

MARY: While me and Lydia toiled in the fields all you did was play stupid games at Tallis Hall.

SYBIL: I had to do it.

MARY: We were fine until we went to the pub that night and that officer tried to impress us with some card tricks.

SYBIL: That was Tony.

MARY: He was speechless when you calculated three ways in which he could do the trick a bit easier.

TREVOR: Aunt Sybil did that with Roger and me some years ago. It was incredible.

MARY: She was nothing more than a joker at Tallis hall entertaining them with her little tricks and I wouldn't be surprised if she did a bit more than that for some of those officers, if you know what I mean!

SYBIL: I had a job to do.

MARY: A clerk supposedly. She never did an honest days work in the entire time she was at that place.

SYBIL: I worked hard.

MARY: Doing what?

SYBIL: I can't say because they told us to keep quiet about everything.

MARY: It's like bashing your head against a brick wall trying to get any sense out of Sybil.

TED: Can't all this be sorted out later!

ACT 2 SCENE 6

AUNT SYBIL picks up the cutters deftly without the others noticing and makes for the bomb.

TREVOR: *[Sharply]* Ted's trying to concentrate!

MARY: On what?

TREVOR: This bloody bomb!

MARY: You don't have to take that tone with me!

TED: *(Goes to pick up flask and pour a cup of tea. Takes a sip)*
I'm going to have a go in cutting one of the wires in a few minutes. Since there's only two wires, a black and a red, I've got a 50:50 chance of succeeding. You'd all better go now. *[Pause]* Have you seen the cutters? They were on the ground a minute ago.

SYBIL: *(She is over by the bomb with the cutters in her hand)* I'll cut the red wire!

TED: *[Shouting]* Stop! *[Puts his head in his hands]*

TREVOR: *[Also shouting]* Don't!

MARY: *[Shouting]* Shit!

AUNT SYBIL cuts the wire. She keeps the cutters in her hands

TED: *(He removes his head from his hands very slowly – when he has done so he speaks in an excited tone)* Luck's on our side. Fantastic!

SYBIL: It's not luck.

MARY: Take the cutters off her quickly before she pushes her luck too far!

TED: *(He takes the cutters from Sybil's hand)* I'll take charge of these. There are still two more stages to complete, and it's a lot more difficult than a 50:50 chance.

MARY: *[Puts her hand near her heart]* I nearly had a heart attack!

SYBIL: He was a big fan of Sherlock Holmes.

TREVOR: What?

SYBIL: Helmut Guttenheim. The man who put this bomb together. It had to be the red wire to be cut in the first stage.

TREVOR: But red indicates danger!

SYBIL: They thought the English would think that and fail to cut the red wire, but he was a sporting man. [Pause] That's why Helmut left clues on the bomb.

TREVOR: What clues?

SYBIL: Sherlock Holmes.

MARY: Make sense Sybil!

SYBIL: Helmut was obsessed with Sherlock Holmes. You can tell that by the words Pericolo, Adolph and Hurry Wagner.

TED: But why should it be the red wire?

SYBIL: Pericolo is a reference to Adventure of the Red Circle. That was easy to work out.

TREVOR: Are you sure?

SYBIL: We had to draw up plans to defuse bombs like this all of the time.

TREVOR: How could you remember details of Sherlock Holmes after so many years?

SYBIL: We had to examine every word.

MARY: I thought you just did clerical work for them.

SYBIL: It was our job breaking German codes. I was better at the mathematical codes rather than ones used by Helmut. *[Pause]* It's my fault that Ted's friend died.

TED: Harry?

SYBIL: There wasn't always enough time for one of the men from Tallis Hall to go and help with bomb defusal, so we'd prepared instructions for bomb disposal squads when they came across anything unusual.

TED: Harry had a book of instructions on how to defuse the bomb.

SYBIL: I did a lot of work on that book. We were close to breaking Helmut's code when we made the links with Sherlock Holmes.

TED: What a bastard, that Helmut! Harry had no chance.

SYBIL: Out intelligence suggested that he was a decent man before the war. On his experimental bombs he was giving us a sporting chance to defuse them?

TED: Come off it!

SYBIL: It was war and we did the same thing. We left a riddle on a few of our experimental bombs based on the game of cricket, but I don't think the Germans were successful in breaking the code.

MARY: *[Her voice breaking with emotion]* I'm proud of you, Sybil for what you did for your country. I never realised.

SYBIL: I'm not proud of what I did. I failed to prevent Harry and a number of other fine young men from losing their lives.

MARY: *[Very apologetically]* I never realised the pressure you were under at Tallis Hall.

SYBIL: I asked them a number of times if I could go back working in the fields with you and Lydia, but they wouldn't let me. I cried nearly every night, but I had to go on doing my work for them.

MARY: I'm sorry that I thought it just looked like you were having a party that day I visited you at Tallis Hall.

SYBIL: It was the day before Tony and his friends were going to be flown to France to make contact with the resistance. We wanted to give them all a good send off. *[Pause]* There wasn't much chance of their mission succeeding after the German's had managed to break one of our codes.

MARY: Did they all manage to return safely?

SYBIL: None of them ever returned. Not even my Tony.

MARY: You've never mentioned his name to me!

SYBIL: I kept everything a secret. I had too. At the end of the war I just couldn't take any more.

MARY: But you managed to get over your breakdown.

SYBIL: I wouldn't have been able to do it without your help, Mary.

MARY: That's what sisters are for. To look after each other, in the good times and the bad.

SYBIL: You've been good to me. You had your chance to marry Eddie after the war, but gave that up to look after me.

MARY: I've been a bit hard on you at times.

SYBIL: It's just your way of caring, that's all. I always knew that I could rely on you.

ACT 2 SCENE 7

TED: I want you all to leave immediately. I'm going to cut one of the wires in this second chamber.

TREVOR: Which wire?

TED: There's fifteen. I'm just going to take a guess and cut one of them.

SYBIL: I know which one to cut.

TED: Are you sure? We won't get a second chance.

SYBIL: I'm sure, Ted. Let me cut the wire.

TED: I'll do it, if you tell me which one I need to cut.

SYBIL: If I had done a better job Harry and the others would still be alive.

TED: You tried your best, Sybil.

MARY: The country should be proud of you, Sybil.

SYBIL: I'm going to cut the wire, but I want you all to go first.

TED: I'm not budging, whatever you say. Trevor and Mary should leave us, since its unfinished business for Sybil and me.

SYBIL: *[To Mary and Trevor]* Ted and me will stay. Go now

MARY: I'm not deserting my sister.

TREVOR: I'm staying as well.

TED: We're old Trevor. You're too young to die. If you stay it'll be the end of the family line.

SYBIL: But it won't be the old of the line.

MARY: Sybil!

SYBIL: *[Firmly]* We can't have any more secrets, Mary.

TREVOR: Don't keep me in the dark! I'm not a little boy anymore!

MARY: Susan is pregnant.

TREVOR: But she never said anything to me.

MARY: She loves you, but couldn't go on any longer with the way things were.

TREVOR: About me not getting over Diane?

MARY: Diane was a lovely girl, but she would want you to be happy.

TREVOR: I know she would.

MARY: Susan has already made some plans to stay in Scotland if you don't want her.

TREVOR: *[Strongly]* Of course I want her!

MARY: Then you'll need to put the past behind you first.

TREVOR: It's not been easy!

MARY: I know it hasn't but you can do it.

TREVOR: *[Excited]* A father. *[Pause]* Me.

MARY: You'll make a good father. And a good husband.

TREVOR: *[Confidently]* I'll be able to put the past behind me. Just you wait and see.

TED: Not if this bomb goes off first you won't. *[Pause after which he is desolate]* I'll never be able to see my grandchild with these shitty odds stacked against me! *(TED drops the cutters on the ground and places his hands over his head)*

TREVOR: *(He pulls a photograph of his girlfriend out of his pocket to show AUNT MARY)* I took this photo of Susan when we went to Blackpool last year.

MARY: She's a wonderful girl. Don't lose her, Trevor.

TREVOR: I won't

ACT 2 SCENE 8

Whilst TREVOR and AUNT MARY gaze at the photograph and TED remains with his hands over his head AUNT SYBIL picks up the cutters and moves over to the bomb and cuts a wire.

SYBIL: I've cut the wire.

TREVOR: *[In panic]* Run for it!

TED: Oh Shit!

SYBIL: *[Calmly]* Don't worry. If it were going to go off it would have done it by now.

TREVOR: Was it a lucky guess?

SYBIL: Of course not. When it's out of 15 wires the odds of guessing the right one isn't very good. Adolph's number had to be 13.

TREVOR: Why was that?

SYBIL: Adolph Meyer's number was 13 in the Adventure of the Bruce - Partington Plans.

TED: Was it as easy as that, Sybil?

SYBIL: It wasn't difficult.

TED: We'll cut the wire on the final stage and go to the Bingo Centre for a few drinks. Which wire do we cut now, Sybil?

SYBIL: I'm not sure.

TREVOR: But you've been brilliant so far.

SYBIL: The problem is that Helmut makes it easy in the first two stages, but it's the last stage that must have killed Harry and the others.

TED: You've got a girlfriend and a son on the way, Trevor. You'd better clear off.

SYBIL: It might be a girl.

MARY: Ted's right. It would be better for you to go now, Trevor.

TREVOR: Why don't we all leave. It's crazy staying here any longer!

TED: I can remember that look on Harry's face, just as I deserted him. It's haunted me ever since so I'm staying here whatever happens.

TREVOR: The odds of surviving are slim.

TED: I have to be brave like Harry whatever the odds.

MARY: Concentrate hard Sybil and you will be able to pick to right wire to cut.

SYBIL: I don't think so, Mary.

MARY: Try, Sybil. What does 'Hurry for Wagner mean?'

SYBIL: I can't remember.

TREVOR: Can't we try to get hold of some books about Sherlock Holmes.

TED: There's no time for that.

TREVOR: How long do we have?

TED looks closely at the bomb

TED: The time gauge is cracked but it's no more than four minutes.

TREVOR: My eyesight's better so I'd better double check.

TED points to gauge while TREVOR double-checks it. When he has done this and turns to face the others he has a very worried expression on his face.

MARY: How long do we have Trevor?

TREVOR: Ted's right. We have just under four minutes.

MARY: *[To Sybil]* We once went to see an orchestra, Sybil. Where was it?

SYBIL: Can't remember, but it was Mozart, not Wagner.

TED: There's no time to spare. I'll just have to take potluck and cut one of the wires.

TREVOR: There's too many to choose from.

TED: I might be lucky.

SYBIL: *[She suddenly remembers something]* Convent Garden!

MARY: What, Sybil?

SYBIL: There's a link between Covent Garden and Hurry for Wagner.

MARY: What is it?

SYBIL: I'm trying to remember.

MARY: You can do it, Sybil. I've got every faith in you.

SYBIL: You do?