



Clue[®]

MYSTERY PUZZLE

by Parker Brothers

The Masquerade Murder

A JIGSAW PUZZLE MYSTERY

The Masquerade Murder™

Colonel Mustard loved surprises. Taking the large package from the messenger with something like glee, he marched it into his sitting room. Should he open the card on top first? Yes. That would prolong the suspense very nicely. It was from Dr. David Black, perhaps his best friend in the world. "A party!" the Colonel exclaimed as he perused the invitation. "Next Saturday. Fancy dress costumes." It was nice to see that Dr. Black didn't allow his recent run of bad luck in the stock market to dampen his enthusiasm for entertaining.

A second later and he was tearing open the box. It looked like a suit. Could good old Black have gone as far as providing him with a costume for the party? Yes, that's just what it was, a World War I flying ace uniform, complete with scarf and goggles. "What a dashing outfit!" As Colonel Mustard held it up to the light, a note fell out of the jacket.

"Please wear this," it said in Black's distinctive hand. **"I thought it apropos. You've certainly had enough luck with aces during the past year. Hope the sleeves are roomy enough. Ha-ha."**

Colonel Mustard read the note twice, his frown increasing. Aces? Sleeves? Just what was the joke? Mustard gulped. Could Black possibly know his dirty little secret?

Mustard read it a third time, his memory focusing on the National Amateur Poker Finals last month in Manchester. He had won the competition handily, thanks in large to his talent for storing aces up the sleeve of his tuxedo and switching them for useless cards at just the right moment. Dr. Black had been on hand with his video camera, recording his win for posterity and the local poker club. Could Black have seen something that night, or

worse, have caught something on tape? Mustard tried to put the thought out of his mind. No. The wording was just a coincidence.

On that very same morning, eight miles away, Mrs. Peacock answered the door to her manor house. "Yes?" A messenger stood there with two boxes. Elizabeth Peacock checked the names. "This one is for me," she said haughtily, taking the larger package. "The other is for my maid. Go around to the kitchen. She'll tip you for both of us."

Shutting the door in the young man's face, Mrs. Peacock dropped the box in the middle of the hall and attacked it with her bare hands. "What? A skirt?" she said in confusion as she tore away the layers of tissue paper. "I don't remember ordering a skirt." She lifted it out, then shuddered at the sight of leather fringe. "A cowgirl outfit? What kind of a joke..." One by one, she examined the accessories: the hat, the blouse, the holster set, the toy six-shooters. When she opened the card from Dr. Black, she was relieved. "Oh, the doctor's having a party. Well, I suppose I can force myself to wear this for a few hours." And then she found the note stuffed in the scarf.

"Be our own Annie Oakley next Saturday. If things get a little dull, you can entertain us with some fancy shooting. I'll bet in a previous incarnation you were a Wild West show artiste, getting rich and famous with one perfectly placed shot."

"Good gracious." Mrs. Peacock dropped the note like a hot potato. Could this be a coincidence? There was no way Dr. Black could know. She *had* been a sharpshooter in a previous existence — 20 years ago — and she *did* get rich with one perfectly placed shot.

Her late husband, Enoch Peacock, had been in his eighties and sickly. On their wedding day, doctors estimated that he had six months to live. Two years later, he was still aggravatingly alive and Elizabeth was secretly taking marksmanship lessons. Enoch's

departure from this world occurred suddenly — killed in the only drive-by shooting ever recorded in rural Sussex. A freak shot fired from a passing car smashed through his library window. Old Enoch was busy exercising on his treadmill when the bullet entered his back, hitting him straight in the heart.

Dr. Black had been the attending physician. At the time, he didn't seem bothered that the bullet was a kind most commonly used on target ranges. Mrs. Peacock had never even been under suspicion. But now... perhaps forensic science had improved and now something could be proved. Had Black kept the bullet for 20 years? Was he thinking of blackmailing her? "No," she said with a laugh. "He wouldn't."

Mrs. Peacock's reverie was interrupted. "Good gracious," someone else yelped in the distance. Hmm. It sounded just like her maid's voice and seemed to be coming from inside.

Mrs. White stood in the kitchen, gazing down into the box lying open on the chopping block. "Good gracious," she gasped again. "A prison uniform." Mrs. White was familiar with such uniforms, having worn one every single day for six years. By the end of those six years of detention, she had grown so tired of the monotonous dress code that she decided to treat herself to a shopping spree. Climbing into a laundry truck, Mrs. White escaped, hitching a ride straight from the prison yard to the annual dress sale at Harrod's.

It was there at Harrod's that she first met Mrs. Peacock. The two women began their acquaintance fighting over a blouse and when Mrs. White let the other woman have it, they became friends. The rich widow soon persuaded the escaped felon to move to Darbyshire and take employment as a maid. What a perfect hideout! And she didn't even ask for references.

In the bottom of the box was a note. **"My brother, the warden at the women's prison in Berkshire, assures me this is the latest fashion. But you would know that better than I. Looking forward to seeing you in your prison stripes."**

"He knows I escaped from prison," Mrs. White murmured as she re-read the note. "And he wants me to know he knows. What's the man up to? Blackmail?"

Before her incarceration, Blanche White had been a member of a highly successful counterfeiting gang, spreading fake 100 pound notes throughout greater London. During those salad days, she managed to stash away quite a tidy sum, money she was now saving for her retirement. "He's not getting his hands on my stash," she snarled menacingly. "I don't care what he knows."



Saturday evening was blustery and cool. The Reverend Green hopped off his bicycle and removed the ankle clips that had kept his white robes from getting entangled in his gears. "What a nuisance," he sniffed as he mounted the steps of Tudor Close. "And what an odd party. Only six guests. And all of us received our clothes by messenger."

He rang the doorbell, then straightened the folds of his sheik costume. "Hardly an appropriate get-up, religiously speaking. And then there's the matter of the note. Very troubling."

He recalled it word for word. **"The Church of England is not known for its oil-rich property, but I think our local parish is an exception. We'll dub you Achmed Oldoildrum, the Sheik of Darbyshire."**

"Oldoildrum?" The Reverend didn't like that name at all. It reminded him of the dozens of drums filled with contaminated oil that he had allowed to be buried in a remote corner of the parish

cemetery. "I had no choice," he told himself for the hundredth time. "The church needed the money. When that waste disposal company came to me, I knew it was wrong. But it seemed like a foolproof way out. I mean, it's not as if a little toxic waste is going to hurt their health. Not in the cemetery."

The Reverend's musings were interrupted by the arrival of Dr. Black's butler. "Hogarth. Good to see you. Am I the first one here?"

"The last one, sir," Hogarth replied and led the clergyman through the hall into the ballroom where a phonograph was playing a scratchy recording of *Happy Days Are Here Again*. The five other guests greeted the new arrival warmly but cautiously, and spent a good deal of time examining his costume.

Hogarth glanced around the room and shook his head. From the decorations to the refreshments to the sullen faces of the guests, it was the saddest excuse for a party he'd ever seen. Tudor Close had once been famous for its extravagant events. With affection, Hogarth recalled the Blue Ball, a party for 300 where everything — the flowers, the soup, the salmon — had been dyed blue, all except for the blueberry pie which had been turned red. Ah, those were the days. But now, ever since Dr. Black made those disastrous miscalculations in the stock market, Hogarth was reduced to decorating with paper streamers, keeping the guest list to six and mixing up batches of watered-down punch.

Vivienne Scarlett was on her fourth glass of punch and starting to wonder why she wasn't feeling the alcohol. If ever there was a night when she needed liquor to give her courage, this was it. The first premonition of disaster occurred two months ago when Dr. Black had been over to her cottage for tea and accidentally opened the garage door. Before she could stop him, he had seen the dozens of boxes and pondered aloud how she'd come to own 10,000 copies of Tony Bennett's latest cassette.

"You know," she'd told him sweetly. "Every time I'm in a music store, I forget that I already have it and I buy a new copy. Isn't that silly?"

It hadn't been a very convincing lie but she quickly put the incident out of her mind — until last week when the messenger dropped off Dr. Black's invitation. Along with it had come the costume for a pirate and a not-so-mysterious note. **"Looking forward to your attendance next Saturday. I'm sure you can provide plenty of pirate music to keep us all entertained."**

Pirate music? Pirated music; that's what he'd meant. Dr. Black must have connected her to the London gang run by her old boyfriend, a gang that was manufacturing and selling pirated copies of all the most popular albums and videos. Miss Scarlett adjusted her eye patch and silently cursed the day she invited her nosy neighbor over for tea.

Returning to the punch bowl for one more refill, the voluptuous pirate nearly had a collision with a firefighter's ax. "Sorry," Professor Plum said as he switched the weapon to his other hand.

"My fault. No depth perception. That's a very dashing outfit." Miss Scarlett's single available eye lingered on the professor's costume and, for the first time, she wondered if some of the others just might be in the same predicament as she.

Scarlett's stare only served to make Peter Plum more self-conscious. Blasted costume. Had she guessed his guilty secret? Had the others? Even if these people had been total strangers, they could still know. Last month's headline in the *Darbyshire Gazette* had said it all. **"PLUM VITAMIN FACTORY DESTROYED IN SUSPICIOUS FIRE."** And now he was forced to wear a firefighter's uniform.

The professor had been in the fitness industry for decades, managing to squirrel away quite a tidy profit. True, his partners never made a penny. But so what?

His vitamin company was a perfect example. Rich investors, Dr. Black among them, had put up all the money. For a year or so, Professor Plum siphoned off the proceeds, slipping them into a numbered Swiss account. And then disaster struck. It always struck, thanks to the professor's ingenuity. A robbery. A lawsuit. In this case, a fire. Everything was supposedly lost in the flames and bankruptcy was declared. The investors wound up recovering most of their money from the insurance settlement and went away relieved that things hadn't been worse.

Dr. Black had been the only one to ask embarrassing questions. Plum faked his way through the answers and thought he'd done a pretty good job — until last week when the party invitation arrived. **"Wear this as a tribute to the men who fought so bravely against YOUR fire. Who would have believed vitamin E could be so flammable?"**

Why had he capitalized "YOUR"? And what did the last sentence mean, that Dr. Black didn't believe the official police findings? "He knows I torched my factory," Plum grumbled under his breath.

The six guests were pacing silently through the ballroom, all of them absorbed in their own private torments as they drank the tasteless punch. And then, suddenly, the scratchy music was replaced by a scratchy fanfare. All eyes focused on the top of the grand staircase. "My dearest friends. Good evening and welcome."

It was Dr. Black, thin, tall and imposing, dressed up in the black cape and false fangs of Dracula. "Don't you all look splendid!" he continued in his version of a Transylvanian accent.

"You'll forgive me, I hope, for keeping the guest list so exclusive. I am experiencing temporary cash flow problems. They should be corrected very shortly. In the meanwhile, I promise you an evening you will not soon forget."

"Your choice of costume," Colonel Mustard squawked with a tinge of panic rising in his voice. "A vampire. Is there some reason why you're dressed up as a mythical bloodsucker?"

"Very good." Dr. Black laughed as he descended the stairs.

"Bloodsucker. That's exactly the impression I was hoping to make. By the way, Colonel, I have some priceless footage of this year's National Poker Finals. If you have a few minutes free this evening, we must get together and take a look at it."

"Priceless footage?" Mustard gulped.

"Well, not quite priceless. I'm sure we can come up with an agreeable sum. Reverend Green. How are you? I can't let you leave tonight without sitting down and discussing gardens. Last month, just for curiosity's sake, I took soil samples from the surrounding neighborhood and came up with some fascinating readings, especially from the area right outside the cemetery wall."

"Indeed," the Reverend gulped. "I suppose we should sit down and talk."

"Ah, and Mrs. Peacock. That holster does look good on you."

Like the others, Elizabeth Peacock suffered through a minute or so of excruciating innuendo and, like the others, was invited to step aside with Dr. Black sometime that evening to discuss it.

Miss Scarlett was next on their host's hit list, followed by Professor Plum and finally Mrs. White. "I believe you know my brother," Dr. Black said with a sickening smile. "He remembers you. The stunt you pulled with the laundry truck. Tom never stops talking about it. He would love to see you again."

"I'm sure he would," Mrs. White replied. "We must sit down and talk."

"Absolutely," Dr. Black said, leading the way into the conservatory. "Now, on with the party. I believe Hogarth has set up a lovely table of tinned fish paste, white bread and dessert gelatin. Haven't you, Hogarth?"

Hogarth grunted.

The buffet-style dinner progressed just as sullenly as the cocktail hour. The sole difference was that each guest now spent a good portion of the time wondering about the others. "A pirate," Mrs. Peacock muttered to herself. "Why was Scarlett given a pirate costume?" The only possibility she could imagine had to do with the eye patch. "Perhaps she poked someone's eye out years ago and he's blackmailing her for that."

Dr. Black seemed to be the only one with an appetite. He finished off three sandwiches and two bowls of gelatin before disappearing into his study. "If anyone wants to talk to me..." The doctor smiled, letting the phrase linger in the air. Then he closed the creaky door behind him.

By now the evening had lost any semblance of a party. The costumed guests all wandered off on their own, milling around the mansion and muttering to themselves, like actors from some bizarre movie, memorizing lines during a break in the shooting. Every now and then, when no one was looking, the door to the study would creak open, signaling that one of the guests had slipped in to visit the host.

Only Hogarth continued to pretend. "It's time for the group picture," he announced cheerily. It was about an hour later and all six had wandered into the lounge in search of another drink. "Dr. Black insisted that I snap you in full costume, as a little memento of the festivities."

"A memento of his pay day," Professor Plum growled.

Hogarth ignored the comment. He knew as well as anyone what his employer was up to. Being a proper servant, however, he considered it none of his business. Besides, maybe now the doctor would make good on his two months of back salary.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please gather 'round the sofa. Full costume, everyone." Hogarth's voice brimmed with faked enthusiasm. "Professor Plum, where's your ax? We can't have our fireman without his ax."

"Ax?" The distracted professor glanced around. "I don't recall where I left it."

"Look for it later," Mrs. Peacock carped. "Just take your blasted picture and let us go home." The others agreed and took their places behind the sofa, trying to look pleasant and happy despite the circumstances.

Hogarth snapped off two photographs. "Lovely, lovely," he said as he waited for the flash to recharge. "But we should have Dr. Black join you. I'll go find him." He headed toward the study. "Everyone hold your places. Just a minute."

It took only half a minute. As soon as the study door squeaked open, Hogarth saw his employer. He was sprawled out on the Oriental rug, faceup and surrounded by a pool of blood. Hogarth let out an involuntary yelp and was soon joined by the six guests, now suddenly transformed into six suspects.

"Hmm," Professor Plum said as he stood in the doorway. "At least we know what happened to my ax." The ax in question was imbedded neatly and deeply in the doctor's chest.



It was the next morning and the police still didn't have a suspect in custody. According to their reconstruction, the killer entered the study either carrying the ax in plain view or hiding it somewhere in his or her costume. Since no one heard an outcry, the attack probably took the doctor by surprise. Death occurred within seconds, but not before he'd had a chance to grab at his killer. They knew this because of a piece of fabric found in the victim's hand. It was a long red band of cloth about an inch wide — clutched tightly in his right hand and covered with the deep red stain of blood.

The cloth matched nothing on Dr. Black's own costume nor anything else in the room and Hogarth swore he had no idea where it might have come from.

The police then proceeded to interview the guests, all of whom denied having visited the victim. They also denied having seen anyone else enter the study and denied any possible motive for killing the good doctor.

Hogarth was spending time in the darkroom this morning, developing the pictures from last night. One of them had turned out particularly well, he thought as he switched on the light.

The butler examined his handiwork, his mind drifting back to last night. He wasn't really looking for clues, just mulling over the evening in general, thinking about the guests and their costumes. His eyes focused on one particular section of the photo. "Oh, good heavens," he whispered, then ran for the phone, the wet picture still in his hand.

"Good morning, Sergeant. This is Dr. Black's butler. I know who killed him."

The sergeant was amazed. "What? You know? How can you know?"

"I have photographic evidence," Hogarth replied. "Come over right away and I'll explain."

Before the sergeant and his men arrive, it's your turn. Assemble the jigsaw puzzle to find Hogarth's photo of the six suspects. Somewhere in there is the one clue you'll need to solve Dr. Black's murder.

THE SOLUTION

All six suspects had the opportunity to take the air and kill Dr. Black. The only clue that could possibly link the killer to the crime is the clue left behind, the three pieces of bloody red cloth found in the elderly band.

When Hogarth examined the photo, he noted in one white corner was missing a thin red stain from his or her clothing. No one seemed to be missing anything.

And then Hogarth noticed the drapes. A green drapery he held one side in place, but the other side had no air. "Where didn't get" Hogarth wondered.

The leader inspected the curtains again and saw that. He remembered that a green cloth had been used to tie around his head tonight. Here was the missing drapery tie. Hogarth knew exactly what had happened. During the Reverend's murder attack, Dr. Black grabbed at his assistant, moving the cloth from the clerk's costume. Green saw that the cloth was too stained with blood to have back and went. He had to find another piece of cloth to use instead. When no one was looking, he grabbed the drapery tie and fastened it around his head. Hogarth knew that no one would notice the difference.

The three pieces of the clue, which were Reverend Green's costume, before the bloody dead was found.