

THE WORLD OF AGATHA CHRISTIE

READ

winter
mysteries

SOLVE

a cryptic
conundrum

EXPLORE

festive
favourites

DELVE

into delicious
memories



Christmas

Hercule Poirot's Christmas

AN EXTRACT [1938]

Part 2: December 23rd

Tressilian went to answer the doorbell. It had been an unusually aggressive peal, and now, before he could make his slow way across the hall, it pealed out again.

Tressilian flushed. An ill-mannered, impatient way of ringing the bell at a gentleman's house! If it was a fresh lot of those carol singers he'd given them a piece of his mind.

Through the frosted glass of the upper half of the door he saw a silhouette - a big man in a slouch hat. He opened the door. As he had thought - a cheap, flashy stranger - nasty pattern of suit he was wearing - loud! Some impudent begging fellow!

'Blessed if it isn't Tressilian,' said the stranger. 'How are you, Tressilian?'

Tressilian stared - took a deep breath - stared again. That bold arrogant jaw, the high-bridged nose, the rollicking eye. Yes, they had all been there three years ago. More subdued then...

He said with a gasp:

'Mr Harry!'

Harry Lee laughed.

'Looks as though I'd given you quite a shock. Why? I'm expected, aren't I?'

'Yes, indeed, sir. Certainly, sir.'

'Then why the surprise act?' Harry stepped back a foot or two and looked up at the house - a good solid mass of red brick, unimaginative but solid.

'Just the same ugly old mansion,' he remarked. 'Still standing, though, that's the main thing. How's my father, Tressilian?'

'He's somewhat of an invalid, sir. Keeps his room, and can't get about much. But he's wonderfully well, considering.'

'The old sinner!'

'Remember the tale of the prodigal's return?'

Harry Lee came inside, let Tressilian remove his scarf and take the somewhat theatrical hat.

'How's my dear brother Alfred, Tressilian?'

'He's very well, sir.'

Harry grinned.

'Looking forward to seeing me? Eh?'

'I expect so, sir.'

'I don't! Quite the contrary. I bet it's given him a nasty jolt, my turning up! Alfred and I never did get on. Ever read your Bible, Tressilian?'

'Why, yes, sir, sometimes, sir.'

'Remember the tale of the prodigal's return?'

The good brother didn't like it, remember? Didn't like it at all! Good old stay-at-home Alfred doesn't like it either, I bet.'

Tressilian remained silent looking down his nose. His stiffened back expressed protest. Harry clapped him on the shoulder.

'Lead on, old son,' he said. 'The fatted calf awaits me! Lead me right to it.'

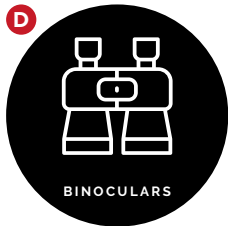
Tressilian murmured:

'If you will come this way into the drawing-room, sir. I am not quite sure where everyone is... They were unable to send to meet you, sir, not knowing the time of your arrival.'

Hercule Poirot's Christmas Copyright © 1938 Agatha Christie Limited. All rights reserved.

Guess the Gift

A PUZZLE



Can you match the presents to their intended recipients?

- 1 ARIADNE OLIVER
- 2 CAPTAIN HASTINGS
- 3 HERCULE POIROT

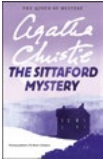
- 4 INSPECTOR JAPP
- 5 MISS MARPLE
- 6 MISS LEMON

- 7 MR SATTERTHWAITE
- 8 RAYMOND WEST
- 9 TUPPENCE BERESFORD

Answers: A7, B6, C3, D5, E1, F4, G8, H2, I9

Winter Stories

A READING LIST



THE SITTAFORD MYSTERY [1931]

On a cold winter's night during a snowstorm in a quiet English hamlet, six shadowy figures huddle around a table for a séance. But what starts off as some

light entertainment to while away the evening, soon turns into terror when the spirits spell out a chilling message: 'Captain Trevelyan...dead...murder.' The only way to know whether this is just a cruel hoax or the truth is to find the Captain. The trouble is, he lives several miles away, and heavy snowfall might make the route impossible...

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

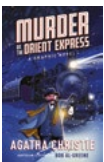


THE THIRTEEN PROBLEMS [1932]

It is a peaceful Tuesday evening in St Mary Mead and a group of friends are gathered for dinner. Amongst the guests are an artist, a clergyman, a solicitor, and an

unassuming, elderly lady. It's not long before the conversation turns to crime. Each guest brings a tricky mystery to the table, but with Miss Marple around, they won't stay unsolved for long. This collection features the festive short story, 'A Christmas Tragedy'.

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



MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS [1934]

It has just gone midnight and the luxurious Orient Express has been brought to a halt by a perilous snowdrift. On board are an

assorted group, from a Russian Princess to a British military officer. But one passenger lies dead in his compartment, stabbed a dozen times. Stranded by the weather, the culprit must still be on board. Can Poirot solve the mystery before the train continues its journey? Now available in the US as a graphic novel, adapted by Bob Al-Greene.

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



HERCULE POIROT'S CHRISTMAS [1938]

A so-called family reunion turns into a nightmare, when cunning Simeon Lee gathers his relations together for the festive season. After insulting them and

expanding on his plan to cut them out of his will the old man is found brutally slain. It must be money that is at the heart of this case, but with so many desperate heirs, how will the local force track down the killer? Perhaps, with a little help from a visiting Belgian Detective...

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

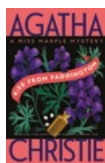


THE MOUSETRAP [1952]

Whilst guests seek shelter from the snowstorm at Monskwell Manor, news of a London murder begins to spread. But when a police officer arrives at

the countryside house, the guests are shocked to discover that the killer is amongst them. One by one they begin to reveal their closely-guarded secrets and open up about their pasts. They all have things they would rather keep hidden, but which one of them is capable of murder?

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



4.50 FROM PADDINGTON [1957]

Miss Marple's friend Mrs McGillicuddy is reliable and trustworthy, but she has also witnessed a bizarre crime.

Christmas might slow down the wheels of justice, but with help from the accomplished Lucy Eyesbarrow, they will locate the victim of the train strangling. This country house murder has enough intrigue to keep you guessing until New Year's Eve.

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



THE ADVENTURE OF THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING [1960]

Poirot has accepted a trip to Kings Lacey, after plentiful reassurance that the central heating is up to scratch.

He pretends to be there to experience the "traditional English Christmas" but is watching and waiting for the appearance of a precious ruby. The titular story, and its accompanying tales, are perfect for unwinding over the festive season.

[SHOP IN THE UK](#)



STAR OVER BETHLEHEM [1965]

In this compendium of short holiday stories and poems, Agatha Christie explores topics such as religion, justice, faith, dreams, and nature. Although

many of the subjects discussed are suitable for adults, the short stories in this collection are considered children's tales and are accompanied by charming illustrations. This book puts the spotlight on an alternative writing style of Christie's, highlighting her multifaceted talents as an author. *Star Over Bethlehem* is perfect for those looking for a short, festive read.

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



MIDWINTER MURDER [2020]

There's a chill in the crisp December air, and something sinister lurks beneath the mistletoe. This collection of 12 fireside stories sees some of

Christie's most beloved detectives taking on cases during the festive season. Expect sudden visitors, poisoned treats, dangerous snowdrifts, deadly journeys and even a malevolent Christmas warning... Can you solve these mysteries before your guests arrive? It's time to prepare a hot drink, get cosy by the fire and settle in for an evening of wintery whodunnits.

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



HERCULE POIROT'S SILENT NIGHT [2023]

Determined to be back in London by Christmas, Poirot and Catchpool must work quickly to solve the mystery of a very likeable man's murder.

Cooped up at Frellingsloe House, aka "Frelly", the pair must get to know the inhabitants of this crumbling coastal property, and uncover why a stranger's death has spooked a seemingly hysterical Mrs Laurier (with help from Catchpool's interfering mother, naturally). A new novel perfect for those looking for crime-fiction this Christmas.

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

We hope you enjoy our selection of festive stories. To explore our Agatha Christie Christmas Gift Guide visit agathachristie.com/to-buy

A Christmas Note from Sophie Hannah

This festive season, I have not one but two treats for Christie fans! The first is probably obvious: *Hercule Poirot's Silent Night*, which I hope captures not only the jolly experience of solving a baffling murder mystery over your turkey and Christmas pudding, but also the terror of having your Christmas plans ruined by the sub-optimal behaviour of a narcissistic relative. This is the dreadful fate Catchpool is keen to avoid as he and Poirot do all they can to solve the murder, in a Norfolk hospital, of Stanley Niven, a suspiciously happy man. No sooner does Poirot think he's on the right track than a second murder occurs, throwing his theories into disarray. His little grey cells need to work hard to solve the puzzle.

This is my fifth Poirot novel and my only festive one. All the way through writing the book, I loved the 'Christie for Christmas' element of it. There's no better Christmas gift than an ace mystery novel, which I hope this is. This feels, then, like a slightly special occasion, which is why I'm delighted to be able to announce another treat for Agatha fans, for anyone who wants not one but two murder mysteries this Christmas:

From 25 November, *The Mystery of Mr. E*, my first ever murder mystery musical movie will be streaming on Amazon Prime. I co-wrote the musical with my genius composer friend Annette Armitage. If you love Agatha Christie, then you might just love it. Though *The Mystery of Mr. E* doesn't contain Poirot, there's a baffling mystery puzzle at its centre that he would approve of, I think.

The action takes place at Idlewyld House, former home

of the world's most best-selling romantic novelist, the late, great Harriet Landrigan. Agatha Christie is actually mentioned by name: as the only novelist to have sold more books than Harriet. And it was Agatha's brilliant *The Mousetrap* that inspired me to invent the hook for my musical: a stranger arrives at home of a detective, announces himself as 'the murderer', then disappears. The Detective then has to find the murder attached to this self-confessed killer. This isn't the only element of *The Mystery of Mr. E* that was inspired by the Queen of Crime. The movie's story is all about writers and their legacies. The suspects are the late Harriet Landrigan's houseguests and their families: Peter, her son, who runs her literary estate; Swithun Kirk, an actor who wants to buy film rights to one of her novels so that he can play its romantic lead; Laura Taylor, an academic who is doing a research project on Harriet and is obsessed with the missing letters from her archive. Then there's Max Russell, a publisher who wants to publish the four last books Harriet wrote. (An extra puzzle running alongside the murder mystery is: why did Harriet refuse to publish

her last four books? Instead, she framed them and hung them on the walls of her home, insisting no one must ever be allowed to read them. But why would anyone do such a thing? You'll have to watch the movie to find out.)

I'll wrap up with a fun fact that those who are interested in such trivia might enjoy: another connection between *The Mystery of Mr. E* and *Hercule Poirot's Silent Night* is that David Brawn, my Poirot editor in the UK, thought of both titles.



Christmas Cryptogram

A PUZZLE

Assign the correct letters to the numbers to decode this cryptic message.
We have given you a couple of hints to get those little grey cells warmed up.

3	24	21	15		13	14	15
<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>		<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0;" type="text" value="E"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>

21	24	21	13		24	2
<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0;" type="text" value="E"/>		<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>

15	6	13		16	4	18	25
<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0;" type="text" value="E"/>		<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>

16	18	3	3	7	21	12
<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0;" type="text" value="G"/>

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text" value="13"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text" value="12"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>

*"During the afternoon we ate chocolates solidly.
We neither felt, nor were, sick! How lovely to be
eleven years old and greedy!"*

Agatha Christie, Foreword to 'The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding'

4.50 from Paddington

AN EXTRACT [1957]

Miss Marple set about her plan of campaign methodically and making due allowance for the Christmas season which was a definitely retarding factor.

She wrote to her great-nephew, David West, combining Christmas wishes with an urgent request for information.

Fortunately she was invited, as on previous years, to the vicarage for Christmas dinner, and here she was able to tackle young Leonard, home for the Christmas season, about maps.

Maps of all kinds were Leonard's passion. The reason for the old lady's inquiry about a large-scale map of a particular area did not rouse his curiosity. He discoursed on maps generally with fluency, and wrote down for her exactly what would suit her purpose best. In fact, he did better. He actually found that he had such a map amongst his collection and he lent it to her, Miss Marple promising to take great care of it and return it in due course.

'Maps,' said his mother, Griselda, who still, although she had a grown-up son, looked strangely young and blooming to be inhabiting the shabby old vicarage. 'What does she want with maps? I mean, what does she want them for?'

'I don't know,' said young Leonard, 'I don't think she said exactly.'

'I wonder now . . .' said Griselda. 'It seems very fishy to me . . . At her age the old pet ought to give up that sort of thing.'

Leonard asked what sort of thing, and Griselda said elusively:

'Oh, poking her nose into things. Why maps, I wonder?'

In due course Miss Marple received a letter from her great-nephew David West. It ran affectionately:

*'It seems very fishy to me...
At her age the old pet ought
to give up that sort of thing.'*

'Dear Aunt Jane,—Now what are you up to? I've got the information you wanted. There are only two trains that can possibly apply—the 4.33 and the 5 o'clock. The former is a slow train and stops at Haling Broadway, Barwell Heath, Brackhampton and then stations to Market Basing. The 5 o'clock is the Welsh express for Cardiff, Newport and Swansea. The former might be overtaken somewhere by the 4.50, although it is due in Brackhampton five minutes earlier and the latter passes the 4.50 just before Brackhampton.

In all this do I smell some village scandal of a fruity character? Did you, returning from a shopping spree in town by the 4.50, observe in a passing train the mayor's wife being embraced by the Sanitary Inspector? But why does it matter which train it was? A weekend at Porthcawl perhaps? Thank you for the pullover. Just what I wanted. How's the garden? Not very active this time of year, I should imagine.

Yours ever,
David'

Miss Marple smiled a little, then considered the information thus presented to her. Mrs McGillicuddy had said definitely that the carriage had not been a corridor one. Therefore—not the Swansea express. The 4.33 was indicated.

Also some more travelling seemed unavoidable. Miss Marple sighed, but made her plans.

4.50 from Paddington Copyright © 1957 Agatha Christie Limited. All rights reserved.

Missing Jewel Log

A RECIPE

MAKES: 8-10 SLICES

PREP: 30 MINUTES

COOK: 20 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE SPONGE: 4 eggs, 115g caster sugar, 35g cocoa powder, 115g plain flour, $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp baking powder

FOR THE FILLING: 200ml double cream,
1 tsp vanilla essence

FOR THE ICING: 100g butter, 200g icing sugar, 1
tbsp cocoa powder, plus extra icing sugar and
jelly diamonds or edible pearls to decorate

EQUIPMENT:

Swiss Roll Tin or Baking Tray; Baking Parchment;
Whisk (can be Electric); Sieve; Mixing Bowl
and Mixing Jug; Saucepan; Spatula or Wooden
Spoon; Fork

METHOD:

Preheat the oven to 180C fan/gas 6. Butter a swiss
roll or baking tray (23 x 33, 9 x 13) and line with
baking paper.

Beat the eggs and sugar until thick and creamy in
a bowl (electric whisk will speed things up).

Mix flour, cocoa and baking powder together in
a separate bowl. Then sift this carefully into the
sugar and egg mixture. Don't overwork.

Pour the mixture into your prepared tray and put
it in the oven to bake for 10 minutes.

Once the cake is cooked, remove it from the oven
and leave to cool for just a minute. Then, keeping
the baking paper attached, fold the cake up to
resemble a swiss roll. Then leave to cool fully.



Whilst it cools, you can make the filling and the
buttercream icing. Whisk the double cream,
vanilla essence and about 2 tbsp of icing sugar
until it holds its shape.

For the butter cream, beat the icing sugar, butter,
and cocoa powder together with an electric mixer,
wooden spoon, or spatula. Tip: You can use 2-3
tbsp of boiling water to help combine them, and
ensure you get a nice smooth finish.

Unravel the cooled sponge, and spread your
filling evenly across the cake. If you'd like to hide
the missing jewel, add one or two of your edible
decorations onto the creamed cake before rolling.

Next roll the sponge carefully into a log shape.
To make it look more authentic, you may choose
to cut a diagonal slice off the end of the cake
which you can sample before your guests arrive.
Now use the buttercream to ice the missing jewel
log with a knife or spatula. You can then recreate
the log effect by running a fork over the surface
of the icing.

Plate the cake, and scatter icing sugar and your
edible jewels or pearls. Enjoy!

Foreword to The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding

AN EXTRACT [1957]

The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding is an indulgence of my own, since it recalls to me, very pleasurably, the Christmases of my youth. After my father's death, my mother and I always spent Christmas with my brother-in-law's family in the north of England - and what superb Christmases they were for a child to remember! Abney Hall had everything! The garden boasted a waterfall, a stream, and a tunnel under the drive! The Christmas fare was of gargantuan proportions. I was a skinny child, appearing delicate, but actually of robust health and perpetually hungry! The boys of the family and I used to vie with each other as to who could eat most on Christmas Day. Oyster Soup and Turbot went down without undue zest, but then came Roast Turkey, Boiled Turkey and an enormous Sirloin of Beef. The boys and I had two helpings of all three!

We then had Plum Pudding, Mince-pies, Trifle and every kind of dessert. During the afternoon we ate chocolates solidly. We neither felt, nor were, sick!

How lovely to be eleven years old and greedy! What a day of delight from 'Stockings' in bed in the morning, Church and all the Christmas hymns, Christmas dinner, Presents, and the final Lighting of the Christmas Tree!

And how deep my gratitude to the kind and hospitable hostess who must have worked so hard to make Christmas Day a wonderful memory to me still in my old age.

So let me dedicate this book to the memory of Abney Hall - its kindness and its hospitality.

And a happy Christmas
to all who read this book.

The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding Copyright © 1960
Agatha Christie Limited. All rights reserved.



Spend Your Christmas at Monkswell Manor

Monkswell Manor Guest House
Berkshire
Cost Per Week from 7gns
Full/Half Board Optional
Contact : Mrs. M Ralston

Festive Food

A WORD SEARCH

Feast your eyes on some classic and contemporary foods for the season.
How quickly can you find them all?

L Q P D O U B L E C R E A M K G X A I X
Y K O V C K W Q B C C T R I F L E A R S
G H C W H M R P F B U M C F T T C P O S
F G V J O G O O S E C E N X I D H R A N
J M O Q C H A M P A G N E D S P R X S O
K L B S O V S L D Z M L Q K R U I D T V
C K R Y L T T N Q K L T Z Q E V S G P G
R S W D A U B C H E S T N U T S T K O O
A K X W T R E M S N A R J X Q T M Y T O
N I F D E K E K B E W A J I L U A A A C
B I Y J S E F G M Q R Y Z J M F S F T R
E T M T T Y H Q X P J X Y D O F P P O C
R L P J G M I N C E P I E S A I U D E G
R J Z S C Z C L N K B U G D R N D I S Q
Y M W W R V O P F O Y A G B Q G D Z P J
V O M Z X V O Z B S R L N C E V I A W Z
P C L Q Q Q I B O P Q U O F D X N Y Z G
F O Y S T E R S O U P N G O Z U G M U V

CHAMPAGNE
CHESTNUTS
CHOCOLATES
CHRISTMAS PUDDING
CRANBERRY

DOUBLE CREAM
EGGNOG
GOOSE
MINCE PIES
OYSTER SOUP

ROAST BEEF
ROAST POTATOES
STUFFING
TRIFLE
TURKEY

*"Hercule Poirot enjoyed it. He enjoyed it very much.
He said to himself that he had had a very good Christmas."*

Agatha Christie, 'The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding'



For more extracts, features, reading lists, games
and trivia visit agathachristie.com

Sign up to the Agatha Christie monthly newsletter
at agathachristie.com/subscribe

 **officialagathachristie**

 **agathachristie**

 **OfficialAgathaChristie**

AGATHA CHRISTIE, POIROT, MARPLE and the Agatha Christie Signature are registered trademarks of
Agatha Christie Limited in the UK and elsewhere. All rights reserved.



#READCHRISTIE2023