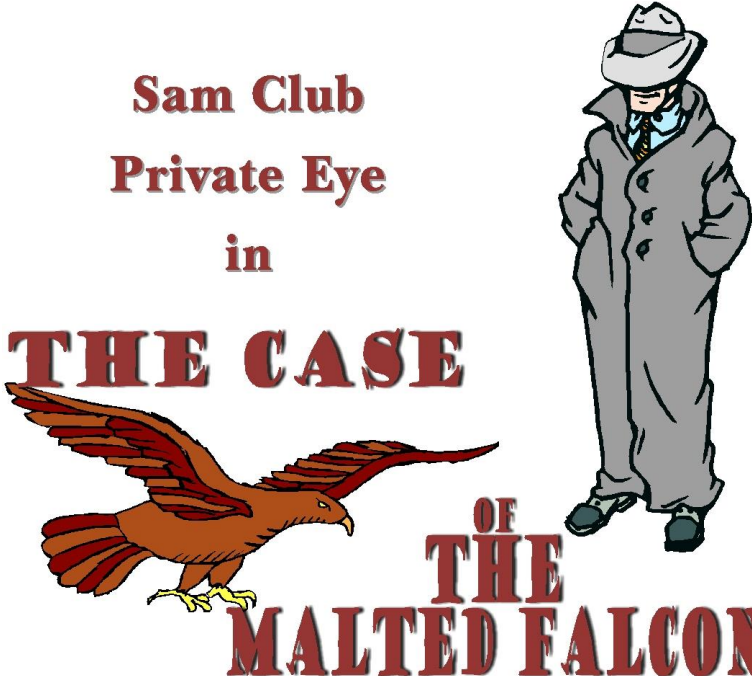


**Sam Club
Private Eye
in
THE CASE
OF
THE
MALTERED FALCON**

A stylized illustration of a detective in a grey trench coat and a fedora hat, standing with hands in pockets. To the left is a brown falcon in flight. The text is in a bold, serif font, with 'THE CASE' and 'MALTERED FALCON' in larger letters.

An Audience-Participation Murder Mystery-Comedy
By Tony Schwartz & Marylou Ambrose
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Sam Club, Private Eye,

in

The Case of the Malted Falcon

By Tony Schwartz & Marylou Ambrose

Cast of Characters:

Sam Club: Bumbling private eye; talks like Humphrey Bogart

Velma Vavoomski: Sam's ditzy secretary; has multiple addictions

Rachael Raven: Famous TV chef and cookbook author

Robin Hawkins: Nephew of Gertrude Hawkins, who created the Malted Falcon sculpture

Harvey Featherby: Falconer with stuffed turkey buzzard on arm

Casey Stourbridge: Penniless heir to railroad tycoon family; dresses as engineer and entertains train passengers

Abigail Nightingale: Representative from Feathered Friends Freedom Foundation (FFFF), bird rescue organization

Miss Marbles: Famous mystery novelist and amateur sleuth (acts as MC at beginning of show)

Setting

TIME: The present

PLACE: The entire play takes place in the Gallery of Amazingly Great Art (also known as GAGA), in New York City. Furniture is minimal: a high table and two stools on one side of the stage and a folding chair upstage on the other side for Miss Marbles. Use the high table and stools at your discretion. It gives the actors somewhere to go besides standing center stage while delivering their lines. (*See **Production Notes** for details on properties and set décor.*)

NOTE: This play was written to be performed in a variety of venues, but not all of them will have a real backstage area. Consequently, the script usually only designates *when* the actors enter and exit, not whether they enter and exit stage right, left, or center. That's up to the director and depends on the venue. In our shows, we hang a curtain upstage center as a backdrop, so the actors often enter and exit upstage, from either side of the curtain. However, they also enter and exit stage right and stage left.

Sam Club, Private Eye,

in

The Case of the Malted Falcon

The public (your audience) has gathered at the Gallery of Amazingly Great Art (GAGA), in New York City, for the unveiling of the world famous sculpture, "The Malted Falcon." This priceless bird statue was created completely out of chocolate by the renowned sculptor, the late Gertrude Hawkins.

Miss Marbles: Hello, I'm Jessica Marbles, writer of mystery stories and amateur sleuth. I'd like to welcome you to the *(Insert your company's name)* production of *Sam Club, Private Eye, in The Case of The Malted Falcon!* Tonight, you're part of the action. So keep your eyes and ears open for clues, because before the night's over, someone will be ruthlessly murdered. And it's up to you to guess "whodunit" and why.

How many of you have been to a murder mystery before? Well, this show may be a little different. We won't ask you to take a part, or get up on stage, or do anything but watch if you don't want to. So you shy people can come out from under your tables now and just relax and enjoy the show. Your main job is to pay attention and play detective—and then to vote at the end. The first *(Insert how many prizes you have)* people to correctly guess the murderer and the motive will win a prize. We'll explain the voting process to you in more detail after the show.

Here are a few tips to help you enjoy the show: Please watch and listen carefully. There are lots of important clues in the characters' dialogues, so you might want to take a few notes. I, Miss Marbles, amateur sleuth, will be taking notes, too, and I'll recap from time to time. Who knows? Perhaps we'll solve this case together!

And now—on with the show!

Miss Marbles goes to chair UPSTAGE and watches, appearing to take notes throughout the show.

Opening music (your choice) cues the cast members to take their places. While music is playing, RACHAEL RAVEN and ABIGAIL NIGHTENGALE take places at one side of the stage area. They speak after music fades.

Rachael: Ooooh ... this is so exciting! It seems like I've been waiting for this moment forever.

Abigail: So have I, my dear, so have I . . . (*Extends hand to RACHAEL*) By the way, I'm Abigail Nightingale, President of the Feathered Friends Freedom Foundation. (*They shake hands*) You don't have to introduce yourself, my dear. Raven is a household name! Your cooking show is fabulous!

Rachael: (*laughs smugly*) You're right. I'm more famous than Julia Child -- and a lot cuter! Now, who are you again? (*Sees Robin approaching*) Never mind. Here comes Robin Hawkins to make an announcement! (*They quickly walk UPSTAGE and just observe*).

ROBIN HAWKINS enters, walks to CENTER STAGE, and address the audience.

Robin: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Gallery of Amazingly Great Art, or GAGA, as it's known. Tonight, on public display for the very first time, will be the priceless sculpture, The Malted Falcon, created the late Gertrude Hawkins. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Robin Hawkins, Gertrude's long-lost nephew. Today, I'm thrilled to be unveiling my aunt's greatest work, the chocolate masterpiece, The Malted Falcon!

VELMA VAVOOMSKI runs out from BACKSTAGE and goes up to ROBIN.

Velma: (*excited, interrupts him*) Uh . . . excuse me, Mr. Owl.

Robin: That's HAWKins. Mr. *HAWKins*.

Velma: Yeah, whatever. Look, Mr. Hawkeye, there's something I think you should know. The Malted . . .

Robin: (*annoyed, loud stage whisper*) Not now, Miss Vavoomski. Can't you see I'm in the middle of announcing the arrival of the statue?

Velma: But that's what I'm trying to tell you! The Malted Fal . . .

Robin: Go away! (*embarrassed, realizes the audience is listening. Then talks to audience.*) Ladies and gentlemen, I do apologize for this outburst. We're both so excited about the arrival of The Malted Falcon, we lost our composure for a moment.

Velma: That ain't all we lost!

Robin: (*glaring at her*) Miss Vavoomski, why don't you do your job and see if your employer, Sam Club, Private Eye, has arrived yet.

Velma: Oh he's here alright. He's staggering down the hallway right now.

Robin: Staggering? Has he been drinking?

Velma: Oh, no, my boss never drinks on the job. I do the drinking for both of us. (*reaches into purse, pulls out a flask, takes a swig*).

SAM CLUB staggers in, a bit dazed, holding an ice pack on his head. Trouble is, he's wearing his hat, so the ice pack isn't doing any good.

Robin: My God, are you drunk?

Sam: I wish . . .

Velma: He was airbrushed!

Sam: That's ambushed, airhead.

Velma: No need to be rude, Mr. Diamond.

Sam: That's **Club!** Sam **Club!**

Velma: Right!

Robin: But where's The Malted Falcon?

Velma: It flew the coop!

Sam: You better let me handle this, sweetheart. Why don't you go back to the office and . . . file something.

Velma: Oh, I can do that right here, Mr. Heart. (*pulls a nail file from purse and begins filing her nails*)

Sam: That's Mr. *Club!* Oh, my head . . .

Robin: I demand to know what's going on!

Velma: Mr. Diamond was airbrushed!

SAM takes VELMA'S hand, lifts it for all to see, takes her pointer finger and extends it, closing her other fingers into a fist, then lifts her finger up to her lips in the "Shhhhhh" position.

Sam: Understand?

VELMA *nods and backs away a few steps. She rummages in purse, finds a chocolate candy, pops it in mouth, and licks fingers.*

Sam: She means well.

Robin: Where is The Malted Falcon?

Sam: *(to Robin)* I guess I owe you *(to audience)* and all of you here tonight, an explanation.

Robin: It better be a good one . . .

Sam: Well, it's like this. For those of you who don't know me, the name is Sam Club, Private Eye. I was hired by Mr. Hawkins here to guard the priceless piece of confectionary artwork known throughout the world as The . . .

ABIGAIL *runs from UPSTAGE and interrupts. RACHAEL follows her.*

Abigail: . . . Malted Falcon! The legendary chocolate statue carved by none other than Gertrude Hawkins herself, and valued, I believe, at well over one million dollars.

Sam: Uh, that's right, ma'am. The statue was being transported by rail from the quiet little town of Honesdale, PA, *(or insert your own town)* where Gertrude Hawkins lived, to the Big Apple, where it was to be placed on permanent display right here, at the Gallery of Amazingly Great Artwork, or GAGA, for short.

Rachael & Robin: *(together, ad lib)* We know all that. Now, where's the statue?

Sam: I'm getting to that. My job was to guard The Malted Falcon and see that it got from Honesdale *(or insert your town)* to New York City safely, aboard the Stourbridge Line, a state-of-the-art, 200-mile-an-hour bullet train. I was riding in the baggage car with the statue, disguised as a sack of mail . . .

Abigail: *(interrupts him)* A sack of mail? That's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard.

Sam: Not really, ma'am. It was actually quite a convincing disguise. But just as I was attaching a "No Postage Necessary if Mailed In the United States" label to my forehead, someone slugged me from behind.

Abigail: Oh dear!

Sam: You can also throw in an "ouch" or two, ma'am. Anyway, when I came to, The Malted Falcon was gone. So was that label on my forehead. It had been replaced with one that said, "Return to Sender."

Robin: Oh my God!

Rachael: You can say that again!

Velma: Oh my God!

They all look at VELMA. She raises her finger her to her lips again as if promising to be quiet. Then she rummages in purse again and produces a pill bottle, pops a few, and puts bottle back into purse.

Sam: So there I was with that label on my head, not to mention a goose egg, after someone flew the coop with The Malted Falcon!

Robin: My million dollar statue, gone!

Sam: I'm afraid so, sir.

Robin: I'm holding you personally responsible, Mr. Club. You were hired to protect that statue and get it here safely. You failed miserably.

Sam: Now hold on, Mr. Hawkins. The train is parked outside and no one was allowed to leave it unless we personally escorted them. Once we escorted everyone into this building, we locked the doors. So, unless the thief jumped off at 200 miles an hour, and I seriously doubt that, then he or she is right in this room.

Rachael: Yes, but some of these people weren't on the train.

Sam: That's true. But someone here could be an accomplice. No one leaves.

Rachael: This is ridiculous. I have a TV show to tape in an hour.

Sam: (to RACHAEL) You were also on that train, weren't you?

Abigail: Yes, she was. I saw her.

Velma: Which means you were on the train, too, Miss Nightingale.

Sam: Good work, Velma.

Velma: Thanks, Mr. Spade. (*reaches into purse and takes out a cigarette*)

Sam: Club. It's Club!

Velma: Right! Got a light?

Robin: You better solve this case and find my statue, Mr. Club. Now get busy! I have very little patience.

ROBIN exits.

Rachael: Robin, wait! We need to talk about this now! (*she runs after ROBIN*)

Abigail: (*suspicious*) I think I'll follow those two and . . . (*looks at audience as if she caught herself almost saying something she shouldn't*) and uh . . . see if I can get Miss Raven's autograph.

ABIGAIL exits.

HARVEY FEATHERBY comes storming in, followed by CASEY STOURBRIDGE.

Harvey: I've never been so humiliated in all my life!

Casey: (*to Sam*) I'm sorry, Mr. Club, he got away from me.

Sam: That's alright. All the doors are being watched by museum security. He's not going anywhere. Come on Velma, we've got to work to do. I have a feeling whoever our thief is, he found a way to smuggle The Malted Falcon off the train and into the museum. We need to find some clues.

Velma: But boss, you always say I don't have a clue.

Sam: Come on . . .

SAM and VELMA exit.

Harvey: (*to Casey*) Where's a phone? I have to call my lawyer. I'm going to sue for the way I've been treated. Detaining me on that train while the others were allowed to leave. Why? Because I have this bird on my arm? I'll bet they detained every person on that train with a bird on their arm. That's profiling. I've been profiled.

Casey: You were the only one with a bird on his arm. I wouldn't call that profiling.

Harvey: What would you call it then?

Casey: (*to himself*) Nuts?

Harvey: What?

Casey: Never mind. So what's with the bird anyway?

Harvey: Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Harvey Featherby, falconer extraordinaire. And this is my pet falcon, Spot.

Casey: (*incredulous*) You're a falconer?

Harvey: Extraordinaire.

Casey: But you don't even have a real bird.

Harvey: You're right. Actually, he's a stuffed turkey buzzard. I can't afford a real bird yet, not even a canary. But once I get folks to join my falconry club and start paying dues to me, I'll be able to get a real falcon. (*to bird*) No offense, Spot.

Casey: Do you realize you're talking to a stuffed bird?

Harvey: (*as if he didn't hear Casey*) Someone flipped me the bird once, but that's not getting a real bird, that's just getting, well, nasty! Anyway, falconry is my whole life. Well, not my whole life. I'm also into butterfly collecting and cow chip bingo. But it *will* be my whole life someday, when I get a real falcon. (*suddenly lucid*) So, you're the engineer from the train, huh?

Casey: (*momentarily disconcerted*) Uh, yeah, that's right, Casey Stourbridge, engineer aboard the Stourbridge Line, providing passenger rail service between Honesdale, PA (*or insert your town's name*), and New York City. Of course, on this trip we were also transporting the world famous chocolate sculpture, The Malted Falcon, valued at over one million dollars. Too bad about the robbery. I really appreciate art. Once I visited the world's largest ball of twine. It was very . . . round.

Harvey: You have the same last name as the train. Do you own it?

Casey: Actually, this railroad, the Stourbridge Line, was founded by my great-grandfather, Lionel Stourbridge. (*pronounced Lionelle, like the model railroad trains.*) He turned it into a very successful railroad. He passed it on to my grandfather, and then my father, who both made it even more successful. Unfortunately, my father met an untimely death. He drove his car around some downed, flashing, railroad crossing gates because he just couldn't wait, and was run over by his own train.

Harvey: Oh, so you inherited the railroad?

Casey: Yes, it was all left to me. And it was all downhill from there.

Harvey: Surely the train runs uphill, too.

Casey: No, no, no. The *business* went downhill. I was young and foolish. I had no head for business. It didn't take me long to run the railroad into the ground. The bank foreclosed on the railroad and now they run it. I went from owner to just an engineer.

Harvey: Well, at least you're still able to run the train.

Casey: (*leans in, stage whisper, letting HARVEY in on a secret.*) To tell you the truth, I'm not even an engineer. The real engineer is running the train. They pay me to dress like an engineer and schmooze with the passengers.

Harvey: You're a phony engineer? And they say *I'm* nuts for talking to a stuffed bird.

Casey: (*daydreaming*) If only I could have a railroad of my own again. I dream about it all the time. But it would take at least a million dollars. Boy, what I wouldn't do for a million dollars.

Harvey: Yes, Mr. Stourbridge. What **would** you do for a million dollars?

Casey: Why I . . . I have to check on some things.

CASEY exits.

Suddenly, a radio antenna rises on Spot's back. HARVEY sees it, gets nervous, and pushes it down again.

Harvey: (*to audience*) So, would any of you would like to join my falconry club? I'd be happy to . . . (*antenna rises again; HARVEY tries to laugh it off*) Heh, heh, heh . . . this bird can fly anywhere in the world. (*points to antenna*) Satellite navigation. (*pushes antenna down again*) Now, as I was saying, my club . . . (*antenna rises a third time*) Uh, excuse me a moment. (*hunches over bird, takes an ear piece that's attached to Spot and places it in his own ear, then begins stage whispering into bird's beak*) What is it? I can't talk now, I'm not alone. These people are going to think I'm nuts talking to a stuffed bird. What? Oh, right, boss. They're *supposed* to think I'm nuts. (*notices audience looking at him*) Hang on, boss. (*to audience*) I'm, uh, checking Spot for parasites! (*talking into bird's beak*) I'm back. No, I haven't found out anything yet. I know, I know, time is running out. Spot and I will keep our eyes and ears open. What? Right, the bird is fake. Sorry, I just got caught up in it all and . . . (*grabbing ear piece*) Ouch! Okay, okay, don't yell. I'm on it! You know I'll come through, boss. Hershtle's Chocolate Company is my whole life. Right! Back to work! (*takes ear piece out of ear and places it back on bird and lowers antenna; talks to audience.*) Well, **there**. He seems to be in perfect health. How sick could a stuffed bird be? I mean . . . if anyone is interested in my falconry club, just let me know. Right now Spot and I have the munchies. I wonder if they sell Hershtles's chocolate bars here? I just love them. Hershtle's chocolate is my whole life. (*catches himself*) Well, not my whole life. I'm also into butterfly collecting, cow chip bingo, falconry and – never mind!

HARVEY exits.

SAM and VELMA enter.

Velma: (*filing nails*) Sam, are you sure you're all right?

Sam: Yeah, I'll be okay, as soon as the swelling from this goose egg goes down.

Velma: I'm glad I came back and found you when I did.

Sam: Where'd you go anyway? Back to the office to finish that filing?

Velma: No, I'm still working on it, but I'm almost done (*continues filing nails*).

Sam: (*shakes his head*) Never mind. We've got a real problem on our hands. We have to find that bird, otherwise I'm out of a job.

Velma: Me, too!

Sam: You have to actually work before you can be out of a job.

Velma: (*under breath, takes cards out of purse and shuffles them*) If I play my cards right, people will be working for *me*, birdbrain.

Sam: What's that?

Velma: Uh, nothing. I said, so what's your plan for getting the bird back? You do have a plan, don't you?

Sam: Of course I do. I just haven't thought of it yet. But it'll come to me. It always does. All I know is we've got to find that bird before it flies south permanently and is never seen again.

Velma: But jeez Sam, didn't the thief leave any clues?

Sam: I can tell you this: Our thief is one slippery character.

Velma: What do you mean?

Sam: Well, when I came to, lying next to me on the floor was a large railroad spike, which I believe was used to hit me over the head.

Velma: That's a clue? I mean, after all, we were on a train.

Sam: No, not in itself, but on one end of that spike were some of my hairs, and on the other end were some greasy fingerprints. Whoever hit me over the head had grease on their hands.

Velma: So we're looking for someone with greasy hands?

Sam: It's a start. For now, that's all we've got to go on.

RACHAEL enters.

Rachael: Well, Mr. Club, any clues?

Sam: We're working on it ma'am.

Velma: Just who are you, sister, and why were you on the train?

Rachael: Who am I? Don't you cook?

Sam: She's not allowed to. Her cooking has been called a weapon of mass destruction.

Velma: That's not true! I can make a delicious frozen TV dinner, if I try real hard.

Rachael: Well, Miss Vavoomski, allow me to introduce myself. I'm Rachel Raven. Everyone knows me, because my face is plastered all over TV, magazine covers, and billboards for Dunkin Donuts! Well, that's all going to change, because pretty soon, my face will be plastered all over billboards for Gertrude Hawkins' Chick Chicky Booms, the new edible version of the famous Malted Falcon sculpture!

Sam: You mean there's going to be a candy modeled after the statue?

Rachael: That's right! They'll be yum-o! I've gone into business with Robin Hawkins, and as the company's new spokesperson, I'm traveling around the country as part of The Malted Falcon Tour. I'm also developing a recipe for the candies. The marketing division has come up with an adorable packaging idea -- putting the candies in little nest-shaped boxes with the slogan imprinted on the top: "Eat an endangered species."

Velma: How cute!

Rachael: Yes! This is soooo exciting for me, because besides loving cooking, I really love art. I have the original Mona Lisa hanging out above my sofa. Honest! I make so much money on TV showing people how to cook recipes like macaroni with little hot dogs, I'm a multimillionaire! And I'm perky, too!

Sam: And also quite clever.

Rachael: You bet. The Chick Chicky Boom candies will be delish! Imagine being able to eat an endangered species without going through all the mess and bother of hunting them down, plucking their feathers, and cooking them -- although I do have a yum-o recipe for falcon fajitas if you're interested.

Sam: Uh, no thanks. I'll stick to chicken fingers.

Velma: Does it come in a frozen TV dinner version?

Sam: Come on, Velma, we have work to do.

Rachael: Yeah, well, if you don't find the Falcon, there won't be any miniature candies. So get moving!

SAM and VELMA exit. RACHAEL moves to one side of the stage. MISS MARBLES walks to CENTER STAGE to recap.

Miss Marbles: *(to audience)* My goodness, hasn't this been exciting? I hope you've been paying attention. I certainly have been. Actually, I'm doing research for my next mystery novel, which is about a sculptor, so I thought I'd ride the train to the museum and gather some info. I never dreamed the famous Malted Falcon statue would be stolen and a real mystery would ensue! How lucky can you get? So -- let's review what's happened so far, shall we?

Sam Club Private Eye was hired to guard the million dollar chocolate statue, The Malted Falcon, sculpted by the late Gertrude Hawkins. It was en route to the Gallery of Amazingly Great Art in New York City. Unfortunately, someone hit Sam over the head and absconded with the sculpture!

Sam's secretary, Velma Vavoomsky appears to have a bit of a substance abuse problem – cigarettes, alcohol, gambling, drugs, even chocolate! She was back at the office “filing” when Sam got hit on the head and the sculpture was stolen. She's the one who found him knocked out cold. She also said something about playing her cards right and Sam working for her. I wonder what she meant?

Casey Stourbridge's family used to own the railroad. He inherited it and then derailed it . . . er, ran it into the ground. The new owners feel sorry for him, so they let him dress like an engineer and entertain the passengers. He dreams of owning the railroad again someday.

Rachael Raven is a famous, incredibly rich TV chef. She's developing the recipe for a new candy called Chick Chicky Booms, modeled after The Malted Falcon statue. She's also an art lover – she has the original Mona Lisa above her sofa!

Harvey Featherby claims to be organizing a falconry club, but his falcon is actually a stuffed turkey buzzard. Did you notice how he keeps talking to it? Like maybe he's crazy? And did you also notice that antenna thing that comes out? And how he was talking to someone from Hershtle's candy company?

Robin Hawkins is the long-lost nephew of Gertrude, who sculpted The Malted Falcon. He and have gone into business together to manufacture the Chic Chicky Boom candies based on his Aunt Gertrude's famous sculpture.

Abigail Nightingale is the president of the Feathered Friends Freedom Foundation. But so far, that's all we know about her. Hmmmmm.

Ooops! Here comes the birdbrain! I mean the bird man. Let's step back and listen for more clues . . . *(returns UPSTAGE and sits in same chair)*

HARVEY *walks to CENTER STAGE and spots RACHAEL.*

Harvey: Ohmygod! It's Rachael Raven, the famous TV chef and star of 30-Second Meals! Spot! She's your favorite star! *(goes up to her)* Can we have your autograph? *(produces pen and newspaper)*

Rachael: We?

Harvey: Well, no. Actually, *Spot* would like your autograph. He's your biggest fan. Here, you can sign your name on this newspaper.

Rachael: Why a newspaper?

Harvey: Spot will line the bottom of his cage with it. Then he can enjoy it until he can't see it anymore.

Rachael: (*looks a little squeamish but signs it*) Do you know your bird isn't real?

Harvey: Shhhhhh! He doesn't know that!

Rachael: So you're a fan of the artwork of Gertrude Hawkins?

Harvey: Some people are into oil paintings, some people are into water colors, some people are into pottery. Spot and I are into edible art.

Rachael: (*alarmed*) Edible?! The statue's not for eating, it's a priceless work of art! You wouldn't actually eat it, would you?

Harvey: Why not? You bite the head off chocolate rabbits at Easter don't you? What's wrong with chewing the head off a chocolate falcon? (*listens to Spot*) What's that Spot? Oh, sorry. Didn't mean to upset you.

Rachael: (*suspiciously*) Have you heard The Malted Falcon statue has vanished?

Harvey: Of course. I was on the train. They held me until last.

Rachael: Really? Why?

Harvey: Hey, wait a minute. I was joking about eating the statue. Spot and I couldn't eat that statue, we're vegetarians!

Rachael: What does your horoscope have to do with it?

Harvey: (*to Spot*) And they say *I'm* crazy. (*to RACHAEL*) What about you? Maybe *you* took it. Everyone knows what an art lover you are. Maybe you stole the million dollar chunk of chocolate to add to your art collection.

Rachael: That's ridiculous! Without The Malted Falcon this whole multimillion dollar deal goes right down the drain. No falcon, no Chic Chicky Boom Mini Chocolates. All I'll have to show for my efforts will be these sample candies (*produces samples – use any small candy like Hershey's Kisses*). Geez, it's hot in here. They're melting all over my hands.

Harvey: Oh, really? I was wondering what was all over your hands. I thought it was axel grease.

Rachael: Axel grease? Why would a cook have axel grease on her hands? It's chocolate. I've got to go wash them.

RACHAEL exits. CASEY enters.

Casey: Mr. Featherby! Any news yet on The Malted Falcon?

Harvey: No, not yet. If you'll excuse me, I have to go change Spot's batteries.

Casey: What?

Harvey: Uh, nothing. Excuse me.

HARVEY exits. ABIGAIL enters.

Abigail: Excuse me, are you the engineer?

Casey: No, I'm not really . . . (*looks at his clothes, smiles*) Yeah! I'm the engineer!

Abigail: But you were in the back of the train with all the passengers. Who was driving?

Casey: Uh . . . cruise control!

Abigail: Let me ask you something. Traveling at breakneck speed, would it be possible for someone to leap from the train without getting hurt?

Casey: Why do you ask?

Abigail: I'm sure you've heard that the chocolate sculpture was stolen. Maybe the thief jumped off the train with it.

Casey: I doubt it. Say, why are you so interested in the sculpture? Who are you?

Abigail: (*extends hand*) Abigail Nightingale, president of the Feathered Friends Freedom Federation, or FFFF (*blows feathers out of hand into his face; see Production Notes for how to do this*) Our organization is dedicated to returning captive birds like canaries and chickens to the wild and also to ensuring that no wild feathered friends are mistreated or, God forbid, roasted, broiled, baked or fried.

Casey: Wow, that's a mouthful.

Abigail: To sum it up, our slogan is "Save a bird, eat a cow!" We're even opposed to eating food shaped like birds. Like those marshmallow Easter peeps! I hate them! How do you think real baby chicks feel about something like that?

Casey: (*sarcastic*) Probably the same way they feel about McNuggets.

Abigail: And now those Chicky Chicky Boom candies that Rachael Raven is raving about. Something has to be done! Here—sign a petition against them.

Casey: No thanks, I never sign petitions. The last time someone said “sign this,” I ended up in the Army. But your worries are over. If The Malted Falcon sculpture is never recovered, there won’t be any Chic Chicky Boom candies.

Abigail: Sure, today. But what about tomorrow? That statue could turn up anywhere. I’ve heard Rachael Raven and Robin Hawkins are in business together. But maybe Rachael got greedy and stole the statue so she can make the Chic Chicky Booms herself.

Casey: Yeah, yeah. She could’ve done it. But then, anybody who was on that train could’ve done it.

Abigail: Which is exactly why I can’t take any chances. The sculpture needs to be found! It’s mine!

Casey: Mine? What do you mean *mine*? You seem awfully attached to that chocolate bird.

Abigail: Er, I, um, I mean . . . of course I am . . . for the good of the cause! Save a bird, eat a cow!

ROBIN enters.

Robin: Any news about the sculpture?

Casey: I’m afraid not.

Robin: Look, I just want my statue back. Without it, my deal with Miss Raven will fall through!

SAM enters.

Sam: What deal was that?

Robin: Rachel and I have recently become partners in a new candy business venture. Rachel has developed a secret chocolate recipe that’s going to drive chocoholics crazy! We’re using The Malted Falcon sculpture as a model to make candy sensations called Chick Chicky Booms! Now, you’ll be able to get your hands on your very own mini Malted Falcon and your taste buds, too!

Abigail: Not without the original to copy from.

Robin: I know! I want that statue, Mr. Club. Now!

ROBIN storms off.

Casey: I better check on the train. Make sure everything is okay out there.

CASEY exits.

Abigail: How come he can leave the building?

Sam: He's the engineer. He was driving the train, so he couldn't have stolen the statue.

Abigail: Oh, he's no engineer. I happen to know he's hired to pose as an engineer and keep the passengers happy. He was in the passenger cars with everyone else.

Sam: I didn't know that . . .

Abigail: Ha! And you were hired to guard the sculpture? Some private eye you turned out to be. You couldn't keep an eye on The Malted Falcon very long. Nice goose egg, though.

Sam: I was ambushed from behind. I never saw it coming.

Abigail: Or going . . .

Sam: Enough with the wisecracks, Lady, just who are you, anyway?

Abigail: The name is Abigail Nightengale. I'm the president of the Feathered Friends Freedom Federation, or FFFF for short. (*feathers fly out of her mouth*)

Sam: Say, didn't that group once put out a hit on Colonel Sanders?

Abigail: All charges were dropped. So, have you come up with any clues?

Sam: Just these. I found them on the floor when I came to. (*takes Hershey Kisses, wrapped in handkerchief, out of pocket*)

Abigail: Hershtley's Kisses? (*takes one*)

Sam: Is that what they are? I thought they were Malted Falcon droppings.

Abigail: (*eats one*) Nope, Hershtley's kisses. Want one?

Sam: You just ate half my evidence.

Abigail: (*to self*) We're in good hands here . . .

Sam: Speaking of hands, Ma'am, if I may ask, where did you get grease on your hands?

Abigail: What grease?

Sam: Right there, on your hand. See?

Abigail: Oh, that's not grease. It's from the chocolate I just ate.

Sam: Yeah, well, you didn't get all that chocolate on your hand from handling just one dropping. I mean, one Hershtley's Kiss. It looks like the same grease, I mean, the same *chocolate stain* that was found on the railroad spike used to hit me over the head.

Abigail: Nonsense! Are you suggesting I was the one who struck you in the mail car?

Sam: No, I'm suggesting you're the one who struck me in the head. There's chocolate on your hand and there was chocolate on that spike.

Abigail: That's absurd! Mr. Club, if you're implying that I hit you over the head and stole The Malted Falcon, you're sadly mistaken.

Sam: Oh, I don't know. Your organization could sell that statue and use the money to fund your bird-brained causes. (*shakes finger at her*)

Abigail: Mr. Club, I'm warning you. Keep pointing that finger at me and you'll end up with egg on your face!

ABIGAIL exits.

Sam: I think I better follow her.

SAM exits.

MISS MARBLES walks to CENTER STAGE to recap.

Miss Marbles: Well, well, the plot thickens, as we mystery writers like to say. Everyone's suspicious of everyone else. Here's what's happened since we last talked . . .

Harvey was excited to meet Rachel and pretended Spot wanted her autograph. Is this falcon bit an act, or is he really nuts? Harvey accused Rachael of stealing The Malted Falcon to add to her art collection. He noticed her hands were greasy and she said it was chocolate from the sample candies she was passing out.

Abigail told Casey she was the president of a bird rescue organization and tried to get him to sign a petition against the Chic Chicky Boom candies Rachael is making. Abigail said maybe Rachael stole the sculpture so she could make the candies on her own and cheat Robin out of the profits. Abigail was intent on finding the stolen sculpture and even said, "It's mine!"

Sam showed Abigail a new clue he found at the scene of the crime. He thought they were falcon droppings, but they were actually Hershtley's Kisses, which Abigail proved by eating one. Sam pointed out the grease on her hands, which she said was from the candy she just ate. Sam said maybe she stole The Malted Falcon to fund one of her bird-brained causes.

Oh! Here comes the bird man again. Let's keep an eye on him. (*returns UPSTSGE and sits in same chair*)

Harvey: (*mumbling to himself as he examines Spot*) What the hell is wrong with this damn thing? (*notices passengers staring at him as he's looking underneath Spot; he begins to panic*) Uuuuuuh . . . I think "he" may be a "she"! (*to Spot*) Spot! You've been keeping secrets from me!

Harvey continues examining Spot and mumbling to himself about Spot being a piece of junk. He pulls up the antenna and it falls down. He does this several times. He then hands the bird to an audience member and asks them to hold it very still. He takes a screwdriver out of his pocket and pretends to screw things through the feathers as if he's repairing something. He then takes the bird back, gives it a shake, and peers through the beak. Finally, he hands it back to the same person or someone else in the audience and asks them to hold it with the butt facing him and pointing up. He pulls a round plug, like a cork, out of Spot's butt. Then he takes a small flashlight out of his pocket and looks in the bird's butt.

Harvey: Aha! Here's the problem. I forgot to put the batteries in! (*Harvey pulls a battery out of his pocket and inserts it in Spot's butt, then puts the cork back in*)

Harvey: Now let's give it a try.

Harvey raises the antenna and plugs an earpiece into Spot and begins talking into the bird's mouth.

Harvey: This is Snickers calling Reese's Peanut Butter Cup, Snickers calling Reese's Peanut Butter Cup, come in, Peanut Butter Cup . . . Ah, there you are, Boss. I was having trouble with this transmitter . . . Yes, I've been gathering information on the new candy company being started by Robin Hawkins and Rachel Raven. But there's a good chance it will never happen now and you'll have nothing to worry about . . . Why? Because The Malted Falcon, the model for the Chick Chicky Boom candies, has vanished. Someone stole it . . . From what I understand, there are very few clues so far, and the private detective on the case is an idiot . . . I know, I know . . . What? . . . What does it matter now? You sent *me* here to steal it, but someone beat me to it . . . Why would I lie? Why would I steal it and tell you someone else did it? . . . To blackmail you? Boss, I'm a loyal . . . Yes, but . . . No, I tell you, I don't have it! . . . (*reacts like the boss just shouted in his earpiece.*) Okay, I'm on it!

HARVEY removes earpiece from his ear and lowers Spot's antenna. Then he talks to Spot.

Harvey: Do you believe this Spot? Treated like dirt again. I'm the best corporate spy in the corporate spy business, and the CEO of Hershtley's Chocolates treats me like an idiot. Well, he's about to find out just how smart this idiot is. I'll show him. He'll be sorry he ever treated me like this. (*to bird*) What? Oh, sorry. He'll be sorry he ever treated *us* way! And when we're done with

him, we'll confront that psychiatrist of mine. Imagine her telling me you're not real and I need help.

ROBIN enters.

Robin: Who are you talking to?

Harvey: Uh, no one. Gotta go.

HARVEY exits. RACHAEL enters.

Rachael: Oh Robin, there you are. My God, I've been looking all over for you! Have you heard any news on The Malted Falcon?

Robin: No! That idiot you suggested I hire to protect the bird turned out to be a real dodo!

Rachael: I know; I'm sorry. He came highly recommended. So now what do we do? Have you notified the authorities?

Robin: No. Let's not draw too much attention to this just yet. Maybe that bumbling idiot of a detective will find the statue.

Rachael: Where is he, anyway?

Robin: I saw him interrogating that bird lover. I assume he's going to question everyone who was on the train.

Rachael: You don't think he'll interrogate me, do you?

Robin: Why, do you have something to hide?

Rachael: No! (*licks her fingers and wipes them on her apron*) What would I have to hide?

Robin: Oh, I don't know. How do I know you didn't steal the statue for your art collection?

Rachael: Don't be crazy. In the same room as the Mona Lisa? They'd clash.

Robin: Seems like all *we* do is clash. Some business partners.

Rachael: Yeah, well, let's talk about you for a minute. You tell me we're going to make a fortune modeling miniature chocolates after your famous falcon statue, only I've never seen it. Not even a glimpse. Every time I ask to see it, you tell me I have to wait like everyone else for the unveiling. Maybe the statue never existed!

Robin: Then what was Sam Club guarding and why was he hit over the head?

Rachael: Okay, good point. Then maybe it does exist. But I know your heart isn't in this candy venture. How do I know *you* didn't steal the sculpture yourself? You've told everyone it's worth a million bucks. Maybe you stole it to collect the insurance money. Then you wouldn't need me, and I would have wasted a lot of time and my own money for nothing!

Robin: Don't be ridiculous! Auntie Gertrude would roll over in her grave if I stole the statue myself.

Rachael: She's probably rolling over anyway. She saw it as a great work of art. You're turning into the next Gummie Bears! And what's this "Auntie Gertrude" crap. The last time you saw her you were 10 years old.

Robin: But I always had fond memories of her. I was crushed when she moved to Palm Springs and became a recluse. Then when I heard she died last year, I was heartbroken. And what are you talking about? *You* came to *me* with the candy proposal. I was just going to put the statue in a gallery, so the whole world could enjoy it.

Rachael: Yeah, right. You forget I'm the one who found you living in that cardboard box. I'm the one who told you to contact the estate and claim the bird. What good would it do you for the statue to be on display? You'd go right back to poverty. You need me. And, unfortunately, I need you. Now, let's see if we can help find that chocolate bird before you end up back in the box and I end up with egg on my face!

RACHAEL exits.

VELMA enters.

Velma: (*pulls out a cigarette*) Got a light?

Robin: There's no smoking in the gallery.

Velma: (*annoyed*) Sorry . . . (*pulls out a flask and drinks*)

CASEY enters.

Casey: It's a little early for a drink, isn't it?

Velma: It's not booze, (*hiccup*), it's just a little, uh, energy drink to help wash down my medication. (*pulls out a pill bottle*)

Casey: You need help, lady. You're addicted to . . . everything!

Velma: I am not. Well, maybe to chocolate. Ooooh, I looooooove chocolate! I was court ordered to attend a six-week Chocoholics Anonymous program at the Hershtley Clinic after they caught me biting the heads off the chocolate Easter rabbits in Wal-Mart. (*takes chocolate out of purse and then stuffs it back in when she realizes everyone is staring at her*)

Robin: Yeah, well, be careful. You have chocolate all over your hands. You might get it on your clothes.

Velma: Oh, you're right. (*takes tissue out of purse and wipes off hands*) I got this on my hands before when . . . never mind.

Casey: *When* did you get chocolate on your hands?

Velma: Uh . . . when I was picking up the falcon droppings. I mean the Hershtley Kisses. Picking them up for evidence. (*pulls out deck of cards*) Quick hand of Black Jack?

Casey: No thanks. I have work to do.

Velma: Speaking of work, how come you were walking though the passenger cars on the train? Aren't you the engineer? Who was driving it?

Casey: The real engineer. I'm just someone they pay to act like the engineer for the tourists. (*daydreaming*) But some day . . .

Velma: Some day, what?

Casey: Never mind. So, do you and Sam Claw have any clues besides the Hershtley's Kisses?

Velma: Club. It's Sam *Club*, and I'm not at liberty to discuss the case. Say, is there an off track betting office in the museum?

Casey & Robin: No!

Velma: Casino nearby?

Casey & Robin: No!

Velma: Supermarket with lottery tickets?

Casey: Down the street.

Velma: Thank God!

Robin: How do you support all these addictions of yours? You're either independently wealthy, or you owe a lot of money to a lot of people.

Velma: Or maybe I've already hit the jackpot.

VELMA exits.

Casey: Or lost your shirt. I have work to do. Good luck with the case. You're going to need it.

CASEY exits.

Robin: Wait! What do you mean by that?

ROBIN runs after CASEY.

MISS MARBLES walks to CENTER STAGE to recap.

Miss Marbles: Oh boy, this is exciting! Let's review what's happened since we last talked.

Harvey examined Spot and got the antenna to stay up. As you've all realized by now, Spot is more than a dead bird -- he has a radio transmitter hidden inside him. And Harvey is more than a crackpot -- he's a corporate spy. Harvey told his boss at Hershtley's that The Malted Falcon was stolen. We learned that Harvey was sent by his company to steal the chocolate sculpture so Robin and Rachael wouldn't be able to develop a competing candy product.

Robin accused Rachel of stealing the sculpture for her art collection and Rachael accused Robin of stealing it for the insurance money. Robin expressed his fondness for Aunt Gertrude. Rachael reminded him that she found him living in a cardboard box and that she's the one who told him to contact Gertrude Hawkins' estate and claim the bird sculpture. They admitted they needed each other . . . but they obviously don't like or trust each other.

Velma and Casey discussed the theft and Velma pulled out a cigarette, booze, pills, cards, and chocolate. Is there anything she *isn't* addicted to? Casey pointed out that Velma had chocolate all over her hands. He asked her how she supported all her addictions and she hinted that she'd hit the jackpot. I wonder what she meant by that?

ABIGAIL enters and begins walking through audience, trying to get them to sign a petition.

Miss Marbles: Oh, here comes Abigail Nightingale. She seems to be soliciting the audience for something.

MISS MARBLES returns UPSTAGE and sits in her chair. ROBIN enters and approaches ABIGAIL.

Robin: Excuse me, ma'am, but there's no soliciting at the gallery. It's filled with art lovers who don't want to buy Avon products, join your red hat group, or whatever the hell you're pitching.

Abigail: I beg your pardon, young man. I would never get involved in such worthless causes. I represent the Feathered Friends Freedom Foundation, dedicated to ensuring that no wild or domesticated feathered friends are mistreated or . . .

Robin: (*interrupts her*) Yeah, yeah, look, I don't really give a hoot. I organized this gala so fans of my late Aunt Gertrude (*looks heavenward*) -- may her soul rest in peace -- could view her Malted Falcon masterpiece up close and personal. Can't you see these people are intellectual art aficionados? (*checks out the audience*) Well, maybe not all of them . . .

Abigail: Maybe not *any* of them. (*fervently*) But that's just what Gertrude Hawkins was aiming for. She sculpted in chocolate! She was an artist of the people!

Robin: She was? Oh, right, she was! Say, how come you know so much about my aunt? I thought you were here to get people to sign your petition.

Abigail: I was? Oh right, I was! Lucky guess. Save a bird, eat a cow! (*pushes petition at him*) Sign here.

Robin: (*waves petition away*) Knock it off, sister. Something's fishy here. I've never even heard of your bird organization. How do I know it's not bogus?

Abigail: Bogus, schmogus! How do I know *you're* not bogus?

Robin: (*startled*) What do you mean? I . . . I'm Robin Hawkins, heir to . . .

Abigail: Yeah, yeah . . . look, I don't really give a hoot. I'm just a feathered friends fanatic trying to drum up support for a cause I believe in. What do *you* believe in, young man? (*looks at him piercingly*).

Robin: (*uncomfortable*) Me? Why . . . none of your business!

Abigail: Do you believe in preserving art for posterity? Truth, justice, and the American way? Making love, not war? Stopping to smell the roses? UFOs . . .

Robin: (*interrupts her, confused*) No, yes, I don't know! What are we talking about?!

Abigail: You tell *me*, rich boy.

Robin: How dare you talk to me this way! I don't even know you. Although the more I look at you, the more there's something familiar about you . . .

Abigail: (*now she's uncomfortable*) Familiar about me? Um, I don't think so, sonny. I don't even live around here. I'm from Shamoken, PA.

Robin: Really? That's funny; I grew up in Shamoken. You look about the same age as my Aunt Gertrude. Maybe you knew her!

Abigail: Nope, never met the woman. I don't even like art. And I'm allergic to chocolate. I'm only interested in birds. Real ones. Gotta scoot! Lots of signatures to get! (*holds up petition and runs off before ROBIN can stop her.*)

Robin: The more I look at that woman, the more she reminds me of someone . . .

HARVEY enters.

Harvey: Who are you talking to?

Robin: Me? I was just . . . none of your business.

SAM enters.

Harvey: Ah, Mr. Club. Have you come up with any clues yet about who stole The Malted Falcon?

Sam: Well, I thought I had a clue when I found what appeared to be grease or chocolate on the railroad spike that was used to hit me over the head. All I had to do was find the same grease or chocolate on someone's hand.

Harvey & Robin: And . . .?

Sam: After examining the hands of everyone who got off the train, there's not a clean hand among them! That's because Rachael Raven handed out chocolate samples to everyone. Not only that, the restrooms are out of soap and paper towels. This is one sticky-fingered bunch of people. It could've been anybody. I'm back to square one.

Harvey & Robin: Damn!

Robin: My patience is running thin, Mr. Club

Sam: Well, I haven't given up. I'm still hoping to crack this case wide open before the day is over. There are still a few more people I need to talk to.

Harvey: I'll bet. There are sure some strange looking people here. (*looks at audience*)

Sam: They're no stranger than a guy who walks around with a dead bird on his arm.

Harvey: You're kidding? Where's he sitting?

Sam: I'm talking about you, you numbskull!

Harvey: Oh, yeah, I forgot about Spot here. We've gotten so attached, I don't even notice him anymore.

Sam: Knock it off. I'm not as dumb as I look, although that knock in the head didn't increase my IQ any. Anyway, since when does a bird have an antenna sticking out of its back? (*lifts antenna up*)

Robin: Good question . . .

Harvey: Uh, radio collar so he doesn't get lost! (*snatches bird away and puts antenna back down.*)

Robin: Oh brother. I've got to find Rachel.

ROBIN exits.

Sam: (to **HARVEY**) Yeah, and maybe you aren't as loony as you pretend to be. I'm keeping my eye on you. You and that phony bird might just lead me to the real bird yet. Remember, I've got my eye on you (*do finger motion with eyes*). YOU just became a "person of interest." I'll talk to you later. I've got work to do.

Harvey: (*nervous*) Yeah, right, see you around. Say goodbye, Spot.

SAM walks off, but not completely. He stays in view of the audience and observes HARVEY, who doesn't realize he's there. SAM pulls out a listening device that's really a funnel on a stick.

Harvey: (*raises antenna on Spot and inserts earpiece in his ear; then says to himself:*) I gotta get me one of those shoe phones like the other spies! (*says into bird's beak*) This is Agent Snickers calling Reese's Peanut Butter Cup, come in Peanut Butter Cup. Hello Boss, glad I got you. I'm in big trouble. I think my cover may be blown . . . What? . . . No. They haven't found the bird yet. Look, things are heating up. Sam Club is smarter than we thought. He's going to find out that I was sent by Hershtley's Chocolate to steal that sculpture so this new candy company could never get off the ground. Who knew it would get stolen before I could steal it? What? . . . No, I *didn't* steal it. But if the thief approaches me, how much are we willing to pay him for it? I, uh, could be the middleman in the negotiations . . . Okay, you think about it and get back to me, but do it quick. Sam Club could solve the case any minute. Over and out, boss.

HARVEY SHOVES down antenna and exits.

VELMA enters.

Velma: (*takes chocolate out of purse and eats some*) Yum, yum. Just can't get enough of this stuff. Hey -- that gives me an idea. Wanna play a game? It'll give us something to do while we wait for Sam to solve the crime. How about some chocolate trivia?!

VELMA asks the audience the following questions about chocolate.

1. **Question:** Does anyone know what plant chocolate is made out of? **Answer:** The cocoa plant. Chocolate is made from the dried and partly fermented seeds of this plant's flowers. Cocoa plants grow to be 20 to 25 feet tall. Africa and South America are the leading growers of cocoa plants.
2. **Question:** What country leads the world in chocolate consumption per person? **Answer:** Switzerland. Each person there eats about 22 pounds per year. (*to self*) Big deal. I can eat that in a day (*licks fingers*).

3. **Question:** Who was the Baby Ruth candy bar named after? **Answer:** The candy bar was created in 1920 and named after President Cleveland's daughter Ruth. A lot of people think it was named after the famous baseball player Babe Ruth, but it wasn't.
4. **Question:** M & Ms were created in 1941 for a very special group of people. Does anyone know who? **Answer:** The U.S. soldiers in WWII. They were made with a candy coated shell so they wouldn't melt in the soldiers' hands. Today, the slogan is still "The milk chocolate melts in your mouth--not in your hand."
5. **Question:** In Hershey, PA, what candies are the streets lights shaped after? **Answer:** Hershey Kisses. Milton Hershey built the chocolate factory in Lancaster County in 1905. Today, Hershey is the nation's leading producer of chocolate products.
6. **Question:** What famous black-and-white movie used chocolate for blood? **Answer:** Alfred Hitchcock's suspense/horror film *Psycho*, produced in 1960. Chocolate was used to look like blood in the famous shower scene.
7. **Question:** Is chocolate good for you? **Answer:** Yes. Research shows that dark chocolate, like red wine, contains substances that may lower the risk of heart disease.

RACHAEL enters.

Rachael: I'm glad to see you're having fun while we still have a crisis on our hands.

Velma: Don't worry, Sam will find The Malted Falcon. Have you seen my boss, Miss Raven?

Rachael: He can usually be found unconscious on the floor.

Velma: That's not funny. He could've been killed, or worse, gotten a concussion!

Rachael: You two were meant for each other. But no, I haven't seen him.

Velma: Hasn't he interrogated you yet?

Rachael: Why would he want to talk to me? Are you implying that I'm a suspect?

Velma: Everyone is a suspect.

Rachael: Including you?

Velma: Me? Watch it sister. What would I gain by stealing The Malted Falcon? (*absently reaches into pocket and produces a candy bar*)

Rachael: What would you gain? A fix for your chocolate addiction, that's what!

Velma: And what about you? You have plenty of motives to steal the bird.

Rachael: Yeah? Name one.

Velma: I'll name several. Let's start with your own addictions, how you need to have every valuable piece of art out there, including maybe The Malted Falcon. And that's just for starters. Because once you have the bird what do you need Robin Hawkins for? You can start that candy empire without him. One-hundred percent is a lot better than halvesies, isn't it?

Rachael: I was only getting 40%; that's not halvesies. I mean, that's none of your business!

Velma: Oh yes it is my business. If it has to do with Sam Club, Private Eye, I make it my business. See, I love the big lug. I'd do anything to help him solve this case.

Rachael: Even if helping him solve the case means you'd have to confess to stealing the bird?

Velma: You crazy broad. I'd never steal the bird! (*to self*) Even though it *is* the biggest chunk of chocolate I've ever seen (*smacks lips*).

Rachael: You're drooling Velma.

Velma: And so were you, over all the money you thought you'd be making. Until the sculpture got stolen. That'll teach you to count your Chick Chickie Booms before they're hatched.

Rachael: Say, you've got a way with words. Have you ever thought of going into advertising?

Velma: (*flattered*) No – you really mean that? Hey, stop trying to distract me. I'm trying to concentrate on this case. I've been thinking. It's a well-known fact that it took years to find Gertrude Hawkins' sole heir, the rightful owner of The Malted Falcon statue. How come lawyers and detectives couldn't find him but a TV chef could?

Rachael: Let's just say, where there's a *will*, there's a way. And in this case, we're talking about Gertrude Hawkin's will. It named Robin Hawkins as owner of The Malted Falcon statue. I saw a money making opportunity and I took it. That's called being a shrewd businesswoman.

Velma: Or maybe a crook. How do I know you didn't just pluck some homeless guy off the street and buy him a whole new identify? Maybe you just invented Robin Hawkins.

Rachael: And here I thought Sam Club was the idiot. But you're a bigger idiot than he is. I never heard such a cock and bull story in my life

RACHAEL storms off.

Velma: I have to find Sam and tell him my theory!

VELMA exits.

MISS MARBLES walks to CENTER STAGE to recap.

Miss Marbles: The plot gets thicker and thicker! Let's review what just happened:

Abigail told Robin that Gertrude Hawkins was an artist of the people, and Robin asked how she knew so much about his aunt. Robin said Abigail looked familiar, and it turned out she grew up in Shomoken, the same town he and his aunt were from.

Sam told Harvey he thought he'd found a clue when he saw grease on the railroad spike, but then he realized everyone on the train had greasy hands. He said maybe Harvey wasn't as crazy as he looked and called him a person of interest. Harvey got nervous and called headquarters again, asking his boss how much money they could offer the person who stole The Malted Falcon in case the thief tried to make a deal.

Rachel told Velma that she probably stole the sculpture as a fix for her chocolate addiction. Velma accused Rachel of stealing the sculpture to add to her art collection or to get the whole candy empire and cheat Robin out of his inheritance. Velma asked Rachel how she found Robin so easily when detectives couldn't do it, and Rachel said "where there's a will, there's a way," meaning Gertrude Hawkins' will. Velma decided Rachel was the thief and ran off to tell Sam.

Here come Robin and Casey. Let's keep an eye on them! (*returns to UPSTAGE and sits in same chair*)

ROBIN and CASEY enter.

Robin: (*to CASEY*) Are you sure you didn't see someone carrying a large package off the train and into this building? I want my Malted Falcon back. I need that bird sculpture, or else I'm going to end up back in . . . never mind.

Casey: Why are you asking me? I thought that gumshoe, Sam Club, was on the case.

Robin: That's the problem. I don't think that guy could solve a crossword puzzle. He has no real clues yet, and the longer we wait for him to figure this out, the more time the thief has to plan his escape with The Malted Falcon. Maybe it's still hidden on the train somewhere and the thief plans to go back and get it later.

Casey: How do you know the thief didn't already make a break for it?

Robin: Sam Club, Velma, and I watched everyone get off the train. The statue is too big to conceal that easily. Unless the thief jumped from the train on the way here.

Casey: At that breakneck speed? That would be suicide! And the statue would probably be destroyed. I think if the thief was smart enough to steal the bird, he or she was smart enough to know it would be insane to jump from a moving train. No, he probably jumped from the train as it slowed down, right before it reached the platform here, and no one noticed.

Robin: Yeah? Sounds to me like you had all this planned out.

Casey: Well once you ride the train as much as I do, you know all the right . . . (**ROBIN stares at him suspiciously**) Uh, of course, it's just speculation. It probably wouldn't work anyway.

Robin: Just the same, maybe I'll keep an eye on you!

Casey: And maybe I'll keep an eye on you! Maybe I just accidentally gave the thief the perfect plan to get away with the stolen statue!

Robin: That's ridiculous. Do you hear what you're saying? You're suggesting I stole The Malted Falcon from myself.

Casey: That's exactly what I'm suggesting.

Robin: Why would I steal it from myself?

Casey: I've heard some rumors that maybe you're not who you say you are. That maybe you're an imposter. So the smart thing to do would be to steal the bird, claim the million dollar insurance policy, and disappear with the money before anyone realizes you're not Robin Hawkins!

Robin: Nice try. I've heard about those ridiculous allegations made by Velma Vavoomsky. But I assure you, with some fingerprint tests, lie detector tests, DNA tests, urine tests, and whatever other tests you'd like me to take, I can prove I am who I say I am. How about you?

Casey: How about me? Look, I don't have time to answer any questions right now. If we're ever going to find your statue, we've got to keep looking. I only hope it's not hidden up in the locomotive.

Robin: Why?

Casey: It's so darned hot up there, it would be a puddle of chocolate syrup by now.

Robin: We're wasting time with this nonsense. I have to find my statue.

ROBIN exits. HARVEY enters.

Harvey: He looks mad. What did you say to him?

Casey: Oh, he's just upset about the statue. You can't blame him. You're still walking around with that bird on your arm, huh?

Harvey: Oh yes, Spot and I go everywhere together.

ABIGAIL enters.

Abigail: (sees Spot) What is the meaning of this? Is that a captive raptor?

Harvey: A what? What the hell is a capt . . . what?

Casey: Captive Rapper. He's a singer, I think.

Abigail: No! Not rapper! Raptor! There, on your arm!

Harvey: That's no raptor, that's my radio transmit . . . uh, Spot! It's my pet falcon, Spot.

Casey: (*to self*) Yeah, right. I think they're both phony, him and the bird.

Abigail: First of all, that's no falcon. That's an old buzzard.

Harvey: Yeah? Same to you! (*to bird*) Don't listen to her, Spot. (*To ABIGAIL*) Just who are you anyway?

Abigail: My name is Abigail Nightingale, and I'm the president of the Feathered Friends Freedom Federation, or FFFF (*blows feathers out of mouth into his face*) Our goal is to protect all types of feathered friends. But not fake ones. Why are carrying a fake bird on your arm?

Casey: Hey, who's gonna clean up these feathers? Not me . . .

Harvey: You knew the bird was fake?

Abigail: Everyone knows it's fake! Stevie Wonder could see that!

Casey: Even I knew it was a fake.

Harvey: Geez, was it that obvious? (*antenna lifts up from bird*) Oh God, not now!

Abigail: What's with that antenna?

Harvey: What antenna?

Casey: Right there. Sticking up out of its back!

Abigail: You fool, give me that bird! (*she lunges for Spot, yanking Harvey's arm around*).

Harvey: Ouch! You're hurting me! You're flipping my arm all over the place!

Abigail: I am not. I'm flipping the bird! (*discovers ear piece and listens*) What's this ear piece for? Hello?

Harvey: Pay no attention to that voice inside the bird!

Abigail: (*talking like a man*) Yes, yes, uh huh. Roger wilko. Over and out!

Harvey: Wrong number? Telemarketer? I get them all the time. They try to sell me bird seed.

Abigail: Knock it off, wise guy. I've got *your* number. You're not a lunatic. You're working undercover for someone. I don't know exactly who just yet, but I got a few clues from that voice on the bird, er, phone!

Casey: Can you call for pizza on that thing? I'm starving. They were all out of little hot dogs and I don't recognize any of the other horse doovers.

Abigail: (*to HARVEY*) Why don't you get a shoe phone like the other spies?

Harvey: (*suddenly threatening*) They didn't have any in my size. How about you? You need a new pair of shoes? Maybe made out of cement? We could take a little walk in them over to the East River!

Abigail: (*frightened*) Look, I don't know why you're here, and I don't care, as long as you didn't steal The Malted Falcon. That's all I'm interested in, getting the statue back.

Harvey: How do I know you're not the one who stole it?

Casey: She wouldn't do that. She's a nice ole' lady. aren't you?

Abigail: Why would I steal it when I already ow . . . never mind.

Harvey: What were you going to say?

Abigail: Mr. Engineer, could you get me a glass of water? I have to take my medication.

Casey: Sure, ma'am. I'll find you some.

CASEY exits. ABIGAIL watches him to make sure he's out of sight. Then she resumes her conversation with HARVEY.

Abigail: Look, you help me and maybe I can help you with whatever you're after.

Harvey: I have a feeling we're both after the same thing. Maybe one of us already has it, and maybe not. But if you don't have it, I suggest you stop looking for it before you end up like Sam Club, or worse.

HARVEY storms off and ABIGAIL stays CENTER STAGE, looking frightened.

SAM enters.

Sam: You look scared, Miss Nightengale. Is everything alright?

Abigail: What? Oh . . . uh . . . yes. Everything is fine. How is the investigation coming along?

Sam: Velma and I are working on it. Don't worry, ma'am, we'll find the statue.

RACHAEL enters.

Rachael: You'd better, or I'm out a lot of money.

Sam: Ah, Miss Raven. I've been looking for you.

Rachael: Me? Shouldn't you be looking for clues? Or, as usual, you're probably clueless.

Sam: Cute, real cute. I'd like to ask you a few questions.

Rachael: Such as?

Abigail: (*very aggressive*) Go on, work her over, tie her to a chair, shine a bright light on her, pull out the brass knuckles, give it to her . . .

Sam: (*staring at her in disbelief*) Lady, you watch too many old movies.

Rachael: Sounds like fun! And I can cover you in chocolate syrup, and you can cover me in whipped cream, and . . .

Sam: I'm not sure what kind of movies *you're* watching . . .

Abigail: Sounds like fun!

Sam: Alright! Enough! Now, Miss Raven, exactly where, when, and how did you actually find this "Robin Hawkins"?

Rachael: (*laughs*) I see you've been talking to your other half.

Sam: If you're referring to Velma, we're not married.

Rachael: I meant that between the two of you, you have a whole brain. Maybe.

Sam: Just answer the question.

Rachael: Let's cut to the chase. The point is, I *did* find him. And through fingerprints and DNA testing, it's been proven he *is* Robin Hawkins. It's a matter of public record. Go look it up. If you can read.

Sam: (*ignores her sarcasm*) So, why did you want to find him?

Abigail: Yeah, come on Sister, sing like a canary!

Sam: Miss Nightengale, please let me handle this.

Insulted, ABIGAIL storms off.

Sam: So, one more time, why did you want to find him?

Rachael: Oh please, everyone knows why. Don't you read the *National Enquirer*? It's strictly business. I knew if I could find him, I could build a candy empire around him and The Malted Falcon. It's simple to understand. Well, for most people anyway . . .

Sam: So the plan was that Robin Hawkins would let you use the chocolate bird as a model to create the miniature candy replicas in exchange for a piece of the action?

Rachael: You got it.

Sam: But the chocolate bird would still belong to Robin, right? You wouldn't get a piece of that. Er, let me rephrase the question. You wouldn't *own* a piece of the bird, would you?

Rachael: Unfortunately not.

Sam: That must hurt. Because you're an art collector, aren't you?

Rachael: That's no secret. In fact, I recently acquired the arms to the Venus De Milo. I'm hoping to get the rest of the statue some day.

Sam: Right. And maybe put it on display next to The Malted Falcon.

Rachael: That's ridiculous. Why would I steal the bird if I already have a business deal with Robin?

Sam: Because then you could start the business without him and keep all the money -- and the bird.

Rachael: Some detective you are. If I did that, Robin would put two and two together when the miniature chocolates hit the market. He'd be knocking on my door in a New York minute looking for *his* bird and *his* share. Don't you see how ridiculous your idea is? The only way it would work is if Robin Hawkins were dea . . .

Sam: What, *dead*?

Rachael: I didn't say that. Look, if you're not going to try harder to find The Malted Falcon, I will.

RACHAEL storms off.

Sam: (to self) And I'll bet you know right where to look, Sweetheart.

SAM exits.

MISS MARBLES walks to **CENTER STAGE** to recap.

Miss Marbles: I can't believe how many clues I've gathered just by eavesdropping. I hope you've been paying attention, too. So let's see what's happened since we last spoke.

Robin accused Casey of stealing The Malted Falcon, and then Casey accused Robin of stealing it so he could collect the insurance money.

Sam asked Rachel why she was so intent on finding Robin who was living in a cardboard box. Rachel said because she knew Robin was Gertrude's only living heir and it was an opportunity for them to go into the candy business together and make a ton of money. Sam accused Rachel of stealing The Malted Falcon for her art collection, but Rachael said she couldn't do this because Robin would find out. Then Rachael let it slip that the only way this plan would work was if Robin were dead. Good heavens!

Accusations are flying and everyone suspects everyone else. (*laughs*) They're about ready to kill each other! I've been taking notes and trying to figure out who the thief is. Imagine . . . if I could solve the crime, I could write a mystery book based on fact, not made up, and the critics would take me more seriously. Maybe I'd even make the *New York Times* bestseller list! Now let's see, hmmmmmm (*consults notes, mutters to herself after saying each name*), Abigail Harvey, Sam, Velma, Robin, Rachael, Casey . . . greasy fingers . . . motives . . . (*suddenly, lightbulb goes off*)

Oh my god! I think I know who did it! I know who the thief is! I have to tell the authorities! (*hurries BACKSTAGE, yelling*) Help! Police! I know who stole the statue! Help!

SAM enters. He talks to himself and the audience. What he's really doing is giving someone in the cast time to commit a murder offstage.

Sam: I heard someone yelling for the police. It sounded like it came from in here, but I don't see anyone in trouble. I wonder what that was all about? Like I don't have enough to worry about. If I don't find The Malted Falcon soon, my reputation will be ruined.

A bloodcurdling scream comes from BACKSTAGE. SAM exits BACKSTAGE to investigate, leaving the stage uninhabited for about 30 seconds. Then CASEY enters from BACKSTAGE, and RACHAEL enters from a second later.

Rachael: Did you hear a scream?

Casey: Yeah. I wonder what that was all about?

Rachael: Maybe they ran out of hors d'oeuvres again. Look, I have to get back on that train. I left something on there.

Casey: You know the rules. No one leaves this building.

Rachael: Says who? Sam Club, Private Eye? Blind eye is more like it. That guy is an idiot.

Casey: He's not the brightest bulb in the chandelier, I agree. I don't think anyone will ever see that statue again.

Rachael: You say that as if you know something no one else does.

Casey: No, just a gut feeling, that's all.

ROBIN enters.

Robin: Hey, you two, you're not going to believe this. Sam Club just found that meddling amateur sleuth, Miss Marbles, in a storage room -- murdered!

RACHAEL & CASEY both react with shock and horror.

Rachael: Oh my God! What a tragedy. First the theft of The Malted Falcon and now this.

Casey: Wow. There's never been a murder on the Stourbridge Line before. Although we did hit a cow once. Killed instantly. Maybe you read about it? It was in all the local papers, *The Weekly Almanac*, *The News Eagle* . . . (*or substitute names of your local papers*)

This is the script, minus the last five to seven pages.