

# MURDER INCLUDED



a whodunnit in three acts

by

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## The Cast (in order of appearance)

7 female / 7 male

- Hamlet** He is quite an irresponsible but charming young man. He studies drama at an actors' school in Edinburgh. At the moment he is studying for the part of Jaques in „As You Like It“.
- Ophelia** She is Hamlet's sister. She also goes to drama school and hopes to get the part of Juliet in „Romeo and Juliet“.
- Abel** Sir Abel Lindsay, 12th Earl of Kilmany. He is a well dressed member of the Scottish nobility. He has lost a fortune with gambling, hunting and other gentlemanly sports. But he has retained his sense of humour.
- Abigail** Lady Abigail Lindsay, Baroness of Kilmany. She is Abel's wife. She comes from a rich, but lower class, family. Her father was a very successful butcher with shops all over Scotland.  
She has got two hobbies, the opera and William Shakespeare. That is why she has named her children after two famous characters from Shakespeare's plays.
- Debbie** She is the maid at the Earl of Kilmany's Manor House. She is the last of their servants. The others had to be dismissed years ago, because the Lindsays cannot afford a large staff any longer.
- Randolph** Randolph Smith wants to surprise his wife with a mystery week-end for their 25th wedding anniversary.  
He thinks himself to be very sexy and absolutely irresistible to women.
- Prudence** Prudence Smith is Randolph's wife. She is very shy, a grey mouse, actually. She does not like the short form of her name, although, or rather because, it fits her perfectly.
- Millie** Millie Miller is George's girl-friend. She is divorced and has moved into George's house together with her son Anthony.  
She is a big fan of „EastEnders“. She does not really like coming to the mystery week-end and would have preferred to save the money for a holiday in Spain.
- George** George Morris is a policeman who works in the traffic department. He would like to become a detective at Scotland Yard. He is a mystery week-end fan.
- Anthony** He is Millie's 10-year old son. He hates being at the mystery weekend. He wanted to go to Disneyland instead, as he is a big fan of Mickey Mouse. So he carries a Mickey Mouse toy around with him all the time, and also a big handkerchief, which he sometimes still sucks like a baby.  
He is a bit of a nerd and wears big Harry Potter glasses.
- Brown** Mr Charles Brown is the manager of ***The Mystery Week-End Drama Society***.
- Vanessa** Vanessa Redhill is one of the actors of the Drama Society. She plays a sexy, cheeky and tactless young lady.

**James** James is a patient at Dr McLeod's mental hospital. He is a hunchback. He is a bit clumsy, has got a stutter and cannot pronounce the letter 's' correctly. Abigail employs him because he used to be a butler before he became a patient, and because he comes very cheap.

**Tiffany** Tiffany Chandler is another actress of the Drama Society. She plays a serious young librarian.

The story takes place in the living-room of the Kilmany Manor House in Scotland.

## ACT ONE

*As the curtain opens we see a big and comfortable living-room, furnished with some expensive looking old armchairs, a sofa and a small table. There is a row of ancestral portraits on the wall and a suit of armour stands in one of the corners. On the left there is a window with a view into a grand old English garden. Behind one of the armchairs there is a bell-cord hanging down from the ceiling. This is obviously a Manor House of one of the old noble families of Great Britain.*

*A young man, all dressed in black, is sitting in the middle of the room on a stool. The spotlight picks out the dead man's skull between his feet. He has got a copy of „**The Complete Works of William Shakespeare**“ in one hand and soon starts reciting from it. He uses his second hand to make big, exaggerated gestures.*

Hamlet      All the world's a stage,  
                 And all the men and women merely players;  
                 They have their exits and their entrances;  
                 And one man in his time plays many parts,  
                 His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,  
                 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;  
                 Then the whining school-boy, with his satchel  
                 And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
                 Unwillingly to school.“

Gosh, that's hard stuff! I hardly understand one word!  
But I like the bit about school. „Creeping unwillingly to school“.  
Old Will must have known someone like me!  
Okay, let's try.

*(He closes the book and tries to recite the text by heart.)*

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women creep unwillingly to school.  
Is that correct?

*(He opens the book again)*

No, it says: „and all the men and women merely players;“  
Okay, let's do it again: “All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;“  
*(He takes up the skull and speaks to it)*

Well, that wasn't bad, was it?

Ophelia      *(runs in, also using grand gestures)* „Oh Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou  
                 Romeo?“

Hamlet      Oh, shut up, Ophelia. - I'm trying to learn my lines.

Ophelia      So am I.

Hamlet      Well, can't you do it in your room?

Ophelia      No, Hamlet, I need some space to live Juliet.

*(She steps back a few feet and starts again, approaching Hamlet as she recites her text)*

„Oh Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?“

*(She falls to the ground and clutches his legs)*

Hamlet Oh, stop it please, I can't concentrate!

Ophelia But I'm training. I've got an audition on Friday, you see.

Hamlet And mine's on Thursday. So get lost!  
„They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,“

Ophelia Why did you bring Grandpa's skull to the living-room?  
*(She takes the skull from between his feet)*

Hamlet It's not Grandpa's skull, stupid. It's the skull of the first Earl of Kilmany who died in battle as you can see.  
*(He points to a hole in the skull)*  
Anyway - what's that skull to you?

Ophelia To me or not to me, that's the bloody question! Isn't it bad enough that Mum has christened you „Hamlet“? You needn't carry that skull along with you all the time.

Hamlet But it's my good luck charm, you see.

Abigail *(from behind the stage)*  
“Come away, come away, death,  
And in sad cypress let me be laid;  
Fly away, fly away, breath;  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.”

Hamlet Mum's at it, too. I think I'd better go to my room.  
*(He stands up just as his mother Abigail enters.)*

Abigail Good morning, children!

Ophelia Hi, Mum! *(she kisses her)*

Hamlet Hello and good-bye.

Abigail You're leaving? Don't! Sit down for a while and listen, please.  
*(Hamlet sits down again)*  
I've found that exciting new song this morning. *(She starts singing)*  
“Come away, come away, death,  
And in sad cypress let me be laid;  
Fly away, fly away, breath;  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.”  
Do you know who wrote the lyrics?

both *(pointing their fingers at each other)* Shakespeare! Who else?

Hamlet Look, I really have to go. *(He gets up again)*  
And, Mum, that song's awful. Why do you sing of death and dying?

Abigail Why not? It expresses my feelings perfectly.

Ophelia Don't be so pessimistic, Mum. Your situation can hardly be that bad.

Abigail But it is. Darlings, we're broke again!

Ophelia So what's new? We're always broke!

*(At this moment Abel Lindsay, 12th Earl of Kilmany, enters.)*

Abel Good morning everybody! Abigail *(he kisses her)*, Ophelia *(he kisses her)*, Hamlet *(he slaps his back)*.  
Who's broke again?

Abigail Well, we are, Abel.

Abel What do you mean by „broke“?

Abigail Well, „broke“ as in „absolutely no money left“!

Abel Good God, are you serious? Hamlet, go and ring Debbie!  
I think I need a whisky to digest such terrible news before breakfast.

*Hamlet pulls the bell-cord and the bell is ringing. Almost at once the maid appears. She is wearing a black skirt, black stockings, a white blouse and a white bonnet. She is carrying a silver tray with a glass of whisky and a copy of The Times on it.*

Debbie Good morning, ladies and gentleman.  
Your drink, Your Lordship.

Abel Good girl, how did you guess that I needed a drink right now?

Debbie You always need your first drink at 9 a.m., Your Lordship.  
You can't digest "The Times" without a wee dram of whisky.

Abel Oh, do I? *(He takes a sip)*  
Ah, very good quality. What is it, dear?

Debbie A Laphroaigh. The last bottle, Your Lordship.

Abel What, the last bottle of Laphroaigh?

Debbie No, Your Lordship, the last bottle of whisky.

Abel Lord, have mercy! Running out of whisky! Then our situation is really desperate.  
Abi, darling, what will you do about it?

Abigail Well, that's a bit rich, coming from you!

Abel What do you mean?

Abigail **You**'ve got us into that mess. With your drinking, gambling and whoring. You, the great Earl of Kilmany, Sir Abel Lindsay! You should be called Sir **Unable** Lindsay!  
When I married you, I thought you **were** someone. The head of one of Scotland's most important noble families. And look at you now. A drunken beggar!

Abel I'm not drunk, and you knew I can't handle money. But you still married me - or rather my title and family name!

Abigail The cheek of it! **You** married **my** money - which has all gone now. Oh, I hate you. I had hoped to become happy here. I wanted to live for my singing, my Shakespeare and my children. And what have you reduced me to? A businesswoman and a fund raiser!

Ophelia But you're very good at that, Mum. You know we all depend on you. So please, have another good idea.

Hamlet Yes, Mum, we know you can do it. And I do need some money for my drama lessons - by Friday.

Abigail But we've already tried everything. We've sold all our lands.

Ophelia And my horses!

Hamlet And my Aston Martins!

Abel We've even opened up our palace to American tourists! And I, the Earl of Killmany, have sold tickets to them and shown them around. What else can I do? Okay, I'll do it again this year. When does the tourist season start?

Debbie It's the middle of January, Your Lordship. The Americans won't be back before May.

Abel Oh, shit!

Abigail Mind your language, Abel. - Not in front of the children and servants, please!

Ophelia So what about the French?

Abel The Frogs have no money - and no English, that's worse.

Hamlet Well then, the Germans.

Abel They're all Nazis. My father *(He points to one of the pictures)* fought them in two wars. I don't want any Sauerkrauts in my house.

Ophelia Or the Swiss. They're rich - and some of them speak English quite understandably.

Abel No, thank you. They're all bankers - and they've got their blood money from the Nazis.

Hamlet But they're not **all** bankers. They're also cowherdsmen and watchmakers. And some Swiss produce chocolate and cheese.

Abel Okay, the yodelling, watch-, cheese and chocolate-making ones are welcome – but **not** the gnomes of Zurich.

Debbie They won't come before April, Your Lordship. They're all skiing now.

Abel Oh, shhhhugar! *(he turns to his wife)* Is that better, darling?  
So what? We've even tried to turn our palace into a hotel!

Ophelia But nobody wanted to spend their holidays in the middle of nowhere. We couldn't offer anything. No golf course.

Hamlet No tennis court.

Ophelia No horse riding!

Hamlet No Aston Martins!

Ophelia And even offering a family ghost wasn't enough!

Abel Well, Mum in her pyjamas wasn't very scary. Were you, darling?

Abigail Don't remind me of that!

Ophelia Well, who's ever heard of a ghost singing Shakespeare songs?

Hamlet Let's look at the paper. Sex and Crimes might give us an idea.

Ophelia Well, honestly! Sex and Crimes in "The Times"! Stupid!  
*(They all look at the paper)*

Hamlet Haven't we got any rich relatives we could do in?

Abigail They're all dead - and the money they've left us has all been gambled away by your dearest Daddy.

Abel Why do you have to be so outspoken?  
What about a lottery? There are hundreds of Euro millions to be won.

Abigail No, you've already lost enough of my money!

Hamlet The stock exchange?

Ophelia You need some capital to start with - and a good Swiss banker to invest it.  
But look, what's that? An advert for „Mystery Week-Ends in the Countryside“.

Hamlet Come on, read!

Ophelia „We're looking for comfortable hotels in the countryside to perform our week-end mysteries. You make your hotel available to our drama group - we provide the guests and the action. We're ready to pay good money. Don't hesitate - call us now.“  
There's a phone and a fax number in London.

Hamlet Good money! - What are we waiting for?

Abigail This isn't a hotel, Hamlet.

Hamlet Yeah, it's a lot better. It's the Earl of Kilmany's Manor House.



Abigail      And we haven't got any staff to serve the guests.

Abel         No problem! If Ophelia can play Juliet, she can also play a waitress.  
Debbie will help you in your new role, won't you?

Debbie      Of course, Your Lordship.

Abel         And stop Lordshitting me, err, Lordshipping me. I'll be the hotel manager.  
Debbie, hand me the phone, please.

Debbie      Yes, Your, err, manager.  
*(She brings him the phone and he dials a long number)*

Abel         Hello, is this the Mystery Week-end Drama Society?  
I'm the personal secretary of the Earl of Kilmany. His Lordship is on a four-  
month cruise with his family and he ordered me to offer you his Manor House.  
I'm afraid, it's rather big, and it isn't a hotel of course. But there's a trained staff      of  
cooks, butlers, servants, maids and so on.  
How much would you be ready to pay?  
£ 3,000.- per week-end?  
*(They all shake their heads and show five fingers)*  
Well, let's make that 5,000.-  
Yes, come around and have a look at it.  
Day after tomorrow is fine. I'm sure, you'll like it.  
And I need £2,000.- in advance, of course.  
Splendid, see you soon. Good-bye, sir.                      *(He rings off)*  
Done! We're in business. That calls for a celebration.  
Debbie, another glass of that fine whisky, please.

Debbie      Are you Your Lordship again, Your Lordship?

Abel         Damn right, Debbie! So fetch that bloody whisky!

**CURTAIN**