



A Dinner-Theatre Murder Mystery

by

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Customer Taster

Body of the Play

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Body of the Play

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About the Murder Mystery Pack

The full pack provides the full script and guidance to enable you produce a successful murder mystery event. The event will work well if delivered to an audience enjoying a meal.

Structure

The Murder Mystery Pack contains:

- The Organiser's Overview [*Extract here*]
- The Full Script [*Extract here*]
- The 'Accusation Sheet', to be provided for audience members to fill in.

The Organiser's Overview contains

- Synopsis
- Staging notes
- Suggested timings
- Character list
- Set description
- Props list

Synopsis

A group of amateur actors meet in the village hall to rehearse their forthcoming production, but director Paul is not at all happy, especially when the dead body emits a loud sneeze, a cast member comes late and wants to leave early, and an important prop - a dagger - goes missing. Annoyance turns to horror when the dagger reappears stuck fast in the back of a fellow thespian.

Characters

Paul - director of the 'play within a play'.

Robert - new to the village, plays murder victim Philip.

Simon - plays John.

Alison - plays Susan.

Lucy - Robert's neighbour, plays Karen.

Elaine - Paul's wife, plays Gwen.

Sandra - props lady.

Staging Notes

In order to perform the mystery to an audience, a Performance Licence must be purchased from the Murder Mysteries page of the Lazy Bee Scripts website.

A murder mystery play works well when a meal is served throughout the acts, and ideal breaks for courses to be served are at the end of Acts One and Two. If preferred, or if a meal is not possible, then a coffee break is necessary after Act Two in order for Accusation Sheets to be filled in and collected.

All the evidence is within the script and there is no audience interaction with the actors.

The Accusation Sheets can be placed inside programmes or given out after Act Two. A member of the cast can then invite the audience to complete the sheet by naming the character they believe to be the murderer and to list any clues they have spotted. There can be one sheet per table or per person, depending on the size of the audience.

Before the Denouement, the sheets must be collected in and checked backstage. The winner can then be announced after the Denouement. If there is more than one winner, the correct description of clues can be taken into consideration or a draw can be held.

Suggested Timing

7:00 - 7:15 - Audience greeted and take seats

7:15 - 7:40 - Act One

7:40 - 8:00 - First course of meal

8:00 - 8:20 - Act Two

8:20 - 8:45 - Main course or coffee break; Accusation Sheets filled in and collected

8:45 - 9:00 - Denouement, followed by announcement of winning accusation

Body of the Play

Script Extract

Act One

(Lucy, Simon, Alison, Robert and Paul are in the village hall to rehearse their forthcoming play. Robert, covered by a bloodstained sheet, plays dead on a high-backed fireside chair. Lucy stands right of the chair with a vegetable peeler grasped in her hand. Simon and Alison are left of the chair looking horrified. Paul is not on stage but stands at the back of the venue behind the audience, holding his script. The characters are rehearsing for their next production.)

Simon: (As Johnny.) Oh my God, Karen, what have you done?

Alison: (As Susan.) Has she killed him?

Lucy: (As Karen.) What? (Stares at vegetable peeler for a second.) It wasn't me.
(Drops peeler.) I didn't do it.

Simon: (As Johnny.) It's all right, my dear, we understand.

Alison: (As Susan.) Speak for yourself, Johnny, because I certainly don't.

Simon: (As Johnny.) But you know what Alex was like, Susan.

Alison: (As Susan.) What makes you so sure it's him?

Simon: (As Johnny.) His feet, of course, those ghastly trainers.

Alison: (As Susan.) That's no excuse for sticking a knife into him.

Lucy: (As Karen.) I didn't. It wasn't me.

Simon: (As Johnny.) Don't worry about that now, Karen.

Alison: (As Susan.) For heaven's sake, Karen, we've found you with a (frowns down at peeler on floor) with a large carving knife, dripping with blood, grasped in your hand.

Lucy: (As Karen.) Of course he's dead.

Alison: (As Susan.) And how, exactly, do you know that?

Lucy: (As Karen.) What do you mean?

Alison: (As Susan.) If you didn't do it, how do you know he's dead? The body's covered up.

Simon: (As Johnny.) I really don't think we should be questioning her.

Lucy: (As Karen.) Maybe he's not dead. Is that possible?

Alison: (As Susan.) You should know, dear.

Simon: (As Johnny.) Right. (Goes towards body.) Let's make sure, shall we? (Lifts sheet.)

Alison: (As Susan.) Well?

Simon: (As Johnny.) Oh yes, he's gone all right.

Lucy: (As Karen.) Are you sure?

Simon: (As Johnny.) Quite, quite sure.

(They all stare at the chair.)

(A very loud sneeze emits from under the sheet.)

Robert: (His head appears from under the sheet.) Sorry.

Paul: (Strides forward from behind audience.) Sorry? Sorry? What do you mean, sorry?
Is that what you intend to say next week when we present this so-called thriller to our audience?

Robert: (Rises, sheet falls onto floor.) Not to worry, Paul, I probably won't sneeze then.

Alison: Mind you, getting the dead body to sneeze might give the audience a bit of a thrill.

Paul: Yes, thank you, Alison. (Climbs on to stage.)

(Alison, Lucy and Simon move upstage, pick up their scripts and start studying them.)

Paul: Going to have a miraculous cure by opening night, are you?

Robert: Oh, it's just a bit of a chill. I'll get a pick-me-up from the chemist. That should do the trick.

Paul: (Buries his head in hands for a second, looks up and calls out.) Sandra, Sandra!
Where the hell is she? She's never here when I need her.

Sandra: **(Runs on nervously, clutching a script and various bits of paper.)** I'm here, Paul.

Paul: The dagger, where's the bloody dagger?

Robert: I say, Paul, no need to swear at her.

Paul: I am not swearing at her. I am merely pointing out that the dagger should be dripping with blood.

Robert: Ah, see what you mean.

Sandra: I was saving the blood for the dress rehearsal because you said I'd poured too much over the sheet at last night's rehearsal.

Paul: Damn waste. Isn't much left. All right, **(walks towards the fireside chair)** go and get it. I want to see if it... **(Stares down at the vegetable peeler on the floor. Picks it up.)** What the hell is this?

Sandra: Err, it's a vegetable peeler. I borrowed it from the kitchen.

Paul: Did you really, Sandra? Now, as far as I can remember, there are no vegetables that require peeling in this play.

Sandra: Yes I know but, you see, I couldn't find the dagger so I thought that might do for...

Paul: Oh well, in that case I'd better change the script. **(Pretends to write on the script.)** Simon, your line now reads: stabbed to death by a vegetable knife borrowed from the kitchen. Okay?

Simon: **(Without looking up.)** Okay.

Sandra: Sorry Paul. I'm sure I put the dagger back on the props table last night when we'd finished.

Paul: You've got the chair at the wrong angle again, Sandra. **(Goes to fireside chair and moves it a fraction.)** It's vital it's in the right position.

Sandra: Oh, sorry. I thought I set it properly. **(Moves to the chair and starts pulling it.)**

Paul: For God's sake, woman, leave it alone. I've already corrected it.

Sandra: Oh yes, sorry Paul, sorry.

Robert: I expect I moved it out of its position when I got up. Easily done. My fault, Paul. **(Sandra gives Robert a little smile of gratitude.)**

Paul: Right. So, Sandra, what have you done with the dagger?

Sandra: It wasn't in its place on the props table. It seems to have got, err, mislaid somehow.

Paul: You must keep a better check on things. I really can't have this continual muddle, Sandra.

Sandra: Yes, Paul, I mean, no, Paul.

Paul: Come along, then. I suppose I will have to sort things out myself, as usual. **(Moves left towards door.)**

(Sandra scurries after Paul.)

Paul: As if I haven't got enough to do without you losing props.

[Continues in the full script...]