



Hallowe'en Party

Agatha Christie

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A teenage murder witness is drowned in a tub of apples... At a Hallowe'en party, Joyce—a hostile thirteen-year-old—boasts that she once witnessed a murder. When no-one believes her, she storms off home. But within hours her body is found, still in the house, drowned in an apple-bobbing tub. That night, Hercule Poirot is called in to find the 'evil presence'. But first he must establish whether he is looking for a murderer or a double-murderer...

Hallowe'en Party Details

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From Reader Review Hallowe'en Party for online ebook

Veronique says

3.5

Feeling a bit torn about this one.

On one side I very much enjoyed this story with our Poirot doing his thing. The mystery was a good one, suitably horrible with the death of a child, and for once I got the identity of the killer (yippee - but not the exact motive).

On the other however, I found the many references to this contemporary time quite jarring. I expected one type of vocabulary and got sometimes something quite different. I know that Christie carried on writing until her death in 1976 but somehow I always associate her with the 50s and before. I'm sure I've read many of her later books but I don't recall ever feeling like this.

Another important factor for the pros is of course Ariadne Oliver. What an amazing character! She leaps off the page with her eccentricity and humour. I absolutely love her.

"Put that in your mustache and smoke it."

Stephanie Anze says

Joyce is a 13-year-old girl helping set up for a Halloween party. Amid the preparations, she brags about having witnessed a murder once. Most that hear her simply suppose that she is trying to impress Adriadne Oliver, a noted murder mystery author that is in attendance, so they pay little mind to her. Joyce storms off only to be found dead in the library, by the bobbing-for-apples game later that evening. It's Mrs. Oliver that contacts Hercule Poirot. Poirot is ever as eager to pursue the case and what he uncovers will be a complicated web of lies and deceit.

Mon Dieu! Agatha Christie strikes again. She once again delivers a clever whodunit. I picked this title specifically for its proximity to Halloween and was not disappointed. There were some concerns that, since this is one of the later titles in the Hercule Poirot series, it was not going to be as impressive as the earlier ones. I was proven quite wrong. Poirot is older, his signature moustache is perfectly coiffed, his leather shoes are too tight but his keen sense is just as sharp. This title has more of an eerie, dark and sinister feel to it. The murder victim is a child that claims to have witnessed a murder. There is doubt as to whether she is telling the truth but when found murdered, well there must have been something to her story. Poirot, who now spends more time at home, is delighted to be on the case. He heads to a quiet and seemingly safe village. Once there, he learns of the murders Joyce could have seen and these served as the red herrings. There is also Greek references which added to the dramatic tone. The suspects and motives were not immediately obvious. Christie slowly builds up to the reveal and it was quite a treat. There will be more Agatha Christie books for me in the future, I can assure you that.

Ginger says

3.5 stars!

I had my hunches and finally figured out most of the mystery, with a 1/4 of the book left. It can happen friends but is very rare with AC books! It's so rare, it's kind of like seeing a yeti for the first time. ?

This was a fun book and an interesting ending.
Not one of her best books but still highly entertaining.

Carol says

While helping to decorate for an upcoming **HALLOWE'EN PARTY** a contentious thirteen year old comments that she once witnessed a murder, but when no one believes her, she high-tails it for home, and only a few hours later, after the party, she is found drowned in the apple-bobbing tub.....hence another murder mystery to solve for ole Hercule Poirot with his manicured to perfection mustache, too tight patent leather shoes and never-ending search for the truth.

Really enjoyed this one! (perhaps bc of the Hallowe'en setting, but more likely bc I actually figured out the evil murderer this time.)

(Note: No Spoilers here, summary of drowning on back cover of my edition)

Erin says

3.5 stars

Ariadane Oliver should really stop attending parties or planning any special events because once again Hercule Poirot was needed. This time to try and solve the murder of a young girl that hours before her death claimed that she "had seen a murder once." Turns out this English village has more than a few missing people, forgers, accidents, and murderers. My head was spinning!

I love the relationship between Olivier and Poirot as they have these "downtime " moments in the midst of crime solving where we can easily see the mutual respect each has for the other. Another good one!

Richard Derus says

Rating: 4* of five

Another case of book and film reviews overlapping.

The book is a hot mess and I'd give it 2.5 stars on its own merits. The entire plot is muddled and there are more loose ends than a fringed vest, but this isn't a surprise as Mrs. Christie was almost certainly suffering from dementia when she wrote this book.

The cast is vast, their interconnections vague, and the motive for the murder was (while the same in both versions) significantly less well explained in the book.

The filmed version is superior, as one would expect from work coming from the inspired pen of Mark Gatiss. He is, after all, one of the geniuses behind the stellar re-imagining of Sherlock Holmes, Sherlock, among other television delights.

The primary benefit the story has on film versus page is the opportunity to clean up the clutter. The story's essential horror comes from untrammelled greed in both versions, but the film's pace and slimmed-down cast make the experience hugely superior. In my never-humble opinion, of course.

As a side note, the miserable experience of trying to read a tree book today was deeply unsuccessful, caused a nasty relapse migraine, and led to me watching the show (sort of, with sleep mask on and taking occasional peeks).

Carol says

Read for my IRL book club. Based on the publisher's blurb that Dame Agatha's sales are exceeded only by Shakespeare's and the Bible, my failure to appreciate what the entire reading world cherishes no doubt speaks to some dark blot on my soul.

Kasia says

I love reading mysteries because they really made my brain tick. They deliver more than a mindless hobby, which reading can sometimes be and really gear me up and make me alert for clues, suspects and provide with great satisfaction when I find myself on the right track. Having said that, Agatha Christie and her charming books fit that hunger to a tee, I find their slightly old fashioned approach so charming and alluring that I always finding myself craving them. She is still my favorite mystery author even though I have hundreds of other books, mostly those leisurely silly cozy mysteries that are cute but nowhere near as intricate as a Hercule Poirot mystery.

This tale was different than most Hercule Poirot books I read. For starters the story begins with a death of a child, not something I am accustomed to reading, and creepy, depressing as it may be it was a hooking point for the real mystery that seemed to have spanned years back. When a children's Halloween party is disturbed by Joyce, who was found drowned in a tub full of water and apples that were there for apple bobbing, everyone dismisses her previous claims of witnessing a murder as another one of her lies. The trouble was that the girl was known for making things up but did she lie this time or was there truth to what she said? Her corpse was proving one point while logic and clues around it were not making any sense. Poirot decides to investigate any unusual incidents that happened approximately at the time of Joyce's story and tries to connect the past with the present making for a very interesting read.

I liked the story but it was hard to follow a few times, the past was far behind yet it was being dug up and spat back at me. So I advise the reader to follow right along, pay attention and when the ending comes together to go over the whole thing in their mind, it will make sense! Overall this was a great read but it made me think more that other Poirot books, of course the answers were right there but I was often misled by Christie's many red herrings. The murderer was evasive and I was surprised to discover who it was but it made for a great read.

Kirsti says

Here's some free advice: If you want to impress people at a party, choose some topic other than "when I was a kid I saw a murder but I didn't know it was a murder and I just figured it out and isn't it awful and aren't I clever."

Cracking good mystery, what what. Halfway through I thought I had it figured out, but it turned out I had only about 5 percent of it right. You expect red herrings in any mystery novel, but this one had about two dozen. I was SO SURE the guy with the fake beard would turn out to be THE KEY TO THE WHOLE THING.

Some of these Agatha Christie books are quite old, and even the later ones seem old to me because of their phrasing and expressions and emphasis on social classes . . . and every once in awhile an abortionist or a lesbian or a drug dealer pops up, which startles me. (I'm not giving anything away about *Hallowe'en Party*; I'm just talking about her books in general.)

While listening to this audiobook over the past week, I've cooked three meals and cleaned out three drawers and half a closet. Well done, Agatha. But now that I know whodunit, I'll probably never get the bathtub scrubbed out.

Vikas Singh says

Another block buster from the queen of crime writing. Once again Poirot teams up with Mrs. Oliver to solve a crime where the characters have a sinister past. Slowly and skillfully the ace detective unravels the plot. Compared to her other novels, this is relatively shorter but not short on thrill

David Schaafsma says

"I hate water"—Ariadne Oliver, once rescued at sea by a friend.

"I hate apples. I never want to see another apple again"—Ariadne Oliver

Hallowe'en Party, Hercule Poirot #36, the second to last Poirot novel, published in 1969, and the second to last written, since Curtain was written in the forties, ready to publish when the end would finally come about (which didn't happen for more than a quarter of a century later!). To say this is better than you'd expect is no compliment, of course, but it is just is. I had little expectations except to be happily surprised at the cleverness of some aspects of the ending, as I always am, and in that respect was not disappointed.

Hostile 13-year-old Joyce, known to be a compulsive liar, tells everyone at a Halloween Party for “Plus Elevens” that she once saw a murder; when no one believes, she leaves in a huff and is promptly drowned in the tub for bobbing apples. This is the second of the Poirot books, both of them written when Christie was a grandmother, where children die, and almost die. An expression of grandparently worry?

Aside from the lively opening, in the spirit of P.G. Wodehouse, to whom the book is dedicated, the book descends for more than a 100 pages into a dull and somewhat needless side story about a forged codicil to a will. This is a Halloween story, can it not be a little scary? Can it not connect to Halloween more than just the opening?! We do have a woman, Mrs. Goodbody who plays a witch at the party, who also seems to have some actual (though underutilized) psychic capacity, and who presciently tells Poirot:

“Ding dong dell, A pussy in the well”— quoting a nursery rhyme [and can a reference to pussies in the pussy hat Women’s March generation ever again be only a reference to cats? It IS here!]

But Christie is (largely) consistent; if you think a murder has to do with madness or magic, you are wrong. Sprites or drooling crazies are not generally killers in Christie. It is usually greed, at the base of things, in some way or the other. You need a reason to kill.

The killer in this tale kills for greed, but it is money s/he requires to create Beauty, to make Art. So s/he kills, in the manner of Agamemnon, who sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia so that he could get a wind to take him to Troy.

“There is always a brave world, but only, you know, for very special people. The lively ones. The ones who carry the making of that world within themselves.”—Poirot.

This novel, set in 1969, includes several references to young men with raucous rock n roll voices and “piles of unruly hair.” Christie and the sixties were not a match, let’s say. There are water and apple references throughout this tale—one house that figures in is even called Apple Trees--but as Poirot points out,

“One always comes back to apples”—Poirot

It is “scatty” detective writer Ariadne Oliver that invites Poirot to help solve the murder(s), which do pile up near the end. She’s a lively character, the best thing that came to the imagination of the later Christie.

Hallowe’en Party is quite good in places, it really is, overall, but it is uneven, including long passages of near irrelevance and boredom after a promising energetic and amusing opening, though it has, I’ll admit, a pretty satisfying conclusion.

Stephanie Swint says

It is Autumn, this week there have been storm clouds in the sky and wind pulling leaves off branches. I am preparing for Halloween and hopefully a horde of trick or treaters who will be knocking on doors in the near future. In my preparation, I was also listening to Christie’s ‘Hallowe’en Party.’ It is a book I have not read by an author I consider an old friend – even if I never met her. Agatha Christie and her beloved Belgian Hercule Poirot are special to me. I watched the series with Hugh Fraser as Hastings and David Suchet as Poirot with my family as a child. Recently, I watched several with my father and they withstood the test of time. It was with joy I found out the narration was done by Hugh Fraser heightening a sense of nostalgia for me and I

burrowed down into blankets and dogs to enjoy this mystery.

Hercule Poirot is older now, at the end of his career, but he still seeks justice with a well-groomed mustache and patent leather shoes. At the request of his friend the famous murder mystery writer, Ariadne Oliver, he has come to help solve the death of a young girl. Ariadne was invited to her friend's house for a Halloween Party. Amidst the broom decoration, witches telling young girls fortunes, bobbing for apples, and the snapdragon a girl is found drowned. Not in a mundane fashion either, she was found with her head floating in the tub used for bobbing for apples. No one can think why someone would want her dead. She wasn't delightful, in fact she was known to seek attention by lying, but she wasn't what one would consider special. Ariadne heard the young girl boasting of having seen a murder to her friends, but when no one believed her she flounced off in a huff. It wasn't until the party was over anyone noticed her disappearance. Ariadne, noticing something more sinister, insists Poirot come and use his skills to find out what is really happening in this quiet village.

Christie's writing is as enjoyable as ever. Her humor in these delicate murder mysteries is part of what I think made her stories unique and loved. She never skimped on creating real whole characters. 'Hallowe'en Party' is not long but it is packed with a good mystery, and commentary on the times it was written. This was published in 1969 and while it still holds the atmosphere of a quiet English village you can feel Christie seeing the changes in England as she writes about it, including the changing opinions on children, accountability, and justice. Much is said about how making "morally right" decisions can have larger, and in Christie's view more negative, impacts on children and society.

The Halloween party is perfect. You get a lot of discussion about village witches, the difference between pumpkins and vegetable marrows, young girls seeing their future husbands in mirrors, and a Snapdragon. I had no idea what a Snapdragon is. For your information 'Snapdragon' is a Victorian parlour game where raisins are put in a shallow bowl filled with brandy. The Brandy is lit and children try to grab the "snapping" raisins from the bowl. It sounds a touch dangerous to me but it definitely fits as a fun Halloween game (even if it usually took place at Christmas time).

Small town politics and gossip, as is tradition, help Christie's characters find their murderer. I loved this book. It will definitely be something I reread/relisten to around Halloween. It is the perfect length at 336 pages or about six hours listening time. It will get you ready for a Halloween party of your own...

This is on sale for \$1.99 on Amazon starting 10-19-15

Marijan says

Knjiga je solidna, mada možda ne vrhunska, i kao i uvijek kod AC nepredvidljivo se krije unutar predvidljivog. Zabavno štivo, i još jedan ugodan susret s malim detektivom.

Bridgette Redman says

I am a big fan of Agatha Christie. I love her writing and have read piles and piles of her books.

So I feel a bit queasy when my first review of one of her books is panning it.

But I can't recommend this book to anyone—especially not to anyone who hasn't read Agatha Christie before. You might get the impression that she is a hack, formulaic writer with cardboard characters who all spout the same dialog. You might read this book and think that Agatha Christie writes mysteries with predictable plots and too large of a social agenda.

You would be right if you based your judgement solely on this novel. In fact, there is a part of me that desperately wants to believe that this book is a forgery. Perhaps Christie decided to loan her irascible detective Hercule Poirot and the self-parodying Ariadne Oliver out to another author, an apprentice perhaps. That might explain the travesty that is this novel.

Yet, I look at the date of this novel—1969—and realize that perhaps one of my favorite mystery authors was simply getting tired of her characters and writing to meet a deadline. Perhaps she had used up all of her suspenseful endings and gripping characterizations. Granted, *Curtain*--a novel that ranks with her best works—was still to come, but I think this novel was part of the reason she was so ready to give Poirot his send-off.

The book begins slowly, pouring all sorts of irrelevant details and descriptions over us as if Christie hadn't yet decided in which direction she was going to take the novel and what information would end up being useful. Even when the murder takes place—the murder of a 13-year-old girl at a Hallowe'en party—there isn't a lot of drama.

The book gets worse as we have to listen to each and every character spew forth the popular drivel about criminals not being responsible for their actions and that the murder must have been committed by an insane person let out too early from a mental institution due to overcrowding. It wouldn't have been so bad if only two or three people had proposed this as a solution, but to have every person interviewed jump on this bandwagon and speak almost identical dialog made for a boring read. Indeed, the only diversity in opinion came from Poirot himself, who maintained that this was a murder with a motive.

As the readers, we have no doubt. Dame Agatha does not write murders without motives. So it would have been nice if at least a few of the characters Poirot interviewed could have had a distinct voice.

I was also disappointed because typically Christie is able to produce an ending that is both surprising and memorable. In this novel, I was able to figure out who the murderer was when Poirot was first given a list of past murders. There was one slight twist at the end, but it was neither surprising nor interesting.

The ending of the book was nothing but painful. Christie labored at building suspense using all sorts of techniques to the point where the techniques got in the way and the reading was simply wearisome. She holds off on revealing who-dun-it until long after the reader has any doubts, making the denouement simply a relief that the book was almost over, rather than a delightful surprise.

Agatha Christie writes wonderful mysteries. I encourage anyone to read them. But don't read this book. Try instead one of these novels:

Witness for the Prosecution
The Mousetrap
And Then There Were None
Death on the Nile
The ABC Murders

Murder on the Orient Express
The Murder of Roger Ackroyd
Verdict
The Mirror Crack'd From Side to Side

All of those books are immensely satisfying and are wonderful examples of Christie's craft. I may even go re-read some of those to get the taste of Hallowe'en Party out of my mouth.

Amalia Gavea says

"The past is the father of the present."

The "crime" writers who write like Christie are few. The ones who try to write mysteries similar to her own are non-existent. I may sound harsh, but those who struggle to imitate her should take a step back and reconsider. And why is that? Because she understood, embraced and elevated to a whole new level the implications of the past when facing the present. As horrible as a present situation may be, the roots of all evil lie in the deeds of the past. This is present to every work of the Queen of Crime. In my opinion, "Hallowe'en Party" delivers this notion in a highly atmospheric manner and presents one of the most elaborate crimes Agatha ever delivered.

13 year old Joyce, a little busybody who wants to be in the centre of attention, is found murdered in a tub filled with apples, in a twisted apple-bobbing game on Halloween. Hercule and the wonderful Ariadne Oliver are called to solve the crime. In this work, sexual passion and obsession are the motives that guide each suspect and there is a plethora of fascinating stories of people attracted to beauty, vice and a twisted notion of love. Agatha creates a unique atmosphere, with prominent descriptions of the Halloween festivities, the beautiful garden, the temptations that guide the characters to questionable deeds. The snapdragon scene, a haunting game that isn't included in many works of Fiction, is among my favourites in all of Christie's novels and stories. Not to mention that I love Ariadne to pieces. I think she's an exciting character on her own and the proper equivalent to our beloved Hercule. And, naturally, the ITV film production was perfect, despite some deviations from the novel.

If you want to experience Halloween through Crime Fiction, don't look further. "Hallowe'en Party" is just what you want, with a healthy dose of good old British mystery. Can't get any more perfect than that...

Raya ???? says

??????: ?????? ?????? ????

Lata says

Ariadne Oliver, stop going to parties! Murder seems to follow you to parties; what a bad guest!
A girl is murdered at a party and a shaken Ariadne pulls Poirot into the case, which I partly figured out with

my own 'little grey cells.' I really enjoyed Ariadne's presence, which, though not large, still entertained me. And really, Poirot! Patent leather shoes in the country while you walk from location to location during your inquiries? Though you are intelligent when it comes to figuring out who's a murderer, your desire to look good instead of sporting sensible shoes makes me grin and shake my head.

mark monday says

Choose Your Own Adventure!

You are a truly annoying little girl. A busybody, a liar. Who can trust you? For the good of the community, a-bobbin' for apples you must go – like permanently. But death is not the end! From on high you witness the actions of a strange mustached man and his flighty authoress sidekick. Together they vow to avenge your murder and lay your lovely bones to rest. They believe in your tale of dastardly deeds and murder, the tale that brought you to such an untimely end; their quest for vengeance will lead them to all who once stood in judgment of you.

Unfortunately, your legacy remains that of an unrepentant liar and even your avengers soon grow weary of your string of lies and deception. Turn from the truth, little soul, fly away! But wherever shall you go?

If you decide to follow the demented authoress on a path filled with psychics, séances and black magic, choose <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...>

If you decide to follow the mustached weirdo in his never-ending quest for crème de cacao, choose <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...>

Susan says

This is very much a later Christie novel – written in 1969 and virtually one of the last Poirot novels she wrote. Poirot is very much, like the author I suspect, feeling his age. We meet him bemoaning the fact that a friend is probably cancelling a visit and contemplating another dull evening, when he gets a call from his old friend, Mrs Ariadne Oliver. Mrs Oliver, a crime author, had been visiting a friend and helping with the organisation for a joint Halloween/11+ party for some children. During the preparations, one girl, Joyce, boasts that she once witnessed a murder. Her words are not believed, but, later that same day, she is found murdered and now Mrs Oliver turns to Poirot for help.

This book reunites Poirot both with Mrs Oliver and the, now retired, Superintendent Spence from “Mrs McGinty’s Dead,” as he lives nearby. There is a little personal complaining from the author about the modern world – boys hair, children’s behaviour and a little repetition, which does show that Agatha Christie is not quite at the peak of her powers. However, even with a few flaws, this is still a very enjoyable novel. Poirot delves into the past to find out who, and why, a murderer would kill a child. As such, this is very much a more ‘modern’ novel – Poirot is constantly told by characters how many unbalanced characters abound, there is no longer a death penalty and the world seems a more dangerous place. As such, it is an interesting novel for Poirot fans, as a glimpse of Christie’s views of the permissive society and, as such, of how Poirot viewed the modern world.

Carol. says

While some of Agatha Christie's mysteries remain immensely satisfying, there are a few that just don't work, whether from cultural shift or a more experimental approach. I was worried when I picked up *Hallowe'en Party*; I had been operating with a suspicion that her best work was earlier in her extensive career. However, it wasn't long before my concern was dismissed as I settled into an engrossing tale of Hercule Poirot investigating a murder at a Halloween party.

Poor Joyce; thirteen and a bit desperate for attention, she's become known for telling tales. Perhaps hoping to impress Mrs. Oliver during the preparations for a Halloween party, she claims to have seen a murder. When the Halloween party is over, Joyce is discovered dead, but only Mrs. Oliver connects the earlier boast to the death—the rest of the village is prefers to blame an anonymous unstable person. She calls on dear, aging Hercule. He concurs with her fine instincts and arranges to stay with retired Inspector Spence, coincidentally living in the same village.

Hercule focuses on Jane's tall tale, convinced the solution lies in the past. He digs into the history of the village; a disappearing au pair girl, a wealthy widow who died unexpectedly, a forger who was stabbed, a man killed in a hit-and-run, a strangled girl in a gravel pit. As he talks with the villagers, the ominous atmosphere increases.

Almost everything about the book is lovely. The writing shines, the characters are complex. Christie can paint a portrait in only a few sentences: **"His friend, Mrs. Oliver, sounded in a highly excitable condition. Whatever was the matter with her, she would no doubt spend a very long time pouring out her grievances, her woes, her frustrations or whatever was ailing her...The things that excited Mrs. Oliver were so numerous and frequently so unexpected that one had to be careful how one embarked upon a discussion of them."**

The atmosphere is sinister, and the setting feels fully realized, although I still don't understand why snap-dragon would be the capstone to a children's party. Once again Mrs. Oliver serves as a authorial voice, particularly when Hercule notes how an author tends to co-opt characters from real people. Her bits calling out Hercule are particularly amusing:

"The trouble with you is," said Mrs. Oliver..."the trouble with you is that you insist on being smart. You mind more about your clothes and your moustaches and how you look and what you wear than comfort. Now comfort is really the great thing. Once you've passed, say, fifty, comfort is the only thing that matters."

Straight from the mouth of a seventy-nine year old.

An excellent read, and well worth re-reading.
