

Miss Holmes Returns – Side 1

Priya Singh, Daniel Burke

Priya: (as her eyes close) Daniel . . .
(*there is a shift. DANIEL BURKE enters into what is now his bank office*)

Daniel: Did you say something, Priya?

Priya: (her eyes open, gets her bearings) I said it's a lovely office, Daniel, but wouldn't it be better to meet downstairs in the dining hall?

Daniel: No one would dare judge me here. I practically own the place.

Priya: I wasn't really worried about anyone judging *you*, Daniel.

Daniel: Always so proper, our Priya. But there's no reason for concern. After all, we're practically family, you and I.

Priya: Family? That's . . . very kind of you.

Daniel: Well, it's true. Your parents were a part of my father's household since before I was born. Oh, I was sorry to hear about . . . you know. I always like them, your mum and dad. Remember how my mum would have them wear their traditional costumes when they served at table during dinner parties? I loved that. Everyone thought it was so exotic.

Priya: Yes, I remember that.

Daniel: But look at you now! A nurse! And associating with the likes of Josephine Butler, no less. That's incredible. You must tell me all about it.

Priya: I . . . I'm sorry. What is this?

Daniel: What is what?

Priya: What am I doing here, Daniel? I've hardly seen you since we were children, and then out of nowhere you send me this note to come and meet you. We've lived in the same city for years, but this is the first time I was aware you even remembered who I was. Why did you ask me here?

Daniel: It's time to wake up, Priya.

Priya: What?

Daniel: *In Dublin's fair city,
Where the girls are so pretty,
I first set my eyes on sweet Mary Malone . . .*

Miss Holmes Returns – Side 2

Priya Singh, Olive McGann, Josephine Butler

(Olive enters a dark alley)

Olive: Priya? Are you there?

Priya: (out of sight) Olive?

Olive: Priya, it's me. I brought the things from your rooms that you asked for. Clothes and whatnot.

Priya: What took so long?

Olive: Sorry.

(Priya enters the alley. Olive observes Priya's state.)

Olive: Is that blood?

Priya: Please don't ask. I have to go. When you see Mrs. Butler, please tell her . . . tell her . . .

Josephine: Why don't you tell her yourself?

Priya: Mrs. Butler! Olive, you promised –

Olive: No I didn't! You needed help, Priya. Who better to ask?

Josephine: Please, Priya. Just come back with us. We can talk this out, whatever this is.

Priya: I can't. You shouldn't have come. I don't want you involved. It will look bad.

Josephine: You think I give a fig about what it looks like? Just talk to us, dear. Are you hurt? Do you need a doctor?

Priya: No, I'm all right.

Olive: So that blood's not yours, then?

Josephine: As much as I hate to suggest this, dear, I think we should go to the police.

Priya: No.

Josephine: Why not?

Priya: The police . . . they won't help me They won't believe me.

Josephine: Then come with me. Let me keep you safe. They wouldn't dare invade the home of a respectable vicar and his family.

Miss Holmes Returns – Side 3

Mrs. Hudson, Sherlock, Watson, Olive McGann, Josephine Butler

(Mrs. Hudson re-enters, followed by Josephine Butler and Olive McGann. Mrs. Hudson does little to hide her distaste for her guests)

Mrs. Hudson: A Miss Olive McGann and Mrs. Josephine Butler here to see you, Miss Sherlock.

Sherlock: Thank you, Mrs. Hudson.

(Mrs. Hudson exits, disapproving)

Sherlock: Do come in, please. Allow me to introduce my companion, Dr. Dorothy Watson.

Watson: Mrs. Butler, I am a great admirer of your work.

(Josephine gives Watson a polite smile. As she responds, she looks about the room. She wasn't sure what she expected, but this wasn't it)

Josephine: Thank you for seeing us on such short notice. I'm sure you're both very busy.

Sherlock: Well yes, now that you mention it. Dr. Watson and I are in the midst of some rather urgent business. I hope you will forgive me if I bring us to the point. What brings you to Baker Street today?

(Josephine is taken aback. Olive tries to alleviate the awkwardness)

Olive: Oh, well . . . we – that is, I've heard talk, Miss Holmes, that you help people? Sometimes? Women? When they can't turn to the usual places, The police and such.

Sherlock: You are here out of concern for someone. Someone known to the both of you?

Olive: Priya. Priya Singh. Something happened to her last night, and she's disappeared., We're very worried about her.

Josephine: Miss Singh is a nurse who works with us at the LNA. She runs clinics and helps us create literature regarding women's health and disease prevention,

Sherlock: The LNA?

Josephine: The . . . Ladies National Association.

Sherlock: Of what?

Watson: apologies, Mrs. Butler. I am very familiar with your work. Sherlock, however, prefers to leave things . . . uncluttered.

Josephine: We should have gone to the police after all. I fear we're wasting your time.

(Josephine begins to leave)

Sherlock: I am sorry for your loss, Mrs. Butler.

Josephine: Miss Singh is not . . .

Sherlock: I was referring to your daughter.

Josephine: I beg your pardon?

Sherlock: That portrait you wear. I estimate the child's age to be around five years old. I wonder, did her death lead to your break from the church?

Watson: Sherlock –

Sherlock: Those prayer beads. On most Christian rosaries, the beads are arranged in groups of ten, called "decades." Your beads follow your own customized pattern, which tells me that you remain a believer, but you will not allow an institution to dictate the terms of your devotion.

Josephine: You are quite observant, Miss Holmes.

Sherlock: Ladies' National Association of what?

Josephine: The Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts.

Sherlock: Rather cumbersome name, that.

Josephine: We prefer to be unambiguous.

Sherlock: Which I fully support. Please, tell me about Miss Singh.

(Josephine takes a breath, reassessing the situation)

Josephine: Priya wouldn't tell us what happened. Whatever it was, it scared her enough that she's gone into hiding.

Sherlock: Did Priya ask you not to go to the police?

Josephine: She believes she will be treated unfairly. She's afraid they'll treat her as a foreigner.

Olive: She's right. They will.

(Sherlock and Watson exchange a look over the word 'foreigner')

Sherlock: What can you tell me of Miss Singh's activities last night?

Olive: She told me she'd gone to meet an old friend.

Sherlock: She didn't happen to mention the name of this 'old friend,' did she?

Olive: It was, um, Burke, something. David? Daniel? I think it was Daniel. Daniel Burke.

Josephine: Priya grew up in the household of a Sir Edmund Burke. Her parents worked in service to the Burke family.

Sherlock: Curiouser and curiouser.

Watson: Sherlock, what are the odds?

Sherlock: It strains credulity. Miss Singh's "old friend" Daniel Burke was Sir Edmund Burke's son. He was killed last night. A "foreign woman" was seen leaving his offices shortly after seven o'clock. The police are working right now to identify and apprehend her.

Josephine: Oh. Oh dear.

Miss Holmes Returns – Side 4

Sherlock, Watson, Olive, Worthington

Sherlock: Can you tell us when you last spoke to Miss Singh?

Worthington: It was just the other day. I'm sorry. Mrs. Butler asked you to make inquiries?

Sherlock: She did.

Worthington: Rather than go to the police?

Sherlock: Yes.

Worthington: This is . . . something you do?

Sherlock: It is.

Worthington: That is . . . rather extraordinary. This rather reminds me of a series of delightful stories I read. Perhaps you've heard of the author? D.W. Graham?

Sherlock: (to Watson) You must be very proud of yourself. Mr. Worthington, allow me to introduce the eminent man of letters, Mr. D.W. Graham.

(Watson bows)

Worthington: Oh, I say! So, these stories are true?

Sherlock: Hardly.

Watson: They are, to varying degrees, based upon our own adventures.

Worthington: How wonderful!

Sherlock: Now about Miss Singh?

Worthington: Oh yes. How can I help?

Sherlock: Her current difficulties have prompted her to go on the run. However, if we are to be of assistance to her, I must speak to her, and time is of the essence. We were made to understand you and Miss Singh were on familiar terms.

Worthington: We're friendly, certainly. I daresay she was me as someone she could confide in.

Watson: What was the nature of your relationship, if I may ask.

Worthington: You might say "nature" was the nature of our relationship. (beat) Botany. It's something of a hobby of mine. She noticed a book I had on the topic and, well, that led to some discussion.

Sherlock: May I ask how you came to this position?

Worthington: As a volunteer. I teach literature at Ashford Hill. But twice a week I take the train into London to teach clerical skills for women who are hoping to find work beyond service or . . . well, how shall I put this?

Sherlock: Some of your students are prostitutes.

Olive: They're of age! None of them are breaking any law.

Sherlock: You are aware of Mr. Worthington's other clientele, Miss McGann?

Olive: (suddenly very uncomfortable) Well, yes, I know . . . some of –

Watson: It's all right, Miss McGann. You don't need to explain . . .

Olive: No. It's fine. I just . . . yes, I do know some of Mr. Worthington's other clients, from a time in my life before Mrs. Butler found me. I brought some of them here., I hoped I might, in some small part, do for them what Mrs. Butler did for me.

Miss Holmes Returns – Side 5

Sherlock, Worthington.

Sherlock: Ah. Here we are.

(Sherlock stoops and finds a cluster of seeds)

Worthington: Yes, look at that! These are identical to the seeds I saw on Priya's shawl. This may be the very spot where she made her rendezvous.

Sherlock: Perhaps. (Looks around) Vauxhall is not convenient to where Miss Singh rents her rooms, nor to Mrs. Butler's offices. One might assume, then, that this location is convenient for this writer of hers.

Worthington: My thoughts precisely.

Sherlock: There are a handful of factories to the west of us. Several pubs to the north, and a theater to the east. To the south we have Kennington Lane, a church, a café and the Winstead Hotel.

Worthington: I say. Do you spend a lot of time in this area?

Sherlock: No. I am an avid consumer of maps. Although if I have a curiosity about any particular point of interest I will not hesitate to conduct a bit of urban exploration.

Worthington: Really? That sound delightful. I do hope you'll let me know the next time you go exploring.

Sherlock: To what purpose?

Worthington: So . . . that I might, um, accompany you? Perhaps? If that would be . . . to your liking?

(Sherlock doesn't respond)

Worthington: Or not.

Sherlock: What sort of writer did you say he was?

Worthington: Er . . . essays and articles, that sort of thing, I believe.

Sherlock: Indeed.

Worthington: The needle in the haystack, it seems.

Sherlock: Yes. I shall have to find some other approach to narrow our search. I apologize, Mr. Worthington. This has been rather a complete waste of your time.

Worthington: Quite the contrary. I went for a walk in a lovely park and talked about trees with the most delightful companion. I cannot think of a more pleasant way to spend an afternoon. (a pause) What is it?

Sherlock: I am trying to understand something. Normally, a bit more persuasion is necessary before people are willing to assist us in our investigations.

Worthington: Ah. I suppose I'm not surprised. But then, our whole system of justice is constructed by and for men only, and so I am equally unsurprised to learn that women of intelligence and skill have taken it upon themselves to address problems the law is unequipped, or unwilling, to handle.

Sherlock: I see. (pause) I have no specific objection.

Worthington: To what?

Sherlock: To your accompanying me on my next expedition,

Worthington: Oh! How delightful. And let me assure you my interests are not limited to the London planetree. We shall not want for conversation.

Sherlock: I am glad to hear it. Now, if you'll forgive me, it's time I headed back to Baker Street.

Worthington: Of course. I'll summon a cab and return you to Dr. Watson on my way home,

(offers his arm. Sherlock starts at it, unsure what to do with it)

Sherlock: No.

Worthington: No?

Sherlock: I appreciate the gesture. And, yes, this walk through the gardens has been . . . pleasant. But as a rule, I would prefer not to do that.

Worthington: Ah. Well, may I at least walk with you as we make our way to the lane?

Sherlock: Yes, Mr. Worthington. I would find that acceptable.

Miss Holmes Returns – Side 6

LeStrade, The Professor

Professor: Pardon me. You wouldn't happen to be Inspector Geoffrey Lestrade, would you?

Lestrade: I am.

Professor: I received your rather cryptic message. Of course, I am happy to be of assistance in any way Scotland Yard might require.

Lestrade: I apologize for the cloak-and-dagger nature of my note, but it was necessary to lure you away from your lodgings.

Professor: Lure me? To what purpose?

Lestrade: So that my officers would have ample time to make a thorough search.

Professor: I see. And may I ask why?

Lestrade: I have come into possession of information. Specific information that indicates your true business.

Professor: Well. All credit to Mycroft Holmes and his cleverness.

Lestrade: You admit you are not who you say you are?

Professor: I congratulate you on your diligence, Inspector.

Lestrade: You are under arrest, sir.

Professor: Yes, I suppose that would normally be the case . . . if one did not allow one's personal feelings to cloud one's judgement.

Lestrade: And what is that supposed to mean?

Professor: I simply observe that were you not so eager to prove your worth to Miss Sherlock Holmes, you might have taken greater precautions.

Lestrade: I need no precautions for the likes of you.

Professor: Unfortunately, Inspector, you are no Sherlock Holmes. She would not have been so careless as to engineer an opportunity to gloat over a bested rival. Is this how you imagined it?

Lestrade: She would have caught on to you.

Professor: We are not talking about her. We are talking about you, Inspector, and your abject failure to live up to the faith she has placed in you. Tell me, is such a show of manly bravado a part of normal procedures at Scotland Yard?

Lestrade: Just who the hell do you think you are?

Professor: Robert James Moriarity. *Professor Moriarity.*