DEATH OF A HOT SAUCE SALESMAN

By MICHAEL DRUCE

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In Order of Appearance)

SASSY................................overworked, underappreciated maid; continually serving refreshments 68

PEPPER DEVINE ..................30s; attractive and youthful fiancée of Prescott Knight 85

FESTER N. BOYLE...............60s; Prescott’s sleazy attorney 45

SHILOH DEVEREAUX ..........mid-20s; Prescott’s older granddaughter 41

BRICK TARMAC ...................mid-20s; dimwitted cowboy, about to become engaged to Magnolia 29

MAGNOLIA DuKANE .............20; Prescott’s younger, naïve granddaughter; Shiloh’s cousin 56

SUE RAE (MOMMA) DuKANE..............50; Prescott’s daughter Magnolia’s mother 72

W.C. (DADDY) DuKANE........mid-50s; Sue Rae’s husband 48

JUAN ..............................one-eyed gardener 37

PRESCOTT KNIGHT ..........80s; family patriarch and owner of Hot Knights 47

HELEN KNIGHT .................70s; Prescott’s ex-wife 23

JUDGE TITUS A. DRUMM......70s; local judge and friend of Prescott Knight 93

SETTING

Time: Summer, present day.

Place: The dining room of Terra Firma, the Knight family estate, located somewhere in the South.

UP LEFT to UP RIGHT is a table well stocked with refreshments and glasses. Furnishing the room are various wicker pieces, including a pair of chairs, an occasional table, a loveseat, and another chair. There are two benches, one LEFT CENTER and one RIGHT CENTER. OFF LEFT leads to the service area, the driveway, and the front entrance of the house. OFF RIGHT leads to the rest of the house, the pool, the veranda, the barn, and the distillery.
SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE
Scene One: Approximately noon.
Scene Two: Approximately four hours later.

ACT TWO
A short time later.

SUGGESTED DINNER THEATER FORMAT
1. Begin the evening by serving appetizers and dinner.
2. After dinner, introduce the play and present ACT ONE.
3. After ACT ONE, serve dessert and present the clue packets.
4. After dessert, present ACT TWO.
Each table should have a bottle of Hot Knights Authentic Pepper Sauce.
DEATH OF A HOT SAUCE SALESMAN

ACT ONE
Scene One

1 AT RISE: The Knight family dining room, summer. It is about noon. SASSY ENTERS LEFT with a flower arrangement and places it on the occasional table. After a few fussy adjustments, she goes to the refreshment table to prepare a drink. PEPPER ENTERS LEFT and crosses CENTER.

   PEPPER: My, oh, my, this heat. I don’t think I can stand it a minute longer. This heat is so oppressive. I may have to shed some clothes.
   SASSY: (The thought is too much for her.) Oh, please!
   PEPPER: What’s that you say, Sassy?
   SASSY: I wouldn’t do that, Miss Pepper. I don’t think Mr. Knight’s heart could take it.
   PEPPER: You’re probably right. A man his age could be gone any moment.
   SASSY: You can only hope.
   PEPPER: I’m sorry?
   SASSY: (Takes the drink to PEPPER.) I said, try this. This will help cool you off.
   PEPPER: Thank you, Sassy. I am parched. By the by, have you seen Juan?
   SASSY: Which one?
   PEPPER: Excuse me? Did you say which Juan or which one?
   SASSY: Either Juan.
   PEPPER: The one with the eye patch, one-eyed Juan, not the one with that thing. (Pats her right shoulder. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.]) I have an errand I would like him to run.
   SASSY: If I see him, I’ll send him along. (Crosses to the refreshment table.)
   PEPPER: Thank you.
   BOYLE: (ENTERS LEFT.) Hello, Sassy.
   SASSY: Good morning, Mr. Boyle. Might I bring you some refreshment?
   BOYLE: Yes, I’ll have what Miss Devine is having.
   SASSY: Heat stroke? Oh, we’re out of lemon. Do you mind waiting while I go slice some more? (EXITS RIGHT.)
   BOYLE: (His attention is on PEPPER.) Yes, that’ll be fine. Good morning, Miss Devine. Fine, Devine. That rhymes. I must be a poet.
   PEPPER: (Fans herself.) Among your other talents, no doubt. What an unexpected pleasure.
BOYLE: I assure you, the pleasure is all mine. If you don’t mind my saying, you look—

PEPPER: Hot? You’ve got that right, mister.

BOYLE: *(Wipes his brow with his handkerchief.)* Indeed.

PEPPER: Is it always so hot here?

BOYLE: Only when you’re in the room.

PEPPER: If I didn’t know better, I’d say you’re trying to flirt with me.

BOYLE: Well, I must polish my skills if you think I’m only trying.

PEPPER: You would think a man as wealthy as Prescott would have air conditioning.

BOYLE: Perhaps that can be your wedding present. The previous Mrs. Knight preferred ceiling fans.

PEPPER: No wonder Prescott divorced her.

BOYLE: For my money, she’s a few berries shy of a shortcake. She’s like one of those characters in a Tennessee Williams play.

PEPPER: I don’t read plays. I just play.

BOYLE: I thought that was the case.

PEPPER: You’re a tad early for the cookout, aren’t you?

BOYLE: Prescott called and asked me to drop by. He said he had something important to discuss. I came a little early, hoping I might see you, so we could follow up on our previous conversation at the cotillion.

PEPPER: Which conversation was that, the one about my personal assets or a potential merger?

BOYLE: If you could persuade Prescott into taking Hot Knights public, your net worth would increase considerably.

PEPPER: Since you sit on the board of directors for Down Home Foods, doesn’t your relationship with Prescott constitute a conflict of interest?

BOYLE: Not really. I only represent Prescott’s private financial interests, not his business.

PEPPER: And what interest do you have in my interests?

BOYLE: If anything were to happen to Prescott—after all, he is well struck in years—a vibrant young woman such as yourself should be thinking of her future.

PEPPER: I appreciate your concern. But as Prescott and I are not married yet, doesn’t that seem a little premature?

BOYLE: You should at least consider a prenuptial agreement.

PEPPER: Well, I’m sure I don’t know anything about such things.

BOYLE: I would be more than happy to tutor you.
PEPPER: How thoughtful. I’ll keep that on the back burner.

SHILOH: (ENTERS LEFT, carrying a beach bag.) Speaking of back burners, I don’t believe I’ve seen you in the gym lately, Pepper. Hello, Mr. Boyle.

BOYLE: Good morning, Miss Shiloh.

SHILOH: I hope I am not interrupting anything.

PEPPER: As a matter of fact—

SHILOH: Can you believe this heat so early in the day? Mr. Boyle, are you as hot as I am?

PEPPER: If you’ll excuse me, I need some fresh air. It’s getting awfully stuffy in here. I’ll be on the veranda.

BOYLE: Of course. (PEPPER EXITS RIGHT.) Pepper seems a little tense.

SHILOH: Yes, I believe the blush is already off the rose.

BOYLE: I see. Any idea why your granddaddy has called this meeting?

SHILOH: No, but I don’t imagine it bodes well. I was thinking I might take a swim. (Pulls a tiny swimsuit from her bag.) I have a new little bathing suit I’d like to try out. Would you care to join me?

BOYLE: I didn’t bring my swimsuit.

SHILOH: Some other time, perhaps.

BOYLE: Besides, I need to speak with Miss Devine some more. I have some unfinished business with the future Mrs. Knight.

SHILOH: Don’t forget, we also have some unfinished business.

BOYLE: I haven’t forgotten. If you’ll excuse me. (EXITS RIGHT. BRICK ENTERS LEFT.)

SHILOH: Hello, Brick.

BRICK: Hello, Miss Shiloh. I’m looking for Maggie.

SHILOH: Who?

BRICK: Your cousin, Magnolia.

SHILOH: Oh, her. I believe I saw her at the pigpen.

BRICK: You’re sure?

SHILOH: I think it was her, but there are so many pigs down there it’s hard to say. Brick, I was thinking I might take a swim before this heat positively drives me crazy. Could you rub some lotion on my back?

BRICK: I could, but if Maggie were to see us together, she might get the wrong impression.

SHILOH: I wouldn’t worry about her. She’s as loony as my grandma. At least walk me outside. (Both EXIT RIGHT.)
SASSY: (ENTERS RIGHT with a drink and a bowl of lemon slices, which she sets on the refreshment table.) Oh, Mr. Boyle, here’s that cool beverage you wanted. (Seeing the room is empty, she drinks the beverage herself.)

MAGNOLIA: (ENTERS LEFT, carrying a stuffed animal.) My, oh my, Sassy, what a wonderful day. Don’t you think?

SASSY: Is it? It’s almost a hundred degrees, and my armpits are like Niagara Falls.

MAGNOLIA: Nothing you say is going to spoil my day.

SASSY: What are you so giddy about?

MAGNOLIA: Something.

SASSY: Well, put a lid on it. I can’t take too much fizz. What with this heat and all, preparing for this cookout is about to do me in.

MAGNOLIA: Oh, Sassy, quit being a stick in the mud. Tomorrow is going to be the best day ever.

SASSY: I’m sure I don’t know what you mean, Miss Magnolia.

MAGNOLIA: Brick Tarmac is going to ask me to marry him.

SASSY: What?

MAGNOLIA: Brick Tarmac is going to make it official. Oh, Sassy, say you’re happy for me. Say it.

SASSY: I am happy for you, Miss Maggie.

MAGNOLIA: You mean that, don’t you?

SASSY: Goodness, no! What’s wrong with you, child?

MAGNOLIA: No? Oh, don’t tell me that, Sassy. Why can’t you be happy for me?

SASSY: Because your granddaddy has called a family meeting, and everyone is on pins and needles. Dr. Griggs was with him for about two hours this morning. It’s like someone has taken a stick to a hornet’s nest. As it is, your granddaddy’s engagement to Miss Pepper has set this family on edge. He could be gone at any moment, and there he is making a fool of himself with a woman young enough to be his granddaughter.

MAGNOLIA: What kind of meeting is it?

SASSY: Who knows? All I know is it involves everyone. The entire staff as well.

MAGNOLIA: When Brick and I announce our engagement, everything is going to be set right. Ever since Beau Daschious jumped off the Creek River Bridge, a dark cloud has hung over this family.

SASSY: When are you going wake up and smell the chicken frying? You think Beau jumped off that bridge?
1 MAGNOLIA: Of course he jumped. I remember that day vividly. It’s like it happened just two months ago.
SASSY: It did happen just two months ago!
2 MAGNOLIA: Maybe that is why it is so fresh in my memory. Beau was heartbroken knowing he was just a poor boy from the other side of tracks.
SASSY: Maggie, there are no trains in Knight County.
3 MAGNOLIA: No trains?
SASSY: And no tracks.
4 MAGNOLIA: Nonetheless, he was a poor boy. I just know he thought he wasn’t good enough for me. It’s such a curse being rich. I hate it. Money ruins everything. That’s why Beau jumped into the river.
SASSY: Maggie, Beau didn’t jump.
5 MAGNOLIA: Of course he jumped. If he didn’t that means it must have been an accident. An accident isn’t as romantic as jumping because of unrequited love.
SASSY: It wasn’t unrequited love. You didn’t think it strange they found Beau tied up in a gunnysack?
6 MAGNOLIA: I guess I hadn’t remembered that. (A realization.) You don’t think Beau met with foul play, do you?
SASSY: It’s a thought.
MAGNOLIA: Is there something you know that you’re not telling me?
SASSY: I know a lot of stuff, but I’m not saying. I’m just the maid. My function is to cook and clean.
MAGNOLIA: And to provide relevant information in this story we call life. The hired help is always smarter than the people they work for. They have such a keen sense of irony. They just don’t have the means or the money to capitalize on their intelligence.
SASSY: Miss Maggie, you read too much fiction. You live in a fragile fantasy world of make-believe. Ever since Beau died, all you’ve done is spend your days playing with that collection of stuffed animals.
MAGNOLIA: (Clutching the stuffed animal.) These animals are my friends. They help me in my time of need.
SASSY: Maggie, your mind is practically gone. You don’t have a clue what’s going on around you. That menagerie upstairs is a shrine to your weirdness. It’s a metaphor for how truly out of touch you are. This county, this town, your own family is built upon deception and lies.
MAGNOLIA: But I don’t see how that’s possible.
SASSY: That’s my point. You don’t know anything. You don’t see anything going on around you.

MAGNOLIA: If Beau was murdered, why? And by whom?

SASSY: I don’t know. Maybe he knew something.

MAGNOLIA: Like what? What did Beau know?

SASSY: I don’t know what Beau knew!

MAGNOLIA: Are you suggesting the truth has been obfuscated?

SASSY: You better quit using big words. Mr. Brick won’t like that.

MAGNOLIA: You leave Brick Tarmac out of this. I know you don’t care for him, but he was there for me when I lost Beau.

SASSY: And not a minute too soon.

MAGNOLIA: Are you insinuating that Brick’s intentions toward me are not honorable?

SASSY: I’ve said enough. (BRICK ENTERS RIGHT, wiping his hands on his jeans. Throughout the rest of the scene, SASSY gets people drinks from the refreshment table and collects empty glasses.)

MAGNOLIA: Why Brick, your nose must have been twitching.

BRICK: (Touches his nose.) I don’t think my nose is twitching.

SASSY: (Aside.) Lord o’ mercy.

MAGNOLIA: I have a wonderful idea. Let’s make the announcement today at the cookout. Let’s not wait until tomorrow.

BRICK: What? Why?

MAGNOLIA: It’s an expression. If your nose is twitching, it means someone is talking about you.

BRICK: (Takes his nose.) I don’t think my nose is twitching.

SASSY: (Aside.) Lord o’ mercy.

MAGNOLIA: I have a wonderful idea. Let’s make the announcement today at the cookout. Let’s not wait until tomorrow.

BRICK: What announcement?

MAGNOLIA: You are so funny. Here, sit down and we’ll plan it all out. (They sit on the loveseat.)

W.C.: (ENTERS LEFT with SUE RAE.) Sue Rae, if this is what I think it’s about—

SUE RAE: It will be over my dead body. Sassy, would you find Juan and bring him here.

SASSY: Which Juan?

SUE RAE: Not the Juan with the thing. (Pats her shoulder.) My daddy will meet with all of us and the household staff in about five minutes.

SASSY: Yes, ma’am. (EXITS LEFT.)

SHILOH: (ENTERS RIGHT with BOYLE.) Hello, everyone, look who I found.

W.C.: Fester. Now what gets you off the golf course on a day like this?

BOYLE: A personal invitation from your daddy-in-law.
W.C.: If Prescott has invited his attorney, this must be something about his will.

PEPPER: (ENTERS RIGHT.) Will? Did I hear something about a will?

SHILOH: (To PEPPER.) Hello, Grandma.

PEPPER: Shiloh, I do wish you would call me Pepper. After all, there’s not that much difference in age between us.

SUE RAE: Mother, I’m sure Shiloh meant no offense.

PEPPER: Sue Rae, I am not your mother and nor will I be. I prefer you call me Pepper as well.

SUE RAE: But you will be my stepmother.

PEPPER: Yes, but since I am so much younger than you—

SUE RAE: And since my daddy is so much older than you—

PEPPER: Let’s not go into that May-December romance thing again.

SUE RAE: More like a one-week romance.

PEPPER: There you go again insinuating that I am marrying your daddy for his money.

SUE RAE: Perish the thought. What healthy young woman doesn’t love a walking corpse? (SASSY and JUAN ENTER LEFT. JUAN carries a can of weed killer.)

PEPPER: Oh, Juan, there you are.

JUAN: Good morning, Miss Devine.

PEPPER: Have you had the oil changed in my Lincoln as I asked you to?

JUAN: Yes, ma’am. Three thousand miles on the dot.

PEPPER: Did they put a little sticker in the window reminding me it’s due again in another three thousand miles?

JUAN: Yes, ma’am. Due at six thousand miles.

PEPPER: Did you also tell them it’s a little sluggish starting?

JUAN: The mechanic said there was a problem with the battery. It had to be recharged.

SUE RAE: Hopefully you’ll take as much interest in my daddy as you do with your car.

SHILOH: The way I hear tell it, her car is not the only thing that needs its battery recharged.

SUE RAE: (So the others don’t hear the following exchange between her and SHILOH.) Shiloh, I will not have you talking about your granddaddy that way.

SHILOH: Is that a threat?

SUE RAE: Yes, I suppose it is.
SHILOH: What are you going to do, shoot me with that little pistol of yours?

SUE RAE: Don’t tempt me.

PEPPER: Juan, there’s one more thing I need you to do for me.

JUAN: Yes, ma’am.

PEPPER: Chester has eaten my budgie.

JUAN: Excuse me?

PEPPER: My cat Chester has eaten Mr. Tweets, and now Mrs. Tweets is terribly lonely living in that big birdcage all by herself. I need you to drive to the pet shop in Delphi and buy me a new budgie.

JUAN: Yes, ma’am.

W.C.: Juan, is that a can of weed killer you have there?

JUAN: Yes, sir.

W.C.: I don’t like that stuff in the house. Find an appropriate place for it.

JUAN: Yes, sir. (Moves LEFT to leave, but stays when PRESCOTT ENTERS LEFT. JUAN looks around, but isn’t sure what to do with the weed killer, so he hides it behind his back.)

PRESCOTT: (ENTERS LEFT.) Well, well, what a sight for sore eyes. (Before PRESCOTT has a chance to say anything more, HELEN makes a big, brassy ENTRANCE RIGHT.)

HELEN: Hello, darling, it’s nice to see you too. Or should I say, “buongiorno”?

SUE RAE: Mama? You’re back. (Ad-libs.)

PRESCOTT: Tarnation, what are you doing here?

HELEN: I live here, or have you forgotten that already?

SUE RAE: Mama, you’re supposed to be in Italy.

HELEN: Well, I’m back, but not for long.

SUE RAE: What are you doing home?

HELEN: It’s just a short break. Too much wine, too much pasta, too much love.

SUE RAE: Mother!

HELEN: All right, I’m kidding... about the wine and pasta. But you might as well know, Sue Rae, I met someone who swept me off my feet.

PRESCOTT: I may choke.

HELEN: Yes, a hot, swarthy Italian. All that wine made me lose all my inhibitions.

SUE RAE: What’s his name?
PRESCOTT: She’s just trying to make me jealous. Well, I’m not.
HELEN: His name is Arturo, and he is everything your daddy is not, starting with young.
PEPPER: Prescott, what is going on here? What does she mean she lives here? Are you divorced or not?
PRESCOTT: Yes, we’re divorced, but she got half the house in the settlement.
PEPPER: Half the house? I can’t live under the same roof as this woman.
PRESCOTT: We’ll get it worked out, I promise.
HELEN: So, you’re my competition.
PEPPER: What?
HELEN: The other woman.
PEPPER: I am not the other woman, I am the woman.
HELEN: I mean you’re my competition for the Hot Knights empire when this old geezer kicks the bucket.
PEPPER: That’s the last thing on my mind.
HELEN: If you were smart, it would be the first thing on your mind.
PEPPER: I love Prescott. I want nothing from him.
HELEN: Good, because you’re about to find out that just because a man owns a hot sauce empire, that doesn’t mean he has any spice.
PRESCOTT: As I was about to say before I was so rudely interrupted, thank you all for gathering on such short notice.
PEPPER: Prescott, the cookout is in a few hours, and Sassy has yet to earn her salary today. (SASSY shows an expression of disdain.)
PRESCOTT: I have something important I need to say.
SHILOH: Will this take long?
PRESCOTT: As long as it needs. On the occasion of yet another birthday, when a man reaches my age, he cannot help but reflect on the future, perhaps with just a little melancholy. Though no man knows when his time will come, that bright white light, still a distant star, draws inevitably closer every year.
PEPPER: Oh, my goodness, Prescott, are you dying?
PRESCOTT: No, Pepper, at least not yet. Dr. Griggs has found the cause of my recent distemper and pronounced me fit as a fiddle, so I expect to be around for a long time.
PEPPER: (Her disappointment is obvious.) Oh— (Then cheerfully for effect.) —that’s wonderful. You had me worried for a moment.
SASSY: (To JUAN.) The only thing she’s worried about is that he’s not going to die.
PRESCOTT: On a day like this, one wants to have his family and friends close, and so I’d like to propose a toast—to my lovely bride-to-be, Pepper; my daughter, Sue Rae DuKane; her husband and my son-in-law, Webster Cain DuKane; my granddaughter, Magnolia DuKane and her beau, Brick Tarmac; my other granddaughter, Shiloh Devereaux; my gardener, Juan; my faithful housekeeper, Sassy; and my trusted friend and lawyer, Fester N. Boyle.

SUE RAE: Daddy, you forgot Mama.

PRESCOTT: (Quickly.) And my ex-wife, Helen. (Now measured.) As you know, the Hot Knights motto is and has always been “the secret is in the sauce.” But what does that really mean?

BRICK: It means your sauce is a secret. Like the famous chicken recipe.

HELEN: What floor did your elevator stop on?

PRESCOTT: Thank you, Brick. That’s what it means literally. But what does it mean figuratively?

BRICK: Huh?

MAGNOLIA: I’ll explain it to you later.

SUE RAE: Daddy, the toast, the cookout is in three hours.

PRESCOTT: I’m getting to it. “The secret is in the sauce” is a reminder of what is important. It means sticking to your original vision, having integrity, and remaining in touch with your values and your character. It’s what Hot Knights is and who we are supposed to be. It is the ingredients and the consistency of your recipe that is important. Hot Knights never changes. So please allow me to make this toast. To all of you who are near and dear to my inheritance, you can kiss my chili peppers.

SUE RAE: Daddy! Have you lost your mind? What on earth would possess you to say something like that?

PRESCOTT: It has come to my attention that this house is filled with liars and deceivers.

PEPPER: Why, Prescott, that’s a harsh thing to say.

PRESCOTT: And I don’t say it lightly. Right now, I can think of only one person in this house besides me who deserves my fortune when I am gone. Only one person here deserves to be in possession of the recipe that bears my name.

W.C.: You don’t mean to say you’re thinking of changing your will?

PRESCOTT: That’s what I like about you, W.C. It’s always been about the money, hasn’t it?

W.C.: I don’t know what you’re talking about.

PRESCOTT: It’s so much easier to fall in love with a rich girl instead of one from the other side of the tracks.
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES ONSTAGE
Table with refreshments and glasses; wicker chairs, occasional table, wicker loveseat, two benches.

PROPERTIES BROUGHT ON

ACT ONE, Scene One:
- Flower arrangement, drink, bowl of lemon slices (SASSY)
- Handkerchief (BOYLE)
- Beach bag with tiny swimsuit (SHILOH)
- Stuffed animal (MAGNOLIA)
- Towel (BRICK)
- Can of weed killer (JUAN)

ACT ONE, Scene Two:
- Bottles of hot sauce (SASSY)
- Straw on his cowboy hat (BRICK)
- Straw in hair (PEPPER)
- Evidence packets [see below for details of the contents] (VOLUNTEER)

ACT TWO:
- Notes, pieces of evidence: parcel service “failed delivery attempt” notification, oil change reminder, ad showing bank closure, golf scorecard, ad showing library hours, boat repair claim ticket, movie times, pet store ad, photograph of “The secret is cn the sauce” spelled out in hot sauce (JUDGE)

AUDIENCE INTERACTION

As a dinner theater presentation, Death of a Hot Sauce Salesman presents numerous opportunities to involve your audience. When appropriate, lines should be directed to the entire audience or to specific individuals. If the play is not presented as a dinner theater production, the clue sheets and the Hot Knights Authentic Pepper Sauce label can be reproduced in the program. The JUDGE will still ask for audience participation.

AD-LIBBING

The interactive nature of the script allows considerable opportunity for the actors to ad-lib as they interact with the audience. Ad-libs should always be consistent with the attitudes and behaviors of the individual characters. Ad-libbing is especially important for the actor playing the role of the JUDGE, who must know the sequence of events and the alibis of the suspects well enough to react to the audience members.
as they begin to respond to the clue packets. To keep the sequencing of questioning straight, the JUDGE might want to use a small notepad on which he appears to jot down notes as he questions the suspects the first time, and then questions them again later in a different order.

ABOUT JUAN AND THE OTHER JUAN

JUAN wears an eye patch that changes eyes each time he exits and returns.

The Other Juan, Juan Two, although never seen, is always referred to as the Juan “with that thing,” something that is vaguely referenced with a pat over the right shoulder.

COSTUMES

MAGGIE wears a fashionable summer dress. It should be attractive, but not gaudy.

SASSY wears appropriate maid attire.

SUE RAE, SHILOH, PEPPER, and HELEN all wear fancy summer dresses with plenty of jewelry.

BRICK is dressed in black with a cowboy hat and boots.

JUAN is dressed in a work shirt and jeans, or overalls.

The other men wear light colored summer suits and lightweight summer hats.

THE CLUES

The clues are for your audiences to take an active role in solving the murders of Prescott Knight, Juan Two, and Beau Daschious. Graphics for these clues can be downloaded at: https://www.PioneerDrama.com/PDF/CluePacket1.pdf …or you can create your own versions of the clues. Several of the clues can be presented in a mock newspaper format inside the evidence packets. In the original production, the first two pages of the Saturday edition of The Delphi Oracle, the Voice of Knight County, were created with stories about the barbecue, the mysterious murder of Beau, an ad for Fester N. Boyle, and a “Doin’s in Delphi” column that contained gossip and the bank closure. Also featured were the library hours, the budgie ad, and The Gemini Twin ad. Some of these ads may also be posted in your theatre or inside the program. Groups may utilize any number of approaches for the clues. If you wish to create your own materials, pertinent details for each clue follows:
DEATH OF A HOT SAUCE SALESMAN

ACT ONE
Scene One
AT RISE: The Knight family dining room, summer. It is about noon.

SASSY ENTERS LEFT with a flower arrangement and places it on
the occasional table. After a few fussy adjustments, she goes to
the refreshment table to prepare a drink. PEPPER ENTERS LEFT and
crosses CENTER.

PEPPER: My, oh, my, this heat. I don't think I can stand it a minute
longer. This heat is so oppressive. I may have to shed some clothes.

SASSY: (The thought is too much for her.)
Oh, please!

PEPPER: What's that you say, Sassy?

SASSY: I wouldn't do that, Miss Pepper. I don't think Mr. Knight's heart

could take it.

PEPPER: You're probably right. A man his age could be gone any moment.

SASSY: You can only hope.

PEPPER: I'm sorry?

SASSY: (Takes the drink to PEPPER.)
I said, try this. This will help cool
you off.

PEPPER: Thank you, Sassy. I am parched. By the by, have you
seen Juan?

SASSY: Which one?

PEPPER: Excuse me? Did you say which Juan or which one?

SASSY: Either Juan.

PEPPER: The one with the eye patch, one-eyed Juan, not the one with
that thing. (Pats her right shoulder. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.])
I have an errand I would like him to run.

SASSY: If I see him, I'll send him along.
(Crosses to the refreshment table.)

BOYLE: (ENTERS LEFT.)
Hello, Sassy.

SASSY: Good morning, Mr. Boyle. Might I bring you some refreshment?

BOYLE: Yes, I'll have what Miss Devine is having.

SASSY: Heat stroke? Oh, we're out of lemon. Do you mind waiting
while I go slice some more?
(EXITS RIGHT.)

BOYLE: (His attention is on PEPPER.)
Yes, that'll be fine. Good morning,
Miss Devine. Fine, Devine. That rhymes. I must be a poet.

PEPPER: (Fans herself.)
Among your other talents, no doubt. What an
unexpected pleasure.

CLUE #1 – DELPHI PARCEL SERVICE “Failed delivery attempt” notice.
The notice should be addressed to Prescott Knight, dated Saturday,
and time-stamped at 2:20 p.m. If using the graphic provided, courier
signature and date/time fields should be handwritten on
the notice.

CLUE #2 – OIL CHANGE DUE SERVICE REMINDER
Service reminder for Pepper’s car. The reminder reads, “Your next
oil change is due at 6000 miles.”

CLUE #3 – ODOMETER OF PEPPER’S CAR
Auto odometer reads 3017 miles.

CLUE #4 – KNIGHT COUNTY ROAD MAP
The map will indicate the distances between Terra Firma and
Delphi and Sellano.

CLUE #5 – BANK CLOSED NOTICE
A notice stating that the bank is closed today for the installation
of a new air conditioning system.

CLUE #6 – GOLF SCORECARD
This should be an 18-hole card with the scores for only nine holes
filled in by hand.

CLUE #7 – LIBRARY HOURS
A photo or graphic of library hours that specifically indicates the
library closes at 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

CLUE #8 – BOAT REPAIR CLAIM TICKET
A standard repair ticket should indicate that Prescott Knight’s boat
is in the repair shop to fix a hole in the bottom of the boat. The
handwritten details on the ticket should indicate the boat will be
ready for pick up next Tuesday.

CLUE #9 – SHOWTIMES FOR DOUBLE INDEMNITY
An ad for Double Indemnity showing at the Gemini Twin movie
theater. Mon – Friday times should read 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, &
9:00. Sat & Sun time should read 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00,
& 10:00

CLUE #10 – DELPHI PET STORE Budgie Sale Ad
An ad for the Delphi Pet Store indicating a “Huge Budgie Sale.”

CLUE #11 – SEALED ENVELOPE
If including this in the evidence packets for your audience, the
photograph will need to be created by your production team. The
outside of the sealed envelope should read “DO NOT OPEN UNTIL THE JUDGE TELLS YOU TO DO SO.” Inside is the photograph of the writing in hot sauce:

“The secret is cn the sauce.”

The writing should look like the scribble of a dying man. The letter “o” in the word “on” should look incomplete as shown, closer to the letter “i.”

**CLUE #12 – BOTTLE OF HOT KNIGHTS AUTHENTIC PEPPER SAUCE**

If using a real bottle of hot sauce, the label should contain the actual ingredients of the real hot sauce. As a diversion, you can include additional information, such as a history and anything else you choose. You can also include a picture of the actor playing Prescott on the label, but be sure you include the following: Batch Number 31h09-407145 (Note: The 4s must be open.)

**SOLUTION:** When turned upside down, the batch numbers reveal the two culprits.

For dinner theater productions, each table should have at least one bottle of Hot Knights authentic pepper sauce. A facsimile of the bottle can be part of the program if not presented as a dinner theater production.
We hope you’ve enjoyed this script sample.

We encourage you to read the entire script before making your final decision.

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