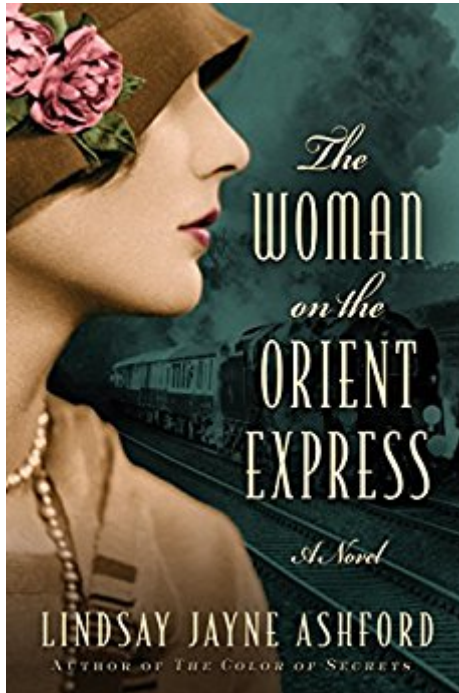


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The Woman On The Orient Express



Synopsis

Hoping to make a clean break from a fractured marriage, Agatha Christie boards the Orient Express in disguise. But unlike her famous detective Hercule Poirot, she can't neatly unravel the mysteries she encounters on this fateful journey. Agatha isn't the only passenger on board with secrets. Her cabinmate Katharine Keeling's first marriage ended in tragedy, propelling her toward a second relationship mired in deceit. Nancy Nelson is newly married but carrying another man's child is desperate to conceal the pregnancy and teeters on the brink of utter despair. Each woman hides her past from the others, ferociously guarding her secrets. But as the train bound for the Middle East speeds down the track, the parallel courses of their lives shift to intersect with lasting repercussions. Filled with evocative imagery, suspense, and emotional complexity, *The Woman on the Orient Express* explores the bonds of sisterhood forged by shared pain and the power of secrets.

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Customer Reviews

This wonderful, historical novel, mixes fact and fiction and puts Agatha Christie at the centre of a

story based loosely on real life. It is 1928 when Agatha has divorced her husband, Archie, after he told her that he was in love with another woman. She has endured endless press speculation about her life, especially after the incident where she went missing after the breakup of her marriage. Now, with Archie about to re-marry, she is feeling forlorn, sensitive and depressed. Determined to get away from England, she takes the Orient Express and head for Baghdad, under the name, Mary Miller. Her journey will introduce her to two other women, also travelling on the train. There is the beautiful, flirtatious widow, Katharine Keeling; who is heading to Mesopotamia to work on a dig there and who is due to marry the much older archaeologist, Leonard Wooley. There is also Nancy, a married woman who is fleeing her husband and who hopes to meet her married lover on the train. All three of the women have their secrets to bear, but the journey will bring them together. When Katharine invites them to visit the dig at Ur, events will threaten to overwhelm the women, who despite their differences do their best to help each other. I will say that I am a huge fan of Agatha Christie and I was unsure about reading this novel based upon her life. However, it is wise to remember that this is a novel and, although there is some factual content, it is fiction and the character of Nancy does not actually exist. I have read Christie's biography and her book about her life on expeditions in the Middle East, "Come, tell me how you live," which is a charming memoir, and this novel does really help you imagine what that time, and place, was like. This is an evocative and well written book, which is sensitive to Christie as a woman and imagines her romance with Max Mallowan. I can, in all honesty, hardly recall enjoying a historical novel more than this one. I recommend it highly as a very enjoyable read. I received a copy of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

The Woman on the Orient Express Lindsay Jayne Ashford, takes us back to 1928, when thirty-eight year old Agatha Christie traveled under a pseudonym to Mesopotamia aboard the Orient Express. For the first time in her life, Christie "was traveling abroad on her own. Everything she would do in the next two months would be entirely of her own choosing. She would find out if she could do it. If she could stand being alone," and if she could finally banish the ghost of her ex-husband who had betrayed her in every possible way. The Orient Express, itself, connotes a time where passengers dressed for dinner, slept in luxurious compartments, and travelled undisturbed from Calais to Damascus. Ashford captures the excitement and elegance of travel aboard this train starting with her depiction of the moment Christie decides to take this trip. It was at a dinner party, one of the few that Christie attended as a newly single woman. After learning that one of the guests, a military

man, had been stationed in Iraq not far from a famous archeological dig, Christie exclaimed, "I've always been fascinated by archaeology, I do envy you, living there. I'd love to visit Baghdad." His response, "Oh, you must go! You can get there by the Orient Express," had a "magical effect" on Christie and she told the guest that the Orient Express represented a pinnacle of elegance to her ever since she "had seen this train as a child, catching sight of the distinctive blue-and-gold livery when her mother took her to live in France before the war. She had watched men and women walking along the platform with rapturous faces, greeted by immaculate stewards standing to attention outside every carriage. She saw boxes of oysters glistening on ice, whole sides of bacon slung on hooks, and cartloads of every kind of fruit being loaded on board." Aboard the Orient Express, Christie learns that she is not the only one hiding secrets behind the luxury of the Wagons-Lits train cars. A loner most of her life, she finds herself befriending two women whose friendship will change her life. It is through the eyes of these three friends that Ashford shows us parts of Middle East as it was in 1928, a time when Aleppo and Baghdad were busy, whole and cosmopolitan, and the Yezidis live peacefully on their mountain-Jebel Sinjar. As Christie cleverly demonstrated in her mystery novels, dark secrets can be harmful. Ashford brings such dark secrets to light when Christie is called upon to solve real life mysteries involving her friends. Never having solved a real life mystery before, Christie screws her courage to the sticking place and thinks, "what would her little Belgian detective do in a situation like this? The answer came back in a flash. You must use the little gray cells." Through this fictionalized biography, Ashford paints a magnificent portrait of Christie as a woman of great depths, with a plethora of emotions and moods. This is a novel that will engage both your heart and your little gray cells. (I received an advance review copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.)

Enjoyed the book very much. I'm surprised by that...I don't usually read books like this. It's pace was slow and while that would normally stop me from reading it, I just kept going. It was interesting and the characters were , so well drawn that I wanted to find out what happened to them. It's a mystery, it's about friendship between women, it's about travel, work, secrets, love, bad men, good men, disillusionment and finding new beginnings. It's pretty much about life. Definitely worth reading.

I was a First Read Winner of this Book and I really enjoyed it. Like another reviewer I thought I might have a mystery on my hands, but the story that unfolded was even better. I liked all the characters and since I have been a huge fan of Agatha Christie I could not wait to see how the story would unfold. It had been such a long time that I had read about her that I had forgotten parts of her life

and this book did a beautiful job of mixing real life events with some fiction. Very entertaining and it made me want to do some train travel.

I enjoyed the author's blend of fact and fiction. I especially enjoyed the setting, both time and place, of the novel. Spoiler alert - I didn't think the scenes between Agatha and her future husband were very well-developed and I was quite surprised to find out they married in real life.

Loved this novel! Highly recommended!! The story includes famous writer Agatha Christie, soon after her divorce. This is a story of three women in crisis - much based on true events. I often stopped to look up characters on the Internet which made the story even more interesting. The novel includes traveling on the Orient Express, at a dig, in exotic places, and in romantic places. Just excellent story! The book deserves an A++++++

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