

THE REUNION CRUISE MURDERS

By Michael Druce

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THE REUNION CRUISE MURDERS

A Comedic/ Mystery Full Length Play

By Michael Druce

SYNOPSIS: After tragedy deep-sixed their ten-year reunion, the graduates of Lehigh High School are eager to make their twenty-year reunion one they'll never forget by booking passage on the cruise ship, *The Mirage*. Unfortunately, a popular classmate is murdered days before the cruise begins and then the ship's captain goes missing. A cryptic note surfaces suggesting the recent murder and the tragedy ten years earlier are linked and that the person responsible will be revealed. Detective Magnus McNair dives in, hoping to crack the case before another Lehigh graduate goes under. It's full steam ahead as the detective navigates the murky waters of long simmering grudges, a raft of suspects, and two murders. Easily presented as a dinner theatre production.

DURATION: 65 minutes.

TIME: The Present.

SETTING: The cruise ship, *The Mirage*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 females, 6 males, 2 either; 0-15 extras possible)

PAISLEY PARKS (f) Energetic cruise director in charge of activities. *(45 lines)*

BANE BERRY (f) Reunion organizer. Sister of Lington and Logan. Dickey personality. *(60 lines)*

LOGAN BERRY (m)..... Reunion organizer. Brother of Lington and Bane. *(40 lines)*

LINGTON BERRY (f)..... Reunion organizer. Sister of Bane and Logan. Nicer than her sister. *(51 lines)*

LEHIGH GRADUATE (m/f)..... Graduate in attendance. *(3 lines)*

SALLY MASON (f) Recently widowed wife of Chase Mason. *(36 lines)*

DASH WORLEY (m)..... Former football star. Not especially sharp. *(52 lines)*

BROCK LEE (m).....Humorless husband of Ashley Lee. *(16 lines)*

ASHLEY LEE (f).....Former prom queen and now a star of commercials. *(58 lines)*

EDDIE CRUZ (m)Ship's DJ and co-activities director with Paisley. *(43 lines)*

MAGNUS MCNAIR (m).....Graduate turned detective. *(118 lines)*

JENNY JAYE (f)Brilliant former debate club president. *(48 lines)*

LIEUTENANT TENNANT (m/f)...Serious, efficient first officer. *(15 lines)*

CAPTAIN TY TANNICK (m)Former heartthrob turned ship's captain. Lots of swagger and charm. *(15 lines)*

EXTRAS:

GRADUATES (m/f)Graduates in attendance. *(Non-speaking)*

CASTING NOTE: If roles are changed to accommodate casting requirements (like gender changes), character names should approximate those in the script.

SEQUENCE OF SCENES

ACT ONE, Scene One – Evening, third day at sea.

ACT ONE, Scene Two – Later that evening.

ACT TWO, Scene One – Morning, day four.

ACT TWO, Scene Two – Evening, day four.

ACT TWO, Scene Three – Morning, day five, in port.

COSTUMES

CAPTAIN – Captain's shirt and pants. Jacket, tie, and cap not necessary.

LT. TENNANT – Ship's uniform. Cap optional.

EVERYONE ELSE – Fun, bright. What one might expect of a tropical cruise.

NOTE: Sally's top should have a collar.

NOTE: Paisley and Eddie could also wear uniforms, but not necessary.

PROPS

- notepad (PAISLEY)
- pencil (PAISLEY)
- dart pistol (PAISLEY)
- urn (SALLY)
- satchel (EDDIE)
- five small cards (EDDIE)
- handheld remote for sound and lights (EDDIE)
- covered memoriam board with silhouettes of graduates mounted on an easel (BANE)

THE HANDHELD REMOTE: EDDIE's handheld remote controls both the sound and lighting. It should be introduced early without calling much attention to it. Later in the blackout scenes, the remote will prove useful as an aid to blocking. The remote allows EDDIE freedom of movement. Not only is he freed from the DJ station, but he doesn't need to be near wall mounted light switches at critical moments.

At least one visible wall mounted light switch is necessary for Lt. Tennant to turn on in the final scene.

SOUND

- a couple of upbeat tunes
- memorial music
- blast of ship's airhorn

LIGHTING

- standard stage lighting throughout.
- noticeable change in and out for the Sally flashback.
- mood lighting for Royalty Ball.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Graduates attending a twenty-year reunion will be in their mid to late thirties. Productions with older players can change the reunion to a thirtieth or fortieth. Thus, the previous reunion becomes the one canceled. Make continuity changes in text as necessary.

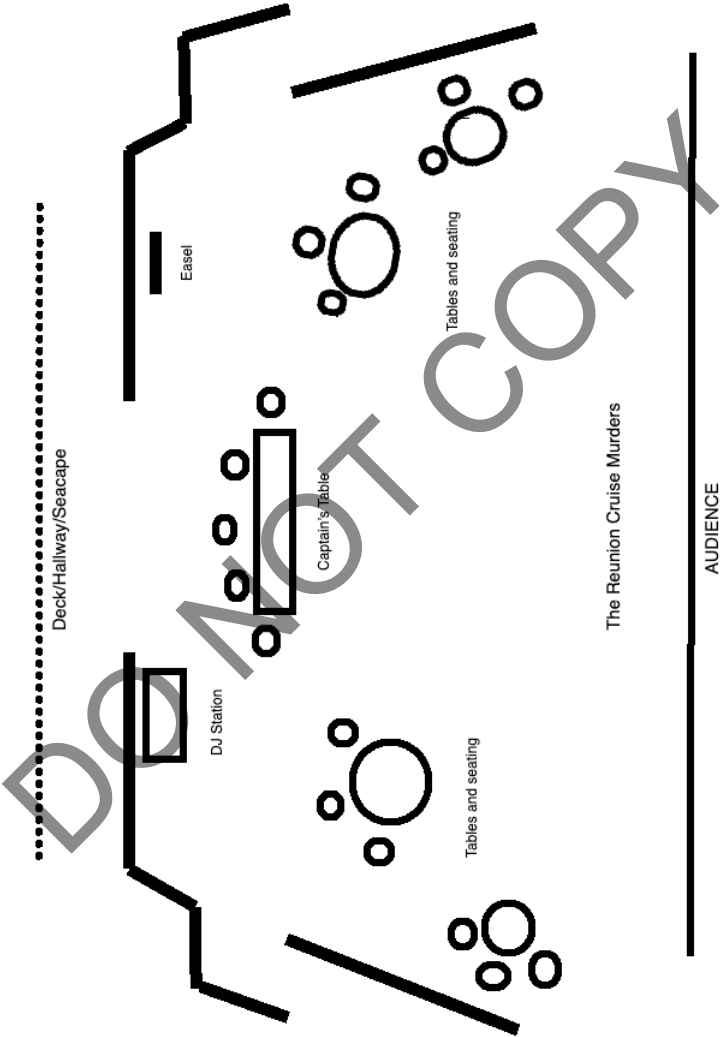
The full cast is on stage most of the time, therefore it is important to keep characters moving. Avoid having characters sit for long periods of time. Energy and motion are critical to maintaining visual interest.

If roles are changed to accommodate casting requirements, character names should approximate those in the script.

The details of the canceled reunion are not revealed. Not knowing what happened and why allows audiences to imagine their own horrible crime.

SET

The action takes place in a ballroom on the cruise liner *The Mirage*. Entrances right and left. A main entrance upstage center. The upstage entrance may have swinging doors or be an open entrance with a backdrop behind. The backdrop may be of ocean and sky, a deck, or interior hallway. A head table is positioned center with VIP seating either side. Additional seating down left and down right. The walls should have a nautical flavor. Portholes serving no practical function might be part of the décor.



ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT START: *It is the third day at sea. Music playing. DASH, JENNY, LEHIGH GRADUATE, MAGNUS, and SALLY are seated. (If presented dinner theatre style, these characters may be seated with the audience.) EDDIE is seated up right at the DJ station. PAISLEY enters, bubbling over with enthusiasm.*

PAISLEY: Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Captain Ty Tannick and the entire crew of *The Mirage*, welcome aboard! I am Paisley Parks, cruise director. My job is to make sure your cruise is one you'll never forget. Over the last two days, whether at the indoor skydiving park, the go-cart track, the rock-climbing wall, or a Broadway show starring actors you've never heard of, I have met so many of you. Not all of you, of course, because we have over three-thousand passengers on this ship. But I will do my best. Tonight is special because it is your night and one of my favorite nights as a cruise director. We love hosting high school reunions. *(Ship's horn blasts.)* Now that everyone has their sea legs, the moment you've all been waiting for is finally here. Please give a giant *Mirage* welcome to your hosts for this reunion, the Berry family.

BANE, LOGAN and LINGON bound on. A little too perky.

BANE: Thanks, Paisley. What a great introduction. Hello, hello! Fellow graduates of Lehigh High. Let's hear it for the Lehigh High Highlanders. Is this fabulous or what? A reunion cruise in the South Pacific! Wow!

LOGAN: Hear that? Now that is music. Was our music the best or what? *(Indicating the DJ.)* Give it up for DJ Eddie Cruz. Great tunes, my friend. Keep the hits coming. A little later, Eddie will be giving salsa lessons. Rock the Casbah, baby!

LINGON: Class of _____, *[Twenty years prior to the current year]* can you believe it? Twenty years. And I haven't aged a bit. Seriously, not one bit. I wish I could say the same for you. Just kidding. Not really! But, enough about me. We know how crushed you were when our ten-year reunion was canceled. But this reunion will make up for that tragedy.

LOGAN: If you were one of those kids who had no clue what was going on in high school, we're the Berry triplets. I'm Logan Berry.

LINGON: I'm Lingon Berry.

BANE: And I'm Bane Berry. And no, we haven't forgotten the jokes. We all remember the jokes. When it came to names, our parents were in a jam.

LINGON: Yeah, it was the pits, alright. Get it? Berries, fruit, jam? Well, not this cruise. It's gonna be a killer reunion.

BANE: Remember back in the day? We said we'll have our twenty-year reunion at sea. And here we are. We've put that disaster ten years ago behind us, and we're sailing on.

LOGAN: We'll be sailing to the paradise islands of Polynesia.

BANE: Micronesia.

LINGON: And if we're lucky, Amnesia. White sand beaches.

LOGAN: We'll zip line through the lush green jungles. Swim in crystal-clear waters.

LINGON: We'll dance, we'll party, and we'll snorkel with the sea turtles.

BANE: We'll rekindle friendships with old friends and make new ones. *(Beat.)* Before we get to all the fun, we need to take a moment to be serious. Eddie, if you will.

EDDIE plays a melancholy tune.

BANE: It's tradition at reunions to honor those classmates who have already gone to that big reunion in the sky. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the Lehigh High roll of honor. *(Removes the shroud and makes a sweeping gesture across the board.)*

LEHIGH GRADUATE: That is not everyone we've said goodbye to in the last twenty years.

LINGON: These were all the names we could think of.

LEHIGH GRADUATE: In other words, your friends.

LINGON: Your point?

A hand goes up.

BANE: Oh, my gosh! Is that Sally Mason? It is! Sally, come on up. Sally Mason, everyone. Who can forget Sally's brilliant performance our senior year in *Beauty and the Beast*.

SALLY crosses up. She is carrying a small urn.

SALLY: Thank you, Bane. You are too kind.

BANE: Are you kidding? You were a wonderful beast. (*Noticing the urn.*) But what is this? Something for me? A gift.

SALLY: No.

BANE: You shouldn't have.

SALLY: I haven't. No! This isn't for—

BANE: Before you go on, where is that fabulous husband of yours? Is Chase with you?

SALLY: Yes. Sort of.

LOGAN: (*Scanning the audience.*) Chase Mason, stand up. Where are you, buddy?

SALLY: He's in here.

BANE, LOGAN, and LINGON: What?

SALLY: These are Chase's ashes.

LOGAN: Chase is dead?

SALLY: That's why he's in here.

BANE: Is that an urn?

SALLY nods.

LINGON: Oh, yuck! Keep that thing off the dessert table.

LOGAN: How can Chase be dead? Wasn't it a week ago you and the rest of us had coffee together? We laughed. We reminisced. You told us how much Chase was looking forward to this reunion.

SALLY: I know. It was very sudden.

LINGON: You told us some crazy story about a note. "I know what you did, and I'm going to tell everyone at the reunion." What was that all about?

SALLY: I know. It's been a terrible week. I almost didn't come on this trip.

BANE: But you came anyway.

SALLY: For Chase's sake. To add his name to the memoriam list.

BANE: You didn't need to bring the jar. I can do that with a marking pen.

SALLY: Chase desperately wanted to come on this cruise. Only it wasn't to be. In some small way, it's as if he's with us now. I thought to scatter his ashes at sea.

LINGON: Poor Sally. We are so sorry for your loss.

LOGAN: Okay. Kind of a buzz kill. This cruise is all about fun, so why don't we take care of that little matter right now. (*Surveys his audience.*) We need a volunteer to assist Sally.

DASH raises his hand.

LOGAN: Bingo! Right there. Dash Worley. The man, the legend, and—? You can fill in the blank. Dash lettered in every sport imaginable. One of these days, Lehigh High is going to name something in the locker room after Dash.

DASH: Thanks, Logan. It's the least I can do. Chase and I were teammates. When I was quarterback, he was my center. I remember that big game—

LOGAN: I know we'd all like to relive those memories, Dash, but there is so much to do. Why don't you and Sally take care of that little matter.

DASH: Oh, right. (*To SALLY.*) Shall we? (*Exits with SALLY.*)

BANE: While Chase's ashes are being disposed of with dignity, we'll take a short break. Grab some snacks, refill your glasses, whatever. Come back ready to have a great time.

ASHLEY and BROCK enter with an air of self-importance.

BROCK: Good grief, it's like a zoo in here. I knew this was a bad idea.

ASHLEY: Brock, I have to be here. I was prom queen my senior year.

BROCK: We never did stuff like that at my school.

ASHLEY: You went to an all-boys school. Prom royalty comes with certain responsibilities. It's a lifetime appointment.

BROCK: You mean we have to come back in another ten years?

ASHLEY: Brock, there are lots of expectations, especially now that I am a media star. I'll have to dance with my king and perform other ceremonial duties.

PAISLEY crosses to ASHLEY and BROCK.

PAISLEY: You must be Mr. and Mrs. Lee.

ASHLEY: Of course. No doubt you recognize me.

PAISLEY: I can't say that I do. Only two names are left on the list. I'm Paisley Parks, the cruise director. I'll be in charge of all activities and entertainment. Any needs, questions, or concerns, I'm your go-to person.

ASHLEY: I do have a question. Who are these people?

PAISLEY: Excuse me?

ASHLEY: These people, who are they? Why are they here? The only faces I recognize are on that board.

PAISLEY: I believe these are people you went to high school with. They were in your graduating class.

ASHLEY: That doesn't seem possible. I don't know any of them.

PAISLEY: People change over the years. This name tag should come in handy then.

ASHLEY: Why would I need a name tag?

PAISLEY: To let everyone know who you are.

BANE and LINGON cross to ASHLEY and BROCK.

ASHLEY: Everyone does know who I am. In high school, I was the Helen of Troy of the rowing club. Mine was the face that launched a thousand rowing boats, or whatever they're called.

BROCK: My wife appears on television.

PAISLEY: Really? What series do you star in?

BANE: She plays a stomach on gas relief commercials.

PAISLEY: That's you? My great-grandmother loves those commercials.

BANE: Ashley, you made it. Last week at The Coffee Corner when you told us about your upcoming face lift, we were worried you might not make it. But you decided not to have the procedure after all.

ASHLEY: Bane of my existence, seeing you twice in little more than a week seems cruel and unusual.

LINGON: You didn't have to be here. As first runner-up, Bane could have taken your place.

ASHLEY: How could I refuse? That morning over coffee when you and the other committee members told me of the plans for the royalty ball, I said, Ashley, you can't turn your royal duties over to an also-ran. Our fellow classmates have an expectation.

BROCK: Five minutes ago, you didn't know any of these people. Now they're your royal subjects?

BANE: Ashley, don't be so rude. Is this your son?

ASHLEY: My husband, Brock Lee.

LINGON: Which husband are you?

BANE: There have been so many.

ASHLEY: Bane is still bitter about being first runner-up.

BANE: Only because you stuffed the ballot box.

LINGON: Mr. Ashley, are you enjoying the cruise?

BROCK: It's Brock. I am enjoying myself about as much as falling overboard.

PAISLEY: This is good-natured kidding, right? You all really are friends.

ASHLEY: So young, so innocent.

PAISLEY: This is your seating assignment. You'll be seated next to the head table.

ASHLEY: Next to the head table? Not at the head table.

BANE: There wasn't enough room for the three of you.

BROCK: Three of us? It's just Ashley and me.

BANE: Ashley's ego makes three.

ASHLEY: You two really are the nasty gift that keeps on giving. We'll continue this later.

LINGON: Yes, we will.

BANE: Count on it.

BANE and LINGON return to the head table.

BROCK: (To PAISLEY.) We expected to be seated at the head table with the captain.

PAISLEY: I'll take it up with the captain as soon as he arrives. I'm not sure what's keeping him.

ASHLEY and BROCK cross to the table, Right. EDDIE crosses to PAISLEY

EDDIE: Everything all right here? Things looked a little dicey.

PAISLEY: Those ladies threw off some wicked shade. It's like they hate each other.

EDDIE: They do hate each other. They have history. They were sworn enemies in high school.

PAISLEY: Why? What keeps a feud alive for twenty years?

EDDIE: The captain.

PAISLEY: Our captain? (*EDDIE nods.*) Captain Tannick is a Lehigh graduate?

EDDIE: That's how this reunion got planned twenty years ago. In high school, the captain used to be the captain of the rowing team. He always said that one day he'd be a cruise ship captain. It seemed like a crazy leap from rowboat to cruise ship, but it happened.

PAISLEY: What is the captain's connection with the Berry sisters and Mrs. Lee?

EDDIE: In high school, the captain used to be a bit of a lothario.

PAISLEY: Is that bad? I don't know what a lothario is.

EDDIE: A Romeo, a Casanova, a Don Juan. Back in the day, the captain broke a lot of hearts, ruffled lots of feathers, and made plenty of enemies. He dated all of them: Bane, Ashley, Ligon.

PAISLEY: Wow! I guess a person changes a lot in twenty years. Personally, I don't see it. Is that why they became enemies?

EDDIE: He would date one and then someone else would catch his eye.

PAISLEY: I sure hope there won't be more drama.

EDDIE: Trust me, there will be. This place is a flea market of smashed up romances, broken hearts, shattered dreams, jealousies, and betrayals. Put on a life jacket. It's gonna be rough sailing.

DASH enters. He has dark smudges on his face.

LOGAN: (*To DASH.*) Dash, what is that on your face?

DASH: Chase Mason. Sally and I went on deck to scatter Chase's ashes. It was so windy they blew back on us. It wasn't a king of the world moment.

EDDIE: You didn't go to the stern.

DASH: The stern?

EDDIE: The rear of the ship.

DASH: Oh.

LINGON: What's happened to Sally? Where is she?

DASH: She said she needed to wash up and that she had something important to do.

MAGNUS rises and comes Center.

MAGNUS: You let Sally go off by herself! The woman is an emotional wreck.

DASH: Magnus, is that you?

MAGNUS: Of course, it's me. You don't recognize me? How many hits to the head did you take?

JENNY: It's not that Dash didn't recognize you. It was a rhetorical question. You know like, Magnus, it's you! Only he said, Magnus, is that you?

BANE: In case you don't remember—why would you? Jenny Jaye, debate club president.

DASH: Debate club? Did we also have da fishing club?

LOGAN: While that's taking time to sink in, let's introduce Lehigh's very own bagpipe playing, caber tossing, haggis hurling, Magnus McNair.

LINGON: Let's not forget kilt wearing as well. Woo Hoo!

LOGAN: Magnus, you're looking a little serious, like a man on a mission.

MAGNUS: That's right, Logan. It concerns Chase Mason.

LINGON: We've already done that. Chase has been taken care of.

DASH: It was kind of like a Viking funeral, only without the flames and the burning boat.

JENNY: It was nothing like a Viking funeral.

DASH: I didn't know you in high school, did I?

JENNY: No. We wouldn't have met. You were afflicted with the heartbreak of low intelligence.

DASH: Oh.

BANE: Magnus, you didn't go on to become a professional bagpipe player then.

MAGNUS: No. Nobody goes to a bagpipe show. I became a detective. That's why I am here. At the request of Sally Mason.

LINGON: I'm sure Sally appreciates the emotional support.

MAGNUS: I am investigating Chase's death.

BANE: Why? Didn't Chase die of natural causes? I just assumed—

MAGNUS: Chase was murdered.

LOGAN: Did not see that coming. *(To EDDIE.)* Eddie, do we have any really depressing funeral type music? Anything from the sixties will do.

EDDIE: I'll check.

TENNANT enters.

TENNANT: Detective McNair, a word.

MAGNUS: I am in the middle of something.

TENNANT: This is important.

MAGNUS: I am busy.

TENNANT: I think you'll want to see this.

MAGNUS: Whatever it is, it can wait.

TENNANT: *(To himself as he walks away.)* Very well. The captain is missing. There's blood in his cabin sink. A blood-stained knife. And a cake. It can wait. *(Exits.)*

The room falls silent.

MAGNUS: *(Directly to the audience.)* A cake?

Blackout.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT START: *Later the same evening. BANE, LINGON, LOGAN, ASHLEY, BROCK, EDDIE, PAISLEY, JENNY, DASH, and LEHIGH GRADUATE are on stage. EXTRAS optional. MAGNUS enters.*

LINGON: Has the captain been found?

MAGNUS: No. The captain is still missing. And now Sally Mason is missing as well.

DASH: I'm not a detective, but if the captain is missing...

Long pause.

JENNY: Is more coming? Or did something snap?

BANE: Shouldn't you be looking for Sally?

MAGNUS: Of course, we're looking for Sally. This is a giant ship. A search takes time.

DASH: Now I remember. Without a captain, who's driving this boat?

EDDIE: This is a ship, not a boat.

DASH: Okay. Who's driving?

ASHLEY: Magnus, should we be worried?

MAGNUS: No, the first mate can pilot the ship.

ASHLEY: That is not what I'm asking. Should the rest of us be worried for our safety?

DASH: Don't worry, Ashley, I'll take care of you.

BROCK: Why would you do that? I'm her husband.

DASH: I knew her before you did. I was king to her prom queen.

BROCK: She still has nightmares about that. *(Beat.)* I'll protect my wife, thank you.

DASH: Right. I just meant if anything should happen to you.

BROCK: It won't.

DASH: You never can tell.

BROCK: It won't!

LOGAN: Reunion cruises are meant to be fun. Let's not lose sight of that.

MAGNUS: Logan is right. Carry on as if nothing has happened.

LOGAN: Eddie, how about those salsa lessons.

LINGON: Great idea. We need to re-focus. To cut a rug. To bust a move. To get our groove on. To boogie down.

EDDIE: That's the spirit. Paisley, let's show everyone how it's done.

EDDIE and PAISLEY take center stage. Using a handheld remote, EDDIE starts the music. EDDIE and PAISLEY begin dancing. Others dance around EDDIE and PAISLEY. After a moment, PAISLEY throws up her hands and stops.

PAISLEY: I'm sorry. I can't do this.

EDDIE uses the remote to stop the music.

PAISLEY: The mood isn't right. The captain is missing, and your friend murdered. It feels weird, creepy, and disrespectful.

DASH: You are so right. This is not a good cruise. I'm giving it three stars.

MAGNUS: In looking at this board again, something occurs to me. What do the people on this board and Chase Mason have in common?

LEHIGH GRADUATE: They're dead.

MAGNUS: That's not what I was getting at. I am reminded of what happened ten years ago. Now, with the recent murder of Chase Mason and the disappearance of the captain, could there be a connection between the past and the present?

EDDIE: What happened ten years ago was an accident.

MAGNUS: There's always been doubt about that.

DASH: If you're thinking what I think you're thinking, then you're thinking there may be a serial killer onboard and that every person on this cruise should be worried.

Audible gasps of concern.

JENNY: Didn't Paisley say there are over three thousand passengers on this ship?

Audible gasps of relief.

DASH: Point taken. Everyone who graduated from Lehigh should be worried.

Audible gasps of concern.

PAISLEY: Can I leave? I am not a Lehigh graduate, and I am much younger than the rest of you.

MAGNUS: I don't think so.

PAISLEY: I really am. I was only two years old when you people graduated high school.

MAGNUS: Everyone in this room could be a potential victim or a possible suspect.

PAISLEY: I don't know what happened at your ten-year reunion, and I don't care. I was only twelve. Look at me. Do I look like a killer?

MAGNUS: Nothing in the cold-blooded killer handbook says a killer can't be cute and bubbly.

PAISLEY: I'll cop to being cute. Not feeling bubbly. But at the age of twelve, what motive would I have for killing anyone at a ten-year reunion for a high school I don't know anything about? *(To JENNY.)* You were the debate club president. Tell him. His logic is—is—what word am I looking for?

JENNY: Nutty.

PAISLEY: Yes. Nutty! You're talking crazy talk.

MAGNUS: Am I? Isn't it true that yesterday you and the captain argued?

PAISLEY: You were spying on me?

MAGNUS: Merely reporting what others said they witnessed. What was that about?

PAISLEY: It was personal.

MAGNUS: Personal enough to kill the captain.

PAISLEY: Why are you talking to me? Eddie said high school reunions are like flea markets of smashed up romances, broken hearts, shattered dreams, jealousies, and betrayals. If that's true, I will not be going to my ten-year reunion. *(Pointing to BANE, LINGON, and ASHLEY.)* You should be talking to the broken hearts club. Eddie said when the captain was in high school, he was a logarithm.

EDDIE: Lothario.

PAISLEY: What he said. A whole lot of ugly happened between those three ladies.

MAGNUS: Eddie?

EDDIE: Reunions have a way of reigniting old jealousies and grudges.

MAGNUS: *(To ASHLEY, BANE, and LINGON.)* One of you dated the captain.

ASHLEY: One of us? Ty practically dated every woman in this room. *(JENNY raises her hand.)* There were exceptions.

MAGNUS: What was the ugly that happened between the three of you?

ASHLEY: Just girl stuff.

BANE: I don't mind saying. In high school, Ashley stole Ty away from me. I'm still bitter about that. She stole the prom queen election from me and bribed her way into playing Belle in *Beauty and the Beast*. She's just an awful person.

JENNY: All of that happened twenty years ago.

BANE: In another ten years, I might be over it.

ASHLEY: I didn't steal Ty away. He ran into my arms. For him, women were like cars. He was always interested in the latest model.

MAGNUS: (To LINGON.) How do you fit in this picture?

LINGON: Ty threw Ashley over for me. Ashley's paint job was fading.

MAGNUS: You and Ty didn't last.

LINGON: With Ty, it never lasted. He dumped me for Sally. Not long after, Sally was traded in for someone else.

MAGNUS: Was Sally bitter?

BANE: We were all bitter.

LOGAN: You think my sisters came on this cruise to commit murder? To even the score with Ashley. Kill the captain. What?

MAGNUS: Early days. We must consider all possibilities.

PAISLEY: If I'm a suspect in the captain's murder over a dumb argument, then your sisters, Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Mason, should be suspects as well.

JENNY: There's no proof the captain is dead.

DASH: I'd like to take a crack at this. The captain and Sally dated in high school. After they broke up, Sally and Chase got together and eventually married. What if the captain and Sally still have feelings for each other and conspired to do away with Chase?

BANE: Chase and the captain were best friends. That doesn't seem likely.

ASHLEY: Loyalty didn't mean anything to Ty. We all know that from experience.

LINGON: What about the blood in the captain's cabin and the bloody knife?

DASH: Then Sally killed the captain. But I don't know why.

EDDIE: Is it possible the captain and Sally are both victims?

LOGAN: Very possible! Now we're getting to it. Chase, Sally, and the captain were part of the Lehigh in crowd. Everyone on this board was popular. If there are other murder victims on this board, (*Indicating the AUDIENCE.*) then one of these people did it. They weren't part of the Lehigh social scene. Social jealousy is a big motive.

JENNY: Why not question everyone in this room and see if anyone confesses.

LOGAN: Excellent idea, Miss Brainiac. Let's start with you. Jenny Jaye. Did you kill anyone on this board or Chase Mason?

JENNY: Let's start with you, Logan Berry.

LOGAN: I'm asking the questions.

JENNY: I'm asking now. Did you murder Chase Mason?

LOGAN: That's absurd!

JENNY: Did you murder the captain?

LOGAN: Ditto! No!

JENNY: Did you do away with Sally Mason?

LOGAN: I haven't murdered anyone.

JENNY: Can you prove that?

LOGAN is stumped.

JENNY: I'll take that as a no, which makes you a suspect like the rest of us.

BANE: Us includes you. So, it could be you.

JENNY: It could be. But it's not.

LINGON: I bet you didn't even like the popular kids in high school, did you?

JENNY: No.

LINGON: There's your motive.

JENNY: I didn't dislike them either.

BANE: That doesn't make sense. You either liked the popular kids or you didn't.

JENNY: They were part of your life, not mine. You keep calling them popular. Not with me. Not with my friends. We had other stuff going on in our lives. We didn't care enough about you or the other popular kids to like you or dislike you. Indifference is not a motive, and it is not a crime.

MAGNUS: (To LOGAN.) I'll take over. Next time, don't pick on the debate club president. (Beat.) Sally came to me for help in solving Chase's murder. The night of the murder, Chase had driven to the wharf to meet an unknown contact. His body was found the next morning, floating in the bay. There was no evidence at the crime scene to link anyone.

EDDIE: What about Chase's phone?

MAGNUS: Most likely at the bottom of the bay.

ASHLEY: Why did Sally come to you for help?

MAGNUS: The police investigating Chase's death hit a dead end. She believed there was something fishy about Chase's murder.

ASHLEY: Isn't murder always fishy?

MAGNUS: She came to me as a friend.

FLASHBACK. Lights change to suggest an earlier time. SALLY enters.

MAGNUS: Tell me everything you remember about the day of the murder.

SALLY: It was a day like any other day, only it wasn't like other days because on other days, my husband wasn't murdered. Chase left for work at his usual time. I went into the office to get some stamps and noticed something written on the notepad. It was an impression, as if the sheet above had been ripped off. There was something odd about the note, so I scribbled back and forth on the notepad with a pencil. The note read, "I know what you did. And I'm going to tell everyone at the reunion."

MAGNUS: Do you know what Chase was talking about?

SALLY: No. There was no name.

MAGNUS: You didn't think the note was to you?

SALLY: No.

MAGNUS: You had no secrets to hide?

SALLY: No. Well, one or two. Every woman has a secret or two. But nothing serious.

MAGNUS: Did anyone else know about the note?

SALLY: My friend, who I spent the day with shopping. We stopped for coffee at The Coffee Corner and there was Bane, Lingon, Logan, and Eddie. Ashley came in later. Something to do with the prom royalty dance. They were meeting to plan the reunion entertainment. I asked them if they knew anything about the note.

MAGNUS: Did any of them have any ideas?

SALLY: No.

MAGNUS: Did you confront Chase about the note?

SALLY: I never got the chance. My friend invited me to her house for dinner. Before I got home, Chase texted to say he was meeting an old friend at the wharf—something urgent. That morning when he left for work was the last I saw him.

MAGNUS: Where is the note now?

SALLY: I didn't want Chase to think I was being nosey, so I flushed it. Chase discovered something that got him killed. I want to know what that was.

SALLY exits as the lights return to the present.

MAGNUS: No one saw the note, which means we can't corroborate Sally's story.

LINGON: Why would Sally make up a lie about the note?

JENNY: She wouldn't unless she was trying to cover up something.

DASH: You think Sally is involved in Chase's death?

JENNY: That was your theory minutes ago.

MAGNUS: I need to be able to rule Sally out as a suspect.

EDDIE: We've all known Sally a long time. She would never be involved in something so awful.

LINGON: It's beginning to feel like our reunions are cursed.

ASHLEY: If there's nothing else, can we get on with our lives?

BROCK: I'm feeling cursed. I have no idea why I had to sit through this.

MAGNUS: That's all I have. Go about your business.

BANE, LINGON, LOGAN, ASHLEY, BROCK, JENNY, DASH and LEHIGH GRADUATE move to exit.

MAGNUS: There is one more thing.

BANE, LINGON, LOGAN, ASHLEY, BROCK, JENNY, DASH and LEHIGH GRADUATE stop.

MAGNUS: Never mind. It's probably nothing.

BANE, LINGON, LOGAN, ASHLEY, BROCK, JENNY, DASH and LEHIGH GRADUATE move again.

MAGNUS: On second thought.

BANE, LINGON, LOGAN, ASHLEY, BROCK, JENNY, DASH and LEHIGH GRADUATE stop again.

MAGNUS: I just remembered something. Sally said when she went into the office to get stamps, there were five addressed and stamped envelopes.

EDDIE: Your story about meeting Sally didn't mention letters.

MAGNUS: Not letters. Envelopes. Card sized. Five of them. One addressed to each of you.

LINGON: Each of us?

MAGNUS: *(To LINGON.)* To you, Bane, Logan, Eddie, and Ashley, care of *The Mirage*. Sally didn't mention those cards that day at The Coffee Corner?

ALL: No.

EDDIE: But Sally didn't open one of the cards.

MAGNUS: No, she thought that was being too nosey.

LINGON: What is wrong with that girl. That's what wives do.

LOGAN: Are you thinking what was in the note was also written on the cards?

MAGNUS: That would mean the five of you would know what the note means.

BANE: Not me.

ASHLEY: I don't know what it means.

EDDIE: I don't have a clue.

LOGAN: Did the police open the cards?

MAGNUS: No. The cards were gone when Sally got home. She figures Chase mailed them on his way to that fatal meeting. (*To PAISLEY.*) How is mail delivered to a ship?

PAISLEY: Mail sent to passengers and crew is sent ahead to the next port of call. That'll be Île du Soleil two days from now.

MAGNUS: Then we'll know something in two days.

LINGON, LOGAN, BANE, ASHLEY, and EDDIE glance at each other suspiciously. TENNANT enters.

TENNANT: Detective McNair, we've found Sally Mason. The fingerprints on the bloody knife are an exact match.

General stir.

MAGNUS: I'm on my way. Take her to the brig and hold her in connection with the possible murder of Captain Ty Tannick.

MAGNUS exits.

END OF ACT ONE

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