

POIROT. And the name Linda Arden is itself a stage name, surely. The word Arden was the maiden name of Shakespeare's mother and also the name of the forest in his play entitled –

COUNTESS. *As You Like It.*

POIROT. You know your Shakespeare well for a Hungarian.

COUNTESS. I have studied Shakespeare since I was a child.

POIROT. Yes, I know. I believe your mother Linda Arden taught it to you.

(The COUNTESS is shaken but tries to hide it.)

And that would make you the *aunt* of little Daisy Armstrong, the aunt who went to graduate school and got a degree in medicine, then moved to Europe and got married.

COUNTESS. *(A catch in her throat.)* I do not know this woman...

(Sob.)

But I would imagine that she still suffers from the loss of her niece and her sister.

(She starts to weep quietly.)

POIROT. My dear, there is no use denying it. When the train gets underway again and we reach the next city, a simple telegram will get me a photograph of Daisy's aunt and it will all be over.

COUNTESS. *(Suddenly without the Hungarian accent – purely American.)* But I didn't kill him! I should have but I didn't. I didn't even know who he was until you discovered it. But when you did, I realized that if you knew that I was Daisy's aunt, you would *think* that I killed him because he was...a *blackmailer*. And a *swine!* And the murderer of a *darling, sweet, innocent child who deserved to live!!*

POIROT. *Madame,* really –

COUNTESS. *It's the truth, I swear to God!* But I'll tell you this: If I had known who he was – that he was *Bruno*