



Madhouse!

A Madcap One-Act

By Todd Wallinger



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For preview only

MADHOUSE!

By TODD WALLINGER

CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<i># of lines</i>
<u>The Pembroke Family</u>	
GERALD.....Byron's oldest child; late 40s; arrogant and overbearing	76
JUDITHByron's second-oldest child; mid-40s; snobby and high-strung	88
PANSY.....Byron's second youngest child; early 40s; flighty and self-centered	106
RUSSELL.....Byron Pembroke's youngest; 30s; charming slacker	82
ABIGAILPansy's 12-year-old daughter and Byron's only grandchild; clever and precocious	39
GRANDMAMA.....Byron's mother; cantankerous but confused	15
<u>The Pembroke Estate Staff</u>	
LORRAINE.....Byron's lawyer; smart, argumentative	43
HOBSON.....the Pembrokes' dutiful butler; mostly humorless	32
<u>The Superfans</u>	
HARRIETByron's biggest fan; opinionated and talkative	33
GEORGEHarriet's husband; verifiably verbose	16
<u>The Ghost Hunters</u>	
NORAHthinks she's the leader	18
IAN.....struggles with technology	15
MYRTLE.....feels like a third wheel	18
<u>The Burglars</u>	
SNAKEfocused professional	21
JOEYdistracted newbie	18

The TV News Team

KATIE	reporter; sensationalizing	33
DREW.....	makeup artist; all attitude	10
ALEX	camera operator; indecisive	14

The Thespians

WESLEY	pompous actor; plays Romeo	13
DEVON	cranky director	16
CAITLYN	sarcastic actress; plays Juliet	11
FLORENCE	can-do stage manager	13

The Family

BILLY	little boy who lost his pet	16
DAD	supportive, encouraging	10
MOM.....	emotional, melodramatic	9

The Police Officers

MORALES	the veteran; no nonsense	24
KOWALSKI	the rookie; some nonsense	15

Mystery Guest

BYRON	mystery author; tough, but with a heart of gold	23
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SETTING

Time: Present.

Place: The living room of the Pembroke family mansion.

SET DESCRIPTION

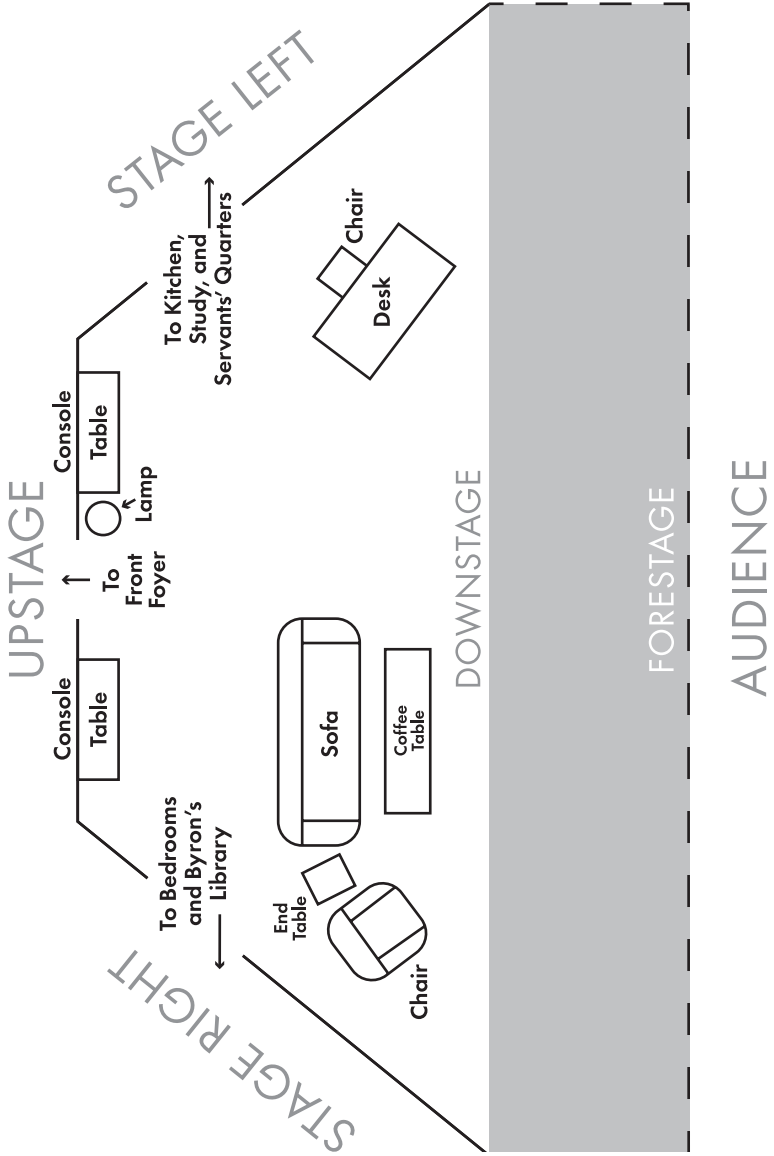
Madhouse! takes place entirely within the ostentatious and macabre living room of the Pembroke mansion. The doorway to the front foyer is UPSTAGE. A floor lamp with a lampshade stands LEFT of the door. The EXIT to the bedrooms and Byron's library is RIGHT. The EXIT to the kitchen, study, and servants' quarters is LEFT. A desk and chair are DOWN LEFT. A sofa and armchair are DOWN RIGHT, with an end table in between them and a coffee table DOWNSTAGE of the sofa. There is a handbell on the end table. Two console tables are located against the UPSTAGE wall. All these tables—and the UPSTAGE wall—are covered by the kind of spooky art pieces and knickknacks you'd expect to find in the home of a bestselling mystery author. Along with other paintings, on the UPSTAGE wall is a painting of a deer in a snowy wood. It remains undisturbed throughout.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene One: The Pembroke living room, early one evening.

Scene Two: The Pembroke living room, later that evening.

SET DESIGN



MADHOUSE!

Scene One

1 AT RISE: The Pembroke mansion living room in the early evening. LORRAINE sits at the desk with Byron's Pembroke's last will and testament before her. Her briefcase is beside her. RUSSELL sprawls on the sofa, and GRANDMAMA sleeps soundly at the other end of
5 the sofa. GERALD sits ramrod straight in the armchair. JUDITH paces anxiously in between them.

RUSSELL: Can we get started already? I want to know how much I'm getting.

10 **LORRAINE:** Russell, need I remind you that it took your father seventy-five years to build the fortune you're so desperate to get your greedy little hands on? Waiting another five minutes won't kill you.

RUSSELL: No, but I think it's killed Grandmama. (*Pokes GRANDMAMA with his foot.*) See? She's dead.

15 **JUDITH:** Oh, for heaven's sake, Russell. Grandmama isn't dead. She's only sleeping.

RUSSELL: Well, she should snore louder then.

GERALD: (*Rings a handbell on the end table.*) As much as it pains me, I agree with Russell. What are we waiting for? Everyone is here.

LORRAINE: Not everyone.

20 **GERALD:** Who's missing?

LORRAINE: Your other sister. Remember her?

GERALD: Pansy? Oh, please. We don't know if she's going to show up at all.

RUSSELL: That's right. She didn't even show up for her own wedding.

25 **JUDITH:** She sure showed up for the gifts though.

HOBSON: (*ENTERS LEFT.*) You rang, sir?

GERALD: Yes, Hobson. Please bring me a small glass of water and a very large aspirin.

HOBSON: I'm sorry, sir, but we only have the regular size aspirin.

30 **GERALD:** It was a joke.

HOBSON: Oh, yes. I see. Very amusing, sir. (*Laughs stiffly. EXITS LEFT.*)

RUSSELL: He never asked me what I wanted.

GERALD: That's because he doesn't like you, Russell. Nobody does.

RUSSELL: That's not true. A lot of people like me.

35 **GERALD:** Name one.

RUSSELL: All right. Let me think... Someone who likes me, someone who likes me... I've got it! Grandmama. She likes me very much.

1 **GRANDMAMA:** (*Wakes.*) Don't be so sure. (*Goes back to sleep.*)
GERALD: I rest my case.
JUDITH: Would you both stop bickering? I swear, it's like you two never
grew up.

5 **RUSSELL:** Oh, yeah? Well, I'm rubber, you're glue. (*JUDITH shakes her
head wearily.*)
PANSY: (*ENTERS UPSTAGE carrying a suitcase and umbrella and is
followed ON by ABIGAIL, who has her own small suitcase.*) Oh! I'm
so sorry I'm late! You wouldn't believe the traffic. It was bumper to
10 bumper the whole way here. And I can't even tell you how horrible
the weather has been!
RUSSELL: Then don't. You tend to run at the mouth anyway.
PANSY: Well! That's rather rude!
RUSSELL: No ruder than making us wait to read the old man's will.

15 **LORRAINE:** Well, now that we're all here, let's get started. Shall we?
ABIGAIL: I'm bored.
PANSY: Be patient, Abigail. Mother is going to find out how many
millions she's going to get and then we can drive right back to the
city and start spending it. Won't that be fun?

20 **GERALD:** I don't know what makes you think you're going to get any of
Father's money, Pansy. You were never around when he was alive.
Why should he leave you anything after he's dead?
PANSY: You know very well why I've stayed away. Father and I never
got along. The only reason the rest of you stayed behind was so
25 that you could live off Father's handouts.
GERALD: They were hardly handouts, Pansy. I managed his entire
publishing empire. I'm the one who negotiated his contracts. I'm
the one who set up his tours and booked him on all the talk shows.
If anyone deserves the bulk of his estate, it's me.

30 **JUDITH:** Publishing! Why, that's nothing. Don't forget, I edited every
one of Father's books. It was my insightful guidance and my loving
attention to detail that allowed him to crank out so many mystery
novels over the years.
PANSY: Well, Russell? How did you contribute to Father's success?

35 **RUSSELL:** I emptied his wastebasket. (*Beat.*) Once.
JUDITH: That's only because you thought you saw a quarter at
the bottom.
RUSSELL: What's your point?
LORRAINE: You know, we don't have to waste time arguing over
40 how to divide your father's estate. His instructions are right here.
(*Waves the will.*)

1 **RUSSELL:** Read on, Macduff.

JUDITH: Yes, let's hear the good news.

LORRAINE: All right, here goes. (*HOBSON ENTERS LEFT with a glass of water and an aspirin on a tray and sets them on the end table by*
5 *GERALD.*) Hobson, you might want to stay here for this. (*Clears her throat and reads.*) "I, Byron G. Pembroke, being of sound mind—"

RUSSELL: That's debatable.

LORRAINE: "—and body, would like to take this opportunity to express
10 my grave disappointment with each of you, the members of my immediate but all-too-needy family." (*PEMBROKES react, except GRANDMAMA, who remains asleep.*) "Not one of you lived up to my admittedly high expectations for you. As you well know, I spared no expense in making sure you received every advantage in life—
15 fine clothes, travel, the best educations. And what did you do with them? Nothing! I suppose a kinder man might halt there, but I did not get where I am by holding back. Oh, no. Honesty has always been my hallmark. Therefore, let me lay out in excruciating detail the many ways in which you've disappointed me." (*Scans ahead.*)
Uh, there is a statement for each of you.

20 **GERALD:** Well, go ahead and read them!

LORRAINE: Are you sure? They do get rather personal.

JUDITH: Yes, of course! You must read them.

RUSSELL: We're not afraid.

PANSY: Maybe we should be.

25 **GERALD:** Oh, come on! It'll be good for us. Father may have been a hard man, but he always knew what he was talking about.

LORRAINE: All right. You asked for it. (*Reads.*) "Let me start with Gerald, my first-born child. You were blessed with a sharp mind and an observant eye, always seeing things nobody else saw.
30 You could have been a great scientist or engineer. Instead, you became an accountant, learning how to cook the books so that you could steal from me without my finding out. Well, I found out."

JUDITH: Is this true, Gerald?

GERALD: Oh, please. He didn't know what he was talking about.

35 **LORRAINE:** (*Reads.*) "Judith, my second born. You were so imaginative, with an extensive vocabulary and a wonderful grasp of language. Of all my children, you were the most likely to follow in my footsteps. But you were too lazy to write your own books, so you decided to tinker with mine. You drove me half-mad with your endless notes!
40 In fact, if it hadn't been for you, I probably could have written another ten books!"

RUSSELL: So much for your "insightful guidance."

1 **JUDITH:** Oh, shut up.

LORRAINE: (*Reads.*) “Pansy, my third child. Growing up, you were so inquisitive and had a strong sense of fairness. You dreamed of becoming a great lawyer, but you just couldn’t hack it. After
5 you failed to get into Harvard, you threw it all away, giving up your passion for justice to become a bubble-headed socialite. What a waste!”

RUSSELL: Ooh, burn.

PANSY: Your turn is coming, little brother.

10 **LORRAINE:** (*Reads.*) “This leads me to Russell, the youngest. You turned out to be the biggest disappointment of all.”

RUSSELL: Yay! I’m number one!

LORRAINE: (*Reads.*) “You always had a restless mind, one that refused to be put in a box. I suppose that might be useful in some fields,
15 but you never even tried to apply yourself. You had no talents, no passion. Not even a passing interest in anything. Your life is destined to end in ruin, degradation, and failure. The one bright spot in all of this is that I won’t be around to see it.”

PANSY: Ouch.

20 **RUSSELL:** I’ve heard worse.

LORRAINE: (*Reads.*) “Of course, the one exception is my mother, your Grandmama. She was, quite simply, the greatest mother a boy could ever have. She made our home a happy one, a place filled with love and laughter. I would prefer to leave my entire fortune to
25 her, if she’s still alive when my will is read.”

RUSSELL: (*Half-heartedly.*) Grandmama. You still with us? (*Pokes GRANDMAMA with his foot.*)

GRANDMAMA: (*Wakes.*) Huh?

LORRAINE: (*Reads.*) “Unfortunately, Mother would only divide the estate among the four of you when she passes on.” (*GRANDMAMA goes back to sleep.*) “She was always too soft-hearted that way. No, I want to make sure that the fortune I spent my entire life building goes to the right person, the person most worthy of receiving it. Therefore, I’ve devised a little puzzle.”

35 **GERALD:** Excuse me?

JUDITH: What does he mean, a puzzle?

LORRAINE: I’m getting to that. (*Reads.*) “I’ve liquidated my entire fortune and used the proceeds to purchase a single item worth 84 million dollars which I’ve hidden somewhere in this house.” (*PEMBROKES gasp.*) “As I’ve made clear, none of you truly deserves the fortune
40 I’ve built. But through cleverness and ingenuity, one of you—whether

1 family, friend, or stranger—may manage to find this item and, in doing so, prove yourself more deserving than the rest.”

RUSSELL: What?

GERALD: Let me see that! (*Grabs for the will. LORRAINE holds him off.*)

5 **LORRAINE:** Sorry. No one can see the will until after probate.

GERALD: Oh, this is ridiculous!

LORRAINE: That may be. However, it’s also the law.

JUDITH: Are there any clues about the treasure? Where it might be located or what form it might take?

10 **LORRAINE:** (*Scans the will.*) No, nothing. That’s all he wrote.

PANSY: I’m confused. He said whoever finds it—“family, friend, or stranger.” What does that mean?

LORRAINE: It means the fortune isn’t only for you to find. Anyone can inherit it. All they must do is find it.

15 **GERALD:** Well, we don’t have to worry about any strangers finding it. There are only the four of us here.

ABIGAIL: Five.

RUSSELL: Six, with Hobson.

GERALD: Don’t be absurd. Hobson can’t inherit Father’s estate.

20 **LORRAINE:** The will is quite clear on that point. Finders keepers, losers weepers.

RUSSELL: What law school did you go to? Trite State?

HOBSON: I can assure you I have no interest in Mr. Pembroke’s wealth. It was honor enough to serve him for so many years.

25 **JUDITH:** Good man, Hobson.

GERALD: Being forced to compete for Father’s fortune? This is the worst thing to happen to us since that exposé in *The New Yorker!*

PANSY: Oh, I don’t know if I’d go that far.

GERALD: Did you actually read it, Pansy? It was brutal.

30 **JUDITH:** Indeed. It made the lot of us look like manipulative, money-grubbing monsters.

RUSSELL: Much like Father’s will.

GERALD: Well, I, for one, refuse to indulge Father’s eccentricities. Just because his readers like to solve puzzles he devised doesn’t
35 mean we need to.

LORRAINE: So you’re not going to look for the treasure, Gerald?

GERALD: Of course, I’m not. I’m going to look for something much more valuable—a lawyer who will contest the will in court!

LORRAINE: I’m afraid the will is airtight. I should know. I wrote it.

- 1 **RUSSELL:** With a crayon, no doubt.
- LORRAINE:** (*Shuts briefcase, forgetting to put the will inside.*) Well! I do not have to stay here and let myself be insulted. I've done my duty. The rest is up to you. (*Heads UPSTAGE toward the front door.*)
- 5 **HOBSON:** Shall I show you out, ma'am?
- LORRAINE:** No need, Hobson. I know the way. And I won't be back! (*EXITS UPSTAGE.*)
- JUDITH:** (*To RUSSELL.*) Well! That was rather abrupt!
- RUSSELL:** Why are you looking at me? It was Gerald's fault!
- 10 **GERALD:** (*Stands.*) Hobson, I'll be on the telephone in the study. Please see that I'm not disturbed.
- HOBSON:** Of course, sir.
- GERALD:** (*To himself.*) A treasure hunt! The very idea! (*EXITS LEFT.*)
- PANSY:** What about you, Russell? You seem to be the primary money-grubber around here. Aren't you going to look for the treasure?
- 15 **RUSSELL:** I don't know. Why go to all that work when I can just let someone else find it and steal it from them?
- PANSY:** You wouldn't!
- RUSSELL:** You're right. That would be too much work as well.
- 20 **JUDITH:** Even if I had the inclination to look for the treasure, I don't have time to dig through every room in this house. I've got Father's last book to edit.
- PANSY:** And it's been so long since I've stepped foot in this place, I wouldn't know where to start.
- 25 **JUDITH:** (*Sighs.*) I suppose Father's treasure will just stay here then, undiscovered...
- PANSY:** (*Sighs.*) I'm afraid so.
- RUSSELL:** (*Sighs.*) I sure could go for some cereal. (*EXITS LEFT.*)
- PANSY:** He's not going for cereal, is he?
- 30 **JUDITH:** Oh, no. He's going to look for the treasure. (*Goes to GRANDMAMA.*) Well, good night. I'm putting Grandmama to bed.
- HOBSON:** I'll take care of it, ma'am.
- JUDITH:** It's quite all right, Hobson. I like to do it.
- HOBSON:** If it's all right with you then, ma'am, I shall retire to my
- 35 quarters for the evening.
- JUDITH:** Of course, Hobson. We'll see you in the morning. (*HOBSON EXITS LEFT. JUDITH helps groggy GRANDMAMA to her feet.*) Come along, Grandmama. It's time for bed.
- GRANDMAMA:** But I don't want to go to bed!
- 40 **JUDITH:** Sure you do. You were sound asleep on the sofa just now.

- 1 **GRANDMAMA:** Oh, was that the sofa? I thought I was in some sort of
jalousy, the way I kept getting jostled around. (*JUDITH EXITS RIGHT*
with *GRANDMAMA*.)
- PANSY:** (*Whirls around to ABIGAIL.*) Well, Abigail, are you ready to look
5 for the treasure?
- ABIGAIL:** You better believe it! Where do you think Grandfather hid it?
- PANSY:** (*Looks around and sees the will. Picks it up.*) Well, this is
peculiar. Lorraine forgot to take the will with her.
- ABIGAIL:** So? She already read it to us.
- 10 **PANSY:** (*Scans the will.*) Apparently not. There's one more paragraph
at the bottom. Listen to this. (*Reads.*)
"This treasure does not shine like jewels,
Nor does it gleam like gold.
But if you wish to find it true,
15 A cold hart you must hold."
(*Points to the will.*) Oh, and look. He spelled "heart" wrong. See?
He spelled it H-A-R-T.
- ABIGAIL:** That's weird.
- PANSY:** Indeed. (*Picks up her suitcase.*) I've changed my mind. Let's
20 take these up to the guest room. I think we'll be staying a while.
- ABIGAIL:** Aren't you going to show the will to the rest of the family?
- PANSY:** And give away our one advantage? I don't think so! (*Rolls up
the will and shoves it in her pocket. She and ABIGAIL pick up their
luggage and EXIT RIGHT.*)
- 25 **GERALD:** (*Sneaks ON LEFT and looks around.*) Well, it's about time!
I thought they'd never leave! Now let's approach this logically—
there are twenty-six rooms in this house. In which would Father
have hidden the treasure? (*Thinks.*) I know! It must be in Father's
library. There are a ton of hiding places there! (*EXITS RIGHT.*)
- 30 **JUDITH:** (*Sneaks ON RIGHT and looks around.*) Now think, Judith...
Father must have left a clue to the treasure in one of his books.
But which book? (*Thinks.*) I've got it! *The Mystery at Foggy Point!*
The killer hid the diamonds behind the breadbox. That must be
where Father hid the treasure, behind the breadbox in the kitchen!
35 (*EXITS LEFT. A moment later, RUSSELL ENTERS LEFT, eating from a
box of cereal. He EXITS RIGHT without a word.*)
- HOBSON:** (*Sneaks ON LEFT and looks around.*) Come on, Hobson!
You knew Mr. Pembroke better than anyone. There's only one
place he could have hidden the treasure and that would be the...
40 (*SOUND EFFECT: DOORBELL.*) Oh, for heaven's sake! Who could
it be at this hour? (*EXITS UPSTAGE. From OFFSTAGE.*) May I help
you? (*SUPERFANS GEORGE and HARRIET rush IN UPSTAGE, holding
novels, followed by HOBSON.*)

- 1 **HARRIET:** Look at this place, George. Isn't it just a dream?
GEORGE: Oh, it's more than a dream, Harriet. It's an absolute vision!
HARRIET: This is exactly how I pictured his house, you know. All ominous and spooky. That's why I insisted we come at night.
- 5 **GEORGE:** Spooky indeed. In fact, one might almost call it "sinister" or "macabre."
HOBSON: Excuse me, is there someone you'd like to see?
HARRIET: Oh, yes. Byron Pembroke, please. We're his biggest fans.
(They hold up their novels.)
- 10 **HOBSON:** I'm sorry, but Mr. Pembroke is... indisposed.
HARRIET: That's all right. We'll wait right here until he's disposed again. *(They start toward the sofa.)*
HOBSON: No, no, no! Don't sit down!
HARRIET: *(Sits.)* Oh, but we must. Our feet are simply pounding.
- 15 **GEORGE:** *(Sits next to HARRIET.)* They're a virtual symphony of pain.
HOBSON: All right, fine. He's dead.
HARRIET: Who's dead?
HOBSON: Mr. Byron Pembroke. The man you're waiting for.
HARRIET: Well, that was rather sudden.
- 20 **HOBSON:** Actually, it happened several days ago.
HARRIET: Oh, dear! And to think we never got to tell him how much his books have meant to us! Isn't that tragic, George?
GEORGE: More than that. It's a genuine cataclysm of sorrow.
HOBSON: *(Calls OFF LEFT.)* Mr. Pembroke!
- 25 **HARRIET:** I thought he was dead.
HOBSON: What? Oh, uh, Mr. Pembroke is dead. I mean that Mr. Pembroke is dead. I'm calling the other Mr. Pembroke. The one who isn't dead.
HARRIET: Well, let him know we appreciate his putting us up for the
- 30 night. We couldn't go back to the village, with the roads washed out and houses flooded and everyone clambering for shelter.
HOBSON: Clambering for shelter?
HARRIET: Oh, yes. Half the village is looking for a place to stay tonight.
HOBSON: Are you suggesting that we shall soon be inundated with
- 35 more interlopers?
HARRIET: I don't know about interlopers, but I'm sure you'll have plenty of people stopping by.
GEORGE: It will be a veritable crush of humanity.
HOBSON: *(Calls OFF LEFT.)* Mr. Pembroke!

- 1 **HARRIET:** Of course, I suppose it's Mr. Pembroke's fault for buying a house on top of a bluff. But it's just so fitting, isn't it, George? I mean for a mystery novelist to live somewhere so... bleak.
- GEORGE:** I consider it the epitome of gloom.
- 5 **HOBSON:** (*Shouts.*) Oh, please shut up!
- JUDITH:** (*ENTERS LEFT.*) For heaven's sake, Hobson. Keep it down! Grandmama's trying to sleep.
- HOBSON:** Sorry, ma'am, but have you seen the master of the house?
- JUDITH:** No, I— (*Finally notices SUPERFANS.*) Excuse me, who are
- 10 these people?
- HOBSON:** They're fans of the late Mr. Pembroke, ma'am. They intend to stay the night.
- JUDITH:** Oh, no. No, no, no! They can't stay here! What if they find the T-R-E-A-S-U-R-E?
- 15 **HOBSON:** With all due respect, ma'am, I thought you weren't interested in the T-R-E-A-S-U-R-E?
- JUDITH:** I'm not! But I don't want them to find the T-R-E-A-S-U-R-E.
- HARRIET:** Isn't it cute, George? They're speaking in some sort of code.
- JUDITH:** (*To HARRIET and GEORGE.*) It's been very nice meeting the
- 20 two of you, but now you must allow Hobson to show you the door.
- HARRIET:** Oh, there's no need for that. We've already seen it out there in the foyer. A very nice one it is, too.
- GEORGE:** A true portal of pulchritude.
- JUDITH:** (*Calls OFF LEFT.*) Oh! Gerald!
- 25 **HOBSON:** As you noted, I've already tried that approach, ma'am. Unfortunately, it seems Mr. Gerald is indisposed.
- HARRIET:** Another one? Boy, they're dropping like flies around here.
- JUDITH:** We have to find him!
- HOBSON:** (*Calls OFF LEFT.*) Oh, Mr. Pembroke! (*EXITS LEFT.*)
- 30 **JUDITH:** (*Calls OFF RIGHT.*) Hallo, Gerald! (*EXITS RIGHT.*)
- HARRIET:** Oh, George! I don't know how we're going to get any sleep tonight, what with all this yelling going on.
- GEORGE:** You might almost say it's a cacophony of caterwauling.
- NORAH:** (*ENTERS UPSTAGE with fellow GHOST HUNTERS IAN and*
- 35 *MYRTLE. NORAH and IAN have electronic meters they wave around the room. MYRTLE looks on enviously.*) The energy field is coming from right inside here.
- IAN:** That's not what my meter is saying.
- NORAH:** Well, maybe you're reading your meter wrong.

- 1 **IAN:** I am not reading it wrong. I know perfectly well how to read an EMF meter.
- MYRTLE:** Hey, Norah, you said I could use one of the meters.
- NORAH:** Well, you can't use mine. Borrow Ian's.
- 5 **MYRTLE:** I don't want Ian's. His is all wonky.
- IAN:** My meter is not wonky. It's perfectly fine. (*Looks at his meter.*) Oh, wait. It's upside down. (*Turns meter around. To NORAH.*) Ooh, you're right! That is a lot of energy!
- HARRIET:** Oh, look, George. There are those nice paranormal
- 10 investigators we saw down in the village.
- MYRTLE:** Shhh! You must remain absolutely quiet. You'll disturb the energy field.
- IAN:** The EMF waves are very strong.
- NORAH:** Perhaps the strongest we've ever seen.
- 15 **HARRIET:** Ooh, George, isn't this exciting?
- GEORGE:** It's a never-ending panoply of thrills.
- MYRTLE:** Come on, Norah. I really, really want to use the meter.
- NORAH:** Not now, Myrtle. I've locked onto something.
- IAN:** The presence of death is very strong here. Almost palpable.
- 20 **HARRIET:** Well, of course it is. Poor Mr. Pembroke passed away just a few days ago.
- MYRTLE:** Oh, I am so sorry. Was Mr. Pembroke your father?
- HARRIET:** No, I don't think so. I don't think we're related at all.
- IAN:** Well, the vibrational component of his energy field is very high.
- 25 That generally indicates a violent death.
- NORAH:** Maybe we should try to communicate with him.
- MYRTLE:** Hold on, Norah. Extra-dimensional linguistics is my specialty, not yours. (*Grabs the meter away from NORAH.*)
- NORAH:** Be careful, Myrtle! You could have broken it!
- 30 **HARRIET:** Oh, I think I should like to communicate with Mr. Pembroke. What is he saying?
- MYRTLE:** Give me a second. I need to adjust the frequency gain. (*Turns a dial on the meter.*) Ah, yes. I've got it now. He's saying that he was murdered.
- 35 **HARRIET:** Murdered? Well, that is a surprise.
- NORAH:** Does he say how he was murdered?
- MYRTLE:** Oh, the usual way. Somebody killed him.
- NORAH:** That's not what I meant. Does he mention a murder weapon or anything?

1 **MYRTLE:** I don't know. Let me see. *(Turns the dial some more.)*
IAN: Hold on. I'm picking up something. I think it's the murder weapon.
NORAH: Can you tell what it is?
IAN: Not yet. The signal's a little weak. *(Follows the meter as it leads*
5 *him to the back of GEORGE'S head.)* It's coming in more sharply
now. Yes, yes, there it is! I can see it clear as day!
NORAH: What is it? What is it?!

IAN: It appears to be... an egg.
MYRTLE: An egg? How can you kill somebody with an egg?

10 **NORAH:** That's not the murder weapon. You're looking at the back of
this guy's head!
HARRIET: Oh, George. Did you kill Mr. Pembroke?
GEORGE: Of course not, my dearest. What conceivable motivation
would I have to exterminate my most beloved novelist?

15 **HARRIET:** For the insurance money, of course!
MYRTLE: Wait. I'm picking up the spirit again.
IAN: Oh, really? Where is he?
MYRTLE: Let's see. He appears to be right over... *(Swings the meter*
toward HARRIET.) ...there!

20 **HARRIET:** *(Jumps up.)* Ahhh! I can feel his cold breath on my face!
GEORGE: That's funny. I don't feel a thing.
HARRIET: Well, don't just sit there, George! Do something!
GEORGE: What precisely do you expect me to do, Harriet?
HARRIET: I don't know! Chase it away or something!

25 **GEORGE:** *(Lamely.)* Shoo. Vamoose. Depart.
HARRIET: Oh, George! You're completely useless!
GEORGE: The very paragon of pointlessness!
MYRTLE: *(Swings the meter around the room.)* Ooh, he's coming back
around again! *(HARRIET screams and runs OFF LEFT. GEORGE*
30 *stands begrudgingly and slowly follows her OFF LEFT.)*

IAN: Oh, great. The signal is fading.
NORAH: That's long enough, Myrtle! You can give back my meter now!
MYRTLE: No way. This is too much fun! *(Runs OFF LEFT with the meter.*
NORAH and IAN run OFF after her.)

35 **GERALD:** *(ENTERS RIGHT.)* Okay, so, what is the second most likely
room to hide the treasure? *(Thinks.)* Must be the kitchen. Nobody
would ever expect to find it there. *(EXITS LEFT.)*
PANSY: *(ENTERS RIGHT with ABIGAIL, who carries a flashlight.)* Now be
very, very quiet. We don't want anyone to know what we're doing.

1 **ABIGAIL:** What was that verse again?
PANSY: Um, I think it went... (*Remembering.*)
“The treasure does not shine like jewels,
Nor does it gleam like gold.
5 But if you wish to find it true,
A cold hart you must hold.”

ABIGAIL: I get the first part, but what does cold heart mean?
PANSY: Well, I suppose Father wants us to think clearly and rationally,
like him. That’s why I brought along this flashlight. If we hold it at
10 a low angle, we can see where the dust was recently disturbed.
That’ll help us find where the treasure’s hidden.

ABIGAIL: Good thinking, Mother!
PANSY: Oh, you learn all sorts of things in my line of work.
(*RUSSELL ENTERS RIGHT, eating a sandwich.*) Russell! What
15 are you doing here?

RUSSELL: I could ask you the same thing.
PANSY: Me? Oh, uh, I must have been sleepwalking.
RUSSELL: With a flashlight?
PANSY: I wanted to see where I was going.

20 **RUSSELL:** I’m disappointed in you, Pansy. You used to be so much
better at lying.
PANSY: Can I ask you something?
RUSSELL: I’ve never been able to stop you before.
PANSY: What did Father die of?

25 **RUSSELL:** Oh, I suppose it was a heart attack or something.
PANSY: You don’t know?
RUSSELL: Well, the coroner’s report hasn’t come out yet.
PANSY: The coroner’s report?
RUSSELL: Yes. Isn’t that how these things usually go?

30 **PANSY:** No. A coroner isn’t called unless the person died under
suspicious circumstances.
RUSSELL: Oh, well, there was nothing suspicious about the old
man’s death. He died as he lived, tapping away at his typewriter.
Or so I was told.

35 **PANSY:** Then why was a coroner called?
RUSSELL: I have no idea. (*Listens OFF LEFT.*) Wait a minute. Did
you hear that?
PANSY: No.
RUSSELL: Well, I did. It sounded like a box of pizza rolls calling to me!

40 **PANSY:** Wait! I’ve got another question! (*RUSSELL EXITS LEFT.*)

- 1 **ABIGAIL:** What were you going to ask him?
PANSY: I'll tell you later. Right now, we've got some treasure hunting to do. Come on. *(EXITS LEFT with ABIGAIL as BURGLARS sneak ON UPSTAGE, carrying cloth sacks.)*
- 5 **JOEY:** Wow, Snake! Just look at this place. I ain't never been in a place this fancy before.
SNAKE: Now remember. Everybody's probably in the basement hiding from the storm, so we got to work fast. They could come upstairs any minute.
- 10 **JOEY:** Sure thing, Snake. *(Pulls out a phone and poses for a selfie.)*
SNAKE: What are you doing?
JOEY: I'm taking a selfie for my Instagram account.
SNAKE: What Instagram account?
JOEY: The Thieving Life. I just launched it.
- 15 **SNAKE:** Why would you do a thing like that?
JOEY: Gee whiz, Snake. I can't live on the money from breaking and entering alone. I got to generate alternative income streams from my online endeavors.
SNAKE: That's the stupidest thing I ever heard. If you post what you're stealing online, the cops are gonna see it and know you stole it.
- 20 **JOEY:** Don't worry about that. I figured out a way to prevent the cops from knowing who I am.
SNAKE: Oh, yeah? How do you do that?
JOEY: I post under your name.
- 25 **SNAKE:** Oh, great! Now they're going to arrest me!
JOEY: Why would they do that? You didn't post nothing.
SNAKE: Just put the phone away! We don't have much time.
JOEY: If you say so, Snake. *(Pockets the phone, then goes to the floor lamp and removes the lampshade. SNAKE starts placing various*
- 30 *knickknacks in his sack.)*
SNAKE: Now what are you doing?
JOEY: I'm gonna put this stylish-looking lamp in my bag.
SNAKE: Don't waste your time with big stuff like that.
JOEY: Why? What's wrong with lamps?
- 35 **SNAKE:** Lamps are cheap. If you want to be a successful burglar, you got to look for valuables like watches and jewelry. Not lamps. Lamps are a dime a dozen.
JOEY: Wow. You're right. That is cheap.
SNAKE: Hurry up, would you? I don't want anyone bursting in on us—

- 1 **KATIE:** (*ENTERS UPSTAGE holding a microphone.*) This is Katie Wong with *Eyewitness News*—
- SNAKE:** Oh, geez! (*SNAKE dives under the coffee table. JOEY puts the lampshade over his head. ALEX ENTERS UPSTAGE and records*
- 5 **KATIE** with a video camera. *DREW follows them ON with a makeup kit and makeup brush.*)
- ALEX:** Cut!
- KATIE:** What's the matter?
- ALEX:** The image is too dark. I need to adjust the lighting level. (*While*
- 10 *ALEX fiddles with his camera, DREW applies KATIE'S makeup.*)
- KATIE:** Drew, what are you doing?
- DREW:** It's called working miracles, honey. Your pores look like the craters of Jupiter.
- ALEX:** Jupiter doesn't have any craters. It's a giant ball of gas.
- 15 **DREW:** You're a giant ball of gas.
- KATIE:** Well, make it fast.
- DREW:** You can't rush miracles, honey.
- ALEX:** (*Points the camera at KATIE.*) In three... two... one...
- KATIE:** Go! Go! Go! (*DREW scrambles out of the way.*) This is Katie
- 20 Wong with *Eyewitness News*. I'm here at the scene of the floods and, I have to say, the sight of the devastation has been heartbreaking. This house is just one of many abandoned by desperate residents seeking to escape the ravages of the storm, the front door left wide open—
- 25 **ALEX:** Cut! (*DREW jumps in to touch up KATIE'S face again.*)
- KATIE:** Drew, please!
- DREW:** This is going to take more than a miracle, honey. This is going to take full-blown magic!
- ALEX:** It's still too dark. We're going to need more light.
- 30 **KATIE:** Drew, would you be a sweetheart and turn on that lamp over there? (*Points to JOEY.*)
- DREW:** You did not just ask that. (*While the NEWS TEAM is turned away, JOEY tiptoes away from them.*)
- KATIE:** What's the matter? Don't you know how to turn on a light?
- 35 **DREW:** Please! I'm an artist, not an electrician!
- KATIE:** And I'm an award-winning journalist, but I guess I'll be the one to turn it on. (*Goes to where Joey was and looks around.*) Hey, what happened to the lamp?
- DREW:** Don't ask me. I'm not the award-winning journalist.
- 40 **ALEX:** Never mind. I had the lens cap on.

1 **KATIE:** You have got to be kidding me.
ALEX: No, really. I forgot to—
KATIE: I believe you! I believe you. (*Takes her position again.*) Are you ready now?

5 **ALEX:** (*Fiddles with his camera.*) Just give me a minute.
KATIE: I'll give you two seconds.
ALEX: (*Points camera at KATIE.*) And one!
KATIE: Hello, I'm Katie Wong with *Eyewitness News*. This house is just one of many abandoned by residents escaping the storm. As you

10 can see, the front door was left wide open and there's not a single soul in sight—
ALEX: Cut!
KATIE: Alex, I swear. One more interruption and I'm going to send you back to covering toddler pageants!

15 **DREW:** Ooh! Can I do those? I just love their little attitudes. They're so sassy!
ALEX: I was right the first time. It is too dark in here.
KATIE: (*Points to JOEY.*) Your turn, Drew. (*JOEY tiptoes further away.*)
DREW: I do not get paid enough for this job. (*Goes to JOEY and absentmindedly reaches for a switch but finds JOEY'S nose instead. Screams.*) The lamp! It's alive!

20 **JOEY:** (*Removes the lampshade.*) Gee, thanks. That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me.
KATIE: Hey, look. There's another one over there. (*SNAKE climbs out from under the coffee table. DREW screams again.*)

25 **SNAKE:** Sorry. We was, uh... just taking a little nap.
ALEX: Well, you need to get out of here. You're ruining our shot.
KATIE: No, wait. We can use them for a quick stand-up interview.
SNAKE: Uh, we really ought to get going— (*Starts to leave.*)

30 **KATIE:** (*Yanks SNAKE back.*) Not a chance. This is real-life drama! An inspiring story of hope against insurmountable odds! The chance to bury those losers at *Daily News Now*!
ALEX: (*Points the camera at KATIE.*) In three... two... one...
KATIE: Hello. This is Katie Wong and I'm here with two survivors of the

35 storm. I found them wandering the halls of this mansion in a daze, their strength weak, their appearance sickly.
SNAKE: (*Gestures to JOEY.*) Oh, no. He always looks like that.
KATIE: So, this is your home? (*Holds the mic out to BURGLARS.*)
JOEY: Oh, yeah. We've lived here for, uh... how many years has it

40 been, Snake?

- 1 **SNAKE:** A bunch.
JOEY: Yeah. A whole bunch of years.
KATIE: That's funny, because you don't look like you could afford a place like this.
- 5 **JOEY:** Oh, you'd be surprised how much money you can make in our line of work.
KATIE: Oh, really? And what is your line of work?
SNAKE: Asset redistribution.
KATIE: So, what were you doing when the storm hit?
- 10 **JOEY:** Oh, we was up here, casing the neighborhood—
SNAKE: (*Elbows JOEY.*) Ha-ha. He means we were evaluating some of the fine real estate offerings in the area.
KATIE: And did you find anything worth investing in?
JOEY: Yeah. (*Holds up his sack.*) Bigger bags.
- 15 **SNAKE:** (*Stuffs both sacks behind the sofa cushions.*) Ha-ha! She don't need to know about these.
JUDITH: (*ENTERS RIGHT. Screams.*) What are you doing in our house?
SNAKE: And that's our cue to leave... (*Ducks OFF UPSTAGE with JOEY.*)
KATIE: (*To JUDITH.*) Hi, I'm Katie Wong from *Eyewitness News*—
- 20 **JUDITH:** I know who you are. What I don't know is why a news team is in my house.
KATIE: Your house? (*Gestures behind her.*) But these gentlemen said this was their house.
JUDITH: You mean the gentlemen who just snuck out?
- 25 **KATIE:** Yes, those— (*Looks around.*) Wait, what? (*Not thinking they left the house, calls OFF LEFT.*) Hey! You can't get away from us that easily! (*Runs OFF LEFT with ALEX and DREW.*)
JUDITH: (*Calls after them.*) I didn't give you permission to be here, you know! (*PANSY and ABIGAIL ENTER LEFT. PANSY now has the flashlight.*)
- 30 **PANSY:** Oh! Judith! You're still awake.
JUDITH: Of course, I'm awake! How can I sleep when our home has been overrun by intruders?
PANSY: Oh, Judith. I'm sure you're imagining things.
- 35 **JUDITH:** Hardly! I just saw them. There was an entire TV news team, and they were pursuing two suspicious-looking gentlemen.
PANSY: That's quite interesting, Judith, but I was hoping you could answer a few questions for me.
JUDITH: I'll do what I can, Pansy, but you must understand that my
- 40 nerves are frayed. Absolutely frayed!

- 1 **PANSY:** I'll make it quick. Russell said something about a coroner being called?
- JUDITH:** Yes. Apparently, Father arranged it a few days before he died.
- PANSY:** Why would he do a thing like that?
- 5 **JUDITH:** I suppose he wanted to lend an air of mystery to his death. For his fans, you know.
- PANSY:** And how did Father look? After he died, I mean.
- JUDITH:** I wouldn't know.
- PANSY:** You never saw the body?
- 10 **JUDITH:** The funeral was closed casket. Father didn't want any fans taking pictures of his body and posting them all over social media.
- PANSY:** So, who did see the body?
- JUDITH:** Oh, I suppose Lorraine did. After all, she was the one who took care of all those pesky little arrangements for the funeral.
- 15 **PANSY:** Well, sure, but why—
- JUDITH:** Listen, dear. I'd love to stay and answer your questions all night, but I really must get to bed. Good night.
- PANSY:** Please, Judith. Just let me ask one more question—
- JUDITH:** I said good night. *(EXITS RIGHT.)*
- 20 **PANSY:** Well, that is strange.
- ABIGAIL:** What is, Mother?
- PANSY:** Aunt Judith never saw Grandfather's body after he died. It's almost as if something happened to it—something that someone wanted to hide.
- 25 **ABIGAIL:** Like what?
- PANSY:** Well, like an unhealthy dose of cyanide in his bloodstream. Or bruises on his neck from strangulation.
- ABIGAIL:** You think Grandfather was murdered?
- PANSY:** Possibly. What I don't understand is why it's taking so long to receive the coroner's report.
- 30 **ABIGAIL:** Maybe it was received, and someone destroyed it.
- PANSY:** Ooh. Good thinking. Let's see if we can find any remnants of it in the trash.
- ABIGAIL:** Or ashes in the fireplace?
- 35 **PANSY:** You know, you're going to make a good detective someday.
- ABIGAIL:** What do you mean someday? *(Follows PANSY OFF RIGHT.)*
- GERALD:** *(ENTERS LEFT.)* All right then. What is the third most likely room for the treasure? Could Father have hidden it in the bathroom? He did spend an inordinate amount of time in there. *(EXITS RIGHT.)*

1 **WESLEY:** (*ENTERS UPSTAGE with a sword. He practices feinting and lunging throughout.*) “But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the dawn.”

DEVON: (*ENTERS UPSTAGE.*) The word is “sun,” not “dawn.” “It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.”

5 **WESLEY:** You quote Shakespeare the way you like, and I’ll quote Shakespeare the way I like.

DEVON: No, you’ll quote Shakespeare the way he likes. You can’t just change his words like that.

10 **WESLEY:** He’s been dead 400 years. How is he going to stop me?

CAITLYN: (*ENTERS UPSTAGE.*) Did you find something?

WESLEY: Indeed. This home will make the ideal venue for our world premiere of *Romeo and Juliet, Part Two: Teen Zombies in Love*.

CAITLYN: I have to admit, this place is much better than that drafty old barn we were using.

15 **DEVON:** Well, sure, but what about the people who live here? They may have something to say about us using their space.

WESLEY: My dear Devon, as leader of our happy troupe, you of all people should know the cardinal rule of the theater.

20 **DEVON:** Turn off your cell phones and pagers?

WESLEY: No! “The show must go on.” Surely, we can persuade the owners to lend us their house for the night.

DEVON: What’s the point? We don’t have an audience anymore.

CAITLYN: Yeah, they all ran when rain came pouring through the roof.

25 **DEVON:** They didn’t all run. Some of them swam.

WESLEY: Fellow thespians, concern ourselves not with such trivial matters as an audience. The sofa and chairs can be our audience.

CAITLYN: They’ll give us the same response as our previous audience.

FLORENCE: (*ENTERS UPSTAGE carrying a box of stage props. Looks around.*) Oh, this is wonderful.

30 **WESLEY:** (*To DEVON.*) See?

FLORENCE: We could knock down that entire west wall. Put up stadium seating. Maybe add a rotating stage.

DEVON: We are not making any changes to this place. We don’t even own it!

35 **FLORENCE:** So? We can put it all back when we’re done. The owners will never notice.

CAITLYN: Well, director? What do you propose we do?

DEVON: I don’t know, but we’ve got to scrape up some money—and fast. We can’t afford another canceled performance.

40

1 **BILLY:** (*ENTERS UPSTAGE with MOM and DAD.*) We'll never find him. I just know it.

DAD: Don't lose hope, son. We're sure to find him if we just keep looking.

MOM: He ran away only a short time ago. He couldn't have gone far.

5 **FLORENCE:** Can we help you, little boy?

BILLY: Yes, ma'am. Sir Barks-A-Lot ran off in the storm. We've looked everywhere. And, gee whiz, we just can't find him.

CAITLYN: Have you tried looking in the 1950s?

FLORENCE: Be nice, would you?

10 **DAD:** Please, folks, you must help us. Sir Barks-A-Lot means everything to our family.

MOM: We don't know what we'd do if he were gone for good!

BILLY: Oh, gosh. He's just the goodest, most bestest boy ever!

DEVON: Well, see, the problem is we're busy right now. We just don't

15 have time to help you look.

DAD: We'll pay a handsome reward.

DEVON: (*Pushes past the OTHERS.*) What breed did you say he was?

BILLY: He's a Mexican Redleg.

FLORENCE: Huh. I've never heard of that breed before.

20 **DAD:** They're quite rare.

FLORENCE: How big was he?

MOM: I'd say he was pretty large. Wouldn't you, honey?

DAD: Oh, yes. For his size, he was extremely large.

MOM: He has long skinny legs.

25 **BILLY:** And the fluffiest black fur you ever did see.

DEVON: When you say large, do you mean like Wesley over here or more like Caitlyn?

CAITLYN: (*Pulls DEVON aside.*) What are you doing?

DEVON: I'm doing what directors do. I'm casting our next production.

30 (*Spreads her hands as if reading a marquee.*) Caitlyn Summers in *Long Lost Dog!*

CAITLYN: Are you crazy? Nobody would believe I was a dog!

DEVON: (*Shakes her head.*) Caitlyn, Caitlyn, Caitlyn. The essence of performing a role well is to lose yourself in the character. Believe

35 you're a dog and everyone else will believe you're a dog, too.

WESLEY: Indeed. I was the title role in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Critics called my performance "very loud and oddly alarming."

DEVON: That's not helping.

FLORENCE: Come on, Caitlyn! We have to do something to get

40 that reward!

1 **CAITLYN:** But I don't even look like a dog!

FLORENCE: Oh, a little makeup can do wonders. A little fur here, a blackened nose there and—believe me—you're a dog.

BILLY: Please, can't you help us find Sir Barks-A-Lot? (*BILLY suddenly has something black, red, and hairy attached to his knee. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.]*)

5 **DEVON:** I'm sure we can throw something together. (*CAITLYN screams.*)

FLORENCE: Heaven's sake, Caitlyn. You nearly gave me a coronary.

WESLEY: What could possibly justify such an emotive reaction?

10 **CAITLYN:** (*Points.*) That boy has a giant spider on his leg!

BILLY: What?

CAITLYN: Right there, near your knee. Oh, it's horrible! Just horrible!

DAD: Look, son! He was on your pant leg this whole time.

BILLY: (*Picks up the tarantula and pets him gently.*) Oh, Sir Barks-A-Lot!

15 You naughty boy!

FLORENCE: Wait. Sir Barks-A-Lot is a tarantula?

MOM: Yes, of course. What did you think he was?

FLORENCE: Call me crazy, but I thought he was, you know, a dog.

MOM: Boy, that's dumb.

20 **BILLY:** How could he be a dog? (*Holds fingers up.*) He's only this big.

FLORENCE: Yeah, we get that.

DAD: Uh-oh. Looks like you lost him again, son.

BILLY: Where'd he go? (*THESPIANS except DEVON scream and run OFF LEFT.*)

25 **DAD:** (*Calls OFF LEFT.*) It's all right! He's not that venomous!

BILLY: (*Calls OFF LEFT.*) Just don't do anything to make him mad!

MOM: (*Looks around and gestures LEFT.*) Maybe he went this way? (*EXITS LEFT with DAD and BILLY.*)

DEVON: (*Calls OFF LEFT.*) Can we still get the reward? (*EXITS LEFT as PANSY and ABIGAIL ENTER RIGHT.*)

30 **ABIGAIL:** Well, that was a waste of time.

PANSY: Not necessarily. At least now we know the coroner's report isn't in Grandfather's bedroom or library.

ABIGAIL: Any other ideas where it might be?

35 **PANSY:** Well, we could look in the trash bin behind the house.

GRANDMAMA: (*ENTERS RIGHT. Confused.*) Ronnie, is that you?

PANSY: Grandmama! What are you doing up?

GRANDMAMA: I'm looking for Ronnie. Have you seen him?

ABIGAIL: Who's Ronnie?

1 **PANSY:** That was Grandmama’s nickname for your Grandfather. It’s short for Byron.

ABIGAIL: Doesn’t she know he’s—

PANSY: Shhh!

5 **GRANDMAMA:** I haven’t seen him in such a long time.

PANSY: I’m sorry, Grandmama, but Ronnie isn’t here right now.

GRANDMAMA: It was that woman, wasn’t it? She took him away.

PANSY: Woman? What woman?

GRANDMAMA: I banged and banged on the door. I knew he was in
10 there, but she wouldn’t let me talk to him.

ABIGAIL: Grandmama! What woman?

GRANDMAMA: And then she took her briefcase and left.

PANSY: Briefcase!

ABIGAIL: She must be talking about that lawyer lady!

15 **PANSY:** Grandmama, do you mean Lorraine? Was Lorraine in the study with Father?

GRANDMAMA: (Sobs.) Oh, I’ll never see him again! I just know I’ll never see him again!

ABIGAIL: Gosh! Grandmama sounds really upset.

20 **PANSY:** Poor dear. We ought to get her to bed. Here, you take one arm and I’ll take the other. (*PANSY and ABIGAIL guide GRANDMAMA RIGHT.*)

GRANDMAMA: Oh, Ronnie! Dear Ronnie! Where have you gone?

PANSY: It’s all right, Grandmama. You’ll feel better after a good
25 night’s sleep. I hope. (*PANSY and ABIGAIL lead GRANDMAMA OFF RIGHT as GHOST HUNTERS ENTER LEFT. IAN and MYRTLE have the meters now.*)

IAN: I don’t get it. Our meters keep bringing us back to this room.

MYRTLE: I guess somebody must have died in here.

30 **NORAH:** If you don’t give me back that meter, Myrtle, “somebody” is going to be you! (*NORAH and MYRTLE struggle over the meter. NEWS TEAM ENTERS LEFT. ALEX points the camera at KATIE.*)

KATIE: (*To the camera.*) This mansion, once a bastion of despair, is now a symbol of hope as many wayward travelers find sanctuary
35 within its walls. (*FAMILY ENTERS LEFT searching the floor.*)

BILLY: Do you see him, Dad?

DAD: Not yet, son.

MOM: Oh, I do hope nobody steps on him!

LORRAINE: (*ENTERS UPSTAGE. Screams.*) What are you all doing in
40 this house?

1 **KATIE:** *(To the camera.)* In a surprising development, yet another mysterious figure arrives to lay claim to the estate.

LORRAINE: Get out, all of you! This is private property!

KATIE: *(To the camera.)* Like a modern-day Scrooge, this woman is
5 completely oblivious to the plight of the unfortunate souls who've found refuge in her home—

LORRAINE: Oh, do shut up!

PANSY: *(ENTERS RIGHT with ABIGAIL.)* Lorraine! So it's true what they say. The criminal always returns to the scene of the crime. *(JUDITH
10 ENTERS RIGHT. Seeing PANSY and LORRAINE, she stops to listen.)*

LORRAINE: Criminal? Scene of the crime? Really, Pansy, I have no idea what you're talking about.

PANSY: Haven't you? Well then, perhaps you'd like to explain why my father requested a coroner to investigate his death days before
15 he died. Why the coroner's report has been delayed, maybe even destroyed. And why you were the only person to see the body. *(GERALD ENTERS RIGHT. He stops to listen.)*

LORRAINE: Wait a minute. Are you accusing me of murder?

PANSY: Me? Not at all. It's the facts of the case that accuse you.

20 **LORRAINE:** Well, I've got a perfect alibi. I was in Chicago with Gerald when your father died. *(RUSSELL ENTERS LEFT, eating popcorn from a bag. He stops to listen.)*

PANSY: What?

GERALD: It's true, Pansy. We were negotiating a new contract with
25 Father's publisher.

PANSY: But— but— *(HOBSON ENTERS RIGHT. GERALD signals for him to bring a glass of water. HOBSON EXITS RIGHT.)*

LORRAINE: What about you, Pansy? Where's your alibi?

PANSY: Me? Why, I was in New York the night Father died.

30 **LORRAINE:** Can you prove that?

ABIGAIL: I can. She took me to the Metropolitan Opera that night. I still have the tickets.

LORRAINE: I don't know. Maybe the two of you snuck out of the opera early, traveled here incognito, climbed in through an open window,
35 and strangled Byron in his sleep.

RUSSELL: You do have unusually strong hands, Pansy.

PANSY: Well, what about you, Russell? You had the most to gain from Father's death.

RUSSELL: I'm warning you, Pansy. Don't go there.

40 **PANSY:** Why not? Let's face it. You've never been able to support yourself. You needed Father's money just to survive.

1 **GERALD:** Russell did seem unusually eager to read Father's will.
RUSSELL: I wouldn't talk, Gerald.
GERALD: Just what do you mean by that?
RUSSELL: Oh, come on. It's obvious you're the most likely culprit. You
5 knew Father was going to go public about your embezzling and you
did away with him before he could have you arrested.
GERALD: That's a lie, I tell you! A bald-faced lie!
JUDITH: I don't know, Gerald. I'd believe Father before I'd believe you.
GERALD: What about you, Judith?
10 **JUDITH:** What about me?
GERALD: Well, the culprit is always the one you least suspect, and
that would be you!
JUDITH: Ah, but you're forgetting someone even less likely than me.
GERALD: And who might that be? (*HOBSON ENTERS RIGHT*
15 *carrying a glass of water on a tray. PEMBROKES whirl around*
and point to him.)
PEMBROKES: The butler!
HOBSON: (*Raises his hands, causing the tray to go flying.*) It wasn't me!
LORRAINE: I knew this would happen. I knew you'd all start attacking
20 each other like the cold-blooded vipers you are.
JUDITH: You're right, Lorraine. We're behaving dreadfully.
GERALD: Worse than dreadfully. We're behaving like children.
ABIGAIL: Hey!
PANSY: Oh, I wish Father had never started this finders-keepers game
25 with 84 million dollars hidden in this house!
DREW: He hid what now?
DAD: Eighty-four million dollars?
IAN: In this house?
BILLY: Finders keepers?
30 **MOM:** Wahoo!
MYRTLE: I'm going to find it first!
NORAH: Oh, no, you're not! I am! (*INTRUDERS run around and grab*
items at random. ALEX points the camera at KATIE.)
KATIE: (*To the camera.*) It's a madhouse here at Pembroke Mansion as
35 the refugees have been given the chance of a lifetime, the chance
to uncover a treasure worth 84 million— Wait a minute! What am
I doing? That treasure is mine! (*KATIE and ALEX join in the search.*)
RUSSELL: (*To PANSY.*) You had to open your big mouth.
PANSY: Sorry. (*BLACKOUT. CURTAIN.*)

End of Scene One

Scene Two

1 CURTAIN UP: The Pembroke mansion living room, now in shambles, later that evening. Art pieces and knickknacks are knocked over or scattered about. Furniture and shelves are overturned. Paintings are tilted, except the one of the deer. ABIGAIL sits on the sofa with
5 RUSSELL, who slouches. GERALD rights the overturned armchair and sits in it. PANSY is at the desk. JUDITH paces anxiously between them. They look depressed. (NOTE: Throughout the remainder of the play, INTRUDERS from Scene One other than the BURGLARS pass through carrying off items from the rest of the house, such as books, jewelry
10 boxes, and/or paintings.)

GERALD: The police are certainly taking a long time to get here.

JUDITH: They can't help everyone, Gerald. I'm sure they have plenty to do already with the storm.

GERALD: But these people are robbing us blind! And right under our
15 noses! (*An INTRUDER snatches an item from the end table between RUSSELL and GERALD and scurries OFF with it.*)

RUSSELL: Some of them are even robbing us above our noses.

JUDITH: Well, perhaps the police would be more responsive if you
20 hadn't called them every time you thought someone was breaking into the house.

GERALD: You have to admit those girls were acting very suspiciously. They came right up to our front door!

JUDITH: Those girls were Girl Scouts. They were selling cookies!

GERALD: Well, I'm sick of sitting around. If the police won't come,
25 then it's up to us to get rid of these intruders! One of them is bound to find the treasure before we do!

RUSSELL: All right. Go ahead. Get rid of them.

GERALD: Fine. I will. (*BILLY ENTERS LEFT with a small statue. GERALD stands.*) I say there. You, boy.

30 **BILLY:** Who? Me, sir?

GERALD: Yes, you. What are you carrying off there? Don't you know that's private property?

BILLY: Well, sure, but it could be worth 84 million dollars.

GERALD: But that's our 84 million dollars!

35 **BILLY:** Not if I find it first! (*Blows a raspberry and ducks OFF RIGHT.*)

GERALD: (*Calls OFF.*) That attitude will get you nowhere, young man!

RUSSELL: See? (*GERALD sits, defeated.*)

JUDITH: You've been surprisingly mum during this discussion, Pansy. Don't you have anything to say?

1 **PANSY:** (*Deep in thought.*) No, not really.
MORALES: (*ENTERS UPSTAGE with KOWALSKI. MORALES has a pair of handcuffs attached to his belt.*) Did someone here call the police?

GERALD: (*Doesn't look up.*) Yes, but don't worry. Those worthless
5 bums will never show up.
KOWALSKI: Hey, boss, I think he's calling us bums.
MORALES: I think you're right, Kowalski. And remember, I'm your partner, not your boss.
JUDITH: (*Clears her throat.*) Gerald... (*Gestures toward the OFFICERS.*)

10 **GERALD:** (*Sees the OFFICERS and leaps to his feet.*) Oh, I am so sorry, officers! I didn't mean you, of course. I meant those other bums. The ones that didn't come.
MORALES: Maybe you should just sit down.
GERALD: Good idea. (*Sits.*)

15 **MORALES:** I'm Officer Morales.
KOWALSKI: And he's Officer Kowalski. (*ALL look at him, confused.*) I mean, I'm Officer Kowalski.
MORALES: I understand there's been a break-in here.
RUSSELL: You could call it that.

20 **MORALES:** (*Surveys the room.*) What was your first clue someone had broken in? Were there any signs of forced entry? Or unusual footprints in the yard?
KOWALSKI: (*To MORALES.*) Ooh! Ooh! I'll bet it was Bigfoot! What do you think, boss? Huh? What do you think?

25 **MORALES:** I think you talk too much, Kowalski. And I'm still your partner, not your boss.
RUSSELL: Actually, the first clue we were broken into was the random horde of strangers occupying our house.
MORALES: And how many people would you estimate that to be?

30 **RUSSELL:** Let's see... (*Counts INTRUDERS he can see.*) One, two, three— Hey, stop moving around! You're making it hard to count.
MORALES: Wait, you mean some of the intruders are still here?
RUSSELL: No, I mean all of the intruders are still here.
KOWALSKI: (*Looks around.*) Oh. We thought you were having a party.

35 A really bad party.
RUSSELL: Even a bad party would be more fun than this.
MORALES: Have you tried to get rid of them?
RUSSELL: Oh, we've tried, Officer. Believe me, we've tried.
MORALES: Well, why didn't they leave?

- 1 **RUSSELL:** I don't know. Maybe because our father hid an object worth 84 million dollars in the house, and they all hope to find it first.
- KOWALSKI:** Did you say 84 million dollars?
- JUDITH:** Yes. It's the entire fortune left by our father.
- 5 **GERALD:** The old fool decided to make a game of it. Rather demented, if you ask me.
- KOWALSKI:** Interesting. Very interesting.
- MORALES:** And what did you say this object looks like?
- RUSSELL:** We didn't, actually.
- 10 **JUDITH:** It could be anything.
- GERALD:** A diamond ring, perhaps. Or a very rare book.
- MORALES:** You ever seen anything like this, Kowalski?
- KOWALSKI:** Well, there was that one episode of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*—
- MORALES:** I meant in real life.
- 15 **KOWALSKI:** Then no.
- MORALES:** (*To OTHERS.*) I think we're going to have to investigate.
- JUDITH:** What do you mean, investigate?
- MORALES:** You know, dust for fingerprints. Maybe collect some DNA samples.
- 20 **KOWALSKI:** (*To MORALES.*) Ooh! Can we do a suspect lineup? I just love guessing games.
- MORALES:** What did I tell you about talking too much?
- KOWALSKI:** Sorry, boss.
- MORALES:** I'm not your boss!
- 25 **JUDITH:** You're going to look for the treasure, aren't you?
- MORALES:** What? No! Not at all! That's private property. Of course, if we happened to stumble across it, we'd have to take it in.
- KOWALSKI:** For evidence, of course.
- GERALD:** (*Gestures.*) Aren't you going to arrest these people?
- 30 **MORALES:** Well, yeah, I mean we could do that. But then the question becomes what to do with them? We only have room in the car for a couple of perps.
- KOWALSKI:** And besides, we've only got one pair of handcuffs.
- MORALES:** (*Holds up the handcuffs and gestures to KOWALSKI.*) That's because he lost the other pair.
- 35 **KOWALSKI:** Can I help it if that lousy magician made them disappear?
- JUDITH:** Oh, for heaven's sake! Can't you call for backup?
- MORALES:** What?! And have some other cops find the treasure— I mean evidence? That wouldn't be... professional.

- 1 **KOWALSKI:** Yeah. We've got to be professional.
- MORALES:** (*Points OFF RIGHT.*) Hey, Kowalski. I think I see some evidence right over there.
- KOWALSKI:** Does it look like it's worth 84 million dollars, partner?
- 5 **MORALES:** I don't know yet. Let's take a look. And I'm not your partner anymore. I'm your boss. (*OFFICERS EXIT RIGHT.*)
- GERALD:** I was wrong. This isn't the worst thing to happen to our family since that exposé in *The New Yorker*. It's a hundred times worse.
- 10 **PANSY:** Do you really believe that, Gerald?
- GERALD:** Oh, yes. Father's little game has destroyed any hope of comfort or prosperity for the Pembrokes. The exposé merely destroyed our reputations. Why do you ask?
- PANSY:** Because I wrote that exposé. (*OTHER PEMBROKES react.*)
- 15 **GERALD:** What?!
- JUDITH:** You mean you're not some bubble-headed socialite?
- PANSY:** Oh, no. That is just a role I play, a character I created in order to get access to high society. I'm actually an investigative reporter. I've been one for twelve years.
- 20 **ABIGAIL:** And I'm going to be one, too!
- GERALD:** This is abominable!
- JUDITH:** This is contemptible!
- RUSSELL:** This is hilarious!
- JUDITH:** Why would you do this to us?
- 25 **PANSY:** I didn't do anything to you. I simply reported the truth.
- GERALD:** That's not the point, Pansy. You made us look like greedy, money-grubbing monsters.
- PANSY:** Well, aren't you?
- GERALD:** No, not all the time.
- 30 **RUSSELL:** Just on days that end in Y.
- PANSY:** Well, maybe it was a good thing. Maybe you needed to see yourself the way others see you.
- GERALD:** You mean the way you see us.
- PANSY:** And Father. He saw you that way, too.
- 35 **JUDITH:** Yes, well, Father became rather prickly in his later years. Don't believe everything he said.
- PANSY:** Earlier you said you'd believe Father before you'd believe us.
- JUDITH:** Well, don't believe everything I said either.
- PANSY:** Look, all I've ever really wanted was to be accepted by my
- 40 family. I've always been the black sheep just because I ventured

1 out into the world and followed my own path. Nobody ever accepted me for me. Not even Father.

GERALD: This was a horrible way to do it.

PANSY: I see that now, and I'm sorry.

5 **JUDITH:** Yes, well, a half-hearted apology this late in the game won't make any difference.

PANSY: No, but something else might. I can help you find the treasure. (*LORRAINE sneaks ON LEFT, unseen, and eavesdrops.*)

JUDITH: We've been scouring the house for hours and we're no closer
10 to finding the treasure than we were when Lorraine read the will.

PANSY: Oh, but we haven't yet begun to search.

GERALD: What do you mean?

JUDITH: Yes, Pansy. What do you know that we don't know?

PANSY: Just this—Lorraine left out an important part of the will.

15 **GERALD:** Don't be ridiculous! She read the entire document.

PANSY: Did she though?

JUDITH: If you think of any of us are going to fall for this ploy—

PANSY: I have the proof right here. (*Pulls the will from her pocket.*)

LORRAINE: (*Reveals herself.*) What is that?

20 **JUDITH:** Is that the will?

PANSY: See for yourself. (*PEMBROKES and LORRAINE rush to PANSY and ALL grab for the will. GERALD finally gets it.*)

GERALD: Got it!

LORRAINE: Give that here! You're not allowed to read the will until
25 after probate!

GERALD: Sue me. (*Beat.*) Wait. Maybe that's not the smartest thing to say to a lawyer.

JUDITH: (*Grabs the will from GERALD and examines it.*) Pansy's right. There's something at the bottom of the will.

30 **RUSSELL:** (*Grabs the will from JUDITH.*) It's a verse.

ABIGAIL: More like a riddle. It tells us how to find the treasure.

GERALD: (*To PANSY.*) You kept this a secret from us?

PANSY: Yes. And I'm sorry.

JUDITH: You know, we have every right to be angry with you for this.

35 **PANSY:** That's fine. You can be angry later. But right now, we need to figure out the riddle so we can find the treasure first.

GERALD: Go ahead, Russell. Read it.

LORRAINE: (*Reaches in vain for the will.*) No! I'm warning you!

- 1 **RUSSELL:** (*Reads.*) “This treasure does not shine like jewels,
Nor does it gleam like gold.
But if you wish to find it true,
A cold hart you must hold.”
- 5 **ABIGAIL:** Oh, and he misspelled “heart.”
RUSSELL: You’re right. He spelled it H-A-R-T.
GERALD: It’s not like Father to misspell words.
JUDITH: Don’t you see? He didn’t misspell “heart” at all. He spelled
H-A-R-T, as in a male red deer.
- 10 **RUSSELL:** How in the world do you know that?
JUDITH: Because I read, Russell. I read books.
RUSSELL: I’ve heard of those.
GERALD: Well then, what does the verse mean by a “cold hart?”
RUSSELL: That could mean a deer in the winter, like in a snowy woods.
- 15 **JUDITH:** All right. So what does that refer to?
GERALD: (*Points at the deer painting on the UPSTAGE wall.*) The
painting! It shows a red deer in the snow!
JUDITH: That’s it! The treasure isn’t gold or jewels. It’s a painting! An
84-million-dollar painting!
- 20 **RUSSELL:** Really?! I should have learned to paint!
JUDITH: Get it down, Russell!
GERALD: But be careful! We don’t want to damage it! (*RUSSELL
takes down the painting just as WESLEY chases HOBSON ON LEFT.
WESLEY brandishes his sword.*)
- 25 **WESLEY:** Loosen your tongue, Tybalt! Where is this treasure they
speak of?
HOBSON: I’ve no idea! And my name isn’t Tybalt, it’s Hobson! (*Ducks
behind the sofa as WESLEY feints left and right, trying to stab him.*)
WESLEY: “What’s in a name? A rose by any other name would
smell as strong!”
- 30 **HOBSON:** It’s “sweet”! Not “strong”! “Sweet”!
WESLEY: Would everyone stop correcting me! (*Runs around the end of
the sofa. HOBSON screams and grabs the painting from RUSSELL
to shield himself. WESLEY lunges at HOBSON, piercing the painting
with his sword and slicing it down the middle.*) Oops.
- 35 **RUSSELL:** Oops?!
JUDITH: Oops?!
GERALD: I’ll give you “oops”! (*Picks up a knickknack and hurls it at
WESLEY, who screams and runs OFF UPSTAGE as GERALD chases
him. Slowly, sadly, GERALD returns to OTHERS.*)
- 40

1 **JUDITH:** The painting is ruined!
RUSSELL: Eighty-four million dollars down the drain.
GERALD: Oh, Hobson. How could you be so careless?
HOBSON: Do you mean to say that the painting is the treasure?

5 **GERALD:** Yes. Or at least it was the treasure.
RUSSELL: It's completely worthless now.
ABIGAIL: Maybe not.
PANSY: What do you mean, Abby?
ABIGAIL: The verse said "a cold hart you must hold."

10 **JUDITH:** Yes. So?
ABIGAIL: So the treasure isn't the painting. (*Grabs the painting, searches the frame, and reaches inside. She pulls out a folded stock certificate.*) It's inside the painting.
JUDITH: What is that?

15 **RUSSELL:** Let me see! (*Grabs the stock certificate and unfolds it.*) It's a stock certificate. For two million shares!
GERALD: (*Looks at the certificate.*) Worth 84 million dollars, all right.
JUDITH: We should have known it would be stock! Father was too level-headed to invest his entire fortune in something as easy to destroy as a painting.

20 **LORRAINE:** Well, you did it, Abigail. You found the treasure.
ABIGAIL: No. We all found the treasure. My mother first discovered the verse. Aunt Judith knew that "hart" referred to a male deer. Uncle Russell realized the cold meant snow. Uncle Gerald noticed that both of those were in the painting. And I figured out the rest.

25 **PANSY:** What are you saying, Abby?
ABIGAIL: I think Grandfather wanted it this way. He didn't want one of us to find the treasure. He wanted us to work through our differences so we could find it together. And that's why he bought exactly two million shares of stock. So that we could split it equally among us.

30 **RUSSELL:** Well, I have to admit, five hundred thousand shares will be a nice little nest egg.
ABIGAIL: Four hundred thousand, you mean.

35 **RUSSELL:** Huh?
ABIGAIL: Well, Mother and I both played a part, so we each get an equal share.
JUDITH: Come on, Russell. You've got to admit it's only fair.
RUSSELL: (*To ABIGAIL.*) You're a manipulative little girl, you know that?

40 **ABIGAIL:** I try.

1 **RUSSELL:** I like it!

KATIE: (*ENTERS RIGHT with NEWS TEAM, holding the mic. DREW brushes makeup on KATIE'S face. ALEX points the camera at KATIE, who waves DREW away. To the camera.*) And so it's a happy ending

5 here at Pembroke Mansion, as the once dysfunctional family—

PEMBROKES: (*Loudly and with authority.*) Go away!

KATIE: You know... I think we'll wrap this up back at the studio. (*NEWS TEAM EXITS UPSTAGE.*)

PANSY: Well, that takes care of one mystery. But we've still got an

10 even bigger mystery to solve.

RUSSELL: What's that?

PANSY: Father's death. Lorraine was the only person to see his body after he died. And we still haven't received the coroner's report.

LORRAINE: There's actually a very good reason for that.

15 **PANSY:** Aha! So you did kill him!

LORRAINE: No. Not at all.

PANSY: Then who did?

BYRON: (*ENTERS UPSTAGE.*) Nobody.

GERALD/JUDITH: Father!

20 **RUSSELL:** Old man!

HOBSON: Mr. Pembroke! (*GERALD, JUDITH, RUSSELL, ABIGAIL, and HOBSON rush to greet BYRON as PANSY remains an uneasy distance away.*)

BYRON: (*After greeting his family.*) Pansy, aren't you happy to see me?

25 **PANSY:** Of course, Father. But it's been so long. Last time we talked—

BYRON: We shared some harsh words.

PANSY: Yes.

BYRON: That's one of the nice things about dying. All of the things in your previous life seem so... trivial.

30 **PANSY:** You're not angry?

BYRON: You're my daughter. I could never be angry at you. At least not for long.

PANSY: Oh, Daddy. (*Rushes to BYRON and they hug.*)

RUSSELL: Wait a minute. So you were never actually dead?

35 **BYRON:** No, son. I faked it.

RUSSELL: But why?

BYRON: Isn't it obvious? To bring you all together. To make you realize how much you need each other. To make you a family again.

JUDITH: Were you in on this, Lorraine?

1 **LORRAINE:** Of course! Your father needed someone to “find” the body
and have it taken away. And he needed someone to order a fake
coroner’s report to make the death look official. Unfortunately, that
got delayed a few days. Then he needed someone to plan the
5 funeral—closed casket, of course. Who better than his trusted
friend and advisor?

BYRON: I just never dreamed you’d find the treasure so quickly.

RUSSELL: Well, we would have found it sooner if Lorraine had read
the riddle to all of us.

10 **LORRAINE:** Blame your father. He wanted to see if one of you would
keep the information to yourself. As a test.

PANSY: And I failed it.

JUDITH: You told us eventually. That’s what matters.

GERALD: (*To BYRON.*) But how did you know we needed each other?

15 How could you be sure one of us wouldn’t figure it out on our own?

BYRON: I couldn’t. Not for sure. But I always knew you had different
strengths, different abilities. Pansy is inquisitive, so she was
the most likely to find the verse in the first place. Judith knows
words. Russell thinks outside the box. And you, Gerald, are very
20 observant. I just needed to set up a riddle that would require all
of those strengths. What I didn’t expect was that it would take
someone with a firm grasp of logic to tie it all together. (*Looks
fondly to ABIGAIL.*)

ABIGAIL: What can I say? It was a piece of cake.

25 **JUDITH:** But, Father, what you wrote in the will... hurt us deeply.

BYRON: Please forgive an old novelist for one last piece of fiction.

GERALD: See! I told you I wasn’t an embezzler!

JUDITH: So you didn’t mean what you wrote?

BYRON: Well... there may have been a grain of truth in some of it. But
30 you’re my children. I’m proud of each of you.

PANSY: Even me, Father?

BYRON: Especially you.

RUSSELL: (*Teases.*) Pansy? Oh, please. What has she ever done to
be proud of?

35 **BYRON:** Come on! Investigative reporter? Defender of truth? Warrior
for justice? Her words have had a bigger impact on the world than
my silly tales.

PANSY: But I kept my career a secret. How did you find out?

BYRON: You’re my daughter. I’d know your writing anywhere.

40 **PANSY:** Then why didn’t you say something?

- 1 **BYRON:** Why didn't you? You were the one hiding the secret, not me.
PANSY: Well, I suppose I was afraid you'd disown me after I wrote that exposé.
- BYRON:** That little thing? I get harsher reviews from book critics.
- 5 **JUDITH:** Well, you certainly outwitted us all. But I'm glad you're alive.
RUSSELL: Hear, hear!
GERALD: Yes, indeed.
ABIGAIL: Oh, gosh! Someone needs to tell the news to Grandmama!
BYRON: Don't worry. She already knows.
- 10 **GRANDMAMA:** (*ENTERS RIGHT.*) Fooled you, didn't we?
RUSSELL: Well, I'll be hornswoggled!
GRANDMAMA: You didn't know I used to be an actress, did you?
RUSSELL: We knew that. We just didn't know you were still lucid.
GRANDMAMA: Listen, little boy, my mind is sharper than yours
- 15 will ever be!
RUSSELL: That's the Grandmama I remember! (*ALL laugh.*)
GERALD: Well, I suppose this calls for a celebration!
HARRIET: (*ENTERS with GEORGE. They still hold their novels.*) Does this mean the treasure's been found?
- 20 **ABIGAIL:** Yes. We all found it.
HARRIET: Oh, well, that is disappointing.
GEORGE: It is beyond disappointing, it is the quintessence of catastrophe!
JUDITH: Aren't you happy? Your favorite author is alive!
HARRIET: (*Looks around.*) He is? Where?
- 25 **JUDITH:** Right here. (*Indicates BYRON.*)
HARRIET: Oh, no! You can't fool us. Byron Pembroke is a much younger man!
GEORGE: See? (*They hold up the back covers of their novels.*)
BYRON: (*Laughs.*) How old are those books? (*HARRIET and GEORGE*
- 30 *shrug and EXIT UPSTAGE. GHOST HUNTERS ENTER RIGHT. This time, NORAH and MYRTLE are holding the meters.*)
IAN: Wait. So you're alive?
BYRON: I am now.
NORAH: But that doesn't make any sense. Earlier, when we were
- 35 scanning the room, we picked up a very high vibrational energy.
MYRTLE: And the ghost, he even told us he was murdered.
BYRON: You mean Josiah?
MYRTLE: Josiah?

1 **BYRON:** Yes. Josiah Madde [*pronounced “mad”*], M-A-D-D-E. He’s the man who built this house. In 1794.

NORAH: (*Looks at her meter, then at IAN.*) Seventeen ninety-four! Didn’t you calibrate the frequency of the meters so we’d know how old the ghost was?

5 **IAN:** I couldn’t. That dial was on the fritz!

NORAH: I think you’re on the fritz!

BYRON: Who are all these people?

HOBSON: Shall I get rid of them, sir?

10 **BYRON:** Don’t bother. I’m going back to the hotel, flooded or not. This really truly is a “Madde” house! (*EXITS UPSTAGE and we hear the door slam behind him. BLACKOUT.*)

END OF PLAY

PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES ONSTAGE

Desk, desk chair, armchair, sofa, coffee table, end table, two console tables, floor lamp, knickknacks, art pieces, handbell, framed paintings, framed deer painting (with document inside).

PROPERTIES BROUGHT ON

SCENE ONE

Briefcase, will (LORRAINE)
Suitcase, umbrella, flashlight (PANSY)
Suitcase, flashlight (ABIGAIL)
Tray, glass of water, aspirin (HOBSON)
Box of cereal, sandwich, popcorn (RUSSELL)
Novel (HARRIET, GEORGE)
Handheld electronic meters (NORAH, IAN)
Cloth sack (SNAKE, JOEY)
Phone (JOEY)
Microphone (KATIE)
Video camera (ALEX)
Makeup kit, makeup brush (DREW)
Sword (WESLEY)
Box of stage props (FLORENCE)
Tarantula (BILLY)

SCENE TWO

Small statue (BILLY)
Pair of handcuffs (MORALES)
Will (PANSY)
Sword (WESLEY)
Microphone (KATIE)
Video camera (ALEX)
Makeup kit, makeup brush (DREW)
Handheld electronic meters (NORAH, MYRTLE)
Novel (HARRIET, GEORGE)

SOUND EFFECTS

Doorbell, door slamming

COSTUMES

Most CHARACTERS dress in casual, contemporary clothing.

PEMBROKES are dressed a little finer, perhaps in suits or sport jackets, pantsuits, or dresses.

HOBSON wears a black dress coat with tails, vest, and a tie.

BURGLARS are dressed in black sweatshirts and knit caps.

WESLEY and CAITLYN dress as Shakespearean characters. WESLEY wears tunic and tights. CAITLYN wears a Renaissance dress and headpiece.

LORRAINE, KATIE, and POLICE OFFICERS dress accordingly for their respective roles.

FLEXIBLE CASTING AND CAST SIZE

NORAH, IAN, MYRTLE, DREW, ALEX, DEVON, FLORENCE, MORALES and KOWALSKI can be played by any gender with simple pronoun changes.

For a smaller cast, BURGLARS can double as OFFICERS. DAD can double as BYRON.

ABOUT SIR BARKS-A-LOT

BILLY'S tarantula, Sir Barks-A-Lot, remains unseen by the AUDIENCE until its reveal. This can be achieved with some sleight-of-hand and perhaps some Velcro to help the black and red tarantula (five to six inches in diameter!) stick to BILLY'S pant leg. Sir Barks-A-Lot's later disappearance will require more sleight-of-hand by the actor playing BILLY.

PROGRAM NOTE

In the program or other promotional material, you may wish to leave out any mention of the actor playing BYRON PEMBROKE in order to maintain the element of surprise. If including the actor's name, consider referring to the character as MYSTERY GUEST.

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