



## The Body in the Library

*Agatha Christie*

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# The Body in the Library

*Agatha Christie*

## **The Body in the Library** Agatha Christie

Colonel Bantry has found the strangled body of an exotic blonde bombshell lying on his library hearth - and the neighbors are beginning to talk! When Miss Marple takes an interest, though, things begin to move along nicely, and its all far more convoluted - and sordid - than the genteel Bantrys could have imagined.

A curmudgeonly financier, his self-absorbed adult children, a couple of pragmatic and clever hotel workers, tons of money and influence, a wild local lad, some smitten girls, the film business, mix into a classic Christie plot filled with twists, turns, and double-backs galore. Plus the glorious settings of A Great House, a fancy Hotel, and an excessively genteel little village, and let's not forget Miss Marple...

## **The Body in the Library Details**

Date : Published September 1st 2006 by Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers (first published February 1942)  
ISBN : 9781579126261  
Author : Agatha Christie  
Format : Hardcover 191 pages  
Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime, Classics

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## From Reader Review The Body in the Library for online ebook

### Ms. Smartarse says

You're Dolly, wife of the respectable Colonel Bantry, living in the lovely little village of St. Mary Mead. You live a charmed if a bit boring life. Isn't it rather frustrating when even winning first prize at the flower show is just a dream?

They say, you should be careful what you wish for, but how could you be anything but excited when your very own library becomes the scene of a gruesome murder? If this isn't the *news* of the decade, you don't know what is. In any case, it's definitely prime discussion fodder with your dear friend Jane Marple. Funny how your husband doesn't share your enthusiasm.

Yet another murder mystery solved by our lovable heroine, Miss Marple. I didn't enjoy it quite as much as *Murder at the Vicarage*, but it was an entertaining read nonetheless. It had its funny one-liners, but the story was mostly focused on the intricacies of how the body of an unknown woman actually ends up in the Colonel's library.

Mrs. Bantry reflected a minute and then applied an urgent conjugal elbow to her sleeping spouse.

"She's just lying there in the library, dead. That's why you've got to come up at once."

"You want me to come up?"

"Yes, I'm sending the car down for you."

Miss Marple said doubtfully, "Of course, dear, if you think I can be of any comfort to you."

"Oh, I don't want comfort. But you're so good at bodies."

No innocent person ever has an alibi!

The more I think of it, the less I can recall about the main story. What I actually recall best, is a side story about a man who ended up being (not so) covertly suspected by a crime nobody could prove he committed. Or was that in the previous book?

### Score: 3/5 stars

I enjoyed reading the 3rd installment in the Miss Marple series, and will definitely continue working my way through the rest of the books. All this however doesn't change the fact that I can barely remember anything from the story.

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book 1: Murder at the Vicarage

book 2: The Thirteen Problems

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## Nobody says

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## Simona Bartolotta says

3.5

**“My nephew Raymond tells me [...] that I have a mind like a *sink*. He says that most Victorians have. All I can say is that the Victorians knew a good deal about human nature.”**

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## Kwoomac says

Someone here on Goodreads has a shelf called "cozy mysteries" and I think this is a perfect description of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple series. You can't get much cozier than a tea-drinking elderly spinster in a tiny English village. The Body in the Library is a clever little book. Miss Marple is called in to investigate when her friend finds a dead body (in the library). What I enjoy about Christie is she doesn't take her mysteries too seriously. There's lots of room for humorous little bits. I loved the way she describes the relationship between Mrs. Bantry and her husband, Colonel Bantry. They are pure upperclass silliness personified. There's a brief little chapter when the news of the murder runs through St Mary Mead, gaining momentum and inventiveness with every repetition. And when young Peter approaches the detective saying he's collected some famous autographs including Dorothy Sayers and Agatha Christie, I couldn't help smiling.

Plus, I really want this library. *The library was a room very typical of its owners. It was large and shabby and untidy. It had big, sagging armchairs, and pipes and books and estate papers laid out on the big table. There were one or two good old family portraits on the walls, and some bad Victorian water colors, and some would-be-funny hunting scenes. There was a big vase of flowers in the corner. The whole room was dim and mellow and casual. It spoke of long occupation and familiar use and of links with tradition.*

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## Stephanie Anze says

"...there sits an old lady with a sweet, placid, spinterish face and a mind that has plumbed the depths of human iniquity and taken it all as in the day's work...where crime is concerned, she's the goods."

When the body of a blonde young woman is found strangled in the library of Colonel Bantry, rumours start spreading rapidly. Colonel and Mrs Bantry are part of the upper class elite and considered with the upmost respect. Concerned for her husband (who assures her that he has never seen the victim before), Mrs. Bantry contacts Miss Jane Marple. Though the police have already been informed, Mrs. Bantry trusts Miss Marple more to clear the name of the colonel. What she uncovers is far more complicated than meets the eye.

Agatha Christie was such a gifted writer. I have yet to be let down by her work. In this third installment of the Miss Marple series, Christie mixes a classical whodunit with whimsy, wit and humour. When the body is

discovered in the library of Colonel Bantry, everyone assumes the colonel had something to do with this woman. Completely assured of her husband's innocence, Mrs. Bantry involves Miss Marple. A spinster with a keen eye, Miss Marple has a knack for finding the truth. There is plenty of misdirections in this cozy mystery and the list of suspects is varied and wide. There is also so much laughter, those subtle yet witty remarks made by Miss Marple truly make this work stand out for me. I just love the way in which the narrative played out and as usual, I did not guess the culprit. I still have so much of Christie left to read, it makes me feel quite delighted. A great read overall.

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## Veronique says

4.5

*“Downstairs in the lounge, by the third pillar from the left, there sits an old lady with a sweet, placid, spinsterish face and a mind that has plumbed the depths of human iniquity and taken it all as in the day's work....where crime is concerned, she's the goods.”*

Another excellent story! Having read it previously, I still remembered the key points, but on the other hand it allowed me to look at all the clues in a different way, and weirdly I ended up enjoying it more than the first time. I'm always amazed at Christie's masterful strokes not just in her writing but in her understanding of psychology - and it all looks and feels so simple and easy. Hardly!

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## Madeline says

This was my first foray into the Miss Marple series of Agatha Christie mysteries, and I have to admit first and foremost that this story has one of the best setups I've ever read in a detective novel: one morning Colonel and Mrs Bantry, the owners of a big English country house, are woken by their staff and informed that a dead body is in their library. It's a young blond woman in a cocktail dress, strangled to death and sprawled on the library rug. No one recognizes her, or has any idea how she ended up in the Bantry's home.

The best part of all of this is the homeowner's reactions to the fact that their house has become a crime scene - it reminded me a little of *Gosford Park*, which is all about rich snobs refusing to let a silly little murder get in the way of their hunting holiday. Here's Mrs. Bantry explaining the situation to her friend, Miss Marple: "But you're very good at murders. She's been murdered, you see; strangled. What I feel is that if one's got to have a murder actually happening in one's house, one might as well enjoy it, if you know what I mean. That's why I want to find out who did it and unravel the mystery and all that. It really is rather thrilling, isn't it?"

Investigations ensue, and there are actually quite a few good twists in the surprisingly short (191 pages) mystery. My main complaint, however, is that Miss Marple herself is barely present in the story. The majority of the detective work is done by three police officers, who were virtually indistinguishable due to the fact that they all seemed to share a single personality. Miss Marple is only called upon when the officers want her to connect an event to some village gossip, and also once they ask her to figure out whether a schoolgirl they're questioning is lying. After the way Hercule Poirot would insistently butt into every moment of *his* stories, Miss Marple's lack of involvement was a little disappointing.

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## Brina says

Last year the reading the detectives group read through Agatha Christie's Miss Marple mysteries as a yearly challenge. Having joined the group late, I did not have a chance to read all of the Queen of Crime's cases featuring her famous spinster sleuth. As I participated in the challenge when I could, I came to appreciate Miss Marple as an everyday detective who is a champion for the average person. Using her quality of reading human nature to solve cases, Miss Marple became a favorite crime fighter of mine as the year drew on. When this year's classic bingo board in the group catching up on classics featured a classic mystery square, I used this as an opportunity to once again catch up with the Queen of Crime and the village of St Mary Mead's resident detective.

Dolly Bantry is woken by what she thinks is a bad dream but is really one of her maids alerting her and her husband Arthur to the presence of a dead body in their library. Immediately, the older couple notifies the local police, who are just as baffled by the young woman as the Bantrys are. In a village as small as St Mary Mead, gossip spreads like wildfire, and Dolly fears that people would start to believe that her husband murdered the woman himself. Immediately, she calls her close friend who happens to have a penchant for solving murders, Miss Jane Marple. Not giving a choice in the matter, Miss Marple is dispatched to Gossington Hall to assist the Bantrys in solving this heinous crime.

The cast of possible suspects expands at once to include local film star Basil Blake as well as the younger set of people vacationing at the nearby Majestic Hotel. The police discover that the body is that of Majestic dancer Ruby Keene yet are addle brained as to suspect and motive. Dolly Bantry and Miss Marple head to the Majestic in order to solve this mystery before the entire village suspects Arthur of wrongdoing. As with previous cases that I have read, Miss Marple has put her facts together and pieces together the crime while the police are still shaking their heads. She finds out that Conway Jefferson, a close friend of the Bantrys, is spending the season at the Majestic, alone with his son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and her son. Jefferson is shaken by the death of Ruby Keene, who he had recently decided to adopt as a daughter, and phones his friend retired Inspector Henry Clithering to help solve this case. Clithering has always had respect for Miss Marple, and the two join forces to work out the mystery, especially as they see the police stuck for ideas.

As in many Christie mysteries, murders happen in threes. Halfway through the book, another young woman is found murdered in a burning car. At once, Miss Marple knows the identity of the murderer but has to verify the cause and alibi with the guests at the hotel as well as some residents in her village before the third murder occurs. Miss Marple is indeed a shrewd judge of human nature whereas she notes that the police believe everything they hear at face value. As a result, she is the detective who is left explaining the entire case to the police force time after time. With all of Marple's cases, Christie has developed an older woman who is overlooked as a spinster and close to the scrap pile yet is still sound in mind and other body faculties. Time and time again Miss Marple has proven to the police and readers alike that age is just a number and should not be used to inhibit living one's life to the fullest.

I often read mysteries in between denser reads or when I feel that I might be going into a reading rut as a means of cleansing my mind in anticipation of more involved books ahead. With the enduring reputation as the Queen of Crime, Dame Christie's mysteries remain enjoyable to me as I often have to read an entire book to discover whodunit. Even after completing this bingo square, I have a feeling that I will be reading through more cases featuring both Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot throughout the year, most likely alternating between the two each month. These quick whodunits sharpen my deductive reasoning skills and put me in a better frame of mind to accomplish reading a wide variety of books that I have on tap. Palette cleansed.

3.75 stars

## Phryne says

Agatha Christie is one of my favourite authors when I want to read something light, entertaining and always well written. This book did not let me down. Miss Marple was at her very best, guessing who the murderer was quite early in the piece but of course not letting the reader know who it might be. As usual I had no idea but just kept happily reading, letting her do all the detective work and enjoying how smart she is.

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## James says

It had been a while since I read an Agatha Christie novel. I combed through the list of her work and thought to myself... I'm not actually sure if I ever read this one. And it turned out, I hadn't! Now I want to watch a TV version to see how they interpret it.

Great story. So much has been re-done from this early on work. It's a must read for Christie fans and truly any mystery buff! When you are rich, and you have people who take care of things... and it's nearly 100 years ago... what does one do when a body shows up in the library -- and you're not sure who it is? How confusing. But even more so when there's another girl who is missing... and they look alike. Which is which? And you know someone's lying. But you can't quite tell. Marple can tho!

I think this is one of the better Marple mysteries... it's less about Marple and more about the story. And how the body got there. Nothing is as it seems, but that's where Christie shows her strength. The writing leads you to one conclusion based on how the facts are shown. But it's not trickery. The info is there, you just have to weed thru it.

The only issue here: I'm just sorry I waited so long to read this one.

### About Me

For those new to me or my reviews... here's the scoop: I read A LOT. I write A LOT. And now I blog A LOT. First the book review goes on Goodreads, and then I send it on over to my WordPress blog at <https://thisismytruthnow.com>, where you'll also find TV & Film reviews, the revealing and introspective 365 Daily Challenge and lots of blogging about places I've visited all over the world. And you can find all my social media profiles to get the details on the who/what/when/where and my pictures. Leave a comment and let me know what you think. Vote in the poll and ratings. Thanks for stopping by. *Note:* All written content is my original creation and copyrighted to me, but the graphics and images were linked from other sites and belong to them. Many thanks to their original creators.

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## Mansuriah Hassan says

I confess to absolutely loving Dame Agatha Christie's books. I find the coziness of them very soothing. Miss Marple's character becomes more rounded as we see her interact with her friends. Even though there were less action in this book, but I don't think that dooms it to being a bad book, it's just a change of pace, which is often refreshing.

In the author's foreword Christie writes: *"I laid down for myself certain conditions. The library in question*

*must be a highly orthodox and conventional library. The body, on the other hand, must be a wildly improbably and highly sensational body."*

Christie kept to her conditions, and the results were excellent. Her writing is timeless. She keeps you guessing right up to the very end. The characters are well developed and detailed. The Bantrys are warm and funny, but still have their own depth. Conway Jefferson who seemed to be permanently in mourning, is one of the most interesting characters. It was humorous when the author portrays the village's people and their gossip. Very tongue-in-cheek :P

The best thing about Agatha Christie is that she writes with typical British wit and humour, and also wry observations appearing here and there. The skill of observation and drawing similarities between unrelated events of Miss Marple are unparalleled. One of the most intricate of plots. **The Body In The Library** is certainly a splendid read for cozy mystery fans!

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## Richard Derus says

Rating: 4 solid stars of five

The novel, surprisingly, holds up well to a 21st century re-read. I was so pleased not to find anything shouting at me, "oh dear gawd please don't say that!" Slut-shaming, a huge component of the novel, isn't something unique to the times it is set in. It was a pleasure not having anything other than that and class snobbery to overlook!

But goodness me, what a lot of it there was. The "film people" were ever so louche, my dear, just Not Our Sort, so...American, you know. The dead girl? A Platinum Blonde, one of...Those Girls \*chicken's-ass face\* and doubtless not one smidgen better than she should be. (Later it is revealed she was a virgin, you old cow.)

But what divine fun! An actual (fictional) Body In The Library! Cliche central, send up a cheap one. Then Dame Agatha does her magic, the sort that turns things inside out, and it's the library that's the red herring, the body that's the clue, and the mystery itself isn't about ANY of those things.

Divine fun.

In 1983, ITV's Miss Marple turned the book into a good, faithful adaptation starring Joan Hickson \*headache face\*. It was a bit grave-dusty for me, as were the other Hickson Marple outings. I simply don't get the lady's appeal in the role. In 2004, *Agatha Christie's Marple* did it over and made significant character changes to the evergreen plot. I won't spoiler them for you because I think you should watch it. The changes are fun, I'll say that. What a lark, and *pace* you Hicksonians, I think Geraldine McEwan makes a damned good Marple. But the biggest and best casting delight is the ever joyous to watch Joanna Lumley as Dolly Bantry. Delicious.

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## Anna says

Το πρώτο βιβλίο της Αγκάρθια Κρυστι που διαβάζω με αφορμή το ριεντ Εξπρές που εβδα στο σινεμά (και επ΄σης το προτείνω ανεπιβλάκτα!) Το διλέξα αποκλειστικά για τον ττλο (γιατ΄ έχω βιβλιοθήκη και σως με βρουν κι εμ΄να κ΄ποτε εκε΄ να έχω πεθ΄νει απ΄ αφυδ΄τωση και ασιτ΄α - OXI ποτ΄, π΄ντα καθ΄ς δ΄πλά μου ΄ταν διαβ΄ζω και για το φαγητ΄ δεν κ΄νω μ@λ@κ΄ες!!)

Τελος πντων, το πτμα ανκε σε μια νεαρ? κοπλα και ε?ναι σαφ?ς ?τι οι ?νοικοι δεν ε?χαν ιδ?α, με διαλ?γους ?πως "Η Μ?ρθα λ?ει ?τι υπ?ρχει ?να πτμα στη βιβλιοθ?κη", "Τι λ?ει η Μ?ρθα ?τι υπ?ρχει στη βιβλιοθ?κη;" "να πτμα", "Υπ?ρχει ?να πτμα στη βιβλιοθ?κη;", "Ναι, ?τσι λ?ει η Μ?ρθα", "Ε?πε η Μ?ρθα ?τι υπ?ρχει ?να πτμα στη βιβλιοθ?κη" που μας θυμ?ζουν Λ?μψη (ε?ναι αξιαγ?πητα παππο?δια οι ?νοικοι, δικαιολογο?νται) και ?ταν - με το καλ? - ?ρχεται η συνειδητοπο?ηση της μο?ρας τους, αναλαμβ?νει δρ?ση η αστυνομ?α και η Μις Μαρπλ.

Ναι, η Μις Μαρπλ. Δεν ε?ναι ?να βιβλ?ο με τον Ηρακλ? Πουαρ?, αλλ? και η Μις Μαρπλ ε?ναι αξιολ?τρευτη!! Ο δολοφ?νος αποδεικν?εται στις τελευτα?ες σελ?δες, εν? ως τ?τε η ρο? κυλ?ει πολ? ευχ?ριστα!

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## Shaikha says

This book will hold your attention from the first chapter, it will impress you with the brilliantly crafted lines and take you straight into the murder scene. It's a short book, but I assure you it will not affect the quality of it and you'll enjoy this mystery which leaves you hanging until the end when all is explained.

Colonel and Mrs. Bantry, wealthy and upright citizens of St. Mary Mead, wake up one day to find the dead body of a mysterious young blonde woman in their library. This mysterious girl seems to have been strangled to death. Neither Colonel Bantry nor Mrs. Bantry has any idea who she is and how she ended up in their library. Their servants also have no idea about the girl. While Colonel Bantry calls the police, Mrs. Bantry calls her friend Miss Marple to solve the mystery of this girl. And, thus begins the search for both the identity and the murderer of this young blonde. Like all Christie novels, a number of characters who might have actually committed the murder of this girl appear one by one in the book. A real twist in the story develops when another body of a girl is discovered very soon. The death of this second girl turns up to be connected with the death of the first one. The story then progresses neatly and smoothly within the plot and finally ends with a well executed ending.

Miss Marple takes a back seat in this novel as she doesn't make much of an appearance until the second half of the book. Most of the space of the detective work in the book has been done by three police officers. However, whatever presence Miss Marple has in the book, she truly shines. Her village life comparisons to point out the possible reasons for the behaviour of different people in the book are really worth reading. It is really hard to not to get impressed by her common sense and observation.

In the 'Foreword' of the book Christie says that she wanted to take the old classic scenario of a body in a library and turn it into an interesting mystery for a long time. Christie certainly seems to have succeeded in spinning an attention-grabbing murder mystery by taking a conventional setting of a murder.

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## Lata says

What a pleasure it was to reread this book. The first time I read a Miss Marple mystery story, I was in my early teens and did not appreciate just how smart the woman is. She's very observant, and remembers little things about people, and draws parallels between different people to figure out who could have done it (the murder, that is.)

And I don't remember Agatha Christie being quite so funny the first time I read this; I found myself laughing out loud at the dialogue between Mrs. and Mr. Bantry at the beginning of the book. There are also little descriptions as the story progresses that are amusing.

Though I figured out who one of the murderers was and suspected the other, I had fun reading as the story unfolded and Miss Marple did her thing, quietly watching everyone involved, and figuring out who was responsible.

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### **Barry Pierce says**

There's a small note to the reader at the very beginning of this novel in which Agatha Christie basically writes, "the trope of the body in the library is very common throughout detective fiction so I wrote this novel to fuck shit up". Good old Agatha. This is a Miss Marple story... well... I think it is, because our beloved Miss Jane Marple is in fact missing from quite a lot of this novel. Thankfully the crime is exciting enough for us to overlook that minor setback. It's a classic Christie, foolproof and sturdy plot with a cast of both memorable and useless characters. However there are scenes in this that I did find rather... graphic... for your typical Christie novel. I won't spoil it but there is a scene set in a quarry and it is quite out there for Agatha.

Overall, I enjoyed this, like I do with most of Christie's books. She really can't do any wrong!

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### **Ginger says**

Agatha Christie books are timeless! I always love reading her books when I want something entertaining, light and well written for a mystery. I'm always amazed at her writing but also her understanding of psychology and how good her books continue to be after all these years!

The Body in the Library did not let me down. Once again, I was surprised by the ending and enjoyed the ride. I enjoyed Miss Marple more in this book than the 1st one of the series, Murder at the Vicarage. She outwits everyone in the end and I'm glad the police are finally understanding that they need her on the team. Note to self: Do not disregard smart old ladies that notice all the details.

Overall, I enjoyed this book and will be reading more Miss Marple books in the future!!

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### **AMEERA says**

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### **Susan says**

When a peroxide blonde is found dead in the library at Gossington Hall, Colonel and Mrs Bantry are perplexed. However, Mrs Bantry is determined that the crime should be solved, aware that suspicion will fall on her husband ("no smoke without fire...") and wisely calls in Miss Marple. When the body is identified as Ruby Keene, a dance hostess at the Hotel Majestic in Danemouth, Dolly Bantry and Miss Marple head off for a short break to do a spot of sleuthing.

This is a classic Christie novel and the second, full length, Miss Marple mystery, after The Murder at the Vicarage. It sees Miss Marple in fine form, making her usual comparisons between the various suspects and

locals she has known - there is, she says shrewdly, so much "evil" in a village. As always, Christie utilises the setting expertly, with the hotel housing a great array of suspects, including a rich invalid, professional dancers and tennis coaches. There is also local Basil Blake, who works in the film industry and causes a great deal of gossip in St Mary Mead. Miss Marple manages to solve the crime and put all to rights with her shrewd judgement and common sense - great fun.

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## **Rachel Hall says**

This is the third instalment in the amateur detective encounters of Miss Marple and makes use of the great cliché of crime fiction - the "body in the library". An author's foreword explains the conditions that Christie imposed on herself to add to the intrigue; namely that the library is question would need to be a highly orthodox and conventional location and that the body, on the other hand, must be a wildly improbably and highly sensational victim. When Gossington Hall, home of Colonel Arthur Bantry and wife Dolly is awoken to the shock news that a young platinum blonde of unknown identity has been found dead in the library it sends shockwaves through the entire household. As intended this discovery of the body, found strangled and clad in a tawdry satin dress and with the window of the library forced with a standard chisel is highly incongruous with the solid and old-fashioned comfort of the Bantry's library.

Inspector Slack, in his usual self-confident manner, promptly attends the scene, soon to be followed by Colonel Melchett, the Chief Constable of Radfordshire. However, Mrs Bantry is determined to enjoy the hopefully never to be repeated experience of a murder in her own home and preserve her husband's respectable position in the village, knowing full well that an unsolved murder will quickly leave him tainted by association. Thus when Slack and Melchett arrive, Miss Marple is already in attendance with the village of St. Mary Mead knowing all too well of her ability to link up trivial village happenings with graver problems. As the deceased has already been reported missing she is soon identified as Ruby Keene, eighteen-years-old and employed as a professional dancer at the nearby Majestic Hotel in Danemouth. Temporarily resident in the county of Glenshire, Superintendent Harper is called to coordinate inquiries and before long, Sir Henry Clithering, retired Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police is summoned by an old friend to lend a hand! Nevertheless, Sir Henry doesn't doubt for a minute that Miss Marple is as shrewd as they come, privy to village gossip and knows a thing or two about the murkier side of human nature, as he quickly conveys to his good friend:

"Downstairs in the lounge, by the third pillar from the left, there sits an old lady with a sweet, placid spinsterish face, and a mind that has plumbed the depths of human iniquity and taken it all in the day's work. Her name's Miss Marple. She comes from the village of St. Mary Mead, which is a mile and a half from Gossington, she's a friend of the Bantrys - and where crime is concerned she's the goods, Conway."

As Miss Marple and Mrs Bantry descend to the Majestic Hotel they meet Ruby's cousin, Josie Turner, whom she was currently deputising for in her capacity as professional dancer with handsome tennis coach and male partner, Raymond Starr. At the centre of the intrigue is wealthy invalid and regular guest, Mr Conway Jefferson, who had taken a shine to Ruby and formed a close attachment to her. Accompanied by his daughter-in-law, Mrs Adelaide Jefferson and son-in-law, Mark Gaskell, it transpires that with no blood relations remaining alive, Mr Jefferson intends to adopt Ruby, hence leaving her in the admirable position of inheriting his remaining fortune.

Described as everything from “a rather insipid and meretricious little bag of tricks” by Mr Gaskell to a common or garden gold-digger by others, the solid alibis of the family leave the police searching for other possible motives for Ruby’s demise. However, the suspects are not confined to the Majestic alone, with impudent film maker and louche party goer, Basil Blake, a frequent visitor and the local suspect of choice. George Bartlett, an ardent admirer of Ruby’s was the last to be seen dancing with the young lady and with his car discovered burnt out two miles away with traces of a charred body inside, it appears that an unfortunate witness has seen something incriminating and become victim number two. As Miss Marple says, once one murder has been committed the perpetrator doesn’t shirk from another but thankfully she has the measure of things, enabling her to lie in wait for the perpetrator before a third fatality can come to bear.

The writing is wonderfully crisp writing, Miss Marple is in attendance from the off and full of her pithy insights and although this felt like it should be readily solvable and certainly more straightforward than my other encounters with Christie, she pulls off the combination of providing a perfectly plausible motive and employing a ruse to see the guilty party caught in the act! Ingenious, incisive and the limited suspects make *The Body in the Library* a hugely impressive piece of crime fiction. As Miss Marple often says, so often people are far too trusting as she draws in some excellent parallels from village life to illustrate her rationale... all “terribly amateurish” if one were to listen to her. A fun, spirited investigation with a fiendishly clever motive and method swiftly deduced by the inimitable Miss Marple. Excellent stuff from Agatha Christie.

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