

The Mystery of Mrs. Christie

by Marie Benedict



About the Book

The *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of *THE ONLY WOMAN IN THE ROOM* returns with a thrilling reconstruction of one of the most notorious events in literary history: Agatha Christie's mysterious 11-day disappearance in 1926.

In December 1926, Agatha Christie goes missing. Investigators find her empty car on the edge of a deep, gloomy pond, the only clues some tire tracks nearby and a fur coat left in the car --- strange for a frigid night. Her World War I veteran husband and her daughter have no knowledge of her whereabouts, and England unleashes an unprecedented manhunt to find the up-and-coming mystery author. Eleven days later, she reappears, just as mysteriously as she disappeared, claiming amnesia and providing no explanations for her time away.

The puzzle of those missing 11 days has persisted. With her trademark historical fiction exploration into the shadows of the past, acclaimed author Marie Benedict brings us into the world of Agatha Christie, imagining why such a brilliant woman would find herself at the center of such murky historical mysteries.

What is real, and what is mystery? What role did her unfaithful husband play, and what was he not telling investigators?

Agatha Christie novels have withstood the test of time, due in no small part to Christie's masterful storytelling and clever mind that may never be matched, but Agatha Christie's untold history offers perhaps her greatest mystery of all.

Fans of *THE SECRETS WE KEPT*, *THE LIONS OF FIFTH AVENUE* and *THE ALICE NETWORK* will enjoy this riveting saga of literary history, suspense and love gone wrong.

Discussion Guide

1. Agatha Christie is one of the most celebrated mystery writers of all time. What did you know about her personal history before you read *THE MYSTERY OF MRS. CHRISTIE*? Did the book challenge any of your preconceived notions about her life?
2. Agatha Christie was a successful writer within her lifetime, quite unusual for a woman of her time. How did her desire for independence shape the course of the story, both obviously and more subtly?
3. Do you think Agatha Christie is a good representative of the issues that women faced in her era? Did she have any privileges or responsibilities that set her apart from other women of her period?
4. Describe the night Archie and Agatha first met. How did their relationship change over time, and why? Do you think Agatha's manuscript told the full story? What details do you think she changed or left out? Why do you think she might have altered the "truth"?
5. Archie spends much of the story trying to protect his reputation. Do you think that would be the case if the story took place today? Would it be easier or more difficult for him to deflect guilt in the modern news cycle?
6. What differences did you see between the Agatha within the manuscript and the Agatha who appears at the end of the book? What creative licenses did she take with her own personality and story? Were they justified?
7. Toward the end of the book, Agatha mourns the mother she could not be for Rosalind. What forces dominated their relationship? Do you think Agatha's struggle to balance husband and child was common in her historical period? How do you expect her relationship with Rosalind to evolve after the events of the book? How does this compare with parental struggles mothers face now?
8. Which characters, if any, did you find to be most relatable? Did you connect with Agatha? Were there any characters you wished you knew more about?
9. Agatha left an enormous mark on the mystery community and on the world of books more generally. Do you think her marriage had an effect on her success? Or her disappearance? If so, what was it? How would you characterize her personal and professional legacies?

Author Bio

Marie Benedict is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of *THE QUEENS OF CRIME*, *THE MITFORD AFFAIR*, *HER HIDDEN GENIUS*, *THE MYSTERY OF MRS. CHRISTIE*, *THE ONLY WOMAN IN THE ROOM*, *LADY CLEMENTINE*, *CARNEGIE'S MAID*, *THE OTHER EINSTEIN*, and (with Victoria Christopher Murray) the "Good Morning America" Book Club pick *THE PERSONAL LIBRARIAN* and the Target Book of the Year *THE FIRST LADIES*. All have been translated into multiple languages, and many have been selected for the Barnes & Noble Book Club, Target Book Club, Costco Book Club, Indie Next List and LibraryReads List. She lives in Pittsburgh with her family.

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