

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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***The Lady Vanishes* (1938)**

Alfred Hitchcock

OVERVIEW

Director Sir Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) is a household name and perhaps the best-known British filmmaker. With over 50 films to his credit, Hitchcock helped to shape the modern understanding of the thriller genre. His best-known films include *The Birds*, *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, and *Rear Window*, all of which have earned accolades, including preservation by the US Film Registry. In 1960, Hitchcock was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame with two stars for his work in both film and television. He was also the first recipient of the BAFTA Academy Fellowship Award.

Film *The Lady Vanishes* is based on Ethel Lina White's 1936 novel *The Wheel Spins* and was the first of its three film adaptations. This adaptation took incredible liberties, most notably changing Miss Froy from an innocent woman to an undercover intelligence operative. *The Lady Vanishes* was the only film for which Hitchcock won an award for his direction, the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Director in 1939. Through this, we can see that the US reception was very positive, and the film was an instant hit in the UK, where critics called it a "craftily sophisticated" and "out of the ordinary and exciting thriller." More recently, film was given number 35 on the British Film Institute's list of 100 greatest British films of the 20th century, and a poll of *Time Out* magazine readers ranked it number 31 of the greatest British films of all time.

Background *The Lady Vanishes* was filmed in Islington, London, at the Gainsborough Pictures studios, a place where Hitchcock shot many of his earliest films. Film scholars credit *The Lady Vanishes* with attracting Hollywood's gaze to Hitchcock, and the many strong elements of this film give the idea some credit. Originally, the film was to be shot by Irish director Roy William Neill and called *The Lost Lady*. This version of the film was never completed, as a team collecting background footage in Yugoslavia were thrown out of the country for embarrassing portrayals of local police. Hitchcock bought the rights to the story from producer Edward Black when he was unable to find a suitable pitch for his next film at Gaumont-British Pictures.

CINEMATIC NARRATION

With lasting cinematic appeal, it's no wonder that there are many of Hitchcock's favorite elements and plot twists present in *The Lady Vanishes*. Among the most noticeable are an apparently mute villainess who turns against the co-conspirators, a vital clue taking the form of a melody, and two unwilling allies becoming lovers. What sets *The Lady Vanishes* apart is its feminine focus because women are rarely the main protagonists of a Hitchcock film. Here, though, Margaret Lockwood as Iris is unlike the cool-headed and cold-hearted leading ladies of many of his films, radiating a natural warmth and sensitivity as she desperately tries to find the woman who helped her. Miss Froy, too, is unique: While other female spies exist in Hitchcock's work, they rarely live very long or work for the good guys. Michael Redgrave as Gilbert defies many of the characteristics of a typical Hitchcock leading man. He is crass, rude, and otherwise unhelpful until he senses a conspiracy behind the disappearance of Miss Froy. His comedic timing, too, is legendary, helping the dated humor of this movie shine even almost 100 years after its release.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Iris Henderson - A young socialite enjoying one last European adventure before her marriage
Miss Froy - An older woman who accompanies Iris onto the train then vanishes
Gilbert - A musicologist working on a book about the folk songs and dances of Europe
Dr. Hartz - A world-renown psychologist and brain surgeon
Signor Doppo - A seemingly ordinary Italian man who turns out to be a world-class magician
Caldicott and Charters - A pair of cricket enthusiasts whose only motivation is to return to London on time to see England play an important match
Mr. and "Mrs." Eric Todhunter - A soon-to-be judge and his mistress posing as a married couple

PLOT

Avalanche- As the opening credits fade away, the camera begins to move down the slope of the mountain in the background. As the evidence of an avalanche becomes apparent, the Alpine scene transforms from one of natural beauty to one of disaster. A train lies partly buried in a massive snow drift. Thankfully, it seems no one was harmed but the rails are completely blocked. Travel is impossible. The camera continues tracking into a nearby village where quaint houses sit quietly. A car passes through a nearby alley as the camera settles on the door of a lodge.



Busy lodge- Inside the lodge, people crowd against a wall, seated with their luggage. They are the train's passengers. Jaunty music plays as people smoke cigarettes and read newspapers. An elderly woman approaches the front desk where she exchanges a few unheard words and some money with the hotel manager. As she exits the building, a strong wind holds the door open and two men help close it afterward. The peaceful scene is interrupted when two arguing tour guides burst into the lodge, the noisy clock on the wall strikes the hour, and the phone rings—all simultaneously. The hotel manager speaks in exasperated Italian, shouting to be heard over the din. After hanging up the phone, he addresses the crowd in Italian, then turns to some other people, speaking French. The two men who closed the door are confused: they only speak English. After addressing another group in German, he begins speaking English. The train is stuck, he reports, adding, "If you wish to stay in my hotel, you have to register immediately." The Englishmen complain to themselves, "Well why didn't he say so in the first place?"



Return customers- The pair of Englishmen, Caldicott and Charters, are delighted to see the hotel manager walking toward them but their smiles fade as he blows past them to welcome a group of young women at the door. They greet him fondly, asking if everything is ready for them. The manager responds saying he hasn't changed a thing. "Not even the sheets?" one of the young ladies jokes. He leads them up the stairs slowly, talking and answering their questions. They ask about the people and the manager explains the situation with the avalanche. The young women make their room-service dinner orders as the rest of the crowd waits impatiently near the front desk.



"3rd-rate country"- The two Englishmen complain again, this time about the terrible service. "Oh, third-rate country," says Caldicott, "What do you expect?" Charters wonders who the women are, and the two agree they must be rich Americans. Charters then laments that they missed their train in Budapest. Caldicott reminds him the only reason they missed the train was that he insisted on standing for the Hungarian national anthem. "You must show respect, Caldicott!" Charters responds. "It's always been my contention," Caldicott continues, "that The Hungarian Rhapsody is not their national anthem." They wonder what is going on in London, as the last newspaper they read said 'England on the Brink.'



Booking- The hotel manager returns from upstairs and is greeted by a swarm of people speaking several different languages. He closes the swing-top counter behind him, creating a barrier. The two Englishmen study the train schedule. They both mutter calculations, trying to figure out if they can make it back to London on time. At the counter, a woman is offended when her male counterpart asks for two single rooms. He complains about the hypothetical condition of the room, to which she responds, "You weren't so particular in Paris last autumn." It's the two Englishmen's turn to be waited on, and they have a list of demands, but the hotel manager can't give them what they want: only the maid's room remains unlet. The two Englishmen debate sleeping on the train for a moment, but when the hotel manager tells them there's no heat on the train, they gladly accept the maid's room.



The maid's room- The manager says there's one condition: the maid will have access to the room to "remove her wardrobe." They accept even though they're confused, thinking he means the woman will undress in front of them. More humor results from the language barrier. Neither of the Englishmen seems excited about the prospect of a sexual encounter when the young maid makes eyes at them, trying to be polite. The young woman goes to prepare her room. "Awkward situation over that girl," says Charters. "Pity he couldn't have given us one each," responds Caldicott. When the other man looks offended, he clarifies that he meant separate rooms.



"Blue-blooded check-chaser"- In an oversized suite, the three (possibly American) young women change their clothes. One stands on the table, addressing the others: "I, Iris Matilda Henderson, a spinster of no particular parish, do hereby solemnly renounce my maidenly past." A waiter enters the room with a tray, and Iris continues, declaring that she will become Lady Charles Fotheringail the coming Thursday. "Can't you get him to change his name instead?" one of the girls jokes as the waiter tries to serve them champagne. Iris asks the waiter to help her down from the table, and the three women join in a toast 'to Iris and the happy days she's leaving behind. And the blue-blooded check-chaser she's dashing to London to marry.'



Tuxedos- In the maid's room, the two Englishmen unpack and change into tuxedos. "If only we knew what was happening in England," says one. "Mustn't lose grip," the other replies. The maid knocks rapidly and enters the room, greeting them in a language they don't recognise. She pulls something from under the bed while the men turn their backs to preserve her modesty. She pulls out a hat and places on her head in front of the mirror. She says something else in her native tongue and motions that she wants to change. Although unwilling to give up the room just yet, the Englishmen retreat outside because they can't communicate with the young woman.



Direct line to London- Charters and Caldicott finish dressing on the landing above the front desk. In the lobby, the two men rifle through the assorted newspapers and magazines on a table. Charters complains that there's nothing newer than last month. Caldicott agrees, lamenting, "Our communications cut off in a time of crisis." Something catches their attention: The hotel manager yells into the phone, "Hello! Hello! London!" He puts down the phone and looks for a lodger while Charters and Caldicott eye the abandoned receiver. Charters picks up the receiver and asks about the conditions in England. When the person on the other end responds that it's windy, Charters asks about a test match in London. When the person is confused, Charters shouts, "Cricket, Sir! Cricket! What? You don't know? You can't be in England and not know the test score." Frustrated, Charters slams the phone down, hanging up. He realizes his mistake quickly. He and Caldicott walk away just as the hotel manager returns with the man the call was for.



Dining room- The lodge's tiny dining room bustles with activity as the two Englishmen enter. They look around for somewhere to sit, barging in and taking a seat at a booth just as another couple approaches. The waiter approaches and speaks Italian, which the Englishmen don't understand. An elderly woman seated across the table explains after the waiter repeats himself three times. "He's trying to explain to you that, owing to the large number of visitors, there's no food left." Charters and Caldicott moan and complain about the lack of proper hospitality. The old woman offers them some cheese and bread.



Dinner conversation- The elderly woman strikes up a conversation, calling Bandrica -the town in which they're stranded- one of Europe's hidden gems. Charters says he can't wait to leave and the woman says she's "quite miserable at the thought of leaving." She tells them that she's a governess by trade, and now that her charges are grown up, there's nothing left for her to do in England. She begins talking about her fondness for the area, sharing her anthropomorphizations of the surrounding hills. Charters and Caldicott look bored and placid as they seem to drift off, only pretending to listen. A man harmonizing with a guitar begins to play as the old woman asks the men if they can hear it. "Everyone sings here," she says, comparing the attitudes of the locals to happy children. The woman excuses herself. "Queer sort of bird," Charters says as she walks out of earshot. Caldicott defends her, saying she was very gracious about the cheese.



Serenade- The three young women exit Iris' suite, bidding each other good night, when one notices the man singing outside. "Nothing will keep me awake tonight," Iris proclaims as she kisses her friends goodnight. She sees the older woman coming up the stairs and nods in parting as she backs into her suite. The woman smiles after entering her room, rushing to the little balcony and throwing open the doors to hear the singing. She smiles and looks to the mountains as the music continues, but soon a cacophony of tooting woodwind and stomping feet begins, drowning out the serenade. She looks frustrated and exits her room to investigate.



"Musical chairs with an elephant"- In the hallway, it seems Iris had the same idea. "What's happening?" she asks. "An earthquake?" The old woman says that it doesn't explain the horrible music. "Musical country, this," Iris says to the old woman as she picks up the phone in her suite. "Look. Someone upstairs is playing musical chairs with an elephant," she says to the manager when she is connected. "Move one of them out, will you? I want to get some sleep." Believing that will solve the issue, the old woman bids Iris good night and returns to her room. The hotel manager meets Iris and says he'll fix everything before marching up the stairs.



Temperamental artist- In the lodge's top-most room, the manager finds several of his workers dancing in a circle. They stomp out the beat of a clarinet tune played by a man lying on the bed. The manager is about to speak when the man stops playing. "Hold it," the musician shouts and the dancers freeze as he sketches in a notebook. "If you please, sir..." the manager says. "Get out!" yells the man before starting the tune once more. The manager finally gets the words out, telling the guest that the noise is disturbing others in the lodge. The man refuses to hear it, kicking the manager out of his room and beginning the music and dance anew. Downstairs, the manager complains to Iris about the man's behavior before she hands him a bribe to kick the man out of the lodge.



Odd couple- Someone sits in bed holding a newspaper. We hear Caldicott speak nostalgically about stickball before lamenting the newspaper's lack of cricket coverage. The door knocks and the paper lowers, revealing Caldicott and Charters sitting next to each other in the tiny bed. The maid enters, grinning at the two men as she puts her hat away. She exits but quickly reenters to bid them good night in her language. Charters rushes to lock the door after her only to be pushed into the low crossbeam when the maid enters again to retrieve something from her dresser.



A rude awakening- Iris is fast asleep in bed. She awakes when the door opens and the light comes on. The man from upstairs smirks in the doorway, his luggage under his arms. She asks who he is and he responds by playing the same clarinet tune. When Iris asks him to leave, he kicks the door shut behind him. "Oh, this is a much better room," He says, laying his luggage on the bed and displacing Iris' drying clothes, "Definitely an acceptable room." He continues acting childishly, unpacking and crawling over Iris in the bed as he makes his way to the bathroom. Iris attempts to call the manager, but the man says he'll just say the young woman invited him in, creating a scandal. Iris changes her mind and asks the manager to give the man his room back. He finally leaves, asking her to have someone collect his things. "You're the most contemptible person I've ever met in all my life!" shouts Iris. "Well, confidentially," the man replies from the hallway, "I think you're a bit of a stinker too."



One coin- One by one, the lights go out in the windows of the village. One remains as the serenade continues. The old woman stands on her balcony, listening to the man and his guitar. Below, the man sings and strums as a pair of hands slowly extend behind him. As the tune ends, the hands grasp his throat and pull him off-screen. The old woman fumbles around in her purse before throwing a coin over the railing. The camera settles on the single coin on the paving stones. She closes her curtains and begins changing into her bedclothes. As she fumbles with the buttons, she hums the tune as if memorizing it.



Train Station- The little train station swarms with activity. A local plays accordion as Caldicott and Charters enter from inside the station. "Hope the weather's like this in Manchester," Charters says as the pair board the train. Iris and her friends approach the train from the station. Her friends tell her she still has one chance to let Charles down easily, but she says she's come to terms with the marriage. The old woman appears, saying that she can't find her bag. When she realizes the young women can't help her, she moves to the various piles of luggage near the station. Iris spots the woman's glasses on the ground and picks them up. As she tries to hand the glasses to the old woman, a potted plant is pushed off a windowsill above Iris and strikes her on the head. Before Iris can figure out if she needs medical help, the train jerks away from the platform. The old woman helps Iris onto the train, promising her friends that she'll look after the young woman. Iris manages to wave goodbye to her friends before her vision blurs, and she collapses.



Coming to- When Iris awakens, she's seated in a carriage. "There, there. You'll be all right in a minute," the old woman says as she offers her some cologne to soothe her head. Iris scans the car. A grinning man and matronly woman stare at her as do a young mother and her child. The old woman offers to ring the attendant to bring Iris a cup of tea, but Iris says she'd rather go to the dining car as she needs some air. The older woman accompanies her. Along the way, the train sways along the rough track and knocks the old woman off balance; she trips into one of the compartments. The occupants respond by closing the door and blinds. "You can always tell a honeymoon couple," she smiles at Iris, "They're so shy."



Honeymoon couple- "Why did you do that?" the woman in the compartment demands of her male counterpart. He responds that he doesn't want anyone to recognize him. When she scolds him for acting paranoid, he responds, "One would be enough." She continues her reprimand: "You even thought that beggar in Damascus was a barrister in disguise." As the argument continues, we learn that these two are adulterers, one a woman in the process of leaving her husband, the other a soon-to-be judge who had no intention of leaving his wife until recently.



Dining car- Charters and Caldicott pour their tea in the dining car as Iris and the old woman enter. The woman orders a pot of tea and stops the waiter as he tries to walk off, giving him a packet of tea. She says she doesn't drink any other brand. She turns to Iris, explaining that her mother and father, who are still alive, drink it daily. "Did you know," she asks, "a million Mexicans drink it? At least that's what it says on the packet." Iris thanks the woman for her kindness and introduces herself. The woman then says she is Miss Froy, a governess, but the train's whistle makes it hard for Iris to hear. After a couple more failed attempts, Miss Froy writes her name in the condensation on the window.



"Sugar, please"- The waiter returns with Iris and Miss Froy's pot of tea. Miss Froy asks the waiter to reserve her two seats for lunch, inviting Iris to dine with her. At the table next to them, Chambers complains to Caldicott about an umpire's call during a cricket match he saw. When Caldicott is confused, Chambers dumps the contents of the sugar dish onto the table and begins lining up the cubes in various positions to explain the cricket layout. Miss Froy notices their table doesn't have any sugar and asks the two men across the aisle if she could borrow theirs. Reluctantly, the two cricket fanatics plunk the cubes back into the dish and pass them to the woman. Back at the compartment, which they share with the smiling man and his family, Miss Froy recommends that Iris "get a little sleep."



The lady vanishes- The train surges onward. Eventually, Iris opens her eyes. She sees the matronly woman gazing out the window and the smiling man staring vacantly, but Miss Froy is missing. An attendant enters with tickets for lunch reservations. He first speaks to the Italian passengers before asking Iris if she needs a reservation. "My friend did. She's got tickets," Iris responds. Unsure where Miss Froy could have gone, she asks the compartment's occupants where the English lady has gone. "There has been no English lady here," says the matronly woman. She presses them into admitting they're lying when the smiling man suggests that maybe her concussion made her forget that she boarded the train alone.



Panic- In a panic, Iris leaves the compartment, searching for Miss Froy. She can't find her in the other compartments or the dining car. On her way back, she runs into the steward who served them tea. She asks about the old woman she had tea with, and the steward replies, "But madame was alone." "But she gave you a special packet of tea!" Iris insists as the Maître d' approaches with the bills from the dining car. In his search, he finds that Iris paid for tea for one. She storms off, calling the situation absurd.



"If it isn't old stinker"- In the third-class car, Iris approaches a man smoking a pipe and asks if he's seen Miss Froy. A look of disdain crosses her face as the rude man from the lodge turns to face her. "Well, well," he smirks, "if it isn't old stinker." Iris turns and walks away, but stumbles, holding her head. The rude man -who we come to know as Gilbert- approaches, offering his assistance. She says he could only help her by going away. He says that his father taught him to always help a woman in need and he pledges to help her find Miss Froy. "She must be still on the train," he says. "We haven't stopped since we started."



The heart of the matter- Back in the first-class car, Iris spots the smiling man talking to a tall man. She points him out to Gilbert as one of the people who denied seeing Miss Froy and they approach. "This young lady seems to have lost her friend," says Gilbert. The tall man says he's heard and suggests they all introduce themselves. The smiling man introduces himself as an Italian citizen and introduces his wife and son, and the matronly woman says she's the wife of a minister of culture and a baroness. The tall man introduces himself as Dr. Egon Hartz of Prague. Gilbert recognizes him as a world-renowned brain specialist. Neither he nor the Baroness claim to have seen Miss Froy.



Psychological alternative- Dr. Hartz asks Iris to describe Miss Froy. Iris says that she's unsure if she can remember before giving a perfect description of the missing woman's clothing. Gilbert suggests that there must have been someone else in the dining car, and Iris remembers the cricket fans. The doctor accompanies them, saying he's most fascinated by Iris' dilemma. They find Charters and Caldicott, who deny seeing Miss Froy only because they fear that a disturbance would stop the train and make them miss the cricket match in London. The doctor brings forth a theory: The bump to Iris' head gave her hallucinations. She's only imagined Miss Froy.



A short stop- Dr. Hartz opens a nearby window and peers out. "Dravka," he says, "If you will excuse me, this is where my patient comes aboard." Alone in the passageway, Iris cooks up an idea: she and Gilbert will look out windows on opposite sides of the car to see if Miss Froy exits. They do so, swiveling their heads back and forth as the train comes to a slow halt. Dr. Hartz jumps from the train to meet several men wheeling a gurney towards the train. He says a few words to a nun before they all help to put the gurney with the doctor's patient onto the train.



"Six weeks with Cesar's wife"- "How long does it take to get a divorce, Eric?" the adulteress asks in her private compartment. When Eric asks why, she responds, "I was only wondering whether we could take our honeymoon next spring. I mean the official one." Eric drones on and on about difficulties getting the case to court in a timely and scandal-free manner. After he's finished listing his worries, the adulteress says, "In that first careless rapture of yours, you said you didn't care what happened." He says she's not thinking about it from his point of view, but "the law, like Caesar's wife, must be above suspicion." "Even when the law spends six weeks with Caesar's wife?" she responds.



A witness- A whistle screams as the train chugs away from the station. Iris didn't see anyone disembark, and the only things Gilbert saw were "two bits of orange peel and a paper bag." The adulteress, hearing Iris's dismay, approaches the pair. She says that she had seen Miss Froy. Iris challenges her, asking why her husband didn't speak up. "Oh, he didn't notice," the adulteress lies. "As soon as he mentioned it, I remembered at once." In passing to tend to his patient, the doctor hears that there has been a witness to Miss Froy and wishes Iris luck in finding her friend. Back in their private compartment, the adulteress reveals her plan to Eric. If they become a part of an investigation, there will be a scandal and two divorces, meaning they can be together. But he says, "Your husband would divorce you. I've no doubt. But whatever happens, my wife will never divorce me."



"She come back!"- The smiling, Italian-speaking man approaches Iris, beaming. "Your friend," he says, "she come back!" Back at her compartment, Iris is elated to see a woman sitting in Miss Froy's seat and calls out to her. The woman turns her head, revealing that she is not Miss Froy. She is too young and dour. When Iris reacts, Gilbert asks if she is Miss Froy, and she says she's Madame Kummer. The doctor approaches and offers another psychological theory: "In your subconscious mind you substituted for the face of Madame Kummer that of Miss Froy." Iris is stunned and reiterates that Miss Froy is real and this woman isn't her. Gilbert asks Madame Kummer to come with them to verify whether or not she's the woman the adulteress saw.



A little lie- Gilbert, Iris, the doctor, and Madame Kummer leave the compartment and approach the Todhunters' private compartment. Eric opens the door, and the group addresses his mistress, asking if Madame Kummer was the woman she saw before. The adulteress thinks for several heartbeats, remembering Eric's warning about his wife. "Yes," she finally says, "She's the woman." Iris is irate: This isn't Miss Froy. The adulteress reiterates that Madame Kummer is the woman she saw in the passageway before, her face betraying her lie. Eric closes the door and lowers the blind once more. "Aren't you going to gloat?" his mistress asks. "What am I expected to say?" he responds, "You only did it to save your own skin."



Teatime- Iris is distraught. She knows the woman was lying, but she doesn't understand why. "Do you believe this nonsense about substituting Miss Froy's face for Madame Kummer's?" she asks Gilbert. "Well, I think any change would be an improvement," he replies. Iris notices Gilbert following her closely and compares him to a pet dog. "Let's say a watchdog," he cracks, "I've got all the better instincts." Iris tries to distance herself from him by shutting the compartment door, but as she looks around, she sees Miss Froy's face everywhere. She laments, partially caving to the peer pressure seeing as no one believes her that Miss Froy is real. Gilbert suggests they go to the dining car and have a snack for tea.



Tea and revelations- The pair enters the bustling dining car and sits at the same table where Iris and Miss Froy shared tea. Gilbert opens the window to let in a breeze. They start a conversation, Iris saying she doesn't want to meet her fiancé in such a nervous state. Gilbert looks disappointed that she's not single, asking if she's not imagining her upcoming wedding as well. He begins talking about his father, but Iris is distracted. "Harriman's Herbal Tea. A million Mexicans drink it," she muses as she remembers that Miss Froy gave the waiter a packet.

Evidence on the window- The conversation continues, but Iris' attention falters again. "Look," she says, staring at the window: 'FROY' is written on the window, clear as day. It disappears as the train enters a tunnel and new condensation clings to the window. Iris bursts into a panic, telling the diners in the car about the missing woman before pulling the emergency brake at the front of the car.



"10 minutes late"- Charters and Caldicott relax in the compartment as a beautiful landscape appears through the window behind them. "Ten minutes late, thanks to that fool of a girl," complains Charters, saying any further delays and they'll miss the cricket match. "People just don't vanish," mutters Caldicott. "She has," replies Charters, "the old dame." They both spoke to Miss Froy during their paltry dinner in the lodge. "How could she?" Caldicott ponders. Finding no answer, he says this supports his original point. Charters brings up the Indian 'rope trick,' and Caldicott responds, "It never comes out in a photograph."



“Popular as a dose of strychnine”- The doctor comforts Iris in her compartment. He says there will be a stop soon where he and his patient will disembark. “If you will come with me,” he suggests, “you could stay overnight in a private ward.” “Nothing doing,” Iris replies. Gilbert asks if anything can be done, and Iris replies, “Find Miss Froy.” The doctor speaks privately with Gilbert, asking him to convince Iris to rest as she likes him. “I’m about as popular as a dose of strychnine,” Gilbert chuckles. The doctor recommends mixing the strychnine with sugar before leaving.



Evidence in the rubbish- Gilbert considers what the doctor said, taking a moment to light his pipe before tending to Iris. As he does this, the chef in the car ahead tosses a bowl full of rubbish out of the window. Coated with garbage, a piece of paper clings to the window and catches Gilbert's attention. 'Harriman's Herbal Tea. A million Mexicans drink it.' A gust catches the wrapper, but Gilbert knows what he saw. He sits beside Iris in the compartment, eyeing the other occupants. “Cosmopolitan train, this. People of all nations,” he mutters to Iris, I've just seen at least a million Mexicans in the corridor.” They leave together and huddle in the connection between the two passenger cars for privacy. “You’re right,” Gilbert says, “Miss Froy is on this train.” He suggests they search the train.



Baggage car- Upon entering the baggage car, Gilbert calls it a “supply service for trunk murderers.” They look around for a moment and Iris notices something moving inside a large wicker hamper. Gilbert rushes to untie the ropes holding it shut. “It’s alright, Miss Froy,” he says. “It’s only us.” Inside, a calf stares up at them. They laugh but continue the search. “Faint heart never found an old lady,” says Gilbert. They continue rummaging through the baggage in the car when something falls and they see a cutout figure, whom they recognize. “It’s our Italian friend!” cries Gilbert. The smiling man is the cutout figure, named The Great Doppo, a renowned magician whose signature act is ‘The Vanishing Lady.’ “Maybe he’s practicing on Miss Froy,” Gilbert remarks.



“My dear Watson”- After accidentally releasing Doppo’s caged doves, they continue rifling through his belongings. A large box with an opening draws their attention; Gilbert steps in and disappears. Surprised, Iris follows after him when the false compartment swings back around, revealing Gilbert and trapping her. As Gilbert tries to work the magic box, Iris falls out the back through a thin panel. Sitting on the floor, Iris reminds Gilbert that he was about to share his theory. “My theory, dear Watson,” the man says, as he picks up a nearby detective’s hat and smokes his pipe, “is that we are in very deep waters indeed.” They conclude that a conspiracy is afoot. While Gilbert is joking about searching the train in disguise, Iris spots Miss Froy’s glasses on his face.



Doppo appears- Gilbert says he found the glasses on the floor, broken. As the two stoop down to collect the broken fragments, celebrating the discovery of tangible proof, a hand moves menacingly toward them. Doppo reaches down to grasp the glasses, catching them off guard. He claims the glasses belong to him. Gilbert refuses to believe it and starts a fight. Doppo tries to strangle him, and the two tumble into the belongings strewn about the car. From the floor, Gilbert urges Iris to help: “Don’t just stand there like a referee!” Facing two people and desperate, Doppo draws a knife but is quickly disarmed, knocked over the head, and trapped in a trunk.



“Hard work, but worth it”- Iris and Gilbert sit on the trunk, victorious over Doppo. “Ah. Hard work, but worth it,” Gilbert sighs before asking for the ‘evidence.’ Iris says she doesn’t have the spectacles that Doppo did. They stand and open the trunk, finding it empty. With a hearty bang of his fist, Gilbert reveals the false back Doppo used to escape. They realize Doppo must have already warned his co-conspirators. Gilbert is unsure who to trust, but Iris brings up Dr. Hartz immediately. “He might help,” says Gilbert. “Let’s tell him the symptoms.”



Suspicious nun- Iris and Gilbert peek into the doctor's cabin, but they only see his patient and the nun who came aboard earlier. Gilbert closes the compartment door and subjects Iris to his 'particularly idiotic idea.' He thinks the patient might be Miss Froy. Iris points out that the patient boarded after Miss Froy disappeared. Gilbert says they should find the doctor and begins to walk off when Iris pulls him aside. "Did you notice anything wrong about that nun?" she asks before telling Gilbert, "I don't think she's a nun at all. They don't wear high heels." They discuss what they think happened: Madame Kummer boarded, disguised as the patient, and changed into Miss Froy's clothes, while Miss Froy became the patient. Iris wonders why they would go through all this trouble to kidnap an old woman. "Perhaps it isn't a governess at all," says Gilbert. "Perhaps it's some political thing."



The doctor's plan- Iris and Gilbert barge back into the doctor's compartment, quickly trying to unravel the gauze covering the patient's face. "What are you doing here?" the doctor asks from the doorway, "You have no business to be here at all, neither of you." When Iris states they believe the patient to be Miss Froy, the doctor invites them to the dining car where they may find more privacy. With them gone, the doctor turns to the nun and speaks in Italian. "How the devil do I know how they cottoned on?" the nun replies. "Somebody must have tipped them off." The doctor devises a quick plan to poison Iris and Gilbert, asking the nun to slip a chemical into their two drinks.



Drinks in the dining car- Dr. Hartz joins Iris and Gilbert in the dining car. "Have you ever actually seen your patient?" asks Gilbert. When he says he hasn't, they reiterate their belief that someone has swapped places with Miss Froy. A waiter approaches, and the doctor orders a green chartreuse before convincing the others to order a pair of brandies. The doctor answers a couple more questions before Iris and Gilbert explain the conspiracy. He is agreeable, claiming there could be no other explanation. The drinks come, and the doctor encourages Iris and Gilbert to drink. After drinking, Dr. Hartz offers to examine the patient to confirm it is not Miss Froy.



Examining the patient- Back in the first-class car, the doctor invites Iris and Gilbert to wait in the private compartment next to his. He enters his compartment and addresses the nun: “They noticed you were wearing high heels.” She looks displeased, but he assures her there’s no need for alarm, “We shall reach Morsken in three minutes.” He leaves his cabin and enters the one beside it. “The patient is Miss Froy,” he says, adding that she will be taken off the train at the next stop. Iris and Gilbert look confused as Dr. Hartz explains that she will be the victim of a failed operation.



Gunpoint confession- Gilbert jumps to his feet only to freeze when the doctor presses something into his side through his pocket. The rectangular shape is unmistakable as a gun. “You see,” the doctor continues, “I am in this conspiracy as you term it.” He sits, keeping the gun trained on them as he tells them of their current dilemma. His accomplice slipped a drug called Hydrocin into their drinks, and it will soon render them comatose. Iris passes out. Dr. Hartz apologizes for taking what he calls a “melodramatic course” before Gilbert falls limply to the seat.



Locked in- Gilbert awakens as soon as the doctor leaves the compartment. He was playing possum. He rouses Iris, telling her Miss Froy will be murdered if they don’t do something. They come to the conclusion that action will help them stay conscious, and they try to unlock the door linking their compartment to the doctor’s. Gilbert, not wanting to be detected, climbs out the window and along the car. Iris tries to stop him, but he says it’s the only way, encouraging her to do anything she can to stay awake. Gilbert makes his way to the next compartment. Iris’ scream joins a train whistle as another train passes on the adjoining track, nearly crushing Gilbert between the rushing locomotives.



Unexpected double-cross- The nun pretends to pray in the doctor's compartment when she's interrupted by Gilbert as he climbs through the window. She watches for a moment as he decides not to bind and gag her, encouraging him to unravel the gauze covering the patient. "You haven't been drugged," she assures him. "He told me to put something in your drink, but I didn't do it." Gilbert asks who she is, having assumed she was deaf. "If you want to save her," the nun replies, "you've got to hurry." Together, they quickly unravel the gauze and bindings holding the patient to the gurney.



The lady appears- Madame Kummer strolls down the corridor. Inside the doctor's compartment, the nun rolls up the gauze and other bindings as she discusses a plan to distract the doctor. Miss Froy sits on the gurney, looking stunned. Suddenly, Madame Kummer walks into the compartment. Gilbert quickly tackles her, pushing her onto the gurney. In another compartment, Dr. Hartz counts out a stack of bills, saying something in Italian as he hands the cash to Doppo. The magician requests more money in Italian, most likely for the beating he received in the baggage car.



Deceiving the doctor- Back in the doctor's compartment, Gilbert takes Miss Froy into the adjoining compartment where Iris is doing calisthenics to keep alert. Gilbert startles her with a slap on her rear, telling her she's not drugged and surprising her with Miss Froy. The two women embrace. Iris' elated squeals result in a whispered warning from Gilbert. Dr. Hartz walks down the corridor outside the private compartments, entering his own after pausing at the one that holds Gilbert, Iris, and Miss Froy. He asks if the nun is ready before entering the adjoining compartment. Gilbert and Iris lie there, as before, pretending to be unconscious. Satisfied, the doctor leaves. Gilbert sits up and opens a nearby cupboard, and Miss Froy sits inside, with her legs against her chest. "It's rather like the rush hour on the underground," she jokes.



Ambulance- Gilbert notices that the train is slowing. He cracks the compartment door so he and Iris have a view of the ambulance waiting at the station. Dr. Hartz approaches two uniformed men who accompany him to the train to retrieve the patient. "I'm sorry you've had such an uncomfortable journey, Miss Froy," the doctor says when he is in the rear of the ambulance. He notices hair sticking out from under the gauze and parts the bandages to investigate further. Madame Kummer takes a great breath like she's about to shout, but he stifles her with his hands, glaring at the passenger car.



Disconnected- The nun begins to disembark, but the doctor blocks her and orders her back onto the train. He moves away from the train, speaking to two men in uniform on the platform. "Aren't we stopping rather a long time?" Iris asks Gilbert. Outside the train, Dr. Hartz oversees a rail worker disconnecting the rear cars from the train. The shortened train blows its horn and rolls away, the doctor hopping on board. "Another couple of minutes and we'll be over the border," Gilbert says to Iris.



Conspiracy broken- The Baroness scolds the nun in the doctor's compartment. "But this was murder," says the nun, "and... she was an Englishwoman." The Baroness questions her patriotism before the doctor speaks: "Your little diversion made it necessary not only to remove the lady in question...but two others as well." "You can't do that," the nun replies snidely. "It would be unwise of us to permit the existence of anyone who cannot be trusted," the doctor continues. When the nun replies that she knows too much, the Baroness responds, "Precisely."



Branch line- “I think we’re over the border now,” says Gilbert as he frees Miss Froy from the cupboard. The old woman thanks him as he lifts her out and places her on a seat. “Now that it’s over,” he says, “I think you ought to tell us what it’s all about.” Miss Froy begins to respond, but a scream interrupts her from Dr. Hartz’s compartment. Iris wants to believe it was only the train’s whistle, but Gilbert is sure it was a woman’s scream and leaves to investigate. At the rear of the car, he finds the doors open to empty air. “We’re on a branch line and they’ve slipped the rear part of the train,” he reports to Iris and Miss Froy. He demands to know what is going on from Miss Froy once more, but she maintains that she’s a governess.



An English tradition- “I wonder if there’s anybody else left on the train,” says Gilbert. Iris says there’s only the dining car. There shouldn’t be anyone inside. Gilbert notes that it’s teatime and suspects that some of the Englishmen aboard may be there. As Gilbert thought, several people sit at the tables in the dining car, speaking with the waiters. “There’s the old girl turned up,” Charters says, seeing Miss Froy enter the car. “Told you it was a lot of fuss about nothing,” replies Caldicott. Gilbert addresses the car and explains the conspiracy, but no one believes him. Even as the train comes to a halt in the middle of the forest, the others refuse to believe anything is amiss. Only when Gilbert mentions that the rear cars have been uncoupled does anyone start to take notice.



Bound nun- When Gilbert leads Caldicott to the rear of the train to show him it’s been uncoupled, the nun falls through the door to the dining car. She’s bound and gagged. The two men carry her to a seat where they untie her and give her some brandy. “Someone’s coming!” Iris whispers as a military officer approaches the train. “They can’t possibly do anything to us,” says Eric, “We’re British subjects.” The officer boards the train and addresses the occupants of the dining car, apologizing for the delay and asking them to accompany him to the British embassy in a nearby city. The nun whispers something to Gilbert, who distracts the officer before beating him over the head with a chair.



“You were right”- The others in the car are confused and frightened by Gilbert’s attack. They were ready to comply with the officer’s orders. “You heard what he said, didn’t you?” asks one of the men. “I heard what she said,” Gilbert says. “That was a trick to get us off the train.” One of the train attendants speaks to the doctor in Italian by the cars outside. Inside the dining car, Charters says he’s going to speak with the officers and put things right. As he disembarks, the Baroness says something to an officer who draws a pistol and fires. Charters looks shocked and reenters the dining car. “You were right,” he calmly states as he tends to his wounded hand.



A nasty jam- The people in the dining car watch the activity of the soldiers around the cars. “They can’t do anything,” says Eric. “It would mean an international situation!” “It’s happened before,” Miss Froy replies solemnly. A group of soldiers led by Dr. Hartz approaches the train. The nun shouts, “Don’t let them in! They’ll murder us.” Gilbert takes the gun from the unconscious officer on the floor and stands by the window. Dr. Hartz demands immediate surrender. “Nothing doing,” Gilbert replies. “Come any nearer, I’ll fire.” He makes true on his promise, shooting a soldier. “Better take cover,” Gilbert recommends. “Nasty jam, this,” comments Caldicott from the floor.



“Must be getting along”- A lengthy shootout begins as the soldiers spread out and open fire on the train. Eric’s mistress wrestles with him, drawing Caldicott’s attention. It seems the man has a gun but is unwilling to use it as he is a pacifist. Caldicott muses about contradiction as he takes the gun and begins firing at the soldiers. Miss Froy pulls Gilbert and Iris aside, finally ready to confide in them. They move towards the passenger car for privacy. “I just wanted to tell you that I must be getting along now,” she says to them. When they say it’s madness, she insists that she has to try. Before she leaves, she confides an odd message to Gilbert, hoping he can remember a specific tune that holds an encoded message, the same one the busker sang outside the lodge in Bandrica. As she hums the tune for Gilbert to memorize, the others in the car comment that she must have gone insane.



Failed surrender- Having helped lower Miss Froy from the train, Gilbert and Iris return to the dining car and take cover. Gilbert asks for help restarting the train, and Caldicott agrees to help. Eric calls it all madness, saying pacifism is the answer. Despite the arguments of others, he disembarks from the car with a handkerchief as a white flag. The military officers open fire, and he falls to the ground, asking them to stop shooting as he dies. The others look horrified for a moment. Charters renews the gunfight, taking a few shots before ducking back into cover.



Restarting the train- Caldicott and Gilbert climb over the train's tender, staying low to avoid gunfire. "Why aren't we going?!" cries Eric's mistress. Charters comments that he only has one shot left as the soldiers begin to advance: "Pity we haven't a few more rounds." Those left in the dining car give in to despair as the soldiers draw closer. "Gads!" Charters cries as the train jolts, "We're off!" The train reverses down the line while the soldiers scramble back to the cars. Gilbert stands next to the engine, pointing Eric's empty pistol at the engineers. "Keep going," he orders as shots ricochet around them.



Chase- Inside the moving cars, soldiers take shots, striking both engineers in an attempt to stop the train. Gilbert takes the helm, claiming to know something about steam engines, as Caldicott acts as his eyes, peeking around the dining car. The occupants of the dining car watch the pursuing cars, hoping it won't be long before they lose them. The unconscious officer on the floor comes to, grabs the gun on the table, and holds the dining car hostage. But he doesn't notice the nun.

Jolly good luck- Iris gives her a chance to escape and redirect the train by telling the officer that he only has one bullet left. The train slows to a stop at a switch. "Where the devil is Charters?" asks Caldicott as the nun exits the train and pushes the lever to make the switch. The soldiers stop their cars and open fire. Gilbert restarts the train and lifts the nun into the engine room with Caldicott's help. She is shot on the way in, but only through her leg. The Baroness and Dr. Hartz speak to each other in a foreign language on the roadside. "Or as they say in English," he smiles, "jolly good luck to them." The train backs down the track toward freedom.



Back in England- Several trains and a ferry flash across the screen, showing the trip back to London in seconds. Gilbert hums the tune Miss Froy sang for him as Iris powders her face in a private compartment on a train. "Well," she says, "we're home, Gilbert." He nods enthusiastically, still humming. She complains about his singing, but he says he's not taking risks with Miss Froy's message. "Charles be here to meet you?" he asks. Iris says she believes so. Gilbert jokes that she'll be busy between now and Thursday, and she offers to meet him for a meal sometime soon. He declines, making excuses about delivering the tune and writing his book.



Waiting for Charles- The platform is full of activity when Iris and Gilbert disembark. Charters and Caldicott celebrate being back in time to catch their cricket match only to see a newsboy carrying a placard that reads: "Test Match Abandoned: Floods". Gilbert continues humming the tune as he and Iris look up and down the platform. "No sign of Charles yet?" he asks. She says she doesn't see him, and Gilbert tries to bid her farewell. Suddenly, she pulls Gilbert into a nearby taxi. Gilbert realizes they're hiding from Charles and pulls Iris in for a kiss. The cabbie asks if they're going anywhere, and Gilbert responds, "Foreign Office."



Foreign Office- Iris and Gilbert laugh and joke on a couch in a lobby. "Where are we going for our honeymoon?" asks Iris. "I don't know. Somewhere quiet," Gilbert replies, "Somewhere where there are no trains." A man beckons them forward and they walk towards the office when Gilbert stops Iris. "It's all gone," he says, shocked. Gilbert can't remember the tune. As he tries unsuccessfully to remember, a piano plays the melody in the next room. Iris and Gilbert enter slowly, the camera following them. As the tune ends, Iris exclaims, "Miss Froy!" The old woman beams at them, reaching to take their hands as they rush forward to greet her.



THEMES

POLITICS

Intrigue- Intrigue is at the heart of *The Lady Vanishes*. Even in the film's first moments, a mystery appears concerning Charters' and Caldicott's worries about England. We quickly come to see these worries are based in a cricket obsession. A more serious intrigue continues as the busker singing outside the lodge is murdered by an unseen attacker. Another unseen attacker tries to drop a flower pot on Miss Froy's head at the train station, striking Iris instead. Through this, we see the widespread nature of the conspiracy running throughout *The Lady Vanishes*: Already, we don't know who to trust. This becomes a repeated theme as it seems the train's staff has been paid off, and the Englishmen and women aboard the train have no interest in being involved with Iris and her ravings about a missing woman. Money and apathy cannot change reality, though Gilbert catches on to the conspiracy when he sees Miss Froy's tea packet thrown out with the kitchen garbage. The intrigue continues as they seek Dr. Hartz's help only to find that he is the ringleader of the conspiracy. Intrigue proves too much for the diners, and what Gilbert, Iris, and Miss Froy say is too preposterous to believe. It takes Charters getting shot for them to realize that the odd trio is telling the truth about the conspiracy. That the tune Miss Froy sings to Gilbert is the same one the busker sang in *Bandrica* cements the idea that intrigue has been at work during the whole film, that every action has had some hidden purpose for either side of the espionage.

PSYCHOLOGY

Courage- Bravery is a minor theme though it occurs at key points in the film. Iris' ability to stick to her gut instinct when everyone around her denies the existence of Miss Froy is incredibly courageous. In the same situation, most of us would have given up or believed we were hallucinating. Against the odds, the young woman brings enough attention to the conspiracy that it falls to pieces. Gilbert and Iris show bravery in the fight with Doppo in the baggage car. Even when the magician brandishes a knife at Gilbert, Iris bites the man's hand until he drops the weapon, allowing them to subdue him. Facing threats to their lives -such as poisoning and a gunfight- they continue to seek out and protect Miss Froy. Especially given his rude and thoughtless behavior at the beginning of the film, Gilbert's actions seem especially brave. Not only does he face many dangers, he does it all to help a woman he's never met. Miss Froy, too, faces the soldiers' bullets to flee the train and take the hidden message home, showing great bravery in the face of a seemingly unstoppable force.

APPEARANCE

Deception/Appearance- Deception and appearance play into the intrigue of *The Lady Vanishes*, but they also act as a form of comedy and misdirection for the viewer. The first instance comes with Charters' and Caldicott's introduction. They discuss their need to contact someone in England, that the country was "on the brink" in the last report they read. This report leads us to believe that they are perhaps spies or at least important businessmen. It turns out they are fanatical followers of cricket. The longest appearance-based deception is Miss Froy's: Even after her release from the gurney, she maintains that she's just a simple governess and she doesn't know why the doctor wants to imprison and kill her. She eventually shows her hand when giving the encoded message to Gilbert to ensure a better chance that it makes it to the Foreign Office in London. Appearance helps Iris and Gilbert to see through deception at several points and even to create their own. A cutout of their Italian friend in the baggage car reveals he is a world-class magician. This deception was minor, but the magician's skill explains how a woman could disappear without anyone's notice, leading Iris and Gilbert closer to the heart of the conspiracy. Iris notices the nun's high heels, surmising she must be involved with the conspiracy as nuns don't wear fancy shoes. Then the nun guards Miss Froy, imprisoned and disguised under several layers of bandages as the doctor's important patient. Dr. Hartz's deception almost works when he fools the young couple into drinking drugged brandy, but the nun's deception against the doctor keeps them from coming to harm. Dr. Hartz is nearly fooled by Gilbert and Iris' deception when they replace Miss Froy with Madame Kummer on the gurney. The doctor notices the sloppy bandages and Madame Kummer's hair just in time to think up a new plan to deal with the meddlers and recapture Miss Froy. The appearance and charming speech

of the military officers when the train stops on the branch line keep the conspiracy going, that is until Charters is shot trying to speak with the fake officials.

Language- Language and misunderstanding play a major role in *The Lady Vanishes*. Comic misunderstandings at the film's beginning lead Charters and Caldicott to believe the manager has set them up for a sexual encounter with the maid when he offers to let them her room. When he says the maid needs to be able to "take off her wardrobe," his broken English is taken as an amorous invitation rather than allowing the young woman access to the possessions stored in her wardrobe. Some of the dialogue is in an artificially constructed language (a mashup of several European tongues), created by the director in order to make the setting ambiguous. However, at times, we also hear French, Italian, German and Yiddish. The use of several languages shows the general cultural complexity of the region in which the characters travel. The Alps divide many European nations and act as a sort of melting pot of cultures, languages, and dialects. The conspirators use the English characters' general lack of language comprehension to their advantage, speaking in other languages to hide what they're saying and speak about the conspiracy in the hearing of others. Gilbert and the nun seem to be the only two English travelers with any knowledge of other European languages. The capacity to speak multiple languages can be seen as a sign that someone is involved in the conspiracy to eliminate Miss Froy.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Iris Henderson

Iris is a young socialite taking one last trip with her friends before marrying a nobleman her father wishes her to wed for business reasons. Her trip changes when a falling flower pot concusses her just before she boards the train home. When the woman who helped her after her head injury disappears, Iris begins a crusade to find her.

Adventurous The only reason Iris is in Bandrica at the start of the film is her love of adventure. It seems her most recent trek proved too much, as she and her friends caught a farmer's cart back into town from the mountains, arriving earlier than expected for their return trip home. Through conversation with her friends, we learn that this excursion may be her last: She is being married off to a 'blue-blooded check-chaser' to help her father's business. She seems to value her freedom, beginning her travels back to England alone, save for Miss Froy, who helps her after she is injured. With her love of adventure, it's no wonder that it takes Gilbert so little effort to convince her to investigate Miss Froy's disappearance. It's also unsurprising when Iris helps Gilbert overpower and capture Doppo when he attacks them. It is surprising, however, when she puts herself in the line of fire to allow the nun to escape from the dining car undetected. The excitement of adventure and her stunning willpower allow her to keep her cool as she tells the officer to waste his last bullet on her. Her love of adventure overpowers her familial duty when she chooses Gilbert over her fiancé, Charles, at the train station. Their shared adventure has transformed into a blossoming romance.

Intelligent Iris is also quick-witted and good at solving puzzles. She notices things other people don't as well, such as Miss Froy's name written on the glass in the dining car and the nun's high heels. Combined with her strong will, her intelligence allows her to question the deception the conspirators use to try and cover Miss Froy's disappearance. Through discovering Doppo's true identity, Iris realizes that he has something to do with Miss Froy's disappearance and Madame Kummer's appearance, an idea Gilbert is ready to give up on after a single argument from the witty young woman. Her intelligence and love for adventure allow her to act quickly in the dining car after the shootout and enable the nun to escape so that she can redirect the train. She astutely observes that the officer only has one bullet left and only one of his captives has to die so the others may go free, holding the man's attention until the nun can escape undetected.

Strong-willed Iris' strong will is apparent from her introduction. She and her friends dominate the attention of the lodge's manager, who ignores the stranded travelers in the lobby to attend to their room service orders. She is the obvious leader of her group of friends, calling them "my children" as they discuss her upcoming marriage and toast her. Her strong will plays into her first interactions with Gilbert: His rude,

late-night folk dancing keeps Iris from sleeping, and she bribes the manager to kick him out. Their strong wills clash when Gilbert invades her room until she convinces the manager to give him his room back. Iris' strength of will is the main reason Miss Froy is even discovered. She refuses to believe the others who lie and tell her Miss Froy never existed. Through her insistence and willpower, she convinces Gilbert that something is afoot. Together, these two willful individuals shatter a conspiracy that would put not only Miss Froy but all of Europe in danger.

Gilbert

Gilbert is a musicologist traveling Europe, researching for his book about European folk dances. He is portrayed as rude and arrogant in the film's beginning. Through his actions with Iris, however, we see that he has a heart of gold.

Insensitive While it comes from a place of wit and intelligence, Gilbert can be incredibly coarse. His introduction shows us he doesn't think of others as he orders several hotel workers to perform a loud stomping folk dance while the other guests have settled in for the night. He shows no remorse for his behavior, instead harassing Iris when he learns that she bribed the manager to kick him out. This behavior arises once more when he recognizes Iris on the train, calling her "old stinker" and teasing her. While he does become sensitive to her dilemma, it takes nearly half the film and leads them to throw several people's belongings all around the baggage car in the search for evidence.

Playful There is something playful in nearly everything Gilbert does. Even though it is incredibly unkind, he seems like a child interrupted during playtime when the manager tells him he has to stop the loud folk dancing. Although he is simply taking his revenge on Iris when he invades her room, there is a simple childishness to his actions as he tosses her belongings aside and crawls over her in the bed. Gilbert's playfulness doesn't stop aboard the train either. He teases Iris relentlessly when they first meet on the train, giving her grief for possibly seeing things after hitting her head. The teasing becomes play acting in the baggage car when Gilbert becomes Sherlock Holmes after donning a costume hat, calling Iris his 'Watson' and awarding her with a cigar for her correct deduction. His playfulness shows when he slaps Iris' bottom to get her attention when he frees Miss Froy and as they joke about their honeymoon in the lobby of the Foreign Office.

Confident Gilbert's crass and swaggering nature shows a great amount of confidence. He believes he can get away with his behavior. Gilbert also shows confidence in his profession as a musicologist, saying his book will be "a very long" one when Iris comments on its late publishing date. His confidence shows most clearly in the film's final scenes when his plan to trick the doctor nearly works because of his self-belief. He and Iris pretend to be unconscious while Miss Froy hides in the cabinet. The plan might have succeeded if whoever wrapped Madame Kummer's face had tucked her hair out of sight. Later, Gilbert takes and uses the officer's gun without a second thought and seizes control of the steam engine when the engineers are killed by gunfire. The young man's confidence drives him to kiss Iris in the taxi at the train station when he realizes she's not committed to her fiancé.

Miss Froy

Miss Froy is an old woman seemingly on holiday in the Alps. When she goes missing aboard the train, it seems she is involved in some greater conspiracy. After her eventual rescue, we learn she is a secret agent for England carrying a secret message.

Friendly Miss Froy is incredibly friendly. We see this several times in the lodge. First, she shares her table and food with the cricket fanatics, Charters and Caldicott, even though their behavior is boorish. She loves the local people, comparing their attitudes to happy children because of their friendly and musical nature. Miss Froy and Iris bond incredibly quickly when Gilbert's folk dancing becomes too loud for the both of them. They seem to strike up a conversation naturally, cementing their future relationship. Her friendliness continues as she helps the injured Iris onto the train and even purchases tea and food for her.

Careful Miss Froy doesn't let anything slip. Even after she is rescued by Gilbert and Iris, the spy refuses to give away any information that might harm her mission. Only when there is no other option, she gives Gilbert the tune that holds a coded message. Although we don't see much of this trait on screen, it's clear that Dr. Hartz and his co-conspirators had to go to great lengths to catch Miss Froy, employing many people outside his inner group for help. Were the governess not so careful, she would have disappeared before getting onto the train.

Dr. Hartz

Dr. Hartz is the main antagonist of *The Lady Vanishes*. His role begins as that of a psychologist interested in Iris' symptoms after a head injury, but we soon learn he is at the heart of the conspiracy to kidnap Miss Froy.

Calm Dr. Hartz uses his calm nature to cover his plans at several points in the film. Because of this trait and because of his medical degree, the doctor is the first person Iris and Gilbert think to include in their investigation. Little do they know he is the leader of the conspiracy. The doctor uses this to his advantage, attempting to poison the meddlers. A double-cross within the conspiracy nearly tricks him when the nun helps Iris and Gilbert, refusing to slip the drug in their drinks and releasing Miss Froy. Dr. Hartz realizes this at the last moment and calmly executes a new plan, singling out the nun as the one who helped Miss Froy. His calm attitude extends beyond the gunfight and the failed chase. His final line is "jolly good luck to them" said with a smile. Even defeat doesn't shake him.

Planner Through the second half of the film, we see Dr. Hartz concoct and carry out many plans. Some happen on screen, such as his conversation with the nun about drugging the drinks, while others are ongoing, like the plot to kidnap Miss Froy. We can assume the doctor had something to do with the death of the busker and the pushed flower pot in Bandrica as they could have stopped her from hearing and delivering the secret tune, this film's MacGuffin. He rapidly changes plans when he is tricked by the nun. Perhaps Dr. Hartz had planned for such an occurrence, as two carloads of soldiers respond when he shunts the train onto a branch line. This plan almost works as the diners seem willing to comply with the well-spoken officer who orders them into the cars. However, the Baroness orders the soldiers to fire, which convinces the others in the dining car that Gilbert and Iris have been right all along.