

A MURDER MYSTERY FOR DEV'S 40TH · LEEDS, 15 NOVEMBER

Death at the Marigold Supper Club

8 suspects · three rounds · one evening

Written only from the facts the host gave us. Every character is a guest; nothing here is true of them.

Host guide

HOST GUIDE (Anika only)

The setting. Leeds, November 1926. The Marigold Supper Club, a basement room with a brass band that has stopped playing because the club's owner, Victor Marigold, has just been found dead in the wine cellar with a corkscrew in his hand and a look of enormous surprise. Everyone in the room had a reason to want Victor gone. Everyone in the room also has a secret that is nothing to do with the murder, which is why they will all lie.

The murderer is Tom's character, Reginald Pike. He does not know this until Round 3, when he opens his sealed card. Until then he plays the dry bandleader with the card debt. Do not tell anyone.

How the evening runs (2 to 2.5 hours between courses):

Before the starter: hand out the character sheets and name cards. Read the Opening aloud. Everyone introduces themselves in character (two minutes each; Marcus's character has a longer introduction on purpose).

Starter: Round 1. Everyone has an alibi and one question to ask another guest, printed on their sheet. Let the table talk.

Main: Round 2. Open the Clue envelope and read the three clues aloud, one at a time, with a pause. Each guest also opens their own Round 2 card, which reveals the secret they have been hiding and tells them what they saw.

Pudding: Round 3. Everyone opens their sealed card. Everyone writes an accusation on their menu. Then read the Solution.

Your own part: you are Anika Marigold, the widow, and you are also a suspect. Your Round 2 card is true. Your sealed card says "not you".

OPENING (read aloud)

Ladies and gentlemen, the band will not be returning. Victor Marigold, owner of this establishment, was found in the cellar twenty minutes ago. The doors are locked, the police have been telephoned, and the inspector has asked that nobody leave and that everybody, for once in their lives, tell the truth. Dinner, however, will be served. Victor would have wanted that. He had already paid for it.

YOU ARE

Detective Inspector Dashiell Crane

the inspector who arrived too fast

ROUND 1 · WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU SAY

You arrived at the Marigold four minutes after the body was found, which is suspicious because the police station is twenty minutes away. The truth: you were already here, in the kitchen, trying to finish a plumbing job for Victor that you started in 1923 and have never completed. Victor was threatening to tell the Chief Constable you moonlight as a handyman. Alibi: "I was in the kitchen. Working. It's nearly done."

YOUR QUESTION TO ASK AT THE TABLE

Ask Marigold's widow why there are two glasses on Victor's desk.

ROUND 2 · OPEN WITH THE MAIN COURSE (fold this part under until then)

You saw the bandleader, Reginald Pike, come UP the cellar stairs at ten past nine, wiping his hands on a napkin. You assumed he had been fetching wine.

ROUND 3 · SEALED. OPEN WITH PUDDING, READ SILENTLY

Not you. Accuse whoever you like; you have one vote.

YOU ARE

Anika Marigold

the widow with the ledger

ROUND 1 · WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU SAY

You married Victor for the club and stayed for the brass band. For a year you have kept a second set of books, because Victor cannot add up. You were in the office at nine, and the office is next to the cellar door. Alibi: "I was doing the accounts. Somebody has to."

YOUR QUESTION TO ASK AT THE TABLE

Ask the inspector why he smells of pipe solder.

ROUND 2 · OPEN WITH THE MAIN COURSE (fold this part under until then)

You heard the cellar door open twice between nine and quarter past: once quietly, once with a bang. The band was between numbers both times, which means the bandleader was not on the stage.

ROUND 3 · SEALED. OPEN WITH PUDDING, READ SILENTLY

Not you. Accuse whoever you like; you have one vote.

YOU ARE

Sid Lark

the comedian who cannot keep a straight face

ROUND 1 · WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU SAY

You are the club's comic turn and the worst liar in Yorkshire. Victor owed you three months' wages. You spent nine o'clock in the stationery cupboard off the corridor, where you have been hiding a bottle of Victor's good brandy, and where you got locked in once before with a certain inspector. Alibi: "I was... resting. In a cupboard. It's a long story."

YOUR QUESTION TO ASK AT THE TABLE

Ask the sister why she was counting the takings.

ROUND 2 · OPEN WITH THE MAIN COURSE (fold this part under until then)

From the cupboard keyhole you saw somebody carry a corkscrew DOWN the cellar stairs. You could only see their shoes: patent leather, with a scuff on the left toe.

ROUND 3 · SEALED. OPEN WITH PUDDING, READ SILENTLY

Not you. Accuse whoever you like; you have one vote.

YOU ARE

Josephine Vale

the singer who wanted a contract

ROUND 1 · WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU SAY

You sing at the Marigold on Saturdays and Victor promised you a contract for a year. Tonight he told you the contract was going to a girl from Manchester instead. You were seen leaving his office in tears at five to nine. Alibi: "I went to powder my nose. For twenty minutes. Women do."

YOUR QUESTION TO ASK AT THE TABLE

Ask Mr Pike why the band played the last number without a leader.

ROUND 2 · OPEN WITH THE MAIN COURSE (fold this part under until then)

You saw Josephine's own reflection in the cellar-door glass at nine o'clock, which means you were in the corridor; and you saw the bandleader's music stand empty on the stage while the band played without him.

ROUND 3 · SEALED. OPEN WITH PUDDING, READ SILENTLY

Not you. Accuse whoever you like; you have one vote.

YOU ARE

Pearl Marigold

the sister who always wins

ROUND 1 · WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU SAY

Victor's younger sister, part-owner of the club, and the only person in the room who can actually add up. You suspect everyone, you have already decided who did it, and you have a habit of winning games by means nobody can quite prove. You were in the cloakroom at nine, counting the takings, which is not your job. Alibi: "Somebody has to count the money and it is not going to be my brother's wife."

YOUR QUESTION TO ASK AT THE TABLE

Ask Sid Lark whose brandy he was drinking.

ROUND 2 · OPEN WITH THE MAIN COURSE (fold this part under until then)

You found the cellar key under the cash box, where only staff would think to put it. The bandleader has staff keys. So does the widow.

ROUND 3 · SEALED. OPEN WITH PUDDING, READ SILENTLY

Not you. Accuse whoever you like; you have one vote.

YOU ARE

Montgomery 'Monty' Fairweather

the investor with a monologue

ROUND 1 · WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU SAY

You put two hundred pounds into the Marigold and Victor spent it on the brass band's uniforms. You have a speech prepared about this and you will give it whether or not anyone asks. You were at the bar from half past eight, loudly. Alibi: "Let me finish. I was at the bar. Everyone saw me. Let me finish."

YOUR QUESTION TO ASK AT THE TABLE

Ask the singer what Victor said to her in the office.

ROUND 2 · OPEN WITH THE MAIN COURSE (fold this part under until then)

You saw the bandleader borrow the barman's corkscrew at five to nine and NOT return it.

ROUND 3 · SEALED. OPEN WITH PUDDING, READ SILENTLY

Not you. Accuse whoever you like; you have one vote.

YOU ARE

Miss Ivy Bell

the quiet cigarette girl

ROUND 1 · WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU SAY

You sell cigarettes and see everything, because nobody looks at you. You were on the corridor between the cloakroom and the cellar all evening. You have one secret: you are Victor's niece, and he was paying for your night classes, so you are the only person here who liked him. Alibi: "I was where I always am. Nobody noticed. Nobody ever does."

YOUR QUESTION TO ASK AT THE TABLE

Ask the investor what he was doing at the bar for forty minutes.

ROUND 2 · OPEN WITH THE MAIN COURSE (fold this part under until then)

You saw everybody. Reginald Pike went down at nine and came up at ten past. Josephine went into the office, not the cellar. Pearl never left the cloakroom. Say this only if asked directly.

ROUND 3 · SEALED. OPEN WITH PUDDING, READ SILENTLY

Not you. Accuse whoever you like; you have one vote.

YOU ARE

Reginald Pike

the bandleader with a debt

ROUND 1 · WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU SAY

You lead the Marigold's brass band and you owe Victor eleven pounds from cards. He took it out of the band's wages every week, and tonight he told you the band was finished. You left the stage at nine for "a glass of water". Alibi: "The band can play one number without me. They did."

YOUR QUESTION TO ASK AT THE TABLE

Ask the inspector why he arrived in four minutes.

ROUND 2 · OPEN WITH THE MAIN COURSE (fold this part under until then)

Your Round 2 card: you went to the cellar to confront Victor about the wages. You will say you found him already dead. (Your sealed card says more.)

ROUND 3 · SEALED. OPEN WITH PUDDING, READ SILENTLY

IT WAS YOU. Read the solution's first paragraph to yourself now, then deny everything until the vote. If accused, demand to see the scuff on your shoe.

The clues

- 1 Clue one: the corkscrew in Victor's hand is the barman's, with a brass handle. The barman says he lent it to somebody at five to nine and did not get it back.
- 2 Clue two: there is one set of footprints in the sawdust on the cellar floor beside Victor's own: patent leather, with a scuff on the left toe. Three people at this table are wearing patent leather. Only one has a scuff.
- 3 Clue three: the band's last number was played without its leader. The sheet music for it was found in the cellar, with a wet ring from a wine glass on the cover.

The solution

SOLUTION (read aloud after the accusations)

Reginald Pike did it, and he did not mean to. At five to nine he borrowed the barman's corkscrew and went down to the cellar to open a bottle and have it out with Victor about the wages. Victor told him the band was finished and, worse, laughed. Pike pushed him. Victor fell against the racking, and that was that. Pike put the corkscrew in Victor's hand to make it look like an accident, dropped his sheet music in the panic, and came up the stairs at ten past nine wiping his hands. The inspector saw him. The widow heard the door bang. Miss Bell saw everything, and told you, if you asked her.

Everyone else was lying about something smaller: the inspector about the plumbing, the widow about the books, Sid about the brandy and the cupboard, Josephine about the office, Pearl about the takings, Monty about the two hundred pounds, Ivy about being family.

The band, under new management, will now play the birthday boy's favourite. He may finish the kitchen in 1927.