

TUFFY FARQUESON

Character Booklet

Hello and welcome to Mistletoe Manor – and to the murder mystery set to unfold under its ancient roof. I am author Ruth Ware, and I will be guiding you through the events of the night.

Your host is the bestselling writer Aubrey St Clair, author of more than forty books starring his celebrated sleuth Eric Argent, and founder of the Detective Club, whose members comprise the crème de la crème of crime writers. Tonight is the fiftieth annual meeting of the club, and you are one of the honoured guests.

First of all, an explanation about this character booklet. Anything written in italics is for your eyes only, so please don't read it aloud. It may contain secret information or clues to your motive, if you are guilty. However, you may choose to share this information as part of the discussions at the end of the evening.

The night begins with a draw determining who is the murderer and who is an innocent bystander. Whatever your status, keep this information to yourself! But when you come to the paragraph in the character booklet marked 'if you are innocent' or 'if you are the murderer', then you must read the appropriate section.

If you are innocent, you win by collaborating with your fellow bystanders to correctly figure out the murderer. If you are guilty, you win by tricking the other participants into accusing the wrong person.

You are the rotund, port-swilling Tuffy Farqueson, Aubrey St Clair's long-time literary agent and friend. With more than fifty years in the book business under your belt, you are one of the old school of publishing, and almost as much a staple of the London crime scene as Aubrey himself. As you're fond of telling editors, you never met a percentage you couldn't argue, or an advance you couldn't raise, and you've seen out more scandals, takeovers and industry hubbubs than they've had dinners at Ottolenghi. Sadly though, publishing isn't a lucrative business, and now you're coming up to retirement you realise that you might need one last cracker of a deal to feather your nest. Maybe you can poach someone here tonight?

INTRODUCTION

Read the paragraph below to your fellow guests when you are invited to introduce yourself.

What ho, chaps and chappesses! Tuffy Farqueson here – Aubrey’s literary agent of more than fifty years and, dare I say, friend for even longer. Aubrey and I were at boarding school together, as a matter of fact, and we’ve been what you might call partners in crime ever since! Feel like a bit of an interloper, don’t you know. Not really a writer, what. But I flatter myself I know more about the business than most of you young whippersnappers here tonight, and if you want my advice, you’ll pick a good agent, and stick with them. Worked for Aubrey, what?

CHAPTER 1 REVENGE IS A DISH BEST SERVED COLD

Read the paragraphs below when the narrator instructs you to do so.

Good Lord. Aubrey, *dead*? It doesn’t seem possible! Oh, but this is terrible news, terrible! It’s not just the personal loss, though that’s a painful blow, for I counted Aubrey as a friend as well as a client. But the loss to the world of letters – he wrote to me only the other day about the new novel he was planning, *Eric Argent and the Secretary’s Revenge*. And now the world will be deprived of reading that work – though of course there’s always the possibility of a collaborator. I’ll have to call *The Times* about the obituary – and his publishers, to discuss a special commemorative edition, they might even want to rejacket his backlist.

As for that young woman’s absurd suggestion that one of us might be involved – I can’t speak for these others, but in my case of course it’s completely ridiculous. Yes, it’s true that I went up to Aubrey’s room on arrival, but in point of fact he was dressing and told me we would speak after dinner. Besides, Aubrey was one of my most illustrious and lucrative clients. Why would I want to kill the golden goose?

CHAPTER 2 A QUESTION OF MOTIVE

After the narrator has finished, it’s time for you to ask some questions – and answer them!

Below are the questions you might wish to ask your fellow guests. Each guest can ask TWO questions, so choose wisely. They don’t have to be directed at the same person. At the end are the questions you may be asked yourself. The answers may be different according to whether you are the murderer or an innocent bystander, so take a moment to read through all the questions and answers, and familiarise yourself with what you should say in the event that you are questioned.

If you are innocent, then your job is simple: to figure out the murderer. You need to get other people on your side, so don’t be afraid to point out holes in the stories of your fellow guests! If you are the murderer, then remember you cannot lie – you must read out the ‘if you are the murderer’ answer if you are asked that question. However, your job is to deflect suspicion onto your fellow guests, by rousing suspicions against them. Be ready with some red herring theories!

Questions for Valerie Chime

- 1) You said you’re something of a ‘scribbler’ – can you tell us a bit more about your literary ambitions?
- 2) Sir Aubrey always gave his speeches off the cuff. Why would he be writing out notes this time? Was that really what he was writing?
- 3) Can you tell us anything about the murder weapon? The maid said it was a letter opener. Do you know the one she meant?

Questions for Alex Masters

- 1) You said that you had last seen Aubrey at a writing retreat. Did anything happen there that we should know about?
- 2) What is your next book about?
- 3) You told us that you arrived on the 5.20 train from London, but other guests said the London train was late. Did you really take that train? How is it that you arrived ten minutes before them?

Questions for Dolores de l'Amour

- 1) You told us that you gave Aubrey's forthcoming novel *Eric Argent and the Secretary's Revenge* a glowing quote. Other guests have told us that this book wasn't finished yet. How did you manage to give a quote for it?
- 2) What was Aubrey's forthcoming novel about?
- 3) How did your late husband die?

Questions for A. N. Andrews

- 1) What did you say in your letter to Sir Aubrey? It seems a big leap from writing one fan letter to being invited to join the Detective Club.
- 2) You told us that your train from London was late. Other guests who were on the same train arrived ten minutes before you. What were you doing in the interim?
- 3) What is your novel about?

Questions for Kick Carmichael

- 1) You mentioned that you drove down from London. Did anyone actually see your car arrive?
- 2) You don't seem very sure of the plot of your own books. Why is that?
- 3) How long have you been a member of the Detective Club?

Questions for Rowan McTaggart

- 1) You seemed very reluctant to look at Sir Aubrey's body. As a doctor, didn't you want to see if there was anything you could do?
- 2) You told us that your train from London was late, and you were one of the last to arrive at the party, but other guests who were on the same train arrived considerably before you. How do you explain the difference?

- 3) In your opinion, as a medical examiner, would it have taken much strength to stab Aubrey?

Questions for Clive Barking

- 1) You said in your statement that you usually stay with Aubrey but you didn't this time – why was that?
- 2) You said that you co-founded the Detective Club alongside Sir Aubrey – I never knew that. It's very generous of you to let Aubrey take all the credit.
- 3) You mentioned that Sir Aubrey was stabbed with a letter opener you gave him – can you tell us a bit more about that?

Questions for YOU!

- 1) You seem awfully eager to make hay out of Aubrey's death with special editions and so on. Isn't that a little macabre?

If you are innocent, say: Well, when you put it like that, dashed if it doesn't sound a little cynical. The truth is I'm damned cut up about Aubrey's death, but I'm an old-school fellow, what. Not very good at emotion. My way of dealing with this sort of thing has always been to put my head in the sand and bury myself in business. Feels like this is my only way of honouring the dear old chap now. If you'll excuse me, I think I've got something in my eye.

If you are guilty, say: I find that dashed impertinent. Aubrey employed me to do my best by his books, and he paid me 15 per cent of his income to make sure I did, dammit. I won't let his death stop me doing right by his books. It's what Aubrey would have wanted, and any suggestion that I'm doing it to feather my own pocket is bloody rude. Besides – there's no getting around the fact that his death is going to increase his profile *and* his sales. I may have been his friend, but that doesn't make me a sentimental fool as well.

- 2) You told us that you went up to see Aubrey before dinner but that he was dressing. Other people have told us he was in his study. Can you explain the discrepancy?

If you are innocent, say: Aubrey had a bad habit of getting ink stains on his shirt cuffs, so he always kept a spare shirt in his study to change into. I imagine that's what he was doing when I came up, but I didn't barge in to find out. I just knocked on the door and he said *not now, old chap, I'm getting dressed*. His secretary can confirm that, if you don't believe me.

If you are guilty, say: Well, they probably came up after me when he had finished getting dressed. I'm telling you, Aubrey was in his bedroom when I saw him. I knocked on the door and he said *not now, old chap, I'm getting dressed*. I hung around on the landing for a few minutes to see if he'd finish, but then I got thirsty and went downstairs for a whiskey and soda. When I left him he was alive and well.

3) You mentioned Aubrey wrote to you about his forthcoming novel, *Eric Argent and the Secretary's Revenge*. What was the novel about?

Answer: Tragic loss to the literary world, what. I hadn't read it, it wasn't finished yet, but he'd told me the outline. He said it was about a famous writer who is killed by his downtrodden secretary. To be honest it was a relief to hear he was back on form again. He'd been suffering from writer's block recently. Something in his personal life, he said.

CHAPTER 3 J'ACCUSE!

After the narrator has finished, it's time for you to share your theories with the other guests – and vote. The accused is decided by majority vote.

If suspicion has fallen on you, then read out the appropriate passage below.

If you are innocent:

Good gad! Never heard such poppycock in my life. Kill Aubrey forsooth! I mean, special editions or no special editions, I'd be killing one of my best clients.

Yes, it's true I went up to see him before dinner, but then so did half the bally party judging by the accounts we've heard tonight. He was alive and well when I left him, and I'll take any oath you like to that effect. You've got the wrong end of the stick, dash it.

If you are the murderer:

Damn your eyes for an interfering busybody. Yes, I killed Aubrey, and the miracle is that I didn't do it sooner. He was a pain in the proverbial, and I'd put up with his grouching and grumbling for years. 'Is this the best advance you can strike, Tuffy?' 'Did you bother negotiating these royalty rates at all, Tuffy?'

When the truth is that his books were getting drearier and duller, and his readers were falling away in droves.

Fifteen per cent he paid me, and I deserved twice that for all I did for him. So what if I helped myself to a little more – I earned my fee ten times over and then some. I don't know how he found out about my dipping my fingers in the pot, but he did, and he threatened to report me to the Association of Authors' Agents. I would have been ruined – struck off – clients gone – out on my ear after years of thankless work for that ungrateful scoundrel. And all for pocketing a few extra pounds of royalties he never even missed.

When I went up to try to reason with him before dinner he told me that he was writing a letter to his publisher to inform them that he was sacking me forthwith for gross misconduct and betrayal of trust, and that was the last penny of commission I'd ever see from him. Not so much as a 'thank you for fifty years of service, Tuffy'.

Well, I saw red, and I stabbed him. Yes I did, and I'm not sorry. Aubrey was a wart, and bumping him off was the best day's work I've done in years.