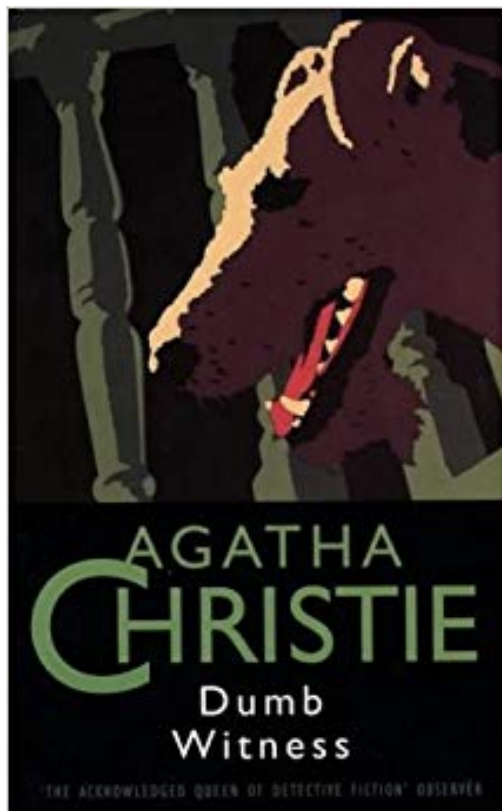


Dumb Witness *by* Agatha Christie



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Reviews of the **Dumb Witness** *by* Agatha Christie

Ucantia

Eh bien, it's been almost four years since I last reviewed a Hercule Poirot mystery...and I wasn't disappointed. This is my sixth review of an Agatha Christie Hercule Poirot novel. I absolutely love reading the adventures of the somewhat rotund short Belgian mustachioed detective. Poirot never uses muscle (does he have any?) to apprehend the guilty person. He tells Captain Arthur Hastings (the narrator of this novel) what a detective is after Hastings accuses Poirot of being very noticeable, "That is because you have the mistaken idea implanted in your head that a detective is necessarily a man who puts on a false beard and hides behind a pillar! The false beard, it is vieux jeu, and shadowing is only done by the lowest branch of my profession. The Hercule Poirots, my friend, need only to sit back in a chair and think." Mon ami, once again I failed to pick out the murderer, putting my record at one successful and five unsuccessful ascertainment. Oh well, so who got murdered?

Hercule gets a letter dated April 17th on June 28th from Emily Arundell from the country town of Market Basing in England. It's odd that it took so long to get to London. It's a very hazy letter with many underlined and triple underlined words. She asks about his fees but doesn't tell Hercule exactly what she wants. It seems that she had an accidental fall down a flight of stairs, but now suspects that one of her relatives visiting during the Easter holiday might have tried to murder her. The reason? She is a sickly and wealthy old woman with two nieces and one nephew who are eager for their inheritance. They need money now. Hercule and his friend, Captain Hastings, decide to drive down to Market Basing in Hastings's second hand Austin. When they arrive, they find that Emily has recently died and the house is for sale. They also learn that everyone involved says "Bob", the wire-haired Terrier, left his ball on the top of the stairs and Emily tripped over it causing her to fall down the stairs. But that fall didn't kill her...only left her bruised. So how did she pass away? Was it a natural death or murder? Let's meet the suspects.

When the Will was read, Emily's house companion, Wilhelmina Lawson, got the estate and most of the cash. The maid and cook got small cash rewards. Miss Lawson was flabbergasted...or is she a good actor? Emily's nephew, Charles, who has previously been in trouble with the law, desperately needed cash. Did he kill Emily, not knowing that Emily (just before her death) changed the Will...leaving all the relatives out? Emily's niece, Theresa, wanted money to fund her fiancé doctor's research project. Did they kill Emily? The second niece, Bella Tanios wanted out of her marriage with a Greek doctor. She needed money to live in the style she desired with her two children. Or did Bob, the dog, leave the ball on the stairs on purpose? Did he have an alibi? (just kidding, but he really did have one). Captain Hastings isn't sure Emily was murdered. Hercule asks him, "It does not intrigue you at all to know who attempted to kill her?" Hercule goes to the grave site and discovers that Emily died on May 1st 1936.

Poirot stood looking for some time. He murmured softly: "May 1st...May 1st...and today, June 28th, I receive her letter. You see, do you not, Hastings, that that fact has got to be explained?" And explained it will be. One of the reasons I love reading the old classics is the nostalgia that you learn from the period. This novel was published in 1937 and exhibits some of the prejudices of that era. On page 183, Agatha headlines the chapter, A nigg** in the woodpile. Wow, even in England? Wikipedia defines the term as, "A nigg** in the woodpile is a dated American figure of speech meaning, some fact of considerable importance that is not disclosed-something suspicious or wrong." It can also mean: When a caucasian has some negroid ancestry there is said to have been a nigg** in the woodpile, usually said if the caucasian has some negroid traits like kinky hair. Anyway, enough of the history lesson. I loved the novel.

Moonworm

I love Poirot- every thing is always so logical and methodical, as though he is your mentor and you the reader are to deduce the solution to this mystery puzzle on your own. I suppose this is why I like Hastings so much... bar his penchant for pretty girls, we are all as frustrated as Hastings waiting for Poirot to walk us through the conclusion.

I am once again, wrong with all my guesses... definitely something to be treasured in today's mystery thriller genre where the most unexpected person is the killer for some half hearted reason (because the author had already decided to make it "a twist"). Not so here- the motive is sound, the evidence was there all along, and the method for the crime is logical.

The premise- an elderly lady with a lot of money suspects one of her own family member is plotting to kill her. She writes to Poirot, but doesn't spell out enough information. By the time he gets the letter, she is dead. According to doctors, nurses, family members, her death was of natural causes. It is up to Poirot and Hastings to figure out if the initial attempted murderer succeeded in the end, or can there be coincidences?

Breder

I really enjoyed the different twists and turns in Dumb Witness. It wasn't Christie's strongest book, but it was a fun read nonetheless. I absolutely adore Hercule Poirot, and I love that I can never quite guess what he's thinking! This book features his good companion, Hastings, who is always my favorite narrator (probably because they have a Holmes/Watson rapport) and his point of view is always an excellent reflection of the readers own view of the case.

If you don't read Christie's books in any particular order (like me), I would strongly suggest reading this book after the following ones, as Poirot makes reference to the culprits from such cases:

The Mysterious Affair at Styles

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd

Mystery on the Blue Train

Death in the Clouds

I was so glad I had read each of those books before I picked up this one or the culprits from those cases would have been spoiled!

Overall, this was a highly entertaining read, as Christie's books always are.

huckman

I enjoyed this book more than any Christie I have read in a while. Not that the others have been bad, this one was just very good. The story begins when Poirot receives a letter from a woman who believes she will be killed. However, it arrives after she is deceased. Poirot is then led to the woman's home where he is introduced to her family and the people surrounding the area. He becomes intrigued with the circumstances surrounding the woman's death and stays at the mansion longer than expected. I really liked the characters and the way the story was told was delightful. Moreover I simply adored the addition of "Bob". I highly recommend reading this book to any mystery fan and if you admire Christie's works, then you must read it! This is perhaps my favorite Christie!

Cordanius

I have become a Hercule Poirot addict and this is just another satisfying dose. Cleverly plotted as always by Agatha, these mysteries, along with Miss Marple and the others, are timeless. They never rely upon excessive violence by upon clues and logic to be applied with "the little grey cells". It you take the trouble to get to know Poirot, Hastings, Japp and the lot you will come to love and appreciate them even if you do figure out who done it before the end. They truly are habit forming, but its a habit you won't want to break.

Vozuru

This is my favorite Agatha Christie book, so why the one star? Book cover was torn almost in half on front cover and back cover was bent in half. This is not typical for orders I get from Amazon, I will try and repair cover and hope in future this does not happen again.

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