

# MURDER IN A BOOKSTORE

82

The Christmas Stran

Suddenly a hood was pulled over his head with a noose that tightened on his throat. Unable to see, to call out or to breathe, he died quickly. When the body was discovered, it lay on its back, ankles crossed, and with happy Santa Claus perched on the breastbone. The noose was fastened with the same kind of tourniquet used in two previous Christmas murders.

BEST SELLER  
BOOKS, INC.  
NON-FICTION

BIOLOGY

RELIGION

HOME REPAIR

LE!

MAGIOLOGY  
by  
GREGORY POPE

**O**n December 23rd the body of Quintus Tertius, a bibliophile, was found as shown in the basement of the Boswell Bookstore. Page 82 of *The Christmas Strangler*, by Elden Hack, lay open on a counter. Mr. Tertius, a regular customer, often rummaged in the stacks of books in the basement.

Eppis Pepys and his wife, Alice Pepys, were proprietors of the Boswell Bookstore. Each of them admitted having gone down to the basement within a half hour of the probable time of the murder.

E. Pepys said, "I went down to get a copy of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*. I saw no one in the basement."

A. Pepys said, "I went down to get a copy of Spinoza's *Ethics*. I saw no one in the basement."

From these facts and from an examination of scene, can you tell who killed Quintus Tertius, and why?

## Questions

1. Did Tertius commit suicide?

Yes  No

2. Is it likely that the murderer entered and left the bookstore without being noticed? Yes  No

3. Do you think Tertius was reading *The Christmas Strangler* when he was accosted? Yes  No

4. Did the murder method require preparation? Yes  No

5. Do you think the killer brought his murder equipment with him?  
Yes  No

6. Did Eppis Pepys have a motive for killing Tertius? Yes  No

7. Did Alice Pepys have a motive for killing Tertius? Yes  No

8. Do you think that the killer brought *The Christmas Strangler* with him?  
Yes  No

9. Do you think that Tertius was engrossed in reading at the time of his murder? Yes  No

10. Can you figure out a probable motive for this murder?

11. Who do you think killed Tertius?

*Solution on page 62*