

Death on the Nile Study Guide

Death on the Nile by Agatha Christie

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Plot Summary

Death on the Nile is a Hercule Poirot mystery novel by the best-selling author Agatha Christie. The story follows the main character, Hercule Poirot, where he embarks on a vacation in Egypt, but finds himself solving two murder cases. Hercule Poirot is a French private investigator that is famous for solving some of the world's most perplexing mysteries. While he is on vacation and sailing on a river boat up the Nile, he finds himself in the middle of not one, but actually two murder mysteries.

It all starts when Linnet Ridgeway, one of the richest young ladies in London, steals the fiancé of her best friend, Jacqueline de Bellefort. Linnet Ridgeway not only steals Simon Doyle away from her friend Jackie, but she marries Simon and they head off on their honeymoon to Egypt. In revenge for stealing her man, Jackie starts showing up at all the locations where the newlyweds are present and harasses them. Coincidentally, Hercule Poirot is vacationing in Egypt and boards the same ship to sail up the Nile that the Doyles and Jackie de Bellefort take.

While on board, Jackie shoots Simon Doyle in the leg one night in the saloon. On the same night, Linnet Doyle is shot in the head while she's sleeping. Hercule Poirot takes on the case with his friend and fellow investigator who has come aboard the ship, Colonel Race. During the investigation, two more people are shot and killed, including Linnet's maid and one of the other passengers, Mrs. Otterbourne. Just in the nick of time, Hercule Poirot finds the murderers as the ship returns to port and justice triumphs.



Chapter 1

Summary

Mr. Burnaby and one of his friends is standing outside the post office when a beautiful girl steps out of a limo. The girl goes into the post office. The two men talk about how she is an American girl that recently bought a house in their country and plans on tearing it down and rebuilding it. Mr. Barnaby talks about how she is rich and good looking.

Linnet Ridgeway and her friend Joanna are talking in her new house. Linnet is the rich American girl who tore down the house and rebuilt it. One of the conversations the two women are having is about Linnet's jewels. Joanna mentions that she must be afraid of having them stolen. After Linnet's friend Jacqueline calls to come for a visit, the two women talk about Jacqueline's misfortune of losing all her money. Joanna insists Jacqueline is probably coming to ask Linnet for money, but Linnet says Jacqueline won't take her money. Joanna says that Linnet's efficient manner must create a lot of enemies and Linnet insists she doesn't have an enemy in the world.

Charles Windlesham is thinking about his proposal to Linnet as he gazes at her home, Wode Hall. He thinks about how Linnet did not deny his proposal but instead asks for them to delay their engagement. He also dreams about how he has fallen in love with one of the richest girls in London, and how this is a bonus if he can make Linnet his wife.

Jackie arrives and Linnet introduces Jackie to Charles. Charles leaves and Jackie tells Linnet she's engaged. She says Simon, her fiancé, lost his job and she wants Linnet to hire him to run the estate. When Linnet agrees, Jackie leaves back to London to tell Simon. She plans to return the following day with Simon.

Hercule Poirot is dining at Chez Ma tante, which is run by M. Blodin. As Hercule is being escorted to his table, he remembers when he was involved in a case involving the restaurant proprietor and a dead waiter. Hercule and M. Blodin are discussing the fact that Hercule might travel to Egypt soon when Hercule notices a couple talking about honeymooning in Egypt. The couple is Jacqueline and Simon.

Joanna and Linnet are discussing some people in cottages overlooking her new swimming pool that Linnet is having removed, so she can knock the cottages down. Windlesham comes in to ask Linnet if she's decided about the proposal. Linnet realizes that if she marries Windlesham, she'll lose her own identity and become his wife. She also calls into question her love for Windlesham when Jackie and Simon arrive.

Tim Allerton and his mother are discussing vacation plans when Tim mentions vacationing on the Nile in Egypt. Tim is Joanna's cousin. He mentions receiving a letter from her that says Linnet is marrying her land agent, which is Jackie's former fiancé,



Simon. Mrs. Allerton worries about how close Tim and Joanna are, but he reassures her that he's not in love with Joanna.

In New York City, two cousins are discussing their trip to Egypt. Miss Van Schuyler has asked her cousin Cornelia to accompany her on the trip to help her with errands and such. As Cornelia's mother passes one of the servants on the stairs, they have a discussion about the Egypt trip. A shadow falls on Mrs. Robson's face, who is Cornelia's mother.

Andrew Pennington is in his downtown office when he calls his partner Mr. Rockford into the office. Pennington tells Rockford that Linnet is married and honeymooning in Egypt. They plan to have a chance encounter with them in Egypt.

In London, two lawyers, William Carmichael and his nephew Jim Fanthorp, are reading a letter from Linnet. The letter says that she is honeymooning in Egypt and she ran into her trustee, Andrew Pennington. She includes that Pennington is taking the same trip up the Nile that her and her husband are. This causes Carmichael to send his nephew to Egypt because Linnet and Pennington do not know who Jim is.

Mrs. Otterbourne is telling her daughter Rosalie that she thinks they should move their vacation time from Jerusalem to Egypt. After Rosalie sees in the newspaper that Linnet and her new husband are honeymooning in Egypt, she agrees with her mother.

Analysis

Joanna talking about Linnet's jewels being stolen and Linnet saying how they are insured foreshadows that in fact Linnet will be robbed. Linnet stating she doesn't have any enemies indicates that she is probably naïve, but does in fact have someone that is greedy and does not like the things Linnet does. This might result in Linnet's murder.

The inference is that Hercule Poirot is some type of an investigator. Hercule overhearing Jacqueline and Simon talking about honeymooning in Egypt foreshadows that the three will wind up on a trip together and that a murder will force Hercule to investigate the case.

The shadow that falls on Mrs. Robson's face foreshadows trouble while Cornelia and Miss Van Schuyler are traveling in Egypt.

It appears as if Pennington and Rockford are American attorneys. They are plotting to run into Linnet and her new husband Simon as a way to land Linnet's business. Rockford thinks Pennington should have the chance encounter with Linnet because she either sees him as a n uncle or thinks that Pennington is her uncle.

Jim Fanthrop going to Egypt infers that he is trying to win the business of Linett away from Pennington.



Mrs. Otterbourne mentions that it's not a matter of life or death, but the author notes that it is. This foreshadows that someone dies on the trip up the Nile and all of the characters that have been introduced thus far are on the cruise and involved in the investigation.

Vocabulary

companion, bucolic, frock, autocratic, envious, sordid, vast, dilapidated, ecclesiastical, intonation, tactful, unobtrusively, amiable, impious



Chapters 2

Summary

Tim Allerton and his mother are sitting outside of their hotel in Assuan when they spot Hercule Poirot. Walking with him is an unknown but beautiful girl, who turns out to be Rosalie Otterbourne. Hercule and Rosalie are discussing how they are all passengers, including Rosalie's mother, on the ship to go up the Nile. The two continue to walk to drop off Rosalie's film for developing. As they are leaving the shop, they notice the boats on the Nile are mooring. As the passengers start to disembark, Tim Allerton joins them and they spot Linnet and her husband Simon. Rosalie says it's not fair for Linnet to be so rich, beautiful and have love. Hercule, however, says that the dark circles under Linnet's eyes and how tightly she is clutching her umbrella indicates a problem of some sort. Hercule also mentions that he recognizes Simon's voice from somewhere but can't place where.

They all return to the hotel. Hercule finds a bench overlooking the Nile while Rosalie goes to check on her mother. Hercule sees Jacqueline and puts together her face with Simon's voice and realizes now where he knows them from. Simon and Linnet walk down the path and run right into Jacqueline, who makes it sound as if they keep on running into each other.

Analysis

The characters this far introduced in the novel are starting to come together as they get ready to set sail up the Nile. Hercule recognizes Simon's voice from the conversation Hercule overheard between Jacqueline and Simon. It infers that Simon and Jacqueline were plotting for Linnet to fall in love and marry Simon so that Jacqueline and Simon can rip Linnet off for her money. Jacqueline infers that it's coincidence they keep running into each other however the meeting is planned.

Vocabulary

incredulously, ulterior, sloughingly, prattling, placid, excursion, gauntlet, proffers, strain, realization



Chapter 3

Summary

Tim Allerton and his mom are in the dining room of the hotel. When the DoYLES enter, Tim approaches them and introduces himself as Joann's cousin. Hercule is dining with Mrs. Otterbourne and Rosalie. It comes up in the conversation that Mrs. Otterbourne is an author and she offers to give one of her books to Hercule. Rosalie fetches the book for her mother. when Rosalie returns, Hercule recognizes the sadness in Rosalie's eye. Jacqueline enters the dining room and sits down at a table by herself and stares at Linett. Linett changes seats. Jacqueline changes seats so she can continue to start at Linett. Eventually, Linett goes into the hotel and Simon follows her.

Analysis

It seems as if Rosalie is destined to live her life caring for ill mother. This prohibits Rosalie from finding true happiness, which is why Hercule sees sadness in Rosalie's eyes. Jacqueline is stalking Linett and trying to make her life with Simon miserable because Linett stole Jacqueline's love.

Vocabulary

abstraction, flinch, sulkier, fidgeted, curtness, unconventional, eloquent, demeanor, meditative, abruptly



Chapter 4

Summary

Hercule Poirot is sitting on the terrace after dinner and after everyone else is gone. Linnet Doyle asks to hire him with a problem, but he tells her that he's on vacation. She explains the problem is Jackie following Linnet and Simon wherever they go. Linnet also mentions Jackie has threatened them. Hercule says that Jackie is not breaking the law and suggests that Linnet's attitude is one of disgust because she knows that stealing Simon from Jackie was wrong. Hercule agrees to talk with Jackie, but not as a commissioned representative of Linnet's. When he asks what kind of threats Jackie has made, Linnet tells him that Jackie has threatened to kill Linnet and Simon.

Analysis

The fact that Jackie has threatened to kill Linnet and Simon foreshadows Jackie becoming the primary suspect when the newlyweds wind up dead.

Vocabulary

hastily, meditation, trifle, regal, keenly, faltering, encounters, incredulous, absurd, disposed, conviction, grave, sanguine



Chapter 5

Summary

Hercule Poirot finds Jacqueline sitting overlooking the rocks on the Nile. She assumes Linnet has sent him to talk to her for a fee, but he says he is not representing Linnet. Hercule tells Jackie she should stop following the Doyles. Jackie pulls out a small pistol, which she says she bought to kill them both right after Linnet stole Simon from her. She says Linnet succeeded because Linnet is the sun and she is the moon, so Linnet dazzled him with her glamour. While Jackie is talking about killing them both she points out a man that was in the bushes, but he's gone by the time Hercule looks. Additionally, Hercule tells Jackie to stop what she's doing because what she is doing is evil and it will just attract more evil to come her way.

Analysis

Jackie saying she is the moon and Linnet is the sun is a simile. Someone lurking in the bushes overhearing what Jackie is saying about killing the Doyles provides the perfect scapegoat for the real murder, which is to set Jackie up for their murders. Hercule is referencing the "law of attraction" when he tells Jackie that if she does evil things that she attract more evil into her life--providing Jackie with a chance to move on and enjoy the rest of her life, even without Simon in it.

Vocabulary

assumption, undertone, bitterness, prolong, inflection, emphasis, obscure, dainty, reminiscent, beseech, deserted



Chapter 6

Summary

Hercule follows Simon out of the hotel the next day and asks to join him on his walk. Simon says that he knows his wife spoke to Hercule the night before. Simon uses the same simile Jackie used to explain why he fell in love with Linnet - the sun and moon simile. Hercule warns Simon that Jackie is carrying a gun but Simon says he doesn't believe Jackie would use it. Simon tells Hercule how he spread a rumor that he and Linnet are staying at the hotel for 10 days, but he has booked passage on a ship under assumed names so that Jackie can't find them. When Hercule mentions that eventually Jackie's small amount of money will run out and she'll have to stop following them, this point seems to make Simon uncomfortable. Hercule tells Simon that he is booked on the same ship the Doyles plan on escaping on from the hotel. When Hercule talks about planning his trips ahead of time, Simon mentions how he supposes that this is how a good murderer behaves as well. Simon tells Hercule the Allertons are also booked on the ship. Simon explains who Pennington is and how the Doyles coincidentally ran into him when they arrived in Egypt.

Analysis

It's ironic that Jackie and Simon use the same simile to describe the situation. It makes it seem as if they are in on the plan together to drive Linnet crazy, kill her and run off together with her money. Simon relating planning ahead of time to murder suggests that he is indeed in a plot with Jackie to kill Linnet, steal her money and for Jackie and Simon to run off together and live happily ever after.

Vocabulary

latter, redress, faint, annoyance, infamous, victimized, indecent, melodramatic, awe, spiteful, assumed, bribe, porter, stolidly



Chapter 7

Summary

Simon and Linnet go out on a boat for a day excursion to throw Jackie off on their true plans to sail on the boat up the Nile. Hercule spends the day at a museum on Elephantine, where he also runs into Mrs. Allerton with a drawing pad. Hercule and Mrs. Allerton talk about the types of crimes each of the hotel guests could be involved in and Mrs. Allerton says Jackie could murder someone. After they return from the island, they all board the train to go and catch the boat. On the train, Hercule runs into the Americans Mrs. Van Schuyler and Cornelia. On the boat, after everyone checks their rooms, Hercule and Rosalie are talking when they see the Doyles emerge from their cabin. They emerge looking happier and more relaxed than they were at the hotel, when suddenly Jackie walks up behind them and greets them.

Analysis

The fact that Jackie could find out the Doyles are on the boat under assumed names suggests that she has insider information. Since supposedly only Hercule, the maid and Simon knew about the plan, it suggests that Simon is the leak.

Vocabulary

expedition, picturesque, laden, demure, pugnacious, idiomatic, erudite, rudiments, appalling, contingency, ingenious, vanity

Chapter 8

Summary

Mrs Allerton and Tim are walking into the dining room of the boat when Mrs. Allerton tells Tim she asked Hercule Poirot to join them at their table. Tim gets mad at his mother, which shocks her. As Hercule joins them at the table, Mrs. Allerton says they should make a game out of identifying people from the ship's register. While Hercule is walking back to his room, he sees Jackie. He tells her he is unhappy to see her there because now she cannot turn back from what she has set out to do.

Analysis

Something has caused Tim Allerton to despise Hercule Poirot. Hercule seems to know that the end of the situation with Jackie, Simon and Linnet is the death of Simon and Linnet.

Vocabulary

distinguished, unmitigated, cosmopolitan, sullen, succulent, banter, insouciance, malicious, defiance, disaster



Chapter 9

Summary

As the boat docks, Hercule and Cornelia are two of the first people off the ship to view the pyramids. Hercule learns that Cornelia Robson is Marie Van Schuyler's niece and the other woman traveling with them is Marie's nurse. He also learns that Marie is very ill. Later, back on the ship, Mr. Pennington is having Linnet sign some legal documents, which Linnet insists on reading. Mr. Ferguson, the attorney, commends Linnet for having a head for business, especially as a woman. As Hercule walks back to his cabin, Mrs. Otterbourne stumbles into him, ranting how she's going to tell everyone how her daughter neglects her. Hercule returns Mrs. Otterbourne to her cabin and fetches Rosalie.

Analysis

Because Miss Van Schuyler is so ill, it foreshadows that she might die during the trip. Mr. Pennington trying to rush Linnet through signing the documents without reading them suggests that he is trying to fool her into signing something in which Linnet would not normally consent to sign. Mr. Ferguson complimenting Linnet's head for business suggests that he is trying to get on Linnet's good side so that he can land her business away from Mr. Pennington.

Vocabulary

snubbing, companions, frightfully, gracious, prattled, droned, recited, mite, cultivation, fruition, sheaf, perused



Chapter 10

Summary

It's Monday and the ship is moored once again. Simon Doyle tells Hercule Poirot that he and Linnet have decided to face Jackie rather than try to dodge her. As some of the ship passengers go ashore, Hercule strikes up a conversation with Andrew Pennington who admits he was friends with Linnet's father and has known her since she was a little girl. After touring the inside of one of the temples, Linnet and Simon decide to leave and sit in the sun under one of the cliffs. Someone yells and Simon moves Linnet just in time because a boulder falls where Linnet was sitting. Simon instantly thinks the boulder was pushed rather than falling on its own, but when they are getting back on the ship, they see Jackie is just leaving the ship.

Analysis

Hercule Poirot finds it suspicious that Andrew Pennington just happened to find himself in Egypt or the same place where Linnet and Simon were honeymooning. He suspects Pennington has other motives. If the boulder was pushed, then someone else was involved in pushing it, rather than Jackie pushing it herself.

Vocabulary

colossal, hewn, eternally, creed, fey, shrewd, gesture, vividly, docile, ashore



Chapter 11

Summary

Hercule Poirot asks Mrs. Allerton what the meaning of the word "fey" is, which is how Mrs. Allerton describes Linnet when she decides not to allow Jackie to bother her. Mrs. Allerton says it is a Scottish word that describes the happiness that comes before a disaster. Linnet accidentally opens a telegram meant for Mr. Richetti, who is an Italian ship member. Colonel Race surprises Hercule as a new ship passenger. The colonel is someone Hercule met at a dinner party where their host was murdered. The colonel says he's on the ship looking for a man that kills people but he doesn't know which passenger it is yet.

Analysis

It's ironic that Mrs. Allerton describes Linnet as "fey" because shortly after this the boulder almost falls on and crushes Linnet. It is also a foreshadowing of the murders that are yet to come. Colonel Race joining the ship members to hunt for a killer adds additional foreshadowing to the murders that are set to take place on the ship.

Vocabulary

toiling, reminiscent, indignity, prohibitive, exalted, jestingly, ornate, ruefully, contrary, novelette, inquietude, gloomy



Chapter 12

Summary

On a second day at the temples, Mr. Ferguson scolds Cornelia for being ordered around by Miss van Schuyler. When Cornelia returns to the ship, Miss van Schuyler tells Cornelia to find her stole, which Cornelia cannot find anywhere.

Later that night, Cornelia is doing needlework in the saloon. Linnet and Simon are playing bridge with Pennington and Colonel Race. Jackie comes in, sits next to Cornelia and orders a drink. Jackie makes comment about it being a honeymoon night and sings tunes that speak of a woman stealing another woman's man. Linnet retires to the cabin but Simon stays behind in the saloon to have a drink. This leaves Cornelia, Simon, Mr. Fanthorp and Jackie in the saloon. Jackie urges Cornelia to tell her about herself, but then addresses Simon directly by telling him to get her another drink. Jackie and Simon argue and Jackie ends up shooting Simon in the leg.

Cornelia summons Miss Bowers, who is a nurse. Mr. Fanthorp summons Dr. Bessner. Both attend to Simon and then Miss Bowers gives Jackie a morphine shot and vows to stay with her overnight. When Mr. Fanthorp goes back to retrieve the pistol, he cannot find it and tells Dr. Bessner that the gun is gone.

Analysis

If Simon is in on the plot with Jackie, Jackie could have shot him in the leg as a way of showing that they are not in it together. It is simply a diversion to keep everyone thinking that Jackie and Simon are still at odds with one another. In addition, the missing pistol foreshadows another shooting--one that ends in murder--and this time with an unknown shooter.

Vocabulary

artificial, pompous, faltered, mortified, desultory, gargantuan, sauntered, merriment, comply, settee



Chapter 13

Summary

Colonel Race comes in to Hercule Poirot cabin to tell him that Linnet Doyle was shot in the head the previous night. Hercule and the colonel go to Linnet's cabin, where they find the doctor examining Linnet's dead body. Hercule points out that Linnet, as she was dying, wrote the initial J in her own blood. Hercule says he thinks Linnet was writing the initial of her murderer. As Hercule tells the doctor that Jackie threatened to shoot Linnet in the head with her little pistol, the doctor explains that it was impossible for Jackie to do so. Then the doctor tells Hercule and the colonel about Mr. Doyle being shot by Jackie and Jackie receiving morphine and sleeping it off in her room with the nurse. Hercule and the colonel use the saloon to question Cornelia and Mr. Fanthorp about what happened the previous night. Miss Bowers, the nurse, undergoes questioning with Hercule Poirot and the colonel. She confirms that Jackie was with her all night after shooting Mr. Doyle.

Analysis

Hercule is saying that it is Jackie that shot and killed Linnet, just as she shot and wounded Simon. Ironically, during the questioning, it comes out that Simon wanted someone to stay with Jackie because he was afraid Jackie would hurt herself rather than hurt Linnet.

Vocabulary

lather, acquiesced, celerity, scorched, incrustation, extracted, inquiry, opiate, detain, premeditated, fiend



Chapter 14

Summary

Hercule Poirot and the colonel are discussing how someone is framing Jackie for the murder when Jackie comes into the room proclaiming her innocence. Hercule Poirot reassures Jackie that they know she couldn't have done it. Jackie reminds Hercule of the conversation they had back at the hotel, where she told him how she wanted to kill Jackie, and when they thought someone was listening in the bushes. Dr. Bessner beckons Poirot and Colonel Race to talk to Simon. Simon also proclaims Jackie's innocence to the two men. When Poirot questions Simon about Linnet's possible enemies, Simon lists Windlesham and Sir George, but says they are miles away. He also mentions that a name on the passenger list upset Linnet--something to do with her father's business. Poirot says it might be Mr. Ferguson that upset Linnet. They call in the maid to question her because she is the one that found Linnet's body. They find out from the maid that there is an engineer on board that disliked Linnet because she interfered in him marrying Linnet's former maid. The maid also says Mrs. Doyle was wearing her expensive pearls the night before and she put them on the nightstand before going to bed. Poirot says the pearls were gone this morning when he was in Linnet's room.

Analysis

While Jackie comes to mind as the one person who hated Linnet the most, there are at least two other people on board that held a grudge against her. One of these grudges might just be the motive for killing her. Additionally, the fact that Linnet's pearls are missing suggests that robbery could have been the motive. If this is the case, it opens up the door for someone else onboard to be guilty.

Vocabulary

faintest, faltered, downcast, reproachfully, convulsive, predominant, stammered, grudge, affluence, triumphantly



Chapter 15

Summary

The colonel and Hercule Poirot discuss possible suspects and motives over breakfast in the saloon. Mr. Fanthorp mentioned hearing a splash when the two questioned him. They question the bigamist that had a problem with Mrs. Doyle when she was Miss Ridgeway, but he says he had a grudge against her, not thoughts of murder. When they question Mrs. Allerton, she also mentions hearing a splash and running, or running and a splash. She can't remember in which order. Tim Allerton comes in after his mother and he says he heard the same thing of a splash and then running. He says he also heard a cork pop, which could have been the shot.

Analysis

It seems as if some of the ship passengers heard a cork pop--equating it to someone popping open a bottle of champagne. This in fact was probably the shot that killed Mrs. Doyle. The splash could be either the pearls the murderer stole going overboard or the gun being dropped overboard. So far, the two people onboard that have motives to kill Mrs. Doyle both have alibis for their whereabouts during the time of the murder.

Vocabulary

precipitate, booty, feasible, divert, profoundly, imbecile, grimace, speculate, astute, brood, bygone, bigamy, alibi, ordeal



Chapter 16

Summary

The colonel and Hercule question Miss Van Schuyler. She says she normally goes to bed at 10, but last night went to bed later because Cornelia kept her waiting. She says after she fell asleep, she heard the maid go into Mrs. Doyle's cabin. Then she heard someone on the deck and a splash. Miss Van Schuyler says it was 1:10 am when this occurred. She got up and looked out the window to see Miss Otterbourne dropping something overboard. The manager of the ship enters the room carrying a wet velvet cloth wrapped around a small pistol. Hercule says it's the pistol he saw Jackie with at the hotel when she was threatening to kill Linnet. Miss Van Schuyler identifies the velvet wrapping of the pistol as her stole that went missing the night of the murder. They say the stole was used as a kind of silencer for firing the weapon.

Analysis

Hercule Poirot thinks that Linnet is a victim of foul play. It doesn't make sense to him that someone would try to frame Jackie for the murder but then throw her pistol overboard to try to hide the murder weapon. Both the colonel and Hercule are baffled as to why Miss Otterbourne would have a reason to murder Linnet or hide the murder weapon.

Vocabulary

dame, venomous, displeasure, inconsiderately, fortunate, prowling, distinctly, malicious, triumph, assent, perplexed



Chapter 17

Summary

Next they question Miss Otterborne, who denies leaving her cabin all night or throwing something overboard. The investigators interview Mrs. Otterbourne, who says she cannot attest to whether or not Rosalie left the cabin last night. Mrs. Otterbourne instead points out all of the people onboard that could have committed the murder. Richetti says he went to bed right after dinner but that he did hear a splash in the middle of the night. When they interview Ferguson, he is not very amiable. He says he believes in violence but that he didn't murder Linnet.

Analysis

Miss Otterbourne blushes when the investigators tell her about Miss Van Schuyler seeing her throw something overboard at 1:10 am. The fact that Ferguson is acting so defensive could implicate him in the murder. Hercule also suggests that Ferguson and Fleetwood, the bigamist, were working together in the murder plot.

Vocabulary

colleague, seldom, merely, reflected, fuss, persist, shrank, scornfully, contradiction, despondently, futile, corroborated, gallantly, gesticulating



Chapter 18

Summary

The investigators interview Pennington. Then, Colonel Race writes down notes on all of the information they know, evidence they have and theories they have for the murder. The only thing Hercule wants to add to the notes is that the starting point is why the pistol was thrown overboard. He believes the answer to this question will point to the murderer.

Analysis

Hercule suggests that someone drugged Linnet. This is his reason for Linnet lying so peacefully and sound when she was shot. The two people on board that would have access to sedatives is Dr. Bessner and Ms. Robles. Both, however, have alibis for the time of the murder.

Vocabulary

conventional, commotion, uttered,, deplore, inadequacy, interchange, perturbed, marvel, postmortem, vacant, procured, interval



Chapter 19

Summary

A steward knocks on the door to beckon Hercule Poirot to Mr. Doyle. Simon asks Hercule to bring Jackie to him. Jackie comes into the cabin and instantly starts apologizing to Simon for shooting him and denies killing Linnet. Hercule leaves and goes to Rosalie's cabin. He walks with Rosalie and tells her that he knows her mother is a drunk. Rosalie admits that she was throwing her mother's bottles overboard. Hercule asks Rosalie if she saw anyone when she was throwing the bottles overboard, but Rosalie says no.

Analysis

Hercule thinks that Rosalie is lying when she says she didn't see anyone else on deck.

Vocabulary

wretched, quest, incredulity, docile, mute, maudlin, reluctant, entreat, strain, unfilial, intoxication, bouts, cunning, vehemently



Chapter 20

Summary

Mrs. Allerton and Tim are at their table in the dining saloon for lunch. They are discussing the murder and Tim tells his mother that Linnet's pearls are also missing. Tim says he heard this from Ferguson, who heard the information from the engineer. Hercule Poirot joins the Allertons. At the end of lunch, Colonel Race tells the group about the stolen pearls and asks everyone to remain in the saloon until the ship is searched. Hercule whispers something in Race's ear and then they both step out of the saloon. A few minutes later, a steward tells Race and Poirot that Miss Bowers, the nurse, wishes to speak to them. She steps out of the saloon, opens her purse and says she wants to return "these," which turn out to be the pearls.

Analysis

Hercule Poirot suspects that the thief will hand over the pearls when they hear the announcement that everyone and everything onboard will be searched. What takes Poirot and Race by surprise is that it is Miss Bowers that hands over the necklace.

Vocabulary

subdued, maternal, demurred, virtue, rectitude, abatement, permanent, lameness, evaporated, expedite, nimbly



Chapter 21

Summary

Miss Bowers explains that Miss Van Schuyler is the one that took the pearls. Miss Bowers says she has a habit of stealing items. Miss Van Schuyler wraps up stolen items in a pair of her stockings, which is where Miss Bowers found the pearls this morning. Miss Bowers also tells Poirot, when asked, that Miss Van Schuyler is hard of hearing. After Miss Bowers leaves, Poirot rubs the pearls on his teeth and tells Race that the pearls are fake.

Analysis

Miss Van Schuyler might have seem Rosalie as she said, but according to Miss Bowers, there is no way that Miss Van Schuyler heard anything in Linnet Doyle's cabin. The fact that the pearls are fake suggests that Tim Allerton is involved because he was also at a dinner party where someone's diamond necklace was discovered to have been traded out for a fake version as well.

Vocabulary

averse, discretion, idiosyncrasy, persuade, ceased, quandary, competent, unhinged, interpolate, partition, astute, capable, purloining



Chapter 22

Summary

The colonel and Hercule Poirot search each of the cabins, while a female and male steward search each of the passengers. During the search of Tim Allerton's cabin, the only thing suspicious they find is that none of the personal letters he has are from Joanna, his cousin and friend of Linnet's. As they continue to search the cabins, the steward comes and tells the two investigators that they cannot find the maid anywhere. When they're searching Ferguson's cabin, they find a gun, but it is too large of a caliber to be the murder weapon. The steward and stewardess that were searching the passengers come to the investigators. They say the only thing they found was a gun on Richetti--too big of a caliber--and a small pistol in Rosalie's purse. As the investigators go to search the maid's cabin, they find the maid hiding under the bed.

Analysis

The lack of letters from Joanna to Tim Allerton suggests that Joanna and Tim could be cohorts in the murder of Linnet. The fact that Linnet's maid is missing makes her a suspect in at least the theft of the pearls. The fact that Rosalie has a small caliber pistol in her purse points suspicion back at her as a possible murder suspect.

Vocabulary

hastily, imitation, lustre, genuine, fabrication, allayed, masquerading, speculate, expedition, discrepancies, meticulous



Chapter 23

Summary

The maid under the bed is dead. She has been stabbed in the heart. Clutched in her hand is a corner of a French note. Race and Poirot conclude that she was blackmailing the real murderer. Dr. Bessner confirms that she was stabbed with an instrument that is thin like that of a surgical knife. It offends the doctor when Poirot asks if any of his surgical knives are missing. As Poirot is leaving the cabin, he hears Rosalie and Jackie having a conversation. Poirot tells them there has been another murder and he confronts Rosalie about lying about having a gun and about what she saw when she was on deck. Rosalie thrusts her purse at Poirot but she does not have a gun. She also denies seeing anyone.

Analysis

Rosalie must have disposed of the small pistol after the stewardess searches her purse and saw it there. That, or the stewardess was lying for some reason about Rosalie having a gun. Poirot suspects that Rosalie saw more than she is admitting to and she might either be the murderer, or Rosalie's life is in danger because she was a witness to the murder.

Vocabulary

instantaneous, feline, convulsed, detached, insensate, accede, parsimonious, audacity, prudent, disposition, indignation, consternation, bluntly, nominally



Chapter 24

Summary

As Miss Bowers is leaving the doctor's cabin, Jackie asks how Simon is doing. Miss Bowers tells her that Simon has a fever and that his condition is worsening. Jackie cries and Poirot assures her that Simon will be fine, once they get him back to land in the morning and can X-ray his leg and remove the bullet. Poirot and Race decide they have to find out more information about the telegram that Linnet mistook for hers, but was meant for Richetti. Poirot tells Race that he knows who the murderer is and gives Race some clues to think of, but Race cannot guess who it is. The investigators return to the doctor's cabin to talk with Simon about the telegram. Before Simon can tell the investigators what the telegram said, Mrs. Otterbourne stumbles drunkenly in the cabin screaming that she knows who the murderer is. Just as Mrs. Otterbourne is about to tell the investigators and Simon who she saw going into the maid's room, someone shoots her in the head. Poirot goes out onto the deck and finds a Colt revolver and then runs into Tim Allerton, who asks what the noise was. They go to Pennington's cabin and the revolver that was there earlier is gone. When they find Mr. Pennington, he is writing letters and says he's been in that room for the last 20 minutes. They tell him Mrs. Otterbourne was shot with his gun.

Analysis

Mrs. Otterbourne is inserting herself into the investigation so that she can once again have a claim to fame. Since her novels have not been publishing, she is losing the attention of her audience so she is always looking for ways to be the center of attention. All of the clues point at Pennington being the murderer. Now that Mrs. Otterbourne has been shot with Pennington's revolver, it really looks as if he is the murderer. The investigators are trying to figure out if this is fact or if someone is trying to frame him as they were trying to frame Jackie.

Vocabulary

accosted, relinquished, gropingly, lorry, inclined, console, hypocritical, decorous, lofty, sentiment, mockingly, impediments



Chapter 25

Summary

Mr. Pennington assures them that he's been below deck in this room writing letters. When they ask how it happens his gun was used to kill Mrs. Otterbourne, Pennington says that he made it clear to the passengers that he carried a gun during a conversation that took place when they first boarded the ship. When Poirot returns to the doctor's cabin, Cornelia and Jackie are still wondering how the shooter could have gotten away without them seeing him. Poirot says he could have swung himself down below. Ferguson proposes to Cornelia, but Cornelia denies him. Ferguson also announces that Cornelia's father was one of the men that lost all his money because of Linnet's father. Ferguson goes to Miss Van Schuyler to ask for Cornelia's hand in marriage. Miss Van Schuyler says disapproving things because of Ferguson's social status. When Ferguson leaves, Poirot tells Miss Van Schuyler that Ferguson is Lord Dawlish.

Analysis

Swinging himself down below indicates how Pennington could be the shooter and still have gotten below deck where they found him writing letter. Miss Van Schuyler is put in her place when she misjudges Ferguson, not realizing that he is of royal blood. When Ferguson reveals that Cornelia's family is one of those adversely affected by Linnet's father's actions, it points the finger at Cornelia having a motive to kill Linnet.

Vocabulary

imperiously, decency, odious, cling, mutt, paralysed, authoritatively, earnestness, devitalized, parasite, homely, reliable, roused, monographs, frigidly



Chapter 26

Summary

While Poirot and Race are waiting for Pennington to join them again, Poirot sends Race to fetch Fanthorp. Poirot accuses Fanthorp of being an impostor because a true Englishman would not butt into a ladies conversation and compliment that same lady on not signing legal documents before reading them. Fanthorp admits that he works for his uncle, who is the attorney for Mrs. Ridgeway in London. He says his uncle was suspicious of Andrew Pennington acting as Linnet's American attorney. His suspicions heightened when Linnet mentioned running into "Uncle Andrew Pennington" in her letter to Carmichael. Fanthorp leaves and they wait for Pennington to arrive in Poirot's cabin. Poirot confronts Pennington, saying that he killed Linnet because Simon would inherit Linnet's money. While Linnet was a shrewd business woman that Pennington could not fool, Simon would sign anything that Pennington put in front of him. Pennington says the boulder falling on Linnet was an accident, he denies shooting Linnet and leaves the cabin.

Analysis

Poirot thinks that Pennington saw an opportunity to get Linnet out of the picture and put Simon in charge of the millions he would inherit. Pennington saw that it would be easier to fool Simon into signing paperwork, after Simon admitted that he just signs anything that is put in front of him.

Vocabulary

indicated, perceive, bewilderment, transacting, delicacy, conjunction, solicitor's, presence, succession, injudicious, endeavoring, nebulous, acute, defalcations



Chapter 27

Summary

Poirot tells Race that while Pennington had motive to kill Linnet, that he didn't commit the murders because he is not bold enough to do so. Poirot says he wants to finish their conversation with Simon about the telegram, but first he wants to talk with Tim Allerton. When Tim enters the cabin, Poirot tells him that his friend at Scotland Yard has been telling him about jewel thieves that are switching the real pieces out for imitations. Poirot's friend thinks it is two people with social status. In other words, it is in an inside job. Poirot tells Tim that Joanna mailed him the imitation pearls in a hollowed out book. He hid the real pearls in his rosary beads that unscrew. Tim admits that he switched out the real pearls for the imitation ones the night of Linnet's death but says he doesn't know if she was dead or alive when he did it. Poirot tells Tim that Rosalie saw him leaving Linnet's cabin, but when they call for Rosalie, she won't admit it. As they leave the room, Tim grabs the box containing the fake pearls. He tells Rosalie he'll switch them out for the real pearls. He then professes his love for Rosalie and they go to tell Mrs. Allerton they are going to be together. Mrs. Allerton is happy they are going to be together and Rosalie says that she's always wished, but doesn't finish her sentence.

Analysis

Poirot is suggesting that Joanna Southwood and Tim Allerton are the criminals. It might be that Rosalie is Tim Allerton's partner, rather than Joanna Southwood.

Vocabulary

admission, faultless, calculating, execution, attributes, attentive, riveted, genial, stamina, curt, sordid



Chapter 28

Summary

As Poirot is about to tell Race who the murderer is, Cornelia and Dr. Bessner come to the door. Cornelia is upset because Miss Bowers has told Cornelia about Miss Van Schuyler's stealing. When Poirot mentions the telegram to Dr. Bessner, the doctor laughs and says it was talking about vegetables and . Race realizes it is Richetti who is the agitator he was sent to the ship to find because potatoes are code for machine guns and artichokes for high explosives.

Analysis

While Race has solved the mystery of the person he is there to arrest, he does not yet know who the murderer of Linnet Doyle is. According to Poirot, they are not one in the same.

Vocabulary

benevolently, sardonically, conceit, apologetically, regard, tenderness, excavation, modestly, feminine, splendidly



Chapter 29

Summary

Poirot explains how Simon and Jacqueline carried out the murders as accomplices--even giving each other an alibi. First, they put a narcotic in his bottle of wine so that Poirot could not get in the way of their plan. The scene in the saloon was staged so that it looked like Jacqueline shot Simon in the leg but all Cornelia and Fanthorp saw was Simon holding a bloody handkerchief over his supposed wound. Later, Poirot found the red ink in Linnet's room disguised as nail polish. Simon sent Cornelia after Jackie and sent Fanthorp to fetch the doctor. During the five minutes Simon was alone, he grabbed the pistol from under the settee, ran to his wife's room, shot her in the head and then returned to the saloon and shot himself in the leg using the stole as a muzzle. He then threw the gun, handkerchief and stole into the Nile. Poirot says the entire plan was premeditated so that Simon could inherit Linnet's money and then marry his true love--Jacqueline--down the road. The maid said what she said to Poirot about not seeing anyone in front of Simon, so it was the maid's way of blackmailing him. When Simon asked to see Jackie and Poirot left them alone is when Simon told Jackie about the maid. Then Jackie used one of Dr. Bessner's scalpels to stab and kill the maid.

Analysis

Poirot fits all of the pieces of the puzzle together. He then paints the picture of how Jackie and Simon carried out their plan to kill Linnet and then be together.

Vocabulary

preconceived, spur, narcotic, implied, absurd, indications, superfluous, rigmarole, ambiguous, implore, colossal, ingenious, lapses



Chapter 30

Summary

Poirot enters the cabin where a steward is watching over Jacqueline. Jacqueline confesses the whole story to Poirot. She says that it was Simon's idea to marry and kill Linnet for her money. Jackie says she got involved because she knew that Simon was so simple that he would never be able to make it work without her. As Poirot leaves, he hears Jackie's laughter ringing in his ears.

Analysis

It's possible that Jacqueline is at least slightly crazy. Poirot, however, does believe that Jackie is not the one that thought of killing Linnet first. She is simply the brains behind the plot, once it was decided that's how they would be together and have money.

Vocabulary

reflectively, bluffed, logical, jury, defiant, broodingly, keen, horrid, glamour, scouted, bunged, coveted, rectitude, grovel



Chapter 31

Summary

The ship returns to port. As they are docking, Cornelia announces to Poirot that she spent the night with Jackie and the steward. She also announces that she's marrying Dr. Bessner. Richetti is escorted off the boat by two engineers to be taken to jail. Simon is being carried off the ship by stretcher when Jackie approaches him with the steward that is escorting her. Simon apologizes to Jackie for confessing everything. Jackie tells him is okay, bends to tie her shoe lace and pulls something out of her stocking. She shoots and kills Simon and then shoots and kills herself.

Analysis

Jackie and Simon are representative of Romeo and Juliet. They are lovers that can no longer be together. Just as Romeo and Juliet did, Jackie kills Simon and then kills herself so that they can be together again in another world or another lifetime.

Vocabulary

grimly, stretcher, vain, scoundrel, venomous, striding, furiously, indignantly, pompous, cordon, insouciance, convulsed



Characters

Hercule Poirot

Hercule Poirot is Belgian. He is a famous investigator responsible for solving some of the toughest cases in the country and even the world. He's an older gentlemen in his 50s or 60s. He is not married and doesn't have any children.

He is financially independent however. He has the disposable income to vacation and work when he wishes. During the novel, he decides to take a vacation to Egypt. This trip happens to coincide with some murders that take place aboard a ship that Poirot is sailing up the Nile.

Poirot's keen senses and attention to detail are what helps him to solve his murder cases, robberies and other mysteries. At first, Poirot gets off on the wrong foot during the investigation aboard the ship. By the end of the novel, however, he has put all of the minute details together to find the people responsible for the deaths of three of the ship's passengers.

Linnet Rideway

Linnet Rideway is a 20-year-old girl. She is the daughter of an American financial professional and so she is one of the richest women now living in London. When the novel opens, Linnet has just bought an estate, Wode Hall, which she is in the process of remodeling. In addition to her riches, Linnet is also a very beautiful girl.

When one of Linnet's closest friends, Jacqueline de Bellefort, comes to Wode Hall, Jackie announces that she's engaged and that her husband-to-be needs a job.

Linnet gives Jackie's fiancé, Simon Doyle, a job. Linnet also steals Simon away from Jackie and ends up as Mrs. Simon Doyle. Now that Linnet is married, her family fortune is due to her. While the Doyles are on their cruise up the Nile in Egypt, Linnet is shot in the head while she sleeps.

Joanna Southwood

Joanna Southwood is Linnet's friend. When Linnet is in Wode Hall, Joanna is hanging around with Linnet. Joanna is also the cousin of Tim Allerton, who ends up being a fellow passenger on the ship Linnet is on for her honeymoon. A string of jewelry robberies that having been taking place and are under investigation by Scotland Yard have Joanna pegged as the prime suspect.



Jacqueline

Jacqueline "Jackie" de Bellefort is Simon Doyle's fiancée and one of Linnet Ridgeway's best friends. Jackie comes to ask Linnet to hire Simon so that they will have money to get married. After Linnet steals Simon away from Jackie, Jackie proceeds to show up at all the destinations the Doyles are visiting for their honeymoon.

It turns out that Jackie and Simon are involved in the murders together. While it was Simon's idea to kill Linnet for her money, Jackie is really the brains behind the plan. It is Jackie that murdered Linnet's maid and Mrs. Otterbourne on the ship.

Andrew Pennington

Andrew Pennington is Linnet's attorney in the U.S. When he receives a letter from Linnet saying she's gotten married and is honeymooning in Egypt, he makes arrangements to have a coincidental run in with the Doyles. It comes out that his plan was to try to get Linnet to sign some documents that would allow Andrew to retain control of her money so he would continue to receive payment for managing the accounts and to buy him time to replace the money that he had lost from the downturn in the stock market.

Simon Doyle

Simon Doyle is the former fiancé of Jackie and the new husband of Linnet Ridgeway. Simon pretends that he's in love with Linnet and that he's disgusted and angry at Jackie for following them on their honeymoon. In reality, however, it's was Simon's idea for him to marry and kill Linnet for her money.

Simon shoots Linnet in the head while she's sleeping. He then gets rid of the murder weapon and shoots himself in the leg, to make it look as if Jackie shot him. When the maid tries to blackmail Simon and Jackie, Simon arranges it so that Jackie shoots and kills the maid. Because Mrs. Otterbourne saw Jackie going into the maid's room, Jackie also shoots and kills Mrs. Otterbourne.

In the end, Jackie also shoots and kills Simon and herself so they don't have to go to jail for the murders.

Tim Allerton

Tim Allerton is another of the ship's passengers. He's travelling with his mother, Mrs. Allerton. Tim is also Joanna Southwood's cousin. Tim and Joanna write letters back and forth to one another. Tim turns out to be one of the jewel thieves in the Scotland Yard cases. He ends up admitting that he is the one that stole Linnet's pearls, made an imitation set and placed the imitation set on Linnet's nightstand. By the end of the novel,



Tim and another of the passengers, Rosalie Otterbourne, are in love and planning to be together.

Mrs. Salome Otterbourne

Mrs. Otterbourne is Rosalie Otterbourne's mother. Both are passengers on the ship up the Nile. Mrs. Otterbourne is a novelist. She writes romance novels. When her books were no longer popular, however, Mrs. Otterbourne became an alcoholic. Rosalie spends the majority of her time trying to hide her mother's alcoholism to the rest of the world.

Mrs. Otterbourne is a witness to one of the murders and is therefore shot in the head and killed before she can provide information to Hercule Poirot and Colonel Race during their investigation.

Colonel Race

Colonel Race comes aboard the ship in one of the ports of call. He is a friend of Hercule Poirot from a case they solved together, where they were both dinner guests where the host was murdered. Colonel Race comes aboard ship to find a murderer, but he doesn't know the murderer's identity. He ends up helping Hercule Poirot in the murder investigations that ensue while aboard the ship.

Rosalie Otterbourne

Rosalie Otterbourne is another of the ship's passengers. She is the daughter of the novelist, Salome Otterbourne. Rosalie is a very sulky and sullen young lady. It turns out that this is because her mother is an alcoholic. At first, Rosalie is the murder suspect because one of the other ship's passengers saw Rosalie throwing something overboard. What they assumed was the murder weapon turns out to be her mother's liquor bottles. In the end, Rosalie and Tim Allerton fall in love and Mrs. Otterbourne winds up dead.



Objects/Places

Wode Hall

Wode Hall is the estate that Linnet Ridgeway buys in London. Linnet renovates the home. She also buys out the homes of the villagers living in the cottages that overlook her pool. At the beginning of the novel, the estate is the primary setting.

Chez Ma Tante

Chez Ma Tante is a French restaurant that Hercule Poirot frequents. While he is dining in the restaurant before his trip to Egypt, he sees who he later recognizes as Jacqueline de Bellefort and Simon Doyle dining in the restaurant too. They are acting like lovers do and Hercule Poirot overhears a conversation they are having about getting the money they need to be together.

Pearl-handled Pistol

Jackie pulls out the pearl-handled little pistol for the first time before they board the ship. She pulls it out to show Poirot that she has the tool she needs to kill Linnet, Simon or both of them. Later, the pistol winds up being the weapon suspected in the murder of Linnet Doyle. In the end, the pistol is responsible for several murders. It also turns out that Jackie had two matching pistols. The latter of the two is what Jackie uses to kill Simon and then herself.

String of Pearls

Linnet Doyle's missing string of pearls after her death lead Poirot and the colonel to believe the motive for her murder might be robbery. It turns out that Tim Allerton is a jewel thief. He stole the real set of pearls, had an imitation set made, and placed the imitation set on Linnet's nightstand.

Karnak

The Karnak is the ship that all of the passengers board to set sail up the Nile. It's the primary setting for the rest of the novel. In addition, the Karnak is where Linnet Doyle, her maid and Mrs. Otterbourne are shot and killed.



Cataract Hotel

The Cataract Hotel is the hotel where all of the guests stay in Egypt prior to boarding the Karnak. It's the location where Hercule Poirot first meets the Doyles and has a conversation with Jacqueline de Bellefort.

Saloon

The saloon is one of the sitting rooms aboard the Karnak. It's the room where Jacqueline de Bellefort supposedly shoots Simon Doyle in the leg. It's also the location where the passengers are lunching when they are contained so that they and their cabins can undergo a search.

Stole

A stole of one of the passengers is used as a type of muzzle by Simon when he shoots himself in the leg. He then wraps the gun in the stole and throws the gun overboard. The manager of the ship fishes the stole with the gun inside out of the water and turns it over to Poirot and the colonel during their initial investigation.

Nail Polish Bottle

When Poirot is searching Linnet's cabin, he finds two nail polish bottles. One is filled with polish the same color as Linnet's fingernails. The other turns out to be red ink, which is what Simon Doyle used to make it look like he was bleeding when Jackie supposedly shoots him.

Nile

The Nile is a river in Egypt. It's the river that the Karnak sets sail on and where the passengers are when the murders take place.



Themes

Good versus Evil

The primary plot throughout the entire novel is that of good versus evil. Hercule Poirot has an internal struggle with good versus evil and so do each of the characters that are involved in the story as the murder plot unfolds. Poirot's first encounter with good versus evil is when he has a conversation with Jacqueline de Bellefort to try to convince her to stop following Linnet and Simon Doyle around.

Each of the characters struggles with the good and evil of the other characters they encounter while sailing up the Nile on the Karnak. While each character has their own personality traits and characteristics, the other characters start to evaluate what the motive of each one would be to kill someone, and even if the person has it in them to be a murderer. As the bodies start piling up on the ship, evil seems to be winning out over good.

Mental States

Another primary theme in the novel is the mind or mental state of human beings. Primarily, the focus falls on whether or not Jackie is crazy or just seeking revenge for Linnet stealing Simon away from her. As the investigation of the murders unfolds, the mental state of several characters comes into question, including that of Mrs. Otterbourne, Miss Van Schuyler, and Rosalie Otterbourne.

Friendship/Relationships

Friendships and relationships are a third major theme that runs throughout the novel. First, there is the love between Jackie and Simon that is broken when Linnet marries Simon. Second, it is the friendship that is broken between Jackie and Linnet because of the marriage that comes into question. Linnet seems to have a demeanor where she gets along with everyone, but when she winds up dead, Poirot has to draw a line between the relationships Linnet might have with each of the ship's passengers that could lead to her death. Hercule Poirot also struggles with his relationships with some of the ship's passengers because they are afraid that he will find out their secrets and lies.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the third-person point of view, from the perspective of the author. The point of view of this novel is intimate, allowing a reader to connect closely with the main character, Hercule Poirot. The book written in this manner allows the reader to get inside Poirot's head, thoughts, and inner struggles. The reader cares what happens to the. The point of view also allows the author to inject her own opinions into the narration and to expand on the events taking place around the other characters and the occurrences taking place.

Setting

The novel is set primarily in London, Egypt and on the boat sailing up the Nile. While it never specifically states the time period when the novel takes place, it seems to be in the 19th or 20th centuries. The main characters are involved in the events leading up to and the aftermath of the murders of Linnet Doyle, her maid, and one of the other ship's passengers, Mrs. Otterbourne.

The setting of this novel works well with the plot. At first, the reader is not aware that the character that seems one of the most innocent characters, Linnet, is the victim of murder. However, as events unfold, the murders are a constant part of the plot, the lives of the characters, and even the outcome of the novel.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is relatively simple and easy to read. The author, however, interjects many French words to fit into the setting of the novel because Hercule Poirot is French. The language is from the 19th or 20th century, which is when the novel is set. The language is descriptive enough that it helps to explain the situations and is always detailed enough for the reader to truly understand.

Structure

The novel is divided into 31 chapters. The length of each chapter ranges from four pages to 20 pages long. The chapters tell the story primarily in exposition and some dialogue. The narrator injects her own voice and thoughts throughout the book, providing her opinions and feelings of the events unfolding in the novel.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot is the struggle of human beings in choosing between good and evil. One subplot is the mental state of

mind of each of the characters, primarily Jacqueline de Bellefort. Another subplot is the relationships that the characters form amongst each other.



Quotes

It's certainly not a matter of life or death" (Chapter 1, p. 49).

Some people have got everything" (Chapter 2, p. 55).

Quite a lot of notabilities her now, aren't there? I expect we shall see a paragraph about it in the papers soon. Society beauties, famous novelists" (Chapter 3, p. 62).

She threatened to - well - kill us both" (Chapter 4, p. 79).

It is deeper than that. Do not open your heart to evil" (Chapter 5, p. 86).

That is how the more skilful murder behaves, I suppose" (Chapter 6, p. 96).

I just feel that - everything's unsafe all round me" (Chapter 7, p. 114).

We've got to go through with it now" (Chapter 8, p. 123).

In my profession - er - I am a lawyer - I find ladies sadly unbusinesslike. Never to sign a document unless you read it through is admirable - altogether admirable" (Chapter 9, p. 129).

Yes, yes, I know what you thought" (Chapter 10, p. 146).

I am afraid, my friend. I am afraid" (Chapter 11, p. 156).

The pistol. It dropped out of the girl's hand. She kicked it away and it went under the settee. It isn't under that settee now" (Chapter 12, p. 174).

I am not sure, you see. She would have the brains--yes. But I doubt if, physically, she could bring herself to do the act" (Chapter 13, p. 184).

There was someone else on this boat who disliked Madame, who was very angry because of the way Madame had injured him" (Chapter 14, p. 204).

Ordeal over? My turn now! What sort of things did they ask you" (Chapter 15, p. 217).

I do not mean that. I mean the sequence of events is impossible. Something is wrong" (Chapter 16, p. 224).

Fleetwood, my friend, had an excellent motive for killing Linnet. He had a special grudge against her" (Chapter 17, p. 232).

I've got an idea you're trying to tell me something--but I haven't the faintest idea what it is" (Chapter 18, p. 245).

No, I saw nobody" (Chapter 19, p. 254).



You'll excuse me, Colonel Race, but under the circumstances I thought the best thing would be to speak to you at once and to return these" (Chapter 20, p. 262).

Yes. She can't help it, you know, but she does -er - take things. Especially jewelry" (Chapter 21, p. 263).

She hasn't disappeared. She's here - under the bed" (Chapter 22, p. 283).

I saw no one" (Chapter 23, p. 291).

You see, Mr. Pennington. Mrs. Otterbourne was shot with your revolver" (Chapter 24, p. 306).

It all fits" (Chapter 25, p. 318).

You can't pin that on me gentlemen" (Chapter 26, p. 333).

I always hoped - but Tim was so tiresome - and pretended he didn't like you. But of course I saw through that" (Chapter 27, p. 348).

The murderer took it away because he had to take it away - because he had no choice in the matter" (Chapter 28, p. 354).

They thought of everything" (Chapter 29, p. 367).

That very bad star. That star fell down" (Chapter 30, p. 375).

But thank God, there is happiness in the world" (Chapter 31, p. 382).



Topics for Discussion

Topic for Discussion 615982

Who is the true Jacqueline de Bellefort? Why has she chosen to tell Hercule Poirot parts of the story leading up to following the Doyles around and plotting to kill them? Do you believe that Jackie is innocent or guilty of the murders? Why do you think Jackie kills Simon and then herself at the end of the novel?

Topic for Discussion 615983

Discuss the relationship between Linnet and Jackie. Are they friends, foes or somewhere in between? Is their true competition in their relationship? How does Jackie feel about Linnet? How does Linnet feel about Jackie? How do Linnet's feelings change after the marriage? What does he do about it? What happens to Linnet?

Topic for Discussion 615984

Who is Simon Doyle? Is he smart, naive, or just a really good actor? Do you think Simon could have pulled off murdering Linnet without Jackie's help? Why do you think Simon agrees to marry Linnet? What role does Jackie play in his decision to marry Linnet?

Topic for Discussion 615985

Why do Jackie and Simon hide their relationship? Do you think anyone suspects that Jackie and Simon are just acting? Why do you think Jackie went through with killing one of her best friends?

Topic for Discussion 615986

Discuss the murders. What impact do the murders have on the characters of the novel? How does it motivate them and how does it derail their lives?

Topic for Discussion 615987

Who is Hercule Poirot? Do you think that trouble finds him or that he finds trouble? Is it a coincidence that anywhere he seems to go, he gets wrapped up in mysteries and crimes?



Topic for Discussion 615988

What do you think happens the living characters after they leave the ship? Do you think that Tim Allerton keeps being a jewel thief or that being with Rosalie makes him go straight? What happens to Joanna Southwood? Now that Linnet doesn't have any living relatives, what happens to her money and her estate?