

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 ENGLISH/HOMEWORK 13

NAME (FIRST AND LAST): _____ GRADE: _____

Note: You do not have to print out the summaries and selections from page 1 to 6.

SparkNotes Summaries of Chapter 1 to 3 of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Chapter 1

It is five o'clock on a cold windy morning in Syria. Detective Hercule Poirot is boarding the Taurus Express on his way to Stamboul (Istanbul) for a few days of vacation. As he boards the train, Lieutenant Dubosc profusely thanks Poirot for his help, "You have saved us mon cher...you have saved the honor of the French Army." To which Poirot replies, "But indeed, do I not remember that you once saved my life?" After exchanging more pleasantries with the General, Poirot boards the train. On the train, he is accompanied by Mary Debenham and Colonel Arbuthnot whom Hercule first encounters at breakfast that same morning. While sipping coffee, Poirot observes every detail of Arbuthnot and Debenham. Arbuthnot approaches Debenham, already eating breakfast, and asks if he might join her. The two, "true to their English nationality," were "not chatty." At two-thirty, the train comes to a halt because of a fire under the dining car. Mary Debenham is extremely anxious and tells Poirot that she must not miss her connection to the Simpleton Orient Express. Poirot observes that Mary and the Colonel become increasingly friendly over the course of their voyage to Istanbul and overhears conversations between them that pique his curiosity. While looking out at the scenery, Mary remarks to Arbuthnot that she wishes she could enjoy the countryside. And, at the Konya stop, when Poirot and the couple get out to stretch their legs, Poirot hears Arbuthnot and Mary speaking together; Mary says to Debenham "When it's all over. When it's behind us—then—."

Chapter 2

Poirot arrives in Stamboul and checks in at the Tokatlian Hotel. There are three letters and a telegram waiting for him. The telegram informs him that there is a development in the Kasner case and he must return to London. Poirot arranges a room on the Simpleton Orient Express, which will leave at nine that evening. In the hotel restaurant, Poirot meets up with an old friend M. Bouc, director of the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits, who will accompany him on the train. While eating in the restaurant, Poirot takes interest in two men, Ratchett and Hector McQueen, at a nearby table. Poirot is immediately distrustful of Ratchett. After Poirot finishes his meal, he meets M. Bouc in the lounge. The concierge enters and tells Poirot there are no first class apartments available. Surprised at the full train, he remarks to Poirot, "All the world elects to travel to-night!" M. Bouc arranges for Poirot to take the carriage of Mr. Harris, a man who has not yet shown up for the train. Poirot shares the carriage with Hector McQueen--the same young man he saw with Ratchett in the restaurant.

Chapter 3

The next day M. Bouc lunches with Poirot. While the two men sit and eat, Poirot looks around at the other thirteen passengers: a "big, swarthy Italian;" a neat Englishman; a big American, one of the "ugliest old ladies he had ever see—Princess Dragomiroff; Mary Debenham sitting with two other women; Colonel Arbuthnot by himself; a middle-aged Scandinavian woman; an English- looking couple; and lastly, Hector McQueen and Ratchett. The dining car empties and Ratchett comes and sits opposite Poirot. Ratchett tells Poirot that he has enemies and that his life is threatened. He offers Poirot "big money" to protect him. Poirot tells Ratchett that he only takes cases that "interest him." Ratchett asks Poirot why he won't take the case. Poirot replies, "I do not like your face."

READING COMPREHENSION/VOCABULARY

Read the selections from page 2 to 6 and answer the questions from page 7 to 12. The words in the right column will help you locate them.

Selection 1, from the first couple pages of Chapter 1, "An Important Passenger on the Taurus Express"

<h2 style="text-align: center;">AN IMPORTANT PASSENGER ON THE TAURUS EXPRESS</h2>	Vocabulary
<p>It was five o'clock on a winter's morning in Syria. Alongside the platform at Aleppo stood the train grandly designated in railway guides as the Taurus Express. It consisted of a kitchen and dining car, a sleeping car and two local coaches.</p>	
<p>By the step leading up into the sleeping car stood a young French lieutenant, resplendent in uniform, conversing with a small lean man, muffled up to the ears, of whom nothing was visible but a pink-tipped nose and the two points of an upward curled moustache.</p>	Resplendent
<p>It was freezingly cold, and this job of seeing off a distinguished stranger was not one to be envied, but Lieutenant Dubosc performed his part manfully. Graceful phrases fell from his lips in polished French. Not that he knew what it was all about. There had been rumours, of course, as there always were in such cases. The General—<i>his</i> General's—temper had grown worse and worse. And then there had come this Belgian stranger—all the way from England, it seemed. There had been a week—a week of curious tensiety. And then certain things had happened. A very distinguished officer had committed suicide, another had resigned—anxious faces had suddenly lost their anxiety, certain military precautions were relaxed. And the General—Lieutenant Dubosc's own particular General—had suddenly looked ten years younger.</p>	Distinguished
<p>Dubosc had overheard part of a conversation between him and the stranger. "You have saved us, <i>mon cher</i>," said the General emotionally, his great white moustache trembling as he spoke. "You have saved the honour of the French Army—you have averted much bloodshed! How can I thank you for acceding to my request? To have come so far—"</p>	Averted Acceding
<p>To which the stranger (by name M. Hercule Poirot) had made a fitting reply including the phrase, "But indeed do I not remember that once you saved my life?" And then the General had made another fitting reply to that disclaiming any merit for that past service, and with more mention of France, of Belgium, of glory, of honour and of such kindred things they had embraced each other heartily and the conversation had ended.</p>	
<p>As to what it had all been about, Lieutenant Dubosc was still in the dark, but to him had been delegated the duty of seeing off M. Poirot by the Taurus Express, and he was carrying it out with all the zeal and ardour befitting a young officer with a promising career ahead of him.</p>	Delegated Ardour
<p>"Today is Sunday," said Lieutenant Dubosc. "Tomorrow, Monday evening, you will be in Stamboul."</p>	

Selection 2, from Chapter 1, “An Important Passenger on the Taurus Express”

<p><i>“Voilà, Monsieur.”</i> The conductor displayed to Poirot with a dramatic gesture the beauty of his sleeping compartment and the neat arrangement of his luggage. “The little valise of Monsieur, I have placed it <i>here</i>.”</p> <p>His outstretched hand was suggestive. Hercule Poirot placed in it a folded note.</p> <p><i>“Merci, Monsieur.”</i> The conductor became brisk and businesslike. “I have the tickets of Monsieur. I will also take the passport, please. Monsieur breaks his journey in Stamboul, I understand?”</p> <p>M. Poirot assented.</p> <p>“There are not many people travelling, I imagine?” he said.</p> <p>“No, Monsieur. I have only two other passengers—both English. A Colonel from India, and a young English lady from Baghdad. Monsieur requires anything?”</p> <p>Monsieur demanded a small bottle of Perrier.</p> <p>Five o'clock in the morning is an awkward time to board a train. There was still two hours before dawn. Conscious of an inadequate night's sleep, and of a delicate mission successfully accomplished, M. Poirot curled up in a corner and fell asleep.</p> <p>When he awoke it was half-past nine, and he sallied forth to the restaurant car in search of hot coffee.</p> <p>There was only one occupant at the moment, obviously the young English lady referred to by the conductor. She was tall, slim and dark—perhaps twenty-eight years of age. There was a kind of cool efficiency in the way she was eating her breakfast and in the way she called to the attendant to bring her more coffee, which bespoke a knowledge of the world and of travelling. She wore a dark-coloured travelling dress of some thin material eminently suitable for the heated atmosphere of the train.</p> <p>M. Hercule Poirot, having nothing better to do, amused himself by studying her without appearing to do so.</p> <p>She was, he judged, the kind of young woman who could take care of herself with perfect ease wherever she went. She had poise and efficiency. He rather liked the severe regularity of her features and the delicate pallor of her skin. He liked the burnished black head with its neat waves of hair, and her eyes, cool, impersonal and grey. But she was, he decided, just a little too efficient to be what he called <i>“jolie femme.”</i></p> <p>Presently another person entered the restaurant car. This was a tall man of between forty and fifty, lean of figure, brown of skin, with hair slightly grizzled round the temples.</p> <p>“The colonel from India,” said Poirot to himself.</p> <p>The newcomer gave a little bow to the girl.</p> <p>“Morning, Miss Debenham.”</p> <p>“Good morning, Colonel Arbuthnot.”</p> <p>The Colonel was standing with a hand on the chair opposite her.</p> <p>“Any objection?” he asked.</p> <p>“Of course not. Sit down.”</p> <p>“Well, you know, breakfast isn't always a chatty meal.”</p> <p>“I should hope not. But I don't bite.”</p> <p>The Colonel sat down.</p> <p>“Boy,” he called in peremptory fashion.</p> <p>He gave an order for eggs and coffee.</p>	<p>Valise</p> <p>Sallied</p> <p>Eminently</p> <p>Poise</p> <p>Pallor</p> <p>Peremptory</p>
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Selection 3, from Chapter 2, “The Tolkatlian Hotel”

<p>Hercule Poirot addressed himself to the task of keeping his moustaches out of the soup.</p> <p>That difficult task accomplished, he glanced round him whilst waiting for the next course. There were only about half a dozen people in the restaurant, and of those half-dozen there were only two that interested Hercule Poirot.</p> <p>These two sat at a table not far away. The younger was a likeable-looking man of thirty, clearly an American. It was, however, not he but his companion who had attracted the little detective's attention.</p> <p>He was a man of between sixty and seventy. From a little distance he had the bland aspect of a philanthropist. His slightly bald head, his domed forehead, the smiling mouth that displayed a very white set of false teeth, all seemed to speak of a benevolent personality. Only the eyes belied this assumption. They were small, deep set and crafty. Not only that. As the man, making some remark to his young companion, glanced across the room, his gaze stopped on Poirot for a moment, and just for that second there was a strange malevolence, and unnatural tensy in the glance.</p> <p>Then he rose.</p> <p>“Pay the bill, Hector,” he said.</p> <p>His voice was slightly husky in tone. It had a queer, soft, dangerous quality.</p> <p>When Poirot rejoined his friend in the lounge, the other two men were just leaving the hotel. Their luggage was being brought down. The younger was supervising the process. Presently he opened the glass door and said:</p> <p>“Quite ready now, Mr. Ratchett.”</p> <p>The elder man grunted an assent and passed out.</p> <p>“<i>Eh bien</i>,” said Poirot. “What do you think of those two?”</p> <p>“They are Americans,” said M. Bouc.</p> <p>“Assuredly they are Americans. I meant what did you think of their personalities?”</p> <p>“The young man seemed quite agreeable.”</p> <p>“And the other?”</p> <p>“To tell you the truth, my friend, I did not care for him. He produced on me an unpleasant impression. And you?”</p> <p>Hercule Poirot was a moment before replying.</p> <p>“When he passed me in the restaurant,” he said at last, “I had a curious impression. It was as though a wild animal—an animal savage, but savage! you understand—had passed me by.”</p> <p>“And yet he looked altogether of the most respectable.”</p> <p>“<i>Précisément!</i> The body—the cage—is everything of the most respectable—but through the bars, the wild animal looks out.”</p> <p>“You are fanciful, <i>mon vieux</i>,” said M. Bouc.</p> <p>“It may be so. But I could not rid myself of the impression that evil had passed me by very close.”</p> <p>“That respectable American gentleman?”</p> <p>“That respectable American gentleman.”</p> <p>“Well,” said M. Bouc cheerfully. “It may be so. There is much evil in the world.”</p>	<p>Philanthropist</p> <p>Belied</p>
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Selection 4, from the last couples of pages in Chapter 3, “Poirot Refuses a Case”

<p>Ratchett spoke to his companion, who got up and left the car. Then he rose himself, but instead of following MacQueen he dropped unexpectedly into the seat opposite Poirot.</p> <p>“Can you oblige me with a light?” he said. His voice was soft—faintly nasal. “My name is Ratchett.”</p> <p>Poirot bowed slightly. He slipped his hand into his pocket and produced a matchbox which he handed to the other man, who took it but did not strike a light.</p> <p>“I think,” he went on, “that I have the pleasure of speaking to M. Hercule Poirot. Is that so?”</p> <p>Poirot bowed again.</p> <p>“You have been correctly informed, Monsieur.”</p> <p>The detective was conscious of those strange shrewd eyes summing him up before the other spoke again.</p> <p>“In my country,” he said, “we come to the point quickly. Mr. Poirot, I want you to take on a job for me.”</p> <p>Hercule Poirot’s eyebrows went up a trifle.</p> <p>“My <i>clientèle</i>, Monsieur, is limited nowadays. I undertake very few cases.”</p> <p>“Why, naturally, I understand that. But this, Mr. Poirot, means big money.” He repeated again in his soft, persuasive voice, “Big money.”</p> <p>Hercule Poirot was silent a minute or two, then he said:</p> <p>“What is it you wish me to do for you, M.—er—Ratchett?”</p> <p>“Mr. Poirot, I am a rich man—a very rich man. Men in that position have enemies. I have an enemy.”</p> <p>“Only one enemy?”</p> <p>“Just what do you mean by that question?” asked Ratchett sharply.</p> <p>“Monsieur, in my experience when a man is in a position to have, as you say, enemies, then it does not usually resolve itself into one enemy only.”</p> <p>Ratchett seemed relieved by Poirot’s answer. He said quickly:</p> <p>“Why, yes, I appreciate that point. Enemy or enemies—it doesn’t matter. What does matter is my safety.”</p> <p>“Safety?”</p> <p>“My life has been threatened, Mr. Poirot. Now, I’m a man who can take pretty good care of himself.” From the pocket of his coat his hand brought a small automatic into sight for a moment. He continued grimly. “I don’t think I’m the kind of man to be caught napping. But as I look at it I might as well make assurance doubly sure. I fancy you’re the man for my money, Mr. Poirot. And remember—<i>big</i> money.”</p> <p>Poirot looked at him thoughtfully for some minutes. His face was completely expressionless. The other could have had no clue as to what thoughts were passing in that mind.</p> <p>“I regret, Monsieur,” he said at length. “I cannot oblige you.”</p> <p>The other looked at him shrewdly.</p> <p>“Name your figure, then,” he said.</p> <p>Poirot shook his head.</p> <p>“You do not understand, Monsieur. I have been very fortunate in my profession. I have made enough money to satisfy both my needs and my caprices. I take now only such cases as—interest me.”</p> <p>“You’ve got a pretty good nerve,” said Ratchett. “Will twenty thousand dollars tempt you?”</p>	<p>Trifle</p> <p>Caprices</p> <p>Nerve</p>
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<p>"It will not."</p> <p>"If you're holding out for more, you won't get it. I know what a thing's worth to me."</p> <p>"I also—M. Ratchett."</p> <p>"What's wrong with my proposition?"</p> <p>Poirot rose.</p> <p>"If you will forgive me for being personal—I do not like your face, M. Ratchett," he said.</p> <p>And with that he left the restaurant car.</p>	
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OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 ENGLISH/HOMEWORK 12**NAME (FIRST AND LAST):**_____ **GRADE:**_____**Selection 1**

1. Referring to the context of the sentence or of the selection itself, explain the meaning of each of the following words. **Explain how you know.** In addition, copy down a definition from the dictionary. However, if you are confident that you know the word's meaning, simply share your prior knowledge without copying down a dictionary definition.

i. Resplendent

ii. Distinguished

iii. Avert

iv. Accede

v. Delegate

vi. Ardour

2. Referring to the first couple of pages of the novel, how does the author portray the private detective, M. Hercule Poirot? How does Agatha Christie's writing shape your initial impression of this character?

Selection 2

1. Referring to the context of the sentence or of the selection itself, explain the meaning of each of the following words. **Explain how you know.** Ensure that the meaning matches the context of the selection. In addition, copy down a definition from the dictionary. However, if you are confident that you know the word's meaning, simply share your prior knowledge without copying down a dictionary definition.

i. Valise

ii. Sally

iii. Eminent

iv. Poise

v. Pallor

vi. Peremptory

2. What is your impression of the detective? Briefly explain. Do not repeat your response on page 8 of this homework.

Selection 3

1. Referring to the context of the sentence or of the selection itself, explain the meaning of each of the following words. **Explain how you know.** Ensure that the meaning matches the context of the selection. In addition, copy down a definition from the dictionary. However, if you are confident that you know the word's meaning, simply share your prior knowledge without copying down a dictionary definition.

i. Philanthropist

ii. Belie

2. Who has attracted the detective's attention, and why?

3. What is your impression of the detective? Briefly explain. Do not repeat your responses on pages 8 and 10 of this homework.

Selection 4

1. Referring to the context of the sentence or of the selection itself, explain the meaning of each of the following words. **Explain how you know.** Ensure that the meaning matches the context of the selection. In addition, copy down a definition from the dictionary. However, if you are confident that you know the word's meaning, simply share your prior knowledge without copying down a dictionary definition.

i. Caprice

ii. Nerve

2. Using evidence from the selection, discuss how Christie's writing creates tension.

Selection 1, 2, 3, and 4

"Every mystery has a problem to solve, usually who committed a crime and why. Authors should fill mystery stories with clues, so that the reader can try to solve the puzzle along with the characters. Sometimes, an author may insert a false clue just to throw the character (and reader) off." (penguin.com)

Referring **only** to the first three chapters of Agatha Christie's novel, *Murder on the Orient Express*, discuss any clue or red herring (i.e., false clue) that you can find or are aware of.

THE END