

## THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG

**BACKSTAGE CREW MEMBERS:** Please choose one of the two speeches below (from Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*) and be prepared to read it in 2 different ways:

Reading #1: "Over-act" it. This could involve melodramatic or exaggerated gestures and/or vocal choices, but try not to make it too 'abstract.'

Reading #2: "Under-act" it. Your choices could be flat, stiff, nervous, etc. Enjoy being bad. (Or, if you prefer, you could choose to read one speech for Reading #1, and the other for #2)

We are interested in your physical interpretation of the lines. Memorization is not required but is encouraged (especially for Reading #1).

*A note about accents:* the idea is that this is an amateur American company performing a British play. As such, any accents don't need to be particularly good or consistent. Feel free to play with this if you'd like.

---

**READING #1:** Yes – the unexpected guest. The guest that you did not invite. The guest who just arrived – from nowhere – out of the storm. It sounds quite dramatic, does it not? Who am I? You do not know. Where do I come from? You do not know. Me, I am a mystery. *(Laughs)* But now I tell you this. I complete the picture. From now on there will be no more arrivals. And no departures either. By tomorrow – perhaps even already – we are cut off from civilization. No butcher, no baker, no milkman, no postman, no daily papers – nobody and nothing but ourselves. That is admirable – admirable. It could not suit me better. *(Beat)* Perfect. *(Laughs)* Perfect.

OR

**READING #2:** I don't believe it – I won't believe it ... You see that? Yesterday's paper – a London paper. And it was in his pocket. But he didn't go to London yesterday. *(Beat)* Why shouldn't he tell me? Why pretend? He didn't know about the murder. *(Beat)* Or did he? Did he? ... I don't know what the Inspector thinks. And he can make you think things about people. You ask yourself questions and you begin to doubt. You feel that somebody you know so well might be – a stranger. That's what happens in a nightmare. You're somewhere in the middle of friends and then suddenly they're different people – just pretending. Perhaps you can't trust anybody – perhaps everybody's – a stranger.