

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 ENGLISH/HOMEWORK 15

NAME (FIRST AND LAST): _____ GRADE: _____

SESSION (DAY): _____ TIME: _____

Note: You do not have to print out the summaries and selections from page 1 to 7.

SparkNotes Summaries of Chapter 6 to 8 of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Chapter 6

The passports and the tickets of all the passengers are gathered. Poirot will interview each passenger and first calls Hector McQueen, the younger man Poirot has seen with Ratchett. Poirot tells McQueen that his employer, M. Ratchett is dead. The young man is not surprised and replies, "So they got him after all." McQueen explains to Poirot that he had worked as Ratchett's secretary for just over a year. He traveled all over the world with Ratchett and was particularly helpful because Ratchett didn't know any languages. McQueen also tells Poirot that his employer was American; his full name, Samuel Edward Ratchett, which McQueen thinks is an alias, because he was escaping from something. A few weeks back, Ratchett had begun to receive threatening letters. McQueen shows one of the letters to Poirot who determines it has been written by not one, but several people. McQueen last saw Ratchett alive at 10 p.m. when he took some memoranda down for him. McQueen is released from the interview.

Chapter 7

Dr. Constantine escorts Poirot to Ratchett's compartment. The room has been left untouched since the murder and Ratchett lies dead on the bed. Dr. Constantine observes that some of the stab wounds were delivered after Ratchett was dead and Poirot notices that some of the blows were delivered right-handed and some left. Some of the blows are very deep and others just scraping the skin. Another curiosity is two different kinds of matches in the ashtray—one round and one flat. Poirot compares this to Ratchett's matches and suspects the flatter may have been used by the murderer. Poirot also finds an embroidered handkerchief with the initial "H" on it and a pipe cleaner on the floor. The hands of Ratchett's watch, found in his jacket, are pointed to 1:15. Lastly Poirot discovers a small, charred piece of paper. With a spirit stove, curling tongs and the netting from a lady's hat box, Poirot is able to read the paper: "—member little Daisy Armstrong." Poirot instantly knows who Ratchett really is, an American named Cassetti.

Chapter 8

Poirot and Dr. Constantine join M. Bouc in the dining car for lunch. Poirot explains the identity of M. Ratchett. Ratchett, real name Cassetti, was the kidnapper of Daisy Armstrong. Daisy was the three-year-old daughter of Colonel Armstrong, a man with a great Wall Street inheritance, and the famous actress, Linda Arden. Daisy was the couple's only child. The young girl was kidnapped and the parents paid 200,000 dollars for her return, but Daisy's body was found dead. Mrs. Armstrong then had a premature child who was born dead and the Colonel shot himself, broken-hearted. At about the same time, the child's nursemaid also committed suicide suspected of some involvement with the crime. About six months later, Cassetti was arrested, but because of his enormous wealth and power he got off. Poirot believes the murderer, with the intention of erasing any connection to the name Armstrong, destroyed the charred piece of paper.

READING COMPREHENSION/VOCABULARY

Read the selections from page 2 to 7 and answer the questions from page 8 to 12. The words in the right column will help you locate them.

Selection 1, from Chapter 6, "A Woman?"

<p><i>"Qu'est ce qu'il y a?"</i> he began laboriously. <i>"Pourquoi—?"</i></p> <p>With a vigorous gesture Poirot motioned him to the seat in the corner. He took it and began once more.</p> <p><i>"Pourquoi—?"</i> then, checking himself and relapsing into his own tongue, "What's up on the train? Has anything happened?"</p> <p>He looked from one man to another.</p> <p>Poirot nodded.</p> <p>"Exactly. Something has happened. Prepare yourself for a shock. <i>Your employer, M. Ratchett, is dead!</i>"</p> <p>MacQueen's mouth pursed itself in a whistle. Except that his eyes grew a shade brighter, he showed no signs of shock or distress.</p> <p>"So they got him after all," he said.</p> <p>"What exactly do you mean by that phrase, M. MacQueen?" MacQueen hesitated.</p> <p>"You are assuming," said Poirot, "that M. Ratchett was murdered?"</p> <p>"Wasn't he?" This time MacQueen did show surprise. "Why, yes," he said slowly.</p> <p>"That's just what I did think. Do you mean he just died in his sleep? Why, the old man was as tough as—as tough—"</p> <p>He stopped, at a loss for a simile.</p> <p>"No, no," said Poirot. "Your assumption was quite right. Mr. Ratchett was murdered. Stabbed. But I should like to know why you were so sure it <i>was</i> murder, and not just—death."</p> <p>MacQueen hesitated.</p> <p>"I must get this clear," he said. "Who exactly are you? And where do you come in?"</p> <p>"I represent the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits." He paused, then added, "I am a detective. My name is Hercule Poirot."</p> <p>If he expected an effect he did not get one. MacQueen said merely, "Oh, yes?" and waited for him to go on.</p> <p>"You know the name, perhaps."</p> <p>"Why, it does seem kind of familiar—only I always thought it was a woman's dressmaker."</p> <p>Hercule Poirot looked at him with distaste.</p> <p>"It is incredible!" he said.</p> <p>"What's incredible?"</p> <p>"Nothing. Let us advance with the matter in hand. I want you to tell me, M. MacQueen, all that you know about the dead man. You were not related to him?"</p> <p>"No. I am—was—his secretary."</p> <p>"For how long have you held that post?"</p> <p>"Just over a year."</p> <p>"Please give me all the information you can."</p> <p>"Well, I met Mr. Ratchett just over a year ago when I was in Persia—"</p> <p>Poirot interrupted.</p> <p>"What were you doing there?"</p> <p>"I had come over from New York to look into an oil concession. I don't suppose you want to hear all about that. My friends and I had been let in rather badly over it. Mr. Ratchett was in the same hotel. He had just had a row with his secretary. He offered me the job and I took it. I was at a loose end, and glad to find a well-paid job ready</p>	<p>Vocabulary</p> <p>Relapsing</p> <p>Distaste</p>
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<p>made, as it were.”</p> <p>“And since then?”</p> <p>“We’ve travelled about. Mr. Ratchett wanted to see the world. He was hampered by knowing no languages. I acted more as a courier than as a secretary. It was a pleasant life.”</p> <p>“Now tell me as much as you can about your employer.”</p> <p>The young man shrugged his shoulders. A perplexed expression passed over his face.</p> <p>“That’s not so easy.”</p> <p>“What was his full name?”</p> <p>“Samuel Edward Ratchett.”</p> <p>“He was an American citizen?”</p> <p>“Yes.”</p> <p>“What part of America did he come from?”</p> <p>“I don’t know.”</p> <p>“Well, tell me what you do know.”</p> <p>“The actual truth is, Mr. Poirot, that I know nothing at all! Mr. Ratchett never spoke of himself, or of his life in America.”</p> <p>“Why do you think that was?”</p> <p>“I don’t know. I imagined that he might have been ashamed of his beginnings. Some men are.”</p> <p>“Does that strike you as a satisfactory solution?”</p> <p>“Frankly, it doesn’t.”</p> <p>“Has he any relations?”</p> <p>“He never mentioned any.”</p> <p>Poirot pressed the point.</p> <p>“You must have formed <i>some</i> theory, M. MacQueen.”</p> <p>“Well, yes, I did. For one thing, I don’t believe Ratchett was his real name. I think he left America definitely in order to escape someone or something. I think he was successful—until a few weeks ago.”</p> <p>“And then?”</p> <p>“He began to get letters—threatening letters.”</p> <p>“Did you see them?”</p> <p>“Yes. It was my business to attend to his correspondence. The first letter came a fortnight ago.”</p> <p>“Were these letters destroyed?”</p> <p>“No, I think I’ve got a couple still in my files—one I know Ratchett tore up in a rage. Shall I get them for you?”</p> <p>“If you would be so good.”</p> <p>MacQueen left the compartment. He returned a few minutes later and laid down two sheets of rather dirty notepaper before Poirot.</p> <p>The first letter ran as follows:</p> <p><i>“Thought you’d doublecross us and get away with it, did you? Not on your life. We’re out to GET you, Ratchett, and we WILL get you!”</i></p> <p>There was no signature.</p> <p>With no comment beyond raised eyebrows, Poirot picked up the second letter.</p> <p><i>“We’re going to take you for a ride, Ratchett. Some time soon. We’re going to GET you, see?”</i></p> <p>Poirot laid the letter down.</p> <p>“The style is monotonous!” he said. “More so than the handwriting.”</p>	<p>Hampered</p>
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<p>MacQueen stared at him.</p> <p>"You would not observe," said Poirot pleasantly. "It requires the eye of one used to such things. This letter was not written by one person, M. MacQueen. Two or more persons wrote it—each writing a letter of a word at a time. Also, the letters are printed. That makes the task of identifying the handwriting much more difficult."</p> <p>He paused, then said:</p> <p>"Did you know that M. Ratchett had applied for help to me?"</p> <p>"To <i>you</i>?"</p> <p>MacQueen's astonished tone told Poirot quite certainly that the young man had not known of it. He nodded.</p> <p>"Yes. He was alarmed. Tell me, how did he act when he received the first letter?"</p> <p>MacQueen hesitated.</p> <p>"It's difficult to say. He—he—passed it off with a laugh in that quiet way of his. But somehow"—he gave a slight shiver—"I felt that there was a good deal going on underneath the quietness."</p> <p>Poirot nodded. Then he asked an unexpected question.</p> <p>"Mr. MacQueen, will you tell me, quite honestly, exactly how you regarded your employer? Did you like him?"</p> <p>Hector MacQueen took a moment or two before replying.</p> <p>"No," he said at last. "I did not."</p> <p>"Why?"</p> <p>"I can't exactly say. He was always quite pleasant in his manner." He paused, then said, "I'll tell you the truth, Mr. Poirot. I disliked and distrusted him. He was, I am sure, a cruel and a dangerous man. I must admit, though, that I have no reasons to advance for my opinion."</p> <p>"Thank you, M. MacQueen. One further question—when did you last see M. Ratchett alive?"</p> <p>"Last evening about"—he thought for a minute—"ten o'clock, I should say. I went into his compartment to take down some memoranda from him."</p> <p>"On what subject?"</p> <p>"Some tiles and antique pottery that he bought in Persia. What was delivered was not what he had purchased. There has been a long, vexatious correspondence on the subject."</p> <p>"And that was the last time M. Ratchett was seen alive?"</p> <p>"Yes, I suppose so."</p> <p>"Do you know when M. Ratchett received the last threatening letter?"</p> <p>"On the morning of the day we left Constantinople."</p> <p>"There is one more question I must ask you, M. MacQueen: were you on good terms with your employer?"</p> <p>The young man's eyes twinkled suddenly.</p> <p>"This is where I'm supposed to go all goosefleshy down the back. In the words of a best seller, 'You've nothing on me.' Ratchett and I were on perfectly good terms."</p> <p>"Perhaps, M. MacQueen, you will give me your full name and your address in America."</p> <p>MacQueen gave his name—Hector Willard MacQueen, and an address in New York.</p> <p>Poirot leaned back against the cushions.</p> <p>"That is all for the present, M. MacQueen," he said. "I should be obliged if you would keep the matter of M. Ratchett's death to yourself for a little time."</p>	<p>Vexatious</p>
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Selection 2, from Chapter 7, “The Body”

<p>“Then bring me—let me see—yes, the Swedish lady’s and that of the lady’s maid. Those two are the only hope. You will tell them it is a customs regulation—something—anything that occurs to you.”</p> <p>“That will be all right Monsieur. Neither lady is in her compartment at the moment.”</p> <p>“Then be quick.”</p> <p>The conductor departed. He returned with the two hatboxes. Poirot opened that of the lady’s maid and tossed it aside. Then he opened the Swedish lady’s and uttered an exclamation of satisfaction. Removing the hats carefully, he disclosed round humps of wire netting.</p> <p>“Ah, here is what we need. About fifteen years ago hatboxes were made like this. You skewered through the hat with a hatpin on to this hump of wire netting.”</p> <p>As he spoke he was skilfully removing two of the attachments. Then he repacked the hatbox and told the conductor to return them both where they belonged.</p> <p>When the door was shut once more he turned to his companion.</p> <p>“See you, my dear doctor, me, I am not one to rely upon the expert procedure. It is the psychology I seek, not the fingerprint or the cigarette ash. But in this case I would welcome a little scientific assistance. This compartment is full of clues, but can I be sure that those clues are really what they seem to be?”</p> <p>“I do not quite understand you, M. Poirot.”</p> <p>“Well, to give you an example—we find a woman’s handkerchief. Did a woman drop it? Or did a man, committing the crime, say to himself ‘I will make this look like a woman’s crime. I will stab my enemy an unnecessary number of times, making some of the blows feeble and ineffective, and I will drop this handkerchief where no one can miss it.’ That is one possibility. Then there is another. Did a woman kill him and did she deliberately drop a pipe cleaner to make it look like a man’s work? Or are we seriously to suppose that two people—a man and a woman—were separately concerned, and that each was so careless as to drop a clue to their identity? It is a little too much of a coincidence, that!”</p> <p>“But where does the hatbox come in?” asked the doctor, still puzzled.</p> <p>“Ah! I’m coming to that. As I say, these clues, the watch stopped at a quarter past one, the handkerchief, the pipe cleaner, they may be genuine, or they may be fake. As to that I cannot yet tell. But there is <i>one</i> clue here which I believe—though again I may be wrong—has <i>not</i> been faked. I mean this flat match, M. le docteur. I <i>believe that that match was used by the murderer, not by M. Ratchett</i>. It was used to burn an incriminating paper of some kind. Possibly a note. If so, there was something in that note, some mistake, some error, that left a possible clue to the assailant. I am going to endeavour to resurrect what that something was.”</p> <p>He went out of the compartment and returned a few moments later with a small spirit stove and a pair of curling tongs.</p> <p>“I use them for the moustaches,” he said, referring to the latter.</p> <p>The doctor watched him with great interest. He flattened out the two humps of wire, and with great care wriggled the charred scrap of paper on to one of them. He clapped the other on top of it and then, holding both pieces together with the tongs, held the whole thing over the flame of the spirit lamp.</p> <p>“It is a very makeshift affair, this,” he said over his shoulder. “Let us hope that it will answer its purpose.”</p> <p>The doctor watched the proceedings attentively. The metal began to glow. Suddenly he saw faint indications of letters. Words formed themselves slowly—words of fire.</p> <p>It was a very tiny scrap. Only three words and a part of another showed.</p> <p>“—member little Daisy Armstrong.”</p>	<p>Incriminating</p> <p>Resurrect</p> <p>Makeshift</p>
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<p>"Ah!" Poirot gave a sharp exclamation.</p> <p>"It tells you something?" asked the doctor.</p> <p>Poirot's eyes were shining. He laid down the tongs carefully.</p> <p>"Yes," he said. <i>"I know the dead man's real name. I know why he had to leave America."</i></p> <p>"What was his name?"</p> <p>"Cassetti."</p> <p>"Cassetti." Constantine knitted his brows. "It brings back to me something. Some years ago. I cannot remember...It was a case in America, was it not?"</p> <p>"Yes," said Poirot. "A case in America."</p> <p>Further than that Poirot was not disposed to be communicative. He looked round him as he went on:</p> <p>"We will go into all that presently. Let us first make sure that we have seen all there is to be seen here."</p> <p>Quickly and deftly he went once more through the pockets of the dead man's clothes but found nothing there of interest. He tried the communicating door which led through to the next compartment, but it was bolted on the other side.</p>	Deftly
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Selection 3, from Chapter 8, "The Armstrong Kidnapping Case"

<p>They found M. Bouc finishing an omelet.</p> <p>"I thought it best to have lunch served immediately in the restaurant car," he said. "Afterwards it will be cleared and M. Poirot can conduct his examination of the passengers there. In the meantime I have ordered them to bring us three some food here."</p> <p>"An excellent idea," said Poirot.</p> <p>Neither of the other two men was hungry, and the meal was soon eaten, but not till they were sipping their coffee did M. Bouc mention the subject that was occupying all their minds.</p> <p><i>"Eh bien?"</i> he asked.</p> <p><i>"Eh bien,</i> I have discovered the identity of the victim. I know why it was</p> <p>"Who was he?"</p> <p>"Do you remember reading of the Armstrong baby? This is the man who murdered little Daisy Armstrong—Cassetti."</p> <p>"I recall it now. A shocking affair—though I cannot remember the details."</p> <p>"Colonel Armstrong was an Englishman—a V.C. He was half American, as his mother was a daughter of W. K. Van der Halt, the Wall Street millionaire. He married the daughter of Linda Arden, the most famous tragic American actress of her day. They lived in America and had one child—a girl—whom they idolized. When she was three years old she was kidnapped, and an impossibly high sum demanded as the price of her return. I will not weary you with all the intricacies that followed. I will come to the moment, when, after having paid over the enormous sum of two hundred thousand dollars, the child's dead body was discovered, it having been dead at least a fortnight. Public indignation rose to fever point. And there was worse to follow. Mrs. Armstrong was expecting another child. Following the shock of the discovery, she gave birth to a dead child born prematurely, and herself died. Her broken-hearted husband shot himself."</p> <p><i>"Mon Dieu,</i> what a tragedy. I remember now," said M. Bouc. "There was also another death, if I remember rightly?"</p> <p>"Yes—an unfortunate French or Swiss nursemaid. The police were convinced that she had some knowledge of the crime. They refused to believe her hysterical denials. Finally, in a fit of despair, the poor girl threw herself from a window and was killed. It was proved afterwards that she was absolutely innocent of any complicity in the crime."</p> <p>"It is not good to think of," said M. Bouc.</p>	<p>Intricacies</p> <p>Complicity</p>
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<p>“About six months later, this man Casseti was arrested as the head of the gang who had kidnapped the child. They had used the same methods in the past. If the police seemed likely to get on their trail, they had killed their prisoner, hidden the body, and continued to extract as much money as possible before the crime was discovered.</p> <p>“Now, I will make clear to you this, my friend. Casseti was the man! But by means of the enormous wealth he had piled up and by the secret hold he had over various persons, he was acquitted on some technical inaccuracy. Notwithstanding that, he would have been lynched by the populace had he not been clever enough to give them the slip. It is now clear to me what happened. He changed his name and left America. Since then he has been a gentleman of leisure, travelling abroad and living on his <i>rentes</i>.”</p> <p>“<i>Ah! quel animal!</i>” M. Bouc’s tone was redolent of heartfelt disgust. “I cannot regret that he is dead—not at all!”</p>	<p>Lynched</p> <p>Redolent</p>
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OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 ENGLISH/HOMEWORK 14**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. Relapse

ii. Distaste

iii. Hamper

iv. Vexatious

2. Why does MacQueen say, "This is where I am supposed to go all goosefleshy down the back. In the words of the bestseller, 'You've nothing on me.'"? Why does Poirot's question provoke such a response?

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3. Poirot asks MacQueen many questions. In your opinion, does Poirot ask good questions? Explain your answer.

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4. To what extent is the meeting between Poirot and MacQueen a productive one? Does it bring Poirot a step closer towards solving the case? Explain.

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.

i. Incriminate

ii. Resurrect

iii. Makeshift

iv. Deft

2. Why does Poirot need hatboxes?

3.

- i. "...I am not one to rely upon the expert procedure. It is the psychology I seek, not the fingerprint or the cigarette ash. But in this case I would welcome a little scientific assistance." What does Poirot mean by this description of his

method as a detective? And why does he need scientific assistance in this case?

- ii. In your opinion, which method of solving crime should be prioritized – the psychological approach or the scientific approach? Is a combination of both approaches necessary? Explain your answer by referring to **any** crime fiction you have read or movie you have watched.

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.

- i. Intricacy

ii. Complicity

iii. Lynch

iv. Redolent

2. What is the purpose of Chapter 8 in the novel? Discuss the significance of selection 3 or Chapter 8 as a whole.
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THE END