



Charlotte Nixon

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DETECTIVE DEVAROE AND THE HALDON HOUSE HEIST

COMEDY/MURDER-MYSTERY. Detective Devaroe is certain a thief has hidden diamonds somewhere in Haldon House, the home of Lady Emily, a wealthy socialite. However, three bumbling constables—who won't stop touching Lady Emily's belongings and eating her hors d'oeuvres—find nothing. Though there's not a shred of evidence to connect Haldon House to the stolen diamonds, Devaroe declares, "The game is afoot!" and convinces his assistant, Dr. Delaney, that they must attend Lady Emily's Mysterious Masquerade Party to search for suspects. But, first, they must get past three footmen tasked with making sure all attendees are on the guest list. Devaroe disguises himself as an "elderly gentleman," while Delaney prefers a vampire and pirate costume. Once inside, Devaroe and Delaney encounter two practical jokers and a woman who compulsively overeats when she gets nervous. Then when the entertainment fails to show, the butler and maid are forced to serenade guests by playing water glasses and spoons. Suspects include a French diplomat, a Scottish Colonel, and a Texas rancher. Audiences will roll in the aisles with laughter, and there's a scene-stealer for everyone in the cast! Easy to stage with one simple set.

Performance Time: Approximately 65 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(7 M, 4 F, 8 flexible)

- DETECTIVE DEVAROE:** Private detective who doesn't need proof to solve a case; thinks he's far too intelligent to be associated with law enforcement; male.
- DR. DELANEY:** Devaroe's assistant who loves disguises, particularly pirates and vampires; male.
- LADY EMILY:** Wealthy socialite and party hostess; owner of Haldon House; female.
- JENNY:** Lady Emily's loyal maid whose hidden talent is playing water glasses; female.
- BUTLER:** Lady Emily's butler whose hidden talent is playing the spoons; male.
- FOOTMAN 1:** Tasked with making sure those who enter Lady Emily's party are on the guest list; afraid of vampires; flexible.
- FOOTMAN 2:** Tasked with making sure those who enter Lady Emily's party are on the guest list; thinks everyone at parties loves pirates; flexible.
- FOOTMAN 3:** Tasked with making sure those who enter Lady Emily's party are on the guest list; tends to take his job too seriously; male.
- DETECTIVE CHIEF INSPECTOR (DCI):** In charge of solving a series of diamond robberies; flexible.
- CONSTABLE 1, 2, 3:** Bumbling cops assisting the DCI with the investigation at Haldon House; flexible.
- MONTY MONGOOSE:** French foreign minister and party guest; French accent, opt.; male.
- COLONEL CRAWFORD:** Retired colonel and party guest; Scottish accent, opt.; male.
- MAVERICK:** Wealthy Texas rancher and party guest; Texan accent, opt.; male.
- GUEST 1:** Party guest who hates jazz and is against the domestication of all animals; female.

GUEST 2: Party guest who nervously eats at parties; female.

GUEST 3: Practical joker and party guest; flexible.

GUEST 4: Practical joker and party guest; flexible.

EXTRAS (opt.): As additional Guests.

SETTING

Haldon House, Lady Emily's manor house, Devon, England, 1923.

SET

Haldon House hall. Hall in Lady Emily's manor house. Rich décor with a potted plant, pictures, rugs, and a few chairs scattered around the room. There is a refreshment table with drinks and hors d'oeuvres. There is a table for Lady Emily's gifts. For outdoor scenes, there is a backdrop depicting the exterior of Haldon House, or set pieces may be used, if desired.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Haldon House hall, prior to the party.

Scene 2: Haldon House hall, prior to the party.

Scene 3: Outside Haldon House, a short time later.

Scene 4: Haldon House hall, evening, the party is in full swing.

Scene 5: Haldon House hall, a short time later.

Scene 6: Outside Haldon House.

Scene 7: Haldon House hall, a short time later.

Scene 8: Haldon House hall, a short time later.

Scene 9: Outside Haldon House.

Scene 10: Haldon House hall, a short time later.

PROPS

All-black disguise (clothing and something that covers her face), for Lady Emily
Several large "diamonds"
To-do list
Trays of assortment of hors d'oeuvres (e.g. sausage rolls, devilled eggs, meat tray, cream puffs, etc.)
Hand bell
2 Blindfolds
"Ice" sculpture
3 Elderly gentlemen disguises (each disguise should look entirely different), for Devaroe
Gaudy heiress disguise, for Delaney
Assorted wrapped gifts
Sharpie marker
Water glasses and spoons, for Jenny
Pirate disguise, for Delaney
Stuffed parrot, for Delaney's pirate costume
Bowl
Yellow box
Large pair of ladies bloomers
Vampire costume, for Delaney
Plastic fangs for vampire costume
Martini glass with an olive in it
Olives
2 Pairs of toy handcuffs

SOUND EFFECTS

Music for party

Ripping noise, opt.

1920's musical instrument police siren

"PEOPLE AT PARTIES LOVE PIRATES.
ESPECIALLY ONES WITH PARROTS."

—DR. DELANEY

SCENE I

(AT RISE: *Haldon House hall, Lady Emily's manor house, Devon, England. The room is set up for a party that Lady Emily is hosting that evening. As the lights dimly fill the room, a noise is heard offstage. Lady Emily enters dressed all in black with her face covered so that the audience can't identify her. Lady Emily looks around, pulls out a bag from her pocket, and opens it to reveal several large diamonds. She holds one diamond up to the light to examine it. Voices are heard offstage. Lady Emily looks for a place to stash the diamonds but can't find a hiding place. She freezes like a statue. [Note: Her statue pose should look ridiculous.]*)

JENNY: *(To herself, offstage.)* I need the candlesticks! I know they're in the hallway cupboard...the worst place to store them, if you ask me. Who puts candlesticks in an airing cupboard? *(Enters from the kitchen and crosses the hall, carrying a long to-do list.)* It was probably the maid before me. I swear, the hiring practices of this manor house! Every party, I'm worked off my feet gathering all of Her Ladyship's things. *(Stops, turns, and looks at the "statue." She shrugs and exits. Lady Emily breathes deeply and takes out a diamond for another look. Lady Emily hears Jenny offstage. She quickly attempts to hide the diamond bag in her pocket. Offstage.)* There's only two of them in here! *(Re-enters and heads toward the kitchen just as Lady Emily assumes her original statue pose. Jenny stops in her tracks. To herself.)* I thought Her Ladyship owned a few more than two. I remember from the last party...we should have four. *(Realizes.)* Oh, now hold on a minute! I didn't check behind the tablecloths. *(Jenny exits where she entered. Lady Emily inches her way to the kitchen exit but hears Jenny returning. Lady Emily goes back to her original statue pose, but it is slightly different because she can't remember her exact pose. Instead, she strikes another ridiculous pose. [Note: This pose should be even more outlandish than the first.] Jenny enters and heads toward the kitchen. To herself.)* I found the

third one. It was hiding behind the fancy napkins! Do you think the fourth is anywhere to be found? Oh, no! Maybe with the silverware... *(Looks at the "statue," suspiciously.)* I could have sworn that...couldn't have... *(Exits where she entered. Lady Emily breathes deeply and then attempts to head for the kitchen exit. She's almost at the door when she hears Jenny offstage. Lady Emily panics and makes a run for it. She exits to the kitchen. Jenny enters, looking at her to-do list. To herself.)* I finally have all the candlesticks, so what's next on the list? Serving spoons. Those'll be in the kitchen, I reckon. *(Exits to the kitchen without noticing that the "statue" is no longer there. Blackout.)*

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: Haldon House hall, prior to the party. Constable 1, 2, 3 enter and look around the room for diamonds. Constable 2, 3 begin to check the most ridiculous places.)

CONSTABLE 1: Nuffin'.

CONSTABLE 2: Broom closet...nuffin'!

CONSTABLE 3: Glass vase...nuffin'!

CONSTABLE 2: Table...nuffin'!

CONSTABLE 3: Under the rug...nuffin'!

CONSTABLE 1: *(To Constable 2, 3.)* We're just checking that the room is secure.

CONSTABLE 2/3: Oh.

(Lady Emily and Detective Chief Inspector (DCI) enter. They stand and wait while Constable 1-3 fall in line.)

CONSTABLE 1: The perimeter is secure, Detective Chief Inspector. There is no trace of the diamonds—

CONSTABLE 2: *(To DCI.)* We've checked everywhere. The plant, the pictures, the rugs, the lights—

CONSTABLE 3: *(To DCI.)* Even under our shoes, we have. *(Picks up one foot and looks and then picks up his other foot and looks.)* The criminal has slipped right through our fingers.

CONSTABLE 2: *(To DCI, striking a heroic pose.)* But don't you worry, Inspector—

CONSTABLE 3: *(To DCI, striking a heroic pose.)* He won't escape our grasp for long!

CONSTABLE 1: *(To Constable 2, 3.)* That's enough of... *(Indicating heroic poses.)* ...that!

LADY EMILY: Of course, you didn't find anything because there's simply nothing to find. Honestly, Chief Inspector, do I look like a criminal to you?

CONSTABLE 2: *(Eyeing Lady Emily suspiciously.)* That's what they all say!

CONSTABLE 3: (*Eyeing Lady Emily suspiciously.*) Right before they get caught!

LADY EMILY: (*Insulted.*) I beg your pardon!

CONSTABLE 1: My apologies, Lady Emily. My fellow constables can get quite excitable in the moment.

LADY EMILY: Oh, how unfortunate.

CONSTABLE 2: (*To Constable 3.*) Maybe there's something we missed.

CONSTABLE 3: We should review the premises one more time...for clues!

CONSTABLE 1: I'll watch them, Chief Inspector, and I'll make sure they don't touch anything.

(*Constable 2, 3 start to look around and proceed to touch everything. Constable 1 attempts to keep Constable 2, 3 from touching things, but he is unsuccessful.*)

LADY EMILY: Seriously, Inspector, I have been here all day. I've been getting ready for Haldon House's annual masquerade ball. It is tonight, you know, and anyone who's anyone is attending. (*To Constable 1-3, nasty tone.*) You fools, don't touch anything! This whole house is worth more than your heads! (*To DCI, sweetly.*) You see, Inspector, with so much to do to prepare, how could I have possibly found time to steal—? What was it, again?

DCI: Diamonds, My Lady. They're worth quite a lot, I'm told.

LADY EMILY: Indeed, but as you can see, I've simply had my hands full with preparations.

DCI: I understand, My Lady, and I'm sorry to bother you. I understand that you're very busy, but the information we were given at the station *did* say that the suspect approached this residence. There have been several diamond robberies in the last few months, and we've been advised to follow every lead. Now, My Lady, the tip we got said that the getaway motorcar was a black Sunbeam 20/60 and that it drove right up your front drive.

LADY EMILY: A black Sunbeam? Really, Inspector?! I own three black Sunbeams! All of my guests tonight will arrive in black Sunbeams. Any person wealthy enough to have a chauffeur will arrive in a black Sunbeam. It's the most luxurious motorcar on the market.

DCI: I understand that, but—

(Constable 2, 3 continue to look through Lady Emily's things. Constable 1 tries desperately to keep them from touching things.)

LADY EMILY: *(To Constable 1-3.)* I swear, if you three pests break anything, I will march right down to your supervisor and personally petition for your removal! *(To DCI, charmingly.)* Sorry, you were saying?

DCI: We do have a warrant to search the property. So we will need to check the *entire* premises. Constables, check the rest of the house, if you please.

CONSTABLE 1: Yes, Detective Chief Inspector.

CONSTABLE 2: I, uhhhhhh, think I'd better check the kitchen. Peoples are always hiding things in the kitchen.

CONSTABLE 3: Liar! You just want to check if there's something to eat.

CONSTABLE 2: No, I'm a professional, I am.

CONSTABLE 3: [Give over!] [*"Stop it!" or "Shut it!"*]

(Constable 2, 3 exit. Constable 1 shakes his head and follows them off. Devaroe and Delaney enter and look around the room casually.)

LADY EMILY: *(To DCI.)* Can I at least know who brought you the tip?

DCI: I'm sorry, Lady Emily, but our source was anonymous.

(Devaroe and Delaney approach DCI and Lady Emily.)

DEVAROE: *(To Lady Emily, proudly.)* It was I.

LADY EMILY: I beg your pardon?

DEVAROE: I reported to the authorities that the getaway vehicle used in tonight's robbery did indeed drive to this establishment and park in your driveway.

DCI: I should have known it was you! For the last time, Devaroe, you are not a police officer!

DEVAROE: Of course, I'm not. I'm far too intelligent to be associated with law enforcement. You'd only hold me back!

DELANEY: *(To DCI.)* He meant that as a compliment.

DCI: And Dr. Delaney...why am I not surprised? Where one crazy vigilante goes, the other must follow.

DEVAROE: What exactly are you implying, Inspector?

DCI: *(Correcting.)* Detective Chief Inspector. And I'm not implying anything. I'll flat out say it: You and your little sidekick are nothing but a thorn in my side.

DELANEY: *(Insulted.)* "Sidekick"? I do believe you mean "partner."

DCI: *(To Devaroe.)* This is the third "tip" you've given us, and they all end in a wild goose chase!

DEVAROE: I go where the evidence leads me. Besides, it's not like *you'd* solve the case. *(Laughs.)*

DCI: I've solved plenty of cases in my time, and I'll—

DEVAROE: Yet you can't solve this one!

DCI: Is that so?

DEVAROE: So!

(Devaroe and DCI approach each other and conduct a stare-down.)

DELANEY: *(To Devaroe and Delaney, breaking up the stare-down.)* Now, that's quite enough! Break it up, you two, and play nice. We are on the same side, after all!

LADY EMILY: As much as I'm loving this fabulous display of male bravado, *who* are you?

DEVAROE: Oh, how rude of me. The name is Devaroe, private detective, and this is Delaney, my assistant.

DELANEY: *(To Lady Emily, shaking her hand.)* More like “associate,” but “assistant” is fine. I do have a doctorate, but, you know, it’s fine—

LADY EMILY: But why are *you* at my house?

DEVAROE: As I’m sure you are aware, there have been a series of high-end jewellery robberies over the last six months, and the criminal has yet to be caught. I decided to stake out the only opulent jewellery store left this side of the Thames. Well, I didn’t have to wait long. Within days, the establishment was broken into, the alarm sounded, and immediately following, a masked figure, dressed all in black, ran out the front door and into a black Sunbeam. I gave chase, and the culprit drove straight to this residence and up your front drive! At which point, so as not to trespass and break the law myself, I called the authorities and waited for them to arrive before entering the premises.

DCI: So you followed the motorcar straight here, correct?

DEVAROE: I was right on their tail!

DCI: So you got a license plate number?

DEVAROE: What? No! I didn’t think it necessary as I had already found the perpetrator’s location.

LADY EMILY: And you are assuming this Sunbeam is one of my vehicles...without proof?

DEVAROE: Proof? I don’t need proof. I have the power of deduction!

DELANEY: Actually, Devaroe, you do need proof! It’s the law: “Innocent until proven guilty,” and all that.

DEVAROE: This is preposterous!

DCI: *(Laughing, clapping.)* Great police work, Devaroe! You’re a regular Sherlock Holmes, you are! You didn’t collect a single piece of solid evidence linking this house to the crime. Bravo!

DEVAROE: Detective Chief Inspector, I assure you that the robber came to this location. I am absolutely positive that the diamonds are somewhere in this house.

LADY EMILY: That's impossible. I've been preparing all day for my party. If someone had tried to enter or leave Haldon House, I would know about it.

(Constable 1, 2, 3 enter. Constable 2, 3 are eating hors d'oeuvres delightful from the kitchen.)

CONSTABLE 1: Nuffin' upstairs.

CONSTABLE 2: *(Announcing.)* The kitchen, neither!

CONSTABLE 3: *(Announcing.)* We found absolutely nuffin'.

LADY EMILY: *(Slightly nervous.)* Except tonight's hors d'oeuvres! I've had enough of this!

DEVAROE: *(To Constable 1-3.)* Well, that is just absurd. Check again! Check again! You obviously didn't look hard enough! I know the thief is in this house!

CONSTABLE 3: *(Insulted.)* Is this "to-do," saying we don't know how to do our jobs?

CONSTABLE 2: *(To Devaroe, insulted.)* That's what it sounds like to me.

CONSTABLE 3: Maybe he needs to be taught a lesson on how to speak to law enforcement proper!

CONSTABLE 1: *(To Constable 2, 3.)* Really? And what are you two blockheads going to do about it?

DCI: There's nothing here, Constables, let's get a move on!

CONSTABLE 2: *(To Constable 1.)* You heard him...pack it up!

CONSTABLE 3: *(To Constable 1.)* Yeah, pack it up!

CONSTABLE 1: I did hear him with my own ears the first time.

CONSTABLE 2, 3: *(Mockingly.)* Oh, look who's sensitive.

(DCI and Constable 1, 2, 3 start to exit.)

DEVAROE: *(To DCI.)* What? What are you doing? You can't leave!

DCI: The house is clean, Devaroe. And do me a favor: Next time you have another crazy theory as to who this thief is,

do *not* call us. We're very sorry to have wasted your time, Lady Emily. I hope you have a lovely time at your party.
LADY EMILY: Thank you, Inspector.

(DCI and Constable 1, 2, 3 exit.)

DEVAROE: *(Calls.)* Well, fine! I'll just search the house myself!

LADY EMILY: You most certainly will not! This is my house—and as you are not a policeman and do not have a warrant—I see no reason why I must entertain your fanciful ideas one second longer. Get out!

DEVAROE: I say, Delaney, how perfectly ghastly! Madame, manners are what—

LADY EMILY: *(Shouts.)* Get out of my house! And if you set one foot on my property again, I'll have you arrested for trespassing!

DEVAROE: How wretched!

DELANEY: Come on, Devaroe, we've outstayed our welcome...as usual.

(Delaney pulls Devaroe off. There is a slight smile on Lady Emily's lips as she looks at the audience.)

LADY EMILY: *(Calls.)* Jenny, where are the candlesticks I asked for? While you're polishing them, I have a few things I need to prepare in the kitchen. *(Louder.)* Jenny? Jenny!
(Exits. Blackout.)

SCENE 3

(AT RISE: Outside Haldon House, a short time later.)

DEVAROE: (*Pacing feverishly.*) I'm telling you, Delaney, the diamonds are in that house! I can feel it!

DELANEY: I believe you. I mean, you've never been wrong before.

DEVAROE: Of course, I'm never wrong.

DELANEY: Except for the time you accused the 15th Earl of Devon of kidnapping his own children.

DEVAROE: Nine out of 10 times a kidnapper is close to their victims. What's closer than fatherhood?

DELANEY: And then there's the time when you accused the county's portraitist of stealing several art pieces.

DEVAROE: How was I supposed to know that the artist had extra storage elsewhere?

DELANEY: And the time when—

DEVAROE: All right! Get to the point!

DELANEY: All those times aside, you might actually be on to something here. There was something not quite right in that house. We were right on the thief's trail. There wasn't enough time to sneak away without being caught by the police. The thief must still be hiding in the house.

DEVAROE: Go on...

DELANEY: Well, the way I see it, Haldon House is big enough to lie low, and it's pretty obvious that Lady Emily is preparing for a party. If I were the thief, I'd wait until tonight and slip out as one of the party guests. Wouldn't be too difficult, I reckon.

DEVAROE: Delaney, you took the words right out of my mouth.

DELANEY: (*Suspicious.*) Oh, really, you were going to say all that?

DEVAROE: (*Can't pronounce.*) Unequivocally... (*Tries again but can't pronounce.*) Unequivocally...unequiv—

DELANEY: (*Pronouncing it correctly.*) Unequivocally?

DEVAROE: Precisely! Delaney, we must find those diamonds!

DELANEY: Okay, so what's our plan?

DEVAROE: Pull out your hat and tails, Delaney, because we're going to a party!

DELANEY: Yes, but, Devaroe, I don't believe we're invited.

DEVAROE: Excellent observation. That does present a problem. (*Gets an idea.*) Wait! I have the perfect plan!

DELANEY: I'm waiting with bated breath.

DEVAROE: Dear Delaney, all in good time, all in good time...

(*Devaroe and Delaney exit. Blackout.*)

SCENE 4

(AT RISE: Haldon House hall, evening. Lady Emily's party is in progress. There are a few chairs and a refreshment table for guests. Mongoose, Maverick, and Crawford are huddled together, chatting. Guest 1 and Guest 2 are in a corner talking. Guest 3 and Guest 4 are in the middle of playing a parlor game. Guest 3 rings a bell and Guest 4 has to try and find Guest 3, but they are blindfolded. Jenny is offering drinks and snacks to Guests. Footman 1, 2, 3 are stationed at the hall entry.)

JENNY: (To Guest 1, holding out a tray of hors d'oeuvres.) May I offer you something to eat?

GUEST 1: What is it?

JENNY: I believe they're sausage rolls.

GUEST 1: Oh, no! I couldn't eat any of that.

(Guest 1 grabs a sausage roll. Jenny approaches Guest 2.)

JENNY: (To Guest 2, holding out a tray of hors d'oeuvres) May I offer you something to eat, Madame?

(Guest 2 takes the entire tray from Jenny.)

GUEST 2: Why, thank you, little missy, I don't mind if I do!
(Starts to eat everything on the tray.) Got any sauce?

JENNY: (Disgusted.) I'll see what I can do.

GUEST 3: Excuse me, but I need your help. My friend appears to be in an unusual way.

JENNY: An unusual way?

GUEST 3: He's stuck to the ice sculpture. An innocent party game gone wrong, you see—

(Jenny and Guest 3 approach Guest 4, who is blindfolded and has his tongue stuck to the ice sculpture.)

GUEST 4: (*Frantic, with tongue sticking out.*) Help me! Help me! I can't get unstuck!

JENNY: Hold on a moment, please.

(*Jenny grabs Guest 4 and begins to pull.*)

GUEST 4: (*Shouts.*) Ow! Ouch! Stop pulling on me!

JENNY: Just a moment longer. We'll have you free in no time.

(*To Guest 3.*) Do you think you could help me? He's very stuck!

GUEST 3: (*Devilishly.*) Gladly!

(*Jenny grabs Guest 4. Guest 3 grabs Jenny. Jenny and Guest 3 pull on Guest 4. A ripping noise is heard and Guest 4's tongue is finally free.*)

GUEST 4: (*Tongue out, pulling off blindfold.*) My tongue! I think you ripped off half my tongue!

JENNY: You're very welcome. Now I must continue with my work.

GUEST 4: (*To Guest 3, tongue out.*) She ripped off my tongue!

GUEST 3: Oh, look! There're the footmen!

GUEST 4: (*Tongue out.*) Oh, I know where this is going!

(*Eager to pull a practical joke, Guest 3 and Guest 4 approach Footman 1, 2.*)

GUEST 3: (*To Footman 1, 2.*) Gentlemen, do you happen to know if Baron Ocks is joining us this evening?

FOOTMAN 1: He doesn't appear to be on my list.

GUEST 3: First name "Budd." Last name "Ocks"?

FOOTMAN 2: Sorry, not on the list

GUEST 4: (*Tongue still hurting.*) That can't be right. He assured us he was coming to tonight's festivities.

FOOTMAN 2: We'll check outside, sir.

(Footman 1, 2, 3 exit.)

FOOTMAN 3: *(Offstage, announcing.)* Is [Baron Budd Ocks] in attendance? We're looking for a [Baron Budd Ocks]? *[Note: Pronounced: Baron Buttocks.]*

(Guest 3, 4 laugh. Footman 1, 2, 3 enter.)

FOOTMAN 1, 2, 3: *(To Guest 3, 4, angrily.)* He's not on the list!

GUEST 3: *(Holding back laughter.)* Oh, that's a shame.

(Guest 3, 4 slink away, laughing to themselves. Butler enters.)

BUTLER: *(To Guests, announcing.)* Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Lady Emily Gertrude's Mysterious Masquerade! Tonight will be an evening of secrecy and intrigue! Now, without further— *(Jenny approaches Butler and whispers something in his ear. To Jenny.)* Indeed. *(To Guests, announcing.)* The staff of the estate would like to remind its guests that for their own safety they should refrain from sticking their tongues to the ice sculptures. So without further ado, it is my pleasure to present to you our most gracious, humble host...Lady Emily Gertrude!

(Guests applaud as Lady Emily enters.)

LADY EMILY: *(To Guests, announcing.)* Thank you, thank you! You are too kind. *(Guests stop clapping. Annoyed.)* Excuse me! Why did you stop clapping? *(Guests begin clapping again.)* Thank you, thank you! Oh, please stop it! *(Guests stop clapping. Annoyed.)* Why'd you stop? *(Guests begin clapping.)* Thank you, thank you! Please, this is too much! Stop it! Oh, come on now, stop it! *(Guests don't stop clapping this time. Shouts.)* Stop it! *(Guests stop clapping.)* Thank you! I would like to take a moment to welcome each and everyone one of you to my home this evening. It's

going to be a great party. But before we start, I wanted to mention that the police were here earlier. (*Indistinct murmurs are heard from the Guests.*) No need to be alarmed. They were looking into a case. But we were given the all-clear, so everything is fine...you know, just in case any of you decided to start nasty rumor about me and the estate to get ahead! (*Serious.*) I'm watching *all* of you. (*Cheerful.*) So let's get this party started! Music!

(Music plays and the party continues. Blackout.)

SCENE 5

(AT RISE: Haldon House hall, a short time later. Devaroe and Delaney enter, wearing disguises. Devaroe is dressed as an elderly gentleman, and Delaney is dressed as a gaudy heiress. Before they can join the Guests, they are stopped by Footman 1, 2, 3.)

FOOTMAN 2: (To Devaroe.) Name?

DEVAROE: (Obviously lying.) We're Mr. and Mrs. Pembroke of the Scottish Pem-brook-er-shires—

FOOTMAN 1: You are not on the list, sir.

DEVAROE: (As Mr. Pembroke.) Pardon me?

FOOTMAN 3: Your name is not on the list. We cannot allow you in unless your name's on the list.

DELANEY: (As Mrs. Pembroke.) Oh, silly me! I must have replied under my maiden name. I'm so clumsy sometimes! I'd forget my own pretty little head if it weren't attached to my shoulders. (Flirtatiously.) Speaking of shoulders, yours are huge. My, my! (Sneaks a peek at the guest list.) Oh, look! Here we are... (Points to guestbook.) ...Lady Emmeline and guest.

FOOTMAN 1: (To Footman 3.) They're on the list.

FOOTMAN 3: (To Devaroe and Delaney.) You may go in. Enjoy the party, and might I say that you look exquisite this evening, Lady Emmeline.

DELANEY: (As Mrs. Pembroke.) I do try. (Delaney and Devaroe join the party. Big sigh of relief.) Devaroe, why do I always get the female disguises?

DEVAROE: Isn't it obvious? You have the better bone structure.

DELANEY: Well, I did spend an awfully long time trying to get the hair flip just right, and I—

DEVAROE: Now, to the case at hand! We need to split up and interview the guests. Someone in this mix of characters is not who they appear to be. You take that side of the room, and I'll take this side.

DELANEY: Right! To catching a jewel thief! *(Heads to one side of the stage to speak to some Guests. Devaroe heads to the other side and begins snooping around. Lady Emily is speaking with Mongoose, Crawford, and Maverick. Crawford hands Lady Emily a gift. Lady Emily excuses herself and exits with the gift to the kitchen. To Guest 1, as Mrs. Pembroke..)* Isn't this a smashing party! Bee's knees, I'd say!

GUEST 1: I dunno. It's no Candlelight Club with the foxtrot, tango, or Charleston, but the drinks are good!

DELANEY: The Charleston?

GUEST 1: Oh, yes! Everyone's doing it! It's the latest trend. I can't believe you've never heard of it!

DELANEY: *(Lying.)* Oh, yes, I've totally heard of it. I did the Carlston just last week. Charming!

GUEST 1: I know, right?

(Guest 1 starts dancing the Charleston. Delaney joins in, but is terrible at it.)

DELANEY: *(As Mrs. Pembroke.)* Well, this has been...um...nice, but I have to go...powder my nose.

(Trying to dance the Charleston, Delaney slowly retreats. To catch his breath, he grabs a drink and some food at the refreshment table. Devaroe is investigating Mongoose, the French foreign minister, who has stepped away from his friends, Crawford and Maverick.)

DEVAROE: *(As Mr. Pembroke, obviously lying.)* Minister Mongoose, it's so good to see you again!

MONGOOSE: Do I know you, Monsieur?

DEVAROE: *(As Mr. Pembroke. Laughs.)* Do you know me? Look at you, old sport! Of course, you know me! We met at the expo last fall.

MONGOOSE: What expo was that?

DEVAROE: *(As Mr. Pembroke, obviously lying.)* You know, the expo!

MONGOOSE: *(Pretends to remember.)* Oh, oui! *The expo! Such excitement!*

DEVAROE: *(As Mr. Pembroke.)* Wasn't it just?! Minister, let's get a drink, and we'll catch up!

(Guest 2 goes to the refreshment table to get more food.)

DELANEY: *(As Mrs. Pembroke. To Guest 2.)* So?

GUEST 2: *(Stuffing her face.)* Yes?

DELANEY: *(As Mrs. Pembroke.)* I notice you're wearing a lot of jewellery this evening?

GUEST 2: *(Indicating Delaney's plate.)* Are you going to eat that? I'll happily take it off your hands. The maid has refused to serve me anymore. Can you believe it?!

DELANEY: *(Awkward smile.)* Really? I can't imagine why...

GUEST 2: *(Insulted.)* What are you trying to say there, huh?

DELANEY: *(As Mrs. Pembroke.)* Nothing, nothing. I think I see a servant with a new plate of—

GUEST 2: *(Excited.)* Where?!

DELANEY: *(As Mrs. Pembroke.)* Must be off!

(Slowly, Delaney backs away and finds another Guest to chat with. Devaroe's conversation with Mongoose is going according to plan. Lady Emily enters with Crawford's gift and places it on the gift table.)

DEVAROE: *(As Mr. Pembroke. To Mongoose.)* So, tell me again, why are you in town?

MONGOOSE: Well, um, I've been looking at a few investment opportunities, but all the places I've looked at are not within my budget. It's been my dream to open a French patisserie in this country. You have not experienced heaven until you've tried one of my croissants.

DEVAROE: That is quite the undertaking, Minister—

MONGOOSE: Oui, I know. This is my fifth visit in the last six months, but Lady Emily has been such a wonderful host,

she's taken me in every time. I think she likes French baking more than I do –

DEVAROE: *(As Mr. Pembroke.)* Wait. Have you been here five times in the last six months?

MONGOOSE: Oui!

DEVAROE: *(As Mr. Pembroke.)* And all five times you've stayed here at Haldon House?

MONGOOSE: Oui!

DEVAROE: *(As Mr. Pembroke.)* And your business venture needs start-up capital?

MONGOOSE: Oui, Monsieur, that is correct.

DEVAROE: *(As Mr. Pembroke.)* Oh, Minister Mongoose, you are not what you seem!

MONGOOSE: Excusez-moi?

DEVAROE: *(Shouts.)* Stop the music! Stop the party! Stop everything! I have found the jewel thief! *(The party comes to a halt. Everyone stops and stares at Devaroe. Lady Emily watches on with suspicion. Guests adlib shock, "What?" "Where?" "Who?" "My necklace is missing. Oh, wait! It's around my neck!" etc.)* Minister Mongoose, you have been stealing diamonds out of this town for months!

MONGOOSE: Sacré bleu! I would never!

DEVAROE: Oh, yes, you would, and you have been! I find it interesting, Minister, that your visits here coincide perfectly with the dates and times of each robbery and that you require more money to fund your bakery. And, finally, and most importantly, that you've been staying here at this estate...the very estate that I witnessed the diamond thief disappear into earlier this very evening!

MONGOOSE: It is not true!

DEVAROE: Oh, yes, it is!

LADY EMILY: What the devil is going on here?

DEVAROE: I have found the thief, Lady Emily. He was under your nose the whole time!

LADY EMILY: Who are you? You're not on my guest list!

DEVAROE: (*Removing disguise.*) Detective Devaroe, private investigator!

LADY EMILY: You! I told you to get out of my house and never come back! (*To Footman 1, 2, 3, shouts.*) Remove him immediately!

DEVAROE: Don't ignore the facts, Lady Emily. This man is a thief!

LADY EMILY: Oh, really?! Monty—

MONGOOSE: Oui?

LADY EMILY: When did you purchase your bakery?

MONGOOSE: Last month, Madame. I am here overseeing the start-up.

LADY EMILY: You see, Devaroe, why would the Minister steal money for an investment that he's already paid for?

DEVAROE: (*Struggling.*) Well, I don't know, but I'm sure if we dig deeper, we'd—

LADY EMILY: (*Shouts.*) I've heard enough! You are an incompetent misfit! (*To Footman 1, 2, 3, shouts.*) Escort Mr. Devaroe from the premises immediately!

DEVAROE: (*Correcting.*) Actually, it's Detective Dev—

FOOTMAN 2: (*Grabs Devaroe by the jacket.*) You come with us!

(*Footman 2 and Devaroe step away.*)

DELANEY: (*Thinking Devaroe is still there.*) Devaroe, I think I have something. There are these two suspicious characters in the corner. They keep daring each other to do the strangest things. (*Sees that Devaroe isn't there. Indicating Footmen.*) Oh, hello, nice party! (*To Devaroe.*) We've been found out, then?

DEVAROE: Indeed.

(*Delaney removes his wig.*)

FOOTMAN 3: (*Shocked.*) Lady Emmeline...you're a lord?!

DELANEY: So sorry...

LADY EMILY: Dr. Delaney! Why am I not surprised?

DELANEY: Lady Emily, we meet again. *(To Footman 1, 2, 3.)*

Ah, yes, and, um, it's nice to make your acquaintances. My name is Dr. Delaney, and—

LADY EMILY: *(To Footman 1-3.)* Take that one, too!

FOOTMAN 1: *(Grabs Delaney.)* Yes, milady.

LADY EMILY: And, Devaroe... *(Shouts.)* ...don't come back!

DEVAROE: Fools! I know the missing diamonds are here!

DELANEY: Goodbye, Lady Emily, always a pleasure.

(Footman 1, 2, 3 start to escort Devaroe and Delaney off.)

FOOTMAN 1: *(To Footman 2.)* This is all your fault. I told you they weren't on the list.

FOOTMAN 2: What? You told me they were *on* the list.

FOOTMAN 1: No, not when they first showed up.

FOOTMAN 2: It's not my fault you changed your mind.

FOOTMAN 1: No one gets in if they're not on the list, and they weren't on the list.

FOOTMAN 3: Well, then, maybe we should double-check the list!

FOOTMAN 1: And maybe you shouldn't let in whoever you feel like!

DEVAROE: Have you three ever considered relationship counselling?

DELANEY: *(Sarcastic.)* So helpful, Detective.

FOOTMAN 1: *(Shouts.)* Get out!

FOOTMAN 2: *(To Delaney and Devaroe, shouts.)* And don't come back until you're on the list!

(Blackout.)

SCENE 6

(AT RISE: Outside Haldon House. Delaney is removing his disguise. Devaroe is pacing.)

DELANEY: (*Sarcastic.*) Well, that went according to plan.

DEVAROE: We will have time for your mockery later. Right now, we need to debrief.

DELANEY: So we're not addressing your accusation of a foreign dignitary, then?

DEVAROE: We're moving on. The case waits for no man! Who did you talk to?

DELANEY: I talked to a—

DEVAROE: What did they say?

DELANEY: They said several things, mainly—

DEVAROE: Did any of it pertain to the case?

DELANEY: I don't believe—

DEVAROE: At anytime did you see someone sneak away from the party?

DELANEY: I can't be sure. I was preoccupied with—

DEVAROE: Anyone holding a suspicious object?

DELANEY: What kind of suspicious obj—

DEVAROE: Something that could hold a diamond.

DELANEY: Yes?

DEVAROE: Really?

DELANEY: On second thought, no.

DEVAROE: I say, Doctor, what were you actually doing in there?!

DELANEY: I was—

DEVAROE: No matter! Unfortunately, neither one of us collected anything of substance. We have nothing...not a single shred of evidence to connect this house to the robberies. I will be a laughingstock! The Detective Chief Inspector will skip around merrily singing, "told you so" off-pitch and with no sense of rhythm, which I will not stand for! Whatever shall I do?! I'm a fool, Delaney, a fool!

DELANEY: Well, the saying goes, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." We could just sneak in again.

(Pause.)

DEVAROE: My dear doctor, I've got it! We shall sneak in again! I'm brilliant! Absolutely brilliant!

DELANEY: I'm glad *you* think so.

DEVAROE: Come on, Delaney, we've not a moment to lose! Ha-ha! The game is afoot!

DELANEY: Another Holmes line?

DEVAROE: I don't know what the devil you're talking about, Doctor! *(Exits.)*

DELANEY: Oh, fine, play innocent, but I'm picking my own disguise this time. *(Exits after Devaroe. Blackout.)*

SCENE 7

(AT RISE: *Haldon House hall, a short time later. Guest 1-4, Mongoose, Crawford, Maverick, and other Guests are having a wonderful time. Footman 1, 2, 3 are standing at the entryway. Jenny and the Butler are serving refreshments to the Guests. Lady Emily is moving from Guest to Guest, making sure everyone is having a good time.*)

BUTLER: (*Announcing.*) Hello again, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of Haldon House, we sincerely hope you are enjoying yourselves! (*Guests cheer.*) Excellent! I have a few announcements. It's now time for tonight's performances to begin. First, the amazing, the mystical, the mysterious Melvin, the Invisible Magician! (*Guests cheer. Magician does not appear. Louder.*) Melvin, the Invisible Magician! (*Jenny runs off to look for the magician. Louder.*) Melvin, the Invisible Magician!

(*Jenny enters and rushes over to the Butler.*)

JENNY: (*To Butler, aside.*) I can't see him anywhere!

BUTLER: (*To Guests, announcing.*) I'm terribly sorry, ladies and gentlemen. It seems that Melvin, the Invisible Magician has vanished into thin air. But do not worry, we have plenty of entertainment for you this evening. Next up, we have the graceful, the stylish, the ever-poised dancing troupe...The Masked Maidens! (*Begins to clap feverishly, and Guests follow suit. The Masked Maidens do not appear. Louder.*) The Masked Maidens! (*The Masked Maidens do not appear. Jenny runs off to find them. Louder.*) The Masked Maidens!

(*Jenny enters and rushes over to the Butler.*)

JENNY: (*To Butler, aside.*) They all have bloody noses! They can't dance!

BUTLER: *(Aside.)* All of them?

JENNY: *(Aside.)* They were practising their cancan line, and they kicked each other in the face. Now all their noses are gushing blood!

BUTLER: *(To Guests, announcing.)* My apologies again, ladies and gentlemen. The Masked Maidens have suddenly suffered from communal nosebleeds and will not be able to dance for you this evening. Moving on...our last event for you this evening is an art exhibit featuring only masked portraits. *(Calls.)* Please, bring in the art! *(No one appears. Jenny rushes off. To himself.)* Oh, for heaven's sake, can something please just go right? *(Announcing, louder.)* Bring in the art!

(Jenny enters and rushes over to the Butler. Guests 3, 4 eavesdrop.)

JENNY: *(Stage whisper.)* Someone has drawn a mustache on each picture!

BUTLER: You can't be serious!

GUEST 3: *(To Guest 4, aside.)* Was that you?

GUEST 4: *(Pulls out a Sharpie marker.)* Oh, yeah! *(Guest 3, 4 high-five.)* I saw some statues in the rose garden, too. Do you want to...? *(Waves the Sharpie marker around.)*

GUEST 3: Oh, no, I couldn't—

GUEST 4: Come on, I dare you!

GUEST 3: I accept!

(Giddy, Guest 3, 4 run off, with Sharpie marker held high.)

BUTLER: *(Announcing.)* Unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, due to some very bizarre and coincidental circumstances, none of tonight's entertainment is able to perform for you. But please don't be disappointed. We, the staff of Haldon House, are full of hidden talents. Jenny, here... *(Pulls Jenny to CS.)* ...can play the water glasses splendidly, and I'm not bad at the spoons. Jenny?

(Jenny frantically grabs a water glass and a few spoons off of the refreshment table and rushes over to the Butler.)

JENNY: *(To Guests, announcing.)* Um, yes. The first song we will be playing for you is called...is called...is called...

BUTLER: ...is called "Around the Water Glass We Go."

JENNY: Yes, of course! And a one, and a two, and a one, two, three, four –

(Butler and the Jenny play, but their "instruments" sound horrible and their singing is off-key. Guests have pained looks on their faces. Guests watch for a bit and then return to their previous activities.)

GUEST 2: *(To Guest 1.)* Perhaps a nice evening walk in the garden?

GUEST 1: A wonderful idea! I could use, um, a moment of peace and quiet.

(Jenny and Butler continue their song, but it is so bad every Guest is forced to exit, leaving them alone. Seeing that the hall is empty, Jenny finishes the song with gusto.)

JENNY: *(To Butler.)* Not half bad, I reckon, all things considered.

BUTLER: You are aware the room is empty?

JENNY: Well, it was only a bit of fun, anyway. Fancy another song?

BUTLER: Absolutely not!

(Butler turns and exits. Jenny rushes after him, begging for a reprise of "Around the Water Glass We Go." Blackout.)

SCENE 8

(AT RISE: *Haldon House hall, a short time later. Guest 1, 2, 3, 4, Butler, Jenny, Lady Emily, Mongoose, Crawford, and Maverick are mingling about, not paying attention to the entrance. Footman 1, 2, 3 are standing at attention in the entryway waiting for other Guests to arrive. Devaroe enters, disguised as another elderly gentleman. [Note: This disguise should look entirely different from his first elderly gentlemen disguise.] Delaney enters, disguised as a pirate and has a stuffed parrot on his shoulder.*)

DEVAROE: A pirate?! Delaney, are you an idiot?

DELANEY: No, hear me out. People at parties love pirates, especially ones with parrots. Think "Treasure Island"! This disguise will endear me to the guests. I'll form a relationship with them, and then they'll reveal their deepest secrets!

DEVAROE: Really? Their deepest secrets because you're dressed like a pirate?

DELANEY: I'm telling you, Devaroe, the disguise is foolproof.

DEVAROE: We'll see about that...

(*Devaroe and Delaney attempt to enter the party, but are stopped by Footman 1, 2, 3.*)

FOOTMAN 3: (*To Delaney.*) Name?

DELANEY: (*As pirate.*) Long John Silver.

FOOTMAN 3: Like the pirate?

DELANEY: (*As pirate.*) Aye, aye, matey!

FOOTMAN 1: Well, you're not on the list. Sorry, Long John Silver, but you can't come in.

DELANEY: (*As pirate, very sad.*) 'Tis not a pirate's life for me... (*Sighs.*)

FOOTMAN 2: (*To Footman 1.*) Oh, come on! Look at him! He's just a pirate. Everyone loves pirates! We should let him in.

FOOTMAN 3: No, he's not on the list.

FOOTMAN 2: What could he possibly do? He's a pirate!
Plus, we lost all the night's entertainment. This could liven
the place up a bit.

DELANEY: *(As pirate. To Footman 3.)* Ye should heed the
word of yer first mate.

FOOTMAN 2: *(To Footman 3.)* Can we let him in, please?
(Begging.) Please, please, please, can we let him in? *(Long
pause.)* Please!

FOOTMAN 3: Fine! Just stop whining!

DELANEY: *(As pirate.)* Aargh! If I ever find me buried
treasure, I'll share my booty with ye!

(Devaroe and Delaney breeze past Footman 1, 2, 3 into the party.)

DEVAROE: What...was...that?

DELANEY: That was my pirate impression! Pretty good, I
thought!

DEVAROE: *(Sarcastic.)* Oh, yes, indeed. Moving right
along...have you talked to those two over there?

DELANEY: Define, "talked to."

DEVAROE: Delaney, you must dig deeper—really give them
the gears—if we're going to get anywhere in this case. The
time for gentlemanly discourse is gone! We must seek out
the truth and hold a light to—!

DELANEY: Fine! Fine! I'll be tougher.

DEVAROE: Oh, and remember to report back if you find
anything suspicious.

(Devaroe heads off to investigate Crawford.)

DELANEY: *(Continues to speak to Devaroe as if he's still there.)*
Of course, Devaroe. Whatever you say, Devaroe. You're the
boss, Devaroe— *(Sees that Devaroe isn't there. To himself.)*
And you're not here! Wonderful! I've been speaking to
myself this whole time. Really? I shouldn't be surprised. I

mean most of the time you're not listening to me, anyway. You're off in your own little world, thinking things through, solving "unsolvable mysteries" and all that— *(Realizes.)* Wait, I'm still talking to myself. I'm going to stop now. Right! Wise choice, Doctor!

(Delaney moves to another part of the party. Devaroe has pulled Crawford away from the other Guests and they are engaged in a deep conversation. Lady Emily exits into the kitchen with a gift from Mongoose.)

CRAWFORD: *(To Devaroe.)* Aye, you were in the Army, too, were you, laddie? What regiment?

DEVAROE: *(As Elderly Gentleman 2.)* I was in the 19th Battalion, the Highland Wild Cats—

CRAWFORD: *(Laughs.)* Never heard of such a division. Sure you weren't fighting on the wrong side?

DEVAROE: *(As Elderly Gentleman 2. Laughs.)* Oh, no, sir. We were part of a top-secret division. But I don't want to talk about it right now. You never know who might be listening. Let's keep it very hush-hush! *(Tapping his nose.)* If you know what I mean...

CRAWFORD: *(Tapping his nose as well.)* Awrite, laddie, I'm with ye.

DEVAROE: *(As Elderly Gentleman 2.)* So what brings you to town, Colonel? No wars, I hope?

CRAWFORD: Naw, I'm far too old for a square-go these days. Now, I am a man of leisure.

DEVAROE: *(As Elderly Gentleman 2.)* I'll drink at your leisure then, Colonel! *(Indicating drinks at the refreshment table.)*

CRAWFORD: I'll never say no to a wee bevvy!

(Devaroe escorts Crawford to the refreshment table for a drink. Meanwhile, Delaney is doing some investigating of his own.)

DELANEY: *(As Pirate. To Guest 1.)* Ahoy, pretty lady! Take a look at me pet parrot!

GUEST 1: Oh no, sorry. I'm firmly against the domestication of all animals. Nature's wildlife must roam free!

DELANEY: *(As Pirate.)* Have ye castaway on an island and down to your last coconut?

GUEST 1: *(Angry.)* Yes, yes, of course! I must be out to lunch just because I don't want to look at your bird in captivity?!

DELANEY: *(As Pirate.)* Better batten down the hatches. This one's in the crow's nest!

GUEST 1: You're vulgar!

DELANEY: *(As Pirate.)* Dead men tell no tales!

(Guest 1 shakes her head and turns away from Delaney. Delaney moves on to another Guest. Devaroe is interrogating Crawford in a quiet corner of the hall.)

CRAWFORD: *(Laughs. To Devaroe.)* Aye, so my driver slams on the brakes, and I poke my head out the windae and yeld, "You call that a hand grenade?"

DEVAROE: Your driver, you say? I didn't know you had a driver. What kind of car is it?

CRAWFORD: It's a wee bonny black Sunbeam!

DEVAROE: And did your driver bring you here this evening?

CRAWFORD: Aye, laddie! Ooh, except I got the time wrong, and so he dropped me off wee bit early. I arrived just in time to watch the police barge in. It was a bit of a show!

DEVAROE: So you're telling me that you arrived here this evening, moments before the police, and that you were driving a black sedan. What else happened?

CRAWFORD: To be perfectly honest, I don't know. I only had time to drop off my party gift before the police burst in.

DEVAROE: How very interesting!

CRAWFORD: Aye?

DEVAROE: I would love to hear more, Colonel. Perhaps another drink?

CRAWFORD: Pure barry, that!

(Devaroe and Crawford head to the refreshment table for another drink. Delaney has moved on to Guest 2, who is at the refreshment table eating hors d'oeuvres.)

DELANEY: *(As Pirate. To Guest 2.)* Blimey! Ye landlubber scallywag! Ye could sink a ship with all this grub!

GUEST 2: *(Mockingly.)* A pirate! Aargh, matie!

DELANEY: *(As Pirate.)* Yo-ho, ye scurvy dog. Who be the pirate here? Don't ye take the wind out of me sails!

GUEST 2: Sorry, sorry –

DELANEY: Good. Aargh! So what you fillin' yer coffers with?

GUEST 2: Oh, it's all good. The deviled eggs...good! The meat tray...good! But the cream puffs are my favorite. I had at least one or two...trays! Ha! Oh, except the olives in the martini. I had to trick the maid into giving me the drink in the first place. She said they were only for "special guests," but I'm special, aren't I?

DELANEY: *(As Pirate.)* By Davy Jones's locker, ye are!

GUEST 2: Exactly! Anyways, the martini was good, but the olives in the martini were gross. I think they left the pit in them or something. You bite right into them, and they're as hard as a rock. I think I even chipped a tooth. I just spittin' them in the bowl right there, and no one's been the wiser. Well, I'm piled high. Guess I'll see you when I come back for seconds!

(Guest 2 leaves Delaney at the food table.)

DELANEY: *(As Pirate. To himself.)* Shiver me timbers, more like fourths or fifths! *(Breaks pirate character.)* Wait a minute! Olives...pits as hard as rocks...chipped a tooth?! Where's that bowl?! *(Grabs the bowl.)* I don't believe it! *(Holds up a large diamond.)* Diamonds! I also just grabbed that and it

was in someone's mouth! Eww! Eww! Eww! *(Realizes.)*
 Snap out of it, Doctor, there isn't time! *(Holding bowl, calls.)*

Devaroe! *(Rushes over to Devaroe.)* Devaroe, I found—

DEVAROE: Don't worry, Dr. Delaney, I already know!
(Removes his elderly gentleman 2 disguise.)

DELANEY: You do? But how? *(Removes his pirate disguise.)*

DEVAROE: By my power of deduction, of course, Delaney.
 Every superb detective has it! May I present Colonel
 Crawford...our diamond thief!

(Immediately, Guests stop talking and move in closer to listen.)

CRAWFORD: What you playin' at, laddie?

DELANEY: No, Devaroe, you misunderstand—

DEVAROE: No, Doctor, you misunderstand, but let me spell
 it out for you. Our old boy, Crawford, is a master criminal.
 He arrived at tonight's event in a black sedan. He arrived
 just before I called the police.

CRAWFORD: You called the police?!

DEVAROE: Yes, in hopes of catching you. But when you
 realized that the police were hot on your tail and you
 couldn't escape, you decided to hide instead. You made it
 into the estate. Then all you had to do was hide the jewels
 somewhere in this house and retrieve them before you left
 this evening. Very clever, Crawford! You also knew that
 the cops would search the whole house. But their warrant
 was to search Lady Emily's property, and those gifts are *not*
 her property until she opens them!

CRAWFORD: I don't have the foggiest idea what you're
 talking about!

DEVAROE: Oh, Crawford, it would have been so simple,
 wouldn't it? Just come in, play nice, drink your bebies, eat
 the food, and then just before you leave, grab your "gift"
 and go! Too bad I showed up to stop you!

CRAWFORD: *(To Delaney.)* Is he mad?

DELANEY: I ask myself that all the time.

DEVAROE: *(To Crawford.)* Oh, starting your defence already, are you? Trying to undermine my credibility? No, I am not mad!

(Lady Emily enters and places Mongoose's gift on the gift table. She sees the large gathering of Guests and approaches.)

LADY EMILY: What is all this commotion? You again?! You are really trying my patience! So who's the thief this time? My butler? Perhaps my maid?

DEVAROE: No, My Lady, it's your friend, here, Colonel Crawford.

LADY EMILY: And how, pray tell, did you come to that conclusion?

DEVAROE: He drove here in a black sedan and disguised the diamonds as a party gift!

LADY EMILY: Is that so? Colonel, would you be a dear and tell me which of these gifts is yours?

CRAWFORD: Aye, it's the wee yellow one over there, lassie.

(Lady Emily approaches the gift table, picks up the yellow gift, and returns to the group.)

LADY EMILY: Well, if this gift is really full of diamonds, we should open it and see. Is that all right with you, Colonel?

CRAWFORD: Aye!

(Lady Emily opens the gift and removes a large pair of bloomers. Guest 1, 2, 3, 4, Jenny, Butler, Maverick, and Mongoose snicker. Even Delaney can't hide a smile.)

LADY EMILY: *(To Devaroe, holding the bloomers up, shouts.)* Does this look like diamonds to you?!

DEVAROE: That can't be the only thing in there.

LADY EMILY: Here! *(Tosses the gift box at him.)* Take a look for yourself!

DEVAROE: (*Looking inside the box.*) What? No! It's impossible!

LADY EMILY: Now get out! (*To Footman 1-3, calls.*) Footmen!

DEVAROE: It can't be!

LADY EMILY: Leave now, or I will personally make you leave! (*Calls.*) Footmen!

(*Footman 1-3 rush over.*)

FOOTMAN 1: Yes, Your Ladyship?

LADY EMILY: Remove these men.

FOOTMAN 2: (*Disappointed.*) Really? The pirate? But I really liked him...

LADY EMILY: (*To Footman 1-3.*) Remove them and don't let them in again. Is that clear?

FOOTMAN 3: Yes, Lady Emily.

LADY EMILY: (*To Devaroe, shouts.*) And if I find you in the Haldon House ever again, I will charge you with harassment! Now, get out!

DEVAROE: Well, there's no need to yell!

LADY EMILY: (*Shouts.*) Out!

DELANEY: (*As Pirate. To Devaroe.*) Aargh, she be makin' us walk the plank! Jolly Roger, we're doomed!

LADY EMILY: (*Shouts.*) Out!

DELANEY: Sorry, just trying to lighten the mood. (*Lady Emily scowls at him.*) No? Right. Then off we go!

CRAWFORD: (*To Lady Emily.*) My bonnie lass, are you all right? You're looking a wee bit [peely-wally]. Here, let's get you a nice cup of tea. That always helps me when I'm feeling a bit under the weather. [*Pronounced to rhyme with "rally" not "holly."*]

LADY EMILY: Thank you, Colonel, but I might need something a little stronger than a cup of tea. (*Calls.*) Jenny! (*Jenny rushes over. To Jenny.*) The Colonel and I would like a drink, please. Do be a dear and fetch us one.

(Crawford leads Lady Emily off to a corner of the hall to have a drink and calm down. Escorted by Footman 1-3, Devaroo and Delaney start to exit.)

FOOTMAN 1: *(To Footman 2, mockingly.)* "I know he's not on the list, but can we let him in? Look, he's a pirate."

FOOTMAN 2: There's no need to be mean. I didn't know he was a pretend pirate. If I had known he was a pretend pirate, I would have never asked for him to be let in.

FOOTMAN 3: *(Scoffs.)* How could you not know?

FOOTMAN 2: Well, he looked the part, and he had a parrot!

FOOTMAN 1: The parrot was stuffed!

FOOTMAN 2: *(Shouts.)* Polly? No! *(To Delaney.)* You deceived me!

DELANEY: *(As Pirate.)* Aargh! I be a pirate, and that's what pirates do.

FOOTMAN 3: *(To Footman 2, indicating Delaney.)* See, even his pirate accent sucks!

FOOTMAN 2: Yeah, I guess you're right.

DELANEY: *(Insulted.)* What? No, I have a great pirate accent! I've been practising for months!

FOOTMAN 1: Might want to keep practicing. Now, get out!

DELANEY: So incredibly rude!

[END OF FREEVIEW]