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Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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presents...

“Mystery In The Library”

Host Guide

For mini 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 kit.
- 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. You can assign up to three people to play each suspect. You can play the investigator (i.e. Sherlock Holmes) or assign the role to someone who has good reading skills.
- 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. Always print in landscape mode.
- 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.

- 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 Print the play and the investigator's report. 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 The "Who Did It" pages are at the end with a warning beforehand not to read the next section. Print these and fold these unread, put them in an envelope and open it at the end of your party to find out who did it.
- 9 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.
- 10 Print additional copies of the map to hand out or enlarge it and put it on the wall.
- 11 Decorate the room just before the party (see *Décor suggestions*).
- 12 Prepare or arrange for food for the event (this is optional 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 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 characters book on the table)
- Placemats printed on paper to look like books spread open
- Play a variety music suited to some of the characters. For example, the soundtrack to Aladdin etc.

Menu suggestions

Serving food is optional. 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).

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 Have everyone's clue pages on a table near the entrance so people can collect their page and their name tag as they arrive. Or hand them to your guests as they arrive.
- 2 When everyone has arrived, read *The Rules* to everyone.
- 3 Have one of the guests that are playing each suspect to introduce themselves to the group by saying their character's name and reading out the underlined words from their character's 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 your First Course (if you are serving various courses, otherwise, 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. Have one of the guests playing each suspect to read the lines for their suspect in the play.
- 7 Have the investigator (or someone else) read the investigator's report and serve some more food (optional).
- 8 Serve hot drinks and after dinner mints (if applicable).
- 9 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.
- 10 After everyone has had a guess, take the *Who Did It* pages out of their sealed envelope and have the third person playing each suspect read the lines for the suspect in the order specified.
- 11 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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The Rules

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

Welcome to “Mystery In The Library”!

The other night in the library, when many characters were out of their books enjoying a sojourn in the night air, a crime was committed, grim and grave, right in our own library. As a result his Majesty Henry VIII – that famous monarch from the English history books – has disappeared. Gathered are the characters who were present in the library at the time of the nasty deed. But the perpetrator of this heinous crime will no doubt be revealed as the night proceeds.

You have all been asked to remain here for questioning by the police. We must all work together to help determine who is the villain in our midst. You may want to jot down some notes on your clue page. When we do have some facts or evidence, we will read these to you.

If you are playing a suspect, 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 Map

The Library

