



The Mystery of the Blue Train

Agatha Christie

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A mysterious woman, a legendary cursed jewel, and a night train to the French riviera -- ingredients for the perfect romance or the perfect crime? When the train stops, the jewel is missing, and the woman is found dead in her compartment. It's the perfect mystery, filled with passion, greed, deceit. And Hercule Poirot is the perfect detective to solve it...

The Mystery of the Blue Train Details

Date : Published October 2nd 1982 by Pocket (first published March 29th 1928)

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Author : Agatha Christie

Format : Paperback 226 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Classics, Detective



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From Reader Review The Mystery of the Blue Train for online ebook

Melindam says

Update 23 Jan

I am sorry to say this about an Agatha Christie book, but it was MEH-MEH-MEH. Badly structured, trying to be too many things at the same time, like Agatha Christie couldn't quite make up her mind what it was she was writing. There were too many characters and uninteresting, bland ones at that. Not the finest hour of detective fiction altogether. No wonder I did not remember much about it.

Update 19 Jan

I read this a long time ago and it did not make a big impression, because I couldn't for the life of me remember, who the murderer was or why the victim was killed (one of my benchmarks for detective fiction, though definitely not the only one) - so maybe this will be like reading the book for the first time. Let's see.

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David Schaafsma says

“You tell your lies and you think nobody knows. But there are two people who know. Yes- two people. One is le bon Dieu - and the other is Hercule Poirot.”

The Mystery of the Blue Train is not one of Christie’s best, but as the sixth Hercules Poirot (of 39!) it is a strong effort. Having also just read Agatha: The Real Story of Agatha Christie, the graphic biography that insists she was the Very Model of a Modern Woman, and a feminist, I felt supported in my view that the disparaging comments she has various characters make about women throughout had a purpose in the mystery’s solution. I know an author’s autobiography is usually a sketchy source at best for divining purpose in fiction, but Christie had just been cheated on and dumped by her first husband in the year before this was published, but I thought this book’s (in part) focus on women may have come from her life events.

Ruth’s Dad: "Have you got the grit to tell the world you made a mistake. There's only one way out of this mess, Ruthie, cut your losses and start afresh. . . "

“You mean. . .”

“Divorce.”

“Divorce!”

As with other, better books from Christie, a murder takes place on a train (some take place on boats, too!), the night or “blue” train from Calais to Nice, (as Christie herself did much world travel via train). (Yes, I was reading this about a location in Nice on the day of the Nice truck bombing, which was somewhat strange). In this one she tries third person omniscient (rather than have some buffoon like Hastings narrate it) and experiments with having us not meet Poirot at all for more than a third of the book. I have heard this lesser known book from Christie was done rather quickly, as she needed cash for her and her daughter, but that seems unfair, because while this one wasn’t particularly innovative, I can see her working on different things as a writer, developing her craft.

So: Ruth Van Kettering is murdered. She was unhappily married to Derek, who is struggling financially but could use the money he might get from Ruth’s rich daddy, who hires Poirot to do the investigation. Ruth also was given rare rubies from her father, and they are of course missing at the time of her death. Derek also “hangs out” with an exotic dancer named Mirelle who seems hotly unpredictable. Ruth’s and Derek’s marriage is one of convenience, not love (and for any mystery reader, the obviousness of him as possible murderer takes him out of the running pretty quickly, eh?).

Then there’s someone Ruth may have been seeing on the side, the Comte de La Roche who could also use the cash. A sophisticated ladies man. But is the murder linked to the theft?

There’s a woman, Katherine Grey, that we come to like very much, one of the best of Christie’s early

characters. She's been working for a crusty old lady, Miss Viner for many years and is going to receive an inheritance from the old crank (who contributes some comic relief). Oh, and Grey has "contacts" with The Count and Derek, too.

But who is M. Marquis? And what of Mr. Kettering's valet, Knighton, and his maid? Do we have enough characters for a line-up?

There are many many slyly satirical comments about women throughout, such as this exchange between Miss Viner and Katherine:

Ms. Viner: "Don't think you'll get married, though, my dear, because you won't. You're not the kind to attract the men. And, besides, you're getting on. How old are you now?"

"Thirty-three," Katherine told her.

"Well," remarked Miss Viner doubtfully, "that's not so very bad. You've lost your first freshness, of course."

"I'm afraid so," said Katherine, much entertained.

An early statement from Olga: "Most women have that madness. I do not."

At one point Derek says: "She might bring me bad luck. Women do."

The book is full of such satirical observations about women, which led me to think because she was exorcising some demons, making a fun feminist point overall.

This one takes a while to get going. Too long. It doesn't match up to her very best, but I still liked it. I rate it somewhere between 3 and 4, rounded down for some of the slowness of the opening. The resolution is neither all that surprising or satisfying, after we have of course spent the whole book looking at obvious and obviously wrong choices for murderer. But it's a good read, overall.

Sandy *The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice* says

audio.

Ruth Kettering did not marry for love. She had money, which her impoverished husband needed, and he had a stately home to be inherited. However, her husband has not been discreet with his dalliances, and Ruth's millionaire father strongly advises her to divorce him.

But is Ruth quite as innocent as she seems? She has some rather murky shadows in her past which threaten to surface when she is found murdered in her luxury compartment on The Blue Train en-route to meet her former lover.

And who has her jewels, which have disappeared?

Ruth's father hires Hercule Poirot to bring his daughter's killer to justice.

The twists and turns are Classic Christie! What more can one say?

Ahmad Sharabiani says

The Mystery of the Blue Train (Hercule Poirot #6), Agatha Christie (1891 – 1976)

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Alaina Mesarole says

The Mystery of the Blue Train is about the death of Ruth Kettering. Not only did she die from a heavy blow to the head, but her face was beyond recognition. Oh, and her rubies were stolen. But wha the actual fuck happened on this train to this poor women? Well her father sure wanted to figure that out so he hired the best god damn detective ever - Poirot. And who is our prime suspect? Ruth's husband of course. But did he do it?

At first I had no idea who killed poor Ruth but I wanted some god damn revenge. So I was totally on board with pinning this whole thing on her ex-husband Derek. I mean, come on, the guy acted like he gave no fucks that she was dead. Plus, he jumped pretty quickly into another ladies arms.. so uh yeah, there's that.

Now aside from Derek being a grade A douche bag, this book was kind of "meh" to me. It wasn't my favorite but I also didn't hate it that much either. It just seemed super slow paced and that no one really wanted to solve this murder. Like all they did was talk and talk and talk and then BAM murder was solved! At one point I stopped caring about the murder and Ruth's revenge. I just kind of wanted this book to be over.

I guess I just expected more from this book. I hope the next book is better.

Piyangie says

This is my fourth read in the Hercule Poirot series. I'm presently reading Agatha Christie's famous detective Hercule Poirot in the written order (skipping one or two depending on my interest and accessibility).

In *The Mystery of the Blue Train*, a wealthy woman is found murdered; and Poirot, happening to be travelling in the same train, involves himself in the unraveling of the mysterious death.

As with the previous reads, the murder-mystery plot is ingenious. My view is that Agatha Christie's unrivaled popularity as a murder-mystery writer is undoubtedly rests on her brilliantly written plots. She has

an amazing ability to make plot twists and to astonish the reader at the end. She lays down clues; invites the reader to solve the mystery alongside her famous detective Poirot. But at the end, Poirot, or rather Christie, beats the reader.

However, in this book, the clues were rather vague. In an attempt to misdirect the reader and to take him by surprise at the end, Christie keeps things hidden in Poirot's mind without expressing them. Poirot works in secrecy, without exposing what is going on within his mind to the reader. This secrecy and the vagueness of the clues made me, as a reader, to fall out a little with the story. The end surprised me; no doubt of that. And then, I realized that the author has, from time to time, given clues through other characters that I missed as I was looking for clues earnestly through Poirot's order and method. But I rather wished, there were a little more transparency.

Nevertheless, I did enjoy the read, though perhaps not as much the others I have read of her thus far.

Iryna (Book and Sword) says

2.5/5 stars (not rounding up)

I must be getting very picky, as this is the very first book by Agatha Christie that I did not enjoy. Usually, I just generally like them - they are all nice and cozy little mysteries, but apparently not this one.

It started out well enough, but then the writing became choppy and confusing. **Pages were filled with useless babbling and unnecessary conversations. There was very little actual detective work in it. And in the end many, many questions were left unanswered.**

It felt rushed and unfinished.

I suspected the correct murderer from the very start, but then I started suspecting bunch of other people too. But still in the end - **it was all just very anti-climatic.**

There are many **GREAT** mysteries by Agatha Christie, I mean she wrote over 80 books. **But this is not one of them.**

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Simona Bartolotta says

3.5

"Life is like a train [...]. Trust the train, Mademoiselle," murmured Poirot again. "And trust Hercule Poirot. He knows."

I don't know if you've noticed, but I'm kind of in a Christie mood right now. So sue me.

Before I begin, there's one thing I want to be clear about: I've read more than 20 of Christie's books, and I

enjoyed unreservedly every single one of them. I may have complaints about the solution of the mystery or about some other nothing, but every single time, I enjoy them. This time is no different. So, Christie, I love you. Poirot, you're my lifetime hero. Thank you both being real. (Well, you know what I mean.)

The Mystery of the Blue Train plot is fabulous, and not once was I bored. I was slightly disappointed in the solution because **the reason why I like crime novels, mostly, is that they get their strength from the great deal of strong, violent emotion they usually involve**. Well, Lady Kettering's murder was not as much "of passion" as I would have liked -and as it seemed at first. The solution is intelligent, of course, and **the planning of the deed is brilliant, more than brilliant**. But its motive is not about passion; and since I am a silly, emotional reader, I felt a little letdown.

Otherwise, I'm completely satisfied.

Susan says

I am currently reading the Poirot novels in order and this was published in 1928 and written in the Canary Islands in 1927, where Christie had retreated. Her beloved mother had died, her marriage lay in ruins and this was a difficult time for her. During her famous disappearance, her current novel had been the bold, and innovative, "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd." Afterwards, she had cobbled together, "The Big Four," from some short stories and, now, she again looked to her short stories for inspiration. Indeed, this novel is based upon the 1923 short story, "The Plymouth Express," which can be found in, "Poirot's Early Cases."

Agatha Christie herself, "always hated," this novel. However, for Christie fans, it has a lot to offer. There is the interesting setting – the murder on the luxurious train (sadly, not much of the story actually occurs on the train itself), the exotic location of the Riveria and Poirot – as ever, doing a little match-making alongside his sleuthing. This novel also features the first mention of St Mary Mead (home, in later work, of Miss Marple) and of a character, Mr Goby, who later appears in, "After the Funeral," and "The Third Girl."

There is, indeed, a little of the Miss Marple in the elderly ladies that Katherine Grey looks after. A companion, she is left a large amount of money by the lady she cares for, and decides to visit relatives on the Riveria. On the train there, she meets both Poirot and millionaire's daughter, Ruth Kettering. Ruth's marriage is heading for divorce and she is on the way to meet her lover, when she is found dead on the train. Is the motive the fabulous rubies that her father, Rufus Van Aldin, had given to her, shortly before her journey? Aldin asks Poirot to find Ruth's murderer and he turns his little grey cells to the problem. The novel has a good start, but gets a little lost in the twists and turns of the plot. Something of a weak ending for Christie, but she was obviously not at her best and still producing great work under immense pressure.

Ova Incekaraoglu says

What can I say? Any train mystery by Christie is a joy to read.
I can't say it's one of her best books, but still much better than most of the crime fiction.

Adrian says

Oh so very close to 5 stars. If only we had halves !?!?

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, the settings , the characters and of course Poirot's masterful investigation into the murder and robbery. I must admit towards the end I thought I had worked out who did it, but didn't know why. Well I was completely wrong ha ha. Oh well. It just goes to show how enjoyable these books are.

As I said at the start it is certainly a 4.5 star read and one of the most enjoyable Poirot novels so far, and it takes me ahead of the game in this group buddy read.

Jan-Maat says

This book reminds me that Dennis Diderot said something along the lines of "Men will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest." By the time I reached about the 100th page I doubted I could wait until the entrails of the last priest were available, dried and suitably braided for that excellent task, nor was I particularly fussed whether certain people were technically kings or not, fortunately for my blood pressure I avoided Downton Abbey when it was on, so I found a novel about toss pots behaving like toss pots close to unbearable, particularly as there was only the one death (view spoiler)

"I can sound my h's dear, as well as anyone, but Helen is *not* a suitable name for a servant. I don't know what the mothers in the lower classes are coming to nowadays" (p193) first up against a wall come the Revolution? Why wait until the revolution? Particularly since the location of the wine cellar key has already been revealed to us (p.192)

I picked this up as a train book and I presume it was written for that purpose. It struck me as curiously restrained, or perhaps very conventional, when for example we learn that the marriage between wealthy American heiress and waste of space English aristo had been disastrous and unhappy from the start I was suspecting that the husband was using wife's capital to amuse himself with ten years worth of North-African boys, indeed I struggle to accept that the Parisian chorus girl alone could have rendered the marriage so sour - but then I need to remind myself of my earlier observation on the qualities of the husband. Likewise when the prospect of cross dressing train jumping criminals was introduced I imagined a more far reaching scenario than Christie put forward but that's why she was the best selling novelist and I'm not, restraint being the writer's best friend.

there's a tongue in cheek (view spoiler) awfulness about her characters, apart from Hercule Poirot, a character apparently inspired by the First World war Belgian refugees , or so I heard someone say on the television(view spoiler) - who incidentally, I'm convinced is a woman (view spoiler) - and I felt there was a lazy skill evidenced in the writing, the ending particularly disjointed, I regretted a little that she hadn't turned her typewriter to something a bit less frivolous (view spoiler) , but that is possibly my inner Calvinist speaking.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

In many ways this is a typical Hercule Poirot type of mystery: a wealthy man's daughter is murdered on a train for a set of fabulous rubies, and only a limited number of people could have gotten on or off the train at

the right times to make them suspects ... or so one might think, but who ever knows for sure with Agatha Christie?

This book was, for me, a cut above the typical Poirot mystery, and I think it's mostly because I liked the main character so much. Katherine Grey has "beautiful gray eyes," a Madonna-like manner, and a quiet sense of humor. She has been a crotchety old woman's companion for 10 years and unexpectedly inherited her fortune, and decides to travel. The other old ladies in the English village are dubious:

"And so you've come into a lot of money, I hear? Well, well. Take care of it. And you're going up to London to have a good time? Don't think you'll get married, though, my dear, because you won't. You're not the kind to attract the men. And, besides, you're getting on. How old are you now?"

"Thirty-three," Katherine told her.

"Well," remarked Miss Viner doubtfully, "that's not so very bad. You've lost your first freshness, of course."

"I'm afraid so," said Katherine, much entertained.

"But you're a very nice girl," said Miss Viner kindly.

As it turns out, men *are* in fact attracted to Katherine, except it's a problem when one of them might be a murderer. And Katherine (though she's not a suspect) was, during her travels, coincidentally one of the last to see the murdered woman alive. Luckily we've got Poirot there to solve the problem!

The book shows its 1928 roots a little with the social attitudes and a soupçon of 1920s-type spiritualism. But it's an enjoyable read overall, and yet another time that Dame Agatha had me fooled until the very end.

Raoofa Ibrahim says

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Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

"You tell your lies and you think nobody knows. But there are two people who know. Yes- two people. One is le bon Dieu - and the other is Hercule Poirot."

Poirot graced so many Agatha Christie novels that there's bound to be misses as well as hits. This one is in the middle - a good book but not one of the best with him in it. I liked it but didn't love it. I'd recommend

starting with others starring the detective first.

Christie whips out intriguing characters that have a richer background of emotion in this one compared to some of her other works - an almost saintly, now rich young woman Katherine Grey who has a quiet humor and little bit of mischief about her. Besides her, there is a controlling and wealthy father of the victim who helps Poirot (kind-of) in the investigation. These two stand out as well done characters to complement the detective, who I usually adore. The issue is here he faded in the background and something about Poirot just felt 'off.' I'm not sure what it was, but he just wasn't as likable this time.

I can't complain much about characterization, and the story itself was complex. Christie brought into play jewel theft and having to solve different issues while the reader sorts out whether it will lead to one villain with one crime or several villains with different crimes and a big coincidence.

It's not easy to guess the mystery as the writer leads the reader astray from original assessments, and there's more to this story than a simple layer underneath - the ending wraps this up well and in a satisfying matter. The issue is that it's just not that interesting following the story. I grew bored several times and struggled with so many points of view shifts from characters I cared little about.

Overall it was a good story bogged down with too much misdirection. Had the author put Poirot more into the limelight and had him discover these sideplots rather than keep showing them through other small character's eyes, then maybe it would have been more intriguing. It showed in this book she was kind of tired of the detective that made her so famous.

Unlike some of her other works, the crime doesn't stay in the scene. This year I had the joy of reading *Murder on the Orient Express*, where the crime happened on a train they stayed trapped on. My other favorites by her include *Death on the Nile* where they solve a murder on a boat, and '*And then there were none*', where the group solves murder in a claustrophobic feel while they're trapped on an island. Here the train is visited only briefly and people travel all over the place afterward. This hurt the tight-knit mystery feel some of her better books hold.

Cyndi says

Arg! How did I miss all the clues? Guess I didn't use my "little gray cells."

This book introduced St. Mary Mead which is where Agatha Christie has based another series featuring a sweet little old lady who solves crimes while drinking tea and knitting.

Excellent who- dunnit! ?

Jim says

I have always enjoyed Agatha Christie, particularly those stories featuring Hercule Poirot. However, this was not one of my favorites and I believe Christie indicated in her autobiography that she didn't like it either. For me it started out slow and I didn't even recognize it for a Hercule Poirot story. It has all of the classic trademarks of Christie though. The murder takes place on a train and therefore the suspects are limited to just a few. You know it's one of the passengers but which one? Fortunately Hercule Poirot is one of the passengers.

“You tell your lies and you think nobody knows. But there are two people who know. Yes- two people. One is le bon Dieu - and the other is Hercule Poirot.”

Ruth Kettering and her husband Derek are not happily married. He is unfaithful and broke and married Ruth for her money. She is the only daughter of Rufus van Aldin, an American millionaire. van Aldin encourages Ruth to divorce Derek at the same time that he is presenting her with some rubies. One of the rubies is the legendary Heart of Fire which is supposedly cursed. Ruth is planning on going to Nice on the Blue Train and her father warns her not to take the rubies and to lock them in a bank. Of course Ruth doesn't listen to her father and not only takes the rubies with her but she has her own secrets.

When the train arrives in Nice the conductor attempts to wake Ruth only to discover that she has been murdered. She was strangled. But she was also beaten so badly that her face is disfigured and not recognizable. Why? Of course the main suspect is Ruth's husband, Derek, but Poirot is not so sure. There are several others who may have killed Ruth and stolen the rubies. Was it a robbery gone bad? Or was the theft of the rubies a cover for murder? On the train at the time Ruth was murdered was Katherine Grey from St. Mary Mead. Katherine recently came into some money and decided to treat herself with a visit to Nice. St. Mary Mead may be familiar to readers of Miss Marple stories.

Rufus van Aldin hires Poirot to find out who murdered his daughter and at the end Poirot and van Aldin will take the Blue Train where Poirot will reveal what happened and the identity of the murderer. Not the worse story in the series but not the best.

Laurel Young says

I think I recall reading that Dame Agatha was in a hurry to complete this novel, that she needed the money to support herself and her daughter, and that she did not consider it one of her better efforts. Nonetheless, I was anxious to read it; it is definitely a lesser-known work of hers and I love having a new Christie to read. Besides, I wondered if she were not being rather too hard on herself--and I was correct. This is a perfectly respectable addition to her canon, with Poirot in fine form and a very charming amateur to help him--what does it mean that Miss Grey lives in St. Mary Mead two years before Miss Marple, its most famous resident, was introduced? I kept expecting Poirot to run into Miss Marple, as though she had always lived there even before Christie first wrote about her!

I admit that I am biased against the "adventure" angle of some of Christie's earliest (1920s) mysteries--notorious jewel thieves in disguise were no doubt intended as good escapism for post-WWI readers, but I much prefer the eminently rational puzzles of her best work; she can dazzle the reader with fiendish ingenuity in an entirely prosaic setting. However, there are some good twists in The Mystery of the Blue Train; I figured out the culprits rather early but she still kept me guessing--in fact, I was surprised to find I was right! And there were a number of details that I did *not* see coming, such as the reason for disfiguring the corpse. Overall, this was much better than I expected, and I think my favorite thing, really, was seeing her play around with the logistics of a murder on a train. I can see her warming up for one of her greatest novels of all time, Murder on the Orient Express.

Hamad says

“Those who have listened do not find it easy to talk; they keep their sorrows and joys to themselves and tell no one.”

I will try to make this a fast non-spoilery review

So, Agatha's book are my guilty pleasure reads and this was my 5th book and it was good, I started reading her best and most famous books so I try to go to those less famous works without high expectations.

I like Hercules Poirot, he is the most peculiar and impertinent detective ever, and I like how the character is so unique but it feels real in all her books.

“You tell your lies and you think nobody knows. But there are two people who know. Yes- two people. One is le bon Dieu - and the other is Hercule Poirot”

I also like how Agatha likes to use french terms and it always brings me back to those french classes in school, nostalgia people!!

I also like the idea how a lady who was born in 1890 could become the most sold author ever, I can't imagine my grandma writing such books, so Agatha is definitely on my list of the coolest ladies ever... & she focuses on the psychology of the characters which is always refreshing.

This book did not surprise me as always, I could guess the murderer, although I kept changing my mind but I said if it came to this then there was a major hint.... I will keep this vague!

And the reveal was fun and good but the whole book could have been shorter, anyway I am not regretting reading this book, more Agatha books will be read soon :)
