**THE TRAGIC DISAPPEARANCE OF HARRIS BURDICK**

**CHARACTERS**

**1)Mr. Peter Wenders (Publisher):**

He is a publisher of books. His job is to join authors with illustrators and then send the work off to be printed. He is 45 years old. He typically wears a maroon coloured suit to work. He is a short man with a light beard. His voice is deep and gestures wildly with his hands when talking.

**2) Mr. Harris Burdick (Illustrator):**

He is an illustrator with lots of experience. He has a long beard that comes to a point. He is 49 years old. He is very skinny and tall. He has a heavy walk. He draws very detailed pictures.

**3) Ms. Flank (Secretary):**

She is a cheerful woman who likes to whistle while she works. When she speaks she always is trying to do the right thing and to stay positive. She is skinny. She wears a black suit to work. She has long brown hair.

**4) Narrator:**

The narrator pauses for quite a while...letting words at the end of sentences dangle. Sometimes the narrator whispers and hisses out certain key words.

**SCENE ONE**

**SETTING:**

**OFFICE:**

The office is plainly decorated. The office has two rooms. The main door opens up into a waiting room. Ms. Flank’s desk sits off to one side and there are 4 neatly organized but stiff chairs for people to sit on. The waiting room is connected to Mr. Peter Wenders’ office. He has several Egyptian paintings on his walls and he has a large office chair sitting behind his rectangular mahogany desk.

**DIALOGUE:**

**NARRATOR:** There once was a man named Mr. Peter Wenders. He published books and drawings and paired up authors with illustrators. Mr. Peter Wenders was often busy trying to hire the best candidates for the job. Every Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Wenders would hold interviews where prospective illustrators would show off their talents. If hired, he would pay them handsomely.

**MS. FLANK:** (Beep sound effect) Ah...Mr. Wenders...sorry to interrupt but your 2:30 interview candidate Mr. Burdick has arrived to speak with you!

**MR. WENDERS:** Please let him in and I’ll begin the interview shortly. Thank you Ms. Flank!

**MS. FLANK:** You’re very welcome! Anytime.

(Mr. Burdick walks into the office nervously)

**MR. WENDERS:** Welcome Mr. Burdick. (He points dramatically at the chair in front of him). You can take a seat on this comfortable chair before me.

**MR. HARRIS BURDICK:** Hi (Somewhat trembling) Mr. Wenders. (He fumbles with the chair as he pulls it back and takes a seat).

**MR. WENDERS:** Would you like anything? We have some bottles of water or coffee?

**MR. HARRIS BURDICK:** No thank you. (Softly. Mr Burdick cautiously places his large black art portfolio onto the desk).

**MR. WENDERS:** So Mr. Burdick can you show me some of your illustrations? You know it’s my job to hire illustrators for the authors I’ve hired. If your work is good enough, I’ll hire you to work with Ms. Carbunkle who has just completed a book involving these talking turnip characters.

**MR. HARRIS BURDICK:** (He starts to fidget with his fingers) Umm...well I have some experience (takes a deep breath and exhales) and I’d like to think that I’m an okay (takes another deep breath and exhales) or good illustrator (Shrugs shoulders).

**MR. WENDERS:** Ummm...Mr. Burdick I’ve noticed that you...ummm…have what looks to be a black portfolio of your work sitting by you? Is that indeed the case? I’d love to see your work!

**MR. BURDICK:** Ummm...Oh yeah...Um...I must’ve forgotten about that! Uh...would you like me to open it and show you?

**MR. WENDERS:** Yes...yes...yes...of course! (He waves his fingers in circles and eventually points towards the large art portfolio sitting by Mr. Burdick’s feet)

(Mr. Burdick lifts the clunky black portfolio and places it on top of his desk)

**MR. BURDICK:** Sorry Mr. Wenders! I’m a bit nervous about the interview. I know it’s not the ideal time…but may I use the facilities?

**MR. WENDERS:** But of course! Ms. Flank will show you where to turn as you leave my office. It’s just down the hallway.

**SCENE TWO**

**SETTING:**

**OFFICE:**

Thirty minutes have passed and Mr. Burdick is nowhere to be seen. Mr. Wenders is growing impatient and is seen drumming a pen atop Mr. Burdick’s unopened portfolio. He starts to click the pen furiously and then dramatically puts it down and lifts up his phone.

**DIALOGUE:**

**MR. WENDERS:** (Presses intercom button on his phone/Beep sound effect) Ah…Ms. Flank! This frankly is getting ridiculous! I assume you have shown Mr. Burdick to the washroom down the hallway, is that correct?

**MS. FLANK:** Why yes! I in fact walked him down the hallway and showed him where the door was and I’ve been busy sending that email to Ms. DaNewt as you asked me to do this morning.

**MR. WENDERS:** Ha! He must’ve flushed himself down the commode I suppose! C’mon…would you agree that this is far too long to be gone in the midst of a job interview? Honestly, I’m starting to get frustrated and worried!

**MS. FLANK:** I do agree Mr. Wenders. I assure you that I did as you asked. Do you think we should go check on the gentleman?

**MR. WENDERS:** That’s exactly what I was about to propose. Let’s go together in case some unfortunate emergency has occurred and I need your help.

**SCENE THREE**

**SETTING:**

**OUTSIDE OF THE MEN’S BATHROOM DOOR:**

The hallway floor has been polished to the point where one can see their reflection. The door that Ms. Flank and Mr. Wenders are standing outside of seems normal and undisturbed.

**DIALOGUE:**

**MR. WENDERS:** (Knocks furiously/Knocking sound effect) Ah, Mr. Burdick? Mr. Burdick! It’s Mr. Wenders here. I understand that you needed to use the washroom. Are you alright in there? (Shrugs shoulders and turns to face Ms. Flank).

(Mr. Wenders carefully turns the doorknob and swings the door open slowly. Ms. Flank peers over Mr. Wenders’ shoulder to take a look inside)

**MS. FLANK:** (Calling over Mr. Wenders’ shoulder) Mr. Burdick. It’s Ms. Flank here. Are you alright? We can gladly call a medic if need be!

(Mr. Wenders and Ms. Flank hear nothing and proceed inside the bathroom. The audience cannot see their expressions but hear their comments from behind the now closed door)

**MR. WENDERS:** There isn’t a single soul in here! I just don’t get it! Ms. Flank, was our office door open this whole time?

**MS. FLANK:** Yes it was! I would’ve certainly noticed Mr. Burdick if he decided to leave the bathroom and fail to return to the interview! No one walked past our door!

**MR. WENDERS:** This makes zero sense. I cannot understand this. It’s as if Mr. Burdick was a phantom! Where did he go off to?

**MS. FLANK:** Shall I call security and see if the security camera picked up anything unusual?

**MR. WENDERS:** A brilliant idea, Ms. Flank. Please do!

**SCENE FOUR**

**SETTING:**

**OFFICE:**

Mr. Wenders and Ms. Flank have now returned to the publishing office. Mr. Wenders is sitting on one of the waiting room chairs with both hands gripping the sides. Ms. Flank is sitting behind her desk and is seen talking into a phone.

**DIALOGUE:**

(Ms. Flank places the phone receiver down firmly into its cradle)

**MR. WENDERS:** Ms. Flank. We must replace these chairs. They’re tremendously uncomfortable! No wonder Mr. Burdick just vanished!

**MS. FLANK:** Will do Sir! Listen, I am at a loss of what to say to you. I just got off the phone with Mr. DeBussey who runs security for our building. He just reviewed the footage for the past two hours. He tells me that it clearly shows Mr. Burdick entering the bathroom with me standing alongside him after pointing him towards the entrance. But no one is seen leaving the bathroom!

**MR. WENDERS:** What the? That’s utterly incomprehensible! People do not simply vanish. He isn’t a ghost! Are you sure?! There has to be a reasonable explanation!

**MS. FLANK:** I assure you Mr. Burdick! That’s indeed what was relayed to me. Mr. DeBussey has already made a call to the authorities and the police have been dispatched!

**MR. WENDERS:** Wait! Ms. Flank! Mr. Burdick brought a large portfolio into my office! Perhaps it has a contact number in case of emergency within it?!

(Mr. Wenders runs into his office ignoring Ms. Flank’s comment)

**MS. FLANK:** Wait! Mr. Wenders! Perhaps you don’t want to touch anything in case it might be needed as evidence…

(Mr. Wenders hurriedly exits his office with the portfolio already unzipped. He is holding the open portfolio in one hand and Mr. Burdick’s work in the other)

**MR. WENDERS:** I cannot believe my eyes! Ms. Flank! You must check out his work!

**MS. FLANK:** I will! But most importantly, was there any contact number?

**MR. WENDERS:** (The hand holding Mr. Burdick’s work is now shaking). No…no…No number at all! But let me tell you something! What you’re about to see is even more jaw dropping and mysterious than this entire vanishing act by Mr. Burdick!