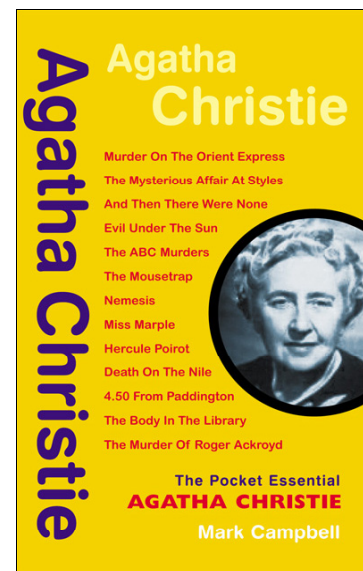


Agatha Christie

Mark Campbell

new edition

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- **Agatha Christie is the most popular novelist in the world. With total sales of 2 billion books (4 million a year in the 21st Century) she is outranked only by Shakespeare and the Bible.**
- **Over the past 5 years, the owners of the Agatha Christie estate, Chorion, has been engaged in a hugely successful relaunch of the author's Marple and Poirot work in print and on television**
- **2005 marks the 75th anniversary of the publication of the first Marple novel.**
- **Christie Week will be held from 12-17 September this year, to coincide with the 115th anniversary of Agatha Christie's birth.**

Why is Christie so popular? She produced almost a book a year since her debut in 1920 with *The Mysterious Affair At Styles* and was the chief proponent of the English village murder mystery. She created two enormously popular characters - the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, always on the brink of retirement, and the inquisitive elderly spinster and amateur sleuth Miss Jane Marple. Christie was never afraid to 'break the rules', provoking a storm of controversy with the unorthodox resolution of *The Murder Of Roger Ackroyd*, now acclaimed as one of the classics of British crime fiction. Above all, she managed to write complex whodunits in a clear, easily readable style - making her books as popular now as they were 50 years ago.

Christie was publicity-shy for most of her life and the details about how she worked, especially how she created such figures as Poirot and Miss Marple, remain elusive. Famously, she disappeared for ten days in December 1926 and still no-one knows the exact reason why. She wrote in many different genres: Wodehouse style comic mysteries (*Why Didn't They Ask Evans?*), atmospheric whodunits (*Murder On The Orient Express*), thrillers (*N or M?*), romances (under the pseudonym of Mary Westmacott), plays (*The Mousetrap*) and poetry.

The *Pocket Essential Guide To Agatha Christie* provides an informed introduction to the whole Christie phenomenon; a biography of Dame Agatha Christie; in-depth profiles of ten of her most popular characters together with an analyses of the stories in which they appeared; a look at her espionage thrillers and non-crime titles; a section on film, TV and stage adaptations; appendices that include an exhaustive bibliography and an overview of the best Agatha Christie websites around.

Mark Campbell writes for *The Independent*, *Midweek* and *Crime Time*, has produced Pocket Essentials on *Doctor Who*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Agatha Christie* and *Carry On Films*. He lives in South East London, near the 'melancholy Plumstead Marshes' of *The Sign Of Four*.

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