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A fundraiser with a missing centrepiece

The Bellweather Benefit: The Vanishing Star - Small-Group Edition is a non-violent theft mystery for 10-40 players in 2-8 teams, plus one non-playing host. Plan 85 minutes of game time, with a 90-minute access option. Arrivals and meals need separate time. This is the SAME STORY, evidence and solution as the 40-80 edition. Choose one edition; buying both does not provide two mysteries.

Five steps

1. Read ORGANISER_GUIDE and the host-only solution.
2. Choose A4 or US Letter; print one nine-page guest set per team plus a spare.
3. Pair R1/E1 through R4/E4 into four closed packets. Add an answer sheet.
4. Seat 2-8 balanced teams; follow the 85-minute script and give equal hints.
5. At the deadline use host marking for 2-4 teams or peer marking for 5-8, verify results, read the reveal and thank everyone.

Print only what you need

Per team: TEAM_CLUE_PACKS (4 pages), EVIDENCE_AND_EXHIBITS (4 pages), TEAM_ANSWER_SHEET (1 page). Nine single-sided sheets per team. One spare set adds 9 sheets. Print one team label per table. Keep all host files away from guests.

Bring

Ordinary paper, pens, a clock, table space and one non-playing host who knows the solution. Prepare four folded packets per team; no envelopes, props, apps or acting required. Seat teams far enough apart for quiet discussion. The host count is extra: 10 players means 11 people including the host. Arrange any food, admissions and venue duties separately.

Before inviting anyone

Edit the poster, invitation and tickets in Editable. Replace every bracketed field, proofread and export to PDF. Open FUNDRAISER_BUDGET.xlsx, replace the blue example inputs and enter all amounts in one currency. Read LICENCE_AND_USE. The story is intended for adults and accompanied teens aged 13+; age suitability and timing need your judgement.

E1 | The display file

E1A - Maker's inventory | VERIFIED

The original Bellweather Star weighs 2.40 kg and has a crescent notch on the upper point. A hollow display copy weighs 0.40 kg and has no notch. Both look similar through glass. There are exactly these two stars in the hall. At 18:50 the original was locked in the gallery cabinet and the copy stood on an open decoration shelf in the gallery. Both fit inside a standard parcel.

E1B - Photograph and steward record | VERIFIED

Finn's photograph shows the notched star inside the locked cabinet. Its timestamp reads 19:14. His camera clock is exactly four minutes FAST; all other clocks in this case show the correct time. At exactly 19:14 real time, the steward lifted the star from the cabinet and found it weighed 0.40 kg. The steward's opening at 19:14 is logged separately. The object was not moved between the photograph and the theft. Treat the swap as occurring strictly after the photograph and strictly before the steward opened the cabinet.

E1C - Committee messages | VERIFIED copies

18:35 Nia to Owen: "The catering deposit is late. I need it sorted."
18:38 Ellis to Bea: "My sponsor expected first choice. Please do not let the star go without telling me."
18:40 Bea to Mara: "That mount makes the star look crooked. I want to fix it."
18:44 Mara to Owen: "Please wait until tomorrow to check the printing receipts."
These messages establish concerns, not guilt. The maker donated the original for the auction; nobody was authorised to remove or sell it privately.

Print and setup checklist

Choose one paper folder

A4 and US_Letter contain the same game in their respective sizes. Print at actual size, monochrome, single-sided. Do not print both folders. Avoid duplex for guest packs: the next round must not be visible on the reverse. Use plain paper and ordinary printer quality. The game has no required cutting.

Guest quantities including one spare

10 players / 2 teams: 18 sheets + 9 spare = 27.
20 players / 4 teams: 36 + 9 = 45.
30 players / 6 teams: 54 + 9 = 63.
40 players / 8 teams: 72 + 9 = 81.
For intermediate counts, teams = round players/5 up to a whole number; guest sheets = 9 x (teams + 1). Every set has four round pages, four evidence pages and one answer sheet. Add host pages, team labels and publicity separately. Count players, excluding the non-playing host.

Day before

[ ] Read the complete guide and solution.
[ ] Edit and proof event publicity; confirm venue access and audibility.
[ ] Print a test page; check size and contrast.
[ ] Print the required sets and one spare set.
[ ] Pair R1 with E1, R2 with E2, R3 with E3, R4 with E4. Fold each pair with round number outside.
[ ] Count four packets and one answer sheet per team.
[ ] Prepare pens, labels, a clock and any equal-value prizes.

On arrival

[ ] Check lighting, accessible routes and seating.
[ ] Place identical packet sets and a label at each table.
[ ] Keep host-only sheets at the MC desk, away from guests.
[ ] Test announcement audibility from the back.
[ ] Keep spare pages ready and note start time.
[ ] Confirm separate cover for non-game event duties.

Afterwards

[ ] Verify scores before announcing a winner.
[ ] Secure money and reconcile costs independently of the game.
[ ] Recycle clue sheets or retain internally; no public upload.
[ ] Record timing and confusing clues to improve your next event choice.