

Future Tense

Book Week Scotland 2020
Murder Mystery



Future Tense

Welcome to Future Tense, a rather literary Murder Mystery party for Book Week Scotland 2020. Thank you for playing!

This Murder Mystery is designed to be played with family and friends either in person or via Zoom. It can be played with as few as seven people, each of whom would play a character and also double as a sleuth, working out the storyline and trying to deduce the killer. Alternatively, it could be organised with seven people playing the character parts and everyone else attending as sleuths.

Please **email participants their character sheets in advance of the party** with strict instructions **not to read further than the first scene**. This will give your party plenty of time to familiarise themselves with their character – and to plan their costume! The host may or may not also be a character. It's your choice, as is the option to build in themed party food and drinks to suit the occasion.

Future Tense

Lock the gates

A twisted tale is unfolding in the Scottish Highlands tonight. The world's bestselling author, Catriona du Meurtre, has been murdered hours after launching the final instalment of her acclaimed Crook Week series.

The scribe, beloved by an army of fans, didn't make it home to her Highland retreat alive following her book launch at Stirling Castle. Instead, she took ill in her Land Rover and died, clutching her stomach. The cause of death: arsenic.

We know this comes as a shock, but the killer can only be one of Catriona's close friends or associates. They were the only people who could have got close enough to poison her. So take a breath and grab a drink, because you are a suspect.

Rules of engagement

At this point, everyone is a suspect. Be cool, play by the rules and you will be fine – maybe.

- 1 Read your character description and secret information but don't read ahead! Let your host guide you through the evening.
- 2 After each scene, please don't hold back. Each suspect has secret information they have to reveal when probed. Don't be shy.
- 3 When put under pressure by your fellow guests you can be coy, but never lie.
- 4 Overacting and gesticulation are hugely encouraged.

The suspects

You are within the inner sanctum of bestselling author Catriona du Meurtre tonight. You can probably tell a lot about the woman from the entourage she has built up for herself over her hugely successful career.



Morven du Meurtre

Catriona's wife



Finella Bludgeon

Catriona's agent



Bruce McCroaster

Catriona's chef



Lindy Scriver

Catriona's prodigy



Sam du Meurtre

Catriona's son



Dr Justin Fayed-Sinner

Catriona's
personal doctor



Holly Netweaver

Manages several
Catriona du Meurtre fan sites

Introduction by the host

Instructions for host: Read this out at the beginning of the evening

It's November 2030. Catriona du Meurtre, the world's bestselling author, is due to host a party at her Highland retreat for her closest friends and associates to celebrate the launch of her latest novel Future Tense – the final book in her acclaimed Crook Week series.

After a star-studded event at Stirling Castle, with catering provided by her personal chef Bruce McCroaster, Catriona clutches her stomach and begins vomiting in the Land Rover en route to the after-show party. Suddenly and shockingly she has died.

Her wife Morven du Meurtre, agent Finella Bludgeon and her personal physician Dr Justin Fayed-Sinner were all in the vehicle at the time. Dr Fayed-Sinner pronounces Catriona dead on arrival at her Highland retreat.

The famous author's blood tests show that she has been killed by arsenic. Strikingly, this is the exact same way her beloved character DI McNoiry died in what will now be Catriona's final novel.

I should now like to introduce you to the following characters . . .

Instructions for host: Introduce each of the seven characters. For each, read out their name and character description (the blurb just under each character name) then ask them to read out their **own introduction to the group** (these introductions are not included in the host pack).

Please remind your party that each character can only share their **secret information** if the sleuths ask them a question which warrants the sharing of all or part of it.

Host reads out:

Morven du Meurtre **Catriona's wife and muse**

Thirty-something, Morven is a glamorous, well-spoken and attractive socialite.



Character notes

Play her like:

Daisy Buchanan. She has a voice full of money, all the tact in the world and laughter like tinkling bells. Deliver your lines as artfully as you can, with plenty of charm. Oh, and make sure your outfit is to die for.

Others see her as:

The closed off and reserved muse of Catriona du Meurtre, and a stepmother to Catriona's grown-up son Sam only in name. She's unknowable and no one ever knows what her real intentions are. Close acquaintances may even expect them to be no good, but no one would ever question her. She seems very agitated tonight – for Morven anyway.

Costume inspiration:

Anything glamorous, elegant and expensive looking (even if it's not).

Secret information (to divulge only if asked):

Morven signed a prenuptial contract prohibiting her from receiving any money from Catriona while she was alive. That said, there is a life assurance policy which will pay out £10 million to either her or Catriona in the event of the death of the other, and Morven knew about it. It will not pay out in the event of suicide, however.

Even though Morven and Catriona have been exploring the possibility of IVF, Morven has been having an affair with Catriona's agent, Finella. She knows that Sam has never liked her.

Her ideal future:

Would be to live with her lover, Finella, looking forever young and living like a character in an F. Scott Fitzgerald novel.

Host reads out:

Finella Bludgeon **Catriona's agent**

A supremely confident, straight-talking character who doesn't suffer fools. She has managed Catriona's business affairs for years and is very proud of what she's achieved with the estate.



Character notes

Play her like:

The manager you fear. Finella has no problem putting people in their place and doesn't put much stock in 'emotional intelligence'. Don't spare other people's feelings if you feel they are wandering off course or coming for Morven.

Others see her as:

Catriona's right-hand woman, and fist. If you ever needed anything from Catriona you had to go through Finella first. Catriona had problems saying no, but that's not a problem Ms Bludgeon suffers from. In fact, others often thought Finella had too much influence over Catriona – especially when it came to the huge decision to kill off DI McNoiry in the final Crook Week novel.

Costume inspiration:

Even though she's at a party Finella should look like she's dressing for business. Think shirts, trouser suits and severe hairstyle.

Secret information (to divulge only if asked):

Finella has an out-of-control antique book-buying habit and has been stealing money from Catriona for years to fund her enormous, very valuable library of rare and precious first editions. Catriona valued trust above everything else and Finella knows she would never have forgiven her for this betrayal. It must therefore remain a secret. What's more, Finella has been having an affair with Catriona's wife, Morven.

Her ideal future:

Would be with Morven, worshipping her and building a beautiful island retreat (and extensive library) somewhere warmer than Scotland.

Host reads out:

Bruce McCroaster

Catriona's red-headed chef

A highly respected burly Dundonian chef, he knows exactly what Catriona likes to eat, and prepares her food meticulously.



Character notes

Play him like:

A burly, hard Dundonian with a heart of gold and a touch of paranoia. Think of Brian Cox – the actor. Your heart is like a split haggis upon hearing about Catriona's death but you won't cry – not in front of these hoity-toity people.

Others see him as:

A cherished employee and friend of Catriona – not like her other friends from the literary world. Many have suspected that Catriona might know something about big burly Bruce that they don't.

Costume inspiration:

Chef whites or an apron. Maybe holding a rolling pin and with a fine beard – even if it's drawn on.

Secret information (to divulge only if asked):

Bruce has worked in some of the best hotels around the world. He was genuinely fond of Catriona and is really shocked by her death.

Early in his career Bruce was dismissed from a top hotel when a famous client contracted food poisoning after eating a meal Bruce had delivered to her room. It was all covered up and Bruce was dismissed to avoid scandal for the hotel. Catriona found out who he was and took pity on this brusque, burly Scotsman, who reminded her of her father.

His ideal future:

Would be to have his own Michelin star restaurant in the Highlands if only he had the money to start it up.

Host reads out:

Dr Justin Fayed-Sinner

Catriona's personal doctor

A well-dressed, smooth-talking character, Dr Fayed-Sinner has been Catriona's personal doctor for five years. He is never unprepared and is practically unflappable.



Character notes

Play him like:

You were Pierce Brosnan playing a doctor. You have charm to burn and think you can talk anyone round to your way of thinking. Your winning smile will always work its magic in getting you out of almost any pickle.

Others see him as:

A little too slick. The doctor has expensive tastes and sometimes seems more interested in the lifestyle of a well-paid physician rather than the profession itself. In fact, others have wondered whether he actually is a real doctor.

Costume inspiration:

Think tuxes, moustaches and well-coiffured hair. Wear strong aftershave to get you in the mood. Do you own a cravat?

Secret information (to divulge only if asked):

Dr Justin Fayed-Sinner is not a real doctor. A huge fan of Catriona's books, he met Catriona at a party one evening and told her that he was a doctor to impress her. Catriona really liked him and asked him to become her personal doctor and since then he has done lots of research into non-medical and placebo-effect treatments. In essence he is just a soothing friend to have around. When visiting Catriona one day, Justin happened to see a copy of Catriona's last will and testament, and he read it. He didn't pay any attention to what others might receive but knows he stands to gain a yacht and a private jet when Catriona dies.

His ideal future:

Dr Fayed-Sinner's ideal future would be to train as a real doctor and open his own clinic. He just wants to help others – and make lots of money.

Host reads out:

Holly Netweaver

Catriona's super fan

Holly manages several popular fan sites that obsess over Catriona's work. Marketing experts say they are a large part of the author's success.



Character notes

Play her like:

You are nervous around this intimidating crowd. You are of course devastated at the death of your favourite author, but you can't shake your lifelong habit of laughing at inappropriate moments. You are in love with Catriona's son Sam and can barely hide it – or your contempt for Finella Bludgeon, Catriona's agent.

Others see her as:

A bit of an odd fish. Perhaps she spends too much time online obsessing over Catriona du Meurtre. It's obvious that she's head over heels in love with Sam du Meurtre and not a fan of Finella.

Costume inspiration:

Holly should wear an ill-fitting party dress with mismatched accessories.

Secret information (to divulge only if asked):

When she found out that her fictional crush DI McNoiry had been killed off in the final Crook Week novel, Holly threatened to delete all the sites she manages. An invite to the after-launch party from Finella Bludgeon, Catriona's agent, changed her mind.

Holly adores Catriona's son Sam du Meurtre and wants nothing more than to make him happy. She has recently discovered through several chat room sources that Morven is being unfaithful to Catriona in a relationship with Finella. In an attempt to get closer to Sam, she has shared this information with the author's son as she knows he'd stand to gain from his stepmother's infidelity.

Her ideal future:

Holly's ideal future would be as Sam's wife, managing the estate of Catriona du Meurtre and having lots of little du Meurtres with him.

Host reads out:

Lindy Scriever

Catriona's young writing prodigy

Lindy has recently been living in the author's mansion. She's sharper than a quill made from a hawk's feather. Lindy always has an agenda.



Character notes

Play her like:

You are playing chess with everyone's emotions. You know Sam adores you and you are fully aware that Holly has designs on him. You need to cut her down, even if you do think of Sam as an annoying, needy puppy.

Others see her as:

A bit of a parasite. No one can understand why the du Meurtres are so obsessed with Lindy Scriever. Catriona dedicated so much time and money to Lindy's writing career, and Sam is hopelessly in love with her. What's her secret?

Costume inspiration:

From make-up to clothes, hats to glasses, Lindy never wears anything but red. It's like Morticia Addams from *The Addams Family* became an academic.

Secret information (to divulge only if asked):

Lindy is *very* proud of her talent. It is only natural that the world's bestselling author chose her as her prodigy, and invited her to live in her mansion. Knows Sam is planning to propose to her. Even though she finds him irritating she'd say yes. Tonight has made her aware that she needs to drive a wedge between Sam and Holly. She wants to remind him that Holly had threatened to remove all of the internet forums which supported his mother's writing.

Behind the scenes Lindy has been posting anonymous critiques of the Catriona du Meurtre fan sites to discredit Holly, suggesting she should be replaced. Lindy would like to take them over to start building a considerable audience for her own writing.

Her ideal future:

Lindy's ideal future would be to marry Sam and use that position to take over the fan sites, using that power to build a base for her own writing.

Host reads out:

Sam du Meurtre

Catriona's only child

A handsome man with little ambition but a short temper. Easily led, he seems especially distractible tonight.



Character notes

Play him like:

You are aware of your good looks but unaware of your limitations. You might like to mix your metaphors frequently and watch that temper, especially around that money-grabber Morven.

Others see him as:

A nice to look at but ultimately charmless man. Sam has a fearsome temper and is rather selfish, in all honesty. Catriona was always a bit too busy for Sam when he was young and so he was shipped off to expensive boarding schools where he rarely excelled. He is nice enough but as distractible as a Labrador puppy, and behaves like a petulant child to his stepmother.

Costume inspiration:

A smart suit that's a little too big, with a badly tied or undone tie.

Secret information (to divulge only if asked):

Sam has found out from Holly that his stepmother Morven is having an affair with Finella, and he is angry about this. He has never trusted Morven and it was he who insisted on the prenuptial agreement stating that Morven should receive no money from Catriona while Catriona was still alive. He was planning to propose to Lindy this evening and is furious that such an announcement would now be considered to be in bad taste. He loves the attention he receives from Holly, who is always kind to him – especially when Lindy is not.

Recently, Holly also revealed to him that Morven has been spotted at an upmarket IVF clinic with Catriona. This would put his position as sole heir at risk, he thinks.

His ideal future:

Sam's ideal future would be to inherit his mother's fortune, live off the royalties with his beautiful Lindy and ruin his parasite of a stepmother.

Scene 1

Instructions for the host: Please encourage the assembled suspects to begin scene one reminding them that ham acting is actively encouraged ...



Scene 1

- Dr Fayed-Sinner:** I am so very sorry, Mrs du Meurtre. I really can't believe it but the truth is that Catriona has died. I don't know what to say.
- Morven:** How could this happen? She was absolutely fine before tonight's book launch. We were going to take a holiday . . . to . . . to . . . have a break. Whatever shall I do now?
- Lindy:** Dead?! She can't be! That doesn't make sense!
- Sam:** Mother, dead? I can't believe it! That's impossible! How on Earth could *that* have happened?
- Dr Fayed-Sinner:** It seems she has been poisoned. By arsenic of all things – like DI McNoiry in her latest book. In all my years in . . . my profession, I have never known anything like it. It appears that the poison has been ingested.
- Morven:** Where is the chef? Where is Bruce McCroaster?
- Chef:** Eh'm here, Mrs du Meurtre.
- Morven:** What did Catriona eat and drink before tonight?
- Chef:** As far as eh ken, just the usual, like. Yi ken how she is . . . eh mean, how she wiz. Fruit and cereal fir ir breakfast, nae lunch and jist a light salad wi' nae dressin' in the early evenin'. Nae alcohol, nae added salt or sugar and only wah'er ti drink. You ken tha' yirsel', Sam. You an' Lindy were in the kitchen wi iz when eh wiz feenishin' aff the ganache on they lactose-free truffles Morven likes.
- Lindy:** Yes, I remember. They looked delicious.
- Morven:** Could she have consumed anything else by mistake, Bruce?
- Chef:** Maybe she et sumhin' at the event. Na, she widna hiv did tha'. Food wiz jist a means o' stokin' the biler fir her, so ti speak, so's she'd hae the energy and concentration fir ti work. She didna care fir fine dining.
- Morven:** Okay. Thank you, Chef McCroaster. Could you please now refresh everyone's drinks and get ready to serve dinner?
- Chef:** Aye, nae problem, Mrs du Meurtre. (*Chef leaves to prepare food and drinks for everyone*)
- Finella:** Is that wise? Asking him to prepare food and drinks when Catriona has evidently been poisoned by something she has eaten?
- Morven:** Oh, don't be ridiculous. Chef Bruce adored Catriona. He'd never do anything to harm her. But did she have anything to eat or drink at the book launch?
-

Sam: No.

Holly: YES! She did! (*To Morven*) You kept trying to get her to eat throughout the evening. You said she looked . . . faint.

Morven: Well she did! I thought that a quick truffle would give her the sugar hit she needed. What's wrong with that? I'd have eaten some myself if I hadn't been so busy.

Lindy: Well we only have your word for that.

Sam: Yes, we DO only have YOUR word for that. Why would you give my mother *your* special truffles, Morven? She never wanted to eat or drink anything during events! You knew that!

Morven: Settle down, Samuel! What are you saying? It was only one truffle. She had to eat something or she wouldn't have made it through the night . . . she was really quite light-headed. (*Pauses and looks around*) And when I think of it, every one of you offered her food at some point. How do I know she didn't eat anything else? It's not like I can . . . I can . . . ask her. (*To doctor*) May I see her, dear Justin?

Dr Fayed-Sinner: Yes, of course.

Morven: Did *you* give her anything?

Dr Fayed-Sinner: No, I did not, dear. As you are aware, she never took anything other than paracetamol and that only when she *absolutely* needed it. She preferred my heat and cold therapies to ease the stiffness in her fingers when she had been writing all day and to relax her shoulders and muscles after hours of working. She just needed support and comfort.

**Morven
(defensively):** I gave her that.

**Finella
(soothingly):** Indeed you did.

Sam: (*Coughs meaningfully*)

Lindy: Oh for goodness' sakes. Think of poor Sam, Morven. He is the one who has lost his mother. (*Lindy smiles at Sam and Sam gazes at her adoringly*)

Morven: You don't think she . . . I mean she wouldn't have . . . she was so happy, doing so well. You don't think she could have (*gulps*) *done something stupid?*

Dr Fayed-Sinner: Don't upset yourself. There's no way she would have taken arsenic on purpose. She was so happy – and she loved you.

Finella: Of course she did. Everyone knew that. She often spoke about how lucky she was that you had agreed to marry her.

Finella: Look, I'm just going to pop up to the office to make all the necessary phone calls. I need to handle the information spread and just check everything is okay. Oh! I've forgotten my key. Morven, may I borrow yours?

(Finella draws Morven to one side)

Finella: Please don't worry. It will all be all right. I promise you that.

Morven: But what can have happened? If she did this to herself I'll get nothing! I can't go back to that. Our plan was to have a child together. It was what Catriona wanted to seal our six years together.

Finella: Don't fret, Morven. All will be well. You must trust my judgement. I was the one who first suggested the character of DI McNoiry and it made her fortune, and I was the one who recognised that the character should be killed off at the height of his popularity. She had completed the final book and when it's published it will be worth millions. I'll get my cut and we shall be set up for life.

Morven: I *do*. I do trust you. But I also wonder if she had her suspicions about *us*.

Finella: Not at all. Sweet Morven, we've always been careful. Now just go back in and talk to the others and I'll make sure everything is okay. *(They hug one another for a long time)*

**Dr Fayed-Sinner
(coughs):**

Erm. You can go up now, Mrs du Meurtre. Would you like me to come with you?

(Morven and Finella break away hurriedly.)

Morven: No. Thank you, Doctor. It's fine. I'll go myself.

(Morven leaves)

Finella: She couldn't have done this to herself, could she?

Dr Fayed-Sinner: It's a little too early to say. We shall find out but she has definitely been poisoned by arsenic. This is such a tragedy. She was an exceptional writer – a true star. Everyone loved her.

Finella: When will we know? I mean . . . how it happened?

Dr Fayed-Sinner: We shall know later this evening. Once everyone has said their goodbyes to her I shall conduct further tests and we shall know for certain then.

Finella: You'll let me know as soon as *you* know?

Dr Fayed-Sinner: Yes, yes, of course.

Finella: And Justin, about Morven . . . Mrs du Meurtre . . . and me. You *mustn't* say anything to anyone.

Dr Fayed-Sinner: I'm very discreet.

Finella: So am I. I *know* that you are not a real doctor but Catriona believed in you and so that was all that mattered.

Dr Fayed-Sinner

(alarmed): I . . . well . . . you won't say anything?

Finella: Of course not. I think we understand one another.

(Holly bursts in on the conversation)

Holly: You are a murderer!

Finella: What? What are you talking about, Ms Netweaver?

Holly: You did it before – you could do it again!

Finella: She's ranting now. Doctor, perhaps you could give this poor creature something to calm her down.

Holly: You killed DI McNoiry! Who's to say you didn't kill Catriona too?

Finella

(speaks slowly): DI McNoiry was a character in a book.

Holly: Loved by MILLIONS of fans!

Finella: That's right, but a character in a book. Having a tattoo of him on your arm doesn't make him real, Ms Netweaver. McNoiry had served his purpose and it was time for him to go. I simply advised Catriona that his time had come.

Holly: Well your advice stinks.

Finella (sighs): Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that Catriona was a real person who has died and at this point in time we have no idea how or why.

Holly: It was *you*, wasn't it?

Finella: I've already told you . . .

Holly: You are the one. The one who has been writing these horrible comments on and about my fan forums. All anonymously of course. You'd *never* have the courage to put your name to them.

Finella: I wouldn't demean myself by getting involved in your fantasy world Ms Netweaver, but just for the record, if I wrote anything I would most certainly put my name to it – and had I done so then your unctuous little websites would have been abandoned by all. Now please calm yourself and leave me alone.

Holly: *(Bursts into tears and laughs inappropriately)*

Questions: Round 1

Instructions for the host: The party guests can now ask any questions of any of the characters. As host, please facilitate this discussion to keep it moving along.

Important: Please tell your guests that if anyone asks any characters if they murdered Catriona they will say, 'No'.

Some suggestions for questions are shown below. Guests can ask the questions of any character. **Remind the guests that each character has secret information that they MUST divulge if pressed.**

Questions you could ask the characters

- How did you first meet Catriona?
- What was your relationship with Catriona?
- How do you see your future now without Catriona?
- Do you know what is in Catriona's will?
- Has anyone been unfaithful in their relationship?
- What is Finella keeping secret?
- How does Sam feel about Morven?

Intermission

Take a break for ruminations and cocktails and/or cups of tea.

Scene 2

Instructions for the host: Please tell the characters to begin scene two ...



Scene 2

Sam: What can we do now?

Lindy: I have no idea.

Sam: I just can't believe that *Mother* has been poisoned. It's such a shock to hear that the great Catriona du Meurtre has been poisoned. How could *that* have happened?

Lindy: It changes everything – and the doctor has just confirmed that it wasn't suicide – that in fact she was *definitely murdered*.

Sam: Which means that that duplicitous Morven will receive the life assurance that was set up in the event of the death of her or Mother. The good thing is that because she signed a prenuptial agreement I shall inherit all of Mother's estate. What we have now, Lindy, is an opportunity – an opportunity to be together – and the main thing is that I will inherit everything.

Lindy: Hmmmm.

Sam: I was going to propose to you this evening. I wanted to make a big announcement and plan a huge engagement party so we could declare our love to the world.

Lindy (sharply): Well, given the circumstances I think that would be in rather poor taste now.

Sam: Do you think so?

Lindy: Yes, but there's no reason why we shouldn't just arrange a very quiet wedding – just you and me and a couple of witnesses. Much more intimate and romantic.

Sam (sadly): I wanted to let everyone know what we feel for each other.

Lindy (impatiently): Yes, yes, but there'll be plenty of time for that later.

Do you think Holly could have had anything to do with this? I've often wondered if she was secretly rather jealous of your mother's writing fame? I mean, she has only made her own name on the back of your mother's talent. She's so unremarkable. She could easily have found a way to poison Catriona – no one would notice *her*.

Sam: Holly! Of course not! Holly worshipped my mother and adored her work. You know that.

Lindy: Well, so she made it appear, Sam. But actually, I've often wondered . . .

Sam: It couldn't have been Holly. She has always been such a loyal and supportive presence to Mother and to me.

Lindy: Yes, quite the little lapdog. (*Sarcastically*) What WOULD you do without her?

Sam: It's Morven I'm wondering about. If Mother consumed arsenic but only partook of what Bruce had cooked, including *the truffle Morven handed her*, doesn't that rather point to one of them?

Lindy: What possible reason could Bruce or Morven have for wanting to see your mother dead? They both have fantastic lives *thanks* to your mother.

Sam: *She* doesn't have everything she wants! She wants to help Finella build that ridiculous collection she has of rare antique books. It's worth an absolute fortune and Finella means to have THE most prized collection in the world. (*He pauses then blurts out*) . . . And she wants to be with Finella!

Lindy: Finella! Whatever gave you that idea?

Sam: Holly told me. She came across it in one of her chat rooms. They've been seen together, plotting and planning.

Lindy: They *have* to do that. As your mother's wife and agent they need to co-ordinate your mother's work and personal commitments to make sure there are no clashes with engagements.

Sam: No, no it's more than that. One of the fans heard them whispering one evening and then she saw them kiss one another. They didn't know they'd been seen but it's true, Lindy! I *know* it is!

Lindy: Perhaps, but I still think . . .

Sam: And I've always suspected that Finella has been creaming money off the top of Mother's fortune. How else could she have built that incredible book collection. I mean, for goodness' sakes, one of those books alone is worth £93,000!

Lindy: How *very* interesting. Sometimes you quite surprise me, Sam.

Sam (glowing): Do I Lindy?

Lindy: Yes . . . but I must say that you also have the knack of getting things *spectacularly* wrong.

Sam: But not with you beside me. We make a great team. You know how much I need you.

Lindy: Yes, yes. I know. Listen, your mother has been good to me. She was the one who first recognised my incredible talent and I mean to do everything I can to protect her name. We can do this together but we need to find out who has poisoned your mother, and it seems to me that there's more to your sweet little Holly than meets the eye.

Questions: Round 2

Instructions for the host: The party guests can now ask any questions of any of the characters. As host, please facilitate this discussion to keep it moving along.

Important: Please tell your guests that if anyone asks any characters if they murdered Catriona they will say, 'No'.

Some suggestions for questions are shown below. Guests can ask the questions of any character. **Remind the guests that each character has secret information that they MUST divulge if pressed.**

Questions you could ask the characters

- Could someone else have been the intended victim?
- What will you lose/gain from Catriona's death?
- Are all of the characters what they seem?
- Who is the barrier to Lindy's real ambition?
- Why did Catriona employ Bruce after he was dismissed from a top hotel?
- Where did Dr Justin Fayed-Sinner study?
- Has the doctor come across any interesting reading material recently?
- With whom is Holly head over heels in love?
- Why has Lindy been so busy on her laptop without producing a manuscript?
- What has Holly told Sam in confidence?

Intermission

Take a break for ruminations and cocktails and/or cups of tea.

Scene 3

Instructions for the host: Please instruct your guests to begin scene three ...



Scene 3

Finella: Here it is! Catriona's last will and testament. *(She reads)* I, Catriona du Meurtre, a resident of Edinburgh, being of sound mind and memory and at least eighteen (18) years of age, do hereby make, publish and declare this to be . . .

Morven: Oh, please, let's not prolong this, Finella. We get all that. What does it SAY?

Finella: Oh! Um . . . *(reads down a bit)* . . . currently married to Morven du Meurtre . . . ah . . . blah blah blah . . . appoint as my representative my faithful and trusted agent Finella Bludgeon, to carry out my last wishes.

(She beams with delight)

Morven: Well . . . and what are the last wishes?

Finella: To my dear wife, Morven, who signed a prenuptial agreement prohibiting her from receiving any of my wealth while I was alive, I know that you will make good use of the £10 million you will receive in the life assurance payment in the event of my death. I wish you well.

(Morven sighs with relief)

Finella: To my loyal and trusted agent, Finella, I leave the sum of £15 million and I thank you for your service over the years. We have been a great partnership.

To Holly, the first and most faithful of fans, I leave the sum of £5 million to create the life you deserve.

(Morven scowls at Holly. Holly looks stunned and giggles)

To Lindy, who has shown such promise, I leave the sum of £10,000 to make sure you stay hungry enough to build on your evident writing talent. Please use this wisely, Lindy, and make the most of the skill you have.

(Lindy is furious but tries to disguise this)

To my excellent chef, Bruce. I know that you were wrongfully dismissed from a position in your early years when you were accused of poisoning a hotel guest. I was that hotel guest and I know that that incident had nothing whatsoever to do with you but that you were blamed simply because you delivered my room service tray that night. To right a wrong I made sure you were given employment in some of the best hotels in the world before finally you came to work for me. You have dedicated your life to cooking for others and I leave you my hotel chain because I know that you will make a real success of this business. Thank you for your commitment.

(Bruce looks astonished but pleased)

To my respected doctor, Dr Justin Fayed-Sinner, I thank you for your professionalism and skill and leave you my yacht and private jet so that your travel and professional development may always be easy in the future.

(Dr Fayad-Sinner looks content)

To my beloved son, Sam, I am sorry I wasn't always there for you in life. I want to make sure I am there for you in death. I leave you everything else I own to ensure you will have a life of luxury and have the opportunity to indulge your every whim. Make your choices for the future wisely and without any financial worries influencing them. I love you and want only your happiness.

(Sam beams at Lindy)

Questions: Round 3

Instructions for the host: The party guests now have a **final chance** to ask the characters/suspects questions.

Important: Please tell your guests that if anyone asks any characters if they murdered Catriona they will say, 'No'.

Some suggestions for questions are shown below. Guests can ask the questions of any character. **Remind the guests that each character has secret information that they MUST divulge if pressed.**

Questions you could ask the characters

- Did you know what was in the will before it was read?
- Who had most to gain from Catriona's death?
- How do you feel about the content of Catriona's will?

Denouement

The time has come for you to close the book on this Crook Week case for Book Week Scotland. There's been a murder and you need to solve it. Who from tonight's tragic party killed the world-famous author Catriona du Meurtre? It's time to ask yourself these questions:

Instructions for the host: Before you make your mind up, ask each character to read out their closing statement (these are not included in the host pack). If any of your guests ask, here is a neat summary of each suspect's motive for offing Catriona du Meurtre:

- **Morven's motive:** by killing Catriona, Morven would receive a life assurance payout of £10 million and could marry Finella.
- **Finella's motive:** by killing Catriona and marrying Morven, Finella would be able to cover up her historical secret thieving from Catriona and continue to build her antique book collection.
- **Holly's motive:** by killing Finella, Holly could persuade Catriona to bring back the character of DI McNoiry, and by killing Lindy she could remove any obstacle to getting closer to Sam.
- **Lindy's motive:** by killing Holly, Lindy could remove the competition for Sam's affections and take over the fan forums to build her own power base.
- **Sam's motive:** by killing Morven, Sam could become the sole focus of his mother's attention, knowing she would indulge his every whim.
- **Dr Fayed-Sinner's motive:** by killing Catriona, Dr Fayed-Sinner knows he will inherit the yacht and the private jet as he had previously read the will and knew its content.
- **Chef Bruce McCroaster's motive:** Chef Bruce was previously accused of poisoning a client. Only Catriona and Bruce were aware of this and by killing her, Bruce could bury this information forever and have enough money to realise his dream to open a restaurant.

Who is the murderer?

Instructions for the host: Before you instruct the murderer to confess to the killing, please ask each guest to answer the following questions:

- **Who do you think was the intended victim and why?**
- **Who do you think killed Catriona du Meurtre and why?**

Revealing the murderer

Instructions for the host: Ask everyone to scroll down in their pack and for the murderer to confess. Do this bit as dramatically as you can!

Solution

Instructions for the host: After Sam's confession, please read out this solution to the guests with your best detective patter.

Bruce McCroaster had prepared some incredible canapés for after the book launch. Amongst those canapés were his special lactose- and wheat-free chocolate and almond truffles prepared especially for Morven du Meurtre.

Sam had laced one of those truffles with arsenic intended for Morven. He knew his mother hated to eat or drink during an event and so it never crossed his mind that when he injected the poison into the allergy-safe truffle it would end up being eaten by Catriona.

Morven knew that Catriona hated to eat or drink during an event but always tries to persuade her to eat something every so often so she doesn't get overtired and faint. Morven offered Catriona a truffle and, to her surprise, her wife ate it.

Once Morven was out of the way, Sam would be the focus of his mother's attention and there would be no risk of having to share his inheritance with anyone else. He was secure in his position as the probable sole heir to the du Meurtre fortune. It was his intention to propose to Lindy at the party and to get married and live happily ever after with her.

Sam was the killer, Morven the intended victim and Catriona the unintended victim.

Thanks for playing and happy Book Week Scotland.



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Many thanks!