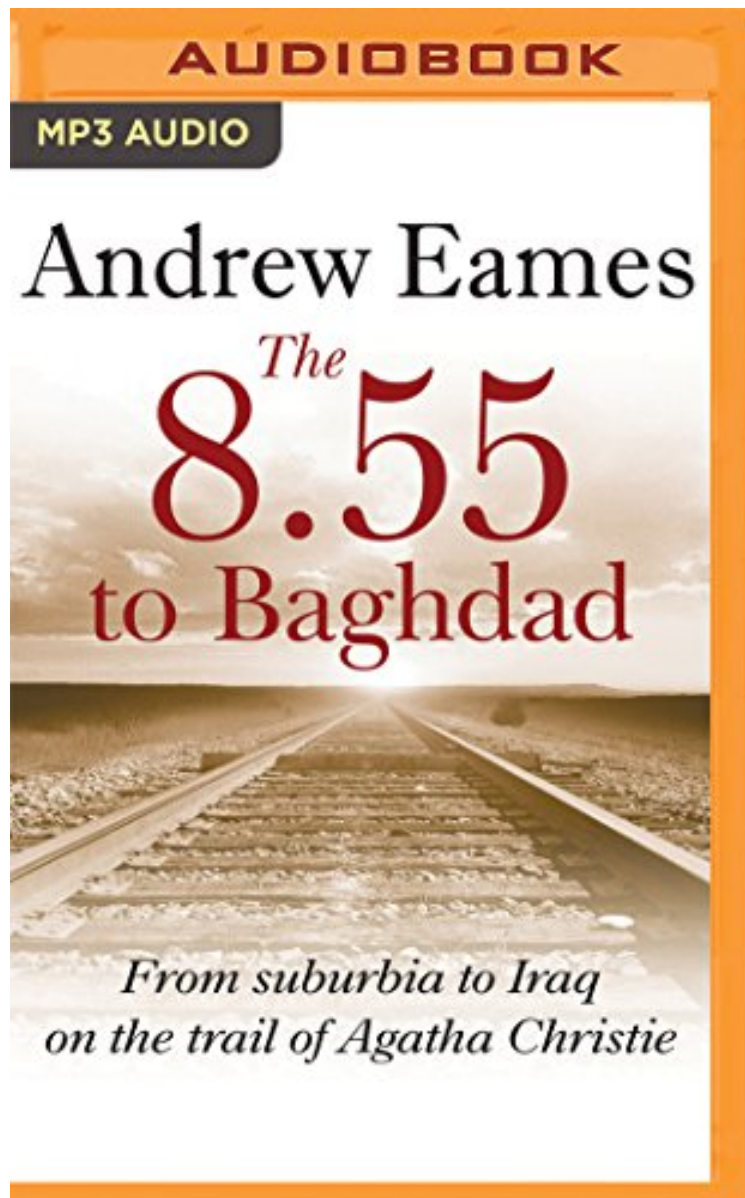


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The 8.55 to Baghdad: From suburbia to Iraq on the trail of Agatha Christie

Andrew Eames

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Andrew Eames : The 8.55 to Baghdad: From suburbia to Iraq on the trail of Agatha Christie before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The 8.55 to Baghdad: From suburbia to Iraq on the trail of Agatha Christie:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly RecommendedBy Alabama AnglophileTo quote from GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE, "Eames laces the book with Christie trivia and a certain sly wit. His descriptions of the people he meets and the places he visited are both vivid and perceptive... THE 8:55 TO BAGHDAD is a thoroughly enjoyable read that combines an Agatha-centric travelogue with a thought-provoking journey through a benighted land."Treading lightly throughout this work is Eames' own spiritual quest. Some have noted the book's weak ending and it is rather like the last gasp of an arriving steam locomotive. Since the inspiration for the book occurred during an earlier trip that included Aleppo, perhaps Eames, an atheist, could have ended the book with the advice--really a parting blessing--that he received in Konya from Alp Aslan, a Muslim. "Go," he said, "write a travel book in search of the miracle of creation. Go looking for God." (P. 211) However, such an ending would have required that Eames double-back at the conclusion of his present journey--an arduous and awkward maneuver he was not prepared to make at present--either in writing or in life.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CustomerFor all lovers of train travel in the grand style and admirers of Agatha Christie. A most satisfying journey.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Like itBy MJJI bought this book for my Mum because she loves Christie and ended up reading it myself. I was especially taken by the sections in Eastern Europe and Iraq. This book introduced me to places in geography and history that I had not been to before and was a pleasant and thought-provoking read.

In 1928, Agatha Christie, the world's most widely read author, was a thirty-something single mother. With her marriage to her first husband, Archie Christie, over, she decided to take a much needed holiday; the Caribbean had been her intended destination, but a conversation at a dinner party with a couple who had just returned from Iraq changed her mind. Five days later she was off on a completely different trajectory. Merging literary biography with travel adventure, and ancient history with contemporary world events, Andrew Eames tells a riveting tale and reveals fascinating and little-known details en route in this exotic chapter in the life of Agatha Christie. His own trip from London to Baghdad a journey much more difficult to make in 2002 with the political unrest in the Middle East and the war in Iraq, than it was in 1928 becomes ineluctably intertwined with Agatha's, and the people he meets could have stepped out of a mystery novel. Fans of Agatha Christie will delight in Eames' description of the places and events that appeared in and influenced her fiction and armchair travelers will thrill in the exotica of the journey itself.

From Publishers Weekly Agatha Christie fans, as well as connoisseurs of fine travel writing, will relish British journalist Eames's gripping, humorous and eye-opening account of his train and bus trip across Europe and the Middle East on the eve of the second Gulf War. A chance stay in a Syrian hotel where Christie once stayed prompts Eames to attempt to follow in the bestselling author's footsteps. Despite the awkward timing, Eames (*Crossing the Shadow Lines: Travels in South-East Asia*) finds many friendly faces, even in Iraq, where a close call with a mysterious explosion curtails his journey. Admirers of the creator of Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot will learn more about her relationship with the peoples of the region (Kurds, Armenians and Palestinians), as well as the real-life inspiration for her classic 1934 novel, *Murder on the Orient Express*: a blizzard that stranded the historic train for nine days in 1929. Especially engaging is the way Eames describes his traveling companions on the last leg of his odyssey as if they were the cast of characters in a typical Christie mystery. (May 31) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist In 1938, when she was 38, Agatha Christie took a 3,000-mile train ride on the Orient Express from London to Baghdad. Eames retraces her journey, describing many of the places and events that influenced Christie's fiction. Along the way, he offers some background on her early life: her father died when she was 11, she later married Max Mallowan, an archaeologist. Eames relates a brief history of the Orient Express and recounts his visits to Baghdad, Damascus, Trieste, Zagreb, Belgrade, Sofia, Istanbul, and other cities. Throughout, he writes about the people he met--fellow passengers, taxi drivers, hotel managers, guides, and military escorts--and the hotel rooms he stayed in. Armchair travelers will enjoy the journey. George Cohen Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved An important reason for the book's readability is Eames' writing style. -- The Chicago Tribune, May 22, 2005 Eames enlivens his text with descriptive writing that is a pleasure to read. It's a superb work, erudite, witty, informative. -- The San Francisco Chronicle, May 8, 2005 This intriguing memoir is highly recommended for all public and larger academic libraries. -- Library Journal, May 15, 2005