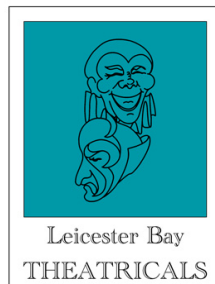


PERUSAL SCRIPT

DEATH ON DECK

by Jim Christian

A CHAMELEON'S MURDER MYSTERY



Salt Lake City

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DEATH ON DECK

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CAST OF CHARACTERS: (5M 3W)

HORATIO DUPONT – CAPTAIN OF THE CRUISE SHIP, **S.S. ENCHANTMENT** – FROM A LONG LINE OF WEALTHY SEAFARERS – CHARMING – IMAGE CONSCIOUS – DETERMINED – A BORN LEADER – LESS COMPETENT THAN HIS IMAGE SUGGESTS

JANICE JOHNSON – CRUISE DIRECTOR FOR THE **S.S. ENCHANTMENT** – METICULOUS AND WELL PUT TOGETHER – INFATUATED WITH CAPTAIN DUPONT – HAS SERVED DUTIFULLY FOR FIFTEEN YEARS – GROWING SEXUALLY IMPATIENT

DAEDALUS – PIRATE CAPTAIN OF **THE SERPENT’S CURSE** – POWERFUL AND CRUEL – HIS RUTHLESS METHODS HAVE EARNED HIM THE TITLE “SCOURGE OF THE SEVEN SEAS” – AN EXCELLENT FIGUREHEAD – NEEDS TO BE SURROUNDED BY A CREW POSSESSING THE QUALITIES HE LACKS...COURAGE AND COMMON SENSE

RAMUS THE DOLT – RECKLESS PIRATE – HIS MIND CAN ONLY HANDLE ONE TRACK AT A TIME – MENTALLY INEPT – DOES MUCH OF DAEDALUS’ DIRTY WORK FOR HIM – EASILY MANIPULATED – AN IMPULSIVE BLABBERMOUTH

FITZGERALD “FITZ” MALLOY – BOOKISH PIRATE – THE BRAINS OF THE CREW – WELL-SPOKEN AND SMOOTH – MANAGES TO AVOID MOST OF THE FIGHTING AND HARD WORK – NOT A TEAM PLAYER – WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, HE DISAPPEARS

LIGHTFINGER LIZ – FEMALE PIRATE – FORMER NOBLEWOMAN – DISOWNED FOR STEALING FROM HER PEERS – THRILLSEEKER – NICKNAMED “THE DUCHESS” – LOVES HER LIFE AS A PIRATE – A GREAT FIGHTER AND COMPETITOR

SALTY PIERRE – PIRATE SCUM – ABUSIVE AND RAUNCHY – A STRANGER TO HYGIENE – MONEY-GRUBBING AND GLUTTONISH – TAKES EVERYTHING HE CAN GET HIS HANDS ON – LOVES TO MENACE WOMEN WHO FIND HIM REPULSIVE

LENORA PRITCHARD – DAUGHTER OF THE EARL OF WEATHERLY – BEING HELD CAPTIVE ABOARD THE SERPENT’S CURSE – FIERY AND STRONG-WILLED – DETERMINED TO GAIN HER FREEDOM – SURPRISINGLY ATHLETIC

SETTING

THE SPECIAL “HALLOWEEN CRUISE” ABOARD THE **S.S. ENCHANTMENT** THROUGH THE CARIBBEAN

DEATH ON DECK *A CHAMELEON’S MURDER MYSTERY* by Jim Christian **Characters:**

5m 3w Synopsis: An unpredictable Caribbean cruise goes haywire when voodoo conjures up a band of 18th century pirates whose mutinous plan leads to murder and mayhem for passengers and crew alike. (**ORDER #3083**)

1 -- COCKTAILS:

(DURING COCKTAILS, HORATIO AND JANICE GREET EACH OF THE GUESTS AS THEY ARRIVE. BINGO CARDS ARE HANDED OUT – POSSIBLY BON VOYAGE STREAMERS. A GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF FRIVOLITY SHOULD PERVADE.)

2 -- AFTER COCKTAILS:

HORATIO: *(AT THE MICROPHONE, BLOWING BOSUN'S WHISTLE)* AHOY THERE, MATES! WELCOME ABOARD THE S.S. ENCHANTMENT. I'M CAPTAIN HORATIO DUPONT AND FOR THE NEXT 7 DAYS AND 6 NIGHTS, I'LL BE NAVIGATING THIS SHIP THROUGH SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WATERS THE CARIBBEAN HAS TO OFFER. AND AT MY SIDE WILL BE YOUR DELIGHTFUL CRUISE DIRECTOR, MISS JANICE JOHNSON.

JANICE: *(STEPPING TO THE MIC)* THANK YOU, CAPTAIN DUPONT. HELLO AGAIN, EVERYONE. HOPEFULLY BY THIS TIME, I'VE HAD A CHANCE TO PERSONALLY MEET AND GREET EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU, AND IF I HAVE MISSED SOMEONE, PLEASE DON'T FEEL LEFT OUT. BY THE END OF THE WEEK, I KNOW THAT WE'LL BE FAST FRIENDS AND NAME ALL OF OUR CHILDREN AFTER EACH OTHER

HORATIO: NOW BECAUSE THIS IS OUR SPECIAL "HALLOWEEN CRUISE," *(OR APPROPRIATE HOLIDAY/TIME OF YEAR)* WE HAVE MORE THAN OUR REGULAR SHARE OF EXCITING ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS.

JANICE: BESIDES OUR NORMAL ITINERARY OF SIGHTSEEING AT EACH PORT OF CALL, OUR STOP IN HAITI WILL INCLUDE A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME VISIT TO SOME ACTUAL VODOO GROUNDS. WON'T THAT BE EXCITING?

HORATIO: AND REMEMBER, WE'LL BE CAPPING OFF THE WEEK WITH OUR MASQUERADE BALL.

JANICE: YES, AND DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD SHOW EVERYONE WHAT FIRST PRIZE IS GOING TO BE FOR THE COSTUME CONTEST?

HORATIO: CERTAINLY.

(PRODUCING PENDANT FROM POCKET)

THIS IS A GENUINE, ANTIQUE VODOO AMULET, APPRAISED AT OVER \$500. IT WAS DISCOVERED BY DIVERS OFF THE COAST OF ST. THOMAS.

JANICE: *(TAKING IT FROM HORATIO)* NOW, WOULDN'T THIS BE THE PERFECT SOUVENIR OF YOUR CARIBBEAN HOLIDAY? WHO KNOWS WHAT "WITCHCRAFT" YOU COULD PERFORM WITH THIS? IT EVEN HAS AN INSCRIPTION. CAPTAIN, WOULD YOU HELP ME OUT?

(HOLDS THE AMULET FOR HIM TO READ)

YOUR "FRENCH" IS SO MUCH BETTER THAN MINE.

HORATIO: (*PULLING OUT HIS GLASSES*) WELL, IT'S A LITTLE RUSTY, BUT HERE GOES...
(*READING*)

..."DES ESPRITS CAPTIF DES TENEBRES, AVEC CES PAROLES, EVOQUEZ-VOUS DE CE MALEFICE."

(*SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS BEGIN TO DIM AND THE HOWLING OF THE WIND IS HEARD*)

JANICE: (*UNEASILY*) CAPTAIN, WHAT EXACTLY DID THAT MEAN?

HORATIO: (*AS THE DARKNESS GROWS AND THE STORM INCREASES, HE BEGINS TO PANIC*) ...UM...UM..."CAPTIVE SPIRITS...OF THE DARKNESS...WITH THESE WORDS...EVOKE YOURSELVES...FROM THIS...CURSE"

(*AS HE SPEAKS THESE LAST WORDS, THE LIGHTS BLACK OUT, THE STORM PEAKS, AND ACCOMPANIED BY ALL OF THE SPECIAL EFFECTS AVAILABLE, THE PIRATE CREW OF THE SERPENT'S CURSE TUMBLES NOISILY INTO THE ROOM, LANDING IN A HEAP*)

PIERRE: (*SPEAKING OUT OF THE CONFUSION*) OH! I CANNOT BELIEVE IT. SOLID GROUND AT LAST.

LENORA: (*TO RAMUS*) LET ME GO, YOU BRUTE!
(*SHE CLUBS HIM ALONGSIDE THE HEAD AND MAKES A BREAK FOR IT*)

RAMUS: OW! NOT SO FAST, MISSY!
(*HE TACKLES HER*)

DAEDALUS: DON'T LET HER GET AWAY.

FITZGERALD: (*SPYING THE CHANDELIER*) WELL, WOULDJA TAKE A LOOK AT THAT ?

JANICE: NOW, PEOPLE, I CERTAINLY DON'T WANT TO SPOIL THE SPIRIT OF FUN, BUT THE COSTUME PARTY ISN'T UNTIL THURSDAY.

LIZ: OH, YER A FINE ONE TO BE TALKIN'...

DAEDALUS: WHERE ARE WE?

HORATIO: (*TAKING CHARGE*) NEVER MIND THAT. WHO ARE YOU?

DAEDALUS: (*DRAWING HIS SWORD*) DON'T GET PUSHY, YA PANTYWAIST. REMEMBER WHO YER TALKIN' TO.

HORATIO: (*INSISTENT*) I DON'T KNOW WHO I'M TALKING TO!

DAEDALUS: WHAT?!!

FITZGERALD: BEGGIN' YER PARDON, CAPTAIN, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE THE GENTLEMEN HAS A CLUE AS TO YER IDENTITY.

DAEDALUS: (*AFTER A BEAT*) OH.
(*ROARING*)

I...AM...DAEDALUS!...

(AT A LOSS)

FITZGERALD: *(COACHING)* CAPTAIN OF THE...

DAEDALUS: *(PICKING UP THE THREAD)*...CAPTAIN OF THE SERPENT'S CURSE...

FITZGERALD: THE MOST FEARED...

DAEDALUS: ...THE MOST FEARED BUCCANEER IN THE WORLD!

FITZGERALD: THEY CALL ME...

DAEDALUS: ...THEY CALL ME "THE SCOURGE OF THE SEVEN SEAS"!!!

(LOOKS AT FITZ WHO GIVES HIM A REASSURING NOD)

LIZ: (TO HORATIO) AND JUST WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

HORATIO: MADAME, I AM CAPTAIN HORATIO DUPONT.

DAEDALUS: YOU...A CAPTAIN?

(THE PIRATES ALL LAUGH DERISIVELY)

LIZ: A CAPTAIN OF WHAT?

HORATIO: OF THIS LUXURY LINER, THE S.S. ENCHANTMENT

LIZ: *(MOCK IMPRESSED)* OOOOH! AND JUST WHAT THE DEVIL IS A "LUXURY LINER?"

HORATIO: IT'S A PASSENGER SHIP...FOR TAKING LONG OCEAN VOYAGES.

LENORA: THEN, CAPTAIN, I DEMAND THAT YOU FETCH YOUR SHIP AT ONCE AND RETURN ME TO MY FATHER.

HORATIO: AND EXACTLY WHO ARE YOU?

LENORA: *(STAMPING RAMUS' FOOT AND BREAKING FREE)* LENORA PRITCHARD, DAUGHTER OF THE FOURTH EARL OF WEATHERLY. I WAS CAPTURED BY THESE BRIGANDS AND HELD HOSTAGE SINCE...SINCE...SINCE I CAN'T REMEMBER SINCE. NOW TAKE ME TO YOUR SHIP.

HORATIO: BUT YOU'RE ALREADY STANDING ON IT.

LENORA: WHAT?!!

PIERRE: ZUT ALORS!

DAEDALUS: THIS AIN'T NO SHIP.

LIZ: LOOKS MORE LIKE A BLEEDIN' PALACE.

RAMUS: I THINK IT'S PRETTY.

FITZGERALD: TELL ME...

(INDICATING THE CHANDELIER)

...HOW DO YOU LIGHT ALL THEM CANDLES ON THAT SNIGGLEFRITZ?

HORATIO: *(HAVING HAD ENOUGH)* ALL RIGHT. YOU'VE HAD YOUR LITTLE JOKE BUT IT'S

GONE TOO FAR. MISS JOHNSON, HAVE THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER RADIO SHORE PATROL TO COME AND PICK UP THESE STOWAWAYS.

LIZ: STOWAWAYS? YOU BROUGHT US HERE.

PIERRE: I'VE NEVER STOWED AWAY IN MY LIFE.

JANICE: I'M SORRY, BUT I CHECKED IN EVERY TICKETED PASSENGER PERSONALLY AND I DON'T REMEMBER A SINGLE ONE OF YOU.

FITZGERALD: JUST A MOMENT...

(TO HORATIO)

WHAT DID YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAID "RADIO?"

HORATIO: I MEANT FOR SOMEONE TO CALL ON THE RADIO TO HAVE YOU PICKED UP. YOU KNOW – SHIP-TO-SHORE?

(THEY ALL STARE BLANKLY)

LIKE CALLING ON THE TELEPHONE?

RAMUS: WHAT'S A "TELEPHONE?"

HORATIO: *(TO FITZ)* WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?

FITZGERALD: YOU TELL ME. I'M STILL WAITIN' TO FIND OUT WHAT A "TELEPHONE" IS?

JANICE: GOOD HEAVENS, DON'T THEY HAVE TELEPHONES WHERE YOU COME FROM?

FITZGERALD: *(WITH INCREASED FRUSTRATION)* WELL, NOT KNOWIN' WHAT ONE OF THE BLAMED THINGS IS, IT'S PRETTY DIFFICULT TO TELL YOU WHETHER OR NOT WE'VE GOT THEM.

JANICE: *(DEMONSTRATING)* YOU KNOW – YOU PICK IT UP, PUNCH THE NUMBERS, AND TALK TO SOMEONE ON THE OTHER END.

FITZGERALD: *(ALARMED)* NOW WHY WOULD I WANT TO BE TALKIN' TO SOMEONE'S OTHER END?

HORATIO: YOU IDIOT! A TELEPHONE. LIKE A TELEVISION.

(HE IS MET WITH BLANK STARES)

A TELEGRAPH? TELEMARKETING? GOOD GRIEF. THIS ISN'T THE 1800'S, YOU KNOW.

DAEDALUS: WELL, OF COURSE WE KNOW THAT. AND IF YOU WANT TO LIVE TO SEE 'EM, YOU'LL KEEP A CIVIL TONGUE IN YOUR HEAD.

HORATIO: LIVE TO SEE WHAT?

DAEDALUS: THE 1800'S. OF COURSE, YOU'LL PROBABLY BE DEAD LONG BEFORE THEN.

HORATIO: WHAT?

FITZGERALD: DON'T BE PREPOSTEROUS. THE 19TH CENTURY ENDED OVER 100 YEARS AGO.

HORATIO: THE YEAR IS [CURRENT YEAR]

DAEDALUS: WHAT?

LIZ: Y'SEE...HE'S A LUNATIC?

PIERRE: MONSIEUR, THE YEAR IS 1702.

JANICE: OH, NO. IT'S [CURRENT YEAR]

PIERRE: ARE YOU SURE?

JANICE: [CURRENT YEAR]

ALL PIRATES/LENORA: *(AFTER A LONG TAKE TO ONE ANOTHER) ARRRGGGGHHHH!!!
(THEY ALL BEGIN FRANTICALLY RUNNING BACK AND FORTH)*

DAEDALUS: HE-E-E-E-EELP!!!!

PIERRE: C'EST IMPOSSIBLE!

RAMUS: BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MUTI --...

(HE IS STOPPED BY A QUICK SMACK FROM FITZ)

LIZ: I TOLD YOU THAT WOMAN WAS A WITCH.

LENORA: OH, NOW I'LL NEVER SEE MY FATHER AGAIN.

PIERRE: AH, THE WITCH. WHEN I FIND HER AGAIN I'LL SLIT HER UP THE GULLET.

JANICE: WHAT WITCH?

HORATIO: STOP IT! STOP IT!

(HE BLOWS THE BOSUN'S WHISTLE)

EVERYONE JUST SETTLE DOWN. NOW, I WANT TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS. ALL RIGHT, YOU SAY THAT SOMETHING HAS BROUGHT YOU HERE AGAINST YOUR WISHES...CORRECT?

ALL PIRATES/LENORA: CORRECT.

PIERRE: IT WAS THAT WITCH.

ALL PIRATES: AYE!

JANICE: WHICH WITCH?

PIERRE: HER NAME IS POLYMNIA AND SHE THREATENED TO PUT A CURSE UPON US.

JANICE: WHY?

PIERRE: BECAUSE...BECAUSE...

(ALL PIRATES LOOK AT EACH OTHER WITH EMBARRASSMENT)

FITZGERALD: BECAUSE WE KILLED HER CAT.

JANICE: WHAT?

LIZ: WE KILLED HER RUDDY CAT!

JANICE: HOW?

FITZGERALD: WE WERE JUST HAVIN' A LITTLE GAME OF "SWAT THE KITTY" AND IT GOT A BIT OUT OF CONTROL...

RAMUS: *(TO PIERRE)* IT WAS ALL YOUR FAULT.

PIERRE: CE N'EST PAS MA FAUTE!

RAMUS: USING AN ANCHOR WAS CHEATING!

PIERRE: T'ES BETE – FICHE MOI LA PAIX!

HORATIO: *(REGAINING CONTROL)* THAT'S ENOUGH! THIS IS ALL VERY FASCINATING BUT I THINK WE'RE GETTING OFF TRACK. NOW, WHAT YEAR TO YOU THINK THIS IS?

ALL PIRATES/LENORA: 1702

HORATIO: *(METHODICALLY)* THAT'S WRONG. IT'S [CURRENT YEAR]
(ASSORTED WHIMPERS FROM THE PIRATES AND LENORA)

NOW, YOU THINK YOU'VE BEEN SENT HERE BECAUSE OF A WITCH'S CURSE, CORRECT?

ALL PIRATES/LENORA: CORRECT.

HORATIO: AND YOU'RE ALL PIRATES...CORRECT?

ALL PIRATES/LENORA: *(LENORA BEGINS TO PROTEST BUT THINKS BETTER OF IT)* CORRECT.

FITZGERALD: *(AFTER A PAUSE)* AND WHAT DO PIRATES DO BEST?

ALL PIRATES: *(AFTER A BEAT)* TAKE OVER THE SHIP!!!

(WITH A SHOUT, THEY ALL BEGIN RUSHING ABOUT. DURING THE ENSUING ACTION, FITZ PUTS A KNIFE TO HORATIO'S THROAT, PIERRE DRAGS JANICE OVER AND BLOCKS THE EXIT, DAEDALUS GRABS LENORA AND ASCENDS ONE OF THE CENTRAL TABLES, AND LIZ AND RAMUS EACH TAKE CAPTIVE A GUEST OF THE OPPOSITE SEX.)

DAEDALUS: *(STRIKING A TRIUMPHANT POSE)* HA-HA-HA!!! AH, IT FEELS GOOD TO BE BACK.

LIZ: OH YES, CAPTAIN!

DAEDALUS: AFTER BEING OUT OF CIRCULATION FOR ALMOST 30 YEARS...

FITZGERALD: 300...

DAEDALUS: ...300 YEARS, I FEEL MORE ALIVE THAN EVER.

(TO THE CROWD)

ALRIGHT, YOU SCURVY LOT, THESE ARE YOUR NEW COMMANDERS...

(INTRODUCING HIS CREW)

..."FITZ" MALLOY...LIGHTFINGER LIZ...SALTY PIERRE...AND RAMUS THE DOLT.

(TO THE CREW)

AND DON'T FORGET YOU'LL STILL BE TAKING ORDERS FROM ME...

(STALLED)

FITZGERALD: DAEDALU...

DAEDALUS: DAEDALUS, "THE SCOURGE OF THE SEVEN SEAS!" NOW, WHAT SHALL WE DO FIRST?

RAMUS: KILL THE WOMEN!!!

ALL: NO!!!

DAEDALUS: NO.

(WITH A FLASH OF INSPIRATION)

WE SET SAIL FOR THE WEST INDIES – TONIGHT!

HORATIO: BUT THAT'S WHERE WE WERE ALREADY GOING.

DAEDALUS: *(SLIGHTLY DISAPPOINTED)* OH. WELL, THEN...WE'LL DO THE NEXT BEST THING.

RAMUS: KILL THE WOMEN!!!

DAEDALUS: NO! WE'LL HOIST THE...

FITZGERALD: FLAG...

DAEDALUS: ...FLAG AND TURN THIS INTO A TRUE PRIVATE....

FITZGERALD: PIRATE

DAEDALUS: PIRATE VESSEL.

PIRATES: AYE, AYE, CAPTAIN!

DAEDALUS: *(TO THE CROWD)* SO WHAT I WANT EACH OF YA TO DO IS...IS...

LIZ: ...PARK YOUR CARCASS AT ONE OF THE TABLES...

PIERRE: ...FILL YOUR BELLIES UNTIL THEY BURST...

FITZGERALD: ...DON'T TRY ANYTHING FUNNY...

RAMUS: ...KILL THE WOMEN!!!

DAEDALUS: ...AND JOIN US IN A PIRATE CHANTY.

(SINGING)

**OH, I HATE TO BE
ON THE ROLLING SEA
WITH AN EYE AND A MIND THAT'S CLEAR**

ALL:

**SO SLAP YOUR BUM
AND DRINK SOME RUM
UNTIL YOU'RE FLAT ON YOUR REAR.**

(DURING THE REMAINING VERSES, THE GUESTS ARE USHERED TO THEIR SEATS)

PIERRE:

**I'M MALCONTENT
IF I AM SENT
TO SAIL WITH A SOBER MAN**

ALL:

**SO SLAP YOUR BUM
AND DRINK SOME RUM
UNTIL YOU'RE FLAT ON YOUR CAN."**

LIZ:

**"WHO'D WANT TO FLOAT
IN A LEAKY BOAT
WITH A TOTALLY EMPTY GUT?**

ALL:

**SO SLAP YOUR BUM
AND DRINK SOME RUM
UNTIL YOU'RE FLAT ON YOUR BUTT."**

FITZGERALD:

**"NOW THE OCEAN BLUE
IS YOUR ONLY VIEW
'TIL YOU SPOT AN OCCASIONAL WHALE**

ALL:

**SO SLAP YOUR BUM
AND DRINK SOME RUM
UNTIL YOU'RE FLAT ON YOUR TAIL."**

RAMUS:

**"THEN YOU KILL THE WOMEN AND KILL THE WOMEN
AND THEN YOU FILL YOUR GLASS**

ALL:

**SO SLAP YOUR BUM
AND DRINK SOME RUM
UNTIL YOU'RE FLAT ON YOUR ..."**

ALL:

"OHHHHH..."

DAEDALUS:

**"AND A BUCCANEER
HAS A LIFE THAT'S DREAR
AND A FUTURE THAT'S HORRIBLY BLACK**

ALL:

**SO SLAP YOUR BUM
AND DRINK SOME RUM
UNTIL YOU'RE FLAT ON YOUR BACK."**

(RAUCOUS PIRATICAL CHORTLING)

DAEDALUS: ALL RIGHT, NOW. I WANT YOU ALL TO CHOW DOWN AND LOOSEN YOUR BELTS,
'CAUSE YOU'RE PART OF MY CREW NOW –

(TO HORATIO)

– AND THAT GOES DOUBLE FOR YOU, YA PANTYWAIST. GOT IT?

(HORATIO NODS RAPIDLY)

EAT HEARTY!

(ALL DINE)

3 -- DINNER:

4 -- AFTER DINNER

5 -- RAMBLES

6 -- RESOLUTION

7 -- CURTAIN CALL

8 -- ANNOUNCEMENT OF MASTER SLEUTH

14 pages fill out the script