

Brigadier Balderdash

Murder at

Merkister

Hall

Congratulations!

You are taking part in a murder mystery by Red Herring Games.

Firstly: *Don't Panic!*

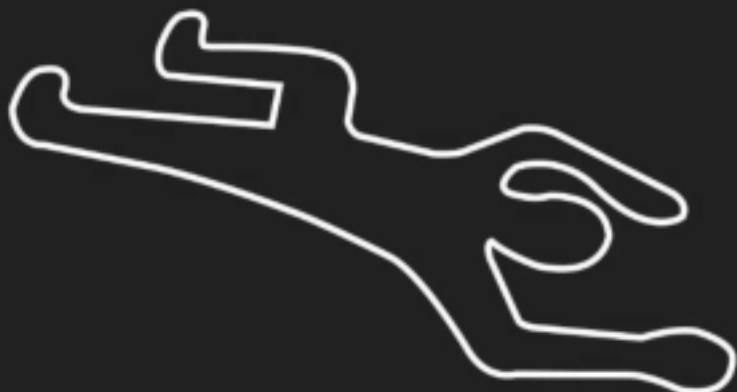
This booklet contains all the information you need to help you act your part throughout the murder mystery; background history, scripted dialogues, questions you should ask and scripted answers to questions you will be asked by the other guests.

You are encouraged to make the most of your part. Feel free to make up new lines and add to your back story or statements if you wish. However, make sure you always provide the information you need to within your answers. We have pre-scripted your statements to make things as simple for you as possible.

Make sure you listen to everyone else's questions and answers.

You won't be told if you're the killer – so feel free to guess yourself at the end – but don't tell anyone else you are! You must protest your innocence until the end!

Lastly: *Have fun!*



Brigadier Balderdash

Background Character Information

Keep this information to yourself, and use it to help you to act in character throughout the mystery:

You are ex-army and maintain much of your army mentality, so conduct yourself with military bearing. You like order and are often found straightening pictures, cutlery, people's clothing and even ordering people around. Speak loudly and bark orders at people, particularly the younger ones.

You are besotted with your wife, Carlotta. Smother her with lavish shows of affection, although try to stay within the bounds of your military personality! You have a lot of pet names for her and she is the only person you can't order around. Allow her to boss you about.

Drew Sketches and Morgan Carze are the children of your sister. They often require you to keep them in order.

Brigadier Balderdash - Introductions

Use the following dialogue to introduce yourself to the other guests, speaking when indicated below.

Brigadier Balderdash speaks first using the following dialogue:

It's all just too much, really it is. Leversham, dead! What will we ever do without him? We just can't live without him, can we, Lotta? And for him to die this evening. I mean, really! Who's going to serve the meal? You? Certainly not me! I, Brigadier Balderdash, serve the King, not bally dinner guests!

After you have heard from everyone, please continue reading and begin round 1.

Scripted Dialogue - Round 1

- Rev. Al Ation:** If we could all just bow our heads, then I'll say a few words of thanks.
- Brig. Balderdash:** Thanks? Thanks? I hardly think a few words of thanks are appropriate after a murder has been announced!
- Lotta Balderdash:** Perhaps we should skip grace this evening, vicar. Just this once.
- Miss Jane Marbles:** Don't worry, vicar. I'm sure the good Lord knows we are thankful for our food. He is all-knowing after all.
- Morgan Carze:** Then perhaps we should ask *him* who committed the murder?
- Drew Sketches:** Well you can ask him if you like, Morgan, but don't expect an answer any time soon.
- Miss Jane Marbles:** I'm sure he's forgiven whoever did it anyway. Isn't that what it's all about?
- Rev. Al Ation:** Hardly!
- Lotta Balderdash:** (POLITE COUGH) I hardly think religion makes for good, civilised conversation.
- Miss Jane Marbles:** I agree, Lotta. It's one of the three things you shouldn't discuss in polite company.
- Drew Sketches:** The other two being politics and murder I suppose?
- Morgan Carze:** Oh no, Drew. I don't think murder was one of them.

Lotta Balderdash: Not now, Morgan.

Drew Sketches: Oh Lotta, you are showing your age! People are talking about everything these days over dinner. There are no taboo subjects.

Miss Jane Marbles: (POLITE COUGH) Well, in that case, I think that's enough of the small talk. Perhaps should get on with the enquiry before the conversation around this table degenerates any further.

Lotta Balderdash: I agree, and to that end, I think I might have a question for someone here. Shall I go first?

Brigadier Balderdash - First Round

Questions you should ask:

Rev. Al Ation, would you say you had a close relationship with everyone at the house?

Drew, was Leversham interested in art, or was there another reason you were spending so much time together?

Answers you should give when asked the right questions.

When asked: Brigadier Balderdash, how long has Leversham worked at Merkister Hall?

Say: Hmm, let me see now. Well, Leversham has worked at Merkister Hall ever since I retired from the Army. That must have been, what, 20 years ago at least. He was my enlisted support officer. I couldn't have him coming back to any old menial work on his return to Blighty, so I offered him a post at Merkister as my butler. He was very grateful.

When asked: Brigadier Balderdash, what did you actually think of Leversham? Was he a good, loyal butler?

Say: He certainly was. You know, I've always thought that if you want loyal service, you need to be loyal yourself. I treated Leversham very well over the years and had an excellent relationship with him. He always worked hard and I rewarded that service over the years by ensuring he, and his family, were well provided for. We had a mutual agreement never to discuss the war with each other as we both lost people we loved.

Do not read further until instructed by your host.

Scripted Dialogue - Round 2

Brig. Balderdash: Carry on with the enquiry? Who do they think they are, ordering us about like that?!

Lotta Balderdash: The police, dear. We have to obey the law.

Morgan Carze: Unless you can outrun it. I tell you, when I get the old Bluetit back on the road, no one will be able to catch me!

Miss Jane Marbles: But is it always necessary to drive quite so quickly, Morgan? One of these days I fear you'll have a nasty accident.

Morgan Carze: Oh, don't worry about me, Aunt Marbles. I'll be fine. There's hardly any traffic on the roads these days.

Drew Sketches: I don't think she was worried about other cars, Morgan. I think it was the trees that were bothering her.

Rev Al Ation: Yes. They have a way of resisting cars should they accidentally leave the road.

Morgan Carze: Piffle.

Rev Al Ation: It's true, Morgan. Even the Romans suffered with trees. Accidental impaling during horseback charges.

Brig. Balderdash: And it's not just in ancient times either. I've known of a few eyes put out by stray branches on the battlefield.

Miss Jane Marbles: Can we please discuss something a little less gory?

- Drew Sketches:** Yes. I've got trees all around my studio and I don't want to think about my eyes being impaled on anything on the way there.
- Rev Al Ation:** Hmmm. Perhaps we should just get back to the enquiry. Someone must surely recognise the sword used.

Brigadier Balderdash - Second Round

Questions you should ask:

Drew Sketches, was Leversham was a quick learner?

Morgan, are there any rival competitors for the land speed record?

Answers you should give when asked the right questions.

When asked: Brigadier Balderdash, can you tell us anything about Leversham's family? Where are they?

Say: Oh, I believe his elderly mother lives in Crewe somewhere. He used to have two brothers, but both were killed in the last war. Colin was a pilot. He died in France. Neville was in the army like Leversham and entered service at the same time. Leversham has no wife or children. He never married, but he has been supporting Neville's wife and two children who live near the coast. Brighton maybe? Or Bournemouth. Could be Bognor Regis. Somewhere beginning with B anyway.

When asked: Brigadier Balderdash, what do you think about war? Did you enjoy fighting the enemy?

Say: There is nothing glorious about war, let me tell you. It's a bally mess. All blood and guts and man against man. There is nothing noble or honourable about death either. It just happens. As for my role, I was good at strategic planning. That's why I stayed in the forces as long as I did. It was like chess in many respects - my mind against the mind of my enemy. I enjoyed that aspect of the battle, but not the fighting. Once the war was over, I left.

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Scripted Dialogue - Round 3

- Morgan Carze:** I don't know how this inspector expects us to solve anything by just asking each other questions. I thought they were the police. If you ask me, it's *us* that are doing all the work.
- Brig. Balderdash:** Quite right, young Morgan! I don't know why any of us pay taxes to support the police force when this is how they run an enquiry!
- Rev. Al Ation:** Give to Caesar what is Caesar's.
- Drew Sketches:** The tax office is hardly Caesar, vicar.
- Brig Balderdash:** Perhaps we should change the conversation. Move onto politics.
- Lotta Balderdash:** (SOMEWHAT AGHAST) Not while the women are at the table if you don't mind!
- Drew Sketches:** Why don't we just get back to discussing the murder? We've been doing it all night!
- Miss Jane Marbles:** Just so long as we avoid any bloodthirsty details.
- Drew Sketches:** That should be possible. After all, we've established how he was killed and by what, so perhaps we could just stick to motives and opportunity now.

Rev. Al Ation: Good idea, Drew. I'm sure I have a question for someone here. Shall I go first this time?

Morgan Carze: Why not? Someone has to and it may as well be you.

Brigadier Balderdash - Third Round

Questions you should ask:

Jane, I'm sure I saw you crying in the grounds this morning. What had upset you?

Rev. Al Ation, I'm sure I saw you and Leversham having words last Sunday morning after the service. What was the problem?

Answers you should give when asked the right questions.

When asked: Brigadier Balderdash, do you know what happened to Leversham's brother, Neville?

Say: Yes, I remember Neville well. He was in a unit under my command. Unfortunately, he died in a manoeuvre that I planned. A lot of men died that day. It was a miscalculation - these things happen in war. I never told Leversham that I was the one that sent his brother into battle and it has gnawed at my conscience ever since. It's one of the reasons I kept him on as my butler and looked after his family so well. Guilty conscience I suppose...

When asked: Brigadier Balderdash, where were you when Leversham was killed?

Say: Me? I was in the drawing room. No one was with me I'm afraid. I was attending to some correspondence that needed finishing up before the dinner party. The billiard room connects to the drawing room as you can see from the plans. When I heard all the crashing and banging I went through and found Leversham... well, dead.

Do not read further until instructed by your host.

Brigadier Balderdash - Concluding Statement

Use the following dialogue to summarise your position, speaking when indicated below.

Brigadier Balderdash speaks after Drew Sketches using the following dialogue:

That's all very well, Drew, but what about us? Leversham has been so loyal over the years. Not only do we have to find another butler, but I also have to face the facts that my judgement must be terribly impaired. Maybe I'm getting too old. What do you think, Lotta? Am I too old?

After you have heard from all the guests make a prediction as to who the murderer is and why.

Tell the others.

Notes

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