

Plays for Teen Actors Even Parents Can Enjoy – Vol. II

By Elaine Taylor

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ABOUT THIS COLLECTION

Here's a perfect resource book for producing plays in your grade school or junior high classroom. All three plays have roles which are mostly flexible in gender to include as many students as possible. The plays have interesting plots, easy settings, and short, easy-to-learn lines. Your student actors will have fun developing and portraying the varied characters.

MURDER IN THE CLOISTER

PAGE 3

9 characters (3 m, 6 w, and extras)

45 minutes to 60 minutes

Who would murder an old nun? And how could they get in with all the doors locked? Surely it couldn't be another nun, or the priest? The detective has his work cut out for him in this case.

THE WITCH HUNT

PAGE 22

14 characters (5 m, 9 w)

About 60 minutes

Salem has nothing on these kids, but the one they're convinced is a witch is Miss Harridan, their teacher. Is she? Can they convince their parents or the principal?.

THE CASE OF THE PARTY CORPSE

PAGE 39

15 characters (8 m, 7 w)

About 60 minutes

Mary is having a garden party but, as often happens in early spring, it is interrupted by torrential rains. As they arrange to stay the night something goes terribly wrong. In the morning her brother is discovered murdered in his bed. Who could do such a thing and why? Set in England in the 1800s.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *The plays in this collection may be produced in class royalty free, but a reasonable royalty fee is due when performed in front of any kind of an audience, whether or not admission is charged. Please see application form at the end of the script.*

MURDER IN THE CLOISTER

Cast of Characters

(3 m, 6 w, and extras)

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Capable, competent, dependent on Sister Mary.

SISTER MARY: Intelligent, take charge sort, math genius.

SISTER GERTRUDE: Older nun, mentally quick, experienced.

FATHER ROACH: Self-important, high strung, nervous.

SISTER GEORGE: Quiet, seeming a peacemaker, really a backbiter.

SISTER MARIANNE: Simple, unpretentious, says what she thinks.

SISTER JANE D’AZA: Personable, polite, and analytical.

DETECTIVE: Thorough, smart, great powers of deduction.

MEDICAL EXAMINER: Busy, thorough, non-sociable.

EXTRAS: Various nuns and police officers.

Synopsis of Scenes

Scene 1: Convent chapel

Scene 2: Guest dining room

Scene 3: Kitchen

Scene 4: Kitchen

Scene 5: Kitchen

Approximate running time: 45 to 60 minutes.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: SISTER GERTRUDE enters into chapel to go to window and open it as she does every morning. SHE trips over something on the floor and screams. NUNS come rushing in noiselessly.)

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Sister Gertrude! It's profound silence!

SISTER GERTRUDE: Mother, it's Sister Polycarp!

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Shhh!

SISTER MARY: *(Feeling Polycarp's neck.)* She's dead, Reverend Mother.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: All right, please come to the living room. *(Ushers GERTRUDE and OTHERS out. Stops MARY.)* How? Heart? Stroke?

SISTER MARY: From the amount of blood on the floor, and the letter opener sticking in her back, I'd say she's been murdered, but not officially. Not until the autopsy.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Autopsy! Do you think that's necessary?

SISTER MARY: It's always done in cases of questionable death.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: What's questionable? It's obviously murder.

SISTER MARY: The question is *who did it*. The pathologist can often find clues in the autopsy. Anyway, we have to call the police, and keep everybody out of the chapel until they come.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: But what about morning prayers?

SISTER MARY: Say them in the refectory. *(Pause.)* Would you like me to lead prayers or call the police?

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Oh no. I should call the police ... you lead prayers.

SISTER MARY: Yes, Reverend Mother.

(BOTH exit. LIGHTS dim then come up again. Two POLICEMEN enter with MEDICAL EXAMINER and MOTHER SUPERIOR.)

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Sister is right over here.

(POLICE start looking around the crime scene, dusting for prints, etc.)

EXAMINER: Thank you, Ma'am. Hmm... *(Works over body, removes letter opener, places it in baggie.)*

MOTHER SUPERIOR: When can we have Sister's remains? It is customary for a Sister to be with the body until her burial.

EXAMINER: Who was with her when we came?

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Oh, Sister Mary said we had to keep everybody out of the chapel until you came.

EXAMINER: Ah, then no one has been in here.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: No ... Oh! We all came in when we heard Sister Gertrude scream, but...

EXAMINER: You heard her scream?

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Not her, *(Indicates the body.)* Sister Gertrude!

EXAMINER: And this is...?

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Sister Polycarp.

EXAMINER: Where was Gertrude when she screamed?

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Sister Gertrude was standing right there, she had tripped on Sister Polycarp's body.

(DETECTIVE enters UL.)

DETECTIVE: Hi, Carl, Sister. *(To Examiner.)* What do we have?

EXAMINER: Apparent homicide. Murder weapon, this letter opener. *(Hands him the bag.)*

DETECTIVE: Time of death?

EXAMINER: Don't know yet.

DETECTIVE: Okay, Sister, why don't you sit down and tell me all about it and when you discovered the body.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Sister Gertrude discovered it, er, Sister Polycarp when she came into chapel for morning prayers. She....

DETECTIVE: Okay, Sister. I want to talk to Sister Gertrude.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: That's not possible. We aren't off profound silence until 9:30.

DETECTIVE: You're talking to me.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: I'm the Mother Superior, I have the power to dispense if the situation warrants.

DETECTIVE: The situation warrants, Reverend Mother. Now get Sister Gertrude.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Sister Gertrude is very high strung. I am sure this has unnerved her. You'll be gentle with her, won't you?

DETECTIVE: Of course.

(MOTHER exits. DETECTIVE talks with other officers. SISTER GERTRUDE comes in timidly. Detective doesn't notice her.)

SISTER GERTRUDE: Ahem!

DETECTIVE: Ah, Sister. Tell me how you discovered the body.

SISTER GERTRUDE: Certainly, Mr. Fulsom.

DETECTIVE: Excuse me, have we met?

SISTER GERTRUDE: You're wearing your I.D. And one thing you'll learn as you get older is you see better at a distance than up close.

DETECTIVE: All right. Now, what happened?

SISTER GERTRUDE: Every morning I rush to get to chapel before the other Sisters so I can open the windows and air the place out. This morning I did as usual and tripped over Sister Polycarp's body. I can't imagine Sister getting to chapel before me.

SISTER GERTRUDE: *(Cont'd.)* She often overslept, but I never heard of her being early before. Maybe she was killed last night. How long has she been dead? No outsider could get in here. The back door wasn't opened for Father Roach yet.

DETECTIVE: Can you think of any reason anyone would have to murder Sister, eh ... *(Looks at notes.)* Polycarp?

SISTER GERTRUDE: Maybe she surprised a robber.

DETECTIVE: Nothing seems to be missing. Perhaps the person in charge of the chapel can give us an inventory to be sure.

SISTER GERTRUDE: Sister George is the sacristan, perhaps she can.

DETECTIVE: You mentioned the door. Are the chapel doors locked at night?

SISTER GERTRUDE: Sister George locks it every night after Compline and opens it every morning after Lauds.

DETECTIVE: In English, please.

SISTER GERTRUDE: I'm sorry. About 8 p.m. it's locked and opened again at 6:45 a.m. Father Roach arrives at about that time to say Mass for us at 7.

DETECTIVE: When you tripped over the body, did you move it?

SISTER GERTRUDE: No. It was dead weight. *(Laughs nervously.)* Oh, that sounds awful. I mean, she's quite heavy, I didn't move her.

DETECTIVE: All right, thank you, Sister. The ME is taking the body now. Would you please inform your Mother Superior and would you also send Sister *(Check notes.)* George in to me? Thank you.

(EXAMINER and POLICE exit with body on gurney. SISTER GERTRUDE follows them and FATHER ROACH enters.)

FATHER ROACH: Excuse me, Detective, eh, Fulsom. I'm Father Roach. The Sisters would like to know, now that the body is gone, when they can have Mass?

DETECTIVE: Where? Here? Listen, Father, I want to close this room off for a coupla days. This is a crime scene!

FATHER ROACH: Close off the chapel! Officer, this is a convent!

DETECTIVE: Father, this is a crime scene and I won't have people walking through my crime scene until I gather the evidence.

(SISTER GEORGE enters.)

SISTER GEORGE: Good morning, Father. Detective, I'm Sister George. I believe you sent for me.

FATHER ROACH: Sister, we have to move the Blessed Sacrament. Perhaps we could use one of the front living rooms?

DETECTIVE: Excuse me, Father. I need to interview Sister now. If you will wait outside, I'll send her to you when I've finished.

FATHER ROACH: This is a little more important than an interview.

End of Freeview

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