

# The Curious Mansion

A Quick Storytelling and Drawing Game for 1-6 Players by  
Jack van Riel

Created in 24 hours for the 2018 RPG Geek 24-hour RPG Contest.



# What This Is

This is a Storytelling and Drawing game. Together with your friends, you play characters who explore a curious house, which may be haunted. As you walk through the garden, enter the house, move from room to room, you find out how you react to each new discovery. Sometimes you'll react with joy, at other times a sense of mystery is predominant, or you might get frightened by the unexpected. You will find items, that you have to find creative uses for in later scenes. Your friends help you play out these scenes, and shape the story of exploration. And while this story emerges in your mind's eye, you'll also draw representations of your discoveries on a sheet of paper, shared with your friends. By the end of the game you will have a drawing of a Curious Mansion and everything in it, unique to your game.

# What You Need

To play The Curious Mansion you will want to gather around a table with your friends. While you can play The Curious Mansion solo, it's probably more fun when you play it with others. There's no hard limit on how many can play, but if you're with more than six people, you might want to split into multiple groups.

All players have equal authority over the story. There is no Gamemaster.

Furthermore, you'll need some supplies:

- A blank paper, at least letter or A4 sized.
- Drawing supplies. A pen at the minimum, but preferably colored pencils.
- A six-sided die
- This document. If this is your first time playing, you'll have to print out pages 6 and 7 and print and cut out the item cards on page 9.

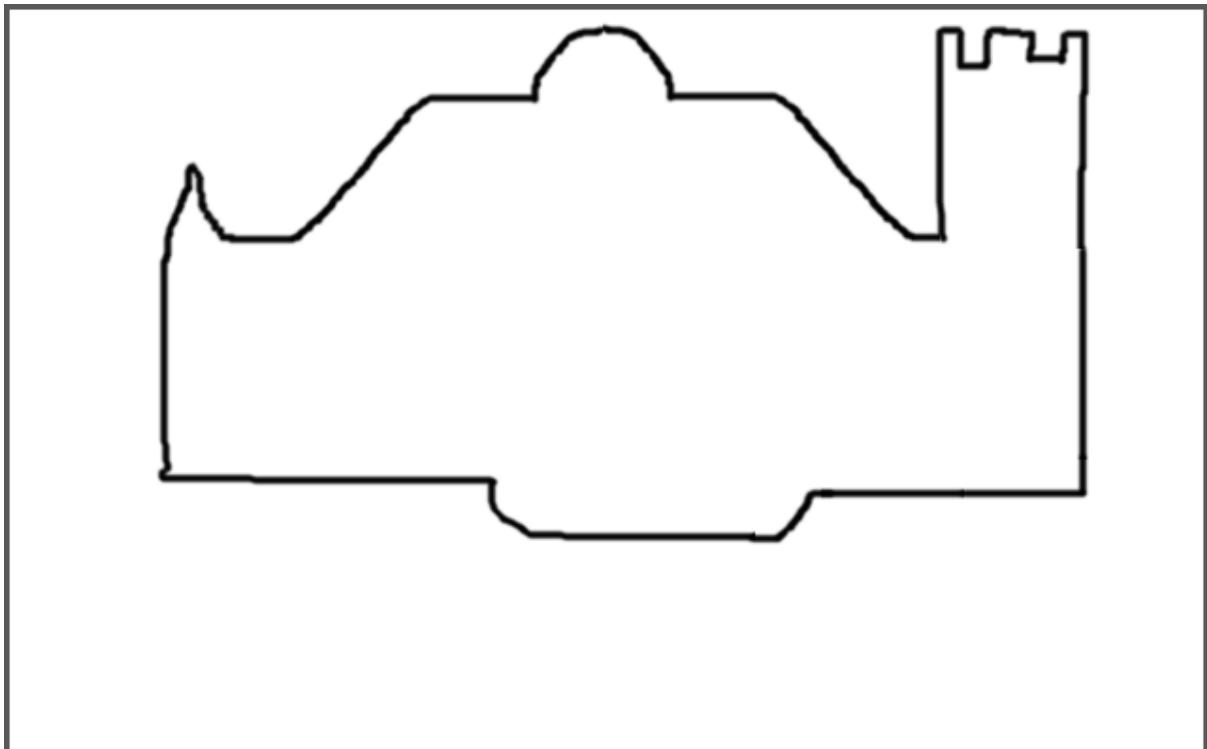
## Preparing to Start

The story of *The Curious Mansion* starts with the characters discovering a strange, large, possibly abandoned, house. Players should discuss who these characters are, the relationships between them, and how they came upon the mansion. Perhaps they're a family on vacation, whose car broke down not far from the house. Perhaps they're neighborhood kids, daring each other to explore the old house. Perhaps they're paranormal investigators, who read about the mansion in old newspaper clippings.

Each player should choose a character to play, and introduce them to the others with a name and (visual) description.

Players should also briefly discuss the location and look of the house. Don't go into too much detail! Leave enough to be discovered through play. You might decide that the house is on a hill, or hidden in a forest, and that it is tall and leaning over, or squat and irregular with plenty of little turrets and towers.

One or more players should draw the outline of the house on the sheet of paper. Use an open front view, like a dollhouse. The house should take up most of the paper, but leave room to draw the grounds around the mansion.



Place the marker on the space marked Start on the List, and choose a player to start.

# On Your Turn

When it's your turn, follow these steps in order:

1. Roll the die, and see if you rolled odd or even.
2. If you rolled odd, move the marker to the next odd number on the List. If you rolled even, move the marker to the next even number.
3. Read the brief description on the List. This is what your character encounters.
4. Think about how your character reacts. If you rolled a 1 or a 2, think about what is **joyful or pleasing** about the scene, what triggers an enthusiastic response. If you rolled a 3 or 4, think about what is **curious or mysterious** about the encounter, and why your character is intrigued. If you rolled a 5 or 6, think about what is **scary or unsettling**, and why your character reacts with fright.
5. Invite none, some, or all of the other characters to be present in the scene. The players whose characters are invited can each accept or decline that invitation.
6. Play out the scene with the characters who are present. Say what you see, hear, smell, feel, and think about the encounter. Build on each other's descriptions. That means leaving blanks for others to fill in, and not contradict each other. Ask each other questions, if you like. If it's your turn, your character's general response is determined by the die roll, while other players can choose their characters' gut reactions.  
If you have an item card, you may use that item in the scene. Describe how you leave it there, and discard the card. If you have an item card that's rotated right side up (see below) you **must** use the item. You can only use an item on your own turn.
7. The players whose characters aren't in the scene may each ask one question about the scene of the players whose characters are in the scene. If you can't think of anything to ask, that's ok. Discuss and answer the questions.
8. Draw a small representation of the encounter on the sheet of paper. Invite the other players to contribute.
9. If the description on the List mentions an item card, and you rolled a matching number, take it and place it in front of you, right side up. If there was another character present in the scene, and that player doesn't yet have an item card in front of them, you may give it to them. If there were no other characters present, or they all already have one or more item cards, you must keep the item card yourself, even if you already have one or more item cards. Describe how your character takes the item.
10. Turn all item cards you have, including one you may just have gotten, 90 degrees clockwise. This keeps track of how long you've had the item in your possession. You have to use the item some time in your next four turns.
11. Pass the die and the sheet of paper to the next player. It is now their turn.

## Example of Play

Aiko, Burak, Chris, and Dana are playing a group of 18-year-olds on a hiking trip. Intrigued by a house that isn't on their map they decide to investigate. Aiko goes first and rolls the die. She gets a 2.

Aiko: A 2! Let's see. The next even number is the 2. I come upon an ornamental gate, and I'm joyful about it. I invite you all to be in the scene, if you like.

Burak: Sure, my character Molly is there with yours!

Chris: I think I'm lagging behind, looking at all the flowers and plants.

Dana: And I'm trying to get you to hurry up, so I'm not at the gate yet either.

Aiko: Ok. Molly and I are standing in front of this beautiful, intricate metal gate, all loops and swirls. It's eight feet tall, green and white and gold.

Burak: I run my fingers over it. Paint has chipped at some places, but it's in good condition. It's cold to the touch, but not unpleasantly so.

Aiko: (In character) Would you look at that, Molly! Isn't this beautiful? It reminds me of my grandparents' place. When I was a small child, I thought their gate must be the biggest in the world!

Burak: Pleasant memories, eh? Who do you think might live here?

Aiko: I don't know! It looks like it hasn't been opened in a while.

Burak: Yeah. There are vines growing over it.

Aiko: Vines! I like that. I'm going to start drawing. Do you have any questions, Chris? Dana?

Chris: Uh, let's think. Can you see the house beyond?

Burak: I think there are lots of trees in the way, still. What do you think, Aiko?

Aiko: Trees, sure! But this tall tower we talked about, I think that's visible.

Dana: Is the gate locked? Will we have to climb over it?

Aiko: No, no. When Molly touches the gate, it opens without sound. Almost like it's inviting us to explore.

Burak: Perfect. I love your drawing, Aiko. Can I add the vines?

Aiko: Sure. And then it's your turn.

# The List

Start Outside the garden wall.

1 A hole in the garden wall, big enough to crawl through.

2 An ornamental gate.

Enter the garden

3 A discarded doll. On a 1 or 3, take the Discarded Doll item card.

4 A hand painted sign.

5 A puddle of rainwater.

6 A rubber boot. On a 2 or 4, take the Rubber Boot item card.

7 A small animal.

8 A toppled statuette.

9 A carving in a tree, a knife stuck in it. On a 3 or 5, take the Dull Knife item card.

10 A birdhouse nailed to a tree.

11 A small vegetable patch.

12 Your reflection in a dirty pane of greenhouse glass. On a 4 or 6, take the Glass Shard item card.

13 A mass of remarkable plants.

14 A swing hanging from a tree branch.

15 A broken fountain. On a 1 or 3, take the Silver Coin item card.

16 A pond.

17 The entrance to a hedge maze.

18 The servants' entrance at the side of the house. On a 2 or 4, take the Master Key item card.

19 The main entrance at the front of the house.

Enter the house (main floor)

20 A spiderweb

21 A coat rack. On a 3 or 5, take the Heavy Coat item card.

22 A window with heavy drapes.

23 A bust of a young man.

24 A supply closet. On a 4 or 6, take the Dim Flashlight item card.

- 25 A grandfather clock.
- 26 A low table with dirty wine glasses.
- 27 A wine rack. On a 1 or 3, take the Wine Bottle item card.
- 28 A chess board.
- 29 A chandelier.
- 30 The door to a cellar. On a 2 or 4, take the Jar of Preserves item card.
- 31 A deer head wall decoration.
- 32 An oil painting of a noblewoman.
- 33 A stack of letters. On a 3 or 5, take the Letter Opener item card.
- 34 An antique bookcase.
- 35 A grand piano.
- 36 A billiards table. On a 4 or 6, take the Cue Stick item card.
- 37 A spiral staircase.
- 38 An imperial staircase.

*Enter the upper floors*

- 39 A sewing mannequin. On a 1 or 3, take the Sewing Kit item card.
- 40 A ballroom dress.
- 41 An ornate bed.
- 42 A dressing table. On a 2 or 4, take the Perfume Bottle item card.
- 43 A music box.
- 44 A sudden change in temperature.
- 45 A fireplace. On a 3 or 5, take the Fireplace Poker item card.
- 46 An exotic mask.
- 47 An anatomical skeleton model.
- 48 A gun cabinet. On a 4 or 6, take the Antique Rifle card.
- 49 A hidden door or secret hatch.
- 50 The call of a bird.
- 51 Movement behind a curtain.
- 52-53 An apparition.

*The game ends. Have a final epilogue scene, and show how the experience changed the characters.*

## Example of Play, Continued

A while later, the marker is on 19. It's Dana's turn, and they have the Rubber Boot item card, turned three times. They roll the die, and get a 5.

Dana: Let's see, the next odd number is 21. Ooh, we're entering the house! I see a coat rack. Chris, since your character Natalya was at the main entrance, it makes sense for her to be in the scene. What do you think?

Chris: I'm right behind you!

Dana: Good. I need you, because I rolled a 5, and I'm scared of this coat rack. I think it's dark in the entrance, and my eyes haven't quite adjusted yet. I hit my head on this mass of antlers and tusks and I scream.

Chris: (In character) Are you ok? What happened? Look, it's ok! It's just a coat rack!

Dana: Ah! For a moment I thought.... But you're right. What kind of sick person makes a coat rack out of teeth and bone?!

Chris: I shrug. It's a strange house, but doesn't that make it exciting?

Dana: I don't know... we better warn the others.

Dana looks at their item card, and sees they still have a Rubber Boot. It's turned three times, meaning if they don't use it now, they must use it next scene. Dana thinks for a bit, and has an idea.

Dana: I look at the large protruding antler and rub my forehead where I hit it. I snort angrily. Then I take the little yellow rubber boot that I found earlier, and pull it over the antler. There! Soft and rubbery and bright yellow; this will stop the others from hurting their heads.

Aiko: Clever! But can I ask a question? Are there any coats hanging on the rack?

Dana: Uh, yes. In fact, I find a Heavy Coat item. I think it's the only coat there, and I'm shivering with fear, so I take it. It makes me feel a little more protected. I could give it away, since Chris doesn't have an item card yet, but I'll keep it for myself.

Chris: Sounds good! Burak, do you have a question?












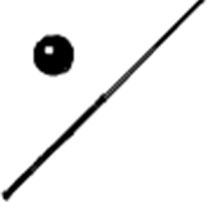


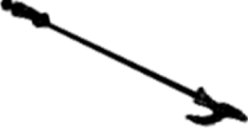

Burak: Well, I'd like Dana to describe the coat. Does it smell bad?

Dana: It's dirty, and ugly green, and it reeks of death. But it's warm. If you draw the coat rack, Chris, I'll draw the coat.

While Chris quickly sketches out the antlers and tusks that make up the coat rack, Dana discards the Rubber Boot item card. They then take the Heavy Coat item card, put it in front of them, and turn it 90 degrees clockwise. Finally they pass the die to Aiko.



# Item Cards

|                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>3.<br/>Discarded Doll</p>  | <p>6.<br/>Rubber Boot</p>          | <p>9.<br/>Dull Knife</p>          | <p>12.<br/>Glass Shard</p>      |
| <p>15.<br/>Silver Coin</p>    | <p>18.<br/>Master Key</p>          | <p>21.<br/>Heavy Coat</p>         | <p>24.<br/>Dim Flashlight</p>   |
| <p>27.<br/>Wine Bottle</p>  | <p>30.<br/>Jar of Preserves</p>  | <p>33.<br/>Letter Opener</p>    | <p>36.<br/>Cue Stick</p>      |
| <p>39.<br/>Sewing Kit</p>   | <p>42.<br/>Perfume Bottle</p>    | <p>45.<br/>Fireplace Poker</p>  | <p>48.<br/>Antique Rifle</p>  |

Marker

*Curious*