



A Dinner Theatre Murder Mystery
by

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Customer Taster

The Great British Bump-Off

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About this pack

This is a scripted murder evening that will also require the cast to answer questions put to them by their audience. The full pack includes the full script as well as “accusation sheets” for the audience to write their answers.

This show is mostly a **scripted performance**, with **two** possible endings. This enables the performance to be shown on two nights without the risk of anyone in the first audience giving the game away to someone in the second audience. If the script is being performed for one night, your group can simply pick which one you would prefer to perform. There is also opportunity to **interact with the audience** between Acts and for the audience to question the suspects.

The murder evening is designed to be played by ten actors in a hall with a stage or suitable acting area, with tables around the hall for your audience. The actors perform one act with three scenes, followed by an interval, and a second act with two scenes. The audience, divided into teams/tables, are then invited to ask the suspects questions, and are given time to solve the mystery before the guilty party is revealed. There is an optional sing-along at the end of the performance.

Structure

The full murder mystery pack contains:

- **The Organiser’s Overview** (extract in this document)
- **The Script** - (extract in this document)
- **The Accusation Sheet** - for the audience to enter their solutions

Organiser’s Overview Contents

- Synopsis
- Character Descriptions
- General Staging Notes – Brief description of each step of the production
- Event Guide - Suggested Show Timings
- Production Notes
- Props List
- Set Descriptions
- Costume Notes
- Song suggestion

Synopsis

As baking fever hits the country, the village fete organisers in the usually sleepy village of Crabblebottom are delighted when celebrity chef Eduardo D’Angelo takes up residence in the village and agrees to judge the annual cake baking competition. But this year there is a change of plan, as the bake-off turns into a bump-off.

Character Descriptions

Major Gordon Watt - an elderly man, a bit absent minded and deaf at times. He is a well-presented ex-army officer who heads up the Fete committee.

Philip Stanton - member of the Fete committee, married to Hilary. He is quite outgoing and loud at times, but devoted to his wife.

Hilary Stanton - member of the committee. Ardent baker and determined to succeed in her own business to prove she doesn’t live in her husband’s shadow.

Patricia McLaren - current judge of the cake competition and member of the committee. She is generally not liked in the village, but has lots of influence. Always well dressed and groomed.

Eduardo D’Angelo - Celebrity chef who has recently moved to the village. He has a persona that comes across as a bit of a ladies man and a charmer in front of his fans/an audience/in public. But he has a hidden past.

Caroline Fountain - one of the bakers. A traditional type and has lived in the village for a long time. Generally well liked, and a huge fan of Eduardo D’Angelo.

Sarah Mead - a bit new-age in appearance. She is treated with some suspicion by some of the villagers after the disappearance of her husband.

Detective Sam Nelson - investigating officer who happens to be at the Fete. (The character can be male or female).

Sophie - villager and baker.

Maisie - villager and baker.

Optional **Extras** may be called for in certain scenes to give the impression of a busy fete, though they do not have any speaking parts and will not affect the story in any way.

Number of Speeches per Character

Major: 88 (22%)

Philip: 33 (8%)

Hilary: 33 (8%)

Patricia: 60 (15%)

Eduardo: 66 (16%)

Caroline: 27 (6%)

Sarah: 24 (6%)

Sophie: 6 (1%)

Maisie: 10 (2%)

Sam: 46 (11%)

General Staging Notes

The script should be rehearsed and memorised beforehand by your chosen actors. The script has two possible endings, thus allowing for two consecutive performances, or for the performing group to select which ending they prefer for one performance.

It is a good idea to rehearse every probable questions that the characters may be asked.

It is suggested that you provide each table or audience team with note paper and pens so they can take notes through the performance.

Interrogation

In Act 2, Scene 2, Sam will invite questions from the audience. Depending on the size of your audience/number of teams, etc., you may want to restrict this to one question per table. Make it clear to the audience before starting the question session what the format will be.

Only the murderer is allowed to lie! All other characters should tell the truth as they know it from their character's view point. Sam may need to start the ball rolling or give the audience some ideas for questions. For example, ask Caroline why she needed to go to the second tent to see Patricia when other people were already there? Ask Philip why he went to the second tent? Ask the Major why he didn't tell the police that Patricia was blackmailing him?

Remember that in a large hall, some people's questions may not be heard by other tables/team, so it is always a good idea to repeat the question, maybe by saying something along the lines of "A good question. Major, would you like to explain why you didn't go to the police when Patricia started blackmailing you?"

Deliberation

A cast member will give out an accusation sheet to each team or table. These sheets have a space for the audience to write down who committed the murder and their motive, as well as a space for a team/table name. An example of this is on the final page of these notes. Allow adequate time for audience to reach conclusion, see suggested timings. At the end of the allowed time the cast collect in sheets and give to Sam off stage. There is no change in set needed.

Event Guide

Suggested Show Timing

The total time is approximately two hours. Allow time between scenes for any scene changes.

Act One

8:00 Scene One

8:10 Scene Two

8:20 Scene Three

8:30 Interval: Meal is served.

Act Two

9:00 Scene One

9:10 Scene Two, Audience Q&A

9:35 Audience Deliberation

9:55 Scene Three (Ending and optional sing-along)

Production Notes

Costumes Notes

Bakers should be wearing aprons in the Fete scenes.

The Major should be well-presented but not in any uniform. A country gent appearance will suffice. He will need an outdoor coat for Act one, scenes one and two.

Patricia should be well dressed and well-groomed at all times. She will need an outdoor coat for Act one, scene one.

Eduardo should be smart during the Fete scenes, but in his house scene he can be dressed in a more relaxed way.

Caroline is supposed to be quite new age, so think along the lines of 70s hippy. She would have an apron for the Fete scenes.

Hilary and Philip are quite well off, so they would dress smart casual. Hilary would have an apron on for the Fete scenes. They will need outdoor coats for Act one, scene one.

Sarah, Sophie and Maisie can wear whatever they want, though Sarah should have an apron for the Fete scenes.

Sam should not be in uniform and can be dressed smart casual.

Set Description

Act One

Scene One

Village hall setting and this can be quite basic - a long table to accommodate six people with seats both ends and facing audience. One entrance/exit only needed for this scene.

Scene Two

Eduardo's house. There should be one exit as the hallway to the front door, and one as an exit to an adjacent room. The room is sparsely populated with the appearance of someone in the process of moving in. On stage are three chairs at most, a small coffee table and a wall hanging or curtains on the opposite side of the stage to the adjacent room exit.

Scene Three

Village hall – use same table as committee scene, it should have cakes on it and maybe a plain tablecloth, the cakes should have slices removed so they look as though they have been tasted. Only one entrance/exit is needed and it should be the same one used in Scene One.

Act Two

Scene One

Fete day. The stage should be set with bunting/Fete sign, etc., and this can be as elaborate or basic as you want as the background/main setting will remain the same for the whole of this act. You can use the same table as committee scenes if it is long enough for three people to stand behind. It is decorated with a tablecloth, maybe some bunting as well and it should have 'used' cake making items on it. There should be one stage exit which is referred to as the "second tent".

Scene Two

Judging – same setting as Act Two, Scene One, but replace all the baking utensils with the three cakes for judging.

The Great British Bump-Off

Act One

Scene One - Village hall

(Lights up on Major, who is seated at a table shuffling papers. Maisie and Sophie are seated nearby chatting inaudibly.)

Major: Well, if they don't get here soon we'll have to carry on without them. This Fete doesn't organise itself you know!

(Enter Philip and Hilary in outdoor clothing.)

Philip: Sorry we're late Major. The old girl just doesn't like coming out in this weather. (Removes coat and sits down.)

Major: (Looking at Hilary.) Why not? She's got a coat hasn't she?

Hilary: (Laughing and removing coat.) He means the car Major! Although sometimes I think he cares more about the car than he does about me! (Sits down.)

(Enter Patricia in outdoor clothing.)

Philip: (To Hilary.) Impossible my love, I think of you all the time. And I bought you that beautiful coat so you wouldn't catch a chill when you're out on nights like these.

Patricia: Make a habit of going out at nights do you Hilary? You've not taken another job to pay for that wreck have you?

Hilary: My husband is not a wreck Patricia!

Patricia: I meant the car. (Removes her coat and sits down.)

Philip: Steady on! It's an E-type you know.

Patricia: (Glances at Hilary's chest.) Looks more like double A or B at best to me.

Hilary: (Insulted) Huh!

Major: Wonderful, wonderful! Let's all get down to business shall we? Now then, I have some very exciting news about the baking competition this year.

Sophie: Paul Hollywood is coming?

Maisie: Ooo... that would be nice.

(Sophie and Maisie giggle between each other.)

Major: Not quite, but I'm delighted to say that the celebrity chef Eduardo D'Angelo has moved into the Palmer's place on the outskirts of the village and has kindly agreed to judge this year's competition!

Sophie: Oh shame, I would have preferred Paul Hollywood.

Maisie: On toast? With honey?

(Sophie and Maisie start giggling again.)

Patricia: What?

Major: Yes?

Patricia: No, not Watt, what. What did you just say?

Philip: He said Eduardo D'Angelo has moved into the...

Patricia: (Interrupting him.) I heard what he said!

Hilary: Then why did you ask him to repeat it?

Patricia: Who is this Eduardo D'Angelo and why is he judging the competition? I always judge the competition! Who are you to change the judges?

Philip: He's the chairman Patricia. He can do pretty much whatever he wants.

Patricia: Over my dead body!

Hilary: (Quietly) That can be arranged.

Patricia: (To Hilary.) What did you say?

Hilary: I said that would be a shame.

Major: Patricia, Patricia... Mr D'Angelo will be judging with you, not instead of you. I thought you would be happy.

Patricia: No, not really. But as long as I have the deciding vote.

Maisie: Who does she think she is? Len Goodman?

Sophie: No... She's not got the walnuts for that.

Maisie: True... but she's often pickled!

(Maisie and Sophie both start giggling again until they see Patricia staring at them.)

Major: Of course Patricia, of course, whatever you want. Now, let's keep this official. A show of hands please for those in favour of having Mr D'Angelo as a guest judge for the baking competition.

(They all raise their hands except Patricia.)

Major: Patricia?

Patricia: Oh, okay then. **(Slowly raises her hand.)**

Major: Excellent! All hands on deck to get this show on the road, and as I always say...

Patricia: }

Philip } **(Together, bored)**

Hilary: } Your Fete awaits you.

Sophie: }

Maisie: }

Major: Indeed it does! Indeed it does.

(All start to pack up papers and pens from table in front of them.)

(Major is busy putting things away, stands up to get his coat on and does not pay attention to what is going on for the next few lines.)

Hilary: I can't wait to meet Eduardo D'Angelo and hear what he thinks of my cakes.

Patricia: It depends how often he shops at the Co-Op.

Hilary: What are you trying to say Patricia?

Patricia: I'm just saying that your Strawberry and White Chocolate cake last year looked remarkably like something from the Co-Op.

Hilary: How dare you!

Philip: I say Patricia, that's uncalled for. Hilary spent a lot of time on that cake last year.

Hilary: It took a lot of skill and effort.

(Major now pays attention to what is going on.)

Patricia: Why? Was the Co-Op closed?

Major: Is it ever?

Philip: Is what ever?

Major: The Co-Op. Is it ever closed?

Hilary: I didn't buy it from the Co-Op!

Major: Didn't buy what?

Philip: The cake.

Major: What cake?

Patricia: Her entry last year.

Major: I say, Hilary, you shouldn't be buying cakes you know it's against the rules. You may lose your place on the committee for that.

Hilary: **(Standing up, annoyed.)** What? But I didn't buy it, I made it!

Philip: Look here Patricia, I think you should say sorry to Hilary – it was only a joke wasn't it?

Hilary: It had better be. If anyone thought that I bought cakes my business would be ruined. Bakes and Buns has taken a long time to set up and establish. The last thing I need is for some stupid rumour to get out that I buy the cakes in.

Philip: That's not going to happen is it Patricia. It was a joke.

Patricia: Of course Philip. Hilary, you need to buy a sense of humour when you're out shopping next. Maybe they sell them in the Co-Op. **(She stands up to leave.)**

Major: Righty-o then, see you at Mr D'Angelo's Patricia. The rest of you we will no doubt see at the preliminary stage in the village hall. That should be tasty when the judging is done, I do love a bit of Tiffin myself!

(Sophie and Maisie giggle again.)

Philip: **(Stands up and blocks Patricia's way.)** I won't let anyone ruin Hilary's business. Do I make myself clear Patricia? If you try to ruin her, you won't know what's hit you.

Patricia: **(Laughing)** Well let's just hope it's not one of your wife's cakes!

Philip: (To Hilary.) I'll just go start the car dear. See you out there. **(He picks up his coat and exits.)**

Hilary: **(Moves to block Patricia's exit.)** You may think you are the Queen Bee around here Patricia, but when a bee stings they die. Just be careful who you sting! **(Puts on her coat ready to leave.)**

Patricia: Is that some sort of idle threat?

Maisie: **(Looking at Hilary.)** Nope, she's stood up.

(Exit Hilary.)

Patricia: She's barking mad that one and her husband's no better. Anyone would think cake baking was a matter of life and death! **(Picks up coat then speaks to Sophie and Maisie.)** Last one out turn out lights. **(Exits.)**

(Exit Maisie and Sophie.)

(Lights and Curtain closes.)

[The full script carries on with Scene 2, etc.]