

# Character: The Actress



## *A Gutshot Straight*

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## **The Scene**

You have received an invitation from an old friend, a wealthy heiress, for a night of fun and gambling aboard the Swan, her riverboat casino. The cruise will be departing this coming Friday evening, June 19, 1969, from a private, New Orleans dock on the Mississippi river. The heiress is very well connected and has many friends, particularly among the social elite. She has invited a number of these friends for a private cruise. Many of the guests are your friends or acquaintances, while some may be new to you. Excitement abounds, and all are eagerly awaiting the main event of the evening: a high stakes poker tournament with a \$20,000 buy in! It's sure to be an experience that no one will ever forget. Come visit with old friends and make new ones in an incredible night of entertainment, poker, and... murder!

## **How to play**

You are a character in a murder mystery game. Below you will see a detailed description of your character, followed by a brief description of the other characters in the game. Read through this information before the party so you will have a basic idea of your character and that of the other players. Before the event, do not discuss any of your character's information or secrets with others who will be playing the game. Dressing up is encouraged. The general dress is 60s style casual or semi-formal, though your individual character may give you particular ideas about how to dress. Upon arrival at the event, the host will give you a sheet that you will use during Act 1. He or she will also provide additional instruction at certain points and will be able to answer questions about the game. The sheet the host provides will contain one or more announcements that your character will make during Act 1 as well as indications of how to respond to other characters. While parts of the game follow an exact script, others do not, and you will have the freedom to interpret your character however you choose. Everyone has secrets and knowledge as well as objectives of their own, so the more you talk to the other guests, the more you will learn, and the more fun you will have.

## **Your Background**

Your name is Patricia Penn. You are a stunning Hollywood star at the apex of your career. Recent hits, such as *Another Night in the Bronx* and *I Love the Lights of L.A.*, have propelled you to stardom in ways you never could have imagined just a few short years ago when you were a struggling actress.

William West, a renowned movie producer, gave you your first big break. He saw you on the set of one of his films, in which you had a single line as an office secretary. He instantly took a liking to your acting ability and asked you to audition for the lead role in *Another Night in the Bronx*. You couldn't believe it when he told you that you got the part! During the filming, William invited you and several other key members of the cast to join him on frequent trips to the Swan, the New Orleans based riverboat casino of his old friend, Mary Milton. Mary was always there when you went, and you found her to be an enchanting person. She is the heiress of the Milton family fortune.

It wasn't until the premier of the movie that William professed his feelings toward you. You were shocked! William was nearly twice your age, and you'd never looked at him as anything other than a boss and friend, so you told him you didn't feel the same way. William stormed away, but not before telling you you'd never star in another of his movies. However, the movie was a screaming success, and you made such an impression that you were given the star role in *I Love the Lights of L.A.*, which proved to be another blockbuster. Since then, the offers have been pouring in. You have continued

to make frequent visits to the Swan to enjoy a little poker and to talk to Mary, who has quickly become a good friend. Luckily, while you have heard that William still comes by on occasion, you have not seen him on any of the evenings you have visited.

Nearly a year ago, while at the Swan, you met Lazare Lebeau. Lazare was born in the French Quarter of New Orleans, where he still resides. He is a tennis pro, ranked 247<sup>th</sup> in the world, and has a charming French Cajun accent. There was an instant attraction, and the two of you talked on the boat for hours. This made for an awkward moment when Sandra Smith, a fashion model who had been invited to the casino that night by Lazare, approached the two of you and gave you both a scathing look before leaving alone.

You have been seeing Lazare ever since that night. You don't get to see him as often as you'd like, since, for the time being, he continues to live in New Orleans, while you are living and working in L.A., but you make frequent trips to New Orleans to visit him, and your evenings often see the two of you spending time on Mary's riverboat.

You have proven to be a natural at poker, which has become your game of choice. You often play with the same group, which includes a number of Mary's friends. Most of them are also excellent poker players. Good as you are, at first you frequently lost against such tough competition. This ended, however, when you discovered a skill at which you are even better: holding out. You have become exceptionally skilled at hiding cards without getting caught, which has made you the best poker player of all of Mary's friends. As a matter of fact, one of her friends, James Johnson, has lost over \$50,000 to you over the last 2 years.

A few weeks ago, you were talking to Robert Rich, a comedian from Baton Rouge. Both of you had had too much to drink. Robert asked you about your amazing luck at poker, and you laughingly said that maybe your opponents would have a chance if they knew how to hide cards like you do. You caught yourself, then told him you were only joking. You hope he was too drunk to remember.

In a recent magazine interview, you were asked about your relationship with Donna Davidson and your opinion of her novels. Donna is a famous writer, who you've spoken to on the Swan. You said the two of you didn't go back very far, that you don't enjoy her writing, and that she makes her books so racy to distract readers from the lack of a plot. Your comments were published in the magazine mere days before her newest release, which sold worse than any other book she had written.

Your relationship with Lazare has been rocky recently. While the two of you long since agreed to be exclusive, you have been increasingly suspicious that Lazare is going out with other women. You confronted him about this, but he said you were just being paranoid.

A few weeks ago, you received a call from Mary. She told you she is inviting a small number of her close friends for a private cruise on the Swan. In addition to a fine selection of free food and drinks, the cruise will feature a high stakes poker game with a \$20,000 buy in! You are very excited by the prospect of winning such a large pot!

# The Guest List

**The Heiress** – Mary Milton. Owner of the Swan riverboat casino. An affable and charismatic woman who loves to make friends, particularly with the social elite.

**The Writer** – Donna Davidson. Exploded onto the romance novel scene with her steamy debut novel, *Wild Hearts and Bodices*. Has amassed fame and fortune over the last few years, though her newest release was a major flop.

**The Comedian** – Robert Rich. Spent a decade trying to make it big as a comedian in the Big Apple before giving up and moving his act to the Big Easy. Spends a significant amount of time on the Swan and appears to have a major gambling problem.

**The Producer** – William West. Famous Hollywood movie producer. Discovered Patricia Penn and gave her the starring role in one of his most recent blockbusters, *Another Night in the Bronx*.

**The Actress** – Patricia Penn. Struggled to make her mark in Hollywood before landing the lead role in *Another Night in the Bronx*. Won even more fame for her performance in *I Love the Lights of L.A.* An exceptional poker player. Girlfriend of the Tennis Pro.

**The Doctor** – James Johnson. Has a successful practice in Baton Rouge that allows him free time and an affluent lifestyle. Frequent visitor at the Swan.

**The Tennis Pro** – Lazare Lebeau. From the French Quarter of New Orleans. Has a hint of a Cajun French accent and is the 247<sup>th</sup> ranked tennis player in the world, two factors that have always played well with the ladies. Boyfriend of the Actress.

**The Model** – Sandra Smith. Famous fashion model, born and bred in New Orleans. Appears in magazine and television ads across the country.