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The Art of Adaptation Through the Analysis of Stanley Kubrick Films

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THE ART OF ADAPTATION THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF STANLEY KUBRICK FILMS

By

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The purpose of this component is to further analyze the nexus between the research aspect and the creative portion of my thesis on how a film adaptation of a literary text can be successfully achieved through the study of Stanley Kubrick’s novel to film adaptations. Through close readings and analysis of the literary and film versions of Lolita, 2001: A Space Odyssey, A Clockwork Orange, The Shining, and Eyes Wide Shut, I was able to grasp Kubrick’s strategies and apply them to my own screenwriting endeavor. Before delineating the features I borrowed from each film, it is important to investigate the cineaste’s body of work and why he is not only an exceptionally successful director-screenwriter, but also why I chose him and his oeuvre over other auteurs and adapters.

When first structuring my thesis, I was enrolled in Dr. Parker’s film theory class that focused on Alfred Hitchcock as auteur. The auteur is a director who imprints or has “particular patterns” within his/her body of work that constantly reflects his/her individual inventiveness (Cahir 255). Originally, the word auteur was unbeknownst to me; however, once I was further educated in auteur analysis I became increasingly fascinated with its connection to Kubrick and his eclectic films. The study of the auteur can be approached in a variety of ways, from “tracing a particular theme favored by one film auteur through several of his/her films” or perhaps focusing on the presence of particular genres or even historical/literary influences within their cinematic work (Cahir 255).

Throughout Kubrick’s career, he has expressed a “dark ethos” and common tropes that successfully differentiate him from other filmmakers (Cahir 255). In the Cinema of Stanley Kubrick, film theorist Norman Kagan explores the themes that unfailingly arise in Kubrick’s films. For example, he focuses on the creation of imaginary worlds (e.g. A Clockwork Orange’s violent dystopia) and the futility of intelligence (e.g. in 2001: A Space Odyssey, HAL’s victims are all astronauts with all the intellect but none of the control). In addition to these key devices, I was fascinated by Kubrick’s ways of conveying environmental effects on human behavior as well as the strong critical interest that followed the releasing of his films. After reading supplementary articles on the releasing of films like 2001: A Space Odyssey and A Clockwork Orange, I began to realize that Kubrick’s art is “capable of stimulating even the most parochial of critical tastes” and I became transfixed by my own desire to write an adaptation that provoked deeper thought (Jenkins 2).

Without a doubt, there were problems that I found while researching Kubrick’s films. I will address those tribulations when examining each film specifically; as for now, it is necessary to communicate how I chose Daphne du Maurier’s “The Split Second” and how Kubrick influenced this decision. For Kubrick, the perfect manuscript to adapt was not based on action, but instead a text “which is mainly concerned with the inner life of its characters” (Kubrick 338-9). Kubrick strived to restore “the spirit of the [original text],” but switched between using the text as “merely a guide” (i.e. Lolita, 2001: A Space Odyssey, and The Shining) to writing/directing dialogue almost verbatim from the original text (i.e. A Clockwork Orange and Eyes Wide Shut) (Jenkins 7-8). “The Split Second” drew me in, because it offered dialogue I could be faithful to while simultaneously providing a brief story that I could expand upon with my own creative license. Furthermore, “The Split Second” provides characters that I wanted to further develop and dark tropes like fantasy stratospheres and the ineffectuality of human intelligence that were present in Kubrick’s adaptations.
Aside from auteur analysis, the film theory course also introduced me to feminist film theorist, Laura Mulvey, and her essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” In this essay, Mulvey addresses scopophilia (the pleasure in looking) and the male gaze. Laura Mulvey suggests, “in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female” (Mulvey 4). Traditionally, the women in Kubrick’s films are eroticized (the cat lady and the record store girls in A Clockwork Orange), victimized (Wendy in The Shining), or absent (there are barely any female roles in 2001: A Space Odyssey). Since Kubrick’s films follow male protagonists, “the man controls the film phantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator” (Mulvey 5). Per contra, “The Split Second” follows Mrs. Ellis, a female protagonist. Additionally, Maurier introduces her male characters as unorganized, vice-driven, poor listeners, and demeaning authority figures. In order to turn the male gaze on its head, I emphasized these qualities throughout the screenplay by using Mrs. Ellis’s subjective point of view, as well as specific descriptions of male gestures and male occupied sets.

My upcoming analysis will describe how the films I researched influenced the creation of the adapted version of “The Split Second.” Some of Kubrick’s cinematic works offered more than others; I will attempt to explain this in detail, as well as chronologically by the release dates of each film.

**Lolita (1962) – Nabokov vs Kubrick**

Out of the pool of Kubrick adaptations I investigated, Lolita was the most disappointing. Kubrick believed that Humbert’s “feelings and emotions and thoughts” were what had to be dramatized, as opposed to Nabokov’s style. The feelings that Nabokov evokes from his readers are deeply embedded in his distinctive prose and the absence of that language is extremely detrimental to the quality of the film. Originally, Nabokov wrote a screenplay for Kubrick that contains lengthy voice over that Kubrick ended up cutting out. Since “The Split Second” was primarily infused with Mrs. Ellis’s introspective, I used a brief amount of voice over and subjective, point of view filming in order to avoid presenting the protagonist in the disloyal light Kubrick portrayed Humbert in. “The Split Second” was also drained of substantial prose, which was more attractive while choosing what to adapt because it encouraged more development as opposed to reduction.

Furthermore, Kubrick decides to shoot Lolita in black and white. This choice “emphasizes the film’s noir elements of mystery, a femme fatale, seedy locales and even seedier activities” (Boozer 219). However, the privation of color goes against “Nabokov’s pavonine prose” and his “frequent references to assorted hues” (Jenkins 35). Since Mrs. Ellis switches ethnicities in Maurier’s short story, I was inclined to suggest the screenplay as a black and white film in order to deceive the audience after the subjectively filmed walk. However, I found that the black and white also drained the color out of the characters (e.g. the eccentric photographer and the rest of the lodgers) and decided against this decision.

Kubrick did not take the low budget approach with Lolita in fear that the film would only be another sporadic, art-house showing. Since the Hays Code was still governing movie
production, Kubrick labored to gain a seal of approval so that the film would be released on a larger scale. By doing so, the eroticism and obvious pedophilia is omitted and Kubrick [succeeds] in domesticating Nabokov’s exotic animal,” and transforming a profound novel “into merely a good film” (68). Nonetheless, I was intrigued by Kubrick’s choice of aging Lolita. Unfortunately, in the film the aging of Lolita portrays her more as a temptress/femme fatale as opposed to what she really served as in the text: a juvenile, rape victim. When reading about Susan in “The Split Second,” I imagined her to parallel with Kubrick’s Lolita. Despite my initial qualms with Kubrick’s choices to introduce an older Lolita, I found that the brattish, oblivious qualities of Kubrick’s female role could work in my development of Susan and the power she possesses over her mother.

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) – Arthur C. Clark » Kubrick

2001: A Space Odyssey was the first of these films to exhibit the benefits of adapting a short story (The Sentinel) into a feature length film. In fact, after researching this film I narrowed my adaptations down from novels and short stories to only short stories. I was intrigued by the notion of developing “integral ideas that the [short] story raises and [cultivating] complexities of story and character that the initial story seeded” (Cahir 227). “The Split Second” lacked fully developed characters, themes, and overall structure, which provided enough space for me to confidently instill my own creative license within the plot. Comparatively, my adaptation provides a beginning that sets the dark tone of the film, a further development of female characters (i.e. Susan and Linda Moore), as well as an end that holds the same ambiguity as the original text but also offers a kind of cessation to the madness.

Kubrick’s successful stab at science fiction also provides leitmotifs that impacted my selection of “The Split Second.” For example, in 2001 the imaginary world to the astronauts “is a world of cause and effect without purpose, feeling, or meaning” and to “the monoliths’ masters, it is a whizzing, blinding chaos man is not meant to understand” (Kagan 165). For Bowman, the odyssey is one that leads him “to the truth about himself and life in the universe” (Kagan 166). The world full of “blinding chaos” was exactly where Maurier placed her protagonist. Since the two films both took place in imaginary worlds, I was inclined to create an ending to Mrs. Ellis’s odyssey in which she sees herself/her doppelgänger (much like when Bowman watches himself age in the alien hotel room).

A Clockwork Orange (1971) – Anthony Burgess » Kubrick

A Clockwork Orange was the first adaptation that came to mind when reading about the lodgers that had occupied Mrs. Ellis’s apartment during her walk. The messy rooms, erotic photographer, and quirky characters impacted my decision to leave out the superimpositions of the specific date the story was set in. “A Clockwork Orange is set in England in the near future” and I imagined this is the environment Mrs. Ellis arrived to after her walk. Much like Kubrick, most of my “contributions merely clarified what was
already in the novel” (Kubrick 420). For example, when describing Mrs. Bolton, I had Burgess/Kubrick’s cat lady in mind. The cat lady is a single, older, woman who owns an inordinate amount of cats and has a house decorated with highly erotic art. This character ends up being hoaxed and murdered by Alex after she calls the police. When modeling Mrs. Bolton, I gave her similar erotic undertones, but since there was no violent male protagonist, I portrayed her with all the power and none of the fear. The descriptions of that character and the set only accentuated the psychedelic environment Mrs. Ellis found herself in when going upstairs to what used to be her master bedroom.

While Kubrick remained faithful to the text, he also added a prison sequence that was not present in the book. The scene was long, but Kubrick defended it for “[giving] sufficient weight to the idea that Alex was actually imprisoned” (Kubrick 420). Following Kubrick’s lead, I found it essential to add scenes to “The Split Second” that highlighted Mrs. Ellis’s isolation. For example, I put the Mr. Ellis’s death at the start of the film and further emphasized isolation by lengthening Susan’s rejection through a café scene as well as a funeral scene. I also found it impossible to introduce Mrs. Ellis’s change in ethnicity through her own eyes, so the addition of the behind-the-mirror, interrogation scene helped simultaneously enlighten and disorient the audience.

The most captivating camera tricks and movements in A Clockwork Orange were borrowed and added into “The Split Second.” For example, the fast-forwarding camera applied to Alex’s threesome scene in A Clockwork Orange was useful during Mrs. Ellis’s cleaning day. Alex was always obsessed with violence; sex was just something to pass the time. The rapid paced camera movements highlighted this sense of mindless lust. Mrs. Ellis constantly relies on her perfectionism in order distract herself and pass time until Susan returns home. The fast forwarding achieved the same tone of mindlessness but emphasized perfectionism.

The Shining (1980) – Stephen King > Kubrick

The Overlook Hotel is “a zone of dualities where an uneasy alliance is maintained between light and dark, self and other, [and] the rational and the mad” (Lyttelton, 85). The overriding theme of dualism was the most complex and fascinating facet of The Shining. Despite how many times I viewed the film before undertaking the thesis, I did not realize the reappearing presence of doppelgänger until my first close reading of the screenplay. The film begins with Ullman interviewing Jack for the caretaker position. The conversation eventually leads to the incident of Charles Grady, a previous caretaker who contracted cabin fever and butchered his wife and daughters. Later on, “Jack finds his double in the ghost (or hallucination) of Grady” in the bathroom of the hotel; however, this is Delbert Grady who insists he is not the caretaker of the hotel – that Jack has always been the caretaker. After Jack’s death, the camera pans into The Gold Room where a picture from 1921 hangs on the wall, with Jack’s doppelgänger in the center. The image cannot be the Jack in the movie, but “in the juxtaposition of expansive and oppressive space, Kubrick…creates a space conducive to the supernatural” (Lyttelton 92).
Since “The Split Second” did not have a conclusive ending, I applied the presence of a doppelgänger in order to “tease the viewer and reader, respectively, with conflicting representations of reality and the supernatural” (Lyttelton 85). I also did this by creating scenes where the dark skinned Mrs. Ellis would flash in and out of frames and dreamscapes. These scenes were shaped from Danny’s close encounters with the two Grady girls, the bloody elevator and Wendy’s encounter with The Overlook’s dead guest. The presence of an eerie dreamscape aided me in further blurring the lines between reality and the paranormal.

_Eyes Wide Shut (1999) - Arthur Schnitzler » Kubrick_

_Eyes Wide Shut_ suggests the “potential [of] psychological awareness through dreams” and since Mrs. Ellis’s return from her walk is identical to a nightmare, I modeled her experience after Bill Harford’s odyssey in Kubrick’s final film (Boozer 95). Much like Mrs. Ellis, Bill stays calm, cool and collected during his trip away from Alice/reality. However, there is an overriding feeling that he is trapped in a dream world in which he has no control over (e.g. scenes in which Bill is accused of being gay by a group of men on the New York/London disguised streets and, moreover, when Bill is noticed at the orgy ball he has not been invited to). I attempted Mrs. Ellis’s odyssey to be one in which she was constantly othered, creating a disorientation between dream state and reality for the protagonist as well as the audience.
Bibliography


Filmography


The Split Second
Adapted by
Brooke Sonenreich

The Split Second
by: Daphne du Maurier
DEATH OF WILFRED

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The body of WILFRED ELLIS lies in the middle of a king sized bed. There is an oxygen tank by the left side and a night table with an eclectic range of syringes, vials and pill bottles atop of it.

MRS ELLIS sits on a chair at the right side of the bed. She is tired, but holds her posture. She grazes the top of Wilfred’s hand and stands up. They both wear wedding rings.

Mrs Ellis walks to the foot of the bed, tucks in the bed sheets and moves to the window on the other side of the room. She looks out. It is LONDON 1932. The window looks down on a courtyard and there is a house straight across, but the blinds are closed.

GRACE, dressed in a maid uniform, pops her head in the bedroom abruptly interrupting the silence.

GRACE
Dinner is ready.

Mrs Ellis continues looking down at the courtyard.

MRS ELLIS
(softly)
Grace, enter the room fully. How many times do I have to tell you?

Grace enters the room completely and looks over at Wilfred. She realizes he is dead.

GRACE
Yes, ma’am. Can I get you anything?

MRS ELLIS
Call the morgue and then go to bed. You’ll have to fetch Susan from the bus station tomorrow morning.

GRACE
Yes, Mrs Ellis.

Grace exits, closing the door behind her.

Mrs. Ellis draws the curtains down, looks at Wilfred. She conceals her sorrow and exits the room.

TRANSITION TO:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

INT. HALLWAY

Mrs. Ellis walks to the the drawing room at the end of the hall.

CUT TO:

CALL TO HIGH CLOSE

INT. DRAWING ROOM – NIGHT

The drawing room has a fire place with a large mirror. There is one that hangs parallel on the other side of the room. There are ornaments, pictures of her wedding, Susan and the family on the mantelpiece. A sofa and two chairs surround the fireplace.

Mrs. Ellis walks over to the window which looks out from the front of the house. Across the street is another block of houses. In front of the window is an end table and a phone on top of it.

Mrs. Ellis picks up the receiver. She dials the operator.

MRS ELLIS
Can you connect me to High Close school for girls?
(pause)
Yes, I’ll hold.
(pause)
Yes, this is Mrs. Ellis, mother of Susan Ellis. May I speak to headmistress Hilda Slater?

Mrs. Ellis rolls her eyes.

MRS ELLIS
Yes, yes, I can hold.
(pause)
Hello, Miss Slater. Yes, I am holding up alright.

Miss Slater talks into the phone, but it’s unclear what she is saying

MRS ELLIS
Miss Slater, I’m calling to inform you that Susan will have to return home this weekend for her father’s funeral.
(pause)
Thank you, I am sorry too. Will you do me the courtesy of telling Susan (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MRS ELLIS (cont’d)
why she must return home when she
wakes up tomorrow morning?
(pause)
Yes, it’s just that I don’t want
her to have to wait for bad news.
(pause)
Thank you, it’s very much
appreciated. Goodnight, Miss
Slater.

Mrs. Ellis hangs up the phone and draws the curtains.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Ellis enters the dining room. There is a long table and
a tray of dinner at the head of it.

Mrs. Ellis draws the curtains around the dining room. She
picks up the tray and exits the room

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mrs. Ellis enters. She passes by a calendar that says the
31st, but it goes unnoticed. She puts the tray down on the
island, picks up the plate of food and puts it in the
fridge.

She places the tray, glass, and napkin in a cupboard and
places the silverware in a drawer.

CUT TO:

AWAITING SUSAN

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Grace exits the house, locking the door behind her and
walking out the gate.

THE CAMERA PANS UPWARDS TO THE DRAWING ROOM.

Mrs Ellis is standing at the window. She is already dressed
in black. She investigates Grace’s every movement until she
is too far down the street to make her out. She takes a sip
of tea, turns around and walks away from the window.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

INT. HIGH CLOSE, HEADMISTRESS OFFICE – MORNING

HILDA SLATER is sitting at her desk going through paperwork. SECRETARY enters.

SECRETARY
Miss Slater, Mrs. Ellis is calling again. Should I transfer her to your line?

HILDA
(sympathetically)
Yes, please do.

Hilda picks up the phone and waits for Mrs. Ellis’ voice to come on the line.

HILDA
Good morning, Mrs. Ellis.
(pause)
Yes, Susan left as soon as she finished breakfast.
(pause)
I told her, yes. She acted very put together, she’s quite strong for a girl her age.
(pause)
I’m sorry I’m not there to pay my respects. Please let me know if there is anything more I can do and don’t hesitate to extend Susan’s visit. I will make sure her teachers understand.
(pause)
Goodbye, Mrs. Ellis.

Hilda hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM – MORNING

Mrs. Ellis stands in the middle of the drawing room between the two large mirrors, causing a repetition of Mrs. Ellis’ body. She becomes disoriented and exits the room, not allowing herself to think too deeply.
CLEARING DAY

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Mrs Ellis enters. She walks to the sink and passes the calendar again. This time she notices the 31. She looks back and returns to the calendar. She rips off the 31 to reveal a 1.

Mrs. Ellis takes a breath, relieved.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - CLEANING

INT. STUDY - MORNING

THE MONTAGE IS SPED UP AND PLAYED TO THE SOUND OF BOOMING, UPBEAT CLASSICAL MUSIC.

Mrs. Ellis begins in the study. She fills the blotter with new sheets of paper, dusts the pen tray, sharpens pencils, straightens magazines on the side table. She goes through the desk drawers and throws away old envelopes, receipts and counterfoils from old checkbooks. She dusts the books and pulls them to the front of the bookshelf. She dusts the portrait of her late husband which is amongst the books on the shelves.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. SUSAN’S ROOM - MORNING

Mrs. Ellis rearranges Susan’s records. Remakes an already made bed and fluffs the pillows. She straightens the stack of books on Susan’s night table.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

Mrs. Ellis runs back and forth between bedroom, bathrooms, drawing room, and Susan’s room.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Mrs. Ellis rearranges the homemade jam and bottles of vegetables and chutney in the pantry. All of the containers are labeled with her perfect handwriting. She closes the cupboard and hides the key under the kitchen sink, fearing Grace might find her hiding spot.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CUT TO:

SUSAN IS HOME

INT. DRAWING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Mrs. Ellis lies on the sofa, relaxed. The clock ticks loudly. Mrs. Ellis anxiously looks over at it.

Sound of the front door opening. Susan and Grace’s voice are heard, though unintelligibly. Mrs. Ellis rises immediately.

Mrs. Ellis exits

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

SUSAN
(yells)
Mom? It’s Susan, I’m home.

Mrs Ellis walks down the stairs.

MRS ELLIS
I’m coming, dear!

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY

Mrs Ellis quickly walks towards Susan, kneels down and hugs her tightly. Susan is sixteen and is wearing a black dress and her school dress hat.

MRS ELLIS
I’m so happy you’re home.

Mrs. Ellis releases Susan.

MRS ELLIS
How are you feeling?

SUSAN
I’m fine, mom. Miss Slater told me about dad. I know I should be more sad, but I knew it was going to happen soon.

Mrs. Ellis hugs Susan again and releases her - but still holds her shoulders.

(CONTINUED)
MRS ELLIS
Are you hungry? Would you like
Grace to make you something? Would
you like to go out?

SUSAN
I’d like to go out.

Mrs Ellis looks up at Grace.

MRS ELLIS
Grace, please bring Susan’s
belongings to her room.

GRACE
Yes, Mrs. Ellis.

Grace walks upstairs with Susan’s school bag and suitcase.

MRS. ELLIS
How about some ice cream?

Susan smiles.

TRANSITION TO:

COZY CAFE

EXT. COZY CAFE – AFTERNOON

Mrs. Ellis and Susan sit at the window. Mrs. Ellis admires
Susan, who is admiring her cup of ice-cream.

CUT TO:

INT. COZY CAFE

Mrs. Ellis takes a sip of tea and waits for Susan to finish
a spoonful of ice-cream.

MRS ELLIS
Susan

SUSAN
Yah

Susan shoves another spoonful in her mouth.

MRS ELLIS
What do you think about returning
home?

(CONTINUED)
SUSAN
It’s alright. They don’t give us much ice-cream, mostly cake. I wish we didn’t have to go to this funeral though.

MRS ELLIS
Yes, me neither. But I think you misunderstood my question Susan.

Susan curiously looks up at her mother.

SUSAN
What did you mean?

MRS ELLIS
Now that your father—
(pause)
Wouldn’t you like to return to your own room? You can go to a day school nearby.

Susan is no longer happy. She begins to throw a tantrum, crying loudly.

MRS ELLIS
Oh, Susan, don’t cry. What’s the matter?

Susan hiccups and stutters as she speaks through her tears.

SUSAN
I love my school...we have so much fun...and, and I have made so many friends.

Mrs. Ellis pulls a handkerchief from her pocketbook and gives it to Susan, who only puts it in her lap.

MRS ELLIS
Oh Susan, don’t be silly. You can make other friends at a day school.

This only makes Susan cry more who is now looking down angrily at the wet handkerchief in her lap.

MRS ELLIS
And think, we would be together in the evenings. Grace can make us meals. You can eat ice cream whenever the weather is right for it.

Susan looks up at Mrs Ellis.
CONTINUED:

SUSAN
(snaps)
What would we do?

Mrs. Ellis takes a deep breath and looks out the window. Mrs. Ellis is hurt, but she attempts to hide it from Susan.

MRS ELLIS
Perhaps you are right. You are content where you are.

Susan wipes away her tears.

SUSAN
I will always come home on holidays

Mrs. Ellis nods.

MRS ELLIS
Yes, we shall always have the holidays.

CUT TO:

THE FUNERAL

EXT. GRAVEYARD – AFTERNOON

It is raining. Wilfred’s grave is surrounded by friends and family. His coffin is being put into the ground. Susan holds Mrs. Ellis’ hand. Mrs. Ellis’ face is covered by a net from her hat. She is holding an umbrella over her and her daughter.

CUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM – AFTERNOON

The phone at the end table is replaced with platters of food. Guests talk amongst themselves. There is no music playing.

Susan entertains a group of older relatives. Mrs. Ellis sits at the chair closest to the fireplace beside NETTA DRAYCOT, a close friend.

NETTA
All things pass.

MRS ELLIS
Yes, you’re right. Pleasure and pain, and happiness and suffering,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MRS ELLIS (cont’d)
and I suppose you must find my life
is a dull one

Netta tries to say otherwise, but only gets a head shake in
before Mrs Ellis begins speaking again

MRS ELLIS
It is. Rather uneventful actually.

NETTA
Oh I don’t think so, dear.

MRS ELLIS
That’s sweet of you, but I am
grateful for it, and although
sometimes I feel I did not do my
utmost for poor Wilfred-

Mrs Ellis looks up at his picture on the mantel

MRS ELLIS
–his was a difficult nature. At
least I believe I have succeeded in
making a happy home for Susan.

NETTA
You can’t blame yourself. He was
sick for so long.

MRS ELLIS
Luckily Susan has not inherited any
illness.

NETTA
Luckily.

Both women look over at Susan who is telling stories of
boarding school to the guests

NETTA
When is she going to start going to
day school?

Mrs Ellis shakes her head

NETTA
I only assumed, because –

MRS ELLIS
No, Susan is too socially advanced
for day school. Boarding school is
just the better fit.
CONTINUED:

They look back at Susan who is still the center of attention amongst the relatives.

CUT TO:

LUNCH

Black frame.

Superimposition over:

TWO MONTHS LATER

INT. STUDY - AFTERNOON

Mrs Ellis stands by the fireplace. She notices the dust on the fire irons. Her finger grazes the dust off one of the pokers and she rolls her eyes in disgust.

She looks over at the portrait of her late husband which is in a dark corner beside the bookshelf.

Grace pokes her head in the room.

GRACE
Lunch is in.

MRS ELLIS
Do I have to mention it a hundred times? The sudden thrust of your head is so disconcerting.

Grace enters the room fully.

GRACE
My apologies.

MRS ELLIS
Next time open the door outright and come right into the room.

GRACE
Yes, Mrs. Ellis.

MRS ELLIS
What’s for lunch?

GRACE
Guinea fowl and apple charlotte.

(continued)
CONTINUED: 12.

MRS ELLIS
I’ll be down in a minute.

Grace exits.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM

Mrs. Ellis sits in front of her food. She picks up a fork. She hesitates and puts it back down.

A bell is located next to her tray. She rings it. Grace comes almost immediately from the kitchen.

GRACE
Yes, Mrs. Ellis.

MRS ELLIS
I will not be eating at this time, Grace. Please bring some coffee to the drawing room.

Grace does not hide her annoyance. She picks up the tray and exits.

Mrs. Ellis takes the napkin out of her lap and places it on the dining table beside the bell.

CUT TO:

IS SUSAN ALRIGHT?

INT. DRAWING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Mrs Ellis stands beside the phone. She takes a sip of coffee and dials the operator.

MRS ELLIS
(urgently)
Will you connect me to High Close school for girls?
(pause)
I’ll hold.
(pause)
This is Mrs. Ellis, mother of Susan Ellis. May I speak to Miss Slater?
(pause)
Yes, I’ll hold.

(CONTINUED)
Mrs. Ellis looks out the window to the opposite house. The house’s open window has a sagged, ugly red curtain covering it. The fabric is held together with clothes pins. She scowls.

MRS ELLIS
(mumbles to herself)
This district is losing class. Soon enough I’ll have lodgers for neighbors.

A voice is heard from the other line.

MRS ELLIS
(uneasy)
Miss Slater, I’m sorry to bother you, but I had a feeling just a moment ago that something might be wrong with Susan.
(pause)
Will you make sure that everything is alright?

Mrs. Ellis taps on the end table impatiently, awaiting confirmation.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH CLOSE HALLWAY

SECRETARY walks down an empty hallway. When she reaches the end she opens the back door to a field of young girls playing. Susan is nowhere in sight.

Secretary approaches a young girl of Susan’s age.

SECRETARY
Have you seen Susan Ellis?

The girl shrugs her shoulders.

GIRL
No, ma’am.

Secretary walks around the schoolyard as quickly as her heels can keep up. Susan is nowhere in sight. Secretary does a 360 spin.

She begins walking back towards the school. Susan exits the school with three other girls. They are all laughing.

(CONTINUED)
SECRETARY
Susan Ellis, where have you been?

SUSAN
(brattish)
We went to the drinking fountain.

SECRETARY
(addressing the 3 other girls)
Girls, go play. I need a word with Susan.

The girls disperse.

SECRETARY
Susan, is everything alright?

SUSAN
What do you mean?

SECRETARY
Are you sick? Have you been eating?

SUSAN
I just had lunch...I don’t feel sick. Should I feel sick?

SECRETARY
No, I just wanted to update your mother.

Susan looks out at her friends playing.

SUSAN
Well, I feel just fine. Can I return to my friends or do I have to go to the infirmary?

Secretary smiles.

SECRETARY
I don’t think that will be necessary, Susan. Go on.

CUT TO:

INT. HEADMISTRESS OFFICE

Secretary enters. Headmistress is still on the phone speaking with Mrs. Ellis.
SECRETARY
Everything is fine. Susan is
playing outside with the others.

Headmistress nods her head.

CUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM

Mrs. Ellis stops tapping her fingers on the end table.

MRS ELLIS
Oh. It was just a foolish notion on
my part then. I am so sorry to have
bothered you.

Mrs. Ellis hangs up the receiver and exits

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Camera tracks Mrs. Ellis making her way to the bedroom

INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Mrs. Ellis takes out her outdoor clothes and smiles at the
photograph of Susan on her dresser. She spreads the clothes
out on her bed and closes the curtains. She undresses.

Once undressed, Mrs. Ellis hesitates. She stares at the
clothes. She looks overtired.

MRS ELLIS
(mumbles)
To rest...or to walk?

She looks at the clothes and then the bed. She puts the
clothes on.

There’s a knock at the door.

MRS ELLIS
Yes, come in Grace.

Grace enters completely.

MRS ELLIS
(ridicules)
Well done, Grace.

GRACE
Is everything alright, Mrs. Ellis?
CONTINUED:

MRS ELLIS
Yes, I’m going out for a little while. I shan’t be long.

GRACE
All right, ma’am.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY/DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY – AFTERNOON

Mrs. Ellis grabs her coat and scarf from the coat hanger by the entrance. She puts everything on and exits.

CUT TO:

THE WALK

EXT. HOUSE – AFTERNOON

CAMERA IS SUBJECTIVE – MRS ELLIS P.O.V.

Mrs. Ellis locks the door behind her. She walks out the gate. She looks down into the basement window and sees Grace lighting up a cigarette. She shakes her head in disapproval.

It is a dull, gray day. Mrs. Ellis walks eastward towards the Viaduct Ponds. She passes a group of nurses pushing baby carriages. They laugh and chat together. She passes the MILKMAN.

MILKMAN
*whistling*

The Milkman places a tray of empty bottles into his cart. He nods his head at Mrs. Ellis in recognition.

MILKMAN
Afternoon, Mrs. Ellis.

Mrs. Ellis smiles but keeps walking.

MRS ELLIS
Afternoon.

Mrs. Ellis arrives at the park. She inhales, but the air is muggy. Dogs bark beside the pond, unleashed. Their owners are men in rain coats, staring vacantly. An old woman sits on a bench throwing food to chirping sparrows.

The sky becomes darker. Mrs. Ellis speeds up the pace. She arrives at the Vale of Health. It looks dark, the clouds warn that there will be a storm.

(CONTINUED)
A man passes her on a bicycle. She picks up her pace. The voices of passing tradesmen and nurses have become louder. Mrs. Ellis reaches a junction of two roads. She crosses and a laundry van rapidly swings down towards her. She sees the driver’s look of surprise. It swerves and its breaks screech.

A nurse pushing a carriage screams.

MRS ELLIS
(yells at the van)
One day there will be an accident.

She pats down her dress and crosses the street. She walks down to the corner of the road where her house is. She opens the gate which nearly falls off the hinges.

MRS ELLIS
*gasps*

She takes her key out and tries to fit it in the lock, but it is stuck and won’t turn. She looks down into the basement’s closed window.

MRS ELLIS
(irritated)
Grace! It’s me. My key is jammed in the door.

No response.

MRS ELLIS
Grace, could you finish your cigarette and let me in?

No response.

MRS ELLIS
(sharply)
Grace!

The window opens below. A man thrusts his head out Grace’s bathroom. He had not shaved in days and wore a dirty, button down shirt.

   LODGER 1
   What are you bawling your head off about, lady?

   MRS ELLIS
   *gasps*

(CONTINUED)
LODGER 1
What, you’ve never seen a man in a basement before?

MRS ELLIS
I did not realize Grace was expecting company.

LODGER 1
I didn’t realize I was expecting company either, lady.

MRS ELLIS
Perhaps you will have the goodness to ask Grace to come upstairs and let me in.

LODGER 1
Who’s Grace?

MRS ELLIS
(furiously)
If Grace is out, kindly let me in yourself. I prefer not to use the back entrance.

Lodger 1 vanishes from the window. Mrs. Ellis stares at the door, waiting to be let in. There is a sound of footsteps from behind the door. Lodger 1 opens the door. He’s dressed in wrinkled pants that go well with his dirty shirt. He looks much more drunk up close than from the small basement window.

LODGER 1
Who is it you want?

A bark from a small dog comes from the study.

MRS ELLIS
Who is in the study?

LODGER 1
The study?

MRS ELLIS
Yes, the study. Who is in the study?

LODGER 1
I think Mr. and Mrs. Bolton are in, but I’m not sure. The dog yaps whether they’re in or out. Was it them you wanted to see?
MRS ELLIS
You had better go down to the basement again and tell Grace not to bring tea until I ring. These people may not stay.

Lodger 1 looks confused. He shrugs.

LODGER 1
Alright, but if you want Mr and Mrs Bolton again, ring twice next time.

Lodger 1 turns and drunkenly walks away and down the basement stairs. He leaves the door open. Mrs Ellis enters.

CUT TO:

MR BOLTON

INT. LOBBY/HALLWAY - DUSK

CAMERA GOES BACK TO SUBJECTIVE

LONDON 1952. The lobby and hallway are completely different. The house looks older. There are no portraits on the walls. She takes her coat and scarf off and goes to put them on the coat hanger, but it is no longer there.

Mrs Ellis walks over only to trip over a man’s boot. When she looks down to see it, she sees a briefcase and more pairs of mens shoes in the lobby.

Mrs Ellis walks to the study. The door is cracked open and a little dog runs through the crack and yaps at her feet.

MRS ELLIS
Grace will go tonight.

MR BOLTON’s voice addresses the dog from inside the study.

MR BOLTON
Quit it, Judy.

Mrs. Ellis pushes open the door.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDY - DUSK

The bookshelf, desk, and arm chair are gone. Any furniture left is covered with books and discarded papers. The walls are also covered with papers. Odds and ends of junk cover (CONTINUED)
the floor. There is a parrot caged by the window. The window is covered by wrinkled curtains held together with clothes pins. The parrot squawks at Mrs. Ellis’ arrival.

Mr Bolton is sitting on the floor, typing away on a typewriter in his lap.

Mrs Ellis clears her throat.

Mr Bolton pushes his glasses on to his forehead.

MR BOLTON
Excuse me but do you want anything?

Mrs Ellis is tries to mouth words, but no sounds come out.

MR BOLTON
My wife is upstairs.

Mrs Ellis looks around the room. Mr Bolton puts his glasses back on and returns to his typing. Mrs Ellis remains in the doorway.

MRS ELLIS
(voice strained)
Your wife is upstairs?

Mr Bolton does not look up from his typing. He removes the sheet he’s typing on, crumples it and throws it in the middle of the room. It blends into the rest of the litter. He replaces the sheet with another one, still not making eye contact with Mrs Ellis.

Mrs Ellis’ eyes bulge.

MR BOLTON
Yes. If you’ve come for an appointment, she always makes them. You’ll find her in her studio. Room upstairs, back left door.

Mrs Ellis quietly exits the study.

MRS BOLTON

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DUSK

CAMERA TRACKS MRS ELLIS

The dog follows Mrs Ellis, sniffing at her heels. Mrs Ellis ascends upstairs.

(CONTINUED)
Voices and footsteps come from the master bedroom, Susan’s room as well as the drawing room. Susan’s bedroom door has a peep hole in the middle. The door opens. LODGER 2, a fat red-faced elderly woman stands in the doorway. She has a feathered boa around her neck, a fat cat under her arm and an empty milk bottle under her other.

The dog sees the cat and barks louder. The cat hisses.

    LODGER 2
    What do you want to bring the dog upstairs for? They always fight when they’re on the same floor.

Lodger 2 squints at a speechless Mrs Ellis. Lodger 2 puts on her glasses, which are hanging around her neck.

    LODGER 2
    Oh, sorry. I thought you were Mrs Bolton.

Lodger 2 walks to the ledge of the stairs and leans over to place the milk bottle on the first step.

    LODGER 2
    (out of breath)
    No stairs for today. Somebody will have to take it down for me.

Lodger 2 slowly pulls herself up.

    LODGER 2
    Is it foggy out?

    MRS ELLIS
    (shocked)
    No.

    LODGER 2
    Wouldn’t go down there if it was.

Mrs Ellis holds eye contact with Lodger 2. The lodger points to Mrs Ellis’ bedroom with her thumb.

    LODGER 2
    Got an appointment?

Mrs Ellis doesn’t respond. (CONTINUED)
LODGER 2
She won’t see you if you haven’t booked an appointment, you know.

Mrs Ellis reveals a small smile

MRS ELLIS
Thank you, yes, I have an appointment.

LODGER 2
Is she gonna do you straight or fancy?
(whispers)
It’s the fancy ones that get the men if you know what I mean.

Lodger 2 winks and then looks down at Mrs Ellis’ trembling hands, the left still home to a wedding ring.

LODGER 2
I’m betting fancy.

Beat.

LODGER 2
I see you’re married. I wouldn’t be too nervous. Even the quietest husbands like their pictures fancy.

Mrs Ellis remains silent.

LODGER 2
Take a tip from an old pro. Get her to do you fancy.

Lodger 2 returns to Susan’s room and locks the door behind her.

CUT TO:

CAMERA SWITCHES TO LODGER 2’S PEEP HOLE VIEW OF THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. WATCHING MRS ELLIS APPROACH THE MASTER BEDROOM.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM – DUSK

The room is bare. The wallpaper and portraits have been stripped from the wall. There are several lights at various points of the room. A camera with the tripod faces a sofa that is pushed up against the wall, replacing the bed. The walls are striped orange and white.

(CONTINUED)
MRS BOLTON, a young woman, is sitting on the floor behind the tripod. She is wearing a leotard with tights. She is sorting out nude photographs that are spread out on the floor.

Mrs Ellis opens the door and walks in. She is shocked and disoriented. Mrs Bolton does not turn around to look at her.

MRS BOLTON
who is it? I don’t see anyone
without an appointment.

Mrs Ellis looks around for a telephone. She sees one attached to the wall and picks it up. Mrs Bolton turns around while Mrs Ellis is already dialing.

MRS ELLIS
(into the receiver)
I want the police

MRS BOLTON
(infuriated)
You’ve no right to come in here

Mrs Bolton begins piling up and hiding the nudes in a nearby chest of drawers.

MRS ELLIS
I want them to come at once to 17 Elmhurst Road

Mrs Bolton locks the drawers with a key around her neck.

MRS BOLTON
Leave my telephone alone.

MRS ELLIS
I am in great danger. Please report the message to the police at once.

MRS BOLTON
If you think you can come in snooping, you’re greatly mistaken. You won’t find anything. You or the police. I have a trade license for the work I do.

Mrs Ellis hangs up the phone. She remains calm. She stands with her back to the wall. Her hands are folded.

MRS BOLTON
(shouting)
Harry, come here and throw this woman out.

(CONTINUED)
Sound of the study door open. Mr Bolton shouts up the stairs.

MR BOLTON
What are you yelling for? I’m busy. Can’t you deal with the woman yourself?

MRS BOLTON
(to Mrs Ellis)
Who’s sent you here?

MR BOLTON
She probably wants a special pose.

Mrs Bolton’s eyes narrow.

MRS BOLTON
What did my husband say to you?

MRS ELLIS
I had no such conversation with your husband. He merely told me I should find you upstairs. Don’t try and bluff with me. It’s too late now.

Mrs Ellis motions her hand at the bare room.

MRS ELLIS
I can see what you’ve been up to.

MRS BOLTON
You can’t put any phony business over me. I run a respectable studio and everyone knows that I take camera studies of children. Plenty of clients can testify to that. You’ve got no proof of anything else. Show me a negative, and then I might believe you.

Mrs Ellis remains silent.

MRS BOLTON
Well? What are you going to say when the police come?
   (pause)
What’s your story?

MRS ELLIS
I shall tell them that I live here. That is all they will need to know. Nothing further.
Mrs Bolton looks puzzled. She returns to the chest and removes a cigarette from a pack in her pants pocket. She lights it with a big cigarette lighter from on top of the chest.

**MRS BOLTON**

Is it just a pose you want?

There’s a tap on the door. Both women stand still.

**MRS BOLTON**

Was that call just a bluff? Why don’t you come clean and say why you’re here?

The door opens. Lodger 2 pops her head in.

**LODGER 2**

(to Mrs Bolton)

Anything wrong, dear?

**MRS BOLTON**

Push on out of it. This is none of your business.

**LODGER 2**

Difficult client, eh?

**MRS BOLTON**

(to Lodger 2)

I don’t interfere with your life, and I expect you to not interfere with mine.

**LODGER 2**

I’m not interfering at all, dear. I only wanted to know if I could help.

(to Mrs Ellis)

Do you want something outsize?

**MRS BOLTON**

(to Lodger 2)

Oh, shut your mouth before I shut it for you.

Mr Bolton barges in from behind Lodger 2. Lodger 2 welcomes herself into the room and begins looking around.

**MR BOLTON**

Just what’s going on in here?

Mrs Bolton shrugs her shoulders, keeping eye contact with Mrs Ellis.

(CONTINUED)
Lodger 2 takes a seat on the sofa.

MRS BOLTON
Perhaps blackmail.

MR BOLTON
Has she got any negatives?

MRS BOLTON
Not that I know of. Never seen her before in my life.

Mr Bolton takes off his glasses and looks up and down at Mrs Ellis whose back is still against the wall.

MR BOLTON
She might have gotten them from another client.

The three of them stare at Mrs Ellis

MRS ELLIS
(addressing all three)
I think we’ve all become a bit too excited. I believe the best thing to do is go downstairs and have a little chat. We can talk about your work. Tell me, are all three of you photographers?

There is a drawn out silence.

MRS ELLIS
Well...shall we do as I suggested and go downstairs? Perhaps we can call Grace in to pour us some tea.

Mrs Ellis begins leading the way out of the house. The three follow her. Mr Bolton looks confused, Mrs Bolton is still outraged.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DUSK

Lodger 2 stays at the top of the stairs. Mrs Ellis, Mr Bolton and Mrs Bolton descend downstairs.

LODGER 2
Call me if you want me.

CUT TO:
THE POLICE

INT. LOBBY/DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DUSK

Mrs Ellis gestures to the dining room.

MRS ELLIS
Shall we sit in the dining area, since the furniture in the study is -

Mrs Ellis looks into the open door of the chaotic study. The only chair in the room is covered with papers.

MRS ELLIS - occupied.

Mr Bolton and Mrs Bolton shoot looks of bewilderment.

MRS ELLIS
You shall tell me all about this photography business.

There’s an authoritative pound at the front door. Mrs Ellis sighs with relief.

MR BOLTON
(to Mrs Ellis)
Better have ’em in. She’s got no proof.

Mr Bolton crosses the hallway and opens the door. POLICE 1 and POLICE 2 stand at the door. Police 2 is younger than Police 1.

MR BOLTON
Come in, officers.

POLICE 1
We received a call. Some trouble going on, I understand.

MR BOLTON
I think there must be some mistake. The fact is, we’ve had a caller and I think she’s a bit -
(under his breath)
hysterical

Mrs Ellis walks toward the police officers and Mr Bolton.

(CONTINUED)
MRS ELLIS
I am not hysterical. I am perfectly fine. I was the one who rang.

Police 2 takes a notepad and pencil out.

POLICE 2
Can we have your name and address?

Mrs Ellis smiles

MRS ELLIS
It’s hardly necessary, but my name is Mrs -

Police 2 jots this down, his eyes focused on the notepad.

MRS. ELLIS
Wilfred. Ellis. I am of this address.

POLICE 2
You lodge here?

Mrs Ellis frowns

MRS ELLIS
Certainly not. This is my house. I live here.

Police 2 continues writing.

MRS ELLIS
(to Police 1)
Constable, I must speak to you alone. The matter is terribly urgent.

POLICE 1
If you have any charge to bring, Mrs Ellis, you can bring it at the police station at the proper time. We were informed that somebody lodging here at Number 17 was in danger.

MRS ELLIS
I don’t think you quite understand.

POLICE 2
Are you, or are you not, the person who gave that information to the exchange?

(CONTINUED)
Mrs Ellis speaks so rapidly that her words fall over themselves.

MRS ELLIS
(infuriated)
Of course I am that person. I returned home to find that my house had been broken into by thieves, these people here

Mrs Ellis points to Mr Bolton and Mrs Bolton

MRS BOLTON
dangerous thieves, lunatics. I don’t know who they are, and my things carried away, the whole of my house turned upside down, the most terrible disorder everywhere.

Lodger 1 appears at the edge of the basement staircase.

LODGER 1
I saw her come to the door. I thought she was balmy. Wouldn’t have let her in had I known for sure.

POLICE 1
And who are you?

LODGER 2
Name of Upshaw. William Upshaw.

WILLIAM UPSHAW rolls up his dirty sleeves and walks up the stairs, more sober than he was before but not by much.

UPSHAW
Me and my missus has the basement flat here.

MRS ELLIS
(hysterical pitch)
He’s lying. He does not live here; he belongs to this gang of thieves. Nobody lives in the basement except my maid, Grace Jackson, and if you will search the premises you will probably find her gagged and bound somewhere.

UPSHAW
Balmy, I tell you.
(CONTINUED)

POLICE 1
(firmly)
Quiet, please.

Police 2 mutters something in the ear of Police 1. Police 1 nods.

POLICE 1
Yes, yes. I’ve got the directory here. It’s all in order.

Police 1 pulls a small notebook out of his back pocket. He consults the book.

POLICE 1
(to Mr Bolton)
Are you Henry Bolton?

MR BOLTON
Yes, officer. And this is my wife. We have the ground floor here and my wife uses an upstairs room for a studio.

MRS BOLTON
Camera portraits, you know.

Lodger 2 waddles down the stairs. She has put on make up since the first introduction.

LODGER 2
My name’s Baxter. Billie Baxter they used to call me. Perhaps you recognize me from my old stage days.

BAXTER waddles her way to the police officers, out of breath from the stairs.

BAXTER
Used to be in the profession, you know. I live upstairs across from Mrs Bolton’s studio.

Baxter gestures to Mrs Ellis

BAXTER
I also encountered this woman. Up to no good, I knew it from the start. I saw her barge into Mrs Bolton’s studio just a few moments ago.

(CONTINUED)
POLICE 2
Then she doesn’t lodge here?

POLICE 1
I didn’t think she did; the name isn’t in the directory.

MR BOLTON
We have never seen her before, officer. Mr. Upshaw let her into the house through some error. She walked into my study and then threatened my wife. She rang you in the most hysterical fashion.

POLICE 1
(to Mrs Ellis)
Anything to say?

Mrs Ellis holds back tears

MRS ELLIS
There has been a terrible mistake. You must be new to the district and the young policeman too. I don’t seem to recognize either of you, but if you would kindly get me through to your headquarters. They must know all about me. I swear I have lived here for years. My maid as well. I am a widow, my husband has been dead for only two months. I went out for my usual walk this afternoon and during my absence these scoundrels broke into my house, seized or destroyed my belongings - I don’t know which. The whole place is upside down.

POLICE 1
There, there.

He puts his notepad away and pats Mrs Ellis on the shoulder.

POLICE 1
That’s all right now. We can go into all that quietly down at the station.

(to lodgers)
Now, do any of you feel it’s necessary to press charges for Mrs Ellis’ trespassing?

Silence.

(CONTINUED)
MR BOLTON
We don’t wish to be unkind. I think my wife and myself are quite willing to let the matter pass.

The rest of the group nods in agreement.

MRS BOLTON
Although, I think it should be clearly understood that anything this woman says about us at the police station is completely untrue.

Police 1 nods his head.

POLICE 1
Quite. You will both be called if needed, but I very much doubt it should come to that.

Police 1 turns to Mrs Ellis

POLICE 1
We have the car outside and we can run you down to the station. You can tell your story there.

The policemen lead Mrs Ellis down the hall to the front door.

MRS ELLIS
They’ve taken away the coat hanger. It was perfectly all right this afternoon, and now these boots and the pile of suitcases. All these have been brought in, officers. Just thrown here. The suitcases are probably filled with my ornaments.

Police 2 opens the door.

MRS ELLIS
I must ask you most urgently to leave a policeman in charge here until we return to see that these people don’t escape.

POLICE 1
That’s all right, Mrs Ellis.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)
POLICE 1
Now, are you ready to come along?

Mrs Ellis holds onto the handle of the unhinged gate.

MRS ELLIS
I’m not going with you

POLICE 2
Now, Mrs Ellis, don’t give any trouble. You shall have a cup of tea down at the station.

POLICE 1
No one is going to hurt you.

Police 2 seizes her arm. Mrs Ellis attempts to shake it off, but the officer only moves closer.

MRS ELLIS
(shouts)
Help...help...help

The lodgers walk out onto the front stoop.

UPSHAW
Poor lady. Seems sad, don’t it?

BAXTER
I wonder how she got like that.

Mrs Ellis hears the lodgers.

MRS ELLIS
(yells)
You rogues! How dare you?

Police 1 pushes her into the backseat of the car.

MRS ELLIS
How dare you?

Police 1 shuts the door. Her screams are muffled, but still coherent.

The car takes off westward towards the police station.
INTERROGATION

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT - L.S.

The police car arrives to the police station.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT HALLWAY - M.L.S.

Camera tracks out as Police 1 escorts Mrs Ellis down a long, bright hallway.

He leads her into a doorway.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERIOR POLICE OFFICE

SUPERIOR OFFICER sits at his desk. He looks more intelligent than the other two policemen. He is focused on reading a file. Superior Officer does not make eye contact yet with Mrs Ellis.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
What can I do for you?

Superior Officer looks up at Mrs Ellis.

MRS ELLIS
There has been great deal of confusion. I am Mrs Ellis, of 17 Elmhurst Road, and my house has been broken into, robbery is going on at this very moment on a colossal scale.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Oh?

MRS ELLIS
I believe the thieves in my house are extraordinarily cunning and have completely taken in the constable here and the other policeman that was with him.

Superior Officer raises his eyebrows to Police 1.

(CONTINUED)
SUPERIOR OFFICER
Have a seat, Mrs Ellis.

Mrs Ellis hesitates, but sits anyways.

MRS ELLIS
I must insist that you hear what I have to say, sir.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
What is it you want to tell me?

MRS ELLIS
My name is Ellis, Mrs Wilfred Ellis.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Yes, I remember that part.

MRS ELLIS
(perturbed)
I live at 17 Elmhurst Road. I am in the telephone book. I am in the directory. I am very well known amongst the district and I’ve lived in the area for a decade now. I am recently widowed and have a daughter of nine years old at boarding school. I employ one maidservant, Grace Jackson, who cooks for me and does other general work. This afternoon I went for one of my daily walks round the Viaduct and the Vale of Health ponds and when I returned home my house had been broken into and Grace had disappeared.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Disappeared?

MRS ELLIS
Yes, that’s quite right. The rooms were stripped of my belongings and the thieves had taken over my home, putting up an extremely impressive facade that deceived even the constable here. I was frightened and called you all and now I am here and they are there, and everything is just as upside down as it was a few hours ago.

Superior Officer nods.
SUPERIOR OFFICER
Thank you, Mrs Ellis. That description is very helpful.

MRS ELLIS
(sarcastically)
I am enthused that you appreciated it.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Now, have you anything you can show me to prove your identity?

Mrs Ellis sighs.

MRS ELLIS
It’s very unfortunate, but I did not take my handbag with me when I went out for my walk this afternoon. In fact I left it in a chest of drawers in the study, but I am positive everything has been discarded in that room since the burglary.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Hmm...

MRS ELLIS
The house is in utter chaos, you must believe me.

Superior Officer jots a note on a pad beside him.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
You can’t produce your identity card?

MRS ELLIS
No, that’s what I just explained.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
How about your ration book?

MRS ELLIS
My what? - Listen, sir, I have explained. My calling cards are in my writing desk. My writing desk has been stolen, hidden, sold...which one, I cannot be sure.

Superior Officer picks up the phone on his desk.

(CONTINUED)
SUPERIOR OFFICER
(into the receiver)
Yes, can you come down here. I need your assistance.

MRS ELLIS
Verify my name and address in the telephone book or the district directory if you must. If you refuse to do that ask the postmaster -

Superior Officer hangs up the receiver.

MRS ELLIS
- or my bank on High Street. In fact, I just cashed a cheque on Saturday.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Now, Mrs Ellis, we have checked up on your statements, you know, and they won’t do. You are not in the telephone book, nor in the directory.

MRS ELLIS
I assure you I am. And if you don’t believe me, ring up Mrs Draycot of 21 Charlton Court. She will vouch for me.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Mrs Ellis -

MRS ELLIS
Fine. Give me the books then, and I’ll show you myself.

Superior Officer looks at Police 1 who is standing in the corner of the room by a bookshelf. Superior Officer nods at the phone book on the shelf.

Police 1 picks it up and hands it over to Mrs Ellis who immediately flips to E.

SUBJECTIVE SHOT FROM MRS ELLIS P.O.V.

Mrs Ellis trails her finger down to the name Ellis but none of the first names belong to her.

OBJECTIVE SHOT - M.C.U MRS ELLIS

Mrs Ellis looks up at Police 1.

(CONTINUED)
MRS ELLIS
May I have the directory?

M.S. POLICE 1 AND SUPERIOR OFFICER

Police 1 looks at Superior Officer who gives him a nod of approval. Police 1 hands Mrs Ellis the directory.

S.S. - MRS ELLIS P.O.V.

Mrs Ellis flips to 17 Elmhurst Road. The names beside it are BOLTON, UPSHAW, and BAXTER

Mrs Ellis puts the books on the desk and pushes them away from her.

OBJECTIVE SHOT - M.C.U MRS ELLIS

MRS ELLIS
There is something wrong with these books. They are not up to date, they are false, they are not the books I have at home.

POLICEWOMAN enters. Superior Officer apologizes her.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Mrs Ellis, this is Officer Linda Moore.

Mrs Ellis looks at MOORE for a second and returns her gaze at Superior Officer.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Now, I can see you are tired and I think a rest should do you good. We will try to find your friends for you. Go with Officer Moore now, we will get in touch with them as soon as possible.

MRS ELLIS
Where am I being escorted to? What about my house?

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Since you have no place to stay, we’re going to put you in a private holding cell for the night. I will send a doctor along to you and he may chat with you a little and give you a sedative to help you sleep. After some rest, I am sure (MORE)
SUPERIOR OFFICER (cont’d)
you will feel much better and we
may even have news for you on your
friends and relatives.

Moore places her hand on Mrs Ellis’ shoulder. Mrs Ellis
looks up at Moore. Moore’s face is not unkind.

MRS ELLIS
(defeated)
But my house...

MOORE
Come along, Mrs Ellis.

MRS ELLIS
(to Moore)
Grace may be lying in the basement,
surely you are going to do
something about the house.
(to Superior Officer)
You won’t permit them to get away
with this monstrous crime.

Beat.

MRS ELLIS
Even now, we’re letting them get
away with it.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
That’s all right, Mrs Ellis. You
can leave everything in our hands
now.

Moore gently pulls Mrs Ellis up from her seat and leads her
out the door.

CUT TO:

THE INJECTION

INT. HOLDING CELL – NIGHT

Moore helps Mrs Ellis out of her coat and scarf and then
sits her down on a small bed under a barred window. Mrs
Ellis begins to tear up.

MOORE
Oh now, now, Mrs Ellis. No one is
going to hurt you.
MRS ELLIS
This is where you all put prisoners.

Moore smiles politely.

MOORE
Yes, but just think of it as a poorly run bed and breakfast for now.

MRS ELLIS
I beg of you, ring up Hampstead 4072. Mrs Draycott will come for me. The officer won’t listen to me. He won’t hear my story.

MOORE
Yes, yes that will be all right.

DOCTOR enters. He’s wearing a stethoscope and a white coat.

DOCTOR (to Mrs Ellis)
Feeling a little upset, I hear?

Doctor pulls a chair from the corner of the room up to the dinky bed. He begins taking her temperature, under her arm like a child.

MRS ELLIS
There is nothing whatever the matter with me. I admit I have been through a terrible experience - traumatizing some may say. Quite enough to unnerve anyone. No one here will listen to my story, but I am Mrs Wilfred Ellis of 17 Elmhurst Road.

Doctor doesn’t listen, instead checks her pulse. He takes a flashlight from his coat pocket and drags the pupils of her eyes back and forth.

MRS ELLIS
I realize this is all routine and you are obligated to do this,

Doctor takes a elastic band from his pocket and ties it around Mrs Ellis’ upper arm.

(CONTINUED)
MRS ELLIS
but I want to warn you that my whole treatment since I have been brought here, since these police came to my house, has been abominable.

Doctor takes out a sealed alcohol towelette from his pocket and dabs the vein on Mrs Ellis’ arm. He then removes a packaged syringe and vile, takes them out of the plastic and fills the syringe.

DOCTOR
This will only hurt a little.

MRS ELLIS
What exactly is that?

The doctor pricks the vein, injects the sedative and removes the needle.

DOCTOR
How is that?

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA - MRS ELLIS P.O.V.

Mrs Ellis becomes drowsy. The camera is hazy. She lies down in the bed. Moore places a blanket over her.

DOCTOR
Better, eh?

Doctor removes the band from her arm.

DOCTOR
Now, tell me your story again. You say your name is Mrs Ellis?

Mrs Ellis sighs and closes her eyes.

DOCTOR
Mrs Ellis do you think you can remember your real address?

Mrs Ellis opens her eyes and tries to focus on the doctor.

MRS ELLIS
I live at 17 Elmhurst Road. I am a widow. My husband has been dead for two months. I have a little girl of sixteen at school I went for a short walk on the heath this afternoon after lunch, and when I returned -

(CONTINUED)
DOCTOR
Yes, we know that. We know what happened after your walk. What we want you to tell us is what happened before.

MRS ELLIS
I had lunch. Grace made guinea fowl and apple charlotte, followed by coffee in the drawing room. I almost took a nap upstairs, because I was feeling under the weather, but decided the air would do me some good.

DOCTOR
Ah! You weren’t feeling very well. Can you tell me what the trouble was?

MRS ELLIS
Nothing out of the ordinary. I was rather tired from sorting things in the house during the morning.

DOCTOR
Can you describe your house for me, Mrs Ellis? The furniture, for instance, the layout of it all?

Mrs Ellis closes her eyes. Each room she describes comes up as a picture on the screen.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

MRS ELLIS
(v.o.)
The dining room is downstairs. It’s teal. Long white drapes. A mahogany table stretches across the room, accompanied by white upholstered mahogany carved chairs. There’s a buffet table that matches the other furniture. It was a wedding gift. We placed it by the large windows that peak out the front and left side of the house.

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNSTAIRS WATER CLOSET

(Continued)
MRS ELLIS
(v.o.)
There’s a water closet between the kitchen and dining room. The floors are checkered black and white. White porcelain toilet, large black frame mirror on the back of the door and a medicine cabinet above the stainless steal faucet.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

MRS ELLIS
The kitchen is across the hall from the dining room. There are windows that look out onto our back terrace. The drapes are yellow. There’s a small refrigerator, a stove and oven. There is a cupboard, as well as a pantry with my homemade jams inside. The cabinets are all cherry wood. There is also a calendar that hangs above the sink.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Mrs Ellis opens her eyes. The doctor looks sympathetic. Moore is no longer in the room.

MRS ELLIS
Must I go on?

DOCTOR
Just tell me the layout of the house.

MRS ELLIS
There’s a study also located downstairs. The maid quarters are in the basement. Upstairs is my bedroom, Susan’s bedroom, two bathrooms and a drawing room.

DOCTOR
And you say Grace Jackson is your maid?

(Continued)
MRS ELLIS
Yes, Doctor, she has been for several years. She was in the basement when I left this afternoon. I remember most distinctly watching her light up a cigarette from the basement window. When I returned she wasn’t there. Or at least I didn’t see her, I never got the chance to go down to the basement. Those thieves must have hold of her, perhaps they’ve had her kidnapped.

DOCTOR
We’ll see to that. Now, Mrs Ellis, you have been very helpful, and you have given such a clear account of your home that I think we shan’t be long in tracing it, along with your relations. You must stay here tonight, and I hope to bring you better news in the morning.

Moore arrives back to the room with a cup of tea. She places it on the end table by the narrow bed.

DOCTOR
Now, you say your daughter is at school. Can you remember the address?

Moore takes out a pen and notepad.

MRS ELLIS
High Close, Bishops’ Lane, Hatchworth.

Moore jots this down.

DOCTOR
Very well

MRS ELLIS
But I don’t understand what you meant by "tracing" my house. I have told you all, I come from 17 Elmhurst Road.

DOCTOR
There’s nothing to worry about, Mrs Ellis. You are not ill and you are not lying. I realize both. You are

(MORE)
DOCTOR (cont’d)
only suffering from temporary
memory loss.

MRS ELLIS
But it isn’t true.

Mrs Ellis tries to raise herself from the pillow but can’t
manage to get up.

DOCTOR
It happens often, Mrs Ellis - to
all sorts of people.

MRS ELLIS
My memory is perfectly all right. I
have given you every detail I can
think of.

DOCTOR
It will pass quickly, we’ve had
many cases like this before.

MRS ELLIS
I have told you everything though:
my name, where I live, a
description of my home, the address
of my daughter’s school.

DOCTOR
Now, now. Don’t worry.

Doctor gets up from the chair.

DOCTOR
Just try to relax and have a little
sleep. We shall find your friends
for you in no time.

Doctor murmurs something to Moore and exits the cell. Moore
comes over and tucks in the blanket.

MOORE
Now cheer up, Mrs Ellis. I’ve
brought you some tea just in case
you get thirsty during the night.
Do as the doctor said and get some
rest.

Moore walks to the door.

(CONTINUED)
MOORE
We shall find your friends for you soon. Good night.

Moore goes to exit, but Mrs Ellis interrupts.

MRS ELLIS
The Furbers.

MOORE
What was that?

MRS ELLIS
(clearer)
The Furbers. They live next door at number 19. They’ll vouch for me. They’re not friends, but they will know me by sight.

MOORE
Yes, okay. Try and get some sleep now, Mrs Ellis.

Moore exits.

CUT TO:

AWAKE

INT. HOLDING CELL - MORNING

Mrs Ellis has been up for an hour. Officer Moore is in the cell pouring her paper cup with tea. Officer 1 enters the holding cell.

OFFICER 1
How are you feeling today? A little more like your true self?

MRS ELLIS
On the contrary, officer. I am feeling unwell and I can predict I will feel under the weather until I know what has happened at home. Is anyone here prepared to tell me what happened at my home last night? Have you done anything to safeguard my proper-

OFFICER 1
Now, now, Mrs Ellis. My superior wants to show you something. Let’s (MORE)

( CONTINUED )
OFFICER 1 (cont’d)
head to the interrogation room so
we can get all our cards in order.

Mrs Ellis looks at Moore who nods her head in approval of
Officer 1’s request.

Officer 1 exits, followed by Mrs Ellis who is followed out
by Moore.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION OFFICE

Officer 1 and Mrs Ellis enter. Superior officer is sitting
at the table with a newspaper in his lap.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
How was your sleep?

MRS ELLIS
Am I being interrogated?

Officer 1 exits.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
No, I just want to ask you a few
more questions. Come, sit down.

Superior Officer gestures to the chair on the other side of
the table. Mrs Ellis walks over and sits down.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
I’m going to show you a picture
from The News of the World and I
want you to tell me if you’ve ever
seen the person in the picture
before.

Superior Officer shows the article. It’s a picture for a
missing person by the name of Ada Lewis. The woman is of
African descent. It reads that she is 36, a widow and a
resident of 105 Albert Buildings, Kentish Town.

MRS ELLIS
I’m afraid I can’t help you. I
don’t know this woman.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
The name Ada Lewis conveys nothing
to you?

Mrs Ellis shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)
Superior Officer looks at Mrs Ellis with disbelief. Mrs Ellis looks back down to investigate the photograph. The woman wears the same coat and scarf as her.

MRS ELLIS
This is absolutely preposterous. I have told you my name is Ellis, Mrs. Wilfred Ellis, of 17 Elmhurst Road, and you continue to disbelieve me.

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER SIDE OF THE INTERROGATION ROOM

Lewis Sister, a young black woman stands on the other side of the mirror watching Mrs Ellis and Superior Officer’s conversation. She is accompanied by Officer 1, Officer 2 and Moore. However, through the mirror Mrs Ellis has a round figure, black skin and is around 36 years of age. She is not Ada, but she looks similar.

MRS ELLIS
(from a speaker traveling from the mic in the interrogation room)
My detention here is an outrage; I demand to see a lawyer...my own lawyer!

OFFICER 1
(to Lewis Sister)
Can you identify this woman as your sister, Ms Lewis?

LEWIS SISTER
No, sir. That isn’t Ada. Ada isn’t so stout, and that woman’s teeth seem to be her own. Ada wore dentures. I don’t think I’ve ever seen this woman before.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

(Continued)
Officer 1 pops his head in the door. Mrs Ellis is back to being the white woman she’s been throughout the film. Officer 1 shakes his head at Superior Officer, indicating that Mrs Ellis is not Ada Lewis.

Officer 1 exits.

MRS ELLIS
Perhaps you believe me now.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
As much as I would like to believe you, Mrs Ellis, I can’t. Your facts have been proved wrong in every particular thus far.

MRS ELLIS
What do you mean?

SUPERIOR OFFICER
First, your address. You do not live at 17 Elmhurst Road because the house is occupied by various tenants who have lived there for some time and who are known to us. Number 17 is an apartment house, and the floors are let separately. You are not one of the tenants.

MRS ELLIS
You are mistaken. Number 17 is not a lodginghouse. It is my house – a private house.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
You are not in the directory under the name of Ellis, nor in the telephone book. There is no Ellis on the register of the branch of the bank you mentioned to us last night. Nor can we trace anyone of the name of Grace Jackson in the district.

MRS ELLIS
Why are you all against me? Is there some conspiracy? I don’t understand what I have done...

Mrs Ellis swallows back tears.
MRS ELLIS
You rang up my friend at Charlton Court? Mrs. Draycott?

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Mrs Draycott is not living at Charlton Court, for the simple reason that Charlton Court no longer exists. It was destroyed by a fire bomb.

Mrs Ellis stares at Superior Officer in horror.

MRS ELLIS
A bomb? I had no idea there had been such a fearful outrage. No doubt it is part of the same plot, those people in my house -

Moore enters.

MOORE
(to Superior Officer)
Sir, I checked up on all the nursing homes and mental hospitals within a twenty mile radius. Nobody has gone missing.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Thank you, officer Moore. We can’t keep her here though. You’ll have to persuade them to take her at Moreton Hill. The matron must find a room. Say it’s a temporary measure. Case of amnesia.

MOORE
I’ll do what I can, sir.

QUICK TRANSITION TO:

INT. CELL IN MORETON HILL - NIGHT

Mrs Ellis stands in a white straight jacket staring directly at the camera. The walls around her are yellow. A quick flash of the dark skinned Mrs Ellis comes and goes. She was wearing the same clothes and had the same apathetic expression on her face.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Mrs Ellis snaps back from her day dream.

(CONTINUED)
MRS ELLIS
I’m right here. Why are you speaking as if I’m not right here? You can’t possibly take me there. It has a shocking reputation. The nurses there are always leaving. I refuse to go. I demand to see a lawyer. Dr Godber, he lives in Parkwell Garden.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
(to Moore)
She must be a local woman. She gets the street names and areas right every time.  
(to Mrs Ellis)
Godber left to Portsmouth though. I remember him.

MRS ELLIS
I highly doubt that. He’s most conscientious about having his secretary tell me when he leaves on holiday.

MOORE
The name of the school was correct though. Wrong telephone number, but right school. Co-educational. We got through to them last night.

MRS ELLIS
That cannot be right. High Close is most certainly not co-educational, and I should never have sent Susan there if it had been.

MOORE
High Close is a co-educational school run by a Mr. Foster and his wife.

MRS ELLIS
High Close is run by a Miss Slater, a Miss Hilda Slater.

MOORE
It was run by a Miss Slater. She retired and it was taken over by Mr and Mrs Foster. They have no pupil there by the name of Susan.
Mrs Ellis looks at the expressions on both Moore and Superior Officer. They do not look patronizing. They watch her steadily.

MRS ELLIS
You are not deliberately trying to mislead me? You do realise that I am desperately anxious to know what has happened? If all of what you are staying is a game or some kind of joke, would you tell me so that I know, so that I can understand?

Moore walks over and puts her hand on Mrs Ellis’ shoulder.

MOORE
We are trying to help you.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
We are doing everything to find your friends.

MRS ELLIS
I don’t understand. What has happened? If I am suffering from loss of memory, why do I remember everything so clearly? My address, my name, people, the school...Where is Susan? Where is my daughter? I only telephoned the school yesterday, Susan was quite well, playing in the grounds.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Are you suggesting that Miss Slater answered you herself?

MRS ELLIS
No, the secretary answered. I telephoned because I had - what seemed like a premonition that Susan might not be well. The secretary assured me the child had eaten and was playing. I am not making this up. It happened yesterday. The secretary would have told me if Miss Slater was retiring.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
You are certainly very convincing. We can all tell from your appearance, the fact that you have
SUPERIOR OFFICER (cont’d)
no money on you, that your shoes
are polished, and other little
signs, that you definitely belong
somewhere in this district. But you
do not come from 17 Elmhurst Road,
Mrs Ellis, that is quite certain.

MRS ELLIS
I do assure you that I don’t want
to make trouble. I’ve never been
very quarrelsome, and if I have
really lost my memory I will do
what the doctor tells me. I’ll take
the drugs or medicines that will
help, but I am worried –
desperately worried – about my
little girl.
(to Moore)
Would you do just one thing for me?

Moore nods her head.

MRS ELLIS
Would you telephone the school and
ask them where they can get in
touch with Miss Slater? It is just
possible that she has taken the
house down the road with some of
the children, Susan amongst them.
Perhaps whoever answered the
telephone was new to the work and
gave you vague information.

Moore turns to Superior Officer for approval.

SUPERIOR OFFICER
Very well. We will do that. We will
try to contact this Miss Slater,
but it may take time. Meanwhile, I
think it is best for you to wait in
another room while we put through
the enquiry.

Mrs Ellis stands up. She is wobbly from the disturbing
discussion. Moore holds her arm and leads her out.
GRACE?

CUT TO:

INT. HOLDING CELL – DAY

Moore brings Mrs Ellis to the bed. Mrs Ellis sits down.

MOORE
Would you like some tea?

Mrs Ellis is silent.

MOORE
I’ll get you some tea.

Moore exits.

MRS ELLIS
(v.o.)
It’s all they think about. Cups of tea. Instead of getting on with their jobs.

Moore returns with the tea.

MOORE
Here you go, Mrs Ellis.

MRS ELLIS
Office Moore, may I ask you something?

MOORE
Sure

MRS ELLIS
Is it all in the morning papers about the disaster?

MOORE
What disaster?

MRS ELLIS
The fire at Charlton Court the superior officer spoke to me about.

MOORE
Oh, no. It wasn’t a fire. I think he was referring to a fire bomb during the war.

(CONTINUED)
MRS ELLIS
No, no. Charlton Court was built a long time after the war. I remember the block being built when my husband and I first came to Hampstead. This accident apparently happened last night.

Moore shrugs her shoulders.

MOORE
I think you’re mistaken. There’s been no talk of any accident or disaster here.

Mrs Ellis sips her tea and grins at what she believes is another one of Moore’s stupid comments.

Doctor enters.

DOCTOR
Well, I think we’re a little nearer to home, Mrs Ellis. The superior officer just told me he was able to contact Miss Slater.

MRS ELLIS
Oh thank heavens. Have you any news of my daughter?

DOCTOR
You must not get too excited or we shall have all last night’s trouble over again, and that would never do. I take it, when you refer to your daughter, you mean someone by the name of Susan Ellis?

MRS ELLIS
Yes, yes, Doctor. Of course. Is she all right? Is she with Miss Slater?

DOCTOR
No, she is not with Miss Slater, but she is perfectly well. I have even managed to speak to her on the telephone myself. I have her present address her in my notebook.

Doctor pats his breast pocket to indicate where his notebook is.
MRS ELLIS
Not with Miss Slater?

DOCTOR
(hypnotically)
Now, I want you to think quite calmly and quite clearly and not be agitated in any way, and your trouble will be cleared up, and your mind will be free again. You remember last night you gave us the name of your maid, Jackson?

MRS ELLIS
Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR
Now, take your time. Tell us a little about Grace Jackson.

MRS ELLIS
(to Moore)
Have you found her? Is she at home?
(to Doctor)
Is she all right?

DOCTOR
Never mind that for the moment. Mrs Ellis, can you tell us a little about Grace Jackson.

MRS ELLIS
She is a big girl - at least not really a girl, about my own age, but you know how one is inclined to talk of a servant as a girl. She has a large bust, rather thick ankles, brownish hair, grey eyes, and she would be wearing her cap and apron. Although she might have also slipped into her overalls. She has good teeth and a pleasant expression, though of course if anything has happened to her she would hardly -

QUICK TRANSITION TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

(CONTINUED)
The room has varicolored lights. Grace is gagged and tied up on the couch. Her face is beaten up. Mrs Bolton is taking pictures of her. Mr Bolton is in a corner typing away descriptions of what’s going on in the room. The fat lodger woman is in the doorway holding her cat and laughing.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. HOLDING CELL - DAY

Mrs Ellis looks terrified from her brief daydream.

MRS ELLIS
You don’t think they’ve battered her, do you?

DOCTOR
I most certainly don’t.

(pause)
You see, Mrs Ellis, you have given a very accurate description of yourself.

MRS. ELLIS
Myself?

DOCTOR
Yes. Figure, coloring, and so on. We think it may just be possible that your amnesia has taken the form of mistaken identity and that you are really Grace Jackson, but believe yourself to be a Mrs Ellis.

MOORE
We are now doing our best to trace the relatives of Grace Jackson

MRS ELLIS
(outraged)
Doctor, you have gone a little too far. I bear no resemblance to my maid. If and when you find trace of her, she will be the first to agree with me. Grace has been in my employment for several years. She is a good, hard-working, honest girl and she is not me and I am certainly not her.

DOCTOR
You know a great deal about Grace Jackson

(continues)
MRS ELLIS
Doctor, she has worked for me for seven years. If she is found ill or in any way hurt, I shall hold the police force responsible. Now perhaps you will be good enough to tell me where I can find my child. She, at least, will recognise me.

DOCTOR
You insist that you are thirty-five and that Grace Jackson is approximately the same age?

MRS ELLIS
I believe Grace to be a year younger, but I am not sure.

MOORE
You certainly don’t look more

Mrs Ellis does not pay attention to Moore’s compliment.

DOCTOR
Following upon the telephone conversation I had today, Grace Jackson should be at least fifty-five or fifty-six.

MRS ELLIS
There are probably several people by the name of Grace Jackson employed as maids. If you propose tracing every one of them, I expect it will take you and the police force a considerable time. Now, I must know the whereabouts of my daughter Susan. I demand to know where she is.

DOCTOR
As a matter of fact, Miss Slater was able to very conveniently put us in touch with Susan. We have spoken to her on the telephone and she is only a short distance away in St. John’s Wood.

MRS ELLIS
What in the world is she doing in St. John’s Wood?
DOCTOR
The good news is that she thinks she would remember Grace Jackson if she saw her.

MRS ELLIS
Do you know where she spoke from? I mean was somebody was in charge? Somebody must be looking after her.

DOCTOR
She spoke from 2a Halifax Avenue and I don’t think you will find that she needs anyone to look after her. She sounded very capable.

Mrs Ellis is incredibly confused.

MRS ELLIS
Well, Doctor, I am ready to go to Halifax Avenue at once.

Mrs Ellis looks at Moore

MRS ELLIS
If the authorities here will permit me to do so

DOCTOR
Very well. I am afraid I can’t accompany you, but we have arranged for officer Moore to assist you.

Doctor nods to Moore who opens the door, gesturing Mrs Ellis to come outside with her into the hallway. Mrs Ellis gets up and follows officer Moore. Both exit. Doctor follows Mrs Ellis out.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

DOCTOR
I think you will only be a few minutes at Halifax Avenue, and then we hope things will be straightened out.

Both Moore and Mrs Ellis nod in agreement.

DOCTOR
I’ll be seeing you, Mrs Ellis.
Moore directs Mrs Ellis to walk down the hall and exit through the police department’s entrance. Doctor walks down the opposite end of the hall.

SUSAN

TRANSITION TO:

INT. CAR – DAY

Car drives through a neighborhood of shabby houses with their windows barred, some broken. The car drives up to a small house that has 2a written on the door. Once the vehicle stops, Moore exits. Before closing the door she addresses CHAUFFEUR.

MOORE
We shouldn’t be too long.

Chauffeur nods. Moore gestures Mrs Ellis to get out of the car. Mrs Ellis slides out of the same side Moore exited and Moore shuts the door behind her.

Mrs Ellis and Moore walk up to the front door. Moore rings the bell. A curtain opens and there is KEITH, a toddler boy peaking out from behind a window by the door. The door opens. OLDER SUSAN opens the door. She looks a lot like a younger Mrs Ellis.

OLDER SUSAN
Hello?

MOORE
Are you Mrs Drew?

OLDER SUSAN
Yes.

Keith calls Older Susan from inside.

OLDER SUSAN
(directed at Keith)
I told you to stay in your room.

MOORE
This is the person I have brought along for you to identify.

Older Susan moves out of the doorway and welcomes Moore and Mrs Ellis to enter the house.

(CONTINUED)
OLDER SUSAN
You had better come inside. I’m afraid my day has been a fearful mess. I’ve got no help, and you know how it is.

Moore and Mrs Ellis enter the house.

Mrs Ellis steps over a broken toy on the door mat. She is annoyed by the mess. The three women walk into a living room/dining room area. Remains of breakfast have not been cleared off the small dining room table. Toys, dress fabric, and sewing materials are scattered on the coffee and dining tables.

Older Susan laughs apologetically.

OLDER SUSAN
What with Keith’s toys and my material - I’m a dressmaker in my spare time - and trying to get a decent meal on the table for my husband when he comes home in the evening, well life just isn’t a bed of roses.

MOORE
We don’t want to take up your time.
If you will just say whether this person is Grace Jackson or not.

Moore motions to Mrs Ellis. Older Susan looks at Mrs Ellis for a brief moment. The Black Mrs Ellis briefly flashes in the back of the frame.

OLDER SUSAN
No. I’m sure she is not. I haven’t seen Grace for years, not since I married. I used to look her up in Hampstead occasionally before then, but she had quite a different appearance from this woman. She was stouter and darker...and older too.

MOORE
You are sure you have never seen this lady before?

OLDER SUSAN
No, I can’t say that I have.
MOORE
Very well then. We needn’t detain you any longer.

Moore turns around to leave, but Mrs Ellis stands still.

MRS ELLIS
(to Older Susan)
Excuse me there has been a most unfortunate misunderstanding all around, but I understand you spoke to the doctor at the police station at Hampstead this morning, or someone did from this house, and that you have a party of school children here from High Close, my child amongst them. Can you tell me if she is still here and if anyone from the school is in charge?

By now, Moore is turned back around with her eyes on Mrs Ellis. Keith comes out of his bedroom, dragging a toy behind him. Older Susan realizes his presence immediately.

OLDER SUSAN
Keith, I told you to stay in your room.

Mrs Ellis smiles at the boy. Her tone changes when addressing the child.

MRS ELLIS
What a pretty boy.

Mrs Ellis reaches out her hand. Keith comes over to her and gives it a childlike shake.

OLDER SUSAN
He doesn’t usually take to strangers. He’s very shy. It makes me wild at times when he won’t speak.

MRS ELLIS
I was shy myself as a child. I understand it.

Keith sits down by Mrs Ellis and begins playing with his toy.

MRS ELLIS
We were talking about the party from High Close

(Continued)
OLDER SUSAN
Yes, but the police officer was rather an idiot, I’m afraid, and got everything wrong. My name was Susan Ellis before I married, and I used to go to school at High Close. That’s where the mistake came in. There are no children from the school here.

MRS ELLIS
What a remarkable coincidence. My name is Ellis, and my daughter is called Susan, and an even stranger coincidence is that you seem so familiar.

OLD SUSAN
Oh? Well, the name is common enough. Even the butcher down the road is Ellis.

Moore advanced toward Mrs Ellis, ready to take her by the arm and walk her to the front door.

MRS ELLIS
I’ve always found High Close such a homey sort of school, but I am rather distressed about the changes they are making.

OLD SUSAN
I don’t think they’ve changed it much. Most small children are horrible little beasts, anyway, and it does them good not to see too much of their parents and to be thoroughly well mixed up with every sort of type.

MRS ELLIS
I’m afraid I don’t agree with you on that.

Older Susan smiles politely.

OLDER SUSAN
Of course, I can’t help but be grateful to old Miss Slater. She’s a funny old stick, but with a heart of gold, and she did her best for me. Kept me in during the holidays after my mother was killed in a street accident.
MRS ELLIS
How good of her and what a dreadful thing for you.

Older Susan laughs.

OLDER SUSAN
I was pretty tough, I think. I don’t remember much about it. Keith really takes after her though.

MOORE
It’s time we were getting along. Come now, Mrs Drew has told us all we need to know.

MRS ELLIS
I don’t want to go and you have no right to make me go.

Moore exchanges a glance with Older Susan.

MOORE
I’m sorry. I shall have to get the chauffeur. I wanted him to send another officer with me, but they said it wouldn’t be necessary.

OLDER SUSAN
That’s all right. So many people are bats these days, one extra doesn’t make much difference. But perhaps I had better remove Keith to his room, or she may kidnap him.

Older Susan rises and picks Keith up. Keith protests, but is taken back to his room anyways.

MOORE
(to Mrs Ellis)
Come along now, be reasonable.

MRS ELLIS
No.

Mrs Ellis quickly picks up a fabric scissor from the dining table and points it at Moore.

MRS ELLIS
If you come near me, I shall stab you.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)
Moore turns and rapidly leaves the house, calling for the chauffeur. Mrs Ellis exits into the kitchen.

CUT TO:

ESCAPE

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

In the back of the kitchen are two long French windows that go look out into the backyard. She opens the window and leaps out.

QUICK TRANSITION TO:

EXT. DREW BACKYARD - DAY

Mrs Ellis walks around the house and hides in a bush behind Keith’s room. Moore and the chauffeur are heard from inside, yelling out unintelligible words. They come out the back entrance and look for Mrs Ellis, but do not see her.

After checking the entire area, Moore and the chauffeur start the car and leave the Drew residence.

Mrs Ellis gets up, patting the dirt off her clothes and out of her hair. She walks by Keith’s window. Keith notices her and climbs up to look at her through the window. He smiles. Mrs Ellis smiles back at him.

Older Susan calls from inside the living/dining room.

OLDER SUSAN
Keith, get down from there. Come inside and eat your lunch.

Keith put his hand on the glass, climbs down and exits out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. DREW FRONT YARD - DAY

Mrs Ellis makes it to the front of the house and begins walking northward, towards Hampstead.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF ELLIS HOUSE - DUSK

(CONTINUED)
Mrs Ellis stands across the street, staring at what was once her house. A doppelganger of Mrs Ellis walks out the front door, wearing the same clothes as Mrs Ellis. She calls to someone inside.

Mrs Ellis follows the doppelganger.

Doppelganger arrives at the park, Mrs Ellis is in the distance. Doppelganger inhales the air and dogs bark beside the pond, unleashed. Their owners are men in rain coats, staring vacantly. An old woman sits on a bench throwing food to chirping sparrows.

The sky becomes darker. Doppelganger speeds up the pace, Mrs Ellis continues to follow. They arrive at the Vale of Health. It looks dark, the clouds warn that there will be a storm.

A man passes Doppelganger on a bicycle. Doppelganger picks up her pace. The voices of passing tradesmen and nurses have become louder. Doppelganger reaches a junction of two roads, Mrs Ellis is just far enough behind to not be noticed by the Doppelganger. Doppelganger crosses and a laundry van rapidly swings down towards her. Doppelganger sees the driver’s look of surprise. The breaks screech and the van swerves, but not soon enough.

A nurse pushing a carriage screams. Doppelganger is on the floor in a pool of her own blood.

High-Angle shot of Doppelganger in the street. Doppelganger reaches her hand out to Mrs Ellis, who looks terrified.

Screen blacks out.

THE END.