

JILL TRENT SCIENCE SLEUTH

A full-length comedy by
Paul Lewis and Carissa Meisner Smit

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR, any gender, cheery, mannered delivery.

DAISY, Daisy Smith, a 1940s career girl and certified scientific genius.

JILL, Jill Trent, another brilliant scientist working as a private investigator.

TAXI DRIVER

TWO BAD GUYS IN A CAR

ELDERLY LADY WITH A WALKER

WOMAN, murder victim.

ARTHUR BENSON, a crook.

JACK BENSON, his brother

JUNE VAN DOREN, a wealthy heiress, engaged to Jack.

SGT. MULLIGAN of the Metropolitan Police.

MAN IN LINEUP

MUSEUM DIRECTOR

TRIXIE, a seven-year-old brat in pigtails, ideally played by a young adult.

MRS. DUNCAN, her mother.

SHOPKEEPER

MAN IN BROWN SUIT & MAN IN BLUE SUIT

THEIR BOSS

DR. REINER, a world-famous ichthyologist and calculating killer.

OTTO, his butler.

MRS. GILMORE, a nosy neighbor.

JOHN ROCKABYE, a wealthy philanthropist.

PET SHOP GUY

HOFFMEISTER, Jill and Daisy's former professor and nemesis.

FOUR-EYES McGEE

JOEY THE WEASEL

HOTEL CLERK

UNCLE NED, an old prospector.

MARRON, a crook.

STEVE, his sidekick.

BRAD, Daisy's Army beau.

SLIM FATLEY

NURSE

There are many possible doubling variations. Here is one (JILL, DAISY and NARRATOR are not doubled):

HOFFMEISTER doubles as Man in Lineup, Rockabye, Museum Director.

SGT. MULLIGAN doubles as Boss, Hotel Clerk, Slim Fatley.

*FOUR-EYES doubles as Bad Guy 1, Arthur, Man in Brown Suit, Otto, Marron.

*JOEY THE WEASEL doubles as Bad Guy 2, Man in Blue Suit, Pet Shop Guy and Steve.

TRIXIE doubles as Elderly Lady, Woman victim, Mrs. Duncan, Mrs. Gilmore, June, Nurse.

DR. REINER doubles as Taxi Driver, Jack, Shopkeeper, Uncle Ned, Brad.

*May be played by women in a female-predominant cast.

SETTING

1943. A large American city, with one excursion to a small Colorado town.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The special effects and science equipment may be deliberately low-tech, even cheap-looking, consistent with its derivation from a vintage comic book series.

Much of the dialogue is intended to be fast, loud and punchy, in the style of a 1930s or 1940s police procedural.

Original *Jill Trent* action music underscoring is available as an audio file and may be edited as desired.

The Chesterfield cigarette radio commercial at the top of Episode 2, as well as the brief reference to smoking on the next page, may be deleted if desired; an Ovaltine ad, found on the last page of this script, may be used in place of the cigarette ad.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Jill Trent Science Sleuth premiered at Cayuga Community College, Auburn NY, in March 2020 (Harlequin Productions). Director and Technical Director—Bob Frame. Set Design—Navroz Dabu. Costume Design—Virginia Fennessy. Lighting Design—Brad McLean. Graphic Design—Adam Williams.

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Jill Trent Science Sleuth is based on the comic book series of the same name, published by Nedor Publishing/Standard Comics between 1943-1948, and now in the public domain. Al Camy was the principal artist for this series.

ACT I

EPISODE 1: Car Chase

(Jill Trent Theme Music kicks in. After a few moments, lights up on NARRATOR.)

NARRATOR: Jill Trent Science Sleuth!

(As music fades, the sounds of a city street fade in: honking horns, buses passing by.)

It's a typical mid-summer day in 1943. America is at war. In the large American city which she calls home, career girl Daisy Smith has just hailed a taxicab.

(Narrator exits. Lights up on the suggestion of the interior of a taxicab. DAISY has just gotten into the rear seat.)

TAXI DRIVER: Where to, lady?

DAISY: East 57th and Maple, please. The Gridiron Building. *(Checking her watch:)* I've got a job interview in 25 minutes. I do hope you can get me there on time!

TAXI DRIVER: Ya know...no, forget I brought it up.

DAISY: What? What were you going to say?

TAXI DRIVER: You sure?

DAISY: Yes.

TAXI DRIVER: I was gonna say, if you wanted to be sure to be there on time, maybe you shoulda left home a little earlier.

DAISY: Yes, I suppose I should have.

TAXI DRIVER: It's simple arithmetic—something that you females never seem to understand. Between the makeup, the hair, and then trying out 12 pairs of shoes before making up your mind, it doesn't take a genius to realize that you're always gonna be running late.

DAISY: Which is ironic, since I am a certified scientific genius.

TAXI DRIVER: Ya see what I mean? And it's all entirely preventable. How come you girls never once stop to think about these things?

DAISY: Oh dear. Another red light.

TAXI DRIVER: I'll tell you why. It's because girls don't have analytical brains like men do.

DAISY: *(Checking her watch:)* We are different creatures, I guess.

TAXI DRIVER: Entirely different creatures. So what kinda job are you applying for, doll?

DAISY: Oh, it's nothing, really. There's an opening in the steno pool at Bigley, Badley and Ugley.

(The sound of gunfire and then squealing tires. Jill Trent Theme Music kicks in again.)

TAXI DRIVER: Oh, for crying out loud!

DAISY: Holy Toledo! What's going on?

TAXI DRIVER: We're in the middle of a gun battle! And here I was having such a nice, peaceful Tuesday!

(Lights up on the representation of another car; there are TWO BAD GUYS IN A CAR, in suits, one driving and the other firing out the window in the general direction of the taxi.)

DAISY: Oh my!

(The rear passenger door opens abruptly and JILL TRENT slides in next to Daisy.)

JILL: Follow that vehicle, cabbie!

DAISY: I beg your pardon?! I'm trying to get to a job interview —

JILL: Well, I'm sorry, but your little job interview is going to have to wait. Step on it, cabbie! There's a war on, you know, and we all have to do our part— (*Recognizing Daisy:*) Daisy?!

(Taxi Driver steps on the gas, and all three veer wildly as the cab weaves through traffic. Ideally a black and white panorama of 1940s city streets is projected in the background.)

DAISY: Jill?! Jill Trent! Goodness gracious. How are you?

(The two men aim and fire at the cab. Jill pulls out her revolver and begins firing back.)

Oh my!

JILL: I'm well. And you? (*Beat.*) Can't you get any closer, driver?

TAXI DRIVER: I'm tryin', lady, believe me, I'm tryin'!

JILL: Hand me your radio handset, okay?

TAXI DRIVER: Here you go.

JILL: Central Dispatch. Inform the Metropolitan Police that Jill Trent is in pursuit of two suspected criminals in a brown Studebaker sedan heading north on Fourth Avenue between Madison and Carnegie. They are armed and dangerous.

VOICE ON RADIO: Roger that, Jill Trent.

DAISY: You're...a cop?

JILL: Not exactly, although the cops know me all too well. (*Handing Daisy her business card:*) Have a look.

DAISY: It's...blank! Hey, wait a minute! Invisible ink? If only I had a few drops of lemon juice, I could make out what it says!

JILL: (*Handing her a small vial with a dropper:*) You haven't lost any of your science smarts, I see.

(She then aims and fires again.)

DAISY: Holy smokes. "Jill Trent, Science Sleuth. Private Eye"! I thought for sure you'd be department chair at a university by now.

JILL: Actually, I was—until a couple of years ago. But like I said, there's a war on, and everyone's got a role to play.

DAISY: And your role is...?

JILL: Solving mysteries and fighting crime, using the most advanced scientific techniques! And if I run across a couple of dangerous characters like those two in the course of my work, well, I make that part of my job as well—to track them down and bring them to justice.

(Another exchange of gunfire.)

What about you? What are you up to these days?

DAISY: Me? Well, I, uh...

TAXI DRIVER: She's on her way to a job interview!

JILL: Let me guess: head scientist at an important laboratory!

DAISY: Well, not exactly...

TAXI DRIVER: It's for a secretarial position!

DAISY: Well... stenographer, is more like it. Although one day I hope to acquire the full array of skills needed to be a secretary—

(Another exchange of gunfire.)

JILL: Blazes! Traffic ahead, and now they're driving on the sidewalk! Get up there and follow them. Can't you go any faster?

TAXI DRIVER: What do you want from me, lady? They just shot out one of my front tires.

JILL: You still have three good tires, don't you? Quit yer bellyaching and drive like you mean it, okay?

TAXI DRIVER: Oh, for Pete's sake!

(Music and gunshots intensify.)

JILL: Good. We're closing in on them.

DAISY: Hooray! Hooray!—

(At that moment an ELDERLY LADY with a walker steps in front of the cab. The screeching of brakes as the cab comes to an abrupt halt. After a few loud blares, the music concludes. The Elderly Lady takes forever to cross in front of the cab, as dialogue continues. The other "car" disappears from view.)

JILL: They got away from us, Daisy. Just as we were closing in on them.

DAISY: Yes, I saw! How terrible!

JILL: Maybe the cops will nab them. If not, I'll get 'em eventually. You can let us off here, driver. How much do we owe you?

TAXI DRIVER: A dollar twenty on the meter. And I'm gonna need a new tire.

JILL: *(Handing him a ten-dollar bill:)* Here you go.

TAXI DRIVER: Thanks, lady. And good luck on your job interview, honey. Bigley, Badley and Ugley is just across the street!

DAISY: Oh my, it *is!* And with ten minutes to spare!

(Daisy and Jill exit onto the sidewalk.)

Jill Trent! You certainly seem to be leading an exciting life! *(Holding up the business card:)* And putting your science skills to good use, I see.

JILL: That? That's nothing! Wait 'til you see the science lab in my private eye office.

DAISY: Oh golly, I'd love to! (*Beat.*) Jill.

JILL: Yeah?

DAISY: I was just thinking. If we had tagged that car with a radioactive isotope—say, atomically charged chewing gum propelled from, let's say, a dart gun—

JILL: (*A light bulb going off!*) —with a half-life of say, a day or two—

DAISY: —then wherever it went, every official Geiger counter in the city would go off—

JILL: —and we could have followed them to their ringleader and nabbed them all!

DAISY: It was just a thought, and probably not a very good one.

JILL: What do you mean? It's brilliant! Oh, Daisy, when I graduated a year ahead of you, I would have sworn that you were on your way to a Nobel Prize. Whatever happened to your scientific dreams?

DAISY: (*Beat.*) Professor Hoffmeister happened.

JILL: Oscar-Meyer Hoffmeister! Oh, how I despised that creep.

DAISY: He never stopped picking on me, tearing my work apart. "You have no aptitude for science," he finally told me—

JILL: No aptitude for science?! He was jealous, is all!

DAISY: "Leave the university now and quit wasting your time and mine!" is what he said to me.

JILL: So you dropped out?

DAISY: I couldn't take the constant pressure. I never got the degree that I had worked so hard for.

JILL: I'll tell you something that I've figured out. That when you're doing something new or revolutionary—that's when all the bullies and doubters and critics emerge, trying to throw you off. But you can't give in to them, Daisy. Don't let them write the story of your life.

DAISY: The story of my life. You're right, Jill. And if you had been there with me, you might have convinced me to stand up to Dr. Hoffmeister and stay. But you had gone off into the world. And now it's too late.

JILL: What do you mean, it's too late? You can join me in *my* work, Daisy. Be my partner!

DAISY: Your partner?! Are you serious?

JILL: I've never been more serious. Think of it: the two of us forging new scientific discoveries and inventions. There are so many bad guys in the world. Together we can bring down a few of them. (*Picturing their names in lights:*) Jill Trent, Science Sleuth, and Daisy Smith, certified scientific genius! If we put our heads together, there's nothing we can't do. And when this war's over, I'll see to it that you get enrolled in college again—at any university you choose!

DAISY: You'd do that for me?

JILL: Of course I would!

DAISY: Oh my!

JILL: You can do great things, Daisy. Make the world safer. And live your dreams.

DAISY: Live...my dreams! (*Beat, as she reconsiders:*) I just don't know, Jill. Perhaps Professor Hoffmeister did me a favor when he told me to drop out. 'Cause maybe I'm not cut out for that world anymore—the dog-eat-dog world of science. And as for the kind of work that you appear to be doing... (*Beat. Pulling a*

snapshot out of her purse:) Let me show you something. This is Brad.

JILL: Brad, huh? He's pretty good-looking.

DAISY: Oh yes, he is! He's my fiancé. He's over there now – somewhere overseas. Brave, handsome Brad! We're going to get married when he comes home. Buy a home and start a family. *That's my dream now, and it's more than enough for me.*

JILL: You *will* come by my science lab sometime, won't you?

DAISY: (*Jill's business card in hand:*) Of course I will. I'll call you soon!

(After a quick embrace, Daisy walks away.)

JILL: Good luck on your interview!

(Romantic music underscoring.)

NARRATOR: That night, Daisy pens a letter to her beloved beau.

DAISY: (*Looking over her letter:*) Dear Brad. Nothing too exciting to report about here. But you'll never guess who I shared a taxi ride with today, while I was on my way to a job interview – my best friend in science college, Jill Trent! We had so much fun catching up on each other's lives, that the time just seemed to fly by! Well, I should hear about the steno job soon. Do stay safe, my brave, valiant Brad. (*Signing her name:*) Your loving Daisy.

(Blackout. Segue music.)

EPISODE 2: The Case of the Black Sheep Murder

(Lights up on Narrator.)

NARRATOR: Jill Trent's latest invention gets her into heavy trouble this time – and then gets her right out again. Now let's watch what happens when Jill and her friend Daisy come up against "The Case of the Black Sheep Murder"!

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(He lights up a cigarette.)

But first. Friends. After a long day of chasing violators, or just gathered around the dinner table with friends and family, do as Jill and Daisy do, and reach for a Chesterfield—the fresher, cleaner, milder cigarette—and simply the most satisfying smoke you can find. Chesterfield cigarettes.

(He lights a cigarette, inhales deeply and blows out a smoke ring.)

"Blow some smoke my way." *(Beat.)* It all started on a warm summer evening. Jill had just finished showing Daisy around her science lab, when they decided to get some fresh air.

(Lights up on Jill and Daisy, taking a walk outdoors.)

JILL: So, as I was saying the Element Detector is still eluding me—a nut I've been trying to crack for years.

DAISY: You and *many* of the world's most brilliant scientists!

JILL: *(Pulling out a pack of cigarettes:)* Chesterfield, Daisy?

DAISY: Sure.

JILL: So where do you think your fellow Brad is stationed?

DAISY: I have no idea, of course, but from the sound of his letters, he's on the front somewhere. North Africa is my guess. Or maybe somewhere in the Pacific, the poor angel... *(A beat as she has a revelation:)* Angel!

JILL: What is it?

DAISY: That Element Detector of yours—I think I've just figured out how to get it to work!

JILL: You have?

DAISY: Listen to me: Take a solid object—a chunk of silver, say. It holds onto all its precious little silver atoms for dear life. But once you subject that silvery nugget to powerful gyroscopically

generated electromagnetic forces, its atoms become excitable and radiate in all directions in the surrounding atomic space.

JILL: The *halo* effect.

DAISY: Yes! So in order to detect and identify the element inside an object, we should first be –

JILL: –super-magnetizing the object to the point where our detector ray can easily penetrate into the halo—the space *between* the atoms! You might be onto something, Daisy!

DAISY: Let's hurry back to your lab and try it out!

NARRATOR: But Daisy and Jill's scientific ruminations were soon interrupted by a blood-curdling scream and a pistol shot.

WOMAN: (*Off:*) No! No! Stop!

ARTHUR: (*Off:*) Where is it? Where the devil is it?!

(*A WOMAN's scream and a pistol shot. Theme Music kicks in.*)

DAISY: What was that?

JILL: A blood-curdling scream and a pistol shot. Let's go!

(*They turn a corner and find a man [ARTHUR] hovering over a Woman on the ground, and rifling through her purse.*)

ARTHUR: Where did she hide it?!

JILL: You! Stop what you're doing and put your hands up!

ARTHUR: Stop for a couple of girls? Not a chance!

(*Producing a gun, he aims it at Jill and Daisy.*)

JILL: Duck, Daisy!

(*He fires a couple of shots in their direction, then grabs the woman's purse and flees.*)

(*Checking the victim:*) Dead. Shot through the heart. And the killer got away. If only I had my gun –

DAISY: Jill! I recognize this woman. It's Mrs. Eleanor Van Doran!

JILL: Isn't she the woman who owns the Rama Diamond – ?

DAISY: And vaults full of other precious stones, reportedly.

JILL: *(Examining the dead woman's hand:)* Now, this is odd. Why didn't that guy take this ruby ring?

DAISY: It certainly looks valuable enough!

JILL: I already suspect there's more to this case than what meets the eye.

(Blackout.)

(Segue music. Lights up on Police Headquarters, manned by SGT. MULLIGAN.)

NARRATOR: A short time later, at Police Headquarters...

SGT. MULLIGAN: Well if it ain't Jill Trent, Private Eye. How come anytime there's trouble in this town, you seem to be in the vicinity?

JILL: Some girls go for nylons and shoes, Sergeant Mulligan. I guess you can say I like shopping for trouble.

SGT. MULLIGAN: And who's your friend?

JILL: This is my scientific colleague, Miss Daisy Smith.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Great. So now the two of youse can be in two places at once, just so you can make our lives twice as miserable. Tell me again exactly what you saw. You said on the phone that the man was looking for something.

DAISY: He kept saying, "Where did you hide it?" When we turned the corner, Mrs. Van Doran was on the ground and he was going through her purse. He grabbed it and ran when he saw us.

JILL: The thing I can't understand is why he didn't make off with the ruby ring on her hand.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Very simple. It wasn't a murder for robbery. More likely a case of revenge, or blackmail...a crime of passion. You name it.

JILL: I don't buy it. Even if it was a revenge or blackmail killing, the murderer still wouldn't have passed up a valuable prize like that ring—if only to make it *look* as if the motive was robbery.

SGT. MULLIGAN: You know, maybe you should leave that kind of speculatin' to the professionals. Anyway, we've picked up three suspects. Step over here, you two, and see if you can identify the killer.

DAISY: Well, we'll try, but it was a pretty dark alley.

(Lights up on a line-up: the Taxi Driver, JACK BENSON, and a THIRD MAN.)

(Pointing to the Taxi Driver:) This definitely wasn't the man. He was our taxi driver the other day, in fact!

SGT. MULLIGAN: Okay, bub, you're off the hook. But if we ever catch you driving on the sidewalk again, I'm going to personally take away your taxi medallion. *(Beat as the Taxi Driver exits.)* And this guy?

JILL: No, it wasn't him, either.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Okay, get lost. *(To Daisy and Jill, as Third Man exits:)* What about this character? We picked him up in a diner just a block from the crime scene.

JILL: This one...bears some resemblance to the man we saw, but I can't be positive.

DAISY: He does look similar. And yet—

(JUNE bursts onto the scene.)

JUNE: No! No! Jack didn't kill my mother!

SGT. MULLIGAN: Who the heck are you?

JUNE: I'm June Van Doran. And Jack Benson here is my fiancé!

SGT. MULLIGAN: Fiancé, huh? How long have you two been engaged?

JACK: For three years.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Three years!?

JACK: Three years, four months, and twelve days. But Mrs. Van Doran called me a fortune-hunter. She said I would never marry her daughter as long as she lived! (*Beat.*) I guess that makes me a likely suspect.

SGT. MULLIGAN: I guess it does. Where were you at the time of the murder?

JACK: Well, I was in the Museum of Science until about 7:15. But I didn't talk to anybody there, so I don't know how I can prove it.

SGT. MULLIGAN: You're certainly not making a very good case for yourself. How'd you know it was 7:15 when you left the museum?

JACK: I guess I must have looked at my pocket watch... That's funny, I can't find my watch! I must have lost it someplace.

SGT. MULLIGAN: That *is* funny. In fact, it's so hysterical that we're going to lock you up on suspicion of murder, Benson. You had the motive, you were at least partially IDed by eyewitnesses and you have no alibi for your whereabouts at the time of the murder. Maybe you'll want to save us all a whole lot of trouble and confess now —

JUNE: Oh, Jack!

JACK: It's alright, June-ikins. I'm sure everything's going to get sorted out in due time.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Don't be so sure. Come along now, you. This way.

(Sgt. Mulligan exits with Jack.)

JUNE: Jack! ... Jack!

(Jill and Daisy move to the side.)

DAISY: It's hard for me to believe that Jack Benson is the killer. If he had killed Mrs. Van Doran, would he have stopped at a diner a block away? You'd think he would want to get as far away as possible.

JILL: My thought exactly. I have a hunch that something much bigger is going on, and that somehow our frustrated fiancé got caught up in the middle of it.

JUNE: *(To Jill and Daisy:)* He's innocent! I know he is! He doesn't care at all about my money! You've got to believe me!

JILL: Miss Van Doran, we're not on the police force, but we might be able to help. We understand your mother had a great many fine jewels. Where did she keep them?

JUNE: In safes – in various locations all across the city. Mother's fortunes are considerable. She always said that there would be criminal organizations and foreign governments alike who would go to any means to locate them, and that it would be safer for me not to know. Her will reveals the secret, I understand. I can contact her attorney in the morning –

JILL: There may not be enough time for that. Thank you, Miss Van Doran. We'll be in touch.

(Lights fade. A phone rings. Lights up on SCIENCE MUSEUM DIRECTOR answering the phone.)

MUSEUM DIRECTOR: Hello, Museum of Science. ... Oh, hello, Miss Trent, how do you do? ... A lost watch? Well, it just so happens that we did find a man's pocket watch left here earlier this evening. ... I have it right here. It's got the initials J.B. engraved on the back. ... Okay. We'll keep it here until the owner claims it. ... You're welcome. Goodbye, Miss Trent.

(Lights fade on Museum Director, as he hangs up.)

NARRATOR: A short time later, Jill Trent and her accidental sidekick continue their investigation – at the City Morgue!

(Spooky music. Lights up on Jill and Daisy sneaking into a dark room, flashlights in hand. A nervous Daisy is carrying the Element Detector.)

JILL: I have a hunch that the key to this mystery lies inside that big ruby on Mrs. Van Doren's finger.

DAISY: But...now that Jack Benson appears to have an alibi, can't we simply pass the information along to the police and call it a day?

JILL: Not 'til we get to the bottom of this. What's the matter? Haven't you ever broken into a morgue before?

DAISY: Why, I've never even jaywalked!

JILL: I'll try to find Mrs. Van Doran. Go stand on that stepladder and look out the window to make sure no one sneaks up on us.

DAISY: Uh, Jill...

JILL: Oh, that's right. You're afraid of heights.

DAISY: Terribly!

JILL: How do you manage working on the 29th floor of the Gridiron Building?

DAISY: Fortunately, I'm in the middle of the steno pool, a half-mile away from any windows –

JILL: Oh, we're in luck! The ruby ring. This is her! (*Pulling the ruby off of the ring:*) Here's the rock.

DAISY: Okay, first we'll put it inside the gyroscopic magnociter chamber.

(Sound effects.)

JILL: That should be enough time.

(She takes the ring out of the chamber and puts it on a table.)

Right. Now for the pulsatile element detector ray gun.

DAISY: But first, the protective goggles!

(Both put on goggles resembling View-Masters. Daisy picks up a type of ray gun.)

Okay, I'm going to aim this into the center of the ruby for exactly eleven seconds. Aluminum is the most important element in rubies, so it should contain a lot of it!

(A strobe light. More sound effects. Beat.)

JILL: Do you see what I see, Daisy? In the spectrographic projection?

DAISY: A minuscule amount of aluminum. It's mostly room air!

JILL AND DAISY: The ruby is *hollow*!

(A Man appears in the shadows, carrying a pistol.)

ARTHUR: That's all I wanted to know. Thanks!

DAISY: Who...who are you?

JILL: You're the man we saw beside Mrs. Van Doran's body on the street. And you're not Jack Benson!

ARTHUR: You're right! I'm *Arthur* Benson, Jack's brother! Since you'll never have a chance to spill the beans, I'll tell you that I killed Mrs. Van Doran because she put up a fight when I held

her up and tried to search her for the map showing where her safes are hidden.

JILL: But how did you know she had it? We were told it was a secret!

ARTHUR: I was once her chauffeur, and I heard her mention it to her daughter! That was before she fired me—when she learned I had a criminal record.

DAISY: I'm beginning to understand. Your being Jack Benson's brother was probably the real reason she objected to Jack as a son-in-law. Because you're the black sheep of the family.

ARTHUR: Yeah. But she was wrong there. *Jack's* always been the real black sheep of the family—a goody-two shoes. Everyone else—a hardened career criminal like me. Even Grandma Nellie, may she rest in peace.

DAISY: Oh, I'm sorry for your loss!

(Jill rolls her eyes.)

ARTHUR: Jack really believes that old saw about honesty being the best policy. Now I'll just take that ring. If the rock is hollow, the map and combinations must be inside!

JILL: Even if it is, once you crack the safes how are you planning to pawn millions of dollars' worth of jewels without attracting attention and arousing suspicion?

ARTHUR: That's not my problem. All I've got to do is turn the map over to the ringleader of this heist, and in exchange I get a one-way ticket to a beach resort somewhere in South America. I'll be on Easy Street for life.

JILL: Who's your ringleader?

ARTHUR: Why should I tell you? You know enough already. Too much, in fact. So I'm afraid I'm gonna have to plug you.

JILL: Maybe we can make it worth your while not to kill us!

DAISY: You saw what our Element Detector can do. You could do the same thing with safes or bank vaults –

JILL: Determine if there's money inside them before going to the trouble of blowing them up.

DAISY: We'll explain to you how it works and give it to you free of charge – in exchange for our lives!

ARTHUR: You just show me how it works, and *then* I'll make up my mind.

JILL: Daisy, show him how it works.

DAISY: Yes. Of course. Well, first, we turn it on.

(Daisy turns the Element Detector ray gun back on, pointing it directly at Arthur's eyes. Theme Music kicks in.)

ARTHUR: Hey! My eyes! I can't see!

DAISY: Oh, goodness. I guess we forgot to give you the protective goggles!

JILL: How careless of us!

(Choreographed fight scene. Arthur flails around for a while, then makes an unexpected comeback. But Daisy is a surprise expert in Jiu Jitsu, and between the two of them, they're able to disarm and restrain him.)

ARTHUR: What the heck? Where'd you learn those moves?

DAISY: *(Placing him in a painful hold:)* In stenography school!

ARTHUR: Ow! Stop, please, I give up! Uncle! Uncle! Just take me downtown to the station.

JILL: Who's your ringleader?

ARTHUR: I don't know!

JILL: I said, Who's your ringleader?!

ARTHUR: I told you, I don't know! Some professor, they say, but I've never even seen him, for crying out loud. Everything's done through intermediaries. There are two, three levels of separation—at least. I'm just a small potato—barely a French fry.

JILL: Oh for crying out loud. Okay, Daisy, cuff this miserable so-and-so, and let's get him down to the station.

(Lights fade on Jill, Daisy and Arthur.)

(Lights up on Police Headquarters, where Sgt. Mulligan, Jack and Miss Van Doran are waiting. Jill pushes a handcuffed Arthur before her.)

JILL: Here's your murderer, Sergeant—and this is what he was after all along: a map of the safes where Mrs. Van Doran kept all her jewels. Keep it someplace secure—there are plenty of people who'd like to get their hands on it.

DAISY: This is Jack Benson's brother, Arthur. Jack knew his brother had set him up but didn't say anything.

JACK: I didn't want to rat on my own brother! He telephoned me, said he was sorry he'd gotten me into trouble, and promised to give himself up—

JILL: Which he had no intention of doing.

JUNE: Oh, Jack! I knew you were innocent!

JACK: I love you, June-ikens. I wouldn't care if you didn't have a nickel to your name.

(They kiss and embrace.)

SGT. MULLIGAN: And you two can positively I.D. this character as the man at the scene of the crime?

DAISY: Without a doubt!

SGT. MULLIGAN: Mr. Benson—the *other* Mr. Benson—you are under arrest for the murder of Mrs. Van Doran!

ARTHUR: It ain't fair. It ain't fair! I would have gotten away with it, if it weren't for a couple o' meddling girls!

SGT. MULLIGAN: Get a move on, bub. See you around, Trent. And whatever your name is.

(He exits with Arthur.)

(Jill and Daisy exchange looks.)

JILL: You're welcome, Sergeant! *(Beat.)* Not bad for an evening's work. How about we go out and celebrate with a nightcap?

DAISY: Oh, Jill. Tomorrow's a workday and this working girl has to be up bright and early. But you'll call me, won't you? When you have another case.

JILL: There's always another case. Come over Saturday morning, will you? I could use your help on an experiment.

DAISY: You bet I'll be there! *(Turns to exit then turns back:)* Jill. That was so much fun!

(Blackout.)

(Lights up on Narrator.)

NARRATOR: Jill and Daisy match their investigative science against another extraordinary criminal in our next episode. Watch for it! *(Beat.)* But first. The next morning...

(Lights up on Sgt. Mulligan and Jill talking on the phone.)

SGT. MULLIGAN: Miss Trent. Sergeant Mulligan here.

JILL: What is it, Sergeant?

SGT. MULLIGAN: You know that map? Of all Mrs. Van Doran's diamonds and jewels?

JILL: What about it?

SGT. MULLIGAN: Somebody broke into the break room and took pictures of it.

JILL: The break room, you say.

SGT. MULLIGAN: There were flashbulbs all over the floor, under the staff bulletin board.

JILL: The staff bulletin board in the break room.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Oh, it gets worse. Every one of the safes on the map has been cleaned out. Every last diamond and pearl. They did a thorough job. Very professional.

JILL: Professionalism. That's something you don't see much of nowadays.

SGT. MULLIGAN: You can say that again, Miss Trent.

JILL: You do realize that a hostile foreign government was very possibly behind this caper—such as the one in Germany?

SGT. MULLIGAN: (*Trying to think:*) The one in Germany... You mean, the Germans?!

JILL: Yeah, that's the one.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Oh. (*After an embarrassed pause:*) Well, it was nice talking to you, Miss Trent. Goodbye.

(*They hang up.*)

(*Blackout. Segue music.*)

EPISODE 3: A Case of Bubble Trouble

NARRATOR: "Bubble Trouble" and Trixie can cause an awful lot of grief! If you doubt it, learn what happens to Jill and Daisy in another round of slam bang sleuthing! (*Beat.*) Next Saturday morning at Jill Trent's science laboratory...

(Jill and Daisy are carefully funneling a liquid into a vial. MRS. DUNCAN and her seven-year-old daughter TRIXIE have arrived. Trixie is chewing gum and blowing bubbles.)

MRS. DUNCAN: I really appreciate your looking after Trixie over the weekend, Jill! I'm sure she'll be a perfect angel.

JILL: Of course, Mrs. Duncan. I'm tickled to have her.

MRS. DUNCAN: And here's a little money in case the ice cream truck comes by.

JILL: Five dollars!

DAISY: We can buy out the whole truck with five dollars.

TRIXIE: Hooray!

MRS. DUNCAN: Goodbye, Trixie. Be good, now! Don't get into any trouble!

(She exits.)

TRIXIE: Whatcha doing? I wanna know whatcha doing!

DAISY: We're experimenting with iodinated phosphate of cerargyrite, Trixie.

TRIXIE: What's *that*?

(She may turn her back to us, as she leans in toward the experiment. Her bubble pops with a loud bang. Startled, Daisy spills the contents of the vial onto the table.)

Oops.

DAISY: Iodinated phosphate of cerargyrite, my mutton, is an incredibly *rare* and *expensive* substance that attracts and conducts radio waves from distant planets. And now, thanks to your bubble gum, three-quarters of the world's supply has taken up residence on this five-dollar bill!

TRIXIE: Wotta shame. But my bubble gum's spoiled too, lady!

DAISY: (*Handing Trixie a nickel:*) Here's a nickel, go out and buy a stick of Triple Mint bubble gum. And take your time, okay?

TRIXIE: A *nickel*? Are you kiddin' me? Bubble gum's ten cents a stick!

JILL: What?! Are you sure about that?

TRIXIE: Sure I'm sure!

DAISY: Jeepers, of all the *gumption*!

JILL: I hate to see kids rooked. Just show us where you buy your gum, Trixie.

DAISY: Jill, don't you think we have more important work here?

JILL: It's the principle of the thing, Daisy! Our new research can wait. Let's go!

NARRATOR: A few blocks away...

(Lights up on a SHOPKEEPER. Trixie, Jill and Daisy enter.)

TRIXIE: Here's where I buy my gum! Now, if you're a *real* detective, put him under arrest!

SHOPKEEPER: What's this all about? I run an honest business here – always did!

JILL: Wouldn't you agree that ten cents for a stick of gum is outright robbery?

SHOPKEEPER: Sure! But it's costing me nine cents! Me and every other shopkeeper in this neighborhood. The Ghoulardi Brothers have the bubble gum racket sewed up in this town.

DAISY: This is going to give us something to chew on. And I don't mean gum!

JILL: Can you tell us how we can find these racketeers?

SHOPKEEPER: Well...when I want a few boxes, I put this sign in the window. (*Produces sign that reads "No Bubble Gum":*) I leave an envelope with cash under the doormat. A car makes the delivery late at night – zooms in and out, just like that! They work so quickly, there isn't much chance of catching 'em!

DAISY: No wonder there's a gum shortage in the armed forces. There's too much profit to be made by extorting six-year-olds.

TRIXIE: Hey! Watch your mouth, lady! I'm seven!

DAISY: Well, the point is, the Army is no longer including chewing gum in our boys' meal rations! Brad says that morale is terrible as a result.

JILL: I wouldn't be at all surprised if the Germans are behind this. (*To Shopkeeper:*) Tonight I want you to put that sign in the window. And leave cash under the doormat like you usually do. Except, make sure you include this five-dollar bill in the cash. It's marked with iodinated phosphate of cerargyrite!

SHOPKEEPER: Ce-ra-who?

JILL: Just do as we say. When they come by, we'll be waiting in the alley across the street, and with any luck we'll catch these black market profiteers and bring them to justice.

NARRATOR: That evening, Jill and Daisy try to persuade Trixie to go to bed.

(Lights up on Jill, Daisy and Trixie.)

TRIXIE: Hey! You're supposed to be babysitting me tonight. You can't just leave me alone while you're out catching the bad guys. That's against the law! Besides which, that was my ice cream money that you gave away!

DAISY: It'll just be for an hour or two. We promise. And we'll replace the five-spot with a brand-new one.

TRIXIE: You better! But I wanna help catch the musketeers!

JILL: Look, Trixie! Wouldn't it be wonderful if you kids could get bubble gum for a penny again?

TRIXIE: Sure! It would be *swell!*

JILL: Well, then just close your eyes, and—

TRIXIE: No!

JILL: I'm sorry, but you've just *got* to go to sleep!

TRIXIE: No! No! No! No! No! I demand to speak to my attorneys!

(Daisy and Jill close the door on her.)

(From behind a closed door:) I'm gonna get an elephant and a tiger and a rocket ship and knock your whole house down!

NARRATOR: *(With a chuckle:)* Twenty minutes later...

(Jill and Daisy both appear exhausted from listening to Trixie's tantrum.)

DAISY: I think she's finally asleep.

JILL: Let's go. We don't want to miss out on our chance of catching these louts.

(They put their trench coats on and set off. Trixie enters, in pajamas.)

TRIXIE: *(To us:)* Huh! I'm the one who chews bubble gum, and I'm not gonna stay in bed!

(She follows them offstage.)

NARRATOR: A few blocks away, Jill and Daisy are staking out the site when a sedan pulls up.

(Lights up on the rear end of a car, trunk open, filled with boxes marked "Bubble Gum." Jill and Daisy are in the nearby shadows.)

DAISY: Jill, those are our racketeers!

NARRATOR: But our usually observant detective and her friend are too busy watching the distinctive gait of a Man in a Brown Suit to notice that the little fugitive Trixie Duncan has also arrived on the scene!

(MAN IN BROWN SUIT enters with a dramatic limp, followed by MAN IN BLUE SUIT.)

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: I'll grab one box and you grab the other.

MAN IN BLUE SUIT: Got it.

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: We'll drop 'em in the after-hours delivery chute like usual.

(Both men exit. Trixie appears, still in pajamas.)

TRIXIE: Oh boy oh boy, do I see what I see!

(She crawls into the trunk. The Man in the Brown Suit reappears and closes the trunk door.)

(From behind the door.) Creepers! I'm locked in! Yuk, yuk, yuk!

JILL: That sounds like Trixie!

DAISY: She's in the trunk of that sedan, Jill!

(Lights out on the back end of the car. The sound of a car speeding away.)

JILL: Let's go!

(Jill and Daisy begin running in place toward the audience.)

DAISY: How are we ever going to catch up with them?

JILL: With any luck, they're only going a short distance. In the meantime, I'll turn on my walkie-talkie, and we should be able to pick up radio waves from the iodinated phosphate of cerargyrite.

(There are a number of squawks and beeps, and then the Jill Trent Theme Music kicks in as if over a tiny transistor radio picking up a broadcast from a million miles away.)

They must have turned into one of those alleys—but which one? *(Beat.)* Wait a minute! Isn't that a bubble gum wrapper?

DAISY: Yep! And there's another one!

JILL: It looks like we're on the right track, Daisy!

DAISY: What a break, Jill. There's the car!

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: *(Entering:)* What's all the racket about?

JILL: *(Gun pulled:)* You're a little more hep to this racket than we are, Bub!

(Man in Blue Suit enters.)

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: Grab that other chick, Joe!

(Man in Blue Suit aims his gun at Daisy as he pulls her into a headlock. Seeing her friend in danger, Jill lowers her weapon. Man in Brown Suit grabs it.)

TRIXIE: *(Banging on the trunk:)* Hey! Lemme outta here!

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: What's this? A kid?! *(Pulling Trixie out of the trunk by her pajama tops:)* So! Having a time for yourself, Pee-Wee?

TRIXIE: I was, until I ran outta bubble gum!

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: *(Holding all three at gunpoint:)* Okay, youse. Walk this way.

TRIXIE: I couldn't walk that way even if I tried, Mister!

(They're led into a storeroom. Their BOSS is there.)

MAN IN BLUE SUIT: Confidentially, Mr. Ghoulardi just *loves* unexpected visitors.

BOSS: Who are these characters?

JILL: (*Aside to Daisy:*) Play dumb, and let me handle this. (*To the others:*) Nylons. Tires. Cotton goods! I *thought* this would be a good outfit to work for!

BOSS: Skip the corny act, babe! What are youse nosing around for?

JILL: A job, pal! If we had anything else planned, wouldn't we have tipped off the feds?

BOSS: Maybe. I suppose you have an angle figured out, eh?

(The men put their guns away.)

JILL: A natural! Now ten-to-one, this is only one spoke in a much larger operation. Why not be smart, and do a little side business?

BOSS: *Side* business?

JILL: Why, sure. You skim off a portion of these nylons and sell 'em for five bucks, with a free stick of bubble gum to take home to the kiddies.

DAISY: Chances are, *your* boss won't ever notice.

MAN IN BLUE SUIT: That's brilliant! Maybe we *can* use a pair of smart chicks in this outfit, boss!

BOSS: How 'bout a little retainer of say, a hundred bucks, just to make sure the ideas keep flowing?

JILL: Make it five hundred and it's a deal.

TRIXIE: Just you wait! I'm gonna tell my mother all about this. I never *did* believe you were detectives, anyway!

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: (*Grabbing Trixie's arm:*) *What?* What's goin' on around here? Tell me, kid!

(She kicks him in the shin.)

Ouch!

BOSS: Detectives, huh? I knew there was something phony about this.

DAISY: *(Held at gunpoint by Man in the Blue Suit:)* Oh, Trixie, did you mess things up!

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: *(Lunging after Trixie:)* While we're at it, how'd you get in our car? Answer me, kid!

(Turning upstage, Trixie blows a bubble which pops in his face.)

Blazes! I can't see!

JILL: *(Karate-chopping the gun from his hand:)* Let's keep things popping, by gum!

(She spins, aims and fires at the Boss, hitting him in the shoulder.)

(Meanwhile Daisy picks up a small crowbar and strikes Man in the Blue Suit over the head.)

MAN IN BLUE SUIT: Ow!

(Daisy grabs his gun and levels it at him. Boss grabs Trixie.)

BOSS: Okay, this little pest's now a hostage. Put your guns down and slide 'em over here, and nobody gets hurt.

TRIXIE: Don't do it, Jill Trent! This is fun! Just like in the movies.

BOSS: If it wasn't for the kid here, I'd plug both of you.

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: What's our next move, Boss?

BOSS: Our next move is to hightail it outta here before the cops and the FBI arrive.

MAN IN BLUE SUIT: The Professor ain't gonna be happy once he finds out that our operation was turned upside down by a couple of dames.

TRIXIE: Hey! What am I— day-old chewing gum?

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BOSS: Yeah, well maybe we don't stick around long enough to find out how the Professor feels about it. Maybe we grab the proceeds from this week's shenanigans and get on the next boat to Venezuela.

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: Maybe I'll be joining you.

MAN IN BLUE SUIT: Me, too!

(Jill puts her gun down and slides it across the floor to one of the men. She motions to Daisy to do the same.)

JILL: Daisy.

(Man in Blue Suit and Man in Brown Suit hastily pocket their guns. The Boss pushes Trixie towards Jill and Daisy.)

BOSS: Take the little brat.

TRIXIE: Aw, shucks!

MAN IN BROWN SUIT: *(To Jill and Daisy:)* See you around, chicks!

TRIXIE: Don't count on it, Buster!

(The men prepare to leave, the Boss first, babying his shoulder.)

JILL: Wait a minute! You forgot to take your money.

DAISY: *What?*

(Boss motions for one of his men to take care of it.)

MAN IN BLUE SUIT: *(Turning back to grab the money, then winking:)* Thanks, doll, I owe you one.

(They exit. The sound of a car starting up and speeding away.)

DAISY: Jill, what in the world?

JILL: That loot is still sending out radio waves. I'll tip off the cops and maybe they'll be able to track these characters down.

DAISY: It makes me mad to see them get away with this racket for so long. To think of our boys over there going without good old-fashioned American chewing gum to remind them of home.

JILL: To think of the nylons I haven't worn in the last five years!

TRIXIE: And to think of all the bubbles I coulda been blowing all these years. It's not fair!

(Blackout.)

NARRATOR: The next morning, at Jill's apartment.

(Lights up on Jill and Daisy, looking over a newspaper.)

JILL: *(Reading a newspaper headline:)* "Black Market Operation Uncovered by Lady Gumshoes, but Thieves Escape Police Dragnet."

TRIXIE: Wotta shame!

JILL: Well, maybe that marked bill will show up somewhere else. And even if it doesn't, it's not necessarily a lost cause. You never know when a case like this one will give you the one vital piece of evidence that cracks an even more important case down the line.

DAISY: Here comes your mother, Trixie. Right on time.

JILL: Hide that newspaper away, and let's just hope she doesn't read the *Daily Bugle*.

TRIXIE: I told ya already! She says the only thing that rag's good for is for wrapping fish.

JILL: Now, remember what we agreed to? Not a word about the chewing gum capers if you want to keep this box of gum. And if you ever want to help us on another case.

TRIXIE: What do you think I am, some kinda rotten fink? When I make a deal, it's a deal!

MRS. DUNCAN: (*Entering:*) Here I am! Thank you so much for watching Trixie over the weekend.

JILL: Any time. She wasn't a bit of trouble.

MRS. DUNCAN: Did you miss me, darling?

TRIXIE: I missed you something terrible! But maybe next time you go away and leave me with Jill Trent, you can stay away for a little longer. Like for a month or two!

(Jill and Daisy exchange glances.)

MRS. DUNCAN: A month! We'll see about that!

(Trixie blows a bubble that splats in her face. All laugh. Lights out. Lights up on Narrator in a dentist's smock.)

NARRATOR: For another uproarious adventure, look for Jill Trent in our next issue. But first. Friends, here's a habit you won't ever want to break. Triple-Mint Gum. Why is that? Well, let's start with its delicious taste, not to mention a cleaner mouth, whiter teeth, better check-ups. And it aids digestion as well. In fact, in a scientific survey, four out of five dentists recommend Triple-Mint Gum for their patients who chew gum. So whether between meals, on the run, or listening to your favorite show on the radio, do as Jill and Daisy do, and chew Triple-Mint Gum. Triple-Mint—it's the chew that satisfies.

(Lights out on Narrator. Romantic music underscoring. Lights up on Daisy writing a letter.)

DAISY: Dear Brad. Not much new to report on the home front. I'm enjoying my new stenography job, and just got a 15-cent per hour raise. Rather than spend it on something silly, I'm going to save my money to buy another 25-dollar U.S. War Bond. Oh! I read in the paper that the Army will soon be putting chewing gum in your meal rations again. It seems that there was a temporary disruption of the supply of gum. I don't know any of the details, but hopefully that's a little ray of sunshine in your

day, wherever you may be. Stay well and safe, my valiant, courageous Brad. Your Daisy.

(Blackout. Segue music.)

EPISODE 4: The Case of the Sanitary Murders

(Lights up on Narrator.)

NARRATOR: Can a man be brutally murdered without even being touched? Can a magazine advertisement lead to a string of unexplained deaths? These are the actual problems that face Science Sleuth Jill Trent and her accidental sidekick, Daisy Smith, in their latest scientific-crime case—the mysterious, spine-tingling Case of the Sanitary Murders!

(Lights up on DR. REINER in his residence, reading the newspaper with obvious enjoyment. His butler OTTO enters with a carafe of brandy.)

DR. REINER: "The Mystery Deepens."

(He chuckles appreciatively.)

OTTO: Five murders to date, sir, and nobody has even the slightest suspicion! Your victims have willed everything they own to the charities you control. And the entire world thinks you're wonderful!

DR. REINER: I *am* wonderful, Otto!

OTTO: Murder can be a dangerous business. But you've managed to keep your hands very clean.

DR. REINER: Oh yes, I have. Have a look at this baby powder advertisement. It was, in fact, the inspiration for my brilliant scheme.

OTTO: *(Reading:)* "Completely sanitary. Untouched by human hands." Indeed, sir.

DR. REINER: My so-called charities have not only made me rich beyond my wildest dreams – they have also allowed me to make substantial contributions to the Nazi war effort! Now, in my view, Otto, and the view of many experts, the victory in this war will go to whichever side is first to find a substantial quarry of *blastonium* –

OTTO: An extremely rare element, sir. But one with terrifying explosive power –

DR. REINER: – one thimbleful of which can level a medium-sized city.

OTTO: Indeed, sir.

DR. REINER: So you see why every dollar directed to the German war machine is of paramount importance. But enough exposition for the moment. I think this would be a good time to call John D. Rockabye back.

OTTO: (*Handing Dr. Reiner the phone:*) Very well, sir. He seemed to be a decent sort, wouldn't you say, sir?

DR. REINER: (*Dialing the phone:*) Oh yes, very nice fellow. Let's see if he's in.

NARRATOR: Little does Dr. Reiner know that Mrs. Gilmore, a lonely widow in the apartment building across the alley, is listening in on the conversation through a party line.

(The ringing of a phone. Lights up on MRS. GILMORE guiltily listening in on the phone.)

DR. REINER: Mr. John D. Rockabye please. ... Yes, I'll wait.

OTTO: No doubt the Fuhrer has been most impressed by your generosity.

DR. REINER: Yes, yes. According to Professor Hoffmeister, he has taken note of my contributions, which I only hope will help lead to the overthrow of that communist Roosevelt. Now, I

don't agree with Mr. Hitler on every single issue, mind you, but—

(Lights up on ROCKABYE, on the phone.)

ROCKABYE: Hello?

DR. REINER: Rockabye? This is Dr. Reiner.

ROCKABYE: Good evening, Dr. Reiner. What can I do for you?

DR. REINER: The document you signed, transferring your entire estate to my Charity for Crippled War Orphans upon your death—

ROCKABYE: Yes. What about it?

DR. REINER: I'm afraid you neglected to initial page four.

ROCKABYE: Oh, I see.

DR. REINER: Would you mind terribly coming over tonight to take care of this?

ROCKABYE: Tonight? I, uh—

DR. REINER: For the sake of the children, you know.

ROCKABYE: Well, I suppose I could. For the sake of the children.

DR. REINER: Come alone, please.

ROCKABYE: Alright. I'll see you soon, Doctor.

(All three hang up.)

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, at Jill Trent's science lab, Jill and Daisy, hard at work on a new scientific project, are taking a much-needed Ovaltine break.

(Lights up on Jill and Daisy drinking Ovaltine.)

JILL: Another cup of Ovaltine, Daisy?

DAISY: No, thank you. It was delicious, though!

JILL: (*Pointing to a newspaper on the table:*) Did you see this story? "The Mystery Deepens."

DAISY: Yes. Five nationally-known, wealthy businessmen, found dead in their cars at various locations around the city over the last two months—

JILL: Apparently without a scratch on them. And no fingerprints or other usable evidence at the scene.

DAISY: The police say they all appeared to die of natural causes. Quite a coincidence, wouldn't you say?

JILL: Hmm. That's no coincidence, if you ask me.

DAISY: Maybe that's why Sergeant Mulligan wants to see you tomorrow afternoon. To help develop some new leads.

JILL: I doubt it! As far as the police are concerned, I'm just a meddling amateur. Well, let's get back to work.

(Scene shifts back to Dr. Reiner's residence. The ringing of a doorbell. Dr. Reiner answers the door.)

DR. REINER: Oh, hello, Rockabye. Thank you for coming by on such short notice.

ROCKABYE: It's not a problem.

OTTO: May I take your coat, sir?

ROCKABYE: (*Taking out a pen:*) I suppose. Do you have that document for me to initial? I only have a moment.

DR. REINER: Yes, yes, this won't take long at all. (*Opening up a box:*) But here, use this pen instead.

ROCKABYE: Very well, then. If you insist.

DR. REINER: You came alone, did you?

ROCKABYE: (*Taking the pen:*) Yes... But it appears that I've already initialed this page, Dr. Reiner.

DR. REINER: You did, didn't you? My mistake.

(Rockabye drops to the ground dead. Dr. Reiner puts a pair of gloves on and places the pen back into the box.)

Place the pen carefully back in the fish tank, Otto.

OTTO: Very well, sir. Shall I contact Dr. Hoffmeister's office to arrange for the disposal of the remains, sir?

DR. REINER: Yes. As before, the body must be placed behind the steering wheel of his car. And the car is to be towed to another part of the city. Ever untouched by human hands, Otto!

OTTO: Hoffmeister's towing service has always been quite professional. Top-shelf.

DR. REINER: Speaking of which, here is another \$100,000 entrusted to Dr Hoffmeister, for the advancement of the Third Reich.

OTTO: Heil Hitler, sir.

NARRATOR: The next day, at Police Headquarters...

(Lights up on Mrs. Gilmore speaking with a skeptical and sarcastic Sgt. Mulligan.)

SGT. MULLIGAN: So let me get this straight. You were sitting at home, minding your own business, when you had a sudden burning desire to call your cousin in Omaha, and when you picked up the phone you *happened* to hear your neighbor Dr. Reiner on the line.

MRS. GILMORE: It's a party line, officer.

SGT. MULLIGAN: And how did you know it was Dr. Reiner?

MRS. GILMORE: Because I could see him through the window. He lives in the apartment building next to mine.

SGT. MULLIGAN: You're supposed to hang up if someone else is using the line, or didn't you know that? It's called eavesdropping, which is a criminal offense!

MRS. GILMORE: What else do you expect me to do in the evenings? I have no one to talk to since Harold's been gone—other than my parrot. And he's even worse than Harold. He keeps repeating the same thing over and over...

(Jill and Daisy enter.)

SGT. MULLIGAN: Miss Trent, I'll be right with you.

JILL: Alright.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Anyway, back to your little accidentally overheard conversation. You claim that you heard Dr. Reiner ask John D. Rockabye to come over.

MRS. GILMORE: First he was going on about how much he admired Hitler.

DAISY: Hitler?!

MRS. GILMORE: Yes. Adolph Hitler! Then when Mr. Rockabye got on the line, Dr. Reiner asked him to come over right away. Alone, he said. And when I saw in the newspaper this morning that they found Mr. Rockabye's body in his car on the other side of town, I thought I should let you know.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Mrs. Gilmore, Mr. Rockabye was the unfortunate victim of a heart attack. And, in case you don't know, Dr Reiner is a world-renowned fish scientist, a great philanthropist and one of the most respected men in the city. I suggest you quit snooping in on other peoples' private conversations and find yourself another hobby. You've got such a vivid imagination, maybe you should try writing a comic strip!

MRS. GILMORE: Oh dear. Well, thank you anyway. I hope you'll at least file a report.

SGT. MULLIGAN: (*Wearily:*) Oh yeah, we'll file a report. Goodbye, Mrs. Gilmore.

(Mrs. Gilmore exits.)

JILL: Uh, Sergeant, you're not going to follow up on that? It could be an important lead.

SGT. MULLIGAN: That ain't a lead. That's a bunch of fantastical nonsense.

JILL: But that makes six wealthy businessmen dying of "heart attacks" in their cars –

SGT. MULLIGAN: What can I say? And no, you may not examine Mr. Rockabye's body!

JILL: Oh for crying out loud, Sergeant Mulligan!

SGT. MULLIGAN: How come everything has to be so complicated with you two? Speaking of which, the reason I called you in: this new-fangled static electricity squirt gun gadget that you wanted us to try out.

DAISY: Excuse me, Sergeant, but it's not some gadget!

SGT. MULLIGAN: Yeah, well, whatever it is, you can have it back!

DAISY: This squirt gun, as you call it, contains a powerful miniature thermoelectrical magnet. As we tried to explain, when you activate it and aim it at a person or object, each of its atoms becomes a tiny electrical generator and takes on a phosphorescence, even in the dark –

SGT. MULLIGAN: Too many syllables! Please! Use English –

JILL: Have you at least tried it out in the field?

SGT. MULLIGAN: The Captain took one look at it and said maybe you should try selling it to Milton Bradley.

DAISY: I beg your pardon! A toy company!?

JILL: It's okay, Daisy. Sometimes our discoveries are a little ahead of their time, is all.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Now, if you don't mind, I've got bigger fish to fry.

(Lights out on Sgt. Mulligan.)

JILL: I don't know why we even bothered with those dummies. *(Beat.)* What is it, Daisy? Why so quiet all of a sudden?

DAISY: "Bigger fish to fry," he said.

JILL: It's just an expression.

DAISY: Yes, but... If you were going to kill someone off with a powerful poison that would be virtually undetectable by normal laboratory testing, what would you use?

JILL: Hmm. I'm thinking. Not cyanide...

DAISY: Think advanced zoology! Ichthyology, to be specific. Which happens to be Dr. Reiner's field of expertise!

JILL: Fish...fish...the Pink Pekinese Pufferfish! Seductively beautiful in appearance, but mere contact with its poison—

JILL & DAISY: —causes instantaneous death!

DAISY: I think we ought to pay a visit to our local exotic pet and fish shops.

JILL: But first, let's find a picture of our dear friend, Dr. Reiner!

(They exit. Lights up on PET SHOP GUY. The phone is ringing. He picks it up.)

PET SHOP GUY: Hello. Chuck's Rare Fish and Birds, Chuck speaking.

(Lights up on Mrs. Gilmore on the phone.)

MRS. GILMORE: Hello, this is Mrs. Gilmore.

PET SHOP GUY: Oh yes, hello, Mrs. Gilmore, how's that wonderful parrot we sold you? After so many years here, we do miss him, you know...

MRS. GILMORE: Well, I'm not at all happy with that bird of yours, to tell you the truth. As a matter of fact, I want to return him for a full refund!

PET SHOP GUY: A refund!? And why is that?

(Jill and Daisy enter the pet shop. Jill flashes her I.D. at the Pet Shop guy.)

MRS. GILMORE: As I told you, I bought him to keep me company. I've had him for six months now, and he says one thing and one thing only. Day and night.

PET SHOP GUY: *(Guiltily:)* What...does he say?

MRS. GILMORE: You know very well what he says! "Chuck's Rare Fish and Birds, Chuck speaking." It's driving me crazy.

PET SHOP GUY: Oh my. Listen, I have some very official-looking visitors. Can I call you back in a few minutes?

MRS. GILMORE: If you don't, I'll report you to the Better Business Bureau! And another thing—!

(Pet Shop Guy hangs up on her. Lights out on Mrs. Gilmore.)

PET SHOP GUY: What can I do for you ladies?

JILL: *(Showing him a photograph:)* Do you recognize this man?

PET SHOP GUY: Yes, of course I do. That's Mr. John Doe. A customer of mine.

DAISY: John Doe, you say. That's original.

PET SHOP GUY: Oh yes. How could I ever forget him? He came in a few months ago and asked if I could procure a pod of Pink Pekinese Pufferfish. Dangerous animals, you know, among the most dangerous on earth! I don't get too many requests for them. If you even touch the water they swim in, you're a goner!

DAISY: So you supplied the fish to him.

PET SHOP GUY: That's my specialty: rare birds and fish, and collectables!

JILL: Thank you for your time, sir.

PET SHOP GUY: You aren't, by any chance, in the market for a parrot, are you?

(Lights out on Pet Shop Guy.)

NARRATOR: Late that night, outside the morgue.

(Lights up on Jill and Daisy, flashlights in hand. Spooky music.)

DAISY: I'm almost getting used to this place.

JILL: You stay outside and stand watch. I'm going to glove up.

(Daisy exits. Jill enters the space representing the morgue. There is a body on a gurney.)

(Checking the tag on the toe:) Here's Mr. Rockabye. Now for the poison-o-meter. *(Pulling out a probe with wires:)* If our suspicions are correct, he came into contact with the deadly pufferfish toxin just before his demise, and the reading on his fingertips will still be sky-high.

(Dr. Reiner appears, gun in hand.)

DR. REINER: Stop what you're doing right now and put your hands up. You cracked the case, Jill Trent. But I'm afraid this will be the last case you'll ever work on.

JILL: How did you know I'd be here, Reiner?

DR. REINER: Sergeant Mulligan let slip that a nosy P.I. and her bubble-headed sidekick were following a few bread crumbs which seemed to point to me. We shared a good laugh about it. Preposterous, we both agreed. Simply preposterous.

JILL: Even if you kill me, you'll never get away with this, Reiner. There's a trail of evidence a mile long that leads right to you. The pet shop. The overheard phone call—

DR. REINER: Oh yes. There's all that. But I do know how to cover my tracks. Poor Mrs. Gilmore and Chuck of Chuck's Rare Birds and Fish won't say a word—not in this lifetime, at least. So it seems as if you don't have any moves left, Jill Trent. No more cards to play.

DAISY: *(Entering, thermomagnetic ray gun in hand:)* Don't be so sure, Dr. Reiner! Greetings from a bubble-headed sidekick.

(She pulls a switch which cuts the lights.)

(Room goes dark. Jill Trent Theme Music kicks in.)

DR. REINER: What's going on?! What is this?

(A loud pop. Dr. Reiner reappears, his shirt glowing in the dark and his hair standing on end.)

DAISY: You can't see us, Dr. Reiner, but we're seeing you just fine! For I just blasted you with our thermomagnetic ray gun. Not only are you glowing in the dark, but you're also conducting enough static electricity to power a small city!

DR. REINER: Ow!

JILL: I wouldn't touch that gurney again, if I were you!

(A couple more loud pops.)

DR. REINER: Ow! Ow! Oh my!

DAISY: Of anything else in the room, for that matter!

DR. REINER: Ow!

(A one-sided fight ensues, during which the gurney with Rockabye's body may end up getting unceremoniously propelled into a wall or offstage during the melee.)

Where the devil are you!?

DAISY: Oh, didn't I tell you? I have an advanced degree in ventriloquy and I can also throw my voice across the room!

(Dr. Reiner is eventually subdued. Jill cuffs him.)

JILL: Out of moves, you say!

DAISY: I can't wait to see the expression on Sergeant Mulligan's face when we reel this world-renowned shark into Police Headquarters.

JILL: You're about to be a big fish in a much smaller pond, if you ask me, Dr. Reiner – federal prison!

NARRATOR: Later, at Police Headquarters...

(Jill and Daisy are leading a handcuffed Dr. Reiner into the room.)

JILL: Here's your sanitary murderer, Sergeant. Each victim's body untouched by human hands, because each of the victims was instantly dispatched by the toxin of a pod of Pink Pekinese Pufferfish.

DR. REINER: Now listen here, Sergeant, I'm a reasonable man, and I'm willing to strike a deal.

SGT. MULLIGAN: What kind o' deal?

DR. REINER: I have valuable information on a German spy ring operating in this very city.

SGT. MULLIGAN: Spy ring?!

DR. REINER: And I'll sing – on the condition that I won't get the chair!

JILL: Your loyalty to the Nazis doesn't run very deep, does it, Reiner? Tell us more.

DR. REINER: Well, the ringleader is none other than the world-famous scientist, Dr. Oscar-Meyer Hoffmeister!

(Daisy, appearing shaken, turns away.)

SGT. MULLIGAN: Hoffmeister!? Is this just some kind of fish story, Miss Trent, or what?

JILL: For once, the good doctor may be telling the truth. I suggest you search his premises very carefully, and warn your men to stay clear of the fish tank!

DR. REINER: Just please don't overfeed the fish. One shake every other day is all they need!

SGT. MULLIGAN: *(Leading Dr. Reiner offstage:)* This way, buster. Let me get you acquainted with your new accommodations.

JILL: Daisy? Are you alright? You look whiter than a sheet!

DAISY: I'm...I'm fine.

JILL: So, will I see you next weekend? I have a new idea I'd love to—

DAISY: No, I don't think so. I've got...plans next weekend...and the weekend after. And probably the one after that as well.

JILL: Daisy—

DAISY: I'll...see you around, Jill.

(She exits quickly.)

JILL: *(Plaintively:)* Daisy.

(Blackout.)

(Lights up on Narrator.)

NARRATOR: The next morning, at Jill's apartment...

(A phone rings. Lights up on Jill, picking up the phone.)

JILL: Hello? Daisy...?

(Lights up on Sgt. Mulligan. Jill Trent Theme Music begins, gradually building under the following dialogue:)

SGT. MULLIGAN: Miss Trent. Sergeant Mulligan here. Just wanted to let you know: Uh, that Dr. Reiner character and his butler.

JILL: What about them?

SGT. MULLIGAN: They won't be singing anytime soon. Anytime at all, as a matter of fact.

JILL: What do you mean?

SGT. MULLIGAN: They died of food poisoning last night.

JILL: Food poisoning?! Both of them?

SGT. MULLIGAN: It was the filet of fish, apparently.

JILL: That sounds to me like an inside job, Sergeant. Somebody wanted to get rid of them, and fast!

SGT. MULLIGAN: Miss Trent, when you hear hoofbeats, why is it you're always looking for a three-legged zebra?

JILL: So what's *your* learned opinion, Sergeant? If you don't mind my asking.

SGT. MULLIGAN: My opinion? If you ask me, they shoulda had the veal.

NARRATOR: *(Chuckling:)* Yes, Sergeant. Mulligan and Jill don't always see eye-to-eye, but if there's one thing on which they'll surely agree, it's that you're only minutes away from another eye-popping episode of...*Jill Trent Science Sleuth!*

(Music swells. Blackout. End of Act I.)

ACT II

EPISODE 5: The Race Is On

(Jill Trent Theme Music kicks in. After a few moments, lights up on Narrator.)

NARRATOR: Jill Trent Science Sleuth!

(Music fades. As Narrator speaks, lights up on HOFFMEISTER. With him are FOUR-EYES McGEE, who sports a monocle in each eye and an early pocket protector, and JOEY THE WEASEL.)

The Black Sheep Murder. The Bubble Gum Racketeers. The Sanitary Murders. All entirely unconnected—at least to the unscientifically trained eye. But there is one criminal mastermind behind them all—Professor Oscar-Meyer Hoffmeister, the spider at the center of this web, peering out from a secret penthouse on the top floor of the Gridiron Building, in the company of Jill Trent's former classmates, Four-Eyes McGee and Joey the Weasel!

HOFFMEISTER: *(With a satisfied smile:)* Are you quite sure that Reiner mentioned the name of Jill Trent, Mr. Weasel?

JOEY THE WEASEL: Sure I'm sure. How was I not going to remember that name? The insufferable smarty pants of the class of '38. It was about the last thing he said to me, before I delivered his meal tray to him.

FOUR-EYES: You know, they say that the Pink Pekinese Pufferfish is perfectly safe to eat if you know how to prepare it. It's a delicacy in certain parts of the world.

HOFFMEISTER: I'll make a note of it, Mr. McGee.

JOEY THE WEASEL: Want me to take care of Trent? It would be an easy job. She's right here in the phone book!

HOFFMEISTER: No, no, no, no, no, Mr. Weasel. I knew it would only be a matter of time before she'd be on my trail. As long as we stay one step ahead of her, we have nothing to fear. Would you deny me the pleasure of the game, of watching that strident scientific striver try yet fail to stop the destruction of the United States of America—?

(Joey the Weasel is about to respond.)

No. I didn't think so. Let's play out this little game until its final apocalyptic conclusion! Speaking of which, I have an important mission for the two of you. The Third Reich is urgently requesting a pound of pure... *(Air quotes gesture:)* "Kreplach."

FOUR-EYES: Want us to run out to Katz's Deli? Best Jewish food in town!

JOEY THE WEASEL: Oh no, I think Solomon's is better. And their pickles are far superior—

HOFFMEISTER: No, you fools! I'm not talking about dumplings or pickles! "*Kreplach*"! Don't you remember? It's the code word we're using.

FOUR-EYES: Oh yeah!

FOUR-EYES & JOEY THE WEASEL: *(Brightly:)* For the bewitchingly rare and highly explosive element blastonium!

(They shake hands as Hoffmeister rolls his eyes.)

FOUR-EYES: One thimbleful of which could destroy a city the size of Cleveland!

HOFFMEISTER: I'm sending you out west to the little Colorado town of Los Cedros. Our sources report that you may be able to find "*kreplach*" in the nearby mountains!

(Blackout. Segue music [Klezmer].)

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, on the other side of town, a very different conversation is unfolding. Daisy Smith, having practically swooned at the mere mention of Professor Hoffmeister's name, made up her mind that she'd keep a safe distance from Jill Trent's science lab—and her scientific adventures! But let's listen in on what happens when Jill rings her up.

(Lights up on Jill and Daisy, speaking to each other on the phone.)

DAISY: Colorado!?

JILL: Sunshine, fresh air, mountain scenery.

DAISY: I have a feeling that there's something more to it than that.

JILL: Well...maybe a little geology, too. An old prospector out there found some mineral deposits that would be of great utility to the Nazis, if they were to get their hands on them. Fortunately, he called the government office in Denver right away. So we're going out there to meet this fellow —

DAISY: *We?* I never said anything about —

JILL: Daisy, I need you. We're better together than we can ever be apart. At least, I know that I am. Please come to Colorado with me. Please.

DAISY: *(Beat.)* Is there any chance, any chance at all, that we're going to cross paths with Professor Hoffmeister himself?

JILL: Not a chance. Government criminologists tell us that he's holed up in a lair somewhere inside this very city. Where exactly is a question we'd all love to answer. But no, we're not about to run into him in Colorado.

DAISY: Well...I *am* off next week. And to get out of the hustle and bustle of the city sounds pretty tempting.

JILL: Pack your bags and meet me at the train station in an hour! Oh, and bring along your Transistorized Atomic Automaton. We're a couple of amateur rockhounds, okay? That's our cover. Heading out west to visit my "dear old Uncle Ned."

DAISY: Jill.

JILL: Yeah?

DAISY: I'm so glad you called. I've missed you.

JILL: See you in an hour.

(Blackout.)

EPISODE 6: The Case of the Blastonium Claim Jumpers

(The sound of a train and train whistle, fading into the parody of a Western melody, preferably lazily whistled. The sound of horses nearby. Lights up on a hotel registration desk. The Hotel Clerk may be whistling.)

NARRATOR: Now let's see what happens when men with guns are matched against real courage and scientific skills...in the Case of the Blastonium Claim Jumpers!

(Jill and Daisy enter, each with a suitcase.)

DAISY: What a cute little town. This looks like the perfect place to relax! Thank you, Jill! This is just what I needed.

JILL: I can't wait to introduce you to my Uncle Ned Randall—

DAISY: From all the stories you've told me, I feel like I know him already!

JILL: Well, he's the best hunter, guide and prospector in Colorado.

HOTEL CLERK: Can I help you ladies?

JILL: I have a reservation under the name of Trent.

(Two mobsters in Western garb appear: MARRON and STEVE.)

HOTEL CLERK: Oh yes, sign in here, please. You'll be on the second floor in our V.I.C. room— Very Important Cowpokes! What brings you to Los Cedros?

DAISY: Oh, blue skies, fresh mountain air — the usual!

HOTEL CLERK: Well, I don't expect you'll be disappointed then.

(They continue conversing in pantomime.)

STEVE: Hidin' out in this burg won't be so bad, Marron...with a brace of chicks like that around!

MARRON: I'll get their names from the register, and then we can introduce ourselves!

STEVE: I think there's something the matter with these cowboy chaps. Maybe I shoulda got a different size.

MARRON: There's nothing the matter with them, you lunkhead. The fringe goes on the outside, not the inside. Ain't you ever seen a Western?

UNCLE NED: *(Entering, with a backslap to Jill:)* Jill? Jumpin' Jimson, gal, you git prettier every year!

JILL: Oh! Hello, Uncle Ned. It's been a long time!

UNCLE NED: It shore has!

JILL: How's Aunt Gertrude?

UNCLE NED: Ornerly as ever!

JILL: I'd like you to meet the friend I wrote to you about — Daisy Smith.

UNCLE NED: Pleased to meet you, Daisy. Is this your first time out West?

DAISY: Yes, it is!

JILL: Been doing any hunting, Uncle Ned?

UNCLE NED: My prospectin' has kept me a mite too busy for that, Jill.

(As their conversation proceeds in pantomime, Uncle Ned steers them to another part of the stage. Marron has a look at the hotel register.)

MARRON: Jill Trent! She's the snoopy girl P.I. who sent my brother Homer to the pen!

STEVE: Why would they pick a crummy place like this for a vacation?

MARRON: Beats me, but I'd like to even things up! Let's listen in for awhile and see what they're up to. And then we'll settle the score.

(Jill, Uncle Ned and Daisy continue their conversation, their voices lowered. Marron and Steve move nearby, pretending to read a newspaper.)

UNCLE NED: It's a wallupin' strike, alright, Jill. 'Course, there's no saying how pure it is, not until someone take a few samples to Denver—

DAISY: Good heavens, no need for that! It just so happens that your brilliant niece asked me to bring along my Transistorized Atomic Automaton!

UNCLE NED: Your *what*?

DAISY: Just a little invention of mine, which can isolate, scientifically extract, and tell you in a heartbeat exactly how much of any given mineral is in any given sample of ore!

UNCLE NED: Well, I'll be a three-legged sloth! Reckon you'd like to ride out to Cougar Creek in the mornin'?

MARRON: *(Aside, to Steve:)* This is gettin' better all the time.

STEVE: Sounds like that old coot found some gold.

MARRON: Yeah, maybe. Whatever it is, it's gonna mean a lot of dough for us!

(All exit. Four-Eyes and Joey the Weasel enter, disguised in Western garb identical to Marron and Steve's, and approach the Hotel Clerk.)

FOUR-EYES: Howdy, pardner! I don't reckon you have a room in this here establishment for a couple of tired and lonesome cowpokes.

HOTEL CLERK: I've got one room left. Sign here, please.

(A beat as he examines the signature.)

I'm sorry, friend. It looks like you accidentally wrote...Joey the Weasel... See?

(He laughs.)

You must have had your mind on something else when you –

JOEY THE WEASEL: *(Drawing a revolver:)* Hey pal, do you have a problem with my name?

HOTEL CLERK: No, no, not at all, sir!

FOUR-EYES: *(Drawing another revolver:)* Now that we've got that straight, why don't you tell us where we can find some *kreplach!*

HOTEL CLERK: I beg your pardon?

JOEY THE WEASEL: *Kreplach!* Where can we get a pound of it?

HOTEL CLERK: The closest Jewish delicatessen is p-probably going to be in Denver, sir!

FOUR-EYES: Okay, then what about *blastonium?*!

HOTEL CLERK: Blastonium. An exceedingly rare element that –

JOEY THE WEASEL: Yeah, yeah, we've heard all that. Where can we *find* it?

HOTEL CLERK: Y-you might want to head out to Cougar Creek. There's been a spell of prospecting activity in that area, to the best of my understanding.

JOEY THE WEASEL: Okay, now, unless you want to be carrying around a couple of lead deposits of your own, you're gonna keep your mouth shut about this whole conversation.

HOTEL CLERK: Of course, Mr. Weasel. Anything else I can do for you gentlemen?

(Four Eyes and Joey the Weasel confer privately.)

FOUR-EYES: As a matter of fact, there is. We want to see you dance.

HOTEL CLERK: I beg your pardon?

JOEY THE WEASEL: He said, we'd like to see you dance!

HOTEL CLERK: Oh, no, not this again!

(They take turns shooting at the floor. The Hotel Clerk hops around yelping, trying to avoid the bullets.)

FOUR-EYES & JOEY THE WEASEL: Yee-haw!

(Blackout.)

(Segue music: Western melody. Lights up on the opening of a mine.)

UNCLE NED: Here we are. Have a look.

(As the conversation proceeds, Marron and Steve approach and eavesdrop, bandanas partially obscuring their faces.)

DAISY: Black, lumpy crystals. Is this...saturnite!?

UNCLE NED: I'd bet the ranch on it, gals. I haven't dug my way through half o' Colorado fer nigh onto fifty years without knowin' my minerals. Black, lumpy crystals mean saturnite –

DAISY: A blastonium-rich ore!

JILL: If this is in fact saturnite, the blastonium in this cave alone could destroy every city and town in America!

UNCLE NED: But maybe your transistorized something or other can tell us for sure. Do you see now why I called the government office in Denver as soon as I found it? I reckon we wouldn't want it to get into the hands of the wrong people.

DAISY: I'll just go rinse this nugget off in the nearby creek.

(She exits in the opposite direction from where Marron and Steve are hiding.)

MARRON: Blastonium, eh? Sounds even better than gold! We'll sell chunks of it to the highest bidder and we'll be set for life!

UNCLE NED: *(Hearing Marron's voice and reaching for his pickaxe.)* Crimpin' hoptoads! Eavesdroppers!

MARRON: *(Gun drawn.)* Put that pickaxe down, old timer. Hands up! You too, Jill Trent! And I'll take your gun.

JILL: You look familiar.

MARRON: We never actually had the pleasure of meeting, but you might remember my brother, Homer Marron, who you helped put away for grand larceny and murder.

JILL: Oh yeah, I remember him. And I see that you're following in the proud family tradition.

(As conversation proceeds, Four-Eyes and Joey the Weasel appear, hiding behind rocks, still identically dressed, and with identical bandanas. One of them carries a machine.)

STEVE: Want me to plug her now, Marron?

MARRON: No, not until we make 'em show us where the best blastonium deposits are.

(Four-Eyes and Joey the Weasel spring out of hiding, guns drawn.)

FOUR-EYES: Hands up, everyone!

(Beat.)

JILL: Now, this is awkward.

(After a beat, Jill Trent Theme Music kicks in. A fight breaks out during which the conversation proceeds as if nothing out of the ordinary were happening.)

(Jill engages with Marron as Ned swings his pickaxe at Joey, who dodges and grabs it. Steve and Four-Eyes grapple. Jill and Joey speak over their shoulders.)

JOEY THE WEASEL: Jill Trent – fancy meeting you here.

JILL: Joey the Weasel. So now I know what became of you after science school. You crawled under a rock in the Rocky Mountains.

FOUR-EYES: *(Breaking away from Steve, spinning him around and kicking him in the backside:)* Nah, actually we're just here on vacation.

JILL: I can't help but notice that you brought along an Atomic Automaton which bears a marked resemblance to the one that a friend of mine invented in school.

(Joey spins Ned around by the axe. Ned stumbles into Marron and falls.)

JOEY THE WEASEL: I never quite understood the appeal of doing something original. It's so much more satisfying to steal someone else's work.

(The four "cowboys" begin exchanging gunfire. Jill grapples with each of them in turn, tripping them up, landing punches to the face.)

STEVE: Marron, what did you shoot *me* for? I'm your pardner!

MARRON: Steve? Is that you under the bandana? Sorry!

STEVE: Oh well, with any luck, it's just a flesh wound.

MARRON: I thought you were the other guy—Joey the Alligator.

JOEY THE WEASEL: *(Firing at Marron:)* Weasel, you meathead! Weasel!

MARRON: *(To Four-Eyes, in between exchanging shots:)* So where did you get your Western duds?

FOUR-EYES: At Johnson's General Store.

STEVE: I looked there, too, but I found a better price at Ye Olde Tack and Haberdashery Shoppe next to the saloon on Laredo Street.

FOUR-EYES: *(To Steve:)* Joey, I told you we shoulda gone there!

STEVE: *(Shooting at Four-Eyes:)* I'm not Joey, I'm Steve!

(A ricocheting bullet hits Uncle Ned in the arm. Daisy enters, holding a chunk of ore in each hand, dumbfounded at the scene unfolding in front of her.)

JILL: Daisy! No!

DAISY: What on earth...?

MARRON: *(Taking one of the pieces of ore:)* I'll take that off your hands, Missy.

FOUR-EYES: I'm right behind you, Joey!

MARRON: *(Shooting at Four-Eyes:)* I'm Marron, you idiot!

(They exit, shooting at each other.)

JOEY THE WEASEL: And I'll have this piece of ore, if you don't mind. Now let's cheese it outta here!

STEVE: Okay, boss! Hey, wait a minute... You're not my boss! You're Joey the Lizard!

(They exit, shooting at each other.)

FOUR-EYES: *(Off:)* Untie those horses, too! Let the three of them try to walk back to town!

JOEY THE WEASEL: *(Off:)* Giddyup! Come on, let's go!

(The sound of horses whinnying then galloping away, and shots being fired. Jill, Daisy and Uncle Ned stand together, helplessly regarding the horizon, as the others get away.)

JILL: Ned, are you alright?

UNCLE NED: Oh yeah, I'll be alright. I'm too ornery to die.

DAISY: It was all my fault, Jill. I let them get away with the blastonium. They've got more than enough to make that bomb.

JILL: This fight's not over yet, Daisy.

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