

SFX: OPENING TANGO MUSIC, THEN --

The QuarantTeam presents Mansfield Mysteries: 'Game, Set, Murder!' - Chapter One.

SCENE ONE:

SFX: INTERIOR CAR NOISE. A TURN SIGNAL CLICKS UNTIL THE TURN IS MADE.

DORINDA: Stacey, I don't see why you have to drive. I'm not a geriatric.

STACEY: Of course not, Mom. But I love doing stuff like this when I come home: driving these old, familiar streets. The mansions along Berkshire Bay never change. The same immaculate lawns, the same manicured hedges.

DORINDA: Old money never changes, dear, only the people do.

STACEY: How so?

DORINDA: They get more and more dreadful with each generation, and I thought new money was bad.

STACEY: Ah. What's wrong with new money?

DORINDA: If we had time, I could show you. All the garish mini-manses on the west side of Berkshire Bay. All the same. Not a shred of imagination. But at least they're not duplicitous scoundrels like the Berkshires or the Breckenridges--

STACEY: Mom!

DORINDA: Just listing them in alphabetical order, dear.

STACEY: Alice Breckenridge is your tennis partner!

DORINDA: That's how I know.

STACEY: Well, what about Jim and Linda Abbott?

DORINDA: Oh! I skipped over the As! (They chuckle.) Jim Abbott is serving ten to twenty for serial tax evasion.

STACEY: So we won't be seeing the Abbotts around the club anymore?

DORINDA: Of course they're still members. Linda and I had lunch at the club last week. With all the Botox, you can't even tell she's distraught. Speaking of which, step on it. We're going to be late.

STACEY: I'm going five over the speed limit.

DORINDA: Our court time starts at ten. We need to warm up.

STACEY: It'll be fine, Mom. So long as Alice is ready when we pick her up, we'll make it.

DORINDA: The only thing Alice has ever been on time for is a five o'clock martini. (They share a laugh.)

STACEY: Wait, is that a police car in front of Alice's house?

DORINDA: Yes, that's her house! Look at those gaudy Halloween decorations. Now we're definitely going to be late.

STACEY: I just hope everything is all right!

SFX: TURNS SIGNAL. CAR STOPPING AND SEATBELT UNLOCKING. DOORS OPENING AND CLOSING.

SCENE TWO:

SFX: FOOTSTEPS UP THE LEAF-COVERED WALKWAY.

STACEY: Mom, there's police tape over the door. This looks like a crime scene.

DORINDA: Oh, nonsense, Stacey. Alice's only crime is her decor. I keep trying to recommend my interior designer--

SFX: TAPE BEING RIPPED DOWN AND DOOR OPENING.

STACEY: Mom! You can't just barge in.

DORINDA: Of course I can! Alice is my tennis partner and closest friend!

SFX: A LOUD CLOCK TICKS IN THE BACKGROUND.

STACEY: It's called "frenemies", Mom. Real friends don't speak to each other the way you two do.

DORINDA: We're just honest with one another.

STACEY: (gasping) Oh, my god! Look at the rug!

DORINDA: I know. So tacky!

STACEY: No, Mom, look! It's covered in blood! Oh, and so are the curtains!

DORINDA: This whole place is a mess: coat closet wide open, garish throw pillows everywhere. Very unlike Alice. Say what you will about her style, but there's never an ugly knickknack out of place.

POLICE OFFICER: Whoa, whoa. Ladies. Stop right there, please. I can't have you disrupting an active investigation. Let's step outside.

SFX: OFFICER OPENS THE FRONT DOOR AND GUIDES THEM BACK ONTO THE PORCH. THE DOOR CLOSSES BEHIND THEM. BIRDS SING IN THE DISTANCE.

STACEY: Sorry, Officer. We didn't touch anything. Oh God, can you tell us what happened?

DORINDA: And where's Alice? We're meant to be at the club in ten minutes.

POLICE OFFICER: Excuse me, who are you?

DORINDA: I'm Dorinda Mansfield, and this is my daughter, Stacey. I'm Alice's doubles partner, and today's the doubles tournament for the Halloween Club Open.

POLICE OFFICER: I'm very sorry to tell you this, Mrs. Mansfield, but Alice was seemingly the victim of an attempted murder last night.

DORINDA: Oh, my! Alice?

STACEY: That's awful!

POLICE OFFICER: She's doing all right. The paramedics said she was severely concussed but stable when they left for the hospital.

STACEY: Concussed? What happened?

POLICE OFFICER: A fire poker was found near her body. Could be the weapon.

DORINDA: Could be?

POLICE OFFICER: Well, the real victim was Mrs. Breckenridge's gentleman caller. He's deceased.

STACEY: Gentleman caller? I thought Alice was a grieving widow.

DORINDA: Oh, sweetie, we all nurse grief in our own way.

POLICE OFFICER: We're looking into it at the moment, but are you familiar with a Niles Higgenbottom?

DORINDA: I'm sure I'd remember someone with a name like that.

POLICE OFFICER: So, no?

DORINDA: No. Never heard her mention him. How old a gentleman is he? Sorry: was he?

POLICE OFFICER: Mid-to-late fifties.

DORINDA: Definitely not Alice's type.

POLICE OFFICER: Mrs. Breckenridge phoned 911 shortly before 9PM about an unresponsive man.

DORINDA: Probably just needed some Viagra.

STACEY: Mom!

POLICE OFFICER: (in unison) Excuse me, ma'am?

DORINDA: (chuckles) Well, you said he was older.

POLICE OFFICER: Do either of you know someone who might have held a grudge against Mrs. Breckenridge?

DORINDA: Only anyone who's ever played tennis against her. She's a notorious cheat.

SFX. A CAR ALARM BEEPS IN THE DISTANCE.

POLICE OFFICER: Didn't you say she's your partner?

DORINDA: Yes! That's why she's my partner.

POLICE OFFICER: Any specific names you could give me?

DORINDA: Well, there's Brandon, of course. The club pro. They had a torrid love affair. It just ended last week.

STACEY: They did? Alice is a cougar?

DORINDA: I think it was more about Brandon being a gold-digger. Oh, this wasn't his first swing at a monied older woman. Speaking of older, there's the Southern Belles. They've been trying to knock us off our doubles throne for a decade, to no avail.

POLICE OFFICER: Names?

DORINDA: Annabelle and Sarabelle something. I forget. I suppose Carl Berkshire, the desk clerk, might be worth questioning, too, given that Alice tried to have him fired.

STACEY: His father owns the club.

DORINDA: Hence the hard feelings. And don't forget to question Pam. She's wanted to be my doubles partner for years. Years! She doesn't seem the murderous type, but you know what they say about the quiet ones.

POLICE OFFICER: Do you have any idea what Alice was doing last night?

DORINDA: Celebrating her singles victory, no doubt. Alice is the best over-fifty player at the club, and she was in the finals yesterday. If

I were you, Officer, I'd question the person she beat in that match. That'd be a fresh grudge.

POLICE OFFICER: Thanks for the tip.

STACEY: I guess we should get out of your way, Officer.

POLICE OFFICER: Oh, oh. Take my card. If anything occurs to you--

DORINDA: Sure, sure. Stacey, honey, let's get going.

STACEY: Of course, Mom. Do you want to go straight to the hospital?

DORINDA: Are you kidding me? We have to get to the club! I need to find a new doubles partner by 2 PM!

SFX: TANGO MUSIC TRANSITION, THEN --

SCENE THREE:

SFX: INTERIOR CAR NOISE, EN ROUTE TO CLUB.

STACEY: Are you sure you want to go to the club? We should visit Alice, shouldn't we?

DORINDA: The officer said she was stable.

STACEY: But just to make sure she'll be all right?

DORINDA: Alice has been my doubles partner for twenty years. It is my duty to carry on. In her name. We may have bickered, and we might have had our spats, but we are of one mind when it comes to tennis. The match must go on!

STACEY: (a pause) I can't believe Alice was attacked and her friend murdered. And how gruesome the crime scene was—I, I can ever unsee that.

DORINDA: I know, sweetheart. Between the window treatments, the color scheme, and that sad, sad curio case of collectibles. It's a tragedy. Oh, but at least she finally moved that Faberge egg from the mantel! So pretentious - and did not belong next to all those Yankee Candles. I hate to speak ill of the concussed, but Alice just does not have good taste.

STACEY: A Faberge egg? Like, from the Russian Empire?

DORINDA: Yes.

STACEY: No, it must've been a copy. Those are crazy expensive. Like, Picasso expensive! They're really rare.

DORINDA: Exactly why it didn't belong next to candles in jars! Though the egg was missing its "surprise," or whatever is supposed to be inside. Anyway, I guess a sense of style is something you're born with. Or in Alice's case: nearly die without.

STACEY: How on earth would Alice have a real Faberge egg?

DORINDA: A gift from her husband, right before he disappeared. He was an ambassador to Russia for many years, you might recall.

STACEY: Gosh, how long has it been now?

DORINDA: Five years. They never did find the body. Who knows...

STACEY: And Alice, she had a fling with Brandon?

DORINDA: I'm afraid so. But they weren't a good fit. Alice enjoyed prolonged attention, shall we say, and Brandon's attention span was short. And often premature, if you catch my drift. Oh quick! Grab that spot near the entrance!

SFX: TURN SIGNAL CLICKS.

SFX: TANGO MUSIC TRANSITION, THEN --

SCENE FOUR:

SFX: MUZAK PLAYS FROM A SMALL, OVERHEAD SPEAKER. A BELL JINGLES AS THE CLUB DOOR OPENS.

DESK ATTENDANT/CARL: Good morning, Mrs. Mansfield. Happy Halloween! Court Seven is ready for you and Mrs. Breckenridge to warm up.

DORINDA: Change of plans, Carl. I need to see Brandon immediately.

SFX: CARL TYPES ON A COMPUTER KEYBOARD.

CARL: Brandon's giving a lesson on Court Three. It should be wrapping up. Wait, is this Stacey?

STACEY: You still work the desk, I see. How've you been, Carl?

CARL: Pretty good, I guess. Been in this chair 15 years. Same old, same old--

DORINDA: Court Three, you said?

CARL: Yes, is something wrong, Mrs. Mansfield?

DORINDA: Well, I suppose you'll all hear about it soon enough. (a pause) I need a new doubles partner.

CARL: What? How can that be? You and Mrs. Breckenridge have been a pair for nearly twenty years!

STACEY: Actually, what my mother meant to say was that Mrs. Breckenridge is unexpectedly indisposed.

CARL: What does that mean?

DORINDA: Someone tried to murder Mrs. Breckenridge, according to the police.

STACEY: And a man named Niles Higgenbottom was killed.

CARL: How? When?

DORINDA: Sometime last night. What time did her singles championship finish up?

CARL: I don't know. I wasn't here. I clocked out at six, and the match started at seven.

DORINDA: Well, you are extremely unhelpful today, Carl. Come on, Stacey. Let's go find Brandon.

SFX: TANGO MUSIC TRANSITION, THEN --

SCENE FIVE:

SFX: TENNIS BALLS, GENERAL MURMURING OF PAIRS AND FOURSOMES PLAYING.

DORINDA: (from afar) Yoo hoo, Brandon!

BRANDON: All right, Molly. Good groundstrokes this morning. We'll call it a day. (a pause) Is that Stacey? My protege? What are you doing here?

STACEY: I can't miss the Halloween Club Open!

BRANDON: And previous tournament champion, back in the day! Under-18 four years running, as I recall. You still playing?

STACEY: No. Not since school. No time anymore.

BRANDON: Yeah? What are you up to?

STACEY: I teach kindergarten at a small public school.

BRANDON: Any guy lucky enough to snag you yet?

STACEY: Ha-ha! It's slim pickings out there.

DORINDA: Excuse me for interrupting this little coach/player reunion, but this is an emergency.

BRANDON: And what can I do for you, Dorinda?

DORINDA: Haven't you heard about Alice?

BRANDON: Oh, yes, I most certainly have. I'm in shock.

DORINDA: As am I. I don't know what to do.

BRANDON: It was brutal.

DORINDA: Absolutely awful.

BRANDON: She was basically killed. Didn't stand a chance, poor thing.

DORINDA: Nobody could have predicted it.

BRANDON: A blood bath.

DORINDA: Terrible, terrible.

BRANDON: 6-1, 6-0. I've never seen her take a beating like that. And from an unknown, besides.

STACEY: (a pause, then) Wait, what?

BRANDON: The singles final. Some ringer from Russia--a last minute entry--practically murdered her.

DORINDA: Alice lost the final? Well, that's interesting.

STACEY: Brandon! I don't think you know what's happened. Alice was almost murdered last night.

BRANDON: Oh, I saw it with my own eyes. You should've seen the serve off this Russian lady. A bullet!

STACEY: No, no, no, literally. Alice was almost murdered in her home last night.

BRANDON: What? Oh my god! That's awful! Poor Alice!

DORINDA: So, you see my plight, Brandon. I need a new doubles partner ASAP. For instance, this woman from Russia: might she be available?

BRANDON: I have no idea.

DORINDA: How's her backhand?

BRANDON: Flawless.

DORINDA: And, I don't know how to say this tactfully, but how would you estimate her size?

BRANDON: Her size?

DORINDA: You know how Alice and I like to have matching tournament outfits, as well as Halloween costumes for the banquet. Is this Russian woman about the same size?

BRANDON: Size six-size eight? Yeah, that sounds about right.

DORINDA: I suppose you would know Alice's dress size.

STACEY: Mom!

BRANDON: What?

DORINDA: Do you have this Russian's contact information?

BRANDON: She paid her registration in cash, being last-minute and all, but Carl should have her paperwork.

DORINDA: Great! My future hinges on Carl Berkshire. Nepotism breeds incompetence, you know.

BRANDON: I did see her in the dining room this morning, so she must be sticking around for the awards ceremony, if not the doubles competition.

DORINDA: The dining room? Oh, good. I'll find her myself. What does she look like?

BRANDON: About your build. In her 50s but looks considerably younger.

DORINDA: Filler and Botox, no doubt.

BRANDON: Didn't talk much. Stoic, even when she won. Icy, Hitchcock blond-type.

DORINDA: Not much help, Brandon. You're describing ninety percent of the women at this club.

STACEY: Let's get the contact info from Carl--

DORINDA: I'm not dealing with Carl. Come on, Stacey, I'll buy you a mimosa in the dining room. Toodle-oo, Brandon.

STACEY: (a pause - as they walk away) Strange how Brandon didn't seem too upset by the news. I thought they just broke up.

DORINDA: He's a tennis pro, darling. That's another reason why he and Alice weren't a good match--not much going on upstairs or downstairs, if you know what I mean.

SFX: SLIDING DOORS CONNECTED TO THE DINING ROOM OPEN AND THEN CLOSE BEHIND DORINDA AND STACEY.

SCENE SIX:

SFX: DINING ROOM NOISES. PEOPLE CHATTING AND EATING.

STACEY: You're right, Mom. Nearly everyone here looks exactly the same. Blond--

DORINDA: --tanned and stretched. Like fine leather. The cosmetic procedures in this room bought Dr. Margosian's six lackluster offspring entrance into Ivy League schools.

STACEY: It's awfully busy for a Saturday morning.

DORINDA: This is the hive of the club, and all these busy bees are gossiping, comparing children, ranking home gardens, and certainly buzzing about poor Alice and her tragic loss.

STACEY: Near tragic loss of life.

DORINDA: Oh, yes. I meant the singles final, but they'll definitely gossip about her attempted murder, as well - once the word gets out.

STACEY: And the real murder. Don't forget Niles Higgenbottom.

PAM: (in a slight Cockney accent) Dorinda! Dorinda! I just heard the news.

DORINDA: (scared by Pam) Hard to believe.

PAM: You're looking for a new doubles partner? I would love to play doubles with you!

DORINDA: Oh, Pam. I don't know--

PAM: I've been working on my serve and my overheads and my backhand and my forehand. I know no one can replace Alice--

DORINDA: Well, you certainly can't.

STACEY: Hi, Pam. I don't know if you remember me. I'm Stacey--

PAM: Of course I remember you! How are you--

DORINDA: We're looking for someone, actually. We're kind of in a hurry.

PAM: Who?

DORINDA: The woman who beat Alice last night.

PAM: I have no idea who she is. I'd never seen her before. But Annabelle and Sarabelle were chatting her up earlier. They'd know.

DORINDA: Thanks for the tip. See you later, I suppose.

PAM: I'm around if you change your mind.

DORINDA: (under her breath as Pam leaves) Oh, I won't. Besides, she'd never fit in the dress. Pam's put on a few pounds lately.

STACEY: Don't comment on women's weight, Mom.

DORINDA: How about that ridiculous accent? Is that allowed?

STACEY: Mom--

DORINDA: It's been a hindrance in more ways than one.

STACEY: How so?

DORINDA: Other than being my doubles partner, Pam's lifelong goal has been working for Rosemary Berkshire. She'd do anything to get in with her.

STACEY: What's the problem?

DORINDA: Rosemary only hires employees with posh British accents. Pam sounds like My Fair Lady before the transformation.

STACEY: (giggles) True, but--

DORINDA: Until Pam takes some elocution lessons, Rosemary won't give her the time of day.

STACEY: OK. Look, I'm going to ask Carl for the Russian's phone number. I'll meet you back here, all right?

DORINDA: All right. I see the Southern Belles over there at the bar, likely deep into their mimosas. This should be interesting. They hear every bit of gossip in this club. They're a little like that Rain Man character, minus being good at math.

STACEY: Mom! That's rude!

DORINDA: I can't critique arithmetic, either? Listen, you get the Russian's info from Carl, and I'll squeeze these Belles for any tidbits they might've picked up.

SFX: TANGO MUSIC TRANSITION, THEN --

SCENE SEVEN:

SFX: A PAPER SHREDDER RUNS. MUZAK PLAYS FROM AN OVERHEAD SPEAKER.

STACEY: Hey, Carl? Can I talk to you for a minute?

CARL: Oh, hey, Miss Mansfield! Sorry, you caught me off-guard there. What can I do for ya?

STACEY: Carl, we've known each other since we were kids. Call me Stacey!

CARL: You still playing tennis, Stacey?

STACEY: Not since school. Say, could I ask you a favor?

CARL: Sure. What'dya need?

STACEY: I need to track down the woman who beat Alice--Mrs. Breckenridge--last night in the singles final. Brandon said you'd have her paperwork. I could use her name, a cell number, if you have it.

CARL: Oh, I don't know about that. Those are official club documents.

STACEY: Oh. Come on, Carl. Can't you bend the rules for an old friend?

CARL: Well, I suppose her name is public record since it's right here on the draw sheet. See? Nadia Gorcheva.

STACEY: That should help, but her phone number would really save me some time.

CARL: It just doesn't feel right.

STACEY: Oh, come on. I'll buy you a drink at the tournament banquet.

CARL: I have my Halloween costume all ready. How about you?

STACEY: Of course! So, how about that number?

CARL: I mean, I guess, what are you going to do this woman, right?

STACEY: Exactly! I mean, I just want to ask her a couple of questions about what happened after the match last night.

CARL: What do you mean? Are you a detective all of a sudden? I thought you were looking for a new doubles partner for your mom.

STACEY: Of course! That too. But I am curious. I mean, I got a look at Alice's living room and there was a lot of blood.

CARL: Well, I don't like poking my nose into official police business or anything. But I'll grab the registration folder and get you her number. That's it, though.

STACEY: Thank you so much!

SFX: THE SLIDING OF A MANILA FOLDER.

CARL: (after a pause) That's odd.

STACEY: What's that?

SFX: SHAKES THE FOLDER.

CARL: The folder. It's empty.

STACEY: How could that be?

CARL: Like I said earlier, I went home before the finals began last night. Maybe Brandon did something with it? Or one of the volunteers? Anyway, this is the only place we would've had her cell phone number.

STACEY: Well, that's too bad, but at least I have her name. Hopefully I'll be able to track her down.

CARL: Good luck! And don't think I'm not taking you up on that drink tonight!

SFX: TANGO MUSIC TRANSITION, THEN --

SCENE EIGHT:

SFX: DINING ROOM NOISE.

STACEY: Brandon! Wait up! Can I talk to you before you start your next lesson?

BRANDON: I always have time for my star player.

STACEY: Burned-out star at best. Anyway, I was talking to Carl about that Russian woman, and her paperwork has gone missing.

BRANDON: Huh. Weird.

STACEY: What's wrong with your hand? It's all bandaged.

BRANDON: Cut it on a can of balls. You know me--always doing things too quickly. No big deal. At least it's my right hand, otherwise I couldn't hit today.

STACEY: Looks like it hurts. Anyway, do you have any idea where the paperwork might be?

BRANDON: My office, maybe. You're welcome to check.

STACEY: Thanks!

SFX: TANGO MUSIC TRANSITION, THEN --

SCENE NINE:

SFX: BRANDON'S OFFICE DOOR OPENING. MUZAK PIPES IN FROM THE HALLWAY.

STACEY: (papers rustling) What a mess! Some things never change. OK. Logically, it should be on the top of one of these piles. Bills, bills, magazines, summer camp flyers from two years ago. Some photos. Wait... What's this? An ultrasound? Interesting.

SFX: DOOR SLAMMING AND LOCKING. MUZAK IS MUTED.

STACEY: (knocking on door) What the? Hello? Hello? Carl? Brandon? Somebody? Somebody! Help, I'm locked in!

SFX: FROM OUTSIDE OFFICE, THE KNOCKING IS HEAD THROUGH THE DOOR. THE MUZAK FROM THE SPEAKERS SWELL AND OVERPOWER THE CRIES FOR HELP.

STACEY: (muted) Brandon? Hello? Hello?! Mom! Mom! Mom!!

SFX: MARTINI GLASSES CLINK.

CLOSING CREDITS AND TANGO MUSIC:

Mansfield Mysteries

Featuring:

Melissa Hughes Ernest as Dorinda Mansfield
and
Melissa Zeien as Stacey Mansfield

With:

Doug Despin as Police Officer
Cody Ernest as Brandon
Anne Mollerskov as Pam
And
Christopher Wild as Carl

Written by Amy Hanson and Michael L. Johnson

Sound Design by Paul Reese

Directed by Nicholas Hoyt

Special thanks to Dennis Hoyt as well as an extra special thank you to Amber Miller for inspiring this whole project. We couldn't have done it without any of them.

You've just enjoyed a QuarantTeam Production.

