

SEAFOOD VERANDA
By Jane Lake ©2018

Genre: Contemporary Humor

Synopsis:

Lobsters, shark, shrimp and murder! In the tradition of a dinner theatre murder-mystery, this children's play takes place at "Seafood Veranda." A fictitious restaurant in [Your Town], it's a hugely successful eatery. Waiters dress like sharks, crabs and ocean creatures. All orders come with a side of popcorn shrimp.

One evening, Dr. Grullon enters the establishment and requests a table in the V.I.P. lounge. As the main course arrives, a patron at the next table falls over – dead! A regular who-dun-it ensues. Was it the tough-talking, disgruntled waiter? The chef? The hostess, or Dr. Grullon? Detective Vivienne gets to the bottom of this undersea mystery.

SPOILER ALERT!

As it turns out, Dr. Grullon seasoned her soup excessively with habenero hot sauce from her purse. She sent it back to the kitchen. The disgruntled waiter accidentally grabbed the tainted bowl. Unknowingly, he served it to the customer who keeled over from heartburn.

When the victim revives, Det. Vivienne deduces that Dr. Grullon *intended* to spike the soup with hot sauce in order to ruin the reputation of Seafood Veranda. Why? Grullon is a doctor but has had a life-long passion for cooking. She always dreamed of having her own restaurant, but was afraid to compete with Seafood Veranda.

Restoring justice, the owner of Seafood Veranda makes amends with Dr. Grullon. She proposes that they expand the restaurant as business partners.

"Seafood Veranda" is an original play written in 2017 by C.J. Lake when she was a second-grade teacher in the Bronx. It has been used for reading enrichment, neighborhood performances, fundraisers and as an after-school theatre club production. In 2018 it was recognized by the Bronx Arts Council.

A Reader Theatre piece, elementary children of all abilities can read the script and perform their lines for a family or community audience. Most importantly, students of all abilities can access the joys of being in a show.

SEAFOOD VERANDA

Category: One-Act Play

Running time: 20 minutes

Length: 9 pages

Cast List: 8 speaking roles;
1 audience member

Flexible to 10 or more.

All can be M/F

Audience participation

CAST

Restaurant Owner

Hostess

Chef

Assistant Chef

Waiter #1 (“Party Shark”)

Waiter #2 (Pirate)

Customer #1 (V.I.P.)

Customer #2 (Audience Member)

Detective Vivienne

SETTING: A restaurant in [your town]

SEAFOOD VERANDA – MYSTERY DINNER THEATRE INT.

RESTAURANT ENTRANCE

PARTY SHARK

Hey Everybody! Welcome to Seafood Veranda. I'm Nicky the Party Shark.
I'm the waiter who will take your order tonight. Look – a customer!

RESTAURANT OWNER and HOSTESS are at the door. CUSTOMER #1 enters.

RESTAURANT OWNER

Good evening. Are you here for dinner?

CUSTOMER #1

Yes I am. I would like a table in the V.I.P. Lounge.

HOSTESS

Do you have a reservation?

CUSTOMER #1

Grullon. Doctor Grullon. Ph.D.

HOSTESS

Let me check the list.

CUSTOMER #1

Right there.

HOSTESS

Where?

RESTAURANT OWNER

She's on the list. Take Dr. Grullon to the V.I.P lounge.

HOSTESS

Right this way.

INT. VIP LOUNGE

HOSTESS takes Customer #1 to the V.I.P. table. Glow-sticks, party favors and a bowl of grapes are on the table.

PARTY SHARK arrives and places a bowl of shrimp on the table.

PARTY SHARK

Hello. I'm the party shark here at Seafood Veranda,
where everything comes with a side of popcorn shrimp. Can I take your order?

CUSTOMER #1

I'll have the soup, bread and apple juice please.

PARTY SHARK

And shrimp!

CUSTOMER #1

Yes, shrimp.

PARTY SHARK

Coming right up.

INT. KITCHEN

PARTY SHARK goes to the kitchen. CHEF and ASSISTANT CHEF are cooking soup.

PARTY SHARK

One order of soup, bread and apple juice.

CHEF

Don't forget the shrimp.

ASSISTANT CHEF

At Seafood Veranda everything comes with a side of popcorn shrimp!

CHEF hands PARTY SHARK a tray of food.

CHEF

Here you are.

PARTY SHARK takes the tray.

INT. VIP LOUNGE

PARTY SHARK delivers the order to CUSTOMER #1 at the V.I.P table.

CUSTOMER #1 slurps the soup then spits it out. She adds SALT.

CUSTOMER #1 takes a bottle from her purse and puts it in the soup.

CUSTOMER #1 waves to PARTY SHARK. She complains that the soup tastes bad.

PARTY SHARK returns the bowl of soup to the kitchen and puts it on the counter.

INT. RESTAURANT ENTRANCE

RESTAURANT OWNER and HOSTESS are at the door. CUSTOMER #2 enters.

RESTAURANT OWNER
Welcome to Seafood Veranda.
Do you have a reservation?

CUSTOMER #2 (Parent)
No, but I would like to sit down for dinner.

HOSTESS
Ok, we have a table in the family section.
Right this way.

HOSTESS seats CUSTOMER #2 at a table.

WAITER #2
Hello, may I take your order?

CUSTOMER #2
What do you have on special?

WAITER #2
Soup. And shrimp.

CUSTOMER #2
I'll just have the soup.

WAITER #2
You have to have popcorn shrimp.

WAITER #2 points to a sign: "SEAFOOD VERANDA. Where everything comes with a side of popcorn shrimp."

CUSTOMER #2
But I don't like shrimp.

WAITER #2 Takes the menu.

WAITER #2
Too bad.

INT. KITCHEN

WAITER #2 enters the kitchen.

WAITER #2
(Yells.)
Order of soup!

CHEF AND ASSISTANT CHEF
(Yells)
And a side of popcorn shrimp!

ASSISTANT CHEF puts the wrong bowl of soup on the tray.

WAITER #2 takes the tray of food and exits.

INT. FAMILY TABLE

WAITER #2 delivers the food to CUSTOMER #2 at the family table.

CUSTOMER #2 takes a sip of soup and dies.

EVERYONE
Gasp!

RESTAURANT OWNER, HOSTESS, CHEF, ASSISTANT CHEF rush to the table.

PARTY SHARK
Oh my goodness! This customer just fell asleep.

WAITER #2
No he didn't. He's dead.

RESTAURANT OWNER
That's impossible!

DETECTIVE walks into the restaurant.

DETECTIVE
I'm the detective. Detective Vivienne.
The customer was murdered.

EVERYONE
Gasp!

RESTAURANT OWNER
That's impossible!

CUSTOMER #1
I told you the soup tasted bad.

ASSISTANT CHEF
I ate it myself.
That soup was perfectly fine.

WAITER #2
No it wasn't. It smelled like feet.

RESTAURANT OWNER
That's impossible! This is a Five Star restaurant.

DETECTIVE
To the kitchen!

PARTY SHARK
To the kitchen everybody!

EVERYONE goes to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

DETECTIVE inspects the bowl of soup.

DETECTIVE
A fresh bowl of soup.

RESTAURANT OWNER
What does that prove?

DETECTIVE
It proves the customer ate
the poisoned bowl of soup.

CUSTOMER #1 sneaks to the V.I.P Lounge, gets her purse and tries to leave.

INT. RESTAURANT

CUSTOMER #1 tries to exit.

DETECTIVE
Stop! Freeze.

HOSTESS blocks the door.

CUSTOMER #1
Let me out! I didn't do anything.
I was just dining in the V.I.P. Lounge.

WAITER #2 AND HOSTESS bring CUSTOMER #1 back to the dining area.

RESTAURANT OWNER
My restaurant!
The reputation of my restaurant is ruined!

CUSTOMER #2
Anybody gonna call 9-1-1?

DETECTIVE
That's just what "Dr. Grullon" wanted.

EVERYONE
Gasp! What?

DETECTIVE takes a wallet and I.D. from CUSTOMER #1's purse.

CUSTOMER #1
Let me go.

DETECTIVE
Dr. Grullon is a Chemist with a Ph.D.
She wanted to start her own restaurant.

CUSTOMER #1
That's a lie.

WAITER #2
No it isn't. I saw Dr. Grullon on the
Discovery AND Food Channels last week.

DETECTIVE
Dr. Grullon what do you have to say for yourself?

CUSTOMER #1
Ok, I always wanted to have my own restaurant but Seafood Veranda is too popular.

ASSISTANT CHEF
Everything does come with shrimp.

DETECTIVE
So, YOU put poison in your soup then sent it back to the kitchen.

CUSTOMER #1

I've been here before and knew they'd get the order wrong.

DETECTIVE

Exactly. Arrest her!

CUSTOMER #2

9-1-1! Heartburn!

RESTAURANT OWNER

This man is alive!

EVERONE surrounds CUSTOMER #2.

CUSTOMER #1

It was just hot sauce.

PARTY SHARK

Everybody back to your tables.

No murder here. Just heartburn.

DETECTIVE EXITS.

RESTAURANT OWNER and HOSTESS walks toward CUSTOMER #1.

RESTAURANT OWNER

You didn't have to do all that.

Actually, I need a partner to expand.

CUSTOMER #1

Really? You mean I could be a part-owner of the best seafood restaurant in the [Name of City]?

HOSTESS

Of course you can. We want to expand and build an indoor water park so the kids can have fun all year-long.

RESTAURANT OWNER, HOSTESS and CUSTOMER #1 shake hands and hug.

PARTY SHARK

And that's how the story ends. Seafood Veranda
now has a water slide for kids and is open all yearand

EVERYONE

Every order comes with a side of popcorn shrimp!

THE END