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An all-girl interactive mystery game (approx. 10-13 years old)

Here's how to organize the investigation:

Before the party:

1. Print off one copy of the suspect roles (pages 8-15).
2. Print off enough copies of the notes, diagram and answer sheet (pages 4-7) so that everyone who is investigating the mystery has a set. You can, at your discretion, make "clipboards" by stapling these pages to sheets of cardboard.
3. Print off the solution (page 16) and keep it hidden.

At the party:

1. Assign the roles to eight girls. Everybody else becomes private investigators hired to solve the case. No information needs to be memorized because each suspect has notes containing the answers to questions.
2. Read "Awoken at Midnight" and "Rules of the Game" (pages 2 & 3) out loud to everyone.
3. Distribute the notes and answer sheets to the investigators. The investigators will need to make notes to collect information. If the suspects are investigating the events, they'll also need clipboards.
4. Tell the kids to talk with each other to find out what everyone knows about the events. You can organize this if you want to, or you can just let it happen.
5. When time's up (after an hour or so) gather everybody together and, one at a time, ask them the questions on the answer sheet.
6. Read the solution to the crime. You may want to award a prize to the person who came closest to the correct answers.



THE SHOCKING CASE OF MYSTERY MANOR

Awoken at Midnight

As the clock struck midnight, early this morning, an explosion woke the people staying in Mystery Manor. Moments later came a horrible scream, and everybody ran to the main ballroom where they saw Minerva (everyone calls her Minnie) Maxson, illuminated by a shaft of moonlight, completely frozen in fear.

A big hole was discovered in the glass roof of the huge conservatory with its many large trees and plants. Several windows were also broken. Small droplets of blood led into the yard.

Minnie's 13th birthday party should have been the highlight of her year. Her parents had booked Mystery Manor on this night before the big birthday dance. As a present, her Aunt Teresa had paid for the event and was there to chaperone the party. Magician Penny Vanish, owner of the Manor and daughter of the late Merlin Vanish, was also scheduled to give a special performance at the big birthday dance.

Minnie remained silent, her eyes seemingly fixed open. Nobody was able to attract her attention. The big birthday dance is due to take place tonight, but it cannot possibly go ahead until the mystery is solved. There are rumors of arguments among the guests. Some say the adults are hiding more than a few secrets.

What happened to Minnie? Somebody knows. How is it linked to the incident in the conservatory? Minnie's parents have called in a team of investigators. Moments after their arrival, Penny revealed that she had seen a girl in the yard, just moments after the explosion. A girl covered in scratches . . .



THE SHOCKING CASE OF MYSTERY MANOR

Be sure to ask:

1. Who are you?
2. What can you tell us about the evening?
3. Where were you at midnight?



Notes about Teresa

Leafy



Notes about Penny Vanish



Notes about Dusty Shelves



Notes about Abby Typin



THE SHOCKING CASE OF MYSTERY MANOR

You are a suspect. Always tell the truth when people ask you questions.



Destinia Waits

Who are you?

Destinia Waits - nice to meet you! I'm editor of the school newspaper. Isn't this exciting? It's awful for poor Minnie, of course, but exciting just the same!

What can you tell us about the evening?

Lots! What do you want to know? After dinner Minnie did some close-up magic tricks. She's so good! I know a little magic - not a lot, but a little - and I couldn't figure them out at all. What really interested me was the big dance that is supposed to take place this evening. There have been rumors for weeks that Penny's going to do something really big at the end of her magic act at the dance. I want the scoop. I was talking to Dusty and she was telling me about all the work that Abby's Dad has been doing here. Cables are all over the place, and all sorts of hi-tech stuff.

Where were you at midnight?

In my room. I heard Teresa telling the twins that they couldn't have their cell phone at about 11:00. I looked out and could tell from a shadow that Teresa sat outside their door for 15 minutes. As soon as she'd gone all sorts of muffled noises came from their room. It was like they were moving furniture or something. I'm pretty sure they did take Abby's purse. I remember seeing it next to Abby's chair at dinner, and Alita could easily have reached over and grabbed it. I didn't actually see her do it, though.

What were you looking at in the ballroom?

I was being a reporter. You can't tell anybody this, right? I was looking at the chandelier hanging down in the center of the room. Abby accidentally mentioned to me that her Dad had been installing some kind of projector somewhere in the Manor. I was looking at the mirrors in that room, and I'm sure that if a projector was installed in the chandelier, you could project an image into the center of the room that could look just like a real person. You'd need to have a picture coming from somewhere, though. I'm not sure, but that could definitely be Penny's big final trick to her act.

Why were you in the conservatory?

When Dusty went to speak to Abby and the twins, I ducked into the games room and surfed the Internet to find out some more information about what I saw in the ballroom. But I found something better. I found an old map of the Manor on the computer, and I saw that there was a secret passage in the conservatory. I wanted to see whether it was still there, but Teresa caught me. Can you believe it? I left my notes in the games room, and haven't been able to get them back. If I had them, I'm sure I'd be able to figure all this out. That's what a good reporter does.

Is the school newspaper losing readers?

Who said that? It just needs the right story to make it more popular, that's all. I hope you're not suggesting this whole thing had anything to do with me! I wouldn't do anything like that.

Did you take Abby's purse?

How did you figure that out? OK, I admit it. I did! I knew that Abby would blame the twins, and I wanted people to be distracted so I could take a look around. It had to be done.



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