

# Mary and the Colonel

**ARBUTHNOT.** Mary. There you are!

**MARY.** James! At last! Where have you been?!

**ARBUTHNOT.** Oh, I'm not that late, am I?

**MARY.** Of course you are. You're always late. And I was terrified we'd miss the train. It would ruin everything!

**ARBUTHNOT.** I was just exploring a bit. I've never been to Istanbul before and I quite adore all this eastern nonsense.

**MARY.** Well, I don't. I just want to leave right now and get it over with.

*(ARBUTHNOT puts his hand on her cheek.)*

**ARBUTHNOT.** I wish to hell you were out of all this. You deserve better, you know.

**MARY.** Shh! Not now! No one should see us like this. Not till it's all behind us. Besides, I think we're being observed by that funny little man over there.

*(She nods toward POIROT, who is hidden behind his newspaper.)*

**ARBUTHNOT.** What, him? He's just some damned foreigner who probably doesn't even speak English.

*(POIROT's newspaper gives an involuntary shake.)*

**MARY.** Shall we order? I'm starving.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Not here. I found a cute little place around the corner where I'm sure the food will be ten times better.

**MARY.** But we can't be late for the train! We can't miss it!

**ARBUTHNOT.** We won't be late, I promise, now stop fussing and come on, let's hurry.

# Mrs. Hubbard and McQueen

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Excuse me, young man. Are you American?

**MACQUEEN.** Y-yes I am.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** I thought so. I can see from your passport. Us Americans have to stick together, you know. Especially in a place like this. I can't even pronounce half the things on the menu. Can you believe it? And what's a falafafafafafel? I keep seeing them on the street and they look like you could play hockey with 'em.

**MACQUEEN.** I believe they're made of fried chickpeas.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Well there ya go. Who knew? Some people will fry anything. By the way, I don't mean to snoop but I see your train ticket sitting there on the table and I wonder – do you know if they're providing a bus to the station?

**MACQUEEN.** I don't think so. I-I believe the hotel has a private car.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Well don't you worry, I'll ask and find out. As the Bible says, "If Moses doesn't know the answer, ask the concierge." Now I better go. I think I'm annoying that odd little man with the silly moustache. (*Sotto voce.*) And I don't think it's real.

(*As MACQUEEN and MRS. HUBBARD exit,*

# Bouc

**BOUC.** *Monsieur Poirot!* You stab me in the heart! I am writhing on the ground at your feet! It is not a mere train that will carry you tonight, it is a legend. It runs like no other vehicle on the earth. The fittings are from Paris, the paneling Venice, the plates are from Rome, and the taps from New York. The best food, the best beds, the best pillows, the best feathers inside the pillows. It is poetry on wheels, and Lord Byron himself could not write it better. *Monsieur*, prepare yourself. In one hour, I will meet you on the platform of the Orient Express.



# Greta/Princess/Michel

20 AGATHA CHRISTIE'S MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

**MICHEL.** Princess Dragomiroff. How lovely to see you.

(*To Greta.*) Please, let me help you, *madame*.

(*MICHEL relieves GRETA of the luggage.*)

**GRETA.** It iss *mademoiselle*. I am not married, except to God almighty who lives in heaven.

(*She crosses herself.*)

**PRINCESS.** Oh Greta please, not *now*. (*To MICHEL.*) This is Greta Ohlsson.

**GRETA.** I am a missionary and I verk in Africa with little babies.

**PRINCESS.** I have agreed to pay her way if she will assist me as I travel to Paris.

**MICHEL.** But your usual companion, Miss Schmidt –?

**GRETA.** She iss very sick.

**PRINCESS.** The doctors are calling it a cardiac event, but she is German so it is very unlikely to slow her down.

**GRETA.** I vill pray for Miss Schmidt and God vill protect her.

**PRINCESS.** Greta, please, that is enough, just get on the train.

**MICHEL.** You are in compartment eleven, princess, as usual. (*To GRETA.*) And Miss Ohlsson, you are sharing with a Miss Mary Debenham in compartment four.

# Hubbard

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Well, you bring me those crisps and I'll give you a lesson. Over and out.

*(She hangs up, then looks in the mirror.)*

You're not doin' so bad there, kid. You're lookin' younger all the time. Ha!

*(She turns on her radio, hears a tune she likes, and starts to sing and do a dance routine. She's surprisingly professional. The more she sings, the louder she gets.)*

COME ON AND HEAR, COME ON AND HEAR ALEXANDER'S  
RAGTIME BAND

COME ON AND HEAR, COME ON AND HEAR 'BOUT THE  
BEST BAND IN THE LAND

THEY CAN PLAY A BUGLE CALL LIKE YOU NEVER HEARD  
BEFORE

SO NATURAL THAT YOU WANT TO GO TO WAR

THAT'S JUST THE BESTEST BAND WHAT AM, OH HONEY  
LAMB

COME ON ALONG -

# Hubbard/Ratchett

**RATCHETT.** Would you keep it down!

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Shut up! Who asked you?!

**RATCHETT.** It's the middle of the night!

*(Bzzz! Bzzz! RATCHETT is buzzing for the attendant, and MICHEL hurries down the corridor.)*

**MICHEL.** Sir, what is it?!

**RATCHETT.** Would you tell that ridiculous woman in there to keep it down, it's time for bed!

**MRS. HUBBARD.** *(Calling in to RATCHETT's room.)* Ridiculous woman? I heard that!

**MICHEL.** *Monsieur*, if the lady wants to sing a little song –

**RATCHETT.** It is twelve o'clock at night!

*(MRS. HUBBARD barges into RATCHETT's compartment through the connecting door.)*

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Now listen you, just mind your own business.

**RATCHETT.** Stay out of here! This is my compartment!

**MRS. HUBBARD.** If I want to enjoy myself, I'm gonna do it, so just pipe down.

**RATCHETT.** You're insane, you're just... *Get out!*

**MRS. HUBBARD.** What are you, a thug? Are you in the mafia? Michel, I think he's dangerous.

*(Seeing RATCHETT's gun on his night stand.)*

Oh my God, he's got a gun! Michel, it's a gun!

**MICHEL.** It is not against the law, *madame*.

**RATCHETT.** Get out this instant!

**MRS. HUBBARD.** You must be crazy!

**RATCHETT.** I said get out!



# Princess/Greta/Poirot (p.1 of 2)

**PRINCESS.** *Monsieur* Poirot, we are here out of a sense of duty, that is all. I do not like having my day disturbed.

**POIROT.** Then let us begin immediately. Now it says in your passport that you are Russian.

**PRINCESS.** That is correct. I have been in exile since the Bolshevik dogs took over.

**POIROT.** And I see that your first name is –

**PRINCESS.** Natalya.

**POIROT.** And is this your handkerchief, *madame*?

**PRINCESS.** Of course not. It has the letter *H* on it. My initials are N. D. Natalya Dragomiroff.

**POIROT.** Is it yours, *mademoiselle*?

**GRETA.** No, no, I could not afford such a beautiful thing as this. It would be a sin.

**PRINCESS.** Oh!

**POIROT.** And may I ask each of you where you were last night between midnight and two o'clock.

**PRINCESS.** I could not sleep, so at midnight the Countess Andrenyi and I read a book together in my room. Out loud. It is the very best way to get to sleep when you are anxious.

**POIROT.** And what were you anxious about?

**PRINCESS.** The Bolsheviks.

**POIROT.** And what book did you read?

**PRINCESS.** *A Tale of Two Cities*, it is very comforting.

**POIROT.** And you, Miss Ohlsson? Where were you?

**GRETA.** I was in my room with Miss Debenham, who is also nice. We talked from twelve o'clock until two o'clock and then we slept. You can ask her!

**POIROT.** And have either of you ever been to America?

# Princess/Greta/Poirot p.2 of 2

**PRINCESS.** Yes, many times.

**GRETA.** I have not been to America but I must go some day to raise money for my babies in Africa.

**POIROT.** You are very religious.

**GRETA.** *Ja*, since I was little girl and Jaysus came to visit me in my garden. He spoke vith me, und told me I must verk hard to help little babies in Africa.

**POIROT.** And I'm sure you have done it beautifully, *mademoiselle*. Just one more question for both of you ladies. Are you aware of the identity of the man who was killed last night?

**GRETA.** His name was Ratchett.

*(Sob.)*

And I pray for his soul.

**PRINCESS.** No, my dear, his name was Bruno Cassetti, the countess told me, and what *I* pray is that his soul is damned and that he burns in hell for all eternity.

**GRETA.** Princess!

**PRINCESS.** He murdered a girl named Daisy Armstrong and her grandmother is my dearest friend. You would know her as the actress Linda Arden.

**BOUC.** She was very great.

**PRINCESS.** Not *was*, *monsieur*. She *is* very great. She is very much alive and remains the greatest actress of the American stage. And when her five year old granddaughter was murdered by this *monster* Cassetti, it took her years to recover, indeed she has not *yet* recovered!



# MacQueen/Poirot P.1 of 2

**POIROT.** *Monsieur* MacQueen, please sit down.

**MACQUEEN.** Of-of-of course. Are they all right?

**POIROT.** They will be fine, I assure you. Now tell me, please, what exactly were your duties as secretary to your employer?

**MACQUEEN.** Well I-I wrote his letters and did his errands and things.

**POIROT.** And you knew him only as Samuel Ratchett.

**MACQUEEN.** How else would I know him?

**POIROT.** His real name was Bruno Cassetti.

**MACQUEEN.** Holy God. Are you sure of that?

**BOUC.** Then you know about the Armstrong case?

**MACQUEEN.** You bet I do. My father was the district attorney for the state of New York and he brought the case against that...son of a bitch. I'm sorry, but you have no idea what he did to that family. And they were so kind to me!

**POIROT.** Can you tell us who was in the Armstrong household?

**MACQUEEN.** Mrs. Armstrong had a sister. She went to graduate school, but after the tragedy she moved to Europe and I think she got married. Her name was *Helena*. And also Mrs. Armstrong's mother would come to visit. She was an actress.

**POIROT.** Anyone else?

# MacQueen/Poirot P.2 of 2

**MACQUEEN.** There was a governess and a baby nurse, and then poor Suzanne. She was a French housemaid – she came from Paris – and my father’s office thought she might be implicated, and...and she was so distraught from the accusations that she –

**BOUC.** Killed herself.

**MACQUEEN.** *(Nods.)* Only it turned out that she was innocent. My father was shattered. He never recovered.

**POIROT.** And where were you last night between midnight and two o’clock?

**MACQUEEN.** Twelve to two? I-I was with Colonel Arbuthnot on the observation deck.

**POIROT.** And did you see anyone last night you did not recognize?

**MACQUEEN.** No. I saw Michel the conductor, and the other conductor, and Colonel Arbuthnot, and Miss Debenham –

**BOUC.** The “other conductor”?

**POIROT.** There is a second conductor?

**MACQUEEN.** I guess so. I saw him.

**BOUC.** He was in uniform?

**MACQUEEN.** Yeah. The same one that Michel wears.

**BOUC.** And what did he look like?

**MACQUEEN.** I don’t know. He had his hat pulled down. He was small-boned, you know what I mean? Sort of feminine.

**POIROT.** Did you speak with him?

**MACQUEEN.** I said hello and he just kept going.

**POIROT.** You are very helpful, thank you. You may go. And please ask Michel to come see me.

**MACQUEEN.** Sure thing. I’ll see you later.

*(As soon as MACQUEEN exits, BOUC cries out.)*

**BOUC.** Haha! I knew we would get a breakthrough! Mrs. Hubbard was telling the truth, I should have

# Poirot/Mary/Arbuthnot/Bouc p.1 of 2

**POIROT.** I am sorry also because you are not.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Now listen to me you little *Frenchman* –

**BOUC.** He is Belgian.

**ARBUTHNOT.** I don't care if he's the man in the moon, I'm not leaving her!

**MARY.** It's all right, James. Honestly. I'm sure it won't take long.

**POIROT.** She is correct. I need a mere ten minutes.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Well, I don't like it! Do you understand? And you can put that in your meerschaum pipe and smoke it!

**BOUC.** That is Sherlock Holmes.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Oh, go to hell!

(**ARBUTHNOT** *stalks out.*)

**POIROT.** *Bon.* Please sit down, Miss Debenham. There is much pain?

**MARY.** Well, it's rather sore, that's all.

**POIROT.** You are very brave. Let us all be grateful that it is not worse.

**BOUC.** (*Crossing himself.*) Thank the Lord.

**POIROT.** Now Miss Debenham. In the hotel yesterday I heard you speaking with the colonel and you said you were terrified you would miss the train. Can you tell me why it was so important to you?

**MARY.** It wasn't that at all. I didn't want to be late.

**POIROT.** But you said you wanted to, "Get it over with." Get it, "All behind you." Get what behind you? You seemed quite agitated.

**MARY.** I'm afraid you're reading into it. I'm tremendously punctual, that's all.

**POIROT.** Aha. *Pardon.* It is my profession. Sometimes I am too *imaginatif*. And you and the colonel are very close, I take it?

**MARY.** We only met a few days ago, and I suppose we rather hit it off.



# Poirot/Mary/Arbuthnot/Bouc p.2 of 2

**POIROT.** And as for the murder, I assume you know that the dead man was Bruno Cassetti.

**MARY.** I heard.

**POIROT.** And what do you know of the kidnapping?

**MARY.** Not much, I'm afraid. I've never been to the States.

**POIROT.** Aha. I see. And what is it that brought you to Istanbul?

**MARY.** I lived with a family for about a year. I'm a governess.

**POIROT.** And can you tell me your whereabouts last night between midnight and two o'clock?

**MARY.** I was in my room with Miss Ohlsson. We chatted until quite late. You see she...she talks quite a bit, especially when she's anxious, and I may have dozed off for a few minutes.

**POIROT.** I see.

**MARY.** May I go?

**POIROT.** You may. Oh wait. There is one last thing. Would you sign your name please.

**MARY.** All right.

*(She does.)*

It's a good thing I'm left-handed. I'd have trouble signing with my right at the moment.

**POIROT.** *Merci.*

**BOUC.** Please get some rest. And on behalf of the company I will have some champagne sent straight to your room.

**MARY.** Thank you so much.

*(She exits.)*

# Poirot/Countess p.1 of 2

**COUNTESS.** You seem troubled.

**POIROT.** I am getting more and more concerned.

**COUNTESS.** That another crime will occur?

**POIROT.** No. That I will solve this one.

*(POIROT picks up one of the passports and reads the contents.)*

Countess. What is your maiden name?

**COUNTESS.** Goldenberg. As you see in the passport.

**POIROT.** *Oui.* But now you use Andrenyi.

**COUNTESS.** My husband's name.

**POIROT.** Of course. The Countess Andrenyi. And I believe your first name is Eléna.

**COUNTESS.** That is correct. I am a suspect?

**POIROT.** I merely ask questions. That is my job.

**COUNTESS.** I thought we were friends.

**POIROT.** It is my greatest wish, but please indulge me. This morning I examined your passport and I saw a grease spot at the beginning of your name, Eléna. The spot occurs before the first letter, and it could easily hide another letter, such as H. Now if you add an H at the beginning of the name, it becomes *Helena*, which is used by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

**COUNTESS.** That is true.

**POIROT.** The kind of name an actress might choose for her daughter.

**COUNTESS.** I suppose.

**POIROT.** An actress such as Linda Arden, the grandmother of Daisy Armstrong.

**COUNTESS.** If you say so.

# Poirot/Countess p.2 of 2

**POIROT.** And the name Linda Arden is itself a stage name, surely. The word Arden was the maiden name of Shakespeare's mother and also the name of the forest in his play entitled –

**COUNTESS.** *As You Like It.*

**POIROT.** You know your Shakespeare well for a Hungarian.

**COUNTESS.** I have studied Shakespeare since I was a child.

**POIROT.** Yes, I know. I believe your mother Linda Arden taught it to you.

*(The COUNTESS is shaken but tries to hide it.)*

And that would make you the *aunt* of little Daisy Armstrong, the aunt who went to graduate school and got a degree in medicine, then moved to Europe and got married.

**COUNTESS.** *(A catch in her throat.)* I do not know this woman...

*(Sob.)*

But I would imagine that she still suffers from the loss of her niece and her sister.

*(She starts to weep quietly.)*

**POIROT.** My dear, there is no use denying it. When the train gets underway again and we reach the next city, a simple telegram will get me a photograph of Daisy's aunt and it will all be over.

**COUNTESS.** *(Suddenly without the Hungarian accent – purely American.)* But I didn't kill him! I should have but I didn't. I didn't even know who he was until you discovered it. But when you did, I realized that if you knew that I was Daisy's aunt, you would *think* that I killed him because he was...a *blackmailer*. And a *swine*! And the murderer of a darling, sweet, innocent child who deserved to live!!

**POIROT.** *Madame*, really –

**COUNTESS.** *It's the truth, I swear to God!* But I'll tell you this: If I had known who he was – that he was *Bruno*



# Bouc/Poirot p. 1 of 2

**BOUC.** I hope that the food at this humble establishment is up to your usual standards.

**POIROT.** What? What's this?... Ah, *mon Dieu*, it is *Monsieur Bouc*!

**BOUC.** My friend! Haha!

**POIROT.** *Mon ami!* But what are you doing here?

**BOUC.** What am *I* doing here? This is my city! I live here!

**POIROT.** Of course, I'm a fool!

**BOUC.** I run Wagon-Lit, the greatest train company in the entire world, and the central office is in this hotel. *Garçon!* This meal is on me, please charge my office.

**POIROT.** *Ah non.*

**BOUC.** *Ah oui.* It will give me pleasure, you are my guest here. So tell me, what are you doing here? You are solving a crime, eh?

**POIROT.** No, no, I did that last week in Syria. It was a bad affair. An army officer, a missing check, a beautiful woman, puh. It did not end well.

*(As **POIROT** describes the case, a **MAN** appears in a blue down light, wearing an army tunic and an officer's hat. We are witnessing **POIROT's** memory.)*

The man was guilty, that was certain. But perhaps, because I pressed the man too hard to admit his guilt...

# Bouc/Poirot p. 2 of 2

**BOUC.** I hope that the food at this humble establishment is up to your usual standards.

**POIROT.** What? What's this?... Ah, *mon Dieu*, it is *Monsieur Bouc*!

**BOUC.** My friend! Haha!

**POIROT.** *Mon ami*! But what are you doing here?

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# Countess/ Ratchett

**COUNTESS.** Pardon me. Sorry.

**RATCHETT.** Hey, you're that countess, aren't you?

**COUNTESS.** That is correct.

**RATCHETT.** Well, you're awful pretty. And from what I hear, you were a commoner to start with, just like the rest of us.

**COUNTESS.** That is also correct.

**RATCHETT.** So does that mean you'll have a drink with me?

**COUNTESS.** I am married, *monsieur*. My husband is having business elsewhere. Please excuse me.

**RATCHETT.** Now not so fast.

*(The **COUNTESS** looks up sharply, but he's blocking her way. There is something threatening about him.)*

**COUNTESS.** Move out of the way, please.

**RATCHETT.** Hey, you don't need to get all high and mighty about it.

**COUNTESS.** If you do not move this second I will scream.

**RATCHETT.** *Just wait a minute!* You've said that you're unattached at the moment, and we are on a train, so who the hell's gonna know what happens in some private room on some two-bit piece o' –



# Hubbard/Princess

**POIROT.** You are right, forgive me. Now would you be so kind as to help Miss Ohlsson back to her room and take Mrs. Hubbard with you. I need to speak with the countess alone for a moment if you do not mind.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Of course we mind. Every time things get juicy, you throw us out again!

**PRINCESS.** Uch. Would you please stop gossip mongering.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Me? You have your mouth open so much I can count your teeth.

**PRINCESS.** What a pleasure to learn you know how to count. Bird brain.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Well, if I'm a bird brain, you're a communist!

**PRINCESS.** I am not a communist, I'm in *exile*!

**MRS. HUBBARD.** From your *husband*, I'll bet, who couldn't wait *to get rid of you*!

**PRINCESS.** And who's the one with all the *divorces*?!

**MRS. HUBBARD.** My husbands were unfaithful!

**PRINCESS.** And this surprises you?!

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