



## Maigret and the Apparition

*Georges Simenon , Eileen Ellenbogen (Translator)*

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Maigret arrives home exhausted after cracking an especially difficult case, only to be awakened within hours by the news of a nearly successful attempt on the life of a colleague. Plainclothes detective Lagnon, known to Maigret as "Inspector Hopeless," has become involved beyond his depth in an international art fraud and is suffering the consequences. Maigret's only clue to Lagnon's assailant is the single word "apparition" spoken by the victim as he emerges from the operating room. The apparition leads Maigret to the highest echelons of the Parisian art world--and the depths of greed and cruelty.

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## **Maigret and the Apparition Details**

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## From Reader Review Maigret and the Apparition for online ebook

### Phillip Kay says

Maigret and the Ghost was first published as *Maigret et le fantôme* in 1964, and translated into English by Eileen Ellenbogen. The lugubrious Inspector Lognon makes another appearance in this late story, as a victim shot and seriously injured by persons unknown. The plot involves (or perhaps may involve) art swindles, as a talented forger appears to be successfully selling work under more famous names. As usual, Simenon is more interested in the people that Maigret interviews than in the how and who of any actual crime. This is an incredibly badly constructed story by Simenon, and the ‘solution’ of the crime, hastily introducing a large number of undeveloped characters, is almost incomprehensible. I’m still not sure Simenon solved the attempted murder or not, as there seems to be suddenly too many people doing mysterious things which are not fully explained, all in the last chapter. Simenon does this at times: he is primarily interested in the case study, not the plot (though he can be superb in constructing a plot).

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### Meredith says

When Inspector Maigret’s colleague whom he dubbed *Inspector Hapless* is shot while on duty, Maigret sets out to find the assailant and complete the investigation.

Disappointingly, the apparition from the title isn’t a ghost. Rather is a figure dressed in white that Inspector Hapless glimpsed on the third floor of the house he had staked out. Personally, I would have liked to see how sensible hard-nosed Maigret would react to an encounter with the supernatural.

This case plunges Inspector Maigret into the world of fine art collecting, dealing, smuggling, thefts, and forgeries as well as the accompanying rich collectors with loose sexual morals and seedy gangs of thieves and forgers. It’s a fairly straight forward game of connecting the dots rather than making sense of contradictory events, accounts, and evidence. Maigret’s intuition puts him on the right path, but the denouement doesn’t come out of nowhere as often happens in this series.

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### Benjy says

Mixed Maigret. The mystery itself is a tough one to solve and the clues aren’t too obvious.

But there’s an extended period in the middle in which we’re waiting on stake outs and phone calls and records searches to yield any progress. Fortunately, the point of these novels is the atmosphere and characterizations.

It’s a little skimpy on evocative descriptions by Simenon standards, mostly giving up after some wonderful images of rainswept Paris in the first chapter. But check out this exchange, an inspector reporting back about a witness:

He pricked up his ears, however, when mention was made of one Maclet, who lived on the second floor of a

neighboring building. According to Chinquier, he was a creaking old gentleman, who had shut himself in his apartment once and for all, and whose only recreation was to sit at his window, watching the antics of the world outside with sardonic amusement.

"He's crippled with rheumatism, and just manages with the aid of two sticks, to hobble about his filthy apartment, where no cleaning woman is permitted to set foot. He orders the food he needs each day by means of a note left under the doormat, and the concierge takes the food up and leaves it outside his door.

"He has no radio, and never reads a newspaper. The concierge claims that he's a rich man, for all that he lives like a pauper. He has a married daughter, who has tried more than once to get him committed to a mental hospital..."

"Is he really mad?"

"Judge for yourself. I had the greatest possible difficulty in persuading him to open the door. It wasn't until I threatened to come back with a locksmith that he finally let me in. When, at last, he did so, he inspected me slowly, head to foot and then said with a sigh:

'You're rather young for this sort of job, aren't you?'

"I told him I was thirty-five, and he retorted, two or times over:

'A boy! A mere boy! ...What does anyone know at thirty-five? Understanding comes with experience....'"

I think there's a cop out by shifting some of the lurid behaviors away from one suspect to another.

But there's also a very tense exchange between Maigret and a suspect at the suspect's house, where every detail and word feels like a clue or a lie or both.

A fun diversion, though not a good Maigret or Simenon to start with if you're new to them.

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### **Steven says**

This is a marvelous late Maigret that has to do with art forgeries, mysterious women, and men of unsavory character. Poor Inspector Lognon, Maigret's deputy of some years, has decided to pursue some tantalizing leads, but he neglects to tell anyone in the police office about his investigation. When he is shot in the stomach late at night and left for dead in the street, he can tell no one about the nature of the case. Maigret and, surprisingly, his wife, solve the crime. This is a pretty intricately plotted book; I noticed that one reviewer said that it was quite incomprehensible and relied on "deux ex machina" devices, but ultimately I found the resolution quite convincing. However, cynic that Simenon could be, he minimizes the importance of the story in the final paragraph: "The trial caused little stir. It was already stale news, and besides, it took place in June, a time of the year when no one talks of anything but where they are going on holiday."

The dialogue between Maigret and Mme. Maigret is charming and playful, and I was particularly struck by this comment after one of their exchanges: "They never addressed each other by name, now were they in the habit of exchanging endearments. What was the point, since both felt that, in many ways, they were one

person?" So indicative of a long and enduring marriage.

If there is anything more entertaining than a Maigret mystery that can be read in one sitting, I defy anyone to name it!

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### **Richard Hannay says**

Otra gran historia de Maigret con la reaparición de un viejo conocido. Lognon, le Malgracieux, el policia de barrio sin suerte que pese a su dedicacion y tenacidad no logra jamas alcanzar la promocion que merece ni el reconocimiento que anhela y que le exige la harpia que tiene por esposa. Lognon es, en esta ocasion, victim. No bien acaba de cerrar Maigret una investigacion complicada cuando le anuncian en plena noche que Lognon ha sido llevado al hospital. Le han disparado en el estomago y los medicos temen por su vida. Lognon, para sorpresa de todos cuantos le conocen ha sido abatido cuando salia del apartamento de una joven y bella esteticienne, Marinette Augier, en cuya casa habia pasado las ultimas noches segun testimonio de la portera. A partir de ahí una historia de pasion y de pasión por el arte con falsificadores, coleccionistas y pintores ríos y geniales. Simenon en plena forma. Nada que ver con fantasmas.

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### **Marlène says**

Mon premier Maigret. Mais pas mon premier Simenon (le deuxième en fait). Je m'attendais donc plus ou moins à certains thèmes, ici, le voyeurisme, simple curiosité occasionnelle, relation de voisinage ou passe-temps, qui accompagne l'enquête et livre la majorité des pièces du puzzle à Maigret. Et Lognon le Malgracieux, ou plutôt Malchanceux.

Un puzzle oui, et les méthodes de notre commissaire qui contrastent tout particulièrement avec la norme du polar ou thriller actuel, plus basé sur l'action ou la psychologie. Ici, tout est enquête, procédure, recouplement et réflexion. Et travail d'équipe.

Et tout ça, ça donne soif. J'aurai pu compter le nombre de demis descendus par Maigret...

Sous couvert d'une écriture fluide et d'apparence simple et directe, Simenon nous fait suivre les interrogatoires et interrogations faussement désordonnés d'un Maigret à l'observation blasée, quelque peu désabusée des protagonistes de cette histoire de "fantôme" dans le milieu des grands amateurs d'art.

En d'autres termes, ma première incursion dans les enquêtes de Maigret a été marquée par le plaisir d'un style unique et bien loin du best seller flashy.

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### **Gaetano says**

Niente di soprannaturale, a dispetto del titolo, in questa ennesima indagine di Maigret.

La notizia di una sparatoria notturna che coinvolge un collega del commissario, l'ispettore Lognon, famoso tra i colleghi per la sua sfortuna, arriva dopo la difficile conclusione di un'altra faticosa indagine.

Maigret si trova così coinvolto a tempo pieno per venire a capo del mistero (la parola fantasma sembra essere sussurrata dall'ispettore gravemente ferito prima del ricovero in ospedale) che lo porta a contatto con abitanti e frequentatori della via teatro dell'agguato.

Donne misteriose ed affascinanti, ragazze di vita, raffinati collezionisti, mercanti d'arte e persino un inquilino che passa le notti a spiare dalla finestra i vicini (inevitabile per me il pensiero al film di Hitchcock **La finestra sul cortile**) sono i personaggi che animano le pagine di questo romanzo. Il ritmo dell'indagine accelera e tutti i tasselli compongono il puzzle rivelando una verità articolata e complessa.

Bello, inusuale ed intrigante.

«Come è iniziata la storia dei quadri?».

«Non le sarà facile credermi, visto che lei non è un collezionista...».

«Io colleziono uomini...». Grande Maigret!

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### Sandra says

Nonostante il titolo non c'è nulla di soprannaturale in questo Maigret, che mi è piaciuto di meno rispetto ad altri: la storia gira intorno al tentato omicidio dell'ispettore Lognon, un collega del commissario da lui detto lo Iellato perché perseguitato dalla sfiga nel corso della carriera lavorativa che avrebbe potuto portarlo a livelli più alti, se le sue indagini non finissero spesso in mano ad altri inquirenti che le portano a termine con successo mentre lui rimane sempre a mani vuote. Questa volta lo Iellato viene colpito di notte da due proiettili all'ingresso di un condominio parigino, sta in coma all'ospedale e non può parlare. Le illusioni fioccano. Cosa ci faceva di notte in quel condominio? Si scopre che passava ogni notte, da qualche tempo, a casa di una bella e giovane ragazza, misteriosamente scomparsa dopo la sparatoria; ma Lognon è sposato, si tratta di adulterio? Tocca all'incredulo Maigret dipanare la matassa, che prende le mosse da un ricco collezionista d'arte olandese che abita con la bellissima moglie francese dal passato oscuro proprio di fronte alle finestre della ragazza.

Non mi è piaciuto come altri Maigret perché nella storia vi è troppa confusione di personaggi, che rendono la trama aggrovigliata e poco chiara, ed anche il finale non risolve alcuni dei dubbi che sorgono durante la lettura. Sia chiaro, Maigret è sempre una lettura piacevole, ma questo mi ha lasciato con un leggero amaro in bocca.

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### Cheryl says

Wow -- was amazed that the whole set of events in this book basically took place in the span of a day. I would have expected this amount of investigation in a few days to a week in most mysteries, but Maigret appears to have the stamina of the Energizer bunny. An interesting mystery -- some of it I was able to guess, and some of it was a surprise to me. I found myself shocked by the nature and extent of the Dutchman's involvement in the nefarious goings-on.

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### Novella Semplici says

Il commissario Maigret mi sta molto simpatico. I libri di Simenon sono una garanzia. Il testo è breve e si legge d'un fiato. La vicenda è un bel po' ingarbugliata ma si legge con piacere. Non lo ritengo però uno dei migliori della serie. Comunque un ottimo livello.

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### **Jack Laschenski says**

As usual, a great Maigret book!

Art fraud and mistresses!!

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### **John Frankham says**

Simenon at his best. I am beginning to think that the 1960s produced some very fine Maigrets (this one is no. 66 out of 79). Here, a very tight case as Maigret, like a conductor, leads his team to bring out the information and people that allow him to interview the key characters and solve the mystery. All in Paris, with plenty of beer and sandwiches, and visits to bistros!

The GR blurb (with spoilers removed):

Maigret arrives home exhausted after cracking an especially difficult case, only to be awakened within hours by the news of a nearly successful attempt on the life of a colleague. Plainclothes detective Lagnon, known to Maigret as "Inspector Hopeless," has become involved beyond his depth in an ..... and is suffering the consequences. Maigret's only clue to Lagnon's assailant is the single word "apparition" spoken by the victim as he emerges from the operating room. The apparition leads Maigret to the highest echelons of the Parisian ..... world--and the depths of greed and cruelty.

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### **Emir says**

A good classic and a read. I liked Monsieur Jonker.

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### **Orinoco Womble (tidy bag and all) says**

A hardworking, hardluck police officer is gunned down on a Paris street; the only word he can say while trying not to bleed to death is, "Fantome." *I wonder why the translator chose the word "Apparition" instead of the homonymous, homophonous "Phantom" for the French word "Fantome." Even "ghost" would have been better--"Maigret and the Ghost!" I doubt a man near death would even think of the word "apparition", let alone try to say it.* What was Inspector Grumpy doing in that place at that time of night? Who shot him, and why? And where is the mystery girl? Maigret goes into bulldog mode when dealing with the suspects, a Dutch art dealer and his French wife--he simply holds on till he gets what he wants. He's less polite than usual, but that's understandable--he's had very little sleep, finding himself with 2 tough cases to crack in less than 48 hours. "The boys" are all on side to help him--Janvier, Lucas and co do their best to help out the cheif, even if it means going against orders and doing without sleep. If he can do it, so can they! We are given some interesting sidelights on the Cheif Inspector's relationship with the longsuffering Madame Maigret, who finds herself delegated to deal with the victim's wife, a woman who enjoys poor health.

I realised last night that it only takes about as long to read a Maigret novel as it does to watch an episode of the eponymous TV series. They're a satisfying mental snack at bedtime, no gore to disturb dreams, just a rattling good yarn. The Bruno Cremer film gave some of the subthreads more play, which in some ways confused the story; again, I prefer the original book, but now I can re-watch the film and things will make more sense.

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### **Karla Mallma Soriano says**

Como te amo Maigret!!!!

En esta nueva aventura el comisario Maigret tiene que lidiar con falsificadores de Van Gogh, Cezanne, Renoir y un excelente copista de arte.

Buenazo el libro!

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