

ROUND ONE - The murder is announced

Before Round One begins, all the cast, except Peter, should have been circulating (in character) with the guests.

Olivia Vickers should act the gracious host, meeting and greeting the guests. She should try and discuss current affairs with them. Think of a few things that were current around 1934, such as the Nazi regime in Germany, the Marx Brothers, Laurel and Hardy, the Hollywood horror films of 'Dracula' and 'Frankenstein' and the new movie 'King Kong'.

Roger Bounder should be eyeing up attractive young women and suggesting they meet him later at the bar.

Colonel Worcester should appear on edge, keen to make a good impression on the VIP guest. He should check the guests are dressed appropriately for the expected arrival, mention security arrangements and generally fuss.

ROUND ONE SCRIPT

MAKE SURE ALL THE GUESTS ARE SETTLED BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

Colonel Worcester barks for everyone's attention saying the Prince will be arriving shortly and can everyone please be ready to receive him.

Layla de Couch walks dreamily towards the table.

Colonel Worcester My dear, are you here alone?

Layla Er, no. I'm with Peter Bowler.

Colonel Worcester I don't see him with you?

Layla He's on his way. We've only just left the cricket field.

Colonel Worcester What? This isn't a Sunday afternoon church social!
Where is the blighter!

PETER WALKS IN SMARTLY, DRESSED IN CRICKET GEAR.

Peter Hellooooo! Rather thought I wasn't going to make it! Last batsman just didn't want to leave the crease but I bowled him a corker, right on middle stump! Got 'im good and proper!

Colonel Worcester Damn it, man, you're not dressed for dinner! The Prince of Shebulibar is due to arrive in a few minutes and you breeze in as if this is a pavilion tea room!!

Peter Awfully sorry old chap, but I am wearing my best sports blazer

and the Prince is known to be a keen cricket fan!

Colonel Worcester What? Oh, yes. I see. At least it's got your teams crest on. That is something, I suppose.

Layla And apparently it was a terrific game, Colonel! So Peter was just telling me anyway.

Colonel Worcester Really? Gave them a damn good thrashing, did you?

Peter I'd say! Got 'em all out for 105! I'm really rather looking forward to telling the Prince all about it. He's a frightfully keen cricket fan, you know!

Colonel Worcester Splendid! Was this that charity match I heard about against the visitors from Australia?

Layla It certainly was.

Colonel Worcester Top hole! That'll give Bradman something to think about, what?

Peter Rather! Is everyone else here?

Colonel Worcester Nearly! Ah! Good evening, Roger.

ROGER BOUNDER WANDERS OVER.

Roger Hello Colonel. Goodness! Thought I was going to be late! Had a small financial matter that needed attending.

Colonel Worcester Well, you businessmen always seem to have some pressing corporate matter that needs attention.

Roger Well, sort of. I got a tip of a dead cert in the 5 o'clock at Doncaster and I had to get to the bookies in time to place my bet!

Colonel Worcester What? How dare you put gambling before a matter like this!

Roger It wasn't really gambling, Colonel. I heard from an insider that someone had nobbled all the top runners so I couldn't really lose!

Colonel Worcester Disgraceful behaviour, sir! Most unbecoming of a gentleman! Now, where is Olivia?

OLIVIA WALTZES IN.

Olivia I'm right here, darling. You wouldn't believe how long it takes to decide which jewellery goes best with this new dress.

Colonel Worcester I think I can say it was worth the wait, Olivia. You look ravishing!

Olivia Oh, you're very kind. I try my best.

Colonel Worcester Well, it *is* the Prince of Shebulibar who's joining us!

Layla Shebulibar! It sounds so grandiose! Most people have no idea what a little place it is. The Prince visited us at the film studios once and joked that our set was bigger than his country!

Colonel Worcester But strategically it's very important because of it's location between Kenya and India in the Indian Ocean. Here, let me show you on this map. (LAYLA AND OLIVIA LOOK AT THE COLONEL'S MAP)

Olivia It does look very small on the map but my father has mentioned the importance of the island's location for trade and defence.

He's had several business dealings with the Prince you know!

Colonel Worcester Quite so, my dear! Until the Prince asserted his family's ancient claims, it was effectively a British protectorate. We want to keep our influence there intact so you can see that keeping this Prince chappie happy is rather important to British interests.

Roger I suppose it might affect British trade quite adversely if this Prince chappie was nobbled by another power, wouldn't it, eh Colonel?

Colonel Worcester Indeed it would! So we're doing what we can to keep him 'in the side', as you might say, Peter. In fact, I don't think it does any harm to let you know that I've been lined up to become the Prince's personal military advisor!

Roger You'll enjoy that! I expect you'll put lots of big guns on the island and have fun making them go bang!

Colonel Worcester Yes by jove, I certainly will! Now, if you would excuse me, I'll go and see where the Prince has got to. (TO PETER) Be careful of Roger Bounder, sir. He may try to induce you into some illicit gambling! And he is no sportsman!!

COLONEL WORCESTER LEAVES THE ROOM.

Roger Pompous ass! Who does he think he is?

Peter But is he correct when he says - you know - about you not being a sportsman and that?

Roger Not at all! (EYEING UP LAYLA) I play the field as much as any man and relish a good innings when the opportunity presents itself. Are you a sportswoman, Layla?

Layla (COYLY) I can be, if the prize is worth competing for.

Roger How about you, Olivia?

Olivia I was playing tennis this afternoon and I swim well. I like to keep in shape.

Peter Excellent! I play a bit of tennis. Perhaps we could make up a foursome whilst we're here?

Layla Spiffing! I'd be up for that!

Roger In that case, I'll see what I can arrange. We might even be able to persuade the Colonel to umpire for us! (DIRTY LAUGH). See that fair play is conducted and all that!

Olivia I think we can dispense with him. He'd probably look upon the match as another military battle or conquest!

Roger Why not? (EYES UP LAYLA) I'm rather proud of all my previous conquests!

Layla Yes, I'm sure you are. Well I think we should think about the Prince for moment. We are supposed to be representing our country after all.

Olivia You make the little man sound so important, Layla! (HAUGHTILY) I don't suppose as an actress that you've met many genuinely important people. Let me assure you, it's only a tiny island in the Indian Ocean that he's the prince of! You can probably buy titles like that!

Peter Even so, we've all been invited here to present a great image of good old Blighty, so I think we should do our best to put on a good show.

Roger Quite right, old man . Look out, the walrus is coming back.

COLONEL WORCESTER STRIDES IN.

Olivia Any sign of the Prince, Colonel?

Colonel Worcester I'm afraid the most ghastly thing has happened!

Roger The Prince didn't stop off for a quick one en route and then get waylaid, did he Colonel?

Colonel Worcester Certainly not!! The Prince was playing golf this afternoon! Apparently, after losing his ball in a pond, he said he was changing balls. Next thing, he took a wallop with his driver and – BABOOM!!!! Golf ball exploded the moment his club hit it! He was killed instantly amidst a great plume of smoke!

Peter Great Scott! An exploding golf ball?!

Colonel Worcester Yes! It's probably some new type of plastic explosive. We've been experimenting with bombs of that type on Salisbury Plain. Damned effective type of weapon! Could have done with explosives like that in France during the stalemate in the Somme. In fact, for aerial bombardment -

Layla Never mind about the technical aspects, Colonel; Are you saying that the Prince has been killed outright?

Colonel Worcester Oh, certainly! The blast was apparently heard over a mile Away! Only problem with that kind of explosive - damned noisy!

Roger Surely if the Prince has been blown up on a golf course, it's going to be rather difficult to get him to complete the treaty negotiations, isn't it?

Colonel Worcester Of course it is, man! He's dead!

Roger Well, in that case, can we at least proceed with the meal? I'm famished!

Colonel Worcester Damn it, man! Have you no sense of occasion? None of the other guests have eaten yet and they're not complaining. In any case, the police want to interview everyone who's had anything to do with the Prince. That means us five. They're waiting outside. (TO THE GUESTS) Ahem! Ladies, gentlemen! Would you please excuse us? Perhaps, as Roger suggested, it would be a good idea if you started your meal. I'll tip the wink to the serving staff. We'll be back shortly, I'm sure!

THE CAST ALL LEAVE THE ROOM.

END OF ROUND ONE.

The guests should all now be served with their first course.

The cast should not re-enter the room until round two begins.