

DEAD AND BREAKFAST

A MYSTERY-COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

By Craig Sodaro

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SYNOPSIS: Hardly-boiled ace detective Nick Noir is at it again. He's married his secretary Selma, and for a honeymoon surprise, he's rented a sailboat, the Lady Lovey Dove, for a romantic Caribbean cruise. A hurricane douses the romance, and the two lovebirds end up at the Jolly Rodger Bed and Breakfast, the only inn on an otherwise deserted island.

The Noirs have a big surprise, for when they walk in—wet and weary—they find themselves mistaken for J. J. Hay, a ruthless tycoon, and his mother. The owner of the inn, Violet Van Leer, introduces Nick and Selma to the guests they supposedly invited for the weekend “they’ve” paid for. There’s Ozzie Hawkins, a U.S. Congressman, and his young wife Dora; the great mystery writer, Zona Zou; a famous hypnotist, Madam Alma; a country singer, Patsy Robbins; and a homemaking guru, Emmie Bloom. Nick and Selma are at a loss for words, but against Selma’s objection at playing Nick’s mother, they decide to go along with the gag.

That is, until someone takes a shot at them. And then someone sends poison candy as a gift. And then they’re knocked out and hung up in the walk-in freezer to die. Fortunately, they manage to thaw, but realize there are two bodies hanging up in the freezer—could they be the real J.J. Hay and his mother? Already dead?

Further attempts on their lives spur Nick and Selma into action. They must find out which of the guests is the killer. Or could it be the help? Darlene and Charlene, the Sudsy sisters are pretty suspicious. And Dexter, the handyman, is always hanging around in the wrong places. And what about the beachcomber Davey Jones who just happens to know a few things nobody else does? With their customary flair, Nick and Selma peel back a few layers and begin to see the truth. But somewhere along the line, their wires get crossed and they find themselves in a web spun by the killer and there doesn’t seem to be any way out.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 MALES, 8 FEMALES)

NICK NOIR (m)Ace private eye on his honeymoon.
(214 lines)

SELMA NOIR (f)Nick's bride and his secretary.
(172 lines)

DEXTER BAGLEY (m)An older handyman. *(43 lines)*

VIOLET VAN LEER (f)About 40 years old, the dour owner of
the Jolly Roger Inn. *(66 lines)*

DARLENE SUDSY (f)Mid-thirties, the cook at the Jolly Roger
Inn. *(42 lines)*

DAVEY JONES (m)A classic beachcomber. *(32 lines)*

OZZIE HAWKINS (m)A congressman *(43 lines)*

ALMA DEGROOT (f)In her forties, a talented hypnotist.
(98 lines)

DORA HAWKINS (f)Ozzie's once secretary, now wife.
(32 lines)

ZONA ZOU (f)A famous mystery writer. *(54 lines)*

EMMIE BLOOM(f)A homemaking maven. *(67 lines)*

PATSY ROBBINS (f)A famous country singer. *(51 lines)*

PROPERTIES

PRESET: CD player, CDs including one Mozart CD, book manuscript.

- Cell phone (SELMA)
- Shovel (DEXTER)
- Magazine (VIOLET)
- Small tablet and pencil (DARLENE)
- Large knife (DAVEY)
- Pocket watch on a chain (ALMA)
- Stack of “messages” (VIOLET)
- Life jacket (DORA)
- Knitting needles, yarn, and “book jacket” in progress (EMMIE)
- Frying pan (DARLENE)
- Stick (DARLENE)
- Envelopes containing “messages” (VIOLET)
- Book (ZONA)
- Tablecloths (NICK and SELMA)
- Coffee cups (DARLENE)
- Dust cloth (CHARLENE)
- Paper and pen or ledger book (VIOLET)
- Notebook and pen (DORA)
- Fancy box of candy with gift card (VIOLET)
- Box wrapped up as a present containing snake (KILLER)*
- Hot water bottle (DORA)
- Umbrella (NICK and SELMA)
- Dart (KILLER)*
- Comb (NICK)
- Box of candy (NICK)
- “Pin” (ALMA)
- 2 Guns (ALMA)
- Blowgun and dart (DAVEY)
- Small package wrapped in cloth (DAVEY)
- Tape recording (DAVEY)

*Creating the cobra is easy. Be sure that there's room under the counter for a stage hand or actor to hide during the scene. Cut a hole in the top of the counter (which can be covered with registration book or other papers when not needed) that the actor's hand can fit through. The box should have no bottom, so that when it's placed on the counter the actor can stick his or her hand up through the box. The snake is actually a puppet, either purchased or handmade. To make the puppet by hand, use a white sock, stuffing the toe so that it looks like a snake, sew or paint eyes and a design and perhaps spray paint it all a golden color. It should look more silly than frightening. When Davey rips the puppet off the actor's hand, the actor simply drops his hand quickly and stays out of sight.

*The dart comes from offstage, so anyone can handle this move.

SOUND EFFECTS

- Mozart music (CD)
- Clunk (as if something heavy is dropped)
- Thunder
- 6 doors slamming with locks snapping
- Gunshots
- "Whacks" (as if someone is hit on the head)
- Snake charming music, if desired
- Loud electrical crackling

COSTUMES:

Unless otherwise specified in the script, characters wear modern, everyday dress. Specifics are described when needed.

SCENE CHANGES

ACT ONE

- Scenes 1:* A boat dock in Key West, played before the curtain.
Scenes 2: The lobby of the Jolly Roger Bed and Breakfast. That evening.
Scenes 3: The lobby later that night.
Scene 4: The lobby the following morning.

ACT TWO

- Scene 1:* The lobby a short time later.
Scene 2: A hallway at the Inn, played before the curtain a short time later.
Scene 3: The lobby that night.

SETTING

The lobby of the Jolly Roger Bed and Breakfast is on a secluded island in the Caribbean. French windows upstage center provides an exit into gardens. We can see flowers and bushes outside. Large windows at right and left again with tropical plants visible beyond along with palm trees and so on. Wing entrance down right leads to guest bungalows. Wing entrance down left leads to dining room and more bungalows.

Lobby desk up left, high enough that someone can hide behind it easily. Patio furniture grouping at center right, with a small table. A book manuscript sits on the table. A birdcage up right hangs from the ceiling and inside is a stuffed parrot. A portable CD player sits near counter along with a few CDs. A bell hangs on the upstage wall behind the counter, a rope attached so it can be rung easily. Flowers and plants decorate the room with a tropical flare.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

A boat dock in Key West played before the curtain. The suggestion of a pylon or two along with a life preserver and even a stuffed gull or pelican can help suggest the location and be left in place through the entire play.

AT RISE, SELMA and NICK enter left, arm in arm, gazing deeply into one another's eyes.

SELMA: Gosh, Nick, I'm the happiest gal alive!

NICK: Glad to hear it, baby.

SELMA: *(Dreamily.)* No, Nick...Mrs. Noir. Don't you love the sound of that name? Mrs. Noir?

NICK: Yeah, reminds me of my mother.

SELMA: Oh, Nick, we're going to be so happy for ever and ever and ever!

SELMA freezes, as do all characters whenever NICK speaks to the audience. NICK's lines addressed to the audience appear in italics.

NICK: *Yeah, you guessed it. Selma and I got hitched yesterday and today we're startin' the honeymoon. Look at her! Ain't she the happiest secretary you ever seen in your life? Oh, yeah, she's my secretary all right. That's how we met. My name's Noir, Nick Noir. You can call me Mister Noir. It's a pretty famous name these days. I'm the private eye who cleaned out the rotten hot dogs at Wurst Mansion. And I'm the guy who nabbed the Cocoa Killer. I'm so good at solving cases I even had a little time in between to do some romancin'. 'Course what dame doesn't like a private eye who can stare into her eyes and sweep her off her feet? (NICK stands, staring into SELMA'S eyes.)*

SELMA: Nick, what's wrong?

NICK: Hold still! Don't blink! *(NICK attempts to get something out of SELMA'S eye.)*

SELMA: Nick! What is it?!

NICK: Don't blink!

SELMA: Ouch! (*NICK flings something away. SELMA takes out a pocket mirror to check the damage.*)

NICK: Something black and wormy was crawling around your eye!

SELMA: Nick, that was my mascara!

NICK: *Can't win 'em all!* Sorry, baby. It's just that I don't want nothin' to happen to you. Ever! And I want this honeymoon to be one for the books!

SELMA: Nick, do you really, really, really love me?

NICK: I really, really do!

SELMA: Oh, Nick! Is the romance fading already? That was only two really's.

NICK: Baby, nothin's fadin' but your eye shadow. Don't you wonder what we're doin' out here on this lonely dock at the tippy-tip of Key West?

SELMA: You said we were going to buy a postcard for your Aunt Sylvia.

NICK: I don't even have an Aunt Sylvia!

SELMA: You got me here under false pretenses?

NICK: The falsest!

SELMA: (*Coyly.*) Should I be scared?

NICK: Not when your big, strong husband is here to protect you!

SELMA: So, what are we doing on this dock?

NICK: A little romantic surprise. Tada! (*NICK points to a "boat" in the audience.*)

SELMA: Gosh, Nick...what is that?

NICK: That's the *Lady Lovey Dove*.

SELMA: It's a boat?

NICK: A sailboat...and it sleeps two!

SELMA: Two what? Penguins?

NICK: It's what real estate folks call "cozy."

SELMA: And the rest of us call "cramped." (*Suddenly nervous.*)
Nick, why are you showing me this boat?

NICK: *And now for the big romantic finish!* The *Lady Lovey Dove* is going to spirit us away on the most romantic honeymoon trip since honeymoons were invented.

SELMA: (*Disgustedly.*) That?

NICK: *I knew she'd love it!* Makes you yearn for the wide-open seas, doesn't it?

SELMA: Makes me yearn for a Holiday Inn. Nick, this is our honeymoon, not the sequel to Kon Tiki!

NICK: Just think, Selma... You, me, the deep blue sea!

SELMA: In that boat, it's going to be you and me under the deep blue sea!

NICK: The *Lady Lovey Dove* has the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval!

SELMA: I'm sure it bakes a fine cake, Nick, but can it float?

NICK: It's made out of wood, baby...and it's got life vests, life preservers, and five bottles of the best champagne from Target (*pronounced Tar-Jay.*)

SELMA: Look, Nick, there's something I haven't told you.

NICK: (*Moving around SELMA appraisingly.*) *Uh oh! What could Selma have held back? I've known her for three years and we didn't have any secrets from each other...until now. Could she already be married to somebody else? Could she have a criminal past? Maybe she poisoned her last six husbands?! Or maybe she's an heiress?! Yeah...that's it! She's heiress to a hot dog fortune! Wait a minute. She is an heiress to a hot dog fortune! Beats me!* All right, Selma—let the cat out of the bag and give it to me straight!

SELMA: Nick...I get seasick!

NICK: (*Relieved.*) Is that all? So do I! I got a whole case of Dramamine on board! Now, c'mon!

SELMA: But Nick, honey, we don't have our stuff!

NICK: I'm way ahead of you there, baby! I had a couple of guys bring our suitcases over while we were walking down here.

SELMA: What about food?

NICK: Oh, Selma, baby, we can feast on love!

SELMA: But maybe a few crackers now and then....

NICK: Never fear! The galley of the *Lady Lovey Dove* is stocked with every Lean Cuisine meal made.

SELMA: Nick, the lady at the front desk said that a hurricane is brewing!

NICK: I checked with the Weather Channel and they said it's going in a totally different direction!

SELMA: But, Nick!

NICK: *I hadn't seen this much resistance since D-Day, and I wasn't even there! But fate took a hand! (Cell phone rings.)*

SELMA: *(Answering it.)* Hello? Yes, Nick Noir's here. May I ask who's calling? *(Covering the phone.)* It's a Harry Tingle.

NICK: *That sent a hairy tingle up my spine! Selma! He's a— (NICK pantomimes a mobster why "shooting" a gun.)*

SELMA: A mobster? *(NICK nods. Into phone.)* Ah, Mr. Tingle, what's this regarding? *(She covers phone after a few minutes.)* He's got a job he wants you to do. *(NICK wildly draws his finger across his throat.)* Well, Mr. Tingle, Mr. Noir unfortunately is on his honeymoon and won't be taking any jobs for one... *(NICK holds up two fingers.)* Two... *(NICK holds up three fingers.)* Three fingers! I mean weeks. Oh, I will, I will! Goodbye! *(SELMA snaps phone shut.)* He said he'll find somebody else to take care of Melvin the Mouse.

NICK: I'd hate to add that to my caseload.

SELMA: I know! I had to shuffle your cases like a deck of cards so we could get a week off! All that publicity after the last job really paid off.

NICK: Don't you see, Selma, out on the *Lady Lovey Dove* the phone will never ring!

SELMA: I don't know, Nick! How many life preservers are there? *(Phone rings. SELMA answers it.)* Hello? Melvin Mouse? *(She covers the phone.)* It's Melvin Mouse, and he's got a job for you.

NICK: Ask him what the job is.

SELMA: Could you be a bit more specific about the job, Mr. Mouse? *(After listening a bit, SELMA covers the phone.)* He wants you to take care of Harry Tingle.

NICK: *All I had to do was reel Selma in like a guppy!* You decide, baby. I want you to be happy!

SELMA: I'm sorry, Mr. Mouse, but Mr. Noir is on his honeymoon and is incommunicado for three whole weeks. *(SELMA snaps phone shut.)*

NICK: You won't regret this, Selma! *All right, do you see a crystal ball or something lying around? I couldn't tell what was going to happen!*

Lights dim as NICK leads SELMA off right with a flourish.

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

The lobby of the Jolly Roger Bed and Breakfast on a secluded island in the Caribbean. Evening. French windows upstage center provides an exit into gardens. We can see flowers and bushes outside. Large windows at right and left again with tropical plants visible beyond along with palm trees and so on. Wing entrance down right leads to guest bungalows. Wing entrance down left leads to dining room and more bungalows. Lobby desk up left, high enough that someone can hide behind it easily. Patio furniture grouping at center right, with a small table. A book manuscript sits on the table. A birdcage up right hangs from the ceiling and inside is a stuffed parrot. A portable CD player sits near counter along with a few CDs. A bell hangs on the upstage wall behind the counter, a rope attached so it can be rung easily. Flowers and plants decorate the room with a tropical flare.

AT RISE:

VIOLET, dressed in black and without a shred of humor—ever—stands behind desk sharpening the points of arrows. We see lightning and hear the low rumble of thunder. DEXTER, the classic handyman, enters carrying a shovel.

DEXTER: Evenin', Miss Van Leer.

VIOLET: You get that thing buried?

DEXTER: Six feet under, like you wanted! Three feet would've done the job, but who am I to question the owner?

VIOLET: That's right, Dexter. And we wouldn't want our guests seeing a bat flying about, would we? It could hurt the reputation of the Jolly Roger Bed and Breakfast.

DEXTER: Don't see how Jolly Roger's got any reputation as it is. The old pirate got himself hanged right up there on that tree overlookin' the swimmin' pool, he did!

VIOLET: That's not common knowledge, Dexter, and we're going to keep it that way, aren't we?

DEXTER: Yes, Ms. Van Leer. Say, you sure are a good shot with those poisoned arrows, killin' that bat 'n all.

VIOLET: Daddy hid out in the Amazon for years. He taught me the finer points of using a blow gun.

DEXTER: And that thing was flyin' through the air when you brought him down. You sure coulda got a gold in the Olympics, Miss Van Leer. You sure coulda!

VIOLET: Stop fawning, Dexter. Any sign of our last two guests?

DEXTER: No, ma'am. And the storm is brewin' up somethin' fierce.

VIOLET: (*Ominously.*) I wonder what's keeping them.

DEXTER: If they don't get here soon, they ain't gonna get here at all. They'll miss the whole weekend.

VIOLET: A pity, since they paid for the whole thing.

DEXTER: (*Surprised.*) Pickin' up the tab for everybody?

VIOLET: They can afford it. It's this J.J. Hays and his mother, Harriet. (*VIOLET hands DEXTER a magazine article.*)

DEXTER: (*Reading.*) Reclusive Millionaire Camera Shy. There are no known photos of millionaire J.J. Hays or his mother Harriet with whom he lives in their secluded ten million dollar mansion on the outer banks of North Carolina. No one—especially reporters—gets past the guards who stand duty twenty-four hours a day. So what are these two comin' here for?

VIOLET: I can only guess!

DEXTER: You gotta wonder if they're so afraid of bein' seen if they even exist at all.

VIOLET: Why, Dexter, how clever of you! The article goes on to ask that very thing. Maybe there is no J.J. Hays and he's just a front for some corporation that's got its fingers into something it shouldn't!

DEXTER: Wouldn't be the first time! Says here he's a good cook. Never without his collection of favorite recipes in his cookbook.

VIOLET: I hear his chocolate mousse is to die for!

DARLENE enters down left. She wears a very stained apron and carries a small tablet. A pencil is stuck in her hair.

DARLENE: Look, Violet Van Leer, you don't pay me enough to whip up chocolate mousse!

VIOLET: Why, Darlene, you look lovely.

DEXTER: Yeah, like Sweeny Todd on a bad day.

DARLENE: You don't pay me enough to put up with Dexter, neither! Now, you want to take a look at the menu for tomorrow or not?

VIOLET: Of course, my dear! Let's have a look.

DAVEY JONES, a beachcomber in beard, pedal-pushers, Hawaiian shirt, and straw hat races on, a large knife in one hand.

DAVEY: Ah! There you are, you murderer! (*DARLENE screams and hides behind the desk as DAVEY moves to her.*)

VIOLET: Davey Jones, what are you doing?

DAVEY: An eye for an eye! (*DAVEY begins chasing DARLENE in a circle around the desk.*)

DARLENE: Help! Help!

DAVEY: A tooth for a tooth!

DARLENE: Save me!

DAVEY: A chicken for a chicken!

VIOLET: (*Stopping DAVEY.*) What chicken?

DAVEY: She murdered Floradora!

DARLENE: I never murdered nobody! I just cooked up a chicken for dinner!

DAVEY: Floradora! My wonderful chicken.

VIOLET: Davey Jones, what was so wonderful about your chicken?

DAVEY: Floradora could tell the future!

DARLENE: Oh, sure!

DEXTER: She the chicken that pecked out letters 'n spelled words?

DAVEY: That was my Floradora!

VIOLET: And just how do you know she could tell the future?

DEXTER: She told me I was gonna win some money and I sure did! I won two dollars on a scratch ticket the very next day.

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DAVEY: And she told me just this morning she would end up in a rotten stew! (*DAVEY yowls and chases DARLENE off through center entrance.*)

VIOLET: Dexter, go make sure Mr. Jones calms down! I don't know how we ended up sharing the island with the likes of him!

DEXTER saunters off center as ALMA and OZZIE enter down right. ALMA walks before OZZIE swinging a watch on a chain.

ALMA: You are getting sleepy! Your eyes are getting heavy! You can only hear the sound of my voice!

OZZIE: (*To VIOLET.*) Any messages, Ms. Van Leer?

ALMA: You can only hear the sound of my voice!

VIOLET: (*Handing him a stack of messages.*) Here you go, Congressman.

ALMA: Will you please listen to the sound of my voice? You are getting sleepy! Sleepy!

OZZIE: Lady! I'm not sleepy! I'm sick of your swinging that watch in front of me! I am a member of the U.S. House of Representatives! I cannot be hypnotized!

DORA enters down right carrying a life jacket.

DORA: (*Coyly.*) Ozzie! (*Instantly, OZZIE is hypnotized.*)

OZZIE: Yes, sweetheart?

DORA: I wanna go parasailing!

OZZIE: Anything you want, sweetheart.

VIOLET: There's a nasty storm coming, Congressman!

DORA: Oh, pooh! (*DORA exits center.*)

OZZIE: (*Mimicking DORA.*) Oh, pooh!

OZZIE exits center.

ALMA: Well, I never! I just thought I could help Congressman Hawkins a bit.

VIOLET: Does he want to stop smoking or something more ominous?

ALMA: He's a politician. He wants to try telling the truth for a change. But I guess it's an uphill battle! How about you, Ms. Van Leer? Any bad habits?

VIOLET: None that I want to get rid of!

ALMA: If you change your mind, I'm in the Long John Silver Suite.

ALMA exits down right as CHARLENE enters center, excitedly.

CHARLENE: Ms. Van Leer! Come quick! Davey Jones is after my poor sister! I think he wants to shrink her head!

VIOLET: Oh, Charlene, you're overreacting, as usual!

CHARLENE: He said he's got a pot of water boiling back at his shack and he's going to turn her into a keychain he'll sell to tourists!

CHARLENE screams and runs out center. VIOLET follows her off. ZONA enters down left.

ZONA: Now where did I leave that thing? (*ZONA looks around. On the small table she spies a manuscript.*) There you are! Come to Mama! (*ZONA picks up the manuscript lovingly. As she flips through the pages, a look of horror floods her face.*) Oh, my baby! Who's done this to you?

EMMIE enters right, knitting a book jacket.

EMMIE: Why, Zona Zou! I need to talk to you! Honey, you look a bit flushed. Want to sit down or something?

ZONA: Someone... Someone left pencil marks all over my baby!

EMMIE: 'Course I did, sugar!

ZONA: You?! You dare to touch the work of Zona Zou, the world's foremost mystery writer?!

EMMIE: Well, now, I saw your new book just lying there like that and figured I'd take a peek. And then the greatest idea came over me and I just let 'er rip!

ZONA: This mystery will sell five million copies!

EMMIE: But with my idea, it'll sell ten million!

ZONA: And why should I need to sell ten million copies?

EMMIE: I think we could all use a little spare change, couldn't we? Especially after this weekend.

ZONA: Even if I did need a bit more money, I doubt if any idea from you would provide it!

EMMIE: Now, don't be so sure, sweetcakes. I got me a huge following, what with my craft books and homemaking tips and my TV show, "The Happy Homemaker."

ZONA: Ms. Bloom, I hate to clue you in, but the people who read a Zona Zou murder mystery are not the same people who watch you get ketchup stains out of t-shirts.

EMMIE: You don't know that, hon! Maybe we could build what they call a cross-over demographic.

ZONA: Where did you pick up a word like demographic?

EMMIE: Zona, honey, you don't really think I'm stupid, do you?

ZONA: You do a fine impression.

EMMIE: Do you want to hear my idea or not?

ZONA: If it will save me the trouble of reading whatever notes you've scarred my baby with!

EMMIE: Well, you know how there's mysteries that got recipes in 'em?

ZONA: Gimmicky! Gimmicky! Gimmicky!

EMMIE: But folks buy 'em!

ZONA: The brownie recipes cover up weak plots and vapid characterizations.

EMMIE: Anyhow, I thought maybe we could do a series of mysteries that include useful household hints.

ZONA: You're joking, of course.

EMMIE: No! See, it'll all tie into the story. Like on page 38 of your book there, the police find out that the murder weapon is an ice pick.

ZONA: A very sharp, long ice pick.

EMMIE: Why not make it a crochet hook instead?

ZONA: A crochet hook?

EMMIE: Sure! That'll tone down the blood a bit and tie in the Happy Homemaker side.

ZONA: You can't kill somebody with a crochet hook!

EMMIE: Oh, now, I'll bet you could find a way.

ZONA: Shall we try?

EMMIE: And at the end of every chapter we put in a household hint.

ZONA: Such as?

EMMIE: I've got a couple of them all sketched out there for you. The first one is "how to get out tough blood stains."

ZONA: You can't get out tough blood stains!

EMMIE: How about "poisons that won't mar your furniture"? And my favorite is "getting rid of nasty powder burns." Whaddaya think?

ZONA: I wish I had an ice pick right here!

EMMIE: What for?

ZONA: So I could put it right there!

ZONA points to EMMIE, then turns and exits left with the manuscript. PATSY, wearing a fringed outfit, cowboy hat, and cowboy boots enters right holding her head.

PATSY: Who was screaming? It sounded like somebody was gettin' murdered!

EMMIE: With an ice pick and not a crochet hook. Honestly! Gee, Ms. Robbins, you look awful!

PATSY: Thanks! And when you get that critical, you might as well call me Patsy.

EMMIE: Oh, I've got all your CDs, and I bet I'm your biggest fan, so I didn't mean you look awful. You just look awful, you know?

PATSY: It's a headache. I get them when I'm stuck in a hot, humid place where a hurricane's about to hit!

EMMIE: Well, I know just the thing you've got to do. (*EMMIE moves to CD player and rifles through the CDs.*) Sit down and put your feet up. (*PATSY does so as EMMIE loads CD player.*) Relax every muscle in your body. (*PATSY visibly goes limp.*) And now, the finishing touch for the Happy Homemaker's Headache Relief. (*EMMIE pushes "play" and we hear the powerful strains of a piece by Mozart.*) Mozart!

PATSY: (*PATSY stiffens and jumps up.*) What are you doin' to me?!

EMMIE: Studies show that listening to Mozart relaxes us and puts us in a receptive frame of mind!

PATSY: Honey, I am one hundred percent country! There's no room for Mozart in country!

EMMIE: Oh, you're exaggerating, Patsy.

PATSY: Mozart couldn't get a room at a Motel 6 if he tried! Now, turn that off! Turn it off 'fore it makes me want to kill somebody! (*EMMIE does so.*)

EMMIE: Sorry! But you know, maybe there's a song in this...something along the lines of "Don't Play Mozart with the Strings of My Heart!"

PATSY growls as ALMA enters down right. ALMA wears a flowing caftan or muumuu adorned with beads and a brightly colored scarf about her head.

ALMA: Ah ha!

EMMIE: Ah ha what?

ALMA: I sensed conflict!

EMMIE: Patsy's got a headache is all.

ALMA: A headache? That's my specialty!

PATSY: (*To EMMIE.*) What? Givin' 'em?

ALMA: Oh, I can tell we must get right to work. Sit! Sit! (*PATSY sits as ALMA pulls out the pocketwatch and begins swinging it in front of her.*)

PATSY: Oh, brother! None of this New Age stuff works on us country folk!

ALMA: You are getting sleepy! Sleepy!

PATSY: I told you, we're too down to earth for— (*PATSY is instantly hypnotized.*)

ALMA: The only sound you can hear is the sound of my voice.

PATSY: The sound of your voice.

EMMIE: Gosh! You are really good!

ALMA: Shhhhh!

EMMIE: Well, the only voice she can hear is your voice.

ALMA: Because yours is going to be permanently silenced if you don't shut up! (*EMMIE bristles, but doesn't respond.*) Now Patsy, I want you to hold your head in your hands for a moment. (*PATSY obeys, hands on either side of her head.*) Do you feel the headache inside?

PATSY: Yes.

ALMA: The headache is a hat that you're wearing.

PATSY: A hat.

ALMA: That's right. A big, ugly hat that's too tight.

PATSY: Too tight.

ALMA: I want you now to take that hat off your head.

PATSY: Take off hat. (*PATSY struggles to take off the "tight" hat.*)

ALMA: Take off the hat, Patsy. (*PATSY continues her struggle.*)
Patsy, what's wrong?

PATSY: Hat is too tight.

ALMA: All right, it's not all that tight, Patsy. It will come off on the count of three. One, two, three. (*PATSY "removes" the hat.*) Now, take the hat and throw it in the garbage can. (*PATSY carries "hat" behind counter and drops it. We hear a "clunk."*) Come back and sit down, Patsy.

PATSY: Sit down. (*PATSY does so.*)

EMMIE: Ms. DeGroot? I'll bet you can't do a...what do you call it...a post-hypnotic suggestion.

ALMA: Of course I can.

EMMIE: Prove it!

ALMA: You want me to plant a post-hypnotic suggestion in Patsy Robbins?

EMMIE: Ten dollars says you can't!

ALMA: Patsy, I want you to listen to me.

PATSY: Yes, Ms. DeGroot.

ALMA: When you awaken, you will feel wonderful. So wonderful that for five minutes you will fall in mad love with the first man you see. At the end of five minutes, you will return to normal. Is that clear?

PATSY: Five minutes!

ALMA: Yes. Now, I am going to count backwards and gradually you'll awaken, fully refreshed with no hint of a headache. Three...coming awake....two...awakening more...one! You are now fully awake!

PATSY: Like I said, us country folk don't cotton to city cures, Ms. DeGroot! No siree!

ALMA: Of course not.

PATSY: Hey...wait a minute...where'd my headache go?

EMMIE: In the trash can behind the counter.

PATSY: What'd you do to me?

ALMA: Just took care of your headache.

PATSY: Lady, you're either a walking Tylenol or a witch!

ALMA: Patsy, I'm neither. I just use hypnotism to help the mind help itself.

EMMIE: You know what I think? *(To ALMA.)* You oughta do a show for all of us here. Make us act like little kids and chickens. What a hoot!

ALMA: I think you've got something there, Ms. Bloom! We can do it right here, and I'm sure—

DAVEY: *(DAVEY runs on center.)* Help! Help me!

DARLENE: *(DARLENE runs on center carrying a huge knife.)* Come after me, will ya? *(PATSY grabs DARLENE, swipes the knife and tosses it away. She is totally smitten with DAVEY, who is suddenly terrified.)* What?

PATSY: Keep your hands off my man!

DARLENE: Your what?

PATSY: Davey is my kind of man!

DAVEY: What're you talkin' about, Miss? *(PATSY vamps DAVEY.)*

PATSY: Don't tell me you haven't noticed how I stare at you every time I see you.

DAVEY: You do?

PATSY: I'm waitin' for you to take me on a nice romantic walk on the beach!

DAVEY: It's startin' to rain right now, miss.

PATSY: Nothing like a walk in the rain to heat up the kitchen!

DAVEY: Did I kill your chicken, too?

PATSY: Come here, you great big beautiful hunk!

DAVEY: Holy sassafras, they're all crazy! (*DAVEY screams and runs off down left.*)

PATSY: You can run, but you can't hide! (*PATSY vamps her way off left.*)

DARLENE: What got into that girl?

EMMIE: A post-hypnotic suggestion!

DARLENE: A post-what?

ALMA: Just a little bet.

EMMIE: Well, I'll give you the ten bucks next time I see you. Bye! (*EMMIE runs off down right.*)

DARLENE: Now maybe I can get back to fixing dinner.

ALMA: Is it dinnertime already?

DARLENE: Ms. Van Leer will be announcin' it any minute!

ALMA: What's on the menu tonight?

DARLENE: Floradora! (*DARLENE exits down left.*)

ALMA: Floradora?

VIOLET and DEXTER enter center.

VIOLET: Are we too late?

ALMA: For what?

DEXTER: The machete murder!

ALMA: A little magic took care of the whole thing.

VIOLET: What a relief. That last thing we would want is a murder at the Jolly Roger.

ALMA: That would put a damper on the weekend, would it?

VIOLET: (*Smiling grimly.*) Dexter, sound the dinner alarm.

DEXTER: Aye, aye, Captain! (*DEXTER rings the bell three times.*)

VIOLET: Dexter, that's the signal for man overboard.

DEXTER: I just never could count straight.

VIOLET: It's four rings. Four for dinner.

CHARLENE: (*Before DEXTER rings, CHARLENE runs on carrying a life preserver.*) Where is he? Where's the victim?

VIOLET: Relax, Charlene. Dexter got the wrong alarm.

CHARLENE: What? Again?

DEXTER: Yes, again! (*DEXTER rings four times.*) There, happy?

ZONA: (*ZONA enters down right followed by ALMA.*) Mmmmm! I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!

DEXTER: Don't tell Darlene that or it'll be on the menu!

ALMA: It certainly looks nasty out there!

OZZIE and DORA enter, both windblown with their hair standing on end.

VIOLET: How was the parasailing?

OZZIE: We sure didn't need a boat to get off the ground!

DORA: Gosh, is it always this windy?

DEXTER: Only during a hurricane!

EMMIE: (*EMMIE enters right, followed by PATSY.*) Oh, fun! My favorite time of day!

ZONA: I thought your favorite time was after dinner when you get to wash the dishes.

EMMIE: Really, Zona, if you don't like my idea, you just have to say so. I don't need another critic breathing down my neck.

ZONA: Okay, I think your idea stinks.

EMMIE: You don't have to be so blunt about it!

OZZIE: Oh, Ms. Bloom, if you're going to be in the public eye, you've got to develop a real tough hide.

DORA: Yeah...Ozzie's hide is like leather.

ZONA: No surprise with all the facelifts he's had.

OZZIE: Do you think...honestly? Well, I'm flattered!

DORA: Ozzie's never had a face lift.

ZONA: Probably because they couldn't decide which face to lift!

OZZIE: (*Laughing jovially.*) Oh, Ms. Zou, you are a treat and a half! I'm glad I don't have to run against you for re-election!

DORA: Now, you promised not to bring that up 'til after this weekend, Ozzie!

ALMA: Ms. Van Leer, may I ask something on behalf of the entire group?

VIOLET: Of course!

ALMA: We each received an invitation to this Caribbean weekend...all expenses paid...but we have no idea who sent the invitation. Do you know?

VIOLET: Your host wishes to remain anonymous until he chooses to reveal himself. He gave me the list of guests, and I sent the invitations.

EMMIE: Well, is everybody here?

DEXTER: Nope! Got one party missing!

ZONA: Who might that be?

VIOLET: Your host!

ALL react suspiciously.

ZONA: Well, I sure don't know any of these people. I can't imagine why I'd be invited with them.

EMMIE: (*Pointedly to ZONA.*) And I'd have left some names off my list!

DORA: Frankly, I think a younger crowd would be more fun!

OZZIE: Well, that doesn't matter, cupcake.

PATSY: I can't imagine why I'd get invited! Unless he's got a thing for country music!

ZONA: Heaven spare us!

PATSY: Well, I can't see him sittin' around readin' silly murder mysteries about a cat!

ZONA: Lady Gray is one of the world's greatest sleuths!

EMMIE: Yeah...she's one of a kind.

PATSY: The only detective who can throw up a hairball on cue!

VIOLET: Ladies...gentlemen...I'm sure that when your host and his mother get here, they'll tell you everything you want to know.

DEXTER: But with this storm, they won't get a boat within a hundred yards of this island!

EMMIE: They could always swim ashore.

ZONA: No one would be that stupid!

NICK and SELMA, wet and bedraggled, carrying two wet suitcases, enter center.

NICK: *I know, I know. Not the classiest way to make an entrance, but we didn't exactly have a choice.*

VIOLET: Speak of the devil!

ZONA: Look what the cat dragged in!

NICK: You got a room for tonight?

VIOLET: Of course! Your suite is ready and waiting.

SELMA: Gosh, now that's service!

NICK: Look, before we go any further, I gotta tell you, we're wearin' everything we got. Our luggage is at the bottom of the ocean—

SELMA: Along with the *Lady Lovey Dove!*

NICK: And five of the best bottles of champagne they had at Target.

VIOLET: Not to worry, Mr. Hay.

OZZIE: (*Impressed.*) Hay? J.J. Hay?

ZONA: You're the elusive tycoon?

ALMA: I...I don't quite understand—

VIOLET: Mr. Hay paid for the entire weekend by cashier's check. Remember, Mr. Hay?

NICK: *I got a sudden funny feeling in the pit of my stomach, like I'd swallowed a hair ball or something. Yeah, yeah...that's right.*

DARLENE: (*DARLENE enters left with a frying pan. She beats the bottom with a stick.*) It's dinnertime, folks! Now, let's get cracking before it gets cold! (*DARLENE leads ALL but NICK, SELMA, and VIOLET off left.*)

VIOLET: Oh, Mr. Hay, you and your mother are in bungalow 12, our Captain Kidd Suite.

SELMA: Mother?

VIOLET: Mr. Hay said his mother would be joining him. Oh, and there are some messages for you. (*VIOLET hands NICK several envelopes.*) Freshen up, then come in to dinner, if you like. The dining room is right in there. (*VIOLET moves left, then stops and turns back.*) I'm so glad you were able to make it. The weekend promises to be very...interesting! (*VIOLET exits left.*)

SELMA: She thinks I'm your mother?!

NICK: Oh, that's ridiculous! You don't look like anything more than an older cousin.

SELMA: Nick!

NICK: *I guess in a marriage you gotta learn the right time to tell a joke. (SELMA hits NICK.) And that wasn't it.*

SELMA: This is our honeymoon! I don't want people to think I'm your mother. My beautiful trousseau is at the bottom of the ocean and all I salvaged are a pair of earplugs so I don't have to listen to you snore!

NICK: You salvaged something else, baby...me! Look, Selma, let's see how this plays out. For some reason they think we're J.J. Hay and his mother, whoever they are. Maybe it'll pay off! We even got some mail! (*NICK opens letter.*) Hmm... (*NICK opens letter.*) Hmm...

SELMA: What do they say?

NICK: They aren't exactly from the welcome wagon! (*NICK hands SELMA the letters.*)

SELMA: (*Reading, horrified.*) You will die! By Monday you'll be dead! Hay today, gone tomorrow!

The curtain falls.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

SCENE:

The lobby, later that night:

AT RISE:

The lights are very dim, with a special, if possible, on ZONA who sits center. Here and there around the room are VIOLET, DEXTER, CHARLENE, DARLENE, OZZIE, DORA, ALMA, EMMIE, and PATSY. They are listening to ZONA reading from her latest novel with varying degrees of interest. OZZIE is continually texting. DORA is doing her nails, CHARLENE is dusting the room, while the others give ZONA their rap attention. Lightning and thunder punctuate the scene.

ZONA: (*Reading dramatically.*) Ashley walked slowly down the hallway. She passed by the room where only a moment before she had heard voices arguing.

DARLENE: Excuse me, Ms. Zou, but who was arguing?

VIOLET: Darlene, pay attention! It was Dr. Wilson and Mrs. Tippet, his patient.

ALMA: She had gone to him for a facelift—

PATSY: But the poor thing ended up looking like Quasimodo!

DARLENE: Who's Quasimodo?

ZONA: Oh, dear, spare me!

EMMIE: Zona, you see? You've got to add a touch of down-home crafting if you want people to understand your books, hon. Instead of that Quasi fellow, why not say something like she ended up lookin' like a quilt what got stained with motor oil.

VIOLET: What do you think, Congressman?

OZZIE: I will definitely form a bipartisan committee to look at the matter!

ZONA: Here I offer to read from my newest book, *Deadly Beloved*, and I find myself in a viper's pit!

VIOLET: Please, Ms. Zou, continue reading. (*Ominously.*) No one will say a word.

DEXTER: (*Angrily to the others.*) Nobody, hear! I like it, and I wanna find out whodunit! Go on, Ms. Zou—she was walkin' down the hall. What happened next?

ZOU: Ashley stopped before the door. Dead silence greeted her from inside. A chill crawled up her spine like a leech. She hadn't seen either Dr. Wilson or Mrs. Tippet leave the room. They must both be inside. But were they alive...or dead? She slowly, ever so slowly, slowly like molasses in January slowly turned the doorknob. She heard it click and knew the door wasn't locked. As gingerly as she could, she pushed the door open a crack...then more...then more... It took her eyes a moment to adjust to the darkness of the room, but when they had, she wished with all her might she'd never gone to work at Dr. Wilson's Medical Center. She wished she'd never become a nurse. She wished she'd never passed eighth grade. She wished she'd never been born! For there, lying in front of her was—

NICK stumbles on left with a crash and a bang. PATSY, EMMIE, ALMA, CHARLENE, and DARLENE all scream. OZZIE pulls a gun, and DEXTER raises his shovel as a weapon.

OZZIE: Hey! Hey! Hey!

NICK: That's my name! Don't wear it out. Bit dark in here, don't you think? (*NICK stands and brushes off his clothes.*)

VIOLET: Are you all right?

NICK: *Aside from feeling like a complete idiot, I was just peachy!* Sure. You can't keep a good man down.

ZONA: Well, that's it! I won't read another word! (*ZONA snaps the book shut.*)

NICK: *I don't see how she could have read any words; it was so dark in there. I fumbled around and found the light switch. (NICK snaps on the lights.)* There, that's better. (*ALL glare at him.*) What? Did I interrupt something?

SELMA: (*SELMA enters right wearing a turban and trying to look much older. She now does her best to act older than she is with her voice quivering at times and her shoulders hunched over.*) All right, sonny, what've you done this time?

EMMIE: He ruined Zona Zou's reading!

PATSY: We were just about to find out what Ashley saw in the doctor's office!

NICK: So what's in a doctor's office? A sink? A stethoscope? A couple of hypodermic needles? C'mon, it couldn't have been that exciting!

DORA: If I had a gun aimed at you, Mr. Hays, I'd pull the trigger!

NICK: So you're the one who's been sendin' me messages! *I could tell from the way she turned beet red that I was right. But then I looked around the room. They were all beet red!*

DORA: I don't know what you're talking about! I never sent a message!

CHARLENE: Me neither!

DEXTER: Wouldn't be bothered.

ZONA: Not my style!

NICK: *I figured I'd hit the ground running!* I know somebody's got it in for me, and I aim to find out who!

VIOLET: Mr. Hay, why would anybody have an in for you?

SELMA: People have always had an in for my baby boy! It's because he's such a go-getter!

OZZIE: The question is, what does he go get?

DORA: Yeah!

NICK: *They had me there, so I decided to play it cool! That's for me to know and you to find out!*

EMMIE: Just what we intend to do!

PATSY: You know? I just wrote a song last week called 'I Got a Secret and It Ain't Under My Arms'!

NICK: *Ewwwww! What were these people talking about?*

DEXTER: You know, Mr. Hay, when I was a little tyke, I watched my mommy cooking at the stove, and the flame looked so inviting. One time when my mommy wasn't looking, I stuck my finger to see what it felt like. I got burned, Mr. Hay! And I got the scar to this day!

SELMA: What are you talkin' about, old timer?

DEXTER: Play with fire, you're gonna get burned! (*DEXTER exits center.*)

VIOLET: Charlene, Darlene, let's get things ready for tomorrow. And make sure everyone has candles in case the lights go out.

CHARLENE: They'll be in your rooms, folks!

DARLENE: And breakfast is at nine sharp!

CHARLENE: Hope everybody sleeps real good!

DARLENE: Don't mind the noise outside. But Mr. Hay, if you hear flappin' in the Captain Kidd Bungalow, it's bats. They like that place for some reason! (*CHARLENE and DARLENE laugh heartily and exit left.*)

SELMA: Bats! Sonny, I don't want to stay anywhere where there are bats!

NICK: *There was only one person more afraid of bats than Selma and that was me!* It's okay, Mom, I got real good aim! (*NICK pats his pistol under his coat.*)

ZONA: You've come prepared, I see, Mr. Hay.

NICK: Yeah. I was a Boy Scout!

ZONA: Care to read my latest? You'd be surprised who gets murdered! (*ZONA exits right after handing NICK her book.*)

NICK: Just what I needed, a little light reading!

EMMIE: Night, Mr. Hay, Mrs. Hay. If you see any bedbugs, a bit of talcum powder mixed with crushed rose petals will get rid of them just like that! (*EMMIE snaps her fingers and exits down right.*)

DORA: C'mon, Ozzie! There's nothin' to do here!

OZZIE: Right! I do have a few budget figures to juggle tonight! Night all! (*OZZIE and DORA exit center.*)

PATSY: (*Snapping her fingers.*) And I got a new idea for a song! Think You Got Me by the Mud Flaps, but I Can Throw It in Reverse! (*PATSY exits down right scribbling the new title in a tiny notebook she keeps in her pocket. She does this whenever she thinks up a great new song.*)

SELMA: You know, sonny, there's a bit of animosity in the air!

ALMA: It's the storm. The pressure drops, the human spirit spirals downward! I can help you overcome your feelings of doom and gloom. Let me know...Madam Alma is at your service! (*ALMA exits down left.*)

NICK: It sure looks like the inmates were running the the asylum! (*He moves right and left to check.*) Too bad none of 'em are smart enough to lock themselves in for the night! (*We hear six doors slamming and locks snapping.*) That's better! (*SELMA and NICK relax a bit.*) So whaddayathink, Selma, baby?

SELMA: I think this is a rotten way to spend a honeymoon! You and that *Lady Lovey Dove* can go jump in the lake!

NICK: We already did that! And we probably better stick with Mom and Sonny Boy 'til we find out what's going on!

SELMA: I don't want to be your mother!

NICK: What's wrong with my mother? She's a real nice old lady!

SELMA: Nick! I wanted hearts and flowers on our honeymoon, not bats and bedbugs.

NICK: But I got a feeling this is One Big Case. *And that's in capital letters.*

SELMA: Nick, if I had a gun, I'd shoot you! (*BANG! A shot rings out. NICK grabs SELMA and they dive to the floor. BANG! Another shot is heard.*) Oh, Nick, I didn't mean it! I'm sorry!

NICK: You pulled that trigger? (*ALL enter from their respective exit point. NICK and SELMA get up. No one else in the room is excited at all by the gunshots, speaking in very ho-hum voices.*)

VIOLET: Was that a shot we heard?

NICK: More like two shots.

OZZIE: Anybody hurt?

SELMA: (*Rubbing her knee.*) I skinned my knee when sonny here shoved me to the floor.

EMMIE: I've got the perfect thing for that.

SELMA: Yeah, I know. Talcum powder and crushed rose petals.

EMMIE: You must have my latest book.

DEXTER: Musta been that crazy old loon!

NICK: *That really narrowed things down for us!*

CHARLENE: I bet you're right, Dexter!

DARLENE: I've heard him shooting before at this time of night.

NICK: Mind filling us in on who's using us for target practice?

ALMA: Oh, I'm sure no one was shooting at you, Mr. Hay.

NICK: What, aren't I good enough to get shot at?

PATSY: I wouldn't mind takin' a pot shot at **you**, Mr. Hay.

SELMA: Try it, lady, and you're gonna sing a new song— "I Was Sweet on the Boy, but His Mama Was Sour on Me"!

VIOLET: I believe this is all Davey Jones's fault.

NICK: Davey Jones? I thought he was like a mermaid or somethin' who has a locker about 24,000 leagues under the sea!

DEXTER: This Davey Jones is a beachcomber who's alive and breathin' and has a shack over yonder. Owns the only piece of the island that doesn't belong to Mrs. Van Leer.

VIOLET: I tried to get it from him.

CHARLENE: She did everything—

DARLENE: But poison his chickens!

VIOLET: I'll have Dexter speak to Mr. Jones as soon as it gets light. I'm sure his aim was just a bit off. (*Grumbling, DEXTER exits center.*)

NICK: Good thing for him!

SELMA: Us! What about us?!

NICK: He'd have ended up doing ten to twenty.

OZZIE: But you'd have been six feet under. A pity. Come along, Dora. No more excitement tonight.

DORA: Yeah, I'm all excited out. (*OZZIE and DORA exit center.*)

ZONA: Do clue me in if there's another murder attempt! Live research is so much better than just reading about things. (*ZONA exits right.*)

EMMIE: Remember talcum powder and crushed rose petals!

ALMA: Pleasant dreams all! *(ALMA exits left and EMMIE exit right.)*

DARLENE: C'mon, sis, let's try and get some shuteye!

CHARLENE: Yeah! If anybody else tries to kill you, keep it to yourself! *(CHARLENE and DARLENE exit left.)*

PATSY: Sweet dreams, y'all. *(PATSY exits right.)*

VIOLET: Oh, Mr. Hay, Mrs. Hay, this came for you after dinner—special delivery. It won't make up for what's happened here tonight, but you might enjoy it. *(VIOLET takes a beautifully wrapped box of candy from behind the counter and hands it to NICK. SELMA rips it from his hands.)*

NICK: Thanks! Wow, Mom...Kramer's Kandy Kitchen! That's with three K's.

SELMA: Candy! I love candy! And with all these false teeth, I don't even have to worry about tooth decay!

VIOLET: Good night.

NICK: Don't let the bedbugs bite!

VIOLET: Oh, they avoid me like the plague.

NICK: *Pretty bad when the bugs don't even bite her!* *(VIOLET exits down left.)* At least there are a few perks to this job. Who's it from?

SELMA: *(Opening card.)* It says a secret admirer.

NICK: That's the kind of admirer I can admire! I gotta admit, I got a real sweet tooth! Hurry up, Selma, I want a nougat filled nut-covered dark chocolate!

SELMA: Oh, my! They're works of art! Seems a shame to eat 'em!

NICK: Yeah, breaks my heart! *(NICK grabs one and is about to pop it into his mouth when DAVEY enters center, his arms raised.)*

DAVEY: Stop! *(NICK and SELMA jump in fright.)* Give me the box!

NICK: It's our candy!

DAVEY: Give me the box!

NICK: We'll share with you!

DAVEY: Give me the box or you die! *(DAVEY swipes the box from SELMA'S hands.)*

NICK: You can't do that, you big bully! Who are you anyway?

DAVEY: Davey Jones! Your only friend! *(DAVEY races out center with the box. NICK hands SELMA his piece of candy. He races out after DAVEY, center. SELMA sniffs the chocolate.)*

NICK: Get back here! Get back here!

SELMA: Nick? Nick!

NICK: *(Entering.)* Would you believe the guy vanished into thin air? This place was getting creepier and creepier all the time! Well, at least I salvaged one chocolate to enjoy! Give me my candy, Selma.

SELMA: No, Nick!

NICK: Selma! You, too? What is it with everybody? I want my candy!

SELMA: Nick, it's full of cyanide!

NICK: *(Pouting.)* You're just saying that so you can eat it!

SELMA: Nick, somebody is trying to kill us!

NICK: Who'd want to do that?

SELMA: I don't know, but think about it. Nothing could have been delivered to this island because of the storm. This is from one of them! *(Loud noise off left.)* What was that?

NICK: The sound of my heart jumping into my throat! *(A second noise.)*

SELMA: Nick, I'm scared!

NICK: This is going a little too far! *(With great confidence, NICK strides off left. We hear a "whack" as if someone is hit on the head.)*

SELMA: *(After a moment.)* Nick? Nick? What is it, Nick? *(Another noise off left.)* Nick? This isn't funny at all! *(SELMA exits left. We hear another loud "whack" as if someone is hit on the head. The curtain falls.)*

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

SCENE:

The lobby, the following morning.

AT RISE:

VIOLET is at the desk working. CHARLENE is dusting the room. DARLENE is clearing away coffee cups on the table. DEXTER works on center entrance. OZZIE and DORA enter down left. OZZIE carries a coffee cup. DORA is taking a letter.

OZZIE: And so, Mr. President, I will be behind your proposal.

DORA: How do you spell that?

OZZIE: P-R-O-P-O-S-A-L.

DORA: I'm still on "president."

DARLENE: Nice to see how things get done in Washington!

OZZIE: Say, Ms. Van Leer, have you seen the Hay duo?

VIOLET: As a matter of fact, I haven't.

DORA: They must be sleepin' in!

DEXTER: Mighty tired after all the excitement last night.

CHARLENE: They ain't sleepin' in. Their room's clean as a whistle and empty as my purse the day before payday.

OZZIE: *(Indicating to DORA they're going to NICK'S room.)* Oh, well, then, let's go find that budget statement we need, Dora!

DORA: What? Oh, yeah! *(OZZIE and DORA exit right, passing ZONA who enters right.)*

ZONA: And where are those two off to so determinedly?

DEXTER: Snoopin', I'd say.

DARLENE: Oh?

CHARLENE: You know? I think I forgot to put fresh soap up in the Hays' room.

DARLENE: I'll go help you!

DEXTER: Come to think of it, I gotta fix a hinge up there, too.
(CHARLENE, DARLENE, and DEXTER exit right.)

ZONA: I take it the Hays aren't in their room?

VIOLET: Beds haven't been slept in.

ZONA: Hardly a morning for a stroll.

EMMIE: (*EMMIE and PATSY enter center wearing rain slickers or gear.*) Oh my, it's wet out there!

PATSY: But inspirin'!

ZONA: A new song?

PATSY: (*Proudly.*) "The Sky is Full of Raindrops, but You're the Biggest Drip Around"!

ALMA: (*ALMA enters right.*) Ms. Van Leer, are the Hays throwing a party in their bungalow? Everybody's there!

VIOLET: I suppose I ought to go make sure nothing is...taken.

PATSY: They're not in their bungalow?

EMMIE: I'd love to get a look inside the Captain Kidd Bungalow! C'mon! (*VIOLET, PATSY, EMMIE exit right.*)

ALMA: Is there any coffee left?

DAVEY: (*DAVEY enters center.*) Ma'am!

ALMA: Oh, heavens! You almost scared me to death!

DAVEY: The couple...last to arrive...you know where they are?

ALMA: I think they're throwing a party in their bungalow.

DAVEY: Party? Take me to them!

ALMA: I don't think you're particularly welcome here, Mr. Jones, right?

DAVEY: Lady, it's a matter of life and death!

ALMA: Well, c'mon! This way! (*ALMA leads DAVEY off right. SELMA and NICK enter left, wrapped in tablecloths and shivering.*)

SELMA: Nick! What happened?

NICK: I'll ask the goose egg on my head!

SELMA: I've got one, too!

NICK: I know! Somebody hit us on the head and knocked us out!

SELMA: You're right! We heard a noise, and...and...

NICK: And even though we're on a tropical island, we woke up freezing!

SELMA: Yeah, but I think I know why, Nick!

NICK: Why?

SELMA: We were in a freezer! A big walk-in freezer and...and there were giant fish hanging up on hooks.

NICK: A big flounder...and a sailfish...and a couple of groupers! *(SELMA suddenly gasps.)* You know what I think? Somebody put us in there on purpose! And you might ask what their purpose was, but that's pretty clear. They're trying to kill us! *I could tell Selma agreed with me because she looked like a deer caught in somebody's headlights! She was scared to death.* It's okay, Selma, because nobody here's a real killer. They shoot and they miss. They try poison and screw it up. They put us in the freezer, but forget to lock the door. Yeesh! Whoever it is is a rank amateur!

SELMA: Nick! Did you see—

NICK: *Gee, I wish Selma would finish a sentence once in a while!* Did I see what?

SELMA: What was hanging up between the flounder and the swordfish?

NICK: Yeah, a pair of groupers.

SELMA: *(Angrily.)* Those weren't a pair of groupers, Nick!

NICK: Yeah, they were...about this tall, two arms, two legs, two eyes, one mouth...

SELMA: Groupers don't have two arms, Nick! *(SELMA slugs NICK in the arm.)*

NICK: *Then it hit me like a ton of bricks!* Gee, Selma, you got a left that feels like a ton of bricks!

SELMA: Nick! Those are bodies hanging up in there! People bodies! Dead bodies!

NICK: You sure? *(SELMA drags NICK off left.)* Hey! I'll take your word for it! We don't have to look, do we? *(They're gone. From behind the desk, two gloved hands lift a box and set it on the top of the counter. The hands disappear behind the counter. NICK and SELMA enter, shivering once more. This time, though, NICK carries a wallet.)*

SELMA: You see, Nick?! I was right! And I bet I know who those two are!

NICK: I bet you don't!

SELMA: Five bucks!

NICK: You're on!

SELMA: It's J.J. Hay and his mother!

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