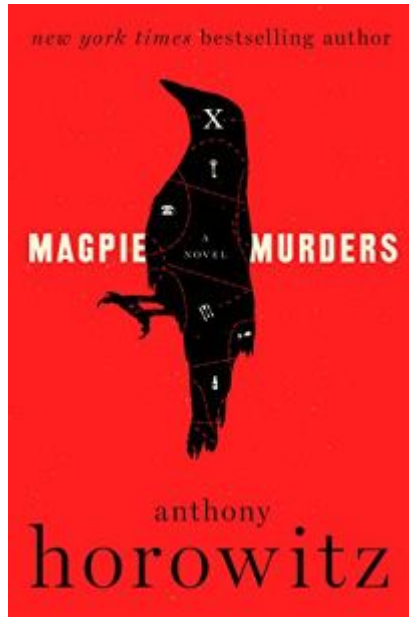




BEST
BOOKS

AUTHORS

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY



★ Magpie Murders

Anthony Horowitz. Harper, \$27.99 (464p) ISBN 978-0-06-264522-7

Bestseller Horowitz (*The House of Silk*) provides a treat for fans of golden age mysteries with this tour de force that both honors and pokes fun at the genre. In the prologue, an unnamed editor sets the tone by describing how reading the manuscript of *Magpie Murders*, the ninth novel in a bestselling mystery series by Alan Conway, cost her her job and many friendships. In the text of the manuscript itself (which is accompanied by a bio of Conway and blurbs from real-life authors Ian Rankin and Robert Harris), Poirot-like sleuth Atticus Pünd, a German concentration camp survivor who has settled in England, tackles an Agatha Christie–like puzzle in 1955 Saxby-on-Avon. The verdict of accidental death seems warranted in the case of housekeeper and unrepentant busybody Mary Blakiston, who took a fatal fall down a flight of stairs at Pye Hall, since no one else was in the locked manor house at the time. But rumors that her estranged son wished Mary dead lead his fiancée to seek Pünd's help. The identity of the person responsible for Mary's death is but one of the questions Pünd must answer, and Horowitz throws in several wicked twists as the narrative builds to a highly satisfying explanation of the prologue. *Agent: Jonathan Lloyd, Curtis Brown (U.K.). (June)*