

*– from a cheaply made “snow machine” hanging above the window.)*

PENELOPE. What are you trying to tell me, Alexander?

*(ALEXANDER crosses to the fireplace. We see a big wad of pink gum stuck to his back. He picks up a poker, which he uses to poke the plastic fireplace log.)*

ALEXANDER. I was born and raised in this house, Pen-el-opp. I lived here my entire life. With the exception of school and college and day camp. And the week I was kidnapped by the man in the Blue Mask. This home is my blood. This home and...

*(Spotlight on – stage lights out as ALEXANDER steps forward.)*

... The Snow...

*(Spotlight off – stage lights up as ALEXANDER steps back into the scene.)*

*(posing at fireplace)*

There's nothing I wouldn't do to keep it. Nothing.

*(DICK SCORSESE as INSPECTOR MOUNDS enters from the archway. He wears a tweed Sherlock Holmes coat and cape, a Deerstalker hat, his Martin Scorsese glass frames, and smokes a large pipe.)*

INSPECTOR. “Anything?” What do you mean by “anything?”

*(ALEXANDER and PENELOPE exchange looks – never having said the word.)*

ALEXANDER. Who the hell are you?

*(CANDY begins mouthing all the other actors' lines.)*

INSPECTOR. Me?

ALEXANDER. Yes.

INSPECTOR. Inspector Mounds.

ALEXANDER. Beg your pardon?

*(INSPECTOR MOUNDS dramatically poses at the fireplace – with his foot set on the log.)*

INSPECTOR. Inspector Mounds. Scotland Yard. I'm investigating your late father's death.

ALEXANDER. And what have you found? We have nothing to hide here.

INSPECTOR. Nothing?

ALEXANDER. Nothing that can't be explained.

INSPECTOR. Explained?

ALEXANDER. And what else do you know, Inspector?

INSPECTOR. We know that your late father didn't die accidentally.

ALEXANDER. You mean...

INSPECTOR. Murderrrr!

*(Sound effects: Ominous Music Sting)*

PENELOPE. Oh, Alexander. Hold me. Touch me. Thrill me.

*(Spotlight on – stage lights out, as ALEXANDER steps forward.)*

ALEXANDER. Looks like snow.

*(Spotlight off – stage lights up, as ALEXANDER steps back into the scene.)*

INSPECTOR. Would you mind answering some questions, Mr. Barrington?

ALEXANDER. I have nothing to hide.

INSPECTOR. The reading of the will will tell the tale.

ALEXANDER. Meaning?

INSPECTOR. Exactly what was your sister Bette's relationship with your late father?

*(MONA MONET sweeps in as BETTE. She glides in as she speaks, smoking from a long cigarette holder. She rehearses a grand bow for the audience's expected applause.)*

BETTE. Marvelous, Inspector. We got along divinely. I was like a daughter to him and he was like a father to me. I miss him so.

*(flicking away a tear)*

It's hard to believe he's really gone.

*(DROOLS pops in to deliver a punchline, carrying a tray with script pages taped to the bottom.)*

DROOLS. I say! He's not really gone. He's still in the study. They haven't come for the body yet. Snow and all.

*(DROOLS exits.)*

BETTE. Hello, brother.

ALEXANDER. Hello... Bette!

BETTE. You must be the new one.

ALEXANDER. Bette...this is Pe-nep-o-le. Pe-nep-o-le... Bette.

PENELOPE. Delighted. What did you mean, "New one?"

*(BETTE and ALEXANDER exchange looks. CANDY, the actress playing PENELOPE, continues mouthing the other actors' lines.)*

INSPECTOR. Yes. What did you mean? I didn't quite follow that myself.

BETTE. Didn't dear brother tell you? You're number thirteen. Unlucky number thirteen! Ha ha!

PENELOPE. Thirteen? Thirteen what?

BETTE. Why, thirteen wives, you little unsuspecting fool!

PENELOPE. Wives?

BETTE. Ha ha!

PENELOPE. I thought I was the first.

BETTE. Naive foolish petulant child!

ALEXANDER. You are the first, Pen-el-opp. The first that meant anything.

PENELOPE. Alexander...what happened to them? Were they pretty?

ALEXANDER. They were all lovely.

*(stepping forward)*

Especially Gwendolyn.

*(removing a paper from his pocket and reading it)*

"With her fair skin, tight sweaters, and massively large jugs."

PENELOPE. Where are they now?

ALEXANDER. She was buried with them.

PENELOPE. You mean...

ALEXANDER. Dead.

PENELOPE. You mean?

BETTE. Murderrrr!

*(Sound effects: Ominous Music Sting)*

ALEXANDER. I always meant to tell you that, dear.

PENELOPE. Murdered? All of them?

ALEXANDER. Not at the same time. Individually.

INSPECTOR. Interesting, Mr. Barrington. If you'll excuse me.

*(The INSPECTOR dramatically exits stage left face first into the painted-on archway. The slam sends chills up the other actors' spines. INSPECTOR slinks off through the archway, rubbing his face in pain. The other actors freeze until he is off.)*

ALEXANDER. I was never convicted.

*(INSPECTOR MOUNDS screams from pain backstage.)*

BETTE. Ha ha. Juries can be bought. You never did explain that blood on your socks.

*(DROOLS enters through the archway with his tray/script.)*

DROOLS. Mr. Barrington, your mother can't wait to see you. I told her that you had arrived and her face lit up like a shining sun in the noon day...

*(can't remember the line)*

...sun. Presenting Lady Barrington!

*(All pose, and NO ONE enters. There is an awkward pause.)*

Presenting Lady Barrington... She cannot wait to see you, Mr. Barrington. Her face... Lady Barrington.