

# *How Peculiar*

The background of the cover is a surreal, painterly landscape. In the foreground, a river flows from the bottom left towards the center, its surface glowing with a vibrant green light. On the banks, there are dark, silhouetted trees. In the middle ground, several large, conical structures resembling tents or huts are scattered across the landscape. These structures are a bright, glowing red-orange color, with some showing internal wooden frames. The background is a hazy, dreamlike sky with soft, ethereal light in shades of green, blue, and purple, suggesting a twilight or dawn setting. The overall mood is mysterious and otherworldly.

Aidan Bowes

## **How Peculiar**

In which mysterious happenings are investigated in a haphazard way and then discussed over tea.

This is not a game of detectives. This is a game English tropes and absurdities, where the crimes are made up, the suspects bizarre and the conclusions are random

Play for fun only.

A Comedy Evening Game By Aidan Bowes © 2022

Thanks to “Operators” by Kyle Simons for mechanical inspiration

Cover Art: Walter Licínio,  
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<https://imgur.com/gallery/x4suTCF>

# Characters

You are a group of detectives, spies or amateur sleuths who have heard about weird goings-on in the nearby countryside. You are determined to investigate, no matter how dangerous or unearthly.

There is no pre-planned reason why you are working together. Instead, after you have introduced your character explain how you saved their life once, or the most dramatic crime you managed to solve together.

**Roll 1d6 for each column, or make up your own.**

<i>Number Rolled</i>	<i>Profession</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Weapon</i>
1	Spy	17	Tea
2	Shopkeeper	24	Umbrella
3	Bank Manager	29	Fisticuffs or Judo
4	Policeman	42	Darts
5	Wastrel	65	Steely Glare
6	Cross-Country Runner	85	Cat or Dog



# Plot

Each player rolls one dice, each choosing either a D6 (common plot) or D10 (rarer plot). These elements are shared between all players and may appear in some scenes, or may be the reason why you became involved in the first place.

<i>Number Rolled</i>	<i>Common plots (D6)</i>	<i>Rarer plots (D10)</i>
1	Murder of Ralph Burns	Murder spree in Fauston Village
2	Theft of Galadriel's Garnet Crown	Plot to blow up Harpbridge garden festival
3	Alan Appleby, fellow investigator, is missing	UFO sighting
4	Bramford Police are stumped	Jan Jenkins changing overnight
5	A mysterious illness	Strange lights at night
6	Secretive gatherings	Crop circles
7		Dead hiker
8		Heightened security
9		Military presence
10		Destruction from escaped chemicals



# Landmarks

When visiting a landmark for the first time, work out what it is by rolling 1d10 for each column for the landmark (Description, Place, With...) and each column of the main person found there (NPC, Temperament). Or make up your own.

<i>Number Rolled</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>With...</i>
1	Crumbling	Harkley Manor	... a secret attic
2	Isolated	The Bloody Bear	... a barrel of mysterious liquid
3	Extremely Clean	The Professor's House	...an impressive library
4	Tense	Mrs. Widgeley's poker night	...with copious amounts of alcohol
5	Silent	Grant Farm	...dangerous machinery
6	Wealthy	Animal Sanctuary	...newborn animals
7	Dilatated	Tourist Destination	...a potential investor
8	Dark	Collapsed Mine Shaft	...vans coming and going mysteriously
9	Entrepreneurial	Ice Cream Van	...a pet weasel
10	Family-Owned	Sausage Factory	...hidden stash of advanced weapons

<i>Number Rolled</i>	<i>NPC</i>	<i>Temperament</i>
1	Gamekeeper	Angry and offensive
2	Landlord	Proud
3	Scientists	Extremely nerdy
4	Con Artist	Lazy
5	Butcher	Industrious and distracted
6	Animal Keeper	Overly Friendly
7	Tour Guide	Knowledgeable/helpful
8	Metal Detectorist	Non-local
9	School Children	Excitable
10	Manager	Ominously Normal

# Scenes and Rules

## 0. Introductions

Introduce your characters to the group: the details above and their name. But also use this as an opportunity to expand your investigators' background and give them a few quirks. You can expand on these as the game progresses.

## 1. Investigations

To begin with, the group splits up and each investigator individually visits a landmark in the area to gather evidence. So, one landmark per investigator.

- *The investigator chooses from the available players the one to play the main NPC.*
- *That player can assign other roles to available players as needed.*
- *The main NPC also acts as story guide for this scene, in the sense that they may need to flesh out the physical objects and geography of the location, but there is nothing to say that other players can't contribute to this.*

Once each investigator has visited a landmark, they can revisit landmarks they haven't investigated previously (or indeed choose to investigate extra landmarks) and may do so in pairs. Yes, that means other players may end up NPCing the same characters, and causing plot confusion. Luckily this is a comedy and chaos goes with the territory.

Investigation mostly need no rules: it just plays out as conversations and/or actions between investigators, NPCs and possibly

objects and locations. But if a scene turns antagonistic, then there is a simple rule to say what happens.

*Each investigator rolls 1D6. The number rolled is the number of obstacles or antagonists they have to overcome in order to make their daring escape. The investigator must describe how they do so.*

To clarify, the obstacles require no further dice to overcome – the investigator will always manage to escape intact - but they should endeavour to entertain with their thrilling heroics (whether physical, smart or witty). Other players can make suggestions, but suggestions only.

## 2. Joining the dots

Once each landmark has been investigated to the investigators' satisfaction, they all meet for a cup of tea, biscuits and to work out what the plot is.

On a piece of paper, scatter over it all the landmarks and NPCs and anything else you want to note that came out of the investigations.

*Now crumple it up and pour soy sauce [1] across it and let it drip. Flatten it again. All investigators now look at the pattern and use it to work out the “real” plot.*

Notably, circle anyone or anything which counts as a threat. If playing online, choose one of the players to do this and then share a photo of the result with the rest of the players.

## 3. Dealing with the threats

Once they have identified the threats, the investigators need to deal with them before they cause more problems. This works very similarly to the scene's “conflict” mechanism. Each investigator rolls two dice.

- *Roll 1d6 as the first dice. This is how many dramatic moments you face as you try to take down the bad guys.*

- *Roll 1d6 as the second dice. If you score 4-6 you have one success, meaning you can deal with one threat (as you worked out during the previous scene).*

Take turns to tell the story of how you handle the threats and the dramatic turns that you face along the way.

It is possible some threats aren't covered; in which case they escape or cause lots of damage (you may end up with yet another scene where you have to explain this to your bosses or the police!).

You might also end up defeating more threats than exist, in which case that might mean you uncover an extra threat or that you somehow "deal with" an innocent bystander. Or something else.

## Tip

- *Keep things strange, or at least eccentric, and be liberal with your descriptions. The more colourful everything is, the more everyone will enjoy and remember it.*

- *Don't worry about using the tropes correctly. As long as it's fun and works for you, you are playing it right.*

- *Similarly, don't worry about it making any real sense.*

- *Because you are split up for most of the game, remember to give everyone their screen time.*

- *How long everything takes will vary, but make sure to allow 30-40 minutes at the end for Joining the Dots, Dealing with the Threats and for light out-of-character discussion after.*

- *[1] Various liquids work but this seems to be the most practical. Tea is not dark enough and coffee not much better.*