

The Dumb And The Desperate: *The Craven Morehead Murders*

An interactive murder mystery in three acts

Preview

**This is a partial script to provide an idea of what the play is about,
prior to licensing.**

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The Dumb And The Desperate: *The Craven Morehead Murders*

Dr. Richard Fitzwell *: Arrogant plastic surgeon of choice among the ritzy residents of Craven Morehead. Quite the ladies man and anything but monogamous. Extremely shady in his business dealings.

Leslie Fitzwell *: Richard's rather flamboyant twin brother. He returns to Craven Morehead after years among the missing. An actor by profession, he has had little success. He has a pronounced lisp and tends to spatter when he speaks. This may explain his difficulty in finding work as an actor. He hopes to launch a new career in tv/ radio advertising, with financial backing from his brother.

Ditzy Doodle Fitzwell: Richard's wife. Snobby socialite. President of the Craven Morehead Arts Council, Women's Club, and Gardening Alliance. She was Richard's high school sweetheart and helped put him through medical school. She suspects he may be unfaithful but has no idea to the extent. She may have a drinking problem.

Fanny Foreman-Fenimore-Ford-Fallwell-Fitzwell: Richard's estranged step-mother. Has been married five times. An heir to the Ford automotive fortune. She recently sustained a head injury causing amnesia. In spite of this, she has retained her lifelong nymphomaniacal tendencies.

Lorelai Testibuster: Richard's nurse. Competent and efficient. Likes to be in charge. Rumored to be a distant cousin of Eva Braun. Knows exactly how to put Richard in his place. And he likes it.

Wally Buttonputter: Owner of the Craven Morehead Inn, site of the Annual Valentine's Day Dinner Dance. Speaks in a high pitched falsetto. He is an old classmate of Richard's, and is heavily in his financial debt. In addition, he is now seeking Richard's professional services.

Bonita Buttonputter: Walter's wife. Manages the Inn. Sexually frustrated. Always teetering near the edge. Owner of an eclectic collection of noise-toys.

Honey Bangham Brightly: Craven Morehead real estate agent. Very successful, providing "personal service" with every transaction. Loves the art of the deal.

Heidi Harrison Holmes: Richard's neighbor and a leading attorney in Craven Morehead. She has represented Richard on many occasions and has extricated him from numerous complications. She has also been the object of numerous sexual advances from Richard, which she has, so far, managed to evade.

Holden Holmes: Heidi's husband. Has had many careers. He has lived off Heidi for most of their marriage but has suddenly acquired new optimism about the future. He is currently in the midst of brokering a huge development deal.

Corey Columbo: Waiter/bartender at the Craven Morehead Inn. Working his way through the Hoboken School of Detective Arts.

* We highly recommend the same actor portray both Richard and Leslie.

Prior to the show, the company members should engage in "table-talk" with the audience members. They may introduce themselves, discuss the personality conflicts that exists among the characters and endeavor to create a rapport. It is suggested that character descriptions be included in the program in order to compliment this process.

Act I

Host: (Stereotypical soap organ fx) Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome. It's time, once again, for our daily visit to a typical day in the lovely Victorian community of Craven Morehead. A typical day....but is it? (soap organ) During the cocktail hour you may have noticed that something seemed a bit askew. (soap organ) In fact you may have detected an air of jealousy (soap organ), deception (soap organ), and perhaps even (soap organ) conspiracy. In fact, it is quite possible that this so called typical day might soon turn quite ugly. A crime may be imminent. Take notice of your resolution forms, make notes if you wish. Later, you'll be given an opportunity to become involved in the investigation. But for now, take heed ladies and gentlemen. For we are in for an evening of mystery, mayhem, and maybe even (soap organ)....*murder!* Now, let's meet some of Craven Morehead's most prominent citizens: (Richard and Ditzzy enter)

Here's Dr. Richard Fitzwell, a leading plastic surgeon.....he's ready for his day. And here's his lovely wife....Ditzzy Doodle Fitzwell.

Richard: Darling, which tie goes better with this shirt?

Ditzzy: (She points) This one brings out your eyes a little better. (She runs her fingers through his hair) How come you're all dressed up, you're usually so casual under your lab coat. (Only half kidding) You got a date or something?

Richard: (Over the top) Oh..that's right dear. Heidi Klum and I are meeting for lunch and I wanted to look my best.(Laughs)

Ditzzy: (She laughs and lightly slaps his cheek. Then more serious...) But really, what's the occasion? (Richard and Ditzzy pantomime over Host's line)

Host: Richard explains that he has a big business meeting today. Ditzzy seems fine with that until she finds out the deal is being mediated by her arch rivalHoney Bangham Brightly.

Ditzzy: Honey? (organ FX) (She's agitated) Okay, now I get it.

Richard: Darling, what are you talking about? Honey Bangham Brightly is a legitimately licensed real estate agent in this community and she is brokering a meeting for what could be a very significant real estate transaction. She is simply providing the services for which she was trained.

Ditzzy: Richard..... I've known Honey since junior high school when she was caught "simply providing the services for which she was trained" to the gym teacher in the locker room. Poor Mr. Pullpecker. I heard they finally let him out of jail.

Richard: Ditzzy stop. You are delusional. I'll see you tonight.

Ditzzy: All right. I guess I can trust you Richard. (suspicious) Right?

Richard: (Overly assuring) Of course, dear. (Hugs) You're still my best gal right?

Ditzzy: I hope so?

Richard: Of course you are. Besides, I've got a lot invested in you.

Ditzzy: (Rolling her eyes) Here we go again.

Richard: Really. Remember, when I first came to this town, I was a young plastic surgeon with no experience and no reputation.

Ditzzy: So you practiced on me.

Richard: I prefer to say I *invested* in you. And look at them (indicating her chest) They are still absolutely spectacular.

Host: As Richard heads out, Ditzzy reminds him of tonight's big Valentine's Dance at the Craven Morehead Inn, of which she is in charge.

Ditzzy:-(He's gone. She swigs from a flask, becomes emotional) Oh, Richard! (organ FX out)

(Heidi and Holden enter)

Host: Now let's meet Richard's neighbor and lawyer Heidi Harrison Holmes and her husband Holden.

Heidi: (Handing him a list) Holden, dear. Would you mind picking up a few things at the market today. The fridge is absolutely empty.

Holden: Why me? Can't you do it?

Heidi: Now Holden. Don't do this again. I have a full client schedule this afternoon and I'm due to be in court all morning. And since you're (sarcastic) "between jobs" right now, I don't think it's too much for me to ask you to help out a bit.

Holden: Oh, that's slick Heidi. Very slick. Just because you're a big time lawyer and I've been down on my luck...it's no reason for you to bust my chops and make me feelsmall. (organ FX-He turns away)

(Pantos business)

Host: Holden tells Heidi that he's a little nervous because he has a big deal pending. Heidi feels guilty for what she said and wants to make it up to Holden, but suddenly her phone rings....

Heidi: Hello, this is Heidi Holmes.....yes Richard Fitzwell is my client....his stepmother?....really! All right, I'll arrange to have her picked up at the bus station. Right. Goodbye. (a contemplative beat....looks at her watch again) I really have to go. We'll talk about your investment deal tonight, Okay? (She kisses him goodbye) Have a good day.

Holden: You too. (She's gone. He dials cell.) Hallo (Hello)...Kontonummer (account number) : null (0) null (0) drei (3) sieben (7) drel (0). Hat sich das Kapital geklärt? (Has the money cleared?) Sehr gut! (Good) Danke. (Thanks you)(Smiles and closes phone. Exit. FX out)

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Host: And here we are at the Craven Morehead Inn under the management of Wally and Bonita Buttonputter . Here comes Wally now.....

(Wally enters)

Wally: Bonnie! (Looking for her) Bonnie! (We hear a buzzing sfx) Bonnie where are you ?

Bonita: (Enters straightening her skirt. She's always very nervous.) Here I am Wally. I'm sorry I didn't hear you. I was vacuuming the lobby. That sweeper is so loud. (giggle)

Wally: Sweeper? Bonnie that didn't sound like a sweeper to me it sounded like a ----

Bonita: So what did you need dear?

Wally: Huh? Oh, I just wanted to remind you that Ditzzy Fitzwell is coming by today about tonight's party.

Bonita: Oh, right, okay. I have someone coming in about the bartender job today. We're definitely going to need the help. I think Ditzzy is such a snob, don't you? She acts like she's doing us a big favor by booking the Inn for her dumb Women's Club party. I can't stand dealing with her.

Wally: Well, she is a bit pushy, but being married to Richard can't be easy. And don't forget Richard's bankroll is keeping this place open. So we've got to be somewhat accommodating.

Bonita: Whatever....speaking of Richard....have you gotten around to making your appointment with him yet?

Wally: (Embarrassed) Bonnie...do we have to go into that right now...here !?

Bonita: What? (Looking around) There's nobody around. And Wally you said you were going to do it.

Wally: I know. I know, but it's kind of embarrassing.

Bonita: Look Wally. Face the facts. (Looking around again) Your "thing" doesn't work anymore. Right? RIGHT?!

Wally: Well, I-I---

Bonita: (Attesting) Right!! It doesn't work anymore. IT-DOES-NOT-WORK! Oh...there's no doubt about it. Right as rain! As the one on the so-called receiving end...Wally...let me assure you.....your thing *does not* work. To tell you the truth, it didn't work all that well to begin with. But now, it doesn't work at all. That is a 100% true statement, Wally. When I'm right, I'm right!

Wally: Okay! Okay! But it's not like I'm doing it on purpose.

Bonita: (Somewhat kindly) Oh, honey, I'm sure you're not. (Then Lewis Black crazy out of control) *But you don't seem to be in any hurry to fix it either.* I'm going out of my mind, Wally. I'm so frustrated I'm going cross-eyed. I'm going through batteries like water. I'm a young woman, Wally. I'm still in my prime and you can't stand by and let me waste away.

Wally: All right, Bonnie. All right! What do you want me to do?!

Bonita: We agreed. You need an implant. You need it *large*. And you need it *now*. And it just so happens that the best plastic surgeon in the area is an old friend of yours. So

Wally: I know, Bonnie...but we owe Richard a lot of money. And I'm kind of uncomfortable.....

Bonita: Oh poor baby. You're uncomfortable... Well, I'm uncomfortable too. If you don't believe me just ask my friends. (She starts pulling vibrators out of her bag.) Here's *James Wand*...a very dear friend of mine..... and here's *Hello Kitty*..we get together on Tuesdays and Thursdays (she purrs) and of course my golden oldie Steely Dan. (SFX as each is turned on. Wally tries to turn them off.) So don't tell me about how uncomfortable you are. JUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!!!! JUST HURRY UP AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!!!! YOU BASTARD!!!!(She's gone)

Wally: (buzzing SFX- Wally sheepishly exits in the opposite direction whistling)

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Host: Next we go to the future site of the Craven Morehead Business Park. (Music FX) And here she is...the aforementioned Honey Bangham Brightly.....

Honey makes a sultry appearance.

(Richard enters. He approaches her and they embrace.)

Host: And here comes Holden Holmes. Honey has brought these two together to make a deal.

Holden and Richard shake hands

Honey: Gentlemen, we are here to talk business. Now, as you can see the site is quite spacious and perfectly appropriate for the modern technological commerce center we have discussed. Our contractor has agreed to build to suit to your specifications.

Richard: It all sounds fine. The site is perfect. Don't you agree Holden?

Holden: Definitely. The economic future for Craven Morehead is right here.

Honey: Good! So all that's left is to solidify the financial arrangements. Now, guys, in order to proceed with the contract, I'll need to have 2.5 million from each of you placed in my escrow account by 6:00 tonight. Is that going to be a problem?

Richard: No problem here. I'll have my accountant deposit the funds right away. How about you Holden?

Holden: (Beat) No. No problem. I'll see that the money is deposited in the next few hours.

Richard: Sounds good. (SFX cell goes off. He looks at the ID) It's your wife. (He answers) Heidi...you must be psychic I was just talking about you. Your husband and I are about to make a boatload of money together. Heidi says "Hi." (Holden smiles. Organ fx) What? You're kidding. That's incredible. All right I'll be in my office in 20 minutes. Thanks. Bye. (hangs up) I've gotta run kids. Looks like I've got to deal with step-mother issues....unbelievable! See you both tonight. (He shakes hands with Holden then goes to hug Honey but thinks better of it and shakes her hand. He's out)

Holden: Well, I hope everything's all right.

Honey: (SFX) Oh, I'm sure Richard will know what to do. He's very hands-on. How about you Holden. Are you a hands-on kinda guy.

Holden: I've been told I am.

Honey: (She moves to him and puts her hands on his shoulders.) That's good to know...because it looks to me like you are about to become very wealthy. And a wealthy man needs to keep his fingers firmly on the pulse (she places his hands on her butt) of his fortune.

Holden: That's good advice.

Honey: Holden, I want you to know that I am at your service. Call me if you need anything. And I do mean anything. Okay?

Holden: Sounds good to me, Honey.

Honey: (She abruptly releases and starts out. Stops.... moves back to him) Oh, and Holden don't wait to long to make your deposit in my account. Okay?

Holden: Right.

Honey: Bye-bye. (She kisses his cheek and exits)

Holden: (cell) Hallo! ...Kontonummer (account number) : null (0) null (0) drei (3) sieben (7) drel (0). FX out

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Host: Back at the Inn, Bonita has just hired a new bartender: Corey Columbo.

Bonita: -(She circles him, giving him the once over) I'm very happy that you answered our ad, Corey. You certainly have the ...background....I'm looking for. Hopefully, this will be the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial association.

Corey: That's great Mrs. Buttonputter! Thank you.

Bonita: Please, (offering her hand) call me Bonnie.

Corey: Thanks Bonnie.

Bonita: Okay, so I'll see you tonight. Better get here by about five. These women's club broads like to start their boozing early.

Corey: Will do, Bonnie. See you later. (He starts out.)

Bonita: Oh, Corey...I just mopped that floor so it might be a little damp. Better go out slowly. I wouldn't want you slip.

Corey: Okay, thanks. (He starts out.)

Bonita: Oh, just a minute. (She sits down) Okay.

Corey: See ya, later (He exits slowly. Bonnie watches attentively.)

Ditzy enters from other direction.

Ditzy: Bonita?

Bonita: (startled) Oh, Hi. I didn't hear you come in.

Ditzy: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I really needed to go over a couple of things regarding the party tonight.

Bonita: Oh, no problem Ditzy. Wally reminded me that you were coming. I think we're all set.

Ditzy: Good. Now we're expecting 194 people. Are you okay with that?

Bonita: Yes indeed. We're all set up. And we have the head table at the far end of the room for you and your husband as well as the other people you specified. And we've cleared the center of the room for the dance floor.

Ditzy: (Extremely patronizing) Excellent. Well, I must say, I'm impressed. It seems like you and Wally actually have your act together.....for once.(organ fx)

Bonita: Yes...yes we do. We do have our act together Ditzy. I don't know why you're so surprised, we've been running the Inn for five years now.

Ditzy: (Nastily condescending) I know that dear....but it hasn't exactly been a smooth ride now has it? (She starts out)

Bonita: (In a rage goes after her) Ditzzy, Ditzzy JUST STOP!!!

Ditzy: (Stops turns....crappy smile) Oh, and Bonita. Richard wanted me to remind you that you're late on your loan payment to him....again. Tsk! Tsk! Tsk! ...see you tonight dear. (She's out. Bonita screams)

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Richard's Office

He is standing at examination table, perusing a file folder. Lorelai enters.

Lorelai: (German accent) You wanted to see me doctor?

Richard: Yes, nurse, do you know anything about this appointment for Wally Buttonputter?

Lorelai: No, doctor, I do not. His wife called this morning and said it was urgent that you see him immediately. Is there a problem, doctor?

Richard: I'm not sure.

Lorelai: Well, there is only one way to find out doctor, shall I bring him in?

Richard: He's here?

Lorelai: Oh, yes doctor, he's in the waiting room. He looks extremely nervous.

Richard: Hmm, all right. But I'm expecting my lawyer anytime. So when she get's here, just bring her in right away.

Lorelai: Very good, doctor. (She starts out)

Richard: Thank you..... *Lorelai* (organ fx she stops cold)

Lorelai: (Turning to him, stalking) What did you call me?

Richard: (realizing his mistake) Oh...oh dear. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry I forgot myself.

Lorelai: (She bitch slaps him) Dummkopf!

Richard: Ow!! I said I was sorry.

Lorelai: You are correct about that, you piece of excrement. (She wrenches his arm behind his back) What is my name?

Richard: Ow!!!! Uhm! Hey, the patients in the waiting room are going to hear you.

Lorelai: (She pulls tighter) You should have thought about that before referred to me with such pathetic familiarity. (She pushes him to the floor) Now beg my forgiveness!

Richard: (Quietly) Forgive me!

Lorelai: Aghh! (She kicks him.) Forgive me *what?* (She kicks him again) Forgive me *what?*

Richard: Ow! (a little louder) Forgive me *Mistress*.

Lorelai: I cannot quite hear you..... Darling! (she grinds her heel into his back)

Richard: Ow!!! Please, please, please forgive me(another heel grind) *Mistress!*

Lorelai: That's better. Now on your feet. (He obeys) Put on your dog collar. (He obeys.) On your hands and knees. (She attaches a leash and drags him around the space) Now Doctor Richard....you have been very bad, haven't you?

Richard: Yes..... *Mistress!*

Lorelai: You've been so bad that I'm thinking perhaps I will not work here anymore.

Richard: Oh, no Mistress *please!* I promise you, I'll be good, but *please* don't leave. I couldn't stand it if you were to leave me.

Lorelai: (She pulls him with the leash up to his feet) We shall see! I want you to double my salary and I want new leather furniture in my apartment. And I want both by the end of the day, der Liebhaber....or else! (FX. She pushes him away.) I'll bring in your next patient....doctor (She's out. Richard takes off the leash and collar and straightens himself up.)

Lorelai: (Re-enters cheerily with Wally, who is in a hospital gown) Good morning Dr. Fitzwell, this is Mr. Buttonputter.

Richard: Thank you so very much Nurse Testibuster. Hello Wally. (Shakes hands) What's the word?

Wally: Hi Richard. I really hate to bother you. I know you're a very busy man.

Richard: Hold it right there Wally. Is this about the loan? Because if it is, this not the time or the place--- (He gets cut off)

Wally: It's not about the loan Richard. It's....it's....

Richard: Just say it Wally. I'm sure it's nothing I haven't heard before.

Wally: Okay, Richard (deep breath) My *thing* doesn't work any more.

Richard: Really! Well, a lot of men have that problem Wally. It's nothing to be ashamed of. Have you tried the little blue pill?

Wally: Yes, I have. And it doesn't work. I'm telling you Richard, I need your help. Bonnie is going crazy.

Richard: All right. All right. I'm sure we can figure this out. Here, get up on the table. (Wally does so. Richard covers him with a sheet) Now hike up that gown. (Richard raises the sheet to examine Wally.) Holy crap. That's the smallest one I've ever seen. It's amazing. Has it always looked like this?

Wally: Uhm, yeah...I guess so.

Richard: Wow! Unbelievable. Oh, Nurse Testibuster, please bring in the digital camera. (To Wally) I've gotta get a picture of this. (Wally groans)

Lorelai: (entering) Here's the camera, doctor.

Richard: Oh, good. Nurse Testibuster, just take a look at this. (He lifts sheet. Lorelai starts giggling. Richard starts laughing too) Have ever seen anything like that in your life? (Wally is dying on the vine)

Lorelai: No doctor, never. (more giggling. Wally continues to cringe)

Richard: Nurse Testibuster, take a few pictures please.

Lorelai: All right doctor. (She starts shooting)

Richard: Excellent. Now nurse...if we're going to perform surgery, we'll need an accurate measurement. What do you suggest?

Lorelai: Let me stretch it out as far as I can with the needle nose pliers. Then I will secure the data we need.

Richard: (Richard passes her the pliers and clipboard.) Okay, here you go. (Soon Wally starts screaming.) Make sure you get an accurate measurement.

Lorelai: Yes, doctor. Okay, I've got it. (She comes out) Here is your data doctor. (She hands him the clipboard)

Richard: Excellent. Excellent. (He reads clipboard) I guess we'll have to use the micro scalpel.

Lorelai: Yes, Doctor

Wally: (Finally settling down) That was excruciating Richard. What 's the prognosis?

Richard: Well, you're definitely a challenge Wally, but everything is going to be fine. We're going to fix you up.

Lorelai: Doctor, I found the micro scalpel.

Richard: Good, please prepare Mr. Buttonputter for surgery.

Lorelai: Yes, doctor. And doctor, your lawyer is here. I told her to come right in.

Richard: Oh, right. Thank you Nurse.

Wally: Did you tell her to prepare me for surgery? Now ?!

Richard: Yes, Wally. There's no time like the present----

Wally: But---

Heidi enters with Fanny--

Heidi: Richard...your nurse said it was all right to come in. But you look busy. (She gazes under the sheet and starts giggling as does Fanny.)

Richard: (Also laughing) Isn't that amazing? Let's go over here where we can talk. (They move to a different part of the space. If possible Wally's table should be rolled off. If not, perhaps a screen could be placed in front of it.)

Richard: So what's all the urgency, Heidi. (Recognizes Fanny) Good grief...Fanny. I didn't recognize you at first. (Fanny smiles and grabs his ass)

Fanny: Hi, Honey!

Heidi: (Steps between them) And I'm sure she doesn't recognize you. Apparently your step-mother is the victim of amnesia. She can't seem to remember anything. She was sent here on a bus from a clinic in Wheeling, West Virginia. The driver said she was all over the male passengers. He almost had to put her off the bus. Apparently she still remembers some things.

Richard: Yeah, I remember she made my teenage years quite interesting. But my question is this. Why the hell has she been sent to me? I haven't seen nor heard from her in years?

Heidi: Well, I'm still investigating, but apparently your step-mother is the victim of some kind of foul play.

Richard: Really?

Heidi: Yes, you see, one of her ex-husbands was an heir to the Ford automotive fortune. He recently died and left her in the clover. You are her only living relative. So...

Richard: So I'm in line to get that money?

Heidi: Exactly!

Richard: Wow! That's great! (He hugs Heidi, and Fanny steps in and hugs Richard)

Heidi: There's only one problem. Apparently she's broke.

Richard: What?

Heidi: The other night, she withdrew her entire fortune in cash.

Richard: No!

Heidi: Yes. She can't remember what happened and no one seems to be able to account for the missing money.

Richard: So...

Heidi: So the real reason she's here is because she's destitute and has nowhere else to go.

Richard: So she has to stay with me?

Heidi: You got it.

Richard: Holy hell, what happened?

Heidi: I'm working on it Richard, but it's going to take some time.

Richard: All right. All right.

Lorelai enters

Lorelai: Excuse me doctor. Mr. Buttonputter is ready for surgery.

Richard: Very good, Nurse Testibuster. I'll be right in...oh, would you please show my step-mother to the waiting room.

Lorelai: Certainly, doctor.

Heidi: I'll be right out Fanny.

Fanny: Okay, sweetie. (She grabs Richard's ass once more on the way out.)

Richard: She sure hasn't changed in that department.

Heidi: I'll take her back to my home office and interview her there. She might be more comfortable, and hopefully she'll remember what happened?

Richard: Thanks Heidi. It looks like you're bailing me out again. (He hugs her and doesn't let go) I'm so lucky to have you Heidi.

Heidi: (Trying to push away) Richard...We've been over this before. Our relationship is strictly professional.

Richard: Oh, come on. We have a connection. You know it and I know it.

Heidi: I *don't* know it Richard. Let go of me. (She finally pushes away)

Richard: All right. But I'm not giving up. Someday you'll be ready. And when you are...I'll be waiting for you.

Heidi: Goodbye Richard. See you later.

Richard: Goodbye, Heidi. Remember what I said. (He leaves)

Heidi: Richard..Richard ...Richard... you better remember what *I* said. Or else you could be very, *very* sorry! (SFX)

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Richard and Ditzzy's House

Ditzzy: (on the phone, swigging from flask) Yes Miriam, it looks like we're all set. All the arrangements are in place; the flowers have been delivered; the DJ has the music list; even the idiots who run the Inn haven't screwed things up. All right dear, I'll see you around five. Bye.

Leslie: (Pronounced frontal lisp. Lots of spittle) Excuse me, Ditzzy....I could see you were on the cell phone so I simply let myself in. I hope that was all right.

Ditzzy: (Doing a double-take. Slips the flask in her pocket.) Leslie...Leslie Fitzwell?

Leslie: Yes. It's true I've returned from the twilight zone.
(He laughs and hugs her) How's my favorite sister-in-law?

Ditzzy: I'm fine. Just (pushing him away) fine. What a surprise.

Leslie: Don't you just love surprises?

Ditzzy: Sometimes, Leslie, sometimes. Exactly what brings you home after all these years.

Leslie: That's exactly what I wanted to speak to you about Ditzzy. You see, it was never easy being Richard's twin brother. He was such an overachiever and I knew I could never measure up to him in any way. So, as you know, I decided to become an actor. I've been auditioning all over the country for the last twelve years?

Ditzzy: Good for you. (Beat. Starts walking him out) Well, its been very nice seeing you Leslie, but I have to prepare for a big event tonight and---

Leslie: But wait...I've decided to give up the stage.

Ditzzy: You have. Why?

Leslie: For some strange reason, I've never been cast is anything. It's very (extended lisp) myssssteriousssss...but true.

Ditzzy: So what are you going to do?

Leslie: I've decided to go into TV and radio advertising. You know...commercials. I think I could be stupendously successful.

Ditzzy: (cautiously) Uh-huh.

Leslie: All I need is a little venture capital to get started, say 50-grand...and that's where I thought you could help me.

Ditzy: Leslie, I don't have any---

Leslie: Please Ditzy...could you please just put in a good word for me with Richard. I left here in such awkward circumstances.

Ditzy: I'll tell you what. I'll let Richard know you dropped by. I'll discuss your proposal with him. He'll be at the Craven Morehead Inn tonight. Maybe you can see him then.

Leslie: Thank you..thank you Ditzy. (Another hug. Ditzy pushes him out) I am certainly most appreciative.

Honey enters and bumps into him from behind. She turns him around to her. She doesn't see Ditzy.

Honey: Well, how lucky is this. I was hoping I would catch you home in the afternoon. Time for a quickie, Dicky?

Leslie: (Backing out) I'm so sorry. But I think you are confusing me with someone else. Bye Ditzy. (He's out)

Ditzy: Bye, Leslie. (to Honey) "Dicky's" twin brother.

Honey: Wow...what a striking resemblance.

Ditzy: Obviously. What do you want Honey?

Honey: I needed to discuss business with Richard.

Ditzy: I can just imagine. Well, he's not here.

Honey: Oh, too bad. I guess I'll catch up with him later.

Ditzy: (approaching her) Honey I know you've slept with my husband. To say the least, I don't appreciate it.

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

Ditzy: (She grabs her by the wrists) Don't play dumb with me, bitch. I know what's going on. I am not your door mat. And I will not be made a fool of. Don't underestimate what I'm capable of. Keep your mitts off my man. (She twists her wrists)

Honey: Ow!!! (Ditzy releases her. She backs up.)

Ditzy: Now get out of my house!

Honey: Okay, Ditzy. You've made yourself perfectly clear.

Ditzy: Good!

SFX

Honey: But you know something, Ditzy...I've never forgotten...that night in junior high school....when you and I....experimented. (She approaches.)

Ditzy: (overly appalled) Well! I haven't the foggiest idea---

Honey: Uh! uh! uh! (takes flask from her pocket and takes a drink) I think you do... (holds flask to Ditzy and feeds her a drink)

Ditzy: (as in a trance) I...I... (Honey embraces her from behind and returns the flask to her pocket. Ditzy is responsive)

Honey: Uh-huh! I knew you remembered..... (She takes her by the hand) Which way? (Ditzy leads her out) If only Richard could see us now.... (FX out)

=====

Richard's Office

After surgery. Wally is seated. He has a bandage on his nose.

Richard: Wally, how are you feeling?

Wally: I feel all right I guess. How did the surgery go? And why do I have a bandage on my nose?

Richard: About that Wally....surgery is a funny thing.

Wally: Funny?

Richard: Uh, yes. Sometimes.....sometimes things don't go exactly as expected.

Wally: What happened?

Richard: There was a tiny technological error.

Wally: You mean my thing still doesn't work?

Richard: Oh no...your...thing..... will work...your thing will work fine.

Wally: Good.

Richard: But...

Wally: But?

Richard: ...but you just won't have any sensitivity...down there.

Wally: Huh? No sensitivity at all?

Richard: No...well, not *down there*.

Wally: Then...where? (Richard points to his nose) My nose? My sexual sensitivity is in my nose? Oh no....oh no!!!!

Richard: Now...don't be a baby, Wally. You'll get used to it. Now, here's a prescription for the pain. Good luck Wally. (Starting out) And Wally, lets get me that loan payment huh? (He's out)

Wally: My nose!! Richard...you quack!!! I'll get you for this Richard. I'll get you!!! (SFX out)

=====

Heidi's home office

Heidi: Now Fanny. You said you don't remember going to the bank and withdrawing all your money?

Fanny: No. I withdrew all my money?!

Heidi: Yes, you did...in cash. Do you know what happened to the cash?

Fanny: No.

Heidi: Do you remember anything at all about the other night.

Fanny: Not really? I have sort of a recollection about being in a dark place.....I think I might have been.....under a table..... in a restaurant. Isn't that bizarre?

Heidi: Yes...it is. What were you doing under the table?

Fanny: I'm not sure. But I think it was fun.

Heidi: Okay. What else happened?

Fanny: Well, it seems like when I tried to get up, I banged my head on the table. That's when I blanked out. The next thing I remember, I was on that bus...having a great time with Charlie, and Ben and Gustav. That Gustav was amazing. From Russia I think.

Heidi: Okay, now Fanny...

Holden enters

Holden: Heidi have you seen my cufflinks. I wanted to ...(sees Heidi is with a client)

Heidi: Oh, hello dear. I didn't hear you come in. (She crosses to him and kisses him)
Oh, this is Fanny Fitzwell, Richard's step-mother. Fanny this is my husband, Holden.

Fanny: (She approaches. Holden shows panic- then steps away briefly.) Wow! (He turns to face her. Beat) He's a cutie. (She puts her hand on his chest) I'll bet you know how to treat a lady, don't you?

Holden: (relieved..cautious laugh) It's...very nice to meet you.

Richard enters

Richard: Sorry I'm late Heidi. I got hung up with a patient.

Heidi: That's all right. I was just finishing up with Fanny.

Richard: Holden. Good to see you again. Is everything in place for our...proposal?

Holden: I think so, Richard. Everything looks good.

Richard: That's fantastic!

Heidi: Holden, will you please excuse us. I have a legal issue to discuss with Richard. You understand don't you darling?

Holden: Of course. Attorney-client privilege and all that... I'll be waiting in the den. (Holden exits briefly, but returns unseen to the peripheral of the space)

Richard: Fanny, why don't you wait for me in the car. I won't be long.

Fanny: Okey-dokey, Baby. I'll keep the car nice and warm for you. (She's out)

Richard: What a piece of work. So what do we know?

Heidi: Very little. She doesn't remember much of anything. According to Wheeling police, she was found wandering the downtown area at four in the morning. Customers at the Bridge Tavern and Grill recalled seeing her there earlier in the evening.

Richard: Was she with anybody?

Heidi: According to the owner, she was with a man. No details. But it must have been at that bar where she hit her head when she was under the table.

Richard: I-yi-yi!

Heidi: Now this is interesting. Your step-mother has a Facebook page.

Richard: Really!

Heidi: Yes and someone with the username, "Catcher In The Rye" had written on her wall. "Can't wait to see you"

Richard: Who the hell is "Catcher in the Rye?"

Heidi: I don't know. And Facebook has a pretty strict privacy settings policy so I don't know if we'll be able to find out who it is.

Richard: Hm.....You know my college roommate at Rutgers went to high school with Mark Zuckerberg. I wonder..... (pulls out cell) Hey Larry this is Dick Fitzwell.... a name from the past...hope everything is going well. I was hoping you could help me out. Are you still in touch with Mark Zuckerberg? If so, please call me back when you get this message. Thanks Larry. Bye. (To Heidi) We'll see. (Holden exits)

Heidi: There's one more thing. Are you ready for this?

Richard: Hit me.

Heidi: When they found your step-mother on the street they had to keep her in a Wheeling holding cell for a few hours. So as a standard operating procedure, they gave her a routine physical exam.

Richard: Don't tell me...

Heidi: Oh, no.... nothing bad. But sometime during the course of that fateful evening, Fanny had a tattoo placed on her.... fanny.

Richard: You're kidding. What did it say?

Heidi: They took a picture (She shows him) Look!

Richard: Holy Hell! (FX out)

=====

The Inn

Wally: I'm telling you Bonnie, I'm going to sue that quack for everything he's worth. I don't care how much money we owe him. He's not getting a way with this.

Bonita: It's unbelievable. We need a good lawyer. But in the meantime.... did he say how long it would be before you can use your new "thing?"

Wally: Not really. He said it would be at least a few weeks before— Bonnie! Don't you understand. My only sexual sensitivity is in my nose.

Bonita: Oh darling. That's terrible. (She starts giggling a little...it escalates until she is out of control.)

Wally: Bonnie! Bonnie stop laughing. It's not funny! Bonnie!

Leslie: Excuse me. Are you the owners?

Wally: Richard...how dare you show your face here today. I oughta---

Leslie: Oh no. I'm not Richard. I'm his twin brother, Leslie.

Bonita: Wow...the resemblance is remarkable.

Wally: (cranky) How can I help you?

Leslie: I was hoping to catch my brother or his wife about a business proposal I made to them.

Ditzy: (entering) Bonita....Wally..... is everything ready?

Bonita: Oh, yes. Ditzy. We're all set. (sarcastic) I do hope everything will be up to your standards.

Ditzy: I hope so *too*, dear. I hope so *too*! Wally...what happened to your nose?

Wally: What happened? What happened? Why don't you ask your husband what happened?!
(He's out. Bonita follows)

Ditzy: Oh, hello Leslie.

Leslie: Ditzy, I know you're busy. But did you happen to talk to Richard about my TV and radio idea?

Ditzy: Actually, I did, Leslie. I explained the whole thing.

Leslie: And.....

Ditzy: I'm sorry, Leslie. But Richard is not interested. He's not interested in funding your business and he's not interested in seeing you. Not now...not *ever*! I'm sorry Leslie.

Leslie: (Beat) Not as sorry as *he's* gonna be. Not by a long shot. So long, Ditzy. (He exits. SFX out)

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The Party

(Music: any public domain dance tune)

Ditzy is happy, happy, happy, making the rounds.

Fanny is grind dancing with Richard--he breaks away - she gives him the finger- "Asshole!"

Wally is dancing with Bonita rubbing his nose all over her. Bonita is embarrassed and tries to get him to stop.

Honey is pouring champagne for Holden. They toast each other. Ditzy grabs Honey and pulls her in one direction. Fanny grabs Holden and pulls him in the other.

Heidi enters pursued by Richard--she turns to him and slaps him. Then she moves out.

Lorelai approaches Richard indicating her impatience (ad libbing the fact that her new furniture is cheap imitation leather and he'll have to look elsewhere to satisfy his kinky fetishes from now on, wrenches his arm, and kicks him.)

Ditzy: (on microphone) Everybody....everybody.....(she sings in Honey's direction "*Some enchanted evening.....*") (swigs from her flask and giggles) I just want to thank you all for coming

tonight and supporting the Craven Morehead Women's Club. It's well known everywhere that the number one priority of our Women's Club is Craven Morehead. Craven Morehead tonight. Craven Morehead tomorrow. Craven Morehead anytime, anywhere! Join me girls (She leads the women in the audience): WE ARE, NOW AND ALWAYS, CRAVEN MOREHEAD! Well done. I want you to know that we've raised over 3 thousand dollars tonight in support of our charities. (applause) I hope you all had a good time. I know I did. (another swig...really loud laugh) Now, since tonight's event is tax deductible, I've prepared charitable donation certificates for each of you. If you would be so kind as to join me in the lobby I'll give you yours. (Another swig) Geronimo!!! (She leads principals off. All are gone but Richard and Corey. Richard approaches Corey at the bar.)

Richard: Scotch and soda, please.

Corey: Sure thing. Aren't you gonna claim your tax deduction?

Richard: Hm...I'm sure my wife has got me covered on that score.

Corey: Cheers!

Richard: Right back atcha (SFX cell rings) Hello! Hi! I'm so glad you called! I really need your help--

BANG
SFX

Richard dies a dramatically choreographed death (He may stagger out of view to be replaced by "stunt double")

Corey: Whoa! (Runs to Richard. Checks his pulse.)

Wally: I heard a shot! What happened?

Corey: This guy's dead.

Others enter shocked by what they see.

Wally: (Screams)

Heidi: Oh, no!

Ditzy: RICHARD!!!! Oh, my poor RICHARD!!!!!!

Honey: (Comforting her) It's okay, baby. It's okay (Stepping to Holden) I'm glad I got that contract signed this afternoon?

Holden: Me too! (they slap hands)

Lorelai: Piece of capitalist crap! (one last kick)

Leslie: Suffering succotash....Richard!...Richard!....(patting him down) where's you're ID?

(Corey pulls him off)

Fanny: I think I vaguely remember him being almost like a son to me. (To Corey....twirling his hair) Do you need a mommy, baby?

Wally: Bonnie, call 911!

Bonita: Okay dear. Let me just grab my phone. (looking for phone in her bag, pulls out all her other "friends.")

Corey: There's no need to call 911. As a student of the Hoboken School of Detective arts and a volunteer junior g-man, I am completely qualified, and do hereby take over the investigation into the murder of..... What's this guy's name?

Ditzzy: Richard. Dr. Richard Fitzwell.

Corey: Thank you. I am hereby taking over the investigation into the murder of Dr. Richard Fitzwell. Now, did anybody see anything? (Entertains any response. He picks up Richard's cell phone) He had just received a call. (Looking at ID) Hmmm... Zuckerberg. Mark. Ladies and gentlemen...there is a murderer among us. I must insist that no one leave the premises. I have to get Dr. Fitzwell to the medical examiner's office. When I return I will conduct a complete and thorough investigation into his murder. But for now...trust no one. And please..enjoy your dinner. Now...let's get this Dick out of here. (All help remove Richard from the area.)

Dinner is served.

As dinner winds down cast members return to engage in table-talk with the audience.

Corey announces that he will be interrogating the following suspects: Honey Bangham-Brightly, Wally Buttonputter, Heidi Harrison-Holmes, Leslie Fitzell, Lorelai Testibuster, Holden Holmes, Fanny-Foreman-Fenimore-Ford-Fallwell-Fitzwell, Ditzzy Doodle-Fitzwell, and Bonita Buttonputter. (each suspect reacts when name is called.)

Here's how a typical interrogation looks....

Act II

All are in table-talking

Corey: (Entering) Ladies and gentlemen. I have just returned from the morgue. According to the M.E., Richard Fitzwell succumbed to one .38 calibre bullet to the abdomen. Now..... did anybody see the shooter? Did anybody see anything at all? Very well. I will now proceed with my investigation. The following persons of interest will be called for questioning. (each suspect reacts when name is called) Honey Bangham-Brightly, Wally Buttonputter, Heidi Harrison-Holmes, Leslie Fitzell, Lorelai Testibuster, Holden Holmes, Fanny-Foreman-Fenimore-Ford-Fallwell-Fitzwell, Ditzzy Doodle-Fitzwell, and Bonita Buttonputter. Now, ladies and gentlemen, these are not my only suspects, but merely the suspects I consider to be major at this time. Honey Bangham-Brightly will you come forward please? (Honey steps up) Ms. Brightly, how long have you been a Craven Morehead resident?

Honey: Oh, I've lived here all my life detective. I'm a Craven Morehead native.

Corey: And what is your occupation, Ms Brightly?

Honey: I am a licensed real estate agent.

Corey: I see. And don't you find that to be difficult in these troubling times?

Honey: I prefer to view it as a challenge. Today's economy requires creativity and personalized service, in order to achieve financial success.

Corey: And you pride yourself on your personalized customer service, don't you Ms. Brightly?

Honey: Indeed I do, detective.

Corey: In fact you were in the midst of brokering a very big deal involving the deceased Mr. Fitzwell, weren't you?

Honey: Uh huh. Yes I was.

Corey: What specific arrangement were you negotiating?

Honey: Hmm...well...that negotiation has a contract pending, so I'm really not at liberty to divulge the details.

Corey: Ms. Brightly, this is a murder investigation. It is unlawful for you to withhold any information.

Honey: Well, Dr. Fitzwell was engaged in the purchase of the Craven Morehead Business Park Development.

Corey: And did you provide Dr. Fitzwell with personal customer service in this regard.

Honey: Of course. I'm a professional, detective.

Corey: Indeed. The fact is, despite the fact that Dr. Fitzwell was a happily married man...you slept with him didn't you. You slept with him, to close this deal.

Honey: That is absolutely the most ridiculous thing I've every heard. I DID NOT SLEEP WITH HIM TO CLOSE THIS DEAL!

Pause

Corey: You never slept with him!

Honey: To close this deal?

Corey: EVER????!!!

Honey: Oh, sure. Lots of times. Just not to close the deal.

Corey: Were you in love with him?

Honey: I love everybody, detective. In fact, I even love you.

Corey: Indeed. In fact, you *gave* yourself totally to Dr. Fitzwell. But he refused to leave his wife for you. So you murdered him in cold blood. Didn't you Ms. Brightly...didn't you?!

Honey: Mister, that is crazy talk. Hey...Dicky boy and I had a few laughs. It was fun. But in case you didn't notice detective, (She rises) I'm young and single and love to mingle. Dickie may not have been a one woman man...but I'm definitely *not* a one man woman either. Call me. (she hands him her card)

After being questioned by Corey, the audience may question each of the suspects. This is where the improvisational skills of your actors will come into play. I recommend that during the

rehearsal period, you suggest possible audience questions to provide practice for your cast. I also suggest you have Corey repeat each question from the audience, so all can hear.

Following the interrogations, Corey instructs the audience regarding the resolution form. We recommend you ask audience members to suggest the murderer(s) — motive, method and opportunity. “Winner” chosen from all correct solutions. It’s also fun to provide a prize for the most creative solution. You’ll usually get some additional good laughs from this.

Dessert is then served as the audience members fill out their forms. Have someone collect the forms as they are completed. They should be delivered to whomever will determine the winners. (We usually have the cast decide the winners)

***Act three** is the resolution of the play and the crime. The detective (Corey) eliminates each suspect, until the murderer is finally revealed. Here’s an example of how this goes.*

Act III : The Resolution
(After dessert)

Corey: Ladies and gentlemen, this has been an evening of shocking surprises. A heinous act of murder has been committed. The victim: Dr. Richard Fitzwell...a highly renowned physician and an upstanding member of the Craven Morehead community...(organ fx) or was he. On closer examination it would appear that indeed Dr. Fitzwell was not the man his résumé suggested. In fact, after subpoenaing various court documents, we find that he has been the subject of no fewer than three paternity suits, a number of DUI arrests, as well as one apprehension for public exposure. Incredibly, in all of these instances, there were no convictions. In fact, these indictments were all sealed. They never even saw the light of day. Quite clearly, Dr. Fitzwell had maintained the services of a high skilled attorney. Wouldn’t you say so Mrs. Holmes?

Heidi: What would you like me to say? I did my job. I’m not ashamed of that. Every lawyer is bound to protect the client as competently as possible and in every way possible.

Corey: Oh, yes. There’s no dispute there. But don’t you feel somewhat guilty in allowing this man to appear so noble in his community, always knowing of his flaws.

Heidi: Detective, I resent that. As you stated, my client was never convicted of anything. As far as you or anyone else knew he is.... *was* a noble man.

Corey: But you knew that wasn’t true, didn’t you!

Heidi: I

Corey: And while he was constantly coming-on to you...again and again...you knew what a low-life he really was.

Heidi: That has nothing to do with---

Corey: And so when you'd finally had enough...when he refused to back off...even after you physically struck him....you decided to rid the world of a man you knew to be no good.

Heidi: No.

Corey: Yes! You shot and killed him, didn't you Heidi. You murdered your client, Richard Fitzwell.

Heidi: No. That's not true. Yes, Richard had lots of problems. And, yes, I grew weary of all his shenanigans. But, there was much good in this man. He was a talented surgeon and he helped many people. The bottom line---he didn't deserve to die. And I certainly didn't kill him.

Corey: You know, I believe you Ms. Holmes. You resisted his advances and I guess your only real transgression is that you are a lawyer. As opposed to some, whose transgressions were constant, numerous and unremorseful. Isn't that right Ms. Brightly?!

Following Act Three and your curtain call, your director, or perhaps a cast member, announces the winners and awards.