

EXCERPT FROM “Don’t Be a Fool, Dorothy”

SETTING: The music room in the stately home of Lord Crowley

TIME PERIOD: 1930’s

CHARACTERS, in order of appearance

The actors double or triple the characters for comic effect.

ARCHIBALD (ARCHIE) ROE An energetic upper-class young man.

MISS PURPLE Elderly spinster, amateur sleuth. All her clothes: cardigan, skirt, woollen tights, scarf, hat, etc are various shades of purple.

BRIAN, THE BIRD A Mynah bird puppet that can be manipulated by an actor hiding in a curtained table, on top of which sits the bird’s cage.

DOROTHY CROWLEY Daughter of Lord Crowley. A bright young thing.

COOK She always carries a meat-cleaver, menacingly.

SISTER ATTLA An Irish nun.

SEPTIMUS CROWLEY Lord Crowley’s somnambulant twin brother.

LORD CROWLEY Father of Dorothy.

LADY CROWLEY Step-mother of Dorothy.

THE GAMEKEEPER Lascivious, heavily red-bearded. Revolting, in a black-comedy kind-of-way.

JOHNNY SWINDON A cheat, cad, rogue and philanderer.

THE MAID Lower-class mistress of Lord Crowley.

FENELLA A seductress. Upper-class mistress of Lord Crowley.

THE VICAR Cliché protestant vicar. Has booming voice. Secretly fancies Miss Primshaw.

PRIMSHAW Sexually frustrated housekeeper. Secretly fancies the vicar.

INSPECTOR HARRIS A self-important police inspector.

POLICE SERGEANT

(Excerpt from Act I, Scene 1)

The action till now: Dorothy has announced her intention to marry Archie Roe, in opposition to scoundrel Johnny Swindon, the choice of her father Lord Crowley.

CROWLEY When’s your afternoon break?

MAID Four o’clock, sir.

CROWLEY Perfect! I’ll see you in your room at four.

HARRIS *(Walking out from amongst the coats on the coat stand)* Good morning!

(At the sudden appearance of HARRIS, the MAID gives a startled cry and runs off)

HARRIS I'm a police inspector.

CROWLEY How can I help you, Inspector?

HARRIS We received a phone call reporting two murders committed in this house.

CROWLEY Really, Inspector? There's been no murder done to my knowledge.

HARRIS Early as usual. *(He turns to go)* I'll come back later.

CROWLEY Can't you apprehend the culprits in advance?

HARRIS I'm a detective sir. How can I detect something that hasn't happened yet?

CROWLEY If there is a murder, how would we contact you?

HARRIS I'll give you my card. *(Hands blank white card)*

CROWLEY Thank you. *(Looks at it)* But this card is blank, Inspector!

HARRIS Yes, sir. I had those cards specially printed for occasions, such as this, when I wish to remain anonymous.

CROWLEY They're very well printed. A brilliant shade of white. Perfectly matches the shade of the card. Who are your printers?

HARRIS Davies and Co. I'm always happy to give them a reference.

CROWLEY I'll contact them. *(Pulls out a notebook and pen)* Who shall I say gave the recommendation?

HARRIS *(Wagging a finger)* Ah now, you don't catch me out that easily! It takes a smart man to outsmart Inspector Harris.

CROWLEY *(Writing it down)* Inspector Harris.

What happens next: Two murders, a list of suspects as long as your arm, highly-improbable explanations from Inspector Harris and Miss Purple, and Dorothy finally gets her man.