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Учебная серия «Книга-фильм»

А.Н. Панина

ЧИТАЕМ, СМОТРИМ, ОБСУЖДАЕМ

по роману Агаты Кристи «Ответ знает Эванс»
и экранизациям её произведений

Учебно-методическое пособие

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CONTENTS

ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ	4
AGATHA CHRISTIE (1890-1976) – MARY CLARISSA MILLER.....	8
Dame Agatha Christie: queen of the maze.....	8
A brief history of the detective novel.....	13
WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK EVANS	16
Unit 1.....	16
Unit 2.....	19
Unit 3.....	22
Unit 4.....	25
Unit 5.....	28
Unit 6.....	31
FILMS ON THE BOOK.....	34
Why didn't they ask Evans (1980).....	34
Why didn't they ask Evans (2022).....	45
OTHER FILMS.....	50
The murder of Roger Ackroyd.....	51
At Bertram's hotel.....	59
TAPE MEASURE MURDER	79

ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ

Занятия по домашнему чтению являются неотъемлемой составляющей процесса обучения иностранному языку. Занятия по домашнему чтению способствуют раскрытию национально-специфического фона функционирования английского языка, а также формированию у студентов навыков восприятия и оценки полученной информации. Работа с пособием призвана стимулировать сознательное отношение к чтению и познавательной деятельности, а также развитию навыков и умений, необходимых для вдумчивого чтения с целью извлечения информации. Вопросы и задания проблемного характера, содержащиеся в пособии, являются предпосылкой для формирования у студентов собственных суждений и умения излагать свое мнение и давать оценку прочитанному.

В предлагаемом пособии раскрытие национально-культурных особенностей жизни Великобритании сочетается с системой упражнений, направленных на развитие и закрепление языковых и речевых навыков.

Данное пособие является вторым изданием ранее выпущенного пособия, и в нем полностью добавлен один – третий раздел, в котором студентам предлагается выполнить ряд заданий до и после просмотра двух мини-сериалов, выпущенных непосредственно по прочитанной книге. Необходимость переиздания настоящего пособия как раз и возникла в связи с возрождением интереса к творчеству А. Кристи и выходом в 2022 году нового сериала, снятого по книге «Ответ знает Эванс». Кроме того, в момент публикации первого издания, самый старый мини-сериал, выпущенный в 1980 году с тем же названием, не был доступен российским зрителям. Сегодня, благодаря развитию современных технологий, появилась оцифрованная версия первого сериала, а вместе с ней и уникальная возможность сравнить две режиссерские работы, временная разница между которыми составляет более сорока лет. Кроме того, в настоящем издании были исправлены некоторые орфографические и пунктуационные ошибки, допущенные в первом издании, и добавлен список произведений А. Кристи, разделенный по тематическим группам.

Предлагаемая методическая разработка входит в учебную серию «Книга – фильм», предназначенную для студентов английского отделения. Выбор книги обусловлен ее принадлежностью к популярному во все времена жанру – детективу. В рамках этого жанра произведения А. Кристи всегда стоят особняком благодаря особенностям авторского языка и занимательности сюжета. В произведениях А. Кристи естественно сочетаются увлекательная интрига, тонкий психологизм и современный живой английский язык.

Уже в 30-40-е годы XX века Кристи – самый читаемый в массовой среде писатель на Западе. Она удостоивается миллионных тиражей изданий, получает почетную степень доктора литературы, становится королевой детектива, а в 1971 году становится кавалерственной дамой. Успех ей сопутствовал грандиозный, по числу тиражей и количеству публикаций она заняла третье место в англоязычном книжном мире, вслед за Шекспиром и Библией. Но и в России произведения А. Кристи уже несколько десятилетий пользуются неизменной неослабевающей популярностью у читателей всех поколений. То же самое можно сказать и о фильмах, снятых по ее произведениям. У Агаты Кристи была уникальная писательская судьба – практически все ее детективные романы были экранизированы. Часто в них играли ведущие, самые знаменитые актеры современности – Марлен Дитрих, Ингрид Бергман, Ив Монтан, Альберт Финни, Остин Тревор. Но самыми знаменитыми актерами, тем, кому, по мнению самой А. Кристи удалось наиболее точно создать на экране образы прославленных детективов Пуаро и Марпл, являются Дэвид Суше и Джоан Хиксон. Именно с их именами зритель ассоциирует образы двух знаменитых детективов, что учитывается в предлагаемой методической разработке. Вниманию студентов предлагается фильм с участием Суше в роли Пуаро «Убийство Роджера Аккройда» и фильм с участием Джоан Хиксон в роли Мисс Марпл «Отель Бертрам».

Очевидно, что и в наше время интерес к творчеству Агаты Кристи не ослабевает. Большой популярностью пользуются ее романы, которые вновь и вновь служат вдохновением для каждого нового поколения режиссеров. Доказательством тому служит экранизация романа «Ответ знает только Эванс», которой он удостоился три раза: в 1980, 2009 и в 2022 годах, причем всегда режиссёры принимали решение снять многосерийный сериал на основе относительно небольшого романа. Их творчество представляет собой особый интерес для читателей романа, потому что дарит замечательную возможность сравнить разное восприятие героев, интерпретацию описываемых событий режиссерами и актёрами, принадлежащими к разным поколениям.

Развитие современных технологий предоставляет преподавателю широкие возможности для технизации процесса обучения (использование видео, аудиоматериалов, Интернет ресурсов и т.д.). Насыщение учебного процесса техническими средствами является объективной необходимостью, что объясняется, в первую очередь, большими возможностями обучающей техники, благодаря которой успешно решается задача – существенным образом повысить эффективность учебного процесса на всех стадиях обучения. Применение вспомогательных средств слуховой и зрительной наглядности имеет большое значение во всех тех случаях, когда

осуществляется семантизация новых лексических единиц или объяснения грамматического материала, когда для развития умений и навыков устной иноязычной речи требуются сюжеты перспективные линии повествований и диалогов, чем подсказывается логика и содержание высказывания и облегчается продуцирование высказывания на иностранном языке, так как снимается трудность – о чем говорить. Преподаватель иностранного языка должен использовать все имеющиеся в его распоряжении аутентичные средства для создания условий, необходимых для стимулирования интеллектуального и эмоционального потенциала студентов, а также их коммуникативной компетентности.

Предлагаемая методическая разработка состоит из нескольких частей. *Первая часть* представляет собой вводный этап и подразумевает предтекстовую работу. В ней студенты знакомятся с основными моментами жизни и творчества Агаты Кристи, а также изучают основные жанровые принципы детектива и его историю. Учитывая особенности современного студента – направленность на зрительное восприятие информации, студентам предлагается прокомментировать ряд фотографий, отражающих различные эпизоды жизни Агаты Кристи. Также в этом разделе приводятся цитаты писательницы, отражающих ее жизненную позицию; их обсуждение поможет студентам настроиться на восприятие произведений.

Вторая часть пособия – поурочное планирование занятий по домашнему чтению. Каждая часть включает задания для самостоятельной работы студентов дома, а также аудиторные задания. К каждой главе предлагаются лексические и грамматические упражнения, а также задания на перевод с русского на английский и с английского на русский. Задания и упражнения направлены на усовершенствование техники чтения, развитие навыков монологической и диалогической речи. Лексические упражнения направлены на активизацию новой лексики, расширение и пополнение словарного запаса. Особое место занимают задания, направленные на развитие навыков говорения, способствующие совершенствованию навыков монологической и диалогической речи. Большой потенциал для обучения устной речи имеют задания, преднамеренно создающие проблемные ситуации. Такие задания способствуют возникновению мотива и потребностей высказывания, выдвижению гипотез, предположений, активизации мыслительной деятельности, а также развитию навыков интерпретации художественного текста. Итоговая дискуссия, завершающая работу над текстом, направлена на обсуждение характеристик главных и второстепенных героев, особенностей авторского стиля, а также морально-этических и социальных проблем, поднятых в произведении.

Третья часть пособия предусматривает просмотр сериалов, снятых в разное время по роману «Ответ знает только Эванс» и выполнение к ним заданий. Наибольший интерес у студентов может вызвать возможность сравнить работы разных режиссёров и актёрского составов, принадлежащих к разным поколениям, обсудить достоинства и недостатки каждой из работ, подходы к созданию образов. В данном пособии включены задания по двум сериалам – самом раннем (1980) и самом современном (2022).

В *четвертой части* студентам предлагается просмотр фильмов, снятых по другим известнейшим романам А. Кристи с выполнением заданий по ним. Выбор фильмов не случаен и обоснован не только их художественной ценностью, но и наличием в них двух самых знаменитых детективов – Пуаро и Мисс Марпл. Задания к фильмам способствуют их лучшему восприятию, позволяют сосредоточить внимание студентов на особенностях развития сюжета, главным образом на кульминационных и поворотных моментах. Задания, выполнение которых предусматривает полное ознакомление с фильмами, способствуют совершенствованию речевых навыков студентов.

Последний, *пятый раздел* пособия представляет собой ряд заданий для аудирования, позволяющих актуализировать и оперировать пассивным и потенциальным словарем студентов. Каждое прослушивание сопровождается заданиями, призванными направить внимание студентов на общее содержание и выработку умений понять важную второстепенную информацию, а также развить навык ассоциации зрительного образа слова со слуховым.

Настоящее пособие ни в коей мере не ограничивает творческие изыскания преподавателей и студентов по творчеству Агаты Кристи, а призвано лишь помочь им в этом. В определенной степени, пособие выходит за рамки заданий для домашнего чтения, и может быть успешно использовано для изучения тем «Кино» или «Суд».

Желаю приятного чтения!

Автор.

Agatha Christie (1890–1976) – Mary Clarissa Miller

Her achievement was absolutely astonishing.

P.D. James



DAME AGATHA: QUEEN OF THE MAZE

Dame Agatha Christie made more profit out of murder than any woman since Lucrezia Borgia. One estimate of her total earnings from more than a half – century of writing is \$ 20 million. The Christie output was torrential: 83 books, including a half-dozen romances written under the name of Mary Westmacott; 17 plays; nine volumes of short stories, and “Come, Tell Me How I Live”, in which she described her field exploration with her second husband, British Archeologist Sir Max Mallowan. The number of printed copies of her books is conservatively put at 300 million. Her own characters were much less exotic: doctors, lawyers, army officers, clergymen. Her stalking grounds were usually genteel English houses, and she rarely strayed. “I could never manage miners talking in pubs”, she once said, “because I don’t know what miners talk about in pubs”.

In a Christie murder mystery, not only counts, it is everything. As the genre’s undisputed queen of the maze, she laid her tantalizing plots so precisely and dropped her false leads so cunningly that few – if any – readers could guess the identity of the villain. Poison was a preferred method of dispatching a victim – frequently “in quiet family surroundings”. She continued to publish one or two novels a year, often plotting them in a hot bath while eating apples.

Born Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller in Torquay, she was the daughter of a rich American and an English mother. Taught at home by a governess and tutors, as a child Agatha Christie never attended school. She became adept at creating games to keep herself occupied at a very young age. A shy child, unable to adequately express her feelings, she first turned to music as a means of expression and, later in life, to writing. Although gifted with a good singing voice, she abandoned a stage career because of her shyness.

In 1914, at the age of 24, she married Archibald Christie, a World War I fighter pilot; their daughter, Rosalind, was born in 1919. During World War I she worked in a Red Cross Hospital in Torquay as a nurse, which gave her knowledge of poisons. It was to be useful when she started writing mysteries. It was while working in a hospital during the war that Christie first came up with the idea of

writing a detective novel. Although the novel called “The Mysterious Affair at Styles” was completed in a year, it wasn’t published until 1920, five years later.

“The Mysterious Affair at Styles” gave the world the inimitable Hercule Poirot, a retired Belgian police officer who was to become one of the most enduring characters in all of fiction. With his waxed moustache and his “little grey cells”, he was “meticulous, a tidy little man, always neat and orderly, with a slight flavour of absurdity about him.” His egoism, eccentricities and the fact that for a time he had a Watsonian colleague called Hastings suggest that Christie was strongly influenced by Sherlock Holmes. Christie wrote more than 30 novels featuring Poirot. Among the most popular were “The Murder of Roger Ackroyd” (1926), “Murder on the Orient Express” (1934), and “Death on the Nile” (1937).

Christie was a well-established writer when her controversial “The Murder of Roger Ackroyd” was published in 1926. Publication of the novel coincided with another first in the author’s otherwise scandal-free life. For two weeks in December 1926, Agatha Christie, 36, was officially a missing person. A frenzied nationwide search led to a Yorkshire hotel, where she was found registered as Tessa Neele, the name of the woman Colonel Christie married after his divorce from Agatha two years later. Doctors said the disappearance was caused by amnesia.

In 1930, on a trip to the Middle East, she found Max Mallowan, 14 years her junior, who was excavating on the site of ancient Ur. “An archeologist is the best husband any woman can have”, she noted before their 25th anniversary. “The older he gets, the more interested he is in her”.

Another of Christie's most well-known and beloved characters – Miss Marple – was introduced in “Murder at the Vicarage” in 1930. That elderly spinster in the quaint English village of St. Mary Mead, solved all manner of mysteries with intense concentration and intuition. Featured in 12 novels, Miss Marple exemplified the cozy style, a form of mystery fiction that became popular in, and ultimately defined, the Golden Age of fiction in England during the 1920s and ‘30s.

The last few years of Dame Agatha’s life saw an upsurge in Christiomania. “Murder on the Orient Express”, the film based on her novel “Murder in the Calais Coach”, was a huge box office success that spurred even further the sales of her books. “Curtain”, the novel in which Hercule Poirot predeceases his author, is still No.1 on U.S. bestseller lists, with over a quarter of a million copies in print.

But it was the elderly Jane Marple who remained her favourite detective. Gifted with as many “little grey cells” as Poirot, Miss Marple also possesses an unpretentious village wisdom and homey psychological insight that make her Agatha Christie’s alter ego. Although Poirot is gone, Marple survives for at least a

while longer. An unpublished manuscript in which she too passes on locked in the Christie vault , along with the ultimate whodunit, Dame Agatha's autobiography. By refusing to publish it during her lifetime, Dame Agatha has assured herself one last, suspenseful hurrah.

Here are some photos illustrating different periods of Christie's life. Take a look and describe what, to your mind, they show and how the people in the photos feel.





Below you can see Christie's quotations. Study them carefully and say what they tell us about her character and the life she had. Do you agree with her ideas?

If I was born once again, I would like to be a woman – always!

One of the luckiest things that can happen to you in life is to have a happy childhood. I had a very happy childhood.

An archaeologist is the best husband any woman can have: the older she gets, the more interested he is in her.

Never go back to a place where you have been happy. Until you do it remains alive for you. If you go back it will be destroyed.

One doesn't recognize in one's life the really important moments – not until it's too late.

There is no greater mistake in life than seeing things or hearing them at the wrong time.

Good advice is always certain to be ignored, but that's no reason not to give it.

The saddest thing in life and the hardest to live through, is the knowledge that there is someone you love very much whom you cannot save from suffering.

It is never good to entirely quit with work.

One is left with the horrible feeling now that war settles nothing; that to win a war is as disastrous as to lose one.

Where large sums of money are concerned, it is advisable to trust nobody.

If one chooses to look back over the journey that has been one's life, is one entitled to ignore those memories that one dislikes? Or is that cowardice? I think, perhaps, one should take one brief look, and say: "Yes, this is a part of my life, but it's done with. It is a strand in the tapestry of my existence. I must recognise it because it is part of me. But there is no need to dwell upon it".

A child says "Thank God for my good dinner". What can I say at seventy-five? Thank God for my good life, and for all the love that has been given to me.

A Brief History of the Detective Novel

Crime stories have been with us at least since Cain killed Abel in the Bible, yet Sherlock Holmes is considered the father of what is known as the classic “Golden Age” of English murder mystery. Writers such as Agatha Christie, Ellery Queen, and P.D. James went on to emulate this form, and today even a cursory glance at a mystery section in a book or video store will reveal the vigorous lineage of the great detective. Although Edgar Allen Poe, Wilkie Collins, and others had written mysteries before him, somehow, in the persons of Sherlock Holmes and his humble helper, Dr. John Watson, Arthur Conan Doyle captured the public imagination as no detective writer ever has.

The formula Conan Doyle helped establish for the classic English mystery usually involves several predictable elements: a “closed setting” such as an isolated house or a train; a corpse; a small circle of people who are all suspects; and an investigating detective with extraordinary reasoning powers. As each character in the setting begins to suspect the others and the suspense mounts, it comes to light that nearly all had the means, motive, and opportunity to commit the crime. Clues accumulate, and are often revealed to the reader through a narrator like Watson, who is a loyal companion to the brilliant detective. The detective grasps the solution to the crime long before anyone else, and explains it all to the “Watson” at the end.

At about the same time as the English murder mystery was establishing itself, a distinctly different school of detective fiction emerged in America. This “hard-boiled” style of fiction took hold in the 1920s, the era of American prohibition and gangster violence. Popularized through the accessibility of the “pulp” – cheaply produced, gaudy magazines that featured short, violent crime stories – the hard-boiled American detective contrasts distinctly with the classic English version. This detective is not a gentleman hero, but a hard-drinking, tough-talking “private eye,” often an outsider to the world of upper- and middle-class values. The classic setting is not a country house but the brutal and corrupt city, and the suspects might be anyone at all in such a vast and anonymous place. The action does not move in a series of orderly steps toward a logical solution, but, instead, careens from place to place and scene to scene. As Dashiell Hammett, one of the originators of the genre, explained it, “Your private detective does not want to be an erudite solver of riddles in the Sherlock Holmes manner; he wants to be a hard and shifty fellow, able to take care of himself in any situation, able to get the best of anybody he comes in contact with, whether criminal, innocent bystander, or client.”

The detective and mystery stories we read and watch on television and in film today can often be traced directly to one of these two original schools, or borrow from both traditions. Contemporary writers continue to reinvent the basic formula so

that, over a hundred years since readers first met the great Sherlock Holmes, the detective story is more fresh, interesting, and popular than ever.

Exploring the Genre: questions and tasks

1. Why do people like to read mystery and detective stories? Why are we so fascinated with crime, especially murder? List as many reasons as you can. How does the fact that detective stories have a predictable structure make them more or less enjoyable to read? Why?

2. Why do many readers consider relaxing with mystery, detective, and crime fiction a “guilty pleasure”? What is the difference between “serious literature” and mystery stories? To think about this, consider the following questions: Why is Shakespeare not considered a crime writer even though he often writes about murder? Is *Crime and Punishment* or *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* a “mystery” novel? Explain your answer.

3. What would Sherlock Holmes think about the kind of detectives we are most familiar with from American television? Pretend you are Holmes and watch an episode of a series that features a contemporary American/British/Russian detective. If Holmes were asked to give them advice on detecting, what would he tell them?

4. What can the history of the two mystery writing schools tell us about some of the differences between England and America? Pretend you are an alien trying to research the two countries before coming to visit. If all you were given were the first chapter of any Agatha Christie novel (to represent England) and the first chapter of any Raymond Chandler novel (to represent America), what conclusions might you draw? Write a list of the assumptions and expectations this alien might form about each society based on these chapters. How many of the things on your list do you think the alien might actually observe if it came for a visit today?

5. Mystery and detective fiction is often judged by how well it satisfies the conventions of its genre – that is, how well it follows the unwritten “rules” of how detectives, criminals, suspects, and clues are presented. In the 1920s, writer Ronald Knox made a list of “commandments” that he believed must be followed in all good detective fiction. Since then, nearly all have been broken, but they are still a guide for most writers of the classic English school. Some of these rules are listed below. Which do *The Hound of the Baskervilles* obey? Do today’s detective stories still follow these rules? If not, what rules would you add to or eliminate to bring a list of detective story commandments up-to-date?

- The criminal must be mentioned in the early part of the story, but must not be anyone whose thoughts the reader has been allowed to follow.

- All supernatural or preternatural agencies are ruled out as a matter of course.
- Not more than one secret room or passage is allowed.
- The detective himself must not commit the crime.
- The detective is bound to declare any clues upon which he may happen to light.
- The friend of the detective, the Watson, must not conceal from the reader any thoughts which pass through his mind; his intelligence must be slightly, but very slightly, below that of the average reader.

6. Other genres also follow rules and conventions. Horror, romance, and science fiction stories all use predictable structures, characters, and plots. Choose one of these genres and develop a set of “commandments” for that genre. You might also compile a list of classic lines from this genre or develop a graphic organizer for watching or reading this kind of fiction.

7. Can a genre’s formula be exhausted? If so, can the formula be reinvented and remain fresh? Choose a genre with a formulaic approach (mystery, detective, crime, spy, romance, horror, or science fiction), and compare an early classic with a contemporary example. What do the changes tell you about how the audience and our world have changed?

A. Christie Why didn't they ask Evans?

Unit 1 (Ch -s. 1-6)

I. Read chapters 1-6 with special attention to the use of the active vocabulary items provided below. Reproduce the situations in which the author used them:

1. to groan with dismay (p. 6)
2. to depress one's shoulder (p. 7)
3. to draw a breath of satisfaction (p. 7)
4. to be on the point of doing smth. (p. 7)
5. the footpath runs along (p. 7)
6. What do you make of that? (p. 8)
7. at most (p. 8)
8. to recover consciousness (p. 8)
9. to live an out-of-door life (p. 9)
10. to keep guard over smb. (p. 12)
11. to squat (p. 12)
12. to stifle a pang of envy (p. 15)
13. the deceased (p. 16)
14. to hold an inquest (p. 16)
15. to give evidence (p. 16)
16. the coroner (p. 19)
17. plucked eyebrows (p. 20)
18. to say soothing words (p. 21)
19. shifty eyes (p. 23)
20. to be indebted to smb. (p. 23)
21. henna-tinted hair (p. 24)
22. bloodthirsty instincts (p. 25)
23. to revert to the original topic (p. 25)
24. to dismiss from the mind (p. 26)
25. to count on smb. (p. 30)
26. to give allowance (p. 30)
27. inferiority complex (p. 32)

II. Give English equivalents for the following:

тропинка идет вдоль, издать вздох разочарования, кровожадные инстинкты, давать показания, удовлетворенно вздохнуть, Что ты об этом

думаешь?, сидеть на корточках, покойный, проводить дознание, коронер, опустить плечо, окрашенные хной волосы, содержать кого-либо, комплекс неполноценности, подавить укол зависти.

III. Give words and word combinations which are opposite in meaning to the following:

not to be ready to do smth.	bushy eyebrows
to faint	to talk rudely
to live indoors	a straight gaze
at least	to owe smb. nothing
to ignore smb.	to focus on smb.
to digress from the topic	to be independent from smb.

IV. Translate the following sentences using the active vocabulary:

1. Давай *вернемся к теме разговора*. Так на чем же мы остановились?
2. Вообще-то, мы *рассчитывали на* вашу помощь. Вы обещали *дать официальные показания* в суде. Почему же вы теперь отказываетесь от своих слов?
3. «Я никому ничего не должен!» – кричал мой бывший муж, – «И не собираюсь *содержать сына* за свой счет. Это ты во всем виновата!»
4. Джейн так сильно хотела получить роль в новом спектакле, что, не задумываясь согласилась *выщипать брови* и *выкрасить хной волосы*, как того требовала роль.
5. Маргарет еще издали увидела дочь: та *сидела на корточках* и плакала, *опустив голову и плечи*.
6. Станный, *бегающий взгляд* продавца навел меня на мысль о том, что что-то было здесь не так.
7. «Ты знаешь, с Джорджем теперь очень сложно связаться. Это раньше он вечно сидел дома, а *теперь постоянно в разъездах*. Я и не припомню, когда виделся с ним в последний раз».
8. «Да перестань ты думать о том, что не смог тогда пройти собеседование, *просто выброси это из головы*, иначе недолго и *комплекс неполноценности* заработать».
9. *Следователь, проводивший дознание*, никак не мог добиться ясного ответа от подозреваемого, и решил провести повторный допрос.
10. *Придя в себя* после аварии, пациент не сразу понял, что находится в больнице.

V. Make up five sentences in Russian and five sentences in English, the translation of which will require the knowledge of the active vocabulary.

VI. Answer the questions and do the tasks:

1. What is the time, place and setting of the novel?
2. What is your first impression of Bobby? (Describe his age, appearance, social status, relations with his Father).
3. Why did he interrupt the game? What did he hear?
4. What in your opinion do the words “Why didn’t they ask Evans?” mean and why did the dying man utter them?
5. Translate the beginning of Chapter 2 up to the words “Then he sat down again to wait ...” p. 10 (What did Bobby jerk out of the man’s pocket? How did it affect him?)
6. Do you think it was nice of the stranger to help Bobby? Can you describe him?
7. Whom did Bobby meet in the train? What did they talk about? Describe the girl and her relations with Bobby.
8. Whom did Bobby intend to see in the town?
9. Why did Bobby give a gasp of disappointment after the inquest?
10. Who was the woman that disappointed Bobby?
11. What was the verdict of the jury?
12. Whom did Bobby see in his house? What did they want?
13. What were Frankie’s impressions of the inquest?
14. Do you think that the phrase Bobby remembered was of any importance to his visitors and worth mentioning in the letter?
15. What letters did Bobby get? What effect did they have?
16. What did Bobby think of the letter sent from abroad?
17. Why didn’t Bobby accept Frankie’s invitation? Do you think they’ll meet again?

VII. Comment on the following quotations and develop the ideas:

1. “What rotten luck there was in the world!” (p. 9).
2. “Nobody over fifty has got any sense – they worry themselves to death about tuppenny-ha’penny things that don’t matter” (p. 10).
3. “With death or tragedy about, you had to keep a stiff upper lip” (p. 13).
4. “My manly indignation rises at the thought” (p. 14).
5. “Photographers, thought Bobby disgustedly, were the worst kind of liars”(p. 20).

Unit 2 (Ch -s. 7-11)

I. Read chapters 7-11 with special attention to the use of the active vocabulary items provided below. Reproduce the situations in which the author used them:

1. to answer the door (p. 33)
2. to go up in one's estimation (p. 34)
3. to put smb. out of one's way (p. 35)
4. to benefit by one's death (p. 36)
5. to be catching (p. 38)
6. to be sweet on smb. (p. 39)
7. to rave over smth. (p. 39)
8. to adjust oneself to smth. (p. 40)
9. a sort of nondescript fellow (p. 40)
10. to upset one's plans (p. 41)
11. to hold one's tongue about smth. (p. 41)
12. to keep to the point (p. 42)
13. verdict of accidental death (p. 43)
14. on the spur of the moment (p. 44)
15. to abstract one's mind (p. 46)
16. to laugh at one's own wit (p. 47)
17. to have a qualm of doubt (p. 48)
18. out of sheer curiosity (p. 49)
19. counterfeit banknotes (p. 49)
20. to swell with gratification (p. 50)
21. to get into a mess (p. 51)
22. to give an exasperated sigh (p. 52)
23. to be on the trail of smb. (p. 52)
24. to reconnoiter the ground (p. 52)
25. to cast a look of reproach (p. 55)
26. to steady the steering wheel (p. 57)
27. to lie doggo (p. 58)
28. to take the hint (p. 59)

II. Give English equivalents for the following:

подняться в чьих-то глазах, чужая смерть выгодна, заразный, привыкать к ч-л, заключение о смерти по неосторожности, под влиянием минуты, погрузиться в размышления, засмеяться над собственной шуткой, из чистого

любопытства, поддельные купюры, надуваться от важности, раздраженно вздохнуть, прозондировать почву, выровнять руль.

III. Give words and word combinations which are opposite in meaning to the following:

to close the door	to go off without a hitch
to involve smb. into the business	to speak freely
to dislike smb.	to beat about the bush
to be indifferent to smb.	to be absolutely sure of smth.
to stand out in a crowd	to keep aside
to lose the track of smb.	to give a look of praise
to be noticeable	not to catch a hint

IV. Translate the following sentences using the active vocabulary:

1. Майкл немного странный: он вечно *смеется над собственными шутками*, которые никто, кроме него, не понимает, а в остальном он нормальный парень.

2. Мы поговорили о деле, а затем я стала задавать вопросы о своей подруге уже *из чистого любопытства* – мы не виделись с ней полтора года.

3. Во время занятия студенты были увлечены беседой о чем-то своем, но после того, как преподаватель *взглянул на них с упрёком*, они замолчали, *поняв намек*.

4. После повышения *он просто раздувается от важности*, он даже перестал разговаривать со своими бывшими коллегами.

5. Детектив Джонсон услышал разговор за соседним столиком в кафе, который заставил его насторожиться: «Но кому же может быть *выгодна смерть* миссис Паркер?» –

«*Попридержи свой язык*, здесь могут быть копы, ты еще *разрушишь наши планы* своей болтовней».

6. Ребенок смеялся так *заразительно*, что и я невольно улыбнулся.

7. В наше время стало проще *подделывать купюры* благодаря современной технике.

8. В дверь звонят, *пойди узнай*, кто это.

9. Когда следователь читал *заключение о смерти по неосторожности*, в его душе *шевельнулось сомнение*: некоторые факты показались ему сомнительными.

10. *Мария погрузилась в собственные мысли* – она хорошо понимала, что прежде чем выступить со своим предложением, необходимо хорошенько *прозондировать почву*.

V. Make up five sentences in Russian and five sentences in English, the translation of which will require the knowledge of the active vocabulary.

VI. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. Where did Frankie and Bobby meet? What brought Bobby into hospital?
2. Does Frankie's theory about "morphia accident" sound logical or far-fetched to you?
3. Why did Bobby ask the nurse to ring up the Castle?
4. Does Bassington-ffrench have anything to do with the photo and the tragedy?
5. Make up dialogues on the suggested topics:
 - a) Bobby tells Frankie about the letter sent to the Caymans.
 - b) Bobby and Frankie work out the meaning of "*Why didn't they ask Evans?*" and make deductions.
 - c) Bobby and Frankie discuss their further actions.
6. What did Lord Marchington know about the Bassington-ffrenches?
7. How did Frankie learn the address of Bassington-ffrench? What seemed suspicious in his behavior to her?
8. Reproduce the dialogue between Frankie and Inspector Williams.
9. Where did next Frankie and Bobby's meeting take place? What was Frankie's plan?
10. What was Bobby to do next?
11. How was Frankie's plan carried out?

VII. Comment on the following quotations and develop the ideas:

1. "The nurse was thrilled, and her patient went up in her estimation" (p. 34).
2. "These newspaper reporters don't mind how much they exaggerate, and as often as not they get the whole thing wrong" (p. 49).
3. "Nobody looks at a chauffeur in the way they look at a *person*" (p. 54).

Unit 3 (Ch-s. 12-17)

I. Read chapters 12-17 with special attention to the use of the active vocabulary items provided below. Reproduce the situations in which the author used them:

1. to keep quiet (p. 61)
2. to play a mean trick on smb. (p. 61)
3. to flash across one's mind (p. 62)
4. to have a bad fall from the swing (p. 63)
5. to show out in a new light (p. 63)
6. to meet smb. face to face (p. 64)
7. to fling oneself upon smb. (p. 64)
8. to go in for a cure (p. 67)
9. to collect one's ideas (p. 68)
10. to come out into the open (p. 69)
11. to feel creepy (p. 73)
12. to draw a breath of relief (p. 74)
13. to catch one's eye (p. 75)
14. enforced inaction (p. 76)
15. to give smb. credit (p. 79)
16. to turn one's footsteps (p. 81)
17. to measure smth. with one's eye (p. 81)
18. to stop dead (p. 82)
19. to explore one's soul (p. 82)
20. one's head is in a whirl (p. 82)
21. You're wanted on the telephone (p. 83)
22. to catch smb. out (p. 83)
23. on second thought (p. 83)
24. to be on the right track (p. 84)
25. to be puzzled (p. 85)
26. to use a letter as an excuse (p. 87)
27. to see through the pretense (p. 90)
28. to act for smb. (p. 92)

II. Give English equivalents for the following:

с Вами хотят поговорить по телефону, получить сильный ушиб, упав с качелей, пройти курс лечения, собраться с мыслями, раскрыть карты, облегченно вздохнуть, встретиться взглядом, вынужденное бездействие, направить шаги, измерить что-либо на глаз, вывести на чистую воду, подумав,

быть на верном пути, воспользоваться письмом в качестве предлога, действовать от чьего-либо имени.

III. Give words and word combinations which are opposite in meaning to the following:

to be very noisy	to underestimate smb.
to slip one's mind	to keep on walking
to go in opposite directions	to shoot a quick glance
to stay still	to have both feet on the ground
to feel at ease	to know the way
to be taken in	to treat smb. honestly

IV. Translate the following sentences using the active vocabulary:

1. Однажды этот человек *подло обошелся со Стивом*, и теперь им лучше *не встречаться лицом к лицу*. Стивен все еще не забыл обиду, и при встрече *может наброситься на него с кулаками*.

2. Мой сын *сильно ушибся, упав с качелей*. Его не положили в больницу, но он *проходит курс лечения* дома.

3. Молодым хозяйкам не всегда удается *измерить на глаз* необходимое количество ингредиентов для того или иного блюда.

4. Он *встретился с ней взглядом и остановился, как вкопанный* – он понял, что это его бывшая жена, изменившаяся до неузнаваемости.

5. *Вздыхнув с облегчением, я покинул кабинета стоматолога* – я прошел последнюю процедуру, и можно было не появляться еще, как минимум, год.

6. Многих людей раздражает *вынужденное бездействие*, в котором они оказываются, стоя в очереди к врачу.

7. Готовясь к ответу на экзамене, Пеги никак не могла *собраться с мыслями*, хотя накануне она долго учила материал и надеялась, что ее старания *будут оценены по достоинству*.

8. Разговаривая с подозреваемым, следователь ясно *видел, что тот притворяется* и лжет, но не знал, *как вывести его на чистую воду*.

9. Я не знала, как помириться с Джеком, но, *подумав*, решила *воспользоваться* домашним заданием *в качестве предлога*, и попросить Джека его мне объяснить.

10. Он был *на верном пути*, и успех *кружил ему голову*.

V. Make up five sentences in Russian and five sentences in English, the translation of which will require the knowledge of the active vocabulary.

VI. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. What reception did Frankie get at the house of the Bassington-ffrenches?
2. What impression did they (the Bassington-ffrenches), their family life and relations produce on Frankie?
3. Why did she begin to doubt about Roger Bassington-ffrench being a murderer?
4. How and what did she learn about Henry Bassington-ffrench ?
5. What made Roger speak with Frankie about his brother?
6. Speak of Frankie's little plan about Roger, the way she carried it out, the information she got.
7. Translate an extract from chapter 14 (from "Frankie was careful to make ..." up to the words "If only there were some explanation of the photograph!" – pp. 71-72).
8. Speak about the dinner with the Nickolsons (the couple, their relations, the topics of the table talk) and the scene that followed.
9. What letters did Bobby get? Describe the senders and the letters' contents.
10. Speak of Bobby's further actions.
11. Why did he decide to go to the Grange? What impression did it produce on him? What did he see there?
12. Speak of Bobby's meeting with Frankie, their conversation and their plan.
13. Who was Mr. Frederick Spragge and what did he go to Mrs. Rivington for?
14. What conclusions did Frankie and Bobby make after the visit to Mrs. Rivington?
15. What surprised Frankie when she returned into the Bassington-ffrenches' house?

VII. Comment on the following quotations and develop the ideas:

1. "For the first time she (Frankie) felt that she was playing a mean trick on her hostess" (p. 61).
2. "He calls himself the ne'er-do-well of the family, and perhaps it's true in a way" (p. 62).
3. "On the other side was only the personality of the man himself" (p. 66).
4. "When it's a case of drug-taking, nobody, even the nearest and dearest, has any influence" (p. 67).
5. "I've always heard that really dangerous criminals are singularly attractive" (p. 93).

Unit 4 (Ch - s. 18-23)

I. Read chapters 18-23 with special attention to the use of the active vocabulary items provided below. Reproduce the situations in which the author used them:

1. to occur to smb. (p. 95)
2. to feel the answering pressure of one's fingers (p. 96)
3. to say encouragingly (p. 96)
4. to be at pains to do smth. (p. 96)
5. to be meant (p. 97)
6. to turn over the story in one's mind (p. 98)
7. the colour came up in one's cheeks (p. 99)
8. one's eyes downcast (p. 99)
9. to get hold of smb. (p. 100)
10. to give rise to gossip (p. 101)
11. to go to the heart of the matter (p. 101)
12. to take a long breath (p. 103)
13. to give smb. one's word of honour (p. 104)
14. to take one's breath away (p. 104)
15. to be on the track of smb. (p. 106)
16. at all costs (p. 106)
17. fortune favoured smb. (p. 107)
18. to act on impulse (p. 108)
19. to shrug one's shoulders (p. 111)
20. to light a cigarette (p. 111)
21. to upset one's balance (p. 111)
22. to feel complemented (p. 113)
23. to come to one's rescue (p. 115)
24. for one's sake (p. 115)
25. to hang by a hair (p. 122)
26. to be feminine (p. 122)

II. Give English equivalents for the following:

прийти в голову, почувствовать ответное пожатие пальцев, мысленно прокрутить всю ситуацию, связаться с кем-либо, вызывать сплетни, глубоко вздохнуть, дать честное слово, любой ценой, удача улыбнулась, пожать плечами, потерять равновесие, ради кого-либо, висеть на волоске.

III. Give words and word combinations which are opposite in meaning to the following:

to speak disapprovingly	to study insufficiently
to remain passive	to stay indifferent
to do smth. by chance	to lose one's track
to go pale	to plan ahead
eyes looking up	to smoke a cigarette
to be desperate	to let smb. down
to be masculine	

IV. Translate the following sentences using the active vocabulary:

1. *Внезапно Пол понял, что улыбка девушки за соседним столиком предназначалась ему, и он улыбнулся в ответ.*

2. Когда ко мне подошел сын, *виновато опустив глаза*, я поняла, что он опять набедокурил (to get into mischief), и, *глубоко вздохнув*, начала спрашивать, что случилось.

3. «Вы что, не понимаете, что ваша судьба *висит на волоске*», – спросил преподаватель студента. «Если вы не соберетесь и не выучите мой предмет *любой ценой*, то будете обязательно отчислены!»

4. На все мои расспросы он *только пожимает плечами*, поэтому я до сих пор не знаю, в чем дело, схожу с ума, *а в голове крутятся различные предположения*.

5. Грабитель боялся, что его *выследит* полиция, и три дня отсиживался на чердаке пустого дома, но *удача изменила ему*, и его выследили.

6. Осторожно! Твой необдуманный поступок может *вызвать сплетни* в нашем городке.

7. Каждый раз, когда я отвечаю на экзамене, от волнения *краска заливает мое лицо*, и я всегда чувствую себя неловко.

8. Каждый раз, наблюдая за канатоходцем, я *замираю от страха* – а вдруг он *потеряет равновесие* и упадет?

9. Когда Майкл взял Джейн за руку, то почувствовал *ответное пожатие*, и понял – она согласна выйти за него.

10. Наблюдая за тем, как известная кинозвезда *закуривает*, Виктор не мог не удивляться – даже с сигаретой она была *женственна* и прекрасна.

V. Make up five sentences in Russian and five sentences in English, the translation of which will require the knowledge of the active vocabulary.

VI. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. Whom did Bobby find in his inn on the return? What did the visitor come for?
2. What did Moira know about Alan Carstairs? What did she learn from Bobby?
3. Speak on the following points:
 - a) Bobby, Moira and Frankie talk together in the little summer house
 - b) Bobby and Frankie talk in private
 - c) Frankie asks Roger about the photograph
4. How did Roger regard Moira's fears?
5. Who did Roger call "the real suspects"? Why?
6. Why did Sylvia Bassington-ffrench look terribly worried and strained when Roger and Frankie entered the house? What did she decide to do?
7. Describe the tragedy that followed this conversation. Whose victim was Henry Bassington-ffrench?
8. Why did Bobby doubt it was a suicide? What was his theory about the tragedy?
9. What was the next point in Bobby and Frankie's inquiry?
10. Was Moira Nickolson in danger after the tragedy? Why? Who decided to help her?
11. Dwell on Frankie's visit to the Grange. What surprises awaited Frankie?

VII. Comment on the following quotations and develop the ideas:

1. "When you've lived at a place like the Grange your mind gets distorted and you do begin imagining things" (p. 98).
2. "Bobby ventured to steal a look at her. His spirits rose. She looked sad and thoughtful – but that was all" (p. 101).
3. "A woman would know all right about her own husband" (p. 111).
4. "He'll like Moira – nearly any man would, she's so feminine. It's extraordinary how men like helpless women" (p. 122).

Unit 5 (Ch-s. 24-27)

I. Read chapters 24-27 with special attention to the use of the active vocabulary items provided below. Reproduce the situations in which the author used them:

1. for the benefit of smb. (p. 126)
2. with a heavy heart (p. 127)
3. in a dilapidated condition (p. 127)
4. to give a possible clue (p. 130)
5. to overshoot smth. (p. 130)
6. to draw confidences out of smb. (p. 131)
7. to give reasons for smth. (p. 132)
8. to be at liberty to do smth. (p. 132)
9. to look softly on smth. (p. 133)
10. to wag a forefinger (p. 133)
11. to be at the top of smth. (p. 135)
12. in a state of mental distress (p. 136)
13. to disinherit (p. 136)
14. to take the matter up (p. 137)
15. to jump to conclusions (p. 137)
16. of one's own free will (p. 138)
17. to be behind the times (p. 139)
18. to see smb. in the flesh (p. 139)
19. to break smb.'s fall (p. 140)
20. a word of reassurance (p. 142)
21. smb's heart sank (p. 143)
22. smb's eyes fell before smb's eyes (p. 144)
23. My sympathies are with you (p. 145)
24. to repent smth. bitterly (p. 146)
25. to give warning (p. 147)

II. Give English equivalents for the following:

примите мои соболезнования, ради чьего-либо блага, вытащить из кого-либо признание, приводить доводы в пользу ч-л, погрозить пальцем, сделать скоропалительные выводы, отстать от жизни, смягчить падение, сердце ушло в пятки, отвести взгляд, раскаиваться в чем-либо.

III. Give words and word combinations which are opposite in meaning to the following:

with pleasure	to be at the bottom of smth.
new and nice to look at	with a clear mind
to get smb. confused	to receive property
to stop at the right place	to give up doing smth.
not to have the right to do smth.	to be forced upon
to be angry with smb.	to see smb. on TV
a word of disapproval	on a sudden

IV. Translate the following sentences using the active vocabulary:

1. Узнав о тяжелой болезни его жены, я лишь сумел *выразить свои соболезнования и с тяжелым сердцем* оставил его одного.

2. Ричард так задумался над дипломным проектом, что *чуть не проехал свою остановку*.

3. Я считаю, что никогда не следует *делать скоропалительных выводов* о человеке, особенно в первые моменты знакомства, поскольку это может обидеть другого и привести к *горьким сожалениям*.

4. Многие подростки готовы отдать все, что имеют за то, чтобы *вживую увидеть* кумира, чьи песни занимают *верхние строчки* хит-парадов.

5. Джоан вытянула билет и *сердце у нее упало в пятки* – ей попался тот самый единственный билет, который она не успела выучить.

6. В *поисках ключа к разгадке* Вивьен взглянула на него, но он *отвел взгляд*.

7. Так какие же *доводы вы можете привести в пользу* вложения средств в это предприятие?

8. Мы очень боялись реакции Мэриэн, поскольку она – человек *вспыльчивый и непредсказуемый*. Однако она *снисходительно отнеслась* к нашей оплошности и *только погрозила нам пальцем*.

9. В наше время очень сложно *не отставать от жизни* и всегда быть во всем осведомленным.

10. Инспектору Джекобсу так и не удалось *вытащить признание* у подозреваемого, хотя он был уверен, что тот совершил преступление.

V. Make up five sentences in Russian and five sentences in English, the translation of which will require the knowledge of the active vocabulary.

VI. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. What did Frankie do at St. Leonard's Gardens, Paddington?
2. Translate an extract from chapter 24 (from "The musty smell of a closed-up house..." up to the words "...and bought a couple of papers at the bookstall" (p. 129).
3. What caught Frankie's attention when she was reading a newspaper?
4. What did Frankie hope to find out at the office of *Messrs. Spragge, Spragge, Jenkinson & Spragge*?
5. What did Mr. Spragge know about his client Mr. Carstairs and his friend Mr. Savage?
6. Retell chapter 26 as if you were Bobby.
7. What made Frankie feel suddenly sick? Whom did she confide her worries to?
8. Dwell on the conversation between Roger and Dr. Nickolson after the inquest.
9. What is the author's remark "She was to repent her decision bitterly before twenty four hours had passed" applied to?
10. Speak on Frankie's adventures after she had read Bobby's letter.
11. Did Bobby and Frankie get in the hands of the same or different people?
12. Do you think Bobby and Frankie's lives are in danger? Who do you suppose outwitted them?
13. Think of the possible developments of the plot.

VII. Comment on the following quotations and develop the ideas:

1. "The law, Lady Frances, is an uncertain animal. It has twists and turns that surprise the nonlegal mind" (p. 134).
2. "He saw ahead of him a painful and lingering death. I understand some members of his family had died of cancer, and he determined not to go through what he had seen them suffer" (p. 136).
3. "I know more about drug taking than you do, Mr. Bassington-french. To induce a man to take drugs is indeed a most terrible crime" (p. 144).

Unit 6 (Ch -s. 28-35)

I. Read chapters 28-35 with special attention to the use of the active vocabulary items provided below. Reproduce the situations in which the author used them:

1. to come to oneself (p. 147)
2. to call a “fair cop” (p. 148)
3. to do credit to smb. (p. 149)
4. the honours of the situation lie with smb. (p. 150)
5. at any rate (p. 150)
6. to find one’s tongue (p. 150)
7. on one’s behalf (p. 150)
8. an eleventh-hour rescue (p. 151)
9. a last-minute boon (p. 152)
10. to take into one’s confidence (p. 154)
11. to be in a predicament (p. 156)
12. forgery (p. 158)
13. to take one’s word for smth. (p. 159)
14. one’s head a little on one’s side (p. 163)
15. to nose around (p. 168)
16. to gasp (p. 168)
17. to raise a question (p. 170)
18. with one accord (p. 171)
19. Now then? (p. 173)
20. to shatter a plan (p. 175)
21. to dwindle down to mediocrity (p. 175)
22. to lose one’s common sense (p. 176)
23. the story didn’t ring true to smb. (p. 176)
24. one’s nerve is going (p. 179)

II. Give English equivalents for the following:

ну, так что?, прийти в себя, поимка/захват на месте преступления, все лавры достаются, в любом случае/как бы то ни было, со своей стороны, спасение в самую последнюю минуту, находиться в затруднительном положении, взять с к-л слово, последняя просьба, разнюхивать, потерять здравый смысл, это история не показалась мне правдоподобной, нервы сдают.

III. Give words and word combinations which are opposite in meaning to the following:

to be to one's shame	to stay silent
to feel tongue-tied	to answer a question
to mistrust	separately
the original	to keep one's balance
with one's head erect	to fulfill a plan

IV. Translate the following sentences using the active vocabulary:

1. Твоя глупая выходка совсем не *делает чести* тебе и твоим родителям. Я должен *взять с тебя слово*, что это больше не повторится.

2. Извини, что я накричал на тебя. В последнее время *нервы совсем сдают* – работы много, да тут еще *и план мой провалился*.

3. Ты знаешь, я все никак *не могу прийти в себя* после сдачи этого проекта. Ведь я работал день и ночь, разрабатывал тактику, а он просто украл мои идеи, *и все лавры достались ему*.

4. Виктория *находилась в затруднительном положении*. С одной стороны, нужно было рассказать о *подделке* кому следует, но с другой стороны, она пообещала Кристоферу не делать этого.

5. Каждый раз, когда начинается сезон распродажи, Джулия *теряет здравый смысл*: она скупает все подряд, а потом даже не носит купленные вещи.

6. Джейн хотела отругать пса за его проделку, но, взглянув на него, не смогла сдержать улыбки. Он смотрел на нее преданными глазами, умильно *склонив голову набок*, и делал вид, что ничего не произошло.

7. «Я думаю, нам стоит *поднять вопрос* о вашем отчислении», сказал преподаватель *нерадивому* студенту.

8. Многие стеснительные люди не могут публично выступать, им бывает сложно *заговорить* в такой стрессовой ситуации.

9. – Ты знаешь что-нибудь о Майкле Колдмане?

– Боюсь, он *сильно деградировал*, видишь ли, он ведь пьет ...

– Да, а когда-то был лучшим учеником и подавал большие надежды.

10. Когда близнецов спросили, кто из них Павел, оба *хором* закричали: «Я!»

V. Make up five sentences in Russian and five sentences in English, the translation of which will require the knowledge of the active vocabulary.

VI. Answer the questions and do the following tasks:

1. Where did Frankie come to herself?

2. Who had prepared a trap for the friends and what were his future plans?

3. What idea suddenly struck Bobby?
4. Who miraculously fell through the skylight?
5. How did it happen that the jailer and his prisoners exchanged places?
6. What did Bobby, Frankie and Badger learn from Roger?
7. What surprise awaited them in one of the rooms?
8. Why did the police inspector regard the whole story as a hoax?
9. Who were Rose Chuldleigh and Albert Mere? Why was it necessary to find them?
10. Speak on the following points:
 - a) the conversation between Bobby and Frankie at lunchtime;
 - b) the interview with Rose Chuldleigh.
11. What did Bobby and Frankie realize after the interview with Rose Chuldleigh?
12. Whom did they unexpectedly meet in Marchbolt?
13. What was the letter that Frankie received one day about?
14. What is your opinion of the end and the novel on the whole?

VII. Comment on the following quotations and develop the ideas:

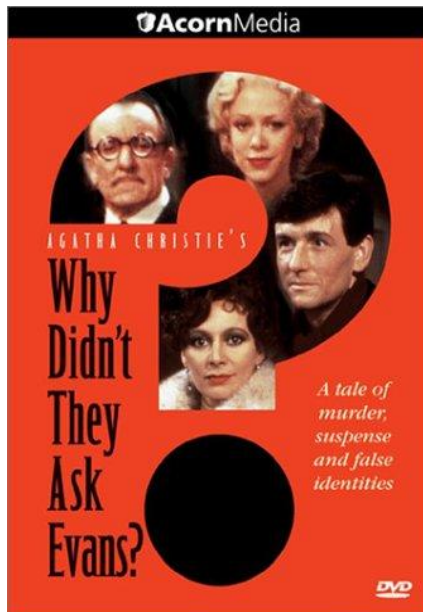
1. “The only thing that I can’t make out is why they didn’t knock us both on the head straight away” (p. 149).
2. “In books there is always an eleventh-hour rescue” (p. 151).

Suggested topics for general discussion

1. Agatha Christie, her life and creative work.
2. A. Christie’s novel *Why didn’t they ask Evans?* The setting of the novel, its plot.
3. A character sketch of Frankie.
4. A character sketch of Bobby.
5. A character sketch of Roger Bassington-ffrench.
6. A character sketch of the Nicholsons.
7. The detective story as a separate genre of fiction.
8. The problem of class distinction in the novel.
9. Parent-child relationship in the novel.
10. The role of friendship in the book.
11. The problem of drug taking and asylum in the book.
12. The merits and shortcomings of the novel.
13. Compare the film and the book.

FILMS

WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK EVANS (1980)



Why Didn't They Ask Evans directed by John Howard Davis and Tony Wharmby was adapted by London Weekend Television and transmitted on 30 March 1980. Given a generous budget of one million pounds – a large sum for the time – it had an all-star cast and a three-month shooting and videotaping schedule. The original intention was that the 180-minute teleplay would be transmitted as a three-part "mini-serial" but ITV then decided to show it as a three-hour special with maximum publicity, especially for Francesca Annis in the role of Frankie (Annis was a major name in UK television at the time). *Evans* attracted large audiences and satisfactory

reviews, but more importantly, it demonstrated to television executives that Christie's work could be successful for the small screen given the right budgets, stars and attention to detail.

BEFORE WATCHING QUESTIONS AND TASKS

1. What are your expectations before watching the film? What scenes and episodes would you most like to see?
2. Do you expect the production to be totally faithful to the plot? What difficulties do you think the directors had to face when making the screen adaptation?
3. Read some audience reviews for *Why Didn't They Ask Evans* (1980).

'Already SO much better than the newest 2000 something version. This feels like the clear, uncluttered Christie storylines, and charismatic characters we've come to love. Thank you dearly for posting these wonderful videos! Not only are they enjoyable as art, and human storytelling, they're an important living archive of our history and heritage that I worry is being lost.'

'Absolutely delightful! Sir John Gielgud! The best of the best! Francesca Annis and James Warwick who later played Agatha Christie's Tommy and Tuppence. Joan Hickson who became the Miss Marple and Connie Booth, the infamous Polly of Fawlty Towers. A magnificent cast and I thought a truly delightful

portrayal of one of my personal favorites. Nobody can do Agatha Christie like the British! Hands down, by far, the best!

'Sometimes, (although I do watch modern or American stuff too) something in me craves something that is quintessentially BRITISH and traditional to watch. This wonderful movie, its words and settings and its perfect actors satisfied that craving admirably. It is British and traditional, beautiful and elegant in its overall character without being annoyingly precious or affected as some of these sort of programmes can be.'

4. Below you can see the cast. Match the photos and the leading actors.

- Francesca Annis as Lady Frances Derwent
- James Warwick as Bobby Jones
- John Gielgud as Reverend Jones
- Bernard Miles as Dr Thomas
- Eric Porter as Dr Nicholson
- Leigh Lawson as Roger Bassington-ffrench
- Madeleine Smith as Moira Nicholson
- Connie Booth as Sylvia Bassington-ffrench
- Robert Longden as Badger Beadon
- Doris Hare as Rose Pratt
- Joan Hickson as Mrs Rivington
- Rowland Davies as Dr. George Arbuthnot
- James Cossins as Henry Bassington-ffrench
- Mitzi Rogers as Mrs. Cayman
- John Pennington as Mr. Cayman
- Lynda Marshall as Mrs. Roberts
- Deddie Davies as Postmistress
- Frank Tregear as Mr Roberts
- John Horsley as Mr Spragg
- Leon Sinden as Mr Owen
- Elaine Wells as Nurse Fletcher
- Annette Robertson as Julie
- Eirik Barclay as Tommy Bassington-ffrench
- Raymond Francis as Earl of Marchington



Photo 1.



Photo 2.



Photo 3.



Photo 4.



Photo 5.



Photo 6.



Photo 7.



Photo 8.



Photo 9.



Photo 10.



Photo 11.



Photo 12.



Photo 13.



Photo 14.



Photo 15.



Photo 16.



Photo 17.



Photo 18.



Photo 19.



Photo 20.

ACTIVITIES FOR MEANINGFUL WATCHING

PART I

1. Be ready to answer who said the following:

1. You know sometimes I wonder whether bringing you into the world wasn't a waste of a professional effort.
2. Every time I'm close to the edge I do it! Every single time!
3. I say, anything the matter?
4. Not a bit like a golfer.
5. Punctuality may be the politeness of princes but not apparently in my parish.
6. I know that most of your friends have no idea of time but there's One whom we should never keep waiting.
7. Well, I thought I couldn't just push off and leave him, so when another fellow came along, I just passed the job of chief mourner on to him and legged it here as fast as I could.
8. Nothing, not even death can shake your deplorable callousness!
9. The gentleman won't be staying for long, I expect.
10. Life was not then extinct.

11. I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I shall give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

12. I don't think we need to distress you any further.

13. It's most exciting to have a romantically poisoned friend.

14. Anybody who plays golf the way I do should be forgiven for taking the easy way out.

15. Do I kiss you or don't I?

16. Easier to check up on the Hampshire Bassington-french from London than from this remote outpost of the British Empire.

17. Come and have a look at what we've got in stock.

18. I'll stay on the running board until the pace gets too hot and then I'll jump off.

19. You take her legs and I take her head.

20. Lady Frances, may I present the black sheep of our family, my brother-in-law Roger.

21. After all, I barely know you. But I do feel I have to speak to someone about Henry. I feel ... I know instinctively I can trust you.

22. Besides, if I had met you before, I should never have forgotten it.

2. Give English equivalents for the following:

1. Там дальше есть тропа.

2. Его пульс быстро слабеет.

3. Помощь уже идет.

4. Ты теряешь хватку.

5. Он взял кредит, чтобы купить автомастерскую.

6. Боюсь, на такое я не смогу тебя благословить.

7. Да говорю тебе, мы обязательно преуспеем!

8. Мой муж занимается похоронами брата.

9. Я растопила ей печку.

10. Надеюсь, ты осознаешь, что видишь перед собой медицинский феномен.

11. Это определенно должно иметь отношение к Притчарду.
12. Еще что-то необычное произошло?
13. Ну, о чем я тебе говорю!
14. У мистера Джонсона случился повторный приступ\ рецидив.
15. Я бы узнал ее где угодно.
16. Пора бы вернуться на поле для гольфа, молодой человек!
17. Нужен новый двигатель, новая коробка переключения скоростей и **НОВЫЙ КОМПЛЕКТ ШИН.**
18. Но это же погубит твою карьеру!
19. Дорогая Сильвия, боюсь, я принес плохие новости!
20. Леди Франсез произвела фурор в нашей округе.

PART II

1. Be ready to answer who said the following:

1. What's the value of the rabbits?
2. In the grounds of Dr. Nickolson's nursing home.
3. Frankie, what do you think at the bottom of all is?
4. Canadians are so awfully touchy, don't you think?
5. It's so interesting to see how the legal mind operates.
6. We've got to find some place where there's no danger of being overheard
7. If ever I seem a bit ... you know short-tempered, it doesn't mean anything, you know. Don't always feel very well.
8. Bobby wanted ... oh how does one put it? To get a line on Roger Bassington-french.
9. They obviously thought that your friend Bobby Jones was in possession of some knowledge that was dangerous to them!
10. He promised to do anything for my sake and for Tomy's.
11. Nothing to be done! The death must have been instantaneous.
12. I believe in perfect liberty between husband and wife.
13. Thank heaven! A friendly voice at last!

14. I bet you anything, the birds have flown.

15. I have been impersonated.

16. High spirits may sometimes lead to complications that can be extremely difficult to settle.

17. Here, Lady Frances, I preserve an open mind.

2. Give English equivalents for the following:

1. Я задумался.

2. А я нашел девушку с фотографии!

3. Возможно, ее похитили с целью выкупа.

4. Не имею ни малейшего представления.

5. Видишь ли, за всем этим стоит Николсон, а не Роджер.

6. Перед смертью к вашему другу вернулось сознание.

7. К тебе это не относится, понимаешь?

8. Даю вам честное слово.

9. Я действовал спонтанно.

10. Твой брат находится в смертельной опасности.

11. Соедините меня немедленно с дежурным по участку.

12. Мы все были в зимнем саду, когда слышали выстрел.

13. Я пришла к миссис Николсон.

14. Я подумала: если не сейчас, то когда?

15. Думаю, я сама займусь расследованием.

16. У Рождера возникла догадка – Кейманы.

17. Возможно, мы напали на ложный след.

18. Здесь что-то не так\затеваается.

19. Неправомерное воздействие очень сложно доказать.

PART III

1. Be ready to answer who said the following:

1. Bobby thought it would be easier to keep an eye on the Grange from the hotel or whatever.
2. But leaving all his things behind...
3. Suicide while of unsound mind.
4. He was last seen heading for the Grange.
5. Not as much as you seem about the disappearance of your chauffer.
6. I trust you won't find this too intolerable.
7. I shall plead a guilty passion.
8. You haven't a scrap of evidence!
9. I'm getting it, just a sort of flicker.
10. There's a live bridge on the lawn!
11. Have you gone batty?
12. Any man has the right to go to hell in any way he chooses.
13. That time I thought I only wanted two things: Merroway and the money to run it in the way it deserved to be run.
14. Murder is merely an acceleration of a natural process.
15. Merroway would have been a perfect setting for you.
16. I placed the bullet in the fire
17. I couldn't bear the thought of life without you, without Merroway.

2. Give English equivalents for the following:

1. Владелец гостиницы сказал, что он вчера вечером вышел подышать свежим воздухом и с тех пор его не видели.
2. Вы просили меня сообщить, когда придет коронер, сэр.
3. Мы с тобой связаны по рукам и ногам.
4. Говорите тише!
5. Я появился очень кстати\в последний момент.

6. Осторожнее, он заряжен.
7. Бобби, наконец-то мы приближаемся к разгадке!
8. На что ты намекаешь?
9. Она работала в Тьюдор котидж.
10. Роджер Бассингтон-ффренч все еще на свободе.
11. Здравствуй, отец, я должна бежать.
12. Сахарница – очень полезная вещь.
13. Ты же просто не можешь отказать в просьбе о помощи.
14. Вернуть ему былое великолепие.
15. Сэвидж был той курицей, которая несла золотые яйца.
16. Она сбила Бобби со следа.
17. Мне было очень страшно, но я хотела, чтобы ты восхищался мной.

AFTER WATCHING QUESTIONS AND TASKS

1. Express your general impression of the film. What episodes struck you most of all?
2. Speak on the acting and cast. Which of the actors impressed you most of all?
3. What changes made in transforming the book into the film did you notice? What do you think of them?

WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK EVANS (2022)



Hugh Laurie adapted the new Agatha Christie adaptation – now available to watch on Britbox.

A dying man's enigmatic last words send vicar's son, Bobby Jones, and his socialite friend, Lady Frankie Derwent, on a crime-solving adventure.

Agatha Christie's wittiest mystery ever. Lucy Boynton and Will Poulter star in Hugh Laurie's new adaptation, where two amateur sleuths set out to find the meaning behind a dead man's mysterious final words.

A comic mystery romance, the latest Britbox original, *Why Didn't They Ask Evans?* is unabashedly romantic and old-fashioned in the most entertaining of ways.

BEFORE WATCHING QUESTIONS AND TASKS



1. You are now going to watch a new screen version of the book. In what way, do you think, the new 2022 version of the screen adaptation will be different from the 1980 version?

2. What would you change in the modern version in comparison with the old one if you were Hugh Laurie, the director of 2022 mini-series?

3. What character would you like to play in the TV series?

4. Why do you think the book has been a source of inspiration for directors for decades?

AFTER WATCHING QUESTIONS AND TASKS

1. What is your general impression of the 2022 TV version? In what ways is it better and worse compared to the 1980 version?

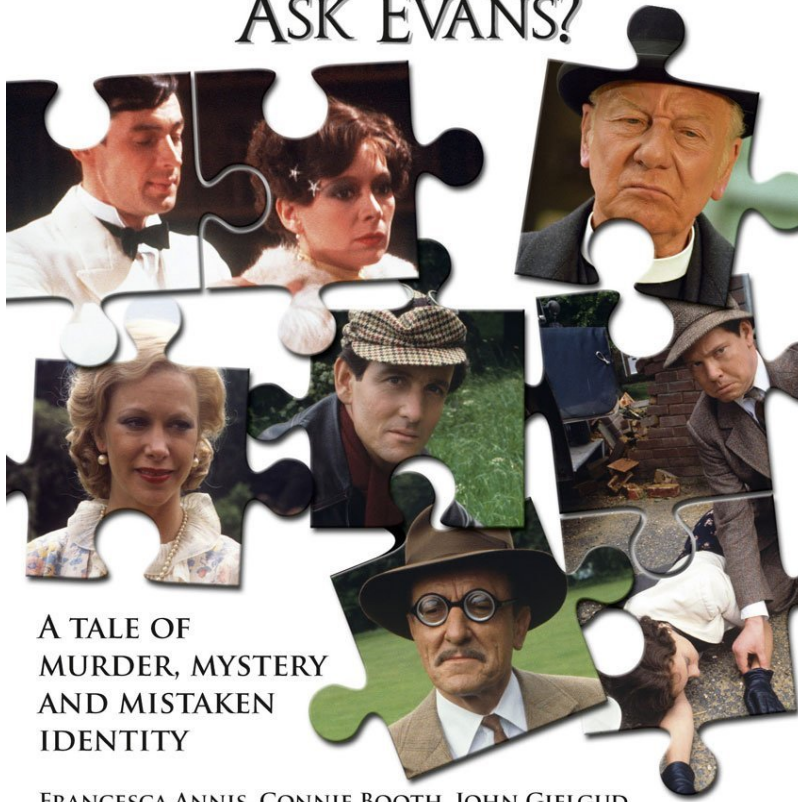
2. How did you like the changes in the plot, namely, adding in extra characters such as Lady Marcham, the wife of Lady Frankie's father Lord Marcham, played by Emma Thomson?



4. What would you say about the leading characters in the 1980 and 2022 versions?

Agatha Christie™

WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK EVANS?

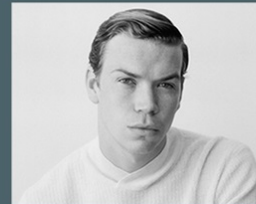


A TALE OF
MURDER, MYSTERY
AND MISTAKEN
IDENTITY

FRANCESCA ANNIS, CONNIE BOOTH, JOHN GIELGUD,
LEIGH LAWSON, ERIC PORTER



britbox | ORIGINAL
WHY DIDN'T THEY
ASK EVANS?



MAMMOTH
SCREEN

AGATHA
CHRISTIE LTD

Bobby Jones



James Warwick



Will Poulter

Lady Frances Derwent



Francesca Annis



Lucy Boynton

Roger Bassington-ffrench



Leigh Lawson



Daniel Ings

Moira Nicholson



Madeline Smith



Maeve Dermody

Doctor Nicholson



Eric Porter



Hugh Laurie (the director)

Badger Beadon



Robert Longden



Jonathan Jules

THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD

Agatha Christie's novels, short stories, and plays have proved a rich source of cinematic material from the silent movie era to the present. The first Christie feature film ever made was *Die Abenteuer G.m.b.H.* (Adventure INC.), a 1928 German silent movie based on her 1922 novel *The Secret Adversary* featuring the jazz-age sleuths Tommy Beresford and Tuppence Cowley. A second silent film, *The Passing of Mr. Quinn*, was shot in Great Britain, also in 1928. This movie was based on a short story, *The Coming of Mr. Quinn* which introduced Mr. Harley Quinn, one of Christie's own favorite characters, somewhat modeled after the Harlequin figure from the commedia dell'arte theatrical tradition.

After these early beginnings Agatha Christie's characters appeared on the big screen in fairly consistent fashion: four films in the 1930s, two in the 1940s, only one in the 1950s, and then seven in the 1960s, four in the 1970s and five in the 1980s. These figures do not include the many television movies and series which have appeared over the years.

In 1989, the BBC began producing Poirot films with David Suchet as Poirot. You are now going to watch the film entitled *The murder of Roger Ackroyd* starring David Suchet as Poirot, which is based on another novel by A. Christie *The mystery of King's Abbot*. Most Christie fans feel Suchet represents the quintessential Poirot, because he gets all the mannerisms and physical appearance of Poirot perfectly right.

BEFORE WATCHING QUESTIONS AND TASKS

1. If you have ever read a book or watched a film with this character, what are your general impressions about his personality and the methods he used?
2. How can you explain his popularity that has moved with the times?
3. The book you have read stands apart from other books by A. Christie in the sense that there is no professional detective like Poirot or a very experienced and well-known one – Miss Marple to launch the investigation. Instead, Lady Frances Derwent or Frankie for short, decides it will be amusing and gets in. ***Do you expect the differences between Frankie's and Poirot's methods of crime investigation?***
4. You are also expected to do some tasks while watching. Look through the list of vocabulary to get ready for close watching before you start.

ACTIVITIES FOR MEANINGFUL WATCHING

I. Give English equivalents for the following:

- 1) ежедневный изнуряющий труд на предыдущем месте работы
- 2) изучение человеческой натуры
- 3) дома из камня
- 4) обыватель
- 5) разоблачение виновного
- 6) акула индустрии
- 7) Сожалею, но я уже ухожу.
- 8) он не записывался к тебе на прием
- 9) об этом ходят сплетни
- 10) хладнокровный убийца
- 11) привести к самоубийству
- 12) быть официально помолвленным с кем-либо
- 13) она мертва
- 14) указать на виновного пальцем
- 15) говорить от чьего-либо имени
- 16) перед кем-либо предстало зрелище
- 17) главный подозреваемый
- 18) я не склонен ему доверять
- 19) в пределах досягаемости
- 20) открытый кран
- 21) в окрестностях, по-соседству
- 22) Думаете, останется пятно?
- 23) Не отвлекайтесь.
- 24) обратиться к кому-либо с особой просьбой
- 25) Все эти дела прошли через наши руки.

- 26) Он не из тех, кто женится.
- 27) отплыть в Америку
- 28) Вас просят к телефону.
- 29) пребывать в неведении
- 30) сдерживаться
- 31) оказывать давление на кого-либо
- 32) дать распоряжение принять кого-либо
- 33) излагать собственную теорию
- 34) соорудить устройство
- 35) совершить убийство
- 36) я должен прочесть это наедине
- 37) на привычном месте
- 38) излишне наблюдателен

II. Be ready to answer who said the following:

- 1). A journal came into my possession, in which the murderer had taken the trouble to record for posterity .
- 2). He likes to think of himself as a scientist.
- 3). I'm eternally grateful to you for that first loan, Poirot.
- 4). I'll get a cloth.
- 5). I always told your late mother that I would look after you as if you were my own son.
- 6). I've got to see you! There's something I've got to tell you!
- 7). You think it's a suicide?
- 8). Presumably, it was Flora, but it doesn't make any sense.
- 9). Murder, cold-blooded murder!
- 10). Parker, Mr. Ackroyd says he doesn't want to be disturbed tonight.
- 11). I didn't make any phone calls, sir. I didn't phone, sir. I swear I didn't!
- 12). I was worried about him, and I made my return.

13). Ralph may have done some foolish things in the past, but he wouldn't murder anyone!

14). I'm not as you say all mixed up. Mr. Ackroyd was my old friend, that is all.

15). It's either him or the butler.

16). And I saw ...well...I thought I saw a woman disappearing into the bushes near the summerhouse. Well, just a gleam of white, you know.

17). It might be completely unimportant, that's why it's so interesting.

18). These shoes match the mark on the window so precisely.

19). There was a reason, inspector, of that you can be sure. When we know it, we'll know everything.

20). Yes, indeed. Mr. Paton will be a very wealthy young man.

21). You startled me!

22). One must keep the eyes on the alert.

23). Well, if you think that is why Mr. Ackroyd dismissed me, then you are wrong!

24). Who do you think knows all the little family secrets, sir?

25). Why would anyone want to kill a butler?

26). Ralph Paton disappeared from his lodgings on the night of the murder and nobody's seen him since.

27). I swear solemnly to you, I have no idea where Ralph is. I have neither seen him nor heard from him on the day of the murder or since!

28). I mean to arrive at the truth, I mean to know, and I shall know, in spite of you all.

29). Monsieur Ackroyd believes that Madam Ferrows ... she had been blackmailed ... and it is possible that this blackmailer and the murderer of Roger Ackroyd, they might be connected.

30). Who would have thought Miss Goody Two Shoes, Flora Ackroyd, capable of such naughtiness?

31). She confided in me to an unlimited extent.

32). I thought Mr. Ackroyd might have been sympathetic to me, but he was awful.

33). Ah, Mr. Smith. I thought that I'd find you here.

34). I knew the suspicion would fall on him, or if not on him, on the girl he loved.

35). I know precisely who killed Monsieur Ackroyd and Parker, and how it was done.

36). Woman? I hardly think it could be a woman.

37). I believe he had a weapon with him already, when it occurred to him that the dagger, which was actually on display at the scene of the crime, would cast the matter of suspicion even wider.

38). The law wouldn't punish her, so I did!

III. Complete and comment on the following ideas:

- Just scratch the surface and you will find ...
- When one retires ...
- Rule number one in King's Abbot – ...
- There is one thing a murderer may rely on for protection – ...
- You have no idea what my life has been like since we came here... wanting things...
 - I thought I could escape the wickedness of the city by moving to the country. The grass that is green, the singing of the birds, the faces smiling and friendly. Oh, what foolishness! The grass that is green is ...

AFTER WATCHING QUESTIONS AND TASKS

1. Express your general impression of the film. What episodes struck you most of all?
2. Can you say that the film reflects Christie's typical style and devices? Why/Why not?
3. Speak on the acting and cast. Who of the actors impressed you most of all?

David Suchet
Philip Jackson
Oliver Ford Davies
Selina Cadell
Roger Frost
Malcolm Terris

Hercule Poirot
Chief Inspector Japp
Dr. Sheppard
Caroline Sheppard
Parker
Roger Ackroyd

Nigel Cooke
Daisy Beaumont
Flora Montgomery
Vivien Heilbron
Gregor Truter
Jamie Bamber
Charles Early
Rosalind Bailey
Charles Simon
Graham Chinn
Clive Brunt
Alice Hart
Philip Wrigley
Phil Atkinson

Geoffrey Raymond
Ursula Bourne
Flora Ackroyd
Mrs. Ackroyd
Inspector Davis
Ralph Paton
Constable Jones
Mrs. Ferrars
Hammond
Landlord
Naval petty officer
Mary
Postman
Ted

4. As you know, Poirot and Miss Marple are two famous and most well-known characters created by A. Christie. The diminutive and somewhat fussy Belgian detective has been enjoyed for his keen mind, comic arrogance, and playing his part in some of the most famous fictional mysteries to emerge from Christie. Poirot enjoyed a long career by fictional standards, and did not meet his death until



the 1975 novel *Curtain*. In between his first novel and his last, Poirot was featured in more than 50 short stories and 30 novels. Numerous actors have lined up to play Poirot, including Albert Finney, Peter Ustinov, Ian Holm, Tony Randall, Alfred Molina and, most recently, and famously, David Suchet. Most found Poirot portrayals to be lacking in the essential description of the character. Ustinov, Finney and Molina, were generally thought too tall for the part. ***Look at the photos and say what you think about each actor playing the part of Poirot.***



Austin Trevor debuted the role of Poirot on film in the 1931 movie *Alibi*. The film was based on the stage play *Alibi* which had been adapted by Michael Morton from the novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*.

Trevor reprised the role of Poirot twice, in *Black Coffee* and *Lord Edgware Dies*. Trevor said once that he was probably cast as Poirot simply

because he could do a French accent.

Austin Trevor

The next time we see Poirot in the cinema with the *Alphabet Murders* (based on the *ABC Murders*) starring Tony Randall. This was more a satire on Poirot than a straightforward adaptation, and was greatly changed from the original. It turned the sharp and observant detective into a blundering buffoon who solves the case almost by accident.

Tony Randall

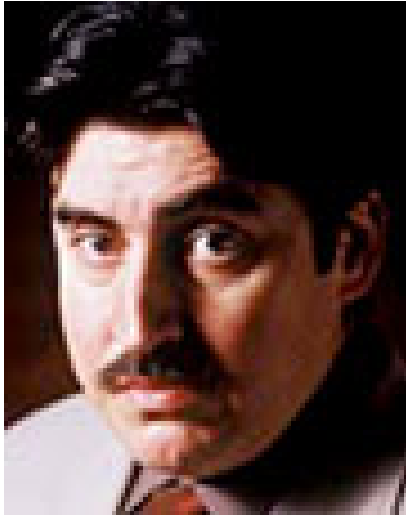


Albert Finney played Poirot in 1975 in the cinematic version of *Murder on the Orient Express*. His portrayal was considered by many to be the definitive Poirot until David Suchet took up the role. It was a very faithful adaptation of the novel and was, at the time, the most successful British film ever made. It received the stamp of approval from Agatha Christie herself. Finney is, so far, the only actor to receive an Academy Award nomination for playing Poirot, though he did not win.



Peter Ustinov

Peter Ustinov played Poirot a total of six times, starting with *Death on the Nile* (1978). He reprised the role in *Evil Under the Sun* (1982) and *Appointment With Death* (1988). Christie was less sanguine about Ustinov's portrayal, given that Poirot, written as short, slim, and with coal-black hair, bore little resemblance to the tall, heavy, grey-haired Ustinov.



Alfred Molina



David Suchet

Say what you think about David Suchet as Poirot. Did he manage to give the portrayal of the famous detective in the way you imagined him? Use the following expressions: patent leather shoes, slicked back hair, an amiably comic character with egg-shaped head carried a little to one side, his magnificent (and suspiciously black) moustache, eccentric, his dapper dress, his accent, the endless glasses of sirop de cassis, and the eyes that flash greenly in moments of excitement.

AT BERTRAM'S HOTEL

BEFORE WATCHING QUESTIONS AND TASKS

1. You are now going to watch the film featuring the detective Miss Marple. As you know, Miss Marple, along with Poirot, are two famous detectives created by A. Christie. Miss Marple first appeared in a series of six short stories in Britain's *The Sketch magazine*. She was a member of the Tuesday Club, a discussion group that met in the quiet Kentish village of St. Mary Meade to discuss unsolved crimes. Other members included the vicar; Miss Marple's nephew, Raymond West, a successful novelist; his fiancée Joyce, an artist; and others. **If you have ever read a book with Miss Marple, say why it was this character who always arrived at the solutions to the crimes?**

2. Miss Marple was not the first spinster detective - that honor belonged to Anna Katherine Green's Amelia Butterworth - but she is the one everyone thinks of when the concept arises. **How can you explain this fact?**

3. Miss Marple was based on Christie's own grandmother, a pleasant woman who nevertheless, according to Christie, "expected the worst of everyone and everything" and was usually right. A precursor of the character in Christie's own work can be found in the Hercule Poirot novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926). **Can you guess who it was? What did this character and Miss Marple have in common?**

4. Although popular from her first appearance in 1930, Jane Marple had to wait thirty-two years for her first big-screen appearance; when she made it, the results were disappointing to Christie purists. **Does it seem difficult to you to play the part of Miss Marple and not to disappoint Christie's admirers?**

5. The film you are going to watch is called *At Bertram's Hotel*. As it is seen from the title, the plot centers round the events taking place at the hotel. It is known that *Bertram's hotel* is inspired by **Brown's Hotel**, in London, where Agatha Christie often stayed when visiting London. Set in the heart of Mayfair on Albemarle Street, Brown's is one of the most historic hotels in London. Within a short walk from exclusive Bond Street shopping, West End theatres and St James's, Brown's Hotel was founded in 1837 to provide "genteel" accommodation for discerning people. Brown's has always had an air of exclusivity and refinement, which it has retained following its extensive refurbishment overseen by The Rocco Forte Collection's Director of Design, Olga Polizzi. Brown's has been restored to its rightful position as one of the most intimate and charming hotels in London. The

interiors are contemporary and have a real sense of style, while retaining much of their original, quintessentially English elegance.

Look at the photos and say what kind of clientele Brown's Hotel has. Would you like to stay there?



6. Below you can see the photos of other legendary hotels, which, as well as Brown's Hotel, joined The Rocco Forte Collection of luxury hotels. ***Can you define which photos present Brown's hotel?*** (There are two of them).



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

7. Look through the list of characters to get ready for close watching:

Characters

- Jane Marple
- Mr Humfries - the manager of Bertram's Hotel
- Miss Gorringe - Mr Humfries's assistant
- Rose Sheldon - a chambermaid employed at Bertram's Hotel
- Lady Selina Hazy
- The Honourable Elvira Blake
- Lady Bess Sedgwick – Elvira's mother
- Colonel Derek Luscombe – Elvira's guardian
- Michael "Micky" Gorman - Lady Sedgwick's husband and
commissionarie at Bertram's Hotel

- Robert and Wilhelm Hoffman - the owners of Bertram's Hotel
- Chief-Inspector Fred "Father" Davy
- Inspector Campbell
- Sergeant Wadell
- Canon Pennyfather
- Mrs McCrae - Canon Pennyfather's housekeeper
- Archdeacon Simmons - Canon Pennyfather's friend and houseguest

ACTIVITIES FOR MEANINGFUL WATCHING

Part I

1. Arrange these facts in the order they appear in the film:

1. Colonel Luscombe shook hands with Elvira politely. The effort he made was somewhat palpable as was his lack of ease. He could hardly go on saying how nice this was.

2. Rather unwillingly, Colonel Luscombe stepped across the threshold and had the door shut firmly behind him. "I had no idea you would be staying here, Bess. I would never have brought her here." "Where's she now?" "Watching television." She was dressed ready to go out in a well-cut dark suit and a shirt of bright emerald green. She looked gay and very much alive. Beside her, Colonel Luscombe looked rather old and faded. "I'd hate you to think that ..." "you were trying to stage a sentimental reunion. Only that it would be impossible." "Well, Bess, you are her mother."

3. Elvira went into her own room, opened her suitcase and flung a few things on the bed. Then she undressed, put on a dressing gown, went into the bathroom and turned the taps on. She went back into her room and sat down on the bed by the telephone. She listened a moment or two in case of interruptions, then lifted the receiver. "This is room twenty nine. Can you give me Regent 1129, please?" "Hello, Ladislaus. It's me."

4. Lady Sedgwick is asked for a photograph at the airport, which she gives writing "Break a leg".

5. Miss Marple had been listening with only half an ear to lady Selina's comments on her surroundings. She and Miss Marple moved in entirely different circles, so that Miss Marple had been unable to exchange scandalous tidbits about the various friends or acquaintances that Lady Selina recognized or thought she recognized. But Bess Sedgewick was different. Bess Sedgewick was a name that almost everyone in England knew.

6. Luscombe did not know what to say to this. While he was considering what next to say, Elvira spoke. "Have I any money?" Again he took his time before answering, studying her thoughtfully. Then he said, "Yes. You've got quite a lot of money. That is to say, you will have when you are twenty – one." "What happens if I die?"

7. Suddenly the doors were pushed open with violence, a violence quite unusual in Bertram's Hotel, and a young man strode in and went straight across to the desk. He wore a black leather jacket. His vitality was such that Bertram's Hotel took on the atmosphere of a museum by way of contrast. The people were dust-encrusted relics of a past age. He bent towards Miss Gorringer. "Is lady Sedgewick staying here?" Miss Gorringer on this occasion had no welcoming smile. Her eyes were infinty.

8. – Oh, Canon Pennyfather!
– Upon my soul, if it is not my dear old friend ...
– Jane Marple.

9. Miss Marple arrives at the desk and is pleasantly greeted by Miss Gorringer, the receptionist. She looked frumpy but respectable and knew everyone of the clientele and, like royalty, never forgot a face.

10. The commissionaire was left on the pavement with a broad grin on his face, and since no other exits seemed to be taking place, he strolled a little way along the façade of the hotel whistling an old tune in a muted manner.

One of the windows on the ground floor of Bertram's was flung up but the commissionaire did not even turn his head until a voice spoke unexpectedly through the open window: "My God! Micky Gorman! It can't be."

11. Canon Pennyfather entered his room and darkness fell over him.

12. Elvira and her friend Bridget go shopping and Elvira asks her friend for help saying it is really important. She suggests that her friend should ring up the the Melfords pretending to be her mother and explain that the dentist wants to see her again the next day and so she's staying over with her.

13. On the evening of November 19 Canon Pennyfather had finished an early dinner at the Athenaeum, he had nodded to one or two friends, had had a pleasant acrimonious discussion on some crucial points of the dating of the Dead Sea scrolls and now, glancing at his watch, saw that it was time to leave to catch his plane to Lucerne. As he passed through the hail he was greeted by one more friend: Dr. Whittaker, of the S.O.A.S., who said cheerfully, "Pennyfather, hello, there! Haven't seen you since that lecture on the Dead Sea scrolls. Surprised to find you not at the Lucerne Congress!"

"I am or rather I shall be. I'm off to catch my plane now. I think I can't stop".

"Surely. What date is the Congress?"

"Tomorrow, the nineteenth. I'll let you know if anything..." Whittaker looked slightly puzzled.

Canon Pennyfather passed out through the door while his friend, looking after him, was just saying, "But my dear chap, today is the nineteenth, isn't it?"

Canon Pennyfather, however, was gone beyond earshot.

14. Curiosity, or what she preferred herself to call "taking an interest" in other people's affairs was undoubtedly one of Miss Marple's characteristics.

She took a route that passed close to Lady Sedgwick and saw her with a young man who had a lean hawk like face and wore a black leather jacket. As Miss Marple stood behind the bush she memorized such scraps as she had heard. It was interesting that neither of the two objects of her curiosity spared as much as a glance for the dithery old lady.

"So, is everything set?"

"Yes".

"You've checked the weather forecast?"

"Of course."

That was all Miss Marple had been able to hear. She found it interesting.

2. Fill in the gaps in the following dialogues and comment on them:

Dialogue A

Lady Selina: Bess Sedgwick! Of all the ...! Extraordinary girl. I've known her since she was a child. No one could her. She ran off with one of the ... when she was only sixteen.

Miss Marple: Really?

Lady Selina: But they managed to and married her safely to old Coniston, awful old rip, but ... about her. That didn't last. Then she married an American, a year. Then she went off with Jonnie Sedgwick. I suppose that might have stuck if he hadn't broken his neck steeple chasing.

Miss Marple: Yes, yes, and since then?

Lady Selina: One I don't think she's ever married again. But there's always someone. She's that sort of woman that always needs a man.

Miss Marple: Oh, do you think so? I would have said that men were more like an ... for her than a

Dialogue B

Bess Sedgwick: Come in! Come in!

Elvira: Hello. I'm Elvira.

Bess Sedgwick: So, he it.

Elvira: Uncle Derek didn't tell me. I

Bess Sedgwick: What do you want?

Elvira: To meet you.

Bess Sedgwick: So, now you've met me.

Elvira: Is that all you can say?

Bess Sedgwick: What else is there to say? It's no use

You were two years old the last time I you.

Elvira: Why didn't you take me with you when you left?

Bess Sedgwick: Just didn't want to be the baby. I knew your father would see you

Elvira: And when he died?

Bess Sedgwick: You haven't gone without anything, have you?

Elvira: Not

Bess Sedgwick: I couldn't give you anything else. I'm not of a I'm sorry but there it is.

Elvira: Couldn't we just meet each other?

Bess Sedgwick: There'd

Elvira: All these years I've ... you I saw you as a fold romantic person who ... me

Bess Sedgwick: Now you know I'm

Elvira: Yes.

Bess Sedgwick: Elvira, you are much better

Dialogue C

Bess Sedgwick: My God! Micky Gorman! It can't be.

Micky Gorman: I recognized you when you arrived yesterday.

Bess Sedgwick: It's more than I did you.

Micky Gorman: People seldom ... the man Well, well little Bessie...

Bess Sedgwick: Oh, don't you use that ... name!

Mick Gorman: You didn't think it was ... then.

Bess Sedgwick: What have you all these years?

Micky Gorman: ... and ...!

Bess Sedgwick: I

Micky Gorman: I know all about your doings. It's been a long time.

Bess Sedgwick: It certainly has.

Micky Gorman: A lovely you were.

Bess Sedgwick: I'vebetter than you. Still, I suppose?

Micky Gorman: It's easy when you are in the money.

Bess Sedgwick: Money wouldn't have done you any good. You'd have gone to the dogs completely. How on earth did you at this place?

Micky Gorman: It was the medals

Bess Sedgwick: I'm sure.

Micky Gorman: All ... too in case you're wondered.

Bess Sedgwick: I wasn't. You never lacked The army must have suited you.

Micky Gorman: Army's all right in wartime but I thought of writing to you, you know.

Bess Sedgwick: What for?

Micky Gorman: I've not forgotten Ballygowlan.

Bess Sedgwick: What's that supposed to mean?

Micky Gorman: Just ... you.

Bess Sedgwick: If you mean what I think you do, then listen, chap. You start raking all this up and I'll you are.

Micky Gorman: U-u-uh, I do believe you would do.

Bess Sedgwick: So I would.

Questions to the first part of the film:

1. How would you characterize **Bertram's hotel**? (the clientele: Bess Sedgwick, Lady Selina Hazy, Elvira Blake and her uncle – Colonel Luscombe, Canon Pennyfather; the interior, staff, service). *Make use of the following expressions*: in the heart of the West End; dignified, unostentatious, and quietly expensive; just like stepping back a hundred years; patronized over a long stretch of years by the higher echelons of the clergy, dowager ladies of the aristocracy up from the country, girls on their way home for the holidays from expensive finishing schools; the steps that led up to the big swing doors; a field marshal appeared outside the steps; gold braid and medal ribbons on the manly chest; perfect deportment; the doorman is always happy to assist an elderly person into a taxi; in the big central lounge there were two magnificent coal fires; to serve all the old English dishes; to enjoy sumptuous, late afternoon teas; large crested silver trays; Georgian silver teapots; to be pleasantly greeted by Miss Gorringer, the receptionist; to be the epitome of efficiency; a chambermaid looking unreal, chambermaids wear a striped lavender print dress and a freshly laundered cap; a smiling, rosy, positively countrified face.

2. What impression did **Elvira** produce on you? (Consider her age, her relationships with her uncle and Ladislaus Malinowski). Why do you think she asked Colonel Luscombe about her money and the procedure if inheriting it in case she died? Was she afraid of something?

How well did she know Malinowski? Do you agree with Miss Marple that “a young girl needs a mother's watchful eye”? Who was this phrase meant for?

Why did she ask her friend Bidy to help leave London? What was it that she called “a matter of life and death”?

3. What's your opinion about **mother-and-daughter relationships** portrayed in the film? Do you find them strange? Were the women happy to meet each other? What did they think about each other?

4. What made **Inspector Campbell** stay at Bertram's hotel? Why was it meant to be a secret? How did Miss Marple find him out? Do you find it true-to-life that an experienced inspector should rely on the words of a common elderly lady?

5. Speak of **Canon Pennyfather**. Make use of the following phrases: a forgetful minister; to go to a conference at Lucerne; to dine at the Athenaeum Club at seven-thirty on the evening of the nineteenth; to omit to leave his key behind but take it with him; to have the aeroplane ticket for the eighteenth.

6. What do you think might have happened to the old man at the end of the part?

Part II

1. Give English equivalents to the following:

- 1) придумай что-нибудь
- 2) попечитель
- 3) Мне надоело, что все считают меня ребенком.
- 4) Приятно провести время!
- 5) Я подброшу тебя до вокзала.
- 6) Не пропадай!
- 7) Приятного путешествия!
- 8) Надеюсь, вы не сочтете меня слишком бесцеремонной.
- 9) Как мне вас представить?
- 10) Подмени меня, Эллис!
- 11) Ты меня неправильно поняла.
- 12) рано утром
- 13) Я знаю, что значит связаться с негодяем в таком возрасте.
- 14) при сотрясении мозга
- 15) сесть в поезд
- 16) Вас не проведешь, мисс Марпл
- 17) ухаживать за кем-либо
- 18) заикаться
- 19) на нее было совершено покушение
- 20) Ну все, успокойся.
- 21) пуля предназначалась не для него
- 22) Бог услышал мои молитвы
- 23) ходить по кругу
- 24) подслушивали, да?
- 24) главный преступник
- 25) с другой стороны, какого черта?
- 26) Да, я заправляла всем.

27) украсть пистолет

28) Она призналась в совершении убийства.

2. Who and under what circumstances says the following:

- 1) There's been another robbery during the night.
- 2) I've got to see someone urgently.
- 3) No one ever tells me things!
- 4) For you I can risk anything.
- 5) I wondered if I could get a word with you. In private.
- 6) I think you should report his disappearance to the police at once.
- 7) I do hope it won't get into Sunday papers that he's missing or, at any rate, there won't be mentioned Bertram's.
- 8) So, you could try to screw some money out of me. I warned you the other day...
- 9) What was once so reassuring seems to be so false. Menacing even.
- 10) She's young and vulnerable. I'm not letting you ruin her life.
- 11) Oh, no, Bess. We need each other too much.
- 12) I've trained quite a few maids in my time but I've never seen a bomb courtesy like that since at St. Mary Mead players put on a French farce.
- 13) How else could I be lying on the road?
- 14) Mothers and daughters ... they don't seem to keep cropping up, do they?
- 15) I feel so worried about that poor girl. I have a dreadful sense of foreboding.
- 16) They shot at me. If it hadn't been for him...
- 17) So, now I'm guilty of murder as well as robbery.
- 18) Bess and I have been lovers but it was never serious.
- 19) You say that because you are jealous, I know all about you and him!
- 20) What you saw was someone dressed up to look like you do.
- 21) You, police, aren't as slow as which people make out.
- 22) Bigamy, trigamy, what's the difference?

23) Or you might reassure her that she wasn't the intended murder victim. That's how it appeared to her. That's how the murderer wanted it look: he fired a shot taking care the bullet went nowhere near her, she screamed, Gorman ran down the road and then the murderer shot the person he always wanted to shoot – Michael Gorman.

24) After all, Bertram's is a blackmailers' paradise, isn't it? It's the headquarters of one of the biggest crime syndicates we've ever known.

25) Humphries is wonderfully plausible too, not to mention Miss Gorringe, Rose Sheldon and all those foreign visitors with their luxury luggage tailor-made for carrying money in and over the country.

26) Remember, Miss Marple! You are the witness to what I'm saying. I killed Michael Gorman. (pause) Now catch me if you can!

27) So what?! So bloody what?! Why shouldn't she take the blame?! That's all she ever did for me! I hated her! Hated her!!!

28) When she found that her mother had married Gorman, she realized that the marriage to her father was illegal. She thought she wouldn't inherit. No money – no lover.

AFTER WATCHING DISCUSSION AND TASKS:

1. Express your general impression of the film. What episodes did you enjoy most of all?

2. Can you say that the film reflects Christie's typical style and devices? Why/Why not?

3. Speak on the acting and cast. Who of the actors impressed you most of all? Pick out of the list of actors and actresses:

Joan Hickson	Miss Jane Marple
Caroline Blakiston	Lady Bess Sedgwick
Helena Michell	Elvira Blake
James Cossins	Colonel Derek Luscombe
Joan Greenwood	Lady Selina Hazy
George Baker	Chief Inspector Fred Davy
Douglas Milvain	Sir Ronald Graves

Philip Bretherton	Detective Inspector Campbell
Preston Lockwood	Canon Pennyfather
Irene Sutcliffe	Miss Gorringe
Brian McGrath	Michael Gorman
Neville Phillips	Henry
Robert Reynolds	Ladislaus Malinowski
Peter Baldwin	Mr. Humfries
http://www.imdb.com/rg/title-tease/resumehead/http://resume.imdb.com/Randal Herley	Richard Egerton

4. The film you've watched features some of Christie's best and most original female characters. Along with Miss Jane Marple, there is the ruthless and brilliant Lady Bess Sedgwick, and her daughter Elvira Blake. Women's ideas and actions take a prominent place in this film, as it reveals a female mind turned criminal. Can you name any reasons for this turn? Is there a difference between male and female driving motives and ways of committing crimes?

5. After watching the film you know that it was Miss Marple who helped the police to crack a ruthless crime syndicate and unmask a cold-blooded killer. ***Did you notice how she did it?*** In this film Joan Hickson portrays Christie's phenomenal amateur detective Jane Marple. The Controller of BBC One, Peter Salmon, also paid tribute to the actress. "Joan Hickson was over many decades one of the greatest character actresses of British film and TV," he said.

"She will be remembered for countless roles but for many she was the definitive Miss Marple in the BBC's classic adaptation of the Agatha Christie stories, and her performances brought pleasure to millions." ***Do you agree with this estimation?***

Miss Jane Marple, one of the most famous characters created by English crime writer Agatha Christie, has been portrayed by a variety of actresses in films and television. The first Miss Marple was played by British stage star Gracie Fields in a US TV play entitled *A Murder is Announced* (1956). This character wasn't revived again until 1961 when MGM splashed out on the wonderful and highly popular *Murder, She Said* (1962) starring Margaret Rutherford, a magnificent comic actress but too boisterous and loud for the prim and birdlike character Christie created. The tone of the film was overall far more jolly and humorous than the darker novel and the following three films *Murder at the Gallop* (1963), *Murder*

Most Foul (1964) and *Murder Ahoy* (1964) became increasingly silly, if still rather fun. Despite her hatred of the MGM films Christie still became great friends with Rutherford and dedicated a Miss Marple book, "*The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side*" to her.

A British film adaptation of that book by EMI was made in 1980 entitled *The Mirror Crack'd* (1980) starring Angela Lansbury as Miss Marple. This remarkably stodgy movie was made even more ridiculous by the fact that Lansbury was obviously too young for the role.

The same comment could hardly be made of that grand dame of American theatre Helen Hayes as Miss Marple, who appeared in the mildly entertaining *A Caribbean Mystery* (1983) and at the age of 85 in the dreary *Murder with Mirrors* (1985). Hayes's Marple was benign and chirpy.

However it was the BBC television series which began in the 80s that brought what many regard as the definitive Miss Marple to the screen, played by Joan Hickson. The series was a resounding success and was seen in more than forty countries. From 1985 to 1992, Hickson filmed all twelve of the Miss Marple novels. It was also in 1946 that Agatha Christie, having seen Joan in *Appointment with death* in the West End, sent her a note which said: "I hope one day you might play my dear Miss Marple".

In promoting the programmes in America, they were described as "heritage productions": "As a celebration of English culture, "heritage" demands that the program be as faithful as possible to the source material".

In 2004, ITV first broadcast new adaptations of Agatha Christie's books under the title *Agatha Christie's Marple*, usually referred to as *Marple*, with Geraldine McEwan in the lead role. The series is infamous for its frequent plot and character changes (such as incorporating lesbian affairs, changing killer identities, and re-naming or removing a number of characters). Two series have so far aired, with a third airing in 2007.

Look at the photos of the actresses portraying Miss Marple and say how well each of them managed to embody the famous detective.



Gracie Fields



Margaret Rutherford



Angela Lansbury



A scene from *Murder Most Foul* (1964), starring Margaret Rutherford as Miss Marple and Charles Tingwell as Inspector Craddock.



Helen Hayes



Joan Hickson



Geraldine McEwan

6. Listen to the interview with Joan Hickson where she tells about her experience of featuring Miss Marple. What are your impressions about her?

7. **Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple**

There's an opinion that Miss Marple ranks as readers' second favourite detective next to Poirot. *Do you agree with this point of view? How can you explain the fact that Miss Marple is less popular than Poirot?*

Check how much you know about Poirot and Miss Marple. Divide the following expressions describing both detectives into two columns - Poirot and Miss Marple:

a tall, thin person of between 65 and 70 years of age; has a big ego, he/she stands 5 feet, 4 inches tall, has green eyes, and an egg-shaped head (which he/she perches to one side); always takes for granted that everyone recognizes his/her name; this person finds English habits and humor incomprehensible; has white snowy hair, pale blue eyes, and a pinkish wrinkled face; prefers to sit quietly and think when he solves crimes, for he/she believes all crimes are psychological and having clues is not everything; this person is often seen carrying knitting needles and yarn; a shrewd and intelligent person, and a keen observer of human nature; however, this person has an excellent command of the English language and at times uses his/her "foreignness" as an advantage; this person believes that all people are alike everywhere, with their bad traits and evil desires; this person loves the indoors and avoids extreme weather whenever possible; although his/her belief is that crime is not solved on evidence alone, he/she's not above snooping into others' personal things: he/she has been known to listen at doors, hide behind curtains, and even dig in women's' underwear drawers; the famous sleuth loves the finer things of life and luxury, including exotic drinks (he/she loves *sirop de cassis*), exotic locales, excellent served food, the theatre and other arts, and very comfortable hotel rooms;

simply only his/her observations and knowledge of people are what lead him/her to the truth; this person did not have any family life, but travelled much; he/she has the blackest of hair (is known to use dye), and his/her black waxed moustache is perfection; he/she offers a pleasantly female-oriented version of detective mythology; he/she had a limp when he/she walked; gossip forms the most powerful of his/her tools; this person is very much the stereotypical spinster of the last century - blue-eyed and frail, wearing a black lace cap and mittens, and constantly knitting; two of his/her hobbies (and subjects of conversation) are bird watching and gardening; he/she always wears patent leather shoes and is always neatly dressed with the finest of clothing; this person loathes dirt and disarray, and favors order, method, and symmetry; his/her investigative methods involve no violence, threats or intimidation; he/she doesn't take just any case that comes his/her way, however, and he/she freely admits that he/she's fond of money; the Belgian detective states the greatest tool for crime solving is the mind, thanks to the "little grey cells"; he/she is also a gleeful gossip and not especially nice.

8. *Discussion points:*

1. Imagine that Poirot and Miss Marple had to compete with each other in the art of solving crimes. Who would be the fastest?

2. Do you believe that they would get on well with each other if they solved one and the same mystery case?

3. Say how the two famous sleuths would help to solve the crimes in the films you've watched (The murder of Roger Ackroyd and At Bertram's hotel) if they exchanged places and appeared in different films. Would the films end in the same way?

4. The photo on the right shows the first meeting of Christie's beloved detectives: Jane Marple (Joan Hickson) and Hercule Poirot (David Suchet). Although they never appeared in the same story, they meet here in 1990 for Agatha Christie's centenary celebration in her hometown of Torquay, a seaside town in Devonshire.



What in your opinion they said to each other? Act out their dialogue.

9. Below is the film review of the greatest of all Poirot films, and one of the finest mystery films of any kind, *the Murder on the Orient Express* (EMI, 1974,

directed by Sidney Lumet). Study it and write a film review of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* or *At Bertram's hotel*.

A film review by VINCENT CANBY

Had Dame Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* been made into a movie 40 years ago (when it was published here as *Murder on the Calais Coach*), it would have been photographed in black-and-white on a back lot in Burbank or Culver City, with one or two stars and a dozen character actors and studio contract players. Its running time would have been around 67 minutes and it could have been a very respectable B-picture.

Murder on the Orient Express wasn't made into a movie 40 years ago, and after you see the Sidney Lumet production that opened yesterday at the Coronet, you may be both surprised and glad it wasn't. An earlier adaptation could have interfered with plans to produce this terrifically entertaining super-valentine to a kind of whodunit that may well be one of the last fixed points in our inflationary universe.

The new film, directed by Mr. Lumet and written by Paul Dehn, was made mostly in Britain and on location in France and Turkey. It was shot in color. It runs a bit over two never-flagging hours. And it has the kind of all-star cast that only M-G-M could have afforded 40 years ago.

Like the lovely, extravagantly overemphasized nineteen-thirties' costumes and production designed by Tony Walton, *Murder on the Orient Express* is much less a literal re-creation of a type of thirties movie than an elaborate and witty tribute that never for a moment condescends to the subject.

Setting the tone for the film is Albert Finney's extraordinary performance as Hercule Poirot, Dame Agatha's Belgian detective whose smug, unflappable brilliance makes Sherlock Holmes seem like a hysterical freak. When Hercule first appears in the film, dining with dainty disgust in an Istanbul hotel, one can't even be sure it's really Mr. Finney, so transformed is he by black, patent-leather hair, waxed mustache, portly, middle-aged physique and a musical-comedy French accent that comes and goes, much like the accent of Hercule Poirot in Dame Agatha's books.

The performance is made up of the sort of wildly theatrical overstatements that heretofore only Laurence Olivier, Marlon Brando and, occasionally, Maggie Smith have gotten away with. It's a performance of exaggeration, which is fun to watch both for the goals achieved and the risks taken.

Though to a lesser extent almost all the other stars come on strong and take similar risks: Lauren Bacall as a pushy, garrulous American widow, Ingrid Bergman as a virtually psychotic Swedish nurse-missionary, Rachel Roberts as a very weird

German maid, Sean Connery as a stuffy British Army officer, Jacqueline Bisset as a beautiful, preoccupied Hungarian countess, Wendy Hiller as a Russian princess and Jean-Pierre Cassel as an unlikely sleeping-car conductor.

Everyone in the film is very, very busy acting (which is about the only clue one should give about the plot), and one shouldn't be put off by the fact that some of the actors have acted similar roles before, especially Anthony Perkins (as a possibly homicidal man of indeterminate youth), John Gielgud (as a fastidious valet), Vanessa Redgrave (as a coolly passionate English beauty) and Richard Widmark (as a ruthless American millionaire).

For the record I must say how much I also liked Martin Balsam, Michael York, Colin Blakely, George Coulouris and Denis Quilley. It's a movie in which everyone is important to its success.

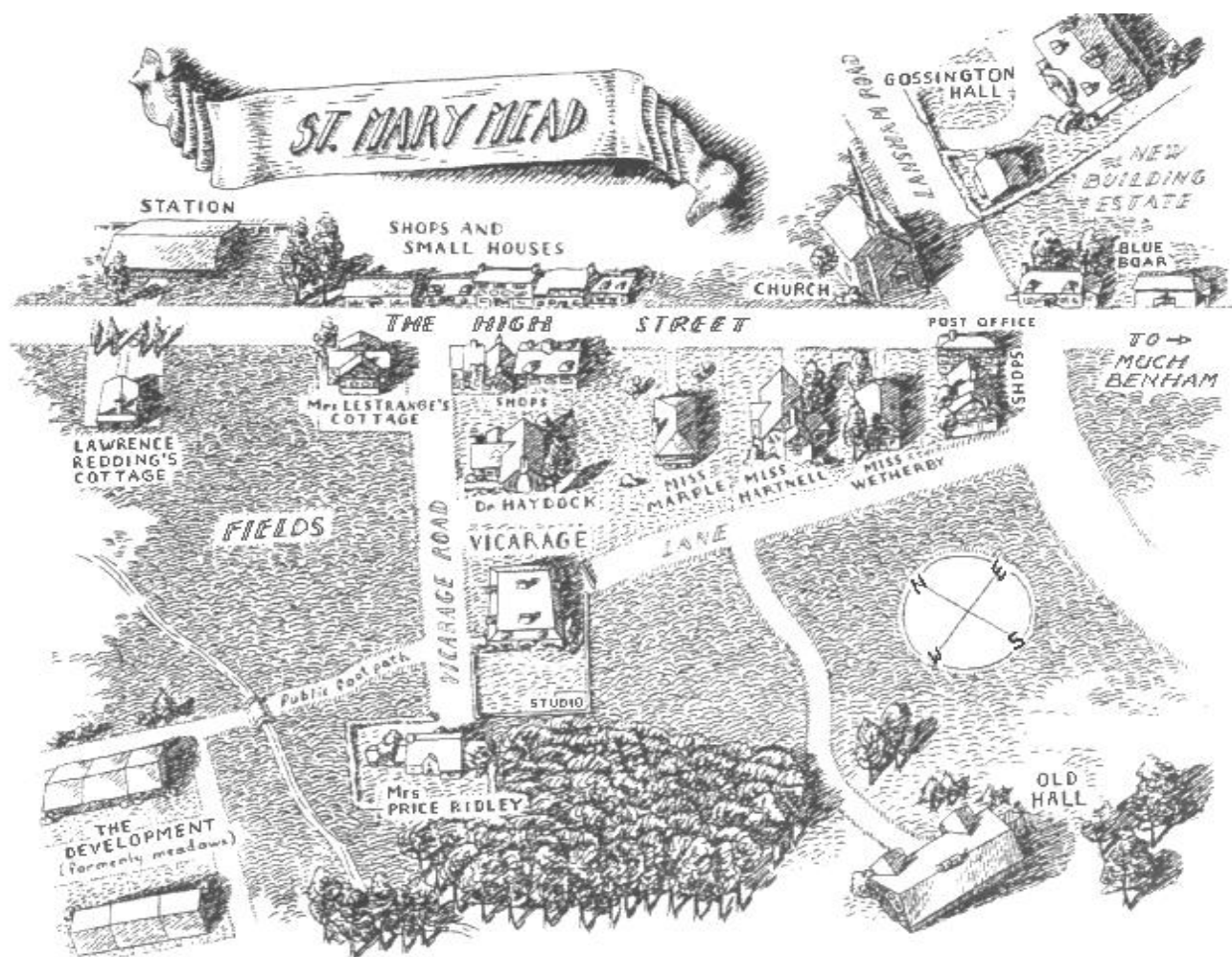
Some purposely vague details about the story: the time is the mid-nineteen-thirties, five years after a notorious case of kidnapping on Long Island (detailed in a fine pre-credit sequence), and it is set aboard the Orient Express, the crack train that went from Istanbul to Calais, with stops at Zagreb, Trieste and other points in between. The murder, which is committed the second night out, is solved by Hercule Poirot in the time it takes to dig the train out of a huge Balkan snowdrift but not before absolutely everyone has come under suspicion and all identities have been scrambled.

In addition to being the sort of mystery that treats death as a largely goreless inconvenience, an intellectual riddle to be solved as politely as possible, clue by clue, *Murder on the Orient Express* recalls that innocent, pre-Amtrak time when the Orient was still mysterious and railroad travel was full of exotic possibilities. (I suspect that because it took so long to get from one place to another on trains in those days, the places arrived at were invested with a magic that has since been lost, but that's another subject entirely.)

My only quarrel with the film is a minor one. There is too much music on the soundtrack. Especially when the train is under way I miss hearing, loud and clear, the rhythmical, monotonous, wheel-on-rail clickety-clack that I associate with such great moments of childhood as *The Lady Vanishes* and my first overnight trip in a Pullman berth.

TAPE MEASURE MURDER

Below you can see the picture of St. Mary Meade, the fictional village where Miss Marple lives and the setting for crimes in three novels and many of the short stories. As you know, Miss Marple was a crime fighter who relied on her feminine sensitivity and empathy to solve crimes. While the police struggled to find a culprit, Miss Marple went quietly about her business looking for clues using her instinct and knowledge of human nature. St. Mary Meade is the place where Miss Marple got her experience in solving crimes as much of Miss Marple's success comes from her simple observations of the denizens of the village. *Look at the picture and say what kind of life the people of the village might have.*



Part I

1. Before reading the story study the definitions of the words you may not know and give their Russian equivalents:

to ascertain - *formal* to find out if a fact that you think is true is really true

to startle – to make someone suddenly surprised or slightly shocked

to strangle – to kill someone by pressing on their throat with your hands, a rope etc.

wrathful – *formal* feeling extreme anger

artful – clever at deceiving people

acumen – the ability to think quickly and make good judgments

assiduity – *formal* someone who has this is very careful to make sure that smth. is done properly

embezzlement – the act of stealing money from the place where you work

2. While reading the story give English equivalents for the following:

1. договориться о примерке
2. взглянуть на наручные часы
3. зычно крикнуть
4. бросить небрежный взгляд
5. не выказывать признаков жизни
6. нужно не терять самообладания
7. сдерживать эмоции
8. многозначительно замолчать
9. совладелец
10. острый на язык
11. не называя никаких имен
12. сама респектабельность
13. однолетние и многолетние растения
14. существенно увеличить прибыль
15. с головой окунуться в религию

16. сыграть роль убитого горем мужа
17. рассматривать возможность
18. разыграть чистосердечное признание
19. похлопотать о деле

3. Say whether the following statements are true or false in reference to the text:

1. Miss Hartnell started life as a lady's maid.
2. Mrs. Spelow wasn't at home because she had forgotten about the appointment with the dressmaker.
3. When Miss Hartnell looked through the windows and saw Mrs. Spelow dead, both women ran away in terror.
4. Miss Hartnell suspected smth. about Mr. Spelow at once.
5. The police didn't allow the suspicion to fall on Mr. Spelow.
6. Police Constable Palk wasn't surprised to find out that Miss Marple was aware of the crime and even knew the details.
7. Miss Marple didn't call Mr. Spelow at 2.30
8. Miss Marple was out when Mr. Spelow paid her a visit.
9. Mr. Spelow never intended to live in the country but did so, on account of his wife, who had always been attached to flowers.
10. This had been Mrs. Spelow's first marriage.
11. Mrs. Spelow spent all the money she had inherited and now lived at her husband's expense.
12. Mrs. Spelow was an atheist.
13. The police couldn't trace the calls.
14. The police never thought of Tom Gerard as another possible murderer.
15. Tom Gerard once embezzled a sum of money.
16. Mrs. Spelow was a married woman working as secretary at Sir Robert Abercrombie's place when there was a jewel robbery.
17. Opinion in police circles was that the son of Sir Robert Abercrombie had an affair with Mrs. Spelow.

4. Discussion points:

1). Who was the first on the scene of the crime and how did they happen to be there? What did they do?

2). How can you explain the fact that Mr. Spenlow didn't seem surprised at all on learning about his wife's death? Do you agree with the police that it looked very suspicious?

3). How did Miss Marple get to know about the event?

4). Why did Constable Palk pay a visit to Miss Marple?

5). Can we say that Mrs. Spenlow had a business streak?

6). Do you think the Spenlows made a good couple and were both happily married?

7). What was wrong with the phone call to Mr. Spenlow? What are your suppositions?

8). Why was the name of Tom Gerard mentioned by the police?

9). Why did the policemen need to consult Miss Marple for the second time? Do you believe they'll find the murderer?

10). Who do you suspect of committing the murder?

11). Did you recognize the voice of the narrator? How would you characterize the way the story was read out?

Part II

1. Listen to the second part of the story and give English equivalents for the following:

1. Это конфиденциальный разговор.

2. финансовый вопрос

3. Он немало с этого получит.

4. преступление припишут бродяге

5. перевести дыхание

6. это навевает некоторым определенные мысли

7. на месте преступления

8. Как такая мысль могла прийти ребенку в голову?

9. Что могло послужить этому толчком?

10. Уверяю вас, я очень остро переживаю ее утрату.

11. Я не могу вспомнить это название.
12. на взгляд мужчины
13. Он уже начал догадываться.
14. Преступление имеет давнюю историю.
15. Что бы он ни делал, у него все получалось.
16. Деньги к деньгам.
17. и глазом не моргнуть

2. Say whether the following statements are true or false in reference to the recording:

1. Colonel Melchett didn't remember Miss Marple at all.
2. The two policemen came to Miss Marple to find out what people were saying.
3. Everyone in the village was sure of Mr. Spenlow's guilt.
4. The Spenlows had quarreled a lot before the murder.
5. Tom Gerard was a very attractive young man.
6. Tom Gerard took the two twenty-seven down train.
7. Mr. Spenlow had always been a very attentive husband.
8. Miss Marple was sure that Miss Hartnell could help Inspector Slack.
9. Mr. Spenlow was surprised by the village gossips about him.
10. Mr. Spenlow chose the follower of a Chinese philosopher.
11. Miss Politt lived in the flat near the post office.
12. Miss Marple wanted to have a new grey dress made.
13. Colonel Melchett picked up a pin in Miss Politt's house.
14. Miss Marple gave a clear explanation how the crime had been performed.
15. Miss Politt and Mrs. Spenlow had once been participators in the murder.
16. Mrs. Spenlow was ready to clear her breast.
17. Miss Politt was a very shrewd woman and couldn't be easily taken in.
18. Colonel Melchett didn't believe a word Miss Marple said.

3. Discussion points:

1). How did the two policemen (Inspector Slack and Constable Palk) treat Miss Marple? How can you account for it? Why did the head of St. Mary Mead's police station still remember Miss Marple?

2). What can you say about the methods of investigation the police used? When and how did Miss Marple hint at something that the policemen couldn't understand?

3). Why did Miss Marple speak to Mr. Spenlow in the tone in which she spoke to her grandnephew, aged three?

4). Why didn't Miss Marple at once go through the door of the post-office?

5). How did Miss Marple trace the murderer? How long did it take her? How long do you think it would take the police if Miss Marple didn't help them?

Tape-Measure Murder

'Tape-Measure Murder' was first published in the USA in This Week, 16 November 1941, and then as 'The Case of the Retired Jeweller' in Strand Magazine, February 1942.

Miss Politt took hold of the knocker and rapped politely on the cottage door. After a discreet interval she knocked again. The parcel under her left arm shifted a little as she did so, and she readjusted it. Inside the parcel was Mrs. Spenlow's new green winter dress, ready for fitting. From Miss Politt's left hand dangled a bag of black silk, containing a tape measure, a pincushion, and a large, practical pair of scissors.

Miss Politt was tall and gaunt, with a sharp nose, pursed lips, and meagre iron-grey hair. She hesitated before using the knocker for the third time. Glancing down the street, she saw a figure rapidly approaching. Miss Hartnell, jolly, weather-beaten, fifty-five, shouted out in her usual loud bass voice, 'Good afternoon, Miss Politt!'

The dressmaker answered, 'Good afternoon, Miss Hartnell.' Her voice was excessively thin and genteel in its accents. She had started life as a lady's maid. 'Excuse me,' she went on, 'but do you happen to know if by any chance Mrs. Spenlow isn't at home?'

'Not the least idea,' said Miss Hartnell.

'It's rather awkward, you see. I was to fit on Mrs. Spenlow's new dress this afternoon. Three-thirty, she said.'

Miss Hartnell consulted her wrist watch. 'It's a little past the half-hour now.'

'Yes. I have knocked three times, but there doesn't seem to be any answer, so I was wondering if perhaps Mrs. Spenlow might have gone out and forgotten. She doesn't forget appointments as a rule, and she wants the dress to wear the day after tomorrow.'

Miss Hartnell entered the gate and walked up the path to join Miss Politt outside the door of Laburnum Cottage.

'Why doesn't Gladys answer the door?' she demanded. 'Oh, no, of course, it's Thursday – Gladys's day out. I expect Mrs. Spenlow has fallen asleep. I don't expect you've made enough noise with this thing.'

Seizing the knocker, she executed a deafening rat-a-tat-tat, and in addition thumped upon the panels of the door. She also called out in a stentorian voice, 'What ho, within there!'

There was no response.

Miss Politt murmured, 'Oh, I think Mrs. Spenlow must have forgotten and gone out, I'll call round some other time.' She began edging away down the path.

'Nonsense,' said Miss Hartnell firmly. 'She can't have gone out. I'd have met her. I'll just take a look through the windows and see if I can find any signs of life.'

She laughed in her usual hearty manner, to indicate that it was a joke, and applied a perfunctory glance to the nearest window-pane – perfunctory because she knew quite well that the front room was seldom used, Mr. and Mrs. Spenlow preferring the small back sitting-room.

Perfunctory as it was, though, it succeeded in its object. Miss Hartnell, it is true, saw no signs of life. On the contrary, she saw, through the window, Mrs. Spenlow lying on the hearthrug – dead.

'Of course,' said Miss Hartnell, telling the story afterwards, 'I managed to keep my head. That Politt creature wouldn't have had the least idea of what to do. "Got to keep our heads," I said to her. "*You* stay here, and I'll go for Constable Palk." She said something about not wanting to be left, but I paid no attention at all. One has to be firm with that sort of person. I've always found they enjoy making a fuss. So I was just going off when, at that very moment, Mr. Spenlow came round the corner of the house.'

Here Miss Hartnell made a significant pause. It enabled her audience to ask breathlessly, 'Tell me, how did he *look*?'

Miss Hartnell would then go on, 'Frankly, I suspected something at once! He was *far* too calm. He didn't seem surprised in the least. And you may say what you like, it isn't natural for a man to hear that his wife is dead and display no emotion whatever.'

Everybody agreed with this statement.

The police agreed with it, too. So suspicious did they consider Mr. Spenlow's detachment, that they lost no time in ascertaining how that gentleman was situated as a result of his wife's death. When they discovered that Mrs. Spenlow had been the monied partner, and that her money went to her husband under a will made soon after their marriage, they were more suspicious than ever.

Miss Marple, that sweet-faced – and, some said, vinegar-tongued – elderly spinster who lived in the house next to the rectory, was interviewed very early – within half an hour of the discovery of the crime. She was approached by Police Constable Palk, importantly thumbing a notebook. 'If you don't mind, ma'am, I've a few questions to ask you.'

Miss Marple said, 'In connection with the murder of Mrs. Spenlow?'

Palk was startled. 'May I ask, madam, how you got to know of it?'

'The fish,' said Miss Marple.

The reply was perfectly intelligible to Constable Palk. He assumed correctly that the fishmonger's boy had brought it, together with Miss Marple's evening meal.

Miss Marple continued gently. 'Lying on the floor in the sitting-room, strangled – possibly by a very narrow belt. But whatever it was, it was taken away.'

Palk's face was wrathful. 'How that young Fred gets to know everything –'

Miss Marple cut him short adroitly. She said, 'There's a pin in your tunic.'

Constable Palk looked down, startled. He said, 'They do say, "See a pin and pick it up, all the day you'll have good luck."'

'I hope that will come true. Now what is it you want me to tell you?'

Constable Palk cleared his throat, looked important, and consulted his notebook. 'Statement was made to me by Mr. Arthur Spenlow, husband of the deceased. Mr. Spenlow says that at two-thirty, as far as he can say, he was rung up by Miss Marple, and asked if he would come over at a quarter past three as she was anxious to consult him about something. Now, ma'am, is that true?'

'Certainly not,' said Miss Marple.

'You did not ring up Mr. Spenlow at two-thirty?'

'Neither at two-thirty nor any other time.'

'Ah,' said Constable Palk, and sucked his moustache with a good deal of satisfaction.

'What else did Mr. Spenlow say?'

'Mr. Spenlow's statement was that he came over here as requested, leaving his own house at ten minutes past three; that on arrival here he was informed by the maid-servant that Miss Marple was "not at 'ome".'

'That part of it is true,' said Miss Marple. 'He did come here, but I was at a meeting at the Women's Institute.'

'Ah,' said Constable Palk again.

Miss Marple exclaimed, 'Do tell me, Constable, do you suspect Mr. Spenlow?'

'It's not for me to say at this stage, but it looks to me as though somebody, naming no names, has been trying to be artful.'

Miss Marple said thoughtfully, 'Mr. Spenlow?'

She liked Mr. Spenlow. He was a small, spare man, stiff and conventional in speech, the acme of respectability. It seemed odd that he should have come to live in the country, he had so clearly lived in towns all his life. To Miss Marple he confided the reason. He said, 'I have always intended, ever since I was a small boy, to live in the country some day and have a garden of my own. I have always been very much attached to flowers. My wife, you know, kept a flower shop. That's where I saw her first.'

A dry statement, but it opened up a vista of romance. A younger, prettier Mrs. Spenlow, seen against a background of flowers.

Mr. Spenlow, however, really knew nothing about flowers. He had no idea of seeds, of cuttings, of bedding out, of annuals or perennials. He had only a vision – a vision of a small cottage garden thickly planted with sweet-smelling, brightly coloured blossoms. He had asked, almost pathetically, for instruction, and had noted down Miss Marple's replies to questions in a little book.

He was a man of quiet method. It was, perhaps, because of this trait, that the police were interested in him when his wife was found murdered. With patience and perseverance they learned a good deal about the late Mrs...Spenlow – and soon all St Mary Mead knew it, too.

The late Mrs. Spenlow had begun life as a between-maid in a large house. She had left that position to marry the second gardener, and with him had started a flower shop in London. The shop had prospered. Not so the gardener, who before long had sickened and died.

His widow carried on the shop and enlarged it in an ambitious way. She had continued to prosper. Then she had sold the business at a handsome price and embarked upon matrimony for the second time – with Mr. Spenlow, a middle-aged jeweller who had inherited a small and struggling business. Not long afterwards, they had sold the business and came down to St Mary Mead.

Mrs. Spenlow was a well-to-do woman. The profits from her florist's establishment she had invested – 'under spirit guidance', as she explained to all and sundry. The spirits had advised her with unexpected acumen.

All her investments had prospered, some in quite a sensational fashion. Instead, however, of this increasing her belief in spiritualism, Mrs. Spenlow basely deserted mediums and sittings, and made a brief but wholehearted plunge into an obscure religion with Indian affinities which was based on various forms of deep breathing. When, however, she arrived at St Mary Mead, she had relapsed into a period of orthodox Church-of-England beliefs. She was a good deal at the vicarage, and attended church services with assiduity. She patronized the village shops, took an interest in the local happenings, and played village bridge.

A humdrum, everyday life. And – suddenly – murder.

Colonel Melchett, the chief constable, had summoned Inspector Slack.

Slack was a positive type of man. When he had made up his mind, he was sure. He was quite sure now.

'Husband did it, sir,' he said.

'You think so?'

‘Quite sure of it. You’ve only got to look at him. Guilty as hell. Never showed a sign of grief or emotion. He came back to the house knowing she was dead.’

‘Wouldn’t he at least have tried to act the part of the distracted husband?’

‘Not him, sir. Too pleased with himself. Some gentlemen can’t act. Too stiff.’

‘Any other woman in his life?’

Colonel Melchett asked. ‘Haven’t been able to find any trace of one. Of course, he’s the artful kind. He’d cover his tracks. As I see it, he was just fed up with his wife. She’d got the money, and I should say was a trying woman to live with – always taking up with some “ism” or other. He cold-bloodedly decided to do away with her and live comfortably on his own.’

‘Yes, that could be the case, I suppose.’

‘Depend upon it, that was it. Made his plans careful. Pretended to get a phone call –’

Melchett interrupted him. ‘No call been traced?’

‘No, sir. That means either that he lied, or that the call was put through from a public telephone booth. The only two public phones in the village are at the station and the post office. Post office it certainly wasn’t. Mrs. Blade sees everyone who comes in. Station it might be. Train arrives at two twenty-seven and there’s a bit of a bustle then. But the main thing is *he* says it was Miss Marple who called him up, and that certainly isn’t true. The call didn’t come from her house, and she herself was away at the Institute.’

‘You’re not overlooking the possibility that the husband was deliberately got out of the way – by someone who wanted to murder Mrs. Spenlow?’

‘You’re thinking of young Ted Gerard, aren’t you, sir? I’ve been working on him – what we’re up against there is lack of motive. He doesn’t stand to gain anything.’

‘He’s an undesirable character, though. Quite a pretty little spot of embezzlement to his credit.’

‘I’m not saying he isn’t a wrong ’un. Still, he did go to his boss and own up to that embezzlement. And his employers weren’t wise to it.’

‘An Oxford Grouper,’ said Melchett. ‘Yes, sir. Became a convert and went off to do the straight thing and own up to having pinched money. I’m not saying, mind you, that it mayn’t have been astuteness. He may have thought he was suspected and decided to gamble on honest repentance.’

‘You have a sceptical mind, Slack,’ said Colonel Melchett. ‘By the way have you talked to Miss Marple at all?’

‘What’s *she* got to do with it, sir?’

‘Oh, nothing. But she hears things, you know. Why don’t you go and have a chat with her? She’s a very sharp old lady.’

Slack changed the subject. ‘One thing I’ve been meaning to ask you, sir. That domestic-service job where the deceased started her career – Sir Robert Abercrombie’s place. That’s where that jewel robbery was – emeralds – worth a packet. Never got them. I’ve been looking it up – must have happened when the Spenlow woman was there, though she’d have been quite a girl at the time. Don’t think she was mixed up in it, do you, sir? Spenlow, you know, was one of those little tuppenny-ha’penny jewellers – just the chap for a fence.’

Melchett shook his head. ‘Don’t think there’s anything in that. She didn’t even know Spenlow at the time. I remember the case. Opinion in police circles was that a son of the house was mixed up in it – Jim Abercrombie – awful young waster. Had a pile of debts, and just after the robbery they were all paid off – some rich woman, so they said, but I don’t know – Old Abercrombie hedged a bit about the case – tried to call the police off.’

‘It was just an idea, sir,’ said Slack.

Miss Marple received Inspector Slack with gratification, especially when she heard that he had been sent by Colonel Melchett.

‘Now, really, that is very kind of Colonel Melchett. I didn’t know he remembered me.’

‘He remembers you, all right. Told me that what you didn’t know of what goes on in St Mary Mead isn’t worth knowing.’

‘Too kind of him, but really I don’t know anything at all. About this murder, I mean.’

‘You know what the talk about it is.’

‘Oh, of course – but it wouldn’t do, would it, to repeat just idle talk?’

Slack said, with an attempt at geniality, ‘This isn’t an official conversation, you know. It’s in confidence, so to speak.’

‘You mean you really want to know what people are saying? Whether there’s any truth in it or not?’

‘That’s the idea.’

‘Well, of course, there’s been a great deal of talk and speculation. And there are really two distinct camps, if you understand me. To begin with, there are the people who think that the husband did it. A husband or a wife is, in a way, the natural person to suspect, don’t you think so?’

‘Maybe,’ said the inspector cautiously.

‘Such close quarters, you know. Then, so often, the money angle. I hear that it was Mrs. Spenlow who had the money, and therefore Mr. Spenlow does benefit by

her death. In this wicked world I'm afraid the most uncharitable assumptions are often justified.'

'He comes into a tidy sum, all right.'

'Just so. It would seem quite plausible, wouldn't it, for him to strangle her, leave the house by the back, come across the fields to my house, ask for me and pretend he'd had a telephone call from me, then go back and find his wife murdered in his absence – hoping, of course, that the crime would be put down to some tramp or burglar.'

The inspector nodded. 'What with the money angle – and if they'd been on bad terms lately –'

But Miss Marple interrupted him. 'Oh, but they hadn't.'

'You know that for a fact?'

'Everyone would have known if they'd quarrelled! The maid, Gladys Brent – she'd have soon spread it round the village.'

The inspector said feebly, 'She mightn't have known –' and received a pitying smile in reply.

Miss Marple went on. 'And then there's the other school of thought. Ted Gerard. A good-looking young man. I'm afraid, you know, that good looks are inclined to influence one more than they should. Our last curate but one – quite a magical effect! All the girls came to church – evening service as well as morning. And many older women became unusually active in parish work – and the slippers and scarfs that were made for him! Quite embarrassing for the poor young man.'

'But let me see, where was I? Oh, yes, this young man, Ted Gerard. Of course, there has been talk about him. He's come down to see her so often. Though Mrs Spenlow told me herself that he was a member of what I think they call the Oxford Group. A religious movement. They are quite sincere and very earnest, I believe, and Mrs. Spenlow was impressed by it all.'

Miss Marple took a breath and went on. 'And I'm sure there was no reason to believe that there was anything more in it than that, but you know what people are. Quite a lot of people are convinced that Mrs. Spenlow was infatuated with the young man, and that she'd lent him quite a lot of money. And it's perfectly true that he was actually seen at the station that day. In the train – the two twenty-seven down train. But of course it would be quite easy, wouldn't it, to slip out of the other side of the train and go through the cutting and over the fence and round by the hedge and never come out of the station entrance at all. So that he need not have been seen going to the cottage. And, of course, people do think that what Mrs. Spenlow was wearing was rather peculiar.'

'Peculiar?'

‘A kimono. Not a dress.’ Miss Marple blushed. ‘That sort of thing, you know, is, perhaps, rather suggestive to some people.’

‘You think it was suggestive?’

‘Oh, no, *I* don’t think so, I think it was perfectly natural.’

‘You think it was natural?’

‘Under the circumstances, yes.’ Miss Marple’s glance was cool and reflective. Inspector Slack said, ‘It might give us another motive for the husband. Jealousy.’

‘Oh, no, Mr Spenlow would never be jealous. He’s not the sort of man who notices things. If his wife had gone away and left a note on the pincushion, it would be the first he’d know of anything of that kind.’

Inspector Slack was puzzled by the intent way she was looking at him. He had an idea that all her conversation was intended to hint at something he didn’t understand. She said now, with some emphasis, ‘Didn’t *you* find any clues, Inspector – on the spot?’

‘People don’t leave fingerprints and cigarette ash nowadays, Miss Marple.’

‘But this, I think,’ she suggested, ‘was an old-fashioned crime –’

Slack said sharply, ‘Now what do you mean by that?’

Miss Marple remarked slowly, ‘I think, you know, that Constable Palk could help you. He was the first person on the – on the “scene of the crime”, as they say.’

Mr Spenlow was sitting in a deck chair. He looked bewildered. He said, in his thin, precise voice, ‘I may, of course, be imagining what occurred. My hearing is not as good as it was. But I distinctly think I heard a small boy call after me, “Yah, who’s a Crippen?” It – it conveyed the impression to me that he was of the opinion that I had – had killed my dear wife.’

Miss Marple, gently snipping off a dead rose head, said, ‘That was the impression he meant to convey, no doubt.’

‘But what could possibly have put such an idea into a child’s head?’ Miss Marple coughed. ‘Listening, no doubt, to the opinions of his elders.’

‘You – you really mean that other people think that, also?’

‘Quite half the people in St Mary Mead.’

‘But – my dear lady – what can possibly have given rise to such an idea? I was sincerely attached to my wife. She did not, alas, take to living in the country as much as I had hoped she would do, but perfect agreement on every subject is an impossible idea. I assure you I feel her loss very keenly.’

‘Probably. But if you will excuse my saying so, you don’t sound as though you do.’

Mr. Spenlow drew his meagre frame up to its full height. ‘My dear lady, many years ago I read of a certain Chinese philosopher who, when his dearly loved

wife was taken from him, continued calmly to beat a gong in the street – a customary Chinese pastime, I presume – exactly as usual. The people of the city were much impressed by his fortitude.’

‘But,’ said Miss Marple, ‘the people of St Mary Mead react rather differently. Chinese philosophy does not appeal to them.’

‘But you understand?’

Miss Marple nodded. ‘My Uncle Henry,’ she explained, ‘was a man of unusual self-control. His motto was “Never display emotion”. He, too, was very fond of flowers.’

‘I was thinking,’ said Mr. Spenlow with something like eagerness, ‘that I might, perhaps, have a pergola on the west side of the cottage. Pink roses and, perhaps, wisteria. And there is a white starry flower, whose name for the moment escapes me –’

In the tone in which she spoke to her grandnephew, aged three, Miss Marple said, ‘I have a very nice catalogue here, with pictures. Perhaps you would like to look through it – I have to go up to the village.’

Leaving Mr Spenlow sitting happily in the garden with his catalogue, Miss Marple went up to her room, hastily rolled up a dress in a piece of brown paper, and, leaving the house, walked briskly up to the post office. Miss Politt, the dressmaker, lived in the rooms over the post office.

But Miss Marple did not at once go through the door and up the stairs. It was just two-thirty, and, a minute late, the Much Benham bus drew up outside the post office door. It was one of the events of the day in St Mary Mead. The postmistress hurried out with parcels, parcels connected with the shop side of her business, for the post office also dealt in sweets, cheap books, and children’s toys.

For some four minutes Miss Marple was alone in the post office. Not till the postmistress returned to her post did Miss Marple go upstairs and explain to Miss Politt that she wanted her old grey crepe altered and made more fashionable if that were possible. Miss Politt promised to see what she could do.

* * *

The chief constable was rather astonished when Miss Marple’s name was brought to him. She came in with many apologies. ‘So sorry – so very sorry to disturb you. You are so busy, I know, but then you have always been so very kind, Colonel Melchett, and I felt I would rather come to you instead of Inspector Slack. For one thing, you know, I should hate Constable Palk to get into any trouble. Strictly speaking, I suppose he shouldn’t have touched anything at all.’

Colonel Melchett was slightly bewildered. He said, ‘Palk? That’s the St Mary Mead constable, isn’t it? What has he been doing?’

‘He picked up a pin, you know. It was in his tunic. And it occurred to me at the time that it was quite probable he had actually picked it up in Mrs. Spenlow’s house.’

‘Quite, quite. But after all, you know, what’s a pin? Matter of fact he did pick the pin up just by Mrs. Spenlow’s body. Came and told Slack about it yesterday – you put him up to that, I gather? Oughtn’t to have touched anything, of course, but as I said, what’s a pin? It was only a common pin. Sort of thing any woman might use.’

‘Oh, no, Colonel Melchett, that’s where you’re wrong. To a man’s eye, perhaps, it looked like an ordinary pin, but it wasn’t. It was a special pin, a very thin pin, the kind you buy by the box, the kind used mostly by dressmakers.’

Melchett stared at her, a faint light of comprehension breaking in on him. Miss Marple nodded her head several times, eagerly.

‘Yes, of course. It seems to me so obvious. She was in her kimono because she was going to try on her new dress, and she went into the front room, and Miss Politt just said something about measurements and put the tape measure round her neck – and then all she’d have to do was to cross it and pull – quite easy, so I’ve heard. And then, of course, she’d go outside and pull the door to and stand there knocking as though she’d just arrived. But the pin shows *she’d already been in the house.*’

‘And it was Miss Politt who telephoned to Spenlow?’

‘Yes. From the post office at two-thirty – just when the bus comes and the post office would be empty.’

Colonel Melchett said, ‘But my dear Miss Marple, why? In heaven’s name, why? You can’t have a murder without a motive.’

‘Well, I think, you know, Colonel Melchett, from all I’ve heard, that the crime dates from a long time back. It reminds me, you know, of my two cousins, Antony and Gordon. Whatever Antony did always went right for him, and with poor Gordon it was just the other way about. Race horses went lame, and stocks went down, and property depreciated. As I see it, the two women were in it together.’

‘In what?’

‘The robbery. Long ago. Very valuable emeralds, so I’ve heard. The lady’s maid and the tweeny. Because one thing hasn’t been explained – how, when the tweeny married the gardener, did they have enough money to set up a flower shop?’

‘The answer is, it was her share of the – the swag, I think is the right expression. Everything she did turned out well. Money made money. But the other one, the lady’s maid, must have been unlucky. She came down to being just a village dressmaker. Then they met again. Quite all right at first, I expect, until Mr Ted Gerard came on the scene.’

‘Mrs Spenlow, you see, was already suffering from conscience, and was inclined to be emotionally religious. This young man no doubt urged her to “face up” and to “come clean” and I dare say she was strung up to do it. But Miss Politt didn’t see it that way. All she saw was that she might go to prison for a robbery she had committed years ago. So she made up her mind to put a stop to it all. I’m afraid, you know, that she was always rather a wicked woman. I don’t believe she’d have turned a hair if that nice, stupid Mrs. Spenlow had been hanged.’

Colonel Melchett said slowly, ‘We can – er – verify your theory – up to a point. The identity of the Politt woman with the lady’s maid at the Abercrombies’, but –’

Miss Marple reassured him. ‘It will be all quite easy. She’s the kind of woman who will break down at once when she’s taxed with the truth. And then, you see, I’ve got her tape measure. I – er – abstracted it yesterday when I was trying on. When she misses it and thinks the police have got it – well, she’s quite an ignorant woman and she’ll think it will prove the case against her in some way.’

She smiled at him encouragingly. ‘You’ll have no trouble, I can assure you.’

It was the tone in which his favourite aunt had once assured him that he could not fail to pass his entrance examination into Sandhurst.

And he had passed.

4. Comment on the following phrases and say in reference to what Miss Marple used them:

- 1). In this wicked world the most uncharitable assumptions are often justified.
- 2). Good looks are inclined to influence one more than they should.

A FINAL DISCUSSION ON AGATHA CHRISTIE

1. Do you think that the films you saw convey the atmosphere of A. Christie's books?
2. What is preferable for you: reading her books or watching the films made after them? Why?
3. Read some books by A. Christie out of the list that follows and make a report on them.

With 66 books spread out over multiple series, including short stories and standalones, reading the Agatha Christie books in order can be a monumental task. To make it easier, they were broken down by series below.

#1 The Hercule Poirot Books

For the *Hercule Poirot* series, you should read these Agatha Christie books in order of publication.

While most of these books feature individual cases that conclude by the ending of the book, if you choose to read them in publication order, you will witness Christie's growth as an author. As well, you will be able to experience Hercule Poirot's career as a detective in the way Christie intended. Some books also feature references to earlier cases.

1. The Mysterious Affair at Styles (1920)
2. The Murder on the Links (1923)
3. Poirot Investigates (1924) (Short Story)
4. The Murder of Roger Ackroyd (1926)
5. The Big Four (1927)
6. The Mystery of the Blue Train (1928)
7. Black Coffee (1930) (Originally a play)
8. Peril at End House (1932)
9. Lord Edgware Dies / Thirteen at Dinner (1933)
10. Murder on the Orient Express / Murder in the Calais Coach (1934)
11. Three Act Tragedy / Murder in Three Acts (1934)
12. Death in the Clouds / Death in the Air (1935)
13. The A.B.C. Murders (1936)
14. Murder in Mesopotamia (1936)
15. Cards on the Table (1936)
16. Dumb Witness / Poirot Loses A Client (1937)
17. Death on the Nile (1937)
18. Appointment with Death (1938)

19. Hercule Poirot's Christmas / Holiday for Murder / Murder for Christmas (1938)
20. One, Two, Buckle My Shoe / Overdose of Death (1940)
21. Sad Cypress (1940)
22. Evil Under the Sun (1941)
23. Five Little Pigs / Murder in Retrospect (1942)
24. The Hollow / Murder After Hours (1946)
25. Taken at the Flood (1948)
26. Mrs. McGinty's Dead / Blood Will Tell (1952)
27. After the Funeral / Funerals Are Fatal (1953)
28. Hickory Dickory Dock (1955)
29. Dead Man's Folly (1956)
30. Cat Among the Pigeons (1959)
31. The Clocks (1963)
32. Third Girl (1966)
33. Hallowe'en Party (1969)
34. Elephants Can Remember (1972)
35. Curtain (1975)

#2 The Hercule Poirot Collections

The *Hercule Poirot Collections* are all short fiction written by Agatha Christie about her most famous detective, Hercule Poirot. These books are best read in the order of publication.

1. Murder in the Mews: Four Cases of Hercule Poirot (1937)
2. The Labors of Hercules (1947)
3. The Under Dog and Other Stories (1951)
4. The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding (1960)
5. Double Sin and Other Stories (1961)
6. The Early Cases of Hercule Poirot (1974)
7. The Casebook of Hercule Poirot (1984)
8. The Harlequin Tea Set and Other Stories (1997)
9. While the Light Lasts and Other Stories (1997)
10. Hercule Poirot: The Complete Short Stories (2013)
11. The Grey Cells of Mr. Poirot (2020)

#3 The Miss Marple Books

As with Hercule Poirot, it is best to read the *Miss Marple* Agatha Christie books in order by publication date.

Again, most of Christie's novels can be read as standalone novels; however, reading them in order of publication will allow you to follow along with the growth of the characters. This is especially true in the case of amateur detective Miss Marple.

1. The Murder at the Vicarage (1930)
2. The Body in the Library (1942)
3. The Moving Finger (1942)
4. A Murder is Announced (1950)
5. They Do It with Mirrors (1952)
6. A Pocket Full of Rye (1953)
7. 4:50 From Paddington (1957)
8. The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side (1962)
9. A Caribbean Mystery (1964)
10. At Bertram's Hotel (1965)
11. Nemesis (1971)
12. Sleeping Murder (1976)

#4 The Miss Marple Collections

There are also multiple short story collections featuring Miss Marple. Unfortunately, some of these collections are now out of print and may be difficult to find.

However, similarly to Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple will return in a new iteration following an agreement between Agatha Christie Ltd. and HarperCollins. The new collection will feature 12 short stories written by authors like Leigh Bardugo, Val McDermid, and many more.

1. The Thirteen Problems (1932)
2. 13 Clues for Miss Marple (1966)
3. Miss Marple's Final Cases (1979)
4. Miss Marple: The Complete Short Stories (1985)
5. Marple: Twelve New Mysteries (2022)

#5 Tommy and Tuppence Books

Agatha Christie's website says these books are the ones she enjoyed writing the most. Young detectives Tuppence Cowley and Tommy Beresford are childhood friends that, after reuniting following the First World War, decide to form a company together.

These books are especially important to read in order of publication to best understand the overarching story and character development. Tommy and Tuppence are the only detectives to grow older throughout the course of their books, roughly aligning with Christie's own age at the time of writing.

1. The Secret Adversary (1922)
2. Partners in Crime (1929)
3. The Affair of the Pink Pearl (1929) (Short Story)
4. N or M? (1941)
5. By the Pricking of My Thumbs (1968)
6. Postern of Fate (1973)
7. The House of Lurking Death (1995) (Short Story)

#6 Superintendent Battle Books

Agatha Christie's *Superintendent Battle* series focuses, as you can imagine, on Superintendent Battle of the Scotland Yard.

Similarly to Hercule Poirot, Battle sports an impressive moustache and is described as a sensible, intelligent police officer. In addition to his own books featuring crossovers with Hercule Poirot, Ariadne Oliver, and Colonel Race, Battle is also mentioned in other Christie novels.

1. The Secret of Chimneys (1925)
2. The Seven Dials Mystery (1929)
3. Cards on the Table (1936)
4. Murder is Easy / Easy to Kill (1939)
5. Towards Zero (1944)

#7 Colonel Race Books

Colonel Johnnie Race is a former Army Colonel and MI5 agent. In addition to being described as highly intelligent, he is immensely rich. He is also patient, composed, and quick-thinking.

As previously mentioned, there is overlap with Col. Race, Superintendent Battle, and Hercule Poirot. All feature in the 1936 novel *Cards on the Table*. As well, Race features in Poirot's 1937 mystery *Death on the Nile*.

1. The Man in the Brown Suit (1924)
2. Cards on the Table (1936)
3. Death on the Nile (1937)
4. Sparkling Cyanide (1944)

#8 Harley Quin Books

Not to be confused with the enigmatic DC character, Agatha Christie created her own Harley Quin based on the Harlequin of the Commedia dell'arte. He is described as perhaps the most unconventional of Agatha Christie detectives with extraordinary skills and almost mystical instincts.

1. The Mysterious Mr. Quin: A Short Story Collection (1930)
2. The Love Detectives (1993) (Short Story)
3. The Coming of Mr. Quin (2021) (Short Story)

#9 Agatha Christie Writing as Mary Westmacott

The following books are a list of Agatha Christie books in order of publication under her pseudonym, Mary Westmacott. These books are out of print and are not available for purchase from most retailers.

The below books are a departure from Christie's signature mysteries and her connection to the novels remained a secret for nearly 20 years. Christie's daughter describes the books not as love stories, but as stories about love in some of its most powerful and destructive forms.

1. Giant's Bread (1930)
2. Unfinished Portrait (1934)
3. Absent in the Spring (1944)
4. The Rose and the Yew Tree (1947)
5. A Daughter's a Daughter (1952)
6. The Burden (1956)

#10 Agatha Christie Standalone Books in Order

Agatha Christie also wrote nearly a dozen standalone novels that do not feature any of her iconic detective characters. Despite not featuring the likes of Poirot or Miss Marple, these books are quintessential Christie mysteries and must-reads for any fan.

1. The Sittaford Mystery / The Murder at Hazelmoor (1931)
2. Why Didn't They Ask Evans? (1934)
3. And Then There Were None (1939)
4. Death Comes as the End (1944)
5. Crooked House (1949)
6. They Came to Baghdad (1951)
7. Destination Unknown (1954)

8. Ordeal by Innocence (1958)
9. The Pale Horse (1961)
10. Endless Night (1967)
11. Passenger to Frankfurt (1970)

#11 Agatha Christie Short Stories in Order

Agatha Christie loved to write short stories and she wrote more than just the collections listed above for Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple, and others. Here are the rest of her short stories in order of publication.

1. The Regatta Mystery and Other Stories (1932)
2. The Hound of Death (1933)
3. The Listerdale Mystery (1934)
4. Parker Pyne Investigates (1934)
5. The Witness for the Prosecution and Other Stories (1948)
6. Three Blind Mice and Other Stories (1952)
7. Star Over Bethlehem and Other Stories (1965)
8. The Golden Ball and Other Stories (1971)
9. Masterpieces in Miniature (2005)
10. Midwinter Murder (2020)
11. A Deadly Affair (2022)

#12 Agatha Christie Non-Fiction Books

If you are looking to learn more about Agatha Christie and her life then her non-fiction books will be the perfect reading material for you.

1. Come, Tell Me How You Live (1946)
2. Agatha Christie: An Autobiography (1977)
3. The Grand Tour: Around the World With The Queen of Mystery (2012)

Bonus

Agatha Christie also wrote plays, and as a bonus, we have included the plays she wrote in the order of their publication.

Publication of Plays in Order

1. The Mousetrap (1952)
2. Spiders' Web (1954)
3. Verdict (1958)
4. Rats (1962)

<https://www.tlbranson.com/agatha-christie-books-in-order/>

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