

Themes: *Finances, Travel, Language, Learning, Performance, Music*

Summary

In this section Christie details the first time her father became worried about his financial affairs. So, aged six, the family let out their Ashfield house and staff, and moved to the South of France, to live in The Hotel Beausejour in Pau, benefitting from the lower cost of living abroad at that time. In the pages that follow, we learn about the determination of Christie's mother for her to learn French, employing and subsequently dismissing a governess, then a daily tutor, before finally settling on a dressmaker's assistant, the 22 year-old Marie, who spoke no English at all. It was the "beginning of a happy partnership".

After a brief stop in Paris, the family made their way to Brittany. It was there that young Agatha learnt to swim, picked blackberries, and subjected her parents to nightly performances of fairy tales. From Brittany they moved on to Guernsey, before returning home with Marie, and picking up their dog Tony who was now "as fat as a balloon". Christie details the music and dance lessons she received upon returning from the Channel Islands, before reflecting on the joys of the annual Torquay Regatta, and the fair that went alongside it. Finally in this section, Christie remembers the time of her father's death, when she was eleven.

Quotes

"Left to myself I was a good, well-behaved and obedient child, but in company with other children I was only too ready to engage in any mischief that was going."

"One cannot, ever, go back to the place which exists in memory. You would not see it with the same eyes"

"I sometimes think that in my last incarnation, if the theory of reincarnation is right, I must have been a dog."

"There is no doubt about it, my favourite thing has been, is, and probably always will be, cream."

Questions

- What do you make of Christie's character as a child?
- How do you feel about the education Agatha Christie received, and her mother's feelings on this?
- Does anything stand out about Christie's relationship with Marie? What about her siblings?
- What do you make of Christie's imaginary friends?
- Are there any moments from this part that you found surprising, or of particular interest?