

Mystery of the Kidnapped Keys

By Brian Sylvia

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DEDICATION

This script is dedicated, first and foremost, to my bride of 25 years who encouraged me to write this mystery format (and who even came up with the show's title). Thank you, Rebecca Lynn, for your support of my crazy ideas and for being such an incredible wife and cheerleader of dreams.

And a special shout out to JP Marker who created the logo for the show and did an amazing job as Detective Vic Torius. Your comedic timing is flawless, and your development of Vic was spot on. True story!

Finally, I want to thank the entire premier cast of this show who dedicated so much of themselves to developing colorful characters in order to provide a fun holiday experience for so many people. inCharacter Theatre took the stage and exceeded my expectations. You guys rock!

STORY OF THE PLAY

Detective Vic Torious is called to Pine Valley Church by their secretary, Barb Dwyer who reports the church's historic, antique grand piano missing! Key members of the congregation (aka suspects!) arrive at the request of the detective. Was it Barb Dwyer herself, who may or may not be a piano player and perhaps may want to frame someone else? Or maybe it's the new pastor, Rev. Oliver Sudden. Little is known about him.

Perhaps it was Frieda Livery, a truck driver who makes deliveries almost daily, or Anne Tickwitty, an antique dealer whose great-grandfather had a connection to the instrument.

Xavier Money, the frugal church treasurer, has been looking for ways to raise money -- was this his idea of a fundraiser? And let's not forget Jess Churd, the youth group drama team leader who is upset there is no drama in the upcoming Christmas program.

After the suspects have been questioned, the audience will cast their votes for the most likely guilty party during intermission. Then the true culprit is revealed. But wait! There are multiple endings for multiple shows! Or you can simply select your favorite conclusion.

An optional actor may serve as the mistress of ceremonies and lead the audience through the process, even singing a couple of Christmas carols with them.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 5 w, 1 flexible, 1 optional.)

DETECTIVE VIC TORIOUS: Detective who always gets to the bottom of it, while taking audience on a pun-derful journey. "True story."

PASTOR OLIVER SUDDEN: Church pastor, just arrived several months ago. *(Could be Pastor Olive A. Sudden if cast as a female.)*

XAVIER MONEY: Church treasurer, worried about the church's finances.

BARB DWYER: Cranky church secretary; complains about everything; seemingly dislikes all other characters, church pianist.

ANNE TICKWITTY: Antique dealer, church member, faints easily, nemesis of Barb Dwyer, very 'southern.'

FRIEDA LIVERY: The delivery truck driver that has access to the church building for delivery purposes.

JESS CHURD: Teenager; leader of drama team; upset that there is no drama in the Christmas production.

CARMEN GEAUX: *(Optional.)* The very Christmasy mistress of ceremonies. (Geaux is pronounced "go.")

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SETTING

The sanctuary of Pine Valley Church.

PROPS

Traffic cone	Watch
Notepad and pen	Envelope
Cellphone	Handcuffs
Piece of paper	

SOUND EFFECTS

Sinister minor chord progression
Phone ringing

EFFECTS

Photos projected for audience (*Optional.*)

PREMIER PERFORMANCE

The show was performed by the inCharacter School of Ministry at Deep Creek Community Church in North Port, Florida on December 6-8, 2019. Original cast is as follows:

Carmen Geaux	Merci Hotchkin
Vic Torious	Joseph (JP) Marker
Barb Dwyer	Anna Riley
Oliver Sudden	Preston Williams
Anne Tickwitty	Kailyn Williams
Jess Churd	Annaliese Sylvia
Xavier Money	Domenick DiLena
Frieda Livery	Victoria Fant
Sound/Lighting:	Joseph Marchese, Gideon Crater

PROLOGUE

(CARMEN the mistress of ceremonies enters wearing a very over-the-top Christmasy outfit. She delivers lines directly to the audience.)

CARMEN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Carmen Geaux, your hostess for the evening. Thank you so much for joining us this evening. In just a little while you will meet a group of, let's just say, interesting individuals. Six of these individuals all end up being suspects in a crime in our little town of Pine Valley. Not much happens in this little town, so when it does, it's a big deal. There's no time like the Christmas holiday season here. The streets are decorated with wreaths and white lights, houses have manger scenes and inflatable snowmen in their front yards, and the sounds of Christmas carols fill the air. In case you can't tell...I just love Christmas! Speaking of Christmas carols, why don't we get into the spirit of the season by singing one together right now. *(Leads the audience in a carol.)*

Yes, Pine Valley is like a trip back in time in December. Well, except for this year, our tranquil town has had a most hideous crime occur. And to think this crime took place in the historic Pine Valley Church. Now before you assume too much, I think it's important to let you know that you're about to go on a journey of uncovering evidence. Pay close attention, because later on we'll be asking you to decide who you think is the guilty party. And remember, out of respect for the other amateur sleuths around you, do not, under any circumstances, use your cell phone. The recording of evidence is not allowed. You are to do all of this from memory. So from me, Carmen Geaux, and all of us in Pine Valley, welcome to our town. And please help us get to the bottom of our little problem. Get ready, because the cast of characters are about to make their way out here. Have a good evening, and I'll see you later.

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(LIGHTS shift as CARMEN exits and VIC enters. He moves downstage as his lines are mostly directed toward the audience.)

VIC: It was December twenty-first and I was out Christmas shopping. I live alone and have no family in the area, so I was basically shopping for myself. I was going to buy a rare spider from the pet shop until I realized I could get one on the web. *(Beat.)* The rest of my Christmas list included mostly spy-type gadgets needed in my profession as a world-class crime solver. I stayed away from the busy mall since I have a phobia of over-engineered buildings. My doctor says it's called a complex, complex, complex. *(Aside.)* True story. My name is Vic, *(Pause.)* Vic Torious. Indeed, I have quite a reputation in this part of the country as the sleuth who almost always gets to the bottom of the mystery. Yes, I don't like to say it about myself, others say it about me.

I hadn't had a legitimate case since July when old lady Milligan called to report that her fifteen-year-old cat named Gladiola had mysteriously disappeared after her quilting bee's most recent gathering. Hardly an open and closed case. Those elderly ladies all clammed up and I couldn't get a straight answer from any of them. Who knew that quilting clubs were such hotbeds of mystery and deceit? You know what they say; quilters come with strings attached. *(Continuing.)* In true Vic Torious fashion, I solved the crime within 24 hours. Let's just say it was a brief case. You see, while interviewing their president, Isabel Ringing at the local tearoom, I heard a faint cry coming from her large quilting bag. To Isabel's surprise, the feline fugitive had been mistakenly sewn into the beginnings of the quilt begun the day before. Not only did we rescue Gladiola, but we arranged for all of the quilting club's members to get cataract and hearing check-ups.

And that was my last case. Well, I did have one other client contact me. It was about a robbery at the local dairy farm. Disappearing blocks of cheese, they said.

End of Freeview

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