

Cast

Inspector Peero

Roger Bustyfield - An old, rich, Multi Millionaire

Penelope Bustyfield - A young Starlet (Wife of Roger)

Jack - The Porter, A helping hand for Penelope.

Pierre Shiraz - A French Director

Richard "Dicky" Bird - A famous, Playboy Golfer

Crawford Jones- Richard's Caddy

Albert: Engine driver

Martha - Tea Lady

Felicity - Serving Girl

Sister Mary - A Nun with a dirty habit

Sister Ann - Earl of Stowmarket's daughter in disguise.

M = 7

F = 5

The barn is lit dimly and there is a small Blue light in a lantern and a huge clock hung from one of the upright beams. The sound of a train's whistle is heard in the distance followed by the sound of the wheels chugging along, getting closer and closer until it is right upon us as if arriving at a station. A Huge "Hiss" is heard as the train lets off steam. Cue a huge puff of smoke from either side of the barn (as if either side of the station) A smartly dressed man in a suit steps out and into a spot light (as if exiting a train coach). He has a rain coat draped over his arm, a suit case in one hand and a trilby hat on. He stands there in the centre of the barn as we hear the train leave the station. He looks up at the clock and pulls out a pocket watch and checks he has the correct time. He stands, pulls out a cigarillo case and puts a cigarette into his mouth. He feels for matches but can't find any. He walks over to one of the tables and asks an audience member for a light (A box of matches will be on the correct table). After lighting his cigarette he steps back onto the supposed platform of the station and looks around.

Inspector Peero: Good evening everyone. Please do not be alarmed, I am not as sinister or suspect as I first may seem. Please allow me to introduce myself I am Inspector.....

SFX - A train rushing by

LFX - Flash of lights along the side of the barn as if the train is passing by.

Inspector Peero: I shall start that again; I am Inspector Peero (*Pronounced 'Peer'O'*). You may have heard of me from several great cases I have solved which have been turned into books by local writers - such as "The hand in the glove", "She did it", "whoops, I slipped on the knife dear" and my most challenging case "The Sudoku murder". Now, you may be wondering why I am here at this lonely village station on such a cold September night as this - well allow me to tell you of a case of seduction, betrayal and murder most foul; Yes I am talking about "Murder on the Semer Express"! It was but five year ago where I stood on this exact same spot to board the Semer Express for its maiden voyage through the heart of the country - what a strange trip that turned out to be! I had just finished solving the case of "The Stopped clock of Tickington" when my superior ordered that I take a short vacation to recover from such a hands on case. As I stood there on the platform on that cold March morning.....

The lights fade down and the sound of a large outside clock ticking and striking nine can be heard. The lights fade back up as the clock strikes nine and there standing on the platform is Inspector Peero standing in the exact same spot - nothing has changed from earlier. He pulls

out his pocket watch looks at it and the main clock, he lifts the pocket watch to his ear, shakes it, gives it a little tap with his palm and lifts it to his ear again and smiles as if it is now working again.

Inspector Peero: Can't beat a good watch - but you can a bad one.

A commotion is heard from off stage, and in comes a glamorous woman (Penelope Bustyfield) dressed in a fur coat, followed by her own Porter (Jack) pushing a huge trolley of luggage. Penelope is a typical spoilt female, who has what she wants because of her (A lot) older Husband (Roger), who has yet to arrive on stage.

Penelope: Come, come Jack!

Jack Nods

Penelope: Now just leave my luggage over there and stand guard won't you. My Husband will be a long shortly and then you can assist him with his luggage and put it all in our compartment on the train. *(She stands and powders her nose in a compact and talking very loudly as if there are hoards of people around)* Oh I am thoroughly looking forward to this adventure - How romantic of my Roger to whisk me away for a week on The Smer Expresses' maiden voyage. Touring the rugged, mountainous areas of Suffolk, Cambridge, Lincolnshire and Grantham. What a lucky girl I am. How many girls can say that their husbands treat them as good as my Roger. I hear women as far as Sussex are jealous of our marriage.

Inspector Peero: May I ask Miss, but who is it you are talking to?

Penelope: Well, my admirers of course.

Inspector Peero: And where may they be Miss?

Penelope: Well they're..... they were.... Jack, did you stop the photographers and admirers from following me? I shall have you fired for that!

Jack looks around in shock.

Inspector Peero: My dear lady, I believe that may be too harsh a course of action to take. Surely your man Jack here is looking out for your best interests and I guess they hadn't bought a ticket to be able to come through to the platform.

Jack looks pleased with Inspector Peero's words.

Penelope: Yes... yes you may be correct Mr?

Inspector Peero: Peero. Inspector Peero. You may have read about my latest case in the papers "The stopped clock of Tickington"?

Penelope: Oh that ghastly murder that happened over a mantel clock, yes I did read something in the paper - that was you was it? Have you escaped from police custody? Are you a daring criminal set to whisk me into a carriage and have your wicked way with me; just to keep me quiet so I don't tell anyone of your escape? We can be like that Bonnie and Clyde in America. Hiding out on lonely farms and making love in hay fields.

Inspector Clue: Bit cold and damp this time of year. But sadly I am not the desperate criminal - he is safely behind bars. I am the man who worked out El Vito Valora, the Spanish cook, committed the crime.

Penelope: Oh Bravo Inspector. I bet you're the type of man who can really keep a girl safe. Do you like hard interrogation?

Inspector Clue: I shall ask the questions thank you.

Penelope: And masterful too. I am overcome.

Roger enters - he is an elderly gentleman with a cane. He walks slowly and is doddering on his feet.

Roger: Ah, here I am my sweetness and light. Your ever loving Roger for eternity.

Penelope: Oh Roger darling, I wish you to meet this lovely man - Inspector Peero. He solved the case of "The stopped clock of Tickington" do you remember, we read it in the paper.

Roger: He did what with the paper?

Penelope: No darling, *(Speaking louder)* He solved a case and we read about it in the paper.

Roger: I shall go and get one for you if you like? Which one would you prefer?

Penelope: Prefer? what are you talking about?

Roger: Paper dear. I enjoy The Times myself, or even the Telegraph on a Sunday. Which shall I get you? the Mail or the Anglian?

Penelope: I don't want a paper darling - oh isn't he a wag Inspector, always pulling my leg.

Roger: More of a breast man myself - hey! *Nudges the Inspector.*

Inspector Peero: So I can see! Would you like me to help you to your seat Mr?

Roger: Bustyfield, Mr Roger Bustyfield. That's my wife you know - Penelope Bustyfield. We've been married nine months now - *(beat)* still no baby though.

Inspector Peero: Well, it's very nice to meet you Mr Bustyfield.

Penelope: My Husband owns the Bustyfield Hotel in Bury St Edmunds and has opened one in Cambridge and Norfolk. He owns two estates and also is a majority share holder in Mcfleece and Son's Bank.

Inspector Peero: He has done very well for himself then. Ah I believe I can hear a train coming, yes its coming round the bend.

The sound of the train approaching gets louder and louder.

Roger: Jack, Jack. Fetch me my luggage will you my good man. We are in carriage Two, compartment Fifteen.

Jack runs off and returns with two suitcases as the sound of the train draws it into the station. They all walk towards the raised area of the barn and mount the steps as if heading into the carriage.

Penelope: *(Calling out)* Jack - don't forget my luggage will you!

Jack rushes back out into the centre of the barn and grabs the trolley of luggage and pushes it up and into the carriage.

Black out.

Scene Two

The scene starts with the sound of a train pulling out of the station. As the lights fade up, there are a few seats located in the centre of the barn, as well as a cupboard with drinks on - this is to be set out much like an extra large dining cart. Sat at one of the seats is a distinct looking French man - Pierre Shiraz, a famous French director who is sketching out his latest movie. Opposite him is sat Richard 'Dicky' Bird - the famous golfer, who is reading a paper and his caddy - Crawford Jones.

Richard: My goodness, how could they print a story like that!

Crawford: What have they done now sir - spelt your name wrong?

Richard: No, no not at all - it's this blasted tabloid newspaper - they've tangled me up in this ridiculous affair between Marie-Ann, the Earl of Stowmarket's daughter and myself. I mean honestly - they have taken it all out of context. I was merely helping her to put her shoe back on, but by the looks of this photograph it would appear I am kissing her leg. Do you know what they have titled the article - Going for a birdie! How degrading.

Crawford: Could be worse "Dicky"

Richard: Don't "Dicky" me Ducky! This could end my career as a professional golfer. My social standing will plummet!

Crawford: I thought it already had? Especially after that ordeal at the last open, what was it a Fifteen on a par Three? The papers said they'd only ever seen a larger amount of sand on Felixstowe beach when you were on that bunker trying to get out. Whack, whack, whack!

Pierre: *(Loud and declaring)* Viva la France!

Richard: I beg your pardon?

Pierre: Pardon monsieur?

Richard: *(In a typical loud and over accentuated manner)* I said " I beg your pardon", as in what did you say?

Pierre: Bon. You must excuse me very muchly monsieur. I am speaking English very short time now. But I declared, with much excitement, "Viva La France" as I have just finished my new screenplay. Tres bien!

Crawford: Hang on - he can talk English, he's taking the pi....

Richard: Piste. Yes, I believe he may well be - after all he is French.

Pierre: No Piste - we are too far away from the Alps for skiing, besides I am not one for much of that. Broke my leg tobogganing many years ago when my brother pushed me out of it.

Richard: Sorry to hear that ol' chap. So your English is far better than you first declared. How come you came to learn the language?

Crawford: And what's your film about? I've always fancied myself as a bit of an actor - my mother said I have looks to rival Clark Gable!

Richard: I think your mother said the horse in the stable - not Clark Gable! *(He laughs uncontrollably and nudges Pierre who looks perplexed)*

Pierre: Je nais c'est pas?

Richard: Doesn't matter. Back to the original questions.

Pierre: Qui. So I was educated in Gai Paris. It was during the Great war, that I learned my English. My mother became a nurse to many of your injured soldiers. Once they were healed they would come visit our house, bring small gifts and spend many moons with my mother showing her their appreciation for saving their life. Sometimes the soldiers would sit with me and teach me English sayings and poems, whilst waiting to thank my mother. Oh she was a popular woman and very good at her job - saved hundreds of lives.

Richard: Sounds like my kind of nurse!

Pierre: I believe you would have liked her very much - especially judging by the article in the paper I read about - you naughty man! But that is beside the point old bean - I do like that saying, ha ha. I then gained interest in the film industry after seeing Charlie Chaplin movie - very clever man, especially in those trousers! I commissioned my first movie from the small fortune my mother had gained from nursing during the war and found myself flung into the cinematic world of France two years ago. *(Sticks two fingers up at Richard and Crawford)*. And now I have just finished my screenplay "Death on a train". Oh it is exciting. I have been riding trains for a while now to gain the enthusiasm for the script.

Richard: So what happens in "Death on a train"?

Crawford: Quite obviously a death... on a train. No wonder you keep getting caught in uncompromising situations.

Richard: I gathered that was the main plot line, but I was asking for a more juicier slice of the steak!

Crawford: That's always your response isn't it!

As Pierre is talking, Richard and Crawford are slowly leaning in further and further as they are drawn into his story.

Pierre: Gentlemen, if you please, I tell you what happens in my story. So, a beautiful lady gets aboard this luxury train for a few days travel with her rich, tiresome husband. Their relationship appears to be normal, yet underneath it is revealed that there are many cracks within their foundations. He discovers that his wife is having an affair with another man - ooo mon amie! You see, a letter in her suitcase just happens to fall out when she unpacks her belongings. He takes it and reads it privately whilst in the water closet.

Richard looks slightly concerned

Crawford: He's not actually in the water closet Dicky, just in the water closet area.

Richard: *(Sarcastically)* I know, I know. Please continue.

Pierre: He acts as if he knows nothing is going on and takes his wife to dinner in the dining cart. It is here that he makes an excuse to return to their compartment as he has forgotten his cigarettes. What he is really doing is watching his wife like a spy. He sees a man approaching his wife's table, she looks uncomfortable for a brief moment until she realises that her husband is not around. Now, what the audience has seen in my film is the presence of this man in every crowd scene - watching the lady in question. He whisks her off to the cart with the bar in it and takes a new booth, for a moment or two they have a little smoochy smooch; a passionate kiss between lovers. She breaks away and returns to the dining cart and sits awaiting her husband's return.

Richard: And then he kills her?

Pierre: *(Firmly and with exclamation)* Non! *(Normal tone of voice)* They eat and return to the compartment. The husband pours them a drink, slips a few sleeping pills into her glass and swirls it around until it is dissolved. They drink and then he confronts her about the affair. She denies it and he sits there watching her drift off to

sleep. He places his hands to her neck, checks her pulse and tightens his grip. He leaves the carriage and gets off at the next station. The lover finds her body sprawled out in the compartment and is arrested. C'est finis!

Richard: Wow! That sounds amazing. I can't wait to watch that!

Crawford: Why would you need to watch it - he's just told you what happens.

Pierre: Oh mon petit pois. You make my heart weep. To really appreciate the plot, you must watch the film. It includes so much more. The minor details make up the major elements of the film.

Richard: See!

There is commotion as Penelope and Roger bustle through the train, Jack is following behind lugging the suitcase trolley.

Penelope: I honestly don't see why we can't find the right carriage darling. I am worn out with all of this traipsing up and down the train. I thought you had your new monocle in?

Roger: I did dear, but it keeps popping out.

Penelope: Excuse me, coming through.

Pierre: Pardon et moi mademoiselle. May I be of assistance?

Penelope: *(Slight breath taken away)* You're French!

Pierre: Qui, I am Pierre Shiraz - the great French film director.

Penelope: Am I what you've been looking for?

Pierre: All my life.

Penelope begins to breath heavier and appear to melt/swoon at Pierre.

Penelope: So it is true what they say about French men.

Pierre: Bon! Now madam you appear lost, may I assist? *(He grabs the carriage ticket from her and peruses it).* Ah, you are down here, three more carriages and third along - right next to mine. I do hope we bump into one another again and again and again.

Richard and Crawford are aghast, jaws on the floor as Penelope is literally swooning and melting in front of them at Pierre's words.

Penelope: Mais qui!

Roger: *(Appears oblivious to the whole ordeal bustles amongst them all)* Ah, a pleasure to meet you, my wife and I are looking for our quarters, you wouldn't know you're way around this train would you? Rather easy to get lost on here.

Penelope: I know where to go darling - Mr Shiraz has informed me we are on top of one another, I mean we will be living on top of one another, you see his compartment is next to ours. What a nice man Mr Shiraz is!

Roger: I prefer a Merlot dear - Jack be a good fellow and sort it won't you, and bring one for our friends here.

Penelope: No, darling, this is Mr Shiraz.

Roger: Oh Have we met before?

Pierre: About two minutes ago.

Roger: Could have sworn I have seen you before.

Penelope: Who could ever forget that face!

Roger: Hmm?

Penelope: Obviously my husband can.

Roger: Here, you're that golfer chappy aren't you? I saw you trying to get out of that bunker! You did a better job of it than I could. Anyway onwards and upwards you fellows. we must make away to our compartment- these cases are getting rather heavy for me. Come on Jack, do keep up.

As Roger and Penelope exit carrying nothing more than a cane and their coats with them. Jack struggles past them with the trolley of suitcases.

Crawford: That poor bloke.

Richard: What do you mean 'that poor bloke'? Married to a beauty like that, pots of money?

Crawford: No, I mean the one lugging all of the suitcases around for them. How does he go around with that smile still on his face all day?

Richard: Must be the view that keeps him going! (*Suggestive hand signal for a large pair of breasts*)

Pierre: Do you know that mademoiselle?

Richard: I believe that is Penelope Bustyfield - and the old man is Roger Bustyfield a very wealthy man around these parts.

Pierre: Ah, I thought as much. If you will excuse me gentlemen, I must visit the water closet.

Richard: Not to read a letter I hope?

Pierre: (*Mock laughs*) Most amusing.

Richard and Crawford settle back into a discussion and Pierre gets up. He draws a bottle from his suit pocket and examines it and then places it back in his pocket. he looks at Richard and Crawford - they are busying themselves and not taking any notice of him. He turns and leaves in the direction Penelope, Roger and Jack left.

Black out.

The sound of a train can be heard rushing along through the country side. This can also be seen on the projector screens