

AGATHA CHRISTIE
THE MYSTERY OF
HUNTER'S LODGE



Chapter 1

“After all,” murmured Poirot, “it is possible that I shall not die this time.” Coming from a convalescent influenza patient, I hailed the remark as showing a beneficial optimism. I myself had been the first sufferer from the disease. Poirot in his turn had gone down. He was now sitting up in bed, propped up with pillows, his head muffled in a woolen shawl, and was slowly sipping a particularly noxious tisane which I had prepared according to his directions. His eye rested with pleasure upon a neatly graduated row of medicine bottles which adorned the mantelpiece.

“Yes, yes,” my little friend continued. “Once more shall I be myself again, the great Hercule Poirot, the terror of evil-doers! Figure to yourself, mon ami, that I have a little paragraph to myself in Society Gossip. But yes! Here it is! ‘Go it - criminals - all out! Hercule Poirot - and believe me, girls, he’s some Hercules! - our own pet society detective can’t get a grip on you. ‘Cause why? ‘Cause he’s got la grippe himself!’”

I laughed.

“Good for you, Poirot. You are becoming quite a public character. And fortunately you haven’t missed anything of particular interest during this time.”

“That is true. The few cases I have had to decline did not fill me with any regret.” Our landlady stuck her head in at the door.

“There’s a gentleman downstairs. Says he must see Monsieur Poirot or you, Captain. Seeing as he was in a great to-do - and with all that quite the gentleman - I brought up ‘is card.” She handed me the bit of pasteboard. “Mr Roger Havering,” I read. Poirot motioned with his head towards the bookcase, and I obediently