

The Confusing Case of The Lost Letters to Santa

by Lis Norman
with contributions from Jack Pachuta



How to Organize the Investigation

Before the party:

1. Print off one copy of each suspect role (pp. 7-14)
2. Print off a copy of the answer sheet for each participant (p. 6)
3. Print off the suspect cards (pp. 4&5). You will need enough for each participant to have one of each so that each player can keep notes. If you choose to do so, "clipboards" can be made out of cardboard and given to each player with the note cards and Answer Sheet attached. Each player will need a pen or pencil.
4. Print off the solution to the case (pp. 15&16) and keep it hidden until the end of the party.

At the party:

1. Assign suspect roles to eight kids. Everyone is allowed to investigate the case, even the other suspects.
2. Read "The Missing Mailbag" (p. 2) and the Rules of the Game (p. 3) out loud to everyone.
3. Distribute the suspect cards and Answer Sheets with pens or pencils.
4. Give the kids adequate time to investigate the case. (About 45 minutes to one hour, but you can decide this based on your group of kids.)
5. Call your "investigators" and suspects back together and read the questions on the Answer Sheet. Have the investigators give their solutions one at a time.
6. Read the solution to the case out loud. If you wish, you can award prizes to the kids or teams with the correct solution. Something Chistmassy would be great.

ALTERNATE WAY TO STAGE THE MYSTERY:

If you have an extremely young group of kids who might have difficulty reading the roles, you could have older kids and/or adults play the suspects. Your young "investigators" can then form teams, ask the questions, and work together to try to solve the case.

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The Missing Mailbag

Christmas is just around the corner and the people of Hollytown, a small country village, are worried. A week ago, the children had all sent their letters to Santa and were eagerly awaiting their replies. Every other year the replies had come straight back, but this year **NO-ONE** had received a letter from the North Pole. What was going on? Would there even be a Christmas in Hollytown this year?

Then came the bad news. The North Pole had called the new post office in Hollytown and asked why there had been no sack of letters from the children of the town. Where had the mail gone? What was going on?

An investigation began and the missing bag of mail was found in the woods but the bag was torn and the letters all ruined. A red scrap of material was fluttering in the breeze on an overhead branch. Who was the culprit that wanted to spoil Christmas?

Children gathered in the local town hall to rewrite their letters and send them express to the North Pole before it was too late, but people were still upset. No one will be able to enjoy Christmas until the mystery of who took the mail and why is solved. The joy of Hollytown's Christmas is in the hands of a special group who has been called in to work on the case. Can **you** help the people of Hollytown figure out what happened?

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Be sure to ask:

1. Who are you and what do you do?
2. What do you think of Christmas?
3. Do you own anything red?
4. Who do you think took the mail?



Notes about
Goody Tooshoo



Notes about
Scrooge Finster



Notes about
Woody Carver



Notes about
Iva Pupp

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Goody Tooshoos

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

Who are you and what do you do?

I am Goody Tooshoos and I do good things! I like to keep everyone happy and liking me. So, I'm good all the time. Actually, you could say I am just the opposite of Missy - She is naughty all the time.

What do you think of Christmas?

Christmas is my favorite time of the year. All the presents, good food and spending time with family, I just love it! But, it does seem unfair to me that even the naughty kids like Missy get presents. I mean why should they, when I am the one that is good all the time. I should get more presents than anyone else.

Do you wear anything red?

Yes, I do. I have some red mittens that I like to wear. They keep my hands warm. I knitted several pairs for the homeless shelter and I kept a pair for myself. Looks like I will have to make a new pair though - mine are starting to come apart. That reminds me, I'll have to knit Del a new scarf. I noticed a hole in his the other day when he was having a coffee at my family's café. He said he was on the way to the airport to pick up his mother. I know how proud he is of that scarf.

Who do you think took the mail?

It was definitely Missy. It is just the sort of mischief she gets up to all the time! Why, just last week she took Mrs. Suds's Laundry and hid it Behind the house. She thinks that sort of thing is funny. Yes, whenever there is trouble that Missy is never too far away.

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