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Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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presents...

“Who Stole The Cookies?”

Host Guide

For standard versions

by Stephanie Chambers

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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 murderer 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 version of the kit to suit the number of guests you **think** you will be having. The name of each version shows the number of female and the number of male roles.
- 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 four invitations per page. You can print them in color or black and white or you may like to print them on colored paper.
For versions with optional roles: For the guests playing optional roles, cut out and attach their character description or copy and paste it into their invitation.
- 5 Or you could paste the jpg version into an email and add your party details and send this to each guest.

- 6 Move to the page(s) that show the character descriptions for the main characters (suspects). You need to send each guest a copy of these pages along with their invitation. Print as many copies of these pages as you need using Print Current page and specify the number of copies required.
- 7 If you are emailing the invitations, copy and paste the text from the suspect pages into your email message. You can select the text (page by page) from the Adobe Acrobat file.
- 8 When you know **exactly** how many guests will be attending, print the version of the kit for that number of guests.
- 9 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!
- 10 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.
- 11 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.
- 12 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.
- 13 **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. If there are far too many clues for the number of guests you are having, then you can ignore some of the sillier clues.
- 14 Print additional copies of the map to hand out or enlarge it and put it on the wall.
- 15 Decorate the room just before the party (see *Décor suggestions*).

- 16 Prepare or arrange for food for the event (see *Menu suggestions*).
- 17 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 the location look like a library:

- A few bookcases filled with books
- A few small tables with books scattered on them
- A couple of books (eg cheap paperbacks or books people don't want any more) in the middle of the table or arranged between bookends so it is like a mini library (if possible put at least one copy of their character's book on the table)
- Placemats printed on paper to look like books spread open
- Play a variety of music suited to some of the characters. For example, the soundtrack to Aladdin or Peter Pan etc.

Menu suggestions

You can serve whatever you want. However, as most of the characters are from long ago, you might aim for an olden day feel. For example, you could serve meat or vegetable pies, a roast and Yorkshire pudding for main course and bread and butter pudding for dessert. Search for recipes on the Internet (eg search for specific recipes on www.google.com).

Or you may like to serve cocktail party food such as:

- caviar, crackers (not necessarily expensive caviar), vol-au-vents or mini pies
- pastry cases filled with corn or asparagus and cheese
- spring rolls
- pastry parcels with spinach and feta cheese and pine nuts
- spicy chicken wings
- mini pizzas
- hot skewered food
- mini sweet pumpkin pies.

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

If it is a children's party, it is best to serve normal children's party food as that is what they are familiar with.

You may like to create some fun food relating to certain characters such as porridge for Goldilocks and a cake marked "Eat Me" for Alice in Wonderland (and everyone else) to eat.

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 each suspect 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 “Who Stole The Cookies?”!

As you know last night in the library, when many characters were out of their books, a crime was committed, grim and grave, right in our own library. When Mrs Bookworm, the librarian, opened the fundraising cookie cupboard this morning she was shocked. The cupboard, where the fundraising cookies had been kept, was empty.

Gathered in the library are the characters that were present at the time of the nasty deed. But the villain behind this terrible crime will no doubt be revealed as the party proceeds.

I will introduce you to the suspects shortly.

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.

The investigator will go first and ask various questions. You should go around the circle and answer each question. 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.

The Library

