ECLIPSED!

An Audience Participation
Murder Mystery

By Lisa Patrick-Wilkinson

Performance Rights

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy or reproduce this script in any manner or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Contact the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information. The author's name must appear on all programs and advertising with the notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Co."

PUBLISHED BY
ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
www.histage.com
© 1999 by Lisa Patrick-Wilkinson

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/eclipsed

STORY OF THE PLAY

This audience participation mystery/comedy invites you and your audience to become celebrated guests of Lord and Lady Moon at the coveted Annual Moonlight Masquerade Charity Gala. When a diamond Tiffany necklace scheduled to be auctioned off at the event mysteriously disappears, it becomes clear that someone present isn't quite what or who they appear to be. But things take a decidedly sinister turn as members of the entourage turn up quite indubitably, irrevocably dead. Could one of the remaining blue-bloods be responsible? Could someone in the audience help solve these heinous crimes? Can the crime be solved, or will the entire evening be "Eclipsed"?

With this hilarious cast of aristocratic characters, mayhem is the appetizer, madness the main course and murder is served up a la carte!

First Produced by Center Stage, Naples, Florida.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The success of audience participation murder mysteries largely depends on the cast's ability to "draw" the audience into the plot; to make them feel as if they were each an integral part of the action that's occurring on stage. As a result, we enjoy having contact with the audience prior to the staged performance. Before the first line of actual dialogue is spoken, the audience should already have some idea of who the "players" are and their relationships. A few well-placed gestures, together with some improvisational lines, will help propel the audience into the intrigue and into the fun!

Lisa Wilkinson

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 w, 3 m)

LADY SILVER E. MOON: American by birth, educated and raised in England, married into her title. She is imperious, demanding, possessive and extremely jealous.

LADY LUNA CEE: A noble Englishwoman by birth, having a small but respectable fortune, and rather tired of the charade.

LORD CRESS N. MOON: A poor English nobleman. Vain self-centered, affected, reckless but ineffectual.

BARON VON KRATERFASSE: A titled but impoverished roué, who in fact looks remarkably like Lord Moon. The Baron and Lord Moon may be cast with the same actor.

MANFRED: The butler. Conventional, class-conscious, cool and detached.

HENRIETTA QUARTER, called HATTIE: A Texas lawyer with the accent to match. She has street smarts and savvy. Henrietta and Lady Moon may be cast with the same actor.

SET REQUIREMENTS

The setting is the palatial Moon River Estate of Lord and Lady Moon, where the Moons are hosting their annual Moonlight Masquerade Gala charity auction. A central platform will help focus the action. Be certain that the area chosen is in the most visible and accessible portion of the room for entrances and exits.

STAGE PROPS

Two chairs, placed CS (barstool-height chairs work best for visibility); a small serving table with a crystal decanter filled with water or sparkling cider, several drinking glasses, an ice bowl or bucket with tongs and a small silver serving tray (which Manfred uses to serve drinks). There is also a draped butler's cart with a silver tea service, three coffee cups and a sugar bowl (Note: sugar is in the sugar bowl, which is placed on the shelf beneath the top of the draped cart).

HAND PROPS

LADY MOON: A stick mask, “diamond” necklace, large costume ring.
LADY CEE: A small clutch purse with compact.
BARON VON KRATERFASSE: A black mask, a walking stick. Optional: fake mustache.
LORD MOON: A silver, white or red mask.
MANFRED: A prop pistol.
HENRIETTA (HATTIE) QUARTER: A saddle-bag type purse, a prop pistol.
GENERAL: You may wish to provide a gross or more of cheap masks to distribute to guests as well as fake money for them to bid on the necklace.

SOUND and LIGHTING

Depending upon the size of the room, a wireless microphone may be desirable (especially to amplify the remarks of the audience members chosen to participate). House lighting is recommended, where possible.

COSTUMES

Costumes for Ladies Moon and Cee should be appropriate evening dress - preferably silver or white. Lady Moon’s dress should be as ostentatious as possible.

Manfred wears a butler’s tuxedo and waistcoat.

Lord Moon and Baron Von Kraterfasse will be dressed identically, in suits and capes, slightly garish. Two ways to distinguish these characters are the use of different colored masks and/or a fake mustache for the Baron’s character.

Henrietta Quarter wears a cowboy hat and boots, a suit appropriate for a lady lawyer with a string tie or a fancy, fringed shirt pointing to her Texas background. If she is played by the same actress as the one who plays Lady Moon, she will also need a wig and perhaps padding to make her very different.

SETTING THE SCENE - OPENING IMPROV

If the play is performed in a dinner theater, country club or hotel, a brief period of improvisational greeting, together with a few inexpensive props, can be used to help set the scene for the mystery. Some of these suggestions may also work in a theatrical setting, with the exception of beverage and food service. The improv will help both audience and characters “get into it.”

As the guests arrive , Ladies Moon and Cee may greet the guests enthusiastically. They may distribtute inexpensive masks to the guests and remark on the auction of the diamond necklace (which Lady Moon is wearing). They may carry on light repartee about their mutual acquaintances, drawing guests into the intrigue by claiming prior acquaintance with them at some posh social event. Lady Cee may also appear pointedly distracted, craning her neck occasionally as though looking for someone. She may even question guests as to whether they’ve seen “a handsome gentleman, so tall?”, though careful to guard these actions from Lady Moon

The Baron will be located in another area, introducing himself to the women in the audience, flirting with them and admiring their jewelry. He must avoid Lady Cee; his later appearance to her should be a complete surprise.

The butler, Manfred, may attempt to help the staff serve drinks or seat guests, but often get things wrong. Lady Moon will shrilly harangue him when he does so, bemoaning the difficulty of getting good help these days. Manfred will take it all in his unruffled manner, though there may be subtle signs of distress.

Once the guests are seated, you may either serve dinner (in which case the actors will exit) or Ladies Moon and Cee will proceed to the center stage area and begin opening dialogue. Manfred will accompany them, standing unobtrusively to the side. The Baron will disappear.

ACT I

(AT RISE: LADY MOON, LUNA and MANFRED ascend the stage, in preparation for addressing the guests. Lady Moon is wearing the necklace to be auctioned off. As Lady Moon mills about, Luna seems distracted, combing the audience for someone. Manfred, impassive, stands discreetly in the background. Lady Moon moves DS center, raising her hands to get everyone's attention.)

LADY MOON: *(Shrill.)* Ladies and gentlemen, welcome! Welcome to our annual Moonlight Gala!

(Golf applause from her COMPANIONS.)

LADY MOON: *(Continued.)* Tonight, we have a special treat! As you know, part of our program includes a special segment to raise money for those less fortunate than ourselves. To that end, I am pleased to announce that Tiffany's of New York has created a magnificent piece - a spectacular diamond necklace - donated especially for this occasion! Now. The bidding shall commence shortly. So let me urge you, dear friends - bid generously! Thank you! *(After the applause, aside to LUNA.)* Smashing success, what?

LUNA CEE: Pardon? Oh - yes. Smashing.

LADY MOON: You'll never dream who's here tonight.

LUNA CEE: Oh?

LADY MOON: *Hattie*, darling. Of all the rotten luck. If I see her, I, for one, plan to show her my heels. Politely, of course.

LUNA CEE: Hattie? Hattie … From boarding school?

LADY MOON: The same.

LUNA CEE: Heavens! I heard she became a lawyer or some such.

LADY MOON: She's up for a *judgeship*, darling - if you can believe that! And after what she did! Why, I've half a mind to alert the authorities. That would put an end to that, I can tell you!

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/eclipsed

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!