

Bouc, Countess, Poirot, Michel + Mrs. Hubbard Side 5

that wins you over immediately. She is out of a fairy-tale.)

BOUC. Countess Eléna Andrenyi! Welcome! I am *Monsieur* Bouc of the Wagon-Lit.

COUNTESS. *(With a Hungarian accent.)* I am delighting to see you.

BOUC. Your reputation precedes you, *madame*. May I present my friend, *Monsieur* Hercule Poirot.

COUNTESS. The famous detective. That is being wonderful. I have read about you in the papers, *monsieur*, and I admire you greatly.

POIROT. *Ön nagyon kedves.*

COUNTESS. *Ez az igazság.*

POIROT. *Nagyon örvendek.**

COUNTESS. You speak Hungarian beautifully.

POIROT. Not as well as you speak English.

MICHEL. May I help you with your bag, *madame*?

COUNTESS. No, no, it is nothing at all.

BOUC. And your husband the count is coming?

COUNTESS. *Hélas*, he cannot join me this trip. But since I am visiting my mother it works out nicely. He does not like her.

(Offers her hand.)

Monsieur Poirot, I look forward to hearing of your wonderful adventures.

POIROT. *(Kissing her hand.)* And I look forward to telling you about them.

MICHEL. Compartment twelve, countess.

(The COUNTESS sweeps away, into the train.)

BOUC. I think you are in love, my friend.

POIROT. I will not discount this possibility.

* POIROT: You are very kind.

COUNTESS: It is simply the truth.

POIROT: It is an honor to meet you.

(*At this moment, MRS. HUBBARD blows onto the platform.*)

MRS. HUBBARD. Is this that Orient Express I keep hearing about? It doesn't *look* that impressive, at least not from here.

MICHEL. You are Mrs. Hubbard?

MRS. HUBBARD. Mrs. Helen Caroline Peabody-Wolfson-Van Pelt-Hubbard, if you please, from the beautiful garden state of Minnesota. Mr. Peabody, my first husband, was a very good soul but the poor man had no talent for longevity, and I shouldn't say poor because he did very nicely for himself, thank you very much. My second husband was a Mr. Wolfson who I loved rather dearly, but he loved a lot of women and so I traded up and got a Van Pelt, but I caught him in bed with that redhead from the Waldorf who did his nails. Then at last I found Mr. Hubbard and I call him my little white knight for saving me from a life of bridge games and watery cocktails at the Minneapolis Country Club.

BOUC. And is Mr. Hubbard joining you?

MRS. HUBBARD. No, Mr. Hubbard is not joining me. Mr. Hubbard and I traveled together once and he said it raised his blood pressure. I don't know why. So now I do it for both of us. (*To MICHEL.*) Do you like to travel?

MICHEL. I travel every day.

MRS. HUBBARD. Then you and I should exchange notes some time.

MICHEL. Compartment three.

MRS. HUBBARD. Is that yours or mine?

MICHEL. Yours, *madame*.

MRS. HUBBARD. I hope it's comfy.

MICHEL. I have never had a complaint, *madame*.

MRS. HUBBARD. I'm sure you haven't.

(*She exits.*)

POIROT. She is quite the character.