A MURDER MYSTERY FOR 8 GUESTS

The Last Ferry from Saltmarsh Point

Saltmarsh Point, a small fictional town on the southern coast of Australia, regatta night at the Point Hotel

The regatta dinner is nearly over when Harold Quill, owner of the Point Hotel, is found dead in the boathouse. The last ferry leaves at 11. Eight guests, four rounds of clues, one killer.

Clue-checked: a solver proved the clue set points to exactly one culprit, and that nobody can work out who it is before Round 3 of 4.

SAMPLE PAGES: the full kit has all 8 characters, every round's clue cards, accusation slips and the solution.

Original story and characters. Written with AI assistance and clue-checked by a solver. For private home use.

Host guide

Players: 8, one character each. **Time:** about 2 hours. **Setup:** print the pages, cut out the character cards and clue cards, keep each character's pages in an envelope or folder and give them out a day ahead or at the door.

The victim

Harold Quill, 71, owner of the Point Hotel, boathouse and slipway, was found at 9:20 pm in the boathouse, struck once with a brass boat hook. He planned to sign the sale of the whole Point before midnight.

The one rule

Every clue card is true and is read aloud exactly as written. Only the killer may lie out loud. Each person plays their character, keeps their secret, and reads their clue cards aloud when their round comes.

Rounds

Round 1: The body in the boathouse. The host announces the death. Everyone introduces their character, then each reads their Round 1 clue aloud.

Round 2: Who walked the slipway. The evening is reconstructed. Everyone reads their Round 2 clue and questions each other.

Round 3: The key register. Lachlan's register of keys changes the picture. Read the Round 3 clues, then discuss.

Round 4: The last ferry. The final clues. Read them, then everyone writes a name on the accusation slip. The host reads the solution.

The three questions

To be the killer, a guest needs all three. Keep a note of who has each:

Means: Holds a key to the boathouse tool chest, where the boat hook was kept

Motive: Loses out (or gains) from the sale of the Point being stopped by Quill's death

Opportunity: Was unaccounted for near the slipway between 9:00 and 9:20 pm

Finishing

After Round 4 everyone writes one name on an accusation slip. Count them, then the host reads the sealed solution page aloud. The killer keeps a straight face until then; every other player must tell the truth about their own cards but may keep their secret.

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Character: Marguerite Fenn

Hotel manager

Who you are. You have run the Point Hotel for nineteen years and live in the flat above the bar. Quill hired you when no one else would, and you have never forgotten it.

Your secret. Keep it hidden. You knew about the sale a month before anyone else and told no one. You hold Quill's spare key to the boathouse tool chest, and you quietly drank two of his bottles of rum last week.

Everyone else at the table: Dr Ansel Prowse (Town doctor), Bridie O'Callan (Caterer), Cormac Teal (Boatbuilder), Priya Venn (Journalist), Lachlan Marsh (Harbourmaster), Odette Wray (Quill's niece), Felix Dunmore (Property investor)

Your clue cards are on the clue pages. Read yours aloud in the round printed on the card, exactly as written.

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Round 1 clue cards: The body in the boathouse

Cut along the boxes. Give each card to the character named; they read it aloud in this round.

Round 1. For Dr Ansel Prowse.
You examined Quill. He died between 9:00 and 9:20 pm from one blow of a brass boat hook, the kind kept in the boathouse tool chest. The boathouse door was found unforced.

Round 1. For Bridie O'Callan.
From 9:00 to 9:30 you and Marguerite Fenn were plating dessert in the hotel kitchen with the pass door open to the dining room. The waiting staff saw you both the whole time.

Round 1. For Lachlan Marsh.
Quill renewed the harbour mooring lease for ten years last Tuesday, signed and witnessed. A sale of the Point changes nothing for you.

Round 1. For Odette Wray.
Everyone knows Quill's will leaves you the boathouse, and that a sale of the Point would have voided that gift.

Round 1. For Felix Dunmore.
Your firm holds an option on the Point that expires at midnight tonight. Quill's death would stop the sale.

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