



The Murder on the Links

Agatha Christie

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A millionaire dies...

'One can see by his face that he was stabbed in the back' said Poirot.

But the strangest feature of the case was where they found the body - in an open grave!

Hercule Poirot had answered an appeal for help - but he was too late!

MURDER - bizarre and baffling - had come to the Villa Genevieve.

The Murder on the Links Details

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Author : Agatha Christie

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From Reader Review The Murder on the Links for online ebook

Beth S. says

Shut up Hastings. Shut up, shut up, shut up.

Lawyer says

The Murder on the Links: A Retrospective

It was almost fifty years ago I read my first Agatha Christie novel. I was fourteen. I bought it at a middle school book fair. It was an Hercule Poirot mystery, The Big Four, a Dell paperback that sold for \$.45. A bargain at the price.

My First Poirot

Through the coming years I read all of the Poirot novels. A few of the Miss Marples. Miss Marple just didn't grab me as Poirot and his friend Hastings did. As far as Tommy and Tuppence, well, I could do without them. The stand alones did nothing for me, other than And Then There Were None, The Mousetrap: A Play, and The Witness for the Prosecution and Other Stories which I considered an absolute masterpiece.

Christie first wrote this as a short story, then the play, which became the blockbuster movie

In retrospect, I probably didn't get all of the nuances of Dame Christie's work at age fourteen. Poirot's use of French phrases drove me to distraction. Of course, in 1965, there was no thing as Google Translate. However, I doggedly followed Poirot's cases, understanding more and more as I grew a little older and a little wiser.

I had a pleasant surprise yesterday. Walking into a chain bookstore in Papamoa, New Zealand, I perused the bargain table and found a stack of Harper Collins 125th Anniversary Reprints of Hercule Poirot novels. Among them was The Murder on the Links published in 2015. With a price tag of Three for 25 NZ\$, the lure to recapture a bit of my youth was too much to refuse. I bought all the early Poirots, leaving those written after the 1950s on the table.

Within a day I devoured The Murder on the Links. In reading it so many years after I had first encountered it I found I still possessed the same love for the curious little man originally driven from his native Belgium by the Great War. And, once again I was drawn to Poirot's relationship with Hastings, Captain Hastings, invalided out of the war after the Battle of the Somme.

Theirs is a friendship based on true regard for one another. There is also a paternalistic attitude Poirot has toward the much younger Hastings. It is not unusual that in the course of events Poirot tells Hastings to "Trust Papa Poirot." You gotta love it.

Then there is the undeniable comparison of Poirot and Hastings to Holmes and Watson although Poirot and

Holmes are detectives of decidedly different natures. Alas, Hastings possesses Watson's same inability to ever stay even with his companion when the game is afoot.

Hastings describes Poirot:

An extraordinary little man. Height five feet four inches, egg shaped head carried a little to one side, eyes that shone green when he was excited, stiff military moustache. Air of dignity immense! He was neat and dandified in appearance. For neatness of any kind he had a passion.

Of Poirot's method, Hastings tell us this:

He had a certain disdain for tangible evidence such as footprints and cigarette ash, and would maintain, by themselves, they would never enable a detective to solve a crime. Then he would tap his egg-shaped head with absurd complacency, and remark with great satisfaction: 'The true work, it is done from within. The little grey cells--remember always the little grey cells, mon ami.

Originally published in 1923, this is the second appearance of Poirot in novel form. Dame Christie introduced him in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* published in 1920 to great success. In this novel Poirot is summoned to France at the urgent request of Monsieur P.T. Reynaud. However, Poirot and Hastings arrive too late, finding that Reynaud has been murdered, stabbed in the back and turned into a shallow grave on golfing links under construction. Mrs. Reynaud tells of having been bound hand and foot by two heavily bearded foreigners wearing masks.

The case is further complicated when a second body is found on the Reynaud estate. Another man has been murdered apparently with the same weapon which killed Reynaud.

Poirot must match wits with Chief Inspector Giraud of Le Surete, an investigator of the new breed, for whom only physical evidence holds the solution to any crime. Giraud, arrogant and rude, calls Poirot an "Old Fossil," provoking the more traditional investigator to wager he will solve the case before Giraud.

The stakes are high. An innocent man could be sentenced to death by the guillotine. It is only a very small spoiler to say that Poirot wins his bet with Giraud. The innocent man is saved.

The Murder on the Links illustrates the rules of constructing a mystery which Dame Christie followed. The Detection Club was founded in 1930, Christie being a founding member. The club's ethics were created for the purpose of giving the reader a reasonable chance of solving the mystery. Those ethics include the following:

1. The criminal must be mentioned in the early part of the story, but must not be anyone whose thoughts the reader has been allowed to know.
2. All supernatural or preternatural agencies are ruled out as a matter of course.
3. Not more than one secret room or passage is allowable.

4. No hitherto undiscovered poisons may be used, nor any appliance which will need a long scientific explanation at the end.
5. No accident must ever help the detective, nor must he ever have an unaccountable intuition which proves to be right.
6. The detective himself must not commit the crime.
7. The detective is bound to declare any clues which he may discover.
8. The "sidekick" of the detective, the Watson, must not conceal from the reader any thoughts which pass through his mind: his intelligence must be slightly, but very slightly, below that of the average reader.
9. Twin brothers, and doubles generally, must not appear unless we have been duly prepared for them.
10. No Chinaman must appear in any story. (Yes, at one time, the inscrutable Chinaman was a handy villain in poorly written mystery stories.)

Agatha Christie served as President of the Detection Club from 1957-1976. She never wavered from the rules. *"The little grey cells. Remember always the little grey cells, mon ami."*

Dame Agatha Christie during the early cases of Hercule Poirot

So with many more years of living behind me than when I first held an Hercule Poirot in my trembling hands, I have returned to the Golden Age of Mystery Writing. It's good to be back. I've obtained the newly revised copy of The Mysterious Affair at Styles. Ah, the first Poirot. It's been a very long time. Indeed.

Susan says

This is the second major case for Poirot, following on from "The Mysterious Affair of Styles". For some reason I had never read this one - perhaps the link with golf put me off when I was younger and beginning to read Christie's novels. However, the link with golf is tenuous and it is, thankfully, hard to imagine Poirot wishing to indulge in sporting activities! The story begins with Hastings meeting a young woman on a train on his way back to London. He barely arrives before Poirot receives a letter calling him to the aid of a millionaire in France, frightened for his life because of a 'secret' he possesses. Poirot, with Hastings, immediately leave England, only to find on arrival that Monsieur Renauld has already been killed and his body found on the golf course next door.

There follows a convoluted plot, waiting to be unravelled. There is a tragic widow, a son about to be disinherited, a mysterious neighbour - Madame Daubreuil, and her anxious daughter, and the lovely girl, known only as 'Cinderella,' who Hastings meets on the train. The crime reminds Poirot of an earlier case and he sets off in pursuit of the truth, while M. Giraud, a 'modern' detective with new methods crawls around looking for clues and sneers at our hero. Although Hastings is impressed by Giraud's poking around in the shrubbery, we know that the 'little grey cells' are all that is needed. Poirot, of course, comes out the winner and Hastings even gets his girl.

This audio book is narrated by Hugh Fraser, who played Captain Hastings in the TV series with David Suchet. His reading is a delight and this is a very enjoyable mystery.

Veronique says

"Two people rarely see the same thing."

Another enjoyable Christie. This one is quite confusing with a lot of seemingly nonsensical elements. I did get a few clues right (can't help myself trying) but nothing else. This is partly due to the author not sharing all the data. Naturally, once all is revealed and explained, it made perfect sense.

Another aspect that was highly entertaining was seeing Poirot compete with the French inspector. Not only was this funny (can't believe Poirot restrained himself so much) but I also got the impression that Christie was mocking Sherlock Holmes through this character, who places more importance on ashes than psychology. Captain Hastings provides the narration, in his usual bumbling way, which was perhaps a little more erratic than usual due to his infatuation. The fool! :0)

F.R. says

I spent a lot of 'Murder on the Links' distinctly worried about Captain Hastings. Firstly, he spends some time seemingly flirting with a younger, French detective, even at points seeming to agree with this interloper that Poirot is past it; then he causes a crime scene to be corrupted; and finally he actually puts himself in opposition to Hercule Poirot. As if he could ever beat his old friend in a battle of wits or a battle of nerves or a battle of anything. In later Poirot novels, Hastings always seems the ultimate loyal and reliable friend. Prone to fall for pretty face, true, but basically a steady gentleman. Here, in his younger days as it were, it appears he was a complete loose cannon. Thank the lord he settled down, or Poirot would have to had to find another Doctor Watson.

This early Poirot story still feels fresh now. Later in her career Christie was so sure of her usual tricks and deceptions, that she almost reels them out by rote. 'Murder on the Links' however, feels like an author still learning what she can do (and most importantly, what she can get away with) and that gives us a particularly entertaining and surprising mystery. True, the character of Hastings is all over the place, but Poirot is already perfectly realised and – since his creator is still a way off from getting bored of him – is a fantastically brilliant, enigmatic and full of life character to hang a tale of murder and intrigue around.

Nikoleta says

Ο Πουαρ? σε μ?α γν?σια κλασικ? «αγκαθικ?» περιπ?τεια, στην οπο?α διακριτικ? και αθ?ρυβα παρατηρε? τα π?ντα εν? ο γνωστ?ς και μη εξαιρετ?ος αφηγητ?ς Χεηστινγκς τα κ?νει μαντ?ρα. Τ?ποτα καινο?ριο, αλλ? προσωπικ? αυτ? την παλι? καλ? οικε?α συνταγ? την αγαπ?!

Emma says

Really enjoyed this one! Had no idea about who was the culprit.

Sherif Metwaly says

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Vikas Singh says

The second book by Christie to feature Poirot we get to know more about him and Hastings. It actually builds up the imagery of Poirot which then the master sleuth carries forward seamlessly in succeeding novels. Interesting plot with lots of twists and turns, finally revealing the murderer least suspected by all. A roller coaster of a novel.

Adrian says

Well what can I say, I have just added this to my "favourites" and given it 5 stars, so erm it was good. Ok that was understatement, I really **really** enjoyed this. Astonishingly I have never read this before, nor do I remember the Suchet TV version, so it was a great experience to read a Poirot not knowing the answers. As always with Christie the characterisation was fantastic. I find it very difficult to believe this was only the 2nd Poirot book as it was so "mature". Poirot was excellent and this was probably one of the best assists from Hastings.

Once again, a big shout out to Jessica for organising the Poirot challenge.

Ensiform says

The second Hercule Poirot novel. To explain its plot accurately would take half an hour and a whiteboard, but briefly: the Belgian detective and his aide Hastings are summoned to the house of M. Renault, a millionaire who fears for his life. They arrive too late, finding him already dead, half-buried in an unfinished golf bunker, supposedly at the hands of bearded foreign thugs, and possibly at the hands of a jilted lover. But Poirot soon unearths not one, but two of the principals are living under assumed names and have criminal pasts, while the jilted lover may not have belonged to M. Renault at all, and then another corpse pops up.

I enjoyed this book quite a bit, as I did its predecessor; Christie puts so much charm and wit into her tortuous, labyrinthine plots filled with deception and red herrings that the joy they bring makes one forget the craziness of the coincidences and cover-ups. I did roll my eyes at the depictions of the police other than Poirot; I don't mind Hastings being a besotted fool (and he certainly is, from first page to last), but when the police dismiss what is obviously evidence such as discarded clothes or the woman who visited the crime scene; or when the doctor fails to realize the most basic of forensic points (that a man was stabbed after death), it makes Poirot's cleverness merely the rationality of the not-stupid. Still, nit-picking leaches the fun

out of the mystery, and it is indeed quite fun.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

The Murder on the Links, Agatha Christie

The Murder on the Links is a work of detective fiction by Agatha Christie, first published in the UK by The Bodley Head in May 1923, and in the US by Dodd, Mead & Co in the same year. It features Hercule Poirot and Arthur Hastings. The story takes place in northern France, giving Poirot a hostile competitor from the Paris Sûreté. Poirot's long memory for past or similar crimes proves useful in resolving the crimes. Hercule Poirot and Captain Hastings travel to Merlinville-sur-Mer, France, to meet with Paul Renault, who has requested their help. Upon arriving at his home, the Villa Genevieve, local police greet them with news that he had been found dead that morning. Renault had been stabbed in the back with a letter opener and left in a newly dug grave adjacent to a local golf course. His wife, Eloise Renault, claims masked men broke into the villa at 2 am, tied her up, and took her husband away with them. Upon inspecting his body, Eloise collapses with grief at seeing her dead husband. Monsieur Giraud of the Sûreté leads the police investigation, and resents Poirot's involvement; Monsieur Hautet, the Examining Magistrate, is more open to sharing key information with him.

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Simona Bartolotta says

This plot is so **complicated** that I lost count of the number of times I lost count of its *coups de théâtre*. So **layered**! At one point, when a first (second? Told you I lost count) solution is offered, Poirot says,

“This is not a crime well ordered and regular, such as a detective delights in. [...] ah, indeed, what order or method is there in that?”

and I pretty much agreed with him. I was appalled. I disliked that solution so much, it made so little sense, that I thought it was the worst of all of Christie's novel I had ever read -and believe me, they are quite a lot. But then another solution came up, *et voilà*! I fell in love again. On top of that, I fell in love again *in spite of*

all the **sentimentalism** the whole story is seasoned with. It may be tough to deal with at times, but I promise it will be worth the effort: *“Take it from Papa Poirot!”*

PS Hastings needs to disappear now. He is such a moron I can't even. I find so much easier to enjoy the novels where he is simply a minor character rather than the sole narrator -and, between you and me, if you haven't read Poirot yet and you're trying to choose where to begin, my suggestion is to start from a novel of the former type *cough* *Murder on the Orient Express* *cough cough*.

Lata says

A somewhat sloppy mystery. Lots of running around, despite Poirot saying he doesn't like running around. There are bits of information that are revealed a little late so it was harder to figure this one out. Hastings narrates, and he is totally ruled by his hormones in this story, while Poirot clashes, mildly, with a French detective, who insists there are many clues to be found in ash, matches and other little things. (Seems like a little dig at another famous fictional detective...)

Amr Mohamed says

[illegible]