

## Instructions

Thank you for purchasing the murder mystery game **Can Cook, Won't Kill?**

**Can Cook, Won't Kill?** is a large group mystery requiring eight cast who are fully in the know (one of whom is just an inspector who will read the solution at the end), the 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 into 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 checklist before running the event

### **Introduction to the game**

This mystery is written so that it can be conducted using several smaller rooms, rather than using one big one with a stage. These rooms will require decorating according to the mystery. 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 to have read through their background material more than once to familiarise themselves with their background. They should be able to recite their monologues to the guests. If this is a problem they could hide their scripts within a prop of some kind. Five of them have one monologue to recite, and two 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 be able to 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 handout. 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. This 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.

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 the 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, make sure there is enough space between the cast members so that your guests can hear the individual monologues. You don't want the cast members trying to talk over one another, competing in volume! In other 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.

For some suggestions on where to hold your event consider the following:

- Hiring a small hotel/guest house for the evening – they may be happy to let you take over the venue when they realise they are guaranteed bar sales and catering
- Hiring a venue with multiple rooms but no catering facilities such as a church hall/conference centre/town hall/community centre and using outside catering
- Hiring a manor house/mansion/castle and using outside catering if not supplied
- Hiring several rooms in a large hotel

Finally, decide how you want your event to go. Is the mystery the main event, or just simply a sideshow 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?

Also 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 of them 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 Can Cook, Won't Kill:

- **Sharon Platter** (Waitress)  
Young, bright-eyed and eager to please, Sharon has all the skills she needs to pass around canapes, but lacks finesse and education.
- **Philip De' Glasse** (TV Celebrity)  
One of the hosts of the popular Drink and Food programme, Philip De'Glasse is a galloping gourmet, a darling on screen and frightfully upper class.
- **Lettuce Bapp** (Food Editor at the Times)  
Attractive with refined tastes, Lettuce turns heads and has a reputation of being able to make or break a restaurant with her reviews.

- **Ed Wayter** (Maître D')

Smooth, charming and the height of discretion, Ed Wayter is reliable and informed and keeps the front of house running like clockwork.

- **Fonda Cakes** (Food Critic for a Tabloid Newspaper)

A previous TV celebrity turned food critic, Fonda prefers baking to haut cuisine and loves nothing better than old fashioned comfort food.

- **Frieda Lobsta** (Sous Chef)

Second in command in the kitchen, Frieda is very much second-in-command and not a woman to be messed with, especially when sharp knives are around.

- **Julien Stix** (Head Chef)

Arrogant and flamboyant, this French MasterChef is not an easy man to work for, nor please.

- **Detective Inspector Rita Cookbook** (Detective)

Detective Inspector Rita Cookbook is required only to provide the solution speech. She 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.

Can Cook, Won't Kill? is set in the present day at a typical hotel hosting a preview evening. You may be able to borrow a couple of chef's outfits from the venue you're hosting the event in.

Suggested costumes for the cast are as follows:

**Sharon Platter:** Black skirt/trousers and a white blouse

**Ed Wayter:** Black trousers, white shirt, a black bow tie or long tie, black or white jacket optional

**Fonda Cakes:** Floral dress, or two-piece outfit suitable for television

**Philip De'Glasse:** Either smart casual with a bow-tie or formal attire with a bow tie

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**Julien Stix:** Chef's attire

**Frieda Lobsta:** Chef's attire

**Lettuce Bapp:** Cocktail dress

**Detective Inspector Rita Cookbook:** A smart suit/smart clothes

***Dressing up the Venue:***

Do your best to dress up all the rooms you plan on using for the event. This can be simply done or you can go all out, but the more effort you make, the more enjoyable the mystery will be for the guests. The mystery is set in a typical modern day hotel, so try and maintain a corporate image throughout the rooms. You can use flowers, table settings etc if you have the inclination and the money.

The rooms are simply a backdrop to the cast and mystery but the more authentic they look, the more fun your guests will have. There is only one key room for the mystery and this is the hall which is also the crime scene. Apart from this room you can change the type of room to suit your venue and budget and move the clues accordingly.

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

**Hall** – Sharon Platter

**Restaurant** – Fonda Cakes

**Kitchens** – Julien Stix and Frieda Lobsta

**Manager's Office** – Ed Wayter

**Bedroom / Lounge** – Lettuce Bap

**Conservatory** – Philip De'Glasse

Please remember these are only suggestions. You can change all the rooms except the hall. Obviously when decorating you want the venue to resemble a typical hotel. You might want to decide on a colour scheme for the corporate image and make sure all the flowers, table settings, complimentary notepaper etc, match this theme. Otherwise let your imagination run free! See the clue list for specific prop requirements that are essential requirements for the mystery.

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 bottlenecks during the night. If possible, set up a circular route around the rooms and begin all monologues at the same time so that guests can move between rooms with ease. You will need approximately twenty minutes between speeches.

## **Music**

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/arrival room, consider hiring a band.

## **Guest Handouts**

Your guests will each need a copy of the guest handout 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 that they have found them all. The labels can be placed discreetly if you want them to hunt a little.

The use of fake blood is required for this mystery. Fake blood can easily be made by mixing tomato ketchup with a little red food colouring to darken it. However, there are numerous methods for making blood substitutes, and you can even buy some if you really want to do it professionally!

The props/clues required are detailed below.

### Hall

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

- Steak knife (found in the body/within body outline) covered in blood
- Steak knives on sideboard in hall
- Canapes with powder scattered on them sitting on the sideboard ready to be served
- Epi-Pen (used) in hall
- Dispenser soap container, partially full, in dustbin in hall

With Sharon Platter:

- Positive pregnancy test

### Kitchen

- Large cook book with blood on one corner

With Julien:

- Chef's apron covered in blood as if he has wiped his hands

With Frieda:

- Chef's apron with less blood on than Julien

### Manager's Office

- Betting slips showing Al betting lots of money on horses
- Partnership contract (clue 1)
- Engagement ring
- Mug with text which reads 'The boss' or 'Al', whichever is easier to obtain. It must have the dregs of coffee and the remains of a barely dissolved tablet in the bottom

With Ed Wayter

- Caffeine tablet packet (all used up) in his pocket

### Conservatory/Restaurant (The Orangery)

With Philip De'Glasse

- Photograph of Lettuce in his wallet/jacket pocket
- Bruising and a cut on his face. This is hard to label! Make sure people know it's a CLUE and let Philip hold a clue label so they know to ask!

### Bedroom/Lounge

With Lettuce:

- Laxative bottle/packet in her pocket – all used up

### Restaurant

- Nicely printed up menu with Foie Gras on the menu as a course, crossed out by hand with "La Foie Gras of the Sea" written next to it in pen

With Fonda Cakes:

- Envelope of money

### **Cast Guidelines**

These are also in the game files separately for ease of printing and sharing.

Instructions



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 the cast (and potential suspect) you may want to limit your responses. DON'T under any circumstances give away who actually did it!

As a general rule: act suspiciously. 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. 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 type is the one from the guest handout.

The questions contained in the handout and to whom they apply are as follows:

<b>Are you pregnant?</b>	- Sharon Platter
<b>Do you have any regrets?</b>	- Philip De'Glasse
<b>Have you been avoiding someone today?</b>	- Lettuce Bapp
<b>Were you offered a bribe?</b>	- Fonda Cakes
<b>Did you hit Al today?</b>	- Julien Stix
<b>Have you ever been arrested?</b>	- Frieda Lobsta
<b>Did you see any strangers hanging around the hotel?</b>	- Ed Wayter

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! 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. You know a lot!

In short you have several possibilities with regards to answers:

- Reveal something from the background information
- Simply say "I don't know" or some variant of that
- 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"
- 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 Rita Cookbook's speech to ensure you do not give away too much information, particularly the murderer, unwittingly.

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, or before you did/saw such-and-such, and say that you don't recall the exact time as you were too busy to look at your watch this afternoon/or enjoying yourself too much.

### **Further information**

Michelin critics are a highly secretive bunch. They don't even tell their family they are critics for Michelin. It's a classified appointment, more secretly guarded than the CIA!

Al Fresco has a gambling habit. He's middle-aged and suffers with constipation, heartburn, stress and high blood pressure. This is known to those who would KNOW but not to everyone in the cast. If you think you'd be likely to know one of these – then do know it. If not, then don't know it. He was found stabbed with a steak knife by Frieda Lobsta who called the police. All the staff know he was stabbed and so too does Philip De'Glass, but Fonda does not.

## 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!