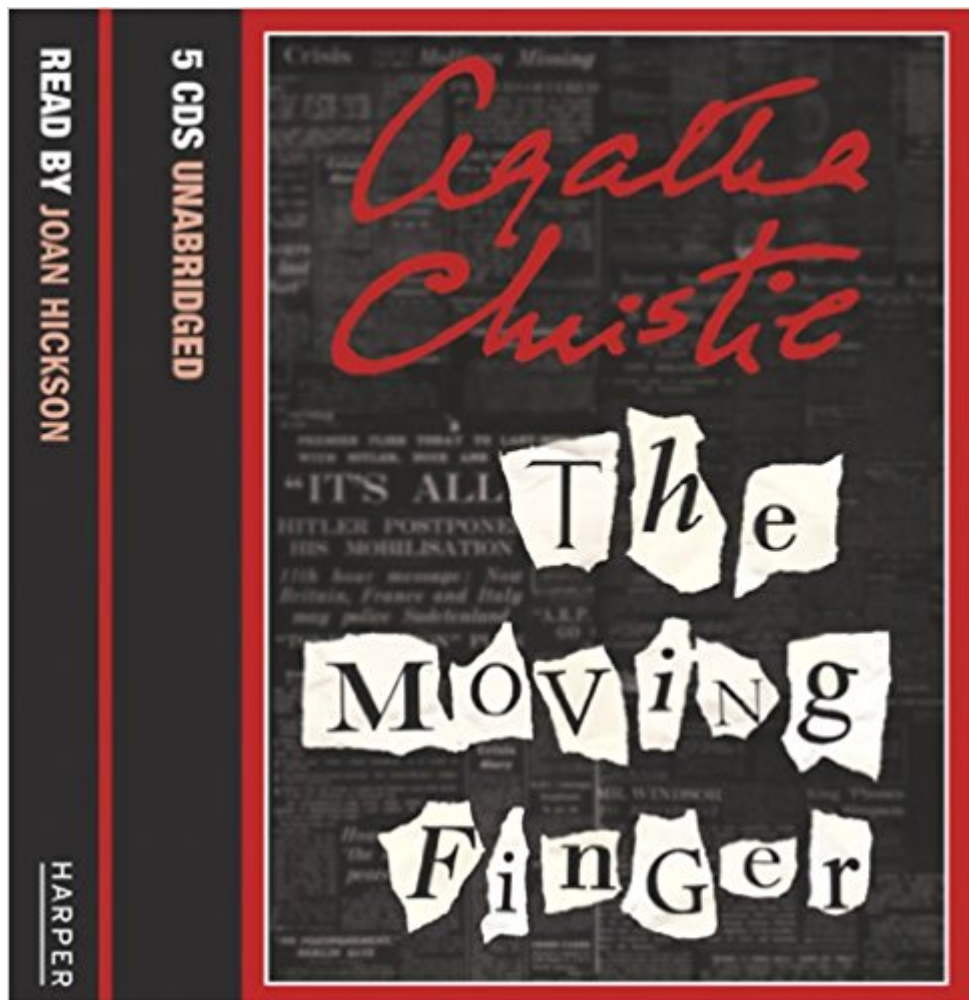


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The Moving Finger



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

'Beyond all doubt the puzzle in The Moving Finger is fit for experts.' The Times

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 says "I can't go on," but Miss Marple questions the coroner's verdict of suicide. Soon nobody is sure of anyone as secrets stop being shameful and start becoming deadly.

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The plot is pretty basic and straight forward. There's no real originality among the characters. It's an incredibly boring book and does not do well to maintain your interest. Also, Where the heck is Miss Marple? She doesn't appear until you are nearly 3/4 done with the book and even then she's disappears for many pages and only reappears to solve things real quick and explain things to the

reader. Such a disappointment of a book, This is the last Miss Marple book I'm gonna read.

This is a review of the recorded book. The story is narrated by Jerry Burton, a young flyer who is recovering from a crash. Unfortunately, the producers decided to have it read by Joan Hickson, an elderly actress who has played Miss Marple on the screen. She has a very well-bred and elderly voice, with some slurring of the words, as though Miss Marple had drunk a couple of sherries. This is disappointing, as in the case of "Murder on the Links," where the story is narrated by Hastings, but read by a young woman with a sprightly voice. It detracts from the listening experience. The book was a favorite Christie, with a very likable young hero and his sister (a "flapper,"), going to stay in a village in the country while he recuperates from his injuries. Then the poison pen letters start to show up, and murder follows. There are some wonderful characters, especially the vicar's wife, a strange woman who frightens people with her peculiar insights, and a young girl who moons about, unwanted by her family. Miss Marple appears only in the last quarter of the book, and penetrates through the fog of suspicion to the truth behind the letters. (I've never been a fan of Marple---imagine living next door to someone who surveys the activities of her neighbors through binoculars in the guise of bird-watching!) There are two different romances in the novel, and Christie does an excellent job of presenting a believable hero, the young man who narrates the story.

Jerry Burton and his sister have come to Lymstock for him to recover after an air crash he was in. They think they will get some rest in a small town where they know no one. Too soon they receive a hate letter in the mail and soon learn others have, too. Then Mrs. Symmington kills herself supposedly, but can Jerry, Miss Marple and the police figure out what really happened? Great writing. From Burton's point of view.

This story is a little bit different when confronted with other Marple mysteries. Miss Marple and her incomparable wisdom appear late in the plot. With that said, one will experience another well designed puzzle with a lot of good ingredients: anonymous letters, murder, a lot of gossip, even romance. A well written tale presented in the first person by its main character.

"Such a peaceful smiling happy countryside - and down underneath, something evil..."-- The Moving Finger, p. 28 After a wartime plane crash, Jerry Burton's doctor advises him to find a nice, quiet country village and "live the life of a vegetable" to speed along the recuperation process. Jerry and his sister Joanna settle in Lymstock, an idyllic country town that is three miles from a main road. It is

a place where, as an astonished Joanna observes, "People really call - with cards!" Jerry's peaceful, vegetative life in Lymstock is, however, soon shattered. A few days after their arrival, Jerry receives a malicious anonymous letter. The letter alleges that the Burtons are not brother and sister, but an unmarried couple living in sin. Jerry and Joanna are initially quite amused by the novelty of receiving such a letter, but they soon view the letter as a sign of something much more sinister. All of Lymstock, it seems, has been receiving these letters. When a woman apparently commits suicide after receiving a letter, the search for the writer intensifies. After another character is murdered, presumably by the anonymous writer, a palpable fear settles over the community. Neighbor suspects neighbor and the whole of Lymstock wonders who amongst them could be capable of such despicable acts. The indomitable Miss Marple makes her first appearance in the last quarter of the novel. For a less skillful writer than Dame Christie, the lack of the primary character could have made this story very tedious for the reader, but Christie's characters are so well-drawn and compelling that the reader does not notice the loss. The primary sleuthing has been done by Jerry and a few of the other residents of Lymstock, but only Miss Marple is able to connect the myriad of clues and bring the killer to justice. The Moving Finger was originally published in the United States in 1942. For a novel that is over sixty years old, it has aged incredibly well. Agatha Christie's extraordinary understanding of human nature gives her characters and her stories a timeless quality. One of my favorite Christie novels, The Moving Finger is a compelling read that will keep you guessing until the end.

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