



A Murder Mystery Party Pack

By David Lovesy & Steve Clark



in association with



Customer Taster

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LepreCON!

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At the monthly meeting of LepreCON – a group for those who celebrate fairies, pixies and other fair folk, the members are shocked to hear that two of their company have finally tracked down a Leprechaun and claimed his pot of gold and will be using their new found wealth to start a new life in the South of Spain. But it soon appears that this incredible source of the cash may not be true! Soon recriminations, revelations and dissent throw the meeting into chaos and before the evening is out, someone dies. Who committed the grisly deed?

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LepreCON!

About the pack

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

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 the pack 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 the 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 should have a lot more fun!

The full document includes:

- A **Plot Overview**.
- **General Staging Notes** on how best to plan and stage your Murder Mystery event.
- **Overview of the Characters ~ Customer Taster sample included here** (including suggested costumes and 'props').
- A **Plot Narrative** to show how plot should flow and how the events should be woven in.
- An Appendix containing detailed **Character Back Stories** on each character.

In the Full Pack the accompanying **Resources pack** of PDF files 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 **Photographic proof** of 'Leprechauns'.
- Printable **Poster** for the new film about Finn McCool.
- 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** characters have been given motives and reasons to commit murder and in fact it could have been any of them that did the deed. As such there are no complicated or involved clues for the audience to have to try and deduce or follow!

Plot Overview

It's the monthly meeting of LepreCON a rather odd group of individuals who gather to share tales, experiences and exchange views about Fairies, goblins, pixies and other fair folk. An odd hobby and though the hearts of some are not really in it, and some are clearly just there for the company and the drinks, their chairperson **Judy Andrews** lives and breathes fairies. She is particularly excited as tonight the group has a special guest speaker, Jamie, a minor Hollywood film star who has come to talk about a number of the fantasy films he has been in and about his new fairy tale feature in production – an Irish saga about the legendary hero Finn McCool. **Judy** can't wait to hear all about these fantasy worlds that speak to her from the cinema screen.

Other prominent guest include:

- **Sharon Cook**– who has a different sort of obsession – men!
- **Nigel Andrews** - Judy's husband who only attends these events under sufferance.
- **Mavis and Doug Benning** – a pleasant middle aged couple and regular attendees
- **Jamie Flint** – visiting guest speaker and the star of a number of straight-to-DVD fantasy films!

It soon becomes apparent that **Mavis** and **Doug** have a secret to tell – they have recently come into a large sum of cash, as they have caught a real Leprechaun and taken his crock of gold. This is amazing news! What's more, they have photographic evidence to prove it! With the Leprechaun gold they plan to move to Spain and buy a luxury Villa.

It becomes clear that their good fortune and life-changing plans are causing a mixture of jealousy and distress among the other guests for a number of reasons. Tempers fray as the tension builds and there is a murder!

There is further action played out ... and eventually the murderer is revealed.

General Staging Notes

Casting / rehearsal

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

You should hold as many rehearsals as required depending on experience of performers (2 or 3 recommended).

The first rehearsal should concentrate on reading through the 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 or write new ones.

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 victim will also use this room once deceased!

The performers will eat at the same time as the audience. Food for the deceased victim 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.

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 6 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 Judy's speech	Starters
8.15	Leprechaun gold revelations	
8.30	Arguments begin	Main course
8.50	... leaves the room	
9.00	The body is discovered	
9.00 to 9.30	Ongoing revelations	Dessert
9.40 to 9.55	Wrapping up!	
10.00	Solution sheets distributed	Coffee
10.15	Prize giving and denouement	

Since the convention / evening has a fairy theme, you can encourage your guests to come dressed in appropriate costumes; Elves, fairies, goblins etc. The principal characters should be dressed for their roles.

Improvisation and performance

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 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 back ground 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

Judy Andrews

Female: Playing age 40's.

Costume: *Dressed as a fairy with tutu, wings, face glitter / make-up, tiara and wand.*

Judy is chair for the group and completely obsessed with fairies. Not only does she love dressing up (she does so at home too) she really believes in them and will bore anyone who'll listen (and even those who won't!) about the times she believes she has almost seen one... She is the driving force behind the group and fails to recognise that the rest of the members treat it more as a social club than a serious hobby. She also fails to notice that her husband is fed up with the whole thing... and her!

Nigel Andrews

Male: Playing age 40's.

Costume: *Smart casual clothes, with a minimal effort / attempt made towards the whole costumed theme. Perhaps a pixie hat!*

Nigel is Judy's long suffering husband, married for 15 years and utterly fed up with the whole Fairy obsession. Although he tried hard to show her support and enter into the spirit, the cracks are starting to show! If Judy would let him, which she won't, he'd prefer to stay at home and watch the soccer on TV, but the group also gives him an excuse and opportunity to flirt, and more, with the female members...

Plot Narrative

Meet and Greet

All the guests are members of group and friends and family, invited to a monthly meeting and dinner of LepreCON. The evenings are usually a fun mix of socialising mixed with chatter about the fair folk! This evening has an added attraction as Jamie Flint is the special guest, invited to come and talk about his roles in a range of fantasy related blockbuster movies including the forthcoming Finn McCool movie. The key 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: Judy and Nigel, Mavis and Doug, Sharon and finally, making a bit of an entrance, Jamie).

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!

Guests should then be invited to take their seats for the meal.

The speech

Once the guests are seated for the meal, Judy opens with a speech to the assembled guests welcoming them to the event. Her speech must include:

- A welcome to the guests.
- An introduction of the other principal characters for anyone who's missed them.
- Introduce Jamie and remind the audience of his film roles and the fact that he is there to speak to them tonight about the new movie. She can also reveal new poster artwork for the film - an exclusive for the group.
- A mention of the recent night-time robbery of the Jewellers in the high street, the latest in a string of hits on local shops which have baffled police.

After the starters Judy will ask those present to give their "Fairy Tales" – a regular round-up of strange experiences and exciting contact with the fairy world and the supernatural! This regular round-up never has anything of interest. Judy will make her usual claim that she thinks she saw something at the bottom of the garden – asking Nigel to stick up for her... he doesn't, and suggests she saw the neighbour's cat...

Then Doug and Mavis deliver their trump card. They have seen a Leprechaun! Not only that, they took pictures which they have with them tonight and they managed to temporarily trap him and get him to part with his crock of gold! If this doesn't cause a stir, nothing will!

With the cash they have found – nearly £100,000, they plan a new life for themselves in the South of Spain and announce their intended departure next week!

Jamie then tries to start talking about his career in film, but clearly no-one is paying him much attention whilst the Leprechaun capture remains the hot topic. He has even bought a prop Shillelagh with him from the movie! He is fairly put out by being ignored, as he was hoping for a bit of a "Local Hero" experience!

Arguments before the murder

After these revelations, the performers should feel free to move about and work the tables and not stay sat at the top table. The characters should mingle and engage in dialogue with the other guests, expressing their amazement and reaction.

While this is going on, there are predefined arguments or heated discussions which should take place. This can be done at the top table, in the area in front of the table or anywhere around the room (if the venue is very large then the arguments can be held twice or more at different points around the room if necessary).

Judy is not happy...

Nigel is less enthusiastic about this venture...

Mavis and Doug are downright opposed to going so public so soon...

Etc.

Everyone has then left the room. They must all have the opportunity to murder ...

They can meet and confer in the private perform room and then return to the main room, individually.

After 10 minutes or so all the characters except ... return.

Other things come to light...

All the characters should react with horror and shock at the murder (of course!).

The further revelations

The players will announce that the police are on their way but given local cuts they may be sometime and that no-one is allowed to leave the building!

There are further revelations which must come out in ensuring counter accusations and argument...

Motives for the murder

Everyone had a motive...

... These are described in the Full pack!

Who Dunit?

... announces that it is clear that the murderer is in the room and the local police will be arriving soon but of course they'll need the help of the audience / guests to identify the suspect!

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 guests 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).

Further details are announced by the acting company

The chosen winner is announced (and the solution they gave read out) and a prize awarded (for example, a bottle of wine / champagne and the Film poster!)

The booby prize is announced (and the solution they gave read out) and a prize awarded (a silly theme-related gift). 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 - *Sample of a detailed Character back story*

The full pack includes all the characters

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 background etc).

Judy Andrews

The origins, and blame, for Judy's fanatical obsession with Fairies lies with her mother, Mandy. Mandy had a one night stand with Wayne, a roadie from a touring heavy rock band and the result was Judy. Since the father was never seen again, Judy was brought up by her mum who doted on her, spoiled her and rather than tell her the sordid truth about her parenthood, spun her a story that her father was a fairy! While Judy is not quite daft enough to go around telling everyone this, she does tend to let it slip after a couple of glasses of wine and is totally sincere about it.

Her childhood very much revolved around her mum, and fairies and she built up an enormous collection of dolls, figurines and other tat! She was always a loner at a school – most of the other kids thought she was loopy (with good reason). Leaving school at 16 she worked in shops and cafés and a variety of other dead end jobs. Her mother died of cancer when Judy was twenty and Judy inherited the house and a nice nest egg of savings Mandy held in a bequest from a wealthy Aunt. Judy could now realise her dream and opened a Fairy themed shop just off the High Street selling all manner of fantasy and fairy stuff called 'Pixie and Mix'! The shop does moderately well and Judy spends her days chattering non stop to regular customers and those who walk in off the street and wish they hadn't.

Nigel was one of those... He came to the shop looking for a gift for his young niece, got pounced on by Judy and was still there 4 and a half hours later. For Judy it was love at first sight and she kept up a persistent courtship (which was more akin to stalking) until Nigel caved in after 3 months, and they married 15 years ago. The passion and love faded fairly quickly – Judy's idea of a fairytale romance and marriage are streets apart from the mundane reality and over the years the pair have settled into an odd, sexless relationship. Judy spends most days at the shop and evenings are spent at home with Judy watching fantasy films and ready fairy novels while Nigel sits listening classical music on his I-pod and drinks more whisky than he should or goes out to the pub to join his work friends at 'quiz nights'.

Aside from the shop – LepreCON is the other big love of her life and she is passionate about the group (it was her idea to start it over a decade ago). She is the life and soul of the monthly meetings – gushing, over enthusiastic and, to honest, a bit of a pain! At each meeting she will ramble on about the signs and near sightings of fairies that she thinks she has experienced that week.

She has no idea that Nigel has been seeing Mavis, or that he has also slept with Sharon and would be horrified to find out – even though she herself has not shared a bed with her husband for at least 9 years!