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*presents...*

## “Revenge on the Goldfields?”

Standard version  
for 5 females  
and 5 males

*by Angela Murphy*

First edition

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## The Suspects

It is in the midst of the gold-rush. Alec Rashford – the ‘uncrowned king’ of Falcon’s Ridge – was shot dead in Barton Street last night after leaving The Station Hotel shortly after 10.00pm. A cook at The Station Hotel found his body in a road culvert this morning as she headed to work to prepare the breakfasts. Rashford’s body was taken to the hospital and examined by the doctor who estimated the time of death between 10.00pm and 1.00am last night. He determined that a common Colt revolver, the handgun of the gold-fields, caused the wound. The doctor also said there were traces of Friar’s Balsam on Mr Rashford’s shirt collar and lips but there were no obvious cuts on his neck or face.

The Falcon’s Ridge police have called certain townfolk to attend a special meeting at The Station Hotel to begin investigations into the murder. Others may have invited themselves.

**Dulcie Rashford** (*widowed wife of Alec Rashford*) I came to Falcon’s Ridge with Alec because that’s what wives with four young children have to do – follow their husbands. Before we came here we lived in Villawood and the children got to see their grandparents and swim in the ocean. I’ve never got used to the dryness here. But Alec said he knew how to make good money from gold mining without getting his hands dirty. He said he knew Falcon’s Ridge would make him a rich man. He was right about that and I guess I shouldn’t complain – but it’s been no fun being Alec’s wife since the miners went on strike and everyone in the town hates us. Six months of strike have meant six months of horror for the children and me – I begged Alec to listen to the miners and give them the same wages as the men in Hurston but he wouldn’t listen. Like always, Alec was never interested in my opinion. *Dress suggestions:* Matronly period clothes 1900-style, long skirt and long sleeved top, buttoned to neck, broach at throat. Hair – long and wrapped into a bun over head.

**Jack ‘Snakeman’ Waller** (*owner of The Station Hotel*) I had an Italian brick-maker create 340,000 bricks to build The Station Hotel in 1902 when Falcon’s Ridge was booming. With the Gilder mine just across the road producing good money I had extra cash, so I installed a hand-pumped water supply system with galvanized horse troughs right beside my hotel. All the town’s horses could drink outside while all the town’s men drank inside my bar. They call me “Snakeman” cause I have a pit of pet snakes in the cellar. They are gentle creatures when you get to know them. I even have a photo of my daughter

draped in snakes hanging in the public bar. I’ve married a beautiful woman but unfortunately all the other men in town think she is irresistible too. Poppy enjoys flirting with them and it makes me mad. She says she is just having fun but I don’t see it that way. I know I can get a bit hot-headed after a few drinks but what man wouldn’t to protect his wife? *Dress suggestions:* Open suit coat, white shirt, 1900-style bow tie or tie, black pants.

**Poppy Waller** (*Jack Waller’s wife*) I serve in the public bar at our hotel – “The Station Hotel” – and I love talking to all the miners when they finish their shifts. I don’t mind the look of a man who’s got muscles and a sweaty brow from hard labour. Jack is good to me but I hate it when he flies into jealous rages and does stupid things – like throwing poor Jose off the balcony last year – he nearly killed him. I only ever wanted a bit of a laugh and the tips are good when the likes of Alec Rashford come in for a meal. Jack didn’t know about those tips but why shouldn’t I take Alec’s gifts if he’s going to give them away? *Dress suggestions:* Wear red lipstick, hair in loose tresses and a dress with a cleavage.

**Warden Dave Cole** (*mine warden*) I have been the mine warden for Alec Rashford for ten years and I have seen him drag this town from one on its knees to one bustling with businesses. Butchers, drapers, cabinetmakers – Falcon’s Ridge boomed thanks to Alec. I know he was a tough boss but I always told the men that he had to be firm to keep the mines open. But now the miners’ strike is into its six month I told Alec he should at least go and talk to the men to negotiate some sort of wage deal. I knew from the barrage of abuse I got he hadn’t appreciated my suggestion. *Dress suggestions:* Felt hat, suit coat, tie, dark pants.

**George Simpson** (*ex-mill manager*) I worked my guts out for Alec Rashford for two years – pulling all those miners into line, makin’ them work in shocking conditions on lousy wages just to keep his mines going. And after two solid years work I asked for a raise and he laughed in my face. After that I decided the only way to make money from the place was to pinch a bit of the gold dust off the wash table when no one was looking. Only trouble was I was seen and reported to Rashford. I offered him 2 weeks wages and 200 Deep Blue Shares worth 6 shillings each to square the matter. I said I only did it to put food in the mouths of my five kids, but Rashford went ahead with the prosecution. I was sent to Villawood Prison for 6 months with hard labour. The only thing you learn in jail is about guns and crime. I got out last week and jumped on the first train to Falcon’s Ridge to see my family. *Dress suggestions:* Unshaven, calico/beige pants, long-sleeved cotton shirt and broad brimmed hat. Carry a replica of a seven and a half inch Colt revolver. Have a bandage around your shin and a cut on your bottom lip.

**Harriet Simpson** (*wife of George*) When my husband George was given six months with hard labour for stealing gold dust from the New Falcon's Ridge mine I was devastated. How on earth was I gonna' support five kids? It was hard enough when George was around. But I don't blame him for what he did. He only did it because Alec Rashford wouldn't give him a pay-rise despite all the extra hours he put in. I ended up getting work in the pie shop but it was so hot in summer when the wood stoves were on that I nearly died. My two oldest girls have had to help me with the pastries before school everyday, just so we can make enough to live on. It's been a really tough time. The flour irritates my eyes. It makes it hard for me to read the Bible. *Dress suggestions:* Drab looking shirt and three-quarter-length skirt, with apron. Hair disheveled, face spotted with flour from making pies & age-lines.

**Clementina Jones** (*runs Sleepy Willow boarding house*) I lost my eye when I was six years old. My brother rubbed blue stone in it and I've been blind in it ever since. I built the Sleepy Willow to run as a hotel after my husband died. When I applied for a licence Alec Rashford – in his role as shire chairman – wouldn't give me one. He said that there were enough hotels in Falcon's Ridge already – so what made it all right for him to build one? I wear black dresses as a sign of respect for my husband but I know people call me "The Black Widow". *Dress suggestions:* Long black skirt with long black-sleeved top and a patch over one eye. Hair pulled back severely – look sinister.

**Mick Sheedy** (*Irish miner*) I work in the underground mine and it's a dirty place full of mud and slush and stale air. I write songs and jingles to sing down the mines and in the hotels at night to keep everyone's spirits up. I like romancing women and it's amazing what an aphrodisiac an Irish accent can be. But I'm no fool and my motto is 'love is like a mutton chop, sometimes cold and sometimes hot'. Alec Rashford seemed like a decent bloke at first. I mean if it weren't for him none of us miners would have jobs at all, but after all these years it's time we got the same wages as the Towers men. I felt sure the strike would work, but Rashford didn't give an inch. Blowed if I was gonna' risk my life for measly 10 shillings a day – Alec Rashford sure wouldn't have. *Dress suggestions:* Calico pants & shirt, brown belt, dirt on face.

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## Investigator

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**Fred Fergus** (*Falcon's Ridge Police Sergeant*) I've lived in Falcon's Ridge for five years and my job can be very nasty. With the strike into its sixth month the townfolk have become desperate. Men get real hungry when gold is up for grabs and they end up behaving like animals. Some of them drink away their sorrows and that's worse, cause they end up shooting each other. There's always someone spending the night at the cozy Court House cell. *Dress suggestions:* Police cap, coat white shirt, long tight pants, boots and carry trudgeon, handcuffs and replica of a five and a half inch Colt revolver.

## Witnesses

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**Wilma Wilson** (*bag lady*) I came over from Germany with my parents when I was a little girl, but they are long dead now. I don't have any family left here – the only thing that keeps me going is the love I have for my Irish miner, Sean O'Conner. I've walked from Hurston to the gold fields of Falcon's Ridge with my cats and dogs and all my worldly possessions stuffed into these bags, searching for my Sean. I hope he's all right. *Dress suggestions:* Old blouse and skirt to ankles, hair messed up and calico carry bags of belongings plus a stuffed-toy dog or cat on a leash.

Dulcie  
Rashford

Snakeman  
Waller

Poppy  
Waller

Dave  
Cole

George  
Simpson

Harriet  
Simpson

Clementina  
Jones

Mick  
Sheedy

Wilma  
Wilson

Fred  
Fergus

*Merri Mysteries presents...*

**“Revenge on the  
Goldfields?”**

*by Angela Murphy*

*These are the questions for:*

*Fred Fergus  
(Investigator)*

## Fred Fergus - Investigator - Act One

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During this act, you must ask each suspect the following questions:

- Dulcie Rashford** How would you describe your relationship with your husband?
- Jack Waller** What did you think when Alec Rashford built his New Falcon's Ridge Hotel right beside your hotel?
- Poppy Waller** How did Alec Rashford treat you Mrs Waller?
- Dave Cole** How did you and Alec Rashford get on Warden?
- George Simpson** When did you get out of jail George?
- Harriet Simpson** How did you feel with the news that your husband was going to jail for six months Mrs Simpson?
- Clementina Jones** How is the Sleepy Willow boarding house going Mrs Jones?
- Mick Sheedy** As a miner, what was it like working for Alec Rashford?

## Fred Fergus - Investigator - Act Two

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During this act, you must ask each suspect the following questions:

- Dulcie Rashford** How was it in the Rashford household when the miners went on strike? And do you own a gun Mrs Rashford?
- Jack Waller** Snakeman, last week you put up a sign above the town horse trough which caused you and Alec Rashford to exchange punches. Please tell me about that.
- Poppy Waller** We know Alec was shot with common Colt revolver. Do you own such a gun Mrs Waller?
- Dave Cole** Warden, what happened when you advised Alec Rashford to talk to the miners about the strike?
- George Simpson** George, what did jail teach you about guns?
- Harriet Simpson** Do you own a Colt revolver Mrs Simpson?
- Clementina Jones** Clementina Jones do you own a Colt revolver?
- Mick Sheedy** After Sean fell down the mine shaft is it true you received all his possessions because you were considered his best mate?

## **Fred Fergus - Investigator - Act Three**

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During this act, you must deliver the following information and ask the following questions:

- 1 Alec Rashford's body was not discovered until this morning. The doctor said it was a single shot but, as the discharging of firearms is not unusual in this town after the miners have had a few drinks, no one reported anything unusual.
- 2 There was something strange about the body though. There were traces of Friar's Balsam about the neck but as Alec didn't have any cuts on his neck I couldn't determine why.
- 3 I would like you all to tell me your whereabouts on the night Alec Rashford was shot.
- 4 Any other relevant information you know and would care to share with me is much appreciated.

*Merri Mysteries presents...*

## **“Revenge on the Goldfields?”**

*by Angela Murphy*

*These are the clues for:*

*Dulcie  
Rashford*



## Dulcie Rashford - Act One

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During this act, you must reveal the following points:

- 1 When I first met Alec I was smitten with his talents. Always in charge. Always a solution to everything. I thought he could never put a step wrong, but that was a long time ago. Our marriage was all about compromise, so long as I did the compromising.
- 2 My father was a wealthy aristocrat in Keffey. As I child, I loved going to concerts and plays. I never wanted to come to Falcon's Ridge. When I met Alec, he was wealthy. I didn't realise he was planning to come to the country to buy a gold mine.
- 3 My mother would visit and help me with the four children. Alec never played with them, as he believed children should be seen and not heard. Anyhow, he was always too busy.
- 4 Alec built us a big house in Falcon's Ridge. He was proud of his wealth and liked to show it which meant I had to have the house gleaming all the time. It was a thankless task with all the mining dust about.
- 5 Now that Alec is not here to wave his white glove I suspect the furniture will become very dusty and I'll spend more time playing the piano.
- 6 *(if someone asks if that was you playing the piano last night, say)* Yes, I often play the piano at night when Alec goes to town.
- 7 *(if someone asks you what it was like living with Alec Rashford, say)* It was very difficult. At times I just wanted to walk out. He didn't care that I had to give up all my love of culture and society. He would never even allow me to visit my parents in Keffey.

## Dulcie Rashford - Act Two

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During this act, you must reveal the following points:

- 1 *(if someone asks you about the Rashford household, say)* At first the strike didn't matter much to the children and I. Alec's *affairs* were very much his own! But as the weeks went on the whole town ostracized me and the children were taunted at school. I do own a small dainty gun. I have it for my protection when I am travelling on the coach alone – because there are armed robbers and amorous menfolk.
- 2 I used to play cards with Harriet Simpson, didn't I Harriet? But after George was caught stealing and Alec sent him to jail that had to stop too. The Warden was the only friend I had left.
- 3 The strike really angered Alec. He used to drink too much whiskey and then rant and rave to me and the children about how he had made Falcon's Ridge the town that it is and he would bring it to its knees before he would give in. I told him he should listen to the miners but he told me I was nothing but a 'stupid woman'.
- 4 I tried to persuade Alec to send the girls to a good girl's boarding school in Keffey. I offered to take them there and visit my elderly parents. But he insisted on sending them to Dalesford. There aren't any symphonies in Dalesford – only the same choruses of crows we have here. No wonder the girls hated it.
- 5 *(if someone asks you if you knew Alec Rashford was going to sell your piano and buy a bigger buggy, say)* Yes, he had been threatening to do it for a long time but when he said it last week I knew he meant it.
- 6 *(if someone asks you about the goat, say)* I did see one last night when I was out walking. It was fierce wild-looking goat and it was heading to the main street. Alec had a real phobia about goats because he was gored in the crutch as a boy.

## Dulcie Rashford - Act Three

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During this act, you must reveal the following points:

- 1 I was at home playing the piano last night. The children were in bed. I had invited my friends the school teacher and the Warden Cole over for dinner but Alec had abused the Warden and so they had left without eating. All my preparations for dinner were wasted. And Alec hadn't stayed at home for dinner either. He told me he'd rather eat at The Station Hotel than eat another meal with me.
- 2 Last night the Warden did mention to me before Alec joined us at the dinner table, that Alec hadn't made a will so I'd get everything if he died.
- 3 I knew he was desperate to go to The Station Hotel to see you Poppy Waller. I wasn't blind to the way he carried on with you. The entire town gossiped about it and you – Jack Waller – didn't seem to notice.
- 4 If the miners' strike wasn't bad enough, I had to endure the humiliation of a husband flirting with every woman he thought attractive. I hated him for treating me so badly after I had always been loyal and faithful to him.
- 5 *(if someone asks you if you were standing on the corner of Raven and Barton Streets last night, say)* Yes, I did leave the house briefly just to get some fresh air.
- 6 *(if someone asks you if you use Friar's Balsam in the Rashford household, say)* Yes, of course I do – everybody does, but I know for a fact that Alec hated the smell of it and wouldn't use it.

*Merri Mysteries presents...*

# “Revenge on the Goldfields?”

*by Angela Murphy*

*These are the clues for:*

*Jack  
'Snakeman'  
Waller*

## Snakeman Waller - Act One

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During this act, you must reveal the following points:

- 1 I was completely shocked when Alec Rashford built his bar next door. My hotel is made from 340,000 handmade bricks the Italian bricklayer created. This building is classy – not like that one Rashford slapped up.
- 2 The absolute last thing Falcon's Ridge needed was another bar but no one could tell Rashford that until he built his.
- 3 I had a great little business going with my free water trough for the horses. The town's horses drank at my trough while the town's men drank at my bar.
- 4 The word was that if you stayed at the New Falcon's Ridge Hotel and drank there you had a better chance of getting a job in Rashford's mine. So you can imagine how that affected my business.
- 5 *(if someone asks if you really threw Jose Gomez off the second-story verandah, say)* Yeah I threw Gomez off but he deserved it. The slimy man was after my Poppy and if any man touches my wife he has to answer to me. But he was lucky – he landed in my horse trough.
- 6 *(if someone asks if you go a bit crazy when you have too much to drink, say)* I'm a big man. I can handle my drink.

## Snakeman Waller - Act Two

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During this act, you must reveal the following points:

- 1 Yeah, I was arguing with Rashford last week. I put up a 'Patron's Only' sign above my horse trough and Rashford said if I was gonna' do that he'd stop the water coming to the trough from the Gilder mine.
- 2 Rashford accused me of not being community minded but that got me really angry coming from him. If he had any community spirit he would have listened to the miners to find a way to end the strike and he wouldn't have disconnected the water from my horse trough.
- 3 *(say to Harriet Simpson)* I wasn't the only one who didn't get on with Alec. What about you Harriet Simpson? Wasn't it you I saw chasing Alec Rashford off your property with an iron rake?
- 4 *(say to Clementina Jones)* And didn't you fly into a rage Clementina when Alec refused your liquor license?
- 5 *(if someone asks if you were with Alec Rashford outside The Station Hotel last night, say)* Yes, I won't deny that. Alec and I always had a dispute over some issue or other. It was the relationship we had.
- 6 *(if someone asks how come you were not aware of Alec Rashford's dotting attention towards your wife, say)* Alec Rashford wouldn't come into The Station Hotel when I was here. He wasn't game, so I never saw it.

## Snakeman Waller - Act Three

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During this act, you must reveal the following points:

- 1 Last night I was across the road re-connecting the water from the Gilder mine to my horse trough.
- 2 Rashford must have deliberately bent all the plumbing so a simple reconnection wasn't possible and the whole thing took ages. What sort of man does that to a public horse trough?
- 3 I left the plumbing about nine-thirty and was walking back towards The Station Hotel when I saw Rashford through the front window. He was leaning towards my Poppy, sliding what looked to be a wad of notes along the bar. He had a big ugly smile plastered all over his big ugly face like he'd just brought himself a trophy.
- 4 I was furious. I wanted to drag him into my snake pit there and then and let the death adders deal with him.
- 5 *(if someone asks if you went to the snake pit last night, say)* Yeah I did. I wanted to make Rashford know fear.