



## Death in the Clouds

*Agatha Christie*

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A woman is killed by a poisoned dart in the enclosed confines of a commercial passenger plane...

From seat No.9, Hercule Poirot was ideally placed to observe his fellow air passengers. Over to his right sat a pretty young woman, clearly infatuated with the man opposite; ahead, in seat No.13, sat a Countess with a poorly-concealed cocaine habit; across the gangway in seat No.8, a detective writer was being troubled by an aggressive wasp.

What Poirot did not yet realize was that behind him, in seat No.2, sat the slumped, lifeless body of a woman.

## Death in the Clouds Details


Date : Published 2001 by HarperCollins (first published March 10th 1935)

ISBN : 9780007119332

Author : Agatha Christie

Format : Paperback 333 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Classics

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## Dina says

### Reference Notes

Series: Hercule Poirot #13 (1935)

Narrator: (3rd person)

Recurring Character: Scotland Yard's Detective Inspector James Japp

Victim: Mme. Giselle (née Marie Morisot)

COD: Boomslang (South African snake) venom poisoning

Suspects (passengers and crew of the aeroplane):

Ms. Jane Grey

Mr. Norman Gale

Lady Cicely Horbury

The Hon. Venetia Kerr

Dr. Roger Bryant

M. Armand Dupont

M. Jean Dupont (M. Armand's son)

Mr. Daniel Clancy

Mr. James Ryder

Mr. Henry Mitchell (senior steward)

Mr. Albert Davis (2nd steward)

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## Jim C says

**Actual rating is 3.5 stars.**

This book is part of a series but each one can be read as a stand alone novel. In this one, the main character, Poirot, is traveling on an airplane where an unexplained murder has occurred. Poirot is on the case to try to identify the culprit.

This was my introduction to this writer's works and I enjoyed it. Obviously I have heard of her and I had a general idea that her books were of the mystery variety. The aspect that stood out for me was the characters. While I enjoyed the main character and his intelligence, we also get characters like a refined lady who snorts coke. I was surprised by this considering when this was written. As for the mystery, I was interested throughout as it seemed like it was impossible. (I did figure out how some of it was done but not even close to the murderer or the motive). And I do like a scene that we have all seen where the detective has gathered all of the suspects to reveal the truth.

I liked this book and I would definitely pick up another one of this series. I did feel like there were parts of the solution that came out of nowhere and it would be impossible for the reader to solve the crime. Maybe I just didn't notice them and it is a good thing I am not a private detective.

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### **Fiona says**

Vintage Poirot: starts with a closed set, continues with a range of disguises, ends with everyone in the library, post-script involves a wedding. These things are meant to be cliched and obvious by now, but I was still surprised.

It's been a rubbish couple of days. Agatha makes everything better.

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### **Nina says**

Ternyata pelakunya dia. Kecele lagi.

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### **Tanja Berg says**

An absolutely delightful "whodunnit"! I had forgotten how much I enjoy Agatha Christie! She was the first author I read after I started to move away from horse books. I remember having been to the mall and bought some Miss Marple Mysteries, one of the classmates I hung out with mentioned "oh, so somebody actually reads this stuff?" Right. Agatha Christie being outsold only by the Bible and Shakespeare! No, J.K Rowling isn't quite in this distinguished league yet, but I expect she will be.

In this particular book, a murder takes place on a plane journey, in the same compartment which the distinguished Monsiuer Poirot also travels. There is a wasp in the compartment and it is evident that this should have been seen as the cause of the money lender Giselle's demise. There is also a blow pipe and a thorn which dispensed the snake venom; so this is a very juicy case for the press. Monsieur Poirot must put all his little grey cell's to work to solve the riddle.

In typical Agatha Christie style, I suspected absolutely everyone - except the culprit. I don't know how she manages this every time. I hear about the people so deft at her writing style they always know who the murderer is, but I am certainly not in this category. In more modern mysteries I can sometimes suss out the murderer by half-way through, but never Agatha Christie. She has an admirable sleight of hand. I should definitely put the rest of the works I haven't read by her on my reading list. I've read 15-20 books by her or so, but some when I was so young I hardly remember. What I do remember though, is how reliable she is. You always know what you get with Agatha Christie - something to tickle your little grey cells"

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## David Schaafsma says

Death in the Clouds (formerly Death in the Air) (vast title improvement, Agatha!?)

A flight from Paris to Croydon. Poirot on the flight, asleep for most of it. A woman, Giselle, is murdered on the way. What ensues is a closed set mystery, including a scorecard with a short list of suspects and a map for us to peruse, illustrating where all were seated. Death, we learn at the Croydon inquest, was by Boomslang (South African tree snake) venom from the tip of a thorn found near the murder victim. (Cool murder weapon, eh? And Boomslang Venom is a better title than Death in the Clouds, maybe, Agatha?!).

When the egg-head-shaped Belgian awakes, an African blowgun is found wedged into his seat. Poirot: suspect!

A wasp appears on the Harper Collins reprint cover. So the wasp must be very important, too.

Interesting suspects include a gambling coke addict (in 1935), a detective novel writer and a dentist.

In the last book, Christie has Poirot pontificate about the importance of observation: We don't do enough of it, and surely, we have not observed what he has observed, to prove his point. Observe harder, look more closely, come on. Mysteries teach us to pay attention. So we set that goal.

In this book, however, Poirot pulls that particular rug from under us and insists that observation is not what it is cracked up to be, perception is often deeply flawed. And besides, he says, it is often what we do NOT see that is key to a crime, what didn't happen. Stop messing with us, Agatha! You keep making us look at one thing and then another! Then nothing at all?! Is it possible we can't trust you? Are you some misdirecting magician? (Yes).

Detective writer and suspect Clancy hopes to write a novel based on the murder, with an ingenious solution! But, alas, if you thought he would be useful in figuring out a murder mystery, he says--when approached by Poirot for help--he can only make up stories, he has no sense how to actually solve them. This detective writer uses a character that loves bananas and bites his nails, which the writer laments has to happen in every book now that he put it in the first one! He also laments that with a detective writer's stories "unfortunately, it has to be a different thing every time." Sound familiar, Agatha? The challenge of originality in genre writing.

This is a very solid book, not one of her best, or most original, but it's well done, overall. Maybe 3.5, as I build a base of the range of her stuff, book after book.

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## Zaphirenia says

B.R.A.C.E. 2018 ?να βιβλίο που αγ?ρασες απ? δε?τερο χ?ρι

?λλο ?να δε?γμα εντυπωσιακ?ς μαεστρ?ας και εκπληκτικ?ς αν?λυσης του ψυχισμού? απ? την μοναδικ? Agatha Christie. Πραγματικ?, κ?θε φορ? που θ?λω κ?τι πιο "ελαφρ?", κ?τι να ξεφ?γει το μυαλ? μου για λ?γο, στρ?φομαι στην αγαπημ?νη Agatha και εκε?νη δεν με ?χει απογοητε?σει ποτ?.

Στο βιβλίο αυτό λοιπόν ακολουθούμε τον Ηρακλή Πουάρ σε ένα αεροπορικό ταξίδι προς το Λονδίνο όπου (φυσικά) μια απίστευτη βρσκήτα νεκρού στο κτίσμα της Αρχζεί λοιπόν η αναζήτηση του δολοφόνου, η οποία κινείται γύρω απ' τρεις ξόνες: πιθανότητα, δυνατότητα και κίνητρο. Ποιος είναι πιθανό να τη σκότωσε, ποιος είχε τη δυνατότητα να την χεί σκοτώσει και βέβαια ποιος θα επωφελοόταν απ' το θάνατό της. Υποθέσεις γίνονται και καταρρίπτονται, επιχειρήματα ανταλλάσσονται, η ψυχολογία των ηρώων αναλύεται και τελικά, όπως πάντα, ο ύνοχος αποκαλύπτεται μέσα απ' έναν υπέροχο μονόλογο του Πουάρ, ο οποίος παραθέτει βήμα-βήμα τη συλλογιστική του και τις σκέψεις και τα στοιχεία που τον οδήγησαν στην επίλυση του εγκλήματος.

Χω την πεποθήση ότι η Agatha Christie δίνει πάντα στον αναγνώστη τσα στοιχεία σα χρειάζονται για να κάνει κάποιες υποθέσεις, αλλά όχι αρκετά για να τον βοηθήσει να βρει τον ύνοχο. Ενδε ο Πουάρ εκφράζει τις σκέψεις του κατά τη διάρκεια της έρευνας, ποτέ δεν αποκαλύπτει στον αναγνώστη ολοκληρωμένους τους συλλογισμούς του ώστε να κάνει και αυτές τις δικές του υποθέσεις. Ότι το τέλος ρχεται πάντα (ή σχεδόν πάντα) σαν εκπλήξη, σαν κάτι που δεν περιμενε ο αναγνώστης. Ο τυλχιστον αυτό ισχτεί για εμένα.

Πάντα Christie στα δύσκολα, μη βαριέ αναγνώσματα που όμως πάντα κάτι σου αφήνουν.

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### **Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says**

Back in the days when I was really into Agatha Christie, I decided I really only liked her Hercule Poirot mysteries. After reading this, I remember why. They have greater complexity (thanks to Poirot's little grey cells) and fewer boring society details than Christie's other mysteries. I really enjoyed reconnecting with M. Poirot in this story.

What's really cool is that I guessed who the murderer was right at the start, doggedly stood by my first guess, and I turned out to be right! That's never happened for me before in one of Agatha's books.

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### **Ashley says**

Not my favorite Christie, but fun all the same.

Of note: Since I first added this book to my TBR in 2008 (thanks, Goodreads!), I have developed a rather bad fear of flying, so this book (in which one passenger is murdered by another) was like, one nightmare scenario on top of another for me. Add wasps (FUCKING WASPS USELESS DEVIL BUGS) in to the mix and why don't you just kill me already.

This is a Poirot mystery, and a later one at that. I have tried in vain to read all the Poirot books in order, but my library only has so many Christies in audio (my preferred delivery system for Agatha Christie-based verbiage), and free is better than not free, which is apparently one of the only things that can overcome my compulsion to read series in order.

ANYWAYS.

If you have read one Poirot, you probably know the basics. Someone is murdered, Poirot happens to be

caught nearby, Poirot cleverly solves the case, laying it all out for you neatly, and usually you don't see the answer coming. The details differ from book to book but that same basic pleasure remains. This one, other than the three nightmare scenarios piling on top of each other, wasn't actually all that remarkable in terms of the characters or the mystery. It wasn't bad at all, but it did feel a little more rote than all the other mysteries I've read from her in the past. Maybe because it's a later one, and I've mostly only read the earlier stuff so far?

[3.5 stars]

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### **J.S. Bailey says**

Every time Poirot travels anywhere, one of his fellow travelers/passengers is murdered. The man is a walking jinx, I tell you.

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### **pegah says**

Even in a very last moment I couldn't guess the murderer.

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### **Vikas Singh says**

Hercule Poirot at his best. A gripping who dun it high in the air drama. The only case where Jury actually convicts Poirot of murder before their opinion is not upheld. For a change we see Poirot moving around looking for clues rather than solving the case from the comforts of his chair. Interesting read

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### **Obsidian says**

Not too much to say about this one besides the fact I really enjoyed it.

On a flight we have Poirot on the scene when a woman is found dead before the end of the flight. At first it appears that a wasp has stung her, but looking closer it appears someone has killed her with a dart. With a plane of suspects it takes all of Poirot's little gray cells to figure out how do the killer do this and why.

I always enjoy it when Christie's books have diagrams in them. This one does and spells out where each character is sitting. I honestly didn't try to guess who did it and just enjoyed the ride that Christie takes us on. We get to follow a couple of different characters POV in this one and so at first glance you wonder if you are being fed a bill of goods by someone. It's honestly not til the end until everything neatly ties together.

We even have Poirot going back and forth from England to Paris in this one which was a lot of fun. No Hastings on the scene, but we do have Inspector Japp. There's also a reference to a man that Poirot one upped from Murder on the Links which made me crack up.

I thought all the characters were very done, though I always laugh when Poirot gathers everyone together



and reveals all. If you're a murderer why even attend?

This case was great to me since we get to follow each line of inquiry that Poirot has and we in a way get to see how his brain works. I can't recall another Poirot book that got this in depth with questions, answers, descriptions of people's luggage, etc. It felt like a lot of info being thrown at you, but once the killer is revealed you get why Poirot did the things he did.

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### **Sean Kennedy says**

Not the best of Christie's mysteries, and some truly appalling casual racism that threw me out of the story as a modern reader. Blah blah context, I know, but the characters themselves were detestable. I quote this as an example as the two romantic protagonists get to know each other over dinner:

They liked dogs and disliked cats. They both hated oysters and loved smoked salmon. They liked Greta Garbo and disliked Katherine Hepburn. They didn't like fat women and admired really jet-black hair. They disliked very red nails. They disliked loud voices, noisy restaurants and negroes. They preferred buses to tubes.

These people are meant to be the *heroes* of the text. It's bad enough to dislike cats and Katharine Hepburn. That would strike these people off my list of friends anyway. But to be so openly prejudiced against 'fat women' and 'negroes'? Yeah, not really the protagonists I like.

The whole bloody plane should have gone down in the ocean.

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### **Tim says**

During my time making my way through all these Poirot novels, it is strange how often I've encountered that ones that don't seem particularly interesting to me from the brief plot description on the back end up being some of the better books. This and Lord Edgware Dies are two excellent examples of that. I enjoy most of Christie's novels in general, but this one is shockingly fun.

It is important to remember that though Christie wrote several, what we might call clichéd books, they were not so clichéd at the time. In fact she delighted in subverting many mystery clichés common among writers before her, and she delights in it so much here that one could practically consider it a comedy. This is Christie at her most playful. Not only does the case seem an insult to Poirot's logical detective story hating mind (the murder was done with a poisoned dart on an airplane and there's even a blowpipe found on the plane... in Poirot's own words, the crime is absurd), but she even pokes fun of herself. One of the suspects is a detective writer who is immediately suspected because obviously he would plan out a crime and even admits he was planning an alibi (for a novel of course!), he also complains about how difficult it is to write good stories and how he hates some of his character's tics yet has to keep it because the public loves it (Christie had a well known dislike of Poirot, but kept writing him because the public loved him and all his little quirks). This one just comes off as Christie having a bit of fun all around.

The case itself is rather clever, but unfortunately I solved it not through a clue, but through a writing trope (view spoiler). That said if you are unfamiliar with some of her writing quirks, this would probably be a difficult one to solve. While I knew who did it, I was at a bit of a loss to figure out how it was actually done.

All around this is another fine entry for Poirot and well worth a look to all mystery fans. I might suggest it being an earlier read though, just to make sure you're not quite as familiar with some of her usual tricks.

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### **Alaina Meserole says**

It seems that death is constantly following Poirot around. He can never escape it. Not even on a god damn plane.

*Death in the Clouds* has Poirot trying to solve how Madame Giselle died in her seat on the flight. At first, he thinks it's because of a wasp sting - which had me so confused because HOW THE HELL DID NO ONE NOTICE A GOD DAMN BEE ON THE PLANE?!? I'd be bobbing and weaving to get off that flight if I saw a bee. I'd run for the hills people. I hate bees.

But then he comes to his sense and comes to a conclusion that she died from a poisoned dart. Again, I'm wondering what the hell kind of flight he is on. Where the hell is he heading? Oh, and the "thank god I'm never on these kinds of flights."

PS. I'm not spoiling the ending or anything. Go read this book people.

Just like in *Murder on the Orient Express* everyone is a god damn suspect - until proven otherwise. I liked this book because I had no idea who did it. My secret? I didn't try to figure it out this time. I just wanted to enjoy this book after a stressful day of work and I really enjoyed every second of it.

It's not my favorite book in this series but it didn't disappoint either. I liked it - I really did and I can't wait to move onto the next book.

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