

Chapter 1: The body of Mrs Boddie

The sun was shining high, and the birds were chirping. The sky above the Princethorpe tower was bright blue and cloudless and the flag fluttered gently in the breeze.

Students and staff had all gathered on the tennis courts following an unexpected fire drill and were slowly ambling back to class, taking their time to enjoy the warmth of the sun and fresh air.

The librarians, Mrs Chadwick, Mrs Treadwell and Mrs Hallam were chatting happily as they made their way back to the library. Mrs Hallam was describing the conversations from her book club the previous night in which they discussed Agatha Christie's *The Body in the library*.

Mrs Treadwell opened the library door and, still deep in conversation, the three librarians entered the room. Nothing could have prepared them for the sight that met their eyes. There, lying on the floor stabbed and in a pool of blood was Mrs Boddie the biology teacher! Mrs Chadwick fainted, Mrs Hallam screamed and Mrs Treadwell grabbed the telephone and with trembling hands called for help.

Mrs Boddie was not one of the most popular teachers, regularly issuing the most LLCs and HLCs in the school. But who would hate her enough to kill her? And how, when everyone was out on the tennis courts?

Chapter 2: Hercule Princethorpe

By chance, Hercule Princethorpe (cousin of the famous Belgian detective Hercule Poirot) was visiting the school that day to lead workshops for the A-level French and History students. Mr du Toit took him to one side and pleaded with him to stay and investigate the murder before it reached the papers.

After twirling his carefully shaped eyebrows and reflecting for a few moments, Hercule gently nodded his head and with a serious expression agreed to take the case on.

He gathered all the teachers in the staff room and prepared to interview them all individually. First he spoke to Miss Alice the library assistant who was the last person to leave the library when the fire alarm went off. Next he spoke to Mrs McGonnagal the Chemistry teacher who had always had an air of mystery and could seem to appear and disappear very suddenly. Then he spoke to Mr Dracula the followed by Miss Pumpkin the new drama teacher. After this he spoke to Mr Hook the Geography teacher followed by Miss Menace and Miss Harsh, Mrs Boddie's equally unpopular daughters who worked in the school office. And finally, Hercule interviewed Mr Pooh the toilet cleaner.

Chapter 3: A discovery

Following his discussions with the teachers Hercule Princethorpe asked to be taken to the top of the school tower. Mr Spencer escorted him there and watched in mild confusion as he carefully combed the area apparently looking for something important.

Just as he looked about to give up, Hercule's gaze landed on something and he nodded his head gravely.

He signalled to Mr Spencer that he had found what he was looking for and asked him to gather all the teachers back in the library.

Mr Spencer went back to the staff room where all the teachers were drinking coffee and talking amongst themselves and told them that nobody was allowed to leave.

He announced that Hercule Princethorpe had made an important discovery in the investigation and was about to reveal what he knew. Everyone looked nervously around and a hush fell over the room.

Chapter 4: The murderer is revealed

The door slowly opened and Hercule Princethorpe slowly but purposefully entered the room, hiding something behind his back. He stood in front of the group and looked around at them all one by one with a serious expression on his face. Then he said calmly but clearly "I know what happened to Mrs Boddie. I know who killed her, how and why. And the killer is in this room right now".

The teachers all looked shocked and stared at Hercule Princethorpe in disbelief. Miss Alice put her head in her hands, Miss Menace and Miss Harsh stared at each other and Mr Pooh burst into tears.

At this Hercule Princethorpe dramatically pulled a blood stained glass slipper from behind his back. He pointed it at Miss Pumpkin and said "It was you! You murdered Mrs Boddie with this glass slipper!".

Miss Pumpkin laughed and said "That glass slipper is far too small it would never fit me, and besides I was on the tennis

courts the whole time and have no reason to want to kill Mrs Boddie”.

Hercule Princethorpe studied Miss Pumpkin carefully while twirling his eyebrows again. He said slowly but gently “Ah, but I know who you are Miss Pumpkin, or should I say ... Cinderella”.

Chapter 5: Hercule Princethorpe solves the case

Everyone turned and stared at Miss Pumpkin, who they now knew was in fact Cinderella. Miss Harsh and Miss Menace cried out and had to be held back by Mr Dracula.

Hercule continued “I know who you are and I know why you wanted to kill Mrs Boddie. She is the wicked stepmother who tortured you as a child and you have been tracking her ever since, waiting for the right moment to take your revenge. When you found out she worked in a school you trained as a teacher and took a job here yourself. You arranged to meet Mrs Boddie at the top of the tower, but hid and stabbed her with your glass slipper. You then quickly set off the fire alarm. Knowing how good Princethorpe students are at evacuating the building you knew you would have just enough time to drag the body into the library and rush outside to register your tutor group on the tennis courts. But unfortunately you

dropped your slipper on the stairs, with Mrs Boddie’s blood and your fingerprints all over it”.

Cinderella looked at Hercules and her eyes filled with tears. She knew there was no point denying it, so confessed to it all. The room fell quiet as Mr Heath led the policemen in and took Cinderella away to the police station in the school minibus.

Chapter 6: Farewell to Hercule Princethorpe

Mr du Toit shook Hercule’s hand and thanked him for his help. To show his gratefulness he handed Hercule a box of Princethorpe cookies and an honorary da Vinci.

As Hercule drove away down the school drive he looked up at the school tower and saw the Princethorpe flag fluttering in the summer breeze.

