

# DID SOMEONE SAY, MURDER?

A Full-Length Play

by

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## ACT ONE

*(We are in a very ritzy, fashionable restaurant. There are numerous tables across the stage. We're in dining-mood lighting.)*

*(Enter a young couple, JOE and MARY. They walk through the door, obviously out of place in such a ritzy restaurant, and stand at the door, waiting for someone to seat them.)*

JOE: Here we are!

MARY: Oh, what a beautiful place, Joe. Are you sure we can afford to eat here?

JOE: Nothing's too good for you, my love.

MARY: It looks very expensive.

JOE: Shee-shee, Fru-fru? Yes, it does. But don't worry. Tonight we'll eat, drink, and be merry. We'll have burgers and fries the rest of the week.

MARY: The rest of our *lives* from the looks of this place. *(pause)* Where is everyone?

JOE: *(glances at watch)* It's still early. Maybe they don't open the doors until later.

MARY: Have you been here before?

JOE: No. But the reviews are excellent.

MARY: I'm so excited. *(Enter HOSTESS. SHE looks them over for a moment and sneers. HOSTESS leaves.)* Did you see that?

JOE: Miss?

MARY: She turned up here nose at us. Like we're not classy enough to be here.

JOE: Oh, I'm sure she didn't mean it that way.

MARY: Maybe we shouldn't dine here after all.

JOE: The reviews are good. It looks marvelous. We're staying.

MARY: If you're sure...

JOE: Miss? Miss?

*(Enter HOSTESS. SHE glares at them.)*

.HOSTESS: Yes?

JOE: We'd like a table for two, please.

HOSTESS: Table for two. Did you have a reservation?

JOE: The paper says you don't need reservations.

HOSTESS: You always need reservations. What do you think this is, McDonalds? *(SHE goes to the appointment book, reads intently; pause* Smoking or nonsmoking?

JOE: Nonsmoking.

HOSTESS: We don't have anything in nonsmoking.

JOE: Do you have anything on the patio?

HOSTESS: How do you know we have a patio?

JOE: I assumed...

HOSTESS: Of course we have a patio! Ha ha!

JOE: Oh. Well, we'd like a place on the patio.

HOSTESS: There's nothing available there, either.

JOE: Oh. I suppose smoking will be okay, then.

HOSTESS: We don't have anything in smoking either. We're completely booked. Call before you come next time. Goodbye. *(SHE turns to leave. MARY stops her.)*

MARY: Wait a moment. Miss? Look. Is it just me?

HOSTESS: Yes?

MARY: You're being very cold to us. I don't see anyone else around...

HOSTESS: No.

MARY: Well, then. Why can't we sit where we want?

HOSTESS: They're all reserved.

MARY: I don't see any reservation markers.

HOSTESS: Maybe they're invisible.

MARY: They're all reserved? Every single table?

HOSTESS: We're booked solid. It's murder night.

MARY: I beg your pardon?

JOE: Maybe we *should* go somewhere else—

MARY: Did you say murder night?

HOSTESS: Yes. That's what I said.

MARY: I've heard of these things! They have dinner and these actors come out and you get to play detective and there's a murder mystery—

HOSTESS: Not even close, Toots.

MARY: I beg your pardon?

HOSTESS: No actors. No playing detective for the audience. No getting up and going home afterward if you get killed. Just murder, plain and simple. With dinner. Got the picture?

MARY: How intriguing.

HOSTESS: I'm afraid it's very expensive and requires reservations far in advance.

JOE: Why don't we just call the restaurant down the street. If they don't want our business here. . .

MARY: I like it here.

JOE: But you said yourself—

MARY: I changed my mind. I want to be here for murder night.

JOE: What? Murder?

MARY: I'm intrigued.

HOSTESS: Oh, it's quite intriguing. And deadly, too.

MARY: Sounds delicious!

JOE: Honey—

MARY: **(to JOE)** Give her a tip and see if she'll seat us.

JOE: Tip?

MARY: **(whispering)** She wants a tip. Don't you know anything about dining in these fancy restaurants?

JOE: But murder night?

MARY: Don't be frightened, darling. It's just a publicity stunt. **(to HOSTESS)** Isn't that right?

HOSTESS: What?

MARY: No one really gets killed on murder night. Do they?

HOSTESS: If I were you, I wouldn't stick around to find out.

MARY: Oh, how delightful!

**(HOSTESS turns her back on JOE and MARY as another couple approaches. JOE keeps looking through his clothes for cash.)**

ELSINORE: Table for two. Under Elsinore.

HOSTESS: Oh, yes. Mr. Elsinore. Right this way.

JOE: Wait a second. We were here first. You have to seat us. And I'll, uh, give you a tip on my credit card.

HOSTESS: Do you have a reservation, sir?

JOE: **(looks at her book)** Yes. It's... **(looks at book)** under Mithington.

HOSTESS: Oh, is it?

JOE: Mithington. Mr. and Mrs. Mithington. Isn't that right, honey?

MARY: **(delighted)** Yes! The Mithingtons.

JOE: And we'd like to be seated.

HOSTESS: Mithington, eh? Are you sure?

JOE: Yes.

ELSINORE: Elsinore—

HOSTESS: Just a moment Mr. Elsinore.

ELSINORE: We'd like our table.

MRS. ELSINORE: Those people obviously don't have a reservation.

HOSTESS: No. But if they want to be a "Mithington" on murder night. . .

MRS. ELSINORE: **(amused)** Oh. Yes, how unfortunate.

MARY: What?

ELSINORE: Tell, me, Mithington. Just what is it you do for a living, old boy?

JOE: Um. I'm an accountant.

ELSINORE: **(knowing)** Is that right? **(to HOSTESS)** Yes. They're perfect to be here for a murder night.

HOSTESS: **(to JOE and MARY)** This way.

MARY: Wait, Joe. Maybe we shouldn't stay.

JOE: Oh, come on, Mary. Don't tell me they've frightened you with all this silly murder talk. You said—

MARY: I've changed my mind.

JOE: You wanted to eat here, and we're going to eat here.

HOSTESS: Even if you take the Mithingtons' place?

JOE: That's right.

HOSTESS: Very well. **(to ELSINORES)** You'll excuse me for a moment.

ELSINORE: I suppose.

MRS. ELSINORE: How rude.

ELSINORE: How crass.

MRS. ELSINORE: Ridiculous.

ELSINORE: They deserve what's coming to them.

MRS. ELSINORE: Indeed.

MARY: What was that?

ELSINORE: You'll find out.

MRS. ELSINORE: Yes. Poor things. You'll find out.

HOSTESS: Right this way, Mr. Mithington.

MARY: Wait a minute. I don't know about this. . .

HOSTESS: Do you want to take the Mithington reservation or not? I don't have all night.

JOE: Yes! Yes, we do.

MARY: **(to HOSTESS)** Did you say "murder night?"

HOSTESS: **(takes them to seats)** Here. **(tosses menus to table; points at the chairs)** Your waiter will be with you in a moment. Mithington.

**(SHE goes back and politely escorts the ELSINORES to their table. JOE and MARY lean over table and try to whisper.)**

MARY: I've got a bad feeling about this.

JOE: Well you had your chance. I wanted to go and you thought murder night sounded charming.

MARY: **(trying to convince herself)** They must be putting on a play.

JOE: Yes. That's it. A murder mystery play. It'll be fun. **(pause)** I just hope it's not too expensive.

HOSTESS: **(to ELSINORE)** I trust you'll have a marvelous evening, Mr. and Mrs. Elsinore.

ELSINORE: **(tipping her)** Thank you, my dear.

HOSTESS: **(seating them)** Here you are. **(takes out MRS. ELSINORE's chair)** Can I get you anything?

MRS. ELSINORE: Not just now, dearie. Thanks.

HOSTESS: Thank you.

**(SHE goes back to the hostess table. SHE sneers at JOE and MARY as SHE goes by.)**

MARY: See? He tipped her so she'd treat them well. Why don't you go tip her, Joe?

JOE: Well. Um. She's already seated us. Besides. I don't have any cash. **(enter BUSBOY, with water)**

BUSBOY: Water?

JOE: Oh. Yes, thanks. We'd like to know about your specials—

BUSBOY: I'm not the waiter. I'm the bus boy.

MARY: **(embarrassed)** Haven't you ever been in a fancy place like this before?

JOE: Well...

BUSBOY: Your waiter will be with you in a moment.

JOE: Thanks.

BUSBOY: Bread?

JOE: Yes.

MARY: No.

JOE: Why not?

MARY: I can't eat bread. It goes right to my thighs.

**(BUSBOY shrugs and goes to the ELSINORE table.)**

BUSBOY: Your waiter will be with you in a moment. Water?

ELSINORE: **(looking at menu)** No. But the Chablis looks quite good tonight.

MRS. ELSINORE: Yes. Let's order some.

BUSBOY: I'll get your waiter.

JOE: **(looking at menu)** Wait a minute. There's no food on this menu.

MARY: It's a drink menu.