

WADSWORTH. Wouldn't want to frighten anyone to death. There are so many better ways to die.

[MUSIC CUE #2]

(Then.)

WADSWORTH. Yvette! Cook! Is everything ready?

YVETTE. Oui, Monsieur.

WADSWORTH. You have your instructions?

(They nod.)

COOK. You want the dogs fed before the guests arrive?

WADSWORTH. No, I want them . . . hungry.

(Dogs bark.)

WADSWORTH. Cook— Dinner will be served at 7:30?

COOK. Sharp.

(COOK and YVETTE exit through the doorway. Thunder/lightning. WADSWORTH steps forward to address the audience.)

WADSWORTH. My apologies, ladies and gentlemen. I've been awfully rude. You've no idea why you're here do you? You see, it is the butler's job to make everyone comfortable. And from the looks of your faces . . . I'd venture to guess, you haven't got a clue. But don't worry. You're not alone. We're all in this together.

(Thunder/lightning. A dead body is revealed in the balcony.)

[MUSIC CUE #3]

WADSWORTH. Well, not him.

[MUSIC CUE #4]

WADSWORTH. (Looking at his pocket watch without pause.) At any rate, not to fear . . . if I've done my calculations correctly . . .

(The doorbell rings, proving his point.)

WADSWORTH. . . . The guests are on their way.

(Dogs bark. A bang.)

WADSWORTH. (Addressing the audience.) Don't be alarmed! It's just the Maid, in the Hall, with the Champagne Cork! Time to meet our guests!

[MUSIC CUE #5]

SCENE I

(The Hall.)

(WADSWORTH crosses upstage through the opening as the red drape flies out, revealing the Hall—a rather large gothic entrance room to a dark and mysterious mansion.)

(Lighting continues to flash, through a pair of stained-glass windows. Strange paintings and various taxidermy adorn the upper walls. There are a total of seven doors in the Hall, three stage right and three stage left. At center, there are steps that lead to a rounded platform where we find the front door. A suit of armor is stage left and a love seat is stage right.)

(There is a bit of stage choreography as YVETTE pushes a bar cart from one side of the stage to the other, crossing COOK who passes by her, sharpening her knives. WADSWORTH crosses between them and up the steps to the front door.)<sup>1</sup>

WADSWORTH. (Sly.) Right on time.

(WADSWORTH straightens his jacket, smooths his hair, looks at his pocket watch, and grandly opens the door.)

[MUSIC CUE #6]

(Dogs bark. Rain storms. COLONEL MUSTARD, officious yet disheveled, stands baffled in the doorway, shielding himself from the rain. He wears a medallion around his neck with a red-white-and-blue ribbon.)

WADSWORTH. Good evening.

(MUSTARD walks right in.)

MUSTARD. Good evening. I'm not sure if I'm in the right—

WADSWORTH. Yes, indeed, sir, you are expected, Colonel. May I take your coat? It is Colonel Mustard, isn't it?

MUSTARD. No, that's not my name. My name is Colonel—

WADSWORTH. (Putting up a hand to stop him from continuing.) Pardon me, sir, but tonight you may well feel obliged to my employer for the use of a pseudonym.

MUSTARD. Oh, no, thank you. I took an antihistamine before I came. (He inhales to demonstrate cleared sinus passages.)

<sup>1</sup> Please note: Starting here, each time the doorbell rings, the cast inside Boddy Manor has a deliberate look to the door and then a look out to the audience (or some such consistent head-ography).

**WADSWORTH.** (*Turning to YVETTE.*) Yvette, will you attend to the Colonel and give him anything he requires.

**YVETTE.** (*Firtatiously.*) Oui, Monsieur.

**WADSWORTH.** Within reason, that is.

**YVETTE.** You spoil all my fun!

(*Disappointed, YVETTE takes a confused MUSTARD's coat and offers him a glass of champagne, just as the doorbell simultaneously rings once more. ALL look to the door. Look out.*)

**WADSWORTH.** Ah.

(*WADSWORTH straightens his jacket, smooths his hair, glances at his watch, and opens the door.*)

(*Dogs bark. Rain storms. MRS. WHITE stands, tragic and morbid, dressed in funeral clothing, guarding herself from the rain. Over her face is a mesh black veil.*)

[MUSIC CUE #7]

**WADSWORTH.** Do come in, madam. You are expected.

(*WHITE enters fully with a confident mystique.*)

**WHITE.** (*Pulling back her veil, to reveal her face.*) Do you know who I am?

**WADSWORTH.** Only that you are to be known as Mrs. White.

**WHITE.** Ironic, isn't it?

(*WADSWORTH removes her coat, with a brilliantly white inside.*)

**WHITE.** The letter I received said I should refer to myself by that name, but why . . . ?

**WADSWORTH.** May I introduce you? Mrs. White, this is the maid —Yvette.

[MUSIC CUE #8]

(*The women flinch in disgust.*)

**WADSWORTH.** I see you two know each other.

**WHITE.** Don't be ridiculous, I've never seen this woman before in my life!

(*The women turn away from each other with dramatic flair. WHITE notices MUSTARD.*)

**WHITE.** Hello.

**MUSTARD.** Hello.

(*Simultaneously, the doorbell rings again. All look to the door. Then out. WADSWORTH straightens jacket, smooths hair, looks at watch, opens door.*)

(*Dogs bark. Rain storms. MRS. PEACOCK, middle-aged and rather batty, stands in a ridiculous hat, with distinct peacock feathers poking out. She wears a gigantic crucifix necklace and black-trimmed glasses. She desperately shields herself from the rain.*)

[MUSIC CUE #9]

**PEACOCK.** (*Drammatically.*) "Behold," said the Lord, "I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh."

**YVETTE.** Bonjour Madame.

**PEACOCK.** (*Reacting to YVETTE's skimpy uniform.*) Speaking of "flesh!"

**WADSWORTH.** Mrs. Peacock, I presume.

**COOK.** (*Removing PEACOCK's cloak and offering to take her Bible.*) Book?

**PEACOCK.** (*Noticing the COOK with surprise and clinging to her Bible.*) Cook!

[MUSIC CUE #10]

**WADSWORTH.** (*Relishing the rhyme.*) Look! You two know each other.

**PEACOCK.** (*Perfectly normal.*) Don't be ridiculous, I've never seen this woman before in my life!

(*The women turn away from each other with dramatic flair, causing PEACOCK to notice WHITE and MUSTARD for the first time.*)

**PEACOCK.** (*Bordering hysteria.*) Who are you?!

(*Before anyone can respond, the doorbell rings again. All look to the door. Then out.*)

**WADSWORTH.** (*To PEACOCK.*) Hold that thought.

(*Even faster now, WADSWORTH straightens, smooths, looks, and opens the door.*)

(*Dogs bark. Rain storms. MR. GREEN, straight as an arrow, serious and smart-looking, stands in a trench coat, holding an umbrella raised above his head. He does not enter, but remains in the doorway. He sneezes, takes out a hanky and wipes his nose.*)

[MUSIC CUE #11]

**GREEN.** Is this the right address to meet Mr. Boddy?

**WADSWORTH.** You must be Mr. Green.

GREEN. Yes . . .

*(The door remains open and the dogs are still barking wildly.)*

WADSWORTH. *(To dogs.)* Sit!

*(GREEN frantically sits on the loveseat. Dogs stop barking.)*

WADSWORTH. No. Not you, sir.

*(GREEN sheepishly stands up.)*

GREEN. Oh . . . Excuse me. I'm rather clumsy at parties, I'm afraid.

WADSWORTH. Not to worry, sir.

GREEN. *(Wiping his nose.)* Oh dear. Is there a cat? I'm afraid I'm highly allergic.

MUSTARD. *(To WADSWORTH.)* Give him a pseudonym. *(To GREEN.)* Clears it right up.

*(MUSTARD inhales deeply again.)*

WADSWORTH. *(Prompting.)* Cook? Coat?

COOK. *(Still wielding the knife—to GREEN.)* Kindly.

*(GREEN, spooked, hands over his coat to the COOK.)*

*(Lightning crashes, illuminating the house. The doorbell rings once more. All look to the door. Then out. Impossibly fast, WADSWORTH goes to the door, opens it. MISS SCARLET and PROFESSOR PLUM burst through the doorway, nearly knocking over WADSWORTH. He tumbles down the stairs.)*

[MUSIC CUE #12]

*(Despite the unruly entrance, SCARLET appears elegant. If she weren't such a hopeless broad, she'd be classy. She inhales a long thin cigarette in a fancy cigarette holder. PLUM wears a plum-colored beret. If he weren't such an arrogant cad, he'd be charming.)*

PROFESSOR PLUM. Greetings all. It's a pleasure for you to see me.

WADSWORTH. *(Struggling to his feet.)* Ah! Professor Plum! Miss Scarlet. Welcome. I didn't realize you were acquainted.

SCARLET. We weren't.

*(SCARLET and PLUM dump their coats on WADSWORTH.)*

*(SCARLET, redheaded, looks positively Hollywood in a provocative velvet green dress. PLUM, in his black tuxedo with plum-colored cummerbund and bow-tie, is quite the debonair academic.)*

SCARLET. My car broke down, and this . . . professor . . . gave me a ride.

PLUM. *(With a smarmy wink.)* Naughty, naughty, Miss Scarlet. And the party's barely begun . . .

*(Before she can reply—he notices cocktails.)*

Oooh, Cocktail hour! I only drink on two occasions. Day . . . and night.

*(PLUM, oozing charm from all the wrong places, has entered fully now, and just as GREEN is about to take a sip of his champagne, PLUM thoughtlessly takes it from him, downs it, and returns the glass empty.)*

SCARLET. *(Soaking in the mansion and other guests.)* Good lord, this really is a party.

*(Taking a glass of champagne off of YVETTE's tray.)*

Jesus Christ, what is this godforsaken place anyway?

PEACOCK. *(Crossing herself.)* I'll thank you to keep our Lord, Jesus Christ, out of this!

WADSWORTH. This old place? Oh, this . . . is Boddy Manor.

*(Thunder/lightning.)*

*(WADSWORTH checks his pocket watch, handing COOK the extra coats.)*

WADSWORTH. Cook. Dinner?

COOK. Directly.

*(YVETTE and COOK exit.)*

WADSWORTH. Now, ladies and gentlemen, we are all met. Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Wadsworth. The butler. *(Then.)* You may have realized that tonight, nobody is being addressed by their real name. I suggest you refrain from revealing too much about yourselves this evening.

*(The GUESTS glance around suspiciously. The sound of a gong. The GUESTS jump! GREEN spills champagne all over himself. PEACOCK and PLUM help him to mop himself up as . . .)*

WADSWORTH. *(Calmly, as always.)* Ah. Dinner.

SCARLET. *(Put out.)* I haven't even finished my champagne!

PLUM. That was more like a cocktail minute!

*(Just as GREEN has mopped himself up, the sound of the gong again. The GUESTS jump! PLUM and PEACOCK spill their drinks on GREEN.)*

**WADSWORTH.** *(Carrying on without pause.)* We really oughtn't to keep her waiting. Cook can get cranky. Follow me, please. The dining room is right this way.

[MUSIC CUE #13]

*(As GREEN mops himself up, WADSWORTH leads the GUESTS downstage. A scrim of an ornate textured wall flies in behind them. From opposite downstage wings, the COOK and YVETTE push on two sides of a dining room table.)*

*(During this transition, the GUESTS have lined up across the edge of the stage.)*

*(WADSWORTH walks to center, and calls their names off, one by one. Lights bump up on each guest.)*

[MUSIC CUE #14]

Colonel Mustard.

*(Poses "at attention," but hits himself in the head.)*

Mrs. White.

*(Lowers the black mesh veil over her face.)*

Mrs. Peacock.

*(She throws a prayer up to her Lord and Savior.)*

Mr. Green.

*(Blows his nose.)*

Miss Scarlet.

*(Blows a puff of smoke from her cigarette.)*

Professor Plum.

*(Slicks his hair in the reflection of a spoon.)*

**WADSWORTH.** You will find your names by your places.

[MUSIC CUE #15]

*(We transition to the Dining Room.)*

SCENE 2

*(The Dining Room.)*

*(Lights reveal the Dining Room, and a long, beautifully-set table with six chairs set side by side, facing the audience. Soup bowls are set at the table.)*

**WADSWORTH.** Please be seated.

*(The GUESTS move upstage and around the table.)*

**ALL.** *(Ad-libbing:)* "Do you see my tag?" "Is that me?" "Is that you?" "Oh, here you are, Mr. Green." *(Etc.)*

*(The GUESTS sit. MUSTARD sits on the far stage right side of the table. SCARLET sits next to him, followed by GREEN, PEACOCK, PLUM, and then WHITE, who is on the stage left side of the table.)*

**WADSWORTH.** Dinner is served.

**PEACOCK.** Well, what's all this about, Butler; this dinner party?

*(Dogs bark.)*

**WADSWORTH.** All in good time, Madam. *(In response to the barking.)*

Excuse me, if you will.

**YVETTE.** *(Presenting:)* Shark's fin soup.

**PEACOCK.** My favorite!

*(WADSWORTH exits.)*

**YVETTE.** Bon appetit.

*(YVETTE and COOK exit. For a moment, the GUESTS anxiously await what to do next.)*

**PLUM.** I say we eat it while it's hot.

*(He slurps a sip too loudly.)*

**SCARLET.** I like things hot.

*(She slurps a sip too loudly.)*

**MUSTARD.** But isn't soup supposed to be hot?

*(He slurps a sip too loudly.)*

**PEACOCK.** Thank you, Lord, for this meal we are about to receive and for the gracious host, whomever he is, that has invited us here tonight.

*(She slurps a sip too loudly.)*