

Audition Scene Packet – Arsenic and Old Lace

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Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 1 - Mortimer and Abby

MORTIMER: (MORTIMER is looking around the room for the draft of his latest book chapter. He is saying his lines loudly to Aunt Abby who is out of the room) I hope the play I’m seeing tonight will be something I can enjoy tonight. It’s called “Murder Will Out.” (He has worked his way over to the window seat) When the curtain goes up the first thing you see is a dead body. (He opens the lid of the window seat and sees a dead body – react as you think you might if you saw the same thing) Aunt Abby!

ABBY: (entering innocently) Yes, dear?

MORTIMER: You were making plans for Teddy to go to that... sanitarium – Happy Dale –

ABBY: Yes, dear, it’s all arranged. The papers are ready for Teddy to sign.

MORTIMER: He’s got to sign them right away.

ABBY: That’s what Dr. Harper thinks. Then there won’t be any difficulties after we’re gone.

MORTIMER: He’s got to sign them this minute! Teddy’s got to go to Happy Dale – tonight!

ABBY: Oh, no dear, that’s not until after we’ve gone. Mortimer, why have you suddenly turned against your own brother?

MORTIMER: Listen, darling Aunt Abby. I’m frightfully sorry but I’ve got some shocking news for you. Now we’ve all got to keep our heads. You know we’ve sort of humored Teddy because we thought he was harmless...

*ABBY: Why he *is* harmless!*

*MORTIMER: He *was* harmless. You’ve got to know sometime. Teddy’s – killed a man!*

ABBY: Nonsense, dear.

MORTIMER: There’s a body in the window seat!

ABBY: Yes, dear, we know.

MORTIMER: You know?

ABBY: Of course dear, but it has nothing to do with Teddy. Just forget you saw the gentleman.

MORTIMER: Forget?

ABBY: We never dreamed you'd peek.

MORTIMER: But who is he?

ABBY: His name's Hoskins – Adam Hoskins. That's all I really know about him.

MORTIMER: Well, what's he doing here? What happened to him?

ABBY: He died.

MORTIMER: Aunt Abby, men just don't get into window-seats and die.

ABBY: (*Silly boy*) No, he died *first*.

MORTIMER: Well, how?

ABBY: Oh, Mortimer, don't be so inquisitive. The gentleman died because he drank some wine with poison in it.

MORTIMER: How did the poison get in the wine?

ABBY: Well, I put it in wine because it's less noticeable – when it's in tea it has a distinct odor.

MORTIMER: *You* put it in the wine?

ABBY: Yes. And Martha put Mr. Hoskins in the window-seat because Dr. Harper was coming.

MORTIMER: So you knew what you'd done! You didn't want Dr. Harper to see the body!

ABBY: Well, not at tea – that wouldn't have been very nice. Now, Mortimer, you know the whole thing, just forget about it. And don't you tell Elaine! I do think Martha and I have a right to our own little secrets. (*She exits, leaving Mortimer in a daze*)

MORTIMER: (*exiting*) Aunt Abby!

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 2 - Martha, Abby, and Mortimer

MARTHA: (REMEMBERS SOMETHING) Oh! Oh, Abby, while I was out, I dropped in on Mrs. Schultz. She's much better, yes, and she would like us to take Junior to the movies again.

ABBY: Well, we must do that tomorrow or the next day.

MARTHA: Yes, but this time we'll go where we want to go. Junior's not going to drag me into another one of those scary pictures.

MORTIMER: (AGITATED) Aunt Martha! Aunt Abby! What are we going to do?

MARTHA: What are we going to do about what, dear?

MORTIMER: There's a body in that window-seat.

ABBY: Yes. Mr. Hoskins.

MORTIMER: Well, good heavens, I can't turn you over to the police. What am I going to do?

MARTHA: Well, for one thing, dear, stop being so excited.

ABBY: And, for pity's sake, stop worrying. We told you to forget the whole thing.

MORTIMER: Forget--?! My dear Aunt Abby, can't I make you realize that something has to be done?

ABBY: (A LITTLE SHARPLY) Now, Mortimer, you behave yourself. You're too old to be flying off the handle like this.

MORTIMER: But you can't leave him there.

MARTHA: We don't intend to, dear.

ABBY: No, Teddy's down in the cellar digging the lock.

MORTIMER: You - you mean you're going to bury Mr. Hotchkiss in the cellar?

MARTHA: Hoskins, dear. Oh, yes, dear, of course. That's what we did with the others.

MORTIMER: Oh, no, no, no. You can't bury Mr.-- Others?

ABBY: The other gentlemen.

MORTIMER: When you say "others" -- do you mean --- others? More than one "others"?

MARTHA: Oh, yes, dear. Let me see, this is --- eleven, isn't it, Abby?

ABBY: No, dear, this makes twelve.

MARTHA: Oh, I think you're wrong, Abby. This is only eleven.

ABBY: No, dear, because I remember when Mr. Hoskins first came in, it occurred to me that he would make just an even dozen.

MARTHA: Well, you really shouldn't count the first one, dear.

ABBY: Oh, well, I was. I was counting the first one. So that makes it twelve.

ABBY: (COUNTS) Twelve, eleven--

MORTIMER: Now - now, let's see, where were we? (ABRUPT) TWELVE?!

MARTHA: Yes, Abby thinks we ought to count the first one and that makes it twelve.

MORTIMER: Well, all right now. All right, who was the first one?

ABBY: Mr. Midgely. He was a Baptist. He came here looking for a room.

MARTHA: He was such a lonely old man.

ABBY: All his kith and kin were dead and it left him so forlorn and unhappy.

MARTHA: We felt so sorry for him.

ABBY: And then when his heart attack came and he sat in that chair looking so peaceful-- Remember, Martha?

MARTHA: Mm hm.

ABBY: We made up our minds then and there that if we could help other lonely old men to the same peace, we would.

MORTIMER: He dropped dead right in that chair? Oh, how awful for you.

MARTHA: Oh, no, dear. Why, it was rather like old times. Your grandfather always used to have a cadaver or two around the place.

MORTIMER: Well, I know, but--

MARTHA: You see, Teddy had been digging in Panama and he thought Mr. Midgely was a Yellow Fever victim.

ABBY: That meant he had to be buried immediately.

MARTHA: So we all took him down to Panama and put him in the lock.

MORTIMER: And that's how it started?

ABBY: Of course, we realized we couldn't depend on that happening again, so--

MARTHA: You remember those jars of poison that have been up on the shelves in Grandfather's laboratory all these years?

ABBY: You know your Aunt Martha's knack for mixing things. You've eaten enough of her piccalilli. (CHUCKLES)

MARTHA: (CHUCKLES) Well, dear, for a gallon of elderberry wine, I take one teaspoonful of arsenic, then add half a teaspoonful of strychnine -- and then just a pinch of cyanide.

MORTIMER: (APPRAISINGLY) Should have quite a kick.

ABBY: Yes! As a matter of fact, one of our gentlemen found time to say, "How delicious."

MARTHA: Yes! He did! (CHANGES SUBJECT, MOVES OFF) Well, we'll have to get things started in the kitchen for supper.

ABBY: I wish you could stay, Mortimer.

MARTHA: (OFF, MELODICALY) I'm trying out a new recipe.

MORTIMER: (MISERABLE) I couldn't eat a thing.

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 3 - Elaine and Mortimer

ELAINE: Hello, darling. I keep you waiting?

MORTIMER: Hmm? Oh, it's you. You run along home, Elaine; I'll call you up tomorrow.

ELAINE: Tomorrow?

MORTIMER: Well, you know I always call you every day or two.

ELAINE: But we're going to the theatre tonight.

MORTIMER: Oh, no. No, we're not. Elaine, something's come up. Now, you run along home.

ELAINE: Well, what's happened? If we're going to be married--

MORTIMER: Married?

ELAINE: Have you forgotten that not fifteen minutes ago you proposed to me?

MORTIMER: I did? Oh! Oh, yes. Well, as far as I know, that's still on. Now you run along home.

ELAINE: Listen, you can't propose to me one minute and throw me out of the house the next.

MORTIMER: Well, I'm not throwing you out of the house, darling. Will you get out of here?

ELAINE: Don't push!

MORTIMER: Now, you get out and I'll call you in a few days.

ELAINE: Mortimer? Mortimer!

MORTIMER: Whew!

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 4 - Jonathan, Einstein, Abby, and Martha

JONATHAN: (CREEPY) Come in, Doctor.

EINSTEIN: I'm right behind you, Chonny.

JONATHAN: Well! This is the home of my youth.

EINSTEIN: Ohhh.

JONATHAN: As a boy, I couldn't wait to escape from this place -- now I'm glad to escape back into it.

EINSTEIN: Yah, Chonny, it's a fine hideout.

JONATHAN: The family must still live here. There's something so unmistakably Brewster about the Brewsters. (LIGHTLY) Huh! I hope there's fatted calf awaiting the return of the prodigal.

EINSTEIN: Yah, I'm hungry. Ooh! Look, Chonny, a drink! (CHUCKLES)

EINSTEIN: Elderberry wine!

JONATHAN: A good omen.

EINSTEIN: Here's to you, Chonny. Who's that?

ABBY: Who are you? What are you doing here?

JONATHAN: Why, Aunt Abby! Aunt Martha! It's Jonathan.

MARTHA: You get out of here.

JONATHAN: But I'm Jonathan -- your nephew, Jonathan.

ABBY: Oh, no, you're not. You're nothing like Jonathan, so don't pretend you are! You just get out of here!

JONATHAN: But, Aunt Abby, I am Jonathan. And this is Dr. Einstein.

ABBY: And he's not Dr. Einstein either.

JONATHAN: Not Dr. Albert Einstein -- Dr. Herman Einstein.

MARTHA: (HUSHED, TO ABBY) His voice is like Jonathan's.

ABBY: (TO JONATHAN) Have you been in an accident?

JONATHAN: (GRIM) No! My face-- Dr. Einstein is responsible for that. He changes people's faces.

MARTHA: Abby? Abby, I've seen that face before. Oh, do you remember when we took the little Schultz boy to the movies and I was so frightened? It was that face!

JONATHAN: (LOW, FURIOUS) Aunt Martha--

EINSTEIN: Easy, Chonny easy! Now, don't worry, ladies. The last five years I give Chonny three new faces. This last one-- Well, I saw that picture, too, just before I operate, and -- (CHUCKLES) -- I was intoxicated.

JONATHAN: (INTENSE) You see, Doctor -- you see what you've done to me? Even my own family--!

EINSTEIN: (SOOTHING) Chonny, Chonny -- you're home -- these are your lovely aunts. They know you.

ABBY: Well, Jonathan, it's been a long time. Where have you been all these years?

JONATHAN: (RECOVERS HIS COMPOSURE) Oh, England, South Africa, Australia. And the last five years, Chicago. Dr. Einstein and I were in "business" there together.

ABBY: Oh, we were in Chicago for the World's Fair.

MARTHA: Yes, we found Chicago awfully warm.

EINSTEIN: Yah, it got hot for us, too.

JONATHAN: (CLEARS THROAT, TURNS ON CHARM) Well, it's wonderful to be in Brooklyn again. And you -- Abby, Martha! -- you don't look a day older. Just as I remembered you. Sweet, charming -- hospitable? And dear Teddy -- I remember him so high -- did he get into politics? You know, Doctor, my little brother was determined to become President.

EINSTEIN: Yah?

MARTHA: (WITH A NERVOUS CHUCKLE) Well, Jonathan, it's very nice to have seen you again.

JONATHAN: Bless you, Aunt Martha. It's good to be home again.

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 5 - Abby, Teddy, and Martha

MARTHA: Poor dear Mr. Hoskins, he's been so patient in the window-seat.

ABBY: I think Teddy had better get Mr. Hoskins downstairs right away.

MARTHA: (ADAMANT) Abby, I will not invite Jonathan to the funeral services.

ABBY: Oh, no. We'll wait until they've gone to bed and then come down and hold the services.

TEDDY: The General was very pleased. He says the Canal is just the right size. He says that--

ABBY: Teddy! Teddy, there's been another Yellow Fever victim.

TEDDY: Oh, dear me. This will be a shock to the General. But I'll have to tell him. Army regulations, you know.

ABBY: No, Teddy, we must keep it a secret.

MARTHA: Yes!

TEDDY: (HE LOVES THEM) A state secret?

ABBY: Yes, a state secret.

MARTHA: Promise?

TEDDY: (WHAT A SILLY REQUEST) You have the word of the President of the United States. Cross my heart and hope to die. (SPITS TWICE)

ABBY: Now, Teddy, you must take the poor man down to the Canal.

MARTHA: And we'll come down later and hold services.

TEDDY: You may announce that the President will say a few words. (LOW) Where is the poor devil?

MARTHA: He's in the window-seat.

TEDDY: Oh. Seems to be spreading. We've never had Yellow Fever there before.

TEDDY: (WITH EFFORT) Up we go! He died for his country. Open the cellar door, Aunt Abby.

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 6 - Mortimer and Elaine

MORTIMER: I'm sorry I'm so late, Elaine. But it's after twelve and I-- Twelve! Elaine, you've got to go home!

ELAINE: What?! Mortimer, I want to know where I stand. Do you love me?

MORTIMER: I love you very much, Elaine. I love you so much, I can't marry you.

ELAINE: Have you suddenly gone crazy?

MORTIMER: Oh, I don't think so, but it's just a matter of time. You see, insanity runs in my family. It practically gallops.

ELAINE: Now just because Teddy is a little--

MORTIMER: No, no, no -- it goes way back. The first Brewster, the one who came over on the Mayflower-- You know, in those days the Indians used to scalp the settlers? He used to scalp the Indians.

ELAINE: But, darling, this doesn't prove you're crazy. Well, look at your aunts -- they're Brewsters, aren't they? -- and the sanest, sweetest people I've ever known.

MORTIMER: Well, even they have their - peculiarities.

ELAINE: Mortimer, you're not even looking at me. Come away from that window-seat.

MORTIMER: (ABSENTLY) Yeah, right away, Elaine.

SOUND: CREAK! OF WINDOW-SEAT LID LIFTED

MORTIMER: (SHOCK) Ahhh!

SOUND: WINDOW-SEAT LID SLAMS SHUT

MORTIMER: (TO HIMSELF) Another one! (QUICKLY) Elaine, you've got to go. Something very important has just come up.

ELAINE: Up? From where? We're here alone together.

MORTIMER: Elaine, if you love me, will you get the devil out of here?!

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 7 – Jonathan and Einstein

EINSTEIN: Well, Chonny, where do we go from here? We got to think fast. The police. The police have got pictures of that face. I got to operate on you right away. We got to find some place for that – and we got to find a place for Mr. Spenalzo too.

JONATHAN: Don't waste any worry on that rat.

EINSTEIN: But, Chonny, we got a hot stiff on our hands.

JONATHAN: Forget Mr. Spenalzo.

EINSTEIN: But you can't leave a dead body in the rumble seat. You shouldn't have killed him, Chonny. He's a nice fellow – he gives us a lift – and what happens?

JONATHAN: (Remembering bitterly) He said I looked like Boris Karloff! That's your work, Doctor. You did that to me!!

EINSTEIN: Now, Chonny – we find a place somewhere – I fix you up quick!

JONATHAN: Tonight!

EINSTEIN: Chonny – I got to eat first. I'm hungry – I'm weak.

Einstein/Jonathan 2

EINSTEIN: Chonny, when I go down in the cellar, what do you think I find?

JONATHAN: What?

EINSTEIN: The Panama Canal.

JONATHAN: The Panama Canal

EINSTEIN: It just fits Mr. Spenalzo. It's a hole Teddy dug. Six feet long and four feet wide.

JONATHAN: Down there?!

EINSTEIN: You'd think they knew we were bringing Mr. Spenalzo along. That's hospitality.

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 8 – Dr. Harper and Abby

ABBY: Oh, Dr. Harper, I hope you don't disapprove of Mortimer.

HARPER: Well –

ABBY: We'd feel so guilty if you did – sister Martha and I. I mean since it was here in our home that your daughter met Mortimer.

HARPER: Of course, Miss Abby. And so I'll say immediately that I believe Mortimer himself to be quite a worthy gentleman. But I must also admit that I have watched the growing intimacy between him and my daughter with some trepidation. For one reason, Miss Abby.

ABBY: You mean his stomach, Dr. Harper?

HARPER: Stomach?

ABBY: His dyspepsia – he's bothered with it so, poor boy.

HARPER: No Miss Abby, I'll be frank with you. I'm speaking of your nephew's unfortunate connection with the theatre.

ABBY: The theatre! Oh, no, Dr. Harper! Mortimer writes for a New York newspaper.

HARPER: I know, Miss Abby, I know. But a dramatic critic is constantly exposed to the theatre, and I don't doubt but what some of them do develop an interest in it.

ABBY: Well not Mortimer. You need have no fear of that. Why, Mortimer hates the theatre.

HARPER: Really?

ABBY: Oh, yes! He writes awful things about the theatre. But you can't blame him, poor boy. He was so happy writing about real estate, which he really knew something about, and then they just made him take this terrible night position.

HARPER: My! My!

ABBY: But, as he says, the theatre can't last much longer anyway and in the meantime it's a living. Yes, I think if we give the theatre another year or two, perhaps.

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 9 – Mortimer and Elaine

MORTIMER: Where do you want to go for dinner?

ELAINE: I don't care. I'm not very hungry.

MORTIMER: Well, I just had breakfast. Suppose we wait until after the show?

ELAINE: But that'll make it pretty late, won't it?

MORTIMER: Not with the little stinker we're seeing tonight. From what I've heard about it we'll be at Blake's by ten o'clock.

ELAINE: You ought to be fair to these plays.

MORTIMER: Are these plays fair to me?

ELAINE: I've never seen you walk out on a musical.

MORTIMER: That musical isn't opening tonight.

ELAINE: (Disappointed) No?

MORTIMER: Darling, you'll have to learn the rules. With a musical there are always four changes of title and three postponements. They like it in New Haven but it needs a lot of work.

ELAINE: Oh, I was hoping it was a musical.

MORTIMER: You have such a light mind.

ELAINE: Not a bit. Musicals somehow have a humanizing effect on you. After a serious play we join the proletariat in the subway and I listen to a lecture on the drama. After a musical you bring me home in a taxi, and you make a few passes.

MORTIMER: Now wait a minute, darling, that's a very inaccurate piece of reporting.

ELAINE: Oh, I will admit that after the Behrman play you told me I had authentic beauty – and that's a fool thing to say to a girl. It wasn't until after our first musical you told me I had nice legs. And I have too.

MORTIMER: For a minister's daughter you know a lot about life. Where'd you learn it?

ELAINE: In the choir loft. Religion never gets as high as the choir loft. Which reminds me, I'd better tell Father not to wait up for me tonight.

MORTIMER: (almost to himself) I've never been able to rationalize it.

ELAINE: What?

MORTIMER: My falling in love with a girl who lives in Brooklyn.

ELAINE: Falling in love? You're not stooping to the articulate, are you?

MORTIMER: The only way I can regain my self-respect is to keep you in New York.

ELAINE: Did you say keep?

MORTIMER: No, no. I've come to the conclusion that you're holding out for the legalities.

ELAINE: I can afford to be a good girl for quite a few years yet.

MORTIMER: And I can't wait that long. Where could we be married in a hurry – say tonight?

ELAINE: I'm afraid Father will insist on officiating.

MORTIMER: Oh, no! I'll bet your father could make even the marriage service sound pedestrian.

ELAINE: Are you by any chance writing a review of it?

MORTIMER: Forgive me, darling. It's an occupational disease.

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 10 – Martha and Mr. Witherspoon

MARTHA: Mr. Witherspoon? Does your family live with you at Happy Dale?

WITHERSPOON: I have no family.

MARTHA: Oh – Well, I suppose you consider everyone at Happy Dale your family?

WITHERSPOON: I'm afraid you don't quite understand. As head of the institution, I have to keep quite aloof.

MARTHA: That must make it very lonely for you.

WITHERSPOON: It does. But my duty is my duty.

MARTHA: Well, Abby – If Mr. Witherspoon won't join us for breakfast, I think at least we should offer him a glass of elderberry wine.

WITHERSPOON: (severely) Elderberry wine?

MARTHA: We make it ourselves.

WITHERSPOON: (melting slightly) Why, yes . . . (severely again) Of course, at Happy Dale our relationship will be more formal – but here – You don't see much elderberry wine nowadays – I thought I'd had my last glass of it.

MARTHA: Oh, no – no, here it is.

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 11 – Gibbs and Abby

GIBBS: I understand you have a room to rent. Are you the lady of the house?

ABBY: Yes. Won't you step in? I'm Miss Brewster.

GIBBS: My name is Gibbs.

ABBY: Oh, won't you sit down? I'm sorry we were just setting the table for dinner.

GIBBS: May I see the room?

ABBY: Why don't you sit down a minute and let's get acquainted.

GIBBS: That won't do much good if I don't like the room.

ABBY: Is Brooklyn your home?

GIBBS: Haven't got a home. Live in a hotel. Don't like it.

ABBY: Are your family Brooklyn people?

GIBBS: Haven't got any family.

ABBY: (Another victim) All alone in the world?

GIBBS: Yep

ABBY: Well, you've come to just the right house. Do sit down. What church do you go to? There's an Episcopal church practically next door.

GIBBS: I'm Presbyterian. Used to be. I'd really like to see the room.

ABBY: It's upstairs. Won't you try a glass of our wine before we start up?

GIBBS: Never touch it.

ABBY: We make this ourselves. It's elderberry wine.

GIBBS: Elderberry wine. Hmmph. Haven't tasted elderberry wine since I was a boy. Thank you. Do you have your own bushes?

ABBY: No, but the cemetery is full of them.

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 12 – Brophy and Klein

BROPHY: She shouldn't go to all that trouble.

KLEIN: Listen, try to stop her or her sister from doing something nice– and for nothing! They don't even care how you vote.

HARPER: When I received my call to Brooklyn and moved next door my wife wasn't well. When she died and for months before – well, if I know what pure kindness and absolute generosity are, it's because I've known the Brewster sisters.

(At this moment TEDDY steps out on balcony and blasts a bugle call. They all look.)

BROPHY: Colonel, you promised not to do that. He used to do that in the middle of the night. The neighbors raised Cain with us. They're a little afraid of him, anyway.

HARPER: Oh, he's quite harmless.

KLEIN: Suppose he does think he's Teddy Roosevelt. There's a lot worse people he could think he was.

BROPHY: Real shame – a nice family like this hatching a cuckoo.

KLEIN: Well, his father – the old girls' brother, was some sort of genius, wasn't he? And their father – Teddy's grandfather – seems to me I've heard he was a little crazy too.

BROPHY: Yeah – he was crazy like a fox. He made a million dollars . . . left his daughters fixed for life. Not that they ever spend any of it on themselves.

KLEIN: You don't know a tenth of it. When I was with the Missing Persons Bureau I was trying to trace an old man that we never did find – do you know there's a renting agency that's got this house down on its list for

furnished rooms? They don't rent rooms – but you can bet that anybody who comes here lookin' for a room goes away with a good meal and probably a few dollars in their kick.

BROPHY: It's just their way of digging up people to do some good to.

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 13 – O'Hara and Mortimer

O'HARA: Yeah. My mother was an actress – a stage actress. Perhaps you heard of her – Peaches Latour.

MORTIMER: It sounds like a name I've seen on a program. What did she play?

O'HARA: Well, her big hit was "Mutt and Jeff." Played it for three years. I was born on tour – the third season.

MORTIMER: You were?

O'HARA: Yep. Sioux City, Iowa. I was born in the dressing room at the end of the second act, and Mother made the finale.

MORTIMER: What a trouper! There must be a good story in your mother – you know, I write about the theatre.

O'HARA: You do? Saay! – You're not Mortimer Brewster, the dramatic critic!

MORTIMER: Yes.

O'HARA: Well, I certainly am glad to meet you. Say, Mr. Brewster – we're in the same line of business.

MORTIMER: We are?

O'HARA: Yeah. I'm a playwright. Oh, this being on the police force is just temporary.

MORTIMER: How long have you been on the force?

O'HARA: Twelve years. I'm collecting material for a play.

MORTIMER: I'll bet it's a honey.

O'HARA: Well, ought to be. With all the drama I see being a cop. Mr. Brewster – you have no idea what goes on in Brooklyn.

MORTIMER: I think I have.

O'HARA: Say, what time you got?

MORTIMER: Ten after one.

O'HARA: Wow. I gotta ring in.

MORTIMER: Wait a minute, O'Hara. On that play of yours – I may be able to help you.

O'HARA: You would! Say, it was fate my walking in her tonight. Look – I'll tell you the plot!

Arsenic and Old Lace Audition Scene 14 – Rooney and Mortimer

ROONEY: Yeah – yeah—those thirteen bodies in the cellar! It ain't enough that the neighbors are all afraid of him, and his disturbing the peace with that bugle – but can you imagine what would happen if that cock-eyed story about thirteen bodies in the cellar got around? And now he's starting a Yellow Fever scare. Cute, ain't it?

MORTIMER: (Greatly relieved, with an embarrassed laugh) Thirteen bodies. Do you think anybody would believe that story?

ROONEY: Well, you can't tell. Some people are just dumb enough. You don't know what to believe sometimes. About a year ago a crazy guy starts a murder rumor over in Greenpoint, and I had to dig up a half acre lot, just to prove them wrong. Now let's be sensible about this, ladies. For instance, here I am wasting my morning when I've got serious work to do. You know there are still murders to be solved in Brooklyn.

MORTIMER: Yes! (Covering) Oh, are there?

ROONEY: It ain't only his bugle blowing and the neighbors all afraid of him, but things would just get worse. Sooner or later we'd be put to the trouble of digging up your cellar.