

# Cat Among the Pigeons

*Agatha Christie*

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### Part 1 (Prologue to Chapter 4)

#### 1 Comprehension

Number the events in the order they happened. The first one has been done for you.

- 1    Bob visits his sister.
- 2    Ali asks Bob to give the jewels to a man who helps Ali.
- 3    Joan Sutcliffe and her daughter Jennifer go sightseeing.
- 4    Bob phones his friend at the British Embassy.
- 5    Bob and Ali are killed in a plane crash.
- 6    Bob writes a quick note to his sister, Joan.
- 7    Ali gives Bob a million pounds worth of jewels in a small bag.
- 8    Bob uses some plasticine to do something with his sister's luggage.
- 9    A woman in the next room uses her mirror to watch Bob.
- 10    Bob and Ali plan a dangerous escape from Ramat by plane.

#### 2 Language

Use the words in the box to complete this description of Meadowbank.

fit the ages discipline of who as culture  
successful royalty

It was because \_\_\_\_\_ her that Meadowbank was one of \_\_\_\_\_ most \_\_\_\_\_ – and expensive – schools in England. Miss Bulstrode accepted different types of pupils, of all \_\_\_\_\_ – girls who didn't \_\_\_\_\_ into other schools, girls \_\_\_\_\_ wanted to go to university, girls who only wanted to learn about \_\_\_\_\_ and art, and even foreign \_\_\_\_\_. She treated her pupils \_\_\_\_\_ individuals, though she also believed in \_\_\_\_\_ – and she did not accept anyone who was stupid or badly behaved.

#### 3 Comprehension

Try to match the two halves of the sentences below. They are all from the first part of Chapter 4 (pages 19–21). Then decide who each sentence is about: **J**=Jennifer Sutcliffe; **M**=Mrs Sutcliffe; **O**=O'Connor. The first one has been done for you.

<b>J</b>	‘I’m looking forward to	couldn’t leave work and meet us.’
	‘I’m sure that man on the boat	had just shown the electrician the bathroom.
	‘I don’t know why your father	they crashed in the mountains.’
	‘She knew what the news	<b>having a really good afternoon tea.’</b>
	‘Your brother was flying Prince Ali Yusuf out from Ramat and	might have hidden it in your luggage instead.’
	When the telephone rang, she	would die young.’
	‘He and Prince Ali	bending over a suitcase.
	‘I knew Bob	must have died immediately.’
	He went through the bedroom door and stopped as he saw a young man	must be.’
	‘If your brother didn’t give you a package ... he	was trying to steal my green bag.’

#### 4 Comprehension

- 1 Why is Ann surprised when she sees a young man cutting a hedge?  
.....
- 2 Why does Bob Rawlinson lie to his friend John Edmundson at the British Embassy about a problem with a girl?  
.....
- 3 Mr Robinson says that Bob and Ali’s plane crash was not an accident. What really happened?  
.....
- 4 Where do Colonel Pikeaway and Mr Robinson think Bob Rawlinson hid the jewels?  
.....
- 5 Who was staying in the rooms on either side of Mrs Sutcliffe’s hotel room?  
.....
- 6 Is Adam Goodman really a gardener? What is his real mission?  
.....
- 7 Derek O’Connor from the British Secret Service doesn’t seem surprised to hear that the ‘electrician’ wasn’t really an electrician. What does he really think?  
.....
- 8 Mrs Sutcliffe’s daughter Jennifer asks ‘How did the police know the house was being burgled and get here in time to catch him?’ What is the explanation?  
.....

# Cat Among the Pigeons

*Agatha Christie*

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### Part 2 (Chapters 5–12)

#### 1 Comprehension

Look at the questions and see how many you can answer. Then listen to Chapter 8 to check your answers.

- 1 What's the name of the Detective Inspector investigating the case?  
.....
- 2 Who was murdered?  
.....
- 3 How was she murdered?  
.....
- 4 Who found the body?  
.....
- 5 Was the murdered woman seeing anybody?  
.....
- 6 Was there any reason she would be out at night?  
.....
- 7 Where was she murdered?  
.....
- 8 What things were kept there?  
.....
- 9 Was there any sign of a break in? (So how did the murderer get in?)  
.....
- 10 Why did Miss Johnson go to investigate?  
.....
- 11 What did she think was happening?  
.....
- 12 Did Miss Johnson see anyone running away?  
.....

#### 2 Language

English has many sayings involving cats. Try to match the sayings below to their meanings.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 ___ That put the cat among the pigeons!                              | <b>a</b> There is more than one way to do something.              |
| 2 ___ He's like a cat on hot bricks.                                   | <b>b</b> That caused a lot of argument or fuss.                   |
| 3 ___ We don't have a cat in hell's chance.                            | <b>c</b> You're very lucky: you always escape bad situations!     |
| 4 ___ You're like a cat with nine lives.                               | <b>d</b> She looks very happy with herself – she had a big smile. |
| 5 ___ It's the cat's whiskers. (or, strangely, 'It's the bee's knees') | <b>e</b> Oh no, you've told everyone the secret!                  |
| 6 ___ There are more ways to skin a cat!                               | <b>f</b> This room is too small!                                  |
| 7 ___ She was grinning like a Cheshire cat.                            | <b>g</b> The rain is very heavy.                                  |

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 8 ___ Oh-oh, you've let the cat out of the bag now!   | <b>h</b> He's really nervous about something. |
| 9 ___ There's not enough room to swing a cat in here! | <b>i</b> It's really good.                    |
| 10 ___ It's raining cats and dogs outside!            | <b>j</b> There's no chance at all!            |

#### 3 Comprehension

Find a phrase for each character from each category below to complete the sentences. The first one is done for you.

personality	appearance	extra information
curious about everything and everyone proud pleasant, agreeable rude <b>charming</b> bored by her teaching job	athletic, light-red haired <b>very drunk</b> too old with freckles slim and mouse-like tall, muscular, good-looking	new French teacher <b>usually looked after</b> Agent R work with secret agents start it found shot dead

- 1 **Lady Veronica Carlton**, a *charming* parent, who is *usually looked after* by her cousin because she often gets *very drunk*. When she arrives at the school, she distracts Miss Bulstrode, who is talking to Mrs Upjohn.
- 2 **Mrs Upjohn** is Julia's mother. She's a \_\_\_\_\_, young woman \_\_\_\_\_, who used to \_\_\_\_\_ during the war.
- 3 No one really likes **Miss Springer**, the \_\_\_\_\_ Games teacher, because she is \_\_\_\_\_. They are shocked, however, when she is \_\_\_\_\_ in the Sports Pavilion.
- 4 **Miss Chadwick** loves Meadowbank, and is \_\_\_\_\_ that she helped Miss Bulstrode to \_\_\_\_\_. She is \_\_\_\_\_ to be the next head teacher, but she doesn't want Miss Vansittart to take the position.
- 5 The \_\_\_\_\_, **Miss Blanche**, is \_\_\_\_\_, and notices everything, though Julia thinks she is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 We never find out **Adam Goodman's** real name: he is \_\_\_\_\_, working secretly as the \_\_\_\_\_ gardener, and \_\_\_\_\_. After the first murder, he tells Inspector Kelsey and Miss Bulstrode about his real identity.

# Cat Among the Pigeons

*Agatha Christie*

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### Part 3 (Chapters 13–17)

#### 1 Comprehension

Where are these people on the weekend of Miss Vansittart's murder? Match the syllables to make names or words then add to the correct sentence. The first one is half done to help you.

wel-	ir	den-	bank	vi-	nis	ors	dow-	a-
em-	to-	lia	sham	na-	mea-	sit-		

- Miss Bulstrode went to stay with the Duchess of **Wel** \_\_\_\_\_.
- Princess Shaista is being taken out by the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ann Shapland is going to meet her 'young man' \_\_\_\_\_.
- Miss Vansittart, Miss Chadwick, Miss Rowan and Mademoiselle Blanche stayed at \_\_\_\_\_.
- Julia's mother is travelling in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Jennifer's mother and father are meeting some important \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 2 Listening

See if you can answer these questions. Listen to Chapter 17 to check your answers.

- Why did Julia put a chair under her door handle?  
.....
- What did she find inside the tennis racquet handle?  
.....
- Why was Julia so afraid?  
.....
- How does Julia try to protect herself in her room after she finds the jewels?  
.....
- Who did she write a note to, and why?  
.....
- How did Julia know about Poirot?  
.....
- Where did she hide the jewels when she went to see Poirot?  
.....
- Who does Poirot telephone?  
.....

#### 3 Comprehension

Who says ...

- \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_: 'Sometimes she sounds like a woman of twenty-five – she's led such a varied life and visited so many different countries.'
- \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_: 'You must be careful ... that you're not murdered next.'

- \_\_\_\_\_ : 'I like doing different things. And I don't like to stay in one job for too long.'
- \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_: 'She was hit with something like a sandbag.'
- \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_: 'She reminds me of someone.'
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_: 'Now tell me ... about this robbery and these murders.'
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_: 'I will admit that I have formed a high opinion of your courage and your intelligence.'

#### 4 Language

The names of six jobs mentioned in the story are all mixed up. Write in the correct words.

- An archaeolician is a person who studies the past by examining the remains of very old things.
  - An electrogist is a person whose job is to install and repair electrical equipment.
  - A minanic is a person who is in charge of a particular department in the British government.
  - A clergent is a person who answers the telephone and deals with people when they arrive.
  - An anerk is a person who is employed to find out the secrets of other governments.
  - A mechister is a person who repairs and maintains machines and engines.
  - A gatron is a person who is paid to work in someone else's garden.
  - A marde is the woman in charge of students' health and living matters in a boarding school.
  - A sancary is a person who is employed to do office work, such as typing letters.
  - A decreter is a person who earns money by dancing.
- Can you give the name of one character in the story who does each job in numbers 5-10?**
- 5= \_\_\_\_\_, 6= \_\_\_\_\_, 7= \_\_\_\_\_,  
8= \_\_\_\_\_, 9= \_\_\_\_\_, 10= \_\_\_\_\_.

# Cat Among the Pigeons

*Agatha Christie*

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### Part 4 (Chapters 18–25)

#### 1 Comprehension

Can you 'gather the threads'? Label the clues below to fit the person.

A=Ann Shapland B=Mademoiselle Blanche

C=Miss Chadwick

- \_\_\_ jealous of Miss Vansittart
- \_\_\_ the previous secretary disappeared very suddenly
- \_\_\_ she seems bored in lessons
- \_\_\_ no one has met her old mother
- \_\_\_ picks up a weapon, but we don't know which one
- \_\_\_ she isn't a very good teacher
- \_\_\_ no one knows her in England
- \_\_\_ loves Meadowbank
- \_\_\_ changes jobs frequently
- \_\_\_ guesses Adam is a secret agent
- \_\_\_ Miss Bulstrode chose Miss Vansittart to look after Meadowbank on the night of the second murder
- \_\_\_ she is the kind of person no one notices

#### 2 Comprehension

Ann Shapland's and Miss Chadwick's stories are each told in 8 lines below. The lines are all mixed up. Can you first label them correctly – A=Ann Shapland, C=Miss Chadwick. Then put them in order, 1 to 8. The first part of each story has been done for you.

<p>A. 1 She pretended to be a Spanish dancer in Ramat.</p> <p>___ She shot Miss Chadwick by accident.</p> <p>___ She became jealous that Miss Vansittart was left in charge when Miss Bulstrode was away.</p> <p>___ She killed Mademoiselle Blanche with a sandbag.</p> <p>___ She killed Miss Vansittart with a sandbag.</p> <p>___ She shot Miss Springer, who found her looking for the jewels in the Sports Pavilion.</p>	<p>C. 1 She loved Meadowbank too much.</p> <p>___ She read the luggage labels and found Jennifer and Mrs Upjohn's address.</p> <p>___ She wanted to be the next head teacher.</p> <p>___ She found out Miss Bulstrode was thinking of making Miss Vansittart the next head teacher.</p> <p>___ She saw Bob Rawlinson hide the jewels.</p> <p>___ She went to investigate a light in the Sports Pavilion.</p>
--	--

<p>___ Now she was sure she would be the next head teacher, so she lied to the police about the golf club.</p> <p>___ She began to hate Miss Vansittart.</p>	<p>___ She paid Miss Bulstrode's secretary a lot of money to leave, and took the job herself.</p> <p>___ She dressed up as an American woman to trick Jennifer into giving her the tennis racket.</p>
--	---

#### 3 Vocabulary

Draw three straight lines to make seven different groups of words.

		emir	stumble	bump into	tap
	princess	sheikh	palace	balance	
royalty			scar	code	
mathematics	French		eyebrows		sabotage
geography			swimsuits		rebellion
			golf clubs		revolution
	tennis racquets				rebels

#### 4 Comprehension

Who is talking to who? You can use each name several times.

Jennifer	Miss Rich	Poirot
Miss Bulstrode	Adam Goodman	Derek O'Connor
Mrs Upjohn	Miss Chadwick	Ann Shapland

- 1 p. 80 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_:  
'You are the person I want to run this school when I retire'
- 2 p. 73 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_:  
'Did you ever notice Princess Shaista's knees?'
- 3 p. 79 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_:  
'No. ... I think I saw someone who just looked like Miss Rich. This person was much fatter than she is.'
- 4 p. 81 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_:  
'I was wondering about marrying a secret agent'
- 5 p. 84 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_:  
'We've been trying to contact you for days.'
- 6 p. 90 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_:  
'You liar!'
- 7 p. 94 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_:  
'Jennifer said you were fat. She didn't realize you were pregnant.'
- 8 p. 95 \_\_\_\_\_ to the dead \_\_\_\_\_:  
'You did give your life, my dear'

# Cat Among the Pigeons

Agatha Christie

## ANSWER KEY (STUDENT ACTIVITIES)

### Part 1 (Prologue to Chapter 4)

#### 1 Comprehension

- a 10, b 7, c 2, d 3, e 1, f 8, g 6, h 4, i 9, j 5
- Bob and Ali plan a dangerous escape from Ramat by plane.
- Ali gives Bob a million pounds worth of jewels in a small bag.
- Ali asks Bob to give the jewels to a man who helps Ali.
- Joan Sutcliffe and her daughter Jennifer go sightseeing.
- Bob visits his sister.
- Bob uses some plasticine to do something with his sister's luggage.
- Bob writes a quick note to his sister, Joan.
- Bob phones his friend at the British Embassy.
- A woman in the next room uses her mirror to watch Bob.
- Bob and Ali are killed in a plane crash.

#### 2 Language

It was because of her that Meadowbank was one of the most successful – and expensive – schools in England. Miss Bulstrode accepted different types of pupils, of all ages – girls who didn't fit into other schools, girls who wanted to go to university, girls who only wanted to learn about culture and art, and even foreign royalty. She treated her pupils as individuals, though she also believed in discipline – and she did not accept anyone who was stupid or badly behaved.

#### 3 Comprehension

- 1 J: 'I'm looking forward to having a really good afternoon tea.'
- 2 S: 'I'm sure that man on the boat was trying to steal my green bag.'
- 3 S: 'I don't know why your father couldn't leave work and meet us.'
- 4 S: 'She knew what the news must be.'
- 5 O: 'Your brother was flying Prince Ali Yusuf out from Ramat and they crashed in the mountains.'
- 6 S: When the telephone rang, she had just shown the electrician the bathroom.'
- 7 O: 'He and Prince Ali must have died immediately.'
- 8 S: 'I knew Bob would die young.'
- 9 O: ... went through the bedroom door and stopped as he saw a young man bending over a suitcase.'
- 10 O: 'If your brother didn't give you a package ... he might have hidden it in your luggage instead.'

#### 4 Comprehension

- 1 She didn't know a new, good-looking gardener had started working at the school.
- 2 They have a secret code. In the code 'wonderful girl' means 'urgent and important news'.

- 3 Achmed sabotaged the plane.
- 4 In his sister's luggage.
- 5 On the left hand side was Señora Angelica de Toledo, on the right hand side was a teacher.
- 6 No – he is a Secret Service agent. He has to watch Princess Shaista closely and report to Colonel Pikeaway if anyone seems interested in her.
- 7 That the electrician is an agent sent to search for the jewels in Mrs Sutcliffe's luggage.
- 8 Derek O'Connor tells Colonel Pikeaway that they were watching the burglar/agent, and 'We let Ball have plenty of time to search the house before we arrested him, ...in case he knew where the jewels were.'

### Part 2 (Chapters 5–12)

#### 1 Comprehension

- 1 Kelsey.
- 2 Miss Springer, the Games teacher.
- 3 She was shot through the heart.
- 4 Miss Johnson, the matron.
- 5 Miss Bulstrode thinks it was not likely.
- 6 No reason.
- 7 In the new Sports Pavilion.
- 8 Just swimsuits and sports equipment.
- 9 No sign: the murderer must have had a key.
- 10 She saw a light moving in the Sports Pavilion.
- 11 She thought one of the girls might be meeting her boyfriend.
- 12 No.

#### 2 Language

- 1 That put the cat among the pigeons! – b. That caused a lot of argument or fuss.
- 2 He's like a cat on hot bricks. – h. He's really nervous about something.
- 3 We don't have a cat in hell's chance. – j. There's no chance at all!
- 4 You're like a cat with nine lives. – c. You're very lucky: you always escape bad situations!
- 5 It's the cat's whiskers. (or, strangely, 'It's the bee's knees') – i. It's really good.
- 6 There are more ways to skin a cat! – a. There is more than one way to do something.
- 7 She was grinning like a Cheshire cat. – d. She looks very happy with herself – she had a big smile.
- 8 Oh-oh, you've let the cat out of the bag now! – e. Oh no, you've told everyone the secret!
- 9 There's not enough room to swing a cat in here! – f. This room is too small!
- 10 It's raining cats and dogs outside! – g. The rain is very heavy.

#### 3 Comprehension

- 1 **Lady Veronica Carlton**, a charming parent, who is usually looked after by her cousin because she often gets very drunk. When

- she arrives at the school, she distracts Miss Bulstrode, who is talking to Mrs Upjohn.
- 2 **Mrs Upjohn** is Julia's mother. She's a pleasant, agreeable young woman with freckles, who used to work with secret agents during the war.
- 3 No one really likes **Miss Springer**, the athletic, light-red haired Games teacher, because she is rude. They are shocked, however, when she is found shot dead in the Sports Pavilion.
- 4 **Miss Chadwick** loves Meadowbank, and is proud that she helped Miss Bulstrode to start it. She is too old to be the next head teacher, but she doesn't want Miss Vansittart to take the position.
- 5 The new French teacher, **Miss Blanche**, is slim and mouselike, and notices everything, though Julia thinks she is bored by her teaching job.
- 6 We never find out **Adam Goodman's** real name: he is Agent R, working secretly as the tall, muscular, good-looking gardener, and curious about everything and everyone. After the first murder, he tells Inspector Kelsey and Miss Bulstrode about his real identity.

### Part 3 (Chapters 13–17)

#### 1 Comprehension

- wel-sham em-ir den-nis mea-dow-bank a-na-to-lia vi-sit-tors
- 1 Miss Bulstrode went to stay with the Duchess of Welsham.
- 2 Princess Shaista is being taken out by the Emir.
- 3 Ann Shapland is going to meet her 'young man' Dennis.
- 4 Miss Vansittart, Miss Chadwick, Miss Rowan and Mademoiselle Blanche stayed at Meadowbank.
- 5 Julia's mother is travelling in Anatolia.
- 6 Jennifer's mother and father are meeting some important visitors.

#### 2 Listening

- 1 So she would hear if anyone tried to come in.
- 2 Some plasticine and lots of jewels.
- 3 Two people had been murdered already, and someone tries to open her door late at night.
- 4 She puts a heavy desk in front of the door and locks the window.
- 5 Miss Bulstrode, so that she wouldn't be worried.
- 6 A friend of her mother's had said Poirot was a very clever detective.
- 7 In a small plastic wash bag taped to her leg.
- 8 Miss Bulstrode.

# Cat Among the Pigeons

*Agatha Christie*

## 3 Comprehension

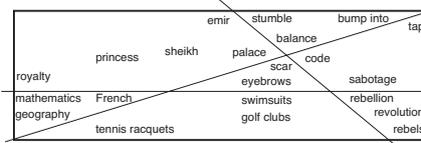
- 1 Miss Bulstrode about Princess Shaista
- 2 Julia about Jennifer
- 3 Ann Shapland
- 4 Inspector Kelsey about Miss Vansittart
- 5 Jennifer about Miss Rich
- 6 Poirot to Julia
- 7 Poirot to Julia

## 4 Language

- 1 archaeologist
- 2 electrician
- 3 minister
- 4 clerk
- 5 agent Adam Goodman
- 6 mechanic Achmed
- 7 gardener Adam Goodman
- 8 matron Miss Johnson
- 9 secretary Ann Shapland
- 10 dancer Señora Angelica de Toredó

She wanted to be the next head teacher.  
 She found out Miss Bulstrode was thinking of making Miss Vansittart the next head teacher.  
 She began to hate Miss Vansittart.  
 She became jealous that Miss Vansittart was left in charge when Miss Bulstrode was away.  
 She went to investigate a light in the Sports Pavilion.  
 She killed Miss Vansittart with a sandbag.  
 Now she was sure she would be the next head teacher, so she lied to the police about the golf club.

## 3 Vocabulary



## 4 Comprehension

- 1 p. 80 Miss Rich to Miss Bulstrode
- 2 p. 73 Poirot to Adam Goodman
- 3 p. 79 Poirot to Jennifer
- 4 p. 81 Ann Shapland to Adam Goodman
- 5 p. 84 Derek O'Connor to Mrs Upjohn
- 6 p. 90 Ann Shapland to Mrs Upjohn
- 7 p. 94 Poirot to Miss Rich
- 8 p. 95 Miss Bulstrode to the dead Miss Chadwick

## Part 4 (Chapters 18–25)

### 1 Comprehension

*Ann Shapland*

- changes jobs frequently
- no one has met her old mother
- the previous secretary disappeared very suddenly
- guesses Adam is a secret agent

*Mademoiselle Blanche*

- no one knows her in England
- she seems bored in lessons
- she isn't a very good teacher
- she is the kind of person no one notices

*Miss Chadwick*

- loves Meadowbank
- jealous of Miss Vansittart
- picks up a weapon, but we don't know which one
- Miss Bulstrode chose Miss Vansittart to look after Meadowbank on the night of the second murder

### 2 Comprehension

*Ann Shapland*

She pretended to be a Spanish dancer in Ramat.

She saw Bob Rawlinson hide the jewels.

She read the luggage labels and found Jennifer and Mrs Upjohn's address.

She paid Miss Bulstrode's secretary a lot of money to leave, and took the job herself.

She shot Miss Springer, who found her looking for the jewels in the Sports Pavilion.

She dressed up as an American woman to trick Jennifer into giving her the tennis racquet.

She killed Mademoiselle Blanche with a sandbag.

She shot Miss Chadwick by accident.

*Miss Chadwick*

She loved Meadowbank too much.