



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1989 Volume IV: Detective Fiction: Its Use as Literature and History

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## Curtain Call: A Dramatic Approach to Detective Fiction

Curriculum Unit 89.04.07  
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### Curtain up

One of my first theater experiences was directing a high school version of Maxwell Anderson's melodrama about a child murderess, *The Bad Seed*. I look back fondly on this event for in that production I was able to bring together two of my childhood passions: the murder mysteries I had grown so attached to while first reading the Nancy Drew series and a newly-discovered interest in all things theatrical. Here was a school project that enabled me to bring together both elements. I could now see my favorite detectives and the criminals they pursued brought to life by means of the stage. What a thrill it is for both a cast and an audience to be caught up in a living web of suspense, seeing and feeling the action as it happens right before their eyes. As a director, I often feel as if I am a detective for as I pursue each clue and element of production I am solving the mystery too.

I am not alone in my enjoyment of mystery and suspense plays. It is a rare Broadway season that does not have at least one melodramatic mystery play on its roster. Audiences have flocked to the theater to see such classic plays as *Sherlock Holmes* (1899), *The Letter* (1927), *Night Must Fall* (1936), *Angel Street* (1941), *Ten Little Indians* (1943), *Dial "M" for Murder* (1952), *The Mousetrap* (1952), *Witness for the Prosecution* (1954), *Sleuth* (1970), and *Deathtrap* (1978). Many of these plays have been adapted as screenplays that have brought even larger audiences into movie theaters to enjoy them. The plays above are timeless and therefore are being constantly revived for production on Broadway, as professional tours, or for performance by school and community groups.

The genre is so popular that there have even been successful parodies such as *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* (1987) by John Bishop which mingles the backstage antics of theater folk with the snowbound setting of *The Mousetrap*. Plays of mystery and detection have been written as successful comedy, *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1941) by Joseph Kesselring, and have even appeared in the guise of a Broadway musical, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1985) by Rupert Holmes. In this recent musical play the audience voted each night deciding for themselves who the murderer of Edwin Drood really was. The cast finished the play using this audience input. Charles Dickens would be quite surprised and I expect pleased with this strange, new twist his unfinished story has taken.

The tradition is continuing at this time with the production of Ira Levin's new play *Cantorial*. Ira Levin wrote *Deathtrap*, Broadway's longest running thriller. *Cantorial* is the story of a young couple who have taken over a

former synagogue and turned it into a loft. The loft is haunted by the spirit of a cantor who wants to see the synagogue and its sacred ark restored. This 1989 thriller is also a touching drama that speaks to the issues of its time in a more realistic manner than the melodramas of the past. As with “straight” dramatic plays it can be said that plays of mystery and suspense also enlighten us as to the people and times that produce them.

This curriculum unit will weave together the elements of mystery, suspense, and drama as they were woven together for me during that long ago production of *The Bad Seed*. The students will learn about the theater and its literature, history, and production through the study of these plays. Three melodramas will serve as the backbone of this teaching unit: *The Final Curtain* by John Murray, *Sherlock Holmes* by William Gillette, and *The Mousetrap* by Agatha Christie.

This curriculum unit of theatrical mystery and suspense has been created for the Comprehensive Arts Program 7th/8th Drama-Dance Electives Program. I facilitate the 7th/8th Drama-Dance Electives Program which operates in seven of the nine New Haven Public middle schools. The remaining two schools create their own programming. Students in the 7th and 8th grades may choose to take drama as one of their elective courses. 7th graders study drama for ten weeks and 8th graders take the drama course for twenty weeks.

This curriculum unit is designed to last ten to twenty weeks with a total of three forty-five-minute sessions per week. The 7th graders will cover as much material as is possible in one marking period. The 8th graders will spend study the entire unit creating a simple, culminating production using as source material the “thrillers” they study. All of the students will be introduced to the theater and its basic components of acting, improvisation, production, history, and dramatic literature through the study of mystery and suspense plays. Although this unit has been created specifically for a drama class it is easily adapted and has much to offer a middle or high school English teacher.

My experience has taught me that middle school students love to read detective fiction. As an English and humanities teacher I have created several classroom projects where I used detective fiction as the primary literature read by the students. Adolescents find it to be exciting, fun, and a challenge. They like the puzzle elements of a whodunit. They like to escape and enter a very different world than the one they really inhabit. While reading a mystery they are taken out of their real environments and invited to travel to new and exciting locales. Though sometimes grim, the worlds found in detective fiction are somehow comforting because the solution to all the problems is found on the last few pages of the book. This tidying up of all the loose ends gives young readers an optimism they can carry with them. The suspense keeps them on their toes and interested in their reading as they try to stay one step ahead of the detective. While reading a mystery the students are actively engaged in trying to solve the puzzle of whodunit. Infrequently in real life are youngsters asked to solve problems and face obstacles that they can really conquer. Reading detective fiction gives an adolescent the knowledge that with courage and cunning one can solve one’s own problems. That is a comfort for young readers in today’s all too troubled world.

When on their own, students will most often choose a mystery or suspense novel to read over other types of books. Playing on this enthusiasm I hope to interest my students in the art of theater by letting them read interesting, stimulating, and entertaining plays of mystery and suspense.

The goals and objectives of this unit are as follows:

1. The students will be introduced to the world of theater through the study of mystery and suspense plays.

2. The students will be presented with challenging, interesting, and amusing pieces of dramatic literature to read, analyze, discuss, and dramatize.
3. The students will be able to identify and understand the fundamentals of dramatic literature: character, dialogue, theme, plot, conflict, climax, and denouement.
4. The students will understand and recognize the three basic forms of drama: comedy, tragedy, and melodrama.
5. The students will be introduced to the art of acting through improvisation and theater games that center on the themes of mystery and suspense.
6. The students will learn about the technical elements involved in the staging and production of a play and how these elements: make-up, scenery, lighting, costumes and props, create a mood and set an atmosphere.
7. The students will create their own mystery and suspense plays through classroom playwriting activities.
8. The students will begin to problem-solve and to think more creatively using their imaginations as they begin to solve the mysteries found in the classroom activities and in the plays to be read.
9. Each student will find the detective hiding within as he/she studies the theater and it is discussed how a director behaves in a manner similar to a sleuth.
10. Each 8th grade class will culminate their study of mystery and suspense plays by creating and producing a final performance of original work or scenes from the plays studied in class.

Mystery and suspense plays have been an important element in the world of drama for over one hundred and fifty years. The thriller was a natural outgrowth of the melodrama. The term melodrama means a combination of music and drama. Early melodramas were plays written with musical interludes and with underlying musical themes similar to what is found in films today. William Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes*, written in 1899, is scripted with musical themes and chords that highlight the action and key points in the play.

This dramatic form became popular in the nineteenth century and was imported to England and America from France. A melodrama deals with serious action and with the elements of good and evil. A happy resolution is achieved at the end of the play through the destruction of a villain's power. A melodrama usually has a double ending, in which the good characters are rescued and rewarded and the evil characters are detected and punished. It is related to tragedy through its serious action and to comedy through its happy ending. The melodrama has been popular in one form or another throughout history for it assures audiences that good triumphs over evil.

All mystery and suspense plays are melodramas for even though the ending may appear to be tragic the

resolution of the mystery and the unveiling of evil is a form of the traditional happy ending. Detective fiction, which gave birth to mystery and suspense plays, is a form of narrative melodrama. There is always evil present in detective fiction. There is always a villain, of sorts, who is a murderer or at the very least a thief. This villain, in modern literature, may have real psychological reasons for his actions, nonetheless, he is still a source of evil who harms others. Depending on the author, the villain may be a fully developed character with a clear rationale and motive for his crime or he may simply be a vital, yet ambiguous piece of the puzzle.

Whenever elements of evil are present there must also be elements of good. In detective fiction and plays of mystery and suspense the good character (the hero) is always the person who solves the crime. The detective is the personified element of good in the story because due to his cleverness and his unique personal strengths the crime is solved and the villain is thwarted. As soon as the audience understands the crime and knows who the criminal is, at this point of denouement, a type of happy ending is reached through the simple unveiling of evil.

The detective does not have to be a private dick or a member of a police force. He may be no more than an average human being who is able this one time to rise to the occasion. The hero may even be an outcast from society, a loner, or a clinically depressed individual that the audience sees as undesirable. He is still the hero for he alone is able to solve the crime. In a mystery play it is more likely though that the hero will be a traditional detective like Sherlock Holmes who is quick, clever, and more intelligent than any of the other characters.

What finally sets a mystery play apart from the traditional form of melodrama is the ever present use of suspense. An excellent thriller will keep the audience on the edge of their seats throughout most of the play. Viewing a good mystery play is not unlike a ride at the amusement park. It is very exciting with its sudden ups and downs. One never knows what is over the next ridge. Ultimately, the ride must slow down and come to a satisfying close where all is revealed though all may not be resolved. The ending of a mystery play can be as upsetting as the tummyache one feels after a roller coaster ride.

The students will take their first ride by reading *The Final Curtain* by John Murray. This play was written specifically for young people and is part of the collection, *Mystery Plays for Young People*. The students taking the drama course are all types of learners. They will be on several different reading levels. This play is simple to read, yet entertaining enough to keep any young reader interested. It will serve as a solid introduction to mystery melodramas. Reading the play aloud with the class will help the teacher assess the students' reading skills and she will be able to judge whether or not they will be able to tackle more challenging material.

*The Final Curtain* is a one-act play in which Jean Watson and her husband Bob, who is a police detective, visit the theater to see an old school friend, Bess Travers, star in her first major role. Early in the show, which is performed as a play within a play, Bess opens a closet door to get her coat and her leading man, John Morris, falls out of the closet and onto the stage dead. Several people wished him harm including Bess because John was threatening to throw her out of the play. Of course, Bob solves this murder mystery and the show is saved to go on another night.

Reading *The Final Curtain* will give students a peek at the world of greasepaint while interesting them in a legitimate murder mystery. The students will be introduced to the many technical elements of the theater and backstage life while reading and studying this play. First, they will identify all the jobs or tasks people perform in the theater. They will gain a working theater vocabulary. They will learn stage directions and will use stage blocking (the pre-planned movement of actors while in character from one section of the stage to another) to recreate scenes from the play. They will study each production element: lighting, costumes, props, make-up,

and scenery. They will create technical plots and renderings as if they were going to produce *The Final Curtain* . They will further learn about backstage life by reading Ngaio Marsh's description of the opening night of *Macbeth* as found in her novel, *Light Thickens* . The entertainment value of the *Final Curtain* will spark the students into learning about the foundations of backstage life and theater production before they read adult dramas or attempt to produce their own plays.

Students will also discuss the elements of a mystery and of a melodrama. They will discuss the theme of good triumphing over evil, the concepts of the murderer as a villain and the detective as a hero, the gathering of evidence, the need for a detective to use inferential thinking, and the ways in which they as readers can solve literary crimes. The students will tackle puzzles such as those found in *Two-Minute Mysteries* by Donald J. Sobol and in *Solv-A-Crime* by A.C. Gordon. These very, very short mystery stories encourage students to look carefully at the details of a plot and to see what is odd and also what is absent that needs to be present.

After a brief introduction to the history of detective fiction the students will tackle Sherlock Holmes as he is seen in William Gillette's play. Prior to reading the play the class will read a Sherlock Holmes story in both the abridged and in the original versions. After reading *Sherlock Holmes* in class the students will share their opinions regarding Gillette's interpretation of Holmes. We will discuss Gillette's obsession with Sherlock Holmes and his long and successful career playing Conan Doyle's detective. Since we are fortunate enough to live nearby in Connecticut, a field trip will be made to Gillette Castle where the students can take a closer look at William Gillette's life and see firsthand some of his Holmes' memorabilia.

The play *Sherlock Holmes* , takes place in London during the last century and in it we see a depressed, almost suicidal Holmes. Holmes rebuffs Watson's concerns for his health as he seeks comfort in cocaine. A young woman Alice Faulkner, is being held against her will by two crooks, James and Madge Larrabee. The Larrabees are trying to force Alice to reveal the whereabouts of papers that once belonged to her sister. These papers will implicate a member of the royal family and accuse him of being the father of the dead girl's child. This royal prince is about to wed and Holmes has been asked to discreetly retrieve the papers. Along the way the Larrabees ask for help from Holmes' archenemy, Professor Moriarity. Moriarity will stop at nothing to destroy Holmes. After several dangerous and close encounters, Holmes, using his unique talents, triumphs over Moriarity and even gets the girl. The play ends with Alice in Sherlock's arms. He is a new man.

The class will study other dramatizations of Sherlock Holmes as he appears on film. We will begin by viewing Basil Rathbone's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and move on to *Murder by Decree* starring Christopher Plummer as Holmes. This film has several plot elements that are similar to those found in *Sherlock Holmes* . We will also look at Jeremy Brett's PBS series and at Steven Spielberg's *Young Sherlock Holmes* . The students will try to decide which characterization is the closest to what Sir Arthur Conan Doyle intended his Holmes to be. Though he allowed his name to be associated with Gillette's play it has been said that Conan Doyle was not very happy with the play or Gillette's performance. At the time the play *Sherlock Holmes* , was written Doyle was tired of Holmes and told Gillette, "He could marry or murder the detective or do what he liked."

After studying *Sherlock Holmes* the students will be able to competently discuss characterization. At this time they will begin to study acting, first working with theater games and improvisation. The students will present scenes from *Sherlock Holmes* using a variety of acting styles to assist them in deciding what is the correct characterization for Holmes.

The unit will end with the reading of Agatha Christie's classic play, *The Mousetrap* . The history of this unique play will be presented to the students before they read it as will the short story of the same name (original title: *Three Blind Mice* ). The class will read the play aloud as if doing a staged dramatic reading. Prior to

reading the ending of the play the students will vote on who they feel the murderer is. (In the past I have found that Giles and Molly usually win.)

*The Mousetrap* is based on a radio sketch that was written by Agatha Christie to commemorate the eightieth birthday of Queen Mary. It was so well received that Ms. Christie decided to turn it into a play. It became a huge success and is the longest running play in the history of the London theater. *The Mousetrap* opened on November 25, 1952 and it is still being performed in London today. It will not be made into a film until the play closes. It is beginning to look like that special clause in Ms. Christie's contract may prevent film audiences from ever seeing the play. At this time *The Mousetrap* has been running for over thirty-six years without an interruption. The play was not as successful on Broadway though it is often produced by American amateur theater groups. *The Mousetrap* is a full-fledged English institution and tourists visit the play as often as they do such other sites as Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London.

*The Mousetrap* is set in the English countryside in an old house called Monkswell Manor. Giles and Molly Ralston are newlyweds who have inherited Monkswell manor and for financial reasons have turned it into a boarding house. As the curtain opens we hear over a radio that a woman, Maureen Lyons, has been killed. It is snowing heavily outside and as each new guest arrives it is obvious that soon they will be snowed in. Detective Sergeant Trotter arrives from Scotland Yard just as all contact with the outside world has been cut off due to the storm. He has come to Monkswell Manor because a clue was found near the body of Maureen Lyon which points to her murderer being found at Monkswell Manor.

It is then that we learn the cruel story of the abuse suffered by three children during the war. They were in foster care and terribly neglected. The youngest child died because of his ill-treatment. It seems everyone at Monkswell Manor can be connected to these poor three blind mice and, yes, a murder is finally committed at Monkswell Manor. It is in the reenactment of this crime that the true murderer is revealed. He is caught in his own mousetrap.

*The Mousetrap*, though still a melodramatic thriller takes us into the modern mystery world of the psychological motive. The murderer is mentally ill and his crimes are a direct result of this illness. *The Mousetrap* is also a finely constructed puzzle. Unlike *Sherlock Holmes*, which is based almost entirely on the characterization of Holmes and on his battle with the evil Moriarity, *The Mousetrap* relies far more on its plot than on its characters. Its plot pivots on this point of the psychological motive and on the idea that there is a little evil in all of us. If we are stuck hard enough or pushed too far we may crack and commit terrible crimes.

People read detective fiction and go to see mystery and suspense plays because they want to be reassured that good will always triumph over evil. People have a basic, primal need to believe in good and evil. They see crime and violence in their streets, read about it in the newspapers, and see it broadcast on T.V. Detective fiction provides an escape to a place where there is always a solution. No author comes up with a better solution than Agatha Christie. She is a master of the puzzling detective story. Students love her work for its suspense and its twisting and turning plots. *The Mousetrap* is one of her most clever puzzles. The students will study *The Mousetrap* discussing with one another Ms. Christie's unique writing style and the ways in which she utilizes and creates such riddling and perplexing plots. They will begin to study the literary elements of plot such as conflict, climax, and denouement. They will attempt to create their own puzzles and to write mini-plays based on Ms. Christie's style.

*The Final Curtain* will introduce students to the world of mystery and suspense plays while it teaches them about technical theater and backstage life. *Sherlock Holmes* will introduce students to acting and characterization. While studying *The Mousetrap* students will look at plot and the dramatic elements of theme,



conflict, climax, and denouement. By reading all three plays the students will be exposed not only to suspenseful, dramatic literature but also to the basic elements of theater.

The students will conclude this unit of study by writing their own scenes, monologues, and short plays. These original dramatic pieces will be performed along with the scenes from the plays read in class during an evening of theater. The students will use the knowledge they have gathered during this course of study to create their own performance.

Stanley Richards quotes Sir Max Beerbohm in his introduction to *Best Mystery and Suspense Plays of the Modern Theatre* as saying, "The drama is, after all, essentially a vehicle for action. For drama, as the Greeks quite frankly called it, is essentially, or at least mainly, a thing to cause the excitement of pity and awe, or of terror, or of laughter . . . where the characters are saying or doing things in your very presence. The Theatre, I would say, is a place for thrills." The theater is a place for thrills, chills, and goosebumps on your arm as you sit in the dark attempting to solve a mysterious puzzle while you watch a group of actors bring the play to life before your very eyes. It is also great fun to read mystery and suspense plays, envisioning with your inner eye the action as it unfolds and always trying to stay one step ahead of the detective and his villains. It is exciting to read, view, and produce mystery and suspense plays. I know that my students will enjoy the experiences discussed here as much as I enjoyed my high school production of *The Bad Seed* .

## **Curtain**

## **Lesson Plans**

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The following lessons are quite simple, yet each teaches an important technical theater skill and asks the students to look at each play as a producer or theater technician. Each lesson can easily be taught in one or two class sessions. They may also be adapted for use as homework assignments or group projects. They were purposely designed to be very flexible and these lessons, though created for a theater class, could be easily adapted for use in an academic classroom.

### *#1 The Final Curtain*

Using the enclosed diagram the students will discuss and study the sections of a stage floor and its nine basic directions. The class will then tape out these sections on the classroom floor using masking tape. To familiarize themselves with each section the students will take turns standing on the "stage" while one person calls out directions. Example: Up Stage Left is called out and the student on stage moves to the Up Stage Left section. The calling out of commands can be played as a game with the students helping to create the format and rules. To make this activity more challenging several students should stand on the stage each moving to a different command. When the students are fluent in this stage language they should begin to block or choreograph simple scenes.

### *#2 Sherlock Holmes*

Using the enclosed diagram and after a class discussion of his character the students should each create a make-up plot for Sherlock Holmes. Using crayons, markers, or colored pencils each student should design a make-up they feel is appropriate for any actor playing Holmes to use. Remind them that this is a flat rendering and that on a real face their design will be slightly altered. The students could also create make-up renderings

for the other characters in the play. The final activity involves each student making up his/her own face as Sherlock Holmes based on his/her design and make-up renderings. The students might also choose to try their make-up designs out on one another.

### #3 *The Mousetrap*

The setting of Monkswell Manor is such a key element to *The Mousetrap* at times the drawing room set is almost a character in the play. First, after discussing basic stage design spacing elements each student should make a rendering or drawing of *The Mousetrap* set using the description found in the script. This set description is exceptionally detailed and should give the students a good idea of where to begin. The students should then build simple shoebox models of the set using the script's description, class comments, and their set renderings. Ask the students in advance to bring in the shoeboxes and "found" materials (e.g., buttons, fabric scraps, old toys, pieces of wood, spools of thread, yarn, paper, etc.) they will need to build their miniature rooms. These model sets should be displayed in the classroom for everyone to enjoy. It will be very stimulating to see how many different versions there can be of the same set.

### Lesson #1: Stage Geography

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION \_\_\_\_\_

There are three basic types of theater buildings and performance spaces:

***Proscenium*** *The audience sits in front of the stage which is usually raised. The stage is defined by a front proscenium wall that has a window-like opening covered by a stage curtain. This is the most common type of theater. e.g. the Shubert Theater in New Haven, CT*

***Thrust*** *The stage is low or on the same level as the audience sits. The stage juts out into the audience and people are seated on three sides. There is no proscenium arch or stage curtain. e.g. the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, CT*

***In-the-Round*** *The stage is built like a circle with the audience seated all around the stage space. This is the least common type of theater building. e.g. Arena Stage Theatre in Washington D.C. or the Oakdale Music Theater in Wallingford, CT*

*(figure available in print form)*

These stage directions are the opposite of those sitting in the audience. They are from the actor's point of view. Except for theaters that are built in the round, the stage directions are in the form of a trapezoid, starting out narrow at the back wall and expanding as one moves towards the proscenium (front).

### Lesson #2: Stage Make-up

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION \_\_\_\_\_



Character \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Race \_\_\_\_\_

Unique Characteristics \_\_\_\_\_

On the back of this worksheet describe with words the make-up you have created. Don't forget to add head and facial hair. Change the basic face in any way that you feel is necessary. Make sure you deal with all five of the facial areas and that you use any elements you feel are vital to recreate this character's face.

(figure available in print form)

## Bibliography for Students

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The source for *The Mousetrap* .

Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur. *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* . New York, NY: A&W Visual Library, 1975.

An original source for Sherlock Holmes stories.

Gillette, William and Conan Doyle, Arthur. *Sherlock Holmes: A Play* . Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1976.

The original Sherlock Holmes play.

Gordon, A.C. *More Solv-A-Crime* . New York: Scholastic Inc., 1978. (Also *Solv-A-Crime*) .

These short narrative puzzles are great exercises in logic.

Murray, John. *Mystery Plays for Young Actors* . Boston: Plays, Inc., 1984.

The source for *The Final Curtain* .

Robinson, Katherine (editor). *The Red-Headed League and Other Mystery Plays* (Scope Play Series). New York, NY: Scholastic Inc., 1986.

An excellent source for an abridged easy to read dramatic version of a Sherlock Holmes play that students love.

Sobol, Donald J. *Two-Minute Mysteries* . New York, NY: Scholastic Inc., 1967. (Also *More Two-Minute Mysteries* and *Still More Two-Minute Mysteries*) .

These mini-narrative mysteries are quite puzzling and very popular with adolescents.

## Bibliography for Teachers

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A recent and popular parody of mystery melodramas.

Brockett, Oscar G. *The Essential Theatre* . New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.

A wonderful textbook for students and a resource for teachers which deals with the history of theater, as well as its basic concepts and production in America today.

Christie, Agatha. *An Autobiography: Agatha Christie* . New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1977.

Agatha Christie's own telling of her life's story with her thoughts on *The Mousetrap* .

Haining, Peter, (Editor). *The Sherlock Holmes Scrapbook* . New York, NY: Bramhall House, 1974.

This book is an excellent resource for Sherlock Holmes fans.

Holmes, Rupert. *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* . Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Inc., 1986.

A wonderful, mysterious musical.

Klinefelter, Walter. *Sherlock Holmes: In Portrait and Profile* . New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1975.

Another excellent book for learning about Sherlock Holmes and his background.

Morgan, Janet. *Agatha Christie* . New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984.

A very informative biography that deals with Agatha Christie's life and also with her famous disappearance in 1926.

Richards, Stanley, (Editor). *Best Mystery and Suspense Plays of the Modern Theatre* . New York, NY: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1971.

The source for such plays as *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Sleuth* , and *Angel Street* .

Richards, Stanley, (Editor). *10 Classic Mystery and Suspense Plays of the Modern Theatre* . New York, NY: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1973.

The source for such plays as *Ten Little Indians* and *Night Must Fall* .

Riley, Dick and McAllister, Pam, (Editors). *The New Bedside , Bathtub, & Armchair Companion to Agatha Christie* . New York, NY: The Ungar Publishing Co., 1979, 1986.

This book tells the reader *everything* about Agatha Christie's life, and her books.

Spolin, Viola. *Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teacher's Handbook* . Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1986.

The only place to begin for any teacher who wants to use improvisation and theater techniques in her classroom.

Steinbrunner, Chris and Penzler, Otto, (Editors). *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection* . New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976.

This is a solid source book for information on Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie, and most elements of detective fiction.

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