

## Part Seven

### The Case of the Casino Night Caper

*(SOUND: Cards shuffling, and low level ambiance of a full “Casino Night” at the Admiral’s Shanks.)*

*(SCENE: INT. The Admiral’s Shanks. Late. FAWX and SARAH sit at the card table with three melancholy middle-aged men who are completely silent.)*

FAWX

So... Dealer, Gentleman, Gentleman, Gentleman. What’s the name of the game at this table?

DEALER

Well Mr...

FAWX

Kensington. Britt Kensington. Gentleman gambler and rogue. And this is my... Wi - girlfriend -?

SARAH

Associate. Bridgegirdle. Septima Bridgegirdle.

FAWX

Yes. Septima. My Associate. You understand, gents. Wife at home. Casino night. The dogs will play, eh. We’re all on the level here.

*(SARAH elbows him.)*

Ahh! Only fooling gents, I’m not having an affair.

*(SOUND: She elbows him. Harder.)*

This is a working relationship.

*(SOUND: She elbows him again.)*

I was just lying to make myself feel like more of a man!

DEALER

Well, Mr. Kensington and Ms... Bridgegirdle. This is the owner's table and as such we are playing the owner's game: Kribbitz.

FAWX

Excellent. Hit me with the rules. I love a challenge.

DEALER

I hold in my hand a deck of cards. Players must make a bet on at least one of four possible characteristics, colour of card, suit, value, and fools, also known in the public houses and stag nights as the Joker, of which there is one. The odds increase the more specific the bet gets, as does the value of the pot given the chances of winning - 50% chance of winning on colours, 25 on suits, 8 for values, and less than 2% for the Fool.

FAWX

...So....I'm just trying to guess what card will get pulled.

DEALER

Yes.

FAWX

Ok, then why not just say that? You know, it's much more complicated the way you just explained it.

DEALER

I'll do my best to simplify for you, Mr. Kensington. Would you like to play?

*(Brief beat. Time to impress:)*

FAWX

Deal me in for 2 crowns!

SARAH

*(whispering to FAWX)*

What are you doing?

FAWX

Blending. Trust me, there's nothing to worry about. It's like the dealer said, it's just a simple matter of statistics - weighing the odds and keeping track of what came before. You just have to spot the pattern!

DEALER

First bet is to you, sir.

FAWX

2 crowns on... the 9 of clubs.

*(The DEALER takes bets from the other two players at the table. FAWX addresses SARAH. Sincerely.)*

Don't worry. I've got this.

SARAH

I'm severely worried that you don't.

*(SOUND: The DEALER slaps down a card.)*

DEALER

2 of hearts.

*(SOUND: The DEALER throws a few coins to one of the men.)*

FAWX

Ahem. Just... warming up.

### CREDITS

**Fawx and Stallion, by Ian Geers and Lauren Grace Thompson. Part Seven: The Case of the Casino Night Caper**

*(SCENE: INT. The Admiral's Shanks. Late. Where we just left off.)*

FAWX

2 crowns on the Jack... of diamonds.

*(FAWX looks to SARAH giving her an affirming nod.)*

This one's our hand.

SARAH

Whatever you say, Mr. Kensington.

DEALER

3 of hearts, Gentlemen.

FAWX

Oh, come on! -

SARAH

Keep your voice down!

FAWX

Sorry, I'm just not -

SARAH

Winning?

DEALER

Would you like to bet on the next round, sir?

FAWX

Yes!

SARAH

Bloody hell. I hope Madge and James are having better luck than us.

*(SOUND: A bucket of water getting poured on STALLION)*

*(SCENE. INT. a Private room in The Admiral's Shanks. Same time.)*

STALLION

Jesus Christ! That's freezing.

OSKAR

That'll be the ice water..

STALLION

You don't say. And by the time I get this blindfold off my tuxedo had better be clean—and I expect it to be hung up!

OSKAR

I don't think you have a lot of room to be making demands, Mr. Stallion.

STALLION

That's never stopped me before.

OSKAR

Just keep ya trap shut.

STALLION

You do realise that cold water holds significantly more impurities than hot water, right? Now who's the shit detective.

*(SOUND: Another bucket of water gets poured on STALLION. This time it's hot.)*

Jesus!

OSKAR

Sorry did I not mention the hot water was coming next?

STALLION

No! You didn't!

OSKAR

Oopsie. Now are you ready to talk about what you were doing at the Crimeria Estate this morning.

STALLION

Volunteering!

OSKAR

If you'd actually been *volunteering*, wouldn't you have brought what we told ya?

STALLION

Right, and I did! Just remind me, real quick, what was that, exactly?

OSKAR

You got some cheek, don't ya.

STALLION

Well if I hadn't been stripped of my tux I can assure you the "cheek" factor would be significantly lowered. Could I perhaps get a towel or high thread-count robe?

OSKAR

First interrogation?

STALLION

What made you guess?

*(SOUND: Another bath of water is poured over him.)*

Oh my god! Why is it cold again?

OSKAR

I poured an extra just in case I spilled. Now, are you ready to talk?

STALLION

*(shivering)*

Sure, just give me a moment to go into hypothermic shock.

OSKAR

Jesus Christ... fuckin' rich people.

*(SOUND: A secret knock. Through the door:)*

CLARENCE

Oy!

*(CLARENCE opens the door, pops his head in)*

He's on deck, yeah?

OSKAR

Heard.

*(SOUND: The door closes.)*

STALLION

On deck for what? Another trip to the baths?

OSKAR

Well, since you didn't bring what we told ya to, *you'll* have to do.

STALLION

*(to himself)*

Madge, you'd better be having better luck than me right now...

*(SOUND: The sexy music from the last time MADGE and SAZARAC hooked up in episode 4. Candles are burning. A sexy vibe. She is having much better luck than James.)*

*(SCENE: INT. Another private room in The Admiral's Shanks. Very exclusive, there's even a bed.)*

*(MADGE and SAZARAC are lying in said bed, still out of breath.)*

SAZARAC

Now *that* is what I call a reunion, Ms. Pangea.

MADGE

I can think of worse bookends to my day, Ms. Sazarac...

SAZARAC

Furina, please. Cigarette?

MADGE

When in Rome. *Furina*.

*(SOUND: SAZARAC lights MADGE's cigarette, then her own.)*

SAZARAC

You have no idea how glad I was to see you tonight.

MADGE

Pretty happy coincidence, I'd say. Any major events in your neck of the woods between this morning and now?

SAZARAC

*(almost chokes as she inhales)*

Come again?

MADGE

I mean, I'll do my best...

SAZARAC

No, sorry. It's just... No one ever asks me about my day.

MADGE

Oh no. That's a shame.

SAZARAC

*(sitting up)*

Even just now, when you asked, I could feel my whole body tense up like a child who was just caught by her lower-middleclass parents stuffing the family's Figgy Pudding under her bed to satisfy her night hungers. Caught me off guard, I suppose.

MADGE

Oh well, why don't you just come over to Ms. Pangea. She can help with that tension.

*(MADGE sits up and gets SAZARAC in place for a shoulder massage)*

SAZARAC

So I just... sit here.

MADGE

Exactly. Then I touch your shoulders. Is that ok?

SAZARAC

Yes...

MADGE

There we go. Now why don't you tell me about your day?

SAZARAC

Oh... Oh wow... oh yes, this is a nice back touch, indeed.

MADGE

Learned my technique at day camp as a child. Now tell me about ya day? In detail. From the beginning.



SAZARAC

Mmmm... why do you want to know about my day?

MADGE

Well, it's what's causing you tension, innit? We don't want that...

SAZARAC

I know but it's private... I can't say...

MADGE

You can't...?

SAZARAC

No... but god, now I want to...

MADGE

Well I'm here to listen if you wanna say...

SAZARAC

But I can't... It's just...

MADGE

Yeah...?

*(SOUND: Knock on the door.)*

SAZARAC

Go away! I'm relaxing!!!

CLARENCE

*(muffled through the door)*

Ms Sazarac? It's Clarence. I can't hear you through the door.

SAZARAC

I said, I -!

MADGE

Why don't you go ahead, Furina. You know I can help you relax when you get back.

SAZARAC

Ugh, fine. Duty calls, as they say...

*(SAZARAC gets up and goes to the door.)*

CLARENCE

*(still on the other side of the door)*

Ms. Sazarac -

*(SAZARAC opens the door)*

SAZARAC

What are you doing?! You see the ribbon on the door! Where did you learn etiquette, Clarence!

MADGE

Yeah, Clarence!

SAZARAC

This is exactly why I'm an accountant and you're a thug.

CLARENCE

Noted. Sorry ma'am. I'll get better at my etiquette skills before I take the bar. They're ready for you.

SAZARAC

Ugh... Finish this another time then?

MADGE

If we must, we must.

CLARENCE

I'll need your guest's name for the log.?

MADGE

I'm sorry, 'log'?

SAZARAC

Oh this is 'Madge Stallion'. She'll be my guest for this evening, won't you, Madge.

MADGE

I...will... fuck, I hope Hampton is having better luck than me.

*(SCENE; INT. The Admiral's Shanks. Kribbitz Table. Same time.)*

DEALER

5 of clubs.

*(HAMPTON hits the table in despair, chips rattle a bit)*

FAWX

Come the fuck on!

DEALER

That makes 3 games lost and an exciting 90 seconds of play for the rest of the table. Shall I deal you in another hand?

SARAH

*(face in her hands at this point)*

Perhaps we should cut you off for the night.

FAWX

*(to SARAH, but also to himself because he needs it)*

No, I'm going to win this. It's just deduction. Simple elimination based on the previous patterns and random chance which is why I'm going to go for... the Queen...? Of spades!

DEALER

What's your wager?

FAWX

2 crowns.

DEALER

Adventurous. You must present it on the table.

FAWX

*(to SARAH)*

Can I borrow 2 crowns?

SARAH

You only brought 4 crowns with you? To a casino night?

FAWX

Well how was I supposed to know what the small blind was at this table.

SARAH

You're seated next to the dealer! *You* made the small blind!

FAWX

Well now I have to match it otherwise they'll know we don't belong here.

SARAH

UGH, I hate that that made sense.

*(SOUND: She hands him the money.)*

DEALER

All bets are in. And the winning card is... the 4 of hearts.

FAWX

No, no, that's not - No!

SARAH

Come on! The pattern was right there! You couldn't tell what came after 2 and 3?

FAWX

It couldn't be that simple. There have been no Queens on the table this whole game, so probability said it was the most likely card to pull next. Obviously this is some sort of a trick deck or something!

SARAH

Or, it really is that simple and the pattern is right in front of your eyes. Oy, dealer. 2 crowns, 5 of hearts.

*(The DEALER takes the rest of the bets.)*

FAWX

No, it can't be that easy. Lightning doesn't strike 4 times in a row, it barely does 3! Go with the Queen of clubs. Just consider it!

SARAH

It's been considered. 20 crowns, 5 of hearts.

*(SOUND: The DEALER slaps down the card.)*

DEALER

Queen of clubs.

FAWX/SARAH

See, I told you/Oh fuck this game!

*(MUSIC: a slinky riff on the Victorian Budos Band/Ocean's 11 theme.)*

SCHNUTZ

Be a dear and deal me in, Prudence. I've got a feeling this may be my lucky table...

*(SOUND: A stylish woman in an emerald green dress takes a seat next at the table. The same woman who was speaking to SAZARAC and OSKAR earlier. As she sits down the other players all quietly get up and leave.)*

DEALER

But of course, Ma'am.

*(The woman, Catalina Montgomery SCHNUTZ, sets her Pims Cup down. The pH of the room changes when she sits down. SARAH's entire demeanour stiffens.)*

SCHNUTZ

My grandmother taught me how to play Kribbitz. Every Sunday, my mother and father would leave me home with her while they futilely pretended their marriage wasn't falling apart. They used to always say, "Don't teach her any of those old country gambling games. The friends it'll make her aren't the ones she needs". They meant well. According to them. What they didn't realise though, was that games are the only way children communicate. Win a game against the neighbourhood bully and your spot in the grade school hierarchy was tenuous, but recognized. However, introduce a new game? The hierarchy shifts. Now you're leading the conversation. And once you lead the conversation everything funnels to you: information, objectives...people. And then, before you know it, you can predict the moves of everyone and everything in your orbit: even a random card. Which leads me...to you.

FAWX

Me?

SCHNUTZ

No.

SARAH

Me?

SCHNUTZ

Yes. You. Who... are you? You don't seem to be romantically involved with this man and yet you're pulling money from your discretionary areas to aid in his bets, while being ever so careful to not play the game yourself. So what are you? A gentlewoman? An heiress I haven't had the pleasure of meeting? Or... something else...

FAWX

Well, *I'm* Britt Kensington, gentleman gambler -

SCHNUTZ

I'm afraid there's not room for more than one game at this table, Mr. Fawx. Your company was expected. However you, miss -

FAWX

*(Trying to cover for SARAH)*

"Mrs." -

SCHNUTZ

Oh really, what makes you so sure?

FAWX

Because... If one assumes every woman they see to be wed, it makes every time that isn't the case... a special surprise.

SCHNUTZ

So your assumption of this young lady's marriage credentials lay entirely on your own hopes for a... "special surprise"?

FAWX

... Not entirely. I can also deduce -

DEALER

Bet is yours, ma'am.

SCHNUTZ

Excuse me. 4 pounds on the ace of hearts. Now... Your deduction. I'm on pins.

FAWX

*(clearing his throat)*

For one, her dress. A modest cut, late century. Exclusive to Farthing's '81 Collection. Stylish and modern, minimally worn. Indicative of a lack of nightlife exposure, the life of a married woman. A dress of this stature and care, while previously worn by the bourgeoisie, now is only used for special occasions. The earrings are from three seasons ago, the shoes five. And don't even get me started on the purse.

SARAH

I don't have a purse.

FAWX

Exactly. Which is why *I'll* call... on the Fool.

SCHNUTZ

Well. Look at you. That was impressive, if not mildly adorable. But I'm afraid, Mr. Fawx, you're not the only one here with the power of deduction.

FAWX

Moved to prove the contrary? Be my guest.

*(SOUND: DEALER flips over the card..)*

DEALER

The Ace of Hearts.

SCHNUTZ

She isn't wearing a ring.

FAWX

Oh. Yes, well. That.

SARAH

Admirable effort.

FAWX

Thank you.

SARAH

I was being facetious.

FAWX

I know.

SCHNUTZ

As do I... Sarah Fletchley. You know, I had a feeling I'd be seeing you tonight.

SARAH

Oh, I doubt that, Catalina.

SCHNUTZ

Good. Because now, *I* was being facetious.

SARAH

Hampton, this is Catalina -

SCHNUTZ

Catalina Montgomery Schnutz, Mr. Fawx. However, most know me by the tiresome moniker "The Hammer." Bemused to meet you.

*(She holds out her hand to shake. He takes it.)*

FAWX

Charmed. Speaking of rings...I couldn't help but notice yours. Pewter, inlaid with the image of a...what is that, a...hammer?

SCHNUTZ

Can't get anything past you, detective.

FAWX

You know, I had a run in the other day with a man wearing the same ring. A banker. Perhaps an...associate of yours?



SCHNUTZ

Oh, perhaps indeed, detective. If only there were a way to narrow it down. You see, dozens of those rings are running around my establishment. It's a bit of a party favour, you see, gifted to a particular group of... close friends. Think of it as an... Employee of the Month prize for unobtrusively separating patrons from trinkets they otherwise wouldn't miss. I seem to notice that very ring on your little finger now, that must have been a neat bit of trickery. Are you currently seeking employment?

FAWX

*(trying to be flirty—he's not good at it)*

Perhaps, if you told me a bit more about the...perks of the job...

SCHNUTZ

Why don't you ask your freshly-deduced, unwed friend here, Miss Fletchley? She knows all sorts of things about the goings on around here. Or she *did*, at least.

FAWX

Sarah...?

SCHNUTZ

Of course, that's before she decided to leave us a while back for more...honourable pastures. They grow up so fast, don't they? But sooner or later they always come crawling back to mummy for a glass of full fat milk...Oh, sorry, love. Too soon?

*(SARAH moves to get up, FAWX stops her.)*

SARAH/FAWX

Don't you dare—/Sarah....

SCHNUTZ

You know, it's so good seeing you here, Sarah. And on Casino Night, of all nights. But god knows, I love symmetry.

FAWX

Casino Night?

SARAH

She doesn't know what she's talking about.

SCHNUTZ

Oh, come now, Sarah. You know that's not true. Honestly, Mr. Fawx, I'm surprised she hasn't told you yet. That says a lot.

FAWX

It does?

SARAH

It doesn't.

SCHNUTZ

Sarah's last sojourn at The Admiral's Shanks was also during a Casino Night, nearly one year ago, do you remember? The time does fly. If I recall correctly, as I always do, that was the night that the house winnings "mysteriously" disappeared.

SARAH

Jesus, I had already put in my notice, I had a new job ready to take me. You just couldn't bear the thought of anyone around here leaving this shithole and making an honest go of it, could ya? You had to take that from me, too.

SCHNUTZ

And have you? "Made an honest go"? No offence, *Miss* Fletchley, but it seems like these things just keep following your family, again and again and again. Like spiders caught in the bathwater, circling the drain, delaying the inevitable...

FAWX

Quite the alarming image but I think that's enough, Ms –

SARAH

Catalina, I think you and I should speak in private or I'm gonna have to start asking you, in front of all these people-

SCHNUTZ

By now you should know how the game is played, Fletchley. And your part in it. I taught you well. Now, Mr. Fawx, I believe you owe me four pounds for a losing bet, and I should tell you there's only one currency I'm willing to accept.

FAWX

...francs?

*(SOUND: a small gun cocking)*

SCHNUTZ

Why don't you follow Clarence here into the back and we can... hash it all out.

*(SOUND: FAWX and SARAH push out their chairs and begin walking.)*

*(SOUND: The back hall is cavernous and dark. FAWX, SARAH, SCHNUTZ and CLARENCE walk down the hallway.)*

*(SARAH and FAWX are being forcefully escorted to the back of the pub and down a set of stairs to a dark, dingy, basement. SCHNUTZ is leading with CLARENCE.)*

FAWX

Really, Sarah? You never told us you had a past!

SARAH

We all have a past. I told you I worked at the seediest, most depraved place on the East End. You think that's possible without doing some things you're not particularly alright with?

FAWX

I do! But I've been vouching for you! I've been laying my reputation on the line while it turns out this whole time you've been versed in... juvenile crimes!

SARAH

I did what I had to do, and I got out when I could. Or at least, I tried. They don't make it easy round here. Besides, you don't think Holmes and Watson haven't interacted with the odd pickpocket or two?

FAWX

No, I don't. And even if they did, I'm sure it's for a good reason, like trying to figure out the labyrinthian mind of a criminal.

SARAH

You just called it a 'juvenile crime,' whose crimes do you think they're solving, The Artful Dodger's?

FAWX

Why didn't you just tell me?

SARAH

Injustices don't just happen to saints, Mr Fawx. If you don't understand that, maybe you never should have come.

CLARENCE

Oy! Hush up! There's still a casino night on the other side of them walls.

FAWX

*(whispering)*

Things like this, in your past, could be the reason your mother has been targeted. You said Schnutz set you up once before, to keep you from leaving? Who's to say she hasn't done it again?

SARAH

Hampton -

FAWX

Look, I know there are aspects of this you don't want to tell the police, but if you're serious about *us* helping you...

SCHNUTZ

We're here. Clarence, take Mr. Fawx to get ready.

FAWX

I'm sorry, get ready for what?

*(SOUND: CLARENCE puts a burlap sack over FAWX's head and pushes him off down a dark hallway.)*

I can see why you'd think this sack over my head is necessary but I assure you, I have no clue what's going -

*(SOUND: SCHNUTZ gives a signal - a finger snap. CLARENCE whacks FAWX in the back of the head.)*

SARAH

Oh, come on! You don't need to hurt him, he's harmless!

FAWX  
*(muffled)*

Hey!

*(CLARENCE drags FAWX away down the dark hallway.)*

SCHNUTZ

Don't worry, Sarah. You'll be seeing Mr. Fawx again, very soon. But first, I wanted to show you what we've been up to since you've been gone.

*(SOUND: A coded knock on a large metal door. The door opens.)*

Please, after you...

*(SOUND: The chaos of a CROWD hits SARAH. A raucous audience of men in tuxedos, yelling, drinking, clapping, groaning, and cursing. In the centre of the crowd is a large-domed cage - a wrestling arena. In the cage a skinny man is being beaten to a pulp by another ill-looking man.)*

*(MUSIC: A Victorian punk band shreds in the corner.)*

Welcome to my arena.

SARAH

Alright, this is new.

*(SCENE: INT. The Cage.)*

*(SOUND: We zoom over to: a flashy ANNOUNCER in the ring. A bell dings, signaling the end of the match. The crowd is still chatting excitedly.)*

ANNOUNCER

That's right, gents, let's hear it for the amazing Grizzly Man! More of a cub to me, but we won't hold that against him!

*(The crowd goes wild. The GRIZZLY MAN is handed a sloshing pint of ale as he walks off, ashamed. The loser, The GRASSHOPPER (George) lays on the floor in the arena.)*

SCHNUTZ

I think you'll like this next one. And just between us girls, I'll take your bet.

*(SARAH does not get a good feeling from this.)*

ANNOUNCER

Unfortunately we can't say that's where it ends for our loser, the dear Grasshopper George here, as he's now relegated to the rematch bracket!

*(SOUND: The crowd boos. GEORGE is dragged from the arena)*

Poor little Georgie-boy...But now!

*(SOUND: A heavy door opens, focus drawn to the next fighter that will enter. The crowd hushes.)*

We have something truly, truly special, gentlemen...

*(SOUND: A man is escorted into the arena in the same briefs and mask that were given to FAWX & STALLION at the Crimeria Estate. He has a burlap sack over his head.)*

Hailing all the way from Baker Street. The self-proclaimed greatest detective mind in London.

*(SOUND: The crowd is getting stoked.)*

Not that one.

*(SOUND: The crowd laughs disappointedly.)*

May I introduce to you, your 10-to-1 long shot for the evening, The Fighting Fox!!!!

*(The announcer removes the burlap sack: it's FAWX. He's wearing the briefs and mask.)*

*(SOUND: A zoom in on FAWX and SARAH (outside of reality) as they simultaneously realize:)*

FAWX/SARAH

*Shit.*

*(SOUND: We're back to the arena. The crowd goes wild. Several men are putting in their bets.)*

FAWX

Excuse me, I think you have me mistaken! I'm a detective, not a fighter -

ANNOUNCER

Alright then, I give ya three deductions how this goes for ya.

SCHNUTZ

*(Shouting over the crowd)*

Mr. Fawx, I must say you fill out the uniform quite exquisitely.

FAWX

*(Shouting back)*

Don't suppose that means I could trouble you for a shirt or a pair of trousers perhaps?

ALL (but Sarah)

No!

FAWX

Understood.

*(Shift. We're up in a private booth with SCHNUTZ and SARAH)*

SCHNUTZ

So Sarah. What's your wager?

SARAH

My wager? My wager is that I'm not betting.

SCHNUTZ

Oh boo. I don't know if it's not working here anymore or your mum being on the chopping block but you have become so boring. Dour. It's bad for the skin.

SARAH

Don't bring her into this.

SCHNUTZ

Then wager.

SARAH

No.

SCHNUTZ

Oh come on, don't you even want to ask what's at stake?

SARAH

Not especially.

SCHNUTZ

Fine, then I'm going to pretend that you did because otherwise we're just going to watch this next bit without any context and emotionally it won't really *mean* anything, you know? If you wager right, I'll pull every string I have from the top to the bottom of that rat's nest of a building we call Scotland Yard to free Good Mother Eliza from the noose. *And* I may even have some pertinent information that may be of interest to you. Employee to employee, if you catch my meaning.

*(Beat.)*

SARAH

And if I lose?

SCHNUTZ

I believe you've met Oskar.

*(SOUND: OSKAR emerges from the shadows.)*

OSKAR

Spitting image of your mother, I tell you. Minus the wrinkles and creepy old lady hands.

SCHNUTZ

One bet. Do you believe Hampton Fawx will win this fight?

*(SARAH looks to FAWX in the arena. He looks incredibly lost.)*

FAWX

*(yelling up from the arena)*

So is... am I supposed to *do* anything? I'm just... it's cold?

*(SCHNUTZ looks to SARAH.)*

SCHNUTZ

Tick tock.



SARAH

Catalina. Please just tell me why.

SCHNUTZ

Oh, come now. You came to a Casino Night, but you don't have time for games? Pish, Fletchley. I knew you'd gotten soft but now you're getting boring. Clarence, if you wouldn't mind bringing in our final guest...

*(SOUND: The door to SCHNUTZ's box opens up and in walks CLARENCE escorting a tied up and blindfolded MADGE.)*

MADGE

Where are we going? Get your calloused mitts off me. Feels like being manhandled by 3 week old scones. You need to moisturise, *sir* -

*(CLARENCE ties another blindfold around MADGE's mouth as a makeshift gag.)*

SARAH

Madge!

MADGE

*(gagged)*

Sarah?

CLARENCE

Sorry ma'am. She put up quite a fight. And to be honest, most of it was verbal. And pretty mean.

MADGE

*(gagged)*

Fuck you.

SCHNUTZ

Oh, a fighter.

SARAH

You're sick, you know that?

SCHNUTZ

Don't blame me that your life hasn't led you to be shameless. So... what is it gonna be? Can Hampton Fawx, "gentleman detective," save your mother?

SARAH

Fine. I'll take it. He'll win.

SCHNUTZ

Adorable. The wager is locked.

*(To the ANNOUNCER)*

Bring on the challenger!

*(To SARAH)*

This will be fun. Drink?

*(SOUND: We're down in the arena with FAWX)*

FAWX

*(To SCHNUTZ)*

I'm sorry, "challenger"?

ANNOUNCER

And now.... it is my extreme honour to bring to the arena our prize jewel, our finest specimen of physical prowess, you don't yet know him, but you will love him, the Ragin' Cage Match Favourite -

SARAH/FAWX

Shit.

ANNOUNCER

The Gooooooollllllldddddeeeennnnn STALLION!!!!!!!

*(SOUND: STALLION comes out, arms wide soaking in all of his Maximus-ian glory. He does not see FAWX. He clomps around the arena peacocking, but like a horse. He's got a whole routine already.)*

STALLION

*(Over the intro music)*

Alright, you want a show, then get ready for your seats to get damp, cuz The Stallion will give you a fucking show!

SARAH/FAWX

*Shit!*

STALLION

Hampton?

FAWX/SARAH/MADGE

James?!

*(We're in the box with SARAH and SCHNUTZ)*

SCHNUTZ

The Fox vs. The Stallion. Delicious.

SARAH

What, do you want a bib or something? Keep it in your pants.

ANNOUNCER

*(from below)*

The betting floor will be closing in -

SCHNUTZ

All bets are in, right Sarah?

*(Beat.)*

SARAH

Right.

SCHNUTZ

Let the match COMMENCE!

*(SOUND: We're back in the ring. A bell rings. The match has begun. The crowd is keyed in. FAWX and STALLION don't move.)*

FAWX

Uhh... I don't really... um...

STALLION

We know each other, so this is really just...

FAWX

Awkward, yeah?

STALLION

Right.

*(Beat.)*

SCHNUTZ

*(To the room)*

How gentlemanly. Unfortunately that isn't how we play in this arena, is it? I'm afraid in this house we play by house rules. And house rules say:

CROWD

One. Man. Standing!

STALLION

Ahh. A routine. Lovely...

SCHNUTZ

So... set the timer.

*(The announcer brings out a comically large hourglass.)*

FAWX

An hourglass? Don't worry James, we'll have plenty of time to get out of this!

SCHNUTZ

*(To the room:)*

This hourglass runs out in one minute.

FAWX/STALLION

Oh come on!/That's not how hourglasses work!

SCHNUTZ

No instigation after one minute and both fighters will be eliminated. And not just from the evening's events. Any questions?

FAWX

Will the questions be counted outside of the minute?

SCHNUTZ

Start the timer.

*(SOUND: The announcer turns over the hour glass and rings the bell. FAWX & STALLION remain in their corners.)*

SARAH

Go for it, Hampton. Kick his teeth in!

STALLION

What?! -

FAWX

Sarah!

*(To STALLION:)*

I did not tell her to say that -

STALLION

I would hope not!

CROWD

*(overlapping)*

Stampede his scrawny arse!/Crush him, Stallion./Kill the Fox!!!/You can't see me but both of my thumbs are down!

FAWX

In my defense, looks like you've got... everyone else.

STALLION

*(wistful)*

Somehow doesn't feel as good.

FAWX

So... are we going to...?

STALLION

Do you want to find out her definition of ‘eliminated’?

SARAH

Go! Fight!

STALLION

Yeah, we heard you, Fletchley! Thanks!

*(NOTE: Over the next scene the lines that are italicised are said for the benefit of the crowd to instigate the fight, all other non-italicized dialogue is meant solely for each other.)*

STALLION

*(Knowingly to FAWX)*

*Come on then. Just like in sparring practice at home. For Ambrosius...*

FAWX

*(Picking up on it)*

*For Ambrosius...? Oh! For Ambrosius!*

*(SOUND: The two begin going through their sparring routine but massively overselling.)*

SCHNUTZ

*(To SARAH)*

Now, let’s hope your little detective friend is better at no-holds-barred-cage-fighting than he is at making amateur deductions.

*(Back in the fight.)*

FAWX

How did you get here? *Ahh! Take that!*

STALLION

I could ask you the same question. *You dare challenge the Stallion!*

FAWX

Well, we got found out by the owner! *Welcome to the Fawx-Hole!*

STALLION

I was wondering how long it would take you to get to Fawx-Hole. Madge left me to run off with Sazarac and *I* got found out by Oskar.

FAWX

Two ships in the night. Brutal. Left-Right combo and swipe kick?

STALLION

Who's A and who's B?

FAWX

I'll take A.

STALLION

You always do.

FAWX

Feint to the floor.

STALLION

Uh No! There's about nine different textures on that floor.

FAWX

Ugh, fine. *Uh oh, you got me!*

*(STALLION swipes at FAWX who feints to the floor, STALLION gets on top of him in a lock.)*

God, it is truly wretched down here.

STALLION

Is it as sticky as it feels on my feet?

FAWX

Try to drag me?

*(SOUND: He does. Fawx is stuck to the very sticky floor and doesn't move.)*

It's worse.

STALLION

I guess money can't buy everything. *Enjoy your own Fawx-hole.*

FAWX

So how did you end up here?

STALLION

Remember when Madge and I spotted Oskar and Sazarac and you said they were absolutely going to recognize us?

FAWX

I do.

STALLION

They did.

*(STALLION stands. For the crowd:)*

*You won't be getting up from down there!*

*(FAWX jumps up and advances.)*

*Oh no, you're up! Ah, ah, ah, you were just on the ground. Don't get too close to -*

*(FAWX jumps up and advances.)*

FAWX

No, James seriously. Listen. It's about the case.

STALLION

Oh, solved it already with Sarah, did you? What, did she walk on water? Turn piss into Burgundy?

FAWX

James, listen. We found the owner of this place, and get this: she's called The Hammer!

STALLION

Wait, like—?



FAWX

Like the insignia on the ring! She's got some sort of pickpocketing outfit running out of the club, full-on robbery can't be too far a leap from that—it's perfect, James! Also, maybe throw me or something, I think they're getting bored.

*(STALLION gives him a shove)*

STALLION

*Rahhhh!* Right, then, but why Sarah's mum?

FAWX

She was set up to take the fall, obviously! This Banker fellow committed the robbery, and Sarah's mum was in the wrong place at the wrong time! You know, The Hammer planted evidence of theft on Sarah, just because she wanted to get out of this place! *Oh, no, he's advancing, he's so tall!*

STALLION

Wait—so Sarah was part of this ring of ring-wearing thieves?

FAWX

Right—and I was shocked too! But I've really had a reckoning about it, and—

STALLION

Why didn't she mention this when we showed her the ring?

FAWX

—and I've really come to terms with—what?

STALLION

We showed her the ring, she saw the hammer on it—if she was part of this, why wouldn't she have said before we came here? She knows the boss is called The Hammer.

FAWX

*(trying to make sense of this unexpected curveball)*

Right, well...

ANNOUNCER

Final minute before Double Elimination!

FAWX

Shit, no time. *Ahhhh tackle!*

*(FAWX rushes him. STALLION steps neatly to the side to avoid him, isn't even really fazed by this, caught up in the deduction)*

STALLION

In fact, why not tell us that from the beginning? If her mother's life hung in the balance.

FAWX

James, what are you saying?

*(Beat. He knows what STALLION is saying.)*

No. James, no. The—the banker! We saw the banker flee the scene of the crime!

STALLION

A banker with cheap shoes three sizes too big? A banker with a northern accent? A banker wearing a ring that fits on your pinkie finger, a ring that—now that I actually look at it—is very clearly a *woman's* ring?

FAWX

Fine, so a woman did it! But not *Sarah!*

*(STALLION grunts, the sparring intensifies and blurs into real combat.)*

STALLION

Why not?

FAWX

Because it doesn't make sense—why would she come to us? Why *return* the jewels she stole?

STALLION

Because her mother being arrested wasn't part of the plan! So she, laden with guilt, as one would be, hires two private investigators to examine the scene of the crime the following morning, drawing everyone out of the games room so she can return the jewels, therefore proving that it *couldn't* have been her mother—wow, actually, really solid plan on her part—

*(SOUND: FAWX slaps him full across the face.)*

Oww! That one actually hurt, Hamp -

FAWX

No, that's not... *no*.

STALLION

God, I knew something was off about her ever since she started making unnecessary potshots at me back at the flat. Think about it!

FAWX

No, because... because...

STALLION

*(riding high)*

Oh, my god, I'm right, I am so right—take *that*, Archie!

*(SOUND: FAWX tackles STALLION to the ground.)*

AHH! I told you about the sticky ground!

FAWX

If she had a secret like that, why would she try to get Holmes & Watson to solve the case?

STALLION

Well, I mean, she didn't, did she? She got us.

*(Beat. The room has started listening to their conversation. Everyone is wrapt. Only the drum beat continues, pushing on.)*

FAWX

What are you saying?

STALLION

I'm saying we're not the only Private Investigators in London! I know you like to think we are, or that it's just us and them, but there are more streets in London than Baker Street! There's Haymarket! Carnaby! Regent Street!

FAWX

You've made your point -

STALLION

Tottenham Court, Oxford Street, Charing Cross -

FAWX

Ok -

CROWD MEMBER #1

St. James.

CROWD MEMBER #2

Fleet Street.

CROWD MEMBER #3

Northumberland.

FAWX

Yes, thank you! I get it!

CROWD MEMBER #1

Waterloo Street!

CROWD MEMBER #2

It's Waterloo *Road*, ya dunce.

CROWD MEMBER #1

No it ain't, it's *street*. You think I don't know my own street.

CROWD MEMBER #2

I'm tellin' ya, mate, it's *road*.

CROWD MEMBER #1

No, it ain't.

ALL (Everyone, even FAWX & STALLION)

Yes, it is.

CROWD #1

Nah, I don't think so...

FAWX

So what are you saying?

STALLION

If she was actually serious about solving this case, the *whole* case, why in god's name would she ask us?

*(FAWX turns to look at SARAH.)*

FAWX

Because she believes in us... Right, Sarah?

*(Beat. We're back with SCHNUTZ and SARAH)*

SCHNUTZ

Do you want to answer, Fletchley, or should I?

*(Beat.)*

SARAH

I-

*(SOUND: The Hourglass runs out. A horn goes off or a bell rings, something signaling a bit shift.)*

ANNOUNCER

And.... time! You know what that means, gents! Double elimination!

SCHNUTZ

Oh! Look at that timing. I'm so sorry Sarah, no last-minute commutation for mummy. Now, let's stop with the games—why don't you give these gentlemen the truth and me what I'm owed.

SARAH

Can't we handle this in private, Catalina?

SCHNUTZ

Oh, the crowd won't tell anyone. They've all signed Standard Admiral's Shanks Non-Disclosure Agreements. Nothing that takes place in the arena, leaves the arena. Isn't that right, gentlemen?

CROWD

Ay.

SCHNUTZ

Now. I'm not going to ask again.

FAWX

Sarah, she doesn't know what she -

SCHNUTZ

Oh my god - just - Oskar!

*(SCHNUTZ snaps to signal OSKAR to her side)*

OSKAR

Anythin' you say, Miss Schnutz.

SCHNUTZ

*(Flirty)*

"Mrs."...

OSKAR

Not to me.

*(SOUND: OSKAR pulls a lever on the wall and the floor in the cage begins opening mechanically. The crowd goes nuts!)*

CROWD

In the pit! In the pit! In the pit!

*(Crowd chants continue)*

FAWX/STALLION

Jesus Christ!/Is that lava?

MADGE

*(muffled)*

What the fuck?!

SCHNUTZ

Truth or Elimination by fiery lava pit. Your choice.

*(SOUND: The floor continues to open.)*

FAWX

James, cling to the side of the cage.

STALLION

I know I look like I have it, but that is some very specific finger strength that I don't know if I -

FAWX

Just do it now!

*(SOUND: FAWX & STALLION have jumped up onto the sides of the cage. We go back to SCHNUTZ and SARAH)*

SCHNUTZ

You know what, just for fun, let's throw Mrs. Stallion into the mix, too. Oskar, on the count of 5, start taking off fingers.

*(MADGE audibly struggles)*

SARAH

*(pained)*

Please, stop—

SCHNUTZ

5, 4—what's it gonna be, Fletchley! 3...

SARAH

I...

SCHNUTZ

2. I'm sorry - there's a lot of noise right now. It's just... Can you repeat that so the class can hear?

SARAH

Madge—

*(SCHNUTZ starts to say “one,” before she can:)*

SARAH

It was me!

*(All sound **stops**, stepping outside of realism—the world stops for us like it does for FAWX, for a suspended moment)*

FAWX

Sarah... You...

STALLION

HA!

*(All sound returns)*

SARAH

Let them go.

FAWX

I think I’m gonna be sick.

STALLION

Breathe and count to ten. I don’t know how much more this floor can take.

SCHNUTZ

Well, Sarah. With that I’d say we -

*(SOUND: The door to SCHNUTZ’s box bursts open and SAZARAC comes running in. She is breathing heavily.)*

One moment. Yes, Ms. Sazarac, how may I help you *this* time?

*(SOUND: SAZARAC feverishly explains something to SCHNUTZ—we don’t hear it)*

They what?! Fucking rich people.

*(to the crowd, businesslike, clipping along)*



Gentlemen, I regret to inform you this evening's festivities will be cut short due to some important personal business. Single file line by the east exit. Messrs Fawx and Stallion, thank you for being such excellent collateral. Oskar! Pull the lever. Ta ta, Fawx & Stallion. It's been a delight.

*(SOUND: SCHNUTZ laughs and laughs. Fire rages, ready to engulf FAWX and STALLION.)*

***CREDITS***

***End of Part Seven.***