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presents...

# “Celebrity Celebrations”

Play version  
for 10 to 16 guests

by Stephanie Chambers

Second edition  
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Although the characters in this mystery are based on real people, the events depicted in this mystery are totally fictional.

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## The Suspects

It's 1961. The world's richest man – Jerry Oilman – has invited anybody who is anybody to his birthday party – the biggest party of all time. Jerry Oilman is an extremely wealthy man. He also has the misfortune of being a very short man.

He made his money in oil. He is eccentric and notorious for his collection of stuffed bats. These hideous black winged creatures hang from the walls and ceiling of his house spooking everyone who enters. Some people consider Jerry Oilman quite batty. Others are less polite.

Tonight Jerry has invited a host of rich and famous people. For example, Marilyn Monroe is here looking for the perfect man. And when you get this many big names together you know there's sure to be conflict. What Jerry hadn't foreseen, and what you don't know, is that something sinister and frightening is about to take place. You will all be asked to work out who is the villain behind this dastardly crime – a crime that will take us all the way to the graveside.

**Fred Astaire** (1899-1987) I am a debonair man and I have sung and danced like no other. People say I gave Ginger class and she gave me sex appeal. I practice all the time. I'm a perfectionist. *Dress suggestions:* Black top hat and tails. *Song:* "Let's Call The Whole Thing Off".

**Ginger Rogers** (1911-1995) I am a dazzling singer, dancer and actor. I won an Academy Award for "Kitty Foyle". When I retired from Hollywood fame, I bought a dairy farm. I am very attached to my dairy cows. *Dress suggestions:* 1930s type clothes such as a calf-length floral dress. *Song:* "I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket".

**Jimi Hendrix** (1942-1970) I know I am going to be one of the most daring, inventive and influential rock guitarists. But at present, I'm still in the army. *Dress suggestions:* An Afro wig & thin moustache. You must carry an electric guitar or a cardboard cutout of one and wear at least one large ring. You may like to wear an army uniform. *Song:* "Voodoo Child".

**Janis Joplin** (1943-1970) I am the first goddess of rock. I have a raw iron soul and sing like a blues mamma. I keep begging God to buy me a Mercedes Benz, but so far he hasn't. *Dress suggestions:* Long dark wavy-haired wig worn messy. Flowery or hippy-like dress. Carry a small microphone. *Song:* "Mercedes Benz".

**John Wayne – The Duke** (1907-1979) I was born Marion Robert Morrison and I have never legally changed my name to John Wayne. I've been far more than just a celluloid cowboy. I am a legend – a man who commands respect. *Dress suggestions:* Ten-gallon hat. Cowboy gear. Add an eye patch.

**Marilyn Monroe** (1926-1962) I am a sex goddess, singer, actor and model. I spent part of my childhood unloved in an orphanage but now I'm loved by all the men in the world. I am a member of the "Rat Pack". *Dress suggestions:* A white dress with a wide skirt like in her famous photo. Red lipstick. Blonde wig. *Song:* "I Wanna Be Loved By You".

**Elvis Presley** (1935-1977) I am the King of Rock 'N Roll. I am also known for moving my pelvis when I perform. I have acted in a large number of movies. I am religious, but I'm not a saint. *Dress suggestions:* Las Vegas white clingy clothes. Carry a microphone. *Song:* "Love Me Tender".

**Judy Garland** (1922-1969) I have sung and danced in thirty-two feature films and I am one of the world's greatest entertainers. I am a member of the "Rat Pack". *Dress suggestions:* Wear her "Wizard of Oz" outfit complete with ponytails and red shoes. *Song:* "Somewhere Over The Rainbow".

**Groucho Marx** (1890-1977) I am the most famous of the Marx Brothers and I am known for my one-liners about elephants and pajamas and so on. I set fire to the first film we made as the Marx Brothers because I thought it was bad. I never work with children or animals except for Harpo. *Dress suggestions:* Wiry wig, moustache and cigar.

**Patsy Cline** (1932-1963) I am a country music sensation with a voice people say is never to be forgotten. I started "entertaining" my neighbors when I was only three. *Dress suggestions:* Country and western clothes including a hat. *Song:* "Crazy".

### Optional extra suspects (as many as you like)

**Bruce Lee** (1940-1973) I am a martial arts master and star of many films such as "Enter The Dragon". I also starred in the TV series "The Green Hornet". As a child I saw a ghost as a black shadow. *Dress suggestions:* Martial arts clothes and/or Chinese clothes.

**Rita Hayworth** (1918-1987) I am an actress, singer and dancer. My most famous role was as Gilda. Some people have branded me as the screen's sultry love goddess. I married a prince. My face was painted on the atomic bomb which was dropped on Hiroshima – I'm not sure if this was a compliment or not. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a glamorous dress that has a slit to show off your legs. Wear long white opera gloves. *Song:* "Put the Blame on Mame".

**Lucille Ball** (1911-1989) I am the lady who has made thousands of people laugh with my films and TV shows for over 50 years. I dye my hair red and I am not really a redhead. *Dress suggestions:* Curly redhead wig. Adopt goofy expressions. *Song:* "Mame".

**Bob Marley** (1945-1981) I am going to put Reggae on the map. I am a Jamaican Rastafarian and I don't eat salt because of my beliefs. I shot the sheriff (in one of my songs). *Dress suggestions:* Dreadlocks and hippy type clothes or flowery "tropical island" type clothes. *Song:* "I Shot The Sheriff".

**Optional authority**

**Pete Persimmons** – I am a police officer. I love solving puzzles. That's why I became a police officer. I'm also great at cryptic crosswords. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a mock police uniform. Carry some crime scene tape (make some out of paper with masking tape attached at the ends). Carry a notepad and pencil. Wear white gloves. Carry some clear plastic bags to collect evidence in.

**Optional creature**

**Selina** – I am Jerry Oilman's son Lorne's pet black cat. *Dress suggestions:* Wear black tight-fitting or furry clothes. Add whiskers. At the party, act normally: meow and purr. Don't be too concerned about what is going on. Act superior to everyone.



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**Suspects**

Groucho  
Marx

John  
Wayne  
(The Duke)

Janis  
Joplin

Marilyn  
Monroe

Jimi  
Hendrix

Elvis  
Presley

Fred  
Astaire

Ginger  
Rogers

Judy  
Garland

Patsy  
Cline

***Optional characters***

Bruce  
Lee

Rita  
Hayworth

Bob  
Marley

Lucille  
Ball

Detective  
Sergeant Pete  
Persimmons

Selina  
(black cat)

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**“Celebrity  
Celebrations”**

by Stephanie Chambers

*The Play*

## Celebrity Celebrations - Act One

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**Note:** *Although this is in play format, you do not have to take to a stage and act it out. You can just sit around a dining table and read out your lines or sit in a circle on sofas etc.*

**Note:** *If it says the line may be said by “Anyone”, we recommend that one of the optional characters take a turn to say the line. If there are no optional witnesses or not many of them, then everyone should take a turn saying one of these lines. Try and make sure everyone gets a similar number of lines to say. You may like to work out beforehand who will say each of these “Anyone” clues and write their character’s name next to each one.*

Anyone: I want you each to tell me how you came to know Jerry and to be at this party. During our discussion I would also like you to tell us more about yourselves and your relationship with Jerry.

Fred Astaire: I’m still being cast for movies. Only Jerry thought I was past it. He kept trying to talk people out of casting me in parts. That’s what my friends in the movie business have been telling me lately. So I’m not sorry to see the last of the slimy bloodsucker, not sorry at all. He was too pushy.

Ginger Rogers: I have met Jerry a few times at social functions. Last month, at a charity ball, I saw him look in my direction and say “Stupid old cow”. I wasn’t sure if he was referring to me or one of my prize-winning dairy cows. But either way I found his remark offensive, as my cows certainly aren’t stupid. I came to this party because I wanted to give him some of his own cheek back – the rich cow-hating bully. But I certainly didn’t come here to murder him.

Jimi Hendrix: Jerry invited me to this party because I am a friend of his son Lorne, who I met in the army. I’m on leave. I’ve met Jerry before when I have visited Lorne. I think he wanted to ask me how Lorne was doing.

Janis Joplin: As you all probably know, Jerry crashed into my car recently. That’s how I met him. But stingy as he was, he was refusing to pay me fully for the repairs. Then he had the hide to invite me to this party as if everything was fine between us. I had planned to give him an earful at the party. But I hadn’t planned to kill him.

John Wayne: Jerry and I didn’t see eye to eye, I don’t deny it, and we’ve had our fights in the past. He was always hassling me about how I didn’t go to war. Sure I regret that I didn’t get to serve my country. I begged them to let me fight, but they wouldn’t on account of an old football injury and an ear infection I had.

Marilyn Monroe: Jerry was a fan of mine. Most men are. They can’t help themselves. But I don’t want to just be an “hour glass shape”. I’m sick of being a sex symbol. I want to be taken seriously as an actress. Believe me, I’m not acting when I say I had nothing to do with Jerry’s death.

Elvis Presley: I’m all shook up over Jerry Oilman’s death. God gave us our lives and our lives are precious. I’ve learned a lot about death. My precious Ma’s been taken from me and I’ve served my time in the army where death is talked about a lot. I don’t have a wooden heart.

Judy Garland: Jerry was my husband’s friend, not mine. Sometimes he came to our house. I didn’t invite my husband to this party, because he’s in my bad books at the moment.

Groucho Marx: I came to this party because I knew some lovely young ladies would be here. My last wife was 44 years younger than I was. And I wanted to give Jerry a taste of my humor. I didn't come expecting to find a corpse.

Rita Hayworth *(ignore this line if not present):*  
I was expecting a much better class of person at this party. I'm not just an actress after all. I became a Princess when I married Aly Khan. I don't know why Jerry invited peasants like Janis and Jimi and Bob. Now he's dead, I'll never know. I know some of the others though. I remember when Fred trod on my toe during rehearsals for "You'll Never Get Rich" years ago.

Bruce Lee *(ignore this line if not present):*  
As a lot of people know, I came up with the idea for the TV show "Kung Fu". But then the TV company cheated me. They stole my idea and cast David Carradine instead of me. Recently I found out that it was Jerry who convinced them not to cast me in the role. Apparently he was a racist and he couldn't handle the idea of me being cast, as I am Asian. He was only pretending to not be racist by inviting me to this party.

Lucille Ball *(ignore this line if not present):*  
This is the first big party I've been to since I divorced Desi. Shame there had to be a murder at it. But I certainly had nothing to do with that. I do comedy not tragedy. The whole party seems like a balls up to me. But that could be because my name is Lucille Ball.

Anyone: Judging from the bump on Jerry's head, it appears Jerry's killer came at him from behind.

Anyone: Jerry's arm was bruised, possibly by the fall to the ground after he was hit on the head.

Anyone: Jerry's wife Emma died under suspicious circumstances three years ago. She was found dead, possibly poisoned, but the type of poison was never fully identified and nor was her murderer.

Anyone: Jerry's only child Lorne is in the army. He can't believe that his father is dead. He said Jerry had asked him to arrange for a twelve-gun salute at his funeral if he ever died.

Jimi Hendrix: Lorne and his father never really got on. Although I'm sure he'll still grieve a little over his dad's death. Lorne is a really good bass player and we are thinking of forming a band together once we get out of the army. He wants to call it "Hendrix Oil", but I'm not so sure. We've been jamming together and we've come up with a really tight, bluesy sound. I tell you, man, it's out of sight. Jerry, of course, didn't like the idea of Lorne playing in a rock band, so I guess he planned to talk me out of it at this party.

Ginger Rogers: Jerry Oilman only invited us because he liked everyone to think that he was popular and had many famous friends. But that certainly wasn't the case. He was as popular as cod liver oil. But people will go anywhere for decent caviar.

Janis Joplin: The famous all mix with the famous and the poor with the poor. Birds of a feather and "all my friends drive Porsches" kind of stuff. That's why we're here. But we didn't come here expecting someone to be killed. I really only came tonight because I heard Jimi was coming.

Bob Marley *(ignore this line if not present):*  
 The power of philosophy floats through my head, light like a feather, heavy as lead. Remember folks you just can't live that negative way...make way for the positive day! Haile Selassie!

Fred Astaire: I dance a bit and sing a bit, but besides that I'm a pretty ordinary guy – not a murderer.

Patsy Cline *(if Bob Marley is present, say):*  
 After I arrived, Bob Marley kept playing Reggae music records and it was driving us all crazy, so I went to see Jerry about it and that's when I discovered his body.

*(if Bob Marley isn't present, say):*  
 After I arrived, Janis Joplin kept playing rock music records and it was driving us all crazy, so I went to see Jerry about it and that's when I discovered his body.

John Wayne: I never killed anybody. That was all just acting.

Judy Garland: I'm not really enjoying this party. Having your host murdered tends to put a dampener on proceedings.

Marilyn Monroe: Jerry was a blabbermouth. I came to this party to try to get him to keep quiet about my private life. But I didn't intend to shut him up forever. I didn't kill him.

Elvis Presley: Groucho Marx is a bit of a worry. Weird guy. Maybe he killed Jerry. Or is it just my suspicious mind?

Rita Hayworth *(if not present, this can be said by anyone):*  
 At a fundraiser I overheard Jerry complaining about how the Arab sheiks think they control the price of oil. He was angry, because he thought he should be the one in control.

Bruce Lee *(ignore this line if not present):*  
 I had planned to confront Jerry about the Kung Fu show issue at the party. I thought that if he got to know me as a person and saw me perform, he would realize what a big mistake he had made in preventing me from taking that role. I have a lot of fans in the US and they are very disappointed that I haven't been offered many television or movie roles over here.

Lucille Ball *(ignore this line if not present):*  
 Although I've had a lot of success with my TV shows, I want to show people that I really can act. I have a script for a movie about a lady who flies a plane into a desert in order to save some stranded children and an injured man. It could win me an Oscar. But I have had trouble getting the financial backing for the movie.

Bob Marley *(if present):*  
 Some people in this group just don't appreciate Reggae. They kept complaining just because I played a few Reggae records when I arrived. They've got to get with it, man.

*(if not present, Janis Joplin can say):*  
 Some people in this group just don't appreciate rock music. They kept complaining just because I played a few rock records when I arrived. They've got to get with it, man.

Anyone: Jerry Oilman didn't like animals. Jerry's son Lorne had a cat. He is away in the army at the moment. Jerry used to kick Lorne's cat whenever he saw it.