

The Case of the Missing Bride

An audience interactive mystery dinner theater by Kathy Applebee



Cast

Preacher

Owen Munnygew – groom, concerned for Ivana

Ivana B. Phreee – bride

Ellie Gant – snobbish mother of the bride, dressed and coiffed impeccably.

Ann Teek – grandmother of the groom, a down to earth “mountain woman”. She dresses in her best but in notably less expensive clothing than Ellie and Noah.

Noah Count – Snobbish friend of the Gant family and ex-beau of Ivana, impeccably dressed

Penny Less – Third cousin twice removed of Owen, uncouth but savvy

Fran Tick – bridesmaid, anxious, prone to hyperventilation

Natalie Drest - maid of honor and ex-girlfriend of Owen, bubbly, cheerful and clueless. She wears more jewelry than good taste would dictate and has cosmetic items stashed in the flowers she carries so she can check and apply makeup, do her nails, etc.

Page Turner – flower girl/junior bridesmaid and avid reader. She carries a basket with rose petals and has a small book tucked underneath the petals.

Lauren Order – a plain clothes investigator with badge and gun

Ferris Wheeler – loyal best man

Gustuv Wynde – Great Uncle of the bride, uses a cane, white hair, forgetful

Setting: Present, Virginia Beach (or your location)

At rise: An arch decorated for a wedding is center stage. Four chairs flank the arch on either side.

PENNY is seated on the groom’s side, in the second chair from the arch. The PREACHER strides to

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center stage underneath the arch. A CD player is tucked off to one side of the arch. The head table should be set stage right and have four place settings with four glasses, each containing a small amount of water in addition to any decorations desired.

Scene 1

PREACHER: Ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being flexible about this wedding. Due to a power outage, we can't have it in the sanctuary. *(shaking his head in disbelief)* Who would have thought hair appliances could short out half a building. Of course, who would have thought five women would plug in 13 curling irons, 11 blow dryers and 4 sets of hot rollers in one outlet? This hall will have to do for both the wedding and reception. We are about to get started, so please take your seats. Seems like I'm going to have to be the sound person as well. *Starts first processional music.*

OWEN brings in Ann Teek.

ANN: *(chuckling)* I can't believe that stuck up Kapulet clan is having the wedding in the reception hall. They are so worried about what other people think.

OWEN: Now Granny, they aren't all stuck up.

ANN: Are you sure you want to go through with this wedding? Marrying Ivana Bee Phree means Ellie Gant will be your mother-in-law.

OWEN: I'm sure I want to marry Ivana even if it means having Ellie Gant as a mother-in-law. Now promise me you won't tell any mean mother-in-law jokes at the reception.

ANN: (reluctantly) Do I have to? *(Owen nods)* Oh, alright.

PENNY: *(leaning over to chime in)* You know what they say, Granny, promises are like piecrust, made to be broken in. *(seeing ELLIE and NOAH and jerking her thumb towards them)* Speaking of the devil. *ELLIE and NOAH enter with their noses in the air)*

ELLIE: Whoever heard of a wedding in the reception hall! It's bad enough my daughter Ivana wants to marry a Munnygew, and a poor one at that,

NOAH: After all the money you spent seeing to it that she went to the right schools and joined the right clubs and associated with all the right people, like myself, the least she could have done was married the right person. This Owen Munnygew doesn't even own a car.

ELLIE: This is just one big mess. Noah, I sent for you to fix this situation. If only you had talked some sense into my daughter.

NOAH: Not to worry. I have a little surprise that will put an end to this idiocracy. You can count on me or my name's not Noah Count.

PAGE (carrying a book in the flower basket) enters, then FRAN hiccupping. ELLIE motions PAGE over and sends her to FRAN with a glass of water which PAGE gets from the head table. FERRIS escorts NATALIE. NATALIE waves like she is Miss America taking her victory walk. NATALIE collides with FRAN who has stopped to drink the water. Water goes everywhere.

FRAN: My new dress! Look what you did. You ruined my dress. *FERRIS tries to help but only makes matters worse. NATALIE's bracelet gets stuck on Fran's dress and they can't get it undone. OWEN tries to help and FRAN accidentally whacks him in the eye while NATALIE flirts with him. OWEN staggers away holding his eye. ANN starts to giggle and finally breaks out in a loud snorting laugh and PENNY laughs loudly as well. The preacher finally disentangles the two. The wedding party takes their places.*

PREACHER: Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to witness the vows between of Ivana Bee Phree and Owen Munnygew. Marriage is a covenant established by God and is to be respected by all. *Starts second processional music.*

ELLIE: *(if audience does not stand)* Stand up, you morons, my daughter's coming down the aisle. *(to NOAH)* They must have been brought up in a barn. *Nothing happens.*

PREACHER: *(to OWEN)* You better go see what's keeping the bride. *OWEN exits*

FRAN: *(to NOAH)* Are you waiting for me? Is it time? Should I say it now? *NOAH motions for her to be quiet. OWEN jogs back down and whispers to minister, a worried expression on his face. Gustov slowly makes his way in, wandering off to a table where he sits down with the guests.*

PREACHER: The bride is missing?

ELLIE: What do you mean, the bride is missing? *Fran gets the hiccups again.*

FRAN: This wedding is just too stressful. *Gets a brown bag from the flowers she is holding and begins breathing in it to avoid hyperventilating)*

PENNY: *(loud aside to the audience. PENNY means for ELLIE to overhear)* I would have been missing years ago if I'd been part of her dysfunctional family.

ELLIE: Who are you calling a dysfunctional family?

PENNY: Well if the shoe fits, wait for the other one to drop.

FRAN: I need another *hiccup* glass of water. *PAGE goes to get her one from the head table but Penny takes it from her before she can deliver it.*

NATALIE: (*chiding FRAN*) Be more careful this time – that’s a dry clean only dress. *Penny sneaks up behind FRAN, dumps water on her and yells Boo! to startle her. Water appears to have hit ELLIE who starts wiping it off of herself, looking horrified. Fran starts shrieking.*

FRAN: Why did you do that?

PENNY: Stopped your hiccups, didn’t it. *Fran nods*

ELLIE: (*irate*) Don’t you people have any decorum?

NATALIE: (*Cheerfully trying to be helpful*) I think most of the decorations were in that auditorium. It’s a real shame the electricity went off in there. I mean, who would have thought my curling iron could make that much smoke?

OWEN: (*interrupting*) Please. We need to figure out where Ivana is.

PREACHER: I’m sure there is a reasonable explanation. (*to GUSTOV*) What happened?

GUSTOV: She said she had to go.

ELLIE: Go where? *Gustuv shrugs*

FLOWER GIRL: Probably to the bathroom. I’ll go check. (*exits*)

FRAN: Maybe she’s in the bathroom throwing up. I do that sometimes when I get nervous. In fact, I think I’m going to throw up right now. (*exits and drags Natalie with her*)

ELLIE: Uncle Gustuv. Where did she go?

GUSTUV: (*shrugs*) I don’t know. No one ever tells me anything, they just boss me around. Uncle Gustuv, stand here. Uncle Gustuv, sit there. No one ever says Uncle Gustuv, would you like a sandwich.

ELLIE: (*to preacher*) Why did he have to pick this weekend to get Alzheimer’s?

OWEN: (*concerned, trying to get GUSTUV to remember*) Was something wrong? Did she say she had to go somewhere? To do something?

ELLIE: (*glaring at OWEN*) We can only hope she came to her senses. Uncle Gustuv, think. What happened?

PAGE: (*reentering*) She’s not in the bathroom. *PAGE goes to the table, sits down next to Uncle GUSTOV and starts to read. She will leave her basket and book behind when she leaves the table.*

NATALIE: (*reentering with FRAN*) Maybe she was abducted by aliens. I saw this one TV show...

OWEN: Natalie, stay focused. We have to figure out what happened to Ivana.

FERRIS: Maybe we should call the police.

ELLIE: The police! You don't think she's been kidnapped, do you?

NOAH: A rich, young, beautiful heiress... it could happen.

OWEN: Mr. Wynde. Think back to just before Ivana left. What happened?

GUSTUV: (*trying hard to remember*) I think I think (*seeming to remember something*) I think we should eat without her.

ELLIE: How can you think about food at a time like this?

GUSTUV: (*shrugs*) I always think better on a full stomach.

OWEN: Mr. Wynde, was anyone else around? Did Ivana leave with someone?

GUSTUV: Yes. (*everyone gasps*)

OWEN: Who?

GUSTUV: (*Shrugs*) Never saw him before in my life.

ELLIE: (*getting panicky*) Why didn't you mention this before?

NATALIE: (*enthralled*) She did get kidnapped. Now we just have to call Nick from CSI. He is soooo good looking. *Everyone begins asking questions all at once. Utter chaos erupts. Owen tried to quiet everyone down. Penny pulls a whistle out of her purse and whistles everyone quiet.*

GUSTUV: All I know is he gave me this note. *Pulls note from pocket. ELLIE tries to get it but can't because Gustuv is giving it to PREACHER.*

Preacher reads:

Something borrowed, something blue

Won't help find your next clue

Someone old, something knew

Pay up what you know is due

A wrong was done; to make it right

Solve the riddle by midnight

Pay the price, don't harbor spite

Or she'll be gone by morning light.

OWEN: It sounds like a ransom note except the kidnapper didn't ask for anything.

FERRIS: But it says something about “next clue”. Maybe we should be looking for a clue.

NOAH: Good luck, you two don’t look like you’ve had a clue your entire lives. *FERRIS starts after NOAH, fists up but OWEN reins him in.*

ELLIE: Something terrible has happened to her. I just know it. Come on, Noah, we have to find her. *Exits with NOAH, when almost out, sends NOAH back for GUSTOV, who is reading PAGE TURNER’S book. PENNY moseys up and gets the note. She signals to ANN to come up. NOAH tries halfheartedly gets GUSTOV to get up and follow, when GUSTOV ignores NOAH, NOAH throws up his hands and leaves without him. PAGE goes to GUSTOV’s table and leaves her book and basket by him while she gets him a snack or drink. GUSTOV opens her book and starts reading.*

OWEN: I’m going to call the police. *OWEN and best man exit*

FRAN: Ivana always was one for drama. Maybe she staged this whole thing.

NATALIE: I hope they send a cute officer. Let’s go check our makeup. *Exits with FRAN.*

PENNY: *(Reading)* “Someone old, something knew” – they spelled new with a “k”. “Pay up what you know is due”. What do you suppose this note is talking about?

ANN: You don’t suppose this has anything to do with the Kapulet – Munnygew feud, do you?

PENNY: Nobody has paid mind to that old feud generations. I forgot; what it was about?

ANN: Back in the 1800’s, before the civil War I think, my great-great- - a whole bunch of greats – grandmother – Anita Bath Munnygew got cheated out of a blue ribbon at the Coal County Fair. The clan always blamed Gustuv Wynde Kapulet.

PENNY: *(pointing to Gustuv)* Him?

ANN: Heavens no. His great-great –something or another grandfather. That’s what started the feud. After the coal mine collapsed there wasn’t really any of the menfolk to carry it on.

PENNY: Real shame how it crushed all those folks and left Owen an orphan. But he’s done real good for himself going to college and all. Once he gets his engineering degree, he’ll figure out a way to make mines safer.

ANN: I’m sure he will. He’s real smart. I just thought he’d bet smarter than to have Ellie Gant as a mother-in-law.

PENNY: You know what they say, love is blonde. Sure is a crying shame these folks put on a nice spread that’s just getting cold.

ANN: No sense letting it go to waste, unless it's my waist. *(they both laugh)* Somebody ought to say the blessing.

PREACHER: I agree. *Says blessing. MEAL is served. PAGE will get GUSTOV's meal for him then will pick up her book and basket to take her place at the head table.*

Scene 2

Cast members who feel comfortable can interact with audience asking if they have seen Ivana. The chairs for CAST GUESTS are arranged around tables. Prior to start of Scene 3, ELLIE, NOAH, GUSTOV are seated at the bride's side table, PENNY and ANN at the groom's side table. PAGE, FRAN, NATALIE are seated at HEAD TABLE, placed stage right. There is an empty seat by NATALIE. Give audience a warning to be seated, that the next scene will begin in 5 minutes, then two minutes.

Scene 3

OWEN and FERRIS enter. OWEN's suit coat is unbuttoned, tie undone like he has been working. If audience does not quiet down, PENNY should blow her whistle again.

OWEN: *(to an audience member or two)* Did anyone hear from or see Ivana?

FERRIS: *(to audience in general)* Don't worry. The police are sending someone.

NATALIE: *(excited)* I hope they send Niki Stokes from CSI.

(NATALIE waves and flirts with OWEN patting the seat next to her in invitation. OWEN pointedly ignores the invitation and instead sits with ANN and PENNY. Undeterred, NATALIE then succeeds at beckoning FERRIS who does sit next to her. When not directly involved in the dialogue NATALIE will flirt with FERRIS, check her makeup, file her nails. FRAN will look worried, fan herself and breathe in the bag.

NOAH: *(superiorly)* He's not an investigator, he's an actor.

NATALIE: I'm not surprised he went into acting since he's so good looking. Is he on TV or the movies?

NOAH: *(irritated and frustrated)* He IS on TV, on CSI!

NATALIE: *(confused)* I thought you said he quit CSI and became an actor. *NOAH just shakes his head in frustration over her stupidity.*

LAUREN: (*entering, getting everyone's attention*) May I have everyone's attention. I am Officer Lauren Norder. I'm here to investigate the missing bride, Ivana B. Phree. We're a little short handed tonight so I'm going to need each and every one of you to help me figure out if a crime has been committed and if so, who did it. In the case of missing persons, a life could be on the line.

PENNY: Office Lauren Norder, here's the ransom note. *Lauren takes it and reads it aloud.*

LAUREN: Who are you and how are you related to the missing bride?

PENNY: Penny Less.

LAUREN: I don't need to know your financial status. What's your name?

PENNY: Penny. Less. I'm a third cousin twice removed and somehow reattached to the groom, Owen Munnygew. Personally, I think Ivana was just marrying my cousin to spite her mother.

LAUREN: Ivana's mother didn't approve of them getting married.

PENNY: No way. She's madder than a wet cat on a hot tin roof sundae. Since she moved off the New York City, she thinks better than the rest of us.

LAUREN: Did your side of the family approve of this wedding?

ANN: We had some concerns.

LAUREN: Who are you?

ANN: I'm Ann Teek, grandmother of the groom. We thought possibly Ivana was just hitching up with Owen to spite her mother.

PENNY: That Ellie Gant is a control freak.

OWEN: (*interrupting*) Please. We need to focus on Ivana's disappearance.

LAUREN: Who are you?

OWEN: I'm Owen Munnygew. It's my fiancé who's missing.

LAUREN: How did you meet?

OWEN: At college.

ANN: (*interjecting*) He's studying to be an engineer. Remember when those Chilean miners were trapped for over two months? Owen gave the NASA scientists a design for rescue capsule. They hardly had to change a thing.

PENNY: He's as smart as a whippersnapper.

NOAH: If he was smart, he would have SOLD it, not given it away.

LAUREN: Are you sure Ivana didn't get cold feet?

NATALIE: I bet she did. She was wearing these cute little sandals with a 2 inch heel that we got at...
(stops when she sees how everyone is looking at her)

LAUREN: I meant change her mind. Could she have decided to call the wedding off?

NOAH: *(bragging)* Not likely. I did everything I could to dissuade her yesterday. If I can't change a girl's mind, no one can.

LAUREN: Did you try to force her to change her mind?

NOAH: Please. When you're as charming, good looking and from old money like I am, you don't need force. You have charisma. *Winks toward and points to audience.*

PENNY: I bet it's hard on you when it rains.

NOAH: *(self-satisfied)* You mean because sugar melts in the rain?

PENNY: No, because your big head won't fit under an umbrella. *NOAH's jaw drops, he'd like to retaliate but ...*

OWEN: Please stop bickering and focus on finding Ivana.

ANN: *(aside)* We don't want another Surfriider incident. *Lauren hears the comment and jots something down in her notebook*

LAUREN: Hold on. I need to figure out exactly who everyone is. *(points at ELLIE, then the others).*

ELLIE: I'm Ellie Gant, mother of the bride.

NOAH: I'm Noah Count. An old friend of the Gant's.

FRAN: And he used to date Ivana every time she needed an escort to the country club. I'm Fran Tick, bridesmaid.

LAUREN: *(to NOAH)* Were you still interested in Ivana?

NOAH: Who wouldn't be? She's rich and cute and did I mention well off?

PENNY: I heard him talking to Ellie when he walked her in. They were planning something.

ANN: I heard them too.

PENNY: He said, and I quote "Hopefully they'll never find out because our little surprise will put an end to this.

NOAH: I was only planning to talk her out of marrying beneath her station.

LAUREN: *(sternly)* That's not what it sounds like to me. Exactly what little surprise were you planning?

NOAH: It wasn't me – it was her! *(pointing at Fran who begins hiccupping)*

LAUREN: Yes?

FRAN: (*panicked*) It was his idea. (*pointing at NOAH. FRAN has to breathe in the bag a couple of times to calm herself before she can continue.*) When the preacher got to the part where he says “speak now or forever hold you’re peace” I was supposed to say I was already married to Owen. (*gasps all around*)

NATALIE: (*to Fran, stunned*) You’re married to Owen?

FRAN: Noah told me to say we got married in Vegas.

NATALIE: (*relieved*) Then it doesn’t count because what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas and this is Virginia Beach.

FRAN: (*nervously*) It was just a joke. (*looking around and seeing everyone glare at her*) I guess it wasn’t a very funny one.

OWEN: I’ve never married anyone. I’ve never even been engaged, except to Ivana. *LAUREN points to NATALIE*

NATALIE: (*excited*) I’m Natalie Drest, maid of honor! (*conspiratorially*) I dated Owen first. He studied too much so I broke up with him but I always intended to get back together once he graduated and could pay more attention to me. (*disappointed*) I guess that isn’t going to happen now.

LAUREN: So you would have motive to want to see Ivana out of the picture.

NATALIE: Oh, did the photographer get here? (*Primping her hair*) I don’t care if she’s in the pictures. I just wanted to marry Owen myself.

LAUREN: It was a figure of speech.

NATALIE: I’m not very good with figures. They’re a lot like numbers and there’s just too many of them. *LAUREN shakes her head and points to PAGE*

PAGE: Page Turner, flower girl.

FERRIS: Ferris Wheeler, Owen’s best man.

LAUREN: (*to ANN*) What was this surf rider incident you referred to? *ELLIE stands and starts to answer, (Feel free to substitute a local upscale restaurant name for Surf rider.)*

ELLIE: It was terrible...

ANN: (*Flaring with indignation*) She was talking to me, Ellie. *ELLIE is taken aback and sit abruptly.*

ANN: We had the thing they call a rehearsal dinner in that there fancy smancy restaurant. Things got a little heated and management asked us to leave.

ELLIE: It was humiliating. Officer, I never wanted her to marry this no-good, money grubbing descendent of a hillbilly who is up to his ears in debt. He's only interested in his hands on her money so he can start his own mining company. I have no intention of letting my daughter marry that... that... pauper!

LAUREN: What kind of money are we talking about?

ELLIE: Several million dollars. Part of a trust fund. Ivana received it on her 24th birthday. My first husband, Ivana's father, passed away in the Coal County mining accident many years ago. *(ELLIE starts to get choked up and can't continue. She pulls a hankie from her purse and dabs her eyes)*

OWEN: Coal County's main industry was the coal mine. Just about everyone worked there back in the day. I was just a boy when the accident happened. The mine collapsed killing nearly half the town. *PENNY is uncharacteristically serious, swallowing hard. It is obviously a painful memory for both ANN and ELLIE as well*

OWEN: My father and granddad died. But Granny stayed and she raised me.

ANN: Ever since he was knee high to a grasshopper, Owen has said he would one day figure out how to keep mines from collapsing so no one ever had to go through what we did. *ELLIE regains her composure.*

LAUREN: *(to ELLIE)* Your second husband?

ELLIE: Mr. Gant died of a heart attack.

PENNY: And left you sitting pretty in a Manhattan penthouse with all that money.

ELLIE: Don't forget I lost my family too. No amount of money can ever replace your family.

LAUREN: So all of you came down for the wedding?

ELLIE: I had no idea she planned to marry this grafter until three days ago. *(UNCLE GUSTOV begins nodding off)* She told me she had arranged this family reunion/vacation in Virginia Beach to celebrate her graduation from Vassar and her twenty-fourth birthday. I was looking forward to relaxing on the beach, shopping and wham! First, Ivana springs it on me that she's getting married. Then Uncle Gustov loses his mind. I guess the shock of it was too much for him. *UNCLE GUSTOV starts to awaken when his name is mentioned. His eyes fly open and he yells*

GUSTOV: Bingo! *(realizes he's said something wrong, furrows his brow, mutters loudly)* Never mind. Wrong church.

LAUREN: Who is Uncle Gustov?

ELLIE: (*ELLIE points to him and LAUREN and ELLIE move to him*) My uncle and Ivana's only male relative.

LAUREN: (*to GUSTOV*) When and where did you last see Ivana? (*During the following exchange GUSTOV is trying to eat. He'll just about get the bite to his mouth when he has to put it down to answer a question. ELLIE's facial expressions vacillate between hopefully hanging on every word, surprised and frustrated. At times, GUSTOV flinches like he thinks ELLIE may clobber him with her purse*)

GUSTOV: We were getting ready to come down the aisle and she said she had to go somewhere and we should eat without her.

LAUREN: She said that?

GUSTOV: Just the part about having to go somewhere. I threw in the eating part.

OWEN: Tell her about the man she left with.

GUSTOV: Man? I don't remember any man.

ELLIE: The one that gave you the note.

GUSTOV: Oh, that man. I don't remember him. So when are we going to eat? I'm hungry.

ELLIE: (*to Gustov*) You already did! (*to Lauren*) He's been like this ever since Ivan shocked him with the news. Forgets everything.

PENNY: (*aside to audience*) I probably would too if I was vacationing with her.

LAUREN: What did the man look like?

GUSTOV: (*Shrugs*) I didn't get a good look because I didn't have my glasses on.

ELLIE: You only need glasses to read.

LAUREN: Do the best you can. What did the man Ivana went off with look like? *GUSTOV looks around the room. His eyes stop on an audience member close to him and the front. It will be obvious to anyone paying attention that he is describing that person* He was (*fill in a hair, clothes, etc description of the audience member*)

LAUREN: Ivana left with this man after he gave her the note? (*GUSTOV nods affirmative and finally gets to eat that bite of food*)

PENNY: Officer, I think there's supposed to be another clue around here somewhere and I think this has something to do with the Munnygew-Kapulet feud.

LAUREN: What feud?

PENNY: (*deferring to ANN*) Ann Teek knows more about it than anyone else.

ANN: It happened a long, long time ago. Aunt Anita Bath Munnygew always won the blue ribbon and a \$50 prize for the pie baking contest. She was a widow and she and her family counted on that money. One summer, the original Gustav Wynde that that *Gustav (pointing at GUSTUV)* was named after, either ran off with or ate or somehow caused her entry to disappear and his mother won that year. That started the Munnygew-Kapulet feud. But it pretty much died out over the years. At least I thought it did.

PENNY: But listen to the poem. “Something borrowed, something blue” – sounds like that wedding poem, something borrowed, something blue, something wrinkled looks like you. *She stares pointedly at ELLIE who is visibly offended*

FRAN: It’s supposed to be something borrowed, something blue, something OLD (*pointing at ELLIE*) and something new.

PENNY: Whatever. “Won’t help find your next clue – so there’s probably another clue around here somewhere. Plus the “Someone old, something knew” – knew starts with a “k”, so that’s a clue. “Pay up what you know is due” – I think that’s the \$50, “A wrong was done; to make it right. Solve the riddle by midnight.”

OWEN: You think somebody kidnapped Ivana over a \$50 prize?

PENNY: I did a little calculating – Unlike some people (*stares at NATALIE*) I’m good with figures - and according to my calculations, \$50 compounded monthly at 7% for 100 years equals \$53,727.78

ELLIE: If you think for one moment I’m going to give you \$53 thousand dollars you are sadly mistaken. I demand you tell us what you did with Ivana. *ELLIE starts over to PENNY. She grabs her shoulders and starts to shake PENNY. LAUREN gets between them.*

LAUREN: You’re jumping to conclusion.

OWEN: Forget this petty feud. Can we please focus on getting Ivana back?

PAGE: Hey! Look what I found in my book! *Gives note to Lauren*

LAUREN: This might be the second clue. (*reading*) Ports (It wasn’t opened in Acts 8:32) Marina. Come alone. *Ad lib What’s that mean? Axe or Acts? Acts is spelled A-C-T-S.*

PREACHER: That must be a biblical reference. I have it right here. (*reads Acts 2:38 aloud*) *ad lib, Hmm, what does that mean? His mouth wasn’t opened. So Portsmouth marina, come alone?*

LAUREN: I get it. It is pronounced “Ports smith” – the Portsmouth Marina. I know that location. Maybe that is where Ivana is being held. But by itself, this clue doesn’t tell us much. Hmmm.

Sometimes a kidnapper will leave a series of clues to show off how smart he is. Ladies and gentlemen – I suggest all of you look around your tables, under your chairs to see if you find a clue of some sort. *(to PREACHER)* We might need Bibles in case there are more biblical references. *(PREACHER nods)* *Cast members spread out to assist tables in finding and solving the clues. PREACHER makes sure tables with clues 3-8 get Bibles. The clues are discovered under the chairs or hidden somewhere at each table. Cast members call Lauren over (in order). Lauren will read the clue or have an audience member read it. Asks the audience to help decipher the clue. See director's notes for further information.*

The clues are:

Ports *(it wasn't opened in Acts 8:32)* marina, come alone *(found in PAGE's book)*

To pier 2, flying *(how Christ died)* and bones

Your *(Rev 21:9 –who is being shown)* is tied up in a boat,

By *(# of apostles)* bells it won't float

It will *(Psalm 49:8, 7th word deleting the suffix)* a pretty penny

Mark 10:45, deleting many

1 Tim 2:6, deleting all

John 13:15; who'll take the fall?

During this time LAUREN will covertly get the audience member who fit the description of the mysterious man to trade seats with another man .After all 8 clues are found and read

LAUREN: Thank you for your help folks. Let's see if we can come up with a solution. I get the first five clues but these last three make no sense to me.

PENNY: I have a \$53,727.78 solution.

ELLIE: That's outrageous! I'm not going to give you Munnygews a dime.

PENNY: Drastic times call for drastic measurements. Besides, no one has proven it was a Munnygew – the kidnapper could be anyone.

OWEN: Ivana's safety is what's important, not money or this argument.

LAUREN: Exactly. Let's recap what was on each clue *(reads them in order)*

Portsmouth marina, come alone

To pier 2, cross and bones

Your bride is tied up in a boat,

By twelve bells it won't float

It will cost a pretty penny

Mark 10:45, deleting many

1 Tim 2:6, deleting all

John 13:15; who'll take the fall?

LAUREN: Two of these last three talk about a ransom but I still don't know ...

PREACHER: I think I see a pattern. Mark 10:45 and I Timothy 2:6 talk about a ransom and John 15:13, says "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." So it would seem to indicate the ransom is someone's life.

LAUREN: Yes, I think you're right. I believe Ivana is being held in a boat set to sink at midnight if the ransom isn't paid. (*OWEN stealthily exits*)

ELLIE: (*to Noah*) Noah, you head out to the marina immediately. Take my Bentley (*dangles keys at him*)

NOAH: I'm not going out there. I could get killed.

NATALIE: I bet Greg from CSI would go if he was here ... and he hadn't become an actor.

ELLIE: (*to Lauren*) Don't just stand there – go out to that marina and arrest someone.

LAUREN: The note says "come alone." If a SWAT team shows up, the kidnappers could sink the boat before we could figure out which boat she was on and save her. I know this marina – it's a hang out of the Russian mafia and a boat graveyard. It is a very dangerous place. We'll have to play along until we figure out exactly where she is.

ELLIE: I lost everyone in my immediate family in that coal mine accident. I have no intention of losing Ivana. Do something!

FRAN: Hey! Owen is gone.

ELLIE: Just what I thought! My daughter's life is in danger and he runs away. He was only interested in our money.

FERRIS: No mam. He's gone to save her. He gave me this when he asked to borrow my car keys. (*shows paper*) It says Song of Solomon 8: 6-7.

LAUREN: What does that mean?

PREACHER: It is from the Bible and was part of their wedding vows. I've got it right here. (*reading*) "Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its

jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one's house for love, it would be utterly scorned.” *(looks up from Bible)* Love, not money, is what really counts.

NATALIE: I bet he's headed out to the marina to save her. *(sighs)* He's that kind of a guy.

FERRIS: Yes, he borrowed my keys and told me that he would die in her place.

ELLIE: He's no hero! *(shaking Lauren)* Do something. Call the FBI! Call out the Navy Seals. Get my daughter back! *(Lauren walks over to GUSTOV, who is eating animal crackers out of his shirt pocket)*

LAUREN: Uncle Gustov, I need to ask you a couple more questions.

GUSTOV: *(Holds up a cracker)* It's ok. I can eat 'em because the seal wasn't broken. He was in one piece. *Lauren is not amused and continues.*

LAUREN: Tell me again, what the man who gave that note to Lauren looked like. *GUSTOV sneaks a peek at the man he thinks he described before and describes the man that is now in the seat. His descriptions will not match. Lauren will check her notes as he speaks.*

LAUREN: Are you sure he didn't have *(LAUREN will insert the description of the first man GUSTOV described)*

GUSTOV: No, he *(re-describes the second man who is now in the seat)* I'm positive.

LAUREN: Uncle Gustov, you seem to be describing the man sitting in this seat. *LAUREN will move to the man to show GUSTOV and the audience who the man is.* During desert I asked these two men to switch places. You seem to be describing whoever is sitting in this seat.

GUSTOV: *(panicked, not confused)* Coincidence! *(regaining some composure and acting confused)* I mean, maybe he was the man.

LAUREN: *(to the men)* Thank you for switching and helping crack this case. You can return to your original seats. Uncle Gustov, not only do your stories about the mystery man not match up, I noticed that you were reading a book earlier – even though you need reading glasses to read. You were “reading” Page Turner's book, the same book the second clue was found in.

PENNY: Uncle Gustov, I think you got some explaining to do.

GUSTOV: *(sounding in touch with reality for the first time)* I guess I do. Relax. Everything's under control – even if it's not under your control, Ellie. Ivana is just fine. In fact, she'll be here any minute so this wedding can take place. *(Everyone looks shocked except for GUSTOV and ANN)*

LAUREN: Go on.

GUSTUV: I was a little concerned about the girl's reasons for marrying Owen, as was Ann Teek.

ANN: We thought Ivana might just be rebelling against her mother. So we decided we'd run a little test to see if they truly loved each other.

NATALIE: How romantic!

PENNY: The two of you were in cahoots together? A Munnygew and a Kapulet? Will wonders never cease?

ANN: *(laughing)* We talked about the situation and set up the little spat at the restaurant. Everyone fell for it. Gustuv, I never imagined you were such a good actor. We decided to see what they would do if the other one's life were in danger.

GUSTUV: While you all were waiting for the bride's entrance, I arranged for Ivana to get a phone call threatening Owen's life if she went through with the wedding. The caller demanded she meet with them immediately. Ivana never hesitated. Dress and all, she took off, proving she truly cared about him.

ANN: *(very pleased)* And now Owen has proven himself by going to the marina.

ELLIE: The least you could have done was let the rest of us in. I was worried sick...

FRAN: Too much stress. I need *hiccup* glass of water. *PAGE and PENNY start to get her water, FRAN notices and says* Never mind, I'll get it myself. *(OWEN and IVANA appear in the doorway)*

OWEN: It's OK, everyone. Look who I found! *ELLIE marches over to the couple as they come into the scene.*

FERRIS: I knew Owen would come through.

ELLIE: Young man. I want to have a word with you. *(softens her tone)* I just want to say, I'm sorry for how I have acted and *(sticks hand out to shake OWEN's)* welcome to the family.

IVANA: Really, mom? You mean it.

ELLIE: Yes. Ivana, I only wanted what was best for what family I had left. When you told me he was in the mining business, all I could think of was you being a widow when he died in some accident.

IVANA: I love him, mom. But I wish I hadn't deceived you.

ELLIE: *(tenderly)* I forgive you. Besides, I might have been just a teeny weeny bit overbearing about this whole situation. *(ELLIE and IVANA embrace)*

ELLIE: Why is everyone just standing around. Get to your places. We have a wedding ceremony to preform! *Everyone erupts into activity. ANN licks her thumb to wipe a smudge off OWEN's cheek.*

ELLIE grabs him by the lapels to button up the jacket. PAGE and FRAN get IVANA in place, NATALIE checks her make up.

PREACHER: Dearly beloved, we are gathered her in the sight of God to join Ivana B. Phree and Owen Munnygew in holy matrimony. If there is any reason this couple should not be wed, speak now (*ELLIE and NATALIE cover FRAN's mouth, everyone else pointedly stares with disapproval then chuckle*) or forever hold your peace.

The Bible tells us greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. Owen loved Ivana enough to die for her. Like Owen, Christ's focus was on saving the bride, that's us, his church. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He died as a ransom to set us free so we could be his church, his spotless bride. I would love to talk to any of you after this ceremony if you'd like to know more about Christ's love for us.

(to Ivana) Ivana, do you take Owen to be your husband?

IVANA: I do.

PREACHER: Owen, do you take Ivana to be your wife?

OWEN: I do.

PREACHER: Then by the power vested in me, I pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride. *Starts processional music, Bride and groom exit with others following.*

Director's Notes

Tables for audience members can be decorated for a reception. We hid the clues inside of foldable place cards and numbered the tables. Cast members were assigned specific tables numbered 2-8 with the clues 2-8. Clue 2 should be found as quickly as possible while audience members can be given longer to discover the location of the rest of the clues. (holding up clue #2 and shouting "We have one over here!" can also work to get them to check the place cards.)

We found it helpful for the preacher to hold a Bible, premarked to the different scriptures. In addition, the scriptures were also written on a piece of paper in case the markers fell out or were misplaced. This prevented a possible lag in the show.

When casting Owen, consider that the Owen character represents Jesus to the audience. It is possible to double cast LAUREN and FERRIS by having FERRIS announce at the beginning of scene 3 that an officer cannot be spared for some time and as an off duty (deputy, military investigator, Texas Ranger, whatever) he will conduct the investigation until they arrive. FERRIS then takes LAUREN's lines and his remaining lines then can be assigned to PENNY.

Please feel free to contact me at kathyfoolforchrist@gmail.com for any additional questions of copies of publicity/pictures.