

THE GHOSTLY MANSION

A Play in One Act

By

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2015 Old Orchard Drive
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CHARACTERS

SANDY SLOANE:	Perky, no nonsense, clever. Impeccable clothes, photographic memory. Always ready with a smile.
MARY LOU CORNING:	Sandy's best friend. Helpful, sweet, Very wealthy. Friendly. A bit naïve.
AUNT LOUISE:	Mary Lou's aunt. About 50 years old. Sophisticated and poised. Guardian of Miss Polly. Laughs easily and very accommodating. A bit nervous.
MISS POLLY:	Matriarch of the Corning family. About 80 years old. Sweet, sentimental, gracious. Clearly concerned about her home and the mysterious happenings. Good sense of humor.
TRICIA FERNGATE:	Neighbor of Miss Polly. Nosy, Flamboyant, very VERY rich. Impressed with herself and her Money. Likable, but tactless.
TADMORE:	The Butler at Twin Oaks Mansion. Stiff, no smiling, slow moving, Stuffy.
MRS. POTTINGSOIL:	The gardener at Twin Oaks. Protective of Miss Polly. Loud and a bit rough around the edges.
NATHAN GOMBER:	Real estate agent. Obnoxious. Gutsy, rude, pushy, irritating. Laughs nervously and often. Sloppy.
OFFICER O'NEILL:	Can be male or female. Good Natured but serious.

SUE:	Switchboard operator. Knows EVERYBODY. Only person who interfaces with audience. Can do comedic non-verbals.
GHOSTS OF TWIN OAKS:	Various personalities of resident Ghosts: old relatives and servants, All kinds of characters. Depending on the set, the GHOSTS can be subtly used as well as blatantly. i.e., GHOST stands holding a picture frame with his face in it, or simply walk through the room unnoticed.

NOTE FROM PLAYWRIGHT

Experiment with both scary and funny. Use audio noises and music for transitions. There are lots of opportunities for all players to create a “round” character. Think about the background of individual parts...i.e., where did your character grow up? What does he wear? What would make him a good suspect? What are his typical actions and interesting habits? EACH character should be suspect by the audience. Even the most innocent of them all...

TIME

October, near Halloween. If Director would like to create a “period” (1950s or 1920s), great fun can be had with costumes, props and set pieces. Check the script and make any changes necessary in dialogue to help describe the time period to the audience. Cannot be set present day because of switchboard.

DEDICATION

To the Shadywood Ladies....who know how to celebrate Halloween in grand style!

ACT I

SCENE I

SETTING: Twin Oaks Mansion

AT RISE: Lights are dim in Twin Oaks' parlor as music begins. Enter TWIN OAKS GHOSTS. During song, GHOSTS place props in parlor as they sing and do ghostly things...

SONG – WHO DUNNIT? – TWIN OAKS GHOSTS

WHO DUNNIT? WHO WAS IT?
WHO WAS IT? WHO DUNNIT?

WAS IT JUST COINCIDENCE
OR JUST A DREAM?
LOTS OF SPOOKY INCIDENTS
AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM.

WHO DUNNIT? WHO WAS IT?
WHO WAS IT? WHO DUNNIT?

CAN A BRACELET DISAPPEAR BEFORE YOUR EYES?
WAS IT STOLEN BY A THIEF DRESSED IN DISGUISE?
SOME MIGHT BLAME IT ON THE GHOST WHO LIVES UPSTAIRS
OR IT COULD HAVE BEEN MISPLACED MOST ANYWHERE.
YOU WILL GET TO CHOOSE...WHO DONE THE DEED.

WHO'S THAT CREEPING UP THE STAIR
VANISHING INTO THE AIR?

WHO DUNNIT? WHO WAS IT?
WHO WAS IT? WHO DUNNIT?

NOW YOU SEE IT NOW YOU DON'T
NOBODY KNOWS.
WHAT'S THAT SHADOW ON THE WALL?
WHERE DID IT GO?
IF THE LIGHTS GO OUT YOU'LL KNOW
WHO DONE THE DEED. BOO!

(Freeze. BLACKOUT. Instrumental reprisal of song. GHOSTS howl as they exit through audience)

ACT I

SCENE II

SETTING: SANDY SLOANE's apartment. Mary Lou's studio and the switchboard.

AT RISE: Phone rings. Enter SANDY. She has on gardening gloves. Lights up on switchboard.

SANDY

Hello?

SUE

Sandy?

SANDY

Yes?

SUE

This is Sue, the operator. Mary Lou is calling. Says she's been trying to reach you. What has the great Sandy Sloane, Super Sleuth been up to?

SANDY

(Laughs)

I've been working in the garden, trying to figure out what is eating my roses. Put her on, Sue. And thanks...

(Lights up on MARY LOU. If no lights are available, have MARY LOU enter with phone)

SUE

(To MARY LOU)

You may go ahead.

(Stays on line to listen)

MARY LOU

Sandy! Hi, this is Mary Lou. Are you tied up on a case?

SANDY

(Looking at her garden gloves)

Well, sort of. What's up? A mystery?

MARY LOU

A haunted house.

SANDY

Tell me more!

MARY LOU

You've heard me speak of my Aunt Louise. Since the death of her father, Captain Foster, she has lived with her aunt, Miss Polly Corning, at Twin Oaks, the family mansion. Well, I went to see them yesterday. They said that many strange things have been happening there lately. I told them how good you are at solving mysteries and they'd like you to come out to Twin Oaks and help them.

SANDY

It certainly sounds intriguing!

(SUE nods in agreement)

MARY LOU (Cont'd)

If you're not busy, why don't you meet me there in about an hour and we can talk about the ghost.

SANDY

I can't wait! Goodbye, Mary Lou...

MARY LOU

Goodbye. And thanks!

(MARY LOU and SUE hang up. SUE is shaking her head in disbelief. Lights fade on MARY LOU and SUE)

SANDY

(Dreamily)

Gosh! I have longed for another case, ever since solving The Secret of the Circular Staircase. Now here's my chance!

(Snaps out of it)

But enough daydreaming. I must get to Twin Oaks!

BLACKOUT

ACT I

SCENE III

SETTING:

Twin Oaks Parlor. Typical Victorian living room. Fireplace with portrait above it.

AT RISE:

AUNT LOUISE and MISS POLLY are in parlor working on needlework.

LOUISE

That child is always late.

MISS POLLY

Nonsense. Mary Lou is so sweet. Don't talk so!

LOUISE

Sweet....but late.

MISS POLLY

(Good naturedly)

Oh hush and pick up that stitch you just dropped!

(Doorbell. Enter TADMORE to answer the door)

LOUISE

That must be her now. Thank you, Tadmore.

TADMORE

Yes ma'am.

MISS POLLY

What's this child's name who's coming with Mary Lou?

LOUISE

Sloane. Sandy Sloane. She's the granddaughter of Sam Sloane, the great detective!

(TADMORE opens door. Enter MARY LOU and SANDY)

MARY LOU

Thank you, Tadmore. Hello Aunt Louise. Miss Polly!

(Hugs Miss Polly)

MARY LOU (Cont'd)

May I present my very good friend, Sandy Sloane...

MISS POLLY

Hello dear. So nice to meet you. Welcome to Twin Oaks. My, you're as pretty as a melody. Tadmore, tea for...four?

TADMORE

Two, madam. Tea for two, I believe.

(Hums "Tea for Two" as he exits)

MISS POLLY

Everyone's a comedian these days...

LOUISE

Thank you so much for coming, Sandy, dear. Love your hairdo...

SANDY

(Modestly)

Why, thank you. Please tell me more about what's going on here.

LOUISE

Well, I guess it all began a couple of weeks ago. At first we thought it was our imagination, but lately, we can't ignore these things....music, thumps, and creaking noises at night....eerie shadows on walls...

SANDY

Have you notified the police?

LOUISE

Oh yes. They listened politely but it seems our story is quite hard to believe. They think everything can be explained by natural causes.

MISS POLLY

There is one incident we haven't told you.

(LOUISE and MISS POLLY exchange a glance. Enter TADMORE with tea.)

TADMORE

Where would you like your tea, Madam?

LOUISE

Over there will be fine, Tadmore.

TADMORE

(Places tea on table. Whistles or hums "Tea for Two" as he exits)

MARY LOU

You were saying something about some other incident, Miss Polly...

LOUISE

(Nervously)

Oh yes, well, we don't want to mention...

MISS POLLY

My pearl necklace is missing.

(WARNING MUSIC)

MARY LOU

You don't mean the one that has been in the family for years!?

MISS POLLY

I'm afraid so. I laid it on my dresser and left the room for only a few minutes. Only a ghost could have stolen it so quietly and so quickly!

SANDY

How dreadful!

(Crosses the room and looks out a window. Stops to notice portrait of CAPTAIN FOSTER above fireplace. Continues. At window, she speaks)

Where does this walk lead?

LOUISE

To the next property. No one has lived there for years.

MARY LOU

(Laughing)

Maybe that's the ghost's home.

SANDY

Maybe it is....Miss Polly, do you know of any secret entrance to your home?

MISS POLLY

No, but it's...it's possible I suppose.

(Looks frightened. DOORBELL rings. Enter TADMORE to answer door)

LOUISE

Now who could that be? Thank you, Tadmore.

TADMORE

Certainly, Ma'am.

(Opens door. Enter TRICIA FERNGATE and MRS. POTTINGSOIL in a flurry. TRICIA is dressed in fur)

TRICIA

Unhand me!

MISS POLLY

Mrs. Pottingsoil! What is the meaning of all this?

MRS. POTTINGSOIL

I found her peeking in the window. She says she lost her earring.

TRICIA

Oh, garbanzo beans, Pottingsoil! Miss Polly, I came as soon as I heard!

ALL

Heard what?

TRICIA

Why, about the burglary. You must be sick about it, Miss Polly. Such a beautiful necklace and so valuable. I always thought it would look marvelous on me!

MARY LOU

How did YOU know about it?

TRICIA

Oh, your maid told my maid and you know how that goes. Darlings, what can I do to help?

MRS. POTTINGSOIL

Want me to get rid of her?

MISS POLLY

No, Mrs. Pottingsoil. Miss Ferngate is our neighbor. We must remember our manners. Tricia, have you heard anything else about the burglary? Anything that might be helpful?

LOUISE

(Interrupts, nervously and abruptly)

Is anyone hungry? Perhaps we should have some lunch.

MARY LOU

(Delighted)

What a good idea! Then you can show us around the grounds, Aunt Louise. Let's go.
I'm famished!

("Who Dunit" music is faintly heard)

SANDY

Did anyone leave a radio on upstairs?

(ALL shake their heads and look at each other)

SANDY (Cont'd)

I'll check it out.

(Exit NANCY)

MISS POLLY

Oh dear...

(ALL exit hurriedly as music swells. Lights dim as GHOSTS enter to move chairs and props all around. At end of song, GHOSTS freeze)

BLACKOUT