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Murder at Merkister Hall



Brigadier Balderdash
Character Booklet

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

A few simple instructions to help you along:

Firstly: Don't Panic!

This booklet contains all the information you need as a guest to help you act your part throughout the murder mystery party.

The first page provides you with additional background information to help you get into character, however there are no special acting abilities required and you can make as much or as little of your character as you wish.

After that on each page you are given either something to read out (dialogue), questions to ask, or information to help you answer questions you will be asked. These questions and answers are not intended to be read out word for word. Instead read them, digest the information and then ask and answer any questions in your own words. You are encouraged to ad lib, but it is very important you do not lie, so please provide the information contained within your booklet when asked.

Your host for the evening will direct you where necessary and tell you when to move on to the next round when the time is right.

If you are the murderer you will not be told. When you finally come to guess who did it – it could easily be you and feel free to point the finger at yourself if you feel you must!

And lastly: Have fun!

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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. Speak loudly and bark orders at people – particularly the young ones.

Bruce Bugatti and Anna Glipta are your niece and nephew (Bruce is Lotta's sister's son and Anna is your brother's daughter). They often require you to keep them in order.

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!) and have a lot of pet names for her.

You conduct yourself with military bearing. You like order and are often found straightening pictures, cutlery, people's clothing and even ordering people around.

The only person you can't order around is Lotta. Allow her to boss you about.

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 I ever do without him. We just can't live without Leversham can we Lotta, and for him to die, especially this evening – I mean – who's going to serve the meal for one? You? Me? I, Brigadier Balderdash, only serve the King, never 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 the grace this evening vicar? Just this once?

Miss Jane Marbles: Don't worry, I'm sure the good Lord knows we are thankful for our food. He is all-knowing after all.

Bruce Bugatti: Then perhaps we should ask *him* who committed this confounded murder?

Anna Glipta: Well, you can ask him if you like Bruce, but don't expect an answer any time soon.

Bruce Bugatti: 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 dinner time conversation.

Cont.

- Brig. Balderdash:** I must agree with you there, Lotta. It's one of the three things you shouldn't discuss in polite company.
- Miss Jane Marbles:** The other two being politics and murder I suppose?
- Bruce Bugatti:** Oh no Auntie, I don't think murder was one of them. It was –
- Lotta Balderdash:** Not now Bruce. I think we all *know* what the third is, even if some of us don't know in the actual *carnal* sense.
- Rev. Al Ation:** Quite.
- Bruce Bugatti:** Oh Lotta, you *are* showing your age! People are hardly going to be offended by the "sex" word – I mean – look at what the women wear these days. It's hardly the age of innocence anymore.
- Anna Glipta:** I assume from that you like what I've got on?
- Bruce Bugatti:** Rather.
- Lotta Balderdash:** (polite cough) Well, I think that's enough of the small talk. Perhaps we should get on with the enquiry before the conversation around this table degenerates any further. I think I might have a question for someone.

Brigadier Balderdash

First Round

Questions you should ask:

Leversham was often seen with Anna Glipta. Was he interested in art, or was there another reason they were spending time together? Ask her.

Ask Miss Jane Marbles if she ever had any love interests in her youth.

Information you should reveal about yourself only when asked.

Leversham had worked at the Hall ever since you retired from the Army. He was your enlisted support officer back then, and you thought you'd make sure he was set up for life and so offered him a post at Merkister as your butler. He was very grateful. He has worked for you for nearly 20 years without complaint.

You have always treated Leversham well over the years and have a good relationship with him. Leversham has always worked hard and you have rewarded his service to you over the years by ensuring he, and his family, are well provided for. You and he have always had a good working relationship and a mutual agreement never to discuss the war with each other as you both lost people you loved.

Do not read further until instructed by your host.

Scripted Dialogue Round 2

- Brig. Balderdash:** Carry on with the enquiry? Who does he think he is, ordering us about like that!
- Lotta Balderdash:** The police dear. And we all have to obey the police.
- Bruce Bugatti:** Unless you can outrun them. When I get the old Bluetit back on the road I won't be stopping for anyone. I'd like to see them catch me in their old Wolseleys. They wouldn't stand a chance.
- Miss Jane Marbles:** Is it always quite so necessary to drive so quickly, Bruce? One of these days I fear you'll have a nasty accident.
- Bruce Bugatti:** Oh don't worry about me, Miss Marbles. I'll be fine. There's hardly any traffic on the roads these days.
- Rev. Al Ation:** I don't think she was worried about other cars Bruce, I think it was the trees that were bothering her. They have a way of resisting cars should they accidentally leave the road.
- Bruce Bugatti:** Piffle.

Cont.

7 8

- Brig. Balderdash:** Oh it's true Bruce – even the forces suffered with trees. Accidental impaling during horse back charges – it all happened. Even I've known of a few eyes put out by stray branches while my platoon was -
- Lotta Balderdash:** Can we please discuss something a little less gory? I
- Anna Glipta:** 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.
- Bruce Bugatti:** Especially as they are so pretty.
- Brig. Balderdash:** Oh pur-lease. We've got a dead body in the billiard room – it's hardly the time to use such cheesy chat-up lines.
- Bruce Bugatti:** Life goes on Uncle. Love, death, it's all entwined.
- Rev. Al Ation:** In ways you cannot even imagine Bruce – but now is not the time for one of my sermons. Perhaps instead we should get back to the enquiry. Someone must surely recognise the sword used.

Brigadier Balderdash

Second Round

Questions you should ask:

Ask Bruce Bugatti whether there are any rival competitors for the land speed record at present.

Ask Anna Glipta if Leversham was a quick learner.

Information you should reveal about yourself only when asked.

You know Leversham has one aged mother, and he used to have a brother, but he was killed in the last war. He entered service at the same time as Leversham. Leversham's mother lives in Crewe somewhere. He has no wife or children. He never married. But he has been supporting his brother's wife and two children who live near the coast, somewhere...

When you were in the army you were involved in several battles. There is nothing glorious about war. It's all blood and man against man. There is nothing noble, nothing honourable in death – it just happens. You were good at strategic planning which is why you stayed in the forces as long as you did. It was like chess in many respects, your mind against your enemies mind. You enjoyed that aspect of the battle, but not the fighting. Once the war was over, you left.

Do not read further until instructed by your host.

Scripted Dialogue Round 3

Bruce Bugatti: I don't know how Inspector Napp expects us to solve anything without his support. I thought *he* was the police. If you ask me it is *us* that are doing all the work.

Brig. Balderdash: Quite right, m'lad! 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.

Lotta Balderdash: The Prime Minister is hardly Caesar, vicar. And besides, at least Caesar got on with criminal justice.

Rev. Al Ation: Perhaps, but their methods were rather cruel and a little drastic, and they didn't always crucify the right person.

Miss Jane Marbles: Really? I thought God had intended that particular "mistake"?

Anna Glipta: No! No! No! No religious discussions at the dinner table!

Bruce Bugatti: Shall I change the conversation then? Move onto politics?

Cont.

Lotta Balderdash: Not while we women are at the table if you don't mind.

Anna Glipta: Why don't we just get back to discussing the murder? We've been doing it all night!

Lotta Balderdash: Just so long as we avoid any bloodthirsty details. I think 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 Lotta, and I'm sure I have a question for someone here. Shall I go first this time?

Lotta Balderdash: Why not. Age before beauty as they say.

Brigadier Balderdash

Third Round

Questions you should ask:

Ask Lotta Balderdash if she saw anyone in the hall when she dashed into the billiard room after hearing all the commotion.

Ask Bruce Bugatti if he had traced the saboteur before this evening.

Information you should reveal about yourself only when asked.

You remember Leversham's brother well. He was in a unit under your command. He died in a manoeuvre that you planned. A lot of men died that day. It was a miscalculation – these things happen in war. You never told Leversham you were the one that sent his brother into battle. It has been something that has gnawed at your conscience ever since, and is one of the reasons you have always kept him on as your butler and looked after his family.

You were in the drawing room at the time of Leversham's death. No one was with you. You were attending to some correspondence. The billiard room connects to the drawing room. When you heard all the crashing and banging you went through and found Leversham 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 Anna Glipta using the following dialogue:

That's all very well Anna, 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.

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