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Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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presents...

“Phony”

Host Guide

For the mini version

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 criminal 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 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 Print out the play.
- 7 Cut each page in two using a guillotine/paper trimmer or scissors. Don't read the play 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 If it says the line may be said by an "Anyone", it can be said by one of the optional characters. If there aren't many optional characters, then the suspects should take a turn saying one of these lines, however, they shouldn't say it if it is a question for their character or about their character. You may like to work out beforehand who will say each of these "Anyone" clues and write their character's name next to each one. Try and make sure everyone gets a similar number of lines to say.
- 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 nametag 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 Decorate the room just before the party (see *Décor suggestions*).
- 12 Prepare or arrange for food for the event (see *Menu suggestions*).
- 13 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 make it look like a graduation party:

- position a banner with the names of the graduates mentioned in the kit as the suspects
- balloons, streamers
- mock diploma scrolls on the table
- music (eg modern music, or some of the theme songs of the suspects).

Menu suggestions

You can really serve any style of food that you would like for appetizers, main course and dessert.

Secret instructions

After the play, take a break after everyone has written down who they think did it and how and why. Give the people playing Tara Logue and Xavier Gates a secret note each. These secret notes are in the clue file just after Act 3 and before the Who Did It pages. Something will happen. After everyone gathers around, go back and have the suspects read out the Who Did It pages.

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 nametag 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 or their whole description (but not their dress suggestions).
- 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 your First Course (if you are serving various courses, otherwise, if you are providing food just make the food available and let people know they can eat it during the party).
- 6 Start reading out the clues of the play. Pass the play booklet around to each person mentioned. If it says “Anyone” can say the clue, give it to someone playing one of the optional roles or if you don’t have many people playing these roles, give it to someone who hasn’t had much to say as long as it isn’t about them. You may like to work out beforehand who will say each of the “Anyone” clues and write their character’s name next to each one. Try and make sure everyone has a similar amount to say. Make sure everyone reads out all their lines and that everyone participates.
- 7 Have the investigator (or someone else) read the police report and then let people discuss this and serve some more food (optional).
- 8 Have one of the optional characters read the medical report and then let people discuss this and serve some more food (optional).
- 9 Serve hot drinks and after dinner mints (if applicable).
- 10 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.

- 11 Take a break and hand out the secret instructions (see *Secret instructions* for details).
- 12 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 “Phony”! A bunch of friends have gotten together and decided to hold a group graduation party. But as people arrived at the party, they found some anonymous typed notes saying that one of the new graduates is a fraud. Someone managed to get a master’s degree without ever having obtained an undergraduate degree.

Which of their graduating friends had found out the truth? Why didn’t they tell the university? What will happen once the truth is revealed? Will the imposter take revenge? All of these questions will be answered at the party.

Shortly I will introduce you to the suspects. There is a separate play booklet. Only read your lines as required and please don’t read the pages ahead of time. There are assigned lines and there are also some lines which can be said by an "Anyone". We will be taking turns to say these clues and making sure we all get to participate. If there is another character’s name written next to a clue, then that person should say it.

There is no need to hurry through this and you can adlib a little if you want. You do not have to read each line exactly as it is written – embellish it if you want, but just don’t change its meaning. 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.