

THE AUGUST JINX

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by

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### Cast of Characters

- LUCY: Age 70-80. A sweet woman who is everyone's favorite aunt. When she was widowed, she moved back into the family home with Martha who had never left.
- MARTHA: Age 70-80. The quintessential pessimist, always looking for the other shoe to drop. A spinster, she has now reached that point where she ceases to care what people think about her and does what she pleases. She has a heart condition but is not as serious as she thinks or makes it out to be.
- BRIDGET: Age 24. A bit self-centered, much like every bride on her wedding day.
- DEAN: Age 30. A practical man who is very solicitous of the aunts.
- MINISTER: Any age, male or female. The minister was called an hour or so ago to perform this ceremony and is a bit frazzled and perhaps slightly unkempt.

### Setting

We are in the empty ballroom of Martha and Lucy's house. It is a big, old home designed for massive entertaining. Since Martha and Lucy live alone and don't entertain much (other than the occasional bridge game) the ballroom has not been used in some time. The only piece of furniture in the room is a bare table center stage. Even though the chandelier and mirror are mentioned, the play can be performed on a bare stage.

- Scene 1: An August afternoon  
 Scene 2: A little bit later

SCENE 1

SETTING: Stage is empty except for a table in the center and a large box containing candlesticks, candles, a vase of flowers, a bible and two ring boxes. Throughout the scene MARTHA and LUCY prepare the table as an altar. Several times they re-arrange what the other has done or undone. At the end of the scene the altar is ready.

AT RISE: MARTHA and LUCY are putting a tablecloth on the table/altar.

LUCY

I think it's so sweet Bridget wants to use our home.

MARTHA

Sweet? It saves her the cost of renting a hall.

LUCY

This old ballroom doesn't get much use any more.

(She looks overhead.)

Look how dusty that chandelier is.

(She looks at the wall.)

And the mirror. Ugh.

MARTHA

Next time, check with me first.

LUCY

Don't be such a stick in the mud. It's romantic.

MARTHA

I would never have agreed to an August --

LUCY

Oh, Martha, don't start with that again.

MARTHA

How do you explain Bridget's broken leg?

LUCY

She tripped over the dog and fell down a flight of stairs.

MARTHA

Don't you see that as a sign?

LUCY

Yes. A sign that the dog belongs outside.

MARTHA

Well, what about Dean?

LUCY

Such a sweet boy.

MARTHA

How often does someone's spleen rupture?

LUCY

When you play football without padding it can happen.

MARTHA

He just got out of the hospital this morning.

LUCY

Isn't it nice? They don't have to postpone the wedding.

MARTHA

Against medical advice.

LUCY

Where did you hear that?

(beat)

You made it up, didn't you? Oh Martha, would you please stop starting rumors?

MARTHA

It's no rumor that this is August.

LUCY

I'm warning you.

MARTHA

Every August bride in our family dies within the year.

(LUCY sighs.)

What about Great Aunt Beatrice? Her marriage only lasted 8 months before her untimely death.

LUCY

You think the Titanic sank because Great Aunt Bea got married in August?

MARTHA

And what about poor cousin Sophie?

LUCY

Oh yes, I quite agree. I think Japan got word of her August wedding and bombed Pearl Harbor.

MARTHA

Make fun of me if you want, but I've been doing research. Every August bride since --

LUCY

Research? Martha, don't you think that's going a bit far?

MARTHA

Since Nellie Parker got married in 1774 has died --

LUCY

Let me guess, the founding fathers started the revolution because our great-great-great aunt --

MARTHA

Actually she was our great, great, great, great, great, great grandmother. Ten months after her wedding she was tending the wounded at Bunker Hill and was shot in the arm.

LUCY

She died from being shot in the arm?

MARTHA

Lead poisoning.

LUCY

I'm not listening to any more of this garbage.

MARTHA

I know for a fact someone is going to die at this wedding.

LUCY

Been calling the Psychic Network again, have we? Honestly Martha, sometimes --

MARTHA

We weren't August brides, and we're still here.

LUCY

I didn't want my anniversary near my birthday. And you never got married. Period.

MARTHA

Oh piffle! I almost married Tom Mellow. Before he shipped out to Korea and met that floozy.

LUCY

It's better you didn't go through life as Martha Mellow. Now, promise me you won't say a word to Bridgie.

MARTHA

But she has a right to know.

LUCY

Not a word. She's a lovely girl. And Dean is everything you'd want in a husband. Plus he's a doctor. We don't want him to find out Bridget has a loony Great Aunt --

(BRIDGET rushes in on crutches wearing a long wedding dress.)

BRIDGET

Oh Aunties, it's the most horrible thing.

MARTHA

I knew it.

(LUCY rushes to BRIDGET.)

LUCY

What it is, dear?

BRIDGET

It's the minister. He's dead. A car accident.

(BRIDGET buries her face in her hands.)

LUCY

Oh my goodness! What a horrible shock on your wedding day.

(LUCY and BRIDGET both have their backs to MARTHA when MARTHA gets a chest pain.)

BRIDGET

It's not like he's a friend or anything. But, still . . . the minister. I mean, how awful. You don't think it's a sign, do you?

MARTHA

Since you brought it up --

LUCY

Martha, I'm warning you.

MARTHA

Well, she asked. Besides, I just can't let the poor girl get married without knowing all the facts.

BRIDGET

You're not talking about that stupid August jinx are you?

MARTHA

You know? Then how could you plan an August wedding?

BRIDGET

We didn't have a choice. Dean's parents just got back from their round-the-world-cruise. We couldn't very well get married without them. And Dean's residency at Hopkins starts in 2 weeks and Mom won't let me go unless we're married.

MARTHA

I'll talk to her. Maybe she's forgotten about Great Aunt Lilly.

BRIDGET

Is she the one who went to Germany to meet her in-laws and came home on the Hindenburg? Mom told me about her.

MARTHA

No dear. That was cousin Helen. Great Aunt Lilly --

LUCY

Nobody believes this stuff except you, Martha.

BRIDGET

Yeah. A lot of women in our family have died in odd circumstances. So what.

MARTHA

Bridget, this is nothing to scoff at. You're in mortal danger. And if the August jinx isn't enough, look at the rest of the signs. Your leg. Dean's spleen. And now the minister. What does that tell you?

LUCY

It tells me you've been reading way too many trashy novels. Now leave the poor girl alone.