



MURDER MYSTERY 101 | BE PART OF THE MYSTERY


How To Host A Murder Mystery Like A Pro

The no-panic guide for suspiciously good parties

A practical guide for planning, briefing, feeding, pacing, and surviving a suspiciously excellent murder mystery night.

[Browse Mystery Games](#)

[Explore Hosted Events](#)



Created by Inspector Keyser for Murder Mystery 101 and Be Part Of The Mystery.

Welcome, suspicious host

Hosting a murder mystery should feel thrilling, not like you have accidentally become the stage manager of a tiny criminal circus.

The good news: you do not need to be an actor, theatre director, forensic specialist, or person who owns seventeen clipboards. You need a clear plan, prepared materials, and guests who know just enough to become dangerous.

This guide will help you plan the night, prepare your guests, manage the clue rounds, and keep the mystery moving until the final reveal.

Inside the case file

- Choose the right mood for your group
- Send the right information at the right time
- Use Pinterest for costume, food, and theme inspiration
- Prepare your host kit
- Brief guests without killing the magic
- Support shy guests and redirect loud guests
- Manage clue rounds, food flow, late guests, and no-shows
- End the evening with awards
- Decide when to DIY and when to bring in an Inspector

1. Start with the kind of night you want

Before choosing a game, ask one simple question:

What should the evening feel like?

Some groups want elegant suspicion. Some want costumes, chaos, and accusations over pudding. Some want a safe corporate-friendly experience where people can laugh without anyone feeling uncomfortable.

Choose the mood first. The theme comes second.

Corporate-friendly

Best for teams, colleagues, mixed-age groups, executive dinners, year-end events, and people who want clever fun without too much scandal.

Social and celebratory

Best for birthdays, bachelorettes, family gatherings, informal team events, and friend groups who enjoy costumes, dramatic accusations, and a little theatrical nonsense.

Bold and theatrical

Best for groups who enjoy drama, darker humour, gothic settings, intense characters, or stories with more bite. Look for games with big personalities, stronger themes, and a little more performance energy.

Quick host tip

Do not choose only for yourself. Choose for the room. A game may sound perfect to you, but the real question is whether your guests will feel brave enough, safe enough, and curious enough to play.

2. Give your guests enough time to become suspicious

A murder mystery begins before the first guest arrives. The anticipation is part of the fun. Guests need time to read their character information, plan an outfit, and start wondering who around the table is secretly dreadful.

Two to three weeks before

Choose your game, confirm your guest list, and send a save-the-date or theme teaser. Tell guests that they will receive a character role. Keep the tone light and reassure them that no acting experience is needed.

One to two weeks before

Send character assignments, dress-code inspiration, arrival time, and any important game notes. Guests do not need to memorise everything, but they should know who they are, what they want, and why everyone else should probably be nervous.

Two to three days before

Send a reminder with event time, location, dress code, and one little line of atmosphere: "Your character has been assigned. Your secrets are waiting. Arrive on time and trust no one."

The day before

Print and sort all materials. Label clue rounds, check envelopes, set aside name tags, confirm pens, and keep the solution safely away from curious eyes.

On the day

Set the space, prepare the materials, welcome your suspects, and keep the clue rounds moving. Stay calm, give clear instructions, and resist over-explaining before guests have even found the snacks.

3. Use Pinterest for costume, food, and theme inspiration

A good theme does not need to become a full theatre production. Effort beats accuracy.

A suspicious hat, a dramatic scarf, a feather boa, a chef's apron, a fake moustache, a string of pearls, or a pair of overly confident sunglasses can do more than a full costume budget.

For extra inspiration, browse the [MurderMystery101 Pinterest boards](#). Each game has its own saved folder with dress-up ideas, food suggestions, decor references, and theme sparks.

Use the boards as inspiration, not homework

You do not need to copy every image, recreate every dish, or transform your dining room into a film set. Look for simple ideas guests can understand quickly.

Costume cues

- 1920s formal
- Back-to-school 90s
- Chef hats and aprons
- Masked glamour
- Pirates and scallywags
- Wild West
- Hollywood drama
- Shipwrecked chic

Food cues

Food should support the evening, not sabotage the clue flow. Choose food that is easy to serve, easy to eat, and not so complicated that the host disappears into the kitchen during a vital confession.

Decor cues

One strong detail is often enough. A clue table, themed menu card, fake evidence folder, candlelit corner, police tape, or character name cards can set the tone without a haunted-palace budget.

Host rule

Make the theme easy for guests to step into at whatever level suits them. Some games invite full costumes and dramatic flair, while others work perfectly with just a small nod to the theme. When guests feel they can join in without pressure, they are far more likely to relax and play.

4. Prepare your host kit

A smooth murder mystery is not built on luck. It is built on envelopes, labels, pens, and one person who knows where Round Two is hiding.

Host prep checklist

- Character booklets or character sheets
- Clue sets sorted by round
- Name tags
- Pens
- Voting or accusation slips
- Host instructions
- Solution notes
- Awards, if using
- Spare copies
- A clearly marked final reveal envelope
- A timer or phone alarm
- A small host notes page
- A table or folder for materials

Label everything

Do not trust Future You. Future You will be distracted, possibly hungry, and surrounded by people asking whether they are allowed to lie. Label each clue round clearly: Round One, Round Two, Round Three, Final Accusations, and Do Not Open Until Reveal.

Keep the solution safe

The solution should not sit casually next to the snacks. Keep it in a marked envelope, folder, or host-only file. Nothing ruins a mystery faster than someone "accidentally" reading the ending because they thought it was the menu.

5. Brief your guests without killing the magic

The best host briefing is short, clear, and confident. You do not need to explain the entire game universe before people have had a drink. Give guests enough to start, then let the mystery unfold.

A simple opening script

"Welcome, suspects. Tonight, one of you is involved in something deeply unpleasant. You each have a character, secrets, motives, and information that may help uncover the truth. You may question each other, share clues, protect your reputation, and accuse people with great confidence. The game will unfold in rounds. Please do not open future clues until instructed. At the end, you will make your final accusation and the truth will be revealed."

The rule about lying

In most Be Part Of The Mystery games, the murderer knows they are the murderer and may lie. Other players should protect their secrets, but should not invent new facts or create fake alibis unless the game specifically tells them to. This keeps the mystery solvable.

People do not need to perform perfectly. They need permission to be curious, suspicious, and slightly ridiculous.

6. Help shy guests participate

Not everyone wants to enter the room shouting accusations in a fake accent. That is fine. A good murder mystery gives different types of guests different ways to play.

Some people act. Some observe. Some question. Some take notes. Some quietly notice contradictions while everyone else is distracted by the person in the feather boa.

How to support quieter guests

- Send character information early so they can prepare.
- Do not force them to introduce themselves first.
- Give them a clear role or purpose.
- Encourage one-on-one questioning instead of putting them in the centre of the room.
- Let them investigate from the edges.
- Pair them with a confident guest if needed.
- Remind everyone that listening is part of the game.

Useful host line

"You do not have to perform loudly to play well. Quiet detectives often catch the loudest liars."

7. Manage the loud guests without starting a second murder

Every murder mystery has one guest who decides, somewhere around the first clue round, that they are now the main character. This can be wonderful. It can also become a small weather event.

How to keep big personalities useful

- Give them a task.
- Ask them to question a specific suspect.
- Tell them the Inspector needs their theory in five minutes.
- Invite them to help gather final accusations.
- Redirect them toward the story instead of shutting them down.

Useful host lines

"Hold that theory. The Inspector wants it after the next clue."

"Interesting accusation. Please collect one piece of evidence before you destroy another reputation."

"Everyone gets one dramatic theory. Make yours count."

The aim is not to flatten the energy. The aim is to aim it.

8. Keep the clue rounds moving

Clue timing is where many first-time hosts get nervous. Do not panic.

A good clue round has three parts: guests receive new information, they question each other, and the host gathers the room and moves the story forward.

Simple event flow

Arrival and welcome	Guests arrive, collect name tags or materials, settle into character, and start mingling.
Opening briefing	The host explains the basic rules and sets the scene.
Round One	Guests read their first clues, introduce themselves, and begin questioning.
Round Two	New information appears. Motives deepen. Alibis begin to wobble.
Round Three	The pressure builds. Secrets surface. Final theories begin forming.
Final accusations	Guests decide who they think the murderer is and why.
Reveal	The truth is announced, the murderer is exposed, and justice either triumphs or limps dramatically into the corner.

Host emergency lines

"A new clue has surfaced."

"The Inspector believes someone is withholding information."

"You have five minutes to question someone you have not spoken to yet."

"Final accusations are approaching. Choose your suspect wisely."

"The room will now prepare for the reveal."

9. Feed people without killing the flow

Food matters. Timing matters more. A murder mystery can work beautifully with a sit-down dinner, buffet, grazing table, cocktail format, or snack-heavy gathering. The trick is matching the clue flow to the food flow.

Sit-down dinner

Release clues between courses. Do not ask guests to read important clue material while plates are being served. Avoid revealing the murderer while someone is balancing dessert and a spoon.

Buffet or grazing table

Great for mingling-heavy games. Guests can move, question each other, and return to the food without disrupting the story.

Snacks and drinks

Keep food easy. Avoid anything too messy, too fiddly, or too demanding. If guests need both hands and moral courage to eat it, choose something else.

Host rule

Do not let food become the villain.

10. Prepare for late guests and no-shows

Someone may cancel. Someone may arrive late. Someone may forget they are meant to be a scandalous countess and arrive as "tired person from traffic." This is normal.

If a guest arrives late

- Welcome them quietly.
- Give them their materials.
- Tell them the current round.
- Assign someone to bring them into the story.
- Do not restart the whole game unless absolutely necessary.

If a suspect cancels

All suspects have vital clues, especially if you have a missing killer. If the killer is absent, reassign the role or, if you are hosting and not playing a suspect character, play it yourself. For missing suspects, use the suspect quick facts as witness testimony and add them to the table for interrogation. Let the missing character become absent, but still suspicious. Use the host or detective role to introduce any vital clue.

If you have a detective or non-suspect role, use them as a bridge. They can ask questions, collect theories, help quieter players, or carry missing information back into the room.

Host rule

The mystery can survive imperfect attendance. The host just needs to protect the key clues.

11. End with awards

The final reveal is not the end of the evening. It is the perfect moment to celebrate the chaos.

Awards give guests a reason to laugh, pose for photos, and replay the night.

Ace Detective First Class	For the guest who correctly identified the murderer or built the strongest case.
Untouchable Award	For the murderer who got away with it.
Dressed To Kill	For the guest whose outfit understood the assignment.
Drama Royalty	For the guest whose performance briefly made everyone forget this was not a televised trial.

Host tip

Do not take awards too seriously. They are a final flourish, not a courtroom judgement. A printable awards pack is a lovely way to close the night and make guests feel seen.

[Download the Awards Pack](#)

12. DIY or professionally hosted?

A DIY murder mystery is perfect when you enjoy hosting, have time to prepare, and do not mind managing the flow of the evening.

A professionally hosted event is better when the event is important, the group is large, the audience is corporate, the venue timing matters, or you want to enjoy the evening without secretly running a command centre behind the dessert table.

DIY is a good fit when

- You enjoy organising.
- Your group is small or familiar.
- You are comfortable giving instructions.
- You have time to print, sort, and prepare.
- You do not mind keeping the clue rounds moving.

Hosted support is a good fit when

- The event has a formal schedule.
- The group is larger or mixed.
- The audience is corporate or senior.
- You want someone to read the room.
- You want the organiser to relax.
- You want the mystery woven into dinner, speeches, venue timing, or a broader event programme.

The simplest rule

If you want to play host, go DIY. If you want to enjoy the room while someone else holds the clue envelopes, bring in an Inspector.

[Explore Hosted Events](#)

13. Your quick host checklist

Before the event

- Choose the right mood for your group.
- Confirm the guest list.
- Assign characters.
- Send character information early.
- Share dress-code inspiration.
- Print and sort materials.
- Label clue rounds clearly.
- Prepare name tags and pens.
- Keep the solution hidden.
- Set up a clue table or host station.
- Plan food around the clue flow.
- Prepare awards, if using.
- Appoint a deputy inspector if needed.

During the event

- Welcome guests.
- Explain the rules briefly.
- Release clues on time.
- Watch the room energy.
- Support quieter guests.
- Redirect louder guests.
- Protect key information.
- Give final accusation instructions.
- Reveal the murderer.
- Celebrate the chaos.

After the reveal

- Hand out awards.
- Take photos.
- Let guests argue happily.
- Accept that at least one person will insist they knew the answer all along.

14. More free mystery tools

The Guest Detective Cheat Sheet

Not every player needs to be a suspect to matter. The detective or non-suspect role can be one of the most powerful roles in the room. This guest watches, questions, tracks contradictions, and helps the mystery unfold without needing to perform as one of the suspects. The Guest Detective Cheat Sheet helps that player interrogate with confidence, spot suspicious behaviour, and make the final accusation count.

[Download the Detective Cheat Sheet](#)

Murder Mystery Awards Pack

Finish the night with printable awards for suspiciously excellent guests. Crown your Ace Detective, your Untouchable murderer, your Dressed To Kill champion, and your Drama Royalty before everyone returns to normal life and starts trusting each other again.

[Download the Awards Pack](#)

Need help choosing the right game?

Browse the [hosted mystery catalogue](#) or send an enquiry with your event date, group size, venue, and preferred mood. The Inspector will help you open the right case file.

[Browse Hosted Catalogue](#)

Final note from the Inspector

A murder mystery does not need perfection. It needs preparation, timing, willing guests, and a host who knows when to release the next clue.

Your job is not to control every laugh, every accusation, or every outrageous theory. Your job is to open the door to the story, keep the clues moving, and let your guests become gloriously suspicious together.

*Mysterious regards,
Inspector Keyser*