

THE MOUSETRAP

BY AGATHA CHRISTIE
STUDY GUIDE BY HANNAH GUNSON MCCOMB

Pg. 2-3	Biography of Agatha Christie
Pg. 4-5	Undertaking the Legacy
Pg. 6	The History of Mousetrap
Pg. 7	Understanding England in 1949
Pg. 8	Are You in a Murder Mystery or Film Noir?

Agatha Christie

Dame Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie lived the sort of life you'd expect of a renowned crime-writer. Her career produced sixty-six detective novels, fourteen short-story collections, and the world's longest running play. She is the best-selling novelist of all time, her works rank 3rd in the world's most published books (right behind the Bible and works by Shakespeare), and was one of the first woman ever to surf standing up.



Agatha Christie Plaque, Wikipedia Commons
Agatha Christie with Max Mallowan in 1930s, Wikipedia Commons

Born in the south west of England as Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller, Agatha was homeschooled by her American father and cared for by her by her English mother, who was gifted with psychic abilities. Christie taught herself to read at the tender age of five, motivated by the boredom of an only-child life.

As a young adult living abroad in Cairo, Egypt, she met Archie Christie, an aviator with whom she struck up a whirlwind affair. With World War I on the horizon, the couple was married in 1914, but had to remain separate until the end of the war in 1918, when they finally began married life in London.

MRS. CHRISTIE FOUND AT HARROGATE

Dramatic Re-union With Husband in Famous Hydro.

"HER MEMORY GONE"

How Missing Novelist Spent Time While Police and Public Looked for Her

Mrs. Christie, the missing inventor of detective stories, was traced last night to the Hydro, Harrogate, by her husband, Colonel Christie.

In an interview after a dramatic meeting between the pair, Colonel Christie told the DAILY HERALD that his wife had suffered from the "most complete loss of memory." She did not even recognize him, he added.



Mrs. Christie

"She does not know why she is here."
—Col. Christie



Col. Christie

But her life wasn't all excitement. Following the death of her mother and the discovery of Archie's extra-marital affair, Christie disappeared one night in 1926. Her abandoned car was found and a nation-wide search began. She was finally found at the Spa Hotel in Harrogate, but couldn't recognize Archie and had no idea who she was. Agatha was treated for a concussion and began recovering from mourning her mother and the end of her marriage.

Daily Herald (London), 15 December 1926, Wikipedia Commons
Agatha Christie Monument, Poxbury

Alone, but resilient, she picked up a traveller's lifestyle, frequenting the Middle East and making friends with the archeologists working there. It was on one such trip that she met Max Mallowan, a man unafraid of the rough journeys Christie was so fond of. They were later married in 1930. At the same time, Christie began writing more and more prolifically, often finishing 2-3 books a year. When Max was gone serving in World War II, she focused on her work, providing entertainment to a world where it was rarely found.



Towards the end of her life she slowed down. Her last public appearance was the opening night of Murder on the Orient Express, in 1974. Her only critique of it was that Poirot's legendary moustache wasn't "luxurious enough."

Agatha Christie's influence to the mystery genre is immense. Known as the "queen" of crime and mystery, she created a large number of motifs and caricatures that are now considered classic tropes of the detective novel. Her legendary shocking twists and reveals, however, are inimitable to this day.



Undertaking the Legacy: Conversations with the Director

CHARACTERS

David Morgan, a wild director

Hannah Gunson-McComb, a harried dramaturg

SCENE:

[INT: HFAC conference room. Early Wednesday morning.]

DAVID: I think I wanna do film noir with this— [looks at dramaturg] Can I?

HANNAH: (stuttering) I—sure, I don't think I see why not. Mind if I ask why?

DAVID: I'm just thinking of a lot of movies that make me interested in mystery... If you go back to British shows, they're all mystery, it's just something they did, they're still doing it— what's that show now, *Broadchurch*? It's a genre we dig big time. It's perfect for Halloween.

HANNAH: Film Noir is more... aesthetic than genre. Without dramatically changing the script or characters, how do you see this playing out?

DAVID: Mostly in lighting, I think. And music. I want something that sounds like Hitchcock, like *North by Northwest* or *Psycho*. Something that makes me go, "Ooooh. Spooky."

HANNAH: And the characters? We can't exactly transform Giles to a hardboiled P.I, or Mollie to a femme fatale...

DAVID: Agatha Christie's brought a lot to the characters. It's supposed to be a mystery, even though it's more of a comedy, really... They'll still play very well, just because of how it's written.

[He looks off to the side, lost in creative thought]

HANNAH: (breaking silence) Well this is promising to be a *Mousetrap* unlike any other.

DAVID: It is done all the time. I'm surprised they haven't made a movie.

HANNAH: They can't, legally. No one's allowed to make a film of it until the play's been closed on West End for six months.

DAVID: (beat) Still surprised.

The History of The Mousetrap

1947

Agatha Christie writes "Three Blind Mice," a radio drama, for the royal family. It was based on the real life case of Dennis O'Neill and his brother, Terrance. Christie gives the rights of the drama to her grandson, Matthew Prichard, for his 9th birthday. (At the time, he just wanted a bike.)

1952

"Three Blind Mice" opens with a new name, *The Mousetrap*, at the Ambassadors Theatre.



Christie receives a congratulatory, though glum, telegram from esteemed playwright, Noel Coward. "Much as it pains me I really must congratulate you..."

1957

1954

The Mousetrap is one of three plays written by Christie running on West End simultaneously. She's the first female playwright to achieve such a feat.



The Mousetrap is transferred (and opens immediately) to St. Martin's theatre, the neighbouring theatre to the Ambassadors.

2012

The Mousetrap celebrates its 25,000th performance, and the Agatha Christie memorial in Leicester Square is unveiled to honour the 60th anniversary of the play.

TODAY

The Mousetrap has since surpassed 26,000 performances, and there's no sign of stopping!

1949 Life in England

Let's face it— we might all be speaking English, but there's an ocean and several decades between us and the time in which *The Mousetrap* takes place. There are quite a few references and slang in the play that sound just strange enough to warrant further explanation.

Dogsbody

Someone who's given menial tasks to do

Bilking

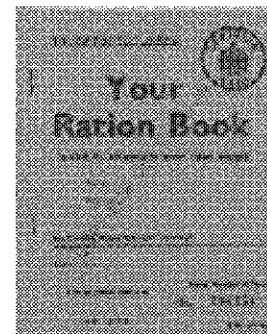
Eluding payment or withholding money

Spiv

A "flashy," ostentatious man who makes his money through disreputable dealings

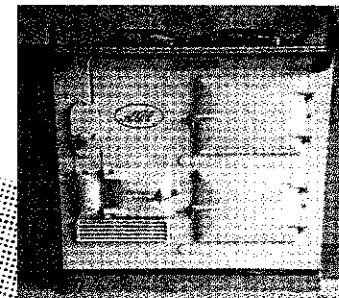
Ration books

World War II drained England of its resources, from rubber to nylons. In order to feed their citizens, the Ministry of Food started rationing in an effort to spread out what they had. The rationing system went like this: A family would register at their local shop and were in turn given a book of coupons, known as a "ration-book." A shopkeeper was given enough food for those registered with them. When a family would go shopping, the grocer would then mark the coupon. Every man, woman, and child owned one of these books, which also was a valid proof of identification.



Aga/Coke

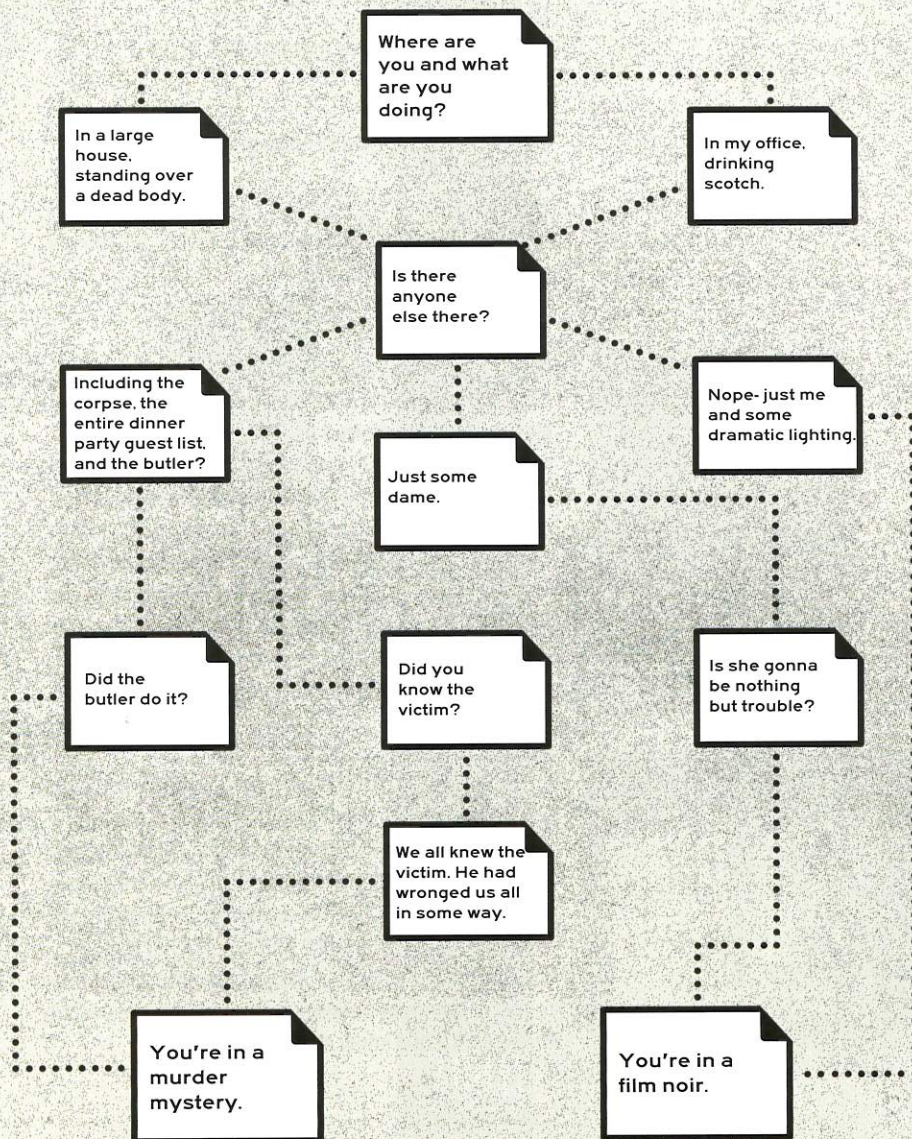
A new invention of the time was a cast-iron stove that could retain heat, didn't take too much to keep it going, and continuously burned. These could heat an entire house, but it wasn't as effective as our modern central-heating. "Coke" is coal that's been processed to remove its black smoke and smell. Coal was, of course, rationed in this time, and people would have relied on frequent delivery to keep warm— especially in the midst of a snow storm.



St. Martin's Lobby Display, Wikipedia Commons
The national Archives UK, Sample Child's Ration Book Wikipedia Commons
St. Martin's Theatre, 2012, Wikipedia Commons
Front of a 2000-Aga GCs in cream, lobby at English Wikipedia

ARE YOU IN A

Murder Mystery or Film Noir?

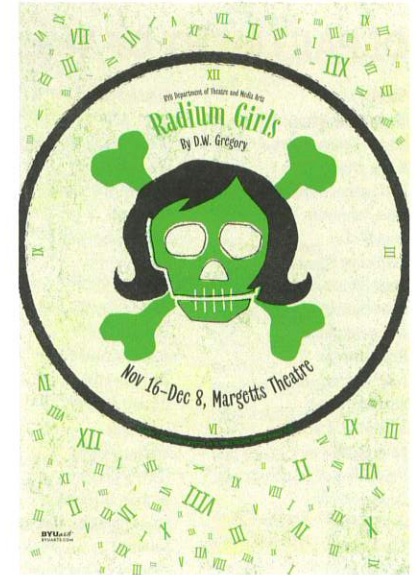


COMING SOON

RADIUM GIRLS

November 16- December 8
Margetts Theatre

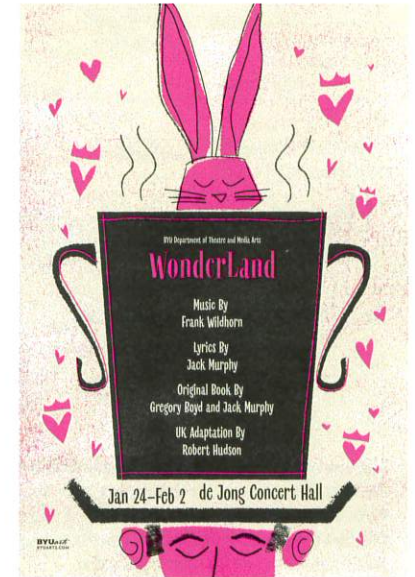
Grace and her coworkers—factory workers who paint the faces of radium-fluorescent watches—fight for their day in court when they all begin to fall ill with a mysterious disease. With nine actors playing 38 roles, Radium Girls is a fast-paced snapshot of the true story of what happens when the American dream bumps up against the realities of health, wealth, and big business.



WONDERLAND

January 24- February 2
de Jong Concert Hall

From the team that brought you the BYU smash hit The Count of Monte Cristo, this new musical takes Lewis Carroll's classic story and sets it in present-day New York. Jump down the rabbit hole to discover this inspirational story of love, redemption, and the power of imagination.



COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Dean Ed Adams	Associate Dean Amy Petersen Jensen	Associate Dean Jeremy Grimshaw	Associate Dean Rory Scanlon
-------------------------	--	--	---------------------------------------

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS

Faculty	Adjunct Faculty	Adjunct Faculty Cont.	Administrative Staff
Wade Hollingshaus, chair	Travis Allen	Carrie Lopez	Kelly Bready
Megan Sanborn Jones, assoc. chair	Haley Flanders Anderson	Teresa Love	Elizabeth Funk
Darl Larsen, assoc. chair	Brandon Arnold	Jeffrey Martin*	Grant Gomm
Julia Ashworth	Kenneth Baldwin	Kee Miller	Lindi Neilson
Brad Barber	Lisa Bean	Mikel Minor	Kyle Stapley
Stephanie Breinholt	Erin Dinnell Bjorn	Bradley Moss	
Scott Christopherson	Jenny Brown	Kyle Nielson*	*BYU Arts Production
Dean Duncan	Matthew R. Carlin	Marianne Ohran*	
Adam Houghton	Michael Chadbourne	Karen Peterson	
Kris Jennings	Travis Coyne*	Ben Phelan	
Amy Petersen Jensen	Jessica Cowden*	Stephen Purdy	
Kimball Jensen	Bryan Densley	Reese Purser	
Michael S. Kraczek	Deanne DeWitt*	Martha Rallison	
Kelly Loosli	Lisa Elzey	Jennifer Reed*	
David Morgan	Bryson Frehner	Nathaniel Reed	
George Nelson	Shelley Graham	Lauren Roundy	
Jeff Parkin	Michael G. Handley*	Courtney Russell	
Tom Russell	Marianne Hales Harding	Spencer Scanlon	
Rory Scanlon	Katie Hill	Alex Simmons	
Benjamin Thevenin	Jennine Hollingshaus	Jerry Stayner	
Tim Threlfall	Wynn Hougaard	Troy Streeter*	
Dennis Wright	Kelyn Ikegami	Bruce Sundstrom	
	Katie Jarvis	Anne Sward-Hansen	
	Heather Jones	Becky Wallin	
	Ruston Jones	Ron Wilkinson	
	Aaron Kopp	Ward Wright*	



College Theater Festival™ 49

part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program,
is generously funded by
David and Alice Rubenstein

Additional support is provided by The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein; the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation; the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation; The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust; Hilton Worldwide; and Beatrice and Anthony Welters and the AnBryce Foundation.

Education and related artistic programs are made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts and the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants, and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction, and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

BYU ARTS PRODUCTION

Director Russell Richins	Production Manager for School of Music Troy Streeter	Stage Operations Manager Jared Patching	Young Ambassadors Costumer MaryLynn Schaerrer
Scheduling/Production Office Supervisor Naomi Escobedo	Production Manager for BRAVO! Series Jared Patching	Stage and Front of House Operations Amanda Morris Elise Lacanienta Glenn Stapley Jason Murdoch Natalie Thomas Kaal Glazier Paige Whitaker Kaylee Tanner Kirsten Busse Emily Bennett Marcus Weatherred Grace McKay Mitch McCarty Monica Wood Statler Smith Tommy Kindall Lela Hill	A/V Operations Manager Troy Streeter
Scheduling/Production Office Assistant Supervisor Silvia Harwood	Technical Operations Manager/ Technical Director Travis Coyne	Technical Director Mark Ohran	Sound Recording Manager Jeff Carter
Scheduling/Production Office Secretary Valerie Stolp	Technical Director Mark Ohran	Asst. Technical Director Ward Wright	Sound Recording Engineer Caleb Hill
Associate Director/Production Manager for Dance Benjamin Sanders	Draftsman/Expeditor Elisabeth Goulding	Scene Shop Carpenters Paul Hintz Devon Howard Makenna Johnston Rider Markwalter John Marshall Passey Alex Swindler	A/V Engineer Doug Olsen
Production Assistant Olivia Jefferies	Scene Shop Carpenters Paul Hintz Devon Howard Makenna Johnston Rider Markwalter John Marshall Passey Alex Swindler	Venues Night Manager Sandra Gierisch	A/V Technicians Gabriella Warnick Grant Porter Holly Schellenberg Jeffrey Owens Karina Orton Matthew Kupferer Zach Griffins
Dance Production Assistant Stage Manager Emma Frost	Painters Sarah Billeter Leah Brandt	Production Assistants Rebecca Hesson Monica Wood	Tour Operations Manager John Ward Shurtleff
Dance Production Digital Media Assistants Taylor Zerilli Drew Dahlberg Ashley Johnson	Scene Shop Painters Desiree King Denyce Hawk	Costume Operations Manager Jessica Cowden	Young Ambassadors Stage Manager Mercedes Schaerrer
Production Assistant Olivia Jefferies	Lighting Operations Manager Michael G. Handley	Costume Operations Assistant Manager/Cutter/Draper Deanne E. DeWitt	Business Manager Brian Olson
Dance Production Digital Media Assistants Taylor Zerilli Drew Dahlberg Ashley Johnson	Lighting Operations Assistant Manager Marianne Ohran	Cutter/Draper Rebekah Silver Jackson	Assistant Business Manager Kathy Heckel
Production Manager for Theatre & Media Arts Jennifer Reed	Resident Master Electrician Mckenzie Ottley	Costume Shop Office Assistant Alexis Winn	Student Accountant Agnese Klugle
Production Assistant Christina Hernandez	Lighting Crew Jacob Anderson Michael Ballif Daniel Barton Tyler Christensen Alexandra Cuthbert Susan Kupferer Melissa Longhurst Esther Pielstick Christina Porter Grant Porter Lauren Rogers Stephen Warren Dylan Wright Matthew Wyman	Wardrobe Supervisors Hannah Liberatore Ashley Peterson	Photography HandleyCraft Photography University Communications
Production Stage Managers Taylor Ballard Daniel Barton Emma Pankratz Melissa Longhurst Christina Hernandez Susan Kupferer Jordan Peterson Cameron Cox	Properties Master Sarah Anne Broyles	Stitchers Elizabeth Banks Allie Stanley Kelen Wright Ren Cottam	
Properties Artisans Mariah Eames Jake Fullmer Taylor Robinson		Costume Crafts CoCo Olson-Paul	
		Hair & Makeup Supervisors Colleen Ackerman Paige Francis	
		Student Productions Wardrobe Supervisor Heather Everett	

DONORS

Mary Lou Fulton Chair Endowment
Ira A. and Mary Lou Fulton

Dr. Marcus & Loren Bach Endowment
Verda Mae Fuller Christensen
Endowment

Cherril B. Liptak Endowment
O. Lee Walker Endowment
R. Don & Shirley Oscarson Endowment

Ruth Smith Silver Endowment
Divine Comedy Endowment
Frank Whiting Endowment

Laurie and Bruce Bayne
Clayton and Christine Christensen
DAB Stewardship Trust
Burt Dalton
Joshua and Jenna Gubler
Mary and Hooshang Farahnakian
Michael and Virginia Handley
David and Laura Harmon
Glen and Megan Sanborn Jones

David and Bianca Lisonbee
George and Leslie Nelson
Kyle H. Nielsen
Ben and Dana Nye
Harold and Ima Jean Oaks
Richard and Nadene Oliver
Nat and Jennifer M. Reed
Reliable Permit Solutions
Michael and Becky Roundy

Ryan D. Roundy
Scott and Liesl Shurtliff
Rodger and Claudia Sorensen
Sam and Diane Stewart Family
Foundation
Janet L. Swenson
Lincoln and Rebekah Watkins
Rick and Amy White
K. Perry Woolsey

Deanne and Paul DeWitt
Eric and Cecelia Fielding
Cynthia Hilger Foundation
Calson Properties, etc.
Bruce and Marie Hafen
Barta L. Heiner

Benjamin and Melanie Hess
Amy and McKay Jensen
Thomas and Laura Lefler
Steven D. Mackay
Jeff and Jana Parkin
JoAnn and James Rogers

Rory and Deanna Scanlon
Sharon E. Swenson
Mary Jane and Sterling Wadley
King and Diane Woolsey

Frank S. Allison
Juila D. Ashworth
Kelly and Brian Bready
Stephanie and Stephan Breinholt
Bill and Trilby Cope
Timothy and Dana Edvalson
Elizabeth C. Funk
Jacob Gowans

Priscilla and Peng Hao
Eric and Elaine Huntsman
Mike and Marianne Krazcek
Ben A. Myers
Patrick and Diane Power
Danna and Gregory Robinson
Thomas B. and Courtney Russell
Eric and Annette Samuelsen

David and Deborah Tehrani
Timothy and Linda Threlfall
Kathleen S. Tuck
Janine Young
Karl and Brenda Wesson
Ward and Mary Wright

Mckell and Thomas Bennet
Mylinda and Michael Butterworth
Klair N. Bybee
Jean S. Chestnutt
Marren B. Copeland
Pheroze and Deenez Coachbuilder
Michelle R. Evans
Andrew Foree
Christopher W. Francia

Peter Gabriel
Heidi Hemming
Nadine L. Lugo
Joana Major
Kenneth and Judith Mallett
Medtronic Foundation
Ryan M. Nielson
Douglas Olsen
Patrick and Diane Power

Gayanne Ramsden
Christen L. Richards
Craig and Shawnda Smith
Chris A. Sturgis
Mary Jo and Neil Tanner
Matthew J. Taylor
Brenton L. Williamson
Jonathan Ying

Erin Anderson
Lisa K. Bean
Kenneth and Lorraine Crossley
Michael and Evelyn Day

Thomas and Alesandra Durham
Tracy A. Evans
Carol P. Farmer
Brandon and Joann Kirk

John J. Kunzler
Nadine J. Lugo
Valerie Merit



The Department of Theatre and Media Arts expresses deep appreciation to our generous patrons. For information about giving to Theatre and Media Arts, visit cfac.byu.edu and click on the link "Giving to the College." For information on how you can play a greater role in Theatre and Media Arts at BYU, contact Wade Hollingshaus, department chair, at 801-422-7768 or wadeh@byu.edu.