



HOW TO HOST YOUR OWN
MURDER MYSTERY
ON THE
NIGHT TRAIN

HOST'S INSTRUCTIONS





You are about to embark on a fun-filled evening of
intrigue, deceit and wrongdoing!

It's 1935, and there has been a murder on the luxury train,
the European Belle!

All those travelling on the train are suspects.

Can anyone work out whodunnit?

You can host your murder mystery over dinner, but this isn't
essential. However, you will need a table to set up the various
components of the game.

You will act as the host; but you may want to ask a friend to
help with the hospitality side while you are busy orchestrating
the game.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX

- 13 NAME BADGES
- 13 PINS (one for each name badge)
- 12 CHARACTER NAME cards
- 12 SECRET TRAIT cards
- 9 MURDER WEAPON props
- 1 DETECTIVE NOTEPAD
- 1 EVIDENCE FILE
- 1 ROUTE MAP
- 12 ROUND ONE cards
- 12 CHALLENGE Cards
- 3 sets of ROUND TWO cards (6 YELLOW, 6 RED and 6 GREEN cards)
- 3 sets of ROUND THREE cards (6 YELLOW, 6 RED and 6 GREEN cards)
- 1 ACCUSATION and VOTING PAD
- 3 SOLUTION SHEETS and 3 SOLUTION ENVELOPES (one for each
time you play the game)
- 3 AWARD TROPHIES
- 1 INSTRUCTION BOOKLET

Extra items you will need to provide:

- 1 pen per guest
- 1 red item of clothing for setting up the crime scene



TIP

The plot is broken down into three main rounds, designed
to run as one round over each course of a meal. We recommend
that you have a short break at the end of each round so that
your guests can make notes and discuss what's happened so far.

GAMEPLAY

Preparing your murder mystery party is simple. Just choose a minimum of four friends or family members to invite, set the date, and send out your invitations! This game can be played by a maximum of 13 people including the host, but needs at least five participants (including the host) to run effectively. It can be played up to three times with a different solution each time you play. For the best experience, invite different guests each time.

- Select a colour: each one relates to a different scenario and a different ending. You can choose from YELLOW, RED and GREEN.

The game is split into six sections:

1. INTRODUCTION
2. THE MURDER - Crime Scene and The Missing Murder Weapon Hunt
3. ROUND ONE clues - BLUE cards (the same for every game)
4. ROUND TWO clues - YELLOW, RED or GREEN cards according to the gameplay colour chosen
5. ROUND THREE clues - YELLOW, RED or GREEN cards according to the gameplay colour chosen
6. FINALE - the Accusations, the Solution and the Awards

There is a CONVERSATION STARTER at the beginning of each round of clues to determine which of your guests should go first. These are intended to be played in character.

Have a quick read of the whole booklet before the evening.

INVITATIONS AND ALLOCATION OF CHARACTERS

There are a few things you might like to do to make your party go with a bang!

- Send out invitations for the evening to your chosen guests to tell them their character name and occupation in advance.

You should include the following details in your invitation:

- Time and date
- Character (tip: you could take a photo of the character card to send to the guest)
- Information on the 1930s theme
- Ask your guests to dress up and bring a suitable prop, inspired by the character card
- Let them know there will be an award for best detective, best costume and most impressive acting

IMPORTANT: There are 12 possible characters, but you **MUST** allocate Pat O'Logist, Hugh Dunit and Greeta Klient every time you play. Once you've taken those three out of the stack of **CHARACTER NAME** cards, randomly choose as many as you need to give all your guests a character to play.

Visit talkingtables.com for printable/emailable invitations to send to your guests.

BEFORE YOUR GUESTS ARRIVE SETTING UP THE CRIME SCENE

Place the following in an area where people can easily gather round, but preferably out of sight when they first arrive:

- Pillows in the shape of a body, under a white sheet. Alternatively, a willing friend not taking part in the game can play the body!
- A "bloodstain" on the sheet, around the head area of the "body" (create using an item of red clothing).
- Hide the nine **MURDER WEAPONS** provided around the area/house, in a different area from the crime scene.

CHARACTERS

- Take the relevant **NAME BADGES** out of the box for the characters who are attending along with the **CHARACTER NAME** cards, ready to give out to your guests when they arrive. The first time you play, you will need to attach one of the supplied **PINS** to the back of each name badge. There are 12 characters in total: four male, four female and four that can be either sex (Eddy Tor, Mo Lah, Pat O'Logist and Rene Weigh).
- Place all **SECRET TRAIT** cards face down on the table.

LAYOUT THE ROUNDS

- Place all **CHALLENGE** cards face down on the table.
- Set out the three rounds of **CLUE** cards in separate piles, face down on the table, correlating to the colour of game you are playing. (**ROUND ONE** clue cards are all blue. **ROUND TWO** and **ROUND THREE** cards vary in colour.)
- Place the **ROUTE MAP** where everyone can see it.

- Place the empty EVIDENCE FILE on the table - you will need it to keep all the clues safe once they've been revealed, so they are available for review.
- Place the DETECTIVE NOTE SHEETS and some pens around the table so the guests can make their own notes.
- Keep the ACCUSATION SHEETS handy as you will need them towards the end of the game.
- Select the sealed SOLUTION ENVELOPE corresponding to your chosen gameplay colour. Keep it handy as you'll need it later, but make sure no-one opens the envelope - no peeking!
- Keep the trophies somewhere nearby so you can access them easily at the end of the game, when it's time to award them to deserving guests.

MUSIC

To add to the atmosphere of the evening, why not put together a playlist of music from the era? Search for 1930s music.

NOTES TO YOURSELF

You, the HOST, are called Al Abord. Your role is to make sure things run smoothly. You are the ticket inspector aboard the fabulous train, the European Belle.

All the guests are passengers on the European Belle, travelling from Paris to Moscow over three weeks. There are 13 passengers travelling in the first sleeper carriage of the train. They might not all be present this evening, as they may be elsewhere on the train. How many of them are here depends on how many guests you have invited, but they're all still suspects in the murder. Although you, the host, are not a suspect in this murder, you might still have skeletons in your closet, and you won't know whodunnit until the very end, so you can play along with your guests and try to guess the identity of the murderer!

YOUR GUESTS ARRIVE

Introduction

- Serve pre-dinner drinks.
- Give out the relevant CHARACTER NAME cards to each of your guests. Ask them to read what's on the card, but not to share this information with anyone else for now.
- Now ask each guest to take a blue SECRET TRAIT card at random.
- Return the remainder of the SECRET TRAIT cards to the box.
- Tell your guests to read the information on the SECRET TRAIT cards to themselves and not to reveal it to each other until the end of the game.

When your guests are ready to start the game, read out the following:

"I'd like to formally introduce myself as your new ticket inspector. My name is Al Abord and I joined your train in Budapest. Many of you have been on the train for a while already as it steamed its way through France, Switzerland and Austria, but for those who have recently joined us, welcome aboard the European Belle! I'm sure 1935 is going to be your best year yet - after all, you are already part of an incredible adventure from Paris to Moscow, taking in some amazing countries and cities over the three-week journey. This is where the adventure really begins, as we've just this afternoon left Hungary and we're now making our way through Romania and on towards Russia. There are almost one hundred passengers on the train in total but you are all the occupants of the sleeping compartments in the best and most luxurious carriage - Carriage 1. Some of you already know each other, but many of you don't, so let's take a minute to introduce ourselves".

Now ask your guests to introduce themselves to each other using the information on their CHARACTER NAME cards, remembering their secret traits. Remind your guests to keep their character name/trait cards face down at all times to stop others peeking.

Encourage your guests to throw themselves into the traits and personalities shown on their cards throughout the evening.



TIP

This is a good time to remind everyone that award trophies will be handed out for Best Acting, Best Costume and Best Detective at the end of the evening.

CRIME SCENE AND MISSING WEAPON HUNT – THE MURDER!

Make an excuse to leave the area/room and go to the crime scene you prepared earlier. You could cock your head, look alarmed and say:

"Oh my goodness, that was the emergency whistle! I have to go and investigate!"

When you reach the crime scene, act alarmed, scream or do whatever you fancy, but make it clear there has been a MURDER!

Go back to your guests and explain that you think it's important that everyone sees what you've seen. Warn those of a nervous disposition that they may need to prepare themselves for a horrible sight. Lead your guests to the crime scene. Tell your guests the following:

"You can look but not touch! It's probably a good idea to make notes of anything you think is relevant, and you can take photos if you wish. This is exactly how the body was found - in Compartment 5 - by the train porter, Cary Bagges. Nothing has been touched".

Once your guests have had a good look at the crime scene, return to the main room and read out the following:

"I'm sorry if you were upset by that awful scene. I have to tell you that the body is that of the world-famous concert pianist, Reid Muzik. You may have heard of him. He was a wonderful Czechoslovakian pianist, a child prodigy, and the recipient of an Oscar in 1934 for his performance of the theme music to "What The Butler Saw". I know we were all looking forward to his recital tomorrow evening on the beautiful grand piano we have in the Lounge. What a terrible shame that it will now remain silent. There's very little information at the moment, but one thing that seems to be missing is a murder weapon!

There are, in fact, nine potential weapons hidden around the place. It's time for a little game of "Hunt for the murder weapon"! You're looking for:

A dagger, a pistol, a paperweight, a bottle, an umbrella, scissors, a frying pan, a wrench and a shovel!

If you find something, bring it back here and make sure you examine it closely. Remember, finding the potential murder weapons could help win you the Best Detective Award at the end of the game".

"I hope everyone has their wits about them this evening. If there is any chance of this terrible murder being solved, you need to remember that everything you see and hear could be relevant!"



TIP

This is a good time to remind everyone that they're going to need to concentrate this evening and write some notes.

As the weapon props are found, the interesting information on the back of each one will need to be shared with the group – the person who finds the weapon should read the information aloud to the group. Make sure all nine weapons have been found and examined. Put them in the EVIDENCE FILE.

ROUND ONE

- When everyone is ready, ask your guests to sit down at the dinner table.
- **Serve the starter.**
- Make sure the ROUND ONE clues and CHALLENGE cards are easily accessible, face down. Read out:

"Now it's time to start looking at the clues and evidence that's gradually coming to light. It's now 6.30pm and hopefully we can get this all sorted out in time for our sumptuous meal in the dining car later".

CONVERSATION STARTER (OPTIONAL) - Decide who is to go first by asking each guest in turn: "What's the most daring crime you've ever committed?" The best or funniest answer (in your opinion) goes first.

That person should now take the top ROUND ONE card and follow the instructions on it. Once they have done that, they should take a CHALLENGE CARD and follow the instructions on it.

After they have performed the challenge, the next person around the table should take the next ROUND ONE card and follow the instructions, followed by a CHALLENGE CARD. Repeat until all ROUND ONE cards have been used. When all those clues have been revealed, put them in the EVIDENCE FILE.



TIP

At the end of this round, it is a good idea to recap some of the juicy bits of information that have just been uncovered.

ROUND TWO

Serve the main course.

Make sure the ROUND TWO cards are accessible. Read out:

"The second round will give you some forensic and character clues; it would be a good idea to take notes".

CONVERSATION STARTER (OPTIONAL) - To decide who should start, ask your guests: "What's your earliest memory?" Whoever comes up with the most impressive answer should take the first ROUND TWO card and follow the instructions on it. The clues must come out in the specific order marked on the reverse - from Clue 1 to Clue 6. If there are more than six guests, you might like to select which guests reveal the other five clues. If not, your guests can simply take it in turns. When all the ROUND TWO cards have been used and the contents read/acted out, put them in the EVIDENCE FILE.

ROUND THREE

Serve the dessert.

Make sure the ROUND THREE cards are accessible. Read out:

"The final set of clues will provide statements from the witnesses and some physical characteristics of the suspects. Use these clues to draw your conclusions on who the murderer is".

CONVERSATION STARTER (OPTIONAL) - To decide who should start, ask your guests: "If you could be anyone else in the world, who would it be and why?" Whoever comes up with the best/funniest answer should take the first ROUND THREE card and follow the instructions.

Again, they must come out in the specific order marked on the reverse - from Clue 1 to Clue 6. If there are more than six players, give players who did not reveal a clue in ROUND TWO the opportunity to reveal the ROUND THREE clues.

After all the clues and information have been revealed, invite everyone to review both their notes and all the evidence contained in the EVIDENCE FILE.

FINALE - THE ACCUSATION

Serve coffee and after-dinner drinks.

Give each guest an accusation form and a pen. Read out:

"So - all the evidence is in and the time has come to make your accusations. Complete your accusation form and be ready to reveal and justify who you think killed poor Reid Muzik".

Each person should now complete their form with the following information:

- their own character name
- the name of the person who they believe murdered Reid Muzik
- what they think the motive behind the murder was
- how they reached their conclusion

Remind everyone that apart from you (the host), everyone in the room is a suspect. As the host, you can play along and guess the murderer if you wish, as the solution is contained in a sealed envelope.

Once everyone has written down their proposed solution, work your way round the guests, starting wherever you choose, and ask them all to reveal out loud what they've noted on their accusation form. They should all be prepared to justify and defend their proposed solution!

SOLUTION

You may now open the sealed SOLUTION ENVELOPE corresponding to the colour of the cards you used in ROUND TWO and ROUND THREE. Read the contents aloud to the room.

AWARDS

Once the murderer has been unveiled, collect everyone's accusation forms and tally up the votes for Best Costume and Best Acting. It's up to you who gets Best Detective!

It's time to hand out the trophies based on:

- The person (or persons) who guessed the murderer/motive (or who came closest) for the Best Detective Award.
- The highest number of votes for Best Costume.
- The highest number of votes for Best Acting.

SUBSEQUENT GAME PLAYS

Simply choose a different gameplay colour, which will lead to a different solution. Don't forget to use the appropriate coloured cards in ROUND TWO and ROUND THREE.

THE END

CHECKLIST

Advance Preparation:

- Decide whom to invite (minimum of four and maximum of 12 guests). Send out your invitations in good time, ensuring you've invited the obligatory characters and then added others. Make sure everyone is clear on the location (send maps/directions if necessary) and what time they need to arrive. Encourage your guests to dress to impress in 1935. Perhaps buy a few 1930s accessories to add to your guests' costumes.
- Party Food and Drink:
If much of your menu can be prepared in advance, you will have less to do on the night.
Prepare as much as you can the day before and during the day of the party.
- The Room:
Arrange the furniture, making sure there is plenty of space for everyone and for all the components of the game.
Decorate the room to fit the theme.
Set the table in advance.
Set up the crime scene as per instructions.
Have a small separate table for the EVIDENCE FILE so the evidence is easily accessible for review during the evening.
- On the Night:
Get everything ready at least an hour before your guests are due to arrive so you can make any final touches.
Remember to document the evening. Take photos and videos and encourage guests to do the same.
Capture the moment and share your memories
#HostYourOwn #MurderMystery #TalkingTables

