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AUDITION FOR MURDER

An Audience-Participation Murder-Mystery

bу



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

DIANE VAN HOUTEN Forties. Glamorous in a classy, understated way. DIANE is a serious actress who works hard at her craft. She's widely respected as an actress and has made some wonderful films. Unfortunately, this acclaim has not translated into financial success.

DAVID HOWARD Forties or fifties. DAVID has been married to DIANE for fifteen years which has never stopped him from little 'side trips' now and again. Like DIANE, he is also highly respected as a director\writer. But once again, this reputation for quality has not resulted in significant financial rewards. DAVID is hungry for this kind of success.

KATIE OSBOURNE Thirties. Glamorous in a flamboyant, overdone way. KATIE is DIANE's baby sister. She is also an actress though some might say this is an overstatement. She's carved a very successful career from doing wacky comedies, made for t.v. movies, etc. This has made her extremely rich. She's also achieved a degree of notoriety for her marriages (four) and her numerous affairs (too many to count.)

PAUL RANDALL Twenties, thirties. KATIE's latest husband (of

three months.) PAUL is nicelooking, although rather bookish. He's quiet, serious, and somewhat deficient in the humor department. He is a bit bewildered by fame and the film world.

MARCY ANDOVER Twenties. Very pretty, sweet, and somewhat shy. She is KATIE's assistant and standing although for the film she is also functioning as DAVID'S assistant.

JOE PORTER Thirties, Forties. KATIE's most recent 'ex.' A very intense guy, JOE was not happy about being 'dumped' for PAUL. He's had a history of mental instability, which is further challenged by this. He is an actor, albeit an unsuccessful one.

SCOTT JENSEN Thirties. Starstruck and waiting to be 'discovered'. He is the Security Officer on the scene who will lead the investigation.

PART ONE - PRELUDE TO MURDER

The event is advertised and marketed with this scenario:

A major motion picture, directed by DAVID HOWARD and starring DIANE VAN HOUTEN and KATIE

OSBOURNE will be filmed at (your location). Just as the famous director starts auditions for extras, (you, the participants!) someone is

murdered!.

As participants arrive and mingle they will witness one or more of the following improvisational scenes. (All information contained in the scenes, the relationships exposed, etc., are reiterated in the Play section. So it is not necessary for everyone to witness all of these scenes in order to solve the mystery.)

- 1. DAVID is circulating, followed by MARCY with a clipboard. He will introduce himself to people, and 'study' them from various angles, etc. He is looking for 'types' to audition. He may ask them to perform, or sing, or walk and talk a certain way. MARCY takes notes of what he is doing. Together they will get the names of 4 women and 4 men to 'audition.'
- 2. JOE is in evidence, looking suitably sinister, with top coat, hat and sunglasses. He is also getting somewhat 'looped.' If approached he will warn folks to stay out of his way, because "there's going to be trouble tonight."
- 3. SCOTT, the Security Officer, is checking out people as they arrive. He will also make repeated attempts to catch DAVID's attention. He is dying to get into the movies. 4. DAVID will accidentally meet up with JOE. An argument

ensues, with DAVID pleading with JOE to leave - it will upset KATIE if he's here. JOE doesn't care, "it's about time that somebody upset KATIE." After this encounter, JOE will tell people that he's MR. KATIE

OSBOURNE the THIRD. He's her third and most recent 'ex.' He was dumped by KATIE after she met PAUL, her current husband. This exchange may become so intense that SCOTT will intervene.

- 5. DIANE will enter, wearing sunglasses and a hat. She appears to shun the spotlight, preferring to mingle with the crowd. She joins DAVID who informs her that JOE is at the event. Furious, she goes off in search of him, asking people if they've seen him.
- 6. DIANE finds JOE and upbraids him for coming to interfere with DAVID's movie. She doesn't care about what happened between KATIE and JOE, she cares about DAVID. JOE replies that she should care about what happened between KATIE and DAVID. Furious, she threatens him and goes off in search of DAVID again.
- 7. DIANE confronts DAVID, "everyone knows about his sordid little affair with KATIE, how could he humiliate her like this?" He tries to placate her, says it was years ago when they were separated for a time. He then gets angry, wonders how long he's going to have to listen to her jealousy. She

replies,"As long as you give me reason to be jealous." It is evident from this conversation and DAVID's flirtatious manner, that he does, indeed, love the ladies.

- 8. KATIE, with PAUL in tow, makes a grand entrance. She greets people graciously, offers autographs, flirts with the gentlemen, etc. PAUL follows her, rather uncomfortable with the attention she draws, although she never 'loses' him. She's quick to introduce him as 'the too, too cute husband #4, PAUL.'
- 9. KATIE spots DAVID, rushes to him and greets him effusively, hugs, kisses, cries of joy upon seeing him, etc. The men shake hands. KATIE then turns and addresses her 'OLDER sister, dear, dear Diane. . . She barely recognized her "the sunglasses, the hat, the ten extra pounds." KATIE tells her how marvelous she looks, that she's one of those women that looks actually BETTER the older they get. "And don't you dare let anyone talk you into a facelift, Diane, darling! Wrinkles and crow's feet add such interest

to an actress." DIANE gives it right back with comments about KATIE's lack of taste and less-than-stellar acting ability. Not too mention her rather wild reputation. "Don't you dare let anyone talk you into going into counseling about your wild behavior. Your lifestyle must be the reason you are so believable in the bimbo

tramp roles that seem to be your specialty."

DAVID and PAUL have to separate them. The audience moves into the theatre.

PART TWO - THE DASTARDLY DEED

The stage can be bare, or an existing set from another show can be used. A table and chair is placed slightly SR of center. SL is a coat rack with two trench coats. Next to this is a box which contains four guns. Much of the plot centers around what will be happening offstage LEFT. Placed there are a coffee pot on a small table, and a chair which will be used by JOE. It is also important that MARCY never goes stage left.

KATIE, PAUL, and DIANE, find seats in the audience, towards the front. JOE has attached himself to a team. SCOTT is also in the audience.

DAVID and MARCY go onstage.

DAVID: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. And thank you all for coming tonight. Next month, my company, Howard Productions, will begin filming a story that I have been working on for twenty years. And for this film, I wanted to find new, fresh, and exciting faces to portray a variety of the smaller roles. That is why we are

here tonight, to give some of you the opportunity to audition for these roles. Now, unfortunately, I will not be able to use all of you in the film, but I guarantee that you will all be able to help us. But first, a little bit about the movie.

My screenplay is based on the true story of two sisters in the Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War. One sister, Katya, is married to a prominent Communist leader, Yuri, and enjoys the wealth and privilege of that position. Katya will be played in the movie by noted film and television actress, KATIE OSBOURNE. (KATIE stands and waves, blows kisses, etc.) Katya's sister, Maruschka, is leader in the underground dissident movement. Maruschka will be played by the respected actress, who is also my lovely wife, DIANE VAN HOUTEN. (DIANE stands and bows.) The first scene we will be using for the audition takes place in an opulent drawing room in a suburb of Moscow.

(If no set is used other than what was described, the scene proceeds. If another set is used, DAVID will call for MARCY who will explain that the location didn't have an opulent drawing room set and that they had their choice of this one, or one that was left over from Finian's Rainbow.")

DAVID: For the first scene I'll need Katya Katie and I'd like Mr. to come up and read for the part of your husband, Yuri.

SCOTT: (from audience) I could do that. I could play a Russian husband. (In Russian accent) "Vork is goot for voman, make her

strong, like bull."

DAVID: (Peering into the audience.) Sir? Officer? I'm really sorry, I'd like Mr. to read for the part. But thank you, I'll keep you in mind for other roles. Also, I'd like to hear Ms. in the part of Ludmilla, the maid. Would the two of you please join us.

SCOTT: Couldn't it be a butler? I mean if they have a maid, chances are they'd have a butler. I can do butlers.

DAVID: I am sorry, Officer. No butler. (By now, KATIE and the two auditioners are onstage. DAVID sets the scene. Speaking to Mr.) Katya's husband, Yuri, is a bombastic bore. Not to mention he's a little crazy.

KATIE I can relate. Husband #1 was bombastic. Husband #2 was autocratic. And, God knows, husband #3 was crazy. A lot crazy.

DAVID: In this scene, Katya eavesdrops on Yuri on the telephone. She confronts him, then confides in her loyal, though rather slowwitted maid, Ludmilla. (DAVID gives the scripts to the auditioners and attempts to hand it to KATIE, as well.)

KATIE Not necessary, David, darling. I looked at the script on the plane. I'm off book.

DAVID: Wonderful. Now, Mr. . . As the scene begins you are on the phone, giving orders, very military, very officious. I know it's a cold reading, but give it a shot. And, Ms , Ludmilla the maid is fiercely loyal to Katya, and not overly bright. You enter when Katya calls you. Do you understand? Fine. Let's get into position. (DAV ID shows Mr. where to stand. KATIE, MARCY, and 'Ludmilla' wait offstage RIGHT.)

DAVID: Now remember, you are on the phone. Okay. Anytime. (During this scene and subsequent 'auditions', DAVID is free to interrupt, give line readings, etc.)

YURI: Surround the entire block then! I want the woman caught. Listen, you fool! For five years we've tried to get our hands on Marushka. She's become a symbol to the rabble in the streets. Her and her damn babushka! (KATIE, as 'Katya', enters from SR.)

KATYA/KATIE: Babushka? Did I hear you say "babushka?"

YURI: (Oblivious to her.) I don't care if she is my wife's sister! Don't let Marushka escape! Do anything to stop her!

KATIE: Yuri...

YURI: (Seeing her) Hello, my pet. Comrade, you have complete authority to DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY.

Do you understand? Good. (He hangs up the phone.) Katya, my little sweetheart. (At

this point in the script, 'Yuri' is to kiss her hand.)

KATIE: (Coming out of character) Whoa, wait, stop. David, no hand kissing. I don't do the physical stuff, any of it, until we're actually shooting. It's in my contract, remember. . .

DIANE: (From the audience.) Oh, for pity's sake, Kate. Let the guy kiss your hand! Don't be such a baby.

KATIE: IT'S IN MY CONTRACT, okay, big sister? I don't do any kissing, any dancing, any combat, any falling, any sweating until cameras are rolling.

DIANE: From what I've seen you don't do any ACTING, either.

KATIE: Hey, I don't see you flashing an Oscar or an Emmy or a Tony around. Who's got the star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Di baby? It ain't you, honey, it ain't you.

DIANE: Awards? You think awards mean you're an actress? That just shows how shallow you really are! David, really, I don't care how much she's giving to back this film.

DAVID: Diane. Please. Ladies, please. You promised! We are going to make this work, right? You are both so beautiful, so talented, so very special in your own unique ways that this film will leap off the screen with your personalities and charm. It will be

magnificent. But you've got to put this rivalry thing aside. For the good of the film. For "The Red Babushka."

DIANE: Oh, all right, David.

KATIE: David, you can fling more bull than Bill. Clinton, I mean. *(To audience)* Speaking of which there is absolutely NO truth to the stuff about us that was in the Inquirer last year.

DAVID: Of course there wasn't. Where were we? Oh, yeah, the handkissing. Yes, Katie, I remember your contract. Standin!! (MARCY comes onstage from SR, takes KATIE'S place.) Take it from page , where Yuri puts down the phone and kisses Katya's hand.

MARCY: (To Mr.) It's okay, I just washed.

(As soon as the hand kissing is over, MARCY exits SR, and KATIE returns to her place.)

KATIE: Yuri... just now, on the phone? Were you talking about Maruschka? Were you talking about my sister?

YURI: Don't worry your pretty little head. . .

KATIE: But I heard you mention the babushka! That's her symbol. And the symbol of her movement! What. . what are you going to do...

YURI: It does not concern you. It is a police matter. (He is directed to exit, SR. "KATYA" paces worriedly.)

KATIE: Ludmilla! ("Ludmilla" enters from SR.) Ludmilla, you are involved with the Red Babushkas, are you not?

LUDMILLA: (Obviously frightened) The Red Babushkas? No, no, mistress. That is an illegal organization. I know nothing about that group.

KATIE: Don't lie to me, Ludmilla! And don't be afraid! I'm not going to betray you, you stupid woman! But I need you to take a message to my sister. To Marushka.

LUDMILLA: But, mistress...

KATIE: Shut up and listen to me! You must hurry to Marushka, wherever she is hiding now, and warn her. Tell her that the KGB is on the way and she must flee or risk capture. (She goes out of character.) David, David, I gotta tell you. . . I have a real problem with that line..."she must flee or risk capture". . . that doesn't sound right, it doesn't sound, you know, like me.

DIANE: (From audience.) Probably because it's NOT you. It's KATYA. It's called acting, Katie, ACTING.

KATIE: I know it's acting. I'm just not comfortable with the line,

okay. And, hey, David, is she gonna be on my case for this whole movie?

DAVID: Of course not. And if the line bothers you, we'll change it. But for tonight, Katie baby, will you try it? Trust me, sweetheart.

KATIE: Oh, all right. . . . and she must flee or risk capture. Go to Maruschka, quickly, Ludmilla.

DAVID: And then Ludmilla will exit, followed by Katya. Thank you both, . . (They exit offstage back to their seats.) Very nice. Now I'd like to try that same scene again, only this time with. . . (he consults paper)

SCOTT: (Standing and being overly dramatic with a Russian accent.) I vant the voman caught. Her and her damn babushka!

DAVID: Oh, you again. Thank you very much. That same scene again please with and . Come up here please.

KATIE: Davey, Davey, I have an idea! Can tootoo cute husband #4 have a crack at Yuri? (PAUL jumps to his feet and eagerly comes onstage.)

DAVID: Paul? I don't know, Katie. Can he act?

KATIE: Oh, David, who cares. It's just one scene. (PAUL

suddenly "switches gears.")

PAUL: Um, Katie, look. . . . you're the actor in the family. I really don't want to. I just like to watch you. Really. Honest.

KATIE: (To audience) Can you stand it? Is he just the cutest, or what? Kiss-the-Katie, husbandomine. (Without hesitation PAUL strides over and really "lays one on her.") **KATIE:** I love you, ya big galoot.

PAUL: And I love you, Katie.

DAVID: "Scuse me. Can we try the scene again? And maybe Paul can be one of the KGB agents in the next scene.

KATIE: Oooh, the KGB agent, Paul. Bring the uniform home, honey, it could be Game Night tonight! (PAUL exits SL.

DAVID: (To the auditioners) You two understand the scene? Places. And...Action!

YURI: Surround the entire block then! I want the woman caught. Listen, you fool! For five years we've tried to get our hands on Marushka. She's become a symbol to the rabble in the streets. Her and her damn babushka! (KATIE, as "Katya", enters.)

KATIE: Babushka? Did I hear you say "babushka?"

YURI: (Oblivious to her.) I don't care if she is my wife's sister! Don't let Marushka escape! Do anything to stop her!

KATIE: Yuri...

YURI: (Seeing her) Hello, my pet. Comrade, you have complete authority to DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY. Do you understand? Good. (He hangs up the phone.) Katya, my little sweetheart.

DAVID: Standin! (MARCY enters from SR and 'Yuri' kisses her hand. MARCY exits SR and KATIE takes her place again.)

KATIE: (To 'Yuri') Nothin' personal, guy. No offense. But my husband is insanely jealous.

PAUL: (Sticking his head out.) I am not!

DAVID: Can we. . . .???

KATIE: (Picking up "the scene") Yuri. . . just now, on the phone? Were you talking about Maruschka? Were you talking about my sister?

YURI: Don't worry your pretty little head. . .

KATIE: But I heard you mention the babushka! That's her symbol.

And the symbol of her movement! What. . . what are you going to do...

YURI: It does not concern you. It is a police matter. (He is directed to exit, SR. "Katya" paces worriedly.)

KATIE: Ludmilla! (RICHARD, the Stage Manager, enters from SR, carrying a styrofoam cup of coffee and obviously looking for something.)

KATIE: Ludmilla, honey, how you've changed.

RICHARD: (Becoming aware that there is a scene going on, an audience, etc.) Oh, sorry. See, we've been having a rodent problem here. . .and I had a box of rat poison. I put it down somewhere and can't find it. 'Scuse me. (Exits SL)

DAVID: And again.

KATIE: Ludmilla! (The real "Ludmilla" enters from SR.) Ludmilla, you are involved with the Red Babushkas, are you not?

LUDMILLA: (Obviously frightened) The Red Babushkas? No, no, mistress. That is an illegal organization. I know nothing about that group.

KATIE: Don't lie to me, Ludmilla! And don't be afraid! I'm not

going to betray you, you stupid woman! But I need you to take a message to my sister. To Marushka.

LUDMILLA: But, mistress...

KATIE: Shut up and listen to me! You must hurry to Marushka, wherever she is hiding now, and warn her. Tell her that the KGB is on the way and she must flee or risk capture. (Out of character) David, how about something like "she's gotta make tracks before the KGB scum move in on her."

DAVID: I'll take it under advisement, Katie. Okay, I've seen enough of that scene. The action now moves to the shabby apartment in the heart of Moscow where Maruschka is hiding, so Diane, darling, will you please come onstage. (As DIANE comes onstage, MARCY moves the table and chair to slightly left of stage center, to signify the different setting.)

In this scene, the dullwitted Ludmilla comes to warn Maruschka, followed unknowingly by Katya.

KATIE: Remember, David, you said that Paul could try the KGB agent.

JOE: (From the audience, quite inebriated) I vant the voman caught! That's right! Vy not let ol' Joe take a crack at it? I AM AN ACTOR, at least. You can't turn the stiff into an actor! And why are you even trying, Katie? You had an actor. You had me. I thought you didn't WANT an actor any more. You wanted a

waiter. Isn't that why you dumped me? (There is general consternation, adlibbing, etc., from the stage. MARCY enters from SR and joins this.)

KATIE: How'd he get in here? Dammit, David, it's bad enough putting up with Sister Diva, now I got whacko exhusband s, too? Joe, I got a court order that says you can't get within ten feet of me! Go home and sleep it off.

JOE: (As he comes down front and on to the stage.) I can't go home, Katie. It's your home now, remember. You and the stiff. Why'd ya do it to me, Kitty Kat? I loved you soooo much. We were good together, remember?

KATIE: Ah, gee, Joe. Give it up. It isn't going to work.

JOE: We were happy, baby, you know we were. Until you met this, this...waiter. (He almost falls, is caught by PAUL.)

PAUL: Steady, now.

JOE: Leave me alone. Leggo of me.

KATIE: Let me talk to him. Look, Joe, things were rotten between us by the time I met Paul. It's not Paul's fault. It's not anybody's fault. I met him and it was like we'd known each other for years. We liked the same music, we liked the same movies, we liked the

same books. . .

DIANE: It must be love. She's taken up READING.

KATIE: (*Ignoring her.*) It was almost scary. He knew me better in 2 minutes than you did in 2 years. And he was NORMAL. SANE. As in NOT CRAZY. After the first three husbands I needed that, Joe. Face it, it's over!

JOE: No, it ain't...I'm never giving up. You pushed me over the edge, Katie, remember that. Don't blame me if. . . .

KATIE: That's enough, Joe. You keep this up and I won't pay one more penny in alimony or your "shrink" bills. You gotta admit, Joe, I'm taking care of you. I take care of all the "ex's". But if you don't cut it out, I'll make an exception in your case. You'll be back doing bit roles on (insert name of current bad sitcom)

JOE: Not (insert name of bad actor on bad sitcom) Ah, honey, you wouldn't cut me off.

KATIE: Watch me. Call it "alimony interruptus", Joe. I'm not shelling out 5 thou a month to have you harassing me.

JOE: I'll think about. . . (He sways.) Whoo, I feel woozy. . .

MARCY: Why doesn't someone get him offstage and give him some

coffee or something.

DAVID: Good idea. Let's get him off. There's a pot of coffee backstage. (Hands MARCY the clipboard. From this point

on, MARCY never goes offstage.) Go ahead and bring our next auditioners up here. We need a Ludmilla and a KGB

agent. (DAVID, PAUL, KATIE, and DIANE exit SL, helping JOE. He will sit in the chair SL with a cup of coffee, in a

stupor.)

MARCY: (Consulting clipboard). Let's see. We'd like

to read for Ludmilla.

SCOTT: (Raising his hand) Excuse me, excuse me. Were you aware that in Greek theatre and even Shakespeare's

time, women's roles were played by men? Has Mr. Howard ever considered what an interesting twist it would be if

Ludmilla were played by a man? (falsetto) "I don't know nothing 'bout no babushkas, Mistress."

MARCY: I'll pass your idea on to Mr. Howard, Officer. But for now, we will be using female Ludmilla's. And for the

KGB agent, could please come onstage.

SCOTT: But you need two! KGB agents are like Nazi's and women going to the bathroom. They always travel in pairs.

You need another one. Do you want to hear my Russian accent again?

MARCY: Thank you, no. (DAVID enters from SL. He takes the

clipboard from MARCY.)

DAVID: Thanks, babe. (He strokes her face and nuzzles her neck.) Later, okay?

MARCY: David! (She gestures to audience.)

DAVID: (Getting a "grip".) Oh, right. Officer, in answer to your question, I only need one KGB agent, because Miss

Osbourne's husband Paul is already cast as the other.

SCOTT: Well, that's not fair! (To the audience) Is that fair? They said they were open auditions! Open to everyone!

I guess it's only open to everyone who's married to the star!

DAVID: Officer, do you have ten million to invest in this picture? No?

SCOTT: No...well, no.

DAVID: Because if you do, you can play all the parts and have your grandmother do a dream ballet. But until then,

Katie Osbourne is giving ten million and if it keeps her happy to have the stiff....I mean her husband, play a small role

well, it's gonna happen, that's all. (By now, the auditioners should be onstage. MARCY keeps them there.) Alright,

everyone, listen up. The scene opens with Maruschka alone in the room. Ludmilla knocks, enters, and is warning her

when Katya enters. They talk and Katya convinces her

to switch places. She believes that the KGB will break in, see that it is her, and know they have been fooled.

However...and here's the tragedy, the KGB will enter, see only the red babushka and, mistaking her for Maruschka,

shoot and kill her. You KGB agents, listen carefully. (He "walks" through the scene.) Your cue to enter is when Katya

says, "the Maruschka babushka". You come to this mark, "knock", and, (to audience auditioner) you say, "KGB, open

up, Maruschka, we know you're in there." She'll say, "It's open." You enter to this mark, and, Paul, you say, "At last

we've found you, Maruschka!" Then both of you, pull your guns from your trench coat pockets, and fire. Guns and

trenchcoats are over there. Oh, and don't get any closer than this mark. Even though the guns are stage props and

are loaded with blanks, sometimes there will be a flame from them. Do you understand? Any questions? Okay, wait

offstage (indicating SL).

NOTE: The auditioners will be waiting STAGE LEFT and will see JOE, sitting morosely with his coffee. He will mutter "

bigamy" repeatedly, in various phrases..."It's bigamy that's what it is? What'dya call it when somebody's married to two

people? Etc." Other than that, he is uncommunicative.

DAVID: (Continuing.) Diane, darling, are you ready? (DIANE enters from SL. She is concentrating.)

DIANE: Just a moment, David. I'm getting into character. (KATIE enters from SL.)

KATIE: Oh, give me a break. This isn't even a rehearsal, Di! It's an audition.

DIANE: Unlike you, Katie, I miss no opportunity to hone my craft.

KATIE: Do what to your crap? Oh, did you say craft? I thought you said, you know. What you are so full of. Craft. . . like making potholders, huh. . . Honestly, Di, I cannot count the number of times I have been grateful that Mummy and Daddy could only afford to send ONE of us to acting school.

DIANE: I doubt that sentiment is shared by your audiences, Kate darling. I'm surprised there hasn't been a scholarship drive for your benefit.

KATIE: Let's just get on with it, okay.

DIANE: Suits me. The sooner we get this film finished the sooner I can go back to doing serious work and you can go back to sharing billing with Suzanne Sommers.

KATIE: Hey, I got news. . . Compared to you, Suzie is a pro. I love that woman. She's got talent she hasn't even shown yet. (She exits SL.)

DIANE: Oh, I hope that's true.

DAVID: (To DIANE) Anytime you're ready, Diane. (DIANE closes

her eyes and takes several deep breaths.)

DIANE: I'm ready. (She takes a red babushka from her pocket and puts it on and sits at small table.)

DAVID: And Ludmilla enters and knocks on the door. ("Ludmilla" enters and mimes "knocking.")

MARUSCHKA: Who is it?

LUDMILLA: Maruschka, it's me. Ludmilla Polenka.

MARUSCHKA: Ludmilla? Come in. ("Ludmilla" enters.)

LUDMILLA: Oh, Maruschka, my mistress sent me to warn you. . .

MARUSCHKA: Your mistress? Katya? But why? (KATIE as "Katya" enters, pushing past "Ludmilla.")

KATYA: That's alright, Ludmilla. I'll tell her myself. Don't look so shocked, you stupid woman. I followed you here. Now go out there and keep watch. Go. GO. ("Ludmilla" exits SL.)

KATYA: Maruschka. (DIANE does not respond. She is obviously having trouble.)

KATYA: (Repeating) **Maruschka. Maruschka?** (Once again no response.) Yo, Maruschka, yoo hoo, Maruschka, hey there...earth to

Maruschka... Beam her up, Scottie.

DIANE: David, I'm sorry. Just what is my motivation here? I mean am I glad to see her, or surprised or what? I'm having trouble with my "why's" in this scene. Should it be played realistically? Or is this whole scene an allegory for the state of the Soviet Union at that time?

KATIE: Oh, hell! I had a feeling the word "allegory" was going to creep into this audition! Hey, Di, how's this for motivation get your ass in gear or I see how Suzanne looks in a red scarf.

DAVID: Please, please, Katie, give us a moment... (He goes to DIANE and has a whispered conference with her, discussing the scene.)

KATIE: (*To audience*) I must be nuts to have gotten involved in this. I mean, I'm pulling down some serious money with the madeforty movies and I've just signed to star with Stallone in Cliffhanger II and the last thing I need is to blow eight months working with Miss Method. COME ON, willya, Diane? Paul and I got some serious plans for later tonight. I'm dying to see him in the KGB getup...

DIANE: Dear Katie, I realize that you believe that the most important part of a every film is the car chase, however. . .

KATIE: No, dear, dear Diane, you're wrong. Because I don't make films, I don't "do" cinema. I make movies. And there isn't a damn thing wrong with a car chase. As long as it isn't like the one

in your last flick. Whoever heard of a silent car chase? I kept expecting subtitles. Are you ready already?

DIANE: I think so. Could you give me the line again? (Goes back "into character")

KATIE: Sure. Maruschka. MARUSCHKA. MARUSCHKA, dammit.

MARUSCHKA: (Through clenched teeth.) Oh, Katya, why did you come?

KATYA: To warn you! The KGB will be here any moment! You must leave here now!

DAVID: (Interrupting to speak to the audience) At this point, European police sirens are heard. This is where you can help me get the right feel for this scene. Together, everyone. . . (he does the twotone police siren made famous by every World War II spy movie). . . A little softer so we can hear the dialogue. . . And when I go like this, stop. (They practice once.)

MARUSCHKA: It's too late, little sister. They are here. ("KATYA" rushes to "window." DAVID silences the "siren".)

KATYA: No, it's not too late... Give me the babushka. The KGB doesn't know you, just your scarf... They will

arrest me! By the time the mistake is discovered, you will have escaped! Hurry, give it to me. . .

MARUSCHKA: (As she takes off the babushka and hands it to "KATYA".) But won't they... couldn't you get into

serious trouble?

KATYA: Yuri won't let that happen. Go! Go! ("Maruschka" exits. "KATYA" stands, looking at the scarf. She goes

out of character.) Okay, now I know there's a big speech here about Maruschka and freedom and Mother Russia...

Blah, blah, blah, blah...ending with, and I'm going to have a helluva time saying THIS with a straight face. . . . "The

Maruschka Babushka" (Enter "KGB". They enter, probably tentatively. If they forget to "knock", DAVID will remind

them.)

1ST AGENT: KGB. Open up, Maruschka, we know you're in there.

KATYA: It's open.

PAUL AS AGENT #2: (Very woodenly) At last we have found you, Maruschka. (KATIE bursts out laughing.)

KATIE: God, that was rotten, Paul!

PAUL: (Hurt) Was it?

KATIE: Oh, YEAH! Lord, you stink. . . (seeing he's hurt) Oh, baby. Sweetie. I still love you. If I wanted to be married

to a good actor, I coulda had Dustin or Keanu but...Oh, come here. Kiss the Katie. (He does.) I've got the next

seventy years to give you acting

lessons, tootoo cute husband #4.

PAUL: You promise, Katie? Seventy years? I'm gonna hold you to that. (They kiss again.)

MARCY: David, don't you think we should get on with this...

DAVID: Yes, yes. . . Can we go back to your line, Paul? And maybe you can put a little more "threat" into it?

PAUL as AGENT #2: (Taking a moment to think about it, then saying it exactly as before.) At last we have found you Maruschka.

DAVID: Then you pull your guns and...

KATIE: David? No falls, remember?

DAVID: Right. Standin! (MARCY enters and takes KATIE'S) Now shoot. (They do. MARCY falls, dramatically.)

KATIE: Nice fall, Marcy. Very realistic. Wasn't she good, Paul?

PAUL: Oh, yeah. Sure.

DAVID: (*To auditioners*) Thank you both, we'll be in touch. You can go back to your seats now. Now I'd like to try that scene again, only this time...

DIANE: (Backing on from SL) David. . . David. . . there's something wrong with Joe...

MARCY: Oh, my God, look at him! (*JOE enters, a ghastly color, clutching his throat and stomach and staggers onstage and "dies" dramatically. DAVID "examines" him.) DAVID: He's...he's dead...l'm sorry, Katie.*

KATIE: He's dead? But he can't be! He was alive and crazy and bugging me not ten minutes ago! How can he just drop dead like that!

RICHARD: (Entering from SL drinking his coffee.) You folks will be happy to know I found the rat poison. Right next to the coffee pot. (He takes a sip of coffee.)

NOTE: When we performed this at a restaurant, we had to avoid the whole 'rat' thing. We substituted pool and/or cleaning solutions.)

SCOTT: (From the audience.) Don't drink that! Stop. (It's too late - RICHARD has drained the cup as SCOTT makes his way onstage.) That coffee could be poisoned! The entire pot could be laced with it. How much have you had?

RICHARD: Me? This is my third cup. I'm fine. (He exits.)

MARCY: But if his coffee is okay. . .

DAVID: Then the whole pot must be...

DIANE: But if the whole pot wasn't poisoned...then it was just Joe's cup. (As the implications occur to her.) He...He must have mistaken the rat poison for Cremora or Sweet n Low. . .

SCOTT: Just like 9 to 5. Lily Tomlin, Jane Fonda, Dolly Parton. 1988. With a brilliant gem of a comedy performance by Dabney Coleman.

MARCY: (Increasingly agitated) So it was a horrible accident, right? Just one of those things...

SCOTT: This is not what I'd call a trip to the moon on gossamer wings. Pal Joey, Frank Sinatra, 1955. But, yeah, a freak accident. Personally, I think the Sweet n' Low people oughta put a warning on the box...

KATIE: But. . . but Joe. . . Joe didn't take anything in his. . . his coffee. He.. . . . always, ALWAYS drank it black. . . (*There's a moment of stunned silence, and then MARCY starts to scream.*)

MARCY: But it HAS to be an accident...It has to be. . . (She runs to the body.) Joe, Joe, wake up. . . It's a joke, right?

KATIE: Gee, Marcy, you're taking this harder than I am and I was married to him for two years. . .

MARCY: (Shaking the body) Joe, Joe, wake up...

DAVID: This isn't doing anybody any good. Paul, get her offstage... (PAUL helps her exit through the center curtain split. She can now get changed from her blouse to an identical one which has bloodied "bullet" wounds in the chest.)

SCOTT: Yeah, but don't give her any coffee, okay? Alright, alright...so somebody slipped the poison into the guy's cup. I think we're gonna have to call the cops, folks.

DAVID: I thought YOU were a cop.

SCOTT: Nah, I'm just rented security. See, no gun. Just a uniform. Actually, my day job's at a video store. So, I think we're gonna have to call the genuine police. Yep, I'm pretty sure murder was one of those things I'm not supposed to do.

DAVID: This will ruin me! I'll never get the picture made now. That damn actor! Oh, Diane, baby, I'm so sorry I wanted this for you...(*To the audience*) And so, of course, that means that I won't be able to give any of you roles. Which is really a big disappointment. I felt sure I would discover a major new star tonight. My apologies to all.

SCOTT: (Getting an idea!) Of course, WAITING until after auditions

can't hurt. And even then, who's to say, the whole thing could STILL have been an accident. . . Or suicide. Sure, suicide. That's probably what I'll put in my report. Suicide! The guy was so despondent over losing his wife, he poisoned himself. Mr. Howard, it just seems a shame not to finish the auditions. . . .you know, and not discover any raw talent that's here tonight. All because some nut case picked tonight to commit suicide. (*This whole speech, of course, is heavy with "hidden meaning" - i.e. - Scott getting his audition.*) **DAVID:** (*Catching on.*) Suicide, huh?

SCOTT: That would be my professional opinion.

DAVID: Suicide. Hey, who's to say?:

SCOTT: Who's to say? (They "high-five".)

KATIE: Are you NUTS? Suicide? Joe wore a helmet in bed.

DIANE: Why am I not surprised?

DAVID: Look, what this fine young officer. . .????

SCOTT: Scott. Scott Jenson. Though I've been thinking about using Dirk Stone as my stage name.

DAVID: What I think Scott. . . Dirk. . . is saying is that we don't have

to do anything this minute. I mean, Joe isn't going to get any deader.

KATIE: You didn't see him on our honeymoon...

DAVID: So, why don't we just go ahead with the audition, and worry about Joe later.

SCOTT: I'll conduct a full scale, no holds barred, look under every stone, investigation after the auditions.

DAVID: Hey, Dirk, give me a hand and we'll stow him offstage.

SCOTT: Good idea. (SCOTT and DAVID drag JOE SL.)

MARCY: (Screaming from behind the curtain) Let go of me! Leave me alone! I'm fine.

PAUL: (Entering from curtain split.) I think she's better.

DIANE: That is so odd of Marcy to react like that. You don't think that Joe and her were. . . you know.

KATIE: Not unless she was in a position to further his acting and I use the term loosely career.

DIANE: That's it! I never figured out what you and Joe had in

common until just this minute. You shared the same level of acting talent.

KATIE: Really, Diane, darling? Well, tell me...have you ever figured out what you and I have in common?

DIANE: It's kept me awake. (SCOTT and DAVID return.)

KATIE: I can tell you in one word what we've had in common, sister dear. We've had David in common, that's what!

DIANE: Why, you notalent little twobit. . . you're just jealous because you can't hold onto a husband for longer than two weeks!

KATIE: Jealous? Of YOU? I got news, honey...At least any man married to me didn't have to leave home for a good time... (DAVID and PAUL pull them apart.)

DAVID: Stop it, you two! Look, we're going to get through this audition somehow, and through this movie, somehow,

DAVID: and then you two can put on the boxing gloves and go at it. But for now. . . .please...

DIANE: I can't, David! Everytime I look at her, I see the two of you. . .

SCOTT: You can? I can't. Unless they're standing next to each other.

DAVID: I told you a thousand times, Diane. It was when we were separated, I was lonely, I'd had too much to drink...

KATIE: Oh, not that much, Davey boy!

PAUL: SHUT UP! (*To KATIE'S look of surprise.*) Yes, I said "shut up". Did you ever stop to think how I feel when you use your fling with David to get to your sister? Did you ever think that I might be a jealous and hurt by it? It's bad enough that every time we sit down to watch TV or a movie you keep score. . . "Had him, had him, almost had him, would have had him if the plane hadn't landed."

KATIE: Paul. . .

PAUL: I know I'm not fascinating or glamorous like your other husbands and lovers, and I don't know anything about show biz, and I'm not an actor, but I love you, Katie Osbourne. And I don't want to hear about anybody else that you ever loved before me.

KATIE: That's easy, Paul. Because I never loved anyone before you. Kiss the Katie. (He does.)

DAVID: (Afire with enthusiasm!) Now, that's the kind of passion I want to see from you when you play the KGB agent, Paul. I want to do that scene again. Let's see, I'll need a Ludmilla. . . where's Marcy? Oh, hell, who wants to give it a try. (He picks a woman from the audience). And for the other KGB agent. . . (He looks

around, feigns a "sudden thought.") Say, Officer Scott...Dirk, would you... would you like to audition for KGB agent #1?

SCOTT: Who, me? Why . . . if you think I could do it. . . I could give it a shot. I'm not prepared. But. . . oh, why not?

DAVID: Everyone remember what to do? Agents, get your coats and guns. Ludmilla, when you exit, you can just go to your seat instead of stage left. Trust me. . . your seat is better. Ready? Places. ("Ludmilla" enters and mimes " knocking". In this scene it is EXTREMELY obvious that DIANE and KATIE are seconds away from going at each others throats.)

MARUSCHKA: Who is it?

LUDMILLA: Maruschka, it's me. Ludmilla Polenka.

MARUSCHKA: Ludmilla? Come in. ("Ludmilla" enters.)

LUDMILLA: Oh, Maruschka, my mistress sent me to warn you. . .

MARUSCHKA: Your mistress? Katya? But why?

(KATIE as "KATYA" enters, pushing past "Ludmilla.")

KATYA: That's alright, Ludmilla. I'll tell her myself. Don't look so shocked, you stupid woman. I followed you here. Now go out there and keep watch. Go. GO. ("Ludmilla" exits to seat.) KATYA: Maruschka.

MARUSCHKA: Oh, Katya, why did you come?

KATYA: To warn you! The KGB will be here any moment! You must leave here now! (DAVID cues the siren, and "directs" the noise level.)

MARUSCHKA: It's too late, little sister. They are here. (KATYA rushes to "window." DAVID silences the "siren".)

KATYA: No, it's not too late...Give me the babushka. The KGB doesn't know you, just your scarf... They will arrest me! By the time the mistake is discovered, you will have escaped! Hurry, give it to me...

MARUSCHKA: (As she takes off the babushka and hands it to her.) But won't they... couldn't you get into serious trouble?

KATYA: Yuri won't let that happen. Go! Go! ("MARUSCHKA" exits. "KATYA" stands, looking at the scarf.)

KATIE: Blahdy, blahdy Maruschka, freedom, Mother Russia, Doctor Zhivago, blah, blah, (back "into character")

"The Maruschka Babushka" (The agents enter. SCOTT is VERY dramatic as he knocks and waits expectantly.

He uses a Russian accent and holds an unlit cigarette in the European style of forties spy movies. If

possible, there is a lighting change and he is hit with a "spot".)

SCOTT as Agent #1: This iss the KGB. Yes...you heard rightly, Maruschka. It vill do no good to stay locked in this shabby room in the middle of Moscow. You cannot escape the traps and clutches and snares of the KGB, the most dreaded and feared secret police in the world. So, Maruschka... you vit the babushka of rebellion... open this door. Open this door, I say, OPEN THIS DOOR.

KATYA: It's open. (They enter and go to "mark.")

PAUL AS AGENT #2: (Very woodenly) At last VE have found you, Maruschka.

KATIE: (Whispering.) Much better, darling.

PAUL: Really?

KATIE: Standin! Marcy, you okay to do this? (MARCY enters from the center, using the clipboard to hide the bloodied bullet "wounds" on her chest.)

MARCY: I'm fine. (She takes KATIE'S place so she is facing upstage towards PAUL.)

DAVID: And shoot. (They do. MARCY falls, dramatically.)

KATIE: Not as good as the last time, Marcy.

SCOTT: Uhoh.

PAUL: Oh, my God. (He rushes to MARCY.) She's really shot. (General confusion, crowding around, adlibbing, etc.)

DAVID: I told you to stand on the mark!

PAUL: Ve did, I mean, we did!

SCOTT: (Examining the body) Oh, boy. . . Oh, boy, We got some trouble now. This wasn't done with a blank. Look at

your gun, Paul. One or both of these was loaded with real bullets.

PAUL: You mean. . .that I. . .you. . .we. . . shot her. . .

SCOTT: Oh yeah. . . And you better make that I. . . you. . . we KILLED her. She's dead. (Consternation, more

adlibbing etc.)

DAVID: That's it. I'm cooked. Maybe I can get a job with Roman Polanski. DAMN!

DIANE: It's okay, David, maybe it was not meant to be...Look, if I have to, I'll call David Lynch and tell him I've

reconsidered about "Return To Twin Peaks"...

DAVID: This was finally going to do it for me. Put me up with the

big boys. Spielberg, Coppola, Eastwood. DAMN. (An idea. . .) Oh, it's not the film so much. Or even the fact that I

was able to bring the two greatest actresses of our generation together for the first time. . . The worst thing is. . . The

absolute worst thing is. . . Now that my career is in the dumper, well, . . . I won't be able to say that I discovered the

greatest American actor since Brando. . .THAT is my biggest regret. . . I'm sorry, Dirk.

SCOTT: Wha. . . Brando. Me. . . Hey, look, who loaded these guns anyway?

DIANE: Marcy.

KATIE: Yeah. . . it was Marcy.

DAVID: She was my production assistant. . .It was one of her jobs.

SCOTT: Well, if SHE loaded the guns, then that would make it. . .

SCOTT AND DAVID: SUICIDE! (They congratulate themselves on this smart idea.)

SCOTT: You guys get her outta here, okay. Just give Joe a nudge. (DAVID and PAUL drag her off SL.) She was despondent over the death of her lover, Joe, and switched bullets because she didn't have the nerve to do it herself. Yeah, that'll work.

KATIE: I can't believe she'd kill herself over Joe. Too much of a

stretch.

DAVID: (Entering) Um. . . Scott. . . I mean Dirk. . . This was in her hand. (He is holding up a photograph. They crowd around to look.)

SCOTT: It's a picture. Hey, I know these people. It's a party. I did security at this party.

KATIE: Look, Di,. . . it's Mummy and Daddy. .

DIANE: It looks like. . .Yes, this was taken at their last anniversary party. In January. I recognize Mummy's dress. Part of the Jaclyn Smith collection. A present from Katie.

KATIE: Hey, if you got paid for doing those commercial what I got paid, you'd hustle your buns to the blue light specials too. . .It's called paying some dues.

SCOTT: It was a great party. Maybe you remember me...I played the piano for a while.

KATIE: Was that you? I do remember. . .the pianist took a break and you "sat in."

DIANE: Oh, yes, the singing security guard. . .

SCOTT: Just another one of my little talents. As I recall, I did the Barry Manilow medley.

DAVID: Oh, God, it's all coming back to me. Sixteen choruses of "At the Copa." But this picture. . .we never saw any pictures.

KATIE: Marcy took them to be developed.

DIANE: But she said they didn't come out.

SCOTT: Well, this one obviously did. And, look, here's the corner of another picture. A picture that Marcy didn't want anyone to see. I wonder why? Look, folks, I gotta tell you. I have a feeling the real cops will be none to happy about the stack of bodies stage left. BUT, if we can solve the case before we call them. . .

DAVID: We can salvage my film project. . .But more importantly, we can give America...the next DiNiro.

SCOTT: Ah. . . wha. . . Di. . . Di. . . DiNiro? Okay, let's solve this puppy. First, some guestions. Who was Marcy?

KATIE: She started out just working for me. . .then I recommended her when David needed a production assistant. Gee, I feel bad. I really didn't know anything about her. If she had family or anything...Or a husband or boyfriend. . .

DAVID: She didn't.

DIANE: How do you know?

DAVID: She mentioned it once or twice. That's all.

SCOTT: And she was at this anniversary party for your parents. . .

KATIE: That's right. She took the film to be developed, then said that they were all overexposed, or something. Which really made me mad because I was hoping there was some of me and Paul. We met at that party. *(To PAUL)* Y ou looked so cute in your tux.

PAUL: (To SCOTT) I was a waiter. That's how we met.

SCOTT: (Writing it down) Lied about the pictures. Worked for Katie. Then worked for David. Production assistant. Standin.

PAUL: Oh my God. Katie, maybe that bullet was meant for you!

KATIE: That's right! If she hadn't stepped in for me. . . then I could have been...

DIANE: Oh, really, Katie, you aren't that bad an actress.

KATIE: Anybody could have switched bullets, at any time. And just waited.

DIANE: Oh, Katie, cut the act. Everyone KNOWS you don't do your own stunts. Onscreen anyway. Hey, Scott/Dirk, w hy don't you talk to the last set of auditioners and see if they noticed anything about Joe.

SCOTT: I was just about to do that. (SCOTT will interview the last auditioners. From them he will learn that JOE:

- 1) Was holding a cup of coffee, but not drinking it.
- 2) Kept repeating, "Bigamy.")

He said "bigamy?"

KATIE: Oh, THAT. That was his latest. He called me last week, going on and on about how Paul and I weren't really married because my Reno divorce from him wasn't legal. How I was a bigamist and still married to him, that kind of garbage. I told him that if anyone knows anything about divorce, it's me. I've got the alimony payments to prove it.

PAUL: That's what he meant? You never told me he called, Katie.

KATIE: Sorry, sweetie, I try to keep the ex's out of our life as much as possible. It was just Joe ranting.

SCOTT: Okay, here's the way I see it. Anyone could have switched the bullets at any time before tonight. They wanted Katie or Marcy dead and they were willing to be patient. But whoever poisoned Joe had to have been stage left while he was sitting there so they could slip the rat poison in his coffee. It could be one of your auditionees. There's a couple of them I wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley.

DAVID: . . . Or it could have been one of us. (*Protests*) Face it, we were all stage left at some time or another.

DIANE: . . . Except Marcy. She was onstage all the time that Joe was over there. She's the only one who COULDN'T have poisoned him...

SCOTT: I know what to do! We've got to find the rest of that picture. . .from the party. You guys go off and grab a cup of coffee or something and I'll get these folks organized into search parties. Each team is going to get a clue packet. (See Production Manual for specific instructions that are given at this time.)

PART THREE - THE CLUE HUNT

The Mysteries by Moushey Production Manual provides instructions for designing the AUDITION FOR MURDER Clue Hunt. You can do a full search, or simply distribute the object of the clue hunt - another photo from the anniversary party. When we performed AUDITION our clue hunt led to portions of the picture which had to be assembled, jig-saw style. Once again, the Production Manual will give complete directions for the various options regarding a clue hunt.

Using our picture (at the end of the review script) and the following description, take a digital photo and, using a photo editing program, insert cut lines.

THE PHOTO

- 1. A group clustered around a piano.
- 2. DIANE is standing behind JOE and whispering in his ear, as if to

say "Do it! Do it!"

- 3. JOE is glaring at MARCY/DAVID/KATIE. His hand is in his pocket, and he is drawing a gun from it.
- 4. Seated at the piano is SCOTT, singing and playing his heart out, oblivious of the drama around him.
- 5. MARCY, DAVID, and KATIE are grouped together. MARCY is facing front but turning a shocked face towards DAVID. It is obvious that he has his arm around her in a less-than-proper manner. MARCY is holding a champagne glass in both hands. A wedding band is clearly visible on her left hand.
- 6. DAVID is whispering closely in KATIE's ear. KATIE appears to be enjoying his comments immensely. She is holding a cham- pagne glass in her left hand.
- 7. The only part of PAUL, the waiter, which is visible is his left hand. He's filling KATIE'S glass from a champagne bottle. A wedding band is clearly visible on this hand.

You may wish to vary the photo, have all of PAUL showing, etc.. Keep in mind, however, that PAUL and MARCY must be wearing wedding bands. And certain lines in the Solution Scene may need to be adjusted.

THE VERY BRIEF SOLUTION SCENE IS NOT INCLUDED IN REVIEW SCRIPTS. IF YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST HAVE THE ENTIRE ACTING COPY BEFORE MAKING A DECISION ABOUT PRODUCING, PLEASE CONTACT US:

330-678-3893

mysteriesbymoushey@gmail.com

PROPS/SET DRESSING

MARCY - clipboard with names of auditioners

- 2 identical blouses. 1 is bloody, has "bullet holes"

Audition scenes for "The Red Babushka"

KATYA'S apartment - small table, chair, phone

MARUSCHKA'S hiding place - same small table and chair

- coat rack with 2 trench coats
- box with guns, at least 2. More can be used.

Offstage Left - small table with coffee things: pot, cups, creamer, sugar, artificial sweetener, spoons; chair

Box clearly marked RAT POISON for RICHARD

DIANE - a red babushka

Body removal - script refers to 'dragging' bodies offstage. However, we've used a wide variety of methods and equipment including a hotel luggage rack, an appliance dolly, etc.

The photo clue

Clue packets for optional clue hunt.

What's Included in Production Packets/Royalty Fees

The following is sent electronically:

The Production Manual which is the same for all shows.

Printed copy of scenes from RED BABUSHKA

Flow chart, answer key, and sample clue hunt (optional)

Audition sign-up sheet

Optional

For a small fee, we can send all of the above in printed format.