



The Act of Roger Murgatroyd: An Entertainment

Gilbert Adair

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Boxing Day circa 1935. A snowed-in manor on the very edge of Dartmoor. A Christmas house-party. And overhead, in the attic, the dead body of Raymond Gentry, gossip columnist and blackmailer, shot through the heart. But the attic door is locked from the inside, its sole window is traversed by thick iron bars and, naturally, there is no sign of a murderer or a murder weapon. Fortunately (though, for the murderer, unfortunately), one of the guests is the formidable Evadne Mount, the bestselling author of countless classic whodunits. In fact, were she not its presiding sleuth, THE ACT OF ROGER MURGATROYD is exactly the type of whodunit she herself might have written.

The Act of Roger Murgatroyd: An Entertainment Details

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Author : Gilbert Adair

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Laura says

This book is wonderful! Gilbert Adair has somehow managed to poke fun at Agatha Christie and the entire whodunit genre, while at the same time admiring them, and creating a fantastic addition to this same variety of novels. The contrived setting and characters are hilarious, quirky and intelligently crafted; his prose is clever and completely enjoyable to read, particularly in the description of his creations and their various peculiarities: with Evadne Mount, for example, wearing 'shoes so sensible, as they say, you felt like consulting them on whether you should cash in your shares in Amalgamated Copper'. Adair even managed to begin a chapter with 'It was a dark and stormy afternoon', without sounding ridiculous or at all as though he's ridiculing Bulwer-Lytton's 'It was a dark and stormy night'. Or, at least, without losing the conviction that that was exactly what he had intended to do. I can't wait to read the following books in the Evadne Mount Trilogy!

Manny says

"Now," said Evadne Mount in her quiet but implacable way, "I shall ask you all to join me in the library."

"All of us?" asked Gilbert, sardonically lifting an eyebrow.

"That is what I said, Mr. Adair," replied the renowned amateur sleuth.

"But there is only me," said Gilbert.

"Only I," said Evadne with a hint of impatience. "And frankly, how many of you there are is hardly the question. I would like to observe the proprieties, even if you don't."

"But be reasonable!" entreated Gilbert. "How can we have a mystery with only one suspect?"

The rest of this review might be in *Verbivoracious Festschrift Volume Three: The Syllabus*. Or then, again, it might not be: according to Goodreads policy, I'm not allowed to say. Only one way to find out, you know...

says

Every sentence in *The Act of Roger Murgatroyd* screams "Agatha Christie!" An English country house has been snowed in over Christmas, but if that wasn't bad enough, the guests also have a dead body in the attic to deal with.

I'm an avid Christie fan, and having read all her mysteries a dozen times, reading *Roger Murgatroyd* is like slipping into a pair of well-worn, comfortable slippers. There's nothing new or outrageous here, the book is

written in the style of a classic whodunnit. You've got the dead body, the list of suspects, and the detective. But Gilbert Adair pulls it off wonderfully, and spoof or not, fans of the old-fashioned "cozy" murder mysteries will enjoy this.

Gerry says

A house party on Boxing Day c1935 turns into a murder hunt. Snowed in with no hope of police intervention for some days, the murderer does not realise that a retired chief inspector lives close by.

He pops in to investigate in advance of official sources and with the help of crime novelist Evadne Mount, who does most to unmask the unlikely killer, the mystery is solved.

The build-up is superb, tantalisingly pointing to any number of guests who could have perpetrated the crime until the most unsuspected murderer is revealed, which leads to a dramatic climax.

Great fun, great read, let's have more Evadne!

Hanna says

Adairs novel is a wonderful homage to classic whodunits of Agatha Christie and the likes. Set in Dartmoor on Boxing day in the 1930s, a group of friends have gathered to celebrate Christmas together only to find the hosts daughter's friend dead in the morning. Since nobody liked him and the house is snowed in, there's only one possibility: one of them is the murderer.

My favorite character of the book, Evadne Mount, a novelist, who, by all chances, is writing crime mysteries, sets out to solve the case, as she has no confidence in the neighbor and (retired) policeman that is fetched to help.

I liked Adairs writing a lot and the portrait he paints of all his characters, they literally came to life with all their flaws (and there are many). Only the ending came a bit too abruptly for my liking.

Tony says

This pulls in every hook and device used in whodunits and in such a beautifully tongue-in-cheek manner.

An enjoyable read even with the rather drawn out revelations in The Library (although Gilbert makes a wonderful stab at himself for doing so).

Hannah Fatkin says

This book is an interesting one. It was passed onto me because I'm a big fan of Agatha Christie's books, and this is, for want of a better word, a parody. The Act of Roger Murgatroyd is clearly a play on The Murder of Roger Ackroyd. I was intrigued to say the least, and not quite sure what to expect. I wondered at first if this was going to be the same story as in The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, with the same premise and the same characters, but with twists that aren't in the original novel. It turns out this is actually an entirely new novel, with the title and a few subtle references being the only direct link to Christie's work.

I enjoyed this book, if only for those little references. It was a very straightforward story, with a range of typical characters you'd normally find in crime fiction, including a detective who is brought in spontaneously. There's also plenty of backstory to pad the plot out. However, I'm not sure I would have enjoyed this book if I wasn't a fan of Christie. I imagine I would have found it rather a dull plot, with the only excitement coming from fictional sleuth Evadne's dialogue. It was a fun book with some merits, but I can't imagine I'll ever read it again.

Read my full review here:
<https://theforeverbookworm.blogspot.com>...

Adele says

Thank goodness this is just a stand alone book. Possibly one of the least enjoyable books I've read recently. The plot dragged on far too long and few developments occurred along the way until Mount suddenly recalls a key clue and solves the whole thing over the last 20 pages. That character has a rather irritating tendency to waffle and wander from the point. I'll admit the end when it switches to the murderer's thoughts at the very end was quite witty and boosted the book a bit. Pitty it was too little too late.

Sjonnei says

A frightfully entertaining spoof of the classic english murder mystery.

"As you're doubtless sick to the back-teeth of hearing, Gentry took the absolute pip. He was a beast, a rotter of the first water, a self-infatuated, sallow-complexioned little climber, with his artistic hair and his scarlet lips and his T.S. this and D.H. that and his eternal boasting and bragging about his acquaintance with the Maharani of Rajasthan or the Oom of Oompah or some other equally improbable pasha or pashette. [...] No, I did not murder Raymond Gentry. Though to be candid with you [...] I wish I had."

Lucy Sheridan says

I read this back-to-back with Agatha Christie's "The murder of Roger Ackroyd" which was apparently the inspiration for Gilbert Adair and I loved them both! I loved the twists and turns and I couldn't guess who the murderer was!

mark monday says

literary author Gilbert Adair constructs a charming bagatelle that riffs on all of the tropes and standbys of classic murder mysteries written by Agatha Christie et al. we have the Colonel and the Vicar and the Country Doctor and their various wives and we have the eccentric Authoress (named Evadne, clearly to honor Christie's own Ariadne Oliver) and the grand-standing Actress and the Plucky, Pretty Young Thing and her beau, the Stalwart Young American. best of all, we have the murder victim, dead before the first page: an incredibly venomous gossip columnist whose nastiness and over-the-top snobbery (seared into his targets' memories and thus recounted to another standby, the Retired Police Inspector) caused me to laugh out loud repeatedly. everything about this vindictive little bitch was, in a word, *delicious*. Adair adroitly skirts the basic problem of juggling all of his stereotypical characters - namely, that reading about stereotypes is rather a bore - by stuffing his slim tale with heaps of wonderful wit and knowing irony and brief, gleeful bits of inappropriate humor based around race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and whether or not the murder victim "looks Jewish" - humor that happily skewers the characters themselves, including the narrator. I particularly appreciated the throwaway references to Christie's Murder on the Orient Express and The Mousetrap; beyond those and other callbacks, the book was obviously written as an homage to her classic The Murder of Roger Ackroyd. the murder mystery itself is well thought-out and I was surprisingly surprised at the identity of the murderer. although I really shouldn't have been surprised at all - the clues are all there. the whole endeavor is clever, clever, clever, and overall a delightful lark... although in the end I prefer actual classic murder mysteries to murder mystery parodies.

recommended for fans of cozy mysteries who don't mind a smart spoof of their favorite genre. also recommended for snooty literary types who wouldn't dare be seen reading such bourgeois entertainments.

and by the by... have you seen *Murder By Death*? if you liked that film you will no doubt like this book.

Jade says

Pale imitation of Agatha Christie with insufferable characters. I expected this book to be a funny and clever take on the Golden Age but it was a sad parody. All the characters' secrets were absolutes clichés! The main characters kept wittering on about irrelevant stuff that were supposed to be charming, I suppose, but it made reading this book an absolute chore. To top it off the resolution was disappointed, the ending abrupt, and there was some animal cruelty.

Doug Beatty says

Poor Raymond Gentry. He shows up unexpectedly on Boxing Day with his new girlfriend, and immediately makes himself instantly unpopular with the entire household. Early one morning the poor lad finds himself in the attic, shot through the neck, with the door locked and the key on the inside. The windows are barred and there seems to be no other way in or out of the room. How did Raymond meet his unpleasant end? Luckily, a retired Chief Inspector lives close by, and one of the guests is no other than mystery writer Evadne Mount who has some ideas of her own as to the method of the crime. She also shares vignettes from her own novels that are quite amusing and makes one realize that the solution will be in her hands. In the tradition of the great mystery writers, Gilbert Adair creates the perfect "classic" novels, and he pays homage in his writing to some of the greats, including Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, John Dickson Carr and

Margery Allingham. If you are a fan of the classic age of mysteries and miss the style, this would be a novel for you.

Evadne Mount will return in two other novels, and hopefully, although this was planned as a trilogy, the writer will give us more. It is truly a joy to find a contemporary writer that can take us back to the twenties and create a wonderful crime novel.

Truly one to be read and savored.

Richard says

Stylish Christie pastiche. Definitely entertaining, but the herrings are SO red that they seem kind of pointless. I'd call this a 3.5, rounded up. If you like this kind of thing, I highly recommend James Anderson's Affair of... trilogy, especially The Affair of the Mutilated Mink.

Nicolas Chinardet says

The book is subtitled "an entertainment", and this is exactly what it is. As usual, Adair is masterful at playing with the recognised tropes of the genre he has decided to tackle (in this case the old fashioned British murder mystery). As usual he also manages to transcend the pastiche element to create an original and highly enjoyable, beautifully written and crafted piece of writing. Adair was a brilliant writer (and if my experience of meeting him once is anything to go by, a terrible flirt). It's a real shame he never got more recognition.
