MURDER UNDER THE BIG TOP
Enter a world of fabulous freaks, exotic acts & mysterious management

Desperate to bolster his circus from a dog-and-pony show to a spectacle that will rival Ringling, Harold Hargrove’s dire attempts to lure audiences and show-stopping attractions have created rivalries that extend beyond the center ring.

As the pressure builds, a murder is committed that steals the show… and you are left to uncover the culprit before the final act.

Was it the raging ringmaster in an attempt to clean up the spectacle? The talented tight rope walker whose fall took them out of the limelight? A revolting roustabout with revenge in their veins? Or possibly a possessive performer whose death-defying demeanor went too far…

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

How To Host Without Knowing the Murderer

We realize that part of the fun of throwing the party is playing along. If you choose to host WITHOUT knowing who the murderer is, simply follow these directions so that you can avoid any spoilers.

First, you will want to read this host’s guide in full. Nowhere in the Host Guide pdf will the murderer and/or victim’s identity or gender be listed. Additionally, with these in-depth instructions, it will ensure you that you are setting up the party correctly while being able to fully participate!

Second, even if you avoid places where the murderer is identified, the mystery materials will give you clues, added information, etc. so we suggest you refrain from reading the mystery materials if desiring to play along.

There are only two places in the mystery materials that will tell you who the murderer is:

((1) In the solution. It will be separated into a different file AND flagged with a cover page to tell you not to read it. The name itself is not highlighted, rather usually listed within the text and amongst a lot of other text so there is little chance of “accidentally” seeing it when you are printing it off. If you still do not trust yourself, have someone else print it out and put it in the solution envelope.

(2) It is listed in that guest’s secrets in their “B” materials. Since we cannot tell you which character to “not read,” since that too would give it away, you will want to avoid reading the character’s “B” information but your own. Again, it is not highlighted or bolded, but if you do not trust yourself, you may want to have someone else stuff the envelopes.
Assigning the Characters

- You, as host, 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 that you feel suits that particular character the best.

- If you are short of 20 guests, the game can be played without the following characters: Information included with purchase.

- Because this party is dependent on a minimum number of people showing up, it is important to get an accurate guest count before ordering and/or assigning characters.
  - 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.

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

- 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.”

- If you have eliminated the investigator for your party, then the victim will play the role of Peyton Protection for the second half of the party. Following the “death,” the victim will get up and the host can then explain that there will be an investigator for the second half (which will be the victim). The victim/investigator will then read the “investigation directions” to the crowd. You will have prepared the investigator’s “b envelope,” so the guest will know what to do next and how to proceed. Since the investigator’s main role is based after the murder, it is ok if the investigator is eliminated from the first half of the party and only plays the second half. Additionally, the victim does not know who killed them or why, so the victim can assume the role of the investigator for the second half.

- As host, who should I be? Information with mystery purchase.

- Good suggestions for assigning couples include: e of the investigator for the second half.

- As host, who should I be?

- Is this mystery suitable for youths and/or more conservative groups? Yes. However, please be aware there are multiple instances of bribery, blackmail, deceit and “murder” does occur.
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
*** Not all characters are included in the smaller versions.

Harold Hargrove—Bossman. 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 Wrker. 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 Protector—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.
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.

The Print Option:

THE INVITATION

• First input your party details into the invite page. To make the fonts match, download and install the font “Blas-trick Special.” To find the font, do an internet search using “free fonts” and “Bastrick Special.”
• Print out the number of invites that you need, double-sided, onto 8.5” x 11” paper. Fold each invite in half.
• Invite should fit nicely into an invitation sized envelope (4 3/8” x 5 3/4”).

THE CIRCUS BULLETIN

• This will provide information on the other guests at the party.
• If you wish for the newspaper to be more authentic, you can photocopy or print the bulletin onto newsprint.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

• You need to assign each guest a character to play at the party. (See the previous sections.)

** Print Invite, Circus Bulletin, and Character Descriptions will be found in the Mystery Materials Document.

The Download and Email Option:

• Following your purchase of the party, you may also access and use the downloadable character descriptions from our website.
• Each description is a pdf file containing the above information for each character.
• This option allows you to email each of your guests their character description without having to print and mail the information.
• Please remember, the pdf file option does not include a place to enter the date, time or address of the party, so you will have to inform or remind your guests of the party location details in another fashion.
• For this, we do have downloadable, emailable invitations that can be found at: http://www.nightofmystery.com/ invitations

** Downloadable invites with Bulletin and Character Descriptions will be available in your account after purchase.
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 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.
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.

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.

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.

MISSING

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.
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.

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
MURDER AT THE DEADWOOD SALOON

Banker Bob

Objectives At The Start Of The Party
These are things that are in your best interest to do before the evening goes much further. Be aware of what others around you are doing as well!

- 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.
Murder at the Deadwood Saloon

Banker Bob

Things You Know:
This is information not known to many—and possibly only YOU. Use it wisely in your scheming and bribery or hide it to help maintain your innocence.

- 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.

Objectives After The Murder:
These are things that are in your best interest to do to help solve the murder. Be aware of what others around you are doing as well!

- Find the murderer while maintaining your innocence.
- Ask XXXXX how much money the killer is paying him to keep his mouth shut. (XXXXX is known to take bribes.)
- Accuse XXXXX of bribing XXXXXXX 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 XXXXXXX, question where she will get the XXXXXXX.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EXHIBIT A</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong> The murder weapon-- a dagger in the heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes:</strong> Found to be the cause of death.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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!

Tickets • Posters • Food Labels • Signs • Condiment Labels • Old-Time Price Tags • More!
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!!!

MurderUnderTheBigTop.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.

Our 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/

Follow 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!
THIS HAS BEEN JUST A SAMPLE OF WHAT YOU WILL RECEIVE WHEN YOU PURCHASE

MURDER UNDER THE BIG TOP

THE COMPLETE PACKAGE INCLUDES:

• A Host Guide— A complete how-to guide for your party which includes directions on preparing the invitations, assigning characters, and preparing for the party.
• A Schedule of the Night— A step-by-step breakdown of how the night will go.
• An Introduction— to be read to the guests upon arrival.
• Designed Invitations— that you can customize with your party details.
• Emailable Invitations— that you can send to your party guests digitally (saving you the cost of printing and sending invitations).
• Circus Bulletin— to be sent with the invitations, this bulletin provides background information on the happenings around the circus and the other circus goers attending the festivities.
• Character Sheets— a full description of each of the characters, including costuming and acting tips.
• Character Objective Sheets — a list of the objectives each character will pursue in each stage of the game.
• Name Tags
• Fake Money— to be distributed to guests and used in the party for scheming and bribery.
• Evidence — additional clues provided after the murder to help your guests solve the mystery and find the murderer.
• Solution— a detailed description of who the murderer is, why the murder happened and the clues that led to the outcome.
• “Who Dunnit” Cards— cards completed by each of your guests near the end of the party that allow guests to list the suspected murderer(s), and to vote for the most animated character and best outfit.
• Award Certificates— certificates presented to the following award winners: best costume, most theatrical guest, the player with the most money at the end of the night, and, of course, those who solved the murder mystery.
• Party Extras— A number of unique and easy designs and templates to help you make party decorations. Pictured on the two pages before this.
• MurderUnderTheBigTop.com— check out this section of our website for loads of party planning tips and treasures for Murder Under The Big Top!

All of our parties come in the form of 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 will be able to download your party (including optional e-mailable guest invitations). If you wish to access this information later, you will be able to do so for two weeks after your purchase by logging into your account. If you forget your password, you can request a new password be sent to your email. By having our games online as instant downloads, we are able to satisfy even the most urgent need for a party, while also being good stewards of our environment.

PLEASE LOG ONTO: www.nightofmystery.com
TO PURCHASE YOUR MYSTERY TODAY.