



A Dinner Theatre Murder Mystery
by
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Customer Taster

The Mysterious Murder at the Murder Mystery

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About This Pack

The Mysterious Murder at the Murder Mystery is a scripted murder mystery set at an amdram society's rehearsal, over two acts, with approximately 55 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 nine actors in a venue with a stage or suitable acting area.

Structure

The full murder mystery pack contains:

- **The Organiser's Overview** [*Extract here*]
- **The Script** [*Extract here*]
- **The Accusation Sheet** - for the audience to enter their solutions

Organiser's Overview Contents

- Synopsis
- Character Descriptions
- General Staging Notes
 - Suggested Show Timings
 - Notes on Audience Participation
- Production Notes
 - Props List
 - Stage Settings
 - Costume
 - Music Notes

Synopsis

It's the final rehearsal of the North Undersfield Theatrical Society's performance of 'The Murder Mystery', but things are not going quite as well as they could be, with a combination of actors with egos, secrets known and kept, and a dead body. How will the cast and crew cope with the revelations after the untimely death of one of their founding members? Surely nothing else can go wrong? Or can it?

Stage Settings

The setting throughout is a stage. There must be a table and wheeled chair (for Bob) at the start of Act One. Otherwise, it doesn't really matter how the stage is set, but allow space for seating of the characters during the remaining scenes.

Character Descriptions

Bob – A dead body. Sorry, but he is. He should be played by an older person. (In Act Two, Scene Two, Bob is revealed to, in fact, be alive, and so this is a speaking role.)

Jenny – A lovable but scatty character. She has a good heart and a loud voice.

Oscar – Over the top. He is very loud when acting and hams up all his lines. He has little or no time for anyone else. He should be played by an older man (he needs to be old enough to have a son of working age).

Felicity – Another actor who can be over the top; she knows she is a good actress and knows she should be doing more. She is well-spoken and well presented.

Amanda – Oscar's wife. Quite reserved, she knows about Oscar's past and present, but also knows she is stuck with him.

Sophie – Front of house manager. Quite an independent lady, but she has her secrets. She doesn't spend much time with the cast as she's busy with front of house, but she gets on well with Jenny.

Jason – A younger man, who recently joined the drama group. He shows signs of talent and is quite independent.

Chris – Director of the group. He is at the end of his tether, but he keeps going. He can come across as sarcastic at times.

Inspector Abbott – The investigating officer. Typical detective, he trusts nobody and believes only in his own instinct.

Number of Speeches per Character

Chris: 110 (18%)

Jenny: 108 (18%)

Bob: 8 (1%)

Felicity: 79 (13%)

Oscar: 65 (10%)

Jason: 44 (7%)

Amanda: 44 (7%)

Sophie: 43 (7%)

Abbott: 91 (15%)

General Staging Notes

This play is set in the present day and is performed by nine actors (4M, 4F, 1 either). It is set out over two acts with approximately 55 minutes of scripted dialogue.

There is an interval to allow for audience to enjoy a meal and/or drinks and time given for audience questions and deliberation before the final scene. The final scene contains the reveal.

Timing

Act One – approximately 30 minutes.

Scene One: 15 minutes

Scene Two: 15 minutes

Interval – as required.

Act Two – approximately 40 minutes if including full audience participation.

Scene One: 20 minutes

Audience Questions and deliberation: 10-15 minutes

Scene Two: 5 minutes

Audience Participation

In Act Two, there is a break between Scene One and Two for audience questioning and deliberation, followed by filling in of Accusation Sheets.

Consider how you want audience participation to work. It is usually better if you have teams or tables rather than normal theatre-type seating if your venue is suited to this. If you want to allow your audience to ask your characters questions, then make sure you give them some paper and pens at the start of the evening so they can take notes. You may also want to explain before the show starts that there will be a chance for one question per team later in the play, so they can start thinking during the performance. Or you can leave the pens, paper and explanatory note on the tables.

During audience questions, all characters who are not the murderer should speak the truth as they know it, or as it is perceived. Remember to rehearse the sort of questions you might be asked. It's a fun evening, so there may be some odd questions based on am dram performances and rehearsals – luckily, you should be okay with them! Try to think about what may be asked and come up with some answers so you have them to hand. Don't forget that, unless you are using a roving microphone, sometimes it is difficult for everyone in a hall to hear audience questions, so it is always a good idea for Abbott to repeat the question to the character, e.g. "A good question there from table seven for Jenny – how heavy was the pickaxe?"

There is an example Accusation Sheet in this pack; these should be given out for the audience to complete after the questioning session. Once the questioning is complete, the Inspector should announce that there will be approximately ten minutes for deliberation, after which the sheets will be collected. After his announcement, the stage curtains should close and the characters can leave the stage.

You could ask your backstage staff to give out and collect sheets. If you are not including audience questioning, then make sure that, when you give out the sheets, the audience know how long they have to deliberate. At the end of the allowed time, gather in the answer sheets. Make sure you know who the winning team is before you start the final scene, because the Inspector will need to announce it!

The Mysterious Murder at the Murder Mystery

[Script Extract]

Act One

Scene One – Great acting, Bob

(Stage setting throughout is a village hall, with stage set for a play which itself can be as basic or elaborate as you like. There should be a table or desk with a wheeled chair.)

(Enter Chris, front of curtain, or at the front of the hall, not onstage – whichever is best for your setting. He is holding his copy of the script.)

Chris: Curtains please, Jenny. (Pause.) Jenny! Jenny! Are you there, Jenny?

(Enter Jenny, front of curtain, on the opposite side to Chris.)

Jenny: Yes Chris, I'm here.

Chris: Well, open the curtains then!

Jenny: Oh, sorry, I didn't hear you. I had my earpiece in. I was expecting to hear your instruction through that.

Chris: Jenny, how do you have an earpiece in? I didn't even think they'd been delivered yet?

Jenny: Oh yes, sorry, Chris, the kit arrived this afternoon, I just haven't given them out yet. I was trying mine first to see if it worked.

Chris: And?

Jenny: Well, it doesn't work.

Chris: And why do you think that is, Jenny?

Jenny: I don't know, Chris, I'm not technically minded. But I have switched it off and switched it back on again. That's what my nephew tells me to do with my computer at home, it seems to work.

Chris: Jenny, have you ever thought the reason it doesn't work is because nobody else is using it?

Jenny: Why would other people be using my computer anyway? Oh my goodness! Have I been hijacked?

Chris: Hacked, Jenny, the word is hacked. And no, I didn't mean your computer, I meant your... Oh, for goodness' sake, we'll be here all night at this rate, just open the curtains, Jenny. Please!

Jenny: Okay, Chris, I'll do that now, shall I?

Chris: Yes please, Jenny. Now.

Jenny: Do you want me to say two minutes or anything like that, Chris?

Chris: No, Jenny, you've already done that, five minutes ago.

Jenny: Rightio, I'll just open the curtains then.

(Jenny exits.)

Chris: (Shaking head in disbelief. Under his breath.) Preferably within this millennium.

(Speaking normally.) Okay, ready everyone? Jenny, open the curtains please.

(Curtains open. Bob – the dead body – is on the chair, slumped on the desk, with a knife sticking out of his back. There is a noticeable pause.)

Chris: Georgiana! Georgiana! Oh, for goodness' sake, where is Felicity?

(Felicity wanders onto stage.)

Felicity: I'm here, Chris, I'm here, no need to shout. I just had to go to the ladies' room and there was no soap in the dispenser, at least none of the nice stuff, only the cheap one, and I can't use that on my delicate skin. So I had to go to the gents of all places to get some soap, but there wasn't any there either, not that I honestly expected the gents to have any Molton Brown, so I had to break into the caretaker's cupboard. Well, I got Jason to do that, and luckily there was some in there. Then I had to go and find an anti-bac wipe to clean the door handles – I mean, you can't be too careful these days, can you? Goodness alone knows who has been using the soap in the gents and what they might pick up, and as for what's in that cupboard, goodness alone knows why he keeps a pickaxe in there.
(Looks down at the body. Rather condescendingly.) Oh, great acting skills, Bob, your best yet. I can't even see you breathing. Excellent work.

Chris: Are you ready now, Felicity?

Felicity: Yes, Chris. Of course, but to be honest, I didn't hear Jenny tell us we were starting.

Jenny: **(Sticks head out from offstage.)** Sorry, Felicity, I said it into the microphone.

Felicity: What microphone?

Jenny: The new microphone headset thingies. They arrived today.

Felicity: Well, how come none of the cast have them?

Chris: Nobody else has them, Jenny is testing hers.

Felicity: Well, that's a bit daft if just one person is testing. Honestly, Chris, you make some strange decisions as director sometimes, but this takes the biscuit. Jenny, darling, can you just shout for now until we get our units?

Jenny: **(Off.)** Yes, of course, Felicity. **(Comes onto stage. Shouting.)** Places please, everyone! **(Exits.)**

Chris: **(Shaking head in disbelief.)** Thank you, Jenny. Felicity, please, from the top.

Felicity: I'll just go off and come on again, shall I?

Chris: Yes, please do, Felicity.

Felicity: Are you going to shout "action" or anything like that?

Chris: No. Felicity, your cue is the curtain opening.

Felicity: But it's already open.

Chris: Yes, well, just pretend it isn't please.

Felicity: And then pretend it is?

Chris: Yes.

Felicity: I think I can manage that. **(Exits.)**

Chris: Well, that's one achievement anyway.
(Enter Felicity.)

Felicity: **(Overacting.)** Oh my goodness! David! David! Someone please help, David's been stabbed! **(Goes over to Bob and grabs his wrist.)** Oh, my poor, poor darling David. Who could do this to... **(Drops the wrist, screams loudly, steps back, looking at the body, in shock.)**

Chris: Watch your timing on that scream, Felicity.
(Enter Oscar.)

Oscar: What is all that dreadful racket going on? I say, Georgiana, what's happened to David?

Felicity: He's... he's... he's...

Jenny: **(Prompting from offstage.)** Dead.

Oscar: Ruddy Nora, Felicity, it's not difficult, is it? One line, a dead body in front of you, the clue is staring at you.

Chris: Thank you, Oscar. Felicity, a bit too much drama there, I think you can probably say dead after the second "he's". From the top please, everyone, let's try that again.

Jenny: **(Sticks head out from offstage.)** Do you want me to close the curtains, Chris?

Chris: No Jenny, no, leave them open. Let's start from Georgiana's entrance, please.
(Exit Oscar. Felicity doesn't move and continues to stare at the body.)

Chris: Felicity? Start again please?

Felicity: He's... he's... dead!

Chris: No, Felicity, we're going from your entrance please. From the top.

Felicity: No. He's dead!

Chris: Yes, I know that, but please take it from the top. Poor Bob will get stuck if we leave him there too long.

Felicity: He's pretty stuck where he is now, Chris!

Chris: Why? You're all right, aren't you, Bob? Great acting by the way, Bob, best yet. From here, I can't even see you breathing. Great acting!

Felicity: The reason you can't see him breathing, Chris, is because he's dead!

(Enter Oscar.)

Oscar: What's going on? Why aren't we restarting?

Felicity: He's dead. I mean, really dead. At least, I think he is.

Oscar: Oh, for goodness' sake, Felicity, get your lines right, we're onstage in two days. Great acting, Bob, by the way, very convincing. Make-up looks very realistic. Look, Felicity, see? **(Goes behind the body and kicks it.)** Bob? Bob? Why aren't you moving, Bob?

Chris: He's acting.

Oscar: **(Looking more closely at the body.)** Ruddy Nora. She's right, I think he's really dead.

Chris: What?

(Enter Jason, Amanda, and Jenny.)

Amanda: Who's dead?

Felicity: Bob.

Amanda: Isn't he's supposed to be?

Oscar: Oh, pay attention, woman, he's *really* dead!

Jason: What? **(Goes behind the body and kicks it.)** Oh my god, he's dead!

Felicity: That's what I've been telling you! Chris! Do something!

Chris: **(Goes onto stage, goes behind the body, kicks it.)** Bob? Bob? Oh, good grief. I think he's dead.

Felicity: } **(Together.)**

Oscar: } That's what we've been telling you!

Jason: }

Jenny: Oh my goodness, oh no, poor Bob! What should we do?

Chris: I don't know. Sort it out, will you, Jenny?

Jenny: Me? Why do I have to sort it out?

Amanda: Because you're our official first aider.

Oscar: I'm no doctor, but I'm not sure a first aider will be much use now. I don't think even Lazarus could come back from that.

Chris: Just... just sort it please, Jenny. You do all the health and safety stuff.

Jenny: Of course, Chris, of course. I'll see what to do. **(Exits.)**

Amanda: What are we going to do?

Oscar: We could get a dummy.

Felicity: A what?

Oscar: A dummy.

Jason: I've got something at home we could use.

Oscar: What is it, Jason? A blow-up doll?

Jason: Of course it's not a blow-up doll, Oscar! We don't all have your hobbies, you know. Sorry, Amanda, no offence meant.

Amanda: None taken. But I actually meant what are we going to do about Bob, not how are we going to replace Bob for the play.

(Everyone watches as Jenny enters with a blanket and places it over the body, then exits.)

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[Continued in the full Murder Mystery pack.]