



Talking Tables

HOW TO HOST YOUR OWN  
MURDER MYSTERY  
at the  
BOTANIC GARDENS



HOST'S  
INSTRUCTIONS

# HOW TO HOST A MURDER MYSTERY

## WHAT'S IN THE BOX

- 13 NAME BADGE STICKERS
- 12 CHARACTER CARDS
- 8 EVIDENCE PROPS
- 24 CHALLENGE CARDS
- 12 ROUND 1 ACCUSATION CARDS
- 6 ROUND 2 CLUES
- 6 ROUND 3 CLUES
- 1 SOLUTION in SOLUTION ENVELOPE
- 1 INSTRUCTION BOOKLET

## EXTRA ITEMS YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 PEN or PENCIL per GUEST
- Paper for making notes

## INTRODUCTION

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). To run effectively, the game needs at least four participants if you choose to play with the audio host, or five if you are acting the part of the host.

If you choose the role of the host, you will play the role of Inspector Heathland Thorninside. Alternatively, use the audio inspector by scanning the QR code on the back page when ready to play the game. This will allow you to play any other character in the game. You will need a smartphone or a laptop with internet access.

### ROUND 1

The host will introduce themselves along with the other players, and the evidence props will be examined. They will then ask if anyone has any suspicions, and the guests will read from the accusation cards.

### ROUND 2

More definite evidence will come to light and details of the crime will be revealed. Challenges will be undertaken prompted by the pollen marks on the back of the round 2 clues.

### ROUND 3

The final set of clues will be revealed. Challenges will be undertaken prompted by the pollen marks on the back of the round 3 clues.

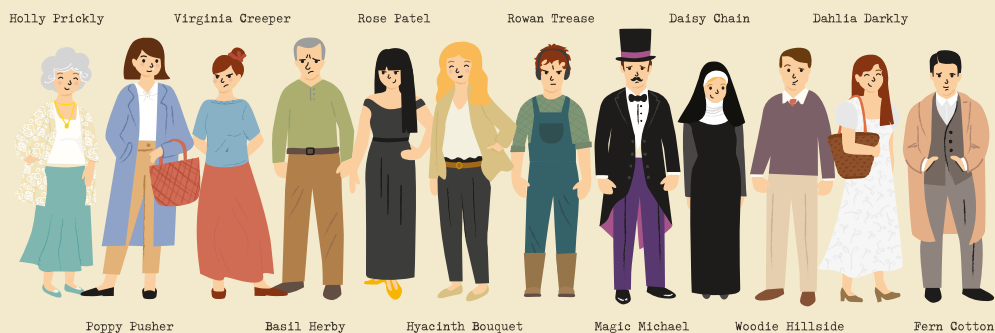
### FINALE

Guests will need to decide who they think is guilty. Everyone will reveal their accusations and the host will reveal the killer's identity.

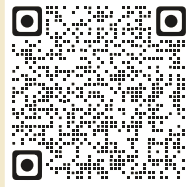
## INVITATIONS AND CHARACTER ALLOCATIONS

**IMPORTANT:** There are 12 possible characters, plus the host, but you **MUST** allocate Poppy, Basil, Dahlia and Fern. Once you have taken those four out of the stack of **CHARACTER CARDS**, randomly choose as many as you need.

• Send out invitations to your guests. These can be found at the web address below or by scanning the QR code. The invitations give each guest a character name and occupation.



### SCAN QR CODE FOR INVITATIONS



VISIT WEB SITE ADDRESS FOR INVITATIONS  
<https://www.talkingtables.co.uk/pages/online-invites>

## BEFORE YOUR GUESTS ARRIVE

### SETTING UP THE EVIDENCE

- Place all eight **EVIDENCE PROPS** on the table within easy reach of your guests. These will need to be examined throughout the course of the game.

### CHARACTER

- Take the relevant **NAME BADGES STICKERS** and **CHARACTER CARDS**, ready to give out to your guests when they arrive.

### LAY OUT THE ROUNDS

- Place all **CHALLENGE CARDS** face down on the table.
- Set all **ROUND 1 ACCUSATION CARDS** face down on the table. Remove any cards that mention guests who are not present.
- Set all **ROUND 2 AND 3 CLUE CARDS** face down on the table.
- Have the **SOLUTION ENVELOPE** ready to read out at the game's conclusion.
- Have some paper and pens on the table, so the guests can make their own notes.



## NOTES TO YOURSELF IF PLAYING THE HOST

This will only be relevant if you are not using the audio host and wish to play the host yourself.

You, the host, are Inspector Heathland Thorninside. Your role is to make sure things run smoothly. You are here to lead the investigation and bring the evidence to light so it can be examined by your fellow guests.

You are a humourless war hero, and you were great friends with the victim's father many years ago, so you have made it your mission to see his killer brought to justice.

Usually, you have a very stiff upper lip and a macho demeanour, but unfortunately you suffer from anthophobia, a persistent and intense fear of flowers. In fact, you find all flora repulsive and are likely to scream or vomit if you come too close to a plant, or even see one. When you're not cowering from plants, you are telling people to pull themselves together and regaling people with extremely questionable war stories. Demonstrate these character traits throughout the evening!

All the guests are suspects who were present the night William Whittaker was murdered. They might not all be physically present if you have invited fewer than 12 people. How many of them are present depends on how many guests you have invited, but all 12 are still suspects in the murder. Although you, the host, are not a suspect in this murder, 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

- Give out the relevant number of **CHARACTER CARDS** and **NAME BADGE STICKERS** to your guests. Ask them to read what's on their cards, but to not share this information with anyone else yet.

- Each guest should take a few **CHALLENGE CARDS**. These should be evenly distributed among the guests, so all are used.
- These challenges will come into play during the second and third round. When players see the symbol that correlates with their challenge on the back of a clue, they should follow the instruction.
- Keep all **CHALLENGE CARDS** secret from one another.

When your guests are ready to start the game, scan the QR code on the back of the **INSTRUCTION BOOKLET** for the video intro. This is Holly Prickly's eyewitness report of the night of the murder. She is the only reliable witness, and her testimony will set the scene and introduce the game.

You can also access the video here if you wish to set up the video on a screen beforehand:

<https://www.talkingtables.co.uk/pages/mystery-garden-video-intro>

Once the video is finished, you can either scan the QR code on the back of the instruction booklet to access the audio host or, if you are playing the role of Inspector Heathland Thornninside, read the below:

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Heathland Thornninside, and I am a private investigator working for the Whittaker estate. I have brought you here tonight because you were all present the night William Whittaker was murdered. I also know for a fact that each and every one of you has something to hide!

The Whittaker family contacted me several weeks ago to inform me that new evidence has come to light whilst looking through William's personal effects, and they begged me to re-open the case. I knew William's father in the armed forces, and I will not rest until his son's killer has been brought to justice! As you can see, the palm house has been rebuilt following the fire and the botanical garden is due to reopen to the public in a few days' time. So here we are at the scene of the crime,

and before the evening is out, the truth will be revealed! Remember, we're looking for the person who killed William but that doesn't mean only one person was responsible for his death. In my experience, these crimes usually need a planner as well as a patsy.

And now some housekeeping. I suffer from a rather rare affliction known as anthophobia: an intense fear and repulsion of plants [gags] and flowers [gags]. Rather unfortunate given the circumstances. Please would you hum rather than naming any species of hmm or hmm, and avoid showing me or talking to me about any hmm or hmm, otherwise I'm likely to be sick, scream, pass out or all of the above. I trust you'll be courteous and accommodating in this respect.

I know that you're all familiar with each other but for my sake, would you mind introducing yourselves?"

Now ask your guests to introduce themselves to each other using the information on their **CHARACTER CARDS**.

Once your guests have taken it in turns to introduce themselves to the rest of the group, read out the following:

First things first, I think we better have a look at the physical evidence. Please take turns examining each item and read aloud any of the investigator's notes.

Read out:

"Now it's time to have a look at all the case files. It's now 6.30pm, so the sooner we solve this, the sooner we can get away from all these revolting plants!"

## ROUND ONE

When everyone is ready, ask your guests to sit down at the dinner table.

The guest who arrived first should pick up a **ROUND 1 ACCUSATION CARD** and follow the instructions on it. Players should take turns until the accusations concerning all present guests have been made. When all the accusations have been made then the round is over.

## ROUND TWO

Take turns picking **ROUND 2** cards and follow the instructions on each one.

Guests will undertake challenges when they see pollen marks on the back of the round 2 cards that are also included on their challenge cards.

When all the **ROUND 2** cards have been read/acted out, put them aside.

## ROUND THREE

Take turns picking **ROUND 3** cards and follow the instructions on each one.

Guests will undertake challenges when they see pollen marks on the back of the round 3 cards that are also included on their challenge cards.

After all the clues and information have been revealed, invite everyone to review both their notes and all the evidence revealed so far.

## FINALE - THE ACCUSATION

Ask guests to write down their accusations on a piece of paper as well as their own names.

Remind guests that everyone in the room, plus all other characters mentioned in the course of the game, are suspects. If you are playing the host, you can play along and guess the identity of the murderer.

Once everyone has written down their proposed solution, all players can take turns to reveal who they think did it. They should be prepared to justify and defend their solution!

## SOLUTION AND AWARDS

You may now open the sealed SOLUTION ENVELOPE. Scan the QR code on the back to access the audio host or read the solution aloud to the room.

## HOSTING TIPS

### SETTING THE SCENE

This mystery takes place in the palm house of a 1920s botanic garden. Add to the atmosphere by decorating your space with as many houseplants and flowers as possible to turn your play area into an inside jungle. If playing over dinner, create a botanic tablescape with tropical leaves or foliage to add to the atmosphere. We suggest candlelight or twinkling table lights to make things intimate and atmospheric.

## FOOD AND DRINK

We suggest playing the game over dinner, although this is not essential. After each round, you can serve a course, or break to refresh drinks or snacks.

It's a good idea to prepare as much of your menu in advance so you will have less to do on the night.

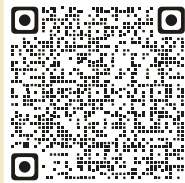
Cocktails are a great way to add a special touch to proceedings.

Think about a signature drink that ties in with the night. There are plenty of classic recipes from the era.

Prepare your table for the evening for all you need. An ice bucket will help avoid rushing back and forth to the kitchen.

For more tips on how to host the perfect murder mystery dinner party, scan the QR code below for a step-by-step guide.

[https://www.talkingtables.co.uk/pages/  
mystery-Manor-How-to-Guide](https://www.talkingtables.co.uk/pages/mystery-Manor-How-to-Guide)



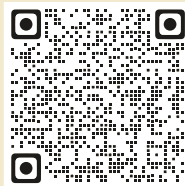
## ONLINE CONTENT

Don't forget, this game comes with online content. This is not essential, and you will not need a smart device to play the game. However, the following features can be used to enhance the gameplay.

## ONLINE INVITES

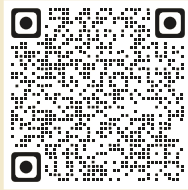
Visit

<https://www.talkingtables.co.uk/pages/online-invites> to download invitations for your guests. Alternatively, you can scan the QR code below to take you to the online invitations page.



## SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

Visit  
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/OQ8dEYsbrA4sYXHLnuXtUw>  
to add to the atmosphere of the evening with some music.  
Scan this QR code with your smart device to access our  
Spotify playlist to accompany the game.

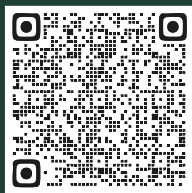


## AUDIO CLUES AND SOLUTION

QR codes appear on the bottom of some clues and on the  
solution at the end of the game. If you scan these, you  
can hear the evidence first-hand for a more immersive  
experience.



## VIDEO INTRO



[https://www.talkingtables.co.uk/  
pages/mystery-garden-video-intro](https://www.talkingtables.co.uk/pages/mystery-garden-video-intro)

## AUDIO HOST

Inspector Heathland Thorninside reporting  
for duty. If all your guests have arrived  
and you've all heard Holly Prickly's  
eyewitness statement, scan the below code  
and we can get started!

