

Poirot Investigates Study Guide

Poirot Investigates by Agatha Christie

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Poirot Investigates Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
The Adventure of the 'Western Star'.....	5
Tragedy at Marsdon Manor.....	8
The Adventure of the Cheap Flat.....	10
The Mystery of Hunter's Lodge.....	12
The Million Dollar Bond Robbery.....	14
The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb.....	16
The Jewel Robbery at the Grand Metropolitan.....	18
The Kidnapped Prime Minister.....	20
The Disappearance of Mr Davenheim.....	22
The Adventure of the Italian Nobleman.....	24
The Case of the Missing Will.....	26
Characters.....	28
Objects/Places.....	31
Themes.....	33
Style.....	35
Quotes.....	37
Topics for Discussion.....	38



Plot Summary

Captain Hastings, Poirot's friend, notices a woman on the street when looking through the window of Poirot's room. Poirot identifies her to be Miss Mary Marvell, a famous American film star. He suspects she is on the way to see him. Soon his predictions are confirmed, and the door bell rings. Mary Marvell brings threatening letters she received in relation to the diamond in her possession called the "Western Star."

This is the first of the 11 adventures of Hercule Poirot, a Belgian detective who investigates crimes and unravels mysteries that pose danger to his clients. Along with him the Scotland Yard is also chasing these villains always coming second. Each crime involves high society circles, including political figures. Although less able, Captain Hastings provides assistance that can be vital even when his conclusions seem to go astray. His input in the form of observation or remark can spark a new perspective, and Poirot appreciates it. Captain Hastings follows all the cases not realizing that Poirot knows more than he reveals, only to find out that all his actions were methodically planned and executed. At the end of each adventure, Poirot explains how he arrived at his conclusions.

The first chapter and the first robbery involves the famous diamond "Western Star" and its copy. Gregory Rolf, a famous American actor has an affair with Lady Yardly, on her visit from the UK. He then blackmails her to give him the diamond, which he then gives to his wife while Lady Yardly keeps the copy. Lord Yardly wants to sell the false substituted copy, but such transaction would expose the fraud. Gregory Rolf invents a story that there are two diamonds wanted by a Chinese man, who is to steal them and return them where they belong. He then attempts to steal his own copy when Poirot discovers everything and convinces him to return the diamond to the Yardlys.

The second crime involves a businessman, who allegedly committed suicide after insuring his life for the benefit of his young wife. She executed the murder by asking him to reenact the story of one man's suicide and then pulling the trigger. This act was inspired by a story told by her friend, Captain Black, involving an African farmer, who killed himself by putting the gun into his mouth.

In the third chapter and the third adventure Captain Hastings finds out from Mrs. Robinson about an unusually cheap apartment she has just rented. When he relates it to Poirot, he suspects crime. The Robinsons have the same name as two international spies, who try to escape the revenge of the mafia. When they find a couple with the same surname and similar appearance they rent out their apartment to them to mislead their avenger, but Poirot prevents the revenger from revealing their true identity. The spies are also wanted by the American Government for the Naval Plans that are in their possession.

The fourth chapter involves Captain Hastings investigating the crime committed by Mr. and Mrs. Haverling, who killed their uncle, Mr. Harrington Pace, in Hunter's Lodge. Mrs. Zoe Haverling, previously an actress shot Mr. Pace with one of the two pistols in the



room where he allegedly received a guest. She disguises herself as her own maid, making her testimony more believable, claiming that she has never seen the guest. Poirot realizes there has never been a maid. The murderers manage to get away with the crime but not for long.

The fifth chapter deals with the stealing of Liberty Bonds worth one million dollars when carried on board the ship Olympia traveling to New York. Philip Ridgeway was in charge of taking them to New York, and he is now under suspicion. As the bonds were sold even before Olympia arrived, Poirot knows that they must have reached New York on a different ship, and in fact were stolen before Mr Ridgeway boarded the ship.

In the sixth chapter Poirot doesn't hesitate to travel to Egypt to pursue crimes committed by a doctor, who uses superstitious beliefs to cover his killings. His friend, who has a rich uncle, leaves him a will, not expecting to inherit his uncle's fortune when he dies of blood poisoning.

In the seventh chapter, when Poirot and Hastings are on holiday, they become involved in a theft investigation in the Magnificent Hotel. They meet Mr and Mrs Opalsen, whose necklace is stolen. The chambermaid steals the necklace when their French maid leaves the room for a few minutes. She hands the necklace to the valet waiting in the adjacent room. Both the chambermaid and the valet are experienced thieves, who place the false copy of the necklace into the French maid's bed. Poirot's attention to detail allows him to discover who really stole the necklace.

In the eighth adventure and the most significant of Poirot's achievement he rescues the kidnapped Prime Minister. During the peace conference the Prime Minister is kidnapped in order to influence the result of the conference. He is impersonated while his car is substituted to mislead Scotland Yard and the French police searching for him in France. He is kidnapped before he reaches France, but only Poirot realizes it.

In the ninth chapter Mr Davenheim, a rich banker disappears. A few days later his bank goes bankrupt. He stages his own robbery and disappearance. Only inspector Poirot traces him where no one expects him to be - in prison.

The tenth chapter deals with Count Foscatini, who successfully blackmails his fellow countrymen. The details of his last blackmail are overheard by his servant, who decides to stage a murder. He arranges for a dinner that never takes place and guests that never arrive, shifting the time of the murder to the time of the visit. Poirot's analytical mind sees through the plot.

The eleventh and the most pleasant task involves finding a hidden will. Miss Violet Marsh angered her uncle when refusing to abandon her educational pursuits. He decided to punish her by hiding his will. The only way she can inherit his fortune is if she finds it. She manages to achieve that with the help of the Belgian detective.



The Adventure of the 'Western Star'

The Adventure of the 'Western Star' Summary

Captain Hastings, Poirot's friend, notices a woman on the street when looking out the window of Poirot's room. Poirot identifies her as Miss Mary Marvell, a famous American film star. He suspects she is on the way to see him. Soon his predictions are confirmed, and the door bell rings. Mary Marvell brings threatening letters she received in relation to the diamond in her possession called the "Western Star."

The letters claim this diamond belongs to the gods and has to be returned. The first two letters contain only a request while the third warns that if the diamond is not returned it will be taken away during the full moon. The diamond was purchased by her husband, Gregory Rolf from a Chinese man so eager to get rid of it that he accepted only the tenth of its value.

Mary Marvell came to England with her husband. Upon her arrival, Lord Cronshaw advised her to see Poirot about the letters. As the full moon is to occur in three days when she is to visit Lady and Lord Yardly, Poirot suggests he keep the diamond until then, but Mrs Marvell wants to wear it then. She met the Yardly's during their visit to the States three years earlier. She is aware that Mrs Yardly also has the diamond called the "Star of the East." According to an article gossip, there are two diamonds, one in possession of Lady and Lord Yardly, called the Star of the East and the other owned by Mary Marvell, called the Western Star. They used to be the eyes of the god until they were removed and now have to be returned.

When Mrs Marvell leaves, Poirot goes for a walk and Lady Yardly appears. She tells Hastings that she also received threatening letters in relation to her diamond, but she destroyed them. She leaves before Poirot returns.

Hastings relates all the details of his discussion to Poirot who becomes so interested in the matter that he wants to investigate it regardless of any reward. He arranges a meeting with Lord Yardly, but Yardly knows nothing about any gods connected with the diamond, thinking that the story originated in India. Due to his financial difficulties Yardly has to either sell the diamond or rent out his place for a film. Poirot advises him to return home and wait for him.

When Poirot and Hastings arrive at Yardly Chase, Lord Yardly receives a telegram informing him that a buyer interested in purchasing the diamond has been found. Lady Yardly decides to present the diamond for one last time before it is sold. She fetches the stone, and when she leaves the room to turn on the light she screams. The guests find her lying on the floor, claiming that a Chinese man attacked and stole the diamond.



They chase the thief without success. Poirot and Hastings leave before the buyer of the stone turns up. The next day Poirot finds out that Miss Marvell's diamond was also stolen. The letters were to distract the owners from the real time of the robbery.

They meet Gregory Rolf at the hotel Magnificent, where they also encounter two men from Scotland Yard. The man who stole Mary Marvell's diamond looked like Mr Rolfe and came after Rolf left, asking for the jewel case from the safe deposit. He signed the receipt justifying his different signature with the injury to his hand. Mr Rolf also fits the description of the robber with his somewhat Asian appearance.

Poirot sends a telegram to Lord Yardly before seeing Mrs Marvell. Lord Yardly discovers that it was Poirot who sent a bogus buyer in relation to the diamond to speed things up. His strategy proves to be successful. He recovers the diamond, returning it to Lord Yardly and Hastings, who are both perplexed and stupefied.

Poirot reveals that there was only one diamond which was part of the Yardly's collection—until Mr Rolf got hold of it by blackmailing Lady Yardly. He stole the diamond himself, pretending to be a Chinese man, posing as himself. He had an affair with Lady Yardly in California and then blackmailed her about the diamond with the letters. Fearing divorce and losing her children Lady Yardly agreed to substitute the real diamond for a fake one, but its sale would unveil the truth. Mr Rolfe arranged a double robbery when Poirot became involved in the case. Lady Yardly staged the robbery turning off the light, hitting the door, and throwing out the necklace. Subsequently Mr Rolf staged his own robbery.

Poirot visited Mr Rolf, requesting that he return the diamond or Poirot will start proceedings against him. Mr Rolf agrees. There were no letters to Lady Yardly, who made up the story to arrange the theft.

The Adventure of the 'Western Star' Analysis

Captain Hastings and Poirot are introduced at the beginning of the chapter to solve the mystery crime involving the theft of a famous stone. Poirot is a Belgian detective. Christie offers detail to show the process the detective employs although it is only at the end that his real investigative work is revealed. His investigation is aided by his useful, although not equally clever and perceptive companion, Captain Hastings who is at first involved by questioning various suspects. The most important clues are discussed with his companion while uncertainties are left till the end to be revealed. Poirot researches all the clues he comes across while discussing and analyzing various possible scenarios. His attempt to solve the mystery is engaging and encourages readers to follow the process of solving the mystery.

The famous diamond is to be returned to the god through a cryptic message included in letters. Always wondering about Poirot's abilities Captain Hastings tries to be helpful. The jewel ends up stolen both from Lady Yardly and Mary Marvell. Only Poirot knows that there is only one jewel and that there has never been any Chinese man that sent letters or sold the diamond. He knows that Mrs Yardly's jewel is fake. As Rolf arranges

the deception to extort money, only Poirot can see through it and gets the diamond back by threatening Rolf.



Tragedy at Marsdon Manor

Tragedy at Marsdon Manor Summary

Captain Hastings finds Poirot preparing for a trip to investigate the death claim of the Northern Union Insurance Company, involving Mr and Mrs Maltraverse. Mr Maltraverse insured his life before he discovered he was about to go bankrupt, prepared the money to pay for his wife's life insurance and died. His body was found at his house, Marsdon Manor.

Hastings and Poirot travel to Marsdon Leigh and visit Mr Maltraverse's doctor, Dr Ralph Bernard, who established that his death was caused by a gastric ulcer when shooting rooks. He denies that there were any bullets in Mr Maltraverse's body. The doctor thought there was no need for any further investigation. Poirot, however, suspects that Mrs Maltraverse influenced his statement.

At the Manor-house they meet Captain Black, who visited Mr and Mrs Maltraverse just before his death. Black found out about Mr Maltraverse's death and came to offer help. Poirot examines him using a psychological test that uses word associations. He finds out that Captain Black told the Maltraverse's about a suicide with the rook rifle that occurred in Africa. Poirot concludes that this story could've inspired Mrs Maltraverse. He makes a phone call to London, informing Mrs Maltraverse that her husband committed suicide. Mrs Maltraverse invites Poirot and Hastings to stay for dinner. While they eat, they hear a scream outside and the sound of the broken crockery. The parlour maid tells them that a man appeared in the passage who reminded her of Mr Maltraverse. They hear tapping on the window; the door opens, and a man with the blood on his lips appears pointing at Mrs Maltraverse with his hand. The blood appears on her hand, and she falls down screaming. She admits that she killed her husband.

Poirot reveals that he arranged for the ghostly appearance, hiring an actor, Mr Everett, who was covered with red paint. He also notified inspector Japp waiting outside.

After they leave, Poirot reveals how he uncovered the truth. The first clue was the discrepancy in the way Mr Maltraverse was represented by his wife and doctor Bernard. While the doctor described him as a Christian scientist, his wife told him her husband worried about his health. Black's story about the suicide could have equally inspired Mr Maltraverse as well as his wife. Poirot concluded that Mrs Maltraverse used the idea about suicide to kill her husband. She asked him to go for a walk, and show her how the suicide which was related earlier by Black was committed. When her husband demonstrated, she pulled the trigger.

Tragedy at Marsdon Manor Analysis

Poirot is engaged to solve a possible insurance fraud. Mr Maltraverse insured his life and then died of an internal hemorrhage some weeks later. His death arouses suspicion



especially since the rifle is found next to his body. Poirot and Hastings travel to Marsdon Manor. They find a discrepancy in the way his wife represented him and the way Dr Bernard did so. They interview Mr Black, who visited Mr and Mrs Maltraverse before Mr Maltraverse's death. Only then does he find that Black's story told before Mr Maltraverse's death could have inspired him as well as his wife to execute crime. He concludes Mrs Maltraverse used the idea she heard from Black to kill her husband when asking him to show her how the crime was committed. Her husband puts the rifle into his mouth and she pulls the trigger. Poirot compels Mrs Maltraverse to confess by staging Mr Maltraverse's ghostly appearance. He smears red paint on his hands that incites his wife's admission of guilt. The psychoanalytical approach of first employing word association to reach the subconscious and then provoking the unleashing of repressed memory to unveil murder mystery was effective. The symbolic manifestation of hidden thoughts and desires creates suspense that is resolved after Mrs Maltraverse confesses. Poirot often engages tactics of exploiting the release of what's hidden in the unconscious.



The Adventure of the Cheap Flat

The Adventure of the Cheap Flat Summary

When Poirot investigates the rental of an unusually cheap apartment, he finds that two spies attempt to rent their apartment to someone with the same name and similar appearance to avoid retribution from the mafia. Captain Hastings finds out from Gerald Parker about an unusually cheap flat rented to Mr and Mrs Robinson in Montagu Mansions near Knightbridge. Mrs Robinson fears that the low price may be an indication that the house is haunted.

Poirot is so interested in the matter that he wants to investigate it on his own. According to the porter of the mansion, Mr and Mrs Robinson lived there for six months. Poirot knows that Mr and Mrs Robinson have just moved in and decides to rent an apartment in the mansion as well.

At night he removes the bolt to gain access to the Robinson's apartment. The next day he discovers that important Naval plans were stolen from the American government. A man called Luigi Valdarno found dead in New York two days ago is suspected of the crime. Elsa Hardt, a singer and international spy was his girl friend. Her appearance matches the appearance of Mrs Robinson. Elsa Hardt disappeared at the time of Valdarno's death after obtaining the plans. Poirot is eager to examine the apartment learning that someone has just inquired about the couple named Robinson that morning.

Poirot and Hastings go the apartment at midnight. They apprehend an Italian man who was sent to kill the spies. They all travel to the house where the spies live and find the hidden plans. The police apprehends the spies.

Poirot explains that Elsa Hardt and her husband or brother came from New York and rented an apartment under the name of Robinson. They discovered that they are wanted by that Mafia, to which Luigi Valdarno also belonged. By offering their apartment at an unusually low rate they wanted to attract many tenants, waiting for a couple with the same, frequently-occurring surname, Robinson. When they found such a couple, they promptly rented the apartment knowing that the avenger would soon appear.

The Adventure of the Cheap Flat Analysis

Hastings initiates the investigation of a cheap flat rental when visiting friends. Mr and Mrs Robinson found an apartment at an unusually low price, provoking Poirot's curiosity. The unusual circumstances in a realistic environment incites curiosity even though the reader knows nothing about the Robinsons apart from their apparent good luck in pursuit of affordable accommodation. The apartment, being empty for quite some time, was presented to many prospective tenants but only Robinsons were given the apartment. The somewhat unusual nature of the circumstances arouses Poirot's



curiosity and he has to investigate it. Even though the Robinsons have just moved in, Poirot learns from the caretaker that the Robinsons lived there for six months. Poirot pursues various clues that form a conclusion. Poirot tries to gain access to the apartment having already in mind what could be behind this unusual set of events. He knows of the stolen naval plans and a man who was behind it but was found dead. His connection with Elsa Hardt indicates that more is at stake.

When Poirot gains access to the flat he has already formulated a theory of what is behind the unusual apartment rental. His reasoning proves to be right when they apprehend an Italian man who takes them to Elsa Hardt, a spy implicated in stealing the naval plans. She reveals where the plans are hidden and police arrests both spies.



The Mystery of Hunter's Lodge

The Mystery of Hunter's Lodge Summary

Poirot is recovering from influenza when Roger Havering visits him. Hastings talks to Havering and learns that Havering's uncle was murdered. Havering wants Poirot to investigate the crime. The murder occurred when Havering was in London. Poirot sends Hastings with Havering to investigate the murder, asking Hastings to wire all the details.

Mr Havering's uncle, Mr Harrington Pace was killed on Pace's property, Hunter's Lodge, where they both lived together with Mr Havering's wife, Zoe. While in London Mr Havering received a telegram from his wife that Mr Pace was murdered.

When Hastings and Havering reach Hunter's Lodge, inspector Japp is already there. Mr Havering's housekeeper informs Hastings that a middle aged man with a black beard visited Mr Pace. He gave no name, and when he was alone with Mr Pace, he engaged in an argument and shot him. Mrs Havering confirmed the story about the guest, admitting she didn't see the visitor, but heard their voices and the shot. The murder was committed with one of the two revolvers mounted to the wall, and one of them was missing.

Hastings is unable to find out anything out of the ordinary, relating all the details to Poirot. Japp establishes that Mr Pace was shot at close distance and suspects Havering to be the perpetrator because his uncle's death could rescue him from his debts. Havering's trip to London, however, and his visit to the club are confirmed.

The next day the police recover the revolver used in the murder in Ealing. Poirot is curious about the clothes Havering's wife and the housekeeper wore when Hastings met them. The information he receives from Hastings prompts him to advise that the housekeeper be arrested, but no one can find her. No one also has any information about her, including the agency that sent her.

Poirot concludes that the housekeeper doesn't exist. She was used as an alibi for Mrs Havering during the murder. Zoe Havering, who was previously an actress, staged the appearance of the housekeeper in such a way that one would see them both at the same time. Roger Havering made a mistake by taking the revolver out of the room as the real murderer would dispose of the murder weapon immediately.

It was Roger and Zoe Havering who committed the crime. They intended to implicate someone from outside of Hunter's Lodge in the murder. Roger Havering discharged the revolver, went to London, and left it at Ealing. His wife shot their uncle from the other revolver, which she put back on the wall. The couple disappeared with the inheritance they received, but died in an airplane crash.



The Mystery of Hunter's Lodge Analysis

Poirot investigates the crime at Hunter's Lodge, where Roger's Havering's uncle was murdered while Havering was in London. Hunter's Lodge was owned by Roger's uncle, Harrington Pace. His uncle was staying with Havering's wife, a former actress, when the crime was committed. Poirot is sick and sends Hastings to investigate the crime.

Mr Pace is originally an American and his property in Derbyshire is somewhat isolated. The crime is also investigated by Inspector Japp of Scotland Yard. Japp belittles Hastings' abilities to solve the crime. Hastings wires everything he discovers to Poirot. Although they solve the crime, the murderers escape but Hastings and Poirot's work is more effective than that of the police.

Mr Pace's guest who allegedly killed him with one of the guns in the room, was not seen by anyone, including the housekeeper. The missing murder weapon is found later in Ealing. The housekeeper disappears and is never found. Her details or any information about her are also missing. Only Poirot knows that she has never existed and her role has been played by Mrs Havering who killed Mr Pace.

Poirot is able to wire instructions to Hastings how to proceed. His absence proves fatal to the investigation as no one is able to gather any evidence against the couple and they leave the country. It is only through natural justice that the death becomes avenged when the airplane they are traveling in crashes.

The murderer deliberately involves Poirot in solving the crime. In this way the perpetrator is not a suspect. Poirot's instructions are unexpected, triggering curiosity, but are based on clues gathered from Hastings.



The Million Dollar Bond Robbery

The Million Dollar Bond Robbery Summary

Poirot and Hastings discuss traveling and robberies when Miss Esmee Farquhar comes to see them. She is a twenty-five-year-old, well-dressed lady. She wants Poirot to investigate the theft of the Liberty Bonds carried by her fiance Mr Philip Ridgeway to New York on board the Olympia. He works for his uncle Mr Vavasour, a general manager of the London and Scottish Bank.

Mr Vavasour entrusted Mr Ridgeway with the Liberty Bonds worth one million dollars to be taken to America as part of his dealings with the New York bank. Mr Ridgeway was handed the bonds by his uncle and another general manager, Mr Shaw, on the day of the trip. After the bonds were counted and sealed in Philip's presence, they were placed in his portmanteau. Mr Shaw arranged for a special Hubb's lock for everything to be kept safely in the trunk. Despite these precautions the bonds were stolen before the Olympia reached New York. The entire ship was searched, but the bonds have never been found and were sold just after the ship arrived in New York. Some bonds were sold even shortly before the ship arrived.

Poirot inquires of Mr Ridgeway about his version of events, learning that one day he found the trunk half removed and the lock cut. The lock was forced after someone tried to open it with a key. Mr Ridgeway had the key with him at all times, confirming that the trunk was locked. No one left the ship after the theft was discovered, and the search yielded no results. Poirot decides to investigate the matter in the bank.

Poirot and Hastings meet Mr Vavasour and Mr Shaw while the Scotland Yard also investigates the matter. They find that Mr Shaw arranged for the lock to be installed and ordered from Hubb's. Mr Ridgeway held one key and the other two were placed in the safe. Mr Shaw subsequently fell sick and has only just recovered.

Poirot informs Hastings that he knows who stole the bonds but wants to interview the crew that was on the Olympia on the day of the robbery. An elderly gentleman in glasses, Mr Ventnor, was to travel on that day, staying next to Philip's cabin. Mr Ventnor was also the last person to leave the boat.

Poirot writes a letter to Inspector McNeil and goes for dinner with Hastings and Miss Esmee Farquhar. Poirot concludes that the bonds must have reached New York on another ship since they were sold before the Olympia arrived. A ship called the Gigantic left on the same day, and arrived before the Olympia. The bonds were disposed of so quickly because they arrived earlier.

The empty package on the Olympia was to mislead the investigation. The man in glasses broke inside the trunk and discarded the package, throwing it overboard. He



then immediately returned to England. The man who ordered the lock, had a duplicate key, and pretended to be sick the entire time was Mr Shaw.

The Million Dollar Bond Robbery Analysis

Mr Ridgeway, who is a nephew of Mr Vavasour, a general manager of the London and Scottish Banks was given million dollars worth of Liberty Bonds to deliver them to a New York bank to extend credit. Poirot, who only likes the idea of travel but doesn't cope well with the difficulties involved is of a delicate nature. Always engaging logic he uses the facts of the matter to discover what truly happened. The bonds were counted before they were entrusted to Mr Ridgeway by his uncle and Mr Shaw, another general manager. The packet was stolen just before the ship reached New York. The ship was searched without success while the shares were sold even before the ship arrived in New York. Poirot knows that the bonds must have arrived before the Olympia and been placed on another ship. He arrives at this hypothesis that is verified through his investigation.

It is through the mistake made by the thief of selling the bonds before the Olympia reached New York that Poirot obtains his first clue. His interrogations and conversations are not obvious to Hastings, who tries to follow Poirot's investigation but as usual is misled. Hastings's wrong analytical abilities sometimes prove useful as Hastings finds out that the gentleman who stayed next to Ridgeway's cabin left the ship last and not first as Hastings expected. For Poirot it is confirmation that this gentleman was Mr Shaw who acquired the bonds before putting the false package on the ship.



The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb

The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb Summary

One of the most interesting investigations Poirot dealt with involved the deaths that occurred upon the opening of the King Men-her-Ra tomb, which was publicized in local newspapers. John Williard who conducted the discovery died of heart failure. His rich associate, Mr Bleibner, died of heart poisoning a fortnight later, while his nephew, Rupert committed suicide in New York. In the eyes of the public the string of such incidents could only be part of the curse of Men-her-Ra. One person, Lady Williard, is suspicious about these deaths and wants Poirot to investigate her husband's death. For, if such curse exists, it may affect her son still engaged in the excavations.

Poirot, contrary to his beliefs, accepts the believe in such curse, promising to protect her son. As Rupert Bleibner's suicide occurred after John Williard's death, Hastings suggests that Bleibner suicided out of guilt for killing John Williard. Poirot disagrees and they both leave for Egypt.

After they go on a sight-seeing tour, where they discover that Poirot is not well predisposed to cope with the difficulties of travel, they make inquiries. They first find out from Mr Tosswill, the British Museum official about the last death, that of Mr Shneider, caused by tetanus. They meet other members of the expedition, such as Dr Ames, who examined Mr Shneider, Guy Williard, working in the tomb excavation, and Mr Harper, a secretary. Mr Williard, despite superstitious beliefs is determined to continue his work. He thinks these deaths are coincidental.

Poirot verifies with Dr Ames that the recent death was caused by tetanus and not poisoning. So far, there have been four deaths, each attributable to a medical condition. They involved heart failure, blood poisoning, suicide, and tetanus.

Mr Bleibner left no will as to the disposal of his fortune. Poirot expresses his conviction that some magical influence is present, but Dr Ames disagrees. Poirot is interested in the relationship between Mr Harper and his nephew, Rupert Bleibner. It turns out that Mr Harper's main interest was work and he didn't want to provide for his nephew. In the meantime, Mr Harper is desperate to leave, fearing for his life. Hassan, Sir Williard's servant also shares his superstitious believes.

Poirot and Hastings dine with Dr Tosswill and upon their return to the tents they see a mysterious figure with the head of a dog. Poirot concludes it must be Anubis, the god of departing souls. Poirot starts drawing some magic diagrams in the sand near his tent and then goes to bed. When Hassan brings him a cup of chamomile tea Poirot starts shaking in convulsions. Hastings brings Dr Ames, but Poirot gets up admitting that he only pretended to drink the tea, pouring it into a bottle for analysis. Dr Ames swallows poison and dies.



Poirot reveals that it was Dr Ames who killed his victims following John Williard's death and inciting superstitious fear. Rupert Bleibner killed himself because he thought he contracted leprosy, as his friend Dr Ames told him. In reality it was only some minor skin disease. Rupert Bleibner was once so grateful to Dr Ames for saving his life when drowning that he made a will, leaving him his few possessions. Mr Bleibner left no other will and his fortune would pass to Rupert as he had no other relatives. Because of Rupert's will, Dr Ames would inherit Rupert's uncle's wealth if Rupert died. Ames decided to replicate his success in killing, with an attempt to kill Williard's son as well. Poirot wanted to scare Ames, and asked Hassan to dress himself up like Anubis, but the plot failed. The doctor decided to poison Poirot, killing himself when his plan backfired.

The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb Analysis

Lady Williard, whose husband died during the excavation of the Men-her-Ra tomb in Egypt, is perplexed about the circumstances of her husband's death. Poirot has to investigate what happened in the past and how the unusual events of Mr Bleibner's death and Bleibner's nephew's suicide eventuated.

She is afraid the curse may endanger her son's life. Poirot misleads everyone including the reader to make them think he believes in the curse. He investigates everything giving little information to his closest friend Hastings about what he already knows. Some clues are revealed while other clues are hidden, amplifying the mystery. This mystery gives an aura to the story inciting interest to unveil what is behind it. The logic in the end wins as the superstition Poirot perpetuated was to mislead, prompting the murderer to come out and confess. The discovery that Dr Ames committed murders results in his own suicide, where justice is brought in a natural way without even engaging the police.

Poirot resorts to any tactics and methods to obtain a result even if it requires engaging an actor to stage the appearance of a god. His astute mind wins in the end matching the ingenuity of a somewhat twisted plot to obtain an inheritance.

In this rather simple narrative, involving a change of setting, where time goes back and forth, where prior and present events are important, the narrator is deprived of knowing how Poirot arrives at his conclusion until the very end.



The Jewel Robbery at the Grand Metropolitan

The Jewel Robbery at the Grand Metropolitan Summary

Captain Hastings and Poirot in need of change of air travel to Brighton. They stop at the Grand Metropolitan, where they dine, admiring wealthy guests. It occurs to Poirot that in such surroundings there would be many theft opportunities. They meet Mr and Mrs Opalsen, who own many items of expensive jewellery acquired by the husband, a wealthy stockbroker.

Mrs Opalsen is eager to show one of her necklaces. When she goes to fetch it she disappears. Her husband follows her. Soon the police enters and Poirot and Hastings decide to get involved. They find Mrs Opalsen crying in her room while her husband is nervously pacing around. The policeman interrogates Mrs Opalsen, who confesses that her necklace was stolen. She wants Poirot to investigate the theft.

She came to get her necklace from the room, finding Celestine, her maid waiting with the chambermaid, as it is customary if anyone else is in the room. Mrs Opalsen went to open the drawer, but her necklace was missing. Her necklace was kept locked in the jewel case with her own key always carried around her neck.

When the inspector examines the key, Celestine realizes she is accused of theft, and demands that she is searched. She accuses the chambermaid to do it when Celestine left to get a reel of cotton and then scissors from the adjacent room. Poirot asks her to show her movements, and measures time that elapsed. He concludes that there was insufficient time to steal the jewellery in this way.

Meanwhile, the inspector finds the necklace in the maid's bed. Poirot recognizes that the necklace the inspector holds is only an imitation. The case is not over yet. He presents a white card to the chambermaid and tricks her into touching it, asking if she has seen it. He does the same procedure with the valet and leaves for London. Hastings leaves as well, returning when Poirot is back from London. Poirot hands the stolen necklace to the Opalsens, and the police arrests the chambermaid and the valet.

Poirot reveals how he discovered, who is the perpetrator. First, he realized that the drawer was covered with the French chalk to enable sliding without any noise. Only the chambermaid could have done it. The valet waited in the empty room, and took the case from the chambermaid when the French maid left. He took the necklace and when the French maid left again, the chambermaid took the empty case, and put it back in the drawer. Previously they put a false necklace in the bed of the French maid. Poirot managed to get the chambermaid's and valet's fingerprints when they touched the white card, taking it to Scotland Yard. The fingerprints belonged to two well known thieves.



Their only mistake was failing to dust the room that left a mark indicating where the case was once placed. It is the police who gets the credit for solving the crime, but Poirot receives a cheque from the Opalsens.

The Jewel Robbery at the Grand Metropolitan Analysis

Even during holidays Hastings and Poirot engage in investigation. When they stay at the Grand Metropolitan hotel, they accidentally become involved in a theft investigation. They meet Mr and Mrs Opalsen, a rich couple who enjoys collecting the jewellery. Mrs Opalsen discovers that her necklace is missing and asks Poirot to find the perpetrator.

Despite the apparent circumstances that indicates one of the maids to be a thief, Poirot discovers that it is not the case. The necklace is found in the French maid's bed but only Poirot can see that the necklace is false. His ability to detect important details proves vital as he discovers a mark left on the surface of the undusted cupboard.

In this case also such details as the French chalk used to silence the movement of the drawer when the chambermaid took out the case with the jewels, a mark left when the case was placed on the surface that was not dusted allowed Poirot to discover the real perpetrators of the crime. Only Poirot was able to see through this and use these details to solve the crime. Even the police failed to discern these vital signs.



The Kidnapped Prime Minister

The Kidnapped Prime Minister Summary

During the 1st world war Poirot was involved in saving peace negotiations by rescuing the kidnapped English Prime Minister, David MacAdam. When he and Captain Hastings are discussing the attempt to assassinate David MacAdam, Lord Estair and Mr Bernard Dodge visit them. They ask Poirot to find the Prime Minister, who was kidnapped most likely to disrupt the Allied Conference at Versailles. When traveling from London to Paris he was to drive from Boulogne with Captain Daniels and the A.D.C. The car has been found at the side of the road with the chauffeur and the A.D.C. bound and the Prime Minister missing. The car that was to drive the Prime Minister was substituted with another.

It occurs to Poirot that there is a connection between the attempted assassination of the Prime Minister and his kidnapping. Poirot finds from the visitors that on the previous night Mr MacAdams traveled with Captain Daniels and the chauffeur, an Irish man called O'Murphy and a C.I.D. man, from Windsor to London. He was secretly followed by two detectives. His car unexpectedly turned from the main road, where the detectives remained. As soon as the car was out of sight, masked men surrounded the car, shooting at the Prime Minister, but failing to kill him. The bullet only grazed his cheek. The chauffeur kept driving. They went to the local hospital, drove to Charing Cross, reported everything to the police and departed for France. The Prime Minister boarded the ship and getting into a bogus car flying the Union Jack at Boulogne. His chauffeur is also missing while his car has been found near Soho restaurant.

Suddenly an officer delivers a message that the other car with Captain Daniels has also been found. Daniels was chloroformed, bound and gagged. Daniels confessed that he doesn't remember anything. Poirot discovers that Daniels served in the English Army, speaks several languages, and has two aunts, Mrs Everard, living in Hampstead and Miss Daniels near Windsor. Poirot leaves with Captain Hastings and another officer at his disposal to rescue the Prime Minister.

They meet Dodge, Major Norman, and Detective Barnes of Scotland Yard at Charing Cross. In the meantime the French and English police look for the Prime Minister in France, where Poirot and Captain Hastings travel at first, but then return to England. They pass Hammersmith, Chiswick and Brentford, stopping at a villa, where Poirot makes further inquiries. They go to a cottage hospital and meet two men by the bridge. They go to the door of a tall house, and Poirot forces his way inside. They reappear with a woman and two men, getting into the car. One of the men is O'Murphy, and only later, when they arrive at Hendon Aerodrome, Hastings realizes that the other man is the Prime Minister himself.

Poirot has to explain everything to Hastings, revealing that the Prime Minister never left England, and was kidnapped on his way from Windsor to London. Captain Daniels



chloroformed the Prime Minister, ordered the chauffeur to turn right, and then chloroformed the chauffeur. Both the Prime Minister and the chauffeur were taken out of the car that was substituted. The Prime Minister was impersonated, and conveniently, his face was bandaged because of the alleged wound to his cheek. The real Prime Minister was driven to Mrs Everard's house at Hampstead. Her real name is Bertha Ebenthal. Poirot managed to get the Prime Minister in time for the conference.

The Kidnapped Prime Minister Analysis

Poirot and Hastings become involved in the rescue of the Prime Minister, David MacAdam, abducted by German spies. The suspense is created partly by the importance of the matter and partly by the deadline by which the Prime Minister has to be found. The matter is challenging especially because Poirot's pride motivates him to deliver results. His downfall seems to be imminent in the face of such a difficult case involving a tough deadline. The chance to find the Prime Minister is slim particularly when Poirot spends most of the day thinking in the hotel room. Even Captain Hastings knows that it is practically impossible to solve the crime in such a short time. For Poirot, however, nothing is impossible. He finds the clue without mentioning anything to his friend. His movements seem insignificant. He acts partly guided by clues and partly by intuition. His analysis proves correct as he rescues the Prime Minister and his chauffeur from the house in Hamstead.



The Disappearance of Mr Davenheim

The Disappearance of Mr Davenheim Summary

Captain Hastings and Poirot are waiting for Inspector Japp of Scotland Yard, who is to join them for tea. Japp is searching for Mr Davenheim, who disappeared when walking out of his house. Davenheim is a well known banker and financier that is now nowhere to be found, and neither is his body.

Poirot makes a bet with Inspector Japp that he can solve the case without leaving his place.

According to the inspector Japp, Mr Davenheim left on Saturday, traveling to his place called Cedars at 12.40. He instructed his gardeners, had tea, and then told his wife he that he was going to the village to post letters. As he expected Mr Lowen in relation to a business matter, he asked if Mr Lowen could wait if he was delayed.

Mr Davenheim disappeared without reaching the post office or passing the village. Someone broke into his safe and stole bearer's bonds, jewelery, and money, although the burglary may have occurred earlier. Mr Davenheim also traveled to Buenos Aires last autumn.

The picture of the banker shows a man with a beard and bushy eyebrows. His clothes were found, and a man called Billy Kellet tried to pawn his ring. Kellet assaults the policeman and is imprisoned, having been also been previously imprisoned in autumn for three months. Kellet confesses that he found the ring, which was thrown away by a dark skinned, bearded man.

At this point Poirot knows how Mr Davenheim disappeared. He only wants to know if Davenheim and his wife slept in separate rooms after Davenheim returned from Argentina, which Inspector Japp confirms.

Poirot warns that Davenheim's bank is going to go bankrupt. In a few days the papers report the Davenheim bank failure. As Davenheim was aware that the bank would bankrupt, he converted funds into jewelery and staged a robbery before Lowen's arrival.

Davenheim then shaved, pretending to be Billy Kellet and caused his own arrest. He was also impersonating Billy Kellet when he was supposedly in Buenos Aires. He had to hide his false beard from his wife and slept in a separate room to avoid discovery. When he left his house he went straight to the lake rather than post office, dumped his clothes, and dressed as Billy Kellet. He had to pawn his ring and assault a policeman to get arrested. Prison was the only place where no one would look for him. Japp confirms Poirot's discovery, giving him five pounds as a result of winning the bet.



The Disappearance of Mr Davenheim Analysis

Poirot solves the crime without moving out of his room. He is constantly challenged by the police and inspector Japp to solve the mystery. Poirot praises order and methods that prove to be effective in doing the work even without leaving his room. When he learns the details involving the missing man, Mr Davenheim, he is able to put all the clues together and deliver results.

The missing man, Mr Davenheim hides his whereabouts so carefully that no one is able to trace his body nor his presence anywhere. Such planning is ingenious and Poirot, following his methods and logic detects that Mr Davenheim impersonated someone else so that would be imprisoned, hiding the real crime he committed, stealing from the bank that is about to go bankrupt. Poirot manages to see through the mystery.



The Adventure of the Italian Nobleman

The Adventure of the Italian Nobleman Summary

Poirot and Captain Hastings discuss arsenic poisoning with Dr Hawker when his housekeeper, Miss Rider, comes, telling him that she has just received a phone call from Count Foscatini, who is apparently dying. Count Foscatini has been Dr Hawker's patient, and he immediately leaves to see him. Poirot and Hastings accompany him.

When they arrive they are told that Count Foscatini has two visitors dining with him while his valet, Mr Graves, left. They ring the bell, but there is no response. Poirot goes to get the police while the manager opens the door. They enter seeing the table in the dining room with the remains of the food and chairs pushed aside. Count Foscatini is dead, sitting in his chair bent forward, with his right hand holding the telephone. He was struck with a marble statuette still covered with blood. They search the place while Poirot examines the table, decorated by lace mats and a bowl of roses. There are three coffee cups with the remainder of coffee. There is also the remainder of port, cigars, and cigarettes.

Poirot is interested in the food eaten by Foscatini's guests and goes to the kitchen. He finds that Count Foscatini's guests ate everything except for the rice soufflé. Poirot concludes that the murderer is methodical. Upon Poirot's return, Mr Graves, his servant and the police arrive. Count Foscatini had Italian guests on the previous day. One was Signor Ascanio, and the other a young man of around twenty four. Mr Graves was sent away but managed to overhear the beginning of the conversation concerning a financial proposition and a threat. He heard Count Foscatini deferring the discussion to dinner the next day. That next evening the two gentlemen arrived and discussed various matters, such as politics, theatre, and the weather. Graves was sent away, contrary to the usual arrangements during such visits, and left around 8.30 pm. He met a friend and went to the Metropolitan Music Hall in Edgware Road. The murder was committed at 8.47 when the clock fell down from the table and stopped. It was also the time when the housekeeper received the phone call.

Upon questioning Signor Ascanio the police find that he has never seen Count Foscatini, and that he has never been to the hotel. He arrived two days ago and stayed in the Grosvenor Hotel. He was charged, but then the Italian Ambassador testified that he had dinner with him from eight till nine on that day. He was then discharged.

Poirot invites Signor Ascanio and questions him about his acquaintance with Count Foscatini. He knows that Signor Ascanio came to England to see Count Foscatini. Signor Ascanio admits that he visited Count Foscatini but never had dinner with him. He brought him money in exchange for the incriminating papers concerning an eminent Italian man; the papers were in Count Foscatini's possession. Ascanio came with a young secretary from the Italian Embassy. He gave the Count money, and Foscatini



handed the papers. They have never seen each other again, and no money has been found in the apartment.

As the curtains were not drawn despite the light at this time of day and month; no coffee was found on Count Foscatini's teeth, and no witnesses that saw the two men coming and leaving the apartment, Poirot concludes that it was Graves who committed the murder. He overheard Ascanio's conversation, realizing the difficulty of his position. Graves informs of him of a telephone call, and when Foscatini sits at the table Graves strikes him with the statue. He orders dinner for three, prepares it, eats it, leaving the rice soufflé. He then sets the time on the clock to 8.47 and smashes it. The only thing he forgets to do is to draw the curtains. He gets to the phone box and rings around 8.47 pretending to be Count Foscatini. To prove this Poirot needs to find out if a phone call was made from Count Foscatini's flat at that time. He would then give a hint to inspector Japp, who can arrest Graves. As it turns out, Poirot is right.

The Adventure of the Italian Nobleman Analysis

Poirot and Hastings entertain a conversation with their friend Dr Hawker. They rush to see Dr Hawker's patient, Count Foscatini upon finding out from his housekeeper that he called asking for help. They find him dead in his chair with three empty plates and half empty coffee cups. Poirot discovers all the important details that give him clues to follow. These clues foreshadow later developments but they are only meaningful to the detective. Despite the presence of the police or his friend Hastings they are unable to read the clues in the same way Poirot can. Only he can see that Count Foscatini's teeth have no dark stains from coffee, despite the fact that his coffee cup is half empty. Only he is perplexed that the curtains are not drawn or deserts not finished after the dinner with his two guests. The events progress, indicating that all is what seems to appear. His two guests didn't murder him despite the circumstances pointing that way and Poirot knows it. Even when one of his guests, Ascanio is charged with the crime and supposedly proves he never saw Count Foscatini, Poirot suspects this is not the case. His suspicions are confirmed as Foscatini confirms that his acquaintance with the Count involved some secrecy because of his attempt to blackmail his friend. This confession is a turning point in the investigation and in the story. The real murderer arranged everything in such a way that Foscatini's guests appear to be murderers. The perpetrator is the least expected person, the Count's valet.

It is the tampering with the time of death that alters the perception on the entire crime. As the time of murder is arranged in such a way that it appears to be much later, the police is misled that the guests must have committed the murder. It is also when the clock on the Count's table is broken. Count's valet, Mr Graves, is elsewhere at that time. He makes the phone call pretending to be Count Foscatini while no one verifies it. Playing with time provides the means to conceal the manner and circumstances in which the murder has been committed; that is, until Poirot becomes involved in the investigation.



The Case of the Missing Will

The Case of the Missing Will Summary

Poirot has received a note from Miss Violet Marsh that she wants to talk to him. Her father was a farmer in Devonshire, and his brother migrated to Australia. Her father, Roger, educated himself and became a clerk with a small firm. His wife was the daughter of a poor artist who died when Violet was six. Violet's mother died when she was fourteen. Her uncle Andrew returned from Australia and bought a place called Crabtree Manor, treating Violet as if she was his daughter. He was interested in farming and opposed female education, thinking that only practical work is suitable for girls like Violet. She wanted to pursue education and won a scholarship. Her uncle is critical of her pursuits and wanted her to abandon her plans. Only then she would inherit everything from him. She continued her studies. The uncle died a month ago, leaving her everything in his will but only for a year. After such time, the house and his fortune would pass to charities unless she is able to find another hidden will. She wants to engage Poirot to find it. The original will was made and dated 25 March at 11 am. Any will made after this date would invalidate it. Poirot decides to go immediately to Crabtree Manor and see the couple who attended Andrew when he was preparing the will, Mr and Mrs Baker.

Poirot and Hastings arrive, meet the couple, and search the house. He searches the main room and all the documents. The papers and packets in the room are methodically arranged with a key to each drawer. He notices the key of the desk affixed to an envelope. When examining it, Poirot finds that the words "Key of Roll Top Desk" written in crabbed handwriting.

Poirot asks Mr and Mrs Baker about their participation in making the will. Mr Baker remembers getting two will-forms. They had to sign twice because the first will had to be torn and thrown out. After the second will was signed, Viola's uncle went to the village to make payment for tradesman's books. Only the workmen went to the house since then. The workers were from Plymouth and Poirot goes with Hastings to Plymouth to find them. They find that their work involved making a cavity beneath the fireplace. When Poirot returns they press the brick disclosing the cavity but find only a fragment of stiff paper. The fragment contained a portion of Baker's signature. The other part must have been already removed by someone, but Poirot is unable to determine who would benefit from the destruction of the will.

They decide to leave, but Poirot comes back to Crabtree Manor. He proceeds immediately to the study room. He goes to the desk, examining the key and the envelope attached. He opens the envelope, straightens it up, and holding a flame close to the surface discovers some writing starts to appear, stating that his entire property is left to his niece, Violet Marsh. The witness is Jessie and Alber Pike, a confectioner and his wife. The will is legal, and Viola can inherit her uncle's fortune. They debate whether she deserves it, although Poirot thinks she does if she employed an expert like him.



The Case of the Missing Will Analysis

Poirot receives the most unusual request to discover the mystery of a missing will. Miss Violet Marsh was orphaned and lived with her rich uncle, who opposed her education. Violet proceeded with plans to study and went to college despite her uncle's warnings that she may lose her inheritance in this way. When he died he left two wills, where one indicated that the other will is hidden. If she wants to inherit the property she has to find another missing will. At first even Poirot is misled in his search. The methodical approach of her uncle is at first admired by Poirot, who thinks it may be helpful in solving the mystery. Violet's uncle plan to mislead her includes misleading and missing clues to test her intelligence.

He wanted to prove that his intelligence is superior despite his lack of education. She was to prove that she is worthy of the inheritance. Even though she didn't solve the puzzle herself, Poirot thinks that it is the result that counts. The result has been achieved when employing him, an expert.



Characters

Hercule Poirot

Poirot is a Belgian detective who is analytical, logical, and methodical. His pedantic approach to cleanliness uncovers a mind that is resolute, sophisticated, and ingenious.

He displays certain French characteristics, such as love of food, never refusing or avoiding any opportunity to enjoy good dinner. He has green eyes that shine when he is excited, and he is obsessed about neatness and appearance. Any spot of dirt or dust has to be cleaned. He doesn't follow evidence such as footprints or ash and is upset that eggs are not entirely symmetrical.

He is quite traditional yet amusing. He deals with problems skillfully without resorting to improvisation. It is through analysis and his own methodical process that he achieves success. He is proud that he is able to solve a crime without leaving his room. He doesn't hesitate to resort to illegal tactics if necessary, such as forcing his way into a house or employing an actor to play a ghost if confession can be obtained in this way. He doesn't hide his perception of his own greatness and is equally straightforward in pointing out deficiencies that sees in others. His astute perceptive abilities are always superior to others, whether they are policemen or inspectors. He often points out Hastings' inability to observe essential details. He has methods that can be employed in any situation even to avoid sea sickness. His qualities are embellished and he is the idealistic version of a detective.

Captain Hastings

Captain Hastings admires Poirot and is always trying to solve the crimes himself or assist Poirot. His admiration for Poirot is evident in his comments when trying to unravel mysteries himself. Hastings is unable to solve crimes himself nor even to inspect properly. He is a good companion and traveler, handling the difficulties of travel better. His lack of perceptive ability keeps him several steps behind his friend, Poirot and Hastings is often surprised at the conclusion of a case. He reminds one somewhat of Sherlock Holmes' companion Watson, who also usually unable to solve a criminal mystery without Holmes' aid.

Hastings describes all events from his point of view. His character observes Poirot's investigations as they would occur to an ordinary person. His perspective sometimes allows for insights in the end providing further suspense. He is often mocked by Poirot. He is a former officer in World War I and performs mostly physical tasks, such as catching a taxi. Poirot often teases him about his inability to observe and interpret the observations correctly. Hastings can inadvertently help Poirot on a case by some casual remark or observation.



He is traditional, adhering to fair rules, and is abhorred at Poirot's unconventional and sometimes illegal tactics.

Chief Inspector Japp

Inspector Japp is a policeman with inferior qualities to Poirot. He always lags behind Poirot in his investigations and in solving a case. He respects Poirot for his ability to discern the important details. He is usually confused and unable to keep up with Poirot in his investigations. His conclusions are often shallow because he relies on evidence that is obvious and often misleading. Poirot belittles Japp for his mundane attitude. He appears to be keen but he always misses the main clues during investigations.

Mary Marvel

Mary Marvel is the character and one of the two victims in the first story involving the theft of the famous diamond. She is a famous American actress who came to England to further her career and mix business with pleasure.

Gregory Rolf

Gregory Rolf is married to Mary Marvel. He is not as famous as his wife but quite prominent as they both have friends among the high society. They know Lady and Lord Yardly. Rolf is acquainted with her on a more personal level as he had an affair with her and is now using it to blackmail her and arrange a robbery. He is an opportunist using circumstances to his own advantage regardless of any negative effect it may have.

Miss Maltraverse

Mrs Maltraverse kills her husband to obtain insurance. Poirot despises her cold-blooded attitude, where money takes priority over other things. Her marriage for financial gains ends with getting rid of the boring husband.

Mr Daveheim

Mr Davenheim disappears in a way that is perplexing for the police as well as for Poirot. He is the only perpetrator that Poirot admires. He comments that his brain is of the first quality although misguided, which he calls malformation.



Count Foscatini

Count Foscatini never appears in the story as he is murdered before Poirot becomes involved. Foscatini's own servant deceptively arranged the circumstances of the crime. Foscatini blackmailed others; hence, his death is partly deserving.

Viola Marsh

Viola Marsh suffers both through her own stubborn nature and through her inability to communicate with her uncle. His fortune can only be hers if she exercises her mind and solves the puzzle of the hidden will. Fortunately she knows better and engages someone who already has experience in such matters, Poirot.

Mr Havering

Mr Havering is the only criminal who managed to get away from Poirot's analytical mind. Along with his wife he murdered his uncle. As Hastings was primarily involved in this investigation, such result is partly understandable. Mr Havering and his wife manage to get away with murder but fail to get away with their own life.



Objects/Places

London

Miss Marvel walks through the streets of London dressed in a casual clothes rather than the fancy clothes one would expect of an actress.

San Francisco

Gregory Rolf purchased the Western Star, an allegedly famous diamond that has been in possession of Miss Marvel for three years, from a Chinese man in San Francisco.

The Magnificent

Mary Marvell and her husband Gregory Rolf stay at the hotel Magnificent.

Yardly Chase

The home of Lady and Lord Chase.

China

The Eastern Star, a famous diamond in possession of Lord and Lady Yardly, was brought from China by their ancestor.

Marsdon Manor

Marsdon Manor belongs to Mrs Maltraverse and is a mile from Marsdon Leigh.

Montagu Mansion

Montagu Mansions is a large building off Knightsbridge.

Hunter's Lodge

A small shooting box in Derbyshire moors and the property of Mr Harrington Pace.



The London and Scottish Bank

The London and Scottish Bank sent Liberty Bonds on the Olympia ship to New York.

The Tomb of Tutankh-Amen

The Tomb of Tutankh-Amen is near the Gizeh Pyramids by Lord Carnavaron near Cairo.



Themes

Crime

Crime is the general theme of all the stories in this collection. Criminals are portrayed mostly with vices although many display intelligence. Poirot only deals with the most difficult cases, being disdainful about some crimes that are too easy to solve. Mystery surrounds every crime that sometimes appears to be straightforward and obvious. In most cases the crime is solved and if the criminals are not caught, they face natural justice. Crime seems to be ever present as it reoccurs almost anywhere Poirot and Hastings appear. Whether they are sick or just want to go for holidays, they get involved, sometimes reluctantly, in finding a murderer. Poirot becomes passionate about some of the cases, undertaking some voluntarily. He does crime detection for money, although sometimes admits that crime can be more profitable. Crime is committed by poor people but it is present also among the rich people who are not immune to vice.

Crime is ultimately about ethics. Crime stimulates the examination of the effects that crime has on individuals and society.

Deception

Deception figures prominently in all these stories. Roger Rolf deceives his wife while having an affair with Lady Yardly whom he later blackmails. He arranges the robberies of the diamonds. Mrs Maltraverse deceives and murders her husband, having previously ensured that he insures himself. The Robinsons are deceived to rent a cheap apartment that turns out to be a plot for others to avoid a vengeance from mafia. Mr Shaw deceives the bank placing an empty package on the Olympia ship and pretending to steal it while defrauding the bank. Dr Ames deceives his friend Rupert, first saving him from drowning, who then leaves everything to him in his will, while later giving him the diagnosis of leprosy. All this stirs the superstitious fear that murders are the effect of the Pharaoh's curse. The chambermaid deceives Mrs Opalsen along with their valet who devise a plot to steal her necklace. The robbery is organized in such a way that the necklace is left with Mrs Opalsen's maid. The Prime Minister McAdams is deceived by his own secretary Mr Daniels who executes his kidnapping by staging it through the Prime Minister's impersonation. Mr Davenheim deceives everyone by acquiring a false identity so he can be imprisoned knowing the police is going to search for him. Count Foscatini is deceived by his own servant Mr Graves who kills him while staging a dinner that never took place. Only the last story, where Violet Marsh has to find a missing will, contains a deception that is partly revealed as her uncle reveals that he hid the will.

Deception is used to hide the crime, execute robbery, and in the last story give a lesson to a niece that hasn't obeyed her uncle.

Immorality

Immorality surrounds most crimes in the story. The affairs of Gregory Rolf, Lord and Lady Yardly lead to blackmail and robberies. Immorality involves deception carried out by the servants that undertake robberies and murder. The moral characteristics that Poirot displays protects him at the same time from the temptation to do evil. Although it is his intelligence that gets him through various puzzles, his action is morally right and hence is rewarded in the end.

As the detective acts according to what is moral or just rather than strictly legal, the reader can identify with these values, getting involved on a personal level that allow for choosing a particular path.

Despite Poirot's two dimensional character, he displays moral certainty. Such certainty gives him superiority. Immorality has to be confronted by what is moral rather than simply by the corrective influence of law and order. Poirot's moral stance is almost exemplary. Only in this way can immorality be overcome and defeated.



Style

Point of View

Agatha Christie is a novelist, playwright, and poet. Her most famous work involves detective stories, where psychological clues and ingenious plots dominate. Hercule Poirot is her most popular detective who might remind readers of Sherlock Holmes. Poirot is a retired Belgian, proud of his intelligence and analytical abilities, who along with his companion, Captain Hastings, manage to solve very difficult crimes. Christie concentrates mostly on plots where the solution is usually unexpected. Her stories are puzzle-like games that entertain.

Her plots are often complicated and it is difficult to unravel the mystery while reading it. She used good craftsmanship despite lack of depth in characters.

She uses two perspectives in the narrative. When following the action the reader observes the mind of both Captain Hastings, who provides insights into what happens, as well as Poirot, who allows us to see his entire thinking process although it is usually revealed only at the end. Readers are invited to fill in the missing elements, although mostly guided towards certain conclusion. Readers are also invited to solve the puzzle along with the detective work. At times readers are misled. This apparent deception that later reveals everything provides some foreshadowing elements in the story. The readers ponder and are left questioning how easy it is to exercise deceit. The perspective used shows that Captain Hastings or even Poirot is not perfect.

Setting

Poirot and Hastings travel to various parts of the world to do their work, including places like Egypt, London, and country houses. The settings are an essential part of the crime. The setting influences the crime as its elements are critical to the way robberies are executed. The most essential element in all the stories is the element of mystery. Some settings increase the suspense, such as the robbery of the diamond that is to be committed at Yardly Chase.

Language and Meaning

Christie uses a conversational writing style in her murder stories. The gaps in plot development are filled by Poirot. She describes the investigation that is then recounted and explained. She provides amusing comments, inserting French words in the speech of the Belgian inspector, enhancing his French character. The vocabulary is factual, focusing on the events that occur along with Poirot's thinking process. His comments provide insights that are personal.



As his namesake Hercules, Hercule Poirot tackles labors that at times assure national security. In the same way, Poirot uses his exceptional skills, and sometimes has to resort to tricks to win. His size is not significant in victory for it is his inner qualities that make him superior. Poirot protects society from various evils. His detective work is critical to the survival not just individuals but the entire nation.

"Poirot investigates" has the ethical certainty characteristic of this era, where the evil is always punished. The detective is the essential part in the story as the only objective view of the crime. The detective represents what is good and right while focusing more on justice rather than only law and order. Even though Poirot often resorts to illegal devices he is conservatively correct.

Structure

The novel consists of 11 chapters with all chapters written according to a classic mystery structure, where a crime occurs, there are a number of suspects with various secrets, and these secrets are gradually revealed along with shocking revelations and twists. Detective Poirot gradually unravels the secrets but only at the end explains everything. Captain Hastings follows him in his investigations mostly unaware of what is going on and expecting Poirot's failure. Often after the crime is unraveled, Poirot explains the way he arrived at the conclusion. The most unexpected events and twists are delivered each time differently as the nature of the crime differs.

The way these short stories are constructed revolves around who is the perpetrator. Only sometimes the murderer escapes justice, but then natural justice punishes. The clues provided are the basis of the structure, where their examination leads to the final resolution.

It is the rigid and predictable structure that enhances the effectiveness and power of the narrative. It is through violation of our expectations where uncertainties become threats that the powerful effect is achieved.



Quotes

"When one is unique one knows it." p. 5

"Les affairs - they know no mercy." p. 49

"There are criminals in high places sometimes, my friend." p. 136

"One must have the consideration for those less gifted than oneself." p. 130

"Always employ the expert." p. 298

"Taxis always make themselves sought for when one is particularly pressed for time." p. 261

There may be some malformation in his grey cells but they are of the first quality p. 253

"The important detail you appreciate him never." p. 248

"Look after number one as the saying goes." p. 252

"To work with method one must begin from the beginning." p. 220

"With method and logic one can accomplish anything." p. 218

"As I tell you, uncertainty breeds panic." p. 210



Topics for Discussion

Poirot investigates using his own method. Describe that method and give some examples of it in action.

Does the relationship between Poirot and Hastings influence the way the story develops?

Hastings as a character is a "foil" to Poirot. Define the word foil as pertains to literary criticism and explain why you think Hastings serves this role.

Are "real-life" detectives as infallible as Poirot? Why or why not?

How does Poirot's method of solving crimes compare to a typical police department?

Is there a perfect crime? How often do you think a perfect crime is committed? Do you know of any famous crimes that were never solved? Discuss one.