

Dead Man's Folly

SUMMARIES

Part 1: Chapters 1–3

Hercule Poirot's friend, Mrs Ariadne Oliver, demands that he come to Nasse House in Devon immediately where she has been hired to create a Murder Hunt for the fete by owner Sir George Stubbs. In her Murder Hunt, the victim (played by Girl Guide, Marlene Tucker) will be found in the boathouse. However, Mrs Oliver fears there will be a real murder. En route, Poirot offers a lift to two female backpackers. They are going to Hoodown Park – the youth hostel next door to Nasse House.

At Nasse House, Poirot meets architect Michael Weyman who complains bitterly that the folly is hidden away in the woods; Amy Folliat who lives in the Lodge but used to be the owner of Nasse House; Sir George Stubbs and his childlike, beautiful, foreign wife, Hattie; Miss Brewis, Sir George's efficient secretary; Sally Legge who lives in a cottage by the river; Mrs Masterton who is married to the local MP and Jim Warburton who works for Mr Masterton. They are all there to help with the fete.

Part 2: Chapters 4–6

Miss Brewis tells Poirot that she thinks Hattie Stubb's only acts stupid and child-like. Mrs Folliat tells Poirot that when Hattie's family died, she became Hattie's guardian. Her own sons died in the War and she was forced to sell Nasse House. Poirot meets the old ferryman, Merdell. He remembers when the Folliats lived in Nasse House. He tells Poirot how the younger son was nasty and always in trouble. He mysteriously says there will always be Folliat's at Nasse House. He explains that the folly was built on a whim when the Stubbs moved into Nasse House.

That evening, everyone is busy with last minute preparations for the fete, all except Hattie who disappears off to bed early. The next morning, Hattie receives a letter from her cousin, Etienne de Sousa, saying that he is coming to visit in his yacht that day. It upsets her and she tells Poirot that he is a bad man. She goes back upstairs with a headache. A little while later, the two backpacker girls appear on the lawn. Sir George shouts at them from Hattie's bedroom window as they are trespassing. The fete begins. Mrs Folliat greets people as if she is still the lady of the house. Poirot sees Hattie Stubbs in her big hat and pink dress, but when it is time for her to judge the children's fancy dress competition – she has disappeared. Etienne de Sousa arrives and is greeted by Sir George who is looking for Hattie. He asks Poirot to go and see if Hattie is checking on the Murder Hunt. As he leaves, Poirot notices that Sir George is happily chatting to the same backpacker that he shouted at earlier. When he and Mrs Oliver get to the boathouse it is locked and Marlene has been murdered.

Part 3: Chapters 7–10

Inspector Bland arrives to investigate the murder. Miss Brewis says that Lady Stubbs asked her to take a drink and some cakes to Marlene at about quarter past four. Etienne de Sousa claims that he wrote to Hattie three weeks earlier to let her know that he was coming. Sir George denies this. He tells Bland that Hattie said her cousin was a wicked man who did bad things and killed people. No one can find Lady Stubbs. Bland finds out that there were three keys for the boathouse: one key was hidden in the garden as a clue in the Murder Hunt, Mrs Oliver had the second key and the third key is in Sir George's desk. Marlene must have known her killer and opened the door for them. Mrs Folliat is very upset, one moment not wanting to talk about Hattie and the next defending her character.

Part 4: Chapters 11–14

Mrs Legge says that she last saw Lady Stubbs near the fortune-telling tent at 4.00 when she went for a cup of tea. Poirot thinks Lady Stubbs is dead and that Amy Folliat knows more than she is saying. Poirot investigates the fortune-telling tent. He goes out of the back of it and finds himself by the summerhouse where there is a mark in the dust on the floor. In the boathouse, he finds evidence that Marlene liked spying on people. Poirot returns to London with the murder unsolved and Lady Stubbs still missing. Five weeks later, Inspector Bland visits Poirot. Poirot still thinks Lady Stubbs is dead and that her body is hidden somewhere at Nasse. He also thinks Amy Folliat knows where. Poirot goes back to Devon. The Tucker's tell him that Mrs Tucker's father, the old ferryman, has also died – he fell into the river. Marlene's sister confirms that Marlene used to blackmail people. Poirot tells Bland he knows where Lady Stubbs' body is hidden and that Sir George put it there. Sir George is actually Amy Folliat's younger son. He didn't die in the war; he ran away from the army. He married Hattie for her money, but was already married to an Italian criminal, though his mother, Mrs Folliat, did not know this. He killed Hattie the night they arrived at Nasse House and the next morning his Italian wife came down to breakfast as Lady Hattie Stubbs. They buried the real Hattie's body where the tree had fallen down in the storm and built a folly over it. They realised de Sousa would know Lady Stubbs was not Hattie. They also knew that Marlene's grandfather had told her he had once seen a dead body in the woods, and that Sir George looked like James Folliat. They decided to kill Marlene and make 'Hattie Stubbs' disappear, hoping to frame Etienne de Sousa for both murders. Sir George's Italian wife went through the fortune-telling tent as Lady Stubbs when Sally Legge went for tea, and collected the rucksack she had left in the summerhouse with Elsa the backpacker's clothes in. She killed Marlene at the boathouse, changed clothes, and then Elsa came back to the fete and left Nasse House. Mrs Folliat admits what she knows.

Dead Man's Folly

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 1 (Chapters 1–3)

Before reading

1 Research

Write the title 'Dead Man's Folly' on the board. Elicit the term *folly*. Ask students to research the two meanings of 'folly'. Encourage them to find various pictures of folly buildings. Can they give examples of folly buildings and explain why they were built and who built them? Can they make sentences using both meanings of the word.

They could use an encyclopaedia, a library, the internet, the Cultural notes on page 81 and the Glossary on page 84, both at the back of the book.

2 Language

Display or ask students to turn to the map of Nasse House on page vi of the book. Explain that this is the map of a large country house and its gardens. Elicit the name of the house (Nasse House). Explain that only very rich people could own houses like Nasse House. Ask students to read Cultural note 4 on page 80 for background information about this. Explain that this is where the story takes place.

Point to the Lodge, ask students to read Cultural note 7 on page 81 for background information. Ask *What's interesting or unusual about Lady Folliat's situation?* (She used to own and live in Nasse House). Point to an area of woodland (shaded). Ask *What's this?* If necessary prompt students to refer to the key.

Elicit definitions for the following words:

- Drive
- Lawn
- Summerhouse
- Quay
- Terrace
- Folly
- Bush
- Fortune-teller

After reading

3 Comprehension

Photocopy one set of characters and descriptions per pair. Cut into strips. Have students match the definitions to the correct characters.

Mrs Oliver	...is married to Sir George and is very beautiful and very like a child.
Sir George Stubbs	...is the wife of the local Member of Parliament.
Hattie Stubbs	...is a writer of detective novels.
Michael Weyman	...used to own Nasse House and now lives in the lodge.
Miss Brewis	...is an architect who Sir George has hired to design a tennis pavilion and to repair the folly.

Sally Legge	...is married to a scientist and lives in a cottage by the river.
Mrs Masterton	...owns Nasse House.
Jim Warburton	...is Sir George's efficient secretary.
Mrs Folliat	...is the Masterton's political agent.
Marlene Tucker	...is a young Girl Guide who is going to pretend to be the dead body in the Murder Hunt.

4 Language

Play *Back to the Board* as a class.

Arrange the students into two teams. Have each team line their chairs up – one row per team, facing the board. The student in each team who is closest to the board should turn their chair away from the board to face their team.

Explain how to play the game.

- You will write a word or short phrase from the story on the board.
- Teams take it in turns to think of a clue for their player who has his or her back to the board.
- The first person in each team, i.e. the person who is sitting directly in front of the player with their back to the board, thinks of the first clue. Each clue can only be one word.
- Choose which team will go first and then ask the first player in that team to say a clue. For example, if you had written *Hercule Poirot* on the board, then the player might say *detective*.
- Once the clue has been given, the team player with his or her back to the board can guess the word on the board.
- If they guess correctly, allocate one point to the team and have all students move one chair forwards so that the players with their backs to the board now go to the back of their team's lines. If the player does not guess correctly, the first person in the other team can now give a clue.

Continue until one of the players with their backs to the board guesses what is written on the board.

Possible words/phrases to write on the board from Part 1 include:

- Poirot
- Murder Hunt
- Motive
- Clue
- Victim
- Nasse House
- Hoodown Park
- Hattie Stubbs
- Folly
- Trespasser
- Fete
- Estate
- Lawn
- Architect
- Boathouse
- Rucksack
- Weapon
- Prize

Dead Man's Folly

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 2 (Chapters 4–6)

Before reading

1 Speaking

Recap what has happened in the story so far. Write the following words on the board.

Nasse House	Mrs Oliver	The boathouse
Marlene Tucker	Hercule Poirot	Hoodown Park

Ask students to explain how each one relates to Part 1 of *Dead Man's Folly*.

2 Guess

Ask *Can you remember why Mrs Oliver is at Nasse House? Why has she asked Hercule Poirot to come?* In pairs, ask students to guess who the murder victim will be. Do not confirm or reject any suspicions. They should also think of one or two possible motives for the murder if they can. Ask them to write the name down on a piece of paper with their own names on the back. Fold the papers and keep them safe.

3 Listening

Write the following questions on the board for students to find the answers to as they listen and/or read Part 2:

- 1 What does Hattie receive at breakfast time?
- 2 Who is Etienne de Sousa?
- 3 What does Hattie think about Etienne?
- 4 What piece of clothing is Hattie wearing at breakfast time that Poirot thinks looks a little odd?
- 5 What does Hattie say she's going to do before the fete and why?
- 6 What is Hattie meant to be doing at the fete?

After reading

4 Comprehension

Check students' answers to the questions in activity 3. Then, randomly, hand out the papers on which students made their predictions about who would be the murder victim in activity 2. Ask students to open the papers they have been given and read whose prediction they have and who they predicted would be murdered. Congratulate all those who were correct.

5 Playing detective

Draw the following table on the board:

Victim's name	
Description of the victim	
Approximate time of death	
Method of death	
Place body found	
Murder weapon	

Say *The police need the facts about the murder. In pairs, fill in as much information as you can from memory and then look back through Part 2 of the story to find anything you are missing.*

Put pairs together to compare their profiles and to correct or to add any additional information.

6 Comprehension

Read the following statements and ask students to say if they are true or false. Ask them to correct the false ones. You could play this in teams, giving teams alternate statements.

- 1 Miss Brewis does not believe that Lady Stubbs is childlike and stupid.
- 2 Poirot sees Lady Stubbs go for a walk through the trees towards the river.
- 3 Poirot has a long conversation with Sir George Stubbs on the way to the Lodge.
- 4 Mrs Folliat knew Hattie before she married Sir George.
- 5 Mrs Folliat says that she lost all her family in the war.
- 6 Mrs Folliat didn't want Hattie to marry Sir George.
- 7 The head gardener at Nasse House used to be Mr Tucker.
- 8 Most of the people on the estate are new.
- 9 Mrs Folliat thinks it is a lovely world.
- 10 The ferryman remembers Mrs Folliat and her husband, the squire, living in Nasse House.
- 11 Mrs Folliat had a lot of trouble with her younger son.
- 12 The day the Stubbs arrived at Nasse House was a perfect summer's day.
- 13 The folly was built where a tree came down in the storm.
- 14 It's the perfect place for a folly.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 3 (Chapters 7–10)

Before reading

1 Language

On page 50, Sir George tells Inspector Bland that:

'Etienne de Sousa was the black sheep of the family'

and that Hattie said:

'he kills people'.

Ask students to research the phrase *'the black sheep'*. They could use an encyclopaedia, a library, the internet and the Cultural notes on page 82 at the back of the book.

2 Playing detective

Say *Imagine you are the police. Think about all the information you know about Etienne de Sousa.* Pool the information and then ask students to assess whether he had motive and opportunity. Ask *What else would you like to know about Etienne de Sousa?* Clarify the meaning of the noun *suspect*. You could have a hands up vote as to who thinks Etienne de Sousa is the main suspect in the case and who is not convinced.

3 Playing detective

Using the map of Nasse House and some cut up strips of sticky notes, ask students to write the main characters' names on strips and to stick them onto the map to show where they were or where they were last seen at the fete. They should go back through Part 2 to help them do this. Remind them that the fete is taking place on the lawn. Ask *Are there any characters that you don't know where they were?*

After reading

4 Language

Write the following tag question from page 38 on the board:

She was a local girl, wasn't she?

Explain that Inspector Bland is asking Sir George about the victim. Elicit the name of the victim (Marlene Tucker) and a description of her (she's a 14 year old Girl Guide). Draw students' attention to the question type. Elicit or explain that this is a tag question. Ask *Is Inspector Bland trying to find out information he does not know or checking information he thinks he already knows?* (He is using a tag question to check or confirm information he thinks he already knows.) Elicit the verb in the question (to be: was). Elicit how many times the verb is repeated (twice). Elicit that in one part of the sentence it is in the positive form and in the other it is in the negative.

Write the following gapped tag questions on the board for students to complete:

- 1 Etienne de Sousa is Lady Stubbs' cousin, _____ he?
- 2 Lady Stubbs has disappeared, _____ she?
- 3 Inspector Bland doesn't know who the murderer is, _____ he?

Then ask students to make their own tag questions using some of the following stems.

- 4 Hercule Poirot...
- 5 Ariadne Oliver...
- 6 Sir George Stubbs...
- 7 Mrs Tucker...
- 8 Miss Brewis...

Ask for some sample tag questions and model answering them. Elicit the grammar rule for the answers (the same verb is used as in the question). Encourage students to ask and answer their tag questions in pairs to match what they know from the story.

5 Playing detective

Ask students *Who is missing?* (Lady Hattie Stubbs).

Draw the following missing person table on the board:

Name of missing person	
Where and when she was last seen	
What she was wearing	
Possible reasons for disappearing	1. 2.

Say *The police need the facts about the missing person. In pairs, fill in as much information as you can from memory and then look back through Part 3 of the story to find anything you are missing.*

Put pairs together to compare their profiles and to correct or to add any additional information.

6 Writing

Say *Choose one of the possible reasons for Lady Stubb's disappearance from the missing person table. Write a paragraph explaining why you think this is correct.* Suggest a suitable word length.

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 4 (Chapters 11–14)

Before reading

1 Speaking

Ask students to recap the main events in the case so far. You could move around the class, so that each student says one point that they think is the most important in the case, without repeating what another student has said (if you have a very small class you may want to repeat this two or three times).

Ask students to name all the characters in the story – elicit key points about each one.

2 Guess

Tell students that in Chapter 12, page 64, Hercule Poirot says:

'Madame, you know who killed Marlene Tucker, and you know why. You also know who killed Hattie Stubbs, and where her body lies now.'

Ask students if they can guess who Poirot is talking to, ask them to justify their guesses but do not confirm or reject any opinions.

3 Listening

Write the following on the board:

The fortune-telling tent The summerhouse The folly

Explain that in Part 4, all these places are important in solving the crime. As they listen, students should make a note of what happened in each one and how it was important in the story.

After reading

4 Speaking

Ask students to discuss in small groups *Were you surprised to learn that Lady Stubbs was not the real Hattie and that Sir George was really Mrs Folliat's younger son? Did you think that he and his wife were the murderers?* Check comprehension by asking *Who did Sir George kill?* (his wife – Hattie) *Who did Lady Stubbs kill?* (Marlene Tucker). Ask groups to discuss how this compared to their own ideas of who the murderer was and what had happened to Lady Stubbs.

5 Comprehension

Check answers to activities 2 and 3 to check students' understanding of the plot.

6 Writing

Mrs Folliat says to Poirot:

'I know... I've always known... Even as a child he frightened me... He was very cruel and never sorry about the bad things he did. But he was my son and I loved him. I should have gone to the police after Hattie's death... But he was my son. How could I tell them?'

Ask students *Do you blame Mrs Folliat in any way for the murders at Nasse House? What did she know? When did she know it? What did she do or not do? Why?*

Write key points on the board as a reference for writing. Be prepared to offer an alternative view of Mrs Folliat if the class as a whole perceive her to be either to blame or not to blame. Once students have fully discussed the role she played in the story, ask them to each write an argument giving their point of view. Display the following starter sentence for them to use:

I blame/don't blame Mrs Folliat because...

You may like to write some useful words and phrases on the board:

Therefore So However In conclusion But And
Because On the one hand... on the other hand
It seems obvious that... If we imagine how it feels to...
She should've/could've... It might not have happened...
I'm sure... I understand/I don't understand...

You could put students in groups of five or six and ask them to read their arguments to each other. Give them time to discuss their points of view. Then have a whole class 'hands-up' vote to see if the majority think Mrs Folliat is to blame or is not to blame.

ANSWER KEY (CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES)

Part 1 (Chapters 1–3)

1 Research

See cultural note on page 81 and glossary on page 84.

2 Language

- **Drive** – a private road which goes from the main road to a person's front door
- **Quay** – a place next to the sea or a river where boats can be tied
- **Bush** – a plant which is like a very small tree
- **Lawn** – an area of grass that is kept cut short in a garden or park
- **Terrace** – an area of flat stone next to a building where people can sit; terraces usually have good views
- **Fortune-teller** – a person who tells you what they think will happen to you in the future after looking at something such as the lines on your hands
- **Summerhouse** – a small building in a garden which has seats so that people can sit there in the summer
- **Folly** – a small building built as a decoration in a large park or garden

3 Comprehension

Mrs Oliver	...is a writer of detective novels.
Sir George Stubbs	...owns Nasse House.
Hattie Stubbs	...is married to Sir George and is very beautiful and very like a child.
Michael Weyman	...is an architect who Sir George has hired to design a tennis pavilion and to repair the folly.
Miss Brewis	...is Sir George's efficient secretary.
Sally Legge	...is married to a scientist and lives in a cottage by the river.
Mrs Masterton	...is the wife of the local Member of Parliament.
Jim Warburton	...is the Masterton's political agent.
Mrs Folliat	...used to own Nasse House and now lives in the lodge.
Marlene Tucker	...is a young Girl Guide who is going to pretend to be the dead body in the Murder Hunt.

4 Language

Answers will vary.

Part 2 (Chapters 4–6)

1 Speaking

Nasse House – the large house owned by Sir George and Hattie Stubbs where Mrs Oliver is planning a Murder Hunt for the fete.

Mrs Oliver – the famous detective novel writer who has been asked to devise a Murder Hunt at Nasse House fete. She is Poirot's friend and she has asked him to come to Nasse House as she feels something is wrong and worries that a real murder may happen.

The boathouse – the place where the dead body will be found in the Murder Hunt.

Marlene Tucker – the Girl Guide who is playing the dead body/victim in the Murder Hunt.

Hercule Poirot – Mrs Oliver's friend, a detective who solves crimes.

Hoodown Park – the youth hostel next to Nasse House.

2 Guess

Answers will vary.

Mrs Oliver is organizing a Murder Hunt for the fete. She has asked Hercule Poirot to come to Nasse House as she believes that a real murder is going to happen.

3 Listening

- 1 a letter
- 2 Hattie's cousin
- 3 She doesn't like him. She is afraid of him because he does bad things.
- 4 a large pale-pink hat
- 5 Have a lie down because she has a headache.
- 6 Judging the children's fancy dress contest.

4 Comprehension

Answers will vary.

5 Playing detective

Victim's name	Marlene Tucker
Description of the victim	14, a local Girl Guide
Approximate time of death	2.30 pm – 4.30 pm
Method of death	Strangled
Place body found	The boathouse
Murder weapon	A cord

6 Comprehension

- 1 T
- 2 T
- 3 F – He has a long conversation with Mrs Folliat.
- 4 T
- 5 T
- 6 F – She persuaded her to marry him.
- 7 F – He was called Mr Merdell.
- 8 T
- 9 F – She thinks it's a very wicked world.
- 10 T
- 11 T
- 12 F – There was a bad storm.
- 13 T
- 14 F – It's hidden among the trees.

Part 3 (Chapters 7–10)

1 Language

See cultural note on page 82.

2 Playing detective

Answers will vary.

Students should mention that they know he is Hattie's cousin; that he and Hattie haven't seen each other for a long time; that Hattie says he's the black sheep of the family and does bad things; that he has a yacht; that he arrived during the fete; that he must have walked up from the quay to the lawn.

3 Playing detective

Students should place Amy Folliat on the lawn, Marlene Tucker in the boathouse, Jim Warburton on the lawn, the Dutch girl on the lawn near the house, Sir George on the lawn, Etienne de Sousa on the path coming up from the quay, Miss Brewis on the lawn, Mrs Oliver at the tennis court, Sally Legge in the fortune-telling tent – they should not be able to place either Hattie Stubbs or Elsa the Italian backpacker anywhere.

4 Language

- 1 isn't
- 2 hasn't
- 3 does

Sample answers:

- 4 Hercule Poirot will find the murderer, won't he?
- 5 Ariadne Oliver was right that someone would get killed, wasn't she?
- 6 Sir George Stubbs had not met Etienne de Sousa before, had he?
- 7 Mrs Tucker doesn't know why anyone would want to kill Marlene, does she?
- 8 Miss Brewis is very efficient, isn't she?

Dead Man's Folly

Agatha Christie

ANSWER KEY (CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES)

5 Playing detective

Name of missing person	Lady Hattie Stubbs
Where and when she was last seen	On the lawn at about four o'clock
What she was wearing	A pink silk dress, a large hat and shoes with very high heels
Possible reasons for disappearing	1. To avoid her cousin, Etienne de Sousa. 2. Because she has also been murdered.

6 Writing

Answers will vary.

Part 4 (Chapters 11–14)

1 Speaking

Answers will vary.

2 Guess

Answers will vary.

3 Listening

The fortune-telling tent – Hattie went through the fortune-telling tent when Sally Legge was in the tea tent.

The summerhouse – This is where Hattie as Elsa had placed her rucksack with Elsa's clothes in it earlier. She collected it and went to the boathouse. She killed Marlene, then changed into Elsa's clothes and put Hattie's clothes in the rucksack, then, as Elsa joined her Dutch friend at the fete and they left together.

The folly – This is where the real Hattie Stubbs was buried the night after she and Sir George arrived at Nasse House.

4 Speaking

Answers will vary.

5 Comprehension

In the quote in activity 2, Poirot is talking to Amy Folliat. Students should understand that Poirot was correct and that Mrs Folliat did know that her son and his wife had killed both the real Hattie and Marlene Tucker (and Old Merdell).

See answer key for activity 3.

6 Writing

Answers will vary.