

**COUNTESS.** Excuse me, but you have asked to see me – *oh dear God.*

**POIROT.** Forgive me, countess, but I understand you were trained as a physician, so I thought perhaps you could help me with the body.

**COUNTESS.** I am happy to help.

*(Without hesitation, she strips off her jacket and rolls up her sleeves.)*

**POIROT.** I'm afraid it is not a very pleasant sight.

**COUNTESS.** I have seen worse, believe me. I volunteered in the war.

*(The COUNTESS begins examining the body.)*

**POIROT.** *Regardes.* The left side of his face is slightly red, do you see?

**COUNTESS.** I do. It has been slapped.

**BOUC.** How do you know?

**COUNTESS.** Because I slapped it. I count eight separate wounds.

**POIROT.** That was my count also. Can you estimate the time of death?

**COUNTESS.** I would say it is between eight and ten hours ago, which puts the time between midnight and two o'clock.

**POIROT.** I am in accord.

**COUNTESS.** It appears that the killer was wild – in a frenzy of some sort.

**POIROT.** *Regardes.* See this. Of the eight stab wounds, five appear strong and three are mere scratches. And wait, do you see, the wounds are from different directions. Do you see it? I need a pencil.

**BOUC.** Here.

**POIROT.** *Bon.* Now watch. We place the pencil inside each wound and push it gently...

**BOUC.** Ugh! Is this necessary?

**COUNTESS.** Perhaps the man changed hands during the stabbing.

**BOUC.** Or there were two assailants. One right-handed and one left-handed.

**COUNTESS.** One strong, one weak.

**POIROT.** It is not impossible. But now another question presents itself: why did Mr. Ratchett not fight back when all the while he had this gun under his pillow?

*(POIROT pulls the revolver out from under the pillow.)*

**COUNTESS.** *Oh là là.*

**BOUC.** *Alors.* May I see it?

*(BOUC takes the gun.)*

**COUNTESS.** How did you find it?

**POIROT.** He showed it to me yesterday so I knew it was here somewhere.

**BOUC.** It is an automatic and I believe it is loaded.

*(He waves it around.)*

**POIROT.** *Attention!*

**COUNTESS.** *Ah!*

**BOUC.** Wait! There is a safety switch, it is not on.

**POIROT.** *S'il vous plait, mon ami!* Have you not heard of the fatal accident?!

*(He takes the gun from BOUC, but stops suddenly and sniffs the air.)*

*Un moment.*

*(He sniffs again and puts his finger up.)*

I have a very good nose.

*(He picks up RATCHETT's empty wine glass and sniffs.)*

Aha. Smell the glass of wine.

**COUNTESS.** It smells of almonds.

*(She pulls RATCHETT's eyelids up and examines his eyes.)*

**COUNTESS.** He was clearly drugged, which is why -

**POIROT & COUNTESS.** He did not fight back.

**POIROT.** Puh, puh. What is this in his pocket? *Voilà.*

*(He pulls a pocket watch from RATCHETT's pajama pocket.)*

**BOUC.** It is a watch, and the face is smashed!

**COUNTESS.** It is stopped at 1:15.

**BOUC.** Haha! At last! We have something important, yes?!

It is the time of death, and the countess said between midnight and two! So there it is! It could not be clearer! 1:15 is the time of death, it is obvious.

**POIROT.** It is possible.

**BOUC.** What do you mean it is possible? What is wrong with it?

**POIROT.** I do not know yet what is wrong and what is right because *I am still investigating!* Here is a pipe cleaner, and here is a match, and here is another match of a different shape. There are dozens of clues in this room and it makes me suspicious!

**BOUC.** Look at this, on the floor.

**COUNTESS.** *(Picking it up.)* It is a lady's handkerchief with the letter H on it.

**POIROT.** Yet another clue. And who is H? Eh? As in *Hamlet* -

**COUNTESS.** "That is the question." There is Mrs. Hubbard, and I believe that her first name is Helen.

**POIROT.** And the princess?

**BOUC.** Her name is Natalya Dragomiroff. And there is Mary Debenham and Greta Ohlsson and James Arbuthnot and Hector MacQueen and I am Constantine Bouc, and such a thing like this has never happened in the history of the Wagon-Lit and it will ruin my company *and I want you to solve it immediately!*