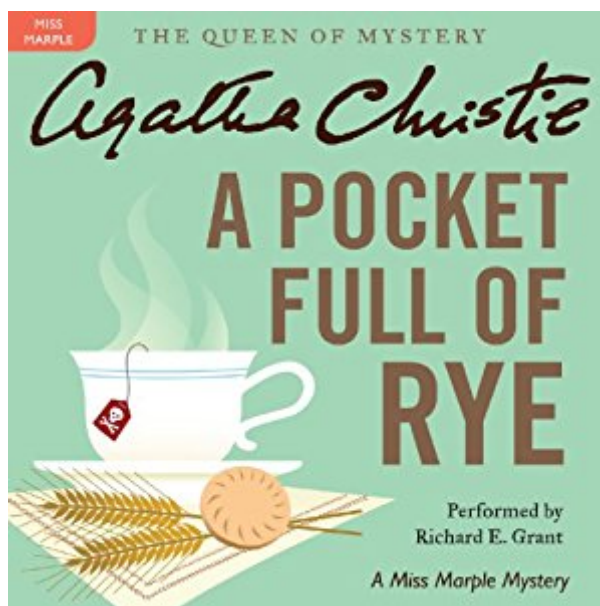


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A Pocket Full Of Rye: A Miss Marple Mystery



Synopsis

Rex Fortescue, king of a financial empire, was sipping tea in his "counting house" when he suffered an agonizing and sudden death. On later inspection, the pockets of the deceased were found to contain traces of cereals. Yet, it was the incident in the parlor that confirmed Miss Marple's suspicion that here she was looking at a case of crime by rhyme....

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 6 hours 51 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: HarperAudio

Audible.com Release Date: March 26, 2013

Language: English

ASIN: B00B8WKX5Q

Best Sellers Rank: #160 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > British Detectives #739 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Historical Fiction #1084 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > British Detectives

Customer Reviews

Agatha Christie used nursery rhymes as titles of her novels several times (Ten Little Indians, Five Little Pigs, Hickory Dickory Dock, One Two Buckle My Shoe, Sing a Song of Sixpence, Three Blind Mice, There Was a Crooked Man - have I missed any?) and they serve to add a sense of direction to the novel as well as provide a clue to the identity of the suspect. Sing a song of sixpence, A pocket full of rye; Four and twenty blackbirds Baked in a pie. When the pie was opened, They all began to sing. Now, wasn't that a dainty dish To set before the King? The King was in his countinghouse, Counting out his money; The Queen was in the parlor Eating bread and honey. The maid was in the garden, Hanging out the clothes. Along there came a big black bird And snipped off her nose! A POCKET FULL OF RYE is set in post World War II years, amid a really quite nasty family. It is filled with tales of frustration, revenge and greed. Miss Marple becomes part of the investigating team when she reads that the maid at Yewtree Lodge is one of three people murdered. The maid is an orphan whom Jane Marple helped train for private service. Miss Marple is particularly upset when the maid is found with a clothes peg on her nose. She makes a train journey from St. Mary Mead via London and presents herself at Yewtree Lodge: Crump [the butler] saw a

tall, elderly lady wearing an old-fashioned tweed coat and skirt, a couple of scarves and a small felt hat with a bird's wing. The old lady carried a capacious handbag and an aged but good-quality suitcase reposed by her feet. Crump recognized a lady when he saw one...The detective in charge of the case wisely decides to make use of Miss Marple's talents. Inspector Neele looked with some interest at the mild, earnest face of the old lady who confronted him now at Yewtree Lodge. He had been in two minds at first how to treat her, but he quickly made up his mind. Miss Marple would be useful to him. She was upright, of unimpeachable rectitude and she had, like most old ladies, time on her hands and an old maid's nose for scenting bits of gossip. She'd get things out of servants, and out of the women of the Fortescue family perhaps, that he and his policemen would never get. Talk, conjecture, reminiscences, repetitions of things said and done, out of it all she would pick the salient facts. So Inspector Neele was gracious. I don't think the murderer's identity came as a surprise. I was surprised that he used three separate murder weapons, albeit two of them were poisons. The maid's murder felt more callous and was certainly more violent.

No one could create puzzlers like Dame Agatha Christie. *A Pocket Full of Rye* is so jam-packed with red herrings, Christie could've taken the story towards a half dozen or so different resolutions (at least!). The victim, Rex Fortescue, was a thoroughly unlikable man, and the dysfunctional family he leaves behind are, for the most part, equally unpleasant. The incredibly competent Inspector Neele is assigned to investigate the case, and what at first seems like a "routine" poisoning case soon grows into a veritable maze of lies and misdirection - beginning with the curious discovery of rye in Rex's pockets. When Rex's much younger widow is subsequently poisoned while taking tea, and the maid is found murdered by the clothesline, Neele struggles to find the connection between these seemingly random crimes. Miss Jane Marple barely appears in this novel, but her scenes are critical in revealing the killer's identity. She's the catalyst that helps Neele connect the threads of these seemingly random killings. I was quite impressed with Neele's character - for my money he's one of Christie's most interesting inspectors. He's extremely intelligent, intuitive, and knows how to read people. Most importantly, he knows how to use a person's tendency to underestimate him. He's not one of those investigators who must have every clue handed to him by the "civilian" or "amateur" sleuth. Christie could've written more novels featuring Neele's character and I wouldn't have complained at all. Christie incorporated rhymes or famous quotes as clues in her mysteries on more than one occasion (*Poirot's* "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe (Hercule Poirot)" or *Tommy and Tuppence's* "By The Pricking Of My Thumbs (Tommy and Tuppence), to name just a few). *Pocket* probably isn't one of my favorites - the pool of suspects is relatively limited after all. But

Christie throws so many misdirections and possible motives into the setting of this dysfunctional, very English, household that it's a delight to spend a few hours with Neele and Marple sorting through the red herrings in order to reveal the culprit.

I love, love, love Mrs. Marple. Can't get enough from her. I read this book years ago and now (while starting to put all of my favorites on Kindle) I read it again. Even the second time around was good.

I have 23 different BBC Radio 4 fullcast dramatizations and I have yet to be disappointed. A Pocket Full of Rye is again one of their top quality works. June Whitfield as the deceptively mild spinster sleuth Miss Marple, excels in the part. Surrounded by some of the finest cast such as Nicky Henson as Inspector Neele, Derek Waring as Rex Fortescue, Peter Yapp as Percival, Ian Masters as Lance and Natasha Pyne as Jennifer, with too many more to list, this is one of the superior dramas brought to BBC audio. I could actually visualize the drama as I listened to it and really enjoyed it immensely.

There's still no one who can match Agatha Christie. After all these years simply the best at the murder - mystery genre.

Sharply drawn characters, vivid scenes. The St. Mary's Meade spinster Miss Marple warms the heart while at the same time shrewdly solving a crime that not even Inspector Neele could crack.

I immensely enjoyed this audiobook. I bought it in the cassette version, and it performed perfectly. My daughter also enjoyed it. Full of Dame Agatha's interesting characters, and in classic Christie style, it kept me guessing 'who done it' right up to the end. Miss Marple was the initial Christie character that got me interested in her mysteries; not the performances of Joan Hixson (I have never seen any of her work) but some short stories that were given to me as a gift. The idea of such a genteel little old lady (who reminded me of my own English grandmother) with an unerring gift for unravelling murder, was quite captivating.

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