MURDER’S IN FASHION

The Mystery.

MINDTRAP®
Mystery Puzzles
THE CHARACTERS

ARI GANT - The jilted lover. Blinded by rage and jealousy the normally suave debonair fashion critic and woman's clothier would stop at nothing to exact revenge.

SHAPLEY SHADY - Whatever she wanted she got. She wanted Ari Gant... she got him. She needed Ari Gant to propel her career... she got it. She then wanted Ari's partner Sam Sham... she got him. Finally she wanted Ari out of the way... for good.

SAM SHAM - All's fair in love and war. If Ari had a problem with Sam's new love there was going to be war.

KENNETH CHIFFON - Ari Gant had arbitrarily decided to sever all ties between Kenneth and himself. Without Ari, Kenneth was like a balloon without air. With nothing to lose, Kenneth vowed to change Ari's mind... one way or the other.

ALBERTO IMPERIOLI - Host of the annual Imperioli AIDS benefit party. In the fashion world this was a must attend. To Alberto Imperioli it was just another party... or so he had thought.

_DETECTIVE SHADOW - Each year he looked forward to the Alberto Imperioli benefit party. It promised to be a working night off... at least it always had been in the past.

CONSTABLE BUMLINGER - As a rule, any detective would like to have the aid of another officer for simple companionship if nothing else. Bumlinger somehow managed to prove an exception to the rule.
MURDER'S IN FASHION

Shadow stopped the cruiser in front of the wrought iron gates. The security guard peered above her newspaper with bored indifference.

"Is there a problem?"

"I'm Detective Shadow. I'm unofficially here as an official police officer. Have a good one, Detective," replied the guard returning to her paper.

The electric gates slowly swung into the grounds. Constable Bumlinger drummed his fingers on the dash. "So what are we doin' here anyway?" questioned Bumlinger. "This Imperial guy's got his own security, what's he need us for?"

"Mr. Imperioli's a cautious man. Any time he has a couple of hundred guests, he likes to have a cop on hand."

"That's you then. What am I doin' here?"

"Hmmm, precisely what I was thinking, Bumlinger."

"So what's this Imperial guy do anyway? I mean check this place out. I bet you gotta skin a few people to get a spread like this, eh?" smirked Bumlinger, as they drove between a long line of sprouting fountains.

Shadow parked next to a Ferrari and checked his bow tie in the mirror. The salesman was right thought Shadow, the light grey tux did suit him.

"Hey they got parking guys for this, what are you stopping way out here for?" whined Bumlinger.

"Your job is to patrol the grounds and the corridors. Do not, I repeat, do not mingle with the guests. Understand?"

"Ya sure, sure. So like I was saying, what's this guy do anyway? I mean, this place makes the Taj Mahal look like a kennel!" He ran several steps to catch up to Shadow.

"Your cummerbund is on backwards constable," said Shadow, not bothering to look in Bumlinger's direction.

The two were greeted at the entrance of the main foyer by the head butler.

"Welcome to the sixth annual Imperioli AIDS benefit party gentlemen. As you can see Mr. Imperioli always insists on personally greeting each of his guests," intoned the butler in a voice more becoming an undertaker.

Alberto Imperioli bowed slightly and kissed the hand of a tall black woman. She was wearing iridescent silk pants with a thin transparent mesh top. Beadwork in the shape of various fruits were covering the strategic spots.
“Makes me hungry just lookin’ at her,” smirked Bumlinger.
Alberto bowed low and kissed the next guest’s hand with such exaggerated reverence one would think it belonged to royalty. The hand belonged to Shapley Shady and in her estimation it was shown no more attention than it deserved.
Shapley wore a skin tight cream coloured gown woven through-out with reflective silver thread, noticeably accentuating her sculpted body.
“Shapley, you look magnificent!” intoned Alberto in a slight Italian accent.
“Your gown is part of your spring collection, no?”
“Should it be?” inquired Shapley, shamelessly fishing for a compliment.
“Absolutely darling,” replied Alberto as he deliberately surveyed her. “You know, I think it’s as much to my advantage as it is to yours.”
“Yes, it does do my figure justice, but unfortunately not many woman could wear it as well as I.”
Shapley bowed to Alberto, stopping and pausing just short of completely falling out of the top. She entered the grand ball room to greetings and exploding flash bulbs.
“Hey Shadow, did ya see the nighty on that little vixen!” yelped Bumlinger, his eyes transfixed on Shapley’s assets.
“Perhaps a drink, gentlemen?” inquired a waiter holding a tray of champagne. Constable Bumlinger instantly relieved the waiter of two of the flutes.
“Cheers Shadow,” offered Bumlinger before gulping the flute’s contents in a single swallow.
“Ah detective Shadow, thanks so much for coming,” greeted Alberto Imperioli. “I always feel I can completely relax knowing we have the capable arm of the law at hand. Not that I anticipate needing your professional services, but it’s always better to be safe than sorry.”
“I brought constable Bumlinger along to patrol the hallways and to take the odd walk around the grounds,” replied Shadow as he turned to see Bumlinger downing the second flute of champagne.
“This is quite the spread you got here guy,” whistled Bumlinger. “So what exactly do you do anyway? I mean after all, you probably gotta skin a few people to get a shack like this, eh?”
“I manufacture women’s fashions,” replied Alberto more amused than offended.
Shadow squeezed Bumlinger’s arm as he guided him away from Alberto, fighting the urge to plant his shoe somewhere deep into Bumlinger’s behind.
“Bumlinger, you are going to patrol tonight. That means one foot in front of the
other and don’t stop until I give you a direct order. Now move it!”

Alberto led Shadow through the ballroom with consummate skill, always managing a smile or a nod to his guests, while never missing a beat in their conversation. “As you probably remember, Detective, all the hallways outside this main ballroom have security cameras which are continually monitored by my own security man on the lower floor. But enough of business. I’d rather see you relax and enjoy yourself, after all you’re only here as an added precaution. As you can see I have quite an interesting mix of guests - outfits aside, that is. For example, see that gentleman over there struggling with the banana? He’s a most interesting character. Recognize him?

Shadow studied the tall regal looking man in a perfectly tailored tuxedo. He had the most remarkable steel grey eyes. He was attempting to peel a banana with one hand while balancing a scotch with the other.

“Isn’t that the owner of Ari’s, the chain of woman’s fashion boutiques?” questioned Shadow.

“That’s him. That’s Ari Gant. That man’s life, Detective, is a study in conflict.”

There was a flash of lightning, followed by a rolling rumble of thunder, as if underlying Alberto’s statement.

“As you may know he’s a very influential fashion critic who carries enormous weight. Two years ago he started dating Shapley Shady of the now famous Shapley Max fashion line. When they first met however, she was just another struggling designer. Through a series of favourable articles and even more favourable wholesale purchases for his boutiques, Ari Gant turned her fledgling design company into the top fashion house in the country practically overnight. Shortly after, for some unknown reason, Shapley dumped Ari in favour of Ari’s business partner Sam Sham. Needless to say Ari’s critical evaluation of her line has taken a 180 degree turn, not to mention the fact that you can no longer find a single tee-shirt in his boutiques bearing the Shapley Max label. As you can imagine the business relationship between Ari and Sam Sham has become rather strained. For some added spice I’ve just heard through the gossip vine that he’s about to dump his co-writing critic Kenneth Chiffon. Oh well, if nothing else, the life of Ari Gant is anything but boring.”

Alberto waved to someone in the crowd. “If you’ll excuse me, Detective.”

Shadow picked a flute of champagne off the tray of a passing waiter and leaned against a large pillar that was within comfortable ear shot of Ari Gant. Ari was speaking to a thin emaciated model, who wore nothing but a black bustier and matching thigh-high man-killer boots, all made out of wetter than wet PVC.
“In this business,” said Ari to the girl, “one has to be either flexible or open minded. I just happened to be both. Take my eating habits for example. I used to fill my body with all kinds of meat and animal fats that were nothing short of a prescription for cardiac arrest. I used to love those foods - perish the thought. Now I haven’t any tolerance for the hamburger life-style Americans subsist on. My body is a temple. I’ve sworn off all animal products. Did you know that I religiously eat no less than fifteen fruits every day?”

Ari took a bite from his banana, for added emphasis.

“Since I’ve been on this fruit diet, I’ve got more stamina today, than I did when I was eighteen. They say eating fruit is good for the male libido. Say, why haven’t I seen you on the major runways before. From what I can see of you, which is a fair amount I might add, you have all the trimmings to be a top model.”

“Why thank you Mr. Gant,” gushed the young woman. “I’ve read all your articles on fashion and I just think you and Mr. Chiffon are the best…”

“… the best liars in the business,” said a woman’s voice.

They whirled around to face none other than Shapley Shady.

“Shapley darling, what in God’s name are you doing here?” questioned Ari in mock surprise. “If I were you I’d be at home working … as it were. You know, back to the old drawing board to borrow a well used cliché?”

“Borrowing well used clichés is certainly something you would know all about. If by some chance you’re referring to the Shapley Max spring line as the reason I should be at home working, I promise you Ari you’re in for the fight of your life,” hissed Shapley.

“Oh, my drink,” gasped the young model sensing an ugly situation. She excused herself to no one in particular and wandered off.

“Shapley darling,” continued Ari, “I simply call them as I see them. With regards to my opinion, you didn’t think it consisted of a bunch of borrowed clichés several years ago when I wrote that you actually had some talent. Anyway, I’ve seen your new spring line and unfortunately my dear, it would hardly do at a commoner’s county barn dance.”

“So you plan to continue your malicious attack?”

“I’m not maliciously attacking the Shapley Max line, but after all Shapley, I am a fashion critic and fashion critics are paid to write their impressions of the latest fashions. I never have and never will spitefully attack any label. I swear to tell the truth the whole truth and whatever else there is to that figure of speech.”

“And the truth according to Ari Gant is …?” inquired Shapley.

“Simply put, your line makes you more akin to being the personal tailor to
Mr. Potatohead and his family. To put it another way darling, I intend to write
that I've seen better and more imaginative sugar sacks!"

"You know that I always get my way and that I will not allow you to
continue your personal vendetta," stated Shapley in a very matter-of-fact tone.
"Fact is Shapley, you have absolutely no say in the matter, comprendi?"
"I would make sure I stood on solid ground if I were you. From what Sam
tells me you're closer to a jail term than you are to writing your next column."
A loud crack of thunder pierced the air, overpowering the jazz band playing
on the far side of the room.
"Ari, Ari!" cried a voice, rushing in like a steam ing locomotive.
"Is it true? Is it true that you've cancelled all our appearances on fashion
television next year?" screeched a panicked Kenneth Chiffon. "Tell me it isn't
true!"

"Our little Ari is in a rather vengeful mood Kenny boy," interjected Shapley,
"I'd suggest you believe it." Shapley turned on her heals and walked off.
Kenneth Chiffon had the shape of a pear. His hips seemed to start just
inches below his shoulders. When people saw him for the first time they usually
thought of a large drop of water.

"Kenneth," began Ari as if lecturing a child for the umpteenth time, "five
years ago, and before I met you, you were a starving freelance fashion critic,
correct?"

"So?"

"It was I who plucked you from obscurity, when I debated you on that
ridiculous television show, "Fashion - Master or Slave" . . . or some such thing.
"Ya and the reviews of that show, Ari, were the biggest thing in the industry
and you know it," wailed Kenneth.

"Look, you've had five years of success thanks to me. Your free ride on my
coot-tails has come to an end. At any rate, I've come to the conclusion that like
most critics you're an eccentric who barely knows any more than your freaked
out readers. So the fact is Kenny boy, Ari giveth and Ari taketh away. To put it
another way, I no longer find you amusing. You bore me."

"Ari, you can't be serious. Just like that? Just like that you decide we're
through?"

"For your information, my fat bottomed, ill-informed friend, I told you two
months ago that I had planned to go alone."
Kenneth Chiffon broke into tears and walked away sobbing loudly.
"A text book example of how to treat your friends and business associates by
Ari Gant, eh?"
Ari turned to see a glaring Sam Sham.  
“I’m going to the library to get a decent drink.  This scotch Alberto is serving to you commoners tastes like low grade motor oil,” snapped Ari. 
“Just a second Ari,” said Sam, “I’ve just got back from New York where I was talking to a few of our mutual acquaintances.”  
“I haven’t time for twenty questions Sam.  Who specifically where you talking to in New York?”

“Specifically, our accountant,” replied Sam. “He had some rather interesting accounting stories about our boutiques.”  
“And what might those be?” drawled Ari trying to appear bored.

“He tells me that our boutiques are losing money!  Oh no, we’re not losing money because business isn’t profitable.  No it’s not that at all.  Our profit margins are huge.  We’re losing money because my partner has developed an expense account that would embarrass a Saudi prince!  Let me lay it on the line for you Mr. Ari Gant, fashion critic and retail mogul, you can have one of two choices, either you return the cash you squandered and tender your shares in Ari’s to me for fair market value, or I’ll press charges for misappropriation of funds, got it?”

“For your information, my good pirate,” replied Ari, “I do not have a set company spending limit, which would be of little consequence to you even if I had, for I can justify every dollar spent as legitimate business expense.”

“A month long African Safari with three runway models is a legitimate business expense?!?” screamed Sam.

“Quite so,” replied Ari warming to the confrontation. “When an American woman embarks on an African safari, she obviously needs to purchase clothing.  Now, thanks to my foresight and in depth knowledge of safari fashion, she’ll be able to shop at Ari’s for the proper attire.”

“You’re going to sell by next week.  That I promise you,” replied Sam.  
“Over my dead body,” replied Ari turning to leave and forcing a yawn for added effect. “As I said, I’m going to the library for a real drink.”

A tremendous crack of thunder filled the room.  The storm had arrived. Ari Gant shrugged his shoulders and sauntered off in the direction of the library. Sam Sham stewed for several moments, then followed Ari.

Shadow looked at his watch, it was exactly 9:32.

He soon found his attention transfixed on a buxom woman with a purple dreadlocks ‘doo’.  She wore a faux leopard skin mini skirt and a white silk
tube-top which made a futile attempt at covering several strategically placed tattoos. She was engaged in an animated discussion with another woman, also wrapped in a faux animal skin - this one, giraffe, with a tiny snakeskin Loewe bag clutched at her side.

Shadow suddenly realized he had been staring at the two women while abstractly considering the correlation between this fashion party and the city zoo. He quickly abandoned the theory however, as it required more analysis than time allowed. Several minutes had passed before Shadow had noticed that Sam Sham had returned to the ballroom, where he and Shapley appeared to be consoling a blubbering Kenneth Chiffon.

"It's all your fault Shapley," cried Kenneth. "You drove him to this. You used him. He made you. He picked you out of the gutter and made you. Look at you now, you ungrateful woman."

"Cut the doting loyalty crap, you drunken louse," laughed Shapley. "He's through with you and you had better learn to go it alone. Judging from what I've read of those fun, bouncy, fashion satires you pass off as legitimate writing, you're as good as dead on your own. To put it more succinctly my fat sloppy friend, you've had your last hurrah and your last attack on Shapley Max."

"I'll straighten him out, you'll see," slurred Kenneth.

Sam and Shapley watched an obviously drunken Kenneth Chiffon weave his way to the library in search of Ari.

"I'm afraid Ari Gant is on a vengeful path of self destruction Shapley. He knows he can do some damage to your career and as for me and my ownership in Ari's he's turned the tables. He insists I sell my half to him or he'll spend the company into bankruptcy."

"I'll deal with Mr. Ari Gant," promised Shapley.

Kenneth Chiffon stumbled back into the ball room. His face was ashen white. He staggered to the first bar and guzzled a drink, most of which ran down the sides of his mouth, soaking his shirt.

He obviously didn't have much luck thought Shadow, as he glanced at his watch. It was 9:47.

There was a brilliant flash of lightning followed by a loud crack of thunder. The lights flickered momentarily. The band played on. It was 9:50.

Shadow couldn't help but follow the unfolding drama as it rapidly developed its own momentum. He sensed an imminent showdown. It was twelve minutes past ten when Shadow could see that Shapley was not about to let the issue simmer, she seemed intent on stirring the proverbial pot.
Again the thunder cracked, this time it was so loud it seemed to come from within the room. The lights flickered.

Shapley said something to Sam, then made a quick exit in the direction of the library.

The storm was directly overhead. The flashes of lightning and claps of thunder were so frequent the band relinquished the stage as the party’s attention was drawn to the windows. Another loud crack of thunder shook the room, followed by a few stifled screams of fright and excitement - then blackness. There were the inevitable little cries of help and nervous laughter until several candles were lit. The din of the crowd was cut into little pockets of excited talk as the room flashed back and forth from brilliant purple to darkness. Then came the inevitable thunder followed by almost deafening silence. The storm quickly passed and the rolling thunder soon faded into the distance. Suddenly, the solemn silence was pierced by a high pitched scream that seemed to come from the library. Shadow grabbed a candle and was cutting through the crowd when the power suddenly surged back. Shadow reached the library door just ahead of constable Bumlinger who had been running from the opposite direction. He thrust the door open to see Shapley cradling her face in her hands and crying uncontrollably. Ari Gant was sprawl face down on the floor. A small deadly pool of blood had formed on the back of his cream coloured jacket. His outstretched hand had just released a partially eaten apple. Ari Gant had been shot - dead. A small calibre hand gun, the murder weapon, lay near his outstretched body.

“What’s happened here,” boomed the questioning voice of Alberto Imperioli as he stepped through the doorway to see Bumlinger and Shadow crouched over the answer to his question.

“Well it looks to me as if an apple a day won’t help this guy,” cracked Bumlinger in his folksy style.

Shadow shot him a stare that suggested he remember his earlier request.

“Bumlinger, start taking names of everyone who’s been here tonight.”

“Okey dokey Shadow,” he replied, happy to deal with a finite task.

Shadow turned to Alberto Imperioli. “What kind of security measures did you say you have?”

“There’s nothing in the individual rooms, but all the hallways have mounted cameras. They’re battery operated so the power failure won’t have knocked them out. We’ll be able to see hall traffic but that’s about it.”

“It’s a start,” replied Shadow, ordering everyone out of the room. “Alberto,
ask Mr. Sham to meet me in the room across the hall.”

A visibly shaken Sam Sham sat on the arm of a leather couch. Shadow paced back and forth in front of Sam trying to decide how to begin.

“I understand you and Ari Gant were business partners, is that right?”

“Listen detective,” replied Sam “lets get to it. Me and Ari Gant were business partners in some woman’s clothing stores. I caught him skimming profits. I confronted him about it and he walked away on me. I followed him to the library hoping to get a straight answer.”

“Well did you?”

“No. He threatened some counter action against me so I told him I would see my lawyers in the morning. When I left he was pouring himself a cognac. That’s the last I saw of him.”

Shadow was half sitting, half leaning on the edge of a desk when a blubbering Kenneth Chiffon waddled in.

“You and Ari Gant were having a fight isn’t that true Mr. Chiffon?”

“Ari’s a darling man, detective. I loved him. I could never harm Ari!”

“Hmmm, yes of course,” muttered Shadow. “What exactly did you two discuss in the library?”

“Nothing. I mean, I was told he was in the library so I went there to speak with him. I took a quick peek around but I didn’t see him. So I left.”

Shapley, who had regained her composure returned Shadow’s cool stare.

“Either you were the last person to see him alive or the first person who will admit to seeing him dead,” began Shadow. “So, tell me what happened.”

“We were having a bit of a misunderstanding, so I went to the library to try and talk some sense into him. He was out to destroy himself and take everyone along with him. Believe me detective, it’s a long story that you don’t wanna hear. Trust me. Anyway, I opened the door to the library and called his name but there was no answer. It was completely dark due to the power failure. I decided to stay in the library and wait.”

“For what?”

“Either for the power to come back on or for Ari to return. Hopefully both, I guess. Anyway, I just stood there waiting for my eyes to adjust to the dark. In a few moments I could make out a sofa across the room, so I walked over to it and sat down. Several seconds later there was a brilliant flash of lightning and that’s when I first saw him lying on the carpet dead. I screamed and just then the power came on. The next thing I knew everybody had rushed in”.

10
Several hours later, Shadow was sitting in the basement of the Imperioli mansion trying to rub his protesting eyes open. For the fifth time, Shadow came to the end of the library hall tape and for the sixth time he began to watch it again - in reverse. Shadow saw himself and Bumlinger emerge from the library running backwards. They broke apart and continued to run backwards in opposite directions. Then after a short time Shapley backed out of the library and into the ball room. The time was 10:13. There was no activity for twenty odd minutes until Kenneth Chiffon was seen backing out of the library into the ball room. Again there was no activity until Sam Sham backed out of the library into the ball room. Seconds later Ari Gant backed out of the library and strolled backward into the main ball room. Shadow hit the stop button.

Shadow pondered the video footage for several moments then told Bumlinger to make an arrest on the grounds of murder. Who did he arrest?
THE SOLUTION

Shapley always to have first seen the body and her frightend scream
Shapley always to have first seen the body and her frightend scream.

The solution which means there was a considerable delay between the time when
The solution which means there was a considerable delay between the time when

series of handfuls and then the scream. The lightning would have occurred prior
series of handfuls and then the scream. The lightning would have occurred prior

seen All's presence body from the flash of lightning. In reality everyone heard a
seen All's presence body from the flash of lightning. In reality everyone heard a

more minutes. Shapley also caught Shapley in a whom she claimed to have first
more minutes. Shapley also caught Shapley in a whom she claimed to have first

Sam shot All the apple would have started to colour and turn brown after twenty or
Sam shot All the apple would have started to colour and turn brown after twenty or

the apple was still white when Ali had taken his last bite. Had either Kenneth or
the apple was still white when Ali had taken his last bite. Had either Kenneth or

obvious to Shapley that Ali had to have been shot very recently due to the fact that
obvious to Shapley that Ali had to have been shot very recently due to the fact that

and examined the body one of the first things he noted was the apple. It was
and examined the body one of the first things he noted was the apple. It was

left the library and Shapley Shapley had entered. When Shapley entered the library
left the library and Shapley Shapley had entered. When Shapley entered the library

know that at least twenty minutes had passed between the time Kenneth Chilton had
know that at least twenty minutes had passed between the time Kenneth Chilton had

any your people including Ali can't had entered the library that night. We also
any your people including Ali can't had entered the library that night. We also

had motives for murdering Ali can't but the evidence clearly points to only one of
had motives for murdering Ali can't but the evidence clearly points to only one of

Shapley knows that Shapley Shapley Sam Shap and Kenneth Chilton all
Shapley knows that Shapley Shapley Sam Shap and Kenneth Chilton all

We appreciate your comments on this MindTrap Mystery Puzzle.
Please address your correspondence to:
Pressman Toy Corp.
Dept: MindTrap Puzzle
745 Joyce Kilmer Ave.
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Our Consumer Service number is 1-800-800-0298.
Calls are accepted Monday through Friday from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm EST.
Other titles in the MindTrap Mystery Jigsaw Puzzle Series.

**MURDER BY WILL**
A fortune lies waiting, providing dear Aunt Abbey would be gracious enough to leave her will, and then this fair world in precisely that order. Her nephews have secured the first part and are willing to lend a hand for the second. After all, where there’s a will there’s a way!

**AN UNSAVORY DEMISE**
It had been five years since Barney Dribble had fingered his two mates - in exchange for a suspended sentence. Cooking at his little diner had been good... till now. His pals had spent five years brewing a batch of revenge which was about to be served to the cook!

**REVENGE IN PARADISE**
Inspite of their mutual hatred, the Shady’s and Sham’s habitually shared their vacations. “Old habits die hard”, but a few drops of revenge mixed with a good dash of murder is certain to ensure the death of a very old habit.

© 1997 Pressman Toy Corporation
New York, NY 10010 Made in U.S.A.
Licensed by Wind Chimes Limited