APRONS

A Comedy in Two Acts

By Gary Ray Stapp

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DEDICATION

To my son, Taylor, because Angel is his favorite.

STORY OF THE PLAY

The mistress of a Long Island estate is very rich, completely eccentric, and suspiciously homicidal, and yet she regularly gets lost in her own home. So how has she managed to get away with murder? Lady Di has accomplices of course! Four of them to be exact: Adeline, Lydia, Angel, and Felicity, each uniformed in a white apron, armed with a feather duster, and humorously dangerous as they have chosen to protect their employer from the police in order to perpetuate their very generous incomes. But when the body count takes a sudden jump, the camaraderie of the maids begins to unravel into comedic chaos as they struggle to sweep the bodies under the rug and hidden from both an attorney and from an off-duty homicide detective who happens to be married to one of them. And when confession leads to arrest, the women learn the valuable lesson that crime doesn't pay…or does it?

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Produced by The Chamber Players Community Theatre, Garnett, Kansas, June, 2011 under the direction of the playwright, Gary Stapp. Assistant Director, Kim Stapp; Technical Director, Steve Markham; Hair Stylist, Linda Miller.

Original Cast: Avery Hollis - Gary Rommelfanger; Adeline - Denise Scheibmeir; Angel - Vicki Markham; Lydia - Linda Umbarger; Felicity - Allison Russell; Erling Knowels - Cleon Rickel; Greer Jensen - Gary Stapp; Diandra Mattrel-VonSchmidt - Connie Edgerton; Thaddeus Bonnaire - Alvin Peters.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ADELINE: 60s, the cook and matriarch of the house staff, poised and eloquent.
ANGEL: 40s, a maid, sassy, brassy, and leisurely comedic.
LYDIA: 50s, a maid, unpretentious, naïve, and just a bottle of peroxide away from blonde.
FELICITY: 30s, a maid, fastidious, tense, and prone to overreact.
DIANDRA MATTREL-VONSCHMIDT: 80s +, an unsuccessful old-Hollywood actress, eccentric, delusional, but endearingly dramatic.
ERLING KNOWELS: 50s, a questionably competent attorney and business manager who possesses a childish enthusiasm for who-done-it board games.
AVERY HOLLIS: 50s, a chauvinistic Casanova, gold-digger, and affirmed swine.
GREER JENSEN: 30s, a manly officer and husband seemingly struggling with his sexual identity.
THADDEUS BONNAIRE: 50s, a flamboyant homosexual chef, highly conceited.

PLACE: The VonSchmidt Estate, Long Island, New York.
TIME: Late spring, current day.

SETTING

A transitional area of the mansion's kitchen linking an implied working kitchen at SR with the dining room hallway SL. At center stage is a kitchen island table with 3 bar stools; at DSL is a small table/desk with telephone and chair with roller legs, and on the wall is an intercom; USC wall is a set of faux kitchen cabinets with working countertop continuing off SR. DSR is a cloak closet providing the partition wall that defines the SR "off" area of the kitchen. USC is an outside door leading to the garden. USL is a utility closet. At SL is a prominent archway leading to the dining room and main hallway of the mansion.

Flashback scenes: Add special effects music to enhance and perpetuate the feeling of continuity with the play, and clarifying a flashback is not a "hard" scene change that might otherwise draw audience applause. Music should be dream-like or sci-fi sounding. Also add special blue lighting. The degree of brightness should be such that it is distinguishable from the normal stage lighting, but not so dark as to make the facial expressions of the actors difficult to see.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: An energetic song, something like "Let's Get Physical," plays in the background. AVERY HOLLIS sits in a bar stool at the island table, his head facedown in a lemon meringue pie, an empty bottle of wine beside his head. He is dead. After a few beats, ADELINE enters SR from the main kitchen with a lemon and utensil. She hums and "jives" to the music as she crosses to the table and adds lemon zest to a few pies resting at the opposite end of the table. ANGEL enters USC through the back door, a cigarette hanging from her mouth, carrying her purse. She watches as the song cues to "let's get animal," then sneaks up behind ADELINE.)

ADELINE: *(Inspects her work.)* Very nice, indeed. *(Taking a taste of the meringue with her finger.)* Perfect. Wouldn't you agree, Mr. Hollis?

ANGEL: *(Barking loudly.)* RARR-RARR-RARRRRRR!

ADELINE: *(Completely startled.)* Aahhhhaaaaaa!

ANGEL: *(Laughs.)* Holy Mother of Mary, you jumped right out of your frickin' shoes!

ADELINE: Angel! You frightened the life out of me! How many times have I beseeched you to CEASE doing that to me!? Is it your wish that I succumb to cardiac arrest?

ANGEL: Addie, you'll have to speak to me in English.

ADELINE: You are the most annoying, inconsiderate, and obstinate individual I have ever had the displeasure of knowing. Thank God, after today I will no longer have to tolerate your insufferable company.

ANGEL: Amen! Your quitting is a long overdue answer to my prayers, I'll tell you that.

ADELINE: I'm not quitting, I'm retiring.

ANGEL: Same thing. But who am I to argue? *(Coughs.)*

ADELINE: Satan's mistress, that's who you are. Angel may be your name, but an angel you are not. And please extinguish that nauseating cigarette. It's no wonder you cough incessantly. You really should see a doctor … or a veterinarian. *(Exits SR to off kitchen area.)*

ANGEL: I saw a doc yesterday. A hottie-tottie too. So, of course, I asked him for his phone number. Instead he just gave me the bad news.

ADELINE: *(Enters into the edge of the room.)* What do you mean, bad news?

ANGEL: He's married … and he doesn't fool around on the side either. So he says.

ADELINE: That's hardly funny. *(Exits SR into kitchen area, then off.)* What did he really tell you?

ANGEL: If I don't quit smoking I'm going to get this or that, or some other thing … blah, blah, blah. Otherwise, I'm healthy as a horse.

ADELINE: *(Off.)* Then you did see a veterinarian.

ANGEL: Hardy har-har. *(Pauses for a beat.)* Damn it, Addie! After today, who am I going to pick on?

ADELINE: *(Enters with a tray and begins to load it with the pies.)* Are you implying you're going to miss me?

ANGEL: Yes. You and your beams of sunshine. And just when I was starting to learn your language, too. Oh well, since this is your last day working for her ladyship Diandra Mattrel hyphen VonSchmidt, and even though your ungrateful sister screwed up your retirement plans, you still have every right to be a happy little camper today.

ADELINE: Who said I was happy?

ANGEL: You was hummin'.

ADELINE: I was not.

ANGEL: Addie, you was hummin'.

ADELINE: And you, Angel, were eavesdropping.

ANGEL: It's a gift.

ADELINE: Call it what you want. I have 17 more important things to attend to than engage in a one-sided debate with you. *(Exits SR into off kitchen area with the tray of pies.)*

ANGEL: Whatever. *(Crosses DSR to cloak closet and puts away her jacket and purse, then retrieves her apron and maid's cap.)* So what's with Mr. Hollis? He's hung over again, isn't he? Is he ever going home? Seriously, he's been here for what, a week? Every time Lady Di throws a dinner party there's always one squatter who refuses to leave, am I right?

ADELINE: *(Enters with a cloth and begins to wipe down the table.)* There's nothing I enjoy more than a litany of your rhetorical questions.

ANGEL: You and your big, fancy thirteen-dollar words. How can anyone chat-chit with you when we don't know what you're talking about? Addie, do you know what your problem is?

ADELINE: Besides my verbalization of big, fancy thirteen-dollar words?

ANGEL: You don't know how to have a little fun. Lighten up!

ADELINE: I'm light enough, thank you.

ANGEL: As light as a cement block and about as square.

ADELINE: Leave my shape out of this, shall we? Angel, you may as well surrender now, because I refuse to be drawn into another meaningless disagreement with you.

ANGEL: Somebody's a little cranky. A side effect of your condition, no doubt.

ADELINE: My condition?

ANGEL: Yeah. Lonely-Old-Maid-Itis.

ADELINE: Angel, you are, as usual, a piercing thorn in my foot.

ANGEL: Go ahead, say what you're thinking. I'm a pain your ass.

ADELINE: Yes, you are.

ANGEL: *(Attaching her maid's cap in place.)* Just another of my many gifts. So, what's the ole lady like this morning? Pouty? Perky? Or nuts?

ADELINE: I'm leaning toward homicidal.

ANGEL: Homicidal?

ADELINE: Yes. That's a thirteen-dollar word meaning she's killed someone … again.

ANGEL: I know what homicidal means, I'm not a moron. So where's the body?

ADELINE: No, you're not a moron, you're an imbecile. *(Motions toward HOLLIS.)* Mr. Hollis is the victim.

ANGEL: Avery Hollis? Get out of here! And I thought Lady Di liked this one! I mean, the way they were dancing last night, it wouldn't have surprised me to hear her announce over the intercom this morning that she's knocked up. Instead, she knocks him off.

ADELINE: As tacky as you've just presented the situation, your words have merit. And for the record, Mr. Hollis and the others before him are the only reason I'm "happy" about retiring.

End of Freeview

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