

Agatha Christie

Murder on the Orient Express

BESTSELLER
contemporary



free Audiobook



Agatha Christie

Murder on the Orient Express

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PRELIMINARY

This icon indicates Preliminary-style activities

T: GRADE 5

This icon indicates Trinity-style activities

n. track



THE STORY IS FULLY RECORDED.



Agatha Christie

Dame Agatha Christie was one of the most famous and successful authors in the world. You can find her books (66 crime novels, 150 short stories and 19 plays) in over 100 languages. However, she also wrote an additional six novels under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott. Her play *The Mousetrap* first opened in London in 1952 and has

never closed – a world record.

She was born Agatha Miller on 15th September, 1890, in the English town of Torquay. Her father was American and her mother was English. For most of her childhood, Agatha was taught at home. Her mother didn't want her to learn to read until the age of eight, but Agatha couldn't wait and taught herself at five. When she was 11 years old, her father died and her world changed. As a teenager, she was sent to boarding schools in England and Europe.

In 1910, she met Archie Christie. Archie was a pilot and an army officer. The two fell in love and were married on Christmas Eve, 1914, several months after the start of the First World War. Their daughter, Rosalind, was born in 1919. During the war, Agatha worked as a nurse and learned about different medicines – and poisons. This was valuable knowledge to her later when she wrote her great mystery novels.

She began writing stories at the age of 18 and went on to novels. In 1920, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* was published and readers were introduced to Hercule Poirot, the brilliant Belgian detective. But in

1926, there were dark times. Her mother died that year and later, Archie fell in love with another woman. In December, Agatha left her house and was not seen for days. Over a week later, she was found at a hotel hundreds of miles away, with no memory of leaving her home. The same year, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* was published. This book made her world-famous and she became known as one of the greatest mystery writers of all time. In 1928, Agatha and Archie were divorced.

In September of 1930, Christie married Sir Max Mallowan. Max was an archaeologist, and he was 13 years younger than Agatha. This was a happier marriage and the couple stayed together for life. Christie spent a lot of time with Max in the Middle East, especially Iraq and Syria. She often helped with his work there, photographing and labelling the discoveries that were found. Several of her novels were set in this part of the world, including parts of *Murder on the Orient Express*.

In 1955, she received the first Grand Master Award from the Mystery Writers of America. In 1956, she was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire, and in 1971, she was made a Dame. Five years later, she died on 12th January, at the age of 85. Today, Agatha Christie and her books continue to fascinate us.

Comprehension check

1 Read the sentences and answer (T) True or (F) False.

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 You can still watch <i>The Mousetrap</i> in London. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Agatha married Archie Christie when she was 24 years old. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Agatha's first book made her world-famous. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Agatha rarely travelled after 1930. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 She died in 1976. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The Characters



From left to right:
*Princess Dragomiroff, Colonel Arbuthnot,
Mary Debenham, Count and Countess Andrenyi,
Samuel Ratchett*



From left to right:

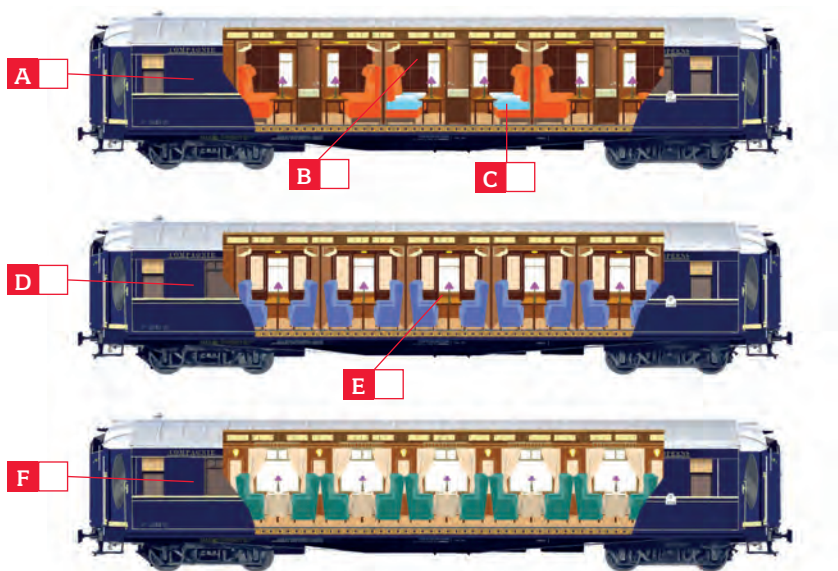
***Hector MacQueen, Caroline Hubbard,
Greta Ohlsson, Monsieur Bouc,
Hercule Poirot***

Before you read

Train vocabulary: All aboard!

1 Most of this story is set on a train. Match the words (1-6) to the right parts of a train (A-F). Use a dictionary, if necessary.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1 compartment | 3 carriage/car | 5 sleeping car |
| 2 berth | 4 dining car | 6 sleeping compartment |



Vocabulary: people and personalities

2 These adjectives are all used to describe people in Chapter 1. Match the words (1-4) to the right definition (a-d). Use a dictionary, if necessary.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> stout | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> ridiculous |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> elderly | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> cruel |

- a an older person, usually someone over the age of 70
- b when someone enjoys causing other people's pain or sadness
- c a little bit fat
- d something silly that makes you laugh



CHAPTER 1

The Orient Express

It was five o'clock on a cold winter morning in Syria. On the railway station platform next to the train, two men were talking. The first was a young officer with the French army. The second was a small figure.¹ His face was almost completely hidden by his scarf and hat; the officer could see only a pink nose and the ends of an enormous moustache.



track 02

'Today is Sunday,' said the French officer, for perhaps the third time. 'Tomorrow, Monday evening, you will be in Istanbul.'

The young officer was nervous. This little man from Belgium was an important person. The officer remembered his own General thanking this man for his help, with tears in his eyes.

'That is true,' agreed Hercule Poirot. 'I shall remain in Istanbul as a tourist for a few days.'

1. **figure** : the shape of a person.



CHAPTER 1

Above their heads, a young woman looked out of the sleeping car. Mary Debenham knew that she was in Aleppo, but she couldn't see anything on the platform except a young officer and a small man with an enormous moustache. Mary smiled. A ridiculous-looking little man.

Monsieur Poirot went aboard² and the train moved slowly forward.

A few hours later, Poirot was finishing his breakfast in the dining car. At these moments, he liked to study the people around him. There was only one other passenger at breakfast this morning: a young English lady, thin and dark, perhaps twenty-eight years old. She moved and spoke with confidence and perfect self-control.

Then another man entered the dining car, a tall Englishman of between forty and fifty years old. He introduced himself to the young woman and joined her. Through their conversation, Poirot was able to learn their names: Miss Debenham and Colonel Arbuthnot.

Late that night, the train arrived at Konya Station and Poirot went for a walk on the platform. He turned a corner and stopped. The English couple were just ahead, with their backs to him.

'Mary,' said the Colonel.

'Not now. Not now. When it's all over. When it's behind us — then — '

Poirot turned away. The calm Miss Debenham was clearly very upset.

The next afternoon they were in the mountains, far away from any station, when the train suddenly³ stopped. A conductor⁴ told

2. **aboard** : on or in a train or ship.

3. **suddenly** : quickly and surprisingly.

4. **conductor** : a worker on a train who helps passengers and keeps the train safe.





CHAPTER 1

Poirot that this was because of a fire under the dining car. Mary Debenham was standing behind him.

‘Don’t worry,’ Poirot told her, in French. ‘We are in no danger, Mademoiselle.’

‘Yes, yes, I understand that. But the *time!*’ she said. ‘This will delay us. I need to catch the Simplon Orient Express at nine o’clock tonight.’ Her hands were shaking. ‘I – I must catch that train.’

Soon the engine started again. They arrived safely in Istanbul that evening, only a few minutes late.

Poirot went directly to his hotel. But before he could go to his room, he received an urgent telegram. The police in London needed his help on an important case.⁵ There was no choice; he had to return to England immediately. Poirot cancelled his travel plans and booked a place on the Simplon Orient Express.

This was not easy. There were no sleeping compartments left. He had to take a second-class berth and share the compartment with a stranger: a young American man with a friendly face. He introduced himself as Hector MacQueen, and said that he was working as a secretary and travelling with his employer.

‘I wasn’t expecting to share this compartment.’ MacQueen smiled. ‘I guess the train’s full!’

Later, Poirot had a more pleasant surprise. His old friend M.⁶ Bouc was travelling on the Simplon Orient as well. M. Bouc was also Belgian, and a director of the company that operated the Orient Express. He was a small, stout man with very short hair.

‘The whole world is travelling tonight!’ said Bouc. ‘Very strange for this time of year. I don’t understand it.’

5. **case** : a crime that someone is investigating.

6. **M. (French)** : *Monsieur*.



Poirot had to agree. 'Neither do I, my friend.'

Outside a whistle⁷ blew and the train started to move. The Orient Express began its three-day journey across Europe.

The next day, Bouc and Poirot met for lunch in the dining car and the two friends enjoyed an excellent meal.

'Look around us!' Bouc waved his hand at the travellers and their tables. 'People of all classes, of all ages, from every country in Europe and beyond. Where else can one find such variety? For three days these strangers are brought together. Then, they part, and most will never see each other again.'

Poirot drank his coffee. There were thirteen people in the dining car. He began to study them.

At the next table, a large Italian man sat opposite a big American in a brightly coloured suit. Between them was a small, neat Englishman with an expressionless face. Poirot's eye passed on.

An elderly woman sat alone at another table. A very ugly woman, Poirot thought, but she was strangely fascinating. The woman wore a necklace of large jewels, her hands were covered with rings, and she spoke and moved like a queen.

'That is Princess Dragomiroff,' whispered⁸ M. Bouc. 'She is a Russian, and extremely rich.'

Mary Debenham was at a large table with two other women. One was tall and middle-aged. She had glasses, grey-blond hair, and looked a little like a sheep. Poirot guessed that she was Swedish. The other was a stout, pleasant-faced, elderly American.

7. whistle



8. whisper : speak very softly and quietly.



CHAPTER 1

She was talking about her daughter in Smyrna, talking and talking while the other two listened politely and said nothing.

Colonel Arbuthnot was in the corner, alone. He sat and stared⁹ at the back of Mary Debenham's head.

On the other side of the carriage, another middle-aged woman was at a small table alone. She seemed to be German, and it was clear that she was not rich. Poirot thought that she was probably a lady's maid.¹⁰

Sitting closer to Poirot and Bouc was a good-looking young couple. The man was handsome, perhaps thirty years old, tall and broad, with a big, blond moustache. The woman was very young, probably about twenty. She was beautiful, pale, with shining dark hair and large, brown eyes, and was stylishly dressed in the latest fashions.

'Husband and wife?' asked Poirot.

M. Bouc nodded. 'Hungarian, I believe. The Count and Countess Andrenyi.'

The only two others were Hector MacQueen and an older man, probably his employer. Poirot studied the man's face. He was between sixty and seventy, well-dressed and smiling with white, perfect teeth. But his eyes were small and cruel. As he looked at this man, Poirot had a strange, unpleasant feeling. 'Now I am close to something evil,' he thought.

One by one, the travellers finished their coffee and began to leave. Poirot stayed. After a time, he and MacQueen's employer were the only people in the dining car.

The man came and sat down at Poirot's table.

9. **stare** : look at someone or something directly for a long time.

10. **maid** : a female servant.



‘My name is Ratchett.’ His voice¹¹ was low, soft and dangerous. ‘And I think that you are the famous M. Hercule Poirot. Is that true?’

‘It is, Monsieur.’

‘M. Poirot, let me get straight to the point.¹² I want you to work for me. I know you’re probably busy with other cases, but this means big money.’ He repeated ‘Big money’ in his soft, low voice.

Hercule Poirot was silent a minute or two, then he said, ‘What do you wish me to do for you, M. Ratchett?’

‘Mr Poirot, I am a rich man — a very rich man. Men in that position have enemies. I have an enemy. My life is in danger and I need protection.’¹³

Poirot rose¹⁴ from his chair. ‘I am sorry, Monsieur, but I cannot help you.’

‘What’s wrong with my offer?’

‘I do not like your face, M. Ratchett.’ And with that, he left the dining car.

That evening, heavy snow started to fall. The train stopped in Belgrade at 9.15 and another carriage was added. Bouc decided to move to this new carriage and leave his own first-class sleeping compartment for Poirot so that his friend could be more comfortable.

After dinner, Poirot went to his new compartment and found that it was next to Ratchett’s. Ratchett’s door opened and the small, neat Englishman stepped out. ‘His servant,’ Poirot thought. Inside, Ratchett was sitting up in his berth. When he saw Poirot, his expression changed to anger. Then the door was shut.

11. **voice** : the sound that people make when they speak or sing.

12. **get straight to the point** : go directly to the main idea.

13. **protection** : keeping someone or something safe.

14. **rose** : past tense of the verb *rise*; stand or move upwards.



CHAPTER 1

In his own compartment, Poirot got into bed and read for half an hour. He turned off the light and went to sleep.

A few hours later he was awake. There was a noise from the next compartment, a loud groan.¹⁵ At the same moment, a bell rang.

Poirot turned on his light. The train wasn't moving. Why? He opened his door just as the conductor came down the corridor. The man knocked on Ratchett's door.

A voice from inside the compartment said, '*Ce n'est rien. Je me suis trompé.*'¹⁶

The conductor nodded and hurried to answer another bell.

Poirot returned to bed. He looked at his watch. It was twenty-three minutes to one.

15. **groan** : a low sound someone makes if he/she is in pain.

16. ***Ce n'est rien. Je me suis trompé.*** (French) : It's nothing. I was mistaken.

The text and *beyond*

Comprehension check

1 Read the sentences and answer (T) True or (F) False.

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Hercule Poirot is travelling to Istanbul to help the police with a murder case. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 The train from Aleppo to Istanbul is very crowded. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Colonel Arbuthnot introduces himself to Mary Debenham on the Orient Express. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Mary Debenham is worried about the fire under the dining car because she doesn't want to be late. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Hercule Poirot and M. Bouc are from the same country. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 All of the people at lunch in the dining car are from European countries. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Mr Ratchett believes that someone wants to kill him. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 Poirot doesn't accept Mr Ratchett's offer because the amount of money is not enough. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 In the evening, Poirot moves to M. Bouc's empty sleeping compartment. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 Poirot wakes up because the train is moving quickly. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Discussion

2 Read the questions and discuss the answers.

- The French army officer says that his General thanked Poirot for his help 'with tears in his eyes'. What do you think Poirot did to help him?
- Colonel Arbuthnot and Mary Debenham are sitting away from each other at lunch on the Orient Express and they are not talking. Why?
- Read the descriptions of the people in the dining car on pages 13 and 14. Then look at the people on pages 6 and 7 again. Which of the thirteen people in the dining car are missing from the picture?

Miss Debenham and Colonel Arbuthnot

- ③ What do you think Mary Debenham and Colonel Arbuthnot were talking about on the station platform at Konya? Write the rest of Mary and the Colonel's conversation. Write at least three lines for each character.

Colonel Arbuthnot: Mary —

Mary: Not now. Not now. When it's all over. When it's behind us — then —

Colonel Arbuthnot: ...

Mary: ...

Mr and Mrs, Monsieur and Madame, Miss and Mademoiselle

- ④ Some of the characters in the story are from different parts of Europe, and use different titles before their last names. Look at the list and write A if this is an unmarried woman, B if this is a married woman, or C if this is a man, married or unmarried.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Mr | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 Monsieur (French) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Mrs | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 Miss | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Madame (French) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 Mademoiselle (French) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

'I don't understand it.' 'Neither do I, my friend.'

We can use **so + auxiliary verb + subject** after a positive statement, often to show that we agree.

We can use **neither/nor + auxiliary verb + subject** after a negative statement in the same way. **Nor** is more formal.

Present with *be*: 'I'm tired.' 'So **am I**.' (= We are both tired.)

Past with *be*: Alice **wasn't** in class yesterday. **Neither was** Sam.
(= Alice and Sam were both absent from class yesterday.)

Present with other verbs: 'I **love** Art.' 'So **do I**.' (= We both love Art.)

Past with other verbs: Sharon **didn't study** for the test. **Nor did** Ross. (= Sharon and Ross didn't study.)

Other tenses: I **haven't been** to Vincovci. **Neither has** my sister.

'I'm not listening.' 'Neither **am I**.'

'She'll **arrive** on Thursday.' 'So **will** we.'

Grammar: so, neither, nor

5 Complete the sentences with *so*, *neither* or *nor*.

- 0 Hercule Poirot is Belgian and M. Bouc is also Belgian.
Hercule Poirot is Belgian and *so is M. Bouc* .
- 1 Mary Debenham seems upset. Colonel Arbuthnot seems upset too.
Mary Debenham seems upset and
- 2 Mr Ratchett stayed in the dining car and Hercule Poirot stayed in the dining car.
Mr Ratchett stayed in the dining car and
- 3 Mary Debenham didn't say anything at lunch and the Swedish lady also didn't say anything.
Mary Debenham didn't say anything at lunch and
- 4 Poirot had the compartment next to Ratchett's. Poirot wasn't happy about this and Ratchett was also not happy.
Poirot wasn't happy and
- 5 Poirot has travelled to many countries. M. Bouc has also travelled to many countries.
Poirot has travelled to many countries and
- 6 The Taurus Express will be on time. The Orient Express will also be on time.
..... and

T: GRADE 5
Speaking: means of transport

6 Ask a partner these questions and be ready to answer yourself.

- 1 Have you ever stayed on a train overnight? Where did you go? How long did the journey take?
- 2 If you haven't stayed on a train overnight, what is the longest time that you have spent on a train, a plane or in a car? Where did you go?
- 3 Which do you prefer taking — a train, a plane or a bus? Or do you prefer driving? Why?
- 4 When is your next holiday? Where will you go? How will you get there?
- 5 What are some good reasons to take the train for a long journey?

Before you read

Vocabulary

1 These words are all used in Chapter 2. Match the words (1-9) to the pictures (A-I). Use a dictionary, if necessary.

- | | | | | | |
|---|------------|---|---------------|---|---------------|
| 1 | footprints | 4 | dressing gown | 7 | pipe |
| 2 | ashtray | 5 | chain | 8 | pipe-cleaners |
| 3 | bolt | 6 | snowdrift | 9 | cigars |



Vocabulary: verbs

2 All of these verbs are used in Chapter 2. Match the words (1-4) to the right definition (a-d). Use a dictionary, if necessary.

- 1 ☐ tap 2 ☐ raise 3 ☐ fasten 4 ☐ explain

- a to lift something up
 b to make something easier to understand
 c to attach something or lock it
 d to touch someone or something lightly