

Dimension X

“Marionettes, Inc.”

Originally aired August 30, 1951

Transcribed by Ben Dooley for “Those Thrilling Days of Yesteryear” old time radio recreations. www.ttdyradio.com

CAST:

ANNOUNCER

DIM-X ANNOUNCER:

Sam, the bartender

Henry Smith

Walter Braeling

Gloria

Nettie

Walter 2

Mr. Zigg

Bank Teller

(MUSIC: drum roll)

ANNOUNCER: (echo) Adventures in Time and
Space, told in future tense.

(MUSIC)

DIM X ANNOUNCER: (strong echo) DIMENSION
X

(MUSIC)

ANNOUNCER: The National Broadcasting Company, in cooperation with
Streaks and Smith, publishers of “Astounding Science Fiction,” bring you
(mild echo) Dimension X.

(MUSIC)

ANNOUNCER: By the year nineteen hundred and ninety, we should see many
amazing technological advances. And yet, in many ways, life will be very
much the same. A husband will stop off at a bar on the way home, and
perhaps unburden himself a little to a friendly bartender.

BAR CUSTOMERS: (singing drunk in background under dialogue) “I want a
girl, just like the girl, that married dear old dad.”

SAM: Another one, Mr. Smith?

HENRY: What time is it, Sam?

SAM: Why, almost, 10 O’clock, Mr. Smith.

HENRY: One more.

SFX:

Coins drop

Interior of car in traffic

Car slows down

Car door open

Getting out of car

Car door close

Crickets

Footsteps, leaving and approaching,
down stairs, on cement

Door open

Door close

Tick-tock

Struggling and scuffling sounds

Knocking on door

Taking Coffee mug

Outdoor traffic sounds

Hammering & breaking lock

Opening sideboard

Gunshots

Hitting with hammer

Machine dying

BAR CUSTOMERS: (finish singing and laugh and talk merrily intoxicated)

SAM: Ah, listen to them. The old songs are still the best. Huh, Mr. Smith?

HENRY: Yeah, Sam. I remember singing that one back in 1974. Just before I met my wife. Golden days, Sam.

SAM: Here's your beer, Mr. Smith.

HENRY: Ah. Thanks. (drinks) Ah, that's good. Almost feels as if I could go home and face Nettie now.

SAM: Wife trouble, Mr. Smith?

HENRY: Wife trouble, Sam.

SAM: Fight?

HENRY: Oh, Nettie and I never fight. Nettie's too mad about me to ever fight with me. She adores me. Worships the ground I walk on.

SAM: Well, this is something new. I remember only last year you was complainin' she so awful.

HENRY: Times have changed. Only wish she was still throwing things. At least in those days I could walk out and slam the door with a clear conscience. Now she's so sweet and loving, I feel like a murderer every time I stop in for a beer on the way home.

SAM: Tough, Mr. Smith. Tough.

HENRY: Ever hear the expression, "Love will fly if held too lightly. Love will die if held too tightly?"

SAM: Can't say I ever did.

HENRY: If only she'd relax a little bit. See the bruise on my lip?

SAM: (examining) Hmm.

HENRY: She kisses me.

SAM: Hm?

HENRY: For an hour every night when I come home.

SAM: Can you do anything for it?

HENRY: I try. I remind her that she really wanted to marry Harvey Tubman. I remind her how we used to have those battles till the neighbors called the robot police. Nothing works. I'm gone for an hour, she cries.

SAM: Well, me, I ain't got that kind of trouble. I hang around too much, and Mabel calls me a loafer and turns me out.

HENRY: It's a sad state. Can't figure 'em out. Well, guess I'll go home and feed myself to the lioness. I tell you, Sam, when Nettie gets finished

demonstrating how much she's missed me, I feel like a man who's been stuffed into an electronic washing machine with the dial set at rinse/dry. How much do I owe you?

SAM: Sixty cents.

(**SFX:** coins drop)

WALTER: Well! If it isn't Henry Smith.

HENRY: Braeling. Wh... as I live and breathe, Walter Braeling. What are you doing here?

WALTER: Oh, having the night out.

HENRY: Does Gloria know about this?

WALTER: (like he has a secret) Things have changed, Henry.

HENRY: I thought she kept you chained to the bedpost most of the time.

WALTER: Not any more, Henry. Not any more.

HENRY: You... aren't divorced, are you?

WALTER: Oh no. Gloria is home.

HENRY: What did you do? Put a sleeping powder in her coffee?

WALTER: Oh, goodness, no, Henry. That would be highly unethical.

HENRY: I can't believe you just walked out on her.

WALTER: Ten years of marriage, Henry, and I never had a night to myself. But it'll be different from now on.

HENRY: Oh?

WALTER: By the way, Henry, what time is it?

HENRY: Ten O'clock.

WALTER: Well, I guess I'd better be going.

HENRY: Scared?

WALTER: Noooo. Don't want to crowd my luck. Although really there's nothing to worry about.

HENRY: I'd sure like to know how you do it, Walter.

WALTER: Would you really?

HENRY: Yes.

WALTER: All right, then. Since you've always been a friend of mine, I'll let you in on it. Come on. My car is outside. I'll drive you home and let you *see* how it's done.

HENRY: That's nice of you, Walter.

WALTER: Not at all, Henry. We fellows have to stick together.

(MUSIC)

(SFX: Interior of Car in traffic)

WALTER: I don't suppose you know how Gloria and I came to be married in the first place, eh?

HENRY: No, I don't.

WALTER: Well, one evening, she threatened to tear off her clothing and call the police unless I married her.

HENRY: No.

WALTER: Oh, yes.

HENRY: Well, that's a bit extreme, isn't it?

WALTER: Well, Gloria was always a nervous girl.

HENRY: I bet you've had a pretty wretched time of it.

WALTER: Oh, yes. It didn't take long for me to become the laughingstock of the neighborhood. Henpecked Braeling, they used to call me. I know. But things are changing now. Here. You see this?

HENRY: What's that?

WALTER: A single ticket to Rio on the morning rocket. I have hotel reservations there for a month. A whole month, Henry, to have a fling.

HENRY: Won't Gloria make trouble over that?

WALTER: That's the amazing part of it, Henry. She won't even know I'm gone. I'll be back in a month, and no one the wiser. You don't believe me, do you?

HENRY: Frankly, no. Just how you going to swing it, Walter?

WALTER: That's the secret, Henry. I tell you it's the most wonderful thing invented. Worth every cent I paid for it.

HENRY: What is "it?"

HENRY: I'm going to show you.

(SFX: car slows down)

Here's my house. Notice the lights are all out?

(SFX: doors open & getting out of car & doors closing)

(SFX: crickets)

(SFX: footsteps)

WALTER: Sh. We'll wait up there on the front porch.

HENRY: Walter. You haven't gone off your rocker, have you?

WALTER: Sh. (almost whispering) Now, I meow twice. (meows twice loudly.)
(whispering) Now, Henry. Watch the window in my bedroom.

HENRY: It looks as if somebody... Hey. There's a man up there. He's looking out.

WALTER: Good. He sees me. He'll be down directly.

HENRY: Isn't it a bit embarrassing for you, Walter?

WALTER: Oh, not at all. (smiling) You'll find out. Here he comes.

(SFX: door opens)

WALTER: Hello, B-2.

B-2: Oh. Good evening, Mr. Braeling.

WALTER: Close the door.

(SFX: door close)

HENRY: Either I'm going out of my mind, or there are two of you. You never told me you had a twin brother.

WALTER: I don't.

HENRY: But if this fellow weren't in pajamas, I couldn't tell you apart.

WALTER: That's the secret, Henry. Everything go all right, B-2?

B-2: Oh, just fine, Mr. Braeling.

WALTER: Uh-huh. I suppose my wife was in her usual good form this evening?

B-2: As a matter of fact, we spent the evening playing gin.

WALTER: No screaming? No shouting accusations?

B-2: Oh, no sir. It was a very quiet evening.

WALTER: Well. This is even better than I thought.

B-2: Well, "Marionettes, Incorporated" aims to satisfy, sir.

HENRY: Did he say, "Marionettes, Incorporated?"

WALTER: That's right, Henry. Look him over. Isn't he... excellently fashioned?
You wouldn't dream he was a robot, a... a marionette, eh?

HENRY: I can't believe it.

WALTER: It's against the law, of course, to duplicate a human like this, but it's well worth the opportunity.

HENRY: I still don't believe it. You can't tell him from a human.

WALTER: Only one way, Henry. Put your ear next to his chest. Listen.

(SFX: tick-tock & piano)

WALTER: That's it.

HENRY: Machinery. Walter, old man, how long has this been going on?

WALTER: I've had him a month, Henry. I keep him in the cellar in my toolbox. Now tonight, I told Gloria I'd like to be excused for five minutes to run down to the cigar store. She agreed. I went down to the cellar, took out Braeling-2, sent him back upstairs to sit with my wife until I got home.

HENRY: Miraculous. Course, it doesn't seem quite ethical, somehow.

WALTER: Oh, nonsense. It's highly ethical. I've been home all evening. I should be home with her for the next month. In the meantime, another gentleman, named Walter Braeling, will be in Rio having the time of his life.

HENRY: Well, can he walk around without fuel for a month?

WALTER: Oh, he refuels himself. And he's still to do everything—eat, drink, sleep. He'll take good care of my wife. Won't you B-2?

B-2: Oh, of course. Your wife is rather nice. I've grown quite fond of her.

WALTER: You see?

HENRY: Walter, old man... how long has this "Marionettes, Incorporated" outfit been in business?

WALTER: Secretly, for two years, now. Why?

HENRY: Well, I wonder... is there a possibility that I might get in touch with them?

WALTER: You? But you love your Nettie.

HENRY: I know, but even so, a little respite... a night or two, once a month.

WALTER: And she loves you dearly.

HENRY: So much she can't bear to leave me for half an hour. You know that lately she's taken to calling me up at work ten or twelve times a day and talk baby talk?

WALTER: Your Nettie?

HENRY: My Nettie.

WALTER: (tch, tch, tch)

HENRY: What do you say, old man? A favor to an old buddy? Fellow lodge member?

WALTER: Mm. Well, I... I could put you in touch with the man who makes them. Of course you'd be pledged to secrecy once you learned where he's located.

HENRY: Oh, naturally.

WALTER: Very well, Henry. Here's his card.

HENRY: "Marionettes, Incorporated. W. Zigg, proprietor and owner. New humanoid plastic 1990 models guaranteed against wear. Our motto, "No Strings Attached." Address: The Jumble Shop, 43 South Westley Drive."

WALTER: Mr. Zigg will take good care of you, Henry. He's a charming fellow. A real craftsman.

HENRY: Wonderful. I'll see him first thing tomorrow. Well, I better be getting home now, though. Nettie's probably splitting a gasket.

WALTER: See you around, old man—after I get back from Rio. And while I'm gone, you might drop around regularly, just as you always have. Treat Braeling-2 here, as if he were me. Otherwise Gloria might be suspicious.

HENRY: I will. And, oh, uh... before I go, uh... these marionettes are safe, aren't they?

WALTER: Oh, absolutely. Tell him, B-2.

B-2: We're guaranteed.

HENRY: Fine. Well, good night, Walter. Good night, eh... B-2.

(SFX: footsteps leaving)

B-2: Good night, Mr. Smith.

WALTER: (sing-song) Good night, Henry.

(SFX: footsteps fading away)

WALTER: (sighs) Well, I'm glad someone else will have a chance at a little happiness and freedom.

(SFX: door open)

All right, Braeling-2.

(SFX: door close)

Back into the cellar box for you.

(SFX: cellar door open.)

Come on.

(SFX: pair of footsteps down stairs)

Down the steps. That's it.

(SFX: footsteps on cement)

B-2: (basement echo) It's very damp down here, Mr. Braeling.

WALTER: (basement echo) Bad plumbing. Well, here we are.

B-2: Braeling.

WALTER: Yes.

B-2: Before you put me back into the tool box, could we have a word.

WALTER: Certainly, old man.

B-2: This tool box.

WALTER: What about it?

B-2: I don't like it, Mr. Braeling.

WALTER: Why not?

B-2: It's cramped.

WALTER: Oh. Well, I'll try to fix up something more comfortable when I get back from Rio. All right now. Before Gloria gets worried, back into...

B-2: Marionettes are made to move, not to keep still. How'd you like to lie in a stuffy old box most of the time.

WALTER: I didn't realize you fellows were that sensitive.

B-2: You wouldn't like it at all. I keep running. There's no way to shut me off. I have my feelings, you know.

WALTER: Hm. Well, day after tomorrow, I'll be off to Rio, and you won't have to stay in the box for a whole month. You can move upstairs.

B-2: But when you get back from Rio, I'll go back in the box.

WALTER: Mr. Zigg didn't tell me at Marionettes, Incorporated that it was possible to get a difficult specimen.

B-2: There's a lot he doesn't know about us. We're pretty new.

WALTER: (voice raising) Now look he... (catching himself) Now look here, B-2. this has gone far enough.

B-2: I'll never get to Rio

WALTER: Come on, now.

(SFX: footsteps)

Into the box.

B-2: And another thing.

WALTER: Well?

B-2: Your wife.

WALTER: What about my wife?

B-2: Well, I... I've grown quite fond of her.

WALTER: Well, I'm glad you enjoy your employment. You'll have the whole month...

B-2: You don't quite understand, Braeling. I've fallen in love with her.

WALTER: You what?

B-2: You just don't appreciate her. Maybe if you hadn't always acted so meek and apologetic about everything, she's have a little more respect for you as a man.

WALTER: Well, now you aren't supposed to behave like this. You know...

B-2: (overlapping) I think you... well, anyway, *I* could be very happy... if I were married to Gloria.

WALTER: Aren't you forgetting? You're nothing but a big, overgrown puppet.

B-2: Careful, Braeling. I'm sensitive.

WALTER: All right. All right, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Now look, uh, you wouldn't mind waiting here, would you? I have to go upstairs and make a phone call.

B-2: To whom?

WALTER: Oh, nobody important. I, uh, have to call Henry Smith about something.

B-2: You're lying. You're going to call "Marionettes, Incorporated," and tell Mr. Zigg to come and get me.

WALTER: Oh, no. Oh, no, really, I'm not. I... I was... I...

(SFX: footsteps)

B-2. Stay away.

B-2: Stand where you are, Braeling.

WALTER: Now, B-2, take your hand off my arm.

B-2: No, Braeling.

WALTER: What are you going to do?

B-2: Nothing much. I'm just going to put you in the tool box. Lock it and lose the key.

WALTER: What?

B-2: Then I'll buy another ticket to Rio and Gloria and I can have a wonderful vacation.

WALTER: You're insane!

B-2: Am I?

WALTER: Now wait a minute! Hold on, B-2! Now don't be rash! Let's talk this over!

(SFX: struggling and scuffling sounds)

B-2: (struggling) Good bye, Braeling.

WALTER: B-2, stop it! Don't! Let go! Help!

(SFX: door close)

B-2: Goodbye, Braeling!

(SFX: struggling against door)

WALTER: (muffled screaming for help)

(SFX: knocking on door)

(SFX: cellar door opens)

GLORIA: (calling from upstairs) Walter? Walter!

B-2: (calling back) Uh... Yes, Gloria?

GLORIA: What in the world are you doing down there at this time of night?

B-2: Oh, nothing, lover. The pipes were knocking, I'm just making sure the boiler hadn't exploded. Uh, you go back to bed. I'll be up soon.

GLORIA: Oh, hurry, won't you? We had such a nice evening. I'm lonesome for you.

B-2: Oh, you won't ever be lonesome again,, darling. (to himself) Never again.

(MUSIC)

(SFX: door close)

HENRY: Good morning, Nettie.

NETTIE: Oh, good morning, darling. How are you? Have a nice time, last night? I missed you so.

HENRY: Breakfast ready?

NETTIE: Aren't you going to kiss me good morning?

HENRY: Oh, uh... yes, I suppose so.

NETTIE: (sighs and savors him a moment) Oh, you're so wonderful, Henry. I guess I'm the luckiest person in the world.

HENRY: (laughs it off)

NETTIE: Here's your coffee.

(SFX: taking coffee mug)

NETTIE: And how would you like your eggs?

HENRY: Any way at all.

NETTIE: But I want to please you.

HENRY: Oh, Nettie, uh... skip the eggs this morning.

NETTIE: But you have to eat to keep well, darling.

HENRY: I'm very healthy. I, uh... have an early business appointment.

NETTIE: Oh?

HENRY: It's a... friend of Walter Braeling's. I met Walter last night, and he...
(pause)

NETTIE: Yes?

HENRY: Well, uh... I'd better be off. Now, Nettie, don't look as if I'm on my way to Rio or something. I'm only going to work.

NETTIE: It's just that I miss you so. I want to be with you all the time.

HENRY: Do I have to go through this every morning? I'll be back at supper. There's no need to cry, now, is there?

NETTIE: No, darling. You aren't displeased with **me**, are you? I try so hard to do everything just as I think you'll like it.

HENRY: No, I'm not displeased. Well, good bye, dear.

NETTIE: Henry?

HENRY: Yes?

NETTIE: You forgot to kiss me goodbye.

(MUSIC)

(SFX: outdoor traffic sounds)

(SFX: footsteps)

HENRY: (singing) "No strings attached, No strings attached. A very nice puppet with no strings attached." He, he. Let's see, now. The Jumble Shop, 43 South Westley. That should be about... Ah. Here it is.

(SFX: Footsteps continue)

(SFX: Door opens)

ZIGG: Yes?

HENRY: Mr. Zigg?

ZIGG: Yes?

HENRY: Uh, Walter Braeling recommended me.

ZIGG: Enter.

(SFX: door close)

ZIGG: Your name?

HENRY: Henry Smith. Eh, 55 Evergreen place.

ZIGG: And what can we do for you, Mr. Smith?

HENRY: Well, Braeling showed me his marionette last night.

ZIGG: I see.

HENRY: I, uh... was intrigued with the idea—not that my wife is anything like the female meat grinder he’s married to, you understand, but, uh, ... well, I’m a man who enjoys, on occasion, leaving with the boys... without complication.

ZIGG: Naturally.

HENRY: So, I thought that...

ZIGG: (completing) I could duplicate you.

HENRY: Exactly.

ZIGG: I think it might be arranged. You understand the need for secrecy, of course? Although an act is pending in congress to legalize Marionettes, Incorporated, it is still a felony to use one of my creations.

HENRY: I understand.

ZIGG: And there is the matter of, uh... the payment.

HENRY: How much?

ZIGG: Nine thousand dollars.

HENRY: Nine thousand...

ZIGG: Well, I have an inferior model if seventy-five hundred...

HENRY: No. If I go through with it, nothing’s too good for Nettie. Nettie’s my wife. We’ve been putting money aside to buy a summer house in Westport...

ZIGG: Sometimes we must choose.

HENRY: Yes. Perhaps I could just slip out nine thousand. It’s a joint account. Um, how soon could I have it?

ZIGG: I could construct a mannequin in about two months time.

HENRY: Good.

ZIGG: Shall I consider the order placed?

HENRY: At once.

ZIGG: Of course, you will have to report here for a body mold, color index of your hair, lips, skin, etcetera. And I'll have to do a complete electro-emotional-calibration.

HENRY: You'll guarantee that these models are foolproof?

ZIGG: As foolproof as I can make them, Mr. Smith, and I've had years of training.

HENRY: And no chance of detection.

ZIGG: None, whatsoever. I've never had a complaint.

HENRY: Walter Braeling seems satisfied enough.

ZIGG: I assure you, he's been taken care of in high style.

HENRY: (still hesitant) I wish there were some way to be sure.

ZIGG: You have our guarantee.

HENRY: (assured) Very well, Mr. Zigg. I'll get the money from the bank and send it to you.

ZIGG: Fine. You'll be just as delighted with yours as Walter Braeling is with his.

(MUSIC)

HENRY: Oh, teller.

BANK TELLER: Yes, Mr. Smith?

HENRY: I'd like to cash this draft on my joint account, please.

BANK TELLER: Yes, sir. Nine thousand dollars, sir?

HENRY: That's right.

BANK TELLER: I'm afraid that's impossible, Mr. Smith.

HENRY: Impossible? My wife and I have a good fifteen thousand dollars in our account.

BANK TELLER: You're mistaken, Mr. Smith.

HENRY: But, I know...

BANK TELLER: Here's your card, sir. You see, Mrs. Smith withdrew ten thousand dollars recently.

HENRY: Ten thousand dollars?

BANK TELLER: Hm.

HENRY: Without even telling me?

BANK TELLER: I remember it distinctly, Mr. Smith. She said it was for a surprise for you.

HENRY: Good lord, she's bought that house in Connecticut. My birthday is next week. Well, I've got to borrow it somewhere. I've already contracted...

BANK TELLER: Yes, sir. Quite a surprise for you. Eh, Mr. Smith?

(MUSIC)

(SFX: knock on door)

(SFX: door open)

GLORIA: Yes? Oh, Hello, Henry.

HENRY: Hello, Gloria. Is Walter home? I'd like to speak to him.

GLORIA: Well, come in.

HENRY: Thank you.

(SFX: door close)

GLORIA: Is there something wrong?

HENRY: Oh, just some private business. Matter of a loan.

GLORIA: Well he went down to the travel bureau, but he should be back soon. We're going to Rio, you know.

HENRY: Both of you?

GLORIA: Isn't it wonderful? I don't know what's come over Walter lately. He's been so romantic. Last night he came upstairs and said, "Darling"—he hasn't called me darling in years—"Darling, we're going to take a honeymoon to Rio. So we're leaving tomorrow." Anything wrong, Henry?

HENRY: No. No, I'm just a little surprised, that's all.

GLORIA: Well he should be back soon. Will you wait?

HENRY: Yes. Yes, I'd better.

GLORIA: Hey, as long as you're over here, maybe you can help me with something.

HENRY: What?

GLORIA: Well, I went downstairs to get an old suitcase a little while ago and I heard the strangest noises near that old tool chest of Walter's. He mentioned that the boiler was acting up, and I'm afraid to go down there again. I wonder if you'd take a look?

HENRY: What kind of noises?

GLORIA: Like a... like a thumping sound.

HENRY: Maybe I'd better go down, Gloria. You stay up here.

GLORIA: Should I call a plumber, do you think?

HENRY: No, no. I'll take care of it.

(SFX: door open)

GLORIA: It's right down those stairs.

HENRY: I'll have a look.

(SFX: footsteps down stairs)

(SFX: knocking and muffled calls)

HENRY: Good lord. Good lord. Hello? Hello, in there? Just a minute. Keep quiet, for goodness sakes. (grunts) I'll have to smash the lock.

(SFX: hammering and breaking lock)

HENRY: Now what in the...

WALTER: Henry! Henry, thank God you've come.

HENRY: Be quiet.

WALTER: I've been in there all night. I thought I'd suffocate. He tried to kill me, Henry. He tried to murder me.

HENRY: Who? Which one are you?

WALTER: Don't be an idiot. I'm Walter.

HENRY: What happened?

WALTER: B-2, the marionette. He stuck me in the tool box and left me to suffocate. Well, fortunately I found an old file in there and managed to get an air hole through the wood.

HENRY: Good lord. He's taking Gloria with him to Rio.

WALTER: Have they left yet?

HENRY: No, he's gone downtown for the tickets.

WALTER: Good. We may just have time.

HENRY: For what?

WALTER: To get down to Marionettes, Inc. and tell Zigg to stop him.

HENRY: You're in no condition to...

WALTER: Oh, don't worry about me. We can't waste any time. Come on.

HENRY: But Gloria?

WALTER: I'll sneak out. Tell her... tell her you fixed the plumbing. Tell her anything. I'll meet you outside.

HENRY: All right.

WALTER: Oh. What a fool I've been.

HENRY: What a fool I almost was. I went down and **ordered** one of those things today.

(MUSIC)

(SFX: door open)

(SFX: footsteps)

(SFX: door close)

B-2: Gloria! Gloria, love?

GLORIA: Yes, darling. Did you get the tickets to Rio?

B-2: Ah, right here, my love. Honeymoon for two under the pampas moon.

GLORIA: Oh, Walter, it's so nice to have you like this.

B-2: You like the change?

GLORIA: I don't know what did it, but whatever it is, I'm in favor of it. I hope it's permanent.

B-2: Oh, I intend to see that it is. Oh, by the way, darling, do you happen to remember where that old pistol of mine is?

GLORIA: Pistol?

B-2: Yes, I just thought since we're gonna be traveling in strange countries, it wouldn't hurt to bring it along.

GLORIA: Oh. Well I think it's here in the sideboard.

(SFX: opening sideboard)

GLORIA: Yes, it's there. Oh, Walter, you know how frightened I am of those things.

B-2: Oh, I'll be very careful of it. In fact, uh... I think I'll go down in the basement and practice. Not really shooting it, of course, just... to make sure it's in good working order.

GLORIA: Do be careful, darling.

B-2: Oh, I will. If you should hear a shot, dear, don't be frightened. I may fire it into a block of wood. Just to test it. Perhaps I'll fire into that old tool chest of mine. Yeah, that should absorb it.

GLORIA: Oh, speaking of that tool chest...

B-2: Yes, what about it?

GLORIA: It reminds me that Henry Smith was here.

B-2: Oh?

GLORIA: I heard some noises downstairs there, and he went down to fix the plumbing.

B-2: Is he, uh... still down there?

GLORIA: No, he left. I really don't understand it. He seemed so anxious to see you before he went down in the cellar and then he just left.

B-2: Oh. Did he, uh... stop the noises?

GLORIA: Well he must have. I don't hear them.

B-2: I see.

GLORIA: What is it, dear?

B-2: I have to go out for a while, darling.

GLORIA: But Walter, we'll have to pack if we're leaving.

B-2: I'll be back soon. There's something very important I have to attend to.

GLORIA: Well, what is it?

B-2: Oh, just some personal business with... uh, Henry Smith. Please excuse me, darling. And don't worry. When I get back everything will be fixed once and for all. Then we can enjoy the rest of our lives just as though the old Walter Braeling never existed.

(MUSIC)

(SFX: traffic sounds)

(SFX: door open)

ZIGG: Ah, Mr. Braeling and Mr. Smith. Come in.

HENRY: Yes, Mr. Zigg.

ZIGG: Come in, come in.

WALTER: We most certainly will come in.

(SFX: door close. Traffic sounds stop))

ZIGG: What brings you?

WALTER: A good deal, Mr. Zigg. Yes, indeed, a good deal.

ZIGG: If I might know exactly. You seem so upset.

WALTER: Tell him, Henry.

HENRY: You told me your marionettes were foolproof, Mr. Zigg.

ZIGG: They are. My personal guarantee goes to each one of them.

HENRY: Ah, we know all about your personal guarantee. Cept that Mr. Braeling's dummy knocked him out, stuffed him in a tool box to suffocate and is making plans to run away with his wife.

ZIGG: Oh dear.

WALTER: Well, Mr. Zigg?

ZIGG: Oh, I really don't know what to say, gentlemen. You see, I work alone. I make these marionettes myself so that I can see to it personally that there are no errors. However, even the finest craftsman can make a mistake once in a while.

HENRY: What Mr. Braeling and I would like to know, Mr. Zigg, is exactly what are you planning to do to stop this over ambitions robot.

ZIGG: Well, of course, we shall have to recover B-2 first. And then I would simply dismantle him...

WALTER: He doesn't seem to want to be dismantled, Mr. Zigg. In fact, I think you'll have trouble catching him...

(SFX: door opens)

B-2: Maybe I can save you the trouble, gentlemen.

WALTER: B-2!

HENRY: Look out. He has a gun.

B-2: I thought I'd find you here when I discovered the tool chest empty.

HENRY: Now, look, B-2. Whatever you're planning to do, you won't get away with it.

B-2: I think I will.

WALTER: Mr. Zigg. Mr. Zigg, can't you do something?

ZIGG: I'm afraid I can't think of anything.

B-2: I'll save you the trouble. Because I'm going to kill the three of you.

WALTER: Oh, you won't get away with it.

B-2: No? You forget that Gloria and I will be on a plane to Rio in a few hours. All right, Mr. Zigg. You first.

ZIGG: Oh, now, see here. This isn't fair. I created you. You can't do...

(SFX: 2 gunshots)

WALTER: Grab him!

HENRY: I got him!

WALTER: Quick, that hammer.

HENRY: I got him!

B-2: No! No!

(SFX: hitting with hammer)

(SFX: machine dying)

HENRY: Well. That's the end of Braeling-2.

WALTER: Oh. Thank heavens. Henry. Henry, he got Zigg. Right through the... (gasp)

HENRY: Oh, holy jumping catfish.

WALTER: Henry, look at him. Look at Zigg!

HENRY: Nothing but a mass of coils and springs. Just like Braeling-2.

WALTER: Why, he's nothing but a marionette.

HENRY: He's no different from... Walter. You know what this means?

WALTER: It's incredible.

HENRY: A marionette building other marionettes.

WALTER: But someone must have built Mr. Zigg originally.

HENRY: Perhaps Mr. Zigg turned on whoever built him the same way the Braeling-2 turned on you.

WALTER: At any rate, we'll never know.

HENRY: I wonder how many of these things are walking around among us.

WALTER: Oh, I shudder to think of it.

HENRY: Some of our best friends might be... Come on. We've got to get out of here.

WALTER: But the police.

HENRY: Don't be a fool. There's been no crime committed here. All the police will find are two oversized puppets with the springs coming out of them.

WALTER: But they seem so lifelike.

HENRY: They're only machinery. You've got to remember that.

WALTER: Well, what will I tell Gloria?

HENRY: If I were you, Braeling, I wouldn't tell Gloria a thing. I'd simply pick up that other ticket to Rio and take her on a honeymoon.

WALTER: What about you, Henry? What are you going to do?

HENRY: Me? I'm going home and give Nettie a kiss that'll singe her hair. I'll even forgive her for taking that ten thousand dollars out of the bank without telling me. You know, when I think of what might have happened if I had gone through with this marionette thing, it makes a fella realize how lucky he is to be married to a decent woman. Let's go.

(MUSIC)

(SFX: door open)

HENRY: Nettie! Nettie!

(SFX: door close)

HENRY: Where are you, sweetheart?

NETTIE: (calling from other room) In here, darling.

HENRY: I've missed you, today. Come here.

NETTIE: (entering room) Oh, Henry. (lovingly settling in with a hug) Oh. (changing the subject) Oh you look tired, darling. Can I do something for you? Just tell me. I'm yours to command.

HENRY: Aw, a man's a fool to jeopardize a nice home and a loving wife like you. You do love me? Don't you, Nettie?

NETTIE: You know I do. Here, let me get your slippers on.

HENRY: Ah! Feels good to sit back in the sofa and relax. You don't know what a trying day I've had.

NETTIE: I can see you're all upset. It isn't anything I've done, is it, dear?

HENRY: Well, in a way, something you've done is connected with it.

NETTIE: What's that, darling?

HENRY: The money.

NETTIE: Money?

HENRY: I know you wanted to surprise me with the house, darling, but really you shouldn't have taken that money out of the bank without consulting me.

NETTIE: Henry, I don't even know what you're talking about.

HENRY: Now, Nettie.

NETTIE: But I don't.

HENRY: Nettie.

NETTIE: Oh, you're so upset, darling. If it's anything important, let's talk about it later. Meanwhile, why don't you just... put your head on my shoulder. And rest.

HENRY: I must admit, that sounds enticing.

NETTIE: Here. Let me make you comfortable. There.

HENRY: Ah.

NETTIE: Now you just close your eyes.

(SFX: ticking & piano)

NETTIE: That's it.

(silence while ticking continues)

HENRY: Nettie?

NETTIE: Yes, darling?

HENRY: Do you hear something?

NETTIE: No, darling.

HENRY: You sure?

NETTIE: Like what?

HENRY: Well, like the... like the... ticking of a clock.

(SFX: ticking stops)

NETTIE: No.

HENRY: It's strange, I don't hear it now. But, when I had my ear against your chest... Oh no. Oh no!

NETTIE: What are you talking about?

HENRY: No, I won't believe it. You are my Nettie, aren't you? You're a real live flesh and blood... Oh, she couldn't have done that to me. Not Nettie.

(SFX: ticking)

(MUSIC begins)

HENRY: But I hear it. And it's coming from you. It's coming from you!

(SFX: ticking gets louder as music climaxes.)

ANNOUNCER: You have just heard another adventure into the unknown world of the future. The world of...

(MUSIC)

DIM X ANNOUNCER: (with echo) Dimension X.

ANNOUNCER: Next week, Dimension X moves to a new day and time. It will originate in New York, on Saturdays from 8 to 8:30 pm, beginning September 8th. Consult your local newspaper for the exact date and time in your locality. And don't miss Murray Leinster's story of deep space, "First Contact."

(MUSIC)

ANNOUNCER: Dimension X is presented each week by the National Broadcasting Company, in cooperation with Street and Smith, publishers of the magazine, "Astounding Science Fiction." Today, Dimension X has presented, "Marionettes, Inc." Written for radio by George Lefferts, from the story by Ray Bradbury. Featured in the story were Kermit Murdock as Henry, Martin Rudy as Braeling, and Ross Martin as Braeling-2. Your host was Norman Rowe. Music by Albert Berman. Fred Collins speaking. Dimension X is produced by William Welsh, and directed by Fred Wiehe.

(MUSIC)