

The Man Who Thought He Was Sherlock Holmes

By Robert Mattson

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DEDICATION

To John Roper, John Russo, John Clinton and Dot Green--four teachers who taught me more than they know.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Dinner theater can mean death to an actor's career, or occasionally, an actor. That's what the cast of "Weekend at Withingham's" finds out when the lead of their dreadfully bad dinner theater production dies right before his entrance. But who can help? They would need a great detective. Unfortunately, what they get is a man who is so psychiatrically challenged that he thinks he's Sherlock Holmes and his psychiatrist is Doctor Watson. Full of dual characters, quick repartee, and just a touch of deduction, "The Man Who Thought He Was Sherlock Holmes" has played to laughter-filled, sold-out houses across the USA.

ORIGINAL CAST

Dr. Goldstein/Dr. Watson: R.C. Jacobs
Jonathan C. Lately/Peter Quinn: Andrew Rappaport
Earnest Withingham/Vinny Padula: Robert Mattson
Sharon Withingham/Rachel Teirson: Susan Zizza
Robert Whitacker/Robert Whitacker: Russ Goliger
Katherine Tendis/Claudia Trubundis: Sally Jones
Warren Deluth/Sherlock Holmes: Christopher Connell

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 3 w, 1 flexible)

DR. GOLDSTEIN/DR. WATSON: A psychiatrist by day, and unfortunately, the famous aide-de-camp of Sherlock Holmes when her patient goes round the bend.

JONATHAN C. LATELY/PETER QUINN: In the dinner theater script, he's a nice British guy, but when the show goes awry, we realize that he's ... a nice American guy. Peter wears nice casual pants and a polo-type shirt.

EARNEST WITHINGHAM/VINNY PADULA: Uptight Brit one second, used car sales sleaze the next. Vinny wears jeans, a t-shirt, and a leather jacket.

SHARON WITHINGHAM/RACHEL TEIRSON: Young ingénue/bimbo. Rachel wears a tight, red mini-dress with red high heels.

ROBERT WHITACKER/ROBERT WHITACKER: This guy is such a bad actor, his parts have to use his real name. Lackey, with a capital "L," to Claudia. Robert wears his original costume.

KATHERINE TENDIS/CLAUDIA TRUBUNDIS: Absent-minded grandmother in the play, co-owner of the theater and hard-as-nails in real life. Claudia wears casual business clothes.

WARREN DELUTH/SHERLOCK HOLMES: Psychiatric patient who thinks he's Sherlock Holmes on occasion. And does a pretty good job of it.

WINSTON MARLBORO/DAVID DELMONT: Dead guy.

STAGE MANAGER: Says one line. Can be male or female.

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SETTING

The show is set in a restaurant or function hall. The initial play that starts the show is called, "Weekend at Withingham's," and is set in the drawing room or library of the Withingham estate in the late 1800s. The initial costumes should be appropriate to that era as much as possible.

PROPS

Wheelchair
Notebook
(2) Pairs of women's underwear
Handcuffs
Newspaper article
Gun
Magnifying glass

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Gunshot

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Scene 1

(AT RISE: The evening starts with the PATRONS being seated by the CAST of a show called "Weekend at Withingham's." It is a British thriller/comedy that takes place at a dinner party at the summer home of the Withingham family. The cast is dressed in costumes similar to what would be worn for "The Importance of Being Earnest." When most, but not all of the patrons are seated, a MAN, at a small table for two which has been set up near the "stage area," will stand and get everyone's attention.)

GOLDSTEIN: Excuse me, if I could have everyone's attention please? Thank you. I'm Dr. Saul Goldstein from the Cleveland Mental Heath Clinic, and I'm going to have one of our patients with me tonight. I've asked if I could make a brief request for your tolerance. There is a possibility that my patient might react to this form of entertainment and speak too loudly, stand up, or some other small reaction. I promise there will be no trouble beyond that. Thank you.

(WARREN DELUTH/HOLMES will ENTER a few minutes later and sit down. If any PATRONS come up and ask the CAST if there is going to be a problem, they will tell the patrons that this sort of thing happens all the time and there has never been a problem before. The rest of the patrons will be seated, and the show will start. The stage area is made up to look like a house wet bar in an English sitting room. ENTER JONATHAN/PETER and EARNEST/VINNY.)

JONATHAN/PETER: This really is quite a party you have here, Earnest. I would say that most of these people are your friends?

EARNEST/VINNY: How did you guess?

JONATHAN/PETER: By the way they dressed. Only one of your friends would come to a dinner party in this. *(Referring to a MEMBER of the audience.)*

EARNEST/VINNY: Have you seen Winston?

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JONATHAN/PETER: Not for hours. Last time I saw him, he was in the library. I think that he's going to do it this time.

EARNEST/VINNY: He's finally going to propose to Sharon? What makes you think that?

JONATHAN/PETER: Oh, just that he's pacing around with a small jewelry box saying, "Sharon, will you...?" "Sharon, would you ...?" Wearing the most earnest face, Earnest. Plus, he's looking rather desperate, if you know what I mean?

EARNEST/VINNY: Oh yes, his father did let that little upstairs maid of theirs go, didn't he?

JONATHAN/PETER: Quite.

EARNEST/VINNY: What about the downstairs maid?

JONATHAN/PETER: Father's bedroom, at the top of the stairs.

EARNEST/VINNY: Stairs creak?

JONATHAN/PETER: Abominably.

EARNEST/VINNY: Bad show.

JONATHAN/PETER: Quite.

EARNEST/VINNY: Any reason for her being let go?

JONATHAN/PETER: Oh yes. I heard that she went up to his room to knock him up one morning and it turned out the other way around.

(ENTER SHARON/RACHEL.)

SHARON/RACHEL: There you two are! I have been looking all over for you! I have been playing hostess for nearly an hour with no help from you two or Winston. Have you seen him?

JONATHAN/PETER: As a matter of fact --

EARNEST/VINNY: *(Cutting off JONATHAN/PETER.)* We haven't seen him for hours.

SHARON/RACHEL: The last time I saw him, he was going off with the upstairs maid. I heard him say something about the stairs creaking?

(The TWO MEN exchange knowing looks.)

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EARNEST/VINNY: He probably just wanted to show her something.

(The TWO MEN exchange hi-fives.)

JONATHAN/PETER and EARNEST/VINNY: Sorry, male bonding.

JONATHAN/PETER: We were hiding in here from the throng.

SHARON/RACHEL: While I've had to play hostess in your place!?

EARNEST/VINNY: I'm sorry, Sharon, but you know that playing host is just not my cup of tea? All that "Wonderful to see you" and "So glad you could come" when what you really want to say is, "You've eaten enough of my food, you fat pig; get out of my house."

SHARON/RACHEL: You don't really mean that, do you, Earnest?

EARNEST/VINNY: Not to all of them, dear, but to a few every now and again.

(ENTER CATHERINE/CLAUDIA and ROBERT WHITACKER. Catherine/Claudia is in a wheelchair.)

SHARON/RACHEL: Hello, Uncle Robert. Hello, Grandmother Tendis.

ROBERT: Good evening, Jonathan, Earnest. Sharon, Mother wanted to talk to you about something she heard might happen tonight. Didn't you, Mother?

CATHERINE/CLAUDIA: What?

ROBERT: You wanted to talk to Sharon about something you heard?

CATHERINE/CLAUDIA: "I wanted to walk to Sharon and give her the bird?"

EARNEST/VINNY: That's Grandmother, hears like a hound.

CATHERINE/CLAUDIA: And where's my drink?

EARNEST/VINNY: And drinks like a fish.

ROBERT: Jonathan, would you be so kind as to get Mother a drink?

End of Freeview

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