

***The Mystery of Mrs. Christie* by Marie Benedict** **Discuss Questions**

1. Agatha Christie is one of the most celebrated mystery writers of all time. What did you know about her personal history before you read *THE MYSTERY OF MRS. CHRISTIE*? Did the book challenge any of your preconceived notions about her life?
2. Agatha Christie was a successful writer within her lifetime, quite unusual for a woman of her time. How did her desire for independence shape the course of the story, both obviously and more subtly?
3. Do you think Agatha Christie is a good representative of the issues that women faced in her era? Did she have any privileges or responsibilities that set her apart from other women of her period?
4. Describe the night Archie and Agatha first met. How did their relationship change over time, and why? Do you think Agatha's manuscript told the full story? What details do you think she changed or left out? Why do you think she might have altered the "truth"?
5. Archie spends much of the story trying to protect his reputation. Do you think that would be the case if the story took place today? Would it be easier or more difficult for him to deflect guilt in the modern news cycle?
6. What differences did you see between the Agatha within the manuscript and the Agatha who appears at the end of the book? What creative licenses did she take with her own personality and story? Were they justified?
7. Toward the end of the book, Agatha mourns the mother she could not be for Rosalind. What forces dominated their relationship? Do you think Agatha's struggle to balance husband and child was common in her historical period? How do you expect her relationship with Rosalind to evolve after the events of the book? How does this compare with parental struggles mothers face now?
8. Which characters, if any, did you find to be most relatable? Did you connect with Agatha? Were there any characters you wished you knew more about?

9. Agatha left an enormous mark on the mystery community and on the world of books more generally. Do you think her marriage had an effect on her success? Or her disappearance? If so, what was it? How would you characterize her personal and professional legacies?

10. What do you think of Agatha's decision to disappear? What were the key motivating factors that led to this decision?

11. The novel is written from dual timelines—Archie's perspective and Agatha's perspective. What did you think about this narration style?

12. Archie is a bit of a mystery in many ways. He takes a huge interest in Agatha in the beginning but that quickly disappears. What was behind his pursue of Agatha? Did he think she came from money? Do you believe he ever truly cared for her?

13. Agatha's mother tells her that Archie must always come first no matter what. Even after the birth of their daughter. Let's talk about how that advice proved to be toxic for Agatha.

14. Agatha talks about unreliable narrators—even saying that people are the unreliable narrator of their own stories. Do you agree with this?

15. How much of Agatha's storyline was reliable and where did she take liberties with the truth?

16. When Agatha and Archie are finally face-to-face again, she tells him that he has in fact murdered her—not in the physical sense but he took away the core of who she was. Let's discuss what she's saying here.

17. What do you think actually happened in those 11 days to the real-life Agatha Christie?