

Lestrade/Watson/Sherlock

LESTRADE. The murderer, you mean. The victim's lying on the floor.

(SHERLOCK moves about the room as she makes her analysis.)

START SHERLOCK. There is nothing to indicate forced entry on either the door or the windows. And note the way he is dressed. Coat, waistcoat, tie in a proper knot. Our Mr. Burke was expecting his visitor. I wonder ... Watson?

WATSON. Flask in his left breast pocket. And you can smell it on him.

SHERLOCK. Dutch courage. Mr. Burke felt the need to strengthen his resolve before his meeting. This wasn't a typical romantic encounter.

LESTRADE. So what did she come here for?

SHERLOCK. The answer to that question will fill in a number of missing details. Whatever the course of the conversation, it resulted in Daniel Burke striking his victim with the back of his hand, then grabbing her by the hair and throwing her to the floor. Note the remains of a handprint just there. These scuff marks tell me she backed away as he stalked her, until she reached the desk. From there, Mr. Burke's victim grabbed the letter opener as he descended upon her. She delivered the fatal blow ... *(She stands before the desk.)* here. Note the drops of blood, just a few, on the floor. He would have stepped back in surprise, and certainly a good deal of pain, at which point ... Watson?

WATSON. At which point he made the fatal error of pulling the letter opener out of his chest. Had he left it where it was and sought immediate medical attention, he might still be alive. And I think our victim knew it, too.

SHERLOCK. Explain.

WATSON. The handkerchief. It's still neatly folded, and centered over the wound. And look how he's lying. Had he been left alone, the pain would've pulled him into a fetal position. He couldn't have managed this on his own. She kept him on his back to prevent blood loss, tried to keep pressure on the wound ... she has some experience. Our victim could be a nurse.

LESTRADE. You keep calling the killer the victim.

SHERLOCK. Inspector Lestrade, surely even you can recognize a case of self-defense when you see it.

LESTRADE. That's a bit of a leap, isn't it?

SHERLOCK. On the contrary, I find the conclusion to be elementary.

LESTRADE. "Elementary"? I don't believe that means what you think it does.

SHERLOCK. I beg your pardon? Have you not heard of Mendeleev's periodic table?

LESTRADE. Who's what table?

SHERLOCK. Watson?

WATSON. It is a list of the chemical elements in tabular arrangement, ordered by atomic weight and recurring chemical properties.

SHERLOCK. When the known elements are laid out according to this pattern, gaps appear in the table. Based on what we know of the information that caused these gaps, we can extrapolate, with a high degree of accuracy, the properties of the as-yet-undiscovered elements that will eventually fill them. It is an application of logic as elegant as it is practical. So you see, when I describe my conclusions as "elementary," I know precisely what I mean.

LESTRADE. All right then, if it's so cut and dried, where is this nurse of yours? Why did she run away? Why not call for help, or go to the police?

SHERLOCK. Because, my dear inspector, there are circumstances for which “help” and “the police” are mutually exclusive concepts.

LESTRADE. I assure you, no one is more aware of that than I am. What are the circumstances, in this case?

SHERLOCK. The description of a “foreign woman” may provide some indication, but beyond that, I have no way of knowing.

LESTRADE. All right then. My men will be back any minute. You know the drill.

SHERLOCK. The scene is yours, Inspector. I believe the victim will need to be located, for her own safety. I shall inform my Knitting Circle at once.

LESTRADE. Right. Your little army of irregulars. Just remember, this is an official case, Miss Holmes. Self-defense or not, you can’t have someone’s death on your hands without at least answering a few questions about it. Anything you find about this nurse, victim, “foreign woman,” will have to go through me.

SHERLOCK. I would expect nothing less. Good evening, Inspector. Watson?

WATSON. Ready.

SHERLOCK. Back to Baker Street. **STOP**

(They exit.)

PRIYA

(The scene shifts to a dark street corner. Gaslight casts ominous shadows on the street below.)

PRIYA SINGH paces. She has just been through a harrowing ordeal and is doing her best to keep it together. A sound in the dark startles PRIYA. She ducks into the shadows.