



A Dinner Theatre Murder Mystery
by
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Customer Taster

MURDER IN CHEDDAR GORGE

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MURDER IN CHEDDAR GORGE

About the pack

Murder in Cheddar Gorge is a scripted murder mystery which does not require any cast-audience interaction. All the information needed by the audience is contained in Act One of the script. A full script is provided, as well as 'accusation sheets' for the audience to write their answers.

Murder in Cheddar Gorge is set in the Ice Age, following a typical cave-dwelling family. The murder evening is designed to be played by nine actors in a venue with a stage or suitable acting area, with tables around the hall for your audience. The actors perform Act One, followed by an interval, and then Act Two. During the interval, the audience enjoy a meal while being invited to solve the mystery and also answer an Ice Age-themed quiz.

Structure

The full murder mystery pack contains:-

- **Organiser's Overview** (extract included here)
- **Script** (extract included here)
- **Accusation Sheet** - for the audience to enter their solutions
- **Quiz Sheet**
- **Quiz Answers Sheet** - for the master of ceremonies

Organiser's Overview Contents

- Character Descriptions
- General Staging Notes
 - Overview of each step of the production
 - Suggested Show Timings
- Production Notes
 - Props List
 - Set Description
 - Costume Suggestions
 - SFX List

Character Descriptions

A note about character names: we have no idea what names ice-age people had, so this script has taken some creative licence!

Izzy – Head of the main clan. A dyspeptic, middle-aged man who still leads the hunting party, but he's not as young as he used to be.

Mizzy – Izzy's wife. She's a stay-at-home cavewoman whose jobs include roasting the mammoth meat.

Lizzy – Their teenage daughter. She's had enough of staying at home, and wants to get away and get married – after all, all the other 16-year-old girls in the district are already married!

Fizzy – Their teenage son. He keeps striving to win his father's approval, but always falls short.

Dirk – Their nephew. The opposite of Fizzy, Dirk is a highly successful hunter who always receives praise from Izzy.

Droogo – The lady from the neighbouring cave. She's rather a busybody and is always dropping by to borrow a cup of mammoth fat.

Oogo – Droogo's husband. He's very friendly and sees himself as Izzy's pal, a sort of Barney Rubble to Izzy's Fred Flintstone, though Izzy can find him irritating.

Roche – A handsome foreigner from 'Gaul' who comes to England to find wives for his sons and rubs everyone up the wrong way – all except Lizzy!

Kalu – An old medicine woman. She is called in to try to identify the murderer.

General Staging Notes

This is a murder mystery play in which the audience tries to figure out ‘whodunnit’ and why. In other words, they try to determine the identity of the murderer and his/her motive for killing the victim. This is **not an interactive** murder mystery; the audience does not get to interact with the characters. They simply watch the first act, gather clues as they watch, and then try to determine the killer during the intermission.

During this intermission, (usually about 45 minutes in length) the audience, sitting in groups around tables, are served dinner (typically fish and chips from a local shop). The dinner is optional, but it makes for a nice evening out for the audience. Each table forms a team, and each team tries to figure out whodunnit, as a group. Each team has an accusation sheet, on which they write their team name, as well as who they think committed the murder, and why, before handing the sheet to a helper.

During the second act, in which the correct solution is revealed, the answer sheets are marked and handed to the master of ceremonies (usually the play’s director). The winner(s) are then announced, and receive prizes, such as a box of chocolates or bottle of wine. Usually only one or two tables guess the right answers - if more, then a random selection of one may give a winner. (Optionally, the murder mystery quiz sheet - see below - could be used as a tie-breaker.)

This murder mystery also comes with a quiz sheet, with twenty questions about the Ice Age and cave men, plus related popular culture such as *The Flintstones*. Before the play begins, the quiz sheets are handed out – one sheet per table – and the master of ceremonies announces to the audience that they are not allowed to use the internet to find answers. He/she also describes the rules for answering the ‘whodunnit’ and ‘why’ questions on the accusation sheet. Unlike the accusation sheets, the teams hang onto their quiz sheets until the end. When the play is over, the master of ceremonies asks each team to hand their quiz sheet to a different team, to be marked. The master of ceremonies then reads out the correct answers, the teams mark another team’s answer sheet, and then return the marked sheet. The team with the most correct answers wins a prize, which again could be a box of chocolates or bottle of wine.

Timing

Act One – allow 35 to 40 minutes.

Interval – suggested 45 minutes, but can be as long as required.

Act Two – allow 15 minutes.

Quiz Answers Announced - allow for 15 minutes.

MURDER IN CHEDDAR GORGE - SCRIPT

Act 1

Scene 1 - In Izzy's Cave, Evening

(The entire play is set in the mouth of a cave in Cheddar Gorge, during the Ice Age. Mizzy, Droogo and Lizzy are in the cave. Dirk and Izzy enter the cave; Izzy has his arm around Dirk's shoulder.)

Mizzy: So there you are at last! We were getting worried about you guys, weren't we, Lizzy?
(Lizzy turns her back on the group.)

Lizzy: Oh, who cares! They never let *me* go hunting with them!

Izzy: You show some respect girl! We've risked our lives for you today, and Dirk here brought down a mammoth, single handed!

Dirk: Well, it was only a young mammoth, Uncle. I could never bring down a big bull mammoth like you did last winter – remember?

(Mizzy turns to Droogo.)

Mizzy: As if he'd let us forget!

Lizzy: Yeah, and we had nothing to eat but tough old mammoth meat for a whole month after that! I hate mammoth meat! Why can't we have something different for a change? I mean, how about some vegetables?

Droogo: We had some lovely chestnut soup last night in our cave. I threw in a couple of dormice, just for flavour.

Mizzy: M-m-m, sounds tasty! Say! Where's Fizzy? You didn't leave him out there in the cold, did you? He could freeze!

Izzy: Might just as well, for all the good he does us! That kid couldn't hit the broad side of a mammoth from ten paces!

Mizzy: So where is he? What have you done with him?

Izzy: Relax, woman! I gave him the job of burying the mammoth carcass so the wolves and bears don't get at it before we can butcher it.

Mizzy: You always give him the worst jobs to do!

Izzy: That's all he's good for, if you ask me.

Mizzy: Alright, so what happened on the hunt today? I'm sure you're dying to tell me.

Izzy: We stalked the mammoth herd for hours, waiting for our chance. Finally they came to that pond we like to fish in, in the summer – you know, the one where there's two clumps of willows along the shore?

Lizzy: That's Willow Pond, Dad. *Everyone* knows that!

Izzy: Alright, smarty-furs! Who's telling this story, you or me?

Mizzy: Better let him get on with it, Lizzy, or we'll be here all night.

(Izzy struts around the cave.)

Izzy: Like I was saying, we got them mammoths right where we wanted them. I was behind them. Fizzy was over on my left, and Dirk was over on the right. They either had to jump in the water or come through us to get away.

Mizzy: Alright – don't keep us in suspense – what happened?

Izzy: I want you to know, woman, that I gave Fizzy the first shot. He was the closest one to the calf. But he missed by a mile. His spear landed in the willows, and the herd got spooked and ran. That's when Dirk, here, threw his spear and brought the calf down. You should have seen it! What a beautiful throw! We're talking pinpoint accuracy!

(Izzy goes over and claps his arm around Dirk.)

Izzy: I'm mighty proud of you, boy!

(Fizzy enters the cave.)

Fizzy: I buried the carcass like you asked me to, Dad.

Izzy: You sure took your time about it! I was just describing the hunt to the family. I told them how you missed the target, like you always do. It's a good thing we have Dirk here, or we'd all be going hungry tonight!

Fizzy: Well, I hit a mammoth with my second shot, didn't I?

Mizzy: Oh really! He didn't tell us about that! What happened?

Izzy: I was just trying to spare the boy some embarrassment, woman. When Dirk had killed the mammoth calf, Izzy here grabbed my spear – my best spear, mind you, and threw it at the big bull! Guess he thought he could make up for missing the calf.

(Fizzy looks downcast.)

Fizzy: I was just trying to help.

Izzy: Well it didn't help me! That was my best spear! I spent weeks chipping that spear head. I used a piece of lucky flint that we got from that trader who passed by here last year. Then you go and chuck it at the biggest mammoth in the herd, and he runs away with it stuck in his fur!

Mizzy: Don't be so hard on the boy! He did his best, didn't he? Maybe he wounded that beast, and we'll find the carcass in a day or two.

Izzy: Wrong again, woman! I plainly saw my spear, stuck in that big patch of fur around the bull mammoth's neck. He didn't bleed a drop, but he did run off with my spear!

Fizzy: I said I was sorry, Dad. Isn't there some way I can make it up to you?

(SFX: the sound of a lion roaring gets everyone's attention.)

Izzy: I hope you got that mammoth meat buried good and proper, boy!

Fizzy: Yes, Dad, I did.

Izzy: Did you put a big pile of stones on top, like I showed you?

Fizzy: Of course I did! Can't anything I do ever satisfy you?

Izzy: You want to make me happy, boy? You go out there tomorrow and get my spear back!

Mizzy: But if that bull mammoth wasn't wounded, there's no way Fizzy can get that close to him without getting stomped into the ground – you know that!

Izzy: You keep out of this, woman! The boy asked me what I wanted him to do, and I've told him! If he wants to stay on the right side of me, he'll get that spear back!

Lizzy: So long, Fizzy, it's been nice knowing you.

Izzy: And I've got a job for you too, girl. I want you to cook us a nice mammoth roast for tonight's dinner.

Mizzy: Why do you want her to do it? I run the hearth in this cave, remember?

Izzy: Yeah, but when you're roasting the meat, you run that hearth of yours a little too hot and way too long. If I wanted burnt offerings I'd go over to the holy man's cave! Lizzy knows how to cook a roast nice and tender, don't you, girl?

Mizzy: You mean you want the meat done like she did it the last time, eh? Half-cooked, with blood dripping out of it? She only did it that way because she was trying to talk to one of her boyfriends outside the cave, and kept getting distracted!

Droogo: That must have been when Dirk's friend Pong came to visit.

Izzy: I *liked* the way she did it, see! I could chew it without breaking my teeth on it. So the men will go out and butcher the meat while you women build up the fire. We'll be back here in a little while with a nice piece to roast, thanks to Dirk!

(Izzy, Dirk and Fizzy exit. Mizzy and Lizzy add wood to the 'fire'.)

[Continued in the full Murder Mystery Pack...]