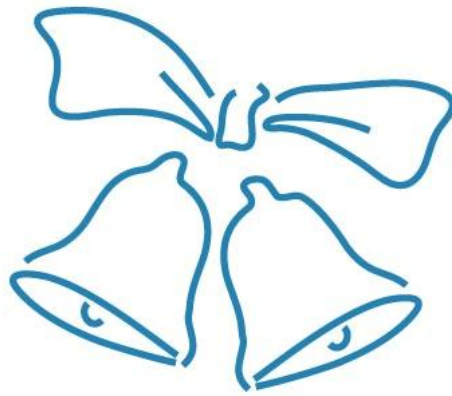


The Wedding Reception



*A Murder Mystery Pack
by*

Archie Wilson

Customer Taster, Extracted from the main pack

Published by Lazy Bee Scripts

The Wedding Reception

A Murder Mystery

Copyright 2008 by Archie Wilson

Dillon Jackson and Lindi Armitage have just been married. Not everyone is happy about the union, particularly Dillon's father Bob Jackson, an obnoxious egotistic tyrant. As skeletons tumble from cupboards one of the wedding party gets their comeuppance. Enter super sleuth Sherbert Holmes to help the guests solve a dastardly murder!

COPYRIGHT REGULATIONS

This play is protected under the Copyright laws of the British Commonwealth of Nations and all countries of the Universal Copyright Conventions.

All rights, including Stage, Motion Picture, Video, Radio, Television, Public Reading, and Translations into Foreign Languages, are strictly reserved.

No part of this publication may lawfully be transmitted, stored in a retrieval system, or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, manuscript, typescript, recording, including video, or otherwise, without prior consent of Lazy Bee Scripts.

A licence, obtainable only from Lazy Bee Scripts, must be acquired for every public or private performance of a script published by Lazy Bee Scripts and the appropriate royalty paid. If extra performances are arranged after a licence has already been issued, it is essential that Lazy Bee Scripts are informed immediately and the appropriate royalty paid, whereupon an amended licence will be issued.

The availability of this script does not imply that it is automatically available for private or public performance, and Lazy Bee Scripts reserve the right to refuse to issue a licence to perform, for whatever reason. Therefore a licence should always be obtained before any rehearsals start.

Localisation and updating of this script is permitted, particularly where indicated in the script. Major revisions to the text may not be made without the permission of Lazy Bee Scripts.

The name of the author must be displayed on all forms of advertising and promotional material, including posters, programmes and hand bills.

Photocopying of this script constitutes an infringement of copyright unless consent has been obtained from Lazy Bee Scripts and an appropriate fee has been paid.

FAILURE TO ABIDE BY ALL THE ABOVE REGULATIONS, CONSTITUTES AN INFRINGEMENT OF THE COPYRIGHT LAWS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

*Published by Lazy Bee Scripts,
www.lazybeescripts.co.uk*

About this pack

The full pack should provide everything you need to stage your own Murder Mystery.

It is intended for use at a three course sit down meal where the principle characters will act out a set of events to the assembled guests.

Please remember from the outset that this pack is intended for an **improvised performance** although there are set lines for some characters.

Your cast must use the information provided to develop their characters, their “back stories” and improvise the action when and where the situation arises.

They must stay in character from the moment the guests arrive until the plot is complete and the murderer is unmasked

This means that your performers are less constrained and restricted, can react and interact with each other and the guests at will and have a lot more fun!

This includes:

A plot overview

General staging notes on how to plan your murder mystery event

Character overview including **motive** and **opportunity** to murder the victim

Questions to be asked by DCI Holmes and responses for each character

Denouement by DCI Holmes

Table cards listing characters as information for your guests and

“Whodunnit” sheets for guests to complete are also included with this pack.

Plot Overview

At the wedding of Dillon Jackson to Lindi Armitage, the following people are present:

Lindi Jackson (née Armitage)

Dillon Jackson: Just wed to Lindi

Bob Jackson: Father of the groom

Sophie Jackson: Mother of the groom

Gerald Armitage: Father of the bride

Marjorie Armitage: Mother of the bride

John Greengrass: Best Man

Isobel Cranforth: Bridesmaid

Penny Clithero: Bridesmaid

General Staging Notes

Casting / rehearsal

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

You should hold as many rehearsals as required depending on experience of performers.

The first rehearsal should concentrate on reading through this 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 using the basic character analysis sheets as a base. At the second rehearsal these should be read out by each performer in character.

As it is impossible to rehearse the whole event without that all-important audience to react to, you should concentrate on cementing motives and relationships within the group. These can be rehearsed by the performers, more to prove they can improvise and keep up a convincing performance than word for word content!

DCI Holmes can use a notepad from which to read the set questions and denouements.

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 victims will also use this room once deceased!

The performers will be given the same food as the guests but will be served by members of the wedding party and will eat first as part of the “Wedding Breakfast”.

It would be sensible to check the facilities before the event to make sure sufficient space is available to stage the “Interrogation” by DCI Holmes.

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 the event is staged in a hall or private venue you could lay-on a simpler meal or even a table buffet. Ideally there should be a table free area in which cast and guests can mix (Pre dinner drinks) before sitting down to the meal in an area set aside for that purpose. If this is not possible guests can be shown to their tables immediately. A table for the Wedding party should be placed separately at the top of the room, raised if possible.

Suggested timetable

7.00 pm guests arrive and are greeted by wedding party at the door
7.30 pm Pre dinner drinks
8.15 pm wedding party breakfast... Murder takes place in full view
8.20 pm First course served... Cast circulate round tables
8.40 pm Main course served... arrival of DCI Sherbert Holmes
8.50 pm Interrogation by Holmes
9.30 pm Questions asked by guests
9.40 pm cast leave, guests complete "Whodunnit" forms... Sweet served
10 pm cast return... Denouement
10.30 pm End

Character Overview, Motive and Opportunity

Dillon Jackson

Not a particularly nice guy but a magnet to the girls.

Into drug dealing, typical “East Ender” mentality... reckons he can get anything for the right price.

Takes, and occasionally deals in drugs.

Manager of Kill-A-Rat pest Control Company.

A loud, brash, colourful extrovert. Although he treats his new wife reasonably well she is left with no doubt that he is in charge.

Hated (with a passion!) by both in-laws.

Idolised by John Greengrass, who is his Best Man at the wedding. Greengrass thinks Dillon is wonderful and backs him to the hilt in everything he does or says.

Isobella, one of the bridesmaids, has an ongoing affair with Dillon, his marriage notwithstanding.

Penny, the second bridesmaid, would like to have an affair with him but Dillon he is not interested and makes this quite clear to her - in no uncertain terms.

Motive

- Very bad childhood. Constantly beaten for the slightest error.
- Ridiculed and made to look and feel a fool in front of his friends and later his girlfriends.
- Is aware that his father beats his mother and that he has had many affairs of which Bob brags to his son.
- Hates the way Bob now treats Lindi.

Opportunity

- Manager of Kill-A-Rat... has access to poisons on a daily basis.
- Has all sorts of unsavoury friends through his drug dealing.
- Insists on inspecting the food before it is being served.

Pre dinner drinks (Approx. 45 mins)

(Please note that non guilty parties MUST tell the truth although they do not have to volunteer information if not asked for it. Sophie Jackson and Gerald Armitage can lie through their teeth. John Greengrass, although implicated in the murder, does not know it so MUST tell the truth.)

Guests are supposedly relatives and friends of the bride and bridegrooms families.

As is the norm with wedding receptions the wedding party line up at the door to welcome the guests as they come in. This gives them the opportunity of formally introducing themselves as well as dropping tidbits of information about themselves and the others, thus sowing the seeds of the chaos to follow!

At this point guests are offered a drink (usually Bucks Fizz!) as they exit the line.

When everybody is in, Gerald Armitage, the bride's father, welcomes them to the wedding of his daughter and tells them to enjoy themselves.

Cast and guests intermingle for approx. forty-five minutes during which time clues and red herrings are dropped to the guests.

Certain actions must take place during pre dinner drinks.

Sophie Jackson must tell John Greengrass to "go and get some drinks for the wedding party"

Greengrass must go out to the back room and reappear with a tray of **white wine** only.

Sophie must make it clear to him that her husband Bob, only drinks **red wine** and that she would fetch him a glass from the back room.

On returning she must place the red wine amongst the white wines on Greengrass's tray.

She must instruct him to make sure he gives the glass of red wine to Bob Jackson. John Greengrass must do this.

Bob Jackson is an obnoxious man and should insult all and sundry including the guests.

He is also a lecher and should try to chat up female guests. He should be particularly obnoxious towards Lindi and her family.

Sophie Jackson seems quiet and unobtrusive but she should let it be known that Bob is a violent man and has struck her in the past... She shows the bruises to prove it. She has cultivated an intimate relationship with Gerald Armitage in order to use his knowledge of pharmacy but has fallen in love with him. She wishes Bob dead because he beats her and more recently so that she would be free to marry Gerald.

John Greengrass is a simple lad and follows Dillon around like a little lap dog. He will do anything for Sophie Jackson because she has been kind to him in the past. He has no idea she is using him to affect a murder. He loathes Bob Jackson because he knows he beats Sophie Jackson and has been know to beat his son... John's hero.

Gerald Armitage has fallen hook line and sinker for Sophie, he thinks she is the answer to all his dreams he is planning to leave his wife as soon as Sophie gives the word. His motive for murder is the desire to avenge the pain inflicted upon Sophie and because she would then be free to marry her after divorcing Marjorie.

Marjorie Armitage is as quiet as a little mouse. She has no idea her husband is having an affair and is still madly in love with him. She has no motive for murder whatsoever.

Dillon is very proud of his new wife. This did not stop him having an affair with one of the bridesmaids, however, and he is desperate that Lindi doesn't find out. He hates his father because he was severely beaten as a child and he knows his dad beats his mother whom he loves dearly.

Lindi Jackson is head over heels in love with Dillon and continually looks at him through adoring eyes.

She can see no fault in him whatsoever. She has no idea he is having a relationship with Isobel Cranforth. She loathes Bob Jackson because he has continually insulted her and her family, tried to stop her marrying Dillon and made an attempt to seduce her.

Isobel Cranforth is madly jealous of Lindi despite the fact that they have been friends for years. She loves Dillon and wished that it was she marrying him and not Lindi. She deliberately engineered an intimate relationship with Dillon on the basis of "If I'm not number one I sure as hell will be number two!"

She wishes Bob Jackson dead because he has found out about her relationship with Dillon and has threatened to expose her if she doesn't sleep with him.

Penny Clithero is plain and mousy. She is also highly intelligent and she too is in love with Dillon Jackson although nobody knows but herself. Dillon is very rude to her because of her plain looks. She is a very close friend of Isobel's and knows all about Bob Jackson attempt at blackmail and seduction. She hates Bob with a passion, even more so because he constantly taunts her over her lack of looks... Particularly in front of other people, like at wedding receptions!

At the end of pre dinner drinks, Bob Jackson yells for his wedding breakfast and insists that all the wedding party sit at the top table and be served first.

As Mrs. Armitage's catering company prepared the meal she, Isobel, John Greengrass and Penny serve the others who are already seated.

After tucking in for a short while and before any guest has been served, Bob Jackson stands and makes a speech. You can use the following scripted speech or one of your own. It should be as insulting as possible!

Bob Jackson's Speech

Bob: Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen... although I can't see any ladies and the only gentleman here is standing giving a speech!

(A pause for effect. He is evidently the only person who finds this funny.)

Bob: You're probably thinking that it is customary for the Bride's father to do the first speech and you'd be right under normal circumstances but my son's new Father in Law is such a buffoon that I insisted on starting the procedures myself.

(Another pause for effect.)

Bob: I'd like to be able to say that I'm happy my boy has married Lindi but that would be a lie. He should have found himself a decent girl not some half baked lower middle class little trollop. Still, perhaps she's got other attributes I'm not aware of... At the moment anyway. **(Pause.)** I thought I'd beaten some sense into Dillon throughout his childhood but obviously not. He's as stupid now as he was whilst he was in his mothers womb, but that's to be expected, after all my wife was close to the bottom of the well when the water of intelligence was drawn.

(A pause. He's not winning them over, but he doesn't care.)

Bob: For your sakes I tried to persuade the Best man not to make a speech. Best man, ha! That's a joke. Look at him, wimp through and through. He has about as much testosterone in him as one of the bridesmaids, although Penny there looks as if she's more male than female!

(Another pause for effect.)

Bob: They say that when you start off married life you should have no secrets. Well, I would ask my son's new bride to have a little chat with her "Best Friend" the tarty Miss Cranforth... Not that I like to spread gossip! My father tried to knock sense into me when I was a boy. As you can see from my choice of wife he failed miserably. He read me a poem that I should have taken note of and didn't. I'm going to recite my boy the same poem so that he makes the right choice in his second marriage, because I'll make damned sure there is one. Getting a Wife...

When I was just a stripling lad, my Father said to me
Get yourself a wife my boy, and here's how she must be

Sufficient mouth to sweetly smile, but not enough to nag
Sufficient breast to fill your hand, but not enough to sag

Two hands to do the washing up, and bring you pots of ale
As you sit lordly on your throne, because you are the male

Brains enough to understand, the wisdom of your ways
But not enough to question them and clutter up your days

A body plump but firm and full, and good to look at too
So you can show her off all day, as she belongs to you

A wife, a nurse, a mother sweet, all rolled up into one
A mistress, whore and lover too, so you can have your fun

If you can find a girl like this, you're a very lucky lad
I fear she'll be too much for you, so bring her home to dad!

After the speech

When Bob's speech is over he utters a long, hearty laugh, then splutters, coughs and collapses. The wedding party gather round. Eventually Dillon comes to the fore and explains that there has been a terrible accident and if all the guests would please be seated and keep calm the wedding party would retire to the back room whilst the police and ambulance are called. They pick up Bob Jackson and retire to the room set aside. After a few minutes a police siren is heard.)

First course is served to the guests and during this the wedding party return and wander amongst the tables disseminating information and expressing their absolute horror at what has happened to 'poor' Bob. At the end of the meal, DCI Sherbert Holmes appears. Holmes calls all the wedding guests to the front where a semi circle of chairs has been placed before the reception started. He addresses the assembled guests.

Holmes: Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. You all witnessed the collapse and death of Mr. Bob Jackson a short while ago. My backroom staff have worked miraculously quickly to provide me with an autopsy report - which states that the cause of death was an intolerably high level of poison in his blood stream. The poison used was a derivative of Warfarin, which I'm sure you'll know as a rat and mouse killer, as well as a medically approved substance for thinning the blood. It is a relatively slow acting poison, taking up to an hour to become effective, and is odourless, tasteless and liquid soluble. The dose found in Mr. Jackson's blood was so high it caused a massive brain hemorrhage. Yes, Bob Jackson was brutally and foully murdered. It seems highly likely that one of the wedding party committed this dastardly deed and I intend to interrogate each and every one.

(Holmes calls each member to the seats at the front and proceeds to question them as below. Please note that some answers are in brackets and are obligatory although you can change the wording if you wish.)

Questions for John Greengrass

Holmes: Mr. Greengrass, you were overheard telling one of the guests that you hated Bob Jackson and would “Do him over if he wasn’t careful.” Is this true?

(Response.)

Holmes: Where do you work?

(Response.)

Holmes: Is this the same firm managed by Dillon Jackson?

(Response.)

Holmes: Do you have access to poison Mr Greengrass?

(Affirmative response.)

Holmes: Any poison in particular?

(Response: Rat poison.)

Holmes: What poison would that be?

(Response: Warfarin.)

Holmes: What sort of relationship do you have with Dillon Jackson?

(Response.)

Holmes: And Mrs Sophie Jackson?

(Response.)

Holmes: Did you have access to the food on that day?

(Response: Checked it)

Holmes: Did you have access to the drinks?

(Response: Served them)

Holmes: So you could have put something in the food or the drink!

(Response.)

Holmes: Thank you Mr. Greengrass, please sit down.

Questions for Isobelle Cranforth

Holmes: What sort of relationship did you have with Bob Jackson?

(Response: Not good.)

Holmes: Why not?

(Response: Tells of attempted blackmail)

Holmes: What was he trying to blackmail you over?

(Response: Tells of affair with Dillon)

Holmes: So you had good reason to want him out of the way!

Holmes: Where do you work?

(Response: Upper Crust Catering Co.)

Holmes: Is that the place owned by Mrs Armitage?

(Response.)

Holmes: And the company that supplied the food for the occasion?

(Response.)

Holmes: Did you prepare any of the food yourself?

(Response: The specials)

Holmes: These “Specials”. Are these the dishes brought out specifically for the wedding breakfast on the day of the murder?

(Response.)

Holmes: Do you have access to poisons or drugs Miss Cranforth

(Response: Hesitates but tells of Dillon’s drug dealing and his bragging that he “Can get anything... For a price”)

Holmes: Thank you Miss Cranforth, please be seated.