

The Mystery of Mrs. Christie

Marie Benedict

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With a blend of truth and fiction, Marie Benedict's novel *The Mystery of Mrs. Christie* tackles the revered mystery writer's most unsolvable mystery.

In early December of 1926, a massive search was underway for Agatha Christie. Her car was found abandoned near the ruin of a chalk pit, at the edge of a dark, deep pond that was thought to be haunted. Though the weather was cold, her fur coat was found in the car. Foul play was suspected, though there were no signs of a struggle, no clues as to her whereabouts, and, aside from her troubled marriage, no obvious reason for the acclaimed writer to take her own life.

The narrative alternates between the events and circumstances surrounding Christie's disappearance and flashbacks to her early life, including the fateful day she met her husband and the poignant story of her unhappy marriage. Adding to the turmoil is Christie's struggle to reconcile her longing to write with her mother's teaching, and society's expectation, that a good wife must indulge her husband "no matter her own situation."

Suspensions that Archibald Christie is responsible for his wife's disappearance grow with the revelation of his adultery, request for a divorce, and hidden engagement to his mistress. Reporters, lusting for details about the beautiful missing novelist and her handsome war hero husband, swarm the couple's home. The suspense grows as repeated police interrogations add to Archibald's growing desperation to escape the labyrinth of secrets and lies in which he is trapped.

With elements of a classic mystery novel, *The Mystery of Mrs. Christie* is gripping, making it possible to believe that, with her real-life disappearance, Agatha Christie surpassed herself and pulled off the perfect, unsolvable mystery.

KRISTINE MORRIS (January / February 2021)

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