CHARACTER DOSSIER · CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. David Pennywhistle

the pun-loving family solicitor

PLAYED BY DAVID

You are Mr. David Pennywhistle, solicitor to the Hexworth family for fifteen years and carrier of a bag of pink-ribboned papers that never leaves your side. You cannot resist a pun, and the worse it is, the happier you are. Tonight the thunder is rolling, the candles are guttering and the Lord has promised a midnight will-reading. Nerves make you punnier. Be charming, be groan-worthy, and keep those ledgers close. Everyone at Gloamwick Hall is wearing a mask. You're simply wearing yours with a gavel on it.

Your story

You have drawn up all eleven of Lord Ambrose Hexworth's wills, and you know that eleven wills means eleven chances to be asked for a twelfth. You keep the estate's books, and over the years you have grown very fond of the trust's money, in the way one grows fond of a library book one means to return. Tonight the Lord ordered you to bring every ledger and the old will to his masked ball, promising a proper reckoning at midnight. He would not say what kind. You have known Lady Sarah since she was a small girl who arrived late to her own christening, and you are her trusted adviser. You tease Leo's séances with spirit puns, and Priya Thorne quotes you in her crime columns, which is flattering until she starts asking about the accounts. You came to Gloamwick to be helpful, jovial and indispensable. You want the evening to pass with everyone laughing at your wordplay and nobody opening a ledger. What you fear is midnight arriving.

How to play your part

Be a cheerful, pompous lawyer who can't stop punning. Deliver each pun with a little bow and wait for the groan; if none comes, repeat it slower. Clutch your bag of papers whenever ledgers or money come up. Keep the mood warm and busy, so people remember you as the funny one at the table.

YOUR CATCHPHRASE

"I rest my case... and I rest it on a very good pun."

The others

Lady Sarah Hexworth (Sarah) Lady Sarah is your trusted client and an old family friend, and you have watched her be late to everything since she was small. You adore her, and you will happily tease her about punctuality all night.

Leo Marvello, "The Great Leonardo" (Leo) You mock Leo's séances openly with spirit puns, and he takes it with a theatrical sigh. You find him harmless fun, though that sleeve of his has always looked busy.

Miss Priya Thorne (Priya) Priya quotes your legal wisdom in her columns, which flatters you. But she keeps trying to peek at the trust accounts for a story, so you keep your bag a little closer when she's near.

Also at the table

Miss Aylin Fernsby (Aylin) the head gardener and plant parent

Sir Marcus Pell (Marcus) the competitive gentleman gamer

Tom Crumb (Tom) the hungry cook

Jess Thimblewick (Jess) the Lord's long-suffering secretary

Your secrets

For three years you have quietly 'borrowed' money from the estate trust, always meaning to pay it back, and you haven't. Every ledger in your bag makes your stomach flutter, and the Lord's talk of a midnight reckoning makes it worse.

Tip: *Keep your bag close and change the subject to puns whenever money, trusts or ledgers come up. Don't deny anything outright that you have to defend later; just sound busy and offended. If it comes out, protest that it was an accounting misunderstanding and try to steer attention to someone else.*

You have been slipping your own puns into the margins of the Lord's legal drafts. Eleven wills, and a pun hidden in each. It's your one bit of mischief, and you're quietly proud of it.

Tip: *This is harmless fun, so use it as a bargaining chip: admit it with a grin if someone presses, and use it to look charmingly harmless. Don't volunteer it too early; make them work for the pun.*

Your goals in round 1

- ☐ Ask Sarah and Leo what the Lord has told them about the midnight reading, and chat up anyone who knows what the new will says.
- ☐ Keep your ledgers close and steer anyone curious about the estate accounts toward a pun.
- ☐ Share your clue C02 "Bring the ledgers" and toast the camping trip of 2019 with your worst pun.

Your clues in round 1

TESTIMONY · ROUND 1

C02 Bring the ledgers

Lord Hexworth ordered me to bring every estate ledger and the old will to tonight's ball. 'Bring the lot, Pennywhistle,' he said, 'we shall have a proper reckoning at midnight.' I assumed it was about the will. A lot of paper for one night, a real case of file-ure to launch.

Tell everyone in round 1, word for word.

Costume idea

A black frock coat or dark jacket, a top hat, a bag stuffed with pink-ribboned papers and a mask with a gavel drawn on it.

The rules in brief

1. Stay in character and call everyone by their character's name.
2. Share each clue in the round you get it, and read it out exactly as written.
3. Bluff about your secrets if you like, but never change the words of a clue.
4. Open an envelope only when the host says so, and show it to no one.
5. Nobody knows who did it yet, not even the person who did.

2

SEALED

Round 2 envelope

Open only when the host starts round 2.

For Mr. David Pennywhistle (David)

The Reckoning Comes Early

You are the murderer. The Lord's accountant found the £4,200 you 'borrowed' from the estate trust over three years, and Lord Hexworth meant to expose you at the midnight reckoning, with the ledgers you carried in yourself. You would have lost your career, your name and perhaps your freedom. At 21:35 you slipped out of the Great Hall toward the Gallery, knowing the Lord had gone to hide the new will in the secret stair. You alone, besides Sarah, knew the chipped raven's beak that opens it. In the blackout, at 21:46, you pushed him down the stair and closed the door behind you. You rejoined the others at 21:52. Your cover story is C10, the library by candelabra from 21:35 to 21:50, alone. Stick to it, share it exactly as printed, and sound mildly sorry about the lack of witnesses. Deflect toward the loudest motives already public: Leo's rigged séance, Aylin's demolished orangery, Priya's threatened lawsuit. Keep everyone away from the library, and from asking who knew the stair.

Your goals in round 2

- ☐ Share C10 "David's blackout story" exactly as printed, and say it calmly during the alibi circle.
- ☐ Point out the loudest motives at the table, such as Leo's threats and Aylin's orangery, without lying about any clue.
- ☐ Keep the table away from the library and the estate books.

Tell everyone in round 2

TESTIMONY · ROUND 2

C10 David's blackout story

During the blackout I was in the library, reading my copy of the old will by the library candelabra, from about 21:35 until the lights returned at 21:50. Alone, sadly. I didn't see a soul, a will like that really leaves a man in need of a little 'probate'.

Tell everyone in round 2, word for word.

3

SEALED

Round 3 envelope

Open only when the host starts round 3.

For Mr. David Pennywhistle (David)

The Last Pun Standing

The evidence is closing in, so keep your composure and your cover story: you were alone in the library, reading by candelabra, from 21:35 until 21:50. Never confess. If anyone doubts the library, say that you were reading and nobody was there to see, and look wounded. You are about to share C19, which points toward Leo and his black thread; say it with a flourish and a pun, because it is a clue and you must share it exactly as printed. Other suspects have alibis, so lean on the Lord's many enemies and Leo's sleeve. If anyone mentions the accounts, call it a misunderstanding and a matter for lawyers, not for ghost stories. Remember, you only have to be more convincing than the truth. Make your accusation with a bow, aimed at a suspect with the thinnest alibi, and be ready for the table to groan at you.

Your goals in round 3

- ☐ Share C19 "The thread up the sleeve" exactly as printed, and push the table toward Leo's tricks.
- ☐ Defend your library story and steer attention to Aylin, Priya and the Lord's many enemies.
- ☐ Make your accusation with a flourish, and never confess.

Tell everyone in round 3

TESTIMONY · ROUND 3

C19 The thread up the sleeve

At half past nine, as the séance broke up, I saw Leo tuck a spool of black thread up his sleeve. A man who can rig a table can rig a staircase! If you ask me, he's the most stair-ly obvious suspect here.

Tell everyone in round 3, word for word.

Notes