

Mrs. Hudson/Watson 2

PRIYA. Everything *you* have done for *me*? Who do you think you are?

DANIEL. Oh, that's rich, from someone like you.

PRIYA. You're drunk. I don't have to listen to this.

(PRIYA moves to leave. DANIEL blocks her way.)

DANIEL. How well do you know Josephine Butler? What exactly is your connection to her?

PRIYA. I volunteer for her. We operate clinics for women who—

DANIEL. Whores.

PRIYA. You haven't changed at all, have you. The same cruel child I remember.

DANIEL. I need you to tell me everything you know about Butler and the LNA. I need to know who is involved with her organization. I need to know about planned demonstrations. I need to know what MPs, candidates, and members of the press you've been in contact with.

PRIYA. How dare you speak to me like this, you pigeon-livered ratbag!

(DANIEL strikes PRIYA with the back of his hand.)

Shift. The memory of DANIEL hitting her jerks PRIYA out of her reverie. She takes a few deep breaths to calm herself. She remembers where she is.

PRIYA takes the basket of food and exits.)

A SIGNIFICANT COMPLICATION

(The scene shifts to the sitting room at Baker Street, the next morning. WATSON waits as MRS. HUDSON vents.)

START MRS. HUDSON. No! I will not have that filth in my home!

I think

WATSON. You surprise me, Mrs. Hudson. I would have thought you'd enjoy having a celebrity like Josephine Butler at Baker Street.

MRS. HUDSON. Pfft. "Celebrity." Marching up and down the streets shouting about diseases and whatnot.

WATSON. She organizes protests against the Contagious Diseases Acts. She wants Parliament to repeal the law.

MRS. HUDSON. Parliament would not have passed such a law without good reason.

WATSON. Well of course they had a good reason. It's written right into the acts themselves. The stated purpose is to protect *men* from diseases they're supposedly getting from prostitutes. But do the laws do anything to address the men's behavior? Do the men have to submit to examinations?

MRS. HUDSON. Why on earth would you expect men to—

WATSON. When I was at the Royal Free Hospital, I saw more women than I can count come through our doors, with the exact problems these laws are supposed to prevent. And do you know where most of these women contracted these diseases?

MRS. HUDSON. Of course I don't know where—

WATSON. From their husbands, Mrs. Hudson. The men are allowed to go out into the world and get up to all sorts of questionable behavior, but when they bring the consequences of that behavior home with them, it somehow becomes their wives' fault.

MRS. HUDSON. It is too early in the morning for—

WATSON. These laws care nothing for the health of the women. They simply allow men to dictate what women can or cannot do with their own bodies.

MRS. HUDSON. Miss Dorothy! There is a time and a place for such a conversation! **STOP**

WATSON. Is there? When and where? Can I make an appointment?

What

who—

e cruel

about

ith her

ations.

of the

igeon-

YA out

erself.

ie next

)

ome!