

The Merit of English Section

Senior Division

Name of Winner : Lee Wai Yin

Name of School : Po Leung Kuk Lo Kit Sing (1983)

College

Book Title : *Death in the Clouds*

Author : Agatha Christie

Publisher : Fontana

This is a detective story which is set in an air liner. One hot day in September, a case of murder was committed by Norman Gale on the air liner Prometheus. The victim, Madame Giselle was killed by Norman Gale who committed a very unique and well planned murder. However detective Hercule Poirot still managed to crack the case and send the murderer to jail. As for why Norman Gale committed the crime, here is the reason. It was because of his greed for money. After Madam

Giselle died, her inheritance would be given to her daughter. His plan was to marry her before she claimed the inheritance and get his share of money. However, since Poirot would be meeting her and Gale was afraid that it would expose his plans, he hustled her away and killed her too. Proud Norman Gale thought that he could get away from murdering two people, but had his crimes exposed in front of other passengers of the air liner during a dinner meeting conducted by Poirot. Gale was caught red handed for his crimes and underestimating the detectives.

I find the story realistic and exciting. The plot development is progressive which makes the story realistic and yet interesting because I could never predict what will happen next and what clues will be found. The story progresses slowly and is written in detail which keeps the reader reading. The theme for this story is mysterious and exciting. The characters' actions are

written very precisely and every conversation between characters is listed out entirely. For example in the first chapter, the actions of different characters on the plane were described in depth. The victim was finally found dead when the flight attendant asked Madam Giselle for her bill and no response was given. 'Excuse me Madam.' Asked the flight attendant while pressing against her shoulder. Madam Giselle then fell to the ground and she was found dead at the end of the chapter. Since the ways of the murderer committing the crime and the identity of the actual murderer is unknown, it creates a mysterious and intriguing theme for readers to continue reading.

Madam Giselle was dead due to poisoning. In the first few chapters, characters who participated in the inquest showed that there were no signs of any passenger on the airline who could have committed the crime by using a poisonous thorn. The passengers described their flight as an ordinary one, as they noticed nothing unusual other

than encountering a wasp on the airline. A blowgun was found under the seat of Hercule Poirot, but such a discovery was proven useless since if it were used, someone would definitely notice. Moreover, the poison which killed Madam Giselle cannot be made by wasps, and also only found from countries which make blowguns. This made me particularly confused about how could the murderer commit the crime without using a blowgun nor with others noticing. Thus, it encouraged me to continue reading.

After reading the book, I think one thing is sure to be true. That is, no matter how hard we try to cover the truth, all crimes or wrong actions will definitely bring consequences to us. We cannot hide from it or get away with it. Sooner or later, the consequences will reach us. This is proven to be true from the actions of Norman Gale. Having to commit such terrible crimes because of his greed for wealth and foolishness to avoid being

caught, he finally had to face his consequences and got arrested. He seemed to have constructed the 'perfect crime' where at first no one thought that he could be the murderer since he had never been seen to have any contact with the victim on the air liner. He only left to use the bathroom. It seemed impossible that he murdered the victim without anyone noticing. However, the truth is, he disguised himself and used his handsomeness for his crime. He changed clothes to a steward, while going to use the bathroom and went to poison Madam Giselle by thrusting the thorn into her neck. The woman sitting next to her didn't notice because she was putting on make-up with her mirror after seeing the handsomeness of Gale. He also released the wasp in his match-box so that no one would notice her crying when stabbed. He then went back to the bathroom and changed. While dressing as a steward, no one noticed since no one paid attention to stewards on the airline. Norman Gale, who thought he would get away with murder, faced his consequences at

the end. This made me rethink my views towards wealth and appearances. Is the great desire for wealth of Gale really an excuse for murder? If you had to murder someone to become wealthy, your wealth would be miserable. Every time you spend that money, you would remember the unforgivable sins you committed for your wealth. You would live your wealthy life as if you were poor and an unsuccessful person, since you could never really enjoy your wealth if you still had a little bit of humanity in your heart. You will live a miserable and regretful life. Gale put his effort into planning his 'perfect crime' and used his gift of handsomeness for the wrongdoings. His effort and seemingly well-planned crime proves his intelligence and carefulness. If Gale had used his gifts and intelligence in work and earned money the right way, he would have lived a much more enjoyable life. Who knows? He might become wealthier by working rather than committing his crimes! Moreover, he might be able to marry Jane Grey, and live a much

happier life by starting a family! Jane Grey had feelings for Gale, and Gale had feelings for her. I believe that if Norman Gale did not commit murder, his life would be much more successful.

Therefore, I will never commit any crime and never expect to get away from facing my own consequences. I will treasure my own gifts, and make use of them the right way.