

The Perplexing Case of The Pilfered Pooch

by Andrew West
with contributions from Jack Pachuta



An interactive mystery game for preteens (8-11 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 and answer sheet (pages 4-6) so that every child who is investigating the "dognapping" has a set. You can, at your discretion, make "clipboards" by stapling these pages to sheets of cardboard.
3. Print off the EVIDENCE (page 7). Hang it in a prominent place in the room so that everyone can see it.
4. Print off the solution (page 16) and keep it hidden.

At the party:

1. Assign the roles to eight boys and 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 "Dognapped!" 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 dognapping, they'll also need clipboards.
4. Tell the kids to talk with each other to find out what everyone knows about the crime. 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.

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Dognapped!

Every year the small town of Tadpole Grove grinds to a halt for the Tadpole Grove Dog Show. Hopeful hounds from miles around gather in the town hall to be judged on their appearance, behavior, training and friendliness. It's the biggest event in town and everybody looks forward to it.

For the last four years, the show's Grand Champion has been Cocoa, a beautiful chocolate labrador retriever. Unfortunately this means that the number of visitors is dwindling, and the other contestants are starting to grumble. Rumors are spreading that the whole show is a fix.

This year, preparations were underway for the big show. The hall was decorated and ready, but very few tickets had been sold. Then, the night before the big event, phones started to ring, and news quickly spread that Cocoa had been dognapped! A strange note was found early the next morning that said only: "Not this time."

The town policeman, Officer Apples, has asked everybody to remain calm. He will, he says, find who stole Cocoa. He's the only policeman in the town, though, and residents have decided he could use some help. The dog show is scheduled to start in a few hours. Private investigators have been called in to work with Officer Apples.

Eight people are obvious suspects, and one of them must be guilty. But who? For such a small town, a lot is going on behind the scenes. The clock is ticking. You need to find out what happened.

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Be sure to ask:

1. Who are you?
2. What do you think of the dog show?
3. How do you know Cocoa?
4. What were you doing last night?
5. Who do you think dognapped Cocoa?



Notes About Claudia Sky



Notes About Clara Sky



Notes about Officer Apples



Notes about Peter Pickem

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Clara Sky

Who are you?

I'm Clara Sky. Claudia's my Mom.

What do you think of the dog show?

It's cool. Cocoa always wins. Sometimes, though, Mom spends so much time getting Cocoa ready for the show that Cocoa and I don't have time to play.

How do you know Cocoa?

She's my dog! Mom bought her as a present for me, but she's the one who takes her to dog shows all the time. She tells everyone that she owns Cocoa, but I'm the one who takes care of her. I take her with me every morning on my paper route and feed her and everything.

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

What were you doing last night?

Mom was getting **Cocoa** ready for ages and ages. She said she needed some hairspray and sent me out to get some from Mr. **Keeper**. I ran and ran because it was raining. When I got there I didn't have enough money but Mr. **Keeper** let me off because he knows me. When I got back at around 8:50 I found Mom in a bit of a panic. She told me that **Cocoa** had been dognapped. I was very upset, but managed to phone Officer **Apples**. I looked outside as I thought she might have just escaped, but I couldn't find her. Behind our house are a lot of fields. My good friend, **Sarah**, lives across the fields. You can see her house from our back door.

Who do you think dognapped Cocoa?

I don't know. I know that **Molly** doesn't like Mom very much, so maybe it was her. There are rumors at school that **Jimmy** sometimes goes into people's houses when no one is home, but I don't know why he'd want to dognap **Cocoa**.

Was Cocoa in a fight?

Yes. Mom said I wasn't allowed to tell anyone. A big dog jumped on her on my paper route and left a scratch on her paw. Some of her hair was also missing. I was really upset but that nice Mrs. **Peeking** came by and helped me. She said she knew how to calm **Cocoa** down while we looked at her paw. **Cocoa** was OK, thankfully. I didn't want **Cocoa** to be in the show, but Mom said we could comb over it and nobody would notice. I didn't think that's true, though. It was really obvious that some hair was missing.

Where did you find the note?

I found it when on the doorstep this morning when I got back from Mr. **Keeper's** store to let the delivery people in. I gave it to Officer **Apples** to examine for fingerprints and things. I kept looking at it to see if there were any clues, but I couldn't find anything.

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