

# DEATH ON THE NILE

## 尼罗河上的惨案



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英语注释读物

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(英) Agatha Christie

王 瑞 注释

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(英)阿·克里斯蒂著

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## 前 言

英国著名女作家阿加莎·克里斯蒂(Agatha Christie, 1890-1976)以写侦探小说闻名于世。她是一位多产作家,一生共发表著作一百余部,除长篇侦探小说(约六十部)外,还有短篇侦探小说集、故事剧、爱情小说、诗集等。她的许多著作被改编成剧本和电影,如《捕鼠器》(The Mousetrap, 1952年改编成剧本)、《东方快车凶杀案》(Murder on the Orient Express, 1974年改编成电影)、《尼罗河上的惨案》(Death on the Nile, 1978年改编成电影)、《破镜》(The Mirror Crack'd, 1980年改编成电影)。

阿加莎·克里斯蒂于1890年9月15日生于英国德文郡托尔奎市(Torquay, Devon)。十六岁时曾到巴黎学习声乐,但由于缺乏这方面的天赋而放弃音乐转而从事写作。1914年她与阿奇博尔德·克里斯蒂上校(Col. Archibold Christie)结婚,后于1928年离婚。1930年她与一位比她小十三岁的考古学家马克思·马洛温(Max Mallowan)结婚。她与丈夫曾多次赴中东旅行。小说《尼罗河上的惨案》就取材于这些旅行。1971年,她获女爵士封号。

小说《尼罗河上的惨案》情节错综复杂,处理细腻巧妙,结局出人意外。故事内容是这样的:继承了万贯家财的林内特·里奇韦小姐和她新婚的丈夫赛蒙·多伊尔乘华丽的

旅游船在尼罗河上继续他们的蜜月旅行。夜里，林内特突然被人枪杀了。凶手是谁？动机是什么？同船的著名比利时侦探浦尔罗受委托立即开始侦查，头等舱里的七、八个乘客都和死者有过接触，且都有过杀害她的念头和机会，因而都是怀疑对象。精明老练的浦尔罗先生凭借他多年的破案经验，抓住一些易被忽略的蛛丝马迹，进行严密的推理分析，理清了纷繁杂乱的各种线索，最后终于揭露了伪装巧妙的杀人凶手。

阿加莎·克里斯蒂写的侦探小说构思新巧，情节离奇，案情分析合乎逻辑推理，令人信服。她发表于1920年的第一部小说《斯蒂勒斯奇案》(The Mysterious Affair at Styles)就创造了埃居尔·浦尔罗这个人物，并在她以后的侦探小说中不断出现。浦尔罗在她发表于1975年的小说《帷幕》(Curtain)中死去。第二年，即1976年1月20日阿加莎在英国沃林福德(Wallingford)逝世，终年八十五岁。

这一注释本的对象是具有中等英语水平的读者，目的是帮助他们理解内容，故对书中较难的词句和背景作了适当的注释，对语法现象则尽量少注或不注。由于水平所限，定有许多不妥之处，欢迎读者指正。

王 瑞

1980年10月

于 北 京

## DEATH ON THE NILE

AGATHA CHRISTIE is known throughout the world as the Queen of Crime. Her seventy-seven detective novels and books of stories have been translated into every major language, and her sales are calculated in tens of millions.

She began writing at the end of the First World War, when she created Hercule Poirot, the little Belgian detective with the egg-shaped head and the passion for order—the most popular sleuth in fiction since Sherlock Holmes. Poirot, fluffy Miss Marple and her other detectives have appeared in films, radio programmes and stage plays based on her books.

Agatha Christie also wrote six romantic novels under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott, several plays and a book of poems; as well, she assisted her archaeologist husband Sir Max Mallowan on many expeditions to the Near East.

*Postern of Fate* was the last book she wrote before her death in 1976, but since its publication two books Agatha Christie wrote in the 1940s have appeared: *Curtain*:

*Poirot's Last Case* and *Sleeping Murder*, the last Miss Marple Book. Agatha Christie's *Autobiography* was published in 1977.

## Chapter One

### I

'Linnet 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<sup>1</sup> had just stopped in front of the local post office.

A girl jumped out, a girl without a hat and wearing a frock that looked (but only *looked*) simple. A girl with golden hair and straight autocratic features—a girl with a lovely shape—a girl such as was seldom seen in Malton-under-Wode.<sup>2</sup>

With a quick imperative step she passed into the post office.

'That's her!' said Mr. Burnaby again. And he went on in



a low awed voice: 'Millions she's got...Going to spend thousands on the place. Swimming-pools there's going to be, and Italian gardens and a ballroom and half of the house pulled down and rebuilt...'

'She'll bring money into the town,' said his friend. He was a lean, seedy-looking man. His tone was envious and grudging.

Mr. Burnaby agreed.

'Yes, it's a great thing for Malton-under-Wode. A great thing it is.'

Mr. Burnaby was complacent about it.

'Wake us all up proper,'<sup>3</sup> he added.

'Bit of difference from Sir George,'<sup>4</sup> said the other.

'Ah, it was the 'orses did for him,' said Mr. Burnaby indulgently. 'Never 'ad no luck.'<sup>5</sup>

'What did he get for the place?'

'A cool sixty thousand,'<sup>6</sup> so I've heard.'

The lean man whistled.

Mr. Burnaby went on triumphantly: 'And they say she'll have spent another sixty thousand before she's finished!'

'Wicked!'" said the lean man. 'Where'd she get all that money from?'

'America, so I've heard. Her mother was the only daughter of one of those millionaire blokes.'<sup>7</sup> Quite like the pictures, isn't it?'

The girl came out of the post office and climbed into the car.

As she drove off, the lean man followed her with his eyes. He muttered:

'It seems all wrong to me—her looking like that. Money *and* looks—it's too much! If a girl's as rich as that she's no right to be a good-looker as well. And she is a good-looker...

Got everything, that girl has. Doesn't seem fair...'

2

Extract from the Social column of the *Daily Blague*.<sup>8</sup>

Among those supping at Chez Ma Tante<sup>9</sup> I noticed beautiful Linnet Ridgeway. She was with the Hon. Joanna Southwood, Lord Windlesham and Mr. Toby Bryce. Miss Ridgeway, as everyone knows, is the daughter of Melhuish Ridgeway who married Anna Hartz. She inherits from her grandfather, Leopold Hartz, an immense fortune. The lovely Linnet is the sensation of the moment<sup>10</sup> and it is rumoured that an engagement may be announced shortly. Certainly Lord Windlesham seemed very epris!<sup>11</sup>

3

The Hon. Joanna Southwood said:

‘Darling, I think it’s going to be all perfectly *marvellous!*’  
She was sitting in Linnet Ridgeway’s bedroom at Wode Hall.

From the window the eye passed over the gardens to open country with blue shadows of woodlands.

‘It’s rather perfect, isn’t it?’ said Linnet.

She leaned her arms on the window sill. Her face was eager, alive, dynamic. Beside her, Joanna Southwood seemed, somehow, a little dim—a tall thin young woman of twenty-seven, with a long clever face and freakishly plucked eyebrows.

‘And you’ve done so much in the time! Did you have lots of architects and things?’<sup>12</sup>

‘Three.’

‘What are architects like? I don’t think I’ve ever seen any.’

‘They were all right. I found them rather unpractical sometimes.’

‘Darling, you soon put *that* right! You are the *most* practical creature!’

Joanna picked up a string of pearls from the dressing-table.

‘I suppose these are real, aren’t they, Linnet?’

‘Of course.’

‘I know it’s “of course” to you, my sweet, but it wouldn’t be to most people. Heavily cultured or even Woolworth!’<sup>13</sup>  
Darling, they really are *incredible*, so exquisitely matched.

They must be worth the *most* fabulous sums!

'Rather vulgar, you think?'

'No, not at all—just pure beauty. What *are* they worth?'

'About fifty thousand.'

'What a lovely lot of money! Aren't you afraid of having them stolen?'

'No, I always wear them—and anyway they're insured.'

'Let me wear them till dinner-time, will you, darling? It would give me such a thrill.'

Linnet laughed.

'Of course, if you like.'

'You know, Linnet, I really do envy you. You've simply got *everything*. Here you are at twenty, your own mistress, with any amount of money, looks, superb health.<sup>14</sup> You've even got *brains*! When are you twenty-one?'

'Next June. I shall have a grand coming-of-age party<sup>15</sup> in London.'

'And then are you going to marry Charles Windlesham? All the dreadful little gossip writers are getting so excited about it.<sup>16</sup> And he really is frightfully devoted.'

Linnet shrugged her shoulders.

'I don't know. I don't really want to marry anyone yet.'

'Darling, how right you are! It's never quite the same afterwards, is it?'

The telephone shrilled and Linnet went to it.

'Yes? Yes?'

The butler's voice answered her:

'Miss de Bellefort is on the line. Shall I put her through?'

'Bellefort? Oh, of course, yes, put her through.'

A click and a voice, an eager, soft, slightly breathless voice:

'Hullo, is that Miss Ridgeway? *Linnet!*'

'*Jackie darling!* I haven't heard anything of you for ages and ages!'

'I know. It's awful. Linnet, I want to see you terribly.'

'Darling, can't you come down here? My new toy. I'd love to show it to you.'

'That's just what I want to do.'

'Well, jump into a train or a car.'

'Right, I will. A frightfully dilapidated two-seater.<sup>17</sup> I bought it for fifteen pounds, and some days it goes beautifully. But it has moods.<sup>18</sup> If I haven't arrived by tea-time you'll know it's had a mood. So long, my sweet.'

Linnet replaced the receiver. She crossed back to Joanna.

'That's my oldest friend, Jacqueline de Bellefort. We were together at a convent in Paris. She's had the most terrible bad luck. Her father was a French Count, her mother was American—a Southerner. The father went off with some woman, and her mother lost all her money in the Wall Street crash.<sup>19</sup> Jackie was left absolutely broke. I don't know how she's managed to get along the last two years.'

Joanna was polishing her deep-blood-coloured nails with

her friend's nail pad. She leant back with her head on one side scrutinising the effect.

'Darling,' she drawled, 'won't that be rather *tiresome*? If any misfortunes happen to my friends I always drop them *at once*! It sounds heartless, but it saves such a lot of trouble later! They always want to borrow money off you, or else they start a dressmaking business and you have to get the most terrible clothes from them. Or they paint lampshades, or do batik scarves.'

'So, if I lost all my money, you'd drop me to-morrow?'

'Yes, darling, I would. You can't say I'm not honest about it! I only like successful people. And you'll find that's true of nearly everybody—only most people won't admit it. They just say that really they can't put up with Mary or Emily or Pamela any more! "Her troubles have made her so *bitter* and peculiar, poor dear!'

'How beastly you are, Joanna!'

'I'm only on the make,<sup>20</sup> like everyone else.'

'*I'm* not on the make!'

'For obvious reasons! You don't have to be sordid when good-looking, middle-aged American trustees pay you over a vast allowance every quarter.'

'And you're wrong about Jacqueline,' said Linnet. 'She's not a sponge. I've wanted to help her, but she won't let me. She's as proud as the devil.'

'What's she in such a hurry to see you for? I'll bet she

wants something! You just wait and see.'

'She sounded excited about something,' admitted Linnet. 'Jackie always did get frightfully worked up over things.<sup>21</sup> She once stuck a penknife into someone!'

'Darling, how thrilling!'

'A boy who was teasing a dog. Jackie tried to get him to stop. He wouldn't. She pulled him and shook him, but he was much stronger than she was, and at last she whipped out a penknife and plunged it right into him. There was the *most* awful row!'

'I should think so. It sounds most uncomfortable!'

Linnet's maid entered the room. With a murmured word of apology, she took down a dress from the wardrobe and went out of the room with it.

'What's the matter with Marie?' asked Joanna. 'She's been crying.'

'Poor thing! You know I told you she wanted to marry a man who has a job in Egypt. She didn't know much about him, so I thought I'd better make sure he was all right. It turned out that he had a wife already—and three children.'

'What a lot of enemies you must make, Linnet.'

'Enemies?' Linnet looked surprised.

Joanna nodded and helped herself to a cigarette.

'Enemies, my sweet. You're so devastatingly efficient.<sup>22</sup> And you're so frightfully good at doing the right thing.'<sup>23</sup>

Linnet laughed.

‘Why, I haven’t got an enemy in the world.’

4

Lord Windlesham sat under the cedar tree. His eyes rested on the graceful proportions of Wode Hall.<sup>24</sup> There was nothing to mar its old-world beauty; the new buildings and additions were out of sight round the corner. It was a fair and peaceful sight bathed in the autumn sunshine. Nevertheless, as he gazed, it was no longer Wode Hall that Charles Windlesham saw. Instead, he seemed to see a more imposing Elizabethan mansion, a long sweep of park, a more bleak background....It was his own family seat, Charltonbury, and in the foreground stood a figure—a girl’s figure, with bright golden hair and an eager confident face....Linnet as mistress of Charltonbury!

He felt very hopeful. That refusal of hers had not been at all a definite refusal. It had been little more than a plea for time.<sup>25</sup> Well, he could afford to wait a little....

How amazingly suitable the whole thing was! It was certainly advisable that he should marry money, but not such a matter of necessity that he could regard himself as forced to put his own feelings on one side.<sup>26</sup> And he loved Linnet. He would have wanted to marry her even if she had been practically penniless, instead of one of the richest girls in England. Only, fortunately, she *was* one of the richest girls in England.



....

His mind played with attractive plans for the future.<sup>27</sup>  
The Mastership of the Roxdale perhaps, the restoration of  
the west wing, no need to let the Scotch shooting....<sup>28</sup>

Charles Windlesham dreamed in the sun.

## 5

It was four o'clock when the dilapidated little two-seater  
stopped with a sound of crunching gravel. A girl got out of  
it—a small slender creature with a mop of dark hair. She  
ran up the steps and tugged at the bell.

A few minutes later she was being ushered into the long  
stately drawing-room, and an ecclesiastical butler was saying  
with the proper mournful intonation: 'Miss de Bellefort.'

'Linnet!'

'Jackie!'

Windlesham stood a little aside, watching sympathetically  
as this fiery little creature flung herself open-armed upon  
Linnet.

'Lord Windlesham—Miss de Bellefort—my best friend.'

A pretty child, he thought—not really pretty but decidedly  
attractive, with her dark curly hair and her enormous eyes.  
He murmured a few tactful nothings<sup>29</sup> and then managed  
unobtrusively to leave the two friends together.

Jacqueline pounced—in a fashion that Linnet remembered