



FREE PREVIEW • NOT THE GAME ITSELF

## *The Third Key*

*A private retreat in an old hilltop observatory, the Fellows' Dinner, and a dome door that locks itself. Three keys open it. One has been lost for twelve years — and tonight, someone used it.*

### USE THIS PREVIEW TO PLAN

- Page 2 shows all twelve characters, with a dress idea for each, so you can start casting your guests.
- Page 3 tells you what the full game asks of a host, so you can decide whether it suits your party.

### WHAT THIS PREVIEW IS NOT

It has no character booklets, no evidence and no solution — you cannot play the mystery with it. The full game is a separate download.

# The guests

Eight are always played; Beatrix, Edmund, Idris and Aurelio join for 9 to 12 guests.

ALWAYS PLAYED

*Delphine Marr*

**Deputy warden**

Has run Vesper Hill's day-to-day for ten years, and gave tonight's speech.

Wear: A velvet jacket and the deputy's silver key-chain (no key on it).

ALWAYS PLAYED

*Osric Tallow*

**Bursar**

Keeps the accounts — and the key cabinet with the second dome key.

Wear: A waistcoat with a watch chain.

ALWAYS PLAYED

*Saskia Quennell*

**Astronomer**

Came to Vesper Hill to see Comet Vesper — and to settle a family story.

Wear: A heavy coat and a red-light torch.

ALWAYS PLAYED

*Barnaby Dorne*

**Novelist (a fellow)**

A new fellow, writing a novel — and asking a great many questions about the estate.

Wear: Tweed and a notebook.

ALWAYS PLAYED

*Septimus Kittle*

**Archivist**

Keeps sixty years of logbooks, letters and photographs in the locked archive.

Wear: Cardigan, spectacles and cotton archive gloves.

ALWAYS PLAYED

*Clementine Ashby*

**Painter**

Paints the sky over Vesper Hill, and lives in Thornby, down the valley.

Wear: A painter's scarf with violets on it.

ALWAYS PLAYED

*Neve Ransome*

**Science journalist**

Studied under the warden, and now writes about science — and scandal.

Wear: A rain jacket and a recorder in the pocket.

ALWAYS PLAYED

*Anouk Petri*

**Composer**

Writes music about the night sky, and has been watching a certain "novelist."

Wear: Black, with a camera round the neck.

OPTIONAL

*Beatrix Oakes*

**Sculptor**

Carves stone in the old coach house, and notices hands.

Wear: Stone dust and a good shirt.

OPTIONAL

*Edmund Sorrell*

**Trustee, a retired judge**

One of five trustees, who meet on Monday to decide Vesper Hill's future.

Wear: A dark suit and a trustee's badge.

OPTIONAL

*Idris Halloran*

**Youngest fellow, amateur astronomer**

Seventeen, the youngest fellow ever, and knows more about comets than anyone here.

Wear: A hoodie and a star chart.

OPTIONAL

*Aurelio Bask*

**Poet**

Writes poems about the fellows, and keeps a list of everyone's habits.

Wear: A long scarf and ink on the fingers.

# Before you buy

*What the full game asks of you and your guests.*

## IS IT RIGHT FOR YOUR PARTY?

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Players</b>  | 8 to 12 adults or teens (14+) who have played a murder mystery before. Eight characters are always played; four more join.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Time</b>     | About three hours with dinner, plus an optional epilogue. Designed to this length; not yet tested with a real group.                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>The host</b> | Reads a short script and opens three envelopes. The host can play a character too, if they print without reading.                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Advanced</b> | More evidence than a first mystery, three secret lines beside the murder, and one innocent guest who lies. Not for beginners.                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Content</b>  | A fictional death that happens offstage and is never described. An advanced game: more evidence than a first mystery, three secret lines beside the murder, and one innocent guest who lies. Nobody needs to drink, dress up or act; the game works seated. |

## WHAT THE FULL GAME INCLUDES

- A host guide with an exact print list for 8 to 12 players, a read-aloud script, cue cards and what to do if someone cancels.
- Twelve player booklets of three pages each: a dossier, and an Act 2 and an Act 3 page.
- Three sealed act envelopes of evidence — a lock record, a key register, statements and documents — a house plan, detective notes, a timeline board and ballots.
- A sealed solution that proves the answer step by step, with why it was not anyone else, and an epilogue for the three secret lines.
- Party extras: invitations, place cards, name badges, a menu, awards, a teaser poster and invitation words to copy.
- A large-print copy of every player booklet (about 17 pt), for any guest who prefers bigger type.