

The Wake



A Murder Mystery Pack
by
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Customer Taster

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The Wake

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Havelock Cartwright, magician and illusionist, has died. He has asked, however, that a wake be held in memory of his life and that people should have a “bloody good time”. To help matters along he has declared that his last will and testament be read during the wake. This is done and there are some very, very disgruntled family members, some of whom want revenge! Enter super-sleuth Sherbert Holmes to help the guests solve a dastardly murder!

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About this pack

The full 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 revealed.

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 includes:

A **plot overview**

General staging notes on how to plan your murder mystery event

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

Questions to be asked by DCI Holmes and responses for each character

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

Havelock Cartwright, world famous magician and illusionist, has died after a long, painful illness.

A big, though obnoxious man in all ways he amazed people the world over with his tricks and illusions amassing a vast fortune in the process. He lived in a large mansion (the House of Illusion) with all his family each of whom inhabit a separate wing.

On his deathbed he instructed his friend and family solicitor Hubert Clegghorn to inform everybody that he did not want to be mourned - but to hold a riotous wake in his honour.

During the wake Hubert was to read out his will, which had been drawn up by a firm of independent solicitors, so that family, friends and mourners could find out exactly what the old man had left for them.

Among the guests present at the wake are:

Enid Cartwright, (Havelock's widow)

Ulysses Cartwright, (eldest son)

Elisa Benjamin, (daughter)

Andrew Benjamin (son-in-law)

Josephine Cartwright (daughter-in-law)

Grantchester Cartwright (youngest son)

Zacharia Wilkins (Havelock's factotum)

Delicious Wilkins (Havelock's maid)

Hubert Clegghorn (Havelock's solicitor)

There is also a **Master of Ceremonies** (to facilitate events)

After the will is read and it is discovered that Havelock has left his vast fortune to ..., the rest of the family are devastated. All of them, however, take on board the fact that should ... die, his fortunes will be split evenly between ..., ... and Thus, they all have a motive for killing ...

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 this entire pack.

The first rehearsal should concentrate on reading through this 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 victims will also use this room once deceased!

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

Suggested timetable

7.00 pm	Guests arrive and are greeted by the family at the door
7.30 pm	Pre dinner drinks
7.40 pm	The will is read
7.45 pm	The soirée begins
8:10 pm	The murder takes place.
8.15 pm	First course served
8.20 pm	Cast circulate round tables during first course
8.40 pm	Main course served... arrival of DCI Sherbert Holmes
8.55 pm	Interrogation by Holmes (during the meal)
9.30 pm	Questions asked by guests
9.40 pm	Cast leave, guests complete "Whodunnit" forms... Sweet served
10.00 pm	Cast return... Denouement
10.30 pm	Wake finishes.

Sample Character Overview, Motive and Opportunity

Enid Cartwright (Widow)

Enid had been married to Havelock for many years. She married him when he was an unknown and supported his ambitions with her own money until he hit the big time. At first, things were good, she genuinely loved the man and thought he loved her, but after fame overtook him he changed dramatically.

Over the years of abuse Enid changed from a vibrant, enthusiastic, outward looking woman to an introverted, timid slave. He started ridiculing her, beating her and regaling her with tales of the conquests he had made in the bedroom... several of her friends amongst them. He spent weeks away when performing abroad and clearly enjoyed the freedom, as the popular press frequently portrayed with photos of him escorting a string of beautiful women. The embarrassment this caused Enid was almost unbearable. She had tried to discuss the situation with Havelock but he laughed at her and told her to mind her own business whilst she got on with hers.

Havelock also beat his children on many occasions when they were not quick enough to accede to his commands. They lived in fear of the man and if Enid tried to protect them she too, was beaten. At her wits end, Enid had consulted a solicitor with a view to divorce. He had told her that she had a right to a large proportion of his estate and that she would fight for every penny. Havelock had vowed to fight her to the death.

She has developed a fondness for ..., sharing a love of all growing things and often helping him in the greenhouse. She dislikes ... intensely because Havelock had flaunted his affair with ... and even slept with ... whilst Enid was in the house. She has not told anybody because she was ashamed.

She is having an affair with ...

Motive(s):

- Hatred for ... over ... affair with her husband.
- Fear that ... will throw her out of her own home now that ... owns the place.

Opportunity:

- Very friendly with ... and would have known about the ... and what was ...
- Could have used this knowledge to obtain
- Left the room at least once during the evening.

Narrative Arc

(Please note that non-guilty parties *must* tell the truth although they do not have to volunteer information if not asked for it.)

Guests (the audience!) are regarded as friends/acquaintances of the deceased, Havelock Cartwright
Eight spray/atomiser style perfume bottles (numbered batch 1, 2, 3 etc.) must be readily available in the back room.

At one end of the room nine chairs should be set out in a semi-circle.

Meet and Greet (30 mins)

(As guests arrive they are given a brief resume of each character and are then greeted by the family who will identify themselves and their relationship to the deceased. It is vitally important that the characters assume their identities immediately and stay strictly in character throughout.)

(After all the mourners are in an announcement is made by the MC:)

MC: Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. Mr Havelock Cartwright would have been delighted at such a turnout. The first forty-five minutes or so will be devoted to socialising and sympathising with Havelock's family. They will give information that may or may not be relevant to future proceedings. Please feel free to ask them anything you like but do remember that any guilty party can, and will lie as they please; whereas all innocent parties *must* tell the truth. The key is to *listen* and *observe*. Thank you

Pre-dinner drinks (Approximately 10 mins)

(The cast circulate and chat with the guests, allowing guests to ask questions about their lives, or anything else they wish to talk about. After approximately 10 mins Hubert Clegghorn, the family solicitor, enters and makes the following announcement:)

Clegghorn: Good evening everybody, could I have your attention please? My name is Hubert Clegghorn and as Havelock's solicitor and executor of his will it is incumbent upon me to read the man's last will and testament. Could I ask family members to please be seated

(Family members are seated in the semi-circle with Hubert at the centre. When all are settled, Hubert reads the Will as follows, with appropriate reactions from the family!)

The Will (Approximately 5 mins)

Clegghorn: "My dear family and friends, as you are hearing this I must assume that I have disappeared and gone to that great illusion in the sky called Heaven, or more likely the other place! I don't want you to mourn me, I want you to have a bloody good time; and to aid the process this is my last Will and Testament: To ... I leave our second best bed, ... lover and the knowledge that I am not as stupid as she clearly thought I was. To ... I leave my magic wand in the hope that he can turn himself into a man instead of the pathetic little wimp he has turned out to be... Infidelities aside of course! To ... I leave a pair of my trousers so that she can become the son I had hoped for. Let's hope she is more successful in keeping them zipped up than she is at keeping her knickers above her knees. To ... I leave his mother, so that he can continue to hide behind her skirts instead of standing up to me ... I am proud, however, that he dared to break the seventh commandment. To ... I leave my daughter Elisa. To ..., for services above and beyond the call of duty, I leave ..., my ..., my ... my ... my fleet of cars, my ... and last but not least my very first conjuring set. Codicil 1: should any of my fortune be left after the death of ..., that money will be evenly split between ..., with the exception of one million sterling that will be given to ... for"

(Uproar at this point cutting off Clegghorn who is trying to say there is a 2nd codicil but abandons it in all the noise.)

Clegghorn: "Codicil 2: Should ... occur within the lifetime of ..., and ... be declared suspicious, my entire estate will revert to ... in its entirety."

The Soirée (Approximately 30 mins)

After this the following actions take place:

- Ulysses leaves room and returns with 5 spray bottles (**labeled batch 1 to 5**) declaring in a loud voice that he is taking this opportunity to promote his companies new perfume.
- He gives batch 1 to ..., batch 2 to ..., batch 3 to ..., batch 4 to ... and retains batch 5 for himself. All commence demonstrating the perfume on the guests. ... is pushy and demands to try each perfume ending with ... at the appropriate moment.
- ... runs out of perfume, declares this loudly and exits. She returns with batch 6.
- ... also runs out of perfume, declares this loudly and exits. He returns with batch 7.
- ... chats up ... and tells him that he needs to move his car as it is blocking the entrance. He is reluctant to part with the key but she kisses him and he relents.
- ... exits to move the car.
- ... declares he is out of perfume and exits.
- ... returns and makes a big show of returning the keys to ...
- ... returns with a refilled batch 2 (**with nicotine**) in his pocket and batch 8 in his hand. He demonstrates batch 8 for several people then places it in his pocket next to batch 2.
- ... declares that he is out of perfume.
- ... causes a scene because ... has not tried ... batch yet.
- ... takes batch 2 from his pocket and offers it to ... who sprays ...
- She recoils, declares it horrible and gives it back to He gives it to ... with instructions to dispose of it. He puts it in his pocket.
- After an appropriate time ... collapses and dies.
- Cast freeze and stay until all the guests are seated for the first course then quietly carry the body of ... to the back room whilst the first course is served.

First Course (Approximately 25 mins)

(After food is served, cast return and circulate amongst the tables. They reiterate all the previous clues and misinformation whilst expressing sorrow at the incident and all stating quite clearly that it had nothing to do with them. Police sirens are heard in the background as the course draws to a close. When the food is finished and plates are being cleared Detective Chief Inspector Sherbert Holmes enters. Holmes calls for quiet and then speaks as follows...)

Holmes: Ladies and Gentlemen, please remain calm and maintain your composure. We've been called to an incident at this address and it will be necessary for you all to remain here until further notice. My team and I will start investigations immediately.

Serving the Main course (Approximately 15 mins)

(The main course is served here during which DCI Holmes is seen to come and go between the main hall and backroom receiving information. Once the course is served the cast return and sit in the semi-circle of chairs. Holmes addresses the guests again, and continues the interrogation whilst the course is consumed.)

Interrogation (Approximately 35 mins)

Holmes: Ladies and Gentlemen please remain seated. I am sorry to have to tell you that ... has died. Initial examinations reveal that ... has been murdered. A very high level of the chemical nicotine have been found in ... and we believe this to be the cause of ... demise. I must insist that nobody leave the room until I have completed my enquiries. **(Pause.)** I believe that a member of the Cartwright household may well know something of this hideous murder and I intend to interrogate each and every one of them in order to root out the truth and reveal the culprit. Would Ulysses Cartwright please step forward?

(Ulysses Cartwright comes to the front)

Holmes: Please tell us what line of work you are engaged in, Mr Cartwright.

(Response)

Holmes: How is your business doing at the moment?

(Response: Not very well)

Holmes: You have a degree in chemistry I understand?

(Affirmative response)

Holmes: You are familiar then, with the handling dangerous substances?

(Affirmative response)

Holmes: Is the chemical nicotine held anywhere on the premises to your knowledge?

(Affirmative response)

Holmes: You left the room on one occasion, why was that?

(Response)

Holmes: The perfume you sprayed around tonight, where was it manufactured?

(Response)

Holmes: Let us be absolutely clear, none of it was... Bottled on these premises tonight?

(Response: At my perfumery)

Holmes: Why was each bottle differently labelled?

(Response)

Holmes: Having talked to a number of people already tonight I discover that your father was having a relationship with ... Did you know about this?

(Affirmative response)

Holmes: I've read your father's will which is, to say the least, somewhat controversial. Apart from leaving you a magic wand your father made some cryptic remark about infidelity. What did he mean?

(Response)

Holmes: Thank you Mr Cartwright. Please be seated. Mrs Enid Cartwright please.

(Enid Cartwright comes forward)

Holmes: First of all Mrs Cartwright, please accept my condolences on your loss. What sort of relationship do you have with ...?

(Response)

Holmes: Did you know your husband was having a relationship with ...?

(Affirmative response)

Holmes: Do you like gardening?

(Affirmative response)

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

(Affirmative response)

Holmes: Do you know what is in it?

(Response)

Holmes: Your son Ulysses runs a perfume manufacturing company so presumably you would know a lot about the manufacture of perfumeries?

(Negative response)

Holmes: Your daughter Elisa and her husband Andrew own a tobacco manufacturing company. Do you know much about the manufacture of cigarettes and other tobacco products?

(Negative response)

Holmes: Do you smoke?

(Response)

Holmes: Have you ever handled dangerous chemicals or poisons yourself?

(Negative response)

Holmes: Do you think ... would have allowed you to remain in this house had ... lived?

(Response)

Holmes: Your husband's Will has mention of a lover ... I am intrigued. Please name him.

(Response: Hubert Clegghorn)

Holmes: Thank you Mrs Cartwright, please take your seat. Josephine Cartwright please.

...contd...