

Side 2

Princess Dragomiroff

Dialect: Russian

Description: A wealthy, elderly Russian aristocrat. Imperious, commanding, and used to being obeyed. Speaks with authority and grandeur.

Greta Ohlsson

Dialect: Swedish

Description: A devout Swedish missionary. Earnest, sincere, and somewhat timid.

Hector MacQueen

Dialect: American (New York or Mid-Atlantic)

Description: Secretary to Ratchett. Nervous, excitable, and eager to please, but easily flustered.

Monsieur Bouc

Dialect: French accent

Description: Director of the Wagon-Lit train company and Poirot's old friend. Energetic, personable, and often lighthearted. Serves as both host and occasional comic relief.

Hercule Poirot

Dialect: Belgian/French accent (consistent, not cartoonish)

Description: World-famous detective. Precise, observant, fastidious, with an eccentric sense of humor. Must carry authority while also being engaging to the audience.

Scene Nine

(The night fades to morning and we are still in the corridor. The PRINCESS is making her way to the dining car and sees GRETA ahead of her.)

PRINCESS. Greta! It is I! Slow down!

GRETA. Oh good morning, princess. *(To MACQUEEN.)* Good morning!

(MACQUEEN comes by with a breakfast tray and they have to squeeze past each other.)

MACQUEEN. *(To PRINCESS.)* Good morning.

PRINCESS. *(To MACQUEEN.)* Good morning!

MACQUEEN. *(To GRETA.)* Good morning.

GRETA. *(To MACQUEEN.)* Good morning.

(MACQUEEN steps in the PRINCESS's way.)

MACQUEEN. My fault! Good morning.

(Knocking.)

Mr. Ratchett?

(Knock, knock, knock.)

Sir?

(Knock, knock, knock.)

Sir, could you open the door, please?

(Sensing that something is wrong.)

Hello?!

(BOUC and POIROT enter.)

BOUC. Is something wrong?

MACQUEEN. He isn't answering.

(He tries the door.)

And it's locked.

BOUC. *Monsieur* Ratchett, are you all right?

POIROT. The pass key, perhaps.

BOUC. Of course.

GRETA. I hope he is not being ill.

PRINCESS. Shh.

BOUC. There's a chain.

MACQUEEN. Hello?

POIROT. You must force the door.

BOUC. It will break and need repairing.

POIROT. Quickly! Do you not feel the air from the room? It is freezing. Quickly!

GRETA. (*Wailing.*) I do not like this at all!

(Bang! The three men break open the door with a crash. As they enter the room, it opens out so we, the audience, are in the room with them.)

*(Sitting up in bed is **SAMUEL RATCHETT**, the chest of his pajamas crimson with blood. He looks garish and hideous.)*

*(Screeeeeeeeeeech!! There is a sound of terror in the score – then **GRETA** screams and falls to her knees.)*

Eeeee! Dear God, dear God, it is awful!

MACQUEEN. Mr. Ratchett!

GRETA. I cannot look!

MACQUEEN. Do you see his chest?!

PRINCESS. It is horrible!

BOUC. (*Reaching to touch **RATCHETT**'s chest.*) I cannot believe it!

POIROT. *Do not touch anything! Not a speck!*

GRETA. (*Hysterical.*) IT IS HUMAN LIFE! IT IS WRONG!

PRINCESS. Greta, calm down!

POIROT. Princess, could you escort Miss Ohlsson to her room, please.

PRINCESS. Come along, Greta.

*(**GRETA** wails with distress and the two women exit.)*

MACQUEEN. Holy cow.

BOUC. There has never been such a thing in the history of my company!

(POIROT removes a pair of tweezers from his pocket and delicately moves the pajamas away from the wounds.)

What are you doing?

POIROT. I am examining the wounds – there appear to be seven – no, eight stab wounds to the chest. *Monsieur* MacQueen, when did you see him last?

MACQUEEN. *Me?* I-I-I don't know anything! He was fine last night when I put out his wine.

POIROT. You are his secretary. What do you know about him?

MACQUEEN. Not very much. He-he-he-he never spoke about himself at all. Frankly, I think he was hiding something. That's just an impression.

POIROT. And why was that do you think?

MACQUEEN. I-I think he was fleeing from America to get away from something, and I think he managed it until a few weeks ago.

POIROT. And then?

MACQUEEN. He began to get some threatening letters. They're in my room. Do you want to see them?

POIROT. Yes. Go quickly. And please ask the countess to join me here.

MACQUEEN. I'll be right back!