

MURDER at the MASQUERADE

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MURDER AT THE MASQUERADE

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STORY OF THE PLAY

It's New Years Eve and the wealthy millionaire, Walter Scottsdale, is hosting his annual New Year's Eve masquerade party. But tonight's guests have more than partying on their minds. Someone is embezzling from his company, Stone-Rich Jewelers, and Walter is none too happy about it.

The vibrant cast of characters includes Romeo and Juliet, Little Orphan Annie, and the Lone Ranger. But where's Tonto? That's where you come in. Audience participation can range from a role in the show to simply dressing up in costume! This masquerade party is the perfect place for mistaken identity and therefore a perfect place for...murder!

A farcical comedy with fun, singable music including "Tonto's New Career," and "Annie's Big Secret." Make your resolution to join in an evening of drinking, dancing...and death!!

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 3 w, 1 flexible)

WALTER SCOTTSDALE: Host, owner of Stone-Rich Jewelers. Loud, boisterous, but with a keen business sense and a temper. In costume as the Lone Ranger. (Southern drawl.)

KENNETH ROCKINGHAM: Friend and business associate of Walter, philandering husband of Agatha. In costume as Romeo. (British.)

AGATHA ROCKINGHAM: Frail wife of Kenneth. Always sick and in and out of hospitals. Possibly a hypochondriac. In costume as Juliet.

CHARISSE SCOTTSDALE: Niece of Walter, mistress of Kenneth, manager at the jewelry store. She is embezzling from the company. In costume as Mime.

DIANA: Co-worker of Charisse. Learned about the embezzlement and threatening to tell. She is really an undercover cop. In costume as Annie. (Can also be played by a man as "Elliot.")

SOPHIA VON HEIST: A mysterious woman, Walter's guest. She is actually the mastermind behind embezzlement, pretending to be a cop. In costume as Cat Woman.

NOTE: *A rehearsal/performance CD is available for this show. Contact Eldridge Publishing at www.histage.com to order with your cast set.*

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SETTING

The main playing area is a room in Scottsdale home where the party takes place. The play can be performed in “walk through” style where the audience can go to different rooms (or partitioned areas of your dining area). Or, the main playing area can be broken down into smaller areas when it comes time to speak to different characters in their “rooms.”

PROPS

Briefcase; cell phone; *Othello* script; *Romeo and Juliet* script; trick knife with collapsing blade, duct tape and cardboard to hold knife to vest; gun for Diana in a leg garter belt; detective badge; mime make-up; baby wipes; Tonto headband (elastic and feather).

MASQUERADE COSTUMES

AGATHA: Empire-waist dress, decorative mask that covers upper half of face, long black wig, hat, black stockings, ballet slippers.

KENNETH: Tunic, white shirt, black tights, belt, boots.

WALTER: White jeans, white pirate shirt, white belt, white cowboy hat, black mask, black boots, black neckerchief, gun and holster.

DIANA/ELLIOT: Red “Annie” dress, white crew socks, black flat shoes, red curly wig.

CHARISSE: Black pants, black turtleneck, black vest (slit in back for knife), short blonde wig, black bowler hat, black stockings, white gloves, black sneakers or ballet slippers.

SOPHIA: “Cat Woman” suit, feather mask, belt, boots.

NOTE: Charisse and Agatha should be of similar body type and height.

Additional Production Notes appear at the end of the play.

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ACT I
Prologue

(During the mingling, SOPHIA should stay alone most of the time, on the phone often. AGATHA, KENNETH and CHARISSE can set up the love triangle, and WALTER can interact with all but Kenneth. Walter should also pick his assistant at this time and both Walter and Kenneth should get any other guest names they will be using. If DIANA is played by a male, he should not mingle, but wait until his first entrance. Walter re-enters as the pianist is playing "Auld Lang Syne.")

WALTER: *(Southern drawl.)* Ah, ain't that just music to my ears! How are all you little doggies doin'? Ready for some good old-fashioned fun? Only a few hours from now, we'll all be a-toastin' with our glasses and bringing in the New Year. And I can tell you, I do hope the New Year rings in a lot better than the old one. Don't you, *(Guest's name)*? I heard about your money problems with the IRS. Word gets out here on the prairie purty quick. If you want the opinion of an old cowhand like me, I'd suggest you be right up-front with those tax coyotes — they'll take you for everything you're worth. Which reminds me, where's my administrative assistant? Come on up here, *(Guest's Name)*. I want you to check in my appointment book and tell me what time my flight leaves tomorrow morning.

GUEST: *(Answers.)*

WALTER: Where is it?

GUEST: *(Answers.)*

WALTER: You don't know? And where's your costume?

GUEST: *(Answers.)*

WALTER: Well, here, take this. *(Hands GUEST a feather headband which s/he puts on.)* Now look, Tonto. I don't want to have to send you out to the prairie, if you know what I mean. Take \$1,000 off your salary. And make sure you stay on top of things. By the way, nice costume, but I hope you will be changing before the flight tomorrow. Now, go enjoy yourself. It's a party. *(GUEST leaves.)* Now, you all know my tradition — so let's go. Everybody stand up. Oh, now, don't be shy,

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come on. (*THEY don't move.*) Maybe you've had too much drink already. It's clouded yer memory. You know that at my New Year's Eve rodeo we sing a round of "Auld Lang Syne" when we assemble, to put us in the proper spirit and to prepare for the real thing at 12 o'clock. on the dot. Let's go, everybody stand up! (*KENNETH enters and EVERYONE sings "Auld Lang Syne."*) Hmm. You pups need a little more oomph. Maybe when the champagne flows you'll liven up a bit.

KENNETH: (*Pretending not to recognize WALTER in his costume.*) Martin, is that you?!

WALTER: Actually...

KENNETH: Canst thou believe we have to be at this drab party on New Year's Eve? My God! You'd think Walter would try to do something a little different! But no, he must go with "tradition"! The old goat is so Elizabethan...archaic even...

WALTER: Is that so, pardner? (*Takes off mask.*) If I'd known you'd felt that way...

KENNETH: Aha!! (*Breaks into laughter.*) Touché!! (*THEY both laugh.*)

WALTER: Tonto! Come here! No more work for now. It's a party. Get us a couple of glasses of champagne. Go on now! (*GUEST leaves.*) Well, Kenneth, you did get my dander up, I admit it. For a minute I thought perhaps I didn't know you as well as I thought I did.

(*CHARISSE enters.*)

KENNETH: Ah, Walter, you know me better than I know myself. And you know how much Aggie...I mean Juliet... and I look forward to this party every year. Although I think the singing becomes a bit shakier with every "Auld Lang Syne." I don't want to gossip, but did you hear (*Guest's name*)? He/she thinks s/he's about ready to perform for *Madame Butterfly*! I know, I know, I shouldn't talk. I am certainly no Pavoratti.

CHARISSE: And you're just realizing that now?

WALTER: Charisse!

CHARISSE: Oh, Uncle, he knows I'm just fooling with him, don't you, Mr. Rockingham? (*SHE puts her arm through HIS.*)

End of Freeview

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