



The Madman of Bergerac

By Georges Simenon

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One of the world's most successful crime writers, Georges Simenon has thrilled mystery lovers around the world since 1931 with his matchless creation Inspector Maigret. In *The Madman of Bergerac*, Maigret gets caught up in an investigation in a provincial French town terrorized by a maniacal murderer?only after being shot following a man who has mysteriously jumped off a moving train. *The Madman of Bergerac* captures the obsessive snobbery and hypocrisy of small-town bourgeoisie.

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One of the world's most successful crime writers, Georges Simenon has thrilled mystery lovers around the world since 1931 with his matchless creation Inspector Maigret. In *The Madman of Bergerac*, Maigret gets caught up in an investigation in a provincial French town terrorized by a maniacal murderer?only after being shot following a man who has mysteriously jumped off a moving train. *The Madman of Bergerac* captures the obsessive snobbery and hypocrisy of small-town bourgeoisie.

The Madman of Bergerac By Georges Simenon Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

Maigret ranks with Holmes and Poirot in the pantheon of fictional detective immortals. (*People*)

Simenon remains an incredibly expert, dry, and inventive storyteller; the spell is infallible. (V. S. Pritchett)

Simenon created one of the great moral detectives . . . a master of the slow unfolding of the criminal mind. (John Mortimer)

A truly wonderful writer, marvelously readable—lucid, simple, absolutely in tune with that world he creates. (Muriel Spark)

A writer who, more than any other crime novelist, combined a high literary reputation with popular appeal. (P. D. James)

About the Author

Georges Simenon (1903–1989) began work as a reporter for a local newspaper at the age of sixteen, and at nineteen he moved to Paris to embark on a career as a novelist. He went on to write seventy-five Maigret novels and twenty-eight Maigret short stories.

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Georges Simenon

THE MADMAN OF BERGERAC

Translated by Ros Schwartz

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Georges Simenon was born on 12 February 1903 in Liège, Belgium, and died in 1989 in Lausanne,

Switzerland, where he had lived for the latter part of his life. Between 1931 and 1972 he published seventy-five novels and twenty-eight short stories featuring Inspector Maigret.

Simenon always resisted identifying himself with his famous literary character, but acknowledged that they shared an important characteristic:

My motto, to the extent that I have one, has been noted often enough, and I've always conformed to it. It's the one I've given to old Maigret, who resembles me in certain points ... 'understand and judge not'.

Penguin is publishing the entire series of Maigret novels.

PENGUIN CLASSICS

THE MADMAN OF BERGERAC

'I love reading Simenon. He makes me think of Chekhov'

— William Faulkner

'A truly wonderful writer ... marvellously readable – lucid, simple, absolutely in tune with the world he creates'

— Muriel Spark

'Few writers have ever conveyed with such a sure touch, the bleakness of human life'

— A. N. Wilson

'One of the greatest writers of the twentieth century ... Simenon was unequalled at making us look inside, though the ability was masked by his brilliance at absorbing us obsessively in his stories'

— *Guardian*

'A novelist who entered his fictional world as if he were part of it'

— Peter Ackroyd

'The greatest of all, the most genuine novelist we have had in literature'

— André Gide

'Superb ... The most addictive of writers ... A unique teller of tales'

— *Observer*

'The mysteries of the human personality are revealed in all their disconcerting complexity'

— Anita Brookner

'A writer who, more than any other crime novelist, combined a high literary reputation with popular appeal'

— P. D. James

‘A supreme writer ... Unforgettable vividness’

— *Independent*

‘Compelling, remorseless, brilliant’

— John Gray

‘Extraordinary masterpieces of the twentieth century’

— John Banville

1. The Restless Passenger

It all came about by pure chance! The previous day, Maigret had not known that he was about to go on a journey, even though it was the time of year when he usually began to find Paris oppressive. It was a March spiced up with a foretaste of spring and a clear, sharp sun that was already warm.

Madame Maigret was away in Alsace for a couple of weeks, staying with her sister, who was having a baby.

On the Wednesday morning, the inspector received a letter from a former colleague who had retired from the Police Judiciaire two years earlier and moved to the Dordogne.

... And of course, if you happen to be in the area, do come and stay with me for a few days. I have an elderly housekeeper who is only too happy when there are guests to fuss over. And it's the start of the salmon season—

Maigret’s imagination was particularly fired by the letterhead with its drawing of a manor house flanked by two circular towers above the address:

La Ribaudière

near Villefranche-en-Dordogne

At midday, Madame Maigret telephoned from Alsace to say that her sister would probably give birth that night, adding, ‘You’d think it was summer ... The fruit trees are in blossom!’

Chance ... Pure chance ... A little later, Maigret was in the chief’s office, chatting, when his superior said, ‘By the way ... Did you ever go to Bordeaux to follow up that matter we talked about?’

It was a minor case of no urgency. At some point, Maigret had to go to Bordeaux to trawl through the municipal records.

One idea led to another: Bordeaux ... the Dordogne.

At that exact moment, a ray of sunlight struck the crystal globe paperweight on the chief’s desk.

‘That’s a thought! I’m not working on anything at the moment.’

Later that afternoon, having purchased a first-class ticket to Villefranche, Maigret boarded the train at the Gare d’Orsay. The guard reminded him to change trains at Libourne.

‘Unless you’re in the sleeper compartment which gets hitched to the connecting train.’

Maigret thought no more about it, read a few newspapers and made his way to the dining car where he sat until ten o’clock.

When he returned to his compartment, he found the curtains drawn and the light dimmed. An elderly couple had commandeered both seats.

An attendant walked past.

‘Is there a free bunk by any chance?’

‘Not in first-class … but I think there’s one in second … If you don’t mind—’

‘Of course not!’

And Maigret lugged his carpet-bag along the corridors. The attendant opened several doors and finally found the compartment in which only the upper bunk was taken.

Here too, the light was dimmed and the curtains drawn.

‘Would you like me to switch on the light?’

‘No thank you.’

The air was warm and stuffy. There was a faint hissing sound, as if there was a leak in the radiator pipes. Maigret could hear the person in the top bunk tossing and turning and breathing heavily.

The inspector silently removed his shoes, jacket and waistcoat. He stretched out on the lower bunk and felt a slight draught coming from somewhere. He picked up his bowler hat and put it over his face for protection.

Did he fall asleep? He dozed off, in any case. Perhaps for an hour, perhaps two. Perhaps longer. But he remained half conscious.

And, in that semi-conscious state, he was aware of a feeling of discomfort. Was it because of the heat battling with the draught?

Or was it because of the man in the top bunk, who couldn’t keep still for a second? He tossed and turned continually, just above Maigret’s head. Every movement made a rustling sound.

His breathing was irregular, as if he had a fever.

After a time, Maigret got up, exasperated, went into the corridor and paced up and down. But there it was too cold.

So it was back into the compartment, and another attempt to sleep, his thoughts and sensations befuddled by drowsiness.

Cut off from the rest of the world, the atmosphere was that of a nightmare.

Had the man above him just raised himself up on his elbows and leaned over to try and get a look at his companion?

Maigret, meanwhile, didn't dare move. The half-bottle of Bordeaux and the two brandies he had drunk in the dining car lay heavy in his stomach.

The night was long. Whenever the train stopped at a station, there was a babble of voices, footsteps in the corridors, doors slamming. It felt as if the train would never get going again.

It sounded as if the man was crying. There were moments when he held his breath. Then suddenly, there'd be a snivel and he would turn over and blow his nose.

Maigret regretted leaving his first-class compartment occupied by the elderly couple.

He dozed off, woke up and drifted off again. Finally, unable to stand it any longer, he coughed to steady his voice and said, 'Monsieur, would you kindly try to keep still!'

He felt embarrassed, because his voice sounded much sterner than he had intended. Supposing the man was ill?

There was no answer. The tossing and turning stopped. The man must have been making a huge effort to avoid making the slightest sound. And it suddenly occurred to Maigret that it might not be a man after all, but a woman! He hadn't seen the person who was wedged between the bunk and the ceiling.

And the heat must be suffocating up there. Now Maigret tried to turn down the radiator, but the control knob was jammed.

It was three o'clock in the morning.

'I really must get some sleep!'

Now he was wide awake. He had become almost as jumpy as his fellow passenger. He listened out.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Phyllis Richards:

Book is usually written, printed, or illustrated for everything. You can understand everything you want by a reserve. Book has a different type. To be sure that book is important issue to bring us around the world. Close to that you can your reading skill was fluently. A guide The Madman of Bergerac will make you to possibly be smarter. You can feel a lot more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think this open or reading a book make you bored. It's not make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you trying to find best book or suitable book with you?

Sondra Spencer:

Reading a reserve tends to be new life style within this era globalization. With reading through you can get a lot of information that will give you benefit in your life. Using book everyone in this world may share their idea. Textbooks can also inspire a lot of people. A lot of author can inspire their own reader with their story or maybe their experience. Not only situation that share in the guides. But also they write about the information about something that you need example of this. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors these days always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some investigation before they write for their book. One of them is this The Madman of Bergerac.

Jennifer Nava:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them household or their friend. Do you know? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity that's look different you can read any book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent the whole day to reading a guide. The book The Madman of Bergerac it is quite good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy the e-book. You can m0ore simply to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not very costly but this book has high quality.

David Rutherford:

Are you kind of occupied person, only have 10 or maybe 15 minute in your day to upgrading your mind skill or thinking skill perhaps analytical thinking? Then you are experiencing problem with the book than can satisfy your short space of time to read it because this all time you only find guide that need more time to be read. The Madman of Bergerac can be your answer since it can be read by you actually who have those short free time problems.

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