

THE WORLD OF AGATHA CHRISTIE

READ

of mysterious
deaths

SOLVE

word
puzzles

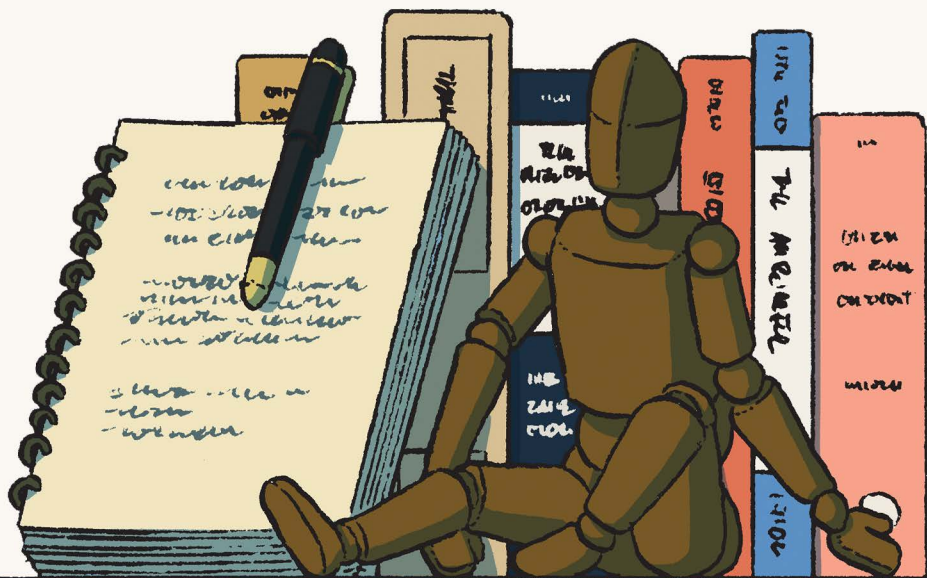
EXPLORE

writing
advice

DELVE

into
details

CHARACTERS & CAREERS



The Seven Dials Mystery

AN EXTRACT [1929]

It was at that moment Tredwell came into the room and looked around him hesitatingly.

'I thought Mr Bateman was here,' he explained apologetically.

'Just gone out this minute through the window,' said Ronny. 'Can I do anything?'

Tredwell's eyes wandered from him to Jimmy Thesiger and then back again. As though singled out, the two young men left the room with him. Tredwell closed the dining-room door carefully behind him.

'Well,' said Ronny. 'What's up?'

'Mr Wade not having yet come down, sir, I took the liberty of sending William up to his room.'

'Yes?'

'William has just come running down in a great state of agitation, sir.' Tredwell paused—a pause of preparation. 'I am afraid, sir, the poor young gentleman must have died in his sleep.'

Jimmy and Ronny stared at him.

'Nonsense,' cried Ronny at last. 'It's—it's impossible. Gerry—' His face worked suddenly. 'I'll—I'll run up and see. That fool William may have made a mistake.'

Tredwell stretched out a detaining hand. With a queer, unnatural feeling of detachment, Jimmy realized that the butler had the whole situation in hand.

'No, sir, William has made no mistake. I have already sent for Dr Cartwright, and in the meantime I have taken the liberty of locking the door, preparatory to informing Sir Oswald of what has occurred. I must now find Mr Bateman.'

Tredwell hurried away. Ronny stood like a man dazed.

'Gerry,' he muttered to himself.

Jimmy took his friend by the arm and steered him out through a side door on to a secluded portion of the terrace. He pushed him down on to a seat.

'Jimmy realized that the butler had the whole situation in hand.'

'Take it easy, old son,' he said kindly. 'You'll get your wind in a minute.'

But he looked at him rather curiously. He had no idea that Ronny was such a friend of Gerry Wade's.

'Poor old Gerry,' he said thoughtfully. 'If ever a man looked fit, he did.'

Ronny nodded.

'All that clock business seems so rotten now,' went on Jimmy. 'It's odd, isn't it, why farce so often seems to get mixed up with tragedy?'

He was talking more or less at random, to give Ronny time to recover himself. The other moved restlessly.

'I wish that doctor would come. I want to know—'

'Know what?'

'What he—died of.'

Jimmy pursed up his lips.

'Heart?' he hazarded.

Ronny gave a short, scornful laugh.

'I say, Ronny,' said Jimmy.

'Well?'

Jimmy found a difficulty in going on.

'You don't mean—you aren't thinking—I mean, you haven't got it into your head—that, well I mean he wasn't biffed on the head or anything? Tredwell's locking the door and all that.'

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If the Butler Didn't Do It... Who Did?

AGAGRAMS

Unscramble these words to reveal domestic staffing roles from Agatha Christie's novels. All of these jobs appear in at least one of her books. How carefully have you been paying attention to the people who keep the household running smoothly?

E.g. leturb = butler

EALTV
CONMANPOI
ANGERRED
OGRESSVEN
DAMI
EUREKESHOPE
ANSVERT
EARLENC
HORNMACAW

Answers: a. Valet b. Companion c. Gardener d. Governess e. Maid f. Housekeeper g. Servant h. Cleaner i. Charwoman

Characters & Careers

A READING LIST

This year's reading challenge explores the types of character and careers famous from Christie's canon. She cleverly plays with both career types, and a reader's expectation of them, to deliver her inimitable twists. In some cases, a character's profession is what defines them. In others the type of job - for example, butler, artist - is simply a way to explore the case, and the time it is set, from distinct perspectives. We hope you enjoy some of our recommended reading.



THE ABC MURDERS [1936]

Notoriously confident Hercule Poirot is being tormented by an anonymous killer... After seeking advice from Chief Inspector

Japp, the geographical nature of the murders brings in police detectives from several areas. It's the young Inspector Crome of Scotland Yard who hopes to solve the case, with minimal interference from the esteemed Belgian. However, as the letters and links to the A B C railway guide keep coming in, Crome may have no choice but to join forces with Poirot. Narrated, in the main, by Captain Hastings, this novel is an excellent exploration of the detective.

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AND THEN THERE WERE NONE [1939]

If you were to describe a typical manservant from a murder mystery, then Mr Rogers would probably be it. "Correct" and

"very respectable" with a reassuring gravity,

Rogers is well-experienced in attending to guests and had an efficient partnership with his housekeeper wife. Of course, in Agatha Christie's best-selling crime novel set on a remote island, things aren't quite as they seem. When Rogers plays a sinister record on the gramophone, the outward facades of the guests quickly crumble and old sins surface. Then one of the party dies horribly...

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THE BODY IN THE LIBRARY [1942]

When a murder victim is discovered in the Bantrys' home tongues start to wag in St Mary Mead. The locals suspect

it has something to do with Basil Blake, a new resident who works at the nearby film studios and who often hosts loud parties for London visitors. But a call about a missing dancer, Ruby Keene, from the Majestic Hotel in Danemouth, presents a very different solution to the police force. Packed full of performers, this Miss Marple novel asks readers to set aside their preconceptions and look at the details closely.

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THE MOVING FINGER [1942]

A perfect pick for the theme of amateurs. This story takes place in the "peaceful backwater" of Lymstock. The community is becoming increasingly

distracted from their daily lives, community

commitments and bridge sessions by a series of poison pen letters. New residents Jerry and Joanna Burton have already received one... Can Jerry track down the culprit before another death occurs? Miss Marple arrives quite late into this case, but still helps our lead to discover the source of the vitriol.

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THE HOLLOW [1946]

Agatha Christie intuitively understood the workings of an artist's mind and shares these insights beautifully here. Henrietta Savernake is

a sculptor, working in a range of materials including clay, pearwood and metal. Like other artists in Christie's works, Henrietta is susceptible to 'the muse', and is able to instil intangible characteristics in her pieces that make them truly unique. In this clever mystery, Henrietta is entangled in an affair with the murder victim - while working on a sculpture of his wife. Hercule Poirot, who has a weekend cottage nearby, investigates.

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MRS MCGINTY'S DEAD [1952]

Crime writer Ariadne Oliver takes a prime role in this mystery about the death of an elderly charwoman, supposedly killed by her lodger. While

Poirot looks into the case, Mrs Oliver is also in Broadhinny on another matter: one of her novels featuring Finnish detective Sven Hjerson is soon to be adapted for the stage, and she is butting heads with playwright Robin Upward... Some amusing dialogue between the two gives us a glimpse into Agatha Christie's thoughts on adaptations.

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MIDSOMMER MYSTERIES [2021]

Agatha Christie's flair for writing ingenious mysteries and adventures in small packages shines through in this seasonal collection of short stories.

Alongside the more familiar detectives, we also encounter artists, performers, amateur sleuths, politicians, butlers, spies, military personnel and doctors, all of whom play their part to confound or elucidate. This is the perfect addition to a summer reading list - a pick-and-mix of bite-sized crime fiction delights.

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CAPITAL CHRISTIE [2025]

The latest UK short story collection focuses on London.

Agatha Christie fans can expect to meet plenty of official detectives, as well as a handful

of unusual sleuths, including society regular Mr Satterthwaite and problem-solver Parker Pyne. There are butlers and maids, and a missing cook that causes a stir in Clapham. Poirot's duties extend to the halls of power, when the Prime Minister is kidnapped, and readers will be taken to the British Museum in the unusual case of 'The Lonely God'.

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Reading & Writing with Christie

TOOL KIT



In a world-first from BBC Maestro, Agatha Christie shares her writing process - brought to life through cutting-edge visual and audio technology. This immersive course reveals the techniques behind her iconic plots, unforgettable characters, and genre-defining rules of mystery.

Using Agatha's own voice from interviews, letters and manuscripts, the course is delivered by actress Vivien Keene in an extraordinary performance. A team of over 100 researchers, academics and creatives, including historians, biographers and Agatha's family, ensured authenticity in every detail.

Across 11 lessons and 12 exercises, you'll learn how to craft compelling fiction, place clues with precision, and master the anatomy of a perfect whodunit. This is more than a writing course - it's a unique chance to be mentored by the Queen of Crime herself.

Agatha Christie's course on Writing is available now on BBC Maestro. You can use the code [WORLD OF AGATHA40](#) at check-out to get 40% off the price of this course. (Offer ends September 16, 2025)



We are so excited for fans to discover the pocket notebook set from Chronicle Books. Six mini lined pads, featuring facsimile cover designs, they are perfect for keeping

in a shopping bag or coat pocket. You can use them to make lists, record overheard conversations, and jot down plot ideas—just like Agatha Christie did!

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If you prefer reading mysteries to writing your own, we recommend securing your copy of the Agatha Christie Reading Tracker. It acts as a great aide-mémoire for you

to tick off which stories you've read, record start and finish dates, as well as victims, clues, the culprits and overall reader impressions. What fun.

[SHOP IN THE US](#) | [SHOP IN THE UK](#)

Giant's Bread

AN EXTRACT [1930]

His mind, free from other distractions, swung back to its secret love, music.

He had formed the idea of writing an opera and had taken for his theme the half-forgotten fairy story of his youth. It was now bound up in his mind with Nell—the whole strength of his love for her flowed into this new channel.

He worked feverishly. Nell's words about his living comfortably with his mother had rankled, and he had insisted on having rooms of his own. The ones he had found were very cheap, but they gave him an unexpected sense of freedom. At Carey Lodge he would never have been able to concentrate. His mother would have been, he knew, for ever fussing after him, urging him to get to bed. Here, in Arthur Street, he could and often did, sit up till five in the morning if he liked.

He got very thin and haggard looking. Myra worried about his health and urged patent restoratives upon him. He assured her curtly that he was all right. He told her nothing of what he was doing. Sometimes he would be full of despair over his work, at others a sudden sense of power would rush over him as he knew that some small infinitesimal fragment was good.

Occasionally he went to town and spent a weekend with Sebastian, and on two occasions Sebastian came down to Birmingham. Sebastian was Vernon's most valued stand-by at this time. His sympathy was real, not assumed, and it had a two-fold character.

He was interested as a friend and also from his own professional standpoint. Vernon had an enormous respect for Sebastian's judgment in all things artistic. He would play excerpts on the piano he had hired, explaining as he did so the proper orchestration. Sebastian listened, nodding very quietly, speaking little. At the end

*'It's going to be good,
Vernon. Get on with it.'*

he would say: 'It's going to be good, Vernon. Get on with it.'

He never uttered a word of destructive criticism, for in his belief, such a word might be fatal. Vernon needed encouragement and nothing but encouragement.

He said one day: 'Is this what you meant to do at Cambridge?'

Vernon considered for a minute.

'No,' he said at last. 'At least it's not what I meant originally. After that concert, you know. It's gone again—the thing I saw then. Perhaps it'll come back again some time. This is, I suppose, the usual sort of thing, conventional—and all that. But here and there I've got what I mean into it.'

'I see.'

To Joe, Sebastian said plainly what he thought.

'Vernon calls this the "usual sort of thing", but, as a matter of fact, it isn't. It's entirely unusual. The whole orchestration is conducted on an unusual plan. What it is, though, is immature. Brilliant but immature.'

'Have you told him so?'

'Good lord, no. One disparaging word and he'd shrivel up and consign the whole thing to the waste-paper basket.'

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Cards on the Table

AN EXTRACT [1936]

'I think every one of us, at one time or another, moved from the bridge table—either to get drinks or to put wood on the fire. I did both. When I went to the fire Shaitana was asleep in the chair.'

'Asleep?'

'I thought so—yes.'

'He may have been,' said Battle. 'Or he may have been dead then. We'll go into that presently. I'll ask you now to go into the room next door.'

He turned to the quiet figure at his elbow:

'Colonel Race, perhaps you'll go with them?'

Race gave a quick nod of comprehension.

'Right, Superintendent.'

The four bridge players went slowly through the doorway.

Mrs Oliver sat down in a chair at the far end of the room and began to sob quietly. Battle took up the telephone receiver and spoke. Then he said:

'The local police will be round immediately. Orders from headquarters are that I'm to take on the case. Divisional surgeon will be here almost at once. How long should you say he'd been dead, M. Poirot? I'd say well over an hour myself.'

'I agree. Alas, that one cannot be more exact—that one cannot say, "This man has been dead one hour, twenty-five minutes and forty seconds."'

Battle nodded absently.

'He was sitting right in front of the fire. That makes a slight difference. Over an hour—not more than two and a half: that's what our doctor will say, I'll be bound. And nobody heard anything and nobody saw anything. Amazing! What a desperate chance to take. He might have cried out.'

'But he did not. The murderer's luck held. As you say, mon ami, it was a very desperate business.'

'Any idea, M. Poirot, as to motive? Anything of that kind?'

Poirot said slowly:

*'How long should you say
he'd been dead, M. Poirot?'*

'Yes, I have something to say on that score. Tell me, M. Shaitana—he did not give you any hint of what kind of a party you were coming to tonight?'

Superintendent Battle looked at him curiously.

'No, M. Poirot. He didn't say anything at all. Why?'

A bell whirled in the distance and a knocker was plied.

'That's our people,' said Superintendent Battle. 'I'll go and let 'em in. We'll have your story presently. Must get on with the routine work.'

Poirot nodded.

Battle left the room.

Mrs Oliver continued to sob.

Poirot went over to the bridge table. Without touching anything, he examined the scores. He shook his head once or twice.

'The stupid little man! Oh, the stupid little man,' murmured Hercule Poirot. 'To dress up as the devil and try to frighten people. *Quel enfantillage!*'

The door opened. The divisional surgeon came in, bag in hand. He was followed by the divisional inspector, talking to Battle. A camera man came next. There was a constable in the hall.

The routine of the detection of crime had begun.

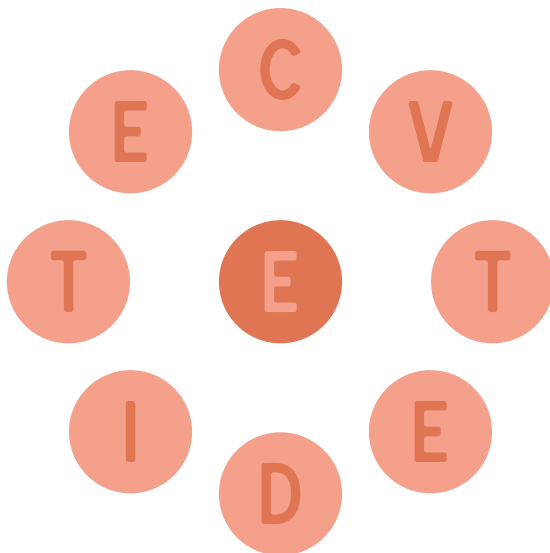
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Use Those Little Grey Cells

A WORD GAME

We are putting your skills to the test with this Christie inspired word wheel. How many three+ letter words can you make using the below? The central letter must appear at least once in each word to qualify, and no letter can be used twice (unless it appears twice in the wheel). You can use all nine letters to create a word too!

10 = clever start Constable 15 = great sleuthing Sergeant
20 = excellent work Superintendent



An Autobiography

AN EXTRACT [1977]

My own serious study was music, of course, both singing and piano. I studied the piano with an Austrian, Charles Fürster. He occasionally came to London and gave recitals. He was a good but frightening teacher.

His method was to wander round the room as you played. He had the air of not listening, looked out of the window, smelt a flower, but all of a sudden, as you played a false note or phrased something badly, he would swing round with the alacrity of a pouncing tiger and cry out: '*Hein, qu'est-ce que vous jouez là, petite, hein? C'est atroce.*' It was shattering to the nerves at first, but one got used to it. He was a passionate addict of Chopin, so that I learnt mostly Chopin Etudes and Waltzes, the *Fantaisie Impromptue*, and one of the Ballades. I knew I was getting on well under his teaching, and it made me happy. I also learned the Sonatas of Beethoven, as well as several light, what he called 'drawing-room pieces', a Romance of Fauré, the Barcarolle of Tchaikowski, and others. I practised with real assiduity, usually about seven hours a day. I think a wild hope was springing up within me - I don't know that I ever let it quite come into my consciousness, but it was there in the background - that perhaps I could be a pianist, could play at concerts. It would be a long time and hard work, but I knew that I was improving rapidly.

[...]

One dream of mine faded before I left Paris. Miss Dryden was expecting an old pupil of hers, the Countess of Limerick, who herself was a very fine pianist, a pupil of Charles Fürster's. Usually the two or three girls who were studying the piano would give an informal concert on these occasions. I was one of them. The result was catastrophic. I was nervous beforehand, but not unusually so, no more than would be

natural, but as soon as I sat down at the piano inefficiency overwhelmed me like a tide. I played wrong notes, my tempo went, my phrasing was amateur and ham-handed - I was just a mess.

Nobody could have been kinder than Lady Limerick. She talked to me later and said she had realised how nervous I had been, and that one did get these fits of what really qualified as stage-fright. Perhaps I would get over them later when I became more experienced in playing before an audience. I was grateful for those kind words, but I knew myself that there was more to it than that.

I continued to study, but before I finally went home I asked Charles Fürster frankly whether he thought that by hard work and application I could one day be a professional pianist. He, too, was kind, but he told me no lies. He said that he thought I had not the temperament to play in public, and I knew he was right. I was grateful to him for telling me the truth. I was miserable about it for a while, but I tried hard not to dwell on it more than I could help.

If the thing you want beyond anything cannot be, it is much better to recognise it and go forward, instead of dwelling on one's regrets and hopes. Such a rebuff coming early helped me for the future; it taught me that I had not the kind of temperament for exhibition of any kind. I can describe what it seemed like by saying that I could not control my physical reaction.

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Do You Remember?

A QUIZ

Can you match the profession to the Christie character? Don't worry if you're not too clued up - you can spot the answers amongst the pages of this magazine.

A

ARTIST

B

AUTHOR

C

BUTLER

D

COMPOSER

E

DANCER

F

PLAYWRIGHT

G

INSPECTOR

H

SUPERINTENDENT

1

ARIADNE OLIVER

2

ROBIN UPWARD

3

RUBY KEENE

4

HENRIETTA SAVERNAKE

5

CROME

6

BATTLE

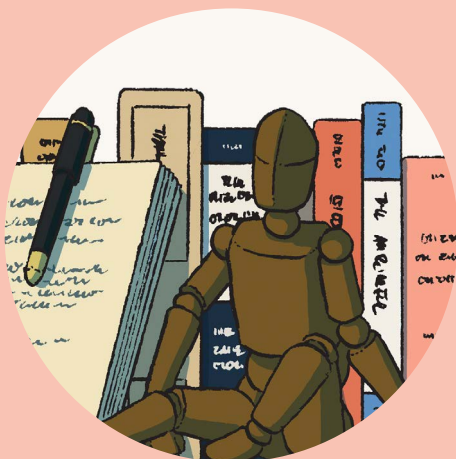
7

TREDWELL

8

VERNON DEYRE

Answers: A4, B1, C7, D8, E3, F2, G5, H6



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