

# **A Murder Is Announced Study Guide**

## **A Murder Is Announced by Agatha Christie**

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# Contents

<a href="#">A Murder Is Announced Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">chapters one and two.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">chapter three and four.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">chapters five and six.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">chapters seven and eight.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">chapters nine and ten.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">chapters eleven and twelve.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">chapters thirteen and fourteen.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">chapters fifteen and sixteen.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">chapters seventeen and eighteen.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">chapters nineteen and twenty.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">chapters twenty-one and twenty-two.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">chapters twenty-three and twenty-four.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">A Murder Is Announced.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">38</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">39</a>



# Plot Summary

A murder is announced in the newspaper Gazette in the dizzy town of Chipping Cleghorn. Someone must be putting an invitation for a game in the paper. Naturally, a murderer would not place an ad in the paper announcing their murder, right? However dangerous as it might be, it sparks the interest of the people in town. With a specific date and time announced in the paper, the neighbors arrive at the home of Miss Blacklock ("Little Paddocks"). At 6:30, the lights cut out. After gunshots ring, the people at Little Paddocks quickly realize that announcement was NOT a game. When the lights come on, Miss Blacklock has an ear grazed by a bullet, and an unknown man lays breathless on the floor with a gun next to him.

A full on investigation takes place. The detectives must consider everybody a possible suspect. Who is the man dead on the floor? Did anyone know him? Was he trying to shoot at anyone in particular? Did he die from a suicide or an accident? Did anyone have anything worth killing for? Is everybody what they seem?

We meet the citizens of Chipping Cleghorn as they receive their paper on the morning of Friday, October 29th. There's old Mrs. Swettenham and her son Edmund. Edmund writes and is the intellectual type. Colonel and Mrs. Easterbrook are an elderly couple. Mr. Easterbrook is a former military man. Mrs. Easterbrook is a sweet yet simple-minded woman. Next, we travel to the home of Miss Murgatroyd and Miss Hinchcliffe. They are two elderly widows providing each other support and company in their old age. Finally, we arrive at the home of Pastor and Mrs. Harmon.

While reading the paper, they all notice something quite remarkable: a murder announcement! The Gazette's personal ad reads: "A murder is announced and will take place on Friday, October 29th, at Little Paddocks at 6:30 p.m. Friends please accept this, the only intimation." The residents of Chipping Cleghorn generally dismiss the announcement as the invitation to a game. It could be an exciting evening full of pretend murder and fun. Nevertheless, they should go see what the announcement's about, right?

Household by household, everyone we previously met arrives at Little Paddocks before 6:30. The people residing at Little Paddock are Miss Blacklock, her old school friend Miss Dora Bunner, and her second cousin's children Julia and Patrick Simmons. The maid, Mitzi, is the paranoid refugee from the war and Phillipa is another worker. The guests all pretend to drop by for frivolous reasons and not the announcement in the paper. Mrs. Harmon is the only one to bluntly ask if the murder had occurred yet.

Everyone still considers the whole situation a joke, so when the lights cut out, nobody expects what happens next. The gunshots kill the idea of a joke or a game. The lights come back on to expose a dead body on the floor with a gun next to his body. Also, a bullet apparently grazed old Miss Blacklock's bleeding ear. Bunny recognizes the dead man as someone who previously asked for money to get back to Switzerland. This seems to be the only contact the man had had with anyone else in the group.



The case is brought to Detective Craddock. He interviews the scene and the people who were present at the time of the crime. A letter comes to Craddock from a small, old woman: Miss Marple.

Craddock realizes that Miss Blacklock must have something that the culprit, whoever it was, wanted. After more probing, Miss Blacklock explains that she will inherit a very large sum of money when her old boss's wife dies. He made Miss Blacklock the beneficiary with no one closer to name. In a pinch, he named his estranged sister's children as the next in line.

Craddock, with the help of Miss Marple, starts investigating everyone involved. The more they discover, the more dangerous the situation seems to get. With the death count growing and time running out, the truth must be discovered.



# chapters one and two

## chapters one and two Summary

The residents of Chipping Cleghorn read an announcement in the Gazette of a murder at the home of Letitia Blacklock. Curiosity leads the townspeople to the home, and they discover that the announcement was quite real. A stranger appears, the lights go out, and the stranger ends up dead with a gun next to him. Inspector Craddock takes on the case with the help of a quiet, nosy older lady named Mrs. Marple. As they dig further into the mystery, it becomes more dangerous and more curious than they ever anticipated.

In chapter one, Johnnie Butt starts the morning off with his paper route as usual. However, today, Friday, October 29th, is no ordinary news day. We meet some of the residents of the quaint town of Chipping Cleghorn: sweet, old Mrs. Swettenham and her intellectual son Edmund, Colonel Easterbrook and his adoring wife, the two old ladies Miss Hinchcliffe and Miss Murgatroyd, and Rev. Julian Harmon and his wife. They all see something quite intriguing in today's paper: "A murder is announced and will take place on Friday, October 29th, at Little Paddocks at 6:30 p.m. Friends please accept this, the only intimation." Spiking the interest of the households, the residents of Chipping Cleghorn debate whether someone placed the ad as a joke, as an invitation to one of those exciting murder mystery parties, or whether it could possibly be real. Whatever the case, the town, particularly the women, make a point to visit Little Paddocks tonight to see what the announcement is about.

In chapter two, The residents at Little Paddocks read the announcement in the paper during breakfast. The sixty-year old Miss Blacklock owns the house and lives with her childhood friend Miss Bunner ("Bunny"). Miss Blacklock houses her distant cousin's two children (Patrick and Julia Simmons), and she also has a live-in refugee maid (Mitzi) and laborer, Phillipia Haymes. Miss Blacklock at first questions if perhaps Patrick placed the ad as a joke. She continues to proclaim that it must be a joke, but Miss Bunner insists that the ad has a spiteful tone to it. Mitzi frantically puts in her resignation, frantically announces her resignation, fearing death, but Miss Blacklock convinces her to stay.

## chapters one and two Analysis

The quaint town of Chipping Cleghorn runs on a generally routine basis. The same papers are delivered to the same houses to the same people on the same mornings. However, the town gets a bit of excitement on Friday, October 29th: a murder is announced. Responses to the ad in the paper include the words "extraordinary" and "spectacular". This may seem like an odd response to such a threatening ad. Rather than fearing the ad, people in the town become excited and feel compelled to poke their noses into the situation. Well, it's the women who decide to get involved. The men



typically dismiss the ad as a joke or figure it's a murder mystery party. The women decide to bring their households to Little Paddocks. The women are clearly much more responsive and curious about the supposed murder. This gives us an idea of the atmosphere of the town. It's one of the towns where the women gossip and know too much about each other. The all too familiar routine and gossip becomes tedious, and a bit of extra spice, like a murder announcement, brings the town the bit of excitement that the women of Clipping Cleghorn desperately crave. While it seems that the levelheaded men would run things, when the women insist on visiting Little Paddocks for the excitement, the men typically come along.

When the ad reaches Little Paddock in chapter two, it appears to be a mystery to the household, too. Miss Blacklock instinctively goes to Patrick to see if he placed the ad as a joke. This tells us about Patrick's personality. He obviously has a tendency to behave mischievously. Mitzi acts paranoid about the ad and murder. She tries to leave, but Miss Blacklock convinces her to stay. Mitzi's paranoia derives from her experience as a WWII refugee. She knows not to trust anybody, even authority, and she takes the advertisement in the paper very seriously. Murder to the poor girl is extremely real, and she doesn't understand how an advertisement for murder could possibly be a joke. Miss Bunner does not seem too amused by the ad, either. She adamantly claims that there is a spiteful nature behind the ad. She even gets so worried, she calls Miss Blacklock "Lotty" rather than her usual nickname of "Letty". However, Miss Blacklock seems to have no fear. Although a murder is scheduled to happen in her home, she and everyone else stay put. The only thing the ad causes the residents of Little Paddocks to do is prepare for guests. The whole town sees the ad, and Miss Blacklock knows that they will be over to satisfy their curiosity. Of course, she's right.



## chapter three and four

### chapter three and four Summary

Chapter three takes place at Little Paddocks. While preparing for guests, Julia, Miss Bunner, and Miss Blacklock lightly discuss the differences in the times of young Julia and the older Miss Blacklock and Miss Bunner. While Julia thinks women stayed home and wrote notes, she learns that Miss Bunner and Miss Blacklock did not have that luxury. Miss Bunner and Miss Blacklock went into the work force. In fact, Miss Blacklock worked for a big financier.

The neighbors arrive at Little Paddocks to take part in what they think is a murder game. They all arrive without mentioning the ad. Instead, they comment on the flowers and other niceties. Only Phillipa Haymes doesn't know about the ad, and only Mrs. Harmon references the murder ad instantly, bluntly asking when the murder will take place. When the clock strikes six-thirty and the lights go out, excitement fills the air. It becomes apparent quite quickly that it's not a game. A man shines a flashlight and demands, "Stick 'em up!" While some may have still thought the whole thing a production, two gunshots ring throughout the blinding light clarifying the situation. After a last shot rings and the flashlight drops, a masked man in black gloves appears on the floor in a gruesome state. Miss Blacklock gets grazed by a bullet and injures her ear. Dora Bunner recognizes the dead man as someone who had asked for money to travel to Switzerland a couple days earlier.

In chapter four, we meet George Rydesdale, chief Constable of Middleshire, and Detective-Inspector Dermot Craddock. Craddock is officially put in charge of the murder case. We learn the identity of the dead man who intruded Little Paddocks the night before. He was a Swiss man named Rudi Scherez who worked at the Royal Spa Hotel as a receptionist. They discuss the case and create a game plan. Craddock visits the hotel to inquire further about the deceased. Rudi's former boss informs Craddock that there had been several situations in which money had been missing, but he never took him for a violent man. Craddock goes to talk to Rudi's former co-worker and girlfriend Myrna Harris to find that he "talked big" about his life and importance, but it never seemed to add up. Miss Blacklock lunched at the hotel, but Rudi had never mentioned her or Clipping Cleghorn. Myrna emphasized the fact that Rudi was indeed a crook.

### chapter three and four Analysis

Almost all of the neighbors fail to mention the ad in the paper when they arrive at Little Paddocks. They all happen to "drop by" or something equally transparent. However, the real reason for their visit is quite clear and comes out. The curiosity becomes dangerous when the lights go out and shots are fired. While there were no lights and no one could see, the intruder carries a flashlight. Is he looking for something or someone in particular? When the lights come on, a dead man appears on the floor shot. This



chapter leaves more questions than answers. Yes, a murder occurs. But why? Did the man mean to shoot at Miss Blacklock? Did he shoot himself or was it an accident? Was anyone else involved? The person who planned this clearly wanted an audience. They must have known that the people in town who read the ad would "drop by". How did this man know the people at Little Paddocks? Who did he know? He had dropped by earlier to ask for money. What was he truly doing?

We meet the inspector in charge of the murder at Little Paddock: Dermot Craddock. He's a patient and persistent man who never jumped to conclusions which leads to his success as a detective.

The shooter, Rudi Scherez, is a Swiss man. He clearly has a sticky hand. Several small things were missing at the hotel and at previous jobs. Furthermore, his old girlfriend claims quite strongly that he is a crook. With all of the accounts of his behavior, it seems more than plausible.. However, just because he is a thief, does not necessarily mean that he is a murderer.

Myrna's persistent testimony that Rudi is a crook implies that she must know of something. Perhaps it consists of the petty theft, but it could be more.

Does she know something more? We see a distrust of foreigners in Myrna. This seems to be a consistent belief.





# chapters five and six

## chapters five and six Summary

Craddock and Sergeant Fletcher visit Little Paddocks and interrogate Miss Blacklock and Miss Bunner in chapter five. Sergeant Fletcher informs Craddock about the difficult Mitzi as they arrive- she's uncooperative and a liar. Julia Simmons opens the door with "a bored expression" and allows the men inside. Miss Blacklock meets with them. Craddock notices that she is an attractive woman with no make-up, a surgical mark by her right ear, and plainly dressed with a Victorian flair. The only thing out of the ordinary is the vase of dead violets. Miss Bunner tells Craddock about the mess after the "incident": tables had been knocked over and someone's cigarette burnt a nice piece of furniture. Miss Blacklock lets Craddock know that she had met Rudi before at the Royal Spa Hotel. She and Miss Bunner had been lunching there when he came up to her. He claimed to know her form when she and her sister stayed at a hotel during the war. He was the son of a proprietor who owned it. She did not recognize him. She had seen him again. He came to her house and asked for money to return to Switzerland to attend to his sick mother, but Miss Blacklock found the story suspicious and denied him. Miss Bunner emphatically insists that Rudi was purposely aiming at Miss Blacklock. Craddock goes on to ask about the details of the incident and the other people who reside or frequent the house. Patrick and Julia have lived with Miss Blacklock for the last two months. Patrick was in the navy and is now studying for an engineering degree. Julia trains as a dispenser at Milchester General Hospital.

Chapter six continues the interrogation at Little Paddocks. Julia maintains a nonchalance throughout the questioning. Craddock asks if everyone was together in the room. Julia informs Craddock that Patrick went to the other room to get sherry and maybe Colonel Easterwood followed him. Miss Blacklock was getting cigarettes for the guests.

Craddock asks if the light the intruder used was held steady or flashed around. Julia tells him that the man moved it. Julia says that after the shots, the door closed slowly and then everyone was left in the dark. She said she was looking at the man so she didn't know if the man could see Miss Blacklock's shadow in the glow of the light. She, unlike Miss Bunner, did not believe that the man purposely aimed at Miss Blacklock.

Mitzi is uncooperative with Craddock, provoking him to use trickery to coerce her into talking. As she cries that she would rather be tortured and taken to a concentration camp rather than talk, Craddock calls her bluff and tells her that she must come with him, because his torture devices are elsewhere. Mitzi begins to answer his questions. Mitzi informs Craddock that she saw Mrs. Haymes coming in through the side door. Mitzi says she looked herself in the pantry when she heard the shots. Patrick receives Craddock and Fletcher with his ever-playful attitude. He admits his mischievous ways, but insists he had nothing to do with the break-in. He thinks the man could have shot



the gun for dramatics and realized he went to far. When he saw the face of the intruder, he said he looked like a type of man who would lose his nerve and shoot himself.

## chapters five and six Analysis

Craddock and Fletcher arrive at Little Paddocks and immediately question Miss Blacklock and Miss Bunner first.

The mess described to Craddock by Miss Bunner provides detail into what might have happened: something burnt the furniture. Miss Bunner assumes that the burn mark comes from a cigarette but moments earlier, we learn that Miss Blacklock was getting the cigarettes as the lights went out. That means something else caused the burn mark. Even more telling, however, is the previous interaction Miss Blacklock had with Rudi. She would lunch periodically at the Royal Spa Hotel, and he must have seen her there and looked her up. When he stopped by at Little Paddocks to ask for money, he could have been scoping out the home for his attack. The question remains: why Miss Blacklock?

The flowers were dead because Miss Bunner's failing mental capacity. She's a sweet, loyal woman. Miss Blacklock keeps Miss Bunner around and makes her feel useful. With old age comes loneliness. Miss Blacklock must know that her time to be a troublesome, forgetful lady is just above the horizon and feels empathy towards the woman. Or perhaps miss Blacklock is bored. She does house quite a few people without much in return from her guests.

Craddock asks if the intruder kept the light steady or not to determine whether he was looking for someone in particular. When Julia goes on about where everyone was, we see that Miss Blacklock was going to get cigarettes, but Miss Bunner said that the furniture was burnt with a cigarette. One of them are mistaken or lying.

Mitzi's paranoia forces Craddock to use trickery to get her to talk. Obviously, her experience as a Jewish, WWII refugee causes her to be skeptical of police. Unfortunately, it also causes police to distrust her. This bring about questionable methods of interrogation, such as lying and the threat of torture. Mitzi makes herself one of the most easily manipulable characters in the story, and Craddock shows he is not above using this to solve a case. Mitzi's less than flattering portrayal of Mrs. Haymes ends in her saying she's a Nazi. Mrs. Haymes's blonde hair and blue eyes scare Mitzi and remind her of the people in Germany who killed her brother in front of her own eyes. This clear and powerful bias makes her testimonials suspect. She's not necessarily unreliable, because she's hiding her whereabouts. She's unreliable, because she's been badly traumatized. However, how far will she take it?

Patrick's description of the man, if accurate, portrays him as a person who has never done this before and maybe didn't particularly want to. He was not psycho murderer. He was a man who wanted something.



# chapters seven and eight

## chapters seven and eight Summary

In chapter seven, Craddock interrogates Phillipa Haymes, Colonel and Mrs. Easterbrook, and Mrs. Harmon. Craddock visits Dayas Hall to talk to Mrs. Phillipa Haymes. He finds her in the Apple Orchard. She tells Craddock that she indeed went through the side door and it was unlocked, but she says she locked it when she came in. She said she didn't know anything about the advertisement until she saw the party going on after her bath. She was by the mantelpiece when the shooting occurred. She did not put her hands up. She saw Miss Bunner staring like a ghost, petrified in fear. The man definitely moved the torch, but not as if he was looking for somebody in particular. She says Edmund and Patrick fumbled with their lighters.

He continues to visit Mrs. Swettenham. She talks about the incident with excitement. She couldn't see a thing when the light engulfed the room. Her son confirms that it was difficult to see.

At Colonel and Mrs. Easterbrook's, the Colonel expressed his expertise in the psychological aspects of the crime. He has a theory that the shooter pulled the trigger blindly, feared the repercussions and guilt of shooting someone and took the gun on himself.

Mrs. Harmon instantly claims she can't help. She had shut her eyes as soon as possible and only clenched them tighter. However, she COULD listen. She heard doors opening and closing, people tripping over themselves, and Mitzi screaming.

Craddock and the Constable go over the notes about the case. Rudi certainly did have an extensive record- mostly for petty theft to larger theft. However, Craddock seems unsatisfied with his current information. It seems incomplete. Rydesdale and Sire Henry receive and read a letter from an "old Pussy" named Jane Marple. She says she may offer some help in the case. Craddock finds Mrs. Marple to be nothing more than an annoyance at first, but his godfather convinces him to talk to the old lady. They meet her at a hotel, and she gives them a check that Rudi altered. She presents the theory that someone put the young murderer up to the crime. She points out that when everybody said they saw a man with a revolver, they were mistaken. Nobody could have seen. If nobody saw who shot, isn't it possible that someone else shot Miss Blacklock? Based on information from Mrs. Marple, the detectives visit Myrna Harris, Rudi Scherez's girlfriend. She verifies that someone hired Rudi, and Rudi placed the ad. He thought it was "kid's stuff", but something obviously went very wrong.

## chapters seven and eight Analysis

The seemingly minor similarities and differences in the multiple accounts of the incident provides key information. Colonel Easterbrook feel very confident in his ability to solve



the mystery because of his previous experience. His experience makes him over confident. He claims to know everything about the case already. Perhaps he thinks that he can commit a murder as good as anyone else. Mrs. Haymes did not put her hands up when they were told to. This implies they were convinced it was a game or perhaps they knew more. Mrs. Harmon claims to not have seen anything.

In this chapter, we meet Miss Jane Marple. She's known as the "pussy of all pussies". She appears quite unimpressive, though. She's a normal looking old woman who knits. People can sometimes disregard older people as useless, and Craddock seems to be going down this route. However, with all the time on her hands, she might have the time to figure something out. Craddock ends up finding his meeting with the old woman useful. When he visits Myrna again to investigate this theory. She immediately admits to knowing about the situation. The way he discussed it with Myrna indicates he had no plan to murder anyone, especially not himself. He had a girlfriend and a life at home. He was doing this strictly for the money.

Rudi claims it was kid's stuff. This only adds to the theory that it was someone else. He doesn't seem to think anybody will die or anything serious will happen. If someone else was behind the murder, why did they invite everybody else to the home?



# chapters nine and ten

## chapters nine and ten Summary

In chapter nine, Craddock returns to Little Paddock to gain more intelligence. The erratic Mitzi insists that the side door was purposely left open for someone to come into. She claims to have heard Mrs. Haymes talking to Rudi secretly in the yard. When Craddock accidentally tries to go through a "dummy door", he notices the numerous doors in the hallway. He also notices the door he tried to go through had a distinct line on it where a table had been. He is told that the door has been locked up for years. Someone has indeed opened the door.

After it is discovered that the "dummy door" had been tampered with, Craddock starts to lean towards Miss Marple's theory that someone in the house at the time of the incident could have been behind Rudi and shot the gun. But why? Miss Blacklock at first insists that she has no money, and technically this is true. When she dies, her money goes to Patrick and Julia, except for a small portion and the furniture in the house, which will go to Bunny. While Miss Blacklock may not be rich at the moment, she may be a rich woman in the very near future. Miss Blacklock divulges the information that when her former millionaire employer's wife dies, she inherits the money. Her inheritance reaches her after the deceased millionaire's wife dies. If someone was trying to kill her, why would they do it before she obtained her riches?

Craddock questions Mrs. Haymes about what Mitzi said. She laughs it off and denies it. She works every morning and Mitzi hates her. It's impossible. However, Craddock couldn't help but think he heard a hint of fear in her voice when he asked about the summer house...

## chapters nine and ten Analysis

Craddock does not trust Mitzi. Mitzi's outlandish claims could very easily be made up. However, is the distrust merely an expression of his prejudices? Perhaps, he should be a little more willing to hear what the girl has to say. Earlier, Mitzi called Mrs. Haymes a Nazi because of her blonde hair and blue eyes. Is she attributing her characteristics to the people who hurt her before? Is she blaming Mrs. Haymes because she is truly a liar and a murderer? Or is Mitzi lying?

It becomes very clear that somebody had tampered with the "dummy door". It may have been locked for years, but it was definitely unlocked. This implies that someone else did something in that room during the incident besides Rudi. Rudi had somebody either helping him or against him. Was it one of the people at the house? If it was somebody in the house, whose whereabouts are unaccounted for?

Learning Miss Blacklock's financial situation provides us with a possible motive for Patrick and Julia to want her dead. Perhaps someone was aiming at Miss Blacklock the



night of the shooting. However, why would Patrick and Julia want to kill her before she is the beneficiary? This also makes Miss Blacklock a suspicious character. Why would she not have divulged this information earlier?

Craddock is left with conflicting stories from Mitzi and Mrs. Haymes. Several people label Mitzi as a liar, but Craddock notices a questionable demeanor in Mrs. Haymes when he questions her about Mitzi's allegations. At this point, Christie offers us a window to believe what Mitzi says. Perhaps she is not as big of a liar as previously thought....



# chapters eleven and twelve

## chapters eleven and twelve Summary

Miss Marple and Mrs. Harmon are guests at Little Paddock. This is the first time that Miss Marple meets Miss Blacklock. The ladies discuss the incident that had taken place. Miss Blacklock once again claims that there is nothing to burgle from her home. Miss Bunner mentions how Craddock focused on the door that was supposedly never opened. She once again calls Miss Blacklock "Lotty". Miss Blacklock's anxiety becomes quite apparent. Miss Marple continues to inquire about the terrifying stand up as casual gossip. Mrs. Harmon and Miss Bunner quickly divulge as much as they can about the interesting story. discovers that Miss Blacklock did not know Patrick and Julia by sight prior to their arrival.

Edmund confesses his love for Philippa at her place of work, but she is unenthusiastic of his advances at best. He speaks in an artistic manner that does not please Phillipa. He goes so far as to ask her to marry him. While she remains passive, he insists that he can get to understand her. He convinces her to speak about her husband who died. He thinks that maybe she is still in love with her dead husband, and her experience hinders her.

Sergeant Fletcher stays at Little Paddocks by himself and narrows the possible perpetrators to Julia and Patrick Simmons, Phillipa, and possibly Bunny. However, when Mrs. Swettenham comes to deliver quince. to Miss Blacklock, she informs Sergeant Fletcher that the doors remain open at all of the houses among the neighbors all day. They regularly walk in and out of each other's houses unannounced, and every neighbor had the opportunity to prepare the door. He now knows that absolutely anybody in town could have easily managed to find their way inside and plan the crime.

Suspiciously, Colonel Easterbrook tells his wife that somebody took his gun. He tells his wife, and they wonder if maybe their maid took it for safety.

## chapters eleven and twelve Analysis

Mrs. Marple's techniques make her a prime investigator for this particular case. In a small town of old women to gossip with, she is bound to discover something. While at Little Paddocks, Mrs. Harmon and Miss Bunner are more than eager to go over the entire shooting in detail with Miss Marple. With their dreary, daily routines, they finally have something quite spectacular to talk about. It certainly beats discussing so and so's son's new job. And to think that they were actually there to witness the whole thing! Only Miss Blacklock was careful about what information was divulged. This is not the first time that Miss Bunner has called Miss Blacklock "Lotty" rather than "Letty". Miss Bunner does suffer from some confusion, but the ladies have known each other since they were children in school. Her slips of something so familiar seems odd.



She makes her discovery by talking about old pictures. She cleverly discovers that Miss Blacklock did not know what Patrick and Julia looked like prior to their arriving. If Miss Blacklock didn't know what Patrick and Julia looked like before, it would be extraordinarily easy to trick her into thinking that's who they were.

Suspicious information continues to come out. Unfortunately, nobody seems to be able to be trusted.

Love can be a very powerful motivator. Philipa's lack of interest in him may cause him to look for a reason to become attracted to the woman. Money has a miraculous power over people sometimes. However, how would he know anything about Miss Blacklock's future inheritance? And if he did, why attack her before she even got it? And how would Edmund receive it?

Edmund is the one who insists that she is still infatuated with her husband. Phillipa responds just as enthusiastically as she does to Edmund She says that she and her husband were as happy as most couples were.

Colonel Easterbrook discovers his gun is missing, which supports the theory that someone else had a gun that night besides Rudi. Did someone else shoot him?





# chapters thirteen and fourteen

## chapters thirteen and fourteen Summary

Miss Marple meets Miss Bunner at the Bluebird Cafe. Miss Bunner tells Miss Marple all about how Miss Blacklock took her in and keeps her busy. Miss Bunner's mind is fading, but Miss Blacklock is always extremely understanding. Bunny expresses her skepticism of Patrick and Julia and her belief that these tragic events involved one or both of them. She says she saw Patrick in the shrubbery with an oily cup. In fact, she suspects that Patrick and Julia are Pip and Emma (the children of Miss Blacklock's former boss's estranged sister). Pip and Emma are next in line after Miss Blacklock to receive the money.

Mr. Craddock visits Mrs. Goedler. She confirms the story Miss Blacklock told him about her previous employer's will. However, being as sickly as she is, no one expected Belle Goedler to outlive her husband. Mr. Craddock inquires as to why her husband left his money to Miss Blacklock rather than his own sister. Mrs. Goedler goes into the history of their quarrel. Mr. Godler's sister, Soina, married a man that her brother considered a crook. Refusing to make her the beneficiary, he begrudgingly did decide to name her twins Pip and Emma at the request of his wife. Craddock suspects that "Pip" and "Emma" might be visiting Chipping Cleghorn.

## chapters thirteen and fourteen Analysis

Miss Bunner expresses her theory of what was going on. If someone is trying to murder Miss Blacklock, it makes sense that it would be Pip and Emma. It was always curious that someone would attempt to murder her before she received her inheritance. That means it must have been Pip and/ or Emma, someone who knew nothing about the inheritance, or the person wasn't aiming at Miss Blacklock.

Mrs. Goedler has been ill for nearly her whole life, she lost her child at two years, and she lost her husband. However, she seems internally content. She says that she has experienced the real fun in life: being a young, pretty, tease, experiencing a family and love. She has experienced the best joys life has to offer and some people never experience this. Her outlook of life comments on the life of the working woman and her own views of a woman's duties.

Could Patrick and Julia be Pip and Emma?



# chapters fifteen and sixteen

## chapters fifteen and sixteen Summary

Miss Blacklock plans a birthday party for Miss Bunner and gives Mitzi several instructions. Mitzi makes her cake and objects to Patrick's name for it: "Delicious Death". Miss Bunner gets several gifts and everybody comes over for a party. She's beaming and truly enjoying herself.

Talk of the recent murders fills the conversation again. Edmund says that they are all under suspicion for the intent of murder, but later insists his statement was a "joke". Miss Blacklock questions Phillipa about looking worried. Miss Blacklock guesses Phillipa's anxiety derives from insubstantial money for her son's education. To calm her nerves, Miss Blacklock puts Phillipa in the will after Bunny's portion. Phillipa protests and questions why not Patrick and Julia. Julia overhears the conversation and has a confrontation with Phillipa.

Craddock has a nightmare expressing his fear of failing to protect Miss Blacklock. Craddock and Rydesdale analyze the information Sergeant Fletcher gives them about the neighbors' interactions with the scene of the crime. During this time, they receive a call.: Bunny died. The aspirin that Bunny took from the bottle next to Miss Blacklock's bed was not aspirin.

## chapters fifteen and sixteen Analysis

Delicious Death seems ridiculous with the pain and grief involved in death. How could such a thing become delicious? Well, for one, perhaps the delicious thing brings the death Or, perhaps, if the death brings about something delicious for someone else, such as money.

Miss Blacklock does not trust Julia and Patrick. She clearly does trust Miss Bunner and Phillipa. Also, putting someone close as her beneficiary will take the attention off of her. No one will want to kill her or continue to poke into her business.

Julia gets angry when she discovers that Phillipa receives Miss Blacklock's money after Bunny. Is she upset because she's looking out for the woman kind enough to house her and her brother? Or is she mad that she's not in that place?

Craddock's nightmare indicates his insecurity in fulfilling his duty.

Bunny dying makes us wonder what she knows that would make someone want to kill her. What does she know?



# chapters severnenteen and eighteen

## chapters severnenteen and eighteen Summary

Miss Marple remembers Miss Bunner saying she thought that Patrick had tampered with a lamp, and decides to look into it. The lamp is part of a set of a shepherd and a shepherdess, and Miss Bunner could have sworn it was the shepherdess before the incident... Miss Blacklock openly expresses her intense grief with the loss of her friend, "her only link to the past". Craddock expresses annoyance with Miss Marple. After asking Miss Blacklock for an old picture of Sonia Goedler, they discover every photo of the woman disappeared. Faded inscriptions describe pictures with Sonia in them, however, they are no longer there. There were no blank spaces the other day.

Craddock interrogates Phillipa about lying about her husband's death. She claims he was a war hero who died in battle, but in reality, he deserted his regime and abandoned his duties as a soldier and a family man. She insists that she hasn't seen him for years, but Craddock questions the possibility that she has seen him sooner than that.

Craddock investigates at Little Paddock to look for more information, especially about Sonia. He remembers Julia up in the attic, and thinks the attic is a weird place for such a prissy girl to spend her time. While looking around, he finds a box of letters between Miss Blacklock and her sister Charlotte. With protest, Miss Blacklock tells Craddock to just take the letters. Craddock finally finds a letter that involves Sonia. With a lack of people to turn to, Craddock brings the letter to Miss Marple to get her opinion. After talking about the letter, Craddock gets a phone call informing him that Mrs. Hayme's husband has been found... dead.

## chapters severnenteen and eighteen Analysis

That detail about the lamps gives Miss Marple a fantastic lead. While Miss Bunner was an extremely unreliable source, perhaps her observations should not go unexamined.

Miss Blacklock's grief seems almost too extreme for the level-headed woman. With Sonia's pictures taken out of the photo album, it becomes clear that someone doesn't want to be recognized as her.

Phillipa lies about her husband to absolutely everyone. She doesn't want her son to know the truth and feel shame, and she doesn't want the rest of the town to know. So when Craddock interrogates further into her lie, she gets upset and defensive. She says that it's unnecessary to dig into certain things. Does she want him to stop digging, because he'll discover something incriminating or her own privacy? Similarly, Miss Blacklock's reaction to the discovery of the letters between her and her sister is one of invasion of privacy. Like Mrs. Haymes, she wants some things to be to herself. Craddock wants them to find out about Sonia. However, will he find something else?

With Mrs. Hayme's husband dead, does that open other opportunities she previously did not have before? Romantic or business opportunities?



# chapters nineteen and twenty

## chapters nineteen and twenty Summary

Mrs. Harmon goes to light a lamp for Miss Marple's knitting before she goes out. The troublesome cat jumps up on the side table and spills a bit of water. As Mrs. Harmon goes to turn on the light, it flickers and sparks. It even puts a burn in the table. All of the lights in the house are now out. After observing this, Miss Marple decides to occupy herself with a new observation rather than knit.

Miss Hinchcliffe and Miss Murgatroyd attempt to analyze the crime. They conclude that Rudi couldn't have opened the door, held the lamp, and held the revolver at the same time. The culprit must have been in the room and the birthday party, too. This leaves out Mrs. Harmon. Miss Hinchcliffe goes on to insist that Miss Murgatroyd try as hard as she can to remember what she saw. According to Miss Hinchcliffe, Miss Murgatroyd is the only one who can tell everybody who the person behind Rudi was. Miss Murgatroyd was behind the door, Miss Hinchcliffe was by the mantelpiece, Miss Blacklock was by the table by the archway, Patrick Simmons went through the archway into the small room, as well as Phillipa and either Edmund or Colonel Easterbrook. She says it was probably one of the three in the small room that must have done it. She admits a chance that that's not right. The only person who would know would be Miss Murgatroyd. She was behind the door, and the torch wasn't blinding her. It was lighting up the room for her. Miss Murgatroyd first recalls seeing Miss Bunner and Mrs. Harmon. Miss Murgatroyd continues to visualize the night, and the phone rings. Miss Hinchcliffe is called immediately to the police station. She speeds out of the house, silencing Miss Murgatroyd as she tries to tell her that, "she wasn't there-"

The rain comes down, and Miss Murgatroyd immediately goes to take the almost dry clothes off of the line. She receives a visitor who offers to help. The unnamed, female visitor goes to put Miss Murgatroyd's scarf around her neck and pulls it tighter and tighter...

Miss Hinchcliffe picks up Mrs. Marple on her way back to her house with the dog. They discover the suffocated body of Miss Murgatroyd. Miss Hinchcliffe and Mrs. Marple decide that, "Murder isn't a game".

In chapter twenty, Miss Blacklock receives a letter from her distant cousin Julia saying she was coming in the next day. Clearly, the Julia she had been housing was not the real Julia. "Julia" is Emma Jocelyn Stamfodis, or one half of Pip and Emma - the beneficiaries of the fortune after Miss Blacklock. She explains that she and Pip were separated at three years when their parents divorced. She went with her father. After being separated from her father at war, she began to think about her future. Knowing about her rich uncle, she goes to see if she receives anything in the will. She does, but she has to wait. She decided she must find Miss Blacklock and hope she takes pity on her. She claims that by a "marvelous stroke of luck" she met Patrick and enticed him.



She convinces his sister, the real Julia, to pursue acting so she could take her place at Little Paddock. Julia's mother had never been fond of Julia on stage, and when she found an opportunity, she decided to take it. Her mother thinks that she's been at Little Paddocks, but really it's been Emma. She had learned of her uncle's inheritance going to Miss Blacklock. When she saw an opportunity to make an impression on the lady, she decided to take it. Unfortunately, when Julia gets into a lovers' quarrel with the producer, she decides to go along and go to Little Paddocks. When Patrick finds out she's on her way, he fails to do anything, and they are found out. She also claims she has not seen Pip since they were three years old and separated.

Craddock arrives at Little Paddocks to tell the people there that Miss Murgatroyd died. She was strangled not even an hour ago, and Mrs. Harmon calls to say Miss Marple is missing. She cannot be found. Miss Blacklock's pearl necklace breaks, leaving her neck bare and bringing her to tears. They find a couple notes that Miss Marple left behind. It contains basic thoughts: lamp?, violets, where is the bottle of aspirin?, and delicious cake. One other thing scribbled on the note: pearls.

## chapters nineteen and twenty Analysis

Miss Marple writes down the word: lamp. She connects what happened at Mrs. Harmon's table to the table at Little Paddocks. The burn on the table at Little Paddocks must have come from a fuse shorting.

If Rudi could not have physically opened the door, held the lamp, and held the revolver that means that the theory that someone else is true. While Miss Hinchcliffe and Miss Murgatroyd investigate to their abilities, their theories cannot be completely trusted.

Discovering Julia's true identity makes us question her character. After all, she lied in hopes of financial gain. And this is not her first lie. She lied about her husband before hand, too. But where was Pip? Were they truly separated?

Miss Murgatroyd was murdered. The only thing we truly know is that it was a female. At least one female is involved.... which ones have the opportunity and the motive?



# chapters twenty-one and twenty-two

## chapters twenty-one and twenty-two Summary

After dinner at Little Paddocks, conversation of the murders dominates the conversation. Patrick proposes his amateur conclusions to the point where Miss Blacklock begs for sanctuary from the topic of murder. Mitzi refuses to make dinner out of fear of the murders being committed. Julia steps up and actually cooks for a change.

Craddock takes statements from Julia, Mrs. Swettenham, and Mrs. Easterbrook to account for where they were during Miss Murgatroyd's murder. Mrs. Swettenham announces that she was cleaning the gutters. Mrs. Easterbrook says she was listening to the radio with her husband, but Colonel Easterbrook says that's simple not true. She seems suspicious in her subsequent statement about only taking a short walk. Miss Murgatroyd was the only one who could see anything from her placement in the room. Through elimination, she was able to figure out who was not in the room the night of the shooting. Unfortunately, she is dead. However, Mitzi claims who she saw had a gun in her hand, and it was... MISS BLACKLOCK! . Phillipa announces that she lied about her identity. Everyone assumed "Pip" was a boy, but it was not. Everyone hears a scream in the kitchen...

In chapter twenty-two, Miss Blacklock comes into the kitchen where Mitzi is. The two are alone. Mitzi apologizes to Blacklock for telling the police she saw her with a gun. However, Miss Blacklock tells her that, in this one instance, Mitzi was right. She attacks the poor girl and attempts to drown her. When Miss Blacklock hears Miss Bunner's voice telling her to stop, but, as we know, she's dead. Miss Marple niftily possesses the talent to mimic voices. As Sergeant Flether says he's going to take Leticia Blacklock in for her attempt to drown Mitzi Miss Marple corrects him and tells him he is taking in Charlotte Blacklock. She admits that she killed everyone, but she didn't want to.

## chapters twenty-one and twenty-two Analysis

Julia usually goes out of her way to avoid any work of any kind. Her stepping up shows a sign of internal guilt and a desire to redeem herself. Mitzi now says that she saw Miss Blacklock with the gun? Why would she accuse Phillipa of conspiring with a man in the yard, then? Either way, she does prove herself as a liar.

The truth comes out. Charlotte Blacklock is at the end of her rope. She feels cornered and overwhelmed. This intense emotion leads her to try to kill Mitzi with everyone else in the next room.



# chapters twenty-three and twenty-four

## chapters twenty-three and twenty-four Summary

Marple and Craddock tell the entire backstory to everyone else. Rudi Scherz had worked for Dr. Adolf Koch in Berne. Charlotte Blacklock went to Dr. Koch to get an unbecoming goiter removed. When Charlotte and Letitia's father died, Letitia left her job to look after her sister. Before Letitia came to care for Charlotte, she had been forced to cope with her goiter rather than surgically removing it. Their father, Dr. Blacklock, was an old-fashioned man. He did not believe in the operation that Charlotte needed. When Letitia came to care for her sister, she assisted her in finally getting the surgery.

Unfortunately, Letitia died of an pneumonia, and Charlotte feared for her future. She took over her sister's identity to obtain her fortune and live the life her goiter had denied her in her youth. The only person who knew about her true identity was Miss Bunner, because they had known each other in their youth. While Miss Bunner was annoying enough with her mannerisms, it was her slip ups that really worried Charlotte. She would call her "Lotty" instead of "Letty", "Lotty" was Charlotte's nickname when they were children.

While Charlotte's plan was going rather well, there was one hitch: she had been spotted by Rudi. He had truly spotted Charlotte. He did track Charlotte down, but he probably only wanted to pitch a sad, pathetic story to earn Miss Blacklock. However, Miss Blacklock was paranoid and thought that he could be trying to blackmail her. Afraid that Rudi would ruin everything, Miss Blacklock panics and decides something must be done. Namely, Rudi had to die. Unfortunately, after the murder, the situation got extremely intense. Miss Bunner's slips were becoming a true cause for concern as well.

Edmund and Phillipa come back to Chipping Cleghorn.... after their honeymoon. They order their numerous papers but insist on not ordering the gazette. Nobody understands. Of course they want the gazette! How else would they know what's going on?

## chapters twenty-three and twenty-four Analysis

Miss Marple and Craddock reveal the motive for Charlotte Blacklock's actions here. Charlotte lived a very sheltered life under her father's care. She was insecure about the hideous goiter on her neck, so she refused to go out. Her father wouldn't let her get the goiter surgically removed, either. Those years spent locked away gave her a craving for socialization and a home of her own. That explains why she was so eager to allow people to stay with her at Little Paddocks.

Miss Bunner could immediately tell the difference between the two sisters when they reunited. However, Charlotte's generosity taking her in made her a very loyal friend, and she kept the secret.





When going to kill Miss Bunner, Miss Blacklock gave her a "Delicious Death". She gave her an amazing day complete with friends and food. She truly loved Miss Bunner, but she had to do it. Unfortunately, after she killed Miss Bunner, she realized that her ties to the past were now officially all gone. When no one else remembers anything about your life except for you, it brings another meaning to the word lonely.

Once again, we see how irratically Charlotte excuuted her plan. Dominated by emotions than clear thought, Charlotte accidentally gets herself into more and more trouble.

Phillipa's true identity being revealed allows her to marry Edmund. Back from their honeymoon, they refuse to order the most popular paper: the Gazette. Knowing what's going on around town has only been troublesome. After a true experience in an exciting situation, it no longer appeals to the couple. As it was said earlier, murder is not a game, and they did not want to know about anyone else's business anymore.

# **A Murder Is Announced**

## **Summary and Analysis**



# Characters

## Letitia / Charlotte Blacklock

Letitia or "Letty" is a woman of sixty. She's a pretty woman but rather plain. She has the mind of a man. Mrs. Goedler says of her, "she hasn't any feminine feelings or weaknesses". She owns and runs her household named Little Paddocks. She has a sister (Charlotte), and is the daughter of a very strict, traditional doctor. In her youth, she takes a job in the financial field as an assistant of the very successful Mr. Goedler. She even helps Mr. Goedler in his business. She lends him money and guides him in his decision making, which causes him to treat her as a partner more than an assistant. Because of this, she is put in his will. She left to care for her sister when her father dies.

Charlotte Blacklock spends her youth virtually in hiding because of an unbecoming goiter. The daughter of a very strict doctor who only believed in traditional cures, he did not let her get the new surgery available that would rid Charlotte of her physical and emotional pain. She avoids the world until her father dies. When her father dies, Charlotte's sister Letitia comes to care for her. Under her sister's care, she is able to get her goiter removed. This opens a whole new world for the previous shut-in.

Letitia and Charlotte are close. When Charlotte is in hiding, Letitia writes her virtually every day to keep her in tune to the rest of the world. In a way, Letitia's life becomes Charlotte's life as well. Since she feels required to coop herself up in her home, she can experience social relationships and the joys and trials of daily life. When their father dies, Letitia doesn't hesitate to run to her aide. She immediately decides to help her sister. Unfortunately, not long after Charlotte's surgery, Letitia dies of an pneumonia. When Letitia dies, Charlotte takes over her identity. Most people would assume that Charlotte, the ill one, would die first anyway. Besides, she and Letitia made plans for that inheritance, and it wasn't fair for someone else to get it.

She takes over the Little Paddocks estate and gets to know her neighbors. Unfortunately, Charlotte gets worried that her secret identity will be discovered and goes on a murderous tirade to keep her secret, her money, and her new life.

## Miss Bunner

Miss Bunner ("Bunny") lives at Little Paddocks with Letitia Blacklock. She's a woman in her sixties. When children, she went to school with Letitia and Charlotte Blacklock. In her young age, she was a very pretty girl. Like Letitia Blacklock, she was forced into the work force young. Unfortunately, she was never extremely competent at anything she partook in. While she worked to care for herself, in her old age, her earnings proved insufficient. In her time of need, she reaches out to Miss Blacklock for help, and the gracious lady quickly offers to take in her childhood friend. With her growing age comes



the inevitable decay of her mind. Sometimes, she might confuse a name or get flustered.

Miss Bunner demonstrates how financially difficult old age can be, especially without help. In her time of need, Charlotte eagerly reached out to her. After all, they both share a connection to a familiar past. Miss Bunner is one of the few people who instantly knew that it was Charlotte, not Letitia. Unfortunately, her slip ups prove a hazard with huge consequences.

## Mitzi

Mitzi works for Letitia Blacklock at Little Paddocks as a live-in maid. She attends to the home's needs, cleans, and cooks. One of her famous desserts becomes known as the "delicious death". Mitzi escaped from the war as a refugee. She been through hell because of this experience. She even saw her brother murdered in front of her. Unfortunately, this experience has left her with a sour taste. She is suspicious of authority and people in general. She does not trust police, she does not trust her employer, she doesn't trust the neighbors.... she doesn't trust anyone. She particularly has an eye on Phillipa Haymes. Phillipa has blue eyes and blonde hair that reminds her of the Aryans that persecuted her family. This lack of trust causes her to act in a paranoid manner some of the time. Her behavior gets her labeled as a liar. The lack of trust goes both ways.

Mitzi does lie or omit information multiple times. She claims to see Phillipa Haymes talking to Rudi, but that is not true. She also fails to tell people that she saw Miss Blacklock with a gun until far too late. Her behavior comes from a desire for survival. Her main motivation is to protect herself. She does not tell on Miss Blacklock, because she houses her and passes her. Besides, she killed Rudi, Miss Bunner, and Miss Murgatroyd. If she says something, she could easily be next. In order to protect herself, Mitzi keeps quiet on the true identity of the murderer.

## Julia Simmons

Julia Simmons is the daughter of a distant cousin of Miss Blacklock's. She has a passion for the stage, but her mother forbids her to pursue this passion. She is rather to go to Little Paddocks and study. This makes it quite easy for her to take up a young woman's offer to take her place at Little Paddocks and allow her the opportunity to try her luck in acting. When she gets into a quarrel with the stage manager, she decides to go on with the original plan and head to Little Paddocks.

## Patrick Simmons

Patrick Simmons is a handsome, young man with a tendency to be mischievous. Once, he even told Mitzi that the Gaspasto was out to get her. He is Miss Blacklock's distant cousin. He is living with her while he studies. However, Miss Blacklock had not seen him



very much prior to his arrival. In fact, she has only seen one baby picture of the boy in her life. He spent his time before this in the navy.

## **Craddock**

Craddock is a handsome detective in charge of the incident at Little Paddocks. He's very detail-orientated and does what he has to to get the job done, even if it means allowing an old woman to put in her advice or trick a refugee into thinking he was going to torture her until she talked. He knew to work slow and never assume. When the case seems simple, he knows better than to just accept the simple answer and to dig deeper.

## **Miss Marple**

An older lady with blue eyes, white hair, and a white wrinkled face. She spends her time knitting and occupying herself with local mysteries. She does not hide her fascination with crimes. She's a charming woman, which no doubt contributes to her ability to acquire information from others. Through her gossipy fashion, she can hear the details in people's all too eager accounts of a mystery and conclude certain things.

## **Edmund Swettingham**

An intellectual man, Edmund spends his days writing. Or sleeping. A young man, Edmund lives with his mother in Chipping Cleghorn. Edmund loves Phillipa Haymes, but his advances are not accepted.

## **Colonel Easterbrook**

Colonel Easterbrook is a confident, older man. His previous experience makes him think he knows everything. When the mystery occurs, he holds Craddock to tell him his detailed analysis of the criminal and his theories.

## **Emma Stamfordis**

Emma is the niece of Randall Goedler. She's one half of the Pip and Emma duo who get their uncle's inheritance after Miss Blacklock. After being separated from her father during the war, she joined the French Resistance. She was raised by her single father. When the war separates them, she feels like an orphan. Suddenly very aware of her insecure future, she looks towards her family history. Knowing about her rich uncle, she investigates if perhaps she would receive something in the will. She finds out that she does, but she must wait for Miss Letitia Blacklock to die. Not wanting to wait that long, Emma finds her opportunity when she meets Patrick and Julia Simmons on their way to stay with their distant cousin- Letitia Blacklock. She takes the place of Julia Simmons in hopes of winning the favor of the older lady and hopefully get something from her.



## **Randall Goedler**

Randall is the former employer to Letitia Blacklock. He worked in finances, and he was in love with the adventure of the business. However, he was not the best at making every decision. He needed Letitia to assist him. Therefore, he puts her in his will after his sickly wife. He is, unfortunately, now deceased. With his own child dead, he had no one else to put in his will except his estranged sister's children- Emma and Pip.

## **Mrs. Harmon**

Mrs. Harmon is one of the residents of Chipping Cleghorn. She came into Little Paddocks before the incident, "with her hat falling off and her shoelaces untied and asked straight out when the murder is going to happen?" (75). This demonstrates her candidness that contributes to her charm. She is the wife to a preacher and the niece to Miss Marple.

## **Mrs. Phillipa Haymes/ Pip**

Mrs. Haymes also lives at Little Paddocks. She works as a paid laborer for blank at Dayas Hall. She has blue eyes and blonde hair. She feels entitled to more in life than her laborer status. She is not the most enthusiastic employee and takes as much time off as possible. She explains to everyone that her husband has been killed during the war. She is left alone with a child she must care for. In reality, she is Pip.

## **Dmitri Stamfordis**

He is a crook that Sonia Goedler married despite heavy disapproval from her brother. They divorced in only a couple years after they had the twins Emma and Pip. Dimitri got Emma. Unfortunately, he was separated from her in the war.

## **Rudi Scherz**

Rudi is a thief from Switzerland. Previous employers have complaints about missing items, and he definitely has a criminal record. He was always short on money, which might explain his criminal behavior. However, he is not really the murderous type.

## **Mrs. Bella Goedler.**

Mrs. Goedler is a sickly but happy woman. She married a man who loved her and had fun with her feminine charms before that. She only had one child for two years, but she considers those two years a blessing. Mrs. Goedler is definitely a girly girl.



## **Sonia Goedler**

Sonia is Mr. Goedler's sister. She's an attractive, self-sufficient woman. This leads her to be very independent and act against what other people tell her. When her brother tells her he disapproves of her upcoming marriage, she does not care.

## **George Rydesdale**

George Rydesdale works for the police department. He has bushy eyebrows and an unemotional demeanor. He listens rather than talks, but when he talks, his words are heard and obeyed.

## **Myrna Harris**

Myrna is a pretty, redhead waitress who works at the Royal Day Spa. She dated Rudi, but she did not want to be associated with his criminal activity. Like many others, she vocalizes a distrust of foreigners.



# Objects/Places

## Chipping Cleghorn

Chipping Cleghorn is the small town where the majority of the story takes place. The neighbors know each other a little too well, and they leave their doors open. One paperboy can cover the whole town, and the women read the paper to learn about the current events in their neighbors' lives rather than national current events.

## Little Paddocks

Little Paddocks is the home of Miss Blacklock. Also living there are Miss Bunner, Patrick and Julia Simmons, Phillipa Haymes, and Mitzi. It's in Chipping Cleghorn. There are chickens, which contributes to the rural feel of the home.

## Dayas Hall

Dayas Hall is a farm in Chipping Cleghorn owned by Mr. and Mrs. Lucas. Phillipa Haymes works here picking apples and lettuce.

## Royal Day Spa

The Royal Day Spa is where Myrna and Rudi worked.

## Vicarage

The Vicarage is where Miss Hinchcliffe and Miss Murgutroyd live. It's a large residence made of three smaller cottages.

## The Gazette

The Gazette is a popular local paper for Chipping Cleghorn. It has several personal advertisements and the people in town use this paper to educate themselves on the whereabouts of their neighbors. This paper is the one that announces the murder at Little Paddocks.

## Colonel Easterbrook's revolver

Colonel Easterbrook keeps a revolver in a drawer in his room at all times. He discovers it's missing and attributes it to his maid being afraid. Unfortunately, the maid did not take it. Someone else did. And she used it to murder Rudi.





## Shepherd and shepherdess lamps

These are lamps in Little Paddocks, specifically in the room of the incident. Usually only one lamp is put out at a time. Wasn't it the other one that was out that night?

## Delicious Death

Mitzi makes a decadent cake with chocolate and raisins named "Delicious Death". The name can also apply to the recipients of an inheritance after death.

## The dummy door

The dummy door is a door in Little Paddocks that is supposed to always be locked up. But that just isn't true.



# Themes

## Affects of War

This mystery takes place after World War II. The war affected almost every person in the story, as it did to every person in Europe at the time. People still felt the ripples of the war: women lost husbands, children lost fathers, and families lost everything. When Phillipa creates her story of a lost husband to the war, people find it very plausible and believe her. Even more, they sympathize for her.

Emma loses contact with her father because of the war. His absence left her an orphan with absolutely nothing. After spending some time in the French Resistance, she realized the toll of the war on her future. To her, the war had taken her father and everything along with him. Without him, she must find a way to take care of herself.

Mitzi illustrates the trauma of war the most. She screams about her experience watching police murder her brother in front of her. She thinks that when Craddock comes in to question her that he is going to take her away. She calls Mrs. Haymes a Nazi because of her blonde hair and blue eyes. It may not even be fair. She lies about her and tells Craddock that she saw Mrs. Haymes talking to Rudi. She continues to claim that she is entitled and arrogant. Unfortunately, this hatred Mitzi felt during the war ultimately manifests itself into an expression of hate towards the people who committed these atrocities to her and the people that look like them.

## Aging

Miss Bunner becomes more of a burden than a help in her old age. She wants to help, but her decaying mind and body prevent her from being more than a nuisance. While some mistakes like forgetting to fill the flowers are harmless, her old age also prevents her from being able to care for herself. When she calls upon her old friend Miss Blacklock to assist her in her old age, it is because in old age, you can no longer care for yourself.

With old age comes a need to occupy your time and mind. Charlotte Blacklock cares for an entire household to occupy herself. Other people in the town of Chipping Cleghorn decide to occupy themselves with their neighbor's business. Or when a stick up and murder happens, that can also occupy an older woman's time.

After the loss of her father, Emma realizes that she is all alone. With no parents, she has no inheritance to help care for her in her older age. She must do something about her future.

When Charlotte murders Miss Bunner, she realizes that her only link to her past is now gone. Now her future means nothing. Once she eliminates her only link to the past, her future becomes less and less important. No one will remember her life. NO one will



remember her when she was once young and vibrant. Her life becomes merely a memory in her own mind. And who know how long her mind will hold up?

With aging comes a sense of uselessness.

## Desperation

A desire motivates. It causes action. Sometimes desire can result in fantastic things. To want something can also be considered sinful, though, and with good reason.

Charlotte Blacklock desires the life that she never experienced. Isolated during a large portion of her youth, Charlotte misses socialization and a home. The woman befriends and helps an old acquaintance immediately, because she desires a friend. Particularly, a friend who knows things and who reminds her of her past. Her desires require financing. After the war separates Emma from her father, she becomes weary of her future, particularly how she will care for herself. With no more than some knowledge from her time in the French Resistance, Emma becomes desperate. As she looks into her family history, she discovers a very well off uncle. Lucky for her, she is one of the beneficiaries of his will! However, there's a woman in between her and Letitia Blacklock. Emma's prayers are answered when she meets Letitia's distant cousins. She takes the place of Julia and uses her place at Little Paddocks to acquire sympathy and hopefully money. Her desperation causes her to go through with an elaborate lie.



# Style

## Point of View

Christie writes the story in the third person. This allows the reader to have an extensive view of the situation. With this view, the audience can look into the homes of the different residents of Chipping Cleghorn. The story can give us information that one household or person knows that the detective and other residents of the town might not know. The reader learns that Colonel Easterbrook's revolver is missing before Craddock does. We also learn things that Craddock discovers before other people in the town. The third person gives us a broad view. Of course, this view is limited by the author. When an unnamed woman kills Miss Murgatroyd, Christie does not permit us to know who tightens the scarf around her neck. Christie does not tell us Miss Blacklock's true identity until the end of the story.

Christie gives us a more extensive view by writing the story in the third person omniscient. Written in the omniscient third person, we can hear the conversations that people are having and the thoughts of the people participating in those conversations. The omniscience is conditional: thoughts are revealed as the author sees fit. Clearly, this contributes to the unveiling of the story. While we may know when a character distrusts another character's testimony, we don't get the privilege of every character's thoughts, especially if it's a secret. We receive a large portion of Craddock's thoughts.

## Setting

Chipping Cleghorn is a small town where the neighbors know each other too well, and the doors are unlocked. Chipping Cleghorn is the setting of "A Murder is Announced." One paper boy can supply the papers to the whole town. The women of Chipping Cleghorn pay attention to the paper for more than current events in politics. They pay attention more to the current events of the people in town. Taking place right after the war, people still feel the affects of what has taken place. Mitzi demonstrates this the best with her paranoid behavior after her experience as a war refugee.

## Language and Meaning

The story is written in simplistic and detail-orientated manner.

Repeated focus on a specific item or detail puts a spotlight on what we the readers should take note of. Craddock asks repeatedly about the light and who can see. Agatha Christie makes us think about this detail with her repetition. The attention to the door, the burn on the table, and the lamp also point out specific things readers should pay attention to. Taking place in England, several English phrases such as "holiday" for vacation and "loo" for the bathroom come up.

## Structure

"A Murder is Announced" is generally told in chronological order with moments from the past revealed throughout.

We start with the morning that everyone in Chipping Cleghorn reads the announcement for a murder. We get the responses from the people in town before we hear the response from the residents of Little Paddock. The murder occurs. The story continues through Craddock's investigation. The story circles back to the people in town by ending with an epilogue portraying Edmund and Phillipa.



## Quotes

Different people's accounts of a few moments of stress never agree." ~Craddock (chapter 6)

'At her age one does not have birthdays. It is better to forget.' Mitzi chapter 15  
Only—sometimes—the most amazing impersonations did happen. chapter 17

You could get away with a great deal if you had enough audacity...chapter 17

'I've heard people say so often, 'I'd rather have flowers on the table than a meal without them.' But how many meals have those people ever missed? They don't know what it is—nobody knows who hasn't been through it—to be really hungry." ~Bunny

It's the rent—always the rent—that's got to be paid—otherwise you're out in the street. And in these days it leaves so little over. ~Bunny

People in the dark are quite different, aren't they?" ~ Mrs. Harmon (chapter 7)

"The comfortably off do not know the deeper abysses of human nature," chapter 13

dock looked at the frail little figure in the big bed with interest. Belle Goedler, he realized, had enjoyed—still enjoyed—being a woman. She twinkled at him. Chapter 14

'One is alone when the last one who remembers is gone. chapter 17

'Horribly and intelligently sane—that's what I think a criminal is!' chapter 21

Weak and kindly people are often very treacherous. And if they've got a grudge against life it saps the little moral strength that they may possess. Chapter 23

one elderly woman is so like another Chapter 23

'But it's very human,' said Julian Harmon. 'One forgets how human murderers are.' Chapter 23

"I'm afraid, you know, that things do get round in the most extraordinary way," (158).  
Miss Marple

## Topics for Discussion

Why does Miss Blacklock decide to help Miss Bunner immediately?

Why does Mitzi behave the way she does?

Why did Miss Blacklock decide to make Phillipa a beneficiary in her will?

How does the setting of Chipping Cleghorn contribute to the story?

How do Miss Marple's investigation techniques differ from Craddock's? How are they similar?

What causes Charlotte Blacklock to attack Mitzi so carelessly?

What motivated Rudi?