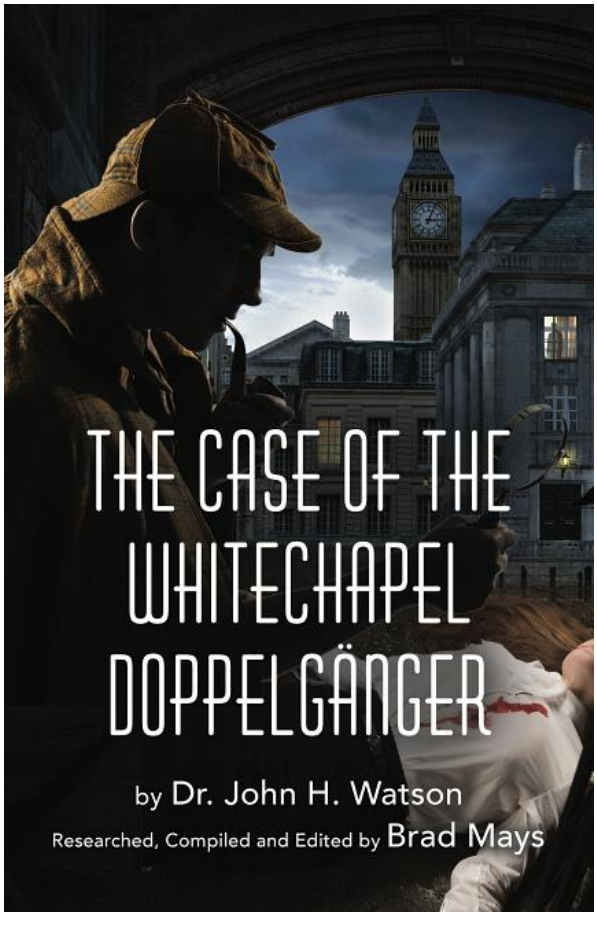


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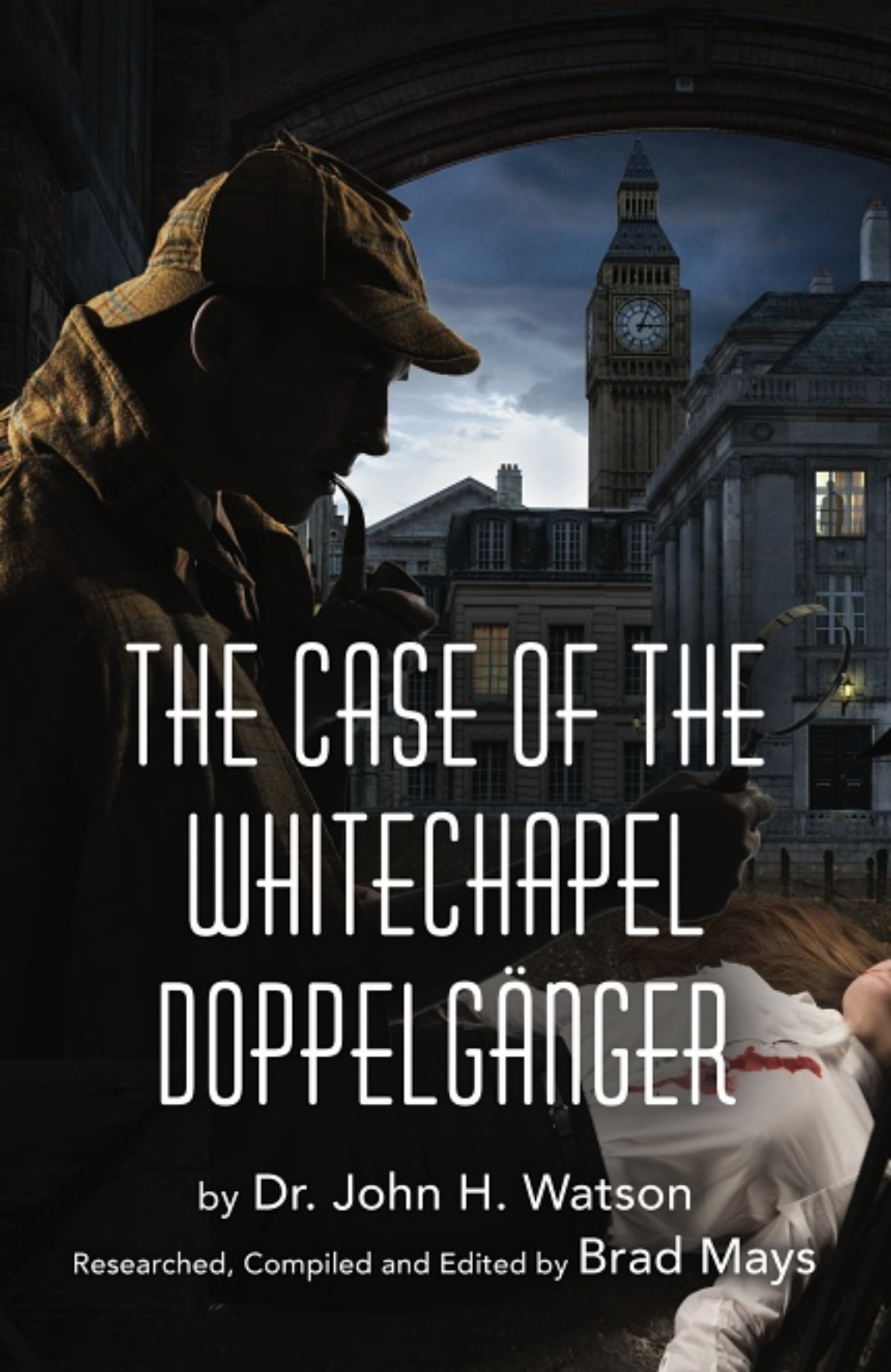
The Case of the Whitechapel Doppelgänger

By John H. Watson MD; Researched, Compiled and Edited by Brad Mays

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None of the medical observations or conclusions described in this book should be inferred by readers as having real world applications.

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First Edition

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

During the many years for which I have born the happy distinction of bearing witness to the deepest intimacies of my dear friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, I have most assiduously avoided drawing personal conclusions of any sort based on acts of soul searching. I prefer now - and have always preferred - to rely on the facts of a given case rather than on any private speculative leaps, particularly in the quiet solitude of my own study. I deplore opinion offered as certitude, or hopeful musings as empirical actuality. I am a man of science, first and foremost and it is only with the greatest difficulty that I have managed, somehow, to adhere to the innumerable mental disciplines necessary to uphold my own particular monastic ideal, which I freely admit is an odd way of defining scientific methodology.

It was in 1881 that I first began chronicling the so-called adventures of the world's first consulting detective, an endeavor to which I have applied all appropriate seriousness of mind for so daunting a task. Nevertheless, if I am to be perfectly candid, I must confess that I have often embraced a certain vicarious glee in being afforded, even required, sufficient license to bedazzle and even stupefy my readers, just as Mr. Holmes did to those who tried, always in vain, to deliver his comeuppance. By the time that London had first been made aware of a series of crimes so ghastly in nature that their full ramifications were not yet comprehended (let alone understood), much had changed between Mr. Holmes and I, and even more so as between myself and my readers. In short, disillusionments had begun to set in on multiple fronts. All of which brings me to the publication of "The Final Problem," which brought to a tidy, if ultimately unsatisfactory,

conclusion my career as a popular chronicler of my friend's obsessive efforts in crime solving.

"The Final Problem," to put it bluntly, remains the least forthright of all my accounts, which is to say that it is almost entirely fictional. The story exists solely as the means by which its author - that is, myself - could effectively avoid exposing to readers the truest (and fullest) implications of what that narrative's deplorable antagonist truly represented. I am speaking, of course, of the character Moriarty, sited in the story by Mr. Holmes himself as "a criminal genius," a description which completely fails to take into full account any full measure of the man's absolute and utter moral depravity.

When I first put pen to paper on this horrid tale, it was my full intention to describe the events with the same dispassion a forensic scientist might describe the convey stages of an ongoing autopsy but, in the end, I could not face the nearly insurmountable personal challenges of doing so. I remain, as a true and loyal subject of our sovereign Queen Victoria, bound (at least by implication) to certain ethical standards through which British society protects itself from even the most wretched manifestations of its reflected image.

What is one to do, then, with a figure so completely in defiance of any construct accorded one of God's own creations, when even the mere contemplation of such an individual - even the most carefully crafted and objective depiction - potentially poisons and corrupts an entire nation of readers? What then, are we left with? A few pages of promises left unfulfilled? The character sketch of an "abstract thinker" which is, in and of itself, abstracted into oblivion? A vaporish literary conceit?

If these questions represent serious cultural charges being lobbied against me rather than casual critical assessments, then my response must needs be: *mea culpa.* If, in attempting to conjure a satisfactory

conclusion to my accounts of Sherlock Holmes' extraordinary exploits, all I have really achieved is a few misbegotten pages of cynical avoidance (or, even worse: a betrayal of my readers, my closest friend and my sole *raison d'etre),* I now consider it high time for me to make long overdue amends.

The first step to be taken in setting this record straight must begin with a close look at the dates from which we embark on our story's journey. In "The Final Problem," I made reference to several accounts, presented in the public press in 1890, in which James Moriarty (ostensibly the infamous professor's sole brother, but in fact the very same man) sought to reclaim the reputation of his family name through an ingenious and systematic misrepresentation of certain established key facts.

One such story, which appeared in 1891, resulted in Sherlock's engagement by the French Government to investigate evidentiary reports of highly organized and sophisticated criminal activities within their borders; apparently, officials there were likewise dubious about the veracity of these published accounts. It was sometime during that very same year that Mr. Sherlock Holmes vanished forever from London (and indeed from the French provinces of Narbonne and Nimes), never to be seen again. I am fully aware that, with disclosure of this startling revelation, a scandal of gargantuan proportions has just been set loose upon the world. Be that as it may, these are the facts and they must be told.

One particular occasion, on which I met with my friend and brilliant sometime co-investigator Sherlock Holmes, I was under the impression that the two of us were to discuss and agree upon certain changes to the timeline of our ongoing published series, "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes." And, in point of fact, these concerns were discussed, very much in brief. Holmes, clearly in a distracted

state, seemed happy to allow me to work these matters out on my own, clearly not his usual way of handling the temporal aspects of his professional legacy. There was something very strange in all this - within moments, he saw the question in my eyes and, putting his fingertips together and his elbows upon his knees, he explained further.

"The man addressed me - quite ceremoniously, mind you - as 'the Great Defective, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.' He then proceeded to beguile me with a diabolically intricate and detailed labyrinth of criminality, which I couldn't even begin to follow, much less comprehend or decipher. But then, as he proceeded with this monstrous wonder of intellectual mazeology, I began to sift out his true purpose."

"And what was that?" I inquired.

"Quite simply, to prove to me that he exists, that such a human aberration is possible and ultimately, to present himself as a glove to be slapped across my own face, in defiance of all that you and I, my good Watson, hold dear. He thus presented me with an impossible challenge - that challenge being himself, both the Minotaur and the Maze in which he hunts."

"Hunts? For what?" I asked.

"That remains, dear fellow, finally to be deduced. He has made himself known to me, but not revealed his purpose. He has yet to show his hand, leaving me only to ponder some still unknown and unknowable rationale." It was at that moment that Holmes, in a gesture born out of his own torment, pounded the table with his fist and blurted out in a near-shrieking voice:

"He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson - the maestro of a global hornet's nest! He is a genius, a philosopher, a Euclidian alchemist. His agents may be caught, they may be apprehended and their crimes forestalled - but he, he is never so much as suspected!"

Walking home that evening, I felt confused and unsettled. Sherlock's manner of speech had always possessed a certain intensely theatrical flair yet had, as of late, taken on an exaggeration of tone and disjointedness of logic sufficient for me to question the state of his mental health. Was Holmes merely imagining these things? Was he drifting in and out of hallucinatory delusions, possibly brought on by his sporadic - and admitted - use of cocaine? Perhaps Sherlock's present manic state was simply the result of sleep deprivation and nothing more. When I re-entered my own home, my thoughts continued to confound me, with one notion leading to another and that one leading to a third and a fourth and so on. I remedied all this with a physical shake of my head and splash of cold water to my face, followed by a shallow sifter of Cognac and a restless evening of endlessly fitful dreaming.

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Somewhere during the middle eighteen hundreds, East London had begun to experience an influx of foreign nationals, mainly Ireland's destitute, but also the indigent masses farther flung, from Slavic nations located at various points across the continent. By 1883, Jewish refuges fleeing Russian oppression had also begun gathering on English soil, where a multitude of inroads led, invariably, to East London. As these increasingly desperate groups struggled to find shelter and work, an economic underclass quickly took hold. Violence, petty crime and alcoholism worked their various evils on the population, forcing many women into prostitution as their sole means of survival.

By the late 1800's, the Metropolitan Police Service of London estimated that 62 brothels were currently in full operation, with over 1,200 girls and women working as prostitutes. The number of people living in common lodging houses was now a staggering 8,500. The

district of Whitechapel, in particular, had quickly evolved into a hotbed of racism, nativism and anti-Semitism; local newspapers led the shrieking public outcry against what was now a bubbling pit of human suffering, disease and moral depravity. Public perception reflected that circumstances in East London could not possibly become any worse than they now were. Such perceptions were, as they so often are, mere wishful thinking. The great terror was about to begin.

Emma Smith was a woman not unknown to me, prior to her demise on a Whitechapel street. An intelligent and articulate soul with a past no doubt enviable to many East London women her age, she had fallen on difficult times. Emma first came to my attention after having been turned away from a private London hospital and referred to me by a physician colleague who shall remain nameless. I can recall, quite vividly, Miss Smith's overall air of dignity which, alas, was called into question only by the raggedness of her attire. Her face bore neither symmetry in her features, nor ruddiness in her complexion, yet her eyes radiated an unmistakable depth of spirit and a disarming sweetness that drew one into an inner realm of womanly empathy. In preparation for whatever treatment I might be administering, I inquired as to Emma's general health history: diet, childhood diseases, injuries and the like. During this questioning, I learned that she had once taught piano and music theory at the intermediate level at the Frankfurt Academy of Music, in Germany. Financial difficulties within her family had necessitated a move to England and thence to East London, where their circumstances worsened greatly. In order to lessen the burden for her parents and siblings, Emma relocated to a squalid residence at 18 George Street, where she had remained up to the day she first sought my help.

Tragically, there was little I could do for her once I discovered that syphilis sores had infested her genital area. The best that could be done

at this point, I advised her, was to keep the infected area clean and to avoid further sexual contact. Emma asked about the possibility of treating the sores with mercury, a common practice of the day. I advised that it should be avoided at all costs; as many in my profession now felt the "cure," such as it was, to be far more injurious to health than the disease itself. Perhaps out of some misbegotten impulse on my part to better understand the poor woman's plight and thus offer comfort, I asked what had caused her to break so far away from her former life on the continent. Her answer was both direct and curt:

"You could not understand now any more than my family understood then. I must live somehow."

On April 3, at approximately 1:30 a.m. Emma Elizabeth Smith was sexually assaulted and left for dead on Osborn Street in Whitechapel. Still alive when her morbidly injured body was discovered, she was taken to London Hospital for emergency treatment. At her urging, I was immediately sent for and very shortly thereafter arrived at her bedside.

Some readers may recall from my first account in the ongoing saga of Sherlock Holmes, "A Study In Scarlet," certain autobiographical details of my service in the British forces, first in India with the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers and later in India with the 66th Regiment of Foot during the Second Anglo-Afghan War. There, I had numerous occasions, as a battlefield surgeon, to witness the ghastly human consequences of modern warfare. Later, in my dealings with Sherlock, I bore witness to many a carnal aftermath of criminal savagery but, as I realized upon gazing down at this unfortunate female victim, I had never seen anything as senseless and shocking as what now lay before me and the reader should consider him or herself forewarned before continuing. Emma's condition was truly grave; she had been cut about her ear and her face was bludgeoned to a near pulp

by a blunt object. The rounded handle of a walking stick, broken in half, had been forced into her sexual orifice, causing the peritoneum to rupture. The poor woman was suffering immense pain, so I called for an injection of morphine to be immediately administered.

It was in this pitiful state that Miss Smith did her utmost to describe the assault on her person, by three men - one of them possibly a teenager – who had emerged stealthily from the shadows, apparently with no other objective other than the robbing, beating and humiliation they inflicted upon her. After recounting the horrible experience, Emma closed her eyes and drifted off to sleep. As the evening progressed, peritonitis began to set in from the trauma to her abdomen and Emma Elizabeth Smith expired the following day. I left it to her attending physician to sign the death certificate and, rather than take a carriage back to my residence, I opted to return on foot, in order to clear my mind.

At one point along the way, I became aware of a tall figure that seemed to be following me at some distance. Once or twice, I attempted to shake him off by making arbitrary changes in direction, but the stalking relentlessly continued. Finally, realizing I'd had enough - I stopped in mid stride, turned, faced the interloper and, speaking in a voice loud enough to carry, I addressed him.

"Look here, Sir, may I be of some assistance to you?" The man slowed his gait to a curious shuffle, but did not halt altogether. We glared at one another from across the roadway, both our views impeded by the eyeglasses he wore, with cracked, smoke-tinted lenses and bent frames. A wickedly gape-toothed smile broke across the man's face, accompanied by a breathy high-pitched giggle. My impatience grew almost to the boiling point when at last he spoke.

"That's'll be rainin' fer sure, comin' e're way soon," the man's vaguely Scottish barróg echoed against the surrounding brick

structures in the vicinity. "A might 'ard rayn it'll be fer 'dems widout umbrellies." I felt myself on the verge of announcing that I was armed just as the man darted off with a maniacal giggle, "Op, skip'n'eway!"

Momentarily, I stood my ground and watched as the deranged man shuffled his way westward. I decided to retrace my steps and head once again south, in the general direction of my home. Just then, a carriage appeared and I raised a pointed finger to hail it. Moments later, I was being driven home, banishing from my mind, as best I could, that disturbing encounter. The rest of that evening is an anxious blur. After a long and fitful night of dreaming, a tender voice made its way to my semi-conscious brain, as if from across a channel.

"How did you sleep, my love?" Slowly my eyes opened to the sight of my wife Mary looking down at me, with her never failing smile and eyes incapable of betraying an unpleasant thought.

"What's that heavenly aroma?" I groggily inquired.

"I'm making your favorite breakfast. Come, I'll put on some extra strong tea for you."

As promised, Mary served me my favorite morning meal, which I had, on occasion, been fortunate enough to indulge in during my service in the Army; very occasionally, I should add, but certainly enough to have made a deep impression. Along with the tea, I indulged in fried pork sausage, scrambled eggs, beans, black pudding and mushrooms.

"Good heavens," I exclaimed. "A full army fry-up!"

"You've been away much longer than usual," Mary said with the sort of gentle smile that acted as a cue for me to explain myself.

"You received my note?" I asked.

"Yes, of course; else I should have gone mad with worry," Mary replied, with a light touch of sarcasm. "I made do with a book of Shelley, *"Ode To A Skylark."* Twenty-one stanzas, five lines per stanza. Hardly a substitute for my husband but, in a pinch..."

"I am sorry, dearest, for the absence. I was summoned."

"Mr. Holmes, again?" Mary asked with a presumptive air of resignation.

"Not this time, I'm afraid," I responded with a shake of my head. I then embarked on a reiteration of the last few days and even went on to establish how I had first come to know Emma Elizabeth Smith. Upon my conclusion, Mary sat, stunned silent, as tears formed in her eyes.

"Many women, it seems to me, are doomed from the very start," Mary said in a quivering voice. "Neither a healthy childhood with loving parents, nor education, nor an unmitigated believe in the Almighty, are predictors of one's future when fate intervenes to take everything away. Dreadful, it's just dreadful."

"The world can be unmercifully cruel," I responded, nodding as I sipped tea, sensing that Mary was not yet finished. "Especially to the fairer sex."

"It is this unspeakable age of modernism that I blame," Mary continued. "This detestable mechanization of all things, from the most delicate, to the impossibly grandiose, everything appears so gear and spring driven, even our hearts, it would seem. It's all madness."

Then, with the grace and delicacy of a picture book bride, Mary dabbed at her eyes with a napkin and forced a smile. At that precise moment, a thought popped into my head.

"You just reminded me of that strange gothic book written by someone else named Mary," I interjected, "about a radical German scientist who uses electricity to reanimate a dead man..."

"Yes," my wife quickly answered, herself becoming somewhat reanimated. "The book's title is *'Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus.'* Its author is Mary Shelley. I read it a few years ago, I actually had to keep it hidden from my family."

Irresistibly intrigued, I asked, "Is the book really all that shocking?"

"I was in no mood, back then, for testing the literary tolerances of my family," she answered smoothly. "By the time I'd finished it, I realized that neither my father nor my mother could possibly have comprehended the story. But as to its relevance to our present industrial age," she concluded, "I endorse your notion." Mary took a bite of her sausage, and then stared at me with gentle defiance as she chewed. "I'm sure you're aware," she added, "that both Mary and Percy Shelley's lives were most scandalously entwined, adding to the book's infamous reputation."

"Sauce for the goose?" I asked.

"Sauce for the gander," Mary concluded, as she reached forward and took my hand.

I had always admired Mary's mental acuity and had been aware, virtually from our very first chance encounter (thanks to deductions made by my friend Sherlock Holmes), of her great love for serious reading. There was one particularly lively discussion I recall from an evening early in our courtship, in which Mary, myself and Sherlock, while enjoying a round of brandy, entered into a speculative talk regarding the true authorship of the 38 plays attributed to William Shakespeare. Having no real expertise on the subject, I removed

myself from the debate before it even got started. Holmes, of course, took great delight in such a dialogue, especially with a woman who, in her own mind, saw herself as perfectly fit for such a challenging engagement.

Sherlock, somewhat characteristically, served the first volley, declaring that a university-schooled writer of the highest magnitude could only have achieved authorship of the plays. Such a requirement eliminated Shakespeare from the very start, leaving only a handful of qualified candidates for serious consideration, namely Sir Francis Bacon; Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford; renowned Elizabethan poet and dramatist Christopher Marlowe of Oxford; and William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby. Of these, Holmes chose Francis Bacon as the most likely candidate for authorship, with Edward de Vere running a close second. Sherlock prepared to defend his choice by first eliminating the supremely gifted Christopher Marlowe from the list.

"He was far too enslaved by the demands of time and labor put on him by his own compositions to offer aid to his ostensible competitor," he began with aplomb, then adding "both his poetry and his plays betray an intellect infected with homosexual obsessions which, I am aggrieved to add, ultimately led to his brutal murder in a local pub at the very height of his artistic output." Holmes paused for several moments to relight his pipe, which had gone cold from neglect. Having done so, he drew several puffs of smoke and, easing back in his chair, took in Mary's expression for hidden signs of a reaction. Seeing none, he asked the rhetorical question, "Shall I continue?"

"By all means," Mary replied with a self-assured nod.

"Very well, then," replied Holmes. "Edward de Vere's literary output, while championed by a notable few, was nevertheless viewed by most contemporaries as the product of only a faint talent, undistinguished and verbose, whose abilities were exaggerated in

deference to his rank. A conclusion which I share, incidentally. Comments?"

"None so far," Mary answered with a faint tilt of the head. Holmes charged on. "In 1845, an article was published by one Dela Bacon, who hypothesized that a committee under the leadership of Frances Bacon, with Sir Walter Raleigh as the principal writer, was created for the purpose of advancing a political and philosophical system for which they themselves could not publicly assume responsibility, but which could be woven into the fabric of dramatic literatures and attribute these to Shakespeare. I would argue against this notion, for the simple reason that no group of political scholars could ever compose anything with the dramatic clarity and thematic focus of a Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream, or an Othello - let alone a Hamlet or King Lear – without imprinting onto the overall text in some inescapably obvious manner. The whole idea is ludicrous on its face, as I'm sure you agree."

"I do agree," Mary affirmed.

"What say you, Watson?" Holmes suddenly inquired, turning his head in my direction. "Will you offer your view, or continue observing impassively with the groundlings?"

"I fear myself unqualified to engage in this particular forum," I responded, judging that silence was the best route for me to take. My wife and Holmes both chuckled at this.

"As you say, my good doctor," Holmes answered, rising to his feet. "I shall now endeavor to make the case for Francis Bacon." I watched as Mary leaned forward in her chair, as she always did in prelude to bearing witness to some important piece of news, or indispensable doctrine. She took a sip of brandy as Holmes continued on.

"Francis Bacon is known as the father of empiricism, in that he called for conclusions to be made based solely on inductive reasoning and careful observation. He believed that truth could be revealed by the use of a skeptical and methodical approach, whereby seekers aim to avoid misleading themselves in their quest for truth. My own investigative methods owe much to Sir Francis," Holmes added, whilst bending forward to take another sip of brandy. During this very momentary pause in Sherlock's argument, Mary and I briefly glanced - and smiled - at one another. She appeared completely at ease with my associate's little game of one-upmanship (and it most certainly was that), betraying not the feeblest indication of being in, as she was so fond of saying, well over her head. Had I the inclinations of a gambler I might very well have, right then and there, put cash down on my wife's odds at coming out ahead in this discussion. That, regardless of Mary scarcely having uttered, up until that precise moment, more than a few words.

"The brandy is sublime. My compliments to you both," Sherlock pronounced agreeably.

"A perfect Segway into my argument. Francis Bacon was a man of myriad accomplishments, from the scientific and political, to the philosophical and legal. He was instrumental in composing the Napoleonic Code," and with this, Holmes raised his glass of Brandy with a mischievous smile. "Bacon's Verulamium: 'The Common Law Template of The Modern in English Science and Culture' introduced three important concepts to our contemporary understanding of justice." Holmes raised the index finger of his right hand, proclaiming the start of a countdown.

"First, the use of existing cases as repositories of evidence pertaining to 'unwritten law.'" Sherlock's middle finger now joined the first. "Second, the determination of relevance of precedent through

the exclusionary principles of evidence and logic." Holmes' third finger now joined the other two. "And third, the treatment of opposing legal briefs as 'adversarial hypotheses' when they are used to apply said unwritten law to a new set of facts. Clearly, we are addressing a first-rate intellect in Sir Francis Bacon." And with that conclusive observation, Sherlock paused for a response - he was not long in waiting.

Mary Stirred in her chair a bit, as if to allow Sherlock's words to settle in. A subtle smile appeared on her face and then she spoke. "Respectfully, Mr. Holmes, I find nothing in your presentation to connect Sir Francis Bacon to England's greatest playwright."

Holmes' eyes lit up with stars and he smiled broadly. "May I continue, then?" he asked.

"Please do so." Mary responded.

"The notion that in order for a knowledge base to be classifiable, it must be universal in application to all applicable resources. Bacon's progressive approach to learning reformulated the Western view of knowledge theory from an individual to a broader social construct: history, poetry and philosophy; these are the groups into which Bacon divided his entire knowledge base. Thus his phrase 'scientia potentia est,' or 'or knowledge is power.' The classification system now at use in American libraries owes everything to Bacon."

By this point, Holmes had worked himself up into a state of considerable agitation. After years of observing the man, I knew that he would now have to regroup, refocus his mind. He sat down and put his pipe aside. "Bacon was a bit of a metaphysician," he continued. "That is to say, he dabbled in the occult sufficiently to have been reasonably well versed in a variety of rituals for conjuring and spell making. He was also a more than capable statesman and had participated in countless meeting with diplomats, heads of state and all

manner of clergy - to such a degree, I might add, that some of these resulted in his arrest and imprisonment on several occasions. Each of these setbacks led, as if by providence, to a full restoration of freedoms and added responsibilities, like a Herculean political Phoenix."

Holmes finished his brandy, taking a satisfied pause from the discussion. He drifted off momentarily, closing his eyes and then jerked his head suddenly forward. "All the ingredients necessary for the range of human experience, both dramatic and comedic, historical and philosophical, from deep religious allegory to nature worshipping paganism, from the noblest to the lowest order of human debris, it can all be located within the limitless pantheon of Bacon's musings and work," Sherlock concluded, staring deep into Mary's enormous blue eyes, clearly offering her the floor. There followed a considerable silence, from which Mary finally spoke. "I must confess to being both extremely overwhelmed and yet somehow...unimpressed; perhaps confused is a better word, my dear Mr. Holmes. Your knowledge of Sir Francis is both comprehensive and broad. Still, you provide no nexus to Shakespeare's plays and certainly no conclusion. You seem to be swimming only in the shallow waters of fact, with no consideration given to poetic inspiration or the rhythm of life itself, both of which I believe to be the province of art."

"Clearly a woman's viewpoint," Holmes asserted, almost defensively. Almost as if on cue, he again took up his pipe and prepared it for yet another smoke. "Art is not a science and if it is to be considered as such, it is woefully substandard. Music is touched by mathematics, so too architecture. But painting, drama, dance - they lack the intellectual exactitude of the sciences - they exist only to amuse. The great exception to this, of course, are the later plays attributed to Shakespeare." By this time, Holmes had relit his pipe and drawn a puff of blue smoke. "The only remaining question, Mrs. Watson, would be whether Bacon's abilities as a writer were up to

snuff and I put forth the notion that yes, judging from my own readings of his published works, his skills were of such a magnitude."

Mary addressed Holmes, quickly and directly. "I do not wish to derail this discussion with backtracking, but something you said earlier regarding Christopher Marlow troubles me."

"Go on," Holmes answered.

"Your passing reference to Marlowe's obsessions with 'manly love,' as it was once referred to, indicates that, for you, such a consideration is, of itself, ample cause for his removal from your list. But hasn't Bacon's sexual orientation also been called into question, from numerous quarters?" Sherlock leaned forward to answer, but Mary held up her hand, indicating that she was not finished. "I cannot hope to debate you on your own terms, Mr. Holmes. What I would like to do is provide an entirely different perspective to our talk, if I may?" Holmes clearly was not expecting this, as evidenced from his slight turn of the head with raised eyebrows in my direction. Mary continued, in a voice both calm and self assured.

"During the years preceding my betrothal to John, I spent some considerable time acting on the stage. Knowing full well the stigma so often attached to women thus engaged, I do my best not to discuss it openly. But one claim I must make is this: there is hardly a more vital and beneficial place of advanced learning than the theatre, where multiple disciplines join together to create and present a codified whole to the paying public, who themselves are thus educated by the spectacle they bear witness to. The theatre is a living, breathing institution for learning and creating, with classrooms and laboratories that exist without walls nor cumbersome hierarchies, an open forum where only the best ideas, historical references and philosophical perspectives prevail."

"You argue persuasively, Mary," Holmes interjected. "Please, continue." Mary smiled, and then continued.

"So, knowing as I do something of how plays are developed, I will readily concede it highly unlikely that Shakespeare wrote every word in all of his plays. A venerable actor of some renown might, on occasion, offer an alternative twist of phrase or even an idea for a whole new scene, which the ensemble then will contribute to. Those who site the playwright's lack of nautical experience as proof that he could not have conjured up the opening for 'The Tempest' overlook the likely contributions of fellow actors who had such experience. How many times do you think William might have called out for a rhyming word to complete a phrase: 'and in sad silence let me be laid...what rhymes with laid?' Someone responds: 'will maid work?' And now we have the closing phrase 'I am slain by a fair, cruel maid.' Bit by bit, piece by piece, phrase by phrase, a play is built in rehearsal, not scribbled together entirely by candlelight. So, back to Marlowe," Mary continued, rising to her feet in the same that Holmes had done only minutes before. She was about to go in for the kill.

"Now imagine, if you will, that among all the actors, musicians, scenic artists and the like, that Christopher Marlowe was also in attendance. Would not his very presence invigorate and elevate the proceedings with his particular brand of dramatic and poetic genius? Ben Jonson and Francis Beaumont cited Shakespeare's lack of classical learning and no extant contemporary record suggests he was a university educated writer or scholar, but not so with Marlowe. And as to Marlowe's having been murdered in a pub under seedy circumstances, I myself have done some reading on this. No grave has ever been identified as Marlowe's final resting place. It had long been rumored that the renowned poet had also been a spy for the British government and had been recruited while studying at Cambridge. Upon his graduation, a Privy Council had asserted that Marlowe 'was

engaged in affairs and matters touching the benefit of his country.' To this very day, there exists no conclusive proof of Marlowe's demise, leaving the world of letters free to speculate on future contributions to Shakespeare's works." With this, Sherlock rose to his feet and, with great enthusiasm, applauded Mary's assertions.

"Bravo, my good Mrs. Watson! Bravo and splendidly argued!" He then turned to me and remarked, "Really, John, your wife Mary is a great credit to the weaker sex. I could not be more impressed." And with that, both Holmes and Mary once again took their respective seats. Lifting up the decanter, I offered to refill their glasses. Holmes shook his head, but Mary nodded. "By the way, Mary," he continued, "how much of Francis Bacon have you actually read yourself?"

"Perhaps a half dozen of his essays, I believe."

"Do you find his prose to your liking?"

"I do, yes. Very much so," as she brought her refilled glass to her lips.

"In contrast to the Bard's output, how would you characterize their difference?"

"In the first place, I do not much care for referencing William Shakespeare as 'The Bard.' It's a personal issue, I'm afraid. When people use that title, I sense that they are doing so to diminish the man, as well as to elevate themselves. Present company excluded, of course."

"Duly noted," Holmes replied. "Shall I repeat my question?"

"No need," Mary cheerfully replied. "As a writer, Bacon was virtually unparalleled. To read his work is to be awed and humbled, truly, almost beyond measure. Whatever his subject might be, Bacon's meanings are all sparklingly clear; perfect for a didacticist." Holmes'

brows pressed together in consternation at that final remark. He puffed at his pipe in a conspicuous silence begging for Mary to continue, or perhaps draw to a conclusion.

"Shakespeare's purposes were always aesthetic, never didactic. His intentions as a dramatist were always to leave his audiences, in some mysterious way, unsatisfied." Mary paused to sip at her brandy. I could almost see her final comment formulating inside her head. "Shakespeare's meanings," Mary resumed, "are cloaked in the shadows of metaphor and allegory, where they belong. Bacon's essays mean what they mean. Shakespeare's writings can never be entirely deduced, dissected, or understood. They are not entirely unlike sinister and subterranean crimes which forever remain unsolved."

Gazing across the breakfast table at Mary, I reminded her of that particular discussion and her eyes lit up. "I believe I did rather well on that occasion, didn't I?" she blushed.

"Quite," I answered. "Demonstrating ample worth on the battlefield of discourse." At that, Mary giggled softly, then suddenly darted straight up in her chair, as if she had just seen a mouse.

"Oh, I almost forgot!" she exclaimed. "Do you recall Irene Adler, the actress?" This was a name I had not heard in ages.

"The opera singer I described in *'A Scandal In Bohemia;'* the woman mixed up with the Crown Prince?" I asked.

"Yes, that is she," Mary replied.

"I recall her as having been an opera singer."

"Certainly a lady of many gifts," Mary responded, somewhat cattily, sipping her tea.

"Why bring her up at this time?" I inquired.

"While brunching with some of the girls during our monthly get together, it was mentioned that Miss Adler is presently engaged on a musical tour of the continent and would be appearing in London for several evenings." It struck me as somehow odd that one of Mary's friends would be keeping track of an American stage performer's affairs, so I pressed on.

"And who amongst your female acquaintances is so sufficiently devoted to opera as to discuss it over cakes and tea?"

"Oh, that would be Beatrice Starkey, wife of the famous jeweler. There was once some sort of rivalry between them. I don't know any of the details, but apparently it carries on to this day."

"Perhaps I should purchase four tickets to the event," I suggested.

"You'd have to wait until she arrives in town," Mary replied. It'll be the last leg of her tour, as they say."

CHAPTER 2

It was some weeks later that a message arrived for me at my medical practice, marked as "urgent." Upon reading the contents, I took my earliest opportunity to travel by cab to Scotland Yard, which was currently in the final stages of construction of their new and improved headquarters. Upon arrival, I was greeted by Detective Inspector Lestrade, who readers may recall from my tale *'The Adventures of the Six Napoleons.'* Lestrade escorted me on a very brief tour of the new facilities, located on the Victoria Embankment.

"These are the Norman Shaw Buildings, named after the architect who designed them," Lestrade informed me, with a palpable sense of pride in his voice. "We're just now getting settled in. Ours will be the very first meeting in my new office." Minutes later, the two of us were sitting at opposite sides of Lestrade's large mahogany desk, sipping the tea his secretary had just served. "I know this is a bit out of the ordinary, Doctor Watson. But with your partner Sherlock Holmes being away on leave, I thought you might be open to a meeting in his absence."

"I am completely at your service, Inspector," I replied, doing my best not to offer any indication that I was unaware of Sherlock's being anywhere outside our rooms at 221B Baker Street.

"What I have to tell you is distressing in the extreme," Lestrade continued. "So appalling a crime it is, that very few of us at the police division are even aware of its having occurred. And it goes without saying that you must not, under any circumstances, share with anyone any detail of what I am about to disclose to you."

"Upon my honor," I answered in earnest.

"Just two nights ago," the Detective Inspector continued, "workers here at Scotland Yard found, literally on these new premises, the horribly mutilated body of a woman whom, as of yet, we have been unable to identify."

"Do you mean to say that this woman was murdered right here, in Scotland Yard?"

"I do," Lestrade replied. "We immediately sent word to your partner, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, but were informed by the landlady, Mrs. Hudson, that he was temporarily away, but expected to return soon."

"It is true that Mr. Holmes' schedule is somewhat mercurial as of late," I offered, while failing to disclose the fact that Mrs. Hudson is not a particularly reliable barometer of my friend's comings and goings. "I hasten to inform you that I was also summoned, very recently, to look after another unfortunate woman, Miss Emma Elizabeth Smith, just before she died the of brutal injuries inflicted on her as well."

"We are aware of your connection to Miss Smith," Lestrade answered. "I commend your sense of duty to her plight, God rest her soul. But I must tell you, Dr. Watson, that the sexual injuries done to her are little when compared to the atrocities committed here, the other night, right at our feet. Shall I show you the crime scene?"

I must admit to having been taken very much aback by Lestrade's unexpected and ghastly offer. Nevertheless, I felt duty bound, both as a physician and as the chronicler and sometimes partner of my friend Mr. Sherlock Holmes, to assist Scotland Yard in any way possible. It was a choice I would, only scant minutes later, come to profoundly regret.

Curtained from view by heavy canvas on all sides, the crime scene was guarded by six robust Scotland Yard police officers. Responding

to a subtle nod from Lestrade, one of them parted the flaps of a section of fabric, allowing us entry. My first assessment of the horrid display was that some unfortunate woman had fallen off the bow of a ship and been mangled by its propeller as it passed over her. There were deep slash wounds to the throat, extensive abdominal and genital mutilation and gashes all about her face. Her clothing had been cut and pulled away, with the clear intention of robbing the victim of all human dignity. Two words had been written in blood on the pavement only a step or two from the corpse: "Dress Rehearsal." I had never beheld anything to match the sight of this and it made me retch.

"Look here, sir, you can't just come walking into this crime scene," I heard one of the officers call out.

"I am here at the behest of Inspector Lestrade," I heard another voice softly proclaim and knew in an instant that the Detective Inspector and I were about to be joined by none other than Sherlock Holmes, most likely in disguise. "I trust that both you gentlemen will forgive me for appearing incognito, but at this stage of the investigation, I must practice extreme caution." With this, Holmes removed his magnifying glass from his pocket, knelt before the corpse and proceeded with a close examination. Sherlock spent several extended moments in his manner, then muttered to himself in an almost inaudible voice, "ticket of leave, or should I say leaf?" He then raised his free hand and asked of both Lestrade and myself, without looking, "Do either of you gentlemen have on your person a pencil, or some other such implement?"

"Yes, I happen to have a pencil right here," Lestrade replied, removing the object from his jacket and placing it into Holmes' open hand. With it, Sherlock carefully scraped away and lifted a strand of some sort from the outer perimeter of the congealing blood gathered around the corpse and held it up to the sunlight for a better look.

"I cannot say for certain, because of blood contamination," Holmes began, "but I do believe one of our killers may very well be a left handed Australian, newly released from captivity. I also believe this crime to be the work of the same men who murdered your friend, Watson; at least the very same men performed the actual labor." He then stood, placed the strand onto an open handkerchief then folded and pocketed it for later.

"You'll note," Holmes continued, "that these slashes all about the torso are jagged and grossly uneven and move from left to right, indicating that the assailant had to force a dull blade through the viscera and experienced great difficulty doing so. The cuts along the face are finer, almost as if performed with a razor - a scalpel, perhaps? - rather than with a knife. I conclude that this killing was carried out by a minimum of two men, most likely three."

"And the words written in blood?" Lestrade asked.

"I'm afraid they may have a double meaning," Holmes replied. "But it may be too early for me to say conclusively." He then turned to Lestrade, returned the pencil and said, "You may remove the body now, Inspector. There is nothing further to be gained by examination. May the three of us reconvene tomorrow morning at 221B Baker Street, at say...9:30 AM sharp?" The proposed meeting was agreed to and the three of us went our separate ways.

The following day's morning papers made little of the grisly murder that would come to be known as the "Whitechapel Mystery." The victim's identity was, as of yet, still unknown and the curious detail of the message in blood was omitted from news reports. Scotland Yard did a thorough job of sanitizing the crime scene, enabling life to go on as it had before. Meanwhile, the trio of Holmes, Lestrade and myself gathered for our morning meeting at the

appointed time at 221B Baker Street, following what appears to have been a long evening of evidence processing.

"I'm afraid I have precious little for you this morning, my friends. After having soaked the tobacco shred in a mild solvent, followed by a second cleansing with distilled water and a careful drying, I have been able to deduce little more than after yesterday's cursory examination. One of the assailants was a large man, until recently imprisoned in Australia, who upon his release traveled to London, where he quickly became involved in the criminal underworld. Not much to go on, I'm afraid."

"Ye Gods, man," Lestrade blurted out, "how can you guess at so much from virtually nothing?"

"I never guess, Inspector," Sherlock shot back. "It does irreparable damage to the analytical faculties. But do not lose heart, my good man, for a fragment of tobacco can yield a near infinitude of valuable information. Look here," he beckoned, holding the shred with a pair of tweezers up to a lamp. "This tobacco is of an inferior grade, as you can tell from the anemic, straw-like coloration. It is grown and harvested in Australia for one purpose: as currency for use within their prison system, where inmates are either paid for their labor, or punished for avoidance, by access or lack thereof to this."

"Astounding, Mr. Holmes!" exclaimed the dumbfounded Lestrade. "And the rest?"

"Australian prisoners are commonly referred to as 'ticket-of-leave men,' with this leaf being the ticket. Since Australia limits the amount of tobacco their prisoners may received and because that amount could only last any prisoner a short period of time, I conclude that our man was only recently released from confinement and that upon such release, he traveled here, where he quickly fell into the crime group

which committed this murder," Holmes concluded, to our collective amazement.

"If I were you, Inspector Lestrade, I would direct your force to search for a large Australian, powerful enough to have forced a dull knife through thick abdominal muscles, whose paperwork will betray a recent arrival to England."

"And the message written in blood?"

"I would interpret it to indicate that these crimes are soon to be taking a new turn, for the worse."

"Then good day to you both," Lestrade said in quick reply and, with a sharp Republican nod, he took his leave. I remained only long enough to briefly engage my old friend on a personal level, inquiring as to his health, his eating and sleeping habits and, of course, his current intake of narcotics. All in all, his answers indicated a normal state of affairs or, at the very least, what passes as normal for Sherlock Holmes.

Over the next week or so, I was able to resume my practice with some degree of regularity for which, I believe, my patients were grateful. One or two of them, having seen newspaper reports of the recent killings, asked whether it was likely that my associate and I would be involving ourselves on an investigatory level. I responded with the usual "It seems unlikely, though one can never be too sure when it comes to Sherlock's professional whims."

As to the efforts of Scotland Yard in this matter, by the following Sunday a team of their officers had located and placed under arrest Colebee Blackmon, a large Australian man who had only within the past ten days first set foot on British soil. Much was made of this by the press, but when the man was later discovered hanged to death in his heavily guarded and isolated jail cell, newspapers became oddly

mute. It was in this climate that Sherlock departed from London to attend upon someone formerly of the French aristocracy, who claimed that an anonymous Dutchman was currently blackmailing him. “Such cases pay the bills,” Holmes was quick to point out, promising to keep an ear to the rails of our still developing mystery.

Roughly a week following, Martha Tabram and her friend Mary Ann Connelly, also known to locals as “Pearly Poll,” were entertaining two soldiers at the Angel And Crown, one of the area’s public houses, not far from the George Yard Buildings. At some time close to 11:45 P.M., the party broke up into two separate couples, each going their own way, with Pearly Poll and her companion heading toward Angel Alley, while Martha and her client followed Wentworth Street to a covered archway adjoining the White Hart Inn, as witnessed by several passers-by. It is assumed that a sex for money transaction was conducted there and that after its conclusion Martha began her walk back home. Somewhat later, various residents reported having been awakened by shouts of “murder!” and “help me!” but such nighttime cries were a common occurrence in that area, so the police were not immediately summoned.

At 3:30 A.M., resident Albert George Crow returned home from his job as a cab driver and noticed Tabram's body lying on a dimly lit landing above the first flight of stairs. Mistaking the lifeless corpse for a sleeping vagrant, he chose to ignore her and continued onto his apartment on the lower floor. Finally, at just before 5:00 A.M., an upper level resident, John Saunders Reeves, was quickly descending the staircase, heading for work, when he almost tripped over Martha’s corpse. Realizing her condition, Reeves immediately contacted the police to file a report. It was only a matter of a few hours before I received a telegram from Holmes, urging me to meet him at the murder scene. Concluding several minor tasks, I hastened to the scene at George Yard, where I discovered Sherlock already immersed in a

heated discussion with Inspector Edmund Reid of H Division Whitechapel, who had assumed the role of leading investigator. Standing to his left was Inspector Lestrade, looking very much the worse for the wear. Also on hand were a number of soldiers of various rank, along with several other men and women, presumably witnesses.

As I ascended the steps leading up to the scene, Holmes turned toward me and, in a markedly cheerful voice, greeted me. "Ah, you've arrived, good fellow. Just one moment, please." He then turned toward Reid. "As you can see, my associate Dr. Watson has just arrived. Might I suggest that we divide our duties: you and your men can interview these fine folks, while Watson and myself examine the body of the victim. Once concluded, we shall withdraw and leave the crime scene entirely in your capable hands."

"Dr. Watson is a highly decorated and eminently capable military surgeon and as it happens, the only physician presently on hand," Lestrade, always the diplomat, quickly interjected. Inspector Reid, seeing no easy way out of this debate, acceded and we all quickly buckled down into our assigned duties. Sherlock Holmes' notion that these murders were soon to take a "turn for the worse" proved downright prophetic. The slaying of Martha Tabrum revealed - even to my less nuanced eye - a more skilled, more organized approach to killing than had been seen before. As Holmes carefully studied the woman's remains, he spoke to me in a firm yet. quiet voice.

"The killer has evolved considerably in his approach, savage yet efficient. There are twenty one initial stab wounds about the torso, most likely the stabbing to the heart and these spreading out to the lungs were almost instantly disabling, depending on the order in which they were inflicted. But the significance here is that there was no need for the victim to be held down, or restrained. Once disabled, the second assailant, using a different knife, stabbed her in the neck, then lifted

her skirts and plunged his knife into her genitals. There is no evidence of sexual intercourse, so the exposing of the victim's private parts must be viewed as an attempt to shock whomever would eventually discover the body. Questions?"

"How can you tell that two separate knifes were used?" I asked.

"By comparing the width of the blades used, as indicated by the wounds; the difference of a few millimeters," Holmes answered, hovering his magnifying glass over several of the wounds for analysis. "You see?"

"Yes," I replied, somewhat amazed. Holmes rose to his feet and motioned for Lestrade to join in as we convened a few steps away, out of earshot. Holmes bowed his head for several moments with eyes closed, deep in thought. Finally, he raised it back up and spoke.

"Up to the present, these killings have been experimental. Lab work, if you will, conducted by a scientist in anticipation of publishing his latest work for peer review."

"Why Holmes, this is fantastic, even for you!" Lestrade exclaimed. "It staggers the mind!"

"Something is being expressed here, my good Inspector, Holmes replied. "Something inexplicable, something that can only be conveyed by using these women as canvases upon which to render an urgent yearning, an obsessive vision, bursting out from deep within the soul." Holmes leaned in and his voice lowered to a near-whisper. "Whomever orchestrated these crimes sees himself as a maven, a world-class virtuoso, a visionary, first and foremost. I am certain of it. All of East London is destined to become his Louvre and we, we are to be his patrons, eager for the next masterpiece to be presented."

CHAPTER 3

I feel it appropriate at this particular juncture in my narrative to take a few steps back and justify, for the benefit of my readers, my employment of murder scene descriptions which defy all accepted contemporary standards of decency. I myself shudder at the frankness with which I am required to catalog the almost unspeakable nature of these wicked displays of madness, yet to cower from this task would only stand as a disservice to the stout individuals tasked with bringing a murderous brute to justice. One such person was Dr. Molly Hoepfner, a pretty young dimpled woman of German descent with a gift for analyzing human remains that rivaled - and even perhaps exceeded - the deductive abilities of Sherlock Holmes himself. That the higher-ups at Scotland Yard harbored ambivalence regarding the employ of a shy young woman to such a rarified position was evidenced by their closeting her in a dungeon-like basement facility, where she could be hidden from view.

The first example of Molly's eye for improbable detail was contained in the forensic report of Colebee Blackmon, the Australian suicide and suspected co-assailant from the cases of Emma Elizabeth and Martha Tabram. The item in question was a crudely carved letter "M" on the man's chest. Other examiners had overlooked this detail, ascribing it to randomly applied knife wounds. Molly, however, would have none of that. When questioned about the carved letter's possible meaning, she proclaimed ignorance, yet held firm to her assertion that the wounds formed an "M," such as might have been drawn in a first grade classroom. Thus, the curious detail remained a key feature of our report.

My home life was becoming much affected, as an apocalyptic cloud of gloom was beginning to settle over Mary and myself. In order

to avoid unpleasant conversations between us, the sharper corners of our interactions grew subtly more rounded, so that while we remained very much aware of one another, the pleasantness between us diminished. I got the distinct impression that Mary suspected that I was withholding from her certain details about these hideous slayings and, of course, she was correct. Clearly, the boundaries had changed between us.

As it was at home, so too was it in my medical practice. As my patients consisted mostly of women, it was I that they turned to for whatever edification I could provide about these bizarre crimes, since it was obvious to all readers of the London papers that much was being kept from the public. A palpable feeling was settling in that these murders were merely the prelude to something far more shocking and sinister that was about to manifest itself in our city. “It is as if we are at the precipice of a whole new era,” my wife would mutter, partially to herself; I could scarcely disagree with Mary’s bleak assessment.

That new era was about to declare itself only days later, on August 31, 1888, with the murder of Mary Ann Nichols - age 43, a married mother of five, domestic worker and occasional prostitute. Within only hours of London newspapers’ blaring headlines, the entire town was transformed into a pulsating cacophony of fear, speculation and outrage. The Whitechapel Murders were all anyone possessing an opinion cared to talk about. One might have thought that Scotland Yard would be eager for the unparalleled talents of England’s most celebrated consulting detective for assistance in solving the murders but, alas, such was not to be the case.

Deputy Inspector Edmund Reid, no doubt recognizing a chance for career-making advancement, rather officiously assumed charge of the investigation, leaving Lestrade - for the moment at least - well in the lurch. Without Inspector Lestrade’s officially sanctioned

involvement, neither Holmes nor I had any direct means by which to study this all-important and still developing case. Personal ambition had seized the day, at least for the present. For his own part, Lestrade shrugged off the development with an ironic declaration of faith from Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales': "Murder will out."

One report, published in the Star, asserted that a likely candidate for consideration in these killings was "a wild-looking man, wearing a leather apron, who had been seen about in Whitechapel," and was believed to be "an escaped lunatic." Almost instantly, the killer was afforded the name "Leather Apron," most likely "a Jew, or of Jewish parentage." All of this was based on dubious eyewitness testimony. The Star added them following speculation, "a more ghoulish and devilish brute than can be found in all the pages of shocking fiction." In a meeting held at 221B Baker Street, Lestrade revealed to Holmes and myself that the man Scotland Yard was currently seeking a "crazy Jew," but had not yet been able to locate him. To this arbitrary and outrageous claim, Sherlock provided some useful - though not necessarily factual in the empirical sense - context.

"This individual of whom they speak," he began, "this 'Leather Apron' fellow, is a man named Jack Pizer. He has, for some considerable time, been availing himself of unfortunates in Whitechapel and other areas of London, in a manner not unlike Mary Ann Nichols. Pizer is a 38-year-old Polish Jew, who has resided at various lodging houses in and around Whitechapel. Upon learning that he has come under suspicion by Joseph Helson of Scotland Yard, Pizer went into hiding."

"Do you have any idea where?" Lestrade asked.

"At his mother's house, on Mulberry Street." Holmes replied. "But...he is not the man we are presently seeking."

"How so?" Lestrade asked, his tone beginning to smack of incredulity.

"Pizer is clearly a deranged man, with numerous obsessions of a sexual nature," Holmes replied. "But his assaults are wholly pedestrian. Our man fits a completely different psychological profile." This time it was I who spoke up.

"Psychological profile, you say?" I began. "Whatever do you mean?"

"I refer you, Watson, to the work of Ferdinand Ueberwasser, Professor of Empirical Psychology and Logic in Leipzig, Germany," Holmes began. "When viewed through the prism of his work, Pizer fails to meet the symptomatic criteria for a particular disorder known as Dementia Praecox. Let Scotland yard chase its own tail, while we blaze our own investigative trail."

"I've already taken steps to ensure that we may do just that and with complete autonomy," Lestrade offered. "I've made a pact with Molly Hoepfner. She's agreed to permit full access to all of her work in her corpse examination dungeon, under cover of darkness. And we'll get her full and actual analysis of the killings, as they happen, free from any imprint of her supervisors."

"When can we begin?" I asked.

"This very evening, if you like," Lestrade answered, lowering his head in a conspiratorial gesture.

Scotland Yard was, at that very moment, in a state of political uproar. From their point of view, the Whitechapel Murders could not have occurred at a less convenient time than the present. James Monroe, Criminal Investigation Department supervisor under the venerable Sir Charles Warren, was suddenly directed to take up full responsibility of the department and one of his first moves was to order

a recently retired Robert Anderson back into the force, to be placed in full charge of the day-to-day doings of the Whitechapel investigation. This meant, of course, the immediate and speedy return of Anderson from a much-needed medically supervised rest on the Continent and the immediate demotion of Inspector Edmund Reid from his self-assumed investigative perch.

"We'll be needing to maintain a vigilant eye on that one," Holmes noted to himself. "Edmund will be doing his utmost to save face, almost certainly to our greater detriment."

The citizens of London cared scarcely a jot for the problems of Scotland Yard. A great evil had suddenly crept over their city and there was no telling how or where it might end. The name of Jack Pizer was on many thousands of tongues and thanks to newspapers, a growing mood of violent anti Semitism filled the air, threatening to choke out the entire frightened city. As previously agreed to, Sherlock, Lestrade and I convened with Molly Hoepfner at her cavernous examination dungeon at Scotland Yard, where the remains of Mary Ann Nichols rested hideously on a sterile metal slab. As was her right, Molly insisted on our strict silence as she led us down the torturous and labyrinthine route to a mutual understanding.

"Let us begin with the most recent victim, Mary Ann Nichols. Her body was discovered at the corner of Baker's Row and Hanbury Street; the time was approximately 3:40 A.M. By the time the police actually arrived on the scene, it was roughly 4:00 A.M. At that time, a surgeon was summoned to the scene, Dr. Rees Ralph Liewellyn. He noted that the body was still warm and estimated that the woman was been dead for 30 minutes or so. Because a large crowd was forming, Dr. Liewellyn had the body transported to the Whitechapel Mortuary, where he performed a preliminary examination." Molly handed

Lestrade a folder containing several documents, then added, "I'm providing you with a copy of his notes, plus other documents."

"Thank you, Dr. Hoepfner," Lestrade answered as he accepted the folder.

"Dr. Liewellyn's notes state the obvious: that Mrs. Nichols received 'severe injuries to her throat,' specifically two parallel incisions running from left to right, one of these was a gash eight inches long, which completely severed all the tissues down to the vertebrae. The large vessels of the neck were also severed. Dr. Liewellyn saw fit to add the following point that these injuries not likely to have been self-inflicted."

"Nothing becomes Scotland Yard like belaboring the obvious," Holmes interjected.

"The Doctor's notes continue," Molly went on, pointing with her free hand as she read. "There were no injuries about the body until just about the lower part of the abdomen. Two or three inches from the left side was a wound running in a jagged manner. It was a very deep wound and the tissues were cut through. There were several incisions running across the abdomen. On the right side there were also three or four similar cuts running downward. All these had been caused by a knife, which had been used violently and been used downwards," Molly concluded, then adding: "Doctor Liewellyn's words, exactly."

"Might we pause briefly for discussion before moving on?" Holmes asked deferentially.

"By all means," Molly replied.

"What we have here is the first fully realized work of a deranged artist - or a man who has convinced himself that he is such - evidenced by what I believe to be signature mutilations to the lower abdomen, from which the victim's intestines protrude. These slices reveal certain

elegance in their execution, with deep and precise strokes downward, requiring both strength and confidence. The good doctor's notes curiously fail to mention these two small stab wounds to the victim's privates, is that correct?"

"Quite correct," Molly replied. At this point, Holmes removed his magnifying glass from his coat pocket, bent over the cadaver in a forward position and proceeded to carefully scan it for additional clues. Once finished, he straightened up and addressed the group.

"This killing is indisputably the work of one man, an individual of extraordinarily high intelligence, deeply obsessive, who harbors a ferocious loathing and disgust of women. He has been trained and subsequently has worked in the medical field, most likely as a surgeon. I hasten to add that he suffers from a catastrophic mental illness, most likely dementia praecox, which causes him to hear voices and experience visual hallucinations. Beyond that, I can deduce very little."

At this point, I spoke up. "Does this mean, Holmes, that our previous victims were also done in by the same single, individual man?"

"I believe that Miss Hoepfner should be able to help us with that particular narrative," Holmes replied.

"I'll do my utmost," Molly replied, as we all leaned in, giving her our full attention. "Much of what I am about to say is in conflict with the official conclusions of Scotland Yard, as you'll see in the documents I've given you. The first incident in the series of attacks under my consideration is that of Annie Millwood, who was admitted to the Whitechapel Infirmary on February 24 of this year. I never got the opportunity to examine her, because she was treated for her injuries, then released to the Southgrove Workhouse with a favorable prognosis. Apparently, there was but a single assailant in this case and

no witnesses to the crime. What does stand out about this attack, likening it to the others, was its geographical location, its suddenness and finally, its sheer brutality." Molly paused for a moment, then moved on.

"About one month following this attack, we have Ada Wilson who, curiously enough, was attacked in her home at 19 Maidman Street, at 12:30 after midnight, while asleep in bed. According to her testimony, she was awakened by her attacker, who demanded money. When she refused to pay, the man took a clasp knife from his pocket and stabbed her twice in the neck. Her screams scared the intruder off and awakened her neighbors, who summoned the police. Mrs. Wilson, a Jewish woman of 35, was taken to the London Hospital, treated for her 'serious neck wounds' and released one month later. She described the attacker as 'five and a half feet in height, wearing a dark coat and a wide-awake hat and sunburned.' Oddly, Ada Wilson collapsed and died, suddenly and unexpectedly, on March 31 of unknown causes. Her death was reported in the Eastern Post and the City Chronicle on April 7, by which time the death of Emma Elizabeth Smith was well under investigation." Molly laid her notes down on a nearby desk with a deep sigh, indicating that these disclosures had taken a toll.

"From there, we have Ema Smith, Martha Tabram, the unknown victim here at Scotland Yard and Mary Ann Nichols, here before you. Everything is contained in those documents."

"Miss Hoepfner," Holmes began, "what do you consider to be the most salient fact for us to consider?"

"The most important of all my observations is that this woman here before us, Mrs. Mary Ann Nichols, is the first of these women to be murdered by a single assailant," Molly confidently replied, "but that all or some of these crimes may very well be related, perhaps in some as yet unknown way."

"And on this, Dr. Hoepfner, we are in complete agreement," Holmes answered, taking several long moments to read from her documents. Then, looking back up, he declared to all present, "As usual, the police, working at an infuriating level of doddering efficiency, have already managed to bungle this case almost beyond recovery. Their either/or hypothesis of the victim having been slain with slices to the neck, either from the front of from behind, offers nothing to explain the lack of blood splatter to the right or left breast. Worse still, virtually nothing is made of these bruises to her face or throat, you see?" Holmes asked emphatically, pointing to those very same faint but clear marks. Then, circling around the cadaver, he turned his attention to the woman's feet. "Observe now, the scuffing of the back of both heels of the victim's shoes, angled near the bottom. These are fresh marks."

Lestrade, Miss Hoepfner and I gathered around, leaning forward for a closer look. The scuffmarks were certainly there, clearly to be seen, exactly as Sherlock had just described them. We exchanged incredulous looks as Holmes continued on.

"I suggest the following series of events: the killer and victim joined together on some obvious pretext and at his first opportunity, the assailant struck her about the face, stunning her, most likely into unconsciousness. He then dragged her a short distance, by the neck, to the eventual site of the actual killing. In doing so, he inadvertently created the marks to her heels. Once at the desired location, he strangled her to death, then arranged her body, face up. He then proceeded, long knife in hand, with his butchery."

Lestrade was the first to speak. "How sure are you of this chain of events?"

"As certain as I can be, given the facts at our disposal," Sherlock replied, with measured confidence.

"What do you then suggest as our first move?" Now fully engaged, Holmes turned to face his astonished audience of three.

"We must hasten to the murder site, then discover and retrace the short route back to the location of the first attack and search there for clues. We shall require lanterns, of course. Any lost time might result in irreparable contamination of the scenes." We quickly donned our outer coats in preparation for the evening's sojourn. Then, with his usual flair for the dramatic, Holmes added, "The game is on! A whole new realm of criminal behavior beckons us forth - where the rational and the irrational, the primal and the articulable, become so hopelessly intertwined that they just may yield some entirely new logic all their own. Let us prepare ourselves to read the signposts." And with that, the four of us quickly dispersed and, equipped with lanterns, began our exhausted way to the official murder scene of Mary Ann Nichols. Arriving by carriage within twenty minutes or so, it was immediately clear that the spot had already become a something of an impromptu shrine, not only for those who had known the victim, but for the morbidly curious as well. Even at this late hour, dozens had gathered around.

As we exited the carriage, a woman's voice called out: "She was a kind soul, our Polly." Always quick on his feet, Sherlock instantly engaged the woman.

"You're referring to the woman who was killed here?"

"I am, sure as nuts," the woman firmly replied.

"Did you know her by any other name?" Holmes asked.

"Only as Polly. I was the first to tell the coppers who she was," the woman continued.

Holmes approached the woman, then asked in a sympathetic tone, "Were you crying when you identified her?" The woman hesitated,

perhaps in response for having been asked so personal a question by a complete stranger.

"Yes and it was enough to make anyone shed a tear, sir, poor, poor girl," she replied calmly. But then, in an instant, her voice became angered. "But I'll tell ya one thing else, laddie: this 'Leather Apron' feller ain't the one who done Polly up like this - too flippin' a loonie bird, he is and too stupid, betimes! Eatin' 'is bread outta the gutter as he does, an' barkin' like some Devilish curr from Hades! Got the brain of a sewer rat, I'd say!" Throughout all of this, Sherlock remained a sympathetic listener, giving the woman his full attention. When she had finished speaking her mind, he cordially thanked her and retuned to us. Removing his magnifying glass from his coat pocket, he bade us illuminate the stone pavement as he knelt to examine it in close detail. At length, he spoke.

"Ah ha! Look here! You see, these tiny shreds, torn from the boot heels," he enthused, nodding in the direction they seemed to lead, beneath an archway and onto an adjoining street. "Illuminate the pavement up to and through that arch and we'll most likely find they lead to the spot of the initial attack." The three of us did as Holmes instructed, leading him just a bit beyond the arch, where the telltale shreds of Mary Anne Nichols' boots disappeared.

"Yes, this is where the assault began, at this precise spot!" Using his arms to indicate the surrounding perimeter of the area, he instructed us to illuminate the pavement in a circle, roughly thirty feet across. Holmes now got down onto his hands and knees, holding his glass to best advantage and searched for whatever clues as might be discovered. As he continued along in this fashion, we could hear him utter in a very low voice: "Yes...yes...yes...". Suddenly Sherlock stopped, picked something up from the pavement and began to scrutinize it with great care. "Eureka," he finally exclaimed. "We have

something! Kindly help me to my feet, Watson." I assisted Holmes in getting up from the pavement and he presented his find with palpable excitement. "You see here? A fragment from a clay pipe!"

On the 5th of September, all of London was entreated to the following headline from the Star:

'LEATHER APRON.'

THE ONLY NAME LINKED WITH THE

WHITECHAPEL MURDERS.

A NOISELESS MIDNIGHT TERROR.

The Strange Character who Prowls About

Whitechapel After Midnight - Universal

Fear Among the "Women - Slippered Feet

and a Sharp Leather-Knife.

According to the hastily assembled conjecture printed by this and other periodicals, Leather Apron was a Jewish slipper maker who had given up his trade in order to terrify and murder prostitutes at night. The name Jack Pizer had not yet reached the papers, which was considered to be for the best. The hysteria in East London was already sufficiently fueled by those who had personal stakes in the game, eager to share and swap the latest rumors, regardless of how wild or improbable they might be. Descriptions of the nefarious Leather Apron followed a typically British Music Hall theme of the melodrama villain: an expression of sinister malevolence, with "small eyes which reflected street lamps in a way that made them appear to glitter fearsomely. His lips were usually parted, forming a grin that is especially repellent," said one anonymous shopkeeper, adding that he

was "unquestionably mad; anyone who met him face to face would know it." Leather Apron's eyes were invariably described as "always moving, always shifting uneasily," as one frightened woman declared. "He never looks nobody in the eye," said another. To the inhabitants of Whitechapel, this man had achieved legendary status even before the murders had begun, routinely bullying and even terrorizing prostitutes during the late hours. But as to his actual whereabouts, neither the press nor the police had even a sound guess.

The situation at Scotland Yard was worsening exponentially by the hour. Robert Anderson had yet to return from his treatment for exhaustion in Switzerland and his temporary replacement, Chief Constable Adolphus Williamson, was fast reaching the end of his tether. Realizing that immediate action was now required, Chief Inspector Donald Sutherland gave new orders, requiring that a tried and true officer, Donald Swanson, be given full charge of the entire investigation, with all due speed. Back at home, my wife Mary had grown disturbingly impatient with my comings and goings. Finally, she snapped.

"Why can't I be included in at least some of these discussions?" Mary argued. "I am sufficiently intelligent to be your wife, but not so when it comes to the intricacies of crime solving? Is that it, basically?"

"It is dangerous work, Mary," I responded, rather feebly, I must admit, "and not suitable for a woman's delicate sensibilities."

"And what sensibilities are those?" Mary began, with considerable ferocity.

"The iron constitutions of nurses in battle, holding mutilated soldiers as they gurgle their final breaths? Neighborhood women offering help and comfort to the female victims of their husband's brutalities? Or their children? Exactly what manner of weakling do you take me for, John?"

To Mary's great credit, she has never entered into an argument that wasn't worth the aggravation it might cause and so it was in this particular instance. It did not take much time for me to agree. "Yes, Mary I do hereby concede your point," I offered. "At our next gathering - Holmes, Lestrade, Miss Hoepfner - we will all meet here first, at our home and afterwards, if needs be, we shall move on. Is that to your liking?"

"It is to my liking, very much so," Mary replied. "Thank you, John." It did not take very long for this new and very sensible arrangement to be put to the test, for on the eighth of September, the body of Annie Chapman was discovered at approximately 6:00 in the morning. Sprawled hideously between steps and an adjoining fence, in close proximity to the back yard doorway of 29 Hanbury Street, Mrs. Chapman had been left on her back, with clothes disarranged and her legs drawn up. Covered in blood, which also drenched the ground surrounding the corpse, it was a "terrifying sight to behold," as one officer on the scene described the display.

The body had been discovered by John Davis, a nearby resident, who immediately ran for the police. By the time Inspector Joseph Handler of H. Division had arrived at the scene, the time was 6:15 AM. After quickly summoning the district medical examiner, Dr. Bagster Phillips, Inspector Handler began a cursory examination of the crime scene and surrounding yard. With the arrival of the medical examiner, Annie Chapman's body was placed into the very same ambulance as had been used for Mary Ann Nichols less than a week before and transported to the very same Mortuary at Whitechapel. By noon of that day, all of East London was seething with anger and "paralyzed with fear," as reported in the Echo; virtually all businesses in the immediate vicinity had been shut down. Angry mobs filled the streets and details of the unfathomably gory crime scene were on every tongue. Newspapers fought tooth and nail for the latest facts. One woman, it

was reported, actually died while reading one such account, so distraught from the descriptions of Chapman's murder that she collapsed "in a fit," and expired shortly thereafter; "killed by emotion," as the Star reported.

Somewhat ominously, yet not exactly by surprise, I was approached by Inspector Edmund Rein, still licking his wounds from that recent humiliation. "I don't mind confessing, Dr. Watson, that having been demoted in such a sudden and public manner was very hard for me to take," he said, just outside the building where I share my practice. "I should have expected it, I suppose, but crimes such as we've been seeing are entirely without precedent. Departmental panic now seems, in hindsight, to have been completely predictable."

"So what will you do now?" I asked, feigning interest.

"I know how shallow this will sound to your ears, but I would be most interested in sharing information, as it materializes, with your man," Inspector Rein answered uncomfortably. 'Saving face,' Holmes had predicted not too long ago.

"By 'your man,'" I began my reply, "I surmise that you are referring to Sherlock Holmes, yes?"

"I am," Rein replied. "Assuming, of course, that the two of you are currently taking interest in the murders?" Not wishing to alienate the Inspector altogether, yet determined not to reveal anything of importance, I was circumspect in my reply.

"We are discussing the killings, of course," I ventured, "but are not engaged in any investigative capacities as of yet."

"Are you including Inspector Lestrade in any of these discussions?" At last, a direct question, requiring a direct response.

"No," I lied. For several moments, Reid regarded me with transparent suspicion – he tilted his head upward, as if searching heaven for a proper reply, then back down again, meeting my eyes.

"Whatever the case, sir, there is much at stake in our present situation," Reid offered.

"Quite," I answered with a curt nod. 'Like a snake,' I thought to myself. And with that, the two of us bid one another a proper Republican "good day," and went our separate ways. Meanwhile, my friend Sherlock Holmes also had a visitor, at 221B Baker Street. The loud knocking at the front door was answered by Mrs. Hudson, who was quite taken aback by the sight of Chief Inspector Donald Sutherland, Donald Swanson and several uniformed police officers, all scowling in the officious manner common to virtually all policemen.

"Is Mr. Sherlock Holmes about?" Inspector Sutherland inquired.

"He's usually about," Mrs. Hudson replied. "He lives on the second floor. I'm his landlady."

"We need to see him, toot swēt," Sutherland officiously declared. "A matter of the gravest urgency."

"Sufficiently grave to justify the rudeness of your tone?" Mrs. Hudson retorted.

"This is official police business," Inspector Swanson interjected. "We must see him now."

"And I'm not your bloomin' lackey," Mrs. Hudson said, in a voice that would have intimidated a cobra. "You'll show some proper manners, or I'll shut the door in your bleedin' face."

In the end, Sutherland and Swanson were admitted and led upstairs to the appropriate flat, where Sherlock greeted them with sympathetic affability. The uniformed officers remained outside,

standing guard. “Good Day, gentlemen,” Holmes greeted, with a bemused smile. “I see you’ve made it past my gatekeeper. Congratulations.” After the formalities of introduction had been observed, the two visitors sat down and came right to the point.

“You’ve no doubt heard of the latest murder in Whitechapel,” Swanson began.

“I have,” Holmes replied.

“There will be an inquest, the day after tomorrow,” Swanson continued. “We’d very much like for you to be present.”

“To what end?” Holmes bluntly inquired.

“I should think the reason self evident,” Swanson answered, visibly perturbed. “All of London is in an uproar over these killings. Citizens are filling the streets, demanding swift and sure action. As England’s most celebrated detective, you could potentially become Scotland Yard’s greatest asset in this affair.”

“Could I, indeed?” came Holmes’ jaundiced reply. “Frankly, I fail to see how any of us could benefit from such an arrangement.”

“It is true that you and the London Police Department have often been at odds,” Sutherland answered with an undeniable air of strained diplomacy. “We are bound by certain traditions and protocols, while you are not.”

“Correction, sir,” Holmes snapped back. “I proceed in my work utilizing logic, critical thinking and adherence to fact, whereas your department relies on impressions, assumptions and long held opinions, unencumbered as you generally are, with precise information.”

“Look here, sir, all I am asking of you is that you attend our inquest and participate in any way you see fit.”

“And I decline your most generous offer, Inspector.”

"Chief Inspector."

"As you say, Chief Inspector," Sherlock replied, deftly bringing the interview to its conclusion. When Sherlock later recounted this meeting to me, I must say that I found myself confused, both by the bluntness of his manner - at least as he described it to me, for Holmes seldom exaggerated - but also by his utter lack of open-mindedness. This was a rare thing indeed for Holmes and when he finished with his conveyance, I began to wonder whether there might be something in this case he found particularly troubling. From within the maelstrom of intense emotions now spewing forth on the streets of East London, newspaper articles seemed to be working at cross purposes - on the one hand striving to document the anger and hatred apparent to anyone with eyes and ears; and on the other hand to pour oil over the flames already raging. As the East London Observer declared, in an article headlined -

A Riot against the Jews:

"On Saturday in several quarters of East London the crowds who had assembled in the streets began to assume a very threatening attitude towards the Hebrew population of the district. It was repeatedly asserted that no Englishman could have perpetrated such a horrible crime as that of Hanbury Street and that it must have been done by a Jew."

Another paper, Lloyd's Weekly, made this observation:

"Bodies of young roughs raised cries against the Jews and many of the disreputable and jabbering women sided with them. Noisy

crowds roamed the streets, shouting 'down with the Jews!' and the police had a difficult time keeping things under control."

The article went on to say that huge numbers within these crowds were shouting for the capture and lynching of "Leather Apron," who was reported to have had a "Jewish appearance." Given the rapidly developing and explosive nature of the day's events, there was much to be discussed later that evening, after dark, at our group's hastily arranged meeting, which was to take place at the home Mary and I shared. It should be mentioned that there was one investigative chain at that moment, completely unknown to Lestrade and myself, though possibly known by Sherlock. It would only seem natural, then, that those in high authority at Scotland Yard would quietly yet vigorously begin investigations based on the barometer readings of public outcry and, optimistically, whatever the press might dig up. Thus it happened that Robert Anderson began, upon his return from Switzerland, maximum scrutiny on a Polish Jew named Aaron Kosminski, who lived in the heart of the Whitechapel district.

Those who knew the man generally avoided him. and with good reason. Exhibiting such unsavory social traits as melancholia, self-delusion, chronic masturbation, violence toward women and an abject refusal to bathe, Kosminski easily stood out as one of Whitechapel's most repellent residents. Citizens of that district would no doubt have readily strung him up, without a trial, as the killer they were seeking out.

Upon his eventual admission to the Colney Hatch Asylum (some years hence), Kosminski's symptoms were officially listed as mania, incoherence, extreme delusion, chronic self-abuse and a believe that all his actions are "dominated by an Instinct," or "probable aural hallucination." Kosminski's past was of the checkered variety,

including participation in an attempted political assassination in Russia, a short-lived marriage in Poland, work as a tailor. and eventual emigration to East London, where he rapidly deteriorated. Kosminski was the first topic of discussion at our group meeting.

"Anderson is an incompetent dolt," Holmes declared. "We should count ourselves lucky he was never given charge of the Whitechapel investigation, though I'm not certain that Swanson is any improvement in that regard."

"So is this Kosminski fellow just another Jack Pizer?" Lestrade asked. "Another Leather Apron?"

"They are one and the same," Holmes asserted sharply. "Little pieces of glass, floating in a kaleidoscope. And there will be more, still, to come, I assure you. Brightly colored objects, diverting attention from where it should be."

"And who is creating this diversion?" Mary asked.

"Not so much a 'who' as a 'what,' my fellow devote of the great Elizabethan poet," Sherlock playfully answered. "He is my nemesis, my evil genius." Then, seeming to stare off at something unseen to the rest of us, he continued. "'Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time into this breathing world.' He beckons me with a boney finger, Mary. He has me staring at him, into and through the void and he stares back at me, likewise, straight though it. And thus I know and yet I do not know, his face." And with that, Holmes turned and faced Mary directly. "He's out there, grinning at me with his death's head smirk. He's there, tasking me, but in the end, I shall find him." Ever the pragmatist, I decided it was high time to redirect the discussion.

"Now, as to tomorrow's inquest?" I asked the room.

"Yes, that," Lestrade quickly replied. "My superiors at Scotland Yard are anxious that you be present, Sherlock."

"I've already received and declined their invitation," Sherlock frostily answered.

"I'd like to say something, if I may," Molly quietly interjected. All present bade her continue, as if with one voice. "No proper post mortem has yet been performed on Annie Chapman," she began. "The Chief Medical Examiner hasn't the stomach for this, though he is doing his best to hide that fact. For now, all post mortems are being left to me, but I'm not sure how long that will last."

"How typically male, leaving the dirty work for us women," Mary commented. I turned to her and our eyes met. Scant moments later, I nodded; her point had been quite well taken. In the end, it was agreed that Molly, Lestrade and I would attend the inquest. Mary and Sherlock would abstain, to the least detriment of discretion; all five of us would then reconvene upon word from Molly. Interestingly, not one among us - not even Holmes - found reason to question my wife's participation in the evening's gathering. In point of fact, Sherlock seemed to have been invigorated by it. And yet... there was something about his manner I found disquieting.

And so it was that Molly, Lestrade and I attended the inquest into Annie Chapman's murder - though not together - the following evening. Arranged in a courtroom-like setting in one of the larger municipal buildings managed by the police department, even their most spacious room could scarcely contain the enormous crowd pushing their way into attendance. From the start, there was a feeling in the air that all of East London had been transformed, almost overnight, into a place no one recognized. Up until now, the police had exercised caution by not disclosing many of the particulars of this murder. The press had, nevertheless, managed to gain access to some of the more guarded and gruesome details. Many throughout London openly discussed the butchery in hideous detail, yet there were those

among them who chose to believe that many of these claims were gross exaggerations. All of that came to an abrupt end as the inquest got under way.

"The first thing to strike me as significant," Dr. Phillips began, addressing the crowded room, "is that not only has this woman been brutally mutilated, but that there are very clear indications that a practiced hand is at work."

A soft murmur ran through the crowd. Dr. Phillips allowed for several long moments, just enough for the noise to die down and then continued.

"I also believe that a clear attempt was made to decapitate the victim, as indicated by two distinct, clean cuts made on the body of the vertebrae on the left side of the spine. They run parallel to each other and are separated by roughly a half an inch. The muscular structures between the side processes of the bone and the vertebrae had an appearance as if an attempt had been made to separate the bones of the neck."

At this juncture in Dr. Phillip's presentation, he paused slightly, as if he had doubts about his next assertion. With a stiff upper lip, he bravely marched forth. "We have determined the cause of death to be a severed carotid artery, resulting from a jagged left-to-right incision across the throat. We also believe that the victim was at least partially strangled before the cut was made, as the victim's tongue was much swollen and protruding from between the front teeth, but not beyond the lips." Hearing this, the crowd's increasing restlessness took hold, whispering and murmuring in suspicion and outright disbelief. A man called out from the uneasy group:

"Which was it, then, a cut throat or strangulation?" Phillips did his best to continue. "There are various other mutilations of the body, but these are so gruesome that it would be too painful to the feelings of

inquest participants and the public for me to describe them." Hardly a stellar presentation and the crowd was having none of it. Molly and I searched the room for one another and our eyes finally met. We shook our heads disgustedly, in tandem, as Phillips continued with a voice that grew ever shakier. Finally, another voice rose above the noise:

"Where is Sherlock Holmes in all of this? Why is he not here?" With that, the entire room was transformed, in an instant, to a battlefield of shouting and recriminations of every sort. For several excruciatingly long moments, I feared that a riot was eminent and that the marshals, jurors and speakers of the inquest all stood in risk to their collective safety. Calls for order to be restored rang out, until the mayhem began to recede. The pounding gavel eventually brought the group back to a manageable state and Chief Inspector Donald Sutherland stepped forward and addressed the hall in a voice resonating with suppressed outrage.

"In addressing the question just put forth, regarding the detective Sherlock Holmes, be in no doubt as to the sole reason for his absence: he was invited - with official urgency - to attend and he quite simply refused to do so. Mr. Holmes is a private citizen and not under the employ of Scotland Yard. He is therefore free to do or not do as he sees fit!"

The inquest was not too long in coming back to full order and Dr. Phillips once again took the podium, this time with the intention of sharing greater detail with those gathered.

"It appears that, as I stated before, these mutilations could only have been effected by a practiced hand. The victim's abdomen has been entirely laid open. The intestines, severed from their mesenteric attachments, were lifted out of the body and placed on the shoulders of the corpse. Certain internal organs were removed as well."

As the first day of the inquest came to a shaky conclusion, most (if not all) of London shared an observable state of stunned quietude. Like a creeping fog, a cruel numbness had taken hold of our city, beguiling its inhabitants into a state of metaphysical isolation and cold despair. Where was our humanity? Where was our God? Where was our savior? Where was Sherlock Holmes?

Then, as if to provide the world with an answer, the following letter arrived at London's Central News Agency, written cursively and in red colored ink:

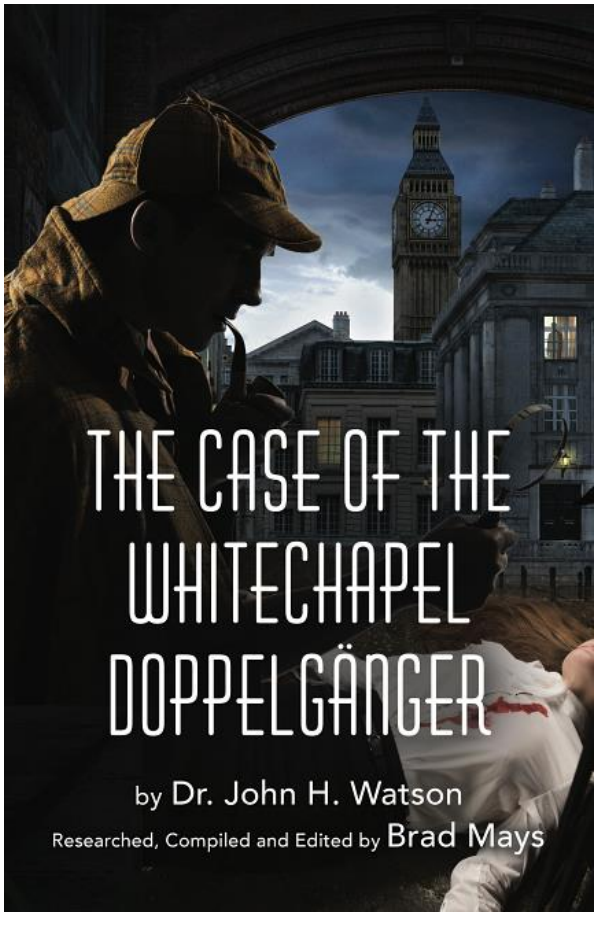
"Dear Boss, I keep on hearing the police have caught me but they won't fix me just yet. I have laughed when they look so clever and talk about being on the right track. That joke about Leather Apron gave me real fits. I am down on whores and shant quit ripping them till I do get buckled. Grand work the last one was. I gave the lady no time to squeal. How can they catch me now. I love my work and want to start again. You will soon hear of me with my funny little games. I save some of the proper red stuff in a ginger beer bottle over the last jog to write with but it went think like glue and I cant use it. Red ink is fit enough I hope ha ha ha. The next job I do I shall clip the ladys ears off and send to the police officers just for jolly wouldn't you. Keep this letter back till I do a bit more work, then give it out straight. My knife's so nice and sharp I want to get to work right away if I get a chance. Good Luck.

Yours truly

Jack the Ripper

Dont mind me giving the trade name

PS Wasnt good enough to post this before I got all the red ink off my hands curse it No luck yet. They say I’m a doctor now. Ha ha



Sherlock Holmes is persuaded to assist Scotland Yard in their pursuit of Jack the Ripper, following the killer across the Atlantic all the way to America, and beyond. In the process, Holmes discovers the two have much in common.

The Case of the Whitechapel Doppelgänger

By John H. Watson MD; Researched, Compiled and Edited by Brad Mays

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