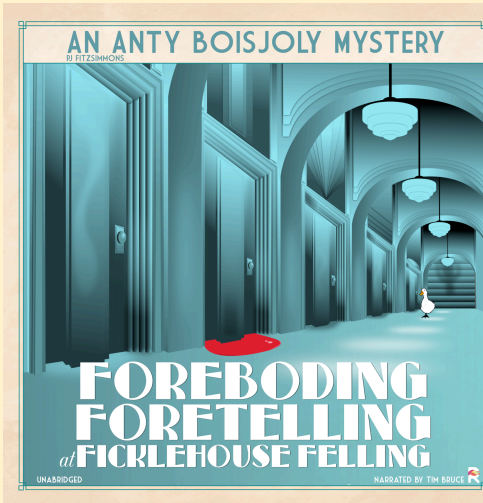


Boisjoly Bulletin

Quillfeather Chronicle

November 2024 ★ Pre-Christmas Hype Edition

NO NEWS!



Not yet available on Audible!

If and when it ever is it'll be announced in the Christmas newsletter.

This newsletter has been delayed three weeks in anticipation of a clever headline like 'Foreboding Foretelling Finally Found on Audible', but it's been four weeks since the official launch and there's still no sign that it's anywhere near the end of Audible's complex approval process (which, insiders tell us, is a literal game of Snakes and Ladders).

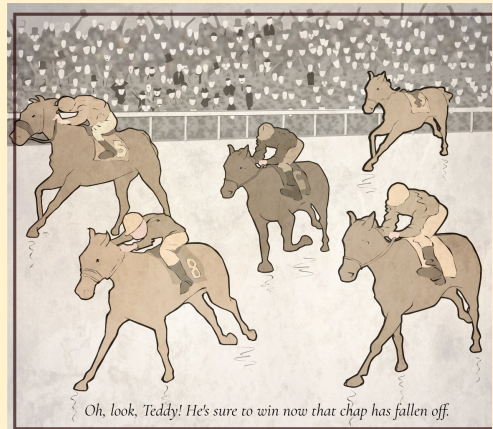
In the meantime, for those not subscribed nor married to Audible, the seventh Anty Boisjoly has been available on [Nook](#), [Kobo](#), and [Chirp](#), among many other platforms, for weeks now.

Foreboding Foretelling at Ficklehouse Felling is Anty Boisjoly's reddest-of-herringed, twistiest-of-turned, locked-roomiest manor house mystery yet, with twice the average number of twists and red herrings and a large cast of eccentrics for narrator Tim Bruce to embody, including a deaf butler and a symbolically significant duck.

Odds On Teddy Being Ready for Christmas

The second Teddy Quillfeather Mystery, *Frauds On Favourite*, is still scheduled for Christmas but there are murmurs among the tighter insiders that the yule deadline is showing signs of slippage.

A sudden family urgency that, in the end, transformed into a happy reunion took me away from home and Teddy for ten days and so, accordingly, I'm about three weeks behind schedule.



The Case of Audible Plus



I learn from a very kind review of the entire Anty Boisjoly series that the first audiobook, *The Case of the Canterfell Codicil*, is on Audible Plus. Further investigation indicates that Audible Plus is a catalogue of audiobooks which don't require one of Audible's beloved credits. Should you have any Audible subscribers among your friends who don't know that *The Case of the Canterfell Codicil* is, for them, free, please pass along this valuable tip.

[Click for Canterfell on Audible Plus](#)

The Cast of the Canterfell Codicil

Last newsletter saw the introduction of a fluffy bit of fun featuring the cast list notes that I provide to Tim Bruce as he prepares to narrate the audiobooks. This was suggested by a reader and it's a delightful idea but I share rather a lot of spoilers with Tim, and so for the first effort — the cast list for *Foreboding Foretelling at Ficklehouse Felling* — there were many redactions.

The cast notes for the first audiobooks aren't really suitable for this purpose (in that they don't exist), so below is a custom-built list for which no redactions are necessary.

Anty Boisjoly (pronounced Beaujolais, like the wine region). Wodehouseian gad-about. Wealthy and idle, optimistic, energetic, and fun-loving. The character is very much informed by Galahad Threepwood (not to mention Fred Ickenham and Psmith and certainly in the view of many readers, Bertie Wooster). Oxford educated, London born and bred. He's 29.

Anty went to Oxford where he was on the second tier rowing team. He has a charmed life and has never worked a day of it.

"A mortician?" I said. "No, hardly. I gave a famously moving eulogy at my father's funeral last year, parts of which were printed in the Times. They left out the funniest lines, in my view, but that's modern journalism for you. And that's the closest I've come to that noble undertaking, if you'll forgive the pun."

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Vickers is a lifelong domestic, and he has served as valet to the Boisjoly gentlemen for (at least) three generations. He's about 103 and he ceased forming short-term memories around about the coronation of George V, but his recollection of everything prior to that is encyclopaedic. He's very correct, and when the gears engage he's very eloquent and useful to the investigation. When we first meet Vickers he's been reduced to footman at Canterfell Castle, but this is due for a radical shift before the story is done.

It had been some hours since Vickers had last seen me, and consequently he had entirely forgotten who I was. I allowed him a moment to come to the light on his own which, after a few moments of productive blinking, he did.

Inspector Ivor Wittersham is a hard-working, working-class, class-conscious copper of the old school. He'll be older than Anty by at least ten years and will have served in the first world war, rising in the ranks such that he was discharged right through the class barriers at Scotland Yard. He's probably a first-generation Londoner.

It was one of those rich, sun-splashed afternoons, custom ordered for a journey by train and made all the more glorious by two whisky-and-sodas and the Surrey countryside chugging past, smelling of apple blossoms and coal dust. Nevertheless, I was pleased when, just after departure, the door to my otherwise lonesome compartment rattled open and a chap with a military bearing and suspicious moustache looked in and said "Hastings?" I leapt at the opportunity, of course, and sprang to my feet and offered him my hand.

"No," I said, "Boisjoly."

Evelyn Fairfax 'Fiddles' Canterfell shares considerable chronicle and character with Anty. They were at Eton and Oxford together and Fiddles was coxswain to Anty's rowing team. Fiddles is much more serious minded, though (he'd have to be), and ambitious, possibly to a dangerous degree.

...he once wrote in a paper that Ophelia would have been better advised to bring an action against Hamlet for breach of promise.

Evelyn Harold 'Hal' Canterfell is Fiddles' cousin and only one of three men named Evelyn at Canterfell. Hal also went to Eton and Oxford but was a year behind Anty and he may harbour some resentment about the comparative liberty afforded first-born sons. Sebastian Canterfell, the first murder victim, is Hal's father, and he might appear initially indifferent to the tragedy but this is soon revealed to be a family trait.

Hal was two years behind us and so it was exigent upon us to abuse him mercilessly, establishing a lifelong dynamic. I suppose to him I was still the worldly upperclassmen, forever armed with a loaded ice bucket and convenient second-floor window giving onto the quadrangle.

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Evelyn Clarence 'The Major' Canterfell is two generations older than Anty, Fiddles, and Hal, and father to Sebastian (the first murder victim) and Halliwell, Sebastian's brother and Fiddles' father. The major is of the colonial, exploitative imperial era and makes no apologies for it, and in fact believes that all young Englishmen should grow a big moustache and cover themselves in blood and glory at the reaches of the empire. *He stood aloof and solid as a load-bearing column, pinioned on a spine that had been professionally ossified by years in the British overseas army. His aged face, that which could be seen of it behind a moustache like a foxtail stole, was a pastiche of emotion ranging from insouciance to indifference.*

Laetitia Canterfell is the widow of the deceased and it becomes very clear very soon that she mourns his loss less than anyone. She spends most of the book tipping between tipsy and trolleyed, and hence finding it difficult to walk the fine line the secret nature of which Anty eventually discerns.

"Thank you, Mister Boisjoly," she said, with the unmistakable crackle of a proud woman who has been drinking steadily and alone, and thinks it doesn't show. "But as you can see, I have one already." She held up, to illustrate the point, an empty glass.

Halliwell Canterfell is Sebastian's brother and Fiddles' father. He's a bit doughy and distracted and, while he appears initially to be merely indifferent he soon shows himself to be obsessively egocentric. Like Anty, Fiddles, and Hal, he will have led a privileged life, perhaps even moreso, in that he was elected by default to his seat in parliament, five times. He has a very old-world, aristocratic relationship with his son, which is to say, virtually none beyond the wholly pragmatic.

Which was well within the range of the expected, for those who know Halliwell Canterfell. It's broadly understood that the nation's asylums are only able to operate as efficiently as they do because parliament is there to take the most acute cases off their hands. And it's commonly known that a reliable measure of the depth of a man's psychosis is the duration of his career in the House of Commons. Halliwell Canterfell had been returned to Westminster by the good people of Fray a record five times. On each occasion it was a landslide.

Rosalind Pierpoint is the American cousin, seeing England for the first time and relying on the hospitality of distant relations. She's also young and beautiful and, on first impressions, a bit dim-witted and innocent. She's good-natured and calm but one could easily form the view that this is partially because she thinks that locked-room murder is a quaint old British tradition (which, arguably, it is).

Rosalind took on the demeanour of a young forest doe, suddenly and without warning asked to give its views on the Treaty of Rome.

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Lydde is the subversive butler. He's probably more metropolitan than the rest of the staff and it could be supposed that he's working as a butler in a remote great house while London police would like him to assist with their enquiries. Like everyone else in the house, he has a secret, but among them is not his desire to see the streets run red with the blood of the ruling class.

Lydde crossed his arms in a manner which said "What of it?" as clearly as if he'd spoken the words aloud.

Luna is the only maid in the house, and this makes her something of a dogsbody to Lydde and Miss Lively, but this suits her shy and nervous disposition well. She'll be local to Fray, no doubt, and young and naive but, like everyone else, she hides a secret but, unlike everyone else, the burden is very nearly unbearable.

"Yes, Mister Lydde," said Luna, with an obsequiousness at which the meekest toady in the court of Louis XIV would have shaken a censorious head.

Miss Lively is the only member of the household staff to survive the cull — the rest of the staff, it comes to pass, has been fired and Miss Lively has been kept on because of her ability to work within a tiny kitchen budget but this, like much of what happens at Canterfell Castle, is in fact a diversion of a deflection of an indiscretion.

"Needs more sherry," said Miss Lively, in agreement with some unspoken proposition. Then she swept the bottle to her lips and drank from it like it granted youth. She set the bottle aside and said, with a satisfied smile, "That's better."

Hug Pennybun is constable of Fray. He'll be forgotten-how-many-generations Surrey working class and he loves his town and his job and is only constitutionally capable of dealing with the conflict that comes with law enforcement by believing the absolute best of everyone, including Anty and Fiddles, whom he arrested on several occasions during their youth.

Constable Hugh "Hug" Pennybun had entirely the wrong temperament to be a police officer anywhere but a town like Fray where, until today, the most serious offence committed was public drunkenness, and even then only when Fiddles and I were down from Oxford.

List Porter runs the local pub and inn, The Hare's Foot. He's a font of local lore and legend and a staunch critic of the rapid development that he feels is ruining his little patch of untouched England. Obviously List is from Fray, as was, doubtless, his entire family tree for as far back as that of Hug Pennybun.

List was much like his pub — he was squat and friendly and welcoming, and he had been a fixture in Fray for as long as I had known the place. He had little thatching on the roof, but he had always compensated for that with a cloth cap and the sort of wily obsequiousness that men with cloth caps tend to have in buckets.

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Mallet (the gardener) is the gardener. He'll be of local working-class convention and cadence, but his principle characteristic in the book is a strong resentment stemming from the extra work he has as, now, the sole grounds staff, not counting the goat. *"Hallo," I called, slowing my gait. The gardener — a thin, fragile type who looked like he'd fallen from the stick on which he'd been posted to warn off the crows — was directing his entire weight toward the castle, and it was being countered by a rope attached to a small white goat whose interests appeared to lie elsewhere.*