

**POIROT.** *(Suddenly alert.)* Miss Ohlsson?

**MICHEL.** *Oui*, she told me this morning.

**BOUC.** She did not tell *us* this morning.

**MICHEL.** She said he was wearing a uniform like mine and when she spoke to him he did not respond. In fact...

**POIROT.** What? *Tell me quickly!*

**MICHEL.** The princess tells me that she also saw this man last night.

**POIROT.** *Oh là là, oh là là, oh là là.*

**BOUC.** What is it?

**POIROT.** It is just the kind of clue that I have been waiting for.

*(He springs into action.)*

Michel, come with me. I will need your help quickly. *Monsieur* Bouc, we shall be right back. Do not move!

**BOUC.** But where are you going?

**POIROT.** You will see in a moment!

*(POIROT hurries out with MICHEL behind him – jostling MRS. HUBBARD, who is just entering.)*

**START HERE ---> MRS. HUBBARD.** Ah!

**POIROT.** Pardon, *madame!* We will be right back!

**MRS. HUBBARD.** I thought you wanted to question me.

**POIROT.** I do! Just stay where you are!

*(POIROT and MICHEL run out of the room.)*

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Well that was exciting – as if we needed any more excitement around here. Now listen, I want my passport back.

*(She goes through the passports on the table, looking for her own.)*

What if there was another shooting and we had to make a run for it? Can you imagine me wandering through Yugoslavia without a passport? They'd shoot me on sight and ask questions later. "Who are you?!"

"Well I'm Mrs. Helen Hubbard from the Minneapolis Golf and Racquet *BLAM!*" No more mahjong!

**BOUC.** You have been extremely patient, *madame*, and believe me, I am grateful. If there is ever anything I can do to thank you, I am at your service.

*(He kisses her hand.)*

**MRS. HUBBARD.** You know you remind me of one of my husbands.

**BOUC.** Which one?

**MRS. HUBBARD.** The next one.

*(At which moment we hear GRETA's voice from down the corridor.)*

**GRETA.** *(Offstage, approaching.)* No, no, no, please put it back! It is my suitcase! You may not take it!

*(POIROT bursts into the room followed by MICHEL who is carrying a battered suitcase. MICHEL is followed by GRETA, the COUNTESS, and the PRINCESS. GRETA is hysterical and POIROT and the COUNTESS are trying to calm her down.)*

**COUNTESS.** He must have a reason.

**POIROT.** I have an excellent reason.

**GRETA.** Please stop!

**PRINCESS.** *Monsieur* Poirot, really!

**POIROT.** Miss Ohlsson, you must permit me to take a look in your suitcase.

**GRETA.** But they are private things! It has my undergarments!

**PRINCESS.** *Monsieur* Poirot!

**POIROT.** Miss Ohlsson, we will look at nothing that will embarrass you, you have my promise. Wait! I have an idea. Princess, would you be so kind as to assist me?

**PRINCESS.** I suppose.

**POIROT.** Miss Ohlsson: Michel tells me that you saw a second conductor on the train last night. Is that correct?

**GRETA.** *Ja.*

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

**GRETA.** He was small like a woman.

**PRINCESS.** That is correct. I saw him as well.

**POIROT.** *Ah bon*, that is perfect. It seems that virtually everyone on this train has seen the second conductor except myself and *Monsieur* Bouc. So the question now is where did he go. Is he hiding on the train? If he were still in uniform, we could spot him quickly. Therefore, at least one conclusion is that he has *hidden* his uniform and done so in the luggage of one of the passengers.

**GRETA.** But why choose me? There are other suitcases! Try the other ones first!

**POIROT.** *(The magician.)* Princess, would you be so kind as to raise the lid and tell us what you see inside?

*(The PRINCESS raises the lid - and pulls out a uniform identical to the one that MICHEL is wearing.)*

**COUNTESS.** It is the uniform.

**GRETA.** Ahh! I have never seen it! I have hurt no one, ever! I would not do such a thing!! I am not a murderer!!

**POIROT.** Oh now, now, now, I am not accusing you, you did nothing wrong.

**GRETA.** I did nothing wrong!!

**POIROT.** *Monsieur* Bouc, does the jacket have all its buttons in place?

**BOUC.** No. There is one missing.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** And there you go! Are we surprised at this?

**BOUC.** Wait a moment. There is something more.

*(He reaches into one of the pockets of the uniform and pulls out a large, distinctive-looking key.)*

*Oh là là. Mon Dieu.* It is a pass key for the doors on the train.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** And *that* would explain how he got in my room.

(**GRETA** weeps loudly on the **PRINCESS's** shoulder.)

**POIROT.** Now, now, *mademoiselle*, just tell me when was the last time you looked in your suitcase.

**GRETA.** It was yesterday, just after we boarded.

**POIROT.** So someone could have hidden it this morning after you left the room.

**GRETA.** *I have no idea! I have never seen it before!*

**PRINCESS.** *Monsieur Poirot!* I must insist that you stop bullying poor Miss Ohlsson in this manner. She is simply not up to it like the rest of us.

**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?!

**BOUC.** Ladies, ladies, we are all a little worked up at the moment – please. This way.