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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.)

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HOW 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).**

RUSHMORE'S REVENGE

YEAR: 1979. (Alternatives: modern day or the 1950's).

PLACE: The Rushmore Beauty Academy for Women, Staffordshire, England

Optional; you can have this take place in the U.S., perhaps somewhere in the south, if you choose.

STORY: Rushmore was established in 1899 in Staffordshire, England. Traditionally it was a finishing school. Its purpose was to teach young women the fine art of being a proper lady and wife: manners, social graces, sewing, cooking and the like. It evolved into a beauty school in 1959, but it has still maintained its long-standing tradition of an elite all-girl's academy. Women who graduate from Rushmore will go on to work at the finest of salons anywhere in the world. Why, one of the girls from the graduating class of 1970 is now the exclusive stylist of Rosalyn Carter, the wife of American president Jimmy Carter.

Suggestion: Watch the movie "Mona Lisa Smile"
(http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect?tag=haleyproducmu-20&creative=9325&camp=1789&link_code=as2&path=ASIN/B0001ADAVK) with Julia Roberts. Although it takes place in the early 1950's you can still get a nice idea of the atmosphere and attitude you want to create.

EVENT: A social for graduating students.

PRIMARY SUSPECTS

These are the folks who will have full knowledge of the mystery; you'll give them this complete script as well as their prime suspect guidelines ASAP.

All are English (or southern). All are well groomed and dressed except for Olivia.

COSTUME NOTE: See costume illustrations and suggestions provided with the full script.

MAUDE GREENFIELD: Chancellor of Rushmore and a former student. She was appointed chancellor 4 years ago. She's planning to admit male students for the first time in Rushmore's history. This has many people very upset. She's a women's libber at heart despite her love for the school and its traditions. Personality-wise, she'd be the life of the party if this weren't a school function. When she attended Rushmore, she was very popular and well-liked. Even today she's a beautiful woman, not afraid to show off her sexy side.

JANE DODGET: A classmate of Maude's and the Dean of Students for the past 7 years. Jane is the very definition of a "lady," however she is not without her faults. She has borne an intense but well disguised hatred for Maude ever since their freshman year at Rushmore. Maude was top student of her class and Jane was second for the graduating class of '49 when it was still a finishing school. Anything Jane can do, Maude can definitely do better. So, Jane, in her current position, opposes anything the Chancellor hopes to accomplish and she will use anything or anyone in her power to disrupt Maude's plans for Rushmore.

Jane is staunchly against admitting male students. The mere thought of it causes her to faint. **Jane** believes females are intimidated, distracted by the opposite sex, and unable to stand up for themselves if a man is studying in the same room. Men cause women to present themselves as sex objects, leading to unclear thinking.

BERNICE RUSHMORE: Chairwoman of the Board of Regents (the governing board at an educational institution). Her family started this school in 1899 and a family member has *always* been on the Board of Regents. Now she's the last in her family line. The Rushmore family's money has held this school together for more years than anyone can remember, but **Bernice** sees the writing on the wall in terms of finances. She's ready to pull all financial support and retire from the Board. She acts more like a man than a proper woman; prefers pants to dresses and is gruff and very stiff in her composure. It's like she's very uncomfortable in her body.

OLIVIA DODGET: She certainly does not fit the bill for a "typical" Rushmore girl. She's too athletic and gawky, too unfeminine and too uncomfortable in a dress. She's also very unsure of herself, except when she's competing in sports or perhaps when she's giving an invigorating scalp massage. Frankly, she's rather dim. She allows anyone and everyone, especially her mother, to walk all over her. That's why she's here at this school getting a degree her mother wanted her to get. She doesn't have the courage to stand up for herself and state that she really wants to be a roller-derby queen just like Raquel Welch in the movie, "Kansas City Bomber":

(<http://www.rollerderbypreservationassociation.com/MUSEUM/Kansas.htm>).

A GREAT BIT TO USE WITH JANE AND OLIVIA: Jane must constantly re-arrange and "fix" Olivia's appearance & clothing. She makes Olivia practice what she's learned by putting nail polish on folks (men included) or doing their hair.

KAT OVERTON: The "bad girl" of the academy. Kat's a bombshell with a heart of concrete who will lie, cheat, blackmail and whore herself to get what she wants. One month ago, **Bernice** privately confessed her attraction to Kat. Kat not only cruelly rejected **Bernice**, she's been using this information as blackmail ever since.

Kat is the top student of her class.

GABRIELLE STEELE: Gabrielle is a pushy, nosy girl if there ever was one. She's always in the midst of every conversation, argument or fight. She covertly takes notes - which will make her look very suspicious. Why? The full script will tell you.

NOTE: If you have an **all-female audience**, they are fellow classmates and family members. If there are males in your audience, they are boyfriends and students from the nearby all male military academy.

MOTIVES: Prime suspect motive chart included in full script.

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. You will **NOT** give them a script but you will give them a description of their character and let them run with it.

*****FOR LARGE GROUP MYSTERIES (75 OR MORE)**: I'd definitely suggest you cast your secondary suspects and give them a script - just like you'll do with your primary 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.

- Members of the board of regents who are either adamantly for or against admitting men to the school
- Other students
- Family
- Boyfriends
- Men who want to enter the academy
- Feminists who want to close the school because it's degrading to women.
- Protesters against males attending Rushmore.

THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

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

0:00

The prime suspects mingle with guests and speak of the fate of Rushmore with **Bernice Rushmore's** decision to pull her funding/support and thereby force the Academy to admit boys.

As you mingle this is a good time to tell the guests who you are, who the other characters are, and what sort of school Rushmore is.

While chatting with the guests, **Jane** politely and apologetically criticizes **Maude** and **Bernice** for compromising the school's tradition and integrity. **Bernice** is stepping down as Chairman of the Board of Regents and withdrawing her financial support of the school despite the fact that her family founded the school back in 1898. This will compromise the financial integrity of the school, but **Jane** says Chancellor Greenfield's solution of breaking with 80 years of tradition and admitting men is not the answer (this is her motive). **Jane** informs the guests that females are intimidated, distracted by the opposite sex, and unable to stand up for themselves if a man is studying in the same room. Men cause women to present themselves as sex objects, leading to unclear thinking.

Also, remember that **Jane** is a suffocating and demanding (in her lady-like way) mother hen to her daughter. **Olivia** meekly and immediately complies with every request or order.

This is also a good time for **Olivia** to practice her skills or lack thereof on guests.

Gabrielle is asking guests what they know about **Bernice** and the other characters.

Perhaps she's covertly taking notes - that will truly make her look suspicious.

0:10 PRACTICE

Maude welcomes everyone to The Rushmore Beauty Academy for Women and thanks them for attending tonight's social for students graduating next week. She requests that **Kat**, **Olivia** and **Gabrielle** lead everyone in singing the Rushmore song.

Your facilitator will put of copy of the song in each program or you can pass out copies now.

FROM SHORE TO SHORE, FOREVERMORE, WE WILL REMEMBER RUSHMORE.

OVER THE PATH OF LIFE, WHETHER OLD MAID OR WIFE, WE WILL REMEMBER RUSHMORE.

AS WE BREATHE OUR LAST, AND REVIEW OUR PAST, WE WILL REMEMBER RUSHMORE.

(Sung to the tune of "Oh Christmas Tree")

After the song, **Maude** introduces **Kat** as Rushmore's top student. **Kat** makes the following speech:

You can have cue cards for this, as would anyone making a speech. Feel free to elaborate on what is written below.

KAT: Good evening Chancellor Greenfield, Chairwoman Rushmore of the Board of Regents, Dean Dodget, fellow candidates, and Ladies and Gentlemen. Tonight, as many of you are aware, marks a milestone in the 80-year history of Rushmore Academy for Women. You see before you the last all-women graduating class. In September, beginning the Fall semester, Rushmore will break with its august past of being a finishing school for women and officially admit men, due in no small part to the resignation of Miss **Bernice** Rushmore from the Board of Regents. The same Miss Rushmore who is leaving because of her desire for what one might call improper relations with students. Now we know why she never married...

Before **Kat** reveals too much more, **Bernice** forcefully grabs **Kat** by the arm telling her that she doesn't have to continue.

Kat asks, "Afraid of what I'll say next, Miss Rushmore?"

Maude wedges herself between **Bernice** and **Kat** and hurriedly agrees that it is probably for the best that **Kat** not continue her speech and she urges all students to meet their guests in the fine Rushmore tradition.

If there are men present, **Kat** heads straight for them and makes a flirting spectacle of herself - just to rub it in **Bernice's** face.

Maude has a heated conversation *that should be overheard by your guests* with **Bernice** about what's going on between **Kat** and her. **Bernice** refuses to admit anything of course. **Maude**, feel free to ask guests what they know about **Kat** and **Bernice**.

0:15 PRACTICE

Jane approaches Bernice.

JANE: You know, Bernice, I would highly suggest that you reconsider your decision so our beloved Rushmore isn't forced to change its traditions. You are, after all, so wealthy and the school was, after all, started by your family, and you should, after all, see your family's money well spent while you are alive rather than after you are dead.

Bernice takes offense to this.

BERNICE: I will do what I want with my money. As much as I appreciate our sex, a beauty school for women is outdated. Women's Lib is in although I doubt you'll ever burn *your* bra Jane.

During this argument, Jane remains dignified and lady-like as she reiterates what men do to woman (see character description). She knows people are watching and appearances are everything to her.

Olivia stands by her mother and dimly and annoyingly summarizes everything her mother says.

When Jane makes a particularly insulting remark about all feminists like Bernice being abnormal in that they don't like men in a biblical sense, Bernice raises her hand to slap Jane but she is immediately intercepted by Olivia, who takes Bernice's arm and bends it behind her back telling her not to touch her mother.

Bernice yelps in pain and Jane instructs her daughter to let Bernice go. She does so immediately. Bernice tells Jane to keep her daughter under control and storms off while Olivia tends to her mother's needs.

0:20

Kat wants to dance - this is a social after all. Gabrielle enthusiastically agrees.

Everyone dances. If there are male guests, Kat dances "inappropriately" with a man. If there are no males present, Kat should still be dancing wildly, making a spectacle of herself.

Bernice is mesmerized; Jane is horrified; Maude is moving to the beat despite herself.

After a moment or two, Bernice starts dancing - if you can call it that - toward Kat. Soon Bernice loses herself in the music and is wildly dancing with Kat. After giving Bernice some time to get into the dancing, Kat throws a temper tantrum.

KAT: Stop it! Stop it right now Miss Rushmore. I know what you're doing and I'm not interested. Everyone, including me, only pretended to like you because you gave the school money. No one, especially me, likes you! Leave me alone!

Bernice forcefully grabs Kat by her arms.

BERNICE: Fine. If you wish to play it this way, just know that I know how you've managed to get such good grades! It would be my last great deed as

Chairman of the Board of Regents to take away your degree. I will tell the Chancellor all that I know about your study habits!

Kat viperously informs **Bernice** that if she tells, **Kat** will tell.