

Theme music

ANNOUNCER: Agatha Christie's Poirot

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From the thrill-packed pages of Agatha Christie's unforgettable stories of corpses, clues and crime, Mutual now brings you, complete with bowler hat and brave mustache, your favorite detective, Hercule Poirot, starring Harold Huber, in the case of The Careless Victim.,

Theme music

Before meeting Hercule Poirot in his first American adventure, it seems only fitting for the millions of faithful readers who have followed the little Belgian detective's career in book form, to meet the famous lady who created this famous character. So it is our privilege to present a message from Agatha Christie introducing Hercule Poirot from London, England. The next voice you hear will be Miss Agatha Christie's.

Go ahead, London.

AGATHA CHRISTIE:

I feel that this is an occasion that would have appealed to Hercule Poirot. He would have done justice to the inauguration of this radio program, and he might even have made it seem something of an international event. However, as he's heavily engaged on an investigation, about which you will hear in due course, I must, as one of his oldest friends, deputize for him. The great man has his little foibles, but really, I have the greatest affection for him. And it is a source of continuing satisfaction to me, that there has been such a generous response to his appearance on my books, and I hope that his new career on the radio will make many new friends for him among a wider public.

ANNOUNCER:

Thank you, Miss Agatha Christie. And now, Mutual presents Hercule Poirot in his first American adventure, the Case of the Careless Victim.

Music

Scene 1: INT: office

POIROT:

(Door opens. Closes.) Mademoiselle?

CLERK:

Huh?

POIROT:

This is the Cozy Room Apartment Renting Agency?

CLERK:

When we got something to rent, yeah.

POIROT:

I have the desire to rent an apartment.

CLERK:

Who hasn't?

POIROT:

Please, mademoiselle, do not jest. Allons, I have with me a brief dossier of my requirements. Please to read it.

CLERK:

Well, all right. Gentleman desires a bright suns ... sunshining apartment, of a reasonable quietness, near the heart of the city. Should be furnished with the utmost charm, French provincial if possible. Price is of no consequence, as long as it is very reasonable. Huh. Please communicate with me at the Hotel Windsor. Hercules P-O-I-R-O-T. Poyrot.

POIROT:

No, no, no, mademoiselle, the name is Poirot. Hercule Poirot.

CLERK:

Well, I wish you luck, Mr. Porroh.

POIROT:

Finding an apartment, mademoiselle, is not a matter of luck. It is a matter of employing the little gray cells. If you can find an apartment for me, please do me the kindness to inform me.

CLERK:

Sure, if you'll do something for me.

POIROT:

And what is that?

CLERK:

If you can find an apartment for me, please do me the kindness to inform me!

Music

Scene 2: INT Elevator

ELEVATOR MAN:

Going up. (Sound of voices conversing in a crowd) Floor please.

POIROT:

Number five. (Elevator door closes). You are new here, no?

ELEVATOR MAN:

Uh, yessir, only came on yesterday. You're Mr. Porrot, aren'tcha?

POIROT:

Poirot.

ELEVATOR MAN:

Well, Poirot. One of the boys pointed you out. Here you are sir, fifth floor. (Elevator door opens and closes)

Scene 3: INT: corridor

POIROT:

(Humming...bumps into a woman) Oh, a thousand apologies, madame!

WOMAN:

(Old, reedy voice) Not a'tall, it was entirely my fault.

POIROT:

Madame appears troubled. Perhaps I may be of some slight assistance?

WOMAN:

No, I...well...if you're sure you don't mind.

POIROT:

But of course not.

WOMAN:

You see, it's my door, it won't open.

POIROT:

Aha. And where is this obstinate door, eh?

WOMAN:

It's right down the corridor, room 515.

POIROT:

If I may have the key?

WOMAN:

But that's just it! The door isn't locked. I left it open only ten minutes ago.

POIROT:

Indeed. Madame is very trusting, eh.

WOMAN:

Hmm. Here it tis. (Rattling of door) You see, it's stuck, it won't budge.

POIROT:

It is not precisely stuck, madame. It gives a trifle. This door is barricaded.

WOMAN:

Oh my goodness.

POIROT:

(grunt, as if applying shoulder to door) Ah, voila, she moves, eh.

WOMAN:

Oh, thanks a million. Now what do you suppose...

POIROT:

No, wait madame. Perhaps it is better if I look first. Ah, alas, it is as I have feared.

WOMAN:

(Quickly) What is it?

POIROT:
You do not know? Look!

WOMAN:
Oh! It's a man! Is he...is he...

POIROT:
Oui, madame. He has been strangled. This is murder.

MUSIC

Scene 4: INT room - a few moments later

POIROT:
Zut alors. I must complement you, madame. Your color, it is excellent. And you did not even commence to faint. For one who...

WOMAN:
I don't fall apart in a crisis, if that's what you mean. And furthermore, I'm not madame, I'm made-moiselle. By choice. Miss Abigail Fletcher. (Over the sound of someone telephoning.) And now, if you'll get that...uh, corpse out of here, I'd like to sit down.

POIROT:
That I regret I cannot do, mam'selle. The body must not be touched before the police arrive.

MISS FLETCHER:
Police!

POIROT:
Well yes, of course, the police. I am calling them now. 'Allo, allo? Ah, inspector Stevens. It is I, Hercule Poirot. Alas, no, I have not yet found the apartment. But I have found something of perhaps more interest. A corpse. Hm, right here in my hotel. Room number...

MISS FLETCHER:
(from far away) 515.

POIROT:
Number 5 fif-. Mamselle! What are you doing with the body?

MISS FLETCHER:
Nuthin. I was just trying to see his face.

POIROT:
You will have that opportunity later. Pardon, inspector. We are room 515. Bien. We shall expect you immediately. (hangs up phone) Eh, bien, Miss Fletcher. Now that you have observed the face of this unfortunate one, perhaps you will be good enough to tell me who he is?

MISS FLETCHER:
I certainly will not! Who do you think you are?

POIROT:

Ah, mamselle, permit me to present myself, I am Hercule Poirot. Formerly chief of the Belgian Surete.

MISS FLETCHER:

Yeah? That's what you say. Now look, Mr. Porroh, I've read plenty of detective stories and none of 'em had a detective that looked anythin' like you. I'll wait for the police and let them ask the questions.

POIROT:

As you desire, mamselle. I merely wish to point out one thing. It is you the police will question first.

MISS FLETCHER:

Me?

POIROT:

But of course. You are the most likely suspect, no?

MISS FLETCHER:

Well, all right. What do you want to know?

POIROT:

First, what are you doing here in this hotel?

MISS FLETCHER:

Why, I've lived here for ten solid years! Ever since I left Waskuskego, Maine!

POIROT:

And what do you do? What is your occupation?

MISS FLETCHER:

Why...why I...don't have any occupation. I've got a little income and...I like it here in New York and the last few years I've been doing...war work....Red Cross and things like that.

POIROT:

You seem a trifle vague, mamselle. Now, about this man. Who is he?

MISS FLETCHER:

I don't know! I never saw him before in my life!

POIROT:

Mamselle, I advise you to consider your answers with care. Do not forget, a man lies dead in this room.

MISS FLETCHER:

I can't help that. I don't know who he is or how he got here. I toldja I was out of the room for ...ten minutes.

POIROT:

That may be, Miss Fletcher, but it does not help you. This man has been dead for at least one hour.

MISS FLETCHER:

How do you know?

POIROT:

If you will touch the body you will observe it is already beginning to cool. Therefore, mamselle, if you left this room only ten minutes ago, your situation is indeed grave, for this man was already dead!

MISS FLETCHER:

Oh! But ...I couldn't have done it!

POIROT:

So? And why not?

MISS FLETCHER:

Because his body was lying right across the doorway. You know perfectly well I couldn't get out through this doorway and still leave a body wedged against it! Belgian surety indeed!

POIROT:

Hm. Very good, mamselle. But, you could have murdered him in here, made your departure by way of this fire escape through the room overhead, and come down inside the building to this corridor, where you so innocently made my acquaintance. You see, there is evidence that the fire escape has but recently been used. Now, it is not so amusing, eh?

MISS FLETCHER:

Well, I don't care. I had nothing to do with this. I know you detectives, you are out to get a suspect, and just because a man was murdered in my room...

POIROT:

Gently, gently, mamselle. All is not lost. Fortunately, you deal with Hercule Poirot, who goes one step beyond the obvious. You see, this poor man was not murdered in your room. He was killed in the room overhead!

MISS FLETCHER:

But why? Why kill him upstairs and leave him on my doorstep?

POIROT:

That, mamselle, we shall discover in due course.

MUSIC

Scene 5: INT corridor

FX:

Door closes. Sound of key turning in lock.

MISS FLETCHER:

All right, Mister Porroh. Now that you've got the corpse safely locked in my room and us outside, what am I supposed to do? Sleep on the fire escape?

POIROT:

I do not think that will be necessary, mamselle. You are coming with me to the lobby where we shall wait for my friend, Inspector Stevens. He will see that you are comfortably sheltered for the night.

MISS FLETCHER:

Oh. ...Tell me, Mr. Porroh, how'd you figure out that the murder took place upstairs?

POIROT:

Is it not apparent, Miss Fletcher? Please to squeeze the bell for the elevator. I look out of your window and observe the fire escapes. And what do I find? Everywhere the dust reposes peacefully.

MISS FLETCHER:

Well naturally! The help is too busy to polish fire escapes.

POIROT:

Ah, mamselle, but on one stairway, the one leading up from your window, all is disarranged. There is a broad, clear path through the dust. And it is precisely the width of a human body. And since the path extends only to the floor above, it is obvious the body has been dragged down from room 615. Also, on the garments of the dead man, the trousers, the left elbow, and across the shoulders, there are unmistakable traces of rust. (Sound of elevator arriving.) Ah, voila, the elevator.

ELEVATOR MAN:

Going down.

POIROT:

Messiur, would you be so good as to explain why you were so long in arriving?

ELEVATOR MAN:

Uh? Oh, it's this old car. Every once in a while it goes on the fritz.

POIROT:

Comma? On the fritz?

MISS FLETCHER:

Out of order.

ELEVATOR MAN:

Yeah, it got stuck on the ninth.

POIROT:

You have been on the ninth floor all this time?

ELEVATOR MAN:

Yeah, that's right.

POIROT:

That is difficult to believe.

ELEVATOR MAN:

Why?

POIROT:

Because the indicator has been pointing to the basement.

ELEVATOR MAN:

Ah, that indicator. Soon as anything goes wrong it flops.

POIROT:

I am not so sure that is true of the indicator. But unquestionably, messieur, it is true of the too clever murder. As soon as anything goes wrong, it flops.

MUSIC

Scene 6: INT Lobby

POIROT:

(Sounds of people talking in lobby) Eh bien, Inspector Stevens, there is the situation. An unknown man strangled to death in one room, and dragged down the fire escape to another.

STEVENS:

Poirot, if this body is the person I think it is, the commissioner will have my head!

POIROT:

Eh? Mon ami, forgive me, you seem agitated.

STEVENS:

And we were warned, too. I assigned my best man to guard him. The smartest cop on my force. Sam Tremble. Good lord, Poirot, there'll be an international scandal.

POIROT:

Gently, mon ami. You go too fast, even for Hercule Poirot. Who is this magnificent figure of international importance?

STEVENS:

Parrish! Jonathan Parrish!

POIROT:

Parrish? Ahhh! Oui. The name rings a bell. He is the big currency expert, eh?

STEVENS:

That's right. He's on his way to Europe to set up the new paper currency for the liberated countries. Checked in at the Windsor today, was supposed to pick up some papers, dyes and inks and then hop a bomber tonight. (Elevator door opens)

POIROT:

Fifth floor, please. An enormous undertaking. And one of great importance.

STEVENS:

And I was responsible for his safety. He's supposed to be an eccentric sort of guy, no photographs, no publicity. Tremble was the only man on the force who knew him at all and Tremble failed. You see what this means, Poirot?

POIROT:

I see only this, my friend. We have arrived at the first step in the solution of this distressing murder, for now we know the motive. (Elevator door opens) This way, inspector. (Elevator door closes). This is the room. Mademoiselle Fletcher, your key.

MISS FLETCHER:

Here you are.

STEVENS:

I'll never live this down.

POIROT:

(Over the sound of key in lock) You exaggerate, mon ami. Even the best of men sometimes fail. Regard, inspector. Here is your corpse.

STEVENS:

Hm. They certainly did a job...thunderation!

POIROT:

You are shocked, messieur?

STEVENS:

Poirot, do you realize what's happened?

POIROT:

But of course, Inspector. It is not Jonathan Parrish who has been murdered, but your own , faithful policeman, Sam Tremble.

STEVENS:

Poirot, that's not very funny, you knew it all the time.

POIROT:

Pardon, mon ami, I knew nothing of the sort.

STEVENS:

But you distinctly told me...

POIROT:

No, inspector, you told me! To me the dead man was an unknown corpse. It could be anyone. But when you speak of two men, one a wealthy financier of international importance, the other a police officer, by employing the little grey cells, it is not difficult to conclude that a corpse with the large high, comfortable shoes and the plain suit, is the policeman.

STEVENS:

Oh, of course. I'm sorry...

POIROT:

Messieur, there is no time now for the profuse apologies.

STEVENS:

You're right. We've got to get to Parrish at once. The poor guy doesn't even know his bodyguard's gone. (Picks up receiver) Hello, hello, operator, what room is Jonathan Parrish in. Eh? 615? Hold on. Poirot, that's the room directly over this one, where Tremble was killed.

POIROT:

Precisely.

STEVENS:

Operator, let me talk to Mr. Parrish.

POIROT:

I think you will find the gentleman does not answer.

STEVENS:

Why not? (Replaces phone.)

POIROT:

Obviously, he would not witness a murder without reporting it. On the other hand, he too may...

STEVENS:

Good lord, Poirot, do you think he's dead too? He...we know he received a warning from Hilary Kent.

POIROT:

I do not follow you, mon ami.

STEVENS:

Huh? Oh, I don't blame you. Hilary Kent is a criminal egomaniac.

POIROT:

Ah. One who commits crime chiefly for the pleasure of baffling the police, eh?

STEVENS:

Exactly. Well, this Hilary Kent, or someone who calls himself Hilary Kent, is one of those guys. He pulled off a few clever jobs and got away with them. We don't know anything about him but whoever he is, he's got to get his thrill out of every job. So he makes it a rule to warn his victims.

POIROT:

Ah, me. I know well the type. And messieur Parrish, I take it, has received such a warning.

STEVENS:

Right. Now you see why I assigned my best man.

POIROT:

Eh bien, but now we must hasten upstairs to Mr. Parrish's room. Already it may be too late.

MISS FLETCHER:

I'll go, too. I don't want to stay here with this body.

STEVENS:

You'll stay right here, Miss Fletcher, until I give you permission..

POIROT:

Inspector, if you do not mind. Myself, I am not averse to Miss Fletcher's company. I find her very...intriguing.

MUSIC

Scene 7: INT

FX:

Knock on door

STEVENS:

Oh, no answer.

POIROT:

But naturally. You did not expect the murderer to sit down and wait for us? You will have to employ the pass key.

FX:

Sound of key in lock

STEVENS:

Remember, Miss Fletcher, you're not to touch anything.

MISS FLETCHER:

It's perfectly all right. I'm wearing gloves.

POIROT:

The inspector is thinking of fingerprints? Moi, I do not think he will find any. Monsieur Kent, or whoever the killer may be, is too clever to leave any such traces.

STEVENS:

Well, maybe. But I want to be sure we don't lose even the tiniest clue.

POIROT:

An excellent approach, mon ami. There are many interesting things we may learn here, about Messieur Parrish.

MISS FLETCHER:

He certainly gets around a lot.

POIROT:

Oui. The labels on his luggage are from the four corners of the earth.

STEVENS:

Miss Fletcher, I said you're not to touch anything!

MISS FLETCHER:

For goodness sake, it's only a book!

POIROT:

Books may be of great significance. Ah. Oui. This one for example. It is no ordinary book. It is a stamp album of great value. Hm. (Sound of pages turning.) Some of these stamps are almost without price. Ah. Ah. Very interesting. This Guatemala Blue....

Voice

Put up your hands! All of you!

FX:

Various sounds of surprise. Oh! from Miss Fletcher. Thunderation! from Inspector Stevens

Don't move! I said don't move!

POIROT:

Have no fear, messieur. I will not dispute the authority of your gun.

STEVENS:

Mister, you can't get away with this. Put your gun down and talk fast. Who the devil are you?

POIROT:

But obviously, Inspector, this is the man we seek. Monsieur Jonathan Parrish.

PARRISH:

That's just who I am! All right, speak up! Which one of you is Hilary Kent?

STEVENS:

Hilary Kent!

PARRISH:

Yes!

STEVENS:

Now wait a minute, Mr. Parrish. You've got this all wrong. I'm Inspector Stevens, homicide squad, and this is Hercule Poirot, the famous Belgian detective.

PARRISH:

So you say! You don't look like policemen to me, particularly that little squirt with the silly mustache.

POIROT:

Eh?

PARRISH:

You stay right where you are til I check on you!

MUSIC

POIROT:

Eh bien, Monsieur Parrish, now that you are satisfied as to our identity...

PARRISH:

Well, I've heard of you, of course. You're supposed to be the greatest French detective in the world.

POIROT:

Oh...always people say that about me, Monsieur, but it is not entirely true. I am not French, I am Belgian.

PARRISH:

Hrmph. Well, I wish you 'd all get out of here and leave me alone. I'm expecting my daughter and I don't want her running in to a roomful of policemen.

POIROT:

But, messieur. You are in great danger. You must be protected every moment.

PARRISH:

You offering me police protection? Hrmph. Not worth a hoot.

STEVENS:

I beg your...

PARRISH:

That's what I said! Not worth a hoot. I have protection. Some detective they assigned to me. Where is he?

POIROT:

He is dead.

PARRISH:
What?

STEVENS:
He was murdered in this very room while protecting you.

POIROT:
Therefore, if you do not object too violently, I shall undertake to protect you until you step aboard your airplane.

PARRISH:
All right, all right, stay. I don't know how long it will be, I'm just waiting for one little parcel to be delivered. Then I'm off.

POIROT:
Monsieur is taking with him much equipment?

PARRISH:
Yes, quite a load. I've already sent most of it off to the airport.

POIROT:
Ah, bon. That is good.

PARRISH:
Miss! Don't eat that chocolate! It may be poisoned.

MISS FLETCHER:
Oh, nonsense. This candy isn't poisoned.

PARRISH:
I wouldn't be too sure. That box of candy supposedly came from my daughter Laura. It was delivered a little while ago.

POIROT:
But you suspect she did not send it?

PARRISH:
Well, she's supposed to come here in person. Should be here now, in fact. So, why should she send it?

POIROT:
You are very shrewd, mon ami.

Scene 8:INT same scene 7

FX:
Door opens

JOHNNY:
Hi...Oh, excuse me.

STEVENS:

Waitaminute, Johnny, come back here. Waddya want?

JOHNNY:

Nuthin. I...I just wanted to see if Mr. Parrish got his extra laundry box okay.

PARRISH:

Yes, yes, I received it.

JOHNNY:

Okay. Excuse me.

PARRISH:

I, uh, picked up a few more things to take along, special dyes and inks, they'll just about fill up that laundry box. Excuse me, I've got to go into the bedroom and finish packing. (Door opens and closes)

STEVENS:

Crusty old bird, isn't he?

MISS FLETCHER:

How would you be if you knew someone was out to kill ya? No wonder he's jittery.

POIROT:

Ah, he's irritable and nervous. That perhaps explains it.

STEVENS:

Explains what?

POIROT:

Why he wears upon his feet that unique pair of socks. One of which is green and the other brown.

STEVENS:

All right, if the man wants to be eccentric let him be. I've still got a murderer to catch. You want to come along?

POIROT:

No, Inspector. I have attached myself to messieur Parrish, and I propose to see that... (knock on door)

STEVENS:

Come in.

BRADY:

(door opens) Inspector. (Parrish with an Irish accent!) One of the men found this on the sidewalk outside the hotel. Thought you might want to take a look at it before turning it in to the lost and found.

STEVENS:

Okay, Brady, thanks (door closes). A lady's purse. Usual assortment of stuff. Cosmetics. Perfume. Change. Keys. Do you make anything of it, Poirot?

POIROT:

Hm...hm....ah, sacre bleu!

MISS FLETCHER:

What is it?

POIROT:

These initials. LP. Monsieur Parrish. (door opens)

PARRISH:

Yeah?

POIROT:

What did you say was the name of your charming daughter?

PARRISH:

Laura.

MISS FLETCHER:

Good lord! LP. Laura Parrish!

STEVENS:

Poirot, where are you going?

POIROT:

I have a little idea. Uh, mamselle Fletcher, please to accompany me.

STEVENS:

How about Mr. Parrish? You were so attached to him.

POIROT:

I have become momentarily de-tached. I leave him in your care, Inspector. Protect him with the apple of your eye!

MUSIC

Scene 9: INT Basement- Dead Room FX

POIROT:

(footsteps) Come, come. It will not be the first time you have left the elevator unattended, Monsieur Johnny. Come along.

JOHNNY:

Mr. Porroh, you're wasting your time in this basement, believe me.

POIROT:

Nevertheless it interests me. Please to light the way.

JOHNNY:

There's nothing here. Just a lot of ash cans.

POIROT:

One moment. What is behind this door?

JOHNNY:

Well..that's the laundry bin. They keep the soiled linen in there. You won't find anything in there.

POIROT:

We shall take one brief glance, eh? (Door squeaks open)

JOHNNY:

There, you see? Nothing but a pile of dirty sheets and pillow cases.

MISS FLETCHER:

Good gracious! What a laundry bill they must have.

POIROT:

Eh, bien. Let us proceed to..(snaps fingers) One moment!

MISS FLETCHER:

What is it?

POIROT:

Sacre bleu! Protruding from under these sheets..

JOHNNY:

Holy cow!

POIROT:

A foot! A small foot. This is what I feared.

MISS FLETCHER:

Look!

POIROT:

Ah, it moves! Then we are not too late! Quickly, messieur, help me to uncover her!

MUSIC

Scene 10: INT. Basement

LAURA:

That's all I know, Mr. Poirot. I was walking along the street toward the hotel. Just as I passed the alley I was pulled in. I tried to scream but something was pressed against my mouth...

POIROT:

Chloroform, Miss Parrish. Had you seen your assailant, you would have seen Hilary Kent. Alors, Miss Parrish, you are most fortunate. Another few minutes under those linens and who knows...Voila, here is the room of your father. (Knocks on door. Door opens) Inspector Stevens, here is Miss Parrish.

STEVENS:

Oh, well, that's a relief. Come in. I was afraid, Poirot, you'd turn up with a body. How'd you manage to find her?

POIROT:

That is not important now. We have found her. But we seem to have lost the father.

STEVENS:

Oh, yes. Miss Parrish, I'm sorry. Your father's terribly upset about you but his material was delivered and he had to rush off to the airport.

LAURA:

Oh, no! Don't tell me I missed him after all this!

POIROT:

Ah, ma pauvre petite, we have neglected you...eh? Miss Fletcher. Your room is now free of corpses. Please take mamselle Parrish down and extend to her the first aid.

MISS FLETCHER:

Come along, Laura.

LAURA:

Thank you. (Door opens and closes)

POIROT:

Inspector. I hope you do not later have cause to regret that you permitted Parrish to go off to the airport unprotected.

STEVENS:

He'll be all right. Besides, I've got a job to do here, although, frankly, I'm in a complete fog. I can't make head or tail of the whole business!

POIROT:

No, Stevens. The head and the tail we have.

STEVENS:

What?

POIROT:

Yes! It is merely a fragment of the middle that we still lack.

STEVENS:

Well, who is it? Hey, Poirot, where are you going?

POIROT:

To see how Miss Parrish is, and to telephone the airport to see that Mr. Parrish receives the proper attention. Au revoir.

MUSIC

Scene 11:EXT street

Sound of cars. Honking horns, etc.

MISS FLETCHER:

Mr. Poirot, where are you taking me now? I'd like to have some...

JOHNNY:

Mr. Perroht. Mr. Perroht.

POIROT:

Allo? Someone calls?

MISS FLETCHER:

It's Johnny in that parked car.

JOHNNY:

Mr. Perroht, I got a message for you from Inspector Stevens, he rushed off a minute ago.

POIROT:
From Stevens? What is it? What is the message?

JOHNNY:
He says he just got word that Mr. Parrish has been seriously hurt in an automobile accident on North Salem road.

POIROT:
Mon dieux, this is too much!

JOHNNY:
You're to get there as fast as you can. Here's the address.

POIROT:
52 North Salem Road. Monsieur, your duties for the day are over?

JOHNNY:
Yeah.

POIROT:
And this is your vehicle?

JOHNNY:
Yeah. Why?

POIROT:
(opens car door) There is no time to seek a taxi so I will impose on your kindness. Miss Fletcher, quickly please.

JOHNNY:
(starts car engine) Okay. (car door closes) North Salem road, right?

POIROT:
No. To the airport.

JOHNNY:
What?

MISS FLETCHER:
But Mr. Parrish isn't at the airport. He's injured on North Salem Road!

POIROT:
No, mademoiselle. That is what I was intended to believe. Do you not think so, Johnny? He is not there, I assure you.

MISS FLETCHER:
How do you know?

POIROT:
Well, North Salem Road is not on the way to the airport. It is in the opposite direction. This is merely a trick to keep us from the flying field. We must hurry there before it is too late.

FX:
Car engine accelerates.

MUSIC

Scene 12: EXT : Street

Engine running. Running feet.

MISS FLETCHER:

Well, the airplane is still there but I don't see anything amiss.

POIROT:

Hola. Over there.

MISS FLETCHER:

Parrish! As large as life.

JOHNNY:

Yep. That's him all right.

POIROT:

Come along please. Uh uh. Both of you. (calling) Monsieur Parrish!

PARRISH:

Messieur. Poirot. My daughter...is she...

POIROT:

She is at the hotel, messieur, resting. She has had a small misadventure but she is entirely safe.

PARRISH:

Thank heavens.

POIROT:

You are relieved, eh?

PARRISH:

Am I. I...I don't think I'd have gotten on that plane if you hadn't found her. Fortunately I didn't have to, they've been delayed a little.

STEVENS:

(calling) Poirot!

POIROT:

Inspector Stevens. I knew you would not walk into the trap.

STEVENS:

Yeah, but as usual you beat me to it. I was halfway out to North Salem Road before I realized what was cooking.

POIROT:

Eh, bien. Here is Mr. Parrish safe and sound, eh. I suggest the bomber be expected with great care. There may be sabotage.

STEVENS:

Good idea.

POIROT:

Also, have all the doors of this building guarded.

JOHNNY:

Eh, Mr. Porroht, do I have to hang around here?

POIROT:

But of course, Johnny. We may require you for our return trip. Oh, Monsieur Parrish, here is your pilot to report.

PILOT:

We're ready now, Mr. Parrish.

PARRISH:

Thank you. Oh, captain, here comes my luggage. Will you see that it gets aboard?

PILOT:

Right, sir.

PARRISH:

And be especially careful of that wooden crate. Well, goodbye, Inspector. I must admit you've been extremely helpful, and I'm much obliged.

STEVENS:

Not at all. Goodbye, and happy landings.

PARRISH:

Miss Fletcher.

MISS FLETCHER:

Goodbye, sir.

PARRISH:

Messieur Poirot, it's been a privilege to know you. I'm only sorry I couldn't remain to see you break the case.

POIROT:

But you have, Monsieur.

PARRISH:

I beg your pardon?

POIROT:

The case, it is broken. Inspector, meet Hilary Kent, the gentleman to whom you have just wished bon voyage.

STEVENS:

Hilary Kent?

PARRISH:

You're mad, Poirot!

MISS FLETCHER:

Good gracious, I thought he was Parrish!

POIROT:

And that wooden crate, which I have waited so long to see, it is not to be moved, Inspector.

STEVENS:

Why not?

POIROT:

Because, mon ami, it contains the body of Jonathan Parrish!

MUSIC

Scene 13: i

Sound of tea things and conversation

POIROT:

A charming restaurant this, n'est pas? The planes circling about give one the feeling of flying, eh?

MISS FLETCHER:

The feeling I've got ..if that's what flying gives ya, keep me from it.

POIROT:

Ah, that is natural. I too do not like murder, Miss Fletcher. Ah, Inspector Stevens, everything is taken care of?

STEVENS:

Yes. They're taking Kent away now.

POIROT:

Then perhaps you will join us in a little supper.

STEVENS:

No thanks, Poirot, I've got to get back. I uh...just dropped over to ask a few questions.

POIROT:

For example?

STEVENS:

Well, when did you first suspect that Kent was impersonating Parrish?

POIROT:

Almost from the start. When we entered the room of Monsieur Parrish, what do we find? Eh? An amazing paradox. On the one hand, we have a man who is an ardent stamp collector, whose album is in perfect order. Each stamp, each shade of stamp, precisely in its proper place, eh? Except the most valuable one of all. A Guatemala blue, reposing among American three cent stamps. Later, when I look at his socks, one green and one brown, I am certain. The man in the room is color blind.

STEVENS:

And therefore not Parrish, the stamp collector.

POIROT:

More important than that, he can not be Parrish, the currency expert, who is to select the colors and shades of the new paper money. Eh? Therefore, if the man in the room is not Parrish, who is he?

STEVENS:
Obviously, Hilary Kent.

MISS FLETCHER:
Then why didn't you arrest him right away?

POIROT:
Because without a body one cannot prove a murder. And I felt sure Monsieur Kent would lead me to the body.

MISS FLETCHER:
Then you weren't guarding him, you were watching him.

POIROT:
Precisely.

MISS FLETCHER:
Well, you weren't so smart. When you let him out of your sight he might have gotten away in the plane.

POIROT:
Not at all. When I called the airport, it was to make sure that the plane would not leave until I gave the word.

MISS FLETCHER:
You know everything, don't you?

POIROT:
Some things are obvious, mamselle. We can suppose Hilary Kent discovers the nature of the mission Monsieur Parrish is engaged in. Ah, what a magnificent opportunity for a swindler, eh? Perhaps the greatest in history. To remove Jonathan Parrish, fly to Europe as Parrish, deliver the papers, the formulas, the dyes, to the proper authorities and then, at the moment juste, counterfeit the new currency and reap a huge fortune.

MISS FLETCHER:
Jumping codfish. The man must be mad.

POIROT:
Perhaps, mamselle. But he is also a genius, eh? He learns that Parrish is at the hotel Windsor in room 615. He knocks on the door. Parrish admits him and is at once strangled to death. Eh? But the body. Ah. That must be disposed of. Where no one will find it. There is but one thing to do. Take the body to Europe in the very packing case which stands in the room.

STEVENS:
Then you just guessed where the body was.

POIROT:
No, no, Inspector. There was proof in the room. You remember the second laundry box which Hilary Kent asked for? 'This is for some special ink', he says to us. 'Which I have only now purchased.' Obviously this is a lie. On such a mission one does not purchase supplies at the last

minute. Eh? Hence I know these inks and dyes have been removed from some other box or crate, to make room for the body.

MISS FLETCHER:

Gracious! It's as plain as the nose on my face. Uh, what about Laura Parrish?

STEVENS:

Oh, I got that figured out. She calls up and says to Kent, 'Pop, I'm coming over.' Course he can't allow that or the jig's up. So he gets down to the alley and eliminates her. Right, Poirot?

POIROT:

Exactly. As for poor Tremble, he has been with Parrish, he knows him. When he knocks on the door and Kent appears, he demands to see Parrish. Kent kills him, and since the packing case is already occupied, drags him down to Miss Fletcher's room.

MISS FLETCHER:

That was his big mistake. He should never have started up with me.

STEVENS:

Heh heh heh. Ahem. 'Scuse me for a minute, I think that's the ward wagon pulling in.

POIROT:

Mamselle, may I ask you a question of a personal nature?

MISS FLETCHER:

Fire away.

POIROT:

Uh, mamselle, you are not now engaged in a business enterprise?

MISS FLETCHER:

No.

POIROT:

Are you fluent with the shorthand, and the typewriter?

MISS FLETCHER:

Why, yes.

POIROT:

Bon. Mamselle, I find you both intelligent and amusing. A rare combination in a woman. Moreover, I am in great need of a secretary with your superb qualifications.

MISS FLETCHER:

Why, Mr. Poirot!

POIROT:

Oh, you do not yet employ the little gray cells to the best advantage. Nevertheless, if you are interested...

MISS FLETCHER:

Oh, Mr. Poirot! For ten years I've been devouring detective stories. And you ask me if I'm interested. Chief, you've got a secretary!

STEVENS:

Well, Poirot, they've taken Kent away now. I guess that winds up the case.

POIROT:

Not quite, Inspector. Tell me, where does messieur Kent reside?

STEVENS:

We found a lease on him for an apartment in Gramercy Park.

POIROT:

That is a good neighborhood?

STEVENS:

Oh, swell. It's right in the heart of the city. But why do you ask?

POIROT:

I do not think messieur Kent will need an apartment for some time. But I do. You see, my friends, it is as I have said. To find an apartment in New York City is the essence of simplicity. One has only to solve...two murders.

MUSIC

ANNOUNCER:

Be sure to listen next week when Agatha Christie, American's favorite mystery writer, brings you her favorite detective, Hercule Poirot, starring Harold Huber in the case of Murder By The Sea.