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Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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presents...

# “Who Killed Santa?”

## Host Guide

For mini 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.
- 2 Decide when you will be having the party, where and who will play each participant 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 participants 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. You can print them in color or black and white or you may like to print them on colored paper. If your guest is not being a participant (ie a suspect or one of the optional report readers), then you should delete the word "Character:" before you print out their invitation.
- 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. However, they don't need to read the descriptions of the optional characters.
- 6 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!
- 7 If it says the line may be said by "Anyone", it can be said by one of the optional characters. If there is only one optional character or no 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" lines and write their character's name next to each one.
- 8 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.
- 9 Print a nametag for each participant. 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 Decorate the room just before the party (see *Décor suggestions*).
- 11 Prepare or arrange for food for the event (this is optional see *Menu suggestions*).
- 12 Prepare props (see *Preparing props*). This is optional, but recommended.
- 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 your place look "Xmassie":

- Kitsch, over-the-top Christmas decorations
- Some crime-scene tape around an area where Santa collapsed near the fireplace
- A sleigh heaped with presents

- A chair where Santa was to have sat in the corner of the restaurant surrounded by presents
- Play Christmas carols (preferably modern ones as this would fit with the plot better).

You will have to pretend that your house is a restaurant called “Chatties”. Perhaps put a sign saying “Chatties Restaurant” on your front door.

You may like to section off an area near the fireplace (if there is one) with crime scene tape. This is where Santa collapsed. Mark his very round body on the floor with chalk. Or stuff some red Santa clothes and pretend his body is still there lying face down.

Also put a chair in a corner and surround it with boxes. This is where Santa would have sat if he had stayed alive at the party.

You may choose to have your participants wear name tags. It would also fit well with the plot. This also makes it easier for people when everyone is mixing during the breaks.

### **Menu suggestions**

Serving food is optional. If you do want to serve food, serve the kinds of foods that are traditional in your area for Christmas or serve an international selection of Xmas-type foods. Search for recipes on the Internet (eg search for “Christmas recipes” on [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) or search for specific recipes).

For example, for first course you could serve Mrs Claus Christmas soup (see <http://www.santas.net/recipes.htm> for details).

For second course, you could serve a roast chicken or turkey with vegetables.

For dessert you could serve a traditional English Christmas pudding, mince pies or a French chocolate Christmas log (see <http://www.santas.net/recipes.htm> for details).

With coffee and tea, you may like to serve Norwegian Christmas cookies called “Sand Kagers”. See <http://www.santas.net/norwegianchristmas.htm> for details.

You may like to serve cocktail party food such as:

- caviar and crackers (not necessarily expensive caviar)
- vol au vents filled with corn or asparagus and cheese
- spring rolls
- filo 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.

### **Preparing props**

You should provide these props to the people at the beginning of the party. These are the important props that you or your guests need to provide:

- **Martina** – a Barbie doll and a plate of chocolate chip cookies.
- **Winnie** – a softball bat.
- **Josh** – a small briefcase full of Monopoly money.
- **Regina** – a dark colored drink in a plastic bottle – one of those modern “health” drinks.
- **Glenda** – a laptop computer (or a cut-out of one in cardboard).

You may like to stuff some Santa clothes and arrange Santa’s body on the floor in the dining room (or another room if more convenient). You may like to cordon this area off with “crime scene” tape.

### **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 the suspect'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 reading out their character's description (but not costume 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 booklet around to each person mentioned. If it says “Anyone” can say the clue, 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. Make sure everyone reads out all their lines and that everyone participates.

- 7 Have the police officer (or someone else) read the police report and then let people discuss this and serve some more food (optional).
- 8 Have the lawyer (or someone else) read the will and then let people discuss this and serve some more food (optional).
- 9 Have the doctor (or someone else) read the medical report and then let people discuss this and serve some more food (optional).
- 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. Or have each table discuss it and write down their nomination.
- 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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# 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 “Who Killed Santa?”! As you know we have been invited here today for the office Christmas Party. Unfortunately, I have some sad news. Santa has been murdered. Just before this party was set to commence, he collapsed and died.

Those of us who were here when this tragedy occurred are being considered suspects by the police who have also just arrived. I will introduce the suspects to you in a moment. I urge you to refrain from going near the body as we have to let the police do their job without interruption.

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. When we do have some facts or evidence, we will read these to you.

If you are playing a suspect, 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. Act it out to the fullest. This is your chance to be dramatic!

*Optional:* I am sure Santa would not have wanted up to let all this wonderful food go to waste, so please help yourselves.

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.