

MURDER AT EIGHT  
By Alex Nalbach

Cast of Characters

- AMY: Attractive young wife, an interior designer.
- MARK: Attractive young husband, an editor.
- KAREN: Amy's helpful best friend, an OB-GYN.
- TOM: Mark's quiet best friend, a podiatrist.
- ALEC: A frustrated and sarcastic playwright.
- HOLLY: Alec's gracious wife, a boutique retailer.
- ANGIE: A charismatic young stage actress.
- PETER: Amy's level-headed younger brother.

Scene

A fashionable contemporary city apartment.

Time

Seven in the evening, the present.

SIDE 1: "Before the Party"  
AMY AND MARK

**NOTE: For our auditions, the actors should not touch or kiss.**

*The clock is slowly chiming seven in high, silvery chimes. AMY, dressed in a simple but very flattering ivory satin dress, is putting finishing touches on things: adjusting lighting, lighting candles, touching flowers. MARK enters from the doorway to the bedrooms and embraces her from behind. His shirt front is still open and he is in boxers without trousers: he has not yet finished dressing. He slips behind her and begins nuzzling the back of her neck and her hair.*

AMY: May I help you?

MARK: Oh, I hope so.

AMY: Stop it, they'll be here any second, and we're not ready.

MARK: I'm ready right now.

AMY: I'll bet. Did you put ice in the bar?

MARK: Sure.

AMY: Did you get the olives out of the fridge?

MARK: Why not.

AMY: And you set out the champagne glasses in the dining room?

MARK: (running his hands over her) Mmm, glasses. . .

AMY: Useless. You come home late, you can't pick out your own clothes. . .

MARK: I'm a bad, bad boy. . .

AMY: . . . and you do none of the things I ask you to.

MARK: I'll do everything you ask me to. . .

AMY: Why is it you always get frisky right before company comes?

MARK: Closet exhibitionist.

AMY: That's a contradiction in terms.

MARK: You smell amazing.

AMY: And you are an idiot. You want me to melt in your arms, you should say how great everything looks, how much you appreciate all the work I've put into everything.

MARK: Everything looks great. I appreciate how much work you've put into everything.

AMY: Like what?

MARK: Like your hair. It smells amazing. (MARK buries his face in it.)

AMY: (laughing but earnest) Quit it!

MARK: I can't help it. I'm sentimental. Why did we invite all these people for our anniversary?

AMY: That was *your* bright idea.

MARK: I just wanted to prove they were wrong when they said it wouldn't last.

AMY: Who said that?

MARK: Oh, wait, that was *me*. . .

AMY: (slipping her hand into MARK's shorts with an air of menace) You're awfully cheeky for someone so vulnerable.

MARK: Whoa, cold hands! Weak heart, remember!

(AMY stiffens.)

MARK: Sorry, that wasn't funny.

AMY: No, it wasn't.

MARK: I'm sorry. Really.

AMY: I wish you wouldn't joke about it.

MARK: I know. I'm sorry.

(There is a pause.)

AMY: Yech. The only thing worse than you being flip is you being serious. (AMY kisses MARK.)

MARK: (pulling her close gently, speaking softly and earnestly) Listen. I, um - I want to tell you something.

AMY: What?

MARK: I feel pretty shitty about how much you've had to do on your own lately.

AMY: It's okay, you're busy. We both are.

MARK: It's not okay, and I don't like being busy.

AMY: Mark, you're good at what you do, and you love it.

MARK: What I love isn't at the office. I - I'm going to cut back. I'm not going to work any more nights. The adaptation's almost done, and if they ask me to do another one like it I'm going to tell them "no."

AMY: Can you do that?

MARK: They're my nights, and I want them back. If that's not okay, I'll go somewhere else. But I think it will be.

AMY: You're serious.

MARK: Yeah.

AMY: Maybe you being serious *isn't* so bad.

(MARK pulls AMY close to give her a long, deep kiss.)

AMY: Oh, wow. You have no idea what good timing you have.

MARK: What do you mean?

(The doorbell chimes.)

AMY: Then again. . .

MARK: (pulling open his shirt in a kind of striptease) Last chance.  
. . .

AMY: (pushing him out of the room with one hand) I doubt it.

SIDE 2: "Still Single"  
MARK AND TOM

**NOTE: For our auditions, the actors should not touch one another.**

MARK: (greeting Tom) Hey!

TOM: Hey.

(MARK and TOM shake hands; MARK pulls TOM in to give him a hug.)

MARK: Good to see you, buddy. (MARK suddenly starts riffling through TOM's sport coat.)

TOM: (laughing) What are you doing?

MARK: Looking for Julie. Where is she?

TOM: (stops laughing at once, disengaging from MARK)  
Oh, she's, um, she's not coming.

MARK: She's not? Why not? She knows how much fun *I* am. . .

TOM: We - well, we're kind of not seeing each other any more.

MARK: You're not? What happened? You didn't tell her about the leprosy, did you?

TOM: No.

MARK: The aunt who thinks she's a rutabaga?

TOM: No.

MARK: The family fortune sunk in shares of Google?

TOM: (smiling) No.

MARK: Well if you managed to keep all that from her, I don't see why she would have dumped my best friend.

TOM: She didn't dump me. I - I dumped her.

MARK: You dumped Julie.

TOM: Yes.

MARK: Julie the production editor.

TOM: Yes.

MARK: Julie the tri-athlete.

TOM: Yes.

MARK: Julie with the amazing -

TOM: Yes.

MARK: Why?

TOM: I don't know. I mean, she's great, she's just - she's not what I'm looking for, I guess.

MARK: Tom, Tom, Tom. If you keep throwing back all the fabulous babes I reel in for you, I'm gonna stop fishing.

TOM: Sorry, Mark, it's just -

MARK: Kidding, buddy, kidding. (Moving to the bar.) How should we drown your sorrows?

TOM: I don't know, a beer, I guess.

MARK: You got it. (MARK opens a small fridge behind the bar, pops cap on bottle, hands it to TOM.) I don't get it, though. You had all kinds of girlfriends in college. How long's it been since you found someone for yourself? Two years? Three?

TOM: Maybe my tastes are changing.

MARK: Maybe. But I worry about you.

(MARK begins to pour himself a short glass of Bushmills.)

TOM: (referring to MARK's drink) Is that a good idea?

MARK: Aren't you a *foot* doctor?

TOM: I meant what would happen if Amy found out.

MARK: Then I suggest we not tell her. (MARK clicks his glass against TOM's bottle.)

SIDE 3: "How's the Writing Going?"  
ALEC

TOM: How is the writing going, Alec?

ALEC: (*expansively, but letting the words do the work – there will be no need to physicalize any of the following*) Well, Tom, it's like this. I wake up every morning to find one of the nine muses with her titties in my face. And I say, "Jesus, what the hell do you want from me? I just banged out a whole act yesterday." But those are some tenacious bitches. She grabs my hair and bites my ear and claws my chest and BAM, there it is. As hard as Chinese arithmetic. Another perfect plot. And I say, "Aw Hell No," but will she listen? She's all over me, inside me, I am man enough to admit. And pretty soon, all it takes is just one little keystroke, and the words are pumping out of me, spattered all over the screen thick and sticky sweet. (beat, then lightly:) How's podiatry?

SIDE 4: "Advice"  
MARK AND PETER

MARK: You aren't serious, are you? About Angie?

PETER: I don't know. Maybe. It has been four months.

MARK: Well, I wouldn't set your hopes too high.

PETER: (lightly) What?

MARK: I just don't think you're her type, that's all.

PETER: *What?*

MARK: Hey, I want what's best for you, man. You're my brother-in-law. I love you. I don't mean any offense.

PETER: What a relief to know there's some other way to take that.

MARK: Look, man, I've known Angie a long time. Longer than you have. I've seen the sort of guys she falls for, and they're not you.

PETER: I see.

MARK: She's a party girl. She's self-involved. She'd have made Copernicus put *her* at the center of the universe.

PETER: So?

MARK: So she likes guys who are flashy and crazy and stupid. Party boys who make her look good. Or people who just trail after her drooling. You, you're a rock. Solid job, solid brain, solid heart. You pay social security. You wear sport coats. You bathe.

PETER: I knew the social security thing was a turn-off.

MARK: You're too good for her. I mean, you're too "good" for her. (Beat.) I just don't want you to get hurt.

PETER: Mark. . . (Pauses, thinks better of it) . . .forget it.

MARK: What?

PETER: Thanks for the tip.

MARK: What were you going to say?



PETER: I was just going to say, look at her friends. Look at you guys. You're not flashy or crazy or stupid. And you don't follow her around drooling. You're smart, you're solid, and you don't just take her bullshit, you give it back to her. And you've been together for years. Millions of Angie years. (Beat.) Maybe that's why none of those other guys lasted. Maybe what she really wants is you guys. Or someone like you guys. (Short pause.) And, maybe you don't give her enough credit.

MARK: (after a pause to let this sink in) So what do you get from her?

PETER: What do you mean?

MARK: I mean I can see what she gets from you. Stability, sense. .  
.

PETER: . . .retirement benefits. . .

MARK: What do you get back?

PETER: (leaning in, conspiratorially) You ever dream about finding a woman who is so sexually self-aware, so completely at home in her own body that she knows exactly what she wants, and has absolutely no compunction about going for it?

MARK: Yeah. . .?

PETER: (instant change of attitude) So do I. But she makes me laugh.

(PETER and MARK click glasses.)

SIDE 5: "Discoveries"  
ALEC, TOM, ANGIE

**NOTE: For our auditions, the actors should not touch each other.**

ALEC: No tour for you, Tom-bellina?

TOM: No, um, I helped them unpack, so I've kind of seen it.

ALEC: I've seen about enough myself.

TOM: What do you mean?

ALEC: Of the Ideal Husband. Christ. Sooo busy with his big adaptation. Always staying late at work to finish it on time.

TOM: It *is* a big project.

ALEC: *It doesn't exist.* I know. I asked his secretary about it. She'd never even heard of it. Made me look like a complete idiot, I had to say I must have been thinking of someone else. (a beat, as TOM says nothing.) Doesn't surprise you, does it? And here we are, celebrating the anniversary of the happy couple. And he thinks he can say anything, do anything, just because he's so god-damned charming. And you know what's the worst part? He's *right*. He's fucking bulletproof.

TOM: I -- I don't think you should tell anybody else. About the adaptation. I don't think it would do anyone any good.

ALEC: (pauses, regarding TOM sardonically) You really are a stupid loyal dog, aren't you?

TOM: (beat) You really are a shriveled up old woman, aren't you?

ALEC: (temporarily thrown off guard, then suddenly smiling and tousling TOM's hair) Baaah.

(ANGIE returns with an intense and bizarre smile on her face.)

ANGIE: Oh my God, oh my God, I *knew* it!

TOM: Knew what?

ANGIE: She's *gay*!

ALEC: Who?

ANGIE: Karen!

ALEC: Whaaat?

ANGIE: It's true.

ALEC: That's crazy.

ANGIE: Then why has she not been on a date in like a brajillion years?

ALEC: Because she works so hard. You should try it some time.

ANGIE: This from the self-un-employed.

TOM: She really does work a lot. Isn't she a specialist in high-risk pregnancies or something?

ALEC: Exactly.

ANGIE: Okay, boys, if she's not gay, then answer this. Why did she have "ANGELICA" on her calendar for tonight?

TOM: How do you know that?

ANGIE: It's on her phone!

ALEC: You looked in her calendar?

ANGIE: Of course not - well, not on purpose. But it was the first thing that popped up when she unlocked her phone. And there it was, under the entry for this party. "ANGELICA."

ALEC: Meaning?

ANGIE: (a disgusted "tch" at their failure to grasp the obvious.) She has a crush on me!

TOM: Your name is *Angela*.

ANGIE: It must be her pet name for me. I do have a certain Latin charm.

ALEC: If by that you mean it's in a dead language, then yes.

ANGIE: I'm telling you, that girl's as queer as a plaid rabbit. I've always thought so. I've *felt* it.

ALEC: Now *that's* proof.

ANGIE: Then *you* explain it, Mr. Detective Writer.

ALEC: (a pause, then curtly) I think I'll join the tour. (ALEC exits into the kitchen.)

ANGIE: Was it something I said?

TOM: Probably.

ANGIE: That was funny. For you.

(There is the sound of laughter from the kitchen.)

ANGIE: Why don't you join them?

TOM: I've already seen the apartment.

(ANGIE pauses, then laughs.)

TOM: What's so funny.

ANGIE: *You*. You want to be happy for them, don't you? And you can't even fake it.

TOM: I don't know what you're talking about.

ANGIE: (Pityingly) Tom, Tom. Tom-tom.

(ANGIE crosses slowly to TOM, picks up one of the two cosmos off the table, and puts it into his hand. She gently adjusts a curl at the front of his hair, then steps back to survey the effect.)

ANGIE: You're cute. You shouldn't let it go to waste.

SIDE 6: "Hiiii."  
ANGIE AND KAREN

(KAREN returns from the kitchen, calling back over her shoulder.)

KAREN: No, I brought it out here, I'll get it.

ANGIE: (to KAREN, with silky elongated vowel) Hiiii.

(There is a slight, awkward pause as KAREN tries to process the strange inflection. TOM covers his eyes with his hands.)

KAREN: Hey.

ANGIE: (purring) Thanks for this.

(ANGIE crosses to KAREN to return the phone. There is a sexy swing to her hips as she moves toward KAREN.)

KAREN: No problem.

ANGIE: (breathily) You're an *angel*.

(ANGIE leans in close to press the phone into KAREN's hand.)

KAREN: Ooo-kay.

ANGIE: (smiles deeply, then continues her Kathleen Turner purr) I think I'll join the others. But don't you worry, I won't be far.

KAREN: (after a beat) Neat.

(ANGIE saunters from the room, hips swaying, never taking her eyes off KAREN.)

SIDE 7: "Secrets"  
TOM AND KAREN

(KAREN takes up a martini glass and fills it with cranberry juice, turns to return to kitchen.)

TOM: That for Mark?

KAREN: No, Amy.

TOM: Because, you know, he's not supposed to be drinking.

KAREN: I know.

TOM: Because of his heart.

KAREN: I know.

TOM: (A very gradual build.) And God, would Amy be furious if he wasn't taking care of himself. After what she's been through. We all would, really - I mean, we'd be so *angry* if something happened to him. Just because he can't be bothered to take a few precautions. Just because he can't say "no" to anything, even when it's so easy. Even when it's so important. I think - I think sometimes he's really selfish. No, that isn't the right word, it's too small. I mean here we all are, we all love him so fucking much, and he can't even be bothered to give something up, something so insignificant, something so small, an occasional drink. Like it doesn't even matter to him how much we care, how much we worry, how much we'd miss him. Especially Amy. How can somebody even *think* like that? And it's not like he doesn't know the risks, like he hasn't had warnings. That last time - how much it was hurting him, and that *color* he turned, and everybody there in the hospital, crying, and praying. Amy going to pieces. And here he is, three months later, just *three months*, like nothing happened. Like he's forgotten it. Forgotten *us*. (A long pause.) Sorry.

KAREN: (She really does get it. Sympathetically) I know. But you know Mark.

TOM: Yeah. I guess we all do. (A mirthless snort.) Except. . .

(A pause.)

KAREN: You okay?

TOM: (reluctant, then:) Can I ask you something?

KAREN: Sure.

*(Another pause.)*

TOM: No, forget it.

KAREN: What? (Silence. KAREN puts down the glass.) What?

*(Another pause.)*

TOM: If – if you knew something about somebody's relationship, a friend, that they didn't know, would you say anything?

KAREN: Something bad?

TOM: Yeah.

KAREN: One of us?

TOM: Not – not necessarily. . .

KAREN: (smiling) Wow, you're terrible at this.

TOM: Would you?

KAREN: (after a short pause) I think it would depend.

TOM: On what?

*(KAREN's phone suddenly lets out a small high ringtone. KAREN looks at it, not recognizing the identification. She answers it.)*

KAREN: Hello?

*(There is a pause as KAREN listens. Her brow creases slightly as the speaker talks for a few seconds: she is listening to a sustained obscene monologue. KAREN may make an expression of mild shock, then exaggerated titillation – perhaps fanning herself. After allowing this to go on for fifteen seconds or so, she interrupts:)*

KAREN: Um, excuse me, I'm sorry, um, did you want to speak to Angie? (Pause.) No, this is her friend Karen, she borrowed my phone. Should I get her for you?

*(Another pause. A mischievous light comes into KAREN's eyes.)*

Well, would you like me to relay the message?

*(Another pause. KAREN is now enjoying herself)*

It's no trouble, really, I think I can remember it all. Let me see, uh, first, you want to lick her –

*(Pause.)*

You're sure?

*(Pause.)*

Well, if you're abso-*lute* —

*(The speaker hangs up. KAREN also hangs up, smiling.)*

KAREN: (wryly) What were we just talking about?

TOM: Never mind.

KAREN: A-yeah.



SIDE 8: "The Email"  
MARK AND HOLLY

MARK: So. How are things?

HOLLY: "Never better."

MARK: Really?

HOLLY: Yes. Yes, they're fine.

MARK: Are you sure?

HOLLY: Mark —

MARK: What is it?

HOLLY: Mark, I can't — I mean, I *want* to, but I can't, not for a while. Maybe not ever again.

MARK: Holly, you know it doesn't bother me. I want to.

HOLLY: It's just — (Her voice breaks.)

MARK: What's the matter?

HOLLY: (letting all out in a flood) Oh, Mark, things are terrible. I mean really terrible. I didn't think it would ever get this bad. He doesn't know it, but we're broke. Flat broke. I told him I got a bonus at the boutique last time. I don't know if he believed me, but he didn't say anything. I try to economize without letting him see. But I couldn't do it again —

MARK: Holly, I swear I would never tell him.

HOLLY: I know, Mark, I know. It's not that, it's — God, I feel so — so *ungrateful* for talking like this. And I'm not. I don't know how we would have gotten this far. But after you —

MARK: What?

HOLLY: Never mind.

MARK: What?

HOLLY: I can't tell you, not if he won't.

MARK: Holly.

HOLLY: (a pause, then with sudden violence) How could you say what you did about his script?

MARK: What?

HOLLY: How could you write that email, how could you say such - such awful things about his work?

MARK: Is that what this is about?

HOLLY: Of course it is. You know how much it means to him, how he slaves at it. Or maybe you don't. Maybe nobody does. But I watch him, every day, for hours and hours, sitting there at that damned computer, sometimes all through the day without eating, sometimes all night without sleeping. Even when he's not at the machine he's still working: I can tell. When he gets quiet. When his mind wanders. It always goes to the same place. And it makes him so unhappy sometimes, to see it all come out so plain, so ordinary. It shreds him up. But he's so dedicated. I can bear it because he's so dedicated. And he *should* think about it all the time. He has a gift, Mark, I know he does.

MARK: We all know it, Holly.

HOLLY: No, no, I don't think you all do. I don't think anyone knows it like I do, not even him. I don't suppose anybody understands why I put up with - why I don't care if we have any money, why I don't mind when we don't go out, why I let him do all the talking. I don't have to, you know. I was brought up differently than that, I'm a smart woman, I could fend for myself.

MARK: I know you could. I think you should.

HOLLY: (curtly) Well, thank you for that suggestion.

MARK: I'm serious. You can write. And maybe that's what he needs. Maybe it would inspire him.

HOLLY: I think we *both* know that would *not* be the result.

MARK: Well, it just seems to me that you're making a self-limiting choice.

HOLLY: (a beat, then coldly) You will forgive me, Mark, if I point out that one of us in this room does not understand very much about the nature of self-limiting choices.

(There is a pause as they both realize the dangerous water into which they have drifted.)

HOLLY: I could never do what I know he can do. I think I believe in it more than he does. He writes because he *has* to. I want him to write because he *ought* to.

MARK: Of course.

HOLLY: But then you wrote that email. I knew it was bad when he wouldn't even show it to me. He wouldn't even talk about it. I had to break into his account to see what you said. I - I just couldn't believe it. It was as if you had been right there in our house on the worst nights of it, when he doubts himself. Everything he feared about his own work, you typed into that message. Right there, in black and white. It was devastating, Mark.

MARK: Holly -

HOLLY: No, don't, I understand. I mean I think I do.

MARK: Holly, *it just wasn't any good*. It was just like the one before, but not as well written.

HOLLY: I know that! Don't you think I could see that?

MARK: Then what did you want me to do? Lie to him?

HOLLY: (without thinking) *Of course!*

MARK: What? How could I do that?

HOLLY: Because you're his *friend*, Mark. And sometimes, that's what friends do.

MARK: They *lie* to each other?

HOLLY: All the time. Sometimes it's little lies, like flattery, and sometimes big lies, like keeping secrets that won't do

anyone any good if they got out. But yes. Friends exercise judgment. They economize with the truth. And sometimes, they lie.

MARK: (a pause; then, simply) Well not me.

(There is a cold silence. Finally, MARK can't stand it.)

MARK: For God's sake, Holly, he asked me to tell him what I thought! That's my *job*, telling people what I think of their writing. I'm no good to anyone if I'm not honest. And Alec isn't an idiot. What makes you think I'd even be *able* to fool him? And don't say - (He stops.)

HOLLY: (regarding him coolly) What?

MARK: Never mind.

HOLLY: Well I hope it's some comfort that you were acting on principle. Because he was *crushed*, Mark, absolutely *crushed*. I've never seen him so upset. He hasn't said a word about it, hasn't written anything, hasn't *done* anything since.

MARK: I should talk to him.

HOLLY: (suddenly panicked) Don't you *dare*. Don't you *dare* let him know I've seen that message, that I spoke to you about it.

MARK: Okay.

HOLLY: Swear to me, Mark. If he won't talk to you about it, you mustn't bring it up.

MARK: If that's what you want.

HOLLY: Swear it.

MARK: I swear it.

HOLLY: And I can't take any more of your money. I appreciate what you and Amy have done for us, your generosity, your discretion. But if he ever found out -

MARK: Of course. I would never say anything.

HOLLY: (after another awkward pause; trying to salvage the situation with a strained smile) Well. I knew I could count on such a gallant gentleman.

MARK: (playing along) How can I refuse such a gracious lady?

HOLLY: (another short pause, then, as a serious reflection) All this charm. Yours, mine. . .

MARK: (lightly flirting, trying to make a joke) One day, it will get us both into trouble.

HOLLY: (not flirting back, seriously) Yes. One day, I believe it will.

SIDE 9: "Mark's Advice"  
HOLLY, TOM, KAREN, ALEC

**NOTE: This takes place one year after the events in Sides 1-8.**

KAREN: (to HOLLY) How's the boutique?

HOLLY: Well actually, I'm sort of retired from retail. I - I've been doing a little writing.

TOM: Hey, that's great.

KAREN: What are you writing?

HOLLY: A novel, I think.

TOM: What's it about?

HOLLY: Well it's not really *about* anything. I mean, I guess I don't believe life really has a plot. Oh, I believe that people have *stories*. And *language*. But not *plots*. It's mostly about people I know. I'm afraid each and every one of you are *thoroughly* exposed.

ALEC: Again.

KAREN: (To ALEC) And you sir?

TOM: What are you writing?

ALEC: (grandly) *I* no longer write.

TOM: You don't?

ALEC: Nope.

KAREN: So what are you up to?

ALEC: (importantly) *I* work at the *boutique*.

TOM: (almost laughing) What?

ALEC: That's right, I do. And what is more, I love it. Oh, it does present its challenges. For example, every morning, I must now put on pants.

(KAREN gasps in mock astonishment.)

ALEC: I *know*. But I like the routine. I like feeling productive. And after all, one writer in the family is enough.

HOLLY: (after a short pause, staring at a certain empty spot in the room.) That's funny, isn't it.

ALEC: What?

HOLLY: That was Mark's advice. That I should start writing.

KAREN: Really?

ALEC: When did he say that?

HOLLY: We were standing right over there. I can't remember where everyone else had got to. But he told me I should start to do some writing.

TOM: How weird.

KAREN: (to TOM) Well, didn't you say something about that too?

TOM: I did?

KAREN: When we were talking about the color of Amy's dress.

HOLLY: (smiling) That's right, you said I should write for catalogs. It was very sweet.

TOM: I just meant it's weird that *Mark* should have suggested it.

KAREN: Well he was an editor.

TOM: But he *also* said you and I should hook up. And now look. A year later, you and I expecting, Holly's writing -

ALEC: - And I've quit.

HOLLY: Well now Mark never said you should do *that*. . .

ALEC: You don't know what he said. But that was it, in a nutshell.

HOLLY: I'm sure he didn't. In fact I know he didn't, because he thought that if *I* started writing - (HOLLY stops.)

ALEC: What?

HOLLY: (trying to sound light) Oh it doesn't matter.

## SIDE 10: "The Rules"

AMY

**NOTE: This scene takes place one year after the events in Sides 1-8.**

AMY: I - I have something to say, and I think it's probably best if I can get it all out at once, without being interrupted. It's going to be hard to believe, but I want you to hear me all the way through. I know something about what happened here a year ago. I know Mark's death was not natural. I don't mean because he died so young. Everyone knew he had a bad heart, so it wasn't a surprise that he didn't live - as long as - we hoped. That's not what made his death unnatural. I mean that one year ago tonight, at approximately seven thirty, Mark was killed. Please, please. Don't say anything. Not yet. I know you can't believe it. I couldn't either, at first. But I found out how it was done. And I - I know which of you killed him. I could never prove anything against - the person who did it. I tried. I went to the police. I asked them to dig up his body, to look for the drug. They thought I was hysterical. Crazy. They wouldn't do anything. I didn't know what to do. I can't really do anything. Not by myself. I need your help. I need a confession. I've administered this (*produces a small brown bottle*) to the person who did it. It's what killed Mark. It should take effect by eight o'clock - the time that he died. And this -- (*AMY indicates the goblet on the tray*) -- is the only antidote. Whoever takes this glass is the killer.