

# Who Dun It?

By and Based on the Books of Robert J. Cormier ([www.thefaithkit.org](http://www.thefaithkit.org))  
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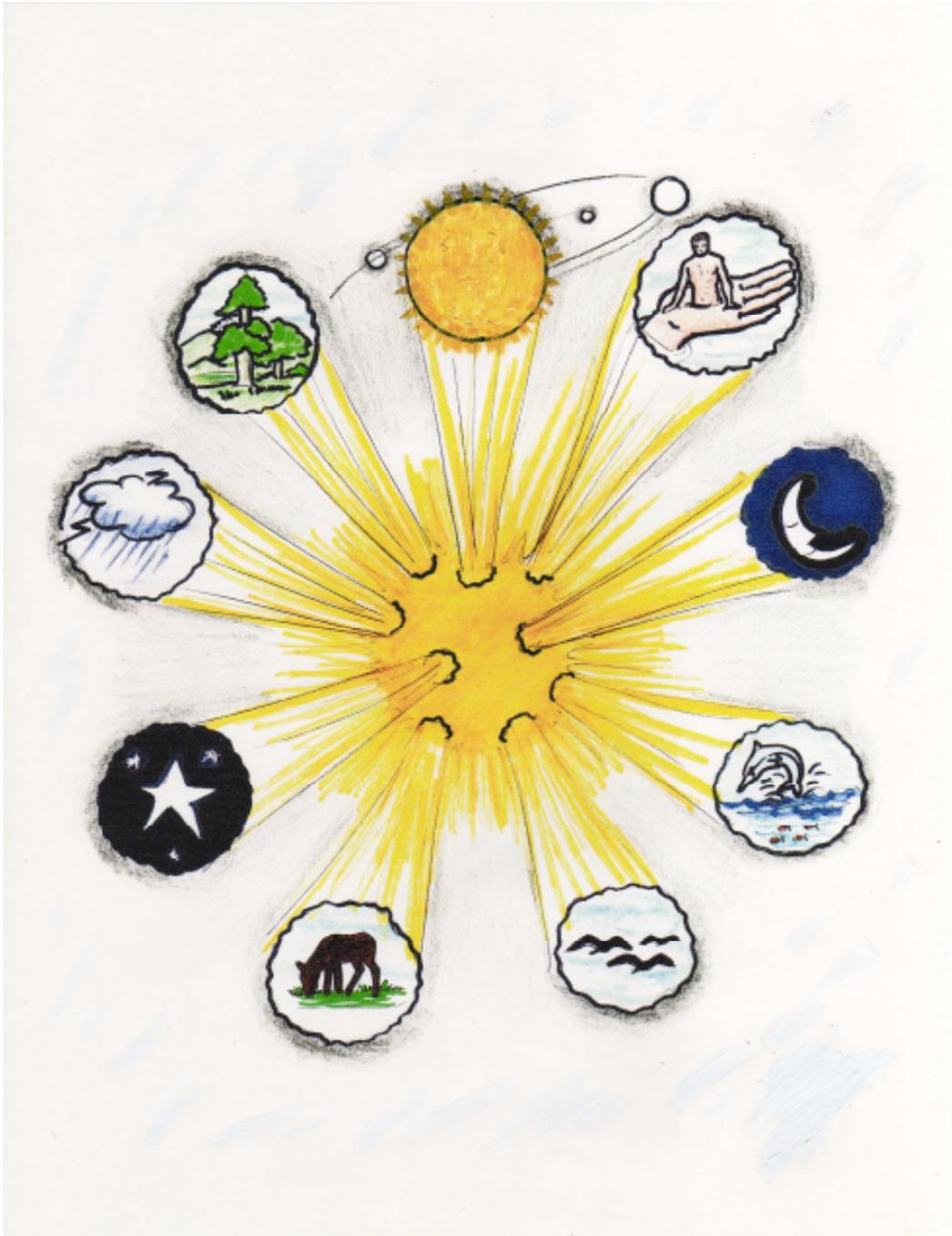
This weekend “retreat” was no treat to those who had to be there. Oh, the mansion was beautiful enough, and grounds too; but snow was coming and they might get snowed in, and that was the last thing that most of them wanted with nine other people from work.

The all-weekend meeting had been called by their boss who was going to be there too. They called him “Mr. Sir” because it was pretty clear that he expected to be called Sir at least once whenever you spoke to him.

The purpose of the meeting was a marketing strategy for a thing called a poopsy. It was cheap to make, easy to surround by expensive packaging, sure to wear out, needed by no one (so there would be no liabilities), and just the kind of thing you might convince everyone they just had to have—and maybe you could even get them to buy one for someone else.

The morning meeting went pretty well. The team had been through this before. It really wasn’t hard to convince people they have to have something; all you have to do is make them believe that almost everyone else is out to get it. And to convince people to believe that almost everyone else is out to get it... well, there are lots of ways to do that, as long as you have money. How to spend the money... this was to be the topic of the afternoon meeting. But first there was lunch, and then there was a break. They would reconvene at two.

At two o’clock, one by one, but almost at the same time, everyone came back to the grand dining hall that served as the room for their meetings. At the door they found that an easel had been set up, and it displayed an unusual picture. There were flowers on a little stand on one side of the easel, and a lit candle on the other.



“So, who set all this up?” asked Mr. Sir. “It must have taken an hour.”

Immediately, in one way or another, everyone said “not me.”

“Well, it didn’t set itself up,” Mr. Sir insisted, “who did it?”

Still no ‘me.’

“Wait a second,” said Mel. Mel was a nice guy, a smart guy, and someone who wanted more from life than marketing things that were worthless to people who were empty. “There’s no one else here. That’s why I have to go into town for our food. One of us *must* have done it; the snow is fresh and there are no new tire tracks in it but mine.”

“How do we know it wasn’t you?” said Harold, a scientist type in an odd couple relationship with anti-establishment Crystal who was also at the meeting.

“We know because I had to go into town for our dinner,” said Mel; “and we know I went to town because we *have* dinner. What about you?” Mel now asked Harold.

“I was out walking with Crystal.” Crystal nodded that this was true.

Someone said, “maybe it was the both of you.”

“No,” said Joe Nied, “I saw them out walking.”

“It looked more like you were following them,” injected Mr. Sir. “I saw you from my window.”

“May we ask, Sir, can you prove you were in your room?” Probably only Mel would have had the guts to ask Mr. Sir such a question.

“DO I HAVE TO PROVE IT!” This was no question. And then there were a few moments of awkward silence, and then Mr. Sir said, “well, if I have to I can; I was working my stocks, AND TOOK A BEATING, and there are records of it.”

“Ok,” said Mel, “who’s left? Polly, where were you?” Polly, known by her co-workers as “Petrified Polly,” said she was by herself, watching television the whole time.

“I can confirm that,” said Claudia, aware of her good looks Claudia. “I heard her; and I heard her change the channel a few times.”

“And what were *you* doing, Claudia?” asked somebody.

“I was getting myself ready for this meeting.”

“Can you *prove* it?”

“Can I *prove* it? Look at me!”

It, indeed, was obvious.

With this, attention now turned to Rex, the office politician. Sensing that the attention had turned to him, he volunteered the information. “I was watching the game with Bonzo.” Bonzo was the office sports nut. “He was pretending to watch it, anyway,” said Bonzo, “and pretending he knows something about the game.”

There was just one person left. This was cell-phone Sally. She, too, knew that she should just speak up. “I was in my room,” she said, “talking on the phone.”

It didn’t seem necessary to ask but someone still did: “Can you prove it?”

“Of course I can prove it,” she said, “I called my boyfriend at least five times.” (Actually it was seven.)

“So if it wasn’t any of us,” said Mel, “who dun it?”

Dear reader,

As, perhaps, you ponder this question, please know that I am not trying to fool you.

Our story contains no lies.

There is no needed information you were not given.

Don’t you see that I have already given you three clues?

Here is another: My goal was to present a model for something much larger?

One more thing: The unusual picture at the center of our story has a name. Go to [www.thefaithkit.org/pages/file63a.htm](http://www.thefaithkit.org/pages/file63a.htm) and you can read about it.

If you are still stumped, go back to [www.thefaithkit.org/panorama/ShortStories/shortStories.htm](http://www.thefaithkit.org/panorama/ShortStories/shortStories.htm) and click on “Who Dun It—Explained.”