

Emergency Murder

Aim

- To stimulate students to read the book.

1 Tell students the title of the book is *Emergency Murder* and ask them to read (handout opposite) the blurb of the book (teach 'blurb' if necessary – a description of the story which appears on the back of the book). Ask students what genre they think the book is (a thriller). If necessary, teach 'genre' and ask students for suggestions of other genres (e.g. romance, comedy, adventure story, ghost story, etc.), and write these suggestions up on the board.

2 Ask students for other examples of thrillers – they can be fiction, plays or films. Write these up on the board. Ask students to work with a partner to discuss what usually happens in a thriller.

Suggested answers: There is a crime, often a murder, someone is usually in danger, someone – often a detective – is trying to find out who the murderer or criminal is, etc.).

3 Ask students to read Extract 1, which is a description of Grabowski, the detective in the story. Working in pairs, ask them to list what they learn about him. (Apart from the physical description, they should also be able to guess that he is single, fairly young and something of a workaholic – get students to guess what his age might be, and teach the word 'workaholic' if necessary.) Ask students for examples of other detectives from stories, plays or films (some of these may already have been suggested in stage 2).

4 Ask students to read Extracts 1 and 2 again and then discuss in pairs what Maxine and Grabowski think of each other. What do they think will happen between these two – if anything – by the end of the book? (They become closer and look as if they will have a romance.) Report back to the whole class. Did most people agree, or were there different endings to Maxine and Grabowski's story?

5 Tell students that during the story Grabowski has to question Maxine about the murder of Nanette, Dr. Hank Myer's wife. Divide the class into two groups and these groups into pairs.

- Ask the pairs in group one to think about what Grabowski and Maxine might say to each other when he questions her about the murder.
- Ask the pairs in group two to think about what Grabowski and Maxine might be feeling and thinking while he is questioning her about the murder (you might like to help if necessary, by pointing out that their personal feelings about each other might be different to how they are feeling about the murder). The pairs in both groups should make notes.
- Next, ask each pair in group one to share their ideas with a pair in group two. How different are Maxine and Grabowski's thoughts and feelings to what they are actually saying? Ask the students if they can think of a way to change what Maxine and Grabowski say to give us a clue as to what they are really thinking.

You might like to visit the groups to help out and make suggestions.

6 Role play – students could act out these scenes to the whole class.

7 Ask students to read Extracts 3, which gives information about Dr. Hank Myer, Maxine, Aaron, Charlie and Virginia. Tell students that one of these five characters murdered Nanette, Dr. Hank Myer's wife. Divide students into pairs and ask them to make notes about the different characters. Then ask them to discuss who they think the murderer is. They must also decide on a motive for the murder – a reason why the murderer wanted to kill Nanette. Pairs should then share these ideas with the whole class. Did everyone agree?

8 Ask students to choose one of the suspects. Tell them they must become this person for this exercise (alternatively tell students which suspect they should be). Tell students that they are the murderer, and ask them to make notes about how and why they killed Nanette. Next ask students with the same identity (all the Maxines, all the Aarons, all the Charlies, etc.) to share their notes with each other, then report back to the whole class about how similar their motives for and methods of murder were.

9 Ask for volunteers from the class to be Detective Grabowski. Tell the Grabowskis to walk around the room to carry out their investigations. They should question suspects about what they were doing at the time of the murder, etc.

10 If there are enough copies of *Emergency Murder* for everyone, give them out and ask students to start reading.

Emergency Murder

Blurb

When the wife of a well-known surgeon dies suddenly in the emergency room of Mercy Hospital in Milwaukee, USA, Dr. Maxine Cassidy suspects murder. The police agree – but they suspect her! Maxine is determined to find the killer and starts an investigation of her own. However, when someone tries to kill her, she begins to wonder which of her medical colleagues she can trust.

Extract 1

Maxine was pleased to see Grabowski. She had met him a couple of months ago when he had come to the ER, injured. He had asked her out for coffee afterward and they had gotten along well. But she hadn't seen him since then. He worked long hours and he didn't seem to have time for a social life. She was glad to see him again now. He was handsome, with dark hair, an untidy moustache, and muscles that showed through his shirt.

Extract 2

The next morning, Grabowski visited Hank's medical office to ask him some questions. The receptionist told him that Hank was a very busy doctor but he might have a few minutes to talk. She told him to take a seat.

Grabowski sat down feeling angry. He didn't like waiting. Also, he was already angry at Maxine and at himself. He liked Maxine a lot. They had gone out together once and he'd wanted to ask her out again. But he was so busy with his work, he hadn't had a chance yet. Now it looked like Maxine was having an affair with Hank. Maxine said she wasn't. But how could she let Hank stay overnight at her house only a few hours after Nanette's burial? What relationship did Maxine and Hank really have? And why did it matter to him so much?

Extracts 3

Dr. Hank Myer

Dr. Hank Myer was a busy surgeon with many patients. He did surgery in five different hospitals, including Mercy Hospital. He was also on the Board of Marquette University . . . His clinic was in the richest part of Milwaukee, near his home. He and his wife, Nanette, lived in a huge white brick house next to Lake Michigan.

Maxine

Maxine hung up the phone and turned off the lamp. She could still hear Hank's voice in her ears. The man had a physical effect on her – and on everyone else. He had a power which either drew people or frightened them away. She had known Hank for five years. He'd been very kind to her during her divorce six months ago.

Aaron

Aaron raised his thick eyebrows. "Everyone is satisfied with the autopsy results. Including Hank."

"I'm not," Maxine said. "A thirty-five-year-old woman should not suddenly die of heart failure."

"Are you worried that you did the right thing in the ER? Be careful, Maxine. If I do another test, you might find out things you don't want to know."

Charlie

Charlie answered. "We mailed a chemical supply company a document that proved we were a university laboratory. Then the company sent us the tetrodotoxin by special mail."

"Where did you keep the poison when it got here?"

Maxine answered. "I locked it in my desk."

Grabowski turned to Charlie. "Did you have a key to that desk?"

Charlie looked nervous. "Yes. But I didn't need it. Maxine didn't usually lock it. She forgets to lock anything. Probably her car is not locked right now."

Virginia

"Virginia's been in a terrible mood lately. I think she's having trouble with her research."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Maxine. "Virginia's famous for her research. Research is her life – all she does is work."

Charlie shook his head. "This year, the Research Review Committee at Maquette will review her research. They'll decide whether she will keep her lab and office, her salary – everything. Even if the drug company keeps giving her money, she might not have a place to do her research."