

Murder at Gravestone Manor-

A Roaring Twenties Murder Mystery Dinner for 8 Guests

The best approach is to send each player their character sheet 7–10 days before the event. That gives people enough time to think about their character, organise their costume, and arrive already knowing their secrets and motives.

Do NOT send a reveal of the murderer, other characters' secrets or the clue timeline.

Only Chester receives the murderer information.

A good structure is:

- Before the event: Send each guest only their own character sheet.
- Arrival: Everyone receives a name card and remains in character.
- Pre dinner drinks: Introduction and rules are read aloud.
- Course 1: First round of clues is revealed.
- Course 2: Additional clues and riddles are revealed.
- Dessert: Open accusations and final voting.
- Finale: Murderer reveals themselves and explains the crime.

The host should ideally not be a player. Instead, they act as narrator and clue-master. If the host must play, simply make them a non-suspect narrator character.

Introduction and Rules (To Be Read Aloud)

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to Gravestone Manor, the most extravagant estate on Long Island. It's the summer of 1928. Jazz is hot, prohibition is cold, and fortunes are being made as quickly as they're lost.

Tonight, millionaire and host, Reginald Gravestone, has invited eight of his closest associates to celebrate the unveiling of his newest investment venture. The champagne is flowing, the gramophone is playing, and everyone is having a splendid time.....until the lights suddenly go out and a scream echoes through the ballroom.

When the lights return, Reginald Gravestone lies dead beside the grand staircase, clutching a torn piece of paper.

The police are delayed by a bridge closure, meaning everyone in the manor is trapped together until morning.

One of you is a murderer. The rest must discover who.

1. Stay in character as much as possible.
2. Reveal information about yourself gradually throughout dinner.
3. You may lie about your suspicions, but you may not invent facts not listed in your character sheet.
4. At the end of dinner, each player will accuse one person.
5. After all accusations are made, the murderer reveals themselves.
6. The winner is the player who correctly identifies the murderer and can explain why.

The Suspects — only send these details to the person playing each character

1. Vera Vain- Socialite & Gossip Columnist

You know everyone's secrets because you've spent years exposing them.

Personality

Charming, dramatic, and incapable of resisting juicy gossip to publish.

Secrets

You overheard Reginald threatening to expose someone's criminal past earlier tonight.

You also saw a torn movie contract in Gloria's handbag.

Suspicion

You noticed a well dressed person slipping away from the ballroom just before the lights went out.

Key Phrases

"Darling, secrets are merely investments waiting for interest."

"I'm not one to gossip, but have you heard...."

"I'm out every night of the week...just like Gloria's false teeth"

"Cheatham by name....cheat 'em by nature"

2. Benny "Bubbles" Bottlesworth- Bootlegger

A cheerful smuggler whose illegal liquor fuels half the parties in New York.

Personality

Funny, loud, and always carrying a mysterious flask.

Secrets

Reginald recently demanded a huge payment to keep quiet about your smuggling operation.

Suspicion

You saw a muddy footprint near the staircase after the murder.

Key Phrase

"The only thing stronger than my whiskey is someone's motive."

3. Gloria Goldworthy- Movie Star

The nation's sweetheart and queen of silent films.

Personality

Dramatic and glamorous.

Secrets

Reginald secretly financed your career and owned contracts that could ruin you.

You once discovered a love letter from Reginald to Daisy.

Suspicion

You saw someone arguing with Reginald near the library before dinner.

Key Phrases

"I've been flat out lately...just yesterday I was on Cecil B DeMille's casting couch"

"Being a silent movie star I can't say....but of course I can mime it"

"Darling, being this glamorous isn't easy"

4. Percy Pennyworth- Accountant

Reginald's meticulous financial adviser.

Personality

Nervous, precise, obsessed with numbers.

Secrets

You discovered a fortune missing from Reginald's books.

You know that Ruby threatened Reginald publicly.

Suspicion

The missing money disappeared shortly after one guest gained access to the accounts.

Key Phrase

"Like an abacus, I'm counting on the murderer to slip up"

5. Daisy Dazzleton - Jazz Singer

The star performer of Gravestone Manor.

Personality

Flirtatious, witty, and quick-thinking.

Secret

You and Reginald were once secretly engaged.

Suspicion

You found an expensive handkerchief near the scene.

Key Phrases

"I can sing notes so high, the human ear is incapable of hearing them"

"Oh you don't want to hear me sing.....do you???"

"I know, let's all cheer ourselves up with a jolly old singalong. I'll lead us off!"

6. Felix Fixit- Inventor

A brilliant but eccentric tinkerer.

Personality

Absent-minded and enthusiastic.

Secrets

Reginald rejected your latest invention and publicly mocked it.

You know that Ruby threatened Reginald publicly.

Suspicion

The manor's lights failed because someone tampered with the fuse box.

Key Phrases

"If it was any more plain, it'd be a 747"

"I haven't been this shocked since I poked a fork in my toaster"

"Give me half an hour and I'm sure I can invent a gadget to solve this conundrum"

7. Ruby Rouge- Nightclub Owner

Runs the hottest underground club in Manhattan.

Personality

Confident, intimidating, impossible to read.

Secret

Reginald threatened to purchase your club and shut it down.

Suspicion

You saw a man carrying a silver letter opener earlier tonight.

Key Phrases

"Anyone for the Charleston?"

"Hmmm...that move sounds like a Quickstep if you ask me"

'And who, may I ask, made you the Bossanova?'

8. Chester Cheatham – Lawyer and THE MURDERER!!

You have spent years helping wealthy people avoid consequences.

Personality

Smooth, intelligent, and unfailingly polite.

Secret

Reginald discovered you had embezzled money from several clients and planned to expose you publicly tomorrow.

Your Goal

Deflect suspicion while subtly encouraging accusations against others.

Final Reveal

At the end of the game after accusations have been made, you stand.

If nobody has accused you, you escape justice.

If you've been accused you confess and smugly explain why the accuser/s is/are correct.

- Reginald intended to expose your embezzlement.
 - You sabotaged the fuse box before dinner.
 - During the blackout you used the letter opener to kill Reginald.
 - Reginald tore the fragment reading "...ster" from a document in your pocket.
 - You hid the weapon in a vase before the lights returned.
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- **During the game, other characters will reveal these following things. It will help deflect suspicion if you have some plausible reasons and/or alibis.**
 - Someone found muddy footprints.
 - Someone witnessed an argument.
 - Someone discovered missing money.
 - Someone found the handkerchief.
 - Someone knows about the fuse box.
 - Someone saw someone carrying the letter opener.
 - Someone saw you leaving the study.
 - Someone noticed your nervous reaction to Reginald's announcement of revealing a revelation.

For the Host

During the First course

Encourage guests to discuss motives.

Reveal:

- Reginald intended to expose someone.
- Several guests had reasons to hate him.
- The victim was killed during the blackout.

During Main course

Reveal:

- The blackout was deliberate....someone tampered with the fuse box.
- The murder weapon was likely the letter opener missing from Reginald's study.
- Only one guest knew exactly where the fuse box was located.
- (Felix knows this, but he also knows he told Chester about it days earlier.)

During Dessert

Reveal:

- The torn note Reginald was holding which read "...ster."
- Evidence connecting the missing money to legal paperwork.

This should strongly point toward Chester without making it completely obvious.

Final Vote

Each guest must:

1. Name the murderer.
2. Explain why.

The explanation requirement makes the deduction far more entertaining.

Winning

The winning guest:

- Correctly identifies Chester.
- Provides the most complete explanation of how and why the murder occurred.

If nobody solves it, Chester wins and escapes justice, which, as any good 1920s lawyer would tell you, is simply an alternative interpretation of the facts.

Cryptic Riddles (Read Between Courses)

Riddle One- read after pre-dinner drinks

"The killer borrowed light by stealing darkness."

Riddle Two-read after course 1 is finished

"A silver tongue and silver blade often belong to the same hand."

Riddle Three-read after course 2 is finished

"The victim held part of the answer."

Riddle Four-read after dessert

"When money disappears, follow the paper."

Final Reveal

After accusations have been made, Chester Cheatham stands.

If nobody has accused Chester, he escapes justice.

If Chester has been accused he smugly explains why the accuser/s is/are correct.

Case closed. Justice is the final act of the evening's entertainment.