It’s Elementary, My Dear…

By Lee Ann Hotovy

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Synopsis:

Set Design: Floor appears as life-size game-board (Clue) with a center hall, surrounded by four smaller stages representing the library, lounge, billiards, and dining halls. Audience sits as close to staging as possible and around board. Hidden passages are designed into smaller rooms, along with a trap door in floor of center hall. Possible back curtains or doorways are set behind each smaller stage to allow cast to enter and exit scenes. Oversized game pieces from Clue game appear ie: weapons, cards, and movers. Bellhops will serve as dice. A few pieces of furniture grace side rooms, while center hall has drama cubes to serve as generic sittings.

Cast:

# Detectives

Sheerluck Holmes

Dr. Whatsin

Jane Marble

Hercule Parrot’

Inspector Soclueless

Kayo

Nancy Rude

Frank Pardy

# Joe Pardy

*Guests:*

Colonel Dijon

Miss Scarlett O’Terror

Penelope Peacock

Mr. Greenatelli

Professor Prune

*Staff:*

Manager/Ms. Hartford

Mr. Doveall, the butler

Mrs. White, housekeeper

Miss Syne-in, Miss Syne-out, Desk Clerks

Ding and Aling, Bellhops

Police Officer Blunt

Extra maids (2) Ella, Louise

## Act 1/Scene 1

Opens with Life is a Mystery Song/staff perform. Thunder and lightning, rain storm, lights flicker followed by mysterious music. Night setting. Detectives arrive one by one to Whyth Inn. Greeted by Hotel Manager and desk clerks.

*Bellhops take luggage etc. Whatsin stands center stage speaking with manager. Jane Marble enters.*

WHATSIN: Jane! Oh I am so glad to see you. How was your journey?

MARBLE: Dreadful weather, I’m afraid, but otherwise uneventful Dr. Whatsin. Which does not seem to be the case for you? Anything turn up yet?

WHATSIN: No, indeed. We’re waiting for the others at present. May I get you a glass of brandy to take the chill off?

MARBLE: No thank you, but a cup of tea would serve me well.

### Whatsin motions to butler

WHATSIN: Tea, please.

BUTLER: Very good, sir.

WHATSIN: Jane, you’ve no idea what a relief it is for me to have you come. I’ve been over every inch of this Inn and cannot find him anywhere.

MARBLE: Well I’m sure the truth will reveal itself in time. I understand you have asked for more help than my own?

WHATSIN: Well, yes. I hope you don’t mind, but when I came up dry, and the local police could do no better, I began to panic…so I simply sent out an S.O.S.

MARBLE: Yes, which you know, stands for the *Society of Sleuths*, therefore, every detective within range shall be here shortly.

WHATSIN: I imagine with the complexity of the situation, it will be necessary to have as many minds working on the case as possible. It is so very mysterious.

MARBLE: Indeed.

*Parrot’ enters and is greeted by bellhops and manager*

### Butler presents tea to Miss Marble

BUTLER: Your tea. I hope you find our Inn satisfactory. Please let me know if I can *take* you into any rooms.

MARBLE: Thank you. For the moment I am fine.

WHATSIN: Oh look…it’s Parrot’!

MARBLE: And his twitching mustache, I’m sure.

WHATSIN: Now, Jane… (pause)…Parrot’! Good of you to come!

PARROT’: In Belgium we pronounce it, Paw ro’…my good doctor; Miss Marble…bon soir. Yes well, I was in the middle of another case, but I left off with it, when I heard Holmes was missing. It is very strange yet very intriguing, non?

WHATSIN: Oh, indeed. I am only too anxious to tell you the details, but I think we should wait for the remaining sleuths to arrive. Drink, Parrot’?

PARROT’: Pwa ro’, and yes I will have brandy.

WHATSIN: Brandy here, for M’sier Parrot!

BUTLER: Very good sir.

### Soclueless and Kayo enter

WHATSIN: Here’s that French fellow, oh what’s his name?

PARROT’: Soclueless…and his assistant, Kayo. Why on earth did you ask him here, when you have, moi, the greatest detective in the world?

WHATSIN: Yes, well…when I sent out the S.O.S. it went to everyone.

PARROT’: Perhaps, but my little gray cells tell me there should be a policy in place that Society members can actually spell S. O. S. in order to be admitted. *(SONG S.O.S.)*

*Kayo has hidden behind potted plant. Soclueless moves past him.*

Marble chuckles; Butler brings glass to Parrot’.

BUTLER: M’Sier Parrot…your brandy.

PARROT’: Merci…and it is pronounced Pwa ro”!

BUTLER: Really? I always thought it was pronounced *bran-dy*. (pause)I hope you plan on staying a *long* time with us, sir. It would be very *restful* for you to do so.

PARROT’: Yes well, I am not particularly interested in resting at the moment, m’sier…?

BUTLER: Doveall, sir.

PARROT: Doveall…,but I shall keep it in mind…as I keep everything in mind.

BUTLER: The offer is *always open,* sir.

*Soclueless approaches Whatsin not looking where he is going, eyes on floor; Kayo comes up from behind holding a potted plant in front of him, then slips behind Whatsin.*

Suddenly Soclueless bumps into Whatsin.

SOCLUELESS: Excusm moi!

WHATSIN: I say, my good man, watch where you’re going!

SOCLUELESS: I am…I am watching my fi’t you see. They are right down there…and if I put one in front of the other, they seem to be following each other. Very peculiar do you not think…they seem to never tire of one another…strange, very strange…

MARBLE: Classic…I dare say.

PARROT’: If Whatsin’s case were not of a serious nature, I should think unraveling his mind was the mystery at hand!

MARBLE: I’m afraid that wouldn’t take too long…and then what would we do?

PARROT’ chuckles: Shhhh…they might hear.

SOCLUELESS: Halt, M’sier. Do not move a muscle, my friend! I detect my servant Kayo to be here somewhere, and he has a habit of hiding in the most unusual places…ah ha!

(Soclueless starts whacking the back of Whatsin)

WHATSIN: Ow! Hold up there! Are you mad?

Kayo suddenly jumps out from behind Whatsin’s back/.chase and fight scene to funny oriental music/pratt falls; Ends with phone ringing.

SOCLUELESS: Kayo, get the foooon.

KAYO: The what?

SOCLUELESS: The fooon. The fooon…on yuuuur fooooot….the foooon!

KAYO: Okay boss.

Kayo removes his shoe where phone is in heel.

SOCLUELESS takes phone: That would be for me. Soclueless here. Oui, yes…I am speakin to yuu on the fooon. The fooon! It was on Kayo’s foooot. How would I know if there is a full moooon, I’m inside the hall talking to you on the fooon….yes, I said, fooon! Oui, Chief Inspector…get smart? Just what is that suppose to mean? Three o’clock…yes….choo…chooo…I understand.

(Hangs up. Hands shoe back to Kayo)

SOCLUELESS: As soon as I am finished here, I am to be on the Orient Express. My chief inspector is sending me on a…Mission…

PARROT’: Impossible!

Music cue/MI

SOCLUELESS: No…he just said it on the foooon.

KAYO: Did you say, Orient Expresso?

SOCLUELESS: Don’t get any ideas, Kayo…I’m not finished with you yet!

Karate pose by both.

Noisy sound of music as Pardy Boys and Nancy Drew enter Inn.

WHATSIN: Good heavens, what is that racket?

MARBLE: Oh dear…I believe we shall have a youthful influence on this case. It’s Nancy Rude and the Pardy Boys.

WHATSIN: Seem awfully young…can they solve anything?

MARBLE: Oh yes, it seems they are gifted for unearthing many a missing object.

RUDE: Hey, so what’s the…Mother Goose?

WHATSIN: What did she say?

MARBLE: I believe she said, “What’ s the story?”

JOE: Smooth…real smooth!

MARBLE: Thank you. That’s why I’m a detective.

WHATSIN: Yes well, we are just about to begin…if everyone can get settled then.

RUDE: Hey fellas, looks like we’re going to be working with some grays.

FRANK: Kad a whack!…Ancient.

WHATSIN: Yes well, at any rate I think we should get started.

Whatsin breaks off from group and takes center stage along with police officer.

WHATSIN: Ladies and Gentlemen…it is so very good of you to come at such short notice to the Whyth Inn. Please be seated so that we may begin. (cast sits)

 As you know, I am Doctor Whatsin. I am a retired physician, and have spent a good part of the last decade working alongside the famous Sheerluck Holmes…one of the greatest detectives in the world. Oddly enough, he who normally unearths the hidden weapon, motive, or murderer, has, himself, gone missing!

(gasps and whispers from crowd) He is nowhere to be found! He seems to have vanished somewhere in this hotel. Officer Blunt and I have secured every possible entrance or exit, and it appears no one has entered or left from the hotel since his disappearance.

More to scene…

**Act 1/Scene Three**

**The Library**

Kayo has hidden himself under lampshade hiding from Soclueless. Prune sits working on books and drawings. Book sticks out on shelf (The Deadly Raven by Edgar Allen Foe)

Soclueless enters cautiously looking for Kayo

SOCLUELESS: Kayo…where are you, Kayo…

PRUNE does not respond

Soclueless looks under and around room totally missing Kayo under shade.

PRUNE: Must you make all that racket? Can you not see that I’m studying here?

SOCLUELESS: Pardonne’…my apologies…but I am looking for Kayo.

PRUNE: Have you tried turning on the lamp?

SOCLUELESS: Oh of course, then I could see better. Yes, it is rather dark in here.

Soclueless moves to lamp and turns it on using Kayo’s arm for pull string (Kayo using flashlight, appears to light shade)

As Soclueless moves away, Kayo follows in disguise with karate hands posed. Lamp shade on head.

Chase scene ensues, when Professor calls out

PRUNE: Stop! Hold that pose for just one moment! (Soclueless and Kayo are posed with Soclueless hands about to strangle Kayo…and Kayo bent over in chicken pose/PRUNE. sketches a contraption on chalkboard)Yes, two for one…perfect!

PRUNE: Thank you. That will do.

Soclueless and Kayo relax/Professor sketches

KAYO: Wha you workin’ on …Professor?

PRUNE: PRUNE. Professor PRUNE.

Shake hands

KAYO: Kayo. This my boss. (points to Soclueless) Inspector Soclueless.

PRUNE: Hmmmm.

SOCLUELESS: Hmmmm.

PRUNE: Yes, well, Kayo, I am working on a means of…umm…travel.

SOCLUELESS: For human bin’s?

PRUNE: No, for human beings.

SOCLUELESS: That is what I said, for human bins.

Professor just stares a Soclueless for a moment

PRUNE: Yes, well then, human beings. Indeed…and it is all rather fascinating. Can you imagine the ease of travel if things were small, compact, had motorized arms, and could move at the speed of twenty-five miles an hour?

KAYO: Why twenty-five?

PRUNE: Because a male ostrich will run this fast when pursuit has…I mean…oh, I it’s just a number I plucked out of the air…ahem.

SOCLUELESS: Do you often pluck numbers out of the air, Professor?

PRUNE: All the time. Look, there goes one now (pluck!)

SOCLUELESS: And what number is it…a fur?

PRUNE: A fur? What is a fur?

SOCLUELESS: One, two, thri, fur…fur!

Professor stares at him again

PRUNE: It was a two…for two minutes, which is all the time I have to spare with your interview, Inspector.

SOCLUELESS: Yes, well, I knew that…I was only seeing if you did!

KAYO: These drawings are nice…look Boss, this one looks like you grabbing me around the neck.

SOCLUELESS: Hmmm…yes it does. So how will your grabbing machine help piple travel?

PRUNE: It is not a grabbing machine…give me that! (takes drawing from Soclueless)it will simply have levers to pluck things as needed; cherries from a tree for example…I only used you two buffoons for measurement purposes. Don’t you understand…(SONG/ Can you imagine?)

PRUNE: You have one minute left Inspector, I suggest you get to your investigation.

SOCLUELESS: Kayo, note the irritation and potential for anger in your notes.

KAYO: Okay Boss.

SOCLUELESS: Your name is Kayo, not okay.

KAYO: Okayo Boss.

SOCLUELESS: Kay-o…not Okay-o!

Kayo: Got it. Okayo.

SOCLUELESS: There seems to be a person missing from the Inn.

PRUNE: Oh yes I heard. The famous Sheerluck Holmes. Bad luck that, but I’m afraid he isn’t here.

SOCLUELESS: That is obvious, but we wish to know your connection to Mr. Holmes?

PRUNE: Barely anything. The last time I saw him he was in the study playing with a candlestick.

KAYO: What was he doing with the candles?

SOCLUELESS: Kay-o, pliz remember I am the detective, and you are the assistant.

KAYO: Okayo Boss.

SOCLUELESS: So what was he doing with the candles, Professor?

KAYO: Checking for fingerprints?

SOCLUELESS: Ahem…that is my question…Professor, was he checking for fingerprints?

PRUNE: Good guess, but actually he was lighting one candle at a time, and merging the flames into a larger candle atop the brass stick. Like so. (PRUNE demonstrates using two quill pens).

KAYO: Why would he do that?

PRUNE: He seemed to be working on a theory of merging two things into one, and having more power that way. Very similar to my machine, in which I use two wheels with a single chain drive to propel the vehicle forward. If truth be known, I think that scoundrel Holmes was stealing my idea, but for what purpose I have no idea since he was working with light and flame.

SOCLUELESS: Two feathers… together, I mean…two flames together…ah ha! It is very simple Kayo. He was designing a writing apparatus that would remain lit, like a candle, so one could write in the dark. Very clever, non?

Kayo: Yeah Boss…but what would happen when he put the feather end of the pen up to his mouth like this (demonstrates) when he’s thinking? Yeow!

SOCLUELESS: Yes, I knew that…that is why it is a terrible idea, and you should not have brought it up, Kayo. Remember…let me do the thinking?

Doubles enter for scene on secondary stage/ study

PRUNE: And then, as I was trying to think of a way to attach my chain drive, Holmes shouts out…

HOLMES: “ah ha!”

PRUNE: …quite loudly, and jumps up knocking into the easel with his candlestick. My invention drawings nearly caught fire until I doused it with a cup of water!

Double of PRUNE: “For goodness sake, man…be careful!”

HOLMES: “I have the perfect solution! You see Professor your chain drive has given me another clue!”

PRUNE: What do you mean?

HOLMES: You’re calculations show that the chain drive will move your vehicle forward at a rapid rate of acceleration, which is an excellent idea…but I am looking for the thing that will take one far from here…to where nothing is all! Ha! And I am getting very close now!”

SOCLUELESS: Where nothing is all? That makes no sense even to me???

PRUNE: Yes, well, I think it is all gibberish, and I told him so…

Double for PRUNE: Look here, Holmes…I am working on a serious invention that may very well change the state of mankind, and finally get me in the history books. I do not need you and your wax drippings ruining my work. Can’t you move to another level?

HOLMES: Indeed, that is exactly what I am going to do, my good man. I only hope that you will reach the same conclusions and move to that level with me. Just remember that the fame and fortune of this world that you wish to have is temporary; when you find there is nothing in it, then you will finally understand.

You see professor you are thinking single-mindedly on your work. Extend yourself in the direction of another mind…and you may find your answers.

PRUNE: Then he left the room in a flurry, grabbing his candles and feather, leaving me, and my dripping wet plans; hours of work and thought, lost to his carelessness. He ruined my plans! That was the last I saw of him!

KAYO: Did your plans dry out?

PRUNE: No…the ink had smeared. I had to completely start over. Not only has it cost me work, but also valuable time. I am under the gun so to speak. You see, if my design is to be accepted for display at the World’s fair, I must submit it by the end of this week, and he had the audacity to think I should want to work with him on the project!! Never! Oh…that is why this interview is so aggravating! You and your silly questions are costing me so much time!

SOCLUELESS: Did he say or do anything else?

PRUNE: No he did not. He left with nothing!

Suddenly the Butler enters with a telegram and black quill feather on tray

BUTLER: Telegram Professor. Will you sign for it?

PRUNE picks up quill(Doveall feather) pen/he signs for telegram and gives Butler a tip

Then reads telegram

BUTLER: Is everything all right, Sir?

PRUNE: No! I’m afraid not.

PRUNE crumples up telegram tossing it on floor and exits room. Butler follows.

Soclueless picks up telegram and reads it.

SOCLUELESS: Ahh, Kayo…the plot thickens. Apparently a Mr. H has beaten our Professor to the punch. The World’s Fair commission has accepted a Mr. H’s plans for a motorized plucking machine to be displayed this September at the World’s fair.

KAYO: Bummer.

SOCLUELESS: Yes, but perhaps, we have our suspect just the same.

KAYO: Got it…lights out! (Kayo turns off his lampshade)