

## Josephine/Sherlock

WATSON. Mrs. Butler, I am a great admirer of your work.

*(JOSEPHINE gives WATSON a polite smile. As she responds, she looks about the room. She wasn't sure what she expected, but this wasn't it.)*

JOSEPHINE. Thank you for seeing us on such short notice. I'm sure you're both very busy.

SHERLOCK. Well yes, now that you mention it. Dr. Watson and I are in the midst of some rather urgent business. I hope you will forgive me if I bring us to the point. What brings you to Baker Street today?

*(JOSEPHINE is taken aback. OLIVE tries to alleviate the awkwardness.)*

OLIVE. Oh, well ... we—that is, I've heard talk, Miss Holmes, that you help people? Sometimes? Women? When they can't turn to the usual places. The police and such.

SHERLOCK. You are here out of concern for someone. Someone known to the both of you?

OLIVE. Priya. Priya Singh. Something happened to her last night, and she's disappeared. We're very worried about her.

**START** SHERLOCK. Singh is an Indian name, is it not?

JOSEPHINE. It is.

SHERLOCK. And what is her connection to you?

JOSEPHINE. Miss Singh is a nurse who works with us at the LNA. She runs clinics and helps us create literature regarding women's health and disease prevention.

SHERLOCK. The LNA?

JOSEPHINE. The ... Ladies' National Association.

SHERLOCK. Of what?

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WATSON. Good Lord, Sherlock. There are sections of the newspaper beyond the police blotter. Apologies, Mrs. Butler. *I* am very familiar with your work. Sherlock, however, prefers to leave things ... uncluttered.

JOSEPHINE. We should have gone to the police after all. I fear we're wasting your time.

*(JOSEPHINE begins to leave.)*

SHERLOCK. I am sorry for your loss, Mrs. Butler.

JOSEPHINE. Miss Singh is not—

SHERLOCK. I was referring to your daughter.

JOSEPHINE. I beg your pardon?

SHERLOCK. That portrait you wear. I estimate the child's age to be around five years old. I wonder, did her death lead to your break from the church?

WATSON. Sherlock—

SHERLOCK. Those prayer beads. On most Christian rosaries, the beads are arranged in groups of ten, called "decades." Your beads follow your own customized pattern, which tells me that you remain a believer, but you will not allow an institution to dictate the terms of your devotion. One wonders, did you ever consider taking up the habit, so to speak?

JOSEPHINE. Briefly.

SHERLOCK. But no, you've found your calling elsewhere. These women. The "ladies" of your "association." They are your flock, are they not?

JOSEPHINE. You are quite observant, Miss Holmes.

SHERLOCK. Ladies' National Association of what?

JOSEPHINE. The Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts.

SHERLOCK. Rather cumbersome name, that.