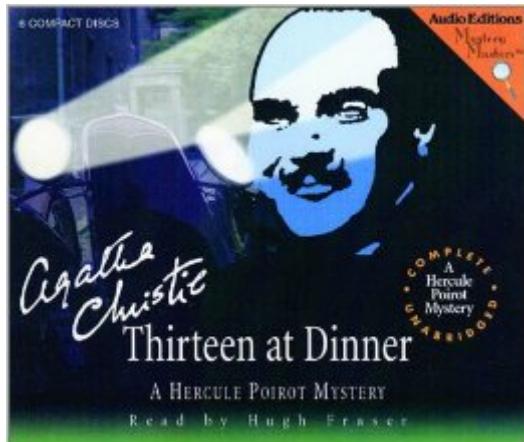


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Thirteen At Dinner: A Hercule Poirot Mystery (Mystery Masters)



Synopsis

Here is another thriller by the master of mystery - and the most popular author of all time. Lady Edgware wants to marry a duke, but Lord Edgware won't divorce her. She jokingly tells Poirot that if he won't kill Lord Edgware, she may have to. When the lord turns up dead, Lady Jane is suspected. Will her alibi hold up?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thirteen at dinner is an excellent book that young adults and adults would especially enjoy. I found it hard to put this book down. It is about the famous detective Hercule Poirot (a very popular character in the Agatha Christie series) who helps his friend Detective Japp on a very strange murder case. It seems that the wealthy Lord Edgware of well-known Regent Gate has been murdered and all evidence is apparently pointing to his wife, actress Jane Wilkinson. Poirot sets out to find out what has happened and finds the surprising truth. He asks himself questions (Who suppressed the letter? What induced Lord Edgware to change his mind about divorce? Who rang Jane Wilkinson up while at dinner at Chiswick?), which help him solve this and all of his cases. In the last few pages, Poirot describes step by step what really has happened. The resolution is both surprising and clever. Agatha Christie has done a great job both making the plot interesting and making people love and look up to the amazing Hercule Poirot. His character has obviously been thought out carefully as was the rest of the book. This book really shows the genius on Christie's part, and I have no idea how she came up with this smart and well put together plot. This book has made me want to read all

of her books about Hercule Poirot. I also thought it was smart to make Poirot's assistant, Captain Hastings, the main voice. This made Poirot seem much more mysterious since the reader doesn't know what is going on inside his head. I would recommend this book to anybody who even just likes mysteries because it is one of the better books I have ever read.

Agatha Christie enters the world of the London theater in this novel, making most of the characters actors and actresses. Jane Wilkinson, a beautiful and popular actress, is in private life the wife of Lord Edgware. The marriage has never been happy, and now Jane wants to divorce Edgware and marry another man. She asks Poirot to intercede for her with her husband and get him to agree to the divorce. When Poirot meets with Lord Edgware he finds the baron very agreeable and says he has informed his wife of this previously in a letter. Jane insists she never received the letter, but is thrilled at the news. A problem arises when Lord Edgware is killed that very evening and several witnesses testify that Jane was present at the home at the time of the murder. Twelve other reliable witnesses can attest to the fact that she was with them at a dinner party that evening and could not possibly have killed her husband. Add to this plot a visiting American actress who does impersonations, a letter with a torn page, a pair of pince-nez, a chance remark by two strangers, a luncheon conversation about Paris, and Poirot solves the case in brilliant form proving his genius and why Agatha Christie is the undisputed mistress of mystery

Also entitled "Thirteen at Dinner", this mystery novel from the early 1930's (!) is a Christie classic in her Hercule Poirot series. The plot engages the reader quickly when Lord Edgware is bumped off. All clues certainly point to actress Jane Wilkinson (Lady Edgware), who has been overheard at dinner (for 13) wishing death for her husband, from whom she wants a not forthcoming divorce. However, an airtight alibi rules out Wilkinson, and so we're off to the races as both Poirot, who the actress had hired to "persuade" the Lord for a divorce, and the cops, in the form of Inspector Japp (who interestingly does legwork for Poirot throughout the story and serves as an amusing foil), chase an overabundance of clues! Soon a second murder, and later a third, add to both the complexities of the case as well as Poirot's chagrin -- an obvious villain is not forthcoming. We readers are probably no better off, as we have as much trouble as Poirot's perpetual sidekick (and narrator) Capt. Hastings does unraveling all the characters and their testimonies. But of course, our hero rises to the occasion in the end and spells out for us clear as a bell what might have been right in front of our eyes. Part of the beauty of these novels is the rather straightforward movement of the plot. While Christie might be accused of "economy of words", we still get enough character

description and involvement to care about the principals and the resolution of the case. While no doubt this story send us down many wrong paths with the numerous red herrings at hand, the eventual outcome, followed by an entertaining afterword by one of the characters, is most satisfying. Charming chapter titles only add to the appeal of the author's timeless writing; and the 200 pages or so pass by quite crisply. Enjoy!

I've yet to read or audit all of Christie's Poirot novels, but of the ones I've enjoyed, "Thirteen at Dinner" proved the greatest departure from Christie's tried-and-true formula for Poirot novels. Lady Edgware is estranged from her husband and wants a divorce. If she can't have a divorce, she says she'll just drive up to her husband's house in a cab and walk in and murder him. Shortly after making this pronouncement, Lord Edgware is murdered. Lord Edgware's servants testify that Lady Edgware drove up to the home in a cab, walked into Lord Edgware's study, and left after a brief period of time in the study. Shortly afterward, the servants find Lord Edgware dead in his study. This is as true-to-life a murder scenario as ever came from the pen of Agatha Christie. In 27 years of prosecuting and defending murder cases, I've had several that followed this plotline. But Christie isn't going to allow things to be that simple. It seems that twelve unimpeachable witnesses are all prepared to testify that Lady Edgware was with them at a formal dinner at exactly the time of the murder. The cast of suspects is smaller than in most other Poirot novels, and the clues just cannot be made to fit together to prove guilt against any one of them. Poirot finally unravels the mystery, and in the denouement provides sudden surprises as the murderer is revealed. Unlike several of Christie's other Poirot novels, the prosecutors have a winnable case without an unlikely confession from the killer.

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