

TEN LITTLE CHIPMUNKS

By Craig Sodaro

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SYNOPSIS: The laughs, frights, and fights are thick when billionaire Thaddeus Thornbury realizes the end of his life is near and invites all potential heirs to his secluded mansion on Chipmunk Island. These include his sisters, Isabelle and Rita, along with Rita's two children; his shifty lawyer, Noah; his voluptuous secretary, Holly; his grumpy cook and her cookie-loving daughter, Coco; and two long-lost country cousins. When all have arrived, Thornbury reads his will: the last surviving member of the weekend party will inherit the entire Thornbury empire. Conveniently, two strangers shipwrecked on the island appear just in time to notarize the will and join the familial festivities. Following a toast, poor Thaddeus promptly dies from rat poisoning. Amidst thunder and lightning, one by one the potential heirs begin to die, but the murderous plots are foiled in Sodaro's rapid-fire, double-crossing mystery.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 MEN, 10 WOMEN, 1 ANNOUNCER)

ANNOUNCER, a radio voice *(2 lines)*

ISABELLE BLUNT, fifties, sister of Thaddeus Thornbury *(93 lines)*

MRS. CHIPS, forties, the cook at Chipmunk Manor *(45 lines)*

CHASE RANCIDDE, twenties, nephew of Thaddeus Thornbury *(37 lines)*

BROOKE RANCIDDE, also twenties, Chase's sister *(84 lines)*

RITA RANCIDDE, forties, sister of Thornbury, mother of Chase and
Brooke *(42 lines)*

COCO CHIPS, teens, daughter of Mrs. Chips *(47 lines)*

NOAH NAGLE, forties, Thornbury's lawyer *(75 lines)*

HOLLY BERRY, twenties, Thornbury's secretary *(54 lines)*

KATIE SUE, twenties, a long-lost cousin *(103 lines)*

COREEN, twenties, her sister *(92 lines)*

THADDEUS THORNBURY, eighty-one, head of the Chipmunk Empire
(111 lines)

STELLA, thirties, his nurse (62 lines)

NICK, twenties, a shipwrecked romantic (116 lines)

KAREN, twenties, his date (104 lines)

SETTING

The Great Room of Chipmunk Manor located on the remote Chipmunk Island. Arch entrance up center leading to main entrance of house and stairs to second floor. Wing entrances down left and right. Large curtained window up right, fireplace at left. On mantel above fireplace sit ten chipmunk statues or stuffed animals. Portrait of Thaddeus hangs above fireplace. Desk against right wall set with phone. Couch downstage set with chairs and table(s.). Bookcase left.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

Scene 1 The Great Room, late afternoon.

Scene 2 The same, an hour later.

Scene 3 The same, a half hour later.

ACT TWO

Scene 1 The Great Room, a short time later.

Scene 2 Various rooms at the manor, played before the curtain. A short time later.

Scene 3 The Great Room, an hour later.

PROPERTIES LIST

- ☐ Several suitcases
- ☐ Backpack
- ☐ Spoon
- ☐ Formal invitation
- ☐ Briefcase

TEN LITTLE CHIPMUNKS

- ☐ Blanket
- ☐ Cane
- ☐ Wheelchair
- ☐ Silver tray set with eleven wine glasses
- ☐ Bottle of wine
- ☐ Cell phone
- ☐ Legal paper (last will and testament)
- ☐ Napkin
- ☐ Knife in Chase's back
- ☐ Small bit of paper
- ☐ Cookie
- ☐ "Rat Poison" box
- ☐ Forks and knives
- ☐ Tea tray set with cups and saucers
- ☐ Throw pillows on couch
- ☐ Large books
- ☐ Blow-up dummy dressed as a nurse (use Stella's costume from Scene 1)
- ☐ Flashlights
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Stacks of money
- ☐ Gun
- ☐ Identification badge

COSTUME NOTES

Unless specified, modern everyday dress.

ISABELLE:

Fur coat

RITA:

Combination of "old hippy, young matron" - colorful long skirt, sandals, fancy top, perhaps some beads.

NOAH:

Suit and tie

- HOLLY:** A “voluptuous” dress or outfit
- KATIE SUE/COREEN:** Western dress: jeans, cowboy boots, vests, western shirts, etc.
- STELLA:** Nurse outfit at the beginning, then change to summer clothes - shorts, tank top, sunglasses, visor, etc.
- THADDEUS:** Smoking jacket at the beginning, then change to summer clothes: golf shirt, shorts, sunglasses, etc.
- FIGURE:** Long, black robe with a hood. A mask and gloves can be worn to conceal the wearer’s identity.

SOUND EFFECTS AND LIGHTING

Gunshots
Glass shattering
Thunder and lightning

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

In darkness we hear:

ANNOUNCER: In breaking news, gazillionaire Thaddeus Thornbury, who made his fortune supplying chipmunks to national parks, is said to be near death. The man, who found his niche by breeding and raising funny furry animals for the amusement of tourists, is spending his last days at his secluded Chipmunk Island mansion surrounded by his loving family and devoted friends.

SETTING:

Lights come up on the Great Room of Chipmunk Manor. Arch entrance up center leading to main entrance and staircase to second floor. Wing entrances down left and right. Large curtained window up right, fireplace up left. On the mantel above the fireplace sit ten little chipmunk statues (or stuffed animals). Above the fireplace is a portrait of a grumpy Thaddeus. Desk with a phone is against the right wall, tables and chairs here and there about the room. Bookcase left.

AT RISE:

ISABELLE enters center followed by MRS. CHIPS who struggles with several suitcases. ISABELLE wears a fur coat. Thunder and lightning occasionally during the scene.

ISABELLE: Is the old buzzard dead yet?

MRS. CHIPS: Not yet, Madam.

ISABELLE: Don't call me "madam." It makes me feel old.

MRS. CHIPS: (*Sniffing.*) But you're his sister. You've gotta be at least - -

ISABELLE: His *younger* sister! *Much* younger!

MRS. CHIPS drops the suitcases

ISABELLE: Be careful with my bags! Why don't you take them up to my room?

MRS. CHIPS: I thought since you're so young, you can do your own lifting!

MRS. CHIPS exits right as CHASE and BROOKE enter down left

CHASE: And that's why the chipmunk crossed the - - (*He notices ISABELLE.*) Well, look who's here!

BROOKE: Auntie Isabelle! What an unpleasant surprise!

ISABELLE: What are you two doing here?

CHASE: (*Sarcastically.*) We're surrounding our dear uncle with devotion and love in his last hours.

ISABELLE: You've probably poisoned his I.V.

BROOKE: We thought we'd let you do that.

CHASE: After all, Auntie . . . you were the one who said wild horses couldn't drag you to Chipmunk Island again after that last fight you and Uncle Thaddie had.

BROOKE: Come to think of it, she looks like wild horses *did* drag her here.

CHASE: Tell us, Auntie Isabelle, have you married again?

ISABELLE: You know I did! I sent you an announcement.

BROOKE: Auntie, we get so many of those from you . . . why can't the post office toss them with the junk mail. Is this number eight or nine?

ISABELLE: Norman is number five. And this one will last.

CHASE: Hope springs eternal.

MRS. CHIPS enters center followed by RITA RANCIDDE, bizarrely dressed as a cross between an old hippie and a young matron. She carries a backpack.

MRS. CHIPS: They're right in here, Mrs. Rancidde, if they haven't killed each other yet.

RITA: Chase! Brooke! You beat me here!

CHASE: Not hard, Mother.

BROOKE: We've told you to junk the VW bus and get something with a little twenty-first century oomph!

ISABELLE: Rita! How charming! You look so . . . colorful! Like a blotter.

RITA: (*Pointing to the fur coat.*) That's . . . that's not real is it, Isabelle?

ISABELLE: Oh, dear . . . I forgot! You're allergic to fur!

RITA: (*Horried.*) How could you! Don't you understand those little animals were probably mothers . . . and they were cruelly trapped and yanked from their families and skinned alive just so you could show off how much money you make? You murderer!

ISABELLE: (*Slipping off the coat.*) You'd better hang the corpse in my room, Mrs. Chips.

MRS. CHIPS: I'm no accessory after the fact!

ISABELLE slings the coat over a chair as COCO enters left licking a spoon, chocolate all over her mouth.

COCO: Mama! I need some more chocolate chips for the cookies!

RITA: Can this be Coco?

ISABELLE: How could you tell?

MRS. CHIPS: Yup! This is my baby!

COCO: Mother! I'm no baby! I can recite the Gettysburg Address backwards!

CHASE: (*To BROOKE.*) Too bad she can't find her mouth.

MRS. CHIPS: C'mon, Coco, let's go find those chips or there won't be any dessert.

RITA: Mrs. Chips, how's my brother doing?

MRS. CHIPS: Hard to tell, ma'am. He won't see anybody but his nurse, Stella. And she's as tight-lipped as they come.

RITA: He doesn't leave his room?

MRS. CHIPS: (*Sighing.*) Too sick for that. Don't you read the papers?

MRS. CHIPS and COCO exit left.

RITA: Poor Thaddeus! I didn't realize . . .

BROOKE: Well, maybe if you'd called once in a while.

RITA: You know your uncle has been . . . difficult.

ISABELLE: The last time I was here he told me to get out and not come back.

RITA: He told me the same thing.

CHASE: Then why'd you come back?

ISABELLE: The same reason as you, Chase. (*From her purse she pulls out a formal invitation. She reads.*) The honor of your presence is requested at my demise. Let bygones be bygones and come to Chipmunk Island . . . blah, blah, blah.

NOAH enters center with HOLLY BERRY. He wears a suit and tie and carries a briefcase. HOLLY is dressed voluptuously.

NOAH: Mr. Thornbury asked me to send out those invitations personally.

HOLLY: I designed them myself. See the cute holly berries all around the edge? That's my personal touch.

ISABELLE: I thought those were crabapples or something poisonous.

HOLLY: (*Giggling.*) No, silly!

RITA: Mr. Nagle . . . did you send yourself an invitation?

NOAH: No. Your brother handed me one. He wanted to save the price of the stamp.

BROOKE: But you're not even family.

CHASE: So? Uncle Thaddeus didn't care for family . . . but he did care for his fortune, and that needed a good lawyer in control, right, Noah, old boy?

NOAH: I hope I've represented your great uncle's interest well.

ISABELLE: And what you have represented well, Miss Berry . . . aside from bad taste?

HOLLY: Hey! I called my mother at Sing Sing and she said this outfit would be just dandy!

BROOKE: (*To NOAH.*) Why is Uncle Thaddeus's secretary here?

NOAH: She's on the list. That's all I know.

HOLLY: And why not? I've worked my butt off for the old man!

ISABELLE: (*Walking around her.*) No, you haven't. It's still there.

HOLLY: That was just a figment of speech.

RITA: Well . . . how many more people are coming for the weekend?

NOAH: Well, now . . . his two sisters, Isabelle and Rita. Rita's children, Chase and Brooke. Myself and Miss Berry. Mrs. Chips and Coco.

CHASE: They're the help!

BROOKE: Surely they're not guests.

NOAH: If they're on the list, they're mentioned in the will.

ALL gasp.

RITA: (*Feigning innocence.*) The will? Is *that* what this is about?

BROOKE: Oh, Mother, don't act so innocent!

CHASE: Of course it's about the will.

NOAH: Mr. Thornbury's drawn up a new one.

ISABELLE: A new will? What's in it?

NOAH: I haven't seen it!

ISABELLE: How *dare* he!

RITA: Isabelle! Thaddeus can do whatever he likes with his money. He made it, after all . . . breeding all those poor furry little creatures just for the amusement of tourists.

CHASE: The way you feel about fur, Mother, I'm sure you won't touch a cent of his money.

RITA: You're absolutely right!

ISABELLE: Ha!

RITA: I have a nice, tidy ceramic business. I tell fortunes on the side and sell lots of incense. I have all the money I could ever want.

ISABELLE: Good! Then I'll take your share.

CHASE: What about us?

HOLLY: And me! I typed my fingers to the bone for him!

ISABELLE: They are kind of bony, at that.

RITA: Well, maybe Thaddeus is going to distribute everything equally among us.

CHASE: (*Counting.*) One, two, three, four, five, six . . . seven if you count Coco . . .

BROOKE: (*Dazzled.*) That's over a billion dollars apiece!

NOAH: Oh, and I forgot . . . there *are* a couple of other relatives.

ISABELLE: What?!

NOAH: Long-lost relatives on Mr. Thornbury's mother's side.

CHASE: Who are they?

KATIE SUE and COREEN enter center. They are wearing western clothing: jeans, vests, and so on.

KATIE SUE: Howdy!

COREEN: This here's Cousin Katie Sue, and I'm Cousin Coreen!

ISABELLE: (*Horried.*) This must be some kind of mistake!

KATIE SUE: This *is* Chipmunk Island, ain't it?

COREEN: Feller on the boat said it was.

RITA: You're related to Thaddeus Thornbury?

KATIE SUE: Sure 'nough! His ma was aunt to our ma, Betty Jane Culpepper.

BROOKE: So you're sisters?

COREEN: We're twins!

HOLLY: Go on! You don't look anything like each other!

KATIE SUE: We're sorority twins.

ISABELLE: I think you mean fraternal.

COREEN: I knew it had something to do with college!

KATIE SUE: You can imagine how we just about dropped our teeth when we got these here invites to Chipmunk Island for the weekend!

COREEN: (*Moving to mantel.*) And lookie here, Katie Sue! Little chipmunks!

KATIE SUE: One, two, three . . . eight, nine . . . eleven!

CHASE: Ten! Can't you even count?

KATIE SUE: I never was good at math.

BROOKE: There are ten little chipmunks.

RITA: (*Ominously.*) All in a row!

HOLLY: Kinda cute little fellows.

ISABELLE: But why are they here? Thaddeus never did a cute thing in his life!

COREEN: Maybe they're party favors!

COREEN reaches out to touch one just as STELLA wheels THADDEUS into the room. She wears a white nurse's uniform; he wears a smoking jacket with a blanket tossed over his legs. He has a cane across his lap.

THADDEUS: Get your grubby mitts off that!

RITA: Thaddeus! You're up!

THADDEUS: Of course I'm up.

CHASE: Can't keep crabgrass down.

THADDEUS: I heard that, whippersnapper! (*To STELLA.*) Push me over there!

STELLA: I really think you should have stayed in bed, Mr. Thornbury.

THADDEUS: And miss all the fun?

STELLA: You're too sick for fun.

ISABELLE: Really, Thaddeus . . . you should listen to your nurse.

THADDEUS: If she had her way, I'd lie in bed watching *Batman* reruns and drinking beef broth! But I didn't make ten billion dollars doing that, now did I?

RITA: No . . . you raised poor furry animals and sold them on a slave market.

THADDEUS: We aren't going to start that again, are we Rita?

STELLA: You certainly are not! Mr. Thornbury is not to be upset this weekend. His poor heart can't take much more,

THADDEUS: One good shock and (*He tries to snap his fingers, but can't.*) . . . well, you get the picture.

BROOKE: Then why are we here if we're not going to argue?

HOLLY: Something about the new will, right, Mr. T?

THADDEUS: How are you, Holly?

HOLLY: I'm just fine, Mr. T. *(She sits on arm of wheelchair.)* But we sure miss you at the office.

STELLA: Mr. Thornbury! Your blood pressure's rising!

HOLLY: *(Running her fingers through his hair.)* It's just not the same without you!

STELLA pushes HOLLY off the wheelchair.

HOLLY: Hey! I coulda gotten hurt!

ISABELLE: Ridiculous! Everyone knows bimbos bounce!

HOLLY: Hey!

THADDEUS: I see you haven't changed, Isabelle.

ISABELLE: Why should I change?

THADDEUS: Still running all those Chipmunk Kitchen restaurants?

ISABELLE: We're up to three hundred twenty-eight nation-wide. We're opening our first overseas restaurant in Malgala. They love chipmunk stew over there.

RITA: Murderer!

THADDEUS: And what are your offspring up to, Rita?

RITA: Well, Chase works at Blockbuster video.

THADDEUS: Now there's a career for you.

CHASE: *(Sarcastically.)* You want popcorn with your movie?

THADDEUS: And what does little Brooke do?

RITA: She's a systems analyst for a major U.S. airline.

THADDEUS: No matter what you say, Rita, you sound like the host of a game show.

ISABELLE: The Price is Fur!

RITA: Very unfunny, Isabelle. You've always been so cruel and heartless. I don't think in my entire life you've ever had a good word for me.

ISABELLE: Oh, come, come, Rita, darling. Why, I've said lots of nice things to you.

THADDEUS: Like what?

ISABELLE: *(Thinking.)* Well, there was the time that . . . well, there was another time, I'm sure . . . well, I know I said something nice when . . . *(Blithely.)* Humph! I guess you're right.

KATIE SUE: You two oughta be a whole lot more like us!

COREEN: Why, we're not only twins, we're best friends!

KATIE SUE and COREEN: Two peas in a pod!

THADDEUS: And I'm happier 'n a polecat with a mouse in its mouth that you two could make this shindig! I really wanted Rita and Isabelle to meet the other side of the family.

ISABELLE: The downside?

STELLA: Mr. Thornbury, now that you've greeted your guests, I must insist you go back upstairs to your room.

THADDEUS: Holy smokes! Must be time for *Batman*!

STELLA: You need your rest!

THADDEUS: She's secretly in love with Robin.

STELLA: That is absurd. I'd prefer someone older.

NOAH: Mr. Thornbury, perhaps you ought to listen to your nurse.

THADDEUS: I see you made it, Nagle. Bring the paperwork?

NOAH: Of course, just as you requested.

THADDEUS: Push me over to the buzzer, woman!

STELLA: I'm pushing you to bed! (*She pushes THADDEUS right.*)

THADDEUS: No, you're not! We've got business!

STELLA: Over my dead body!

THADDEUS pushes his cane into the wall as they reach right exit so STELLA can't push the chair any further. He then stands, using his cane.

THADDEUS: That can be arranged, woman!

RITA: Thaddeus! Let me help you!

THADDEUS: (*Swinging cane to keep her back.*) Think I'm helpless? Hardly, girl!

Using cane, he presses button on right wall. A piercing scream is heard.

KATIE SUE: What in tarnation's that?

COREEN: Somebody's getting' their liver tore out!

ISABELLE: That's just the buzzer to summon the help.

CHASE: Uncle Thaddeus has always had a warped sense of humor.

THADDEUS: 'Least I have one!

MRS. CHIPS and COCO enter left.

MRS. CHIPS: Mr. Thornbury! You must be feeling better!

THADDEUS: I was 'til I spotted the vultures in the parlor.

NOAH: Now, that's not fair, Mr. Thornbury.

HOLLY: You invited us, remember?

THADDEUS: So I did! And to welcome you, we need a toast. The Mouton Rothchild 1897, Mrs. Chips.

MRS. CHIPS: But that's your finest bottle! You sure you want to waste it on this crowd?

THADDEUS: Come, come, Mrs. Chips. These are my family and dearest friends! Who better to waste it on?

MRS. CHIPS moves to desk on which sits silver tray and eleven wine glasses. One glass in the center is taller than the others. She opens the bottle and pours during next dialogue. Each character but THADDEUS must at some point before the wine is served, pass by or come over to the desk, even for a moment.

BROOKE: Uncle Thaddeus, Mr. Nagle here tells us you've made a new will.

THADDEUS: Yup!

ISABELLE: What was wrong with the old will? Rita and I share the balance of the estate after a few tidbits for the help.

MRS. CHIPS: Tidbits! You think workin' here for all these years is worth a tidbit or two?

HOLLY: Yeah! I slaved for the guy!

COCO: And I had to grow up here!

MRS. CHIPS: Don't talk with your mouth full, Coco.

BROOKE: And Auntie Isabelle . . . you're forgetting that the current will leaves Chase and me . . . well . . . where does it leave us?

CHASE: Empty-handed.

ISABELLE: Rita already said that she isn't interested in any money. You can just divide her share.

RITA: That doesn't mean I wasn't planning to donate my share -

BROOKE: Oh! And stiff us, ha?

MRS. CHIPS: If anybody's stiffed, it's us!

HOLLY: Yeah! Us grunts deserve a break!

KATIE SUE: Gosh, Coreen, they sure do like to tangle!

COREEN: You'd think they'd learn to live 'n let live.

KATIE SUE: After all . . . it ain't none of any of your money. You hear that? It ain't none of your money!

COREEN: Uncle Thaddeus can do whatever he wants to with it.

KATIE SUE: 'Sides, you're all actin' like he's dead and gone.

COREEN: Why, anybody can see he's got years and years and years and years of livin' left in him.

ISABELLE: Aren't you the optimist.

THADDEUS: You see, Stella? You see what I've been telling you?

STELLA: Actually, it's a wonder you've lasted this long with a family like this!

THADDEUS: Greed runs in the family like brown eyes.

NOAH: You're right, Thaddeus. We've been acting like children.

COCO: Speak for yourself!

MRS. CHIPS: *(To COCO.)* You're slobbering on the floor.

NOAH: Why don't you just read us the will and - -

Thunder and lightning.

KATIE SUE: That storm is sure a humdinger!

COREEN: How'll we ever get back to land?

THADDEUS: You aren't getting back 'til Monday.

ISABELLE: What?

THADDEUS: Boat won't come back 'til then.

CHASE: Who says?

THADDEUS: I says, whippersnapper! You're all spending the weekend.

RITA: That's what the invitation said.

BROOKE: We'll see about that. *(She takes out cell phone and dials.)* You're so . . . twentieth century, Uncle Thaddy. I can order a helicopter just like that! *(She grimaces.)*

CHASE: What's wrong?

BROOKE: No service. I can't understand it! We always get service here.

THADDEUS: I can. Old twentieth century Thaddy has scrambled the satellite signals to Chipmunk Island. We're completely cut off from the rest of the world.

KATIE SUE: Gosh! It's almost like being at home, ain't it, Coreen?

ISABELLE: Brother Thaddeus, is there a purpose to all this . . . intrigue?

THADDEUS: Now don't go getting' ahead of me, here, Sister Isabelle.

RITA: *(With growing hysteria.)* What are you trying to do, Thaddeus? You know I hate being trapped anywhere! I'm a free spirit! I don't want to be stuck on an island! I can't stand it! Why have you done this? Oh, please! Please!

THADDEUS: Rita, the drama queen. Got anything to calm her down, Stella?

RITA: You can't calm me down! Not knowing I'm stuck here! Nowhere to go! Nothing to do!

STELLA slaps the hysterical RITA, who immediately stops.

STELLA: Feel better?

HOLLY: Gosh . . . you coulda given her an aspirin or something.

STELLA: (*Threateningly.*) Yeah, I could have, but I didn't!

HOLLY: (*Frightened.*) Just a suggestion.

NOAH: Thaddeus, can we get back to the will?

THADDEUS: That's right! You're all so anxious! Well, let's not keep the guests waiting any longer, Stella. Wheel me over to the fireplace.

STELLA does so.

KATIE SUE: We sure do like your chipmunks, Uncle Thaddy.

THADDEUS: Why, thank you, Katie Sue. They're . . . symbolic. A symbol of my life's work . . . bringing joy to millions . . . no, billions of tourists . . . in the form of funny, furry friends. What would have been the joy of seeing Yellowstone as a child if you didn't have chipmunks to chase after? What would have been the fun of Jefferson Gap National Parkway without furry friends popping up everywhere? And would there have been a point to visiting the Grand Canyon aside from watching the chipmunks dart as close to the edge as possible without falling over?

CHASE: Well, now that you mention it - -

RITA: Chase!

THADDEUS: I have given the world smiles! Not to mention all those millions of photos of chipmunks that show lots of grass, leaves, and twigs but no chipmunks because they were too fast for the camera.

ISABELLE: Is there a point to all this, brother?

THADDEUS: Just reminiscing, my dear. But I suppose we ought to get back to business, eh? The will is here . . . Noah . . . you are to read it. I will then sign it. (*From his pocket, THADDEUS pulls out will and hands it to NOAH.*)

NOAH: (*Reading.*) The last will and testament of Thaddeus Thornbury. I, Thaddeus Thornbury, being of sound mind and body do hereby bequeath my entire fortune including Chipmunk Island to the last surviving member of the following list: My sisters, Isabelle and Rita; Rita's two offspring, Chase and Brooke; my lawyer, Noah Nagle; my secretary, Holly Berry; my two grand-nieces on my mother's side, Katie Sue and Coreen; and my devoted housekeeper, Mrs. Chips and her daughter, Coco.

ISABELLE: (*Horried.*) What do you mean "last surviving member?"

THADDEUS: Shhhhh!

NOAH: (*Reading.*) Should more than one on the list attempt to claim my fortune, all my money goes to the Save the Chipmunks Foundation. Should one survivor claim the fortune and then attempt to share it with the others, all my money goes to the Save the Chipmunks Foundation. Should no member survive, all my money goes to the - -

ALL: Save the Chipmunks Foundation.

THADDEUS: You're getting the picture.

NOAH: Thaddeus, you can't be serious about this will!

RITA: It sounds illegal.

THADDEUS: I had my legal team check it over. Nothing illegal about it.

CHASE: But it doesn't make any sense!

THADDEUS: Of course it makes sense!

BROOKE: There's only one way to get your money.

THADDEUS: (*Ominously, rubbing his hands together.*) I know! (*ALL look one to another.*) And Noah, you're not quite finished.

NOAH: Really, Thaddeus! I thought I was your lawyer. You could at least have checked with - -

THADDEUS: Read!

NOAH: (*Reading.*) The surviving member of the list has fifty hours from the time of my death to claim my fortune or all my money goes to the - -

ALL: Save the Chipmunks Foundation.

THADDEUS: You understand completely, then! Now, we'll just sign the will.

NOAH: Wait a second! There's no one here who can sign the will! We're all beneficiaries.

THADDEUS: Only one of you is a beneficiary.

NOAH: But we're all potential beneficiaries. Signatures of beneficiaries would never stand up in court, and the will could easily be thrown out.

THADDEUS: How about Stella? She's not on the list.

STELLA: I'll be glad to sign if it will get you back to bed!

THADDEUS: That's right! *Batman's* on!

NOAH: But you still need someone else not on the list, Thaddeus. There must be two witnesses.

THADDEUS: Well, I guess I'll have to scratch somebody off the list.

ALL: No!

THADDEUS: Then what shall we do? We need another witness!

KAREN and NICK stumble on center, wet, in rags, as thunder and lightning boom.

NICK: Help us!

KAREN: Help!

CHASE: Witnesses!

ISABELLE: Right on cue!

KATIE SUE: Why, gosh, you two, you're soakin' wet!

COREEN: And you look like you just got done pig wrestlin'!

NICK: We were out in our boat . . .

KAREN: The storm came up . . .

NICK: Our boat sank!

KAREN: But we saw your light and swam and swam.

NICK: And swam and swam and swam and swam - -

ISABELLE: We get the picture.

THADDEUS: Lucky for you Chipmunk Island was in range. You're welcome to join our little weekend party. On one condition!

NICK: Anything!

THADDEUS: Sign this! *(He hands will to STELLA who signs. She hands it to NICK.)*

NICK: Right here?

THADDEUS: That's right!

NICK signs will, hands it back to THADDEUS.

KAREN: Nick, what'd you sign?

NICK: Beats me!

ISABELLE: A will! One that just might be murder!

NICK: Ha?

THADDEUS: No skin off your nose, young man! Let's have a toast, Mrs. Chips.

MRS. CHIPS: About time!

She and COCO begin passing out glasses. The tallest one, of course, is for THADDEUS.

MRS. CHIPS: I poured the wine hours ago. Don't blame me if it's gone flat.

THADDEUS: At \$5,000 a bottle, it better have more staying power than that. That's right, everybody take a glass. You'll never taste anything quite like this again. Bought the bottle in an old wine shop in the south of France last time I was there. Always knew it would come in handy for a special occasion. Sorry, you two newcomers, but there's not enough for you. Mrs. Chips will see to you just as soon as we all raise our glasses high! *(ALL raise their glasses.)*

This little chipmunk went to market . . .

This little chipmunk stayed home.

This little chipmunk had roast beef . . .

And this little chipmunk went ready, set, go!

ALL drink. Immediately THADDEUS begins choking and sputtering.

ISABELLE: Thaddeus?

RITA: What's wrong?

STELLA: Mr. Thornbury!

HOLLY: Call a doctor!

KATIE SUE: Call an ambulance!

STELLA: *(Holding his wrist.)* Call the coroner! He's dead.

ALL gasp.

TEN LITTLE CHIPMUNKS

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