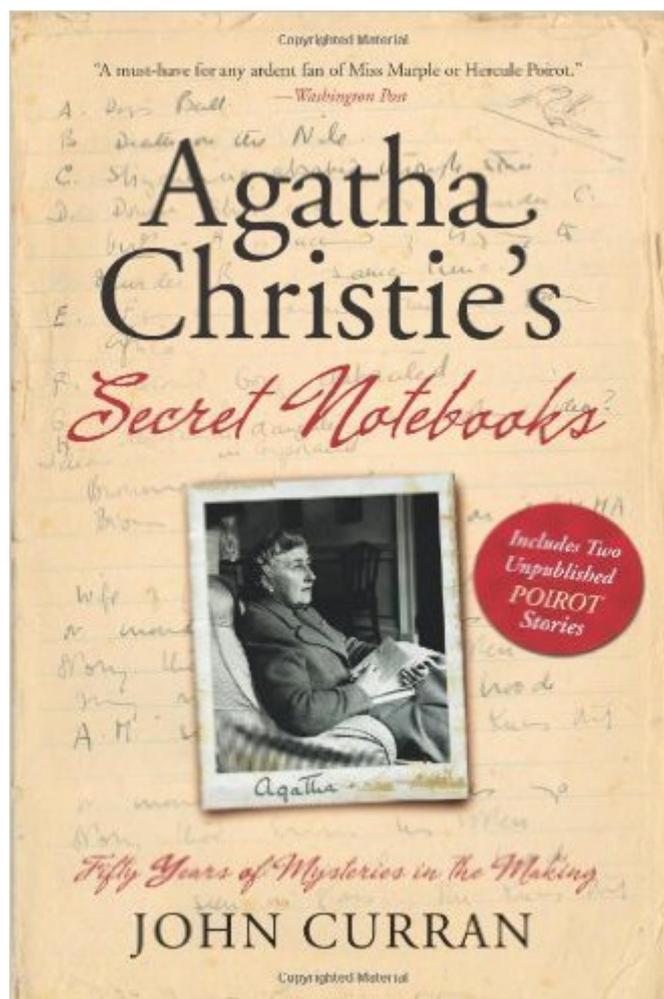


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Agatha Christie's Secret Notebooks: Fifty Years Of Mysteries In The Making



Synopsis

When Agatha Christie died in 1976, at age eighty-five, she had become the world's most popular author. At the end of 2004, following the death of Christie's daughter, Rosalind, a remarkable legacy was revealed: seventy-three handwritten volumes of notes, lists, and drafts outlining all her plans for her many books, plays, and stories. Buried in this treasure trove, all in the beloved author's unmistakable handwriting, are revelations about her famous books that will fascinate anyone who has ever read or watched an Agatha Christie story. Full of details she was too modest to reveal in her own autobiography, this remarkable book includes a wealth of excerpts and pages reproduced directly from the notebooks and her letters; plus, two complete, recently discovered Hercule Poirot short stories never before published.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The 73 notebooks were written the scrawl of a chicken, very different from the famous autograph signature we all know from countless reproductions. There must have been many times when Curran might have felt like giving up, but after months of practice, he says he was able to decipher the writing pretty quickly. Oddly, he says, Christie's handwriting improved with age, rather than the reverse. This is not a variorum or facsimile edition of the notebooks by any means, but rather Curran's selection, with copious comments, of Christie's musings and reworkings over the years. His transcriptions look letter-perfect (a generous sampling of the handwritten entries allows us to peruse both the way she wrote something, and the way Curran took it down). I couldn't spot a

flaw. Christie lovers will find much to marvel at here. My own hunger for more and more Christie, good or bad, started when I was a child. I had a recurring dream--one I still have, years later,--in which I'm in a bookstore, library, friend's house, looking at books, and I see an Agatha Christie novel I've never heard of before. I sit down and read through it, and even want to copy it down, but lack a pencil (ha ha, Freudian I guess), and think of filching it from the premises, but lack the balls. Sometimes I wake from the dream with a title and a few words still in my head. but always with a sense of loss and emptiness. Now Curran's edition has assuaged some of the ache. We hear of dozens of unrealized projects, and quite a few of them fully realized, but withdrawn from the marketplace for one reason or another.

Dame Agatha Christie (1890-1976) is the bestselling fictional writer of all time! She has sold the third most books in history surpassed only by the Holy Bible and Shakespeare! Dame Agatha was a brilliant author of the golden age of British mystery writing which occurred from the end of World War I until the beginning of World War II in 1939. John Curran is a Dublin native who is one of the few persons who has been allowed to study in depth the seventy-three notebooks in which Dame Agatha wrote down story ideas; possible plots; list of possible characters and such mundane material as shopping lists and what to buy her family members for Christmas. The notebooks reveal, says Curran, that the doyen of crime liked to work in chaotic mode. Some of Christie's stories and plots would lay dormant for decades before being used or discarded or transformed from short story to novel. (or vice versa!). Curran asserts that Christie had an easy to read style and used everyday life settings to mold her masterpieces. She is the only crime author who created two immortal figures of the genre: Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot. She had an extensive knowledge of poisons due to her nursing work and this was her favorite way to murder her literary victims. Her favorite murderers came from the ranks of medical men and women. Christie was adept at taking readers to exotic sites of which she was acquainted through the many archaeological digs she had been on with her husband. The most valuable part of the book deals with the careful dissection Curran performs on examining many of the major novels and short stories of Christie from "The Labors of Hercules" to "Sparkling Cyanide": to "Sleeping Murder": and many others.

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