

Agatha Christie

AGATHA CHRISTIE – THE BIRTH OF A NOVELIST

Educated at home and allowed the run of a sprawling house and garden, Agatha Christie's unconventional childhood fostered an extraordinary imagination. She taught herself to read and was allowed freedom to choose what she read and studied until at age sixteen she was sent to a finishing school in Paris.

Agatha Christie always said that she had no ambition to be a writer although she made her debut appearance in print at the age of eleven with a poem printed in the local Ealing newspaper. By her late teens she had had several poems published in *The Poetry Review* and written a number of short stories.

It wasn't until she was working in the Hospital dispensary in Torquay that she found her true voice after taking up her sister's challenge to write her first detective novel.

In the quiet of the dispensary, and inspired by the bottles of poison surrounding her, she produced her first novel *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. The death by poisoning was so accurately described that Agatha received praise and a review in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*. Her knowledge of poisons would certainly prove invaluable to her detective stories: forty one novels and twenty four short stories contain murder by poison!

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