

Agatha Christie: new life of mystery

By GREGORY JENSEN

LONDON — Dame Agatha Christie leaves one monumental mystery unsolved in her autobiography published Nov. 10 — the case of the Vanishing Authoress, a drama where she played the leading part.

Agatha Christie: An Autobiography, published 22 months after Agatha's death at 85, was supposed to answer all the puzzles about this gentle English matron who was the most popular mystery writer ever known.

But in all its 542 small-type pages there is not one word about her disappearance.

The background is there. Dame Agatha frankly discusses her harrowing approach to mental breakdown. When it comes to those 11 December days in 1926 when she vanished — the most publicized event in her long life — she remains silent.

Her marriage to Archibald Christie was breaking down. Mrs. Christie was overworked, overweight and overcame with "a terrible sense of helplessness." She drove her car into a ditch and disappeared.

Her car was found teetering on the lip of a 120-foot-deep quarry. Bloodhounds tracked her in vain. She was found, eventually, in a hotel more than 100 miles away, the victim of amnesia, not even knowing her name.

"When she came back she didn't recognize my mother, her own daughter, who was 7 then," Christie's grandson Mathew Prichard said in a recent interview.

"It was not an episode which was ever discussed in the family," Prichard said. "My grandmother never mentioned it. We did not question her."

Even without this drama Agatha Christie's life was jammed with incidents. Her vivid account of it does not depend for its fascination on those 90 books which were "outsold by the Bible and Shakespeare," her publisher says.

For its first half this autobiography memorializes another age — the dying Victorian era whose standards Dame Agatha never lost.

She creates with loving nostalgia the era of housefuls of servants, talk in girls like Agatha had tutors and governesses rather than going to school, when a teenage girl thought only of chaperones and dances and innocent flirtations.

The second half completes a self-portrait closely resembling her public image — that of a shy, almost exclusive person, family-centered, with a keen intellect, an immovable will and a passion for old-fashioned virtues.

Scattered through her life story are nuggets of surprise which show the human person behind Agatha Christie's famous name.

Her only two ambitions in life were to own a car and to have dinner with Queen Elizabeth in Buckingham Palace. She achieved both, 40 years apart.

Writing remained a casual hobby until one murder story — "The Mystery of the Blue Train" — had to be produced to meet publishing obligations despite her bleak and unattractive mood.

That was the moment when I changed from an amateur to a professional," she recalled. "I have always hated that book."

Her autobiography solves the mystery of how she invented those wickedly ingenious plots — not in a flash of inspiration but through careful planning, long gestation periods and solid research.

She talks about how most of her books were born, but confesses some "left so little impression on my mind that I cannot even remember writing them."

Another surprise is the extent of her travels — and how well she writes about places.

One long chapter covers her trip around the world in the 1920s. With her second husband, archeologist Sir Max Mallowan, she went on decades of digs in the Middle East. Her book sings with exotic names — Tururud and Shiraz, Ur and Tassandria and Isfahan — rather than famous people.

Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller Christie Mallowan, Dame of the British Empire, began writing this autobiography in 1950, when she was 60, and stopped work on it when she was 75. The book has the patchwork quality of an off-and-on work.

It zigzags in time and breaks off for little sermons. Some subjects were unmarried girls flirting and capital punishment, both of which Dame Agatha approved.

You can sell that white elephant through BATTALION ADVERTISING



Donald R. Deere Jr.

Campus Names

Two Rhodes nominees from A&M compete

Donald R. Deere Jr. of Arlington and Robert A. Lacy of Lake Charles, La., are Texas A&M University's nominees for a Rhodes Scholarship to attend Oxford University next year.

The two seniors, both National Merit Scholars with perfect 4.0 grade point ratios, are among 50 applicants from Texas schools who will interview in Houston for the prestigious award. If successful, they will advance to New

Orleans in mid-December for regional screening along with nominees from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

Deere is an economics major and Lacy is a physics major. Both have earned membership in honor societies Phi Eta Sigma and Phi Kappa Phi. Lacy was selected outstanding junior in the College of Science in 1977. In 1976, Deere was chosen outstanding sophomore in the College of Liberal Arts. Both were named University Undergraduate Fellows this year.



Robert A. Lacy

AFROTC graduate named 'distinguished'

James S. Logan, May 1977 Texas A&M University and Air Force ROTC graduate, has been designated a distinguished graduate by the Air Force central selection board at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

Second Lt. Logan was one of 16 nationwide chosen for the honor.

The board assessed university performance, extracurricular activities, class standing and AF-ROTC and field training accomplishments.

Formerly of Fairfax, Va., Logan majored in geography at Texas A&M.

WE GIVE S&H GREEN STAMPS



- SLICED BACON Neuhoff German family 1 lb. pkg. \$1.39
- SLICED BACON Armour Star Mini-cure 1 lb. pkg. \$1.39
- SLICED BACON Oscar Mayer 1 lb. pkg. \$1.39

Festive Fixin's for your Thanksgiving Feast.



BUTTERBALL

Play the all New Series *3
gamerama

PRIZE VALUE	REMAINING # OF PRIZES	ODDS FOR 1 STAKE VISIT	ODDS FOR 15 STAKE VISITS	ODDS FOR 26 STAKE VISITS
1,000.00	40	205,000 to 1	15,769 to 1	7,885 to 1
100.00	400	20,500 to 1	1,577 to 1	788 to 1
20.00	800	2,050 to 1	157 to 1	78 to 1
5.00	8,000	2,050 to 1	157 to 1	78 to 1
2.00	8,500	192 to 1	14 to 1	37 to 1
1.00	51,800	47 to 1	11 to 1	5.5 to 1
TOTAL # OF PRIZES	68,490	199 to 1	9 to 1	4.5 to 1

This game being played in the eighty-one (81) participating Piggly Wiggly stores located in Louisiana, Arkansas, eastern Texas, southeastern Oklahoma and western Mississippi.

Play the all New Series
gamerama

WIN UP TO \$1000

MENU

- Neuhoffs Boneless half or whole PITT HAMS lb. \$1.79
- Swift Premium 4 to 6 lb. avg. BAKING HENS lb. 69¢
- Long Island USDA Grade A DUCKLINGS 4 to 6 lb. lb. 98¢
- Hormel's boneless CURE 81 HAM 1/2S lb. \$2.59
- Neuhoffs 10 to 12 lb. avg. SMOKED TURKEY lb. \$1.19
- Fryer LIVERS 1 lb. pkg. 89¢
- Fryer GIZZARDS 1 lb. pkg. 89¢

MENU

- Moisture Added Butt Half SMOKED HAM lb. \$1.09
- Hormel's Link Sausage LITTLE SIZZLERS 12 oz. pkg. 99¢

MENU

- Moisture Added SMOKED HAMS lb. 89¢
- Shank Portion

Super-Taste Grade A **TURKEYS**

- 10-14 lb. avg. lb. 59¢
- 14 lb. & up 55¢

MENU

- CREAM CHEESE Kraft 8 oz. 59¢
- Philadelphia pkg.

MENU

- BUTTERBALL TURKEY 73¢
- Swifts 14 lbs. & Up

MENU

- Hillshire SAUSAGE 1 lb. pkg. \$1.29
- Piggly Wiggly or Neuhoffs WIENERS 12 oz. pkg. 66¢

MENU

- JUICE Texsun Pineapple 46 oz. can 58¢
- MUSHROOMS Green Giant whole 48¢
- or sliced 2.5 oz. can
- FOIL Reynolds Heavy duty 18"x25' roll 58¢
- STOVE TOP Dressing Mix 6 oz. box 58¢
- SAUCE Piggly Wiggly #300 Cranberry 15 oz. cans 38¢

MENU

- BROTH Swanson's Chicken 13.75 oz. 4 cans \$1
- MARSHMALLOWS Fire 10 oz. 3 pkgs. \$1
- GREEN BEANS Del Monte 3 #303 cans \$1
- SWEET PICKLES Rainbo Gharkin 12 oz. jar 78¢
- COND. MILK Eagle Brand 14 oz. car 58¢

MENU

- PEPTO BISMOL 12 oz. btl. List \$2.29 \$1.48
- LISTERMINT 24 oz. btl. List \$2.29 \$1.48

MENU

- FLOUR Gold Medal 5 lb. bag 58¢

MENU

- DINNER ROLLS Piggly Wiggly 4 12 ct. pkgs. \$1

MENU

- Le Sueur TINY PEAS 38¢
- #303 17 oz. can

MENU

- FOLGER COFFEE 2.58
- 1 lb. can
- Limit 1 with \$7.50 or more purchase

MENU

- BANQUET PIES Pumpkin or mince 20 oz. ctin. 48¢
- PIE SHELLS Per-Ritz 2 ct. pkg. 38¢
- STRAWBERRIES Trophy sliced 10 oz. pkg. 28¢
- WHIPPED TOPPING Piggly Wiggly 9 oz. tub 48¢

MENU

- HOLIDAY FIXIN'S DROMEDARY 8 oz. pkgs. 59¢
- DATES Or Candied 16 oz. pkg. 89¢
- FRUIT PEELS Everyday Low Price! Whole 1.09
- Red 8 oz. pkg.
- PECAN HALVES Ellis 6 oz. pkg. 1.19

THESE PRICES GOOD THURS., FRI., & SAT., NOV. 17, 18, & 19, 1977

MENU

- Piggly Wiggly SPICED PEACHES 48¢
- Whole #2 1/2 29 oz. can

MENU

- APPLES Extra Fancy Red Rome 3 lbs. \$1
- CELERY US #1 Pascal 3 stalk \$1
- CRANBERRIES 49¢
- SWEET POTATOES 3 lbs. \$1
- POTATOES US #1 Russet 10 lb. bag 99¢
- ONIONS Yellow b. 19¢

MENU

PIGGLY WIGGLY
The Original SELF SERVICE

THE FRIENDLIEST STORES IN TOWN

- ★ 2700 Texas Ave. South
- ★ 4300 Texas Ave.
- ★ 3516 Texas Ave.
- ★ 200 East 24th St.
- ★ 9 Redmond Terrace

COLLEGE STATION and BRYAN, TEXAS

we welcome FOOD STAMP SHOPPERS

Double S&H Green Stamps every Tuesday with \$2.50 or more purchase.

WE GIVE S&H GREEN STAMPS