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THEY CAME TO BAGHDAD
A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED
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WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK EVANS?
PARTNERS IN CRIME
LORD EDGEWARE DIES
THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD
MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS
MURDER AT THE VICARAGE
PERIL AT END HOUSE
THE MYSTERY OF THE BLUE TRAIN
ETC.

Destination Unknown

By

AGATHA CHRISTIE



Published for

THE CRIME CLUB

by COLLINS

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To
ANTHONY
who likes foreign travel
as much as I do

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1954.

NAMES OF VARIOUS
CHARACTERS

MR. JESSOP
COLONEL WHARTON
THOMAS BETTERTON
OLIVE BETTERTON
HILARY CRAVEN
MRS. CALVIN BAKER
MISS HETHERINGTON
ANDY PETERS
MONSIEUR LAURIER
MONSIEUR BAKOUMIAN
TORQUIL ERICSSON

midnight when they arrived at the Invalides and Hilary was thankful to collect her baggage and drive to the hotel where accommodation was reserved for her. She was too tired to eat—just had a hot bath and tumbled into bed.

The plane to Casablanca was due to leave Orly Airport at ten-thirty the following morning, but when they arrived at Orly everything was confusion. Planes had been grounded in many parts of Europe, arrivals had been delayed as well as departures.

A harassed clerk at the departure desk shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Impossible for Madame to go on the flight where she had reservations! The schedules have all had to be changed. If Madame will take a seat for a little minute, presumably all will arrange itself."

In the end she was summoned and told that there was a place on a plane going to Dakar which normally did not touch down at Casablanca but would do so on this occasion.

"You will arrive three hours later, that is all, Madame, on this later service."

Hilary acquiesced without protest and the official seemed surprised and positively delighted by her attitude.

"Madame had no conceptions of the difficulties that have been made to me this morning," he said. "*Enfin*, they are unreasonable, Messieurs the travellers. It is not I who made the fog! Naturally it has caused the disruptions—that is what accommodate oneself with the good humour—that is what I say, however displeasing it is to have one's plans altered. *Après tout*, Madame, a little delay of an hour or two hours or three hours, what does it matter? How can it matter by what plane one arrives at Casablanca."

Yet on that particular day it mattered more than the little Frenchman knew when he spoke those words. For when Hilary finally arrived and stepped out into the sunshine on to the tarmac, the porter who was moving beside her with his piled-up trolley of luggage observed:

"You have the lucky chance, Madame, not to have been on the plane before this, the regular plane for Casablanca."

Hilary said: "Why what happened?"

The man looked uneasily to and fro, but after all, the news could not be kept secret. He lowered his voice confidentially and leant towards her.

"*Mauvaise affaire!*" he muttered. "It crashed—landing. The pilot and the navigator are dead and most of the passengers. Four or five were alive and have been taken to hospital. Some of those are badly hurt."

Hilary's first reaction was a kind of blinding anger. Almost unprompted there leapt into her mind the thought, "Why wasn't *I* in that plane? If I had been, it would have been all over now—I should be dead, out of it all. No more heartaches, no more misery. The people in that plane wanted to live. And I—I don't care. Why shouldn't it have been me?"

She passed through the Customs, a perfunctory affair, and drove with her baggage to the hotel. It was a glorious, sunlit afternoon, with the sun just sinking to rest. The clear air and golden light—it was all as she had pictured it. She had arrived! She had left the fog, the cold, the darkness of London; she had left behind her misery and indecision and suffering. Here there was pulsating life and colour and sunshine.

She crossed her bedroom and threw open the shutters, looking out into the street. Yes, it was all as she had pictured it would be. Hilary turned slowly away from the window and sat down on the side of the bed. Escape, escape! That was the refrain that had hummed incessantly in her mind ever since she left England. Escape. Escape. And now she knew—knew with a horrible, stricken coldness, *that there was no escape.*

Everything was just the same here as it had been in London. She herself, Hilary Craven, was the same. It was from Hilary Craven that she was trying to escape, and Hilary Craven was