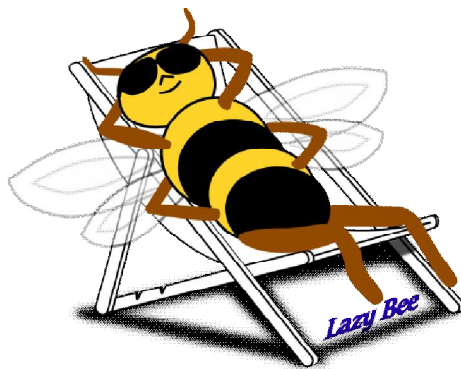




A Dinner-Theatre Murder Mystery

by

Eileen Clark



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Customer Taster

A Meal to Die For

by Eileen Clark

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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 in this taster*]
 - Synopsis
 - Staging Notes
 - Suggested Timings
 - Characters and Seating Arrangements
 - Set and Set Diagram
 - Props List
- The Full Script [*extract in this taster*]
- The 'Accusation Sheet', for audience members to fill in

Synopsis

A small group of villagers usually come together to organise community events, but this afternoon a meal has been arranged in the local inn to bid goodbye to Hilary, who will soon be moving away. The meal is over and has been cleared. As they sip their wine and chat quietly, they appear to be a friendly and close-knit group, but all is not as it seems. Someone has a murderous plan to dispose of the one person present who threatens to put an end to a rather pleasant lifestyle.

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 2. This break is required to allow for the distribution of whodunnit slips to the audience and to explain their purpose.

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

The whodunnit slips can be placed inside programmes or given out after Act 2. A member of the cast can then invite the audience to complete the slip by naming the character they believe to be the murderer and to list any clues they have spotted. There can be one slip per table or per person, depending on the size of the audience.

Before the Denouement, the slips 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 naming 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 - 7:35 - Act One

7:35 - 7:55 - First course of meal

7:55 - 8:15 - Act Two

8:15 - 8:45 - Main course or coffee break; whodunnit slips filled in and collected

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

Characters and their Seating Arrangement

Philip - head of table stage-right; group chairman, a good organiser and well respected.

James - to Philip's right; a gentle-natured soul who has an attraction for Hilary but would rather die than admit it.

Sara - back of table to Philip's left; easygoing and enjoys a tippie, or two.

Poppy - back table stage-left; not too bright but no fool either.

Hilary - back table centre; a rather bossy character who likes to get her own way.

Ray - head of table stage-left; likeable and enjoys a joke, although sometimes at others' expense.

All characters can be between the age of 40 to 60, though Poppy should ideally be a little younger than the others.

A Meal to Die For

Script Extract

Act One

(All are seated around a long table, chatting and sipping their wine.)

Philip: (Stands with glass in hand.) Can I have hush for a moment please, everyone?

(There is a chorus of shushing.)

Philip: Thank you. I would just like to bid a fond farewell to our dear friend Hilary and wish her all the best and a safe journey next week as she makes her way to that strange foreign land, the South.

(Light laughter from around the table.)

Philip: We shall miss you, my dear, and, goodness knows who will have the skill to organise the fete this year.

James: Indeed, and all our other activities.

(All, except, Poppy, nod in agreement.)

Poppy: I thought we decided at the meeting that Sara would do the job just as well as Hilary.

(Horried silence for a moment.)

James: No! Er, no, we said we thought Sara might, just might, be able to fit the bill.

Philip: Yes, something like that. Nothing decided. However, that's not why we're here this afternoon, we're to...

Hilary: Poppy said meeting. What meeting was this, may I ask?

James: Oh, it wasn't really a meeting as such, more of a, a sort of a, er...

Hilary: More of a what, exactly?

Poppy: (To Ray with puzzled tone.) Well, I thought it was a meeting.

Ray: (Laugh) So did I.

Hilary: I see. So, even before I've packed a bag, behind my back, you were replacing me with Sara (sniff) of all people.

Sara: Oh, thank you so much, Hilary.

Ray: What's the problem, Hil? You're clearing off so I suppose we've got to have someone, anyone, to fill the gap.

Sara: (To Ray.) And thank you too, Ray.

Hilary: I have told you on numerous occasions, Raymond, not to address me by that ridiculous diminutive. My name is Hilary.

Ray: And I have told you, on numerous occasions, I prefer being called Ray.

Poppy: (To Ray with a giggle.) Hil does sound rather silly.

Ray: Why do you think I say it?

Hilary: (Stands) I did not come here to be insulted.

Ray: (Aside to Poppy.) I wonder where she usually goes.

Hilary: I heard that.

Sara: Oh, lighten up, Hilary, he's only having a joke.

Hilary: Really? Well, I do not find him in the least bit amusing, even if you do.

Philip: Please, please everyone, we must stop all this bickering. There really is no point to it.

James: Yes, it is most unfair. After all, this luncheon is to honour Hilary for the sterling work she has done for our village.

Philip: Very true, James, no one can doubt that.

James: And I do think an apology is required here, Ray.

Ray: (After a pause, he rises and gives a slight bow.) I apologise, Hil-ary.

Hilary: (Sniffs) I suppose that will have to do. (Sits and refills glass.)

Sara: It's all you're likely to get.

Ray: (Wanders down stage to small table.) I fancy a whisky. (Pours drink and half turns.) Spot of the hard stuff, anyone?

Poppy: Is there a soft drink there? I don't really like alcohol. It makes me go a bit dizzy.

Ray: Really? How can you tell it's the booze that causes it? (Checking the bottles.)

Poppy: Because it's when I drink it, of course.

Ray: Of course. Ah, there's some orange here. How about that? **(Picks up a small bottle.)**

Poppy: Oh yes, lovely.

(Ray opens the bottle and moves to Poppy's right.)

Poppy: **(Pulls a tumbler forward.)** Into this, please, Ray.

Ray: Okey-dokey. **(As he pours, he knocks against Hilary's wine glass, spilling wine across the table and onto Hilary's blouse.)**

Hilary: **(Jumps up.)** Oh, you clumsy fool! Look what you've done.

Ray: Sorry. Here, let me dry you off. **(He picks up napkins and dabs at her dress front.)**

Hilary: **(There is a bit of a kerfuffle as she tries to shove him off.)** Get off! Just leave it! You're making it worse, you fool! Will you please STOP! **(Shoves him off.)**

Ray: Okay, okay. Just trying to help. **(Returns to his seat and sits.)**

Poppy: Is your top ruined?

Sara: Oh, for goodness sake, it'll wash out.

Hilary: If you will excuse me, I shall go to the rest room **(stands)** to freshen up.

Poppy: I'll come with you. Hilary. I'm dying for a pee. **(Stands)**

Hilary: Really, Poppy, you could be a little more discreet.

Poppy: But I do need to go. I've been gasping for ages.

(Hilary and Poppy walk towards door.)

Hilary: I dare say you have but there's no need to inform everyone.

(Hilary and Poppy exit.)

Sara: Now she's out of the way, have I got the blessed job or haven't I?

Philip: Of course you have, Sara, but it would have been wiser to have kept that decision to ourselves until, well until...

Ray: Until Mrs High and Mighty was well and truly out of the picture.

Sara: I don't see why we should have to do that. **(Empties wine bottle into her glass.)**

James: I still think Hilary should have been told about the meeting.

Sara: Why? It really is none of her business now.

James: You know how she likes to keep in touch with everything and it would have been a common courtesy.

Sara: Keep in touch. You are not kidding, James. I assume you all know about the telescope?

[Continued in the full script.]