

Opening & Round 1

- Opening scene: dim the lights and play the audio (about 7 minutes). When each character's name is introduced in the audio, the host shines a flashlight on the guest playing that character.
- Round 1 envelopes: hand out the Round 1 envelopes to guests right after the opening.

SAY: “Everyone in this hall tells the truth, except one person: the one who killed Dale. You may dodge a question once. But if someone asks you the same thing directly a second time, you answer truthfully.”

- Facilitation and timing: the discussion and booklet reading run at the host's discretion. (Recommended: 20–30 minutes)
- Dinner: we recommend it after Round 1, but the host may change the timing to suit the party.
- **Host tips:**
 - At the host's discretion, give only mood-setting hints that are not related to the answer or the key to the investigation. (If in doubt, no hints at all.)
 - If there are quiet guests, naturally draw them into the conversation by asking them questions.
 - If you get a question not in the booklet, answer, “Nobody in Cedar Hollow knows that.”

Morgan Whitaker

Dale's spouse · owner of Whitaker's General Store

Played by _____

You are Morgan Whitaker. You run Whitaker's General Store on Main Street: flour, fishing line, birthday cards and the only decent coffee beans in the valley. You have been married to Dale for nineteen years. For the last three, the marriage has mostly been for show.

What everyone knows say it freely

- You and Dale were heard arguing in the store last week. By now the whole town has heard about it.
- These days you and Dale barely speak in public. Everyone has noticed.
- When the lights dipped at 8:07, you were at the piano, singing with the carolers. Avery and Casey were right beside you. Say this as often as you like.

Your secret protect it

On Monday you signed a lease on an apartment two hours away. After New Year's you were going to leave Dale, and the store, and start over. Nobody knows.

Dale's life insurance policy names you. Dale took it out years ago and you had forgotten it existed. Tonight, everyone will want to know who gains from Dale's death.

At 7:30 you cornered Dale behind the coat racks, sure that Dale had found the lease. "Are you going to tell people?" you whispered. Dale said, "After dinner. In front of everyone." And you said: "You do that, Dale, and you will regret it." The host heard every word but never saw your face. Twenty minutes later Dale stood up and promised the room "something this town needs to hear," and you nearly ran for the door.

Turn over →

Morgan Whitaker · continued

What you've heard it isn't your secret: share it

- **Riley.** Last month you found a stack of IOU slips in Dale's desk at home, every one signed "R. Mercer." The next day Dale locked the drawer.
- **Casey.** On Tuesday Casey stood crying in the back aisle of your store, holding an envelope with the co-op's name on it.

Ask

- **Riley:** "What did Dale have that belonged to you?"
- **Casey:** "What was in the co-op envelope you were crying over on Tuesday?"
- **Sam:** "You argued with Dale last week too. What about?"

If someone asks you...

- **Who was behind the coat racks with Dale at 7:30.** Dodge the first time, for example: "Half this town argued with Dale tonight. Why ask me?" If you are asked directly a second time, admit it was you. Do not say why. Not yet.
- **Who gains from Dale's death.** Dodge the first time, for example: "I've just lost my spouse, and you want to talk about money?" On a second direct question, admit the life insurance policy names you.
- **What you were carrying into an apartment in Millbrook.** Dodge the first time, for example: "Since when is my shopping the town's business?" On a second direct question, admit you signed a lease there on Monday. You were going to leave Dale after New Year.
- **Where you were at 8:07.** At the piano with Avery and Casey. Always true, always say it.

This round

- Find out what Dale was going to announce after dinner. You need to know whether it was about you.
- Keep the lease to yourself this round.

Dress the part (optional) · Red scarf wound tight; keeps turning a wedding ring.

The one rule. Tell no lies. You may dodge a question once; if someone asks you the same thing directly a second time, answer truthfully.

How to dodge without lying: refuse ("That's between me and Dale."), turn it around ("Why do you want to know?"), or point elsewhere with something true ("Ask Riley what Dale kept in that desk."). Never say "No, it wasn't me" when it was.

EVIDENCE C1 • ROUND TWO

The 8:07 photograph

photo



Pastor Ellis's photo of the carolers, taken as the lights dipped. The wall clock reads 8:07. Avery, Morgan and Casey are at the piano, mid-song.

Taken by Pastor Ellis as the lights dipped

EVIDENCE C2 • ROUND TWO

The generator room

physical



Dale lies face-down in a pool of diesel. The fuel line has been knocked off its fitting and pushed back on crooked — that is what made the lights dip at 8:07. Fine diesel spray dots Dale's shirt front and knees: Dale was standing, facing the fuel line, when it popped. Dale's wristwatch smashed against the concrete when Dale fell; it stopped at 8:07. The wound is high on the back of the head: a heavy overhead blow. The 24-inch pipe wrench from the generator tool rack lies beside the body.

The generator room, after Jordan raised the alarm

EVIDENCE C3 • ROUND TWO

A work glove

physical



A single work glove lies near the body. It is Jordan's.

Picked up beside the body

EVIDENCE C4 • ROUND TWO

The co-op ledger

document

CEDAR HOLLOW ELECTRIC CO-OP • EMERGENCY FUEL RESERVE

PERIOD	PAYEE	PAID OUT
Autumn		\$38,000.00

Co-op ledger, emergency fuel reserve: \$38,000 paid out this autumn. The payee line is water-stained and unreadable. Lily the bookkeeper says Dale had been 'going through the books every night' this month.

From the co-op office, brought by Lily

YOU ARE INVITED · CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE GRANGE HALL

Lights Out in Cedar Hollow

An ice storm is coming. The road out is about to close. And one of us will not see Christmas morning.

YOU WILL PLAY

Morgan Whitaker

Dale's spouse · owner of Whitaker's General Store

WHAT CEDAR HOLLOW SAYS

Morgan and Dale were overheard arguing in the store last week.

Dress the part · Red scarf wound tight; keeps turning a wedding ring

DATE

TIME

PLACE

RSVP

YOU ARE INVITED · CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE GRANGE HALL

Lights Out in Cedar Hollow

An ice storm is coming. The road out is about to close. And one of us will not see Christmas morning.

YOU WILL PLAY

Jordan Brandt

Co-op lineman · right arm in a sling

WHAT CEDAR HOLLOW SAYS

Dale fired Jordan three weeks ago after a fall from a power pole. Jordan and Riley are cousins and close.

Dress the part · Co-op cap pulled low; right arm in a sling

DATE

TIME

PLACE

RSVP