

**POIROT.** She is more than lovely. She is a complete liar.

**BOUC.** (*Incredulous.*) Miss Debenham?

**POIROT.** She claims that she is not well-acquainted with the colonel, yet they are clearly *intime*. To him she said she wanted to put something behind her and now she pretends that these words mean nothing.

**BOUC.** But she was shot!

**POIROT.** In the arm.

**BOUC.** It could have killed her!

**POIROT.** I wonder.

**BOUC.** About what?! *Oh là là*, you do not suspect her of Cassetti's murder –?

**POIROT.** It is not impossible.

**BOUC.** But it *is* impossible. She is cool. She is methodical. She would not stab a man to death, she would sue him in court!

**POIROT.** *Non, non*, you are wrong if you think this crime is sudden and passionate. This is a long-headed crime, *mon ami*, I would stake my career on it. Look at this.

(**POIROT** produces the sleeve of **MARY**'s blouse that was cut off by the **COUNTESS**.)

**BOUC.** The sleeve of her blouse. So what?

**POIROT.** There is a powder burn at the entry point.

**BOUC.** Which means?

**POIROT.** That the gun was very close to the sleeve when it went off.

**BOUC.** So what? The man was two feet away!

(**MICHEL** hurries in.)

**MICHEL.** (*At the door.*) Pardon, *messieurs*. I have finished the search.

**BOUC.** And, and, and?

**MICHEL.** Nothing. There is no sign of an intruder anywhere. If you like, I can show you.

**POIROT.** *Non, non, c'est tout.* Would you now be so kind as to remove your tunic, please?

(**MICHEL**, *confused*, looks to **BOUC** for guidance, and **BOUC** nods. **MICHEL** removes his tunic and hands it to **POIROT**.)

I see that none of your buttons are missing, and moreover, the thread for each button is old, so nothing was sewn on recently.

**MICHEL.** That is correct, but may I ask -?

**POIROT.** Mrs. Hubbard found this button in her room this morning.

**MICHEL.** (*Examining it.*) It is not mine, *monsieur*.

**POIROT.** So I see. But it matches yours exactly.

**MICHEL.** It does.

**POIROT.** Michel, are there other attendants on this train at the moment?

**MICHEL.** There is one in second class. A ticket taker I have known for years.

**POIROT.** Is he large or small?

**MICHEL.** Quite large, I'm afraid. Shall I ask him to see you?

**POIROT.** *Non, non*, that is quite all right. And what other passengers, besides the ones in this coach, are on the train?

**MICHEL.** There is hardly anyone at the moment. It is the off-season. There is a mother and child on the Belgrade carriage and that is all.

**POIROT.** And could there be a second conductor on this train wearing a uniform like yours?

**MICHEL.** Oh no, *monsieur*, there is no such thing. I had to earn this uniform with many years of service. However...

**POIROT.** *Oui?*

**MICHEL.** Well, frankly, I am not sure I trust her word, but Miss Ohlsson says that last night she saw what she calls a second conductor on the train.

**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.)*

**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?!"