

"Murder Mystery"

VICTOR BINGHAMTON, GWENDOLYN (Victor's wife), MELISSA (Victor's daughter), STEPHEN (Victor's son), and CRAZY UNCLE HOWARD (Victor's brother) are seated for dinner, about to eat a turkey.

VICTOR: And so, Lord, we thank you for the food we are about to eat, and for the happy household with which you have blessed us. Amen.

STEPHEN: This looks delicious, dad.

VICTOR: Well then, thank your mother. She's an excellent cook.

GWENDOLYN: Oh, now, Victor. I wouldn't have anything to cook with if you hadn't build that multi-million dollar publishing firm from the ground up.

MELISSA: She's right, dad. Nor would Stephen and I be able to afford the wonderful universities we're attending. You've really done a great job keeping this family together.

VICTOR: Well, I'm lucky to have such a wonderful family to spend my time with. (He raises his glass) Here's to the Binghamtons.

VIC, GWEN, STEPHEN, MELISSA: To the Binghamtons!

CRAZY UNCLE HOWARD: (abruptly) I'm going to kill you, Victor!!!

(Awkward pause.)

MELISSA: Oh, Crazy Uncle Howard. You're so crazy sometimes.

VICTOR: He sure is. So Gwendolyn, what did you buy at the store today?

GWENDOLYN: I bought a lovely apple peeler, a new can opener to replace the old one... oh, and an incredibly sharp knife. Show them, Howard.

(Howard brandishes a huge knife, grinning.)

VICTOR: Well, that's a beauty of a knife, Gwendolyn.

STEPHEN: It sure is, mom. I bet you could cut through human flesh with that thing!

GWENDOLYN: Well, that's what it said on the box, but I'm not sure I believe it.

MELISSA: It's true. You can't believe everything you read.

DETECTIVE: (entering) All right then! I'm here to investigate a murder. (Thunder clap.)

(Pause.)

MELISSA: Er... murder?

STEPHEN: What murder?

DETECTIVE: Can't you read? (He walks over and indicates the posterboard reading "MURDER MYSTERY.") Clearly there's going to be a murder here, and I'm here to investigate it.

VICTOR: That's strange. Who in this family would commit a murder?

(The lights go out and there is more thunder. There is screaming, and when the lights come up, we clearly see Crazy Uncle Howard in the middle of the stage, pulling a bloody knife out of Victor's dead body and giggling maniacally.)

GWENDOLYN: Victor!!

STEPHEN: Oh my God, Detective, you were right!! (suddenly they are more casual, shaking his hand) Nice job.

MELISSA: Yes, excellent work.

DETECTIVE: Well, it's what I do.

MELISSA: You're very good at it. (suddenly back to being horrified) What are we going to do?!

DETECTIVE: There's only one thing we can do. My keen detective skills tell me that one of the people in this room is... (dramatic pause) the murderer! (Thunder.)

STEPHEN: One of us? The murderer!

GWENDOLYN: That's preposterous! Who among us would want to kill Victor?

HOWARD: Hahaha! He's DEAD!

(Awkward pause.)

MELISSA: Yes, Crazy Uncle Howard, we're upset about it too. But let's keep our heads.

DETECTIVE: I think that's in bad taste, ma'am.

MELISSA: Hm?

DETECTIVE: Oh, I'm sorry, I thought your husband's head had been cut off. (He inspects the corpse.) Actually, it appears that the victim was stabbed with an incredibly sharp kitchen knife. (He takes the knife from Howard.) Quite like this one. (He hands it back to Howard.) Do you keep such a knife in this house?

GWENDOLYN: I just bought one. But anybody in the house could have picked it up.

DETECTIVE: But YOU bought it? Hmmm... Tell me, Mrs. Binghamton, how has your relationship with your husband been recently?

GWENDOLYN: It's been wonderful. Never better. In fact, we just went into town yesterday to finalize some changes to Victor's will.

DETECTIVE: Oh, did you? And I presume you were the primary beneficiary of this will?

GWENDOLYN: Er, no. Crazy Uncle Howard was actually.

HOWARD: Delicious bloood! (He licks the knife.)

(Awkward pause.)

DETECTIVE: Hmmm... Stephen. Victor was your father, was he not?

STEPHEN: Yes, he was.

DETECTIVE: And was he, perhaps, a neglecting father?

STEPHEN: Oh no, he was wonderful. He took me to the park as a child, he drove me back and forth to college whenever I needed it, and we play catch every Thursday. He even bought me this glove. (He produces a baseball glove, which the Detective takes.)

DETECTIVE: (reading) Property of Crazy Uncle Howard. Hmmm...

HOWARD: Got what he deserved! Got what he deserved, the bastard!

(Slightly longer awkward pause.)

DETECTIVE: And you, Melissa. Did your father have anything against you? Perhaps you dated someone he disapproved of?

MELISSA: Not at all. In fact, Dad introduced me to my current boyfriend, Paul. I think he used to be Crazy Uncle Howard's gay lover... but Dad told me if I worked really hard, I was bound to be able to change his mind.

DETECTIVE: Leaving Crazy Uncle Howard sad, lonely, and desperate for revenge?

MELISSA: I don't know. Maybe.

HOWARD: The knife made a squishy sound!

(Very long awkward pause. Like ten seconds or so.)

DETECTIVE: Not so fast! I have one more question which I suspect will lead us to the answer to this mystery. (He whirls around dramatically to face Howard.) Crazy Uncle Howard! (Dramatic pause.) Could you tell me where the phone is? I'm going to have to call in some reinforcements on this one, because I'm stumped.

HOWARD: BLOOD! MURDER! DEATH! I KILLED HIM AND I COULDN'T BE PROUDER! DIE, VICTOR, DIE! HAHAHAHA!

DETECTIVE: I beg your pardon?

HOWARD: It's in the den.

DETECTIVE: Thank you. (He exits.)

GWENDOLYN: Oh well, I guess we'd better get back to our dinner. It's best that we go about our daily lives.

STEPHEN: Yes. Otherwise the terrorists will have truly won.

ACTOR PLAYING MELISSA: Oh, for Christ's sake, I thought I said I wasn't doing sketch if we left in the stupid terrorist joke.

ACTOR PLAYING STEPHEN: Oh, come on, it's funny!

ACTOR PLAYING GWENDOLYN: It's stupid. I'm leaving.

ACTOR PLAYING MELISSA: Me too.

ACTOR PLAYING STEPHEN: Guys!

(He follows them out. Howard, left alone, looks around for a moment.)

HOWARD: I'LL CARVE!! (He attacks the turkey with the knife in the funniest way imaginable.)