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Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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presents...

“Mardi Gras Mayhem”

Play version
for 10 to 16 guests

by Stephanie Chambers

First edition

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The Suspects

It's Mardi Gras in New Orleans and the city is full of party-goers. The parade has just finished and the invitation-only Ball is about to commence. The only problem is that this year's Rex King of the Mardi Gras – a local property developer called Darrin Hibiscus – hasn't been seen since he went up the steps of Gallier Hall to collect the keys to the city. The Mayor waited in vain in his office, but the king never appeared. His wife, the Queen waited for him to pass by, but he never did. Where has he gone? Has he been kidnapped? It's your job to find out.

Adoette – I am one of the Mardi Gras Indians. My native Indian name means large tree, that's why I have some twigs coming out of my Indian squaw costume. My ancestors are from the Yellow Pocahontas tribe. I work in a dress boutique. **Dress suggestions: Wear a squaw costume with feathers and beads but also include some twigs coming out of it.**

Pierre – I am a direct descendent of the French-Canadian explorer, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur de Bienville – the one who found land south of New Orleans in 1699 and called it "Pointe due Mardi Gras." I live in the French quarter of New Orleans. I just watched the parade go by. I am a draftsman by trade. **Dress suggestions: Wear a beret and a cape and don't let anyone call you Peter.**

Maid Coralie – I am a maid on the Krewe of Rex. Our Krewe is one of the oldest and our colors of purple, green and gold are now the official mardi gras colors. And we started giving out the collectible doubloon coins in 1960. I am a nurse in real life. **Dress suggestions: Wear fancy purple, green and gold clothes and carry some chocolate coins to hand out to whomever you meet. Wear a biggish hat that looks stuffed full of something.**

Captain of the Carnival (Culley) – I am the absolute leader of the carnival organization team and leader of the parade. In real life I am an accountant and believe me sometimes I find working with people much harder than working with numbers and receipts. **Dress suggestions: Wear an elaborate colorful hat with a feather at the top, matching tasseled trousers and shirt and a red beard and, if possible, a crooked red nose.**

Zinnia – I'm on the Zulu Krewe. I'm an environmentalist. Normally I work in an organic Permaculture nursery. The good thing about living in New Orleans is that everything grows well in this warm climate. **Dress suggestions: Wear a white t-shirt with an Hawaiian grass skirt. Carry a coconut.** © copyright Merri Mysteries Inc. 2012 Page 1 of 2

Fitz – I carried the flambeaux (Naphtha-fueled torches) at the parade. I work at a hardware store during the day, but I'm a cool dude at night. **Dress suggestions: Wear a white robe and carry one torch in each hand (or just carry flashlights).**

Dr Babs – I'm a physician and I was on the Knights of Babylon Krewe. Our Krewe was founded in 1939. Our king, or Sargon, takes his title from the legendary Babylonian ruler. But he wasn't the king of the actual carnival this year unfortunately. Our parade route went mainly down St Charles Avenue this year. **Dress suggestions: Wear a flamboyant colorful outfit. Carry a bag full of bandages and other first aid items.**

Mayor Norwell – I am the current mayor of New Orleans. I think the Mardi Gras is great for the city as it brings lots of visitors and keeps us alive and vibrant. And nowadays there are lots of volunteers to help with the clean up afterwards so even that's not a problem. I just wish I hadn't eaten so many king cakes at the party at Gallier Hall. **Dress suggestions: Dress in a suit and tie and carry something that looks like a King Cake.**

Duchess Dinah – I one of the ladies that works on all the committees for various charities around New Orleans. My daughter is all grown up now and is working as a marriage and family therapist, so I have lots of free time. I'm lucky to have inherited some money to live on, so I like to give back by giving my time. **Dress suggestions: Wear a grand glittering outfit complete with a tiara.**

Wise Man Goldwin – I dressed as the wise man carrying gold during the parade. I run a jewelry store downtown and I feel very attached to the soft warm metal that it is. **Dress suggestions: Wear a hat and Arabic men's outfit. Wear lots of golden chains and carry some gold bars (or representations of them).**

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Optional investigator

Police Chief – I’m in charge of the Police in New Orleans. I have a lot of extra Police on duty during the parade so I can’t explain how something like this could possibly have happened. *Dress suggestions: Wear a uniform and carry a notebook and pen.*

Optional witnesses

Boeuf – I am a fax ox. A bunch of masked cooks chase me around. They say I am a symbol of the feasting on “Fat Tuesday” before the austerity of Lent. *Dress suggestions: Wear white clothes and attach some horns to your head. If you want, you can also have some cow-bells tied around your neck.*

Pa Rum Pum Pum – I am a little drummer boy in the Rex marching band. I can really hold a good beat and I am one of the best in our band. *Dress suggestions: Wear a marching band uniform and carry a drum. Sing “Little Drummer Boy”.*

Percy The Page – I am one of the young men who assist the King on his journey through the city. Darrin has had me running errands all day long. I’m exhausted. *Dress suggestions: Wear a page’s uniform.*

Trixie – I am one of the masked riders on each float during the parade. I throw beads, doubloons, and other trinkets to the crowd. *Dress suggestions: Wear a mask and an elaborate, colorful costume.*

Zelda – I am one of the many poor peasant wenches at the Mardi Gras. Give me a nickel and I’ll dance in a spiral, till I fall down. *Dress suggestions: Wear a poor peasant costume.*

Name Tags

Adoette
(suspect)

Pierre
(suspect)

Maid Coralie
(suspect)

Captain of the
Carnival (Culley)
(suspect)

Zinnia
(suspect)

Fitz
(suspect)

Dr Babs
(suspect)

Mayor Norwell
(suspect)

Duchess Dinah
(suspect)

Wiseman Goldwin
(suspect)

Investigator

Police Chief
(investigator)

Witnesses

Boeuf
(witness)

Pa Rum Pum Pum
(witness)

Percy The Page
(witness)

Trixie
(witness)

Zelda
(witness)

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The Play

Note: *Although this is in play format, you do not have to take to a stage and act it out. You can just sit around a dining table and read out your lines or sit in a circle on sofas etc.*

Note: *If it says the line may be said by “Anyone”, we recommend that one of the optional detectives and witnesses take a turn to say the line. If there are no optional witnesses or detectives, then everyone should take a turn saying one of these lines, however, the person the clue is about should not say it. 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.*

Mayor: I was waiting in my chambers in Gallier Hall for the King, but he never turned up. I waited an extra hour or so and then I left.

Anyone: I heard that when they voted as to who should be King, Darrin only narrowly scraped in. The vote was 6 to 4 in his favor.

Anyone: Why were there so many dissenters opposed to him?

Captain: There have been a lot of rumors floating around New Orleans that the reason his construction company does so well is because they put lots of Styrofoam blocks in the foundation molds so they don't have to pour as much concrete.

Anyone: Is that legal?

Wise Man Goldwin: Well it passes inspection. But the chief inspector when to school with Darrin and I, so he might have corrupted him.

Zinnia: If they used coconut fiber instead of Styrofoam, it would be a whole lot better for the environment.

Anyone: The poor people who live in houses that Darrin's company built. They don't have proper foundations, so if a storm comes they might just blow over.

Anyone: They are just accusations. Nothing has been proven has it?

Anyone: That's not true. There's a video posted on the internet showing them doing it.

Anyone: Video footage can be rigged. They would have noticed someone filming them wouldn't they?

Anyone: You were seen lying on the ground with a camera in hand Pierre, so you must have been the one filming it.

Pierre: We French are known for our discreteness. I admit I took the video, but that doesn't mean I have had anything to do with Darrin's disappearance.

Anyone: Maybe the soft footed Indian Squaw Adoette snuck up behind him and kidnapped him?

Adoette: I had barely ever met the man. He lived in a far wealthier part of town than where I live.

Anyone: That's not true. During the lead up to the Mardi Gras, he met with all the people on the main floats, so he would have met you.

Anyone: I think what she means is that she wouldn't have really gotten to know him. A quick handshake isn't enough to make you know someone.

Anyone: I've been with my wife for twenty-five years and I still don't feel I know her.

Fitz: It wasn't just the construction industry scandals that made him unpopular. His son was a friend of mine till his father insisted he leave town.

Anyone: Apparently Darrin found it impossible to accept that his son got an anti-war tattoo.

Anyone: Did Darrin financially suppose his son's departure from town?

Duchess: Darrin gave him a one-way ticket to New York and then his son had to give blood just to get the bus money to move somewhere cheaper to live. His wife was so upset, so cried on my shoulder.

Anyone: Couldn't Darrin's wife send him some money to support him till he got a job?

Maid Coralie: No. Darrin has never given his wife any money. She doesn't even have a bank account. She isn't a signatory on any of his checks. I know because my sister works at the bank he belongs to and she told me all about it.

Anyone: Yes. If she ever needs a new dress, he has to come shopping with her. That's why she wears clothes that look like they belong in the last century. If she had her way, she wouldn't dress like that.

Anyone: Why does she stay with such a controlling man?

Dr Babs: I think on some deep level she loves him and that helps her forgive him for his mistreatment of her. When he had his heart attack, she was very concerned.

Anyone: Maybe Darrin assumed his son wanted to live in New York and that's why he got the tattoo in the first place.

Anyone: No. Darrin thinks that everyone who lives in New York is evil and that because his son had been evil in his eyes, that's where he belonged.

Anyone: His son was rebelling because his father thought that because he had done military service, so should his son.

Anyone: But some people say that it was Darrin's experience in Vietnam that made him into the tyrant that he is.

Anyone: He was the one that came up with the idea of spraying Agent Orange everywhere.

Anyone: Maybe he ingested so much of it, that it affected his brain cells.

Anyone: I also heard that even when the Vietnam war was going so badly, he kept insisting that they shouldn't give up.

Anyone: Maybe Vietnam is where he learned to be so sneaky. I've heard he's the kind of person who demolishes a building if it suits him and he doesn't bother getting all the necessary approvals before he does so.

Anyone: Yes. I heard one family woke up to find a demolition ball in their living room. They were cousins of Fitz's. They hadn't even received an eviction notice.

Anyone: A lot of the period buildings in this state suffered their demise because of Darrin's demolition company. He was only demolishing so that his construction company would have more work to do.

Anyone: Yes. I've heard they've even starting taking buildings down in the middle of the night, so that by the time people woke up, the damage had been done and there was no going back.

Anyone: Darrin uses cheap illegal labor as much as he can.

Anyone: That's because he's stingy. Most of his workers earn less each year than he spends each week on his risky share deals.

Anyone: He has paid off a few of the local immigration inspectors so he can get away with it.

Anyone: Talking of those risky share trades he does, he makes it a rule to invest in all the unethical products like tobacco firms and so on, that other people avoid.

Adoette: He treats everyone with contempt. At first I thought he was just racist, but now I see that he's not just racist. He treats everyone with contempt, even his wife.

Pierre: Yes. Even though he knows I want everyone to call me Pierre, he always calls me "Peter" even though he knows it annoys me.

Maid Coralie: I was on a float with him a few years ago and we were at the back and he shoved his chair so hard against mine, I fell off the float and broke my ribs. He never bothered to apologize.

Captain (Culley): He's the sort of troublemaker who makes Mardi Gras nightmare rather than a joy. He's so unthoughtful. He doesn't think of anyone but himself. And he thought that because he's King that that gives him the right to tell me how to run the Carnival.

Mayor Norwell: If he had his way, all the floats would be cutting costs and not handing out beads this year. What would New Orleans and Mardi Gras be without beads? We wouldn't attract any visitors.

Zinnia: Yeah. We can't hand out many coconuts this year because people throw them at one another and cause injuries. I know because Darrin threw one at me a few years ago and I almost got concussion.

Fitz: Yeah. We have to be careful with our torches. One year Darrin grabbed my flame off me and waved it around and almost set fire to a float. That incident almost cost me my job as flambeaux carrier. Now, I tape the torch to my hand so no one can grab it off me.

Dr Babs: Yes. In previous years, I've had to treat people for burns. Speaking of treating people, I get a lot of Darrin's workers coming to see me with broken bones. It's because Darrin refuses to pay for proper harnesses and scaffolding for the roof workers.

Duchess Dinah: Darrin's wife and I are on various local charity committees. She feels so embarrassed because she knows he doesn't give a penny to charity. But she tries to make up for it with her efforts.

Wise Man Goldwin: Darrin is real penny pincher. One year he came in to buy his wife a birthday gift. He refused to pay for real gold. It had to be gold-plated. And he refused to pay an extra two dollars to have the bracelet engraved. If everyone modeled themselves on him, I'd go broke.

Pierre: I model my work on the great architects of our city. I love looking at the plans for the old buildings in town. They have them all at the city's museum. I've learned a lot from them.

Captain Culley: I have been Darrin's accountant for many years and that has also been a headache. A recent audit brought up all sorts of discrepancies. I've told Darrin what he has to do, but he just doesn't listen to me.