

Lost in the Bermuda Triangle

a Dinner Theater Farce

by Margo Haas

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Welcome aboard the *Oh, Suzanna* and set sail to beautiful Antigua – if you dare! Join Captain Neil Krunch and his lovely daughter Leisel in this wacky sea adventure where you, the audience, are also the passengers. Problems start when the *Oh, Suzanna* gets trapped in the Bermuda Triangle and attacked by a crew of lost seventeenth-century pirates. Lockjaw Lenny and his motley crew of buccaneers plan to take over Captain Krunch's vessel, but things begin to go awry when Leisel and Lockjaw fall in love, their furtive meetings not unnoticed by the other pirates. Deceit and backbiting are standard fare until Captain Krunch is found murdered – poisoned by someone aboard. Watch for clues and red herrings and then cast your vote before the final act. The murderer finally confesses and the compasses return to normal. But as the guilty goes back in time with the buccaneers, Lockjaw decides to bid his crew adieu and stay on with Leisel. Dinner theater format is optional.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 3 w)

NEIL KRUNCH: Captain of the *Oh, Suzanna*, late 40s.

LEISEL KRUNCH: Captain's daughter and cruise director, early 20s.

HORTENSE BROWN: Passenger and world traveler, late 40s or older.

MATE MALLEY: Krunch's boatswain, voice-over only.*

CAPTAIN LOCKJAW LENNY: Buccaneer, captain of the lost ship *Zanzabar*.

SAL MAGUNDI: Buccaneer, quartermaster of the *Zanzabar*.

TORY STELLAR: Female buccaneer, swordmaster of the *Zanzabar*.

DOC "BLACKHANDS" WILLY: Buccaneer, doctor on the *Zanzabar*.

* An actor can double as Mate Malley's voice since Malley's character is eliminated before the pirates' entrance.

PLACE: Aboard the *Oh, Suzanna*, a small sailing vessel in the Atlantic Ocean, heading for Antigua through the Bermuda Triangle.

TIME: The present. Summer.

PROPS

Awards

Piece of driftwood

Bent tin can

Piece of rubber tire

Piece of twine

Swords, pistols (Pirates)

Candy box with chocolates

Handbag (Hortense. Brown)

PRODUCTION NOTES

For mystery dinner purposes, the restaurant or dining room is a sailing vessel, the *Oh, Suzanna*. Guests are encouraged to come in cruise attire. As they file in, ocean sounds can be heard in the background.

Passengers are greeted at the door by Capt. Krunch and his 21-year-old daughter Leisel, the *Oh, Suzanna*'s social director. Leisel is dressed in Caribbean-style clothing and passes out small maps (on the back of the program) to show the travel course of the *Oh, Suzanna*.

As patrons are seated, Mate Malley, whom we only hear in voice over, will make announcements over the address system. If sight lines permit it, the actor playing Malley can make humorous remarks and barbs to guests as they are seated. (For example: "Will the bald guy at the far table please put on a hat – the reflection is distracting the other passengers. Or, "Gee, lady, we said dress for a cruise, not a rodeo.")

Patrons should be selected ahead of time for both the question segment and the sailing awards ceremony. Ballots for voting can be pre-set on the tables. The actor portraying Hortense will be seated among the guests.

Pronunciation of methyl salicylate: meth-ill sah-lis-i-late.

This script is designed around a three-course meal: salad, main dish and dessert. Salads are in place at the top of Act I; the main dish is served between the first and second acts, with the murder taking place at the end of Act II. Before the third and final act dessert and coffee are served. During this time the cast comes out in character (minus the murder victim, of course). Each *table* is allowed to then ask one question of any character to help facilitate the team's detective work. The character may lie or tell the truth; it is up to the voters to decide among themselves if that character is being truthful.

After the questioning, patrons cast their votes for both the murderer and motive. Ballots are then collected and tallied during Act III. After the play, the one who has correctly guesses the murderer and the motive (or close to the motive) wins. In past productions, restaurant gift certificates have been used as prizes.

ACT I

(AT RISE: The dining room off the galley of Oh, Suzanna. As the guests are seated announcements are being read.)

MATE MALLEY (V.O.): All hands! Your attention please, fellow sailors of the *Oh, Suzanna*. Mate Malley here with a few announcements before dinner.

Mrs. Hanover, your daughter called to say that your canary, Debbie Lynn, was overcome by fumes from the lawn mower running beneath the window. Call home for details.

Those helping crew – and, of course, we do encourage hands-on participation here – remember the sails must be up in order for the boat to move. There seemed to be some debate about this earlier.

Anyone interested in learning rigging knots meet at the galley tomorrow at 1400 hours. But please, only those interested in knots, not macrame, attend. We have, thanks to some of you talented people, plenty of plant hangers for the season.

And now ladies and gents, fledgling sailors of the sea, I present to you our revered leader of the Windwhammer Cruises, Captain Neil Krunch.

(DRUM ROLLS. Enter KRUNCH.)

KRUNCH: Thank you. Look at all those suntans! *(To a PATRON.)* Hey, buddy, more zinc oxide. Your nose looks like shaved ham, right out of the deli case. Yikes. Okay, we're on our fourth day of sailing just having left beautiful Bermuda. How did you like that place? Enough rum for ya? And how about those shorts? Have you ever seen so many men in shorts in your life? All right. We're heading due south to luscious Antigua through the Sargasso Sea and will be arriving there Tuesday morning, assuming Mother Nature cooperates. Any questions?

(A PATRON raises hand.)

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KRUNCH: I see a hand. Yes, ma'am (sir)?

PATRON: Is it true that we'll be going through the Bermuda Triangle?

KRUNCH: The question is, will we be going through the Bermuda Triangle? As a matter of fact, we will be. Good chance to find those missing socks, runaway pets.

PATRON: But isn't that dangerous?

(LEISEL, who has been listening at the door, walks forward.)

LEISEL: I'll answer that.

KRUNCH: Leisel! Our lovely cruise director. Go ahead, sweetheart.

LEISEL: Daddy and I have been running cruises for six years now, going through the Bermuda Triangle dozens of times and we're still here. Even though hundreds and hundreds of boats and planes have disappeared without a trace, bodies sucked violently into the black abyss, squadrons of jets never heard from again, and families tortured by the strange loss of their loved ones, my father does not pay me enough, I mean really doesn't pay me enough to fear such silly paranormal phenomena.

KRUNCH: Ah – thank you, Leisel. Well, before we hear from our distinguished guest, *(Points.)* Mrs. Hortense Brown, I have some special awards to give out. The first one is the "Look and Leap Award" and it goes to Melvin Shockey for that heroic dive last night to retrieve Mrs. Shockey. I guess those pesky pelicans wanted her sandwich as much as – come on up here, Mr. Shockey! *(Selected PATRON comes up.)* Let's get the little lady herself up here – Mrs. S., come on up. *(PATRON comes up. KRUNCH ad libs. Both patrons returns to seats.)* Next is "Most Promising Sailor Award," and it goes to Stephen Cutter for trying to row us in to Bay Harbour with lifeguard poles. The dock workers who caught this on camera have already sent the tape on to CNN. Good work, Steve.

End of Freeview

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