

'TIL DEATH DO US PART

An Audience Participation Wedding Mystery

By Craig Sodaro

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STORY OF THE PLAY

You are invited to the most offbeat wedding of the season, where murder takes center stage and all the guests are suspects. Herb and Eula Lomax don't really approve of their zookeeper son marrying Lotus Blossom, an herbologist, because they think she's after their money. Newton Figg doesn't want Blossom to marry Leo because Newton's still in love with her. Of course Newton's new date, the bubble-headed Lulu, doesn't catch on too quickly. Howard, the Lomax family lawyer, has a little something up his sleeve as well. It might involve the mysterious guest who calls herself Aunt Hildy.

Unfortunately, Aunt Hildy dies mysteriously before revealing whose aunt she really is! When the lawyer, Howard, is also murdered, amateur sleuth Miss Peabody, takes charge and conducts an investigation punctuated by the traditional wedding events such as the throwing of the bouquet, the cutting of the cake, and the happy couple's first dance. But each moment brings Miss Peabody a step closer to the identity of a ruthless killer consumed by greed. Is it one of the bridesmaids? A suave tango instructor? The grandmother of the bride? The corny cousin from Big D? The Justice of the Peace? With the help of the audience, all but the killer (well, and the bodies) will live happily ever after.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 M, 11 W)

HERB LOMAX: The wealthy father of the groom.

EULA LOMAX: Herb's domineering wife.

BETSY CROCKER: Aunt of the bride and wedding caterer.

RAMON ESCOBAR: A dance instructor.

HOWARD: The Lomax family lawyer.

AUNT HILDY: A mysterious guest.

GLINDA: A bridesmaid and former soul mate of Howard.

RHODA: Another bridesmaid.

FANNY FISHBURNE: The Justice of the Peace, a friend of Eula.

POLLY PEABODY: A guest and amateur sleuth.

COUSIN ETTA: The bride's cousin.

LEO LOMAX: The groom, a zookeeper by trade.

NEWTON FIGG: Computer nerd who's had a crush on the bride.

LULU DEPEW: Newton's date.

MOTHER GEARTH: Eula Lomax's domineering mother.

LOTUS BLOSSOM: The bride.

SUGGESTED MUSIC

Summer fun type music (such as the Beach Boys) both fast and slow songs; classical or sacred music; wedding entrance and exit music; tango music; and general dance music.

NOTE: *See end of script for information on the clues.*

SETTING

The play takes place anywhere a wedding might be held. What's needed is a large room with a focal area (either front or center) that can serve as the wedding area. Guests can sit either on chairs or at tables. There needs to be a lobby or main entrance along with, preferably, two other doors (ideally one SL and one SR). The room should be decorated for a very frugal wedding. An auditorium can work if two banquet tables are set on stage, with the wedding area in the center. The food table would then be best placed in the area in front of the stage so audience members can partake when appropriate. A dance area should be included no matter where the play is held. In addition, a small table holding a tape player should sit near the wedding area.

PROPS

SET PROPS: Wedding guest book; sign reading "Seat Yourself"; tape player and "party" music tape; plastic flowers on each table; balloons and streamers decorating the room; candy and punch and cups on refreshment table; clues (see end of script).

EULA: Classical or sacred music tape.

BETSY: Apron, plate of cookies, tray of food, paper plates, napkins, cups, food, messenger costume, wrapped wedding present, dance music tape.

HERB: Bottle of ulcer pills, cell phone.

FANNY: Small date book.

PEABODY: Purse, napkin with the message, "Meet me in the kitchen right after cake."

LOTUS: Bouquet, ring.

LEO: Spoon, ring.

HILDY: Purse, key.

HOWARD: Note.

GLINDA and RHODA: Towels, washcloth.

RAMON: Tango tape.

MOTHER: Coat, gun.

ETTA: Frying pan.

ACT I

(The AUDIENCE enters hall after signing the guest book in the lobby or entry way. They are greeted by a sign that reads "Seat Yourself!" Party music blares from a tape recorder or CD player. Audience members sit at tables, but all should have a relatively clear view of the front of the room where - indicated by a rather tacky drape and plastic flowers -the bride and groom will stand. Plastic flowers adorn the tables. Streamers further decorate the room with balloons which have been designed with markers - a heart with "Lotus 'n Leo" inside. One table up front is decorated as a refreshment table and is preset with some food, such as candy. After the audience has been seated, we hear a scream from the lobby.)

HERB: *(In lobby)* Eula? Are you all right? What is it, lamb chop?

(EULA bursts into the room followed by HERB.)

EULA: How COULD she?!

HERB: How could she what?

EULA: A sign telling guests to seat themselves! *(SHE looks around the room.)* Oh, no! Oh, NO!

HERB: Buttercup, you'd better take an ulcer pill!

EULA: I didn't think I'd need them for my son's wedding?!

HERB: That's why I brought the whole bottle, Eula. Here.

EULA: I'm in too much pain to open my mouth!

HERB: Promise?

EULA: Don't start, Herb! I'm warning you! Don't start!

HERB: Then try to relax.

EULA: How can I relax! Look at this place! Oh, hello, there! *(SHE waves to members of the audience between tirades.)*

HERB: It's lovely, just like you!

EULA: Oh, Herb, how COULD you!

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HERB: That's a compliment. You're always telling me how I don't compliment you enough, and then I give you a compliment and all you can say is "How COULD you!"

(EULA snaps a plastic flower from a vase and swats HIM on the shoulder.)

EULA: It's all plastic, Herb! Plastic from Wal-Mart! Streamers from Wal-Mart! The plates probably say Wendy's on them!

HERB: Look, Eula, you know Lotus doesn't even have a family, aside from that aunt of hers who runs the catering place, and I'm sure they've tried to be as economical as possible.

EULA: This isn't the time to be economical!

HERB: It's NEVER the time for you to be economical, Eula.

EULA: Oh, so you'd deny me the few pleasures that come my way.

HERB: Few pleasures?! Eula, UPS delivers twice a day to our place! We've got more empty boxes on garbage days than Macy's on shipping day!

EULA: Herb, this is cheap! C-H-E-A-P!

HERB: I'm surprised you can even spell it, Eula! And you want a compliment, C-H-E-A-P is about as complimentary as you can get!

EULA: We've got to DO something!

HERB: Eula! We've been through all this!

EULA; I know...I know...but we can't just stand by and let this happen! Give me your phone!

HERB: What are you going to do?

EULA: Give it to me!

(HERB hands EULA his cell phone. She dials.)

HERB: The police AREN'T going to come over here and arrest the caterer for using plastic flowers.

EULA: Hello, Troy?! It's Eula Lomax. I AM at the wedding! And I'm desperate! It's plastic - EVERYWHERE! My God, I think I'm being overcome by the fumes!

End of Freeview

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