

The Midday Murder

A murder mystery by Kathy Applebee

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Brief overview of the Midday Murder

King Ish is found slain and decapitated. He definitely had some enemies, but who did it? Was it a political or military assassination? Or were the motives more personal? This mystery is loosely based on the events in 2 Samuel 4.

Prep for the mystery

If you are doing this for the first time, we suggest you follow these directions more closely. Decide where, when and who. Print the needed materials.

Characters can be assigned or done randomly by gender. If you have more than 6 players, choose from the additional character dossiers. For large groups, have players double up on the additional dossiers or make some characters up yourself.

Roll the arrest warrant up as a scroll. Tie or seal it shut with wax.

Second thoughts are clues given midway during the investigation. Cut apart the second thoughts. Fold the individual second thoughts so only the left hand portion shows. They should be distributed to the character whose name appears on the left side EXCEPT those

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labeled "Not ____". Distribute those randomly, making sure they do not go to the NOT person. Stapling the second thoughts is more work but keeps everyone honest since they only open the second thought they end up with.

You may not have an exact 1 to 1 second thoughts for characters. If you have more players than thoughts, give Second Thoughts to the players who need more help to participate.

Following the activity, be sure players can separate the facts in 2 Samuel 4 from the fiction.

Suggestions

Casting

Dossiers may be handed out randomly by gender or as host you may cast your players in the roles you choose for them. If you want to be surprised by the ending, use only the "Who you are" portion of the character dossiers to select roles. If you read complete character descriptions, or the arrest warrant, you will know all the details of the murder.

You may choose to hand them out several days before the giving people more time to prepare their character, costume, props, etc. counting on everyone to be there. You may wish to hold them until the players arrive in case you have no shows.

Essential characters are: Princess Michal, Princess Merab, Zorba, Rizpah, Rechab, Baanah, Add in David, Paltiel and Adriel as needed. If you have more guests than these 8, you can assign some to be armor bearers to David, maid servants of the princesses, friends of Adriel, business partners of Paltiel, etc. The characters with dossiers can share some info with them (without letting them look at the dossier directly)

Biblical style costumes add to the fun. Both men and women wore robes, belts, long hair that might be braided (women) or bound in a head shawl. Fringed shawls were worn over their shoulders and their waists. Men might have pieces of armor or weapons. Colorful and bright outfits were common among the wealthy. Jewelry like necklaces,

brooches, hair ornaments, neck chains and earrings were set with precious stones. Sandals and soft slippers (for the rich) adorned the feet.

Menu

As elaborate or as simple as you wish. Wheat or barley bread, dates, lentils, peas, beans, olives, pistachio nuts, radishes, apples, pears, grapes, figs, quinces, plums, apricots, mulberries, melons, and pomegranates are appropriate as are sweet, spicy cakes made with raisins. Serve in pottery or baskets.

Procedure for solving the mystery

Read over the Rules of the Game

Read aloud the opening statement

Have each person introduce himself or herself in character.

Have Zorba explain exactly what she found when she went to wake Ish.

Allow players to begin questioning each other.

Place crime scene diagram and the Hebron Herald articles on "evidence table"

After 10-15 minutes, present Crime Report 1.

After another 10-15 minutes present Crime Report II and the distribute second thoughts (Place the cut apart second thoughts in a container. Each character is given the one with their name on it and the "NOT ____" ones are pulled at random (or given to more shy players). Instruct players to make sure that the information is shared verbally (no reading someone else's Second Thoughts)

After another 20- 30 minutes assemble the group.

Allow each person one last opportunity to make an accusation and/or give a defense against accusations.

Let each person fill out a "Jury speaks" form. Instruct the murderer(s) to do a fake one.

Collect and read each one.

Read the Arrest Warrant

Invitation to print or send digitally

[Fill in player's name],

You're invited to a mystery party

WHERE:

WHEN:

RSVP:

This mystery takes place in the palace of Saul's son, King Ish. The king has been found murdered and it is up to you to figure out whodunit. You and the other players will become not only investigators but also characters who are also suspects in the crime. All the players will try to solve the mystery while protecting any secrets they might have. You do not need to be an actor or have knowledge of investigations to have a great time.

When your host gives you your character dossier, please do not show it to anyone, before or during the activity. The dossier will explain who you are; who and what you know. It is for your eyes only.

A few of the people you may meet are:

David, King of Judah.

Princess Michal, David's first wife

Paltiel, Michal's second husband

Princess Merab - Michal's older sister

Adriel Jr., Merab's musician son

Rechab, brother of Baanah, and leader of King Ish's raiding parties.

Baanah, Rechab's brother

Zorba, palace harpist

Rizpah, King Saul's concubine, mother of 2 sons

The Jury Speaks

Your name:

Who did it?

How they did it

Why they did it

The character I nominate to get the Academy Award for best character development: _____

Your name:

Who did it?

How they did it

Why they did it

The character I nominate to get the Academy Award for best character development: _____

Mystery Event Rules

1. No one may look at another person's character dossier.
2. Only the guilty person(s) may lie, that is to make statements that go against the true and stated facts.
3. Fabrication to enhance one's character is not only allowed but encouraged.
4. If one does not want to answer truthfully one may do as in real life - evade the question, change the subject, tell partial truths or flat out refuse to answer. One may not lie about facts, however unless one is the guilty party(s).
5. It is possible to have more than one killer.
6. It is possible, but highly unlikely, that no character was involved.
7. At the end of the main activity you will be asked who you think did it, how and why.
8. The most important of all rules:

Have Fun!