



*Cambridge Vintage Mystery Theatre  
Presents:  
Episode 13 in the Casebook of the  
Marshall Sisters Detective Agency*

*The Horrible Haunting  
Hidden History*

*by Siobhán Bredín  
October 2023*

### Cast in Order of Appearance

Announcer		Damon Singletary
Louise Marshall		Laurie Singletary
Edwin B. Jourdain, Jr.*		Damon Singletary
Mrs. Meyers		Linda Pizzotti
Madame Mystica		Betty Bredin
Priscilla		Lauren Foster
Alice Marshall		Linda Pizzotti
William Defrothingham II		Jim Vetter
Joe		Jim Vetter
Queenie		Siobhan Bredin
Adina White*		Lauren Foster
Herbert L. Wolff*		Damon Singletary
Dorothy Arzner*		Laurie Singletary
Professor Winslow		Damon Singletary

\*Actual historical figures. Their activities in this play are fictional.

### Synopsis of Scenes: 1929 - Cambridge MA

ACT I	Scene 1	WCMB Radio
	Scene 2	Marshall Detective Agency
	Scene 3	Refined Ladies Tea Shoppe
ACT II	Scene 1	Defrothingham House, Tory Row
	Scene 2	Mount Auburn Cemetery
	Scene 2	Refined Ladies Tea Shoppe
ACT III	Scene 1	Old Burying Ground
	Scene 2	Marshall Detective Agency
	Scene 3	Refined Ladies Tea Shoppe

## SB

Welcome to First Parish Cambridge! I'm Siobhan Bredin, author of today's play, and director of Cambridge Vintage Mystery Theatre. I'm also a member of this church. In support of truth and reconciliation, I honor the native Massachusetts people—past, present and future—and acknowledge that this church is located on land that was their ancestral homeland and was taken from them. Before we start the performance, I would like to thank several people.

- Dennis Lloyd and Egypt Lloyd, founders of the Slave Legacy History Coalition, for allowing me to include their ancestor, Herbert Wolff, in this play. Dennis and Egypt are joining us on Zoom today.
- Reverend Rob Hardies, minister of this church, for his sermon earlier this year telling the story of Cicely, based on research by Nicole Saffold Maskiell.
- The First Parish staff, community, and members of the Social Justice workgroups for their ongoing work and for their support for this performance

Today's play will be performed in the style of classic radio dramas from the 1930's and 40's, in which actors read from scripts in front of a live audience while the show is broadcast on the radio, or in today's case, on Zoom.

## NARRATOR

Live from First Parish Cambridge, Cambridge Vintage Mystery Players are pleased to present the 13th episode in the Casebook of the Marshall Sisters Detective Agency.

It's 1929, and, as usual, the Marshall Sisters are in the middle of a mystery. Are the new shocking allegations about Cambridge and Harvard founders true? Should the Marshall Sisters use their detective skills to investigate on behalf of descendants? And why are dueling Hollywood talkie directors lurking about graveyards in the dead of night?

Find out in "The Horrible Haunting Hidden History!"

**ACT I**  
**Scene I: WCMB Radio**

LOUISE

Good morning, Cambridge! This is Louise Marshall and I welcome you to Shocking Secrets here on WCMB Radio – Cambridge's first and only radio station.

My guest this morning is Edwin B. Jourdain, Jr., who graduated from Harvard with an undergraduate degree last year and is now a current student at Harvard Business School. Welcome Mr. Jourdain!

EDWIN

Thank you, Miss Marshall. It's a pleasure to talk with you today.

LOUISE

Mr. Jourdain, you have been in the news lately for your advocacy on behalf of negro freshman at Harvard who have been banned from the dormitories in a reversal of previous policy. Can you tell our listeners more about this controversy?

EDWIN

When I was a freshman at Harvard, five years ago, I lived in the dormitory. I learned about this change of policy when my friend and fellow New Bedford native, John Knox, an incoming freshman, first received dormitory information, and then, after his in-person interview, received a letter rescinding his dormitory access.

When he contacted Harvard to question this change, he was told that negro students were not permitted to live in freshman dorms.

LOUISE

That seems really unfair. Was Mr. Knox given a reason for the policy change?

EDWIN

The reason given by Dean Chase, on behalf of President Lowell, was that, while negro students were allowed in voluntary residence and dining halls, they were excluded from the freshman halls because residence in those dormitories was compulsory (for whites). Here is a direct quote "those students whose social prejudice against the negro is strong can hardly be compelled into an association that, rightly or wrongly, is repugnant to them."

LOUISE

That IS outrageous. As a current graduate student at the university, wasn't it intimidating to confront the president and the dean?

EDWIN

I was encouraged to challenge authority and work to change society's rules by my father, Edwin Jourdain Sr., a cofounder, with W. E. B. Du Bois, and others from Cambridge, Boston, and beyond, of the Niagara Movement, the precursor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

LOUISE

Yes, I learned about this work when I interviewed Gertrude Wright Morgan, and her husband, Clement Morgan a few years ago. Until I met them, I was unaware of the role that Cambridge negroes played in forming these activist groups. I think a lot of white people still do not know about this.

EDWIN

I think you are right, Miss Marshall. A lot of negro activism and major contributions to our nation are hidden in both the present and the past. I am happy to say, about the dormitory discrimination issue that J. Weldon Johnson, also a Harvard alumnus, and current Secretary of the NAACP, wrote an editorial in the New York Times that drew a lot of attention to the issue. He also circulated a petition which was signed by 149 fellow alumni and sent to President Lowell.

LOUISE

I read the New York Times editorial, and it was powerful, but I wasn't aware of the petition. Is that what eventually caused Harvard to change their policy back?

EDWIN

There were a number of factors, including the petition. Also, there has been a lot of newspaper coverage of the Nile Club, which I co-founded. It's a social organization for negroes at Harvard and our major focus has been to end segregation in Harvard's freshman halls. In addition to the petition and numerous editorials challenging the policy, an extensive letter writing campaign by negro alumni resulted in the policy being changed.

This situation was especially ironic, given that John Knox is a descendant of Harriet Jacobs, another Cambridge civil rights activist and author of *Diary of a Slave Girl*.

You mentioned earlier that most white people in Cambridge do not know about negro history and present and you are correct. In fact, the history of Harvard, the oldest university in the U.S., contains centuries of mistreatment of negroes and Indians.

LOUISE

What are some examples?

EDWIN

One of the early ministers of First Parish Cambridge, formerly known as First Church, which used to be part of Harvard, William Brattle, was a slaveholder. That church is now known as First Parish Cambridge. Many other leading figures in Cambridge and at Harvard were slaveholders of both negroes and Indians. Brattle also served as a Harvard tutor, fellow, and treasurer.

LOUISE

*Shocked*

First Parish Cambridge? But that's my church.

*Recovering her professionalism*

EDWIN

I'm sorry to have upset you, Miss Marshall, but these truths must be told and reckoned with if we are ever going to have a society in which the races are equal.

LOUISE

Thank you very much, Mr. Jourdain, for joining us today and for your ongoing work to make this a more equal society.

EDWIN

Thank you, Miss Marshall.

MEYERS

And just what do you call that? My phone has been ringing off the hook since your show started!

LOUISE

Well, good morning to you, Mrs. Meyers. Are you talking about my interview with Edwin B. Jourdain Jr.?

MEYERS

Of course I am! I've had Unitarians – whoever they are when they're at home – and Harvard deans calling me to complain about the scurrilous accusations about slaveholders in Cambridge. These are the bigwigs that run this city and I don't need them all over me like a cheap suit because of your show! Reminds me of when the City Council tried to shut down my high class Scenic Temple Vaudeville Theatre because Dolly's Dancing Darlings' skirts were a few inches too short.

LOUISE

Mrs. Meyers, our show features people from Cambridge and beyond who are telling the truth and advocating for social justice, which is bound to ruffle some feathers. That is part of the purpose of the show.

MEYERS

Ruffling feathers by telling the truth is fine and I've supported you and your guests before. But these accusations of slaveholding by the founding fathers of Cambridge and Harvard is another story. These bigwigs could shut down my radio station!!! And I am not going back to running a vaudeville theatre again!!

MYSTICA

I came early for my show because the spirits were telling me of terrible secrets to be revealed.

MEYERS

Oh, brother, here we go again. Madame Mystica, keep that mumbo jumbo stuff for your show, which doesn't start for 15 minutes.

MYSTICA

Cruelty, suffering, long buried truths crying out to be told.

**ACT I**  
**Scene 2: Marshall Sisters Detective Agency**

PRISCILLA

*Storming in without knocking*

Girls, you've just got to help me!

ALICE

*Sarcastically*

And a good morning to you too, Priscilla. Just storm right in without knocking.

LOUISE

I thought you and your Tory Row cronies always displayed impeccable manners!

PRISCILLA

Sorry to storm in like that but you are the only people who can help me. I was listening to your show...

ALICE | LOUISE

*Cutting her off*

We're the only ones who can help you?

You were listening to our show?

PRISCILLA

I will admit that I may have been a trifle snobbish about my social position and said some disparaging things about your show in the past...

ALICE | LOUISE

A trifle snobbish?!!!

Some disparaging things?!!!

PRISCILLA

I was about to switch the station when your show came on and I heard your interview with Mr. Jourdain. The information he shared about some of the founding fathers of Cambridge being slaveholders was shocking, I just couldn't believe it!

ALICE

We were shocked, too! Even with everything we've learned about the history of Cambridge and our own family history.

PRISCILLA

As you know, my fiance...

ALICE & LOUISE  
*Cutting her off In snooty voices*  
William Defrothingham the second!

PRISCILLA

...is descended from William Brattle. He happened to be in the living room when your show was on and he refuses to believe that his ancestors could have had anything to do with slavery.

LOUISE

I know.. I wasn't surprised about Harvard discriminating against negro students, but hearing that one of the first ministers of our church. . .

ALICE

The Unitarian church that supported abolition and women's suffrage...and was one of the first religions in the U.S. to ordain women ministers . . .

LOUISE

Was a slaveholder – was devastating.

WILLIAM

Here you are, Priscilla! I wondered where you went when you rushed out after the radio show!

ALICE

Sheesh. Just barge right in without knocking, why don't you. The standard of manners on Tory Row is definitely in decline, Louise, isn't it?

WILLIAM

I should have known you sassy Marshall girls with your so-called "detective agency" would speak to me like that. I'll have you know that I am descended from one of the founding families of Cambridge and Harvard...

LOUISE

Wake me up when you're done talking. What brings you to our "so-called" detective agency. Mr. Defrothingham?

PRISCILLA

William, calm down please. The Marshall sisters are the only people who can discreetly investigate your family's history and clear William Brattle's name. That's what you want, isn't it?

WILLIAM

You're right Priscilla. Apologies for my rudeness, Misses Marshall. It was just so shocking to hear the outrageous accusations made against my ancestor on your show this morning, one of the founders of Cambridge, for whom Brattle Street and Brattle Square are named.

LOUISE

I can understand how shocking these revelations must be for you, William. Alice and I were just talking about our shock at learning that your ancestor was one of the first ministers at our church and was a slaveholder during that time.

WILLIAM

Alleged slaveholder

PRISCILLA

William. Aren't you due for lunch with the Winthrops at the Harvard Club? I'll stay here and talk with Alice and Louise about your case.

WILLIAM

Thank you, dear. Good day, Misses Marshall.

ALICE

Phew! The ice will take a few moments to melt after his departure.

PRISCILLA

I'm sorry about that. He's just so upset about these allegations against his ancestor.

*Wheedling*

Girls, remember what great friends we were at Miss Cabot's School?

LOUISE

Say you! You and your snooty friends thought you were better than everyone else, including us!

PRISCILLA

Ok then. But we have known each other a long time and I would really appreciate it if you would help William. We won't be able to go ahead with the wedding until this is settled.

ALICE

Alright, we'll do it. But William may not like what we find out. We'll be looking for the real truth. The one we didn't learn about from our families, in our schools, or in our churches. And William has to agree to make a donation to a Cambridge negro organization if it turns out that his ancestor was a slaveholder.

PRISCILLA

Thank you! William's mother is looking for a social secretary, so I'll recommend one of you for the job. Who's going to do it?

LOUISE | ALICE

Not me!

LOUISE

Remember our previous cases when I had to be sawed in half for a vaudeville act AND work in the chocolate dipping room at the candy factory?

ALICE

And do you remember when I had to be a secretary to that fake medium on Beacon Hill AND to the president of the candy factory? At least you got to eat chocolate.

**ACT I**  
**Scene 3: Refined Ladies Tea Shoppe**

JOE

Hey, youse dames, I mean ladies, can't just walk in here unless you know the password....

QUEENIE

*Cutting him off...*

Joe, remember that during the day we are the Refined Ladies Tea Shoppe. It's only at night that people need the password. Louise, Alice – welcome to my “teashop!” That was a shocking show today!

LOUISE

Wasn't it, Queenie! What a great idea to stick to the teashop you set up for the “visit” from Elliot Ness of the Bureau of Prohibition last month during the day and the speakeasy at night.

ALICE

Although I'm glad we can get our favorite kind of “tea” anytime.

QUEENIE

You shred it wheat! Adina's idea to change this place to the Refined Ladies Teashop when we found out Ness and his goons were gonna raid us has actually increased my business. Ladies whose husbands wouldn't allow them to go to my speakeasy just tell them this is a teashop now. And, as you said, Alice, it's up to them what kind of “tea” they decide to have with their scones.

LOUISE

That's great! Is Adina here? She asked if we could stop by between cases because she wants to tell us about her new negro Business Association.

QUEENIE

She's in the nook around the corner. I'll send Joe over with your usual type of “tea.”

ALICE

Hi, Adina! How are you doing today?

ADINA

Hi, Alice. Hi, Louise. I'd like you to meet Mr. Herbert Wolff, one of the co-founders of the new association I told you about. Mr. Wolff, Louise and Alice Marshall, ace detectives.

HERBERT

A pleasure to meet you, Misses Marshall!

ALICE

Same here

LOUISE

Nice to meet you, too!

LOUISE

What kind of business are you in, Mr. Wolff?

HERBERT

I'm a florist in Charlestown, Miss Marshall. It's a good business, but as with any small business, there are a lot of challenges. One day last week, I was in Miss White's newspaper shop, and we got to talking about what it is like to be a negro business owner. She asked me to meet up with her here to discuss forming an association.

ADINA

Mr. Wolff and I discovered that, although we are in different businesses, and his is in Charlestown while mine is in Cambridge, we have a lot in common and we think other negro business owners will be interested in joining us. Cambridge did have a chapter of the National Negro Business League, but it has since disbanded.

ALICE

*Awkwardly*

What kinds of challenges are you talking about?

HERBERT

Difficulty in getting bank loans to start a business or support lean times or expansion.

ADINA

Disdain from some of our white customers and downright hostility from others who just walk out when they see who is behind the counter.

HERBERT

It's better when they just walk out without saying anything, but that doesn't always happen, especially in Charlestown. In Charlestown we have to fight the Irish.

LOUISE

*Not sure what to say*

That is so unfair! I'm sorry to hear these things are happening to you right here in Cambridge and Boston. When you say "fight the Irish," Mr. Wolff, do you mean literally or figuratively?

HERBERT

Both, Miss Marshall. Sometimes it's just rude remarks, but they can be violent, and I have to keep a baseball bat behind the counter of the shop for protection.

ALICE

If you heard Louise's show today you learned about some really shocking history that was news to us. We were especially shocked to hear about the slaveholding of one of our church's first ministers.

HERBERT

I heard your show and I was impressed with your guest. His father is a great leader and it looks like his son is following in his footsteps. But I was not surprised at all about what he revealed. Along with my friend, William Monroe Trotter, and others, I am active in working for civil rights and we have to know our history to do that.

ADINA

I wasn't surprised either. Remember last year when you learned about your ancestors in England making their fortune by slave trafficking? You were really shocked, but I wasn't.

HERBERT

You mentioned that a lot of white people don't know about negro history and our present situation, but every negro knows that most of us are descended from enslaved people AND we experience prejudice every day, sometimes just walking down the street.

ADINA

We don't have the choice to ignore this. That's why it is so important for us to found this organization, to encourage more negroes to start their own businesses to pursue economic prosperity in our communities.

HERBERT

And why we are both involved in civil rights work through our churches and other organizations. We have to fight for equality so our children will not have to experience what we and our forebears have experienced.

LOUISE

We were asked by an old “friend” from school to take on a new case on behalf of her fiancé who is descended from William Brattle. He’s going to give us access to his father’s study and papers to see what we can find out about Mr. Brattle being a slaveholder.

ALICE

He thinks we’re going to find out that what Mr. Jourdain said on the radio show today isn’t true, but we think he won’t like what we find out.

HERBERT

I agree with you, Miss Marshall

**ACT II**  
**Scene I: Defrothingam House, Tory Row**

WILLIAM

I can't believe my mother gave you the job of social secretary after some of the things you said in your interview!

ALICE

She was pretty intimidating, but when you've worked for Mrs. Meyers, nobody can intimidate you. And I'm tired of hearing from women like her who still don't think we deserve the vote.

WILLIAM

I knew you two wouldn't see eye-to-eye, but I figured getting you in here as her social secretary would give you a chance to go through my father's papers. And I'm sure you mentioning what great friends you and Priscilla were at Miss Cabot's school helped to get you the job.

ALICE

Oh yes, we were dear friends! Also, I didn't bother to mention that Louise and I almost got the bum's rush from Miss Cabot's due to sneaking off to suffrage rallies on Boston Common. So where do we start?

WILLIAM

Back in the 1700s, William Brattle started the tradition of passing his important papers down to his eldest son when the son turned 25. The papers were hidden and the clues to find them were in code. When the male line died out, my father inherited the papers through marrying my mother, who is a direct descendant of William Brattle.

ALICE

Yes, she did mention that just a few times!

WILLIAM

She and I and the rest of the family are horrified about the vile accusations against William Brattle shared on your radio show and we want the truth to be told.

ALICE

Sometimes the truth we think we know is not the real truth. I've certainly learned that many times in the Great War, in the detective business, and, most of all, from getting to know people in our community, including Gertrude Wright Morgan and Adina White. There is a whole history we don't learn about in school.

WILLIAM

Please, you've got to help me find the truth. I can't believe that what I heard yesterday might actually be true.

ALICE

We'll do our best, but I just wanted to warn you that you may not like what we find out.

Now, why didn't your father pass the Brattle papers on to you?

WILLIAM

He died suddenly of a heart attack a few months before my 25th birthday. He had told me about the papers and planned to give them to me on my birthday, but...

ALICE

I'm sorry to hear about that. Did he tell you anything about the papers and where they might be hidden?

WILLIAM

No. The whole ritual was secret, so he didn't give me any details aside from mentioning to me that we would meet here in the library on the night of my 25th. I assume they are somewhere here in the library, but, as you can see, there are a lot of places to search, with the desk, all of the bookshelves, and the stacks of papers.

ALICE

Let's start by searching through the books by his favorite authors. Do you know who they are?

WILLIAM

I don't really know. My mother inherited the house and most of the books have probably been here forever. If you don't mind, I'd like to leave you to do the searching. This room gives me the heebie-jeebies. I was usually not allowed in here and when I was allowed it was for a reprimand. Also, this may seem silly to you, but this room has always felt haunted to me.

ALICE

If this was a mystery novel, a secret passage or room would appear when I pulled out the right book or pressed the correct panel next to the fireplace. And, if it is haunted, we might need to bring Madame Mystica in to connect with the “other side.”

I see what William means about these books being old...

Hmmm..this sampler on the wall definitely doesn't belong in a gentleman's office. I'll have to take this back to the agency to see if Louise and I can figure it out.

**ACT II**  
**Scene 2: Mount Auburn Cemetery**

LOUISE

Remind me again why we are at Mount Auburn Cemetery at 11:45 on a freezing windy night.

ALICE

Because the coded message in the sampler said we needed to go to the family grave site at midnight on the night of the full moon. I figure the Brattle family must have a mausoleum in this fancy joint.

LOUISE

That sampler was so weird. Usually, they have phrases like home sweet home but this one just had all those symbols. And then the date 1701 spelled out in French on the bottom.

ALICE

I know. The French date helped to narrow down the language used for the code, so we didn't waste time trying English to crack it.

LOUISE

What are we going to find in this mausoleum anyway? Skeletons, spiders, dust, and who knows what else, that's what.

ALICE

Well at least there won't be anyone here to bother us. Anyone living, that is.

DOROTHY

Slowly they crept through the silent night...

ALICE

What the?

DOROTHY

CUT! Just when I was building up atmosphere.

ALICE

Dorothy Arzner? What are you doing here? I thought you were back in Hollywood working on your latest smash talkie?

DOROTHY

I finished my last talkie and was drawn back to Cambridge - even though it snows in here in April - to keep telling stories of powerful women in unusual careers.

ALICE

That doesn't explain what in the blue blazes you're doing creeping around cemeteries in the middle of the night and giving us a heart attack.

DOROTHY

I know you are always working on interesting cases, so I thought I'd follow you to see what you were up to in the dead of night.

ALICE

It's almost always nice to see you, but we're working on a confidential case right now so you need to beat feet outta here.

PROFESSOR WINSLOW

*<three slow claps>*

Well, Dottie. We meet again! What triumph of the silver screen are you creating now?

DOROTHY

Professor Winslow! What are you doing here? I thought you had reinvented yourself as a high-class jewel thief and author. After your complete failure in the movie industry. And DON'T CALL ME DOTTIE!

ALICE

Listen, both of you get a wiggle on and get outta here now. Dorothy, we'll see you at Queenie's. Winslow, hopefully we won't see you again.

WINSLOW

That's Cecil B. DeMille Jr. to you!

LOUISE

Sheesh, what's next? I thought at least we'd be alone in this creepy place without dueling directors!

ALICE

And how! Dorothy is an amazing director, and her talkies are the bees knees, but she can show up at inopportune times with her idea about reality talkies. I mean, who wants to see that?

LOUISE

Ok, looks like it's this last one on the right. We don't have to go in, do we?

ALICE

Hopefully not, if we can find what we need carved on the outside or hidden nearby.

MYSTICA

The spirits are telling me that you will find nothing here...

ALICE

What the?

LOUISE

EEK!

MYSTICA

Leave from this place and look closer to home.

LOUISE

Sheesh! This joint is like Times Square on New Year's Eve. So much for the quiet of the grave.

**ACT II**  
**Scene 3: Refined Ladies Tea Shoppe**

QUEENIE

So you didn't find anything? Even after having to creep around Mount Auburn Cemetery at midnight.

LOUISE

Nothing. It's going to take me a long time to recover from that night, especially being pounced upon by Dorothy Arzner and Professor Winslow! I almost had a heart attack.

ALICE

And then when Madame Mystica popped up! Talk about the heebie jeebies. I don't think I'll ever be able to go in a graveyard again until they take me in feet first.

ADINA

What were they doing there?

ALICE

Dorothy still has this crazy idea that people want to see "reality" talkies. As if people would want to spend time watching that! And Winslow follows her around trying to copy her and get his flagging directing career going again. And Mystica said ...

ADINA

The spirits sent her

QUEENIE

The spirits sent her

LOUISE

And how!

ADINA

The code in the sampler sounds fascinating. Why did you focus on that out of all of the items in the study, Alice?

ALICE

It was the one thing that didn't fit in with the Tory Row gentleman's study decor. It looked old-fashioned and creating samplers was one of "women's jobs" back then.

LOUISE

When we first looked at it in the office - with a magnifying glass of course - we didn't know how we would decode the symbols.

ALICE

Then I noticed that the year of our lord 1701 was spelled out in French.

LOUISE

It's been a while but thanks to Mrs. Fenn's weekly French vocabulary tests back at Miss Cabot's School, and a French dictionary from the library, we were able to look at letter frequency to find the words.

ALICE

I'll never forget those Monday morning tests of Mrs. Fenn's - but they really worked.

LOUISE

Thankfully, we still keep in contact with Elizabeth Smith Friedman, federal cryptologist extraordinaire, and she helped us crack the code.

ALICE

You shred it, wheat! It was a lot easier dealing with her when we weren't trying to keep her from tracking down one of our friends for purchasing and selling bootleg hooch.

QUEENIE

*Innocently*

It must have been.

LOUISE

It turned out that this sampler used the Babington Cipher, which was used by Mary Queen of Scots and her supporters trying to place her on the British throne in place of her cousin Elizabeth.

ADINA

Was Mount Auburn Cemetery named in the decoded text?

LOUISE

No, we just figured that the Brattles would be buried in the fanciest joint in town.

ADINA

But the date on the sampler was 1701 and Mount Auburn Cemetery wasn't created until the mid-nineteenth century.

ALICE

Adina, you're firing on all cylinders! We didn't even think of that.

LOUISE

Mystica did say that we were in the wrong place, but...

QUEENIE

You don't believe that woowoo dame, do you?

ALICE

No, but...she has been right on the money in the past...

LOUISE

She said we should look closer to home...

ALICE/LOUISE

The old burying ground next to our church!

ALICE

Thanks, Adina and Queenie! Let's get a wiggle on over there.

**ACT III**  
**Scene 1: Old Burying Ground**

QUEENIE

Remind me why I let you talk me into this? I walk past the sign all the time but never read it. "Old Burying Ground. Burial place of early settlers, Tory landowners and slaves, soldiers, presidents of Harvard, and prominent MEN of Cambridge." No mention of the women as usual.

ALICE

Because Louise is busy tonight and I was not going to do this by myself. This place is pretty creepy, but at least we are on Mass Ave so we get some light from the street lamps, and it doesn't have those ghoulish mausoleums like Mt. Auburn.

Plus, our church is right next door. Although I'm not sure I can ever feel the same about it again with what we've learned.

DOROTHY

Hearts filled with foreboding, the intrepid Marshall sisters creep through the silent burying ground...

ALICE

Dorothy, not again!

DOROTHY

CUT! Once again, you have spoiled my atmosphere setting. The dark night, the wind in the trees, the ancient stones, the restless spirits...

ALICE

We know you are trying to do your job, Dorothy, but we're trying to do our job, too. This is the most important case we've ever worked on. We're trying to find if the allegations that one of the founders of our city and our church was a slaveholder are true.

DOROTHY

Yes, I heard Mr. Jourdain on your radio show and thought this story would make a great reality talkie.

MYSTICA

The spirits are telling me that you are in the right place this time.

ALICE/QUEENIE/DOROTHY  
EEK!

ALICE

Madame, you nearly scared us into one of these graves.

QUEENIE

This is almost as bad as having the Federal Prohibition Agency bust in on my  
"Teashop"!

DOROTHY

Madame Mystica, tell me about these spirits. Quiet on the set. ACTION!

MYSTICA

The souls of the enslaved children are calling out to be heard,...

ALICE

Children?

DOROTHY  
CUT!

QUEENIE

This place isn't that big, so let's split up and each take a side to check.

ALICE

Madame, I know I haven't always believed you in the past, but you've been right so many times over the years, under so many different names. And I'll never forget when you knew my shell-shocked fiancé, George, had died, before I found out. Can your spirits tell me where to look?

MYSTICA

Cicely says you will find her over near the big mound on the right side.

ALICE

Cicely. You even know her name...Let's see, there is just one big mound on the right. And then these little headstones scattered around. Queenie and Dorothy, get a wiggle on over here.

DOROTHY

What have you found?

ALICE

I've found the evidence of William Brattle's slaveholding, and it is heartbreaking.  
"Headstone of Cicely Negro, late servant of Rev. William Brattle, died April 8, 1714,  
being ... 15 years old"

ALL <silence for 30-60 seconds>

MYSTICA

Cicely wants her story to be told.

ALICE

I'll never doubt you again, Madame. Even when you keep predicting a big stock market  
crash coming soon, which everybody knows just can't possibly happen in 1929.

**ACT III**  
**Scene 2: Marshall Sisters' Detective Agency**

PRISCILLA

So, what have you found out?

WILLIAM

Have you found the truth about my ancestor?

ALICE

You'd better both sit down. William, remember when I told you in your father's study that you might not like what we found out?

WILLIAM

*Slowly*

Yes.

LOUISE

When Alice looked around your father's study for clues about the message to be passed onto the oldest son, she noticed a stitched sampler on the wall that didn't fit with everything else in the room and brought it back to our office so we could examine it.

ALICE

It was made up of rows of symbols instead of words, as was usual in samplers. So, we figured it was a code.

WILLIAM

Will you please get on with it? I don't need to know the process, just what you found out.

LOUISE

Take a look at this photo from the Old Burying Ground and read the inscription.

WILLIAM

No, this can't be true. Not William Brattle, one of the founders of Cambridge and Harvard...

PRISCILLA

William, what does it say? William?

WILLIAM

Here, you read it.

PRISCILLA

"Headstone of Cicely Negro, late servant of Rev. William Brattle, died April 8, 1714 being ...15 years old?" A child?

WILLIAM

My mother will never recover from this. It just can't be true. I have to leave.

PRISCILLA

William, wait for me. I thought you girls were my friends.

ALICE

I don't know about you, but I need a cup or two of Queenie's "tea."

LOUISE

Ditto! Let's shank's pony it downstairs PDQ!

ALICE

I thought it was shank's mare.

**ACT III**  
**Scene 3: Refined Ladies' Teashop**

ADINA

So, what's William going to do?

ALICE

I don't know and I don't think he knows. As we agreed, his fee for the case - if he pays it - will be donated to your new organization.

ADINA & HERBERT

Thank you!

LOUISE

How is the setup going?

HERBERT

Very well! I've gotten a lot of interest from my fellow Masons of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in Boston. Both current business owners and those who are interested in starting businesses.

ADINA

And I've gotten interest from my church and philanthropic groups here in Cambridge. People don't always realize that a skill they have could be used for their own business, when they are used to working for someone else.

HERBERT

My friend, William Monroe Trotter, is writing about it in his paper, the Boston Guardian.

ALICE

Maybe we could help you raise awareness through an upcoming radio show.

ADINA

That's a great idea!

LOUISE

What else can we do to support this work?

HERBERT

Patronize negro businesses and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

ADINA

Continue to learn about and share the truth about all of our history, and the struggles of negroes for equality, both on your radio show and in conversations.

HERBERT

Yes. There are many more truths to be told and painful realities to be faced before this can become an equal society.

MYSTICA

*Dashing in*

So much sorrow. Voices calling from the grave for their stories to be told...

QUEENIE

Madame Mystica! What are you doing here?

JOE

Sorry, Queenie. I tried to stop her to get the password but she ran by me.

QUEENIE

Joe, people don't need to have the password during the day. Remember, we are the Refined Ladies Tea Shoppe. But, Madame, what brings you rushing in here?

MYSTICA

The spirits of the enslaved souls are speaking through me. So many truths still to be told.

ALICE

After the way you discovered Cicely's grave, Madame, I believe anything you say.

LOUISE

Just please don't start that ridiculous talk again about an imminent stock market crash. That could never happen in 1929.

THE END