

# Parlor Games



By 1904, the United States was really feeling the effects of the Industrial Revolution. Many of the things they had made by hand were now being produced by factories and if you had enough money, you could buy them rather cheaply at a store. With all this free time, parlor games became very popular. Samantha, her friends and even the adults in her family found ways to entertain themselves in their parlors, which is what we might call a living room today. Try some of these games that were popular in Samantha's day with your friends and family!

- **Blind Man's Bluff**

Blindfold one of the players while all other guests scatter around the room. To start, the blindfolded player is spun around several times to disorient them. The blindfolded person must attempt to catch someone. When they capture a player, they have to give the identity. If they get it right, then the captured player takes the blindfold and play continues. If the blindfolded player is unable to identify who they have captured, the prisoner is freed and play continues. To make play more interesting, players may call out to the blindfolded player to attract their attention.

- **Charades**

Prepare by thinking up a list of phrases or words that can be acted out. It is important that the phrases are likely to be known by all the participants. Write each phrase on a piece of paper and put them into a hat. Divide the players into two or more groups. Each group will take a turn at acting out their phrase while their teammates try to guess. No speaking is allowed by the actors. You can keep track of points or just play for fun. Using a timer or time limit will help keep the game moving.

- **Reverend Crawley's Game**

Everybody stands in a circle. Each player then holds hands with another player, but the hands may not be those of the person next to them, and they may not hold both hands with the same person. This creates a large human knot. The group now has to work out how to untangle the knot without anyone letting go of any hands. This involves twisting and contorting and should end in one or two circles of people.

- **Grand Mufti**

One player stands up in a chair and is called the "Grand Mufti." They make whatever motion they want, such as putting their hand on the heart, stretching out an arm,

making up a sad face, etc. At each motion, the Grand Mufti says "Thus says the Grand Mufti!" or "So says the Grand Mufti!" When they say "**Thus** says the Grand Mufti!" everyone must make the same motion as the Grand Mufti; but when they say "**So** says the Grand Mufti!" everyone must keep still.

- Pass the Slipper

Pick a player who stands in the center of a circle formed by the other players. The player chosen closes their eyes for a set amount of time (a count of 20-30). As they do, the slipper or shoe or any other small object is passed from player to player behind their backs. When the person in the middle opens their eyes, the passing of the slipper immediately stops and the player must guess who holds the slipper. If the player is correct they change places. Otherwise the player closes their eyes again and play continues.

- Forfeits

One person is chosen to leave the room (the judge). All the other players must place a small personal item into a box. The "judge" is brought back into the room. The judge picks up an item and describes it. The owner must come forward and pay a forfeit - do something amusing/embarrassing - to win back the item. If the player fails, or refuses the forfeit then the judge keeps the item. Suggestions for forfeits: sing a song; dance; stand on your head; tell a story; make 3 people laugh; yawn until someone else yawns; bark like a dog, do 20 star jumps, imitate the person on your left, hold your breath for as long as you can; hug the person sitting opposite you; hop around the circle on one leg; tell everybody something embarrassing that happened to you; say red lorry, yellow lorry 5 times; rub your head and pat your tummy; try to touch your nose with your tongue; walk around the circle backwards.

- Lookabout

Choose a small object and show it to everyone. One player is chosen to remain in the room. Everyone else leaves. The item is then placed somewhere. It must remain on view, but it could be placed low or high or put with other items. The other players return and look around to find the item. When they find it they sit down without saying where they found it. Play continues until the last player finds the item, and then it becomes their turn to hide the object and the game starts over again.