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Dramatic Publishing

HUMPTY-DUMPTY IS MISSING!
or
The Mysterious Case of the Fallen
Egg

by
JOSEPH ROBINETTE

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(HUMPTY-DUMPTY IS MISSING!
or The Mysterious Case of the Fallen Egg)

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HUMPTY-DUMPTY IS MISSING!

or The Mysterious Case of the Fallen Egg

For 16 (5-7m., 9-11f) with doubling, offstage voice (m)
(27 or more, flexible, without doubling)

CHARACTERS:

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sammy Scoop | Rapunzel |
| Alice | Handsome Prince |
| Police Chief | Troll |
| Little Bo Peep | Little Billy Goat Gruff |
| Little Red Riding Hood | Flopsy |
| King's Horses (4 or more) | Mopsy |
| King's Men (4 or more) | Cottontail |
| Wall (3 or more) | Peter Rabbit |
| Mistress Mary | Mother Hubbard |
| Rip Van Winkle | Mother Goose |
| Henny-Penny | |

The Period: Once upon a time (thought not *too* long ago).

The Place: The office of Sammy Scoop, Private Eye.

SETTING: *The modest office of SAMMY SCOOP, Private Investigator. If desired, a large window upstage, looking out onto a painted backdrop of buildings across the street, may be a part of the set. If so, lettering on the window would read: SAMMY SCOOP, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR. A door at right leads to the outside. A door at left connects to a receptionist's office.*

AT RISE: *SAMMY, wearing a trench coat and felt hat, enters from left—or he may be already on stage. If desired, the*

melancholy sounds of a saxophone are heard underneath SAMMY's opening line.

SAMMY. Good morning (afternoon or evening). Welcome to the office of Sammy Scoop. That's me. I'm a private investigator—better known as a private eye. I come from a long line of private eyes. You may have heard of my grandfather—Samuel Shovel. Or my father—Sam Spade. We all graduated from private eye school. But I did 'em one better. I also went to *medical* school. That makes me a private eye, ears, nose and throat. You can't have too much education these days—especially in this business. (*A pause.*) Maybe you're wondering what a private eye does... Maybe you're not. But I'll tell you anyway. Better yet, I'll show you. Let's go back a few months to a warm, balmy day when a frightened young lady came this way.

(The offstage voice of LITTLE BO PEEP is heard.)

LITTLE BO PEEP (*offstage*). Mr. Scoop! Mr. Scoop!

(She enters carrying a shepherd's crook.)

SAMMY. Yes, miss?

LITTLE BO PEEP. My sheep are missing.

SAMMY. Missing, miss?

LITTLE BO PEEP. Yes, missing—and I miss them.

SAMMY. What's your name, miss?

LITTLE BO PEEP. Miss Peep. But everybody just calls me Little Bo.

SAMMY. So, how many sheep have you lost, Miss Peep?

LITTLE BO PEEP. All of them.

SAMMY. Well, you can't lose any more than that, can you?

LITTLE BO PEEP. Oh, you *are* good. I knew I had come to the right place.

SAMMY. Why didn't you go to the police?
LITTLE BO PEEP. I did, but they said there was no evidence of a crime. So, it's evident they couldn't get involved.
SAMMY. Evidently... Okay, Miss Peep—
LITTLE BO PEEP (*a bit coyly*). Why don't you just call me Little Bo? And maybe I could call you—Sammy.
SAMMY. Sorry, Miss Peep. I never mix business and pleasure.
LITTLE BO PEEP (*somewhat disappointed*). I understand—Mr. Scoop.
SAMMY. I'll get right on the case. Leave your number with my secretary.
LITTLE BO PEEP. I didn't know you had a secretary.
SAMMY. I don't. But now that business is picking up, I'll call the employment agency.
LITTLE BO PEEP. Thanks, Mr. Scoop. I knew I could count on you.
SAMMY. My pleasure, Miss Peep. But just remember—
LITTLE BO PEEP. Yes?
SAMMY. Don't count your sheep—before they're tracked.
LITTLE BO PEEP. I thought that was—"Don't count your chickens before they hatch."
SAMMY. That's another story for another time.

(The offstage voice of ALICE, a secretary, is heard.)

ALICE (*offstage*). Sammy, ready for your morning coffee?
SAMMY. Morning coffee? Who was that?
LITTLE BO PEEP. Could be your new secretary.
SAMMY. Say, that employment agency works fast. She'll take your number. I'll be in touch.
LITTLE BO PEEP. Thanks.

(She exits. SAMMY addresses the audience directly.)

SAMMY. My new secretary's name was Alice. She was from Dallas. She was quite a gallus—uh, quite a gal.

(ALICE enters carrying a cup of coffee.)

ALICE. Just the way you like it, Sammy—cream, no sugar.

SAMMY *(taking the coffee)*. That agency is good. Thanks, Alice.

ALICE. By the way, I'm glad to see you don't smoke—like most private eyes.

SAMMY. That's because I'm an ear, nose and throat private eye. Gotta keep the senses sharp.

ALICE. Right.

(She exits as he sips the coffee.)

SAMMY *(addressing audience)*. Actually, it was the *nose* part that led me to Little Bo Peep's sheep. We found 'em all. So, that's one of the things a private eye does—finds lost people. Or in this case—lost sheep. Here's another example. Happened later on the same day.

(ALICE enters.)

ALICE. Excuse me, Sammy. Somebody named Little Red Riding Hood is here to see you.

SAMMY. Thanks, Alice. Show her in.

(ALICE takes his coffee cup and exits as SAMMY turns to the audience.)

Little Bo Peep. Little Red Riding Hood. It was turning into a big day for the little people.

(LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, carrying a cloth-covered basket, enters. SAMMY turns to her.)

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Hello, Mr. Scoop.

SAMMY. Afternoon, Miss Hood. What can I do for you?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Well, I was taking this basket of goodies to my sick grandmother, and I got the feeling somebody was following me.

SAMMY. Can you describe the perpetrator?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Sure. He's a cyborg—a robot covered with skin.

SAMMY. I said the *perpetrator*, Miss Hood. Not the Terminator.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Oh... Well, he had long pointed ears—a long pointed nose and long pointed teeth.

SAMMY. That would seem to point to a wolf.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I see your point.

SAMMY. I'll take your case, Miss Hood.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Oh, thank you, Mr. Scoop. I have no money, but I'll gladly give you this basket of goodies.

SAMMY. The goodies are for your grandmother. But I think I *do* see a ham-on-rye in that basket.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Lettuce and tomato.

SAMMY. *And* a jar of Grey Poupon?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Extra spicy.

SAMMY. That'll be my fee. The rest can go to Grandma.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Thank you, Mr. Scoop.

SAMMY. Okay, you'll continue your journey. But this time you *and* your follower will also be followed—by me.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Oh, this is exciting.

SAMMY. For you, maybe. For me, it's all in a day's work. Okay, time to hit the road, Little Red. But just remember—I'll be looking at *you* kid.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Oh, Mr. Scoop.

(She giggles and exits as SAMMY turns to the audience.)

SAMMY. It turned out to be a wolf, all right. In fact, he'd been following *several* people in the neighborhood, including some little pigs. But that's another story for another time. With the help of some woodsmen, I took care of the wolf. By then I was pretty hungry, so I wolfed down the ham-on-rye. *(A pause. At this point SAMMY may remove his hat and trench coat, if desired, as he speaks.)* By now, I hope you've got an idea of what I do, because I don't have time to give you any more examples. Right now I've got my biggest case ever coming up, and it's going to take all my resources to crack it. Correction. It's *already* been cracked. That's the problem. It happened a couple of days ago. Alice came in with the morning paper.

(ALICE enters looking at the newspaper.)

ALICE. Sammy, look at this headline. *(She reads.)*

“Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall.”

SAMMY *(looking at the paper)*. Hmmm. *(Reading.)*

“Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall.”

ALICE. “All the King's Horses”

SAMMY. “And all the King's Men”

BOTH. “Couldn't put Humpty-Dumpty together again.”

ALICE. That's terrible.

SAMMY. Yeah. He seemed an okay guy.

ALICE. Always saying please—thank you—you're welcome.

Very courteous.

CHIEF *(offstage)*. Hey, Sammy!

ALICE. That sounds like the Police Chief.

CHIEF *(offstage)*. Are you in there, Sammy?

ALICE *(looking offstage)*. It *is* the Police Chief.

SAMMY. Amazing how much he sounds like himself.

(CHIEF enters.)

CHIEF. Morning Sammy—Miss Alice. Did you hear about what happened at the Wall outside town yesterday?

ALICE. We just read about it.

CHIEF. Terrible accident.

SAMMY. You sure it was an accident?

CHIEF. There was nothing suspicious. No clues. In fact, we couldn't even find the corpus delicti.

ALICE. I think it's about four hundred miles south of Dallas.

SAMMY. That's Corpus Christi, Alice. Corpus delicti means the body.

CHIEF. Or in this case—the *shell*. I was on the scene just after the King's Horses and King's Men left, and I didn't see a single shard.

SAMMY. You didn't see a single shard of shell?

CHIEF. Not where he fell.

ALICE. Do tell.

CHIEF. Not even a trace of yoke.

SAMMY. No joke? Any white?

CHIEF. Nothing in sight. After the King's Horses and King's Men gave up and left, Humpty-Dumpty completely disappeared.

ALICE. Maybe he just—oozed on down the road.

CHIEF. Who knows. Look, Sammy, I guess you're wondering why I'm here?

SAMMY. Not really. The script says you enter stage right on the line—"It *is* the Chief."

CHIEF. Nothing gets by you, Sammy.

SAMMY. I'm guessing you need a little help on this one, Chief. I know you're short of manpower.

CHIEF. *Person* power, Sammy. We recently hired a woman on the force.

SAMMY. Good for you.

CHIEF. She's catching on quickly.

SAMMY. Good for her.

CHIEF. And she's quite a looker. That could be good for you.

SAMMY. You know I never mix business and pleasure, Chief.

CHIEF. I know. That's why you're the best, Sammy. (*A pause.*) Look, what I'd like you to do is—keep an eye and an ear out for what might have happened to Humpty-Dumpty. If you find any evidence, keep it quiet, bring it directly to me.

SAMMY. Sure, Chief. Same salary as always?

CHIEF. You bet. A dozen donuts and a jug o' Joe. Cream, no sugar—right?

SAMMY. Right.

CHIEF. Thanks, Sammy. You know, if you ever get tired of the private eye game, we can always use you down at headquarters.

SAMMY. Thanks, Chief, but if I ever left the family business, my grandfather would turn over in his grave.

CHIEF. How about your father?

SAMMY. He'd turn over in his hammock. He's not dead—just retired.

CHIEF. Oh yeah, right. Well, g'day, Miss Alice—Sammy.

SAMMY. S'long, Chief. I'll be in touch.

(CHIEF exits.)

Okay, Alice, we'll get right on it. We'll make a list of everybody who might have been out and about day before yesterday. Then we'll round up the usual prospects.

ALICE. Don't you mean—the usual suspects?

SAMMY. That line's already been used. We'll go with prospects for now.

ALICE. Sure, Sammy. I'll start a file. *(She exits.)*

SAMMY (*to the audience*). As a private eye, I don't have the power to arrest people—or even make them answer questions. But I knew everybody we called to the office that day would show up. Otherwise, they'd *really* look guilty. (*A pause.*) So, now you're up to speed. We're ready to go. As we question these prospects, see if you can figure out whodid it. Or as they say in the movies—"whodunit."

(*ALICE enters holding six large notecards and the newspaper.*)

END OF SCENE