

Part Eight

The Case of the Hard Truth

(MUSIC: Archie and James's theme, on piano.)

(SCENE: INT. ARCHIE's flat. Early morning. STALLION is in bed. Pleasant ambience. It's a quiet, peaceful morning.)

ARCHIE

James... James...

STALLION

(groggy)

Just give me 5 more minutes. It's so warm and pleasant. And I have a hangover.

ARCHIE

There's a surprise waiting for you, love.

STALLION

A surprise? For me?

ARCHIE

Shh shh... don't open your eyes just yet... just smell.

STALLION

Tempting but I fell for this one too many times as a child. And I don't...

(SOUND: A cover being lifted off a tray of sizzling bacon and freshly made scones)

Oh, that smells heavenly.

ARCHIE

Bacon, cooked to a crisp and scones with cheddar and freshly minced chives.

STALLION

What did I do to deserve all this?

ARCHIE

You tried. And that's all that matters.

STALLION

That does sound like a just reward, but Archie, what attempt is it exactly that you're celebrating me for?

ARCHIE

The Crimeria Jewels, Sarah Fletchley, being a detective...

STALLION

Well, I could argue those were successes, not attempts -

ARCHIE

Making dinner, enjoying opera, investing in people and not just products...

STALLION

I'm sorry, are you saying these are things I've "tried" to do and failed?

ARCHIE

Making a home, being supportive of others, being a good person...

(SOUND: The sizzling of the bacon gets louder and grease spatters. There's smoke trickling into the room.)

STALLION

Ahh! Bacon's getting a touch unwieldy, don't you think maybe you should -

ARCHIE

Having a career, being a good friend, being someone worth rooting for...

STALLION

(coughing)

Ok... ok... Archie, while adorable it's not... This isn't funny anymore... Why's there so much... smoke in the flat?!

ARCHIE

Aww, sweet James. This is a dream. You're just hearing what you want to hear.

STALLION

Why on earth would *this* be what I want to hear?!

ARCHIE

Wake up, James... Wake up...

STALLION

What kind of metaphorical nonsense -

(We hear ARCHIE's voice up close, in the dream, but further away, simultaneously, FAWX:)

ARCHIE/FAWX

Wake up, James!

STALLION

Oh my god - What?!

(SOUND: We SMASH back into:)

(SCENE: INT. The Arena in the Admiral's Shanks. Right where we left off in Part Seven. FAWX's voice is hazy, out of focus.)

FAWX

James... JAMES!

(SOUND: A slap! STALLION wakes with a start.)

STALLION

Sonofa- Hampton?

FAWX

Finally! Sorry about the slap but we've gotta get out of here!

STALLION

Got to get out of... what?

FAWX

There's a lava pit opening up at an alarming rate beneath the floor, we just found out we were lied to by Sarah, and we both look like we're attending the cheapest orgy in Soho.

STALLION

And these are all reasons that you want to live?

FAWX

They're not reason enough to want to die! Come on.

MADGE

(from outside the cage)

Oy, dicks! Find your way to the cage doors!

FAWX/STALLION

Madge!

FAWX

Thank god you're ok!

MADGE

Look we're all happy I'm alive, now get the fuck out of there!

(SOUND: FAWX pulls at the door. No give.)

FAWX

We're locked in!

STALLION

Of-fucking-course we are.

FAWX

We'll have to find another way -

(SOUND: A gunshot—JAMES yelps. The lock falls off. A pause.)

STALLION

Hampton, please tell me you shot that bullet to break the lock with a gun I didn't know you had.

SARAH

No, but I did. Now follow me!

CREDITS

(SOUND: A sewer grate getting pushed open: SARAH crawls out, followed by MADGE, FAWX, and STALLION)

(SCENE: EXT. The alley behind the Admiral's Shanks. Late.)

SARAH

Are you alright?

STALLION

Cold but alive.

MADGE

I just crawled through a fucking sewer to escape an underground fight club ring, but otherwise...

SARAH

Right... Hampton?

FAWX

Fine.

SARAH

Good, well at least -

STALLION

Where did you get a gun?

SARAH

From my bustle. Keep it there for safe keeping.

STALLION

And why do you even need one?

SARAH

My work shift ends at 2 in the morning and I like walks by myself. Now look, I'm not trying to -

FAWX

How could you not tell us?

SARAH

I...it wasn't personal, I - I just -

STALLION

I think you've done more than enough. Hampton, Madge, let's go home.

MADGE

James -

SARAH

If you just give me a minute to explain, I swear—

STALLION

I'm sure you can. And I'm sure it'll be exactly what we want to hear, however I've had enough of almost getting killed for what you *haven't* been telling us for one night.

SARAH

And I can explain all -

FAWX

Wonderful, where would you like to start? How you lied to us from minute one? How you came to us to solve a case you *yourself* perpetrated? How you made us look like fools in front of the entire city, so you could save your mum from *your* mistake? You know what, you can spare us the explanation because I think you've made yourself incredibly clear.

SARAH

I'm not proud of it...

FAWX

No, nor should you be! Must have been very inconvenient, *desperately* needing a detective to help you right when Sherlock Holmes leaves town.

(A beat. The deduction finally hits.)

Or, perhaps, not that inconvenient at all. Because you knew, didn't you? You knew they were out of town. You said you work at The Flag & Staff, evening shift. That's—

MADGE

—Martha's favourite pub...Shit, I knew it sounded familiar.

FAWX

So you overheard from their landlady that Holmes and Watson were out of town on a case, saw the opportunity to carry out a job for your former employer—

STALLION

A job that paid handsomely, I might add!

FAWX

A job with no collateral damage, when the best detectives in London would be conveniently out of town and no one else would have a chance of solving the case. Especially us.

SARAH

I know it sounds bad, but if you'd only let me explain, there is -

STALLION

Yes, well it doesn't really matter now, does it.

(SOUND: We zoom down the alley to ARCHIE and McMURPHY, who stumble toward the group, a little tipsy.)

McMURPHY

...so I says to the publican, unless you can show me a true to life ghost or ghoul, don't ever call it a "spirit" round me again!

ARCHIE

Wonderful story, so glad I heard it so many times, now good - James? Hampton? Is that you?

(We zoom back to our main group.)

MADGE

Is that...?

STALLION

Archie. Down here.

SARAH

James, Hampton, look I swear -

(SOUND: ARCHIE approaches.)

ARCHIE

(a little too tipsy to process what he's looking at)

James, what it blazes are you doing down - Right, Mask. Shorts. More questions. Where to begin... uhh -

McMURPHY

We get it, Stallion, you have long legs and a firm posterior. We're all jealous. Now put 'em away before I arrest you for public indecency.

ARCHIE

He won't do that - you won't do that.

STALLION

This is Sarah Fletchley. She stole the Crimeria Family Jewels from Jonathan Crimeria, not her mother.

MADGE

James - !

ARCHIE

James, what are you -

STALLION

Don't believe me? Question her. Ask her about her involvement with "The Hammer" or some other some such - hell, inquire inside as to how she was *fired* for stealing from the patrons and institution of The Admiral's Shanks.

ARCHIE

Right. Ma'am. Is there any validity to these accusations?

STALLION

Why don't you believe me? I'm *telling* you clear as shit on a serving tray, aren't I?

ARCHIE

It's not that I don't believe you Ja - Mr. Stallion. It's just... we've been looking into another suspect and, and quite frankly, Miss Fletchley here doesn't fit the profile.

MADGE

Right, so -

STALLION

So our word isn't worth anything? Who have you been looking into, the bloody pope?

ARCHIE

The banker! Mr. Hastings or... or at least the false identity used to infiltrate the Crimeria house. There was no record of him at Bouverie & Sons when we rang them up.

McMURPHY

No offense, inspector, but that's confidential police -

ARCHIE/STALLION

It's fine!

SARAH

That was me.

FAWX

Sarah...

SARAH

My mum's innocent, Inspector. I nicked the key from Ms. Sazarac here, at the Admiral's Shanks this past Wednesday night, used it to steal the jewels Thursday, and left it in the library where I thought she'd find it immediately after. This morning I returned the jewels, disguised as the Banker. I know there needs to be a head on pike and I'd rather it be mine than my mum's.

MADGE

Fletchley...

SARAH

And to be honest, I probably didn't even need the key. They say it's a special chest that needs a special key, but really it's *just* a chest and I have no problem breaking into those. I can break into this flat right here.

(SOUND: She unlocks the flat right next to her.)

See? It's not hard.

MADGE

It's not easy...

SARAH

Inspector, please. Take me in and let my mum go.

(Beat.)

ARCHIE

Not how I thought this night would end. So... Miss Fletchley, I'm afraid you're going to have to come with us. I arrest you in the name of the -

SARAH

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Thanks, Inspector. I understand.

(ARCHIE goes to cuff SARAH)

MADGE

Jesus - Are *neither* of you going to stop this?

FAWX

I...

STALLION

Congratulations, Inspector Cartwright. I believe we've solved your first case.

McMURPHY

I don't know, we caught the mum. They are related. That's like... 50%.

ARCHIE

Right. James, Hampton, Madge... we'll be following up on the details of this later but for now. Thank you for your civil service.

STALLION

(self-satisfied)

All in a day's work for Fawx & Stallion.

ARCHIE

Right. Well. Put some pants on please. It is still England.

FAWX

Sarah, I...

SARAH

For what it's worth, Hampton, I really am sorry.

(SOUND: ARCHIE, McMURPHY, and SARAH begin walking away.)

SARAH

Easy on the cuffs, there's a gun in my bustle.

McMURPHY

Now how ya gonna hide a gun in there... and it not hurt? That just don't make sense.

SARAH

Do you want me to say?

McMURPHY

Eww, I think I got it. .

(Beat. They're gone.)

STALLION

Well that turned out to be a pretty convenient ending to a pretty terrible -

FAWX

Right. I'm going home.

(SOUND: FAWX starts walking off.)

STALLION

Hampton. Come on. Are you serious?

FAWX

The only thing I'll be coming onto is Baker Street. When I get home. In about 20 minutes.

(SOUND: He continues off.)

STALLION

Hampton. Hampton, will you wait just a goddamned minute?

FAWX

No!

MADGE

Maybe you should just leave this one.

STALLION

I'm still having a hard time seeing how any of this is my fault.

MADGE

Maybe - and I'm just spitballing here - it's because you had our client arrested in the street!

STALLION

What are you talking about? The case is solved. Sarah stole the jewels. She admitted it. In front of a room full of people *and* the police! Plus she almost got us killed while she was at it. And in *these* outfits, mind you!

MADGE

She saved our lives!

STALLION

I don't understand why I'm the bad guy here. We solved the case. It's done!

(SOUND: FAWX comes storming back. VERY quick footsteps, he's furious.)

MADGE

Oh, he's comin' back.

FAWX

Right. Actually, no, we *didn't*.

STALLION

What are you talking about?

FAWX

We didn't solve the case, James. Scotland Yard arrested Sarah. Scotland Yard solved the case.

STALLION

Right but we turned her over to Scotland Yard. Not Holmes & Watson, *us* so we'll chock it up to a mulligan and get the next one.

FAWX

There is not going to *be* a next one, James! We've been here for almost five years and Sarah's the first person to walk through our door. Are we supposed to wait five more years until Sherlock Holmes falls of a fucking cliff before a bootblack turns up to ask us who stole his shinebox?!

STALLION

Hampton, I know you're distressed that this didn't turn out how you wanted but that doesn't mean all hope is lost. Sarah's mother will walk free.

FAWX

And that's great for her! But what about *us*?! We used to be the laughing stock of Baker Street. Now we're the laughing stock of the Criminal Underworld *and* Baker Street.

MADGE

Oh please, like Baker Street was even aware of us at all.

FAWX

Even worse! We just blew our anonymity. The perfect starting place. All we had to do was get *one* case right and we would've been on the map! And do you know what is the most fantastically, idiotically ridiculous part of all this? *You* solved it. You, James fucking Stallion, solved the mystery. The man who has single-handedly half-assed his way through this entire case - through this entire *friendship*, really -

STALLION

What the—

(Something really ugly is brewing in Hampton—you can tell he's been bottling this up for awhile.)

FAWX

Using our flat as storage for your ridiculous, asinine investments - we don't even have room for a table tennis table! Let alone the boxes upon boxes of toilet paper and wax cones or -

STALLION

They're wax cylinders and they are the future -

FAWX

(mocking)

Right "The future of audio storytelling" which has *fuck all* to do with us! Admit it, those "investments" are the only thing you've doubled down on since we met! Because it certainly wasn't us or our business—you certainly weren't investing in *me*! Only turning up when it's convenient, perfunctory disguises, abandoning us for, for, for "Date nights" -

STALLION

Well excuse me for having a healthy work/life balance.

FAWX

(an explosion)

WHAT WORK?! The most work you've ever done since arriving in London was getting hit by that carriage!

STALLION

You seem to forget I got hit by that carriage saving your--

FAWX

You act like this is all a bloody joke to you and then you wonder why people *treat* you like a joke!

(STALLION takes this in, profoundly hurt. Hampton sees this but is too angry to feel bad about it.)

STALLION

Well, I'm the fucking joke that solved the case, which is more than you can say.

(Beat. He collects himself.)

Right. It's late. I'm going back to my flat to have a long bath, a stiff drink, and go to bed. Do whatever the hell you want.

(SOUND: FAWX walks off without a word, still quietly furious.)

Madge. This was a good thing. We did our job. I'm not crazy, right?

MADGE

Sure. I hope you sleep well, James.

(SOUND: MADGE walks off following FAWX. A beat.)

STALLION

Fuck this.

(SOUND: STALLION walks off in the opposite direction. We follow FAWX's footsteps as he storms into:)

(SCENE: INT. 224B Baker St. Later that night.)

(SOUND: FAWX bursts through the door and makes his way past Ambrosius without acknowledging him. FAWX goes straight to the wall of clues and papers he and MADGE had previously set up and begins ripping papers down and tearing them in half. Ambrosius drops his head in disappointment. MADGE enters close behind and closes the door behind her.)

FAWX

(talking to himself as he's tearing off the clues from the wall)

Suspect list: Oskar, Sazarac, who gives a puff, apparently they're just rich and eccentric. The Banker, just another reminder of my failures of deduction, once again, Winner: everyone else, Loser: me, again -

MADGE

Ambrosius.

(The cat looks up sleepily. Meows. Finally a greeting.)

Oy, ya not gonna -

(SOUND: FAWX rips more papers in half.)

Oh come on. Hey, hey, hey - !

(FAWX is determined to get every loose piece of paper. Right before he gets to the giant map of London with all of the marks where the homeless have displaced by "The Golem", MADGE calls again)

Oy! Dickhead!

(FAWX stops.)

MADGE

Didn't even greet Ambrosius. Have you no heart?

(Beat.)

FAWX

Hello, Ambrosius.

(AMBROSIUS meows in return. FAWX sinks to the ground, heavily. Still angry and frustrated and feeling very sorry for himself)

Five years—five years we’ve known each other, and James just throws every bit of hard work we’ve put into this partnership down the drain. I really thought we were on the same page, all this time. Our big opportunity comes and it’s just—nothing. It’s always nothing, Madge, every time. And it’s just...

(MADGE doesn’t answer—he barrels on, furious, gaining steam)

I mean, doesn’t it bother you? God, of course it must, you’re married to him, what am I even saying! You know, I think he genuinely has no clue how he comes off. Permanent smirk on his stupid face. Flashy clothes when he knows damn well we’re supposed to be incognito. Every single time. We should approach every situation as if we could go undercover at any minute. I could be undercover right now! You wouldn’t know.

MADGE
(flatly)

Sure.

FAWX

Exactly! And that’s what’s just so frustrating about the whole thing!

MADGE

That he didn’t dress right?

FAWX
(we’re in a Rant now)

... It’s indicative of the larger flippancy, yes! He doesn’t care! That’s what I’m getting at. He doesn’t care whether we actually solve anything! He comes on this case, he humours me, like I’m a child to be swaddled, and then he runs off to his “real life” of parties and operas and—and being rich and in love. He has all of it! Right? You don’t ever hear Sherlock Holmes talking about rubbing elbows with the Queen at some, some, some great... gala or anything! He’s solitary. He’s focused! Because there’s always work to be done. Always a case to solve. A, a, a rock to overturn and, and oh, look! A Clue! Ya know?

MADGE

No.

FAWX

Yeah... Yeah, right. No one does! And that's the point! No one knows! No one knows why we're doing any of this! We're all just reaching around in the dark waiting for someone to tell us we did a good job and we can just keep doing whatever that is and getting assurance we're not wasting our time for the rest of our lives. That's all it is.

(The adrenaline of the rant wears off for a moment, and he stalls out. In this pause, MADGE carefully picks up.)

MADGE

You know what *I* hate the most about James? It's how selfish he is.

FAWX

Oh. Yes! This is good. I like this.

MADGE

It's like you do everything you can to just step back and put him in a position where he can just hear himself - but... nothing.

FAWX

Yes!

MADGE

Absolute echo chamber of self-awareness.

FAWX

Couldn't say it better myself!

MADGE

*Oh my god - **It's you, you thick twat!** I'm talking about you!*

FAWX

You... wha... Me? But how does that make sense?

MADGE

Why are you angry with James?

FAWX

I -

MADGE

AH buh buh! Please keep your answer under 10 words.

FAWX

(struggling to get it under ten words)

Because... he ruined our only chance at solving an actual case. Wait - Why are *you* angry with *me*?

MADGE

Because you haven't mentioned Sarah's name once in this whole conversation and she's going to hang for it!

(SCENE: INT. ARCHIE's Flat. Later that night.)

(STALLION sits in the bathtub with a fancy cocktail on the edge. He struggles to roll a cigarette over the course of this next section but his hands are too wet and he's too drunk.)

STALLION

Alright, James. This night is salvageable. Nothing that a bath and a drink and cig can't fix...

(half sung to himself:)

You put tobacco in the middle, and you roll it all up, and you press down the -

(SOUND: the paper tears and the tobacco drops in the tub.)

And it's in the tub. Fuck. You put tobacco in the middle, and you roll it all -

(SOUND: the paper tears again.)

Fuck! You put tobacco in the middle and you -

(SOUND: the paper tears and STALLION knocks his drink over.)

I don't believe in Karma. I do not believe in Karma.

(SOUND: STALLION pulls a bottle of gin from behind the bathtub and pours it into his empty glass. ARCHIE, who has just arrived home, sees that he's in the bathroom and pops his head in.)

ARCHIE

Ahh there you are, James. I thought you'd already gone to -

(ARCHIE sees all of the tobacco in the bathtub and STALLION with the bottle of gin in his hand. Gear change.)

What have I told you about smoking in the house? And just smoking in general?

STALLION

I don't know what you're talking about. Do you smell smoke?

ARCHIE

What's all that in the bathwater, then?

(Gestures to the tobacco.)

STALLION

Tea.

ARCHIE

Tea.

STALLION

Yes, tea. It's a tea bath. You've never had a tea bath before, Archie? They're all the rage in The Standard.

ARCHIE

How could I be so ignorant?

STALLION

I don't know - sounds like a "you" problem...

(Beat. Ok, wow. Crisis mode.)

ARCHIE

Ok. Love? What's up?

STALLION

With me? Nothing. Why? I'm great.

Yeah? ARCHIE

Oh yeah. STALLION

Great. ARCHIE

So great. STALLION

Good. ARCHIE

Excellent. STALLION

(Beat. He is very clearly not excellent. A split second decision. ARCHIE takes off his jacket with determination.)

Right. Make room. ARCHIE

Inspector, I know you think you're - STALLION

(SOUND: ARCHIE takes off boots.)

Nope, make way, ladies and gents, grown man taking off his boots and getting into the bath...now. ARCHIE

(He gets into the bath with STALLION, opposite him. It's cold.)

Ok. Legs. Watch the - STALLION

Ah! Christ, James, it's freezing. ARCHIE

STALLION

It was hot when I drew it.

ARCHIE

Are all tea baths this cold?

STALLION

What the hell is a tea bath?

(Beat.)

ARCHIE

Right, I think you've had enough of this.

(SOUND: ARCHIE grabs STALLION'S drink, ice clinks.)

STALLION

Whoa whoa whoa, gin stays here.

ARCHIE

Maybe it's time for an alternative beverage. I hear there's tea around.

STALLION

Ok, don't belittle me -

ARCHIE

I am not belittling you.

STALLION

Yes, you are.

ARCHIE

No, I'm not!

STALLION

Yes. You are!

ARCHIE

Alright yes I am! But just a bit... And, maybe I have, the past few days, been...well, a bit of an arse. To you. We just keep ending up in this circle of apologising and me saying the wrong thing, or doing the wrong thing, and god if that isn't just my life right now. So I'm sorry. I don't like what these days have made me either.

STALLION

It doesn't matter. It's over anyway.

ARCHIE

Yes. I suppose it is.

(A beat. STALLION breaks for a moment.)

STALLION

Archie, I think I made a mistake.

(INT. 224B Baker Street. Right where we left off.)

FAWX

Madge... she did it.

MADGE

Yeah, Hampton, I suppose she did.

FAWX

She lied to us.

MADGE

Yeah, that too.

FAWX

We...we solved the case. We did what she came here and asked us to do.

MADGE

No, she asked you to save her mum. In the end, it seems like she's the one who did that, really.

FAWX

But she also stole the jewels. And admitted it. She's been double dealing with the dastardly—

MADGE

Don't you dare alliterate - I'm trying to have a serious conversation with you. Here, maybe you'll respond to questions since it gives you more opportunities to hear yourself talk: Do you think it's fair to grow up in neighbourhoods people like *us* take the piss out of? Or work three jobs to barely feed you and your mum?

FAWX

Well I-I've never been in that position before so I can't say.

MADGE

Let's say, as an exercise, that you have. And suddenly, an opportunity arises for a bit more cash with a bit less effort that won't in the slightest affect anyone who'll notice or suffer even a little. You wouldn't take that? Because I suspect you would.

FAWX

Madge, this is all speculation—we don't know anything about her, it could have all been a lie.

MADGE

Right because speculation has never led to a correct deduction before. I spent all afternoon with her, dress shopping, which you know how I feel about. And we talked about her, her life, her mum. And - big surprise - as it turns out, that woman is more than a thief or a ticket to fame, or whatever other simplification you wanna throw on her. And... Look, all I'm saying is, finding the *culprit* of a crime isn't the same as finding a *criminal*, do you not... is none of this getting through to you at all?

FAWX

Fine. Let's say for the sake of *speculation*, I go along with you. So what, she had some debts? But where do you think she got those debts—she stole, Madge. She worked for "The Hammer" nicking money and jewellery and god knows whatever else for *years*. I'm not daft. One time's excusable, maybe, but twice, and you're just a thief.

MADGE

Alright so by that logic, you didn't solve this case. If you don't solve the next one too, does that make you a failure?

FAWX

That's different.

MADGE

How is it different?

FAWX

Because my failing doesn't hurt anyone!

MADGE

(disappointed but firm)

Hampton. I think we both know that's not true.

(SCENE: INT. ARCHIE's Flat. Still in the tub.)

STALLION

You said, "No James, you can't solve this mystery! You're not smart enough!" and I just spiralled -

ARCHIE

No, I didn't -

STALLION

But I did it! I solved it! And yes, sure, I did it to shove it in your face, and prove to myself that I could do something other than day drink and look fantastic while day drinking, but also... also for Hampton! He wanted to solve something, we solved something! It's not my fault she was conning us from under our noses, right?

ARCHIE

Well, no-

STALLION

And even though I solved it, I just feel horrible! I mean, I don't even *want* the reward for it! So why do I still feel like shit?!

ARCHIE

Well we don't give a reward for this sort of thing, so -

STALLION

Right! So - wait, you don't?

ARCHIE

No.

STALLION

So not only are *you* getting the credit for solving the case, but you'll also get *our* payment?

ARCHIE

What payment are you even - James. There's no payment. I get my salary. I get it whether I solve the case or not. But I can... I don't know, take you to a museum or something?

STALLION

I don't want a museum! I want compensation! Financial... monetary compensation!

ARCHIE

That's not how it works! You get assigned a case. You solve the case, or you don't - after a certain amount of time they really stop caring - you get assigned another case. Crime doesn't stop, James.

STALLION

But you can make a dent! We made a dent, right?

(Beat.)

It just feels...empty. Does it always feel like this?

(ARCHIE takes a slow inhale and sighs. Weary.)

ARCHIE

Maybe for some people, no? A lot of the people I work with, definitely not. But I don't think I'm one of those people. And I pray to whatever sort of god exists you aren't either.

(Beat. They sit, both feeling more than a little lost.)

Christ, I hated Scotland Yard when we first met, remember? I hated the way they acted, I hated the way they went about their business. Hell, I still hate how terrified I am of what they might mean for us, for our life together. But after I solved that whole fiasco at the baking competition I thought: maybe I can fix it, maybe I can do it right. And so what if the work environment is terrible, and I don't agree with 99% of the other officers, and I hate every second of being in that putrid building. But what else am I supposed to do? I'm not Sherlock bloody Holmes. I joined Scotland Yard because... I don't know, because I thought maybe all they needed to get back on the right path was someone like me. And not just in the streets, but on every case, every process, every bit of paperwork. I just wanted to do it right. And on my first day, my *first day* as Inspector, I was the one who committed the largest injustice, just so I could keep my place there.

I went through what I thought were the proper channels, and I was wrong. So maybe...I don't know, maybe you and Madge and Hampton have the right idea.

STALLION

You said it yourself, no one would have believed us anyway. Archie, *you* didn't even believe we could do this.

(ARCHIE shifts in the bath, leans forward. Reaches out. This is important.)

ARCHIE

James. Look at me.

(After a moment, STALLION does, reluctantly.)

When we first met, I saw this man in a flashy coat and a hand-me-down ascot and I knew, I just *knew*: this man can do absolutely anything he sets his mind to. And fortunately for me, that night, what he happened to have his mind set on was me.

STALLION

It was technically the tea cakes you baked for the party—

ARCHIE

Noted. The point being: I would not love you the way I do if I didn't think you could do anything in the world. I just thought that, this time, you may have been doing it for the wrong reasons.

(Beat. They see each other.)

STALLION

We really mucked this up, didn't we?

ARCHIE

Yes, we did. And now you and Hampton are going to have to make it right.

STALLION

But—

ARCHIE

And if no one else believes you, you'll just have to make your case so well that they *have* to. That's what Holmes does.

(SCENE: Int 224B Baker Street)

(SOUND: FAWX puts his coat on and gets ready to leave.)

MADGE

Right, where ya off to now?

FAWX

(revving back up)

I don't know. But I can't be expected to sit around here ruminating on interpersonal partner-based disappointments. I need to be out in the field, journaling about how no one believes in me, or ingesting over the counter narcotics. That's what Holmes does.

(He gets to the door, turns the knob.)

MADGE

Do you remember how we met?

(He freezes.)

FAWX

Of course I remember how we met, Madge, I'm a detective. Every detail of my life is stored away into a corresponding file cabinet in my mind where it may be used for future reference. Why do you ask?

MADGE

Alright. Pretend my mind is a mucky, old warehouse of horseshit. Tell me about it.

FAWX

Well... for the sake of this exercise... Fine, em, it was that winter Miss Witherbottom's toffee biscuits went missing from the Christmas Day potluck. St. Aloysius's. I was 7, you were... 10, I believe.

MADGE

Sounds about right. I was taller than the Year 12's though. I remember that.

FAWX

That's right, you were. And I recall everyone thought you'd stolen the biscuits because of that incident where Miss Witherbottom told you girls couldn't go to college, and you called her an uneducated swill bucket who only got her job by sleeping with the chaplain.

MADGE

She made me do all the washing for the church for a year. Old twat.

FAWX

And I told them there was no way you'd done it because I'd noticed, through seeing you at the potluck every year, that you never touched the toffee biscuits. You preferred the Chocolate ones. And why wouldn't you? They're more popular, they're objectively better, their disappearance would cause a much larger uproar, and you clearly weren't the type to do things halfway. And of course, as usual, no one believed me. But then you pulled me aside after the service and told me that we were going to prove your innocence, and they'd all look like inbred cowpilchers for doubting us.

MADGE

My insults were so much more specific then.

FAWX

Everyone thought it was the funniest thing they'd ever seen.

MADGE

Two precocious kids playing detective, interviewing adults like we were the police. Great for us, must've been so annoying for them.

FAWX

But...then we found a trail of biscuit crumbs leading from the back door of the church. The door only accessible by the altar boys, which significantly narrowed our suspect list.

MADGE

And I deduced that from that list that only one of 'em had the motive and love of mediocre biscuits to commit the crime.

FAWX

Johnny Maxwood.

MADGE

Johnny fucking Maxwood. Who, that very day, ripped a fart during mass so hard that he'd *actually* shit his robes and run off to the woods to live life as a hermit to avoid the humiliation-

FAWX

—and since the biscuits had been kept in the back room to cool before the potluck, they would've been directly in his path to escape and start his hermit life anew.

(They laugh together, quietly, fondly. Beat.)

MADGE

We had no fucking clue who Sherlock Holmes was, or The Times or The Standard. We just knew that we did something and we were good at it. And let's be honest, we probably saved Johnny Maxwood from freezing to death in that makeshift tree trunk he called a cabin. And, at the very least, you saved me from another 6 months of laundry duty.

FAWX

That may be, but it's quite a far cry from saving someone from the gallows..

MADGE

Alright sure, it ain't exactly *comparable* but -

FAWX

Madge, there are just certain...expectations of what detectives should do, and be, and how people see them. What we were doing back then, in Ashford, it was great but it isn't enough to make a difference anymore—

MADGE

Not enough to be famous, you mean.

FAWX

You know what, I suppose I do. Is it so wrong to want recognition for the things we do?

MADGE

No. It's not. But can I ask you: in this whole fantasy Sherlock Holmes roleplay you've got going on, where do I fit in?

(He doesn't answer. Has never really considered it.)

I get it, you're Sherlock Holmes—eccentric detective with a penchant for only caring about himself, James is Watson—dashing, athletic, in an absolute sham of a marriage. What does that make me? Because once upon a time, we were partners, and somewhere along the way, I think I just became your landlady.

(This hangs for a moment. She's not judgemental about it, just honest. She'd never really realised either.)

And it's not like I meant to, I just...Look, long and short of it, Hampton, you are not Sherlock Holmes—

FAWX

(bitterly disappointed)

Yeah, got that, thanks.

MADGE

—and I think that's fucking brilliant. He's a genius, sure, but he's also kind of a dick, he's almost always high on - I don't know, I guess it's *morphine* now - and he's absolutely ruined deerstalkers for the rest of us. You will never be him, the good *or* the bad. And we're wasting our time trying to shove ourselves into their story when that story has never made room for people like us. So fuck them, and fuck that. Why can't we just help people?

(Beat. Finally, we see the actual Hampton FAWX appear:)

FAWX

Who can we even help, Madge? Sarah didn't come to us for *help*, she came to us because she chose the one weekend Holmes and Watson weren't home to commit a robbery, because she knew no one *else* in town could solve the case. And it backfired on her. She was stuck with us.

MADGE

Yeah, and I think, unfortunately for her, she's still stuck with us. So what are we gonna do about it?

FAWX

I—what *can* we do about it? Sarah admitted to the crime, she was the banker, she stole the jewels—for god's sake, she *returned* the jewels! Who *does* that, returns to the scene of the robbery to return counterfeits of the thing she stole?

(Brain blast. Complete energy shift.)

Unless—she didn't, did she.

(We're with STALLION and ARCHIE as well, but no transition, the two scenes blending together like they're all in the same room.)

STALLION

(starting to sober up, realising)

Right. Fuck. There's obviously more to this, right? Why return the jewels if she knew they would just be discovered as fakes?

MADGE

(to FAWX)

Maybe she panicked?

ARCHIE

(to STALLION)

She thought we wouldn't check?

FAWX

No...no, Sarah is smart, and more than that, she's practical. If she returned those jewels, she knew they'd be checked—

STALLION

—and she was *genuinely* surprised that they were fake when we told her.

FAWX

She went to the Admiral's Shanks with a mission, then. Why?

STALLION

Why return empty-handed to the criminal's den where you were hired?

MADGE

Why risk us discovering the truth?

ARCHIE

What does your gut say, detective?

STALLION

The only explanation is...that she didn't know they were fake. She was set up, the whole time.

FAWX

Whoever hired her, intended for her to take the fall for the theft, while *they* made away with the *actual* jewels!

MADGE

Her mother was just collateral damage. It was always supposed to be Sarah.

(We're fully with STALLION and ARCHIE again.)

STALLION

Oh...my... god! I need to sober up and get over to Madge and Hampton's.

ARCHIE

There he is.

(SOUND: STALLION stands up from the tub, he's dripping.)

STALLION

Sarah's innocent. Right? Right. Fuck, James. Great job on that.

ARCHIE

Well, I suppose it's a good thing I didn't take her into the station, then.

STALLION

What?!

ARCHIE

Already made that mistake once, thanks. Didn't fancy making it again.

STALLION

But...*how?*

ARCHIE

I told McMurphy Scotland Yard was closed on Sundays. You know, for the Lord, and all. She's staying in his guest room. I only bought us til the morning, but I have faith.

STALLION

Are you coming with?

ARCHIE

I'll go over to check on her and make sure McMurphy isn't trying out his one-man good cop/bad cop routine he keeps boasting about. I'm afraid this is all you, love. You should probably put some clothes on, though.

STALLION

Yes, good call. I'm going to clothe myself, sober up, then head off to Baker Street, because Archie, my dear... There are more games to foot.

(He goes out the door, sopping wet, peeks his head back in.)

Oh, and inspector?

ARCHIE

Yes?

STALLION

The moustache is starting to work.

ARCHIE

I know.

(SCENE: INT. 224B Baker St.)

MADGE

Alright then Hampton, let's go! I'll get my coat. Then we'll find James and get to work.

FAWX

Oh no. There's no need for James here. We can solve this one on our own. You and me. Hampton and Madge. You just said it, why wait around for someone who doesn't even want to be here.

MADGE

Didn't think I put it quite like that.

FAWX

No, we solve this without James, and we show him exactly what he deserves.

(TRANSITIONAL MUSIC: Victorian inspirational music hits a crescendo and ends.)

(SOUND: STALLION walks alone down a dark street. Owls hoot in the distance. Real atmospheric shit.)

(SCENE: EXT. A dark street in London. 3am.)

STALLION

Goddammit I'm so energised I'm not even cold at -

(SOUND: The wind blows.)

I stand corrected, wind.

(Suddenly: silence.)

Thank you!

(He continues walking. A large shadow emerges behind him. STALLION feels the hairs on the back of his neck stand. He turns.)

Hello?

(The street is dark and still. Nothing.)

Right. Creepy street. Classic creepy street.

(SOUND: Something heavy, like a body, gets tossed into a line of trashcans.)

Good sweet galloping fuck! What was that?

(SOUND: a voice wheezing.)

H-hello? Sir, are you alright? I want to be completely transparent, even though I have the card, I do not know CPR so...

(STALLION approaches the body.)

I know you...

(SOUND: The man wheezes, trying to say something...)

No, no. Don't speak if it's going to be too difficult. I... George? Is that right? George Kensington from The Admiral's Shanks. James Stallion, I met you before. Gave you a shilling for a compliment? What... happened to you?

GEORGE
(struggling)

Help me...

STALLION

Yes? I know I said you could relax before but if this is the difference between imperative information coming out too late or just in time to save both of us I'm going to need you to spit it out, George.

GEORGE

Th... Th... The Go...

STALLION

The...

(SOUND: A trash can gets knocked over, this time right next to STALLION. His eyes go wide as he sees the source of the shadow in front of him...)

Oh god, it's You!

CREDITS

End of Part Eight.