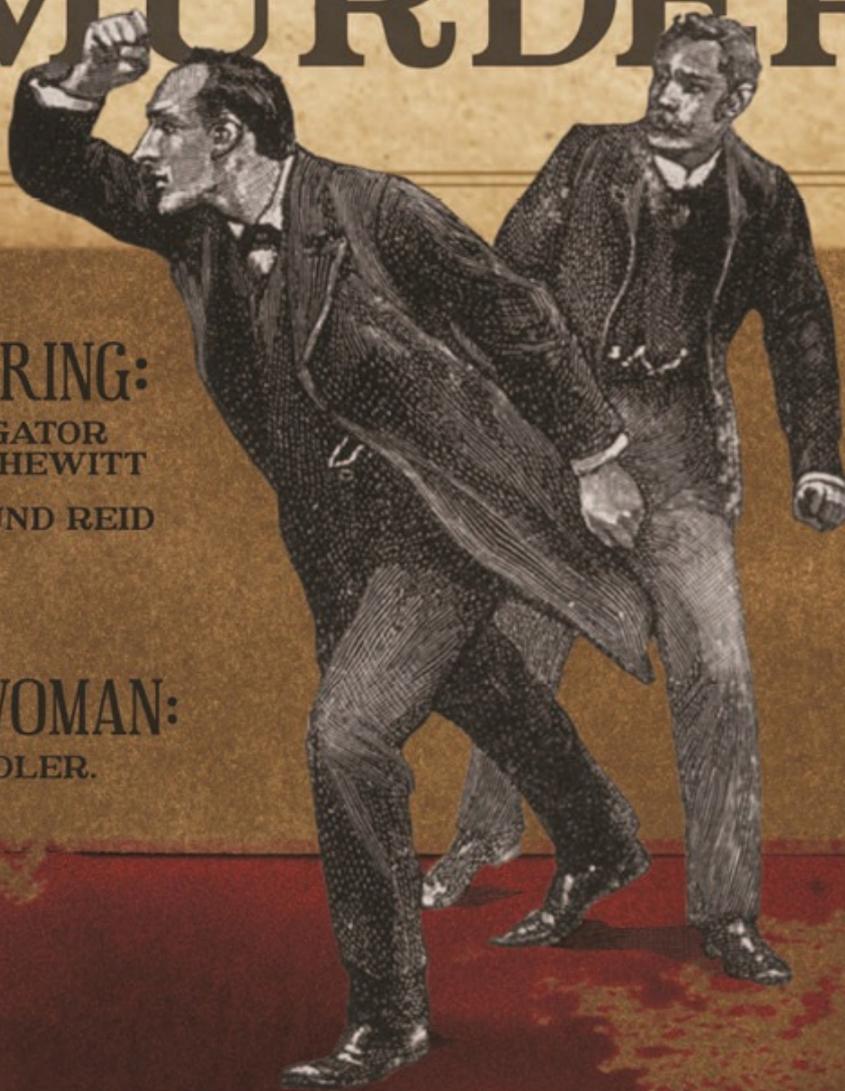


SHERLOCK HOLMES
THE
SCARLET
THREAD
OF
MURDER

FEATURING:
INVESTIGATOR
MARTIN HEWITT
D.I. EDMUND REID



THE WOMAN:
IRENE ADLER.



LUKE BENJAMEN KUHNS

The Scarlet Thread of Murder

By
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Dedication

Dedicated to each and every person who plays the game for the game's own sake.

The Scarlet Thread of Murder

A Sherlock Holmes, Martin Hewitt, & D.I. Edmund Reid Mystery

Prologue

I don't believe that I, Doctor John H. Watson, shall ever run dry of the fantastic tales in which accompanied my great friend, Mr Sherlock Holmes. We had a remarkable and long lasting career which began in the late Victorian era and even to this day, in our elder years, is still ongoing. Sherlock Holmes, who now lives in Sussex, is still as sharp as ever. I often look over our old cases and wonder which of our tales I should disclose next. Some I do not believe will ever be released, unless I myself have passed from this life. However, it was on a summer day in June 1920 that I came upon a series of notes that had not been touched since late 1890.

Sherlock Holmes, you see, was not the only detective in London. There were a great number of others. What made Sherlock Holmes unique was his singular position as a consulting detective. There was another in the profession who went by the name of Martin Hewitt. His adventures were chronicled by a journalist named Brett, and though they were not as popular as those adventures I shared with Holmes, Mr Hewitt was a brilliant detective with a powerful mind. Holmes' client list boasted members of the Yard, his brother, and personages of even higher position, while Hewitt did extremely well amongst the general public, when Holmes was otherwise engaged or unavailable. And while Holmes often scolded the efficiency of Scotland Yard there were some officers who shone bright. One of whom was D.I. Edmund Reid of Whitechapel, one of his most notable tasks being his work on the Ripper Case.

In 1890, these three men found themselves tangled in a web of intrigue. It is important to note that the events that transpire in this narrative are compiled from the notes of myself, the journalist Brett, and D.I. Edmund Reid. They have never shared their stories with the public, but they did share the notes with me, making it my responsibility to disclose the outré events that we endured.

Chapter 1

D.I. Edmund Reid Disaster in Whitechapel

August 1890

Very few things have so shaken my faculties as the events which began on this late Summer's day. As Detective Inspector of Whitechapel it creates a certain type of immunity. One feels prepared and braced for horrors, both weird and wild. Whilst I sat at my desk at Lemn Street buried in piles of paperwork, I found myself suddenly moved by a heart-stopping boom. The windows shook, and I could hear panicked shouts in the street. It did not take long to realise the cause of the incident; it was an explosion in the underground railway. I jolted from my seat and took my hat as I raced outside. I could see a cloud of smoke rising above the buildings. It was coming from the Whitechapel and Mile End station.

Two officers and myself arrived first on the scene. A terrible sight lay before us. More people than I could count had come to watch as smoke poured out of the station entrance. Survivors were stumbling out of the station: men, women, and children coloured grey and black from the heavy smoke were collapsing upon the street. My men immediately began attending to the fallen. I could hear the choking screams of the people still inside unable to find their way out, I covered my mouth with my kerchief and raced inside to help the desperate. The heat within the station was immense, as if walking through a wall of fire. The smoke blocked my vision making it nigh impossible to quickly assist those in need. I stumbled into someone, a woman; I took her by the arm and led her out. She wrapped her arms around me.

"You are safe now," I informed the woman. Her skin was darkened by the smoke and dirt. Something fell from her person - a silver oval pendant. It opened upon hitting the ground. Inside I noticed a picture of a crown. She took it and clutched it tightly while she coughed.

"Thank you, thank you!" she gasped. I motioned for an officer to take her, and I went back inside. I found the body of a man on the floor, he did not move. I hauled the corpse outside and laid him upon the ground; to my horror, not only had the body been trampled, and bones protruded from his flesh but his face was severely burned, the skin charred and peeled back. More officers and the fire-brigade arrived as I looked over the charred body. The smoke began to clear as the fire brigade battled with the flames were left. In total, it was over four hours before all the bodies were moved and some form of peace restored.

"Detective Inspector," called Officer Kipling swiftly approaching me. "We need you to come see something." I followed him down into the wreckage. Looking over the scene it was clear the train had pulled in on time, while passengers were embarking and disembarking the engine had exploded. The two carriages nearest the engine were affected most by the blast, and were now twisted heaps of metal and charred wood. The remaining carriages had been knocked off the tracks, and were black from the fire. Officer Kipling leapt down into the wreckage and I followed. "You see this?" he said, showing me the epicentre of the destruction. "This was no accident. This was a bomb."

As I looked up and down the line of carriages, the chain reaction of explosions which had followed was utterly devastating. I found myself drifting, thinking about the innocent that were carelessly slain as I gazed upon the destruction.

"Sir... sir?" Kipling's voice called me back.

“Yes, an explosion,” I confirmed. “I can see that.”

“Suppose it was Jewish rebels?” Kipling asked. “They’ve caused a lot of trouble lately.”

“It could be the Irish, or Scottish, or Welsh!” I snapped. “For all we know it could be the Americans!”

“Americans, sir?” Kipling questioned.

“My point, Officer, is that we know not who it was. Don’t assume blame upon anyone until you have all the facts.”

“Yes, sir. Sorry, sir.” Kipling hung his head a moment.

“We need to get this cleaned up... get Mr. White down here first. I want him to take a look before we start removing the scrap,” I ordered,

“Right away, sir.” Kipling darted off out of the abyss.

I continued to look around the dismantled carriages. I observed the bodies that remained. They were horribly charred, unrecognisable. Clothes and flesh ripped open, like a hot knife through butter. A foul stench was trapped in the station, a smell fit only for the seventh circle of hell. The scorched bodies and burning coals stung my sinuses. It would take some time to identify the remains and contact relatives. I thought back on Kipling’s remarks: This could be Jews, or even Irish Rebels. Either way, if this was no mistake, the explosion had a purpose not yet known. An extremist at the engine, perhaps?

Whitechapel, these streets run wild with moral insanity. Here whores are gutted like pigs, men from the highest ranks of society transform into drunkards and rapists as they indulge in opium and give in to their animalistic urges. It feels as if God himself had turned his face away, leaving me, and a band of men, to battle the devils that haunt this modern Sodom and Gomorrah.

Within the hour, Kipling returned. With him was Mr. Vigo White. A man of average height, with fiery red hair and wild sideburns. He walked towards me, I could see his beady blue eyes surveying the wreckage. He wiped his mouth in amazement at the destruction. Lifting a pair of spectacles from the arch of his pointy nose he rested them atop his head pushing his ginger locks back.

“I found him, Mr. Reid,” Kipling called.

“Thank you for coming,” said I, stretching out my hand towards Mr. White. Setting his case upon the ground, he took my hand.

“Of what service may I be?” Mr. White returned as his observations continued. “Looks like quite the mess.”

“Indeed it is. We found traces of an explosive. I want you to have a look at it and see if we can gather any clues from what is left behind; a maker or seller, perhaps.”

“Don’t you have other people who could do this?” White asked. He took his spectacles into his hands and rubbed them clean with a cloth. He returned the cloth to his grey tweed jacket with exaggerated care. “I don’t even work for the Yard.”

“You don’t work for anyone, you’re a vagabond,” said I.

“I have my experiments and a more than generous lump sum every six months,” said White with a smirk. He enjoyed his anonymity. He lived in the shadows and we left him to it unless his assistance was needed. For all his bizarre behaviour his skills and scientific knowledge was paramount to me.

“You know our resources are limited. None of my men are as skilled as you,” I paused. “Why do you question my call for aid?”

“No reason, I just like hearing that I’m needed.” White grinned, picking up his case. “Show me where this bomb is - or was.”

Setting his case upon the ground, he opened it up. Inside were various scientific tools, bottles with strange solutions, a small burner, and glass tubes for collecting samples. He descended onto the tracks

and waded through the wreckage to examine the origin of the explosion and gingerly collect samples. White knelt by the remains of the explosive and began to examine. The explosive casing was virtually non-existent. Shrapnel was all that remained. Strange burn marks of various colours of red and orange trailed away from the central blast. I watched White drift into his own world, as happened frequently when he made his examinations. He mumbled, sighed, and chuckled as he took samples and packed them into the tubes.

After a few minutes, White shot up like a bullet, and cried: "Sweet Mother Mary!"

"What?" I asked excitedly. "What is it?"

White turned to look at me, stepped over the wreckage, and climbed back on to the platform. His hands were black, but that did not stop him from rubbing his forehead, leaving residue.

He leaned in close to me and whispered, "I've seen these types of explosive burn marks before."

"Where from?"

"You're not going to like it," he warned.

"Tell me, White."

"I knew a chap once, a Jewish mechanic. He had a design for an explosive that was small in size but with a fierce impact. His work always left these kinds of red and orange burns."

"Who is this mechanic?"

"Look, Reid, I'm not saying he did this. It is possible that someone stole his plans."

"The name! Tell me his name."

White hung his head and ran his blackened hand through his red hair. "The man's name is Abraham Lamech."

"Lamech, you say? The Jewish anarchist?"

"Say that again?" came an unfamiliar voice. White and I turned to see a man approaching us with a notepad and pencil in his hands. He wore a tweed suit in brown and blue checks, a red waistcoat with a gold watch chain, and a brown fedora. "Did you say, Lamech is responsible for this attack?"

"I shan't be saying anything. Who are you?" I demanded.

"He's a piss-taker, Mr. Reid. A scribbling monkey for the papers."

"Care to comment on this attack, Mr. Reid? You suspect Lamech? Will you be arresting him? What is your evidence?"

"Officer Kipling!" I shouted.

"Will you be taking this to Abberline? Or are you afraid of the Jewish threat?" The reporter carried on asking questions.

"Kipling, get down here at once!" I ordered again.

"You are avoiding the question. Why, Inspector Reid? Are you trying to cover something up?"

I gripped the reporter by the collar and pulled his face close to mine. "Now you listen here. I don't know how you slipped in, but whatever you think you hear or know is all hearsay. I will not have scandal like you twisting words and making false reports so that you can sell papers."

"Still bitter about Ripper getting away, Inspector?" I shoved the reporter back, he nearly fell to the ground. Kipling came towards us.

"Officer, throw this man out of here. And make sure everyone knows his face. I don't want to see him sniffing around here again!"

Chapter 2

Doctor Watson The Goblin Man

Autumn 1890

It was a bright and sunny autumn day. The windows of 221B were open, which allowed a pleasant breeze to flow through the rooms. The sound of carts and horses' hooves banging on the cobbled road filled the background, along with the occasional loud-spoken man or laughing woman. I found myself gazing out our bay window, watching the business below. Holmes was in a dark mood. The previous week he had concluded work on a high profile case for a well-known foreign dignitary, and the case had seen him rise to new heights within his field. As a result, he was flooded with letters from prospective clients far and wide. However, he took little interest in this sudden flurry of requests for his services. With open letters piled high around his chair, all of them please for help, he sat with his chin resting on his knees.

"Watson!" he called. I turned from the window to see him throw his head back and rest it on the back of the chair. His arms hung over each side like an exhausted child, and a deep sigh left his lungs.

"Find something of interest?" I asked.

"Quite the opposite, I'm afraid." He sighed again. He leapt from his chair and walked over to the mantle. He rested his long thin arm across it and repeatedly tapped his middle finger upon the wood. "Dull, Watson, just dull. All of these letters." His head turned back and forth as he looked at the pile. "Ah! Take this one." He walked back to his chair and picked up a note. It ran this way:

Dear Mr Holmes,

I require your services. My wife has left me and has given no indication as to where she has gone.

Help me find her.

Sincerely, George Peabody Jones.

"Is there nothing of interest in this woman's sudden disappearance?" I asked.

"Women disappear all the time, especially when they have spent time in the company of people like George Peabody Jones."

"Are you familiar with this man?" I pressed.

"I am, Watson. He's a fiendish man, a banker. He is unaware of my knowledge of him, but he is a member of a spiritualist club that often partakes in immoral indulgences fit only for the ancient city of Corinth. It is likely his wife left for good reason, probably to escape his lunacy."

"Well," said I, "not all of these letters can be from such indulgent individuals, surely."

"No, no, they are not." He threw the letter down and collapsed into his chair. Legs sprawled and his finger tips steepled, he continued, "But they are all void of interest. A missing ring here, a problemat will there, men and women wanting to cover their petty scandals. I'm not a repair service, Watson. Give me real problems, give me real work! Don't hound me with these minuscule problems that Scotland Yard's most ineffective officer could handle."

"I'm sure something will crop up. It always does," I assured him. He nodded and rolled his eyes. Just then, the bell rang.

“Half a second ring!” said Holmes, sitting up straight. He slouched back into his chair. “Probably someone with a missing pet.”

I could hear the sound of footsteps coming up the stairs. I walked to the door and opened it before our guest could knock. It was a man around five feet five inches. He had blonde hair and blue eyes. He was dressed in a well-pressed black suit and held a top hat in his hand.

“Are you Sherlock Holmes?” asked the man in a thick Scottish accent.

“I am Doctor Watson...”

“Yes, the chronicler!” the Scotsman said with a nod. “Where is Mr. Holmes? I must speak with him.”

“I am right here,” said Holmes, who was now standing with hands clasped behind his back. “Come in and have a seat, and do try and calm your nerves, Mr...?”

“David Daniels,” our visitor replied.

“Mr. Daniels,” said Holmes extending his arm, “please, sit.”

I fetched our guest a glass of brandy as he settled on the long couch. Taking it quickly, he downed the liquid and asked for another. After obliging, I replaced the bottle and sat opposite Holmes as our guest dried his mouth with his sleeve. After several deep breaths, the man appeared more composed.

“Now,” Holmes began, “what brings one of London’s most successful business men to our bohemian abode?”

“You know of me, I see,” Mr. Daniels said. “But I would abandon my fortune, my business venture, and all my success to escape this horrific fate that has befallen me.” He took several deep breaths. “Mr. Holmes, I have found myself terrorised by a ghastly creature; a creature known only as The Goblin Man.”

I looked at Holmes, but his expression remained firm.

“Have you heard of him?” Mr Daniels asked.

“The Goblin Man?” Holmes questioned, “Watson, hand me my index, would you?” I did as he asked. Holmes flipped through his papers. “Ah, yes. Reports of a Goblin Man have been present for some time. He is reported to work in dark alleys. He chases his victims, binds them, strips them of their possessions, and leaves them. Reports, though often given by women of questionable nature and drunken men, say he has a large nose...”

“Big green eyes,” interrupted Mr. Daniels, “yellowish skin covered in boils, ratty clothes which consist of a dirty cotton shirt, a red velvet waistcoat, checkered trousers, a long natty jacket, and a battered top hat. His hands are like ice, and his fingernails are long and sharp and black as coal.”

Holmes and I gazed upon our guest. His description of this Goblin Man sent chills down my spine.

“He sounds like the stuff of fairy tales, something the Brothers Grimm might have crafted,” I said, breaking the silence.

“You’ve seen this man then, have you?” asked Holmes.

“I have,” Daniels admitted. “He is my tormentor. He is the demon that stalks me in the night, chasing me till I can no longer run, but he never hurts me or takes anything from me. He has touched me once and never again. I feel him always behind me. His presence lingers when awake, sleep is a struggle for the night as the Goblin haunts my dreams. Mr. Holmes, I need your help. I need you to stop this Goblin Man.”

“And you believe this Goblin Man to be of supernatural origins?” I asked.

“Heavens, no,” replied Daniels, “but he is a foul creature whether birthed in hell or not. He is very real. What I can’t understand is his fascination with me; am I the only one he does this to? What have I done to deserve this torture?” His eyes drifted from Holmes and he stared into the fireplace. “I thought myself an honourable, God-fearing man, maybe I’m not.” Our guest trailed off into silence.

moment. "Can you help me?" he asked, looking straight into Holmes' eyes.

"I'm going to need more details, Mr. Daniels. When did you first encounter this Goblin Man? Tell me everything."

Mr. Daniels leaned back, his hands in his lap. "It began a fortnight ago. I was returning home after a long evening of drink and gambling at my club. The time was around midnight, if memory serves. A misty fog rolled in the air and the streets were deserted. Moving briskly with my head down and my coat collar turned up to keep dry, I did not pay much attention to my surroundings. Strange chattering and quiet giggles could be heard from behind, but when I turned around, no one could be seen. My first thought was that someone from one of the local public houses was fumbling home. Then a horrendous screech echoed through the air. That's when I saw it." Our guest turned pale. "Standing under the yellow glow of a street lamp was the Goblin Man. His shoulders moved up and down as he breathed in and out.

"'Who are you?' I called out, but there was no response. Taking a few steps backwards, I turned around and quickened my pace. My home, which is on James Street, just off Lancaster Gate, was near. Quick steps followed me. The Goblin was chasing after me. I began to run for fear that this maniac might kill me! My terror was amplified when I realised I was leading this monster to my very doorstep. So I darted down a small path between two rows of houses. Without warning, I found myself flung to the ground. The Goblin pounced on top of me, digging his knee into my back. He wrapped his cold hands around the back of my neck and squeezed tightly." Daniels placed his hand around his neck as if the mere memory of it caused him to relive the horror of the event. "I lay there motionless for some time."

"'What do you want?' said I. The man suddenly stood up and backed off. I quickly rose to my feet and faced my attacker. It was dark, but I could still see him clearly. He was not... natural looking. His face, that is, was that of a monster. 'Who are you?' I stammered. Like a beast, the Goblin flailed his arms and let out a piercing scream. I began to run again, but he did not follow me. When I felt safe, I proceeded home. Nerves shattered, I collapsed the moment I got inside my door. I stayed home the entire next day and attempted to recover. I reported this incident to the authorities, but no other had been reported before mine. In fact the officer said there hadn't been a Goblin case since a few years back. They stationed a few extra officers within my area and assured me they'd do their best to find this man." I noticed the slight twitch of a smile upon Holmes's face at this statement. "Well, nothing happened for a day or two. Then about four days after the first encounter, I stepped into my back garden and was horrified when I saw the Goblin Man sitting upon the stone fence. His hand dangled between his legs and his head was bent down. I raced back inside and grabbed my revolver. When he came back, he was gone!"

"And what time was this?" Holmes asked.

"It was about nine o'clock at night. I sent a wire to the police, but of course they did not prove much help at all.

A week after the first encounter, I found myself back at my club. This time my revolver was with me. I looked constantly behind me during my walk home but saw nothing. It wasn't until James Street that fear consumed me, and I saw the Goblin Man a short distance ahead. I reached into my pocket, withdrew my revolver and began to fire. Utter panic took me when I realised my revolver was not loaded! I had loaded that gun that very morning, but now it was empty! The Goblin Man held out his hand, and he dropped several small objects on the ground. They pinged as they hit the ground, and I then realised what they were. They were my bullets! How he got them is a mystery. He then chased after me. We ran for what felt like hours. He didn't appear to wish to catch me this time, as if he

derived some kind of enjoyment from the chase alone. I ran, Mr. Holmes, I ran and ran until I could run no more. I fell over with aching legs and a pounding chest. After recovering my strength, I managed to make my way home. My incident was told to the police. They said they would have a police officer on my street every night between nine and midnight. Their inability to do anything thus far did not ease my fear, but whom else could I turn to? Thankfully, for the sake of my sanity, the next four days passed uneventfully. On the fifth day, after this third encounter, I had prepared myself for bed and when I stepped into my room my window, which overlooks the back, was open. A cold wind crept in and rustled the curtains. I walked over to close it but something caught my attention. I turned, and sitting in the armchair, was the Goblin Man! I dropped my lamp and it shattered on the floor. Thankfully nothing caught fire. There, in the darkened room, the Goblin Man approached me. I could feel his breath on my face. It stank, like the smell of death.

“What do you want? Why are you tormenting me?” I pleaded.

“Don’t you know?” the Goblin Man replied.

“No! I don’t know, so tell me, damn it!” I shouted.

“Shouts won’t bring you any aid,” he said in a slow, serpent-like voice.

“Leave me alone! Is it money you want? I’ll pay you, just leave me alone!” I told him.

“Money? I don’t need your money. Just know that I’m always going to be here. You can’t escape me.” I turned to hit the Goblin Man, but he was too fast. He ducked, missing my swing, and threw one of the bed sheets over my head. By the time I had untangled myself, he had escaped through the window and was gone. I told this to the police, yet again. They found no clues within my room. But I can bear it no more, Mr. Holmes. This man is real and he must be stopped. Can you help me?”

Holmes sat in silence a moment or two. “Have you wronged anyone?”

“Pardon?”

“In your line of work. You have your hands in several operations. You invest in many companies, shipping, manufacturing, a few others. I need to know if you have, in all your business deals, ever wronged someone. It’s better to tell me now than have me discover it later,” said Holmes coolly.

“Oh, well,” stammered Mr. Daniels. “I am an honest and ethical businessman.”

“Then you may very well be the first in history,” Holmes returned.

“Business is not about making friends, Mr. Holmes. It is about making money, and that is something I am particularly good at. But I can say there are no harsh feelings between me and any of my investors.”

“Any business partners?” Holmes asked.

“Well, I lost my most recent partner,” said he.

“How so?” I asked.

“Do you recall that explosion in East London?” Daniels asked. “The one that tore through the station. My partner, Thomas, was on the train that went up. He was a damn good man, a damn good businessman!”

“I’ll take the case, Mr. Daniels,” said Holmes. “As I am sure you are aware, my rates are fixed and Doctor Watson will be accompanying me on my investigation. I will need full access to your house, your room, and I hope that you retained the bullets that this Goblin Man took.”

“Why, yes, of course!”

“Very well, I have some things to take care of and some tidying up to do. We will call upon you tonight, Mr. Daniels.” Holmes stood and walked to the study door, “Good day.”

Mr. Daniels stood and held the rim of his hat with both hands as he passed by Holmes. “Thank you, Mr. Holmes, thank you indeed! I will see you later.”

Chapter 3

Martin Hewitt The Problem At Davenport House

Autumn 1890

This was a singularly unique affair. One that happens once in a lifetime. One autumn evening when Martin Hewitt and I had found ourselves coming home from the public house, The Hare and The Hounds, we were greeted in the street by a stranger. A woman. She was tall and slender, and wore a dark blue dress with a floral design. Her hair, black, was tied up, which accentuated the severity of her face. Her sharp cheekbones, wide green eyes, and pointy nose dazzled us. She looked upon us intensely. I admit that for a moment there was a light feeling of intimidation at the strange beauty that she possessed.

“Are you Martin Hewitt?” she asked in a gentle voice.

“I am,” said Hewitt, stepping forward and extending his hand.

“I need your help,” said the woman, placing her hand into his.

Hewitt brought it to his lips and kissed it. “Well, why don’t we step inside so we may talk? Perhaps with a warm drink?”

“Very well,” she replied.

She followed us up the stairs and into our chambers. I offered her a seat and quickly took to boiling some water in order to prepare some tea. Hewitt sat with our guest and I observed from a distance.

“Now, what is your name?” Hewitt asked.

“Mrs. Clara Edwards,” she replied.

“Well, Mrs. Edwards, what can I do for you?”

“I am here on a most important request. Someone very dear to me has gone missing. I have no clue where they have gone or why they have just abandoned us. I was hoping that if I gave you enough information you would be able to find my missing associate.”

“Mrs. Edwards, you can drop the act,” Hewitt smirked. His fingertips danced on the armrest of her chair. “I know very well that the person you seek is no associate of yours, but is rather a husband, or lover.” An expression of complete bewilderment fell upon Hewitt’s client. Her face went flush and she stirred in her seat. Hewitt remained cool and calm as he continued: “I can also see you are around three months with child, and feel it safe to assume this abandoner is the father.”

It started with a quiver of the lower lip, soon a stream of tears flowed like two great rivers from her green eyes. “How can you possibly know any of this?” she begged an explanation through her sobs.

“Your dress, for one, is bulging ever so slightly around your stomach. You are not a rotund woman yet I can see swelling in your fingers where your wedding ring has tightened. Furthermore, your fingernails; I can see a brown dust under them, and judging from the aroma obtained when I kissed your hand, you are taking Tabloid Opium for your morning sickness. So the logical explanation would be that you are with child. How do I know that you are looking for the father? Well, you said ‘they abandoned us’ rather than ‘they abandoned me’. You also went out of your way to conceal the gender. So you may drop the act. I will help you but only under the umbrella of complete and total honesty.”

She held her head low. The kettle screamed, I quickly prepared three cups of tea. I brought them on a tray with a bit of milk and sugar on the side. Mrs. Edwards lifted her head as I approached. With

the assurance of the warm drink in her hand she told us her tale.

“His name is Phillias Jackson, a struggling businessman. He has all the charisma one could need, but he lacks the finance to succeed in anything. His profession changes on a weekly basis it feels, he could never keep to one line of work. He has passion though, a raw sort of attitude towards life, which was what attracted me to him.”

“And your wealth attracted him to you?” Hewitt interrupted. “Or your husband’s wealth, I should say.”

“My husband is dead, Mr. Hewitt,” she said with a bite in her voice.

“Yes, but not three months ago.”

“And how do you know?” she demanded.

“Mrs. Edwards, or rather, Mrs. Goodtree, I recognise you from the papers. Your husband, Thomas Goodtree, died in that terrible explosion at the Whitechapel station,” said Hewitt. “Now, it will be much easier if you tell us the truth from the start.”

Her eyes widened. She had a child-like look of surprise upon her face. She was caught off guard completely with no more places to hide.

“Yes, yes, I can see that. Thomas was a good man, but he was so wrapped up in the shipping business that he paid little attention to me. I never cared to be rich, I simply wanted a happy life. So when I met this passionate man, Phillias, I gave in to my desires. Thomas cared little about what I did or where I went, so he never knew. He spent all this time with his business partner. I tried to get Thomas to take Phillias into their business, and even introduced them. But then I fell pregnant and we discussed what we would do. We agreed that we would run away together with the money we had and start a life somewhere new. Then one day he sent me a note saying he had some other business to take care of out of town and that he’d be back in a week or two. That was two and a half months ago. He never came back, nor have I heard from him. He’s just gone! I’ve lost my uncaring husband and the one man who did care is missing. I don’t want to make a public ordeal of this, Mr. Hewitt. That is why I’ve come to you. More than anything, I need closure. If he’s dead, I need to know.”

“Were there ever any feuds between your husband and Phillias?” Hewitt asked.

“Never. The times I saw them together they acted like gentlemen.”

“And when did you see them together?”

“Not often. But as I said, I introduced Thomas to Phillias and for a while he did do some work for them. Neither man complained about the other, at least not to me. I have no reason to think there was any issue between them at all.”

“Where did he work for them?”

“Thomas and his partner had a factory on Nine Elms. Phillias managed it.”

“Very well. And as you have no idea where he went I think it would be best to look around Mrs. Goodtree’s home for a clue to his whereabouts. What is his address?”

“I’m not sure. He never disclosed it to me. We only met in hotels.”

“Dear me, Mrs Goodtree, this is quite the mess. At what hotels did you meet?”

“Fashionable ones. The Savoy, most recently. The Langham Hotels and the Midland Grand on St Pancras.”

“Would you know anyone that might know where he lives?”

“Thomas’s partner, David Daniels, he might know. He lives on James Street by Lancaster Gate.”

“Can you give us a description of Phillias?”

“He is tall, about six feet. He had a lovely face.” Her eyes began to well, but she fought back the tears.

“Please, no romantics,” Hewitt interrupted. “Tell it straight.”

Our guest took the rebuke on the chin. Straightening her posture she continued.

“He is six foot with peppered hair,” she continued, “he has a rugged face, and he rarely shaves, so he usually has a thick layer of stubble. When I last saw him, he had a moustache. I could always find him in a crowd as he wore a bowler hat with a card pinned to it.” She paused a moment, and her lip quivered. “The card was a Queen of Hearts, and on the backside, the side facing the hat, was a photograph of myself. He calls me the queen of his heart, you see.”

“His eyes and face, any unique markings upon them?” Hewitt asked.

“His eyes are a swirl of colour, a brownish green - very earthy and wild. On the left side of his face, just before his ear, is a mole. His frame is thin, but strong. His nose is slightly arched in the middle. He often has bags under his eyes from late nights working, and his cheeks are sunken as he never eats enough. He does have a small scar upon his right hand, and one upon his left index finger. He was cut badly, so the scar is quite visible.”

“What type of dress?”

“Gentlemen’s dress. A blue waistcoat was his favourite. A black frock coat and grey trousers with a green-checked pattern.”

“Very well. Brett, you and I will go see what we can find out from Mr. Daniels. Where can we find you, Mrs. Goodtree?”

“Chester House, Elsworth Road, near Primrose Hill.”

“Ah, yes. I know it.”

Mrs. Goodtree rose, as did we. I walked over and opened the door. She stopped in the doorway and turned back. “Find him, Mr. Hewitt. I can’t bear this child without my sweet Phillias.” With that, she rushed down the stairs and out of sight.

Chapter 4

D.I. Edmund Reid An Anarchist's Playground

August 1890

Kipling and I left the Whitechapel and Mile End station and embarked towards Brick Lane where Lamech and his Jewish anarchists were known to make camp. The maria battered along the cobble streets, the driver shouting abuses at the filth that either stumbled into the road or felt the necessity to stand there. I looked at my watch; the time was near three o'clock. I realised I had not eaten since I left my home and my bride, Emily. By now she would have heard of the explosion and I could only imagine her panic for my wellbeing.

I saw the piercing steeple of Christ Church ahead as we drew nearer and nearer to Lamech's dwelling. Kipling sat across from me gripping his baton, his knuckles were white, and his face grimaced.

"Steady, Kipling," said I. He turned his eyes from the cabin floor towards me, and a half smile broke on his face.

"Yes, sir."

"No need to be. We are simply going to have a conversation with Lamech, not break down his doors... yet." I grinned in an attempt to ease his tension.

The maria came to a jerking halt, thrusting Kipling and myself backwards and forwards. The driver called that we had arrived. I looked up and down the street. There was an eerie quiet that loomed in the stale air. Our only company was the foul stench of urine and other bodily remains that swam in the gutters. We ducked down an alley and approached a black door. I pounded upon it until it was jerked open. A short man with dark hair and a thick beard answered. His eyes met mine with disapproval and disdain.

"What do you want?" he asked in a thick Polish accent. He raised his arm and leaned on the doorframe, and I saw that his arm was speckled with tattoos. Upon his wrist I noticed a small symbol, the Hebrew Alpha symbol and on the under part, connected by a chain, the Omega symbol.

"I need to see Lamech. I know he's here," I demanded.

"This some sort of joke?" the man demanded, his face turning red.

"I'm not joking," said I. "Now, where is he?"

"Lamech is dead, you bastard!" he shouted. "Don't act like you don't know!"

"Dead?" I retorted, taken aback by his news. "What is the cause?"

"You English and your fake ignorance. You can't pretend you know nothing of this."

"I assure you we do not."

"How did he die?" Kipling asked.

"What is this man doing here?" roared a voice from inside. A tall lanky man with wide-set eyes and a large nose sprung towards us. His wrist bore the same tattooed symbol. It was a sign showing which group he belonged to.

"We are here to speak with Lamech, but your friend here tells me that he is dead," said I.

"I know you, Inspector Reid. You think you can cleanse Whitechapel. Rid it of vermin like us!" shouted the tall man. His hand was jerking and I noticed him playing with a silver ring with the Star of David embedded on it. "I will not have your presence here!"

"I do not need your permission. Now, if there has been a death, I want to know the cause. Should I suspect anything, it will not cost me any great trouble to rally my troops and arrest you all for illegal imports, petty theft, and other random acts of violence."

"Mr Reid, maybe one day you'll follow through with your threats of arrest," the tall man replied. He turned and walked away saying: "Show him in."

We followed the short man down a dark hallway, and then up a narrow stair and into an attic. The room was covered in Jewish symbols. A desk was piled with newspapers, letters, and several thick Torah scrolls. A strong aroma of incense hung heavy in the room. In the far corner sat two women on the floor, their backs to us. There was a body laid out in front of them. The tall man stood in a corner smoking a cigarette. The women turned to look at us. One was elderly and frail looking, the other young and fair-skinned.

"They are his mother and sister," the short man informed us.

"I am Ruth," said the young woman. "This is Naomi." Ruth pointed towards the older woman.

"I am sorry for your loss," I said removing my hat.

"Can you tell us what happened?" Kipling asked.

"We do not know," Ruth said. "He was fine until last night. He felt ill, talked lots of nonsense, and though he was dreaming but still awake. Then he fainted."

"When did he breathe his last?" I asked.

The young woman looked at me sternly. "Is it always straight to business with you, Mr. Reid?"

"May we have a look at him?" Kipling asked softly. I was impressed with Kipling's tact, and the woman appeared softer towards him. Ruth nodded and we approached.

"He departed from us an hour ago," Ruth said. I looked upon the face of Abraham Lamech. There was a strange shading under his eyes and a sort of yellowish tint to his skin. His body expelled an aroma that was not one of death. It was something else. A toxin, but I could not be certain of which one.

"Was he with anyone last night?" I pressed.

"Not that we are aware. He went out for a drink."

"At what time?"

"Haven't you pressed enough?" the tall man said from his corner, still fiddling with his loose ring. "I think you can leave us now."

"I think not. His manner of death was no accident. He was poisoned."

"He went to the Inn round the corner. The White Stag," Ruth said.

"Quiet, woman!" snapped the tall man.

"They need to know," she returned softly, but her eyes gave him a piercing stare.

"Do you know who he saw there? Was he meant to be meeting anyone?" I asked. They were unsurprised. "Has he had any plans to bomb the Whitechapel and Mile End station?"

The women were silent.

"You come here accusing a dead man of this?" the short man said.

"He did it, or someone wants us to think he did. An explosive very much like the ones we know he has used in the past was the cause of the tragedy today. Many are dead. If he had nothing to do with this, it's important that we learn who did, but it all points here."

"We know nothing of it," the tall man said. The short man looked uneasy.

"Cooperation will go a long way," I returned. The room remained silent.

"We'll cooperate when swine like Lord Myers stop trying to force the Jews out of the city," exclaimed the short man. The other shot him a fierce glance.

“I’m not here to discuss matters of prejudice, nor the thoughts and actions of Lord Myers. I am here about the underground station. We will need Lamech’s body for autopsy .”

Kipling and I came to an agreement with Ruth and the others regarding Lamech’s body. I sent Kipling back to the station to make arrangements for the body to be retrieved while I carried on to The White Stag. The streets were still quiet as Lamech’s followers mourned his passing in silence. Soon enough the sound of glasses clashing and the murmur of sloshed men could be heard here and there. I approached the public house, the smell of stale beer rushed into my lungs as I set foot inside. Glances of disapproval followed me as I walked up to the bar.

“Your name, sir?” I asked the bartender.

“Jeffry,” the man managed to mumble.

“Lamech was here last night. Who was he with?”

He wiped out a glass with a dirty towel. “Don’t know what you mean guv’ner,” he said, and put the glass onto a shelf.

“Give us some gin,” said a man at the bar. Jeffry grabbed a bottle and glass and filled it for him.

“I know he was here,” said I. “You can either help me or I can have a look at your books. I know you’ve made arrangements with local whores for the use of your rooms.”

“You’d like to know who they bring back. That’d be the real crime.” Jeffry grinned.

“I do not care that others in authority have looked past this. I will not do the same. What I can promise is this: help me, and I will give you time to move your whores before we storm the cesspool!”

Jeffry squinted at me. I glared back at him, unmoving.

“Get us a whiskey!” shouted another man, slapping his open palm onto the bar. Jeffry walked away and I stormed out.

I returned, empty-handed, to the station. Lamech’s body was brought in later that night, while White examined the remains of the explosive. Over the next twenty-four hours, the bodies from the explosion were identified. Further aid from other divisions of Scotland Yard stepped in to handle the amount of work. An Inspector Lestrade was put in place to interview survivors and speak with those who had lost loved ones, in the hopes of acquiring any leads.

I dozed at my desk. A rattle at my door shook me awake. “Come in,” I called, wiping the sleep from my eyes and seeing the morning sun pour through the windows.

“You look like hell, Reid,” said White. “You’ve got a beautiful wife, go sleep with her rather than at your desk.”

“I’d rather you not speak of me and my wife’s sleeping arrangements,” I said. “Tell me, what have you learnt?” White waved, and I followed him. In his private working chamber, Lamech’s body lay on a table. White had done the autopsy during the night. On a counter lay the remains of the explosive along with some glass dishes filled with coloured powder, some magnifying instruments, and a few Bunsen burners boiling with strange liquids.

“Well, you were right. Lamech was poisoned,” said White, looking over the dead body. “But not by any poison I’m familiar with. This purple colouring of the skin appears to be a side effect of the

poison.”

“A foreign poison.” I said, walking over and looking down at the corpse. “How did it get into his body?”

“It wasn’t injected into his system. There are no signs of a struggle or even so much as a needle prick on him. It was done orally, through food or drink.” White walked over to a scope. I followed. “Have a look.” I put my eyes to the scope and looked at the microorganisms. “His gut and intestines were full of the stuff. I can only imagine that this poison is tasteless and has no aroma, or at least was masked by another taste. He gobbled his food and drink, and by the time he got home the poison had taken effect, and he died.” I raised my eyes from the scope and looked at White. “So, there you have it.”

“It was done through his food,” I said. “The only place he went, or at least the only place his family told me he went, was the public house. I paid them a visit. They were, of course, no help at all. It would seem they have something to hide.”

“Think you ought to pay them another visit. Perhaps a nice little raid is in order?”

“What of the explosive?” I questioned.

“It’s definitely one of Lamech’s designs. I knew that from the beginning,” said White, as he ran his hand through his hair. “It’s the chemicals he uses, they leave those colour marks which were left. The device used an unknown chemical compound that Lamech and his group have never used.”

“What are you suggesting?”

“It’s obvious. Where does an anarchist get a new chemical?”

“From someone like you.”

“Exactly,” White returned with a grin. “You need to find the chemist Lamech was working with.”

“Our best lead is back at the public house. Burst down the doors and chase out the whores until you get answers.”

Kipling burst into the room. “We’ve got a problem sir!” He handed me *The Weekly Dispatch*. The headline read:

JEWISH ANARCHIST RESPONSIBLE FOR WHITECHAPEL & MILE END BOMBING!

“Story by Eustace Brown? Damn, that reporter!” I shouted, throwing the paper aside. “Bring him in!”

“Another thing, Inspector Reid, Detective Chief Inspector Johnstone is here.”

“What the hell, Reid?” shouted DCI Johnstone as I stepped into my office. He was sitting atop my desk. “This is sloppy, very sloppy!”

“The reporter sneaked in, heard whispers and crafted a story. There is no truth to his words!”

“It doesn’t matter. We now have a newspaper all over the city claiming that a Jewish anarchist is blowing up rail stations. Not only will this affect people travelling on the Underground, it’s going to cause unwanted hostilities between the gentiles and the Hebrews!”

Johnstone stood and walked around my desk looking at the map of London that hung on the wall.

“I’ll make him print a retraction, sir,” said I.

“What are you doing about this anarchist?”

“He’s dead. He was at the pub the night before the explosion, came home, ill, and died sometime

after the explosion. His body lies here. Mr. White..”

“White is here?” he snapped.

“He is, sir.”

“That man is no doctor, he’s no proper scientist. He should not be getting his hands on police business.”

“He’s a good man, and he’s a hell of a lot better than some of these police surgeons we’ve got wasting time on our payroll.” I composed myself. “Now, I have a dead anarchist, a wrecked railway station, and a journalist I need to deal with. So, if you’ll excuse me, I have work to do.”

“See that all this is sorted, Reid. Don’t let this be another Ripper.” Johnstone walked out. I went around my desk and fell into my chair.

Chapter 5

Doctor Watson A Visit To Mr Daniels

Autumn 1890

“Watson, would you visit Lestrade and see what information they might have on this *Goblin Man*; and the incident regarding Mr. Daniels?” Holmes asked.

“I’ll leave straight away,” said I. “What are you doing?”

“I will follow another avenue. Meet me at Lancaster Gate at nine o’clock, and from there we’ll go to see Daniels.”

I left Holmes and made my way to Scotland Yard. I did not find Lestrade at the Yard upon my arrival, and I waited some time before he appeared.

“Hello Doctor.” Lestrade greeted me with a handshake. I followed him into his small office. “What can I do for you?”

“I need to learn what you know about The Goblin Man and his connection to David Daniels,” said I.

Lestrade leaned back in his chair and let out a sigh.

“The Goblin Man,” Lestrade began. “He is a man who dresses up and scares people, but he is as slippery as a fish, I tell you. We can’t seem to catch him. His activity quietened down the past few years. I know some people thought he might have been the Ripper because his attacks stopped about six months before the Whitechapel horrors started. Now the Goblin is back, or so we’re meant to believe, and tormenting this man Daniels.” Lestrade leaned forward, placing his elbows on his desk. “We’ve got nothing. Nothing other than Daniels’ statements. Any piece of evidence or any claim they’ve all been circumstantial.” Lestrade shook his head. “We’ve had more patrols around Daniels’ house, but this Goblin somehow slips through all our nets. He’s just a man, but a bloody sly one, that’s for sure.”

“What about the bullets?” I asked.

“What bullets?” Lestrade questioned.

“The ones Daniels says the Goblin somehow took from his revolver.” Lestrade looked befuddled for a moment. “Surely he informed you of this?”

“I can’t say that he did. What did he tell you?”

“He told Holmes and I that he took a revolver with him to the club; on his way home the Goblin was waiting for him. When he tried to fire, he realised the gun was empty and somehow the Goblin had the bullets and dropped them on the ground before him.”

“Well, this is news to me!” Lestrade exclaimed. “I’m going to send someone over to his house right away!”

“Holmes and I are going there tonight,” I said.

“Then find out what game this man is playing. He’s wasted enough of our time. I’m sorry I can’t give you any solid information on this Goblin, sometimes I’m not sure he exists.”

I met Holmes at Lancaster Gate at nine o’clock; together we walked towards James Street. I told him all that Lestrade had said and that Daniels never spoke of the bullets to the authorities.

“Why would he tell us and not them?” I asked.

“Time will tell, Watson,” Holmes said sagely.

“Lestrade questioned the very existence of this Goblin Man. Do you think it’s possible that Daniel is... well, maybe he isn’t in his right mind?”

Holmes looked off into the distance a moment. “Lestrade may have a point.”

“Where have you been all day?” I asked.

“Watching Daniels,” Holmes said.

“Did you see anything of interest?”

“I didn’t, no. He’s been holed up in his house all day. No one has been seen coming in or out.”

We stopped when we reached the top of James Street. Holmes motioned to go down an alley. We passed by the back of Daniels’ house but saw nothing of interest. As we walked around the corner Holmes pulled me back.

“Someone’s there,” Holmes whispered peering around the corner.

My heart pounded: “The Goblin?”

Holmes confirmed it was not with a slight shake of his head. “It’s a woman.”

I looked and saw a tall slender woman standing on the porch of Daniels’ house. The light from inside poured over her, but she was too far away to make out any clear features. Her distinguishing feature was her blazing red hair. The front door was open and she was speaking with someone, presumably Daniels. She was handed a small box, after which she turned and left. Holmes and I hid in the shadows as she walked towards us. As she passed us, she paused and turned her head slightly in our direction. We both stood still in the darkness, hoping she would not see us. Finally, after a few moments, she continued on her way.

“Who is she?” I asked when she had gone.

“A curiosity. Come, Daniels will be waiting for us.”

Mr. Daniels greeted us with a look of relief. “Oh Mr. Holmes, I am glad to see you!” He ushered us inside and quickly closed the door. “How has your day been?”

“Informative,” Holmes returned. “Has anything of interest occurred since we last spoke?”

“No, no,” Daniels answered quickly.

“No sign of the Goblin?” I pressed.

“Not tonight.”

“Show us your room,” said Holmes.

We followed Mr Daniels down a hall and up a staircase. We were shown into his room.

“Burn marks on the floor?” Holmes asked in surprised as we stepped through the door.

“Yes, that’s right,” said Daniels admitted, looking at a charred bit of carpet and wood panelling.

“I thought you said when you dropped the lamp, it didn’t catch fire,” said I.

“Did I?” he said with a blank expression. “Uh, no it caught fire a bit. I put the fire out when the Goblin had left.”

“Where was the Goblin when you came in the room?” I asked, looking around the room.

“Right behind you on the...” Mr. Daniels paused. “Uh, he was there behind the door, right behind you, Doctor.”

“Can we get the bullets?” Holmes asked. “The ones taken from your revolver.” Daniels took us down into the kitchen where six bullets lay on the table. Without touching them directly, Holmes put them into a leather pouch and tucked them away in his coat pocket. “We need nothing more,” said Holmes patting his pocket. Daniels looked surprised.

“You don’t care to see anything else?”

“No, we have all we need. Good day Mr Daniels.”

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