

THE BALD MOUSETRAP

By Heather Violanti

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CHARACTERS

A MAN IN SNOWSHOES*	a mysterious figure who periodically traipses across the stage for apparently no reason whatsoever
JENKINS	Male, the proper and vaguely sinister butler of LORD and LADY MARLYN
LADY MARLYN	prim and vaguely dotty English lady
LORD MARLYN	LADY MARLYN's prim and vaguely daft husband.
DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE	Male, the mysterious and vaguely intelligent detective who interrupts the Marlyn's tea.
LORD MARVIN	the bluff and vaguely insignificant man who plays golf through the Marlyn's drawing room.
LADY MARVIN	LORD MARVIN's wife, vaguely ruthless.

*NOTE: If no snowshoes are available, any sort of outlandish footwear will suffice.

TIME & PLACE

The drawing room of the palatial country estate of LORD and LADY MARLYN, one foggy afternoon.

The Bald Mousetrap was presented in a workshop production in April 2003 at the Shakespeare Institute. The cast was as follows:

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Man in Snowshoes	Sarah Cummins
Jenkins	Fiona Sakwa
Lady Marlyn	Jodie Duddridge
Lord Marlyn	Peter Orford
Detective Inspector Moorgate	Eleanor Lowe
Lord Marvin	Elinor Parsons
Lady Marvin	Hannah Morison

The Bald Mousetrap was performed at the Camino Real Playhouse in October 2003 as part of their ShowOff! Festival, where it won Grand Prize. The cast was as follows:

Man in Snowshoes	John Kalb
Jenkins	Gary McCarver
Lady Marlyn	Kate Smiley
Lord Marlyn	Brad Schecter
Detective Inspector Moorgate	Joey Daniel
Lord Marvin	Andrew George
Lady Marvin	Meg Wolf
Director	Nick Charles

PROP LIST

General Props:

Five tea cups and saucers
Tea pot
Sugar bowl
Creamer
Man in Snowshoes
Snowshoes (or other outlandish footwear)
Deerstalker cap
Pipe

JENKINS:

2 trays/plates of chocolate biscuits
Salver
Detective Inspector Moorgate's calling card

LADY MARLYN:

Golf club

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE:

Golf club

LORD MARVIN:

Golf club
Golf ball

LADY MARVIN:

Golf club
Golf ball

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At Rise: A MAN IN SNOWSHOES appears upstage. HE looks to the right, then to the left. HE walks a few slow steps, then pauses. HE glances to the right, then left again. HE puts his right foot in, then his right foot out. Then HE shakes it all about. HE does the Hokey-Pokey, and that's what it's all about. HE then proceeds to Hokey-Pokey with his left foot. Then, MAN resumes walking slowly across the stage, at a Robert Wilson-esque pace. Periodically, at the company's discretion, he will walk across the stage, exit, then enters again, walking in the other direction. The other characters do not seem to notice A MAN IN SNOWSHOES. As A MAN IN SNOWSHOES marches across the stage, LORD and LADY MARLYN enter. From the opposite direction, JENKINS enters, carrying a tray of chocolate biscuits.

JENKINS: **(carries the tray down front to address the audience, then clears his throat sinisterly)** The palatial country estate of Lord and Lady Marlyn, one foggy afternoon. **(pauses, thinks a moment, then hold up his tray of biscuits)** A tray of chocolate biscuits, served during tea in the drawing room of the palatial country estate of Lord and Lady Marlyn, one foggy afternoon.

LADY MARLYN: Thank you, Jenkins. **(JENKINS exits. SHE pours tea for herself and LORD MARLYN.)** Have you seen Bobby Watson? **(pause; slurps tea)**

LORD MARLYN: No, I have not seen Bobby Watson. **(pause; HE slurps tea)**

LADY MARLYN: Pity! I do so miss Bobby Watson.

(Pause. LORD and LADY MARLYN slurp tea in unison.)

LORD MARLYN: I say, whatever became of that fellowwot's-his-nameBobby Watson?

LADY MARLYN: No one knows. Not even Bobby Watson.

LORD MARLYN: Eh?

LADY MARLYN: It's true. You see, Bobby Watson, poor lad, entered this world as an orphan. He was abandoned in a handbag, in the cloakroom of Victoria Station. The Brighton line. No, the line, is immaterial...no, in fact, I'm not sure there was a line at all.

LORD MARLYN: Lost.

LADY MARLYN: I daresay he was.

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LORD MARLYN: No, lost my bloody tea biscuit. It was a nice choccy one, too. **(searches through the tea things on the table)**

LADY MARLYN: That's nice, dear. **(Pause and slurps tea. MAN IN SNOWSHOES walks by.)** To proceed, Bobby Watson was an orphan. He was...

LORD MARLYN: **(holds up the biscuit triumphantly)** Found!

LADY MARLYN: Don't interrupt, please, Edward. Yes, Bobby Watson was found by one Mr. Nelson P. Wannafeller, the famous American philanthropist, who made his fortune as a traveling chiffonier salesman. Wannafeller had always wanted a son, and here was this beautiful baby boy, with a handsome handbag to boot.

LORD MARLYN: Ah!

LADY MARLYN: It is so difficult to find a handsome handbag, you know. So Wannafeller took the handbag, adopted Bobby Watson, and raised the lad as his own. Little Bobby Watson never wanted for a thing. He grew up into a charming young man, and took a double first in rugby at Oxford. Then one day, tragedy struck. **(Pause. They slurp tea.)** Nelson P. Wannafeller died abroad in most mysterious circumstances. Some said he been murdered by his archrival in the chiffonier trade, Christopher Wren. But nothing could be proved, of course.

LORD MARLYN: **(mouth full of biscuit)** Oh?

LADY MARLYN: Shortly after his father's death, Bobby Watson disappeared. Vanished into thin air. And in the five years since then, no one has seen Bobby Watson.

LORD MARLYN: **(chomps more biscuits)** Ah!

JENKINS: **(enters, carrying a calling card on a silver salver; clears his throat, then presents LADY MARLYN with the card)** Detective Inspector Moorgate, Madame.

LADY MARLYN: Very good, Jenkins. Show him in.

JENKINS: Yes, Madame. **(exits)**

LORD MARLYN: Were you expecting the Inspector?

LADY MARLYN: No. But I do so love company at teatime. Perhaps he can give me advice on my dahlias. They're missing, poor dears.

(LADY and LORD MARLYN slurp tea. JENKINS enters with DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE.)

JENKINS: **(clears his throat sinisterly)** Detective Inspector Moorgate. **(exits)**

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: Have you seen Bobby Watson?

LORD MARLYN: No, I have not seen Bobby Watson.

LADY MARLYN: Nor have I seen Bobby Watson.

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LORD MARLYN: Has he been found, Inspector?

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: I'm afraid that's classified information.

LORD MARLYN: Has he been found, Inspector?

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: Look here, I'll ask the questions.

LORD MARLYN: Has he been found, Inspector?

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: No, that's why I'm here.

LADY MARLYN: China or India?

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: We haven't looked there.

LADY MARLYN: Milk or cream? (*pours* **DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE a cup of tea**)

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: Although China might be a possibility. (*pours cream into his tea*)

LADY MARLYN: One lump or two?

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: He had none, as far as we know. (*plops two lumps of sugar into the teacup*)

LADY MARLYN: Your tea, Inspector.

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: What? Oh. Yes, thank you. (*takes the tea, slurps loudly*)

LADY MARLYN: Do you know anything about dahlias, Inspector?

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: Dahlias?

LORD MARVIN: (*offstage*) Fore! (*A golf ball suddenly lands onstage, followed by LORD and LADY MARVIN, who wield golf clubs.*) A rum shot, that one was.

LADY MARVIN: Sailed clear above that empty flower bed.

(They see the MARLYNS and DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE.)

LORD MARVIN: Oh, I say, mind if we play through?

LADY MARLYN: Not at all.

LADY MARVIN: Right then. (*places a ball down on the ground, then prepares to swing*)

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: Wait!

LADY MARVIN: Yes?

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: Have you seen Bobby Watson?

LADY MARVIN: No, I have not seen Bobby Watson.

LORD MARVIN: Nor have I seen Bobby Watson.

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: But aren't you Lord and Lady Marvin, alleged world champions of the Aristocratic Amateur Golf and Drama Society, and the last two people to see poor Bobby Watson before he vanished?!

LADY MARVIN: Yes.

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MOORGATE: Ah ha! So you admit to kidnapping Bobby Watson!

LORD MARVIN: My wife means nothing of the sort. And I resent these accusations upon the spotless honor of the house of Marvin.

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