

Mrs. Hudson enters.

MRS. HUDSON

Miss Sherlock, I do not think this is funny.

SHERLOCK

Funny, Mrs. Hudson?

MRS. HUDSON

There is a person downstairs who claims to be a doctor.

SHERLOCK

Yes?

MRS. HUDSON

This person claims to be your doctor.

SHERLOCK

And?

MRS. HUDSON

And? This person is a woman, Miss Sherlock!

SHERLOCK

Yes, surely you're aware that such things exist nowadays.

MRS. HUDSON

I refuse to believe it. Surely we have not become so uncivilized.

SHERLOCK

The barbarians are at the gate, Mrs. Hudson. Doctor Watson! Please come in. Thank you, Mrs. Hudson, that will do.

Watson enters as Mrs. Hudson exits muttering.

WATSON

Have I done something to upset her?

SHERLOCK

Mrs. Hudson is not quite prepared for an age in which we women-folk indulge our eccentric longing for the will-o'-the-wisp pleasures of independence.

WATSON

I see. I must say, that black eye has healed nicely. The compresses worked, then?

SHERLOCK

Indeed. Would you believe Mrs. Hudson wanted me to put raw meat on it?

WATSON

Well, I am just glad to see you are feeling better. I'm sorry I wasn't able to take you up on your invitation sooner. Between the hospital and the school I've been rather occupied of late.

SHERLOCK

That's quite all right. It gave me time to investigate a hypothesis. I just finished reading your novel, Mister Graham.

Pause.

WATSON

Mister--

SHERLOCK

Graham. D.W. Graham. That's your pen name.

WATSON

I... How...?

SHERLOCK

I generally have chemicals about and occasionally do experiments. Would that annoy you?

WATSON

Why should that annoy me? But how did you know--?

SHERLOCK

I sometimes seem sullen and don't open my mouth for days on end. Mrs. Hudson thinks I'm sulking, but usually I just want to be left alone and soon enough I'll be fine. Now what have you to confess?

WATSON

Confess? I--

SHERLOCK

Come come. We ought to know the worst of one another if we're going to be living together.

WATSON

Living together? Who said anything about living together?

SHERLOCK

I thought it the most logical solution.

WATSON

Solution to what?

SHERLOCK

There's no need to decide right away. Let us hear what she has to say, and then discuss it afterward.

WATSON

She?

The doorbell rings.

SHERLOCK

Ah. Right on time.

Mrs. Hudson enters. She complains as she crosses to answer the door.

MRS. HUDSON

Now who could this possibly be? Really, all these visitors tramping about at all hours. I wish I'd known when I let these rooms I was opening a train station...

She exits toward the front door.

WATSON

May I ask whom we are expecting this afternoon?

SHERLOCK

A woman, young, rather pretty, who dresses somewhat better than her accent might lead you to believe. She has a serious matter weighing on her, but puts great effort into affecting an air of nonchalance. Or so I am informed.

Mrs. Hudson re-enters, followed by Lizzie.

MRS. HUDSON

Mrs. Elizabeth Chapman for you, Miss Holmes.

SHERLOCK

Mrs. Chapman, how do you do?

LIZZIE

I'm sorry to disturb you. I hope I won't take up too much of your time.

SHERLOCK

Not at all. Thank you, Mrs. Hudson.

Mrs. Hudson mutters disapprovingly as she exits.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

Mrs. Chapman, this is Doctor Dorothy Watson.

LIZZIE

Hello.

WATSON

How do you do?

LIZZIE

Well, thank you.

SHERLOCK

I don't believe that to be the case, Mrs. Chapman. I gather your visit has something to do with your husband?

LIZZIE

Why do you say that?

SHERLOCK

The skin on your finger near your wedding ring is red. You have been worrying at it.

LIZZIE

I... yes. My husband is Thomas Chapman. He is--

SHERLOCK

The Scotland Yarder?

LIZZIE

Yes. You've heard of him?

SHERLOCK

His name has appeared in the papers.

LIZZIE

Someone has been sending me letters. At first I thought it nothing, but they keep coming.

Lizzie hands Sherlock the letter. Sherlock removes the letter from the envelope. She examines the paper, rubbing it between her

finger and thumb and then examining her thumb for residue. She smells the letter, then hands it to Watson.

SHERLOCK

(continuing to examine the envelope:)

The provenance of the paper is inconclusive. Common stock, widely used. The letter itself was typewritten using a Sholes and Glidden machine. Again, rather common. But the author was not skilled at its operation. Several common errors in spelling, uncorrected, and you can see two instances where the carriage jammed and the author left the space blank rather than retype the correct letter.

WATSON

Why on earth would you know that?

SHERLOCK

Doctor Watson, would you be so good as to read the letter aloud for me?

Watson stares at Sherlock.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

Well go on.

WATSON

(reading the letter:)

"Mrs. Chapman. This is my third attempt to warn you. I can only hope my messages have not come too late. I'm certain you know that you are not the first to bear that name and title. Before you, Katherine Featherstone had the misfortune to be married to the man you now call husband. Please know that Thomas Chapman is not the man he claims to be. By now I'm sure he has told you what happened to Katherine. Do not believe him. Katherine Featherstone was not the first to suffer by his hand. I pray that by my warning she will be the last. Signed, A Friend."

SHERLOCK

Fascinating.

LIZZIE

I'd heard you spoken of before, Miss Holmes. I understood you've been known to help women who find themselves in difficult spots.

SHERLOCK

Mrs. Chapman, who do you suppose wrote this letter?

LIZZIE

I don't know. That's why I came to you.

SHERLOCK

Have you any reason to believe the contents of this letter to be true?

LIZZIE

No, none whatsoever.

SHERLOCK

There must be something, Mrs. Chapman. This is the third letter you've received? Why haven't you shown this to your husband?

LIZZIE

I showed him the last one. He said he'd take care of it, but that was two weeks ago. This one just arrived the other day, and I didn't want to trouble him with it. He does such important work at Scotland Yard.

SHERLOCK

And so instead you brought it to me. Please remember, that I have heard of your husband before. I am a voracious reader of the newspaper.

LIZZIE

Then you know what has been said about him.

SHERLOCK

I know that Thomas Chapman is considered by many to be the most efficient investigator in the Metropolitan Police Force. I know he has one of the highest arrest records in Scotland Yard. I know he has been investigated more than once on suspicions of corruption and brutality, but has never been convicted. And I know that he has been married three times, most recently to one Elizabeth Durham - that would be you, Mrs. Chapman - not two months after he was cleared of any wrongdoing in the death of his second wife, Katherine Featherstone, who drowned in a bathing pool at Hampstead Heath. He married her two years after his first wife, Margaret Cleary, was killed in a fall from a horse. Do I have that right so far? You want me to tell you that you have nothing to fear. You want me to tell you that this letter is nothing more than a harmless prank, inspired by petty jealousy. You want me to tell you to go home to your husband.

LIZZIE

My husband is a good man.

SHERLOCK

Those are lovely shoes, Mrs. Chapman. Very high quality. Very expensive. You would not expect to see them on the feet of your average policeman's wife. But then, your husband is not your average policeman, is he?

LIZZIE

All I want to know is who wrote this letter. Are you going to help me or aren't you?

SHERLOCK

If you want my advice you should find a relative, someone away from the city, and pay them a visit.

LIZZIE

I've made a mistake. I should go. I'm sorry to have intruded.

WATSON

Let me walk you out, at least.

LIZZIE

No. Thank you. I can see myself out. Good day.

SHERLOCK

Be careful, Mrs. Chapman.

Lizzie exits.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

Now that was interesting.

WATSON

Miss Holmes! What on earth just happened? Why did you say such horrible things to that poor woman?

SHERLOCK

I told her the truth. What is so horrible about that?

WATSON

How can you possibly know anything about her husband?

SHERLOCK

Oh, him. Inspector Chapman is notorious. He received no less than twelve mentions in the Times in just the last year. Three times, he was mentioned in connection with high-profile arrests. He was mentioned twice regarding his marriage to Mrs. Chapman; four more mentions in an exposé of police corruption, specifically regarding controversial interrogation tactics. And then there was the death of Katherine Featherstone. There were three articles that focused on this event. The first simply reported the fact that it happened and that an investigation was underway; the second that a coroner's jury had been convened. But the third... oh, the third was my favorite. The third article informed the public that Thomas Chapman had been cleared of any wrongdoing. But when the press asked the inspecting officer for a statement, he refused to comment.

WATSON

Why is that significant?

SHERLOCK

Isn't it obvious?

WATSON

It is not.

SHERLOCK

He refused to comment!

WATSON

I can think of few phrases that appear more frequently in the newspaper.

SHERLOCK

The police had just exonerated one of their own. Under normal circumstances they would trumpet such a victory to the world with great fanfare and celebration. But in this case, the investigating officer refused to comment. That means something. And possibly something else. It definitely means there are details of the case still hidden from the public eye. And it might also mean that the officer in charge of the case does not agree with the official conclusion.

WATSON

There is a third option. He might not care.

SHERLOCK

Oh, not this one. I follow his cases with great interest. Inspector Lestrade is the best of the professionals.

WATSON

Well then why don't you refer Mrs. Chapman to him?

SHERLOCK

I intend to. But Lestrade's abilities in this case are hampered by the protective web Thomas Chapman has spun around himself. All Mrs. Chapman can do is add to Lestrade's suspicions. We must provide evidence.

WATSON

We must provide evidence?!?

SHERLOCK

Who else?

WATSON

Someone more qualified?

SHERLOCK

There is no such person. Mrs. Hudson! We'll be stepping out now!

WATSON

What? You're leaving?

SHERLOCK

Oh, are you not coming with me?

WATSON

Coming with you? Where? This is all moving rather quickly.

SHERLOCK

This is what I do, Doctor. It's not all that different from your own profession. I observe. I deduce. I investigate. I diagnose. And I prescribe.

WATSON

And you want me to come with you?

SHERLOCK

Yes, as a matter of fact, I do. I assure you I am just as surprised as you.

WATSON

She was quite plain, she doesn't want your help. Why would you continue in spite of that?

SHERLOCK

Mrs. Chapman lied to us.

WATSON

She... What?

SHERLOCK

Didn't you notice? Right from the beginning, when I asked her if she had any idea who wrote the letter, she insisted she had none. She lied to us then.

WATSON

How do you know?

SHERLOCK

The same way I knew you studied medicine in Bern and paid for your education by scribbling dreadful mystery novels under a less-than-subtle pen name.

WATSON

Explain yourself, if you please.

SHERLOCK

I saw. I smelled. I deduced.

WATSON

You smelled?

SHERLOCK

You are a licensed medical doctor practising in London. Your demeanor and your association with Elizabeth Garrett Anderson tell me you have some skill and some experience. But England only started issuing licenses to women four years ago. So, while you were able to complete the bulk of your studies in Edinburgh, you would have to have traveled abroad to receive your degree. When you first entered the examining room I detected the scent of chlorine. You had just washed your hands using a technique favored by continental institutions, particularly in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. And I could plainly see the chain of your watch, a common brand associated with Antoine Léchaud of Geneva. The medical school located closest to Geneva, and which accepts international students, is in Bern.

WATSON

I see. And the writing?

SHERLOCK

You have no family to speak of, but managed to complete your studies over an extended period of time. There are no scholarships available to women, so the funds for your education must have come from somewhere. Then there were the words Doctor Anderson spoke when we first met. You recall?

WATSON

"She's a romantic, this one." But I didn't think that's what she was talking about.

SHERLOCK

It was only a hunch, but a survey of book reviews from the last several years revealed the existence of an author focused on the adventures of medical students, and who wrote under an obvious nom de plume. Writers who employ initials rather than complete names are concealing something. Most of the time, that thing is the fact that the writer is a woman. And honestly, "D W"?

WATSON

All right then. Answer one question for me. Is this, what you do... Is it safe?

SHERLOCK

Doctor Watson, tell me truly, when was the last time you felt "safe"?

Watson lets this sink in.

WATSON

Where are we going?