

THANK YOU FOR PURCHASING

Mystery at Windfall Lodge

The charlatan will be revealed...

The principal lawyers at Despicable, Nefarious, and Cad, Attorneys At Law, have received an interesting challenge: they will receive a generous amount of money if they are able to arrange a meeting with 18 strangers. These 18 people have received a mysterious invitation for a complimentary evening at a famous mountain retreat called Windfall Lodge during which two things will occur: someone will receive a large amount of money and the charlatan will be revealed...

Mystery at Windfall Lodge is a great event for any age group within your church, school, club, or gathering of any kind. Birthdays, anniversaries, holiday parties, and special events - any occasion to get together is a great occasion to put on this Mystery Dinner Game.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge is a Mystery Dinner Game that involves between 15-20 people who each get to play the part of a fictional character that is involved in the mystery. Each character has to answer questions that pertain to his or her character until the investigators of the evening determine whom the charlatan is and who receives the money.

At the end of the evening everyone will get a chance to offer his or her own theories as to the identity of the charlatan and who gets the money. Then, everyone will laugh together as they learn the true course of events.

Your group will enjoy every minute of *Mystery At Windfall Lodge*. They will talk about the events of the evening for weeks afterwards. You may have a hard time trying to convince them that they no longer have to act like the famed characters that they are asked to play during the game. But that's all part of the fun of this great Mystery Dinner Game.

This dinner was specifically designed to work well with church groups. There is no inappropriate or offensive content in the games. I have tried to create the parts in a way that enables each participant to ad-lib and have a lot of fun. The more spontaneous and outgoing that your group is the more fun they will have. I have also made a few roles for the introverts of your group, so everyone should have a good time.

The Mystery Dinner Games available through Acts of Light have been tested on groups ranging from junior high to senior high to young adults (21-45) to older adults (50-70) and we have found that most of the participants have a good time, in fact the vast majority of people who have played one of the mysteries play another game!

Please send me any comments or questions regarding *Mystery At Windfall Lodge*.

In the Power of His Blood,

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NOTICE

This event will take a large amount of planning. The following pages outline all that needs to be done in preparation for *Mystery At Windfall Lodge*. This Mystery Dinner Game has been designed to take approximately 4 to 5 1/2 hours. It can take anywhere between three to eight hours, depending on how long you break for each stage of dinner how much time you plan for the game portions, and how quickly the investigators dig up the information. Anyone can participate regardless of their lack of creativity or disinterest in playing games.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge has been designed to work well with large groups so that each person feels that they have had a part to play in the events of the mystery. I have also allowed them the ability to make up their parts as the evening progresses. I have given each character enough information to keep the story going in the direction that will lead to a solution, but I have left plenty of leeway for the activities to get sidetracked into dead end investigations as the players themselves make up a large portion of their character. The lack of a script, which allows the participants more involvement with the creation of the character that they are to play, has necessitated the presence of a moderator. This moderator will be responsible for maintaining the flow of the discussion throughout the various courses of the Mystery Dinner Game Game. The moderator will ensure that the investigation will be cut off in the proper places at the proper time, will ensure that certain questions will be asked, and will be there to ensure that the proper answers are given. It is imperative that the moderator becomes familiar with the characters and the plot line in order to ensure that the right information is disclosed at the proper time.

The first thing that you need to do is to determine who will be helping you with the event. You will need to find help in two distinct areas, and the people who help in one area cannot be counted on to help in another. In order to provide a smooth evening, each person must be left to his or her own part without any other obligation. You will need to assign someone to be in charge of the food for the evening (and possibly helpers), you will need to assign a moderator (and possibly helpers), and someone to determine who is to play which parts (this can be the moderator). *If you will be playing with more than one group, you need to assign one moderator for each of the groups that will be playing.*

The moderator has a lot of preparation that needs to be done before the evening of the event. You must be sure to hand off the information, if you are not going to be the moderator, well in advance of the event itself. Even if you choose not be the moderator you may want to be involved in the determination of who is to play what parts. The players will need to be notified in advance so that they can dress appropriately for the evening.

The following packets of information have been created in a way that will allow you to give only the information that a person needs to prepare their segment of the evening. There is a packet for the person in charge of assigning the characters, a packet for the person in charge of the food, and a packet for the person who is to serve as the moderator. Please be sure that the appropriate people get their packets well in advance of the evening of the Mystery Dinner Game Game.

Remember: It is impossible for one person to do all that is necessary on the evening of the event if you want the participants to enjoy the evening. You must have at least two to four people who are willing to assist the evening's activities. If you are well prepared, and if you have properly delegated the work for the event itself, there is no reason why things won't run smoothly.

It is my wish that you will find all that you need in order to put on an entertaining evening. If you feel that there is information lacking, in any way whatsoever, please feel free to contact me and I'll do my best to clear up your questions.

THE PLAYERS (IN PREPARATION)

This sheet, along with the attached worksheets, will help you plan which characters you should assign to the people attending the game. You must select between 15-20 people to take part in the evening's activities. If you have less than 20, then I have outlined which characters are non-essential and they can be left out. If you have more than 20, then the extra will be able to view the activities and venture a guess at the outcome of the mystery at the night's end. Or if you have enough people, you could have two or more groups doing the event at the same time. They will have to separate for the investigation, into two separate rooms, but they could join together to partake of the food.

Of the 20 that have been selected to participate, two will be the evening's chief investigators. They are named Despicable, Esq. and Nefarious, Esq. Both are top level lawyers from the law firm of Despicable, Nefarious, and Cad, Attorneys At Law and can be of either sex. It is their job to investigate the activities of the other people and attempt to determine who is the charlatan and who should receive the large sum of money, which cannot be determined until the end of the game.

Please note that some of the characters have been developed so that members of either sex can play them. This allows you greater flexibility in figuring out who is going to play what character.

You first need to organize your players into three classifications: Thinkers, Participants, and Viewers. The *Thinkers* will have an important part to play in the game. Two of them are to interview the other participants and investigate the crime. Their part in the game is crucial, and they will have to be able to think on their toes and deduce from the information gained in questioning. Theatre majors, or those with acting experience are perfect for these parts, but acting experience is not necessary. You'll want to select the cream of the crop for these two characters. *Participants* will be the ones who are involved in the majority of the questioning. Their part is crucial, but they will be given all of the information that they need to play their part and their characters can be played with little development. And the *Viewers* will have smaller roles to play in the story. Each of them can play an integral role in the game, but their characters have been created for the more reserved personalities in your group. Each of the 20 have a part to play in the game, so don't think that anyone will feel "left out." In fact, the participants won't even know or be able to determine which of their roles are *Thinking*, *Participants*, or *Viewers*. The "viewing roles" should be reserved for those who don't like to get heavily involved in things. These roles enable them to be part of the fun, but give them little to do to keep the story going. The "viewing roles" can be left out of the game if you don't have enough players to fill all 20 roles.

Fill in the blanks on the following page with ideas as to how you would classify your potential participants. Use a pencil and don't be afraid to move people around until you are sure you have people in the proper categories.

Remember: Those in the *Thinker* roles must be able to lead the game. Those in the *Participant* roles must be able to participate in the questioning while staying in character. Those in the *Viewer* roles should be more reserved, or these roles can be left out if you don't have enough people to play.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

PLAYERS - 2 OF 9

Thinkers

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Participants

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.

Viewers

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

PLAYERS - 3 OF 9

Once you have determined which category the players will be in, you can insert them into the roles below according to sexes. Once you have done that, you are ready to inform these people of the roles that they are to play.

Either Sex

Name of Participant

T – Despicable, Esq.
T – Nefarious, Esq.
P – Terry Underwood
V – Pat Aromeia
V – Louie
V – Robin Tripper

Guys

T – Nathaniel Swizzler
P – Biff Huggins
P – Vince Clortho
P – Jerome Decker
P – Jonathan
P – Jeeves
P – John Watson
V – Michael Talbot

Girls

T – Penny Boon
P – Patty Wilson
P – Rose Charming
P – Vivian Swizzler
P – Irma Peterson
V – Missy Meadows

BASIC CHARACTER INFORMATION
(IN PREPARATION)

The following is a list of the information that each player should receive about his or her character. This is all that they need to know about their character until they arrive at the event itself. You can either cut these statements out and hand them to the players, create a sheet that contains the information along with other specifics for your event, or give them the information over the telephone. Be sure to have a spare copy. You are more than likely going to get a telephone call just before the event itself from one of the players who has lost the information and forgotten how he or she should dress.

Nefarious, Esq.

Lead Attorney

Despicable, Nefarious, and Cad, Esq.

You are the Lead Attorney for Despicable, Nefarious, and Cad, Esq., a world-renown legal firm. You have a reputation of catching the eye and turning the head of all who come into contact with you. Your success has enabled you to spare no expense in your manner of dress, allowing your eccentricities to show through. Your desire is to convey your authority to all who attend the evening's activities.

Your partner, Despicable, Esq. will also be attending the evening's activities (although Cad, Esq. will be occupied with other pressing matters). This part will be played by _____ . You may wish to contact Despicable to coordinate your outfits and plan for the evening.

You and Despicable, Esq. will be leading the investigation. It is your job to ask questions of the others that are gathered in the room. You are the only ones who are allowed to ask questions. Be prepared to present yourself in a manner in which demands respect of those who attend the evening's activities.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

PLAYERS - 5 OF 9

Despicable, Esq.

Principal Attorney

Despicable, Nefarious, and Cad, Esq.

You are the Principal Attorney for Despicable, Nefarious, and Cad, Esq., a world-renown legal firm. You have a reputation of catching the eye and turning the head of all who come into contact with you. Your success has enabled you to spare no expense in your manner of dress, allowing your eccentricities to show through. Your desire is to convey your authority to all who attend the evening's activities.

Your partner, Nefarious, Esq. will also be attending the evening's activities (although Cad, Esq. will be occupied with other pressing matters). This part will be played by _____ . You may wish to contact Nefarious to coordinate your outfits and plan for the evening.

You and Nefarious, Esq. will be leading the investigation. It is your job to ask questions of the others that are gathered in the room. You are the only ones who are allowed to ask questions. Be prepared to present yourself in a manner in which demands respect of those who attend the evening's activities.

Patty Wilson

Secondary English Teacher

You are a secondary English teacher from a small town. Your mannerisms and tastes lead everyone you meet to believe that you're just a simple teacher who leads a simple life. Most people think that your clothes don't match, but you're confident in the way you dress and you feel that it reflects your own personality – something your students taught you to be proud of.

Biff Huggins

Broadway Producer

Huggins and Kisses, Inc.

You are a very successful Broadway producer. You're a people person. You love to meet with people you know, as well as people you don't know. You're used to the party crowd and this kind of an event doesn't scare you, in fact, you can't wait to see who else is at this mysterious little gathering and mingle with them. You're used to dealing with eccentric actors, eccentric investors, eccentric members of the media, and eccentric friends, so why shouldn't their eccentricities rub off on you? Your eccentricities show in every aspect of your life – especially in the way you dress. Let's just say that people can recognize you from a mile a way – and that's the way you like it.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

PLAYERS - 6 OF 9

Vince Clortho

Movie Producer and Lecturer

You are a very successful movie producer. You've also had previous success with some television work. You've recently added lecturing to your portfolio and you love to travel the country and teach others what you've learned in life. You believe yourself to be a people person, but that all changes as soon as someone gets on your bad side. You're not afraid to admit that a bit of a mean streak erupts. But that's okay, it hasn't harmed you in the past and you don't expect it to hurt you in the future. You're known for dressing completely in black. You feel it conveys your mysterious side and you love to see the reaction that it draws from all you meet for the first time.

Missy Meadows

Stay At Home Mom

You are the stay-at-home mother of three – two boys and a girl. You're just a simple woman with simple tastes, but that doesn't mean that you're stupid. You're tired of others assuming that a stay-at-home mom implies that you're not able to make it in the real world. You've made the decision to stay at home for the welfare of your preschool kids and you believe that your decision has paid off. Your modest lifestyle is reflected in your manner of dress. Of course, you would wear something nice to an event such as the one you're attending tonight.

Jerome Decker

Entrepreneur Extraordinaire

All of your friends call you J.D. Your outgoing and aggressive personality is the primary reason you are a successful Entrepreneur. You know a lot of people and you're interested in meeting anyone who's anyone who you don't already know. You dress in the finest of clothes so that you can make your best impression on everyone you meet.

Jonathan

Limousine Chauffeur

You are a professional Limousine Chauffeur, but you are not a snobby or materialistic man. You know how to show respect to your clients, but your down-to-earth mannerisms impress all of your clients and leave them at ease around you. More people than you can possibly service in any single day request your services. You dress in the finest clothes that are comfortable, yet respectful. A bow tie and classic Chauffeur cap are two of your signature pieces.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

PLAYERS - 7 OF 9

Rose Charming

Motion Picture and Stage Actor

You are a famous Hollywood Actor and Broadway star. Your name and face are well known in just about every home in America. Although you try not to refer to every day Americans as “little people” others say you use condescending phrases and tones more often than not. Your style reflects your success.

Jeeves

Butler

You are a butler whose services are highly sought after. Not a day passes when you don't receive requests to leave some Hollywood or Broadway star you are serving and move on to someone who is bigger, better, more famous, and willing to pay more money. Your traditional manner of dress includes a bow tie.

Irma Peterson

Maid

You are just an ordinary maid. You don't believe your life is anything special. You haven't done anything to speak of, and you like it that way. You try to keep your nose clean and you don't make friends with strangers. Your manner of dress is modest and plain, except for the nice bracelet and/or necklace you like to wear when you go out.

Michael Talbot

Talk Radio Host

You are the host of a popular national talk radio program. Your success has not gone to your head, though, you're still down to earth and you enjoy being around your fans. They are the ones who made you successful and you realize that any time spent with them is time well spent for today and well invested in the future. You dress completely in black because you like to have an air of mystery about you.

Vivian Swizzler

Domestic Industrious Engineer

It's true – you're a housewife, but you don't like to use that phrase. It's too condescending: Housewife. You don't even like the way it looks when it's written. You much prefer to refer to yourself as a Domestic Industrious Engineer and then promptly change the topic of conversation if anyone asks specific questions about what exactly you do. In fact, you're not even married, so how can you be a wife? The fact of the matter is that your father is rich and you spend all day lounging around the house eating bon-bons while watching Oprah – and you wouldn't want any other kind of life. You dress in the finest of clothes and you love when people ask you if you're famous.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

PLAYERS - 8 OF 9

John Watson

Businessman

You are a regular kind of guy who happens to be a genius at business. You've dabbled in a few dozen different enterprises and it's netted you over 12 million in assets. It hasn't changed your life though; you're still the down-to-earth guy your high school friends wanted to spend time with. Your personality makes everyone feel as if you're a long time friend. Your manner of dress is simple and comfortable, yet smart and attractive.

Nathaniel Swizzler

Vice-President of an S&P 500 Company

You are one of a few Vice-Presidents for one of America's top 100 companies. You've worked long and hard to get to where you are and you have little patience for two kinds of people: those who aren't willing to work for what they get and those who want something from you. You've weighed the advantages and disadvantages and you've decided to allow your confidence and success to have a debilitating affect on your ability to make friends. In fact, you have no friends, but you feel that it was a fair price to pay to be as filthy rich as you are. You're rarely seen without a suit coat and tie on – if not in a three-piece suit.

Pat Aromeia

A New York City Street Bum

Yeah, you're not afraid to admit it: you're a bum. You spend most of your days walking around the streets of New York City trying to beg enough money to buy a meal or two. Worst-case scenario, you have to look through dumpsters to find enough to satisfy your appetite. The bad luck you've experienced in the past has had a devastating affect on your personality and people don't like to be around you for more than a few minutes. Your friends say you make everyone feel depressed, but what you do, you live a depressing life! You're dressed in anything you've found along your travels. Of course, nothing matches and most things are stained or ripped. You wouldn't believe the kinds of things people throw away! You carry all kinds of treasures you've collected over the years with you everywhere you go.

Louie

The Hot Dog Vendor

You're a hot dog vendor and proud of it. You can't imagine any other way of life. You get to set your own hours, work in the outdoors, make people happy, and it pays real well. You're a real people person too, which helps on the job. It gets you great tips. You normally dress in jeans and a t-shirt, but for this special occasion you've decided to dress in jeans and flannel – but they're your best jeans and it's your best flannel shirt.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

PLAYERS - 9 OF 9

Robin Tripper

Footman

You work as the Footman in a luxury apartment building in New York City. Your job is simple, open the door for anyone coming out of or into the building. You have a great personality and the tenants of your building are always glad to see you after a busy day at work or a long night on the town. In your spare time you like to dress in jeans and flannel. It makes you warm and comfortable, and you feel it doesn't jeopardize your standing as one of the best footmen in New York City.

Terry Underwood

Broadway Script Writer

You'd like to be able to tell others that you are one of the most successful playwrights ever seen on Broadway, but that day has yet to come. You've had a few minor successes, you've partnered with a few other writers to come up with some hits, but you've always been paid according to seniority and for some reason you've always been on the low end of the totem pole. You're starting to get desperate and you're starting to come across as desperate to others you come into contact with. Your manner of dress is simple and comfortable, yet smart and attractive.

Penny Boon

Investment and Financial Advisor to the Stars

At least that's what it says on your business card. You feel that most of the time you're just a therapist. But you're more than willing to listen to your clients drone on as long as they're willing to pay you your exorbitant fees. You come across to your clients as kind, patient, and sweet on the outside, but you can't wait to be alone to let your vicious, impatient, and rude side come through. You dress in the finest of clothes and you love when people ask you if you're famous. You may not be, but you sure know a lot of people who are.

TO THE MODERATOR
(IN PREPARATION)

The success or failure of the evening lies in your hands. You have the ability to make *Mystery At Windfall Lodge* the best event of the year. The success of the evening lies in your knowledge of both the story and the course of events of the evening. You will have a good deal of preparation to do before the night of *Mystery At Windfall Lodge*, so you need to plan accordingly. You must be free from any responsibility for the food portion of the evening. You may wish to choose an assistant moderator to study the same material who can aid you during the event itself.

You should find all that you need to moderate a successful Mystery Dinner Game within this packet. If you find that there is any information whatsoever that is lacking, do not hesitate to contact me and I will do my best to clear up any questions that you may have.

You will notice that I have placed two phrases within parentheses underneath the titles on each of the following pages. The two phrases are "In Preparation" and "In Possession." All of the pages marked "In Preparation" will be used to prepare for the events of the evening. All of the pages marked "In Possession" will be used during the evening itself. You will need to have these pages in your possession throughout the entire event. You must also make sure that these pages do not fall into the hands of any of the participants. The information contained on the pages will tell them all that they need to know in order to solve the case.

Take some time to familiarize yourself with the material that you will be using during *Mystery At Windfall Lodge*. The file *wbooklet.doc* contains the rules and common information that will be handed out to every participant and read together as a group at the beginning of the game. The file *wprofiles.doc* contains all of the information that will be given to the participants throughout the game.

Before we learn about the part that you will play in the events of the evening, you should take the time to read through the player booklets and the player profiles. The moderator needs to know the information contained in the player booklet well enough to be able to summarize it for someone else who has no prior knowledge of the events of the evening. The moderator also has to have a good understanding of who the individual characters are what kind of information has been given to them. The moderator should be able to identify characters that are friends and characters that are enemies.

You will have to print out all of the information contained within this file (*wcontrol.doc*), the player profiles (*wprofiles.doc*), and the player booklets (*wbooklet.doc*). You can do that now if you'd like. You will have to have at least 21 copies of the player booklets – one for each player and one for the moderator. You may wish to print out additional copies for those who may just be watching, but that's up to you. The player booklets also make great pages for the players to take notes as the game progresses.

Be sure that you have read through the player booklet and player profiles before you continue with these instructions.

If you are playing the game with more than one group than you must be sure that you have been asked to moderate only one of the groups playing the game. It is impossible for you to moderate more than on group.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

MODERATOR - 2 OF 13

The following information outlines how the game should be played on the night of the event. The players will arrive and will be seated in a room which has chairs arranged in a circle. You cannot begin the game until all of the players have arrived, so be sure to emphasize the importance of being on time to your group before the event. Once all of the players have arrived and have been seated, pass out a player booklet to each player. You will then read through the entire player booklet with them. I have found that reading through the information with them, out loud, is necessary to ensure that they read it all. This also keeps everyone on the same page, so to speak. You may want to ask for volunteers to do the reading for you. Then give them an opportunity to ask any questions as to how the game is to be played. Once all questions have been answered, you will then hand out their player profiles for the first round. Give them a few minutes to read and study this information. It is different for each character. It is the information that shapes the character that they are to play for the evening (you should take the time to read all of the player profiles before the game is to be played – if you haven't done so already). . Emphasize to them that they are responsible for making up answers that have not been specifically given to them if they are asked questions their player profiles haven't addressed.

There will be two characters that will be given the assignment of investigating the mystery put before them. They will be the only ones who are to interview, question, and accuse the other members of the room. They are to work as a team. One should ask the questions and the other should take notes. Then, when the one asking questions gets stumped, they can change roles and work off of each other. It is important that everyone in the room is able to hear (and is paying attention to) the questions that are asked by the investigators and the answers that the players have given. You'll want to be sure everyone is speaking loud enough to be heard around the circle and that everyone is paying attention.

You will also have to be on your toes to make sure that the players do not lie when they are being questioned. There is a large amount of leeway given to the players as far as what kind of questions can be asked and what kind of answers are to be given. It allows the investigation to go in any of hundreds of different directions – and really is the most fun aspect of the game. Encourage the players to make up their own answers as long as they haven't been given any information regarding the topic of questioning.

For example: Let's say that the event is taking place on Saturday night. Despicable asks Jeeves where he was on the previous Wednesday night and what he was doing. Jeeves hasn't been told what he was doing on the previous Wednesday night, so he has to make up a story that would follow along with what his character would have been doing on a Wednesday night. As long as he isn't contradicting something that he was told, he can say whatever he wants to say. If he says that he was out running some errands for the person he's currently working for; that's fine, as long as the explanation falls in line with his character.

You will allow the questioning to continue until Despicable and Nefarious feel that they have thoroughly questioned those in the room regarding their background. They will not get into why the players are at the Windfall Lodge. The players do not have information regarding why they are at the Windfall Lodge until later in the game. Most groups find that the clock dictates the length of the questioning rounds of the game. If dinner is set to come out of the oven at a certain time it's important that they questioning rounds are kept on time so that you don't have to serve a cold dinner.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

MODERATOR - 3 OF 13

Try to keep a pulse on how well the investigation is going. If Despicable and Nefarious are having a hard time offer questions they could ask that will get right to the heart of the investigation or notify them that line of questioning they are following is going to lead to a dead end. Don't be afraid to be a proactive moderator. You're the only one who knows what direction the investigation should be heading. Use your authority as a moderator to be sure that investigation leads the group in a direction that will give them a shot of solving the mystery at the end of the night.

If you have plenty of time and Despicable and Nefarious are doing a fine job asking questions and working off the answers that they are given, then you might allow more leeway in the truth of the answers given. Let them follow what you know are to be dead end leads if they have the time. Everyone has fun adding to story lines they assume to be made up. There is a sort of camaraderie in trying to get Despicable and Nefarious on a wild goose chase that leads them nowhere.

Realizing that it would take the participants a while to get into their roles and understand how the game will be played, I have made the first round a rather easy round. Despicable and Nefarious will get a feel on how to ask questions and the rest of the players will learn how to answer them so that they don't look suspicious. Round 1 contains a great deal of background information about each of the characters. Despicable and Nefarious should be able to give the names, occupations, friends, enemies, and other incidentals of each of the characters before they are allowed to end Round 1.

When Despicable and Nefarious feel that they have learned all that they're going to learn for a given round, they are to present what they've learned to you. If you feel that they have found out enough of the information, then you call the break. If you feel that they have more investigating to do, then you tell them that they have more information to find before the round is over. You may want to give them some clues or potential questions to ask if the first round is taking a long time.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

MODERATOR - 4 OF 13

The first break to be called is the Appetizer break. Be sure to tell everyone how much time they have and then be sure to let them know when there is just 5 or 2 minutes left so that they can begin to make their way back to their seats.

Be sure to tell everyone that they're doing a good job, pointing out some people who have been doing an excellent job. Use the break to give some of the weaker players some pointers as to how to make their characters more interesting. You should also spend some time with Despicable and Nefarious and coach them in the job they're doing. They have the most difficult job and you should praise them for their willingness to be the investigators.

After the appetizer break you should make sure that all of the players are together in the room before handing out the next round of player profiles. The player profiles contain the information that controls the next round of the game. The material in the player profiles now becomes the topic of questioning for the next round, and so goes the rest of the evening.

The rounds continue as above until the end of round three when we have heard why everyone is claiming they should receive part of Penelope Watson's inheritance. At this time Despicable and Nefarious will read their Secret Clue out loud, announcing that the questioning portion of the game has ended and that all of the information that will be revealed has been revealed. As round four begins you should hand out the clues and open the floor to everyone but Despicable and Nefarious, leaving their theories until the last. You should accept all theories on the same ground, saying something like "that's an interesting theory." Don't tell them if they are right or wrong. This may discourage others who are formulating their own theories. Then you can have everyone read their one final clue (the bold line at the bottom of the page) one after another and then see if anyone wishes to change their theory. They should now have enough information to solve the mystery. After everyone has had an opportunity to speak their peace, you should read the solution to the group.

Be prepared for squeals of laughter as each of the players learn of their future fate.

THE SCHEDULE

This Mystery Dinner Game was designed to last about 5 1/2 hours. An hour was planned for each of the four rounds, and 1/2 hour for each of the food segments. You can adjust this time accordingly, either before the event, or as the event progresses. You do not have to eat dinner as a part of the event. You can skip the dinner entirely and just break for 10 or 15 minutes between each of the rounds, but it's a lot more fun if there is food, especially because of the amount of time the game takes.

You can either adhere to a strict schedule, cutting off the questioning when the time limit for the round expires, or put dinner on hold to let the investigation fulfill its natural course. That is up to you, and you can make the call as the evening progresses if you wish. You will want to be in close contact with the person who is planning food either way to let them know when you expect to eat next.

The one thing that could ruin your evening is if there are one or two who are excessively late at the beginning of the evening. You can't begin until all have arrived and every five or ten minutes that tick by will cause you to change the schedule for the rest of the evening. No investigation round is more important than another, so be sure to make adjustments so that there is equal time for the investigation rounds if you have to alter the schedule you planned on.

Here's a sample schedule that works well for most groups:

5:00 – Beginning of the game

I often set out appetizers 5 or 10 minutes before the start of the event. There are always one or two who don't show up at the proper time and I plan on it. Some groups announce that the game starts at 4:45 to give the extra buffer time.

5:00 – Start Round 1

6:00 – Break for Appetizers

This break is one that I often change depending on when we started. I plan on a 1/2 hour, but it's often just 15 minutes if there were latecomers.

6:30 – Start Round 2

7:30 – Break for Dinner

8:00 – Start Round 3

9:00 – Break for Dessert

This is always my favorite part of the evening. This break can be altered as well. You can give everyone 15 minutes to get settled and have Round 4 at the dessert tables if you need more time.

9:30 – Start Round 4

10:00 or 10:30 (depending on how many people offer theories) – End of the game.

HOW DO I GET ALL OF THIS STUFF DONE?
(IN PREPARATION)

I have outlined exactly what you need to do before the event, and I have included tip sheets that you can keep on your person during the event to aid you as you moderate the dinner itself.

You will not be the only one who is involved in the preparation of the event. Be sure that you are not involved in the preparation of any other aspect of the event. You may either assign characters yourself or ask someone else to assign characters, but you must not be involved in the preparation of the food aspects of the event. You must leave the preparation of the dinner to someone else, and focus in on preparing to run the course of events of the evening.

Keep in mind that you are the quarterback of the event. You will want to keep in close communication with the others who are in the kitchen to make sure that you both have a clear understanding as to when the breaks will be and how long they'll last.

Now we move on to the separate items of preparation that you need to do just before the night of the event.

PRINTING THE PLAYERS BOOKLETS
(IN PREPARATION)

If you haven't already printed the three files out, you should do it now. Notice that there are a number of common sheets that belong in each of the player booklets. Be sure that there are enough copies of these so that you can create all 20 of the player booklets needed to play the game. You will also need a copy of this booklet yourself, and a copy for anyone who may be helping you moderate.

You must also be sure that the player profiles are printed and sorted according to the round that they are handed out. Just keep them in the order that they come off of the printer and you will be prepared to hand them out. Be sure that you have grouped them according to round so that you don't hand out the wrong ones during a given round. You should also note that there are special clues that are handed to Despicable or Nefarious at the end of each of the rounds that are to be read out loud before the break is announced. Don't forget about these. They are very important.

If you have ordered a printed copy of the Mystery Dinner Game you don't have to do these, of course, but this would be a good time to ensure that everything is there.

PLAYER PROFILES (IN PREPARATION)

Each player receives a player profile at the beginning of each round. These profiles contain the instructions that direct the players to reveal the information that is relevant for each round. They also give Despicable and Nefarious guidance about the job they are to do. There are many dead end leads given to others in the room that may cause dead end investigations as the evening proceeds. This may seem frustrating to the players. Be sure to tell them to relate the information they've been given. It's the way they remember things and they're not to allow others to bully them into adopting other's version of the truth as they remember it. If you do not use all 20 players, you must tell the players that they may receive clues that are of no importance since some players could not be there tonight. They are to disregard these clues or use them to create false information about others.

Discourage the players from commenting on the profiles that they receive.

You will need to be sure that the profiles are printed out and sorted according to the rounds. Be sure that the proper profiles are passed out at the proper time. If information gets into their hands before it is supposed to be there the mystery will not play itself out in its proper course.

Another important note to make here is the fact that you need to do your best to make sure that all of the players reveal important information during a given round. You cannot ensure that everyone says everything that they have been given, but you can get a general feel for what was supposed to be said by reading the clues ahead of time, and letting the players know that everything hasn't been found out yet. You can feel free to make up your own clues and offer them to Despicable and Nefarious as the game progresses. Make sure that Despicable and Nefarious use the special information you give them to question suspects.

THE QUESTIONING (IN PREPARATION)

After you feel that everyone has read their player profiles and are ready to begin you should turn to Despicable and Nefarious, introduce them, and then hand the room over to them. You can charge them to learn the names, occupations, friend, enemies, and other incidentals of everyone in the room if you'd like or you can just let them take over.

Despicable and Nefarious may look dumbfounded. They may have no idea as to how to begin. You must be ready for this. You must be ready to tell them how to begin their investigation. Tell them to gain background information on each of the people in the room, both for their benefit as well as for the benefit of the others in the room. Tell them to follow the information on their player profile that tells them how to begin their questioning.

As the investigation intensifies in the later rounds, you must make sure that they find out all of the information before they are allowed to go on to the next round. Even if they know the basics, tell them that they are close on the trail, but they need to be able to explain the motives of the people before the next round can begin.

It won't take them too long to get into stride with the way that the game is played. If things begin to seem a bit sluggish, suggest certain lines of questioning, or give out a secret clue of your own making.

For the most part, you cannot tolerate lies on the part of the person being questioned. If you have extra time you can let a lie go for a time, but be sure to correct the player before the end of the round so that the wrong information isn't carried into the next round. Be bold when you tell one of the players that they must tell the truth. Don't be afraid to tell them that you know when they're lying.

THE FOOD (IN PREPARATION)

The most difficult part of the evening to plan is the food because there is no way to tell exactly when the food will be needed. The pace of the evening is up to the players themselves. If they answer the questions in the “right” manner, the event could be over in an hour and a half, leaving little preparation time for the food. You should contact the moderator and ask them if they have a tentative schedule that the two of you can adhere to.

The game is designed to have a break for appetizers, a break for dinner, and a break for dessert. Each break should last between 20-30 minutes. You should try on planning foods that allow you to be flexible regarding their serving time.

The appetizers should be on the tables as the guests arrive. If start time is 5:00, then appetizers will be on the table until 5:15 to 5:30, which is when the players will start to play the first round of the game. The first round of the game will take about an hour. After the first round the players will take a 15-30 minute break (depending on when they were able to get started), during which you may wish to serve the remainder of the appetizers. After that break, the players will play round 2. Round 2 will take about an hour. After round 2 the players will break for dinner. Dinner should last 30 minutes. After dinner the players will play round 3. Round 3 will take about an hour. After round 3 the players will take a 15-30 minute break during which dessert will be served. Round 4 and dessert may take place simultaneously or the moderator may wait until dessert is over to begin Round 4. You’ll want to be in close contact with the moderator to be sure you’re both on the same time schedule.

The moderator can’t interrupt a round so that a food break can be taken at the proper time. Once the players get on an investigative path, they should be allowed to follow that path to its conclusion. A round of the game can’t be cut short and added to the beginning of the next round because dinner is ready. It will be too hard for the players to remember where they left off.

As far as physical set up of the eating area, you can either have the food in the same room as the discussions, or have easy access to an adjacent room where the food will be served. The moderator cannot be responsible for the preparation of the food. He or she will need to have others who can ensure proper preparation and clean up. He or she will have no time to help them out.

The best way to prepare food for the evening is if you plan on food that needs little preparation, such as sandwiches. Everything but the cold-cuts can be laid out just after the appetizers are cleared and then the cold-cuts can be taken out of the fridge as soon as the break is announced. If you plan on ordering pizza, it is difficult to determine the exact time that the food will be needed. You can plan on two and 1/2 hours after the time that the event is to start, but have the oven on to keep the pizza warm in case the investigation is running behind schedule.

Be sure to keep a line of communication open with the moderator during the event so that you can get a general idea of what time he or she expects to need the next course of the meal.

THE FOOD
(IN POSSESSION)

Gain a tentative schedule regarding times for each of the rounds and breaks from the moderator.

In general:

Appetizers are to be laid out at the beginning of the evening. You may wish to leave them out on the table until Round 2 has begun.

Dinner should be ready about 2-1/2 hours after the beginning of the evening.

Dessert will be needed about an hour after dinner has been cleared.

You can check with the moderator during the game to see if he/she can gauge the course of events and the amount of time until the next break.

THE BIG NIGHT (IN POSSESSION)

As the participants arrive have them gather in a room where chairs have been placed in a circle. You should not begin the game until everyone has arrived. If you do, the participants who are late will not be able to catch up on the information that they have missed.

Once all have gathered in the circle you should hand out the player booklets. Tell them not to open the booklets until everyone has one. Then you should read through the information *out loud* with them.

Allow them some time to ask questions about what you have just gone over. Answer the questions and be sure that everyone has a good idea what is expected of them.

When all of the questions have been answered you are to hand out the Player Profiles for Round One. Tell them to read through their Player Profiles and study the information contained within. This supplies them with the specific information about the character that they are to play. Be sure to give them time to digest all of the information.

Once they have finished reading their Player Profiles, ensure that they have no further questions.

The investigation should then be handed over to Despicable and Nefarious. You will tell them that they need to find out who is in the room, what they do for a living, and the other questions that they have been given to ask during the first round. Mention that the round will not end until they have thoroughly questioned those in the room on these key background points. If they are having a hard time getting going, tell them to refer to their booklets for help, or give them advice as to some questions to ask.

TRACK THE INVESTIGATION (IN POSSESSION)

This sheet will give you the information that you need to know as the game is being played. This sheet tells you what is going to be learned during each of the rounds and when you should stop each round. **DO NOT LET THIS INFORMATION OUT OF YOUR SIGHT WHILE THE GAME IS BEING PLAYED.**

ROUND 1

During Round 1 we learn basic character information regarding everyone that is in the room. Round One does not end until Despicable and Nefarious can identify the name, occupation, and other incidentals of everyone in the room.

Despicable and Nefarious should discover that:

- Biff is a big time Broadway Producer and Vince is a Hollywood Producer and the two are far from friends.
- Jerome Decker, Missy Meadows, and Patty Wilson are friends from college.
- Nathaniel Swizzler is Vivian's father and Vivian does nothing but sit around the house all day.
- Jonathan, Jeeves, and Irma are all in-house servants and have worked with each other at various times.
- Irma has been accused of stealing from her clients on a number of occasions.
- Louie and Pat don't care for one another.
- Jonathan doesn't like having Robin hang around his limo.
- Penny Boon is a financial advisor and she's given advice to just about all of the wealthy people in the room.

And other miscellaneous information whether given to the characters, or made up by them.

When you feel that Despicable and Nefarious have adequately investigated the first round you should ask them to summarize what they have learned about each of the people gathered in the room. You should then hand Despicable or Nefarious their Special Clue and have them read it out loud. Once they have read their clue you should announce the beginning of the Appetizer Break. Be sure to tell them they've done a great job, picking out some who have done an exceptional job. Be sure to tell everyone how much time they have until Round 2 begins.

If the round is taking longer than expected, because of unexpected plot lines that have been invented by the players, don't be afraid to interrupt the questioning and give Despicable and Nefarious some guidance.

APPETIZER BREAK

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

MODERATOR - 12 OF 13

ROUND 2

Once all have been gathered back in the circle after the break and you are ready to begin, hand out the player profiles for round two. Once all have had a chance to read the secret clues ask if anyone has any questions regarding what they have just read. Once all questions have been answered begin Round 2.

In Round 2 we learn more about Penelope Watson. Each character shares recollections of their interactions with Penelope Watson. All but two of the characters have had no interaction with her over the past 20 years. The two who have are Terry Underwood and Michael Talbot.

Each of the character's stories has been designed to overlap one another. People would remember things differently after 20 years have passed. Some of them may be adamant that their side of the story is right and a competitor's side of the story is wrong. That's okay.

Encourage Despicable and Nefarious to do their best to try to get to the true story.

We should learn (loosely, based on whose story is more believable) that Penelope first tried out for a production in college; she was eventually spotted by Biff; she was taken to California by Vince; she became a movie star there and came back to New York; she hired Jeeves, Jonathan, and Irma to work for her; she married John Watson; she lived in the apartment building Robin works for; and then she suddenly disappeared.

She contacted Terry Underwood about a year ago to write a documentary on her life. She also contacted Michael Talbot to see if he would interview her on his show. Their contact with her was brief and they didn't think much of it.

Everyone should be given an opportunity to share what he or she knows about her. Then Despicable and Nefarious should try to sum up what they've learned. When you feel that everyone in the room has had a chance to share what's on their mind, it's time to give Despicable and Nefarious the next Special Clue.

Have one of them read it out loud and announce the Dinner Break.

DINNER BREAK

ROUND 3

Once all have been gathered back in the circle after dinner, and you are ready to begin the next round, hand out the player profiles for the third round.

Once all have had a chance to read the player profiles, and no one has any questions about their information, begin the third round.

In Round 3 we get to hear why everyone thinks they should be entitled to Penelope Watson's money. Again, be sure that Despicable and Nefarious give everyone a chance to make their claim and react to the claims made by others.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

MODERATOR - 13 OF 13

When everyone has made their claim, and you feel that the players don't have anything new to share, you should ask Despicable and Nefarious if there are any unanswered questions they have for the characters. Tell them that this is their last chance to ask questions.

Once they are done with their questions, and if there is still time, you should take the floor and allow everyone there to make their plea to Todd Doyle (the character that is in the other room listening to their claims) just one more time.

Then hand Despicable and Nefarious their last Special Clue and have them read it out loud.

Announce the Dessert Break. They are free to work through their theories as to who the charlatan is and who gets the money. They are allowed to consult with each other during the break, if they wish to.

DESSERT BREAK

ROUND 4

Round 4 can take place in one of two ways; depending on how much time you have left. If you still have about an hour left, then you can have everyone gather in a circle, as you have during the other rounds. If you're short on time, you can play Round 4 as people are seated and finishing their dessert.

Either way, when you are ready to begin Round 4, hand out the last player profiles. Once all have had a chance to read their player profiles, you can begin Round 4.

Reiterate to them, after they have their clues, that they need to determine who is the charlatan and who should receive the estate of Penelope Watson and why.

Now you may open the floor for any suggestions as to their theories to the solution. Accept every theory as if it was a potential theory, allowing everyone to offer his or her theories. Once everyone has finished offering their theories ask them to read the last line of their Round 4 player profile one at a time, out loud. Tell them that there is enough information within these clues to solve the case.

Once all clues have been read reopen the floor for new theories. When everyone has offered his or her theories settle everyone down and read *The Solution*.

The solution to

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

The charlatan IS revealed...

Penelope Watson's first experience as an actress came in a college production of *Barefoot in the Park*. She was hesitant about trying out. She had never been a part of a play before. Her college friends, Jerome Decker, Patty Wilson, and Missy Meadows convinced her that she should give it a try, although neither of them was willing to go with her.

Her audition went well enough and she was awarded a role. The play did well and she went on to perform in three other plays her senior year. It was at the last performance of her last play that a talent scout from Huggins and Kisses, Inc. saw her perform. Soon after Biff Huggins had scheduled a personal interview with Penelope Watson. He instantly identified the natural talent that had barely begun to surface. He cast her in a smaller part in an off-Broadway production in order to allow her to develop her acting skills.

She flourished and did so well in that part that Biff gave her a small role in one of his main productions in the heart of Broadway. It was then that Vince Clortho came to New York to try to talk Biff Huggins into joining him in a joint production. Biff would have nothing to do with it, having had a bad experience joining with Vince in the past. Vince spotted Penelope, who was perfect for a role he was casting and made an agreement with Biff to let her come to Hollywood for just one role – and then she would return to Broadway.

She didn't return for 5 years. Vince cast her in movie after movie, television drama after television drama – and her demand continued to rise. Then, just when Biff was about to produce what he thought to be another Broadway hit which had a role that Penelope was just perfect for, he talked Vince into releasing her from a contract that would keep her in Hollywood for another 5 years and allow her to return to Broadway for the role. Penelope had always wanted to be a Broadway star and the role Biff cast her in was just perfect for her. Nobody was surprised that she was a big hit. She moved into an upscale high-rise apartment complex, and hired Jeeves as her butler, Irma as her maid, Jonathan as her driver, and she began to live the life of a Broadway star.

Just a couple of years later she began to notice that she was straining her voice to sing the songs that once came so easily to her. She visited a doctor and was told that she was going to lose her voice within the next year and there was nothing that could be done about it. They could operate so that she could still speak, but they predicted that she would never sing the way she once did.

She had a hard time dealing with the news. There were many options before her. She finally decided to let nature take its course without operating. Rather than sing with a voice that was waning she decided to disappear and start a new life far from the lights of Broadway and the movie cameras of Hollywood. She settled in a small town in the Midwest where nobody knew her name and planned to live the rest of her life off her nest egg, which Penny Boon had built for her while in New York – and she was happy.

Then, about a year ago she found that the infection that had caused the damage to her vocal cords had lain dormant in her body for years until it had recently activated and ravaged her body, leaving her close to death. She contacted Terry Underwood to create some sort of a record of her life; her high points and her struggles, but she couldn't bear the heartbreak after just a few conversations with him and discontinued the process.

She wanted to have one last chance to meet with those who had a great impact on her life before she died. She decided to gather them together in one place just once before she died so that she could hear the great things they had to say about her and so she could determine who would be the primary benefactor of her remaining nest egg.

She wrote a letter to Penny Boon with the assumed name of Todd Doyle and requested that this gathering be arranged. She then pretended to be her old roommate from college, Patty Wilson so that she could listen to her friends as they told stories of her life from their own unique perspective. She knew that people wouldn't be able to distinguish her from Patty Wilson today if most people had a hard time doing it when she was in college. How could she have expected them to say the things they did tonight?

So, you see, in fact, there were two charlatans – not one. Todd Doyle was fabricated and so was Patty Wilson. Penelope Watson was fabricating both of the charlatans. She fabricated them both so that she could find out what people really thought of her and make a proper determination as to what to do with her estate.

She certainly found out what her friends thought of her. She decided to keep her estate to herself, spending what it took to care for her for the rest of her life, and leave the rest to charity. She thought about starting a “liars anonymous” organization but knew she wouldn't be able to believe anything those affiliated with the organization promised to do with the money she left after she died.

After revealing her true identity to the guests at the Mystery At Windfall Lodge she took the opportunity to share some of her thoughts regarding what they had to say. Her confrontation with those who attended the weekend at Windfall Lodge was something they long remembered. There were a few loose ends that she wanted to take care of before she died and she did that night.

She left Pat Aromeia her house and a good-sized annuity for Pat to live on so that Pat never had to sleep in the streets of New York again. Pat lived a long and healthy life telling all she met how wonderful a person Penelope Watson was – which isn't something Pat had to fabricate.

Louie might not have benefited financially from this encounter, but he did go back to New York with greater appreciation for the life he lived. He invested in three other hot dog stands and expanded his business into other parts of the city. His hot dog carts prospered and he retired a wealthy and happy man.

Penelope was quite interested to learn more about the way Penny Boon invested her client's money – both those who prospered because of it and those who lost it all. She made a few phone calls and found that the FBI was interested in how she made her money too. Just a few days later, the FBI confiscated everything that Penny had in her offices and a jury put her in jail for the rest of her life. Apparently she was doing something wrong.

Biff Huggins was embarrassed by the lies he told and dragged his head all the way back to New York City. He realized that he wasn't the people person he thought he was and vowed to change the way he treated those who worked for him. He wasn't able to keep his promise for very long. He lost the financial backing of Swizzler. Hearing of Biff's misfortune, Jerome Decker stepped in to help him out. J.D. liked Biff's style and was more than happy to step in to help him out. Unfortunately, both of them found out that they lost their entire investment portfolio when the FBI investigated Penny Boon. Soon after that they could both be seen selling hotdogs at one of Louie's stands just off of Broadway.

Missy Meadows went back to her simple life as a stay-at-home mom with a greater appreciation for her marriage and her children. She hoped and prayed that her children wouldn't grow up with the kind of greed that was displayed at the Mystery At Windfall Lodge. Her time and effort paid off, producing fine upstanding citizens, although one of them did end up working for Despicable, Nefarious, and Cad.

Terry Underwood met again with Penelope and she filled in all of the details and he wrote a best selling book about her life. He then wrote a screenplay that was based on the book and sold it to Vince Clortho who produced an award-winning miniseries on the life and times of Penelope Watson. The two won an Emmy award on their collaborative production.

Despicable and Nefarious received the million dollars that Penny Boon promised them. They received national press attention for the part they played in the Mystery At Windfall Lodge. Their law firm, Despicable, Nefarious, and Cad, continued to prosper long after they retired from practice. They learned a number of lessons from the Mystery at Windfall Lodge. One was never again to accept estate cases.

Jonathan, Jeeves, and Irma sought forgiveness for the things they said about Penelope. They renewed their relationship with her and were asked to care for her until she died peacefully in her bed. They received the greatest reward of all: the precious memories of a loved one.

After spending so much "quality time" together as they cared for Penelope, Jeeves and Irma revived their romance from years ago. After Penelope passed away, they got married and began to market their services as a team. Just about everyone who was looking for a butler was also looking for a maid and they didn't have a hard time finding employment at the same location. They enjoyed each other's company for as long as they lived.

Jonathan didn't mind seeing Jeeves and Irma get back together. In fact, Jonathan was the best man at their wedding, as well as the chauffeur. Jeeves had a talk with his boss and Jonathan soon found himself driving his limousine for the same client that employed Jeeves and Irma. As it often is with the rich and famous, their client spent about half of the year in a tropical climate, so there were many days that Jeeves, Irma, and Jonathan were able to catch some rays and swim in the pool. It was during times like these they hired someone to come and wait on them!

Rose Charming didn't give a dime of her money to Penny Boon. She teamed up with Vince Clortho in his production of Penelope Watson's life. She was given the title role and she truly honored the experience of playing her mentor in the documentary of her life.

Mystery At Windfall Lodge

SOLUTION - 4 OF 4

Michael Talbot broke his tradition and began to interview stars on his program again. He devoted an entire week's worth of shows to interview each of those who were involved in the Mystery at Windfall Lodge. Those shows still stand as the highest rated radio shows of all time.

Vivian Swizzler married J.D. and eventually found herself pregnant. Her life-long punishment was finding out that there's a lot more to being a "domestic industrious engineer" than just watching Oprah and eating Bon-bons. She soon found herself sitting beside the TV watching Sesame Street while eating Cheerios from a sippy cup.

John Watson and Nathaniel Swizzler settled their long time rivalry. They both quit their long time jobs and started a new business venture together. They started successful business after successful business and made a million charging admission to their own lecture series.

And that leaves us with Robin Tripper. Well, Robin went back to his/her everyday life, working at his/her job, opening doors for those who lived in his/her apartment complex and complaining about the lack of tips. I guess some people never change.

- The End -

