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Party games for 8 to 100 guests

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presents...

“The Search For The Truth”

Host Guide

For the play 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 Or you could paste the jpg version into an email and add your party details and send this to each guest.
- 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 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 out the play.
- 8 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!
- 9 Staple the pages together into a booklet for each act.
- 10 If it says the line may be said by "Anyone", it can be said by one of the optional authorities and witnesses. If there are few people playing optional roles, 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 has a similar number of lines to say.
- 11 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.
- 12 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.
- 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 like a youth retreat in mid-west America:

- put in some bunk beds so it looks like you are in a cabin
- stick pictures of America on to your tablecloth to help make the people feel at home
- rustic furniture
- American country and western music.

Menu suggestions

You could cook (or order in) a typical American meal that would appeal to a youth group:

First Course:

- spicy bean dip and corn chips
- guacamole dip (with avocados, sour cream and lemon juice) and corn chips

Second Course:

- pizza
- pasta dish
- hamburgers
- French fries
- green salads

Desserts:

- Haggen Daaz ice cream
- Chocolate or mud cake.

Search for recipes on the Internet (eg www.google.com).

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 name tag 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.
- 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 the First Course of your meal or have dips available. Generally we don’t recommend you continue with the play while people are eating unless you are pressed for time.

- 6 Start Act One of the play. Pass the play booklet around to each person mentioned. If it says “Anyone” can say the line, give it to someone playing one of the optional roles or if you don’t have any 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. Make sure everyone reads out all their lines and that everyone participates.
- 7 Serve the Second Course of your meal (if applicable).
- 8 Do Act Two. Serve Dessert (if applicable).
- 9 Do Act Three.
- 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.

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 must indicate this when you order and pay double the cost of the kit. This gives you the right to use the kit more than once.

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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 “The Search For The Truth”!

A large group is attending a Christian camp. The theme for the weekend is to find the truth. As the weekend progresses the participants find that they are not only on a search for their own personal truth, but also the truth in relation to a crime they didn't think could ever happen – the poisoning of camp leader, Peter Stein. But it is obvious that there was no intention to kill Peter, only to make him sick.

Peter is a hard-working 56 year old man who is said to look like “a stern garden gnome”. He is a Vietnam vet and retired Lt. Col. in the US Army. His favorite food is Haggen Daaz ice cream and he never turns down dessert. He has a wife who is helping run the camp, two grown children and four grandchildren. He is a counselor for the police department. He has a Masters in counseling, although some people found his counseling style a bit dictatorial.

I will ask you to turn the page just before each act begins. There is a page of clues you have to reveal for each act. Only read the page for each act as required and please don't read the pages ahead of time. During each act you must reveal all of your clues for that particular act.

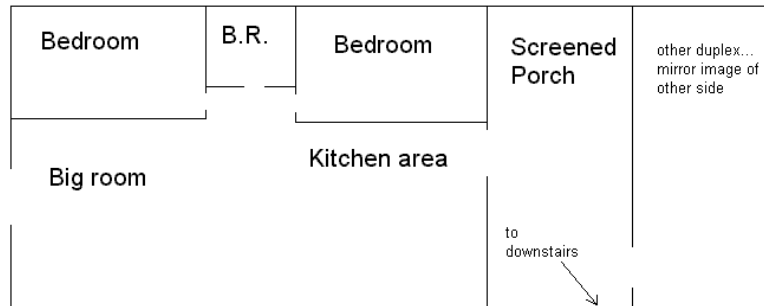
The investigator will go first and ask various questions. You should go around the circle and answer each question. Try to blend the remaining clues into the conversation. If you can't do this, just say your clues when the conversation subsides. If you are asked a question, say the response from your clue sheet – this may be further down the page.

(see next page)

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.

The Map



The Official Spring Retreat Timeline

Friday

5:00pm	arrive at park
5:00 – 5:45	get settled
6:15 – 7:00	give instructions for the weekend
7:00 – 8:00	dinner & clean up
8:00 – 8:45	large group weekend opening (Spiritual content)
8:45 – 9:00	small group (spiritual content)
9:00 - Late Night	movie & popcorn

Saturday

8:30 – 9:30	breakfast is served (whenever they get up) & clean up
9:30 – 10:15	large group (spiritual)
10:15 – 10:45	small group (spiritual)
10:45 – 11:15	free time
11:15 – 12:00	give out team assignments regarding project
12:00 – 1:00	lunch & clean up
1:00 – 1:15	instructions for the afternoon
1:15 – 5:30	work on project
5:30 – 6:30	dinner & clean up
6:30 – 7:15	review whatever we did in the afternoon
7:15 – 8:00	large group (spiritual)
8:00 – 8:15	break, snacks, pop
8:15 – 8:45	small groups (spiritual)
8:45 – 9:15	groups work on project
Late Night	board games & snacks

Sunday

7:30 – 8:15	breakfast
8:15 – 9:00	pack up & load cars
9:00 – 9:55	large group re project
9:55 – 10:00	break
10:00 – 11:00	large group (spiritual)
11:00am	head home