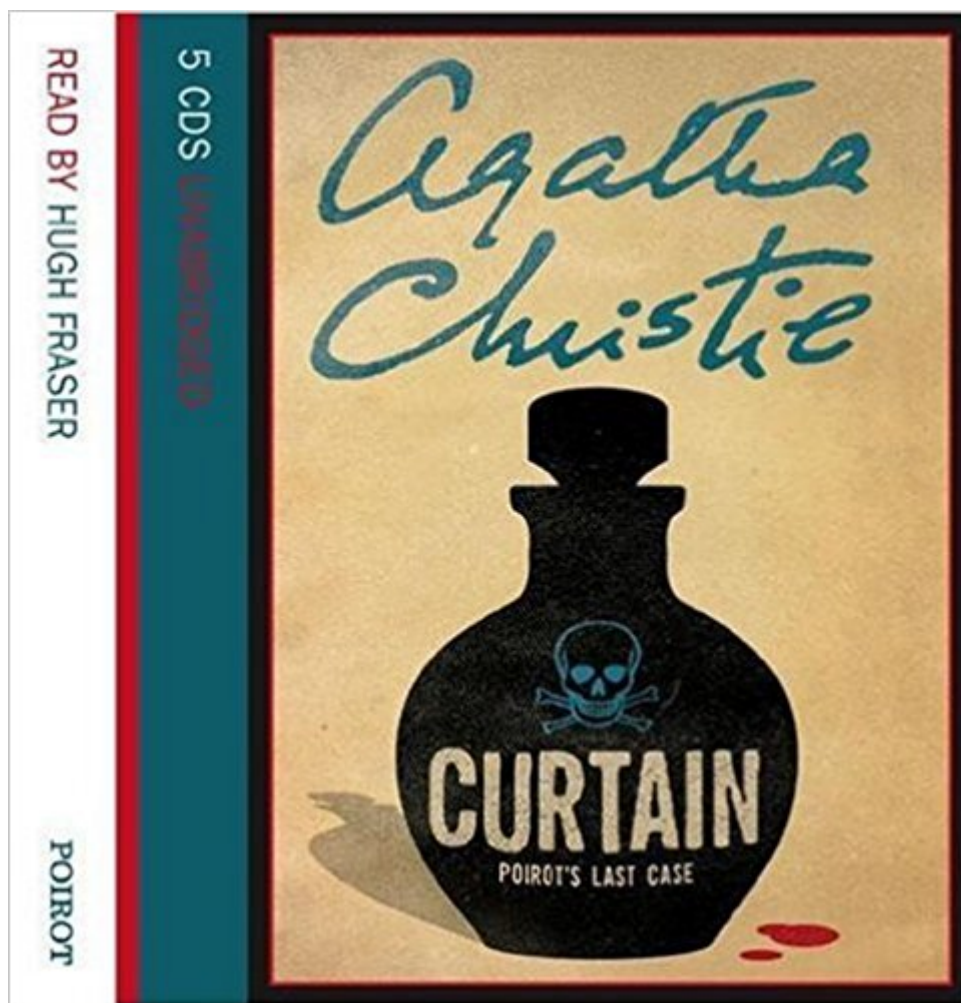


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Curtain: Poirot'S Last Case



Synopsis

A CD edition of this popular Christie mystery. Read by Hugh Fraser, Captain Hastings in the popular TV series. Beautiful new packaging and cover designs. Lining these editions up in a row shows off the illustrations and spines at their best! The house guests at Styles seemed perfectly pleasant to Captain Hastings; there was his own daughter Judith, an inoffensive ornithologist called Norton, dashing Mr Allerton, brittle Miss Cole, Doctor Franklin and his fragile wife Barbara, Nurse Craven, Colonel Luttrell and his charming wife, Daisy, and the charismatic Boyd-Carrington. So Hastings was shocked to learn from Hercule Poirot's declaration that one of them was a five-times murderer. True, the ageing detective was crippled with arthritis, but had his deductive instincts finally deserted him?...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'First rate Christie: fast, complicated, wryly funny' Time
'Superb, vintage Christie' Sunday Express

The crime-fighting careers of Hercule Poirot and Captain Hastings have come full circle – they are back once again in the rambling country house in which they solved their first murder together. Both Poirot and Great Styles have seen better days – but, despite being crippled with arthritis, there is nothing wrong with the great detective and his “little gray cells.” However, when Poirot brands one of the seemingly harmless guests a five-time murderer, some people have their doubts. But Poirot alone knows he must prevent a sixth murder before the curtain falls. . . . --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The circle is completed as Hastings and Poirot return to Styles in Essex for their final case. Poirot's first case was located in this evil locale in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* published in 1920. While it is the last Poirot case it was not the last Poirot novel written by Christie. Dame Agatha wrote it during the London Blitz of 1940. She made sure *Curtain* and *Sleeping Murder* the last case of Miss Marple were placed in a London vault for safekeeping should she run short on ideas for stories. This novel did not see the light of day until it was published in 1975 a year before Christie's death. The plot is narrated by Arthur Hastings. The former companion of Poirot he has returned to England following the death of his wife. He had been living for many years in Argentina. At Styles he discovers one of his daughters Judith Hastings is residing at Styles. Judith is assisting in research medicine with Dr. John Franklin. Franklin is wed to an invalid wife. Also staying at Styles (which has been converted from an estate to a paying guest house) are Colonel Toby Luttrell and his wife. They operate the facility. Also present are Nurse Craven, Stephen Norton and Sir William Boyd-Carrington. Two murders transpire during the course of the brief book of 224 pages. Poirot dies and his notes of the case which solve the crime are read by Hastings four months after the demise of the Belgian detective extraordinaire. Poirot suffered from heart disease but his little great cells continued to function until his mortal end. Every fan of Agatha Christie should read this important novel in the Christie canon.

I read this once when I was a teenager. I disliked it. I thought it was slow pace and boring. But now, 30 years later, I re-read it. I love it! Maybe I'm old too now, so I understand aging process better and this book strikes me. It's touching how Hastings thought about the memory of the past, how it was with Poirot, his wife (who's dead now), etc. When he saw the shooting star and thought about his dear Cinders, how he carried her to the window - I almost cried. The scenes when his daughter treated him badly broke my heart. Poirot himself was still very smart as before. His tongue was sharper than usual to Hastings too, I think. Hastings was so patient! Unlike in other books where Hastings is placed in the background, Christie puts him in the forefront here, at last, finally... Maybe she meant it that way: To finally bring the man to the foreground to be better recognized. After all, Hastings as Poirot's best friend is not something to be taken for granted. He earns it. They earn it, together. It is such a great book. The "Postscript" is impressive, the last paragraphs tear my soul apart. One glimpse of light helps group me together, though, at the math-making idea Poirot hints for his *mon ami* Hastings. So classic, so Poirot. I'd love to imagine that happens. This book totally fits to be the last book of Poirot. One of my most favorites! Thanks Ms. Christie.

Well !? I was miffed to have missed the David Suchet television representation of Poirot's last ever mystery, so I decided that i HAD to read the book - based on the buzz that had been created by the media surrounding the storyline. I shall not spoil the plot and reveal all - that would be so unsportsmanlike (other contributors should take note!) - so I shall just say that as an Agatha Christie fan I was kind of putting off reading this, almost like saving the best for last, but also knowing that it would be 'strange' to go back to other Poirot novels knowing what happens to him in this final story. The story is narrated by Hastings, his ever-faithful friend and co-sort. It was written in a remarkably clever manner, still detailing the usual pithy Christie characterisations and observations of all the people present (the list of suspects). So it was almost like reading any other Agatha Christie - it was an enjoyable read. The only thing that was disappointing was the lack of the man himself 'starring' in this book, as it really would have been a spectacle to have Poirot weave his eccentricities throughout, creating tensions, asking questions, motivating the energy, bringing out sub-plots and then - as always - gathering the crowd of maybe-murderers together at the end to do the 'big reveal'. In this book we find Poirot a very elderly and immobile figure, confined to a wheelchair, bound by his physical ailments and - for the most part in this book - locked away in his room at the hotel only surfacing occasionally to steer Capt Hastings back on track with the investigations. Needless to say, the mystery is solved - it is all justifiable and made sense in the end - and, yes!, Poirot does a type of final performance/reveal at the end which wraps it all up nicely. However, I cannot help but feel that this was written almost in a cold, calculated, way by AC as necessity out of having to detail the end of Poirot, to wrap him up and close that chapter for herself, the publishers and the readers. There did not feel any real act of love for Hercule, which I was quite saddened by. Hastings does somehow manage to carry Curtain though, and is an affable, likeable, diligent character. It is through his emotions, from his perspective, that we view the demise of the Great Belgian Detective. It just would have been nice to have felt it for myself.

Love Agatha Christie and Hercule Poirot in particular. This final book was not true to Poirot's character. The man who walked away from Murder on the Orient Express would not have acted the way this Hercule Poirot did. Poirot is older and not well but he would never act in this manner. Hastings also would have been more attentive to what was being asked of him. I can't say too much because it would ruin the book. I always enjoy an Agatha Christie book and believe I have now read all of them but this one wasn't written when she was at the top of her game.

This was Poirot's last case. Christie in her brilliance gives us a final adventure with her greatest and most memorable character. To say more would ruin the plot. But if you are a Christie fan and have not read it, be sure to do so.

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