

#birdsecrets



A Murder Investigation RPG by Kurt Potts

Special Thanks

Noella Handley

Thank you for starting the **Short and Easy jam**
and telling me to value my work.

Yoshi Creelman, Foundry 58 GDC

Thank you for the advice.

#birdsecrets was created by Kurt Potts
for the Short and Easy Jam
<https://itch.io/jam/short-and-easy-jam>.

#birdsecrets

#birdsecrets is a roleplaying game for 3-6 players. To play you'll need two different six-sided dice, some pencils, & some printed sheets or notecards.

In #birdsecrets you'll take on the role of a bird with many secrets and with the help of or in opposition to the other players you'll attempt to solve a murder.

Birds know many secrets, where the best food can be found, Where the best shiny things are to fill your nest, why the crane never goes near the lake.



Safety

There are many ways to approach safety and consent. Lines, Veils & The X Card are just a few.

Lines: Subjects that will not be discussed. Each player should have an opportunity to outline subjects they would like explicitly excluded from the game. Write anything excluded this way on the Nest Sheet under Lines.

Veils: Subjects that can be present in the fiction, but happen off screen or behind a veil. This is often shown in movies by fading to black on a romance scene. We know what happened, but we don't show it. Write anything veiled this way on the Nest Sheet under Veils.

X Card: There is a large X printed on the Nest Sheet. At any time a player may tap the X or say "I'm Xing that" to remove something from the game. When this happens all players should stop and clarify what was X'd. Resume playing replacing the X'd content with something else. This method of content curation can be used for troubling content we didn't realize needed to be a Line or to remove something that is out of tone or takes the game in a direction we don't like.

Take a moment before playing to make sure everyone has the same understanding of the tools.

The Nest

Place a hat, bowl, or satchel within easy reach to act as the nest.

To begin, each player writes 2 bird names on separate scraps of paper. Take turns reading them aloud and adding them to The Flock on your sheet. Each player will select one of the names as the bird they will portray going forward. Once they've all been read and added to the flock, roll them tightly and drop them in the nest. The flock is our cast of characters for this game.

Remove one name from the nest keeping it secret and place it in a small pouch or envelope. They are the Murderer.

Next, each player secretly writes one weapon and one location on scraps of paper and adds them to the nest.

- *Murder weapons fit for a bird: Poison Berries, A Letter Opener*
- *Locations: The forgotten bath, The Belfry of the Linwood Estates*



Secrets & Suspicion

In #birdsecrets, birds are measured by the secrets they know. Once all the scraps have been added to the Nest and the Murderer has been set aside.

Draw 3 scraps from the nest and write a secret on your sheet that you know about each of the birds, weapons or locations you drew. Secrets about birds should be in the form of an alibi for the murder.

These secrets are the primary way we build the world. Keep them short with room for interpretation.

Share a Secret

When you Share a Secret, tell the other player covertly. They now know that secret too and may add it to their secrets. If the secret was an alibi, be sure to mark the bird as having an alibi. You're one step closer to finding the murderer. If you share a secret with a player that they already know, you must instead reveal that secret and share another secret with them.

Reveal a Secret

When you Reveal a Secret, read it aloud and anyone with that secret marks it as revealed. Other players might ask how or why you knew, but whether you answer is up to you. If the secret is an alibi everyone should mark that bird as innocent on their sheet.

X'ing Secrets

If someone x's a secret, quickly revise it. If the secret originated from another player give them the new version of the secret as well. This might get fiddly, but making sure everyone is having a good time is more important than a little bookkeeping.



Suspicion

Suspicion represents the opinion of the other birds and how likely it is they think you're the murderer. Some effects target the bird with the most suspicion and if the murderer reveals themselves they can attempt to pin the murder on the bird with the highest suspicion. If they have the highest suspicion they're out of luck.

Playing the Game

The game opens at the scene of the crime.

What do we see and who is there? Take turns as Investigators setting scenes and playing them out.

When you trigger a move stop and roll.

The Moves

Everyone is a suspect until they are revealed to have an alibi. Birds that have been revealed to have an alibi are Innocents. Birds that belong to a player are Investigators. Birds not belonging to a player are Witnesses.

Roll + Secrets

When a move tells you to Roll + Secrets, roll two six-sided dice and add the number of unrevealed secrets on your sheet. Use dice you can tell apart and designate one the weather die.

Question a Witness

When you question a Witness, Roll + Secrets

Reveal a secret, check off that Witness as questioned and, 10+: choose 2; 7-9: choose 1; 6- another player chooses a Fowl Deed.

- Do not reveal a secret
- Claim a scrap from the nest adding it to your sheet. Write a secret you know about it.
- The witness might know more. Do not mark them as questioned.

Question an Investigator

When you question an Investigator, Roll + Secrets
Share one of your secrets with them and,
10+: choose 2; 7-9: choose 1; 6-: another player
chooses a Fowl Deed.

- Do not share one of your secrets with them
- They share one of their secrets with you
(You may choose this twice)

Search for Clues

When you search for clues, Roll + Secrets
On a 10+: gain two clues; 7-9: Gain 1 clue; 6-:
another player chooses a Fowl Deed.

Clues function as temporary secrets. You may only
have 3 clues at a time and they can be spent in the
following ways:

- Spend 1: add 1 to a die roll
- Spend 2: Clear 1 suspicion
- Spend 3: Gain a secret from the nest
- Spend 3: Another player Reveals a Secret.



Fowl Deeds

Some moves will ask another player to choose a Fowl Deed. Fowl Deeds always refer to the player who made the move.

- **Birds of a Feather:** The witnesses aren't talking. Gain Suspicion and make your next move with no bonus.
- **Big Beak:** You end up spilling more secrets than you learn. Gain Suspicion or Reveal a Secret.
- **Dirty Bird:** You get caught planting evidence. Gain Suspicion and Reveal a secret from the Nest
- **One in the Hand:** Lose all your clues. Gain Suspicion or Share a Secret with another Investigator.
- **Caw & Order:** The flock demands action. Pick another Investigator, who must Reveal a Secret or you both Gain Suspicion.



Weather

Each time you make a move the weather changes. Weather changes affect the move being rolled. Life is unpredictable for a bird.

1. **Downpour:** Rain washes away evidence but also affects morale. Search for Clues is rolled with no bonus. Anyone affected by Birds of a Feather may ignore that penalty.
2. **Bitter Cold:** The nest has fallen on hard times. When a secret is revealed, reveal 2 secrets instead. Suspicion gains are doubled.
3. **Bountiful Bloom:** The nest is feeling generous. Secret gains from the nest are doubled.
4. **Bright Sunshiny Day:** Easy to see what's right in front of you. Gain a clue in addition to the other effects of your move, but choose two Fowl Deeds on a 6-.
5. **Fall Leaves:** Falling leaves means soon there will be no place to hide. Reveal a secret from the Nest and add Caw & Order to the effects of your move.
6. **Spring Fling:** Birds are more often found in pairs. When you Question an Investigator you can target two Investigators affecting them simultaneously. You can potentially learn four secrets this way.

Ending the Game

The game ends under one of the following conditions:

Two hours pass:

The players make their case for who they think the murderer is. Everyone votes and a majority convicts. Check and see if you got it right.

Someone marks the alibi of all but one bird:

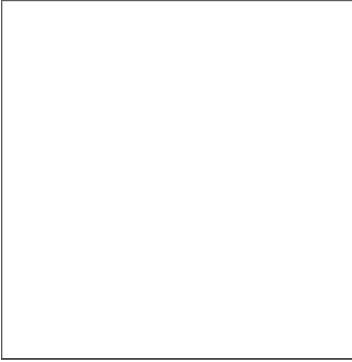
If someone marks all but one alibi the remaining bird is convicted unless it's them, in which case they can throw blame at the bird with the most suspicion. Roll + That player's Suspicion, on a 10+ they are convicted and the murderer gets away. 7-9 is a mistrial no conviction. 6- the murderer outs themselves and gets convicted anyway.



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SAFETY TOOLS

Lines



Veils



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