

MURDER BY MAGIC!

At an annual celebration event for infamous wizards, where the 'Most Magical Wizard' is crowned, Merlin is murdered! A detective has been called and you are the detective's assistant. Using the extract below and the detective's notes, try and work out who murdered Merlin. Find the answer within the text!

From outside came the occasional cry of a nightbird, and once at the windows a long drawn catlike whine, which told everyone that Voldemort's snake was indeed at liberty. Far away the deep tones of the parish clock could be heard, which boomed out every quarter of an hour. How long they seemed, those quarters! Twelve struck, and one and two and three, and still the group of magicians and illusionists sat in awe as they each stepped up on to the stage one by one to flaunt their talents.

Currently, Gandalf was performing his notorious stunt: turning fire into lightning. After Voldemort's parseltongue hymn and Prospero's conjuring of thunder and lightning that almost brought the glass roof down, this was mere child's play. If he wanted the crown, he'd have to do better than that, especially following Merlin's invisibility act. The rivalry between Gandalf and Merlin had been the talk of the town leading up to tonight and it was clear who had the upper hand. The night, or rather the morning, was ending: Doctor Strange glanced habitually at the 3-foot hanging clocking; Dumbledore's light snoring began to increase in volume; and Prospero was still laughing silently to himself recalling his earlier ill-disposed stunt at replacing Merlin's magical cloak with a curtain (a feat which almost ruined the whole night). Suddenly, amidst the silent drone of the night, a deafening crash erupted from behind the stage. It was instantly followed by a loud howl.

There was the momentary gleam of a light up in the direction of the roof, which vanished immediately, but was succeeded by a strong smell of burning oil and heated metal. Heads instantly veered towards Gandalf. He stepped back, eyes wide and arms open. As heads rotated to each magician in the room, fear inched upon them. Again, there was a gentle sound of movement, and then all was silent once more.

At that instant, all sprang from the seats: Doctor Strange, Dumbledore, Voldemort, The Wizard, Prospero. They each conjured light, and lashed furiously towards the back of the stage, Gandalf following sharply behind them.

As the curtains opened, a soft cry escaped Voldemort's lips. It was Merlin: lying down, eyes blood-shot red, gaping at the ceiling, blood gushing out of his neck like an oper tap.

DETECTIVE'S NOTES:

Summary of clinical history

Time of Death: between Around 3:05am.

Cause of Death: unknown.

Physical Injuries: bruising apparent on right side of throat and loss of blood. Injury requires further examination. Confirmed as victim's.

Evidence: Lacking.

Points of importance:

- **Reason for victim's absence:** Exited backstage to retrieve his cloak. Time: around 2.55am. Confirmed by Dumbledore.
- All were present in their seats at time of death.
- **Suspect:** All attendees of party.
- **Motive:** TBC (To be Confirmed)

DETECTIVE'S ASSISTANT'S NOTES:

Read through the extract again and find any clues to who you think the murderer is. List suspects and motives below:

Suspect	Motive	Evidence
Gandalf	Jealousy? Competition for 'Most Magical Wizard'?	"The rivalry between Gandalf and Merlin had been the talk of the town"