

THE PLEA  
(first scene only)

Written by

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**Scene One: Int. Alexander Family Home, London - Day**

1. MUSIC: THEME
2. ANNOUNCER: Join us in 1902 Edwardian England for  
the mystery and adventure of "The  
Plea."
3. SOUND: CONFIDENT KNOCK ON DOOR
4. RUSSELL: (AWAKENED FROM SLEEP, MUMBLES)  
Baxter!
5. SOUND: LOUDER, PERSISTENT KNOCK ON DOOR
6. SOUND: ROLLS OFF COUCH AND HITS THE FLOOR
7. RUSSELL: (YELLS) Will you stop that infernal  
knocking!
8. SOUND: STAGGERING
9. RUSSELL: (MUTTERING) Where are those accursed  
servants!
10. SOUND: BUMPS INTO TABLE. VASE CRASHES TO  
FLOOR.
11. RUSSELL: (IRRITATED) Alright! I'm coming!

1. SOUND: FRONT DOOR OPENS
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2. RUSSELL: (IMPATIENTLY) Yes, what is it?
3. HENDERSON: Good morning, Mr. Alexander. I see that you are your usual cheerful self this morning. I won't keep you awake too long.
4. RUSSELL: What time is it?
5. HENDERSON: It is a reasonable hour of the morning to do business, Mr. Alexander.
6. RUSSELL: It's only reasonable for businessmen and beggars. I am neither.
7. HENDERSON: (WITH DISTAIN) Quite true. Actors always seem to be wavering between the two. If you can manage to shake off the effects of your evening at the pub, I suggest that we retire to the study immediately. I have a matter of some urgency to discuss with you.
8. SOUND: BRISK WALKING. DOOR CLOSSES. BRIEFCASE OPENS. PAPER SHUFFLING.

1. HENDERSON: (CLEARS THROAT) Your brother, Mr. Alexander, is missing and presumed dead.
2. RUSSELL: (STUNNED) What?
3. HENDERSON: You will find the particulars here in the morning newspaper.
4. RUSSELL: (READING) Dr. John Alexander of Coventry Hall, West Sussex, noted alienist, who works with Scotland Yard, has been missing for three days. Servants confirm that his horse arrived home without him shortly after midnight three days ago. A thorough search ensued, and blood was found in the nearby woods. It has not yet been determined if this was an accident or foul play. Servants observed that Dr. Alexander had been acting erratic for several days before his disappearance. Detective Vick of London Scotland Yard will oversee the case.

1. SOUND: RUSSELL WALKING. POURS A DRINK.
2. RUSSELL: (GULPS DOWN THE DRINK, COUGHS) I don't understand. Why would John be acting erratically and riding in the forest at midnight? He has always been the practical, level-headed one of the family. There must be some other explanation.
3. HENDERSON: Mr. Alexander, I am a lawyer, not a detective. You can pursue the matter with Detective Vick. In the meantime, we need to get your brother's affairs in order in the event that he does not return or is found . . .
4. RUSSELL: (INTERRUPTS) He is not dead!
5. HENDERSON: Perhaps not, but I think this letter, which was just delivered to me this morning, will change your mind.
6. RUSSELL: A letter from John?
7. SOUND: OPENS LETTER

1. HENDERSON: Yes. Your brother infers that there is great danger associated with his last patient, the details of which he cannot disclose in this letter. However, in the event of his demise, he insists that you come home immediately. You must find his latest case journal, which he has hidden for safety, and give it to Detective Vick.
2. RUSSELL: Are you serious? I can't leave now. I'm in the *Merrie England* musical at the Savoy Theatre starting tomorrow night.
3. SOUND: PACING. POURING ANOTHER DRINK.  
GULPING IT DOWN.
4. HENDERSON: Yes, well, that is unfortunate because there is also the matter of the ward.
5. RUSSELL: (INCREDULOUS) The ward?
6. HENDERSON: Yes, Jack Edwards. Your brother's 16-year-old ward.

1. RUSSELL:                   When did John take on a ward?
  
2. HENDERSON:                A year ago. Jack's parents were  
Christian missionaries in India.  
When they died from the plague in  
Bombay, your brother took over  
guardianship.
  
3. RUSSELL:                   I see.
  
4. HENDERSON:                As his heir, that guardianship  
temporarily transfers to you under  
the circumstances.
  
5. RUSSELL:                   That is absurd! Do you actually  
expect me to give up my acting  
career, pack my bags and head for the  
countryside to look for a mysterious  
patient, manage the family estate and  
parent a ward?
  
6. HENDERSON:                Yes. That is your legal obligation  
until your brother is found.
  
7. RUSSELL:                   (EVADING) I'll need a few days to  
settle things with the theater  
company.

1. HENDERSON: As a matter of fact, you're leaving today. I've taken the liberty of booking you on the afternoon train from London to Haywards Heath. Here is your ticket and more than sufficient funds for your journey.
2. RUSSELL: Your efficiency is aggravating, Mr. Henderson.
3. HENDERSON: Yes, but it is effective. By the way, the butler has arranged for the driver to pick you up from the station in the motorcar.
4. RUSSELL: The motorcar? When did John get a motorcar?
5. HENDERSON: Six months ago.
6. RUSSELL: I see.
7. HENDERSON: Well, I shall be on my way and see to the legalities. I will meet you at Coventry Hall tomorrow afternoon.
8. RUSSELL: (RESENTFULLY) I guess I have no choice.



1. HENDERSON: I'm sorry about your brother. I'm sure that you and Detective Vick will find him. Good day to you, Mr. Alexander. I will show myself out.

2. SOUND: BRISK WALKING. STUDY DOOR OPENS.

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WALKING FADES OUT.

3. RUSSELL: (SIGHS) Unbelievable!

4. SOUND: POURS ANOTHER DRINK. GULPS IT DOWN.

THROWS GLASS AT FIREPLACE.