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Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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*presents...*

# “Murder On The Prairie”

## Host Guide

For meet and mingle versions

*by Stephanie Chambers*

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## Host's guide

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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. The name of the kit shows the recommended minimum number of guests and the maximum number of guests that 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.
- 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.  
**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) which 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 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!
- 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 Create a clue page for each person playing an optional role. Divide up the extra clues and staple them to their clue page. You may like to print them an extra name tag each that you staple on to the front of their clue page. 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.
- 12 If you think some of your guests may not turn up you could cut up the extra clues and have them in a bowl so people can help themselves. You may like to save some clues to hand out in the middle of the party when people may be tired of their original clues.
- 13 Decorate the room just before the party (see *Décor suggestions*).
- 14 Prepare or arrange for food for the event (see *Menu suggestions*).

- 15 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 American:

- Check tablecloths
- Daisies in vases
- Rustic furniture
- Bales of hay
- Play square dance / hillbilly / folk music.

### ***Menu suggestions***

#### **First Course:**

- potato skins
- creamy corn filled pastries.

#### **Second Course:**

- roast dinners
- steaks and salads
- meat and/or vegetable pies.

#### **Desserts:**

- pumpkin pie
- apple pie
- caramel cream pie
- lemon meringue pie.

Search for recipes on the Internet (eg search for “American recipes” on [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)).

### ***Preparing props***

You may like to stuff some clothes as a body of the victim.

### ***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 them as they arrive.
- 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 Ask the guests to meet and mingle and find out information. Make sure everyone tells the people they meet about their clues and that everyone participates. You may like to encourage people who are shy by asking them a question or two. Once people find out things they think may be important, they can also pass that on to the people they meet.
- 6 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).
- 7 Have the police officer (or someone else) read the police report and then let people mingle some more and serve some more food.
- 8 Have the lawyer (or someone else) read the will and then let people mingle some more and serve some more food.
- 9 Have the doctor (or someone else) read the medical report and then let people mingle some more and serve some more food.
- 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.

## Copyright details

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Acture agrees to grant a license to you to download (or receive the kit files via email) and print out and use or perform our kits, according to the terms and conditions described on <http://www.merrimysteries.com/tmm/terms.htm>. You can only make one printout of the clue pages and lamination of the clue pages is not permitted.

If you wish to use our kits on a commercial basis (eg as a venue for mystery party events or as an event organizer or an actor or theater group), you may only use the purchased kit once. If you wish to use it for further events, you must purchase it again. This also means you will always be using an up-to-date version of the kit. We are constantly changing and improving our kits.

# The Rules

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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 “Murder On The Prairie”!

Yesterday in Mitchido Richard Woods – a wealthy landowner – was shot down in cold blood whilst he was riding to town. He leaves behind his wife Katherine and daughter Annabel. There is a gathering of his family and the townsfolk to discuss what should be done. The people at the meeting look uneasy. They are not sure who will be arrested as the murderer and they are afraid that the gunslingers that are present might take the law into their own hands if they don't like the verdict.

You have all been asked to remain here for questioning by the police. You must tell as many people as you can what you know. If you find out interesting new information, you can also pass that on to the people you meet. We must all work together to help determine who is the villain in our midst. And you must do whatever you have been instructed to do. Don't panic if you don't get to talk to everyone. You will hear and see enough to help you work out who did it. 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.

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.