



THE
DIAMOND
MYSTERIES

A RADIO MYSTERY SERIES

By Alan Robbins

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Myron and Myrna Diamond are a married couple who have just opened a jazz bar called Sax and the City.

Various patrons, including the cagey Detective Shiner, get them reluctantly involved in mysteries that involve twists, puzzles, and the occasional murder.

Episode One: The Zephyr Gambit

Episode Two: The King Thing

Episode Three: The Phantom Empire

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THE DIAMOND MYSTERIES

Episode One: The Zephyr Gambit

SCENE ONE: THE CLUB

SOUND: Jazz Music

MYRON DIAMOND

We were back home again. Not home home; we were never there. Back at Sax and the City, the jazz club we owned. Myrna was sitting pretty at our table when I bounced in and slammed my little gift down with gusto.

MYRNA DIAMOND

What's that?

MYRON

Take a look.

SOUND: Opening envelope

MYRNA

Two tickets. Very nice. Opera? Ballet? I don't have my glasses.

MYRON

Two seats on the Zephyr!

MYRNA

Seats on the whatter?

MYRON

You know, the Zephyr. The new high-speed mag-lev train. It just starting running between New York and Los Angeles. Swoosh. Two hours coast to coast.

MYRNA

We're going to LA? That's nice. Why?

MYRON

Yup. By train. In two hours! How cool is that?

MYRNA

And yet somehow I get the feeling this is not a vacation.

MYRON

It will be once we get to L.A. Sun, sea, surf. Turf.

MYRNA

Okay, this is good. And what about before that?

MYRON

Oh well...it's just a little babysitting. No big deal.

MYRNA

No big deal. I'm pretty sure that's your code for BIG BIG deal. So who exactly is the baby that we're sitting?

MYRON

Dolores DeMann.

MYRNA

Oh no. No no. The one in the news?

MYRON

Yup.

MYRNA

The eyewitness to the murder of Senator Taft?

MYRON

The very same. She has to get to the court in L.A. to identify the killer. Brave lady.

MYRNA

Alive, you mean. She has to get there before the – what do they call him?

MYRON

The Boss.

MYRNA

Get there before The Boss tries to...you know.

MYRON

Well, yeah. Of course. That's a given.

MYRNA

And she's going by train because...

MYRON

She hates to fly. So they arranged for her to take the Zephyr. See what I mean? Two hours, nice train. No big deal.

MYRNA

A picture is forming. The cops are sending her by train because it's faster. She's

going in secret because the Boss will try to kill her before she gets there to testify. And we're going with her to stand between her and a bullet.

MYRON

Well...that's a dramatic way of putting it.

MYRNA

So we're going to be her bodyguards.

MYRON

Babysitters. No one is even going to know she's there. It's all very hush hush.

MYRNA

Why us? What about the cops? The Feds? The Pinkertons? The Boy Scouts?

MYRON

They don't want anyone obvious. Anyone who could be traced or ID'd by the Boss. Look at us...we're just a couple. We could be anybody, an unknown. Shiner said...

MYRNA

Aha! I thought so. I thought we agreed that we were done with Detective Shiner!

MYRON

I still owe him for helping get the bar license. And anyway, like you said...she'll be disguised, the trip is fast, nobody knows who we are. All we have to do is keep an eye on her. I'm telling you, it's no big deal.

MYRNA

Aka...Big. I think I need another drink.

MYRON

Yeah. Dutchie...make mine a triple.

SOUND: Jazz Music fading out

SCENE TWO: THE TRAIN STATION

SOUND: Announcement for boarding the Zephyr to Los Angeles

MYRON

So that's why we were waiting on the station platform looking like tourists without a map. I didn't like it; it made us a target. But Shiner hadn't told us much. To protect us, he said. Just stand there and wait, he said. So we did. When the Attendant asked if we had extra baggage, I laughed.

ATTENDANT

Any extra baggage?

MYRON

(Laugh) I think you mean luggage. I bring lots of extra baggage.

MYRNA

Don't mind him, he's giddy from boredom.

ATTENDANT

Anything? Nothing?

MYRNA

Just our carry-ons. We're fine thanks.

ATTENDANT

Whatever.

MYRNA

Okay, so where is she?

MYRON

Don't know.

MYRNA

What does she look like?

MYRON

Don't know....they disguised her.

MYRNA

What if she doesn't show up?

MYRON

No idea.

MYRNA

Why do I get the feeling we are being played somehow?

DOLORES

Are you two the Diamonds?

MYRNA

He is. I am. I mean...we are.

DOLORES

Very good then. I am (reading) Annie Bodie. We are to meet.

MYRON

That's what Shiner came up with? Anybody? He's not very, you know...

DOLORES

Clever.

MYRON

Well, at least you look nothing like your mug sh...I mean your photo in the media. That's good.

DOLORES

So how do we do this?

MYRON

We're just going to get on the train and go to our separate compartments. Relax. Get out to LA and get you to the hotel. No big deal.

MYRNA

I cringe when you say that.

DOLORES

What is this...cringe? Why cringe?

MYRON

She's just excited about taking the train.

MYRNA

And no one knows you're here? No one?

DOLORES

No one knows.

MYRNA

So why is there a guy over there holding a newspaper?

MYRON

What guy?

MYRNA

That guy near the trashcan. He's kind of looking at us. And he's holding a paper.

MYRON

So maybe he likes the sports section.

MYRNA

Or the obits. No one holds a newspaper anymore. It's a spy movie cliché. Looks suspicious.

ATTENDANT

You gotta get on the train. It's, you know...

MYRNA

Leaving the station?

ATTENDANT

Yeah, whatever.

SOUND: Train Whistle

SCENE THREE: THE TRAIN

SOUND: The soft humming of the train as it moves

MYRON

The train was spiffy, quiet, smooth as water. The mag-lev had no wheels... magnetic levitation and all that. It floated above the rails. Very techy. But our compartment was old school. Retro, like from the great age of train travel... but with wi-fi.

ATTENDANT

Gimme your tickets.

MYRNA

This is actually pretty nice.

MYRON

See I told you.

ATTENDANT

Okay have a nice, you know...

MYRNA

Aren't you supposed to punch them or scan them or something?

ATTENDANT

Yeah? Um...whatever. It's on the house.

SOUND: Door closes with a whoosh

MYRNA

This is just like the Twentieth Century.

MYRON

The century?

MYRNA

No, the luxury train from the 1930's. Like in the movies. Very Hitchcock.

MYRON

Okay, you settle in here. I'll just go and check in on her. She's only two compartments down.

MYRNA

You are going to be careful this time, right? Not like our last little kerfuffle.

MYRON

Look, I told you. It's no big...

MYRNA

Do not finish that phrase.

MYRON

Just relax. Babysitting remember. No one knows anything, so there is nothing to...you know...know. I'll be right back.

SOUND: Door opens and closes and then the phone rings

MYRNA

Hi Jan! Me? No, I'm on the Zephyr. The high speed train. We're going Los Angeles for a couple of days. Myron's with me. (Pause) Don't be silly, it's just a short vacation. No big deal and all that.

SOUND: Knock on the door

MYRNA

Oh, Myron's back. Listen, Jan, let me call you back in a few minutes.

SOUND: Door opens

MYRNA

Who the hell are you?

THUG

Siddown!

MYRNA

You're the guy with the newspaper at the station. I thought you looked creepy.

THUG

Shuttup.

MYRNA

Who are you and why are you pointing that gun at me?

THUG

Sit down and zip it up, lady.

MYRNA

Don't lady me. What do you want? Who are you?

THUG

All's what matters is I know who YOU are.

MYRNA

Congratulations.

THUG

Where is he?

MYRNA

Who? Or is it whom...I could never get that straight.

THUG

Yer babysitter. Diamond.

MYRNA

You mean my husband? He went down to the...

THUG

Nice try, Dolores. And good disguise I gotta admit. You don't look nothing like yerself.

MYRNA

Don't and nothing means I do. But I don't because I'm not her anyway.

THUG

Shut up. You talk too much.

SOUND: Knock on the door

MYRNA
Don't come in. I'm indisposed.

MYRON
Seen it before.

SOUND: Door opens and closes

MYRNA
Not this you haven't.

MYRON
Who the hell are you?

MYRNA
This, my dear, is a thug passing for a creep. Not very sharp either. He seems to think that I am someone named Dolores.

MYRON
Did you explain to him that you are Myrna Diamond and that we are just your basic ordinary married couple taking a trip to California for our anniversary?

MYRNA
I alluded. But I'll try again. I am Myrna Diamond and we are just your basic ordinary married couple taking...

THUG
Both a youse shut up! You both talk too much. You...go and sit there mum. And you sit there with hands I can see.

MYRON
Okay but you're kind of screwing this thing up. The Boss is not going to be very happy with you.

THUG
He will when Dolores here shows up in LA dead as a dice.

MYRON
What makes you think that she's Dolores DeMann?

THUG
She's with you, ain't she? And you is Myron Diamond who is babysitting her.

MYRNA
Again with the babysitting. This is becoming a bad joke.

MYRON

Where did you get all that from? What makes you think I have anything to do with Dolores DeMann or the Boss...or you.

THUG

You keep yappn' and I may just plug you for the quiet.

MYRNA

Myron...

MYRON

Don't worry. What our friend here doesn't know is that bullets don't work on this train. The supermagnets underneath us can lift a 50-ton car two inches off the rail, right?

MYRNA

So?

MYRON

So any bullet would be sucked down into the magnetic field like a spaceship into a black hole.

THUG

Hey, you think I'm stoopid?

MYRON

You? Nah. Just misguided.

SOUND: Knock on the door

THUG

Okay, now youse two sit put. And shut up. And keep yer traps shut too. (Louder) Go away. We're busy in here.

DOLORES

Open up, you moron. The Boss sent me. You got the wrong person.

THUG

Fuck all.

SOUND: Door opening then closing.

DOLORES

Put the gun down fella. The game is over.

MYRNA

Dolores! What are you doing? And why do you have a gun?

DOLORES

I figured you might need help. Hand it over pal.

THUG

Oh yeah, well I heard bullets get sucked down here.

SOUND: Gun click

DOLORES

Let's find out. No? Smart move, now you can sit down and relax.

THUG

You mean you really ain't Dolores? This babe is?

MYRNA

I told you.

MYRON

I don't know what you think you're doing, Dolores, but we're supposed to be protecting you.

DOLORES

No. You are supposed to be protecting Dolores DeMann.

MYRNA

Ah. And that's not you, of course.

DOLORES

No, I work for Shiner. He knew the Boss would try something like this, so he set me up as a decoy.

MYRON

Oh I see...and set us up as....what's the word I'm looking for?

MYRNA

Patsies. Decoys to guard a decoy.

DOLORES

He let it slip to the Boss that you would be on this train protecting her...

MYRNA

Babysitting her.

DOLORES

...so if they sent someone, like our friend here, he would go after you.

MYRNA

And think that I was you. Or...I mean...her. Is Dolores DeMann even on this train?

DOLORES

Press for the Attendant. We need to alert the Conductor.

SOUND: Ding of the call button

MYRNA

I could really hate Shiner.

DOLORES

I sure do. But I gotta say his little plan here worked. It helped us nail this guy before he did any damage.

THUG

The Boss ain't going to be too happy.

MYRNA

But it's a real nice train at least. Isn't it?

SOUND: Knock on the door and then opening and closing

ATTENDANT

You rang for me? What's the deal here?

DOLORES

It worked. We're all set. Just contact Shiner and tell him that we're fine.

ATTENDANT

And then can I take this stupid disguise off?

MYRNA

Oh, so you're Delores DeMann. That's good because I thought you were a lousy train attendant. Nice to meet you. I guess. Sort of.

ATTENDANT

Pleasure's all yours, I'm sure.

DOLORES

No, keep the uniform on. There may be other goons on this train. We're all going to stay right here and you are going about your duties until we get to L.A. in about an hour.

THUG

Is there food on this train? This whole bung-up's made me hungry.

ATTENDANT

Sure, pal. I'll see what I can do.

SCENE FOUR: THE CLUB

SOUND: Jazz Music

MYRON

Back home, so to speak, we took our usual table and our usual drinks....vodka martini for me and Cosmopolitan with a twist for her. We were all cozy and settled before either of us mentioned anything about the Zephyr gambit.

MYRNA

Well that was fun. Kind of, sort of.

MYRON

Wasn't it just?

MYRNA

No, as a matter of fact. I happen to have had a gun pointed right at me.

MYRON

Oh come on....that was no big deal.

MYRNA

There you go again. And what about all that stuff about the supermagnets and bullets being sucked down into the magnetic field? That's sounds all wrong. That's complete baloney, right? Is that true?

MYRON

No, not at all. But I could see you were getting upset, so I was trying to calm things down.

MYRNA

What if he tried anyway?

MYRON

He wouldn't have.

MYRNA

Why not?

MYRON

It's not in the script. Dutchie...can we get another round while I tell Mrs. Diamond about our next vacation.

MYRNA

Oh no. No, no. Shiner has something in the works for us already?

MYRON

Yes he does. But believe me, this time it really is...

TOGETHER

No big deal.

MYRNA

Terrific.

SOUND: Jazz music rising and then fading

THE END

THE DIAMOND MYSTERIES

Episode Three: The King Thing

SCENE ONE: THE BEACH BAR

SOUND: Beach and Bar Sounds

MYRON DIAMOND

Scene, a luscious horseshoe beach surrounded by mountains. The bar at the water's edge. A handsome man in a swim suit is using binoculars to scan the...

MYRNA DIAMOND

Topless women.

MYRON

What?

MYRNA

Don't think I don't know what you're up to.

MYRON

Yes well...looking, searching for a mystery wrapped in a...

MYRNA

Bikini. He's not here. But don't tell Shiner that. This is a nice place to fail. Two Moonlight Passions please.

MYRON

It's like Necker Island. Of the rich, by the richer, and for the superrich. But the kid is here for sure. Shiner thinks so.

VOICE:

Mr. Diamond? Mrs.?

MYRON

Sorry, do we know...

VOICE:

The binoculars were a clue. And the bathing suits. It's considered overdressing here.

MYRNA

That's okay, we're stark naked underneath them.

VOICE

Welcome to Montalbina. I'm Neville Wilker. From the American Bank. I was told that you're looking for a certain Dash Chandler.

MYRON

Yup, that's the kid. You know him?

NEVILLE

Just what I read online. News of the rich and famous and all that. And the Chandlers certainly are.

MYRNA

We'd like to talk to him. Any idea where he is staying?

NEVILLE:

No, that's a mystery I'm afraid. You might want to ask Vaslav Bagnizovic. He knows a quite a bit about what goes on here.

MYRON

A politician?

NEVILLE

Better than that. A lot of money, my friends. Just like your boy. (Announcing) Heir to the Chandler fortune and all that!

MYRNA

Maybe. Maybe not.

NEVILLE

Is that so? I recall that his father died last year.

MYRON

But when Dash turned twenty-one, he suddenly up and left with only a toothbrush and about a billion in funds.

NEVILLE

And that's why he came to Montalbina. The ministry wants to turn it into a playground for the rich. Monaco of the Adriatic and all that. Plenty of opportunities here for someone with cash.

MYRON

Bogdenovich, you say?

NEVILLE

Bagnizovic. Chandler's mother hired you to bring him back to the states?

MYRNA
Him, the money, both, either.

MYRON
Do you know this Bogovich fellow? Can you introduce us? We're staying at the Hilton.

NEVILLE
I'll see what I can do. But one word of warning, my friends. Be quite careful who you trust in Montalbina. This can be a treacherous place. The money you see? It corrupts.

MYRNA
You, for example?

NEVILLE
No, no. I am a banker after all.

MYRON
So was our banker and we trusted him before the meltdown.

SCENE TWO: THE FRONT OF THE HILTON

SOUNDS; General street noise

MYRON
Scene, later on in front of the Hilton, our hero is standing...

MYRNA
Ahem!

MYRON
ONE of our heroes is suddenly shoved by two men forcefully escorting a very tall one to a car at the curb.

MYRNA
It's a limo. It says limo.

MYRON
Right, limo. I'll be damned. That's Dash Chandler!

SOUND: A tussle at the curb, a commotion.

MYRNA

(Announcing) A third man approaches the car and pulls out a gun. Diamond instinctively tackles him. The tall man steps out of the car.

TALL MAN

Do you know what you've done?

MYRON

Acted without thinking. It's a little hobby of mine.

TALL MAN

You just saved my life! You don't even know who I am, do you?

MYRON

Does that matter?

TALL MAN

I'm Dash Chandler. Damn right it matters. To me. Hey, you're American, right? Well so am I. What are the odds of us crossing paths?

MYRON

I lot better than you think, I think.

CHANDLER

Look, come with us. We can talk in the car. I'm afraid you've just stepped into a pretty nice little pile of...

MYRON

Intrigue? Yeah, that's another little hobby of mine.

SOUND: Car door closes and engine revs

SCENE THREE: CAR INTERIOR

MYRON

Plush inside with dark windows. Me, Chandler, and a uniform in the back. In the front, the unconscious gunman and a driver who looked like the guy who lost the heavyweight match.

MYRON

So you're Dash Chandler.

CHANDLER

Short for Dashiell. My mom was a fan of detective fiction. This is Colonel Djukanovic of the national police. And the driver is his attaché, Droska.

MYRON

I thought these guys were kidnapping you.

CHANDLER

Protecting me. From people like our silent friend there.

MYRON

Who is...

COLONEL

We shall make efforts to find this out.

CHANDLER

And you are?

MYRON

Oh, sorry. Myron Diamond. Just a tourist here on vacation. No special reason. No secret agenda.

CHANDLER

That's too bad, Mr. Diamond. Without secrets you won't last very long in modern Montalbina.

COLONEL

Droska, park there and give us some privacy.

SOUND: Mechanical window closing

CHANDLER

It's a shame you had to get involved in this today, Mr. Diamond.

MYRON

What have I gotten myself into exactly?

COLONEL

A fight for the soul of the country.

MYRON

Does actually it have one? I heard it was a more a casino with a flag.

CHANDLER

It has been called the most beautiful merging of land and sea. It could be a paradise. But since it gained independence, the forces of evil have moved in. As they always do.

SOUND: A thud

CHANDLER

Everything is for sale here. You can become a citizen for a million euros. Prime Minister for ten.

MYRON

It all looks pretty swank to me.

CHANDLER

I'm talking about the soul, Mr. Diamond, not the bling.

SOUND: Another loud thud.

COLONEL

Do not mind Droska. He is doing his job. Sometimes he must squash a roach.

CHANDLER

The Colonel means that we have to find out who that man works for.

MYRON

Okay, but why bring *me* along?

CHANDLER

We couldn't leave you there once you stepped in. There may have been more of them around who would have followed you to find me.

SOUND: Mechanical window opening

COLONEL

And?

DROSKA

Bagnizovic.

COLONEL

The biggest roach of them all!

MYRON

Why would this Bagnizovic be trying to have you killed?

COLONEL

Because we are going to cure this place of all its corruption. We are going to stomp the roaches.

CHANDLER

It's too risky at the Hilton, Mr. Diamond. You'll have to change hotels. And please, let us treat you. It's the least we can do to thank you for your trouble.

MYRON
No trouble at all. It's been...educational.

SCENE FOUR: HOTEL LOBBY

MYRON
Scene, a new hotel, much too elegant and ritzy for the Diamonds...

MYRNA
Hey, speak for yourself.

MYRON
For "a" Diamond.

MYRNA
Where were you? I waited all afternoon. Neville got me a meeting with Bagnizovic.
The taxi is on its way.

MYRON
I was with Dash Chandler, believe it or not.

MYRNA
You found him? Did you tell him his mom wants him back?

MYRON
Didn't get the chance. Things got...complicated. Someone tried to kill him and I
think this Colonel Somethng-or-other killed the killer.

MYRNA
Oh boy. So I guess I should forget about Bagnizovic.

MYRON
No, meet with him anyway. Let's find out what he wants with Chandler. But be
careful. I think there is more going on here than we know.

MYRNA
(Announcing) Suddenly the bodyguard Droska appears like a rhino leading the way
for the Colonel as he approaches.

COLONEL
Mrs. Diamond. I am Colonel Djukanovic, an acquaintance of your husband. I do not
think that your meeting with The Roach this afternoon is advisable.

MYRNA
Yes, my husband mentioned you. You work with Dash Chandler.

COLONEL

If I may ask, what is your true interest in the American?

MYRNA

He's very tall isn't he?

COLONEL

This Bagnizovic is a crook and a liar. He is not trustable. He will sell you to the lowest bidder.

MYRNA

Thank you for your concern. Now if you will excuse me, my taxi is here.

COLONEL

I warn you, both of you. Tie yourself too tightly to a man like Bagnizovic and you will hang when he does.

MYRNA

You mean once you cure all the corruption here. How are you going to do that exactly? By taking the kid's money?

COLONEL

On the contrary. We are – how do you like to say? – grooming him.

MYRNA

To be what?

COLONEL

To be a king.

MYRON

How's that again?

COLONEL

Watch your steps, both of you. You don't want to be on the wrong side of the future.

SCENE FIVE: THE OFFICES

MYRON

Scene, the palatial Old World offices of a European multinational. Vaslav Bagnizovic, a huge bear of a man...oops it's you.

MYRNA

Oh right. The palatial offices, etc. Vaslav Bagnizovic, a huge bear of a man with a bald head poking out of an expensive suit, comes from behind his Rococo desk. He bows and kisses her hand.

BAGNIZOVIC

Ah...and here we have Mrs. Myrna Diamond. Our mutual friend Neville Wilker speaks well of you.

MYRNA

A swell fellow isn't he? Thanks for meeting me.

BAGNIZOVIC

I was given to understand that you are a detective. How romantic.

MYRNA

More like an interested party.

BAGNIZOVIC

He said that you are looking for Dash Chandler, the rich American lad.

MYRNA

We are.

BAGNIZOVIC

A very hard man to get in touch with. Guards his privacy like a *pederu*.

MYRNA

A pederwho?

BAGNIZOVIC

One with secrets to keep. May I ask the nature of your interest in finding him.

MYRNA

A family thing. They just want to know if he's okay. He's not a big emailer. I've heard that you're a friend of his.

BAGNIZOVIC

Perhaps not so close as a friend. An observer let us say.

MYRNA

Okay, let's say that. What are you observing exactly?

BAGNIZOVIC

Your young Mr. Chandler has fallen in with scoundrels, my dear. Those who wish to destroy democracy here and create a...

MYRNA

Monarchy with Chandler as the king.

BAGNIZOVIC

No. That is a ruse I am afraid. It is rule by the rich they want. I believe it is called a plutocracy?

MYRNA

That could benefit you. You're rich.

BAGNIZOVIC

I love my country. I am a patriot. I do not want it to become a – how do you say – failed state for only the wealthy. Believe me, Mrs. Diamond, they are setting up this man Chandler only to eliminate him.

MYRNA

Well, perhaps we can persuade him to leave instead.

BAGNIZOVIC

I hope you can, my dear. For the sake of our people. But Mrs. Myrna Diamond, please be advised about those you comport with here in Montalbina. The wrong friends can get you killed.

MYRNA

I keep hearing that. But somehow it wasn't on any of those slick brochures.

SCENE SIX: THE HOTEL ROOM

MYRON

Scene, back in their new digs at the swank hotel, the Diamonds sit on a balcony and try to sort this whole king thing out.

MYRNA

I don't think Bagnizovic tried to kill Chandler. I think he was after the colonel.

MYRON

Colonel Djukanovic, very unpleasant fellow.

MYRNA

He says he wants to return to a monarchy with Chandler as king. King Dash the First. But he does have the army behind him.

MYRON

They talk about getting rid of the corruption here. But they skipped over the part about trashing the democracy. But why Dash Chandler? Just because he's rich?

MYRNA

Young, I think. And rich. And malleable. And eager.

MYRON

And what about your friend Bagnizovic? What does he want?

MYRNA

No idea but he says he's a patriot. I believe him.

SOUND: Knock at the door

MYRNA

There's a note under the door. Oh look, how nice. An invitation to the official coronation.

MYRON

Okay, so all we've got to do is figure out a way to get Chandler out of this and back home. Let them work out their own politics. I mean that's what they're paying us for.

MYRNA

And stop a military takeover of Montalbina while we're at it. Wow. Remind me to pack grenades next time we decide to take a trip.

SCENE SEVEN: THE BAR

SOUND: Bar and beach backgrounds

MYRON

Scene, at the bar by the beach, the jet set suns and plays while having no idea about the turmoil in the works for their rich little paradise.

NEVILLE

Ah, the Diamonds! Good to see you again! How are you enjoying your little...jaunt.

MYRNA

It's more jaunt than I need for one week.

NEVILLE

Did you ever find Dash Chandler?

MYRON

Oh yeah. We found him all right. Found a whole cast of characters.

NEVILLE

I warned you. And have you convinced the young fellow to return home?

MYRA

Not quite. He's gotten himself a little tangled up here.

NEVILLE

Oh yes. Money ties some tight knots in Montalbina.

MYRON

You know Colonel Djukanovic? He wants to set up a monarchy with Chandler as the king.

NEVILLE

I just got an invitation to the ceremony. But I don't think we should celebrate. The colonel more likely trying to grab control.

MYRON

How?

NEVILLE

Kill the king, announce chaos, take over the government, sell it to the highest bidder. That's the way I would play it.

MYRNA

Bagnizovic seems to be fighting it. What do you make of him?

NEVILLE

He's a big bear but I think he really loves Montalbina. He's been involved here for quite a while.

MYRON

You know this place pretty well. Any ideas how to get Chandler out of this mess and back home? Short of...

MYRNA

Kidnapping him.

NEVILLE

There may be a way. Kings can always be...deposed.

MYRNA

You mean like...beheaded?

NEVILLE

I was thinking more...persuaded.

SCENE EIGHT: THE ROYAL PALACE

MYRON

Scene, the Royal Palace just before the Coronation. The Diamonds get an audience with the soon-to-be king.

CHANDLER

Ah! My pal Myron Diamond. And your wife, I presume. No need to curtsy and all that. I intend to be a pretty cool monarch.

MYRON

You can't do this, Dash. It's a terrible idea. The colonel is not looking out for Montalbina. Just for himself.

CHANDLER

I know that, I'm no fool. But I will be king and have the power to control him.

MYRNA

Even seen King Lear?

CHANDLER

You know what a rich kid in a rich family in America is? Nothing. Just another heir. But here, I can actually make a difference.

MYRON

The Colonel is just using you. He'll get rid of you the moment he thinks he can take over control the country.

MYRNA

Come home with us. Now. Before this all gets out of hand.

SOUND: Public event music

CHANDLER

Even if I could, the people are waiting for this moment. It means so much to them. I can't just abandon them.

MYRNA

The "people" are just a bunch of bored rich kids.

MYRON

All right, listen carefully. We might have another way out.

SCENE NINE: SAX AND THE CITY JAZZ BAR

SOUND: Jazz Music

MYRNA

Back at our little homey tavern, the drinks tasted tastier than ever.

MYRON

I can't believe we actually pulled that off.

MYRNA

It was a very nice Coronation. Loved the flowers. And a nice reign too. The world's shortest.

MYRON

Yes, Wilker's plan worked. He abdicated the throne after about an hour.

SOUND: Clinking glasses

MYRNA

So the people got their coronation, the colonel got his king, and Bagnizovic stepped right into the power vacuum once he abdicated and set up a new government.

MYRON

And we got Chandler back to his family where he can pretend to be anything he wants. Win, win, winwin.

MYRNA

Okay, where are going next? How about a nice revolution somewhere in Asia. America?

MYRON

Shiner does have something else lined up but I think it is closer to home.

MYRNA

Here's to King Dash the Brief!

MYRON

May all rulers be as...considerate.

SOUND: Clinking glasses and fading jazz music

THE END

THE DIAMOND MYSTERIES

Episode Three: The Phantom Empire

SCENE ONE: THE STUDIO

SOUND: Voice mimicking a mic test

MYRON DIAMOND

(Announcer's Voice) Hello ladies and gentlemen and welcome back to our Radio Ranch podcast. This week's adventure is called The Phantom Empire...

MYRNA DIAMOND

(Mocking) The Phantom Empire!

MYRON

What are you doing?

MYRNA

Echoing. The Phantom Empire! Look, I know this is just a rehearsal but have you actually read this script? It is completely inane!

MYRON

Oh yeah. Nutsy-fagen. Batso.

MYRNA

So why are we doing it?

MYRON

We promised Shiner, for his mom. Besides, it's famous. It was a series from 1935. The world's first singing-cowboy science-fiction adventure.

MYRNA

See that's the problem right there.

MYRON

Come on, it's cowpokes and aliens. And it starred Gene Autry.

MYRNA

The singing cowboy.

MYRON

Yeah. He starred as "Gene Autry" the proprietor of the Radio Ranch. A combination working cattle ranch and full broadcasting studio somewhere out West.

MYRNA

And they alternate between singing for a radio show and poking cows.

MYRON

No. Singing for the radio show and fighting alien invaders.

MYRNA

You see what I'm saying?

MYRON

Supposedly one of the writers came up with the concept while under nitrous oxide at his dentist's office.

MYRNA

Oh, well now it makes perfect sense.

MYRON

(Announcer's Voice) At the recording studio at Radio Ranch...

MYRNA

What about The Diamond Mystery that our fans are waiting for?

MYRON

This IS one. Just a bit of a throwback. Think of it as our foray into sci-fi. Back to the future and all that. (Announcing) The Radio Ranch daily podcast has just ended when three men in white suits barge in. Ruhruhruh....

MYRNA

What is that supposed to be?

MYRON

The script says "the sound of barging men." We'll do the effects later. What can we do fer ya, fellas? Sign some photos?

MYRNA

They're here to take us to the asylum for agreeing to do this.

PROFESSOR

I am Professor Beetson. Ve are here for ze radium.

MYRON

(Long Pause) Myrna?

MYRNA

Oh...uh...sorry. You mean that you're here for the radio, of course.

PROFESSOR

Ze radium! Zere are vast deposits in the ground below zis very ranch. Deep undergount in caverns and caves.

MYRNA

Caverns and caves and cuckoos and...

MYRON

(Interrupting) Radium? Ain't that some dangerous stuff there, professor?

MYRNA

Golly gee whiz, fellas.

MYRON

(Aside to Myrna) Do you mind? You'll have to excuse Smiley here, professor. She's kind of ad libbing.

MYRNA

Who's Smiley?

MYRON

You are. You're my sidekick Smiley. And stop riffing. Stay with the script.

MYRNA

Okaydie, Gene. Whatever'n you say. (Pronounced) Yee. Ha.

SCENE TWO: AT THE RANCH

SOUND: A voice mimicking neighing and hoofing

MYRON

(Announcer's Voice) Out on the ranch, Gene and the boys are using horses to pull a massive boulder away from a cave entrance.

MYRNA

Okay boys, let's git that boulder outta the way and see where this leads.

MYRON

If the professor is right, that cave is the entrance to a vast underground network.

BEETSON

Yes! Imagine. All ze radium ve might need for power for tousandts of years.

MYRNA

Tousandts? That's a lot right?

MYRON

All right, it's open. We're going in. Get those torches ready, Smiley. It's dark down there.

SOUND: Voice mimicking commotion and echoes

MYRON

Why these tunnels seem to go on forever, professor.

BEETSON

Und zey ver not made by the hands of men.

MYRON

What does that mean?

MYRNA

Look out, there's a cliff there. And it's a LONG way down to the bottom.

BEETSON

Ve keep going! Ve must!

MYRNA

Look Gene! Look over there.

MYRON

Holy cowpoke! It's an entire city down here, right beneath Radio Ranch.

MYRNA

A complete world with towering buildings and televisors and elevator tubes.
(Aside) Like, who knew?

MYRON

And ray guns.

MYRNA

What?

MYRON

You forgot the ray guns.

MYRNA

Oh, my bad. There are ray guns there too Gene! Ray guns! Look out!

SOUND: Voice mimicking a ray gun

MYRNA

What the hell is that?

MYRON

The ray gun. Let's get out of here! Pronto!

SOUND: Voice mimicking ray gun and shouts

MYRNA

That was close, Gene! We barely made it out...(quietly) with our dignity intact, that is.

MYRON

All right Professor Beetson, you'd better level with us. You knew what was down there. Who are those people? Who built that city?

MYRNA

Don't shoot him, Gene. Beetson's just a son of beet!

BEETSON

Huh?

MYRON

Talk you sidewinder!

BEETSON

All right, zen. It is an underground verlt known as...Murania!

MYRNA

Did they happen to come out of Uranus...

MYRON

(Clearing his throat to interrupt) You were saying, professor...

BEETSON

Zey are se lost tribe of Mu...

MYRNA

Woo.

BEETSON

Zey vent untergront in the last glacial period von hundret tousandt years ago and built that grand city.

MYRON

So then you're trying to steal the radium from them. Is that it?

BEETSON

Ve must! Zey can build radium bombs to destroy all life on earth! You must help us!

MYRON

A worthy cause, professor. But we have to get back to the studio for our podcast.

MYRNA

Oh, naturally. The podcast!

MYRON

Saving the ole' earth will jess have to wait a spell.

SCENE THREE: RECORDING STUDIO

SOUND: Voiced saying "Recoding studio, general studio noises, etc."

MYRON

(Singing) I'm an old cowhand. From the Rio Grande (scatting the rest). I don't know the words yet. We can fill all that in later. Anyway, we perform a song. And then...Myrna?

MYRNA

Gene, what is that sound I hear?

SOUND: Voice mimicking thundering

MYRON

Why it sounds like thundering hoofbeats.

BEETSON

Do you hear zat? Zat is de sound off our vorst fears! It is the secret army of Murania! Zey are called the Sunder Riderz.

MYRNA

The wha?

MYRON

He means the Thunder Riders. Right, professor?

MYRNA

(Mock shock) Oh no, not the Thunder Riders.

MYRON

The Thunder Riders (hums Wagner).

BEETSON

Zey must hef come beck through the cave opening. Ve should never haf opened ze door to them. Ve are doomed! Doomed!

MYRON

Not so fast professor. We have some pretty keen shots here on the old ranch.

MYRNA

Boys, get ready for a shootout. We got some intruders. (Quietly) They happen to be underground aliens from Uranus but don't worry about that.

MYRON

Let's round 'em up at the old corral.

SCENE FOUR: THE OLD CORRAL

SOUND: Voice mimicking commotion and cattle drive calls

MYRON

You know, sounds at the old corral.

MYRNA

That was pretty easy, Gene. We jess rounded 'em up like stray cattle.

BEETSON

Zey are not used to breezing our air. It has made zem *veek*.

MYRNA

Oh they're *veek* are they?

MYRON

Wait, there are others coming from the cave.

MYRNA

Yes, it seems to be...why it is...an army of metal men.

MYRON

And there is a woman leading them.

MYRNA

It's like a bad dating app, Gene!

BEETSON

Off curse! Zis is the leader of Murania with her army off robots!

MYRNA

Who is she? Love the catsuit!

MYRON

What catsuit? That's not in the script.

MYRNA

Yep, jess made it up right here on the spot, Genie boy.

MYRON

Professor?

BEETSON

Oh! Be aware. Zis is the icy, blonde, evil...Queen Tika!

MYRNA

And here I thought it was Celine Dion.

SOUND: Voice mimicking clanking metal

TIKA

You! You surface men shall not prevail in your war against us.

MYRON

Now hold on Queenie. We're just defendin' ourselves here.

TIKA

Defending! It is you who have invaded our peaceful Murania to steal our sacred radium.

BEETSON

Lies! Ze radium belongs to us!

TIKA

For a thousand years we have drawn from its power to light our world. You care only to take it and profit from it!

MYRON

Now hold on everyone. Let's all just whittle down a spell.

MYRNA

Whittle down a spell? Who wrote this crap?

MYRON

Yes, um, moving on...

TIKA

My army of metal men will easily destroy your puny weapons. Lay them down and live!

BEETSON

Ve must fight for ze radium!

MYRON

I jess don't know. Is this whole thing worth a showdown?

MYRNA

Look out Gene!

SOUND: Voice doing a bad imitation of a ray gun

SCENE FIVE: THE CORRAL

SOUND: Voice making the sounds of battle and clanking metal

MYRON

This ain't getting' us nowheres. We cain't beat them and they sure as shootin' cain't beat us.

MYRNA

A truce then.

MYRON

A parley.

BEETSON

Tika cannot be trusted. You cannot make ze deal viss her.

MYRON

I ain't so sure about you neither, professor. Smiley, get back the studio and send out a message that we wanna parley.

MYRNA

What? Because the Uranians always listen to our podcast?

MYRON

Muranians. And yes, EVERYONE listens. It's very very popular.

MYRNA

Why me?

MYRON

Because you're Smiley and is says here that "Smiley goes back to the studio to send the message..." Tell Queen Tika to meet us there but without her metal army.

MYRNA

Okay, great. Here I go back to the studio to set up a truce...

MYRON

Good luck Smiley!

MYRNA

Still going...on my way...see you there in the next scene...I mean soon.

SCENE SIX: THE RECORDING STUDIO

SOUND: Voice mimicking studio sounds and saying "muttering, mumbling, shouting."

MYRON

Let's all jess settle down and figure this thing out.

BEETSON

Ve cannot trust zees savages.

TIKA

Savage? You are the savage, you savage.

MYRNA

Good comeback!

MYRON

Now hold on. What about if we figger out a way to share all this mess o' plutonium.

ALL

Radium!

MYRON

Right, sorry. There must be enough of the stuff for everyone.

TIKA

We cannot trust you as long as you lord over us. You might invade at any moment! This is what you humans have always done. You and your vile and violent history.

MYRON

Well now, you got a point there Queenie. We haven't been too keen on keepin' our word, that's fer sure.

MYRNA

What would it take to give you some peace a mind?

TIKA

You must leave this area and never return.

MYRON

You mean abandon the ranch? Never!

BEETSON

But yes, zis could verk! It is a small prize to pay.

MYRNA

You heard the man...it is a small prized toupee.

MYRON

Now hold on a day's wages.

MYRNA

You hold on, Gene. Don't go rustling that dogie so fast – whatever the hell that means – mebbe there is a way.

MYRON

Smiley, you can't go along with this.

MYRNA

I'll go along with anything that ends the pain of this script.

MYRON

Okay Smiley, what d'ya got in mind?

MYRNA

The Queen and her army go back to Uranus...

TIKA

Murania!

MYRNA

...and set up things so the professor gets his share of the radium. Then we move Radio Ranch to somewhere with a nice view of the ocean.

MYRON

Script!

MYRNA

...we move Radio Ranch to another location. This is a big country and thar's plenty a land out here for everyone. Like the professor said. A...small...prized...toupee.

TIKA

This we find acceptable.

BEETSON

Yes, yes. Zis ve can do.

MYRON

Okay then. It's all settled. Boys, let's pack her in and get going. We gotta move fast so we can do the next podcast without missin' a beat.

TIKA

And we will be listening to you. Very carefully!

MYRNA

And scene and closing song and we're outta here! Oh brother.

SOUND: Actual song I'm An Old Cowhand playing and fading

THE END