

one minute
MYSTERIES
and **BRAIN**
teasers

Sandy Silverthorne & John Warner



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS

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ONE-MINUTE MYSTERIES AND BRAIN TEASERS

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TOP SECRET

INTRODUCTION

What Are One-Minute Mysteries?

These short interactive mysteries are examples of lateral thinking puzzles. Each puzzle describes an unusual scenario, and your job is to figure out what is going on. The puzzles may seem open-ended, but they generally have only one satisfying answer, one solution that suddenly appears when the light bulb goes on in your head and you say, “Aha!” Each mystery takes only a minute to read, and then you can take your time to enjoy the sleuthing process!

How Do I Solve Them?

You’ll need at least one other person to enjoy these puzzles to the fullest, and the more people the better. Choose one person to be the case master, and everyone else is a detective. The case master reads the puzzle aloud and privately consults the solution in the back of the book. The detectives can then pose questions to the case master that he or she can answer by saying “yes,” “no,” or “doesn’t matter.” If the detectives get stumped, the case master can turn to the clues and provide them as needed.

If you decide to investigate these mysteries on your own, the clues section will help you along the way. If you have a hunch of what the solution is, before looking at the answer, first examine

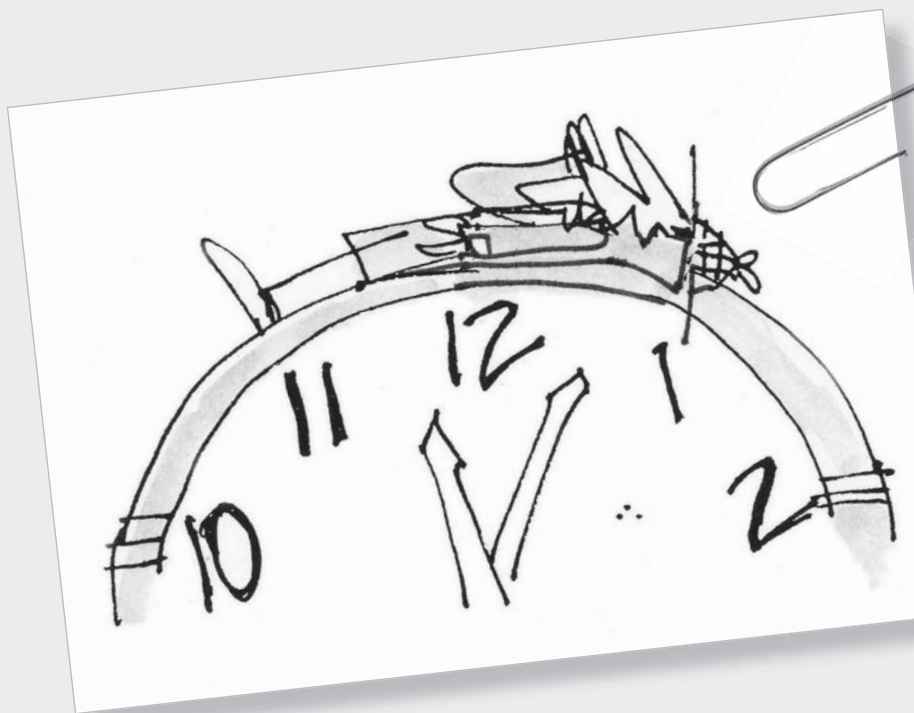
the clues to see if you're on the right track. Some of the clues will surprise you!

When solving these puzzles, throw out all your assumptions about what is going on, and of course, be open-minded, flexible, and creative. Oh—one last thing: Don't let the illustrations mislead you. They will generally depict humorous but incorrect assumptions and are purely for your viewing enjoyment. Now, put on your sleuthing caps and get on the case!



TOP SECRET

TIME TO THINK



1.

When Time Stands Still

As a burglar reaches for something on the mantle, he accidentally knocks over a clock. It falls to the floor, breaks, and stops. The next morning, however, police aren't able to determine what time the robbery took place. Why not?



2.

Lunch Time

Robbie goes into a restaurant and orders a deli sandwich and a cola for lunch. Afterward, he pays his bill, tips his waitress, and goes outside. He slowly takes in his surroundings. The sky is black and the city streets are deserted.

What happened?



3.

Egg Timer

Hard-boiling an egg takes approximately ten minutes, but it isn't always as simple as that. Many factors can alter the time it takes. For example, in different parts of the world, hard-boiling an egg can take up to forty minutes. Why?





4.

Timeless

A man is looking at a clock that displays the correct time, but he doesn't know what time it is. Why not?

TOP SECRET

CLUES



TIME TO THINK

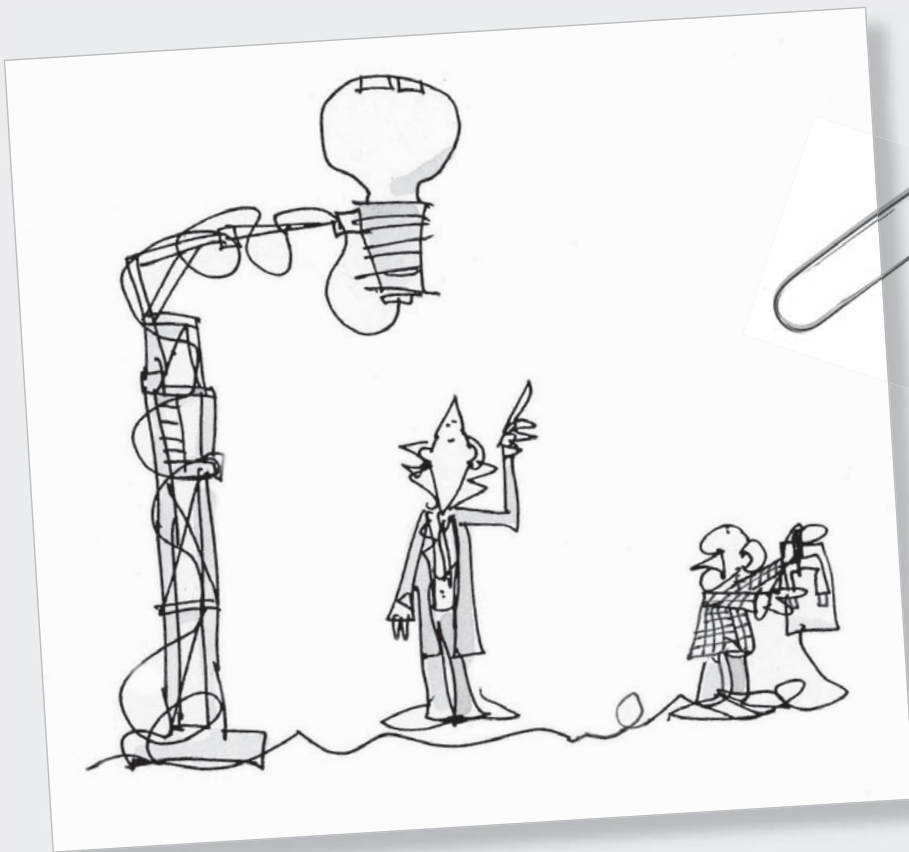
1. **When Time Stands Still**
 - The police could see the clock.
 - The burglar did not alter the clock in any way after it fell.
 - The police didn't expect to be able to read the clock.
 - What kind of clock is it?

2. **Lunch Time**
 - Nothing supernatural happened.
 - The man was on his lunch break.
 - It was like this before he went to lunch.
 - What time is it?

3. **Egg Timer**
 - Elevation doesn't matter in this case.
 - Outdoor temperature doesn't matter in this case.
 - What other factors affect cooking time?
 - What kind of bird are you assuming the egg came from?

4. **Timeless**
 - The man can see and tell time perfectly well.
 - The clock is normal and in plain sight.
 - More than one clock is in the room.

TOP SECRET



SOLUTIONS

TIME TO THINK

1. **When Time Stands Still**

The burglar knocked over a digital clock. When it broke and stopped, it no longer displayed the time.

2. **Lunch Time**

The man worked the night shift and took his lunch break in the middle of the night.

3. **Egg Timer**

Some eggs are larger than others. Ostrich eggs can weigh three to six pounds and can take between 45 minutes and two hours to hard-boil. One ostrich egg is equivalent to two dozen chicken eggs.

4. **Timeless**

Each clock in the room is displaying a different time, so he doesn't know which one is correct.

5. **Got the Time?**

The secret agent calls the phone number for the current time, which replaces the redial memory on the phone so that no one can find out whom he was calling.

Return^{of}
the one minute
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TOP SECRET

Once upon a Crime



1.

Robbed?

Ben tells an officer that his house was robbed the previous night.

“What seems to be missing from your house?” the officer asks.

“As far as I know, nothing.” Ben replies.

How does Ben know he was robbed?





2.

For Crime's Sake

A burglar breaks into a stranger's home late at night. He doesn't plan on stealing anything or causing harm, and he isn't seeking refuge. What is going on?

3.

Crime Spree

Two burglars enter a wealthy neighborhood late one night and take everything they can get their hands on. A police officer is upset with what he sees but doesn't do anything about it. Why not?



TOP SECRET

Clues



ONCE UPON A CRIME

1. **Robbed?**

- Something was stolen.
- No evidence was left behind.
- Nothing was missing from house.
- Everything Ben owned was stolen.
- What kind of house did Ben live in?

2. **For Crime's Sake**

- The burglar wasn't looking for anything.
- He has a good reason to be in the house.
- He is new to burglary, but he isn't practicing.
- The burglar had been in the house before.
- He felt very guilty and wanted to make things right.

3. **Crime Spree**

- The officer isn't restrained and is present.
- There is nothing the officer can do.
- The burglars aren't breaking the law.
- The officer is very jealous of the burglars.
- A scarecrow, a pirate, and a princess are also envious.

TOP SECRET

Solutions



ONCE UPON A CRIME

1. **Robbed?**

Ben's motor home was stolen along with everything in it.

2. **For Crime's Sake**

The burglar, after feeling guilty for robbing the house earlier that night, was returning the items he stole.

3. **Crime Spree**

It is Halloween. The older kids, dressed as burglars, were getting more candy than the younger boy, who was dressed as a police officer.

MIND-BOGGLING
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TOP SECRET

INTRODUCTION

What Are One-Minute Mysteries?

These short interactive mysteries are usually played in a group as an interactive game. You might know them as lateral thinking puzzles, yes/no puzzles, or situation puzzles. Each puzzle describes an unusual scenario, and your job is to figure out what is going on. Although the puzzles may seem open-ended, the goal is to figure out the most satisfying answer, the one that suddenly appears when the lightbulb goes off in your head and you say, “Aha!” (In other words, you’re looking for a solution that matches the one in the back of the book.) Each mystery takes less than a minute to read, and then you can take your time and enjoy the sleuthing process!

How Do I Solve Them?

These puzzles don’t generally provide you with enough information to find the solution, but you can fill in the gaps by asking yes-or-no questions. The solving process is similar to the game of 20 questions, but instead of finding the identity of a thing, you solve a mystery. You’ll need one other person in order to enjoy these puzzles to the fullest, and the more people, the better! Choose one person to be the case master. This person reads a puzzle aloud and privately consults the answer in the back of the book. All other players are the detectives. They take turns posing questions to the case master, who can respond by saying yes or no or something

like “That doesn’t matter” or “Rephrase your question.” The case master provides clues from the back of the book as needed. The game is won when someone figures out the key to the solution. It isn’t necessary to recite the entire solution, but only to figure out the part that explains what is puzzling.

What Kind of Questions Should I Ask?

Start by asking big-picture questions. You will be tempted to jump right in and guess the answer, but you will most likely be wrong. In the game of 20 questions, you wouldn’t start by guessing if the person is thinking of a tow truck. Instead, you’d get some general information first. Use the same strategy here. Give yourself something to build on by asking questions like these: Is the location important? Is anyone else involved? Could this happen to me? As you figure out what is going on, you can ask more specific questions. Also, ask completely random and off-the-wall questions. You never know what will spark some new insight!

Here is a sample puzzle and some dialogue that shows how the questioning process works:

CASE MASTER: Bob is a delivery man, and he’s in a hurry. He approaches a railroad crossing as the barriers start lowering. He won’t cross the intersection before they close, but he doesn’t have time to stop. What does he do?

DETECTIVE: Does his speed matter?

CASE MASTER: No.

DETECTIVE: Does he go a different way?

CASE MASTER: No.

DETECTIVE: Does he drive over or under a bridge?

CASE MASTER: No and no.

DETECTIVE: Does the kind of vehicle Bob is driving matter?

CASE MASTER: Yes!

DETECTIVE: Is the vehicle Bob is driving really short?

CASE MASTER: It doesn't matter.

DETECTIVE: Okay, is Bob driving an ambulance and the train stops for Bob?

CASE MASTER: No.

DETECTIVE: Um...is Bob driving something that doesn't have to stop for the railroad crossing?

CASE MASTER: Yes!

DETECTIVE: Oh! Is Bob actually driving the train himself?

CASE MASTER: Yes! Bob is driving the train, so he continues through the crossing.

Detective: That was tricky.

What Else Do I Need to Know?

1. Always check your assumptions. If a puzzle doesn't come right out and say something, don't assume it is true. Ask yourself, *What am I assuming?* If the case master can't answer one of your questions with a yes or no but instead tells you to rephrase your question, you are probably assuming something that isn't true.
2. The five senses are often important in these puzzles. Ask questions about sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. Don't forget to check the opposite of what you initially observe. Should the person see, hear, smell, taste, or feel something that he or she can't?

3. Ask yourself who, what, when, why, how, and where. Who is involved? What is important in the puzzle? When did this occur? Is the time of day or the year important? Why did things happen this way? Does it matter where this happened? How did it happen?
4. Eliminate red herrings. Look at each element of the puzzle and ask if it is important. This way you can focus your questioning on important details.
5. Ask if you are being tricked. Many times these puzzles aren't as straightforward as they seem and are actually leading you to believe something that isn't true.
6. Think laterally—that is, think creatively or outside the box. If you have exhausted all the obvious possibilities and don't know where else to go, use your imagination and view the problem from a new perspective.

Can I Solve Them by Myself?

If you investigate these mysteries on your own, the clues section will serve as your guide. Once you have read all the clues, your goal is to come up with a satisfying solution that fits all the constraints of the mystery and clues. This process is still fairly open-ended because you might come up with solutions that are different from the one in the back of the book. If you come up with a solution that is more satisfying than the one in the back of the book, congratulations—you are clever indeed! If you have never solved lateral thinking puzzles before, try solving them with the help of someone else first so you can learn how they work. The last 20 puzzles in the book are more suited for doing alone.

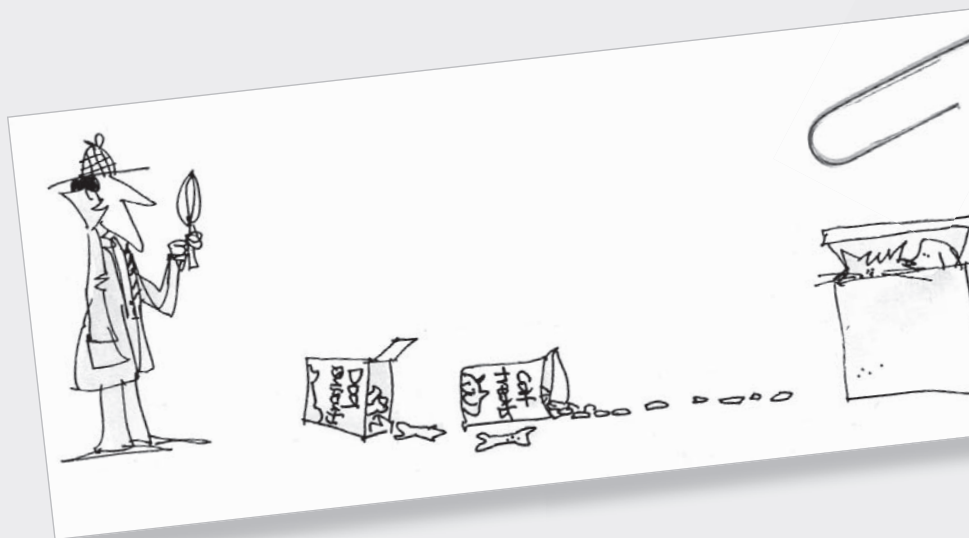
What About the Illustrations?

This book contains two kinds of puzzles. The first 80 puzzles include illustrations that show a humorous yet incorrect assumption of what is happening. These are purely for your viewing enjoyment, so don't let them mislead you! The last 20 mysteries in this book are picture puzzles. These mysteries require you to find clues within the image to figure out what is going on. These puzzles are completely self-contained and can be solved alone but are still fun to do in a group.



TOP SECRET

A Crime in Mind



1.

Take It or Leave It

A burglar robs many homes throughout the day. At the last house, he breaks in through the back door. This house has more valuables than any of the other houses, and nothing is there to stop him from taking them, but he doesn't take anything. How come?

Ah, never mind...
I'm too tired.



2.

Safe but Not Sound

A bank robber worked through the night trying to crack a bank vault. As morning approached, he knew the bank employees would be arriving soon, but he didn't stop. How come?

