

MURDLE

READER'S THEATER

JR.

MURDLE JR.: THE CASE IN THE CLASSROOM

by G. T. Karber

GENRE: Mystery

THEME: Logic and reasoning

CAST MEMBERS: 9

READER AGES: 10+

SETTING:

A regular, ordinary classroom (...OR IS IT?!)

THE CAST:

NARRATOR 1

NARRATOR 2

JAKE, JULIUS, or OLIVIA, the detective

BIG-TIME HOLLYWOOD AGENT, the witness

THE BODY, in a way, the lead role



SUSPECTS

- LADY VIOLET, a very rich lady with a poodle
- GRANDMASTER ROSE, one of the world's greatest chess players
- ADMIRAL NAVY, one of the great admirals of the sea
- MAYOR HONEY, one of the most middling mayors

Continued on next page...



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NARRATOR 1: Our story begins in a regular classroom.
Or, at least, it was a regular classroom. Until...THERE WAS A MURDLE!

(The person playing The Body should sit up and wave. This upsets the Narrators.)

NARRATOR 2: You're supposed to be dead!

THE BODY: I know, but I hear there are some talent scouts in the class today, and if I do a good job, I'll be going straight to Hollywood!

NARRATOR 2: Okay, well, the best way to do that is by playing dead!

THE BODY: Shouldn't I die in the opening scene? Wouldn't that be exciting?

NARRATOR 1: No, because then we would know who did it.

THE BODY: Well, what if I just stumble around and then collapse.

(The two Narrators look at each other.)

NARRATORS *(at the same time)*: Okay, fine.

(The Body jumps to their feet.)

NARRATOR 1: It was an ordinary day in an ordinary classroom, and then...there was a murdle!

THE BODY: Oh no! I've been murdled! Ugh! Oh no!

(They stumble around before they fall to the ground, taking their time.)

THE BODY: I am dead!

Continued on next page...

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(The audience cheers! The Body waves to their admirers, and then dies again.)

NARRATOR 1: Who could solve this seemingly perfect crime?!

NARRATOR 2: Meet...OUR DETECTIVE!

(Now, the Detective is either Jake, Julius, or Olivia, but they enter dramatically.)

DETECTIVE: Greetings, everyone! Have no fear! I am a super-sleuth, and I will solve this case. But also, I hear there's a big Hollywood agent here today, and since I am the lead performer, I think you might want to consider me for Hollywood.

NARRATOR 1: But we're going to stick with the main point, solving the case.

NARRATOR 2: We have FOUR SUSPECTS!

NARRATOR 1: The first suspect is...LADY VIOLET!

(Lady Violet enters.)

LADY VIOLET: I can't believe I am suspected! I am far too rich to commit this crime!

DETECTIVE: Crime never pays! So, you wouldn't do it for the money, anyway.

NARRATOR 2: Our second suspect is...GRANDMASTER ROSE!

(Grandmaster Rose enters.)

GRANDMASTER ROSE: As a chess grandmaster, I am too smart to commit this crime!

DETECTIVE: Maybe you're too smart for your own good!



Continued on next page...

MURDLE JR.

READER'S THEATER

NARRATOR 1: Our third suspect is...ADMIRAL NAVY!

(Admiral Navy enters.)

ADMIRAL NAVY: I parked my boat outside. I hope that's okay.

DETECTIVE: Sounds *fishy* to me...

NARRATOR 2: And our fourth suspect is...MAYOR HONEY!

(Mayor Honey enters.)

MAYOR HONEY: Hello, citizens! Thank you for welcoming me! Vote Honey for Mayor!

DETECTIVE: Or...is it more like...vote Honey for Murdle.

NARRATOR 1: These are the four suspects, but where were they when the crime was committed?! Each of them was in a different location.

NARRATOR 2: Our first location is...THE SPOOKY NATION OF DRAGONIA!

NARRATOR 1: It's got everything. Vampires. Zombies. And one of the suspects.

NARRATOR 2: Our second location is...HOLLYWOOD!

(The Body gets up off the floor.)

THE BODY: That's where I'll be going after my successful performance as The Body!

DETECTIVE: You're supposed to be dead!

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THE BODY: Oh, right!

(They go back down to the floor.)

NARRATOR 1: Our third location is...A BIG GIANT MANSION!

NARRATOR 2: Secret passageways, big roaring fires, and all the weapons you could find.

NARRATOR 1: And our fourth location is...RIGHT HERE IN THIS CLASSROOM!

DETECTIVE: Which, because of the body, you can tell is where the murder occurred. But where were each of the suspects? Let's interview them and find out.

(The Detective walks over to Lady Violet, the first suspect.)

DETECTIVE: Lady Violet, where were you at the time of the crime?

	LADY VIOLET	GRANDMASTER ROSE	ADMIRAL NAVY	MAYOR HONEY
DRAKONIA	✓	✗	✗	✗
HOLLYWOOD	✗			
MANSION	✗			
CLASSROOM	✗			

LADY VIOLET: Well, I was in Drakonia, having lunch with my family.

NARRATOR 1: Everybody, mark it down on your Deduction Grids. Put a checkmark in the box that is below "LADY VIOLET" and beside "Drakonia," because we know Lady Violet was in Drakonia. Then, put Xs in the boxes above and below, and to both sides, because we know that if Lady Violet was in Drakonia, she wasn't in the other places, and the other suspects weren't in Drakonia.

(The Detective walks over to Grandmaster Rose, the second suspect.)

Continued on next page...



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DETECTIVE: And where were you, Grandmaster Rose?

GRANDMASTER ROSE: I was not in Hollywood. I have better things to do than try to be famous.

NARRATOR 2: Okay, everybody, put an X in the box where Grandmaster Rose and Hollywood meet, because we know Grandmaster Rose wasn't in Hollywood.

(The Detective walks over to Admiral Navy, the third suspect.)

DETECTIVE: Admiral Navy, where were you at the time of the crime?

ADMIRAL NAVY: Ah, well, it's simple. I was in a big spooky mansion!

DETECTIVE: Ah-ha! Well, that means I've solved the crime!

MAYOR HONEY: I object! I haven't told you where I was yet!

DETECTIVE: But I don't need you to! I can use logic to solve the crime! If Admiral Navy was in the big giant mansion, and Lady Violet was in the spooky nation of Drakonia, then there are only two locations left: Hollywood and this classroom. Since Grandmaster Rose was not in Hollywood, he must have been in this classroom! And therefore, he must have committed the crime!

NARRATOR 1: Everybody gasps!

	LADY VIOLET	GRANDMASTER ROSE	ADMIRAL NAVY	MAYOR HONEY
DRAKONIA				
HOLLYWOOD				
MANSSION				
CLASSROOM				

Continued on next page...

MURDLE JR.

READER'S THEATER

	LADY VIOLET	GRANDMASTER ROSE	ADMIRAL NAVY	MAYOR HONEY
DRAKONIA	✓	✗	✗	✗
HOLLYWOOD	✗	✗	✗	✓
MANSSION	✗	✗	✓	✗
CLASSROOM	✗	✓	✗	✗

(Everybody gasps.)

NARRATOR 2: And Grandmaster Rose stands up and argues that he's not guilty!

GRANDMASTER ROSE: Forget that! I want everybody to know I'm guilty. If my opponents think I'm an evil mastermind, I will have an advantage when I play them in chess.

DETECTIVE: Unfortunately, you won't be playing in any chess tournaments soon, Grandmaster Rose. Unless they have chess in jail! Because that's right, crime never pays!

NARRATOR 1: Everybody applauds the bad guy getting caught!

(They applaud. Wait until the applause begins to die before continuing.)

NARRATOR 2: And when everybody is done applauding. Suddenly, a BIG-TIME HOLLYWOOD AGENT stands up and walks up to the other performers.

BIG-TIME HOLLYWOOD AGENT: This was a wonderful play! I particularly loved the performance of the dead body! I'm going to go back to Hollywood right now and make every one of you a star.

NARRATOR 2: Everybody cheers!

(Everybody cheers!)