#### ST MARY MEAD

#### PARISH AND VILLAGE NEWS

Price: Free September, 2022 No. 1

### MISS MARPLE IS BACK

#### SIGHTINGS IN MANHATTAN AND HONG KONG

Agatha Christie's iconic detective is back - and she has not one, but twelve new mysteries to solve.

Miss Marple's crime-solving spree will transport her from our quiet little village of St Mary Mead to the bustling streets of New York, to the sun-soaked Italian Riviera and beyond.

She may be an unassuming old lady, but nobody knows better than Jane Marple the wickedness that lurks around every corner . . .

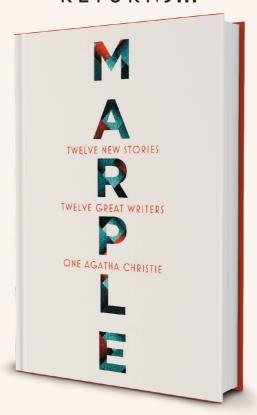
#### FROM FLORA TO FOUL -

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#### SEPTEMBER 2022

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST MARY MEAD?

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I wonder.

sometimes,

if there isn't a

concentration

of evil in

small places.

## © Philippa Gedge

## EVIL IN SMALL PLACES

by Lucy Foley **Y**@lucyfoleytweets



'I wonder, sometimes, if there isn't a concentration of evil in small places.'

'What do you mean, Jane?' Prudence looked across at her former schoolfriend, who sat in

the armchair opposite with a small glass of cherry brandy. In the kind, warm glow of the fire the marks of old age were flatteringly blurred. Jane Marple was so little changed, in the important details

the important details, from her girlhood self. The quick, birdlike manner, the bright, inquisitive eyes, the sense of a quiet, perhaps even formidable intelligence.

Just as Miss Marple opened her mouth to answer, a firecracker exploded in the darkness outside, followed by a series of shrieks and howls that might have come from the mouth of hell itself. Someone had begun to beat a drum. The two women could not see out as all the curtains had been drawn by Prudence's maid at four p.m. sharp. Fairweather House – imposing, Georgian – faced on to the main street of Meon Maltravers. And outside in the gloaming, just beyond the

> windows, a paganlooking throng was mustering.

> As the clamour from outside faded a little, Miss Marple spoke again. 'One is aware there is a great deal of wrongdoing in

cities and larger towns, of course. The newspapers are desperate to make sure that we do not miss a single grisly detail. But I wonder if there aren't more terrible things happening in England's villages and hamlets than in its metropolises.'

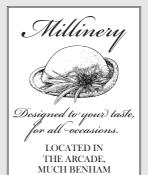
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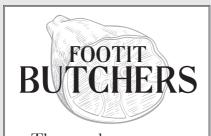
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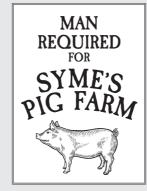
#### POSITIONS VACANT



#### EXPERIENCED HOUSEMAID REQUIRED

for the vicarage, St Mary Mead – a good plain cook and must like children.

Contact Griselda Clement.





### THE SECOND MURDER AT THE VICARAGE

by Val McDermid @valmcdermid

Griselda returned shortly before six, accompanied by an exhausted and fractious David. I ruffled his hair affectionately as Flora whisked him off to bath and bed. 'How are your parents?' I asked.

'They grow duller and more narrow-minded with age,' she sighed. It unnerves me somewhat when Griselda says such things; it's as if she forgets that I am significantly closer in age to her parents than to her. My perennial fear is that she will come to think the same of me.

She caught my moment's apprehension, read my mind and leaned in to kiss my cheek. 'Don't be silly, Len. You know it's my mission in life to keep you for ever young." She yawned. 'I'm worn out,' she complained. 'My father excites David so with his model soldiers and then my mother fills him with sweets and lemonade till the poor boy is beside himself. Once he gets to fever pitch, they can't cope and suddenly find something terribly urgent that must be done elsewhere and leave me to deal with the child.' She made for the study door.

'Where are you going?' I demanded, more sharply than I'd intended.

Griselda stopped and stared at me. 'To the kitchen, to heat up the pie Flora prepared for dinner.'

'You can't. You mustn't. You can't go into the kitchen. It's ...it's out of bounds.'

My wife looked at me as if I was mad. 'Why ever not? How can we have dinner if the kitchen is out of bounds?'

Before I could reply, Flora's scream answered for me. Griselda raced to the kitchen, where Flora stood wailing, her apron over her face. 'The blood, the blood,' she hiccupped.

Griselda looked at the puddle of congealed blood on the floor then looked at me. 'There's blood all over the floor.'

'I know. That's why I was trying to stop you going into the kitchen.'

'Len – what on earth has been going on here?'

# TRAVEL THE WORLD WITH MISS MARPLE



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### MISS MARPLE **TAKES MANHATTAN**

by Alyssa Cole @AlyssaColeLit

Nothing

than an

a spot o' tea.'

'You're British!' Serena crowed, the skin at the corners of her eyes crinkling in delight, and when she spoke again, her accent had changed from American drama queen to East End urchin. 'I'ms an actress, I am. Nothing I loves more

than an accent, 'cept a spot o' tea.'

The store was near the theatre district, of course, and now Miss Marple could imagine set dressers and stage designers popping in to grab last-minute items unconventional additions. How splendid.

'You're very good,' Miss Marple replied carefully, she realised Serena was waiting for her assessment. The accent was not good, but Miss Marple doubted she herself could pull off a convincing American accent and thus applauded the effort if not the result. She gestured toward the tablecloth. 'And you're going to wear this as a theatrical costume? I do think it's very . . . eye catching.'

'See?' the fire-haired woman

said, shooting a look at Davey before turning back to Miss Marple. 'The dress that creep made them give me looks like a tablecloth covered in mud - because he wants me to feel like a tablecloth covered in mud. He's mad he didn't get a

young ingenue as a costar, one who'd bat her lashes at him and make I loves more him feel like something more than a washed-up hack. It'll be a gas to accent, 'cept use a real tablecloth to show him that he can't shove me out of the spotlight!'

> 'Oh! Yes. Quite,' Miss Marple said. 'I do love such ironies.'

> Serena turned, fanning the cloth dramatically behind her as if it were a fine cape - her physical acting was better than her accent, for in that moment, it became a fine cape, flowing majestically. She glanced back at Miss Marple and inclined her head, regally, then turned and walked towards the register of the discount department.

## THE UNRAVELLING

by Natalie Haynes @officialnhaynes

But the Weavers did not open again in the morning. Nor did any of the little shops in the square, leaning

higgledy-piggledy against each other. The whole row kept their doors locked while the police searched for the weapon used to kill Martin, whose body had been discovered by the milkman just after dawn, blue eyes clouded and sightless. At first, they thought the old man must have

died from the stress of his argument with Weaver. Then they wondered if he had hit his head on the stone step of the haberdasher's as he fell. There was a small dark stain on the edge of the lowest step, which Dover was sure must be blood.

But when the doctor felt the back of the man's head, he pronounced it uninjured: not even a bump. And, besides, there was no doubt about what had killed him when they turned the body over. The broken shaft of an arrow was still protruding from his chest

The whole row kept their doors locked while the police searched for the weapon.

### POLICE APPEAL FOR WITNESSES

Officers are asking anyone who witnessed this incident or who was in the area at the time to come forward. All information will be treated confidentially.

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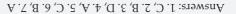


### HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW MISS MARPLE?

- 1. In which year was *The Murder at the Vicarage* first published? A) 1920 B) 1922 C) 1930 D) 1932
- 2. How many Miss Marple novels did Agatha Christie write? A) 10 B) 12 C) 13 D) 20
- 3. Which of these is **not** one of Miss Marple's hobbies? A) GARDENING B) KNITTING C) BIRD WATCHING D) BALLROOM DANCING
- 4. Who pays for Miss Marple's restorative trip to the Caribbean? A) RAYMOND WEST B) MISS MARPLE C) SIR HENRY CLITHERING D) DOLLY BANTRY
- 5. Which Miss Marple mystery takes place in Chipping Cleghorn? A) SLEEPING MURDER B) NEMESIS C) A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED D) THE MOVING FINGER
- 6. Select the correct word to finish the title of this Miss Marple story: At Bertram's

A) HOUSE B) HOTEL C) HILL D) HOSPITAL

- 7. Which one of these Christie novels features Miss Marple? A) THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS B) CARDS ON THE TABLE C) DEAD MAN'S FOLLY D) ENDLESS NIGHT
  - Follow @ @officialagathachristie #@agathachristie for more trivia, insight and Marple extras #Marple



## MISS MARPLE'S CHRISTMAS

by Ruth Ware WareWriter

'So that makes seven now,' Mrs Bantry said to her husband, putting down the telephone receiver and counting on her fingers. 'No, six. No – I was right the first time. It is seven. Nine, including you and me.'

'What's that? Seven? Seven what?' Colonel Bantry's voice emerged from behind the morning paper.

'Seven guests, for Christmas dinner. I shall have to tell Cook to order a larger turkey. Or do you think two small ones would be safer in case the range is playing up again?'

'Seven?' Her husband folded the paper and stared at her, nonplussed. 'What d'you mean, Dolly? You've invited seven people for Christmas? What possessed you?'

'Arthur, how many more times? We've discussed this. You invited those friends of yours the Dashwoods to stay when you went grouse shooting with Major Dashwood, don't you remember?'

'Hardly friends,' the Colonel said, a little grumpily. His wife continued as if he hadn't spoken.

'And then they asked if they could bring their nephew, Ronald. And I invited Jane Marple, and now her nephew and his wife are staying with her over Christmas because of their drains, or perhaps it's their electricity, I can't quite remember, so I've had to invite them too.'

'Oh dash it, Dolly. Not that West chap, the one who writes those frightful books?'

'Yes, and you're to be polite to him, Arthur. I don't see how you'd know whether they were frightful or not, you never read novels anyway.'

'Well, I still don't see how that makes seven. That's only six.'

'Sir Henry Clithering.'

'Oh.' Colonel Bantry was mollified. He liked Sir Henry — the former commissioner of Scotland Yard was a man after his own heart; traditional, fond of his after-dinner pipe, and not too talkative. 'Oh yes, I'd forgotten that. Well, he's all right, but do we really have to put up with all the rest of 'em in the house?'

'They won't be in the house, Arthur, not all of them anyway. Raymond and Mrs West will be staying at Miss Marple's cottage – they're only coming here for Christmas Day. And the Dashwoods are nobody's fault but your own. I didn't invite them.'

### Church Notices

The curate Mr Kemp will be standing in for Reverend Clement while he is on his holiday.

Bishop Ambrose will be officiating at the confirmation service this week.

Thank you to our flower ladies, Miss Hartnell, Miss Marple, Mrs Goldingay, Heather Badcock and Mrs Bantry, for the beautiful arrangements. One more lady's help would be much appreciated.

Choir practice, join us every Tuesday at 7pm. Tenors always welcome.

REMINDER: The bake sale will take place next Saturday at 2:30pm in the village hall to help raise funds for a new church roof. A polite reminder to keep our own spirits high but those in the cakes must

be kept reasonably low!

The bird-watching society asks you all to please turn your lights out at night to avoid scaring away the screech owls.

#### Marriage Announcements

The wedding of PETER APFEL-STRAND, son of Sir Herbert Apfel-Strand, bart., and his wife, Lady Margaret Apfel-Strand, to MARIE BAPTISTE, daughter of Colette

Baptiste of St Honoré,

at Strand Hall.

Engagement of MICHAEL BARNSLEY-DAVIS, of Gossington Hall, son of Marjorie and Lionel, and LYDIA ADAMS.

#### *Obituaries*

The Bedlington-Bomarsand family vault will be opened this week for the funeral of the former Master of St Bede's College, Oxford

CLYDE McCRACKEN, LAIRD OF CLAN McCRACKEN,

was a distinguished naval officer, and highly successful businessman, who served in the Caribbean during the war. He is survived by one daughter, Louise McCracken.

We remember the life of COLONEL LUCIUS PROTHEROE, who lived at Old Hall and was the churchwarden and local magistrate of St Mary Mead. He will be fondly remembered as always having a "stentorian voice" and for his fastidious attention to the Church accounts. He is survived by his wife, Anne, and daughter from his first marriage, Lettice Protheroe.

#### THE OPEN MIND

by Naomi Alderman @Naomi Allthenews

Elspeth Hearken, the producer from the BBC, had taken in the drama unfolding at high table with raw curiosity. She was a modern young woman, with long brown hair and a deep fringe, wearing a blackand-white polka-dot long-sleeved dress in the fashionably short style that showed most of her dimpled, mottled slightly legs. These fashionable styles didn't quite suit everyone, Miss Marple thought, and Elspeth Hearken seemed rather a victim of the current trend, as she self-consciously pulled the hem of her dress to try to get it a little lower when she sat.

'I should have worn tweed, like you,' said Elspeth, half apologetically, 'only I didn't want to seem to be trying too hard to fit in. Tell me, do you know what's going on at the head of the table?'

'Professor Cuthbert Cayling never makes a friend if he can make an enemy,' Eammon McManaway answered her. 'He beat Simon Skipper in the election to be Master. You'd think that victory would make a man magnanimous. But, since then, Cuthbert has gone out of his way to humiliate Simon at every opportunity. Last week at college council, he asked him to bring the tea and biscuits. As if he were a scout! And he's trying to get Skipper out of his rooms – he has rather a nice set on staircase five that Cuthbert wants to use as a second office.'





STATION STATE

SHOPS AND SMALL HOUSES

LAWRENCE REDDING'S COTTAGE

PMISS LESTRANGE

MISS MARPLE

FIELDS

DR HAYDOCK

VICARAGE

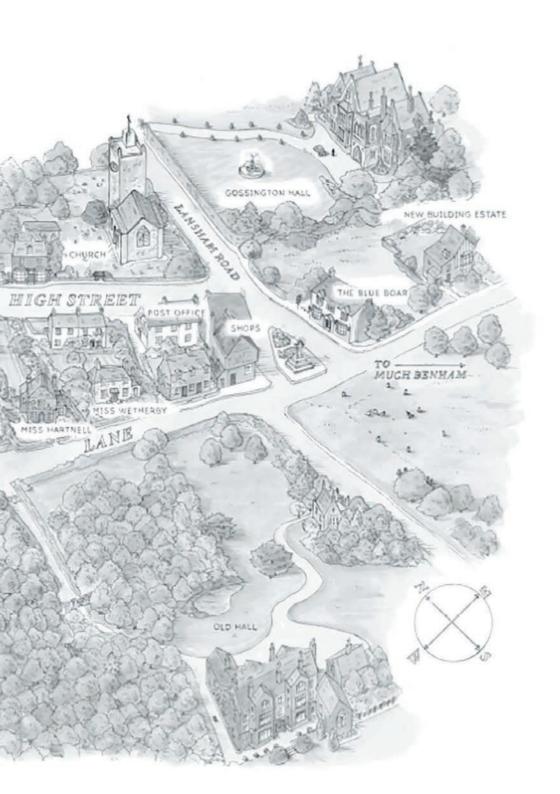
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STUDIO

THE DEVELOPMENT

X.

MRS PRICE RIDLEY



## THE JADE EMPRESS

by Jean Kwok W@JeanKwok

'Why hasn't that daughter been arrested yet?' Victor hissed. 'The safety of all of us is at stake! Is that her sitting by the window?'

Miss Marple took a bite of her pineapple bun, which, ironically, did not contain any pineapple. It was still sweet and delicious, however, and she took some comfort in it

at breakfast after her restless night. 'That's a different woman. I believe Mudan is taking her meals in her cabin. There's been no evidence found against her.'

'Well, they all look alike anyway,' Ellen said, taking a sip of her black

coffee. 'Of course it was her. Who else could it be? She found both bodies. I heard she was covered in blood. Everyone on board is riled up. And here we are, stuck at sea, with a murderer running loose. You can't trust those people.'

Miss Marple looked up. 'Which people?'

'Foreigners,' Victor answered for his wife.

'In Hong Kong,' Miss Marple said, 'I believe we will be the foreigners.'

We are, stuck at sea, with a murderer running loose.

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## FROM FL®RA TO FOUL

TEST THOSE GREEN FINGERS OF YOURS AND SEE HOW MANY FLOWERS YOU CAN YOU IDENTIFY. ARE YOU SHREWD ENOUGH TO SPOT THE POISONOUS ONES?

- 1. Lily of the Valley
- 2. Phacelia
- 3. Asters
- 4. Dahlias
- 5. Mistletoe
- 6. Little apple of death
- 7. Hydrangeas
- 8. White Baneberry
- 9. Peonies
- 10. Jasmine hedge





















Answers: 2 1-e, 2-h, 3-d, 4-a, 5-f, 6-i, 7-j, 88-b, 9-c, 10-g

### A DEADLY WEDDING DAY

by Dreda Say Mitchell @DredaMBE

Miss Bella

never

left home

without

a hat.

'I'm sorry I'm late.' Miss Marple had missed the wedding ceremony. 'I'm afraid two trains from St Mary

Mead were cancelled. That will be something to do with Lord Beeching and the axe he has taken to the railway service, no doubt.'

Miss Bella's statuesque figure towered over her much smaller friend.

She wore a no-frills mauve dress that offset the gloss of her brown skin, and a smart hat was perched atop her head. Miss Bella never left home without a hat. Although the women had last seen each other only recently, when Miss Marple had been holidaying on St Honoré a trip that had included the nasty business of the loss of a hotel guest - they had actually first become acquainted within the confines of an air-raid shelter during the Blitz. While bombs dropped on London, Miss Bella had whiled away the time explaining to Miss Marple, up for a

brief visit to the metropolis, how she had not been allowed to serve in the Axillary Territorial Service, as

the then young Princess Elizabeth had, but how she had recovered from that knock back, and fought tooth and nail to be admitted to the Women's Auxiliary Air Force instead. The unit had contained other

Caribbean women like her, who had answered the call to help the 'Motherland', as they had been brought up to think of England. Miss Bella had then, post war, stayed on and become a nurse in Britain's new National Health Service.

## MURDER AT THE VILLA ROSA

by Elly Griffiths @ellygriffiths

But I found Miss Marple's company soothing and, before long, I was telling her of my plans for Ricky.

'I've come to hate him,' I said. 'And I can never be free of him unless I kill him.'

'It must be hard writing about a character you dislike,' said Miss Marple.

'I don't mind writing baddies,' I said. 'After all, I'm a crime writer. Murder's my business. I love being inside the mind of someone truly evil. That's the trouble with Ricky. He's too nice. He was all right at

first, when he'd just left the army and joined the police force. He was full of interesting angst. He had unhappy love affairs, he was estranged from his son, he had a health condition. But, as people came to like Ricky, I've been scared to make him

suffer. He just drifts along, solving crimes that don't really affect him. He's reconciled with his son, and everyone – including my editor, Fran – has forgotten about his health problems.'

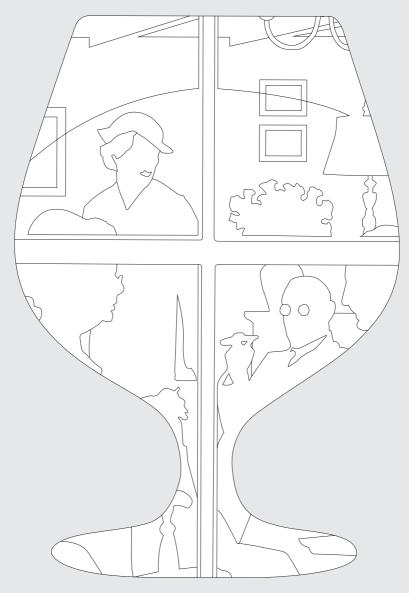
'That reminds me of someone in my village,' said Miss Marple, rather to my surprise. 'Mrs Randall disposed of her husband because every night, at ten o'clock precisely, he always said, "I'm going up the wooden hill to Bedfordshire."'

'I can see how that would get on your nerves,' I said, 'but divorce seems an extreme reaction.'

'Oh, she didn't divorce him,' said Miss Marple. 'She killed him.'

I love being inside the mind of someone truly evil.

### **COLOUR ME IN**



#### THE THIRTEEN PROBLEMS

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## THE MURDERING SORT

by Karen M. McManus @writerkmc

No one is

ever the

murdering

sort until

they are.

Diana and I exchange glances. Josiah Westover is one of the oddest, crankiest men I've ever met – but one thing he's not is paranoid. Two days after we arrived, the brakes on the car that only he drives failed, and could have caused a terrible accident if he hadn't noticed before leaving the driveway. A week later,

the heavy vase on the shelf above his desk came crashing down beside his chair, missing his head by inches.

'There have been a couple of close calls,' Diana says. 'But all

accidents!' she adds quickly, as Aunt Jane gives a sage nod. 'You have to understand – my family is quirky, and, yes, some of them are a bit hard up, but they're not killers. It's been driving my father mad, and when he heard about you, he suggested we invite you to my great-aunt Edith's birthday celebration tomorrow night. Dad thought you might be able to

reassure my grandfather. That you could tell him, perhaps . . .' Diana trails off, and I know she's worried that Josiah will be just as rude to Aunt Jane as he is to everyone else. 'That we're not the murdering sort?'

'Ah, my dear,' Aunt Jane smiles kindly, 'the problem with that,

you see, is that no one is ever the murdering sort until they are. The least likely people can shock you. Young mothers, elderly clergy, esteemed businessmen. You can't rule out anyone, I'm

afraid.' She picks up her knitting with a sideways glance toward me. 'Even charming guitar players.'

It's a little annoying, sometimes, how Aunt Jane never misses a thing.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE ACID SOIL

by Kate Mosse @katemosse

Three quarters of an hour later, Miss Marple and Emmeline were standing outside The Bull's Head on the main road. The early morning clouds had burnt off and the sun was now quite fierce in an intense blue sky. Miss Marple's face was sombre.

'Are we any further along, Jane?'
'Oh, I think so. After all, cases such as this are almost always the same. I know in books it is generally the most unlikely person, but I never find that rule applies in real life. Except ...'

'Except?'

'It seems to me there
is more to it.' Miss
Marple frowned. 'It's
the sequence of things
all running together.
There being two glasses,
and Mrs Hands being
dismissed from Cooper's service.'

Emmeline's eyes were bright. 'And what do you think?'

'That Dr Barden understood he had made a terrible mistake and regretted it, and Mr Cooper realised.

'I can't begin to say I understand, but it really is most exciting.'

Miss Marple's expression grew even more grave. 'No, Emmy. Murder isn't a thing to be taken lightly.'

Murder isn't a thing to be taken lightly.

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#### **INGREDIENTS**

- 225g/8oz self-raising flour
- 75g/2½oz caster sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 125g/4½oz unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 150g/5½oz dried fruit
- 1 free-range egg
- 1 tbsp milk
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

#### **METHOD**

- Preheat the oven to 180C/160C Fan/ Gas 4 and line a baking tray with baking parchment.
- Mix the flour, sugar and baking powder in a bowl and rub in the cubed butter until the mixture looks like breadcrumbs, then mix in the dried fruit.
- 3. In a clean bowl, beat the egg and milk together with the vanilla extract.
- 4. Add the egg mixture to the dry ingredients and stir with a spoon until the mixture just comes together as a thick, lumpy dough. Add a teaspoon more milk if you need it to make the mixture stick together.
- Place golfball-sized spoons of the mixture onto the prepared baking tray. Leave space between them as they will flatten and spread out to double their size during baking.
- Bake for 15–20 minutes, until golden-brown. Allow to cool for a couple of minutes, then turn them out onto a wire rack to finish cooling.

### THE DISAPPEARANCE

by Leigh Bardugo 🛩 @LBardugo

Raymond appeared in the doorway, breaking her reverie. 'Aunt Jane,' he said, his tone accusatory. 'It's for you.'

'For me?' A faint alarm sounded in her head. Had something happened at the cottage? She'd been worried the pipes wouldn't make it through another winter, but perhaps they'd decided to give up early.

'It's Dolly Bantry,' Raymond drawled, 'and she sounds even more breathless than usual.'

'What in the world could Dolly want?'

'I certainly don't know and I don't care to ask.'

Miss Marple knew Dolly had been restless ever since she'd moved into the East Lodge, and it hadn't helped that her children and grandchildren had forgone their holiday visit this year. It was understandable, given how far away they lived, and Dolly had insisted she was relieved not to have to worry about meals and clean up for so many, but Jane suspected it had been a blow nonetheless.

Miss Marple bundled her

knitting under her arm and joined Raymond in the library, where the telephone sat on a cluttered desk.

'Dolly?'

'Oh, Jane!' Dolly exclaimed. 'You must come home at once. I need your marvellous brain.'

'I'll be home at the end of August,' Miss Marple protested. 'Raymond and his wife are taking me to a most intriguing play next week. Very controversial.'

'Quite right,' said Raymond, lighting a cigarette and leaning against the mantel. 'The actors perform in nothing but red paint. Impossible to get tickets, even in summer.'

Miss Marple suppressed a shudder. 'What's wrong, Dolly?'

'I can't possibly explain it all.'

'You must try.'

Dolly took a deep breath. 'You know the family who moved into Gossington Hall? The Barnsley-Davises? Their son has disappeared and you must come home and find him.'



### PUT YOUR DETECTION SKILLS TO THE TEST

Can you locate the twelve authors who have contributed to the MARPLE collection hidden in the wordsearch below?

E | Q T C G I | R U Z K H S D T B S K D K K N F EVVIDEAFHFZI LASDHMOMERBTZUL INF Т J D C N N U S O M ZHSXORGLTEL -K V H Y M J B N W F O U G Z Y F DVYYHZQWAEMGFPNCC J L M U B A C WUAYNCTII JZFNAMINHPMYA ZRFDMTRALXAHKS IQAURCE SAFSOOROK EHZADGSMKOLLIT ISNDYQPSMMSFTBGYCZWWA LOEUIGPUCNVGALGY S P L N A T A L I E H A Y N E S G A R LEHCTIMYASADERD BDQVSAE BFTNROABPHUQUA VEIAUGBTA TWXL LDMPGAVKOGUDRABHG HMMV | R L A X Y H A X G S S R S X L A L X T W Q R U G U B | U D G D R O H E L A S D MNKTBDQQAWEKEWXLUVCWHRHE H E P U X T G T Q F W X T A U E Q N I A Y O C R WTAOOONVNPBGTUNUXITCUQTM EAIFNOKPTMUDFNKILSDTONI KUDKXHOGWBOXFGWEFEPKOD U Y M Q M R M X B Z U P Z O L Z D L O M C M J Y C EYXEINRHDKUNYMKICQVA



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THE MURDER AT THE VICARAGE

THE BODY IN THE LIBRARY

THE MOVING FINGER

SLEEPING MURDER

A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED

THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS

A POCKET FULL OF RYE

4.50 FROM PADDINGTON

THE MIRROR CRACK'D FROM SIDE TO SIDE

A CARIBBEAN MYSTERY

AT BERTRAM'S HOTEL

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