

Orient Express Murder Mystery Game

Age Appropriateness

It is up to the adult running the game to decide whether it's content is suitable for their group. The game was originally written at the request of a brownie unit. Since most of the girls watch Eastenders and Detective TV programs, we considered a murder mystery with slightly 'adult' themes to be reasonable.

Setting up the Game

The more props you use, the more atmospheric the game will be. We turned a school hall into the Orient Express cabins. You will need one cabin for each suspect and one for the murder victim. We used lines of chairs covered with throws and pillows to create the beds. The line of chairs also acted as the edge of each cabin. In between the chairs we placed a small table. Each cabin had a sign saying 'Orient Express with the room number and guest name'.

The following potential evidence must be placed in the cabins:

- In Mr Yellow's cabin:
 - ◆ Letter from Mr Black
 - ◆ Letter from the bank
 - ◆ Happy birthday card (stick the birthday message inside a card)

- In Miss Violet's cabin:
 - ◆ A vase of fake flowers with a note from Mr Black
 - ◆ An open jewellery box with an earring matching that dropped in Mr Black's room
 - ◆ A letter from Mr Black

- In Mr Black's cabin:
 - ◆ A mobile phone
 - ◆ A wedding photo
 - ◆ Two wine glasses - one full and one empty
 - ◆ A button from a shirt
 - ◆ An earring

- In Mr and Mrs Brown's cabin:
 - ◆ A shirt with a button missing
 - ◆ A letter from Mr Black

- In Mrs Green's cabin:
 - ◆ An urn or similar
 - ◆ 2 newspaper cuttings which mention Mr Green

On the opposite side of the hall place a chair for each suspect (spaced out so that they can not be overheard talking to each group).

Give the adult's their character cards and make sure they understand their role before the game begins. Adults should be encouraged to overact. If they are prepared to dress for their parts, even better!

Getting Started

The girls play as a group (e.g. in their sixes). They represent detectives from a nation the Orient Express travels through. (You can tell them which nation they are or let them choose. Girls could make a badge with the relevant flag on whilst the game is being set up.) Give the group leader a detective notebook and pencil.

Tell the players that a murder has taken place on the Orient Express. Mr Black was found dead in his cabin. He had been stabbed with a letter opener. The murder took place at some point between 12pm and 6pm today.

As the murder has taken place on a train moving through different countries each group (representing detectives from a different country) will examine the evidence. At the end of the allotted time the groups will come together and each will present an account of what they think happened.

Detectives must interview a suspect before examining their cabin. When entering the cabin they must not touch anything, but may make notes on what they find. Detectives may interview a suspect a second or third time if new evidence is revealed (either in their cabin or by another suspect).

Each team of detectives must stay together and only one team may interview any given suspect or enter a cabin at a time.

The winner

One of the characters is responsible for killing Mr Black but there is not any conclusive evidence. The winning group should be the one with the most well reasoned argument.

After all the groups have presented their ideas, announce that the forensic results are back and Mrs Green's finger prints are on the murder weapon. At this point Mrs Green should dramatically confess to the crime and explain what happened.

Detective Notebook

As a group, make a note of anything interesting you are told or that you find in the cabins. Look for evidence that suggests the characters have lied or told the truth. Think about whether each person had a reason to kill Mr Black.

If you find new evidence, return to the suspects and interview them again.

Who you think did it and why

(complete when your group has made a decision)

Mr Yellow

Miss Violet

Mrs Green

Mrs Brown

Mr Brown

Suspect Character Cards: Mrs Green

You are a widow. Your husband was killed by a hit and run driver eight months ago. The hit and run driver was Mr Black (the murder victim). Your holiday on the Orient Express was booked by your husband nine months ago as an anniversary present. You are taking the trip with your husband's ashes which you intend to scatter in Istanbul; a place he always wanted to visit.

Mr Black was arrested by the police and confessed to killing your husband. The police forgot to read him his rights and failed to document his confession correctly, so a judge had to set him free.

You saw Mr Black at lunch today. He was joking with one of the stewards about driving too fast. You were furious. You followed him back to his cabin. You were about to go in and confront him when you saw Mr Yellow heading towards you. This was about 3pm. You went back to your cabin.

You headed towards Mr Black's room again at about twenty past four but you didn't try to enter as a woman was yelling at him. You couldn't hear what she was saying but she sounded upset.

At about twenty past five you went to Mr Black's room. You asked him why he didn't stop when he hit your husband. He laughed at you. You lost your temper, picked up the letter opener that was on his desk and stabbed him with it.

What to tell the players

When they initially talk to you deny that you know Mr Black. You have no idea what happened. You should tell them that you are a widow taking your husband's ashes to be scattered in Istanbul - a place he always wanted to go. You should also tell them that you heard a woman shouting at Mr Black at about 4.20pm. You could not identify the voice, but it was definitely female.

After they have been in your room: They will (if they've paid attention) know that your husband died because of Mr Black. Break down and cry (if your acting is good enough!). Admit that you hate Mr Black and are glad he is dead. You'd like to thank whoever did it - but it wasn't you.

After they have spoken to Mr Yellow: They will know that he saw you in the corridor outside Mr Black's room at just before 3pm. It's up to you how you react. You could admit that you were going to confront him or you could say Mr Yellow was mistaken, or whatever you think of. Just don't admit to killing Mr Black!

Suspect Character Cards: Mrs Brown

You went to confront Mr Black (the victim) at about 4:15pm. You knew he had met with your husband and your husband lied about the meeting. You wanted to know what was going on. You raised your voice when he wouldn't tell you anything and then stormed out of the room.

You don't trust your husband. You don't believe he would kill anyone but he's definitely been up to something. There are thousands of pounds missing from your joint bank account. You suspect that your husband is having an affair, though you have no evidence of it. Joke that if you were going to kill anyone it would be that toe-rag of a husband of yours!

You had nothing to do with Mr Black's death. You should be open and honest with the detectives. Answer their questions and be as helpful as you can.

One thing you did notice was that Miss Violet was chatting with Mr Black all yesterday evening. They seemed very friendly with each other.

Suspect Character Cards: Mr Yellow

The victim, Mr Black, owed you £1.5 million. You own a construction company. You built a luxury house for him. He is refusing to pay you as the project over-ran by 2 days.

Your company is in financial ruin, you personally owe thousands and are about to become bankrupt. Mr Black was refusing to pay you the money he owed. It has cost you your business and your house. Understandably you hate the man. You did not however kill him.

You met with Mr Black at 3pm as a desperate attempt to convince him to pay you. He was rude. The two of you argued loudly. You left at about 3.15pm. You went back to your cabin.

At about ten past four you walked to the dining car. You saw Mr Brown leaving Mr Black's room.

Your ticket on the Orient Express was purchased for you by your favourite Aunt as a birthday present.

You dropped your mobile phone in Mr Black's cabin.

What to tell the players

At your first meeting, do not be completely honest with them. You are concerned that you had a motive to kill him and if they learn of this they may assume you did it. Tell them you had a business meeting at 3pm. You wanted to buy a property from Mr Black. The meeting was good - you didn't agree on a price but were both happy. You left at about 3.15pm. You should also mention that you saw Mr Brown leaving Mr Black's room at about 4.10pm.

After the detectives have been in your cabin: They will know (if they paid attention) that you are broke and that Mr Black owed you money. They should therefore work out that you lied. Tell the truth at this point.

Suspect Character Cards: Miss Violet

You were invited to Mr Black's cabin for a drink. You met him yesterday evening in the dining car. He chatted to you (flirted really). He sent you flowers. When you went to his cabin for a drink (at about 5pm) he poured you both a drink. You did not however drink your wine because you saw his wedding photo on the table. You left quickly telling him you did not date married men.

What to tell the players

You are concerned that you may have been the last person (apart from the murderer) to see Mr Black alive. You are worried that if people know you were there you will be suspected of murder. Pretend you did not know Mr Black. Tell them that you heard Mr Black arguing with someone male at about 4.05pm. Someone was shouting at him. You couldn't hear everything that was said but you did hear the man threaten to kill Mr Black. You're not sure who the man was and couldn't make any of the words out other than the threat to kill him. You did not tell anyone at the time because you did not think it was a real threat, just an angry man.

The detectives will discover (or may already know depending on the order they speak to people in) that you knew Mr Black. As soon as they tell you what they know, be honest with them. Tell them everything you know.

Suspect Character Cards: Mr Brown

Mr Black, the victim, was blackmailing you. You have been having an affair with a young lady you met at the office where you work. Mr Black found out about it and threatened to tell your wife if you did not pay him £500 a month. You do not want your wife to divorce you, so you have been paying him. Last month he asked for £1000 and this month he asked for £2000. You can not afford these payments.

You went to Mr Black's cabin at about 4pm. You wanted to talk sense into him; get him to accept the £500 a month again. He was unreasonable and you lost your temper. You threatened to kill him. You left the room at about 4.10pm, passing Mr Yellow in the corridor.

What to tell the players

When you first speak to them deny that you know Mr Black. You had a motive for killing him and you hope they won't find out about it. Do mention seeing Mr Yellow near Mr Black's cabin at ten past four.

Later on: The brownies will discover (or may already know, depending on the order they talk to you in) that you met with Mr Black. If they know this, admit it. If they ask you about the letter from the Mr Black in your room, be honest and tell them everything.

Miss Violet,

*I saw these
beautiful flowers
And thought of you.*

*Love from
Mr Black*

Ticket



London – Istanbul
Cabin 2

Important Bank plc

Dear Mr Yellow,

Your bank account is £150,000 overdrawn without permission. You have 7 days to place the necessary funds in your account. If you do not comply within 7 days legal action will be taken against you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A. Bank

Chairmen of the Bank.

Hit and Run Driver Kills

Mr Green, aged 42 was killed in a hit and run incident. Police appeal for witnesses.

Mr Black Released After Police Bungle

Today Mr Black, who confessed last month to the manslaughter of Mr Green was freed from prison without charge.

A judge told the police they had failed to process the case properly and he therefore had no choice but to set Mr Black free. Justice Red has called for a full investigation into the actions of those police involved.

Dear Mr Brown,

*If you do not want your wife to
know about your affair I want
£2000.*

Divorces can be so messy.

*From,
Mr Black*

Dear Miss Violet,

*I so enjoyed yesterday evening.
Come for a drink in my cabin at
5pm.*

*Love From,
Mr Black*

Dear Mr Yellow,

As my lawyer told you I am not going to pay the £1.5 million. You did not complete the project on time and have therefore broken the contract.

*Do not bother me again,
Mr Black*

Dear Mr Yellow,

I hope you have a lovely birthday, despite your financial worries. Please accept this ticket on the Orient Express as a birthday treat from me.

*Love,
Auntie Molly*