

# THE SECRET OF CELL BLOCK 7

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Music and Lyrics by Cathy Sanborn

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*THE SECRET OF CELL BLOCK 7*

2

**STORY OF THE PLAY**

You've been sent to jail so prepare to be "booked" by a singing Marsha Clark wannabe. In your holding cell, you will meet four zany women who are awaiting trial for murder. As the plot unfolds so do the motives. Who killed Roger Mills? Could it be his pretentious sister, a co-worker who thinks she is Elvis, that sweet little girl next door, or his massage therapist who happens to deal drugs on the side?

Your audience will be actively involved in this campy comedy by sifting through the physical evidence in the case and finally choosing the ending they want to see by electing a murderer! A bitingly funny script, colorful characters, and bright, catchy music make this a sure winner for your evening!

THE SECRET OF CELL BLOCK 7

3

**CAST OF CHARACTERS (5 w)**

**MARSHA MARK:** A Marsha Clark wannabe. She is the warden and though she has a tough exterior, she is clearly a softy at heart.

**ALYSSA RICHARDS:** Roger's girlfriend, very possessive. Nice house - nobody home.

**DEMPSEY SCOTT:** Roger's massage therapist and drug smuggler. Hard, nasty, and bitter.

**RACHEL MILLS:** Roger's twin sister. A definite sufferer of sibling rivalry. Very chic.

**ELEANOR PERKINS:** aka "EP." Co-worker of Roger. A schizophrenic: and one of the two of her believes she is Elvis.

**SETTING**

A prison common room with at least one table and several chairs.

**PROPS**

MARSHA: Blank ink pad; baseball cap; whistle; baseball cap that reads "Green Slope"; bathroom passes; 4 black and white stripped prison uniforms; tray with cookies and milk and tissues; felt board and pieces of felt (representing letters, the 4 characters, two doors, pool of blood, figure of Roger with a red smile.); leis and sunglasses; large bloody glove; marker board and markers; easel clues; 4 masks; handcuffs; box for evidence; tape recorder and cassette tape with message.

RACHEL: Tissue, black mask.

EP: Bandage on hand.

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***See additional production notes at the end of the script.***

THE SECRET OF CELL BLOCK 7

4

ACT I

*(AT RISE: MARSHA MARK improvises with audience as they enter, assigns them their "cell block," e.g., table or seat, and fingerprints them with blank ink pad, telling them it shows up under infrared light. At this time she should pick the men who will later be used as the head of the Mafia and as Roger Mills. At the final break, she should tell the man assigned as Roger to put on the baseball hat she gives him. The Mafia man should not be told his role; it will be a surprise. The other names mentioned can simply be gotten off of the guest/reservation list.)*

MARSHA: *(Blows whistle.)* Let me have your attention please. At this time, all prisoners must return to their assigned cell blocks. Please hurry, your recreation period will be ending momentarily. You're probably all wondering why you were transferred from your prison and brought here. Apparently, there was some sort of political upheaval in Washington, and the FBI thought it best that the "country's finest" were brought here until further notice. That, and the need for a bit more discipline. So...welcome to *(name of town)* Maximum Security Facility. *(If there is laughter: "I see what they meant about discipline. Looks like we have a few class clowns out there.")* My name is Marsha Mark and I am the warden here at *(town)* Maximum Security Facility. I don't expect to have the pleasure of your company for too long, as I have almost completed my hours for prison work study. With any luck, this time next year I'll be out of this rat hole and in a cushy lawyer's firm. In the meantime, I run a tight ship here at *(town)* MSF. I have a list of some things that could make your stay with us more "comfortable" shall we say?

RULE #1: The bathrooms are located to my *(location)*. *(Do a stewardess bit.)* You must obtain a bathroom pass. From now on, *(name of bathroom girl)* will be in charge of the bathroom passes. She has been on very good behavior lately. See what privileges you can get if you work with us?! *(SHE hands passes to audience member.)*

THE SECRET OF CELL BLOCK 7

5

RULE #2: Any attempt to sidestep Rule #1 will result in public humiliation. If you wish to go to the bathroom, simply raise your hand and once you have been acknowledged by me, you can obtain your pass. Does anyone need to go right now? All right, moving on.

RULE #3: Any fighting over or stealing of another prisoner's food will result in punishment. The severity of the punishment will be determined by the number of previous infractions against you, if the food was even worth stealing in the first place, and whether or not I have PMS. It's great to be in charge.

RULE #4. Husband and wife prisoners may celebrate their anniversary, and I am referring to the wedding anniversary only, none of this first-day-we-met, first-day-we-kissed, first-date-we-had crap. Wedding anniversaries only may celebrated in solitary confinement. But the noise MUST be kept to a minimum.

RULE #5: No fraternizing between cell blocks. This is a pet peeve of mine. Breaking this rule is punishable by public ridicule. You are all familiar with this country's national anthem? We'll all see just HOW familiar, if you know what I mean.

RULE #6: You will have a daily recreation period. During this time, prisoners must leave the cell block as it is the only opportunity we have to rummage through your personal items.

If you have any questions please write them down and submit them to *(name of bathroom girl)*. Once 10 questions have accumulated, they will be sent to your congressman who will forward them to your original prison, who will give them to the administrative offices, who will send them to the board for review, who will then reroute them here. When I receive your questions, I will make every effort to answer them promptly.

THE SECRET OF CELL BLOCK 7

6

*(If following Itinerary A, dinner is served here.)*

MARSHA: *(Continued)* At this time, I would like to admit the new prisoners.

*(MUSIC: "Funeral Dirge." RACHEL, ALYSSA, ELEANOR, and DEMPSEY, the new prisoners, enter.)*

MARSHA: Rachel Mills, cell block 7; Alyssa Richards, cell block 7; Eleanor Perkins, aka EP - what does that mean?

EP: There's Eleanor and there's EP.

MARSHA: Oh. EP and Eleanor, cell block 7; Dempsey Scott, cell block 7. *(THEY all enter the cell block as they are called. They remain standing except DEMPSEY. MARSHA turns around and stares at her until she stands. Challenge. Pointedly, to Dempsey.)* You may all sit down. *(THEY do.)* When you were admitted you were briefed on the prison rules so I would like to...*(DEMPSEY raises her hand.)* Yes?

DEMPSEY: *(Sarcastically.)* I need to go to the bathroom. Can I get a pass?

MARSHA: You can wait. As I was saying, I would like to make you familiar with one another. We have here with us, all the way from Chicago, the esteemed head of the mob, *(guest's name)*. Could you stand and make yourself known please? Thank you. We also have *(guest's name)*, who holds the current record for the most successful bank robberies. You know, *(guest's name)*, next time maybe you'll rethink getting that car tuned up every 100,000 miles. And what ever possessed you to use a Ford Escort? You should have checked in *Consumer Reports* about the problems with that model during fast getaways. And let's not forget those white-collar crimes. Tax fraud is pretty serious *(guest's name)*. Did you really think that \$7,000 in tips at a local strip club was a standard deduction? So, that's it folks. The cream of the crop right here in *(name of town)*. I want everybody to settle down and get a little R&R. We have a lot of paperwork still to get through tonight. I'm going to check on your uniforms. The last

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