

The Butler Did It!



*Shockingly Funny
Unbelievably Audacious
Incredibly Politically Incorrect*



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The Butler Did It!

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Juanita Rose Violini
Mystery Factory

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SCENARIO:

Imagine an elegant dinner party. Your best china and silver are laid upon a crisp linen table cloth. Crystal glasses sparkle at each place setting; classical music plays quietly in the background. Fresh cut flowers and candles glowing in your favorite candle holders warmly welcome your guests who have arrived dressed in their finest fashion. Everyone sits at the table, complimenting one another while awaiting the arrival of the first course.

Enter The Butler. And The Maid. Catastrophe follows.

Tripping over some non-existent item the tray of buns he is carrying tumbles to the floor. The maid scowls at him as she quickly picks them up, wipes them off on her backside and replaces them on the tray. Unexpectedly she bursts into tears and rushes back to the kitchen. You and your guests hear glass breaking. You slowly rise from your chair, smiling, then rush to the kitchen yourself. The butler grabs a bottle from the sideboard and begins to drink from it. Wine spills from the corner of his mouth which he wipes off with his sleeve when he has finished guzzling. "Women" he explains before leaving the room himself.

Your guests realize that this is not going to be a boring dinner party.

This is an unforgettable event.

These instructions tell you exactly how to pull it off.

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CHARACTERS:

The Butler:

Just out of jail. Searching for happiness.

The Maid:

Happy to have The Butler back but suspects he is keeping something from her.

The Dinner Party Host: You or an actor is you wish to use one

Your Guests: Themselves – in a theme if you wish

Optional Others:

Other Actors to keep the action moving but be seated with the dinner guests. Not scripted in but they would play along with the action, ask awkward questions and in general keep things interesting by commenting on the actions of The Butler & The Maid

This is the story that comes out during the course of the event

The Butler and the Maid are happy. The Butler just finished a 10-month jail term for armed robbery, and they are back together again. He managed to get a job working for the *Satisfactory Servants for Hire - Cheap, Co.*

The Butler is a changed man. While in jail he had a dream about a woman. Not just any woman, but Saint Martha* herself, the patron saint of servants. She told him that if he ever wanted to be happy in this life he would have to change his ways and start serving others.

Because of his radiant dream The Butler decided to do only good and to serve others. He applied for and got a job so he could begin serving people and being happy right away. The butler wanted to be happy. He wanted to change his ways. He really did.

One of the things that was essential to The Butler's happiness was The Maid. The Maid was happy that The Butler was turning over a new leaf. She thinks it's because of her ... and it kinda is, but ...

The Butler doesn't think The Maid would understand about a dream about another woman. A vision who visited him in the night and who initiated him turning over a new leaf.

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The Butler decided not to tell The Maid about his dream. He didn't think she would like him dreaming about another woman, any other woman. Even a saint who has been dead for 2000 years. He's probably right.

The Butler is determined to stay on the right path. He went to the Library and found a book with a picture of Saint Martha in it, and walked out with the picture in his pocket. He looks at the picture every chance he gets, whenever he thinks he is alone.

The Maid is unhappy. Just this very morning she stumbled on him stroking the picture and saying things like, "You're a vision" and "My angel." The Maid asked him what he was looking at. The Butler refused to tell her and stuffed the picture back in his pocket.

Throughout the day, through various means, The Maid extracted certain information from the Butler. She learned that he'd had a dream in prison that changed his life. She learned it was a dream about a woman. She knew the woman wasn't her. She knew the picture he wouldn't let her see was the woman of his dreams.

Now they are off to work a dinner function. At your place. Oh boy.

*Please feel free to replace St Martha with any other female person or archetype that works for your group. Someone who represents serving others.

PREPARATIONS:

- Plan an elegant dinner party. You can give it a theme if you wish; something to plan the decor and meal around or go with the 'Dinner Party' theme itself.
- Decide on the date and send out invitations or announcements. Be sure to inform your guests if there is a dress code.
- Find people to play the Butler and the Maid. Whether you decide to hire improv actors or find a couple of fun-loving friends whom your invited guests haven't met yet, give them the 'script' far enough ahead of time so they have a chance to practice bantering before your party.

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- The Butler and Maid are enough 'actors' for a group of up to 30 people. For larger groups add an actor for every 10 - 15 additional people. The extra actors will play 'servants' as well that are foils (a character who contrasts with another character in order to highlight particular qualities of the other character) to The Maid and Butler. They can be ordered around by the couple and may act subservient or sassy in response, depending on how your actors want to play it.
- It is important that the people acting can gauge the type of sense of humour that your guests find funny. Every group is different and you never know until the event starts how risqué comments will be accepted.
- Depending on the size and demographics of the group and the room, you might want to consider lavalier microphones so that everyone can hear the banter. Just make sure your actors know to turn the mics off between 'scenes'. Or make sure your maid and butler can easily project their voices in the space.
- Pick up or find two garage sale type items. One is of the 'heavy blunt object' type. The other is a tacky piece of trash. Tell everyone at the party you paid an obscene amount of money for this rare collectible and show it off as a prized possession.
- If anyone in your audience has a traumatic reaction to cap guns being fired, warn them ahead of time so they have the option to leave the room or at least be prepared for the final act.
- HAVE FUN. The more fun the actors have, the more fun the audience has.

ACT ONE - Appetizers Served

TENSION BETWEEN THE BUTLER AND THE MAID

The Maid is always angry in The Butler's presence and always distraught when not around him. The Butler knows he can do nothing right so he blithely carries on being himself. Guests are seated at the table:

- Begin the evening with small jabs between the two actors: small, subtle stabs in the back, passed off with a smile, as humour in public.

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Options - Use any or all as you wish:

- The Butler will flirt with the women, admire their jewelry and ask if they keep it in a vault or a jewelry box on their dresser, give the men grooming advice, size up the women and try to get investors for some get rich quick scheme.
- The Maid will flirt with the men, ask the women how much their jewelry costs, give the women make up and fashion tips, size up the men and gossip about Hollywood celebrities.
- The Maid carries a duster to dust things/people.
- If The Butler compliments a female guest The Maid retaliates by making mildly giving them fashion advice in such a way that insults them. "You might want a more modern hair style. That one hasn't been popular since ..." " That outfit is perfect for a dinner party; the ketchup stains will never show." " That outfit looks the way I feel after my third martini"
- Check the 'Quirky Habits' list at the end of this document.

Action - What must happen to advance the story:

- The Butler does something clumsy such as tripping over some non-existent item, scatters the tray of buns or plastic glasses or silverware, he is carrying onto the floor.
- The Maid scowls at him as she quickly picks them up, wipes them off on her backside and replaces them on the tray. Unexpectedly she bursts into tears and rushes back to the kitchen.
- You and your guests hear glass breaking or pots being dropped. Choose which action would work best for your location.
- You slowly rise from your chair, smiling, then rush to the kitchen/offstage yourself.
- The Butler grabs a bottle from the sideboard or off the table and begins to drink from it. Wine spills from the corner of his mouth and he wipes it off with his sleeve when he has finished guzzling. "Women!" he explains before leaving the room himself.

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ACT TWO - Clear Dishes - Main Course Served

ACCUSATIONS COME OUT

The Maid is jealous of all the women in the room. The Butler is *stressed out*. He may ask the guests if they have anything to help him relax. Then he remembers he has turned over a new leaf.

The Maid:

Talks about how the Butler is a changed man since he got out of jail. He was in for armed robbery but people don't need to worry about their valuables because the Butler doesn't do that anymore. She thinks The Butler meet another woman while he was in jail but she trusts him. Maybe.

The Butler:

Agrees with everything The Maid says although sometimes rolling his eyes or crossing his fingers when he thinks she isn't looking. BUT he denies having meet any other woman. He inspects things in the light and then puts them in his pocket so that it is obvious that he hasn't changed that much. If anyone calls him on it, he will act embarrassed and put the item back or just put it in his pocket anyway, saying something like he forgot he has changed or that old habits die hard, or it's a present for The Maid because he thinks she is mad at him, etc.

Options:

While serving your guests the Maid & Butler will engage in a variety of 'politically incorrect' behaviors such as:

- Dropping cutlery on the floor and wiping it off with their sleeve before reusing it.
- Spilling drinks they are serving.
- Serving outlandish hors d'oeuvres they create themselves.
- Brushing imaginary crumbs off the guests.

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- Picking things out of their own or a guest's hair, looking at something between their fingers , dropping the imagined bug on the floor and squashing it under their foot.
- Constantly changing the background music (and possibly its volume, depending on the crowd): he likes one style (ie: country and western), and she likes another (ie: opera).
- They fight in the kitchen.
- One of them asks to share something and the other one licks it or coughs on it.

Action:

- They recognize various guests from compromising places (jail - a drug dealer's - the racetrack). Hopefully your guest will deny it.
- The Maid - Do you know this woman from jail? Is she someone you worked on the rock pile with? Did she sit beside you making license plates?
- The Butler - says he's never met any of these women before. Except for maybe that one, and possibly that one; naming wildly unlikely places he might know them from.
- The Maid bursts into tears and goes to the kitchen.
- The Butler takes out his picture to look at it. He has his back to the table.
- The Maid yells from the kitchen or somewhere 'offstage': "He's looking at that stupid picture isn't he?" The Butler looks over his shoulder at everyone looking at him and stuffs the picture back into his pocket. "That's a picture of his Dream Girl!"
Maid breaks down in front of everyone. The Butler is in love with someone else. She knows he has a dream woman that he is seeing. Butler explains that when he was in prison he had a dream about a woman and she changed his life.
- The Maid - "You changed for her! Why didn't you change for me? God knows I've tried to get you to change."
- The Maid loses it. She goes to a woman she thinks The Butler has been particularly attentive to and threatens the woman.
- "It's her isn't it? She's the woman in your picture!"
- The Maid pulls a cap gun out of her pocket, and threatens to shoot her. (Or if the woman is seated at the dinner table the Maid grabs her from behind and threatens to

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bludgeon her with the wooden spoon the Maid is carrying in her other hand - or whatever is an appropriate threat in your space with your guests. Only you can decide that.)

- It ends by having someone, preferably the host/organizer, announcing that he/she wants dessert served *now*. If the servants expect to get paid they better do their jobs.

ACT THREE - Clear Dishes - Dessert Served

MAKING UP

The Butler and The Maid are somewhat reunited by the common complaint of having to work to make a living; the agonizing rub of having to do what someone else tells you to do. But The Maid is still upset about the picture and The Butler knows something has to change. Probably him.

The Butler bonds with the men (women can be so difficult, can't they) and The Maid bonds with the women (you just know when a man's hiding something, don't you).

Options:

- Continue with any options you started in Act One and Act Two.

Action:

- Host/Organizer screams or shouts. The heavy blunt object item is missing!
- The Host/Organizer accuses The Butler of stealing it. He denies it. They start to fight.
- The Maid stops them. She did it. (You thought it was The Butler, didn't you. This is a plot twist.) She stole the item because she was going to use it to kill The Butler if he doesn't show her the picture. She loves him so much, if she can't have him, no one can.
- The Butler breaks down. He didn't know she loved him so much. He finally shows the picture to The Maid and everyone else. It is Saint Martha, the patron saint of Butlers. She came to him in a dream while he was in prison and told him to grow up and get his act together and begin to serve others instead of stealing from them. She said if he ever wanted to be happy in this life he would have to change his ways.

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- The Maid is speechless for the first time that night. She forgives him and they have a passionate hug. Now he wants to do something nice for her. He wants to give her a present. He points to various items on the other women until she says that she likes something.
- He pulls a cap gun out of his pocket and fires it in the air. He starts to tell whoever it is that owns 'what The Maid likes' that they have to give it to him so he can give it to her. Then he changes his mind. It's not good enough.
- They go through a couple of different items before The Butler casts his eyes on whatever garage sale item the host has picked up ahead of time for this purpose. This is the perfect thing! The Maid collects these Items. He must have this for The Maid.
- The Maid is pretty excited at the thought of having the Item.
- The Host interrupts and says that if The Butler will only put the gun away the Host will give him the Item.
- The Butler is touched. He puts the gun away and gives the Host/Organizer a big hug. ("We men have to stick together" if the Host/Organizer is a guy or some commonality like that.)
- The Butler gives The Maid the Item and they live happily ever after.
- If they ever decide to get married, everyone is invited. But they are going to have the Honeymoon first and if anyone wants anything else, they will have to get it for themselves. The couple leave the room.

The Host introduces The Butler and The Maid.

Thank your guests for coming

That's it! An unforgettable evening that will live on in the memories of your guests for a long, long time.

THE END

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PROPS:

- Things for the butler to drop in front of people (buns, forks, plastic glasses, something like that)
- Things for the maid to drop or break while out of sight - or the sound effect of that happening.
- Garage Sale Item of the 'heavy blunt object' variety
- Some weird item for the Butler to give the Maid as a gift
- Small cheap items (dollar store rings, etc) that can be planted on some guests which The Butler will try and steal.
- Two cap guns - and caps

QUIRKY ADD-ONS & THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Plant a bottle of 'wine' for the Butler to guzzle in Act One. Fill it with something non-alcoholic but the same colour as wine. Grape juice works well.
- If you are going to let the actors make a mess of the table you are eating at, such as spilled wine, either use a tablecloth you don't care about or put a clear plastic sheet over your tablecloth. Or have them spill something that doesn't leave a stain.

If you want to add another dimension to the evening and the characters, consider using some of the following quirks as part of their personality. Some, any or all of these things might require the host to intervene and put a stop to it sooner or later.

Either The Butler or The Maid can:

- Insist on playing a musical instrument – badly or insisting some of your guests try to play it. Maybe try to sing along and encourage others to do so as well. So what if the food is getting cold.
- Stand outside the bathroom with a stop watch and time how long people take in there.

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- Remove the toilet paper from the bathroom and try to sell it to people on their way in. One dollar a square.
- Show boring badly taken pictures. Just find some out of focus uncentered photos-or take them especially for the occasion. "Pictures? You want to see some pictures? Here, let me show you some shots from my vacation in ..." wherever you have out of focus pictures of. Could be pictures of anything. The more boring the better.
- Read or recite terrible poems that he/she wrote - does anyone know an agent?
- Be superstitious – throws salt over their shoulder or someone else's shoulder.
- Curl up in a corner and take a nap.
- Wear a ski mask, maybe to serve a particular course - ice cream?
- Try to sell the host's knick knacks and furniture.
- Tap a knife on someone's glass to get everyone's attention and then tell a bad joke. Nothing tasteless that will offend anyone. A groaner.
- Bring their pet fish / turtle in a glass bowl because it was traumatized by the fight they are having and he/she doesn't want to leave it home alone.
- Has a weird collection of something to show.
- Talks or texts on cell phone.
- Flosses his teeth (away from the table but in sight of all).
- Carries a comb and constantly does hair.
- Ditto nail clippers.
- Could exhibit weird tendencies: psychic, voodoo, reads bumps on your head.
- Studying to be a doctor, checks in people's ears with a tiny flashlight.
- Karate chops the French loaf.
- Crawls under table between people's legs.
- Offers bizarre and exotic condiments to the guests for their meals - goes around with a bottle of ketchup and ask guests if they would like fresh squeezed ketchup with their meal; can follow with mustard, relish, whatever.
- Asks if he can hold onto their valuables for safekeeping. Butler and Maid (arrange with host & hostess) to 'take' some stuff. Maid can drop stuff down her bra and Butler can

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put small stuff in a bag and drop it down his pants. Necklace, whatever, and then be seen wearing it.

- Correct people's pronunciation even if they don't know how to pronounce the words properly.
- Stand behind someone with a glass of water - dip his fingers in the water - fake sneeze behind that person and sprinkle them with the water as they do so.

SIMPLE THEME SUGGESTIONS:

1) None - Dust, vacuum and otherwise spiff your place up so it shines like fifty maids attacked all surfaces with a toothbrush and lint free polishing cloth. Ok, just kidding. Unless you are a clean freak, like me. But clean your place. Use a tablecloth on your table and set it with your very best dishes and cutlery. Add fresh flowers to the room and light some candles. Play instrumental music in the background. The menu is up to you but have at least three courses; soup and/or salad, main and dessert. You can even start with drinks and appetizers. Bite-size canapés served by the butler and maid. Background music suggestion - quietly classical.

2) A Cocktail Party - James Bond style.

Sleek and sophisticated. Get rid of any extra clutter or knickknacks in the space. Go for a black and white decor. Whether you ask guests to wear formal evening wear or invite everyone to come as their favorite Bond character, set some kind of a dress code. Spy gadgets or gadgets in general can be a great topic of conversation. Create your own cocktails (name them after the Bond Movies) or have ingredients for your favorite drinks. Background music suggestion - Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass and such.

3) Roaring Twenties - The Jazz Age

Crazy fads and capricious fun. Beaded curtains in the doorways, metal washtubs filled with ice and bottled drinks with art deco items scattered throughout. If you can find an old Victrola - you will have an authentic 20's room. Flappers (the modern woman) come adorned in feather

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boas, long pearl necklaces, sequin headbands, and knee length fringed dresses. Gangsters have their fedoras, double breasted and/or pin striped suits and guns. Chinese food was a new fad.

Background music suggestion - Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Count Basie

4) Gambler's Paradise - Poker Tournament

High rollers and gold diggers. Host the dinner as a prelude to playing poker with your friends. The stakes and the steaks are up to you. Invite guests to dress up Las Vegas style; the more glitter, the better. Ornate fixtures, green tablecloths and cards, dice, poker posters add to the gambling ambience. Hang strings of tiny white lights throughout the room. Have dishes of pretzels and peanuts scattered throughout. Bowls filled with fake gold nuggets or chocolate coins spiff up the decor. Background music suggestion - Liberace

Two pictures of St Martha. Print one for your butler to carry. Yes, there actually is a St Martha and she is truly the patron saint of butlers and other servants.

I'd love to hear your comments and feedback. Let us know what we're doing right and where we can improve.

At Your Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juanita Rose Violini". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J'.



