MISS PELL'S CASE OF THE WEEK · NO. 6

The Golden Oak

In 1931, every Friday at seven o'clock, the gates of Ashcombe Manor were locked and Lord Ashcombe's guests played a game. His secretary, Miss Pell, dealt each guest a card in silence: one said victim, one said murderer. The lamps went out for one minute. When they came back on, nobody was allowed to move, and Miss Pell went from room to room with her notebook.

HOW TO PLAY

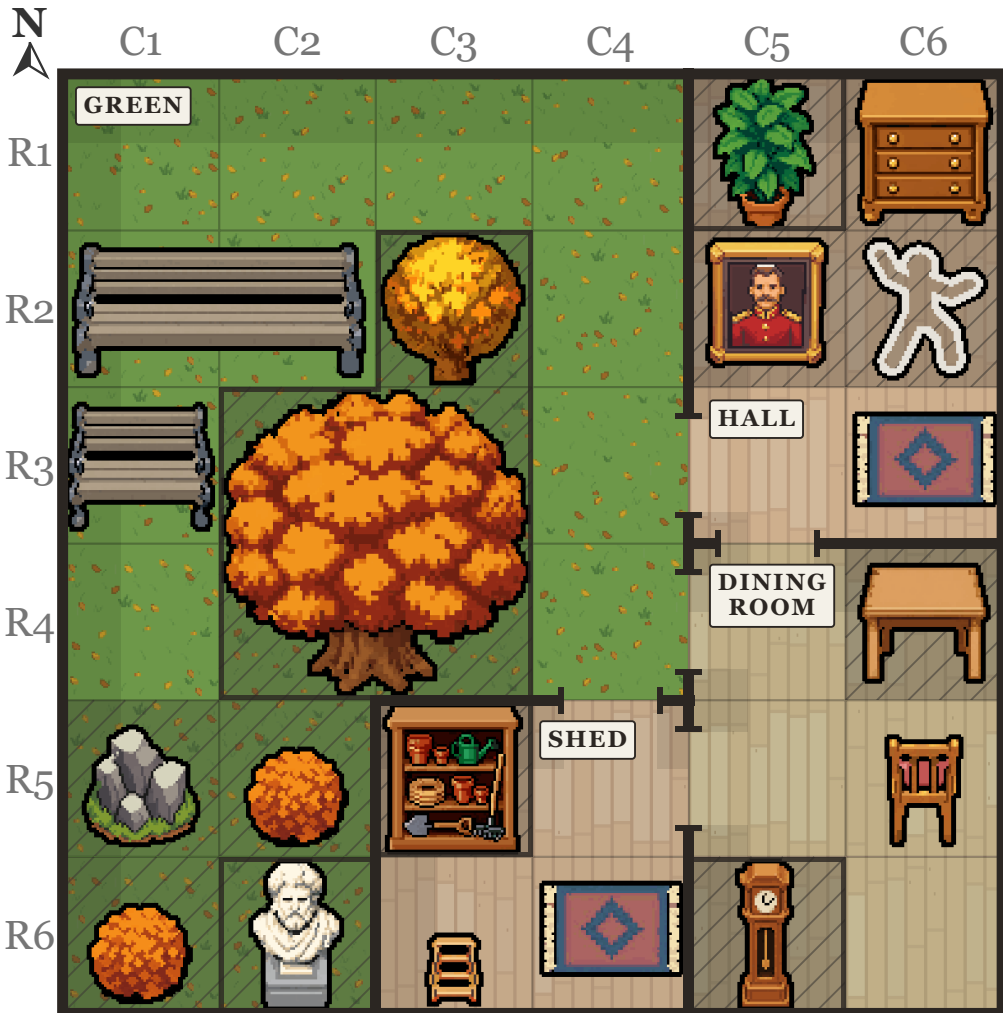
1. **Every statement is true.** Read each one against the plan.
2. **Exactly one suspect stands in every row and every column.** The body is not a suspect. Areas have no such rule: an area may hold several suspects, or none.
3. **The murderer is the one suspect in the area with the body.** That area always holds exactly one suspect, and the rule works while you solve: once one suspect must be there, nobody else can be.

Rows are numbered from the top and columns from the left, so R2C5 is the second row, fifth column; north is the top of the plan. Hatched squares are where nobody can stand. A dark outline around a whole square means nobody can see past it, like a wall. Write initials on the plan as you go: small where a suspect *might* be, large where they *must* be. There is exactly one answer, and you never need to guess.

Beside: in a square next to it, up, down, left or right, and in the same area. Never diagonally, and never through a wall or a doorway. Sitting or standing on something, a chair or a rug, is not being beside it, but another one next to your square is.

In an area containing, in an area with no: the area holds at least one, anywhere in it, or none at all.

Wore, had: what the lineup shows under each suspect's picture. *Everyone beside a clock, if anyone, had a beard* does not say that anyone stood beside one.



The great oak had turned gold. When the lamps came back on, Ursula lay in the Hall.

THE CLUES

1. Walter was standing on a ladder.
2. Harold was beside the rock on the Green.
3. Thomas was not beside the great oak.
4. Clara was in an area with no potted plants.
5. Kit was in the fifth column.
6. Robin was not beside a table.

GENERAL CLUES

7. Everyone beside a small tree, if anyone, wore a monocle.
8. Everyone in the Dining Room, if anyone, had a beard.

THE SUSPECTS



1. Walter
a bowler
a monocle
a beard



2. Thomas
a fedora
a monocle
a beard



3. Robin
a fedora
spectacles
a beard



4. Clara
a bowler
spectacles



5. Harold
a bowler
a beard

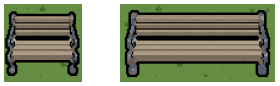


6. Kit
a bowler
a beard

THE MURDERER _____

The Furniture

Every piece in this case, drawn as on the plan, and the two things that matter about each: whether a suspect can stand on its square, and whether a suspect can see past it.



bench
✓ can sit or stand here
✓ can see past it



bush
✗ nobody can stand here
✓ can see past it



chair
✓ can sit or stand here
✓ can see past it



chest of drawers
✗ nobody can stand here
✓ can see past it



grandfather clock
✗ nobody can stand here
✗ blocks the view



great oak
✗ nobody can stand here
✗ blocks the view



ladder
✓ can sit or stand here
✓ can see past it



portrait
✗ nobody can stand here
✓ can see past it



potted plant
✗ nobody can stand here
✗ blocks the view



rock
✗ nobody can stand here
✓ can see past it



rug
✓ can sit or stand here
✓ can see past it



small tree
✗ nobody can stand here
✗ blocks the view



statue

✗ nobody can stand here
✗ blocks the view



table

✗ nobody can stand here
✓ can see past it



tool shelf

✗ nobody can stand here
✗ blocks the view

Stuck?

Three hints, each giving away a little more than the last. Read one, then go back to the plan.

Hint I · Where to begin. Start with Walter. Read against the plan, clue 1 leaves him exactly one square. Clue 2 does the same for another suspect.

Hint II · When you are stuck. Read clues 3 and 7 together: they are enough to place the next suspect. Clue 7 is about what people wore, and it applies to Robin: find them in the lineup, then read the clue against the squares still open to them. By this point two suspects should be placed.

Hint III · A checkpoint. Walter at R6C3, Harold at R4C1, Thomas at R2C4.

Who did it?

The answer, step by step, is at whereaboutspuzzles.com on Saturday.

Fifty more cases

Miss Pell wrote every game into a ledger: a whole year of Fridays at Ashcombe Manor, from the first daffodils to the last of the snow. **Whereabouts: Murder Sudoku — 50 Murder Mysteries from Ashcombe Manor** is that ledger, with a practice case solved for you, three levels of hints for every case, and the answers step by step.

And every Friday, a new case is free at **whereaboutspuzzles.com**.

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