



BREAKING WINDOWS

A Murder Mystery

By

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Customer Taster



Published by Lazy Bee Scripts

Breaking Windows

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About the Murder Mystery Pack

The full pack provides the full script and guidance to enable you to produce a successful murder mystery event. *Breaking Windows* was written for a drama group which has staged a number of such events and their usual format, including a light supper, is given below. The author has no objection to this format being changed to suit, for instance, a three course meal with courses served before the play begins, between Acts One and Two, or any other variation. Chief Inspector Cleveleys' dialogue may be added to or amended to accommodate any changes.

The Full Pack Contains:

- The Organiser's Overview [*Extract here*]
- The Full Script [*Extract here*]
- Accusation sheets (for the audience to put forward their suspicions)

The Organiser's Overview Contains:

- Suggested Event Format
- Approximate Timings
- Character list
- Plot Overview
- Preparation Guide
 - Considerations for a performance or a rehearsed reading
 - Allocating responsibilities
 - Adjudication
 - Suggested tie-break questions
 - Suggested programme notes
 - Interrogation guideline
- Production Notes
 - Set description
 - Props
 - Sound Effects
 - Lighting Notes

Extracts from the Organiser's Overview

Suggested Event Format

- A brief welcome and any “housekeeping” announcements, either in person by the House Manager or via the front of house sound system, before the stage and auditorium is plunged into darkness.
- Act One
- Act Two - including an (optional) opportunity for the audience to question the suspects
- Interval and light supper (during which the audience teams discuss and fill-in the Accusation Sheets, which are collected either by the ‘house staff’ or by the suspects. Groups who go in for such things will also have the opportunity to draw the raffle).
- Act Three
- Presentation of certificates and prizes to the winning team.

Approximate Timings

- Act One: 30 minutes
- Act Two: 20 minutes (plus 10 minutes if the option is taken for interrogation by the audience)
- Interval/Supper: 30 minutes (of course this is highly dependent on the complexity of the catering).
- Act Three: 15 minutes
- Epilogue: 10 minutes for prize-giving and closing announcements.

Characters (in order of appearance)

- Candy Gilmore – Jacob Gilmore’s daughter
- Lola Gilmore – Jacob Gilmore’s wife
- Monica Goose – antique dealer’s widow
- Detective Inspector Ben Cleveleys
- Detective Sergeant Sandra Thornton
- Jacob Gilmore – an entrepreneur
- Celia Morgan – Jacob’s Housekeeper
- Patricia Lemmon – Jacob’s secretary
- Jack Harris – a doctor of medicine
- Mimosa ‘Mimsy’ Mumford – sweet shop proprietor

Plot overview

When Detective Sergeant Sandra Thornton is asked by her senior officer Detective Inspector Ben Cleveleys to look into a report of intruders at the home of Monica Goose, both find themselves drawn into a web of intrigue and malice centring around entrepreneur and villain Jacob Gilmore, who conducts operations from his wheelchair. Gilmore has a number of minor criminals in his clutches who would dearly love to be free of him, but if that involves murder, who will carry out the crime – his secretary Patricia, his housekeeper Celia, his doctor Jack Harris, Mimosa Mumford from the sweet shop, or burglar Bert’s widow Monica? Are Gilmore’s disenchanted wife Lola or his aspiring actress daughter Candy involved? Cleveleys and Thornton investigate, and invite the audience to identify the murderer.

Extracts from the Preparation Guide

Learned lines or rehearsed reading?

The play will work best if lines are learned. This gives the actors more freedom of movement and interaction with one another. It will be difficult, for instance, for Lola and Candy to read a script when the opening of the play is in complete darkness, or for stage business such as Jacob's tussle with envelope, knife and marmalade, or the wrestling of Patricia, Lola and Candy over the opening of the biscuit tin, if they all have scripts in their hands. However, Chief Inspector Cleveleys has a number of long speeches which include references that need to be delivered clearly and smoothly to the audience. Provided he is sufficiently familiar with his lines, so as not to be glued to the script, it might be helpful to have the speeches in his notebook, to which he would then appear to be referring quite naturally as a detective would in the course of his investigation.

If it is decided to perform the play as a rehearsed reading, this should be made clear in the publicity and reflected in the ticket prices.

Note that even if it is a rehearsed reading, you need to purchase a Performance Licence from the Lazy Bee Scripts website.

Programme Notes

If a programme is created for the production, then in addition to the usual lists of cast and crew, the audience may find it helpful to have the sequence of events listed:

Act One:

Scene 1 - The back garden of Monica Goose's house, 10 p.m.

Scene 2 - A room in the King's Arms, 10.15 p.m.

Scene 3 - The back garden of Monica Goose's house, next morning.

Scene 4 - A room in Jacob Gilmore's house, day.

Act Two:

Scene 1 - A coffee shop, next afternoon.

Scene 2 - Detective Inspector Cleveleys' Office, the same afternoon.

Scene 3 - A coffee shop, later the same afternoon.

Scene 4 - A room in Jacob Gilmore's house, one day later.

Scene 5 - Detective Inspector Cleveleys' Office, an hour later.

Interval and Supper

Act Three: An interview room at the Police Station (the next day).

Interrogation (if desired)

The script has an option for interrogation of the cast by the audience. If the director decides to exercise this option, it is, of necessity, improvised. The rules are:

- The murderer may lie, but everyone else should tell the truth (not necessarily the whole truth).
- Responses should be based on the script. There is no information needed by the audience that is not in the script, although some information is made more specific in Act Two, scene five and in Act Three (after the interrogation).
- The audience may ask questions that go beyond the script. The cast may make up answers, provided that these do not have material influence on the plot! There is an option to answer "I don't think that's relevant" or for Cleveleys to step in with "That's not a line of enquiry we are pursuing at this time."

The cast should prepare for and practice this interrogation, particularly dealing with difficult and irrelevant questions. Creating (mutually agreed) back-stories for the characters may help, though these need to avoid details that might confuse the plot.

Extracts from the Production Notes

The Set

The script requires six different locations:

- Monica Goose's back garden
- A room at The King's Arms
- A room in Jacob Gilmore's ostentatious house
- A coffee shop
- Detective Inspector Cleveleys' Office
- An interview room at the local Police Station

The performance is therefore best staged against black drapes with screens wheeled or carried on to indicate location. These need not be elaborate – indeed the simpler the better to facilitate instant, smooth scene changes.

The table and chairs used as garden furniture might easily serve as furniture for Jacob Gilmore's house by the simple addition of a tablecloth, cushions and candelabra, and the same table and chairs serve as coffee shop furniture - by changing the cloth and adding a table menu and coffee shop sign. An imaginative director and set designer will no doubt devise whatever contributes to the ease of transformation and sense of theatre. If lighting facilities do not permit crossfades, the play can be successfully staged under full stage lighting if separate areas are well demarcated. The interval will permit sufficient time for the stage to be cleared and re-set as the interview room.

BREAKING WINDOWS

Act One (*extract*)

Scene One

(SFX: Introductory menacing comedy music.)

(The stage is in complete darkness. Lola and her daughter Candy enter with lighted battery-powered hand torches, searching for something.)

(SFX: Fade music.)

Candy: What are we looking for?

Lola: He said it was in a tin.

Candy: What sort of tin? Big tin, little tin?

Lola: Search me, but we'd better find it or there'll be hell to pay.

Candy: Biscuit tin, toffee tin? You're sure we're in the right place?

Lola: She tossed it over the wall, so it must be here somewhere.

Candy: Tossed what?

Lola: Ten thousand pounds in used notes.

Candy: It'll be a biggish tin then.

(FX: a light goes on in an upstairs window. Monica Goose is silhouetted in the frame.)

Monica: Who's there?

Lola: Shh. Keep still. Switch your torch off.

(Lola and Candy both put their torches out.)

Monica: I know you're there. I've seen you flashing. Skulking about this time of night. What do you think you're up to?

Candy: What are we going to do, Mum?

Lola: Shush. I thought I heard someone.

Candy: Are you sure we're in the right garden? Ow! Get off my foot.

Lola: I'm over here. I haven't trodden on anything.

Candy: I think I've trodden in something.

Monica: I'm ringing the police. You'll never climb that wall, and if you try coming out by the front gate, I'll let the dogs loose.

Lola: He never said there were dogs.

Candy: I have trodden in something.

Lola: Trust your dad. Never thinks anything through.

(FX: The upstairs window light goes out.)

Lola: She's gone.

Candy: Perhaps she was bluffing.

(SFX: Dogs barking.)

Lola: No she wasn't. Run!

Candy: There's nowhere to run.

Lola: Through the hedge. Must be a gap somewhere.

Candy: We'll only end up trapped in someone else's garden.

Lola: Think positive, girl. I've found a hole. Follow me. (Exits)

Candy: I can't see where you are. (Switches her torch back on.) Mum! Wait for me...

(Exits)

Scene Two

(FX: Lights on a pub table at which Inspector Cleveleys is seated with a beer.)

(SFX: Cleveleys' mobile phone rings. He answers it.)

Cleveleys: Cleveleys... Monica? ... Monica who?... Goose?... Oh, Mon-Goose. I'm off duty, Mrs Goose... I can't help it if you've got intruders. Call the police... Yes I know I'm the police but I'm not your twenty-four-seven personal detective. I'm enjoying a beer in the King's Arms, so please ring three nines and find someone else to help you. **(Ends the call. Pauses. Thinks. Dials a number. Waits for an answer.)** Ah, Sandra. Are you busy?... Oh when was that? Any casualties? Oh, well that's a blessing, but you'll be there for a bit longer yet, no doubt... No, it was nothing urgent. Monica Goose rang complaining about some intruders. Can you go?... Carpenters Lane, you know the one. She had a break-in a few weeks back and now she thinks I'm her personal private eye. Yes, yes, all right. In the morning... yes, fine... whenever you can get there. Get her off our backs if you can.

(FX: Fade spot on Cleveleys.)

Scene Three

(FX: Lights to full stage.)

(The back garden of Monica Goose's substantial property. Shrubs and garden furniture.

Detective Sergeant Thornton enters with Monica Goose.)

Monica: **(Crossly.)** I would have thought you'd have been here before this. There's no intruders now, is there?

Thornton: No, Mrs. Goose, but there might be clues. If there are we might be able to track 'em down. We could do 'em for trespass. Did they do any damage?

Monica: They've probably prevaricated the hedge. I heard them scrabbling through it. If you'd come when I rang, you'd have caught them. Who did you say you were?

Thornton: Thornton. Detective Sergeant Thornton. I came once before with Detective Inspector Cleveleys, when you had the break-in.

Monica: Oh. Yes. So you did. Never caught anyone for that, did you? Why didn't Inspector Cleveleys come with you this morning? Ben, wasn't it? I quite liked him, even if he was useless.

Thornton: Useless?

Monica: Never got back my burgled belongings, did he?

Thornton: These things take time, Mrs. Goose. Maybe there's a link between the break-in and your intruders of last night.

Monica: Do you think so?

Thornton: Well, who can say until we've properly looked into it? You live on your own, don't you?

Monica: Yes. Widowed these last three years. My Bert was a burglar, so I do know about these things.

Thornton: Your Bert?

Monica: Yes. Did you know him? I expect you had him on your books.

Thornton: I don't recall a Bert Goose.

Monica: No, he wasn't Bert Goose. I reverberated to my maiden name when he died. He was Bert Bostock when he was professional.

Thornton: Professional?

Monica: Bostock and Bostock. That was me and him. Antiques and Silver. We had a shop in Burley Street.

Thornton: **(Light dawning.)** Oh... oh... Bostock. Bert Bostock. Found dead at the bottom of a ladder with a bag full of silverware. Top of the ladder was at the upstairs window of a house in Wimbledon Avenue.

Monica: **(Delighted)** That's the one. It was in all the papers. My Bert was quite famous when he was dead.

[The action continues in the full script...]