

# Side 5

## **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.

## **Countess Andrenyi**

Dialect: Hungarian (or light Eastern European)

Description: Strikingly elegant and charming. Cultured, graceful, and magnetic in her presence.

## **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.

## **Colonel Arbuthnot**

Dialect: Scottish

Description: A proud, formal military man. Stoic and honorable, with a rigid sense of propriety.

## **Mary Debenham**

Dialect: British (Received Pronunciation or neutral upper-class British)

Description: A calm and composed English governess. Intelligent, reserved, and seemingly in control of her emotions.

## **Helen Hubbard**

Dialect: American (Midwestern or Minnesotan "upper Midwest" sound works well)

Description: A bold, outspoken American traveler. Talkative, dramatic, and larger-than-life, with a flair for comedy.

## **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.

## ACT II

### Scene One

*(A blast of discordant sound is heard: The opening bars of the "Stüermisch Bewegt" from Mahler's Fifth Symphony. The lights come up and we're exactly where we were at the close of Act I. Everyone is frozen, staring at MARY on the floor in a pool of blood with the gun beside her.)*

**POIROT.** *TOUCH NOTHING!* Countess.

**COUNTESS.** Of course.

*(The COUNTESS hurries to MARY and kneels and begins to minister to her.)*

She's still alive.

**BOUC.** Oh thank God!

*(MARY stirs and moans.)*

**ARBUTHNOT.** Mary!

**MARY.** What...what happened?

**ARBUTHNOT.** You were shot, for God's sake!

**COUNTESS.** I need my medical bag.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** I'll get it!

**COUNTESS.** Quickly! Compartment twelve!

**POIROT.** Michel, please search the train.

**MICHEL.** *Oui, monsieur.*

**BOUC.** I'll go with him.

**MACQUEEN.** Me, too!

**POIROT.** Wait! Do you have a gun?

**MICHEL.** There is one for emergencies in the porter's box.

**POIROT.** Take it with you. This is not a game.

**MICHEL.** Yes sir.

**BOUC.** Come quickly.

*(BOUC, MICHEL, and MACQUEEN run off, as  
MRS. HUBBARD returns with the first aid kit.)*

**COUNTESS.** Can you sit upright?

**MARY.** I-I think so. Ow!

**PRINCESS.** There is a great deal of blood. I do not like blood.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Nobody likes blood. Here's the kit.

**COUNTESS.** Thank you. It is only your arm?

**MARY.** Yes.

**COUNTESS.** You have not been hurt elsewhere?

**MARY.** No.

*(The COUNTESS removes a pair of scissors.)*

**COUNTESS.** Do not be alarmed. I am merely cutting the sleeve of your blouse so I can have a better look.

*(The COUNTESS cuts the sleeve of the blouse up the side and then off, exposing MARY's bloody arm. Everyone winces.)*

**GRETA.** I cannot watch.

**COUNTESS.** This may hurt a bit. It is...what do you call it in English. *Jód* -

**POIROT.** *Iodine.\**

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Iodine.

**MARY.** OW!

**ARBUTHNOT.** Be careful, will you!

**MARY.** I'm all right, colonel.

**COUNTESS.** You are remarkably fortunate, Miss Debenham.

Two inches to the left and it would have been fatal.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Well, thank God for small blessings!

**POIROT.** Countess, may I ask Miss Debenham a question?

**COUNTESS.** Are you well enough?

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\*Pronounces it as in French, "Ee-o-deen."

MARY. I-I think so.

POIROT. It is very simple, *mademoiselle*: who shot you?

MARY. I... I don't know. I-I only caught a glimpse of him.  
He was –

POIROT. What?

PRINCESS. Tell us.

MARY. It makes no sense. He was in a kind of uniform. But  
I may have imagined it.

POIROT. Can you tell us what happened?

*(During the following, the COUNTESS  
continues to clean and bandage the wound.)*

MARY. I'll try. I-I woke up this morning feeling disoriented,  
as though I'd been drugged or something, and I had this  
splitting headache. So I looked through my suitcase for  
some aspirin, but I didn't have any. So then I stumbled  
out of the room and I saw that Mrs. Hubbard's door  
was ajar. I called to her but she wasn't there and then –  
I know I shouldn't have – but I went into her room.  
*(To MRS. HUBBARD.)* I'm sorry.

MRS. HUBBARD. That's quite all right.

POIROT. Go on.

MARY. My head was splitting open by this time and I wasn't  
thinking straight – so I looked for some aspirin in  
Mrs. Hubbard's makeup bag. And there was this *knife*  
and it was covered with *blood*!

GRETA. A knife!

MRS. HUBBARD. In my bag?

MARY. Yes.

POIROT. Where is it?

MARY. I left it where it was. I felt *so frightened*.

MRS. HUBBARD. Holy cow. I'll go get it –!

POIROT. *STOP!* You will *not* “go get it.” I will retrieve it,  
when I am ready. Now Miss Debenham, continue.

MRS. HUBBARD. Well, let me just say that this does prove  
there was a man was in my room last night, like I was –

**POIROT.** Mrs. Hubbard!

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Sorry.

**PRINCESS.** You talk too much.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** I beg your pardon.

**POIROT.** Miss Debenham.

**MARY.** Well, I was frightened when I saw the knife and I must have backed into Mr. Ratchett's room, and then I turned and saw the body on the bed with all the blood and the wounds, and I – I screamed, and then I saw the man and the gun and that's all I remember!

*(She starts to cry.)*

**COUNTESS.** *(Comforting MARY.)* It's all right.

**POIROT.** Are you sure it was a man?

**MARY.** I *think* so. I assumed it was. I suppose I'm not positive.

**PRINCESS.** He must have been hiding in this room behind the door, waiting to escape.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** So if I'd come in here first, then *whammo!* No more show tunes in the shower.

**PRINCESS.** And that would have been a terrible loss.

**POIROT.** Mrs. Hubbard, can you tell me where you keep your makeup bag?

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Gladly. Right behind the door, hanging on the handle.

*(POIROT goes to get it.)*

If these compartments were bigger, I wouldn't have to hang my makeup bag on a door handle like some drama school kid in a Rudolf Friml operetta living out of a hold-all and *holy God!*

*(POIROT has retrieved the makeup bag from which he has extracted a vicious looking dagger covered with blood and MRS. HUBBARD has just seen it.)*

**GRETA.** *(Grabbing the PRINCESS.)* I cannot look!

**ARBUTHNOT.** (*Reaching for it.*) I've never seen one like that before.

**POIROT.** Ah, ah. I will be analyzing it for fingerprints. In the meantime, will you all please leave and do not touch *anything* as you go. When I have finished in here, I will be in the dining car and I would like to see Miss Debenham –

**ARBUTHNOT.** Now see here!

**POIROT.** *If she is able.* Then Mrs. Hubbard, and then Miss Ohlsson and the princess again.

**PRINCESS.** Me?!

**POIROT.** Countess, will you be so kind as to escort Miss Debenham to her room, please.

**COUNTESS.** Of course. You are strong enough?

**MARY.** I'm much better. Thank you.

**ARBUTHNOT.** (*To POIROT, angry.*) I see no reason to put Miss Debenham through anything stressful at the moment, and I suggest you *don't*.

**POIROT.** I will bear that in mind.

*(Everyone starts to leave.)*

**PRINCESS.** I hope you solve all this quickly, *monsieur*. I am not afraid of dying, but I would rather not speed up the process.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** I intend to sue this company on the grounds of sheer anxiety.

*(Everyone leaves except POIROT, and we hear the thoughtful opening of the first movement of Bach's Cello Suite No. 2 In D Minor.)*

**POIROT.** *Eh bien, madame*, you are not the only one who is anxious at the moment.

*(Fade into the following scene.)*