

ABOUT MOUSETRAP

The world's longest-running play!

After a local woman is murdered, the guests and staff at Monkswell Manor find themselves stranded during a snowstorm. It soon becomes clear that the killer is among them, and the seven strangers grow increasingly suspicious of one another. A police detective, arriving on skis, interrogates the suspects: the newlyweds running the house; a spinster with a curious background; an architect who seems better equipped to be a chef; a retired Army major; a strange little man who claims his car has overturned in a drift; and a jurist who makes life miserable for everyone. When a second murder takes place, tensions and fears escalate. This record-breaking murder mystery features a brilliant surprise finish from Dame Agatha Christie, the foremost mystery writer of her time

THE MOUSETRAP BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

CHARACTERS:

Mollie Ralston: Female; Age 20s to early 30s. New owner/hostess of Monkswell Manor; anxious about hosting the inn's first guests; married to Giles for one year.

Giles Ralston: Male; Age 20s to 30s. Mollie's husband of one year, Giles is the co-host of Monkswell Manor; somewhat arrogant and jealous of the other guests' attentions toward Mollie.

Christopher Wren: Male; Age 20s to 30s. A flighty, obviously neurotic young man. The first guest to arrive at the hotel, Wren is hyperactive and acts in a very peculiar manner.

Mrs. Boyle: Female; Age 30s to 50s. Mrs. Boyle is an imposing woman in a bad temper; she complains about everything. She is disapproving of every effort to make her comfortable.

Major Metcalf: Male; Age 40s to 60s. Major Metcalf is middle-aged, square-shouldered, military in manner and bearing. He is friendly and very polite. A typical retired British military officer.

Miss Casewell: Female; Age 20s to 30s. An edgy, aloof, somewhat masculine woman who speaks offhandedly about the horrific experiences of her childhood.

Mr. Paravicini: Male; Age 30s to 50s. A man of unknown provenance who turns up claiming his car has overturned in a snowdrift. He appears to be affecting a foreign accent and artificially aged with make-up.

Detective Sergeant Trotter: Male; Age late 20s to early 40s. Detective Sergeant Trotter is a cheerful, common-place man who arrives at the guest house on skis to investigate a local murder.

All roles are open to all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or body type*

Please prepare a short contemporary monologue or one of the suggested pieces.

Mousetrap Monologues

CHRISTOPHER: You know you're not at all as I'd pictured you. I'd been thinking of you as a retired General's widow, Indian Army. I thought you'd be terrifically grim and Memsahibish, and that the whole place would be simply crammed with Benares brass. Instead, it's heavenly – quite heavenly. Lovely proportions. (*pointingatthedesk*) That's safake! (*pointingatthesofatable*) Ah, but this table's genuine. I'm simply going to love this place. Absolutely perfect. Real bedrock respectability. But why do away with a center mahogany table? Little tables just spoil the effect.

If you had a mahogany dining table, you'd have to have the right family around it. Stern handsome father with a beard, prolific, faded mother, eleven children of assorted ages, a grim governess, and somebody called "poor Harriet," the poor relation who is very, very grateful for being given a good home!

MISS CASEWELL: Georgie, Georgie, you know me, don't you? Don't you remember the farm, Georgie? The animals, that fat old pig, and the day the bull chased us across the field. And the dogs. Yes, Spot and Plain. Yes, Kathy – you remember me now, don't you? I came to England to find you. I didn't recognize you until you twirled your hair the way you always used to do. Yes, you always did it. Georgie, come with me. (*Firmly*) You're coming with me. It's alright, Georgie. I'm taking you somewhere where they will look after you, and see that you don't do any more harm.

MOLLIE: Sergeant Trotter. He puts things into your head. Things that aren't true, that can't possibly be true. You see that? Yesterday's evening paper – a London paper. And it was in Giles' pocket. But Giles didn't go to London yesterday. He went off in the car to look for chicken wire, but he couldn't find any. I don't know what the Sergeant thinks. And he can make

you think things about people. You ask yourself questions and you begin to doubt. You feel that somebody you love and know well might be— a stranger. (*Whispering*) That's what happens in a nightmare. You're somewhere in the middle of friends and then you suddenly look at their faces and they're not your friends any longer— they're different people— just pretending. Perhaps you can't trust anybody— perhaps everybody's a stranger.

TROTTER: I'm in the position now where I've got to put myself in the place of a crazy cunning brain. I've got to ask myself what he wants us to do and what he, himself, is planning to do next. I've got to try and keep just one step ahead of him. Because, if I don't, there's going to be another death. Three blind mice. Two mice cancelled out—a third mouse still to be dealt with. There are six of you here listening to me. One of you is a killer! I don't know which yet, but I shall. And another of you is the killer's prospective victim. That's the person I'm speaking to. Mrs. Boyle held out on me—Mrs. Boyle is dead. You—whoever you are—are holding out on me. Well—don't. Because you're in danger. Nobody who's killed twice is going to hesitate to kill a third time. And as it is, I don't know which of you it is who needs protection. I'll get the killer—I've no doubt of that—but it may be too late for one of you. And I'll tell you another thing. The killer's enjoying this. Yes, he's enjoying himself a good deal...

GILES RALSTON: Cheer up, darling, everything's going all right at the moment. I've filled up all the coalscuttles, and brought in the wood, and stoked the Aga and done the hens. I'll go and do the boiler next, and chop some kindling... You know, Mollie, come to think of it, it must be something pretty serious to send a police sergeant trekking out in all this. It must be something really urgent....

MRS. BOYLE: Mrs. Ralston, if you don't mind my saying so, that is a very extraordinary young man you have staying here. His manners — and ties — and does he ever brush his hair? My dear young woman, I have naturally heard of Sir Christopher Wren. Of course he was an architect. He built St. Paul's. You young people seem to think that no-one is educated but yourselves. You are young and inexperienced and should welcome advice from someone more knowledgeable than yourself.

MAJOR METCALF: I was looking around. Just looking around. I looked into that cupboard place under the stairs near the kitchen. Lot of junk and sports tackle. And I noticed there was another door inside it, and I opened it and saw a flight of steps. I was curious and I went down. Nice cellars you've got. Crypt of an old monastery, I should say. Probably why this place is called "Monkswell".

PARAVANCINI: What an answer to a prayer. A guest house — and a charming hostess. My Rolls Royce, alas, has run into a snowdrift. Blinding snow everywhere. I do not know where I am. Perhaps, I think to myself, I shall freeze to death. And then I take a little bag, I stagger through the snow, I see before me big iron gates. A habitation! I am saved. Twice I fall into the snow as I come up your drive, but at last I arrive and immediately — despair turns to joy. You can let me have a room — yes?