

Dame Agatha Mary
Clarissa Christie
(1890-1976)





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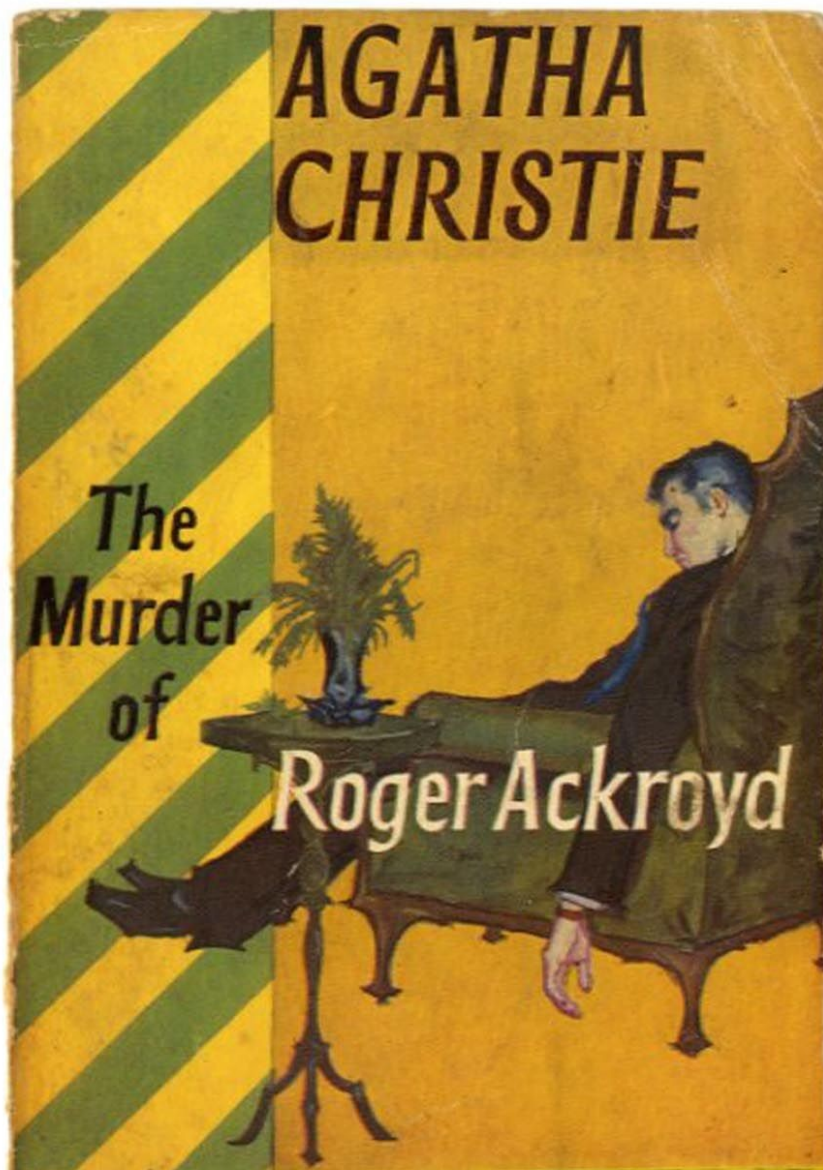
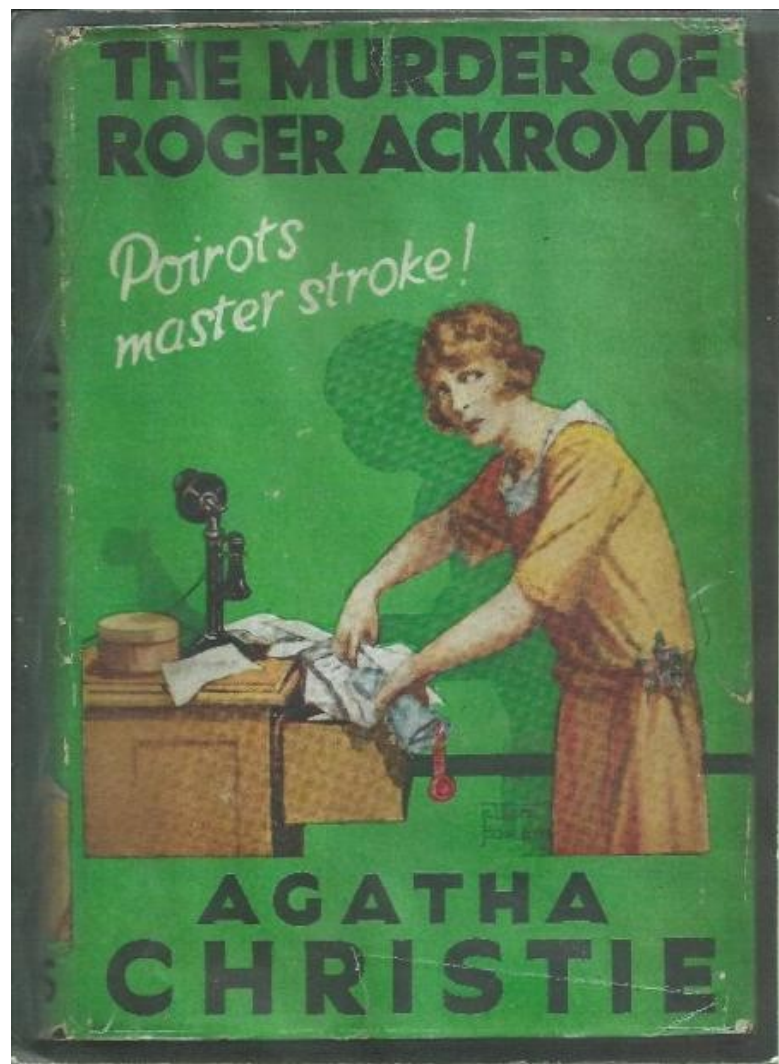


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THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD (1926)



NO PLACE

Our village, King's Abbot, is, I imagine, very much like any other village. Our big town is Cranchester, nine miles away. We have a large railway station, a small post office, and two rival "General Stores." Able-bodied men are apt to leave the place early in life, but we are rich in unmarried ladies and retired military officers. Our hobbies and recreations can be summed up in the one word, "gossip." There are only two houses of any importance in King's Abbot. One is King's Paddock, left to Mrs. Ferrars by her late husband. The other, Fernly Park, is owned by Roger Ackroyd.

HERCULE POIROT

“Why, he’s Hercule Poirot! You know who I mean—the private detective. They say he’s done the most wonderful things—just like detectives do in books. A year ago he retired and came to live down here. Uncle knew who he was, but he promised not to tell anyone, because M. Poirot wanted to live quietly without being bothered by people.” “So that’s who he is,” I said slowly. “You’ve heard of him, of course?” “I’m rather an old fogey, as Caroline tells me,” I said, “but I have just heard of him.” “Extraordinary!” commented Caroline. I don’t know what she was referring to—possibly her own failure to discover the truth. “You want to go and see him?” I asked slowly. “Now why?” “To get him to investigate this murder, of course,” said Caroline sharply. “Don’t be so stupid, James.”

THE LITTLE GREY CELLS

Poirot raised his eyebrows. “You do not use your little grey cells,” he remarked drily

“What’s the great idea?” he said, laughing. “Some scientific machine? Do we have bands round our wrists which register guilty heart-beats? There is such an invention, isn’t there?” “I have read of it, yes,” admitted Poirot. “But me, I am old-fashioned. I use the old methods. I work only with the little grey cells. Now let us begin—but first I have an announcement to make to you all

METHOD and INSPECTOR RAGLAN

“Certainly,” said the inspector. “To begin with—method. That’s what I always say—method!” “Ah!” cried the other. “That, too, is my watchword. Method, order, and the little grey cells.” “The cells?” said the inspector, staring. “The little grey cells of the brain,” explained the Belgian. “Oh, of course; well, we all use them, I suppose.” “In a greater or lesser degree,” murmured Poirot. “And there are, too, differences in quality. Then there is the psychology of a crime. One must study that.” “Ah!” said the inspector, “you’ve been bitten with all this psycho-analysis stuff? Now, I’m a plain man —” “Mrs. Raglan would not agree, I am sure, to that,” said Poirot, making him a little bow. Inspector Raglan, a little taken aback, bowed

He leaned forward, and suddenly his voice and his whole personality changed. He suddenly became dangerous. “I who speak to you—I know the murderer of Mr. Ackroyd is in this room now. It is to the murderer I speak. Tomorrow the truth goes to Inspector Raglan. You understand?”

There was a tense silence. Into the midst of it came the old Breton woman with a telegram on a salver. Poirot tore it open. Blunt’s voice rose abrupt and resonant. “The murderer is amongst us, you say? You know—which?”

Competing narratives

As I say, up till the Monday evening, my narrative might have been that of Poirot himself. I played Watson to his Sherlock. But after Monday our ways diverged. Poirot was busy on his own account. I got to hear of what he was doing, because in King's Abbot you get to hear of everything, but he did not take me into his confidence beforehand. And I, too, had my own preoccupations.

A JIG-SAW PUZZLE/ A MYSTERY

On looking back, the thing that strikes me most is the piecemeal character of this period. Everyone had a hand in the elucidation of the mystery. It was rather like a jig-saw puzzle to which everyone contributed their own little piece of knowledge or discovery. But their task ended there. To Poirot alone belongs the renown of fitting those pieces into their correct place. Some of the incidents seemed at the time irrelevant and unmeaning. There was, for instance, the question of the black boots. But that comes later

SHERLOCK as a MODEL

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POIROT'S LITTLE REUNION

“Another time,” he observed, “I must be more careful of his amour propre. And now that we are left to our own devices, what do you think, my good friend, of a little reunion of the family?” The “little reunion,” as Poirot called it, took place about half an hour later. We sat round the table in the dining room at Fernly. Poirot at the head of the table, like the chairman of some ghastly board meeting. The servants were not present, so we were six in all. Mrs. Ackroyd, Flora, Major Blunt, young Raymond, Poirot and myself. When everyone was assembled, Poirot rose and bowed. “Messieurs, mesdames, I have called you together for a certain purpose.” He paused. “To begin with, I want to make a very special plea to mademoiselle.”

Messieurs et Mesdames, this reunion of mine is at an end. Remember—the truth goes to Inspector Raglan in the morning.

SELF-CONSCIOUS DETECTION

“Just tell me this, doctor,” said Miss Russell. “Suppose you are really a slave of the drug habit, is there any cure?” One cannot answer a question like that off-hand. I gave her a short lecture on the subject, and she listened with close attention. I still suspected her of seeking information about Mrs. Ferrars. “Now, Veronal, for instance—” I proceeded. But, strangely enough, she didn’t seem interested in Veronal. Instead she changed the subject, and asked me if it was true that there were certain poisons so rare as to baffle detection. “Ah!” I said. “You’ve been reading detective stories.” She admitted that she had. “The essence of a detective story,” I said, “is to have a rare poison—if possible something from South America, that nobody has ever heard of—something that one obscure tribe of savages use to poison their arrows with. Death is instantaneous, and Western science is powerless to detect it. Is that the kind of thing you mean?” “Yes. Is there really such a thing?” I shook my head regretfully. “I’m afraid there isn’t. There’s curare, of course.”

MOTIVES

Let us take a man—a very ordinary man. A man with no idea of murder in his heart. There is in him somewhere a strain of weakness—deep down. It has so far never been called into play. Perhaps it never will be—and if so he will go to his grave honoured and respected by everyone. But let us suppose that something occurs. He is in difficulties—or perhaps not that even. He may stumble by accident on a secret—a secret involving life or death to someone. And his first impulse will be to speak out—to do his duty as an honest citizen. And then the strain of weakness tells. Here is a chance of money—a great amount of money. He wants money—he desires it—and it is so easy. He has to do nothing for it—just keep silence. That is the beginning. The desire for money grows. He must have more—and more! He is intoxicated by the gold mine which has opened at his feet. He becomes greedy. And in his greed he overreaches himself. One can press a man as far as one likes—but with a woman one must not press too far. For a woman has at heart a great desire to speak the truth. How many husbands who have deceived their wives go comfortably to their graves, carrying their secret with them! How many wives who have deceived their husbands wreck their lives by throwing the fact in those same husbands' teeth! They have been pressed too far. In a reckless moment (which they will afterwards regret, bien entendu) they fling safety to the winds and turn at bay, proclaiming the truth with great momentary satisfaction to themselves. So it was, I think, in this case. The strain was too great. And so there came your proverb, the death of the goose that laid the golden eggs. But that is not the end. Exposure faced the man of whom we are speaking. And he is not the same man he was—say, a year ago. His moral fibre is blunted. He is desperate. He is fighting a losing battle, and he is prepared to take any means that come to his hand, for exposure means ruin to him. And so—the dagger strikes!"He was silent for a moment. It was as though he had laid a spell upon the room. I cannot try to describe the impression his words produced. There was something in the merciless analysis, and the ruthless power of vision which struck fear into both of us

THE WHOLE TRUTH

“And now, messieurs et mesdames,” said Poirot rapidly, “I will continue with what I was about to say. Understand this, I mean to arrive at the truth. The truth, however ugly in itself, is always curious and beautiful to the seeker after it. I am much aged, my powers may not be what they were.” Here he clearly expected a contradiction. “In all probability this is the last case I shall ever investigate. But Hercule Poirot does not end with a failure. Messieurs et mesdames, I tell you, I mean to know. And I shall know—in spite of you all.” He brought out the last words provocatively, hurling them in our face as it were. I think we all flinched back a little, excepting Geoffrey Raymond, who remained good-humoured and imperturbable as usual

Have I not told you at least thirty-six times that it is useless to conceal things from Hercule Poirot?” he demanded. “That in such a case he finds out?”

The disappearance of Agatha Christie

1926

HOUNDS SEARCH FOR NOVELIST



Bovies were used yesterday in the renewed hunt around Newlands Corner for Mrs. Agatha Christie, the vanished novelist, the latest portrait of whom appears above. On the right is Rosalind, her seven-year-old daughter, photographed in the grounds of her home at Sunningdale.

MRS. CHRISTIE DISGUISED.



Mrs. Agatha Christie as she was last seen (centre), and (right) how she may have disguised herself by altering the



HOUNDS SEARCH FOR NOVELIST



BERKSHIRE CONSTABULARY.
WOKINGHAM DIVISION.
9th. December 1926

MISSING

From her home "Styles" Sunningdale in this Division.
Mrs. Agatha Mary Clarissa CHRISTIE
(WIFE OF COLONEL A. CHRISTIE)



1000 FREE CROSS-WORD COMPETITION! SEE PAGE 4

Daily Mirror

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MYSTERY OF WOMAN NOVELIST'S DISAPPEARANCE



WOMAN NOVELIST'S DISAPPEARANCE



WOMAN NOVELIST'S DISAPPEARANCE

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE WOMAN NOVELIST...
MRS. J. K. BROWN, 45, of 12, St. James's Place, London, W.1, has disappeared since she was last seen on the morning of the 28th. She is 5' 6" tall, has dark hair, and is wearing a dark coat and a hat.

DAILY SKETCH

INCORPORATING THE DAILY GRAPHIC

No. 5,518. Telephones { London—Museum 2841. Manchester—City 4501. } LONDON, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1926. [Registered as a Newspaper.] ONE PENNY.

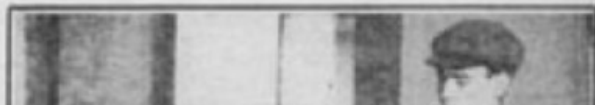
20 Pages

DARK
BLUES
AGAIN
ROUTED
AT
TWICKENHAM

MRS. AGATHA CHRISTIE FOUND ALIVE



Colonel Archibald Christie, who throughout the long suspense resolutely declined to believe that his wife was dead. "I want to believe she is alive," he said.



**DUSTIN
HOFFMAN**



**VANESSA
REDGRAVE**



On December 4th, 1926, the world's most famous
mystery writer disappeared...

Agatha

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AGATHA AND THE TRUTH OF MURDER



SOME PEOPLE
HAVE A TASTE FOR MURDER...

WANTED

INFORMATION AS TO THE
WHEREABOUTS OF



CHAS. A. LINDBERGH, JR.

OF HOPEWELL, N. J.

SON OF COL. CHAS. A. LINDBERGH

World-Famous Aviator

This child was kidnaped from his home
in Hopewell, N. J., between 8 and 10 p. m.
on Tuesday, March 1, 1932.

DESCRIPTION:

Age, 20 months

Weight 27 to 30 lbs

Hair, blond, curly

Eyes, dark blue



