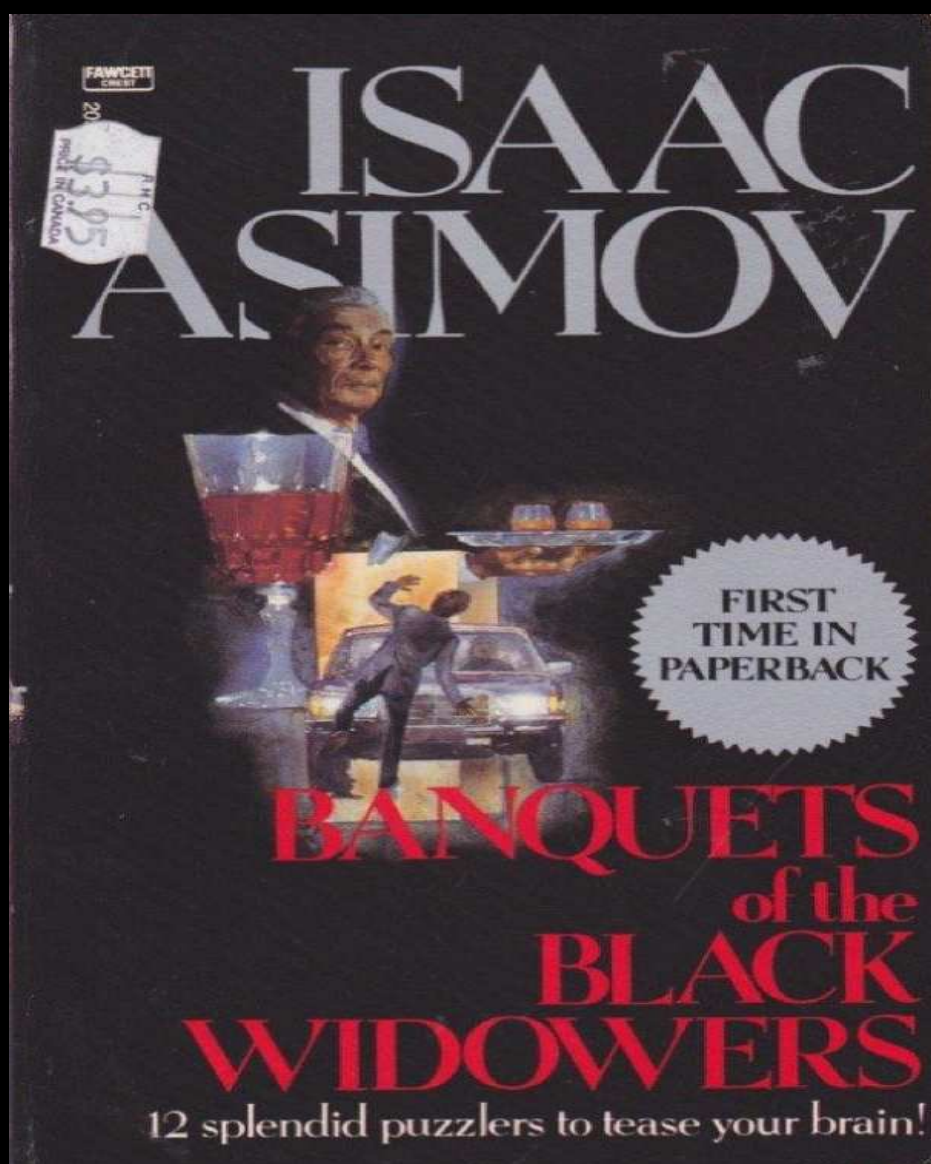




Tales by Isaac Asimov & others, Jump by Aehriman

Once a month, the Black Widowers meet, and dine on the expensive, savory fare of the Milano, and for a couple hours forget any wife or darling. Each month a different man hosts the gathering and produces a guest for the post-branding grilling. Each guest has a problem, a mystery to be solved. Some involve crimes committed, or obscure riddles, a few to settle an inheritance. With nothing but a single witness to question, the combined expertise of the table, and the insight of the Milano's perfect waiter Henry, the club shall almost without failure solve the puzzle set before them.

The club has but two rules beyond basic structure. No repeat guests, and no women ever. This is 'guy time.'

The first Black Widowers short story, the Acquisitive Chuckle, was published in February 1972 in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. For every nine magazine stories, Asimov would pen three more exclusive to when he bundled them in a collection, eventually totalling 66. Plus a few penned by others. The Black Widowers were very transparently based on a literary society Asimov had been a member of, the Trap Door Spiders, and several members are clearly based on people Asimov knew, like Lester del Ray and L. Sprague de Camp. Asimov even wrote himself into a couple of stories.

Have 1,000 choice points (cp) to round yourself out.

Location

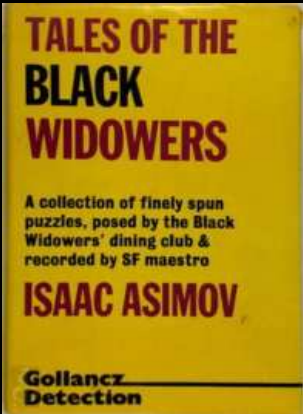
The Milano - a splendid restaurant, described only sparsely.

Origins

There’s no backgrounds here. You can choose something plausible if you want an origin, or be a drop-in.

Age, Race and Sex

Pick whatever you want. The club isn’t racist in the least.



Perks:

These cost 100 points unless otherwise stated. You get 4 Template Tokens. These can be redeemed to get anything 100 cp for free, two for more expensive ones. Anything you buy here can be **purchased multiple times**. Doing so provides an additive bonus.

Artist: You can sketch and caricature, always good for a laugh, and for conveying specific information of a scene where words fail.

Black Widow: Isn’t it funny, all these men having their silly club with a ‘No Girls Allowed’ sign like it was a little boys’ treehouse. No worries, nobody will bar you from anything

Career Options: Choose a career. You get 10 years of experience with that career and updating credentials that’ll allow you to practice it elsewhere in the future.

Chemist: You have a PhD and years of experience in chemistry, granting you familiarity with a wide variety of pharmaceuticals and industrial processes.

Cryptographer: You have the skills to unravel secret codes, and the pattern-recognition and logical skills involved will serve you well in other areas.

Grilling: You can coax information out of even the most reluctant of subjects, a kind word goes farther than any kind of threats.

Honesty: As happens a couple times, you have an incredible reputation for honesty, such that your friends will entertain even wild tales of your travels through the multiverse without substantial proof, and would need ironclad evidence that you were lying to entertain the possibility.

Humility: You have one of the rarest and most admirable of virtues, the ability to understand when you need help and the willingness to ask. You understand what challenges lie within the scope of your abilities and which do not, which tasks can challenge you and which would be foolish to attempt.

Ideal Waiter: Like Henry (based on Jeeves) you are discreet, patient, refined and able to gently prod people to conclusions.

Justify Your Existence: The first question asked of each guest is how they will justify their existence. Your life, however is *res ipsa loquiter*, your exact value is plain to yourself and to others. For any task you are qualified to perform, you are the first candidate that people think of.

Lateral Thinker: You are a creative person, able to run things forward and back, find a fresh perspective, an angle no one else would have considered.

Logician: You are well trained in both formal and informal logic, being wise to various fallacies and false assumptions, skilled in inductive and deductive reasoning.

Mathematician: You can do large sums and complex operations, including advanced calculus and trigonometry, quickly and easily in your head. Never tap a pencil while pondering how much to tip again!

Occam's Razor: Plurality must never be posited without necessity. In other words, the simplest explanation that fits the facts or conditions of the case is most probable. With this principle firmly in mind, you will never overlook a solution for being too obvious.

Peacemaker: Trumbull is the general grump of the group, but some guests have been downright disagreeable. You are skilled at getting various people to get along, or at least politely ignore each other long enough to work together.

Programmer: Computers are still in their infancy, the home PC is a while away, and C won't finish developing for a couple years. Still, you are trained in computer engineering and programming, and it has given you a particular insight into the world.

Sportsman: Each Jump or decade, whichever passes first, you find yourself restored to the full prime of life, with an athleticism possessed only by a few star athletes.

Well-Read: You read a lot of mysteries and fiction, as such you are conversant in a wide variety of topics, tropes and so on. From the methods of safecracking to the many ways of concealing a message in plain sight.

A Touch of Fantasy (-200 cp) The club members never age, leave, or die, though thirty-five years pass in our world between the first Black Widowers story and the last. You will not succumb to the ravages of time.

Reconstructive Imagination (-300 cp) You can easily visualize a scene from verbal descriptions, even one taking place years ago. Your questions prompt surprising details to be remembered and added to your mind palace, a clock, a newspaper, and so on.

Items

Bequest: You are the recipient of a trust that pays out \$10,000 a month, about \$76 thousand in 2024 money. In future Jumps you receive an equivalent sum in the local currency.

The Rolls: An expensive car, which maintains, repairs and refuels itself.

- Home:** A townhouse in or near a major city, appropriate to someone of the upper middle/lower upper class. All utilities and payments are taken care of, as is all cleaning and maintenance.
- The Milano** (-200 cp) You own one of the most exclusive fine-dining locations in a major city, a world-famous attraction with an enormous menu, talented staff, and a way of making money hand over hand.
- The Black Widowers** (-300 cp) Once a month, you can summon the Black Widowers to share a scrumptious meal, hear your problems, and offer their counsel.
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- Supplement Mode:** You can choose to use this jump as a supplement and attach it to another jump. After all, the club only meets once a month.
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- Crossover Mode:** Import another jump of your choice. You'll fill out the jump document, keeping the point totals separate. This setting and the other setting(s) you selected will then merge into one.
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Companions

These cost 100 points unless otherwise stated.

- Recruit Anyone:** Free! Anyone you want to recruit in this world is free to join you as a companion if they agree. Even Isaac Asimov or Bruce Wayne.
- Import:** You can import all your companions, and they'll get 600 points to spend. They also get the 4 Template tokens, same as you got.
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Drawbacks

Each of these offers 200 points unless otherwise stated.

- Longer Stay:** You'll spend 10 more years here.
- Item Lockout:** You can't bring items from outside the jump into this jump.
- Power Lockout:** You can't use abilities from outside this jump here.

Warehouse Lockout: You can't access your warehouse.

Companion Lockout: Your companions can be imported and buy things, but they can't enter the jump with you.

Ottur Trout: You have become fascinated with anagrams, palindromes, limericks, puns and wordplay of all kinds. Your companions... less so.

End

What will you do now? Stay here? Go home? Move on to the next jump?