

**SCENE 7****House of Smythe**

The stage should be entirely monochromatic (using only black and white props). The largest swivel chair available sits UC: UR hangs a huge photo or painting of Smythe, looking particularly evil. UL is a large clock. Downstage, on each side of the stage are two large pots containing spooky looking branches spray painted black. Any other evil looking black and white props may be placed around the stage as desired.

*AS THE LIGHTS COME UP, SHIRLEY SMYTHE sits in the swivel chair at the back of the room. After a moment, SMYTHE gets up from his chair and looks to the clock. He paces back and forward across the room, slowly, checking the clock and waiting exactly for it to reach a particular time (any time during the day will do). He walks in a decidedly creepy way. And holds a stern, evil expression the entire time. This could be drawn out as long as the actor can hold the audience's attention. At last, the clock reaches the time he was waiting for. He smiles (momentarily) then looks around the room expectantly before looking even more evil than before.*

**SMYTHE:** *(almost shrieking)* Sharon!

**SHARON:** *(off)* Coming, sir.

*SMYTHE stands in the centre of the room, tapping his foot impatiently. After a moment, SHARON enters CL, carrying a small package and two envelopes behind her back.*

**SMYTHE:** What time do you call this?

**SHARON:** I'm sorry sir, the boy who delivers the mail was running late.

**SMYTHE:** The boy who delivers the mail *never* runs late. Do you know what I told him I'd do if he *ever* ran late?

**SHARON:** *(speaking slowly, unsure of the correct answer to the question)* Run over his cat?

**SMYTHE:** *(snapping)* Does the mail boy have a cat?

**SHARON:** I don't know. Possibly.

**SMYTHE:** *(pleased with himself)* I told him I'd steal his bike.

**SHARON:** Oh... That doesn't sound *quite* as evil.

**SMYTHE:** *(annoyed at the suggestion that his plan isn't evil)* Not when you downgrade it from murdering his cat. But when you upgrade it from untimely mail delivery it is decidedly wicked.

**SHARON:** I suppose. I actually think it's a new boy.

**SMYTHE:** *(disgusted)* A new boy? I shall have to speak with him. Perhaps this time I will threaten to murder his cat. *You* will set up a meeting.

**SHARON:** *(confused)*. With the cat?

**SMYTHE:** *(exasperated)* With the mail boy! Now, do you have my mail or not?

**SHARON:** *(handing the package and letters to SMYTHE)* Sorry, yes. Here you go, Sir.

**SMYTHE:** *(immediately excited by the package)* Finally, It's arrived!

**SHARON:** What's arrived, sir?

**SMYTHE:** My new, personalised stationery. *(he opens the package and withdraws a sheet of paper with an 'S' emblem printed on the top)* Now those halfwits at Mayhem will *have* to take my correspondence seriously. Nobody can ignore such beautiful, non-recycled stationery that-

*SMYTHE freezes mid-sentence and slowly lifts the paper to his nose. He slowly sniffs the paper before lowering it again, his eyes forming a narrow squint. SHARON shifts her weight nervously.*

**SMYTHE:** *(very slowly and threateningly)* Do... I... Smell... *(he pauses and turns to face SHARON)* Lavender?

**SHARON:** I'm sorry sir, I must have ordered the wrong one.

**SMYTHE:** *(shrieking)* Insolence! *(quieter)* How am I meant to strike fear in the hearts of my correspondents with personalised stationery scented with *(shrieking again)* lavender!

**SHARON:** Give it to me, sir. I'll take it and get the correct one sent straight away.

**SMYTHE:** And you'll deduct the cost of the *lavender* scented stationery from your *own* salary.

**SHARON:** Of course...

*SHARON turns to leave.*

**SMYTHE:** Where do you think you are going?

**SHARON:** *(looking from the stationery to SMYTHE with confusion)* Didn't you want me to-

**SMYTHE:** The stationery drama can wait. Right now, we must prepare for our guests.

**SHARON:** *(confidently)* Right!

*SHARON thinks for a moment.*

**SHARON:** Who are our guests?

**SMYTHE:** Vladimir Kolawski and his Mayhem associates, of course. *(impatiently)* Do try to keep up!

**SHARON:** Why would Kolawski come here?

**SMYTHE:** *Really*, Sharon. Your *constant* state of befuddlement is *extremely* tiring. Following my *(he makes a quotation symbol with his fingers)* accidental slip of the tongue, earlier this evening, regarding destructination, Kolawski will, by now, have realised that I have the Destructinator, and will be on his way here to steal it.

**SHARON:** Right! Where would you like me to hide it?

**SMYTHE:** Hide what?

**SHARON:** The Destructinator.

**SMYTHE:** *Why* would I want you to hide it?

**SHARON:** Didn't you just say... *(rubbing her temples)* Won't Kolawski find the Destructinator if we don't hide it?

**SMYTHE:** I *want* him to find it.

**SHARON:** I'm so confused!

**SMYTHE:** Did you even *bother* to read the plan that I gave you?

**SHARON:** I tried. But I only made it through the first sixty pages, or so.

**SMYTHE:** *(frustrated)* Does *anyone* read *anything* that I give them?

**SHARON:** Sorry, Smythe!

*SMYTHE takes a deep breath and composes himself.*

**SMYTHE:** *(pacing, and much enjoying the opportunity to explain his plan)* You see, Kolawski, due to his *complete* incompetence, will not realise that I am in fact two steps ahead of him. He will turn up, and his cronies will cut the electricity, as seems to be their *only* method of thievery. However, what he will not realise, is that, with the help of the generator you purchased last week, we will switch the-

*SMYTHE freezes and turns to SHARON.*

**SMYTHE:** *(threateningly)* You did purchase the generator last week?

**SHARON:** Yes...

**SMYTHE:** Finally, *one* redeeming moment amongst your *ceaseless* blundering.

*SMYTHE pauses for a moment.*

**SMYTHE:** Where was I?

**SHARON:** One redeeming moment amongst my ceaseless blundering...

**SMYTHE:** Oh, yes: the backup generator. And, much to their surprise, *(he pulls the destructinator onto the stage, from CL)* when we suddenly switch on the lights, I will be here, with the Destructinator, waiting for them.

*SMYTHE carefully positions the Destructinator in the centre of the stage, pointing directly at the door, and covers it with a cloth. He stands back for a moment and checks everything is just so.*

**SHARON:** *(shocked)* You're going to blow them up?

**SMYTHE:** No. Worse than that. I'm going to have them captured.

**SHARON:** Captured by who?

**SMYTHE:** I believe that should be, "by whom".

**SHARON:** Sorry. Whom.

**SMYTHE:** Well, thanks to my recent submission of your somewhat less-than-desirable photographic evidence at Command, they are sure to have now

worked out that Kolawski was behind the art thefts, and will be on their way to arrest him.

**SHARON:** But I thought you said Kolawski was on his way here.

**SMYTHE:** Precisely. He and his accomplices will be here, trapped in the firing line of my Destructinator, while Command Agents enter his home and recover the paintings. Then, with evidence in hand, they will come here - to thank me, no doubt - at which point they will arrest Kolawski.

**SHARON:** Wow, that is *quite* a good plan. I bet they'll be really pleased with you.

**SMYTHE:** You're missing the point. *(he becomes even more dramatic)* Only a true evil mastermind such as I could outwit such a criminal as Kolawski!

**SHARON:** Oh, that's so true, Mr Smythe.

**SMYTHE:** Finally, the evil community will see the full extent of my cunning!

**SHARON:** They'll be impressed!

**SMYTHE:** *(reaching a crescendo of evil)* At last, I will have the fame that I deserve! I will be recognised for the true, evil mastermind that I am!

*SMYTHE concludes with an evil laugh, and is joined by SHARON in a chorus of evil laughter.*

**SMYTHE:** Now, *when* they arrive I must be at my most evil.

**SHARON:** What would you like me to do?

**SMYTHE:** I will be seated here. *(sitting down in his swivel chair)* We will switch the lights off *(he points to the lights)*, so that when they arrive they are unaware of our backup generator. You *(he points to SHARON)* will be in charge of fog.

**SHARON:** *(confused)* Fog, sir?

*SMYTHE gets up and pulls a smoke machine/dry ice onto the stage.*

**SMYTHE:** It will add to the villainous ambiance.

**SHARON:** *(impressed)* You've spared no expense!

**SMYTHE:** Of course not. This is our moment.

*SMYTHE sits down again, and turns the chair so that he is facing away from the audience.*

**SMYTHE:** Fog, Sharon!

*SHARON activates the smoke machine/dry ice. SMYTHE laughs wickedly.*

**SMYTHE:** Finally, our hour of diabolical brilliance is here. Quickly, turn off the lights. They'll surely be arriving at any moment.

**SHARON:** Yes, Smythe!

*SHARON disappears offstage, and the LIGHTS GO OUT. SMYTHE, facing the audience, pulls a torch from his pocket and uses it to light up his face.*

**SMYTHE:** Excellent! Feel the malevolence!

**SHARON:** Oh, I can feel it!

**SMYTHE:** (*shining his torch at SHARON*) More smoke, Sharon!

*SHARON laughs wickedly. Indiscernible voices can be heard offstage.*

**SMYTHE:** Shhh! They're here! (*he turns his chair away from the audience and switches off his torch*)

*LONDON, AGENT 9, AGENT 7, DUBOIS, AGENT 4 and C: enter, DR, while the lights are out.*

**AGENT 4:** It's so dark in here....

**C:** Must be nobody home.

**DUBOIS:** Woah! somezing's got me!

**AGENT 7:** Sorry, that was me.

**AGENT 9:** Ow, that's my foot you're standing on, you oaf.

**AGENT 7:** I'm sorry. It's a bit hard to see.

**C:** Someone find the lights.

*THE GROUP is interrupted by an ominous laugh from SMYTHE who, up until now has been sitting in his swivel chair and facing away from the audience. SMYTHE turns towards them, his face illuminated by his torch. SHARON stands behind him, fanning smoke/dry ice around him. Due to the stage being still dark, it becomes apparent that SMYTHE cannot see who has entered, and assumes it is KOLAWSKI.*

**SMYTHE:** (*theatrically*) Good evening...

*The swivel chair continues to turn until SMYTHE is facing away from them again.*

**SMYTHE:** Sharon!

*SHARON quickly turns the swivel chair back towards the audience.*

**SMYTHE:** I've been expecting you, Mr Kolawski!

**C:** What's going on here?

**SMYTHE:** (*getting out of his chair and walking towards the Destructinator*) Ha, ha! You've walked straight into my trap (*he reaches the Destructinator*). Activate the lights!

*SHARON quickly disappears UC and suddenly the LIGHTS COME ON revealing LONDON, AGENT 9, AGENT 7, DUBOIS and C are clustered by the DOOR. The moment the lights come on, with a manic laugh, SMYTHE pulls the cover off the Destructinator, revealing the machine is pointed straight at the GROUP by the door.*