





First of all, I would like to say thank you for purchasing *The Santa Strangling*. It will be a party your guests will rave about for years to come!

Please take a moment to read Shot In The Dark Mysteries' official disclaimer. Shot In The Dark Mysteries does not guarantee results and will not be held in any way accountable for any personal injury, death and/or loss to the players, facilitators or observers. This game and the materials herein are solely for entertainment purposes and cannot be reproduced or reused after one play without the express consent of Shot In The Dark Mysteries. The characters and story are fictional. Any similarity to actual living or dead people or events is purely coincidental.

Whew! Now that we have that over with, here are a few suggestions for making your party a roaring success.

The Santa Strangling is classified as an interactive mystery game, which means your guests will be up, walking around, mixing and mingling to gather information with minimal effort on your part.



Players are encouraged to ask questions outside of those suggested, but if they ask something that is not explained in the suspects' information, the answer is usually "no". The game is separated into "Chapters", each of which allow the players to ask questions to solve the mystery.

There are two types of clues in *The Santa Strangling*: "Share" clues and "Hide" clues. All of the suspects should receive a Share clue each Chapter, but not everyone will receive a Hide clue. Share clues can be divulged willingly to anyone who passes by if the player so chooses. Hide clues should be kept secret as much as possible. They are not to lie about the information in that Hide clue, but they are not to offer it willingly – the sleuths must coax it out of them, and if they are asked directly about the information in the hide clue, they **MUST** divulge the information.

If instructions are given, they should be followed – although we promise it won't be anything too complicated. Your game is meant to be easy and fun, so you won't see the game get too complicated. Despite this, the plot is still complex, and we encourage your sleuths to get into the event, take notes and discover the truth!

All clues are all directed at the suspect (for example, "you saw the murderer running down a dark hallway"). For the sake of getting everyone into the game, share clues should be transferred into the first person (for example, "I saw the murderer running down a dark hallway") and into the player's own words. Each chapter contains directions. If, after reading the chapter directions, you still have questions please don't hesitate to contact us.



Throughout your Game Materials, you will see the following icons on the top of the page that will guide you in facilitating *The Santa Strangling*:



The green eye icon means that as the host, you can look at the page without worry of spoiling the mystery for yourself.



The red eye icon means you should avoid looking at the information on that page, as it could give away the mystery, or “contain spoilers”. Check for the character's name but don't read the information therein.

You can see one of these icons on the top of this page – just look up!

We at Shot In The Dark Mysteries like to hug trees, and encourage you to use recycled paper when you print your Game Materials. Your game bonuses also include Accusation Forms. When the final Chapter concludes, the players will be instructed to determine who the killer was. We encourage everyone playing to cast their accusations about the identity of the murderer. Print off as many of these accusation forms as you need, but we recommend one for each guest, not just those playing a character.



The Santa Strangling contains one optional character – Detective Hedges. Detective Hedges will open each chapter with some information about the murder and investigation. If you are using the optional character, simply deliver the person playing Detective Hedges the corresponding clues. If you are NOT using the optional character, simply read Detective Hedges' information at the start of each chapter yourself, or alternate which player shares the information with the group.

That's it, that's all! You're ready to play! Have fun, and don't forget to send us pictures of your event to let us know how much fun your guests had!

Sincerely,



Leigh Clements
The Mystery Maiden
Shot In The Dark Mysteries.com



The Suspects



Eva Alpha

The Party Hostess

Eva is the type of person who loves everything to be fabulous. Having moved to the city less than two years ago for her career, Eva is trying to meet new people and establish herself with the city's elite. Her fiancé, Nicholas Bender, is helping her host the party and the two assembled the guest list together.

Nicholas Bender

The Party Host

Nicholas is a smooth-talking, good-looking man who always has five o'clock shadow and can flash a smile to make any girl's heart flutter. Even though Nicholas has only known Eva Alpha for just under a year, he claims he knew instantly she was The One. Nicholas has a law degree, even though he is not currently practicing law.

Lindsay Basset

The Mayor's Personal Assistant

Lindsay is Mayor Hanson's personal assistant, and has been for five years. Tending to his personal and business duties, Lindsay deals with Mayor Hanson's aggressiveness with patience and kindness. She is always nice no matter what – sweeter than candy to all she meets.



Marian Armstrong

The Mayor's Rival

Marian Armstrong has been running against Mayor Hanson for over twenty years and has never been able to win the office. Despite her frustration, she keeps things civil and has agreed to attend the Christmas party for the delight of seeing her nemesis dressed up in a fat man costume.

Latti Veugenstern

The Reporter

Latti is a reporter for the number one local newspaper, and follows the political campaigns very closely. She reports on the issues and also writes a weekly editorial in which she enjoys battering the mayor as much as possible.

Bertram Raycroft

The Construction Tycoon

Bertram Raycroft, owner of Raycroft Inc., is a dynamo in the construction business. Bertram is not just a figurehead, but very involved in the company's negotiations and contracts. He is very persuasive, and rarely loses out on a contract he wants.

Libby Hanson

The Mayor's Wife

Libby is Mayor Hanson's wife of over 20 years and the perfect media darling. Using her social standing to help the city's less-fortunate, she spends the majority of her time rallying for donations for the children's hospital. She is also a big advocate for the Women's Shelter, and usually wears an over-sized flower on her lapel to show her support.

Sergei Constantina

The Personal Trainer

Sergei is Mrs. Hanson's personal trainer and attends Libby Hanson four times per week in order to help Libby Hanson keep her youthful figure. Outside his profession, Sergei enjoys a high social standing, most likely based on his prominent clients, his devilish good looks and his irresistible accent.



Daniel Sullivan

The Party Animal

Daniel Sullivan is a young and wily professional who enjoys socializing and meeting new people. He spends most of his evenings in the local clubs and bars, and has risen to his current social standing with his ability to appear on the most exclusive guest lists.

Detective Hedges

The Detective (Optional Character, can be played by a male or female)

Detective Hedges is one of the top detectives in the city. Hedges loves to interrogate people and will discover clues even the most skilled investigators overlook. Hedges' immaculate track record for closing cases has risen this sleuth up the societal ranks. Everyone loves to hear the detectives' anecdotes!



Chapter I Directions

Once everyone has arrived and you are ready to play, begin by having each suspect tell everyone else about their character. They may use the character descriptions included in your game materials to help them. Then, read the Game Introduction (below) to the group en masse. Following the Game Introduction, distribute the Chapter 1 Clues. Share clues must be disclosed to the group, and although they are written in the third person, each player should share the information in the first person. Begin with Detective Hedges' clue and have the 10th, "optional" player read the detective's information. If you are not using the optional Detective Hedges character, anyone in the group can share the information or you can use the bonus mp3 file included with your game, titled "Detective Hedges Chapter 1".



Game Introduction

The guests have arrived and the party is in full swing, with everyone mingling and laughing with the kind of friendliness the holiday season brings. The guests eagerly await the appearance of Mayor Hanson, who has promised to appear dressed as Santa Claus. This is an important appearance for Mayor Hanson – with reporter Latti Veugenstern attending the party, he is hoping to score some positive media attention for the January 15th election. Eva and Nicholas let the mayor use their bedroom as a change room while he prepared for his big entrance.

Suddenly, a scream rings out and the guests run upstairs to find Libby Hanson standing at the bedroom door looking down on the body of her husband. Mayor Hanson is found in full Santa costume lying on his back, dead, with a length of Christmas lights around his neck. Detective Hedges arrives on the scene soon after to investigate the murder and determine who killed Mayor Hanson.



Chapter I Information for Detective Hedges

Share First



As most of you now know, Mayor Hanson has been found murdered in an upstairs bedroom in this very house. Everyone here is being detained as a suspect, and the death scene investigators have been called in to process the crime scene. On first glance we have determined the following: Mayor Hanson was strangled with a length of Christmas lights. He has a scratch on his neck from a shard of glass from a broken red light that no doubt shattered from the force. Libby Hanson, the mayor's wife, found the body. She claims she was checking on him to see if he needed any help getting ready for his big appearance as Santa Claus. We are looking for any information that could help with the investigation, so feel free to question the others as to their whereabouts around the time of the murder. Check alibis and follow all leads. Make sure your investigations are thorough, because you are all suspects. If you don't discover the identity of the killer, there's a good chance the other guests could pin it on you! Good luck.