

Last Orders at the Partridge & Pear

The whole party pack, host guide and twelve booklets come with the full game.



Christmas Eve at the Partridge & Pear. The snow has closed the lane, the carols have just finished, and Sebastian Thorne, television's most feared food critic, has been found dead in the snug. Six to twelve guests have secrets to keep; one of them has a great deal more.

THE GUESTS

6–12 players • ages 14+

THE EVENING

About two hours

YOUR EDITION

Illustrated • US-Letter

Keep the host guide and character booklets private. Printing this cover is optional.



HOW THE EVENING WORKS

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A fictional, non-graphic death by a made-up Victorian sleeping tonic, played for cosy comedy. Includes Christmas punch (serve it alcohol-free if you like), harmless secrets and gentle rivalries. Designed for ages 14+. No gore, no reenactment, and no romance or dares required.

How the evening runs

0:00

Arrivals and supper

Crowns on, name tags out. Read the welcome; guests mingle in character for about 15 minutes.

0:20

The discovery

Read the discovery. Dr Hartley takes charge of the body.

0:25

Round 1 · The Body in the Snug

Read the round card and hand out the round 1 clue cards. About 25 minutes.

0:50

Round 2 · The Twelve Days of Christmas

Pudding or mince pies. Hand out the round 2 cards and the Naughty List pages to Gabe. About 25 minutes.

1:15

Round 3 · What the Boot Room Kept

Hand out the round 3 cards. About 25 minutes.

1:40

Last Orders

Ring the bell. Everyone writes an accusation; volunteers present their case. About 10 minutes.

1:50

The reveal

Open the sealed solution, hear the confession and award the Pudding Cup. About 15 minutes.

Six core characters always play; six optional characters join in order for seven to twelve players. Every character gets a private booklet with secrets, an objective and, in every round, a goal, something to share and someone to question.



THE CAST

Who is coming

Hollis Berrington • The landlord • red crown

Landlord of the Partridge & Pear for twenty years. Warm, frazzled and never without a tea towel over one shoulder. Tonight is the inn's famous Christmas Eve — supper, carols and the Pudding Cup — and you have spent all of it waiting on Sebastian Thorne hand and foot.

Kris Nicholls • Father Christmas • white crown

Tonight's hired Father Christmas, booked through Merriweather's Costumes & Santas. An actor "between engagements" with a voice that could fill a cathedral. Has not taken off the suit all evening and is beginning to have feelings about the beard.

Merritt Carroll • The choirmaster • purple crown

Choirmaster of St Wenceslas and organiser of the Little Wassail Christmas Pudding Cup for eleven years. Ran tonight's carol with a pencil behind one ear, a rota in one hand and absolutely no tolerance for flat notes.

Gabe Winterbourne • The assistant • blue crown

Sebastian Thorne's personal assistant for eight long years. Carries a clipboard, a spare pen and an expression of infinite patience. Found the body.

Jules Tidings • The reporter • silver crown

Reporter and photographer for the Little Wassail Gazette (circulation six hundred, plus the vicar's cat). Here to cover the Pudding Cup and photograph the carols. Friendly, curious and never without a camera.

Dr Noel Hartley • The doctor • green crown

Little Wassail's family doctor for fifteen years: calm, precise and quietly scandalised by almost everything. Examined the body, and would like everyone to stop touching things.

Clem Figg • The former champion • pink crown

Retired postmistress, eighty-one years young, and three-time winner of the Little Wassail Christmas Pudding Cup — though not for six years, thanks to a suspicious string of brandy-soaked first-time winners. Remembers everything about everybody.

Pip Garland • The pot-washer • yellow crown

The Partridge & Pear's pot-washer, glass collector and barkeep-in-training. Fifteen, nosy, and the only person in the inn who knows where everything is kept. Carried the puddings into the snug.

The Reverend Jo Ingle • The vicar • turquoise crown

Vicar of St Wenceslas, Little Wassail. Kind, cheerful and a little too fond of a flutter. Has blessed the puddings, said grace, and is quietly wondering who will pay for the church roof now.

Sterling Bellamy • The producer • bronze crown

Sebastian Thorne's television producer, here to film tonight's judging for the Christmas special Thorne's Christmas Confessions. Snowed in, under-caffeinated and on the phone to nobody.

Robin Driftwood • The snowplough driver • orange crown

Drives the council snowplough. Got stuck outside the Partridge & Pear at half past six, came in to wait for a tow, and stayed for supper. Big, gentle, and cries at carols.

**Kit Evergreen • The influencer • candy-stripe crown**

The lifestyle influencer behind Kit's Cosy Christmas, livestreaming the whole evening to four hundred and twelve devoted followers. Has filmed every mince pie in the building.



The welcome

Good evening, and welcome to the Partridge & Pear, where the fire is lit, the punch is warm and the lane has been closed by snow since half past six. Nobody is going anywhere tonight.

It is Christmas Eve in Little Wassail, and that means three things: supper, carols and the Little Wassail Christmas Pudding Cup. This year the puddings are being judged by the village's most famous son, Sebastian Thorne — television's most feared food critic, the man who once described a trifle as "a crime scene with custard". He has not been home for thirty years. Judging by supper, nobody missed him.

You have all eaten. You have pulled your crackers and you are wearing your paper crowns, because the landlord's house rule is crowns on until midnight. At a quarter to eight you swapped Secret Santa presents under the tree, and Jules from the Gazette took a photograph. At eight o'clock Mr Thorne retired to the snug with five numbered puddings and a silver tankard of punch, promising to read "a little list" at nine.

At twenty-five past eight Merritt Carroll sat down at the parlour piano, and the whole inn sang The Twelve Days of Christmas, every verse, with Father Christmas leading.

Before anything else happens, find someone you have not met yet. Tell them your name, what you do, and what you think of Sebastian Thorne.



ROUND 1 OF 3 • READ ALOUD, THEN LEAVE ON THE TABLE

The Body in the Snug

Dr Hartley has examined the body, and Gabe Winterbourne was the last person known to have spoken to Mr Thorne. The seating plan and the Secret Santa photograph are on the table. Find out who everyone is, what Thorne was planning to announce at nine, and exactly when he was last seen alive.

THE SNUG.

A small panelled room with a log fire and a window over the snowy yard. Sebastian Thorne sits in the wingback chair, eyes closed, a scowl fixed in place. At his elbow: his engraved silver tankard, lid closed and half full of punch, and a mince pie with one bite taken, on one of the bar's holly-pattern plates. On the sideboard: five numbered Christmas puddings, each with a single spoonful missing. His velvet jacket hangs on the chair; the inside pocket is empty. The fire has been poked, and something papery has burned in the grate. There are two doors: one to the hall, and one to the back corridor that runs past the kitchen to the boot room.

THE SEATING PLAN.

Hollis's seating plan from supper. Every place had a different coloured cracker, and the house rule is crowns on until midnight. Hollis Berrington, red. Kris Nicholls, white, worn on top of the hood. Merritt Carroll, purple. Gabe Winterbourne, blue. Jules Tidings, silver. Dr Noel Hartley, green. Every other guest's colour is on their name tag. Sebastian Thorne refused a crown ("I do not do whimsy"). Nobody was given gold: the spare crowns in the box behind the bar are all plain gold.

THE SECRET SANTA PHOTOGRAPH.

7:50 pm by the camera clock. Jules set the self-timer and dashed into the frame, so for once the photographer is in the picture. Everyone from supper is gathered round the tree in their paper crowns, with Jules in the front row in silver, beaming. Sebastian Thorne stands at the edge, crownless, holding his Secret Santa present at arm's length: a plastic singing fish.

In the full game, the round 1 envelope now goes round the table, and every character has a goal, a secret and a question to ask.



YOU ARE INVITED



Christmas Eve at the Partridge & Pear

A Christmas murder mystery party



YOU WILL BE PLAYING

Kris Nicholls

Father Christmas

Tonight's hired Father Christmas, booked through Merriweather's Costumes & Santas. An actor "between engagements" with a voice that could fill a cathedral. Has not taken off the suit all evening and is beginning to have feelings about the beard.

Come dressed as: Anything red, a Santa hat or beard if you have one, and a white paper crown perched on top.

WHEN

WHERE

REPLY TO

Keep your character booklet to yourself. • playatyours.com

