

TUNE IN TO MURDER

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SYNOPSIS

Clay Davis and Diane Scott have yet to set a date for their wedding, though they've been dating each other for quite some time. The problem is, they never see each other. Clay has been working night and day at WRAP, a radio station he manages and hopes to buy - if he can get the ratings up. Diane works way out of town at an exclusive resort owned by her aunt, Nora Scott. The resort, Four Seasons Lodge, is set on an island famed for its water fowl population.

Sid Templeton, Mrs. Scott's neighbor, has been trying to sell his half of the island to developers. Every deal falls through because the developers only want the whole island and Nora won't give up her home and her business. And what a business! This weekend she is catering to the richest debutante in America, Marla Meecham; Hollywood's greatest former child star, Holly Royce; and current hot rock star, Aleetha Marks.

Along with the already famous are those hoping to become famous, including a budding mystery novelist, Ursula Caan; a future Julia Childs, Mary Louise Crockett; and an ambitious but as yet undiscovered actress, Brooke Brewster, Holly's jealous cousin. Also present at the resort are Madame Lutess, a renowned medium, and a mysterious Countess DuChamp from Paris.

When Marla Meecham suddenly dies after eating several chocolate-covered cherries, everyone assumes she's had a heart attack because she was so grossly overweight. But Clay finds out the candies were poisoned and heads out to the resort to warn Diane and her aunt. A terrible blizzard develops, forcing Clay to stay at the resort. Unfortunately as the police "wrap up" taking the details, the killer burns their bridge behind them and cuts the island off from the mainland. Then he or she has a field day! First Countess DuChamp disappears, and then the maid.

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Clay and Diane, working with WRAP, find enough clues to figure out the handyman, Mr. Butterfield, is the killer. During Clay's nightly talk show, which he does from the resort, they capture Butterfield. The incident boosts ratings and bolsters morale at the resort until the next day when Butterfield escapes. With the killer loose the guests are once again terrorized.

Madame Lutess finally calls upon all to attend a seance. During contact with the vanished Countess, Madame learns that Elizabeth, the maid, must be found or she will die. The Countess demands she be brought to the reading room by ten.

Elizabeth does show up, and with everybody trying to fool everyone else, the killer eventually gives himself - or herself away. Every movement is broadcast over WRAP, and the talk show actually saves the day with special sound effects. By the final curtain Clay and Diane manage to unravel the mystery and set the date !

SCENES

Act I

Scene 1 - WRAP Radio Station, 10 pm.

Scene 2 - Lodge reading room, immediately after.

Scene 3 - Following day, noon, WRAP.

Scene 4 - Later, at the lodge.

Scene 5 - Nearly 10 that night at the lodge.

Act II

Scene 1 - The following morning, at the lodge.

Scene 2 - About 9 pm that night, lodge and WRAP.

Scene 3 - An hour later.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Radio Station Personnel/Callers

TINA: Cheerful young announcer at WRAP radio.

DR. BLEDSOE: Dour expert, middle-aged.

ROB: Young disc jockey at WRAP.

CLAY DAVIS: Manager of WRAP; ambitious, clever, early 20's.

5-8 CALLERS: Voices over the radio, each having a distinct personality and style left to the director.

Lodge Personnel

NORA SCOTT: Owner of Four Seasons Resort, gracious yet highly competent, mid 50's.

DIANE SCOTT: Her niece, hard working, learning the trade, Rob Clay's fiancée, early 20's.

ELIZABETH ROSS: Withdrawn, mysterious maid, wears uniform, early 20's.

BLAKE SAMPSON: Brawny, a jock-type, recreation director, mid 20's.

PHYLLIS PHILBIN: Do-it-by-the-book chef, new, wears apron, early 30's.

MR. BUTTERFIELD: Grouchy, secretive handyman, middle-aged.

Lodge Guests

MARLA MEECHAM: Obese, over-indulged debutante, early 20's.

URSULA CAAN: Wants to be famous mystery writer, wears big horn-rimmed glasses.

HOLLY ROYCE: Former child star looking to recapture fame, mid 20's.

BROOKE BREWSTER: Holly's poor cousin, hiding her career ambitions until the time is right.

MADAME LUTESS: An exotic medium, about 50, wears turban, flowing robe.

MARY LOUISE: Published cookbook chef,

CROCKETT: Has own TV show, early 30's.

COUNTESS DUCHAMP: Elegant lady from Paris, wears scarf, heavy necklace.

ALEETHA MARKS: Hot rock star, looking for a quiet weekend, about 18.

Others

SID TEMPLETON: Annoying neighbor, quick temper, about 50.

DETECTIVE GILFLICH: An inept policeman.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: About 10 pm at WRAP, where CLAY DAVIS is wrapping up his daily "Night Rap" radio talk show. He sits center at the desk, with DR. BLEDSOE on his right and TINA on his left.)

TINA: (*Brightly.*) Has this ever happened to you? You walk into your living room, turn on the light and find mean old Mr. Cockroach sitting in your favorite chair reading the paper? I mean, just try and ask him nicely to leave and what do you get? The rest of his family singing "Home Sweet Home!" Well, listeners out there in radio land, we have the solution for you! "Bug-Off" will kill Mr. Cockroach deader than a doornail, faster than a speeding bullet, and flatter than a pancake. (*SHE looks up from her script and holds up an aerosol can.*) And speaking of pancakes, "Bug-Off" smells just like cinnamon toast, so you freshen the air while you kill those pesty intruders. And now, back to WRAP's "Night Rap" with Clay Davis.

CLAY: Thanks, Tina and we've got just a few minutes left with Dr. Clyde Bledsoe, a noted criminal scientist from Degorchi Detective College. Dr. Bledsoe is an expert on what makes criminals tick and how to take the tick out of their tock. We've got a caller on the line. You're on the air!

CALLER: Hello? Dr. Bloodsore? Can you tell me if there's such a thing as a criminal type?

BLEDSOE: (*Impressed with HIMSELF.*) Indeed there is.

CLAY: Is there some kind of description you can give our caller, doctor?

BLEDSOE: Do you mean five foot two, eyes of blue?

CALLER: (*Excitedly.*) I KNEW it! That's my brother-in-law, Ernie! How can I turn the bum in?

CLAY: (*Tiredly.*) I don't think Dr. Bledsoe meant exactly that.

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BLEDSOE: By no means. There IS no physical description of the criminal type. Ruthless people can be short, tall, fat, thin, blonde, brunette. They look just like you or me!

CALLER: Speak for yourself, brains! So what makes this criminal type?

BLEDSOE: *(With mounting enthusiasm.)* It's inside. The true criminal has little if any compassion. They're self-centered, spoiled, and at any moment when things don't go their way, they explode, lashing out violently against society!

CLAY: Are we talking murder here?

BLEDSOE: *(Passionately twisting a cord.)* There's a killing every other minute in this country and we're civilized! Who knows the powers of human passion!

CALLER: Well, thanks a lot! Now, I'm too scared to go to sleep!

CLAY: *(Nervously watching BLEDSOE.)* Just lock your doors and thanks for calling "Night Rap" on WRAP. Time's up, folks but I don't want to go off the air without thanking Dr. Bledsoe. And I want to say a special goodnight to my Diane wherever you are, you're in my heart.

(LIGHTS fade on the studio.)

Scene 2

(LIGHTS UP on the resort reading room. AT RISE: NORA SCOTT is sitting at a small writing desk listening to a radio that rests on it. DIANE SCOTT looks dreamily out French doors.)

ROB: *(Voice from offstage.)* Now, folks, it's time for the polka hour on WRAP!

(NORA snaps off radio and sighs.)

NORA: How romantic!

DIANE: The polka hour?

NORA: No, your Mr. Davis. He's quite a catch.

DIANE: I think he may end up the one who got away what with my working days and his working days, nights, weekends! We'd see each other more if we lived in different centuries!

NORA: It just seems that way, Diane. Before your Uncle Humbert and I got married we spend three years apart!

DIANE: Three years? Why?! Couldn't Uncle Hum make up his mind?

NORA: Uncle Sam wouldn't let him. Seems we had to win a war first.

DIANE: How did you survive?

NORA: Prayed to the Lord and passed the ammunition! I kept so busy I only felt lonely three fourths of the time. Trust me, Diane your Mr. Davis will own that radio station in no time and we'll be decorating Four Seasons Lodge for a wedding!

DIANE: I hope so but Mr. Hargrove at the bank won't agree to a loan until the station ratings go up eighteen points!

NORA: Is that a lot?

DIANE: *(Disappointedly.)* Clay might as well be climbing the Empire State Building with greasy hands!

NORA: *(Encouragingly.)* But his talk show is the hottest thing in radio right now.

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