

THE WORLD OF AGATHA CHRISTIE

READ

Christie's
best sellers

SOLVE

the Poirot
crossword

EXPLORE

1930s facts

DELVE

into famous
cases

NINETEEN

7



The 13 Problems

AN EXTRACT [1932]

‘Tell me,’ said Sir Henry, ‘do you know a Miss Marple?’

Mrs Bantry was surprised. It was the last thing she had expected.

‘Know Miss Marple? Who doesn’t! The typical old maid of fiction. Quite a dear, but hopelessly behind the times. Do you mean you would like me to ask her to dinner?’

‘You are surprised?’

‘A little, I must confess. I should hardly have thought you—but perhaps there’s an explanation?’

‘The explanation is simple enough. When I was down here last year we got into the habit of discussing unsolved mysteries—there were five or six of us—Raymond West, the novelist, started it. We each supplied a story to which we knew the answer, but nobody else did. It was supposed to be an exercise in the deductive faculties—to see who could get nearest the truth.’

‘Well?’

‘Like in the old story—we hardly realized that Miss Marple was playing; but we were very polite about it—didn’t want to hurt the old dear’s feelings. And now comes the cream of the jest. The old lady outdid us every time!’

‘What?’

‘I assure you—straight to the truth like a homing pigeon.’

‘But how extraordinary! Why, dear old Miss Marple has hardly ever been out of St Mary Mead.’

‘Ah! But according to her, that has given her unlimited opportunities of observing human nature—under the microscope as it were.’

‘I suppose there’s something in that,’ conceded Mrs Bantry. ‘One would at least know the petty side of people. But I don’t think we have any really exciting criminals in our midst. I think we must try her with Arthur’s ghost

story after dinner. I’d be thankful if she’d find a solution to that.’

‘I didn’t know that Arthur believed in ghosts?’

‘Oh! he doesn’t. That’s what worries him so. And it happened to a friend of his, George Pritchard—a most prosaic person. It’s really rather tragic for poor George. Either this extraordinary story is true—or else—’

‘Or else what?’

Mrs Bantry did not answer. After a minute or two she said irrelevantly:

‘You know, I like George—everyone does. One can’t believe that he—but people do do such extraordinary things.’

Sir Henry nodded. He knew, better than Mrs Bantry, the extraordinary things that people did.

So it came about that that evening Mrs Bantry looked round her dinner table (shivering a little as she did so, because the dining-room, like most English dining-rooms, was extremely cold) and fixed her gaze on the very upright old lady sitting on her husband’s right. Miss Marple wore black lace mittens; an old lace fichu was draped round her shoulders and another piece of lace surmounted her white hair. She was talking animatedly to the elderly doctor, Dr Lloyd, about the Workhouse and the suspected shortcomings of the District Nurse.

Mrs Bantry marvelled anew. She even wondered whether Sir Henry had been making an elaborate joke—but there seemed no point in that. Incredible that what he had said could be really true.

The Blue Geranium Copyright © 1929 Agatha Christie Limited. All rights reserved.

St Mary Mead

A WORD SEARCH

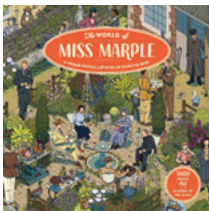
We've hidden 15 words or phrases related to Miss Marple's village in this word search. Can you locate them all?

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

BINDWEED
HIGH STREET
BLUE BOAR
HUMAN NATURE
COLONEL BANTRY

INSPECTOR SLACK
DANEMEAD
JANE MARPLE
DOLLY BANTRY
MUCH BENHAM

DR HAYDOCK
NEIGHBOUR
GARDENING
THE VICARAGE
GOSSIP



The World of Miss Marple A 1000 Piece Jigsaw Puzzle

The third official Christie jigsaw from Laurence King Publishing shines a spotlight on the marvellous Miss Marple and the beloved village of St Mary Mead. Illustrated by Ilya Milstein.

RRP: \$21.99, £16.99 [SHOP IN THE US](#) | [SHOP IN THE UK](#)

1930s

A READING LIST

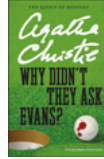


THE MURDER AT THE VICARAGE [1930]

The charming Vicar, Leonard Clement, leads us through the village goings-on in St Mary Mead. But when the hateful Colonel Protheroe is found dead

at the vicarage, the consequences are profound. Confessions, arrests and misdirection follow. Can the old dears of the community crack the case? Miss Marple certainly has a list of suspects.

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



WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK EVANS? [1934]

Bobby's job as a golf caddy feels mundane after the Navy. Determined to find a new role to please his ordained father, he doesn't expect to become

embroiled in a suspicious death. As he chases shadowy figures with childhood friend Lady Frances (Frankie), the pair become both emboldened and endangered by their amateur sleuthing.

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



LORD EDGWARE DIES [1933]

When the caustic Lord Edgware is found murdered, Poirot is already acquainted with the chief suspect: Edgware's second wife Jane, who had been seeking a

divorce. What extremes might she have gone to to get one? With 12 witnesses revealing her innocence, Inspector Japp has several others to interrogate. Who will get to the bottom of the case first?

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



PARKER PYNE INVESTIGATES [1934]

From disgruntled spouses to those bored of the daily grind, former civil servant Parker Pyne helps people to solve their problems from his London office in the

first half of the collection. In the remaining stories readers travel the world with the unusual detective, whose holidays are interrupted by ransom notes, a poisoning, and devious imposters.

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



UNFINISHED PORTRAIT [1934]

Christie's second novel written under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott is her most personal. We learn of Celia via Larraby, a painter who shares his written

portrait of a grieving woman. We discover what has led them to this cliff top encounter. Those familiar with Christie's autobiography will enjoy spotting nods to it in this emotionally-charged novel.

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



CARDS ON THE TABLE [1934]

Four killers. Four detectives. One dead man. Mr Shaitana, known for his flamboyant albeit peculiar parties, is an avid collector, but not in the way one might think... He is

particularly interested in the art of murder. Shaitana invites eight people for a night of bridge, but the game soon turns deadly. Which killer committed the crime, and which detective can solve it?

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



THE ABC MURDERS [1936]

Hastings assists Poirot on his trickiest case yet: a murderer is targeting victims using the ABC Railway Guide. Will they live to regret taunting the great detective? An urgent need to hunt down the killer means the duo must travel England by train to spot clues from the crime scenes. How many will die at the hands of this ruthless perpetrator?

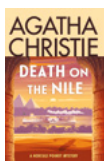
[SHOP IN THE US](#) | [SHOP IN THE UK](#)



DUMB WITNESS [1937]

A letter from beyond the grave reaches Hercule Poirot, who is assisted by the easily-flustered Hastings. The death of a wealthy spinster, Emily Arundell, in the town of Market Basing is blamed on her terrier Bob's mischievous ball games, but the correspondence has Poirot questioning the circumstances. Plenty have something to gain from the will - money talks, but will the witness?

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



DEATH ON THE NILE [1937]

An atmospheric Egyptian cruise is blighted by threats. Heiress Linnet Doyle is on board with her new husband, Simon, but they hadn't anticipated his ex fiancée would join them. Jacqueline is plagued with jealousy, which some choice words from Papa Poirot cannot quell. A colourful assortment of holidayers are also on board:

a romance novelist; a belligerent communist and Linnet's trustee amongst them. As tension builds shots will be fired.

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



AND THEN THERE WERE NONE [1939]

Ten strangers are on a terrifying trip to Soldier Island. As the guests settle in the isolated house, a record player exposes them as suspected murderers.

Haunted by the accusations, none can escape during the terrible storm. And then the visitors begin to die, one by one... The best-selling mystery novel of all time, this is a book you won't want to miss.

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

We couldn't resist including a short story collection Agatha Christie loved. The series of 12 stories were, according to her autobiography, a favourite to write.



THE MYSTERIOUS MR QUIN [1930]

Each of the stand-alone mysteries in this collection have one key thing in common - the timely arrival of the eponymous Mr Quin. Readers can expect

to rub shoulders with high society in stories that transport them to Monte Carlo, London's famous Royal Opera House, as well as a casino on the French Riviera. The cases range from suspicious deaths to serious theft, and show plenty of Christie's unique flair. Enjoy.

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

Murder on the Orient Express

AN EXTRACT [1934]

'My name is Ratchet.'

Poirot bowed slightly. He slipped his hand into his pocket and produced a matchbox which he handed to the other man, who took it but did not strike a light.

'I think,' he went on, 'that I have the pleasure of speaking to M. Hercule Poirot. Is that so?'

Poirot bowed again.

'You have been correctly informed, Monsieur.'

The detective was conscious of those strange shrewd eyes summing him up before the other spoke again.

'In my country,' he said, 'we come to the point quickly. Mr Poirot, I want you to take on a job for me.'

Hercule Poirot's eyebrows went up a trifle.

'My clientèle, Monsieur, is limited nowadays. I undertake very few cases.'

'Why, naturally, I understand that. But this, Mr Poirot, means big money.' He repeated again in his soft, persuasive voice, 'Big money.'

Hercule Poirot was silent a minute or two, then he said: 'What is it you wish for me to do for you, M.—er—Ratchett?'

'Mr. Poirot, I am a rich man—a very rich man. Men in that position have enemies. I have an enemy.'

'Only one enemy?'

'Just what do you mean by that question?' asked Ratchett sharply.

'Monsieur, in my experience when a man is in a position to have, as you say, enemies, then it does not usually resolve itself into one enemy only.'

Ratchett seemed relieved by Poirot's answer. He said quickly:

'Why, yes, I appreciate that point. Enemy or enemies—it doesn't matter. What does matter is my safety.'

'Safety?'

'My life has been threatened, Mr. Poirot.'

Now, I'm a man who can take pretty good care of himself.'

From the pocket of his coat his hand brought a small automatic into sight for a moment. He continued grimly. 'I don't think I'm the kind of man to be caught napping. But as I look at it I might as well make assurance doubly sure. I fancy you're the man for my money, Mr. Poirot. And remember—big money.'

Poirot looked at him thoughtfully for some minutes. His face was completely expressionless. The other could have had no clue as to what thoughts were passing in that mind.

'I regret, Monsieur,' he said at length. 'I can't oblige you.'

The other looked at him shrewdly.

'Name your figure, then,' he said.

Poirot shook his head.

'You do not understand, Monsieur. I have been very fortunate in my profession. I have made enough money to satisfy both my needs and my caprices. I take now only such cases as—interest me.'

'You've got a pretty good nerve,' said Ratchett.

'Will twenty thousand dollars tempt you?'

'It will not.'

'If you're holding out for more, you won't get it. I know what a thing's worth to me.'

'I also—M. Ratchett.'

'What's wrong with my proposition?'

Poirot rose.

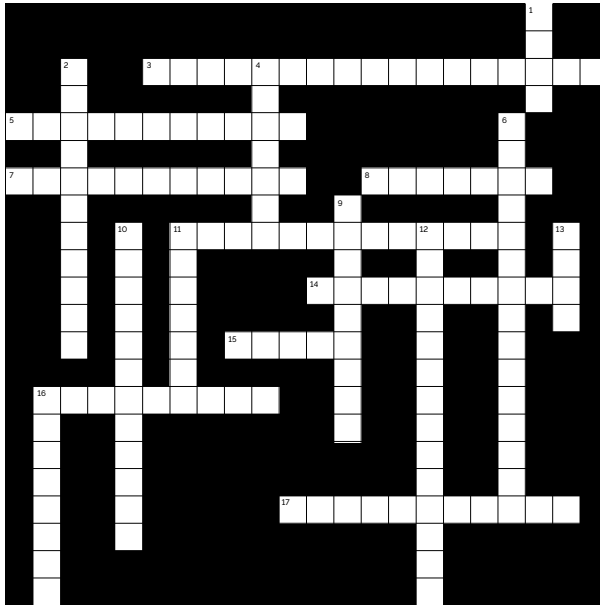
'If you will forgive me for being personal—I do not like your face, M. Ratchett,' he said.

And with that he left the restaurant car.

Murder on the Orient Express Copyright © 1934 Agatha Christie Limited. All rights reserved.

Poirot in the 1930s

A CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 3 What is the name of the romance novelist in *Death on the Nile*? (6, 11)
- 5 Who is the fourth detective in *Cards on the Table*: Hercule Poirot, Superintendent Battle, Ariadne Oliver and _____? (7, 4)
- 7 What was the name of Christie's first play which starred Hercule Poirot? (5, 6)
- 8 What was Jane Wilkinson's profession, prior to her marriage to Lord Edgware? (7)
- 11 What is Eric Leidner's occupation in *Murder in Mesopotamia*? (13)
- 14 SCRAPS DYES is an Aga-gram of which Hercule Poirot title? (3, 7)
- 15 In which city is Mrs Boynton found dead in *Appointment with Death*? (5)
- 16 Who played Jacqueline de Bellefort in the 1978 film, *Death on the Nile*? (3, 6)
- 17 Which novel was first published in the US as *Poirot Loses a Client* and later in the UK as a serialisation named *Mystery at Littlegreen House*? (4, 7)

DOWN

- 1 What is the first name of Elinor Carlisle's love rival in *Sad Cypress*? (4)
- 2 What fell on Nick Buckley's bed and nearly killed her in *Peril at End House*? (3, 8)
- 4 Which Shakespeare play is the opening epigraph from *Hercule Poirot's Christmas* taken: "Yet who would have thought the old man had so much blood in him?" (7)
- 6 Which unlikely detective helps Poirot to solve the murder in *Three Act Tragedy*? (2, 13)
- 9 Complete the name from *The ABC Murders*: Alexander _____ Cust. (9)
- 10 Who played Hercule Poirot in the 1974 adaptation of *Murder on the Orient Express*? (6, 6)
- 11 In *The ABC Murders*, where was Mrs Ascher found dead? (7)
- 12 What name is given to the night on which the short story, *Murder in the Mews* is set? (3, 6, 5)
- 13 Which creature is often depicted on the cover of *Death in the Clouds* and also features in the story itself? (4)
- 16 What is the surname of Samuel Ratchett's secretary in *Murder on the Orient Express*? Hector _____ (8)

1930s Writing

FACT FILE

Several characters who debuted in Christie's 1920s stories reappear in those from the 1930s: Captain Hastings, Colonel Race, and Superintendent Battle. Ariadne Oliver made her first appearance in the Parker Pyne short story 'The Case of the Discontented Soldier' before starring in the 1936 novel, *Cards on the Table*. Miss Lemon didn't feature as Poirot's secretary until the 1940s, but she worked for Parker Pyne in his 1930s short stories.

Hercule Poirot featured in 22 short stories, 12 novels, and one play in the 1930s.

Christie also wrote two novels under the pseudonym, Mary Westmacott during this decade, *Giant's Bread* (1930) and *Unfinished Portrait* (1934). In August 1930, *The New York Times Book Review* declared "Whoever is concealed beneath the pseudonym of Mary Westmacott may well feel proud of *Giant's Bread*."



ILLUSTRATED BY ILVA MILSTEIN

Although written in 1929, *Black Coffee* was Christie's first play to be performed, taking to the stage in 1930.

Christie wrote three further plays during this time, none of which were performed until a much later date. *A Daughter's A Daughter* was first performed in 1956, *Akhmaton* debuted in 1980 after Christie's death, and *The Stranger* was also never performed in Christie's lifetime. It was, however, adapted by Frank Vosper into *Love from a Stranger* and performed in 1936.

The first talking books released by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) were released in November 1935. The Christie classic, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* was among the first three books to be released.

Later, in 1939 Orson Welles played both the narrator (Dr Sheppard) and the lead detective (Hercule Poirot) in a radio adaptation of the same name for an episode of *The Campbell Playhouse* in the USA.

Christie met archaeologist Max Mallowan in 1930 on a dig site in Ur. Her experiences in the Middle East surface in several of her 1930s novels including *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930), *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), *Death in the Clouds* (1935), *Murder in Mesopotamia* (1935), *Death on the Nile* (1937), and *Appointment with Death* (1937).

An Autobiography: Life with Max

AN EXTRACT [1977]

On one of our rest days we decided to hire a car and go to find the great mound of Nimrud, which had last been dug by Layard, getting on for a hundred years before. Max had some difficulty in getting there, for the roads were very bad. Most of the way had to be across country, and the wadis and irrigation ditches were often impassable. But in the end we arrived and picnicked there - and oh, what a beautiful spot it was then.

The Tigris was just a mile away, and on the great mound of the Acropolis, big stone Assyrian heads poked out of the soil. In one place there was the enormous wing of a great genie. It was a spectacular stretch of country - peaceful, romantic, and impregnated with the past. I remember Max saying, 'This is where I would like to dig, but it would have to be on a very big scale. One would have to raise a lot of money but if I could, this is the mound I would choose, out of all the world.' He sighed: 'Oh well, I don't suppose it will ever happen.'

Max's book lies before me now: Nimrud and its Remains. How glad I am that the wish of his heart has been fulfilled. Nimrud has woken from its hundred years sleep. Layard began the work, my husband finished it.

He discovered its further secrets: the great Fort Shalmaneser out at the boundary of the town; the other palaces on other parts of the mound. The story of Calah, the military capital of Assyria, has been laid bare.

Historically, Nimrud is now known for what it was, and, in addition to this, some of the most beautiful objects ever made by craftsmen - or artists, as I would rather call them - have been brought to the museums of the world. Delicate, exquisitely fashioned ivories: they are such beautiful things.

I had my part in cleaning many of them. I had my own favourite tools, just as any professional

*How thrilling it was;
the patience, the care that
was needed*

would: an orange stick, possibly a very fine knitting needle - one season a dentist's tool, which he lent, or rather gave me - and a jar of cosmetic face-cream, which I found more useful than anything else for gently coaxing the dirt out of the crevices without harming the friable ivory. In fact there was such a run on my face cream that there was nothing left for my poor old face after a couple of weeks!

How thrilling it was; the patience, the care that was needed; the delicacy of touch. And the most exciting day of all - one of the most exciting days of my life - when the workmen came rushing into the house from their work clearing out an Assyrian well, and cried: 'We have found a woman in the well! There is a woman in the well!' And they brought in, on a piece of sacking, a great mass of mud.

I had the pleasure of gently washing the mud off in a large wash-basin. Little by little the head emerged, preserved by the sludge for about 2,500 years. There it was - the biggest ivory head ever found: a soft, pale brownish colour, the hair black, the faintly coloured lips with the enigmatic smile of one of the maidens of the Akropolis. The Lady of the Well - the Mona Lisa, as the Iraqi Director of Antiquities insisted on calling her - she has her place now in the new museum at Baghdad: one of the most exciting things ever to be found.

An Autobiography Copyright © 1977 Agatha Christie Limited.
All rights reserved.

And Then There Were None

AN EXTRACT [1939]

This Mr Owen must be a very different sort of gentleman. Funny, it was, thought Fred, that he'd never yet set eyes on Owen or his Missus either. Never been down here yet he hadn't. Everything ordered and paid for by that Mr Morris. Instructions always very clear and payment prompt, but it was odd, all the same. The papers said there was some mystery about Owen. Mr Narracott agreed with them.

Perhaps after all, it was Miss Gabrielle Turl who had bought the island. But that theory departed from him as he surveyed his passengers. Not this lot - none of them looked likely to have anything to do with a film star.

He summed them up dispassionately.

One old maid - the sour kind - he knew them well enough. She was tartar he could bet. Old military gentleman - real Army look about him. Nice-looking young lady - but the ordinary kind, not glamorous - no Hollywood touch about her. That bluff cheery gent - he wasn't a real gentleman. Retired tradesman, that's what he is, thought Fred Narracott. The other gentleman, the lean hungry-looking gentleman with the quick eyes, he was a queer one, he was. Just possible he might have something to do with the pictures.

No, there was only one satisfactory passenger in the boat. The last gentleman, the one who had arrived in the car (and what a car! A car such as had never been seen in Sticklehaven before. Must have cost hundreds and hundreds, a car like that). He was the right kind. Born to money, he was. If the party had been all like him...he'd understand it...

Queer business when you came to think of it - the whole thing was queer - very queer...

The boat churned its way around the rock. Now at last the house came into view. The south side of the island was quite different. It shelved gently down to the sea. The house was there facing

south - low and square and modern-looking with rounded windows letting in all the light.

An exciting house - a house that lived up to expectation!

Fred Narracott shut off the engine, they nosed their way gently into a little natural inlet between rocks. Philip Lombard said sharply:

'Must be difficult to land here in dirty weather.'

Fred Narracott said cheerfully:

'Can't land on Soldier Island when there's a south-easterly. Sometimes 'tis cut off for a week or more.'

Vera Claythorne thought:

'The catering must be very difficult. That's the worst of an island. All the domestic problems are so worrying.'

The boat grated against the rocks. Fred Narracott jumped out and he and Lombard helped the others to alight. Narracott made the boat fast to a ring in the rock. Then he led the way up steps cut in the cliff.

General Macarthur said:

'Ha! delightful spot!'

But he felt uneasy. Damned odd sort of place.

As the party ascended the steps and came out on a terrace above, their spirits revived. In the open doorway of the house a correct butler was awaiting them, and something about his gravity reassured them. And then the house itself was really most attractive, the view from the terrace magnificent...

The butler came forward bowing slightly.

He was a tall lank man, grey-haired and very respectable. He said:

'Will you come this way, please.'

And Then There Were None Copyright © 1939 Agatha Christie Limited. All rights reserved.

Colouring Sheet

BASED ON ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY STEPHEN MILLERSHIP



Discover the new Hercule Poirot editions in US bookstores this summer.
Visit agathachristie.com for more printable colouring sheets.

NINETEEN
30s

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

Sign up to the monthly Agatha Christie newsletter



 [officialagathachristie](https://www.instagram.com/officialagathachristie)

 [agathachristie](https://twitter.com/agathachristie)

 [OfficialAgathaChristie](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialAgathaChristie)

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE, AGATHA CHRISTIE, MISS MARPLE, MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS, POIROT
and the Agatha Christie Signature are registered trademarks of Agatha Christie Limited in the UK and elsewhere.
All rights reserved.



#READCHRISTIE2024