



A Dinner Theatre Murder Mystery

by

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Customer Taster

DIG FOR VENGEANCE

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About this pack

The full pack should provide everything you need to produce your very own murder mystery event. *Dig For Vengeance* is intended to be performed at a sit down meal where the principal characters will act out a set of events for the assembled guests.

This murder mystery is a **scripted performance**; the cast have set lines to learn, which contain the information the audience will need to work out whodunnit. The murder evening is intended to be run in a hall with a stage or suitable acting area, with tables around the hall for your audience.

Structure

This murder mystery pack contains:

- **The Organiser's Overview** (*extracts here*)
- **The Script** (*extracts here*), including the denouement, in which the murderer is revealed.
- **Accusation Sheets** (for the audience to enter their solutions.)

Organiser's Overview Contents

- Plot Overview
- Character List
- General Staging Notes on how best to plan and stage your murder mystery event.
- Suggested Timing Guide
- Production Notes
 - Costume Notes
 - Set Description
 - Sound Effects List
 - Props List

Plot Overview

An earthy and black-humoured Murder Mystery.

The village of Sodbury End has been run efficiently and firmly by one Jennifer Jardine. Until that is, Mrs Jardine is blown sky-high in her allotment shed whilst potting up a monkey puzzle tree.

When Detective Inspector Grace Murray arrives to investigate this death, all the villagers are quick to assert that Mrs Jardine was such a lovely person and they cannot believe that anyone would want to murder her. But the Inspector digs deeper and unearths some different tales. For it appears that many people had disliked the deceased because of her inflexible regime.

So what dark secrets lie buried in this parochial plot? And most pertinently, who had the greatest cause and know-how to lob a WW1 Mills bomb into Mrs Jardine's shed - whilst she was in it?

Character List

Detective Inspector Grace Murray. Professional and pragmatic.

Brenda Alnutt - Pub Landlady. Pretentious.

Bernie Alnutt - Pub Landlord. Hen-pecked.

The Reverend Simeon Knatchbull. Vicar. Genial.

Mo Mole - Cleaner. Rough.

Sid Mole - Gravedigger. Surly.

Edward Jardine - Widower of the victim. Ex-army officer. Bitter.

Maisie Coggins – Beautician. 'Common'.

General Staging Notes

The production can take place on a conventional stage or in any defined area within a club or hall, etc. Following the initial introduction, the Murder Mystery will be performed by actors who have either learned their lines or are reading from the script. Allow just over two hours for the event.

During the coffee break (at the conclusion of Scene 3), the accusation sheets should be distributed by a member of your team, and then collected after some time for deliberation. The winning table should then be determined. In the event of two or more tables correctly identifying the murderer, it is the table with the best points of evidence which will be the overall winner.

Suggestions for a welcoming atmosphere:

- A greeter at the main entrance.
- Pre-dinner drinks.
- Flowers, tablecloths and candles on tables. Any decorations could have a gardening theme.
- Muted background music before the performance and during the meal break.
- A short welcome from the Chairperson including an explanation of the structure of the evening, followed by the performance.
- Following the conclusion of the evening's entertainment, the audience can be thanked for attending and invited to remain until the bar closes!

Suggested Timing Guide

7:00 pm	Guests arrive and are seated.
7:15 pm	Scene One
7:35 pm	Main course
7:55 pm	Scene Two
8:05 pm	Dessert
8:20 pm	Scene Three
8:30 pm	Coffee - Accusation sheets are distributed, with time given for deliberation.
9:00 pm	Scene Four, and announcement of the winning team.

DIG FOR VENGEANCE

Scene 1

(The Inspector enters Stage Right and takes Centre Stage.)

Inspector: Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to our latest, gripping Murder Mystery 'Dig For Vengeance'. We are here in the village of Sodbury End, where yesterday, a bizarre death took place. An allotment shed, belonging to Mrs Jennifer Jardine, a prominent figure in the local community, was blown to pieces. Unfortunately, for Mrs Jardine, she was in the process of potting-up a monkey puzzle tree. In the shed. Quite naturally we, the Plodshire Constabulary, are very suspicious, as allotment sheds are not in the habit of blowing up. I, Detective Inspector Grace Murray, am leading the investigation into what may prove to be a case of murder. But before we begin, let us meet all the characters in our little drama. First, Brenda and Bernie Alnutt from the Gardeners' Arms Public House.

(Enter Bernie Stage Left, followed by Brenda.)

Brenda: And just where might you be going, Bernie Alnutt? The Sodbury Sludge needs changing.

Bernie: Brenda, my love. I'm not going anywhere.

Brenda: Don't you my love me. You're sneaking off down to that allotment again.

Bernie: Only to get some onions.

Brenda: Onions, my eye. We're piled high with onions. And leeks. And cabbages. Not to mention all that mud you've tramped through the place. I pride myself on running a nice clean public house. And what do you do? Tramp mud all through it.

Bernie: Spuds, have we got enough spuds?

Brenda: Why can't we buy our vegetables like normal human beings?

Bernie: Because ...

Brenda: At least the Co-op wash their carrots before they're dumped on my kitchen worktop.

Bernie: Yes Brenda.

Brenda: And their cucumbers are a better shape. Not like that nasty twisted little thing you waved at me yesterday.

Bernie: You should never insult the shape of a man's cucumber, Brenda.

(Exit Brenda Stage Left and Bernie Stage Right.)

Inspector: And now our Vicar, the Reverend Simeon Knatchbull, together with Mrs Mo Mole and her husband Sidney, the local gravedigger.

(Enter Vicar Stage Left and Mo and Sid Mole Stage Right.)

(The Inspector moves to one side of the stage.)

Vicar: Ah good morning to you, Mr and Mrs Mole. What a lovely day. I'm glad I've bumped into you Sidney, how is the plot coming along for the late Mr Jenkins?

Mo: He's nearly finished it Vicar, haven't you Sid?

Vicar: And it's over by the West wall?

Mo: Oh, yes, he's dug it in a lovely spot, by the down pipe.

Vicar: And there's room for the headstone?

Mo: Enough room for the Taj Mahal, isn't there Sid?

Vicar: Oh the Taj Mahal, what a wonderful construction. And the Pyramids. The Ancients certainly knew how to bury their dead with style. It's just a great pity we don't build mausoleums these days.

Mo: They won't give planning permission no more.

Vicar: Have you gone deep enough, Sid?

Mo: He's going the full six feet this time, isn't that right Sid?

Vicar: Oh good. Because it was a bit awkward when the late Mrs Turner wouldn't go in.

Mo: Never mind, we all stamped on her; that got her in, all right.

(Exit Mo Stage Right.)

Vicar: Nice to see you both. Don't forget, Sidney, six feet deep, and then you can go for a nice pint.

Sid: Sod...

Mo: (Offstage.) Sid, 'urry up an' get a move on!

Sid: Off... (Exit Stage Right.)

Vicar: The Sodbury Sludge is off, you say? Bless me, what a shame. (Exit Stage Left.)

Inspector: And lastly, Mr. Edward Jardine, soon to be widower of the victim along with Mrs Maisie Coggins, the local beautician.

(Enter Maisie Stage Right and Edward Stage Left.)

Edward: Maisie, just the person I want to see. I need to make an appointment.

Maisie: What can I do for you, darlin'?

Edward: The usual, my dear.

Maisie: The comb-over, glued behind the left ear again?

Edward: Could you perhaps draw some hairs on as well?

Maisie: Yeah, I could use me eyebrow pencil.

Edward: Excellent.

Maisie: Pity about that toupee, innit?

Edward: Yes, jolly bad luck.

Maisie: (Laughing and giving him a shove.) They had to drain the swimming pool before they found out it wasn't a dead ferret.

Edward: Awfully embarrassing.

Maisie: Never mind, darlin'? Something for the weekend?

Edward: Fat chance! (He goes to sit morosely at the bar.)

(Maisie exits Stage Right.)

(SFX - Explosion.)

Inspector: Well, that's Mrs Jardine and her shed gone up. And what an innocuous little lot the usual suspects appear to be. It is now time to begin my preliminary interviews, and I shall start with the deceased's nearest and dearest, Mr Edward Jardine as he's the nearest.

Inspector: (Moving Centre Stage.) Mr Jardine, I'm sorry to bother you at such a distressing time, but just a few questions, please.

(Edward gets up from the bar stool and comes towards the Inspector.)

Edward: We'd been married for forty-one years. She was my rock.

Inspector: I'm so sorry.

Edward: Never a cross word between us.

Inspector: You must be heartbroken.

Edward: Can you tell me exactly what happened, my dear?

Inspector: As much as I know. Now this may be rather upsetting for you, but Forensics have given a preliminary report and it seems that Mrs Jardine's allotment shed, with her inside of course, was blown sky-high by an explosive device. I'm sure you heard it.

Edward: Yes, I thought it was Sid Mole starting up his lawnmower. Have you any idea how this could have happened?

Inspector: Not yet. It would help if we knew where an explosive of that kind had come from.

Edward: Yes, I suppose it would.

Inspector: Does the term Mills bomb mean anything to you, Mr Jardine.

Edward: Why do you ask?

Inspector: Forensics have found traces of one at the crime scene.

Edward: Well, the name Mills bomb is a misnomer. It refers to a World War One hand grenade, actually. It was a fragmentation device with a timed fuse.

Inspector: How very technical.

Edward: Well, I'll keep it simple for you, my dear.

Inspector: Inspector.

Edward: It was designed in nineteen fifteen and manufactured in Birmingham.

Inspector: Was it used in the trenches?

Edward: Yes. It was mass produced.

Inspector: Could it go off accidentally?

Edward: Oh no, no, no, no, no.

Inspector: That's a definite no, then.

Edward: To detonate you had to remove the safety pin, while holding down a strike lever underneath.

Inspector: And once you let go of the lever, you got rid of the thing fairly quickly?

Edward: Yes, it had a four-second delay, so you lobbed it at the enemy using an over arm manoeuvre, similar to that used in cricket.

Inspector: Then what?

Edward: If you had any sense, you ducked.

Inspector: You're quite the expert, Mr. Jardine.

Edward: I should certainly hope so; I'm a retired Bomb Disposal Officer.

(Exit Edward Stage Left.)

Inspector: Well, that's suspicious, for a start. An explosives expert right on our doorstep. I wonder if the Jardines' marriage was as idyllic as her husband makes it out to be. Now, the next person to interview is that stalwart of every community, the Vicar.

(Enter Vicar Stage Left.)

Inspector: How sad to have lost one of your flock, Vicar.

Vicar: We're all devastated. She was a pillar of the Church. An absolute godsend.

Inspector: She was very involved then?

Vicar: Oh, yes, my child.

Inspector: Inspector.

Vicar: She rang the bells, organised the flower arrangers, and was a long-serving Church Warden. I don't know how we're going to manage without her.

Inspector: How long have you officiated in Sodbury End?

Vicar: About five years.

Inspector: And before that?

Vicar: I was in Wiltshire for quite a time.

Inspector: A very pretty county.

Vicar: Very pretty.

Inspector: And why did you move to this parish?

Vicar: Isn't it obvious?

Inspector: Er, no.

Vicar: But this church has an absolutely super graveyard. Tombs dating back to the fifteenth century.

Inspector: Silly me.

Vicar: Oh how I love to pass a Summer evening reading the inscriptions. There's one that's a particular favourite, right on the Eastern boundary 'Here lyeth the bones of Thomas Crabbit, shot whilst poaching deer and rabbit. He'd trap his prey then quickly grab it. Now Death hath cured him of this habit.'

Inspector: Very nice. Did you hear the explosion?

Vicar: Yes, I thought it was Sid Mole's tractor backfiring.

Inspector: Of course, you'll be conducting the funeral, I suppose?

Vicar: Oh, yes. I love a good funeral, don't you? I do weddings and christenings too, of course. But funerals are my absolute favourites. And I've just thought of something very apt to say in the address.

Inspector: What's that, Reverend?

Vicar: Well, as in life she was here, there and everywhere, so she is in death.

Inspector: I don't get it.

Vicar: She was blown to pieces. You see, she's all over the pl...

Inspector: Yes, thank you Vicar. A little black humour brightens the day no end, I always say.

Vicar: Must dash; I'm having a little party with the undertakers. **(Exits Stage Right.)**

Inspector: A man who obviously has a funereal sense of fun. Now who do we have next? Ah yes, Mrs Maisie Coggins.

(Enter Maisie Stage Right.)

Inspector: Mrs Coggins.

Maisie: Yes, darlin'?

Inspector: Inspector. You run the Sodbury End Hair and Beauty Salon, I believe?

Maisie: Oh, yes, manicures, pedicures, waxing, facials, roots and tanning. And we do gents too, although they don't all tend to go in for the full works.

Inspector: I'd like to speak to you about Mrs Jennifer Jardine. I understand she was one of your customers?

Maisie: One of the best.

Inspector: What can you tell me about her?

Maisie: She was a lovely person, a lovely person. Always cheerful, always smiling.

Inspector: Goodness me. You don't get much of that, these days.

Maisie: You can say that again. The tales I could tell you about some of the women who come in here. They'd make your hair curl. Hair curl, get it? Because I curl...

Inspector: Yes, yes, I get it. Did you hear the explosion?

Maisie: Yes, I thought it was Sid Mole's drains again.

Inspector: Mrs Jardine seems to have died in a most mysterious way.

Maisie: You mean she was done in?

Inspector: Was she?

Maisie: Wasn't she?

Inspector: You tell me.

Maisie: I don't know nothin' darlin'.

[The full script continues ...]