

A Murder Mystery Dinner...

Lilian von Rintelen, December, 20th 2021

Many of us that read crime stories are enraptured by the wonderful vintage settings and intriguing personas the authors have created. We'd like to walk right into the books and experience everything for ourselves.

Others simply love English but lack environments where they can test and improve their skills.

I belong to both of these groups and therefore decided to take part in the Drehtür Course (Revolving Door) "Murder Mystery Dinner" which took place in November. This was my experience with it.

What's it all about

Murder Mystery Dinners are games in which each of the attendees gets assigned a role and one of them is a murderer. The others must determine who it is. Whether the criminal knows about their "missteps" or is left in the dark till the very end of the game depends on the story. All of this – as the name suggests -happens at the dinner table.

Preparation

Our first preparation meeting was on Nov 8th and we first got to know each other. Part of that included explaining what kind of crime we would commit and how. This was really fun and also a good indicator of who not to mess with in the future. Afterwards we had to try describing and acting out important words and activated some crime related vocabulary by playing "Black Stories", a small mystery solving game. Sadly, the meeting was over after the distribution of our roles.

The next preparation session was held the week after and included more challenging activities. This time we got to really act by preparing small scenes. Each group got a funny little situation and some adjectives. With only this we created a scene and presented it to the group. The others had to guess what was going on. One boy even got to use his other language skills when pretending to be from another planet. Very comedic indeed.

The actual thing

The Dinner was held in two separate groups – Sherlock and Watson. The eight of us were all assembled at the table. Everyone got to contribute something yummy for the meal. Then a little detective with a mustache informed us (via video) why we were there. It was Easter Sunday 1900 and the famous

chocolatier *Billy Bonka* had been murdered by an exploding easter egg. All of us were suspected of having killed him. Could we solve the mystery?

The people in question were two well established business rivals of the belated *Bonka*, a boxer, a stunning romantic novelist, an Aztec obsessed archeologist, a questionable psychologist, a performer that believes his puppet is real and I, the *marchioness Duchamp*. I am as famous for my art as I am for my scandals.

The game began by us receiving documents that served as clues. We all had role guides with secret hints and suggestions for our next course of action. The rest was actually about guessing and acting.

I don't want to spoil too much but here are some of the highlights:

First are the costumes. People ended up putting quite a bit of work into them. Even old or everyday things were transformed when being put together with a character. It made the whole thing much more real and fun. I honestly couldn't choose a favorite.

And the acting. I thought that this part would be very hard and complicated but I was wrong. After a while your role came to you quite naturally and you were mentally in the play. Having a bit of an arrogant and free-spirited role made me able to let go a little. The others seemed to enjoy themselves as well and we stayed in our roles even during eating breaks and afterwards.

During one of those interruptions we made up things like chocolate paint and ink meant to be for me (*Marchioness Duchamp*) and the novelist *Dame Barbara Carthorse* later dubbed "Barbie".

In our group one of the teachers, *Mr. Nemeth*, had to jump in and take a role. He had played the game before. I have to say being able to accuse a teacher of being a fake and having possibly murdered someone was something I'd like to repeat.

To sum it up: The table setting and food were good as well as the costumes. Everyone did a great job acting their part and investigating the matter. Wildly accusing people wasn't bad either. Whether we were able expose the murderer, I will keep to myself.

Afterthought

If there is another event like this, I encourage people to sign up. You get to combine being in your own murder mystery (without the casualties) while speaking and improving your English skills. Even though a certain level of English is needed, it doesn't have to be perfect.

If you want to try something different and boost your confidence, this is for you as well. It was a great experience for me and I would definitely do it again. And I don't think I'm alone with this.