



*A Dinner-Theatre Murder Mystery*

by

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**Customer Taster**

# Death At The Shangri-La

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The trouble in the Shangri-La Residential Home really started with Martha, but then she died, even before the rest of the residents finished breakfast. The home owners, Jenny and Ray aren't too concerned - except when it comes to filling the newly created vacancy. But why is Ray pointing a gun at Major Backhurst? What has Heather, the care assistant overheard? Has Cedric noticed something he shouldn't? Why is Aggie so annoyed with Victoria? And what will the Vicar learn about the deceased?

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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, with courses served before the performance and during the intervals.

The Production Guide describes how to run the event and includes a suggested timetable.

## ***Structure***

The full Murder Mystery Pack Contains

- An Organiser's Overview
- The Full Script (in four versions with and without the optional characters)
- Solution Sheets (in four versions with and without optional characters)

## ***This Customer Taster Contains:***

- Event Guide
- Suggested Timetable
- Notes on using the Optional Characters and Optional Scene
- An extract from the opening scene

## ***The Organiser's Overview in the full pack also includes***

- Production Notes
- Plot Overview
- Character Overview

## Event Guide

### *Event Format*

The murder mystery has been successfully produced both with the audience having a catered-for meal and also a picnic (bring-your-own) format.

It is suggested that a short explanation be given, telling the audience what the running order is and what is expected of them. This could be included in an address by a Master of Ceremonies (if it is decided to have one) or perhaps a short handout on each table.

For example, there are no other items for them to expect - the clues are all in the script. The audience use their skills to watch the action carefully and decide who killed the victim and why. The more accurate and comprehensive their explanation set out on their Solution Sheet, the better will be their chance of winning the prize. The audience need to submit their completed Solution Sheets during the interval after Act 2. The solution is revealed in Act 3 after which the prize-winning team will be announced. The Organiser needs to decide who will judge the submissions.

Normally teams comprise of people sitting at the same table, who can confidentially discuss their opinions and suspicions before completing and submitting their Solution Sheets. The audience need to recall actions and dialogue to help identify the murderer and the motive, and it is suggested that they are provided with pens and paper for note-taking.

When choosing a prize it is worth bearing in mind that it will probably be shared between several people.

The timetable suggested below could be adjusted to take account of local situations.

The author has tried to inject a degree of humour into the script.

### *Performing the Script*

Note that you need to purchase a Performance Licence from the Murder Mysteries page of the Lazy Bee Scripts web site.

It is anticipated that the event organiser will recognise the need for a Director to ensure that the script is delivered in a credible fashion.

The first decision relates to whether the optional characters are to be included in the production. For clarity there are four versions of the script where the Optional Characters are omitted or included (see below). Secondly, there is also an optional scene which can be omitted without affecting the plot (see below).

A read-through is an enjoyable way to start rehearsals. At this stage it might be useful for the actors, having been provided with their copy of the script, to describe how they see their characters and how they interact with the others before reading through the script together. The cast will need to learn their lines and movements for the performance(s).

The production is totally scripted and does not call for improvisation by the cast, as sufficient information is provided for the audience to identify the killer without additional clues or questioning of the characters.

None of the language used is excessive and all the words used are in the English dictionary. However, the author recognises that some groups might wish to modify some of the stronger language (for better or for worse!) and he gives his permission to do so.

Note that you will need to decide and arrange

- How to instruct the audience to fill-in the solution sheets
- How to evaluate the winner. (This is an activity for the cast whilst dessert and coffee are served to the audience in the suggested timetable.)
- How to award the prize(s). Who will do this? (We suggest that this is an activity for the deceased!)

## **Timetable**

The following timetable is approximate and does not allow for the optional Act 1 Scene 3 which could add approximately five minutes to the running time.

19:30 Arrival - (Drinks?) - Starter  
20:00 Act 1  
20:40 Main Course  
21:15 Act 2  
21:35 Solution Sheets completed and handed in.  
21:50 Dessert - Coffee  
22:05 Act 3  
22:10 Winning Team announced - prize awarded.

## **Optional Characters**

Many groups enjoy the idea of minor roles and three have been included in the script to allow wider participation in the production if required. The gender of the roles can be changed by altering the appropriate title, name, noun or pronoun. These roles can be dispensed with and are not critical to the plot.

Four versions of the script are available (in the full pack) as follows:-

- Version 1 - No Optional Characters.
- Version 2 - Includes one additional character
- Version 3 - Includes two additional characters
- Version 4 - With all three Optional Characters

## **Optional Scene**

Act 1 Scene 3 is entirely optional. Martin can fall asleep at the end of Scene 2 and wake up at the beginning of Scene 4 with no detriment to the plot.

The original production featured an Abba tribute band miming a performance of Dancing Queen. Although amusing for the audience, there is a budget implication here (additional Performing Rights). There may be an opportunity for other entertainment, although it should be borne in mind that the audience need to follow the action in order to identify the murderer, and they could become distracted by this interlude.

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## *Extract from the Script*

### *Characters*

Ray Toppe - Joint owner of the home  
Jenny Toppe - Joint owner of the home  
Heather First - Care Assistant  
Ben Harvey - The Vicar  
Martin Backhurst - Resident, retired army officer.  
Aggie Hurst - Resident, retired university professor.  
Cedric Pedlar - Resident, retired postal worker.  
Victoria Call - Resident, retired widow.  
Martha Short - Deceased Resident

## Act 1

### *Scene 1*

**(The scene is the lounge of the Shangri-La residential home. There is an opening-window and an internal door which goes to the hall. There are several chairs and occasional tables with magazines and newspapers. There is a desk on which is a laptop computer. There is a shelf propped on which is a wedding invitation. Martha is the only resident in the lounge and she is sitting in a wheelchair. She is dead and covered with a sheet. Enter Jenny and Ray Toppe. Ray has a replica pistol in his pocket.)**

**Jenny:** **(Closing the door.)** Why can't you ever do anything I ask?

**Ray:** I don't know what you mean.

**Jenny:** You know exactly what I mean, Ray. Do I need to give you a list or shall we walk round and I can point out how the place is falling down because you never get round to doing the things that need doing?

**Ray:** **(Pointing towards the body.)** Wasn't a lot I could do about her.

**(Jenny looks at it and some of her anger dissipates.)**

**Ray:** She's what's bothering you.

**Jenny:** You really are pathetic, Ray. I can never have a serious conversation with you.

**Ray:** All right, what do you want to talk about? If it's money again I don't want to hear.

**Jenny:** Of course it's about money, it always is. Ever since you talked me into that ridiculous fixed-rate mortgage we've been struggling.

**Ray:** It's all very well you whingeing on about it but if inflation had gone up like I thought it would, other rates would have gone up as well and we'd be sitting pretty.

**Jenny:** Well, we're not. We're sitting on a fixed-rate of eight and a half per cent, Ray and it's bleeding us dry. Every time that happens **(she gestures towards the body)** we sink further behind.

**Ray:** Down.

**Jenny:** What?

**Ray:** We sink further down. You can't sink behind.

**Jenny:** I'll hit you in a minute!

**Ray:** Okay, okay. Anyway, it's not going to be easy to get out of the loan; the penalties are enormous. At least we're both well insured because of it.

**Jenny:** Don't tempt me. I sometimes think it could be well worth it.

**Ray:** **(Sarcastic laughter.)** It's a pity it wasn't her ladyship who died instead of Martha.

**Jenny:** Don't be so horrid Ray. And grow up. Victoria might say she's leaving us money in her will, but I can't and don't want to run this home on the basis of what one of the residents might leave us.

**Ray:** Why not?

**Jenny:** They often say things like that but they don't really mean it. Aggie said the same thing after her solicitor came the other day. She said that as she never married and has no other family it might as well come to us.

**Ray:** That'd be good but how much? *Victoria's* loaded. Did you know old George Call was a director of Bartholomew Prospecting and Mining and they don't come bigger than that? He ran some of their biggest operations. Africa, South America, Milton Keynes.

**Jenny:** How do you know all this?

**Ray:** Just do. Martha told me. **(Gestures to the body.)** She found it on the internet. Anyway look...

**(Heather enters then looks as if to go out again.)**

**Jenny:** It's all right, Heather, come in.

**Heather:** They're just finishing – Jane's doing their coffees. I've asked them to use the TV lounge until Martha's gone. Has Doctor Pringle been yet?

**Jenny:** Yes, he's in my office sorting the paperwork out with the Co-op people.

**Heather:** Is there going to be a post mortem?

**Jenny:** **(Begins moving Martha in the wheelchair towards the door.)** He said not. He's known she's had a weak heart for years. It was one of the main reasons for her coming to us. I'll just hand her over to the men from the Co-op.

**(Jenny wheels Martha out into the hall.)**

**Heather:** That's two empty rooms now. First Mr Carboy and now Martha.

**Ray:** You don't need to remind me. At least old Carboy didn't die on us, just moved to a posher place. I wish I'd known he was going to win the lottery! We could have increased his fees. **(Jenny enters, hearing what Ray is saying.)** Carry on like this and we'll be in deep trouble – we'll have to halve your pay for a start!

**Jenny:** Oh shut up Ray. Heather doesn't want to hear our troubles. Don't listen to him. Anyway I've got a prospective resident coming to look us over later on. Mrs Humphrey-Berkley. Let's hope she likes what she sees.

**Heather:** I can't see why she wouldn't. Will you want me to show her round? The usual tour?

**Jenny:** Yes, please. Oh, but don't show her Mr Carboy's old room. As you know Ray is supposed to be redecorating it. **(Looks hard at Ray.)** I didn't know champagne could make such a mess.

**Heather:** It was quite a party, he threw.

**Jenny:** I know. **(Beat)** By the way the Vicar will be calling in sometime. Martha's daughter asked him to say a few words at the funeral. He's looking for some stories – you know the kind of thing.

**Heather:** I should think that Aggie would be his best bet – She and Martha have been thick as thieves these past few weeks.

**Ray:** You can say that again. We should have been charging them extra for all the electricity they've been using for that computer, night and day. **(Points to a laptop computer on the desk.)**

**Heather:** I don't know what they were up to. I must say Aggie has been a bit more difficult than normal recently, not even enjoying her usual banter with Martin. A bit crotchety don't you think?

**(Martin opens the door and looks in.)**

**Martin:** Saw them leaving – all right to come in here now?

**Jenny:** Yes, Martin, yes. Heather, have you got a minute? There's a couple of other things. Is Cedric in his room?

**(Heather and Jenny leave after Martin makes his way in. He walks with a pronounced limp and uses a stick. Martin wears a watch, carries a wallet and some loose change in his pocket.)**

**Martin:** Must say I'll miss Martha. She might have been older than the rest of us but she was still quite a solid old girl. Managed to get her head round this thing too. **(Points to the laptop.)**

**Ray:** I thought she was an old busybody. Always interfering.

**Martin:** She was always interested in people. And she remembered things. I don't know about writing *her* life story – I bet she could have written mine.

**(Martin is leaning on his stick looking at the desk with the laptop. He shrugs and as he turns round Ray pulls a revolver from his inside pocket and points it at Martin.)**

**Martin:** Christ! What the hell...

**Ray:** Just hand over your wallet, old chap. **(Holds out his other hand.)** Come on, don't mess me about or I'll put a bullet in your other leg!

**Martin:** Have you gone mad? **(Holds out his wallet but Ray doesn't take it)** For what it's worth.

**Ray:** **(Giggling)** S'all right, all right. Just kidding. It's a replica. **(Waves it about.)** Looks real though, doesn't it?

**Martin:** You bloody pratt. You've no idea what you're doing waving that thing about, replica or not.

**Ray:** **(Still laughing.)** Sorry!

**Martin:** I'll give you sorry! If you ever, ever, do anything like that again I'll, I'll show you what the real thing can do. Do you understand?

**Ray:** Couldn't resist.

**Martin:** Do you understand, you moron?

**Ray:** Yeh, yeh. I'd have thought with your background you'd have been used to people pointing guns at you. **(Points it again.)** All those years in the army.

**Martin:** Put it away! I'm warning you!

**(Ray puts the gun away as Martin threatens him with the stick.)**

**Martin:** I didn't even see the bastard who did this, but it finished the best part of my career. After that I spent most of it pushing a bloody desk and all thanks to some lunatic like you.

**Ray:** Hey, Martin I said I've said I'm sorry. Didn't think, that's all.

**Martin:** Ray, I don't think you've got much to think with. **(Pause)** And from what I hear I don't think your short stay in the army was quite the same thing as mine. How long was it? Six months, I heard. Half of it in the guardhouse.

**Ray:** Nothing was proved.

**Martin:** Anyway, what are you doing with it? **(Points to where the gun is.)** Planning on robbing a bank? I wouldn't bother. They haven't any money these days.

**Ray:** Nah. Bloke I know down the dog-track. He reckoned replicas'd go a bomb on eBay. Said *he* couldn't flog 'em 'cos he didn't have a computer.

**Martin:** So?

**Ray:** Yeh, well. I thought I'd try it out but it turns out you can't sell that sort of gear on eBay.

**Martin:** I wonder why? Didn't you check it out?

**Ray:** Sort of. Martha did. Got loads of stuff when she searched for guns in memorabilia, so I thought it was going to work.

**Martin:** But it didn't.

**Ray:** No. If I'd wanted to buy loads of Guns 'n Roses CDs, OK, but later I found out they're what's called prohibited items. Like I said you can't shift that stuff on eBay.

**Martin:** And I think I know the next question and the answer's no.

**Ray:** Very cheap...

**Martin:** No.

**(We can hear people coming. Aggie, Victoria and Cedric are talking as they come through the hall.)**

**Martin:** Try Cedric. He'll probably start collecting them.

**Ray:** You reckon?

**(Martin shrugs. Enter Aggie, Victoria and Cedric. Cedric is making notes in his notebook. He uses binoculars to check things outside.)**

**Aggie:** There you are! You sneaked off without telling us.

**Martin:** I don't sneak, Aggie. I just saw the meat wagon leaving. **(Turns back to Ray.)** Anyway, how many have you got?



**Ray:** (Shiftily.) Err, twenty. I thought it was too good a deal to miss.

**Martin:** (Bursts out laughing.) That makes me feel a lot better.

**Victoria:** (She is hard of hearing.) What's that about Major, something amusing?

**Martin:** Oh, nothing really, Victoria. Just another one of Ray's schemes. Chocolate hot-water bottles and all that! (Laughs again.)

**Cedric:** (Looks up.) That wouldn't work.

**Martin:** } (Together.)

**Aggie:** } Oh, God!

**Cedric:** They'd melt.

**Ray:** Oh, I'm off.

**Martin:** Down the market?

**Victoria:** Oh, Mr Toppe, I need to have a word with you.

**(Ray doesn't acknowledge her and exits. Victoria follows, trying to catch him.)**

**Victoria:** Mr Toppe! Raymond! Will you please wait! (Victoria exits.)

**Aggie:** She'll have to run faster than that to catch him, the slippery little spiv.

**Martin:** Mmmm. Wonder what he's been up to there?

**Aggie:** Can't imagine. Can't for a minute think of anything the high and mighty Victoria would have in common with that little squirt.

**Martin:** I take it Ray's not your favourite son at the moment.

**Cedric:** Advice.

**(Aggie and Martin both turn to stare at him.)**

**Cedric:** He's been giving her some advice about her investments over the past few months. I think she wants to know how things are going. I just happened to hear. I wasn't eavesdropping. I was trying to get Ray on his own and I heard them. I'm still trying to get the money from that car of mine that he sold. It's been over a month now. Three thousand pounds he owes me and I need it. Badly.

**Martin:** Well, well.

**Aggie:** Indeed.

**(The front door bell rings.)**

**Cedric:** I'll get it.

**(Cedric exits. Martin and Aggie sit for a moment in silence shaking their heads.)**

**Aggie:** Did you know that he logs every person who comes and goes in here? In his little book. I keep seeing him. He's furtive. Gives me the creeps.

**Martin:** He's harmless enough. All those years working at the post office. It must have been enough to give any stamp collector a breakdown. And his was worse than most. Apparently he set fire to over fifty thousand letters the day he blew up.

**Aggie:** Less than they usually lose then.

**(Martin shakes his head at her. A pause.)**

**Martin:** How's your bunion?

**Aggie:** Mind your own business.

**Martin:** Only asked.

**Aggie:** Well don't. (Pause) How's your prostate?

**(Martin squirms.)**

**Martin:** Touché!

**Aggie:** I'd rather not!

**(Cedric re-enters with the Vicar, turning to talk to him.)**

**Cedric:** Well, there's only the four of us residents left now that Martha's – err – well – gone. Us three and Mrs Call. She's just gone out with Mr Toppe.

**(Cedric makes an entry in his notebook and Aggie points it out to Martin. Cedric continues to check things, including the use of binoculars to look out of the window, occasionally making an entry in his notebook.)**

**Vicar:** (To Martin and Aggie.) Good afternoon. Ben Harvey. I'm your local Vicar – St Matthew's. Don't think we've met before. (To Cedric.) Yes, I do know Mrs Call – she sings in the church choir, you know. A lovely lady, a real lady.

**Aggie:** (Heavily) Really. And very proud of her invitation to your wedding on Saturday. (Points to the invitation sitting on the mantelpiece.) It is you getting married?

(Vicar nods and smiles.)

**Martin:** What can we do for you, Vicar?

**Vicar:** Ah, yes. I mentioned to Jenny, err, Mrs Toppe that I would call in to see if anyone could help me prepare the few words I need to say at Martha's funeral. Her daughter asked me and I didn't actually know her very well, you see.

**Aggie:** Had you actually ever met Martha?

**Vicar:** Well, no, actually I hadn't had the pleasure.

**Aggie:** So you didn't know her at all then.

**Vicar:** Ah well...

**Martin:** Oh do stop it Aggie. You'll have to forgive her Padre, her bunion's playing up. It always makes her a bit tetchy. She used to be a professor you know. You've got to feel sorry for the students she had, haven't you?

**Aggie:** (Glares at Martin.) I'll...

(Martin silences her by raising his hand and she looks away.)

**Martin:** Of course we'll be delighted to help you.

**Vicar:** Thank you. I'm just looking for a few snippets, you know. About her life at the Shangri-La or before that if you know of anything. It all helps.

**Martin:** (Nodding and grinning.) And the fee helps too, eh Vicar? Anyway, what can I say? She was a quiet little thing. (Pauses) But then there was the matter of the poisoned cat of course.

**Vicar:** Oh!

(Aggie and Cedric look at Martin.)

**Martin:** Oh, and the young men. - In the afternoons - In her room.

**Aggie:** (Realises he's joking and joins in.) The noise. We had to complain! But the worst thing was the thieving. Couldn't leave anything around - she'd have it.

**Vicar:** Oh goodness!

**Martin:** She was pretty good at distilling.

**Cedric:** It's not true. She wasn't any of those things. They're making it up. She was nice.

(The Vicar looks at Martin and Aggie who burst out laughing.)

**Martin:** Sorry, Padre, couldn't resist. Fact is Martha would have liked that. She had a naughty sense of humour - unlike some people these days. (Looks at Aggie.)

**Aggie:** Stop sniping Martin. You're not in the army now.

**Vicar:** Ah, I see.

**Aggie:** Martha had been a friend of mine for many years before she came here - in fact she was instrumental in me coming to live here. She worked in my department at the university.

**Martin:** Poor thing! Amazing she lasted this long.

**Aggie:** Shut up, Martin. Her husband, Richard died a few years ago and she came here then. Richard was a colleague of mine as well. Martha was older than me but we always got on well.

**Martin:** When she did as she was told.

**Cedric:** You were doing something together on that computer weren't you? It was delivered on. (Starts turning pages of his notebook.)

**Aggie:** (Firmly) It was nothing that would help the Vicar, Cedric.

**Vicar:** Oh I'm sure that people would be impressed to hear she was a wizard on the computer. Not too many people of her age manage to master that. The diocese sent me on a course and I found it difficult enough at my age.

**Aggie:** She bought it just to pass the time. She'd started writing her life story but I showed her how to use the internet - Googling, Facebook and suchlike. To do a bit of research, that's all.

**Cedric:** Yes, she was always saying it was amazing what you could find out on there.

**Martin:** That's right. She got really excited about it. She discovered that you can access secret documents when they're made available in the National Archives.

**Aggie:** Well, I don't remember.

**Martin:** Yes, you do. She used to bring up Cabinet Office minutes and read them as if she was the minister being quoted. She could do a brilliant Denis Healey. You can see all kinds of stuff that's been secret for fifty years.

**Cedric:** Thirty years.

**Martin:** Oh all right, Cedric, thirty, then.

**Aggie:** Well I really don't remember. She lived a quiet enough life here. Not a lot to tell. I suggest you talk to Jenny, she knew her best – they keep some personal details about us residents in the office – not sure why.

**Vicar:** If you're sure you can't remember any other little gems?

**Aggie:** Nothing comes to mind.

**Vicar:** Well, if you think of anything else... I'll go see if I can find Jenny. Thank you.

**(Smiles all round.)**

**(The Vicar exits. Cedric logs it.)**

**Cedric:** I'm off to my room if anybody needs me. I got a load of new stamps today that I need to sort out. My butterfly-theme collection you know.

**Aggie:** Oh goody. I'm sure it can't wait.

**(Cedric heads towards the door.)**

**Aggie:** Oh, did you notice if the post has been?

**Cedric:** Yes. **(Refers to his book.)** Eight-twenty-three by postman number five-two-nine. On the hall table. **(Cedric exits.)**

**Aggie:** Ah. **(Aggie gets up to go and see what post there is.)** I'll see if there's anything for you. **(Exits)**

**Martin:** **(To himself.)** There isn't. There never is.

**Aggie:** **(Enters holding a letter.)** Nothing for you.

**Martin:** I know. I looked earlier. Nothing for you either.

**Aggie:** Why didn't you say?

**Martin:** You didn't give me chance. I did see there was just that **(Points to the letter she is holding)** – addressed to Martha. Yes?

**Aggie:** Nothing to do with you.

**Martin:** What's the matter with you Aggie? You're like a bear with a sore head, snapping at everybody. I don't mind you snapping at them but I thought we were friends.

**Aggie:** **(Aggie looks as if she is about to tell him something but shakes her head.)** Well. **(Beat)** No, nothing to do with you.

**(Aggie exits. Sound of an ice-cream van outside.)**

**Martin:** Why not? **(Checks his pocket for change and limps off - as if to buy one.)**

**(Jenny and the Vicar enter carrying mugs of coffee. She is holding a file.)**

**Jenny:** Ah, the lounge to ourselves, Ben. Everyone seems to have gone to their rooms. They get like that when someone dies. Doesn't last long. Anyway that's all that's in Martha's file – not much really.

**Vicar:** I'm sure it'll help.

**Jenny:** Oh, I just remembered. Martha and her husband, Richard, I think his name was – they were naturists.

**Vicar:** Really?

**Jenny:** Yes and I'm afraid she made the mistake of telling my husband. You know Ray, don't you?

**Vicar:** Oh yes, I know Ray.

**Jenny:** He thought she meant they went collecting butterflies together.

**Vicar:** Ah, an understandable error. For Ray.

**Jenny:** Well yes, Ben. But she made the mistake of putting him right. Actually it was quite funny to see his face when she explained about nudity. But then he wouldn't let the matter drop for weeks. Whenever she called his name he would say 'hang on Martha, bare with me – but you go first'.

**Vicar:** I hope you don't mind me saying - not always the most sophisticated of people – Ray.

**Jenny:** That's a diplomatic way of putting it. Anyway, enough of my problems. I hear you're getting married? And leaving us?

**Vicar:** Yes, next week, it all happens. New wife, new job, new home. But it's the best thing ever to happen to me. I've been waiting for this chance for years.

**Jenny:** You don't like it in Shropshire?

**Vicar:** Oh, no, it's not that. But I have felt that it was time to move on, you understand. Do God's work in more challenging places and all that. Been here quite a while.

**Jenny:** Oh, yes, I understand and believe me I'd love to move on. Quite an upheaval though.

**Vicar:** Yes but worth it. I must say I never thought it would happen – after all these years, but Deidre and I – well, we are so suited to each other. She sings in the church choir you know. That's where I met her.

**Jenny:** Yes, Victoria Call, one of our residents, is a member of your choir too. I only knew you were getting married because of Victoria's invitation. **(Points to the invitation.)** She mentioned that Deidre's father is the Bishop.

**Vicar:** Ah, **(Weak laugh.)** yes he is. It seems as if he wants to keep an eye on us – we'll be living next door to him from next week – or at least when we get back from honeymoon. Then I'll be working for the old boy too!

**Jenny:** Really? I didn't realise that.

**Vicar:** He's given me quite a grilling. He doesn't seem to quite believe how much I'm in love with his daughter. He keeps saying 'at her age'. I mean she's only forty-seven.

**Jenny:** Understandable that he should want to protect her though. Anyway, the best of luck.

**Vicar:** Oh, I don't intend to leave anything to luck, Jenny. After all these chances only come along once in a lifetime. And after all these years in Whitchurch I must admit to looking forward to a slightly more elevated position, you know? Anyway he seems happy at the moment.

**Jenny:** Good. And the honeymoon?

**Vicar:** Err...?

**Jenny:** **(Laughing)** I meant where are you going on honeymoon?

**Vicar:** Oh! I see. Ireland.

**Jenny:** That's nice. I went to Donegal once, it was lovely. It was before I met Ray. I really enjoyed it. Have you been there before?

**Vicar:** Err, just the once. **(Beat)** Tell me Jenny, does Victoria Call have a hearing problem? I only ask because I do find that she does sing – err, rather enthusiastically and – err, sometimes a little at – shall I say – at variance with the notes set out in the music.

**Jenny:** Oh dear! Well, she does have a hearing-aid. However, she tends not to use it. Where Victoria is concerned she tends to do the talking – it's others who listen. I imagine she is a forceful singer?

**Vicar:** She is indeed, and of course after next week it won't really be my concern. However, the choir is singing at our reception and Mrs Call has suggested – well, insisted - that she sings a solo. The idea of the Bishop being in the audience seems to appeal to her.

**Jenny:** Oh dear! Well I wish you luck in sorting it out. Oh, I forgot you're not going to rely on luck, Ben. Perhaps you could bump her off!

**Vicar:** Jennifer!

**Jenny:** Oops, sorry, Vicar. Forgot who I was talking to! Comes from living with Ray all these years.

**Vicar:** Never mind. Well, I haven't really found out very much more about Martha. Oh, hang on though, Cedric and the others mentioned that she was doing something on the computer over there. Do you suppose there's anything on there that'll help?

**Jenny:** Now that's an idea! I'm sure she wouldn't have minded. She joked that her life story might fetch a lot of money one day. When she bought the computer that was what she started doing. Yes, a good idea.

**(They go over to the laptop and Jenny switches it on and puts the file on the desk.)**

**Jenny:** She was actually very good on it – her pride and joy. She did it all properly – you know, backed things up and all that. Just like I do on mine. Aggie showed her.

*But what Aggie showed her will have to wait until you purchase the full Murder Mystery Pack.*