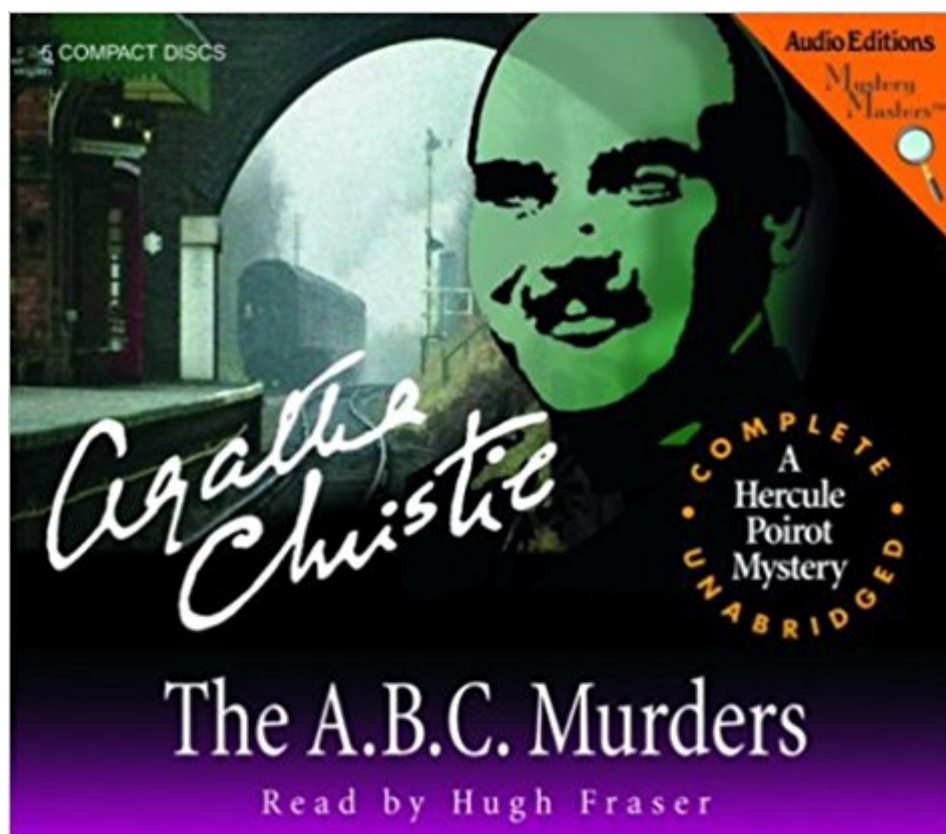


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The A.B.C. Murders: A Hercule Poirot Mystery



Synopsis

Mustachioed sleuth Hercule Poirot receives a letter challenging him to solve a murder that has yet to be committed. The clues? A date and a location, and the signature A.B.C. Soon Alice Ascher is killed in Andover, an open A.B.C. railway guide near her body. Next it's Betty Barnard, strangled in Bexhill. Can Poirot find the serial killer before he 'x97; or she 'x97; goes through the entire alphabet?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'There is no more cunning player of the murder game than Agatha Christie' Sunday Times --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

There's a serial killer on the loose, working his way through the alphabet and the whole country is in a state of panic. A is for Mrs. Ascher in Andover, B is for Betty Barnard in Bexhill, C is for Sir Carmichael Clarke in Churston. With each murder, the killer is getting more confident -- but leaving a trail of deliberate clues to taunt the proud Hercule Poirot might just prove to be the first, and fatal, mistake. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Agatha Christie was a believer in the appeal of violent crime. "Don't skimp on bodies" was her writing philosophy and it served her well. Most of her books involve more than one murder, but this

is the only one that features a "serial killer" who selects his victims randomly. A particularly terrifying situation since there's no way of knowing who will be next. This book was published in 1936, when Christie was at her best. I think it's one of the picks of the Poirot series and fans of Poirot's chronicler Hastings will be happy to hear from him. Hastings narrates parts of the book and others are told in third person and show the movements of a strange little man with a silly name - Alexander Bonaparte Cust. He's a man whom few people would notice or remember. Unfortunately, he suffers from a brain injury and can't always remember where he's been or what he's done. Can a murderer be unaware that he IS a murderer? The killer picks his victims and their locations based on the alphabet and a copy of the English railway guide popularly known as "The ABC" is left beside every body. Mr. Cust's initials fit into the scheme and he's been on the site of all four murders. Only one of the victims was wealthy. The other three had enemies (who doesn't?) but they all have alibis. Everyone but Poirot is satisfied with the evidence. "I do not approve of murder" Hercule Poirot said famously and neither did his creator. Christie's sympathies were with the victim and her books face a fact that many mystery writers ignore - most of us cling to life, even when it's not perfect. We WANT to live and to cut short the life of another human is an intolerable act. There are also the forgotten victims - the ones who loved the dead and who are left to deal with grief and hardship. No kind social workers or militant defense lawyers help them out. It's a first-rate puzzle of the type that Christie was famous for. She was a professional and she wrote for money, but she was also true to her own beliefs. The brilliant, charismatic killer might be a hero to some, but it's the victims who truly deserve our pity and efforts. In the end, the motive for the crimes proves as sordid and selfish as it usually is. And (of course) it's the little Belgium with the egg-shaped head and the wonderful mustaches who brings the killer to justice.

Before the story begins, the narrator introduces a difference in structure: Some chapters not involving him will be written from a third person perspective. This allows the reader to learn about the primary suspect before the first of three murders occurs. When Poirot receives an unsettling letter, the wheels of the plot are set in motion. Three separate murders are brazenly predicted in specific locations on specific dates. What follows is a confused and futile attempt to stop each before it occurs. There are no apparent witnesses, nor is there any useful evidence. Gradually, Poirot gathers information by enlisting the assistance of people living at or near each murder's location. Patterns begin to emerge, which lead Poirot and law enforcement to a suspect. When the suspect turns himself into the police, it appears that the case has been solved. One thing bugs at Poirot: A notice has not been determined. His persistence with this missing piece of the puzzle

keeps the case open in his mind, to the frustration of everyone else. Christie masterfully shares the complicated inner workings of Poirot's with the reader, revealing how he determined the motives for the murders until the real murderer is behind bars. The brilliance of Poirot as presented by Christie creates a page-turning and intriguing mystery.

A.B.C. Murders by Agatha Christie is a murder mystery starring the all-time favorite, Hercule Poirot. This book is up to par with Christie's other books however it is very different. The setting moves with the alphabet. The character relations are relatable. Poirot's wit is well put to use in this novel. It also gives a good look at how others possibly think and various ways that others will open up without knowing it. One such example of Poirot's astonishing reasoning is when he "by making a statement (and a somewhat out of the way and preposterous one) and by [Captain Hastings] contradiction of it, tongues are immediately loosened" (Christie). Agatha Christie tells this story from different points of view. I liked this style because it gives us a wider range of knowledge of the situation. The plot is not easy to follow. There are many characters. It was hard to get started in this book, as is true in other Agatha Christie books. Each murder has a highly likely suspect completely unrelated to each other except for the clue the murderer purposely leaves behind. Although the plot is hard to follow it is also highly realistic. From sick motives to human nature to family relations, the book keeps it fairly real. For example, one time, Hastings "hastily presented the strawberries to a small boy who seemed highly astonished and faintly suspicious" (Christie). Agatha Christie walks you down a path believing that you have it all figured out only to find out you are wrong. The ending was very interesting and there was an unexpected twist. I have read other Agatha Christie books and found this one equally as interesting but completely different. I would definitely recommend this book if you are an Agatha Christie fan.

Another refreshing mystery from Christie! I can't believe I only found out about her this year, as a mystery lover I have found this series a huge step up from every other modern mystery series on the market. While all the other books from this series have some sort of build up time, I found this book intriguing from the very first chapter. This book stands out from all the other ones because there is a serial killer involved. The pattern seems lie with where the victims are located (towns starting with A, B, C, etc.) and the victim's names (A, B, C... last names). The thing that troubles Poirot are the seemingly conflicting traits of the killer and the absence of the motive. Even an insane man has his own reason for doing what he does...

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