DEAD GIVEAWAY

by Pat Cook

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STORY OF THE PLAY

"If there's any skeletons in the closet, I'll find them!" states Angie, who then opens a closet and has a skeleton literally fly in her face. This is one of the many surprises that faces the undercover police woman who just took on a job as a "domestic engineer," hired by Dr. Hugh Bernard to "find out what's going on." Five elderly spinsters live in the same house and all, apparently, hate each other. And what a group. There's Evelyn, who keeps acting out death scenes for Fiona, who's writing some sort of novel. Then there's Catherine, who keeps alluding to her "garden." And Beryl, who carries a pistol and has *really* hired Angie, unbeknownst to the doctor. And finally, there's Dinah, a senior citizen Hell's Angel.

What keeps these women together? And what dark secret are they all hiding? And why do they all keep dying? Find out in this comedy chiller, where you're not sure who or what to believe, who is really murdering who. And finally, what really happened to Jinx, the cat?.

From the author who brought you *The Legend of Robin Hood, Sort Of* and *The Marquis Crossing Ladies Society's First Attempt At Murder*, this show will keep your audience on its toes until the final curtain. Nothing is for certain, nothing is taken for granted, but it's all a *Dead Giveaway*.

CHARACTERS
(1 man, 6 women)

DR. HUGH BERNARD: A reserved physician in his 40s.

ANGIE BOWLES: A young attractive woman in her late 20s.

BERYL CHARTRES: A feisty woman in her early 70s.

EVELYN HARRIGAN: An argumentative former actress, also in her 70s.

FIONA STANDISH: A polite woman, also in her 70s..

CATHERINE MEERS: A cool type of lady, also in her early 70s.

DINAH BOXBURROUGH: A senior citizen "Hell's Angel."'

Time
The present, in the fall.

Place
The living room of Beryl's house.

SETTING

The setting for this rather gothic tapestry is the living room of the boarding house belonging to Beryl Chartres. The house itself was built some decades ago and, though it seems a bit out of date in its architecture, it is clean and tidy.

The front door is located on the SR wall. There is also a window seat DS on the door on the wall, behind which is a bay window. On the US wall, near the SR wall, is an archway which leads into a smaller room and then off into the kitchen. There is a closet SR of the arch and a staircase leading up to the rooms, SL of the arch. The second door, located on the SL wall, leads to the dining room.

The furniture, like the house, is of another time. The large comfortable couch rests DSL near a bookcase on the SL wall. A matching chair is placed next to the couch. There is an imposing desk DS of the fireplace. A telephone rests on the desk..

ACT I
Scene 1

(BEFORE RISE: We hear an elderly woman speaking.)

WOMAN'S VOICE: Remember, you are the last. You are the best. You will have to prove yourselves. But even among the best, there is one who is the champion, only one who will win out … in the end. And she will get everything she deserves.

(AT RISE: DR. HUGH BERNARD is seated at the desk and looking over ANGIE BOWLES' resume. Angie is seated in an occasional chair next to the desk. Angie sits, restlessly, fidgeting and looking around. Then, after a slight pause, Hugh looks up and at her.)

HUGH: Very nice, very … neat.
ANGIE: Thank you.
HUGH: Notice I emphasized the word "neat"?
ANGIE: I caught that, yes.
HUGH: Well, that is where YOU must place emphasis if you are to work here. They like things neat.
ANGIE: Of course.
HUGH: Neat and discreet will be two words to keep foremost in your mind at all times. They want someone to do their job as unobtrusively as possible, don't want you getting under foot.
ANGIE: I'll do whatever's necessary. *(SHE pauses, briefly.)* Something?
HUGH: I was just wondering … you don't have to answer this if you'd rather not …
ANGIE: No, please. If it's too personal, I will let you know.
HUGH: Good. I want you to be honest, especially with me. I was just wondering about you. It's just that … you seem awfully young to be taking a job as a cook and cleaning woman.
ANGIE: I like to think of myself as a domestic engineer. *(SHE smiles, hoping to lighten up the mood a bit.)*

End of Freeview

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