

HARVEY'S WALLBANGER



A Dinner Theatre Murder Mystery

by

Lesley Gunn



Published by Lazy Bee Scripts

Customer Taster

Harvey's Wallbanger

Copyright 2019 by Lesley Gunn

COPYRIGHT REGULATIONS

This murder mystery is protected under the Copyright laws of the British Commonwealth of Nations and all countries of the Universal Copyright Conventions.

All rights, including Stage, Motion Picture, Video, Radio, Television, Public Reading, and Translations into Foreign Languages, are strictly reserved.

No part of this publication may lawfully be transmitted, stored in a retrieval system, or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, manuscript, typescript, recording, including video, or otherwise, without prior consent of Lazy Bee Scripts.

A licence, obtainable only from Lazy Bee Scripts, must be acquired for every public or private performance of a script published by Lazy Bee Scripts and the appropriate royalty paid. If extra performances are arranged after a licence has already been issued, it is essential that Lazy Bee Scripts are informed immediately and the appropriate royalty paid, whereupon an amended licence will be issued.

The availability of this script does not imply that it is automatically available for private or public performance, and Lazy Bee Scripts reserve the right to refuse to issue a licence to perform, for whatever reason. Therefore a licence should always be obtained before any rehearsals start.

Localisation and updating of this script is permitted, particularly where indicated in the script. Major revisions to the text may not be made without the permission of Lazy Bee Scripts.

The name of the author must be displayed on all forms of advertising and promotional material, including posters, programmes and hand bills.

Photocopying of this murder mystery constitutes an infringement of copyright unless consent has been obtained from Lazy Bee Scripts and an appropriate fee has been paid.

***FAILURE TO ABIDE BY ALL THE ABOVE REGULATIONS CONSTITUTES
AN INFRINGEMENT OF THE COPYRIGHT LAWS OF GREAT BRITAIN.***

About the pack

Harvey's Wallbanger is a scripted murder mystery performed over two acts, with two possible endings and approximately eighty minutes of scripted dialogue.

Structure

This murder mystery pack contains:-

- **The Organiser's Overview** [*Extract Here*]
- **The Script** [*Extract Here*]
- **The Accusation Sheet** - for the audience to enter their solutions

Organiser's Overview Contents

- Synopsis
- Character Descriptions
- General Staging Notes
 - Brief description of each step of the production
 - Estimated Show Timings
 - Notes on Audience Deliberation
- Production Notes
 - Props List
 - Set Descriptions
 - Costume Suggestions

Synopsis

Things have not been going well at Marstown Cocktail Club and a potential change in leadership is causing tensions to run even higher, but things reach a peak when a body is found before the start of the group meeting. Can the investigating officer work out whether the Death in The Afternoon is a result of Hanky Panky or a Flirtini? Does it have anything to do with the Three Wise Men of the group? Who has put away their last Whiskey Smash and is that Angel Face as angelic as it seems?

Character Descriptions

(3 M, 5 F, 1 Either)

Hilda Makepeace – Hilda runs the local post office; she is a likeable older lady but naïve.

William Tilder – A local construction worker who appears to be slow on the uptake, but he says things as he finds them. Surprisingly knowledgeable about cocktails.

Sophie Mayer – A well-presented businesswoman and well educated, she is quite assertive, but not bossy. She and Jonathon have been having an affair.

Jonathon Mudsey – Hen-pecked husband of Freya, timid while with his wife, but comes to life when she's not around.

Freya Mudsey – Interfering and loud busybody, wants to be the centre of attention, very unpopular. She is rich and not afraid to show it, flaunting her wealth through her always immaculate clothing and general appearance.

Annie McDonald – Pub landlady, straight-talking and down to earth. Often comes over as abrupt, but very protective of her friends, particularly Hilda.

Harvey Fawley-Jones – Captain of the local golf club, quite 'old school' in his ways and upper class, but amicable.

Bonnie Rathbone – Sister of the founder of the cocktail club, quite matronly, timid at times, most likely to be found dressed in tweed.

Detective Inspector Abbott – Investigating officer, sometimes exasperated by the suspects, but fair and open minded.

General Staging Notes

This play is set in the present day and is performed by three male actors and five female actors as the victim and suspects, plus the Inspector, for whom the gender of the actor doesn't matter. It is set out over two acts with approximately eighty minutes of scripted dialogue. The murder evening is designed to be played in a venue with a stage or suitable acting area, with tables around the hall for your audience.

The actors perform Act One, followed by an interval in which a meal can be served, and then the first scene of Act Two.

After this, there is the option for the cast to answer questions put to them by their audience. However, all the information needed by the audience is contained in the script, so the cast do not need to deliver further clues.

There is then a brief interval in which the audience can fill in their Accusation Sheets. These should then be collected in and the results passed on to the Inspector to announce at the end.

The final scene contains two possible endings to allow for productions over two nights, or for the performing group to select whichever ending they prefer.

Estimated Timings

Act One – approximately 45 minutes.

Scene One: 20 minutes

Scene Two: 8 minutes

Scene Three: 17 minutes

Interval – as required

Act Two – approximately 65 minutes to include full audience participation.

Scene One: 25-30 minutes

Audience Questions and deliberation: 15 minutes

Interval (to fill in/collect) Accusation Sheets: 10 minutes

Scene Two: 7-10 minutes

Audience Deliberation

In Act Two, there is a break between Scene One and Two for audience deliberation. At the end of Scene One, you have the option to allow audience questioning.

Consider how you want audience participation to work. It is usually better if you have teams sat around tables rather than normal theatre-type seating, if your venue is suited to this. If you want to allow your audience to ask your characters questions, then make sure you give them some paper and pens at the start of the evening so they can take notes. You may also want to explain before the show starts that there will be a chance for one question per team later in the play, so they can start thinking during the performance. Or you can leave the pens, paper and explanatory note on the tables.

Only the murderer is allowed to lie when asked a question. The rest of the characters should answer as truthfully as they know. This will probably require a bit of improvisation, so you may want to rehearse questions before your performance.

On the day, you may want to limit the number of questions you get from your audience to prevent this section from going on too long. This can be either done by giving the audience questioning sheets they can fill in after Act Two Scene One, and then selecting one question per character as an example, or if you don't want to have an additional break there, by Inspector Abbott leading questions and asking for one from each table. Remember that in a larger hall, some people may not be able to hear questions from other audience members, so if that is the case then whoever is leading the questions should always start by repeating the question and saying who it is meant for.

Because there were no witnesses to Act One Scene Two, the chances are that there may be a few questions from the audience about what the conversations were, and who with. You are welcome to improvise, but [in the full pack] are the suggested answers.

[...]

After the questioning, the audience should be given time to fill in their Accusation Sheets. If you do not have any 'front of house' or 'backstage staff' to help with giving out and collecting the sheets from your audience, then Inspector Abbott should do this, remaining in character but not commenting on any questions. At the end of the allowed time, gather in the answer sheets. Make sure you know who the winning team is before you start Scene Two so that it can be announced at the end of the play.

Production Notes

Set Descriptions

Act One, Scene One

A village hall. This only really needs to be set up as though you were addressing the audience at a meeting or similar, e.g. a table with the props on for mixing the cocktails and some ordinary chairs (from your venue). No background is needed.

Act One, Scene Two

A bus stop. Front of curtain to allow time for the stage to be set for Scene Three. If you don't have a set-up which allows for this, you may want to consider having the stage lights off and just a spotlight on the characters during Scene Two.

Act One, Scene Three and all of Act Two

Harvey's living room. It is well-presented but the amount and style of furniture you have is up to you and depends on how much space you have on stage. There should be enough chairs for the ladies to be seated during the questioning and a couple of side tables for drinks, etc. to be placed on, plus a larger table for mixing cocktails. You can include a backdrop if you want to.

Harvey's Wallbanger

[Script Extract]

Act One

Scene One – A Village Hall

(On stage should be a table with cocktail ingredients and items, e.g. drinks bottles, glasses, shakers, stirrers. At least one of the glasses should have a drink in it already made up with a garnish. There are also some A5 handouts on the table.)

(Hilda is standing up, facing audience as though she has been addressing them. The other members of the cocktail club - Bonnie, William, Sophie, Jonathon, Freya, Annie, and Harvey - are seated on the stage to one side, listening to her talk.)

Hilda: (Holds up finished cocktail in glass to audience.) And that is how you make the brand new cocktail, invented by yours truly, called The Postman Rings Twice. Are there any questions? (Pause) No? Well, I guess it's cheers to that! (Takes a sip of the drink and hiccups.) Oh, pardon me.

Bonnie: (Stands up and goes over to stand next to Hilda.) Well, thank you everyone, first of all thank you to you (indicating the audience) for allowing us to be part of your meeting tonight. And, of course, thank you to Hilda for that amazing new recipe, and so fitting that it's named after a postman, considering that you run the post office. A round of applause please, ladies and gentlemen, thank you and good night.

(Rest of characters applaud, Bonnie enthusiastically, Freya barely bothering.)

Annie: (Talking loudly over the applause.) We should be grateful she's not a chiroprapist then, otherwise we'd all be drinking Ingrowing Toenails. Heaven help us if she'd been a gynaecologist!

(Rest of characters stand up and go over to where Hilda and Bonnie are standing, to look at the cocktails.)

Bonnie: Annie, that's horrible!

Sophie: Well if you reckon that's horrible, did you know that The Postman Always Rings Twice is actually a book based around adulterous affairs, blackmail and murder? Personally, I'd rather have a cocktail based on an ingrowing toenail, thank you very much.

William: I had one of those once. Nasty little blighter, it was, I couldn't walk for four days.

Bonnie: An adulterous affair?

Harvey: That must have been one hell of an affair if he couldn't walk for four days! Good on you, m'lad!

William: Er, no.

Annie: A murder?

William: No, an ingrowing toenail. Dreadful thing, very painful.

Jonathon: It's not as painful as a murder, though, most people can't breathe, let alone walk, after one of those, ha ha!

Freya: Only you could think that murder was something to be laughed at, Jonathon, have you ever known anyone to laugh at a murder? Certainly nobody in this room! Honestly, you are so warped sometimes, and where is my drink? I've been stood here for at least ten minutes without a drink, Jonathon, get it sorted, for goodness' sake, do I have to do *everything*? And make it a strong one, I need something strong to wake me up after Hilda's droning. (Removes a compact mirror from her bag to check her appearance.)

Jonathon: Sorry dear, I'll get you a drink and I'll find something strong to put in it, (talking under his breath to one side) like arsenic. (Goes to table to pour a drink.)

Annie: (To Hilda.) I can think of a few reasons why Jonathon would think murder was something to smile about; being married to that witch, for a start. She'd be enough to give anyone murderous thoughts!

Hilda: (To Annie.) Oh dear, I know she's allegedly been responsible for some odd things happening, but do you really think it is witchcraft? She's not even wearing a hat.

Annie: (Looking confused about the hat comment.) No Hilda, it's just a saying. She just acts like a wicked witch, but do tell me about these odd happenings and what it has to do with Freya.

(Annie and Hilda go off to one side of the stage and carry on their conversation, inaudibly.)

Sophie: Well, I thought that went well, we had lots of our leaflets taken and a few ladies were very interested in joining us for our next meeting, and a couple of them were in their late thirties, I'd say, so some good young blood.

Harvey: (Smiling and rubbing his hands.) That sounds good to me!

Freya: It would do, Harvey, it gives you a chance to test out your Screwdriver. (Puts away compact, picks up a leaflet from the table and looks at it with disdain.) Is this the leaflet you had printed up, Sophie?

Sophie: Yes, I had one of the girls in our marketing team put it together for us as a favour.

Jonathon: It's very good.

Freya: Shut up, Jonathon.

Jonathon: Yes, dear.

Freya: We've always managed perfectly well without handouts and leaflets before. I don't see why we need to do that sort of thing now, just a waste of money. You of all people should be conscious of that.

Bonnie: We need to attract more new people, Freya, otherwise the group will just fade away, and we're not all going to live forever, you know. Who knows what will happen tomorrow? You could be hit by a bus.

(Jonathon, out of view from Freya, puts his hands together and looks to the skies as though praying, Sophie stifles a giggle and pushes his hands back down.)

Harvey: And I bet I know who'd be driving!

Freya: And what *exactly* do you mean by that, Harvey?

Harvey: I mean it would probably be old Jim Marshall [*replace name if needed*], the old boy who used to drive the school bus. He was forever running into people's front gardens, or over pavements. Nobody minded though, it's not as though he killed anyone. The nearest he got was smashing a garden gnome!

Annie: I think that was deliberate. Did you see what the gnome was doing? That was hilarious! It even had its own Facebook page. The parish council had tried to get it removed years before then.

Hilda: The Facebook page? Is that on that interweb thing?

Annie: No Hilda, the gnome. They reckoned it lowered the tone of the neighbourhood, I reckoned they hired Jim to run it over because they knew nobody would complain about him. It would be like Hilda being hired as a hitman, nobody would ever complain because everyone loves Hilda.

Hilda: Oh, thank you, that's so sweet of you to say. But would I be a hitwoman, not a hitman? I'm not really sure these days, you have to be so careful don't you?

Bonnie: You do, Hilda, especially if you're a hitman, or woman, or is it hitperson?

William: You can be whatever you want, Hilda, as long as you get the job done.

Annie: Now it's not gnomes which lower the tone, of course.

Freya: Well I don't intend to be hit by a bus or anything else for that matter, so you can get that idea out of your heads! And as for Hilda being a hitman, she couldn't even aim an insult, let alone a gun! Anyway, I don't think we need new people, I think we have enough people in the group, and in some cases (looking at Sophie) more than enough! Jonathon! Bring me that drink, and what are you doing standing next to her like a sad puppy? For goodness' sake, she's not interested in someone like you.

Jonathon: Sorry dear, I wasn't... (Passes drink to Freya.)

Freya: (Interrupting) No, you never are.

(Freya downs the drink in one go and gives the glass back to Jonathon, who then refills the glass.)

Bonnie: So our meeting next week will be at Harvey's house.

Harvey: Yes, but we'll have to bring it forward to Wednesday. I'll be playing a round on Thursday and won't be back until late.

Freya: Still playing around, Harvey? What does Geraldine think of that?

Harvey: Gerry? She's fine with it, why wouldn't she be fine? I am captain of the golf club after all.

Freya: Oh, you're playing golf. Silly me. I must be confusing playing a round with playing around. Where on earth did I get that from? You must have set a previous precedent.

Hilda: Have you played a President, Harvey? Which one? Obama? Was it at that picnic course you went to that time?

Harvey: Picnic course?

Hilda: Sandwich.

Bonnie: **(Starting off loudly to get attention back to what she was saying.)** And at our meeting, we can decide who will chair the group for the next year.

Freya: Excuse me? What on earth do you mean? I am the chair of this group and there is no decision to be made. I am the chairperson.

Bonnie: Well, the thing is, Freya, a few of us thought...

Freya: **(Interrupting)** Well, that would be a first.

Harvey: Steady on, Freya, that's uncalled for.

Sophie: It's only fair that the chair is voted for so other people have a chance to bring new ideas, otherwise the group gets stale and doesn't go anywhere.

Freya: Are you comparing me to a three-day old piece of bread?

Annie: Old and crusty?

Freya: Stale!

Annie: You said it, girl.

Sophie: No of course not, but you yourself said we should to come up with new ideas. Changing the chairman is a new idea, Freya, you should embrace that.

Freya: Well, you'd be the one who embraces things, wouldn't you, Sophie? Mainly everyone else's husbands.

...

[Continues in the full script.]