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Introduction

Who doesn't like a mystery?

The recipe is classic: A crime committed during a blinding snowstorm ... a group of tantalizing suspects each with motive, opportunity, and means ... a wary sleuth ... clues littering the landscape ... escalating danger as the truth begins to surface ... the final scene when the sleuth reveals the criminal and the irrefutable evidence that serves up justice.

Agatha Christie knew the recipe well. Her classic play, *The Mousetrap*, is the longest-running play in history, still delighting audiences after fifty-four years, even though by now everyone knows that _____ did it! What a testament to the appeal of a stage mystery!

The most important ingredient in a mystery is a secret — one kept from most of the characters and definitely from the audience. The characters and the audience thus become partners in discovering the secret, and if the audience can outguess the characters, all the better!

Make It Mystery's menu includes twelve one-act plays with something to suit every taste and age group. For young performers, *Mystery of the Magical Forest* and *Mommy's a Zombie!* are mysteries laced with plenty of comedy. For middle school performers, *The Mother Goose Mystery*, *Clue in the Library*, and *Case of the Dangerfield Diamond* provide enjoyable characters seasoned with lots of buried secrets.

Queen of Hearts is a nice side dish to a study of Shakespeare, who plays the role of detective before he earns fame as a playwright. In *The Mermaid* and *For Better or Worse*, women must somehow find the courage to outwit adversaries who threaten their happiness — and lives. Classic mystery entrees include *A Very Cold Case*, *Into Thin Heir*, and *The Little Women Mystery*, designed for an all-female cast. For dessert, *Where Did Everybody Go?* whips up a mystery spiced with a bit of the supernatural.

Whatever your choice from the menu, *bon appetit!*

— Craig Sodaro