

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 ENGLISH/HOMEWORK 16

NAME (FIRST AND LAST): _____ GRADE: _____

Note: You do not have to print out the summaries and selections from page 1 to 5.

Chapter 1

Poirot opens the Court of Inquiry in the dining car of the train. He calls in Pierre Michel, conductor of the Wagon Lit. Pierre Michel is a Frenchman that has been employed with the company for over fifteen years and is considered quite trustworthy and honest. Pierre recounts his actions the previous evening for Poirot. He tells Poirot that Ratchett asked for his bed made up while he was at dinner, so that he could retire early. Hector McQueen was seen entering his compartment some time afterward. At 12:40 in the morning, Ratchett rang the bell, but when the Conductor came to his door, Ratchett told him he had made a mistake. After responding to Ratchett, Pierre went to the Athens coach to visit a colleague, but was called back sometime after one in the morning by Mrs. Hubbard's bell followed by Poirot's bell. A half an hour later, the Conductor made up McQueen's bed. McQueen had been up talking with Colonel Arbuthnot. The Conductor did not see any other movement in the hallway except for a lady with a scarlet kimono with dragons on it. The Conductor also informs Poirot that the train has been well searched and there is no assassin hiding on board; the last stop on the train was at Vincovci at 11:58 where he descended from the train with the other conductors.

Chapter 2

Poirot calls Hector McQueen for a second interview. Poirot divulges Ratchett's real name and crime. McQueen seems very surprised and tells Poirot he would have never worked for Ratchett had he known his true identity. McQueen's father was the district attorney who handled the Armstrong case and McQueen felt great sympathy for the family. McQueen tells Poirot that, after dinner, he returned to his compartment and read a bit. At Belgrade, McQueen fell into conversation with Colonel Arbuthnot. The gentlemen ended up talking about politics until 2 a.m. in McQueen's compartment, and then McQueen fell asleep. At Vincovci, he and Arbuthnot both got out of the train to stretch. The only person McQueen noticed in the hallway was a woman with a scarlet silk robe passing his door. McQueen never saw the unidentified lady return.

Chapter 3

Poirot brings M. Ratchett's valet, Edward Henry Masterman, in for questioning. The valet explains he last saw Ratchett at approximately 9 p.m. The valet went to Ratchett's room to fold his clothes, put his dental plate in water, and gave him his sleeping draught. Ratchett seemed to be upset and on edge – everything the valet did upset him. Ratchett told Masterman he did not want to be disturbed until he rang the next morning. Masterman was not surprised that he didn't call the next morning right off because Ratchett often didn't rise till lunchtime. After leaving Ratchett, Masterman told McQueen Ratchett wanted him and went to his own compartment and read. Masterman shares the No. Four compartment with the Italian. He read until 10:30 p.m., when the conductor came and made up the beds for the night, but did not drift off until four in the morning because of a bad toothache. He knew Ratchett had certain enemies because he had heard conversations between Ratchett and McQueen discussing some of the threatening letters. Masterman had no knowledge of Ratchett's real identity, but told Poirot he was familiar with the Armstrong case. Masterman is a cigarette smoker.

READING COMPREHENSION/VOCABULARY

Read the selections from **page 2 to 5** and answer the questions from **page 6 to 10**. The words in the right column will help you locate them.

Selection 1, from Part 2, Chapter 1, “The Evidence of the Wagon Lit Conductor”

In the restaurant car all was in readiness.

Poirot and M. Bouc sat together on one side of a table. The doctor sat across the aisle.

On the table in front of Poirot was a plan of the Istanbul-Calais coach with the names of the passengers marked in in red ink.

The passports and tickets were in a pile at one side. There was writing paper, ink, pen and pencils.

“Excellent,” said Poirot. “We can open our Court of Inquiry without more ado. First, I think, we should take the evidence of the Wagon Lit conductor. You probably know something about the man. What character has he? Is he a man in whose word you would place reliance?”

“I should say so most assuredly. Pierre Michel has been employed by the company for over fifteen years. He is a Frenchman—lives near Calais. Thoroughly respectable and honest. Not, perhaps, remarkable for brains.”

Poirot nodded comprehendingly.

“Good,” he said. “Let us see him.”

Pierre Michel had recovered some of his assurance, but he was still extremely nervous.

“I hope Monsieur will not think that there has been any negligence on my part,” he said anxiously, his eyes going from Poirot to M. Bouc. “It is a terrible thing that has happened. I hope Monsieur does not think that it reflects on me in any way?”

Having soothed the man’s fears, Poirot began his questions. He first elicited Michel’s name and address, his length of service, and the length of time he had been on this particular route. These particulars he already knew, but the routine questions served to put the man at his ease.

“And now,” went on Poirot, “let us come to the events of last night. M. Ratchett retired to bed—when?”

“Almost immediately after dinner, Monsieur. Actually before we left Belgrade. So he did on the previous night. He had directed me to make up the bed while he was at dinner, and I did so.”

“Did anybody go into his compartment afterwards?”

“His valet, Monsieur, and the young American gentleman his secretary.”

“Anyone else?”

“No, Monsieur, not that I know of.”

“Good. And that is the last you saw or heard of him?”

“No, Monsieur. You forget, he rang his bell about twenty to one—soon after we had stopped.”

“What happened exactly?”

“I knocked at the door, but he called out and said he had made a mistake.”

“In English or in French?”

“In French.”

“What were his words exactly?”

“*Ce n’est rien. Je me suis trompé.*”

“Quite right,” said Poirot. “That is what I heard. And then you went away?”

Selection 2, from Part 2, Chapter 2, “The Evidence of the Secretary”

<p>For a minute or two Poirot remained lost in thought.</p> <p>“I think,” he said at last, “that it would be well to have a further word with M. MacQueen, in view of what we now know.”</p> <p>The young American appeared promptly.</p> <p>“Well,” he said, “how are things going?”</p> <p>“Not too badly. Since our last conversation I have learnt something—the identity of M. Ratchett.”</p> <p>Hector MacQueen leaned forward interestedly.</p> <p>“Yes?” he said.</p> <p>“Ratchett, as you suspected, was merely an alias. Ratchett was Cassetti, the man who ran the celebrated kidnapping stunts—including the famous affair of little Daisy Armstrong.”</p> <p>An expression of utter astonishment appeared on MacQueen’s face; then it darkened.</p> <p>“The damned skunk!” he exclaimed.</p> <p>“You had no idea of this, M. MacQueen?”</p> <p>“No, sir,” said the young American decidedly. “If I had I’d have cut off my right hand before it had a chance to do secretarial work for him!”</p> <p>“You feel strongly about the matter, M. MacQueen?”</p> <p>“I have a particular reason for doing so. My father was the district attorney who handled the case, M. Poirot. I saw Mrs. Armstrong more than once—she was a lovely woman. So gentle and heartbroken.” His face darkened. “If ever a man deserved what he got, Ratchett or Cassetti is the man. I’m rejoiced at his end. Such a man wasn’t fit to live!”</p> <p>“You almost feel as though you would have been willing to do the good deed yourself?”</p> <p>“I do. I—” He paused, then flushed rather guiltily. “Seems I’m kind of incriminating myself.”</p> <p>“I should be more inclined to suspect you, M. MacQueen, if you displayed an inordinate sorrow at your employer’s decease.”</p> <p>“I don’t think I could do that, even to save myself from the chair,” said MacQueen grimly.</p> <p>Then he added:</p> <p>“If I’m not being unduly curious, just how did you figure this out? Cassetti’s identity, I mean.”</p> <p>“By a fragment of a letter found in his compartment.”</p> <p>“But surely—I mean—that was rather careless of the old man?”</p> <p>“That depends,” said Poirot, “on the point of view.”</p> <p>The young man seemed to find this remark rather baffling. He stared at Poirot as though trying to make him out.</p> <p>“The task before me,” said Poirot, “is to make sure of the movements of everyone on the train. No offence need be taken, you understand? It is only a matter of routine.”</p>	<p>Incriminating</p> <p>Inordinate</p> <p>Unduly</p>
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Selection 3, Part 2, Chapter 3, “The Evidence of the Valet”

The American was succeeded by the pale Englishman with the inexpressive face whom Poirot had already noticed on the day before. He stood waiting very correctly. Poirot motioned to him to sit down.

“You are, I understand, the valet of M. Ratchett?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Your name?”

“Edward Henry Masterman.”

“Your age?”

“Thirty-nine.”

“And your home address?”

“21 Friar Street, Clerkenwell.”

“You have heard that your master has been murdered?”

“Yes, sir. A very shocking occurrence.”

“Will you now tell me, please, at what hour you last saw M. Ratchett?”

The valet considered.

“It must have been about nine o’clock, sir, last night. That or a little after.”

“Tell me in your own words exactly what happened.”

“I went in to Mr. Ratchett as usual, sir, and attended to his wants.”

“What were your duties exactly?”

“To fold or hang up his clothes, sir. Put his dental plate in water and see that he had everything he wanted for the night.”

“Was his manner much the same as usual?”

The valet considered a moment.

“Well, sir, I think he was upset.”

“In what way—upset?”

“Over a letter he’d been reading. He asked me if it was I who had put it in his compartment. Of course I told him I hadn’t done any such thing, but he swore at me and found fault with everything I did.”

“Was that unusual?”

“Oh, no, sir, he lost his temper easily—as I say, it just depended what had happened to upset him.”

“Did your master ever take a sleeping draught?”

Dr. Constantine leaned forward a little.

“Always when travelling by train, sir. He said he couldn’t sleep otherwise.”

“Do you know what drug he was in the habit of taking?”

“I couldn’t say, I’m sure, sir. There was no name on the bottle. Just ‘*The Sleeping Draught to be taken at bedtime.*’”

“Did he take it last night?”

“Yes, sir. I poured it into a glass and put it on top of the toilet table ready for him.”

“You didn’t actually see him drink it?”

“No, sir.”

“What happened next?”

“I asked if there was anything further, and asked what time M. Ratchett would like to be called in the morning. He said he didn’t want to be disturbed till he rang.”

“Was that usual?”

“Quite usual, sir. He used to ring the bell for the conductor and then send him for me when he was ready to get up.”

“Was he usually an early or a late riser?”

Draught

<p>“Quite usual, sir. He used to ring the bell for the conductor and then send him for me when he was ready to get up.”</p> <p>“Was he usually an early or a late riser?”</p> <p>“It depended, sir, on his mood. Sometimes he’d get up for breakfast, sometimes he wouldn’t get up till just on lunch time.”</p> <p>“So that you weren’t alarmed when the morning wore on and no summons came?”</p> <p>“No, sir.”</p> <p>“Did you know that your master had enemies?”</p> <p>“Yes, sir.”</p> <p>The man spoke quite unemotionally.</p> <p>“How did you know?”</p> <p>“I had heard him discussing some letters, sir, with Mr. MacQueen.”</p> <p>“Had you an affection for your employer, Masterman?”</p> <p>Masterman’s face became, if possible, even more inexpressive than it was normally.</p> <p>“I should hardly like to say that, sir. He was a generous employer.”</p> <p>“But you didn’t like him?”</p> <p>“Shall we put it that I don’t care very much for Americans, sir.”</p> <p>“Have you ever been in America?”</p> <p>“No, sir.”</p> <p>“Do you remember reading in the paper of the Armstrong kidnapping case?”</p> <p>A little colour came into the man’s cheeks.</p> <p>“Yes, indeed, sir. A little baby girl, wasn’t it? A very shocking affair.”</p> <p>“Did you know that your employer, M. Ratchett, was the principal instigator in that affair?”</p> <p>“No, indeed, sir.” The valet’s tone held positive warmth and feeling for the first time. “I can hardly believe it, sir.”</p> <p>“Nevertheless, it is true. Now, to pass to your own movements last night. A matter of routine, you understand. What did you do after leaving your master?”</p>	<p>Instigator</p>
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NAME (FIRST AND LAST): _____ GRADE: _____

Selection 1

1. Why do you think Poirot wants to interview the Wagon Lit (the sleeping car on a European train) conductor first?

2. Who says, "*Ce n'est rien. Je me suis trompé*"? Could it have been someone else who says that? How do you know?

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.** 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. Nevertheless, you are still encouraged to explain how the word fits into the context of the selection.

- i. Incriminate

ii. Inordinate

iii. Unduly

2. Analyze MacQueen's body language, especially this moment: "A look of utter astonishment appeared on MacQueen's face; then it darkened" (Christie). What is going through his mind?

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.** 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. Nevertheless, you are still encouraged to explain how the word fits into the context of the selection.

i. Draught

ii. Instigator

2. Analyze Poirot's questions for the valet. Why does he ask those questions? What information is he trying to obtain?

3. "The valet's tone held positive warmth and feeling for the first time." Why do you think there is such a change in the valet's tone of voice?

POETRY ANALYSIS

Read the following poem and respond to the questions that follow. If we have discussed this poem in class, you are encouraged to refer to your notes and elaborate on them.

This Is a Photograph of Me

By Margaret Atwood

It was taken some time ago.
At first it seems to be
a smeared
print: blurred lines and grey flecks
blended with the paper;

then, as you scan
it, you see in the left-hand corner
a thing that is like a branch: part of a tree
(balsam or spruce) emerging
and, to the right, halfway up
what ought to be a gentle
slope, a small frame house.

In the background there is a lake,
and beyond that, some low hills.

(The photograph was taken
the day after I drowned.

I am in the lake, in the center
of the picture, just under the surface.

It is difficult to say where
precisely, or to say
how large or small I am:
the effect of water
on light is a distortion

but if you look long enough,
eventually
you will be able to see me.)

1. To what extent does the title define the poem's subject matter (i.e., the topic dealt with in the poem)?

2. Discuss the imagery in the poem. What happens to the images as the poem proceeds from one verse-paragraph to the next?

3. Why do you think the last four verse-paragraphs are bracketed?

4. What do you think the poet is trying to say?

THE END