

CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIME



Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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presents...

“The Love Letter”

Play version
for 8 to 16 females
and 1 optional male

by Stephanie Chambers

Second edition

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The Guests

It is 1807 and Lady Mazzing has invited eight young ladies to her mansion for high tea, as she would like their advice about the next Ball she is planning to hold. Her one and only son Lord Edward Mazzing will briefly greet the guests, but he will not be joining them for long as he has other work commitments. Since his father's death two years ago, the young Lord has taken over the responsibility of managing their large estate. Secretly Lady Mazzing views this social event as an opportunity to acquaint herself with young ladies who may be suitable marriage partners for her son.

Lord Edward Mazzing (optional) – people say I am a very charming, handsome man, but I do have the reputation of trifling with women's feelings. The fact is some women bore me so terrifically I have to move on to another one. I am very wealthy and somewhat arrogant. My mother loves me very much and is my greatest admirer. *Dress suggestions:* Very conservative clothes. Add a cummerbund.

Miss Prunella Braithwaite – I am a refined and gentle young lady of somewhat delicate disposition but when the weather is fine I love to sit outside and capture the beauty of flowers with my watercolors. I spend a lot of time doing good works for the poor and people say I am a very kind hearted person. My father has extensive business investments in Virginia. *Dress suggestions:* A long dress adorned in flowers. White gloves and a bonnet.

Miss Bethany Chesterfield – I am fond of riding sidesaddle and love the outdoors. My parents worry that I am somewhat more forthright than a lady should be and that I am apt to be quarrelsome in nature. My parents own a gunpowder factory. I like to ignore the constraints of civilized society. *Dress suggestions:* A long-sleeved shirt and a long skirt and gloves. Wear riding boots. Strap one ankle and pretend as if you have twisted it.

Miss Wilma Winterflood – I am a lady skilled in all the social graces and excel at tapestry and singing. My parents are very well respected and we are an influential family in the community. Although I appear to be gentle and quiet, my brothers say I am rather headstrong and stubborn. I often take the buggy for a ride by myself much to my parents' dismay. *Dress suggestions:* A long dress and gloves. Carry some tapestry to work on.

Miss Hyacinth Huntington – I am an only child and I am of a somewhat shy disposition. I am very skilled at lacework and I love Shakespeare, especially the tragedies. Sadly my father recently made some unfortunate investments and my family is facing economic ruin. I am terribly embarrassed by my situation as I am used to wealth and all the luxuries it affords. *Dress suggestions:* A long dress with lace on it and gloves. Carry some Shakespeare to read. © copyright Acture Pty Ltd 2005

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Miss Charmaine Chamberlain – people say I am very gracious and I love to read poetry. My favorites are Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth. I am also a skilled pianist. My father owns numerous cotton plantations. I traveled abroad with my family when I was younger and I yearn to travel again especially to London. I miss the operas and plays dreadfully. *Dress suggestions:* A long dress and gloves. Carry a book of Coleridge or Wordsworth's poetry.

Miss Emily Stratford – people say I am rather intelligent. I must say, I do love puzzles and am very fond of writing. There are some false rumors going about that I have been secretly writing mystery novels under the nom de plume of James Ridley. I am very polite, but prefer to observe rather than talk. My father is a highly respected surgeon. My mother is afraid that my mental abilities will frighten men away so she tries to make me appear a silly little girl in public. She insists I wear pink and lots of frills and bows in my hair to make me look more feminine. *Dress suggestions:* A long pink dress with lots of frills and gloves. Add a bow to your hair. Carry a puzzle.

Miss Elizabeth Montgomery – I am just back from finishing school in Paris where I was greatly admired by all. I have a definite flair for fashion and am terribly fond of dancing. At the Paris Balls all the men wanted to dance with me. I also have a beautiful singing voice. At the moment, I am passionate about the color mauve and I wear it a lot. It's so fashionable. My father runs a merchant shipping company. *Dress suggestions:* A long mauve dress and gloves. Talk about yourself all the time in a conceited way.

Miss Clorinda Rosemonde – my father is a Duke and loves me so much he had one of his gardeners plant a rose garden for me, which I treasure. My mother died when I was young and my brother is a General in the army. I am fond of entertaining and my father encourages me to hold tea parties and the like. I play the flute admirably. Although I have no particular interest in getting married myself, I like to play matchmaker whenever I can. *Dress suggestions:* A long dress and gloves. Carry a flute (if available). .

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8 Optional Female Roles

Lady Marion Mazzing – I am a dignified lady of very particular tastes. Since my poor dear husband died two years ago from a goose bone stuck in his throat, I have never been able to bring myself to serve goose at the table. I am a handsome woman who knows what it is like to be born into wealth and opulence. I have no close friends and nor do I want any. Since my husband died, my only real interest is my son. *Dress suggestions:* A long dress and gloves.

Miss Mary Petticoat – I am young and not a very experienced maid but I do my job as well as I can. Her ladyship is very strict and I had to practice my curtsy a lot before I got this job. My mother was in service and so was her mother so I guess it runs in the family. *Dress suggestions:* A long dress and a white apron.

Mrs Gertrude Grimshaw – I am an excellent cook. However, I do think it is important to taste everything before I serve it just to make sure. I am especially fond of plum duff and treacle pudding. I love to cook for Lord Mazzing because he always says nice things to me about my food. I've known him since he was a baby. I used to bounce him on my knee. *Dress suggestions:* A long dress and an apron. Wear a bonnet and carry a bowl of batter or something you've baked. Add some pillows to make you plump.

Juliette Mazzing – I'm one of Edward's sisters. Edward and I used to play together when we were children, but he's too busy to be bothered with me now. I spend my time doing needlework and planning what to wear to the next ball. I love to dance and I hope to find a partner to marry as soon as Edward is married. *Dress suggestions:* A very pretty long dress and gloves.

Charlotte Mazzing – I'm one of Edward's sisters. I wish he would bring home some rich eligible men so I can get married. I'm so bored just reading and playing the piano, though everyone says I play it very well. I'm sure if someone suitable heard me they would propose in a minute. *Dress suggestions:* A very expensive-looking long dress and gloves. Wear flowers in your hair.

Wanda Westwind – I'm the local minister's daughter. I don't get invited to the Mazzing's very often and when I do I feel a bit out of place. Everyone's dresses are so fine and mine are so plain and simple. However, I enjoy the company and love to sit and listen to everyone. *Dress suggestions:* A plain but neat long frock, with hat and gloves. The frock should be buttoned high at the neck if possible.

Maud Mason – I'm a governess and I have taught Lord Mazzing and his sisters. They're nice girls. I just wish Lord Mazzing could find a nice girl to marry. I've never been married and I guess it's a bit late now. I would like to be governess to Lord Mazzing's children. *Dress suggestions:* A plain dark colored long frock, with hat and gloves. Carry a book you are reading.

Constance Cromwell – I'm Edward's cousin. I'm also friends with one of his sisters, so I come to stay with them quite often. I live in another town about five hours by coach from here. I love tea parties. *Dress suggestions:* A pretty long frock, with a hair ornament and gloves.

Name Tags

Lord Edward
Mazzing

Miss Prunella
Braithwaite

Miss Bethany
Chesterfield

Miss Wilma
Winterflood

Miss Hyacinth
Huntington

Miss Charmaine
Chamberlain

**Miss Emily
Stratford**

**Miss Elizabeth
Montgomery**

**Miss Clorinda
Rosemonde**

Optional Witnesses

**Lady Marion
Mazzing**

**Miss Mary
Petticoat**

**Mrs Gertrude
Grimshaw**

Juliette
Mazzing

Charlotte
Mazzing

Wanda
Westwind

Maud
Mason

Constance
Cromwell

Merri Mysteries presents...

“The Love Letter”

Dearest

With this letter I confess to a love I cannot hide from you any longer. You must believe me when I say that I passionately adore you. If I were a poet, I would adorn this letter with sonnets expressing my love, but alas, although I have been blessed with good fortune, I lack the talent of lyrical wordsmanship. But please believe me when I say how sincere my love is for you. It is true, that I have expressed interest in a number of ladies, but that was a mere breeze of affection on my part, whereas, the love I feel for you is more closely aligned with a prevailing wind that shall never die.

My dearest love, if you care for me in even a small way, please let me know. I shall count the moments until I hear from you.

I pledge my unabating love for you,

Edward

Merri Mysteries presents...

“The Love Letter”

by Stephanie Chambers

This is the:

Play

The Love Letter - Act One

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 witnesses take a turn to say the line. If there are no optional witnesses, then everyone should take a turn saying one of these lines, however, the person to whom the line is addressed should not say it (generally this is the person who speaks next). There aren't many "Anyone" lines in Act One, but there are a lot of them during Acts Two and Three. Lady Mazzing (if present) has more to say in Act One than the other acts. Lord Mazzing (if present) only has things to say in Act One. He can slip away in the middle of Act Two if he wants to leave.

Miss Braithwaite: It is such a privilege and delight to visit this enchanting abode. It truly is a pleasure. I am anxiously awaiting the Ball. I know it will be such fun even though I may not have energy to dance all night being the delicate creature that I am. I have asked my seamstress to make me a simple pale yellow gown for the event.

Miss Chesterfield: I always enjoy seeing these beautiful grounds and the excellent horses make me quite envious. I stupidly twisted my ankle slightly whilst I was dismounting from my horse this afternoon. I just pray it won't prevent me from dancing at the Ball.

Miss Winterflood: I am truly honored to be invited to this divine abode. It is simply breathtaking. My parents have often told me of this exquisitely decorated abode, but I'm afraid that even their fulsome descriptions fail to do it justice. I am counting the days until the Ball. It is the highlight of my social calendar for this year. I am sure everyone here feels the same way.

Miss Huntington: I am happy to be invited to this noble home. As Shakespeare so wittily put it in "Comedy of Errors" "Upon mine hostess there: good sir, make haste. Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me, I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me." Although I am a little shy, I am still looking forward to the Ball. I love watching everyone dance, even if I don't dance myself.

Miss Chamberlain: This wonderful home reminds me of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" where he talks of "*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan, A stately pleasure-dome decree*". This must surely be the kind of palace Kubla Khan had in mind. I am looking forward to the Ball as it will be poetry in motion. I have heard you will be having the Keely Orchestra. A true feast for the ear due in no small part to the prowess of their lead violinist, Wolfgang Strauss.

Miss Stratford: I am so glad to have been invited today. I have often wondered if the interior of this mansion matched its peerless exterior. I am eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Ball. I do so enjoy watching such social occasions. There is so much activity and so many interactions between people of all sorts.

Miss Montgomery: I am so grateful to have received an invitation to this gathering. As they say in Paris, “merci beaucoup”. The Ball should be “tres magnifique”. The fashions and the fabrics are so rich and colorful in Paris and I am looking forward to showing the other ladies the beautiful new Ball gown I have brought back from Paris.

Miss Rosemonde: What a delight to be here. The weather is so good at this time of year and I do so enjoy a tea party. The Ball should be enchanting. I look forward to it with joyful anticipation. I am sure it will be a great success.

Miss Braithwaite: (*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) I said to Lady Mazzing:

“In terms of decorations for your Ball, Lady Mazzing, may I suggest yellow roses on the tables. Roses always lend a classical elegance, don’t you agree?”

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) Lady Mazzing said:

Lady Mazzing: I agree that yellow roses are beautiful Prunella, but surely we should avoid flowers with thorns as symbolically, if not physically, they suggest pain.

Miss Chesterfield: (*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) I said to Lady Mazzing:

“In terms of the decorations for the Ball, may I suggest that the tables be decorated with ivy? I think you cannot surpass the elegant simplicity of ivy.” (*see next page*)

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) Lady Mazzing said:

Lady Mazzing:

Miss Winterflood:

Oh my dear, I do not think that ivy on its own will suffice. It is a little plain, is it not?

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) I said to Lady Mazzing:

“In terms of suggestions for the Ball, I think a cascade of paper flowers would be lovely – in a variety of pastels. There is a lady in town who is very skilled in such pursuits.”

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) Lady Mazzing said:

Lady Mazzing:

Yes paper flowers if presented correctly can be rather lovely especially in a ring decorating a doorway.

Miss Huntington:

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) I said to Lady Mazzing:

“My only suggestion for the Ball Lady Mazzing is that perhaps someone more skilled in artwork than I could help to cut out some lattice in pretty floral patterns and this could be used to decorate the Ballroom.”

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) Lady Mazzing said:

Lady Mazzing:

I too am a great lover of the silhouette effect of lattice, and floral patterned lattice would be pretty.

Miss Chamberlain: (*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) I said to Lady Mazzing:

“In terms of decorating for the Ball, may I suggest a somewhat exotic theme. Perhaps Miss Montgomery’s father could help supply something like peacock feathers as decoration.”

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) Lady Mazzing said:

Lady Mazzing: The plumage of peacocks is exotic, isn’t it? But I have heard their feathers bring bad luck.

Miss Stratford: (*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) I said to Lady Mazzing:

“My only suggestion for the Ball is perhaps some sort of game or puzzle could be included. A treasure hunt for example.”

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) Lady Mazzing said:

Lady Mazzing: I think you are right that a game or two would add to the entertainment, however, I think a treasure hunt is a little childish.

Miss Montgomery: (*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) I said to Lady Mazzing:

“Lady Mazzing you simply must make it a masked Ball. But not just any type of mask. The current fashion on the continent is to wear gold masks. They are so elegant. I am sure I will be able to help you arrange to have some brought from Paris.” (*see next page*)

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) Lady Mazzing said:

Lady Mazzing:

Miss Rosemonde: (*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) I said to Lady Mazzing:

“My only suggestion for the Ball is that you scatter rose petals all over the floor of the room. I am happy to collect the roses for you from my rose garden. It would be my small contribution to the Ball if you would allow me the honor.”

(*if Lady Mazzing is not present, say this before you say the next paragraph*) Lady Mazzing said:

Lady Mazzing:

Rose petals are romantic and so soft in nature, aren’t they? I think that would be lovely.

Miss Braithwaite:

(*if Lord Mazzing is present, say this*) Dear Lord Mazzing, during a recent game of polo, I noticed that your horse appeared lame at the end of the game. I hope that it has since recovered?

(if Lord Mazzing is not present, say this) When Lord Mazzing greeted me, I told him that during a recent game of polo, I noticed that his horse appeared lame at the end of the game and that I hoped that his horse had since recovered. He thanked me and said it turned out that his horse was only lame because a stone had wedged itself into its horseshoe and that it is fully recovered now.

Lord Mazzing:

(ignore this if he isn't present) Thank you Miss Braithwaite. It turned out that my horse was only lame because a stone had wedged itself into one of his horseshoes. He is fully recovered now.

Miss Chesterfield:

(if Lord Mazzing is present, say this) Dear Lord Mazzing, your cousin Matthew Beadmont recently confided in me how as children you had become blood brothers and pledged your loyalty to one another both in this world and the next.

(if Lord Mazzing is not present, say this) When Lord Mazzing greeted me, I said "Dear Lord Mazzing, your cousin Matthew Beadmont recently confided in me how as children you had become blood brothers and pledged your loyalty to one another both in this world and the next." Lord Mazzing said that it was true that he and Matthew are very close because he doesn't have a brother, so to him, Matthew is like a brother. He said he has willed a large portion of his estate to Matthew, just as you would a brother.

Lord Mazzing:

(ignore this if he isn't present) You are right Miss Chesterfield, Matthew and I are very close indeed. As you know, I do not have a brother, so to me, Matthew is my brother. I have willed a large portion of my estate to him, just as you would a brother.

Miss Winterflood:

(if Lord Mazzing is present, say this) Dear Lord Mazzing I was sorry you were absent from the banquet we recently held in honor of my brother's engagement. Were you ill? Is that why you were unable to attend? Your presence was sorely missed. *(see next page)*

(if Lord Mazzing is not present, say this) When Lord Mazzing greeted me I said I was sorry he was absent from the banquet we recently held in honor of my brother's engagement. I asked him whether he had been ill and if that was why he was unable to attend. He said that he was very sorry, but that he could not attend due to business reasons. He said he has been very busy since he has taken over the running of the estate. He said he has many matters to attend to and that is why he will also not be joining us for tea.

Lord Mazzing:

(ignore this if he isn't present) Do forgive me Miss Winterflood, but I could not attend due to business commitments. I have been very busy since I have taken over the running of the estate. There have been so many matters to attend to and that is why I will also not be joining you and the other ladies for tea.