

4.50 From Paddington

SUMMARIES

Part 1: Chapters 1–7

When Mrs McGillicuddy takes the 4.50 train from Paddington to visit her friend Miss Marple, she sees a man strangling a woman on another train running parallel to hers. She doesn't see the man's face, but he is dark-haired and wearing a heavy coat. The strangled woman is wearing a fur coat. The police don't find any trace of a murdered woman thrown out of a train.

The following day, after tea in London, Miss Marple and Mrs McGillicuddy travel back on the same 4.50 train from Paddington. Miss Marple notices a long curve by a large country house on the track just before Brackhampton.

Mean, old Luther Crackenthorpe and his daughter, Emma, live in this house, Rutherford Hall. Miss Marple suspects that the body is hidden there. She asks Lucy Eyelesbarrow, a 'professional at housework,' to work there undercover and investigate.

Alexander Eastley, Crackenthorpe's only grandson, and his friend James Stoddart-West come to stay, and with Lucy they find a woman's body hidden in a sarcophagus.

Nobody, including the family's doctor Dr Quimper, recognizes the woman. Inspector Bacon thinks the dead woman may be foreign. Cedric, Harold, Albert – Crackenthorpe's sons – and his son-in-law, Bryan Eastley, all attend the woman's inquest.

Part 2: Chapters 8–14

Detective Inspector Craddock learns from Wimbourne, the family lawyer, that Luther Crackenthorpe's father made his fortune producing biscuits. A will states that Crackenthorpe mustn't sell the house; it will be given to his eldest son (Cedric). The capital from the fortune will be divided equally between his four children and grandson.

Craddock talks to the family. He thinks the woman may have been French and a dancer in Paris.

Emma confides to Cedric that the murdered woman might be Martine, their dead brother's widow. Martine had sent them a letter before Christmas saying she was in England and wanted to meet the family. Emma invited her but then she received a message from Martine saying she had to return to France. Dr Quimper advises Emma to tell this to the police.

Mr Crackenthorpe shows Lucy his hidden money and suggests she should marry him as he'll live longer than his children.

Emma explains to Craddock about Martine. Not all the family thinks the letter is genuine. Martine's son would be an heir to the fortune. Miss Marple has tea at the hall and notices Emma and Quimper seem attracted to each other. Alfred offers Lucy a job, and marriage. Harold also offers Lucy a job in London.

Craddock continues his investigations in Paris. The missing dancer, Anna, isn't the murdered woman, but he believes she could have known Martine and written the letter.

Wimbourne explains that Martine and Edmund's son, and not Cedric, would inherit Rutherford Hall.

Part 3: Chapters 15–20

Alfred and Harold have money problems. Craddock interviews them both and they explain what they were doing on Friday 20th December. On Christmas Day Mr Crackenthorpe had been ill and Dr Quimper looked after him. Sergeant Wetherall recognizes Alfred as being a member of a criminal gang.

Miss Marple speaks about the strong possibility of Dr Quimper and Emma marrying. Craddock speaks to Quimper about Mr Crackenthorpe being poisoned at Christmas, which explains why he was ill. Quimper thinks it was arsenic.

Alexander finds the envelope addressed to Martine that Emma had sent. Craddock continues his investigations and Cedric admits he'd been drinking on 20th December. Alfred came to Rutherford Hall that day and Harold was in London. The police think Harold might have taken the train to Brackhampton during the afternoon and then returned to London.

Mr Crackenthorpe demands curry for dinner, then at 3 am Quimper is called as the family all have food poisoning. Police find arsenic in the left-over curry. Alfred dies.

Part 4: Chapters 21–27

James's mother, Lady Stoddart-West, visits Emma; she is surprised about Martine's letter. She confirms that she is in fact Martine. She had married Edmund and after his death came to England with her present husband. She did not send the letter.

Quimper sends Harold some pills to take, presumably for the food poisoning. Craddock tells Miss Marple Harold has died, Quimper apparently knew nothing about the pills. The pills were in Emma's pill box which has her fingerprints on it. Miss Marple reminds Craddock that Alexander found the envelope after the police search, perhaps intentionally dropped by the murderer. Lucy thinks Bryan could be the murderer; he knew Martine during the war.

Miss Marple asks Mrs McGillicuddy to come and they go for tea at Rutherford Hall. Miss Marple starts choking on a fish bone; Quimper puts his hands on her neck and looks down her throat. Coming into the room Mrs McGillicuddy sees this and instantly recognizes Quimper as the man on the train.

The murdered woman was Quimper's wife; they were separated, but she wouldn't divorce. He wanted to marry Emma and get the money. He wrote the letter to try and implicate the family and then he started poisoning the brothers.

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Agatha Christie

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 1 (Chapters 1–7)

Before reading

1 Speaking

Read part of the blurb from the back cover of the book to the students. 'A woman is murdered on a train. When Miss Marple telephones her friend Lucy Eyelesbarrow and asks her to go undercover to investigate, Lucy quickly accepts the challenge! Who is the dead woman? What was the motive for her murder?'

Tell the students this is a simple description of the story they are going to read. Ask them: *Do you know who the author is? What do you think is going to happen in the story? Have you read any stories by Agatha Christie? What do you know about Agatha Christie?* etc.

2 Speaking

Write the title *4.50 From Paddington* on the board. Ask students what they think it refers to. Explain that Paddington is a London train station and that train travel is important in the story.

The story takes place in the 1950s. In groups, get the students to make a list of the differences between modern train travel and travelling by train in the 1950s. You can give some ideas:

Travelling by train in the 1950s	Travelling by train today
More people travelled by train than by car.	There are more cars on the road today; perhaps the train is used less.
You could travel first, second or third class.	Most passengers travel second class. There is no third class.

Then ask the students to read the Cultural notes on page 105 of the book. They can compare their ideas.

After reading

3 Comprehension

Ask the students the names of the characters from Part 1. Write the names on the board or a large piece of paper. Tell students you are going to play 'Who's who?', that is, you'll read a description of six characters and the students write down who they are.

Descriptions:

- I'm an old man, aged 72. I hate waste. I enjoyed collecting ancient statues when I was younger. (Mr Crackenthorpe)
- Some people see me as a fragile old lady, but I have a very sharp mind. (Miss Marple)
- My hobby is painting. Some people think I'm scruffy as my clothes are old and my hair is untidy. (Cedric)
- I've looked after the family's health for many years. I'm quite fond of Emma. (Dr Quimper)

5 I've been successful in my job for 10 years. I enjoy a challenge and I never work in the same place for more than 4 weeks. (Lucy)

6 My wife died and my son is Mr Crackenthorpe's only grandchild. (Bryan)

4 Writing

In exercise 3 above the class made a list of the story's characters. Refer to this list on the board/paper and explain that you and the class are going to add information about these characters.

Have the students, in pairs, choose one or two characters. Ask them to make an ID card, giving them the following example:

Name: *Mr Crackenthorpe*
Age: 72
Described as being: *a little difficult, mean*
Physical description: *big, thin, thick grey hair*
Likes: *money, collecting statues*
Dislikes: *spending money, waste*
Other information: *inherited a fortune and a large house from his rich father*

Students present their character(s) to the class and keep the cards or stick them on the classroom wall if possible. Tell students that as they read each part of the book they will add more key information to each ID card. This will help the students in case they get the Crackenthorpe family members mixed up.

5 Writing

Ask students what they imagine Rutherford Hall to be like. Remind them that Agatha Christie describes it as having 'broken' steps and 'weeds' (pages 14–15), and being 'dark' (page 15), and 'an island surrounded by railway lines' (page 20). Tell students they have recently visited Emma and Mr Crackenthorpe and now they are writing a postcard about this visit to a friend. Get them to include a description of the Hall.

6 Speaking

As a class, discuss the following:

Mr Crackenthorpe says he isn't rich and he doesn't like waste. Ask students: *What do you think? Is he mean or is he just being careful with money because of all the difficulties after the war?* Lucy Eyelesbarrow has a First in Mathematics from Oxford University but prefers to be a 'professional at housework' rather than a scholar. Ask students: *Why does she choose to do this? Do you think a university graduate today would make the same choice?*

Ask students about the dead woman in the sarcophagus: *Who do you think it could be?*

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 2 (Chapters 8–14)

Before reading

1 Research

On pages 32 and 33 the family's lawyer explains Josiah Crackenthorpe's will which is important in the story. Have students find out the meanings of the following words:

will (noun) in trust inheritance income capital heir

They can use a dictionary, the internet or the Cultural notes on page 108 of the book.

2 Listening

Read, or play if possible the end of Chapter 11, Part 1 from 'But forget Lucy Eyesbarrow...' to '- Martine?'

Write **Martine?** on the board. Ask students: *Who do you think she is?*

Tell students they are going to listen to an extract of the story and ask them to note down:

1 Any information about Martine

2 What does Dr Quimper advise Emma to do?

Play the audio, Chapter 11, Part 2 from 'For a moment...' to 'against them any day.'

Have the students check their answers in pairs and then report back to the class.

After reading

3 Comprehension

Ask students to complete these sentences:

- 1 Wimbourne is the family's _____.
- 2 Bryan Eastley was a _____ in the war and won a _____.
- 3 Emma is worried that the woman in the sarcophagus is _____.
- 4 Mr Crackenthorpe shows Lucy his sovereigns and tells her _____.
- 5 Harold thought Martine's letter was _____.
- 6 Cedric asks Lucy if there is a _____ in the house.

4 Writing

Have students reread pages 34, 40 and 41 and ask them to make notes about Bryan Eastley. Ask them: *What difficulties do you think soldiers might have adapting to civilian life after having fought in a war?* The class can then check its ideas with the description of **Life in Britain after World War II** on page 106 of the book.

Tell students to imagine they are Bryan and write a letter to his friend Sergeant Harry Larkin who fought with him during the war.

If necessary give them this model as a guide:

Dear Harry

.....
.....
..... I'm fine, and so is Alexander. However, everything has changed and life is so different now. As you know, since the war

.....and I still find it difficult to adapt. I even miss

Anyway, life has got exciting again! A strangled woman was found in the grounds at Rutherford Hall! Alexander is enjoying hunting for clues. I'm enjoying spending time with Lucy, the family's new help! I think maybe

So, tell me your news. I hope Mildred and the boys are well. Let me know.....

Best wishes,

Bryan

5 Language

Making deductions.

Write the following on the board:

Sure	must can't	+ have	+ past participle
Possibility	could/couldn't might/may		

Tell the students they are going to play detective and make some deductions, using these modal verbs, about the story so far.

Ask them these questions:

- 1 Did Harold put the body in the sarcophagus?
Sample answers: *Harold can't have put the body in the sarcophagus because he didn't arrive from London in time.*
Or He may have put the body in the sarcophagus and returned to London before coming back to Rutherford Hall for Christmas.
- 2 Did Mr Crackenthorpe murder the woman?
- 3 Did Edmund's wife, Martine, really write the letter?
- 4 Did one of the Crackenthorpe brothers frighten Martine away?

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 3 (Chapters 15–21)

Before reading

1 Speaking

Miss Marple says on page 67: *'Murders so often are simple – with an obvious unpleasant motive...'*

Ask students: *Can you think of some of the reasons why people are murdered?* Money, crimes of passion, etc.

What do you think the motive for the murder in this story could be?

2 Speaking

Write the following on the white board, or a large piece of paper:

give alibis	curry	arsenic	mushroom soup
argument	someone dies (Who? Why?)		

Tell students these are clues for what is going to happen in Part 3 of the book. As a class, ask students to think about what could happen next. Agree upon a possible story then ask students to read Part 3 and see if they have guessed correctly.

After reading

3 Comprehension

Have students match the descriptions to the correct characters:

Harold	...(his) wife died having a baby.
Dr Quimper	...has criminal connections.
Bryan	...wasn't ill after eating curry.
Lucy	...is like a dog that wants to be taken for a walk.
Alfred	...is interested in rare books.
Mr Crackenthorpe	...had been ill at Christmas with a stomach upset.

4 Speaking

Mrs McGillicuddy said the murderer was tall and dark, like Harold, Alfred and Cedric. Unfortunately she didn't see his face. Inspector Craddock interviews the three brothers to ask what they were doing on December 20th.

Get the students to work in three groups; group one represents and defends **Harold**, group two represents and defends **Cedric** and group three represents and defends **Alfred**. Each group will present their character's alibi, as read in Part 3. They should also describe their character's personality. A debate could continue between the three groups: *Who has the best alibi? Who is guilty? Who has a motive?*

5 Listening

Tell the students they are going to listen to an extract from Part 3.

Write these questions on the board:

- 1 What makes Inspector Craddock jump?
- 2 Where do the boys take Inspector Craddock?
- 3 What does James Stoddart-West take out of his pocket?
- 4 Is Inspector Craddock angry with the boys?

Play the audio, Chapter 17, Part 2.

After listening: in pairs get the students to discuss the questions.

James Stoddart-West says his mother is French. Ask students: *Do you think this could be an important fact for the story?*

6 Language

A Put the class into 2 teams. Take it in turns to ask each team a vocabulary question, given below. Tell the students all the vocabulary is from Part 3. Give a point for each correct answer. Write the correct answers in a list on the board.

B After the vocabulary quiz you will have a list of words on the board. Get the students to write a short paragraph using as many of the words as they can.

Questions for vocabulary quiz:

- 1 What do you call the people who work in the homes of rich people? (SERVANTS)
- 2 What do you call a woman whose husband has died? (WIDOW)
- 3 Give another name for a man, guy, gentleman. (CHAP)
- 4 Give a synonym for confused. (PUZZLED)
- 5 How does a person feel when he doesn't have any good friends or his family with him? (LONELY)
- 6 What is the word for an Asian dish which can be spicy? (CURRY)
- 7 What do you call a person who is very knowledgeable about a certain subject? (AN EXPERT)
- 8 What word describes someone who is very angry? (FURIOUS)
- 9 What is the expression which describes a person who behaves in an agitated way about something trivial? (TO MAKE A FUSS)
- 10 What do you call the money or property you inherit from someone when they die? (INHERITANCE)

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 4 (Chapters 21–27)

Before reading

1 Speaking

Have the students work in pairs. One student is Miss Marple and the other student takes the role of Lucy Eyesbarrow. Explain that Miss Marple has invited Lucy for tea as she wants to hear all the latest news from Rutherford Hall. Lucy explains what has recently happened (i.e. in Part 3); she also asks Miss Marple what theories she has about the two murders.

2 Listening

Tell the students that in the final part of the story there will be some surprising news about Martine. Write these names on the board:

Lady Stoddart-West	Martine	Edmund
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Ask students to guess what the connection between them could be.

Play Chapter 22 and get students to listen to see if they were correct.

After listening, ask the students to discuss these questions:

- 1 Why did Emma think Lady Stoddart-West had come to visit?
- 2 What did Lady Stoddart-West do during the war?
- 3 Did Lady Stoddart-West write the letter?

After reading

3 Comprehension

Have the students discuss the following questions in groups:

- 1 Why is Colin cheerful?
- 2 Did Harold and his wife have a good relationship?
- 3 How did Lady Stoddart-West know Bryan Eastley?
- 4 What excuse does Miss Marple use for taking Mrs McGillicuddy to Rutherford Hall?
- 5 Why does Dr Quimper look down Miss Marple's throat?
- 6 Who is the dead woman in the sarcophagus?
- 7 What does Miss Marple think the happy ending for Emma will be?

4 Language

Ask students if they know the meaning of these phrasal verbs:

to get rid of something	to ring off	to pick up	to find out
to go on	to hand out		

Have them write the meaning in the table below:

Extract from the story	Meaning of the phrasal verb
'I wish you would get rid of that nurse.' Page 84	
'Lucy rang off...' after speaking to Miss Marple on the phone. Page 85	
'...said Lucy, picking up the tray.' 'He picked up a cloth...'. Page 85	
'But it gave me a strange pleasure when I found out...'. Page 87	
'What's going on here?' Page 91	
'...when the time came for it to be handed out...'. Page 93	

Put the verbs in the table in the sentences below:

- 1 The teacher _____ the new books to the students.
- 2 She _____ some interesting facts when she researched the subject at the library.
- 3 Unfortunately, we will have to _____ our dog, my husband is allergic to him.
- 4 I asked my daughter to _____ all the toys she had left on the floor.
- 5 What's _____ outside? Why are there so many police cars in the street?
- 6 She was chatting to her friend on the phone, but _____ very quickly when her boss came into the office.

5 Writing

Inspector Craddock now has to write up the report of this solved crime. Ask students to fill in the details of his report.

The arrest of Dr Quimper
With Inspector Bacon I arrested Dr Quimper at Rutherford Hall in yesterday.
He was identified by as being the man she
.....
The murdered woman found in the sarcophagus at Rutherford Hall is
Dr Quimper and his wife were.....
.....
Dr Quimper's motive for this crime was
.....
Dr Quimper will also be charged with the murders of
.....
Dr Quimper murdered his victims by
.....

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ANSWER KEY (CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES)

Part 1 (Chapters 1–7)

1 Speaking

Answers will vary.

2 Speaking

Answers will vary.

Refer to the Cultural notes on page 105.

3 Comprehension

- 1 Mr Crackenthorpe
- 2 Miss Marple
- 3 Cedric
- 4 Dr Quimper
- 5 Lucy
- 6 Bryan

4 Writing

Lucy – 32, has a First in Mathematics from Oxford, clever, sensible, likes money, successful, a professional at housework

Miss Marple – fragile, old, sharp, clever, enjoys solving crimes

Emma – middle-aged, neither good-looking nor plain, lives with and looks after her elderly father, likes Dr Quimper

Cedric – big man, untidy hair, cheerful manner, old clothes, bohemian, lives abroad, likes painting

Harold – tall, smooth dark hair, wears a suit and tie, works in the City, is married to a Lord's daughter, a City gentleman

Alfred – nice but 'been in trouble once or twice'

Bryan – Miss Edith's husband, (a widower), lives in London

Alexander – fair hair, blue eyes, goes to boarding school, Bryan's son

5 Writing

Answers will vary.

6 Speaking

Answers will vary.

Part 2 (Chapters 8–14)

1 Research

Will – a legal document explaining who will receive your money, goods and property when you die

In trust – when another person, or a group of people, are in charge of another person's money because they are considered unable to manage their own affairs

Inheritance – what you can receive (money, property, etc.) from someone when they die

Income – your salary, what money you regularly earn or receive

Capital – a sum of money (in business, investments)

Heir – someone who inherits money, property or goods from another

2 Listening

1 **Martine**: Edmund had married, or wanted to marry a French girl before being killed in the war. Her name was Martine and she sent the Crackenthorpe family a letter just before Christmas wanting to meet them. However, she suddenly returned to France before the arranged meeting.

2 **Dr Quimper** advises Emma to tell the police about Martine.

3 Comprehension

- 1 lawyer
- 2 fighter pilot, medal
- 3 French/Martine
- 4 ...not to throw herself away on a young man
- 5 made up (invented)
- 6 train timetable

4 Writing

Answers will vary.

5 Language

Suggested answers:

- 2 He may have murdered the woman because he didn't want anyone else to inherit his money. / He can't have murdered the woman because he is too old and weak.
- 3 Martine must have written the letter because no one else knew this information. / Someone else could have written this letter pretending to be Martine.
- 4 Cedric could have frightened Martine away as he wants more money for himself. / Harold and Alfred may have frightened Martine away because they didn't believe her story.

Part 3 (Chapters 15–21)

1 Speaking

Answers will vary.

2 Speaking

Answers will vary.

3 Comprehension

Harold is interested in rare books.

Dr Quimper's wife died having a baby.

Bryan is like a dog that wants to be taken for a walk.

Lucy wasn't ill after eating curry.

Alfred has criminal connections.

Mr Crackenthorpe had been ill at Christmas with a stomach upset.

4 Speaking

Answers will vary.

5 Listening

- 1 An excited whisper from the boys makes him jump.

2 To the boiler room.

3 An envelope addressed to Martine Crackenthorpe.

4 No, he says they've been very helpful.
After listening: answers will vary.

6 Language

The answers are given in the class activity.

Part 4 (Chapters 21–27)

1 Speaking

Answers will vary.

2 Listening

- 1 To speak about her son James.
- 2 She hid British soldiers in occupied France during the war and helped them get back to England.
- 3 No, she didn't write the letter.

3 Comprehension

- 1 He's cheerful because he's planning what to do with Rutherford Hall and the money he will inherit.
- 2 No, they had a bad, cold relationship.
- 3 He was a soldier she helped during the war.
- 4 She says she wants to say goodbye as she's going to soon be leaving Brackhampton.
- 5 Because she's supposedly choking on a fish bone and he tries to help.
- 6 She is Dr Quimper's wife.
- 7 She'll go away and meet someone to marry.

4 Language

Extract from the story	Meaning of the phrasal verb
'I wish you would get rid of that nurse.' Page 84	to remove someone or something, to throw something away
'Lucy rang off...' after speaking to Miss Marple on the phone. Page 85	to finish a phone call
'...said Lucy, picking up the tray.' 'He picked up a cloth...' Page 85	to take an object with your hands
'But it gave me a strange pleasure when I found out...' Page 87	to get or discover new information
'What's going on here?' Page 91	to happen, to take place
'...when the time came for it to be handed out...' Page 93	to distribute something

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- 1 ...handed out...
- 2 ...found out...
- 3 ...get rid of...
- 4 ...pick up...
- 5 ...going on...
- 6 ...rang off...

5 Writing

Suggested answers:

With Inspector Bacon I arrested Dr Quimper at Rutherford Hall in **Brackhampton** yesterday.

He was identified by **Mrs McGillicuddy** as being the man she **had seen on the train**.

The murdered woman found in the sarcophagus at Rutherford Hall is **Dr Quimper's wife**. Dr Quimper and his wife were **separated but not divorced**.

Dr Quimper's motive for this crime was **to kill his wife so he could marry Emma and get her part of the fortune**.

Dr Quimper will also be charged with the murders of **Harold and Alfred Crackenthorpe**.

Dr Quimper murdered his victims by **poisoning them with arsenic**.