

Murder at the Manor

The moon looked on as a silver fox thieved its way across the snow covered grounds of Hawthorn Manor and into the shadows of Timperley Wood. A slight breeze rustled its leaves and ruffled the feathers of the crows that were now roosting deep within the branches.

Only the piercing scream of a woman interrupted the deathly silence – the crows cawing like an old hag as they flew from the wood and darkened the sky resembling a murderous storm cloud.

Shortly after, an urgent phone call was made to the village police station.



'Inspector Doyle to see you, Ma'am.'

'Thank you Sasha, do show him in. Oh, and would you mind bringing me a blanket? It's awfully cold in here'.

Inspector Doyle took off his old and battered gloves, placed one in either pocket of his trench coat and walked briskly into the study. There, slumped over his writing desk, was the body of Charles Toffsbury, Lord of the Manor and husband of Lady Josephine Toffsbury, who now sat in a large leather chair on the other side of the room, her emerald coloured ball gown glistening in the moonlight.

'Oh Inspector, it's simply too dreadful to speak of. He was perfectly fine just an hour ago. I was speaking to him myself. Then, when he didn't join me to greet our guests, I decided to come in here to look for him.' Josephine Toffsbury buried her head in her hands.

'Has anybody touched the...er...body, your Ladyship?'

She shook her head. 'No, they couldn't have. The door was locked from the inside and only my husband and I have a key. And of course Sasha, but that goes without saying.'

'And who exactly would this Sasha be, your Ladyship?'

'That would be me, Inspector. I'm head butler at Hawthorn Manor'.

As he spoke he wrapped a blanket round Lady Toffsbury's shoulders and walked over to the window. He was just about to close it when...

'If you don't mind, Sir' said the Inspector politely, 'I'd rather nothing in the room was touched, including the window. This is, after all, a crime scene.'

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Glossary

Word	Definition
manor	a large country house
trench coat	a long raincoat
emerald	a green gemstone

Vocabulary Starter

Word	Definition
ruffled	
thieved	
piercing	
murderous	
roosting	

ANSWER QUESTION 1 BEFORE READING THE STORY

1

Look at the title. What type of text do you think this will be? Why?

2

Tick whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
The crime took place at Hawthorn Manor.		
Lady Toffsbury was murdered.		
The murder occurred in the kitchen.		
Sasha discovered the body.		

3

What were the crows doing before the scream?

4

'the crows cawing like an old hag'

What impression does this give you of the sound made by the crows?

5

The writer describes the crows as being 'like a murderous storm cloud'. What atmosphere does this image help to create?

6

Find and copy **ONE WORD** which tells you whether the Inspector walked into the study quickly or slowly.

7

What season do you think it is? Why?

8

At what time did the crime occur?

Tick one

3.00pm

7.00pm

midnight

How do you know?

9

The text is broken into two parts. What is the function of each part?

Part_1: _____

Part_2: _____

Extension
activity

The author included a silver fox and some crows in the opening because _____

Sasha is the Lord and Lady's head butler but _____

The window was left open so _____
