

Agatha Christie™

Ten Facts About Agatha Christie

1. In a writing career that spanned more than half a century, Agatha Christie wrote 80 detective novels and short story collections.
2. Four million Agatha Christie books are sold around the world each year. An estimated two billion copies of her works have been sold in total. It is often said that she is outsold only by the Bible and Shakespeare.
3. Agatha Christie's first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), was also the first to feature her eccentric Belgian detective Hercule Poirot. One of the most famous fictional creations of all time, Poirot's 'little grey cells' have triumphed over devious criminals in 33 novels and 56 short stories.
4. Christie's last published novel, *Sleeping Murder* (1976), featured her other world-famous sleuth, the shrewdly inquisitive Miss Jane Marple of St. Mary Mead. Miss Marple has appeared in 12 novels and 20 short stories since her debut in the short story *The Tuesday Night Club* in 1927.
5. The author also wrote more than a dozen plays, including *The Mousetrap*, which opened in London on November 25, 1952, and is now the longest continuously running play in theatrical history, and *Witness for the Prosecution*, which celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2008.
6. Christie's stories have famously been dramatised for the big screen including *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974) and *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957). There is a rich appetite for foreign language films too including *Shubho Mahurat* (2003), an Indian Bengali adaptation of the Miss Marple story *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side*; *Zagadka Endkhauza* (1989), a Russian version of the Poirot mystery *Peril at End House*; and *Le Grand Alibi*, a French film based on the Poirot novel *The Hollow* which was released theatrically earlier this year.
7. Agatha Christie also wrote six romantic novels under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott. She wrote nonfiction as well - four books including *Agatha Christie, An Autobiography* and an account of the many archeological expeditions she shared with her second husband Sir Max Mallowan.
8. In Agatha Christie's *Autobiography* she lists *Crooked House* (1949) and *Ordeal By Innocence* (1958) as two of her favourite books and describes the book and play of *And Then There Were None* (1939, 1943) as "a better piece of craftsmanship than anything else [I have] written".
9. Christie's own favourite creation was Mr. Harley Quin, inspired by the Harlequin from commedia dell'arte.
10. Agatha Christie dismissed the notion that there was any "method" to her writing. She believed the real effort was in working out all the plot details and clues in her head first before writing the story down. Inspiration could strike at any time ("*Plots come to me at such odd moments, when I am walking along the street, or examining a hat shop ... suddenly a splendid idea comes into my head*") and she would jot down endless notes as they came to her ("*I usually have about half a dozen [notebooks] on hand and I used to make notes in*

them of ideas that struck me about some poison or drug, or a clever little bit of swindling that I had read about in the paper”).