

Murder on the Orient Express

By: Agatha Christie

About the book: Murder on the Orient Express is a classic mystery novel by Agatha Christie, featuring detective Hercule Poirot, who must solve the murder of a wealthy American, Samuel Ratchett, stabbed in his locked compartment on a snowbound train.

About the Author: Agatha Christie, known as the "Queen of Crime", was an English author who wrote 66 detective novels and 14 short story collections. Her work is known for featuring the detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, and for its signature formula of a closed circle of suspects, a murder, and a dramatic reveal.

People:

- **Hercule Poirot**-Inspector
- **Monsieur Bouc**-Director of the train
- **Dr Constantine**-Doctor who helped take notes
- **Mrs. Hubbard**-American actress/Daisy Armstrong's maternal grandmother
- **Princess Dragomiroff**-Russian *grand dame*/ Sonia Armstrong's godmother.
- **Hildegarde Schmidt**-Lady's maid to Princess Dragomiroff/ The cook of the Armstrong family
- **Colonel Arbuthnot**- Returning from India and struck up a political conversation with MacQueen/ Close family friend of the Armstrong family and is in love with Mary
- **Count Rudolph Andrenyi**- Hungarian Count/who took his wife's place as the twelfth murderer.
- **Countess Helena Andrenyi**-Youngest and Prettiest on the train/ Sonia Armstrong's sister and did not participate in the murder
- **Mary Debenham**-English Governess/ Formerly Daisy Armstrong's governess.
- **Hector MacQueen**- American Secretary to Mr. Ratchett/ Father was Armstrong's lawyer
- **Antonio Foscarelli**-an Italian-American car salesman/the Armstrongs' chauffeur
- **Greta Ohlsson**- Matron to a Swedish missionary school/formerly Daisy Armstrong's nurse.
- Pierre Michel-Conductor/ Father of the nursery maid Susanne
- **Mr Ratchett/Cassetti** - Pseudo philanthropist/ kidnapped and murdered three year old Daisy Armstrong
- **Edward Henry Masterman**-Valet to Ratchett/ formally the valet and served in the war with Armstrong
- **Cyrus Hardman**- Private Detective hired by Ratchett to look after him/ American ex-policeman who was in love with Daisy Armstrong's French nursery maid,

Discussion Questions:

1. Which passenger did you find the most interesting or complex, and why?
2. How does Hercule Poirot's investigative style differ from other fictional detectives?
3. How do the passengers' backgrounds and social status affect the story?
4. What clues did Christie include that pointed toward the final solution?
5. Were there any red herrings that misled you?
6. How did the confined setting of the train affect the tension and mystery?
7. Did the structure of interviewing each passenger make the mystery more engaging?
8. The novel presents two possible solutions at the end. Which one do you think represents the "real" justice?

9. Do you think the passengers' actions were morally justified? Why or why not?
10. What does the book suggest about revenge vs. justice?
11. Should Poirot have reported the truth to the authorities?
12. How does Agatha Christie build suspense and tension throughout the story?
13. What role does dialogue play in revealing character and clues?
14. Did the pacing of the novel keep you engaged?
15. How important is the Orient Express train setting to the story? Would the mystery work as well if it took place somewhere else?
16. How does the snowstorm and isolation contribute to the mood?
17. Were you satisfied with the ending? Why or why not?
18. Do you think the ending makes the story more memorable or controversial?
19. If you were on the train, which character would you trust the most?
20. If you could ask Agatha Christie one question about the book, what would it be?
21. If the case had gone to court, do you think a jury would have sympathized with the passengers? Why?
22. The murder was committed by a group rather than an individual. What might Agatha Christie be suggesting about shared guilt and collective responsibility?
23. Does the fact that each passenger took part in the crime change how you judge their actions compared to a single murderer?
24. Is the group's unity in carrying out the murder a sign of solidarity or moral corruption?
25. Many passengers lie or conceal details during Poirot's interviews. What do these lies reveal about fear, loyalty, and personal motives?
26. Which character do you think had the most emotionally compelling reason to participate in the murder?
27. How does Christie balance fair clues and misdirection throughout the novel?
28. Looking back after knowing the ending, which clues seem most obvious in hindsight?
29. Poirot often speaks about the importance of order and logic. How does the unusual solution challenge his desire for a rational, orderly explanation?
30. Does the group's carefully planned act restore order after the Armstrong tragedy, or does it introduce more moral chaos?
31. The train is a confined and international space, filled with people from many countries and backgrounds. What might this symbolize about society or justice?
32. Christie allows readers to sympathize with people who have committed murder. How does she accomplish this, and how does it affect your emotional response to the ending?
33. If the novel were written today, do you think modern audiences would view the ending differently?

Read Alike:

- **6:40 to Montreal** By: Eva Jurczyk
- **The Hunting Party** By: Lucy Foley
- **1222** By: Anne Holt