**Classic Film Club**

*January 17, 2013*

**Film Title**

*Death on the Nile*

**Starring**

Peter Ustinov, Mia Farrow, Bette Davis, Angela Lansbury, David Niven

**Director**

John Guillermin

**Run Time:** 2.20 **Release Date:** 1971

**Film Plot:**

Almost everyone on the S.S. Karnak, cruising the Nile, has a reason to want heiress Linnet Ridgeway dead. Her jewels are coveted by elderly Mrs. van Schuyler, her maid is upset because Linnet won't give her a promised dowry, writer Salome Otterbourne is facing a libel suit brought by Linnet, Salome's daughter Rosalie wants to protect her mother, American Andrew Pennington has been embezzling from the Ridgeway family, and former friend Jacqueline de Bellefort is upset that Linnet stole her fiancé, Simon, away from her. Belgian sleuth Hercule Poirot must unravel the mystery when Linnet (and some of the others) turns up dead.

**Goofs:**

* On the first night of the cruise, Bette Davis's character says good night to Poirot, and he answers "Bonjour". No Belgian, especially one as fastidious and serious as Poirot, who does not play around or joke, would say "Bonjour" for "good night". He would have said "Bon soir," (good night), which he does say to the others as they go.
* When Simon and Linette are climbing up the pyramid there's a shot of them having climbed more than half way up, but in the next shot, looking down on them, the ground and rubble is visible only a few meters beneath.
* When Poirot theorizes how Dr. Bessner could have shot Linnet, she visibly flinches when the gun touches her temple, although she is supposed to be asleep.

At the beginning, while Linnet and Jackie are in Linnet's master bedroom, a crew member crawling across the floor is reflected in the mirror.

* In the opening scene where Linnet and Jacqueline are talking to each other in the upstairs bedroom, a piece of equipment (possibly the boom) is seen moving, reflected in one of the [large mirrors](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0077413/trivia?tab=gf).
* Doctor Bessner identifies the statue on the left of the temple of Abu Simbel as "the singer". He says it's making a howling sound every evening. Both facts are wrong, "the singer" is one of the statues in Thebe West near Luxor of the now destroyed temple of Amenophis III., and it is said that it was "singing" only in the morning hours.
* Reflections can be seen in the protective glass screen when the cobra is readying itself to strike Hercule Poirot in his cabin.

**Trivia:**

* Filming had to be stopped every day at noon for around two hours because temperatures reached around the 130 degrees Fahrenheit mark at that time. To accommodate this, make-up calls were scheduled for 4 am with filming starting at 6 am. On this, veteran actress [Bette Davis](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000012/) once quipped: "In the older days, they'd have built the Nile for you. Nowadays, films have become travelogues and actors stunt men".
* The movie was shot aboard the paddle steamer 'Memnon' (in the movie named 'Karnak'), one of the few paddle steamers remaining on the Nile.
* In this [Agatha Christie](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0002005/) story, [Angela Lansbury](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001450/) plays the author Salome Otterbourne; in of [Murder, She Wrote: Death 'N Denial](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0653492/) (also whodunits, where Lansbury is the heroine sleuth), playing in Egypt, a character is called Sally Otterburn.
* Visitors were barred from the set by director [John Guillermin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0347086/) so as to preserve the secrecy of the whodunit plot.
* According to producer Richard Goodwin, Bette Davis brought her own makeup, mirrors, and lights to Egypt, just in case they did not have any there.

**Trivia Spoiler:**

* The song Jackie is singing in the lounge just before she shoots Simon is "Frankie and Johnny," a folk song about a woman who shoots her lover after discovering that he is cheating on her.