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Murder Mystery Game Sample

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Partial script; some explanations and details are omitted but will be included with your game purchase (such as when to take optional breaks for dinner courses, costuming ideas and samples, how to stage a fight, etc.)

There are 2 versions of the game available to you with purchase. Version 1 is the **Know It All version** wherein the prime suspects get the script/sequence of actions ahead of time and know whodunit. Version 2 is the **Narrator version** where they'll just get their character descriptions ahead of time and you'll add a narrator to tell the story while your prime suspects act out what he/she is saying. In this version they won't need to know whodunit. **YOU WILL RECEIVE BOTH VERSIONS WHEN YOU PURCHASE THIS GAME.**

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questions?

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----- KNOW IT ALL VERSION -----

Use this version of the game if your prime suspects will know whodunit
(We recommend this version for larger groups of 60 or more).

A sample of the **NARRATOR VERSION** follows.

HOW THE KNOW IT ALL VERSION OF THIS MYSTERY GAME WORKS:

- You'll need to cast your prime suspects (see character descriptions below). They'll have full knowledge of the script, which means they'll know whodunit.
- The rest of your guests will take on the role of detective and it will be their job to actively solve the case by examining evidence, finding clues, following and questioning suspects - whatever it takes for them to solve the mystery.

Essentially, everyone will have a crucial,
interactive part in the mystery.

- The whodunit will be about 1 1/2 to 2 hours long but you can make it shorter by tightening up the sequence of events (*warning: this means LESS audience participation*) or longer by allowing more time between the scenes/action.
- Your guest actors won't have to memorize a lot of dialogue but they will have to be familiar with a sequence of events (see sample below) or timeline (see <http://www.murder-mystery-game.com/timeline.html>) that will move the mystery through the clues, the murder(s) and the solving of the crime. They'll have to carry out certain actions (like arguments) and suspicious activities to set themselves up as suspects.
- All are mystery games are challenging to solve but they're also comedies - a great combination for an unforgettable event.
- This will not be a stationary mystery - it will be action-packed; we get people active and involved unlike those mysteries-in-a-box where everyone just sits around reading their part and asking questions they get from a booklet.
- **NOTE: You can modify any of our mystery games to best suit your needs so long as each suspect maintains a motive to commit the crime(s).**

Next Of Kin

YEAR: Current (you can actually put this in any era you want).

EVENT: A party hosted by the very, very, very wealthy **Hamilton “Big Daddy” Sugarbaker** for his birthday, your birthday, holiday party, fund raiser for his/your pet cause, celebration of a new company acquisition – whatever best fits your needs.

PRIMARY SUSPECTS

These are the folks who will have full knowledge of the mystery; you’ll give them the complete script ahead of time.

SOUTHERN ACCENTS FOR ALL IF YOU CAN DO THEM.

SUGGESTION: The same person can play both **Big Daddy** and **Ashley**. I actually recommend this because it means no actor will have to die and remain sight unseen for the rest of the mystery. However you must ‘age” **Big Daddy** at the beginning and at the end of the show.

If you decide to do it this way, then **Ashley** will not appear until 0:40 into the mystery. Prior to this time, all the characters must talk about him having an argument with **Big Daddy** about money and he’s off sulking.

See script for further clarification.

Hamilton “Big Daddy” Sugarbaker: A very rich man from Atlanta, Georgia who moved here 6 months ago after the disastrous failure of his second marriage--to a woman many years his junior. His first wife, Babette, died giving birth to **Ashley**--she had a weak heart and wasn't strong enough to survive childbirth a second time.

COSTUME: Costume suggestions for all prime suspects provided in full script.

Bobbie (Bobby) Joe Butler:

***THIS CHARACTER CAN BE MALE OR FEMALE. THE NAME REMAINS THE SAME, AS DOES THE HISTORY. THE SCRIPT IS WRITTEN WITH BOBBIE AS A FEMALE.*

Big Daddy's nurse (*butler if the character is male*), confidante, and friend. She would do anything for the man who saved her from certain death 5 years ago. She collapsed outside his home one morning, homeless and hungry. He felt pity for the young girl and provided her with food & medical attention. When she was well, she offered to work for him--free. He wouldn't let her but she kept coming around until he finally gave her odd jobs. She was efficient and excellent at her tasks. She stayed on. He then provided her with the means to go to nursing school - she went for 2 years and has now been back for a little over 3 years, nursing **Big Daddy**.

MALE VERSION: Bobby Joe, Big Daddy's devoted butler, was studying to be a nurse and was in his last semester at Atlanta South Nursing School but then **Big Daddy** decided to move here so **Bobby** never completed his education. As **Big Daddy's** butler

for the past 10 years, he has developed a penchant for talking to silverware – in secret of course. Uh, not that folks won't see him talking to silverware but that's beside the point.

Rhett Sugarbaker: **Big Daddy's** oldest son. A smarmy, slick, dirty-dealing, unethical businessman. He'll do anything to make money--anything--and what better way to make money than by stealing from his own father's bottle capping company in Atlanta. **Rhett** has very high gambling debts so what choice does he have but to embezzle? His father is a miser to his very own kin! He still lives in Atlanta but flies out to Daddy when called.

Scarlett Sugarbaker: **Rhett's** selfish, social-climbing wife who tries to be classy and fails - miserably. She comes from the wrong side of the tracks and it shows. The smell of money makes her desperate to have more of it. She is a bad girl, through and through.

Ashley Sugarbaker: **Big Daddy's** youngest son. He's a struggling poet--a lousy one at that--who's embittered by his lack of success, but who still believes, despite his failures, that he's a true "artiste." In other words, he's a snob. He has only published one book of poetry called "Mine" and that was thoroughly panned by the critics and the masses, leaving **Ashley** quite humiliated. Once he found out Daddy was moving here, he decided to move too. Maybe this place will be more "open" to creative types. OPTIONAL but recommended: Ashley is very much in denial about his sexual preferences (see **Melanie's** character description).

Melanie Sugarbaker: **Ashley's** supportive but very eccentric wife. She's an "interpretive dancer" (and she can interpret that however she wants). She and **Ashley** snobbishly cling to a lifestyle neither can truly afford thus she becomes infuriated when **Ashley's** rich daddy won't help them with their needs. **Ashley** and **Melanie** just married 2 months ago and have yet to consummate their marriage. **Melanie** believes **Ashley's** excuses for um, non-performance shall we say and makes excuses for his excuses. Truth be told, for Ashley, their marriage is just another way to try to please his father.

Philly (Philomena/Filbert) Sugarbaker: *This role can also be male or female.* **Big Daddy's** drunkard of a sister. **Philly's** had a sad, miserable life--she even spent some time in prison for robbery, theft, & even prostitution. When she was a teenager, she was always being picked up for truancy, public drinking, breaking & entering and destroying public property. Finally her parents sent her to a home for wayward teenagers and disowned her -- took her right out of their will. All these years later, she hasn't changed her ways much. Now she merely leeches off **Big Daddy** because, in her book, he owes her (he got all the money and she got nothing) and wallows in alcohol & her own self-pity. She was released from a 1/2 way house in Atlanta 3 months ago and, per her probation details, she's required to live near her kin--which would be **Big Daddy**. And so she does.

Savannah Sugarbaker: **Big Daddy's** neurotic second wife who's prone to drastic mood swings and irrational, insane, behavior. She is a surprise guest this evening. Seven years ago, **Savannah** and **Big Daddy** met at Roscoe's Chicken and Waffles in Atlanta, where **Savannah** was a waitress. He became a regular and always requested her because she kindly brought him two syrups, heated just the way he liked. **Big Daddy** and **Savannah** married that New Year's Eve. They separated 6 months ago and Big Daddy rushed their divorce through all the legal channels. **Savannah** insists that they

are NOT divorced, that he still loves her and wants her back. She also insists she was on an extended vacation for the last 6 months because she was too much woman for the ailing man.

SECONDARY SUSPECTS (optional).

Remember, EVERYONE will be actively involved in this mystery because it will be their job to solve the case and because you'll be encouraging them to come in costume and in character. Use any or all of these secondary suspects if you have "extra" cast members you want to use or if you have some guests who want to take on a character but not take on the full responsibility of a primary suspect. Give them their secondary suspect instructions (included) and let them run with it. *****FOR LARGE GROUP MYSTERIES (75 OR MORE):** I'd definitely suggest you cast your secondary suspects. During the mystery it will be the secondary suspects' "job" to act as general support for the primary suspects. They'll roam the room "gossiping" about the goings-in, quiet the audience down during a main action, answer questions, bring primary suspects to tables for questioning and make sure your guests have seen the physical clues that have been revealed.

There's a separate document included with this kit that contains instructions for these guests.

1. **Edwina Edwin:** Big Daddy's accountant. She's an obsessive compulsive who has devoted her entire working life to Big Daddy. She knows what he's worth and expects that she'll receive a big chunk of his money in exchange for her loyalty. She's also obsessively in love with him. She even broke off her engagement to an Austrian man named Arnold for Big Daddy because marrying Arnold would have meant moving to another country.
2. **Cornelius Bliss:** Big Daddy's ex-foreman at his Acme Bottle Capping Company in Atlanta. Ex because he was caught doing something he shouldn't have: selling secrets about Big Daddy to a gossip rag.
3. **Dr. Chivago Kildaire:** Big Daddy's doctor. He, Philly and Big Daddy grew up together. Where he got his medical degree is the question. Bobbie Joe seems to know more than he does medically speaking. He can doublespeak his way out of any awkward situation and leave you wondering what he just said. He has always loved Philly and it shows.
4. **Ms. Beulah Busty, Esq.:** Big Daddy's aggressive, know-it-all, talkative lawyer. She will read his will so find someone with stage presence to take on this role.
5. **Wilbur Ernest Fudge:** Big Daddy's milquetoast of a milkman and witness to his will. Everything scares this man.

MOTIVES – provided in full script

THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

ORGANIZER NOTES - There are notes to the organizer preceding any scene that requires props or some sort of prep work (like making up the victim).

0:00

Everyone mingle in character.

0:05

Big Daddy has a drink in hand and aided by **Bobbie Joe**, as he makes the following little speech (*note: he doesn't have to memorize the speech; so long as he gets the gist of it out there, he's good*).

BIG DADDY: Welcome everyone (*dramatic coughing fit*). Y'all may be wondering why I'm in my pajamas. Well, I was rushed to the hospital last night for what my nurse here thought was a heart attack. It was a minor one, turns out but I've always had a bad heart and I'm used to 'em. The damned hospital wanted to keep me for observation for another day but I wasn't about to miss my own party, especially since my kin, God love 'em are here. And speaking of my bad heart, y'all do know how rich I am. I took Daddy's money and built on it . . .

Philly interrupts to loudly whine that their daddy took her inheritance away so she never had anything to build on.

BIG DADDY: Daddy was smart: why give his hard-earned money to someone who couldn't keep herself out of jail? (*ANOTHER COUGHING AND GASPING JAG.*) Anyway, when the day comes that this lousy heart of mine gives out, I want y'all to know I will take care of you--one way or the other, whether it's to your satisfaction or not. I promise you. By the way, **Bobbie Joe** here is the executor of my will because I certainly didn't want to play favorites with either of my 2 sons, Heaven forbid! And Bobbie Joe has proven beyond any doubt that she is completely trustworthy and loyal. I know Bobbie Joe, unlike others in this room, would do anything for me if I asked. That being said, I ain't about to let this old, sick heart of mine get the better of me; I know my kin want me to live to a ripe old age, don't ya, **Rhett?**

Rhett magnanimously and insincerely agrees.

As everyone mingles, the family sucks up to **Big Daddy** and sees to his **EVERY** need (*again, all should overdo it as much as possible so that the guests will find it sickeningly saccharine.*)

IF ASHLEY AND BIG DADDY ARE BEING PLAYED BY 2 DIFFERENT ACTORS: Ashley begs Big Daddy for a "loan" but Big Daddy refuses. An ongoing argument ensues.

IF BIG DADDY AND ASHLEY ARE BEING PLAYED BY THE SAME MAN, this is the time to tell the group that **Ashley** is not present because he got into a fight

earlier with **Big Daddy**, just before **Big Daddy** left the hospital to come here to the party. **Ashley** was begging **Big Daddy** for a "loan" but **Big Daddy** refused and an argument ensued. **Ashley** left sulking.

Melanie is present however to reassure **Big Daddy** that **Ashley** is on his way to apologize – he's just putting his apology into a poem and needs a little more time to perfect it. Behind **Big Daddy's** back, **Melanie** should show her anger at **Big Daddy** for not helping his son.

0:10

Savannah makes her surprise appearance by rushing to **Big Daddy**, falling all over him, claiming concern for his condition, having heard he had a near fatal heart attack. She claims she's come back because he's asked her to, because he wants her to take care of him, because he wants to reconcile. She is overly excited at their reconciliation despite how badly **Big Daddy** is treating her now.

Bobbie Joe informs **Savannah** loudly enough so everyone will hear that Mr. Sugarbaker can not get overly excited which prompts **Savannah** to give him her most seductive look and she sort of growls at him in what she thinks is a sexy manner, as **Bobbie** continues that he also can not get overly stressed.

She firmly stands between **Savannah** and her man until **Savannah** gets irritated and moves off to complain about **Bobbie** to the guests.

Suspects mingle, answer questions, tell their stories, promote their motives.

0:20

Big Daddy takes a drink from his glass, chokes and begins to dramatically stagger about drink in hand, crashing into things, gasping for air. He spits out his drink. He stumbles about. He sputters out between gasping breaths: "**Someone wants me dead! I've been poisoned! My drink!**" **Bobbie Joe** rushes to him to get his glass and gives it to **Scarlett**. **Big Daddy** collapses. **Savannah** becomes hysterical, literally throwing herself on **Big Daddy**. She claims she can barely feel his pulse and flips him over to try to resuscitate him by giving him "VCR" – her words, not mine folks. **Bobbie Joe** quickly pulls **Savannah** off **Big Daddy**...

----- NARRATOR VERSION -----

Use this version of the game if you don't want your prime suspects to know whodunit. They will simply follow instructions provided by your narrator.

HOW THE NARRATOR VERSION OF THIS MYSTERY GAME WORKS:

- You'll need to cast your prime suspects (see character descriptions below). They'll get their character descriptions and the basic premise of the mystery but that's it. You'll also cast a narrator to be the storyteller. Your prime suspects will act out what the narrator says. They'll have to carry out certain actions (like arguments) and suspicious activities to set themselves up as suspects.
- The rest of your guests will take on the role of detective and it will be their job to actively solve the case by examining evidence, finding clues, following and questioning suspects - whatever it takes for them to solve the mystery.

Essentially, everyone will have a crucial, interactive part in the mystery.

- The whodunit will be about 1 1/2 to 2 hours long but you can make it shorter by tightening up the sequence of events (*warning: this means LESS audience participation*) or longer by allowing more time between the scenes/action.
- All are mystery games are challenging to solve but they're also comedies - a great combination for an unforgettable event.
- This will not be a stationary mystery - it will be action-packed; we get people active and involved unlike those mysteries-in-a-box where everyone just sits around reading their part and asking questions they get from a booklet.
- **NOTE: You can modify any of our mystery games to best suit your needs so long as each suspect maintains a motive to commit the crime(s).**

Prior to your mystery event/party, you'll send your prime suspects complete character descriptions of all the suspects - which are the same as described above, costume suggestions and the following instructions.

THE NARRATOR

This character will narrate the action in the mystery game.

As a prime suspect, your instructions are very easy. Your job will be to act out what this narrator says and follow his instructions (*feeling free to ad lib if you are so inspired*). You also need to react - as your character - to what's going in the mystery so listen well to your narrator and don't hesitate to interact with your fellow suspects and the audience. Have fun, let loose, and ham it up!

PRIME SUSPECTS, WHEN THE MYSTERY STARTS HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO DO:

- Mingle and introduce yourself. Work the room! Get into the fun of playing your character.
- Use the character bio we've provided to tell your story and to gossip about your fellow suspects.
- Engage in conversations with guests and answer their questions. Any time the narrator is not narrating the story you should be mingling and playing up the story as it unfolds.
- *Any additional character notes/actions are inserted here in the full Narrator version.*

YOUR PRIME SUSPECTS WON'T GET THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION; ONLY YOU AND YOUR NARRATOR WILL. This is what he/she will read during the mystery:

ORGANIZER NOTES - There are notes to the organizer preceding any scene that requires props or some sort of prep work (like making up the victim).

0:10 – AFTER THE SUSPECTS HAVE MINGLED FOR ABOUT 10 MINUTES

NARRATOR: Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen. **My name is Bert (Berta) Beetlejuice** and I am here to lead you through this mystery. I hope by now you've met everyone. If you haven't yet had the chance, don't worry you will. Everyone, your attention please. Big Daddy Sugarbaker would like to welcome all of you to his party. As you can see, he is being taken care of by his devoted nurse Bobbie Joe due to his awful coughing fits. Y'all may be wondering why he's in his pajamas. Well, he was rushed to the hospital last night for what his nurse here thought was a heart attack. It was a minor one but he's always had a bad ticker. The hospital wanted to keep him for observation for another day but he wasn't about to miss his own party, especially since his kin, God love 'em are here. Big Daddy wants you to know that when the day comes that he'll be meetin' his maker, **he will take care of you--one way or the other, whether it's to your satisfaction or not.** By the way, Bobbie Joe here is the executor of Big Daddy's will because, according to Big Daddy, she **has proven beyond any doubt that she is completely trustworthy and loyal.** Now y'all mingle and enjoy Big Daddy's company, knowing that life is fleeting...

0:20

Narrator: *(Get everyone's attention however you can and during your dialogue realize the suspects will be acting out what you say so allow them to do so and pick up where you left off. I've provided "pause" notes here to give you an idea of what I mean).* While you've all been enjoying yourselves, a problem has been brewing. Suddenly and without warning Big Daddy Sugarbaker starts to choke and gasp **(NARRATOR PAUSES TO ALLOW BIG DADDY TO DO THIS - this should be hilarious because Big Daddy has no idea he will suddenly and without warning start to choke and gasp).** He spits out his drink. **(NARRATOR PAUSES TO ALLOW BIG DADDY TO DO THIS)** He stumbles about. **(NARRATOR PAUSES TO ALLOW BIG DADDY TO DO THIS)** He sputters out between gasping breaths: *"Someone wants me dead! I've been poisoned! My drink!"* **(NARRATOR PAUSES TO ALLOW BIG DADDY TO DO THIS/SAY THIS.)** Bobbie Joe rushes to him to get his glass and gives it to Scarlett. **(NARRATOR PAUSES TO ALLOW BOBBIE JOE TO DO THIS).** Big Daddy collapses. **(NARRATOR PAUSES TO ALLOW BIG DADDY TO DO THIS).** Savannah becomes hysterical, literally throwing herself on Big Daddy as he dies. **(NARRATOR PAUSES TO ALLOW SAVANNAH TO DO THIS).** She claims she can barely feel his pulse and flips him over to try to resuscitate him by giving him "VCR" – her words, not mine folks. **(NARRATOR PAUSES TO ALLOW SAVANNAH TO DO THIS).** Bobbie Joe quickly pulls Savannah off Big Daddy as she laments that he's dead and must be removed from the room immediately. **(NARRATOR PAUSES TO ALLOW BOBBIE JOE TO SAY THIS).**