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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **MONDAY ALWAYS LEADS TO MURDER**

**A Play in Two Acts**  
**by**  
**PAT COOK**



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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## Clues and Red Herrings

If the audience-participation aspect of the play is being utilized, the following “clues” are needed to be examined by the audience on Harry’s desk:

1. A patch of papyrus with hieroglyphics on it.

2. A jeweled brooch.

3. An Egyptian dagger with a thick handle.

4. Another Egyptian dagger, similar but not identical to the first. A pawnshop tag is attached to this one with a word handwritten on it. It spells PADDOCK but is scrawled in such a manner as to look like PADLOCK.

5. A tag for a delivery with the word BARNSTABLE written on it.

6. A piece of plain paper pasted with words from newspapers. This message reads: “Leave the cursed ones to their graves, all but one. He who opens the door lets out the curse, the same curse unleashed by the Barnstables. The curse brought about by the Private Eye.”

Also, since this is Harry’s desk, other items may be added, such as an IOU, a deck of cards, a scribbled note on a pad, etc.

# MONDAY ALWAYS LEADS TO MURDER

A Play in Two Acts

For 9 men and 5 women, or 6 men and 4 women

## CHARACTERS

HORACE BARNSTABLE . . . A posh gentleman in his late 30s.

DELBERT BARNSTABLE . . . Horace's brother, slightly older.

MARGUERITTE BARNSTABLE . . . . . Sister to the others,  
slightly younger.

HARRY MONDAY. . . . A wise-cracking, Sam Spade wannabe.

COURTNEY DELECROIX . . . . A shady lady in her late 20s.

PEARL VAN BEESLEY. . . . A bossy, producer type in her 40s.

MILDRED BANNISTER . . . . A mousy woman in her mid-30s.

OFFICER BROGAN . . . . . A harried police detective.

POP . . . . . An elderly, "knows-all" janitor.

ASSAM HAMMADAN . . . . . An Egyptian museum curator,  
around 45.

SOL JOHAR . . . . . Harry's pal, a pawnshop owner.

DESMOND SLOAN . . . . A rather nervous actor in his mid-30s.  
(also shows up as BURGLAR ONE)

VERONICA REYNOLDS. . . A young actress, who's a bit nosy.

BURGLAR. . . . . A burglar, not too swift.

TIME: The mid-50s or may be done in the present.

PLACE: Harry's dingy office.

Double casting may allow actors to essay more than one role. A suggestion would be the following:

ACTOR 1 - HORACE, ASSAM, BURGLAR

ACTOR 2 - DELBERT, DESMOND

ACTRESS - MARGUERITTE, VERONICA

In this way, 10 players may portray 14 roles.

## ACT ONE

**SETTING:** *A rather run-down office belonging to HARRY MONDAY. Long past its prime, the decor speaks volumes about its occupant. The progress of the peeling wallpaper is only impeded by an occasional photo or news clipping tacked haphazardly around the room. Overflowing file cabinets and bookshelves are placed with no apparent plan.*

*There are three doors seen, occasionally, when not covered by coats, files or piles of newspapers. The first door, L, leads to the outside hall. The second door, UL, leads to HARRY's inner office—in other words, his bedroom. The third door, UR, is a closet/file room/hideout. There are two large but dusty windows located on the R wall; one is always open and has been for years.*

*The furniture is a motley collection of leftovers from other tenants, garage sales and tradeoffs from some of HARRY's bankrupt clients. His desk is facing the L door, parallel to the R windows. On top of it, among the old bills, notes, bar tabs and files, is an old typewriter and telephone. There is a desk chair behind it and an occasional chair in front of it. Further into the room, almost C, is a beaten couch and coffee table; on the table are several old magazines HARRY got from the dentist's of-*



*fic down the hall. There is a small table on the U wall, which holds a coffee pot, cups and spoons. A standing hat rack is located near the L door, even though HARRY seldom takes his hat off.*

AT RISE: *As the play begins it is twenty years earlier, long before HARRY took up residence. Selective LIGHTS come up to reveal three elderly people, DC, chatting and drinking champagne. They are obviously rich and influential. DELBERT holds up a glass. MARGUERITTE and HORACE clink their glasses with his.*

DELBERT. Well, we pulled it off. All the plans came to fruition.

HORACE. As I predicted.

MARGUERITTE. Yes, Horace, but you still have the little trinket, right?

HORACE. It's in a safe place.

MARGUERITTE. To the Barnstables. *(She and DELBERT drink.)*

HORACE. I must admit I didn't think that young Sam would work out so well.

DELBERT. We hand-picked him, didn't we?

MARGUERITTE. To the Private Eye! *(She and DELBERT drink again.)*

DELBERT. Good stuff.

HORACE. It is, rather.

MARGUERITTE. Yes. It's got quite a kick. *(She quickly grabs her throat and speaks quietly.)* Ow. *(She slumps on the couch, dead. The other two look at her and then at each other.)*

HORACE. Delbert?

DELBERT. Yes, Horace?

HORACE. I believe Margueritte just died.

DELBERT. So it seems. Must've been something she drank. *(He brings the glass to his lips again and then stops.)* Wait.

HORACE. Oh, let's not let it dampen the party.

DELBERT. If she drank this champagne...and I drank this champagne...bad show! *(He falls on the couch and dies.)*

HORACE. Well! *(He rubs his hand together.)* I must be going. *(He looks down.)* Don't get up. *(He crosses to the L door and opens it.)* What're YOU doing here? *(A shot rings out. HORACE closes the door and looks out.)* Oh, THAT! *(He falls to the floor, dead, and the LIGHTS dim out.)*

*(In the darkness, a solo saxophone plays a melancholy tune. Then HARRY speaks.)*

HARRY. Voice-over. The city lay quiet like a sleeping panther. Dark. Seething. Ready to pounce if awakened suddenly. I know this city like the back of my hand. Dirty. Smelly. The city, not my hand. Not that I don't get my hands dirty once in a while. Dirty from turning over rocks and having to do business with what crawls out from under. It's part of my job. Name's Monday. Harry Monday. I'm a private eye. Lights come up. *(LIGHTS come up to reveal HARRY sitting at his typewriter and reading the page. He smiles.)* This is great stuff. *(He yells out the window.)* Hey, I'm trying to work up here! *(The saxophone music stops.)*

MAN'S VOICE *(offstage)*. Sorry!

*(HARRY takes a pull from the whiskey bottle on his desk and puts it back. He starts typing.)*

HARRY. Let's see, the... YAAHOOEEEEUUCH! (*He smacks his lips, picks up the bottle again and reads the back label.*) "Mix with anything, please!" (*He replaces the bottle and begins typing.*) The hot breath of the street wrapped around me like a foul overcoat as I sat late that night in my office. Then she arrived. The rusty hinges of my office door screamed their apology and SHE slinked in. (*The L door creaks opens and COURTNEY slinks in.*) She was equipped like a well-stocked bar and I was just about to get drunk. She swiveled her way over to my desk with a step you can't learn at Arthur Murray's. (*COURTNEY moves to his desk and sits in the chair.*) After oozing into a chair, she leaned over and said—  
COURTNEY (*leaning over the desk*). Mr. Monday, I need you.

HARRY (*without looking up*). "Mr. Monday, I need y—" (*He stops and slowly looks at her. He shakes his head, picks up the whiskey bottle and lobs it out the window.*)

COURTNEY. My name is Courtney Delecroix and I would like to hire you, sir.

HARRY. Huh? (*He looks back at her.*)

MAN'S VOICE. Hey!

(*Without taking his eyes off COURTNEY, HARRY "waves him off" and jumps to his feet.*)

HARRY. You're real?

COURTNEY. Well, most of me.

HARRY. That's okay, I don't take off points for originality.

VOICE (*offstage*). Thank you!

HARRY (*yells back*). Shut up! (*He moves the typewriter to the side of the desk.*) So. Can I do you out of some serious money? I mean, how can I help you?

COURTNEY. I hope I'm not interrupting anything. (*She indicates his typewriter.*)

HARRY. Darlin', you could interrupt a stampede. (*He looks at the typewriter.*) Oh, this. Writing a play. It's autobiographical. I'm making it up as I go along. Would you like something to drink while you tell me about the case? (*He opens a couple of drawers, looking for another bottle.*)

COURTNEY (*takes off her gloves*). Don't mind if I do. Life is such a bumpy ride without a soft cushion.

HARRY. Yeah, I got some stuff here that'll flat smother you. Here we are. (*He pulls up another bottle and hands it to her.*) This is one of the great wines from the Great Lakes.

COURTNEY (*reads the bottle*). "Huron, Huron"?

HARRY (*pulls up two glasses*). Actually, that's pronounced "You're on your own." (*He puts the glasses down and takes the bottle back.*) And a good year for wine, too.

COURTNEY. I'll come to the point, I know you're busy.

HARRY. Take your time. (*He puts his thumbs against the cork to pry it out.*) I'm here for the long haul and I'm just now starting to enjoy the curves. (*The cork limply falls from the bottle. HARRY looks back at COURTNEY.*) Good year for wine, bad year for corks. (*He pours her a glass.*)

COURTNEY. Thank you. (*She picks up the glass.*) You ever drink alone, Mr. Monday?

HARRY (*pours himself a glass*). Yes, that's my hobby. (*He hoists his glass.*) Better days?

COURTNEY (*holds up her glass*). And nights. (*They clink glasses and drink. They both turn away from the other*

*and make horrible faces. She looks at her glass.)* You sure this is for internal use?

HARRY. Well, works great on my Buick. *(He puts the glass down and pours another glass.)* Try not to belch with your mouth closed.

COURTNEY. Why not?

HARRY. Burns all your nose hairs out. *(He holds out the bottle.)* Would you like another?

COURTNEY *(pushes her glass away)*. Not without medical help standing by. Let me tell you why I'm here.

HARRY *(sizing her up)*. No, let me tell you. *(Holding his glass he moves around the desk.)* You're one of those uptown dames, used to having your own way; a classy type with charge accounts sent to nameless boyfriends with something to hide. You can cry at the drop of a relative from a will but your mascara never runs. Only now, you don't know which way to turn and found yourself on a dead-end street. And that dead-end street is me.

COURTNEY. Very good.

HARRY *(smiles)*. Thanks, that's in Scene One. *(He indicates his typewriter. He looks back at her.)* Wait, you mean I was right?

*(COURTNEY abruptly rises and moves toward the L door.)*

COURTNEY. Maybe you're not the one for this case.

HARRY. Your nickel, lady, but you never know if something looks good until you get it home and try it out.

COURTNEY *(stops, turns suddenly)*. Ever heard of King Midas?

HARRY. Sure. A king, wasn't he? Only you didn't want to make noise in front of him at the movies 'cause he'd tap

you on the shoulder and suddenly you're twenty-four carat.

COURTNEY (*easing up to him*). That's the myth. But you're on the right track.

HARRY. Oh, a near myth.

COURTNEY (*sits in the chair again*). Ever hear of the Barnstable family? (*She shoots him a look.*)

HARRY. Is this leading to something or are you trying to find out just who I owe money to?

COURTNEY. Horace, Delbert and Margueritte Barnstable were well known for finding and then donating priceless artifacts to the Haverfax Museum. They sponsored a dig to find the tomb of King Midas. In Egypt.

HARRY. Well, I can stop looking in Idaho.

COURTNEY. They found his tomb but some of the artifacts got...lost, shall we say? I'm looking for one particular artifact.

HARRY. And the Barnstables?

COURTNEY. They all died.

HARRY (*takes out a pad and pencil*). The nerve. Did they do it just to make the job harder for me?

COURTNEY. Can you find the artifact, Mr. Monday? Money is no object.

HARRY. Not around here, anyway. Describe said artifact.

COURTNEY. It was a gold choker, which was said to be worn by Midas at the end of his days. That's what I want you to find. (*She runs a finger along the line of his chin.*)

HARRY. I see. You're looking for the Midas Muffler?

(*PEARL enters through the L door.*)

PEARL. Harry, they're still waiting for that new opening.

And every time the actors stop rehearsing, they eat. (*She stops.*) Oh, I see you have company.

HARRY (*to COURTNEY*). Oh, this is—

COURTNEY (*rises suddenly*). Pearl Van Beesley!

HARRY. Right. Pearl, this is—

PEARL. Courtney Delecroix.

HARRY. I hate long introductions. (*He leans on the desk.*)

You two go ahead, I'll pick up the slack. (*He begins writing as they speak.*)

PEARL. Funny, you being in this part of town, Miss Delecroix.

COURTNEY. Yes, I always come over here for a laugh.

PEARL. And just as witty as ever.

COURTNEY (*dryly*). Oh, call me Shecky. By the way, did they ever find your first husband?

HARRY. Could you two talk slower, I'm working on Act Two.

PEARL (*moves to HARRY*). What's she doing here, Harry?!

COURTNEY. You tell her nothing!

HARRY. But she's the producer for my play.

COURTNEY. I'll give you five hundred up front to take the case.

HARRY (*looks at PEARL*). What's WHO doing here?

(*POP enters through the L door, pulling a large wastebasket and a broom.*)

POP. Just me, come in to clean up, I don't know nothin'.

(*He drags the wastebasket around, emptying ashtrays.*)

COURTNEY. Our business doesn't concern you.

PEARL. You just HAPPENED to show up?

COURTNEY. I didn't even know you were around until I saw everyone wearing garlic.

HARRY. That's a GOOD one, I can use that. *(He writes.)*  
*(POP drags the wastebasket up behind COURTNEY.)*

POP. Excuse me, Miss Delecroix.

COURTNEY. Sure, Pop.

*(HARRY notices this exchange. POP drags the wastebasket over to HARRY's desk, where he empties HARRY's trash.)*

PEARL. I'm not leaving here until SHE does! *(She sits abruptly on the couch.)*

COURTNEY. Well, I'm not leaving until SHE does! *(She sits on the other side of the couch.)*

HARRY. It's going to be a long night, I better send out for wienies.

*(MILDRED quietly opens the L door and peeks in.)*

MILDRED. Excuse me, are you open?

HARRY. For anything. Come on in. One couch, no waiting.

MILDRED *(looks at the two ladies on the couch; to COURTNEY and PEARL)*. Are you ahead of me?

PEARL *(sizing MILDRED up)*. Only because of evolution.

HARRY *(crosses to MILDRED)*. Name's Monday, Harry Monday. I'm a private eye. *(He escorts her to the chair.)*  
Don't mind those two, they came with the furniture.

MILDRED *(sits)*. My name is Mildred Bannister, Mr. Monday, and I am inquiring about your services. I don't have much money.

HARRY. Well, don't you worry about that. I'll just work for you until it runs out. *(He moves POP from behind*



*the desk and sits in his chair. POP continues to shift the trash in his basket.)* Now, what's your A side?

MILDRED. I beg your pardon?

HARRY. The case, the gig, the job you wish me to saddle up for.

MILDRED. I'm trying to find out about a murder. Well, three murders actually.

HARRY (*to POP*). Why is it always three? (*POP shrugs.*) Who got snuffed?

MILDRED. This happened some twenty years ago.

HARRY. Took you a while to get here, huh. Couldn't get a cab? Who got murdered?

MILDRED. The Barnstables.

*(PEARL and COURTNEY sit up straight. POP also stops working and becomes wide-eyed.)*

HARRY. Barnstable? WHICH Barnstable?

COURTNEY. Margueritte?

PEARL. Horace?

POP. Delbert?

MILDRED. Yes.

HARRY (*looking around*). And I think this is the first meeting of their fan club.

PEARL. Oh, that's an old story. The Barnstables murdered each other.

HARRY. I'll handle this. (*To MILDRED.*) Exactly where did the murders take place?

*(COURTNEY and PEARL look at each other, guiltily.)*

MILDRED. Well, that's why I thought you'd be just the man for the job. See—

*(Sergeant BROGAN bursts in through the L door.)*

BROGAN. Okay, Monday, where is she?!

*(MILDRED sees BROGAN and quickly scribbles something on a slip of paper.)*

HARRY *(jumps up)*. Brogan, you can't come bursting in here!

BROGAN. Hey, It's on my route! THERE you are! *(COURTNEY and PEARL quickly turn away. BROGAN crosses past them and hauls MILDRED to her feet.)* You're coming with me downtown. Got a lot of questions to answer, sister.

HARRY. Her?! For what, an overdue library book?

MILDRED. Officer, I'll come peaceably. *(She hands the paper to HARRY.)* Here's that address you required. *(BROGAN tries to grab the paper but HARRY snatches it first.)*

HARRY. Ah HA! The long arm of the law ain't LONG enough, huh?

BROGAN. If that's evidence, I can run you in right now, right along with Little Miss Marker here. What IS that, Monday?

HARRY. It's an address. I'm having my hat blocked. *(He shoves the note in his jacket pocket.)*

BROGAN. So it'll match your head? *(Pulls MILDRED toward the L door.)*

HARRY. Hold it! *(He rushes over.)* What's the charge?

BROGAN. Breaking and entering, possible theft. The Haverfax Museum. An eyewitness brought us right to her. *(He looks around.)* Say, maybe she has an accomplice.

PEARL. What a load of rubbish!

POP. I'm going as fast as I can!

BROGAN. I'm watching you, Monday. Don't leave town.

HARRY. I can barely afford to go to the cafeteria.

*(BROGAN and MILDRED exit out the L door.)*

COURTNEY. Well. *(She suddenly rises.)* I suppose I better be going.

PEARL *(also rises)*. I...I had better be off myself. You... you have that opening finished and over to the theater by tomorrow, Harry. I'll see you then. Ta. *(She exits out the L door.)*

COURTNEY. I'll get back to you, Mr. Monday.

HARRY. You're sure in a hurry all of a sudden.

COURTNEY *(opens her purse)*. A few things I need to tend to. *(She takes out a few hundred-dollar bills.)* Remember, you're working for me. *(As she talks, she uses the bills for emphasis. HARRY watches the bills flutter past his nose.)* Anything you find, you tell ME first. I want that PERFECTLY understood. ANYTHING you find out about the artifact, ANYTHING you find out about ANY artifact, you give to me. ANYTHING.

HARRY. I feel like a cat with a mouse on a string! *(COURTNEY hands the money to him.)* Wow, they make hundreds now. *(He looks adoringly at the bills.)* How can I get in touch with you?

COURTNEY *(hands him a card)*. There's my private number. And I will be grateful. *(She leans over and kisses him hard on the mouth.)* VERY grateful! *(She quickly exits out the L door.)*

*(HARRY stands frozen for a moment, then slowly turns to POP, who is now leaning on his broom.)*

POP. Glad you're a private eye?

HARRY. Oh yeah! *(He pockets the money and finds the slip MILDRED gave him.)* Wait. Here's that address the Bannister lady gave me.

POP *(crosses to HARRY)*. Where the murders took place?

HARRY. Right. 2714 Bellefontaine, number 16. I think I'll begin there. *(He grabs his trench coat from the hat rack.)* Pop. I'm off to the scene of the crime!

POP. Harry?

HARRY. Lock up when you leave, will you? *(Rushes out the L door.)*

*(POP stands for a brief while, then looks at his watch.)*

POP. Private eye. *(He shakes his head.)*

*(HARRY sheepishly reenters through the door.)*

HARRY. Pop?

POP. Yes, Harry?

HARRY. THIS is 2714 Bellefontaine, number 16!

POP. What took you so long to get here, couldn't get a cab?

*(HARRY scowls at POP and the LIGHTS black out.)*