Appointment With Death: Hercule Poirot Investigates by Agatha Christie

You've Got To Love Hercule Poirot

Hercule Poirot may be on vacation, but a killer isn't. The victims a hateful tourist despised even by her own children. For the guests at the resort hotel, sympathies are with the murderer, which means a tough job for the Belgian detective.

The reader for this 5-CD set (six hours total), Hugh Fraser, is terrific. I've listened to other Christie mysteries read by him and no one does a finer job. His performance on The Mysterious Affair at Styles: Complete & Unabridged was nothing short of magnificent.

Originally published as a mystery novel in 1938, the story here centers upon a former American prison wardress, Mrs. Boynton, who dominates her adult daughter, three step-children, and a daughter-in-law, in the same manner as she ruthlessly made lives miserable in her prison. In her old age and as a widow, she has become even more malicious and despotic and not one of her unfortunate clan dares to make the slightest move without first gaining her expressed permission to do so.

On a trip to the Middle East, accompanied by her acquiescent family, Mrs. Boynton's malevolence achieves a new crescendo and, clearly as a consequence of her tyranny, she is subsequently found dead. While he is sympathetic to the plight of the now-freed family, renowned Belgian detective Hercule Poirot still investigates the incident at the behest of the authorities, especially after a world-famous French physician who was traveling with the Boyntons raises the specter of murder.

There is no shortage of suspects in this dark tale and I doubt that most listeners will rightly guess who the killer is before s/he is revealed by the venerable Master Detective. Although Christie employed a few shrewd
devices from previous works in this instance, she still did a fine job with this one.

As far as I know, this is the only available audiobook of this Christie title. There is a VHS video version starring Peter Ustinov but I have yet to see it: Appointment With Death [VHS]. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate the DVD format of this same film in Region 1 (United States) format.

To summarize my review I can highly recommend this compelling audiobook mystery which springboards from the British "Golden Age" [of mystery writing].

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