



A Murder Mystery Party Pack

By Steve Clark, David Lovesy & Rosemary Hill

Really Horrid Production Company



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Customer Taster

I'm Your Number One Fang

By Steve Clark, David Lovesy & Rosemary Hill

It's the special launch night for the latest Halloween horror movie from Buena Pasta Pictures, "I'm your number one fang!" All the great and the good of the movie industry, along with critics and backers are gathered to hear from the producer and director and meet members of the cast. But nothing goes according to plan. It seems that the studio boss, Donna Canneloni is not happy with the picture and then someone starts re-enacting the grisly events of the movie in real life, as two of the VIP guests are murdered! But who is responsible?

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About this pack

This is a taster pack, containing extracts from the full pack.

The full pack should provide everything you need to produce your very own murder mystery event.

Note that this taster is taken from the version of the scenario with a female bias. (The version with the male bias changes “Donna” to “Don”. Both are included in the full Scenario Pack.)

The pack is intended to be used at a sit down meal where the principal characters will act out a set of events and arguments to the assembled guests.

Please remember from the outset that this is intended for an **improvised performance**. There is no script or set lines included for the cast to learn. Instead, your cast is expected to use the information included in this pack, develop their ‘back stories’ further and, staying completely in character throughout, improvise the action, dialogue and arguments themselves. This means that your performers are less constrained and restricted, can react and interact with the audience and guests at will and have a lot more fun!

This document includes:

A **Plot Overview**.

General Staging Notes on how best to plan and stage your Murder Mystery event.

Overview of the Characters (including suggested costumes and ‘props’).

An extract from the **Plot Narrative** to show how plot should flow and how events should be woven in.

An Appendix containing an example of one of the detailed **Character Back Stories**.

The Downloadable Resources pack that accompanies the full pack contains Adobe Acrobat .pdf image files and allows you to produce additional materials and resources that will help bring the event to life and enhance the plot.

These include:

Printable **Table Cards** to list the key characters to assist the audience.

Printable **Name badges** for the VIP guests for easy identification.

Printable **Poster** for the movie.

Printable **Book cover** for Ivana’s revealing latest novel.

Printable **Tickets** to the Premier screening of the movie.

Printable ‘who dunnit’ **Solution Sheets** for your guests to complete.

You can feel free to customise the details of the scenario. Names and titles of the characters are more fixed if you choose to use the resources provided but should not cause any problems for you.

This murder mystery is a light hearted affair and is intended to be as daft and silly as possible; a comic entertainment rather than a serious Agatha Christie style detective story.

The plot subject, the secret pasts of the characters and the characters themselves are designed for laughs! *All* the characters have been given motives and reasons to commit murder and in fact it could have been any of them that did the deed and as such there are no complicated or involved clues for the audience to have to try and deduce or follow!

Plot Overview

Buena Pasta Pictures are about to release their latest Horror movie, a vampire tale entitled “I’m your number one fang!” Previous titles have proved extremely popular at the box office and this latest picture has been eagerly awaited by the public with considerable pre– release hype in the Press and on fan sites on the internet.

There has also been a great deal of recent gossip surrounding stories of bust ups and upset on the set and issues surrounding the director, **Sam Wannital**, and his relationships with the film’s stars and the state of his marriage.

Tonight is an exclusive launch night, with all guests personally invited by the studio to meet the director and the stars of the movie, in advance of the official movie premiere.

The guests include actors and actresses, financiers, and members of the movie industry, all with close links to Buena Pasta Pictures. It promises to be a fabulous night...

Other notable guests at the launch include:

Donna Canneloni: Head of Buena Pasta Pictures, the production house and distributor for the movie.

Ivana Wannital: Mr Wannital’s wife.

Gracie Dullard: PA to Mr Wannital.

Rex Bannister: The famous movie actor and star of the movie.

Nick Noble: An up and coming new director

Carla di Lucci: Glamorous starlet and star of the movie.

However it soon becomes apparent that tonight is not going to go as smoothly as planned. Donna Canneloni announces that she has just viewed the trailer and is appalled at the quality of the film. Soon the relationships between the guests of honour reach breaking point and before too long someone has started recreating the gruesome film deaths as two of the guests are brutally murdered! Eventually, the killer is revealed to be...

Well, you’ll have to buy the pack (or attend a performance) to find out.

General Staging Notes

Casting / rehearsal

Your chosen performers should be issued with a copy of this entire pack.

You should hold as many rehearsals as required depending on the experience of performers (3 to 5 recommended).

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. We provide example stories in the Appendix and you can use these, amend them to suit, or write new ones. 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 the order and content of the arguments. These can be rehearsed by the performers, more to prove they can improvise and keep up a convincing performance than word for word content!

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!

The performers will eat the same as the audience. Food for the deceased victims can be brought to the main table and then sent away (and taken to the private room!) for extra comic effect.

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 this was being staged in a hall or private venue you could lay on a simpler meal or even a table buffet. However guests should have a table to sit at to watch and enjoy the action.

Given the horror / Halloween theme of the event and the fact that it is billed as a launch night for a vampire movie, your guests could be encouraged to come dressed in suitable **horror and Halloween costume**.

Pre-dinner drinks

Before moving to the seated area, we recommend pre-dinner drinks. This gives an opportunity for the guests to mingle and more importantly to meet the characters informally before the action begins (see **Meet and Greet** below).

Dining area:

Top table: set for 7 places, used by the principal characters. Positioned in a central location so that all the other guests can see the action. Ideally a clear area in front of this table should be provided to give space for the actors to perform freely.

Tables for the other guests. Depending on facilities and space it is recommended that the tables are spaced to give room for the actors to move around and between them and so be able to interact with the guests.

Although structured around a meal, there is no predefined timing for the action and the courses. If this is a restaurant based event then the serving staff should just be instructed to serve the courses as normal and not wait for any events / action (this saves upsetting the chef!).

As a broad guide your event should run as follows:

7.30 to 8.00	Meet and greet	Pre-dinner drinks
8.00	Sit down and Donna and Sam's speech	
8.15 to 8.40	First set of arguments	Starters
8.40	First victim leaves	
8.50	First body discovered	Main course
9.00 to 9.25	Second set of arguments	
9.25	Second victim leaves	Dessert
9.35	Second death announced	
9.40 to 9.55	Wrapping up!	
10.00	Solution sheets distributed	Coffee
10.15	Prize giving and denouement	

Improvisation

As already explained, there is no set script for this Murder Mystery scenario. Your performers are expected to improvise their dialogue, interactions and behaviour based on their back stories and knowledge of the plot and their interpersonal relationships. This is not as daunting as it sounds! Your performers need to get into character and remain in their character throughout. All conversations with guests should be as the character they are playing.

You are bound to get some comments about 'who dies first?', 'are you the murderer?' at the start of the evening. The trick is to act confused and surprised. What are they talking about? This is a special occasion!

If guests start asking you questions that you don't know the answer to then you can simply make excuses and walk away or steer the conversation in a different direction.

You don't have to admit your feelings outright, but can hint at your relationships with the other characters, make passing comments about your reaction to something to trigger a response and a question.

The commonest difficulty is when someone slips up and gives the wrong info from their back story (and guests will sometimes probe into your 'past' in depth). Sometimes this is not of consequence but other times it could be important, a date, a place or something that your character should know too. If when quizzed you give the wrong corroborating account of events, this can lead to red herrings as the guests think you are lying deliberately. Therefore, if possible, if you realise you have let slip something on the spur of the moment that is nonsense, try and draw the other character (s) aside in time and tell them the new story. And if you don't have time to do so, and you get 'caught' out, make light of the situation and play for a laugh; 'Have we really been married for 5 years and not 8, well it seemed like even longer to me...!'

You will find there is plenty of opportunity to whisper in corners with the other performers (and when out of the room) to check tactics, prompt actions and arguments ('right, we need to reinforce our hatred of one another, let's go and have a fight in the middle of the room'). This is often necessary to keep things on track!

The Arguments

The arguments that are used to move on the plot, reveal motives and skeletons in the closet and the complexities of the characters' inter-relationships can be split into two types:

Public: The confrontational / explosive challenge as one character rounds on another to contest something that has been said or announced. These can be very public and devoid of subtlety and a slanging match over the tables and even across the room often develops. Once these start the guests will quickly fall silent and pay attention.

Private: These are the type that build from a quiet conversation into a row as things are said that should not be or revelations are made. These can be more subtle. The characters start talking together, beside a table of guests and get louder and more heated as things develop. Gradually the whole room is drawn into the conversation.

In general the arguments only need to be staged once but if the venue is very large or there is a lot of background noise from the guests you can stage the argument and then move to another area of the room to continue the quarrel (repeating the salient points once more).

Overview of the Characters

It is suggested that your key characters wear 'fancy dress' to a horror / Halloween theme in keeping with the event.

Sam Wannital

Male: Playing age early 40's.

A fantastically successful director in the past, but who may now be losing the plot. His last film "Long in the Tooth" was a phenomenal financial and critical success, and Sam is very proud of this. He is hoping for great things from "I'm Your Number One Fang!" but is very much aware that Rex may have ruined the film for him. He had also been distracted by Ivana's first novel, "Studio Sin" which had come out during the making of the film, and had caused great scandal as it revealed his dalliances with other women as well as hinting (only hinting, mind you!) at shady dealings in the past. Those rumours involve dealing in drugs and there is more than just an element of truth in them. Sam has a four film contract with BPP. "I'm Your Number One Fang!" is his fourth film under contract and he is desperate to have the contract renewed. Although previous movies "Night of the HaemoGoblins", "Long in the Tooth" and the Oscar nominated "Bite of a Thousand Stars!" were a success, he needs good reviews and a box office success for "I'm Your Number One Fang!" to stay secure at BPP.

Ivana Wannital

Female: Playing age early 40's.

She is a blowsy, slightly OTT kind of person. She has little taste, or tact, and voices her opinions loudly and vociferously. Ivana has supported Sam with his directing for a while, content to be the "little lady" and to let Sam get the fame and fortune. However, she has had enough. About a year ago, she realised that she was fed up with sitting at home while he had affairs left, right and centre with every young starlet he met, and she decided to do something to give her fame of her own. She became an author, writing a thinly disguised novel called "Studio Sin" set in the film making world. It was a smash hit and she is close to finishing a secret follow up entitled "Sex on Set". Sam is worried that the first novel let too many cats out of bags, and he'll be concerned that a second novel will cause him grave difficulties. Having lived in Sam's shadow for too long, Ivana has definitely come out of her shell. She is over confident and says rather too much to too many people about her opinions.

Gracie Dullard

Female: Playing age mid 50's.

Gracie is Sam's personal assistant. She is very loyal and would do anything for him. She has been in love with him since she started her job, and admires everything he has done, but that love is unrequited and he just regards her as a valuable and trusted PA. She is a very dowdy character who nobody really notices, but she notices everything and keeps her cards close to her chest. She hates Ivana, who she thinks takes Sam for granted, and loathes Rex, because she thinks he has ruined Sam's latest film, and possibly his career. Unbeknownst to everyone, including herself and Nick, she is Nick's mother who gave him up for adoption years ago.

Rex Bannister

Male: Playing age mid 50's.

Although he was a good actor, his time is past. Cast as Count Dracula in this movie, he knows he performed the role badly and he realises that his film career is bombing and this may be his last big screen role, particularly since he made such a hash of it! His career is going down hill fast and he relies more and more on his fading reputation rather than any remaining talent. All this has led Rex to the bottle and he drinks far too much. This caused problems on the set during filming. In fact he has already polished off a couple of bottles before coming to the event and is slightly the worse for wear when he arrives and gets worse throughout the evening. When he drinks he starts to rant and he will rant at everyone who will listen, except Donna Canneloni, to whom he grovels unbecomingly, hoping to revive his flagging career. He has become infatuated with Carla and tried it on several times during filming but she was not remotely interested. With a few drinks inside him, he may have the Dutch courage to profess his feelings publically.

Donna Canneloni

Female: Playing age late 40's.

Donna is the Head of Buena Pasta Pictures. She is pleased with Sam after the success of the last three Vampire movies, but is secretly worried about the reports from the set of "I'm Your Number One Fang!" She made some catastrophic business investments with the profits of the last movies, and some of her past dealings with her relatives in the notorious Fettuccine Mafia family are coming back to haunt her as favours have been called in and now BPP is on the verge of financial ruin. If this film fails to make a record box office return it will be the end for her. She doesn't know who to blame – Sam, for making a sub standard film, Ivana for taking Sam's mind off what he was doing, or Rex for being so hopeless in it. Donna is presently nurturing a young director to take over if Sam fails him.

Nick Noble

Male: Playing age early 30's.

Nick is a young up and coming director, who has recently had a great success in "Young Director of the Year" with his short film entitled "Kenny the Plank does time". He is trying desperately to impress Donna Canneloni, in the hope that this will further his career. Donna has told Nick that if Sam leaves BPP after this film, then the place of "in-house" director could be his. He therefore has reasons to get rid of Sam. His relationship with Carla means everything to him.

Carla di Lucci

Female: Playing age early 20's.

Carla is a very glamorous starlet who is going to be hot stuff in the movie industry and knows it. This is her first lead role and she has performed well. However she has a drugs habit and is keen to get money and influence to get what she wants. She has been having an affair with Sam, but Sam has also asked her to get involved with Nick so that she can spy for Sam and push Nick off course. She is a very attractive woman and both men are besotted with her and her feelings for Nick are growing. She starred in the movie as Miss Harker, alongside Rex who spent most of the movie ogling her. She detests the drunken fool.

Plot Narrative

Meet and Greet

All the guests are important and valued sponsors, and movers and shakers in the movie industry. They have been invited along tonight to celebrate the wrap up of Buena Vista's latest horror movie, "I'm Your Number One Fang!". A number of the key members of the production team and movie cast are also invited. These principal characters need to introduce themselves and each other to the assembled guests before the event really kicks off (see **General Staging Notes** above for how best to do this).

The characters should arrive over the space of 15 minutes during this informal section (Recommended order: Donna and Nick, Carla, Gracie and Sam, Ivana and finally Rex).

They should introduce themselves to the guests, and interact with one another. They can make throwaway remarks about the other characters, sowing the seeds for any mistrust, dislike and personal conflicts. It is important that during this opening session the characters get to mingle and introduce themselves with all of the guests to ensure that everyone feels involved and gets a feel for what is going on! There should be much anticipation about the film and the usual catty and caustic comments about each other. Guests should then be invited to take their seats for the meal.

The speech

Donna Canneloni welcomes everyone to this event and apologises for the fact that recently she has not been around much at the helm for BPP, having had family matters to attend to in Southern Italy. She admits that nearly all the work on the movie has been laid at Sam's door and she anticipates another box office smash from this talented director after his previous film masterpieces. She hands over to Sam Wannital.

Sam thanks her and takes time to introduce the other characters. His loving wife, without whom nothing is possible or worth doing! The stars of the show, the great Rex Bannister and the very talented Carla di Lucci and young Nick Noble, who is good, but has a long way to go before he presents any competition! It is all full of bonhomie and false praise and aside from his comments on Carla he means none of it!

Sam presents **Donna** with a DVD which contains the final cut of the official film trailer that has today been issued to movie theatres across the world. She leaves the room to go and view the trailer on her laptop in privacy.

Sam admits that the press have given them a hard time and that no-one should believe a word of it all. The movie is great, the actors are great and it has been all one happy family on and off the set. Ivana's first book was a great bit for fun but no-one should believe a word of it – it is just fiction. Rex is a great actor and has brought new depth and a range of startling new emotions to the Count Dracula character and will be giving Christopher Lee a run for his money!

Donna now returns having watched the movie trailer and is furious. It is appalling. The effects are dreadful, the acting a disgrace and the only part saving grace is Carla's obvious talent but, all in all, this is a turkey which she is not prepared to condone. Heads will roll...

[From this point on, arguments develop, leading to two murders! A large chunk of the plot has been cut here for the purposes of this taster!]

Wrapping it up

Obviously the second murder is met with equal shock and this time the mood is more sombre and subdued. Now the murders are complete the final section is an opportunity to sum up the events of the evening and reiterate the motives and the issues. The characters can interact with one another and the guests to ensure everyone has followed what is going on. The guests are likely to quiz individuals on their feelings and attitudes and motives.

Who Dunit?

At this point you have a range of options as how to handle the final events. You can introduce a police officer / inspector, use a member of the staff of the venue / organisers or let the characters themselves handle the final section:

If a policeman / detective is used, he will announce he is just a trainee and needs some help. He can optionally quiz a few of the guests and the characters and make notes.

If one of the organisers or staff members handles this, they simply have to announce that the police are on their way but will need help. One of the characters is guilty of a double murder.

If the characters do it themselves: A lot of fun can be made of the fact that the local police are a little over-worked tonight and rather than sending an arresting officer they have sent over a crime sheet and would like the assembled guests to finger the murderer for them (cut-backs etc.)!

Solution forms (and pens) are distributed to the guests and the performers retire to their room to give the guests time to complete their forms. After giving the guest 10 minutes or so to make their deductions, the forms are collected and the characters in the privacy of their room select the winner and the booby prize!

Denouement and prize giving

The surviving characters return to the dining area.

A summary of the events of the night is repeated and the real murderer is invited to step forward from the line up (you can milk this for tension and laughs by all characters twitching and almost stepping forward).

The murderer will step forward and should deliver a short denouement speech to explain the motive.

The dead are invited to return (they should bring the prizes).

The chosen winner is announced (and the solution they gave is read out) and a prize awarded (A bottle of wine / champagne). We provide printable tickets for the Movie Premiere in the graphics pack, a pair of which can be presented to the winner. (The winner of the booby prize can be given two pairs!)

The booby prize is announced (and the solution they gave read out) and a prize awarded (a suitably silly gift - a magnifier glass etc.). If there were a number of amusing sleuthing answers you can read out a shortlist of howlers. The audience is thanked for their sleuthing skills. The cast take a bow and a get a rousing round of applause.

Appendix A - Detailed Character back stories

Your performers can use these as the basis for their stories. Feel free to embellish, modify and personalise (use your own birthday to save having to learn a new one etc).

Your performers should learn these, both their own and each others. In particular they should be familiar with information that they would know about the other characters (wife's family background etc.).

Donna Canneloni

Donna Canneloni has Italian roots and although she was born in Sicily, she has spent much of her life in the UK and has lost all trace of an Italian accent. Her maternal uncle is Don Fettuccine, head of the notorious Sicilian Mafia family with links to prostitution, drugs, gambling and extortion rackets all over Italy. Her mother and father bravely tried to extricate themselves from the family business and make a life for themselves in legitimate business in the UK in the media industry (her father, Giuseppe Canneloni was a talented photographer). But the Fettuccine family arms were long and after a bitter and protracted argument over many years, Don Fettuccine, insulted and outraged that his sister and brother-in-law were showing such disrespect, ordered a hit on the pair and they died in a car 'accident' when Donna was just 17.

Donna, as you would expect was devastated and always suspected that Fettuccine was behind the deaths, but could not prove anything and anyway, it takes a brave woman to take on the Mafia! She tried, like her parents to avoid the taint of her family influence and, showing a similar creative talent to her father, tried to make an honest living in the media industry. She dreamed of making films but money was tight and it was hard to make inroads into the industry. Her uncle watched from the sidelines, engineering competition and blocks to her business, until she was right where he wanted her. In the Mid Eighties, Donna's business was in dire straights and it was then that her uncle pounced and 'made her an offer she couldn't refuse'. He gave her money to set up Buena Pasta Pictures. Donna got her dream business, but at a price. Fettuccine expected to use BPP as a money laundering business to channel through money made from criminal activity.

BPP, with the Fettuccine financial backing (and on occasion a little discrete mafia muscle to remove any obstacles and settle disputes or ward off potential competition) did well and started becoming a success in its own right. Donna has several times offered to 'buy out' her uncle to go 100% legitimate but he has not permitted this.

In the early 90's Donna signed up Sam Wannital as principal artistic director for the company and his trio of vampire horror films has done very well. Buoyed by the success, Donna speculated with the profits in property developments, but it all went horribly wrong and she then made the fatal mistake of 'borrowing' further funds from the mafia accounts to stave off financial ruin. She is desperately trying to hide the fact from her Uncle that she has spent tens of millions of Fettuccine's money on unwise investments and abortive property deals.

She met Nick at an awards event and sent a passionate night with him. Her business has left her with little time for romance and Nick has made a big impression on her.

The new Wannital movie has to break all records and make a huge profit, to enable her to balance the books and save the business and more importantly appease her uncle. He already has suspicions and she has spent much of the last few months during filming flying back and forth to Italy to keep him happy and avert suspicions. If the film is a failure the future looks bleak for BPP and her!