

WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A MURDER

A MYSTERY IN ONE ACT

By Michael Druce

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ISBN: 978-1-61588-202-1

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SYNOPSIS: When ten distant relatives learn that each of them is about to inherit a million dollars, wheels begin to turn and plots hatch. If someone doesn't make it through the stormy weekend ahead, their share will be divided equally among the others. It doesn't take a mathematical genius to figure out that less is more. As bodies pile up, the laughs come fast and furiously in this 'whodunnit' that proves that *Where There's a Will, There's a Murder*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 MEN, 7 WOMEN, 0-1 EITHER)

NILES HENSHAW (m).....Butler. (122 lines)
MOLLY HENSHAW (f)Maid. (109 lines)
DR. PRESTON (f)Doctor. (43 lines)
METHANY VIXEN (f)Actress. (64 lines)
STARK (m).....Singer. (26 lines)
PENELOPE PRIMM (f)Spinster. (53 lines)
MONICA BUCHANAN (f).....Gullible guest. (15 lines)
AGATHA CRISPIE (f).....Mystery writer. (56 lines)
HEAVENLY DELIGHT (f).....Ingenuer. (67 lines)
PHILLIP CHANDLER (m)Handsome man. (97 lines)
VOICE ON THE RADIO (m/f).....(1 line)

PROPERTIES

- A vase with flowers
- A radio
- A desk with two drawers
- A bulletproof vest
- A knife
- Two manila envelopes (one for each drawer)
- A letter
- Cups for coffee or tea
- Folded bedding
- Umbrellas and rain gear
- A map of the island
- Brandy service
- Ladies' purses
- Doctor's bag
- Four flashlights (To minimize glare, lenses should be covered with white paper.)
- Stormy weather sounds, gun shot sounds, and 'mood music'.

NOTE

Where There's a Will There's a Murder was previously published in a somewhat different form as *Murder by Bequest*.

SETTING

A house on an island, the action takes place in a comfortably furnished great room. Down right is an exit to the kitchen and basement. Down left is an exit to the downstairs bathroom. Upstage center is a split entrance and exit. Up left is an exit to the upstairs area of the house. The up right exit leads to the front entrance of the house. A pair of loveseats, four arm chairs, a small table, and a desk are needed. A radio sits atop the desk, and a vase sits on the radio.

SCENE 1

AT RISE:

It is night. A news broadcast is playing on the radio. A vase sits atop the radio. MOLLY enters with an armload of bedding. She pauses to straighten a few items.

RADIO: ...turning now to area weather. As a result of last night's storm, at least seven fishing vessels were swamped, two of which capsized. Officials report rescuing twenty-seven crew members; however, one crewman is still missing and presumed drowned. Severe weather is expected to continue throughout the weekend. On the national scene, for an unprecedented third day, the president has done nothing rude or embarrassing... (*MOLLY turns off the radio.*)

NILES: (*Enters.*) It's a good thing the guests made it in when they did. I don't think a boat can get through this weather. Anything on the radio?

MOLLY: A vase.

NILES: Any news?

MOLLY: Yes.

NILES: Anything important?

MOLLY: The president is behaving himself.

NILES: Anything about the weather?

MOLLY: It's bad.

NILES: I know it's bad.

MOLLY: If you know, then why are you asking me?

NILES: I am interested in the trend.

MOLLY: The weather *has been* bad, it is *still* bad, it *will continue* to be bad. That's the trend. We're going to be shut in the entire weekend.

NILES: Perhaps I should call the agency.

MOLLY: They'll tell you the same thing.

NILES: To find out if whoever arranged all of this is planning on coming.

MOLLY: It's the end of the world out there. Of course no one else is coming. Would you take a boat ride in this weather?

NILES: It wouldn't hurt to call.

MOLLY: The phones are out. Nothing is working.

NILES: What about the cell phone?

MOLLY: Nothing is working. I just told you that. Nothing means everything.

NILES: You mean *nothing*.

MOLLY: No, I mean *everything*. Nothing is working means everything is not working, including cell phones.

NILES: But the radio is working.

MOLLY: Of course the radio is working, because we can't talk over it. If I thought anyone could hear us through the radio, don't you think I'd be screaming into it?

NILES: Hmm. I'd say we're pretty isolated then. What about the guests?

MOLLY: They're isolated as well.

NILES: Are they settled in for the night? Is everyone comfortable?

MOLLY: Everyone but that snotty soap opera actress, Methany Vixen. She's been here less than an hour and already she wants a fresh change of sheets. I don't like her on *Hot Days and Steamy Nights*, and she's no better in real life.

NILES: You wouldn't be a little jealous, would you?

MOLLY: Of her? What would I have to be jealous of?

NILES: You're not just a teeny-weeny bit worried that a beautiful Hollywood starlet might sweep me off my feet?

MOLLY: First of all, I doubt she even knows what a broom is, and secondly, I'm about as worried as you thinking that obnoxious singer with one name, Stink or Snark or whatever, will sweep me off my feet.

NILES: Stark. His name is Stark.

MOLLY: Does he have a last name?

NILES: Naked.

MOLLY: Very funny. (*Changing the subject.*) If no else comes, are we still supposed to open the mysterious envelope?

NILES: (*Goes to the desk and picks up a manilla envelope.*) Yes.

MOLLY: Couldn't we just take a peek?

NILES: The man at the agency was very explicit. Not to be opened until seven o'clock tomorrow night. *(He pulls open the right hand drawer and drops the envelope in.)*

MOLLY: Don't you think there's something weird about all of this?

NILES: You mean because it's a dark and stormy night, we're on an island in an old house cut off from all communication, and we've been hired by someone mysterious? *(MOLLY nods.)* Nah. This kind of stuff happens all the time.

MOLLY: In murder mysteries.

NILES: Molly, this is real life. This isn't a murder mystery. I'll be back in a few minutes. I need to check the oil in the generator. *(NILES exits while MOLLY sneaks over to the desk and gently pulls open the drawer.)*

NILES: *(Pops back in, catching MOLLY.)* Aha, caught you!

MOLLY screams and spins around as the lights fade out.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 2

The following morning, as the lights fade up, there is a bloodcurdling scream from the kitchen. A moment later, DR. PRESTON casually enters from the kitchen holding a coffee cup. NILES rushes in breathlessly.

PRESTON: Oh, good morning, Niles.

NILES: Good morning, Miss Preston.

PRESTON: Doctor, if you don't mind.

NILES: I don't mind, but I'm not a doctor.

PRESTON: I know; I'm the doctor. Would you know if there might be some biscuits about?

NILES: Yes, I know that.

PRESTON: To go with my espresso.

NILES: You scream?

PRESTON: No, I take it black.

NILES: A scream. I just remembered, I thought I heard a scream.

PRESTON: Yes, now that you mention it, there was a scream. I believe it was your wife.

NILES: My wife? Is she all right?

PRESTON: I wouldn't know. She'll need to make an appointment.

NILES: Excuse me, Molly may need me.

PRESTON: I wouldn't go in there if I were you. It's quite nasty. Molly broke a nail. (*Exits.*)

MOLLY: (*Enters from kitchen, examining her nail.*) That was a ten dollar nail.

NILES: Ten dollars? (*Quickly doing the math on his fingers.*) That's... Why, that's a hundred dollars worth of paint and plastic on your fingers. We can't afford luxuries like that.

MOLLY: You don't think I'm worth it?

NILES: Well, of course you are, darling.

MOLLY: All this menial work is ruining my nails. I need a maid.

NILES: Darling, maids don't have maids.

MOLLY: Oh, Niles, I've had it. I'm through. I'm finished. I'm tired of cooking and cleaning for people who can afford not to do those things themselves. I am sick of being one of the little people. I don't want to work for the rich anymore. I want to be one of them.

NILES: You, you, you. It's always about you, isn't it? Your wants. Your needs. You think I like being a butler? Why can't it be about me for once?

MOLLY: Because all you have to do is buttle, answer the door, and serve. I'm the one who does the cooking, the cleaning, and the dishes.

NILES: All right, from now on, I'll do it all.

MOLLY: You can't handle the cooking, the cleaning, and the dishes.

NILES: Fine, I'll call the agency right now and arrange for a boat to pick us up and we'll go back to the mainland. I'll tell them we're tired of waiting on people and that from now on we want to be rich and snobby ourselves.

MOLLY: Don't try to appeal to my reason. I don't want to be reasonable. I want to be emotional and irrational. The wind and rain and the isolation are making me crazy. Anyway, you can't call the agency because the phones are still out.

NILES: Molly, I know it seem unfair that some people are rich and vulgar and other people like us are—

MOLLY: —poor and vulgar.

NILES: We have each other. We have our health. Honestly, do you think we would be any happier if we were wealthy?

MOLLY: That is the dumbest thing you have ever said.

There is a SCREAM from the kitchen.

NILES: Who's that?

MOLLY: It sounded like Methany Vixen.

NILES: You don't think something has happened to her, do you?

MOLLY: I certainly hope so.

METHANY: *(Enters from the kitchen.)* How utterly vile. I have never been so thoroughly disgusted in all of my life. There was a fingernail floating in my coffee.

MOLLY: That would be mine.

METHANY: I might have guessed. Who else would wear Raspberry Tart Red? I'll take my coffee in my room with nothing in it, thank you. By the way, would you please send up a copy of guest list? I'd like know if it will be necessary to leave my room this weekend. *(Exits.)*

MOLLY: Only to fumigate it. And you wonder why I don't like being a maid. Could anyone possible be more obnoxious than that dreadful woman?

Offstage there is the SOUND of someone blowing his nose loudly.

NILES: You were saying?

STARK: *(Enters, looking windblown.)* Oh, hi. Say, are there any more of those fruit-flavored gummy beans down here?

NILES: Gummy beans?

STARK: Yeah, you know, there was a whole bowl of them on my bathroom vanity. I ate 'em all.

MOLLY: Those were bath oil beads.

STARK: Okay. Are there any more?

NILES: I'll bring some up.

STARK: Great. One more thing, when we do we meet our host?

NILES: We're all supposed to meet at seven. Perhaps then.

STARK: So he's here? In the house, on the island?

NILES: If he is, we haven't seen him. If he is one of the guests, he hasn't introduced himself. We don't know any more than you.

STARK: Okay, that's cool. (*Exits.*)

MOLLY: (*Shaking her head.*) What sort of woman would spend time with a man like that?

NILES: One that has to be inflated.

PENELOPE: (*Entering excitedly.*) I'm not sure, but I think something bad has happened.

NILES: What is it, Miss Primm?

PENELOPE: It's Heavenly.

NILES: Yes, I'm sure it is.

PENELOPE: I think something may have happened to Heavenly Delight. She was supposed to meet Monica and me for coffee—or is it I?

NILES: It's *me*.

PENELOPE: No, you weren't invited. It was me and Monica—Monica and me—and now she hasn't shown up.

NILES: Monica?

PENELOPE: No, Miss Delight.

NILES: Where's Monica?

PENELOPE: Looking for Miss Delight. Her coffee's getting cold.

NILES: Monica's?

PENELOPE: No, Miss Delight's.

NILES: Maybe Miss Delight doesn't like coffee. Perhaps she's a tea drinker?

PENELOPE: It's so confusing. We knocked on her door.

NILES: Was there an answer?

PENELOPE: Well, no, it's just a door. She was supposed to meet us in the sitting room.

NILES: Maybe she doesn't know what the sitting room is. If everyone was standing, how would she know?

PENELOPE: That's right, she wouldn't.

NILES: Have you spoken to Miss Crispie?

PENELOPE: Well, only once or twice.

NILES: About Miss Delight?

PENELOPE: What about Miss Delight?

NILES: She's missing.

PENELOPE: She is?

NILES: You just told me.

PENELOPE: I said she never came to the sitting room.

NILES: Which might mean she's missing, which is why I thought you might have spoken to Miss Crispie.

PENELOPE: Why would I speak with Miss Crispie?

NILES: She writes mysteries. Maybe she has some ideas.

PENELOPE: For a new mystery?

NILES: Maybe she can help you find out where Miss Delight is.

PENELOPE: Oh, I see. (*MONICA enters.*) Oh, Monica, thank goodness. Did you find Heavenly?

MONICA: No, but I ran into Agatha Crispie. She went into Heavenly's room and began going through her drawers.

AGATHA: (*Enters.*) Bad news. I made thorough inspection of Miss Delight's drawers, and she's not in them. I mean, Miss Delight is not in her room.

MOLLY: She's in the spa.

AGATHA: The spa?

MOLLY: Yes, with Mr. Chandler.

CRISPIE: I don't think so. Her swimsuit is lying on her bed. (*Everyone but MOLLY is shocked.*)

MOLLY: They're married.

AGATHA: Good golly, Miss—

NILES: Molly, are you sure?

MONICA: Heavenly and Mr. Chandler are married?

MOLLY: They're here on their honeymoon.

MONICA: But they have different last names.

MOLLY: She's very modern.

PENELOPE: And I was hoping to find romance on this trip.

MOLLY: Too bad.

AGATHA: But that does explain those boxer shorts I discovered on Miss Delight's bathroom door. Well, that little mystery is solved. Maybe I'll have that coffee now. By the way, where is the sitting room?

PENELOPE: We'll show you. Come along, Miss Crispie.
(*PENELOPE, CRISPIE, and MONICA exit.*)

NILES: I didn't know Chandler and Miss Delight were married.

MOLLY: They're not. I just made that up.

NILES: What?

MOLLY: Got you. I'm kidding. Come on, help me serve coffee.

NILES: Just a moment, I need to check on something. (*He crosses to the desk and opens the drawer he put the envelope in.*) The envelope, it's not here.

MOLLY: Don't be silly. Look in the other drawer.

NILES: (*Opens the other drawer.*) Here it is. I could have sworn I put it in the right-hand drawer last night. (*Both cross to exit as the lights fade.*)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 3

Later that evening. As the lights fade up, the eight guests are seated. NILES and MOLLY enter. MOLLY is carrying the envelope.

METHANY: It's about time. You've kept us waiting.

NILES: Forty-five seconds. Please, everyone have a seat. (*Not sure what to do, the eight guests quickly rise and then sit again.*) Just let me say that Molly and I are as much in the dark as the rest of you. We have been hired by an agency as your hosts this weekend, and we're just following instructions. I know it seems—

STARK: Enough already, we get it. You don't know anything. Get this show on the road.

NILES: Molly, the envelope, please. (*He chuckles at his little joke. Opening the envelope, he removes a letter and begins to read.*) Read letter. See, it says right here, "Niles, read the following letter."

AGATHA: How intriguing; how mysterious. It reminds of one of my own mysteries.

HEAVENLY: Oh, Phillip, do say it won't be some bizarre, incomprehensible, cryptic message that will defy our understanding and confuse us more than we've ever been confused before.

CHANDLER: I can't say that.

HEAVENLY: Why not?

PHILLIP: Heavenly, I can't say that because I don't use words like that.

HEAVENLY: Oh, I see.

PENELOPE: Let's just hear the letter before we pass judgment.

METHANY: You don't hear a letter, you read it.

PRESTON: Go ahead, Niles, read and we'll listen.

NILES: (*Reading.*) Ladies and gentlemen, first of all let me say how wonderful it is to have found all of you at long last.

STARK: I didn't know we were lost. (*VIXEN laughs at STARK'S remark and is then suddenly embarrassed when no one else appreciates the humor*)

NILES: What you are about to hear is my last will and testament. I am sure none of you has heard the name Isaac M. Noone. I have devoted my life to remaining in the shadows instead of living it in the limelight. My reasons are private and will remain so. With the exceptions of Mrs. Henshaw and Mr. Chandler, exhaustive research into my family history has revealed that I am related to all of you. (*General stir.*) Through a great deal of time, effort, and expense, I have tracked each of you through a team of private investigators. Although the degrees of separation between us are considerable, my purpose in bringing all of you together is to share with you what you are entitled to as my remaining living heirs—the remaining unbequeathed portion of my estate. I bequeath unto each of you and your spouses the sum of one million dollars. (*A considerable reaction.*)

MOLLY: Spouses, too?

MONICA: I believe that's what he said.

PENELOPE: A million dollars...

PHILLIP: Please, let Niles continue.

NILES: I regret that circumstances did not allow me to meet each of you personally, but I trust you'll enjoy getting to know each other throughout the weekend. Upon your return to the mainland, you will be provided additional information for claiming your inheritance. All the very best, Isaac M. Noone.

PRESTON: That's it?

NILES: No, there's a postscript.

PHILLIP: What does it say?

NILES: Some say money is the root of all evil. I suppose that's for you to decide. Oh, and one last thing. If, for whatever reason, a beneficiary is already deceased or should become so prior to filing a claim for his or her share of the inheritance, their share will be divided equally among the survivors.

METHANY: Well, what do you think?

STARK: I'd say we'll start killing each other in about five minutes.

HEAVENLY: What a horrible thing to say. You don't mean that.

STARK: I do; I most certainly do. With ten million dollars at stake, I'd say anything can happen.

AGATHA: You forget, Mr. Naked, I know quite a lot about crime detection. I'll be keeping an eye on you.

STARK: Oh, you're just saying that. I bet you won't.

MOLLY: We're rich, Niles, rich. Can you believe it? We're rich!

PHILLIP: What do you think, Miss Crispie?

AGATHA: Yes, I suppose we are rich.

PHILLIP: That's not what I meant.

AGATHA: Oh, you're wondering if this is on the level.

PHILLIP: Right. What do we know about this man, Noone?

METHANY: He's rich and he's dead, that's all I need to know.

MONICA: This is scary.

METHANY: What kind of moron is scared of being handed a million dollars?

MONICA: It's not the money that scares me, it's the idea that somehow we're all related to each other.

PRESTON: Yes, I see what you mean, Miss Buchanan. *(All look at STARK.)* It's like discovering you're related to the Three Stooges.

PENELOPE: What am I going to do with a million dollars?

METHANY: Look in the mirror. You'll think of something.

NILES: (To MOLLY.) You don't think all of that money will change us, do you?

MOLLY: (Gleefully.) I hope so.

HEAVENLY: Since we've already met each other, what do we do now?

STARK: Let the killing begin.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 4

The following morning. As the lights fade up, all are on-stage except STARK, CRISPIE, and PRESTON. The others are having coffee.

MOLLY: The first thing I am going to do is quit my job. Let someone else be the maid for a change. Now I'm rich enough to have my own maid.

METHANY: (To MOLLY.) I'd like a refill, please.

MOLLY: Get it yourself.

METHANY: Well, I never.

MOLLY: If you want it, you will.

MONICA: You know, Molly, a million dollars doesn't go that far these days.

MOLLY: You forget, Niles and I both get a million. So we're twice as rich as you.

NILES: Molly, it's not polite to flaunt your wealth.

MOLLY: If you got it, baby, flaunt it.

PRESTON: (CRISPIE and PRESTON hurry on.) I'm afraid we have some bad news.

MOLLY: Don't tell me. The will is a joke?

AGATHA: We found a body at the bottom of the hot tub.

MONICA: A body? A body, you say?

PRESTON: Yes, a body. From the look of it, I'd say it's been underwater for several hours.

METHANY: Ugh! I think I'm going to be sick. You don't think it's affected the water in any way, do you?

MONICA: Someone is dead, and you're worried about the water?

METHANY: I was bathing in that tub not more than an hour ago.

PHILLIP: Who is it, Miss Crispie?

AGATHA: Who?

PHILLIP: The body in the tub.

AGATHA: It's hard to say.

PENELOPE: Can you write down who you think it is?

PRESTON: What Miss Crispie means is that we're not sure who it is.

We're not positive.

PHILLIP: Who do you think it might be?

AGATHA: We think it might be Stark.

METHANY: Oh.

PHILLIP: But you're not sure.

PRESTON: It's either Stark or a very large lobster.

PENELOPE: What do you mean, doctor?

AGATHA: He was very well done.

PRESTON: The thermostat had been turned up all the way. Whoever it is was cooked beyond recognition.

HEAVENLY: Then what makes you think it's Stark?

PRESTON: Who else could it be? Look around. Who's the only person missing?

NILES: Were there a lot of bubbles in the water?

AGATHA: Yes, a lot of bubbles.

NILES AND MOLLY: It's him.

METHANY: No! Stop! Please, I can't hear any more.

AGATHA: Are those real tears, Miss Vixen, or just crocodile tears?

METHANY: Have you no respect for the dead?

AGATHA: Even less for the prime suspect.

MONICA: You think Miss Vixen killed Stark?

AGATHA: She admitted to being in the hot tub.

METHANY: I didn't kill him, you idiot. I was in love with him. (*The other women scream, horrified.*)

PENELOPE: You were in love with Stark?

MONICA: Oh, that's sick.

METHANY: I can't explain it. Something happened.

MOLLY: Insanity?

METHANY: We met a few months ago at a party. At first I thought he was horrid, but once I got to know him, he seemed less—less—

MOLLY: Icky?

METHANY: And then suddenly we found ourselves here, unable to express our affection, and so we decided to play it cool. *(To PENELOPE.)* Penelope, surely an old maid like you understands.

PENELOPE: I may be desperate, but even I have some self-respect.

METHANY: You didn't know him.

PENELOPE: That's why I feel blessed.

METHANY: No one knew him. He wasn't like other men.

MOLLY: You can say that again.

METHANY: He did something for me.

MOLLY: He did something for me as well, but it wasn't anything an airsick bag couldn't take care of.

MONICA: What's worse, you were related to him. We all were. *(A round of yucks.)*

HEAVENLY: Alright, though none of us can ever hope to understand what Methany saw in Stark, she still deserves our love and our support.

CHANDLER: Heavenly is right. Not only must we throw our weight behind Methany and try not to laugh, but we have another problem.

AGATHA: That's right, Mr. Chandler. Do we drain the hot tub or not?

PHILLIP: That's not what I'm thinking, Miss Crispie.

AGATHA: What are you thinking?

PHILLIP: Three things. First of all, don't you think it is ironic that the man we considered most likely to commit murder is dead?

AGATHA: Are you speaking of verbal irony, dramatic, or situational?

PHILLIP: Dramatic.

CRISPIE: Yes, I see, I'm following you.

PRESTON: That's one down and two to go. Your second point, Mr. Chandler?

PHILLIP: Why kill Stark?

MOLLY: Why not? You only had to look at the man and you wanted to kill him. *(To METHANY, who begins to wail.)* Sorry.

PRESTON: That's two down and one to go.

PHILLIP: Doesn't it suggest that whoever murdered Stark may be here, in this room, now?

PRESTON: I'm sorry, your time is up. Would the real killer please stand up?

MOLLY: Well, I do declare. Can you believe it? No one is fessing up.

MONICA: Is it possible there is someone else on the island?

PHILLIP: Anything is possible, Miss Buchanan. Pigs might fly. I just don't see how they would have gotten here in this weather.

NILES: Unless they arrived before we did.

PHILLIP: Exactly.

MONICA: The flying pigs?

PHILLIP: No, a possible murderer.

PENELOPE: Other than the gross out factor, who would want to kill Stark?

MOLLY: You're kidding, right?

PHILLIP: There could have been any number of motives. His appearance was weird. He acted weird. His music was weird. It could be anyone who doesn't understand that today's music doesn't have to have a melody or lyrics that make sense.

PENELOPE: Are you implying it could have been anyone for any reason?

PHILLIP: No, I'm saying it. It could have been anyone for any reason.

PENELOPE: Which means it could be any one of us.

PHILLIP: Exactly, and that's why we need to make an immediate search of the island, to give everyone here the benefit of the doubt.

METHANY: It's pouring rain.

PHILLIP: Then you'll need an umbrella, Miss Vixen. There's a map here. *(He crosses to the desk and pulls a map of the island from the drawer.)* Heavenly and I will search here and here. Niles, you and Molly search there and there. Doctor, you and Miss Vixen search here and there. Miss Crispie, you and Miss Primm search all the way from there to here.

MONICA: What about me?

PHILLIP: We need someone to stay in the house.

PENELOPE: You can't leave her alone.

AGATHA: She won't be alone. She'll have this to keep her company.

(Opens her jacket, revealing a bulletproof vest, and pulls out a large pistol.)

PRESTON: Is that a bulletproof vest you're wearing?

AGATHA: In my profession, you can't be too careful.

PRESTON: But you're a writer—

AGATHA: Who knows a thing or two about criminal minds. If there is a killer out there, we must find him before he strikes again. Lock all of the doors, Miss Buchanan. This will be our secret knock.

(She taps out a long, involved knock that no one could possibly remember.)

AGATHA: *(MONICA futilely attempts to imitate the knock.)* No!

(CRISPIE knocks again, but it is not the same knock.)

HEAVENLY: Couldn't we just identify ourselves by speaking?

AGATHA: Oh, no. Some criminals are masters of voice disguise. Did you know that Jack the Ripper could impersonate a six year old girl and a French Poodle?

MOLLY: I'll be the one making cat noises.

PHILLIP: *(To MONICA.)* Don't worry, you'll know it's us.

Everyone exits. MONICA follows them off to suggest she has locked the door. She returns and sits, nervously holding the gun in her lap. Suspenseful music plays as the lights fade.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 5

An hour later, VIXEN enters alone from the main entrance. A few seconds later, PRESTON enters from the kitchen.

PRESTON: Oh, there you are. I wondered where you'd gotten off to. Beastly weather... What?

METHANY: I turned around, and you were gone. I was terribly frightened.

PRESTON: Yes, well, sorry about that. I thought I saw something at the foot of the cliff, and so—

METHANY: You left me.

PRESTON: When I realized you weren't with me, I didn't know what else to do, so I came back here. I've just put the kettle on to boil.

METHANY: It's awful out there. I must look a mess. Is my mascara running?

PRESTON: I'm afraid so. Shall I fix you some tea?

METHANY: Please. Two sugars. I've got to fix my face. *(She exits.)*

PRESTON: Right. *(As PRESTON moves toward the kitchen, CHANDLER and HEAVENLY enter from the front entrance.)*

PHILLIP: Nothing. What about you, doctor?

PRESTON: Not a thing. I don't believe there's anyone out there. I was just getting ready to pour some tea. Care for some?

HEAVENLY: No, thank you.

PRESTON: Chandler?

PHILLIP: None for me.

AGATHA: *(CRISPIE enters with PENELOPE.)* It's terrible out there, simply terrible.

PRESTON: Yes, positively beastly.

PHILLIP: Did you see anything, Miss Crispie? Any signs?

AGATHA: As a matter of fact, yes. "No trespassing. Private island. Watch your step."

PHILLIP: I see.

NILES: *(MOLLY and NILES enter.)* It's an absolute downpour. Nothing but cats and dogs.

PENELOPE: There can't be anyone out there.

METHANY: *(There is a scream off-stage. It is METHANY. SHE enters.)* It's awful. Positively awful.

AGATHA: What is it, Miss Vixen?

METHANY: It's Monica.

AGATHA: *(Confused.)* All right, Monica.

METHANY: No, not me. Monica. I went into the upstairs bathroom to repair my makeup, and I found Monica in the bathtub.

AGATHA: Well, I'm sure she knew it was an accident. Next time she'll know to keep the door locked.

METHANY: She wasn't taking a bath. She's dead.

AGATHA: What are you saying, Miss Vixen?

METHANY: What does it sound like I'm saying? Monica is dead.

AGATHA: You're sure?

METHANY: She's underwater and doesn't have a snorkel.

AGATHA: Don't anyone leave. (*She exits.*)

MOLLY: As if there's any place to go.

PHILLIP: (*To VIXEN.*) Was Monica here when you returned?

METHANY: No, only Dr. Preston.

PHILLIP: I thought you two were searching the island together?

METHANY: We got separated. The doctor was here when I returned.

PRESTON: I know what you're thinking, but you're wrong. I didn't do it.

PHILLIP: (*To VIXEN.*) Did you hear anything unusual or see anything suspicious?

METHANY: The doctor was coming from the kitchen. She said she was putting the kettle on.

PRESTON: Satisfied?

PHILLIP: Did Monica let you in, Doctor? Did you use the secret knock?

PRESTON: Of course I didn't use the secret knock. Who could remember it? I didn't need to knock, the door was already unlocked.

PHILLIP: What about Monica? Where was she?

PRESTON: Now look here, Chandler, I know it looks suspicious, my breaking away from Miss Vixen like that, but if I had wanted to kill Monica, I wouldn't have done away with her in the bathtub.

PHILLIP: Why not?

PRESTON: Because I don't think I could have carried her upstairs.

PHILLIP: Why do you think she was killed down here?

PRESTON: What reason did she have for going upstairs? The door she was guarding is down here, plus there's a bathroom down here.

PHILLIP: Yes, but it has a shower stall, not a bathtub.

METHANY: I didn't say she was *taking* a bath, I said she was *in* the bath. She's fully clothed.

PHILLIP: Still, the doctor was alone.

PRESTON: Were Miss Vixen and I the only ones separated during that time?

PENELOPE: Miss Crispie and I were separated for about fifteen minutes.

PRESTON: Niles?

NILES: Molly and I were apart for a few minutes.

PRESTON: Chandler?

HEAVENLY: Phillip didn't come back here and kill Monica. He's my husband. I trust him.

PRESTON: That's not what I asked. Were you apart at any time?

HEAVENLY: Well, yes. About twenty minutes. (*HEAVENLY and CHANDLER eye each other cautiously.*)

PRESTON: So you see, Chandler, any one of us could have done it.

AGATHA: (*CRISPIE enters carrying a large syringe.*) Yes, doctor, but how many of us have the tools necessary to administer a lethal injection?

PENELOPE: Poor Monica.

AGATHA: I checked your bag, doctor. It contains several syringes.

PRESTON: Hello! I'm a doctor.

AGATHA: That is my point.

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