



Sad Cypress

Agatha Christie

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Beautiful young Elinor Carlisle stood serenely in the dock, accused of the murder of Mary Gerrard, her rival in love. The evidence was damning: only Elinor had the motive, the opportunity and the means to administer the fatal poison. Yet, inside the hostile courtroom, only one man still presumed Elinor was innocent until proven guilty: Hercule Poirot was all that stood between Elinor and the gallows...

Sad Cypress Details

Date : Published September 1st 2001 by HarperCollins Publishers (first published March 1940)

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Author : Agatha Christie

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From Reader Review Sad Cypress for online ebook

Pranta Ghosh Dastider says

When you don't have what you must, should you feel unhappy? And can you be unhappy enough to kill? Perhaps! Perhaps not. Life is serious as it is, and it takes us wherever it may. We are just the pawn of destiny waiting to be judged by the laws of nature and fortune.

When Mary died due to poison, every fingers pointed at Elinor Carlisle, and she didn't protest! But someone believed she was innocent, hence came Poirot. Can he save the day? Can he rescue someone who doesn't want to be rescued!? That's a question of million dollar.

I liked this story, very much, indeed. Here the mystery is not as important as the reason behind it. And the most generous thing is the setup. Why is more important than how, but how is not quite bad either. Killing was done, but what's the true motive? That's the main find out of this book. I liked how things got revealed. Story progressed nice and fine. Situations came one after another, nice and fluid. Characters changed and clicked. And by the end Hercule Poirot remained to be glorious as ever.

Agatha Christie is a great observer of human character. She is an excellent author of characteristics, of mysteries. This book is as great as any. I would recommend it anytime. Read and know the real deal.

Mansuriah Hassan says

This is an unusual Poirot series, in which there is a possible miscarriage of justice. With a beautiful title taken from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, **Sad Cypress** is often referred to one of the most outstanding Agatha Christie books, and also one of the best to feature our favourite Belgian investigator, Poirot. As the book opens, the main character Elinor Carlisle a woman blessed with beauty and brains reinforced by wealth - finds herself on trial for murder. The mystery of Elinor's personality and her true motivations keeps the reader guessing continually throughout the book, and hungry to learn who really killed the poisoning victim, Mary Gerrard.

Who is the murderer? The story was very engaging throughout the book. The courtroom setting doesn't really mean much one way or the other, I believe it's merely Christie experimenting with a new kind of plot framing device. The trial scene near the end was so intense. With interesting characters, a complex plot and some great courtroom scenes, this is a wonderful mystery. It is said most murders happen because of love or money and this has greed, jealousy and repressed emotions in abundance.

I love mysteries and I have to say that I guessed the culprit wrong :P

This is one of Poirot's most intriguing cases. There was never a single dull moment. The number of suspects was not that many and the mechanism of the deed in itself was a unique one. With flashbacks intertwined with current scenes, it is worth the read.

“The human face is, after all, nothing more nor less than a mask.”
? Agatha Christie, Sad Cypress

of the crime to a judge and jury. Poirot himself actually puts in an appearance only in the second half of the novel. (Perry Mason in Britain? HA-HA! Possibly.)

Later Agatha Christie admitted that he was not strictly necessary to unfold the mystery and while partly I agree with her, I love this little Belgian too much to resent/regret it and **the book still has a solid place in my Agatha Christie Top 5.**

Seemingly we are presented a classic love triangle, but as the story progresses it turns into a rectangle where A loves B, who gets infatuated over C, who does not care for B in return and then we get a D who falls in love with A. :)

As always, Agatha Christie offers deep insight of character and human nature in general. **I love how she plays her kaleidoscope-game with us, showing how her characters see each other and offering a constantly changing pattern which makes us re-evaluate our own views of them and where the solution is staring back at us among the colourful shards. Thankfully, we also have Poirot to interpret/discover the real pattern.**

Leigh says

Brilliant! Had no idea, kept me guessing one of my favourite Poirots!

Amy | shoutame says

I always get that nostalgic happy feeling whenever I pick up a Christie novel, this one didn't disappoint.

When her Aunt dies suddenly of a stroke without leaving any sign of a will Elinor Carlisle finds herself to be the soul benefactor of her Aunt's estate. Not long after the death of her Aunt, Elinor stands accused for the murder of young Mary Gerrerd, her suspected love rival. All leads seem to be pointing to Elinor and so Hercule Poirot is called in to uncover the truth.

A quick, fun, light-hearted read that I would recommend to all.

mark monday says

Choose Your Own Adventure!

You are on the dock for murder most foul! The awkward thing is that the contemplation of murder is not an unusual topic for you. Your surprisingly extensive knowledge of poison is also a questionable thing.

Whatever is a young lady to do? Look to Belgium for succor! A noted botanist of human nature will soon arrive to save the day, and he'll turn that sad cypress frown upside down. Will you keep your dignity and integrity intact? Or will you admit that sometimes people truly deserve to be slain? Hold firm, young miss, class barriers will soon prove to be no obstacle at all to you – and perhaps all will see that murder is just another way of saying Goodbye!

If you would like to say Hello instead, choose this adventure.

If you would like to continue a life of contemplation amidst a company of magnificent cypress trees, choose

Elinor Carlisle stands accused of murder. The evidence is mounted against her. The motive, the weapon, the time and place; everything points directly at the facts. And the facts state that Elinor is the one who poisoned poor Mary Gerrard. The only thing that stands between her and ruin is Hercule Poirot.

This one...might just be my favorite Agatha Christie book thus far! The story started out really strong and just seemed to grow more and more intense throughout the book, especially during the trial scene near the end. I had in my mind who I thought the killer was and I was completely wrong...as usual! :P But in any case, this was a very engaging story with a fascinating plot! Loved it!
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Kaya Dimitrova says

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Veronique says

Christie does an interesting thing in this novel by focusing a large part of the narration through one character's point of view while not revealing her true thoughts, creating interest and enhancing the suspense. The courtroom sections were also nicely combined, seemingly widening the field. Poirot of course 'does his thing' but in a very smart way, adapting his approach and interrogation to each witness in order to get to the facts. This was surprising since his ego is usually in the way ;0)

Laurel Young says

I love Sad Cypress and consider it very underrated; one never really hears it mentioned as one of Christie's classics, but it is! It's probably her most successful attempt to combine mystery and romance; she tends either to tack on a not-very-convincing happy ending for the non-murderous characters by matching them up (the absurd instant-marriage at the end of Third Girl comes to mind), or now and then she awkwardly harnesses a murder with what should probably have been a Mary Westmacott romance, as with The Hollow. But Sad Cypress works on both levels: the emotions are complex and believable and gripping, and the mystery is ingenious.

This novel has always haunted me because it does have so much more depth than the "cozy" mystery is generally expected to have. My heart went out to Elinor and the very true discussion of how even an innocent may contemplate murder when pushed beyond her limits. She stands out as one of Christie's most well-drawn characters. But then, too, the mystery is equally satisfying--Poirot has to prove Elinor innocent even though she seems to be literally the only possibly suspect. The twist(s) at the end work perfectly, introducing a solution that I never would have guessed but which, once explained, added up just fine. And I LOVE when Christie shows off her considerable expertise about poisons--once doesn't have to know about apomorphine to deduce that a strong emetic must have been used by the murderer, but it is intellectually satisfying that she does give us something so precise instead of a vague, unscientific solution.

Sad Cypress is really first-rate, and the only flaw is that the murderer couldn't have known Elinor wouldn't drink the poisoned tea right along with Mary. That could have been addressed by mentioning that she doesn't like tea (that would have been very un-English though!) or what the backup plan would have been in that case. Otherwise, all the loose ends tie up perfectly. And the ending is happy without being unrealistically so-it ends on a hopeful note without bashing the reader over the head with Hallmark cheer.

Highly recommended.

Penelope says

“The human face is, after all, nothing more nor less than a mask.”
? Agatha Christie, Sad Cypress

Very good.

Vikas Singh says

Murder by Poisoning. This is the only story in which Christie also talks about the antidote to the poison. Compared to the others, the story line is weak and there are just too many coincidences in the way Poirot solves the crime. The master sleuth himself appears when more than half the plot is revealed. The novel fails to hold your attention

Tam says

"Roddy, Roddy, de pie allí, parpadeando un poco, con aire de detestar todo aquello. Roddy..., presentando un aspecto... no real del todo. Pero ya no hay nada real. Todo remolnea de una manera diabólica. Lo negro es blanco, lo de arriba está abajo, y el Este es Oeste... Y yo no soy Elinor Carlisle: yo soy «la acusada». "

Giro inpeserado. Buena novela.

Ellie says

I love Agatha Christie. I love her characters as much as her plot. And I love Hercule Poirot (also Miss Marple but Poirot has my heart).

I've actually read Sad Cypress several times but the last time was at least 10 years ago. I wondered if I'd enjoy it as much this time as I have in the past.

I did.

Elinor's icy demeanor masks a passionate interior. Her fiance, Roddy, is a fastidious, rather weak man with whom Elinor grew up. He's fond of her and doesn't realize how much she adores him. They live off the expectation of an inheritance from their aunt (Roddy's aunt by marriage; the two are not blood-related). An

anonymous letter hinting at someone's attempt to work her way into the aunt's good graces (and perhaps upset the inheritance plans) leads to disaster.

Reading Christie is like sitting at a fireplace drinking tea even when I'm sitting in a Bronx apartment. I am transported to another world.

What more can one ask from a book?

Nandakishore Varma says

This is one of those mysteries with an extremely tight plot. The human drama - the eternal love triangle - around the tragedy is gripping; there are a very limited number of suspects; and the accused seems to be indubitably guilty (in fact, the story starts with her trial). However, Poirot steps in with a last minute sleight of hand which leaves us all gasping for breath - with a perfectly plausible solution.

Here, Dame Agatha's extensive knowledge of poisons - a skill she picked up during the war years - stands her in very good stead.

David Schaafsma says

“A little difficult to know where you were with Elinor. She didn't reveal much of what she thought and felt about things. He liked that about her. He hated people who reeled off their thoughts and feelings to you, who took it for granted that you wanted to know all their mechanism. Reserve was always more interesting.”
?Rodney, in Sad Cypress, Christie

“The human face is, after all, nothing more nor less than a mask.”
? Agatha Christie, Sad Cypress

The title comes from a song from Act II, Scene IV of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night which is printed as an epigraph to the novel.

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O, prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Making my steady but inexorable way through the corpus of Christie's Poirot whodunnits, I have almost always been entertained. But then there are so many of them, you can see books that are less crafted than others, you get caught up in patterns and rhythms and occasionally predictable moments. This book has them, the Poirot arrogant claim of brilliance, the occasional anti-semitic remark, the poison pen letter, but also the delights, the surprise twists.

This particular volume is especially carefully plotted, thoughtfully written, but what's new? Well, for one, it

