



How do you like your coffee? Black? With a hint of sugar, or a touch of cream? If you're expecting Agatha Christie's serving of Black Coffee to be so simple, you'd be in for a surprise. **Black Coffee** can be summed up as intriguing, exciting, hilarious, typically British and perfectly proper.

The [Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), now in its 17th year of the **Master Playwright Festival**, selected the works of Agatha Christie for this year's festival, which runs until February 26. And even if you've never read or seen any of Agatha Christie's works, **Black Coffee** is positively the perfect place to start. Not only is it Christie's first stage play, it also won't leave you feeling as if you should have read the book first, or leave you guessing. Well, that's not exactly true since this is a murder mystery.

Black Coffee centers on the death of Sir Claud Amory, a wealthy, demanding scientist preoccupied with his inventions and obsessed with locked doors. When his potentially lucrative and deadly formula for a new explosive goes missing, Sir Amory decides to get to the bottom of the matter, not realizing that this will, in fact, lead to his death. Among the suspects are Sir Amory's broke son Richard, his beautiful and mysterious Italian wife Lucia, Sir Amory's ethnocentric spinster sister Caroline, their unbridled niece Barbara, the mysterious Italian guest and purported friend of Lucia, Dr. Carelli, and Sir Amory's meek and mild secretary Edwina Raynor.

On the heels of Sir Amory's murder and with the theft of his formula, comes detective Monsieur Hercule Poirot and Captain Arthur Hastings - the Watson to Sherlock Holmes' Poirot - to save the day and ultimately solve the mystery.

What makes **Black Coffee** - or any of Agatha Christie's works for that matter - exceptional, is perhaps its understated manner. What Christie's works lack in showmanship that many a modern-day play may offer, she certainly makes up for in the methodical nature and on-point delivery of her plots.

Buy your tickets: <http://royalmtc.ca/Current-Plays/Black-Coffee.aspx>