

# MURDER MOST FOUL

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By **Don Lowry**

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**MURDER MOST FOUL**  
**By Don Lowry**

**SYNOPSIS:** Ashley is in directorial hell. Her corpse won't lie still, her actors won't stop making up lines, and to add to her stress, this murder mystery was written by her assistant principal. Forget figuring out whodunit - - will Ashley be able to reconfigure this mess into something resembling a play?

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

(2 MEN, 6 WOMEN)

ASHLEY ..... Director of the play.  
GARY ..... The corpse of Mr. Powell.  
MYA ..... Lieutenant Carter, a homicide detective.  
ROBIN ..... Traci, Mr. Powell's girlfriend.  
JODIE ..... Miss Perkins, Mr. Powell's secretary.  
BRANDY ..... Darleen, the cook.  
TORI ..... Wendy, the maid.  
CLAY ..... Jerome, the chauffeur.

**PROPS**

- Seven 10-page scripts
- Pillow
- Folded sheet of paper for "Will"

**SETTING**

An empty stage except for a pillow on the floor.

**AT RISE:**

*ASHLEY enters from right carrying seven bound 10-page scripts.*

**ASHLEY:** (*Loudly.*) Everyone come onstage!

*JODIE, MYA, BRANDY, TORI, ROBIN, CLAY and GARY enter from left.*

**ASHLEY:** Each of you take a script.

*ASHLEY gives a script to all but GARY. ASHLEY keeps a script for herself.*

**GARY:** How's come I don't get a script, Ashley?

**ASHLEY:** As I told you before, Gary, you play the corpse of Mr. Powell.

**GARY:** Don't I have any speaking parts?

**ASHLEY:** No! You're dead!

**GARY:** Maybe I should go to a morgue and study dead people so I can be a more realistic corpse.

**ASHLEY:** That won't be necessary. All you have to do is lie down on the floor and not move a muscle.

**GARY:** Don't move. Okay.

**ASHLEY:** Now, lie down. We've got to finish this run-through quickly.

*GARY lies on his back on the floor, his head near the pillow.*

**ASHLEY:** I'll review the roles once more. Brandy, you're Darleen, the cook.

**BRANDY:** What's my last name?

**ASHLEY:** You don't have a last name.

**BRANDY:** Everyone's got a last name. What if someone asks me if I'm Miss Jones? I won't know what to say.

**ASHLEY:** (*Sighing.*) All right, you're Darleen Jones.

**BRANDY:** I don't like Jones. Could I be Darleen Clooney, George Clooney's niece?

**ASHLEY:** *(Resignedly.)* Whatever.

**JODIE:** And I was Mr. Powell's secretary, Miss Tiffany Perkins.

**ASHLEY:** Tiffany is your first name? All right, but it won't be used. Clay, you're Jerome, the chauffeur; Robin, you're Traci, Mr. Powell's girlfriend; Mya, you're the homicide detective, Lieutenant Carter; and Tori, you're Wendy, the maid.

**GARY:** Hey, Ashley. It seems like you're wasting a lot of talent if I don't have any lines.

**ASHLEY:** The next time the school puts on *Hamlet*, I'll see that you get the role of Yorik's skull. You'd be perfect for that part. Now, everyone but Gary and Jodie go off-stage. Mya, you enter first. The rest of you come in on your cue.

*ALL exit left but ASHLEY, GARY, and JODIE. MYA exits right. ASHLEY steps over near a wing. There is a knock on a door.*

**JODIE:** Come in.

*MYA enters from right.*

**MYA:** I'm Lieutenant Carter from police headquarters.

**JODIE:** I'm Miss Perkins who called you. I'm so glad you've come! There's been a murder most foul! *(She turns to ASHLEY.)* That's really a hokey line, Ash.

**ASHLEY:** This play was written by the Assistant Principal, Mr. [NAME]. Complain to him.

**JODIE:** On second thought, I really like that line. *(To MYA.)* The multimillionaire Gregory W. Powell has been murdered! *(She points to GARY. MYA kneels beside GARY and examines him.)*

**MYA:** There's a knife wound in his back, a bullet hole in the back of his head, he's been strangled, his head was bashed in by a blunt object and he was probably smothered with that pillow. Someone wanted to make very certain he was dead. You're right, Miss Perkins - - this *is* a murder most foul!

**JODIE:** He should be thankful he wasn't poisoned.

*GARY scratches his nose.*

**ASHLEY:** Gary! Don't scratch your nose!

**GARY:** Don't move and don't scratch. Okay.

**MYA:** You found the body, Miss Perkins?

**JODIE:** Yes, just before I called you. I haven't told any of the staff  
Mr. Powell has been killed.

**MYA:** Get all of the staff in here. I want to question them.

**JODIE:** They're on their way.

*BRANDY, TORI, CLAY and ROBIN enter.*

**ASHLEY:** You see the body and scream, Robin.

**ROBIN:** Eek.

**ASHLEY:** What was that?!

**ROBIN:** That's the way my mother taught me to scream. She says  
it's very refined.

**ASHLEY:** I don't want a refined scream! You've just found your lover  
lying on the floor, and he's been murdered!

**ROBIN:** We were about ready to break up.

**ASHLEY:** That's not in the script!

**ROBIN:** *(Pouting.)* But look at him! I don't want a corpse as a lover!  
It wouldn't be any fun, and I'm not going to go out with him  
anymore!

**ASHLEY:** You can't go out with him anymore! He's dead! Now  
scream!!

*ROBIN emits a very stagy scream. GARY coughs.*

**ASHLEY:** Gary! Don't cough!

**GARY:** Don't move, don't scratch, don't cough. Okay, I've got it.

**MYA:** *(To BRANDY.)* Who are you?

**BRANDY:** I'm Darleen Clooney, George Clooney's niece.

**MYA:** What do you know about the murder of Gregory Powell?

*GARY burps loudly.*

**ASHLEY:** Gary, don't burp!

**GARY:** Don't move, don't scratch, don't cough, don't burp. Okay.

**BRANDY:** I'm the cook and I hated him, but I didn't kill him. We all hated him.

**MYA:** He had to have been murdered by one of you, and everyone is a suspect! Nobody leaves this house until I learn which of you is guilty! *(To TORI.)* What's your name and your job here?

**TORI:** I'm the maid, Wendy Montana, Hannah Montana's sister.

**ASHLEY:** That's not in the script!

**TORI:** If Brandy can have a last name, so can I!

**ASHLEY:** For your information, Hannah Montana's real name is Miley Cyrus.

**TORI:** That's just an ugly rumor that's not true!

**MYA:** Miss Montana, did you kill Mr. Powell?

**TORI:** I hated him even more than the others, but I didn't kill him.

**MYA:** We'll see about that. *(To CLAY.)* Who are you?

**CLAY:** I'm Jerome Washington, the chauffeur. I'm a distant relative of George Washington. I did not kill him, and I cannot tell a lie.

**ASHLEY:** Will you people stop ad-libbing?!

**MYA:** *(To ROBIN.)* Who are you?

**ROBIN:** I'm Traci Gates. The billionaire founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates, is my father.

**ASHLEY:** I give up.

**MYA:** What was your relationship to Mr. Powell?

**ROBIN:** I was his girlfriend.

**MYA:** Why were you involved with a man so much older than you?

**ROBIN:** He was rich just like my daddy is.

**MYA:** Did you love him?

**ROBIN:** I loved his money, and I loved him, even though I hated him with all my heart.

*GARY yawns.*

**ASHLEY:** Don't yawn, Gary!

**GARY:** Don't move, scratch, cough, burp or yawn. Okay.

**MYA:** What about you, Miss Perkins? Did you hate Mr. Powell, too?

**JODIE:** I wouldn't say I hated him, but I did hate his guts, and I hated everything he said, everything he did and his ugly face.

**MYA:** You weren't a devoted employee, and that makes you a suspect. Everybody who wanted Mr. Powell dead, raise your hands.

*All raise their hands, including GARY.*

**ASHLEY:** Gary, why are you raising your hand?

**GARY:** If he wasn't dead, I wouldn't have a role, and this play could be my steppingstone to fame and fortune in the movies.

**ASHLEY:** Don't raise your hand again, or you really will be a corpse!

**GARY:** Don't move, scratch, cough, burp, yawn or raise my hand. Okay.

**MYA:** I'm going to ask each of you why you hated Mr. Powell. I'll start with you, Miss Montana. Why did you hate him?

**TORI:** He made me do really terrible, disgusting things.

**MYA:** Really?! What kind of things?

**TORI:** Like mopping the floors, vacuuming the rugs, doing laundry, ironing, washing dishes and making the beds.

**MYA:** But you're the maid!

**TORI:** So?

**MYA:** Miss Clooney, why did you hate him?

**BRANDY:** I hated him because he made me cook his stupid breakfast and his stupid lunch and his stupid dinner.

**MYA:** And you're the cook!?

**BRANDY:** Yes, but that doesn't mean I had to do his cooking.

**MYA:** Jerome, why did you hate Mr. Powell?

**CLAY:** He made me wash and polish his cars and drive him places where I had to sit in the car and wait for him, sometimes for two or three hours!

**MYA:** But as his chauffeur, weren't those duties part of your job?

**CLAY:** Yeah, but what's that got to do with anything?

**MYA:** Traci, you said you hated Mr. Powell, although he was your lover. Why?

**ROBIN:** He wouldn't buy a new Cadillac for me, and he'd never let me go out to parties with my guy friends. He'd go ballistic if I played my music, and once he forced me to listen to a stupid opera.

**MYA:** It's your turn, Miss Perkins.

**JODIE:** He made me type all his stupid letters on the computer, and he made a big deal out of all the little spelling mistakes I made.

**MYA:** You were his secretary!

**JODIE:** That didn't give him the right to complain about my bad spelling all the time! He was so unreasonable! You should have heard him yell at me just because I didn't know how to spell "cat."

**MYA:** All of you had a motive to murder him. I'm going to take every one of you to the station for further questioning.

**JODIE:** You don't have to do that! None of us killed him, even though we all wanted to. Now I'm going to tell you what really happened so you'll know why none of us is a murderer. When I came into this room, I found him lying on the floor just as he is now -- dead of a heart attack. An autopsy will prove that.

*GARY snores.*

**ASHLEY:** Gary! Wake up and stop snoring!

**GARY:** Don't move, scratch, cough, burp, yawn, raise my hand, sleep, or snore. That's a lot to remember!

**JODIE:** When I told the others he had died, we all felt cheated out of the pleasure of killing him, so we decided to pretend to kill him. Jerome stabbed him, Darleen shot him, Wendy strangled him, Traci bashed his head in, and I smothered him with the pillow.

**MYA:** Well, there's no law against killing a dead man. But tell me, Miss Perkins, why did you say he was murdered?

**JODIE:** So we could all tell you why we hated him so much.

**ROBIN:** What about his will? How many millions of dollars did he leave us?

**MYA:** Mr. Powell made his will just a month ago. Here's a copy. You can read it to the others. You're all so lazy and spoiled, I hope he didn't leave any of you enough to buy a cup of coffee. (*She gives the "will" to JODIE.*) I'm going to go call the meat wagon. (*She exits.*)

**CLAY:** It's a good thing she can't prove the old man had a heart attack because he saw me coming at him with a knife!

**TORI:** That would be a bummer! But you didn't stick it in far enough, so the rest of us had to finish the job.

**TORI:** Check the will, Miss Perkins! How much did he leave us?

**JODIE:** (*Looking at the "will."*) He left his entire fortune to a Mr. [NAME], Assistant Principal of [NAME] High School.

*The others groan, weep and wail. GARY jumps up from the floor.*

**GARY:** I'm not really dead! I fooled all of you, didn't I?! And I have your confessions on a tape recorder! You're all going to prison for the rest of your lives!

**ASHLEY:** That isn't in the script, Gary! What are you doing?!

**GARY:** It makes a great surprise ending! The audience will love it! And it's the only chance I have to show what a great dramatic actor I am!

**ASHLEY:** You're an idiot!

**GARY:** We've got to show that crime doesn't pay! We can't let five cold-blooded murderers go free! I insist on adding my ending!

**ASHLEY:** Lie down again, Gary.

*GARY obediently lies down. ASHLEY pushes the pillow down on his face.*

**ASHLEY:** Now Gary is a real corpse! . . . That's a wrap, kids. Let's pretend there's an audience out there. and we'll take a bow.

*All bow to the audience except GARY.*

**THE END**