

A collaborative card game of death and deduction.

There's Been A MURDER

RULES

3–8 Players. 5 minutes to play.

There's been a murder in an austere country house in 1930's England. Everyone's a suspect, but nobody wants to talk about it! Can the players work together to solve the mystery, or will the murderer escape justice?

In *There's Been A Murder* players may not talk about the cards they hold in their hand or that they've seen during play. By playing their cards and following the instructions they can discover who holds the key cards, allowing the Detective to uncover the Murderer. When this happens, everyone wins!

Each card in the game has a unique power to aid or hamper the deduction. A reference guide is provided at the end of these rules but it may still take a few games to get to know the cards sufficiently well. You can, of course, talk about cards while learning the rules and teaching new players.

Game Contents:

• 24 cards • 1 rulebook

The Cards:

The deck includes 24 cards, numbered **1** to **24**. Set aside cards **21** to **24**, they are for additional numbers of players. Add card **21** for 5 players, **22** for 6 players, and so on.

All the cards have unique powers or effects. Each of them are explained on the cards and in the reference guide at the end of these rules. When learning the game, keep the reference guide handy to resolve any confusion.

Cards come in two types. Cards that have a blue background and this symbol (👉) are Action Cards. The text applies when those cards are played.

Cards that have a red background and this symbol (👎) are Effect Cards. The text on them applies as soon as the card is in your hand, and stops taking effect when you play the card. Apart from no longer effecting their holder, they have no other effect when played.

Set Up:

Set aside the Murderer (**1**) and the Detective (**2**) cards. Shuffle the remaining cards and deal one card face down. Remove that card from the game without looking at it. Split the remaining deck into approximately two even halves. Shuffle the Detective card into one half and the Murderer card into the other, then place the half with the Murderer on the top of the other half. Then, deal each player two cards.

Place the deck where everyone can reach it. Make space beside it for the discard pile.

The player who most recently read or watched a murder mystery goes first. If you play multiple games in a row, pass the first player around the table clockwise.

Game Turns:

Starting with the first player, each player takes their turn, then passes play to the player on their left. Continue playing turns until either the players win or lose (see Game End, below). Each turn has two phases:

Draw: If you have fewer than two cards, draw from the face-down deck until you have two cards. If you have two or more cards, skip this phase.

Play: Play one card. Cards are played into a central pile, known as the discard pile. You may look through this pile at any time, but do not change the order of the cards. You may not look at the draw deck.

If you play an Effect card, it does nothing except get it out of your hand.

If there is ever a conflict between two cards, the card with the LOWER value takes precedence.

Players may discuss strategy but cannot name cards in their hands or that they have seen (see **No Talking!** below).

Game End:

The players win if:

- The Detective is played and targets a player holding only the Murderer card, causing the Murderer to be discarded.
- The Murderer card is passed to the player holding the Confidant card.

As soon as either of these things happen, the game ends and the players win.

The players lose if:

- The Murderer card is passed to a player holding the Witness card.
- A player needs to draw from the draw deck at the start of their turn, and cannot do so.

Since the players need them to win, in the rare event that the Detective, Murderer and Confidant cards end up in the discard pile with no way to bring them back, the players have lost and there is no need to play out the rest of the game.

No Talking!

Players may speak but must keep the identity of the cards in their hand hidden and may not reveal them except as directed by card play. The rules of what players can and cannot say about their cards are as follows:

- Players cannot give any information whatsoever about the cards in their hand or that they have seen.
- Players can never name or otherwise describe any cards except cards that are currently in the discard pile.
- Players cannot confirm or deny any guesses about cards in their hands by other players, except through game play.
- These rules can be broken by specific cards, when they are played or held. For example, The Butler allows you to name a card, and The Drunk allows you to ignore all these rules while held.
- If the players win a game, they may nominate a means of communication they used in that game. Further games with the same group of players may not use that means of communication in future games!

Example: In one game, Matt is afraid someone thinks he has

the Murderer when he does not and does not want the Detective played, so suggests "nobody play any cards below 5". After winning the game, the players decide that going forward, nobody can say any numbers whatsoever.

Players also have permission to ignore or relax these rules when teaching the game, or if someone is confused or if everyone agrees it would be more fun to do so. Use your best judgement to keep the game enjoyable for all, and don't punish people unfairly when they are learning.

Scoring

Your score is the number of cards left in the draw deck. Compare it with this chart:

12+: Suspiciously clever. Maybe you had a hand in the crime?

9-11: The Murderer will rue the day they thought they could outwit you

6-8: The criminal was clever, but your dogged persistence won through

3-5: You are certain of who did it, but you still don't know why...

0-2: Amused by your poor sleuthing, the Murderer confesses to the crime

Ongoing Play & Difficulty Levels

If you've won the game, the next step is to make it more difficult. Adjust your game as follows:

Level

Novice Detective	Cards as normal
Veteran Detective	Add card 19
Master Detective	Add card 20

If you win the game three times in a row at Master Detective, you've reached the Genius level and can retire as legends. Of course, if you want it even harder, reduce the deck size so you have less time to solve the mystery. You can do this either by knowing which cards are missing, starting by removing card **18**, then **17** and so on. Or, when a card is removed randomly and set up, remove more than one. If you can win at Master Detective with three cards missing, let us know about it!

Need to make the game easier? Include the cards for higher player counts even for smaller groups of players, and/or remove the Stranger (**4**), the Impostor (**5**), or both.

Card List & Guide

To help with learning the game you may like to go through each card with the players before beginning play, or they can read this guide.



1. The Murderer – Effect

Game effects that target cards in your hand do not target this card unless you hold no other cards.

Any instruction that tells you to pass a card, show a card, play a card or discard a card is a "game effect." Unless the Murderer is the only card you hold, the effect will target the other card.



2. The Detective – Action

Choose a player. They must discard a card. If it is the Murderer, everyone wins. Note that they cannot discard the Murderer unless it is their only card.

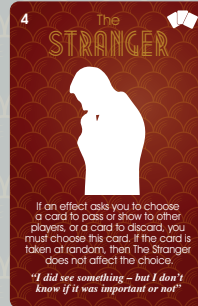
If the Murderer is not the card discarded, the Detective is still played, and the targeted player still discards. Unless you use the Doctor to retrieve the Detective, you can no longer win by this means.



3. The Confidant – Effect

If you hold this card and are passed the Murderer, reveal both immediately, and everyone wins. No effect if you have both cards by other means.

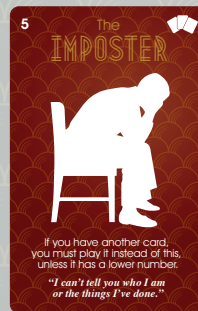
Swapping cards counts as passing them. If this is passed to someone holding the Murderer, it does not trigger. It also does not trigger if the player holding the Confidant draws the Murderer. It must be passed.



4. The Stranger – Effect

If an effect asks you to choose a card to pass or show to other players, or a card to discard, you must choose this card. If the card is taken at random, then The Stranger does not affect the choice.

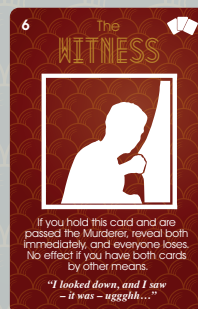
The Stranger does not affect which card you play on your turn.



5. The Impostor– Effect

If you have another card, you must play it instead of this, unless it has a lower number.

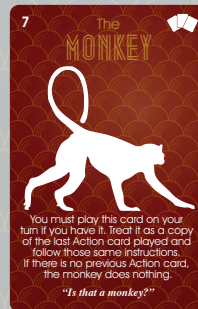
You can pass or show or discard other cards while holding the Tormented. It only restricts what card you play.



6. The Witness – Effect

If you hold this card and are passed the Murderer, reveal both immediately, and everyone loses. No effect if you have both cards by other means.

Swapping cards counts as passing them. If the Witness is passed to someone holding the Murderer, it does not trigger. It also does not trigger if the player holding the Witness draws the Murderer. It must be passed.



7. The Monkey – Effect

You must play this card on your turn if you have it. Treat it as a copy of the last Action card played and follow those same instructions. If there is no previous Action card, the monkey does nothing.

The monkey card doesn't become the card it copies, so if The Doctor pulls it out of the discard pile it will have "forgotten" whatever card it copied. You may look through the discard pile to see what the Monkey will do. If you have the Monkey and the Drunk the Monkey takes precedence.



8. The Drunk – Effect

You must announce that you have this card when it enters your hand. You must play this card on your turn if you have it. While you hold it, you may talk freely about the cards in your hand and those you see and have seen.

The Drunk takes effect the moment you have it in your hand. You do not have to wait for your turn. You can talk about every piece of information you have and remember.



9. The Cad – Action

Choose two other players. They swap a card of their choice with each other. Do not reveal the cards.

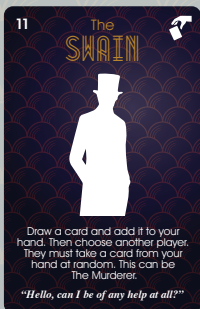
You cannot choose yourself to swap. The Stranger must be swapped if either player has it. The Murderer can only be swapped if it is that player's only card. If any of the other players do not have a card to swap, they simply receive the card handed to them.



10. The Socialite – Action

Choose a card in your hand and exchange it for a card belonging to another player (their choice). You must have another card to swap. Do not reveal the cards.

The other player does not need to have a card, they simply get your card. The Stranger must be swapped if either player has it. The Murderer can only be swapped if it is that player's only card.



11. The Swain – Action

Draw a card and add it to your hand. Then choose another player. They must take a card from your hand at random. This can be The Murderer.

They make take any card. They are not forced to take the Stranger.



12. The Gossip – Action

Everyone simultaneously passes a card of their choice to the left, if they have one. Do not reveal the cards.

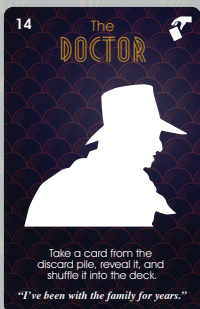
Everyone chooses the card they wish to pass and places it face down on the table near the player to their left. Only pick up your new card when everyone has placed a card face down. The Stranger must be passed if the player holds it. The Murderer can only be passed if it is the player's only card.



13. The Invalid – Action

Choose another player. They pass you a card of their choice. Do not reveal the card.

They must pass the Stranger if they have it. They cannot pass the Murderer unless it is their only card. You may choose a player without cards.



14. The Doctor – Action

Take a card from the discard pile, reveal it, and shuffle it into the deck.

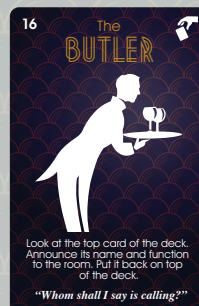
The Doctor cannot take itself out of the discard pile.



15. The Secretary – Action

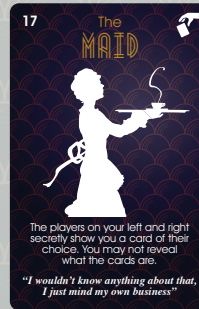
Look through the draw deck without revealing the cards. You may put one card into the discard pile. Then shuffle the deck.

The card chosen goes on top of the Secretary card, and is seen by all. The Secretary may not reveal any other cards.



16. The Butler – Action

Look at the top card of the deck. Announce its name and function to the room. Put it back on top of the deck.



17. The Maid – Action

The players on your left and right secretly show you a card of their choice. You may not reveal what the cards are.

A player holding the Stranger must show it. A player holding the Murderer cannot show it unless it is their only card.



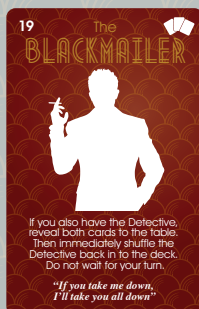
18. The Driver – Action

Look at the top three cards of the deck. Add one to your hand. Shuffle the other two back into the deck. Do not reveal any of the cards.

If there are fewer than three cards, look at all available cards. The cards you look at are not in your hand, only the card selected is, so for example you may safely see the Murderer without triggering the Witness.

You can select any card.

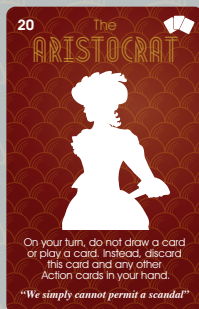
Cards for Advanced Play



19. The Blackmailer – Effect

If you also have the Detective, reveal both cards to the table. Then immediately shuffle the Detective back in to the deck. Do not wait for your turn.

This card triggers no matter what caused the player to hold both cards.



20. The Aristocrat – Effect

The Aristocrat only causes Action cards to be discarded, along with itself. All other cards remain in hand. If you draw the Aristocrat at the start of your turn ignore the instruction not to draw.

The cards are discarded, not played, so they do not activate.

Cards For 5 to 8 player games:



21. The Nun – Action Card

Put a card from your hand on the bottom of the deck. Do not reveal the card.

You must have another card to play the Nun. Do not look at any cards when placing the card under the deck. If there are no other cards, it becomes the draw deck.



22. The Seer – Action

Look at the bottom card of the deck. You may put it on the top of the deck. Do not reveal the card.

The card goes on top face down. If there is one card in the deck, it is the bottom card.



23. The Faithful Hound – Action

Everyone closes their eyes except you. Name a card. The player holding that card must raise their hand. Then everyone opens their eyes.

Obviously, the card may not be in play.



24. The Reporter – Action

Choose a player on your left or right. Choose a card at random from their hand. Show it to everyone. Put it back in their hand. The card shown can be The Murderer.

The card can be any card. They are not forced to give you the Stranger.

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Thank you for supporting independent game design!

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