

ROUND ONE - The murder is announced

Round instructions:

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

If the guests meet in a separate room to the meal, then Ben Pozin, as compere, should call them all through for dinner, e.g.

[WITH EXAGGERATED VOICE]: Ladies and gentlemen, if you would like to take your seats please, the [INSERT YEAR] DAFTA Awards ceremony is about to begin!”

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MAKE SURE ALL THE GUESTS ARE SETTLED BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

IF YOU HAVE A STAGE AREA, THIS SHOULD BE WELL LIT.

YOU MIGHT WANT TO PLAY SOME LOUD INTRODUCTORY MUSIC AND HAVE SPOTLIGHTS FOCUSED ON THE STAGE.

FEMALE (on mic): [THIS CAN BE SPOKEN BY AN EXTRA/STAGE MANAGER OR ONE OF THE EXISTING CAST] Good evening and welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the [INSERT YEAR] DAFTA Awards festival. Please put your hands together and welcome to the stage your host for this evening, the man with the moves, our host with the most – Mr. Ben Pozin!

APPLAUSE – YOU MAY WANT TO ENCOURAGE THE GUESTS TO JOIN IN BY DISPLAYING A PLACARD WITH THE WORD “CLAP” ON IT. YOU COULD NOMINATE AN EXTRA FOR THE PLACARD DISPLAY ROLE – OR BEN POZIN CAN HAVE A SERIES OF CARDS TO USE ON THE STAGE.

Ben Pozin: Thank you, thank you! You’re too kind.

As many of you know, this is my first year as host. And I must say I was honoured, truly honoured to be selected to lead you through tonight’s ceremony. [PLACARD “CLAP”]

Fortunately for you, due to budgetary constraints, the academy has cut its usual opening number, which means you don’t have to put up with my singing...[PLACARD “LAUGH”] but they did say I needed to banter with you for a bit, just to allow

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them time to add in some advert breaks later in the evening for those watching the awards night on TV.

[WAVES TO IMAGINARY CAMERA] Cooooeee all you at home!
[PLACARD "LAUGH"]

Anyway, these last few years, I've been where you are, sitting nervously on the edge of my chair, trying, as you are, not to look as if I'm sitting nervously on the edge of my chair, [PLACARD "LAUGH"] wondering, waiting, to see if that nomination will turn into this...[HOLD UP AWARD] the Drama, Arts, Film and Television Academy Award.

Many of us are familiar with this award, presented to those actors, actresses, directors, producers and other film technicians who have excelled in the industry over the last year.

For those that aren't yet familiar, let me tell you this – you need to dust it carefully. It's really difficult to get into all these little nooks and crannies...[PLACARD "LAUGH"]

No – seriously – an award such as this carries with it a lot of prestige. It can be a spring board for a career and is the ultimate recognition of the dedication and effort it takes to reach the top of any given field in cinematography.

This evening, I want you to remember that to receive even a nomination means you are in the top 1% of your field. There are many wannabe actors out there, most of whom will never see the inside of this hall, let alone receive a nomination. Which means the very fact that all of you are here with me this evening is a testament to your skills... [PLACARD "CLAP"] or at the very least, to the size of your wallet. [PLACARD "LAUGH"] Tickets ain't cheap! [PLACARD "LAUGH LOUDLY"]

And so, as it seems I've filled in enough advertising space, at least for the first half of the show, let me begin the evening with the award for....

[IF YOU WANTED TO INSERT A FEW EXTRA AWARDS HERE TO GIVE OUT TO THE GUESTS, THEN THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO DO IT. MAKE SURE YOU GIVE THESE GUESTS A PHONEY ACCEPTANCE SPEECH TO READ OUT, OTHERWISE...]

Best Actress.

Nominations for Best Actress go to: Crystelle Chandelier for her role as Vivianne Aldi in Captain Botticelli's Cello.

[PLACARD "CLAP"]

CRYSTELLE WALKS ONTO THE STAGE

Nicole De'Limelite for her portrayal of Erma Dontist, in Gnaws.

[PLACARD "CLAP"]

NICOLE COMES ON STAGE

Iona Fortune who starred as Leah Tard in Slamdunk Billionaire...

[PLACARD "CLAP". BEN COLLECTS GOLD ENVELOPE BUT DOESN'T OPEN IT] – THERE IS A PAUSE AS SHE FAILS TO APPEAR. BEN LOOKS AROUND]

Er, I said, Iona Fortune who starred as Leah Tard in Slamdunk Billionaire...

[PLACARD "CLAP"]

BEN LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM, SHIELDING HIS EYES AGAINST THE LIGHTS SO HE CAN SEE THE TABLES.

Ben Pozin: Er... Where is Iona? Has anyone seen her?

Crystelle: No.

Nicole: Not since you tried to scratch her eyes out you mean.

Ben Pozin: Ladies! [HOLDS EAR PIECE] Can I have some guidance here...?

Seymour Philms: [FROM THE AUDIENCE] Maybe she's at the bar?

Ivor Sixpack: [FROM THE AUDIENCE] I'll go and look.

IVOR WALKS OUT.

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Ben Pozin: [AS IF ANSWERING EARPIECE] I see. Right. [TO LADIES] Sorry ladies. I'm afraid you're going to have to go back down. They want us to move on to another award until we can find her. They'll edit this bit out in the advert break.

THE LADIES WALK OFF, "OH" ING AND MUTTERING TO THEMSELVES.

Ben Pozin: [TO AUDIENCE] Sorry, ladies and gentlemen, it seems Iona is,er, indisposed at the moment. We'll carry on with a different award. So! Without further ado, let me begin the evening with the award for Exceptional Stunt Work. The award nominations for Best Stuntperson go to: Ivor Sixpack for his role in –

Seymour Philms: [FROM THE AUDIENCE] He's just gone out!

Ben Pozin: Sorry? Did you say he'd gone out?

Seymour Philms: [FROM THE AUDIENCE] After Iona.

Ben Pozin: [HOLDING EARPIECE] He's just gone out. Right... I see... [TO AUDIENCE] Er, well, we'd better edit that bit out as well!

Nicole: I'll fetch him. He can't have gone far.

NICOLE WALKS OUT.

Ben Pozin: [INTO EARPIECE] Nicole De' Limelite just gone after him. Right. OK. [TO AUDIENCE] Sorry *again* about this, ladies and gentlemen, we'll just have to make another cut. Still, I suppose that's show business, isn't it! This'll probably all end up on a blooper reel at some point and -

NICOLE RUNS IN SCREAMING.

Nicole: She's...

NICOLE FAINTS.

IVOR RUNS IN BEHIND HER.

Ivor: I told you not to... [SEES NICOLE] Oh no... [TO SEYMOUR] Have you got any water on your table? Give me some will you?

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IVOR HELPS UP NICOLE AND GIVES HER SOME WATER.

Ivor: Here Nicole. Come on...

Ben: [COMING DOWN FROM THE STAGE] Will someone please tell me what on earth is going on?

Ivor: She's ... I can't say it, I just can't say it.

Ben: Say what?

Ivor: It's Iona.

Ben: Iona?

Ivor: She's....

Nicole: She's dead.

Ben: Dead? No. She can't be...she's been nominated for an award!

Ivor: She's dead.

Ben: No. No. She can't be.

Nicole: Ivor would know.

Ben: I have to see her.

BEN RUSHES OUT.

Crystelle: Iona's dead? Good.

Ivor: How can you say that?

Crystelle: How can I...? You have a nerve, Mr I-don't-care-for-you-any-more-Crystelle.

Ivor: But she's dead, Crystelle. Dead, as in...

Seymour: Cold? Stiff? Not breathing?

Ivor: As in... she's gone! Iona's gone...

Crystelle: Yes, and good riddance too if you ask me.

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IVOR SUDDENLY GRABS CRYSTELLE BY HER ARMS AND SHAKES HER.

Ivor: You're a witch. Did I ever tell you that before? A witch!

Crystelle: *Let go of me. I didn't kill her.* [SEYMOUR AND NICOLE PULL THEM APART] Go take your masculine frustrations out on somebody else.

Ivor: But you... you....

Nicole: [HOLDING IVOR AWAY FROM CRYSTELLE] You aren't going to solve anything like this, Ivor. Leave her alone. She'll only set her lawyer on you.

Crystelle: I already have. I'm suing him for severe mental trauma.

Ivor: [HEADING FOR CRYSTELLE AGAIN] Severe mental...

Nicole: [HOLDING HIM BACK] Ivor – she's not worth it. Leave her.

Crystelle: No Nicole, let him try it. Let him do his worst. He's already broken my heart, what use are my arms.

Seymour: Oh, shut up, Crystelle!

CRYSTELLE RUNS OUT, SOBBING MELODRAMATICALLY. THEY WATCH HER LEAVE, UNIMPRESSED.

Seymour: What was it? What did she die of?

CRYSTELLE SCREAMS OUTSIDE THE ROOM AND RUNS BACK IN.

Crystelle: She's covered in blood! I thought you said she'd died.

Ivor: Does it matter?

Crystelle: Matter, of course it matters – she's hardly going to have stabbed herself! Somebody call the police, we have a fanatic on the loose!

Ivor: Calm down, Crystelle. The police *have* been called.

Crystelle: Yes, but where are the bodyguards?

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Ivor: Out patrolling the perimeter. No one has got in. Trust me.

Crystelle: Trust you? TRUST YOU? I wouldn't -

Nicole: [INTERRUPTS] But if no one has got in, then...

Ivor: The murderer must already be inside the building. [LOOKS POINTEDLY AT CRYSTELLE].

Crystelle: Oh no you don't. I'll have you for defamation of character.

Nicole: She will.

BEN POZIN WALKS IN, SOBBING, "Oh Iona... Iona..." HIS PALMS BLOODY, HIS FACE SMEARED WITH BLOOD AS HE'S WIPED HIS EYES.

NICOLE RUSHES OVER, PUTS HER ARMS AROUND HIM AND LEADS HIM TO A TABLE.

Nicole: Come on, Ben. Take a seat. No one expects you to do anything. They'll be cancelling the awards night. They have to after this, surely? Here, wipe your hands on this. [HANDS HIM A NAPKIN] And look...[WIPES HIS FACE WITH ANOTHER NAPKIN] It's all over you.

Crystelle: But they *can't* cancel the awards. I was going to get one!

Nicole: Hardly.

Crystelle: Well you don't seriously think you'd have got it for that two-bit, low budget, b-rated move about a beaver.

Nicole: It has to be better than Botticelli's Cello. A cello! Who wants to watch a film about a cello?

Seymour: Oh, can it – both of you! Now is hardly the time!

Crystelle: You wouldn't say that if it was *your* award under dispute.

Seymour: My award- ssss [EMPHASISE THE PLURAL] will come in due time. They always do. [TAKING CHARGE] Ivor, why don't you ask the kitchens to get on with serving the meal? Everyone's blood sugar is probably a little low after this.

Ivor: Yes sir.

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IVOR LEAVES.

Seymour: Nicole, why don't you take Ben to the bathroom and get him cleaned up properly. I'm sure he can put a brave face on this.

Nicole: You aren't suggesting...?

Seymour: Remember the old motto? The show must go on? I dare say the television ratings have just sky rocketed! They aren't going to want to cancel now.

Nicole: Oh, of course. Come on, Ben. He's right. Let's see whether we can tidy you up.

BEN AND NICOLE GET UP TO LEAVE, BEN STILL OVERCOME.

Seymour: Crystelle... you just sit here and stay out of trouble. I'll go and check with the director of the awards about the timings. I'm pretty certain we can make this time back up... somehow. News flashes probably. [TRY OUT A FEW TITLES FOR SIZE] "Tragedy at the Awards", "Death at the DAFTAS", "Murder at the ... M... has to be something beginning with M...."

SEYMOUR WANDERS OUT, TRYING OUT HEADLINE IDEAS.

END OF ROUND ONE.

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

The rest of the cast should wander back in to their seats while the first course is being served and should eat with the guests.