

Text 23

His eyes rested for a moment on Hercule Poirot, but they passed on indifferently. Poirot, reading the English mind correctly, knew that he had said to himself: "Only some damned foreigner".

True to their nationality, the two English people were not chatty. They exchanged a few brief remarks and presently the girl rose and went back to her compartment.

At lunch time the other two again shared a table and again they both completely ignored the third passenger. Their conversation was more animated than at breakfast. Colonel Arbuthnot talked of the Punjab and occasionally asked the girl a few questions about Baghdad where, it became clear, she had been in post as governess. In the course of conversation they discovered some mutual friends, which had the immediate effect of making them more friendly and less stiff. They discussed old Tommy Somebody and old Reggie Someone else. The Colonel inquired whether she was going straight through to England or whether she was stopping in Stamboul.

"No, I'l going straight on."

"Isn't that rather a pity?"

"I came out this way there years ago and spent three days in Stamboul then."

"Oh! I see. Well, I may say I'm very glad you are going right through, because I am;"

He made a clumsy kind of little bow, flushing a little as he did so. He is susceptible, our Colonel, thought Hercule Poirot to himself with some amusement. "The train, it is as dangerous as a sea voyage!"

Agatha Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express*, Harper Collins