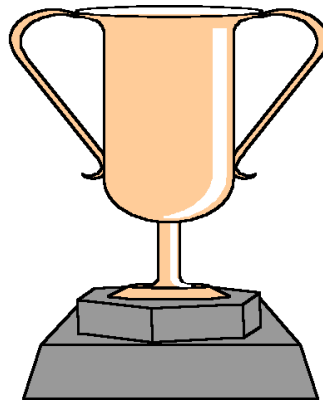


Murder at the Tonylou Awards

An Audience-Participation Murder Mystery-Comedy

By **Tony Schwartz & Marylou Ambrose**



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Dear Murder Mystery Fan:

Thanks for buying a Lakeside Players original murder mystery package. In this package you'll find:

- FAQ's about our audience-participation murder mysteries
- Complete murder mystery scripts for each speaking part
- Suggested opening and closing remarks for master of ceremonies
- Production Notes (properties, costumes, music, lighting effects, helpful hints)

Whether you're a seasoned actor/director or a rookie, this envelope contains everything you need to stage the perfect crime! Happy sleuthing!

Tony & Marylou

FAQ'S (Frequently Asked Questions)

Does performing in an audience-participation murder mystery require lots of acting experience?

No! Our actors range from friends with no experience to people who direct their own theatre companies. We usually give inexperienced people smaller roles and then try them in larger roles as they gain confidence. More than experience, we look for the ability to ham it up, to mingle with the audience, to memorize lines, and to perform without stage fright. Once a person meets these qualifications, we work with them on developing their characters.

How many weeks of rehearsals are needed?

Days of rehearsals are all that's needed. All our shows are scripted, one-act plays (not just flow charts), around 30 pages long, and with an average of 8 actors/show. No one has an overwhelming amount of lines. The key is to give actors their scripts a couple weeks before the first rehearsal so they can familiarize themselves with the play and start developing their characters and memorizing their lines early. Four, 2-3 hour rehearsals usually work for us, but you might want to add more, especially if this is your first murder mystery.

Suppose the audience doesn't want to participate?

No problem. Our shows don't depend on heavy audience participation like some murder mysteries do. Early on, we discovered that most people are afraid you'll ask them to get up on stage and do something. This fear might even keep them from enjoying a murder mystery. That's why we've designed our shows as scripted, one-act plays. Audience members aren't asked to play parts or do anything but sit and watch, if that's what they want. The audience-participation part of our shows consists of pre-show mingling with the cast; getting people involved in conga lines, mambo lessons, or sing a-longs; and in the end, having them vote on "whodunit" and why. It's all strictly voluntary, and we tell them that up front, before the show begins.

How much ad libbing is required?

Not as much as you might think. Most ad libbing is done during pre-show mingling, when actors drift from table to table introducing their characters to the audience. During the show, actors should stick as closely as possible to their scripts, just like in a conventional stage play. Of course, with the audience often only an arm's length away, it's tempting to toss off an ad lib or two. That's fine. Some of our best lines crop up this way--and we keep using them!

What's the best place to perform these shows?

Anywhere! The beauty of our murder mysteries is that they're so adaptable and portable, they can be performed in almost any venue. Admittedly, we do most of our shows in restaurants and country clubs, where dinner is part of the package, but we've also performed in church halls and on theatre stages. It's wonderful when we have lots of space, but even our most extravagant shows can be performed in a 15 x 20 foot area. In fact, our very first murder mystery was performed in an old inn, with most of the action occurring in a doorway between two dining rooms!

Does dinner have to be part of the package?

No! Our shows can be performed just like traditional one-act plays, with the audience sitting in chairs, rather than tables. No matter what your arrangement or venue, be sure to thoroughly discuss the evening's agenda with the people in charge. They'll be happy to accommodate you, as long as they understand how things are supposed to go and why. Handing them a written schedule of events is also helpful. You'll find a sample handout in this package.

Do you need a Master of Ceremonies?

Yes. Someone needs to welcome the guests, explain how the show works, explain the voting process, announce the prizewinners, introduce the actors, and then say thank you and goodnight. The director is the logical choice. If the director acts in the show as well, he or she SHOULD NOT be in character when performing MC duties.

How do you choose the murderer?

Our shows are written so that almost everyone in the cast has a good motive for murder. Changing murderers is especially important if you're performing several shows in the same venue or the same area. Then it won't matter if audience members tell their friends "whodunit."

Murder at the Tonylou Awards

CAST OF CHARACTERS

T. J. HARDCASTLE: Son of Tonylou Award founders and host for evening

M. J. HARDCASTLE: T.J.'s jealous sister

CONSTANCE GABBLES: Well-known comedienne and gossip columnist

LORNA LUSH: Has-been actress with a drinking problem

ANGELINA CANOLI: T.J.'s wife, an award-winning actress

CELIA B. DE MILO: Movie mogul famous for "discovering" young male actors

MONTY CARLO: Latin actor trying to break into American movies

FUNKY BREWSTER: Teen star of Broadway hit, *Annie Goes Through Puberty*

CLAUDE-JEAN VAN DUMBE: Karate champ/action hero; Celia's latest "discovery"

ANNOUNCER: Backstage manager/TV announcer

TROPHY MODEL: Girl who hands out awards (non-speaking role)

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

TIME: The present

The entire play takes place "live" at the Tonylou Awards show.

SETTING

The entire set consists of a podium at CENTER STAGE and two tables with four stools at each. At the STAGE RIGHT table sits (from stage right to stage left) JEAN-CLAUDE, CELIA, and FUNKY. At the STAGE LEFT table sits (stage left to stage right) MONTY, M. J., ANGELINA, and LORNA. T. J. either stands at podium or fades backstage. Tables should be set with tablecloths and "menus." You may use additional awards show décor (see **Production Notes**).

Murder at the Tonylou Awards

Master of Ceremonies: Welcome to the (Insert your company's name.) production of Murder at the Tonylou Awards! 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 is 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. I'll explain the voting process to you in more detail after the show.

And now—on with the show!

Scene One

*About 8 p.m. at the theater where the Tonylou Awards are taking place. Action starts at the door, where CONSTANCE interviews celebrities as they arrive. **Suggestion:** Have actors walk through an open door at back of room, be interviewed there by CONSTANCE, and then walk through the crowd to their tables at the front of room. Keep actors out of view of audience until they make their entrance.*

Announcer: *(From backstage Announcer should use a mic, if possible.)* Good evening, and welcome to the pre-awards festivities at the 30th annual Tonylou Awards. The actual ceremony will be getting underway soon, but right now, let's go down to the entrance where our correspondent, Constance Gabbles, is greeting celebrities as they arrive. Take it away, Connie

Constance: *(Adjusting her bra or stockings and caught off guard)* Oh . . . ha . . . ha, ha, ha . . . Thank you, thank you. I'm Constance Gabbles, and welcome to the Tonylou Pre-Awards Show. As you can see *(Points to audience)*, many of our celebrities have already arrived. But some of the big names in the business are still getting out of their limousines. *(Glances through door)* Wait, wait! Is that . . . yes it is! Here she comes, folks! It's Celia B. De Milo, the Hollywood movie mogul! For anyone who might not know, she's the CEO of PMS studios and is legendary for taking stage stars and transforming them into multi-million dollar movie actors. Especially young *male* actors who make it past her casting couch. Oh . . . here she comes!

(CELIA B. DE MILO enters dramatically. She's the quintessential celebrity. On her arm is CLAUDE-JEAN VAN DUMBE, young karate champ/action hero wannabe with more

brawn than brains. CONSTANCE shoves her mic in CELIA'S face to stop them.)

Constance: Miss De Milo, Miss De Milo, can we have a word with you before you go in, please?

Celia: *(Sarcastically)* Why, if it isn't the legendary comedienne, Connie Gabbler, reduced to a doorman. Oooooops! My mistake. Sorry dear, door *woman*. Perhaps some implants to go with the facelifts would help.

Constance: *(Obviously biting her tongue)* Yes, perhaps. And who's this little boy--your grandson?

Claude-Jean: *(Does a karate move)* I am Claude-Jean Van . . .

Celia: *(Slaps his hand and talks to him like a child).* Only speak when you're spoken to, dear. And as for you, Connie, you obviously you know nothing about sports. This is Claude-Jean Van Dumbe, karate champ, and my newest *(Gives him the once over)* . . . uh . . . *discovery*. Now, if you'll excuse us . . . *(They push by CONSTANCE and go to STAGE RIGHT table and sit).*

Constance: The movie business must be hurting if Celia B. De Milo has to pick up a few extra bucks babysitting someone else's grandson! Well, let's see who else is coming in. Oh, I believe I see . . . yes, yes . . . it's Monty Carlo, the Latin acting sensation, famous in his own country and now trying to break into the American market. Let's see if we can get a word in with him.

(MONTY enters flamboyantly, his jacket worn on his shoulders like cape. He is handsome, suave, poised, and every woman's dream--until he opens his mouth. He has a heavy accent and murders the English language.)

Constance: Mr. Carlo, may we have a word before you go in? *(Shoves mic in his face)*

Monty: But of course, my spicy little enchillada, I can always spare zee time for a beautiful wooman. What is it you wish to talk about? My good looks? My successful acting career in Guadalajara? *(Takes her hand)* Just ask me, my dear, and I will revel to you my most inanimate secrets.

Constance: Revel? Inanimate? *(Thinks a minute)* Oh, *reveal* your most *intimate* secrets! *(Rolls her eyes)* Well, actually, I was wondering why you haven't been able to land a movie role here in the states.

Monty: Ah, that will come in time. Sooner or later, Hollywood will have to recognose my talent and use me. But right now, zey are all seemply imitated by my good looks.

Constance: Uh . . . I think you mean *intimidated*.

Monty: Thas what I said. Don you unerstan' Eeeenglish?

Constance: Of course, my mistake.

Monty: Besides, I am numerated for an award tonight and . . .

Constance: *Nominated.*

Monty: Thas what I say. I am numerated for an award tonight, and when I win the award, Hollywood will have no choice but to give me a big, starring role in a movie.

Constance: Yes, but you're numerated--I mean *nominated*--for your portrayal of a penny- pinching mute in the movie *Talk is Cheap*. It wasn't a speaking part. Quite frankly Mr. Carlo, people have trouble understanding some of the things you say.

Monty: There's nothing wrong with my Eeenglish! An intelevision indivisible has no trouble underestimating my English!

Constance: You mean, an *intelligent individual* has no trouble *understanding* your English.

Monty: Thas' what I said! Jeesh! Thank you so much for wasting my time. Now, if you'll 'scuse me, my fins await! (*Storms off to STAGE LEFT table and sits.*)

Constance: His *fins* await? Where's he performing, Sea World? If he ever gets a speaking role in a movie, Webster will have to rewrite the dictionary! Now, let's see who else is coming in. Oh! I think I see . . . yes, yes . . . it's the teen star of the sequel to *Annie*, *Annie Goes Through Puberty*--Funky Brewster!

(*FUNKY enters all smiley, perky, and sweetness and light.*)

Constance: Hi, Funky. Can we have a word with you before you go in?

Funky: Wow, I think I got in here just in time. It looks like it's about to rain. But don't worry (*Sings Annie song*), "The sun will come out, tomorrow, tomorrow . . ."

Constance: (*Cuts FUNKY off*) Right, thanks for the forecast. Now, I believe this is your very first time at the Tonylou Awards. I'll bet you're excited.

Funky: Yes! (*Sings again*) "I'm excited, excited, you can bet your bottom dollar I'm excited."

Constance: Relax dear, this isn't an audition. Now, I've heard that you'll be going to London sometime soon to do *Annie Goes Through Puberty*. Is that true?

Funky: Yes, it's true. In fact, I'll be leaving (*Sings again*) "Tomorrow, tomorrow, I'm

leaving, tomorrow, it's only a day away.”

Constance: Enough with the singing! (*Pinches FUNKY'S cheek*) Oh, you're soooooo cute! (*Aside to audience, with finger in her mouth*) Gag me with a wooden spoon. (*To FUNKY*) Why don't you go find your seat dear, and I'll have a waitress bring you some cookies and milk. Okay? (*Pushes FUNKY toward stage*) There you go, bye bye! (*FUNKY walks to STAGE RIGHT table and sits.*)

Constance: (*Looking out door again*) Oh, oh . . . is that . . . yes it's her. She's here every year. It's Lorna Lush, the has-been star of the stage. These days she does guest appearances at the liquor store. (*Calling out to LORNA*) That's right, dear. Blow into the balloon and then ask the officer if you can come in and talk to us. (*To audience*) Jilted by a secret lover many years ago and took to the bottle. Hasn't been in a show since. She comes to these awards every year hoping someone will rediscover her and give her a part. But no one will take a chance on her.

(*LORNA enters, tipsy. She has a bottle or flask sticking out of her evening purse. CONSTANCE extends her hand to shake LORNA'S, but LORNA ignores her, gripping her purse with both hands and taking a sip from the bottle.*)

Constance: Maybe you could strap that onto your body somewhere and hook up intravenously. It would free up your hands for other things.

Lorna: Just a little nip to calm my nerves. After all these years I'm finally getting an award tonight. So naturally, I'm a bit nervous.

Constance: But you're not nominated for anything. You haven't been in a show in years. How can you be nominated?

Lorna: But I am. You'll see . . .

Constance: (*Stage whispers to audience*) Drunk as a skunk.

Lorna: By the way, did I tell you I'm writing a book? My life story.

Constance: Oh goodie, *Pour Me Another: The Life Story of Lorna Lush*.

Lorna: Go ahead, make jokes now. But it's going to be a real tell-all book, with secrets revealed that will shock the theater world. You'll see. (*Goes for another drink and realizes bottle is almost empty*) Uh . . . now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go and freshen up a bit. (*LORNA staggers to STAGE LEFT TABLE and sits.*)

Constance: (*Calls to LORNA*) Right, freshen up, you do that. And don't forget to put a little behind your ears, dear. (*To audience*) A tell-all book, huh. Actually, she was running with the in-crowd many years ago, when she was young and sober. She rubbed elbows with many of the people in this very room. She might actually have a few good

stories. And who knows? Maybe after all these years she'll reveal who her secret lover was, the one who jilted her and turned her off to theater and on to the bottle.

(Looks out door again) Well, the awards show will be starting real soon, and there's still no sign of M. J. Hardcastle. I've heard the feud between her and her brother T.J. has really escalated. They don't speak at all. Rumor has it that they . . . oh, here she comes!

(M.J. enters and tries to rush past CONSTANCE, who shoves a mic in her face.)

Constance: Miss Hardcastle, may we have a word with you before you go in?

M. J.: *(Nervous, overbearing, smoking a cigarette and speaking in a raspy "smokers voice")* Okay, but make it snappy. They're about to begin taping and I'm running late. *(Looks around)* Is my brother here?

Constance: Why yes, he's floating around somewhere.

M. J.: And I see Lorna Lush has arrived. Has she fallen on anyone yet?

Constance: No, but the night's still young. Now, Miss Hardcastle, rumor has it that your feud with your brother has intensified these last few months. Is that true?

M. J.: It's no secret my brother and I don't see eye to eye on most things. Especially the family business, Hardcastle Production Company, and of course the Tonylou Awards themselves. Daddy always felt that T. J. was lazy and useless. He set it up for me to be in charge of the family empire should anything happen to him and Mother.

Constance: I see . . . but if that were true, then why is your brother in control instead of you?

M. J.: I would be, had I not been in Europe at the time of their fatal, freak accident and T. J.'s last minute visit to Daddy's death bed. Something happened in that hospital room that changed everything.

Constance: Are you accusing your brother of foul play?

M. J.: Do I have to spell it out for you? T. J. claims Daddy asked for a lawyer, and so he and his wife, Angelina Cannoli, brought in her brother Vinnie—who was a lawyer for the mob!

Constance: Are you suggesting that your brother had your father change documents in the hospital, perhaps against his will?

M. J.: That's exactly what I'm saying. I just can't prove it yet.

Constance: What about this Vinnie the Lawyer? Can't you get him to confess?

M. J.: Unfortunately, Vinnie's no longer with us. He was later gunned down in a pizzeria after he failed to keep a client--Joey "The Snitch" Buttafinko--from testifying against the godfather of the undergarment district, Don Gatchies.

Constance: I remember that. It became known as the Fruit of the Loom Massacre!

M. J.: That's right. But there's a secret eyewitness that no knew about. But I think I know who it is. And when I can get this person to confess what they saw . . .

(T. J. enters with ANGELINA on his arm. T. J. is an awards show host a la Bert Parks—short on talent but skilled in public relations. ANGELINA may be played with a slight Italian accent, but this is optional.)

T. J.: Telling tall tales again, Sis? *(To Constance)* She has a vivid imagination. Always thinking in terms of mystery and intrigue. *(To M. J.)* Why Sis, you should've been a writer. You probably could've been, if you hadn't wasted all your energy being jealous of me and trying to prove your ridiculous allegations.

M. J.: My day is coming, you'll see, you'll all see. And when it gets here, maybe I *will* write a book. A book about my dear brother. The only problem is, the truth about you is so unbelievable, readers will mistake it for fiction! *(M. J. walks off in a huff to STAGE LEFT table and sits.)*

T. J.: Jealousy is soooooo ugly, isn't it Connie?

Constance: Don't drag me into your family feud.

T. J.: But you're almost family; at least that's the way it feels. You've been covering the Tonylou Awards for years. You've tried to hide just how *many* years with a dozen or so face-lifts, but you're looking beautiful, my dear, *for your age*.

Constance: *(Holding back her anger)* Yes, thank you. And speaking of aging beauty, how's your wife, Angelina Canoli? *(To ANGELA)* Are we planning to win another award this evening?

Angelina: It wouldn't surprise me. *(Pretending to be humble)* I do seem to win something every year. It's wonderful to have your talent recognized.

Constance: Yes, especially when your husband is running the whole show and can do the "recognizing".

Angelina: Are you insinuating the awards are fixed in my favor?

Constance: I'm not insinuating anything. Just making an observation, dear.

T. J.: Angelina is a very talented woman and deserves everything she gets. Nothing is

rigged in anyone's favor. The media, fueled by my sister's repeated allegations over the years, has cast a shadow over these awards that, quite frankly, I'm tired of. (*Glances at stage*) Now, I'm being signaled. I believe the taping of the show is about to begin. If you'll excuse us. (*T. J. and Angelina hurry off. T. J. walks to CENTER STAGE, and ANGELINA sits at STAGE LEFT table.*)

Constance: (*To audience*) He's not the worst person in the world, but until another one comes along, he'll do!

Announcer: (*Voice from backstage*) We're going live in 30 seconds, Mr. Hardcastle.

T. J.: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. The live broadcast of the 30th annual Tonylou Awards is about to begin. Isn't it exciting? Who will be our big winners this evening? We're about to find out!

Announcer: (*Voice from backstage*) Okay Mr. Hardcastle, it's almost time. You'd better go backstage and get ready to make your entrance. (*T. J. runs backstage to get ready for his entrance.*) Okay everyone, we're going live. We're live in 5, 4, 3, 2, and . . .

Good evening, and welcome to the 30th annual Tonylou Awards! A star-studded evening filled with stars and studs and plenty of excitement. And now, introducing your host for this evening's festivities . . .

Lorna: (*Stands up drunkenly*) Thank you, thank you, I'm so happy to be your host for this evening . . .

M.J. : (*Grabs Lorna and forces her back into her chair. Then stage whispers the next lines.*) Sit down and behave yourself! Here, have some more milk. (*Hands her liquor bottle and pats her on head.*)

Announcer: Once again, introducing your host for this evening's festivities . . . T. J. Hardcastle! (*Cast applauds and encourages audience to applaud. ANNOUNCER cues music and T. J. sings theme song for Tonylou Awards [See **Production Notes**]. After song is over, T. J. goes to podium and delivers the following dialogue.*)

T.J.: Thank you, thank you ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the 30th annual Tonylou Awards! It's my pleasure to be hosting the awards once again, following in the footsteps of my dearly departed parents, Tony and Marylou Hardcastle, Sr., God rest their souls. They would both be standing here themselves, I'm sure, had it not been for that tragic accident back in 1974. While performing their version of *Peter Pan* entitled, *Pete and Tink, the Golden Years*, they were flying 20 feet above the stage when their harnesses broke and they both ended up in the orchestra pit with oboes up their . . .

(*M. J. jumps up and gives T. J. a threatening look, cutting him off in midsentence.*)

T. J.: Uh . . . but Mom and Dad are not forgotten! No, Tony and Marylou Hardcastle live on. In the reruns of their movies and their television shows, and of course, in the Tonylou

Awards!

(Cast applauds and encourages audience to do the same.)

T. J.: Well, we certainly have a star-studded audience this evening. I see my beloved sister M.J. Hardcastle is in the audience. *(Waves to her)* Love ya, Sis.

Lorna: *(Mostly to herself)* One big happy family. Just like the Mansons.

M. J.: Why brother dear, so nice of you to share the limelight. It's not like you. Are you feeling okay?

T. J.: Ah Sis, always the kidder. Oh, and look who we have over here. Celia B. De Milo, the head of PMS Studios! It's become a tradition for Celia to give a starring role in her next movie to the winner of the Tonylou Award for Best Actor. And isn't that nice-- she's brought her grandson with her tonight.

Celia: *(Indignant)* This happens to be Claude-Jean Van Dumbe, karate champ, and possibly my newest action-hero star. *(CLAUDE-JEAN stands up and does a few karate moves.*

Celia: See? Isn't he adorable? I have high hopes for him.

Lorna: Yea, high hopes he's your next meal ticket. You're going to need a miracle to bail you out of the hole you've dug yourself into. You think no one knows, but I know. And when I finish my tell-all book the whole world will know!

Celia: Some people are has-beens, but not you Lorna dear. You're a never was!

T. J.: Ahhhh . . . yes, and I see we also have Funky Brewster in the audience, the star of *Annie Goes Through Puberty*. It's great to have you with us, Funky. Is this your first time at the Tonylou Awards?

Funky: Yes, it's very exciting. I'm hoping to win my first award this evening, and then it's on to London to do *Annie Goes Through Puberty*. I'm leaving *(Sings)* "Tomorrow, tomorrow, it's only a day away."

Lorna: Yea, well, the sooner the better, right kid? Orphans International would like their money back.

Funky: I don't know what you're talking about!

T. J.: And seated next to my sister is the Latin film star, Monty Carlo! Welcome to our country and to the awards show!

Monty: Thank you, thank you very much. It's a great pleasant to be amongst all you

everybodies at this event. I do hops Miss De Milo recognoses me.

Celia: Don't worry, Monty. I knew you were here the minute you opened your mouth.

Lorna: (*Slurring her words*) He has wonderful diction. He should be on radio.

T. J.: And of course, we have with us tonight the winner of more Tonylou Awards than any other person, the incredible, multi-talented actress who just happens to be my beautiful wife--Angelina Canoli!

Angelina: Thank you, darling. Perhaps I'll be "surprised" again this year.

T. J.: (*Winks at her*) We'll just have to wait and see.

Lorna: Your father's rolling over in his grave because of what you've done to these awards. You just wait till my book comes out, T. J. Hardcastle. You're going to pay for what you've done to your father's memory.

T. J.: Right, ha, ha, ha . . . We'll be right back for the presentation of our first award after these commercial messages!

Announcer: And . . . cut, we're off the air. We'll cue you Mr. Hardcastle, when the commercials are about over.

T. J.: Thank you.

(*M. J. gets up and starts walking backstage. T. J. meets her at CENTER STAGE.*)

T. J.: We may not agree on much, but I think we both know that Lorna is trouble. Could you please try to keep her quiet?

M. J.: Oh, I don't know. When she's bugging you, I think she's kind of cute.

T. J.: For the sake of our parent's memory, please keep her quiet!

M. J.: Oh, and we also don't want her to make a scene when your wife "wins" her award, again, do we?

T. J.: We don't know who the winners are yet.

M. J.: Yeah, right. Ha! Someday. I'll get proof that you rig these awards for Angelina to win. And when I do . . . just you wait, brother dear. Ha, ha, ha! (*Starts walking backstage and then stops.*)

T. J.: Such dramatics! Why dear sister, *you* should be nominated for something.

Lorna: And the winner of the Tonylou Award for Best Jealous Sister goes to . . . M. J. Hardcastle! *(To herself)* And people wonder why I drink.

T. J.: *(To M. J.)* Keep her quiet!

Lorna: Why don't I go stretch my legs and leave you two to your little family reunion. *(Wanders off into audience and leaves T. J. and M. J. alone.)*

M. J.: We both know, brother dear, that Daddy intended *me* to control the family empire. We were so close, Daddy and me. We did everything together—riding, trap shooting. He saw that I had a head for business so he sent me to Harvard Business School. He knew that you were irresponsible—you still are! He didn't trust you to be in control of anything.

T. J.: Yes, but that was before you joined up with that cult. I mean, really sis, from going to Harvard to getting involved with Reverend One Hung Lo and his Unorthodox Unilateral Church? Shaving your head and selling posies on street corners? What the hell were you thinking?

M. J.: *(Defensive)* I was young and impressionable. And Reverend One Hung Lo was very *(gets turned on remembering)* . . . manipulative. How did I know that he was after Daddy's money through me?

T. J.: Daddy had nightmares of Hardcastle Productions moving to Communist China and producing cheap karate movies dubbed in English.

M. J.: Well, it didn't happen. Daddy had me rescued and deprogrammed. I was fine after that. *(Eye twitches)*

T. J.: Yea, but he never trusted your judgment again, and he told you so. You hated that, and it drove a wedge between the two of you. Then Daddy had all those unfortunate accidents. First, while playing in a polo match, the cinch on his saddle mysteriously broke and he went flying off his horse and landed head first in a water trough. He nearly drowned.

M. J.: *(Uneasily)* Yea, that was some freak accident.

T. J.: Then a week later while trap shooting, the trap launcher malfunctioned and launched in reverse, hitting Daddy right between the eyes with a clay bird. He thought we were being invaded by flying saucers.

M. J.: *(Evasively)* It could happen to anybody.

T. J.: And if that wasn't enough, a week after that their harnesses broke during their Pete and Tink performance and they fell into the orchestra pit. Mommy was killed instantly, but Daddy lingered in the hospital for a few more days, until *(a sob in his voice)* . . . he

joined Mommy on that great stage in the sky. We suspected that the cable had been tampered with, but nothing was ever proven. You left for vacation the day of the accident. You weren't there for them in the end. But I *was*.

M. J.: I was at a remote yoga retreat in Tibet. I didn't get the news for days. And by the time I could get a flight back . . . he was gone. They both were. (*A sob in her voice*)

T. J.: It was during those last few days in the hospital that Daddy realized that I should be in control of the family empire. So he had his will changed and put everything in my hands. He left you trust funds to live off of, but no control over anything.

M. J.: I still say you somehow tricked him into changing his will. And I'm convinced that there was a secret witness. The truth will be revealed soon, and then you'll be finished, brother dear. (*Storms back to table and sits down.*)

T. J.: Sometimes I think that deprogrammer didn't quite finish the job. You're still nuts.

Announcer: (*From backstage*) Get ready Mr. Hardcastle. We're going live in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 . . .

T. J.: (*Goes to podium*) We're back at the 30th Annual Tonylou Awards. And now it's time to present our first award of the evening, for Best Director in an Off-Off-Off Broadway Play about Underwear.: (*T. J. reads nominees from a card and then opens an envelope to get winner's name. Insert names of pre-selected audience members before each play. See **Production Notes** for more information.*) The nominees are:

- (*Insert name*), for *Into Leather: The Frederick's of Hollywood Story*
- (*Insert name*), for *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change Your Shorts*, and
- (*Insert name*), for *The Panties of Penzance*.

And the winner is:

(*Insert name*), for *Into Leather: The Frederick's of Hollywood Story*.

(*Audience member goes onstage and receives award from TROPHY MODEL. T. J. ad libs congratulatory remarks and encourages audience member to say a few words. TROPHY MODEL then escorts audience member back to his seat and discretely takes back award. See **Production Notes** for details, including how to make the award.*)

T. J.: Well, wasn't that a surprise? We'll be right back with more of the 30th Annual Tonylou Awards after these words from our sponsors.

Announcer: We're off the air Mr. Hardcastle. I'll cue you when it's time.

(*Attention shifts to LORNA as she joins CELIA and CLAUDE-JEAN at STAGE RIGHT table. LORNA gets more and more drunk as evening wears on.*)

Lorna: Well, well, I hope the boy isn't missing a cub scout meeting tonight.

(CLAUDE-JEAN makes a threatening karate move in LORNA'S direction.)

Celia: Down boy.

(Claude backs off.)

Lorna: He's cute. And young. You'd better take your vitamins, Celia.

Celia: You know Lorna, I used to think you were a pain in the neck, but now *(Slaps herself in butt)* I have a much *lower* opinion of you.

Lorna: Everyone will have a much lower opinion of *you*, too, once my tell-all book comes out.

Celia: Oh really? Am *I* mentioned in your book? What could you possibly have on me? We hardly know each other, except for these chance meetings at the awards every year.

Lorna: I've got something on just about everybody. With you, I just happened to be in the right place at the right time. I used to admire you, Celia. I even thought you could help me. I kept trying to get a meeting with you, but you ignored me. I thought maybe if I could just get you to talk with me, you'd help me. So I snuck into your yard. You were at the pool with your late husband. I saw him slip and hit his head and fall into the water. You didn't kill him, but you didn't try to save him, either. You watched him drown! And then gained control of PMS Studios! And got a whole string of boy-toys, too, like cute little Claude-Jean here. What's the world going to think of you when this comes out?

Celia: *(Dazed)* No one knew. I was sure no one knew.

Claude-Jean: *(Incredulous)* Is all this true?

Lorna: He can speak!

Claude-Jean: *(Demanding)* Is it?

Celia: No! Of course not. She's drunk. Don't listen to a word she says. Come here and give me a hug.

Claude-Jean: *(Does karate move toward CELIA)* Stay away from me!

Celia: She's drunk, I tell you. Now, do you want to be a big movie star? *(Claude-Jean nods uncertainly.)* Then come to Momma. *(CELIA grabs CLAUDE-JEAN'S's arm and they start walking backstage. CELIA turns to LORNA.)* You'll leave that chapter out of your book if you know what's good for you!

Lorna: *(To herself)* I'm not leaving anything out of my book. I'm going to make millions from this. I have to, because there's not much money left in the bank. *(Notices MONTY)* Oh, there's that nice Monty Carlo. I'll go chat with him.

(LORNA walks over to MONTY who is standing in front of STAGE LEFT table with his back to her. MONTY is talking on his cell phone and LORNA eavesdrops.)

Monty: That's right Mr. Gatchies.

Lorna: *(Stage whisper)* Oh! He's talking to Don Gatchies, the godfather of the undergarment district!

Monty: I'm going to talk to Hardcastle during the next commencement broke.

Lorna: He's going to talk to Hardcastle during the next *commercial break!*

Monty: I'll tell him he has to fax the awards in my flavor.

Lorna: He's going to tell him to *fix* the awards in his *favor!*

Monty: That way, I get De Milo's movie compact.

Lorna: He'll get De Milo's movie *contract!*

Monty: And if Hardcastle doesn't agree, we're going to arrange an accident.

Lorna: *(Confused)* I'm not sure what he said there. Oh, wait! They'll arrange an accident! *(Loudly)* Oh my God!

(MONTY turns and sees LORNA. She smiles, waves, and walks away. MONTY glares at her.)

Announcer: Get ready, Mr. Hardcastle. We're going back live in 3, 2, 1 . . .

T. J.: We're back! And it's time to present our next award, for Best Actor in a Play about Body Organs. The nominees are:

(Insert name), for Annie Flash Your Guns
(Insert name), for Beauty and the Breast, and
(Insert name), for Tony & Tina's Sex Change

And the winner is:

(Insert name), for Annie Flash Your Guns!

(Audience member accepts award and makes a short acceptance speech if desired.)

T. J. Well, wasn't that a surprise! The excitement is building! And we'll be right back

after these messages.

Announcer: We're off. I'll cue you, Mr. Hardcastle.

T. J.: Yea, thanks.

(ANGELINA joins T. J. at CENTER STAGE. LORNA eavesdrops.)

Angelina: Is it almost time for me to win my award, dear?

T. J.: Shhhh . . . not so loud! You know, you can't keep winning something every year. People aren't that stupid. It's getting embarrassing.

(LORNA pulls out a notepad and pencil and begins taking notes.)

Angelina: You'll keep making sure I win every year until I tell you otherwise.

T. J.: No! This is it. The last year. I can't do this anymore.

Angelina: You'll keep giving me an award or I'll go to your sister and tell her what *really* happened with your father in that hospital room. After all, I had nothing to do with it. It was all between you and my brother, Vinnie the Lawyer. And now that Vinnie's dead, a victim of the infamous Fruit of the Loom Massacre, the only one to pin it on is you!

T. J.: You wouldn't dare! You have too much to lose.

Angelina: I have nothing to lose. I don't need you. You're nothing more than a convenience.

Lorna: *(To herself)* How do you spell *convenience*?

Angelina: *(Absently)* C-o-n-v-e . . . *(Finally sees LORNA and snaps to attention)* What are you doing?

Lorna: *(Still engrossed in her note taking)* I'm writing a book. A tell-all book. Hey--this is good stuff. Wife blackmailing husband. Yup! Good stuff.

Angelina: I want to talk to you, Lorna!

(LORNA runs over to CONSTANCE for protection.)

Lorna: Well now Angelina, what did you want to talk about? Maybe Connie would like to join us.

Angelina: Never mind. We'll talk later! *(Storms off to STAGE LEFT table)*

Constance: Why do I have the feeling I've just been used?

Lorna: Don't worry Connie, I'll make it up to you. I'm going to make you famous.

Connie: I'm already famous.

Lorna: All right! Then I'll make you *infamous*, how's that? Did you think I was going to leave you out of my tell-all book?

Connie: I assume you're talking about more than just my facelifts?

Lorna: Well of course, dear. After all, a tell-all book wouldn't be complete without mentioning you somehow.

Connie: You've got nothing on me. And everyone knows about the facelifts. Don't waste your time trying to come up with any dirt on me.

Lorna: What about your little affair with Vinnie the Lawyer before he was "rubbed out?" I happen to know he was on his way to meet you at his place the same night he was murdered.

Connie: That's not true!

Lorna: Oh yes it is. I was in that pizzeria the night of the Fruit of the Loom Massacre. I saw Vinnie come in for a large pizza with peppers and onions, just the way you liked it, he said. It was a slow night, no other customers, so we struck up a conversation. He told me he was meeting with the new gossip columnist, Constance Gabbler, as soon as he picked up her favorite pizza. You told him not to come without the pizza.

Connie: That's not true. I never knew him. I don't even like pizza!

Lorna: The next thing I know, two hoods come in and rub him out. He never did pay for the pizza.

Connie: I had nothing to do with it!

Lorna: As the paramedics were placing Vinnie on the stretcher, I looked through the window and saw you outside--with Don Gatchies! He was handing you an envelope, a thick envelope, like one stuffed with cash. You set up Vinnie the Lawyer by sending him for your favorite pizza!

Connie: You're drunk! No one will believe that story.

Lorna: Maybe, maybe not. But people will always wonder.

Connie: I'm warning you, don't do this to me.

Lorna: Sorry, kiddo, this is big news. Enquiring minds wanna' know. And I need a best seller. I need the money bad. I haven't been doing so good at the horse track lately.

Connie: Why don't we play horse right now? I'll play the head and you play yourself, you horse's a . . .

Lorna: Now, now, now! Shame on you, potty mouth.

(FUNKY walks over.)

Funky: What's all the yelling about?

Connie: Oh, nothing. Just a little friendly debate. So, we still have a few minutes till we go live—why don't you tell us about being spokesperson for Orphans International?

Funky: Well, uh . . . I make guest appearances and try to convince businesses and corporations to make contributions.

Connie: Some companies have reported handing over checks to you personally, but then they never see the funds. Is this true?

Funky: Of course not! I have nothing to do with the collection of funds.

Connie: But aren't they launching an investigation into these allegations tomorrow?

Funky: That's right.

Connie: The same day you're running off to London?

Funky: It's just a coincidence! I have nothing to do with the disappearance of funds at Orphan's International! *(FUNKY storms off backstage. On the way, she drops a little black book. LORNA picks it up.)*

Lorna: Hey kid, you dropped your . . . oh, never mind. I'll give it to her later. *(Leafs through book)* Say, this is some kind of ledger. It's the missing funds. It shows exactly how much the kid took!

Announcer: We're live again, Mr. Hardcastle, in 3, 3, 1 . . .

T. J.: We're back, live at the 30th Annual Tonylou Awards! And what a night it's been so far. We've had some real surprises so far, and there's more excitement to come. And now it's time for our next award, for Best Costume Design in a Nude Scene! The nominees are:

- *(Insert name)* for *The Full Monty*
(*MONTY gets up, thinking he's won an award. M. J. pulls him back down.*)
- *(Insert name)* for *Hairless* (starring the original cast of the 60s musical *Hair*.)
- *(Insert name)* for *Oh Calcutta! The Mother Theresa Story*.

And the winner is:

(Insert name) for *The Full Monty*!

T.J.: We'll be right back after these commercial messages.

Announcer: We'll cue you Mr. Hardcastle.

(Attention shifts to CELIA and CLAUDE-JEAN)

Claude-Jean: *(Alarmed)* I want the truth. Did you kill your husband?

Celia: Of course not. I couldn't kill anyone. Not by myself, anyway. But it *is* true what Lorna said. I saw Harold fall in the pool and sink to the bottom. I started to jump in after him, but then I thought about how PMS Studios would be all mine, all mine! And how I'd be free at last to pursue my dream of . . . of *molding* young male actors like yourself into big-screen sensations. Now Lorna is threatening to ruin everything! Perhaps, I might arrange for her to have a little "accident" herself. And you're going to help me!

Claude-Jean: *(Getting panicky)* I don't believe I'm hearing this.

Celia: *(Scornfully)* Grow up, little man.

Claude-Jean: *(Frantically)* This isn't right. I should call the police.

Celia: And if you do and I go down, what becomes of you, Mr. Action Hero Wannabe? It's back to bussing tables in the Poconos, where I discovered you while on vacation. Do you want that?

Claude-Jean: Of course not, but . . .

Celia: No buts, unless you're talking about your own, which is on the line.

Claude-Jean: *(Nearly hysterical)* I can't do it! I faint at the sight of blood!

Celia: Some action hero.

Claude-Jean: *(Desperate)* Do you think you can do it?

Celia: That's a good question. And the answer is, I don't know, I really don't know. I need to think. Come on, lover boy. *(CELIA grabs Claude-Jean's arm and starts walking backstage.)*

Claude-Jean: Someone has to do it. I'm not going back to bussing tables.

M. J.: Well brother dear, it's almost time to announce the award for Best Actress. I assume your wife is ready with her acceptance speech?

T. J.: I told you, no one knows who won. And even if Angelina should win, it's based on her talent, not who she's married to.

M. J.: Sure. But it doesn't matter anyway. Your days in control are just about over. You see, Lorna Lush left a letter in a safety deposit box at the Last National Bank. In it she confesses that she disguised herself as a nurse and was in Daddy's hospital room when you were forcing him to change his will.

T. J.: That's not true. She couldn't have been there.

M. J.: Why not? She may be a drunk, but she was a hell of an actress once. Lorna's letter also says that Daddy was her secret lover! But he left her to stay with Mommy, and Lorna was so devastated she took to drink.

T. J.: Lorna? With Daddy? I don't believe it.

M. J.: Lorna said that she had to see him one more time before he died, so she put on a nurse's uniform and snuck into the room. She had no idea that you, Angelina, and Vinnie the Lawyer were in there forcing him to change his will. She saw and heard everything!

T. J.: We didn't force him to do anything!

M. J.: Maybe not, but you *did* lie about me. You told Daddy that I was still involved with Reverend One Hung Lo and that I was planning to turn the family fortune over to him as soon as I got my hands on it.

T. J.: None of that's true!

M. J.: Oh, yes is. And even if I can't get Lorna to confess to me personally, I'm sure it'll all be part of that tell-all book she's been babbling about. It's going to come out sooner or later, and when it does, you'll go to jail and everything will go to me, where it rightfully belongs. Ha, ha, ha!

T.J.: Wait—how do know about this letter of Lorna's?

M. J.: I've been dating the head security guard from the Last National Bank. At night, he rummages through everyone's safety deposit boxes. Just out of curiosity. Kind of like a hobby. He never takes anything. At least I don't think so.

T. J.: (*Thinking back*) I remember that nurse now! She always kept her back to us, checking the monitors. I didn't think anything of it at the time. I also didn't think we were saying anything incriminating. Boy was I wrong! Damn! I don't believe this!

M. J.: You'd better believe it, brother dear. It's only matter of time now. Ha, ha, ha!
(*M.J. walks backstage*)

(*ANGELIA approaches T. J.*)

Angelina: Well, your sister certainly left in a good mood. Did you two kiss and make up?

T. J.: Knock off the wisecracks. We've got big trouble!!

Angelina: (*Panicky*) Did something happen to my trophy? It's here, isn't it?

T. J.: Oh, it's here alright. But if Lorna ever writes that book, tonight's trophy could be your last!

(*LORNA staggers over to T. J. and ANGELINA.*)

Lorna: Well, if it isn't the Brady Bunch. (*To ANGELINA*) You look radiant, dear, but then why wouldn't you? You're getting an award. How do *I* look? I'm getting an award, too, you know. (*LORNA staggers off BACKSTAGE.*)

Angelina: You're drunk. You're not even nominated for anything. (*To T.J.*) What do you mean, tonight's award could be my last?

T. J.: If Lorna has her way, it will be.

Angelina: I still don't get it.

T. J.: It's too complicated to explain now. Just believe me when I say that LORNA witnessed the changing of Daddy's will that night in the hospital room. She heard us lie about M. J. squandering all the money on Reverend One Hung Lo.

Angelina: Oh boy, are you ever in a lot of trouble. I'll bake you a cake with a file in it.

T. J.: You think you're not going to suffer from this, too?

Angelina: I really don't see how.

T. J.: If I get arrested, the first thing I'll do is publicly announce that I *have* been fixing the awards all these years in your favor. You'll look like a fool. No studio will touch you. You might as well go to prison.

Angelina: I never thought of that.

T. J.: Yea, well, it'll be over for you, too.

Angelina: She has to be stopped!

T. J.: I agree . . . but how?

(MONTY CARLO joins T. J. and ANGELINA at CENTER STAGE.)

Monty: ‘Scuse me. I have been looking for that lovely Lorna Lust.

T. J.: *Lush.*

Monty: Thas what I say! Did you see her anything?

Angelina: Ah geez, *where!* *Anywhere!* Did you see her *anywhere!*

Monty: Of course not! I don’t see her anywhere. Why do you thinks I just asked you that question?

Angelina: Oh, forget it.

T. J.: She went that way. Just follow the spilled drink and you’ll catch up with her. She’s not moving very fast.

Monty: Thank you. Thank you very much. ‘Scuse me, please.

(MONTY exits BACKSTAGE LEFT the same moment as LORNA enters BACKSTAGE RIGHT. LORNA is carrying the notebook that FUNKY dropped. LORNA catches up with FUNKY at CENTER STAGE.)

Lorna: Hey kid, come here. You dropped something.

Funky: *(Tries unsuccessfully to grab notebook from LORNA)* Where did you get that?

Lorna: I found it on the floor.

Funky: Did you look in it?

Lorna: Yup. I see you’re quite good in math.

Funky: So you know.

Lorna: I’m ashamed of you. And everyone thinks you’re such a nice girl. This is going to be a hot chapter in my tell-all book. “Lovable teen star embezzles money from

Orphan's International." That's terrible. What's next? Sally Struthers stealing food from starving children? Actually, that one's believable.

Funky: There's to be an investigation tomorrow into the disappearance of the money. I'm going to London until everything calms down. They had no real proof . . . until now. If they get their hands on that ledger, I'm finished! Now give it to me! (*FUNKY lunges for book again; LORNA snatches it away.*)

Lorna: (*Shaking finger at her*) No, no, no. I need this for my tell-all book. I'll start writing your chapter (*Sings as she walks away*) "Tomorrow, tomorrow, I'll write it, tomorrow, it's only a day away." Ha, ha, ha!

Funky: (*Desperately, thinking aloud*) It wasn't my fault. My uncle--Don Gatchies--forced me to do it. No one knows we're family. He has connections, and he got me my starring role in *Annie Goes Through Puberty*. But then he told me I owed him. He made me embezzle the money from Orphans International and give it to him. I tried to get out of it, but he threatened my boyfriend. I'm too young to go to jail! But if I go, he's going to. I'll squeal; I don't care! I better call Uncle Don Gatchies now and tell him what's happened. He'll know what to do. He's got to. He won't want to be linked to any of this. I have to find a phone!

(*FUNKY goes off. LORNA staggers back in. MONTY CARLO follows LORNA and stops her at CENTER STAGE.*)

Monty: Ahhh . . . my dear Lorna Lust.

Lorna: *Lush, Lorna Lush.*

Monty: (*Sympathetically*) Oh, you have a lisp. No wonder no one will put you in a show.

Lorna: Is there something I can do for you, handsome?

Monty: I want to talk to you about that phone call you were eavesdropping on earlier.

Lorna: Oh . . . uh . . . I didn't hear nothin'.

Monty: Ah, but I'm sure you did. You overheard my constipation with Don Gatchies.

Lorna: I didn't hear any conversation!

Monty: I think you heard us talking about forcing T. J. to fax the awards in my flavor so I can get big a movie deals. And Mr. Gatchies would get a piece of the action. You know, Lorna dear, if you play your cards right, there could be a movie deals for you, too.

Lorna: I don't need a movie deal. I'll make millions off my book, including telling how the mob and Don Gatchies got involved and . . . oops!

Monty: (*Threateningly*) I think you know too much. I also think you should forget about that book if you know what's good for you.

Announcer: We're going live again, Mr. Hardcastle, in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and . . .

(*LORNA sneaks away during announcement.*)

T.J.: We're back at the 30th Annual Tonylou Awards, where it's time to present our next award. The category is Best Actress, and the nominees are:

- (*Insert name*), for Frankie and Johnny in the (*Insert name of local diner*).
- (*Insert name*), for *The Tale of the Gynecologist's Wife*, and
- Angelina Canoli, for *Oh, Calcutta! The Mother Theresa Story*.

And the winner is:

Angelina Canoli for *Oh, Calcutta! The Mother Theresa Story!*

(*ANGELINA accepts her award, pretending to be humble, and ad libs a short acceptance speech.*)

T. J.: Well, if anyone deserved to win that one, it was my lovely wife, Angelina. You're wonderful, baby. And now a word from our sponsors.

Announcer: We'll cue you, Mr. Hardcastle.

T. J.: Thanks. Uh, Lorna, can I have a word with you, please?

Lorna: Is it time for my award?

T. J.: You're not getting any award.

Lorna: That's all right. Maybe I'll get the Pulitzer Prize for my tell-all book.

There is approximately ten more pages of script....