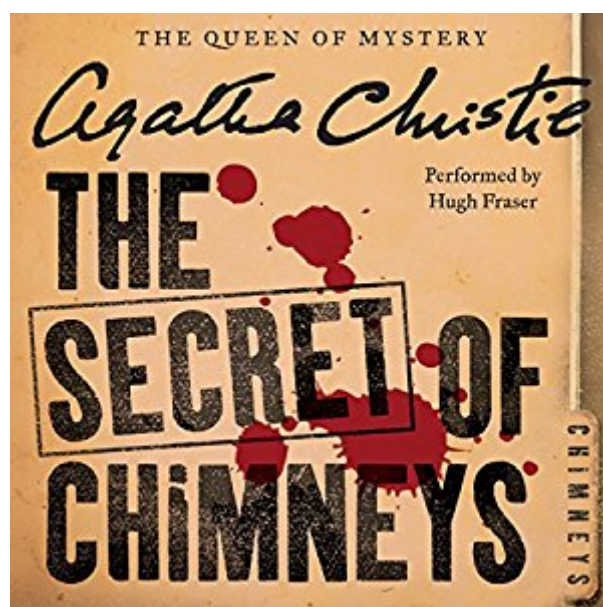


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The Secret Of Chimneys



Synopsis

Little did Anthony Cade suspect that an errand for a friend would place him at the center of a deadly conspiracy. Drawn into a web of intrigue, he begins to realize that the simple favor has placed him in serious danger. As events unfold, the combined forces of Scotland Yard and the French SÃfÂ»retÃfÂ© gradually converge on Chimneys, the great country estate that hides an amazing secret....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Chimneys is the palatial home of the Marquis of Caterham and his charming daughter Eileen, better known as Bundle. His good friend, George Lomax, a high-ranking official in the Foreign Office, arranges a hunting party to be held at Chimneys. The party is actually a cover for diplomatic intrigue. Before the party is too far along, Christie serves up murder, blackmail, romance, mysterious strangers, and a case of mistaken identity. There is also a bit of political information about a fictitious country called Herzoslovakia. This book is often confusing, definitely improbable, but always fun. I think that anyone who starts with this as their first Agatha Christie will not get a true picture of her work nor will they really see the depth of her genius. However, it is very enjoyable for confirmed Christie lovers. This book is notable for the introduction of Superintendent Battle of Scotland Yard, a man who will appear in several other Christie books including one of her very best, "Towards Zero."

This 1925 novel begins in Africa with the chance meeting of two old friends, young men out to see the world. As they catch up with each other they discover that one is working at a job he hates and the other wants to be in two places at once. Since they resemble each other at least superficially one decides to impersonate the other. When the imposter, Anthony Cade, arrives in England he has two errands to complete for his friend, Jimmy McGrath, the first to deliver a manuscript and the other to return a package of indiscrete letters to a lady. Cade is soon swept up in a tangle of intrigue that leads him to one of England most famous 'Stately Homes' - Chimneys. At Chimneys all the various threads come together involving state secrets, murder, secret passages, secret societies and romance. All is well in the end setting the stage for the return of Chimneys and its delightful resident family in the SEVEN DIALS MYSTERY. This is a comic mystery story with many of the characters and much of the plot sounding as much P. G. Wodehouse as Agatha Christie. For those looking for a serious mystery look else where. There is no Hercule Poirot or Miss Marple (although Superintendent Battle makes his first appearance) here but instead a delightful departure from Christie's usual style

Let's be clear: this book is a NOVEL.... The Ingram review isn't much better: yes, there's a beautiful woman and a stolen diamond in the story, but she has nothing to do with the theft. In some ways, this is classic Christie, complete with nefarious goings-on in the grand country home, swarthy-looking foreigners, a beautiful heroine, a manly hero, the mysterious dead body, etc., etc. What raises it above the rest (and makes it one of my favorite Christie books) is that there is an unusual amount of HUMOR in the book, and more than a dollop of romance. And it's clever, altho' the "who-dun-it" is a bit obvious by the end. However, this is one book worth reading for what happens BETWEEN the crime and the revelation of the crook. For budding Christie fans, you should know that "Chimneys" features some of the same characters found in "The Seven Dials Mystery," including the young Lady Eileen Brent (aka, "Bundle"), her long-suffering father Lord Caterham, the over-earnest George Lomax, and Bill Eversleigh - who marries Bundle at the end of "Seven Dials" but is infatuated elsewhere in this volume. Crime-solving is by the impassive Inspector Battle, another one of Christie's recurring characters. A delicious read for a rainy week-end or a day at the beach.

Anthony Cade runs into an old friend in Africa who gives him a couple of jobs to do in England for him. This starts a winding, twisting story involving politics, murder, and a little romance. From the start you hear about a small country which figures prominently throughout the book. The two

threads of mystery involve the successor to the throne and finding a stolen diamond. It all culminates at Chimneys--the home of Lord Caterham. You have Scotland Yard, the Surete from France and later on the Pinkertons--all involved in finding the solution to the case. Some surprising turns and twists until the very end. Good read!

Agatha Christie's "The Secret of Chimneys" is one of her earlier works (published in 1925) and is the first in her "Superintendent Battle" series. It's a fun romp of a book, but I hesitate to actually call it a mystery. There are mysterious things happening, but the sleuthing aspect of the book is really underdone. I'd really call it an Adventure book. Also, the characters are not exactly deep. Probably my biggest quibble with the book is that Superintendent Battle (the namesake of the series) is about as exciting as a rock. He might have 20 lines in the book and does almost nothing. Besides his mere presence, I'm not sure why the book and series bear his name. Again, it's a light and fun book and I'm rating it at a Very Good 4 stars out of 5. But, I'd give it a more ambivalent 3-1/2 stars if I could. The books in the "Superintendent Battle" series are: 1. The Secret of Chimneys (Agatha Christie Mysteries Collection) 2. The Seven Dials Mystery (Agatha Christie Mysteries Collection) 3. Cards on the Table: Hercule Poirot Investigates (Hercule Poirot Mysteries) 4. Murder Is Easy 5. Towards Zero

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