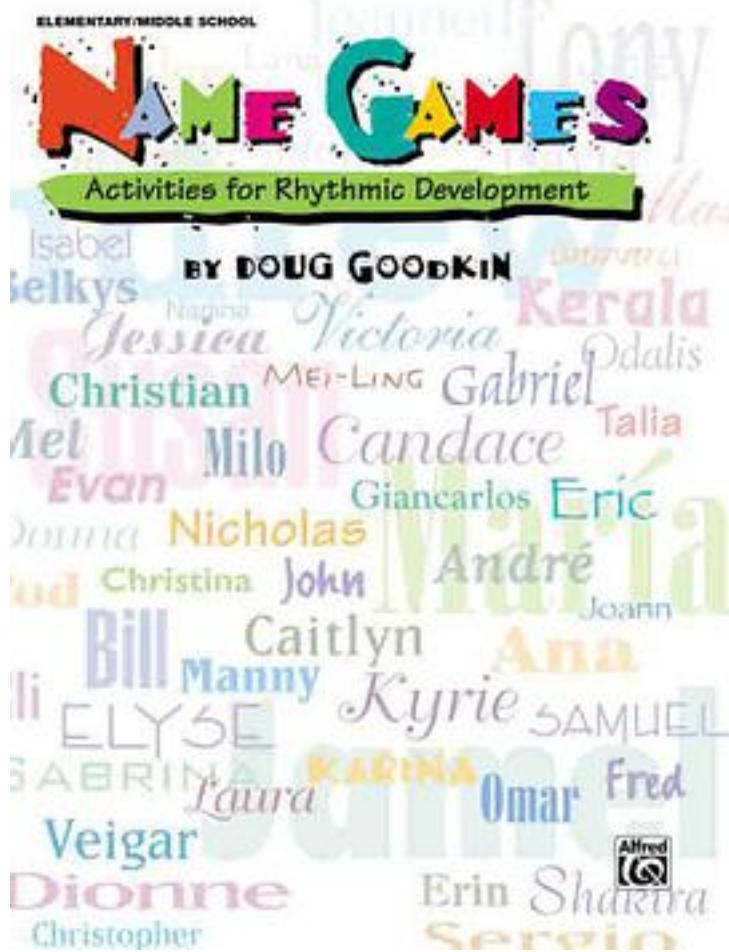


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著者:Craft, Michael

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Mark Manning, once a prominent journalist at a major daily newspaper in Chicago, is now the owner and publisher of the Dumont Daily Register, the daily paper in a small

Wisconsin city. Here the biggest news is the impending city council report on a proposed new adult bookstore zoning law, the upcoming election for Sheriff and the upcoming annual exhibition of the Midwest Miniatures Society. In a unique coup for the first-ever miniatures exhibition in Dumont, the "king of miniatures," Mr. Carroll Cantrell has agreed to come and judge the show's main event. But the exhibition itself is quickly shoved off the front page of the paper when Cantrell is found murdered in his room. To make matters worse, Doug Pierce, the local sheriff, is widely believed to be responsible. Pierce - a closeted gay man and friend of Mark Manning - had been carrying on an affair with Cantrell and was the last person seen leaving his room before the body was discovered. As conservative elements in Dumont attempt to exploit the murder - and the sheriff's association with the deceased - to their own ends, Manning, with the help of his lover, architect Neil Waite, his staff and friends, starts his own investigation of the murder. With Cantrell having led something of a double life with no end of potential enemies and the miniatures world itself being a hot bed of rivalries and closely held resentments, the truth begins to feel very elusive indeed. As public sentiment begins to swing and time running out for Sheriff Pierce, Mark must uncover some of this close-knit town's most deeply held secrets if he's to learn the truth in time.

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