



The Unfinished Clue

Georgette Heyer

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Unfinished Clue

Georgette Heyer

The Unfinished Clue Georgette Heyer

The stabbing of irascible General Sir Arthur Billington-Smith fails to stir up grief in anyone - least of all his family, which is no wonder considering the way he had treated them all during the fateful weekend. He had disinherited his son, humiliated his wife, refused to help his financially stricken nephew and made no secret of his loathing for his son's fiancée, a cabaret dancer. Inspector Harding picks his way through a mass of familial discontent to find the culprit - and find much more besides.

The Unfinished Clue Details

Date : Published January 4th 2007 by Arrow (first published 1933)

ISBN : 9780099493730

Author : Georgette Heyer

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Crime

 [Download The Unfinished Clue ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Unfinished Clue ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Unfinished Clue Georgette Heyer

From Reader Review The Unfinished Clue for online ebook

Hannah says

My first foray into the murder mysteries of Georgette Heyer, and it won't be my last.

Heyer, while better known for her regency and Georgian romances, also wrote a fair number of mysteries along the lines of Agatha Christie.

This novel, written in 1934, has all the classic elements of an English "Golden Age" mystery:

- The bucolic country setting complete with stately home, a rose garden, and a staff of well-trained servants who know their place.
- A crusty old curmudgeon of a victim, who no one (including the reader) is sorry to see meet his maker.
- A large cast of suspects to choose from, including the staples of a golden age mystery: the younger second wife, her lover, the scapegrace step-son, the vixen, the vicar's wife, and...dare I say it...the butler?
- Classic interrogation techniques worthy of Monsieur Poirot himself, in which the suspects are each interviewed in the sitting room (*or was it the morning room?*) by the dapper Scotland Yard Inspector. Their alibi, motives and secrets are all bewilderingly exposed during these polite interrogations - so much so that I feel I need to put together a spreadsheet in order to keep up with who was where, at what time, and with whom. (*You know the drill, don't you? Miss Scarlett, in the Library, with the Lead Pipe*).
- Dialogue that is witty, arcane and spare. Heyer throws in some terms and phrases that are incomprehensible to my 21st century American brain, but that's ok, because it lends authenticity to the story and is fun to try and work out.
- A low-key romance as a side story. Nothing too much with this love story, but it's nice to have in the background.
- A nice red herring and an unexpected twist at the end. I use the term, *unexpected*, loosely, because I can never figure out whodunit and my track record on this one remains unbroken (*drat! I really, really thought I had the murderer pegged this time. Foiled again*).

Really fun, frothy escapism with this one. Not as well detailed as a Christie, but worth a few hours of your reading time.

Emily says

This was my first Heyer mystery, and it was a surprisingly good time! It reads like a mix between Christie and Wodehouse, with larger-than-life characters and some very funny one-liners. The descriptions of British country life and customs are very exacting and detailed, right down to the social stratification of the police (see below) and the appropriate time of day to start drinking cocktails. Because it's Heyer, there's also a romance, which I enjoyed more than I probably should have (given [view spoiler](#)). I took off a star because I

found the eventual answer to the mystery needlessly convoluted - (view spoiler) - but I'm definitely in for more of these.

I leave you with my favorite passage from this book:

'Well, do you really wear a god-forsaken badge under the lapel of your coat, and show it to anybody who wants to know who you are?'

'No, of course I don't. I'm not an American!' protested Harding.

Naturally!

Laura says

Admitting you're a murder mystery addict is sort of like admitting you buy bags of Fritos knowing you're the only one in the house who will eat them. You tell yourself, "Maybe someone will drop in for lunch...Maybe I'll have some little kids over," but really you're just a pathetic chow hound. I tell myself that mysteries exercise my brain somehow, but we all know they're just entertainment, especially as I rarely figure out who done it.

However, while I may have no restraint, at least I have taste! Georgette Heyer is a fabulous mystery writer even though she's never included in the Christie/Marsh/Sayers/Tey canon. (In fact, she's best known for — horrors! — her Regency romances.) Although her plots aren't necessarily ingenious, her characters and dialogue make you forget there's even a mystery to solve. *The Unfinished Clue*, in particular, is a scream. Dreadful old Sir Arthur Billington-Smith delights in tormenting people, especially his colorless wife and his son and heir, Geoffrey. However, one weekend at a particularly miserable house party, he unwittingly delights other people by getting himself murdered — and in the library! With a lead pipe! No, actually with a knife. But the fact that everyone who knew him (including the reader) had a good motive for wanting him dead complicates things a bit.

While all the characters are amusing, especially entertaining is Geoffrey's wildly unsuitable fiancée — a Mexican cabaret dancer named Lola who is as flamboyant and she is self-absorbed. Some of the dialogue is the verbal equivalent of slapstick (if that makes sense), and the mystery is engaging in the best tradition of classic English house murders.

Andrea says

A competent, but not tremendously compelling mystery, lightened a little by Lola-the-dancer, who is forthright and wholly without morals. I enjoyed the main POV character, Dinah, but did not find her very quick romance particularly interesting.

Good narrator.

Nikki says

I don't know why nobody pointed me at Georgette Heyer before. In style and substance her work is much like Mary Stewart's or perhaps Agatha Christie's, and Dorothy L. Sayers set some store by her too. It's a country house murder mystery, with a good number of highly suspicious subjects, a cool and collected young woman who keeps her head and assists the police wonderfully, and an eligible bachelor of a detective to be fallen in love with.

The mystery itself is rather typical of the type, with a mystery that can't quite be solved owing to a lack of the most important piece of information (which, if you had, would spoil the story altogether), but I enjoyed Heyer's narration and dialogue, and had a rather giggly moment over the romance. The characters all seem rather stock, really, but it worked in this case.

At this rate, I shall have to start a guilty pleasures shelf for the purpose of putting Heyer and Stewart on it. Except I don't really feel guilty.

Maine Colonial says

It's always hard to transition to a new book after I've read something really good. When that happens, I look for a good "palate cleanser," meaning a book with a straightforward story that's engaging without being too challenging.

A Georgette Heyer mystery really fits the bill. I think of her mysteries as what Jane Austen would have written if she'd been transplanted to the Golden Age of Mystery. There is always a cast of ill-assorted characters, some of whom will be the kind you love to hate. The murder victim is always somebody you're glad to see dispatched, and there is a minor element of romance. Just enough to be enjoyable if you like romance and not so much as to be annoying if you don't.

This is a classic country house murder. There are several houseguests for the weekend, hosted by General Billington-Smith, who is constantly verbally abusive to his wife, and only somewhat more polite to several of the other guests---except for the married woman he flirts with outrageously. You can hardly wait for him to meet his maker.

This is an ensemble cast, but the principal characters are Lady Billington-Smith's feisty sister, Dinah, and the Scotland Yard detective. I figured out the whodunnit, but it was still a very enjoyable read---or listen, I should say, since I got this on audiobook. Ulli Birvé is a wonderful reader, with that upper-crust accent you expect for a Golden Age mystery.

Shauna says

Flimsy but entertaining detective story set in a country house. A bit more depth of plot and character and a lot less romance would have made it much more of a good read for me.

Tweety says

As with all mysteries one must not say too much. But I can say that I started this with the hope that it would be like *Why Shoot a Butler?*. I had one fear and that was the fear of it being like *Behold, Here's Poison*. Thank goodness it wasn't! In fact it was even better than **Why Shoot A Butler**. Now this my just be me but I didn't get the *Unfinished Clue*. I guess I'm just thick. Anyhow that's neither here nor **There**... The characters were real with real life quirks and I even felt for the murderer/murderess. I did suspect the murderer, however I didn't stick to my suspicion as I wanted it to be someone else.

There was hardly any language and not really any violence either. Although there is no talk of mistresses there is mention of Sir Arthur's flirting and his first wife who left him for someone different. There is also Camilla who's goal in life seems to be to make all the men fall in love her and then maybe they will give her the money her soul desires. Lola is just a silly side kick, who tangles the web farther. At the end of the day I will be rereading this delightful Georgette Heyer book among all my other favorites by this author. Even if this mystery is not as good as say, *Death in Kenya*, it is still well worth the read.

On an end note if you are not okay with the characters drinking (sherry's, cocktails with absinthe) then you probably wouldn't like this as in the first half Steven Guest and Lola And Camilla are constantly looking for their next drink. Lola in particular likes Absinthe in her cocktails at 11:00am sharp. By the way, ignore that cover, Georgette Heyer books deserve covers that don't make one think of a Harlaquin romance.

Melisa says

My first Georgette Heyer book, and I'll most definitely be back for more!

Really enjoyed this whodunnit, involving a large cast of characters and an English country manor. The plot was reminiscent of Agatha Christie, but the writing and the language was most enjoyable for me. Loved being thrown back to 1930's England. A strong mystery, one which I certainly did not solve!

Teri-K says

Lovely English country-house murder novel that never fails to please. The victim was a bully to his wife - a long-suffering, wilting flower. The man who loves her is chivalrous to the extreme. There's the level headed sister, a couple of not-good-for-much heirs who are good for lots of witty dialogue plus a Mexican cabaret dancer who provides the silliness. Two neighborhood ladies pop in to stir things up now and then, and the Scotland Yard detective is the best example of the breed - intelligent, handsome and well-bred, perfect for the tiny bit of romance Heyer throws in. If the ending isn't a big surprise to experienced mystery readers, who cares? The story is loads of fun.

NB - I've read this several times. When I tried listening to the audiobook narrated by Ulli Birve I about went crazy. I don't know if my copy got messed up somehow, but I had to speed it up to 1.25% just to listen to it, she talked soooooo sloooowlllllly. I enjoyed it once I got her up to a more normal speed, though. FWIW

Leslie says

One of the best benefits of a bad memory is the ability to reread mysteries! I didn't remember this at all when I started rereading it -- I know I have read it as I own it and I love Heyer but nothing about the blurb seemed familiar. About halfway through I suddenly did recall a big part of the solution (though as it turned out, not the guilty person!) but by that time I was caught up in the book & could enjoy it even knowing (as I thought) whodunit. So it was a fun surprise to find out I didn't know who did it after all at the end!

This is a wonderful Golden Age mystery (first published in 1933) and it has the features which have become stereotypical for a country house murder mystery. What lifts this one to above average is Heyer's characters such as Lola, the Mexican cabaret dancer whom the son of the household has brought home as his fiancée. Being a Heyer, it is no surprise that there was a romantic subplot but it was unusually low key.

Christina ~ Brunette Reader says

A tyrannical host found stabbed to death in his study, a group of guests each having a reason to hate him and a young and clever detective from Scotland Yard. The stage, an English country house weekend interspersed with cocktails, teas and politely traded barbs. Written back in 1934, *The Unfinished Clue* is a classic Golden Age mystery abounding in wit, atmosphere and old-fashioned charm, where the intricate web of suspicions is subtly interwoven and the tension is conveyed through engaging and polished dialogues leading to the climactic final revelation. The sparkle is more subdued compared to her inimitable Regency romances, but the delightful writing nonetheless delivers an as much sophisticated comedy of manners.

Buddy-read with Anne :)

Leanne (Booksandbabble) says

My first Heyer novel, but definitely not my last. The dialogue is very witty and the characters are great. It is not a thought provoking, strenuous read, but a thoroughly enjoyable, fun read.

Lady Wesley says

Georgette Heyer, best known for her Regency romances, also wrote several mysteries, and **The Unfinished Clue** was the first that I have read. Actually, I listened to the Audible audiobook, narrated by Ulli Birve, who also has narrated several other Heyer mysteries. I thoroughly enjoyed this one and plan to try some of the others.

Given that I am a big fan of Agatha Christie and that I also love house party settings, this book was right

down my alley. It features an ill-assorted group of house guests, a victim that everyone hated, lots of red herrings, and a cool, calm Scotland Yard inspector, along with Heyer's trademark humor and sparkling dialogue. The reveal of the murderer was quite a surprise; I never saw it coming. There is a touch of romance, which really didn't add anything to the story.

For the first time, however, I noticed a problem with listening to a book rather than reading it. The "unfinished clue" of the title was a scrap of paper upon which the victim had scrawled "there." Or was it "they're?" Or was it "their?" I didn't know the answer until the end, although I don't believe that knowing would have helped me in the least to guess the identity of the murderer.

Ulli Birve's narration was a bit on the slow side, but her ability to voice the myriad characters was excellent. Like I said, I will try some of the other Heyer mysteries.

(view spoiler)

Gerry says

A country house gathering where the host, General Sir Arthur Billington-Smith rules the roost with a rod of iron. He regularly upsets his family, other members of his household and even the guests are not spared from his vitriolic tongue. So, perhaps it is no wonder when he is discovered stabbed to death in his study. But who could have perpetrated the crime, the suspects are so numerous and the local constabulary, conscious of the need not to upset the upper classes with whom they will have to mix regularly, call in Scotland Yard in the shape of Inspector Harding.

Harding has a difficult job on his hands for the son, the much younger wife, the wife's sister, the nephew, the son's Mexican dancing fiancée, and any number of the guests, for various reasons, seem to have sufficient motive to have committed the crime. And they are all believable even though sometimes their stories conflict. This provokes Harding to remark to the local Chief Constable, late in the investigation, 'I haven't reached any conclusions yet ... There are too many people mixed up in it.'

Even the suspects, when discussing the case amongst themselves are confused and one of them makes a suggestion: 'Let us all put the name of the person each of us thinks did it into a hat, and see who gets the most votes.' And that cast of characters, delightfully described and given life by Georgette Heyer, flit in and out of the story offering various clues that constantly change the thinking of Harding, his Sergeant colleague and the local police force, one of whom is convinced early in the plot that he has the murderer identified.

But diligent police work usually pays off and so it does in this tale as Harding suddenly realises that one clue was more or less staring him in the face and he did not initially realise its importance. However, as soon as he does, he sets off on a different tack and eventually uncovers the surprise murderer; one that I must confess I had not taken into consideration, so well had Miss Heyer covered the tracks. Similarly she did with a romantic aside to the story (but anyone with a romantic nature will realise that something is going on - even I did!) that ends up idyllically.

It is a suspenseful tale throughout and one that keeps the reader guessing right to the very end.

Stephanie says

A classic British murder-in-a-country house fun read - the characters aren't nearly as fully fleshed out as in most Agatha Christies, but they're a lot wittier.

Sophia says

An acrimonious country houseparty weekend turns murderous and Scotland Yard detective, Inspector Harding has his work cut out for him. Everyone hated the victim and nearly the whole house full of family and guests and neighbors could have done it.

I enjoyed the over the top characters such as Lola the cabaret dancer, Frances the supercilious and expensive cousin, Fay the longsuffering wife, the Vicar's wife in all her righteous indignation, and Camille the spiteful cat of a guest. But to balance all these out, I found Dinah a splendid and sparkling foil with her spot-on observations and diverting dialogue.

I actually had the right idea from early on for the murder, but didn't get it all quite right when the final twist and reveal came. I enjoyed following along as Harding worked the case. He was an okay detective, not a favorite like Hemmingway in the other series, but I did like Harding as Dinah's love interest.

All in all, it was entertaining and just what I was in the mood for- classic whodunnit!

Bill says

A most enjoyable mystery, my first by Heyer and I thoroughly enjoyed. It was a cozy mystery, involving the murder of a cantankerous man, unloved by pretty well everybody associated with him. Inspector Harding is called down from Scotland Yard to investigate and ultimately solves the crime. I liked his character very much and also that of his plodding Sgt. There were also other characters I liked very much, especially Miss Fawcett. No reliance on fancy CSI-type technology, basically interviews and following up on questions, but so totally satisfying of a story. The ending was also satisfying and had a little twist I didn't really see coming. Not a book I'll think about for years to come, but just a perfect, enjoyable read. (5 stars). Always nice to discover a new author that you want to read more of.

Anne says

Oh, this was so good! Witty, fun, and completely engaging!

Entering Georgette Heyer's magical world of Regency romances was one darn good decision I made, but branching out and trying some of her mysteries is definitely one as well. The characters might not be quite so loveable, the dialogue perhaps not as hilarious, and there might not be as many clothing description and everyday details, but on the other hand there is suspense, secrets, and the wonderful 1930's English country-

house atmosphere. Clever dialogue and eccentric characters who all had a motive for hating and murdering the victim are at the heart of this clever mystery. There isn't much action, and it's not spooky like *Footsteps in the Dark*, but I guarantee it will keep you highly entertained and guessing until the last minute. I had my suspicions, but I was totally unable to guess all the particulars, and I loved the feeling of being held on the edge of my seat until the last chapter.

When General Sir Arthur Billington-Smith is found stabbed to death in his study, it raises a lot of suspicion, and a lot of questions. Any number of people could have done the deed, but who *actually* did it? His meek, tired young wife who's had enough of being brow-beaten at every turn? Stephen Guest who has been in love with her for years? Geoffrey the disinherited son who seemed to me to be unstable of mind the whole time? La Lola la Diva who drove everybody batty (ok, me)? The very correct butler? Camilla Halliday who only came over to flirt with the General? Her jealous husband Basil? Or could it be someone else from outside?

The Unfinished Clue had me wondering "WHO IS IT?!!" the entire time, and as soon as I thought maybe I'd found the culprit, something happened to throw my suspicions off, a new track was embarked on by the detective, and I was left guessing once again. I strongly recommend it, it's splendidly written, and so cleverly conceived!

Buddy-read with Christina :D

Madeline says

For real, is there anything as fun as an old-fashioned murder mystery in an English country house? They're like catnip to me, to the extent that I've seen *Gosford Park* at least six times and aren't even close to getting sick of it.

Speaking of which, Georgette Heyer's *The Unfinished Clue* is almost a carbon copy of that movie. We have a motley assortment of guests gathered together in a country home for the weekend (they include the host's mistress, the man in love with the host's wife, and the host's son with his new fiancée), and the host is an insufferable dick to everyone, giving everyone a motive. It's *so* similar to *Gosford Park*, in fact, that murder itself is almost exactly like the movie - the host, Sir Arthur Billington-Smith, is found stabbed to death in his study. Actually, the solution to the mystery is pretty similar to *Gosford Park* as well, and that's all the detail I'll go into without spoiling it.

The whole thing is a fun, classic detective adventure, with fantastic characters. The detective is great, the suspects are all fully realized and complex, and Heyer also has a running joke where multiple characters remark on their own suspicious actions and how they totally could have done the murder themselves. The best example of this is Billington-Smith's son, who brings home his Mexican dancer girlfriend, Lola, to meet the family (it goes over about as well as can be imagined). Once the murder occurs, Lola instantly dons excessive mourning clothes and goes around loudly telling anyone who will listen that the police might arrest her because she had the most reason for wanting to kill her boyfriend's father. Then she has a talk with her agent and decides that it's probably better if she doesn't get arrested and backs off. I only wish there had been more of her, but then again, her schtick might have gotten old pretty quickly.

I have to admit, however, that I guessed the ending to this mystery almost immediately. More accurately, I guessed the motive behind the murder, but was wrong about the identity of the killer - but I was still damn close, much closer than I should have been, since I'm usually so bad at guessing how these stories end. But

transparent ending aside (view spoiler), this was still enormously entertaining, and a good addition to the Georgette Heyer canon.
