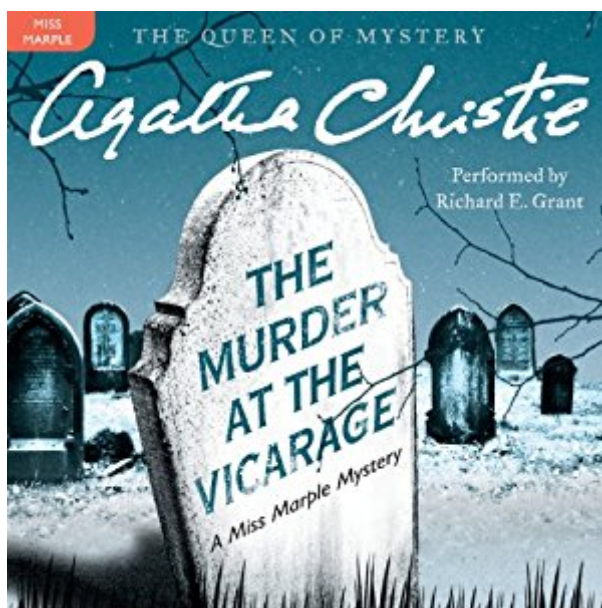


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The Murder At The Vicarage: A Miss Marple Mystery



Synopsis

The first Miss Marple mystery, one which tests all her powers of observation and deduction.

"Anyone who murdered Colonel Protheroe," declared the parson, brandishing a carving knife above a joint of roast beef, "would be doing the world at large a favor!" It was a careless remark for a man of the cloth. And one which was to come back and haunt the clergyman just a few hours later - when the Colonel is found shot dead in the clergyman's study. But as Miss Marple soon discovers, the whole village seems to have had a motive to kill Colonel Protheroe.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It's hard to know where to begin...I've read several Hercule Poirot mysteries but this is my first Miss Marple book. I've watched a few of her movies but can't say I remember much about them. There is quite a cast of characters, which also means there were plenty of suspects. There were lots of subtle clues that kept making me change my mind, again and again, as to who the killer was. There were also a few side mysteries, unrelated to the murder, but their clues and people were getting mixed in with the confusion of the murder case. The story is told from the perspective of the town Vicar, at whose home the murder took place. Elderly spinster Jane Marple lives next door to the vicarage. At first, Miss Marple is not around very much but as the case progresses, she pops up more and more. She really is mostly a background character, which surprised me. I'm interested to read more books to see if that's how they all are. Anyway, this was a great mystery and I can't wait to read more Marple!

This isn't my absolute favourite Agatha Christie simply because I felt like our dear Miss Marple was a tertiary figure in this storyline. Though naturally as it is with all detective stories, the truth will out at the end as it did in this one courtesy of the fabulously curious Miss Marple. In this story the murder of the cantankerous old Col. Protheroe occurs in the office of the village vicar -- who just happens to live next door to the all-seeing Miss Marple. Throughout this storyline we have the vicar acting as both narrator and detective, eager to find out who would kill a man whilst he sat authoring a note to that same vicar. We sense both kindness and exasperation with the village busybodies as he investigates this evil crime. Throughout, he occasionally refers to Miss Marple in that her opinions are invariably the "correct" opinion (as opposed to the malicious gossip that he hears from all of the other elderly women in the village). At one point the vicar says something like, "in England there is no detective equal to the spinster lady with plenty of time on her hands" and in this story there are allusions to crimes that may or may not be connected to the murder. First, we hear about the possibility that someone is dipping into Church funds. Later on we find out that a character who is investigating archaeological burial mounds called barrows may not be the expert that he has claimed to be to everyone in this small village. One nice thing that I must shout out to you fellow Kindle owners is that when you read these old Agatha Christie novels you immediately become aware the number of times that you use the built-in dictionary simply because she used a lot of vocabulary that are no longer used by those of us living, breathing and reading books almost a century past when she had written those same tales. It amazes me that even though her storylines were written before the Roaring Twenties, in some cases, all of those stories are fabulous. You may guess a few plot points, but I think that the writer did that to keep us involved in her plot-line. Rarely do you guess everything, at least I have not yet done so, before Miss Marple or Hercule Poirot fills in the actual deliciousness of the killer or killers. Bottom-line with any Agatha Christie? The most obvious is usually the one that did the evil-deed. In "Murder at the Vicarage" we meet Miss Marple for the first time (and, like I stated previously, my only complaint is that there was more of the vicar and less of Miss Marple). Eventually the vicar and Miss Marple will sit down together in order to pull all of their combined facts. Just when the vicar has you convinced in one person being the bad guy or girl for whatever reason -- watch out because the old lady/detective is going to come out of leftfield and surprise you with the actual evildoers... This is a book that is well worth your time. I only gave it four stars for the simple reason that while it is called a Miss Marple book it seems to me that this was a detective tale using the vicar as both narrator and amateur sleuth who would occasionally run into and across the opinions of the aforementioned Miss Marple. I can imagine that either Miss Christie and/or her publisher liked the humour, intelligence and wit of the minor character of the little

old lady living next door to the vicar. Regardless, I'm glad that more was made of the Miss Marple character in Agatha Christie's successive books.

This was a wonderful read when I needed to escape my hectic life for a bit. It takes place in a 1930s small English town, with quirky characters and charming, dated language. It is a wonderful read for a dark stormy night or being transported to another time and place when things were simpler. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and was entertained and relaxed by it. I gave it 3 stars because the mystery was a bit predictable.

Like most I have been aware of Agatha Christie for most of my life. With no real effort and a love of PBS I have been exposed to several famous detectives created by Christie. Somehow I have gone this long without actually reading one of her books. This book marks the introduction of one of Christie's most popular amateur sleuths, Miss Marple. The writing, characters, plot, and mystery are solid and seemed like they could have been written just yesterday. The story is told from the perspective of a small town vicar who discovers a body at the vicarage. I tried my best to pay attention and figure out whodunit, but I considered so many suspects and couldn't figure it out. Obviously Christie knew what she was doing.

This enjoyable mystery set in the iconic English village of St. Mary Mead introduced acutely observant Miss Marple to the world. The story is told from the point-of-view of the vicar whose household is upset when the most disliked man of the village is murdered in the vicarage study. We see Miss Marple through his eyes and although she seems at first to be a peripheral character -- which, after decades of our knowing and enjoying Miss Marple, we know she is not! -- she is the one with the keys to unlock the mystery of who killed the victim. We follow the vicar through his days as he talks to witnesses, suspects, and the police. He's a sympathetic character and not a stereotypical "upright" vicar whose every thought is pure! Indeed, he often has rather uncharitable thoughts about many of the people he encounters, although he tries to behave well. Not as complex as some of Christie's later Marple mysteries, but still a fun read, and at the current freebie price for the Kindle, it was a "must have" for my Kindle library! I'd originally read it about 35 or 40 years ago, and have read it at least once or twice since, but it was still a pleasure to revisit St. Mary Mead! One other good thing about this Kindle version: it has the diagrams included. So when the vicar mentions a drawing of his house or of the village, you will see the diagram, very clear, at the end of that chapter.

Agatha Christie never wrote a bad story. I started reading her books when I was a teenager and I love her mysteries. The best part is that just when I think I have it figured out, she'll throw in a twist. These aren't books with sex and violence in them. The only violence is the murder, but that is not at all graphic. Usually it's just a body being found somewhere. If you like cozy mysteries and haven't read these, you're missing out. I highly recommend this book.

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