

PRODUCTION NOTES

CASTING

This play allows for very little flexibility in casting. Doubling is impossible since all the characters are onstage at the same time near the end of the play. None of the roles are gender neutral. Due to the drama's setting in an abbey, the cast is predominantly female, with only three male characters out of ten total.

The play can, however, be performed by a cast of children, teenagers, or adults. The story is fun, short, and simple enough to be acted by a very young cast. Yet the play's humor appeals to all ages and its message speaks to young and old alike, so it can be performed with equal success by a cast of teens or adults.

COSTUMING

The characters' costumes are fairly straightforward. The sisters wear nuns' habits, with Mary Elizabeth and Mary Catherine in habits designed specifically for novices. The habits can be as simple or as elaborate as desired: they can merely consist of black robes and veils, or they can include scapular, cowl, belt, rosary, and even wimple. Ideally, the novices' costumes should be distinguishable from the other sisters', perhaps in color or in length. For instance, the novices' habits may be dark blue instead of black, or their veils may be white or gray.

Homes, Arson, and Distraught are dressed professionally in 1890s style. Homes's attire should call to mind the stereotypical Sherlock Holmes look: ulster coat, deerstalker hat, etc. The details of Arson's and Distraught's costumes are more flexible. One or both can be dressed for the cold weather in overcoat, scarf, hat, etc. Alternatively, they may appear simply in suits, presumably having removed their winter gear elsewhere. The most important element of Arson's outfit is the inside of his suit jacket, which (as he reveals in Scene Two) is lined with his collection of matchboxes and matchbooks.

ONSTAGE PROPS

The set is simple and solemn since the entire play takes place in a single room in a convent. The only required onstage prop is a chair, but stained glass windows and a cross on the wall help create the impression of being inside an abbey.

PROPS BROUGHT ONSTAGE

Scene Two: Notepad, pencil (Arson); magnifying glass (Homes); matchboxes (Matilda and Arson); splinter (Catherine)