

# **Murderous Night at the MUSEUM**

**By Kate Sparacio, Matt Steele, Mike  
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## MURDEROUS NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

A Murder Mystery Comedy with Audience Interaction

By KATE SPARACIO, MATT STEELE,  
MIKE STEELE and MELISSA STUMBAUGH

### CAST OF CHARACTERS (In Order of Appearance)

	<u># of lines</u>
DARLENE KISSER..... friendly but stressed curator at the Knotting Museum	152
ARCHIE GREEN ..... rude and sleazy reporter	73
MACKENZIE HAMILTON ..... over-achieving new museum intern	96
LUCY LUNA..... forgetful chemist who often finds herself asleep while standing	48
AL MOND..... washed-up singer; married to Joy and father to Kit and Kat	59
JOY MOND ..... his singing and life partner	32
KIT MOND..... bratty teenage twin who doesn't trust adults	63
KAT MOND..... the other twin—same as Kit	66
BERTHA BRINE..... rough and tough thief who likes to boss around her accomplice, Sebastian	73
SEBASTIAN SPENCER ..... Bertha's oafish but lovable accomplice	33
MARY RICH..... author of murder mystery novels; staunch feminist	75
TIFFANY TIFBLE..... dim-witted beauty queen	85
DOLLY DE LORENZO ..... co-owner of a cold cut franchise in New York City; married to Paulie	48
PAULIE DE LORENZO ..... her business and life partner	50
THE GREAT VALDEZ ..... romantic magician	44
ELIZABETH ROSE ..... famous and demanding movie actress	6
LILIAN CHARLES..... Elizabeth's meek assistant	39
AEPEP ..... humorous mummy	21
MISTRESS ..... mummy who has a difficult time speaking her mind	12

## SETTING

PLACE: The Knotting Museum.

TIME: Present.

## ACT ONE

Scene One: The unveiling of a new exhibit one evening.

Scene Two: Moments later the same evening.

## ACT TWO

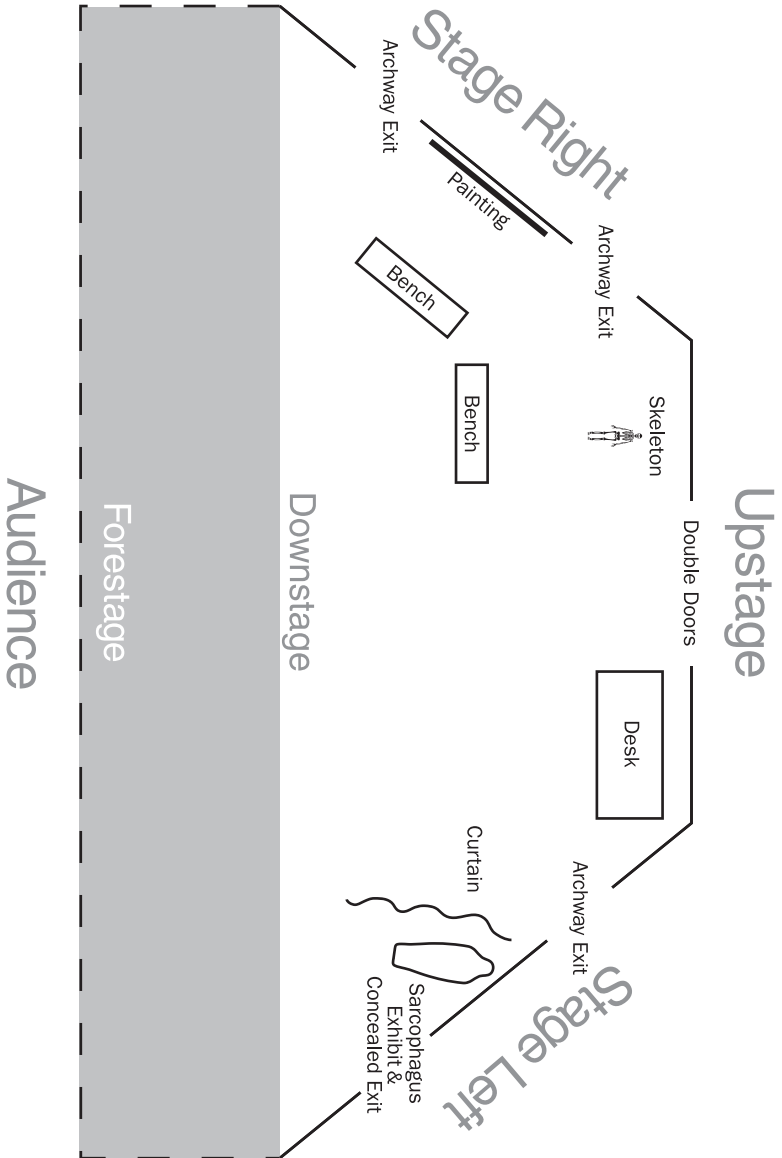
Scene One: Moments later.

Scene Two: Later the same evening.

## SET DESCRIPTION

The action takes place in the main room of the Knotting Museum. UP CENTER is a set of double doors with handles that serve as the museum's main entrance. There are three archways, DOWN RIGHT, UP RIGHT and UP LEFT, leading to other rooms within the museum. These other rooms are accessible to one another without passing through the main room and include a kitchenette, Darlene's office, a supply closet and several public spaces containing exhibits. Within the main room, a desk with a telephone and a heavy vase with a flower is against the wall UP LEFT. A sarcophagus (referred to as The Tomb of Aepep and His Mistress) is on display DOWN LEFT. It is displayed in an upright position and is concealed by a large curtain at the start of the play. A concealed escape passage in the back makes this another EXIT from the stage. A painting is on the wall RIGHT CENTER. A skeleton is on display near the museum's main entrance. Various other exhibits are on display across the stage. Two benches create a seating area CENTER RIGHT.

# Murderous Night at the Museum - Set Design



# MURDEROUS NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

## ACT ONE

### Scene One

1 AT RISE: An exhibit room at the Knotting Museum, one evening. DARLENE, a frantic museum curator, and ARCHIE, a nasty reporter, ENTER UP RIGHT. A large exhibit is behind a curtain DOWN LEFT. DARLENE is carrying a pen and clipboard with a list of guests that  
5 have been invited to the evening's event. ARCHIE is carrying a notepad and pencil and carries a camera over his shoulder.

**DARLENE:** But this is the room you'll probably want to photograph the most. The new exhibit is on display right over there behind the curtain. Doesn't it look mysteriously exciting? (*Makes a spooky*  
10 *gesture to ARCHIE.*) Boo! Ha! Gives you the shivers, doesn't it?

**ARCHIE:** (*Bored.*) Uh-huh.

**DARLENE:** Now, no peeking! The Tomb of Aepep and His Mistress is something not many people know about. But ever since we announced its impending arrival, all of Knotting Museum's sponsors  
15 have been buzz-buzz-buzzing in our ears with anticipation.

**ARCHIE:** (*Still bored.*) You don't say.

**DARLENE:** Well, it's only natural. We don't normally have the opportunity to unveil such a world-renowned exhibit at our humble museum. Oh, but don't get me wrong, our other exhibits are quite  
20 something.

**ARCHIE:** (*Sarcastically.*) Oh, yeah, the Celebrity Potato Chip Look-Alike exhibit in the other room sure seems like a real crowd-pleaser.

**DARLENE:** It is! I came up with the idea for that one myself. Times were a little rough a while ago. We hadn't released a new exhibit in ages,  
25 and visitors were waning. The board of trustees had threatened to close us down if things didn't pick up. I knew we needed a brilliant exhibit to save the museum. I went through thousands of bags of potato chips, looking for crisps that resembled famous figures of the world.

30 **ARCHIE:** That must have been tedious.

**DARLENE:** I'll say! Do you know hard it is to find a potato chip thin enough to look like Mahatma Gandhi? But I would do anything to save this place. The museum has been struggling again these past few years, but I know this new exhibit will attract some tourists to  
35 our little town.

**ARCHIE:** How many visitors does this place normally see?

**DARLENE:** On a good weekend? Maybe four. Sometimes my mother comes for support. Now, would you like to take some pictures of the exterior of the building for your article?

1 **ARCHIE:** Listen lady, I'm here to photograph celebrities.

**DARLENE:** Oh, I see.

**ARCHIE:** I just want a good shot of Elizabeth Rose. She's in town  
filming her new picture. Inside sources say she's been invited to  
5 the unveiling tonight.

**DARLENE:** Oh, yes, I hear her new role is really something. But  
unfortunately, Elizabeth Rose doesn't think she will be attending  
this evening. Her agent called to tell me the filming schedule is  
quite hectic. You know how busy movie stars can be.

10 **ARCHIE:** I came for nothing?

**DARLENE:** Goodness, no. We have several local celebrities who have  
RSVP'd that they'll be attending. I'm sure you'd love to photograph  
them!

**ARCHIE:** *(Sarcastic.)* Great. Local celebrities. *(MACKENZIE, an over-*  
15 *achieving intern, ENTERS DOWN RIGHT. She wears a large fanny*  
*pack stuffed with various items and carries a mug of coffee.)*

**MACKENZIE:** *(To DARLENE.)* I brought the coffee you asked for, Ms.  
Kisser. Can I get you anything else? Tea? Hot chocolate? A double-  
mocha-latte-caramel-frappe-espresso-cappuccino?

20 **DARLENE:** No, thank you, dear. Mackenzie, I'd like you to meet  
Archie Green. Remember, I told you a reporter would be here to  
photograph our special guests for the unveiling. *(To ARCHIE.)* This  
is Mackenzie Hamilton, the new intern at the museum. Would you  
care for some coffee?

25 **ARCHIE:** Look, I didn't come for a tea party. I'll just take some shots  
of these small-town celebrities and scam.

**MACKENZIE:** *(Pulls a notepad and a cloth out of her fanny pack.)* Then  
can I get you a fresh notepad? A soft cloth to clean your camera  
lens? A freshly ironed jacket? I have some hanging in the closet,  
30 just in case.

**DARLENE:** No, no, Mackenzie. I think Mr. Green is all right. Why don't  
you relax for a moment? Can you handle that?

**MACKENZIE:** Perhaps. I've been trying to learn how to relax for a  
couple of years. Every day I get closer and closer to finally being  
35 able to sit down.

**DARLENE:** Well, keep trying, dear. Practice makes perfect! *(MACKENZIE*  
*moves to one of the benches and grunts as she attempts to sit,*  
*with no luck. To ARCHIE.)* Poor dear came to us from one of those  
Ivy League universities. I've never had an intern with such drive.  
40 Well, if you need anything, don't hesitate to ask either of us. And  
remember, nobody likes a peeker! Eyes off of the exhibit until the  
unveiling.

- 1 **ARCHIE:** Right. (*Steps UPSTAGE and begins to photograph other exhibits.*)
- DARLENE:** (*To MACKENZIE.*) You've almost done it. Someday your rump will actually make it to the seat.
- 5 **MACKENZIE:** Learning to sit is even more difficult than the time I memorized all of Beethoven's symphonies on the piano.
- DARLENE:** Mackenzie, make sure Mr. Green is well taken care of. He's here from the magazine *Celebrity Privacy Invaders*. His article could attract major attention to the museum. If we don't start
- 10 getting some visitors soon, the board of trustees is going to shut this place down.
- MACKENZIE:** You can count on me, Ms. Kisser.
- DARLENE:** The guests should begin arriving any minute now. Fingers crossed! (*LUCY, an elderly chemist who uses a cane, ENTERS UP CENTER carrying a purse and begins speaking to a skeleton on display.*)
- 15 **LUCY:** Yoo-hoo. Hello. Are you here for the big unveiling, as well?
- DARLENE:** (*To MACKENZIE.*) Ah, our first guest has arrived.
- MACKENZIE:** Is that...?
- 20 **DARLENE:** Yes. That is Lucy Luna, winner of the Noteworthy Prize in Chemistry. She grew up in this town, you know. And she attends many of our local events.
- MACKENZIE:** When I wrote my doctoral thesis, one of my key references was Lucy Luna's journal article on petroleum jelly and
- 25 how it aided in the rise and fall of ancient Greco-Roman society. She's my idol. Lucy Luna is a genius!
- LUCY:** (*To skeleton.*) Now, I may be mistaken, but haven't I met you somewhere before?
- DARLENE:** That's wonderful! Let me introduce you.
- 30 **MACKENZIE:** No! No! I don't know what to say! I...
- DARLENE:** (*To LUCY.*) Mrs. Luna, thank you for coming to the Knotting Museum tonight. We're so privileged to have such an esteemed scientist at our humble facility.
- LUCY:** Thank you. Call me Lucy. And you are?
- 35 **DARLENE:** I'm Darlene Kisser, curator of the museum. We met last time you visited, remember? And this is Mackenzie Hamilton, our new intern. She's quite a fan of yours, Lucy.
- LUCY:** (*To MACKENZIE.*) It's nice to meet you. (*To DARLENE.*) And you are?
- 40 **DARLENE:** Uh, Lucy, I'm Darlene Kisser, the museum's curator.

1 **LUCY:** Oh, that's right. I'm so sorry. The noggin's not as sharp as it used to be. This old lady has inhaled one too many chemicals throughout her life in the lab. Who knows what all those fumes have done to me?

5 **DARLENE:** Well, please, feel free to look around. We'll be unveiling The Tomb of Aepep and His Mistress shortly. Mackenzie, why don't you show Lucy to the next room where the hors d'oeuvres are laid out? (*MACKENZIE stands frozen.*) Mackenzie? (*Nudges MACKENZIE.*) Mackenzie!

10 **MACKENZIE:** (*Explodes nervously.*) Hello, Mrs. Luna. I'm Mackenzie Hamilton, the new intern here at the museum. Can I help you with anything? I could take your purse for you. Let me show you to the other room. We have a great collection of fossilized rabbit tails on display if you would be interested in seeing them. Can I help make

15 you more comfortable? Could I get you a sturdier cane? Some arthritis soothing cream? A fresh pair of knee-high stockings? (*Pulls a pair of knee-high stockings out of her fanny pack.*) I brought some just in case.

**LUCY:** You remind me of my granddaughter. She's a lovely girl. And

20 you are?

**MACKENZIE:** Mackenzie Hamilton. The new intern at the museum.

**LUCY:** Well, you are lovely, just lovely. I might have some hard candy in my purse for you. Let me see if I can find it.

**MACKENZIE:** It's quite all right, Mrs. Luna. I don't need any candy. But

25 can I get you anything?

**LUCY:** That depends on one thing.

**MACKENZIE:** Yes?

**LUCY:** Where am I?

**MACKENZIE:** The Knotting Museum, Mrs. Luna. Remember? Let me

30 show you around. (*EXITS DOWN RIGHT with LUCY. AL and JOY, two washed-up singers, and KIT and KAT, their bratty twin daughters, ENTER UP CENTER. KIT and KAT are shoving each other.*)

**AL:** Girls, stop that fighting. We need to make a good impression.

**JOY:** Listen to your father. Don't make a scene. (*Gestures towards*

35 *ARCHIE.*) There's a reporter right over there. The last thing we need is bad press.

**KIT:** But, Mom, we're not—

**KAT:** —doing anything.

**JOY:** If that reporter gets even the tiniest bit of dirt on our family, we'll

40 never be invited to sing anywhere in this town ever again.



1 **AL:** Don't ruin our final chance to break back into the local music business. We can't afford another incident like you caused at last week's wedding gig.

**KAT:** (*Indicates KIT.*) That was her fault!

5 **KIT:** Was not!

**KAT:** Was too!

**AL:** Girls! If you're going to argue, you can wait out in the car. We've been thrown out of every possible venue in this town because of your shenanigans. Let's make a good impression tonight.

10 **JOY:** Be on your best behaviors!

**KIT:** All right. We'll—

**KAT:** —behave.

**KIT/KAT:** We promise.

**DARLENE:** (*To AL and JOY.*) Welcome, welcome, welcome. I'm tickled

15 pink to have you at the unveiling of The Tomb of Aepep and His Mistress. I'd recognize the two of you anywhere. You're none other than Al Mond and Joy, the husband and wife singing duo.

**AL:** That would be us.

**DARLENE:** I'm just thrilled you've agreed to sing at our reception. I've

20 seen your posters all over town. I hear that you sing some of the most fantastic harmonies in the state.

**JOY:** Thank you. And these are our daughters, Kit and Kat.

**DARLENE:** Such cute twins. I'm Darlene Kisser, curator of the museum. Would you care for some hors d'oeuvres? They're right in the next

25 room. Let me show you. (*Begins to lead AL and JOY DOWN RIGHT.*)

**KIT:** We're not—

**KAT:** —hungry.

**JOY:** Come along, girls.

**DARLENE:** Oh, it's all right. (*To KIT and KAT.*) The two of you can look

30 around while the adults get something to eat. But remember, this is a museum. You look with your eyes, not with your hands.

**AL:** (*To KIT and KAT.*) We'll be right back. No funny business. (*EXITS DOWN RIGHT with JOY and DARLENE. ARCHIE ducks behind the curtain covering the exhibit to get a better look. KIT and KAT cross to a display close to the new exhibit. KIT reaches out to touch an*

35 *item on display.*)

**KAT:** (*Smacks KIT.*) That lady said not to touch anything!

**KIT:** (*Pushes KAT.*) Quit smacking me!

**KAT:** (*Pushes KIT.*) Make me! (*KIT and KAT continue to push each other.*

40 *ARCHIE comes out from behind the curtain.*)

1 **KIT/KAT:** (*Notice ARCHIE.*) Hello.  
**KAT:** Why were you behind the curtain?  
**KIT:** That lady who works here would be mad at you!  
**ARCHIE:** I'm a reporter. I'm allowed to get a sneak peek before the  
5 unveiling.  
**KIT:** You're a—  
**KAT:** —liar. We've been to enough of these events to know—  
**KIT:** —the rules. Our parents being artists and all—  
**KAT:** —and us being artists. We're going to be—  
10 **KIT:** —singers.  
**KIT/KAT:** Just like Mom and Dad  
**ARCHIE:** (*Sarcastic.*) Good luck with that.  
**KAT:** We take voice lessons—  
**KIT:** —everyday.  
15 **KAT:** Dance and acting classes—  
**KIT:** —every other day.  
**KAT:** And songwriting classes—  
**KIT:** —on the weekends.  
**KAT:** And we aren't little girls.  
20 **KIT:** We're 13 years old.  
**KIT/KAT:** Practically grownups.  
**KAT:** We know the things grownups do.  
**KIT:** And getting a sneak peek at new museum exhibits—  
**KAT:** —isn't one of them. So what are we going to do, Kit?  
25 **KIT:** I don't know, Kat. Looks like this reporter owes us something so  
we won't tell—  
**KAT:** —anyone that he took an—  
**KIT/KAT:** —illegal peak.  
**ARCHIE:** Oh, really?  
30 **KIT/KAT:** Yup.  
**ARCHIE:** Listen, kiddies, I don't have time for your nonsense right  
now. I have celebrities to be mingling with.  
**AL:** (*ENTERS DOWN RIGHT with JOY. They each have a plate of hors  
d'oeuvres.*) Girls, are you bothering this reporter?  
35 **ARCHIE:** Ah, Joy and Al Mond! I shouldn't be surprised to see you  
stuck singing in this joint. These are your daughters?  
**JOY:** (*Embraces KIT and KAT.*) Indeed they are.

1 **ARCHIE:** I see the resemblance. Your girls here were just telling me their dreams of becoming singers. Taking after their parents, I see.

**AL:** Yes, our girls are going to be as famous as we are.

**ARCHIE:** Oh, come on, don't discourage them.

5 **JOY:** What did you just say?

**ARCHIE:** Nothing. So should I expect anything scandalous to happen from the two of you tonight? It seems everything I've read about you lately has been, shall we say, not so pleasant. And it always seems to be because of your daughters.

10 **AL:** Lies. All lies.

**JOY:** You're a reporter. You, of all people, should know not to believe a thing you read in the tabloids.

**ARCHIE:** There's a bit of truth behind every reported fallacy.

**AL:** Not when it comes to the two of us. Come along, girls. Let's go

15 look at some of the exhibits in the other room. A bunch of potato chips make for better company than a slimeball reporter. *(He, JOY, KIT and KAT EXIT UP LEFT. ARCHIE follows them OFF, taking photos. BERTHA and SEBASTIAN, two thieves, ENTER UP CENTER. BERTHA is dressed to look like ELIZABETH, including a wig to match her hairstyle, and carries a purse. SEBASTIAN wears a long coat.)*

20 **BERTHA:** Do I look convincing?

**SEBASTIAN:** Gorgeous, Bertha. Simply gorgeous, boss.

**BERTHA:** Yeah, I got ya, but will everyone think I'm Elizabeth Rose?

**SEBASTIAN:** I'd bet my left leg on it. You're the spitting image. Glamour

25 is your middle name.

**BERTHA:** *(Snorts in and spits on the ground.)* Whatever. *(Begins to play with wig on her head.)* I think I'm allergic to this beast I got on my head. This hunk of junk wig cost me a fortune. My bank account is drained. Good thing I'll be able to fill it back up soon enough. This

30 new exhibit is supposedly worth millions!

**SEBASTIAN:** *(Excited.)* Let's snatch it and run.

**BERTHA:** Quiet! Why don't you just tell the world what we're here for? *(Notices the curtain)* That must be the new exhibit. Now stay close, follow my lead and don't mess things up like you always do.

35 **SEBASTIAN:** I'd never mess anything up. *(Bumps into an exhibit. BERTHA and SEBASTIAN pull the curtain, revealing the sarcophagus.)*

**ARCHIE:** *(RE-ENTERS UP LEFT and notices BERTHA.)* Well, I'll be! Elizabeth Rose is here! *(BERTHA and SEBASTIAN quickly pull the curtain to cover the exhibit. ARCHIE begins to photograph BERTHA.)*

40 Over here, Miss Rose! Smile for the camera!

1 **BERTHA:** Please, no flash photography. My retinas can't handle the abuse. (*DARLENE and MACKENZIE ENTER DOWN RIGHT. DARLENE still carries her clipboard.*)

**ARCHIE:** My apologies, Miss Rose.

5 **BERTHA:** Sure, sure. This is my, uh, assistant, Sebastian.

**SEBASTIAN:** Yup, that's who I am. I'm Elizabeth Rose's assistant!

**ARCHIE:** Can I ask a few questions, Miss Rose?

**BERTHA:** Uh, no. Enough of this mindless chatter. Show me to this priceless exhibit I've been hearing so much about.

10 **DARLENE:** Not just yet, Miss Rose. We're waiting on a few more guests. I thought you wouldn't be able to attend tonight's unveiling. Your agent called and said you were busy filming.

**BERTHA:** Uh, yes, but I finished early, so here I am.

**DARLENE:** What wonderful news! Your being here will attract a great

15 deal of attention to our humble museum. I can't tell you how nice it is to meet you. I would be honored to show you some of our other exhibits. Our museum houses the largest thimble in the—

**BERTHA:** —world?

**DARLENE:** No, the county. But at seven and a half inches in diameter,

20 it's still quite large.

**BERTHA:** And valuable?

**DARLENE:** I suppose it might be.

**BERTHA:** Lead the way, lady! (*Turns to SEBASTIAN and gives him thumbs up.*)

25 **DARLENE:** (*Hands clipboard to MACKENZIE.*) Mackenzie, keep tabs on any other guests that arrive.

**BERTHA:** Come on, Sebastian! (*EXITS UP LEFT with DARLENE and SEBASTIAN. ARCHIE follows them OFF, taking photographs. TIFFANY, an unintelligent beauty queen wearing an evening gown, a tiara and a sash that reads, "Miss Pop, Snap and Shimmy," and MARY, a plainly dressed author who hates men, ENTER UP CENTER.*)

30 **MARY:** (*To TIFFANY.*) Your questions are exhausting me.

**TIFFANY:** I'm just still so confused.

**MARY:** What about?

35 **TIFFANY:** What do you mean you write books?

**MARY:** Excuse me?

**TIFFANY:** You said you write books. Well, whenever I've seen a book, it's always looked printed from a computer or a typewriter or something. I've never seen books written by hand.

40 **MARY:** Yes, and...?

- 1 **TIFFANY:** Does your hand get tired from writing all those words?  
**MARY:** My hand? I don't write the books.  
**TIFFANY:** But you said you write books.  
**MARY:** Have you any knowledge of anything beyond... (*Doubles over*  
5 *and grabs her forehead.*) Oh! Blast you. I feel a migraine coming  
on.  
**MACKENZIE:** (*Pulls three pill bottles out of her fanny pack.*) Regular  
aspirin? Extra strength? Tranquilizers?  
**MARY:** I prefer homeopathic remedies, thank you. I'm sorry, where  
10 are my manners? (*Shakes MACKENZIE'S hand.*) It's a pleasure to  
be here tonight.  
**MACKENZIE:** I'm Mackenzie Hamilton, the new intern at the museum.  
Please let me know if I can get you anything. We'll be unveiling the  
new exhibit shortly.  
15 **TIFFANY:** (*To MACKENZIE.*) Thank you, sweetums.  
**MARY:** (*To MACKENZIE.*) Please, save me. I bumped into this young  
woman in the parking lot only five minutes ago, and she's already  
asked me at least two dozen questions.  
**MACKENZIE:** (*Looks at TIFFANY'S sash. To TIFFANY.*) Miss Pop, Snap  
20 and Shimmy! An impressive title. Let me check you off of the  
invitation list. We want to make sure all of the guests have arrived  
before we unveil the new exhibit of The Tomb of Aepep and His  
Mistress. What's your name?  
**TIFFANY:** Tiffany Tiffle. I'm the reigning Miss Pop, Snap and Shimmy,  
25 but I've won over 50 crowns in my career. Pageants are my life.  
(*As if she's rehearsed the following speech.*) But it isn't the title or  
the crown that makes being a beauty queen so rewarding. It's the  
chance to touch the lives of others and spread positive energy to  
those who may need it.  
30 **MACKENZIE:** How inspirational. I've always wanted to take a stab at  
being a pageant queen, but I've never had the opportunity.  
**TIFFANY:** Yes. I'm hoping that... (*Pulls an index card out of her dress*  
*and reads.*) "...by making an appearance here tonight, all of the  
young girls across the country will realize the importance of  
35 ancient history..." Whatever that means.  
**MARY:** Pageants are degrading and demoralizing productions created  
by men. There's little that I find more offensive than women parading  
around for display and being judged on their outward appearance.  
**MACKENZIE:** (*To MARY.*) You're wrong! Pageants are a way of giving  
40 young girls confidence and determination to succeed. (*Catches*  
*herself and calms down.*) I forgot to ask your name.

- 1 **MARY:** You mean you don't recognize me? I'm wearing the same sweater I wear in my portrait. It's on the dust cover of my latest novel, *Women Are from Venus and Men Suck*. Perhaps this will jog your memory. *(Strikes a headshot pose.)*
- 5 **MACKENZIE:** I'm sorry, I haven't read that book.
- MARY:** I am Mary Rich. Surely, you've heard of me. I'm the only person in this town's history to have been published in four languages.
- MACKENZIE:** Oh, of course I've heard of you. You write feminist murder mystery novels. I've been meaning to read your book *She Killed Him and He Deserved It Just for Being Male* for a while now.
- 10 **MARY:** The trouble with being an author is that I'm famous, but nobody knows what I look like. People would recognize me if my fame were connected to my image. For example, if I were an actress.
- MACKENZIE:** Or a beauty queen. You know, Oprah Winfrey competed
- 15 in beauty pageants when she was younger. She's one of my idols. We have a photocopy of one of Oprah's autographed headshots in our Famous Photocopies exhibit.
- TIFFANY:** A photocopy of Oprah Winfrey's signature? I've never seen anything like that before. It sounds exciting. Is her handwriting
- 20 nice?
- MACKENZIE:** Go have a look. It's right in the other room. *(To MARY.)* It's sitting right next to a photocopy of the cover of one of Stephen King's novels. You might like to see that since you're an author and all, Mrs. Rich.
- 25 **MARY:** It's Ms. Rich. And no, thank you. I don't ogle at covers of books that have been written by men.
- MACKENZIE:** Well, enjoy looking around. You might like to meet some of the other guests. Lucy Luna, the chemist, is around here somewhere.
- 30 **MARY:** Ah, an award-winning scientific female. Practically brings a tear to my eye.
- MACKENZIE:** And Al and Joy Mond are in the other room. *(Points UP LEFT.)*
- TIFFANY:** Joy Mond was a celebrity judge at the Miss Pop, Snap and Shimmy Pageant. She'll be so happy to see me again. *(To MARY.)* I'll be right back after I say hello to Mrs. Mond.
- 35 **MARY:** Take your time. *(TIFFANY EXITS UP LEFT. PAULIE and DOLLY, a loud New York couple who own a cold cut franchise, ENTER UP CENTER.)*
- 40 **DOLLY:** What a dump!

1 **PAULIE:** Ay, shut ya pie hole. My cousin Joey's girlfriend's brotha's  
uncle's dog walka is on the board a' trustees for this joint. (*MARY*  
gives *PAULIE* and *DOLLY* an annoyed look.) What ya looking at?  
Ain't nobody that can stand around lookin' at the DeLorenzos like  
5 that. What's it to ya, punk?

**DOLLY:** Paulie! That's no way to talk to a lady.

**PAULIE:** That's a broad?

**MARY:** Yes, I'm a "broad." Some of us choose not to conform to the  
roles in which our genderized society has forced us to live.

10 **DOLLY:** (*To MARY.*) Listen, hon, maybe if ya added some color to ya  
wardrobe, ya wouldn't be so confusin' to people.

**MARY:** (*To herself.*) Why am I suddenly jealous of the mummified  
Aeep? (*DARLENE, BERTHA, SEBASTIAN and ARCHIE ENTER UP*  
*LEFT.*)

15 **MACKENZIE:** (*To PAULIE and DOLLY.*) Welcome. I'm Mackenzie  
Hamilton, the new intern at the museum. Let me know if you need  
anything. A comb for your hair? A can of polish for your shoes? A  
new set of press-on nails? But first, can I ask your names?

**DOLLY:** Oh, you're so friendly. Say cheese! (*Pulls out her camera and*  
20 *takes a picture of MACKENZIE.*) I'm Dolly, and this is my husband,  
Paulie.

**MACKENZIE:** (*Looks at invitation list on clipboard.*) Hmm. I don't see  
your names on the list. I'll be back in a second. (*To DARLENE.*)  
Ms. Kisser, there are some guests that don't seem to be on the  
25 invitation list. (*AL, JOY, KIT, KAT and TIFFANY ENTER UP LEFT and*  
*mingle.*)

**DARLENE:** This is a private event. Only invited guests are permitted  
to be at the museum tonight. I'll take care of this, Mackenzie. (*To*  
*PAULIE and DOLLY.*) Good evening, folks. Who might you be? (*LUCY*  
30 *ENTERS UP RIGHT and mingles.*)

**PAULIE:** Who are we? We're the DeLorenzos! Paulie DeLorenzo  
and Dolly DeLorenzo. We're the ownas of the greatest cold cut  
franchise in the Big Apple. And who are you to be askin'?

**DOLLY:** Paulie, be nice. There are big stars here! Hi there, everyone.  
35 I'm Dolly. It's a pleasure to meet yas.

**DARLENE:** Did you receive an invitation to tonight's event?

**PAULIE:** Invitation? Nah. We just heard there was some big shindig  
goin' on and thought it would be fun to pop in.

**DOLLY:** So, in we popped! (*Takes a picture of the other GUESTS.*) Smile,  
40 everybody!

**MACKENZIE:** Ms. Kisser, it's eight o'clock.

1 **DARLENE:** (To *PAULIE* and *DOLLY*.) I suppose you can stay. We need to begin shortly.

**JOY:** (To *BERTHA*.) Hello, Elizabeth, how are you?

**BERTHA:** Do I know you, lady?

5 **JOY:** Maybe you forgot. We met a few months ago when we were both celebrity judges at the Miss Pop, Snap and Shimmy Pageant.

**BERTHA:** Oh, yeah. Uh, sure.

**JOY:** Of course, I don't expect you to remember me. You're a big star. You meet exciting people every day. I'm just a local singer. A  
10 nobody.

**TIFFANY:** (To *JOY*.) Oh, Mrs. Mond, don't say that. You're a somebody. Remember how many people took your picture at the pageant when your daughters set off the stink bomb backstage?

**JOY:** (Embarrassed.) Uh, yes. I have tried to forget about that.

15 **TIFFANY:** (To *ELIZABETH*.) Do you remember me, Miss Rose? I'm Miss Pop, Snap and Shimmy. When you were a judge at the pageant, your score helped me to win my crown.

**BERTHA:** Yeah, that's great. Glad I could help. (Scratches her head, and her wig begins to slide off.)

20 **SEBASTIAN:** Boss, your hair!

**BERTHA:** Oh! Crud! (To *DARLENE*.) Excuse me, but I'd just like to powder my nose. Come on, Sebastian. (EXITS DOWN RIGHT with *SEBASTIAN*.)

**DOLLY:** Oh, my word. That was Elizabeth Rose. Paulie, did ya see that?  
25 That was Elizabeth Rose!

**PAULIE:** I saw, Dolly. She's quite a fox.

**DOLLY:** Ay!

**PAULIE:** 'Course, she's not as foxy as you, princess.

**MARY:** (To *PAULIE*.) Fox? Are you referring to your wife as an animal  
30 often hunted for sport?

**PAULIE:** Huh? This broad is talkin' ova my head.

**DARLENE:** Well, while we are waiting on Miss Rose's nose, I'll tell you all a little bit about the museum. The Knotting Museum opened in 1922. This building is the former home of— (There is a puff of smoke and *VALDEZ*, a magician, appears ONSTAGE. [See *PRODUCTION NOTES*].)  
35

**KIT/KAT:** Whoa!

**VALDEZ:** Good evening, beautiful people! It is I, The Great Valdez, magician extraordinaire. But, of course, you already know that.  
40 I apologize for my tardiness. I like to enter with a bang. Haha! (OTHERS groan.)



1 **JOY:** We know! You poof in at every big event around.

**LUCY:** Ah! And what a delightful poof of smoke it was. I used to be a chemist. I'm something of an expert on gas, especially at my age.

5 **DARLENE:** Ladies and gentleman, let's have a hand for our town's greatest and only magician. Welcome, Valdez. Your entrances, while unusual, are always thrilling. But not as thrilling as The Tomb of Aepep and His Mistress, of course. The unveiling will begin shortly. Hold on to your hats.

10 **TIFFANY:** Or your crowns! (*ELIZABETH, an egotistical actress, and LILIAN, her shy assistant, ENTER UP CENTER. ELIZABETH is dressed identically to BERTHA, including carrying a purse, but looks much better and more natural.*)

**ELIZABETH:** Hello!

**DARLENE:** Oh, good. The lady of the hour is back.

15 **ELIZABETH:** Hello! Hello, all! Yes, it's true. You are not imagining things. It is I, Elizabeth Rose. I have made it after all! I told that director I simply couldn't film for a moment longer. I would never miss an important event like this! I walked right off that set and here I am. See all of the good I do? Who wants to take my picture?  
20 (*Strikes a dramatic pose.*)

**ARCHIE:** I think I've taken all the photos I need of you, Miss Rose.

**ELIZABETH:** What?!

**DARLENE:** (*To ELIZABETH.*) We've been waiting for you. I understand the importance of a properly powdered nose.

25 **ELIZABETH:** I'm confused.

**DARLENE:** (*Indicates LILIAN.*) And who is this?

**ELIZABETH:** This is my assistant, Lilian Charles. You don't think I could come to a big event like this all by myself, do you? Who would hold my purse? (*Throws her purse at LILIAN.*)

30 **DARLENE:** Lilian? What happened to Sebastian?

**ELIZABETH:** Sebastian? I haven't the foggiest idea who you're talking about.

**DARLENE:** Never mind. The time has arrived. Please gather around tonight's main attraction. Ladies and gentleman, perhaps you are aware of the ancient Prince Aepep from the land of Lobnichia.  
35 As legend has it, this noble prince ruled the land for many years before taking on a beautiful peasant mistress. Naughty, naughty! One day, the great king discovered that Prince Aepep had shared some of the royal family's secrets with his mistress. The two were  
40 sentenced to death. And the mistress's mouth was sewn shut so that she could never divulge the secrets she had learned, not even in the afterlife. The bodies were placed together and

1 sealed for eternity in a large sarcophagus. Such a gruesome tale  
filled with blood, deception and betrayal. I am pleased as punch  
to present to you The Tomb of Aepep and His Mistress. Let the  
countdown begin! (*EVERYONE counts down from ten as BERTHA  
5 and SEBASTIAN ENTER DOWN RIGHT. BERTHA sees ELIZABETH  
and hides behind the benches. When the countdown reaches one,  
DARLENE removes the curtain to unveil the sarcophagus.*)

**BERTHA:** (*To SEBASTIAN.*) I thought you said the real Elizabeth Rose  
wasn't coming tonight.

10 **SEBASTIAN:** I thought she wasn't!

**BERTHA:** You blockhead! What are we going to do now? (*BLACKOUT.  
SOUND EFFECT: ELECTRICAL BUZZ. We hear some SCREAMS,  
GASPS and other reactions in the dark. During the blackout,  
ELIZABETH EXITS into the sarcophagus.*)

15 **MACKENZIE:** Did you forget to pay the electric bill, Ms. Kisser?

**DARLENE:** I don't think so. (*LIGHTS UP. SOUND EFFECT: ELECTRICAL  
BUZZ.*)

**LILIAN:** (*Notices ELIZABETH is missing. Quietly.*) Elizabeth?

**DARLENE:** Did you say something?

20 **LILIAN:** Elizabeth. Where's Elizabeth? She's missing. She was standing  
here just a moment ago.

**ARCHIE:** Another one of your bogus tricks, Valdez? Give it a rest!

**PAULIE:** (*To VALDEZ.*) Where is she? She wouldn't fit up your sleeve.  
What'd you do, swallow her like a slice of liverwurst?

25 **TIFFANY:** You ate her?

**VALDEZ:** Ladies and gentlemen, there must be a misunderstanding.  
This is not a trick. I do not know where the beautiful girl has gone.  
(*There is a banging from inside the sarcophagus.*)

**AL:** Someone's in that coffin thing.

30 **MARY:** Open it up. (*DARLENE opens the sarcophagus and ELIZABETH  
staggers IN with an ice pick in her chest. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.]  
EVERYONE gasps as ELIZABETH falls to the floor.*)

**AEPEP:** (*From inside the sarcophagus.*) Sim-Shaka-Ba! (*EVERYONE  
FREEZES. AEPEP, a mummy, ENTERS from the sarcophagus. To  
35 ELIZABETH.*) Geez, lady, it's cramped enough in there to begin with!  
You can't just appear and expect there to be room for you! (*To  
AUDIENCE.*) Hello there, folks. I'm Aepep. Recognize me? No? Why  
would you? I hardly recognize myself. Being dead and mummified  
for thousands of years sure can add some damage to the skin and  
40 wrinkles to the brow. (*MISTRESS, also a mummy, ENTERS from the  
sarcophagus.*)

**MISTRESS:** (*Mumbles angrily.*)

- 1 **AEPEP:** No, dear! I didn't mean you had any wrinkles. I just meant that we look a little different than we did when we were young and alive. Your skin may be rotting, but to me, it hasn't aged one bit.
- MISTRESS:** *(Mumbles romantically.)*
- 5 **AEPEP:** *(To AUDIENCE.)* Did you catch that? I didn't. I haven't been able to figure out what my mistress has been saying ever since her lips were sewn shut. I just do what every man does after being with his gal for thousands of years—nod my head and tell her what she wants to hear.
- 10 **MISTRESS:** *(Mumbles angrily.)*
- AEPEP:** Come now, dear, not in front of our new friends! *(MISTRESS notices AUDIENCE. She gets nervous and EXITS back into the sarcophagus.)* Oh, there's no reason to be shy. They won't bite.
- MISTRESS:** *(Mumbles whinily.)*
- 15 **AEPEP:** *(To AUDIENCE.)* Do you have any idea what it's like to listen to that for thousands of years? *(Indicates ELIZABETH.)* It looks like this young girl has seen better days. *(To ELIZABETH.)* We know what it's like to be murdered, don't worry. *(To AUDIENCE.)* What do you suppose happened to her? *(AEPEP should step forward and prompt AUDIENCE members to comment. He should ad lib his responses to several solicited comments. To MISTRESS.)* What do you think?
- 20 **MISTRESS:** *(Slowly comes out of the sarcophagus and looks at ELIZABETH. Mumbles disgustedly.)*
- 25 **AEPEP:** Whatever. *(To AUDIENCE.)* Well, we're going to take a peek around this place. It's been ages since we've seen anything but the inside of that sarcophagus. *(Indicates frozen CHARACTERS ONSTAGE.)* These people can fend for themselves for a while. *(To MISTRESS.)* C'mon babe. Let's visit the museum. It'll be like the honeymoon we never had. I hear there's a planetarium made entirely out of corn kernels. But move quickly. We don't want anyone to see us walking about. That would certainly cause a fright. Ba-Shaka-Sim! *(EXITS UP LEFT with MISTRESS. EVERYONE UNFREEZES.)*
- 30
- 35 **DARLENE:** What in the world...?
- JOY:** Oh, no!
- VALDEZ:** My beauty!
- LILIAN:** My boss!
- MARY:** My word!
- 40 **KIT:** Is—
- KAT:** —she—
- KIT/KAT:** —dead?

1 **JOY:** Girls, cover your eyes!  
**PAULIE:** Someone, help the broad!  
**AL:** Call a doctor!  
**MACKENZIE:** I'm on it! *(To LUCY.)* Mrs. Luna! You're a scientist. Is  
5 Elizabeth Rose dead? *(EVERYONE turns to LUCY, who has fallen  
asleep standing up. They stare at her in silence.)*  
**TIFFANY:** Is she dead, too?  
**LUCY:** *(Suddenly awakens.)* What? Who's dead? *(Checks her own  
pulse.)* Oh, thank heavens.  
10 **MACKENZIE:** Mrs. Luna, is Elizabeth Rose all right?  
**LUCY:** *(Walks over to ELIZABETH.)* Well, that depends on one thing.  
**MACKENZIE:** Go ahead.  
**LUCY:** Where am I?  
**ARCHIE:** Oh, for Pete's sake!  
15 **PAULIE:** She's dead, all right. I know dead meat when I see it.  
**MACKENZIE:** Do you think it was murder?  
**JOY:** It sure looks like it. There's an ice pick sticking out of Elizabeth's  
chest. Most people don't do that sort of thing to themselves.  
**PAULIE:** It's all right, folks. I seen this sorta thing happen all the time.  
20 I know exactly how to handle situations like this.  
**JOY:** What do you do?  
**PAULIE:** *(Walks over to VALDEZ.)* Ya squeeze until the truth pops out.  
**VALDEZ:** Beautiful sir, I know nothing. This magic was not my doing.  
But if I look around, perhaps I can discover how the illusion was  
25 created.  
**PAULIE:** Ya mean clean up the evidence? *(DOLLY begins to take  
pictures of ELIZABETH'S body.)*  
**ARCHIE:** What a story this is going to make. *(To DOLLY.)* Good idea,  
lady. *(Takes pictures as well.)* It's always the right time to get a good  
30 photograph. Do you have any idea what this image will be worth?  
**BERTHA:** *(To SEBASTIAN.)* Let's get outta here. *(She and SEBASTIAN  
begin to sneak out of the museum, but SEBASTIAN bumps into  
TIFFANY.)*  
**SEBASTIAN:** *(To TIFFANY.)* Whoops, sorry.  
35 **TIFFANY:** *(To SEBASTIAN.)* It's okie dokie smokie. *(Notices BERTHA.)*  
Hey, you're on the floor over there, you know? *(OTHERS turn to  
BERTHA.)*  
**BERTHA:** Crap. *(BLACKOUT.)*

End of Scene One

**End of script preview.**

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### PROPERTIES ONSTAGE

Benches, skeleton, sarcophagus covered by curtain, various small and simple exhibits, desk. Heavy vase with flower and telephone on desk. Small pillow, scissors, chain and lock in desk drawer.

At the opening of ACT TWO, Scene Two the hors d'oeuvres cart is preset with a bowl of spaghetti, tongs, five plates, silverware, pitcher of water, napkins, canister of grated parmesan cheese.

### PROPERTIES BROUGHT ON

#### ACT ONE

##### Scene One:

Clipboard, pen (DARLENE)

Notepad, pencil (ARCHIE)

Mug of coffee, fanny pack containing notepad, cloth, knee-high stockings, three pill bottles (MACKENZIE)

Hors d'oeuvres on plates (AL and JOY)

Index card (TIFFANY)

Camera (DOLLY)

Ice pick (ELIZABETH)

##### Scene Two:

Cell phone (DOLLY)

Broken vase (DARLENE)

Silverware (SEBASTIAN)

Long tablecloth over hors d'oeuvres cart with napkins, one pig in a blanket (MACKENZIE)

Ice pick (JOY)

Bowl of potato chips (TIFFANY)

#### ACT TWO

##### Scene One:

Bowl of potato chips (TIFFANY)

Large handbag with knife and ham (DOLLY)

Divorce papers (AL)

Fanny pack containing pencil and yellow, green and pink highlighters (MACKENZIE)

Notepad, pencil (ARCHIE)

##### Scene Two:

Plates of spaghetti (PAULIE, DOLLY, TIFFANY, AL, KIT, KAT)

Purse containing whistle and hard candy (LUCY)

Dentures (MARY)

Camera, handcuffs (DOLLY)

Ice pick (TIFFANY)  
Handcuffs (PAULIE)

### FLEXIBLE CASTING NOTE

While some roles must be played by actors of a specific gender, several may be played by either male or female actors. Flexible roles are: DARLENE (change name to Donny), ARCHIE (Annie), KIT, KAT, BERTHA (Brendan) and SEBASTIAN (Sally). The pronouns associated with these characters should be changed as necessary.

### COSTUMES

Since the setting is present day, the costumes are contemporary. The action takes place all in one evening, so the characters, with the exception of THE GREAT VALDEZ, should wear the same costume from the beginning of the play until its conclusion.

DARLENE and MACKENZIE wear professional attire. MACKENZIE should have a large fanny pack from which she pulls various items.

ARCHIE wears a press hat, coat and button-down shirt. He wears a camera around his neck.

LUCY wears a dress, knee high stockings and orthopedic shoes. She carries a cane and a large purse.

AL and JOY wear outdated, showy clothing. JOY has long hair that is worn up, such as in a bun.

KIT and KAT are dressed as typical young teens.

BERTHA and ELIZABETH should wear the same type of outfit, ideally an evening gown. ELIZABETH should look glamorous, while BERTHA should look somewhat disheveled. BERTHA also wears a wig that matches ELIZABETH'S hairstyle. Both should carry small purses.

SEBASTIAN wears a long trench coat, a scruffy-looking shirt, an oversized pair of pants and old shoes.

MARY wears slacks and a button-down shirt with a sweater on top. Her clothing should be bland, gender-neutral and lack vibrant colors.

TIFFANY wears a pageant gown complete with a tiara and a sash that reads, "Miss Pop, Snap and Shimmy."

DOLLY and PAULIE wear flashy, tacky clothing. DOLLY should carry a large handbag. DOLLY should also have at least one easily removable hair extension.

LILIAN wears a plain, simple dress.

The GREAT VALDEZ wears a tuxedo shirt and pants, a bowtie, suspenders and a cape. He wears his cape, t-shirt and boxer shorts with hearts in ACT TWO, Scene One.

AEPEP and MISTRESS should be dressed as mummies.

### AUDIENCE INTERACTION

The audience interacts with the characters of AEPEP and MISTRESS throughout the play. The actor playing AEPEP may need to do a little coaxing at first to get a reluctant audience responding and must be prepared to ad lib funny responses. Whether the actor allows the audience to call out, or whether he requires the audience to raise their hands to answer his questions is up to the director.

The character of AEPEP has the ability to stop time onstage. When he says, "Sim-Shaka-Ba!" the other characters onstage freeze (with the exception of MISTRESS). When AEPEP says, "Ba-Shaka-Sim!" the characters unfreeze. The formerly frozen characters should react as if time has not been stopped.

Towards the end of ACT TWO, Scene One, the audience has the opportunity to interrogate the characters with the help of AEPEP and MISTRESS. AEPEP asks the audience if they have any questions that they think should be asked of the suspects. AEPEP should control which audience members ask their questions, while MISTRESS writes the questions in a notepad. The actors onstage then improvise a short segment as AEPEP asks the questions that have been written in the notepad. This improvisation can be a lot of fun for both the actors and the audience, but the director should make sure that the cast is well prepared. During the rehearsal process, the director can feed questions to the actors that the audience might ask of the characters. Popular audience questions in the original production were, "Why does Mary have such a disapproving opinion of men?", "Why does Valdez say the word 'beautiful' so often?", and "Why does Darlene seem more concerned about potato chips than about the murders?" The number of questions that AEPEP and MISTRESS gather is up to the director. In the original production, eight to ten questions were gathered at each performance, creating an improvisation segment that lasted roughly ten minutes.

The question and answer improvisation segment can easily be cut from the play. Darlene's line, "With all of this information being presented, I don't know what to think. Who could have murdered Elizabeth and Joy? I'm so confused." can be followed directly by Lucy's line, "Someone has been murdered?" and the scene can simply end there

## A FEW NOTES ABOUT STAGING THIS PLAY

In ACT ONE, Scene One, THE GREAT VALDEZ appears in a puff of smoke. There are many inventive ways to stage a character appearing. In the original production, the character appeared on top of a unit holding an exhibit which was up against a false, easily movable upstage wall. On top of the unit was a metal grate which allowed for smoke to be pumped in from behind the set. As the smoke was released and shot upwards from the top of the unit through the grate, the actor playing VALDEZ slipped through the false wall from behind the set and stood on top of the unit. When the smoke cleared, it looked as if he had appeared out of thin air.

In ACT ONE, Scene One, ELIZABETH is stabbed in the chest with an ice pick while the lights are off. This effect can easily be created by sticking a piece of Styrofoam into the bust of the costume that the actress is wearing. The actress can carry a prop ice pick and a small vile of stage blood in her pocket during the scene. When the blackout occurs, the actress can reach into her pocket, grab the prop ice pick and stick the pick end into the foam. She can pour the vile of stage blood onto her chest so it looks as if she has been stabbed and then quickly enter the sarcophagus before the lights come back up. Since the stage is dark, the audience will not see the actress reach into her pocket or pour the stage blood. When the lights come up and the actress staggers out of the sarcophagus, the prop ice pick will look as if it is sticking out of her chest.

A similar concept can be used for the death of JOY in ACT ONE, Scene Two. If the actress wears her hair in an up-do, a piece of Styrofoam can be placed in the hair.

It is a good idea for a mop or rag to be kept somewhere appropriate onstage so that any stage blood or other slippery liquids that may hit the floor throughout the show can be promptly cleaned to avoid the actors from slipping. MACKENZIE, as the new intern at the museum, might be the character that would most appropriately wipe the stage.

It is important to note when blocking this play that the DOWN RIGHT, UP RIGHT and UP LEFT exits lead to various interconnected rooms in the museum. Therefore, it is possible for a character to exit into the room DOWN RIGHT and re-enter through the entrance UP LEFT or the entrance UP RIGHT (and vice versa). This layout leads the audience to believe that the characters are meandering throughout the museum, looking at exhibits and spying on one another.

In ACT TWO, Scene Two, MARY appears to find Lucy's dentures in her hair. This may be done simply by having MARY bring on the dentures hidden inside her pocket and planting the dentures in her hair during



the food fight. It may also be possible to have the dentures planted in her hair prior to the food fight.

#### SET

The sarcophagus exhibit should be built against the DOWN LEFT wall. It should have a hinged front so that the actors can enter from the sarcophagus. It should also have an escape passage leading OFF LEFT so that when the actors go into the sarcophagus, they do not have to remain inside for extended periods of time.

#### SOUND EFFECTS

Electrical buzz.

#### PRODUCTION HISTORY

The original production of *Murderous Night at the Museum* premiered at Nottingham High School in Hamilton, NJ on November 12, 2010.

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