

Peril at End House

Agatha Christie

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Part 1 (Chapters 1–6)

1 Comprehension

In the first two chapters who describes whom as ...?

(Remember Hastings is the narrator.)

- 1 a good friend
- 2 so modern
- 3 Is he ... 'a "good fellow" – an honest, respectable man?'
- 4 the most tired person I had ever met
- 5 such a liar
- 6 a fair man in a soft voice
- 7 as obstinate as the devil
- 8 modest

2 Grammar

Complete the endings of the (embarrass) adjectives in these two sentences from the story.

- 1 'Monsieur Poirot is – er – was – a great detective,' I explained, slightly embarrass _____.
- 2 'You mustn't ask him embarrass _____ questions, Bert,' said Mrs Croft.

Now insert the appropriate adjective (using the root word in brackets) into these sentences.

- a He was _____ when she didn't come to the party. (disappoint)
- b The fireworks were _____. (amaze)
- c He found it _____ that he hadn't told him he would be late. (surprise)
- d He was _____ about the prospect of a new school. (excite)
- e It was the most _____ film he had ever seen. (bore)
- f The instructions for getting to the hotel were _____ and they soon lost their way. (confuse)
- g He was _____ after the long journey and just wanted to sleep. (tire)
- h Everyone was _____ by his father's story. (amuse)

3 Comprehension

In which chapters from Part 1 do these events occur? There are two for each chapter.

Nick receives a letter from her cousin Maggie.

Poirot and Hastings visit Nick's car mechanic.

Poirot examines the cliff walk where the rock nearly hit Nick.

Hastings and Poirot talk about the missing airman Michael Seton.

Poirot discovers that Charles does not have an alibi for Saturday afternoon.

Hastings tells Poirot he thinks Challenger is not a murderer.

Nick discovers her pistol is missing.

Poirot meets the Crofts.

Poirot arranges to visit Nick at End House.

Poirot finds a bullet.

Freddie learns Poirot's identity.

We hear about Nick's will.

Chapter 1 1. 2.	Chapter 2 1. 2.
Chapter 3 1. 2.	Chapter 4 1. 2.
Chapter 5 1. 2.	Chapter 6 1. 2.

4 Language

Do you remember this exchange between Poirot and Nick? Who is the 'dog' they are talking about?

'... I should not have to praise myself.' (Poirot)

'One should not keep a dog and have to bark oneself,' agreed Nick.

Can you match these dog-related idioms with their meanings?

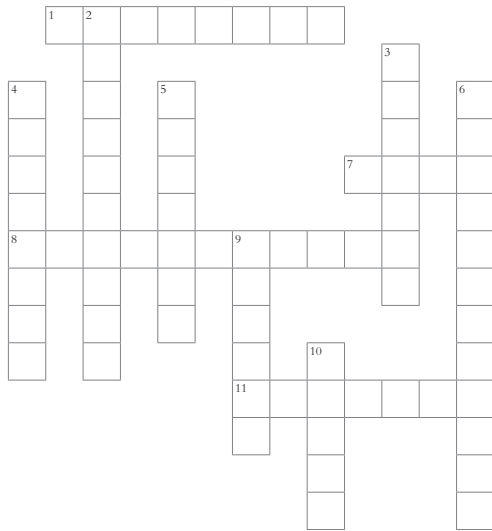
1 Like a dog with a bone	a you'll be successful at something and at some point (eventually)
2 Every dog has its day	b the least important aspect of something is having the most influence
3 If you lie down with dogs, you will get up with fleas	c to leave something (like a problem or difficult situation) alone
4 Let sleeping dogs lie	d to be tenacious
5 The tail is wagging the dog	e it is difficult to change habits and behaviour
6 You cannot teach an old dog new tricks	f if you spend time with bad people, you will become bad yourself

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Part 2 (Chapters 7–11)

1 Vocabulary

Complete this crossword with keywords from the Glossary of Part 2.



Across

- 1 the feeling of anger when someone has taken something away from you
- 7 improvement, increase or benefit obtained from an action
- 8 a small private hospital
- 11 to receive something from someone who has died

Down

- 2 to make something more important than it really is
- 3 when two people have agreed to marry each other
- 4 the feeling of being brave or confident
- 5 to make someone believe something that is not true
- 6 something that shows something is definitely true
- 9 informal conversation about other people
- 10 a large piece of woollen cloth worn over a woman's shoulders

2 Grammar

Put the words for these descriptions in the correct order.

- 1**
- ① woman
 - ② young
 - ③ nice
 - ④ American

- 2**
- ① oak
 - ② round
 - ③ large
 - ④ table

- 3**
- ① Indian
 - ② antique
 - ③ rug
 - ④ magnificent

- 4**
- ① ancient
 - ② Chinese
 - ③ blue
 - ④ book

- 5**
- ① dog
 - ② ugly
 - ③ fat
 - ④ black

- 6**
- ① detective
 - ② elderly
 - ③ small
 - ④ Belgian

3 Comprehension

Which characters does Poirot deduce have the following motives?

Money	Love	Jealousy	Fear

4 Language

Collocations. Match the compound phrases on the left from Part 2 with **as many** of the nouns on the right as you can. Which compound phrase is the odd one out and why?

e.g. *old-fashioned ideas, old-fashioned table, old-fashioned dress*

old-fashioned	movement
would-be	table
well-worn	ideas
pale-blue	eyes
woman-hater	killer
cat-like	party
well-arranged	dress

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Part 3 (Chapters 12–17)

1 Comprehension

Most of these facts are incorrect. Which ones are true and which are false? Correct the ones which are false.

- 1 Ellen tells Poirot about a sliding panel in the library.
- 2 Nick says Charles encouraged her to write a will.
- 3 Poirot finds evidence that Freddie uses drugs.
- 4 In his will Michael Seton leaves everything to his mother.
- 5 Poirot finds Seton's love letters in Nick's underwear drawer.
- 6 Poirot and Hastings find Nick's will in the writing table.
- 7 The Crofts have a criminal record, but only in Australia.
- 8 Challenger sent the chocolates to Nick.

2 Playing detective

In Chapter 12 Poirot suspects Charles and Freddie, but which one does he think ...?

	Freddie Rice	Charles Vyse
is more likely to know of the engagement		
is physically stronger		
is less likely to be impulsive		
may know more about cars than you might assume		
may have believed Nick didn't have a will		
could have used a lever to push the rock down the hill		

3 Language

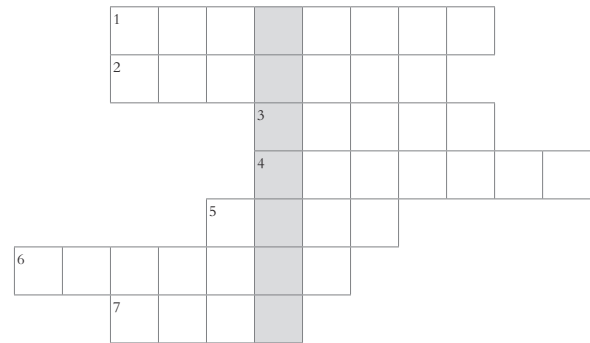
Poirot describes Maggie's death as '*an unnecessary tragedy, so useless – so purposeless*'. He also remarks that '*The murderer has been successful*'.

-less and *-ful* are suffixes which turn a noun into an adjective. *-less* gives it a negative meaning (the murder had no purpose), and *-ful* gives it a positive meaning (the murderer had success). Here are some more nouns that can be altered in at least one way. Be careful, not all of them can be changed.

	-ful	-less
faith		
peace		
power		
sleep		
thought		
waste		
end		
harm		
beauty		
home		

4 Vocabulary

Using clues 1–7, fill in the grid below to find the keyword clue to something in Part 4 of the book.



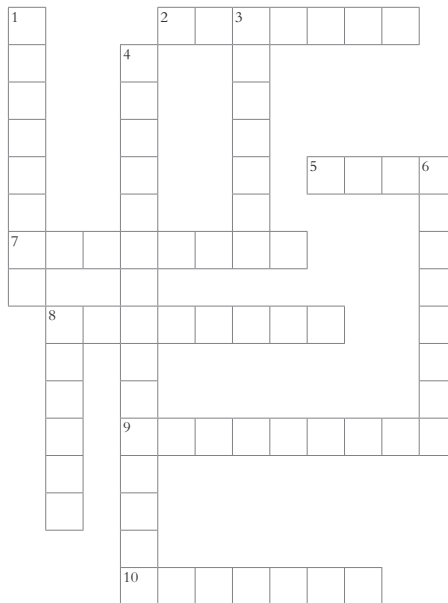
- 1 someone who can fix cars
- 2 something that is real and exactly what it appears to be
- 3 serious or strict
- 4 money or property which you legally leave to someone when you die
- 5 when someone is dead we might refer to them as 'the _____ Mr Smith'
- 6 the illegal drug that nearly killed Nick
- 7 a woman or girl who works in the kitchen is called the *kitchen* _____

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Part 4 (Chapters 18–22)

1 Vocabulary

Test your knowledge of the story by completing this crossword.



Across

- 2 '_____ before dawn' means things always appear at their worst before they get better.
- 5 When Hastings sees Poirot opening Nick's letters he says he's not 'playing the _____'.
- 7 The Majestic Hotel in the story is based on the _____ Hotel in Torquay.
- 8 A _____ is a large loan from a bank to buy a house.
- 9 Challenger's rank in the navy is _____.
- 10 Poirot suspects Nick will commit _____ in prison.

Down

- 1 An alcoholic drink which is mentioned four times in the story.
- 3 The Cornish coast is known as the English _____.
- 4 How does Poirot refer to his brain?
- 6 The person who makes sure the instructions in a will are obeyed is called an _____.
- 8 The real identity of Mrs Croft is Milly _____.

2 Comprehension

Order these events 1-11. One event is not completely correct, can you correct it?

- ___ Nick leaves the firework display with Magdala and shoots her.
- ___ Michael Seton's plane goes missing.

- ___ Nick puts the pistol in Freddie's coat pocket.
- ___ Magdala Buckley becomes engaged to Michael Seton.
- ___ Michael Seton is reported dead.
- ___ Nick hides the gun in the secret panel.
- ___ Nick arranges for Magdala to stay.
- ___ Michael Seton makes a will leaving everything to his mother.
- ___ Nick experiences her 'accidents'.
- 1 Nick meets Michael Seton at Le Touquet.
- ___ Nick steals Michael's love letters to Magdala.

3 Grammar

Fill the gaps in this part of the story with these verbs in the past tense.

forge	foil	need	persuade
intend	start	announce	die

The Story of the Crofts

Nick (1) _____ a serious operation so the Crofts (2) _____ her to make a will, just in case. They said they would post it but instead they (3) _____ a different will, with themselves as the beneficiaries. They (4) _____ to produce the will if Nick (5) _____ but the operation was successful and their plan was (6) _____. However, when Nick started to have 'accidents' the Crofts became hopeful again and when Nick's 'fake' death was (7) _____ they (8) _____ their will to Vyse. They didn't know that Nick didn't really have any money.

4 Playing detective

Before Nick was arrested, there were suspicious facts pointing to other characters. Can you identify the person in each case?

- 1 _____ was not at all surprised when she heard of the murder.
- 2 _____ had access to cocaine which almost killed Nick.
- 3 _____ was not in his office when Nick was shot.
- 4 _____ lied about being in Tavistock.
- 5 _____ offered to pay much more for a painting than it was worth.

ANSWER KEY (STUDENT ACTIVITIES)

Part 1 (Chapters 1–6)

1 Comprehension

- Poirot describes Hastings as a 'good friend' (p. 2)
- Poirot describes Nick as 'so modern.' (p. 3)
- Poirot asks Hastings if he thinks Challenger is a 'good fellow' (p. 4)
- Hastings the narrator describes Freddie as the 'most tired person I had ever met' (p. 8)
- Freddie describes Nick as 'such a liar' (p. 8).
- Hastings describes Jim as a 'fair man in a soft voice' (p. 8)
- Poirot describes Nick as 'as obstinate as the devil' (p. 12).
- Poirot describes himself as 'modest' (p. 1)

2 Grammar

- embarrassed
- embarrassing
- a disappointed
- b amazing
- c surprising
- d excited
- e boring
- f confusing
- g tired
- h amused

3 Comprehension

Chapter 1 1. Hastings and Poirot talk about the missing airman Michael Seton. 2. Poirot finds a bullet.	Chapter 2 1. Poirot arranges to visit Nick at End House. 2. Nick discovers her pistol is missing.
Chapter 3 1. We hear about Nick's will. 2. Poirot examines the cliff walk where the rock nearly hit Nick.	Chapter 4 1. Hastings tells Poirot he thinks Challenger is not a murderer. 2. Poirot and Hastings visit Nick's car mechanic.
Chapter 5 1. Freddie learns Poirot's identity. 2. Poirot meets the Crofts.	Chapter 6 1. Poirot discovers that Charles does not have an alibi for Saturday afternoon. 2. Nick receives a letter from her cousin Maggie.

4 Language

The 'dog' refers to Hastings.

- d
- a
- f
- c
- b
- e

Part 2 (Chapters 7–11)

1 Vocabulary

Across

- jealousy
- gain
- nursing home
- inherit

Down

- exaggerate
- engaged
- boldness
- deceive
- confirmation
- gossip
- shawl

2 Grammar

- a nice young American woman
- a large round oak table
- a magnificent antique Indian rug
- an ancient blue Chinese book
- an ugly fat black dog
- a small elderly Belgian detective

3 Comprehension

- Money – Charles and Freddie
Love – Charles and Challenger
Jealousy – Freddie
Fear – nobody known

4 Language

would-be killer
well-worn dress, well-worn table
pale-blue eyes, pale-blue dress
woman-hater (This is the odd one out. It is a noun and not an adjective like the others.)
cat-like movement, cat-like eyes
well-arranged ideas well-arranged party

Part 3 (Chapters 12–17)

1 Comprehension

- Ellen tells Poirot about a sliding panel but she doesn't know where.
- Nick says Mr Croft encouraged her to write a will.
- TRUE
- In his will Michael Seton leaves everything to Magdala.
- TRUE
- Poirot and Hastings can't find Nick's will.
- The Crofts don't have any criminal record, and are unknown in Australia.
- Freddie and Jim sent the chocolates to Nick.

2 Playing detective

	Freddie Rice	Charles Vyse
is more likely to know of the engagement	✓	
is physically stronger		✓
is less likely to be impulsive		✓
may know more about cars than you might assume	✓	
may have believed Nick didn't have a will	✓	
could have used a lever to push the rock down the hill		✓

3 Language

	-ful	-less
faith	faithful	faithless
peace	peaceful	-----
power	powerful	powerless
sleep	-----	sleepless
thought	thoughtful	thoughtless
waste	wasteful	-----
end	-----	endless
harm	harmful	harmless
beauty	beautiful	-----
home	-----	homeless

4 Vocabulary

- MECHANIC
 - GENUINE
 - STERN
 - BEQUEST
 - LATE
 - COCAINE
 - MAID
- KEYWORD: HUSBAND

Part 4 (Chapters 18–22)

1 Vocabulary

Across

- darkest
- game
- Imperial
- mortgage
- commander
- suicide

Down

- cocktail
- Riviera
- little grey cells
- executor
- Merton

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2 Comprehension

- 1 Nick meets Michael Seton at Le Touquet.
- 2 Magdala Buckley becomes engaged to Michael Seton.
- 3 Michael Seton makes a will leaving everything to his mother Magdala.
- 4 Michael Seton's plane goes missing.
- 5 Nick arranges for Magdala to stay.
- 6 Nick experiences her 'accidents'.
- 7 Michael Seton is reported dead.
- 8 Nick steals Michael's love letters to Magdala.
- 9 Nick leaves the firework display with Magdala and shoots her.
- 10 Nick hides the gun in the secret panel.
- 11 Nick puts the pistol in Freddie's coat pocket.

3 Grammar

- 1 needed
- 2 persuaded
- 3 forged
- 4 intended
- 5 died
- 6 foiled
- 7 announced
- 8 posted

4 Playing detective

- 1 Ellen
- 2 Challenger
- 3 Vyse
- 4 Freddie
- 5 Jim