

CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIMESCENE CRIME

# Merri Mysteries

www.merrimysteries.com



Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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*presents...*

## “Poetic Justice”

Meet and mingle version  
for 17 to 30 guests

*by Stephanie Chambers*

Second edition

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“Merri Mysteries” is a subsidiary of Acture Pty Ltd. “Merri Mysteries” was formerly known as “Tailor Made Mysteries”.

Although some of the characters in this mystery are based on real people, the events depicted in this mystery are totally fictional.

For further details on **Merri Mysteries** or to order another mystery dinner party kit, see [www.merrimysteries.com](http://www.merrimysteries.com).

See the host’s guide for further details on the copyright requirements for this kit.

## The Suspects

A group of cultured people from the 1920s have materialized in a modern apartment in London. H. G. Wells had been testing his novel's Time Machine at a soiree. Now he is discovered dead in the bathroom. Who killed him? Was it James Joyce, Isadora Duncan, T.S. Eliot, Mae West or another of the visitors? Agatha Christie herself is present to help solve this crime. The key to this puzzle may appear in a line of verse or it may not. But in any case, we must achieve justice, poetic or not. The luminaries HG assembled were:

**Dame Agatha Christie** – I'm a British writer of mysteries mainly. I was made a Dame, would you believe it? It was a happy and fulfilling life. And H.G. Wells has made me miss out on all of that. All I got was a quick zip through it. I felt cheated. It was like seeing the menu without being allowed to order or to taste the food. *Dress suggestions:* As a young English lady in the 1920s would have dressed (eg silk blouse, tweed skirt & coat or fake fur or in a Charleston type dress with no waist or a dropped waist & pearls & lots of beads).

**James Joyce** – I'm an Irish poet and novelist. To live is better than to miss out on living. Wells had stopped me from being able to do that. *Dress suggestions:* Dress as a dapper young man of the 1920s would have dressed (eg two-tone shoes, white trousers, white jacket and white striped shirt). Joyce liked to wear bow-ties and he had reading glasses and wore an eye patch over one eye. He also had a moustache and a goatee beard.

**Virginia Woolf** – I'm a British novelist. It was such a sad life (sob sob). I hated having to see it flash before my eyes. H. G. Wells had made me suffer so much. I can't tell you how much. *Dress suggestions:* As a young English lady in the 1920s (eg silk blouse, tweed skirt, tweed coat or fake fur or in a Charleston type dress with no waist or a dropped waist and pearls & lots of beads).

**William Yeats** – I'm an Irish poet, dramatist and politician. I saw my future during the time travel. How could I let a man like Wells rob me of the joy of receiving the Nobel Prize for Poetry? Can you imagine my joy at finally putting Ireland on the literary map? How could I let him do that to me? *Dress suggestions:* As a young man of the 1920s (eg two-tone shoes, trousers, jacket & vest). Yeats (pronounced "Yates") liked to wear ties and he had reading glasses & was clean-shaven.

**Mae West** – I'm a movie actress and I often write my own scripts. I was only just getting started in show business before H. G. Wells whisked me off here into the future. He made me miss out on all that fun. *Dress suggestions:* Dress in curvaceous flamboyant outfit with long gloves & a handbag. She was buxom so add padding. She liked to cut the top out of her hats so her curls wouldn't be crushed. She also wore lots of feathers & diamonds.

**Thomas S. Eliot** – I'm an American born, English poet and playwright. I saw my future. I wrote various poetry collections and plays, although I was not as prolific as you, Mrs Christie. H. G. Wells had no right to bring me into the future. No right at all. *Dress suggestions:* Dress as 1920s young man (eg two-tone shoes, trousers, jacket and knitted vest). Eliot liked to wear ties and he wore his hair parted in the middle and slicked back.

**Isadora Duncan** – I'm a US dancer – one of the first to use dance steps based on natural movement. I saw in my future, that in 1927 I was strangled by one of my long scarves after it caught in the wheel of my sports car. Lucky, I suppose that I had written my autobiography before I died. You can't imagine what it feels like to watch yourself die and to die like that – strangled by my own scarf. I think H. G. Wells has left me with permanent emotional scars. *Dress suggestions:* Isadora often appeared barefoot in a simple cotton tunic. At other times she draped herself like a Greek goddess. You might also like to wear a long scarf like the one that killed her.

**Dorothy Parker** – I'm a US critic, poet and short story writer. I'm known for my satire, terse style and acid wit. I saw my future. Although my life appears to have been as acerbic as my poetry, it doesn't mean there weren't some good times. H. G. Wells shouldn't have denied me those times. *Dress suggestions:* Dress as a young 1920s American lady (eg a Charleston type dress with no waist or a dropped waist and pearls and lots of beads). You may also like to wear a headband complete with feather.

**Ezra Pound** – I'm an American poet and critic and leader of the European literary avant-garde. I saw my future and although I regret what happened as a result of the war, I had a poetic life and I would like the opportunity to live it. What hope is there now that Wells has cast me here? This is worse than any lunatic asylum. *Dress suggestions:* As a young man of the 1920s (eg two-tone shoes, trousers & casual jacket). Pound lived in Europe a lot so you may like to add a cravat instead of a tie. Add a red beard. He was shy but liked tennis so bring a racquet.

**Sarah Bernhardt** – I'm a French actress but I have performed world-wide and I have managed several Paris theatres and opened my own theater. In 1915 I had my right leg amputated after a fall, but I continued to act. I don't want to have my final curtain call here. I find this modern world bereft of style and glamour. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a flamboyant garment (eg a long velvet dress with long sleeves which are loose at the top & tight towards the bottom). Hop as she was elderly by this stage and had had a leg amputated. Bring crutches if you can.

**William C. Fields** – I'm the US actor with the raspy voice and I'm a script writer. My life was a barrel of laughs. H. G. Wells has taken me away from all that. People in this age probably won't appreciate my humor. *Dress suggestions:* Dress as 1920s young man (eg two-tone shoes, trousers & jacket). Wear a top hat & bow tie. Carry a hip flask as WC's main hobby was sipping from it.

**Georgia O’Keefe** – I’m an American painter mainly of flowers, still lifes, desert landscapes and sometimes abstracts. I saw my future. My life was satisfying in its own way. As most of you are poets and writers, you may not appreciate just how good it feels to capture nature in a painting. H. G. Wells had denied me the pleasure of living the life I saw. *Dress suggestions:* A dark outfit with a white shirt complete with a leather hat. You may like to add a cow horn or skull. She liked to paint outdoors so her skin was dark brown in color. Bring along a sketch pad & a small bag.

**Rudolph Valentino** – I’m a Hollywood actor known for my sultry charms. I saw my future. I saw my early death in 1926 due to a perforated ulcer and the mass hysteria caused by it. I was shocked to die so young. Like Isadora, I found it was very jarring to see myself die. Nobody should be confronted with that, surely? *Dress suggestions:* Dress like he did on the big screen (eg as an Arab like in the Sheik by donning a striped sheet & a turban). He had very dark olive skin & slicked back hair.

**Amelia Earhart** – I’m an American and I love to fly in my flying machine. My life was exciting, very exciting. Even from my quick whiz through my life during the time travel, I could tell that I loved being an aviator. I want to live that life. *Dress suggestions:* Dress in your leather jacket, leather pants, leather bonnet & goggles. Maybe bring a paper aeroplane.

**Bessie Smith** – I’m a US blues singer. They say I was important to the development of the blues. But I ain’t going to sing none of those tunes now. How can I when I’m not in the time where I belong? Wells has wrecked all that. *Dress suggestions:* Dress in a dazzling outfit and wear your hair up. She was a buxom lady so you may need to add some padding.

**Charlie Chaplin** – I’m a comedian, writer, director and movie producer. I saw my future. I made lots more movies. Wells has interrupted my movie making career just as it was starting by this time travel nonsense. *Dress suggestions:* The “Little Tramp” with moustache, twirling cane, bowler hat, tight black jacket & baggy pants.

**Lily Pad** – (*English hostess*) I’m a groovy young chic who was about to go out to a party when this lot dropped in. I haven’t gotten to see my future, but it sounds really cool. H. G. Wells was a bossy one. Took over the place as if he owned it and treated it as if it were a movie set. He was a real creep. *Dress suggestions:* Wear fake tattoos & colored hair & a fake nose ring. Bring a small clutch bag.

## Background Information

*Staple their background information here*

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## Character Information

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Cut out each suspect's background information and attach it to *The Suspect* pages when you send their invitation.

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**Dame Agatha Christie** (*Writer of mystery novels and more profound novels under the penname Mary Westmacott. She wrote almost 100 novels.*) At the soiree, I read from "*The Mysterious Affair at Styles*" where Poirot says "If I had told you my ideas, the very first time you saw Mr. Alfred Inglethorp that astute gentleman would have – in your so expressive idiom – 'smelt a rat!' And then, bon jour to our chances of catching him!" During the time travel, I saw my life. I saw my childhood, my marriage to Archie, the birth of our child. During WWI I worked as a hospital dispenser, which taught me a lot about poisons. I'd just published my first book "*The Mysterious Affair at Styles*" in 1920. It starred Detective Poirot. Then I saw my future. I was shocked as Archie and I divorced. I just focused on my writing. Then I met an archaeologist called Max Mallowan. He was younger than me and we married and I followed him to desert places.

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**James Joyce** (*Poet and novelist who used a stream of consciousness technique in "Ulysses".*) At the soiree, I read from my new novel "Ulysses": "Sooner have me than some poet chap with bearsgrease, plastery hair lovelock over his dexter optic." During the time travel, I saw my life so far. I grew up in Dublin, the eldest of ten kids. My dad was a tax collector and a drinker and always in debt. I had a Catholic upbringing. I studied languages at University. I met Nora. Then we had two children and then we married in 1931. We went to live in Europe where I taught languages. I saw my future. I started going blind and I saw my daughter suffering from mental illnesses. I published various works but none received the enthusiastic response "Ulysses" did. We left Paris at the outbreak of war and moved to Switzerland where I died after surgery.

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**Virginia Woolf** (*British novelist known for her innovative stream of consciousness & interior monologue.*) At the soiree, I read from "Jacob's Room": "I am very beautiful," she thought. She shifted her hat slightly. Her husband saw her looking in the glass; and agreed that beauty is important; it is an inheritance; one cannot ignore it. But it is a barrier; it is in fact rather a bore." During the time travel, I saw my life so far. Because of my delicate health, I was educated at home and spent a lot of time in my father's extensive library. We had people like R. L. Stevenson and Thomas Hardy as visitors. I started contributing to the Times Literary Supplement. My father's death caused my first nervous breakdown. I moved to London and married Leonard and we began Hogarth Press. I published 3 of my novels. I saw my future. I published more innovative novels and also critical essays. I suffered from nervous exhaustion and acute sensitivity. In 1941 with the advent of war and feeling another breakdown coming on, I drowned myself.

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**William Yeats** (*Irish poet who received the Nobel Prize for poetry.*) At the soiree I read from "Down by the Salley Gardens":

*"She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;  
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears."*

During the time travel, I saw my life so far. Like Joyce I was also born in Dublin. I have always been one for Irish national identity. I published collections of my poems. I married Georgianna. In my poetry I tried to fuse history, philosophy, mysticism and psychology. I purchased a Norman fort. In 1922, I had just become a senator of the Irish Free State. I saw my future. In 1923, I received the Nobel Prize for Poetry. I continued writing.

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**Mae West** (*Movie actress who also wrote many of her scripts, known for her wit.*) At the soiree, I sang some lines from the first song I had written called "*The Cave Girl*": "*I learned to dance, When I saw the tiger prance*". During the time travel, I saw my life so far. I was born in Brooklyn, New York and I had a career in burlesque and later on Broadway. People liked my wit. And men liked my curves. I'm not like those toothpicks you get in restaurants. I saw my future. I saw my Hollywood films. I wrote my own plays like "*Diamond Lil*" and so on. Even in old age, I was still starring in films.

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**Thomas S. Eliot** (*American born, English poet & playwright who influenced modern poetry.*) At the soiree, I read from "*The Wasteland*" which had only just published: "*Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long. But at my back in a cold blast hear The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.*" During the time travel, I saw my life so far. I was born in the USA. I studied literature and philosophy at Harvard and then at the Sorbonne and at Oxford. With the outbreak of WWI, I took up permanent residence in England. I married Vivien and worked as a teacher, a bank clerk and published a magazine and poetry. I saw my future. My wife went insane and I became a director a publishing company. I joined the Church.

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**Isadora Duncan** (*US dancer – one of the first to use dance steps based on natural movement.*) My husband is a poet. But at the soiree, instead of reading poetry, I danced. Everyone seemed to enjoy seeing my new flowing Bolshevik steps. During the time travel, I saw my life so far. I was born in San Francisco. I invented my own free style of dance based on natural movement and performed barefoot in flowing tunics in Europe, the US and Greece. I visited Russia and I influenced the reform of ballet there. I had love affairs with a stage designer and a millionaire and I had a child by each of them. But unfortunately my children drowned when the automobile they were in went into the Seine in 1913. Last year I visited the Soviet Union and I married Sergei Yesenin. In my future, I saw that Sergei wasn't as understanding as I thought he was. He left me in the next year, I mean 1923. Then he committed suicide in 1925. I returned to France. In 1927 I was strangled by one of my long scarves after it caught in the wheel of my sports car. I've never had much luck with automobiles.

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**Dorothy Parker** (*US critic, poet & short story writer.*) At the soiree, I read from my new poetry collection called “*Enough Rope*”. Here are a few of the lines I read from “*Testament*”: “*Death will not see me flinch; the heart is bold That pain has made incapable of pain.*” During the time travel, I saw my life to date. I was born in New Jersey. I was Vanity Fair’s drama critic from 1917 to 1920. I saw my future. I became the New Yorker’s theater and book reviewer. I also published poetry and short story collections and Broadway plays. I married Edwin Pond Parker II and later we divorced. Then I married the actor-writer Alan Campbell. We went to Hollywood as a writing team and went through a tempestuous marriage, separating, divorcing, getting back together and remarrying until he died in 1963. Then I took to drink and died alone in a hotel room in Manhattan.

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**Ezra Pound** (*American poet, critic and translator and leader of the European literary avant-garde.*) At the soiree, I read from one of my earlier poems:

*“I who have seen you amid the primal things*

*Was angry when they spoke your name            In ordinary places...”*

During the time travel, I saw my life to date. I was born in Idaho. I studied literature. I moved to Europe where I met and married Dorothy. I was interested in Chinese poems. I founded Vorticism and contributed to its magazine. In 1921 we moved to Paris. I saw my future. I had a daughter from an affair with an American violinist and my wife had a son. Some thought I was anti-semitic because I could see bankers destroying the world and a lot of them were Jewish. But that’s not true. I don’t care what race bankers are, but finance is the root evil in this world. During WWII, I made the mistake of supporting Mussolini and was indicted for treason. But I was unfit to stand trial in the US and was confined to a mental hospital for 12 years until I was released as incurable. Then I returned to Italy and died at age 87.

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**Sarah Bernhardt** (*French actress who performed world-wide. She also painted, sculpted & wrote.*) At the soiree, I performed a soliloquy by Lady Macbeth about having blood on my hands. I was wonderful. As I am old, during the time travel, I saw most of my life flash by. I was the illegitimate daughter of a Parisian courtesan. I began training to be an actress at age 13 and made my debut when I was 18. I acted in numerous countries. Then I managed several Paris theatres and opened my own theater. The Belgian aristocrat I loved deserted me when I became pregnant with my only child. I was unconventional. Some thought I carried a coffin with me to sleep in. In 1915 I had my right leg amputated after a fall, but I continued to act. I saw my future. I published a treatise on acting and died the next year.

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**William C. Fields** (*US actor known for his misanthropic humor & raspy voice. He also wrote scripts.*) At the soiree, I told them a few funny lines like: “Madam, there’s no such thing as a tough child - if you parboil them first for seven hours, they always come out tender.” During the time travel, I saw my life so far. I was born in Philadelphia as William Claude Dukenfield. I started as a comic juggler and then did stage reviews. In the 1920s I started doing silent movies. I saw my future. In the 1930s my raspy voice and crazy persona made me popular and I starred in sound films. I wrote some myself and some with you, Mae. The characters I played were known for their dislike and fear of children, their duping of old ladies and other socially prominent persons and officials.

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**Georgia O’Keefe** (*American painter*) At the soiree, I read from Thoreau as I have always admired him. I was born in Wisconsin. I studied art and taught it. I moved to New York and Alfred gave me his support and allowed me to exhibit my paintings at his gallery. I saw my future. I started painting flowers. I saw Alfred divorce his wife and marry me. I became famous and my paintings sold for large amounts. I left New York to return to painting in the desert. I died in 1986.

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**Rudolph Valentino** (*A Hollywood actor known for his sultry charms, flashing smile & presence.*) I write poetry myself, so at the soiree I read a few of my poems. I later published these in 1923 as a collection called “*Day Dreams*” and it sold well. During the time travel, I saw my life to now. I was born in Italy. I changed my name from Rudolfo d’Antonguolla to Rudolph Valentino. Although I studied agriculture, I ended up becoming a dancer when I came to the US and then an actor in Hollywood’s silent movies. This year I starred in “*The Sheik*” and “*Blood and Sand*”. They were all a bit silly really. I have been married twice and my second wife is Natacha Rambova. Her real name was Winifred Hudnut. I saw my future. I saw myself star in three more movies. Then I saw my early death.

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**Amelia Earhart** (*An American aviator who loved to fly in her flying machine.*) I felt like the odd one out at the soiree as I am not at all literary. But I did perform a few loop de loops in my plane as I arrived, so in that sense I performed. During the time travel, I saw my life to date. I was born in Kansas. I developed a great passion for flying planes. I saw my future. I became an aviator and was the first woman to fly solo over the Atlantic Ocean. This was in 1932 and I became famous as a result of it. Then in 1937, I attempted the first round-the-world flight via the equator with my navigator, but my plane mysteriously disappeared after takeoff from New Guinea.

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**Bessie Smith** (*US blues singer known for her forthright approach & uninhibited performances.*) At the soiree, I sang “*Down Hearted Blues*”. I sang it really well. During the time travel, I saw my life so far. I was born in Chatanooga, Tennessee. I began my career as a singer in honky-tonks and tent shows. I saw my future. In 1923 I went to New York for my first recording session. I created quite a stir and for the next ten years I made lots of records. I became known as the “*Empress of the Blues*”. I performed with artists like Louis Armstrong. Unfortunately, I died in an automobile accident in 1937 just as I was about to make a comeback and Edward Albee wrote a play about me called “*The Death of Bessie Smith*” in 1960.

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**Charlie Chaplin** (*He made comedy an art-form.*) At the soiree, I performed as the “*Little Tramp*” – the character I am most famous for. That is why I am dressed as I am. During the time travel, I saw my life so far. I was born in a London slum. My parents were music hall performers. I started out as a clown and was “discovered” whilst touring in the US. In 1914, I made my first movie. In my second movie, I performed as the Tramp for the first time. I also learned to direct my own films. Later I helped co-found United Artists movie studio. I saw my future. I made more and more Tramp films and a parody of Hitler called “*The Great Dictator*”. I married 4 times. I refused to accept US citizenship. I was accused of Communist sympathies and denied re-entry into the US, so I settled in Switzerland with my last wife Oona and our 9 children. In 1972 I received a special achievement Academy Award and in 1973 another Academy Award for my score to “*Limelight*”. In 1975 I was knighted by Queen Elizabeth.

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**Lily Pad** (*English hostess*) I was born in London. I’m a nobody really. I just work in a fish & chip shop. I wasn’t at the soiree. I was just sitting at home here watching the footie on TV. Footie, by the way, is what we call “soccer” in the UK. I haven’t gotten to see my future, but it sounds really cool.

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## Witness and Authority Descriptions

Cut out their character’s description and attach it to *The Suspect* pages when you send their invitation.

### 10 Witnesses (optional)

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**Dorothy Pound** I’m an English artist and the wife of Ezra Pound. Ezra had a daughter from an affair with an American violinist. Around the same time, I had a son. But even when Ezra was kept in the hospital, I still stayed by him and visited him every day. *Dress suggestions:* Dress as a young English lady in the 1920s would have dressed (eg a Charleston type dress with no waist or a dropped waist and pearls and lots of beads). You may also like to wear a headband complete with feather.

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**Gloria Swanson** I am a US actress. I received Best Actress nominations for “Sadie Thompson”, “The Trespasser” and “Sunset Boulevard”. I collect husbands (eg the indigent Marquis) and lovers (eg Joseph Kennedy, father of JFK). *Dress suggestions:* Dark haired wig. Glamorous gown.

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**Marlene Dietrich** I am a husky voiced German singer, movie actress and war entertainer. *Dress suggestions:* Wear trousers & tails, white tie & a hat. Carry a long cigarette holder. Speak about yourself in the third person.

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**Buster Keaton** I am a US comedian, actor, stuntman, director. I spotted Lucille Ball and gave her tips on being a comedian. Houdini saw me fall down some stairs when I was only six months old and said “What a buster your kid took!” and that was how I got my name. I let a real wall fall around me in a movie which was a very dangerous thing to do. *Dress suggestions:* Handkerchief tied on his head or dark hair, slap shoes and a flat hat and suspenders.

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**Louie Armstrong** I am a black US jazz musician, scat singer (a type of wordless singing), and trumpeter. I am also known as “Satchmo”. I like to see people smile. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a tight short curly dark wig. Carry a trumpet. Speak with a gravelly voice.

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**Stan Laurel** I was born Arthur Stanley Jefferson on 16 June 1890 in England. I died on 23 February 1965. I had been raised in English music halls. In 1910 I made my first trip to America as a member of the Fred Karno musical-comedy troupe, which also included Charlie Chaplin. I went on to work with Oliver Hardy and became a famous film comedian. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a baggy suit and try to look thin. Wear a bowler hat (if available). Wear a bow tie.

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**Oliver Hardy** I was born Norvell Hardy on 18 January 1892 in Harlem, Georgia and I died on 7 August 1957. My partnership with Stan Laurel at the Hal Roach studio began in 1926. We went on to star in many films. *Dress suggestions:* Add some pillows and try and look chubby. Add a moustache. Wear a bowler hat (if available). Wear a normal tie.

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**Dame Nellie Melba** I was born on May 19, 1861 in Australia. I was born Helen Porter Mitchell and changed my name to Melba as I loved my country Australia, the place where I was born. The name Melba was a condensed version of Melbourne, a capital city in Australia. I made my great debut as an Opera singer in Brussels in 1887 and gradually established myself as the prima donna of Covent Garden until the mid 1920’s. *Dress suggestions:* Wear an old fashioned long dress. You may like to carry some Melba Toast which was named after her. It is toasted bread with the crust cut off that has been left in a warm oven for 15 to 20 minutes.

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**Albert Einstein** I contributed more than any other scientist since Sir Isaac Newton to our understanding of physical reality. I devised “the special theory of relativity” and discovered that  $E=mc^2$ . I was born 14 March 1879 in Germany and died 18 April 1955 in the USA. *Dress suggestions:* Long flowing white hair and a moustache.

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**Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel** (1883-1971) I am a French fashion designer. I was a major force to emerge in fashion in the 1920s. I was one of the century's most influential designers and entrepreneurs. My fashion designs liberated women from the 19th century corset. I designed my first chemise dress in 1920 and the collarless cardigan jacket in 1925. Simplicity, elegance and comfort marked my style. I introduced my signature perfume fragrance Chanel No. 5 in 1921. *Dress suggestions:* Dress elegantly.

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### The 3 authorities (optional)

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**Detective Bernard Huntley** I am a police officer. I love solving puzzles. That's why I became a police officer. I'm also great at cryptic crosswords. *Dress suggestions:* Dress as an English copper. Make a fake truncheon and bring it along. Maybe also bring some toy handcuffs and carry a notepad.

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**Dr Richard Reynolds** I am a medical doctor. I have been the doctor for the Pad family for many years. I believe you can never have too many tests. I am a bit of a hypochondriac I suppose. *Dress suggestions:* Carry a black bag and any medical items you can obtain (eg thermometer).

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**Tom Trimble** I am HG Well's lawyer. I am very conservative and very well-respected in my profession. I have been the Well's lawyer for many years. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a suit and look very serious.

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## Name Tags

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### Suspects

Dame Agatha  
Christie  
(suspect)

James  
Joyce  
(suspect)

Virginia  
Woolf  
(suspect)

**William  
Yeats**  
(suspect)

**Mae  
West**  
(suspect)

**Thomas S.  
Eliot**  
(suspect)

**Isadora  
Duncan**  
(suspect)

**Dorothy  
Parker**  
(suspect)

**Ezra  
Pound**  
(suspect)



**Sarah  
Bernhardt  
(suspect)**

**William C.  
Fields  
(suspect)**

**Georgia  
O'Keefe  
(suspect)**

**Rudolph  
Valentino  
(suspect)**

**Amelia  
Earhart  
(suspect)**

**Bessie  
Smith  
(suspect)**

Charlie  
Chaplin  
(suspect)

Lily  
Pad  
(suspect)

**Witnesses**

Dorothy Pound

Gloria Swanson

Marlene Dietrich

Buster Keaton

Louie Armstrong

Stan Laurel

Oliver Hardy

Dame Nellie Melba

Albert Einstein

Gabrielle "Coco"  
Chanel

*Authorities*

Detective  
Bernard Huntley

Dr Richard Reynolds

Tom Trimble

*Merri Mysteries presents...*

**“Poetic Justice”**

*by Stephanie Chambers*

*These are the:*

*Clues*

Merri Mysteries presents...

## “Poetic Justice”

***Clue page for the  
witnesses and authorities***

*Print as many copies as you need.  
Staple a copy of their name tag here*

### **What I can reveal**

*Staple their clues here*

### **What I need to do**

- 1 If you have a question for a suspect, briefly meet with them to ask them your question and then move on to talk with other people. Tell the suspect to let other people know what you have asked them and what they said in reply.

Merri Mysteries presents...

## “Poetic Justice”

***Clue page for the authority***  
*Print as many copies as you need.  
Staple a copy of their name tag here*

### **What I can reveal**

*Staple their clues here*

### **What I need to do**

- 1 When you arrive, rush to the rescue and do what someone in your position would do.
- 2 Act very responsibly and calmly. Try and get other people to remain calm. Do whatever a person in your role would do (eg if you are with the police cordon off the crime scene and ask people questions, if you are a medical person, examine the body, look for evidence etc).
- 3 *When asked:* If you are a police officer, you should help read out the police report. If you are a doctor, help read out the medical report. If you are the lawyer, read out the will.
- 4 Ask suspects the following questions: How did you come to be at the soiree? Why did Mr Wells invite you to his exclusive gathering? Had you met Mr Wells before? How did you find Mr Wells? What was he like after the time travel? As some of you are poets, you may care to express how you feel about the situation in a line of your own poetry. How do you like the modern world? Do you think we've progressed? What were you doing late this afternoon? Do you have an alibi? Can anyone vouch for you?
- 5 Ask witnesses the following questions: What have you seen or heard? What do you know about the suspects? Is there anything you would like the authorities to know?

# Dame Agatha Christie

## What I can reveal

When I found myself here in the future, I pleaded to Mr Wells that I really must be getting back as I have a book signing at Harrods for my first novel *“The Mysterious Affair at Styles”*. And of course I had yet to meet Max Mallowan, the lovely young archeologist, who was to become my second husband.

I thought that Mr Wells would understand my need to get back. But he said something had gone wrong with his machine and there was no way to repair it as that particular part just wasn't available anymore. H. G. Wells was jealous of my success as a writer. Why my novels took up practically the whole of Lily's bookcase! And when he heard I'd been translated into 103 foreign languages and made a Dame, he got all huffy and refused to speak to me again.

From my research into psychology, it appears to me that if the circumstances had turned out differently, sometimes people wouldn't have become murderers. Time travel would drive most people towards contemplating either suicide or murder. I spent time outside in the courtyard thinking about this.

## What I need to do

- 1 If someone asks you if you had met Wells before, say “I hadn't met H. G. Wells before. He said he wanted to gather together all of the great people of our time. I was flattered as I had only just published my first novel *“The Mysterious Affair at Styles”*, so I hardly thought of myself as “great.”

# James Joyce

## What I can reveal

Mr Wells read from his novel *“The Time Machine”* at the party. It was full of cannibals. It reminded me of a couple of lines from *“Ulysses”*: *“Eat or be eaten. Kill! Kill!”*

After the soiree Mr Wells invited us all to take a seat in his Time Machine. Mrs Woolf only agreed to do so if we had smelling salts handy. And of course we didn't expect to be going anywhere, so none of us had even a toothbrush. Except for Miss West who had her handbag.

I agree with Eliot, Wells was something of a barbarian. He wasn't interested in playing with words. He only wrote to make money. In fact ... I had a strong sense that he planned to make a killing out of all this time travel business.

Pound, Eliot, Yeats and I formed a close group. Just because we are writers, doesn't mean we can't be men of action when we need to be. Some other lines from *“Ulysses”* which are appropriate are: *“wasn't she the downright villain to go and do a thing like that of course some men can be dreadfully aggravating drive you mad”*.

Maybe it wasn't a man but a woman that committed this crime. Women don't like blood generally and this was a bloodless murder.

## What I need to do

- 1 If someone asks how you came to be at the party, say “H. G. Wells was a scientist turned writer and I don't think he really liked *“Ulysses”* as it was far too avantgarde for him, but he invited me anyway. Pound and Eliot were at the party, so at least I knew some of the people which helped.”

# Virginia Woolf

25 Extra clues

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## What I can reveal

As is so often the case at parties, I banded together with some of the ladies – Dorothy and Agatha. Miss West was with her male admirers. Some of the other men preferred their own company. And their port and cigars. Yet another of the put downs women are expected to endure. But Dorothy and Agatha are intelligent, literary women, so we had a lot in common. We shared a strong desire return to our own era. There were far too many of us to share only one loo. The “loo” is what we British call the “toilet”. We certainly can’t call it the “WC” today can we? Not with William C. Fields in our midst. Mr Wells was very cold towards me. He objected to most of my feminist views. The status of women seems much improved in the modern world and I was pleased to hear how I had contributed to that. If I remain in the present the emancipation of women might be delayed because my writing won’t be there to kick it along. This afternoon, I felt so upset by what had happened I went to the spare bedroom for a good cry. It sometimes helps. Although not often. I’m afraid I again felt quite suicidal and if it hadn’t been for the support of dear Dorothy , Agatha and Zelda, I might have been tempted to drown myself again. I wonder if by drowning myself twice, I’d go to Heaven? You know – two wrongs making a right and all that. Probably not, I suppose. In any case – the bath was already occupied.

## What I need to do

- 1 Say to T. S. Eliot “You and I are friends, aren’t we, Tom? My husband and I had published some of your work.”
- 2 If someone asks how you came to be at the party, say “I have never been interested in science fiction, so I couldn’t see why H. G. Wells had invited me, but I came because so many other literary people were coming.”

*You should divide up these 25 clues amongst the witnesses and authorities (if you have any). The authorities should get less than the witnesses if they also have reports to read out. You may like to staple the clues to the clue page for the witness or authority. Please make sure they are all given out. If you don’t have any witnesses or authorities, divide these clues up amongst the suspects.*

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Virginia Woolf told me that while she was lying in the bedroom, she heard through the wall various visitors to Mr Wells’ room. At one point she heard Mr Wells arguing with a man and later she heard a woman’s laughter.

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There was an awful period when Agatha Christie couldn’t remember who she was. A lot of cruel people thought she’d made that up too. Amnesia is a disease, like a stroke probably, and certainly not a character fault.

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HG was a gentleman in the true sense of the word. He probably wouldn’t have put up much of a fight had his life depended on it. Which it obviously did. He was very interested in one or two of the ladies in the group. I think he liked the idea that he had plucked them like peaches from their normal lives and now they would all have to spend a lot more time with him.

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HG wanted Charlie Chaplin to adapt his novel the “Time Machine” into a movie. But at the party, Charlie told Mr Wells that he didn’t really think that his novel was the type of stuff that movie goers would want to see. He said audiences seem to prefer comedy to science fiction. Wells was furious. He told Charlie that he didn’t know what he was talking about and that his book had sold millions. Charlie told him he’d think about it – probably mainly to shut him up.

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I happened to see that sad nickelodeon they call “television”. I was shocked – such bad acting and hopeless plots – what a waste of Technicolor!

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