

ALFRED HITCHCOCK TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I KNOW

By Pat Cook

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Maura Milton applies for a bookkeeper's job at the home of one Tyrone Bartholomew. However, she soon finds out there isn't one Tyrone Bartholomew but many. This sly old actor relishes life and flies from one character to another whenever dealing with the outside world. But Maura wants to prove that she can stand on her own two feet. And in between dodging gangsters with guns and a wild-eyed lady with an ax, she starts to question her career choice. It is only when the police arrive that she questions Tyrone - Can he distinguish what is real and what is not anymore? She fears he has lost all track of reality. Then his actor friends turn out to be more than they pretend to be. But it balances out, because the cops are not who they pretend to be either. And suddenly, Tyrone seems the only sane one in the group! This screwball comedy with a bit of mystery thrown in for good measure will keep audiences guessing until the last shot is fired, and the dummy hits the floor.

Fast-paced with a bit of heart, this play comes to you from the same playwright who gave you "The Little Town of Christmas" and "The Marquis Crossing Ladies Society's First Attempt at Murder."

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(7 m, 8 w, doubling possible)

TYRONE BARTHOLOMEW: A feisty and surprising man, around 60.

MAURA MILTON: A rather stubborn business woman in her late 20s.

LENA LAMBERT: A mousy, quiet type in her late 20s.

ROGER LAMBERT: A mysterious stranger, husband of Lena.

MRS. GOODMAN: A happy woman in her late 40s.

MRS. DINSTITCH: A pushy but vain landlady.

SCOTTY: A teenager, always into everything.

TRUDY HAMBRICK: A pushy woman in her late 30s.

SHERMAN O'HARA: An affable lummoX, about 30.

MacELROY: A gangster type.

OFFICER ANNIE: A policewoman with a secret.

OFFICER DAPHNE: Annie's partner, a large woman.

FEENEY: Man in a trench coat, can be menacing.

LOUIS: Assistant to Feeney, a bit dense. (May be double cast as MacElroy.)

LADY: A wild-eyed lady in her late 50s.

Time: The present.

Place: Tyrone's living room.

SET DESCRIPTION

The setting for this little intrigue is the home of Tyrone Bartholomew. The living room of the old house is something of a mirror to Bartholomew's rather eclectic tastes, coupled with various leftover props from his past. There are three doors utilized in the floor plan. The front door is located SR. Near it is a curtained window looking out on the porch. The second door, leading to the kitchen, is located UPS, near the staircase. The third door, SL, leads into the dining room and den. The furniture, while a bit crowded, is very comfortable. A large couch rests DSL near the dining room door. There is an easy chair near it with an adjoining table. A desk with a chair is near the front door. A telephone sits on the desk. Several other chairs and tables round out the scene. Two large bookcases are behind the desk on SR wall. Scattered around the room are magazines, bookcases, hats, candles, statues, ashtrays and one skull.

PROPS

Clipboard, pen, a realistic ax, note, purse, skull, glasses, jackets, cardboard box, bandanna, tape player, visor, pretend stick of dynamite, reams of paper to cover desk, fencing mask, sword, two wallets, briefcase, sandwich, metal tool, sack of groceries, life-size dummy, plate of pastries, bow tie, wad of money, ham radio set-up, earphones, pocket calculator, police badges, pad, pen, tie, phone, trench coat, several pistols, fuzzy slipper, whistle, three sets of handcuffs, false arm, handcuff key.

SFX - Doorbell, big band music, microwave ding, beeping noises, phone, people rustling around.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: TYRONE in a dark suit is standing near the couch. He looks at his clipboard and then looks at the room. He shrugs disgustedly and then writes. A LADY enters coming down the stairs, carrying an ax. She moves up behind him and raises her ax. He turns just before she swings it.)

TYRONE: Not now!

(The LADY stops, shrugs and then turns and exits out the kitchen door, dragging the ax behind her. The DOORBELL rings. TYRONE crosses to the door and opens it.)

TYRONE: Yes?

MAURA: Uh ... is this 944 Plymouth?

TYRONE: Who wants to know?

MAURA: Maura Milton. *(SHE hands HIM a note.)* I'm inquiring about a position?

TYRONE: *(Looks at the note.)* Milton ...

MAURA: For a manager? Business manager?

TYRONE: Oh. Well, come in. *(HE opens the door wider and MAURA looks around.)*

MAURA: I'm supposed to be here at ten. Mr. Bartholomew had placed an ad with ... *(SHE looks around.)* ... *The Daily Globe.* Holy ...

TYRONE: A little cluttered, wouldn't you say?

MAURA: Oh, I went through six other words before I even got to cluttered. Anyway, I called and he said to come over today for an interview. *(SHE moves to the bookcase and picks up the skull.)* So, I was supposed to meet him here.

TYRONE: *(After a slight pause.)* That's not him.

MAURA: Why would anybody keep a skull in a living room?

TYRONE: Well, they say some people do that. *(HE takes the skull and replaces it on the shelf. He then looks back at MAURA.)* If they're crazy.

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MAURA: Huh?

TYRONE: (*HE moves back to the couch and continues to make notes.*) Don't mind me. Can't carry the world on my shoulders. You should be old enough to know what you're doing.

MAURA: I ... I just answered an ad ...

TYRONE: Walk in here not knowing what to expect, fresh as a new laid egg and then you wonder? How many times has it happened? How many times have I seen it? Can't blame me.

MAURA: (*Trying to hang on.*) ...in *The Daily Globe*.

TYRONE: (*Points at HER.*) People get murdered by being in the wrong place at the wrong time! Or maybe just by being the wrong person! You ever think of that?

MAURA: I was supposed to be here at ten.

TYRONE: (*Crosses to HER.*) What did he sound like over the phone?

MAURA: Uh ... he didn't sound like he would have a skull on his bookcase.

TYRONE: No, I mean what do you really know about the man?

MAURA: (*Meekly.*) He needs a manager? (*Looks around again.*) And maybe a leaf blower.

TYRONE: And that's all? That's the total sum of your assessment, which enables you to venture out in unknown territory with the slimmest optimism for obtaining employment?

MAURA: Well, there was this ad...

TYRONE: How can you judge a character on such flimsy data?

MAURA: In *The Daily Globe*. Who're you?

TYRONE: (*Walks away from HER.*) Ah, maybe you should've asked when you walked in.

MAURA: And how do you know so much about Mr. Bartholomew?

TYRONE: Well, aren't you the snoopy one.

MAURA: Wait a minute - I've known a lot of people who are a little disorganized. That's usually when I get called in. And, after all, what do you know about me?

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TYRONE: I beg your pardon?

MAURA: *(Changes HER tone.)* How do you know I'm not a murderer?

TYRONE: What?

MAURA: You don't know me, don't know anything about me. No! You just stand there, spouting sermons, giving out with some cynical homilies and you don't know any more about me than I know about him! Or you, for that matter!

TYRONE: I just thought I could be of some help, that's all.

MAURA: Yeah? And maybe you are here for the same job and trying to scare me off, so there! *(SHE snaps her fingers at HIM.)*

TYRONE: Excellent! You have backbone! *(HE drops the clipboard and shakes HER hand vigorously.)* You must play poker.

MAURA: Don't try to make up! Who are you?

TYRONE: *(Takes off HIS glasses.)* I'm Tyrone Bartholomew. The man who placed the ad.

MAURA: *(After a slight pause.)* Do what?

TYRONE: In *The Daily Globe*? That's me.

MAURA: You're Tyrone Bartholomew?

TYRONE: The Tyrone Bartholomew. You can call me "The."

MAURA: You're Bartholomew?

TYRONE: And you just passed the first test.

MAURA: I knew I should've read my horoscope this morning. Wait a minute - first test? There's gonna be more?

(The DOORBELL rings. TYRONE moves to the door and opens it.)

LENA: Mr. Bart?

TYRONE: Mrs. Lambert?

LENA: Lena. We have come, as you have said. *(SHE enters and looks around. Then she looks out the door and nods. ROGER enters holding his jacket over his face.)*

TYRONE: Roger Lambert?

End of Freeview

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