

A Death in Oxford

Richard MacAndrew

Before reading

1. Look at the picture on the front cover. What can you see? What does it make you think about the story?
2. Look at the back cover. What kind of story is *A Death in Oxford*?
3. Look at the Contents on page 3. What do you notice about the way the chapters are written?
4. Look at the 'People in the story' on page 4. Work with a partner to put them into different groups – the same person can be in two groups.
5. Look at the map on page 5. Say where the different people in the story live or work (e.g. the Leighton Clinic is in Banbury Road).
6. Apart from the houses and offices what other places are marked on the map?
7. If you have the recording, listen to Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 1

1. What time does the story start?
2. Where is Inspector Frank Williams fifteen minutes after the start of the story and why?
3. Look at the picture on page 6. What is the room like? Write sentences like this: *A chair is on the floor.*
4. Read the story and say what isn't in the room.
5. Inspector Williams looks at a book and a letter. Why are they interesting? (Clues: look carefully at the receipt in the picture on page 9; what does a *will* tell us?)
6. Where are the police officers going at the end of the chapter?

CHAPTER 2

1. When does this chapter happen?
2. True or false?
 - a Barbara Collins is angry with Janet Leighton.
 - b Janet Leighton is losing her job.
 - c There's an article about Barbara Collins in the newspaper.
 - d Dr Collins writes for the *Oxford Post*.
 - e Janet Leighton is happy that Barbara is a writer.
 - f The clinic is closing.
3. Barbara Collins is losing her job at the Leighton Clinic.
 - a What reason does Janet Leighton give for this?
 - b What does Barbara Collins think is the real reason?
4. How does Barbara feel about Janet Leighton?
5. Do you think she has a reason to kill Janet Leighton?

CHAPTER 3

1. Who else does Barbara Collins say hates Janet Leighton?
2. What do you find out about Janet Leighton and her husband?
3. Where are the police officers going next?

CHAPTER 4

1. When does Chapter 4 happen?
2. Match the beginnings and endings.
 - 1 Janet visits Elizabeth to talk about
 - 2 Janet doesn't want to leave
 - 3 Janet's house and the clinic
 - 4 Janet wants to leave
 - 5 Janet wants her new will to be ready
 - a all her money to HALO.
 - b changing her will.
 - c on Monday morning.
 - d any of her money to her husband and son.
 - e are worth about £2 million
3. What does this chapter tell you about Janet's feelings for her family?

CHAPTER 5

1. Look at the pictures on pages 16, 17 and 18. Describe Elizabeth Morgan's office.
2. What does Janet Leighton's husband live near?
3. Is Elizabeth Morgan sure of Janet Leighton's son's address?
4. Janet Leighton's son owns a house in Woodstock Road. True or false?

CHAPTER 6

1. What time does Chapter 6 happen?
2. Where does this Chapter happen?
3. What does Simon Leighton want from his wife?
4. What reason does Janet give for not giving Simon any money? Do you believe this after reading Chapter 4?
5. What is Simon going to do about it?
6. How does Simon feel at the end of their conversation?
7. Do you think he has a reason to kill Janet Leighton?

CHAPTER 7

1. Where do Williams and Miller meet Chris Leighton?
2. How do the police officers know it is Chris Leighton?

CHAPTER 8

1. When does this chapter happen?
2. Which of these sentences are correct. Janet Leighton
 - a wants her son to get a job
 - b is happy that he is still a student
 - c is going to give Chris £500 for a car
 - d is going to stop giving him money
 - e suggests he asks his father for the money
 - f tells Chris she is changing her will
 - g is going to leave him some money when she dies
3. How does Chris feel at the end of the chapter?
4. Do you think he has a reason to kill Janet Leighton?

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CHAPTER 9

1. Where does Chapter 9 happen?
2. Who are Williams and Miller talking to?
3. What does Miller find out about the dog? Why do you think this is important?
4. Whose fingerprints are on (a) the book (b) the knife?
5. Why is it interesting to Williams that Simon Leighton's fingerprints are on the book? (Clue: look back to the picture on page 9.)

CHAPTER 10

1. What time does this chapter happen?
2. Why does Janet Leighton say 'You again!' when she opens the door?
3. What does Simon want?
4. What does Simon say about *Our Beautiful World*? What does he mean by saying this?
5. How does Simon kill Janet?
6. After he kills her what does he do and why?
7. Why doesn't he break the Chinese dog? (Clue: what did Miller find out in Chapter 9?)

CHAPTER 11

1. Look at the picture on page 31. Who is there?
2. Who do you think killed Janet Leighton and why?
3. Simon Leighton says he wasn't in the room the day before. How does Williams know it's not true?
4. How do the three people feel about Janet Leighton's death?
5. What does Inspector Williams mean when he says the title of the book (*Our Beautiful World*) and 'Not really, is it'?

After reading

Choose some of these activities:

1. Either (a) write Inspector Frank Williams' police report about the case or (b) write the *Oxford Post* newspaper report about the case.
2. Imagine you are making a film of the book. Which famous actors are going to play the characters?
3. Choose either the picture on page 11 or the one on page 22 and write a complete description of it.
4. Write an email to the author, Richard MacAndrew, saying what you like and don't like about the story.
5. Write a description of Janet Leighton saying what she looks like and what she is like as a person.
6. Work with a partner. Act out the dialogue between Janet and Chris Leighton on pages 22–25, with actions. Add some more conversation if you need it. Perform it for others.
7. Make a quiz for other students about the story, e.g. using True/False questions.
8. Look carefully at the picture on pages 6–7 for one minute, then close the book and write down a list of everything there is in the room.