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The Saint-Fiacre Affair: Inspector Maigret #13



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurMaigret's past comes to life in this vivid new translation of this evocative novel, set in the Inspector's home town. Book thirteen in the new Penguin Maigret series.Maigret savoured the sensations of his youth again: the cold, stinging eyes, frozen fingertips, an aftertaste of coffee. Then, stepping inside the church, a blast of heat, soft light; the smell of candles and incense.The last time Maigret went home to the village of his birth was for his father's funeral. Now an anonymous note predicting a crime during All Souls' Day mass draws him back there, where troubling memories resurface and hidden vices are revealed. Penguin is publishing the entire series of Maigret novels in new translations. This novel has been published in a previous translation as Maigret Goes Home.'Compelling, remorseless, brilliant' John Gray'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 supreme writer . . . unforgettable vividness' Independent

Extrait Georges Simenon THE SAINT-FIACRE AFFAIR Translated by Shaun Whiteside PENGUIN BOOKS Published by the Penguin Group Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 2Y3 (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.) Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephens Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin Books Ltd) Penguin Group (Australia), 707 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3008, Australia (a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd) Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110 017, India Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, Auckland 0632, New Zealand (a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd) Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, Block D, Rosebank Office Park, 181 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parktown North, Gauteng 2193, South Africa Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England www.penguin.com First published in French as La Messe de Saint-Fiacre by Fayard 1932 This translation first published in Penguin Books 2014 Copyright 1932 by Georges Simenon Limited Translation copyright Shaun Whiteside, 2014

GEORGES SIMENON Simenon.tm MAIGRET Georges Simenon Limited Cover Harry Gruyaert /Magnum Photos Cover design by Alceu Chiesorin Nunes All rights reserved The moral rights of the author and translator have been asserted ISBN: 978-0-698-19382-6 Title Page Copyright About the Author 1. The Little Cross-Eyed Girl 2. The Missal 3. The Altar Boy 4. Marie Vassiliev 5. The Second Day 6. The Two Camps 7. Appointments in Moulins 8. An Invitation to Dinner 9. In the Spirit of Walter Scott 10. The Wake 11. The Two-Note Whistle EXTRA: Chapter 1 from The Flemish House PENGUIN CLASSICS THE SAINT-FIACRE AFFAIR 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 Andr 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 ABOUT THE AUTHOR Georges Simenon was born on 12 February 1903 in Lige, 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. Its 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. 1. The Little Cross-Eyed Girl A timid knock at the door; the sound of something being set down on the floor; a furtive voice: Its half past five! The first bell has just rung for mass Maigret propped himself on his elbows, and as he looked in amazement at the skylight that pierced the sloping roof the voice continued: Are you taking communion? Detective Chief Inspector Maigret was standing up now, barefoot on the freezing floor. He walked towards the door, held shut with a piece of string rolled around two nails. There was the sound of scurrying footsteps, and when he looked into the corridor he caught a glimpse of a woman in a camisole and a white skirt. Then he picked up the jug of hot water that Marie Tatin had left him, closed his door and looked around for a mirror to shave in. The candle only had a few minutes left to live. Outside the skylight it was still pitch dark, a cold night in early winter. A few dead leaves still clung to the branches of the poplars in the main square. Because of the double slope of the ceiling, Maigret could only stand upright in the middle of the attic room. He was cold. All night a draught whose source he had not been able to identify had left him with a chill on the back of his neck. But precisely that quality of cold unsettled him, plunging him into a mood that he thought was forgotten. The first bell for mass Chimes over the sleeping village When he was a little boy, Maigret hadnt got up so early. He used to wait for the second chime, at a quarter to six, because in those days he didnt need to shave. Had he only washed his face? No one brought any hot water in those days. Sometimes the water was frozen in the jug. A

little while later his shoes would echo on the metalled road. Now, as he got dressed, he heard Marie Tatin coming and going in the front of the inn, shaking the grate of the stove, clattering the dishes, turning the coffee mill. He put on his jacket and his coat. Before going out he took from his briefcase a piece of paper with an official label attached: Municipal Police of Moulins. Issued for any eventuality to the Police Judiciaire, Paris. Then a squared sheet. Meticulous handwriting: I wish to inform you that a crime will be committed at the church of Saint-Fiacre during first mass on All Souls Day. The piece of paper had been hanging around the offices of the Quai des Orfvres for several days. Maigret had noticed it by chance and been taken aback. Saint-Fiacre, near Matignon? Probably, because it reached us via Moulins. And Maigret had put the paper in his pocket. Saint-Fiacre! Matignon! Moulins! Words more familiar to him than any others. Saint-Fiacre was the place of his birth, where his father had been estate manager of the chateau for thirty years! The last time he had gone there had been, in fact, after the death of his father, who had been buried in the little cemetery, behind the church. A crime will be committed during first mass Maigret had arrived the previous day. He had put up at the only inn, the one that belonged to Marie Tatin. She hadn't recognized him, but he had recognized her, from her eyes. The little cross-eyed girl, as she had been called back then. A skinny little girl who had become an even thinner old maid with an even worse squint, moving endlessly around in the front room, in the kitchen, in the farmyard where she raised rabbits and chickens. The inspector went down the stairs. At the bottom, the inn was lit by paraffin lights. The table was laid in a corner. Some coarse grey bread. A smell of chicory coffee, boiling milk. You're wrong not to take communion on a day like today! Especially when you take the trouble to go to the first mass! Heavens! There's the second peal! The bells rang out faintly. There was a sound of footsteps in the road. Marie Tatin fled to her kitchen to put on her black dress, her lace gloves, the little hat which refused to sit straight on her bun. Ill let you finish eating. Will you lock the door behind you? No need! I'm ready. How confused she was to find herself walking along the road with a man. A man who had come from Paris! She took tiny steps, leaning forwards in the cold morning. Dead leaves somersaulted on the ground. Their dry rustle suggested frost in the night. Other shadows converged towards the faint light from the church door. The bells were still ringing. There were some lights in the windows of the single-storey houses: people hastily getting dressed for first mass. And Maigret savoured the sensations of his youth again: the cold, stinging eyes, frozen fingertips, an aftertaste of coffee. Then, stepping inside the church, a blast of heat, soft light; the smell of candles and incense. Please excuse me. I've got my prie-dieu, said his companion. And Maigret recognized the black chair with the red velvet arm-rest, the one that had belonged to old Tatin, the cross-eyed girl's mother. The rope that the bell-ringer had pulled a few moments before still quivered at the end of the church. The sacristan had just finished lighting the candles. How many were they, in this ghostly gathering of bleary-eyed people? Fifteen at most. There were only three men: the sexton, the bell-ringer and Maigret. A crime will be committed in Moulins, the police had assumed it was a bad joke and hadn't been concerned about it. In Paris, they'd been amazed when the inspector followed it up. He heard a noise coming from the door to the right of the altar and could guess, second by second, what was going on: the sacristy, the tardy altar boy, the priest silently putting on his chasuble, placing his hands together in prayer, heading towards the nave, followed by the little boy tottering in his robe. The little boy had red hair. He rang the bell. The murmur of liturgical prayers began. During first mass Maigret had looked at all the shadows, one by one. Five old women, three with their own reserved prie-dieu. A fat farmer's wife. Some younger village girls and a child. *Revue de presse* 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. *The Guardian* 'I love reading *Simenon*. He makes me think of *Chekhov*.' *William Faulkner* 'The greatest of all, the most genuine novelist we have had in literature' *André Gide* A supreme writer. *unforgettable vividness* *The Independent* 'Superb... The most addictive of writers... A unique teller of tales' *The Observer* Compelling, remorseless, brilliant. *John Gray* 'A truly wonderful writer... marvellously readable - lucid, simple, absolutely in tune with the world he creates' *Muriel Spark* 'A novelist who entered his fictional world as if he were a part of it' *Peter Ackroyd* 'Extraordinary masterpieces of the twentieth century' *John Banville*