

Death in them thar hills

Sample Instructions



Find out
who did in
gold mine owner
Dusty Jones
as he was
being honored
by the citizens
of Cactus Gulch.

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How to Organize “Death in them thar hills”

Thanks for purchasing the home version of this murder mystery. You and your guests will enjoy the challenge of solving a crime that will test everyone’s powers of deduction. Here is what you should do to coordinate your murder mystery evening:

STEP 1: Review the materials in this mystery packet. But ... please do it in a very specific way. Remember - you have ALL of the information, *including the solution to the mystery*. If you decide to participate in the mystery as a role player or an investigator, you’ll want to keep yourself in the dark about WHO DONE IT.

All page numbers in this packet are in the upper left-hand corner of the pages as you look at them vertically. That way you can run off the material without having the page numbers interfere with the format. The entire packet includes:

- **Instructions on how to organize the event.** They’re on pages 2 through 5. (You’re reading them right now.)
- **Instructions for the person who will facilitate the event.** Information for the person who will take charge of the murder investigation is on page 6. *If only 10 people are invited to the event, you may want to assign this duty to Beauregard T. Brady, the mayor of Cactus Gulch.*
- **Role Player Information.** These pages serve as a “cover letter” for the information you’ll send to the *ten individuals* who will be in character as the suspects. Run off ten copies of pages 7 and 8 back to back. You may want to use better quality stationery for this letter.
- **The Main Roles.** Pages 9 through 28 contain the information you’ll send with the cover letters. Each role is designed as a two-sided two-fold document. Again, run off this information back to back. *Each role player gets only the information that applies to the role that he or she is playing. Your role players should know ONLY what’s in their individual packets.*
- **The Invitation to the Get-Together.** The invitation on page 29 will be sent to each guest. It is designed to be run off as a two-fold. Or, if you decide to use heavier stock, the left side of the page can be run off back-to-back with the right side of the page.
- **Marshal’s Letter.** The letter on page 30 will be given to each guest by the facilitator upon arrival. Run off enough copies so that each person receives one.
- **Clues about the Crime.** You’ll find 32 clues about the mystery on pages 31 through 34. Cut them out. *Since each guest receives a clue, you can invite up to 32 investigators.*
- **The newspaper account of last night’s event in honor of Dusty Jones.** Everyone will receive a copy of *The Cactus Gulch Gazette* article on page 35.
- **The Answer Sheet.** Run off one answer sheet on page 36 for each investigative team.
- **The End. This is the solution to the crime.** Run off pages 37 through 43. The facilitator will read these pages at the end of the evening.

STEP 2: Plan your event. Pick a date on which to conduct the murder mystery event. *Death in them thar hills* is designed to be an evening’s entertainment. Remember: our mysteries are for serious sleuths. It will take two to two-and-a-half hours to solve the case using the recommended format. Because of this, a buffet meal is recommended for the mystery evening. If you have a sit-down meal, add the amount of time the meal will take to your planning time.

STEP 3: Select your role players. Review the scenario and the brief descriptions of the suspects on page 7. Select guests who would fit into these roles. Send the role players their information **and** a copy of *The Cactus Gulch Gazette* (page 35) approximately 10 to 12 days before the mystery event. The role players should bring the information with them and use it as a reference when they are questioned by the investigators.

If you have only 10 guests, the role players will also be the investigators. This means you will send the invitations with the roles so that all of the information arrives at the same time.

STEP 4: Invite your guests. Approximately three to four weeks in advance of the event, send invitations to the “get-together” to the guests who will not be role players .

STEP 5: Select a person to facilitate the investigation. The facilitator should read the *Instructions* on page 6, and review the information in the packet to keep the event moving so that the investigation is conducted effectively.

Here’s what to do on the night of the mystery event.

STEP 6: The person portraying Beauregard T. Brady greets the guests. Since Brady is the “mayor” and the person who will MC the event, he greets people as they arrive. Brady (or the person who is the facilitator) gives each guest who is investigating the crime a *Marshal Letter with a Clue attached and the Newspaper Article inserted*. (You may want to put them in envelopes marked “Official Information from the U. S. Marshal.”)

If you have only 10 people at the event, and the role players are also investigating the crime, everyone receives a letter. If your event separates the role players from the investigators, then role players DO NOT receive letters. Tell the investigators they can share clues with each other at any time during the evening.

STEP 7: Conduct the “Get-Together” in honor of Dusty Jones. The role player portraying Beauregard T. Brady asks everyone to sit down as “the town of Cactus Gulch” remembers Dusty Jones. Ensure that the get-together is staged in this way:

- Brady reminds everyone that Dusty Jones died last night at an event that was being held in his honor. The ten people who are gathered here to honor Dusty all spoke at the event. They’ve been asked to share their feelings about Dusty with everyone. The sentiments they will express are the same ones they expressed at the dinner last night.
- Brady asks the ten role players to speak in the order indicated in his instructions. They stand and read the sections headlined, “Here’s what you’ll say about Dusty.”

STEP 8: The investigation starts. The facilitator (*with only 10 people*, this will probably be Brady) briefly reviews what happened, including such facts as:

- Dusty Jones has been in Cactus Gulch for five years and has made enemies along the way.
- *Only one of the people who spoke at the get-together committed the murder.*
- MOTIVE, MEANS and OPPORTUNITY must be considered to solve the case.

STEP 9: Form investigative teams. Have the guests who are investigating the murder form three-to-five-person investigative teams. Team members will work together to solve the case.

If only 10 people are at the event, you may (at your discretion) form two-person teams who will work together to solve the case.

STEP 10: Break for dinner or refreshments. The teams may trade clues to obtain as much information as possible while they are eating, but they cannot question the suspects yet.

If only 10 people are involved, distribute the remainder of the 32 clues at regular intervals during the meal until all clues have been used.

STEP 11: Continue the investigation. At the end of the meal, tell the teams that it is time to start the investigation again. Each team should find an area to use as an interrogation room.

If only 10 people are present, everyone stays together and one role player at a time is questioned.

STEP 12: Coordinate the questioning. Have one role player rotate to each interrogation room at five-minute intervals. If you have fewer than ten teams, work out a rotation that gives role players breaks between some of the rounds of questioning. The investigators may ask the suspects ANYTHING.

The suspects should use the information provided in the *Role Player Information* to answer the questions. Suspects should *not* withhold any bits of information, but they should not offer information unless the investigators specifically ask for it. Good investigators must ask the right questions to get the correct information.

STEP 13: Distribute copies of Dusty's speech. After the 2nd round of questioning, The facilitator should loudly announce that Hannibal Hanks transcribed Dusty's speech and has printed copies for everyone. Distribute a copy of Dusty's speech to each team.

STEP 14: Make an announcement about the Gila Gold. After the 6th round of questioning, the facilitator should announce that the bottle of Gila Gold from which Dusty drank was examined closely and it apparently was not tampered with. It had no unusual odor or color.

STEP 15: Conduct open questioning. Place the suspects in different parts of the facility. For a 7-minute period, investigators from any team may go to the suspects and ask final questions. *WARNING: Some investigators will try to pull the suspects back to their teams. Don't permit this.* Several different teams *may* question a suspect at the same time.

With only 10 people, anyone can ask any other role player anything.

STEP 16: Distribute answer sheets. Give teams 10 to 12 minutes to write out their solutions by answering the questions on the *answer sheet*.

STEP 17: Teams give their solutions. The facilitator asks the questions on the answer sheet to each team, one at a time. The teams read the answers exactly as they were written on the answer sheet. *NOTE: Often, a team will want to change its mind after hearing the answers from another team. Don't let this happen.*

If you have only 10 people, each role player (or two-person team of role players) gives an individual solution to the case.

STEP 18: Read “The End.” The facilitator opens the envelope in which “The End” was placed. The facilitator reads it aloud to the guests. This will take 6 to 8 minutes.

STEP 19: Award prizes. You may want to award prizes to the investigative team that did the best job of solving the crime. Let your creativity run wild in selecting the prizes.

Special role player information ...

(The facilitator may want to review these with the suspects prior to the start of the mystery.)

- Because this mystery is crafted with intertwining facts, the role players are provided with an abundance of information that may or may not be used during the investigation. Since the suspects will undergo interrogation by the investigative teams, the extensive number of personal facts will enable them to answer most questions that are asked.
- Role players **MUST** read their speeches at the get-together exactly as they are written. **THIS IS IMPORTANT.** It enables the investigation to begin with the correct preliminary data.
- If role players are asked questions not specifically addressed in this information, the role players should answer in character based upon the other facts available to them.
- The only relationships that the suspects know about are those written into the roles. If asked by investigators about relationships that are not mentioned in the roles, the suspects should say, “No, we’re not related.”
- All of the suspects are telling the truth with the exception of the murderer whose recollections and responses will contain lies – this is intentional and part of the murder investigation.
- Since a good investigator must ask good questions, suspects must only offer information that is asked for by the investigators. They should **NOT** offer information that has not been directly requested.

The murderer **DOES NOT** know he or she committed the crime. This means the suspects don’t have to be good liars. The solution is contained in “The End.”

Happy trails to you!