorder instead.

CRAIGMORE

That is my tape recorder, Officer Kresge.

KRESGE

It was your tape recorder, Mrs. Craigmore, but now we call it
"evidence."

(Gesturing off to the other side of the room.)

You may sit over there.

CRAIGMORE lifelessly responds and walks
to the other side of the room, where
the desk is situated. SHE sits on the
desk. A VOICE tinged with static sounds
from KRESGE's walkie-talkie. HE takes
the walkie-talkie and walks to the
other side of the room. KRESGE proceeds
to converse with the person on the
other end of the walkie-talkie in
hushed tones. CRAIGMORE looks at the
body of SANDRA. VALE slowly approaches
HER and joins HER in staring. HE
eventually turns back to CRAIGMORE.

VALE

(Is HE joking or not?)

So you're Amelia Earhart after all.

CRAIGMORE

Do you really believe all that?

VALE

(Simply.)

No.

CRAIGMORE

(After a beat.)

Just "no?"

VALE

Yes.

CRAIGMORE

Just "yes?"

VALE

I think Amelia Earhart plummeted into the ocean in July of 1937
- or whenever it was. I think right now some dust that used to
be her bones is dancing its way around the Pacific. Some little
coincidences here and there - foggy photographs - faded news
clippings - senile witnesses - don't change that.

KRESGE

(Seeing VALE and MRS. CRAIGMORE conversing.)
Separate yourself from Mrs. Craigmores, please.

VALE

(Mockingly?)
Right away, sir.

VALE rises from the desk and turns to
CRAIGMORE.

VALE

No, Mrs. Craigmores - I think Amelia Earhart is dead and buried -
but then...

CRAIGMORE

What?

VALE

I'm not quite sure you're Aileen Craigmores either.

VALE gives CRAIGMORE a goodbye salute.

VALE

Good luck... whoever you are.

VALE walks off to the side of the stage
and sits in a far-off corner of the
room. KRESGE is back to talking on HIS
walkie talkie. CRAIGMORE turns and
considers the body of SANDRA. HER eyes
then alight on something nearby HER on
the desk - the map of Gardner Island.
CRAIGMORE slowly takes the map in HER
hands and looks at it. SHE peers at the
framed magazine cover of Amelia Earhart
on the nearby wall... then back at the
map... then back at the photograph...
then back at the map. SHE waits a
moment in thought and then slowly
crumbles the map in HER hands.

The LIGHTS slowly fall on the set.

In more ways than one, it's...

THE END.