

A DEADLY GAME

by Mark Halpin; shared courtesy Rick Pender and Mark Halpin

Just as in *The Last of Sheila*, the six guests attending this puzzle are embroiled in a dangerous game of skullduggery. Each guest has been presented with one of the secrets shown below, but one holds an even darker secret: they're a cold-blooded killer!

Six clue answers have been replaced in the grid with other words, which we'll call "Evidence." Enumerations refer to the grid entries, which may be of different lengths than the missing answers (as a solving aid, the enumerations of the missing answers, in clue order, are 7, 9 (2 wds.), 8, 7, 7, and 8). Each piece of Evidence is linked to one of the guests via wordplay, in two ways the solver might deduce, and five of the guests may also be found linked to their evidence in the completed grid.

Identify the killer by determining which guest has fled the scene. Enter the missing words replaced by the Evidence associated with the five (relatively) innocent guests in the lower grid, left to right, one letter per space, in order of those guests' secrets, to reveal the fate of the killer.

- You are a BULLY and a COWARD.
- You are a FLANEUR.
- You are a MAILBOMBER.
- You are a NEO-NAZI.
- You are a NUTSO.
- You are a POTTY MOUTH.

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ACROSS

- 1 Eleven omelets laced with poison (5)
- 4 Not at all like Molly Brown's rumped blankies? (8)
- 9 Holly and myself pursued by Superman's nemesis (4)
- 10 Grass used to feed stupor declared to be "best times ever" (7)
- 12 Kid from a large family exults pet extravagantly (9)
- 13 Adds moisture to beef dish that's sent back (4)
- 14 Taj Mahal site is somewhat fragrant (4)
- 15 Drug pooch unwisely with sore throat remedy (9)
- 19 Not quite finding a place for peaceful protest (5, *hyph.*)
- 23 Endure winning the booby prize? (4)
- 24 Willow twigs and roses arranged around daisy in the center (6)
- 25 Someone in pain cried out a lot, maybe (4)
- 26 Newly tenured, I got some alumni back together (5)
- 27 Polish words written in capitalized italics (4)
- 29 Gutless soldier sloppily does some gun maintenance again (6)
- 31 Eager to wail like a banshee (4)
- 35 To "speak endlessly" or "utter" (5)
- 37 Clever wheeler-dealers investing gold in renovated seaport (9)
- 39 Talking bird shocking many (4)
- 40 Vegetable that's misspelled "leak" (4)
- 41 Gay gopher tidied up study of all places? (9)
- 43 Expressionless, students' supervisor accepts messy pad (7)
- 44 Soothing lotion is all gone, oddly (4)
- 45 Harsh words to a group of furry little hoarders (8, 2 wds.)
- 46 Earth-colored boards shaved off at the front (5)

DOWN

- 1 Six almost give smart answers for travel documents (5)
- 2 *Glee* reimagined by yours truly: cooler, and wistful in tone (7)
- 3 Strange tax included in Texas tea and soup variety (6)
- 4 "How's it goin', bro? Grab some dinner?" (3)
- 5 Lazybones "Mama Rose" portrayer blowing off opening (5)
- 6 Drum set and horns, primarily, are old familiar friends (4)
- 7 Pair of antagonists battle Menachem's partner in peace (5)
- 8 Make hash of a diner's canned fish (6)
- 11 Helps Paul McCartney and others starting off (7)
- 15 Allow "The Spanish Curse" to be brought up (6)
- 16 Sot lies drunkenly and flies off the handle (7, 2 wds.)
- 17 Traveling, I open excellent route initially! (7)
- 18 Oxen stampede time and again, but ultimately don't have to (6)
- 20 Unnaturally tan dude filled with dismay (6)
- 21 Western hostess always displaying property and cash, etc. (6)
- 22 Bear with migrant worker loudly singing in a bar (7)
- 28 Storied Saxon is foolishly naive, suppressing laughter (7)
- 30 A slope's collapsed in border town (6, 2 wds.)
- 32 Formulate ammonia but not iodine? I politely decline (6, 2 wds.)
- 33 Canadian Indian chief to denounce religious statement (5)
- 34 Appropriate home for hens and bantams, essentially (5)
- 36 Part of a cake cooked early (5)
- 38 Top-rated needlefish-and-seaweed-derived gel (4)
- 42 Levitating science fiction vehicle flying over arch (3)