

DISCO FEVER

By
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STORY OF THE PLAY

When bill collectors are pounding on the door and movers begin to repossess the furniture, wealthy but ditzy Patricia Smitherton-Smatherton and her granddaughters realize something is very wrong. Perkins, the perfect butler, tries to tell Madame that the problem lies with Stan D. Mann, her unscrupulous business manager, but she is far too trusting.

When the granddaughters find out Stan plans to sell their house to a flashy Hollywood producer for big bucks, the girls decide the only way to come up with the mortgage money is to turn the mansion into a disco, a la Studio 54. They call their place "Disco Dawg" and hire a singer with the promise that a few movie stars will be there. They decorate the place in the current "groovy" 1970s style, and everyone who's anyone shows up ... including Stan D. Mann. Unfortunately, while he's dancing, Stan drops dead.

Tracy, the oldest granddaughter, is arrested because she picks up what everybody thinks is the murder weapon, a South American blowgun. Chuck's Angels, three lady detectives, step in to help the daffy police officers solve the crime. Tracy is released when it is determined that poison was worked into Stan's new perm.

When Patricia's social secretary disappears leaving only a bloodied scarf, Chuck's Angels and the granddaughters come up with a plan. The killer makes a move during a big night at Disco Dawg's, and only some quick thinking on the part of Perkins stops the killer from getting away.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9 m, 16 w, and extras)

PERKINS: The perfect butler.
PATRICIA SMITHERTON-SMATHERTON: The nervous matron.
MISS SNIVEL: An interior decorator.
MISS GRUNDY: Patricia's prim social secretary.
JANICE: A business owner.
HAL: A young mover.
AL: His partner.
TRACY: Patricia's oldest granddaughter.
DONNA: A second granddaughter.
LIVVY: The youngest granddaughter.
STAN. D. MANN: Patricia's business manager.
G.G. FLASH: A Hollywood producer.
LULU: An actress.
BABETTE: Another.
JAYDEE: A deejay.
GLORIA: A disco singer.
CHUCK: A private detective.
STELLA: One of Chuck's Angels.
ELLA: Another.
NELLA: A third.
SGT. DRAGLY: A police officer.
RUPP: His female partner.
SWEEZIE ZIPP: Owner of Hairs to You beauty parlor.
AUNT LETICIA: Patricia's sister.
KRAMER: A bill collector. Can be doubled by Stan D. Mann.
EXTRAS: Disco dancers for Act II.

COSTUME NOTES

Unless noted, characters should dress in '70s period clothing. Colors were bright, lapels were wide, jeans often decorated, skirts were mini, and both men and women wore lots of jewelry and platform shoes. See special costume notes at the end of the script.

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SOUND EFFECTS

Doorbell
Instrumental disco music
Vocal disco music (a song to which Gloria can lip-sync)
Phone ringing
Screams
Footsteps
Banging followed by a crash
"Thwack" (board hitting something hard)
Voice on answering machine

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: The great room, a summer afternoon, 1975.

Scene 2: The same, that evening at seven.

Scene 3: The same, the following night.

ACT II

Scene 1: The same, the following morning.

Scene 2: The same, a few minutes later.

Scene 3: A hallway in the house, played before the curtain;
that night.

Scene 4: The great room, the following night.

NOTE

The set design and props list are located in the back of script.

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ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: PATRICIA and MISS SNIVEL stand near the window with fabric swatches. PERKINS is on phone. MISS GRUNDY sits primly on chair taking notes.)

PERKINS: I'm very sorry, but Mrs. Smitherton-Smatherton is not at home. I'm very sorry. Sir, you needn't be so persistent. She won't be at home to you anytime in the near future!

(PERKINS hangs up.)

PATRICIA: *(Moving to PERKINS, with a characteristic British accent.)* Oh, dear, Perkins ... which one was that?

PERKINS: The heating people, Madame.

PATRICIA: *(Nervously.)* What did they want?

PERKINS: What they all want. Their money.

PATRICIA: Did you tell them Mr. Mann pays all my bills?

PERKINS: I told them that last month and the month before that.

(DOORBELL RINGS.)

PERKINS: *(Continued.)* Excuse me, Madame. *(HE EXITS SR.)*

MISS SNIVEL: So, you decided which you want for the new drapes, Smithy?

MISS GRUNDY: It's Mrs. Smitherton-Smatherton to you!

MISS SNIVEL: I can't say that with gum in my mouth!

PATRICIA: Oh, it's quite all right. Which do you prefer, Miss Grundy?

MISS GRUNDY: I prefer the more conservative blue. Oranges and avocados belong in a salad, not the drapes!

MISS SNIVEL: But ya know, orange and avocado are the in colors.

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MISS GRUNDY: Being "in" has never been one of my concerns, young lady.

MISS SNIVEL: I can tell! You oughta try to get a new perfume, lady!

MISS GRUNDY: I beg your pardon!

MISS SNIVEL: That stuff you got on reeks!

MISS GRUNDY: I'm not wearing perfume.

MISS SNIVEL: Uh oh!

MISS GRUNDY: I'm cleaning a spot off this blouse, if it's any business of yours.

MISS SNIVEL: I just thought ...

PATRICIA: I have to agree with Miss Grundy. I do like the blue.

MISS SNIVEL: You sure? I mean you get these curtains and then a nice orange shag carpet, a couple of macramé plant holders hanging from the ceiling and you've got yourself a real nice pad here, lady.

PATRICIA: I'm not ready for that much of a makeover.

MISS SNIVEL: C'mon! This is the seventies! You gotta get with it!

PATRICIA: Oh, dear ... each decade is so much harder to "get with" than the previous one.

MISS SNIVEL: Okay, okay, go with the blue. It ain't bad. A bit square, but this place is kinda square, if you know what I mean.

(JANICE ENTERS SR holding clipboard. PERKINS follows.)

JANICE: I don't care if she's busy!

PERKINS: I'm sorry, Madame, but this woman insisted --

JANICE: You bet I insisted!

PATRICIA: How do you do. I'm Patricia Smitherton-Smatherton.

JANICE: Just the lady I want to see.

MISS GRUNDY: I'll show you out, Miss Snivel.

JANICE: You owe our company fifteen hundred dollars.

PATRICIA: Oh, dear ... Perkins?

PERKINS: It's the Merry Maids, Madame.

MISS SNIVEL: You guys got Robin Hood on your truck, right?

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JANICE: That's right.

MISS SNIVEL: And you clean this place? That must be a full-time job!

JANICE: For which we haven't been paid!

PATRICIA: I don't understand. Mr. Mann is my business manager and he's always been so prompt with the bills.

JANICE: We haven't received a payment since March.

MISS SNIVEL: Look, lady, you want Daffy Drapes to make you some new curtains, you'd better come up with some cash first. Give us a call!

(MISS SNIVEL EXITS SR.)

JANICE: *(HER hand out.)* My money?

PATRICIA: Well, yes, I'll write you a check. Miss Grundy, my checkbook?

MISS GRUNDY: Shouldn't you check with Mr. Mann first?

PATRICIA: If we keep the Merry Maids waiting any longer, they won't be very merry.

JANICE: You got that right.

(MISS GRUNDY hands PATRICIA the checkbook. Patricia writes check as phone RINGS.)

PERKINS: Smitherton-Smatherton residence. No, I'm sorry, Madame is indisposed. The disposal company? I'm sorry, but you'll have to check with Mr. Mann, our ... hello? Hello?

PATRICIA: Here you are.

JANICE: Thanks, and if you ever need a cleaning service again, don't call the Merry Maids. Call the Scabby Scrubbers.

(MISS GRUNDY escorts JANICE out SR.)

PERKINS: Madame, if I may say so, I believe something is rotten in Denmark.

PATRICIA: I don't see how. My late husband's investments have been doing splendidly according to the quarterly reports.

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