Logan Payne- Director

Rachel Hibler- Advisor

Director’s Statement

The Plot, Like Gravy, Thickens

**Seed:** Classic murder mystery with a twist

**World of the Play:** 1990, Worthington Manor in Newport, Rhode Island

**Director’s Statement**

The show is a play on the classic murder mystery plays set in the 1940s. This play is different in that it has a comedic twist and is meta in its storytelling. The show will poke fun at the theatre magic we create as storytellers as well as jibe the classic murder mystery storytelling tropes. The playwright is a character in the show who breaks the fourth wall as he explains his writing process of a murder mystery to the audience. The show will be self-aware at moments when the playwright addresses the actors/characters as well as the crew. The show will be “put together” during the playwright’s opening monologues. We will see crew and actors running in and out as they set up the show. During most of the monologuing, the actors will act out what they playwright is discussing. The prologue will be used to “set up” the show in terms of the set and costume design. The crew will be on and off bringing pieces to create the living room to the playwright’s specifications. The costume crew will have moments when they can run on and adjust a character’s costume such as a hat or accessory.

The main difference in characters will be Walter the playwright will be on stage most of the show “writing” the show as we perform it. The parts of James and Edward will not be played by Walter, they will be separate characters and actors.

Some lines will be changed to be more sensitive such as the scene where Roy takes estrogen medication. It will be changed to laxative pills.

**Color Design**

The show will be colorful in its costume design but moody in its manor design. Costumes are free to use a variety of colors and patterns. Perhaps a play on the classic Clue character color assignments. The manor must be very classic New England manor, almost a cliché murder mystery manor.

**Character Design**

These characters are all caricatures of murder mystery suspects. They can have a 1940s feel but they are modern people with little to no self-awareness or common sense. The actors are free to over act different moments to harken back to classic murder mysteries. The characters need to be over the top in their interpretations, have fun and be entertaining. These are not “real” people, instead, are jokes of these classic characters. Roy needs to be the opposite of how he is portrayed in the script. He needs to be big, rich, and pompous.

**Set Design**

The set is one room, the living room of the Worthington Manor and is a classic murder mystery house. The manor is old and has been in the Worthington family for generations. There isn’t a desire to “update” the manor’s look, but it is well kept and clean, just old. The room needs wood detailing such as crown moldings and door frames. The room needs to have an “old world” feel with antique furniture. The room can look so classic that perhaps the people in it look slightly out of place. The set will be “built” in the first few pages as the playwright monologues. French doors, a fireplace, coffee table, wing chairs are all requirements. We need a few doors to other parts of the house and a staircase off. The staircase does not necessarily need to be seen, maybe one or two stairs going off.

See the set ground plan provided in the script.

**Costume Design**

The costumes can be a variety of interpretations for the personalities with a myriad of color choices. Each costume should be a suggestion of a classic 1940s look, but with a modern twist. Each costume needs layering as the guests “arrive”. The exceptions will be the house staff. The servants must be in classic black and white, very old-world manor. Costumes can have different pieces that we “choose” to use throughout the monologuing in the prologue. Every character has accessories such as purses, gloves, etc. to help give that 1940s look but they don’t necessarily have to use them. Feel free to have fun and be creative with costuming, but these are the things that are vital to the director:

* Walter needs sweatpants.
* James should have a really cliche, hokey detective outfit. Needs a pipe and funny hat. Allegra needs a costume with a visible stripe pattern.
* Justine and Debra need to be complimentary.
* Roy should wear something very obnoxious and bright, ugly. Peggy Sue needs glasses.
* Lawrence should be basic, but cold. Professional wear.

**Props Design**

Props need to be true to the period, but they can also be classic pieces found in a New England manor. The dishes, tea set and house items all need to look as though they have been there a long time with little to no upgrades or changes. Any props that are personal items of the characters can be more modern such as the cell phone. But certainly, find places where props can be more fun and cliché.

**Lighting Design**

The lighting should be very classic murder mystery with its thunder and lightning and blackouts. Shadows and darker colors will be used to highlight parts of the stage, but certainly find places to have fun with the lighting. We need moonlight, candlelight, all those lighting tropes.

**Sound Design**

Sounds will follow the classic murder mystery feel such as rain and storms but can find moments of fun such as at moments of great suspense we can hear a “dun dun dun.” Would like 1940s music for scene changes and pre/post show.