

MOMS' MURDER CLUB



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MOMS' MURDER CLUB

COMEDY/MURDER-MYSTERY. The monthly meeting of the Moms' Murder Club, a mystery book club, has added an item to its agenda...murder! Discussion of the latest mystery novel is derailed when the group's host, Pam, finds a dead body stashed in the window seat of her living room. After Pam is arrested for the murder, the club members use a few tricks from their favorite mystery novels to root out the murderer. When club members swoop in to subdue the killer with assorted household "weapons," they are completely caught by surprise when the real killer shows up.

Performance Time: Approximately 75-90 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(3 M, 8F)

PAM THORPE: Host of Moms' Murder Club, a loan officer and mother of two college kids; female.

HUNTER THORPE: Pam's scatterbrained husband, the manager of a French restaurant; male.

HATTIET EVERSOLE: Pam's nosy, persnickety neighbor; female.

HANNAH HALL: Member of Moms' Murder Club; reads tea leaves and writes a blog, "Mystic Mysteries"; wears mystic-looking clothing; female.

GINA CANDALERA: Member of Moms' Murder Club; a homemaker and mother of five kids all under 10 years old; female.

JULIA WISE: Member of the Moms' Murder Club; retiree who has an adult daughter; female.

CALLIE JENKINS: Member of Moms' Murder Club; librarian who is sweet on Deputy Dupris; female.

CARL DUPRIS: Eager, efficient deputy who is sweet on Callie; male.

MAX MCGEE: Sheriff who isn't fond of amateur sleuths; male.

FIONA FOX: Murdered victim's "sister"; female.

DELLA MURCH: Murdered victim's "sister"; female.

SETTING

Pam Thorpe's living room.

SET

Living room. There is an angled couch with throw pillows and a coffee table in front of it at SR. An easy chair sits DSR, and there is a table with several chairs CSL. There is a window with curtains USC with a window seat under it. (Note: The window seat has a seat that can be opened and needs to be large enough to accommodate an actor hiding inside it.) The bookcase is SR of window, and a decorative screen is to the left. There is a wing entrance USL that leads to the kitchen and other parts of house. A wing entrance USR leads to outside and stairs to second floor.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Living room, early evening.

Scene 2: Living room, a short time later.

Scene 3: Living room, two days later, midday.

Scene 4: Living room, later that night.

Intermission, opt.

ACT II

Scene 1: Living room, the following morning.

Scene 2: Living room, 7:45 p.m.

Scene 3: Living room, the following night.

PROPS

Cell phones	2 Hairbrushes
Camera card	Golf club
Book	Donut
Blue box	Pencil
Small notebook	Cutting board with a cord/string attached
Pen	Potato masher
2 Latex gloves	Bobby pin
Wallet	Whistle
Piece of paper	Large cream pie (can be filled with shaving cream)
Feather duster	Ankle brace, for Julia
Scrub brush	Plate of cookies
Air freshener	Cane
Assorted cleaning supplies	2 Containers of goodies
Vase of flowers	Bandana, for Della
Grocery list	Assorted laundry room items to be used as "weapons"
Brownies	Fashion gloves, for Fiona
Biker outfit with a chain that goes across the chest, for Della	Candlestick
Motorcycle helmet	Frying pan
Bathrobe, for Hunter	
2 Flashlights	
Wiffle ball bat	

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Knock on the door	Noises
Cell phone ringing	Sound of pots and pans banging
Clock chiming 11	Loud "thunk"
Moan	Several crashes
Ominous ring tone	

"GEE. WITH ALL THESE GOODIES,
YOU'D THINK WE WERE GONNA
HAVE A SHOWER
INSTEAD OF A SHOWDOWN
WITH A KILLER."

—GINA

ACT I
SCENE I

(AT RISE: Pam Thorpe's living room. Pam enters SL, talking on her phone.)

PAM: *(Into phone.)* You're finding your way around campus all right, Chrissy?...Oh, well, I guess it is a big school, but your brother didn't have any trouble finding his way around. By the way, have you seen him?...Chrissy, he is not a nerd, and the least you can do is smile and say hi when you run into Jeremy. How's your roommate?...She what?...She has a what?...Isn't there some kind of rule against that? Listen, honey, I'd love to chat, but I've got to get going. The Moms' Murder Club is meeting tonight here, and I've got to finish the "Death by Chocolate" dessert. *(Hunter races on SR, looking around the room wildly.)* And it looks like your father is desperate. *(To Hunter.)* Chrissy says hi, honey.

HUNTER: Chrissy who?

PAM: *(Into phone.)* He's disowned you. Talk to you later. And be careful of that thing! *(Hangs up.)* That was your daughter. *(Pause.)* The one we dropped off at college this weekend?

HUNTER: That's nice.

PAM: Her roommate has a pet python.

HUNTER: That's nice.

PAM: I'm worried. What if it gets out of its cage or whatever and gets too cozy with Chrissy? It could crush her to death.

HUNTER: That's nice.

PAM: Hunter, what are you looking for? *(Hunter picks up a camera card lying on floor behind the couch. He looks exasperated.)* Find it?

HUNTER: Here's one of those things. If you need it, it'll be here. *(Frustrated, puts it on the bookshelf.)*

PAM: (*Sarcastically.*) Yeah, next time I need one of these things, I'll find it there. So, what are you looking for?

HUNTER: I need the raffle tickets for the hospital gala.

PAM: Didn't that start a few minutes ago?

HUNTER: Yes! And they should be selling tickets right now! I picked them up yesterday from the printer and forgot to take them to the restaurant when I went to work this afternoon.

PAM: Are they in a blue box?

HUNTER: Yes!

PAM: (*Teasing.*) Oh dear, what did I do with that box?

HUNTER: Pam! Please, please, please don't tell me you threw it out!

PAM: Okay, I won't, honey. I put it on the desk in the kitchen. Wait here, take several deep breaths so you don't hyperventilate, and I'll go get the box. Breathe deeply. That's it!

(Hunter breathes deeply and exhales deeply. Julia enters SR, carrying a book. Hunter doesn't notice her. She taps him on the shoulder and he screams.)

JULIA: Shall I call an ambulance, Mr. Thorpe?

(Pam enters, carrying a blue box.)

PAM: Who screamed?

HUNTER: Oh, thank you, honey! You're a peach! *(Grabs the box, kisses the air, and races off SR.)*

PAM: *(Calls.)* Hope the gala goes well!

JULIA: To answer your question, your husband screamed.

PAM: *(Sarcastically.)* He must have been glad to see you, Julia.

JULIA: He didn't even notice me. If you haven't figured it out, he's a man.

PAM: I thought there was something funny about him.

JULIA: And men have one-track minds: business, business, business. That's all my poor Herbert thought about, and look what he left me—alone, having to keep from being bored to death by joining the Moms' Murder Club.

PAM: But you still have a beautiful daughter, Arabella.

JULIA: Who hasn't called in a week!

PAM: Julia, Arabella's pregnant, she's got a demanding job, and her husband's a resident at a large hospital.

JULIA: Excuses, excuses...

PAM: I can't imagine how she does everything. I hardly have time to keep this place up, and I'm not half as busy as she is. I'm sure you must think this place is a mess.

JULIA: Not at all, but somebody dropped a bit of strawberry jam there on the floor. Ants will love it.

PAM: Oh dear, I didn't notice it this morning when I vacuumed.

(Callie and Hannah enter SR.)

CALLIE: Hi, Pam. Okay to come in?

PAM: Sure. Julia's here.

CALLIE: Hi, Julia.

JULIA: Evening, Callie. And, Hannah, don't you look...*mystic* tonight?

HANNAH: Like it? I decided that I might as well be a walking advertisement for my blog.

JULIA: You're a "Mystic Mystery," all right.

CALLIE: I think you look positively...occult!

PAM: All set for a juicy murder?

JULIA: If you mean "The Wicked Witch of Wetherby," I'd hardly say it was juicy.

CALLIE: I loved it! It was soooooo romantic!

JULIA: Yes, well, you're not married.

HANNAH: Neither am I, but I thought it was romantic, too.

JULIA: I still don't understand how you got into the Moms' Murder Club. You don't have any offspring.

HANNAH: I have Nostradamus and Pythia.

PAM: Two of the cutest Scotties you'll ever see.

JULIA: Hardly human.

HANNAH: I still have to feed them, play with them —

CALLIE: And clean up after them.

HANNAH: That, too.

PAM: Besides, we all agreed we'd use the term "mom" in the loosest sense possible.

(Gina enters, frazzled.)

GINA: Hi, everybody! Sorry I'm late, but I was walking out the door and Leon's tooth finally came out.

PAM: Good for him.

GINA: You'd have thought he'd just lost an arm. He was crying like a baby.

CALLIE: Well, he's only five.

GINA: I wish. He's four and a half.

HANNAH: Well, the Tooth Fairy will visit him tonight. That ought to put a smile on his face.

GINA: Ha! His older brother Rocco told Leon that the Tooth Fairy is an old hag who takes your teeth, and if she doesn't like the one you put under your pillow, she takes another and another until she finds one she likes. Leon's afraid he'll wake up toothless.

CALLIE: Gosh, how do you handle a crisis like that?

GINA: I made Rocco tell him the Tooth Fairy's like that witch in "The Wizard of Oz" ...get her wet and she disappears. So he's sitting up all night with a loaded water pistol.

PAM: Good thinking.

JULIA: You modern mothers...I never had to go through such machinations with Arabella.

GINA: How'd you avoid that?

JULIA: I told her there was no such thing as a Tooth Fairy. I didn't want her growing up believing in conspiracy theories.

CALLIE: You're too much, Julia.

PAM: Maybe that's why Arabella hasn't called Julia.

HANNAH: She hasn't called?

PAM: Not for a week.

HANNAH: Don't worry. I haven't sensed anything dreadful concerning her, Julia.

JULIA: How comforting.

CALLIE: She's probably super busy. I know some weeks we get so busy at the library I don't have time to breathe!

GINA: Tell me about it. The last time I sat down at home was... *(Thinks.)* ...gosh, Thanksgiving?

JULIA: Make fun, but a mother worries.

PAM: Yeah, even after they leave home, you're still a mom.

CALLIE: Well, maybe someday...

GINA: Nobody special yet, Callie?

CALLIE: Well, somebody's caught my eye.

PAM: And? And?!

CALLIE: And what?

GINA: Who is it?!

CALLIE: Oh, no. I'm not counting my chickens.

GINA: So you're in love with a chicken.

CALLIE: He's definitely not a chicken.

JULIA: That narrows the field.

(Knock on the door is heard off SR.)

HANNAH: Maybe this is him!

(Pam exits SR.)

CALLIE: I seriously doubt it. He works a lot of nights.

GINA: There goes the romance.

(Pam enters SR, followed by Harriet.)

HARRIET: Oh, I didn't mean to crash your party, Mrs. Thorpe.

PAM: This is more like a meeting, Ms. Eversole. Do you know everyone? (*Introducing.*) Gina, Hannah, Callie, and Julia.

HARRIET: Yes, well, I just came to let you know that your ficus tree is growing over onto my property again.

PAM: It is?

HARRIET: It is. This has happened before, and I don't want to make a big issue of it, but I do not want any part of that tree on my property.

PAM: Well, I'll be sure to talk to Hunter about it.

HARRIET: That husband of yours? Mr. Johnny-on-the-spot? You just get somebody out here to trim that tree, and fast!

PAM: We'll take care of it.

HARRIET: And another thing...I don't like some of the strange men I've seen here. They're very scary-looking, especially coming in the back way.

PAM: What strange men?

HARRIET: As if you didn't know. This world is a dangerous place, Ms. Thorpe, and I've had to add another lock to every door after I heard all the stories on the news last night.

GINA: Well, why don't you join us? We're the Moms' Murder Club.

HARRIET: Figures you'd go in for something like that. You get that tree trimmed or else! (*Exits SR.*)

JULIA: (*To Pam.*) What a delightful neighbor.

GINA: (*To Pam.*) I'll bet she brought chocolate-chip cookies the day you moved in.

PAM: No, she brought us a list of rules we have to follow if we're going to be allowed to live next door to her.

CALLIE: You've got to be kidding!

PAM: Scout's honor. My favorite is "no cooking garlic after seven p.m."

HANNAH: What is she...a vampire?

PAM: Hmm...that could explain a lot.

JULIA: Like those red spots on the sidewalk outside.

PAM: Hunter must have really made a mess with his toast and jam this morning. Shall we get on with our discussion of "The Wicked Witch of Wetherby"?

HANNAH: Pam? I-I didn't really want to say anything, but—

PAM: What's wrong, Hannah?

HANNAH: Well, I know you'll just think I'm being foolish.

CALLIE: We don't think you're foolish at all. You're just sensitive to the other world.

HANNAH: Well, I am, whether you believe it or not. I've always sensed things...things that will happen. You know, like animals right before an earthquake.

CALLIE: Hannah, is there going to be an earthquake tonight?

GINA: There better not be! Gino just finished our new deck, and the way he builds things, I don't think it could survive even a little earth jiggle.

HANNAH: It's nothing like that. I made a cup of tea this morning—

(Gina's phone rings.)

GINA: *(Into phone.)* Hello!...Ricky? What's the matter, honey?...Ginny hit you? Did you tell your father? ...He said what?...You deserved it? What kind of parenting is that?...Oh, oh, you hit Ginny first. Hmm, then what did you expect would happen? ...No, now you do as your father says. And he is not a dork! Goodnight. *(Hangs up.)*

CALLIE: I don't know how you do it, Gina...five kids!

GINA: Yeah, I oughta write a book.

PAM: Can we...can we hear what Hannah has to say?

JULIA: *(To Hannah.)* You were making a cup of tea...

HANNAH: Yes, and when I finished, I noticed the tea leaves at the bottom of the cup.

JULIA: *(Ominously.)* Uh-oh.

HANNAH: You can laugh all you want, but they formed a message.

CALLIE: What message?

HANNAH: Death!

GINA: (*Sarcastically.*) Well, that's the cherry on top of my day!

JULIA: Hannah, dear, tea leaves don't really leave messages.

HANNAH: But they do! It's one of the oldest forms of precognition known to civilized man.

PAM: Well, I think it's really not as horrible as it seems at first. After all, think about it: What are we here for? To discuss a murder-mystery. Our agenda is death.

CALLIE: You're right. Doesn't that make sense, Hannah?

HANNAH: I...well, I hope so.

GINA: Good. So let's get on with it. That Wetherby witch...she was really something, huh?

CALLIE: Wait! Wait! We need our mascot!

PAM: How could I forget?

GINA: Yeah, we're nothing without Eddie.

CALLIE: (*Sarcastically.*) Gina, please! Do not malign the name of our mascot Edgar Allan Poe.

JULIA: After all, he created the detective story.

HANNAH: And if anyone believed in tea leaves, it was Poe!

PAM: I've got it in the window seat.

CALLIE: Why do you hide it there?

PAM: Hunter says it creeps him out. (*Opens the window seat.*) Got it right— (*Freezes.*)

CALLIE: What's wrong? (*Approaches Pam.*) Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

(All get up and approach Pam. Julia rises.)

JULIA: Did you break the bust, Pam?

(Gina screams and then the others scream. Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: The Thorpe living room, 30 minutes later. Julia, Hannah, Gina, and Callie are sitting on chairs and the couch. Pam is standing DSL. Sheriff is pacing CS.)

SHERIFF: *(Bored, rolling his eyes. To Pam.)* All right, let's try this again! Who is that guy laying in your window seat?

PAM: I've told you, Sheriff, I don't know.

SHERIFF: What about the rest of you?

PAM: My guests have names, Sheriff. I'd think you'd want to write them down so you can remember them.

CALLIE: Do you need a paper and pencil, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: *(Calls.)* Carl! Carl! Get in here!

(Carl, eager and efficient, enters SL.)

CARL: I got the CSI team on their way over, Sheriff...medical examiner, too.

SHERIFF: Bully for you! We gotta get the names and addresses of these women here.

JULIA: We are members of the Moms' Murder Club, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: *(Incredulous.)* The what?

[END OF FREEVIEW]