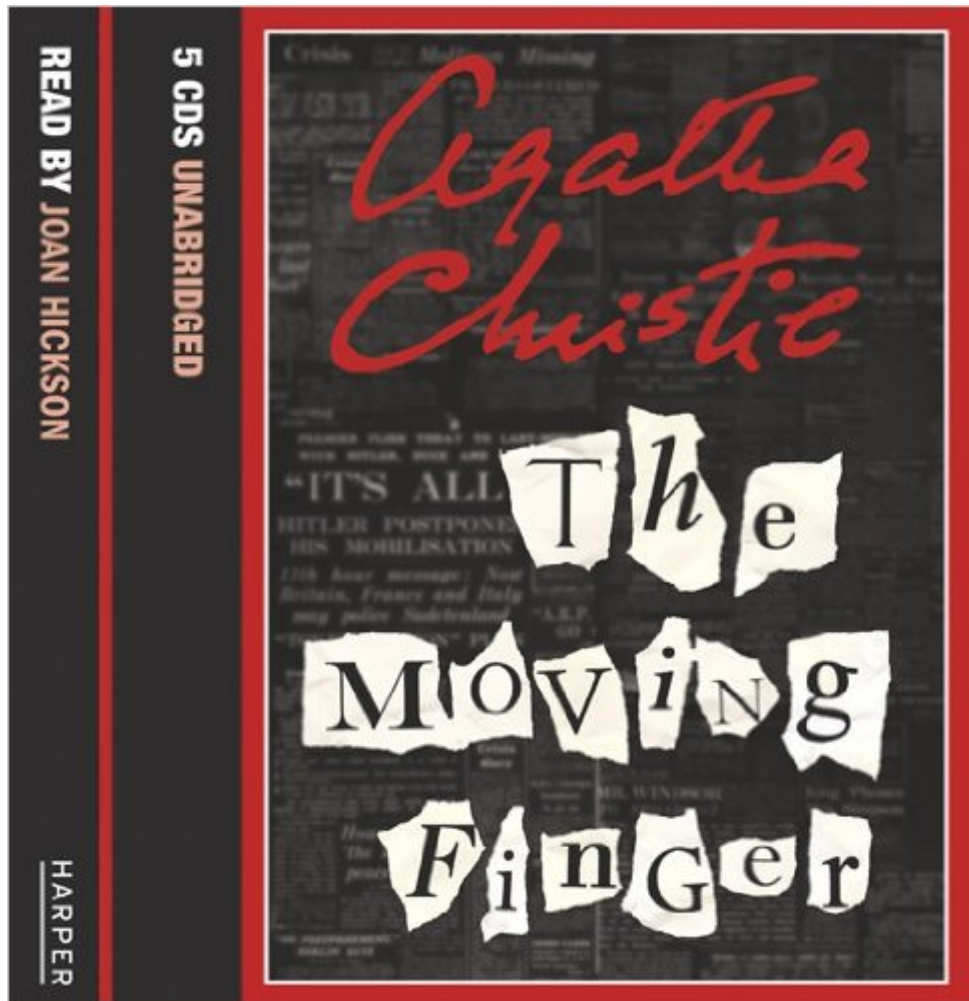


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The Moving Finger: Complete & Unabridged



Synopsis

Of poison pens and poisoning: a gripping Miss Marple mystery. Lymstock is a town with more than its share of shameful secrets - a town where even a sudden outbreak of anonymous hate-mail causes only a minor stir. But all that changes when one of the recipients, Mrs Symmington, commits suicide. Her final note said 'I can't go on'. Only Miss Marple questions the coroner's verdict of suicide. Was this the work of a poison-pen? Or of a poisoner?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read almost all of Christie's books at one point 4 or 5 years ago. One of the last I hit upon was "The Moving Finger", and it turned out to be my favorite Christie mystery. I loved the main narrator - Jerry Burton; his neurosis, wit, simplistic arrogance and ultimately good heart were so novel to me, especially in a murder mystery. He was a breath of fresh air from the likes of Miss Marple and Poirot. These many years later, I picked up the title again to see what I thought. I see now that the narrator reminds me in some ways of Grimes' main characters for her murder mysteries - intelligent, reserved, seemingly aloof, somewhat cynical, and ultimately kind bachelors written by female authors. Apparently I find this character irresistible as I love all of Grimes' work. However, in going back and rereading some Grimes and some Christie, I am noticing how different their styles are. While I read Grimes' books the first time only 2 or 3 years ago, I find I can't remember the solution to her mysteries when I reread them because she buries her clues below a rich surface of character development. Christie, on the other hand, doesn't ever wander far from her murder mystery plot - no matter how much she may twist and turn it; and as soon as I started into this book I thought, "Oh,

_____ did it". Even so, I enjoyed reading this little gem again. That all said, in addition to having a neurotic narrator - which you may or may not enjoy - this mystery focuses on the reactions in a small country village as racy anonymous letters are received by everyone in town. Jerry Burton, the narrator, and his sister arrive from London for some needed R&R right about when these letters start becoming known and so are drawn in to the town's little scandal.

In addition to the delights one gleans from Christie's deft, skillful plotting, incisive wit, and rich characterizations, the true strength of "The Moving Finger" is Christie's examination of evil underneath the pristine surface. This "wickedness" lies not only beneath the beautiful exteriors of the sleepy village, but also beneath the shiny faces of its inhabitants. Christie is quite adept at communicating the "atmosphere that seemed tinged with evil." When confronted with the distressing and distasteful poison pen letters appearing in the village, one of the characters exclaims, "Such a peaceful smiling happy countryside-and down underneath something evil....It's full of festering poison and it looks as peaceful and innocent as the Garden of Eden..." In addition, Christie recognizes the dark side of human nature, and that it is often extremely difficult to tell what people are really like beneath their polite behavior. "I'm beginning to realize how little I really know about anyone...In everybody's life there are hidden chapters which they hope may never be known..." Christie makes it clear, however, that this evil is not a supernatural phenomenon divorced from human intervention in a particularly perceptive and profound passage, "There's too much tendency to attribute to God the evils that man does of his own free will...God doesn't really need to punish us...We're so very busy punishing ourselves..." And although "it isn't very pleasant to look upon the fellow creatures one meets as possible criminal lunatics," Christie takes a realistically pessimistic view of human nature and depicts a village filled with "gossiping, whispering women" and "selfish, grasping natures." "The Moving Finger" is an absorbing account of a sociopath.

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