Death on the Nile

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF AGATHA CHRISTIE

Agatha Christie was arguably the most popular fiction writer of all time, having sold over two billion copies of her novels. She was born to an upper-middle-class family in Devon, England, where she had a relatively happy childhood until her father died when she was eleven. In 1907, after finishing her education, Christie and her mother spent the winter in Egypt, which was then a popular tourist destination for Britons who could afford it. Christie was interested in reading and writing from a young age, and she published her first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in the early 1920s. It featured the eccentric Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, perhaps her best-known recurring character (although Christie is also famous for her spinster sleuth, Miss Marple). In 1930, Christie married her second husband, the archaeologist Max Mallowan, and in the following years, she accompanied him on several digs around the Middle East, including in Egypt. Her knowledge of Egypt from these various trips informed her writing of *Death on the Nile*. Christie wrote over 60 detective novels, as well as several short stories and the world's longest-running play, *The Mousetrap*. She died of natural causes in 1976.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Many of Christie's most famous novels were written between the two World Wars, and in creating Hercule Poirot, Christie drew on her experience treating Belgian soldiers in World War I. Meanwhile, *Death on the Nile* was first published about 15 years after Howard Carter's discovery of the tomb of King Tutankhamun—a landmark event in archaeology and particularly Egyptology (the study of ancient Egypt) that brought a lot of new attention to the region. Carter himself was from England, where "Egyptomania" was strong (and this may have played a role in Christie's husband's decision to embark on archaeological digs). Modern European interest in ancient Egypt began when Napoleon invaded the country in the late eighteenth century, which led to the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799. The Nile has supported civilizations in Egypt for thousands of years. The remains of these old civilizations feature prominently in *Death on the Nile*.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Although the mystery genre has ancient roots, Edgar Allen Poe is often credited with popularizing the modern English-language detective story. He created C. Auguste Dupin, a brilliant detective (although not a professional one) who first appeared in Poe's 1841 story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and who set a template for all future detective protagonists. Arthur Conan Doyle's amateur sleuth Sherlock Holmes, who appeared in over 60 stories written around the turn of the twentieth century, is arguably the most famous detective of all time. Christie was a fan of both Dupin and Holmes, and they are clear influences on her famous detective Hercule Poirot. Christie's own work was enormously popular, and *Death on the Nile* references some of it: Poirot refers to a kimono that was a key clue in *Murder on the Orient Express* and Colonel Race references a strange dinner party that occurred in *Cards on The Table* (in which Poirot and Race both previously appeared as characters). Poirot would continue to appear in Christie's novels until his death in the 1975 novel *Curtain*. Like Dupin and Holmes, Poirot's influence can be felt in some form in virtually every modern detective story.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Death on the Nile
- **When Written:** 1930s
- **Where Written:** Egypt
- **When Published:** 1937
- **Literary Period:** Golden age of detective fiction
- **Genre:** Mystery
- **Setting:** A steamer boat on the Nile, traveling to and from the Second Cataract
- **Climax:** Revelation that Jacqueline and Simon carried out the murders together
- **Antagonist:** Jacqueline de Bellefort and Simon Doyle
- **Point of View:** 3rd person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

At the Movies. Agatha Christie famously hated most film adaptations of her works. While she generally liked the 1974 adaptation of *Murder on the Orient Express*, she complained that the actor who played Poirot (Albert Finney) had a weak mustache compared to the magnificent one she'd written. She wasn't alive to comment on the mustaches of future on-screen Poirots, which include Peter Ustinov, David Suchet, Alfred Molina, and Kenneth Branagh.

Christie and Coronavirus. Like the Olympics and the New York City subway system, Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* was another long-running institution that temporarily stopped due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The play had been running continuously on London's West End since 1952 until it was

forced to close in March 2020. After a failed comeback attempt later that year, the play ultimately did reopen in the spring of 2021.

PLOT SUMMARY

Linnet Ridgeway is a wealthy, glamorous heiress who lives in the English country village of Malton-under-Wode at the manor she recently bought and is planning to improve. Rumor has it that she is engaged to be married to Lord Windlesham, though she is not interested in subsuming herself to someone of higher rank. When her friend Jacqueline De Bellefort asks Linnet to find a job for her poor fiancé, Simon Doyle, Linnet ends up marrying Simon instead. News of the marriage and the couple's subsequent honeymoon in Egypt reaches around the world. Linnet's American trustee Andrew Pennington and her British lawyer James Fanthorp both makes plans to head immediately to Egypt. Other characters also make separate plans to go to Egypt on vacation: Tim Allerton and his mother Mrs. Allerton are tired of vacationing in Mallorca; Miss Van Schuyler is traveling with her poorer and younger cousin, Cornelia Robson; and Mrs. Otterbourne is traveling with her daughter Rosalie in order to get inspiration for her romance novels.

At the Cataract Hotel in Aswan, Egypt, the famous detective Hercule Poirot is on vacation when he finds himself approached by Linnet. She explains her problem: Jacqueline has been following her and Simon on their honeymoon. So far, she hasn't done anything violent, but just her presence has been affecting Linnet's nerves. Poirot agrees to talk to Jacqueline, though he doesn't accept any payment—he says he will talk to Jacqueline in the general interest of humanity. Jacqueline confirms that she's been stalking the couple, but despite Poirot's urging to give up her plans and not to open her heart to evil, Jacqueline remains steadfast. Simon and Linnet try to secretly leave the hotel without Jacqueline noticing, but ultimately, they end up with her and all the other characters on the *Karnak*, a **Nile** steamer boat headed to the Second Cataract and back.

During a stop on the Nile voyage, when the passengers disembark to see some ruins, a boulder falls (or perhaps is pushed) from a cliff, nearly crushing Linnet. Poirot and others immediately suspect Jacqueline, but soon after Poirot sees her coming off the steamer, meaning she couldn't possibly have pushed the boulder.

The steamer continues to its ultimate destination of Wadi Halfa, where Poirot's old acquaintance Colonel Race comes aboard. Race says that he is looking for a political agitator who is responsible for several murders and that he has good intelligence that this person will be on the *Karnak*. The steamer begins its return journey.

One night in the steamer's dining saloon, Jacqueline begins having too much to drink. She gets angry and shouts at Simon before suddenly pulling a pistol from her bag and shooting him in the leg. Horrified at what she's done, Jacqueline kicks the pistol under a nearby sofa. Cornelia, who is present for the event, runs to fetch Fanthorp, who walked out just before the shooting, and together they take care of the situation. Simon is brought to the cabin of Dr. Bessner in order to receive treatment. Jacqueline, meanwhile, is placed under the care of Miss Bowers (a nurse attending to Miss Van Schuyler), and she is given a sedative that knocks her out for the rest of the night. Fanthorp then goes back to look for Jacqueline's pistol, but can't find it.

The next morning, Colonel Race reveals to Poirot that Linnet Doyle has been shot in her sleep by a point-blank bullet to the head. A letter **J** is written in her blood near the scene of the crime, and her extremely valuable **pearls** are missing. Later, Jacqueline's missing pistol is recovered—it had apparently been thrown overboard into the Nile, wrapped in a velvet stole that belonged Miss Van Schuyler and with a pink-stained handkerchief.

Linnet's pearl necklace is eventually returned by Miss Bowers, who says that Miss Van Schuyler is a kleptomaniac and had stolen it. But it doesn't take Poirot long to realize that the returned necklace is in fact only a clever imitation. Poirot and Race continue to investigate the steamer and interrogate passengers—one clue that catches his attention is a bottle of nail polish in Linnet's room that has "Rose" written on the front but which only has a little bit of darker red liquid at the bottom. Suddenly, during their search, they discover Louise Bourget (Linnet's maid) dead in her cabin, holding a scrap of money in her hand. Poirot deduces that perhaps she knew something and was trying to blackmail the murderer.

Race and Poirot continue the investigation, with their search leading them back to Simon in Dr. Bessner's cabin. Simon begins talking about a strange telegram Linnet opened, thinking it said "Ridgeway" when actually it said "Richetti," meaning it was meant for an Italian archaeologist also on board the *Karnak*, Signor Richetti. While there, they are suddenly interrupted by Mrs. Otterbourne, who claims she has an important revelation: she knows who the murderer is. Just as she's about to dramatically reveal her news, however, she is suddenly shot dead. Poirot races to see the culprit, but there's no one around, just the left behind revolver of Andrew Pennington.

Poirot and Race confront Pennington, who claims to have no knowledge of how his pistol came to be used to kill Mrs. Otterbourne. After pressing him with questions, however, they finally get Pennington to admit that he may have been the one to push the boulder that almost fell on Linnet. He reveals that he was trying to get her to sign some documents in order to get himself out of a bad financial situation (a process that Fanthorp interrupted earlier in the trip). He believed that Simon would

be a better business partner because he wasn't as smart or disciplined as Linnet and would just sign anything without reading it. However, despite his involvement in attempted murder, Pennington insists he didn't commit any of the actual murders on the *Karnak*.

Poirot and Race then confront Tim—Poirot reveals that he knows that Tim stole the pearls as part of a jewelry-forging and theft scheme with his cousin, Joanna Southwood. Joana had earlier provided him with the fake pearls by mailing them to him in a cut-out book, and Tim had then swapped the fake pears with the real ones. Poirot gives Tim a chance to return the real pearls before anyone goes searching for them and Tim, who has recently fallen in love with Rosalie, eagerly accepts. Later, after hearing more about the telegram from Signor Richetti that Linnet mistakenly read, Race realizes that Richetti is the agitator he's looking for.

Finally, Poirot reveals what really happened in the murder of Linnet. Simon and Jacqueline never ceased to be lovers, and they planned the crime, with Jacqueline as the mastermind and Simon carrying it out. In fact, Jacqueline is a good shot who purposely missed hitting Simon's leg when she shot at him. He then faked being injured using a handkerchief (which was recovered in the stole with the pistol) and red dye (which he kept in the Rose nail polish bottle in Linnet's cabin). While Fanthorp and Cornelia left Simon alone, thinking he couldn't move because of his injured leg, in fact, Simon carried out the murder, writing the J himself, then shooting himself in the leg (attempting to use the stole as a silencer), before throwing the pistol overboard.

Louise, however, saw Simon entering Linnet's cabin to commit the murder, so she attempted to blackmail him and Jacqueline, only to be stabbed by Jacqueline when she went to deliver the money. Jacqueline herself was seen entering the cabin of Louise by Mrs. Otterbourne, leading to another cover-up murder where Jacqueline shot Mrs. Otterbourne, then quickly pretended she'd been in her cabin the whole time.

When confronted by Poirot, Simon instantly confesses. Jacqueline does too, and further explains that Simon had never loved Linnet but had wanted her wealth, and so Jacqueline, who herself loved Simon overwhelmingly, masterminded the entire plan: Simon would marry Linnet, then they would murder her and Simon would inherit the money, and then Simon and Jacqueline would be together.

After the steamer arrives back in Cairo Signor Richetti is taken off first to be arrested. Soon after, Simon is taken off on a stretcher, followed by Jacqueline. Suddenly, Jacqueline produces a second pistol from her shoe, kills Simon with it, and then kills herself. Poirot reveals to Mrs. Allerton that he knew about this second pistol all along, and that he allowed Jacqueline this easier way out than prison, even though it meant that Simon got better than he deserved. Poirot and Mrs. Allerton then watch the new couple Tim and Rosalie, and agree that while many love stories end in tragedy, others offer hope. News of Linnet's death races around the world, including a pub in her the town of Malton-under-Wode where she bought her manor—the locals discuss the murder briefly, then start talking about a horse race instead.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Hercule Poirot – Hercule Poirot is an eccentric and brilliant detective, from Belgium, who also happens to have a spectacular mustache. By the time *Death on the Nile* takes place, Hercule Poirot is already internationally famous and many of the other characters know him by reputation. This parallels Poirot's reputation in the real world—by the publication of the novel, he was well-established as one of Christie's most famous creations and one of the most popular fictional detectives of all time. Despite the fact that many characters know Poirot (including Colonel Race, who helped him solve a previous case), Poirot's involvement in the events of the novel is largely accidental—or perhaps fate—as he encounters the events of the novel only because he is vacationing in the area. Although he is first approached by Linnet and Simon Doyle to help them deal with Jacqueline de Bellefort (who has been stalking them on their honeymoon), Poirot refuses to accept money from them and gets involved, as he describes it, only in the general interest of humanity. Poirot's investigative prowess endears him to some characters, like Mrs. Otterbourne and Mrs. Allerton, but other characters who are keeping secrets (such as Tim Allerton and Rosalie Otterbourne) often feel uneasy when Poirot talks to them. Poirot figures out the culprits of the central crime well before any of the other characters, although he often withholds information to reveal it at a dramatic moment and is willing to admit that sometimes his initial deductions are incorrect. Notably, Poirot is more interested in uncovering crimes than punishing them—he gives the thief of Linnet's **pearls** (Tim Allerton, with some help from Joanna Southwood) a chance to reform himself and quietly return them, and even tacitly allows one of the main culprits (Jacqueline) to commit suicide instead of facing arrest. Poirot is part of a long lineage of detectives who don't always follow the letter of the law, and his status as an outsider helps Christie explore how a traditional justice system both does and doesn't serve real justice.

Linnet Doyle – Linnet Doyle (formerly Ridgeway) is the wife of Simon Doyle, the one-time friend of Jacqueline De Bellefort, and one of the wealthiest heiresses in England. She is also the first and most significant of the murder victims in the novel, killed in her sleep by a gunshot wound to the head and with the letter **J** written on the wall in her blood. Somewhat unusually, her death does not occur until almost midway through the story, allowing Christie to build suspense about how and where

the titular death on the Nile will occur. Despite this, however, Linnet's death is heavily foreshadowed, and her enemies are identified early in the story, beginning with Lord Windlesham (whose proposal to Linnet was refused) and Sir George Wode (whose home Linnet acquired after the latter fell on hard times). Linnet then seems to betray her friend Jacqueline by using her wealth, glamour, and beauty to steal Jacqueline's beloved fiancé Simon. Linnet is smart, beautiful, and worldly, and prides herself on helping others. But over the course of the novel it becomes clear that her generosity is, in fact, just a mask for a deeper selfishness and sense of superiority. The help she offers is motivated by her sense that she knows what's best for other people, and she often gives help without asking or caring if it's wanted. She helps because *she* wants to, not because others want her help. Linnet's underlying selfishness is revealed when she steals Simon from Jacqueline, and her blindness to the selfish foundations of her behavior are further revealed when she explains at one point to Poirot that, in fact, the very fact she could steal Simon is proof that she was actually helping Jacqueline because she and Simon weren't a good match. Ultimately, Linnet is a cautionary figure—a victim of both her own greed and the greed of others. Her death is tragic, but like the other primary murder victims in the story (Louise and Mrs. Otterbourne) there is the implication that it isn't an entirely undeserved death.

Jacqueline De Bellefort – Jacqueline is one of the primary antagonists of the novel, originally a friend to Linnet and the fiancé lover of Simon. All that changes, however, when Linnet offers Simon a job (at Jacqueline's request), then decides she'd rather marry him herself. As Jacqueline later tells Hercule Poirot, she vowed revenge, first considering violent options but ultimately deciding that she gets more satisfaction from stalking Linnet on her honeymoon, following the couple all the way to Egypt. Poirot, however, first encounters Jacqueline well before the **Nile** excursion that makes up most of the book—she and Simon are dancing at the London restaurant Chez Ma Tante, and Poirot notes to himself that she clearly cares about Simon too much. As it turns out, Poirot is (of course) right in his assessment of Jacqueline. However, while it initially seems that Jacqueline's too strong love of Simon is now being expressed through her relentless stalking of the new couple, as it turns out Jacqueline's overwhelming love for Simon actually led her to mastermind the plot against Linnet, and to turn murderer herself in order to protect Simon. Like many of the characters in the story, Jacqueline is a victim of her own desires, although despite being a murderer and an experienced liar, she is portrayed relatively sympathetically, since her main motivation was always just to please Simon.

Simon Doyle – Simon is the youngest son of a well-to-do family, and as a result has no real money of his own but has a taste for the good life. He is physically capable, but not actually all that bright. He works as a relatively poor office worker in London and is engaged to Jacqueline De Bellefort, a friend of Linnet Ridgeway. Since they can't afford a wedding, Jacqueline asks Linnet to get Simon a job; soon, however, Linnet expresses interest in Simon and soon Simon breaks off his engagement to Jacqueline and marries Linnet instead. As it turns out, Simon's marriage to Linnet was itself a plot that Jacqueline came up with in order to help her beloved Simon get the wealth he always wanted—by marrying and then murdering Linnet. As with all of the other criminals in the novel, Simon is motivated by greed. Even so, Simon is portrayed as the most monstrous of the characters in the novel—willing to use anyone, including both of the women who loved him, to get the wealthy life he desires. The revelation that Simon was the murderer of Linnet in the novel is surprising in part because it *isn't* that surprising: he has the most obvious motivation of any character (to get Linnet's money). In this choice of murderer, Agatha Christie was subverting with the whodunnit genre, in which the murderer is almost never the most obvious suspect.

Colonel Race – Colonel Race is an acquaintance of Hercule Poirot going back to before the events of *Death on the Nile*. In *Death on the Nile*, he comes aboard the *Karnak* **Nile** steamer because he has received word that there's a political agitator on board who is responsible for the murders of several people. Though he is not as brilliant at deduction as Poirot, he is a careful and methodical sidekick, helping Poirot to organize searches and interrogations on the steamer. Race's role in the story is to be a foil to Poirot—he's an intelligent character in his own right, but he mostly just serves to highlight how much more brilliant Poirot is by comparison.

Andrew Pennington – Andrew Pennington is one of the two remaining American trustees for Linnet Ridgeway (the other being his partner Sterndale Rockford, another tall, graying, clean-shaven man who resembles Pennington). He works in an office in New York City and is in charge of managing her fortune until she either reaches twenty-one or gets married. When he receives a letter revealing that Linnet suddenly married Simon Doyle, he immediately decides he needs to go to Egypt to see them on their honeymoon as this marriage could cause him and his partner significant financial difficulties. Pennington remains a plausible candidate for the murderer for much of the story, and like many characters, he gets himself in trouble through his own greed.

Mrs. Salome Otterbourne – Though Mrs. Otterbourne is portrayed as a ridiculous, out-of-touch old British lady, even going so far as to wear a turban blend in with the local culture while on vacation, she ends up playing a crucial role in the story, almost revealing the name of the murderer before she herself is suddenly killed by a bullet to the head. She is the mother of Rosalie Otterbourne and a great admirer of the detective work of Hercule Poirot. Poirot himself is familiar with Mrs. Otterbourne's romantic novels (which are perhaps similar to the novels of the real-life writer Elinor Glyn) although his

interest in her work seems to be mostly out of politeness. Other characters are less diplomatic; for example, when Rosalie compliments Tim Allerton's mother Mrs. Allerton, Tim is unable to return the favor. Mrs. Otterbourne's big secret, which Rosalie keeps for most of the story (although it may in fact be an open secret), is that she's an alcoholic. Rosalie suffers under the specter of her mother's alcoholism. Though Christie herself has been justifiably accused of deploying racist tropes in her work, Mrs. Otterbourne is an example of self-awareness, showing just how ridiculous some Britons looked while vacationing in foreign countries.

Rosalie Otterbourne – Rosalie Otterbourne is a frequently sulky girl who can also be bright and kind-hearted. She is the daughter of Salome Otterbourne (who embarrasses her). Throughout the story, she is often portrayed as a keeper of secrets. She does all she can to keep her mother's drinking problem from becoming public, even going so far as to personally throw away her mother's stash of booze, and she similarly keeps secrets about Tim Allerton. Rosalie and Tim fall in love over the course of the novel, and this love helps to push Tim to change his life for the better. One of Rosalie's roles in the story is to keep the ending from becoming too grim—after all her suffering in the story, she is rewarded with a happy ending. The new, healthy union between her and Tim is presented as a contrast to the doomed love of Jacqueline and Simon.

Mrs. Allerton – Mrs. Allerton is the mother of Tim Allerton, and she doesn't approve of his correspondence with his cousin Joanna Southwood. She is very interested in the detective work of Hercule Poirot, inviting him to dine with her and Tim on the *Karnak* (to Tim's dismay), and she is also an admirer of Sir George Wode, who used to own Linnet's property. Rosalie Otterbourne develops a liking for Mrs. Allerton (though she sometimes acts sulky toward her), and after the death of her mother, Mrs. Otterbourne, Mrs. Allerton gives Rosalie comfort. Mrs. Allerton notices Tim and Rosalie falling in love—perhaps before Tim himself does—and she comments favorably on them to Poirot at the end of the story. Ultimately, Mrs. Allerton does not play a central role in any of the main mysteries and her main purpose is to be an observer and to (accidentally) cause trouble for her son by drawing Hercule Poirot's attention to his jewelry thievery.

Tim Allerton – Tim Allerton is the son of Mrs. Allerton, the cousin of Joanna Southwood, and the eventual lover of Rosalie Otterbourne. Initially, he dislikes Hercule Poirot with an intensity that surprises his mother, but ultimately, he and Poirot reach an understanding: Poirot discovers that Tim stole Linnet's **pearls** as part of a jewelry heist scheme with his cousin Joanna, but he allows Tim to return the pearls instead of turning him over to the police because he believes Tim is capable of being a good person. Though he initially claims to find Rosalie sulky, they talk several times over the course of their **Nile** steamer trip and begin to bond. At the end of the book, Tim and Rosalie get together. Tim's jewelry thievery adds another layer to the central mystery of the story—he contrasts with some of the other criminals in the story, in that Christie gives him a happy ending. Tim is distinct from the other criminals in the novel, in that his criminal actions seem motivated more by a desire for a thrill than out of greed, and this may be one reason why he alone of the criminals is offered redemption at the end of the novel.

Miss Marie Van Schuyler – Miss Van Schuyler is a wealthy American spinster who travels with her cousin Cornelia Robson and her nurse, Miss Bowers. She is a stereotypical spoiled old rich lady who disdains most of the other passengers and who is particularly controlling of Cornelia, whom she treats almost as a servant. She especially doesn't like it when Cornelia associates with people like Ferguson and Dr. Bessner. Although Miss Van Schuyler seems to give Poirot helpful information during his interrogation of her, it is later revealed that she is partly deaf and that she may have lied to Poirot about what she heard in order to hide her disability out of pride. Miss Van Schuyler remains a ridiculous, unpleasant character throughout the story, and Christie uses her to satirize the vanity of the upper classes and punishes her at the end of the novel by having Cornelia abandon her in favor of getting married to Dr. Bessner.

Cornelia Robson – Cornelia Robson is the cousin of Miss Van Schuyler (who also travels with her nurse, Miss Bowers). She is largely a passive character, putting up with the controlling behavior of her older cousin throughout the trip. During the ride on the *Karnak*, she attracts the attention of some of the male characters, particularly the ones who like to talk, like Dr. Bessner and Ferguson. At one point, Cornelia turns down a proposal from Ferguson, even after he keeps insisting. After Ferguson insults Linnet and her family, Cornelia defends her, even though her own father was financially ruined by Linnet's. Ultimately, Cornelia surprises everyone—especially Miss Van Schuyler and Ferguson—by announcing that she's engaged to Dr. Bessner. Though Cornelia grows a little bit of courage over the course of the story, it's implied that her engagement to Dr. Bessner isn't really that favorable—it's just a lot better than being stuck with Miss Van Schuyler. At the same time, Cornelia's impending marriage offers a different view of romantic relationships from the others depicted in the novel—one that is founded less on actual romance than on shared interests and reliability.

Mr. Ferguson (Lord Dawlish) – Ferguson is a dark-haired young man who looks like he wants to pick a fight with everyone around him. Poirot first meets him and Signor Richetti during an excursion near their hotel. An avowed communist, Ferguson is vocal about his dislike of capitalist "parasites" like Linnet, Louise, Mrs. Otterbourne, and Miss Van Schuyler—even though he himself is actually a wealthy lord

who is only pretending to be a poorer man named "Ferguson." He argues intensely with Cornelia, and even tries several times to propose to her, but she resists all his advances. Ultimately, Ferguson fulfills the archetype of the whodunnit character who is so vocal about his motives that he can't possibly be the real criminal. His supposed hatred of the rich theoretically makes him a candidate to be either Linnet's murderer or the agitator Colonel Race is tracking, but it is clear early on that Ferguson is more interested in talk than action. Ferguson is also a figure of satire in the novel, a member of the aristocracy who claims to hate the rich but in fact can't escape his own sense of privilege or superiority and so makes himself ridiculous.

Miss Bowers – Miss Bowers is the nurse of Miss Van Schuyler (who also travels with her cousin Cornelia Robson). Miss Van Schuyler doesn't suffer from any specific medical condition—she's just a very wealthy woman who prefers to keep a nurse with her out of convenience. Miss Bowers is significant precisely because she doesn't have any motive or connection to the central mystery—her outsider status makes her a reliable witness, and by confirming Jacqueline's alibi, she deepens the mystery.

Signor Richetti – Signor Richetti is a slightly overweight, middle-aged Italian archaeologist that Poirot meets on an excursion near the hotel (which Ferguson also came on). He gets extremely angry at Linnet when she opens a telegram addressed to him by mistake (since she accidentally read "Richetti" as "Ridgeway"). Simon later reveals that the telegram mostly sounded like nonsense to him, that it was all about vegetables. Colonel Race, however, immediately recognizes this language as code and realizes that Richetti must be the political agitator that he's been on the *Karnak* searching for. The novels portrayal of Richetti as a "hotheaded" Italian can be criticized as an example of its use of stereotypes in drawing its characters.

Louise Bourget – As the maid to Linnet and Simon Doyle, Louise initially appears to be a minor character, until suddenly she takes center stage when she becomes the second murder victim. As is revealed in time after her death, Louise is another character in the novel who is undone by greed—she dies in the act of trying to commit blackmail.

James Fanthorp – James Fanthorp is a young English lawyer for Linnet Ridgeway, the nephew of the lawyer William Carmichael. Linnet's marriage to Simon Doyle causes Carmichael to send Fanthorp down to Egypt to find the new couple on their honeymoon. At one point, Fanthorp interrupts a meeting between Linnet, Simon, and Pennington, where Linnet is signing documents. He compliments Linnet on her business sense, which causes Linnet to read the documents more carefully (frustrating Pennington). He has just left the dining saloon when Jacqueline suddenly shoots a gun at Simon. Cornelia Robson runs to get him so he can help; this makes his testimony about the night important for solving the murder. Later, when Poirot interrogates Fanthorp, he describes him as an "Old School Tie," meaning a typically reserved old-school Englishman. This means it was odd for someone like Fanthorp to butt in on a private conversation, the way he did earlier. Fanthorp admits that he came on the trip specifically to interfere because his uncle suspected Pennington was a crook. Fanthorp is largely portrayed as a reliable character, whose role as a witness is important to unraveling the central mystery.

Dr. Bessner – Dr. Bessner is a middle-aged European doctor on board the *Karnak* who takes care of Simon after his leg injury and who eventually proposes to Cornelia Robson. He identifies the weapon used to kill Louise as a surgical knife, though he denies having anything to do with it. At one point during interrogation, Poirot lays out a hypothetical scenario where Bessner is in fact the murderer—he had the opportunity and several clues could point toward him. Though when Bessner protests Poirot quickly makes clear that he doesn't, in fact, suspect Bessner. After a couple meetings with Cornelia that are mentioned only briefly in the story, Dr. Bessner proposes to her at the end, and she accepts. Though Bessner is described as having a well-known practice, he is also described as significantly older and not very attractive. Nonetheless, Cornelia appreciates him for his reliability, for the interests he shares with her, and for his willingness to help her pursue her own interests in life.

Fleetwood – Fleetwood is an engineer on the Karnak who attempted to marry one of Linnet's old chambermaids, despite the fact that he was already married to an Egyptian woman. Linnet intervened to stop the marriage, angering Fleetwood. When Fleetwood speaks directly with Poirot and Race, he insists the situation was more complicated, though he admits that he did hate Linnet. Despite a strong motive, however, Fleetwood never becomes a serious candidate to be the murderer. His presence does, however, show that Linnet was not as beloved by everyone as she first appeared—she had many enemies, some of which she didn't even realize she made through her efforts to "help" people who never asked for that help.

Joanna Southwood – A friend to Linnet and Lord Windlesham, as well as a cousin to Tim Allerton, Joanna is well-connected to the central events of the story, though she plays a small role. Mrs. Allerton disdains Tim's correspondence with Joanna because she thinks the two of them are in love; in fact, though, they are corresponding about jewelry theft. Joanna identifies good targets and has copies of their jewelry made, while Tim swaps the forgeries with the originals. She and Tim plot to steal Linnet's **pearls**, although neither of them had any knowledge of or involvement in the murder plot.

Mr. Burnaby – Mr. Burnaby is the landlord of a pub in Malton-under-Wode, the country village where Linnet recently bought an estate that she plans to upgrade. He appears at the beginning of the novel as he hopes that Linnet's money will help

the village, and at the end to briefly gossip about her death before shifting gears to discuss a recent horse race. Burnaby's character makes clear the degree to which others valued Linnet for her money and not for much else.

Sir George Wode – Sir George Wode is one of Linnet's many enemies—he resents her after she bought his house (because he fell on hard times financially). Mrs. Allerton has sympathy for him, although her son, Tim, doesn't. Despite having a motive to kill Linnet, he remains a minor character with no connection to the events on the *Karnak*.

William Carmichael – William Carmichael is one of the senior lawyers at Linnet's English law firm. After he receives a letter from Linnet revealing that she and her new husband Simon Doyle ran into Andrew Pennington during their honeymoon in Egypt, Carmichael decides it can't be a coincidence and sends his nephew Fanthorp down to investigate immediately. Fanthorp claims to Poirot that he and his uncle were just trying to protect Linnet from Pennington's crooked business dealings—there may be truth to this, but it's also clear that Carmichael and Fanthorp have their own stake in Linnet's affairs.

M. Gastin Blondin – M. Gastin Blondin owns a famous London restaurant called Chez Ma Tante, where Hercule Poirot enjoys excellent service because he once helped Blondin by solving a crime that would have put him in a jam. The restaurant becomes important to the plot because it is where Poirot first witnesses Simon and Jacqueline, noting in particular how Jacqueline seems to care too much about Simon.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Lord Charles Windlesham – Lord Windlesham proposes to Linnet at the beginning of the story—local gossip has it that they're practically already engaged—but she rejects him, despite all his qualifications. He leaves for Canada, and despite having a possible motive for murder, is never heard from again.

Sterndale Rockford – Sterndale Rockford is one of Linnet's American trustees, and a partner of Andrew Pennington. His physical resemblance to Andrew Pennington may be a red herring (since mistaken identities are a common theme in mystery stories), but ultimately, he doesn't play a big role in the story.

Mrs. Leech – Mrs. Leech is a woman who has some jewelry stolen from her in Mallorca while the Allerton's are vacationing there. She is an early clue that Tim Allerton (along with his cousin Joanna) is involved in jewelry theft.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

JUSTICE

Unlike some mystery novels that focus on a single incident, in Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* almost every character could be implicated in some sort of crime. Some of these crimes—like Tim Allerton's jewelry thievery with his cousin Joanna, Miss Van Schuyler's kleptomania, or Signor Richetti's politically motivated murders—are only tangentially related to the central mystery: the murder of Linnet Doyle. Hercule Poirot (with some help from Colonel Race) takes it upon himself to uncover all of these crimes, not for a paycheck but for what he believes is the general good of humankind. Being a private citizen, however, Poirot does not enforce the law as rigidly as a police officer or judge might. Throughout *Death on the Nile*, Poirot operates according to a code of justice that doesn't always fit the letter of the law, which allows Christie to explore how a traditional legal system serves justice—and also how it doesn't.

Poirot's status as an independent agent—a famous investigator who is unaffiliated with any police department—is crucial. Because he isn't paid for his work, his ideas about justice are impartial (at least in Christie's view), and he is able to consider multiple other characters' perspectives. Poirot himself often emphasizes his motives. For instance, when Linnet Doyle asks Poirot to help her with an issue—Jacqueline has been stalking her and Simon on their honeymoon—Poirot refuses payment but agrees to speak to Jacqueline anyway. He claims that he is acting "in the interests of humanity." Though Poirot does speak to Jacqueline, he clarifies to her that he's not doing it for a commission. Further, Poirot makes clear that he understands her pain, and his goal in talking to Jacqueline is not to accuse or convict her, but to protect her—perhaps from herself.

In contrast to Poirot, Colonel Race's role in the novel is to represent a traditional justice system—while Christie largely portrays him positively, he also has some notable flaws. When Race is introduced, he is pursuing a wanted murderer in an official capacity—the fact that he is part of a team and that he has access to intelligence suggests that perhaps he is working for a government or some similar organization. (In other Christie novels, he worked for MI-5, the British intelligence agency.) This means his pursuit of justice is more traditional than Poirot's. Race is mostly a competent and well-intentioned man. He is well-suited for methodical, protocol-driven procedures, like searches and interrogations. It is he, for instance, who finds the murder weapon. But Race's biggest flaw is that he is always several steps behind Poirot. He is a bureaucrat, with none of Poirot's creativity or nuanced understanding of human behavior, and it is unclear if he would have been able to solve the murder without Poirot leading the

way. Ultimately, Race's activities in the novel suggest that traditional justice systems can be effective and even well-meaning, but they are limited in both what they can accomplish and in the breadth of their interests beyond punishment.

There are several occasions where Poirot chooses not to act precisely according to the law, and these cases allow Christie to highlight ways in which Poirot can show mercy while solving crimes—a mercy that the law would never show. When Poirot deduces that Tim Allerton is the thief who stole Linnet's **pearls**, he doesn't report the matter to the police. Instead, he allows Tim to return the pearls before they're missed. Poirot recognizes the budding relationship between Tim and Rosalie and demonstrates a capacity for forgiveness that the law itself doesn't have—in this way, Christie shows how a strict adherence to the law doesn't account for the character of the person being punished or allow for growth. More strikingly, Poirot tacitly allows a murder-suicide to take place by leaving Jacqueline with her second pistol instead of confiscating it. This might seem opposed to his whole moral code, but in fact, Jacqueline's dramatic act doesn't make much of a difference. Simon had already given a full confession, meaning he and Jacqueline likely faced the death penalty (which would have been the punishment for murder at the time *Death on the Nile* was written). By allowing Jacqueline to take her and Simon's lives sooner, Poirot demonstrates a disregard for the slow process of courtrooms—he figures if the end result is the same, perhaps it is even a kindness to let her keep her pistol.

Though Poirot represents a somewhat unorthodox conception of justice, he is ultimately portrayed as more of a supplement to the traditional justice system than a replacement. After all, Race—one of the most strait-laced characters in the novel—is indispensable in helping to solve the mystery. One of Race's most positive qualities, though, is that he's willing to listen to Poirot and occasionally indulge the eccentric detective's whims. While *Death on the Nile* is primarily meant to entertain, through Poirot, Christie advocates for a system of justice that isn't set in stone—one that adapts to the situation, bringing the best of both traditional and nontraditional ideas.

DECEPTION AND GENRE EXPECTATIONS

While Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* is a classic example of a detective novel, in many ways it also subverts expectations about the genre. This is because the detective, Hercule Poirot, is not only an expert investigator but also an expert on detective fiction. Many aspects of the novel follow the conventions of a detective novel, where realism is less important than weaving a compelling mystery. There are elaborately planned crimes, an improbably high body count, and other unrealistic elements commonly seen in the detective genre. At the same time, however, many of the characters—and especially Poirot—are familiar with the tropes of older detective fiction, with the murderer even trying to mislead Poirot by writing the letter **J** in the victim's blood. (The cliché of a dying victim leaving a clue about their killer dates back to the 19th century, and Christie herself had used it some of her other books.) Ultimately, detective fiction is a genre built around carefully orchestrated surprises, and in *Death on the Nile*, Christie subverts some expectations while fulfilling others in order to keep her audience guessing about what the final outcome will be, while still delivering the thrills of a traditional mystery story.

One of the most unusual aspects of *Death on the Nile* is that, unlike most whodunnits, where the murder happens near the beginning, the main murder in *Death on the Nile* doesn't happen until approximately midway through the story. This allows Christie to build suspense not just about the identity of the murderer, but also about the identity of the victim (or, as it turns out, *victims*). The title of the novel plays an important role in setting the audience's expectations. Because the title specifically mentions being on the **Nile**, it is unlikely that there will be any deaths in the earliest parts of the book, set in England, the United States, and Egypt's Cataract Hotel. The title signals that the beginning of the book is all set-up—which puts a special exciting emphasis on all of the character's interactions, as every single word or gesture might be a key clue.

Christie also subverts expectations in the novel in a second unique way: by *not* subverting expectations. Christie hints strongly from the very start of the novel that Linnet will be involved in the central crime. In the first chapter of the book, Joanna Southwood comments to Linnet "What a lot of enemies you must make, Linnet." While the comment is partly a joke, later events make it clear that Linnet does indeed attract enemies. Furthermore, it's clear that Linnet is important since almost every other character either knows her or knows of her. When Linnet becomes the main murder victim, it isn't a twist—it's something the whole first half of the novel has been building toward. And yet because the whole novel has been building to this point, and because it is an Agatha Christie mystery, that Linnet actually turned out to be the murder victim feels like a surprise precisely because it *isn't* one. Even as Christie heavily foreshadows that Linnet will be a murder victim, she also springs surprises on the reader: the deaths of Louise and Mrs. Otterbourne are totally unexpected. In this way, while she subverts the expectations of a mystery by playing some things straight, she lives up to the expectations of a mystery by including unexpected twists. It is as if Christie is showing off her expertise and sense of humor: she's tricky when she's straightforward, and conventional when she's being tricky.

While Christie plays with the conventions of the mystery, she has her characters show themselves to be experts in those same conventions. Meanwhile, Christie also assumes that the reader is well-versed in those conventions, and then uses the

reader's knowledge to play further tricks. When a J is found near Linnet's body after the murder, Christie uses Poirot to immediately dispense with the least interesting possibility: that the J was written by Linnet herself to indicate the identity of her murderer. In a typical whodunnit, the J might initially be seen as a clue pointing to Jacqueline, only to be revealed near the end that the J meant something else (perhaps there was another character whose name secretly began with J, or the J was the start of another message she didn't finish). By trusting her audience to already be familiar with this most obvious solution to the mystery, Christie takes the mystery to the next level. She forces Poirot and the reader to grapple with the question of what to think if they *knew* the J was deliberately planted as a false clue. Because Christie has dispensed with the most obvious scenarios, it is harder for a reader to guess what the significance of the J really is.

By the time Christie wrote *Death on the Nile*, both she and Hercule Poirot were already famous, and readers came to new novels with expectations set by the previous ones. Mysteries, and particularly whodunnits, are a formulaic genre—this is part of the appeal. Still, they are also a genre built on the carefully orchestrated reveal of surprises. By playing with the conventions of genre, Christie found a way to write a story that was both familiar and surprising at the same time.

CLASS

Like many of her other novels, Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* is a story that focuses almost exclusively on middle- to upper-class characters, including some of the wealthiest people in the world. Though mentioned on the periphery, characters like the employees of the **Nile** steamer boat the *Karnak* or the local residents of Egypt and Nubia are seldom named or given significant roles. One of the few supposedly working-class characters, who goes by the pseudonym Ferguson, ends up actually being a wealthy aristocrat in disguise. Partly, Christie's focus on well-to-do characters is related to the novel's escapism—while murder may be a grim subject, many parts of the Nile journey are described in lavish detail, perhaps for the benefit of readers who couldn't themselves afford an expensive vacation in Egypt. But there's a darker side to wealth too, and Christie skillfully exposes the hypocrisy, violence, greed, and snobbishness that often lie behind great fortunes. *Death on the Nile* deftly satirizes people who care too much about class and manners while at the same time acknowledging the seductive benefits of wealth and prestige.

One of Christie's favorite satirical targets in all of her novels is the upper class's vanity, with Mrs. Otterbourne, Miss Van Schuyler, and Ferguson serving as examples of such satire in *Death on the Nile*. Many critics speculate that Mrs. Otterbourne is based on the real-life romance novelist Elinor Glyn, whose work was popular, though reviled by some critics. Though Mrs. Otterbourne tries to appear glamorous and important, she is a secret alcoholic who causes her daughter misery. Her most notable characteristic is the turban she wears—a clear case of cultural appropriation (although that phrase wouldn't have been used in Christie's time). Ultimately, Mrs. Otterbourne's flaws lead to her death—she witnesses something she shouldn't have while procuring alcohol, then she spends so long trying to dramatically reveal what she saw that the murderer has time to shoot her. Miss Van Schuyler is another fussy, vain older woman who lies to hide her partial deafness, treats her young cousin Cornelia as a kind of servant, and often demands support from a nurse despite not actually needing any medical care. While she doesn't die, she, too, is punished in the novel when Cornelia ceases to serve her every whim and instead marries Dr. Bessner.

The character of Ferguson furthers the novel's skewering of the upper class. Ferguson at first appears in the novel as a firebrand socialist who rails endlessly against the "parasites" of the upper class. However, it turns out that Ferguson is in fact the very wealthy lord Dawlish. Dawlish did become a socialist in college, but it soon becomes clear that despite these political beliefs he remains steeped in his own privilege. As such, he is a ludicrous, silly figure in the novel: he doesn't realize that poor people can't just hire a bunch of lawyers when they have a problem. Moreover, the Colonel never takes him seriously as a real suspect for the political agitator he's after, and he is left sputtering about his superiority when Cornelia rejects him in favor of the more reliable Dr. Bessner.

Christie's disdain for upper-class vanity, however, doesn't necessarily translate into sympathy for the lower-class or disdain for the whole idea of class—in fact, sometimes quite the opposite is true. As Ferguson demonstrates, characters in *Death on the Nile* have a hard time escaping their class. His efforts to be a communist are consistently depicted as ridiculous, suggesting that he can't avoid his fate as a wealthy heir. Though most characters in the novel are punished according to their flaws, a modern reader might be surprised by the servant Louise's fate. Even Poirot calls her a woman of "insensate greed." It is hard to see why, however, Poirot would condemn Louise as greedy but not Tim (who has stolen far more than Louise, but who Poirot is sympathetic toward). One way to explain the different fates of Tim and Louise is to consider class. Though the Allertons weren't rich, Tim was a member of respectable society, whereas Louise was "a miserable little *femme de chambre*" (as Dr. Bessner calls her after her death). Though Christie ably identifies the classism of characters like Miss Van Schuyler and Mrs. Otterbourne, she may be showing her own bias through the novel's treatment of Louise, portraying the lower-class Louise as less worthy of redemption than the comparatively upper-class Tim.

While not an intended theme of the novel, it is worth noting that, especially to modern readers, some of Christie's satires of

classism and racism may come across as hypocritical, given that her own novel portrays Egyptians and Nubians in a way that reads as racist today. While some aspects of the novel, such as the use of the word "Negros," can be attributed to the time when it was written, more concerning are scenes such as the one where Christie portrays street vendors as a swarm of buzzing flies. Comparing people to animals or insects is a common racist trope that makes those targeted seem less than human, and the novel has many such descriptions of the people of Egypt. Arguably, the whole concept of writing a novel about European and American characters vacationing in Egypt is problematic. Though Egypt formally became independent in 1922, it was scarred by years of violent colonial rule by Britain, and this occupation continued in some form through the 1950s. Christie's negative (or nonexistent) portrayals of local Egyptians and Nubians reinforce the same racist, colonialist ideas that fueled the colonization of Egypt in the first place.

Death on the Nile is a novel about all the hypocrisies involved with class—and Christie herself is arguably guilty of many of these hypocrisies. For better and for worse, the novel conveys attitudes that were prevalent in Britain during the time when the nation was waning as a major colonial power. Though much of the material in the novel is dated, the same issues of class and colonialism continue to reverberate today.

ROMANTIC LOVE

Throughout *Death on the Nile*, Christie explores the theme of romantic love through the lens of several different relationships. In addition to Jacqueline and Simon, the secret lovers who orchestrate the crime at the center of the story, there is also Simon and Linnet; Rosalie and Tim; and the triangle involving Cornelia, Dr. Bessner, and Ferguson. Some of Christie's portrayals of love are cynical—after all, Poirot describes the book's central murder as a product of a love in which Jacqueline cares "too much." Yet she also portrays love in hopeful ways. Throughout the novel, Christie depicts four main types of romantic love: love so strong it leads to evil, selfish love, love that brings out the best in people, and love of convenience.

One of the defining characteristics of Jacqueline is that she "cares too much" about Simon, and Christie uses her overwhelming love for Simon to explore how love can lead to evil. Jacqueline claims that she would be happy living with Simon even if he were poor. But Simon doesn't want to be poor, and so, because Jaqueline loves him so much, she's willing to do anything to please him—even murder. Early on in the novel, Poirot recognizes that her deep love might lead her to such drastic actions, and he warns her not to "open [her] heart to evil." The mention of Jacqueline's heart makes clear the connection between love and evil—the willingness to do anything for the former can lead to the latter. And when Jacqueline describes murdering Louise in order to protect Simon, it's clear that is exactly what happened: according to Jacqueline, she didn't even feel anything when she committed the murder.

The novel's main action is set in motion when Linnet "steals" Simon from Jacqueline. As it turns out, that theft isn't quite what it initially seems, as Simon marries Linnet not because he loves her in return but as part of a plot to get her wealth. Both of these "lovers," then, pursue each other for selfish reasons: Linnet because she desires the love that Jacqueline had, and Simon because he wants Linnet's wealth. In the novel, such selfish love leads to disaster. Linnet gets murdered by the man she selfishly married, while Simon's desire to live a lifestyle like Linnet's drives him to commit murder.

In contrast to the marriage of Simon and Linnet is the new love between Tim and Rosalie, which helps both characters become better people. Christie uses their relationship to show that, despite its dangers, love also has positive qualities. Both Tim and Rosalie are flawed characters. Tim is spoiled and secretly involved in a jewelry heist scheme, while Rosalie is unhappy, mercurial, and unfriendly to people around her. Over the course of the story, though, both Tim and Rosalie are portrayed more favorably. Tim begins to open up to Rosalie and ultimately repents of his past thefts, while Rosalie's melancholy is revealed to have been the result of her struggles with her mother's alcoholism. As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that the change in their nature is a result of their growing love for each other. In the moments after Jacqueline kills Simon as a final act of overwhelming love, the novel cuts to an image of Tim and Rosalie standing together in the sunshine. In this way, Tim and Rosalie's love is contrasted with Jacqueline and Simon's, and a love that drives lovers to be better people offers hope in the aftermath of a different sort of love that leads to tragedy.

Not all romantic love is actually quite so romantic, however: the love triangle of Dr. Bessner, Cornelia Robson, and Ferguson shows that sometimes love is a matter of practical convenience. When Ferguson proposes to Cornelia, he isn't in love with her the way Jacqueline loved Simon, or the way that Tim and Rosalie love each other. Instead, in proposing marriage to the lower-class Cornelia, he is trying to prove something about himself and to define himself by his socialist politics. Cornelia, however, rejects Ferguson and instead chooses to be with Dr. Bessner, who is older and not particularly attractive. However, as she explains to Ferguson, Bessner both treats her with respect and shares her interests; being with him offers her the chance to grow. While the novel describes the Egyptology lessons that Bessner gives to Cornelia as "ponderous," she sees that he will nonetheless always be reliable and treat her well. While not terribly romantic, Cornelia sees these traits as solid foundations for a marriage, and the novel's portrayal of their interactions seems to suggest agreement.

While mystery and murder take center stage in *Death on the*

Nile, love is always on the periphery, motivating many of the key plot events. Love is one of the most written-about topics in literature, and Christie attempts to add something to the conversation by portraying romantic love from different angles. Just as no two criminals are alike—some are beyond redemption, others just a little misguided—so too, the novel suggests, are no two loves alike. Any skilled mystery writer needs to be able to conjure up plausible motivations, and Christie expertly shows how love can lead to crime—as well as how it can lead to something more.

SELFISHNESS AND GENEROSITY

Death on the Nile is a novel in which the villains are undone by their own greed. It is also a novel in which many characters, including its protagonist, Hercule Poirot, act for no reason other than the general benefit of humanity. Many characters have elements of both traits: they are generous in some ways but selfish in others. Some, like Linnet Doyle, even find a way to mix the two, turning generosity into its own kind of selfishness, without even realizing it. By exploring the range of selfishness and generosity in its characters, the novel suggests that these traits can't always be neatly separated, as people have the capacity to mix them in complicated ways.

Linnet is outwardly generous and is always looking to help others with her intelligence and wealth. And yet, the novel hints and later makes clear that she is, in fact, profoundly selfish, demonstrating how selfishness isn't necessarily straightforward. Linnet thinks of herself as a helper, but an early exchange with Joanna Southwood hints at the selfishness hiding beneath her generosity. Joanna mentions a maid whose relationship Linnet disrupted and some housing that Linnet razed—and in each case, Linnet explained how she did what she did for the maid's and the residents' own benefit. Her generosity is domineering, founded on selfish sense that she knows what's best for everyone else. That deeper selfishness is revealed when Linnet takes Simon from Jacqueline. Poirot suggests as much when he compares Linnet's behavior in taking Simon to the actions of the Biblical story of a rich man who takes a poor man's only lamb. Linnet's angry denial of the charge—that she was doing both Jacqueline and Simon a favor by breaking up a couple that wasn't meant to be—follows her normal playbook of pretending her selfish actions are generous, and not even realizing that she's done so. That her selfish explanation of how she ended up with Simon is, in fact, proved wrong by the end of the novel demonstrates the dangers of such self-involvement.

Simon, in contrast, is almost purely selfish. He is charming and simple but deeply desires to live a life of wealth and ease, and he thinks nothing of using others to achieve those ends. Simon uses both of the women in the novel who love him: he encourages Jacqueline to mastermind a plot that will result in him ending up with Linnet's money, and he repeatedly allows Jacqueline to put herself at risk in order to protect him. Meanwhile, Simon tricks Linnet into thinking that he loves her, and he marries her with the express interest of murdering her so that he will inherit her money. By the end of the novel, it's clear that Simon's selfishness makes him an unsympathetic character. His death is presented in the novel as not only just, but in fact a kinder end than he deserved.

By contrast, Poirot is one of the most selfless characters in the story, and he offers a model for what the novel suggests ideal generosity should look like. Poirot states on a number of occasions that his purpose in talking to various characters or in solving the murder is to benefit humanity. Poirot then backs up this claim in a variety of ways. He never accepts a commission from Linnet, and neither is he professionally employed as a detective. His motivation in the case, both before and after Linnet is murdered, are entirely his own. He senses the possibility of Jacqueline's dark path and tries to talk her out of it, and he takes on solving the murder for no reason but to solve it. He discovers both Tim's forgery crimes and Tim's growing love for Rosalie and gives Tim the opportunity to reform. He even finds a way to ease Jacqueline's punishment. Over and over again, Poirot seeks to help others, whether through counsel, the search for the truth, or mercy offered along with justice. Even Poirot, however, is not a complete saint. He is vain and takes great pleasure in being recognized for his cleverness, which slightly undercuts his altruistic motives. In the end, though, Poirot's selfishness is little more than an eccentricity. Rather than being blind to it, as Linnet is, he is well aware of it. Linnet puts on a show of generosity, which covers a selfish core. Poirot enjoys the limelight, but time and again shows a generosity of spirit.

Like virtually all mystery writers, Christie had a keen interest in motivation. Self-interest is frequently the cause of crimes, both in stories and in real life. But self-interest alone is not enough to explain the actions of a character like Hercule Poirot, who is clearly motivated by something else. By looking at how selfishness and generosity intermingle, Christie created villains in her story with realistic motivations—as well as a hero with a realistic motivation for solving the crime.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

As with many Agatha Christie novels, the characters in *Death on the Nile* come from a variety of backgrounds, and many have personalities shaped by their backgrounds. From the careful, reserved Englishman James Fanthorp to the fiery Italian Signor Richetti, each character embodies characteristics (or, in some cases, stereotypes) of their home country. The *Karnak*—the steamer boat that they all take up the **Nile**—becomes both a melting pot, where these characters from around the world temporarily become part of a

shared environment, and a pressure cooker, where the characters' different personalities come into (sometimes violent) conflict. Even before boarding the steamer, many of the characters were well-traveled and cosmopolitan, with some of them being multilingual, suggesting that borders between national identities can be blurred. Christie's multinational cast of characters emphasizes the role that environment plays in shaping people's personality and also shows that people can subvert expectations associated with their nationalities or take on elements of other cultures.

The first chapter of the book emphasizes the international character of the story by showing all the characters in different settings. Some characters, like Linnet and Pennington, are shown in their home environment. Linnet's introduction in her English country village emphasizes how she was shaped by her role in high society—and by English ideas of class. By contrast, Pennington is given a brief scene in a New York City office to emphasize how his job as an international man of business shapes him. Other characters like Tim and Mrs. Allerton, as well as Rosalie and Mrs. Otterbourne, are already abroad when they're introduced. These characters reveal their personality through the ways that they behave while out of their element: Tim's complaint that Majorca is cold reveals him to be spoiled, whereas Mrs. Otterbourne's turban in Jerusalem reveals her to be dramatic. Poirot's own introduction emphasizes his cosmopolitan character: he is a Belgian man eating at a French restaurant in England. His multiculturalism is important because it allows him to find common ground with, and understand, a wide variety of characters.

By contrast, subsequent chapters emphasize the isolation of the characters on the *Karnak*, showing how circumstances can force people together and create new, blended cultures. The settings of the novel are notably limited, as the characters are usually confined to small spaces: the patio of the hotel and the boat on the Nile. The smaller settings of various parts of the boat—the deck rail, the smoking room, and Dr. Bessner's cabin, for instance—and the way they continually reappear emphasize how the characters have been pushed together into a small space where they are forced to interact with one another. The dining saloon in particular is a place where all the characters come together, and much of the most important action in the story takes place there. The room represents how the *Karnak* has created a new, shared culture for its passengers, without fully overriding their old identities.

Even as the novel functions as a kind of melting pot of different nationalities—and celebrates Poirot for being able to navigate these differences—some of the novel's portrayals fall back on stereotypes or even racism. The dancing Nubian boys outside Abu Simbel who appear to be decapitated are one such example. They are presented as an exotic curiosity, echoing racist and colonialist attitudes. Other examples are less explicit but still significant. Christie strongly suggests, for example, that Signor Richetti's crimes can be at least partly attributed to his being a "hot-tempered" Italian, that Jacqueline looks "Latin" when she's violent, and that Louise is considered nefarious because of her "Latin" side.

As with her treatment of class, Christie's treatment of different nationalities is a mixed bag for modern readers. Alongside a curiosity for other cultures, Christie frequently resorts to stereotypes that modern readers may find outdated and offensive. Though the novel may inspire her audience to wonder at all the different kinds of people in the world, it is also a time capsule of racist attitudes that have persisted in some form into the present day.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

THE NILE

The Nile has long been a symbol in literature and culture, going all the way back to the civilizations of ancient Egypt when it was seen as a life-giving force that governed the agricultural seasons. It is somewhat ironic, then, that Christie calls her novel *Death on the Nile*, given the river's famous status as a source of life. Still, the ancient Egyptians were famous for their elaborate death rituals, most notably mummification and the construction of massive monuments to the dead. Some of these monuments feature in *Death on the Nile*, foreshadowing the deaths that will later occur on the steamer boat the *Karnak*. The river itself represents a place where all the main characters come together, much the way that various tributary rivers flow into the Nile. Despite coming from a wide variety of backgrounds, all of the characters are confined to the same steamer, and the Nile symbolizes the way that people of different cultures and classes are brought together and forced to interact.

Furthermore, the river flows inevitably in one direction, which parallels the situations that many of the characters are stuck in and serves as a symbol of impact of a person's choices on the rest of their lives. For example, after Jacqueline makes her decision to go through with her scheme against Linnet, there is no turning back for her—she must continue on that path until she ultimately escapes or faces the consequences of her actions.

PEARLS

Linnet's pearl necklace is, on the most basic level, a signal that her character is extremely wealthy. She is seen wearing them the night she is murdered, and they are missing when her body is discovered, opening up the possibility

that her killing was a robbery. Like Linnet herself, the pearls are dazzling, even as they inspire resentment from some of the other characters. The pearls embodied Linnet's luck in life, but they also made her a target. It's no accident that Jacqueline's pistol also has pearl inlaid in its handle—through this physical echo of Linnet's pearls, Jacqueline's pistol highlights both the beauty and dangers of such wealth. It's also worth noting that even though it turns out that Linnet was not specifically killed for her pearls, she was killed for what they symbolize—Simon was hoping to inherit her wealth, which the pearls represent.

Later in the novel, the pearls play a different but related role. After discovering that Tim has been working as jewelry forger, and has in fact forged Linnet's pearls, Poirot gives Tim the opportunity to return the stolen pearls and change his life rather than face charges. Once again, the pearls are portrayed as both desirable and dangerous, but they also here represent the purity or innocence that is a typical symbolic meaning assigned to pearls. By giving up on the seductive promise of wealth offered by the pearls. Tim rediscovers his innocence and the chance at love with Rosalie.

In *Death on the Nile*, the pearls represent wealth and beauty, the seductive dangers of pursuing such things, and ultimately the promise inherent in giving up that pursuit.

THE LETTER "J"

When Simon murders Linnet, he improvises at the crime scene by using Linnet's finger to write the letter J in her blood. In this case, Simon seems to have been trying to confuse the investigation, throwing suspicion toward his accomplice Jacqueline because he knew she had a perfect alibi. But the action also references a practice found in some old detective stories (and even current ones), where a dying victim leaves a sign that points to their killer. This echo is interesting because it suggests that the characters in the story are themselves familiar with the tropes of detective fiction. Simon, then, is trying to use the tropes of detective fiction to his own advantage. Unfortunately for him, however, Poirot is equally familiar with the conventions of the genre and considerably smarter—he realizes quickly that the J is a detective novel trope and, therefore, that it is a deliberately planted false clue (although he does not immediately know who the killer is). By specifically referencing a cliché of detective fiction, the J becomes a symbol of Christie's own proclivity to play with her audience's expectations, to twist or even upend certain expectations while at the same time fulfilling others.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the William Morrow edition of *Death on the Nile* published in 2011.

Chapter One Quotes

"Ridgeway!"

"That's her!" said Mr. Burnaby, the landlord of the Three Crowns.

He nudged his companion.

The two men stared with round bucolic eyes and slightly open mouths.
A big scarlet Rolls-Royce had just stopped in front of the local post office.

Related Characters: Mr. Burnaby (speaker), Linnet Doyle

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 1

Explanation and Analysis

The opening lines of the story establish Linnet as a wealthy woman who causes a stir wherever she goes. The Rolls-Royce is one of many status symbols that marks her as a member of England's upper class. The expensive car particularly impresses the two men with "round bucolic eyes" who are watching her—Linnet's penchant for luxury makes her stand out in the area. The fact that Linnet is so open about her wealth suggests that she's prideful and perhaps careless—or even so self-absorbed that she doesn't notice the effect she has on other people. Later passages will reveal that Linnet is indeed a very selfish character, though the book also provides glimpses into her humanity. Her character's complexity suggests that even the flashiest and most self-interested people aren't entirely selfish—most people have both selfish and selfless motivations.

Mr. Burnaby is not a major character in the book, but he plays an important role at the very beginning and the very end by commenting on Linnet and showing how she was viewed in the country village where she lived. Though there won't be any deaths in the first half of the novel, the first half heavily foreshadows that whatever does happen will involve Linnet. Mr. Burnaby's reaction seems to be one of admiration, but it could also be read as one of jealousy. Jealousy, greed, and desire for a lifestyle like Linnet's will ultimately be the motivation for the murders on the Nile (Linnet being one of the victims).

"She cares too much, that little one," he said to himself. It is not safe. No, it is not safe."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot (speaker), Jacqueline De Bellefort, Simon Doyle

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis

Poirot says this to himself after he spots Jacqueline and Simon together in a French restaurant in London; it will be brought up again at various points throughout the book. From the very first time that he sees Jacqueline, Poirot identifies a vital personality trait of hers: she cares too much. This is still early in the story, long before anything ominous has happened—but being the brilliant observer of human nature that he is, Poirot can already sense that Jacqueline's extreme caring will lead to problems.

Ultimately, Jacqueline ends up plotting with Simon to commit a murder. As she tells it, she only gets involved because Simon has already made up his mind, and she just wants to make sure he does it the right way. In essence, her obsessive love for Simon is so overwhelming that she'll even help him get away with murder (and commit murder on his behalf). Poirot does not doubt this explanation, and it calls back to what he says here—that Jacqueline's love for Simon "is not safe." With this, the book explores how love isn't always a healthy or benevolent force—it can be twisted to make otherwise good people do evil things.

Chapter Two Quotes

❝ Hercule Poirot made vague gestures to rid himself of this human cluster of flies. Rosalie stalked through them like a sleepwalker. "It's best to pretend to be deaf and blind," she remarked.

The infantile riff-raff ran alongside murmuring plaintively:

"Bakshish? Bakshish? Hip hip hurrah-very good, very nice. . . ."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot, Rosalie Otterbourne (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 39

Explanation and Analysis

As Poirot and Rosalie are walking near their hotel, they make disparaging comments about the Egyptians they pass by. Though the book satirizes the racism and classism of the novel's wealthy European and American characters, it also includes several passages (like this one) that modern readers might find racist and classist.

The narrator's descriptions of the Egyptians as a "human cluster of flies" and an "infantile riff-raff" echo racist tropes. Comparing humans to animals or infantilizing them is a common tactic that racists use to justify oppressive measures. (During the Holocaust, for instance, the Nazi Party compared Jewish people and other marginalized groups to vermin in order to dehumanize them.) This derogatory portrayal of the Egyptians is particularly noticeable since it is one of very few times that Africans are mentioned in the novel despite much of it taking place in Egypt (though the African characters are almost never given names or active roles in the plot). The book places much greater emphasis on exploring the lives of its European and American characters, echoing colonialist attitudes that were prevalent at the time (the 1930s) and that persist in some form in the present day.

Chapter Three Quotes

❝ Poirot signalled to a passing waiter.

"A liqueur, Madame? A chartreuse? A creme de menthe?" Mrs. Otterbourne shook her head vigorously.

"No, no. I am practically a teetotaller. You may have noticed I never drink anything but water-or perhaps lemonade. I cannot bear the taste of spirits."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot (speaker), Rosalie Otterbourne, Mrs. Salome Otterbourne

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

This quote occurs when Hercule Poirot is talking with Mrs. Otterbourne and her daughter Rosalie. Mrs. Otterbourne is introduced as a rather flamboyant romance writer who loves drama but who doesn't seem to have any particular relevance to the impending murders. Like many characters, however, she is lying to Poirot about something from practically the moment he meets her. When she says she's "practically a teetotaler," this is, in fact, a complete lie: Rosalie later confesses to Poirot that Mrs. Otterbourne is an alcoholic.

Mrs. Otterbourne's character is, in part, an opportunity for Agatha Christie to poke fun at a real-life literary rival, Elinor Glyn, whom Mrs. Otterbourne resembles in many ways. But Mrs. Otterbourne's drunkenness also ends up playing a key

role in the plot: first, it provides an explanation for why Rosalie seems so inexplicably moody at certain times and happy at others. Second, because Mrs. Otterbourne secretly and desperately wants alcohol once on the boat, she arranges for a crewmember to sneak her some, and this meeting puts her in position to witness a crucial event in the case—something so crucial that it gets her killed before she can reveal it.

Chapter Four Quotes

"No, Madame." His tone was firm. "I will not accept a commission from you. I will do what I can in the interests of humanity."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot (speaker), Linnet Doyle, Jacqueline De Bellefort, Colonel Race

Related Themes:

Page Number: 62-63

Explanation and Analysis

When Linnet asks Poirot to investigate the issue of Jacqueline stalking her, he refuses a commission. This is significant because Linnet is used to being able to pay people to do whatever she wants, but Poirot is one of the few characters in the book who is too principled to accept payment. He is a detective who follows the truth using his own peculiar methods—a commission, particularly from someone as influential as Linnet, would undoubtedly influence him to find a solution to her liking. Poirot's insistence that he is working for the genuine interests of humanity is heartfelt, and throughout the novel (as well as in several other Agatha Christie novels that feature Poirot), he acts as a moral compass. He promotes a rigorous concept of justice, though not always one that aligns perfectly with what a police officer would. His eventual sidekick, Colonel Race, has more traditional ideas about justice but is also sometimes willing to indulge Poirot's whims—their partnership suggests that there isn't necessarily one right way to seek justice.

Chapter Five Quotes

"It is deeper than that. Do not open your heart to evil."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot (speaker), Jacqueline De Bellefort, Linnet Doyle, Simon Doyle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 69

Explanation and Analysis

Poirot says this to Jacqueline, whom he speaks to almost immediately after speaking with Linnet. With this quote, Poirot proves what he said earlier to Linnet: he is not acting to take any particular side, he is just acting in the general interest of humanity.

Poirot's notions of justice are both traditional and modern. His warning that Jacqueline not open her heart to evil has an old-fashioned, even biblical ring to it. Still, in the context of the larger conversation, it is clear that Poirot isn't scolding Jacqueline—he is merely offering some advice based on his past experience. He treats Jacqueline as an equal rather than a potential criminal, even though he suspects or perhaps even knows at this point that she is on the path to doing something horrible.

On another note, by "do not open your heart to evil," Poirot means that Jacqueline should not let her love for and devotion to Simon motivate her to do evil things. His warning to Jacqueline further suggests that romantic love can sometimes turn obsessive and destructive, foreshadowing a violent end to the love triangle between Jacqueline, Simon, and Linnet.

Chapter Six Quotes

"My dear Monsieur Poirot—how can I put it? It's like the moon when the sun comes out. You don't know it's there anymore. When once I'd met Linnet—Jackie didn't exist."

Related Characters: Simon Doyle (speaker), Linnet Doyle, Hercule Poirot, Jacqueline De Bellefort

Related Themes:

Page Number: 73

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Simon reiterates to Poirot many of the complaints that Linnet previously made to him about Jacqueline. On the one hand, the metaphor of the moon and the sun suggests that greed can overshadow genuine love and cause people to act selfishly and forgo genuine love, just as the opportunity to marry the wealthy and glamorous Linnet (the sun) has seemingly caused Simon to forget about Jackie (the moon).

But this quote also catches Poirot's attention because it

bears a startling similarity to a phrase that Jacqueline herself just used recently. The fact that Jacqueline and Simon use the same metaphor (the moon and the sun) is one of the earliest and most significant clues that the two of them are, in fact, still collaborating and are secret lovers instead of ex-lovers. Simon is consistently depicted as not particularly clever, so it's in character for him to slip up and accidentally say something that he heard from Jacqueline.

Chapter Seven Quotes

❝ "Monsieur Poirot, I'm afraid—I'm afraid of everything. I've never felt like this before. All these wild rocks and the awful grimness and starkness. Where are we going? What's going to happen? I'm afraid, I tell you. Everyone hates me. I've never felt like that before. I've always been nice to people—I've done things for them—and they hate me—lots of people hate me. Except for Simon, I'm surrounded by enemies . . . It's terrible to feel—that there are people who hate you. . . ."

Related Characters: Linnet Doyle (speaker), Hercule Poirot, Simon Doyle , Jacqueline De Bellefort

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 93

Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes from a conversation Linnet has with Poirot in the dining saloon of the *Karnak*, after she discovers that Jacqueline has found a way to follow her onto the Nile steamer—even after all her efforts to through Jacqueline off the trail. This quote highlights the central flaw of Linnet's character: that all she wants is for everyone to like her, but that she's too selfish to act in a way that will endear her to people. Thought Linnet is frequently depicted unfavorably, this monologue helps to humanize her—not quite excusing her actions, but at least providing context in order to elicit more sympathy for them. One darkly humorous part about the quote is that Linnet laments that Simon is the only one around her she can trust, when in fact, Simon is the one who's going to murder her.

On another note, Linnet's description of the "grimness and starkness" of the landscape helps set the somber, foreboding mood of the story, foreshadowing the "grim" betrayals and murders to come. In particular, her mention of "all these wild rocks" is an important image that foreshadows impending danger—as well as more literally foreshadowing a later moment when Linnet is nearly crushed by a boulder.

Chapter Ten Quotes

❝ Simon's eyes were open. They too held contentment. What a fool he'd been to be rattled that first night . . . There was nothing to be rattled about. . . Everything was all right . . . After all, one could trust Jackie—

There was a shout-people running towards him waving their arms-shouting. . . .

Simon stared stupidly for a moment. Then he sprang to his feet and dragged Linnet with him.

Not a minute too soon. A big boulder hurtling down the cliff crashed past them. If Linnet had remained where she was she would have been crushed to atoms.

Related Characters: Simon Doyle , Linnet Doyle, Jacqueline De Bellefort

Related Themes:

Page Number: 120

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Linnet is nearly crushed by a falling boulder. The depiction of the moment is interesting because most of it is from Simon's point of view. Unbeknownst to the reader, Simon and Jacqueline are already plotting the murder of Linnet. But, of course, the book doesn't simply reveal that thought in the narration—it would spoil the whole novel. Instead, Simon's thoughts are ambiguous, which preserves the mystery of who will be the victim of the titular "death on the Nile" and whether Simon will be involved. His decision to save Linnet rather than let her be crushed also contributes to the ambiguity. Given that Simon and Jacqueline do eventually murder Linnet, though, the reason he saves her here is probably so that he can later kill Linnet in a way Jacqueline would approve of—not because he actually cares about Linnet's safety.

Simon is most likely "rattled" about his plot to murder Linnet, but without the context of how the story ends, it is equally possible to read his anxiety as being related to Jacqueline's sudden appearance on the *Karnak*. The one hint the novel drops here is that Simon keeps referring to Jacqueline as "Jackie," suggesting that perhaps the two of them are still on familiar terms.

Chapter Eleven Quotes

"A telegram for me."

She snatched it off the board and tore it open.

"Why—I don't understand—potatoes, beetroots—what does it mean, Simon?"

Simon was just coming to look over her shoulder when a furious voice said: "Excuse me, that telegram is for me," and Signor Richetti snatched it rudely from her hand, fixing her with a furious glare as he did so.

Related Characters: Linnet Doyle, Signor Richetti (speaker), Simon Doyle , Mrs. Salome Otterbourne

Related Themes:

Page Number: 127

Explanation and Analysis

This exchange comes after Linnet accidentally opens a telegram, thinking it says Ridgeway (her maiden name), when in fact it says Richetti. This conflict between Linett and Richetti may seem out of place and added in solely for comic relief, but in fact, it will play a major role in one of the novel's subplots. Richetti is portrayed as a suspicious character on several occasions, and this seemingly nonsensical telegram seems to be some sort of code. As it turns out, that's exactly what it is.

Though Christie draws out the reveal, interrupting it with the climactic death of Mrs. Otterbourne, ultimately it comes out that Signor Richetti is, in fact, a murderous political agitator who is traveling under a fake name. This subplot allows Christie to add an element of international intrigue to the story, as well as opening up another potential avenue related to the murder (though in the end, the story of Richetti the agitator ends up having only a tenuous connection with the murder of Linnet).

Chapter Twelve Quotes

Jacqueline hummed a little tune to herself. When the drink came, she picked it up, said: "Well, here's to crime," drank it off and ordered another.

Related Characters: Jacqueline De Bellefort (speaker), Simon Doyle , Linnet Doyle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 137

Explanation and Analysis

Immediately before Jacqueline (apparently) shoots Simon in the leg, she gives a toast to crime. The quote seems to mean one thing in its original context, but later events in the story reveal that it means something else entirely. Agatha Christie often writes sentences like this that could serve multiple purposes, meaning one thing on a first read-through but revealing different layers on subsequent passes through the novel.

At this point, it seems like Jacqueline is drinking in order to work up the courage to confront Simon and even to shoot him. In fact, however, the crime Jacqueline has on her mind is a very different one—the murder of Linnet. Jacqueline claims during her confession at the end of the book that she was still friends with Linnet when she killed her, so it is likely not an easy decision for her to get involved with Simon's plot to murder Linnet (hence her heavy drinking).

Her mixed feelings are a testament to how love can sometimes bring out the worst in people—in Jacqueline's case, her devotion to Simon is so powerfully obsessive that she's willing to facilitate her friend's murder in order to please him. It's also an example of how selfishness isn't always straightforward—Jacqueline's decision to go through with the plot to kill Linnet characterizes her as fundamentally self-interested, but her heavy drinking and efforts to reassure herself here imply that she is also concerned for her friend and guilty about her involvement in the impending murder.

Chapter Thirteen Quotes

Hercule Poirot was just wiping the lather from his freshly shaved face when there was a quick tap on the door, and hard on top of it Colonel Race entered unceremoniously. He closed the door behind him.

He said: "Your instinct was quite correct. It's happened."

Poirot straightened up and asked sharply: "What has happened?"

"Linnet Doyle's dead—shot through the head last night."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot, Colonel Race (speaker), Linnet Doyle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 148

Explanation and Analysis

This quote leads off Chapter Thirteen and represents a

major turning point in the novel: a murder has finally been committed. Though many elements of *Death on the Nile* are fairly conventional as far as mysteries go, one way in which it deviates from a typical whodunnit is by having the main murder occur at such a late point in the book (about halfway through). As is usually the case in Agatha Christie novels, Poirot's intuition was correct—he can always sense trouble when it's on the way. It's also significant that Race has to be the one to report the news to Poirot—as will later be revealed, Poirot was out of commission when the murder happened because someone drugged his wine. This is a clever technique to help put the reader in the same shoes as Poirot—he has to fill in the missing pieces of what happened that night because he wasn't there, just as the reader does.

Chapter Fourteen Quotes

Hercule Poirot nodded his head.

"You did not look. But I, I have the eyes which notice, and there were no pearls on the table beside the bed this morning."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot (speaker), Linnet Doyle, Tim Allerton, Miss Marie Van Schuyler

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 174

Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes from a pivotal scene at the end of Chapter Fourteen when the characters realize that Linnet's extremely valuable pearls are missing—suggesting that perhaps robbery was a motive for her murder. Poirot demonstrates his incredible powers of observation by revealing that he looked for the pearls before anybody even asked to check about them.

The pearls are an important symbol in the novel because they represent Linnet's wealth, glamor, and sophistication—as well as the danger that these qualities bring. The pearls, after all, inspired admiration in the other passengers, but they also made Linnet the target of a robbery. Although it turns out that Tim's theft of the pearls (and Miss Van Schuyler's theft of the fake pearls) has nothing to do with Linnet's murder, the pearls arguably did play a role in Simon's decision to kill Linnet (since they represent her wealth, which he was trying to get his hands on).

Chapter Eighteen Quotes

Poirot picked up the handkerchief and examined it.

"A man's handkerchief-but not a gentleman's handkerchief. *Ce cher* Woolworth, I imagine. Threepence at most."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot (speaker), Simon Doyle , Jacqueline De Bellefort, Colonel Race, Fleetwood, Linnet Doyle, Miss Marie Van Schuyler

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 209

Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes after Poirot discovers one of the more unusual clues in the story: a handkerchief stained pink that was wrapped in Miss Van Schuyler's velvet stole with Jacqueline's pistol. All of these items were retrieved from the Nile after being thrown overboard. Poirot, being a relatively well-to-do man, is immediately able to identify the handkerchief as one belonging to a comparatively less wealthy man. Though he and Race immediately think of Fleetwood, in fact, the handkerchief belongs to Simon and was the very same one that he used to fake his leg injury.

The handkerchief thus highlights how class (visible markers of class, in particular) influences the way characters perceive one another and what's going on around them, as well as the decisions characters make. Though Simon isn't necessarily a poor man, Jacqueline reveals near the end of the novel that he had fallen on hard times and lost his office job. Simon may have tried to keep up appearances, like when he went out to dinner with Jacqueline at Chez Ma Tante, but he wasn't able to hide the fact that he wasn't a true member of the upper class—at least not until he had the opportunity to marry Linnet. The handkerchief shows how, even after Simon supposedly ascended to a higher class in British society, he was unable to fully leave his roots behind, and many other characters in the novel also find themselves trapped by the expectations associated with their class.

Chapter Nineteen Quotes

"People think I'm awful. Stuck-up and cross and bad-tempered. I can't help it. I've forgotten how to be-to be nice."

"That is what I said to you; you have carried your burden by yourself too long."

Related Characters: Rosalie Otterbourne, Hercule Poirot

(speaker), Jacqueline De Bellefort, Simon Doyle , Signor Richetti, Mrs. Salome Otterbourne

Related Themes:

Page Number: 217

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Poirot comforts Rosalie after she confesses to him that her mother, Mrs. Otterbourne, is an alcoholic. Rosalie's attempts to cut her mother off have led her mother to resent her, which explains why Rosalie is always so sulky in public.

Like many characters in the story, Rosalie suffers under the burden of a secret she must keep. Some of the characters in the story—like Jacqueline, Simon, and Richetti—are keeping grave, murderous secrets, all of which clearly cause them a lot of anxiety. But the subplot with Rosalie and her mother shows that even relatively mundane secrets can take a toll on people. Rosalie's whole personality in the first half of the book is defined by her sulkiness—she seems like an unpleasant character until the truth behind this is revealed. By opening up about her secret here, Rosalie becomes a more sympathetic character and is able to connect with others. Mystery novels are almost always about the pursuit of truth, and in *Death on the Nile*, Agatha Christie uses plotlines like this one to show the consequences of both secrecy and honesty.

Chapter Twenty-Two Quotes

❝ Finally he turned his attention to the washstand. There were various creams, powders, face lotions. But the only thing that seemed to interest Poirot were two little bottles labelled Nailex. He picked them up at last and brought them to the dressing table. One, which bore the inscription Nailex Rose, was empty but for a drop or two of dark red fluid at the bottom. The other, the same size, but labelled Nailex Cardinal, was nearly full. Poirot uncorked first the empty, then the full one, and sniffed them both delicately.

Related Characters: Colonel Race (speaker), Hercule Poirot, Simon Doyle , Linnet Doyle, Miss Bowers

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 237

Explanation and Analysis

After Miss Bowers returns the stolen pearls and Poirot realizes they're fake, he and Race decide to examine Linnet's cabin for more information and find two bottles of Nailex nail polish. These may not seem like a particularly exciting clue, but they are arguably one of the clearest hints that the novel gives about the identity of the murderer.

The crucial clue is that the bottle with "Rose" on the front actually has a "dark red" fluid at the bottom—this would suggest that a rose-colored liquid had been drained from the bottle and a different, darker fluid had been kept in there instead. Dark red fluid might convincingly be used to fake blood, and in fact, that's exactly what it was used for. Simon applied the liquid to his handkerchief so that he would appear to have a serious leg wound when Jacqueline shot at him (when in fact, she purposely missed). There isn't much symbolic significance to the Nailex bottle—it's mostly just a clever plot device—although, like many clues in a mystery, it helps demonstrate that things are not always what they seem to be.

Chapter Twenty-Three Quotes

❝ The body of the dead woman, who in life had been Louise Bourget, lay on the floor of her cabin. The two men bent over it.

Race straightened himself first.

"Been dead close on an hour, I should say. We'll get Bessner on to it. Stabbed to the heart. Death pretty well instantaneous, I should imagine. She doesn't look pretty, does she?"

"No."

Poirot shook his head with a slight shudder.

The dark feline face was convulsed, as though with surprise and fury, the lips drawn back from the teeth.

Poirot bent again gently and picked up the right hand. Something just showed within the fingers. He detached it and held it out to Race, a little sliver of flimsy paper coloured a pale mauvish pink.

"You see what it is?"

"Money," said Race.

"The corner of a thousand-franc note, I fancy."

Related Characters: Colonel Race, Hercule Poirot (speaker), Louise Bourget, Dr. Bessner, Linnet Doyle, Simon Doyle , Jacqueline De Bellefort, Rosalie Otterbourne, Tim Allerton, Mrs. Salome Otterbourne

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 246

Explanation and Analysis

Chapter Twenty-Three begins with an examination of Louise's body—she was found dead under her bed at the end of the previous chapter. Though her behavior prior to this was suspicious, the death of Louise is still shocking because until this moment, there was no indication that she had any direct connection to the murder of Linnet.

Like many characters in the book, Louise is undone by greed—she could've done the right thing and reported all the information she knew to Poirot, but instead, she tried to blackmail Simon and Jacqueline, and it ended up being the death of her. Though the pattern of characters being punished for their flaws is consistent throughout the novel, it does seem that Louise is punished disproportionately to the other characters. Rosalie, for example, also withholds vital information from Poirot, Tim has stolen pearls worth more than the blackmail money Louise has, and Simon kills Linnet in an attempt to gain her fortune. But to varying extents, all of them are treated more sympathetically than Louise. It's possible to read this difference as classist—because Louise herself was lower-class, her motives are portrayed as less noble and more selfish than those of other characters.

Chapter Twenty-Four Quotes

❝ Mrs. Otterbourne continued: "The arrangement was that I should go round to the stern on the deck below this, and there I should find the man waiting for me. As I went along the deck a cabin door opened and somebody looked out. It was this girl-Louise Bourget, or whatever her name is. She seemed to be expecting someone. When she saw it was me, she looked disappointed and went abruptly inside again. I didn't think anything of it, of course. I went along just as I had said I would and got the-the stuff from the man. I paid him and-er-just had a word with him. Then I started back. Just as I came around the corner I saw someone knock on the maid's door and go into the cabin."

Race said, "And that person was—?"

Bang!

The noise of the explosion filled the cabin. There was an acrid sour smell of smoke. Mrs. Otterbourne turned slowly sideways, as though in supreme inquiry, then her body slumped forward and she fell to the ground with a crash. From just behind her ear the blood flowed from a round neat hole.

Related Characters: Colonel Race, Mrs. Salome

Otterbourne (speaker), Louise Bourget, Simon Doyle , Jacqueline De Bellefort, Dr. Bessner, Hercule Poirot

Related Themes:

Page Number: 263

Explanation and Analysis

This passage comes at a climactic moment when Mrs. Otterbourne rushes to Dr. Bessner's cabin to reveal to Race and Poirot that she has vital information about the case. If true, this would be surprising, given that her interview in the smoking room earlier was by far the least helpful out of all of them. Mrs. Otterbourne is so dramatic and so slow in getting the information out, however, that she leaves enough time for Simon to signal Jacqueline and for Jacqueline to stealthily shoot Mrs. Otterbourne dead.

Fitting for her character, the death of Mrs. Otterbourne is dramatic and a little ridiculous—when her head rolls sideways, it looks as if she's trying to solve a difficult problem rather than dying. Though not exactly a noble death, it does contrast with the horrific demise of Louise, who seemed to be punished more harshly than other characters, despite those other characters having equally selfish and greedy motives. In this way, the different ways characters die in the novel could be read as classist, since Louise (who's lower-class) dies in a grislier way than Linnet and Mrs. Osbourne (who are upper-class).

Chapter Twenty-Six Quotes

❝ "Perhaps not, but the custom, it still remains. The Old School Tie is the Old School Tie, and there are certain things (I know this from experience) that the Old School Tie does not do! One of those things, Monsieur Fanthorp, is to butt into a private conversation unasked when one does not know the people who are conducting it."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot (speaker), James Fanthorp, Linnet Doyle, Andrew Pennington, Jacqueline De Bellefort, Simon Doyle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 280

Explanation and Analysis

Hercule Poirot says this to Fanthorp while questioning him about why he intervened between Linnet and Pennington when Pennington was trying to get Linnet to sign some

documents. This quote speaks to how people's personalities are shaped by their countries of origin and their circumstances. Fanthorp is a traditional, old-fashioned Englishman, and that means he keeps to himself (a trait that was displayed earlier in the dining saloon when he kept quietly reading to himself while the argument between Jacqueline and Simon was brewing).

Poirot's observations also exemplify his psychology-based methods of deduction. The evidence that Poirot approaches Fanthorp with in this quote is not something that would be admissible in any court room; still, it has a certain logic to it. Most importantly, Poirot is able to use his logic to convince Fanthorp to say more (giving Poirot ammunition for his upcoming interview with Pennington). Once again, the novel shows how it's possible to pursue the truth outside of a traditional justice system.

"That was an accident. I swear it was an accident!" The man leant forward, his face working, his eyes terrified. "I stumbled and fell against it. I swear it was an accident. . . ."

The two men said nothing.

Pennington suddenly pulled himself together. He was still a wreck of a man, but his fighting spirit had returned in a certain measure. He moved towards the door.

"You can't pin that on me, gentlemen. It was an accident. And it wasn't I who shot her. D'you hear? You can't pin that on me either—and you never will."

He went out.

Related Characters: Andrew Pennington (speaker), Hercule Poirot, Colonel Race, Linnet Doyle, Simon Doyle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 291

Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes after Poirot and Race's interview with Pennington, where Poirot puts increasing amounts of pressure on Pennington until he finally gets him to (indirectly) admit to the attempted murder of Linnet by trying to push a boulder onto her. Pennington has been a crafty and a shady character from the very beginning—several clues seemed to suggest that he might have even been involved with the actual murder of Linnet. Ultimately, however, he's no match for Poirot.

Like Simon, and like so many other characters in the novel, Pennington brought about his own ruin through greed—as Linnet's trustee, he was willing to kill Linnet if it meant gaining access to her fortune. He claims that pushing the boulder was an accident, but his nervous demeanor ("he was still a wreck of a man") strongly suggests that he's lying. Pennington is just one of several characters who are willing to commit crimes (even murder) for money, which speaks to how powerfully motivating wealth, greed, and jealousy can be. When money is involved, people are willing to do things they might not normally do.

Chapter Twenty-Seven Quotes

"Well, sir, where do we go from here? I admit taking the pearls from Linnet's cabin and you'll find them just where you say they are. I'm guilty all right. But as far as Miss Southwood is concerned, I'm not admitting anything. You've no evidence whatever against her. How I got hold of the fake necklace is my own business."

Poirot murmured: "A very correct attitude."

Related Characters: Tim Allerton, Hercule Poirot (speaker), Linnet Doyle, Colonel Race, Joanna Southwood

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 298

Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes after Poirot has confronted Tim about stealing Linnet's pearls, laying out in great detail how the crime could've been performed as well as showing how, to an outside observer, it might look as if Tim was involved in Linnet's murder. Tim needs no more convincing—he takes Poirot's offer of a second chance and agrees to return the pearls (though he does refuse to give Race any incriminating information about his cousin Joanna's involvement in the theft).

Through Tim Allerton's character, the novel is able to showcase Poirot's sense of justice by presenting the famous detective with an edge case. Tim is clearly guilty of something, but there are signs that he is not as greedy as some of the other characters around him. Through his interview with Tim, Poirot reveals that his philosophy of acting on behalf of the common good doesn't just mean prosecuting criminals—it also means extending forgiveness to those who deserve it. Perhaps the most shocking part of the whole exchange is when Poirot commends Tim for not snitching on his cousin Joanna. It is likely that Poirot doesn't

approve of Joanna's thievery (he mentions following it in the news himself, presumably with the intention of catching her), but it seems that even he can appreciate honor among thieves. Once again, Christie demonstrates a conception of justice that's more flexible than the strict letter of the law.

Chapter Twenty-Nine Quotes

❝ Poirot was silent. But it was not a modest silence. His eyes seemed to be saying: "You are wrong. They didn't allow for Hercule Poirot."

Aloud he said, "And now, Doctor we will go and have a word with your patient."

Related Characters: Hercule Poirot (speaker), Cornelia Robson, Dr. Bessner, Simon Doyle , Jacqueline De Bellefort

Related Themes:

Page Number: 321

Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes after Poirot has finally explained all the details of how Simon and Jacqueline carried out Linnet's murder, and Cornelia exclaims that the killers must've thought of everything. Though Poirot does not boast aloud that Simon and Jacqueline didn't think of him, he nevertheless thinks it—and perhaps the other characters in the room can guess what he's thinking.

The novel generally depicts Poirot as a just—even saintly—man, but in order to make him a more compelling protagonist, Agatha Christie gives him little flaws, like his ego. In addition to humanizing Poirot, this flaw is also convenient, because it gives Poirot a motive to get involved in crimes he witnesses. Though Poirot truly is working in the general interest of humanity, he's also working in his own interest—to feel a sense of accomplishment at the end of a case. His dismay at setbacks in a case or unforeseen twists is particularly acute because he has such a strong personal connection to his work, and this gives audiences a hero to root for.

Chapter Thirty Quotes

❝ "Yes," she said "it's rather horrible isn't it? I can't believe that I—did that! I know now what you meant by opening your heart to evil . . . You know pretty well how it happened. Louise made it clear to Simon that she knew. Simon got you to bring me to him. As soon as we were alone together he told me what had happened. He told me what I'd got to do. I wasn't even horrified. I was so afraid—so deadly afraid . . . That's what murder does to you. Simon and I were safe—quite safe—except for this miserable blackmailing French girl. I took her all the money we could get hold of. I pretended to grovel. And then, when she was counting the money, I—did it! It was quite easy. That's what's so horribly, horribly frightening about it . . . It's so terribly easy. . . ."

Related Characters: Jacqueline De Bellefort (speaker), Hercule Poirot, Linnet Doyle, Louise Bourget, Simon Doyle , Mrs. Allerton

Related Themes:

Page Number: 327

Explanation and Analysis

This scene comes in the middle of Jacqueline's confession to Poirot (it's implied that Simon, too, confessed just before this). Jacqueline is describing what it was like to kill Louise, Linnet's maid. Louise is the first person Jacqueline ever had to murder (since Simon did the dirty work with Linnet), but despite all of her anxiety before Linnet's murder, Jacqueline had no qualms at all about killing Louise. In theory, this should make Jacqueline seem cold-blooded and mentally unstable, but in her conversation with Poirot, she is amiable and even seems to be in something like good spirits.

As a mystery writer, Agatha Christie is deeply interested in motives. During an earlier conversation with Mrs. Allerton, Poirot suggested that he believed just about anyone could be convinced to commit murder for the right reason. In Jacqueline's case, that motive was love. It was obvious that she cared too much about Simon from the moment Poirot spotted the couple in Chez Ma Tante—her love for Simon is so obsessive and all-consuming that it led her to commit murder on his behalf.

Though it's easy to be cynical about Jacqueline's confession (she might be trying to avoid trouble, or at the very least protect her legacy), Poirot takes her confession at face value. He believes she's telling the truth when she says she'd have been happy living with Simon in poverty, but apparently that was not enough for Simon. Jacqueline's character thus shows how even the best of intentions can be twisted and how once-good people can be convinced to

do terrible things. This idea is particularly prescient given that the novel was published only a few years before the outbreak of World War II, during which ordinary people were caught up in fascist, genocidal regimes.

Chapter Thirty-One Quotes

Mrs. Allerton shivered. "Love can be a very frightening thing."

"That is why most great love stories are tragedies."

Mrs. Allerton's eyes rested upon Tim and Rosalie, standing side by side in the sunlight, and she said suddenly and passionately: "But thank God, there is happiness in the world."

Related Characters: Mrs. Allerton, Hercule Poirot (speaker), Simon Doyle , Jacqueline De Bellefort, Tim Allerton, Rosalie Otterbourne

Related Themes:

Page Number: 333

Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes immediately after perhaps the most shocking scene in the novel: when Jacqueline reveals that she's been concealing a second pistol in her shoe and uses it to kill Simon, then herself. The surrounding crowd is shocked, but Mrs. Allerton intuits that Poirot is less shocked than the others—he knew about Jacqueline's second pistol but let her keep it anyway, perhaps out of respect for her after their final conversation. In this way, Poirot again demonstrates an unconventional sense of justice, as he seemingly allows a murder-suicide to happen, perhaps because he knows that some version of this outcome is inevitable—Jacqueline and Simon would, after all, face the death penalty for their crimes.

Mrs. Allerton's claim that love can be frightening and Poirot's agreement that most great love stories are tragedies both resonate through the whole novel. Egypt has long been a setting for tragic love stories, with one of the most famous being Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Agatha Christie wanted to make her own addition to that tragic canon—just as the characters in Greek or Shakespearean plays are undone by their tragic flaws, so too were Simon and Jacqueline. Simon's insatiable greed got him into a situation way over his head, while Jacqueline's overpowering love for Simon overrode her reason and morality, turning her into a murderer.

Still, Christie's writing is not nearly as bleak as some of the tragedies that seem to have inspired her. To balance out the doomed love of Simon and Jacqueline, there is the new love of Rosalie and Tim, both characters who had to overcome difficulties over the course of the novel and who were ultimately rewarded for it. With this, the novel emphasizes that even in the bleakest moments, there are signs of hope.

Lastly the body of Linnet Doyle was brought ashore, and all over the world wires began to hum, telling the public that Linnet Doyle, who had been Linnet Ridgeway, the famous, the beautiful, the wealthy Linnet Doyle was dead.

Sir George Wode read about it in his London club, and Sterndale Rockford in New York, and Joanna Southwood in Switzerland, and it was discussed in the bar of the Three Crowns in Malton-under-Wode.

And Mr. Burnaby said acutely: "Well, it doesn't seem to have done her much good, poor lass."

But after a while they stopped talking about her and discussed instead who was going to win the Grand National. For, as Mr. Ferguson was saying at that minute in Luxor, it is not the past that matters but the future.

Related Characters: Mr. Burnaby (speaker), Linnet Doyle, Sir George Wode, Sterndale Rockford, Joanna Southwood , Mr. Ferguson (Lord Dawlish), Simon Doyle , Jacqueline De Bellefort, Andrew Pennington, James Fanthorp, Tim Allerton, Louise Bourget

Related Themes:

Page Number: 333

Explanation and Analysis

These are the final lines of the book, describing the aftermath of Linnet Doyle's death after her body is brought ashore. This might seem like a strange way to end things, given that these lines focus on characters who only played a minor role in the story. But this ending also offers a subtle commentary on Linnet and the people she was surrounded by. In life, Linnet considered herself the center of the universe, and many people envied her wealth and glamor. In death, however, she causes one big stir before the locals at the pub near her old estate go back to discussing an upcoming horse race. She isn't like the monuments in Egypt that last for centuries—she's just another human being.

The fact that the locals in the pub are discussing a horse race is particularly fitting, since the whole novel has been a sort of race or gamble. All sort of characters—including Simon, Jacqueline, Pennington, and Fanthorp—had some

sort of stake in claiming a part of Linnet's fortune as they jockey with each other to take a dominant position. Other characters, like Tim and Louise, were pulled into the situation through their own get-rich-quick schemes. *Death on the Nile* is a novel about the consequences of greed, and there's perhaps no better emblem of that than horse-racing (which has long been an avenue for gamblers to lose their fortunes in the hopes of a big win).

The very final lines of the novel are attributed to Ferguson (a hypocritical character whose whole identity is a flimsy lie), which suggests that the narration is tongue-in-cheek. Rather than taking the last line as literal advice, it makes more sense to read it as a summation of how the patrons in the pub are feeling. Their interest in the future, perhaps a desire for a big payday at the races, embodies the same spirit that motivated many of the characters in the novel—and ultimately doomed them.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER ONE

I. A red Rolls-Royce carrying Linnet Ridgeway, a wealthy American heiress, pulls up in front of a small post office in the English country village of Malton-under-Wode. A local business owner named Mr. Burnaby gossips about her with a friend. Burnaby is excited about the money she's going to bring into the town, focusing on her renovation plans for the estate of Wode Hall, which she recently bought from the bankrupt Englishman Sir George Wode. Burnaby's friend sourly comments on the unfairness of Linnet having both money *and* good looks.

The Rolls-Royce immediately indicates that Linnet is a wealthy character. Though Mr. Burnaby isn't an important character, he shows up at the beginning and the end of the novel to show how Linnet stirs up local gossip. His friend, who comments jealously about Linnet, voices aloud something that many character throughout the novel think to themselves, but that they never tell Linnet to her face.

II. A gossip column in a local newspaper mentions the arrival of Linnet Ridgeway. It notes that she was seen out and about with Hon. Joanna Southwood and Lord Windlesham. The column speculates that Linnet may soon be engaged, and that Windlesham might be the man.

The gossip column once again reinforces that these characters are upper-class. It also shows how the upper class in England at the time followed strict conventions and cared a lot about how they were perceived in public. Linnet's marriage is not just a private issue for her but also a public affair.

III. In Linnet's bedroom at her new estate, she and Joanna Southwood are chatting. At 27 years old, Joanna is seven years older than Linnet, and pales a bit in comparison to the younger woman. She notices Linnet's **pearl necklace**, is delighted to learn that it costs $50,000, and then asks if she can borrow it until dinnertime. Linnet says of course. Joanna says she envies Linnet: Linnet is in control of her own life, wealthy, healthy, good-looking, and smart. Joanna then mentions. Linnet's possible engagement to Charles Windlesham, but Linnet shrugs and says she isn't ready to marry.

Christie introduces several characters in this first chapter, and it isn't clear yet who will be important and involved in the main crimes and who is just there to help set up the premise. The emphasis on Linnet's expensive pearl necklace, wealth, beauty, and good fortune reinforces that class and privilege play an important role in how the novel's characters judge and relate to one another.

Linnet gets a call from her old friend Jacqueline de Bellefort, whose family recently lost all their money. She's coming to visit Linnet that night. Joanna comments that she immediately drops any friend who stops being successful. Linnet is shocked, but Joanna says she's just being more honest than other people are. She says she's "on the make, like everyone else." Linnet retorts that *she's* not on the make and adds that Jacqueline has never asked her for anything. She does admit that Jacqueline can be excitable, though, and once used a penknife to stab a man who was mistreating a dog.

Jacqueline de Bellefort is one of the most important characters to the story, and Christie introduces her by showing what other characters think of her—which seems appropriate, given the role that gossip columns and social expectations play in the first chapter. The story about Jacqueline stabbing a man with a penknife could foreshadow that she'll play a role in the titular "death on the Nile"—but it could also be a red herring (a purposely misleading clue).

Finally, Linnet and Joanna discuss Linnet's maid, Marie, who has been crying. Linnet notes that she looked into the background of a man the maid wanted to marry and saved her from marrying him because he was already married and had children. Joanna comments that this sort of helpful behavior must make Linnet a lot of enemies. Linnet is surprised and replies, "Why, I haven't got an enemy in the world."

Joanna's comment that Linnet makes herself a lot of enemies is intended as a joke, but it also contains a kernel of truth—it does seem as though Linnet interfered in her maid's life without being asked. Linnet's surprise at the comment could indicate that she is naïve or lying to herself—or perhaps a little of both.

IV. Lord Charles Windlesham looks at Wode Hall and admires its "old-world" beauty. Then he imagines it transformed into an Elizabethan mansion, and he sees his own family's mansion of Charltonbury, and he further imagines Linnet standing in front of the building as his wife. Even though she has already turned his proposal down, he doesn't consider it a "definite refusal." He believes he would love her under any circumstances, although he does find it fortunate that she happens to be rich. He dreams of all the things he'd do if he had access to Linnet's fortune.

The section reveals Windlesham as a pompous, self-involved character who only sees Linnet as a trophy and who believes he'll always get what he wants—and that he deserves it. Many of the characters in the novel come from a similarly upper-class background, and they, too, are entitled and lack self-awareness. This passage is humorous because it's clear that Lord Windlesham is deluding himself about Linnet's feelings for him and about his reasons for loving her. Even his name is funny: "Windlesham" sounds like "Swindle" and "Sham," again emphasizing the hypocrisy of wealthy Britons like him.

V. At four in the afternoon, Miss Jacqueline de Bellefort arrives at Linnet's home, when Windlesham is also visiting. Linnet introduces Jacqueline to Windlesham as her "best friend" before he steps aside to let them talk alone. Jacqueline asks Linnet if she's really going to marry Windlesham, like all the papers say, but Linnet replies that she hasn't decided yet. Jacqueline says that Linnet always takes her time with big decisions, as if she were a queen. Then Jacqueline says that Linnet really always was like a queen, and she claims the role of "Queen's confidante" for herself.

The passage establishes the Jacqueline and Linnet's close friendship. The two of them gossip about Linnet's love life, going beyond what's printed in the papers, which suggests Linnet trusts Jacqueline. Jacqueline's insistence that Linnet is a queen helps establish how much power and wealth she has. Since Jacqueline herself is part of high society, if she sees Linnet as a queen, Linnet must really be even more wealthy and prestigious.

After more talk, Jacqueline reveals that she's actually come to ask for an important favor. She doesn't want money. Rather, she reveals that she's engaged to a country man from Devonshire named Simon Doyle, who has been working at an office job in London for the past five years. Jacqueline says she's crazy about Simon, that he's crazy about her, and that she'll die without him. Because Simon's so poor, however, Jacqueline wants Linnet to give Simon a job as her land agent to take care of the Wode Hall property. Linnet is mildly taken aback by Jacqueline's excitement, but seems happy for her, and agrees to at least see Simon. Jacqueline hugs Linnet and promises to bring Simon the next day.

Simon's identity as a fairly unremarkable office worker is important. Though he's called a "country man," he isn't a farmer or manual laborer. He is, however, too poor to marry Jacqueline, particularly in the high-class, gossip-focused society that she inhabits. Because she feels the need to meet upper-class society's expectations, Jacqueline proposes a scheme that will help make Simon a more suitable match.

VI. M. Gaston Blondin, owner of the famous restaurant Chez Ma Tante, avoids mingling with guests unless they're truly rich and famous. It may seem surprising that he pays such attention to a small man with a large mustache: the detective Hercule Poirot, who once helped Blondin by solving a crime that could have caused problems. Poirot regretfully tells Blondin that he is not currently at work on a case and that, as a "man of leisure," he is planning a winter vacation in Egypt. He hopes to travel there by land because sea travel doesn't agree with him.

Hercule Poirot is introduced as a Belgian man eating at a French restaurant in London, which shows that he is worldly and cosmopolitan. He is introduced as a famous person, which was true both in fiction and in the real world—Poirot had already appeared in several Agatha Christie novels by this point, including the famous Murder on the Orient Express. His mention of a vacation in Egypt is a sign that he will eventually be involved in solving this novel's titular death on the Nile.

An orchestra of "Negros" begins to play upbeat music. Poirot observes a diverse assortment of people of all shapes and sizes around him, finding particular interest in a young dancing couple. He notes that the girl in the couple "cares too much" and that this can't be safe. Then he hears them mention Egypt. The girl has "soft-sounding foreign R's," while the man has an upper-class English accent.

This is the first mention of Black characters in the story, and Christie generally never moves beyond stereotypes when portraying them. Here, they're referred to as "negros," which was a common term at the time but is widely considered outdated and offensive today. That they're playing music reflects the fact that some Black musicians (including many American jazz legends) were able to find success in Europe because of different racial attitudes, although often they faced different prejudices.

The girl tells the man that Linnet won't let them down, and she calls her partner Simon. Simon agrees that the job is perfect for him and promises not to let the girl down. Then they plan that after waiting three months to make sure Simon doesn't get fired, they'll get married and honeymoon in Egypt. Simon says it will be marvelous, but the girl suddenly wonders if Simon will love it as much as she will, if he loves her as much as she loves him. Simon says she is being absurd, but the girl—and Poirot—wonder.

Poirot's presence at this particular restaurant with Simon and the girl (who's implied to be Jacqueline) is extremely coincidental—a hallmark of mystery novels. The book intentionally leaves the conversation between Simon and Jacqueline as somewhat vague—it will take on different meanings in the story as more information comes to light.

VII. Later, Joanna and Linnet gossip about Jacqueline's engagement to Simon. Joanna suggests Simon must be "a terrible tough," but Linnet says she trusts Joanna's judgment. Joanna replies, "Ah, but people don't run true to form in love affairs." Linnet just shakes her head and changes the subject to mention that she's tearing down some old cottages that would've interfered with the view from her swimming pool. She adds that the current residents of the cottages—even those who don't want to move—will get better living conditions out of the deal. Joanna calls Linnet a tyrant (albeit a "beneficent" one) capable of getting whatever she wants with either her money or her charm, and she wonders what will happen if Linnet ever gets it into her mind to go the wrong way down a one-way street.

This passage introduces the idea that people act differently because of love. While Joanna is nice to Linnet and tolerates what she says, this makes it clear that Linnet isn't the selfless person she seems to think she is. She cleared out a bunch of families' homes for the sole purpose of giving herself a better view from her swimming pool, though she claims that this was for their own benefit. Joanna's thoughts hint that Linnet's influence over people could become more sinister if left unchecked.

Windlesham comes back, interrupting the conversation. Once Joanna leaves, he gets right to business: he asks Linnet if she's come to a decision regarding his proposal. She says that if she's not sure, she guesses she should say no, so he encourages her to take more time before giving a definitive answer. Linnet says she's been enjoying herself making Wode Hall into her idea of a perfect country home. They then talk about his home in Charltonbury, which his ancestors have owned since the Elizabethan era. Though Linnet agrees she likes the place, she resents his mentioning of it for some reason she isn't able to place.

Once again, Windlesham ends up looking like a fool. It is clear from his conversation with Linnet that the two of them aren't compatible and that they have different goals. Still, he persists in trying to woo her, though the reader knows that he is primarily motivated by Linnet's fortune rather than genuine love.

Once Windlesham leaves, Linnet realizes that he wouldn't take Wode Hall seriously, and that Wode wouldn't matter if she married Windlesham. She'd have to give it up, since Windlesham already has a country place. She realizes, in fact, that if she married Windlesham, she would no longer be "queen" but rather just Windlesham's "queen consort."

Perhaps Linnet seriously considers Windlesham's offer at first, on account of his high standing in society. But by the end of this passage, she has clearly made up her mind against him. Linnet values her independence—although her independence is, perhaps, rooted in her selfishness. Once again, Linnet is compared to a queen, and it is clear that she likes being in a position of authority—and that she has the wealth and influence to hold onto this power, if she chooses.

Linnet thinks about Jacqueline and how in love with Simon she seems to be. Linnet thinks it would be wonderful to be able to feel that way, and she realizes that Windlesham doesn't stir those sorts of feelings in her. Just then, Jacqueline and Simon arrive. Simon is handsome and looks at Linnet with "naïve genuine admiration." Linnet feels a warm, intoxicating rush. She decides that she likes Simon "enormously," greets him as her new land agent, and then has a thought: "Lucky Jackie…."

Linnet is used to getting everything she wants when she wants it—she doesn't know how to cope with the jealousy she feels when she sees Jacqueline in love with Simon. It seems unfair to her that she should have to settle for Windlesham while Jacqueline experiences a real romance. This jealousy, combined with the way Simon looks at her with "naïve genuine admiration," is what leads Linnet to suddenly find Simon so charming—not because she genuinely likes him.

VIII. Tim Allerton, a lanky young man with dark hair, and his mother Mrs. Allerton, a "good-looking, white-haired woman of fifty," are sitting and looking out at the sea. They complain about Majorca, where they are currently vacationing, being cold and cheap. Tim used to be sickly and is supposedly a writer but doesn't publish anything. Tim reveals to his mother that he's thinking of going to Egypt. She argues it would be too expensive, especially for them, but Tim says he has a way to take care of the expenses.

That Tim and Mrs. Allerton complain about being on vacation in Majorca characterizes them as spoiled. Mrs. Allerton is the more practical one—Tim seems to have no concern about spending money. His suggestion that he has a way to take care of expenses creates a sense of mystery, though it is too early to determine whether this detail will actually be a significant part of the plot or just an aside.

Tim claims he got a letter from a stockbroker that morning, but Mrs. Allerton knows from the handwriting that the letter is from his cousin Joanna Southwood. Tim finds this amusing and compares her to the famous detective Hercule Poirot. Mrs. Allerton disapproves of Tim and Joanna's correspondence because she thinks it's just idle gossip. She also doesn't like Joanna much. She doesn't think Tim is in love with Joanna, but Joanna still makes her uncomfortable because the two of them get along so well, and Mrs. Allerton is used to having Tim focus his attention on her.

This section shows how the Allertons are connected to Joanna (and therefore, how they are also connected to Linnet). As with many Agatha Christie novels, the characters are connected by a complex web of relationships—which means that there are many potential motives when a crime is eventually committed. Though Mrs. Allerton is one of the more sympathetic characters in the book thus far, she is fussy, as her disapproval of Joanna illustrates. Though it seems that she's just afraid of losing Tim's attention to another person, later chapters will reveal that there may be more to her disapproval.

Tim reveals some of the gossip that Joanna has included in her latest letter. He says Joanna told him that Linnet is going to marry Simon and that Windlesham was so distraught he left for Canada. Mrs. Allerton disapproves. She claims that back in her day, people had standards, but today's young people just go ahead and do whatever they want. Tim doesn't disagree. Mrs. Allerton realizes as Tim puts away the letter that he only ever reads her snippets from Joanna's letters instead of the whole thing, which is what he does for other letters. She pushes the thought aside and pretends she didn't have it.

Christie builds suspense by withholding information about Jacqueline—there's no indication of when or why she broke off her engagement with Simon, or how Linnet got engaged to him instead. Tim and Joanna's relationship, meanwhile, is not as simple as it seems to Mrs. Allerton.

Tim and Mrs. Allerton talk about Joanna's life. They talk about how she gets extravagant clothes, then just doesn't pay for them and lives on credit. The conversation turns to Sir George Wode, who ended up in bankruptcy court (and whose old home, Wode Hall, now belongs to Linnet). Mrs. Allerton chastises Tim for not talking about George Wode with more respect—she thinks he is a well-mannered man, despite the "funny stories" about him that Tim has heard. The two of them talk about the bitterness that Wode feels toward Linnet, and how the George refuses to go to his old estate to see what Linnet has done with it. Mrs. Allerton thinks Linnet should have known better than to ask George to visit his old estate, but Tim thinks Linnet did him a favor by paying so much for his old "worm-eaten" home.

Tim and Mrs. Allerton's conversation about George Wode reveals their different values. Tim is cynical about wealthy people, believing that George Wode is greedy man who likely wasted his fortune on gambling. Mrs. Allerton, however, doesn't think Tim understand high society's manners and conventions as well as she does. George Wode's enmity toward Linnet might seem like something that could be the motivation for a crime later, but at this point in the novel, it isn't even clear what the central crime of the story will be, let alone who will commit it.

Tim and Mrs. Allerton make more plans about going to Egypt, which they've both always wanted to see, and decide January will be the best time to go. They mention Mrs. Leech, who believes that a ring of hers was stolen but who doesn't speak enough Spanish to report it to the local Mallorcan police. Tim is certain Mrs. Leech actually lost the ring in the ocean and is just going to get some maid in trouble with her report. Mrs. Allerton asks if Tim would prefer if there were more young people around, and particularly if Joanna was there. He bluntly replies that he doesn't actually like Joanna much, that he'd be fine if he never saw her again, and that one of the only respectable women in the world is Mrs. Allerton herself.

The theft of Mrs. Leech's jewelry is intended to be suspicious. While it isn't clear yet if Tim is involved in the crime, it's clear that he knows something he's not telling his mother, hence why he's acting strange. Tim also seems unusually adamant when he insists to his mother that he doesn't like Joanna, although this may just be because he knows Mrs. Allerton doesn't approve of her. Like some of the other minor characters, Mrs. Leech's name is meant to be humorous (Tim suggests that Mrs. Leech's behavior is selfish and harmful to others, much like a parasitic leech).

IX. In an apartment in New York, Mrs. Robson, a wealthy American woman, discusses the upcoming trip to Europe that her "big clumsy" daughter Cornelia and Cornelia's much older cousin Miss Marie Van Schuyler are about to take. Cornelia is excited and promises to do whatever Miss Van Schuyler wants. She then goes off to find Miss Bowers (Miss Van Schuyler's servant) in order to get Miss Van Schuyler some eggnog.

The fact that the book jumps from Majorca to New York again emphasizes that the characters are cosmopolitan people who come from all over the world.

Miss Van Schuyler and Mrs. Robson then discuss how it must embarrass Cornelia that she isn't a "social success." Miss Van Schuyler says she's glad to take Cornelia with her to Europe since Cornelia is "willing to run errands" and is not as self-centered as other young people. As they're leaving, Mrs. Robson runs into Miss Bowers on the stairs. As they discuss the trip, Mrs. Robson suddenly says she hopes there won't be any trouble on the trip. Miss Bowers assures her she will make sure of it, but Mrs. Robson still seems a bit concerned.

Miss Van Schuyler is the richest among the women and extremely class-conscious, to the point that she even looks down on her cousin. Cornelia, by contrast, is both less wealthy and less self-assured, making her vulnerable to being taken advantage of.

X. Andrew Pennington reads a letter that makes him slam his fist on his desk in his New York office. Sterndale Rockford, his partner, appears. Pennington reveals the news: Linnet Ridgeway has just been married to Simon Doyle, the very day the letter arrived. They are both surprised because they didn't get any advance warning. Pennington wonders whether there was something secret about the whole affair.

Like many of the other characters who have been introduced thus far, Pennington is connected to Linnet—though it's not yet clear who he is or why, exactly, Linnet and Simon's marriage is important to him. His suspicion hints that the marriage may not be as genuine and loving as it might appear to outsiders.

Pennington and Rockford discuss, obliquely, how Linnet's marriage will affect them. As they think about ways to respond, they reference other lawyers and traveling to England, before finally deciding that they can best accomplish what they need to do when Linnet is in Egypt for her honeymoon, and they plan to engineer a "chance meeting" with her there. The two of them agree that while Linnet is smart, there may still be ways of "managing it." Rockford makes the call that Pennington should be the one to go because Linnet likes him. She calls him "Uncle Andrew." The two agree that the situation is "critical," and Pennington better be able to pull off their plan.

The conversation between Pennington and Rockford is deliberately ambiguous, but it's clear that they're lawyers and that they have some professional stake in watching—and perhaps influencing—what Linnet does. Pennington, at least, will play some role in what happens on the Nile.

XI. William Carmichael, an older man and a senior partner at the law firm Carmichael, Grant & Carmichael, asks for the young man Jim Fanthorp (also a lawyer and Carmichael's nephew) to be sent in to see him. At Carmichael's request, Fanthorp flips through some a just-arrived letter from Egypt, and says it looks "fishy" to him. The letter writer comments on it being strange to send a business letter on "such a day," then describes going to places in Egypt and an upcoming trip on a steamer boat on the **Nile**. It also mentions a chance encounter with "my American trustee, Andrew Pennington," who, the sender says, had no idea that the sender of the letter was married and who is on the same trip up the Nile.

This passage deepens the mystery of what's going with Linnet's business affairs. The reader learns here that Pennington is Linnet's trustee, meaning that he likely has control over her estate and finances. At this point, it's too early to tell who, if anyone, is the hero and who is the villain—the only thing that's clear is that a lot of other people have a stake in Linnet's money. This scene also emphasizes the interconnectedness of the world at this time (the early 20th century), since news in Egypt quickly makes it back to England.

Carmichael tells Fanthorp he's already heard all that he needs to hear from the letter. Fanthorp comments that he thinks it is not a coincidence, and Carmichael agrees. Carmichael tells Fanthorp to take a trip to Egypt. He argues Fanthorp is perfect because neither Linnet nor Pennington know him. Fanthorp doesn't like the idea, but Carmichael insists on it, calling the whole mission "absolutely vital."

Carmichael and Fanthorp's conversation, like the American trustees', is somewhat vague—although it's clear that important business is at stake. Fanthorp's reluctance to go may be a sign that he has a conscience—or it might just mean he doesn't want to get stuck with a difficult job.

XII. Mrs. Otterbourne is on vacation in Jerusalem with her daughter Rosalie. She's wearing a turban made of "native material" wrapped around her head. Mrs. Otterbourne tries to talk to Rosalie about how she's so sick of Jerusalem that she just wants to move on to Egypt, but her daughter is too engrossed in a newspaper reproduction about "Mrs. Simon Doyle" (formerly Miss Linnet Ridgeway) and her honeymoon in Egypt.

Turbans are an important part of Jerusalem's history—thousands of years ago, the High Priest of Israel would wear turbans when serving in the Tabernacle or the Temple in Jerusalem. Mrs. Otterbourne's choice of clothing—a turban, especially one made of "native material"—could thus be read as cultural appropriation (though this term didn't exist when Agatha Christie was writing), since turbans aren't a part of Mrs. Otterbourne's own British culture.

Mrs. Otterbourne continues to complain about their current accommodations, saying both that they should leave and that she's ready to stay and assert her rights. Rosalie herself feels that "one place is very like another," but eventually she concedes that they might as well go to Egypt as anywhere. Mrs. Otterbourne agrees that it's "certainly not a matter of life and death." On this point, though, the narrator corrects her, saying, "But there she was quite wrong—for a matter of life and death was exactly what it was."

As with Tim and Mrs. Allerton, Mrs. Otterbourne's complaints about her vacation characterize her as wealthy and entitled. Rosalie's feeling that "one place is very like another" suggests that for all the geographic and cultural differences between various countries, the people one meets and the experiences one has in different places may be quite similar. On another note, though Christie's narrator stays in the background for most of the story, they address the reader directly at the end of the first chapter, reassuring them that despite a relatively low-key introductory chapter, eventually there will be a death on the Nile.

CHAPTER TWO

At the Cataract Hotel in Egypt, Mrs. Allerton points out the famous detective Hercule Poirot to her son Tim. They're both excited and watch Poirot talk with a good-looking girl, who is revealed to be Rosalie Otterbourne. She looks to be in a bad temper as she walks with Poirot (standing three inches taller than him). Rosalie complains to him that there are no other young people around except Tim, who Rosalie finds conceited and who is always with his mother, Mrs. Allerton. When Poirot asks if she also finds him conceited, she comments that she doesn't know but she's not interested in crime. Poirot says he's glad she doesn't have a guilty secret—she seems surprised by the statement. They discuss Mrs. Otterbourne, who Rosalie reveals doesn't like their current location, and then they comment that they will all go on the same trip to Wadi Halfa and the Second Cataract.

Now that Christie has introduced the novel's many characters, she builds suspense by showing them in Egypt but not yet on the Nile. This scene does not at first seem particularly important—Poirot meets some of the other characters, but they don't do much beyond exchange pleasantries. But in a whodunnit, sometimes important information is dropped during seemingly inconsequential moments. In this passage, it's worth paying attention to the relationship between Tim and Rosalie, which will change over the course of the novel.

As they talk, Rosalie and Hercule Poirot pass some local street vendors who swarm close trying to sell them cheap souvenirs and tours, but they both make an effort to ignore them. Rosalie says that it's best to "pretend to be deaf and blind." Rosalie and Poirot reach a row of proper shops, and Rosalie goes in one of them to hand over some rolls of film to get developed. Then they watch passengers departing from the **Nile** steamer boats.

Though Christie was astute at pointing out the racism of characters like Mrs. Otterbourne, here she uses a racist stereotype, describing the Egyptian street vendors as if they're all one nameless mass of buzzing insects. Likening people to insects or vermin is a common technique used to dehumanize certain groups.

Tim Allerton joins Rosalie and Poirot as they watch the passengers. Suddenly, Tim excitedly notices Linnet, dressed in white and accompanied by a tall man, her new husband, Simon Doyle. They comment on how rich and beautiful she is, how she really seems to have everything. Rosalie watches Linnet with "a queer grudging expression."

Linnet's grand entrance emphasizes how famous she is, as even a completely unrelated character like Tim knows about her. Rosalie's grumpy expression could be ominous, but it can also be easily explained away, given her sulky personality so far.

Linnet disembarks with the grace of a famous actress, treating the gangplank like a stage, conscious that everyone is looking at her. As Linnet and Simon Doyle pass, Poirot hears Simon say that they can "make time for it" and can spend a week or two in the area if she likes. Tim notes Simon's luck while Rosalie remarks that the couple seem happy and then enviously adds, "It isn't fair."

The idea of fairness comes up several times in the novel—though not all characters voice it aloud, many of them believe on some level that it isn't really fair that Linnet has so many extravagant things. Rosalie, meanwhile, seems more envious of Linnet's relationship than her material possessions.

Tim leaves, and Poirot and Rosalie head back toward the hotel. After they pass the street vendors again, Poirot asks Rosalie about what made her say that things were unfair. She says Linnet has everything, but Poirot asks if she saw what he did: that Linnet had "dark lines" under her eyes and a white-knuckled grip on her parasol. He reminds Rosalie that all that glitters is not gold, suggesting that all may not be as it seems beneath her successful exterior. In fact, Poirot remarks that he even remembers hearing Doyle's voice somewhere before, but he can't place it.

This passage humanizes Linnet by implying that she isn't as happy as she might seem. Poirot demonstrates, as he will many more times in the novel, that he can perceive things that other characters can't, easily looking beyond the surface.

Rosalie suddenly says, "I'm odious. I'm quite odious. ['m just a beast through and through. I'd like to tear the clothes off her back [Linnet] and stamp on her lovely, arrogant, self-confident face." Poirot is surprised but tries to joke with her about it, telling her she must feel better after getting that off her chest. After recovering from her outburst, Rosalie laughs too. Once they reach the hotel, Rosalie leaves to find her mother, Mrs. Otterbourne.

Rosalie's outburst of hatred toward Linnet is surprising, particularly because of its intensity. It could even suggest a hidden motive for murder—in a whodunnit, the central crime is usually foreshadowed by little comments that read differently the second time around. Then again, there are a lot of characters in Death on the Nile, *and Agatha Christie gives many of them motives to commit a crime—some of which are red herrings (purposely misleading clues) and others that relate to totally different secrets.*

Poirot walks alone along a terrace and spots some tennis players. He recognizes a girl sitting on a bench near the tennis courts and recognizes her from months earlier at Chez Ma Tante a few months earlier. He notices that the girl seems paler and much more tired than she was the first time Poirot saw her. Poirot shrinks back and tries to keep watching her without being seen. She looks out at the boats on the **Nile** with a pained but triumphant look in her eyes.

Poirot's memories of Chez Ma Tante are clearly important, since that is where his character was introduced. Still, Christie does not yet reveal why that scene is important—she just builds the mystery by bringing it up again and adding new details.

Suddenly, Poirot hears voices from above. Linnet and Simon are walking down the path. Jacqueline greets them, and they both react with shock and dismay. Simon looks as if he's about to hit Jacqueline. But then, when Jacqueline glances to the side, Simon notices Poirot and tries (unconvincingly) to greet Jacqueline as if everything is normal. Jacqueline tells them it must be a surprise to see her, then walks off. Poirot hears Linnet say "Simon—for God's sake! Simon—what can we do?"

Chapter Two ends with a classic cliffhanger and the promise of more conflict to come. The tension in this scene introduces the possibility that whatever crime is eventually committed will involve the love triangle of Jacqueline, Linnet, and Simon, who seem to have unfinished business among themselves—likely related to Simon's abrupt breakup with Jacqueline and marriage to Linnet.

CHAPTER THREE

Simon and Linnet Doyle come out of the Cataract hotel along with a sharp-looking, gray-haired American. Tim Allerton rises from a nearby chair to greet them and introduce himself. Linnet says she remembers him and introduces the American as her trustee, Mr. Pennington. Tim then takes the whole party to the hotel terrace to meet his mother, Mrs. Allerton. As they talk, the doors to the room open, and Linnet slightly stiffens—but then she relaxes when the person turns out to be a "funny little man." Mrs. Allerton notes that the man is the celebrity detective Hercule Poirot, which interests Linnet.

As more of the characters meet before the titular trip on the Nile, the connections between them (and thus the possible motives for a crime) multiply. It's unclear why Linnet is so on-edge here—but given the way she reacted to Jacqueline's presence in the previous chapter, it's likely that her demeanor is somehow related to the love triangle between herself, Simon, and Jacqueline.

Mrs. Otterbourne, looking ridiculous in the turban she's wearing, asks Poirot to come sit with her and her daughter Rosalie. Poirot asks if Mrs. Otterbourne has a new novel on the way. She's delighted to be recognized, laments the fact that her frank depictions of sex result in her books getting banned, and admits she's been lazy and is on vacation in order to get inspiration for her next erotic novel, *Snow on the Desert's Face*. Mrs. Otterbourne suddenly says she should go get Poirot a copy of her previous book now. Rosalie offers to get it for her, and despite Mrs. Otterbourne's protests, she leaves to get it.

Mrs. Otterbourne is often considered to be a parody of the real-life writer Elinor Glyn, who was massively popular but who some critics reviled. Based on this unflattering portrayal of her, Christie probably wasn't a fan. Rosalie's sudden insistence on getting the book instead of Mrs. Otterbourne may seem strange and out of character for Rosalie, but it will make sense later.

As Poirot and Mrs. Otterbourne talk, Mrs. Otterbourne mentions that she rarely drinks anything other than water or lemonade. Poirot orders a benedictine (French liqueur) for himself and a lemon squash for her. Rosalie comes back with the book but refuses Poirot's offer to get her a drink. The book is titled *Under the Fig Tree*, and the cover resembles Eve from Adam and Eve. Poirot says he's honored, but at the same moment, he is surprised to notice the look of pain in Rosalie's eyes. Just then, the drinks arrive. All three of them become quiet and look out at the **Nile**.

Poirot is probably just being polite to Mrs. Otterbourne by pretending to be interested in her book. The look of pain that Poirot notices on Rosalie is also significant, but it is still too early to determine how it will be relevant to the story.

A thin young woman walks through the doors into the terrace, and everyone watches her with the sense that she is important. The girl moves deliberately and sits in a place where she can look deliberately at Linnet, which after a while causes Linnet to say something to Simon, then change her seat so that she faces the opposite direction. The girl smokes and smiles to herself, looking at Linnet the whole time. After 15 minutes, Linnet goes back into the hotel, with Simon following close behind. The narrator reveals that the girl is Jacqueline, who lights her cigarette and stares out at the **Nile**, still smiling to herself.

Normally, Linnet is the character who makes grand entrances—but this time, Jacqueline gets to have her turn. Her introduction in this passage recalls the femme fatales of hard-boiled detective stories (which was still a very young genre at the time Christie was writing in the 1930s). Jacqueline's smile and gaze at the Nile are both mysterious, but it's clear that whatever she has in mind is something Linnet isn't going to like.

CHAPTER FOUR

Out on the hotel terrace, Hercule Poirot is jolted out of his thoughts by the sound of someone calling his name. It's Linnet, wearing a majestic purple gown. Poirot, who already knows who Linnet is, says that he is at her service. Linnet asks to have a conversation with him in the card room of the hotel. Poirot accepts and accompanies her there. Linnet says she knows of Poirot's reputation for being clever, but Poirot says that he is on vacation and doesn't take cases while on holiday. Linnet confidently persists, however, claiming that she is being persecuted and that the matter is something her husband (Simon) has convinced her she can't take to the police.

After being an observer for the beginning of the story, Poirot is finally being drawn into a more active role. Linnet wants Poirot's help partially because she's desperate, but also because she knows he has a good reputation, and she always likes to be the one with the best things. Poirot tries to refuse, but Linnet keeps going because she isn't used to the concept of people turning her down.

Linnet describes her problem to Poirot: her new husband, Simon, used to be engaged to Jacqueline de Bellefort. Jacqueline, in Linnet's telling, "took it rather hard" when that engagement was broken off, and she has made threats toward Linnet, although she hasn't attempted to follow through on any of the threats yet. Instead, Jacqueline has decided to follow Linnet and Simon wherever they go. Linnet and Simon are currently on their honeymoon, and they saw Jacqueline stalking them in Venice and Brindisi. When they took the boat up the **Nile**, they were prepared to see her on board, but instead, Jacqueline was waiting for them at the hotel (a meeting that Poirot witnessed).

Much of the information Linnet tells Poirot has already been hinted at, but here it is all laid out clearly. The biggest revelation is how persistent Jacqueline has been—Egypt is not, in fact, the first time that she's seen Linnet and Simon since they got married. This begins to paint a picture of Jacqueline as obsessed, perhaps even mentally unstable.

Linnet wonders to Poirot what Jacqueline could possibly want to achieve by following her and Simon everywhere. Poirot muses that "It is not always a question of gain, Madame." Linnet says that Poirot must get Jacqueline to stop following them around everywhere. He asks if she has made any direct threats. When Linnet says no, Poirot admits there isn't much he (or anyone else) can do to stop her. Linnet insists there must be some solution. Poirot suggests going on to a new location, but Linnet doubts this will work and dislikes the idea that *she* should have to be on the run.

Linnet is used to always having the resources to accomplish whatever it is she wants to do, so it's a surprise to her when Poirot tells her there really isn't much she can do to get rid of Jacqueline. Linnet doesn't like the idea of running because it would mean acknowledging the fact that Jacqueline holds power over her, and Linnet is used to always being the one in power.

Poirot asks Linnet to elaborate on why Jacqueline's presence is bothering her so much. He begins recounting the story of what he overheard a month or two ago at the restaurant Chez Ma Tante: Jacqueline, looking very in love with Simon, told him that they would spend their honeymoon in Egypt. He says that Jacqueline mentioned "a friend who, she was very positive, would not let her down," suggesting that that friend was Linnet. Linnet, blushing, replies that she already told Poirot she and Jacqueline were friends.

This scene does not reveal much new information, but Poirot brings these details up again, since events in a mystery novel often take on difference significance after a big revelation. In this case, it's a little strange that Jacqueline and Simon were planning a honeymoon in Egypt, but that Simon ended up taking Linnet instead. This move could be another sign of how Linnet jealously wants to take everything from Jacqueline, even her honeymoon location, or it could mean something more.

Poirot asks Linnet if she is familiar with a particular story about King David in the Bible. It's about a rich man with an abundance of livestock who nevertheless decided to take a poor man's single ewe lamb. Linnet gets angry and claims Poirot is accusing her of stealing Simon from Jacqueline. She argues that this wasn't the case—that Simon loved Jacqueline less intensely than she loved him.

It isn't clear how religious Poirot is, but he's nonetheless interested in concepts of justice that come up in Bible stories. His quoting of the Bible suggests that Linnet's conflict with Jacquelin is not a modern problem, but in fact, just the newest iteration of a conflict that goes back to ancient times—which is appropriate given how many ancient have survived in Egypt.

Linnet tells Poirot that Simon was second-guessing his engagement to Jacqueline before he even met Linnet, and once he did meet Linnet, he realized that she was the one he truly loved. Once he realized that, it was only rational to break off his engagement, since to marry Jacqueline would have been to ruin three lives instead of just one. (If he was unhappy marrying Jacqueline, he would be a bad husband and make her unhappy too, as well as making Linnet unhappy by not marrying her). Poirot admits this is logical but insists it doesn't explain everything.

Linnet is a master at self-deception, so it isn't clear if her account of events can be trusted. Still, she does for the first time lay out a plausible scenario in which Jacqueline is unambiguously the villain, and Poirot can't dismiss the possibility outright. Still, his insistence that there is more to the story is enough to cast doubt on what Linnet says here.

Poirot asks Linnet if perhaps the reason why she finds Jacqueline's presence so unbearable is because it stirs feelings of guilt in her. Linnet is indignant, but Poirot insists that just like the rich man in the Bible story he mentioned earlier, she had to take the poor man's one ewe lamb. Linnet keeps disagreeing, flatly denying that what Poirot says is true, but Poirot insists that she simply isn't being honest with herself.

Linnet's anger and indignation in this scene should be read as a sign that Poirot is getting closer to the truth than she'd like. Though Linnet is an unpleasant character, Christie does extend some sympathy toward her, showing how painful it is for Linnet to have to face truths about her life that she and others have tried to keep in the shadows.

Ultimately, Linnet asks Poirot if he could speak to Jacqueline on behalf of her and Simon, who, Linnet notes, is "simply furious" over the whole matter. Poirot agrees to do so, but he isn't optimistic that he'll be able to accomplish anything. After hearing Poirot's response, Linnet replies forcefully that Jaqueline is "extraordinary" and that there's no telling what she might do. Poirot asks about specific threats, and Linnet says Jacqueline has threatened to kill her and Simon. She says Jacqueline "can be rather—Latin sometimes." Poirot finally says that he will intervene, but he makes clear to Linnet's dismay that he is not doing it on behalf of Linnet or for a commission—he is doing it solely "in the interests of humanity."

Chapter Four ends by establishing Jacqueline not just as someone with a grudge, but as someone who might even have a motivation for murder. Poirot's refusal of a commission is important—by not accepting money from Linnet, it means he isn't obligated to find a solution that's to her liking. As an impartial observer, he gets to decide his own idea of justice—and perhaps Linnet doesn't like this because a part of her still isn't sure that she's on the right side of justice. The description of Jacqueline as "Latin" is one of several times in the story where traits stereotypically associated with a certain ethnicity are conflated with being violent. Though the characters may themselves be racist, Christie largely plays this racist cliché straight instead of subverting it.

CHAPTER FIVE

Poirot figures that Jacqueline has probably not gone to bed yet, so he goes looking and comes upon her sitting on some rocks near the hotel that have a view out on the **Nile**. He asks to speak with her briefly. She gives a little smile and guesses that he's come to see her on behalf of Linnet. He responds that while he did recently speak to Linnet, he's not acting on her behalf.

After hearing Linnet's side of the story, Poirot now goes over to hear Jacqueline's. Jacqueline immediately realizes what he's doing, but Poirot is quick to clarify that he didn't accept Linnet's money, meaning he is coming to hear Jacqueline's story with an open mind.

Jacqueline asks what, then, Poirot is doing talking to her. He dodges the question by asking her if she has ever seen him before. She says no, so he tells her about when he saw her with Simon Doyle at Chez Ma Tante. She remembers going to the restaurant, just as Poirot describes, but she says bitterly that much has changed since then. Poirot agrees. He entreats her, "Bury your dead!" and give up the past. Jacqueline counters that this would certainly be convenient for Linnet, but Poirot insists that he only has Jacqueline's own best interest in mind. He says she must be suffering, but she disagrees and says that sometimes in following Linnet and Simon, she almost enjoys herself. "And that, Mademoiselle," says Poirot, "is the worst of all."

As a detective, Poirot is not just a passive observer. In this scene, he actively tries to stop Jacqueline from going through with whatever it is she has planned. Jacqueline's response that this would be convenient for Linnet gets at the idea of fairness that comes up elsewhere in the novel. Like Linnet, she can't accept a solution that would end up with her looking like a loser, although Jacqueline's motivations are slightly more complicated.

Jacqueline acknowledges that Poirot's intentions are probably good but insists he doesn't understand. "Simon is my world," she tells him. Poirot replies, "I know that you loved him," and Jacqueline takes offense at the way he says this. She insists their love was mutual and that her love as a friend for Linnet was equally genuine. The problem, according to her, was that Linnet was used to always getting whatever she wanted, and that this time what she wanted was Simon.

Jacqueline has more self-awareness than Linnet. Though she could try to avoid Poirot, especially if she has something nefarious planned, instead she engages with him. While Linnet makes herself feel better internally by ignoring her worst qualities, Jacqueline tries to feel better externally by justifying her actions to Poirot, whom she wants to convince because he's a neutral authority.

Poirot asks Jacqueline how Simon allowed himself to be taken in by Linnet. Jacqueline says it's complicated—that Simon wasn't marrying Linnet for the money. "There's such a thing as *glamour*, Monsieur Poirot," she says. She says Simon was so dazzled by Linnet that his shift from Jacqueline to Linnet was like the way a radiant sun obscures the moon. Linnet used her glamor to seduce Simon, who wouldn't have fallen in love with her otherwise, according to Jacqueline.

Jacqueline's explanation that Simon was taken in by Linnet's glamor is probably the most convincing explanation for their romance so far. It is worth noting, however, that Jacqueline is a crafty character who thinks she knows what Poirot wants to hear. The metaphor of the moon and sun will come up again several times in the novel.

After hearing Jacqueline's explanation, Poirot observes, "That is what you think—yes," causing Jacqueline to insist that Simon will always love her. She admits he hates her at the moment but adds, "He'd better be careful!" before showing Poirot a delicate-looking little pistol that she keeps with her in a silk bag. She insists that despite its dinky appearance, it can kill a person with one bullet, and that she's a good shot.

Normally, when a character in a whodunnit does something as obvious as revealing their weapon, it means that they can't be the real murderer, since ideally the ending is always a twist. But since Jacqueline is a complicated character, the audience and perhaps even Poirot himself don't know what to make of her yet.

Jacqueline reminisces to Poirot about her childhood in South Carolina, where her grandfather taught her how to shoot. She reveals that her father once killed a man in a duel over a woman. She talks about buying the pistol and how she couldn't decide whether to kill Simon or Linnet—killing both would be "unsatisfactory." Ultimately, Jacqueline discovers that just "wait[ing]" would be more fun—she realizes that the best way to get under Linnet's skin is just to stalk her like she's been doing. The best aspect of this tactic, as Jacqueline explains, is that there's nothing Linnet can do to stop her, which is poisoning everything for Linnet.

Again, the fact that Jacqueline is a good shot seems like a detail that would be extremely relevant in a mystery story—but it may just be another red herring (a purposely misleading clue). Jacqueline seems like she's being very honest here with Poirot, even talking about her childhood—but the most effective lies often mix in truth, so it still isn't clear if Poirot should trust her.

Poirot insists that Jacqueline must give up on what she is doing. "Do not open your heart to evil," he says. When Jacqueline is confused, he adds "Because—if you do—evil will come…" Jacqueline hesitates but ultimately says that there's nothing Poirot can do to stop her. Poirot admits this is true, that if she "were willing to pay the price," nothing could be done to prevent her from killing Linnet. Jacqueline says that she isn't afraid of death because she has nothing left to live for.

Poirot is an idealist—he may not know exactly what will happen if the conflict between Jacqueline and Linnet escalates, but he can tell it won't be good, and he feels duty-bound to intervene. He does, however, note that there's a limit to what he can do—even someone as just as Poirot can't stop a crime if a criminal really puts their mind to it and doesn't care about the consequences.

Jacqueline asks Poirot if he believes killing someone who hurt you is always wrong. Poirot responds that killing is "the unforgivable offence." Jacqueline argues that that means Poirot should approve of her current plan—to stalk Linnet and Simon instead of killing them. She admits sometimes she dreams of stabbing Linnet or "to put my dear little pistol close against her head and then—just press with my finger." But as Jacqueline is saying this, she's suddenly startled and says "*Oh!*" Poirot asks her what's the matter.

As a detective who solves murder cases, it makes sense that Poirot would consider murder an unforgivable offense—though later events in the story reveal that Poirot's morality is not as black-and-white as it might first seem. Jacqueline's admission that she wants to press her pistol against Linnet's head and pull the trigger is startling, especially since she's confiding in a murder detective. Perhaps Jacqueline is playing a strategic game of some sort, but it seems more likely that regardless of what she is or isn't plotting, she's starting to become a little unhinged.

Jacqueline turns her head and stares into the shadows. She tells Poirot that she thought she saw someone standing nearby, but Poirot says they seem to be alone. Then, he says he's already told her everything he wanted to and stands to go. Jacqueline asks Poirot if he understands why she can't just give up her revenge as he suggested. He insists that there is always a chance to change direction and notes that Linnet, too, had the chance to choose not to do what she did. But after considering Poirot's words, Jacqueline remains defiant. He shakes his head in dismay as he follows her back to the hotel.

Jacqueline seems to be seeing things that aren't there—it's possible that, like Linnet, she is getting paranoid. Though Poirot wants to prevent any further conflict between Linnet and Jacqueline, he knows that something will happen, and that he is powerless to stop it.

CHAPTER SIX

Early the next day, as Poirot begins a walk from the hotel down into town, Simon Doyle joins him. Simon brings up the conversation that Linnet and Poirot had the previous evening. He says he's glad at least that Poirot helped Linnet realize there isn't any legal action they can take against Jacqueline. Simon notes that because of her wealthy upbringing, Linnet believes everything can be solved by simply calling the police. But Simon adds that it's outrageous that Linnet should have to suffer Jacqueline following her around everywhere. He asks if Poirot has also talked to Jacqueline and if he got her to be reasonable. Poirot says he talked to her but couldn't make her give upon her revenge.

In this chapter, Simon finally tells his side of the story. He doesn't add a whole lot of new information: like Linnet, Simon finds it unbearable that Jacqueline should be the one in power. Also like Linnet, he doesn't seem to have accepted yet that in this particular situation, Poirot is powerless to stop Jacqueline if she is really committed to taking action against Linnet.

Simon vents to Poirot about how "indecent" Jacqueline's stalking behavior has been. He says he'd understand her revenge better if she took real action, like attempting to shoot him. Poirot asks if this sort of violence would be in character for her, and he says yes, Jacqueline is "hot-blooded." Simon says that Jacqueline's stalking is making Linnet anxious and that he himself would like to strangle Jacqueline. Poirot asks if that means he no longer loves Jacqueline, and Simon explains his current love for Linnet by comparing her to the sun and Jacqueline to the moon—Linnet is so bright like the sun that he can't even see a moon like Jacqueline.

The fact that Simon uses the exact same metaphor as Jacqueline is very interesting, and it's definitely a clue that Poirot picks up on. Perhaps it is just a sign that the two of them have very similar ways of thinking, even after breaking up, or perhaps it is a sign that they've had a conversation about the topic before.

Looking embarrassed, Simon asks Poirot if Jacqueline told him that he married Linnet solely to get his hands on her fortune. He stridently denies this was the case—he says, "It—it—sounds a caddish thing to say, but Jackie was *too* fond of me!" He says a man doesn't want to feel like a woman owns him. Poirot asks if that's how he felt about Jacqueline and Simon admits it was, even though Jacqueline didn't realize how possessive she was being.

Simon's behavior throughout this chapter suggests that he is hiding something. The obvious secret would be that he only married Linnet to try to get her money, but Simon explicitly brings this possibility up to dismiss it. The fact that Jacqueline cares too much comes up again—this is similar to what Poirot noted about her when he first saw her in the restaurant. This observation introduces the idea that love isn't always a positive force—it can become obsessive and destructive.

Simon asks Poirot why Jacqueline can't just take his rejection of her "like a man." Poirot smiles and notes that she is not, in fact, a man. Simon insists that he'd be insane to marry Jacqueline if he didn't love her, especially after seeing "the lengths she is likely to go to." Poirot probes to see what Simon means by this. He asks if Simon knows that Jacqueline carries a pistol in her bag. Simon shakes his head, but he asserts that Jacqueline wouldn't actually kill anyone—perhaps she might've earlier, but now she wants a different type of revenge.

Simon does not seem particularly concerned to learn that Jacqueline carries a pistol—though Jacqueline herself showed the pistol to Poirot and admitted to fantasizing about killing Simon and Linnet.

Simon tells Poirot that his real concern is how Linnet will cope with Jacqueline's stalking. He talks about an elaborate plan they have to skip town using fake names to book a **Nile** steamer boat called the *Karnak* that goes to Wadi Halfa, and from there, they'll move on to exotic new locations. Poirot notes that eventually, Jacqueline will run out of money and be unable to keep following them. Simon admits this is a clever observation, since Jacqueline is indeed poor. Poirot asks how she made it so far already, and Simon suggests she must have sold off most of her assets to do what she's doing, meaning she'll soon run out of money.

Once again, Linnet's wealth becomes a significant plot point. Though it seems that Jacqueline has found a way to make stalking Linnet and Simon possible, Poirot rightfully notes that this is only temporary—if they keep traveling, eventually Jacqueline will run out of money to follow them. This is important because it suggests that Linnet's anxiety could be a little exaggerated. She could still easily find a way to outrun Jacqueline—she just doesn't do so because she's too proud.

Poirot notices that the thought of Jacqueline being penniless seems to make Simon uncomfortable. Aloud, Poirot admits that Simon's plan to escape may be successful, even though it is ultimately "a retreat." Simon says seriously that someday they may indeed have to stand and fight Jacqueline. "There's no reason why women shouldn't behave like rational beings," he says. Poirot quips that sometimes it's worse when women *are* rational.

The idea that women are irrational has long been a sexist stereotype. Here, it seems that the statement is mostly meant to highlight Simon's own ignorance, with Poirot politely indulging him.

Poirot mentions that he himself was also already scheduled to be on the *Karnak* (the same **Nile** steamer that Linnet and Simon will be using to hopefully escape Jacqueline). Poirot insists, however, that this coincidence has nothing to do with Simon, Linnet, or Jacqueline—that his trip was booked well in advance in London. Poirot says that he is a meticulous planner. Simon jokingly responds that a murderer would probably be just as meticulous as Poirot. While Poirot agrees, he then adds that one of his most challenging cases involved a crime committed impulsively. Simon says he'd like to hear more, but Poirot says he doesn't like to engage in shop talk.

Simon's comment that Poirot is like a murderer actually speaks to Poirot's skill—after all, in order to be a good detective, Poirot must think like a murderer. This duality—how good is often related to evil and vice versa—is at the heart of Death on the Nile *and will help explain several of the characters' motivations.*

Simon mentions to Poirot that he'd be thrilled to hear a detective's shop talk and that Mrs. Allerton (who will also be sailing the **Nile** in the *Karnak* with her son, Tim) has been waiting for a chance to talk with the famous detective. Poirot asks if Mrs. Allerton knows about Simon's troubles, to which Simon replies that nobody does, saying, "I've gone on the principle that it's better not to trust anybody."

Simon's reluctance to tell people other than Poirot about his problem suggests a typical attitude of upper-class Britons at the time—not wanting to do anything that would cause a scandal. This passage once again establishes Poirot's fame and reputation in the story, which mirrored his character's fame among readers in the real world.

Poirot asks Simon about a third person who's been traveling with him and Linnet: Andrew Pennington (Linnet's American trustee). Simon says they met Pennington by chance meeting in Cairo. Poirot delicately asks if Linnet is "of age." An amused Simon confirms that she isn't yet 21 but that she doesn't need anyone else's permission to marry. He talks about how Pennington left New York on a boat called the *Carmanic* two days before Linnet's letter about her marriage to Simon arrived (and thus how Pennington was surprised to learn in Cairo that Linnet was married).

Pennington's role in the story, which up until this point has been vague, begins to get a little clearer. Poirot intuitively realizes that Pennington must have some involvement with Linnet's inheritance and that her marriage changed the plan.

Simon tells Poirot that he learned in Cairo that Pennington was taking the same **Nile** trip as Simon and Linnet. It's been a relief, since Pennington helps Linnet keep her mind off Jacqueline by talking about unrelated things. Poirot asks if Linnet has confided anything in Pennington, and Simon says no, he'd hoped the whole Jacqueline problem would be finished before their Nile trip. "You have not seen the end of it yet," says Poirot. "No—the end is not yet at hand. I am very sure of that."

Pennington's side of the story was already revealed in the first chapter—it's clear that he has some stake in Linnet's finances. So, as Simon tells the story to Poirot, it's clear that he's been deceived and that he's underestimating Pennington. His suggestion that the problem with Jacqueline might be resolved soon further highlights Simon's naivete.

When Simon says he doesn't find Poirot's prediction particularly comforting, Poirot thinks to himself that "the Anglo-Saxon, he takes nothing seriously but playing games! He does not grow up." Poirot believes that Linnet and Jacqueline are taking this matter seriously, but that Simon is acting with "nothing but male impatience and annoyance."

Poirot implies that Simon isn't particularly bright or mature. His comment about male impatience contrasts with Simon's earlier comments about irrational women, implying that men can be just as irrational and emotionally driven.

Poirot then asks what he describes as an "impertinent" question: if it was Simon's idea to honeymoon in Egypt. Simon admits that he'd prefer literally anywhere else, but that Linnet's mind was made up. Poirot notes that once Linnet sets her mind on something, she usually gets it. He has now heard three separate accounts of the events (from Linnet, from Jacqueline, and from Simon) and muses to himself, "Which of them is nearest to the truth?"

It is telling that Linnet would insist on Egypt as the place for their honeymoon, since that's the same place that Jacqueline and Simon had originally planned to go for their honeymoon. This hints that Linnet may have had ulterior motives in marrying Simon, and that she wanted to hurt Jacqueline by making her feel replaced. Poirot, meanwhile, draws attention to the fact that all the characters he's just spoken with have their own agendas, and that the real version of the truth probably doesn't line up exactly with any of them.

CHAPTER SEVEN

At eleven o'clock the next morning, Simon and Linnet head off toward Philae (with the plan that they will ultimately go to Shellal to catch the **Nile** steamer boat the *Karnak*). Jacqueline, on the hotel balcony, watches them go. She does not, however, notice that a car is also departing the hotel, taking their luggage and their maid, Louise Bourget, to Shellal.

Simon and Linnet's escape seems to be successful. Clearly, however, this problem can't be resolved so easily, so the book builds suspense about how Jacqueline, Linnet, and Simon, will come into conflict again.

Poirot decides to spend a couple of hours before lunch on Elephantine, an island reachable by boat that's right across from the hotel. He notes two other men making the same boat journey to the island. The men don't know each other: one is a dark-haired young man, looking ready for a fight, with clothes that look out of place in Egypt. The other is a pudgy, middle-aged man, with a slight accent, and he immediately starts talking to Poirot, taking particular interest in their skilled Nubian boatman.

Poirot meets two characters who will play a role in the coming events, though their names are not revealed at first. There is also a brief mention of a Nubian character who isn't named and who plays no role other than to facilitate things for European characters. Taken in isolation, the boatman isn't a particularly racist portrayal, but he is part of a pattern in the novel of African characters being totally ignored, except for how they relate to the European or American characters.

Soon after the boat reaches the island of Elephantine, the middle-aged man introduces himself to Poirot as Signor Guido Richetti, an archeologist. He walks with Poirot to a museum, speaking first in Italian, then in French. The dark-haired young man loiters near them at first, before eventually going his own way.

It isn't clear yet what role Richetti will play, but his occupation as an archaeologist helps connect the events of the story to the rich history of ancient Egypt, where death was surrounded by elaborate rituals. Agatha Christie's husband was an archaeologist, and she herself was interested in the field.

Later, Poirot and Signor Richetti see the dark-haired young man again near some ruins on the island. Poirot is distracted, however, when he sees a green sun umbrella that he recognizes as Mrs. Allerton's. She's sitting on a big rock with a sketchbook. He greets her politely. Mrs. Allerton complains about "these awful children," meaning a group of "small black figures" surrounding her, all of whom are holding out a hand and asking for "bakshish" (money, like a charitable donation or a tip). She is annoyed by their persistence and finds their staring faces "disgusting." Poirot tries to get rid of them, but they keep coming back. Mrs. Allerton says she'd prefer Egypt if she could just get some peace.

The African children in this scene are another example of racism in the novel. While there are some elements of truth to Agatha Christie's portrayal (there would certainly have been poverty in Egypt at the time), the description of the children as "small black figures" and the way Mrs. Allerton reacts to them are demeaning. As with the street vendors earlier, here all the Africans are portrayed in a racist way, as one faceless mass of poverty. It is particularly strange that Poirot, who is depicted as an impartial defender of justice throughout the book, shoos the children away and takes Mrs. Allerton's side.

Poirot asks Mrs. Allerton why her son, Tim, isn't with her this morning. She says Tim has letters to send before they take a trip to the Second Cataract (the same **Nile** boat trip that Poirot and many other characters will be taking). She then mentions her and Tim's recent visit to Majorca, where her friend Mrs. Leech lost a ruby ring. She wishes Poirot had been there to help her find it.

Christie hints pretty clearly that Tim is involved in some sort of jewelry theft, though it's clear that Mrs. Allerton has no idea about it, or else she wouldn't be telling Poirot. It seems like too much of a coincidence that jewelry just keeps disappearing where he goes, and his absence on the tour suggests he might be up to something again.

Mrs. Allerton then reveals that from her window at the hotel, she saw Poirot walking and talking with Simon Doyle. She talks about Simon's recent marriage to Linnet and the earlier rumors that Linnet would marry Lord Windlesham instead. Mrs. Allerton says she doesn't know Linnet well but that her cousin, Joanna Southwood, is one of Linnet's best friends. Poirot is also aware of Joanna, from having read her name in the news. Mrs. Allerton makes a snide comment about how Joanna really knows how to "advertise herself," then admits that she doesn't like Joanna, even though Joanna and Tim are good friends.

This passage doesn't add much new information, but it reminds the reader of how the Allertons fit in with the Linnet Doyle business—their cousin Joanna is a good friend of Linnet's. This detail will be important later in the story.

Mrs. Allerton changes the subject, saying that pretty much the only young person she's seen around is "that pretty girl with the chestnut hair [Rosalie] and the appalling mother in the turban [Mrs. Otterbourne]". Mrs. Allerton and Tim find Rosalie "sulky," but Mrs. Allerton says they may have to act friendly toward her, since she and her mother will be taking the same **Nile** trip, and they'll all be stuck on the same steamer.

This passage sets up that Tim and Rosalie are some of the only young people on board the Karnak, *suggesting that the two of them will probably be forced to interact with each other, whether they want to or not.*

Mrs. Allerton then says that Tim told her that "that dark girl" (i.e., Jacqueline) was engaged to Simon Doyle and that it must be awkward for them to meet in Egypt as they did. Mrs. Allerton says she found Jacqueline almost scary. Poirot agrees, saying "A great force of emotion is always frightening."

Despite references to Jacqueline being "dark" or "Latin," it's unclear whether she's actually Latina or simply has darker hair and skin than other white characters in the novel. Still, it is telling that Christie uses racially coded language most often when describing Jacqueline's violence, as this perpetuates racist stereotypes that were prevalent at the time.

Changing the subject a little, Mrs. Allerton asks Poirot if all people interest him or if he only takes an interest in "potential criminals." Poirot replies, "Madam—that category would not leave many people outside it," an idea that surprises Mrs. Allerton. Poirot adds that he thinks most people would commit a crime if given the right motivation. They discuss several hotel guests—Mrs. Allerton herself, Simon, Linnet, Jacqueline, Pennington, and Mrs. Otterbourne—and come to the conclusion that all of them could commit murder for different reasons.

Though Poirot is a very generous person, he is also capable of extreme cynicism—or perhaps just realism. His belief that almost anyone can commit murder is likely shaped in part by his long history of solving unusual crimes. It's also worth noting that this novel was written between the two World Wars—the carnage of WWI was still fresh in the mind of many Britons and the warning signs for WWII were already on the horizon for anyone paying attention to news from Europe. This global climate could lead to a darker outlook on human nature, even for someone as selfless as Poirot.

Mrs. Allerton asks about the most common motives for murder and Poirot replies, "Most frequent—money. That is to say, gain in its various ramifications. Then there is revenge—and love, and fear, and pure hate, and beneficence…" He goes on to discuss murders he's seen in the past, how murderers often take it upon themselves to play God. Mrs. Allerton jokes that if there are so many motives for murder, it's a wonder that anyone survives at all.

Poirot's overview of murders he's seen foreshadows the eventual murder (or murders) that will take place on the Nile. While his speech would seem to suggest that money will be involved (perhaps implicating Simon, or maybe Pennington), many murders in Agatha Christie novels don't follow obvious logic, so it is too early to tell.

Finally, Mrs. Allerton declares that they must start getting back from Elephantine to the hotel for lunch, so she and Poirot go back to the boat, where they see the dark-haired young man and Signor Richetti. Poirot makes a friendly comment to the dark-haired young man about all the great wonders of Egypt, but the young man responds that they make him sick. Poirot asks him to elaborate.

The book builds mystery around the dark-haired young man by withholding his name long after his introduction. The young man is angry and seems as if he might be hiding something, although it isn't clear what.

The dark-haired young man tells Poirot and Mrs. Allerton that he feels ill thinking of all the suffering workers who built the Pyramids in order to stroke the ego of some old king. Mrs. Allerton asks if he'd prefer a world without ancient architectural wonders, if the only thing that mattered was "that people got three meals a day and died in their beds." The young man scowls and replies, "I think human beings matter more than stones." Poirot comments that stones are more durable, but the young man insists he'd prefer a well-fed worker over any supposed art. Signor Richetti, the archeologist, overhears and gives a passionate but incomprehensible speech in opposition to the young man, who continues to rail against capitalism.

This is one of many passages in the novel where characters with different backgrounds and philosophies are forced to interact. The book seems to align with Poirot in the argument between him and the young man about the value of building monuments, though it's also poking fun at archaeologists through Signor Richetti's character.

The boat finally arrives back at the hotel, and Mrs. Allerton, Poirot, Signor Richetti, and the dark-haired young man all disembark. In the hall of the hotel, Poirot meets Jacqueline, who is on her way out to go donkey riding. Poirot warns her not to buy any expensive native knick-knacks along the way (which are really cheap imports from Europe), and Jacqueline says she's smarter than that and then goes about her business. Poirot finishes packing his things, takes an early lunch, then takes a hotel bus to a local station, beginning his journey to Shellal, where he'll catch the **Nile** steamer. Mrs. Allerton, Tim, the dark-haired young man, and Signor Richetti travel along with Poirot. Mrs. Otterbourne and Rosalie took a different route but will also meet the steamer at Shellal.

Christie builds suspense with the appearance of Jacqueline—it seems likely that she'll find some way to catch up with Simon and Linnet again, but this scene makes it seem as though she has other things on her mind.

At the busy train station, Poirot is separated from Mrs. Allerton and Tim, and ends up in a compartment with a disdainful, aristocratic old woman (Miss Van Schuyler) and her clumsy, disheveled young companion (Cornelia). For the whole train trip, Miss Van Schuyler snaps orders at Cornelia. The train ride is brief, though, and they soon arrive at the S.S. *Karnak*, where Rosalie and Mrs. Otterbourne have already boarded.

Again, the book creates more connections (and thus, opportunities for crime) by throwing different characters together. The bustle of travel builds anticipation for the upcoming boat ride.

The *Karnak* passengers are shown their rooms. Poirot makes sure his possessions are taken care of in his cabin, then goes out to watch the steamer depart and finds Rosalie at the deck rail, looking out at the **Nile**. Rosalie says she'll be glad to be getting away from people, to which Poirot replies "Except those of our own number, Mademoiselle?" Rosalie replies, "There's something about this country that makes me feel—wicked. It brings to the surface all the things that are boiling inside one. Everything's so unfair—so unjust." Poirot encourages her not to repress these feelings, to let them come up so that they can be skimmed away like scum on the surface of jam.

This is one of many times when Christie draws a parallel between the setting of the story and what it causes the characters to do. Though the suggestion that being in Egypt makes people more likely to commit murder could be read as racist (as this may imply that there's something inherently violent about Egypt or Egyptian people), it is true that being in an enclosed area like the Karnak *will force the characters into new conflicts.*

Rosalie tells Poirot she had no idea Linnet and Simon would be on the trip, and just as she says it, the two of them come out of their cabin, looking pleased with themselves and talking excitedly about their plans. But just as the steamer pulls away to begin their seven-day trip on the **Nile** to the Second Cataract, they hear Jacqueline laughing. Instantly, they lose their good humor. Jacqueline claims it's a surprise to see them, and Linnet says likewise. Linnet and Simon pull away from the group muttering about escape, then in a louder voice, Simon says something about stopping running and about needing to "go through with it now."

This is the moment that many of the previous sections have been building up toward—Jacqueline finally reveals that she's found a way to continue tracking Simon and Linnet. Her claim that it's a surprise to see them is obviously a lie, as all the characters know. Meanwhile, Simon's line at the end about having to "go through with it now" is deliberately ambiguous and meant to build more suspense.

Later, at dusk, the *Karnak* passes through a narrow gorge. Poirot, watching from the "observation saloon" (a glass enclosed area on the front part of the deck, where passengers can see the river) notices rocks falling down into the **Nile** as the steamer crosses into Nubia.

Christie gives some details about the setting—falling rocks are potentially dangerous and could foreshadow what's to come.

Suddenly, Linnet appears beside Poirot and says that she is afraid—the violently falling rocks make her nervous, and she feels she is surrounded by enemies. She feels trapped, and Poirot is sympathetic. She says she'll never escape Jacqueline, but Poirot suggests something she hasn't considered yet: hiring out a private boat. Linnet says the problem is, while they'd have enough money, Simon is "sensitive" about things he sees as needless expenses. She hesitates, wondering if she was too open with Poirot, then apologizes for "talking a lot of foolish nonsense."

Christie goes back and forth between depicting Linnet as selfish and depicting her as something of a victim whom the reader (and Poirot) can sympathize with. Still, it's significant that Poirot suggests a very logical way to escape her current problem, and Linnet turns it down. This suggests that she still has some character flaw (perhaps pride) that prevents her from listening to reason.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Mrs. Allerton, in a black evening gown, goes down to the steamer's dining room, where she meets her son, Tim, at the door. She reveals to Tim that she asked Hercule Poirot to sit at their table, which Tim responds to with uncharacteristically strong annoyance. Mrs. Allerton apologizes and says she thought Tim would like hearing Poirot's detective stories. Tim asks if there's any way to still turn Poirot down, but she can't imagine how, so he resigns himself to it. Mrs. Allerton wonders what got into her son—usually he was too "cosmopolitan" to have "the ordinary Britisher's dislike—and mistrust—of foreigners."

Tim's dislike of Poirot is suspicious, as it implies that he has something to hide form the detective. Though Mrs. Allerton blames it on casual xenophobia (fear of foreign people), it seems more likely that it has something to do with all the jewels that go missing whenever Tim is around.

Poirot joins the table and confirms with Mrs. Allerton that it's really OK for him to sit with her and Tim. Mrs. Allerton says that of course it is, and then suggests they look through the passenger list for the steamer and try to match the names to the people in the room. They see Jacqueline at a table with Rosalie and Mrs. Otterbourne, and identify a man named Dr. Bessner as sitting at a different table with four other men.

This passage begins to situate all the various characters aboard the Karnak. *For a whodunnit, it is important for the reader to be introduced to all the characters relatively early on the story, since they need a fair chance at guessing who the culprit is.*

Poirot and the Allertons can't identify who Miss Bowers is yet, but they do see Simon and Linnet (wearing an expensive frock and a **pearl necklace**) seated off in a corner with Pennington. They figure out that Fanthorp is one of the other men at Dr. Bessner's table, and Mrs. Allerton identifies Ferguson as the dark-haired young man who she describes as "our anti-capitalist friend." Finally, she identifies Richetti as "our Italian archaeological friend" and Miss Van Schuyler as "the very ugly old American lady" who is accompanied by the younger Miss Bowers and Miss Cornelia Robson.

This is the first appearance of Linnet's pearl necklace on the boat, and it will become an important symbol of her character. The dark-haired young man, meanwhile, is finally revealed to be Ferguson.

As the passengers eat and then mingle, Poirot spends most of the night listening to Mrs. Otterbourne talk about her writing. On the way back to his cabin, he finds Jacqueline at the deck railing, looking out at the **Nile** with a miserable expression. When he wishes her goodnight, she asks if he's surprised to see her. He says he's "not so much surprised as sorry"—that she made a dangerous decision by coming and that it may be too late to reverse course. She says she must follow her star, and he warns her to look out for a "false star." As Poirot goes to bed, he hears Simon's voice in his head, repeating "We've got to go through with it now." It makes him unhappy.

Poirot's regret at seeing Jacqueline seems to be genuine—even though he enjoys solving crimes, he would rather they didn't happen in the first place. Jacqueline, too, seems to be having second thoughts. Simon's message that Poirot hears, "We've got to go through with it now," could be a dream—it's also possible that he really did say those words, though the circumstances surrounding them are mysterious. The sense of inevitability—of people having to follow stars or go through with things—recalls the one-way flow of the Nile and the finality of the death that is going to happen on the river.

CHAPTER NINE

Early the next morning, the steamer arrives at the temple of Ez-Zebua. Cornelia, in high spirits, rushes ashore. She comes upon Hercule Poirot, dressed in a flashy white suit and alone. She tells Poirot that her older cousin, Miss Van Schuyler, didn't get up early enough to come, and her nurse Miss Bowers stayed backed with her to help her with whatever she needed. Cornelia discusses the many places she's been on with her cousin on the trip so far.

Unlike many of the novel's other characters, Cornelia isn't entitled or spoiled—rather than complaining about her vacation, she's genuinely interested in seeing new places. Miss Van Schuyler's absence has also noticeably lightened Cornelia's mood, emphasizing how her cousin's poor treatment affects her.

Poirot and Cornelia notice Rosalie. Cornelia calls her good-looking, although not quite as good-looking as Linnet. A tour guide interrupts and begins telling a gathered group of travelers about the temple. Dr. Bessner complains about how the tour is being run, while Mrs. Allerton makes small talk with Mr. Fanthorp. Meanwhile, Andrew Pennington stands with Linnet and remarks that she looks well—better than she's been looking lately. Soon the whole party returns to the steamer, which continues up the **Nile**, and all the passengers seem to be in a better mood.

Again, as characters mingle, they form connections with one another that could play a role in the titular "death on the Nile" that the reader knows is bound to happen.

Later, in the saloon, Pennington asks if it's okay to bring up a business issue with Linnet (who is with Simon), even though it's her honeymoon. The only other passengers in the saloon are Ferguson, Poirot, and Miss Van Schuyler. Linnet agrees to look over some papers to sign, so Pennington leaves, then comes back with a big stack of papers.

This scene is important—in the first chapter, it was revealed that Pennington had to settle a business matter related to Linnet's recent marriage. Despite him acting casual, it's clear that this moment is actually the entire reason that he boarded the Karnak *in the first place.*

As Pennington leafs through the papers for Linnet and Simon, Fanthorp comes into the saloon. After signing the first document, Linnet begins reading through the documents thoroughly, despite Pennington's assurances that this is unnecessary. Simon tells Pennington that Linnet is far more careful than he is when it comes to signing documents. Fanthorp interrupts to say how much he admires Linnet's businesslike manner, annoying Pennington. Pennington suggests finishing up signing the papers some other time. Linnet says they should go outside, and she leaves the saloon with Simon and Pennington.

Again, this scene might seem fairly innocuous, but since it was also revealed in the first chapter that Fanthorp's law firm has an interest in Linnet (and that they sent him specifically because of a letter in which she mentioned seeing Pennington), it seems clear that Fanthorp's intervention here is very purposeful. Pennington's annoyance drives home the fact that he and Fanthorp have competing interests, though Linnet and Simon both seem unaware of this.

Still in the saloon, Poirot surveys his surroundings and sees Miss Van Schuyler chastising her younger cousin Cornelia again. Miss Bowers, the nurse, enters with Miss Van Schuyler's medicine. They all leave.

Though no crime has been committed yet, Poirot always surveys his surroundings, so that when there is a crime, he can verify alibis.

Mr. Ferguson remarks to Poirot that he'd like to "scrag that dame" (meaning Miss Van Schuyler). He calls her a parasite, then says that Linnet is just as bad because she became one of the richest women in England without doing any work. Poirot asks how Ferguson knows she's so rich, and Ferguson angrily replies that he heard it from a working-class man that a "fop" like Poirot would never speak to. Ferguson remarks that all the idle rich deserve to be shot, startling Poirot.

Ferguson's exclamation that he'd like to shoot the rich might seem like a serious red flag in a murder novel, but because he is often all talk, it's not sure how seriously the claim should be taken.

Ferguson asks Poirot what he does for a living, and if he's a middle man. Poirot replies he's actually a top man, since he's an independent detective. Ferguson accuses him of being on Linnet's payroll, but Poirot maintains he has no connection to her or Simon, he's just on vacation. Ferguson responds that he himself is on the boat to "study conditions."

Though Poirot is generally a heroic and humble character, this is one moment where he shows his pride. Ferguson's insults prompt Poirot to defend himself and his vocation as a detective.

Poirot decides to leave the saloon and wander around the boat. He sees a woman with "a dark, piquant, Latin face" talking guiltily with a muscular engineer, but he can't hear the conversation. As he continues, he's surprised by Mrs. Otterbourne coming out of a cabin door. She complains about seasickness and how Rosalie has left her alone. Poirot urges her to return to her cabin so that she doesn't get swept overboard, and she follows his advice.

It's unclear who the woman talking to the engineer is, but the fact that she's speaking "guiltily" could point to her involvement in something nefarious. On another note, Mrs. Otterbourne's complaining and her dependence on her daughter may seem insignificant, but these details will determine later events.

Poirot continues walking and finds Rosalie sitting with Tim and Mrs. Allerton. Rosalie looks happy, until Poirot tells her that her mother needs her. She leaves. Mrs. Allerton and Tim discuss how Rosalie swings between being friendly and rude—Tim suggests she's spoiled, but Mrs. Allerton argues maybe she's just unhappy.

The way Rosalie's happiness dissipates at the mention of Mrs. Otterbourne establishes that much of her sulkiness can be attributed to her relationship with her mother. As predicted earlier, Tim and Rosalie spend time together because they are some of the only young people on board.

II. That night, Poirot sees Mrs. Allerton sitting next to Miss Van Schuyler, discussing aristocratic matters. Cornelia is out on the deck, listening to Dr. Bessner discuss Egyptology. Tim and Rosalie are at the deck rail, discussing how awful the world is. Poirot feels glad that he's not young anymore.

This short section intentionally sets a wistful mood. The characters are enjoying one final moment of peace before the action picks up and things start to get more intense.

CHAPTER TEN

On Monday morning, the *Karnak* steamer is moored on a bank of the **Nile** near a big temple, where four figures have been carved out of the side of a cliff. Cornelia, Fanthorp, and Simon, all comment on how magnificent it is. To Poirot only, Simon adds that he's really glad they took this trip because Linnet has been much happier—he thinks being forced to face Jacqueline directly has done the trick. Just then, Linnet walks up and leads her husband away.

Linnet leading Simon away from Poirot hints that Simon is mistaken about Linnet being happier—it seems that she's still worried about Jacqueline and doesn't want Simon to distract Poirot. Meanwhile, the book once again lays out where all the characters are, so that it is clear who is a possible culprit if anything should happen.

As the tour guide leads the whole group ashore, Poirot walks with Pennington. Poirot asks him about his boat ride over from the U.S. on the *Carmanic* and if he happened to meet some of Poirot's friends who were on the same boat. Pennington says he didn't.

Poirot is prodding Pennington because he suspects (correctly) that Pennington is lying about when he decided to take his trip to Egypt.

Poirot changes the topic to Linnet and Simon, asking Pennington if Linnet is in line to inherit a large fortune. Pennington confirms that this is common knowledge. Poirot muses that the recent slumps must be affecting anyone who owns stocks, though they both agree that Linnet is smart at business.

Poirot also suspects (correctly) that Pennington's sudden appearance might have something to do with Linnet's inheritance. He is insinuating that perhaps Pennington is responsible for losing some of her money, though he does so tactfully by referring to "slumps" instead of directly blaming Pennington for mismanagement.

The tour group stops by the four rock-hewn statues of Ramses. Signor Richetti ignores the tour guide's focus on the big statues and looks instead at reliefs of "Negro and Syrian captives" located near the base of the statues. Nearby, Dr. Bessner reads aloud from his book of Egyptology for Cornelia, until Miss Van Schuyler interrupts. They all proceed to an inner sanctuary of the temple.

Richetti's focus on the workers instead of the monument seems to signal that his politics are similar to Ferguson's. Although Dr. Bessner's reading from his book is perhaps supposed to depict him as boring, Cornelia still prefers his company over that of her cousin.

In the sanctuary, Linnet and Simon are standing together, when Simon suddenly says he finds the statues creepy and wants to get back outside. As they depart, they pass some "Nubian boys" who appear to be buried so that only their heads are visible. Simon gives them money for their "show."

Though Agatha Christie probably included this scene as an attempt to capture local color, it fits into the book's racist pattern of introducing nameless African characters who are only depicted to amuse or annoy European characters.

Outside, Linnet is content in the warm sun and becomes drowsy. Simon, too, becomes more relaxed, and he thinks to himself about how everything is fine and how "After all, one could trust Jackie—" Then there's a lot of shouting as Simon springs up, taking Linnet with him. A giant rock crashes down the cliff—it would have killed Linnet if she hadn't moved.

The boulder is the first real danger in the story, foreshadowed by the falling rocks that Poirot saw earlier from the observation saloon. It seems far too coincidental that the rock was aimed directly for Linnet, suggesting that someone may have had a hand in pushing it.

Poirot and Tim run to the frightened Linnet and Simon. An angry Simon says, "God damn her!" He looks amazed, however, when the party gets back to the boat and they see Jacqueline walking off the boat and just coming ashore. Simon tells Poirot about his relief, and Poirot says he knew what Simon was thinking.

Poirot, like many of the other characters, naturally assumes that Jacqueline was the one to push the boulder. But as he goes back to the boat, he finds she has a perfect alibi. Did she have an accomplice, or does this mean that the real (attempted) killer is someone else with a motive?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The group arrives Wadi Halfa at night. The next morning, the group goes on an expedition to ascend the Second Cataract (except Signor Richetti, who insists on making a different, undisclosed trip). All take donkeys except Poirot and Mrs. Allerton, who walk. Poirot asks Mrs. Allerton what the word "fey" means, and she says it's "the kind of exalted happiness that comes before a disaster." Poirot comments that he finds it odd that Mrs. Allerton used the word yesterday so shortly before the boulder almost killed Linnet. Mrs. Allerton realizes she likes talking to Poirot, perhaps in part because her son Tim is so rude to him.

Signor Richetti's absence is suspicious, though it's not clear how, if at all, it relates to Linnet and her fortune. Mrs. Allerton's use of a word relating to disaster just before the boulder incident is also a bit suspicious, as this could hint that she somehow knew about it ahead of time.

Meanwhile, Tim and Rosalie are talking. Rosalie says Tim is lucky to have a mother like Mrs. Allerton. He wants to return the compliment but can't bring himself to say the same about Mrs. Otterbourne.

This brief scene shows how Tim and Rosalie are both similar and different: while they both have overbearing mothers, other people find Mrs. Allerton likable, but the same can't necessarily be said about Mrs. Otterbourne.

Miss Van Schuyler, who wasn't physically able to make the ascent of the Second Cataract, stayed near the launch area with Miss Bowers. Miss Van Schuyler laments that Cornelia didn't stay behind with her and instead went with the young man Ferguson; Miss Bowers corrects her and says she actually saw Cornelia with Dr. Bessner.

Cornelia is using her freedom to escape her cousin and meet some of the other passengers. Still, the characters she gravitates toward are Ferguson and Dr. Bessner, who, though not nearly as overbearing as Miss Van Schuyler, both definitely like to hear themselves talk.

When the party gets back to the *Karnak*, Linnet is surprised to find a telegram for her and immediately rips it open. An angry Signor Richetti snatches the telegram away from her, and she realizes she grabbed the wrong telegram, thinking it said "Ridgeway," not "Richetti." He doesn't take Linnet's apology very well, and she leaves angrily with Simon.

Richetti's anger is seemingly an exaggerated reaction to an innocent mistake. This, combined with his mysterious insistence on leaving the tour group earlier make him a suspicious character.

Poirot then notices Jacqueline de Bellefort clutching the railing. She looks possessed and starts mumbling about how "They've got beyond me. […] I can't—I can't hurt them anymore…" She regrets coming on the trip and says she'd sooner kill Simon than see him and Linnet happy. She leaves abruptly.

Thought Jacqueline seemed in control when she made her entrance at the Cataract Hotel, she's now beginning to lose her nerve. She is, ironically, doing to herself exactly what she's been attempting to do to Linnet.

After Jacqueline leaves, Poirot is surprised to feel a hand on his shoulder from Colonel Race, an old acquaintance that he met at a strange (and deadly) dinner party in London a year ago. Race explains that he's making the return journey on the *Karnak*, and they decide to have a drink. As they talk, Poirot notes that a government boat would be faster than a tourist one like the *Karnak*, at which point Race admits that he's there on business. He's after a man who led some rioters and has committed five or six murders and who is supposedly on the *Karnak* under an assumed name.

Colonel Race is a recurring character in Agatha Christie novels, who previously helped Poirot solve a case in Cards on the Table. *Though he is not as well-known as Poirot, he is the lead detective in other books. His appearance here, halfway through the journey, marks a turning point in the story. The fact that he is looking for a murderous political agitator is also significant, as Richetti and Ferguson have shown an interest in radical politics.*

Poirot admits to Race that he's uneasy about the atmosphere on the boat. He recounts some recent events for Race, not using names, but calling the passengers "Person A" and "Person B." Poirot reveals that he advised Linnet and Simon to leave the *Karnak* and go onto Khartoum instead, but they didn't listen. He hopes there will be no disaster but says he is afraid.

Chapter Eleven ends on an ominous note. Poirot senses that there will be a murder, and that there's nothing that he can do to stop it.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The next evening, Cornelia stands inside the temple of Abu Simbel, which the *Karnak* visited previously on the voyage out (although that time was during the day). She remarks to Ferguson that she wishes Dr. Bessner were there, but Ferguson responds that he can't stand Bessner. He tries to tell her she's being bullied, both by Dr. Bessner and by Miss Van Schuyler, but Cornelia protests. Cornelia talks about how she's not as elegant as Linnet, but Ferguson retorts that Linnet is "the sort of woman who ought to be shot as an example." Cornelia blames his bad mood on his digestion, and Ferguson gives up in exasperation.

Ferguson's remarks to Cornelia that she's being bullied seem to be accurate, but they're also self-serving, since he is trying to present himself in a better light. Ferguson's insistence that Linnet "ought to be shot" might sound shocking, but he's said the same thing before and has proven that he doesn't always follow up on his grand pronouncements.

Cornelia returns to the observation saloon, where Miss Van Schuyler (accompanied by Miss Bowers) is talking with Dr. Bessner. Fanthorp is seated nearby, while Simon and Linnet are playing bridge with Pennington and Race, and Poirot is yawning in a corner. Miss Van Schuyler tells Poirot that she recognizes him, though she didn't realize it until that moment. She then leaves with Cornelia and Miss Bowers.

This passage puts all the characters into position for what will be a very important scene. The ominous foreshadowing at the end of the previous chapter creates suspense about what will happen to disrupt the relative peace here. The fact that a murder has yet to happen halfway through the book also helps build suspense, as it subverts expectations about the mystery genre (crimes usually happen closer to the start of mystery novels).

Poirot leaves the saloon for the deck and comes upon Jacqueline. Poirot admits to her that he's been extremely tired lately. Jacqueline says it's just been that kind of day and wishes him a good night. Poirot heads to his cabin.

The fact that Poirot is heading to bed is important, because it means he won't be able to witness firsthand whatever happens next.

II. Cornelia, having helped Miss Van Schuyler to bed, comes back to the saloon with some needlework. Simon, Linnet, Race, and Pennington are still playing bridge. Jacqueline comes up to Cornelia and begins making conversation. Jacqueline calls the evening "A real honeymoon night" then looks over at Linnet. She orders a strong drink then shoots a glance at Simon, making him anxious. Taking the drink, she says, "Well, here's to crime." She begins humming to herself: "*He was her man and he did her wrong…*"

Jacqueline's interest in the honeymoon table, combined with the song she sings, are both surely signs that a conflict is brewing. She even jokes about it saying, "Well, here's to crime."

Simon makes a bad play in bridge, and Linnet declares that she's sleepy. Race and Pennington agree that they are too, while Simon says he'll have a drink before retiring. Cornelia also gets ready to leave, but Jacqueline implores her not to, so she stays a little longer. Later, Cornelia tries to leave again, and Jacqueline forbids her again. Cornelia worries that Jacqueline is drinking too much. Fanthorp, meanwhile, sticks to himself and reads a book.

Simon's poor bridge playing calls back to Poirot's earlier assessment that Simon isn't particularly bright. This could mean that if he's involved in the death that's going to happen, he won't be particularly clever at covering his tracks. Meanwhile, Jacqueline's insistence that Cornelia stay behind—and the fact that she repeats the request—seems suspicious. But since Jacqueline is drunk, it isn't clear if she's acting rationally.

Jacqueline asks Cornelia to talk about herself. Cornelia does so, although she's more used to listening than talking. Jacqueline, meanwhile, seems to be interested in something else. Suddenly she turns to Simon and tells him he should ring the bell to ask the stewards for another drink. Simon replies that they've gone to bed and that she's had enough to drink. They argue, and Cornelia tries to leave, but Jacqueline says she needs her support. Fanthorp pretends not to notice the argument as he leaves the saloon.

The cruel joke in this scene is that Cornelia finally gets a chance to talk about herself, but Jacqueline only asks her to do that so she can go ahead making her own plans. She seems to be plotting something against Simon, as her insistence on him ordering another drink and on Cornelia staying in the saloon is peculiar. Fanthorp doesn't want to get involved—a trait of his that will be brought up again, later in the book.

Jacqueline tells Simon she'd rather kill him than see him with another woman. Suddenly, she pulls out a gun and shoots at him. Simon falls, while Cornelia screams and fetches Fanthorp back. The shot seems to have hit Simon's leg—he's holding a crimson-stained handkerchief just below his knee. Jacqueline is paralyzed by what she's done and apologizes. Simon tells Fanthorp to help them avoid a scandal over the whole incident. Jacqueline says she wishes she were dead. Simon orders them to get Jacqueline away from him and call Miss Bowers and Dr. Bessner. He insists that they shouldn't disturb Linnet over this.

This passage is shocking because after all the mentions of characters who want to shoot Linnet, it is actually Simon who Jacqueline shoots at. There is a lot of commotion, and the events around the shooting will be revisited several times, and the specific cast of characters who witness the event will become significant. Jacqueline's apparent regret isn't a surprise, given how anxious she'd been earlier in the day.

Fanthorp pulls Jacqueline aside and tells her to pull herself together. Eventually, she does. Miss Bowers arrives and leads Jacqueline away. Fanthorp hurries to find Dr. Bessner and tell him what's happened. By the time Dr. Bessner arrives, Simon is breathing heavily by an open window, looking pale. Dr. Bessner examines the bone and notes that it's fractured, with a massive loss of blood. Fanthorp, Bessner and Cornelia take Simon back to be operated on. After a successful procedure, Dr. Bessner gives Simon a sedative. Before Simon passes out, he asks Fanthorp to go back and find Jacqueline's pistol.

Miss Bowers takes Jacqueline away, and Dr. Bessner takes Simon—which is important because, at least with the information currently available, Miss Bowers and Dr. Bessner are reliable characters who have nothing in particular to gain or lose from the Linnet-Jacqueline-Simon love triangle. Bessner confirms that Simon's wound is real and gives him a sedative, meaning he'll be out for the rest of the night.

Miss Bowers meets Fanthorp by Jacqueline's cabin and says she just gave her a morphine injection. A few minutes later, Fanthorp comes back to Bessner's cabin and reveals that he can't find the pistol—it's not under the settee where Jacqueline kicked it earlier. Unsure what to make of this, the two men separate.

Like Simon, Jacqueline will also be sedated for the rest of the night. The missing pistol is a major clue and one that Poirot will return to again and again as he considers the case.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The next morning, Poirot has just finished shaving when Race comes to his room and informs him that Linnet has been killed by a bullet to the head. Poirot recalls a girl's voice in his head: "I'd like to put my dear little pistol against her head and just press the trigger." Poirot and Race discuss the matter and agree that the murderer probably didn't come from shore; it must be someone on the boat. They go to the cabin to see what Dr. Bessner can tell them.

The death of Linnet is both a complete shock and something that has been hinted at for the entire first half of the novel. Poirot's first thought is that the culprit has to be Jacqueline. The confined space of the boat means that Poirot and Race can rule out an outsider being involved.

Dr. Bessner tells Poirot and Race that the pistol shot was point-blank to the head while Linnet was asleep. Poirot finds this shocking because he suspects Jacqueline but feels that such an act does not fit her psychology. Poirot then notices that before she died, Linnet seems to have written the letter **J** using some blood on her finger. Poirot says that it reminds him of old mystery stories, and that perhaps Linnet did not write the letter and it was instead written by a murderer with a taste for the old-fashioned. Poirot does agree, however, that the **J** stands for Jacqueline—and Jacqueline recently told him of her desire to kill Linnet.

Poirot is a good judge of human nature and psychology, so when he says that the method of the crime doesn't match with Jacqueline's psychology, there is reason to take his claim seriously. The J is a curious clue that plays with the conventions of the mystery genre. Based on past mystery stories, the most likely person to have written the J would be Linnet, trying to show the identity of her killer. But Poirot raises the possibility that perhaps a murderer left the J to intentionally confuse the trail by pointing toward Jacqueline.

Race asks Bessner about the time of Linnet's death, and Bessner puts it between midnight and two a.m. Race then asks about Simon, and Bessner replies that he's asleep in Bessner's cabin. Race didn't know about Simon's injury the previous night, but Bessner explains. Race decides they must gather all the facts.

This estimate for the time of death seems to place it after the shooting of Simon's leg. Again, there's no reason to assume that Bessner isn't reliable.

The manager of the *Karnak* waits by the smoking room, which he gives to Poirot and Race for the investigation before going back to his work. Race asks Bessner for the whole story of the previous night, and then afterward tells a hypothetical version of the murder in which Jacqueline murders Linnet. Dr. Bessner, however, claims this version of events is not possible. To begin with, he argues that Jacqueline wouldn't have written the **J** on the wall to incriminate herself. He then notes that, even more importantly, Jacqueline couldn't have committed the murder because she was sedated on morphine under Miss Bowers's care the whole night.

Race and Poirot begin laying out the facts of the case, both for their own benefit and for the benefit of the audience. The fact that Jacqueline had to be sedated the previous night is significant because it means that, barring some sort of unforeseen trickery, it was not physically possible for her to have committed the murder.

Poirot asks who discovered the murder, and Race reveals it was Louise Bourget, Linnet's maid. Race says Simon must be informed, then dismisses Bessner. Alone with Poirot, Race says he'll follow Poirot's lead. Poirot proposes first getting the story straight by speaking with Fanthorp and Cornelia, since the disappearing pistol is an important clue. They hypothesize together without getting anywhere until Fanthorp and Cornelia come in.

Poirot and Race are experienced detectives, so they run an orderly operation rather than acting quickly based on emotion. Poirot immediately identifies the pistol as being an important part of the mystery.

Cornelia is in shock as she begins to tell Race and Poirot her story. They establish that she last saw Linnet alive at 11:20 p.m. Pennington left for bed a few minutes after, leaving Jacqueline, Simon, Fanthorp, and Cornelia in the saloon. They retell the story of Jacqueline shooting Simon, establishing that the shot must've gone off around 12:20 a.m. They also establish that after Linnet left the saloon, no one else did at any point. Because Jacqueline was never left alone at any point (Simon feared she might commit suicide), she has a perfect alibi.

Again, the confined location is significant because it limits the number of characters who would've had an opportunity to commit the murder. The times indicated here help narrow the list of potential suspects even further.

Cornelia goes on to describe how Jacqueline dropped the pistol, then kicked it away under the settee, as if she hated it. Fanthorp recalls going back to look for the gun at 12:30 a.m. Since he was only away from the saloon for five minutes, that means that in the five minutes before 12:30 a.m., someone who knew the location of the gun must have gone to move it. Fanthorp admits that, since he went out the starboard door, someone could've been watching from the port door.

Fanthorp is not an entirely disinterested party—he intervened earlier in Linnet's business with Pennington. Still, his testimony about the missing pistol seems to line up with the other accounts. The fact that someone could've been watching from the port door expands the possibilities of who could've been involved.

Race notes that no one—as far as he knows—heard the shot that killed Linnet. He and Poirot continue to ask Fanthorp and Cornelia for more information. At one point, when they ask Fanthorp why he's on the trip, he hesitates before ultimately saying "pleasure." Race asks him if he heard anything unusual after going back to his cabin and Fanthorp remembers he may have heard a splash around 1 a.m.

Fanthorp gives a suspicious answer when asked why he's on the boat. His testimony about a splash at 1 a.m. will be compared to similar statements by other passengers later in the book.

Race and Poirot turn their attention to Cornelia. She claims she's never met Linnet before and that she didn't hear the splash that Fanthorp did (although she wouldn't have, based on where her cabin is located). She and Fanthorp leave and send in Miss Bowers.

Cornelia doesn't have much to add, although since she doesn't seem to have any connection to Linnet, she is a reliable source.

Miss Bowers enters and gives her information to Race and Poirot. She tells them there's nothing particularly wrong with Miss Van Schuyler and that she just likes having a nurse around. Miss Bowers is able to confirm that Jacqueline was with her the whole night and didn't leave her cabin. This seems to be an airtight alibi, so Poirot and Race are left to wonder who could have possibly shot Linnet.

With two of the most likely suspects—Jacqueline and Simon—both having fairly tight alibis, the question becomes whether another character committed the murder, or if some assumption about their alibis is, in fact, incorrect.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Still in the smoking room, Race and Poirot discuss the incident from a few days earlier when someone tried to kill Linnet with a boulder. They agree that Simon, Mrs. Allerton, Tim, Miss Van Schuyler, and Miss Bowers couldn't have done it because Poirot saw them at the time when the boulder fell.

Race and Poirot eliminate names in order to create a more manageable list of suspects—an important part of the whodunnit genre.

Jacqueline now enters the smoking room and pleads that she didn't kill Linnet last night. She admits, however, that she can't think of anyone with a motive except herself. Race has a thought and suddenly leaves the room. Meanwhile, Jacqueline and Poirot recall a conversation they had at the hotel (where Jacqueline said she wanted to put a bullet in Linnet's head) and they agree that it could be more than a coincidence that the murder happened that way—that maybe someone overheard. Jacqueline seems to believe the murderer is a man, though Poirot won't say either way.

Race's role in the investigation is a little more official than Poirot's, since he's been tasked with finding the murderous political agitator and has access to resources that an independent detective like Poirot doesn't. Jacqueline seems to be very cooperative with the investigation, perhaps because she knows the blame could be placed on her, at least based on motive.

Just then Dr. Bessner comes in and says Simon would like to speak with Poirot. Dr. Bessner reassures Jacqueline that Simon won't die. When Poirot arrives, Simon is propped up in Dr. Bessner's cabin. Simon stammers that he's in shock over Linnet's death but that he's sure Jacqueline didn't do it. He also admits, however, that he knows of no one other than Jacqueline who wanted her dead. He considers both Windlesham and Sir George Wode, who might have motives, but finds the idea that they'd be connected to a murder in Egypt too unbelievable.

Simon also agrees to cooperate with the investigation. His suggestions about Windlesham and Sir George Wode probably aren't helpful, even though they would have a motive.

Poirot tells Simon about a conversation he had with Linnet where she said that she felt like everyone around her was an enemy. Simon explains that Linnet may have seen a name on the passenger list that upset her, someone who was a rival of Linnet's father, although Simon doesn't know the name. Dr. Bessner chimes in that Ferguson may also have had a motive.

Simon's suggestion that maybe Linnet saw a name on the passenger list that upset her is also unhelpful. It would generally be considered breaking the rules of a whodunnit to only introduce the murderer after the murder has already been committed. When questioned about the passenger list, Simon can't provide many details.

Poirot asks Simon if Linnet had any valuable jewelry. Simon says she had some extremely valuable **pearls**, to which Poirot muses that robbery could be a motive. Louise Bourget the maid comes in and tells Poirot that the last time she saw Linnet alive was just after eleven, when she helped her undress. Poirot asks if she saw or heard anything, and she says that from her cabin she would've been unable to. She talks hypothetically about how she might've seen something if she'd been unable to sleep and then pleadingly throws out her hands toward Simon. He reassures her that he'll look after her and she isn't being accused of anything.

The pearls, which appeared prominently on Linnet the previous night, will play a central part in the mystery—though of course, it will be more complicated than a simple robbery. Louise Bourget's behavior is strange, as she alludes to possibly seeing something and seems afraid that she'll be accused of the murder.

Louise brings up someone else who had a grudge against Linnet. She says there is an engineer on the boat, Fleetwood, who wanted to marry one of Linnet's former maids, Marie, but Linnet intervened. Simon doesn't know anything about this. Poirot asks about Linnet's **pearls**, and Louise says she saw Linnet wearing them the previous night. Poirot asks if she saw them the next morning. When Louise says she can't remember, Poirot reveals that he looked, and that they were not on Linnet's bedside table.

Louise's revelation explains the conversation Poirot overheard earlier between a woman and an engineer (and this also explains the conversation in the first chapter where Joanna mentions Linnet stopping a marriage). As always, Poirot is a step ahead of the other characters—he thought to look for the pearls before it was even revealed that they were missing.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Louise searches Linnet's belongings. Other than the **pearls,** which are definitely missing, everything else in order. Later, walking along the deck, Race tells Poirot about his theory that the splash Fanthorp heard may have been Jacqueline's pistol being thrown overboard. Race suggests a search of the boat for the gun, but Poirot responds that they should wait before revealing what they know.

The confirmation that the pearls are missing adds another layer to the mystery, and the splash that Fanthorp heard continues to be another crucial element.

Poirot admits that the missing **pearls** make it look like robbery but finds it odd, since a robbery might cause a search while everybody is still stuck on the boat. Race and Poirot wonder if Louise knew more than she said. They agree they don't trust her, but Poirot stops short of connecting her to the actual murder. Instead, he thinks it's more likely she was involved with the robbery. They discuss finding the engineer Fleetwood that Louise mentioned when she spoke with them earlier.

Poirot hints that the missing pearls may not have been stolen, since a robbery in a confined space like the boat would only draw attention to the crime. His suspicion of Louise also matches up with her guilty behavior during her earlier conversation with Simon.

Race asks if there are any other "possibilities," and Poirot brings up Pennington, the American trustee. He found it suspicious earlier when Pennington was trying to get Linnet to sign documents without reading them. Simon will sign anything, so Poirot muses if perhaps Pennington could have murdered Linnet in order to work with Simon. Race admits it's possible but says there's no evidence.

Pennington has one of the strongest motives out of the characters, but Race points out that none of the available evidence so far seems to point toward him.

Race then brings up Ferguson as a suspect. He also brings up "my fellow"—the agitator and murderer that Race has been looking for on the boat. They both admit that it's unlikely Linnet was murdered by Race's suspect, although Poirot raises that possibility that maybe Linnet discovered the man's true identity and therefore needed to be silenced.

The link between Race's man and the murderer isn't clear yet (if there's any link at all). Poirot's suggestion that perhaps Linnet discovered the man's secret identity is arguably the most plausible of the possibilities.

Soon after, Fleetwood is brought into the smoking room, and Poirot remembers seeing him talking with Louise earlier. Fleetwood is alarmed when Poirot says they know a reason why Fleetwood would be mad at Linnet. After some protestation, Fleetwood admits that Louise's story is generally accurate and that Linnet really did interfere with his potential marriage to Marie. Fleetwood was angry to see Linnet lording about on the boat in her expensive **pearls**, but he maintains he didn't shoot her and that he was asleep in his bunk, with an alibi from a fellow worker.

Fleetwood's anger over Linnet preventing his marriage underscores her selfishness, though she seemed to think of her interference as doing Marie and Fleetwood a favor. Despite having a solid motive, Fleetwood remains a minor character in the story. Though his anger toward Linnet seems genuine, he seems to have a solid alibi.

Race says the next thing to do is establish the time of the crime. Poirot comments that he himself heard nothing—that he slept so soundly it was almost as if he had been drugged. They decide to speak with Tim and Mrs. Allerton, who are soon brought in. Mrs. Allerton says she went to bed at 10:30 p.m., but she vaguely recalls hearing a splash and running footsteps, perhaps within an hour of falling asleep. After establishing that Mrs. Allerton doesn't personally know Linnet, Poirot asks if Mrs. Allerton had ever suffered any financial loss due to Linnet's father, but she denies it.

Poirot's comment that he slept as if he had been drugged may, in fact, be true. Since Poirot's reputation precedes him, a smart murderer would specifically try to keep Poirot from observing important events. There is precedent in other Christie stories, like Murder on the Orient Express, where the murderer interacts directly with Poirot. The Allertons are not major suspects in the case, though comparing the testimony of various passengers will be important in the coming chapters.

Tim gets asked the same questions as Mrs. Allerton. He says he got into bed at 10:30 p.m., then read for a little over half an hour. After that, he heard a man's voice saying goodnight—Race interjects that this was him speaking to Linnet. Later, after going to sleep, Tim remembers waking up to a commotion and hearing somebody call Fanthorp. Amid the commotion, he heard a splash. Poirot wonders if the splash wasn't in fact a shot, and Tim says he did hear a cork pop. He wonders if the pop was actually the shot, or if the pop confused him and made him think of the splash of a drink being poured out. That's all Tim knows, so they let him leave.

Tim doesn't add a whole lot of new information and isn't sure of what he saw and heard. Overall, his testimony seems to line up with what other passengers have said so far.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Race looks over a deck plan of the *Karnak* and deduces that Miss Van Schuyler had a good chance of hearing something. He and Poirot invite her into the smoking room. Reluctantly, Miss Van Schuyler agrees to answer questions. She says she usually goes to bed at 10 p.m., but because Cornelia was late, she was up late the previous night.

The layout of the cabins is important because it determines who could have been a witness to what. Miss Van Schuyler has a particularly useful cabin for this purpose.

A light sleeper, Miss Van Schuyler remembers being woken up by Louise saying something loud in French. She remembers again waking up to the sound of someone in Linnet's cabin, followed by the sound of someone walking on the deck, then a splash. She places this event at 1:10 a.m. She did not hear a shot but admits that it may have been a shot that first awakened her.

Miss Van Schuyler is very precise in her testimony and more detailed than just about anyone else, perhaps as a reflection of her strict personality. Her recollection of hearing a splash lines up with Fanthorp's testimony.

Poirot asks if Miss Van Schuyler has any idea who made the splash—and he and Race are surprised to learn that Miss Van Schuyler knows exactly who it was. She looked out of her room and saw Rosalie leaning over the railing. Rosalie didn't see Mrs. Van Schuyler and left by going around the stern of the boat.

The fact that Miss Van Schuyler saw Rosalie is surprising because until this moment, there hasn't been much reason to think Rosalie had anything to do with the murder.

Just then, the manager of the *Karnak* arrives in the smoking room and delivers to Race a wet velvet stole wrapped around a pink-stained handkerchief and a small pistol, which was retrieved from the **Nile**. Poirot identifies it as Jacqueline's, and Race confirms that bullets are the right type and that two bullets have been fired from the gun. Miss Van Schuyler identifies the velvet stole as her own. Race says the stole was used as a silencer. Race asks Miss Van Schuyler if she had any previous acquaintance with Linnet, but Miss Van Schuyler says she only knew of her.

The recovery of the gun is also surprising and represents a significant step forward in the case. Out of everything that was retrieved from the Nile, the pink-stained handkerchief is perhaps the strangest, since it isn't clear what purpose it would've served to the murderer. It, too, will be an important clue in the remainder of the book.

Miss Van Schuyler leaves, and Race and Poirot discuss how strange it is that Rosalie should be involved. Poirot points out an inconsistency: why, if the murderer seemed to leave evidence pointing to Jacqueline would the same murderer throw away the pistol, which is the most damning piece of evidence against Jacqueline?

Poirot will keep coming back to the question of why the murderer would throw the gun away. He believes that people act logically, and in other Agatha Christie novels that feature him as the detective, this generally ends up being true—even if the logic is usually mysterious at first.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Still in the smoking room, Race and Poirot discuss next steps. They bring in Rosalie. Rosalie says she and her mother, Mrs. Otterbourne, went to bed before 11:00 p.m. They heard the commotion near Dr. Bessner's cabin but didn't know the reason for it until the next morning. Rosalie says she didn't leave her cabin all night, but she blushes when Poirot asks if she's certain she didn't throw something overboard on the starboard side of the boat.

There's dramatic irony underpinning this passage, as Rosalie doesn't know what Poirot, Race, and the reader know about her. Her reaction when Poirot reveals that Miss Van Schuyler saw her throw something overboard all but confirms that she was doing something that she didn't want to be seen doing.

Rosalie learns that Miss Van Schuyler supposedly witnessed her throwing something overboard; still, she denies it. She asks what else Miss Van Schuyler saw. Poirot says nothing, but he tells her about the sounds Van Schuyler heard in Linnet's cabin. Rosalie goes pale. Poirot says there are innocent reasons for throwing something overboard. Rosalie, though, maintains her denial about leaving her cabin and says she didn't kill Linnet. After Rosalie leaves, Poirot comments that he thinks neither Rosalie nor Miss Van Schuyler is being entirely honest.

Rosalie is trying to find out what Poirot and Race already know so that she doesn't get caught in another lie. Poirot, however, is too smart to give anything away. He says he doesn't suspect her because he wants her to cooperate—the fact that she still refuses means she's almost certainly trying to hide something.

Race and Poirot proceed with questioning the passengers, and next on the list is Mrs. Otterbourne. Mrs. Otterbourne knows nothing but imagines what happened as a crime of passion. Race interrupts her speculations, telling her that she's been helpful. Then after she leaves, he comments that it's a pity she wasn't murdered instead. Poirot consoles him that there's still time.

True to her character, Mrs. Otterbourne is too involved with herself to be of any real use to the case. This passage is mainly included for comic effect.

Next up in the smoking room with Poirot and Race is Signor Richetti. He answers quickly that he was asleep some time before 11 p.m. and that he heard no shot. He did, however, hear a big splash near his porthole on the starboard side, sometime roughly between midnight and 2 a.m.

As the interrogations go on, there is less need to go into detail about them. Richetti is not a major person of interest given his lack of a clear motive, and his account doesn't differ much from the previous ones. His mention of the splash further corroborates this detail.

Poirot and Race move on to questioning Ferguson. He has a cabin on the starboard side and thinks he remembers hearing one shot. After being prompted, he also remembers a splash. Poirot asks if Ferguson left his cabin. Ferguson says no, then adds that it's a pity he didn't get to help in the murder. Poirot asks if it was Fleetwood who told him that Linnet was so wealthy. Ferguson gets angry and says if they try to pin the murder on Fleetwood, they'll have to deal with Ferguson first. After Ferguson leaves, Poirot and Race agree that it's unlikely Ferguson is the agitator Race has been looking for because he doesn't seem serious. They decide to bring in Pennington.

As with Mrs. Otterbourne, the passages centered on Ferguson are often included for comic effect because of his character's lack of self-awareness. Ferguson is so desperate to be taken seriously that he even adds that he wishes he could have helped in the murder—and this still is not enough to get Poirot and Race to seriously consider him as a suspect. Ferguson may be hiding something, but it's probably not that he committed the murder.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

When Pennington is brought into the smoking room, he acts shocked and saddened at the murder of Linnet. Race asks if he heard anything. Pennington says that his cabin is next to Dr. Bessner's, so he heard the sounds from in there, but didn't know what was going on. He went to bed after 11:00 p.m. and didn't hear any shots. Pennington believes Jacqueline is the murderer and is reluctant to accept Poirot and Race's evidence about her alibi. He looks nervous when Poirot wonders whether anyone would have a motive to kill Linnet based on her father's the business dealings. Poirot asks where Pennington was when the boulder almost killed Linnet, and Pennington says he was in the temple. After Pennington leaves, Poirot reveals that Pennington's story about being in the temple was a lie. They agree Pennington looked nervous in his interview.

Pennington is one of the characters with the most motive and opportunity, so his interrogation is important enough to start off a new chapter. He certainly seems ill at ease during his interview, especially when Poirot brings up the incident with the boulder in the temple (since Pennington is one of the characters who was at the scene when the incident happened). Poirot does not tell Pennington that he already knows Pennington's story about being in the temple is a lie—as a master detective, Poirot knows when to withhold information and when to reveal it.

Race and Poirot plan to announce at lunch that the **pearls** have been stolen, and that no one can leave the dining saloon while a search for the pearls is being conducted. Race shows Poirot a document that recaps all the most relevant facts about the case, including alibis, clues, and possible motives. Poirot agrees with Race's assessment, but he adds that he still can't figure out why the pistol was thrown overboard.

Again, Race and Poirot are careful about how they reveal new information, since it could accidentally tip off the murderer. Race's document is a helpful reminder for the reader, clearly laying out the information about the case that he and Poirot trying to solve.

Poirot asks Race, who knows more about guns, if the velvet stole would actually muffle the sound of the gun firing, as the murderer seemed to intend. Race says no, and that a person who knows about firearms would know that. Regardless, Race adds, the gun is small enough that it wouldn't make much noise. They identify the pink-stained handkerchief found with the gun and stole as "a man's handkerchief—but not a gentleman's handkerchief," perhaps of the kind Fleetwood or Ferguson would own. Poirot remarks that it was odd how peacefully Linnet was lying dead, and Race says he gets the feeling Poirot is trying to tell him something, but he can't figure out what.

Here again, Race's particular expertise comes in handy, emphasizing how well he and Poirot work as a team. The information Race provides about the silencer will be important to solving the case. At the end of the chapter, Poirot even withholds information from Race—Poirot likes being dramatic, which is useful from a narrative standpoint because it means Agatha Christie can withhold important information from the reader until the right moment.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A steward comes to the smoking room and tells Poirot that Simon would like to meet with him. When Poirot arrives at Dr. Bessner's cabin, where Simon is still recuperating, Simon asks Poirot if it would be okay for him to see Jacqueline. Poirot agrees to get her. When Poirot finds Jacqueline in the observation saloon, she's surprised Simon wants to see her but agrees to come.

It's expected that Jacqueline would want to see Simon, given how fixated on him she's been and worried she was about him. But it is a little odd that Simon would want to see her, given that she shot Simon and may have been involved in Linnet's murder. This hints that perhaps Simon is closer with Jacqueline than he's let on.

Back in Dr. Bessner's cabin, Jacqueline pleads to Simon that she didn't kill Linnet and that she wants his forgiveness for shooting him the previous night. Simon reassures her that he'll be okay. Poirot decides to leave them alone.

Again, the ease with which Simon believes Jacqueline and accepts her apology hints that the two of them are closer than they may have let on to Linnet and others on the ship.

Outside the cabin, Poirot sees Cornelia leaning over the rail. They talk about the weather, and Poirot remarks, "When the sun shines you cannot see the moon. But when the sun is gone—ah, when the sun is gone." Cornelia doesn't understand.

Poirot still has his mind on the case, as he recalls the sun and moon metaphor that both Simon and Jacqueline used earlier (to describe how Simon was too blinded by Linnet to pay attention to Jacqueline anymore).

As Poirot is walking, he hears fragments of an argument from inside a cabin. He knocks and asks for Rosalie, who appears. She is sulky but agrees to speak with him. They walk to the stern part of the deck where they're alone. After talking a little, Poirot says bluntly that he knows Mrs. Otterbourne drinks heavily and in secret. He suggests that the previous evening Rosalie stole her mother's alcohol and tossed it overboard. Rosalie admits he's right.

Rosalie has been keeping a secret for the whole trip, and Poirot finally reveals that he knows about it. This is despite the fact that Mrs. Otterbourne lied to Poirot's face earlier when she said she rarely drank anything alcoholic. With this information in the open, it seems that Rosalie's suspicious activity isn't related to the murder.

Rosalie explains that her mother, Mrs. Otterbourne, started drinking after her books stopped selling. Rosalie tried to stop her drinking, and her mother resented her for it. Poirot commends Rosalie for how she's handled it so far and promises not to tell anyone. He asks Rosalie again if she saw anybody around at all when she was throwing the alcohol overboard. After a very long pause, Rosalie says no, she didn't see anyone.

Mrs. Otterbourne was based on the real-life author Elinor Glyn. Given the fact that Agatha Christie makes Mrs. Otterbourne's character an alcoholic with poor sales figures, it seems safe to assume that Christie wasn't a fan of Glyn's work. Just when it seems like the mystery of Rosalie has been cleared up, however, her pause before answering Poirot implies that she's hiding something else—she likely saw something when she was throwing the alcohol overboard, but she won't admit it to Poirot.

CHAPTER TWENTY

At lunchtime, passengers begin arriving in the dining saloon. Tim is grumpy with Mrs. Allerton about being caught up in the murder investigation, although Mrs. Allerton considers their involvement only a technicality. They talk about Linnet's **pearls**, with Mrs. Allerton suspecting they are part of the crime and Tim arguing it's probably something totally unrelated.

The dining saloon is where Race is going to conduct his search for the pearls. Tim's insistence that the pearls have nothing to do with the murder is suspicious, given his own proximity to several missing jewelry cases.

Poirot comes to sit with Tim and Mrs. Allerton. They talk about Simon and how he's recovering. Poirot talks about Simon's strange psychology: he was bothered by Jacqueline stalking them, up until the point when he got shot, when suddenly all his anger seemed to go away.

Poirot has picked up on Simon's odd behavior. Again, for someone who was recently shot and who claimed not to care about Jacqueline when he married Linnet, he seems to be on strangely good terms with Jacqueline.

Poirot then asks Tim if his cousin Joanna Southwood resembles Linnet at all. Poirot then adds that he's been following Joanna in the news. Tim asks why—but before Poirot can answer, Jacqueline walks in, and Poirot stands to greet her. As Poirot sits again, he murmurs to himself, "I wonder if all young ladies with valuable jewels are as careless as [Linnet] was?" He then asks Tim if he has any previous experience being around during a robbery. Tim says no, but Mrs. Allerton corrects him, saying they were near a robbery. Tim disputes whether her version of the story is accurate but admits they were technically near a robbery at one point.

Poirot suspects that Joanna is involved in jewelry theft and that Tim is aiding her. While he's delicate with his questions, and Mrs. Allerton doesn't understand the subtext, enough information has been presented to make Tim a prime suspect for having stolen the pearls. His presence near other robberies (as well as his attempt to hide that from Poirot) only makes his proximity to this one more incriminating.

Poirot changes the subject to ask if either Tim or Mrs. Allerton has any experience with having packages shipped to them from England while traveling. They respond that, other than Tim occasionally receiving books, they don't get any such packages.

Poirot's other question about receiving packages is a little less clear, based on the information presented thus far, but it seems like he suspects Tim may have received a package related to the theft of the pearls.

While everyone is still in the saloon, Race makes a speech and announces the theft of the **pearls**, that he'll be searching the boat for them, and that everyone is to stay in the saloon until the search is complete. Poirot pulls Race aside and whispers something to him, which Race agrees is a good idea.

As planned, Race begins a search of all the passengers while they're still in the dining saloon. The book doesn't reveal what Poirot says to Race in order to build suspense.

Just then, a steward enters and tells Race that Miss Bowers has asked to speak with him urgently. He and Poirot go to meet her in the smoking room. Miss Bowers opens her handbag and reveals a string of **pearls**.

Chapter Twenty ends with a twist—it turns out that the search for the pearls is unnecessary because Miss Bowers already has them. The chapter leaves off on a cliffhanger, as Louise was clearly involved in the theft of the pearls (and possibly Linnet's murder), but it's unclear how.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Race is astonished as he looks at the **pearls** Miss Bowers has placed on the table. She explains that Miss Van Schuyler was the one to take the pearls from Linnet's cabin. It turns out Miss Van Schuyler is a kleptomaniac and Miss Bowers found the pearls in her stockings that morning. Miss Bowers didn't return the pearls earlier because of the murder and because she didn't want to cause a scandal. Poirot thanks Miss Bowers for coming forward.

It's possible Miss Bowers is lying, but kleptomania is a plausible explanation because it's consistent with Miss Van Schuyler acting like she has a secret. It's ironic that a woman as rich as Miss Van Schuyler would still be a kleptomaniac, and in some ways, this recalls the biblical story of the rich man taking the poor man's ewe lamb that Poirot quoted earlier (though, of course, Linnet is anything but poor).

Poirot asks seriously if Miss Van Schuyler's mental illness is so severe that it might lead her to commit murder, but Miss Bowers answers no, with no hesitation. Miss Van Schuyler does, however, suffer from partial hearing loss, according to Miss Bowers, which explains why she wouldn't have heard people moving around in Linnet's cabin.

It might be reasonable to expect, based on what Miss Bowers just revealed, that Miss Van Schuyler is a potential murderer—but since Miss Bowers is a reliable witness, her confident testimony puts that possibility to rest. Miss Van Schuyler's hearing loss is significant because it calls into question all of her previous testimony.

After Miss Bowers leaves, Poirot and Race discuss possibilities. Poirot believes part of Miss Van Schuyler's testimony may still be true—that she saw Rosalie—but he doubts that she heard what she claimed to hear. Poirot fills Race in about his previous conversation with Rosalie and how she was throwing away her mother, Mrs. Otterbourne's, alcohol. Since Van Schuyler is partly deaf, Poirot and Race deduce that the only one who would've had a chance to really hear what was going on was Pennington. They resolve to see him again with "the kid gloves removed."

As per usual, Race and Poirot recap some major plot points to help set the stakes. The book ups the suspense by making Pennington a character with key information—it's already clear that he is suspicious and that he has a potentially shady business interest in Linnet's affairs.

Just then, Poirot holds the **pearls** up to the light and licks them. He admits he's not an expert on precious gems, but he's fairly certain that these pearls are an imitation.

The fake pearls add a twist on top of a twist, as this may imply that Mrs. Bowers is covering up what happened to the real ones. Solving the mystery of where the pearls went will not be so easy after all.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Race and Poirot discuss the implications of the fake **pearls**. Poirot is sure Linnet was wearing the real pearls at dinner the previous evening. They wonder if Miss Van Schuyler stole fake pearls or if Miss Bowers made the whole kleptomania story up to cover her own thievery.

Race and Poirot lay out the facts—it's important to establish that the real pearls were, in fact, on the boat at some point, which narrows the possibilities of where they could have gone.

Race and Poirot begin a search of the cabins for the real **pearls**. They go through the rooms of Signor Richetti, Ferguson, Fanthorp, Louise, and Tim, finding no incriminating correspondence or handkerchiefs. They search especially carefully in Simon's cabin but find nothing. They return to Linnet's and the only thing that catches Poirot's eye is two little bottles of nail polish, one of which is called "Nailex Rose" and is empty except for a little bit of dark red liquid at the bottom. Poirot says there's something curious about this and that he needs to speak to Louise.

The Nailex Rose bottle may not seem particularly significant, but Poirot's interest in it should be taken as a signal that it is a vital clue. The red liquid in the bottom of the vial is too dark to be considered "Rose," suggesting someone replaced the contents with a different liquid. Dark red liquid could be used to fake blood—like Simon's leg wound—although Dr. Bessner did confirm that Simon's wound was real.

Race and Poirot continue the search, going through Miss Van Schuyler's cabin, their own cabins, Miss Bowers' cabin, and Rosalie and Mrs. Otterbourne's cabin without finding anything of note. While searching Dr. Bessner's cabin, they talk with the still-recuperating Simon, who confirms that Linnet didn't travel with imitation **pearls**. They find nothing. While checking Pennington's room, they find no pearls and all his documents seem to be legitimate. He does have a revolver in his drawer, but it's too big to be the one that killed Linnet.

Race and Poirot's search is fruitless, which deepens the mystery. Pennington in particular seems like someone who might've had incriminating documents pertaining to Linnet, but either he's being very careful or the issue with the documents is a misunderstanding.

After leaving Pennington's cabin, Poirot suggests Race search Jacqueline's cabin, Cornelia's cabin, and two empty cabins while Poirot goes back to speak to Simon. Poirot asks Simon if Linnet ever lent out her **pearls**. The question makes Simon embarrassed because he hasn't known Linnet long enough to be sure. When Poirot suggests perhaps Linnet lent the pearls to Jacqueline, Simon gets worked up and claims Jacqueline isn't a thief.

Though Simon doesn't know if Linnet ever lent out her pearls, it was revealed in the first chapter that Joanna got a good look at them. Poirot may seem to be asking innocent questions, but he is in fact prodding Simon to see what sort of reaction he gets.

At this moment, Race comes in to Dr. Bessner's cabin and announces to Poirot that he found nothing in his search. Just then, a steward and stewardess also come and announce that the search in the saloon was fruitless. Signor Richetti caused some trouble and had a gun on him (but not the kind that killed Linnet). Rosalie does, however, carry a small pistol. Meanwhile, they say, Louise can't be found.

The presence of other guns on board is significant and hints at the possibility of more trouble ahead. It's out of character that Rosalie would have a pistol, since she's been characterized as mostly passive and sulky thus far. It's perhaps less surprising that Richetti has a gun, particularly given his mysterious excursion away from the group earlier in the story.

Race wonders if Louise disappeared because she stole the **pearls**. He and Poirot begin a search for her, beginning with her cabin. At first, they don't find anything, although they notice that one of her shoes is resting at an odd angle. When they look under the bed to investigate, they find Louise's dead body.

The death of Louise is a shock because until the moment her body is discovered, she seemed like a minor character with little connection to the murder. Still, when Poirot interviewed her, she seemed to be holding back information—and perhaps what she knew was enough to get her killed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Race examines Louise's body and tells Poirot she has been dead for about an hour, stabbed through the heart. In her hands, she's holding a fragment of a thousand-franc note, leading Race to conclude that perhaps she was blackmailing the murderer. Poirot laments that they didn't think of this sooner. He doesn't find anything particularly significant about the fact that Louise was holding French money, since many travelers carry a mixture of currencies. He imagines the murder happened while she was in the act of counting her blackmail money. They agree the killing of Louise suggests a very bold criminal.

While characters like Linnet and Mrs. Otterbourne are meant to satirize the upper class, the book's depiction of the lower-class maid Louise could be read as a classist. Many characters in the story are greedy, but Louise is among those punished the most harshly for it. She is portrayed as nothing more than a low-life blackmailer and is arguably treated less sympathetically than the actual murderer. Still, her death fits with the pattern of characters in the story being undone by their own flaws.

Race calls in Dr. Bessner to examine Louise's body. He confirms that she has been dead for about an hour. Then, after walking with Poirot and Race back to his own cabin, Bessner notes that the murder weapon was very similar to a surgical knife, like the ones Dr. Bessner himself has. When they ask if perhaps one of Bessner's knives is missing, he becomes indignant but checks and confirms they're all accounted for. Race and Poirot depart, with Race muttering something and leaving Poirot alone.

A surgical knife is an unusual murder weapon and definitely suggests improvisation instead of careful planning. Dr. Bessner is an obvious candidate—perhaps too obvious. Simon might also know about the knives, but he's still out of commission in Bessner's cabin.

Poirot hears Jacqueline and Rosalie talking in Rosalie's cabin, with the door open. He asks them if they're talking of scandal, but an unusually happy Rosalie says they're just comparing lipstick. Poirot reveals what he just found out—that Louise has been killed and that, what's more, Poirot believes Louise had seen someone enter and leave Linnet's cabin the night of the murder.

Agatha Christie had a dark sense of humor, and there is a running joke in the book about Rosalie's happiness always being suddenly interrupted by bad news—in this case, a murder.

Cornelia comes upon the group and cries out to Jacqueline that another terrible thing has happened. As those two talk, Poirot and Rosalie move out of earshot, and Poirot asks her why she didn't tell him about her small-caliber pistol. She's indignant and shows him her handbag to prove there's no pistol inside. She asks Poirot what he's driving at, so he muses that perhaps when she was out on the stern the previous evening, she saw a man come out of Linnet's cabin and then enter one of the two end cabins. He adds that perhaps she's afraid to say so because she doesn't want to be killed. But after a slight hesitation, Rosalie continues to deny that she saw anyone.

Rosalie has already been caught lying to Poirot, so there is reason to suspect that she's not being truthful when she claims that she doesn't have a pistol. Still, if it's a lie, it's a bold one, given that she knows her bag was already searched. Poirot seems to have a strong theory about what it is that Rosalie saw and is hiding from him, but because she isn't willing to admit it yet, the audience is also kept out of the loop.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

When Miss Bowers comes out of Dr. Bessner's cabin, Jacqueline stops talking with Cornelia and demands that Miss Bowers tell her how Simon is doing. Miss Bowers says with a bit of worry that there's always danger of infection. When Miss Bowers reveals that Simon's temperature is rising, Jacqueline is distraught.

Jacqueline and Simon's strange relationship continues: Jacqueline continues to be extremely worried about Simon's health, even though she's the one who shot him the previous evening.

In tears, Jacqueline finds Poirot and sobs that Simon will die and she's killed him. She says she loved him and Poirot adds, "Too much," thinking just what he did when he first saw Simon and Jacqueline at Chez Ma Tante. He reassures Jacqueline that nurses like Miss Bowers are naturally pessimistic.

It still isn't entirely clear what Poirot is thinking when he suggests that Jacqueline loved Simon "too much." What is clear is that Jacqueline's love for Simon (whether current or past) is making her behave irrationally.

Poirot goes back onto the deck where Race once more comes to find him. Race complains that they're still in the dark, but Poirot reveals that he's had an idea ever since the death of Louise. Poirot recaps some important clues but is hesitant to say his hypothesis while there are still things to clear up, which Race respects. Poirot says they must rethink everything because their initial ideas were wrong, although he maintains that the pistol's removal from the crime scene is an important clue that is at the center of his new theory.

It would be anticlimactic if Poirot just revealed everything, particularly with so much of the book left, so he continues to be vague. Race is, in a way, a stand-in for the reader—he's able to figure some things out but is still in the dark compared to Poirot. Poirot continues to obsess over the pistol, which again suggests that figuring out who moved it and way will be crucial to solving the murders.

Race and Poirot go to see Bessner, who reluctantly allows them to ask one question of Simon. Race asks Simon if he can tell them some more about the time when Linnet opened Signor Richetti's telegram by accident and it caused him to get unreasonably angry. Simon recounts that Linnet opened it because the bad handwriting made *Richetti* look like *Ridgeway* and that Linnet couldn't make much of the contents. Race asks Simon if he knew the contents of the telegram, and Simon says yes—but before he can elaborate, there's a commotion outside.

Simon is coherent and doesn't seem sick, apparently confirming Poirot's suspicion that Miss Bowers is a pessimist. The intercepted telegram was a suspicious event earlier, and it was never properly resolved. Unfortunately, it won't be resolved here either, because of the sudden interruption.

Mrs. Otterbourne has come, requesting to speak to Poirot and Race immediately. Since Dr. Bessner hasn't closed the cabin door, she can speak to them, and she dramatically tells Simon that she knows who killed his wife. She draws out the moment, claiming that she knows with certainty not only who killed Linnet but also who killed Louise. Race doubts this, but Mrs. Otterbourne says she saw with her own eyes.

There is ample reason to doubt Mrs. Otterbourne at this point, given how useless her testimony was earlier. Still, a surprising revelation from an overlooked character would be a classic mystery twist.

Mrs. Otterbourne begins telling a long-winded story, savoring her moment in the spotlight. She alludes to an arrangement with a crew member who secretly procures her something she needs (which Poirot immediately recognizes as alcohol). While rendezvousing with him, she saw Louise go in her cabin. Soon after, someone that Louise seemed to be expecting knocked on her cabin door and went in. Race asks who this person was, but before Mrs. Otterbourne can answer, there's a *Bang!*

Mrs. Otterbourne's flair for the dramatic gets the better of her. She is undone by her vices: first she saw something she shouldn't have because she was getting alcohol. And here, she takes so long to tell her story (because she loves that spotlight) that someone manages to shoot her before she can reach the end. Out of all the deaths, hers is the most comic. Poirot and Race were even joking earlier about how they wished Mrs. Otterbourne had been murdered instead—of course never suspecting that such a thing would actually happen. That someone killed Mrs. Otterbourne just before she was about to reveal who went into Louise's cabin implies that this information is crucial for solving Louise's murder—and that whoever killed Mrs. Otterbourne is likely the same person who killed Louise.

There's a smell of smoke as Mrs. Otterbourne slumps down with an apparent gunshot wound in her head. Race bends down to examine her while Poirot leaps out to look for a culprit. The deck however is empty, except for a big Colt revolver on the ground. Poirot sprints toward the stern and finds Tim Allerton running in the opposite direction, toward the noise he just heard. When Poirot asks, Tim says he saw no one else on his way over. Poirot heads back, where a small crowd has gathered: Jacqueline, Rosalie, Cornelia, Ferguson, Fanthorp, and Mrs. Allerton.

While Agatha Christie sometimes subverts the tropes of the mystery genre, this particular scene is pure melodrama. The Colt revolver isn't the one Race found in the dining saloon, although its owner will soon be identified.

Race borrows a glove from Tim and examines the revolver. He reveals that Fanthorp and Ferguson were sitting in the deck lounge and didn't see anyone run that way. Race identifies the revolver as possibly Pennington's, then goes to Pennington's cabin to confirm that the revolver from his drawer is in fact gone. The gun has no fingerprints.

This evidence looks bad for Pennington, though the lack of fingerprints (along with the fact that the killer deliberately dropped the gun) could both point to someone else stealing the revolver.

Race and Poirot find Pennington writing letters on the deck below, apparently oblivious to the shot. He is shocked to hear Mrs. Otterbourne has been shot. Race asks Pennington how long he's been in the room he is currently occupying, and Pennington says about twenty minutes. Race then informs him that Mrs. Otterbourne was shot with his revolver.

Pennington is shifty, and it's unclear whether his shock is genuine or feigned. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, with the consequences of Mrs. Otterbourne's murder to be explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Pennington is shocked that his revolver was used to commit murder and maintains that he was quietly writing letters the whole time, though he can't produce a witness. Pennington tries to explain how someone would know about his revolver and says he mentioned it in the saloon one evening when most of the other passengers were around to hear. Poirot invites Pennington to his cabin in half an hour to discuss the case in more detail.

Pennington has some fairly crucial evidence against him and no one to confirm his alibi when Mrs. Otterbourne was shot. Poirot knows all this and hopes to get some good information out of him.

Race and Poirot leave Pennington, agreeing that he seems afraid. As they reach the promenade deck, Mrs. Allerton comes up to them and offers to share a double cabin with Rosalie, so she doesn't have to go back to the one she used to keep with her mother. Poirot agrees that this is a good idea.

Mixed in with the mystery are little moments of character development, such as this one which suggests that Mrs. Allerton is becoming closer to Rosalie. Little moments of kindness like this make the overall tone of the novel less cynical, as it suggests that it's possible for people from different backgrounds can come together rather than clash with one another.

Cornelia comes onto the deck. She asks Poirot how the culprit could've possibly gotten away. Poirot mentions three distinct escape routes, and Jacqueline notes that the murderer could have swung over the railing onto the deck below. Tim notes that this would be possible since there's a brief period of shock after a gun goes off. Race asks everyone to clear the area so that they can bring out the dead body.

As always, the characters lay out different possibilities to establish what's plausible and what isn't. If the shooter really did swing over the deck (it seems possible, in theory, anyway), then it would limit the shooter to characters in good physical shape.

As he leaves the area, Poirot overhears Ferguson and Cornelia arguing about Western and Eastern attitudes toward death. Ferguson calls Linnet, Louise, and Mrs. Otterbourne all parasites, but Cornelia defends them. As Poirot passes, Ferguson angrily tells him that Cornelia's father was financially ruined by Linnet's and died in poverty, and yet still Cornelia defends Linnet. Cornelia says of course she felt bad for her father, but that she prefers to focus on the future. Ferguson agrees and quite suddenly proposes to marry her. She takes it as a joke, but he insists he's serious. Ultimately, she says Ferguson just wouldn't be *reliable*, and she leaves in a hurry for her cabin.

Ferguson continues his efforts to be noticed by once again commenting approvingly on the murders. His attempt to impress Cornelia clearly isn't working. His lack of seriousness is further emphasized when he proposes to Cornelia—it's not a joke, but it is a sign that Ferguson isn't a particularly practical character, given that he's willing to propose to someone he just met who doesn't even like him.

Ferguson asks Poirot what he thinks of Cornelia. Poirot responds that "she has a great deal of character," which Ferguson agrees with. He goes over to Miss Van Schuyler and asks permission to marry Cornelia. He admits that Cornelia refused him but insists that he'll keep trying until she says yes. Miss Van Schuyler is not pleased. When he asks what Miss Van Schuyler has against him, she says it should be obvious: social position. Cornelia comes back and confirms that she definitely hasn't encouraged Ferguson in any way. She says she finds him outrageous. Leaving Miss Van Schuyler furious, Ferguson at last goes on his way.

The book leaves aside the central mystery for a moment to look at class expectations and romance. Miss Van Schuyler disapproves of Ferguson simply because of his lower class status, suggesting that she sees marriage as a strategic move rather than an expression of genuine love. Like Linnet, Ferguson seems to be someone who isn't used to hearing the word no, and his pursuit of Cornelia is centered on what he wants rather than what she wants.

Miss Van Schuyler asks Poirot to send her Miss Bowers, because Ferguson has so upset her. Poirot notes that Ferguson is "rather eccentric" and "spoilt." He asks if Miss Van Schuyler recognizes him, then reveals that Ferguson is actually Lord Dawlish, who's incredibly wealthy but who became a communist at Oxford. Miss Van Schuyler is shocked but thanks Poirot for the information. Poirot smiles as he watches Miss Van Schuyler leave the saloon, but then he has a thought that makes him become more serious and nod his head.

Poirot finally reveals that he knew all along why Ferguson was acting so strange: he is in fact a member of the aristocracy who is slumming it under a fake name because he recently discovered communism. The humor in this scene comes from the fact that if Miss Van Schuyler had known his identity earlier, she likely would've begged Cornelia to marry Ferguson (a.k.a. Lord Dawlish) rather than shooing him away.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Race finds Poirot still sitting in the saloon and reminds him that his interview with Pennington in the smoke room is in 10 minutes. Poirot asks Race to first get Fanthorp. Race does so. Poirot begins by talking to Fanthorp about Fanthorp's "Old School Tie" and how it represents a uniquely English point of view, such as the inclination to avoid forcing oneself into someone else's private conversation. Poirot goes on, however, to note that Fanthorp did in fact butt in on a conversation, when he saw Linnet signing documents, which is out of character for an "Old School Tie" sort of person. Fanthorp says Poirot is crazy and refuses to say more.

The book builds suspense before the big interview with Pennington by wrapping up a previously unresolved question about Fanthorp, implying that he is somehow involved with Linnet and her fortune. The information that Poirot points out doesn't amount to an actual accusation, but his observations nonetheless reveal him to be a close examiner of human nature.

Poirot persists with Fanthorp: he notes that Fanthorp's law firm isn't far from Linnet's home of Wode Hall. He believes that Fanthorp deliberately intervened to prevent Linnet from signing anything without reading it first. Poirot then reveals to Fanthorp that Pennington's revolver was the murder weapon. Poirot asks why Fanthorp really came on the trip.

Poirot skillfully manipulates Fanthorp by revealing that there is evidence pointing toward Pennington. He suspects that Fanthorp and Pennington are rivals, and that Fanthorp will help him if he believes it hurts Pennington. In this way, Poirot is using the fact that most people are fundamentally self-interested to his advantage.

Fanthorp tells Poirot that his uncle Carmichael was Linnet's lawyer and that, for various reasons, Carmichael suspected Pennington of being a crook. When his uncle received a letter that mentioned Linnet's unexpected meeting with Pennington, he suspected that Pennington was trying to defraud her, so he sent Fanthorp to go monitor the situation. Fanthorp didn't explain this to Linnet, but he believes his presence may have scared off Pennington from any "funny business."

Persuaded by Poirot, Fanthorp reveals the truth (much of which was already hinted at in the first chapter of the novel). Though it's Fanthorp's word against Pennington's, there's ample evidence from Pennington's prior suspicious actions to believe he really is involved in shady dealings.

Poirot then asks Fanthorp if he was trying to scam someone, who would he choose: Linnet or Simon. With a smile, Fanthorp says Simon, which Poirot agrees with—and notes that this fact gives Pennington a motive to kill Linnet. Fanthorp calls the theory interesting but says there's no evidence. Race then says Pennington is coming in shortly, so Fanthorp leaves.

Fanthorp may dislike Pennington, but he knows if he goes too far, he'll risk being seen as unreliable. As a lawyer, he is one of the more cunning people Poirot interviews, though that doesn't necessarily mean he's lying.

When Pennington arrives in the smoking room, he is smiling, with just a hint of guardedness. Poirot starts the interview by establishing that Pennington has known Linnet for a long time. Pennington confirms that he's known her since she was a girl and that he was very close with her father. Because of this close relationship, Pennington became one of the trustees to the family fortune—two of the others are dead and Sterndale Rockford is the other remaining, living trustee.

Poirot knows a lot of incriminating things about Pennington, but he starts slowly, with comparatively innocuous questions, in order to build a rapport. Because he isn't a traditional detective, he doesn't need traditional evidence—this is part of why Poirot focuses so much on psychological profiles.

Poirot notes that Linnet was due to gain control of her fortune on her twenty-first birthday, but that her marriage changed things. Pennington recoils at this question and asks if it's relevant. Poirot insists it may be relevant for the motive. Finally, Pennington reveals that Linnet's father's will said she would receive her fortune when she was 21 *or* when she married, with no other stipulations. Poirot wonders whether this marriage clause caused any difficulties in Pennington's office. The question disturbs Pennington, who tries to leave before angrily saying that Linnet's affairs are well ordered. He claims he didn't even know about her marriage until he met her in Cairo.

Pennington persists in a lie that has already been well debunked—that he only learned of Linnet's marriage in Egypt and that it was a coincidence he saw her. He is clearly desperate to hide something.

Poirot catches Pennington in a lie—the labels on his luggage say *Normandie*, not *Carmanic*, meaning he took a later boat and that he would've received Linnet's letter mentioning her marriage after all. Pennington admits he lied, but claims he had good reason. He says he believed Linnet was being "swindled" by her British lawyer but wanted to get evidence for himself. He claims he lied about not receiving Linnet's letter in order to appear less rude about butting in on her honeymoon. Poirot says he doesn't believe anything about Pennington's story.

Poirot cuts through Pennington's flimsy lie. Pennington tries to put the blame onto Fanthorp—there could be something crooked about Fanthorp, but it seems just as likely that Pennington is just projecting himself onto Fanthorp.

Poirot suggests instead that Linnet's sudden marriage caused a financial problem for Pennington. After failing to get her to sign the right documents, Pennington (according to Poirot) was walking along a cliff near the temple of Abu Simbel and actively pushed the boulder that fell and nearly killed Linnet. Pennington calls Poirot insane.

Poirot gets right to the heart of the matter and accuses Pennington outright—not only of financial crimes but also of attempted murder. Sometimes Poirot floats hypotheticals just to get a reaction, but in this section, he seems to be putting together a genuine theory.

Poirot goes further: he says Pennington again saw an opportunity on the boat to dispose of Linnet when the murder would be attributed to someone else. Pennington objects forcefully, arguing he wouldn't even benefit: Simon would get her money. Race notes that because of Simon's leg and because of witnesses, Simon couldn't have killed Linnet or Louise, and especially not Mrs. Otterbourne. Pennington admits this but still insists he himself had no reason to want Linnet dead, while Simon did.

Poirot's story is convincing—so convincing that it clearly unsettles Pennington. Still, Poirot is not necessarily accusing Pennington of murder yet. One of his techniques is to present to characters how they might *have committed the murder, in order to get them to reveal things about other characters.*

Poirot creates a hypothetical scenario for Pennington: if Linnet is dead, Simon would know nothing about how to manage her fortune and is a trusting, not-especially-bright person. It would be easier to manipulate him into signing things. Pennington still protests, but Poirot says, "Time will show!" Pennington's shoulders droop, and Poirot knows that Pennington has lost and is aware of it.

It would be narratively unsatisfying in a whodunnit if the criminal was not fully identified, and this usually means a confession of some sort is necessary. Pennington's awareness of having lost his argument with Poirot suggests that he's on the verge of confessing to something.

Pennington confesses to the financial problems: he blames the recent financial slump and says that he and his partner were hoping to fix it by June. Poirot muses that Pennington's murder attempt with the boulder was probably a sudden temptation, but Pennington claims, with a terrified look, that it was an accident. With a desperate "fighting spirit," Pennington repeats that no one can ever pin him with a murder attempt and that everything was an accident. He leaves the room.

Though Pennington maintains his innocence, it's clear that he's guilty of both fraud and attempted murder. Since Pennington has already admitted defeat, it's extremely unlikely that he will end up being involved in the murders on the Karnak*—he has already confessed to all his crimes.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Race sighs and says they got more from Pennington than expected: a confession of fraud and of attempted murder. He muses that a real murder confession might be too much to hope for, but Poirot says perhaps it's possible. He has a plan.

Though Pennington admitted he was guilty of other crimes, Chapter Twenty-Seven begins with Poirot and Race establishing that he is not the murderer they're looking for.

Rattling off different pieces of evidence in an order that only makes sense to him, Poirot at last says, "Yes, it's all there. Pennington didn't do it, Race!" Race is startled. Poirot explains that despite the motive, Pennington isn't "bold," only "astute." Poirot and Race remember that they never heard from Simon about the end of the telegram that Linnet accidentally opened, because the death of Mrs. Otterbourne interrupted them. Poirot asks to see Tim.

As always, Poirot relies on his own sense of psychology to eliminate Pennington from the running. Though Pennington is consistent with a lot of the physical evidence, he doesn't fit the emotional profile of the murderer(s). With this, Poirot shows that seeking justice may not solely involve the types of evidence that are permissible in court.

When Tim arrives, Poirot tells him that what he really needs is for him to listen. Tim agrees to do it. Poirot says that what interested him about Tim was his mention of Joanna Southwood. One of Poirot's friends on Scotland Yard has been tracking jewelry robberies for three years and he found his attention drawn to Joanna, since the victims all had some connection to her. Still, it was clear that the actual robberies were not carried out by Joanna. Poirot's inspector friend suspected Joanna only handled the jewels to have imitations made, while another party carried out the robberies.

Scotland Yard is a nickname for the London police. In detective fiction, they're perhaps most notable for appearing in several Sherlock Holmes stories, where they are generally portrayed as incompetent, particularly compared to Holmes. Poirot reveals why he was so interested in Joanna earlier when he was talking to the Allertons. Given that Poirot has specifically summoned Tim, it's likely that Poirot suspects Tim was involved with stealing the real pearls and swapping them for fakes. This hearkens back to Tim and Joanna's letters toward the beginning of the novel, the full contents of which Tim hid from his mother—it's possible that Tim and Joanna are coconspirators in jewel thievery.

Poirot notes that Tim himself tends to be around in situations when jewelry theft happens and that Poirot's presence on the boat seemed to make him anxious. Poirot says he naturally thought of Tim once Linnet's pearls went missing but couldn't understand why he didn't immediately substitute fake **pearls** for the real article, as Joanna did in her other jewelry robberies.

Once more, Poirot relies on psychological profiles and looks for variations in patterns of behavior. He is slowly making his way toward accusing Tim, but he needs to lay the groundwork first, so that his accusation is convincing.

Then Poirot tells Tim about how he realized that when Linnet's **pearls** disappeared, the swap had already occurred—it was the imitation pearls that were stolen from the nightstand. Tim goes pale—he can't control himself as well as Pennington. He says if all that's true, then where are the real pearls?

Tim's inability to control himself suggests that he's not a professional criminal—it leaves open the possibility that perhaps he just made some bad decisions and got in over his head.

But Poirot already knows exactly where the real **pearls** are: they are in a rosary in Tim's cabin, with carved wooden beads that hide the pearls inside. Poirot explains: Tim knew police wouldn't search the rosary closely, since it was a religious symbol. Poirot then adds that the imitation necklace was likely sent to Tim by Joanna in the cut-out interior of one of the book's that he sometimes had delivered. After a long pause, Tim admits defeat.

Poirot finally drops the big reveal: he knows exactly where the pearls are. Because he has built up such a convincing case before dropping this information, there's really no lie Tim could tell to get himself out of it—he has no choice but to confess.

Poirot reveals that Tim was seen during his robbery. He asks if Linnet was alive or dead when he stole the **pearls**. Tim doesn't know; he doesn't remember hearing her breathe, but he also doesn't remember smelling gun smoke. Poirot says it was Rosalie who saw Tim. Tim asks if she told Poirot, but Poirot says she didn't need to—Poirot does not need to be told anything. Poirot says perhaps Rosalie didn't reveal Tim's identity because in that moment he looked like a murderer.

Poirot drops his other big revelation: he already knows that there's a witness who spotted Tim going into Linnet's cabin—even though Rosalie refused to tell him. Poirot probably came to this conclusion in part by watching how well Rosalie got along with the Allertons, then by using the facts he already had to put the whole story together.

Tim asks Race what happens now that he's confessed to stealing the pearls. He refuses to admit, however, that Joanna was in any way involved. He then discusses with Poirot how seeing the famous detective made him nervous and almost stopped him from pulling off the theft.

Tim gives a full confession, confirming that everything Poirot said is correct, though he refuses to incriminate Joanna.

Poirot says they should get Rosalie to come in. A few minutes later Rosalie arrives, with eyes red from crying. Race says he's sorry to bother her. Poirot tells her what Tim has admitted to, and she agrees she saw him. Tim assures her he's only a thief, not a murderer.

Again, Rosalie is freed from the burden of having to keep a secret. The fact that she protected him suggests that she cares about him.

Poirot responds that while there is evidence that Tim visited Linnet's cabin, there isn't yet evidence of why he did it. He begins laying out a hypothetical scenario where Linnet threatened to expose Tim over the theft and he quietly slipped in to kill her. In the process (still hypothetically), Louise saw him, and then she blackmailed him. Tim pretended to agree to go along with the blackmail, but then killed Louise and later killed Mrs. Otterbourne to prevent his secret from getting out again. After shooting Mrs. Otterbourne, he pretended to run away, then ran back to avoid suspicion. There were no fingerprints on the gun since he had gloves in his pocket. Tim swears this is all false, and Rosalie says of course it is—Poirot has his own reasons for telling this hypothetical story.

This is one of many times when Poirot presents a hypothetical situation that he doesn't actually believe in. He is good at teasing out facts to plausible conclusions, even sometimes when they aren't true. Here, his goal is to scare Tim by showing him how someone could choose to interpret the evidence.

Poirot smiles and admits he was only demonstrating how strong the case against Tim would be. He then hints that because nobody has examined the rosary in Tim's cabin, it is possible that nothing will be found in it. Perhaps, Poirot suggests, the real **pearls** were already returned and are just in a box on a table near the door of this very room. He says Tim and Rosalie should go take a look at them right away. Tim gets up immediately and says, "You won't have to give me another chance." He picks up a little cardboard box as he leaves with Rosalie.

Poirot may be an expert at catching criminals, but he also leaves open the possibility for redemption. He is essentially saying that he trusts Tim to give up crime if he promises to return the pearls immediately. This contrasts with a traditional justice system, which wouldn't have the same flexibility to extend forgiveness.

Once Tim and Rosalie are out of the room, Tim takes the fake **pearls** out of the cardboard box and throws them into the **Nile**. He says that when he returns this box to Poirot it will have the real pearls in them, and then he exclaims, "what a damned fool I've been!" Rosalie quietly asks him how he got started in robbery. Tim says perhaps boredom or laziness, a way of making money that didn't involve sitting at a desk, or even just the thrill of doing something risky. Rosalie doesn't really understand the attraction.

It's important that Tim's motivation wasn't greed—this makes his character more redeemable. His regret about what he stole seems to be genuine.

Tim calls Rosalie lovely and asks why she didn't tell Poirot about seeing him the previous night. She says she couldn't believe Tim would actually kill anyone. Rosalie and Tim hold hands, but she is reluctant and asks about Joanna. Tim says, however, that he doesn't "care a damn about Joanna." Tim says he might even tell his mother, Mrs. Allerton, about his criminal life—she might even be relieved that his only association with Joanna is business-related. They go to meet Mrs. Allerton, who as soon as she opens the door says she always knew the two of them liked each other—she just thought Tim was too "tiresome" to actually admit it. She hugs Rosalie. Rosalie says that Mrs. Allerton has always been so kind to her, and she cries happily into Mrs. Allerton's shoulder.

The relationship between Tim and Rosalie has been quietly progressing as a subplot, and this is a turning point where they finally admit they like each other. Their relationship is a positive counterpoint to the other relationships in the novel, which are marred by violence, jealousy, and greed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Outside the cabin from Tim and Rosalie, Poirot asks Race if he's okay with the arrangement he made with them. "It is irregular—I know it is irregular, yes—but I have a high regard for human happiness," Poirot says. Race jokes that Poirot isn't considering Race's happiness and that they're aiding a felony, but ultimately Race says, "I'm not a damned policeman, thank God!" Race's real concern is that he thinks Poirot knows who the murderer is but hasn't told him yet. Poirot is about to tell him when there's a knock on the door.

Race, as a more traditional representative of the justice system than Poirot, is not as happy as Poirot about letting Tim off the hook. Still, as he himself notes, he's not a policeman, and this gives him the freedom to indulge Poirot's whims.

Dr. Bessner and Cornelia come in, with Cornelia apologetic about her cousin Miss Van Schuyler's kleptomania. Race assures her they have no interest in creating scandal: "This is Hush Hush House," he says. Poirot asks if Cornelia has seen Ferguson again, at which point Dr. Bessner mentions that Ferguson is actually "highly-born," even though he doesn't look it.

This scene ties up some loose ends, confirming that Miss Van Schuyler is a kleptomaniac but that Race and Poirot won't do anything about it—again showing more flexibility than a traditional justice system.

Dr. Bessner then tells Poirot that Simon is doing well, despite his fever earlier (which Jacqueline had been panicking about). Race says if Simon's feeling well, they should find him and finish their conversation about Richetti's telegram. Dr. Bessner says that Simon told him about the telegram: that it was funny because it was full of writing about vegetables. Race exclaims that this is a code used in a rebellion in South Africa, meaning that Richetti is the agitator Race has been after. Poirot admits Richetti may be Race's man but contends that he wasn't Linnet's murderer. Now Cornelia asks if Poirot will ever actually tell them the murderer.

Though the telegram Linnet intercepted is clearly important, the book drew attention away from it with the dramatic shooting of Mrs. Otterbourne and all that entailed. The telegram ties up another loose end, proving that Richetti was acting suspicious for a very good reason—he is the man that Race has been chasing the whole time.

Poirot admits he likes an audience of people telling him how clever he is. He begins telling them what happened. His main "stumbling block" was Jacqueline's pistol and why it hadn't been left at the scene of the crime. Ultimately, Poirot realized there was a simple solution: the murderer took the gun away because "he had no other choice in the matter."

Perhaps Poirot indulged Mrs. Otterbourne earlier because he, too, enjoys being the center of a drama (though he's a little less flamboyant than she was). His pride is one of his most notable flaws, though it seldom impedes his detective work for long.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Poirot continues the story for his audience. He says the big mistake was believing the crime was committed spur of the moment, when in fact it had been premeditated—the murderer even drugged Poirot's wine with a narcotic so that he wouldn't interfere.

In a mystery, the villain has to be an equal (or nearly equal) match for the hero, so this means a well-orchestrated crime. Here, Poirot confirms his early suspicion that he was indeed drugged.

Poirot says he first realized his initial premise about a spontaneous crime was incorrect when the pistol was recovered from the **Nile**. The velvet stole was a big clue—burn marks on the stole show that it did seem to have been used as a silencer. However, if it had been used that way, then there should not have been any burning on Linnet's skin from the gun placed directly against her head—but there were such burn marks. Since the stole wasn't used when Jacqueline shot Simon's leg and it wasn't used to murder Linnet, Poirot concludes a *third* shot had been fired at some point, even though he couldn't immediately find evidence of it.

One of the big parts of the whodunnit formula is a reveal at the end that upends previous assumptions. In this case, Poirot reveals that there were actually three shots fired from the pistol, and that this fact was deliberately covered up. Knowing there was three shots completely changes the logistics of the case.

Poirot then explains the significance of the two bottles of nail polish in Linnet's cabin. One bottle matched the shade Linnet wore on her nails, but the other bottle labeled Rose (a pale pink) had bright red drops in the bottle. What's more, Poirot sniffed it and it smelled strangely like vinegar—just like red ink would. Poirot notes: "Red ink washes out quickly but always leaves a pale pink stain"—which matches up with the handkerchief found in the stole with the pistol.

The fact that red nail polish turns pink in water might not be common knowledge, but the book heavily foreshadowed that the stained handkerchief would be important. This makes Poirot's surprising revelation nevertheless seem like a natural outcome.

Poirot says he might've reached this conclusion sooner, but the murder of Louise disrupted everything. Poirot remembers a strange answer she gave to a question: "Naturally, if I had been unable to sleep, if I had mounted the stairs, *then* perhaps I might have seen this assassin." Poirot claims this was a hint—not to Poirot or Race but to someone else present. This leaves two possibilities: Dr. Bessner or Simon.

Poirot explains why the earlier interview with Louise was so strange. Agatha Christie purposely arranged that passage so that someone reading it for the second time would catch new details.

Dr. Bessner rises up with indignity, but Poirot chastises him, saying he is only saying what he thought at the time. Poirot continues: he knew of no motive for Bessner to kill Linnet. But Simon was accounted for by witnesses, and then was too wounded to have physically committed the murder. Poirot had no choice but to conclude that Bessner was, in fact, the guilty one, a theory aided by the fact that Louise was murdered by a surgical knife.

Dr. Bessner would be a shocking murderer, given his apparent lack of a motive, though many of the known clues do point to him. Poirot might seem to be accusing him, but really, his is just pointing out the folly of following the evidence without considering psychology.

But then another fact occurred to Poirot: Louise could have spoken to Dr. Bessner privately at any time she liked—she didn't have to drop a hint while Poirot was there. Simon, however, was always under a doctor's care, which is why she dropped hints around him. When Simon said, "My good girl, don't be a fool. Nobody thinks you saw or heard anything," he was reassuring her that she'd be taken care of.

Poirot begins to leave off of hypotheticals and get into the actual solution to the crime. Since he has mentioned it must be Simon or Bessner and since he seems to have cleared Bessner, it's pretty clear that he's going to accuse Simon.

Poirot reconsidered the crime with this new knowledge. He didn't doubt the professional opinions of Dr. Bessner and Miss Bowers regarding Simon's injury, but there was a gap of five minutes when Simon was in the saloon alone. Before then, there was only *visual* evidence of Simon's wound. Cornelia *saw* Jacqueline fire her pistol, *saw* Simon fall, and *saw* his handkerchief stain red. But soon after, Simon insisted Jacqueline be sent away and that Fanthorp leave to get a doctor.

Poirot again upends old assumptions by looking at things from a different point of view—while it is logical to assume Simon didn't move because he was injured, in fact, proof of Simon's injury didn't come until later in the evening.

After sending everyone away, Simon had five minutes to himself, but Poirot says he only needed two. Simon picked up the discarded pistol, crept along the starboard deck, shot Linnet in the head, left the red ink bottle (so it wouldn't be discovered on him), ran back to the saloon, grabbed Miss Van Schuyler's velvet stole (which he procured earlier in preparation), then used the stole to muffle the sound of him shooting himself in the leg. He then threw the pistol (with the handkerchief and stole) out the window into the **Nile**.

Though Simon has obviously made mistakes (since Poirot eventually caught him), his plan is extremely elaborate—perhaps too elaborate for someone like him to think of on his own.

Race calls this story impossible, but Poirot reminds him of what Tim heard: "a pop—*followed* by a splash," then the footsteps of a man running. Race says the plan is too cunning for Simon, but Poirot argues Simon only needed to be physically capable of it, which he is. In fact, the whole crime was cleverly thought out by Jacqueline. The two were a perfect criminal pair: the resourceful planner and the man of action.

Agatha Christie would've written this story right around the time that Bonnie and Clyde died. So, it is possible that the sensational criminal couple was in the news when she was thinking of this crime.

Poirot continues his explanation. The important thing to realize is that Jacqueline and Simon aren't ex-lovers but current lovers who hoped to get their hands on Linnet's money. Much of what they did was an act, although Simon wasn't a great actor, overdoing parts of his performance. Earlier, when Poirot thought he heard Simon tell Linnet, "We've got to go through with it now," he was actually hearing Simon say those words to Jacqueline.

Reading previous sections again, it becomes clear how bad Simon was at hiding his intentions—however, when reading the first time, it is easy to brush aside some of the unusual details without seeing the bigger picture.

Poirot explains how the whole scene in the dining saloon was a carefully orchestrated performance to give Jacqueline and Simon alibis from reliable witnesses who weren't themselves privy to the scheme—Cornelia and Fanthorp. The clever plan fell apart, however, when Louise saw Simon entering Linnet's cabin. Cornelia says Simon himself couldn't possibly have stabbed Louise in his current condition, but Poirot says that Simon merely requested a private conversation with Jacqueline, who actually carried out the stabbing (using one of Bessner's scalpels which was later wiped down and returned before it was missed).

This explains why Jacqueline was so insistent earlier that Cornelia stay in the saloon—it wasn't just because Jacqueline was drunk, it was because she needed Cornelia to inadvertently play an important role in the plot. It's also relevant that Jacqueline mentioned to Poirot that she was a great shot—if she had wanted to kill Simon, she could have probably done so.

Despite their efforts, Simon and Jacqueline still had a problem with their plan: Mrs. Otterbourne saw Jacqueline go into Louise's cabin. Mrs. Otterbourne ran to inform Simon—what Poirot didn't realize is that when Simon shouted, he was actually shouting out the open door, trying to signal Jacqueline to act. She did, using her strong marksmanship skills to take down Mrs. Otterbourne at the critical moment. Her cabin is only two away from Dr. Bessner's—it was easy for her to drop the revolver, duck inside, then pretend later that she had just gotten up from her bunk.

This is perhaps the least convincing part of the explanation, since it would've required some very deft timing from Jacqueline, but mysteries often work in a heightened version of reality. This is the true version of events, though, so it seems that for a brief moment, Jacqueline got to be like an action hero, making a very precise shot and quickly fleeing. Again, because Poirot is such a brilliant detective, Christie must create equally skilled villains who attempt to thwart him.

Race asks about Jacqueline's first shot (which appeared to hit Simon in the leg but in fact didn't). Poirot hypothesizes that it went into a table. There was a newly made hole in it, suggesting that Doyle dug the bullet out and tossed it out the window, replacing it in the gun with a spare cartridge so that it would look like only two shots were fired. Cornelia says that the two murderers thought of everything. Though Poirot remains silent, he is proud, with his eyes seeming to say: "You are wrong. They didn't allow for Hercule Poirot." He then tells Dr. Bessner that it's time to have a word with Simon.

Poirot once again reveals that his greatest flaw is his pride. It's not a particular troublesome flaw, however, since in this scene he is able to hold back on saying the dramatic closing line that he would clearly enjoy saying aloud.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Much later in the evening (after Poirot's conversation with Simon), Poirot knocks on a cabin door. A voice tells him to come in—Jacqueline is sitting with a stewardess. Jacqueline asks if the stewardess can be dismissed, and Poirot nods, so she leaves. Poirot sits, and there's a long period of silence.

Christie skips Simon's confession because it would likely have been similar to Jacqueline's. Poirot seems to have more respect for Jacqueline because she, like him, is cunning, whereas Poirot clearly finds Simon foolish and unworthy of respect.

Then Jacqueline says "Well, it is all over! You were too clever for us, Monsieur Poirot.'" Poirot sighs and silently acknowledges her comment. Jacqueline says Poirot still lacks solid proof—he has nothing that would convince a jury—but the problem was that Simon was such a "bad loser" that he confessed to everything when Poirot grilled him earlier. Poirot calls her a "good loser," causing Jacqueline to laugh strangely. She asks if Poirot ever considered letting her off the hook, but he says no. Jacqueline says it's probably for the best—she might even kill again, now that she knows how easy it is. She notes how a murderer begins to feel that they are the only person in the world who matters.

Jacqueline has kept her dark sense of humor, even after being caught in the act of murder. Throughout the novel, it turns out that she was actually honest with Poirot most of the time—the majority of what she said was true in some way, though she frequently used the truth in a way that could mislead. Though like Tim, Jacqueline seems to show some remorse for her crime, orchestrating a murder is a much graver offense than stealing some jewelry, hence why Poirot doesn't let her off the hook.

Jacqueline asks Poirot if he knew what she was plotting during their earlier conversation in Assuan when he told her not to open her heart to evil. Poirot shakes his head, saying he only knew that his words were true. Jacqueline acknowledges that maybe she should have listened to Poirot's advice. She asks if he'd like to hear the story from the beginning, and he says he would if she cares to tell.

Jacqueline fits the archetype of a villain who has nothing left to lose, so she explains everything. This sort of detailed convention is a convenient device for mystery stories, one that often allows them to have more satisfying endings.

Jacqueline begins by simply saying she and Simon were in love. Poirot asks if that was enough for her but not for Simon; Jacqueline admits there's some truth in the statement. But she argues that there's more to Simon: he has a childlike desire for all the nice things in life he's been denied but that money would help him get. He didn't want to marry rich, especially after he met Jacqueline. Still the two of them couldn't see when they'd get married—Simon actually lost his job in the city when he got caught trying to "do something smart over money." Jacqueline believes that naïve Simon just thought that's how things worked in London, and that he wasn't doing anything particularly wrong.

There might be reason to be suspicious of Jacqueline's account here: it is self-serving and seems to deliberately paint her as a bystander who was drawn into Simon's plot. Still, many of the details line up with what has already been revealed about Simon's life and his personality.

Jacqueline says that Linnet really was her best friend, even as she envied her. At first, she really did only plan on getting Simon a job (which they were celebrating when Poirot saw them at Chez Ma Tane). Jacqueline insists that it was Linnet herself who started going after Simon first, not even trying to hide it.

Jacqueline is again going for sympathy, though that doesn't necessarily mean that she's lying. The book leaves some ambiguity to continue building suspense.

Jacqueline says Simon didn't really like Linnet because he didn't like bossy women, but he did like the thought of her money. Still, he turned down the idea of marrying her, even after Jacqueline suggested it. According to Jacqueline, it was Simon who first got the idea of murder, starting one day when he had a fantasy about marrying Linnet and having her die within a year. He kept harping on the idea, even reading about arsenic one day. Jacqueline realized then that Simon was serious about the idea—but she knew he was too simple to pull it off on his own. Jacqueline claims she really only got involved for Simon's own good, to look after him. Poirot has no doubt that this actually was Jacqueline's motive.

There seems to be at least one lie in Jacqueline's story: she claims Simon doesn't like bossy women—but arguably, Jacqueline herself is bossy, given that she took over his whole plot against Linnet in order to plan it better. This is the best evidence that she might be fooling Poirot. Then again, the narration specifically indicates that Poirot has no doubt about Jacqueline's motives—and Poirot is usually right, particularly given how he just outsmarted Jacqueline.

Jacqueline details her efforts to work out the plan. She worked out the details so that if anything went wrong, the blame would fall on her instead of Simon. While most of the crime went out as planned, the **J** written in Linnet's blood was improvisation on Simon's part. Louise, however, disrupted their perfect plan.

Jacqueline's intense love for Simon caused her to unimaginable things, which suggests that romantic love can turn obsessive rather healthy and has the potential to bring out the worst in people. Simon also proves his incompetence again—he couldn't resist the urge to add a personal touch to the plan by writing the J.

Jacqueline tells Poirot that what happened with Louise is pretty much exactly what he'd expect. Jacqueline adds that she found it scary, actually, how easy it was for her to murder Louise. Killing the witness Mrs. Otterbourne was a split-second decision but simple enough to carry out, given she had no alternative.

This part is shocking because until this moment, Jacqueline's story was presenting her in a relatively sympathetic way. It recalls the conversation Poirot had earlier with Mrs. Allerton where he suggested that almost everybody was capable of murder.

Jacqueline tells Poirot not to worry about her. If the plan had gone off perfectly, she and Simon might've lived happily ever after, but now she's prepared to face the consequences. She assures Poirot that, while the stewardess was "in attendance to see I don't hang myself or swallow a miraculous capsule of prussic acid as people always do in books," she has no intention of doing those things. She recalls an earlier conversation where she told Poirot she must follow her star but Poirot warned her it might be a bad one. As he goes out to the deck, Poirot hears Jacqueline's laughter ringing in his ears.

The moral of the story is essentially that all of this could've been avoided if Jacqueline just listened to Poirot's earlier advice. Jacqueline's laughter is significant, as it further suggests that she's emotionally unstable and perhaps shouldn't be trusted. Her reference to what characters do in books is one of many metafictional references that Agatha Christie makes to other mystery stories, often to contrast her work with theirs (letting the reader know not to expect the same old tricks), but also to situate her writing within the same genre.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

At dawn, the *Karnak* pulls into Shellal. Race says he's made arrangements to have Richetti, the agitator, taken ashore first. Race goes on to mention that they'll need a stretcher for Simon, whom Race calls a "cold-blooded scoundrel," although he feels sorry for Jacqueline. Poirot muses that the popular saying about love justifying everything isn't true.

The Richetti subplot is being wrapped up. Race reinforces the idea that of the two murderers, Jacqueline had much more sympathetic motivations. Poirot, meanwhile, touches on the idea that being in love isn't a noble excuse for hurting people or acting selfishly.

Cornelia comes up to Race and Poirot, telling them that she's been with Jacqueline to keep her company. When Miss Van Schuyler comes along to scold Cornelia once more and threatens to bring her back home to New York, Cornelia replies that she can't come because she's getting married to Dr. Bessner. Ferguson overhears and reacts in disbelief, and angrily asks if Cornelia is just marrying Dr. Bessner because he's rich. Cornelia responds that she's marrying Bessner because she likes him, and because he's kind, and she shares his interests, and because he's *reliable*. Though he's nearly 50, Cornelia maintains that he's not *that* old, and that looks don't matter to her anyway. She leaves. Ferguson incredulously asks Poirot if he thinks Cornelia really prefers the old Bessner over Ferguson himself. Poirot replies, "Undoubtedly."

Another subplot wraps up: Cornelia decides to accept Dr. Bessner's marriage proposal instead of Ferguson's. Though none of these characters end up being especially important to the plot, they are an interesting way for the book to explore love and relationships beyond the central Linnet-Jacqueline-Simon love triangle. In this case, the impending marriage between Cornelia and Bessner is at least partially out of convenience—Bessner is older, not especially attractive, and interested in boring archaeology books. But he's also the only character who treats Cornelia with respect, which ends up being the most important thing—he is, in essence, her escape from Miss Van Schuyler.

The passengers are asked to wait before departing the boat. First, a sullen-looking Richetti is escorted off the boat. Soon after is brought a defeated-looking Simon on a stretcher. Then comes Jacqueline, pale but otherwise normal-looking. She greets Simon, who gets a little of his old spirit back and apologizes. She smiles and says it's okay. Then she pulls a gun out of her shoe and shoots Simon dead. She smiles at Poirot, and Race leaps to intervene, but she shoots herself in the heart before they reach her.

Though Jacqueline's shooting of Simon and then herself is a shocking twist, it's also a logical way to end the novel. A lengthy trial would be an anticlimactic ending, so some immediate retribution for the killers makes more narrative sense. The fact that Jacqueline gets to go out on her own terms reinforces the idea that she is one of the more sympathetic villains in Christie's books (since wholly evil characters tend to get the worst deaths). Her choice to kill Simon before killing herself again shows how love can become prevented into a dangerous obsession.

Mrs. Allerton quietly asks Poirot if he knew about the pistol. He did—he realized Jacqueline had a pair ever since a similar gun was found in Rosalie's handbag. Jacqueline was the one who planted it there, though later she retrieved it from Rosalie's cabin (after she and her cabin had already been searched). Mrs. Allerton asks if this outcome is what Poirot wanted, and Poirot says it is. He says Simon got an easier death than he deserved and that most great love stories are tragedies. As they see Rosalie and Tim standing together in the sun, however, they are thankful that there are still some happy stories.

Poirot's tacit approval of Jacqueline's murder-suicide might seem wildly out of character for him (since he hates murder so much), but it's important to remember that Jacqueline and Simon would likely have been headed for the death penalty at the time the novel was written. Perhaps Poirot didn't see the point of going through the whole legal process if the outcome was the same, or perhaps he felt that Jacqueline should be allowed to make her own decision, since she confessed to him.

The bodies of Louise, Mrs. Otterbourne, and Linnet are brought ashore. Linnet's body in particular causes a sensation. News of her death quickly reaches such distant people as Sir George Wode in London, Sterndale Rockford in New York, and Joanna Southwood in Switzerland. It's also discussed at the bar of the Three Crowns in Malton-under-Wode. "Well, it doesn't seem to have done her much good, poor lass," says Mr. Burnaby. But he and the other bar patrons soon move on to other things, and start talking about the Grand National (a major horse race). For as Ferguson was saying at just that moment in Luxor, Egypt, what happened in the past is less important than what will happen in the future.

The novel ends on a darkly comic note. Linnet, who had seemed so important in her life, ends up being little more than a talking point in the local pub before everyone moves on to talking about horse racing. Horse racing—which can encourage greed and lead to sudden wins or losses of fortune—is a fitting final image, since much of the novel was dedicated to various characters jockeying to try to control Linnet's fortune. The idea that only the future is important sums up the attitude of the patrons in the pub, which mirrors the get-rich-quick attitudes that motivated (and doomed) many of the other characters in the story.

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