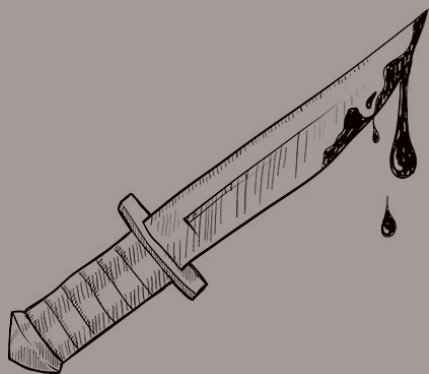




MURDER
AT
TWISTED OAK
MANOR



ROBERT PRINS

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BY ROBERT PRINS

In the opulent drawing room of Twisted Oak Manor, Rosemary stood at the window, her back to the rest of the room. James reclined on the couch smoking, looking suspiciously at his companions. Victor paced the room, fidgeting with his cufflinks, and Lady Chatsworth sipped brandy in her favourite chair.

The door opened and four heads turned as Ms Marble entered the room. Closing the door behind her, she took in the scene. They were all there. Stepping into the middle of the room where she could see them all, she began.

“You know why I have called you here,” she stated. “Each of you are suspects. Virginia was found murdered under the lemon tree. Any of you could have done it.

“Rosemary, you heard James and Virginia arguing in the kitchen and heard Virginia scream, but they had left before you could get back. What was it that you found on the kitchen floor after they had gone?”

Rosemary reluctantly turned from looking out of the window. “It was James

– I know it. I found smeared bloodstains and footprints that led out into the garden.”

“James, you thought it was Victor, didn’t you?” James blew a stream of smoke into the air as he exhaled.

“Nothing gets past you, does it, Ms Marbles?”

“And why did you think it was Victor, James?”

“I know it was Victor. He was the only one to have known about the secret tunnel. It was Victor that came in breathless before anyone knew what had happened to Virginia.”

“I thought so,” Ms Marbles mused.

“Victor, it was you that witnessed the secret transaction between Virginia and Lady Chatsworth. You saw the exchange of papers. You saw their surprised looks as they were interrupted. And what was it you saw Lady Chatsworth hurriedly hide in her pocket?”

Victor looked loathingly at Lady Chatsworth. “It was a knife. The knife used to kill Virginia.”

Lady Chatsworth sat prim on her antique armchair. Her cold eyes glared at Victor, her fists curled into balls. “It was not me!” she spat. “Fools. The knife was for Rosemary. She had requested I take it for sharpening while I went into town. I passed the knife on to Rosemary as soon as I saw her.”

Ms Marbles interrupted. “Ah, yes. You all think it was each other. But each of you missed something important. All you saw were the red herrings. Only I know who the murderer really was and she is right here in this room.”

All eyes looked between Lady Chatsworth and Rosemary and then back to Ms Marbles.

Ms Marbles drew herself up to her full height for the big revelation. “It was me, but I am not really Ms Marbles.” Pulling off her wig and outer clothing, she revealed herself as Agatha Panthis. “Ha, ha,” she laughed, “And you never guessed. You never do! What power I have as a world-famous crime writer!”

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A body under a lemon tree, a knife, four suspects, a secret tunnel, red herrings and a world renowned sleuth, all in the opulent drawing room of Twisted Oak Manor.

Who killed Virginia?

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