



*A Murder Mystery Pack*  
*by*  
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*Customer Taster*

# The School Reunion

*A Murder Mystery*

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*Former pupils from the Alderman Woodrow School are having a reunion. They mingle and gossip about their schooldays, unaware that one of their number has been marked for murder! Enter super sleuth Sherbet Holmes, who hopes to find the culprit before everyone goes nuts...*

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## About this pack

The full version of this pack should provide everything you need to stage your own Murder Mystery.

It is intended for use at a three course sit down meal where the principle characters will act out a set of events to the assembled guests.

Please remember from the outset that this pack is intended for an **improvised performance** although there are set lines for some characters.

Your cast must use the information provided to develop their characters, their “back stories” and improvise the action when and where the situation arises.

They must stay in character from the moment the guests arrive until the plot is complete and the murderer is unmasked

This means that your performers are less constrained and restricted, can react and interact with each other and the guests at will and have a lot more fun!

### ***This Customer Taster document includes:***

**A (partial) Plot Overview**

**General staging notes** on how to plan your murder mystery event

**A sample Character overview** including **motive** and **opportunity** to murder the victim

**A (partial) Narrative Arc** to show how the event should flow.

**A sample of the questions** to be put to each character by DCI Holmes

### ***The full pack includes:***

**The full plot overview**

**Full set of character overviews** including **motive** and **opportunity** to murder the victim

The full **Narrative Arc** to show how the event should flow.

**Full set of questions** to be put to each character by DCI Holmes

**Denouement** by DCI Holmes

**Table cards** listing characters as information for your guests.

**“Whodunnit” sheets** for guests to complete are also included with this pack.

## Plot Overview

It is 1995 and 'A' stream pupils from the Alderman Woodrow Secondary Modern School years 1960 to 1970 are having a reunion. Initiated by Wendy Parkhurst each member has been requested to wear St. Trinian style outfits or short trousers, shirt and tie for the men.

Set in a village hall, with a three course meal, comprising "School Dinner" type food, the ex-pupils catch up with each other. Old rivalries surface jealously abounds as the more successful pupils brag, and long seated hatreds bubble up.

One of the pupils, **Kathy Smallville**, has become an internationally famous film star under the stage name 'Katarina Katya' and is expected to show up.

The following other guests are present:

**Wendy Parkhurst Neé Morrison** (Sweety)

**Amelia Baldwin** (Mousey)

**Jennifer Jackson Neé Sandwell** (Weedy)

**Reginald White** (Pinky)

**Brian Hood** (Cheat)

**Royden Lovely** (Cannabis)

**Michael Cave** (Tiny)

**Kenneth Ward** (Teacher: Romeo)

**Mrs Dorinda Childs** (Teacher: Snooty)

**Agnes Quirk** (Matron)

Excitement mounts as news of her arrival spreads throughout the hall. When she enters it is noted that she is very expensively dressed. No St. Trinians for her!

The members mix with the guests for pre-dinner drinks and gossip spreads like wildfire as they tell of their schooldays.

Dinner is called and all take their seats at the table. First course is served and all tuck in.

After a few moments ... rises, chokes and collapses to the floor. One of the party is a doctor who pronounces ... dead.

The body is carried to a back room with all the members leaving the guests to finish the first course.

A police siren is heard and after a while (whilst the main meal is being served) enter **DCI Sherbert Holmes**.

He informs the guests that the death is suspicious and he intends to interrogate the people who sat at the same table as the victim.

Each in turn is called, questioned and sent back to their seat.

Holmes informs the guests that he knows the murderer and proceeds to eliminate the suspects one by one until that person is revealed.

## **General Staging Notes**

### ***Casting/Rehearsal***

You should hold as many rehearsals as required according to the experience of your cast.

Your chosen performers should be issued with a copy of the full pack.

The first rehearsal should concentrate on reading through the pack and getting a feel for how the event is structured and the role that each character has to play in the plot

Before the second rehearsal the performers should further prepare their back stories using the basic character analysis sheets as a base. At the second rehearsal these should be read out by each performer in character.

As it is impossible to rehearse the whole event without that all-important audience to react to, you should concentrate on cementing motives and relationships within the group. These can be rehearsed by the performers, more to prove they can improvise and keep up a convincing performance than word for word content!

DCI Holmes can use a notepad from which to read the set questions and denouements.

### ***Facilities required for the performers***

The performers need a separate private room for their use. They will use this prior to the event to get changed and prepared and will use the room during the event where they can exchange notes and discuss any change of tactics. The murder victim will also use this room once deceased!

The performers will be given the same food as the guests.

It would be sensible to check the facilities before the event to make sure sufficient space is available to stage the “Interrogation” by DCI Holmes

### ***Recommended event format***

The evening works best if structured round a sit down meal. If the event is being staged in hotel this may be a formal, served, multi-course meal, but if the event is staged in a hall or private venue you could lay-on a simpler meal or even a table buffet. Ideally there should be a table free area in which cast and guests can mix (Pre-dinner drinks) before sitting down to the meal in an area set aside for that purpose. If this is not possible guests can be shown to their tables immediately. A table for the cast should be placed separately at the top of the room, raised if possible.

### ***Suggested timetable***

<b>7.00 pm</b>	School Reunion Committee greets guests as they arrive
<b>7.30 pm</b>	Pre dinner drinks
<b>8.15 pm</b>	Reunion party first course... Murder takes place in full view
<b>8.20 pm</b>	Guests finish first course... Cast circulate round tables
<b>8.40 pm</b>	Main course served... arrival of DCI Sherbert Holmes
<b>8.55 pm</b>	Interrogation by Holmes
<b>9.30 pm</b>	Questions asked by guests
<b>9.40 pm</b>	Cast leave, guests complete “Whodunnit” forms... Sweet served
<b>10.00 pm</b>	Cast return... Denouement
<b>10.30 pm</b>	Party finishes.

## Character Overview, Motive and Opportunity

### *Amelia Baldwin*

40s. Attended the school from 1965 to 1970. Nickname: Mousey

Prefect from 1968 to 1970. A closet lesbian, she was hopelessly in love with ... Whilst at school she confessed her infatuation to ..., and tried to kiss her, but was violently rejected and called a 'lesbian whore'.

... laughed at her and made sure the whole school knew of her sexual proclivities.

Was comforted by Dorinda Childs and had a brief lesbian affair with her.

Very shy and quiet.

Introverted after her denouncement at school and has never had another relationship.

Has a room full of ... memorabilia and still adores her; thinks she should belong to Amelia or nobody and is determined to do something about it.

Leapt at the chance to meet ... again when the invitation arrived.

Is the owner of the 'Food for All' catering company and offered Wendy her company's services for the evening. Kenneth Ward's wife works for her food company and is assisting with preparations for this evening's meal.

**Motive:** Rejected and humiliated by .... Still in love with her but is determined that she shall have her or nobody will have her.

**Opportunity:** Knew about ...'s allergy through ... Crushes up a bag of nuts and in her capacity as owner of 'Food for All' can pop out the back to check preparations. She decides she will serve .... herself, takes the dish and sprinkles nuts on it before serving.

### *Katarina Katya (Real name Kathy Smallville)*

Around 45. Attended the school from 1961 to 1966. Nickname: Beauty

Very good looking girl. School bully. Smoked, took cannabis and LSD, bunked off school, stole money from other pupils. Always good at drama, throwing herself into the parts as if she couldn't wait to lose her own persona.

Discovered Dorinda Childs was having an affair with Reginald White and blackmailed her into falsifying exam results.

Seduced Kenneth Ward the English teacher and got 'A' grades as a result (despite poor exam work) because she needed to get into RADA to fulfil her ambition of becoming an actress.

Deliberately reported Mr. Ward because he refused to pay her money; she revelled in his distress and loss of wife and family.

Left school as soon as she could and slept her way to the top through various agencies and producers.

Has starred in several major films recently and is worth an estimated £15 million.

Married film producer K.S. Katya in 1979 as a means of climbing the ladder to success. He duly obliged by giving her the lead in 'The Ugly Duckling', a motion picture in which a young girl with a harelip rises from ridicule to princess following an operation by a kindly surgeon prepared to work for nothing.

...contd...

## **Narrative Ark**

### ***Pre-dinner Drinks***

There are a number of actions that must take place during the pre-dinner drinks session:

- Reginald White must continually eat and offer ....
- At some time during the session Wendy must make a big show of offering a box of chocolates to Katarina who hands them to somebody else as being not good enough for somebody of her status.
- Brian Hood must continually eat ... and be seen to do so by as many people as possible
- Amelia must “pop out the back” on several occasions to “Check ...”.
- After 15 minutes ... must burst into the room making as bigger spectacle as possible. She should seek out ... and have a real go at her, physically and verbally ending with an attempt to strangle her. She is pulled off by .... She sobs and begs to be allowed to stay, ... tells her she can but she must promise to behave herself.

### ***First Course***

- At the dinner table ... must make a big show of serving ... herself. ... however, gives it to ... (who sits next to ...) because it ‘looks disgusting’. She declares that she will eat after the reunion, at her 5 star hotel, and she’s brought her own snacks to the reunion.
- After the cast take their seats (but before they begin the meal) ... must stand, tell the audience how sorry he is that he upset ... at school and offer to give her a conciliatory .... She grudgingly accepts and allows him ....
- All sit and start to eat. ... calls for a glass of water which is brought out by Kenneth Ward’s wife. ... drinks from it and becomes more and more distressed. Finally ... stands, staggers and collapses. All gather round. ... pushes in waving a small bottle and saying “... needs this, ... needs this”.
- ... pushes him aside and takes the bottle, saying “What are you trying to do, kill ...? I’m a doctor, now get out of my way”.
- After a few moments’ examination ... stands and announces that .... is dead.
- All freeze. The first course is served to the guests and the cast exit to back room. During first course sirens are heard, car doors opening and closing.
- As first course is being cleared DCI Holmes appears and announces that a foul murder has taken place. He tells the guests that several suspects are now in custody.

**The main meal is served to the guests after Holmes’ appearance. Once this course is served, Holmes reappears with the suspects and commences questioning.**

## *Questions for Brian Hood*

**Holmes:** Is my information correct, ..., that you are a doctor?

**(Affirmative response.)**

**Holmes:** Did you specialise in anything particular?

**(Response: allergies.)**

**Holmes:** You would have recognised the symptoms then, when ... collapsed?

**(Response.)**

**Holmes:** With your specialist knowledge, was there nothing you could have done to save ...?

**(Response.)**

**Holmes:** Did you know .. had a ...?

**(Affirmative response.)**

**Holmes:** I understand information about ... condition was known by only a few at school, so how did you find out?

**(Response: through ....)**

**Holmes:** What sort of relationship did you have with ... when you were at school?

**(Response.)**

**Holmes:** Did you keep that relationship up?

**(Response.)**

**Holmes:** It seems that you were particularly fond of .... witnesses say you were seen to kiss ... passionately at the meal table?

**(Response.)**

**Holmes:** Are you able to eat nuts without any side effects ...?

**(Response.)**

**Holmes:** Presumably then you have enjoyed the ... provided this evening?

**(Response.)**

**Holmes:** Are you fond of any particular ..., or just ... in general?

**(Response.)**

**Holmes:** Thank you, Mr. Hood.

**(This pattern is repeated - with other questions - for the other suspects.)**

**(After his questioning, Holmes invites the audience to question the suspects, acting as a mediator to ensure the questions are delivered properly.)**

**(This should last for about ten minutes, after which the cast are led off into the back room 'for further examination'.)**

**(Holmes invites the audience to complete their Whodunnit forms.)**

**(The final course should be served at this point. A nominated MC collects the Whodunnit forms and informs Holmes when all is ready. The suspects are led out and the denouement commences.)**

## *Dénouement*

**(During the Dénouement each guest may step forward as Holmes announces their name.)**

**Holmes:** We begin with Wendy Parkhurst. Did she have a motive? Certainly: we now know she was deeply in love with ... – a man whom ... destroyed. Her opportunity? Wendy knew of ... through her affair with .... Furthermore, ... works at a company that produces and ... so getting hold of the product would certainly not be a problem.

**(And so on...)**