

All Hail Bugtopia!

A storytelling game for 5 players



By **Hannah Shaffer**
For Game Chef 2015

What You'll Need

- 5 players (2 Accused, 3 Audience)
- 3 printed copies of the game
- Printed bug character cards (for the Accused)
- Printed suspicion tally (for the Audience)
- 3 chairs for the Audience, arranged side by side at the table
- 2 chairs for the Accused, arranged side by side, directly across from the Audience
- A large stack of index cards or small pieces of notepaper
- A pen or pencil for every player

A Quick Introduction

(The Audience should read this section aloud to all players, out of character.)

All Hail Bugtopia! is a game about bugs on trial for a crime they may or may not have committed. The **Accused** will always be two lowly bugs, standing trial for the attempted assassination of the Dragonfly Captain. The **Audience** will always be three mighty dragonflies, acting as judge, jury, and exterminator.

The accused are not allowed to read the rules past this section. The Audience may read all the rules beforehand or as they play.

At the start of the game, each of the Accused will choose to play as one of the bugs from the bug character cards. The Accused cannot choose the same two bugs.

Bug Type	Bug Traits
Ants are...	Tireless workers, organized, good-natured.
Beetles are...	Hefty brawlers, strong-willed, temperamental.
Butterflies are...	Flighty bystanders, fickle, absent-minded.
Grasshoppers are...	Agile tinkerers, talkers, eccentric.
Honeybees are...	Devoted servants, protectors, vigilant.

The three players playing the Audience will always be dragonflies.

Dragonflies are...	Democratic judges, model leaders, astute.
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The Accused should play to their own bug's traits, and the Audience should play to the dragonfly traits, where possible.

Approach this game like reading the script from a play. Italicized paragraphs should be read aloud (theatrically) by the dragonfly Audience. Each dragonfly should have a printed copy of the script, and the dragonfly Audience should decide through body language and eye contact which dragonfly speaks at which moment in the script.

It's okay to fumble and to step on each other's toes a little, but try to preserve the dignity of these judicial proceedings.

Beginning the Game

(The Audience should read this section aloud to all players, out of character. In-character reading will begin soon!)

All bugs in Bugtopia live under the reign of the Dragonfly Regime. Are the dragonflies **cruel** or **kind**?

All players (including the dragonfly Audience) must choose their answers privately. Write "**cruel**" or "**kind**" on a notecard, fold the notecard into fourths, and keep your card in front of you, where everyone can see it but not read it. These answers will be revealed at the end of the game.

Enter the Accused

(Get in character, dragonflies, and remember to alternate between readers.)

A grave wrongdoing has been committed in Bugtopia; an attempt on the life of our sovereign leader, the esteemed Dragonfly Captain! Here today, the Accused will stand before us. As stated in the Dragonfly Decree, we shall grant them Audience in the name of justice.

May the Accused enter and remain standing!

Thank you, Accused.

Please, clasp your limb parts to your thoraxes. Now, the Bugtopian national anthem, to be sung aloud by all present:

*All hail the great Bugtopia, our home and our first love!
Where dragonflies soar mightily up in the skies above.
And all the bugs across the land are mostly happy too.
Wherever there are problems we don't make a big to-do.*

All may now be seated.

Opening Remarks

On the morning of the 37th of Bugtember, at precisely 9 o'clock, an explosive device was detonated in the center of the Plaza, mere feet from where his esteemed Dragonfly Captain was scheduled to deliver his quarterly address.

By the fortune of fortunes, the Captain had taken ill that day, and had sent for the Draconian Dragonfly Marching Band to perform in his absence. The Marching Band was, thankfully, unharmed.

*Before us stand the Accused...**(call each Accused by their bug name and motion to the Accused)**.*

You the Accused stand trial today because:

- 1. You were present at the scene of the wrongdoing, and...*
- 2. For reasons that will become clear, your motives are suspect.*

Throughout this fair and just trial do you, lesser bugs of Bugtopia, swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth today, so help you Bug?

Do you...pinky swear?

Then, let us begin.

The Interrogation

(The Audience should read this section aloud to all players, out of character, including Guidance & Guidelines and Scoring Suspicion.)

During the **Interrogation**, both the Accused and the Audience will be quickly writing down answers to questions that haven't been asked yet. Everyone should keep their answers secret until instructed to do otherwise.

The Audience has received tips from key witnesses that may or may not place the Accused at the scene of the wrongdoing. Sometimes, matching answers will increase the suspicion of the Audience. Other times, mismatched answers will appear suspect. The Audience will know whether a match or mismatch is better, but the accused will not.

Guidance & Guidelines:

- For each new round of questions, alternate between which Accused answers first. If Beetle answered first during the first round of questions, Grasshopper should answer first during the second round of questions. The Accused who takes the second turn will always have a slight advantage, so it's important to alternate this role.
- The first question in each round always has two possible answers. If the first Accused gets the first answer wrong, they can optionally pass their second index card under the table to the other Accused to increase the likelihood of a correct answer.
- Stick to easy answers—the first thing that comes to mind. Don't go digging for hard-to-guess answers!
- When the Accused gives a poor answer, they may try to justify or explain it however they wish. The Audience will decide whether to accept these explanations.
- Have fun with the roleplay and take liberties. Use the script as a jumping off point, but feel free to ad-lib your own conversations from there.

Scoring Suspicion:

- As the Accused answer the questions, if the Audience has any matches, they must acknowledge these matches through roleplay. When a matching answer is evidence of innocence, the Audience should react along the lines of, "Yes, very good. This is consistent with our information." When a matching answer is evidence of guilt, the Audience should react along the lines of, "Chartreuse, you say? Well, that's quite interesting. Our records indicate..."
 - The dragonfly Audience cannot hide or withhold matching answers.
 - For every suspicious answer, the Audience will add **+1** to the **Guilty** column for the Accused. For every credible answer, add **+1** to the **Innocent** column.
 - The Audience must confer with each other over matches and mismatches, and suspicion should be scored as a group effort. Settle disputes about guilt or innocence quickly and assertively.
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1st Round of Questions (1 of 4)

(Remember, dragonflies must write down their own answers to these prompts as well.)

Bugs, please take a moment of stillness to gather your thoughts. During this moment of stillness, take four index cards and write down:

- *One job that requires manual labor*
- *Another job that requires manual labor*
- *A number between 1 and 5*
- *A color of the rainbow*

You have roughly 30 seconds to record your answers. Don't show these answers to anyone yet, even to your fellow Accused.

When a question is asked of you by the Audience, your answer must include one of the words on the index cards in front of you. When answering a question, slide your card forward so that everyone can see the answer, then set the card face down beside you. Keep your responses brief and to the point—a few sentences at most. Wasting our time will reflect poorly on you.

*If you feel your response closely matches our insider information, but isn't an exact match, you may say **"appeal,"** and briefly attempt to argue your case. Do not abuse the privilege of appeals. The Audience may deny appeals as they see fit.*

*Answers cannot be in the negative. If you are asked what you do for a living, you cannot answer, "I am **not** a dancer." If you are asked about your relationship to the Accused, you cannot answer, "I am **not** his mother."*

Now, the Audience will ask the first Accused three questions. Then, the Audience will ask the second Accused the same three questions. Accused, are you prepared to answer truthfully?

Good.

(+1 guilt for mismatched answers, +1 innocence for matched answers.)

- 1. You were working in the Plaza the morning of the explosion. What is the nature of your job?*
- 2. How many years have you worked at this job?*
- 3. What is the color of your uniform?*

(Repeat questions for Accused #2.)

2nd Round of Questions (2 of 4)

Thank you, bugs. Second round of questions. Bugs, please take another moment of stillness to write down:

- *A non-familial relationship to another person*
- *Another type of non-familial relationship*
- *A common location in a small town*
- *Something precious and valuable*

The Audience will again ask the first Accused, then the second Accused, three different questions. Accused, are you prepared to answer truthfully?

(+1 guilt for mismatched answers, +1 innocence for matched answers.)

1. *On the morning of the explosion you were seen with **(other accused)**. What is your relation to this bug?*
 2. *Where did you first meet this bug?*
 3. *If you knew this bug had committed a grave wrongdoing, what would it take for you to sell them out? **(For this question, scoring suspicion is at the discretion of the audience.)***
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3rd Round of Questions (3 of 4)

Thank you, bugs. That was certainly enlightening. Third round of questions. Please take a moment to write down:

- *One very blunt and heavy object!*
- *One extremely sharp and pointy object!*
- *A common use for one of these objects*
- *A common fear or phobia*

Accused, now that you've recorded your responses, are you prepared to answer the following questions truthfully?

(+1 guilt for matched answers, +1 innocence for mismatched answers.)

1. *Trusted witnesses reported seeing you with a suspicious and potentially dangerous object the morning of the explosion. Please describe the object in question.*
2. *Do tell, why were you in possession of such a hazardous device?*
3. *Witnesses report that you hid the object from sight the moment of the explosion. What were your reasons for this hasty concealment?*

4th Round of Questions (4 of 4)

Thank you, bugs. We have one last round of questions before we hear your final defense. Please take a moment to write the following on your cards:

- *A large mammal*
- *Another large mammal*
- *A season*
- *A common insect defense mechanism*

Bugs, the final round of questions:

(+1 guilt for mismatched answers, +1 innocence for matched answers.)

1. *In last week's mandatory Bugtopian Council meeting, which I'm certain you must have attended, the Dragonfly Captain discussed the impending threat of a common pest. Which pest was discussed?*
 2. *When did the Captain say we must be ready for this pest?*
 3. *And finally, how is the Captain preparing to defend us from this pest?*
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Final Defense

Thank you, bugs.

Bugs, we will now hear your final defense. Speak clearly and to-the-point. We want no more than a few sentences. You may use any combination of cards in your hand to convince us of your innocence.

(Give the bugs a moment to fumble through a defense using the cards in their hand.)

We have granted you Audience in the name of justice. Now, a moment of stillness while we deliberate your sentences.

The Sentences

Finally, the Audience will tally up the guilt and innocence columns for each of the bugs. If a column has more guilt, the bug is guilty. If a column has more innocence, the bug is innocent.

If both columns are tied, look to the sentence of the other Accused. If the other Accused is guilty, the tied score should be a guilty sentence. If the other Accused is innocent, the tied score should be considered innocent as well. If both Accused have tied scores, it cannot be mere coincidence. Both Accused must be guilty.

Sentences should be delivered for each bug individually. **The punishment for wrongdoings in Bugtopia is death.**

After the sentences have been delivered, all players should unfold the index cards in front of them. If the card says **cruel**, the Accused was truly guilty. If the card says **kind**, the Accused was truly innocent. Dragonflies can interpret their own answers however they wish.



Thanks for reading!

Images

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