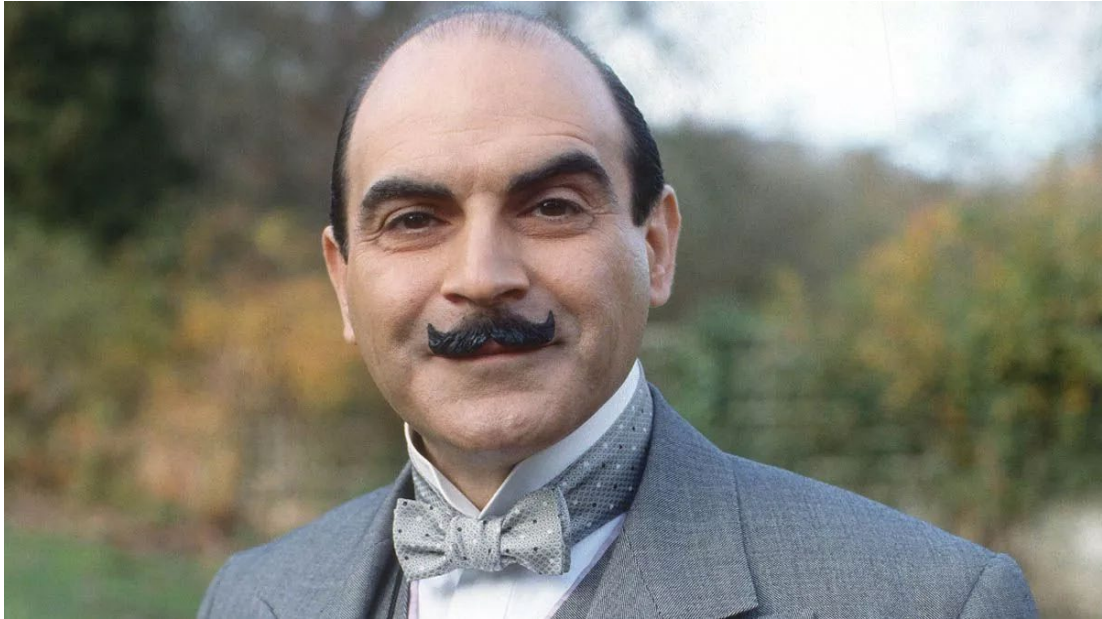


THE GREAT DETECTIVES



ON SCREEN

Week Six

Those Little Grey Cells

Welcome to *The Great Detectives*

Week Six

Sherlock Holmes may be *the* detective, but if there is any character that gives him a run for his money, in terms of international recognition, it is certainly the Belgian wonder that is Hercule Poirot.

Created by Agatha Christie in 1927 and signing off in 1975 after 33 novels, 51 short stories and 2 plays, Poirot is the model for any number of other gentlemen detectives. When you see a group of suspects gathered in a drawing room, you undoubtedly expect the vain little man and his impeccably groomed moustache to appear at any moment.

Readers never appeared to tire of Poirot, though this was not an opinion shared by his creator, who as early as 1930 found the sleuth ‘insufferable’. She knew her public felt differently, however, and she continued to write Poirot stories until the end of her life. (*Curtain*, his final adventure, was actually written during the Second World War, just in case Christie herself failed to survive the regular air raids, alongside a final case for Miss Marple, *Sleeping Murder*).

Poirot on screen has been essayed by the great and good of cinema and television. Austin Trevor, Albert Finney, Peter Ustinov, Ian Holm, Tony Randall, Alfred Molina, John Malkovich and Kenneth Branagh, to name but a few, have all exercised their little grey cells and groomed (with the exception of Trevor) their facial furniture.

Add radio to the mix and you get Orson Welles. The theatre and, look, there’s Charles Laughton – the very first actor to take on the role.

And then, of course, there’s David Suchet, who brought the entire Poirot canon to television between 1989 and 2013. To many, to this day, he simply *is* Poirot.

Kenneth Branagh is the current inhabitant of the role, having directed and starred in three Christie adaptations, with more to come.

Branagh has the best moustache and I will brook no argument on the subject.

So buckle in, it's time to gather the suspects and point a Belgian finger.

FILMS WEEK SIX

Lord Edgware Dies (1934)

Dir. Henry Edwards

The Alphabet Murders (1965)

Dir. Frank Tashlin

Black Coffee (1973)

Dir. Claus Peter Witt

Murder on the Orient Express (1974)

Dir. Sidney Lumet

Death on the Nile (1978)

Dir. John Guillermin

Murder by the Book (1987)

Dir. Lawrence Gordon Clark

The End House Mystery (1989)

Dir. Vadim Derbenev

Spice World (1997)

Dir. Bob Spiers

Murder on the Orient Express (2001)

Dir. Carl Schenkel

Curtain (2013)

Dir. Hettie Macdonald

Murder on the Orient Express (2017)

Dir. Kenneth Branagh

The ABC Murders (2018)

Dir. Alex Gabassi

Murder of Roger Ackroyd (2018)

Dir. Hidenori Jôhō

The Mysterious Affair at Styles (2023)

Dir. Péter Lichter