

Side 2

MRS. HUBBARD. Excuse me, young man. Are you American?

MACQUEEN. Y-yes I am.

MRS. HUBBARD. I thought so. I can see from your passport. Us Americans have to stick together, you know. Especially in a place like this. I can't even pronounce half the things on the menu. Can you believe it? And what's a falafafafafafel? I keep seeing them on the street and they look like you could play hockey with 'em.

MACQUEEN. I believe they're made of fried chickpeas.

MRS. HUBBARD. Well there ya go. Who knew? Some people will fry anything. By the way, I don't mean to snoop but I see your train ticket sitting there on the table and I wonder – do you know if they're providing a bus to the station?

MACQUEEN. I don't think so. I-I believe the hotel has a private car.

MRS. HUBBARD. Well don't you worry, I'll ask and find out. As the Bible says, "If Moses doesn't know the answer, ask the concierge." Now I better go. I think I'm annoying that odd little man with the silly moustache. (*Sotto voce.*) And I don't think it's real.

...

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.