

# The Mysterious Affair at Styles

*Agatha Christie*

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### Part 1 (Chapters 1–3)

#### 1 Comprehension

Are these facts true or false? Rewrite any that you think are false, then check your answers by looking at the paragraph at the bottom of Page 1.

- Emily and John married when they were both young.
- They had three sons together – John, Alfred and Lawrence.
- When John's father died, he gave the house, Styles, and most of his money to his wife, Emily.
- His older son John would inherit Styles only after she died.
- This was unfair, and Emily was quite mean to the boys.
- They told everyone that she was just like a bad stepmother out of a children's story!

#### 2 Comprehension

Match A and B with a line. Next, look at the underlined word or phrase. Who does it refer to? Write his or her name in the third column.

A	B	Who?
1 I was wondering where to stay, when I met <u>my friend</u>	a we saw that his bed <u>had</u> not been slept in.	
2 She married John's father	b that I <u>had</u> come to Styles.	
3 He <u>had</u> qualified as a doctor	c that he <u>had</u> fallen into a river while looking at a very interesting plant.	
4 When I met <u>her</u> , suddenly I was very glad	d after his first wife <u>had</u> died.	
5 He told us	e I <u>had</u> not seen him for many years.	
6 When John opened the door of <u>his</u> room	f but then abandoned the medical profession.	

#### 3 Vocabulary

The words in the box are synonyms (words that mean the same) for the underlined words in the sentences below. Write the correct synonym in the space after each sentence.

house	rubbish	accident	get	gossip
-------	---------	----------	-----	--------

- His older son John would inherit Styles only after she died.  
get
- I have been asked to write an account of the whole story, to prevent any more sensational rumours. \_\_\_\_\_
- 'I like a good detective story,' remarked Miss Howard, 'though they are often nonsense'. \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, it's a fine property. It would be mine now, if my father had made a fair will. \_\_\_\_\_
- If you knew how easy it is to poison someone by mistake, you wouldn't joke about it. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4 Vocabulary

Find the 8 words connected to crime.

g	d	t	e	v	i	d	e	m	s
s	e	e	g	s	e	c	t	p	u
u	c	c	t	u	v	a	n	e	s
s	a	l	i	b	i	u	n	r	w
p	l	i	u	g	d	l	o	i	i
e	i	b	f	e	e	l	t	l	t
c	b	i	t	s	n	o	n	y	n
t	d	e	t	e	c	t	i	v	e
i	n	n	o	c	e	n	t	a	s
r	e	f	e	r	t	y	j	u	s

#### 5 Follow-up activity

Now match your answers to their definitions. Use the glossary to help you.

- \_\_\_\_\_ = something which helps you to find the answer to a problem, mystery or puzzle
- \_\_\_\_\_ = information from documents, objects or witnesses which is used in a court of law to try and prove something
- \_\_\_\_\_ = proof that you were somewhere else when a crime was committed
- \_\_\_\_\_ = (v) to believe something dishonest or unpleasant has been done; (n) someone who is suspected of having done something dishonest or unpleasant
- witness = a person who saw an accident or a crime
- \_\_\_\_\_ = someone whose job it is to investigate a crime
- \_\_\_\_\_ = having committed a crime or offence
- \_\_\_\_\_ = not having committed a crime or offence

**STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

**Part 2 (Chapters 4–6)**

**1 Comprehension**

Number these events in the correct order.

- \_\_\_ Emily marries Alfred.
- \_\_\_ Emily asks the two gardeners to sign a paper at her desk.
- \_\_\_ Emily puts a piece of paper in an envelope, and locks it in a purple box.
- \_\_\_ Emily sends someone to the village to get an official form for a will.
- \_\_\_ Emily writes a will leaving all her money to Alfred Inglethorp.
- \_\_\_ Emily burns a will in the fire in her room.
- 1 Emily writes a will leaving everything to John Cavendish.
- \_\_\_ Emily writes the words 'I am possessed' on an envelope.
- \_\_\_ It's four o'clock in the afternoon.
- \_\_\_ Emily calls for the gardeners.

**2 Vocabulary**

Match the character to the job they do or did.

1 Dr Bauerstein	<b>a</b> pharmacist
2 Cynthia	<b>b</b> companion
3 Dr Wilkins	<b>c</b> maid
4 Manning	<b>d</b> qualified as a lawyer
5 Dorcas	<b>e</b> gardener
6 Evie	<b>f</b> pharmacist's assistant
7 Mr Mace	<b>g</b> lawyer
8 Mary Cavendish	<b>h</b> poisons expert
9 John Cavendish	<b>i</b> land army worker
10 Lawrence Cavendish	<b>j</b> qualified as a doctor
	<b>k</b> poet

**3 Comprehension**

Answer the questions. (You don't have to use full sentences.)

- 1 Where did Alfred sleep the night Mrs Inglethorp died?  
.....
- 2 How long does it usually take strychnine to work?  
.....
- 3 What is written on the half-burnt piece of paper Poirot finds? .....
- 4 How many letters did Emily write on the day of her death?  
.....
- 5 What was strange about the sleeping powder box?  
.....
- 6 What was the date on the letter that Emily wrote to Cynthia? .....

**4 Language**

Use the words in the box to complete part of a newspaper report about Emily Inglethorp's inquest. You do not need all of the words.

Mary	noise	expert	much
Friday	accident	cocoa	has
Evie	coffee	had	Lawrence
such	many	John	so
purpose			

'... the inquest was held this \_\_\_\_\_. John Cavendish described his mother's terrible death. Dr Bauerstein, an \_\_\_\_\_ in poisons, said he believed Mrs Inglethorp drank poisoned \_\_\_\_\_. He was unable to explain why the poison took \_\_\_\_\_ a long time to work, however. Mrs Inglethorp's son, \_\_\_\_\_ Cavendish, said his mother \_\_\_\_\_ been ill for a long time and took medicine. He believes she may have taken too \_\_\_\_\_ medicine by \_\_\_\_\_. Mrs Inglethorp's daughter-in-law, \_\_\_\_\_ Cavendish, was preparing for work when she heard a \_\_\_\_\_ from Mrs Inglethorp's room. She tried to help Mrs Inglethorp, but her door was locked...'

**5 Language**

Delete the 'odd word out' (the word that doesn't fit the meaning of the others).

- e.g. river lake ~~sky~~ ocean puddle
- 1 bromide strychnine ashes sleeping-powder pharmacy
  - 2 mud coffee cocoa rum tea
  - 3 will inherit property tragedy debt
  - 4 coroner juror verdict coincidence inquest

**6 Follow-up activity**

Use **one** word from each line to complete one of the sentences below:

- 1 Ships' captains in some countries used to give their sailors a cupful of \_\_\_\_\_ every day.
- 2 No one in my family is rich, so I'm never going to \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of money.
- 3 Many countries have now banned the use of \_\_\_\_\_ as a way to kill rats.
- 4 The jurors wanted to question one of the witnesses again before they decided their \_\_\_\_\_ .

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## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### Part 3 (Chapters 7–10)

#### 1 Playing detective

Poirot talks about some puzzling facts and questions in the case. Match the character to the fact.

Character	Puzzling fact/question
1 Alfred	a) Why was he passing Styles so early in the morning?
2 Mary Cavendish	b) She certainly overheard more of the argument between Emily and the other person, and yet she says nothing.
3 Lawrence Cavendish	c) did not hear the table fall over in the room next door, yet Mary heard it on the other side of the house.
4 Dr Bauerstein	d) He is behaving strangely, saying things about the poisoning that he knows cannot be true.
5 Cynthia	e) Where was he on Monday night when Mr Mace says he was buying poison?
6 Emily	f) He buys poison under his own name, from a pharmacy close to Styles.
	g) Strychnine works quickly, but this time it was slow.

#### 2 Comprehension

Write the characters' alibis for when the poison was bought. What were they doing on the Monday afternoon that Emily Inglethorp died? e.g. Dorcas was working at Styles.

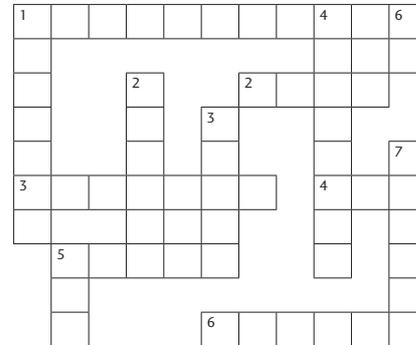
- Alfred .....
- Hastings .....
- Mary Cavendish .....
- Evie Howard .....

#### 3 Comprehension

Answer the questions.

- What does Poirot think about Miss Howard's hatred for Alfred? .....
- What clue did Hastings and Poirot find in the chest full of dressing up clothes? .....
- Who says they believe in truth and justice? .....
- What is Poirot's message for Lawrence? .....
- Why are Mary and John Cavendish arguing? .....
- Which two women is Hastings a little in love with? .....
- On the day she died, who did Emily send the third letter to? .....
- Where did Poirot find Lawrence's fingerprints? .....

#### 4 Language



##### Across

- mark made by a person's finger
- an indirect suggestion or a clue
- nervous or worried
- when you wink, you open and close one \_\_\_\_\_ quickly
- pleasant, kind, and gentle towards other people
- an extremely strong feeling of dislike for someone

##### Down

- the ceremony that is held when someone has died
- the reason for doing something
- a place where a judge and jury make decisions
- not guilty
- a secret agent
- 'I swear \_\_\_ tell the truth.'
- to argue for an accused person in a court of law

#### 5 Grammar

Complete the sentences from the story with the correct forms of the verbs in brackets.

- 'Now that Alfred Inglethorp has an alibi,' continued Poirot, 'the murderer \_\_\_\_\_ even more careful.' (be)
- Only you and Mary Cavendish, who were playing tennis, could not \_\_\_\_\_ the poison on Monday evening. (buy)
- When he \_\_\_\_\_ out he told me that he \_\_\_\_\_ them to test the cocoa from Mrs Inglethorp's bedroom. (come, ask)
- The police \_\_\_\_\_ and asked us questions, but \_\_\_\_\_ us anything. (come, not tell)
- 'It is new,' he said, before putting it back in the chest, 'and it \_\_\_\_\_ to look like Mr Inglethorp's beard.' (be cut)
- At first I was annoyed, but my annoyance turned to surprise when I heard he \_\_\_\_\_ to London. (go)

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## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### Part 4 (Chapters 11–13)

#### 1 Comprehension

Poirot says Emily ‘uses almost the same words, but this time with a different meaning.’ Write the words in the correct places to explain what he means.

Dorcas	angrily	shocked	Mary	John	Alfred	Mrs Raikes
--------	---------	---------	------	------	--------	------------

Emily says angrily, ‘I have made my decision. No fear of **scandal between husband and wife** will stop me,’ because she has heard that \_\_\_\_\_ is having an affair with \_\_\_\_\_, and she wants to tell \_\_\_\_\_. An hour later, Emily is \_\_\_\_\_ and upset, and tells \_\_\_\_\_ ‘I don’t know what to do. **Scandal between husband and wife** is a terrible thing. I’d keep it secret if I could,’ because she found a terrible letter from \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 2 Comprehension

Order these events 1-14. Which one of the sentences is wrong?

- \_\_\_ She forgot to take her last dose of medicine.
- \_\_\_ Emily woke up, dying from strychnine poisoning.
- \_\_\_ Then drank the cocoa with sleeping-powder in it.
- \_\_\_ She spilled her coffee.
- \_\_\_ She was busy with the village concert.
- \_\_\_ Someone broke Emily’s bell on Monday so that she would not be able to call for help.
- \_\_\_ She talked to Dorcas.
- \_\_\_ She argued with John.
- \_\_\_ She wrote a will giving her money to Alfred.
- \_\_\_ She found a letter proving that Alfred wanted to kill her for her money.
- \_\_\_ She argued with Alfred.
- \_\_\_ The sleeping-powder slowed the poison.
- \_\_\_ She went to bed and took her last dose of medicine.
- 1 Someone added bromide powders to Emily’s medicine, so the strychnine sank to the bottom of the bottle.
- \_\_\_ Mary came into her room to find the letter.

#### 3 Comprehension

Answer the questions about Poirot’s explanation of the night of Emily’s death

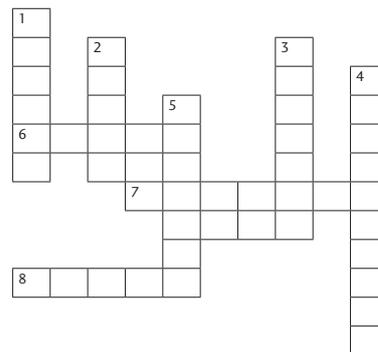
- 1 How does Poirot know that the missing coffee cup must be Cynthia’s?  
.....
- 2 Why did Mary want to go into Emily Inglethorp’s room?  
.....
- 3 Why did Mary hide the coffee cup?  
.....
- 4 Why didn’t Emily drink her coffee?  
.....

#### 4 Language

Connect the two halves of the sentence to make facts about 6 things found in the Cultural notes.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 The 12 people at a trial who give the verdict are... | a) two witnesses must also sign it.                                    |
| 2 Strychnine causes a very painful death, and is...    | b) paid to accompany the lady of a large house, almost like a friend.  |
| 3 A post mortem is...                                  | c) needed when the doctor does not know the cause of death.            |
| 4 The Great War is...                                  | d) called the jury.  |
| 5 To confirm a will is legal,...                       | e) another name for World War 1, and took place between 1914 and 1918. |
| 6 A companion was...                                   | f) from a plant.   |

#### 5 Language



#### Across

- 6 to move from side to side or up and down with quick, small movements
- 7 presenting evidence to help a person on trial in a court of law, or the lawyers who try to prove that a person who is on trial is not guilty
- 8 the person in a court of law who decides about the law, for example, how criminals should be punished

#### Down

- 1 to tell someone that you believe they did something wrong or dishonest
- 2 a formal meeting in a law court, where a judge and jury listen to evidence and decide whether a person is guilty of a crime
- 3 a flat, narrow strip of cloth which you wear around your wrist, or which forms part of a piece of clothing
- 4 a lawyer or official who tries to prove in a trial that someone is guilty
- 5 to make someone believe something that is not true, usually in order to get some advantage for yourself

ANSWER KEY (STUDENT ACTIVITIES)

Part 1 (Chapters 1–3)

1 Comprehension

- Emily and John married when they were both young. False. Emily married John's father after his first wife had died.
- They had three sons together – John, Alfred and Lawrence. False. They had two sons: John and Lawrence.
- When John's father died, he gave the house, Styles, and most of his money to his wife, Emily. True.
- His older son John would inherit Styles only after she died. True.
- This was unfair, and Emily was quite mean to the boys. False. Emily was generous to the boys.
- They told everyone that she was just like a bad stepmother out of a children's story! False. They thought and spoke of her as their own mother.

2 Comprehension

- e (John Cavendish)
- d (Emily Inglethorp)
- f (Lawrence Cavendish)
- b (Mary Cavendish)
- c (Dr Bauerstein)
- a (Alfred Inglethorp)

3 Vocabulary

- get
- gossip
- rubbish
- house
- accident

4 Vocabulary

s			g		e					
u	c			u	v					
s	a	l	i	b	i				w	
p			u	d	l				i	
e				e	e		t		t	
c					n			y	n	
t	d	e	t	e	c	t	i	v	e	
i	n	n	o	c	e	n	t		s	
									s	

5 Follow-up activity

- clue
- evidence
- alibi
- suspect
- witness
- detective
- guilty
- innocent

Part 2 (Chapters 4–6)

1 Comprehension

- Emily writes a will leaving everything to John Cavendish.
- Emily writes a will leaving all her money to Alfred Inglethorp.
- Emily marries Alfred.
- Emily sends someone to the village to get an official form for a will.
- Emily writes the words 'I am possessed' on an envelope.
- Emily calls for the gardeners.
- It's four o'clock in the afternoon.
- Emily asks the two gardeners to sign a paper at her desk.
- Emily puts a piece of paper in an envelope, and locks it in a purple box.
- Emily burns a will in the fire in her room.

2 Vocabulary

- h
- f
- g
- e
- c
- b
- a
- i
- d
- j & k

3 Comprehension

- the land agent's house
- about one hour
- 'll and'
- three
- It had no label
- 17th July

4 Language

'...the inquest was held this Friday. John Cavendish described his mother's terrible death. Dr Bauerstein, an expert in poisons, said he believed Mrs Inglethorp drank poisoned coffee. He was unable to explain why the poison took such a long time to work, however. Mrs Inglethorp's son, Lawrence Cavendish, said his mother had been ill for a long time and took medicine. He believes she may have taken too much medicine by accident. Mrs Inglethorp's daughter-in-law, Mary Cavendish, was preparing for work when she heard a noise from Mrs Inglethorp's room. She tried to help Mrs Inglethorp, but her door was locked...'

5 Language

- bromide strychnine ashes sleeping-powder pharmacy
- mud coffee cocoa rum tea

- will inherit property tragedy debt
- coroner juror verdict coincidence inquest

6 Follow-up activity

- Ships' captains in some countries used to give their sailors a cupful of rum every day.
- No one in my family is rich, so I'm never going to inherit a lot of money.
- Many countries have now banned the use of strychnine as a way to kill rats.
- The jurors wanted to question one of the witnesses again before they decided their verdict.

Part 3 (Chapters 7-10)

1 Playing detective

- e, f
- b
- d
- a
- c
- g

2 Comprehension

(the exact words may be different)

- Alfred was walking near Abbey Farm with Mrs Raikes.
- Hastings was playing tennis with Mary.
- Mary Cavendish was playing tennis with Hastings.
- Evie Howard was working at the pharmacy fifteen miles away.

3 Comprehension

- It's too strong, unnatural.
- a false beard
- Evie Howard
- 'Find the extra coffee-cup, and you can stop worrying.'
- John thinks Mary loves Dr Bauerstein. (And John thinks John is having an affair, as well.)
- Mary Cavendish and Cynthia
- a music shop
- on a bottle of strychnine in Cynthia's pharmacy

4 Language

f	i	n	g	e	r	p	r	i	n	t		
u								n		o		
n			m			h	i	n	t			
e			o		c			o				
r			t		o			c		d		
a	n	x	i	o	u	s		e	y	e		
l			v		r			n		f		
	s	w	e	e	t			t		e		
	p									n		
	y						h	a	t	r	e	d

