

Side 7

Samuel Ratchett (a.k.a. Cassetti)

Dialect: American (Mid-Atlantic or neutral)

Description: A wealthy American businessman. Rough around the edges, forceful, and used to being in control. Carries an air of menace beneath his charm.

Hector MacQueen

Dialect: American (New York or Mid-Atlantic)

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

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.

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.

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.

(*MARY enters, dressed stylishly.*)

MARY. I'm Miss Debenham.

MICHEL. Ah, *mademoiselle*. You will be sharing with Miss Ohlsson here.

GRETA. I vill do my very best so I am not disturbing you.

MARY. Oh, I'm sure we'll get along just fine.

(*At which moment, SAMUEL RATCHETT appears. He's a middle-aged American businessman, brusque, unforgiving, with a threatening demeanor, and a whiplash of a voice.*)

RATCHETT. *Hector!*

MACQUEEN. Here, sir. I-I'm right here.

RATCHETT. Is the luggage on board?

MACQUEEN. Yes sir, it is. And I-I checked this morning for any mail that might have arrived overnight, and-and this came in apparently -

RATCHETT. (*Reading.*) Goddammit!

MACQUEEN. I know, it's *awful*. I mean just look at this! "Prepare to *die*"?

RATCHETT. Keep your voice down!

MACQUEEN. You should call the police!

RATCHETT. It's none of their business.

MACQUEEN. But these are dangerous! This is the third one you've had in a week.

It's good you have a *gun*.

RATCHETT. *Would you keep your voice down!*

(*By this time, POIROT has entered and approached MICHEL.*)

POIROT. Excuse me. Could you direct me to compartment number seven, please.

MICHEL. Number seven, *monsieur*? I believe there must be some mistake.

POIROT. Let us hope not. I must get to London by the end of the week. My name is Hercule Poirot.

MICHEL. Hercule Poirot, the detective?

(*Heads turn. POIROT is a celebrity.*)

RATCHETT. Well, what do you know! Hercule Poirot! I've heard o' you. You're famous.

POIROT. *Merci, monsieur.*

RATCHETT. The name is Ratchett. Samuel Ratchett. Import-export. And I may have some business for you.

POIROT. I'm afraid I am on vacation, *monsieur*.

RATCHETT. Oh, you'll change your mind when you hear the price. Eh? Haha!

MICHEL. *Monsieur* Ratchett, you are in compartment two.

(*RATCHETT doesn't like being interrupted.*)

RATCHETT. I *know* where I'm going, thank you. (*To POIROT.*)
We'll discuss it inside.

CONDUCTOR. (*Offstage.*) All aboard!

(*BOUC enters in high spirits.*)

BOUC. *Monsieur Poirot! Alors.* You have beat me to the gate. You have met Michel? He is from Paris and he is the best conductor in the company!

MICHEL. *Merci, monsieur.* But your friend says that he has number seven, and I'm afraid it is taken. Indeed, the entire first class coach is full.

BOUC. That is incredible.

MICHEL. I know, *monsieur*. All the world elects to travel tonight.

BOUC. You will put him in number one, please.
(*To POIROT.*) It is my personal compartment. I will find something in one of the other carriages.

POIROT. *Non, non.* I cannot take your bed, *mon ami*.

BOUC. I insist, it is done. Michel, you will make the arrangements.

POIROT. I am in your debt.

BOUC. Now tell me, have all the passengers checked in with you?

MICHEL. Not yet. We are waiting for a Mrs. Hubbard and the Count and Countess Andrenyi.

BOUC. (*To POIROT.*) I hear that the countess is one of the greatest beauties of Europe. She is Hungarian, I believe, a commoner, who became a doctor, and when she married the count she became royalty!

MICHEL. I see her coming.