

MIND THE GAP

by

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Inspired by a true story.

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CHARACTERS

British accents. 3 women, 2 men.

MARY CULLEN 60s. Widow.

KATHERINE 40s. Mary's daughter.

JIMMY Katherine's husband. A chef.

LIONEL DANKWORTH Operations Director, London Underground. Can
also perform the role of the TUBE WORKER.

MRS. BRIMBLE Lionel Dankworth's receptionist.

TUBE WORKER

NOTE: The three Sound Cues of train sounds and station
announcements are available.

SCENE ONE: INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND STATION - DAY

EMBANKMENT is a London Underground station in the City of Westminster.

BLACK. LIGHTS FLICKER in the darkness, the light from an incoming train, accompanied by:

SOUND CUE 1: THE TRAIN PULLS INTO THE STATION. DOORS OPEN. COMMOTION OF PASSENGERS BOARDING AND DISEMBARKING.

Over this, AN ANNOUNCEMENT, on the P.A.:

RECORDED ANNOUNCEMENT/MAN

"Mind the gap... Mind the gap... Stand clear of the doors, please."

DOORS CLOSE. TRAIN PULLS OUT OF THE STATION. SOUND FADES. END OF SOUND CUE 1.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE TWO: INT. CULLEN FLAT - KITCHEN - LATER

LIGHTS UP TO DIM. The door unlocks. MARY enters and turns up the lights.

SHE moves slowly, hangs her coat, places her keys away. Plops down into a chair. Looks at the several photos adorning the adjacent counter top. Talks to one in particular, a framed photo of her and her husband.

MARY

I was at the station today. Yes, again, yes, don't you complain. You don't mind me visiting you at work now, do you?

SHE picks up the photo.

MARY (CONT'D)

Because I miss you.

Kisses the photo.

MARY (CONT'D)

(assertive)

And I'll not be taking no for an answer anyway.

SOUND: DOOR KNOCK.

KATHERINE (OFFSTAGE)

Mum! It's me.

MARY places the photo back and opens the door. In enters KATHERINE, hurried, carrying grocery bags. SHE sets them down on the table and unpacks, putting the groceries away, as:

KATHERINE

They didn't have the eggs on sale, I got them anyway. Didja eat yet?

MARY

I was getting around to it. I'm completely knackered.

KATHERINE

So am I. Haven't had a chance to catch my breath all day. D'you want some eggs? Chips? I'll make eggs and chips.

MARY

Yeah, fine.

SHE goes about making supper:

KATHERINE

It's not enough I'm barely keeping up my house, you're another I have to worry about.

MARY

You needn't worry about me.

KATHERINE

It's eight o'clock and you haven't eaten supper yet.

(pause)

So, yeah. I worry about you. Jimmy says--

MARY

--Oh, Jimmy says! Jimmy says!

KATHERINE

He worries about you too, you know.

MARY

He's a sweetheart, he is, your husband. But there's no need for either of you to worry about me. Is he still offering to make Christmas dinner again this year?

KATHERINE

Don't change the subject... I saw Dr. Robbie.

MARY

Who's changing the subject now?

KATHERINE

He says you haven't yet called?

MARY

I don't need to see a therapist.

KATHERINE

Just give him a call. It'll help.

MARY

I don't need help.

KATHERINE

You were at the station again, weren't you?

MARY

So what?

KATHERINE

So that's why you need help, mum. You can't go to [the station every day...]

MARY

(over KATHERINE)

It's helping me grieve--

KATHERINE

--Five years now. Every day for five years, mum...

MARY

It's different for everyone. Everyone needs a different amount of time, they say.

KATHERINE

Yeah, they say that, but if they had you for their mother they'd change their tune right quick.

MARY

It's just special, listening to daddy's voice since he passed.

KATHERINE

But daddy isn't there.

MARY

The memory of him is.

KATHERINE

That's not a memory, mum.

MARY

It's a small bit of him what I have left to connect with. C'mon now. Just let me grieve the way I want. Give me that much.

KATHERINE

I've been giving you that much, mum. For five years. Help me set the table.

THEY go about it as:

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE THREE: INT. EMBANKMENT STATION - NEXT DAY

MARY approaches the bench. Sits.
After a few moments:

LIGHTS FLICKER from an incoming train, accompanied by:

SOUND CUE 2: THE TRAIN PULLS INTO THE STATION. DOORS OPEN. COMMOTION OF PASSENGERS BOARDING AND DISEMBARKING.

A NEW MODERN RECORDED ANNOUNCEMENT PLAYS.

DOORS CLOSE. TRAIN PULLS OUT OF THE STATION. END OF SOUND CUE 2.

MARY appears almost panicky. Doesn't know what to do. As she rises she spies a TUBE WORKER and approaches him, upset.

MARY

Sir? Sir?

TUBE WORKER

Yes, madam?

MARY

Where did it go?

TUBE WORKER

What happened, ma'am? Did you lose something? You can contact the Underground's Lost and Found--

MARY

--The voice.

TUBE WORKER

The voice, ma'am?

It's a bit painful for MARY,
flustered, to articulate:

MARY

The voice! You know, the voice! The man saying, "mind the gap." The voice!

TUBE WORKER

Oh, the announcements. They're still there, madam. The system's been all updated now. Digital. We've just got it today, the Northern Line. It's about time. They always get to us last. But now we're all updated. Good news, eh?

MARY's lost in thought.

TUBE WORKER (CONT'D)

Good news, then, eh?

MARY

That voice... was my husband. I lost him seven years ago.

TUBE WORKER

Oh? Uh... sorry.

MARY

Sometimes, you know, I sit on the platform here just so I can listen to him.

(pause)

I can be with my Lawrence for a bit longer that way.

TUBE WORKER

(unsure what to say)

Yeah, eh?

MARY

Who can I talk to about this?

TUBE WORKER

I suppose, a vicar?

MARY

I mean who's in charge of this new system? Who can I talk to?

TUBE WORKER

Oh, let's see. That'd be Mr. Lionel Dankworth. He's Operations Director. Try him?

MARY
(nodding, distant)

Yeah...

TUBE WORKER
Though at this point, all the work's completed. I don't see
what could be done...
(then, encouraging)
Well, cheers!

MARY
(nodding, distant)
Uh...

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE FOUR: INT. CULLEN FLAT - KITCHEN - LATER

MARY and KATHERINE prepare dinner.
KATHERINE peers into a cupboard.

KATHERINE
You moved the tomato purée?

MARY
No, it's there.

KATHERINE
Where? I don't see it.

MARY
Well I didn't move it.

KATHERINE
You must've.

MARY
What if I did? It's my kitchen.

KATHERINE
Mum, if I have to put up with Jimmy insisting everything in
the kitchen having its proper place, then you have to put up
with me insisting you keep things in their proper place...
Bad enough I have to map down where everything is in two
kitchens, now I need to guess where you might've moved things
to... this kitchen's like living in a game show. Ah! There it
is.

MARY
In the cupboard. I told you.

KATHERINE

Yeah, in the cupboard all the way over into the cupboard next to it. Did you speak to Dr. Robbie?

MARY

Let it go, will you? I'm not going to the station anymore, anyway.

This stops KATHERINE in her tracks.

KATHERINE

Oh? Well... good.

MARY

They stopped playing daddy's announcement today.

KATHERINE

Did they?

MARY

Something about they updated the Northern Line.

KATHERINE

Oh? Fancy that, on the same day you and the Northern Line both making progress.

MARY

Doesn't feel like progress to me.

KATHERINE

It's all for the best, mum.

MARY

(terse)

No, it's not.

KATHERINE

Honestly, mum, me and Jimmy felt it was keeping you--

MARY

--It was keeping me from falling completely apart. Understand? The love of my life. Suddenly, he's gone. It was the one little piece I still had of him, and now even that's gone.

KATHERINE knows not to say anything. Finally:

KATHERINE

Jimmy says we'll come over Christmas Eve. He'll make supper. He can make a turkey for us on Christmas Day too. You like that, don't you, mum?

MARY

I'm going to the offices of London Underground tomorrow.

KATHERINE

(a la "you must be
kidding me")

Oh, what for, mum?

MARY

I want to speak to the Operations Director.

KATHERINE

Oh. Work may do you good. They're hiring for the holidays, then?

MARY

I'm not looking for a job.

KATHERINE

Yeah, I thought it sounded peculiar.

MARY

I want to have them restore daddy's announcement.

KATHERINE

Oh, dear Christ, mum. Let it go.

MARY

No. I wish to register my complaint and request they restore daddy's announcement.

KATHERINE

As if you're owed anything! Mum--

MARY

As a citizen -- and on top of that, a paying customer -- I wish to register my complaint and request they restore the announcement. Just because what they've done with it is new doesn't mean it's better. This... **robot** they have making the announcement now... It lacks the human touch.

KATHERINE

They're going to think you're the one who's touched, mum. Call Dr. Robbie.

MARY

It's a perfectly reasonable request.

KATHERINE

Can you just call the doctor first? Talk to him before you do anything. Please.

MARY

Why? Don't you trust me? You think I've gone off my rocker?

KATHERINE

Do you think you have?

MARY

You act as if I'm going to become a... a lunatic while I'm there. Take the Director hostage until they meet my demands or some such thing.

KATHERINE stares at her.

MARY (CONT'D)

Fine. I'll call your friend.

KATHERINE

I'll feel better if you do.

MARY

(terse)

I just said I'd call... come over early, Christmas Eve. I don't want to get famished waiting to eat on account of a finicky chef fretting over a potato.

SCENE FIVE: INT. THE LONDON UNDERGROUND OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS DIRECTOR - NEXT DAY

MARY, seated outside the office, waiting. DANKWORTH busy at his desk. MRS. BRIMBLE crosses the stage. There's no acknowledgment between her and MARY. A few moments, MRS. BRIMBLE crosses back again. No interaction. A moment, then MRS. BRIMBLE returns, approaches MARY.

MRS. BRIMBLE

Excuse me. Is anyone helping you?

MARY

I'm Mrs. Mary Cullen. I have an appointment to see Mr. Dankworth.

MRS. BRIMBLE

I'll see if--

MARY

--It was for two o'clock. It's now ten past two.

MRS. BRIMBLE

I expect he'll--

MARY rises, heads to the office door.

MARY

--I see why your trains run late. The problem apparently runs rampant from the top down.

Stops at the office doorway and turns.

MARY (CONT'D)

Well? Are you going to announce me?

MRS. BRIMBLE

(brightens up)

I can't think of anything that would give me more pleasure.

SHE moves to the door:

MRS. BRIMBLE (CONT'D)

Oh, Mr. Dankworth? You're two o'clock appointment is here.

DANKWORTH checks the time.

DANKWORTH

She's late.

MARY enters the office.

MARY

I'm no such thing. I was told you'd see me at two. I've been waiting patiently since.

DANKWORTH

Excuse me, Mrs., uh...?

MRS. BRIMBLE

Cullen. Mrs. Mary Cullen. This is Mr. Dankworth.

(to Mary, sweetly)

Nice to meet you, Mrs. Cullen.

MRS. BRIMBLE exits.

MARY

Thank you for seeing me, Mr. Dankworth.

DANKWORTH waves toward a chair.

DANKWORTH

Certainly. Please, have a--

MARY seats herself.

DANKWORTH

--seat... Now, what may I do for you?

MARY

The station announcements. They were updated recently.

DANKWORTH

Ah, right. Yes, they were. Now we're modernized, happy to report. Everything's been digitized in the update. There's new voices, more informative, it's all of it done in the interest of our passengers. Thank you. When will your article run?

MARY

It won't.

DANKWORTH

No?

MARY

No.

DANKWORTH

Isn't this for your local paper?

MARY

No.

DANKWORTH

No?

MARY

No.

DANKWORTH

Oh. Passenger alliance organization, then?

(sighs, launches into
prepared speech)

"We here at London Underground are dedicated to a transport system that's reliable, accessible--"

MARY

No.

DANKWORTH

No?

MARY

No.

DANKWORTH

Then, you're here about it...

(unsure)

why?

MARY

The previous announcement, you know, "Mind the gap"...

DANKWORTH

A perfect example. It was short on details. Exactly the kind of lack of information that frustrates passengers. That's why--

MARY

That was my late husband's voice on that announcement.

DANKWORTH

(taken by surprise)

Oh?

MARY

Lawrence Cullen. He passed seven years ago. To everyone else it was just an announcement. But to me... well, you see... I've come to the station every day for the past five years, just to visit with Lawrence again.

DANKWORTH

Oh my goodness, Mrs. Cullen... I believe he must've recorded that, what would that be now, over forty years ago?

MARY

Yes, that'd be about right.

DANKWORTH

Well... I'm very sorry for your loss. But as for the upgrade, it just really had to be done. The previous system was outdated. Prone to breakdowns. That resulted in delays. Such a headache for our passengers, you see. We needed better technology across the entire network. New announcements had to be recorded to work with that. You understand, don't you?

MARY

I'm asking for one exemption. Only one. For Embankment Station.

DANKWORTH

The entire system's been digitized, Mrs. Cullen. You're asking we restore a forty-year old tape recording. But we can't. It's impossible. I'm sorry.

HE rises.

DANKWORTH (CONT'D)

My condolences.

MARY rises to leave, moves to the door.

MARY

Thank you for your time.

DANKWORTH nods and gets back to work. A few steps and MARY swoons, knees buckle.

MARY
Oh!

DANKWORTH
Mrs. Cullen!

DANKWORTH dashes to aid her.

DANKWORTH (CONT'D)
Mrs. Brimble! Help!

DANKWORTH helps a light-headed MARY back to the chair. MRS. BRIMBLE rushes in, shocked by the sight, and rushes to assist MARY into her seat.

MRS. BRIMBLE
Do you want a glass of water, dear?

MARY
...Whiskey.

MRS. BRIMBLE stares at DANKWORTH. After a beat, DANKWORTH begrudgingly relents and opens a desk drawer, lifts out a whiskey bottle and glass, pours MARY a shot. SHE downs it.

DANKWORTH
Is there anything else you need?

MARY
If you don't mind... I'd appreciate my husband's announcement restored at Embankment Station.

DANKWORTH
Mrs. Cullen, I told you there's nothing we can do!

MRS. BRIMBLE
What's she talking about?

DANKWORTH
The old "Mind the Gap" announcement. Mrs. Cullen is Lawrence Cullen's widow. He recorded the announcement before he died.

MRS. BRIMBLE
I would hope so.

DANKWORTH

You know what I mean. Mrs. Cullen likes to hear his voice.

MRS. BRIMBLE

Awww.

DANKWORTH

She'd like us to bring the announcement back so she may continue hearing her husband's voice.

MRS. BRIMBLE

Awww!

DANKWORTH

Will you stop saying "awww"?

MRS. BRIMBLE

I think it's rather sweet.

MARY turns doe-eyed at DANKWORTH.

MRS. BRIMBLE (CONT'D)

Can't you do something for the poor dear?

SHE stares at DANKWORTH. A beat.

DANKWORTH

Good God! Stop staring at me like I'm a bloody three-headed Hydra Monster! I'm human too you know!

MRS. BRIMBLE

Perhaps you can make an enquiry of the Transport For London office, see if they can make a copy of the recording for Mrs. Cullen? Would you like that, dear?

MARY

If it's no trouble?

DANKWORTH

(sarcastic)

No trouble at all, we've only just completed months of upgrading. Let's request the bureaucratic juggernaut behemoth slam the brakes on current priorities to dredge up an old recording, shall we? Right! Is there anything else you'd like me to pull off for you while I'm at it? Part the Red Sea? Cure a leper?

MARY holds her glass out for a refill.

MRS. BRIMBLE

That's a good idea. Start with something simple.

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE SIX: INT. CULLEN FLAT - KITCHEN - CHRISTMAS EVE AFTERNOON

MARY and KATHERINE are seated.
JIMMY's aproned, busy cooking.

JIMMY

I could make a nice horseradish while I'm at it.

KATHERINE

Not for me.

(calling offstage)

Mum! Do you fancy horseradish?

MARY

(offstage)

What?

KATHERINE

(calling)

Would you like some horseradish? To go with dinner? Jimmy wants to know. He'll make some if you want.

MARY

(offstage)

I'd love some.

JIMMY

Will do, then.

KATHERINE

What do you need to make horseradish?

JIMMY

Vinegar. Heavy cream. A pinch of sugar. But mostly, horseradish. Is there any?

KATHERINE

Pick a cupboard you think has horseradish, then check the cupboard next to it.

(beat)

Then look in the fridge.

JIMMY

What?

KATHERINE

Welcome to my deeply disturbed corner of hell with Mommy Dearest.

JIMMY

That's a tad much. It's just horseradish.

MARY enters.

MARY

Something smells good.

JIMMY

Sausage rolls. Just the way you like them.

MARY

With cranberry wine?

KATHERINE

Hell no. Don't give her any wine, Jimmy. She'll get encouraged to rail against the House of Commons next.

JIMMY

Stop it, Kate.

KATHERINE

I'm being kind. It's a fault of mine, I know.

JIMMY

Don't start a rowe. It's Christmas Eve.

KATHERINE

She never thinks about the consequences.

MARY

Don't yell.

KATHERINE

I wasn't yell-- You see how she is? Always changes the subject.

JIMMY

She's not yelling, Mary.

MARY

Whatever your tone, show some respect. I'm still your mother.

KATHERINE

Stop acting like a child then, yeah?

JIMMY

Stop it, Kate. That's enough now.

(to Mary)

She tells me you're feeling better? I mean, you seem to be.

MARY

It was nothing. Every little thing sets her off. I can take care of myself, I promise you.

KATHERINE

Yeah, just like you promised you'd speak to Dr. Robbie first.

MARY

I did promise. That, I did.

KATHERINE

So what you've got to say for yourself, then?

MARY

I spoke to Dr. Robbie first.

JIMMY

Didn't see that coming, did you?

KATHERINE

Then why did you meet with the Operations Director?

MARY

Dr. Robbie said it was a good idea.

JIMMY

Or that either?

KATHERINE

And you're just telling me this now?

MARY

What's there to tell? He didn't think anything wrong with it, so there's nothing to tell. He said it'd be good to assert my needs.

KATHERINE

He shouldn't have encouraged you like that.

MARY

So you know better than a doctor all of a sudden?

JIMMY

Kate's got a point. I mean, look at how it turned out, you getting all fainty.

MARY

I was worse off than that giving birth to your wife here. How would you say that turned out?

JIMMY

(beat)

I need to see if the rolls are puffed.

HE busies himself.

MARY

I'm going back there again. I want an answer.

KATHERINE

Oh fer cryin' out loud -- You can't think risking your health is worth all this. It's been two weeks. You haven't heard from them. There's your answer.

MARY

Why do you refuse to support me?

KATHERINE

What d'you want me to do? Break into their offices during the night and find daddy's recording?

MARY

That'd be a good start. Did you even think of calling the Operations Director on my behalf, you and Jimmy?

KATHERINE

We are trying to support you. We're saying you need to move on.

JIMMY

Hang on. Maybe we could start a petition? Get signatures.

MARY

There's an idea.

KATHERINE

Brilliant. We could organise a march. Hold a national referendum.

JIMMY

Right!

(beat)

I can't tell if you're serious or not.

KATHERINE

No, I'm not serious! Grief's a private matter!

MARY

Maybe not the way grief ought to be done then.

KATHERINE

Stop filling your head with any more notions... Let daddy go, mum.

SHE looks to get JIMMY on board:

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

(warning)

Jimmy?

Pause. JIMMY relents.

JIMMY

You got your memories. Thank God for that and let the rest go.

KATHERINE

Jimmy's right, mum, if you ask me.

MARY

I wasn't asking you now, was I?

KATHERINE

You listened to daddy's recording and that gave you comfort. All well and good. But now that's gone too. And now you're grieving all over again because of it. Don't you see? It's not helping--

MARY

--Wait until you're my age. Wait until it's you who's in pain.

SOUND: The PHONE RINGS.

JIMMY

Why do older generations want us younger generations to suffer like they do?

KATHERINE

My point is it's keeping you back from healing, mum...

(answering phone)

Hello?

Simultaneous conversations,
Katherine's independent of the
others:

KATHERINE

Oh! Rebecca!

(to Mary)

Mum, it's Rebecca.

(into phone)

How's everything, hun?

We're just about to--

(beat)

Article? What article?

Yes, I have today's paper.

No, I haven't read it yet.

MARY

Don't say that, Jimmy.

JIMMY

We lost dad. We don't want to lose you too. You can't fault Kate for not wanting that.

MARY

You're not about to lose me, dear.

KATHERINE grabs the newspaper.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

What page?

(leafs through the paper)

"Bereaved Widow Only

JIMMY

For which we're grateful.

(plants kiss on Mary's head)

Mmm. The sausage rolls doth

Wants to Hear Beloved
Spouse's Voice Again."

(to Mary)

Mum, what's this?

(into phone)

Let me call you back, hun.

-- Lovely chatting with you.

(hangs up, then outrage)

Mum! You spoke to a reporter?

You spoke to a reporter, mum?

A reporter? Mum? You spoke

to a reporter? A reporter?

A reporter's who you spoke

to, mum?

beckon.

MARY

They smell delicious.

JIMMY

This recipe never fails, wine
or no wine.

MARY

That does sound wonderful. But
next time: wine, eh?

MARY

(beat)

Whatever are you going on about, dear?

KATHERINE

You spoke to a reporter?

MARY

Of course. How else do you imagine my story wound up in the
paper?

KATHERINE

A reporter, mum?

MARY

It was Dr. Robbie's idea.

KATHERINE

Dr. Robbie told you to speak to a reporter?

MARY

That's right.

JIMMY

What's this about?

KATHERINE

Mum spoke to a reporter!

JIMMY

I think I've sussed out that part.

MARY

Dr. Robbie thought his friend Kyle might find my situation
newsworthy. Kyle's a reporter.

KATHERINE

(holds up newspaper)

Yes, apparently! For the Times!

MARY

Kyle may be more than just Dr. Robbie's friend.

KATHERINE

Don't change the subject!

JIMMY

You mean to say mum's in the paper?

KATHERINE

You don't miss a trick, do you?

MARY

I can't help it if Kyle agreed it's a sorry state of affairs.

KATHERINE

It makes you look pathetic. Why are you embarrassing us like this?

MARY

Embarrassing you?

KATHERINE

Yes, with this story in the paper!

MARY

Don't make it about you. It's not about you. It's about me. It has nothing to do with you.

KATHERINE

Really? I'm the one who just took a call about it.

MARY

That doesn't make it about you.

JIMMY

What she means is it's a private matter. Not news to go about gabbing to everyone.

MARY

I thought letting the public know about it might be a good thing.

KATHERINE

How? You think the public sticking their nose in your personal affairs is a good thing?

MARY

I thought it might help change things.

KATHERINE

Why do you want to change things, mum? Let them be!

MARY

London Underground changed things first!

JIMMY

They needed to upgrade the system and make changes. You know that. And wishing it were otherwise won't make anything better.

KATHERINE

It makes you sound like a sad, old woman. Paints us as a sorry lot.

MARY

Again about you? Wanting to hear daddy's voice isn't sad. Or sorry. It was keeping me comforted. Until we meet again. Don't worry. That'll be soon enough. You won't always have your mother here to "embarrass" you.

KATHERINE

Oh, please! Don't use your mortality as a "get out of jail free" card with me.

MARY

If it were the Queen wanting to hear Prince Philip's voice one more time would you be so off-put by that, then?

KATHERINE

If she were making trips to the tube to listen for him -- Yes! I certainly would!

JIMMY

Maybe no one else will notice, Kate? It's just a bit of gossip over a little old lady, is all.

SOUND: PHONE RINGS.

KATHERINE

No one will notice, hmm?

SHE answers the phone.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Hello?

LIGHT on DANKWORTH on the phone.

DANKWORTH

Mrs. Cullen?

KATHERINE

No, thank God. Who--?

DANKWORTH

This is Lionel Dankworth, London Underground. Forgive me calling on Christmas Eve, but I have some news for Mrs. Cullen. I think she'd want to hear. Is she there?

KATHERINE hands the phone to MARY.

KATHERINE

(sarcastic)

Yay. More news... It's that Lionel Dankworth from London Underground. Probably announcing their restraining order against you.

MARY

(into phone)

Hello, Mr. Dankworth, happy Christmas. Have you read the paper?

DANKWORTH

Happy Christmas. As a matter of fact, I have. I suppose I should thank you for not mentioning my, um, whiskey drawer.

MARY

I thought it prudent not to. In case I were to visit again. What would I drink?

DANKWORTH

I apologize for calling on Christmas Eve, but I was just informed and thought you'd like to know immediately--

MARY

--I appreciate the call, Mr. Dankworth. I've come to realize I was acting foolishly. Forgive me. I suppose I'm terrible at handling grief. I'm avoiding it, actually... I apologize for any trouble I caused--

DANKWORTH

--We found it.

MARY's stunned.

DANKWORTH (CONT'D)

Mrs. Cullen? Did you hear me?

MARY

I did.

DANKWORTH

You seem to have touched a nerve. It turns out many people here share the same wish they could hear their lost loved ones once again. They were all only too willing to pitch in.

MARY

Is that right?

DANKWORTH

Let me tell you. First we enquired of those who digitized the system. They enlisted others to aid them in wading through the old tapes. Then technicians were called in, but then the engineers required administrative authorization to access the code to-- well, you'll find out soon enough... Sorting all that business out... there's always something, isn't there?

MARY

I had no idea it would be such a fuss. I'm sorry.

DANKWORTH

I'm impressed it only took a fortnight. Takes longer than that around here to get a requisition for toilet roll... Long story short, it's my great pleasure to inform you we've managed to make quite the decent copy from it. We also have about fifty people now who've invested their hearts volunteering to make this happen...

MARY

Oh my.

DANKWORTH

...and who would very much like to meet you to personally present you with it.

MARY

Oh my.

JIMMY

That's two oh my's.

KATHERINE

Is there a problem? Will we see you on tonight's newscast, then? "Special Report: UK's Most Troublesome Old Biddy"?

DANKWORTH

They're all here now, actually. They'd very much like to make it their Christmas present to you.

MARY

Oh my.

JIMMY

Three. That's three of 'em.

DANKWORTH

I know it's Christmas Eve but we were hoping it's not an imposition to ask if you're able to come straight away? It's rather last minute I know, so if it's not a good time it's perfectly understandable, we'll schedule another--

MARY

--Thank you, yes. That'd be fine.

DANKWORTH

You're certain it's not an inconvenience?

MARY

Not at all. I'd be delighted. Looking forward to meeting all of you. Goodbye, Mr. Dankworth.

LIGHTS OFF DANKWORTH.

MARY hands the phone back to
KATHERINE, who hangs it up.

MARY (CONT'D)

Would you and Jimmy mind accompanying me to Mr. Dankworth's office?

KATHERINE

When?

MARY

Now.

KATHERINE

What?

JIMMY

She said--

KATHERINE

--I know what she said. Now, mum? It's Christmas Eve.

MARY

Perfect timing, then. For a Christmas present. They want to give me a Christmas present.

KATHERINE looks at MARY. Then looks
at JIMMY.

JIMMY

(to Katherine)

I swear to God I didn't give her any wine.

SCENE SEVEN: INT. EMBANKMENT STATION - LATER

LIGHTS UP.

MARY, JIMMY and KATHERINE walk onto
the station.

KATHERINE

This should end things now. Right, mum?

JIMMY

If they want you to sign off on not stirring up any more trouble, promise you'll agree.

MARY

I wasn't stirring up trouble. I was asking for a favor. Read Kyle's article if you need more clarification, you two, would you?

KATHERINE

They found the recording. They're giving you a copy. Be grateful.

MARY

I am.

KATHERINE

I pray it doesn't turn out to become another crutch.

MARY

No. It's just something I'm grateful to have. While I have it.

(beat)

Like everything else we have in life, you know?

KATHERINE gets it.

LIGHTS FLICKER from an incoming train, accompanied by...

SOUND CUE 3: TRAIN PULLS INTO THE STATION. DOORS OPEN.

THEY board the train. Then, over the P.A., a familiar voice. It's the original announcement:

LIGHTS FADE into a SPOTLIGHT on MARY.

SOUND CUE 3 PLAYS OUT: DOORS CLOSE, TRAIN LEAVES THE STATION, AND:

MARY'S face turns into a satisfied smile.

SPOTLIGHT FADES TO BLACK.

THE END.