

In an intense world of itusion and intrigue, you must rely on your wit and intuition to find the killer before the grand finale!

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CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS





THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING MURDER UNDER THE BIG TOP

We are confident that you will find this comprehensive packet to provide everything that you will want and need to run your very own murder mystery party—one that will have your guests talking about it for weeks, if not longer.

This murder mystery experience is designed to be easy to run and fun to play for all the guests involved. The game is played with all of your guests having active roles in the game and each guest having objectives to complete. These objectives keep the party from being pre-scripted and allow your guests to draw their own conclusions as to the motives and the identity of the murderer. This format also allows for great mingling amongst your guests and insures that all of your guests feel included. Before the night is through, each guest will have discovered that they have a motive for killing the victim and be inclined to protect their innocence as well as seek out the murderer. To add to the experience and suspense of the night, the murder happens during the party, not before, as in some other murder mystery games. The victim is also allowed to play along after they 'die', since they do not know who murdered them. Murder Under The Big Top is certain to be a hit with all of your guests.

The following pages contain a simple list of things you need to do as host in order to have the party run smoothly. Once the party is going, it is up to the guests to make the most of it—something you will be surprised at how well they do.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT VERSION:

Versions available: 8-12 guests, 10-15 guests, 15-20 guests, 20+ guests.

Gender Counts:

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With 20+ guests: At least 5 males, 4 females, 11 gender-neutral characters.

With 15-20 guests: 5 males, 3-4 females, 7-11 gender-neutral.

With 10-15 guests: 4 males, 2-3 females, 4-8 gender-neutral.

With 8-12 guests: 4 males, 3 females, 1-5 gender-neutral.

Can I upgrade or downgrade between versions after purchase? Unfortunately, you cannot. With the exception of moving from the 15-20 guest version to the 20+ version, upgrading between mysteries is not an option, which is why we encourage getting an accurate guest count before purchasing.

How do I get an accurate guest count? It is recommended that you send out the general invite with an RSVP date of two weeks before the party. After your guests RSVP positive, you can send them their character sheet and other party information.

You can download an invite at: http://www.nightofmystery.com/invitations

Is this mystery suitable for youths and/or church groups? Yes. Our site offers "clean" versions of a few other mysteries on our site: www.nightofmystery.com. Please refer to those when hosting a party for a more conservative crowd.



ASSIGNING CHARACTERS

- As host, you will need to decide upon a character for each of your guests. The easiest way to assign the characters is to read the character descriptions and match each character with the guest you feel suits that particular character the best. They will be listed in this host's guide, along with a sheet that will help you assign the characters best to your guests.
- Is there a set character list? Yes. You will not be able to pick and choose which characters are included with your mystery. This intro file has the guests listed for the 15-20 guest version. If you are curious about specifically which characters will be included with your purchase, you can email support@nightofmystery.com to inquire about that information ahead of purchase.
- WHO CAN I ELIMINATE WITHOUT RUINING THE MYSTERY? Information in mystery purchase.
- Because this party is dependent on a minimum number of people showing up, you need to determine ahead of time which guests are attending before assigning characters.
- An accurate guest count is important. It is recommended that you send out the general invite with an RSVP date of two weeks before the party. After your guests RSVP positive, you can send them their character sheet and other party information.
- You can download an invite at: http://www.nightofmystery.com/invitations

• After purchase, you will not be able to "upgrade" or "downgrade" your party to the next level, so an accurate guest count is imperative. ***There is an upgrade when moving from the 15-20 guests version to the 20+ guest version for purchase on the site, but the 15-20 guest version is the only version where the upgrade works.

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- The killer will not know they are the murderer until they open their second envelope at the party.
- The victim will not know they are the victim until they get to the party. The victim will not have a list of objectives for after the murder. Also listed in their first set of objectives is to, "fall down dead when the lights go off."
- The victim after "death": If the victim wishes to play along after the murder, they can do so without an identity. If you have an extra identity (that is, a role that is not being played), they can also assume that identity if they so choose. *If Payton Protection is not assigned, the victim will assume this role after they have "died."
- As host, who should I be? Information in mystery purchase.
- Ideas for assigning couples: Information in mystery purchase.
- **Different versions for this mystery:** Adult & Clean verions.



SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Can I run this as a first-time host? First-time hosts need not be wary. Night of Mystery parties have everything you need to throw a successful party and are designed to be easy-to-run.

Can I play along without knowing who the victim and/or murderer are? OF COURSE! Unlike some other mystery parties, we have designed our materials so that the hosts can play along! As host, you will read the host's guide in full to ensure that you are setting the game up correctly WITHOUT letting you know who the murderer is! If you wish to know the murderer, you can simply read the solution.

Will a murder happen AT the party? <u>YES again!</u> We found this adds to the excitement, intrigue, and fun of the party! It's another reason why we are a stickler for "no spoilers on social media" – we can't have pictures of the victims for fear of ruining the intrigue for others!

How can I pick the "right" party theme? We always recommend you pick the theme that you are most passionate about hosting and/or you believe your guests will be most excited about coming to! We do our best to accommodate multiple sizes within each party theme to accommodate that.

- If having specific gendered roles is important to you, please see the gender counts for the version you plan on ordering.
- Additionally, if you are worried about a mystery being too racy, please see our clean versions.

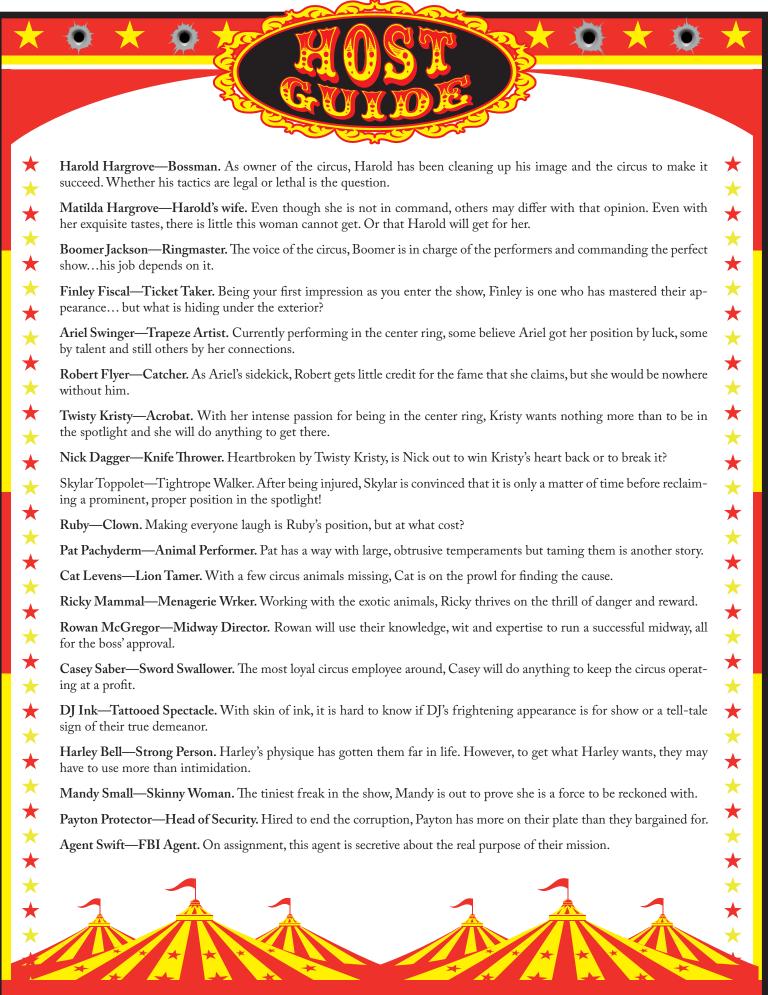
• If specific characters within a mystery are important to you, reach out to support@nightofmystery.com and we can let you know (specifically) which characters are included with the version you are considering.

Can I run this with my business and/or group organization? With a business license, you can run these mystery parties with your organized group and/or business. Please see our FAQ for more information on business licenses.

Do you come and run the party? We do not. Our services are in providing YOU with everything you need to throw your party in your own home or venue. IF you have a desire for someone else to run your party, please see our resources page for party planners who have purchased our business license and are licensed to run our parties in your area.

A Note about Social Media: While we LOVE to see your fun parties – and often highlight and cross-promote those who tag us – we can't have anyone posting pictures of spoilers! This includes, but is not limited to, pictures, videos, or mentions of the victim, murderer, and/or pertinent clues in the game. Since spoiler posts create a calculated loss of business, you can be liable to pay the calculated loss of sales upon discovery of the violation. So keep it fun, crazy, and show us your best spoiler-free content!!! And don't forget to tag us after! #nightofmystery

How does this work? All of our parties come as a professionally designed 50-125 page pdf. Immediately after completing your order, you will be able to re-login to your account using the username and password you established in the purchasing process. Once in your account, you can download your party (including optional emailable invitations for your guests) for 120 days.





HOSTING TIPS

Included with mystery purchase.

MAKING THE INVITATIONS

Before the party, each guest must receive three things: (1) the invitation, (2) the circus bulletin and (3) their character description. *Instructions on how to do so included with the mystery*.

PREPARING THE MATERIALS FOR THE PARTY

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- It is best to view and print all of your materials from Adobe Reader, a free application. Be sure you do not use a Preview Application to print or view materials.
- For the name tag and label pages (optional), they are best printed on adhesive label paper. Name tag and label pages are compatible with Avery labels 15163, 18163, 5163, 5263, 5523, 5663, 5963, 8163, 8253, 8463, 8663 and 8763.
- Cut out and make name tags for the guests. You can print the name tags onto on adhesive label paper or print on regular paper and include a pin with the name tags so that the guests can secure them to their outfits.
- Photocopy the printout of the money onto green paper. You will need as many copies as there are guests attending. Trim the money and bundle them in packages of \$500. —To skip this step, you can purchase fake/play money.
- Cut the objective sheets in half.

• Label two envelopes with each character's name. Label one envelope with an (A) and one with a (B) for each character. OPTIONAL: We have formatted some labels that you can adhere to your envelopes, so that you will not need to label them yourself. Please see the label pages in the Mystery Materials pdf.

In the (A) envelopes place: a name tag, safety pin(s) to adhere the name tag, a bundle of money, and the character's "A" objective half-sheet that has objectives for the beginning of the party

In the (B) envelopes place: the right-side of the objective sheet for each character which has objectives for after the murder happens. **In addition, place the following:**

- If you have eliminated Payton Protection's character, you will need to prepare Payton Protection's "B" envelope. Also insert Payton Protection's character description and name tag into their envelope. (You do not need to add money, as the guest will have money from the first half of the party.) After "death," the victim will assume the role of Payton Protection and will need this information.
- In a separate envelope place the Investigation sheet. Label it as "Investigation."
- In a separate envelope place the Evidence Presentation. Label it as "Evidence."
- Place the solution in a sealed envelope and label it "Solution."
- Keep the "introduction," the "investigation envelope," the "evidence envelope," and the "solution envelope" in a convenient location so you can hand them out throughout the night as guests need them.
- Make enough copies of the accusation sheets for the number of guests you have coming. Cut the pages along the dashed lines.
- Make additional copies of the Smoking Gun Award, as there may be multiple people who guess the murderer.



STAGE ONE: THE GUESTS ARRIVE

• Have the guest's name tags, bundle of money and their (A) envelopes available for them.

STAGE TWO: INTRODUCTION

- After all of the guests have arrived, assemble them together.
- Hand Harold Hargrove the Introduction and ask him to read it aloud to everyone.
- Provide time for guests to mingle and complete their objectives.
 - This may require 30-60 minutes depending on how well your guests know each other.
 - If you're are providing dinner, this will be a good time for dinner to be served.

STAGE THREE: MURDER & INVESTIGATION

• When guests start to settle down, and the victim has told you they have completed all of their objectives, you will arrange for the lights to go out.

- When the lights come back on, the victim will have fallen down "dead."
- After the victim has "died," hand Payton Protection the masking tape or chalk, so they can outline the position of the body on the floor or ground. (Optional)
- Have Payton Protection read the Investigation sheet explaining what will happen next.
- The guests will open their (B) envelopes, which contain new information and objectives for each of the guests to complete now that the murder has occurred.

STAGE FOUR: EVIDENCE PRESENTATION

- · Allow time for the guests to settle down and for Payton Protection to collect all of their evidence.
- When your guests have completed their objectives, hand Payton Protection the evidence packet. With everyone assembled, Payton will present the crime scene evidence/findings to the guests.
- It works well to place all of the evidence on a table, so that it can be seen and inspected by everyone.
- Give your guests additional time to review the evidence. You may want to make multiple copies of the evidence, so that it can be seen by everyone.
- Hand out the 'Who Dunnit?' answer sheets and ask everyone to complete them and return them to you during this time.

STAGE FIVE: THE SOLUTION

- When all the 'Who Dunnit?' sheets are collected, ask Payton Protection to read aloud the solution.
- Using the tally sheet included, calculate who the winners are.
- Award the certificates.

CIRCUS BULLETIN

come one, come all!

To the closing party following the Circus's final performance in town. Help us celebrate a successful week before we pack up and head to the next city. Among others, you'll be sure to see:

Harold Hargrove—Boss man. As owner of the circus, Harold has been cleaning up his image and the circus to make it succeed. Whether his tactics are legal or lethal is the question.

Matilda Hargrove—Harold's wife. Even though she is not in command, others may differ with that opinion. Even with her exquisite tastes, there is little this woman cannot get. Or that Harold will get for her.

Boomer Jackson—Ringmaster. The voice of the circus, Boomer is in charge of the performers and commanding the perfect show...his job depends on it.

Finley Fiscal—Ticket Taker. Being your first impression as you enter the show, Finley is one who has mastered their appearance... but what is hiding under the exterior?

Ariel Swinger—Trapeze Artist. Currently performing in the center ring, some believe Ariel got her position by luck, some by talent and still others by her connections.

Robert Flyer—Catcher. As Ariel's sidekick, Robert gets little credit for the fame that she claims, but she would be nowhere without him.

Twisty Kristy—Acrobat. With her intense passion for being in the center ring, Kristy wants nothing more than to be in the spotlight and she will do anything to get there.

Nick Dagger—Knife Thrower. Heartbroken by Twisty Kristy, is Nick out to win Kristy's heart back or to break it?

Skylar Toppolet—Tightrope Walker. After being injured, Skylar is convinced that it is only a matter of time before reclaiming a prominent, proper position in the spotlight!

Ruby—Clown. Making everyone laugh is Ruby's position, but at what cost?

Pat Pachyderm—Animal Performer. Pat has a way with large, obtrusive temperaments but taming them is another story.

Cat Levens—Lion Tamer. With a few circus animals missing, Cat is on the prowl for finding the cause.

Ricky Mammal—Menagerie Worker. Working with the exotic animals, Ricky thrives on the thrill of danger and reward.

Rowan McGregor—Midway Director. Rowan will use their knowledge, wit and expertise to run a successful midway, all for the boss' approval.

Casey Saber—Sword Swallower. The most loyal circus employee around, Casey will do anything to keep the circus operating at a profit.

DJ Ink—Tattooed Spectacle. With skin of ink, it is hard to know if DJ's frightening appearance is for show or a tell-tale sign of their true demeanor.

Harley Bell—Strong Person. Harley's physique has gotten them far in life. However, to get what Harley wants, they may have to use more than intimidation.

Mandy Small—Skinny Woman. The tiniest freak in the show, Mandy is out to prove she is a force to be reckoned with.

Payton Protection—Head of Security. Hired to end the corruption, Payton has more on their plate than they bargained for.

Agent Swift—FBI Agent. On assignment, this agent is secretive about the real purpose of their mission.

THE "NEW" FAMILY CIRCUS

As the small Hargrove Family Circus grows in popularity, Harold Hargrove has been focusing on making the midway and show more kid and family friendly. Among his efforts, Harold has implemented a strict no tolerance policy prohibiting sleazy, immoral and unethical behavior. "This type of conduct stops many people from attending our circus . . . and those are customers we just can't afford to lose!" says Harold.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



After suffering a fall and a broken ankle, Skylar Toppolet was replaced in the center ring by Ariel Swinger. Ariel has been doing a fantastic job performing and bringing in a record number of attendees!

AGENT ON BOARD

This is just a fair warning to be on your best behavior since Agent Swift (an FBI agent) is traveling with us on the circus train and conducting an investigation into any illegal behaviors. Your full participation in the agent's investigation is both anticipated and expected. The sooner the investigation is completed, the sooner Agent Swift will be returning to Washington where their services are TRULY needed.

ALL ABOARD

The train will be leaving at midnight immediately following the party for its next stop:

HENDERSON, KY BE ON OR BE GONE

WISSING

Unfortunately, some of the Hargrove Family Circus performers have been reported missing. At first these performers were believed to be on their way to new positions at another circus. However, they never said their farewells, nor did they arrive at the new circus. If you have any information, please let Agent Swift or Payton Protection know asap.







Sample Character

From Another Mystery

Banker Bob

As the bank owner in the town of Deadwood, you do business with many of the people in the town and also some of the participants of the Deadwood Poker Tournament. One of your foremost clients is Harry High-Stakes (the Deadwood Saloon owner). In order to get the saloon established and operating in it's first year, you have loaned Harry a substantial amount of money. Although the saloon appears to be doing very well, you are uncertain why Harry is continually delinquent and sometimes misses his payments on his loan. Just last month, Harry was late again on his payment and you warned him that you will have to put his saloon into foreclosure if he cannot repay the money he owes on the loan by next month. You suspect that Harry is throwing the Deadwood Poker Tournament in order to get enough money so that he can repay his debt. This will be an important week to see if you will gain your money back from Harry's loan or if you will gain control over the saloon.

Because Harry is such a difficult and delinquent client, you hope that you will gain control over the saloon. If the saloon becomes the bank's property, you speculate that you may have a very wealthy buyer in Montgomery Money, an investor from the East. Because of Montgomery's reputation, you are certain that you will make a healthy profit off of selling the saloon to Montgomery and he will be consistent and reliable when making his loan payments.

In addition to all the excitement of the tournament, your bank was held up at gun point. Banker Bonnie (your wife) was watching the bank over the noon hour while you were meeting with Harry about his payments. Because of the high ante for the poker tournament, you are convinced that the robber must have been a gambler who was trying to accumulate enough money to pay for the entry fee. Since you view Sheriff Sam (the sheriff) as a very lazy individual, you plan on taking matters into your own hands when it comes to finding the culprit of the bank robbery and bringing them to justice! In addition, you do not believe that Sheriff Sam is a moral character as well. Just this past week, you saw Sheriff Sam taking money from Harry High-Stakes. While you do not know the details of the transaction, the secretive nature in which the money was exchanged suggests that it was not for an honest reason.

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As the Deadwood Poker Tournament Party quickly approaches, you are looking forward to attending for a few reasons. First, the party will be a perfect place for you to talk business with Montgomery Money about his intentions on investing in the saloon if your bank gains control of it. Second, you plan to figure out which one of the poker players may have robbed your bank and you plan to bring them to justice! And lastly, by the end of the night, you will know whether Harry will have enough money to pay off his debt to you or if the saloon will be yours!

Acting and Dressing Your Part: As the bank owner of Deadwood, you are a businessman first. Your bank and your money come before everything, including your wife Bonnie. Since you will be using the party to for business matters, you will want to dress dignified for the night. Consistent with the times, you may consider a button down shirt, vest, ascot and hat (bowler, derby, slouch, gambler or other). Popular of the time period, you may also consider adding in facial hair. For more ideas on how to dress and a glossary of wild western words and phrases to use at the party, please see www.nightofmystery.com and murderatthedeadwoodsaloon.com



Sample Objectives

From another mystery



OBJECTIVES -

Banker Bob

Objectives At The Start Of The Party

- Tell Harry High-Stakes (the saloon owner) that you need the money he owes to the bank by tomorrow or the bank will have to retake the saloon.
- If asked, insist that you may have to foreclose on the saloon if Harry High-Stakes doesn't make enough money by hosting the tournament.
- Tell XXXX that you may have a business proposition for him depending on how the evening turns out.
- Ask Sheriff Sam (the sheriff) if he has any leads on who robbed your bank earlier this week.
- Question some of the gamblers to see what they were doing during the noon hour earlier this week when the bank was robbed.
- Ask Jesse Wales and Black Barbara (two outlaws) why they are in town this week.
- When asked about your wife's actions, insist she can do as she pleases! (But be secretly concerned.)
- If Banker Bonnie questions your relationship, insist that you are only trying to provide a better life for her.
- If anyone approaches you with information about your bank robbery, question their sources and motives.

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Sample Objectives

From another mystery



Things You Know:

- You are about to foreclose on the Deadwood Saloon if Harry High-Stakes (the saloon owner) cannot repay his debt to you.
- Earlier this week, you XXXX handing XXXXX money. For what reason, you are not sure.
- Earlier tonight, you witnessed XXXXX, talking to XXXXXXX.

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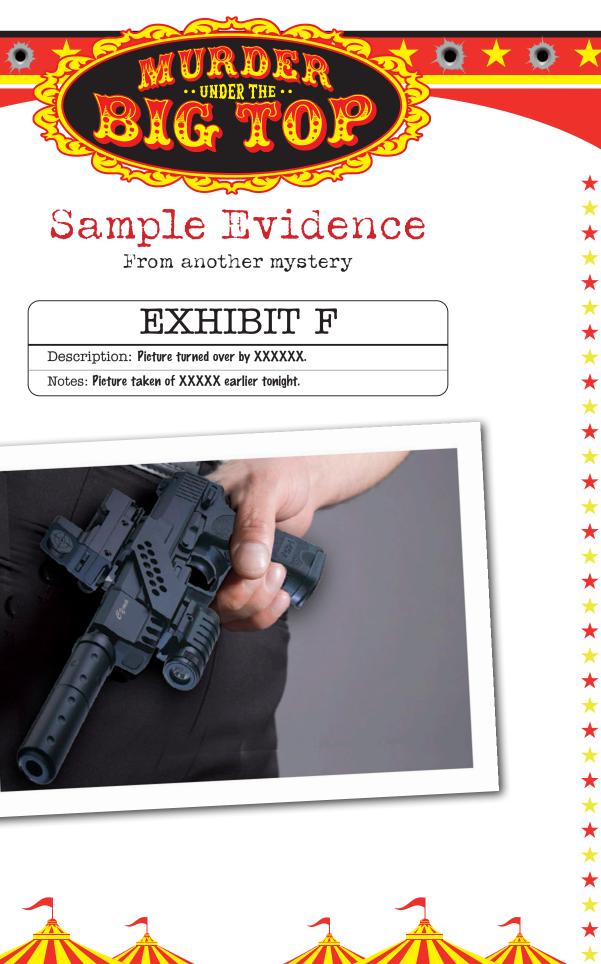
Banker Bob

Objectives After The Murder:

- Find the murderer while maintaining your innocence.
- Ask XXXX how much money the killer is paying him to keep his mouth shut. (XXXXX is known to take bribes.)
- Accuse XXXXX of bribing XXXXXX so he will not be found guilty of murder. If XXXXX denies it, find out the real reason he is bribing XXXXX.
- If asked, admit the saloon will go to XXXXXX if XXXXX is found guilty of murder and put in jail.
- If anyone has information on XXXXX, find out what they know. You may have to pay them to get their information.
- Defend XXXX publicly, but question her privately on her ties to XXXXXX.
- If XXXX threatens to XXXXXX, question where she will get the XXXXXXX.

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Sample Evidence

From another mystery

EXHIBIT F

Description: Picture turned over by XXXXXX.

Notes: Picture taken of XXXXX earlier tonight.





ALL THE EXTRAS

Included with your mystery are ideas and designs to help you make your Murder Under The Big Top party one your guests will never forget!







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MORE PARTY PLANNING RESOURCES

Night of Mystery does our best to provide you with everything you need to create a unique and creative mystery party - including giving you plenty of party planning resources and ideas for each mystery theme we offer! Check out any/all of the resources below!!!

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MURDER II NDER THE RIGTOP. COM

Simply type in MurderUnderTheBigTop.com and it will take you to the "Party Tips" section of Night of Mystery dedicated to giving you the best ideas for decoration, costumes, hosting tips, etc. for THIS MYSTERY!!! Be sure to explore the "Hosting Tips" section of this as well!

"ALL THE EXTRAS" SUPPLEMENT Check out the supplement that is filled with designs, posters, ideas, etc.

NUR PINTEREST PAGE

Get ideas and how-tos on theme-centric decorations, food, etc. Be sure to "Follow Us" to get the latest and greatest pins that we add to the boards! http://www.pinterest.com/nightofmystery/murder-under-the-big-top/

FLICKR ALBUMS

Check out pictures from other hosts and hostesses! See how much fun others had throwing this theme and get ideas for your own mystery party. Find the Murder Under The Big Top gallery at: www.nightofmystery.com/photos-MUBT/

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/nightofmystery/

FOLIOW US ON INSTAGRAM! SEE LOADS OF PARTY PICTS!

https://www.instagram.com/nightofmystery/

GET A COUPON AND A CHANCE TO WIN A FREE PARTY!

Once your party is thrown, please let us know how your party went by emailing the details and pictures to nompartyofthemonth@gmail.com! We will email you a \$5 coupon for submitting your comments and/or pictures about your party. In addition to the coupon, party pictures and comments may be highlighted on social media and/or the blog. Each month we will select one posting to be featured in our "Party of the Month" blog and that customer will receive a \$65 gift certificate towards the purchase of a future party!

