THE AUNT MAUD MYSTERIES

Captain Ferdinand's Treasure

A one-act comic mystery

By Gail Lowe



SAMPLE PAGES

THIS IS A FREE SAMPLE OF SCENE 4 ONLY AND DOES NOT INCLUDE THE FULL SCRIPT.

SAMPLE PAGES

About the play

Amy and Jonathan Cooper arrive in Maudsley Middleton expecting a quiet stay with their eccentric Aunt Maud. Instead, a visit to The Smuggler's Inn brings them face to face with a threatened hotel sale, a film actress, a treasure hunter and the legend of Captain Ferdinand. When a storm cuts off the road, a supposed ghost is only the beginning of the trouble. With missing jewels, suspicious guests and Inspector Clewe confidently reaching the wrong conclusions, Maud and the twins must unravel the mystery before someone gets away with much more than a stolen necklace.

Format - A one-act comic mystery, with a prologue and epilogue

Running time - Approximately 50–60 minutes

Cast - 5 female, 4 male and 2 male or female roles. Eleven in total: ten speaking parts and one non-speaking police constable.

Performers - This production is suitable for youth theatres, schools and adult casts.

Setting - Maudsley Middleton, a fictional coastal village in the present day.

Performance licence - All applications for performance should be made through Drama-Teachers.com/plays or by emailing gail@gaillowe.org.

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Characters

Aunt Maud (F) – A lively middle-aged woman, fond of uncovering the truth

Amy Cooper (F) – Her niece

Jonathan Cooper (M) – Amy's twin brother

Mr Lionel Banford (M) – Owner of The Smuggler's Inn Hotel

Mrs Spice (F) – Aunt Maud's disastrous cook

Bluster Biggins (M) – A London property developer who wants to buy the hotel to develop the land

Miss Celia Renard (F) – A very efficient PA

Gregory Wallace (M) – An archaeologist – investigating the local beach area for lost treasure from a sunken Spanish ship

Elsa Mainwaring (F) – A B-movie actress with a grand opinion of herself

Detective Ivor Norman Oswald Clewe (M/F) – A bumbling police detective

PC Spark (M/F) – A small non-speaking role

F = female; M = male; M/F = male or female

All roles may be played by performers of any gender.

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Scene 4
Dinner service

Lights up.

This scene should be played out in a stylised manner and music could be used at the start when all the characters enter. The scene then cross-cuts between the different tables to hear what is being said on each.

Mr Biggins and Ms Renard enter and sit at a table just left of centre. Mr Banford and Elsa sit at a table next to them, just right of centre. Jonathan, Amy and Aunt Maud then enter and sit at a table downstage left. Mr Wallace enters on his own and sits at a table downstage right. Mr Biggins is trying to get Elsa's attention but she refuses to look at him. Jonathan is staring at Elsa. Mr Wallace is studying the menu. Mrs Spice enters as a waitress and crosses to Mr Banford and Elsa.

Mrs Spice Yes, what do you want?

Mr Banford Ah, Mrs Spice, at last. Elsa, what would you like?

Elsa I'll just have a salad please Lionel. Have to watch my weight you know.

Mr Banford Ah yes, of course. Me too, me too.

Mrs Spice So do you want your usual all-day breakfast with a double helping of chips Mr Banford?

Mr Banford Er, no thank you. I'll just have a salad too please?

Mrs Spice OK but I've cooked all the chips now so you're going to have to eat them sometime, or no pudding for you!

Mr Banford Yes, yes no pudding for me then… thank you Mrs Spice.

Mrs Spice crosses to Mr Biggins and Ms Renard.

Ms Renard At last. Such sloppy service. Do you have an aperitif?

Mrs Spice Of course I do but you're not having them. I need my own teeth.

Ms Renard Not a pair of teeth – an aperitif. It's a drink before dinner.

Mrs Spice Oh yes. There was tea at 4pm but you've missed that.

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Ms Renard *(Exasperated)* OK then, never mind. I'll have the coq au vin please?

Mrs Spice That's off, sorry. No vans!

Ms Renard No vans? But surely your coq au vin is a delicate dish of roasted chicken in a subtle red wine sauce?

Mrs Spice That might be your coq au vin missy, but that's not what we do here.

Mr Biggins How about the Toad in the Hole?

Mrs Spice Yes, I can do that – got some fresh toads in this morning.

Ms Renard What's the soup?

Mrs Spice Aunt Maud's pea and ham. Only we didn't have any ham so I suppose it's just Aunt Maud's pea!

Mr Biggins Sounds appetising!

Mrs Spice Oh it is. There's no one can grow peas like Aunt Maud.

Ms Renard So they are peas that Aunt Maud has grown?

Mrs Spice Of course – what did you think?

Ms Renard Well I… never mind. We'll have the soup please.

Mrs Spice Two soups, coming up.

Mrs Spice crosses to Aunt Maud's table.

Aunt Maud Ah, Mrs Spice – great. What do you recommend today?

Mrs Spice Oh well I wouldn't recommend any of it. I just have cheese sandwiches from the Co-op, me.

Aunt Maud Right. So what about the Welsh rarebit? Is that any good?

Mrs Spice Well sometimes. But it does depend on which Welsh bits we get.

Amy Welsh bits?

Mrs Spice Yes. Welsh rare bits?

Amy Bits of what?

Mrs Spice Could be anything really. You know. Sometimes they're the common bits, but the rare bits are much better.

Jonathan Can't we just have chips?

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Mrs Spice Oh we've got lots of those. Mr Banford's gone on a diet all of a sudden. There's plenty of chips!

Aunt Maud OK, we'll have 3 chicken and chips please.

Mrs Spice Please yourself.

Mrs Spice goes across to Mr Wallace.

Mrs Spice The usual, Gregory?

Mr Wallace Oh yes please Mrs Spice.

Mrs Spice Pint of cockles it is then, Gregory.

Mrs Spice exits, tripping up as she goes. Lights up on Mr Banford/Elsa.

Mr Banford And so the inn has been in the Banford family for generations. There's so much history here, so many old relics.

Elsa *(Obviously bored)* You can say that again.

Mr Banford And we've only just got to 1812. There's another two hundred years to tell you about yet.

Elsa Really. How fascinating.

Action cuts to Mr Biggins and Ms Renard.

Ms Renard It's outrageous. She's an embarrassment and will have to go. I'll have no hesitation in telling her when we… I mean, you are in charge.

Mr Biggins She's just a harmless old lady.

Ms Renard No. I would advise against having her within 10 miles of the place. She's a liability.

There's a sudden crash from the kitchen.

Mrs Spice *(From offstage)* Oops – that's the toads gone!

Ms Renard I rest my case.

The action moves to Aunt Maud's table.

Aunt Maud Jonathan please, dear. It's not flies now. You could catch an owl in that. *(She gently pushes his mouth closed)*.

Jonathan What? I'm just looking at that old picture.

Amy Yes, right!

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Aunt Maud That is Old Samuel Banford, great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather of Lionel. Rumour has it he was here when Old Ferdinand rowed ashore with his treasure.

Amy So he might have known where he hid it.

Aunt Maud It's possible, but Lionel has always denied that there is any treasure.

Jonathan Boring! I bet there is.

Amy Yes, and he's just keeping it all for himself.

Aunt Maud Really dear. I think that if Lionel had found old Ferdinand's treasure, he would have told everyone and saved the Inn at the very least.

Amy I suppose so.

Aunt Maud I know so!

Mrs Spice enters with Mr Wallace's cockles.

Mrs Spice Here you are Gregory. Your usual. A pint of cockles. Except we ran out of cockles so it's just a pint!

Mr Wallace Thank you kindly Ethel. That'll do nicely. Are you still on for later?

Mrs Spice Of course.

Mr Wallace Aren't you bored of me yet?

Mrs Spice Not yet. Too much excitement to be bored.

Mr Wallace I've got a new lead that I want to try.

Mrs Spice Oh, where's that?

Mr Wallace whispers to Mrs Spice. Elsa turns towards them, trying to overhear.

Mrs Spice Ooh – well I'd never have believed it. See you later.

As Mrs Spice passes Elsa's table, Elsa catches her attention.

Elsa You two look as though you're plotting something.

Mrs Spice Never you mind, missy. You just eat your lettuce.

Mrs Spice returns to the kitchen.

Mr Banford has been talking the whole time. Elsa is clearly very bored.

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Mr Banford So it's amazing how much history there is here. The wallpaper in the downstairs cloakroom has a story all of its own.

Elsa You don't say.

Mr Banford Oh don't get me started.

Mr Biggins approaches the table to speak to Elsa.

Mr Biggins Elsa. I mean, Ms Mainwaring. I wonder if I might be allowed to have a word in private at all.

Elsa Oh thank goodness. I mean. No, I'm sorry but would you mind if I just went to powder my nose?

Elsa leaves the room. Mr Biggins sinks into the chair next to Mr Banford.

Mr Biggins I give up!

Mrs Spice comes in and serves the salads.

Mrs Spice Two salads.

Mrs Spice *(To Mr Biggins.)* You didn't order a salad.

Mr Biggins No. I ordered the soup.

Mrs Spice Well why are you sitting in the salad place then? You trying to confuse me?

Mr Biggins No, no, I'm sorry. I was just.

Mrs Spice Well hop it or it'll be no pudding for you either.

Mr Biggins Well really!

Mr Biggins leaves and goes back to his own table. Aunt Maud crosses to speak to Mr Banford.

Aunt Maud Are you alright Lionel? I'm worried about you.

Mr Banford Whatever for? I'm fine, just fine. I'm having dinner with Elsa Mainwaring. Well, I was but she's just gone to powder her nose. We're getting on like a house on fire.

Aunt Maud I mean about the hotel.

Mr Banford Ah that.

Aunt Maud Are you sure you're doing the right thing?

Mr Banford Yes, well I'd really rather not talk about that if you don't mind.

SAMPLE PAGES

Aunt Maud But there must be another way?

Elsa enters and sees Aunt Maud in her seat. She looks relieved and sits with Amy and Jonathan.

Mr Banford Ah Elsa, over here.

Elsa I'll be there in a moment. Just having a quick chat with my fans.

Jonathan stands up and bows.

Jonathan A pleasure Ms Mainwaring. A real pleasure.

Amy Yes. Hope you like chicken and chips.

Mrs Spice enters with the soups.

Mrs Spice Two soups!

Ms Renard What's that?

Mrs Spice Aunt Maud's pea soup.

Ms Renard You could have fooled me.

Mrs Spice You do look like a bit of a fool if you don't mind me saying.

Ms Renard I DO mind you saying. You are an utter disgrace, and when I… I mean, when Mr Biggins owns the hotel, you can be sure there'll be some changes around here. Won't there Mr Biggins?

Mr Biggins *(Looking miserably at his soup)* What? Oh, yes, yes. Whatever you say.

Mrs Spice Well thank you very much. And the place could do with a bit of a revamp so that'll be nice too.

Mrs Spice goes back to the kitchen.

Jonathan So what's your next film Ms Mainwaring?

Elsa Call me Elsa please?

Jonathan OK Elsa. Are you doing "*Ghostwalker 6*?"

Elsa Maybe. It depends.

Amy It must be such fun being a big movie star.

Elsa Sometimes yes. But there are other things in life you know.

SAMPLE PAGES

Jonathan You mean like fame and fast cars?

Elsa I was actually talking about more personal things really. Sorry I shouldn't have said that.

Amy Don't worry. We understand. Don't we, Jonathan?

Jonathan Sure we do. Can't wait to see the special effects. They were awesome last time.

Amy *(Rebuking him)* Jonathan?

Jonathan What?

Aunt Maud crosses to see Mr Wallace.

Aunt Maud A good tour today, Gregory. Thank you.

Mr Wallace Always a pleasure. Old Captain Ferdinand's tale is always good to tell. And who knows, we may even have a worthy ending soon.

Aunt Maud Oh yes? How come?

Mr Wallace Can't say Maud. Can't say. But I will say that it could be a very advantageous night tonight!

Mr Banford Elsa? Dinner's here. It's getting cold.

Jonathan How can a salad get cold?

Elsa I'd better go. Thanks for the chat. *(She sits back with Mr Banford)*.

Aunt Maud crosses to sit with Jonathan and Amy. Mrs Spice brings in the chicken and chips which is just chips.

Mrs Spice Chicken and chips 3 times. Well, OK. Just chips 3 times. Sorry but I couldn't find the meat cleaver.

Aunt Maud That's fine Mrs Spice, really. Thank you.

Jonathan At least these look edible.

Mrs Spice You wait till you've tasted it. Anything to drink?

Aunt Maud We'll just have water please?

Mrs Spice Toilet or Tap?

Jonathan Toilet?

Mrs Spice Yes, I use that lemony cleaner thing so it's got a nice lemony flavour.

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Aunt Maud Tap water will be fine, thank you.

Mrs Spice Oh yes. I forgot to tell you all that there's been a landslide due to the storm so there'll be no going anywhere tonight.

Aunt Maud Oh dear. Anyone hurt?

Mrs Spice No. But the road's impass… impass… you can't get down the road so they say.

Mr Biggins Who says?

Mrs Spice The newsman.

Mr Banford Don't panic everyone. There are more than enough rooms at the inn. You can all stay here tonight.

Mr Wallace If you don't mind sleeping with a ghost. That curse is real you know.

Elsa What ghost? What curse?

Mr Banford Oh don't get him started again. Mrs Spice can you make up the rooms for everyone please?

Mrs Spice What, everyone?

Mr Banford Yes, please, for everyone. Can't have anyone left out now, can we?

Mrs Spice Well if you insist.

Mr Banford Yes, please, Mrs Spice, I do.

Mrs Spice Righty ho! Only I don't know if we've got enough sheets…

Mr Banford I'm sure you'll find something, Mrs Spice. You're nothing if not inventive.

Suddenly Mr Wallace gets to his feet ominously.

Mr Wallace You're all doomed. Doomed! And don't say I didn't warn you. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Lights down.

SAMPLE PAGES