

Once Upon a Murder  
A Pantomime Murder Mystery  
... Oh yes, it is!



By  
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*Published by Lazy Bee Scripts*

**Customer Taster**

# Once Upon a Murder

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## About The Pack

Once Upon a Murder is a scripted murder mystery set at a fairytale wedding, with approximately 45 minutes of scripted dialogue.

The audience, divided into teams or tables, are invited to ask the suspects questions, and are given time to solve the mystery before the guilty party is revealed.

The murder evening is designed to be played by eight actors in a venue with a stage or suitable acting area.

## Structure

This murder mystery pack contains:

- **The Organiser's Overview** [*Extract here*]
- **The Script** [*Extract here*]
- **The Clue Sheet** – to be given to the audience
- **The 'Pre-Nuptial Agreement'** – to be used as a prop
- **The Accusation Sheet** – for the audience to enter their solutions
- **The Winners' Certificate** – to be presented to the best sleuths in the audience

## Organiser's Overview Contents

- Synopsis
- Character Descriptions
- General Staging Notes
  - Order of Events
  - Setting the Scene
  - Audience Questioning
- Production Notes
  - Set
  - Props

## Synopsis

In the kingdom of Far Far Away, a royal reception ball is underway to celebrate the wedding of Prince Charming and Cinderella. Thanks to an error by Buttons, the blundering butler, everyone in the kingdom has received an invitation to the party. This includes Charming's honoured guests, who are all well-known panto personalities, some of whom have motives for murder ... Oh yes, they do!

## Character Descriptions

**Narrator:** M, 40s. Due to the nature of his job, the narrator would usually be familiar with everyone's story, but being new to the role, our narrator is still learning. This the first time he's met Prince Charming or any of Charming's panto guests. He's an efficient storyteller and a private chap who keeps himself to himself. But there's more to our narrator than meets the eye – his real name is Robin Hood, and he has an alternative reason for being at the ball.

**Prince Charming:** M (but can be played by M or F), mid 30s. Charming is very much a girls' panto pin-up... and doesn't he know it! Once you get to know him, you realise he's anything but charming. He uses his position to manipulate people and advance his own gain at any cost. He claims he loves Cinderella and has decided to stop his philandering and settle down, but the only person he'll ever truly love is himself.

**Cinderella:** F, 20s. Cinderella met Charming at a ball to celebrate his engagement to Snow White. The attraction between them was instant and Charming promptly dumped Snow to pursue Cinders. Being forced to work as a scullery maid for her wicked stepmother for most of her life has made Cinderella ambitious, and nothing was going to stop her from snagging her prince and living her dream life. When they were finally reunited, Charming proposed to Cinders (despite her dubious family connections). But is it true love or does Cinders have other plans for a happy ever after?

**Snow White:** F, 20s. Snow White was engaged to Charming before being jilted at their engagement party after he met Cinderella. She was publicly humiliated, and it's taken her some time to get over it. She is still very bitter and, for obvious reasons, Snow and Cinders don't see eye to eye. If only they could see past their relationship with Charming, they would find they have much in common, in particular their evil stepmothers.

**Buttons:** M (but can be played by M or F), 30s. Buttons grew up with Cinderella, working as a butler for her late father. He's a few years older than Cinders and has loved her forever, but she only ever sees him as a brother. He is insanely jealous when Cinderella falls for Prince Charming. He follows Cinders to the palace and takes a position on Charming's staff in order to keep an eye on their relationship, as he's certain that Charming will break her heart.

**Fairy Nuff:** F, any age. After the murder, Fairy Nuff is appointed (by herself) to solve the crime and bring the murderer to justice. Working for the FBI, The Fairy Bureau of Investigation, she is the obvious candidate for the job. Also, being the good fairy, she's the only person at the wedding reception who is above suspicion... as we all know, the good fairy is never bad!

**King Rat:** M, 40s-50s. King Rat is a rebel and a power-crazed baddie! It's no secret that he hates everyone. He is outspoken, radical, and not backward in voicing his opinion. He'd like nothing more than to rid Panto Land of its aristocracy. But does King Rat deserve his bad reputation or is he really a good guy after all?

**Widow Twankee:** The Dame (can be played by M or F), 40s-50s. Twankee's husband, Frankie, worked as a butler for the royal household for fifteen years, and they were happily married with two young sons. Some years ago, a magic lamp went missing from the royal vault under mysterious circumstances and Frankie got the blame. He fled to China with his family to avoid prosecution and died in a tragic accident, leaving Twankee a widow and their boys without a father. They later discovered Frankie's brother, Abanaazer, a well-known con artist, was the thief.

## General Staging Notes

### *Order of Events*

- Prior to the show, the pantomime personalities mingle with the guests and make themselves known.
- Act 1 – The Murder – approximately 12 minutes.
- Break – first course is served.
- Question and Accusation sheets on tables before the beginning of Act 2, to explain the role of the audience in solving the crime.
- Act 2 – The Evidence – approximately 12 minutes.
- Break – second course.
- Clue Sheets placed on tables before the beginning of Act 3.
- Act 3 – More Evidence – approximately 10 minutes.
- Break – third course.
- Act 4 – Audience Question and Answer Session – approximately 12 minutes. Questioning of the suspects to be conducted by Fairy Nuff, who will take questions from the audience and direct the suspects to answer. At the end of the questioning, Fairy Nuff will ask the audience to write down ‘whodunnit’ on the question and accusation sheets.
- Break – coffee and tea.
- The question and accusation sheets are collected and evaluated, and the winning table chosen.
- Act 5 – The Reveal – approximately 10 minutes.
- The winning table is announced.

### *Setting the Scene*

As the guests arrive at the reception party, the panto personalities mingle with them and make small talk while they wait for the newlyweds. During the conversations, they drop in personal connections but don’t go into detail.

For example...

**Narrator:** I’m new to the job, I think you’ll find I’m quite an efficient storyteller.

**Snow White:** Charming is used goods. He’s had more girlfriends than I’ve had hot dinners!

**Buttons:** Cinderella looks beautiful today. The prince is so punching above his weight, she’s far too good for him.

**Fairy Nuff:** Fairy Nuff is my name and happy ever after is my aim. Oops, sorry, I’m always slipping into rhyme. It’s a hazard of the job, I’m afraid.

**King Rat:** I’m a republican, myself. I don’t generally attend these ridiculous royal gatherings. They’re just a bunch of egotists, blowing their own trumpets!

**Twankee:** My husband, Frankie, loved a wedding. Sadly, he’s no longer with us. My son, Aladdin, is a good boy; he looks after me.

### *Audience Questioning*

The unscripted Question and Answer Session, in Act 4, is to be conducted by Fairy Nuff. All six suspects are seated on the stage, facing the audience. Fairy Nuff stands at the podium and acts as the go-between, taking questions from the audience and directing them to the relevant suspects to answer. The questioning should take around twelve minutes, with one question from each table, followed by any further questions by raising hands.

It will be down to Fairy Nuff to draw this act to a close by asking each table to write down “Whodunnit” on the question and accusation sheets, along with any additional suspects involved in the murder and a brief description of how and why.

The sheets will then be collected in after the coffee break. They should be assessed – either at the end of the break or during Act 5 – so that, at the end of Act 5, Fairy Nuff can announce the winning table and present them with the certificate.

# Once Upon a Murder

[Script Extract]

## Act 1

(As the guests arrive at the reception party, the panto personalities mingle with them and make small talk while they wait for the newlyweds.)

(The head table is onstage facing the audience and set with seven places. A podium stands stage left. When all the guests have arrived, Buttons excuses himself and goes to the head table.)

(The Narrator then makes his way onto stage, announces that the bride and groom are due to arrive, and requests that everyone take their seats. The panto personalities sit at the head table. From stage left: Widow Twankee, King Rat, Fairy Nuff, two empty chairs for Charming and Cinderella, Buttons, Snow White. The Narrator goes to stand at the podium, and taps a crystal glass with a silver spoon to get the attention of the room.)

**Narrator:** Good evening, and welcome to this magnificent ball to celebrate the marriage of Prince Charming and Cinderella. I am your narrator for the proceedings. Earlier today, Charming and Cinderella made a vow – to have and to hold, for richer, for poorer, till death us do part. We come together now to celebrate their happy ever after. Please welcome the bride and groom.

(SFX: Royal fanfare. Charming and Cinderella enter.)

**Charming:** Thank you, loyal subjects.

(They take their seats.)

**Narrator:** Their story began once upon a time in the land of Far Far Away at a ball much like this, when a prince...

**Charming:** (Interrupts.) A handsome prince.

**Narrator:** When a handsome prince met a lovely girl called Cinderella, who lived with her stepmother and two ugly stepsisters.

**Snow White:** That's well savage!

**Narrator:** I don't write this stuff, I just read it. It was love at first sight, but the path of true love rarely runs smoothly in panto. To the prince's dismay, Cinderella disappeared at midnight, leaving only a glass slipper. Undeterred, he searched the kingdom until he found his love, and despite her dubious family connections, he proposed, and she accepted.

**Charming:** (Stands.) I'll take over from here, Mr Narrator. Loyal subjects, thank you for coming to celebrate my...

(Cinderella nudges Charming.)

**Charming:** Sorry, *our* special day. I'm especially grateful to my distinguished guests – Snow White, Fairy Nuff, King Rat and Widow Twankee – for putting aside their differences to be here.

**Buttons:** A-hem.

**Charming:** (Waves hand dismissively.) Oh yes, and Buttons, my butler.

**Buttons:** I'm not your but...

**Charming:** (Interrupts.) Snow White, you'll always hold a special place in my heart, and had I not met Cinderella, who knows what might have been.

**Snow White:** (Sweetly.) I had a lucky escape!

**Charming:** King Rat, we may not see eye to eye on political issues, and we'll never agree on the future of the monarchy. In fact, why are you here?

**King Rat:** I never turn down a free meal.

**Charming:** Of course! Widow Twankee, it's good to see you back in Far Far Away after that nasty business with your dear departed husband.

**Twankee:** (Sniffs.) My Frankie loved a wedding!

**Charming:** And Fairy Nuff, no fairy tale party is complete without a good fairy!

**Fairy:** Too right!

**Charming:** Cinderella, it's every girl's dream to meet a handsome prince and sweep him off his feet. From the moment we met at that ball, we were destined to be together.

(Snow White lets out a snort of disgust, which Charming ignores.)

**Charming:** It wasn't all plain sailing, and you certainly led me a merry dance when you disappeared without so much as a goodbye, but here we are! A toast... to my beautiful bride.

**(Charming raises his glass, but puts it down without drinking. He sits down.)**

**Cinderella:** **(Stands.)** Thank you, Charming. I am a lucky girl! What a journey it's been, from scullery maid to princess. I only wish my stepmother could've been here to see me.

**Snow White:** **(Aside.)** She must be turning in her grave.

**Cinderella:** I beg your pardon?

**Snow White:** You may have everyone else fooled, Cinderella, but not me.

**Cinderella:** What are you talking about, Snow White?

**Snow White:** Your stepmother's sudden demise.

**Cinderella:** What are you implying?

**Snow White:** It's rather suspicious that she died after eating *your* homemade pumpkin soup.

**Cinderella:** How could I know she was allergic to pumpkin?

**Snow White:** You honestly expect us to believe it was an allergy?

**Cinderella:** Yes.

**Snow White:** Do you know how rare a pumpkin allergy is?

**Cinderella:** No.

**Snow White:** One in a million.

**Cinderella:** How do you know?

**Snow White:** I googled it. Besides, who makes pumpkin soup?

**Cinderella:** I had a spare pumpkin.

**Snow White:** A spare pumpkin?

**Cinderella:** I don't have to explain myself to you, Snow White. If you can't say anything nice, then don't say anything at all.

**Snow White:** **(Thinks.)** Nothing comes to mind.

**(Snow White sits down and turns her back on Charming and Cinderella.)**

**Cinderella:** Where was I? **(Raises her glass.)** Oh yes, to married life and being mistress of my own palace. Here's to us, Charming!

**(Charming raises his glass, but puts it down without drinking.)**

**Charming:** Thanks, babe. Let's hit the dance floor.

**Narrator:** Your Majesty, what about your guests?

**Charming:** They can find their own dance partners.

**Narrator:** Sire, your guests wish to offer their congratulations.

**Charming:** Really?

**Narrator:** That's generally how it works.

**Charming:** Fine, make it quick.

**Narrator:** King Rat, you may proceed.

**(King Rat stands and walks round to the front of the table.)**

**King Rat:** I'm not usually one for royal ceremonies – it's all a load of pomp and circumstance!

But as I'm here, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you every happiness. **(Wistfully.)** To find true love and raise a family together is a joy and a blessing, you're lucky to have one another.

**(Raises his glass.)** To the happy couple.

**(Charming raises his glass, but puts it down without drinking.)**

**Charming:** What a touching speech, King Rat. And here was I thinking you were the happy-go-lucky bachelor about town.

**King Rat:** Looks can be deceiving. **(Sits down.)**

**Charming:** Who's next?

**Narrator:** Widow Twankee, please take the floor.

**Twankee:** Take it where?

**Narrator:** To offer your felicitations.

**Twankee:** Oh, yes. **(Stands, walks to front of table. To Narrator.)** Have we met before?

**Narrator:** I don't think so.

**Twankee:** I've been doing this a long time; I thought I knew all the narrators.

...

**[Continued in the full Murder Mystery pack.]**