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Hiding in Plain Sight

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In the mesmerizing tapestry of my medical education, where the dance of molecules and the rhythms of physiology play out in intricate patterns, I've often found myself seeking refuge in the whimsical embrace of literature. Agatha Christie's "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd" stands as a beacon, not merely a whodunit but a magical elixir that fuses the analytical prowess of science with the enchantment of storytelling. Picture me, a medical student, navigating the corridors of academia not only with a textbook in hand but also with a dog-eared copy of a mystery novel tucked under my arm, ready to unlock the secrets of the human body and the human soul. As I explore the depths of Christie's narrative, the plot becomes a vivacious waltz, leading me through the twists and turns of human psychology. The characters, like molecular compounds, collide and interact in unpredictable ways, creating reactions that resonate beyond the confines of fiction. In the whimsical world of literature, I've discovered a secret passage to understanding

patients not just as medical cases but as protagonists in their own stories, each with a unique narrative waiting to unfold.

Let's delve into the essence of "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd." Christie, akin to a literary alchemist, blends the elements of suspense and human behavior, distilling a potion that transcends the pages of fiction. In the same vein, medical science becomes an art, where the diagnosis is not just a clinical exercise but a compassionate unraveling of the patient's story. Much like the unsuspecting Dr. Sheppard, who finds himself entangled in the web of deception, I too navigate the complexities of patient care, understanding that sometimes the most perplexing diagnoses hide in plain sight. As I traverse the pages of this literary masterpiece, I'm reminded that every patient, like a character in a novel, carries a unique plotline woven with the threads of joy, sorrow, and resilience. The empathetic physician becomes a storyteller, interpreting the silent narratives etched in the folds of the patient's skin and the echoes of their heartbeat.

However, as I read along further Dr.

Sheppard emerges not just as an unsuspecting narrator but as a master manipulator, orchestrating a symphony of deception that resonates through every page. As the plot thickens, so does the shroud of mystery, obscuring the true nature of his character. Dr. Sheppard's narrative voice, a soothing melody of medical insights and seemingly innocent observations, becomes a cunning tool, lulling readers into a false sense of security. Picture the reader, much like the unsuspecting residents of the fictional village of King's Abbot, entranced by Dr. Sheppard's seemingly genuine portrayal of events. We, too, fall prey to the doctor's narrative charms, trusting his account as an objective and trustworthy guide through the perplexing puzzle of Roger Ackroyd's murder. Little do we realize that much like the delicate dance of misdirection in a magic show, Dr. Sheppard is subtly diverting our attention away from the truth.

The whimsy of literature comes alive as Dr. Sheppard, the wolf in sheep's clothing, guides us through the labyrinth of clues, leading us down paths that seem logical and inevitable. With each turn of the page, he tightens the web of deceit, seamlessly blending his role as narrator and murderer. His medical acumen becomes a smokescreen, veiling the darker motives

beneath a facade of professional detachment. We, the readers, become unwitting participants in his narrative illusion, applauding his diagnostic prowess while remaining blissfully ignorant of the impending revelation. The brilliance of Christie's writing lies not just in the unveiling of the murderer but in the artful manipulation of our perceptions. We are coerced into accepting Dr. Sheppard's version of events, never suspecting that the very voice guiding us through the labyrinth of clues is the one leading us astray. Christie weaves a literary spell, casting doubt on the reliability of narrative perspectives and challenging us to question the very essence of storytelling.

In the final climax, as we see Detective Hercule Poirot step onto the center stage of our mind's eye and, with an air of unsurprised revelation, exposes Dr. Sheppard as the clandestine puppeteer pulling the strings of our perceptions. The narrative unfolds, leaving us in awe of the mastery in orchestrating the grand illusion. It is not merely a plot twist but a literary sleight of hand that forces us to reassess every word, every observation, and every diagnosis provided by Dr. Sheppard. In this revelation, the true artistry of literature manifests — a realm where words become tools of enchantment, and characters transcend the

page to manipulate the very thoughts of their audience. Christie's meticulous crafting of Dr. Sheppard's dual role as both narrator and murderer serves as a whimsical reminder that, in the world of storytelling and in medicine, nothing is as it seems.

As I absorb the lessons of Christie's narrative, the diagnostic challenges of the medical world reveal themselves as intricate puzzles, inviting me to dance through the labyrinth of symptoms, clues, and patient narratives. The whimsy of literature, as exemplified by "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd," becomes a parallel universe where empathy and understanding are not just medical skills but profound expressions of humanity. Dr. Brodsky's call for intellectual growth outside the medical realm echoes in my mind as I immerse myself not only in textbooks but in the vibrant hues of diverse narratives. The empathetic physician becomes a storyteller, interpreting the silent narratives etched in the folds of the patient's skin and the echoes of their heartbeat. Each story, whether fictional or real, enriches my perspective, fostering a compassionate approach to patient care that extends beyond the sterile confines of a clinic. Imagine me, the medical detective, not only examining symptoms but deciphering the cryptic language of the human experience. The stethoscope

becomes my trusty magnifying glass, and the patient's history transforms into a gripping plot waiting to be uncovered.

Biography

Chandana is a third-year medical student at the Anne Marion Burnett School of Medicine at TCU in Fort Worth, Texas, class of 2025. She graduated in 2019 from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and a minor in Medical Microbiology and furthered her academic pursuits with a Master of Science in Physiology from the University of Cincinnati completed in 2021. In her free time, Chandana enjoys singing and was the founder of a band called UW Unplugged during her undergraduate years. She is also a trained classical dancer and loves to read mystery novels. Through creative writing, she enjoys exploring how medicine meets life, and how we can learn from these experiences to bring healing to her patients. After graduating from medical school, Chandana aspires to pursue a career in promoting cardiovascular health in women through a blend of clinical practice and public health initiatives.