

SUMMARIES

Part 1: Chapters 1–5

Miss Marple, as a young student, was friends with two American sisters, Carrie Louise and Ruth. Now, many years later, she is with Ruth in London. Ruth explains that she is worried about Carrie Louise, who lives with her third husband, Lewis Serrocold, in Stonygates which is a centre for juvenile delinquents. Ruth thinks her sister is surrounded by 'cranks' and feels something is wrong. Miss Marple agrees to go and stay with Carrie Louise so she can investigate.

Edgar Lawson, Lewis's assistant, is annoyed to find that Gina, Carrie Louise's granddaughter, has also gone to meet Miss Marple at the station. Miss Marple is happy to see Carrie Louise again after twenty years. During tea Miss Marple meets Mildred, Carrie Louise's daughter, and Gina's husband Walter. Lewis enthusiastically tells her about some juveniles' success in accountancy. Later, there is tension at dinner as Edgar is agitated. Mildred says he's horrible and Walter calls him crazy.

The following day Miss Marple meets other people at Stonygates. Edgar tells her he is Winston Churchill's son; Walter feels he's trapped at Stonygates and Mildred disapproves of her mother's support for Lewis. Miss Marple is concerned Edgar may be mad but Dr Maverick laughs and tells her everyone is mad.

Part 2: Chapters 6–11

Carrie Louise explains that her arthritis is getting much worse. Christian Gulbrandsen, Carrie Louise's first husband's son and trustee at Stonygates, visits to discuss business with Lewis. Christian is concerned about Carrie Louise's health, especially her heart.

Edgar is agitated again and tells Miss Marple his father has sent people to spy on him. Miss Marple overhears some of the conversation Lewis has with Christian – they agree to keep something from Carrie Louise, but Miss Marple doesn't know what. That evening, most people at Stonygates listen to Stephen, Carrie Louise's stepson, playing the piano. Just as Lewis is telling Carrie Louise she shouldn't take her medicine Edgar arrives and accuses Lewis of being both his enemy and his father, and of spying on him. They have a hysterical argument locked in Lewis's study. A gun shot is heard in the park followed by two gun shots coming from the study.

Jolly, Carrie Louise's companion, calls the police because she finds Christian shot dead at his typewriter. Just at this moment, Stephen's brother Alex arrives. Later, Inspector Curry remarks that the letter Christian was writing has disappeared. Lewis says Christian was concerned about someone poisoning Carrie Louise and has the missing letter which confirms this. Traces of arsenic have been found in Carrie Louise's medicine. Lewis and Miss Marple realize that everyone in the house has a financial motive to poison Carrie Louise.

Part 3: Chapters 12–16

Miss Marple suspects both Walter and Alex for the murder and thinks Lewis's argument with Edgar could have been planned to act as a distraction. Alex defends himself by saying he was studying the effects of the fog for use in his theatre productions. He heard shots and running footsteps in the garden.

Edgar is embarrassed and apologizes for his behaviour. Inspector Curry carries out a reconstruction of the scene in the hall and realizes people could have left the hall without being seen. Carrie Louise receives a box of chocolates and a card from Alex, but Alex says he didn't send them. The chocolates are found to be poisoned. Later, Gina and Ernie, one of the delinquents, discuss this as they prepare the next theatrical production.

Inspector Curry times his Sergeant running across Stonygates's garden, from the drive, to see if Alex could have had the time to shoot Eric. This confirms Alex could have done it.

Part 4: Chapters 17–23

Carrie Louise hears that someone is poisoning her. Alex and Miss Marple think the crime is similar to a theatrical production. Lewis then announces that Ernie is missing when suddenly Mr Baumgarten, the occupational therapist, says Alex and Ernie have been found at the theatre with their heads crushed.

Although shocked, Carrie Louise explains to Miss Marple that Lewis dreams of buying some islands to have a self-supporting cooperative for the juveniles. Miss Marple notices some strange nail scissors Alex had given Carrie Louise; he had also taken away her nail clippings.

Miss Marple explains to Inspector Curry how she has solved the mystery; linking everything to theatrical illusion. Lewis is the murderer; he didn't argue with Edgar. Edgar faked Lewis's voice so everyone thought Lewis was in the study, but Lewis ran along the terrace and shot Christian. There was no arsenic found in the nail clippings, Carrie Louise wasn't being poisoned. Lewis just invented this story to explain Christian's visit to Stonygates. In fact, Christian had found out Lewis was embezzling trust funds.

Gina writes to Ruth and explains how Edgar drowned in the lake when trying to escape and Lewis drowned trying to save him. Carrie Louise confirms that Edgar was in fact Lewis's son.

They Do It With Mirrors

Agatha Christie

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 1 (Chapters 1–5)

Before reading

1 Research

Write 'Philanthropy' on the board, and elicit the meaning from students or have them check in a dictionary. Ask them to find out the names of some famous philanthropists (for example Bill Gates) and some examples of philanthropic/charitable causes.

Tell students: *Imagine you are a multi-millionaire and you have decided to donate a large sum of money. Which cause would get your support and why?* Each student presents his cause to the rest of the class and then the class must decide upon only one cause. Tell the students they are going to read a book by Agatha Christie where the main characters are philanthropists. The students can get further information by reading page 104 of the Cultural notes.

2 Listening

Play part of Chapter 1, page 2, from 'Carrie Louise,' said Ruth' to '...charitable organizations.'

Explain that Ruth Van Rydock is speaking about her sister Carrie Louise. Both sisters are Miss Marple's friends.

Have the students listen and take notes. After listening they should answer these questions:

- 1 How does Ruth describe her sister?
- 2 According to Ruth, what type of men has her sister always married?
- 3 How old was Carrie Louise when she married her first husband and how old was her husband?
- 4 Why did Carrie Louise marry her first husband?
- 5 What did Gulbrandsen do with his fortune?

After reading

3 Comprehension

Write the following names on the board:

Ruth	Gina	Lewis	Edgar	Mildred	Warren	Jolly
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Explain to the students that you will read out brief descriptions of these characters and they must write down the correct name after each description.

- 1 She's a middle-aged widow and lives at Stonygates. She's said to be plain and slightly boring. (Mildred)
- 2 Her appearance is important to her. She buys expensive makeup and her hair is perfectly styled. She has been married three times. (Ruth)
- 3 He speaks in a loud voice like an actor. Many people think he's mad. He thinks he's being followed. (Edgar)
- 4 She's rich, beautiful and has artistic talent. (Gina)
- 5 He's a short man but with a strong personality. He's enthusiastic about helping young people in trouble. (Lewis)

6 She's a nurse, secretary, housekeeper and faithful friend. (Jolly)

7 He's a very good-looking young man who thinks everyone is crazy at Stonygates. He feels trapped. (Warren)

Ask the students to write similar descriptions for Carrie Louise and Miss Marple.

4 Comprehension

Students look at the plan of Stonygates on page 103 for 1 minute, then close their books. From memory have them say whether the sentences below are true or false, and correct the sentences that are false.

- 1 ___ There's a terrace all around the house.
- 2 ___ There's a piano in the library.
- 3 ___ There's a staircase between the study and the dining room.
- 4 ___ There's a shower in the guest room.
- 5 ___ The kitchen is next to the library.
- 6 ___ There are 4 doors in the Great Hall.

5 Writing

Tell students that Carrie Louise has decided to sell Stonygates and she asks you, the estate agent, to write a description of the house for the advertisement. Students can refer to pages 14, 15 and 21.

6 Language

Tell the students that the following words are important in the story. In groups have them write a definition for each word. They can refer to the Glossary at the end of the book.

Word	Meaning
juvenile	
delinquent	
trustee	
psychiatrist	
psychologist	
a cause	
arthritis	

7 Playing detective

Miss Marple observes everyone and everything and chats to different people. Ask students:

What observations do you think she's made about these characters – Edgar, Lewis and Mildred? Do you think Miss Marple has noticed anything unusual about Carrie Louise yet?

They Do It With Mirrors

Agatha Christie

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 2 (Chapters 6–11)

Before reading

1 Speaking

Ask students: *Why did Ruth Van Rydock ask Miss Marple to go to Stonygates?*

Write this headline on the board or a large piece of paper: *'Shootings at Stonygates! Police begin inquiries.'*

In small groups ask students to imagine what happens in Part 2 of the book using this headline as a clue. Each group then presents its predictions to the rest of the class.

2 Playing detective

Tell students there will be a murder in Part 2, but don't tell them who will be murdered.

Have them guess who said the following and who they said it about.

Comment	...said by...	...said about...
'She would do anything for me. I really believe XXX would murder for me.'		
'I am particularly anxious that no harm and no unhappiness should come to that dear lady.'		
'He was the only person I trusted and now to find out all the time he's my enemy.'		
'You hate me – you want to get rid of me!'		
'My brother XXX has been shot dead!'		
'XXX was being slowly and cold-bloodedly poisoned.'		

Ask students: *Using these clues, can you guess anything about the murder?* Get students to read Part 2 and see if their predictions and guesses in exercises 1 and 2 are correct.

After reading

3 Comprehension

Read these sentences out to the class. Tell students to note whether they are true or false. Get them to correct the false ones.

- 1 ___ Edgar shoots and injures Lewis.
- 2 ___ Christian is worried about Carrie Louise's health.
- 3 ___ Miss Marple overhears Lewis and Christian discussing how to save Carrie Louise from something.
- 4 ___ Lewis insists that Carrie Louise takes her medicine.
- 5 ___ Christian Gulbrandsen is shot dead.
- 6 ___ There are over 350 juvenile delinquents in the college.

4 Language

Write these sentences on the board: *'Carrie Louise was shocked'* and *'How annoying that Lewis is away.'*

Explain to students that shocked and annoying are both adjectives. We use these adjectives to describe how someone feels about something: the '-ing adjective' describes the something and the '-ed adjective' describes the someone.

Put these adjectives from Part 2 in the spaces:

- 1 disturbed/disturbing: Something _____ happened at 4 o'clock.
- 2 frightened/frightening: The circumstances were already very _____.
- 3 worried/worrying: Both men were looking very _____.
- 4 amazed/amazing: Mr Serrocold looked _____.

Ask students to write other examples using these adjectives:

bored/boring	interested/interesting
surprised/surprising	

5 Speaking

In groups prepare questions that Inspector Curry could ask Lewis, Miss Marple, Edgar and Jolly.

Check the students' questions and tell students they will now carry out an interview using these questions. Each student chooses a role. After the interviews correct any mistakes students made.

6 Writing

When Christian Gulbrandsen was shot some of the people at Stonygates were listening to the piano, so they have an alibi. However, Lewis, Edgar, Alex and Walter were not in the Great Hall. Ask students to choose one of these characters and complete this text:

My name is and I could not have shot Christian Gulbrandsen because (give reason). I believe, however, that (give name) could have murdered Christian because he/she (give motive).

Get students to compare their ideas in the class.

They Do It With Mirrors

Agatha Christie

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 3 (Chapters 12–16)

Before reading

1 Research

Get students to work in two groups:

Group 1: find out as much vocabulary as you can connected to the **theatre**.

Group 2: see if you can find a famous **Shakespeare** quote about a **stage**.

Have students write their information on the board.

For reference, this Shakespeare quote is from the play *As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 7.

‘All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances
And one man in his time plays many parts.’

Ask students: *What do you think Shakespeare means? Do you think we are puppets with different roles, etc.? How could this relate to ‘They Do It With Mirrors’?*

Remind students that at the end of Part 2 Inspector Curry discusses stage sets with Alex. Agatha Christie uses a lot of references to the theatre in this story.

2 Speaking

In groups, ask students to say whether they agree or disagree with Miss Marple’s ideas:

- Lewis is devoted to his wife, he wouldn’t poison her.
- Juvenile delinquents get too much help; good young men deserve a good start in life too.
- It would be very convenient for everyone if Walter had killed Christian Gulbrandsen.

After reading

3 Comprehension

Have students answer these questions:

- 1 Why does Miss Marple think Christian Gulbrandsen was killed?
- 2 According to Miss Marple, did Gina stay in the Great Hall all evening?
- 3 Was Christian killed by one of the juvenile delinquents at the centre?
- 4 What did Alex hear when he was in the garden?
- 5 Why does Edgar say he lied about the true identity of his father?

4 Listening

Play Chapter 15. After listening, read out the following, telling students some are true and some are false. Ask them to correct the false sentences:

- 1 __ Carrie Louise receives a lot of letters and 3 parcels.
- 2 __ Miss Bellever sorts the letters into 3 piles.
- 3 __ It’s Carrie Louise’s birthday.
- 4 __ Miss Marple doesn’t want Carrie Louise to eat the chocolates.
- 5 __ Alex says he sent the chocolates to surprise Carrie Louise.
- 6 __ Miss Marple says they mustn’t tell Carrie Louise about the poisoning.

Ask students: *Do you think Alex sent the chocolates? If yes, why would he want to poison his stepmother? If no, who do you think sent them and why?*

5 Vocabulary

Tell students to work in groups of 3 or 4.

Cut up the following words/expressions and place them in a pile face down in front of the students. There will be one pile per group. Explain to students that they take it in turns and describe what is written on the card for the others to guess. They must not say what is written on the card.

to keep an eye on someone	a pension	convenient
bad-tempered	an alibi	car headlights
footsteps	a parcel	poison
a lying little thief	childish stuff	a trickster
a reconstruction	a theatre stage	a suspect

For writing practice, students could then choose 5 cards at random and write a sentence using each.

6 Language

Put the following phrasal verbs on the board and ask the students if they know what any of them mean. Get them to complete the table below:

make up (p. 70)	run off (p. 76)	go on (p. 65)
fit into (p. 67)	end up (p. 70)	sort into (p. 73)

Verb	Meaning	Example sentence
	1 continue, take place, happen	
	2 to escape, leave	
	3 separate into different categories	
	4 finish by	
	5 invent a story, ‘lie’	
	6 be part of	

They Do It With Mirrors

Agatha Christie

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Part 4 (Chapters 17–23)

Before reading

1 Research

Ask students which words, linked to the theatre, they can remember from parts 1–3.

On the board draw a magician (with a big hat and wand) standing next to a large rectangular box. Next to the box draw a woman and next to her draw a saw. Your aim is to elicit from students the magic trick of ‘the Lady Cut in Half.’

Play the CD, or have students read the Cultural notes on page 106 about **The trick of the Lady Cut in Half**. Ask: *Do you know how this trick is done?*

Ask students to make a list of well-known magic tricks. Ask them: *Do you know how these tricks actually work?* See if any students in the class are able to do any tricks themselves.

Discuss with the class which tricks are used in ‘*They Do It With Mirrors*’ and what the title of this story could refer to.

After reading

2 Speaking

Explain to students that Agatha Christie uses a lot of red-herrings in her stories to create suspense. These are minor suspects who are in fact not important and can cause a distraction during the investigation.

In groups have students discuss what made them suspect these characters before finding out who the actual murderer was:

Red-herring	Reason suspected
Edgar	<i>He is mad, unstable and threatened Lewis.</i>
Alex	
Warren	
Mildred	

3 Comprehension

Get the students to work in pairs. Student A reads out the following summary of the story which contains several factual mistakes. Each time Student B hears a mistake he must stop Student A reading and together they correct the mistake.

Summary

Miss Marple went to Stonygates to check up on her friend Carrie Louise. They had been students together in Venice many years before. At first, Miss Marple chatted to many people at Stonygates but she couldn’t really find out what was wrong.

Edgar Lawson seemed very unbalanced and perhaps mad and everyone was upset when he shot Lewis, Carrie Louise’s husband. A trustee of Stonygates, Christian Gulbrandsen,

told Lewis he knew that he was poisoning Carrie Louise, his wife. Carrie Louise was very ill because she ate some poisoned chocolates given to her by Alex.

Miss Marple solved the crime, but not before there were two more murders. Lewis killed Ernie and Walter because he thought they knew too much. When Inspector Curry was interviewing him about his role in Gulbrandsen’s murder, Edgar tried to escape by taking a boat across the lake. Because there was a hole in the boat Edgar fell in the water and drowned. Lewis drowned too as he was trying to escape. Carrie Louise confirmed that Edgar was really her son.

4 Comprehension

Ask students to discuss which of the following newspaper headlines correctly describe the story:

Three bodies pulled out of lake.
Murderer was embezzling charity’s funds.
Three victims shot at Stonygates!
Inspector Curry solves mystery!
Real drama at Stonygates – but no one is arrested.
250 delinquents suspected in murder case.
Philanthropist drowns trying to save his son.
Miss Marple helps police solve another mystery.

5 Speaking

Ask the students to discuss these questions:

You have just read *They Do It With Mirrors*. Think of this story and other stories you might have read by Agatha Christie. What do you learn about post-war life in Britain from reading these stories?

What is your opinion of Miss Marple? How is she different to Agatha Christie’s other crime-solver, Hercule Poirot?

The technology in this story (written in 1952) is very different to today’s technology. What differences in communication did you notice?

Who was your favourite character in the story and why?

In *They Do It With Mirrors* Agatha Christie uses a lot of allusions to the theatre. Do you think this makes the story more interesting? Why/why not?

Imagine you have only read parts 1–3 of the story; try to think of a different ending for Part 4.

Would you recommend this book to a friend?

6 Vocabulary

Put the class into 2 teams. Ask each team to prepare a vocabulary quiz using new words they have learnt from the story. They can also refer to the Glossary at the end of the book.

ANSWER KEY (CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES)

Part 1 (Chapters 1–5)

1 Research

Answers will vary.

2 Listening

- Ruth's sister is good-natured; she has a kind heart; she has ideals.
- Her sister has always married cranks – 'people with ideals'.
- Carrie Louise was 17 and Gulbrandsen over 50.
- She married him because of his philanthropic ideas.
- He used it to create many great charitable organizations.

3 Comprehension

Answers are given in the exercise.

Carrie Louise: delicate, dreamy, impressed with ideals, slim, sweet, girlish, struggles with walking

Miss Marple: white-haired, wrinkled face, innocent blue eyes, studied in Florence, not rich – gets an income from her nephew

4 Comprehension

- False. The terrace is just at the back of the house.
- False. The piano is in the Great Hall.
- True
- False. There's a bath, not a shower.
- True
- True

5 Writing

Answers will vary.

6 Language

Word	Meaning
juvenile	Youthful, young person
delinquent	A (criminal) offender
trustee	Someone who looks after money or property for another person
psychiatrist	A doctor who treats mental illness
psychologist	A person who studies how the mind works
a cause	An aim which people fight for or support, sometimes a charity
arthritis	An illness where the joints are swollen and painful and it may be difficult to walk

7 Playing detective

Answers will vary.

Part 2 (Chapters 6–11)

1 Speaking

Ruth Van Rydock asked Miss Marple to go to Stonygates to see what could be wrong with Carrie Louise.

Students' answers will vary.

2 Playing detective

Comment	...said by...	...said about...
'She would do anything for me. I really believe XXX would murder for me.'	Carrie Louise	Jolly
'I am particularly anxious that no harm and no unhappiness should come to that dear lady.'	Christian Gulbrandsen	Carrie Louise
'He was the only person I trusted and now to find out all the time he's my enemy.'	Edgar	his father
'You hate me – you want to get rid of me!'	Edgar	said to Lewis
'My brother XXX has been shot dead!'	Mildred	Christian
'XXX was being slowly and cold-bloodedly poisoned.'	Lewis	Carrie Louise

3 Comprehension

- False. He misses him.
- True
- True
- False. He stops her taking it.
- True
- False. There are 250.

4 Language

- disturbing
- frightening

- worried
- amazed

5 Speaking

Answers will vary.

6 Writing

Answers will vary.

Part 3 (Chapters 12–16)

1 Research

Answers will vary.

2 Speaking

Answers will vary.

3 Comprehension

- To prevent him from talking.
- She's not sure.
- No, they're locked up and guarded at night. The juveniles who ate with the family have an alibi.
- Shots and running footsteps.
- He says if he had had a proper father, other people would have treated him better.

4 Listening

- False. Just 1 parcel.
- True
- False. She says someone thinks it's her birthday.
- True
- False. He denies sending them.
- False. She says Carrie Louise must be warned.

5 Vocabulary

Answers will vary.

6 Language

- go on
- run off
- sort into
- end up
- make up
- fit into

Part 4 (Chapters 17–23)

1 Research

Answers will vary.

They Do It With Mirrors

Agatha Christie

ANSWER KEY (CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES)

2 Speaking

Red-herring	Reason suspected
Edgar	<i>He is mad, unstable and threatened Lewis.</i>
Alex	<i>He was in the garden at the time of the murder; he supposedly sent the chocolates.</i>
Warren	<i>He was out of the Hall at the time of the murder; he was bad-tempered and disliked.</i>
Mildred	<i>She may have left the Hall at the time of the murder; she disagreed with the work at Stonygates.</i>

Inspector Curry solves mystery! (With the help of Miss Marple)
Real drama at Stonygates – but no one is arrested. (OK)
250 delinquents suspected in murder case. (No, they were not suspected)
Philanthropist drowns trying to save his son. (OK)
Miss Marple helps police solve another mystery. (OK)

5 Speaking

Answers will vary.

6 Vocabulary

Answers will vary.

3 Comprehension

Summary

Miss Marple went to Stonygates to check up on her friend Carrie Louise. They had been students together in Venice (Florence) many years before. At first, Miss Marple chatted to many people at Stonygates but she couldn't really find out what was wrong.
Edgar Lawson seemed very unbalanced and perhaps mad and everyone (no, Carrie Louise remained calm) was upset when he shot Lewis, Carrie Louise's husband. A trustee of Stonygates, Christian Gulbrandsen, told Lewis he knew that he was poisoning Carrie Louise, his wife. (no, he had accused Lewis of embezzlement) Carrie Louise was very ill (untrue) because she ate some poisoned chocolates (she didn't eat any chocolates) given to her by Alex. (Alex denies sending the chocolates)
Miss Marple solved the crime, but not before there were two more murders. Lewis killed Ernie and Walter (Alex) because he thought they knew too much. When Inspector Curry was interviewing him about his role in Gulbrandsen's murder, Edgar tried to escape by taking a boat across the lake. Because there was a hole in the boat Edgar fell in the water and drowned. Lewis drowned too as he was trying to escape. (save Edgar)
Carrie Louise confirmed that Edgar was really her son. (Lewis's son)

4 Comprehension

Three bodies pulled out of lake. (Only 2 bodies)
Murderer was embezzling charity's funds. (OK)
Three victims shot at Stonygates! (No, only one)