



A Dinner Theatre Murder Mystery
by
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Customer Taster

AGENT IN A STATE

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AGENT IN A STATE

About The Pack

The full Murder Mystery pack should provide everything you need to produce your very own murder mystery event. Agent in a State is intended to be performed from a stage, to an audience seated around tables. In the interval, over a light supper, the audience has the opportunity to compete (one team per table) to figure out motives, weapons and who the murderer was.

This murder mystery is a scripted performance (without interrogation of the cast by the audience); the cast have set lines to learn, which contain the information the audience will need to work out whodunnit. The story takes place in the various properties being sold and the estate agents' office. Each of these scenes are created using only minimal furniture and all of the locations are on the stage throughout the show. Suggestions for each set and a diagram are included in this pack.

The script is in British English, so uses the term "Estate Agent"; in US English, this would be a Realtor.

This Pack Contains:

- The Organiser's Overview [*Extract in this Taster*]
- The Script [*Extract in this Taster*]
- An Accusation Sheet for the audience to fill-in with their suppositions about whodunnit
- A Detective Quiz for the audience (possibly a tie-breaker)

Organiser's Overview Contents

- Putting On Your Murder Mystery Evening
 - Plot Overview
 - Character List
 - General Staging Notes
 - Suggested Timing Guide
- Production Notes
 - Costume Notes
 - Music Note
 - Sound Effects List
 - Props List
 - Lighting Notes
 - Set Descriptions
- Suggested Host Speeches
- Quiz Answers

Putting On Your Murder Mystery Evening

Plot Overview

Brad displays a lack of scruples, not just in his pursuit of property sales, but also in the seduction of his female clients. The mystery follows the property chain, from first time buyers Daisy and Ed to domestic goddess Yasmina and her husband Matt, as they dream of life in their new homes. In the middle of the chain, Amanda and Ali await the birth of their first child while Tanya and Kevin aspire to life in a gated community. When personal secrets are exposed, Brad seizes upon an opportunity for blackmail.

Characters

- Brad - The Estate Agent. A wide-boy and lothario. Around thirty.
- Kat - Professional, caring Estate Agent. Around thirty. (Could double with Tanya.)
- Tanya - Mid thirties, wearing far too much make-up. Beautician from Essex.
- Kevin - Engaged to Tanya. A mechanic, also from Essex. (Could double with Ed.)
- Ed - Daisy's boyfriend. Tall, strong, sensible. A police officer, in his twenties.
- Daisy - Attractive, intelligent woman in her twenties. (Could double with Amanda.)
- Amanda - Heavily pregnant and in her late thirties.
- Ali - Amanda's wife and about the same age.
- Yasmina - Married to Matt and of a similar age. Full time home-maker.
- Matt - Tired bank clerk in his late forties. (Could double with Richard.)
- Richard - Wealthy, successful, retired businessman. Approaching seventy.
- Patricia - Married to Richard and of a similar age. A strong character. Very well spoken.
- Police radio announcer - Male or female. Could be pre-recorded.

General Staging Notes

During the first act, the audience are alerted to various motives that could lead to a murder: blackmail, an affair, besmirchment of character, deceit, rivalry, broken promises, and inappropriate use of social media. In the interval, they are invited to speculate about who did it, how and why. Act Two takes us through the events leading up to the death and also includes a final denouement, set after the court trial, a few weeks later.

Front of house staff should meet and greet the audience, lead them to their tables and sell drinks. It is recommended that the audience does not wander around getting refreshment during the performance, as this could be distracting. Top them up before the show starts!

The tables should be set with enough room for people to turn to face the stage and to gather around the table during the interval. Using well known estate agent's logos as table names would be a nice touch to help set the scene. The quiz sheets can be on the table at the beginning and work well as an ice-breaker. A short welcome from the host of the event to explain the structure of the evening should precede the first performance. The characters of Patricia and/or Ali could act as host for the evening, if you are short of an alternative.

During the interval, more drinks and a light supper can be served, allowing enough time for each table to complete the quiz and make their predictions.

The final scenes are performed while the quizzes and predictions are marked. After the final scene, the quiz answers should be revealed and the winning team announced. (In the event of multiple correct accusations, the quiz may be used as a tie-breaker, or the other way around, perhaps awarding prizes for originality!)

Suggested Timings

7:30 pm	Doors open.
7: 40 pm	Welcoming speech.
7:45 pm	Act 1.
9:00 pm	Interval with meal. Audience complete accusation form.
9:35 pm	Act 2.
9:50 pm	Winners announced, prizes awarded, and thanks given.
10:00 pm	Evening ends.

Production Notes [*Extract*]

Set Descriptions

Act One:

The action takes place in five different locations. It is not necessary to build a fixed set for any of this. A static breakfast bar for the flat and cottage, plus a workable front door for the large empty house, is all that is needed. Easily repositioned furniture - two stools, two chairs and one table - can quickly create the different spaces for each scene with little fuss.

The locations are:

Tanya's town square flat: A single bedroom city flat. Nicely furnished. Light and airy. Breakfast bar, with a sink and tap in it and two stools.

Matt and Yasmina's cottage: A three bedroom family home. Middle-class estate. Breakfast bar, with a sink and tap plus a large kitchen table.

Large empty house: A front door.

The estate agents' office: Large table, laptop, chair (suitable for a kitchen as well as an office) either side.

Act Two:

Scene 1 is set on a **stairwell at a block of flats**. Ideally, there will be a short run of steps leading to a platform with a lift door and balustrade, though minimally this could be played at front of the stage, with three or four steps enough to create the illusion of a chase up the stairs.

Scene 2 goes back to the **door of the large, empty house**. This time, when the door opens loud music and flashing party lights give the impression of a lively party within.

The following diagram shows a suggested way to lay the various sets out on the stage. Boundaries to each location overlap and it is up to the director to decide how much space to use for each scene. There are no doors (except for location 3, which is only a door). Entrances and exits should be made using tabs or the actual entrance spaces to your stage area.

AGENT IN A STATE

[Extract from the Script]

Act 1

Scene 1 - Tanya's City Flat, Day 1, Wednesday Morning

(The stage is set for all five locations. The lights come up - if possible to highlight one scene at a time. Daisy and Ed are looking around a small but desirable modern city flat. She looks more enthusiastic than him. He clearly has reservations and believes this to be a wasted journey. The living room is also a kitchen and dining room. Brad introduces the flat and then leaves them to it.)

Brad: Less than ten years old, with all of the latest kitchen accessories, plus the balcony, giving you a wonderful view over the city centre. Although it's in a prime position, the costs are kept down simply because it is on the fifth floor and some people just don't do heights. Obviously, a fit young couple such as yourselves wouldn't mind the stairs; probably build them into your daily fitness regime. **(To Ed.)** You look like you work out. **(To Daisy.)** You look fit. Personally, I think the view over the city is one of the key selling points, but I'll leave that for you to discover. I have calls to make. Back in five.

(Brad exits.)

Daisy: Oh my god, Ed, it's perfect!

Ed: Yes, but way out of our league. We can't afford this.

Daisy: **(Ignoring him.)** Look at the breakfast bar, the cupboards, the mixer tap. The views are amazing. I love being this high up. And a view over the whole city. It's fantastic! Can't you just imagine us now? Living here! It's perfect.

Ed: We can't afford it.

Daisy: It's not that much, Ed. We could afford it.

Ed: What, on my police salary?

Daisy: And my income. So long as you continue to do nights, we'd be okay.

Ed: What about the deposit? It's a ludicrous amount. We haven't got anything like that much saved up.

Daisy: Not yet, but something will turn up. I've got loads of work in the pipeline. Some of it is nice, high-profile stuff. Not exactly mega-bucks, but more than I have been earning.

Ed: Not going away again?

Daisy: I told you that job's over now. No more opera reviews, I'm afraid. I won't be doing those weekends away any more.

Ed: Good. It's awkward when you're not there. I feel like an intruder.

Daisy: You shouldn't, Mum doesn't mind having you there.

Ed: No, but I do. I don't feel comfortable, you know, in the kitchen or if we meet on the landing. She's lovely and everything, I just find it embarrassing. I don't like it if she sees my bare legs.

Daisy: What? Your legs? Why?

Ed: I don't know. I just don't. I've started wearing socks to the bathroom.

Daisy: What on earth for?

Ed: So she can't see my toes.

Daisy: Why?

Ed: I just feel less naked. I keep getting soggy socks, where I've walked in your mum's drips.

Daisy: What?

Ed: You know, where she's dripped from the sink to the towel. Why doesn't she have the towel next to the sink?

Daisy: I don't know. It's never really been a problem. **(Beat)** There's a lovely big heated towel rail here though.

Ed: I did notice.

Daisy: And under-floor heating and no one else to share the bathroom.

Ed: Warm dry towels.

Daisy: And no wet socks.

Ed: And no one else.

Daisy: So imagine how amazing it will be when we're actually living together, here, in our own place.

Ed: **(Gives her a hug.)** Well, it would be amazing!

Daisy: Wouldn't it?

(They kiss.)

Daisy: And this place is perfect!

Ed: I'm not disagreeing with you, Dais, but we haven't got forty-K.

Daisy: Not yet maybe, but we've got some though. And living at my mum's is saving us loads of rent money. It soon adds up.

Ed: I suppose...

Daisy: Oh, just imagine...

(Breaking free of his arms, she skips around the room, acting out the event.)

Daisy: It's Sunday and you're enjoying your early morning coffee, while I scramble you some eggs, just the way you like them. We sit on the balcony in the sunshine to enjoy our breakfast, watching the shoppers below us in the square.

Ed: It'd be like being on surveillance!

Daisy: **(Laughing)** Oh, shut up! Then back to bed for a special Sunday cuddle, without any funny looks from Mum.

Ed: See, you get it too!

Daisy: Yeah, I get it. Imagine it, Ed, our own place!

Ed: But we haven't got enough for the deposit. There isn't a magic money tree, you know!

Daisy: Okay. Do you agree that month to month we could meet the mortgage repayments?

Ed: Yeah. With a bit of overtime, they shouldn't be a problem.

Daisy: Right, so it's just the deposit.

Ed: Just!

Daisy: Yes, but that's all that's standing between us having our very first own home.

Ed: It's a pretty big *just* though, isn't it?

Daisy: Not if... **(Pause)** Not if you asked your dad.

Ed: No.

Daisy: Oh Ed...

Ed: No way.

Daisy: Just for a loan, not a gift.

Ed: No. I'd rather sleep on the streets!

Daisy: Well that's stupid!

Ed: Well, obviously I didn't really mean that, but ask my Dad!

Daisy: You said he'd offered.

Ed: Only because... It's hush money. He feels guilty, so...

Daisy: Oh, you're imagining things. You've said he's not one for small talk. That's probably why he always goes out whenever we visit. Maybe he just finds it awkward, meeting new people.

Ed: Mmmm.

Daisy: Hey, he's not avoiding meeting me, is he?

Ed: **(Awkwardly)** Of course not.

Daisy: So you'll ask him?

Ed: I don't know. I'd rather not speak to him.

Daisy: So now it's your pride coming before our chance to live here. Imagine, no daytime TV! No Dyson buzzing round to wake you up.

Ed: Tempting...

Daisy: I can work at the breakfast bar while you sleep. Quietly. Then come and join you before your shift starts. **(Puts her arms back around him, whispers suggestively.)** Not *just* before your shifts starts, but an hour or so before you need to get up. Wouldn't you like to be woken up like that, by me sliding into your bed, naked?

Ed: Daisy, of course I'd love it, but...

Daisy: Or we could have a shower, it's plenty big enough for two...

Ed: Alright, I'll ask him!

Daisy: Thanks darling.

(Gives him another kiss, and then bursting apart in excitement.)

Daisy: Oh, this is going to be amazing! I'll let the agent know we're interested.

Ed: Steady on, Dais, I haven't asked him yet!

Daisy: No, but you know he'll say yes!

Ed: Probably.

Daisy: Well, call him. Email him. Send a fax. Send him a bloody pigeon! Just promise me you'll ask him?

Ed: Alright, alright! I'll do it.

Daisy: Promise?

Ed: Promise.

Daisy: Love you.

(Gives him another kiss.)

Ed: Of course we haven't got a lot in the way of furniture.

Daisy: We'll only need a bed.

(Daisy gives him another kiss.)

(Brad returns.)

Brad: Correct me if I'm wrong, and I rarely am - you like this place. I told you it was perfect for the pair of you.

(Lights dim to blackout as they exit.)

Scene 2 - Tanya's City Flat, Day 2, Thursday Evening

(Lights come back up to reveal Tanya and Kevin sitting at the breakfast bar in Tanya's flat, the flat that Daisy and Ed were looking around. On the bar is a bottle of white wine and two glasses. Behind the bar is another bottle and a menu from a Chinese restaurant. As they talk, they are flicking through pages from an estate agent's brochure, showing the house that Tanya wants to buy. Both have Essex accents.)

Tanya: It's all about commitment really, Kevin. I mean, do you love me or don't you?

Kevin: Of course I do. It's got nuffin to do with...

Tanya: So, what's stopping you then?

Kevin: Well it's a big step babe.

Tanya: Kevin, we're engaged! That was a big step!

Kevin: I know.

Tanya: What you waiting for?

Kevin: Oh, I don't know. I just don't fink we should rush into anything.

Tanya: Kevin, you're firty! We've been dating for free years. We're getting married soon. If we don't get a move on, your first move will be out of your mum's and straight into a retirement home!

Kevin: **(Reluctantly)** Alright, alright. Let's have a look then.

Tanya: That's right, babe, you know it makes sense. Have a look at this one. I fink it would be perfect. It's one of them townhouses, you know, gated community. It's well posh!

Kevin: Sounds expensive.

Tanya: No, not really, babe. See, fink is it's on four floors, that's what keeps the price down and makes it cheaper.

Kevin: Four floors?

Tanya: **(Referring to the estate agent's notes.)** Yeah, look, there's like a garage and loo on the ground floor and there's loads of cupboard space under the stairs.

Kevin: There would be if it's on four floors!

Tanya: Then there's the kitchen diner on the next floor plus sitting room, all open plan, then up on the second floor there's a bedroom and the main bathroom.

Kevin: Main bathroom?

Tanya: Yeah. On the top floor, there's the master bedroom, with en suite.

Kevin: Blimey, and you reckon you could afford all that?

Tanya: *We*, Kevin. *We* could afford all that.

Kevin: Yeah, of course, we. I meant we.

Tanya: It's ideal. It's got everything we're looking for.

Kevin: Has it?

Tanya: Yes, babe. Two bedrooms.

Kevin: **(Hopefully)** For a baby?

Tanya: **(Without conviction.)** Yes. **(With enthusiasm.)** Or I can use one for Tanya's Treatments. My clients will be well impressed wiv a place like that. Yeah, they'll have to text me to open the gate and everythink.

Kevin: Won't that be annoying?

Tanya: No. It makes it exclusive, doesn't it?

Kevin: I suppose.

Tanya: It's like going to one of them posh spa hotels for a vajazzle. It's all a bit more up-market, innit?

Kevin: Is it?

Tanya: Course it is, Kevin.

Kevin: Right. **(Looking at the information.)** And how much is this place on the market for, then? How much! Christ, Tanya, that's a lot of money.

Tanya: I know babe, but there's the money I'll make on this place, and you're putting in half, don't forget.

Kevin: I know, but half of that is still an awful lot of money.

Tanya: Babe, it's like I say, it's all about commitment. I've been stung before. I just want to feel secure, to know I'm loved.

Kevin: You know that, babe.

Tanya: Yes, but I need you to like literally put your money where your mouth is.

Kevin: I said I would, didn't I?

Tanya: Good. Coz I'm not making a fuss or nuffink, but you have been staying here most nights and I've never charged you or nuffink, when I could of done.

Kevin: No, but...

Tanya: I've cooked you all them meals.

Kevin: We've eaten out a lot too, when I've paid...

Tanya: Yeah, but I've cooked more.

Kevin: I've cooked too, babe.

Tanya: Yeah, food what I've bought.

Kevin: Okay. I have helped you with some of the bills and I sorted out your car insurance and...

Tanya: It's not a competition, Kevin! Steph charges her fella by the night.

Kevin: Does she?

Tanya: Yeah. If he comes for tea and stays over, she charges him a tenner, more at the weekend.

Kevin: At the weekend?

Tanya: Yeah, coz she does a cooked breakfast. It's not cheap, bacon. So all this time I could've been earning nearly a hundred a week.

Kevin: I've been saving up.

Tanya: Good. Actually she's got a new bloke now, so she's put her prices up.

Kevin: We agreed I wouldn't pay rent, I'd carry on putting money away for my own home.

Tanya: *Our* home babe.

Kevin: Right.

Tanya: Well, look happy about it! Here, open the wine and let's drink a toast.

Kevin: Okay. **(He opens a bottle of white wine and pours two large glasses.)** There you go.

Tanya: Cheers.

Kevin: Cheers. What shall we drink to?

Tanya: To our new home! Cheers. **(She drinks.)**

Kevin: Cheers. **(He drinks.)**

Tanya: It's nice this, citrusy, but not too dry. Where did you get it?

Kevin: Amy's Wine House.

Tanya: They're good there. Mmm, lovely. **(Taking another glug of wine.)**

Kevin: Yes, not bad, not bad at all.

Tanya: No. Although you could've got it a lot cheaper at the supermarket.

(They both continue to drink the wine at quite an alarming rate.)

Tanya: So, when shall we take a look?

Kevin: Hang on, I've only just seen the details.

Tanya: We don't want to miss out, Kevin. It's been on the market for a week already.

Kevin: That's not long.

Tanya: It is for a nice place. Brad said places like that get snapped up in an instant. He said not to hang about.

Kevin: We'd better go soon then. How about next week?

Tanya: I'm glad you said that. I've booked an appointment for after work tomorrow.

Kevin: Friday?

Tanya: Yeah. Not a problem, is it?

Kevin: No, but...

Tanya: What?

Kevin: Friday?

Tanya: Not getting cold feet are you, babe?

Kevin: No, but I usually go for a drink straight after on a Friday.

Tanya: We can go for a drink after we've had a look round.

Kevin: I suppose.

Tanya: Suss out the local. Talk about the new house.

Kevin: I missed last Friday, going to your sister's.

Tanya: What's more important, buying our first home together or you having a drink wiv your mates?

Kevin: Well...

Tanya: You can do that any time.

Kevin: We only do it on Friday.

Tanya: You can do it any Friday.

Kevin: Not if we move out there. **(Pointing at the estate agent details.)** I'll have to drive.

Tanya: Let's take a look before you start fussing over details like that.

Kevin: Okay.

Tanya: Good. You can pick me up from here. They're expecting us about five forty-five.

Top me up, babe.

(Kevin slurps at his wine before topping up both glasses.)

Tanya: Oh, I can't wait. It's ever so exciting. It'll be so much easier to have my clients come to me. It's a right pain to have to take all my kit to theirs. And I can charge people to use the sunbed, if they're coming to mine. I'm gonna need new cards printed with all the new treatments on them.

Kevin: Let's find the right place first, hey babe? Shouldn't you be thinking about putting this place on the market too? I mean, if you reckon fings move that quickly.

Tanya: Well, actually babe, someone's already said they're interested.

Kevin: What? How come?

Tanya: It's been on the market for a fortnight. We've had a few viewings and one of them was really interested. Wanted to buy, right there and then, Brad said.

Kevin: Brad?

Tanya: He's the estate agent what I spoke to, from Hastings and Bond. He's been showing them round.

Kevin: Oh.

Tanya: It's just a case of money. You know, being first time buyers and all, they need a deposit. And that's not easy.

Kevin: Of course.

Tanya: Banks are looking for about twenty percent now, so on what they reckon this place is worth, any buyer would need about forty thousand.

Kevin: No way!

Tanya: I know!

Kevin: Fuck me! No wonder it's hard to get on the ladder!

Tanya: Isn't it though!

Kevin: Bloody hell!

Tanya: Still, you don't need to worry about that.

Kevin: Don't I?

Tanya: No babe. Course you don't. I'm looking to get a clear forty grand profit from this place and you're gonna match that with the money what you've saved and the inheritance from your Nan.

Kevin: Right.

Tanya: So we can put down a decent deposit and then mortgage the rest.

Kevin: Right. Not sure how all that works really, babe. I need to do a bit of research, find out what the best deal will be, you know.

Tanya: No need babe. I've got it all sorted.

Kevin: Really?

Tanya: Yeah, really. No need to worry. I've got it all in hand. I've been to the bank. I'm gonna transfer my mortgage onto the new property.

Kevin: I thought it was supposed to be a bit of a minefield, moving house.

Tanya: Well, not with me it isn't. Pour another glass, would you, babe? You don't need to worry about a thing.

Kevin: **(He pours more wine for both of them.)** Excellent! Well done babe.

Tanya: Just the money.

Kevin: Money?

Tanya: You know, the forty-seven thousand that you're going to put down for the deposit, to show commitment, to make up for what you haven't paid so far.

Kevin: I thought it was forty.

Tanya: Don't you trust me?

Kevin: That's a stupid thing to say.

Tanya: Is it? I don't know why you're questioning me. I mean, we're getting married soon, unless you've changed your mind about that too.

Kevin: I haven't changed my mind about anything.

Tanya: Good. So your money is my money and mine is yours, it doesn't really matter, does it? I mean, once we're married...

Kevin: I suppose.

Tanya: There's no 'suppose' about it, Kevin. In the eyes of the law, when you're married it's all fifty-fifty.

Kevin: Right.

Tanya: Yes, and you remember that!

Kevin: Right.

Tanya: **(Pause)** Oh, I'm sorry babe. I just don't want anything to spoil this.

Kevin: I know.

Tanya: I've been let down before.

Kevin: I know.

Tanya: I just don't want nuffink to spoil it this time. I know it's the right place for us. I've planned it all out already. You mean the world to me, Kev. I can't wait to be your wife and to live in our lovely new home.

Kevin: Yeah, and I'm not going to let you down. You know that, don't you?
(Tanya gets up and goes around to join Kevin on his side of the breakfast bar, putting an arm around him.)
Tanya: I love you, babe. You're the best thing what's happened to me since...
Kevin: And I love you too babe.
Tanya: Oh babe.
(They kiss.)
Tanya: So you're okay with getting the ball rolling then?
Kevin: Yes.
Tanya: Getting the money together to buy this house? And you're sure you're not gonna change your mind?
Kevin: Quite sure. We're buying a house together.
Tanya: Oh babe, I can't wait til tomorrow. I know I'm gonna love it! **(Hops up.)**
Kevin: **(Picks up the details and taking a closer look.)** What's for dinner, then? I'm starving.
Tanya: I've been a bit busy, what with the move and everything. I thought we could eat out.
Kevin: We ate out last night.
Tanya: I know babe, but it's difficult when there's so much on. I haven't had a chance to get to the shops.
Kevin: Surely there's something in the freezer what you could cook?
Tanya: I don't feel like cooking now, not after all that wine. Let's have a naughty take-away tonight. Chinese. **(Finds the menu on the breakfast bar.)** Here's the menu. You call while I take twenty on the sunbed. Okay?
Kevin: Right.
Tanya: Twenty minutes?
Kevin: Okay.
(Tanya kisses him on the cheek before leaving the room as Kevin gets up and reaches for another bottle of wine. Lights dim to blackout as both exit.)

Scene 3 - Estate Agents' Office, Day 3, Friday Afternoon

(Lights come up on Kat and Brad in the office. Kat sits at her desk, while Brad perches on the edge of it chatting to her.)

Kat: As it stands, Brad, my twenty quid is looking pretty safe.
Brad: You think?
Kat: Yeah, I've already made a sale this week and got two new tenants in the Henbridge Block. What have you got?
Brad: Like last week and the week before and the week before that, if I'm not very much mistaken, I have at least two sets of buyers on the verge of an agreement. So you'd better have an extra purple picture of the queen in your purse come seven-fifteen.
Kat: Yeah?
Brad: Yeah. Watch and learn, my little friend, watch and learn.
Kat: Go on then, what've you got?
Brad: Ha, ha, that'd be telling. See you in the Red Lion. I'll show you their signatures on the dotted lines then!
Kat: Alright Mr. Cocky, I'll believe it when I see it.
Brad: One of them is coming in this morning. She's due to drop any minute, so desperate to complete asap. **(He pronounces 'asap' as a single word.)**
Kat: You mean she's pregnant?
Brad: About six months, she said, so really keen to get the ball rolling.
Kat: And the other one?
Brad: First time buyer. Honestly! Looking at one of the town square complex.

...

[Continues in the full script...]