

NANCY DREW:
THE SECRET IN THE OLD ATTIC

Written by
Buster & Eugene La Haye

Based on the novel by
CAROLYN KEENE

Characters created by
EDWARD STRATEMEYER

OVER BLACK

Slow and steady BREATHING...

EXT. DECREPIT MANSION - NIGHT - **LATE 1940S**

A MANOR is seen through a partition of dark branches. Paint faded. Overgrown with ivy. Some of the windows boarded up.

Yet within the house there is LIFE. Light shines through a window. VOICES come from inside: an OLD MAN and a LITTLE GIRL.

GIRL (O.S.)
Tell me another story, Grandpa.

OLD MAN (O.S.)
Some other time. You need to go to bed.

Beneath the voices, the BREATHING continues...

Our view SHIFTS. We PUSH FORWARD, past the branches. There's a soft CRUNCH of footsteps on gravel.

GIRL (O.S.)
But I'm not tired.

OLD MAN (O.S.)
Oh, yes you are, you little muffin cake. You can't fool me. You can barely keep your eyes open.

We approach a window in the house and look inside: the GIRL (age 6) is lying on a couch. The MAN (60s) sits over her.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
You're gonna fall right asleep, aren't you?

He tickles her. She GIGGLES.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Aren't you? Alright now. Come on.

GIRL
Carry me?

OLD MAN
Okay. Just this once.

The old man takes the girl in his arms.

We TRACK LEFT to watch the grandpa through another window. He carries the girl into the entrance hall.

A HAND reaches forward and grips an ivy branch to hoist ourselves up for a better view. It SNAPS under our weight.

GIRL
What was that?

OLD MAN
What?

GIRL
I heard something outside.

We DROP DOWN, away from the window.

OLD MAN (O.S.)
Okay, I'll check.

The breathing INTENSIFIES as we move into a shadowy corner between the house and the entry stairs.

The front door opens, spilling light onto the yard. The old man appears in the doorway.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Hello?

No answer. A distant gate CREAKS in the wind and BANGS against the fence.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
It's nothing, dear. Just the wind.

The man shuts the door.

We approach the window again and watch as the old man carries the girl up the stairs.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
You go right to sleep, you hear? No sneaking back down looking for food.

GIRL
Yes, Grandpa.

WIDE SHOT -- we PULL BACK, away from the house. The mysterious STRANGER is hidden in darkness.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DREW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A pair of YOUNG HANDS dance across a keyboard, playing a classical song -- Mozart Sonata No. 10 in C major.

It's light. Breezy. A few wrong notes, but overall not bad.

MRS. HEMLOCK (O.S.)
Tempo. *Tempo*. C sharp, dear. C sharp.

We are in a well furnished upper-middle-class house.

Sitting at an upright piano is NANCY DREW (16). Blond, well mannered, and full of pluck.

MRS. HEMLOCK (CONT'D)
Nancy, you're rushing again!

Nancy keeps playing.

MRS. HEMLOCK (CONT'D)
Stop! Stop! I've heard enough. Have you been listening to the record?

NANCY
Every night, Mrs. Hemlock.

MRS. HEMLOCK
Well it doesn't sound like it.
Let's listen to it again.

Nancy rolls her eyes. Hemlock stands and sets a record in the player. The music CRACKLES to life.

MRS. HEMLOCK (CONT'D)
This is Josef Hofmann, from Poland.
Isn't he sublime? Listen to the dynamics!

Nancy slumps and stares at the clock. It's **8:53**.

The front door BANGS open and TWO PEOPLE rush in -- Nancy's best friends, GEORGIA "GEORGE" FAYNE (17) and George's cousin BESS MARVIN (16).

George is tall and athletic. She has a pixie cut and zero tact. Bess is a little plump and a tad dim. She wears a gold crucifix.

GEORGE
Nancy! Where are you?!

Hemlock looks around. George and Bess run into the living room. George is holding a 7-inch record.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You gotta hear this! It just came out.

BESS
Everyone's been talking about it!

George lifts the needle and removes Josef Hoffman.

MRS. HEMLOCK
Excuse me!

NANCY
George, now's not a good time.

GEORGE
Listen!

She puts the record down and sets the needle. BIG BAND MUSIC starts. Trumpets, drums, syncopation.

MRS. HEMLOCK
Well! This explains why your tempo is such a mess.
(gathers up her music and purse)
It's clear to me we won't get any more done today.

NANCY
Sorry, Mrs. Hemlock.

MRS. HEMLOCK
I'll see you next week. And for god's sake, *practice*.

She walks out, shaking her head.

NANCY
Gee. Thanks, George.

GEORGE
Forget her, isn't this fab? It's called the Midnight Boogie Woogie.

George and Bess are doing the jitterbug.

BESS
I can listen to this all day!

INT. NANCY'S ROOM - DAY

Nancy does homework at her desk. George and Bess lie on the floor, going through Nancy's record collection.

GEORGE

Got it. Got it. Got it. What's this one?

NANCY

Prokofiev. Russian ballet. You wouldn't like it.

GEORGE

Bleh.

CARSON (O.S.)

NANCY! YOU WANNA GET THE MAIL?

(she doesn't respond)

NANCY!

EXT. DREW HOUSE - DAY

Nancy trots down the front steps and opens the mailbox.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

She drops the mail on the table in front of her father CARSON DREW (50s, fit). He puts his paper down and goes through the mail. Nancy pours herself some juice.

CARSON

Your friends weren't giving Mrs. Hemlock a hard time, were they?

Their housekeeper, HANNAH GRUEN, scrapes fresh eggs onto Carson's plate. She's mid 50s, tall and bony.

MRS. GRUEN

Why she puts up with you, I'll never know. Kids got no respect these days.

CARSON

That'll do, Mrs. Gruen.

NANCY

(re: the mail)

Anything interesting?

CARSON
Here's a letter from your friends
in Bayport.

Nancy grabs the letter and sits down. George and Bess enter.

GEORGE
Nancy, Bess has a dentist
appointment. I'm gonna walk her over.

NANCY
Alright, bye.

BESS
Seeya Nance!

GEORGE
Bye, Mr. Drew.

Carson waves without looking up.

MRS. GRUEN
Never a hello or goodbye for Mrs.
Gruen. No, sir. She's not good
enough... Here.

She scoops eggs and toast onto Nancy's plate.

CARSON
That's odd. I got a package from
Pleasant Hedges. That estate uptown.

NANCY
I thought that place was abandoned.

CARSON
Apparently not.

He opens the package. A STACK OF LETTERS spill out. Carson
rifles through them.

NANCY
What do they say?

CARSON
(reading)
"My dearest love, I count the days
since I last saw you. Every night I
dream of feeling the touch of your
hands against my naked body..."

MRS. GRUEN
Mr. Drew! What is the matter with
you?

NANCY
(looking through them)
They're all love letters!

CARSON
Why would anyone send me these?

Nancy pulls a SMALL ENVELOPE from the stack. She opens it and reads the note inside.

NANCY
"Dear Mr. Drew. I have a problem and, as a lawyer, I was told you might be able to help. These letters were written by my son and his wife. I have reason to believe they hold a clue to something extremely valuable. I'd like to come by Saturday around three to explain further. Hoping you are well, Philip March."

CARSON
Guess we'll just have to wait until three to know what it's about.

MRS. GRUEN
You better not be getting yourself mixed up in another mystery. It's not right for young ladies to go risking their neck like that.

NANCY
Oh, please, Mrs. Gruen. I'm sure it's nothing so dramatic.

DISSOLVE TO:

The CLOCK. It's 3:05. The DOORBELL rings.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Nancy opens the front door. Behind it is the GRANDPA from the opening scene: PHILIP MARCH, mid 60s.

MARCH
... Mr. Drew?

NANCY
I'm his daughter, Nancy. Come in.

She leads him inside. Carson offers March his hand.

CARSON
I'm Carson. You must be Mr. March.
Why don't we move into the living
room? We'll be more comfortable.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Gruen takes Mr. March's hat and coat.

MARCH
I'm sorry. Should I have called at
your office?

CARSON
No, this is fine. Nancy won't
bother us. She has a history report
to finish.

NANCY
But Dad...!

CARSON
Nance.

NANCY
Uhhhh!

She trudges out of the room. Carson and March sit down.

CARSON
I got your letter. What is this
about?

MARCH
It started a week ago when someone
broke into my house.

CARSON
Did you go to the police?

CARSON (CONT'D)
Yes. They're still looking for who
did it.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Nancy stops halfway up the stairs. She crouches and listens
through the balustrade.

CARSON (O.S.)
Why don't you explain what happened?

MARCH (O.S.)

Well, I live at Pleasant Hedges
with my granddaughter, Susan. She's
six. Her father, my son Fipp...
he... he died. Battle of the Bulge.
A mortar shell went off right
beneath him.

LIVING ROOM

MARCH

(voice catching)

There wasn't even a body. Just...
just pieces.

CARSON

Mrs. Gruen, can you get Mr. March a
glass of water?

Gruen departs.

MARCH

I'm sorry.

CARSON

No, please... Take your time.

Mrs. Gruen returns with the water.

MARCH

Thank you.

(takes a sip)

Fipp had a wife. Connie. That's who
the letters were to. She died a few
months after Fipp. Sort of wasted
away. I don't have any income, and I
can't afford to pay the servants any
more, so it's just me and Susan,
alone in that big house.

FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Gruen passes back through the foyer and catches Nancy on
the stairs.

MRS. GRUEN

Nancy Drew! You should be ashamed of
yourself! Eavesdropping like that!

NANCY

Shhh! I'm trying to listen.

Gruen pauses, then listens in as well.

LIVING ROOM

MARCH

Recently strange things have been happening around the estate. We've found footprints outside. The other night Susan told me she saw a face in the window. I went to see for myself, but didn't find anyone. And then there's the music... Sometimes at night we hear bells... or chimes, coming from the attic. It has us spooked.

(he shutters)

Anyway... two days ago I heard footsteps downstairs. I went to see who it was and found a person in a ski mask, rummaging through a desk. I yelled at him to get out. He hit me over the head and ran out the door.

CARSON

Did he take anything?

MARCH

No. The police have no idea what he was after. There's nothing of value in the house. I sold all the jewelry years ago, just to pay for food. I even sold most the furniture. I thought maybe he just picked the wrong estate. But then a few days later I heard something on the radio which got me thinking. You see, Fipp was a musician. He played piano, guitar, trumpet. And he wrote songs. Dozens of them. Maybe even a hundred. Good songs, too. But he never sold them. Never made a record. Instead he hid them in the house. It's been five years and I still haven't found them.

CARSON

(incredulous)

You think the intruder was after your son's... music?

MARCH

I know, it sounds crazy. Who would break into a house to steal sheet music? But the other week, I heard a song on a local FM I could swear was the exact same as one Fipp wrote during the war. He included it in a letter, so I got out his old letters and had a look.

March pulls a page of SHEET MUSIC out of the stack of letters on the table. He shows it to Carson.

MARCH (CONT'D)

Dated November, 1944. Does this seem familiar?

CARSON

I'm sorry, I don't read music.

MARCH

What about your daughter?

CARSON

Yes, she's taking lessons. She can have a look if you like, but I don't know what it'll prove. She's probably listening in the hall. Nancy -- !

NANCY

Yeah?

She's already in the doorway.

CARSON

Mr. March here has some --

NANCY

I heard. Where's the music?

March hands it to her. Nancy sits at the piano.

She plays a few halting notes. Carson lights a pipe.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Gimme a second, it's not what I normally play.

Nancy finds her rhythm and gets into a groove. It's an upbeat swing tune.

It sounds familiar. Very familiar. She stops.

NANCY (CONT'D)
(jumping up)
I'll be right back!

She runs out. March looks at Carson, who shrugs. Nancy runs back in with the 7-inch vinyl. She sets it in the player.

CARSON
Nancy, what is this about?

NANCY
Shhh!

She lowers the needle. It starts playing "Midnight Boogie Woogie" -- George's killer song.

It's the exact same song as the one she played on the piano. Carson sits up, suddenly interested.

CARSON
They're identical...!

CLICK. Nancy switches the record player off.

CARSON (CONT'D)
Alright, Mr. March. You have my attention.

MARCH
I talked to a friend who worked in the business. Do you have any idea how much a hit like Midnight Boogie makes in royalties?
(they shake their heads)
Fifty thousand dollars.

NANCY
Jeepers! For one song!?

MARCH
And my son wrote maybe a hundred. All together that's --

NANCY
Up to five million bucks! People have killed for half that much!

CARSON
I'm beginning to appreciate what's at stake.

MARCH

I don't know how, but I suspect the man who broke into my house is in some way connected to Fipp's song appearing on the radio. What I need is someone to get to the bottom of what's going on. I need help suing whoever published Midnight Boogie Woogie, and I need help finding the rest of Fipp's missing music.

NANCY

You came to the right house.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

George is on the phone. Her MOTHER tries to quell a SCREAMING BABY in the background.

GEORGE

You're joking! This guy wrote Midnight Boogie Woogie!

INT. KITCHEN - NANCY'S HOUSE - INTERCUT

NANCY

His son did. But he didn't get the credit.

Nancy is looking at the record sleeve.

NANCY (CONT'D)

The record says some other guy wrote it. Someone named Ben Banks.

GEORGE

Who's that?

NANCY

No idea. Mr. March doesn't know him either, but he says he's a thief and wants to press charges. My dad's gonna make some inquiries.

GEORGE'S MOM

George, can you take the baby? I'm trying to make dinner!

GEORGE

I'm on the phone, mom, god!

GEORGE'S MOM
Just take the baby.

George's mom presses the screaming baby into George's arms.
She immediately deposits him into a crib.

Nancy glances at Mr. March, seated in the living room,
accepting a cup of tea from Mrs. Gruen.

NANCY
And that's not all. He says there's
more music hidden away. Dozens of
songs already written.

GEORGE
JESUS CHRIST, WILL YOU *SHUT UP*!

NANCY
George?

GEORGE
No, not you. I was talking to the
baby. Hey, you think his other
songs are any good?

MASTER BEDROOM - NANCY'S HOUSE - SAME

Carson picks up a bedside phone.

CARSON
Operator, can you put me through to
218 Dearborn Lane?

GEORGE (O.S.)
I SWEAR TO GOD, IF YOU DON'T SHUT
UP, I'M GONNA THROW YOU OUT WITH
THE TRASH!

CARSON
Hello?

GEORGE
Oh, hi Mr. Drew.

CARSON
NANCY, GET OFF THE PHONE!

NANCY
Sorry. I gotta go.

Nancy hangs up. Carson tries again.

CARSON
Operator? Yes...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy sits down with Mr. March.

NANCY
Is Susan waiting for you at home?

MARCH
She's staying with a neighbor for
the weekend.

Nancy grabs a PHOTO from the pile of letters. It's of SIX MEN
IN ARMY GEAR, standing amid European ruins.

NANCY
Which one is Fipp?

MARCH
He's second to the left, next to
the man with the wavy hair. He told
his wife if she ever needed money,
she should sell his music, and that
he left a clue to where it's hidden
in one of his letters. But I combed
these letters line by line and I
haven't found any trace of a clue.

NANCY
Wait a sec!

Nancy digs through the letters, excited.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I saw something earlier that might
be what he meant. It was kind of a
little poem.

MARCH
Those letters aren't really for kids.
I don't know if you should be --

NANCY
Here it is!
(unfolds a letter)
*"A terrible secret tucked away,
which hides my greatest joy. Two
hundred parts of a whole, a fancy
grown-ups toy. To find my long lost
treasure, A sharp mind would be
best.*

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

*Take care, my dearest love, to you
I give the rest.*" ... What does he
mean by "A terrible secret"?

MARCH

I have no idea.

CARSON

(entering)

I tried the music publishers.
Everyone's gone home for the
weekend. I'll try again on Monday.

NANCY

In the meantime, I'd like to search
the house for that missing music.

CARSON

Alright, but remember --

NANCY

School comes first. Got it.

March stands and shakes Drew's hand.

MARCH

Thank you, sir. You don't know how
much I appreciate this.

(embarrassed)

I, uh... don't have any money to
pay you.

CARSON

I work on contingency on special
cases. We can sort out the details
on Monday. How did you get here? Do
you need a ride home?

MARCH

I'll be fine. I took the bus.

March accepts his hat and coat from Mrs. Gruen.

NANCY

But Dad, the bus doesn't run past
four on Saturdays.

CARSON

We have a guest room upstairs. Why
don't you stay the night?

MARCH

Oh, no. I don't want to impose.

CARSON
Don't be silly. It's no problem.

NANCY
And in the morning I'll drive us
both to Pleasant Hedges and we can
look for that missing music.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A tire SPLASHES through a fresh puddle. We TRACK UP to reveal Nancy driving a sporty convertible. Mr. March rides shotgun. George and Bess sit in the back.

BESS
I can't wait to see the house, Mr.
March. I bet it's *gorgeous*.

MARCH
I wish you could've seen it in it's
prime. One of the best estates in
River Heights. Turn right up here.

Nancy turns onto an overgrown driveway and past a rundown gate. She stops in front of the manor.

BESS
This is the estate?

GEORGE
What a dump! How could anyone live
here!
(remembering March)
I mean... ah, crap.

NANCY
I think it's enchanting.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

The front door CREAKS open. Nancy steps inside. She takes in the cracked marble staircase and the blank spaces where paintings used to hang.

MARCH
Who wants the grand tour?

FIRST THE PARLOR.

MARCH

This is where we spend most of our time. We closed off the east wing. Too much to maintain.

AN EMPTY KITCHEN.

MARCH

Here's the kitchen. Don't bother looking in the pantry. There's nothing there.

A MODEST BEDROOM.

Small, almost cozy.

MARCH

This is where I sleep. I moved in here to be closer to Susan.

A RAT scampers across the floor. Bess shrieks.

MASTER BEDROOM

MARCH

The master bedroom. This is where Fipp slept before the war.

NANCY

Mr. March, did your son have a room where he liked to work on his music?

MARCH

Yes. In the attic.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

March leads them up a narrow staircase to the attic door.

MARCH

I haven't been up here in years.
(pulls out a keyring)
One of these should open it. Ah.
There we go.

He pushes open the door.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

The room is hidden beneath cobwebs and dust. A PHONOGRAPH sits on a table. INSTRUMENT CASES are piled in the corner.

MARCH

This was a storage room long ago. I used to play in here as a boy. It sure seemed bigger back then.

NANCY

If the music's hidden anywhere, I bet it's in this room.

MARCH

Well, I'll leave you girls to it.

BEGIN MONTAGE - SEARCHING THE ATTIC

- Nancy clears away the cobwebs.
- Bess opens an old hatbox, takes out the hat.
- George combs through stacks of music, checking the bylines.
- Nancy finds a MUSIC BOX in a chest. She opens it. A TINY BRIDE AND GROOM waltz around to a TINNY SONG.

NANCY

There's a whole set of these. Maybe Mr. March can sell them for extra cash.

- Bess looks inside the instrument cases. They're all EMPTY.
- George struggles to open a locked WARDROBE.

GEORGE

Someone wanna give me a hand with this? It's jammed tight.

Bess helps her.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

On three. One... two... three!

They yank the door open. A *HUMAN SKELETON* drops out. It's hanging from the top of the wardrobe.

Bess SHOUTS and stumbles back.

NANCY
Heavens! What on earth is that
doing there?!

March comes running up the stairs. He stops in the doorway.

MARCH
What's going on?
(spots the skeleton)
Oh! That old thing. Fipp's wife was
a med student. She brought that home
one year. They put it here, where
it'd be out of the way. Don't worry,
it's made of papier-mâché.

George removes the skeleton's head.

GEORGE
Check it out.
(puppeteering the skull)
How's it going, Hamlet? It's your
old friend Yorick. Don't forget to
bone up on your fencing!

Nancy inspects the wardrobe.

NANCY
Hey, what's this?

She retrieves a PIECE OF PAPER from the floor.

NANCY (CONT'D)
It's more sheet music... And it's
by Fipp March!

	MARCH	BESS
Really?		Is it the Midnight Boogie?

NANCY
No, it's something new! "Summertime
Ballad."

BESS
Is there any more?

NANCY
No. Just the one song.

A car HONKS outside.

MARCH
That'll be the Grays bringing Susan
home. I better say hello.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - DAY

March's granddaughter SUSAN climbs out of a station wagon.

SUSAN

Thank you Mary. Thank you Mr. Gray.

MRS. GRAY

Bye Susan! Don't forget your
gumdrops.

Susan retrieves a BOX OF CANDIES from the back seat. March
comes out to give her a big hug.

MARCH

Susan, darling!
(to the Grays)
Was she any trouble?

MRS. GRAY

She was a perfect angel. We'll see
you later, Phil.

SUSAN

Bye!

They drive off. Susan turns around and sees Nancy.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

(mistrustful)
Who are you?

MARCH

Susan, this is Nancy Drew. She's
gonna help us find your father's
missing music.

SUSAN

Daddy doesn't like people going
through his stuff.

MARCH

It's alright. I asked her to.

NANCY

We should get going.
(hands him the music)
You keep this.
(writing something down)
Here's my number. Call us if you
have any problems. It was nice to
meet you Susan!

EXT. RIVER HIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY - ESTABLISHING

GEORGE (PRE-LAP)
Here's what I don't understand.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Nancy, George, and Bess sit in the back of their pre-calc class. The TEACHER walks around, returning graded tests.

GEORGE
If the intruder didn't take anything
when he broke inside, how'd he get
his hands on Midnight Boogie?

NANCY
I dunno. He must have gotten it
some other way. The question is,
did he get any other songs?

MATH TEACHER
(passing by)
Nice work, Nancy, as always. Good
to see some improvement, Georgia.

GEORGE
Ninety percent! Alright! How'd you
do, Nance?

NANCY
Okay.

George grabs Nancy's test -- 98%.

GEORGE
Go to hell.

MATH TEACHER
(to the class)
Overall the scores were a big
improvement over last week. But you
still need to work on sine and
cosine. Also there are some changes
to the leaderboard.

He erases two names on the blackboard by 1ST and 2ND PLACE.

MATH TEACHER (CONT'D)
Sorry, Ms. Dight. You're back to
second place. Nancy, you're number
one.

Scattered APPLAUSE. George and Bess CHEER. A tall BLONDE in the front row turns around and gives Nancy the evil eye.

MATH TEACHER (CONT'D)
That's all. Class dismissed.

A STUDENT BY THE DOOR clears her throat.

MATH TEACHER (CONT'D)
No, wait. One more thing! These folks from Student Planning have an announcement.

STUDENT PLANNING 1
(stepping forward)
I just want to say we've set a date for the fall dance. It's gonna be two weeks from Friday, on the eighteenth.

Nancy's breath *quicken*s. Her eyes dart to NED NICKERSON (17), a gangly, good looking boy in the row ahead of her. He gives her a quick glance. Nancy hides a smile.

STUDENT PLANNING 2
The theme this year is tropical paradise. There will be shaved ice, barbecue pork, and a ukulele artist.

STUDENT PLANNING 1
Tickets are fifteen cents at the door. So mahalo, and see you there!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Nancy, Bess, and George join the flow of students heading to lunch. Bess carries a clarinet case.

BESS
Two weeks from Friday! I can't believe it's so soon!

EXT. SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

Nance eats lunch with George and Bess.

GEORGE
Are you gonna go, Nancy?

NANCY
Maybe... if someone asks me.

BOY
Hey, Nance!

A short, rat-faced BOY (17) runs up to them.

BOY (CONT'D)
Do you have a date to the dance yet?

GEORGE
She's not going with *you*, Peabody,
so get lost.

BOY
No, not for me. I'm asking for
someone else.

NANCY
Tell whomever it is no one's asked
me yet.

BOY
Righto. I'll pass it along.

The boy returns to his table. He WHISPERS something to Ned Nickerson. George and Nancy watch.

GEORGE
You see that! He's talking to Ned
Nickerson!

BESS
He's so cute!

NANCY
Stop staring. He'll see us.

GEORGE
HEY NED!

NANCY
No! Shut up!

George and Bess dissolve into giggles.

BESS
I wish someone would ask *me* to the
dance. Someone dreamy, with dark
eyes, and a foreign accent.

GEORGE
I want someone sexy, like Nancy's
dad.

NANCY

God, I wish I didn't hear that.

BESS

We should pick out new shoes after school!

NANCY

I can't. I'm going to help Mr. March.

Nancy pulls the stack of love letters out of her bag.

BESS

Again? We combed that attic from top to bottom yesterday!

NANCY

Did anything strike you as odd about that room?

GEORGE

(mouth full)

Like what?

NANCY

No instruments. All those cases, and nothing in them. Not even a piano or a guitar.

BESS

Maybe Mr. March sold them?

NANCY

Without the cases? I don't think so. No, there's something strange about that room.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - LAW OFFICE - DAY

Nancy walks past a RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST

Hello, Nancy. Your father's in his office.

INT. CARSON'S OFFICE - LAW FIRM - DAY

Nance enters and sits down. Carson waves hello, on the phone.

CARSON

(into phone)

And when will that be? ...

(MORE)

CARSON (CONT'D)

You don't know? ... Does *anyone* know? ... Alright. Thank you for your time. If he comes in, gimme a call.

He hangs up.

CARSON (CONT'D)

That was the music publishers. Apparently Ben Banks sent the music in by mail. He talked to the publisher over the phone. They've never actually met him.

NANCY

What about the residual checks?

CARSON

He has them mailed to a post office in Oxford, upstate. No one's seen his face. The man's a ghost.

NANCY

What a bunch of bull!

The phone RINGS. Carson answers.

CARSON

Carson Drew. Oh, hello Mr. March... Wait, slow down...

There is PANICKED SHOUTING on the other end.

CARSON (CONT'D)

When did this happen? ... Alright, I'll let someone know right away.
(he hangs up)

NANCY

What is it?

CARSON

Susan's gone missing. He says she's been kidnapped.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - DAY

Nancy's car SKIDS to a stop outside the mansion. She gets out. Mr. March runs to greet her.

NANCY

My dad called the police. They're on their way. Tell me what happened.

MARCH

I don't know. She was out here playing. I was inside. I heard her talking to someone, then I heard a scream. I ran outside and she was gone!

NANCY

Don't worry. We'll find her.
 (he shakes his head,
 despairing)
 Hey! Listen to me. We'll find her, okay? Where was Susan playing?

MARCH

Over there.

Nancy examines the ground where March is pointing. There are two sets of FOOTPRINTS -- one child sized, the other large, with studs around the heel.

They lead through a gap in a fence, off the property.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

A SEARCH PARTY hikes through the woods. Flashlights sweep over the trees. Nancy is there with Bess and George.

NANCY

SUSAN!

BESS

SUSAN!

POLICE MEN march beside them. BLOODHOUNDS sniff the ground, tugging at their leashes.

A DOG OWNERS reprimands his dog.

DOG OWNER

No. Bad dog. Put that down.

POLICE OFFICER

What is it?

DOG OWNER

Sweets of some sort. Gumdrops. I keep telling her, we're looking for a little girl, not candy.

NANCY

What did you say?

DOG OWNER
Gumdrops. Why?

Nancy shines the light on the ground. It hits a BRIGHT ORANGE GUMDROP.

NANCY
There's another one. She's leaving
a bread crumb trail!

The officer blows a whistle.

POLICE OFFICER
Everyone, listen up! Look for
gumdrops! They'll point us in the
right direction!

MARCH
Gumdrops?!

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The party passes a distinct boulder. Nancy spots a red candy.

NANCY
There's another one.
(looking around)
Hey, I know this area. I came by
here once with my hiking group.

Nancy thinks... then takes off running.

GEORGE
Wait! Where are you going?

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Nancy emerges from the trees, into a clearing.

A dirt road comes to a stop at an ABANDONED SHACK. Faint BANGING is coming from inside.

Carson arrives behind her with the head of the police department, SHERIFF BARNES (hefty, mid 50s).

SHERIFF BARNES
You hear that?

CARSON
It's the girl... !

Nancy dashes across the road and up the front porch.

SHERIFF BARNES
Nancy, wait!

The sheriff draws his sidearm.

INT. SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Nancy bangs open the door.

NANCY
Susan?

MUFFLED SHOUTS come from another room. Nancy opens a closet door, shines her light down.

Susan is lying on the floor, banging her feet on the wall. Her hands are bound and her mouth is gagged.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Susan!

Susan shouts with joy. Nancy hugs her and removes the gag.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Thank god! You're alright.

BAM! OFFICERS slam through the front door, guns drawn.

SHERIFF BARNES
Police! Nobody move!

Susan SCREAMS. The officers check the other rooms. Barnes holsters his weapon.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)
Area secure.

INT. SHACK - LATER

Susan sits on a sunken couch, clinging to Nancy. Officers mill about. Mr. March enters the shack.

SUSAN
Grandpa!

She runs into his arms.

MARCH
Muffin cake! I could've died of worry.
(to Nancy, teary)
Thank you.

EXT. SHACK - NIGHT

OFFICERS take photographs. Some make molds of TIRE TRACKS.

TIRE TRACK OFFICER
Looks like a pickup truck. Maybe a
Volvo or a Chevy.

OFFICER 2
(examining a tree trunk)
Hey, look at this! A bit of blue
paint. The kidnapper must've backed
into the tree when he drove off.

INT. MARCH ESTATE - NIGHT

Susan sits with Mr. March in the living room, talking to a
POLICE DETECTIVE. Nancy hovers nearby with more OFFICERS.

DETECTIVE
So the man who took you was tall, he
had a black beard, and wore a
newsboy cap. Is that right?
(Susan nods)
What did he do after the two of you
reached the shack?

Susan doesn't answer.

MARCH
Do we have to do this now?

DETECTIVE
I'm afraid so. It's important we
get this all down while it's fresh.

SUSAN
He tied me up.

DETECTIVE
And then?

SUSAN
He drove off.

DETECTIVE
That's it? He didn't say or do
anything else?

SUSAN
No.

The officers share a skeptical look.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - NIGHT

The police return to their black and whites. The sheriff walks with March and Nancy.

SHERIFF BARNES

Damn funny business. The man grabs the girl, drags her two miles through the woods, ties her up and just leaves her there. Beats me why he bothered.

(they reach his car)

We'll let you know if we find anything.

(to Nancy)

Ma'am.

The officers drive off. Nancy turns back to the house. She spots something by a FLOWER PATCH under the window. The flowers have been TRAMPLED.

She investigates. A trail of MUDDY FOOTPRINTS lead away from the flowers, around the house.

They stop beneath a window.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The footprints continue inside the house, beneath the same window. Nancy examines them with a MAGNIFYING GLASS.

MARCH

Nancy? What is it?

NANCY

He wasn't after Susan. He wanted to get everyone out of the house. So he could search it.

She crawls across the floor, following the prints.

MARCH

Are you sure? Those prints could've been left by a policeman.

NANCY

I recognize the studs in the sole.
(reaches a cabinet)
He stopped here. Then he went into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nancy follows the prints across the tile floor. March hovers behind her, Susan clinging to his side.

NANCY

He went to the cupboard... and then
he turned back. Why?
(straightening up)
Is anything missing?

MARCH

I don't think so. Not unless --

He rummages through a drawer.

MARCH (CONT'D)

It can't be...! I swear, I put it
right here!
(looks at Nancy)
The music you found yesterday is
gone!

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

A MAN obscured in SHADOW speaks to SOMEONE on the telephone.

TELEPHONE SPEAKER (V.O.)

Are you crazy, kidnapping a girl?
Do you realize what sort of heat
this'll bring?

MYSTERY MAN

Let me worry about the heat. You
just worry about your end of the
bargain.

TELEPHONE SPEAKER (V.O.)

No. This has gone too far.

MYSTERY MAN

You aren't getting cold feet, are
you? Just when we're getting started?

TELEPHONE SPEAKER (V.O.)

All I'm saying is you're making it
more complicated than it has to be.

MYSTERY MAN

If you want my help, you have to
let me do this my way.

(MORE)

MYSTERY MAN (CONT'D)

Otherwise, I'm sure there are other people who'll be interested in what I have to offer. Very interested.

He looks down at a paper in his hand -- the sheet music for "SUMMERTIME BALLAD".

INT. HALLWAY - SCHOOL - DAY

Nancy walks with George and Bess between classes.

GEORGE

He went back to the house? Just to get some music?

NANCY

That's not all. Look at this.

She hands George a SLIP OF PAPER.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I found it in the flowerbed. I think it fell out of the kidnapper's pocket when he climbed through the window.

GEORGE

(reading)

"M. Paray... Twelve W-H... Ten B-K... Eight B-L" But this is gibberish. It doesn't make any sense.

BESS

Can I see?

(taking the paper)

I know what this is!

(they stop)

It's a list of fabrics! W-H is white. B-K is black. B-L blue. And look here, at the top. M. Paray. That's gotta be *Madame Paray's*, the fabric store on main street!

Nancy snatches the list back.

NANCY

Blue... Yellow... Red! I think you're right!

(they keep walking)

I'll drop by there after school and see if Madame Paray knows anything.

BESS
I'll come with you. They have a
periwinkle blue I want for the dance.

Nancy almost walks right into Ned Nickerson as he comes out
of the bathroom.

NANCY
Oh. Hi Ned.

Ned averts his eyes and brushes past her.

GEORGE
Nice to see you too!
(to Nancy)
What was that about?

NANCY
(stunned)
I have no idea...!

BESS
You didn't turn him down, did you?

NANCY
I never got the chance.

BESS
You mean he didn't ask you to the
dance??

NANCY
I haven't heard from him all week.
Look, it's really not important.

BESS
Not important?! Nancy, it's the
fall dance of our junior year! This
might be the most important thing
in our entire lives!

INT. MADAME PARAY'S DRESS SHOP - DAY

Nancy browses the fabric shop with Bess and George.

GEORGE
Maybe his letter got lost in the
mail.

BESS
Yeah. They're always losing stuff!

NANCY

It's alright, really. I'm not sure
I want to go to the dance, anyway.

BESS

Nancy, you don't mean that!

A WOMAN with pince-nez glasses emerges from a back room. She
is MADAME PARAY. She speaks with a strong FRENCH ACCENT.

MME. PARAY

'Ello girls. Can I 'elp you with
anything?

NANCY

I was wondering if you could tell
me about this.

She shows her the paper. Madame Paray examines it.

MME. PARAY

That's odd. What are you doing with
this?

GEORGE

We're investigating a kidnapping.

MME. PARAY

Pardon?

NANCY

Uh... we found it somewhere. Do you
recognize it?

MME. PARAY

Oui, this is an inventory of silks
I ordered from the Lucius Dight
Textile Corporation. Ze plant on
Eighth Street.

GEORGE

Lucius Dight?

NANCY

Is he related to Diane Dight?

MME. PARAY

She's his daughter. She haz a nice
figure. Very easy to fit. Do you
know her?

GEORGE

Know her? Everyone at school knows
that spoiled snob.

BESS

George!

GEORGE

It's true! Did you hear she almost got Mr. Mole-on-his-face fired for giving her a C? That girl is a B-I-T-C --

NANCY

George. Not now.

MME. PARAY

It's alright. I know what she is. She alwayz demands I work on her dress before anyone else's, and then makes such a scene when I don't get it done in time. *J'en peux plus*. I am supposed to have one ready for her tonight, but it won't be finished until Thursday.

(she sighs)

I am not looking forward to telling her.

NANCY

I can tell her if you like.

MME. PARAY

Would you? Ah, *Vous etes un angel!*

Mme. Paray kisses Nancy on both her cheeks.

MME. PARAY (CONT'D)

She iz in the city right now. Her train gets back at four o'clock.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - PARKING LOT - DAY

Nancy sits in her car, studying Fipp's letters.

NANCY

"A terrible secret tucked away..."
What secret were you hiding, Fipp March?

A TRAIN WHISTLE makes her look up. She puts the letters away.

EXT. PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

Diane Dight steps down from the 4 o'clock train.

NANCY
Hello Diane.

Diane stops, startled. Nancy is waiting for her.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I have a message for you. Madame
Paray said your dress won't be
ready until Thursday.

DIANE
That's it? God, that woman gets on
my nerves. You know, I bet that
accent's a put-on? Nobody talks
like that. Still, she can sew a
dress better than anyone I know.

NANCY
My housekeeper does all mine.

DIANE
(looking her over)
That explains it. Anything else?

NANCY
Yes, she said your father called. He
wants to see you at his office. I can
drive you if you like. My car's right
over there.

DIANE
Don't bother. I'll call my father's
chauffeur.

NANCY
Really, it's no trouble.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Nancy drives. Diane rides shotgun, her arms crossed.

DIANE
I suppose you'll be going to that
dance in two weeks.

NANCY
(embarrassed)
I... well, we'll see.

DIANE
Why else would you be at Madame
Paray's?

NANCY

I was there with some friends. Bess and George. Do you know them?

DIANE

You mean the plump girl and the one with a boy's haircut? Don't tell me *they've* found dates?

NANCY

I'm sure there are plenty of boys who'd be happy to go with them.

DIANE

Yeah, I suppose their standards can't be too high.

Nancy grits her teeth.

EXT. TEXTILE FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

They drive up to a GUARD BOOTH. The GUARD spots Diane.

GUARD

Howdy Diane. Go on in.

He presses a button, raising the boom gate. Nancy drives through, onto a dirt parking lot. She parks her car.

DIANE

(getting out)

I'll see you at school.

NANCY

Actually, if you don't mind I'd like to talk to your father about something. Do you think you could introduce me?

DIANE

Is *that* what this is about? Jesus, Drew. You really know how to waste a girl's time.

NANCY

Come on. You owe me for that crack about my friends.

DIANE

Fine. But my father's a busy man.

INT. MR. DIGHT'S OFFICE - TEXTILE PLANT - DAY

Diane's father, MR. DIGHT, looks up from his desk. He's a stern man with horn-rim glasses.

MR. DIGHT
Drew? She's that girl who's beating
you in every class, isn't she?
What do I want with her?

DIANE
She didn't say.

MR. DIGHT
Very well, show her in.

Diane opens a door to admit Nancy.

MR. DIGHT (CONT'D)
Alright, Miss Drew. You've got
sixty seconds. Stick around, Diane.
You might learn something.

NANCY
I was wondering if you could tell
me about this.

She puts the list on Dight's desk. He glances at it.

MR. DIGHT
It's an order slip. We manufacture
fabrics here. Madame Paray is one
of our customers.

NANCY
And who would have access to an
order slip like this?

MR. DIGHT
Probably someone in the packaging
department. Say, what is this
about?

NANCY
It's just a project I'm working on.
Do any of your employees own a blue
pickup truck?

MR. DIGHT
A blue pickup? This doesn't have
anything to do with that kidnapping,
does it? Weren't they looking for a
blue truck for that?
(remembering)
(MORE)

MR. DIGHT (CONT'D)

Hold on. You're that girl who solves mysteries, aren't you? The amateur sleuth!

(to Diane)

What sort of ambush did you set me up for?

DIANE

I didn't know -- !

MR. DIGHT

This interview's over. Next time you wanna talk, see my lawyer first.

NANCY

I'm sorry, sir. Thank you for your time.

INT. WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nancy steps out. We hear Mr. Dight's VOICE through the door.

MR. DIGHT (O.S.)

What the hell's the matter with you, bringing her in to interrogate me like that? You're lucky I don't ground you!

Mr. Dight's clueless secretary, MISS JONES (50s), sits down at her desk.

SECRETARY

Would you like me to walk you out, deary?

NANCY

No, thanks. I can manage.

(stopping at the door)

Actually, do you think you could give me a tour?

SECRETARY

(checks her watch)

Oh, I don't know.

NANCY

Mr. Dight said it would be fine. And I bet you know a lot about the textile business.

The secretary puffs up, proudly.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

The secretary leads Nancy through a bustling production plant. WORKERS, mostly women, operate rows of machines.

SECRETARY

Most the fabrics we produce are made from spruce trees. First the wood is converted into pulp. Then it's churned in a chemical solution for several hours.

NANCY

It sure looks like an exciting place to work.

PASSING EMPLOYEE

Exciting? Gee kid, did you get kicked in the head by a mule?

SECRETARY

(embarrassed laugh)

That's Phyllis. Don't mind her.

Nancy sees a SIGN on a DOOR:

DANGER. KEEP OUT.
POSITIVELY NO ADMITTANCE.

Nancy stops.

NANCY

What's in there?

SECRETARY

That's where we make our *premium* silk. It's strictly off limits. Even I don't know how it's made!

NANCY

How about just a quick peep?

SECRETARY

Mr. Dight would be furious! I could lose my job!

NANCY

Alright. Could you show me the packaging department?

SECRETARY

Of course. Right this way.

She moves on. Nancy glances back at the forbidden door.

INT. PACKAGING ROOM - DAY

A SUPERVISOR oversees WORKERS as they box up fabrics.

SECRETARY

We process thousands of yards of fabric here a day, and send it to shops all over the state. This is Mr. Booker, our supervisor.

NANCY

(to the supervisor)
Do you know Madame Paray's?

SUPERVISOR

The place on main street? Yeah. She orders from our premium supply.

Mr. Dight's VOICE comes over the loudspeaker.

MR. DIGHT (O.S.)

Miss Jones, where are you? I need you in my office right away!

SECRETARY

I better go.

She hurries off. Nancy shows the list to the supervisor.

NANCY

Do you know who might have written this?

SUPERVISOR

That looks like Bushy Trott's handwriting. He works in the Premium Silks department. Tall. Kinda surly. Keeps to himself mostly. Drives a blue Chevy.

NANCY

Really?! Does he have a beard?

SUPERVISOR

Not since I've known him.

NANCY

Do you think I could speak to him?

SUPERVISOR

Not right now. He works night shifts, comes in around six. Most the factory is closed by then.

NANCY
Alright, thanks.

EXT. STREET - FACTORY - DAY

Nancy puts some coins in a payphone down the road.

NANCY
(into phone)
Hey, is this the police?... It's
Nancy... Nancy Drew... Yes, *that*
idiot sleuth girl. Is Sheriff
Barnes there?... Can I leave a
message?... Ask him if he has
anything on a Bushy Trott.

In the background a BLUE PICKUP TRUCK drives past and parks
down the street. Nancy doesn't see it.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Because it might be important...
Look, can you just ask him?...
Fine! Maybe I will!
(she hangs up)
Some people wouldn't know a lead if
it bit them in the -- !
(sees the truck)
Ahhh! It's him!

BUSHY TROTT is getting out of the truck. 6 feet tall, barrel
chest, heavy brow. Nancy scrambles to collect her bag.

She approaches Trott as he walks down the street.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Excuse me. My name's Nancy Drew. I
wanted to ask you a few questions.

TROTT
(not stopping)
Piss off.

NANCY
Where were you yesterday around
four in the afternoon?

Trott gives her a sharp look.

TROTT
I was here.

NANCY
And when did you leave?

TROTT

Four in the morning. I worked a double shift.

NANCY

Can anyone verify that?

TROTT

The watchman.

(they reach the gate)

Ask him, he'll tell you.

GUARD

She with you, Trott?

TROTT

Like hell.

He opens the gate for Trott. Nancy tries to follow him in.

GUARD

Sorry miss. I can't let you through.

NANCY

But I was just here! I came with Miss Dight!

GUARD

You're not with her now.

TROTT

Well, ain't that a pity, Nancy?

Trott laughs and saunters off.

NANCY

Lout.

(to the Guard)

Were you on duty yesterday?

GUARD

Yes, ma'am. Haven't taken a sick day in twenty years.

NANCY

Could you tell me if Mr. Trott left the plant at all during his double shift yesterday?

GUARD

I could check. We make a note of anyone who leaves in this book here.

He pulls out a massive three ring binder.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Let's see... Bushy Trott... Nope.
Came in around noon, left at four
AM... He was here all day.

NANCY

You're positive?... I mean, you
would swear to that?

GUARD

Sure would.
(his phone rings)
Excuse me.

He answers.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Hello?... Oh, hi Mr. Dight...
What's that?... I see... Alright.
(he hangs up)
Sorry, ma'am. The boss doesn't want
me talking to you any more. You run
along now.

Nancy looks up at Mr. Dight's OFFICE WINDOW. Dight is
watching them. He yanks the blinds shut.

NANCY

Thank you. I appreciate your help.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

George sits on her bed, flipping a quarter.

GEORGE'S MOM (O.S.)

George! Phone call!

MOMENTS LATER

George takes the phone from her mom.

GEORGE'S MOM

It's Nancy Drew.

EXT. STREET - INTERCUT

Nancy's on the payphone again.

GEORGE

Make it quick. My parents think I'm
doing my homework.

NANCY

I'm at the Dight factory, and I think I'm onto something. There's a guy here named Bushy Trott who's more fishy than a tuna sandwich.

GEORGE

Bushy? What kind of name is Bushy?

NANCY

Only problem is he's got an alibi. I'm gonna do a little snooping. Maybe I'll look in his office, see what I can find. I might be home late. Can you call my dad, and let him know? His line's busy.

GEORGE

Okay. Be careful.

EXT. TEXTILE FACTORY - SUNSET

WORKERS exit the factory at the end of the day. Some walk to the bus stop, others get in cars. A few wave to the guard.

Nancy watches from inside her car as Mr. Dight's luxury sedan pulls out of the parking lot and drives off.

She gets out of the car and creeps toward the guard booth.

Nancy peeks around the corner at the booth window. The guard is eating a sandwich and reading a western paperback.

Nancy gets down on her hands and knees and crawls past the booth. The guard doesn't see her.

She makes it past and straightens up.

NANCY

Easy peasy.

She backs into some TRASH CANS. They CLAMOR to the ground.

GUARD (O.S.)

What was that?

NANCY

Shoot!

Nancy races across the lot to the factory. She hides behind a corner and looks back.

The guard is setting the cans back up.

GUARD
Damn raccoons.

Nancy breathes a SIGH of relief. She continues around the side of the building.

The sun has gotten lower. It's almost night.

Nancy looks through a window: the main floor is empty, the lights are off, but she can see a LIGHT coming from under the door leading off the factory floor, to the Premium room.

Nancy approaches a door and tries the handle. *It's locked.* She pulls a clip from her hair and picks the lock. The door swings open.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - NIGHT

Nancy steals across the empty room. Her shoes go CLICK-CLACK on the concrete floor.

Nancy stops. She removes her shoes and continues forward. Her stockings don't make a sound.

She tiptoes up to the Premium Silks door.

Nancy peers through the key-hole. The room is full of big chrome VATS OF CHEMICALS, bubbling and churning.

Trott is visible at the far end, hunkered over a desk. He stands and shuts a HOPPER WINDOW near the ceiling.

He adjusts the lids of some of the vats, then walks toward the door.

Nancy hurries out of the way. She drops behind a machine right as the door opens.

Trott steps out and crosses into the break room. The door to his office slowly swings shut behind him.

Nancy dashes forward. She catches the door before it can close all the way.

INT. PREMIUM SILKS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nancy slips inside. She slides a doorstopper in place to keep the door open, then turns to face the room.

THICK SMOKE is coming from the vats.

She moves deeper into the room. Tables line the walls with rows of GLASS TUBES on them.

Nancy examines one. It's full of SILK STRANDS. They quiver, like a guitar string, and then -- A *BLACK SPIDER* crawls into view. It has a RED HOURGLASS on its stomach.

NANCY

Black widow spiders! So *that's*
where he gets his special silk!

She approaches Trott's desk, in the corner of the room.

Nancy rifles through some order slips. She opens a drawer and finds a stack of tabloids titled *THE EVENING ENQUIRER*.

She opens ANOTHER DRAWER and nearly jumps.

There's a MANNEQUIN HEAD inside, with a BLACK BEARD attached.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Holy St. Christopher! A fake beard!

ANGLE ON: the door. A HAND slams it shut and turns a key.

Nancy whips around. She runs to the door and turns the handle. It's locked.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Hey! Let me out!

We hear LAUGHING and RETREATING FOOTSTEPS on the other side.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I said... let... me...
(clutching her forehead)
Goodness, I feel faint...

NANCY'S POV: she sways, SEEING DOUBLE. Her view settles on one of the vats -- still emitting thick smoke.

NANCY (CONT'D)

The chemicals...!

Nancy grabs the lid, tries to wrench it shut. It doesn't move. A steel lock is holding it in place.

Nancy yanks at the door handle again.

NANCY (CONT'D)

God! Damn! It!

She turns and runs to a SECOND DOOR on the opposite side of the room. This one is locked too.

Nancy puts a handkerchief to her nose.

She climbs atop a stool and tries to open the hopper window.
It's also locked.

Nancy spins around. She grabs a paperweight off the desk. She climbs up and bangs it against the hopper window.

THUD! The glass doesn't break.

She tries again. A crack appears.

Nancy sways. The world swims around her...

She raises the paperweight once more... but falls back before she can use it.

Nancy hits the floor, unconscious.

INT. DINING ROOM - DREW HOUSE - NIGHT

Carson Drew looks up from his paper as Mrs. Gruen sets a plate down.

CARSON
Nancy still isn't home?

MRS. GRUEN
I haven't seen her all day.

CARSON
Hmm.

INT. BESS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bess speaks on the phone.

BESS
Nancy? She's not at my house. Did you try George?

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

George's FAMILY is at the dinner table. The baby is screaming again and George is arguing with her LITTLE BROTHER (8).

GEORGE
... Then how did my cornbread get on your plate?

GEORGE'S BROTHER
It's not on my plate.

GEORGE
Then where'd that second cornbread
come from?

The phone rings.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
That must be Nancy.
(to her brother)
Don't touch my cornbread!

She leaves. Her brother crams both cornbreads in his mouth.
George answers the phone.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
How'd it go? Did you break into
that guy's office?

CARSON (O.S.)
George? This is Mr. Drew.

GEORGE
Crap. I mean... uh... wrong number!

CARSON
George, what is Nancy up to?

INT. DREW HOUSE - NIGHT

Carson hangs up. He dials another number.

CARSON
(to Mrs. Gruen)
George says she was going to check
out a Mister Trott, at the Lucius
Dight Textile Plant, but that was an
hour ago. Something must've happened.

MRS. GRUEN
Oh, dear. I knew all this sleuthing
would land her in hot water. I warned
her. Didn't I warn her?

CARSON
(into phone)
Hello, officer? This is Carson Drew.
My daughter Nancy hasn't come home.
I'm worried she might be in trouble.

INT. PREMIUM SILKS ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy lies on the floor, still unconscious. The thick steam swirls above her.

Nancy's eyes stir. Her INNER MONOLOGUE echoes inside her head -- a collage of thoughts and sounds drifting in and out...

NANCY (V.O.)

*Where am I...? What am I doing here?... Get up... Go back to sleep, reeeessst... Come on, open your eyes... What is that smell?... Nancy... Where am I?... It doesn't matter, just go to sleep.... Nancy! Sleeeeeeep... Nancy! Close your eyes... Get up, Nancy! Get up! Get up! **GET UP!***

The last word hits like a THUNDERCLAP. Nancy opens her eyes.

She COUGHS and rolls over, holding the handkerchief to her mouth.

NANCY

Keep your head, Nancy... Hot air rises, so stay low.

Nancy crawls to the second door. She pulls out her hairpin and picks the lock.

INT. GUARD BOOTH - TEXTILE PLANT - NIGHT

The guard speaks into the phone.

GUARD

... Sure, I can check, but I'm telling you, she's not here.

He hangs up and grabs his keys off a hook.

GUARD (CONT'D)

People these days... just don't listen.

INT. KITCHEN - TEXTILE PLANT - NIGHT

Trott is adding some cream to his coffee. The guard enters.

GUARD

Evening Trott. You haven't seen that young lady snooping around, have you?

TROTT

No.

GUARD

Didn't think so. I'm gonna do some looking around. Let me know if you see her.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - NIGHT

The guard wanders down the dark factory floor, shining his flashlight across the different machines.

Trott eyes him from the kitchen.

TROTT

Find anything?

GUARD

No. Everything looks normal. Hold on... What's this?

He shines his light on something by one of the machines:
Nancy left her shoes behind.

GUARD (CONT'D)

They're a pair of women's shoes...!

TROTT

Must belong to one of the workers.

GUARD

They don't wear anything as nice as these. You think maybe she slipped into the Premium room while you were on your break?

TROTT

Don't see how. I locked the door.

GUARD

Let's check it all the same.

INT. PREMIUM SILKS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nancy continues to pick the lock. She coughs, glances up. The fumes are getting lower.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The guard pulls out his key ring. Trott comes forward.

TROTT
(uneasy)
You need my key?

GUARD
No, I got one.

He tries the key. Trott hovers behind him, looking anxious.

INT. PREMIUM SILKS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nancy gets the lock open. She opens the door, tumbles inside, and slams it shut behind her, right as --

The other door opens. The guard looks inside.

GUARD
Nope, no one in here.

Trott pushes past him into the room.

TROTT
Impossible...!

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Nancy listens through the door. She turns and finds a STAIRCASE, leading down to an UNDERGROUND UTILITY TUNNEL.

INT. PREMIUM SILKS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GUARD
Whoo! It's like a furnace in here.
You should crack a vent.

Trott looks from the window with the crack in it, to the paperweight on the floor, to the second door...

He swings the door open, to find -- nothing. Nancy has gone.

The guard unlocks the hopper window and opens it.

GUARD (CONT'D)
That's better. Hey, I thought they closed that access tunnel off years ago.

Trott thinks for a moment. He storms out of the room.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

INT. ACCESS TUNNEL - NIGHT

Nancy feels her way along the tunnel wall. Her stocking feet are dirty and ripped.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The lit-up factory is visible over the rooftops.

We CRANE DOWN to a ALLEY between two buildings. A MANHOLE COVER wobbles as it's lifted up and slid out of the way.

Nancy climbs out and collapses on the ground. She stares up at the stars, catching her breath.

We hear RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

Nancy gets to her feet and hurries off.

Bushy Trott arrives moments later. He spots the open manhole.

TROTT

Dammit.

He scans the alley. It looks empty. Trott stalks off.

TRACK RIGHT to reveal: Nancy, hiding behind a corner.

EXT. STREET - TEXTILE FACTORY - NIGHT

Trott stomps back to the factory. He stops, hearing voices. A COP CAR is parked outside the factory entrance. The guard is showing the shoes to an OFFICER and CARSON DREW.

CARSON

Those are hers, alright. You have no idea where she could've gone?

GUARD

None at all. We searched the whole building. Bushy Trott went running off. Maybe he knew where she went, but he hasn't come back.

OFFICER

Yeah, Nancy called us about him. She thought he might be connected to that kidnapping.

Nancy emerges from an alley.

NANCY

Dad?

CARSON

Nancy!

She stumbles into her father's arms.

INT. CARSON'S CAR - NIGHT

Carson drives while Nancy rides shotgun, exhausted.

CARSON

Breaking and entering?! Are you kidding me?! You could get ten years for that!

NANCY

But he's the guy, Dad! Bushy Trott kidnapped Susan! I know it! He's got the car, the beard, the list. His alibi disappeared through that tunnel under the factory...

CARSON

Then you let the police deal with him. You almost died tonight!

NANCY

But I didn't! I think I can handle one Bushy Trott. The man's three genomes shy of a chimpanzee.

CARSON

That doesn't mean he's not dangerous! Stupid people can still lash out, especially when they feel cornered. Christ, Nancy! I was worried about you!

There's a moment of silence.

NANCY

I'm sorry.

CARSON

I love you, Nance. But don't do something like this again.

INT. DREW HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

Carson and Nancy enter the house.

MRS. GRUEN

About time! I've been worried sick!
What happened to your stockings!?
You expect me to fix those?

Nancy rolls her eyes and slumps into the living room.

CARSON

That's enough, Mrs. Gruen. I'll
deal with her.

MRS. GRUEN

I'm just saying, if she listened to
me this could be avoided. That's
all I'm saying.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nancy collapses face down on the sofa. Carson enters. He
pulls out his pipe and takes a seat.

CARSON

I'm sure Mr. Dight won't press
charges. But I think we should lay
down some basic rules. I'm not
gonna ground you. We both know you
wouldn't obey me if I did. But
maybe some limits would be helpful.
(no answer)
Nancy?

Nancy is already fast asleep.

Carson SIGHS. He retrieves a blanket from a cupboard and
drapes it over her.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Night-night, sweet-pea.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY

Nancy does stretches with Bess and George in their PE class.

BESS

You're dad's right, Nancy! That was
reckless! If I did that my parents
would've sent me back to St.
Francis before I even got home.

GEORGE

Big deal. What did you find out? Is
it him?

NANCY
Definitely.

GEORGE
How definitely?

NANCY
95 percent. Once Susan IDs him, we'll know for sure. They're bringing him in for questioning as we speak.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Trott sits across from a detective in a windowless room.

TROTT
I told you, I don't know about any kidnapping. What would I want with a little girl?

DETECTIVE
And how do you explain the tracks left by your pickup truck at the site where the girl was found?

TROTT
What tracks? I don't know about any tracks.

INT. POLICE STATION - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

A police car pulls up. Philip March and Susan get out. An OFFICER leads them inside.

OFFICER 2
This won't take more than fifteen minutes.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

ANOTHER OFFICER enters the room and gives the detective a nod. The detective stands and pulls the fake beard out of an evidence bag.

DETECTIVE
We need you to put this on and come with us.

INT. POLICE LINE UP - DAY

Trott and FOUR OTHER BEARDED SUSPECTS trudge in front of the height lines.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Susan and March watch from behind a two-way mirror, alongside the detective and Sheriff Barnes.

THUG 4
Can we hurry it up? I've got other
little girls to kidnap.

OFFICER (O.S.)
Hey, stop talking!

DETECTIVE
(to Susan)
Well?

Susan looks between them. She points at Trott.

SUSAN
That one.

The detective turns to Sheriff Barnes.

SHERIFF BARNES
Book him.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Trott is led back into the interrogation room. One of the officers returns the fake beard to the bag.

OFFICER 2
Hold out your hands.

TROTT
(obeying)
Why?

They tighten some HANDCUFFS on him.

OFFICER 2
Mr. Trott, you're under arrest.

TOTT
The hell I am! Go screw
yourself! I didn't do
nothing! Nothing, you hear!
This is unlawful arrestment.
I wanna talk to my lawyer!

OFFICER 2 (CONT'D)
You have the right to remain
silent. You have the right to
an attorney. Anything you say
can and will be used against
you in a court of law.

Sheriff Barnes enters.

SHERIFF BARNES
Take him to the holding cell.
(they push him forward)
Cooperate, Trott. It'll be easier
for everyone.

TROTT
You want cooperation? I'll show you
cooperation.

*Trott yanks the sidearm out of an officer's holster and wraps
his arm around the cop's neck, taking him hostage.*

Barnes and the detective draw their guns.

TROTT (CONT'D)
Anyone moves, I blow his head off.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

An officer walks March and Susan back to his car.

OFFICER
Trust me, you don't have to worry
about him any more.

CRASH!! Trott flies out a window, hitting the ground.

Susan SCREAMS. The officer draws his gun.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
GET DOWN! NOW!

BANG! BANG! Trott scrambles to his feet, diving behind a
corner. He leans around and gets off a shot. BANG! SMASH! *It
shatters the front windshield of the prowler.*

Trott and the officer exchange gunfire. March and Susan
crouch behind some trash cans.

BAM! The officer gets shot in the leg and falls over.

Trott runs forward. He slides over the hood of the car,
through the shattered window, into the driver's seat.

He turns the ignition and slams on the gas, peeling out right as Sheriff Barnes comes running out with more OFFICERS.

They watch Trott swerve around HONKING CARS.

SHERIFF BARNES
Call in a code eight, A-S-A-P!
(mopping his brow)
Ah, I hate it when this happens.

INT. DREW HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Nancy walks in. Mrs. Gruen greets her.

MRS. GRUEN
Nancy! Did you hear? That man Bushy
Trott shot a cop and stole a car!

NANCY
No!

MRS. GRUEN
It's all over the radio. There's a
statewide manhunt for him!

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nancy throws her bag down and turns on a radio.

RADIO (V.O.)
... Last seen heading west in a
stollen police car. If any of our
listeners have any information on
the whereabouts of Bushy Trott, we
urge you to inform the police.

EXT. TROTT'S HOUSE - DAY

CRUNCH! Trott smashes the car into a tree. STEAM pours out the hood. He gets out, still handcuffed, bleeding from the shoulder.

INT. TROTT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Trott stumbles inside. A shelf on his wall is loaded with GLASS CAGES full of TARANTULAS and SNAKES. Trott staggers to a phone and dials a number. SOMEONE answers.

TROTT

You gotta help me! The police are onto me!

TELEPHONE SPEAKER (V.O.)

You said they wouldn't be a problem!

TROTT

I was wrong, okay? I need a place to hide.

TELEPHONE SPEAKER (V.O.)

No. I warned you this would happen. It's your mess, you clean it up!

TROTT

Screw you! You think I'm gonna take the heat for this myself? Guess again. If I'm going down, you're going with me.

TELEPHONE SPEAKER (V.O.)

Alright, alright! Where are you now?

TROTT

I'm at my place.

TELEPHONE SPEAKER (V.O.)

Did you take stupid pills this morning? That's the first place they'll look! Get out! Now! Meet me at the turnoff on Fourth in an hour. I'll figure something out.

TROTT

That's too far. Somewhere closer.

A police car pulls up outside. TWO OFFICERS get out.

TROTT (CONT'D)

Crap! They found me. Turnoff on Fourth! One hour!

Trott slams the phone down and sprints toward a back door.

OFFICER

(drawing his weapon)

There he is! FREEZE!

BANG! BANG! They fire through the window, shattering glass.

INT. DREW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy does homework. Carson reads the paper. The RADIO is on.

RADIO

... Two policemen caught up with him
earlier today at his residence, but
he escaped yet again.

The PHONE RINGS. Nancy picks it up.

NANCY

Nancy Drew... Hey George... Yeah, I
heard... No, I'll be fine. Thanks.

She hangs up. The PHONE RINGS again. Nancy answers it.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Hi Bess... Yeah, I'm listening to
it now -- wait, What's that?

BESS (V.O.)

I just got word. Mary in English
said Sammy's boyfriend James
overheard Nelly ask Ned Nickerson
to the dance and he said he was
already going with someone. And
you'll never guess who!

NANCY

(guarded)
Who?

CUT TO:

DIANE DIGHT

Flirting with Ned Nickerson in the schoolyard. Nancy watches
them, not touching her food.

GEORGE

I can't believe he's going with
Diane Dight. What on earth does he
see in her? I know she's pretty,
but still... The oaf must be dumber
than I thought.

BESS

If you don't wanna go to the dance,
Nancy, I don't have to go either...
We can skip it together... Nancy?

Nancy breaks out of her daze.

NANCY
You don't have to do that.

A nearby STUDENT adjusts the volume on his portable RADIO.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And now, the latest song to grace
the airwaves, Ben Banks' Summertime
Ballad!

NANCY
Gimme that!

Nancy yanks the radio out of the student's hand.

STUDENT

Hey!

BESS
Nancy, what are you -- ?

NANCY
Shh!
(they listen)
That's the other song! The one Trott
took the night he kidnapped Susan!

Nancy shuts the radio off, thinking.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I want to go to Oxford. That's where the Milton Jenner Music Company is. They're the one's who published Midnight Boogie.

GEORGE
Why? We already know Trott stole
the music.

NANCY
Trott's just a tool. There's gotta
be someone else involved. Someone
who knew about Fipp's music in the
first place and got it produced. We
might figure out who it is if we
talk to the publishers in person.

GEORGE
But Oxford's three hours away!

NANCY
We can take the train. I'm free all
day on Saturday.
(grinning)
What do you say?

George rolls her eyes. *Fine.*

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: the clickity-clack of a train speeding over the rails FADES IN.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Nancy sits by Bess and George in the carriage.

BESS

This is exciting! It's like going to Tin Pan Alley!

GEORGE

That's in New York, silly goose.

BESS

Still, it's a real live music studio! They actually record albums there! I bet it'll be thrilling.

EXT. 605 BRIDEWELL PLACE - DAY

A taxi pulls up outside a four story building. Paint faded, covered in soot. SWING MUSIC comes through an open window.

GEORGE

Still think it'll be thrilling?

INT. 605 BRIDEWELL PLACE - LOBBY - DAY

They step inside. A ceiling fan beats overhead. The gum-chewing RECEPTIONIST (40s, bad makeup) looks up from filing her nails.

NANCY

Milton Jenner's office, please?

RECEPTIONIST

Third floor, second door on your right. Have to take the stairs. The elevator's broken.

NANCY

Thank you.

Nancy moves on. George steps up.

GEORGE

Can I have a stick of gum?... I mean, I figured you must have one, because --

NANCY
(dragging her off)
Come on.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

They hike up the steps.

INT. OFFICE ROOM - DAY

Nancy and the girls step into an office crowded with stacks of sheet music. A BALD MAN with glasses sits at a desk, doing paperwork. He is MR. LALLY.

NANCY
Excuse me, are you Milton Jenner?

MR. LALLY
(not looking up)
I'm his assistant, Horace Lally.
Mr. Jenner is not in right now.

A VOICE comes in on the INTERCOM.

JENNER (V.O.)
Horace, where's that copy of the
Ben Banks contract? I asked for it
thirty minutes ago!

MR. LALLY
(into intercom)
Yes, sir. Right away.
(to the girls)
I'm sorry. Mr. Jenner doesn't see
anyone without an appointment.

He rifles through a drawer for the file.

NANCY
But we have an appointment.

GEORGE
We do?

Nancy kicks George in the shin.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Ow! Oh, right. That appointment.

Lally looks between them, confused. He opens a day calendar and runs his finger down the list.

MR. LALLY
I don't see your name.

NANCY
It should be there. I phoned on
Thursday.

JENNER (V.O.)
Dammit, Horace! What's taking you?!

MR. LALLY
(to the girls)
Excuse me.

He stands and opens the door to a CONNECTED OFFICE.

INT. MR. JENNER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MR. JENNER rises to receive the contract. He has a thin
mustache and black hair thick with palm oil.

JENNER
What's going on out there?

MR. LALLY
These ladies insist on seeing you. I
told them, without an appointment --

JENNER
What do they want?

MR. LALLY
I really don't know.

JENNER
I have five minutes. Tell them to
make it quick.

MR. LALLY
(to the girls, defeated)
You may go in.

They step inside. Lally leaves, shutting the door behind him.

JENNER
Alright, what is it?

NANCY
We want to ask you about Ben Banks.
How did you first meet him?

JENNER

He sent his music in for review a month ago. Mr. Lally thought it might have some merit, so I arranged to have a record made.

NANCY

Could you tell us what he looks like?

JENNER

Not really. Like I said, his stuff came in the mail. Why do you want to know?

NANCY

We'd like to meet him. Perhaps you could tell us his number.

JENNER

I can't give out that information.

NANCY

Have you ever heard the name Philip March?

JENNER

Who?

NANCY

Philip March. He sometimes went by Fipp? He's another songwriter.

JENNER

I don't know anyone by that name. If you'd really like to meet Mr. Banks, give your information to Lally and I'll pass it along. Now, unless you have anything else, I have a very important meeting soon, so I must ask you to leave.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

They step out of Mr. Lally's office.

NANCY

I bet you half the royalties from Midnight Boogie Woogie that Mr. Jenner's very important meeting is with Ben Banks. And we're gonna follow him and find out who Ben Banks really is. Here's the plan.

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

Bess, you stay here and be on the lookout. When Mr. Jenner leaves, signal us through the window. We'll tail him to his meeting. Got it?

BESS

Right.

EXT. 605 BRIDEWELL PLACE - DAY

Nancy and George step outside.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Bess paces at the end of the hall.

A door opens and Mr. Jenner steps out, putting on his coat. Bess hides behind a tall potted plant.

JENNER

I'll be back in an hour. Hold my calls.

Jenner trots down the stairs. Bess goes to the window.

EXT. 605 BRIDEWELL PLACE - SAME TIME

George looks up.

GEORGE

There's Bess. He's coming down.

They duck behind a corner and watch the door. No one comes.

NANCY

What's taking him?

GEORGE

Joke's on us if there's a back door.

NANCY

That's it!

Nancy disappears down an alley.

GEORGE

Nancy, wait! What if he comes out?!

EXT. NEARBY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy emerges onto a street and spots a BACK DOOR swinging shut. She looks around. The sidewalk is teeming with people.

NEWSIE (O.S.)
Hey, watch it, idiot!

Nancy turns. Jenner is across the street, brushing past a pair of muddy NEWSBOYS. She follows him at a distance.

Jenner checks his watch and steps into a RESTAURANT. Nancy follows him in.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Jenner is shown to a booth by a WAITRESS.

JENNER
The usual, please.

The waitress leaves. Jenner fidgets nervously.

Nancy sits at a nearby table and buries her face behind an upside-down menu. A WAITER approaches.

WAITER
Can I get you something, miss?

NANCY
Yeah, I'll have --

Nancy flips the menu over and reads the restaurant name.

NANCY (CONT'D)
The Roasted Chipmunk? Uh, just some water to start. And a cup of tea.

WAITER
Very good.

He pours the water. The waitress approaches Mr. Jenner.

WAITRESS
Excuse me, sir? There's a phone call for you.

Jenner follows the waitress into the back. Nancy gets up and goes after him.

INT. CORRIDOR/BATHROOM - RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Jenner picks up the phone, turning his back to the corridor.

Nancy creeps forward and ducks into the WOMEN'S RESTROOM. She opens the door a crack and listens.

JENNER

You told me we'd be meeting in person... I don't understand the need for all this secrecy, it looks suspicious. People are asking questions. First it was that lawyer, now some girl is asking about you... I don't know. Drew, or something... Nancy Drew. Do you know her?... Anyway, the point is, I've been paying you royalties for the past two weeks, it's time we put this childish shyness behind us, and let me finally meet my star songwriter.

Nancy hears a TOILET FLUSH.

She pretends to check her makeup in the mirror as a WOMAN emerges from a stall and washes her hands.

The woman leaves. Nancy returns to listening at the door.

JENNER (CONT'D)

... That's another thing. When are you gonna get me the next song?... Yeah, Summertime Ballad's a hit, but your contract was for a whole album. At least ten pieces... You're not using our studios, you don't let me in on your progress... I don't even know the name of your next piece... You've just been stringing me along! Now I want a new song on my desk by the end of next week, or I'm withdrawing the advance I gave you.

He slams the phone down and stomps off, past the bathroom door. The door opens as Nancy watches him leave.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Nancy rides the train home with George and Bess.

GEORGE

How does any of that get us closer to ID-ing Trott's accomplice?

BESS
Or to catching Bushy Trott?

NANCY
It doesn't. But now we know Mr. Jenner hasn't met him either, and we know Ben Banks only has those two songs. Which means they'll probably break into Pleasant Hedges again to steal more. Only this time we'll be ready. It's time we set a trap. The first thing to do is talk to Mr. March.

INT. MARCH ESTATE - DAY

Nancy, George, and Bess sit with Mr. March in his kitchen.

MARCH
I don't know. This sounds risky.

NANCY
You don't even have to be here. That's the beauty of it! You'll be gone, leaving the house open for Bushy Trott or his accomplice to sneak in again. And we'll be waiting to catch him in the act.

MARCH
No. We can send Susan away, but I want to be here with you. I won't let you face this guy on your own.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - DAY

Nancy trots down the front steps with Bess and George.

NANCY
Next is Step Two: making sure Bushy Trott knows the house will be empty tonight.

GEORGE
How do we do that?

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

A copy of *THE EVENING ENQUIRER* is slammed down on a counter.

GEORGE

The Evening Enquirer? But that's garbage. Just a lot of cheap gossip and conspiracy theories.

NANCY

Bushy Trott reads it and that's what matters. We'll pay for an ad announcing some sort of Fathers of the Fallen memorial service tonight in the next town over, and say that Mr. March will be giving the main speech.

EXT. STREET - DAY

They walk downtown.

NANCY

The problem is even if we catch Bushy Trott and his partner, that doesn't get us any closer to finding Fipp's music --

She stops, staring across the street. Ned Nickerson is outside a HARDWARE STORE, wearing an apron. He's helping a CUSTOMER load a lawnmower into a truck.

GEORGE

Forget it, Nance. He's not worth it.

Ned catches Nancy staring. He stomps back into the store.

NANCY

Screw it.
(crossing the street)
I've known Ned Nickerson three years, and he's never acted like this before.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Ned pulls a box off a shelf and turns around. He almost bumps straight into Nancy.

NED

Nancy!

NANCY

Alright, what the hell is going on?

NED
(scowling)
You know what.

He brushes past her.

NANCY
No, I don't!

Ned loads merchandise onto a display. George and Bess watch them from the end of the aisle.

NED
Forget it. It doesn't matter.

NANCY
It does to me.
(he moves on)
I'm not leaving until we sort this out.

NED
I said forget it. I thought there was something between us, but I was wrong, so let's just stay friends and move on.

NANCY
But there *was* something between us. I felt it too!

Ned stops.

NED
But then... why did you write me that note?

NANCY
What note?

NED
The one you sent back with my telegram.

NANCY
What telegram? Ned, what are you talking about?

NED
The telegram I sent you last Monday! Your reply said you thought we should stay friends!

NANCY
I never said that!

NED
I've got it right here!

Ned digs a crumpled telegram out of his pocket and shows her.

NANCY
(reading)
Nancy, will you be my date to the
Fall Dance next week?

NED
Turn it over.

She does. A handwritten note is scrawled on the back.

NANCY
"Sorry, Ned. But I would rather not
go with someone who has to stack
paint cans for extra money. Maybe
we can stay friends. Sincerely,
Nancy." But I didn't write this! I
would never write this!

NED
The messenger said he gave it to
you in person.

George and Bess rush forward to look at the note. Nancy hands
it to them without looking.

NANCY
That's nonsense! Who is this
messenger?

NED
Tommy, the errand boy. He works on
weekends for comic book money.

NANCY
Can I see him?

NED
(calling)
Hey, Tommy! Where are you?

A BOY (10) in a newsie cap crawls out from under a table,
gripping a comic book.

TOMMY
I'm busy! Make it quick!

NED

You remember that telegram you delivered last week?

TOMMY

Yeah?

NED

Are you sure you got the right address?

TOMMY

Sure. Nancy Drew. 118 Cherrie Lane.

NED

And you gave it to Miss Drew?

TOMMY

Put it right in her hand. Watched her write the reply myself.

NANCY

Are you sure it was really her?

TOMMY

Matched the description. Blond.
Pretty face. Legs like Betty Grable.
(he winks)
My type of girl. Why? Who are you?

NANCY

I'm Nancy Drew.

Tommy gives a low WHISTLE.

TOMMY

Wow. Guess I messed that one up.
Anyway, nice meeting you.

He crawls back under the table.

GEORGE

Hold it, Casanova!

George drags him out again. Nancy kneels in front of him.

NANCY

Be very clear about this. What exactly happened when you delivered the note?

TOMMY

I showed up at the house, and this lady matching your description got out of a car and asked if that was a note for Nancy. I said yes. She said she was Nancy, so I gave it to her.

NANCY

What was she wearing?

TOMMY

Dunno. Gray cardigan and a white hairband I think.

BESS

Doesn't Diane have a white hairband?

NANCY

I don't believe it.

Nancy rises and marches to the door.

NED

Where are you going?

NANCY

To sort this out. Come on! You're coming too!

I/E. NANCY'S CONVERTABLE - ROAD - DAY

Nancy drives ten miles over the speed limit. Ned, George, and Bess are with her.

NANCY

I knew Diane was petty but I never thought she'd stoop to this.

NED

You wanna slow down around the turn!?

EXT. DIGHT HOUSE - DAY

The car screeches to a stop outside a grand manor.

MOMENTS LATER

Nancy knocks on a door. It's opened by Diane Dight. Nancy holds up the crumpled telegram.

NANCY
Recognize this?

Diane goes white.

DIANE
That's... I -- I've never seen that
before.

MR. DIGHT
(coming forward)
Diane, what's going on? Are all
these people friends of yours?

NANCY
Mr. Dight, is this your daughter's
handwriting?

She hands him the note.

MR. DIGHT
Yes, I think so... But Diane, why
is this signed 'Nancy'?

DIANE
I can explain!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DIGHT HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Diane sits, facing the others.

DIANE
I wanted to go to the dance with
Ned, but I knew he'd probably go
with Nancy, so I...
(hiding her eyes)
I waited outside her house until
the errand boy came. Then I told
him I was Nancy so that she
wouldn't get Ned's invitation.

MR. DIGHT
Diane! This is beneath you!

GEORGE
What are you talking about? That's
exactly her.

MR. DIGHT
You be quiet!

NANCY

I don't understand. Why would you do this?

DIANE

Because I liked Ned and wanted to go with him, is all.

NED

But we hardly talk to each other! I thought you looked down on me!

NANCY

You could have any guy in school and you know it. Why Ned?

DIANE

Well, because... because you wanted to go with him. And you were beating me in all my classes, so I wanted to... make you jealous.

Her father GROANS and rubs his eyes under his glasses.

NANCY

That's it then. Now we know.

DIANE

(to Ned)

Are we... are we still going to the dance together?

NED

Is that supposed to be funny?! Of course not!

MR. DIGHT

Diane won't be going anywhere for a while. She's grounded.

DIANE

But Dad! Everyone will be going!

MR. DIGHT

You should've thought of that before you pulled this little stunt.

Diane bursts into sobs.

EXT. DIGHT HOUSE - DAY

Nancy steps out with Ned, Bess, and George.

BESS
Good riddance.

NED
Gee, Nance. I'm sorry I was so sore
at you last week. Can I make it up
to you by asking you to the dance?

NANCY
(taking his arm)
It's a date.

GEORGE
Okay, you two. Get a room.

NED
(teasing)
I promise I don't have any
skeletons in the closet.

Nancy stops. A lightbulb just went off.

NANCY
That's it! ... The answer to Fipp's
riddle!

She hurries to her car. The others race after her.

NANCY (CONT'D)
"A terrible secret, tucked away..."
That's what the letter says. But it
isn't referring to an actual secret.
It's talking about the expression. A
skeleton in the closet. That's where
the music's hidden.

GEORGE
But we already looked in the closet!

NANCY
We're going to look again.

INT. NANCY'S CONVERTABLE - MOMENTS LATER

They get in the car. Nancy turns the ignition. The engine
SPUTTERS but doesn't start. She tries again.

NANCY
Come on. Not now!

PFT-PFT-PFT-PFT-PFT. It dies.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Diane's got a car.

MOMENTS LATER

Nancy knocks on the door again. Diane opens it. Her eyes are red from crying.

NANCY
Can we use your car?

DIANE
W-what?

NANCY
Mine won't start, and we need to be somewhere quick.

DIANE
B-but... I can't let you drive my car. It's brand new!

NANCY
You can drive it. We'll just tag along.
(beat)
Please? I'll talk to your dad about letting you go to the dance.

I/E. DIANE'S CAR - ROAD - DAY

Diane drives. Nancy rides shotgun. George, Bess, and Ned are crammed in the back.

DIANE
Where are we going?

NANCY
Pleasant Hedges on Booker street.

DIANE
I thought that place was abandoned.

Nancy examines the letter.

NANCY
It says here, "A terrible secret tucked away which hides my greatest joy." His greatest joy... that's gotta be his music. "Two hundred parts of a whole, a fancy grown-ups toy."

GEORGE

There are two hundred six bones in the human body.

BESS

And the skeleton's made of papier-mâché, hence --

NANCY

"A fancy grown-up's toy."

DIANE

Is this really what you girls do all day?

BESS

It's called a life, Diane.

NANCY

(glancing up)

STOP!

Diane slams on the brakes just shy of hitting SOMEONE crossing the street. It's Carson Drew.

CARSON

Nancy?

NANCY

Dad!

He speaks to her through the window.

CARSON

I was just going to see Mr. March. I need to talk to him about his case.

NANCY

We're headed there now. Hop in.

CARSON

Thanks.

Carson squeezes into the back, next to George. She grins at him. Diane takes off again.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - DAY

They arrive at the March house. Everyone spills out of the car. March comes to the front door with Susan.

MARCH

Nancy? What's going on?

NANCY
I figured it out! The secret in the
old attic!

Nancy races past him. The others follow her inside.

MARCH
But who are all these people?

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy climbs the stairs, followed by George, Bess, March, Carson, Ned, Diane, and Susan.

NANCY
Fipp didn't just put the skeleton
in that wardrobe to keep it out of
the way. He left it as a clue.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

George opens the wardrobe door. The skeleton drops down.
Diane screams.

GEORGE
See? It's still empty.

NANCY
Let's try moving the whole wardrobe.

Nancy and Ned lift the wardrobe up and scoot it over.

NANCY (CONT'D)
(to March)
When you first showed us this room,
you said you used to play in here as
a kid, and it seemed bigger then.

They set the wardrobe down. The plaster behind it is a
DIFFERENT COLOR than the rest of the walls.

NANCY (CONT'D)
That's because it was. There used
to be a door here.

MARCH
Fipp must've walled it up!

INT. SECRET ATTIC - DAY

BOOM! Nancy and George SMASH a hole through the wall with a wooden bench. All eight of them crowd around to look inside.

The dust settles, revealing a SECOND ATTIC full of INSTRUMENTS. There are three different guitars, a trumpet, a clarinet, a sax, and an upright piano, all covered in dust.

WIND blows through a small HOLE in the wall, rustling a set of chimes.

NANCY

There's that mysterious sound
you've been hearing.

MARCH

By jove! You did it! The music must
be in here somewhere!

Nancy climbs through the hole first. The others follow.

NANCY

Trust me, in five minutes you'll be
calling Mr. Jenner!

They start combing the attic.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME ROOM. 45 minutes later.

The floor is covered in open boxes and drawers that have been pulled out. Diane sits on a stool, drawing patterns in the dust. Susan is napping.

The others are still looking. Carson checks his watch.

CARSON

I gotta get back to work. Nance,
you know when you'll be home?

Nancy glances at George.

NANCY

Actually, I'm gonna spend the night
at George's house.

CARSON

Alright. Call me if there's a
problem.

Carson grabs his hat and jacket and steps out.

BESS

(whisper)

I thought we were doing the
stakeout tonight!

NANCY

We are, but my dad doesn't know
that. Keep looking for the music.

(moves a box)

It's got to be here somewhere!
What was the second line of the
poem?

GEORGE

(reading the letter)

"To find my long lost treasure, a
sharp mind would be best. Take
care, my dearest love, to you I
give the rest."

BESS

But what does that mean?

Nancy digs another BOX out of a chest. The words SHEET MUSIC
are printed on the top.

NANCY

Guys, I think I found something!

They rush to her side.

MARCH

That's got to be it!

Nancy removes the lid. Inside they find -- a stack of BLANK
SHEET MUSIC. Just an empty staff.

GEORGE

There's nothing on it.

March's face sinks. He settles into a chair.

MARCH

I'm sorry, girls. If we didn't find
it already, I don't think we'll
ever find it. Maybe Fipp never
saved his music to begin with.

BESS

Don't think like that, Mr. March!

NANCY

We may not have found anything, but
Bushy Trott doesn't know that.

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

We can still go through with the plan to catch him. Hidden music or not, Mr. March, Trott stole Summertime Ballad, and we're gonna see that he answers for it.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Bushy Trott stops at a NEWSPAPER STAND.

TROTT

The Evening Enquirer.

MOMENTS LATER

Trott opens the magazine. He sees an article and stops.

PUSH IN ON: a headline: **VETERAN PHILIP MARCH TO SPEAK AT BENEFIT FOR FATHERS OF FALLEN SOLDIERS.**

MOMENTS LATER

Trott speaks into a payphone, looking at the article.

TROTT

Hey, it's me. I think we might have an opportunity here.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - DAY

Susan climbs into the back of the Gray's station wagon.

MARCH

You behave yourself, Susan. Grandpa loves you.

SUSAN

But I want to stay here and help you catch the bad guy!

MARCH

I told you, it's not safe. But don't worry, we'll be just up the road if anything happens. Bye now.

The car drives off. March waves goodbye. Nancy and the girls stand beside him with Ned and Diane.

NANCY

Alright then. Let's get to work.

MOMENTS LATER

Nancy leads them around the house.

NANCY

Mr. March, you keep watch over there. Bess and George, you watch from behind the shed. Ned and Diane, you cover the north and south sides. Make sure you have a good view of the windows, since that's how he got in last time. I'll watch the east side, in case he comes from the back road. We better move our car and turn off all the lights so the place looks empty. Any questions?

DIANE

Yeah, one. Have you ever considered having your head examined?

George flicks Diane's arm.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Ow!

NANCY

Any *real* questions? ... No? Okay, good luck.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - NIGHT

A full moon shines down on the manor. The lights are off, there's not a soul to be seen.

Nancy waits in a ditch by a tree. George drops in beside her.

GEORGE

I talked to Ned and Diane. They haven't seen anything.

NANCY

What about Mr. March?

GEORGE

Dunno. Didn't ask him.

NANCY

Shhh! Do you hear that?

There's a RUSTLING in the bushes.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Who's there?

Susan emerges, grinning and covered in dirt.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Susan?! What are you doing here?!

SUSAN
I walked. It's only two miles!

NANCY
But why?

SUSAN
I told you! I want to help catch
Bushy Trott!

GEORGE
(to Nancy)
I think you might be a bad influence.

NANCY
Fine, you can stay. But keep quiet.

They wait in silence. Nancy stares at the ground.

GEORGE
What are you thinking?

NANCY
I'm wondering about that missing
music. It's gotta be somewhere in
that second room.
(reciting)
"To find my long lost treasure, a
sharp mind would be best"... A
sharp mind... I wonder...

She pulls out the letters, squints at the poem.

NANCY (CONT'D)
The A! It's capitalized!

GEORGE
So what?

NANCY
(jumping up)
Stay here. I'll be back in five
minutes!

She hurries to the back door.

INT. MARCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Nancy steals into the kitchen and lights a candle.

NANCY

Could it really be that simple?

INT. DREW HOUSE - NIGHT

Carson sits on the couch, doing some late work. Mrs. Gruen reads a copy of the *Evening Enquirer*.

MRS. GRUEN

Can you believe this? Some woman in Oxford stole her neighbor's dog and tried to sell it!

CARSON

(not looking up)

Why do you read that magazine, Mrs. Gruen? They never print actual news.

MRS. GRUEN

I like it, that's why.

(turns a page)

That's funny. Isn't this that man who came to the house?

She shows him the ad for the veteran memorial event. A picture of Mr. March is directly beneath it. Carson sits up.

MRS. GRUEN (CONT'D)

It says he's giving a talk tonight in Bixton.

CARSON

That's over four hours away!

(thinks)

I was just as his house. He didn't mention any kind of talk.

MOMENTS LATER -- Carson speaks into a phone.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Hello! I have a question about an ad you ran tonight. The one about Philip March. ... Can you tell me who placed the ad?

(he frowns)

Okay, thank you.

Carson hangs up, thinking. He grabs his coat.

CARSON (CONT'D)
Mrs. Gruen, call the sheriff! I'm
going to Pleasant Hedges!

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - SAME TIME

Ned drops into the ditch beside George.

NED
Where's Nancy?
(seeing Susan)
What are you doing here?

SUSAN
Helping.

GEORGE
That's one word for it. Nancy went
inside. Don't ask me why. You wanna
check on Mr. March?

NED
Alright.

Ned climbs out of the hole.

INT. STAIRWELL - SAME TIME

Nancy creeps up the stairs to the attic.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Moonlight shines through a dormer window. Nancy climbs
through the hole into the second attic.

SECRET ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

She approaches the piano.

NANCY
"A sharp mind"... A Sharp. What
happens if I play the A sharp near
middle C?

She presses a black key.

CLICK! A PANEL flips open, above the keyboard.

Nancy reaches into the compartment and pulls out a BOX.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - SAME TIME

Ned creeps behind a tool shed.

NED

Mr. March? Where are you?

He sees SOMEONE lying on the ground in the shadow.

It's Mr. March. *He's been knocked unconscious.*

NED (CONT'D)

Mr. March!

(calling out)

Help! Come quick!

INT. SECRET ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON: a shadowy corner of the attic. TWO EYES peer out. BUSHY TROTT steps forward, his expression hungry.

Nancy removes the lid from the box. It's full of SHEET MUSIC. Page after page of songs, all with the name PHILIP MARCH JR. printed in the corner.

Nancy LAUGHS with glee and rifles through them.

NANCY

This is it! Fipp's music!

Bushy Trott *grabs Nancy from behind.* He covers her mouth, MUFFLING HER SCREAM.

TROTT

Quiet now, missy, or I'll do something drastic.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - NIGHT

George, Bess, Susan, and Diane run to Ned's side.

BESS

What happened?

NED

I don't know. I just found him here.

March wakes up, rubbing his head.

BESS

Mr. March! Are you alright?

MARCH

I think so. Someone knocked me out.
(looking around)
Where's Nancy?

George's eyes go wide. She looks around at the house.

GEORGE

Oh no!

INT. SECRET ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Trott finishes tying Nancy to a chair. Her hands and legs are bound. Her mouth is gagged.

TROTT

There you go. You know, you've done
me a big favor. I know someone who
will be very pleased to get his
hands on these.

Trott rolls the music up and tucks it in his jacket pocket.
He examines Fipp's love letters, which Nancy brought up.

TROTT (CONT'D)

What do we have here? Love letters?
Isn't that cute.

Trott finds the PHOTO of Fipp with his army unit. He stops,
his face white.

TROTT (CONT'D)

Where did you get this?
(no answer)
Doesn't matter.
(he tucks it away)
You know, I hate to leave you up
here all alone, so I thought I'd
give you a little friend to keep
you company.

Trott pulls a jar from his pocket. He puts it on the floor
and unscrews the lid. A TARANTUALA crawls out.

TROTT (CONT'D)

This fellow is called an Indian
Ornamental tree spider. One of the
deadliest tarantulas in the world.
One bite will stop your heart in
thirty minutes, so watch out!

Trott LAUGHS and climbs out through the hole.

The spider crawls toward Nancy. She scoots away.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Trott opens the door and stops. There are SOUNDS of George, Bess, Ned, and Susan running up the grand staircase.

NED (O.S.)

Nancy?!

TROTT

Damn.

Trott slams the door shut.

He heaves the wardrobe over. It CRASHES to the floor, right in front of the door.

TROTT (CONT'D)

Try and get past that, you little piss heads.

He smashes open the window and climbs outside, onto the roof.

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Trott hears SIRENS and looks down.

A squad of POLICE CARS drives through the gate, LIGHTS FLASHING, SIRENS BLARING. They stop outside the house.

Carson and the sheriff get out. Some of the OFFICERS aim rifles. The sheriff speaks through a BULLHORN.

SHERIFF BARNES

Stay where you are, Trott! We have the house completely surrounded!

Trott sidles along the roof.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

George tries the key to the attic.

GEORGE

It's no good! He's blocked the door!

NED

Out of the way!

GEORGE
(sincere)
That's right! Use your big manly
man-muscles!

WHAM! Ned slams into the door. He GASPS and clutches his
shoulder in pain.

BESS
Together!

All four of them bang against the door.

INT. SECRET ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

The tarantula climbs up onto Nancy's leg. It crawls across
her stomach, moving towards her exposed neck.

She SCREAMS through the gag, trying to keep still.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

BAM!... BAM!... CRACK! Ned, George, Bess, and Susan break
through, tearing the door off its hinges.

GEORGE
We're coming Nancy!

INT. SECRET ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

The spider is inches from Nancy's neck.

Ned, George, and Bess climb through the hole. Ned sees the
spider first.

NED
Look out!

Bess SHRIEKS.

Nancy tips the chair over, flinging the spider to the floor.
Ned strides forward.

SMASH! He squashes it beneath his heel.

George and Bess kneel down and untie the ropes.

GEORGE
Golly, that was a close one!

NANCY
(pulling the gag out)
What happened to Trott?

BESS
He disappeared out the window.

They hear a SCREAM.

NANCY
That sounded like Susan!

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Trott has pulled Susan onto the roof. He has a knife to her neck and is dragging her away from the window.

TROTT
Try anything and I hurt the girl!

March and Diane watch from the ground, terrified.

MARCH
Can't you do something?

RIFLE OFFICER
No chance! Might hit the kid!

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Nancy leans out the window with George and Bess. She takes off her shoes.

BESS
What are you doing?!

NANCY
Going out there.

GEORGE
Are you nuts?! You'll break your neck!

Nancy climbs out the window.

EXT. ROOF/MARCH ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

Carson spots Nancy emerging onto the sloped roof.

CARSON
Oh, god. There she goes again.

Trott sees Nancy advancing toward him.

TROTT
Stay back! I mean it!

NANCY
There's nowhere left to run, Trott!

SUSAN
Nancy, help!

Nancy spots the SHEET MUSIC, tucked in Trott's coat pocket.

NANCY
Susan.
(mouthed)
Sheet music.

Susan gets the message. She reaches forward and pulls the music out of Trott's pocket.

TROTT
Hey! Give that back!

SUSAN
You want it? Go and get it!

Susan flings the music off the roof. It flies apart into a hundred separate pieces. They rain down like snow.

TROTT
NO!

Trott lunges for them, one hand still gripping Susan's shirt.

MARCH
Look out!

IN SLOW MOTION: *The two of them tumble off the roof.* Nancy dives forward and grabs Susan by the wrist.

Trott loses his grip and topples down sixty feet. SMACK! He hits the ground.

Susan dangles from Nancy's hand. Nancy is flat on her stomach, her arm reaching over the edge. She heaves Susan up. Susan throws her arms around her, breathing a sigh of relief.

NANCY
I got you.

EXT. MARCH ESTATE - LATER

Trott GROANS as he's loaded into an ambulance. Susan rushes out of the house, into Mr. March's arms.

SUSAN

Did you see? Nancy found the music!

MARCH

I saw.

Nancy emerges from the house. She hugs her dad.

CARSON

Nancy, what am I going to do with you?

Mr. March picks some music off the ground, wipes it clean.

MARCH

Hey! I remember this song! Fipp wrote this for my birthday. And this one too! He used to play this on Christmas! And this one! I remember all of these!

(wiping away a tear)

Thank you, Nancy. Thank you for bringing my son back to me.

Sheriff Barnes saunters over.

SHERIFF BARNES

Good job, setting that trap. But we still have no idea who Trott's partner is.

NANCY

I wouldn't be so sure. Trott seemed pretty worried about this photo he found. Maybe it holds the answer.

Nancy studies the picture of Fipp's unit.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Of course!

(showing George and Bess)

See this man with the wavy hair? Picture him bald.

George covers the top of his head.

GEORGE

Jeepers! It's Horace Lally! Mr. Jenner's assistant!

BESS
That's how he knew about Fipp's
hidden music! Fipp must've
mentioned it during the war!

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - OXFORD - NIGHT

Horace Lally carries a bag of groceries home. He pauses to
unlock the door.

Sheriff Barnes comes forward.

SHERIFF BARNES
Are you Horace Lally?

MR. LALLY
Yeah... What's this about?

COPS step in to handcuff him. Nancy and Carson are there too.

SHERIFF BARNES
You're under arrest for fraud,
conspiracy to commit burglary,
conspiracy to kidnap, and
harboring a fugitive.

MR. LALLY
This is obscene! You've got the
wrong man!

SHERIFF BARNES
Save it for a jury.

Nancy smiles as he's led off. Carson squeezes her shoulder.

EXT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

A banner over the door welcomes students to the fall dance.
KIDS head inside, all dressed up, chatting excitedly.

BESS (PRE-LAP)
I guess we can close the book on
this case, right?

INT. SCHOOL DANCE - NIGHT

A band plays onstage. Nancy is hanging out with Ned and Bess.

NANCY

Pretty much. Mr. March got his first royalty check in the mail this morning, and there'll be a trial in the spring, but the DA has everything he needs to get started.

George joins them with HER DATE, holding four cups of punch.

GEORGE

Here. Drink.

NANCY

What is it?

GEORGE

Fruit punch. Drink it, it's good!
(Nancy drinks)
I added a little vermouth to spice it up.

Nancy and Bess spit it out.

BESS

George!

GEORGE

I'm joking. Jeez!

A new song starts. It's Summertime Ballad.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Ooh! It's starting. Come on!

She drags her date onto the dance floor.

NED

Shall we join in?

NANCY

You bet!

Nancy and Ned join the others. They pass Diane, who gives her a small nod.

Bess is left alone without a partner. She SIGHS.

EXCHANGE STUDENT (O.S.)

Excuse me, miss?

She turns around. A YOUNG MAN is standing behind her. Wavy hair, dark eyes, a sexy SPANISH ACCENT.

EXCHANGE STUDENT (CONT'D)
Will you join me for this dance?

Bess GUFFAWS awkwardly.

BESS
Uh... Yeah!!

He leads her onto the dance floor, past George, who stares open mouthed.

Everyone is dancing, having a good time.

NANCY
(to Ned)
You know, there's something I've
wanted to do for years?

NED
What's that?

NANCY
This.

She kisses him on the mouth.

NED
Boy, Nancy Drew, are you something!

He kisses her back. They laugh. PULL BACK as we

FADE TO BLACK.

(SUPERIMPOSED):

NANCY DREW WILL RETURN

IN

THE SIGN OF THE TWISTED CANDLES