Thank you for purchasing the murder mystery game **Murder at Great Spatsby**.

**Murder at Great Spatsby** is a large group mystery requiring 8 cast (who are fully in the know, one of which is just an inspector who will read the solution at the end), use of 6 rooms, and several prop clues. The murder occurs before the guests arrive and one of the rooms they will visit will be the crime scene.

Your guests play the role of detectives. You can have any number of detectives for this mystery, your only limit is the size of your rooms, and the time you have available.

The mystery requires a lot of advance preparation, the more notice you have, and the more preparation and effort you put in to running the mystery, the better it will run for you and your guests.

These instructions consist of the following:

- Introduction to the game.
- Preparations required to run the mystery
- List of Clues / Props required for the mystery
- Cast guidelines (this is also located in a separate file for easy printing to accompany the individual cast backgrounds and scripts.)
- Final check list before running the event.

**Introduction to the game.**

This mystery is written so that it can be conducted using several smaller rooms, rather than simply one big one with stage. These rooms require decorating according to the mystery, and there is a list of clues / props which will be required in each room.

The cast are spread between the rooms available. If you are short on rooms some of the cast can double up in a room, one remaining quiet while the other recites their lines, and visa versa. If you are doing this, then make sure the ‘prop’ clues in the rooms you do not plan to use are also moved.

The cast are all required to learn their parts before the event, or at the very least have read through their background material more than once to familiarise themselves with their background, and be able to read their monologues to the guests (hiding their scripts within a prop of some kind). 5 of them have one monologue to recite, and 2 of them share a dialogue between them.

It is the role of the invited guests to act as detectives and try and solve the mystery and determine the killer. On arrival guests should be greeted and given a copy of the guest handout and an answer sheet. The guest handout contains instructions for them on how to solve the crime.
The person greeting them may want to add additional instructions depending on the venue with information on the location of specific rooms or amenities (such as toilets or refreshments). He/she should also answer any questions the guests might have.

After that, the guests simply visit all the rooms listed (sometimes more than once), listen to the cast’s speeches, review the clues and then ask the cast questions. A question for each cast member has been included in the guest hand out. The guests need to find the answer to each question to solve the crime. These questions are specific to a cast member, but which cast member they are for is not specified in the handout, which means the guests may need to ask several different questions to get the response they need. Guests can also ask any other questions they like to help them solve the case. The cast will either answer these additional questions using the information they were given in their background information, or make something up if the answers are not important to the case. E.g. what is your favourite colour?

Once a guest thinks they have the solution they fill in the answer sheet and hand this back in, either to a drop box, or to some nominated person. It is up to the host to decide if these answer sheets will be used to give out prizes, and how this will be decided, e.g. first correct solution handed in, or quickest time, etc. During the event your guests will move around the rooms finding clues, listening to the cast’s monologues and asking them questions.

The mystery closes when the solution is provided by the inspector.

**Preparations**

As mentioned before, this mystery requires a lot of advance preparation. However all the extra effort you put in to running this event will be more than worth the effort.

**Time, Location and Event Format**

Before you do anything else try and fix a date for the event. Everyone involved in the preparation needs a date to work towards, and given what is involved, please set a date well in advance to give yourself ample time.

With regards to location, basically your only deciding factor is that you need several rooms. Depending on the number of guests you plan on inviting, these can be small or large. You could even rope off sections of a large room to create small sets if need be, however do make sure there is enough space between the cast that guests can hear individual monologues, i.e. they are not trying to talk over one another, competing in volume! In order words, depending on what you are doing, this mystery will suit anything from a small guest house to a major venue for a fundraising event.
Finally decide how you want your event to go. Is the mystery the main event, or just simply a side show to keep guests amused while they have food and drink. Do you want them to have food and drink during the event? If so, how are you doing it? Do you have one main room in which all guests can mingle to eat and drink, or are you spreading the menu around the different rooms?

Consider how you are inviting your guests. Will it be invitation only, or open house? Do you have enough space for them all to arrive at once? Or will you stagger arrival times? Will it be ticket only basis, e.g. for a fundraiser?

**Preparation for Mystery:**

**Cast:**

Firstly select your cast members. If you plan on running this on a grand scale, it may also be worth selecting understudies, in case of accident or illness.

Give each cast member their character information and scripts, and also a copy of the cast guidelines. Make sure they have ample time to rehearse their parts. If any struggle with memorising their scripts, then think of ways in which this can be hidden on their “stage” area, e.g. taped inside props, like a handbag.

The cast required for Murder at Great Spatsby are:

- **Ginger Bodgers (Wife of Ben Carrie-Deway)**  
The glamorous and gorgeous gal of stage and screen who gave up her promising acting career to marry Ben Carrie-Deway.

- **Al Cappuccino (Laundry Manager)**  
Owner of one of the most successful laundries in the district. Al has a lot of money, a baseball bat, and is not afraid to push his weight around.

- **Dr Gerry Atrics (Doctor)**  
With a brilliant bed-side manner, calm demeanour and a smooth educated voice, Gerry is the favourite doctor of many a patient, and Ben Carrie-Deway’s best friend.

- **Penny Cillin (Gerry’s Fiancée)**  
Demure, submissive and pretty, Penny has eyes only for one man, her fiancé doctor.

- **Phil Anderer (Politician)**  
A staunch democrat and a keen social reformer, Ben Carrie-Deway’s cousin Phil is tipped for high office. (It never hurts any politician to have good family connections.)

- **Damien Wurst (Artist)**
In love with art critics almost as much as he is himself, Damien is a striking artist in only one way – he hardly ever paints! He has assistants for that!

- Minuet Johnson (Maid)
  Quiet and efficient, Minuet just gets on with the day to day running and cleaning of Spatsby Manor.

- Detective Inspector Dick Lacey (Detective)
  Detective Inspector Dick Lacey is required only to provide the solution speech. He does no other acting during the night and is not referred to in the scripts or guest handouts.

Costumes:

Find costumes for the cast appropriate to the event. You may also want to secure costumes for any extras you need on the night, e.g. waiters, waitresses, or other assistants who can mingle and point guests in the right direction when they get stuck. Any extras will add to the ambience, but make sure the guests know they aren’t part of the mystery.

Murder at Great Spatsby is set in 1931 just before the end of Prohibition and in the middle of the Depression. Suggested costumes for the cast are as follows:

Ginger Bodgers:  A glitzy flapper dress.

Al Cappuccino:  A very smart expensive looking 1930’s dinner suit. He must also have a baseball bat to hand. He should have faint blood stains on his shirt cuffs.

Dr Gerry Atrics:  A smart black suit with drab tie.

Penny Cillin:  An inexpensive dress, non revealing and functional, but clearly the best she owns.

Phil Anderer:  A brown 1930’s style suit with drab tie.

Damien Wurst:  A loose granddad shirt with beige trousers blotched with paint, he might want to have a paint brush either in his pockets or behind one ear.

Minuet Johnson:  A traditional maid’s uniform for this era.

Detective Inspector Dick Lacey:  A smart 1920’s/30’s era suit and trilby.

Dressing up the Venue:
Do your best to dress up all the rooms you plan on using for the event. Again this can be simple, or you can go all out. And again, the more effort you make, the more enjoyable the mystery will be for the guests. As a general point, do watch out for anachronisms within the rooms (things that are out of place e.g. a clock for a medieval mystery, or something post 1920’s for a 1920’s event.)

The rooms are simply a backdrop to the cast and mystery but the more authentic they look the more fun your guests will have. However there are two key rooms required in this mystery and these are the Study (for the crime scene) and the Hall (where a lot of clues will be located.) Apart from these rooms you can change the type of room to suit your venue and budget.

A list of rooms with the cast to be found in them is as follows:

- Study – Ginger Bodgers
- Library – Al Cappuccino
- Lounge – Dr Gerry Atrics and Penny Cillin
- Dining room – Phil Anderer
- Conservatory – Damien Wurst
- Hall – Minuet Johnson.

Please remember these are only suggestions, you can change all the rooms except the hall and study. Obviously when decorating you want the venue to resemble a 1930’s nouveau riche mansion. You might want to add a few odd paintings signed by Damien Wurst as well as more classical paintings, otherwise let your imagination run free. See the clue list for specific prop requirements that will have to be available in the rooms.

Guests to the mystery are required to visit all the rooms at least once in order to solve the crime, though many will visit several rooms more than once. It is wise therefore to ensure, when setting the mystery up, that you have ample space for guests to walk between rooms, and that there will be no bottle necks during the night.

**Music**

Do think about music. Music can do a lot to add ambience. Obviously you can just use a CD, but if you are producing this mystery on a large scale and have sufficient funds and space for a large gathering room then do consider a band.

**Guest Handouts**

Your guests will each need a copy of the guest hand out and answer sheet. Read **How to use this game** which details printing instructions.

**Props / Clues**
This mystery includes key props / clues which will need to be obtained and positioned within the rooms for the mystery. The clues which require printing are explained further in How to use this game. In addition you will need to print off clue labels (found in file called Clue labels) for every clue and attach these to the clues. It is important all clues are given a numbered label as guests will want to check they have found them all. The labels can be placed discreetly if you want them to hunt a little. The props /clues required are detailed below.

Study / crime scene

Within this room you will need to place the following clues/props:

On the desk:

- A cup of coffee which has been drunk, there should be a little bit of dregs left in the bottom to make it obvious what it originally contained.

- A replica (or real) handgun. If you have trouble buying one then simply place a water pistol, or a picture of a gun on the desk with a note that says “removed by police for tests”.

- Clue 1, the property details for Johnson’s Stockings old factory premises.

- A full carafe of water into which salt has been added until no more can dissolve (this might be easier to do in a plastic jug first and then pour it in.) When you have saturated the solution with salt then add another two teaspoons and these should stay, undissolved, at the bottom of the carafe. There should also be a glass – totally dry, beside it, or upended over the top.

Elsewhere in the room:

- A decanter of whisky (full) and two unused glasses.

- A brass candlestick with a smear of tomato ketchup on it to look like blood.

In the wastepaper basket:

- Clue 4. You will require several, in fact the more the better.

You may also want to draw an outline of a body as if it were slumped over the desk.

Hall

On the coat rack:
• A large heavyweight thick wool jacket with a gun in one pocket, and clue number 3 in the other pocket. Again, if you can’t get a gun then substitute a note from the police.

Either at the top of the stairs (if you have any) or at the other end of the room:

• Two pot plants. One should have a cigarette lighter replica gun, the other should have a small empty bottle labelled poison in it (again if you have trouble getting hold of a gun then leave a ticket from the police and say it was a replica lighter).

In the lounge:

• Doctor’s bag containing the usual supplies, cotton wool, bandages etc, as well as a small empty medicine bottle labelled ‘morphine’.
• Coffee cups for five, all used.

In the conservatory:

• One or two large bottles (obviously originally whisky) relabelled with Clue 5.

In the library:

• Clue number 2 – Ben Carrie-Deway’s will.
• Baseball bat which should be dented and bashed as if well used. This should be used by Al Cappuccino during his speech.

In the dining room:

• A non-essential prop/clue but one would add to ambience if you can do it: The remains of a three course dinner for seven guests. All the plates should have been used, and the table should look as if it is in the process of being cleared. There should be five port glasses with the remains of port in the bottom, and perhaps a few cigar stubs and a couple of cigarette stubs and ash in an ashtray

Cast Guidelines:

These are also contained in a separate file for ease of printing for each character.

As a member of cast you should have been given three things:
• The cast guidelines (what you are reading now!)
• Your character’s background information
• Your character’s script, which also contains an answer to a specific question.
It is important you familiarise yourself with your character’s background information and your script, though word for word recital is not a requirement during the event. In fact, you are positively encouraged to ad lib on your scripts, using your own personality to jazz things up where you feel is appropriate. Your character background will give you the information you need to act in character throughout the night.

When the guests first visit you during the mystery you should recite your script. Only when this is concluded should the guests begin to ask questions. There is no limit to the number or type of questions they may ask, but as a member of cast (and potential suspect) you may want to limit your responses, and DON’T under any circumstances give away who actually did it!

As a general rule: act suspicious. (All the characters have something to hide, so it shouldn’t be too difficult.) You should be trying to prove your innocence, rather than incriminating yourself (that goes for the murderer too) so, where possible use the information contained in your character background to cast dispersions on the other characters.

There are two types of questions that guests may ask.

The first is the one from the guest handout.

The questions contained in the handout and who they apply to is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you hate Ben Carrie-Deway?</td>
<td>Ginger Bodgers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you used to lying?</td>
<td>Al Cappuccino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you love Ben Carrie-Deway?</td>
<td>Dr Gerry Atrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you done something new tonight?</td>
<td>Penny Cillin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was Ben blackmailing you?</td>
<td>Phil Anderer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you double crossing Ben?</td>
<td>Damien Wurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you see anything interesting in the study?</td>
<td>Minuet the Maid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked the correct question you should answer it with the answer given in your script. But remember, the guests don’t know which question is for which character so they may ask all of them at first until they hit the right one. When they ask the wrong question, either say “No” or some variant of that (to indicate they have the wrong person), and ad lib a response additional to that if you want.

The second type of question is one of their own fabrication.

These come in all shapes and sizes, from favourite colour, to something detailed about personal history and motive. This is where the background information comes in useful. It provides the basis for sensible ad libbing. For anything not covered in the background information – simply invent something appropriate, but don’t go overboard and create a whole new plotline. The rule of thumb is: the simpler the
better, don’t we all know how much trouble we can get into when we lie, and you
don’t want to get caught out, even if it is only a bit of fun!

As a general rule, give out information about yourself only reluctantly, and gossip
about what you know about the other suspects more readily.

In short you have several possibilities with regards to answers:
1) Reveal something from the background information
2) Simply say “I don’t know” or some variant of that.
3) Divert the question to someone else. e.g. I don’t know why you’re asking me that
when you should really be asking so and so, such and such.
4) And lastly, don’t forget you could always ask the guests a question to throw them!
e.g. I don’t like where this is heading. I tell you I’m innocent – but where were you
when so and so was murdered?

You may want to review the solution contained in Detective Inspector Dick Lacey’s
speech to ensure you do not give away too much information, particularly the
murderer unwillingly.

Finally whatever you do don’t get harassed into giving a definite time for anything
that you witnessed or did. When you start giving out times then guests start trying
to trip up the cast and quite frankly different times are incredibly difficult to
remember and you will quickly become confused (as well as your guests). If they
insist keep it vague and simply give the time as sometime after you did / saw such
and such, and before you did / saw such and such, and say that you don’t recall the
exact time as Ben Carrie-Deway positively HATES clock watchers and therefore sets
all his clocks to different times around the house to prevent his guests watching the
time while they are with him. The rule of thumb for guests at Spatsby has always
been to relax and enjoy yourself!

Final checklist

Your last minute checklist for the mystery is as follows:
• Set up rooms with props / clues and any additional decorative touches. Label
the rooms clearly.
• Set up the crime scene with dead body outline and all props / clues
• Make sure you have enough guest handouts and answer sheets available
near the entrance.
• Position drop box for answers.
• Clearly advertise the time of the mystery’s conclusion so that all guests are
available to hear the solution.
• If you are serving refreshments then get these all ready.
• Make sure all the cast are in the right place.
• Start the music
• Let the fun begin!