

Nightmare at Nightschool

A Dinner Theatre Murder Mystery

By Jane Morris

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Morris Murder Mysteries



Published by Lazy Bee Scripts

Sample Role Pack - Maisy

Customer Taster

Nightmare At Nightschool

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A pre Christmas party for a French evening class becomes hazardous when the lights go out on the step. The ladies seem safe, the caretaker is repairing the fault. Everyone makes an entrance – except Max. What has befallen Max, and why? The others need to determine the answer to this mystery by careful questioning.

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Nightmare At Nightschool

Role Pack: Maisy

This Role Pack Contains:-

- A brief overview
- A list of characters
- The script for the “opening scene”
- A character profile for the role of Maisy (which hints about questions to ask of the others)

Overview

Nightmare at Nightschool is a Murder Mystery designed to be played by 18 participants, partly acting formal scenes, partly improvising interrogation to unmask the guilty party. It is designed as a “dinner party” mystery.

It could also be played and improvised by 18 actors in front of an audience at a larger event (for which different preparation is needed - see “Running the Script in Front of an Audience”).

Characters

Shirley Anderson - Teacher of English and citizenship at college

Mlle Josette Anglaise - French teacher

Anne Ashford-Hill - Corporate Banker from the City

Tracey Beckham - Personal fitness instructor

Nicole Campbell - Ex wife of Max Campbell

Stan Carpenter - College caretaker

Harriet Carter - Local archaeologist/historian

Jayne Christie - Proprietor of the Premier Ladies Detective Agency

Gabriella Comaneci - Eastern European asylum seeker

Nancy Newbury - Friend of Nicole Campbell

Gladys Pewsey - College cleaner

Julia Salisbury - Wife of town’s Mayor

Betsy Stuart-Jones - Wife of town’s Conservative MP

Maisy and Daisy Sutton - Twin teenage sisters

Cordelia Wilton - Solicitor

Jessica Woodred - Estate agent

Lady Camilla Wooton-Bassett - Ex PA of Max Campbell

Unseen Characters

Max Campbell – The head - and body - of MaxCorp

Nightmare At Nightschool

Opening Scene

(Gladys is sweeping up in the class room as Josette and Shirley enter.)

Josette: **(Speaking with French accent)** Oh pardon, I thought you would be fini by now. Can we come and put out some of the tables and chairs for our soiree this evening?

Gladys: Oh, don't mind me pet, I'll work round you. I'm all held up tonight because of that power cut or whatever it was in the car park. Couldn't see a thing when I was sweeping down the steps – lucky I didn't go arse over tit in them bushes. That would have done my back in. Are the lights back on yet?

Shirley: No, it's still pitch black out there. I hope no one does fall. It can't be a power cut as all the lights are on in here – I wonder what the problem is? It looks like Mr Carpenter was having a go at fixing something when we came in. Let's hope he can get it sorted before everyone arrives.

Gladys: If you ask me it's a waste of time asking a man to fix it!

Shirley: Don't be hard on him, he hasn't got over losing his poor mother.

Josette: Is that why he always looks so triste, so sad these days? He used to be such a jolly man.

(Gladys finishes sweeping the room just as Tracey bounces in.)

Tracey: **(Sniffing her armpits)** Hi there, sorry if I'm a bit whiffy – I've just taken my ladies dance aerobics class – I had a quick shower but I forget to bring a change of clothes for tonight – silly me! I did remember my food and wine though – that's what's important. Where do you want me to put it? Can I help you move those chairs?

Josette: } **(Together)**

Shirley: } Yes please

Josette: Ze table ici do you zink?

Shirley: Yep that's fine – and the chairs round tables over here? OK?

(Julia creeps in.)

Shirley: } **(Together)**

Tracey: } Hi there.

Josette: Bonsoir Julia, ca va?

Julia: Um ooh err, yes er I mean oui – er bon, whatever, Mademoiselle Ingless

Josette: Anglaise – like English in French.

Julia: Oh dear how confusing – Oh No! I've forgotten my contribution to the party – and I left it out on the kitchen table so I wouldn't forget it and then Charles rushed me so he wouldn't be late wherever he had to go and I came without it – Oh I'm so sorry – I can't seem to remember anything these days. The doctor's given me some pills but I think they are making me worse not better.

Shirley: No problem, there'll be loads of food – just relax and enjoy yourself – its Christmas!

Julia: Don't remind me, I still have a pile of Christmas cards to sign for Charles – I didn't realize it was so difficult being the wife of the Mayor. And I've forgotten to bring in that piece of homework you set us two weeks ago – not that I could do much of it – this French language can be so confusing.

Tracey: I'm with you there Julia – all this le, la and les. Why can't everything be the same like it is in English. How can some things be masculine and some be feminine – it's doing my head in. I take my hat off to poor Gabriella, she can hardly string two words together in English but she seems to picking it up dead easy – like Nancy and Nicole.

(Nancy and Nicole arrive laden with carrier bags)

Tracey: Hi you two, been shopping have we?

Nicole: Oh, just a few bits and pieces for Christmas for friends and something special for Mickey to take over tomorrow.

Nancy: And some food for the party – Nicole have you got the Fortnum and Mason's bag or have I?

(Nicole and Nancy root through their stack of carrier bags and find the bag containing food and drink which they hand over to Tracey.)

Nancy: Just pop this on the table for me will you darling?

Nicole: Just look everyone what Nancy found. Isn't it just divine?

(Nancy holds up a handbag.)

Nancy: Its Gucci you know – I always wanted one of his – I expect Michel would have bought me one for Christmas if I'd asked him but I treated myself as I'm hoping he gets me something a little more special – like a diamond. And I'm taking bets that Nicole gets a ring this Christmas from Mickey.

Nicole: Nancy, it's far too soon for that – you can't rush men you know – anyway Mickey is far too busy at the moment promoting Pirates of the Aegean and looking for a yacht to think about buying me a ring.

(Daisy and Maisy arrive.)

Daisy: Pirates of the Aegean. Maisy and I went to see that last night. Mickey is just gorgeous isn't he – you're so lucky to have him.

Nancy: It's nothing to do with luck darling – Nicole and I have years of experience in knowing what men like – you two are only just out of nappies so you have a lot to learn.

Maisy: Well Mr Campbell seems to like us, doesn't he Daisy?

Daisy: Sure does, he promised last week he'd fix us up with a meeting with Simon Waterman to get a recording contract.

Maisy: Yeh, he said we could be the next Cheeky Girls

Daisy: Or Tatu

Maisy: Mind you, he said he'd ring in the week to confirm he'd sorted it – did you speak to him 'cos I haven't heard from him?

Daisy: No, perhaps he's waiting to tell us tonight as he knows we'll be at the party – then he can tell when we have to go to London.

Maisy: Yeh, I'm sure that's it.

Nicole: Oh you poor young things – surely you don't believe whatever story he told you!

Daisy: Why not! Simon's heard our tape and wants to sign us up.

Maisy: And he's seen the pictures in our folio that Mr Campbell took of us – he said Simon liked the look of us – liked our image *and* our bodies!

(Jayne rushes in.)

Jayne: **(Puffed out)** Sorry, I did try and get away early but some poor soul rang me just as I was leaving and I got held up. Another poor woman who thinks her man is cheating on her – yet another surveillance case – I wish this town could throw me something more interesting to investigate – a nice juicy murder case maybe!

Julia: Don't say things like that. Its tempting fate.

Josette: You won't know ze others, will you Jayne. Zeese are students from my Monday night class – Tracey, Julia, Nicole, Nancy, Daisy and Maisy – and do you all know my friend Shirley – she is also a teacher at ze college. She teaches English to students from overseas. In fact she teaches English to Gabriella, n'est pas Shirley?

Shirley: Sure do – Gabriella's not here yet is she?

Josette: Did you see anyone else in the car park when you came in Jayne?

Jayne: Couldn't see a thing out there – no lights on.

Shirley: Oh dear, Mr Carpenter hasn't got them fixed yet.

(Betsy, Cordelia and Harriet arrive together, Cordelia is carrying Harriet's bag of food and drink and Harriet is holding on to Betsy's arm.)

Betsy: OK now Harriet? All the lights are on in here, it must just be a problem with the outside lights. It was a bit scary out there in the dark wasn't it?

Harriet: Thank you both so much for helping me. A few years ago I could have run up those steps two at a time but not now I'm afraid. I hope I'll be able to manage Carnac OK.

Betsy: Carnac? Off on holiday?

Harriet: Oh no dear, I'm off on another dig next summer so I hope I will be able to manage all the bending. Cordelia, let me take my bag from you.

Cordelia: Don't worry, I'll take it over with ours. Where do you want the food Josette? I hope my gâteau didn't get damaged when that damn cat ran under my feet – its so dark out there you can't see a thing.

Josette: Oh la la are ze lights not on yet? Can I introduce you to ze others? Voici Harriet, Betsy et Cordelia, three more of my star pupils from my Tuesday night class. And voila Nicole, Nancy, Tracey, Julia et Daisy et Maisy from my Monday night class.

Nicole: Cordelia and I have already met. Cordelia, can I have a word with you sometime tonight.

Cordelia: Could you ring me at the office please, I don't like to mix business with pleasure.

Nicole: No I can't do that. You see I'm off to Paris tomorrow and want your opinion before I go on .. you know ... the matter we were talking about the other day.

Cordelia: I'm sorry Mrs Campbell I can't talk about it tonight. You'll have to ring my secretary and make an appointment when you get back. I don't have your file and in any case Mr Campbell will be here soon – it just wouldn't be ethical.

Nicole: Ethical! That's a good one. Since when has anything involving Max been ethical! Look at that monstrosity of a town centre he's kindly left us with.

Harriet: Now don't get me started about that! You all know my feelings, and what's worrying me is that he's planning on doing it again – this time in Dundee – a fine old Scottish town on the Tay. The press have obviously got hold of something – did any of you see the article in yesterday's Times? That man gave us no chance to look for remains here and now he's planning on digging up all the evidence of the whaling industry in Dundee. I don't know how the planning officer lets him get away with it? Does he pay your husband well Julia?

Julia: (**Very flustered**) Oh dear, no, I'm sure Charles wouldn't accept any bribes.

Josette: Now now – pas de disputes tonight pleazz. Can I just check ze register to see who is not yet arrived?

Tracey – yes

Nicole – yes

Gabriella – no not yet

Nancy – yes

Julia – yes

Daisy – yes

Maisy - yes

So that's all ze Monday group except Gabriella – ah 'ere she comes

(Gabriella walks in looking frozen to the core.)

Gabriella: Very sorry – I late

Josette: No you are not late – there are still others to come I zink. You poor thing, you look frozen.

Gabriella: Yes, I very cold but I want to come party with you. Hello Shirley, I not know you here also. That's good. I happy.

Shirley: I *am* happy, don't forget the verb Gabriella

Josette: And we're happy you could join us, aren't we?

Gabriella: Thank you – you make me always welcome here – some other of my friends not so lucky. Some given map and told go away. I am very lucky here in your country. Nice man Mister Maxwell let me clean his house and he say he marry me then I can stay with him in the castle he bought in France.

Josette: (**Shocked and flustered**) Marry you? I don't understand. What castle? Do you mean Chateau Fancett? I do not zink that chateau has yet been sold. I must speak with Jessica tonight. Oh la la – (**fumbling for the registers**) now who is still to arrive tonight from ze Tuesday group?

Anne – no not ere yet

Max – no not yet

Harriet – yes you are ere

Jayne – yes

Betsy – yes

Cordelia – yes

Jessica – Jessica? no not ere Oh dear – I must speak with her soon about Chateau Fancett
Camilla?

(Camilla comes in.)

Camilla: *Lady* Camilla please – I am now the wife of Lord Peter so please address me properly.

Josette: Oh excusez moi, I am not used to your English titles. Please come and join us as the party is about to begin – is that a spare seat next to you Gabriella?

Camilla: **(Turns her nose up at Gabriella)** I'm fine here thanks **(moves a chair next to Betsy or Julia and turns to her to complain about her chauffeur)** Honestly you wouldn't believe that new man my husband Peter has employed to drive me around. He spent the whole evening going round roundabouts getting lost so he has made me late. He doesn't seem to know his way round this town at all. When I was a PA at MaxCorp I was never late for an appointment – I can't stand being late anywhere – it sets such a bad impression. People who can't arrive on time are generally the incompetent type who can't manage their time effectively.

(Anne and Jessica both rush in together.)

Anne: Oh dear, that's us Jessica – both of us incompetent! Good job the bank's clients don't agree or I'd be out of a job!

Jessica: And me too – my clients would desert me in droves if they weren't happy! Sorry I'm late folks – busy day today – goodness knows why I'm thinking of expanding the business.

Anne: Here's my contribution to the party. Sorry its not home made but I ran out of time.

Josette: No problem – Jessica, please can you tell me that Chateau Fancett has not yet been sold.

Jessica: No, as far as I know it goes up for auction next week.

Josette: Its just that Max Campbell seems to have already bought it.

Jessica: Well I can assure you he hasn't. Isn't Max here so we can ask him?

Josette: No, we're still waiting for him to arrive but perhaps we should be making a start without him. **(Turning to Anne and Jessica)** Did you notice him in the car park?

Jessica: No, but then it was awfully dark so I couldn't see much at all. I didn't see Anne till I'd got to the entrance.

Josette: Maybe he has been held up on the train?

Anne: Not tonight, the trains were all on time at Waterloo and there were no hold ups at Clapham Junction tonight. I wouldn't have been late if I hadn't stopped at Sainsburys on the way here.

(Turning to Cordelia) So Max isn't here tonight – I knew he was avoiding me – what did I tell you Cordelia- you didn't believe me on the phone did you?

Cordelia: Its not a case of not believing you Anne – in cases like that you need to have proof of the agreement and what proof can you produce? Were there any witnesses to the agreement?

Anne: **(Shaking her head)** No I stupidly thought I could take him as a man who would keep his word.

Betsy: I wouldn't trust that man either. I suppose you've all read the letters in the local paper. I don't know how that man has the audacity to show his face tonight.

Josette: Come on let's get on with the party – I have some French music to play.

(Just as she goes to put on the CD, Stan bursts in looking shocked.)

Stan: **(Garbles very quickly)** Call an ambulance quick – it's a bloodbath - there's a man out there in the bushes and his head's all bashed in and he's cold and he's not breathing and he comes to your class and I nearly fell over him.

Jayne: Now calm down. Sit down and tell us slowly so we can understand what you are saying.

Stan: **(Takes a deep breath.)** There's a body out there at the bottom of the steps and I think he's dead.

Jayne: In that case we need to contact the police as well as an ambulance.

Shirley: I'll go to the office and ring them straight away.

Jayne: Stan, please take me to the scene of the crime. No one else must leave this room tonight until the police have interviewed you all. You may as well start on the buffet as it could be a long evening.

(Gladys comes back in before Stan and Jayne leave.)

Gladys: Here Stanley, I've just found these under the radiator in the entrance hall – they have your address on – have you dropped them?

Jayne: May I see them? They might be vital evidence which will help us sew up this mystery before the police even arrive.

Character Profile

Maisy Sutton

Your Background:

You are the teenage twin sister of Daisy and you both have a dream of becoming pop idols. You have been singing round the pubs and clubs in town but have yet to hit the big time.

Your link with Max:

You and Daisy must be the only 2 people in town who prefer the new look to the town centre – you like the new shopping centre, fast food restaurants like PizzaCabin and BurgerQueen and the Multichoice cinema complex – you think its much more fun that the old historic town centre that was demolished. Max Campbell heard you sing a few months ago in a wine bar and chatted you up. He said he was in the music industry and that he would offer you a contract as entertainers in his new French enterprise if you could learn French so you joined Mademoiselle Anglaise’s Level 1 evening class. He reiterated this promise to you last week when he was in the same wine bar, only this time he said he was going to fix you up with a meeting with Pete Waterman who would offer you a recording contract. He did seem a bit tipsy but you both believed him. You are now getting a little concerned as he has not phoned you to confirm the meeting has been set up.

Your movements tonight:

You and Daisy caught the bus to the college tonight. The bus stop is just outside the gates to the college carpark and you had to walk all the way through the car park in the dark as there were no lights working. At least those in cars could see by their headlights until they parked their cars. You maintain you wouldn’t have been able to see anything as it was too dark.