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Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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presents...

“Out Of The Game”

Host Guide

For standard versions

by Stephanie Chambers

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“Merri Mysteries” was formerly known as “Tailor Made Mysteries”. This kit was previously called "Death On The Mound". For further details on **Merri Mysteries** or to order another mystery dinner party kit, see www.merrimysteries.com. See *Copyright details* later in this guide for further details on the copyright requirements for this kit.

Host's guide

It is easy to prepare and run a mystery party. We recommend that as host you should also take a role and participate along with everyone else. With our mysteries, not even the villain knows who did it. But with a little intelligence and a careful ear for important clues, it is possible to solve the mystery.

Preparing for the party

- 1 Open the kit. The name of the kit shows the recommended minimum number of guests and the maximum number of guests for which this kit caters.
- 2 Decide when you will be having the party, where and who will play each role. You should read the description of each character and try to select a role for each guest. Or you may like to give your guests a choice of the roles not yet taken and let them decide for themselves. It is better if people play roles that are as different as possible from their normal lives.
- 3 We recommend that you tell your guests to: "Please dress up as your character. Over dressing and going to extremes is highly recommended." We generally find that the more people put into the event, the more fun it is.
- 4 Decide how you want to do the invitations. You can print out the Word or Adobe Acrobat versions and handwrite the details, or you can type in your party details before you print it out. There are versions with four invitations per page or one invitation per page. You can print them in color or black and white or you may like to print them on colored paper.
- 5 The invitations refer your guests to read a web page to find out more details about their character (ie their character's description and their dress suggestions). They should try and read the descriptions of all of the suspects before they come to the party. We sometimes hide clues in these. However, they don't need to read the descriptions of the optional characters.

- 6 You may like to have a copy of the suspect pages available at the party in case some guests didn't get time to read them before the party.
- 7 Cut each page in two using a guillotine/paper trimmer or scissors. Don't read the clues beforehand as it will spoil your enjoyment of the party, and you may spoil everyone else's enjoyment by letting on that you know everything!
- 8 Staple the pages for each person together into a booklet so that there is a page with their character's name at the front followed by clues for each act.
- 9 The "Who Did It" pages are at the end with a warning beforehand not to read the next section. Fold these unread, put them in an envelope and open it at the end of your party to find out who did it.
- 10 Print a name tag for each guest. You can print them in color or black and white or you may like to print them on thicker or colored paper. Cut these up and have some small safety pins handy.
- 11 **For versions with optional roles:** Create a clue booklet for each person playing an optional role. Divide up the extra clues for each act and staple them to their clue booklet for the appropriate act. You may like to print them an extra name tag each that you staple on to the front of their clue booklet. If you don't have many people playing optional roles, divide the extra clues up amongst the suspects also. All the clues should be given out.
- 12 Decorate the room just before the party (see *Décor suggestions*).
- 13 Prepare or arrange for food for the event (see *Menu suggestions*).
- 14 Decide whether you are going to have prizes for the party (see *Preparing prizes*). This is optional, but recommended.

Décor suggestions

These are suggestions you might like to follow to make your place look like a 1940s baseball field:

- Use cushions to mark a few bases
- Have some bats and balls and mitts present
- Put up fake 1940s baseball posters

- Play big band music as people arrive and during the breaks between acts (eg Glen Miller, the Andrews Sisters etc) or marching band music.

Menu suggestions

Eat food you would find in America. Search for recipes on the Internet (eg search for “American recipes” on www.google.com or search for specific recipes). Generally forties food was more conservative and traditional. For example, you might serve soup, a baked roast and apple pie and cream.

Or you can serve the sort of food they’d eat at the game: hot dogs, popcorn etc.

If you would prefer, you can serve a sit down dinner or have the food in a buffet / smorgasbord arrangement.

Preparing props

You may like to have the body of a girl dressed in a baseball uniform collapsed dead on the mound. Make sure she has starched petticoats on. You may like to cordon her off with crime scene tape (you can make this by writing “Crime Scene” on paper).

Preparing prizes (optional)

This is optional, but you may like to have some prizes available to give to the people:

- who guess who did it
- with the best costume.

You can reduce the number of people you have to give a prize to by asking for details as to who, how and why the person did it.

If you do have prizes, you should let people know they exist just after you read out “*The Rules*”.

Tip: Don’t assume that only one person will guess who did it. It is best to have a prize you can divide up (eg a box of chocolates or a bag or box of Turkish Delights). If no one guesses correctly, divide the prize up amongst everyone.

If you have a color printer and some T-shirt transfers, you may like to download and print out some of our special T-shirt logos (ie “I Gussed Who Did It” and “I Had The Best Costume”). See <http://www.merrimysteries.com/tmm/prizes.htm> for details. These are free to download.

Running the party

We suggest that you run the party as follows:

- 1 Give each guest their name tag and a small safety pin to attach it with.
- 2 When everyone has arrived, read *The Rules* to everyone.
- 3 Have everyone introduce themselves to the group by saying their character’s name and a few words about themselves from their description.
- 4 Check that everyone has read the “*The Suspects*” pages. If they haven’t, give them a few minutes to read them quickly. There may be important clues in “*The Suspects*” pages.
- 5 Serve the First Course of your meal or have dips available. Generally we don’t recommend you continue with the clues while people are eating unless you are pressed for time.
- 6 Hand out the clue booklets. You should give each person their clues for all acts. As you give it to each person, tell them not to open it until you say so. When you are ready, tell everyone to turn to Act One. Do Act One. Make sure everyone reads out all their clues and that everyone participates. You may like to encourage people who are shy by asking them a question or two.
- 7 Serve the Second Course of your meal (if applicable).
- 8 Do Act Two. Serve Dessert (if applicable).
- 9 Do Act Three.
- 10 Serve hot drinks and after dinner mints (if applicable).

- 11 Ask each person to think about who did it and why and how they did it. Ask them to write down their final choice. When they are ready, go around the group and ask everyone who they think did it and why and how they did it.
- 12 After everyone has had a guess, take the *Who Did It* pages out of their sealed envelope and read as specified.
- 13 Present the prizes (if you are providing these). If more than one person guesses correctly, give the prize to the person who has the most correct answers as to how and why the person did it. You may like to also give a prize for the person who has the best (or most creative) costume.

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These are to be read out by the host to the whole group at the beginning of the party:

Welcome to “Out Of The Game”!

As you know our baseball game was interrupted today by the unexpected departure of Petticoat Peterson. The game was cancelled. The police, after some preliminary questioning, have narrowed the suspects down to twelve team members. I will introduce the suspects to you in a moment.

I will ask you to turn the page just before each act begins. There is a page of clues you have to reveal for each act. Only read the page for each act as required and please don’t read the pages ahead of time. During each act you must reveal all of your clues for that particular act.

Go around the table and let everyone say a clue or two. Repeat this until everyone has said their clues. Try to blend any remaining clues into the conversation. If you can’t do this, just say your clues when the conversation subsides. If you are asked a question, say the response from your clue sheet.

There is no need to hurry through this and you can adlib a little if you want. You do not have to read each clue exactly as it is written – embellish it if you want. You might like to speak in slang or with an accent. For example, if you are playing a snob, you might speak as if you have a plum in your mouth. If your character is distressed, you could reveal your clues in between sobs. Act it out to the fullest. This is your chance to be dramatic!

At the end of the party you will be asked to guess who performed the crime and how and why they did it. If you work out who did it before the party ends please keep it to yourself. *Optional:* There is a prize for the people who guess who did it. There is also a prize for the person with the best costume.