

Dead as a cluedodo by Tom Hitchcock

Miss Cherry: So, whom else may we have here tonight with us? I can see that Colonel Dijon is joining us, oh and he is sat next to me! I've always loved a man in uniform - gets me going.

Professor Plüm: What doesn't!

Professor Plüm starts to saunter around the table, looking at the name tags, making out as if he knows who's name is where without having to actually look. As he circles the table, Miss Cherry circles it as well, but keeping her eye on him intently and is always opposite him.

Professor Plüm: so, tonight we have... Myself, Professor Plüm, your good self, Miss Cherry, Colonel Dijon and ... Rev Emerald .. then we have... Madam Blanc, oh yes, I love Madam Blanc, and Mr Sch... Mr Schwarz (*He mispronounces the name a couple of times before getting it right - adlib*) Mr Schwarz. Followed by the lovely Mr ... (*With Pace*) Mrs Peahen, from, from, from down the road... somewhere... and last but by no means least ... Ms Ivanna Tann.

Miss Cherry: Quite an eclectic bunch, but why for dinner? That's what I would like to know.

Professor Plüm: (*Under his breath*) Me too! (*To Miss Cherry*) Ah, the million dollar question. I'm sure there is a reason ; there always is. And if I'm not mistaken all will be revealed later tonight.

Miss Cherry: Oh, a man of mystery. I like that. It also gets me going!

Professor Plüm: I had noticed yes! But I fear I must come clean, you see...

Miss Cherry: Oh look, you've got different coloured name places to match the person.

Professor Plüm: Are they? Oh so they are!

Miss Cherry: Mine is in Red, Yours is in Purple. Colonel Dijon is in yellow. Madam Blanc's is white. The Reverend Emerald's is Green. Mr Schwarz's is Black. Mrs Peahen's name place is Blue and Ms Ivanna Tann's is in Orange.

Professor Plüm: Seems quite apt!

Miss Cherry: I'm sorry!

Professor Plüm: I thought you were Miss Cherry?

SFX - Loud knocking

The both look at the door, then Miss Cherry looks at Professor Plüm, whilst he keeps looking at the door

Miss Cherry: Someone's at the door.

Diana Lyalvale: *(From Off stage)* Someone's at the door!

Professor Plüm: I heard you the first time.

Miss Cherry: Are you going to get it or shall I?

Professor Plüm looks at Miss Cherry, then takes a couple of steps towards the door.

Diana Lyalvale: *(From Off stage)* Well? Are you going to get it or shall I?

Professor Plüm: *(Turning back to Miss Cherry)* You're quite impatient aren't you!

Miss Cherry: I'll get it.

Miss Cherry makes for the door.

Professor Plüm: A gentleman should go but...

Miss Cherry: I don't mind, could be rather fun. I can pretend to be your maid, you know, like some role play!

Miss Cherry makes for the door again.

Fiocchi Rottweil : *(From Offstage)* Don't waste your time my girl - I go get the door.

Miss Cherry: I didn't realise you did accents as well? There's more to you than meets the eye. Well I'm here now so I shall get it.

Fiocchi Rottweil : *(From Offstage)* Don't waste your time woman, I said I'll go, you silly sow!

Miss Cherry: Well really Professor Plüm, there's no need to be rude!

Professor Plüm: I didn't say anything.

Miss Cherry: You just called me a silly sow!

Professor Plüm: I can honestly, hand on heart, say that I would never have uttered those disgraceful words. Especially not to such a sensational lady in red as you!

Miss Cherry: Well if you didn't then who was it?

Fiocchi Rottweil enters, he comes straight across the stage to the front door. He stops, walks backwards a few paces, turns and looks at the Professor and Miss Cherry. Bows then heads to the door.

Miss Cherry: Who the hell is that?

Professor Plüm: I haven't the foggiest idea!

Miss Cherry: You haven't the foggiest idea? But this is your home? Is there anyone else here

Professor Plüm: ... No?

Miss Cherry: No?

SFX - Loud knocking, followed by door creaking open.

Fiocchi Rottweil: Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

Enter Colonel Dijon, Madam Blanc, the Reverend Emerald and Mrs Peahen

Colonel Dijon: Yes, yes. Very kind of you ol' boy. Through here is it?

Fiocchi Rottweil: Yes please! You take off your coats now and brush off the snow. It will melt away and make the rug very moist!

Madam Blanc: A moist rug - how distasteful.

Fiocchi Rottweil: To you maybe, but here in this adverse weather we will have to put up with it.

Reverend Emerald: Yes indeed. The weather nowadays is most topsy-turvy. One hardly knows whether to place an overcoat on or not.

Fiocchi Rottweil: It is winter - of course you wear your overcoat! tsk!

As Mrs Peahen removes her overcoat, she reveals a fantastic multicoloured evening dress of deep blues, purples and browns, etc (Much like a Peacocks plumage)

Mrs Peahen: An overcoat should only be used to conceal the beauty held within, that is ... until it is the right time to reveal oneself to the world!

Colonel Dijon: Secrets, secrets, secrets! You women are like overcoats - concealing far too many secrets. Trouble is, you never take them off!

Miss Cherry: I disagree, there is nothing more invigorating than to lay bare!

Colonel Dijon: Well quite.

Fiocchi Rottweil: Please, you come, take a drink. Dinner will be served in a short while.

Madam Blanc: Charming.

Fiocchi Rottweil: You find the drinks on the silver tray on the table. One glass each please.

Fiocchi Rottweil turns on his heels and exits.

Colonel Dijon: I say, what's this all about?

Miss Cherry: Ask him, Professor Plüm. It's his party.

Professor Plüm: No, wait... hang on.. I never ...

Reverend Emerald: It is indeed a pleasure and honour, to be invited to Tudor House to spend an evening with yourself. I must admit I have admired this property in the Parish, from afar. You see, I normally cycle on my bicycle past here, along the main road, as I head towards The Waddington's. They live down at Highlands Park Cottage, Hasbro Road. They're both charming people, yet elderly and slightly infirm, so cannot attend my church service, so I gallantly bring the service to them.

Professor Plüm: I'm sorry, you are?

Reverend Emerald: Why Reverend Emerald of course. Don't worry, I shan't cast you into the flames of hell, just because you don't attend my church on a Sunday. *(He chuckles)*

Professor Plüm: Look, I'm afraid the lady is mistaken somewhat. You see I'm...

Colonel Dijon: Rather bashful I take it. Yes, yes. I can't imagine you being in the front line; Charging at Jerry or the mighty Army of the mad Mahdi! No, no, no. Definitely a pencil pusher! Mind you, we need all those as well. You all serve a purpose! Cheers! *(He takes a glass and swigs at it)*

Madam Blanc: Madam Blanc - delighted to make your acquaintance. I'm a widow.

Colonel Dijon: You can't be – that's a widow! *(pointing at the window)*

Madam Blanc: I beg your pardon!

Colonel Dijon: ... Twas just a little joke – sort of larks we would have in the trenches

Madam Blanc: It most certainly isn't appreciated here! Mocking a poor widow woman!

Mrs Peahen: Oh is that champagne! My favourite!

Professor Plüm: Look. I really wish that you would all listen to me. There's been a mistake.

Mrs Peahen: You're certainly right there's been a mistake! This is a Crémant!

Miss Cherry: Crémant?

Mrs Peahen: Yes, a sparkling wine produced in France using the traditional method, but sadly it is outside the region of Champagne so can't be classed as a champagne. Us in the know call them 'Crémant' or sometimes 'Mousseux', the grapes are from non traditional varieties such as Pinot Blanc, Riesling or Pinot Gris grapes.

Miss Cherry: Someone obviously has a drinking problem!

Mrs Peahen: Oh, I have no problem drinking it darling, its stopping that's the difficulty! Besides, when you mix with the upper classes it pays to be in the know!

Miss Cherry: I do believe you will find that I mix well with various classes, all are the same, especially when on their backs. In my personal opinion.

Professor Plüm: Ladies please. I am in the middle of explaining that there has been a huge mistake. Miss Cherry, I am not the owner of this Tudor House. I am merely a guest here, the same as you all. Sadly my dear, you mistook me for the owner and didn't allow me sufficient time to reveal my true identity to you. In other words your assumption was the mother of all cock ups!

Colonel Dijon: What the blazers is going on?

Miss Cherry: Well if you aren't the host then who on earth is?

Mr Schwarz: *(Off stage)* That would be me.

Madam Blanc: Who said that?

SFX - Gustav Holst - ' Mars Bringer of war' plays (first 35 seconds) as Mr Schwarz enters

From out of the shadows steps a tall man, dark, slim and dressed entirely in black. On his arm is a beautiful woman, in a dress, high heels and a fluffy shawl. She is heavily faked tanned - orange in fact, Russian accent)

Mr Schwarz: I did. I am your host Mr Schwarz. Welcome to my humble and modest home... Oh and this gorgeous creature on my left is Ivanna. Ms Ivanna Tann. A very close friend of mine.

Ms Ivanna Tann: Is pleasure to meet you all.

General mutterings of 'likewise' echo from the cast.

Mr Schwarz: I guess, you're all wondering why I brought you all here together, tonight. Well, all shall be revealed soon enough. However I will give you one little snippet of information. You are all linked together by a common theme... But enough small talk. Allow me to show you around my Tudor House. A house of many rooms and many stories to tell. Oh if only the walls could talk they could tell of the many sights they have seen over the last five hundred or so years. The laughter, the joy, *(With a sinister note)* the death! But if we all let out our secrets too soon, then there would be nothing to hold our audiences attention as they gawk in amazement at what unfolds before them. *(change of tune in voice - jolly)* So This is the dining room. And we have a Billiard Room, Kitchen, Conservatory, Ballroom, Library, Lounge, Hall, study and my favourite place; the cellar. Do you know why that is my favourite place?

Madam Blanc: No, do enlighten us Mr Schwarz

Mr Schwarz: It's where the wine is kept of course!

Mrs Peahen: Sounds like the party ought to be down there!

Mr Schwarz: There is every wine imaginable down there, but it needs to be brought up here and handled ever so carefully; like how a man should care for a lady!

Reverend Emerald: Ha...ha... how do you mean?

Mr Schwarz: You must first choose the right bottle, carry it from the cool cellar upstairs, caressing and holding her tightly to you, allow the bottle of wine to warm slowly to room temperature, keeping her at an angle to allow the flavours of the juice to mix just right. Maximum taste will be accomplished. And when she is ready - 'pop' the cork. Slowly ... not too fast or else you will spoil it! Remember you are to devour yet savour the flavour over the tongue. Every last drop must be enjoyed to the fullest!

The Reverend Emerald loosens his dog collar

Colonel Dijon: Yes, yes. Well. how about a tour of this fantastic home of yours then? Let's see the battle ground and how the land lies, hey? hey?

Mr Schwarz: But of course. Please. Follow me. *(To Ivanna Tann)* Oh my darling, would you please inform Cook and the other staff that we shall take a short tour before we shall be seated for dinner.

Ivanna Tann: Dah, darling.

Mr Schwarz leads the group off stage, Ivanna Tann walks off in the opposite direction to head to the kitchen. Madam Blanc lags behind and stops to look at an object on the wall, it is a piece of Lead Pipe.

Madam Blanc: What a curious thing to have laying around in your dining room?