

Don't say you're Harry

Scene:

The lounge of an upmarket house. There is a coffin upstage centre which should be the focal point of the play. A variety of chairs are arranged around the room - it is obvious that extra chairs have been brought in for a funeral for the guests to sit on. Tasteful pictures reflecting the decor of an octogenarian should be on the walls. People are drinking tea and eating cake. There is a door to the kitchen stage right and a door to the parlour upstage left. There is staircase stage centre to right leading to the upstairs. The front door is an imaginary door downstage left - when we have done this production in the past the players have come up the stage stairs

Cast:

Reverend Waters - the minister - a moral man who fancies the solicitor and licks his lips a lot.

Mz Grim - the solicitor. Female sexy vamp type. Uses her sexuality to get what she wants.

Miss Ethel Devonport - The weepy sister of the deceased

Miss Rachel Devonport - The grim, younger sister of the deceased.

John Smith a.k.a. 'Snake' - specializes in stealing and fencing diamonds

John Smith a.k.a. 'Harry' - the slightly dim partner of 'Snake'

John Smith a.k.a. Captain Theunis van Staden - specializes in catching nasty diamond thieves

John Smith 4 (Constable John Smith) - studying for his detective exams. His name actually is John Smith

2 funeral guests and a maid - non speaking parts.

ACT 1

(Harry and Snake enter the sitting room, stage right. 1 other NDS guests is already there, as well as the Reverend. The Reverend is standing by the coffin, reading from his Bible, one guest is seated with tea and cake.)

Snake: Remember, act like you're one of the guests, right?

Harry: Like who?

Snake: Oh, I don't know - um, like a grieving relative.

Harry: Which relative?

Snake: Um, how about like a cousin? Should be distant enough that the family doesn't have to have seen you before. In fact - yes, they last saw you when you were a child but you moved to, um, to - somewhere overseas like, um, let's see - Jamaica and no one has seen you since. When you got the news of your beloved aunt's death, you rushed back home to attend her funeral. Yes, that's it.

Harry: Okay. (uncertain)

Snake: Okay. And don't say anything about the diamonds to anyone!

Harry: Say nothing about the diamonds. Why mustn't I say nothing about the diamonds?

Snake: Because that would attract attention to yourself, you idiot! Then, when they discover that the diamonds have been stolen, you'd be a suspect!

Harry: Suspect? Oh, right.

Snake: Just look at this place!! It's a goldmine! What I'd give to have even an hour here alone. I bet there's some fancy artwork just lying all dusty somewhere they'd never miss.

Harry: I thought we were after the diamonds!

Snake: Oh we are, today, but just imagine the possibilities!

Harry: The possibilities of what?

(During the course of the conversation, a maid comes out the kitchen and gets stopped by the Reverend who takes a plate with cake on it from her as well as a cup of tea. He then takes a second plate of cake after making a "hold on" motion at the maid, who shakes her head. He puts one plate on the coffin and drinks the tea, placing the plate on top of the cup of tea on its saucer. The maid continues out into the parlour with the tray of food. The Reverend takes 1 plate with him to nibble on, leaving the other behind and goes over the speak to the guest and nods a lot in affirmation whilst drinking his tea noisily to cool it as he drinks. Snake occasionally glances at the slurping Reverend and draws Harry away from

him)

Snake: Harry, if you want your own jobs, you have to start thinking for yourself.

Harry: Think for myself. Right.

Snake: Harry, you can't act stupid all your life and expect to get somewhere.

Harry: Where are we going, Snake?

Snake: (sighs) Exactly the answer I expected from an Einstein like yourself. Just don't fuck this one up, you hear me, Harry!

Harry: Okay, Snake.

Snake: Right, let's go over this. Repeat back to me what you say when you meet these old farts and they ask you who you are. What do you say?

Harry: I say, "Hi, I'm Harry, I'm from Jamaica, I'm um, um.....oh yes, a cousin and I miss my aunt so much I came back from Jamaica to attend her funeral. "

Snake: No, you don't.

Harry: I don't?

Snake: You don't say you're Harry.

Harry: I don't say I'm Harry. (very uncertain)

Snake: Right.

Harry: Right.

Snake: Got it?

Harry: Um

Snake: What is it?

Harry: Um, Snake?

(John Smith enters from the house side with a cup of tea and a plate of cake. He

moves to look at the artwork on the wall. He can look at his watch as if he is waiting for someone.)

Snake: What now?

Harry: What if they ask my name?

Snake: What if they ask your name? Oh - I dunno, say something common, like Mark, Tom or John. Something every idiot is called.

Harry: Um, okay. I'll be Tom. Tom Jones.

Snake: No, you idiot! Not Tom Jones!

Harry: Jeez, Snake, you don't have to be so mean about it. It's not an unusual name.

Snake: Sorry, Harry, I'm sure your mother would have loved you to be called Tom Jones. I mean, you look just like him.

Harry: Like who?

Snake: Jeez. Just choose another name. Now, go and see if you can see the diamonds anywhere. You keep your mouth shut, unless someone speaks to you, and I'll ask the questions. We'll meet back here in ten minutes and report back to each other.

Harry: Got it.

(They go to mingle. Harry casually inspects the pictures and the wall, and when he thinks no one is looking he peers behind them as if to look for a safe. If spotted he quickly turns and smiles broadly at whoever caught him. Harry looks around, obviously to check that no one has seen him before going out through the door to the kitchen. Snake joins the other guest looking very sad and sympathetic. He pats them on the arm a lot, which makes them uncomfortable and smiles at them in a conciliatory way.)

(Enter Rachel Devonport from upstairs. She is carrying a single rose in a glass stem vase. She approaches the Reverend who gets up and moves towards her away from the other guest)

Rachel: Excuse me, Reverend?

Reverend: (comes to stand with Rachel) Yes, Miss Devonport?

Rachel: Are all the guests here? My sister is very distraught, and she'd like

to get the service over with as quickly as possible.

Reverend: Yes, yes, Miss Devonport, but I believe we should wait just a few more minutes. The funeral is scheduled for ten o'clock, and it's only about twenty to. People still seem to be arriving.

Rachel: Yes, of course, of course. Reverend - I believe my sister did request an open casket! (indicates closed casket)

Reverend: The casket is still closed, Miss Devonport, er, I know. People are still having this lovely tea and cake, which (takes bite and speaks with mouth full) I feel, tends to go down much better with the deceased safe and sound inside, er, a closed casket, don't you think? (pats casket fondly)

Rachel: Oh, yes, of course, but will you open it during the ceremony?

Reverend: Naturally. Miss Devonport. Now, if either you or your sister are in need of spiritual guidance, feel free to speak to me after the ceremony. Perhaps we can sit in the garden and chat. I always find the Lord seems closest to us in times of strife. (Pats her hand with sticky fingers. She takes a hanky from her bag, and wipes herself clean as they chat. He holds the cake and eats one of the two pieces)

Rachel: I'll tell Ethel. Reverend, do you know what this is? (indicates the rose)

Reverend: Do you mean the rose?

Rachel: Yes, the rose. This rose is from a bush that my late father brought back with him from his travels through India, I believe. It was a gift for my late sister, bless her. She tended it all her life. When she was ill, Ethel and I would pick a rose for her bedside table to cheer her up. I know that she would love to be buried with a rose from her favourite bush. May I ask that we do that?

Reverend: Oh? Yes, yes, I don't see, er, a problem at all. Er, er - might I suggest that we keep the rose fresh in it's vase on top of the coffin so it doesn't wilt, and then, when we open the coffin for the ceremony, you can place it in her hands?

Rachel: Oh, Reverend, so thoughtful of you! Yes, I believe that is best. I'll just put it here on top, shall I?

Reverend: I shall stand guard over the Rose for you.

Rachel: Thank you so much, Reverend! You've been such a help to us in this terrible time. How can we ever repay you? (Reverend waves his hands as if to indicate he is doing his duty) Excuse me. I need to be with my sister. Will someone let us know when the service is about to begin?

Reverend: Oh, yes, yes. (Rachel exits house door.)

Snake: (joins Reverend just as he takes a bite of cake) Tragic, isn't it!

Reverend: mmhmm

Snake: I'll really miss her.

Reverend: Oh, yes. (mumbled through cake)

Snake: Struck down in the prime of her life!

Reverend: (pause. swallows. talks clearly) Well, she was ninety three.

Snake: Struck down in the prime of her old age!

(Harry enters from the kitchen door, looks around, and starts checking under the pictures. There is a small vase of flowers standing on top of the coffin which he tries to pick up and look under and then accidentally knocks and then catches in midair a few times. As Harry knocks the vase, Snake grabs the Reverend and swivels him as they are talking so that he doesn't see Harry. The Reverend must almost see Harry trying to catch the vase a number of times during the conversation. Everyone's head bar the Reverend's can move up and down following the vase up and down. Harry ducks out of the way as the stairs bend so as to be invisible to the Reverend and the Reverend turns towards to coffin. Snake pretends to ignore him. John Smith can watch Harry with interest.)

Reverend: It's difficult when you suffer from a prolonged illness.

Snake: Oh, illness is a terrible way to die.

Reverend: Well yes, I suppose, but don't you feel that illness is the Lord's way of preparing us for the journey ahead?

Snake: Me, I can think of better ways to go, you know what I mean! (digs Reverend in ribs with elbow as if to indicate a rude action)

Reverend: (stiffly) I firmly believe that we do not choose our time or place. It is up to the Lord to decide.

Snake: Yes, well, um, it sounds like she was well prepared, eh? Oh, by the way, would you say that Miss Devonport was, (clears throat) as well prepared with um, other things? (nonchalant)

Reverend: Other things?

Snake: Things she was leaving behind? Worldly possessions...things she couldn't take with her, if you get my drift?

Reverend: My work with her only dealt with preparing her for life everlasting. I assume her other affairs were in order, but I believe her solicitor, Mz. Grim would know more about that than I would.

Snake: Mz. Grim? Oh, right. Thanks, Reverend, you've been very helpful. (Turns to leave)

Reverend: Oh, you'll need a songbook for the service. (Hands him a folded piece of paper)

Snake: Oh, yes. (Opens book and wipes eyes dramatically) This was her favourite hymn. She used to sing it to me when I was just a boy. (sighs)

Reverend: I wasn't aware that she had any younger relations?

(Harry wants to go upstairs to try his luck. He still has the vase with him. He indicates to Snake where he is going. Snake ignores him and nods and smiles at the Reverend. Harry exits after making very elaborate hand gestures at Snake to indicate he is going upstairs and that Snake must follow him. Reverend is holding a piece of cake on a saucer, a cake fork and a sheaf of papers in the other hand)

Snake: Distant, you know, third cousin removed. Moved away to, um Jamaica when I was very young. But as she always said, it's not the quantity of time you spend with someone, it's the quality of that time.

Reverend: Well said, sir, well said. In fact, I might include that in my eulogy, if I may?

Snake: Oh, no problem.

Reverend: You know what, I was given this piece of cake earlier and I believe that I am actually stuffed to the brim. Would you like it? I haven't touched it and it's delicious, I promise you!

Snake: Oh? Okay, thanks. (tries to take the cake but the Reverend is giving him a fork as well with the other hand. The Reverend takes the songbook back from Snake.)

Reverend: Let's put that into your pocket for you, shall we? (puts the songbook into Snake's jacket pocket. He is carrying a sheaf of songbooks at the time and it isn't clear which one he is putting into Snake's pocket.)

Snake: Thanks again. (takes the fork in his upstage hand and the plate in his downstage hand)

Reverend: May I ask your name?

Snake: Oh, it's um, John. John Smith. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to, er, get some, er tea.... (Snake turns to go upstairs)

Reverend: Yes, yes. You'll find refreshments through there in the parlour. (indicates the house door to Snake and ushers him that direction so Snake has no choice but to go through that one)

Snake: Oh, er, yes, thanks. Um. Again.

(Exit Snake through the house door. Enter another guest stage through the front door who goes to greet the Reverend. The Reverend hands them a piece of paper. The two non speaking guests know each other and hug. They both exit into the house door. Just after them, Captain Theunis van Staden enters through the front door downstairs stage right. The Reverend smiles at the Captain when he arrives, hands him a songbook.

Reverend: Welcome, welcome on this very sad occasion. I'm Reverend Waters.

Theunis: Yes, very sad, thank - you.

Reverend: Here is a songbook for the service.

Theunis: Of course.

Reverend: I'll be over here if you need anything. (he remains by the coffin)

(Theunis and moves to join John Smith and moves him away from the Reverend stage left downstage.)

Theunis: Hey, John, see you're already here. (John has cup of tea and cake

he is busy eating)

John: mmm. (swallows) I thought I'd come early and scope the place out. You must get some tea and cake. It's great!

(Harry appears upstairs and comes down nonchalantly. He is holding the vase in 1 hand but trying to hide it. The audience must see the vase clearly however)

Theunis: Will do. See anything suspicious?

(Harry leans over the bannisters and tries to replace the vase on the coffin but is just too short. The Reverend is standing in front of the coffin with the songbooks. His Bible is on the coffin and as he turns around to get it, Harry starts upright out of his line of sight. Snake pops out of the house door looking for Harry, but doesn't see him on the stairs as he stands up. He does see John and Theunis talking. The Reverend retrieves the Bible and reads from it, still standing in front of the coffin)

John: Well, that one guest there (indicates Harry with his teaspoon) is behaving a bit strangely. But besides him, nothing seems to be unusual.

Theunis: Any sign of the diamonds?

John: Well they're certainly not on display anywhere in this room. I had a quick look around the rest of the house as well, and actually I can't see them anywhere.

Theunis: Well, whoever it was that gave us that anonymous tip, said that someone at the funeral today would be very interested in the Devonport diamonds.

John: Did they give us any tips as to who the interested party would be?

Theunis: As if we'd get that lucky! Nope. These guys are clever, too clever to get caught easily. It's usually one of their own guys, trying to get himself promoted by getting rid of the competition, you know how these guys work. Well, in order to catch them, we'll have to blend in. We can't risk these guys knowing we're cops, otherwise they'll never reveal themselves to us.

John: What have you learned about the Devonports?

(Harry tries something new. He hides the vase behind his back, goes up to the Reverend, taps him on the arm, says something to him and points in the opposite direction to Theunis and John. When the Reverend looks where Harry has

pointed, then Harry whips the vase out from behind his back, pops it on the coffin, makes a "never mind" face to the Reverend and walks towards the wall. He looks relieved. He tries to look surreptitiously behind the paintings on the opposite side of stage to Theunis and John - downstage right.)

Theunis: Well, there were three of them, all spinsters, I believe. Their father was, let's just say he dabbled in lots of small enterprises. Anyway, nothing he did was ever proved to be illegal. When he died, he left a huge fortune to the eldest daughter, most of which was tied up in a necklace containing no fewer than two hundred flawless diamonds.

John: (whistles). The Devonport Diamonds! No wonder these guys want this thing.

Theunis: There are two sisters left, Miss Ethel and Miss Rachel Devonport. Miss Ethel does a lot of charity work for the local church and Miss Rachel (checks book) - breeds show Bulldogs. That's about it.

John: Okay. Got it.

Theunis: Okay - let's mingle. You keep an eye on that guy (indicates Harry) and see what you can get out of him, and I'll chat to the other guests to see if anyone knows anything about where the diamonds might be.

John: I've checked the upstairs thoroughly but there were too many guests in there (indicates the parlour) to check properly. I'll wait for an opportune moment and do it then. And I'll need to check the kitchen as well.

Theunis: They've got to be somewhere here. It's just a matter of where...and who wants them. Maybe you can, you know speak to someone connected with the house, to get an idea of where they could be hidden?

John: Good idea - and don't forget to get some cake. (takes bite and speaks with mouth full, waves fork at Theunis)

(Theunis moves off through the house door to chat to the other guests. John moves to talk to Harry. Harry leans suddenly and casually on the wall)

John: Tragic isn't it.

Harry: Tragic.

John: How did you know her?

Harry: Who?

John: The deceased?

Harry: The deceased? Oh, the deceased. I knew her when I was a small child, um.....in Jamaica.....um, my aunt, you know.

John: Oh she lived in Jamaica? I didn't know that.

Harry: We were very close. (he says it mechanically, as if he has rote learned the line, but John thinks he has offended him by doubting him)

John: Sorry, did I offend you? I didn't mean to.

Harry: Me and my aunt. Very close. (emphatic)

John: Really sorry.

Harry: I came back specially to attend her funeral.(rehearsed tone)

John: Of course you did. I would too if I were in your position.

Harry: Very close. (has run out of things to say)

John: I'm really very sorry for your loss.

Harry: Thanks. Um, I must go. (tries to leave. Heads backwards towards kitchen door throughout conversation)

John: Oh, it's been a pleasure meeting you. John Smith. (holds out hand to shake it)

Harry: John Smith. (shakes his hand)

John: That's right, and you are?

Harry: From Jamaica, goodbye (tries to leave)

John: Living in Jamaica, wow, must have been fantastic.

Harry: Yes. We were very close. Er, me and my, er aunt.

John: She must have looked stunning when she was younger with that

diamond necklace, hey?

Harry: (gets a fright) Diamonds! No I don't know nothing about diamonds. Nothing about diamonds. (backing away)

John: Really?

Harry: Look, I really have to go.

John: Oh, yes, of course.

(Harry ducks into the nearest door, almost falling backwards into it, which is the kitchen. John takes out a notebook and writes in it with a pencil. He sucks on the pencil. At the same time Snake comes in through the house door, looking at his watch to look for Harry. Snake smiles at John and the Reverend.)

Snake: I must just go and comfort my poor cousin in her hour of need. (points up the stairs)

(He explains and then exits upstairs. Just as he has gone upstairs, Harry peers out from the kitchen looking for Snake. He is trying to avoid John Smith. He looks furtive and decides to try the house door, and sneaks past John Smith through the house door. As he is going out the house door, he almost collides with Mz. Grim, the solicitor as she is entering the room from the lounge.)

Harry: Oh! Sorry!!

Mz. Grim: No problem, handsome. (touches him on the arm. Harry looks at her hand touching him and gets alarmed)

Harry: Huh? (exits into the parlour of the house)

Reverend: (puts down his stack of songsheets hurriedly on the coffin and rushes forward to greet Mz. Grim.) Ah, Mz. Grim, lovely to see you, lovely to see you! (he fancies her a lot but comes across as too ingratiating. He is quite possessive of her, as they work together, he considers himself almost in there)

Mz. Grim: Ah. Reverend Waters. Likewise. (she doesn't fancy him. He has a loose, wet mouth and licks his lips a lot at her)

Reverend: It is too good of you to come.

Mz. Grim: Honestly, I hate funerals. But -

(John Smith has finished his cake and wonder what to do with the dirty plate.

There doesn't seem to be anywhere to put it down and so he heads into the kitchen to put it there. He indicates to the other guests where he is going)

Reverend: Who doesn't? ah hahaha. (touches her)

Mz. Grim: But - I felt I I should attend. (moves away)

Reverend: A sense of duty is a Christian woman's moral right. How very Christian of you. (takes her hands again and wrings and pats them. She still stands far away so there is a gap, a slight tug of war to pull her toward the Reverend, which she wins)

Mz. Grim: Well it's not really what I had in mind.

Reverend: Nevertheless, here you are. And here am I. Two souls, -

Mz. Grim: Here I am. (gets hands free) What I was trying to say was, that as the family solicitor, I need to be here.

Reverend: (clears throat) For the reading of the Will?

Mz. Grim: Yes, Miss Devonport told you? (nonchalant)

Reverend: Oh yes. Jacobea?

Mz. Grim: Mz. Grim. (firmly)

Reverend: May I not call you Jacobea? We have known each other for nearly a year year now. Working closely, day by day with you has allowed me to come to a certain realization. (takes her hands and walks her forward)

Mz. Grim: Oh. Really.

Reverend: I know that it may not be the most opportune moment, but I must speak my mind. You see - there comes a time in a man's life when he seeks a certain companionship - Jacobea, my swee -

Mz. Grim: Er, Reverend? (interrupts him hurriedly)

Reverend: Call me Cyril. (licks his lips and leans forward)

Mz. Grim: I'm horribly thirsty. Parched, in fact.

Reverend: What?

Mz. Grim: Would you mind terribly getting me a drink?

Reverend: Oh, er, really, are you sure?

Mz. Grim: Please.

Reverend: But don't you -

Mz. Grim: Reverend Waters!!!

Reverend: I beg your pardon?

Mz. grim: I am so thirsty now, you just can't imagine how thirsty. I think that I may have a headache coming on - from the dehydration, you know.

Reverend: Yes, yes of course, my sweet. You're right. My apologies.

Mz. Grim: The water?

Reverend: I really shouldn't leave Mz. Devonport... (looks nervously at the coffin)

Mz. Grim: Don't worry, er, Cyril. I'll keep a close eye on her for you.

Reverend: Because as a trusted family employer I'd hate anything to happen to... (hand possessively on the coffin)

Mz. Grim: Reverend Waters ?

Reverend: Yes?

Mz. Grim: What could possibly happen?

Reveremd: I don't know what you mean....

Mz. Grim: Reverend, this poor woman is no longer with us. Bless her soul, er, of course (sign of the cross)

Reverend: Yes, that's true. Bless her soul. (sign of the cross)

Mz. Grim; Well, then she's hardly going to get up and run away, now is she? (hands on the coffin)

Reverend: No, but -

Mz. Grim; Just a glass of water, please? I don't even mind if it's a bit warm.

Reverend: I am sure one of the maids can get you iced water from the kitchen shortly?

Mz Grim: Reverend. Cyril. (takes his hands) There's something else.

Reverend: Something else?

Mz. Grim: Honestly? I really just need a few moments of quiet reflection, together with the soul of Miss Devonport. I miss her so. (fake sob). Don't you miss her? And I was using the glass of water as a diversion. I'm so sorry. Do you forgive me?

Reverend: Of course, my dear.

Mz. Grim: It feels so peaceful in here. Don't you think?

Reverend: Death brings a peace which nothing else can duplicate.

Mz. Grim: (sniffs) So true. I won't be long - just a few minutes, if you please....

Reverend: Oh, all right, er, then. I'll get you some water then.

Mz. Grim: Thank you so much. You really have no idea how much of a favour you're doing for me.

(Stops crying, stands and then as soon as the Reverend has gone, bends over and tries to lift the lid of the coffin. The flowers fall off.

Mz. Grim: Fuck.

She struggles to get it open, and then drops the lid guiltily just as both John Smith (out of the kitchen) and Harry (out of the parlour) enter the room simultaneously. Mz. Grim sees them coming, quickly bends down to pick up the flowers and put them back onto the coffin, turning to face John Smith as she does so. He goes to help her. Harry spots John Smith and then tries to duck out the nearest door but is stopped by the maid who is coming back out of the parlour with a empty tray. Harry remains glued to the wall closest to the parlour door. He takes advantage of this to look behind a convenient painting)

Mz. Grim: I, er accidentally knocked the rose off the coffin.

John Smith: Oh, er, yes.

Mz. Grim: You won't tell the Reverend, will you? (approaches him and looks at him smoulderingly) You see, I promised him I'd watch old Miss

Devonport for him...and you know how stuffy he is

John Smith: And then you knocked the rose off?

Mz. Grim: Exactly! I feel so silly. You won't say anything will you? (takes his hand)

John Smith: Don't see any reason to.

Mz. Grim; (puts John's hand on her chest) Cross my heart and, er, hope to die?

John Smith: Not a word, ma'am!

Mz. Grim; Oh that's so wonderful of you!!

(Snake enters from upstairs looking for Harry. He spots him, makes a "where have you been" silent mouthing at him and goes toward him)

Snake: (loudly for the benefit of Mz grim and John) Poor cousin, er, (tries to recall her name) poor cousin lady... (He approaches Harry)

Harry: Who? (Snake drags him away from the other guests so they don't hear Harry is clueless)

Snake: My dear, sweet cousin upstairs - she's very distraught.(loudly)

Harry: What cousin? (even louder)

(Mz. Grim and John Smith continue to flirt with each other and Snake slaps Harry on the back of the head and draws Harry away)

Harry: Snake! Ow! I have to tell you something!!

Snake: (pulls Harry away from crowds with fake grin) Don't call me Snake! Not here!

Harry: Sorry, Snake.

Snake: (exasperated, rolls eyes) Harry, did you hit every branch of the stupid tree when you fell out of it? What is it! (draws Snake away from everyone to speak to him)

Harry: That guy (indicates John) was asking about the diamonds!!

Snake: Really? (looks suspiciously at John) What did you say?

Harry: I said what you told me. That I don't know nothing about any diamonds.

Snake: Then there's no harm done.

Harry: Snake, you don't think he's also here to steal the diamonds?

Snake: Better bloody well not be! This is our turf, this place. Hell, we're the ones that got the tip off, right!! Look, Harry, I'll check him out, okay? You just look for the diamonds.

Harry: I can't see them anywhere, Snake. I looked in all the usual hiding places.

Snake: Did you check for a hidden wall safe?

Harry: Yup. (proudly) I checked behind all the pictures. Nothing.

Snake: Loose wall panels?

Harry: Not one.

Snake: Hollow sounding floorboards?

Harry: No, I haven't checked those yet.

Snake: You go and check those. Just for God's sake, don't make it obvious what you're doing! And stay away from that guy who was asking you questions!

Harry: Okay, Snake. (taps the floor panel near him with his foot surreptitiously. He will continue doing this for a while, sometimes humming as if he is tapping his feet)

Snake: I'm going to track down the other one - the friend of that one - see if I can get this guy's story out of him. (points at John Smith.) I'll be back. Okay? (exits upstairs)

(The Reverend enters with a glass of water just in time to see Mz.Grim run her hands through John Smith's hair. He immediately gets jealous and moves towards them. He rudely thrusts the water at Mz. Grim)

Reverend: Your water!!

Mz. Grim: Oh, er, Reverend!! Bless you!!

Reverend: And you? (looks at John Smith)

John Smith: Don't worry, I'm not thirsty, thanks.

Reverend: Reflecting as well? (sarcastic)

John Smith: Pardon?

Reverend: You should know that this woman here is a good Christian woman, doing her moral duty!!

John Smith: Er, yes.....

Reverend: She needs peace and quiet! For reflection!! In fact, she, she - must not be detained any longer. You should go. (grabs his arms and tries to push him toward the house door. John Smith stops, thinks and then gets a bright idea)

John Smith: Er, of course since she shouldn't be detained any longer, Reverend, you are connected with the family, right? (Reverend nods) I was wondering - perfect opportunity since you say she needs to be left alone - since you've been with the family for years. Perhaps you can give me a little tour of the house - an historical one? As a family member, of course, but one who, sadly has not been here since I was a boy....

Reverend: Oh, yes of course but perhaps later..

John Smith: Why not now? Give Mz. Grim the peace she needs....

(Harry comes across a panel that he thinks sounds hollow and drops down on his hands and knees to check it out. He pretends to drop something to look for it.)

Reverend: Mz. Grim?

Mz. Grim: Just a few minutes more, please?

Reverend: Very well. Mz. Grim - you'll continue to monitor the situation? (she nods and salutes. He sighs.) Let's start upstairs, shall we? (they head up the stairs)

Mz. Grim: (Still has to get rid of Harry in order to search the coffin. Looks at Harry, drums on the coffin lid then looks at her watch impatiently. To Harry) Excuse me, sir but, have you lost something?

Harry: (starts and jumps up) Who, me?

Mz. Grim: Well, you were the one searching the floor?

Harry: Searching the floor....yes - my cufflink! I lost my cufflink! (throws arm behind back)

Mz.Grim: Are you sure you lost it in here? Not in the parlour perhaps?

Harry: Yes, in here.

Mz. Grim: Oh....dam- .(tries to think of how she can get rid of him quickly) Do you need any help?

Harry: Oh, no!! No help at all!

Mz. Grim: Oh did you find it, then?

Harry: No, not yet, but really don't want to put you to any trouble!

Mz. Grim: Honestly, no trouble at all! I mean, you'd want to find it before the service, wouldn't you?. I would love to help.

Harry: Um, thanks.

Mz. Grim: But before I help you, you simply must tell me your name! (flirting)

Harry: My name! Oh, er,it's John.

Mz. Grim: Such a lovely masculine name. So strong! John, who??

Harry: John...Smith. That's it. John Smith

Mz Grim: Jacobea Grim. The pleasure is all mine. (Shakes his hand and rubs it after. Harry doesn't know what to do) Now, let's get this thing found quickly, shall we?

Harry: Huh?

Mz. Grim: Come, let me help you!

(they both kneel and pretend to search for the missing cufflink. Enter Snake and Theunis. Mz. Grim must be positioned so that Snake and Theunis can see her behind which they both will stare at)

Snake: So, as I was saying, are you a relative?

Theunis: What? (stares at the butt) No, I'm an - an old family friend. (pause while they both stare) And you?

Snake: She was my arse, sorry, aunt. (voice cracks) Bless her.

Theunis: Oh, I'm so sorry.

Snake: She will be sorely missed.

Theunis: I wasn't aware that she had a nephew?

Snake: Oh, it's like a distant relationship between us, like a third cousin, really, but I call her my, er, er, er (staring at her butt) aunt.

Theunis: Oh, I see.

Snake: We lost contact when I moved to Jamaica when I was in my teens, but I will always remember her kindness to me.

Theunis: Yes she was always very kind.

Snake: You probably knew her better than I did, after all these years.

Theunis: Well, I wouldn't say I knew the family that well....

(enter the Reverend and John Smith from upstairs. Mz. Grim has reached the set of chairs, sees that she is getting nowhere with this and gives up and sits in one of them. Harry is still on the floor - he is crawling almost between her legs. The Reverend starts to cough and John helpfully thumps him on the back. During the conversation, Mz. Grim remains seated, Harry continues searching and the Reverend moves quickly and jealously to talk to Mz. Grim)

Snake: May I ask big favour, then?

Theunis: Certainly.

Snake: Since you're an old family friend, do you mind pointing out who's who around here? It's been so long and they've all changed so much.

Theunis: I'm not sure I'm the best one to ask, actually.

Snake: Oh come on, old family friend! How long have you known them, hey? (claps him on the back)

Theunis: Oh, really not that long at all!!

Snake: But you said you were an old friend of the family? (pushing)

Theunis: Oh, yes but you know time, and and how it flies~!

Snake: No.

Theunis: Oh.

Snake: But, I'd be eternally grateful if you would point some people out to me. (pushing)

Theunis: What? Oh, well, um, well that's the Reverend Waters, who is conducting the service. (points at the Reverend)

Snake: Lovely Christian person, hey! ... And her? (Points at Mz. Grim)

Theunis: I don't think she's family. I think she might be the lawyer.

Snake: Oh, I see. And him? (points at John)

Theunis: Oh, I don't know him.

Snake: Really? I could swear I saw you talking to him earlier!

Theunis: Did I? Well maybe, but I didn't catch his name.

Snake: Pity.... well if you remember it will you let me know? He just looks...so familiar, you know. I'd hate him to recognize me and feel like an idiot.

Theunis: I will, I promise.

Snake: Nice to have chatted with you, sir. May I ask your name?

Theunis: Oh, I'm er, John Smith. And you?

Snake: (swallows) John Smith!

Theunis: Um, yes, and you are.....?

Snake: um, John Smith. (mumbles)

Theunis: What???

Snake: Oh I see somebody I remember, um, over there, (waves vaguely) I really should go talk to them, if you'll excuse me.

Theunis: Oh, right.

(Second guest enters from the parlour. Snake leaves Theunis and follows the guest to talk to them. Theunis moves to talk to John)

John: Hey, Theunis, I spoke to that weird guy (indicates Harry who is sitting in the chairs now but peering at the floor intently).

Theunis: And?

John: The wheel is turning, but the hamster's dead. If you know what I mean.

Theunis: No, not really, What? Who is he then, some relation? Relation?

John: Nephew of the deceased. Knew her when she lived in Jamaica. He's with that other guy. (indicates Snake) They arrived together.

Theunis: Well, then, it's possible that those two could be here legitimately then.

John: Which would rule them out as suspects! Perhaps we should interview the family. See if they say anything.

Theunis: Good idea. Oh, John, by the way, if anyone asks, I said I was you.

John: You said you were me? What? Why?

Theunis: Because you know my name is well known in the diamond smuggling circles and your name is well comm....., well, it could belong to anyone.

John: Thanks, man. Now I feel really special.

Theunis: Well I didn't mean it like that!

John: Fine. But if they ask me what my name is, what am I supposed to say?

Theunis: Has anyone asked you?

John: Well I told that one guy, you know, the weird one.

Theunis: Crap. Do you think he'll remember it?

John; The lift doesn't reach the top storey with that one, if you get my drift.

Theunis: What lift?

John: Theunis, he's most likely not going to remember it, okay?

Theunis: Well then just don't say anything to anyone else if you can help it and if they do, make something else up, something else common.

John: Oh, fine, but you owe me.

Theunis: That leaves, let's see - The Reverend, the lawyer, and those other two guests to check out.

John: I still need to check some of the house. Why don't you try and get something out of those people and I'll finish up searching the place?

Theunis: Cool. (they turn to move away from each other)

Reverend: Ladies and gentlemen, if I may have your attention, the service will begin in about five minutes. If I may ask you all to kindly take your seats. When the service is finished, Mz. Grim will be reading the last will and testament of the deceased. Miss Rachel Devonport has requested that only close relatives and friends remain for the reading. Thank you and remember to get your songbooks!! Mr Smith, Mr Smith!! (louder. All 4 Mr Smiths take a step toward the Reverend and when they see that the Reverend is looking at Snake, the other three pretend nothing has happened)

Snake: Eh?

Reverend: Would you mind terribly if I ask you to fetch the Devonport sisters from upstairs now that the service is about to begin?

Snake: Oh, not at all, not at all (exits upstairs)

John: (loudly to everyone) I'll go and,er check that everyone has come in from the parlour. (exits into the house) (Theunis takes a seat next to guest no 2. During the course of the conversation other guests can filter back one by one and sit in the back row of chairs. The Reverend remains by the coffin)

Mz. Grim: (To Harry who is sitting down front row of chairs downstage,

tapping at the floor with his feet) Is this seat taken?

Harry: I'm not sure...

Mz. Grim: Good then. (sits down) Are you staying for the reading of the will afterwards?

Harry: I suppose so, not sure really.

Mz.Grim: Oh, but didn't you say that you and your aunt were close?

Harry: Oh yes, yes, very close.

Mz. Grim: Then it's settled then. You will be staying. Who knows - the old biddy might have left you something! (looks around to see if anyone is listening) If you ask me, though, it's a pity about those diamonds. (leans forward conspiratorially)

Harry: Oh I don't know nothing about any diamonds!! (vehement and leans back)

Mz. Grim: Really? Gosh, I thought everyone knew about the Devonport diamonds!

Harry: Nothing about no diamonds!!

Mz. Grim: Well, I'll tell you what. It's a damn shame. (looks around her to see if anyone is listening)

Harry: What is?

Mz Grim: That she wants to be buried with them!!

Harry: Bburied with them?

Mz Grim: You heard me. The deceased is taking two million's worth of diamonds and throwing them in the ground. Two million!! You know what a girl could do with that money!

Harry: Honestly, no.

Mz Grim: Well I do!! But, as her solicitor, I must respect the last will and testament of the deceased.

Harry: The will?

Mz. Grim: Her final wishes. In writing, as it were. Well - her (indicates the coffin) final wish was that she be buried with the diamonds.

Harry: Oh. (non comprehending) Oh! (comprehending and looks at the coffin.)

Mz. Grim: It's standard procedure. You see, once a will has been made, and the person has passed on, there's no altering it at all.

Harry: My granny passed on. And she had a strong will. The one time she hit me so hard! Said something about next Tuesday. Sheesh.

Mz. Grim: The worst part about it is I was the solicitor involved in the signing of the bloody thing.

Harry: It really hurt. .

Mz. Grim: You're telling me!! Besides the sisters, I am the only one that knows about the diamonds.

Harry: Ddiamonds?

Mz. Grim: Which means that if they were to go "missing," they would just know I had something to do with it.(thoughtful)

Harry: They're missing?

Mz. Grim: Oh, no, no. I was just saying "what if?" See?

Harry: No, not really...

Mz. Grim: It's just such a waste throwing them into the ground. I mean, what's the old bag going to do with them anyway, if she's dead?

Harry: She isn't dead? But then -

Mz. Grim: I'm just so frustrated, I don't know what to do! (clasps Harry's thigh tightly) I need help!

(Snake and the two old ladies appear at the top of the stairs and start coming down slowly. When they reach the bottom, Snake makes his way to the opposite wall from the rows of chairs to stand by the kitchen door and the 2 old ladies head towards Mz. Grim to sit down)

Harry: (Spots snake but is oblivious to the come on) You could ask Snake. He always knows what to do.

Mz. Grim: Snake?

Harry: Oh, yes, he's the guy that I.....oh, never mind. (catches himself)

Mz. Grim: Who?

Harry: Oh no one, sorry. Look, I have to go.... (gets up in a hurry)

Mz. Grim: Did I say something wrong? (sighs as Harry leaves. Harry almost exits through the parlour door and can actually go out and come straight back in as John Smith enters straight after him through the parlour door. Harry, in trying to avoid John Smith, crosses the stage upstage and exits through the kitchen door. The Reverend, who has remained by the coffin and is occasionally glancing at his watch, can glare at John Smith, who smiles at the Reverend and then grins at Mz. Grim. He wants to sit next to her but is prevented from doing so by the arrival of the old ladies. He takes a seat in the back row behind the old ladies.)

Rachel: Morning, Jacobea!

Mz. Grim: Morning. Rachel, Ethel. I'm so sorry for your loss!

Rachel: Appreciate it, Jacobea.

Ethel: Yes, yes.

Mz Grim: She was a good age.

Rachel: I know, but we'll miss her terribly, especially Ethel.

Ethel: She was like a mother to us.

Rachel: Yes, because by the time Ethel and I were born, she was already almost twenty years old.

Ethel: We never knew another mother, you see. Ours died giving birth to us.

Rachel: And that's why we're respecting her wishes to be buried with the diamonds.

Ethel; You're respecting her wishes. I think it's poppycock, Rachel, and you know it.

Rachel; Ethel! Did you take your medication? (to Mz. Grim) I think she forgot to take her medication.

Ethel: 'Cause that shuts me up good and proper.

Rachel: Ethel. You know you need it.

Mz. Grim: (takes them aside) Ethel's right, you know, Rachel. Aren't you concerned about the safety of the diamonds? I mean, they're worth a lot of money.

Rachel: Not at all. The only people who know about the diamonds are you, me and Ethel.

Mz. Grim: I know that, but, but what about the open casket? Won't everybody get a good view of the diamonds once it's opened?

Rachel: I'm not a fool, Jacobea. I know how much those stones are worth. And that's why they are hidden under her favourite lace collar. No one will see them there.

Mz. Grim: Naturally. Good idea. Um, will you excuse me for a second? Business matters to attend to, you know.

Ethel+Rachel: Oh yes, of course. (They sit. Mz. Grim goes to talk to the Reverend by the coffin. Harry pops out of the kitchen door to call Snake)

Harry: Snake!!!

Snake: (gets a fright) I told you not to call me that! (drags Harry in and downstage)

Harry: Oh, sorry, Snake.

Snake: What is it? Did you finish checking the floorboards?

Harry: No, not yet, but Snake-

Snake: Harry, we talked about this. if you want your own jobs, you must learn to be thorough. You need to do your job properly. From start to finish.

Harry: Yes, I know Snake, but -.....

Snake: The problem is that now, you've left it too late. There's no way you could check half the places in this house without people noticing

you doing it.

Harry: That lady (indicates Jacobea) said -...

Snake: You've gone and fucked up another job, Harry. Well done! Jeez. All I asked was a simple thing - check the floorboards! Did you do it?

Harry: Well, no, but she said -..

Snake: I don't give a shit what SHE said!! Finish checking the damn floorboards so we can find those stones!! (Harry taps the floorboards right in front of him. Snake rolls his eyes heavenwards in despair) Listen, you idiot. Don't do that here, now!!! Everyone will see you. Now there's a nice empty room you haven't checked through there (indicates parlour) I am going to go check the old braud's room now all of them are downstairs. (Snake exits upstairs) Why do I always have to fix things?

Harry: Fine. (starts to walk slowly to the parlour door)

Mz. Grim: Mr Smith! (In a loud whisper. Harry is oblivious and in a bad temper) Mr Smith!! (louder) Mr Smith!! (loud)

(Harry turns, Theunis and John both start to get up. When Harry sees that Jacobea is calling him, he walks toward her and the Reverend. Theunis and John are already halfway up so they pretend to greet each other and then exit into the parlour on the pretence of getting another piece of cake)

Harry: Uh huh?

Mz Grim: I must speak to you. It's urgent!

Harry: Um, okay?

Mz. Grim: (pulls Harry aside). You know I told you about the diamonds earlier?

Harry: (uncomfortable) Uh huh.

Mz. Grim: The thought of those diamonds going into the ground causes me much distress. John Smith, can I trust you? (grabs his hand. The Reverend sees and starts to cough. He looks all suspicious. But guest 2 has gotten up to talk to him and ask about a songbook so his hands are tied.)

Harry: Can you trust me? I think so...

Mz. Grim: The fact is - I have been looking for somebody just like you for a long time. (Mz. Grim plays with Harry's hair. The Reverend crumples a songbook in his hands, then notices the guest looking strangely at him and apologizes, and gets another songbook for the guest. Mz. Grim sees and pulls Harry away downstage)

Harry: Really?

Mz. Grim: Somebody big and strong.. (touches his arm)

Harry: I always was big for my age.

Mz. Grim: Will you help me?

Harry: Help you?

Mz. Grim: John, only you can do what I want, what I need. John I need you!!

Harry: You need me? (swallows) You sure?

Mz. Grim: You. I am sure.

Harry: Gosh....Really? (Jacobea nods and comes closer. Harry looks flattered and slightly pressured) Okay, okay. I'll help you. What do you need?

Mz.Grim: I need those diamonds!

Harry: You need those diamonds..?

Mz. Grim: How astute of you. (Harry looks confused) Yes, John, I want you to get those diamonds for me.

Harry: Hang on...what for? Aren't you lawyers all rich?

Mz. Grim: Rich? ha! Can't be, with what they pay me, which is absolutely nothing. (looks at the two old ladies)

Harry: They don't pay you anything? (looks at the two old ladies)

Mz. Grim: Well, almost nothing.

Harry: That's terrible.

Mz. Grim: Sometimes. You don't know what it's like to go through day after

day without food, maybe a little water...

Harry: No. My mom makes me sandwiches every morning, with peanut butter and syrup.

Mz. Grim: (seizes on the mother thing) You still have your mother! I wish I did. I miss her so much.

Harry: Shame, is she dead?

Mz.Grim: Dead, oh, no, no, no, very sick, very sick with cancer, in fact dying.

Harry: I don't know what I'd do if my mom was dying.

Mz.Grim: I, I didn't want to say it before, but, I need those diamonds to pay for my mom's operation, for the cancer!!

Harry: So it's for a good cause, then?

Mz. Grim: Oh it's the most noble of causes. John - will you help me?

Harry: Well...okay. For a good cause.

Mz. Grim: Good.

Harry: What must I do?

Mz. Grim: The diamonds are around Mz. Devonport's neck. (Harry looks at the two old ladies) No, not those ones! The dead one!!

Harry: Oh, the dead one.

Mz. Grim: Now, they are there round her neck but not visible. They're hidden, under her lace collar.

Harry: Under the collar, right.

Mz. Grim: The casket will be open for viewing. People will go up to the casket to pay their last respects to the dead. I'll distract the sisters and you steal the diamonds as you bend over and kiss her goodbye.

Harry: You want me to kiss a dead old lady? Look, I don't know if I can do that.

Mz. Grim: John - I'm confused. I thought you wanted to help me...

(The guest has left the Reverend and gone to sit down with the old ladies to say hello and Snake enters from upstairs and joins him which again stops him coming forward to interrupt Mz. Grim and Harry)

Harry: I do, only, why do I have to kiss her?

Mr Grim: John, are you telling me we don't have a deal?

Harry: No, we do have a deal, but -

Mr Grim: John, if you don't help me, nobody will, and you'll kill my mother! You promised! (starts to get louder and Harry looks nervous)

Harry: Um.. shh.

Mz. Grim: (draws him aside) Tell you what - I'll give you ten percent of it, er, all, after. Okay?

Harry: Ten per.. (tries to do arithmetic in his head) um, look, lady, it's for your mother okay. Not the money.

Mr Grim: Wow. you're such a, such a, really good person, John! I just knew you would help me! Now, when you're in the queue, I need you to wait for my signal first before you take them.

Harry: What's the signal?

Mr Grim: Um, let's see. Okay - I'll pretend to faint when I am talking to the sisters and then you take the diamonds.

Harry: You faint and I take the jewels. Got it.

Mr Grim: All right, I'll go now and you wait for my signal. And don't say a word to anyone about this! (leaves and returns to speak to the Reverend to placate him. She moves Snake away from the Reverend by indicating that she wants a bit of quiet conversation with him. Snake nods his affirmation and seeks Harry out.)

Snake: Hey!

Harry: Ssnake!

Snake: I said don't call me that!!!!

Harry: Sorry, S-

Snake: (interrupts him) Oy, nimrod! Don't say it!! (Harry opens his mouth then closes it again) While you were chatting to your new friend, I was actually working, checking the floorboards, talking to people. etcetera, etcetera. But don't thank me, Harry.

Harry: Okay, I won't then. (sulkily)

Snake: Listen - I think I figured out where the diamonds might be! It's the one place we haven't looked!

Harry: Oh?

Snake: Jeez, Harry, stop sulking and listen to me. What if they are on the dead old lady?

Harry: Dead old lady?

Snake: Yes, you idiot, what if she is wearing them right now?

Harry: Wearing them right now?

Snake: I was talking to the Reverend just now, when it struck me.

Harry: Struck you?

Snake: Like a lightning bolt. The Reverend was telling me about the diamonds - how she never went without them, even on her death bed.

Harry: Uh huh.

Snake: So then it hit me. The brilliant idea. Like a flash of inspiration from the Heavens. What if she was still wearing them? What if they never took them off her?

Harry: Okay...

Snake: And then the Reverend gave something away, right. When I asked him about the diamonds he got all edgy and changed the subject. Like he KNEW they were there. All you have to do, Harry, is search the body when you go up to pay your last respects.

Harry: Why do I always have to search the body?

Snake: Huh?

Harry: I mean, why don't you search the body?

Snake: Because she's YOUR dead aunt. You are the one who is unhappy at her passing.

Harry: You also want me to kiss her, don't you?

Snake: Hey that's a good idea! (he looks ecstatic but Harry looks crestfallen) You kiss her, and I'll distract the old ladies.

Harry: Great. (depressed)

Snake: Wait for my signal and then you go, once the coffin is opened.

Harry: What's the signal? (tired)

Snake: Well, you know I'm quite good friends with the old ladies since I fetched them from upstairs earlier.

Harry: Uhhuh.

Snake: I'll take them aside to talk to them - to over there (points at corner stage furthest from coffin) and then when I'm talking to them, you get the diamonds.

Harry: Um, okay. (looks even more unhappy)

Snake: Jeez, Harry, you can act a little less depressed, for crying in a bucket. If I'm right, I've saved our arses after all.