



BACK ROOM
PRODUCTIONS

BLACK SCREEN

WATSON (V.O.)
To Sherlock Holmes, she was always
the woman...

FADE IN:

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

CLOSE on the face of SHERLOCK HOLMES, sat in his familiar armchair by the fire. A wistful smile.

HOLMES
The woman, Watson. The woman.

INT. OPERA HALL -- NIGHT

Starting on the back of a YOUNG WOMAN, facing out across the assembled audience, performing, singing her heart out.

HOLMES (V.O.)
The most sophisticated, the most elegant, the most enchanting of her sex.

CUT TO the faces of the audience, watching the stage, their faces rapt. Completely caught in the performance.

HOLMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Born in New Jersey in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-eight, *prima donna La Scala*, retired from the international stage to live and perform permanently in London.

CUT TO an upper box, where we find Holmes and DR JOHN WATSON, dressed in evening-wear and watching everything. And Holmes is just as hooked as everyone else.

HOLMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The woman. Irene Adler.

CUT TO the stage, where we get our first look at the woman who has caught Holmes' attention so much: IRENE ADLER. She's in her late twenties, blonde and stunning, and she has absolute command of the stage, holding the attention of the audience in the palm of her hand.

BACK TO HOLMES as he watches. Watson glances sideways at his companion. Surprise in his face.

The song finishes. The crowd rises as one, clapping and cheering. Irene smiles, bowing deeply.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holmes applauds just as enthusiastically as the rest.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Holmes smiles slightly to himself. He absently fingers something attached to his watch-chain, like a memento.

A simple SILVER SOVEREIGN.

That same wistful smile from Holmes.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN YARD -- NIGHT

Shrouded in almost total darkness, the only light coming from the full moon. The place is full of the dark hulks of dormant STEAM ENGINES. Smoke and steam fills the air from arriving and departing trains.

RUMBLING from OS -- then a gigantic CARGO TRAIN backs into view, slamming up against the bumpers. STEAM fills the air as the engine driver releases the connections and the engine moves off, leaving just the cargo carriages behind.

Pause.

Then a gang of STREET TOUGHS emerge from the shadows, crowbars at the ready. In seconds they've smashed open the back door of the middle carriage.

EVANS (O.S.)

Stand aside.

EVANS (40s, dressed smarter than the others, the leader) shoves his way to the front of the throng, a dark lantern in hand. He holds it up; the glow illuminates a pile of packing crates inside.

A big grin from Evans.

CUT TO an unknown point of view, further back in the darkness, watching Evans and his gang intently.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Okay lads, let's go.

CUT BACK TO the train as Evans' men clamber up into the carriage. They're about to reach the crates when--

POLICE WHISTLES BLAST in all directions, ripping shrilly through the darkness. The gang's heads all come up quickly--

TOUGH 1

Bollocks!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They drop the crates and leap out of the train. UNIFORMED CONSTABLES converge on them from all directions. In moments a mass brawl has broken out, the gang using crowbars against the police truncheons.

Two members of the gang manage to get the better of their attackers -- laying out one constable with a punch to the face, they grab one of the crates between them and run for it. CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM as they race down a narrow gap between trains--

BANG! A PISTOL SHOT whizzes past their faces. The two thugs stop dead in their tracks--

WATSON (O.S.)

Stay there.

They both turn in time to see

WATSON

emerging out of the darkness, ARMY REVOLVER held in an unwavering hand, pointed right at their faces. Steely resolve in his eyes.

WATSON (CONT'D)

Stay there. Don't move.

The voice is dangerous enough for the two Toughs to stay rooted to the spot.

CUT BACK TO the fight outside the carriages. It quickly becomes clear that the police have the upper hand, and the toughs are very quickly beaten into submission by the quick work of the constables.

One constable batters one of the Toughs to the ground. He raises his truncheon for a knockout blow--

--Only to be SMASHED about the back of the head by a blow from a heavy stone. The man goes down hard -- REVEAL EVANS behind him--

EVANS

Run for it!

Evans pulls the man to his feet, and they start trying to run for it--

--A hand reaches out from the shadows, GRABS Evans and YANKS him backward. A tall, dark figure has emerged from the shadows. Before Evans has time to react he finds himself FLIPPED AROUND in a Judo-like move before smashing to the ground. He tries to get up--

--finds himself staring down the business end of a pistol. He looks up to see

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERLOCK HOLMES

standing right over him, revolver in hand.

Holmes is ruffled from the fight, but his face is shining, wholly alive, and he flashes Evans a triumphant smile.

HOLMES

Mr Culverton Evans, I presume?
My name is Sherlock Holmes.
Perhaps you've heard of me.

Evans looks up at Holmes with a mixture of disgust and respect.

LESTRADE (O.S.)

Holmes!

Holmes glances up in time to see the bulky figure of INSPECTOR LESTRADE of Scotland Yard emerging through the steam. Holmes brings his arm up in salute.

HOLMES

Over here, Lestrade.

Suddenly it's all over. The constables are in the process of fitting handcuffs onto Evans' gang. Lestrade surveys the field of battle with a grin.

LESTRADE

Not bad for an evening's work.
We seem to be a couple missing--

WATSON (O.S.)

Right here.

They both look up to see Watson herding the two would-be escapees into frame, their hands clamped over their heads. Holmes catches Watson's eye and smiles, impressed.

HOLMES

Excellent timing, as always.

Watson returns the smile, his face still flushed with the adrenaline.

EXT. SAME -- LATER

Holmes uses one of the discarded crowbars to prise up the lid of one of the packing crates.

LESTRADE (O.S.)

If you're wrong about this, Mr
Holmes--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestrade stands with Watson down on the ground below. Evans and his thugs sit on the ground nearby, under heavy guard from the constables. Holmes looks dismissive.

HOLMES

When have you ever had cause for concern?

LESTRADE

The whole Silver Blaze business springs to mind--

HOLMES

My dear fellow, you know perfectly well you'd jumped to the same erroneous conclusion as I did --
aha!

He's managed to get the lid off the crate. Lestrade clambers up beside him to get a look. The crate is full of--

LESTRADE

Straw.

HOLMES

Patience, man, patience.

He sifts through the straw in the crate. On the ground, Watson cranes his neck to get a better view. Seated on the floor beside him, Evans seems to be tensing for something.

CUT TO Holmes as his hand rifles through the contents.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Ah. Permit me to introduce you, Lestrade, to--

And he hauls something out of the crate and turns to face Lestrade, the air of a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat. Lestrade's eyes light up in amazement.

LESTRADE

Oh, my stars...

Holmes holds aloft an ornate JEWELLED EGG.

HOLMES

Yes, indeed. Watson, you'll recognise this of course as the famous egg--

WATSON

--designed by the house of Fabarge for Tsar Alexander and stolen from Brussels last week.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

Well done.

WATSON

And the other crates?

HOLMES

(shrugs)

Doubtless the rest of the haul
from that particular robbery, if
I remember correctly Fabarge lost
a lot of jewellery in that--

Evans JACK-KNIFES upwards, smashing his bound hands into
Watson's chest. As Watson goes down, Evans tries to
wrestle the gun off him--

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Watson!

BANG! The gun goes off -- and Watson staggers backwards
in pain, dropping to the ground.

Evans tries to run for it -- Holmes propels himself off
the side of the carriage in a tackle, catching Evans at
precisely waist height and pitching him hard to the ground.
The gun goes flying from his hand as they hit the deck.

The constables are all over Evans in seconds--

LESTRADE

What have I told you about paying
attention, you useless bunch of--?

Holmes has rushed over to Watson's side -- the doctor is
bleeding badly from his leg--

HOLMES

You're not hurt, Watson? For
god's sake say you're not hurt!

Watson looks down at his leg. A blood stain is forming
there. Watson looks into Holmes' face, agony in his eyes.

WATSON (V.O.)

It was not the first wound I had
collected during my time as Holmes'
partner and chronicler, but in
that moment I saw such fear in my
friend's eyes as I'd never seen
him display before on any
occasion...

And off this look we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONDON (AERIAL) -- DAY

SWEEPING across Victorian London, giving us a panoramic view of the capital in all it's disgusting glory. SNOW beats down onto the city from an ominous sky.

WATSON (V.O.)

It was December, the culmination of my fourth year spent living at number 221-B Baker Street with my unusual friend. Four years in which I had learned more than all my time at medical college and the army put together.

EXT. DOCKS (AERIAL) -- DAY

...across the vasts docks, as ships are unloaded and goods brought in from across the empire...

WATSON (V.O.)

During that time, the size of Holmes' reputation grew exponentially, and the sheer variety of the clients who came to consult him never ceased to amaze me, ranging from the lowliest citizen to the very highest in the land.

EXT. COVENT GARDEN (AERIAL) -- DAY

...across the huge market, thronged with traders and shoppers, fires in braziers, Christmas turkeys and geese on sale...

WATSON (V.O.)

Some of Holmes' exploits had been so spectacular that I had begun to chronicle them in the stories I published...

EXT. BAKER STREET -- DAY

...and finally across a familiar bustling street, covered in snow, coming to rest on the brass plate indicating number 221-B.

VIOLIN MUSIC comes from within, scraping away at 'Good King Wenceleslas' rather badly.

WATSON (V.O.)

...something that Holmes always regarded with a mixture of disdain and morbid fascination.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Watson sits in his armchair by the fire, writing in his journal and smoking a cigarette. Snow continues to beat against the window.

WATSON (V.O.)

I flatter myself that I had been a willing pupil, and that I had managed to learn some of Holmes' methods and the tricks of his trade during our time together...

The violin music suddenly gets louder. Watson glances up in annoyance as Holmes strides past, pacing the room at speed while playing in a fast, intense style, as though wrestling with the music.

WATSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...and yet, perhaps because of my injury, I found myself wondering more and more if this was my rightful place in the world, and whether this life was really what I wanted to be living for the rest of--

A particularly violent SCRAPE of the bow jars Watson out of his reverie. His head comes up sharply as he digs COTTON WOOL out of his ears--

WATSON (CONT'D)

Holmes!

Holmes doesn't notice, keeps playing--

WATSON (CONT'D)

Holmes, enough!

This time the shout gets through and Holmes stops playing. The sheer silence is suddenly deafening after the music stops.

HOLMES

Was I bothering you, my dear fellow?

Watson gives him an irate look that isn't lost on Holmes. He puts the violin down and drops into his chair opposite Watson, starting to fill his pipe.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

What's on your mind?

(off Watson's look)

Come now, it's obvious something's praying on you Watson, now what is it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON
It's nothing--

HOLMES
Your injury?

Watson regards him for a moment, then glances away.

WATSON
Still a bit stiff, that's all.

HOLMES
Well then.

Watson closes his book. Considers. Eventually:

WATSON
Holmes--

From OS: a ring at the bell pull. Holmes and Watson share a look.

HOLMES
Client?

WATSON
Client.

Pause. Then a big grin crosses Holmes' face as he rises. HOLD on Watson for a moment, still looking unsettled.

HOLMES (prelap)
Mr John Claverhouse?

INT. SAME -- LATER

Holmes and Watson haven't moved from their chairs. Across the room JOHN CLAVERHOUSE sits on the sofa. In his fifties, rotund. The most striking thing about him is a shock of FLAMING RED HAIR.

CLAVERHOUSE
Yes sir.
(shifts
uncomfortably)
This may be something and nothing,
Mr Holmes, but I'm left without
an answer--

HOLMES
Then you did absolutely the right
thing in coming to see me. Now,
please tell me all about the matter -
beyond, of course, the obvious
facts that you have at some point
done manual labour, you've been
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES (CONT'D)
to China, and that you've done a
considerable amount of writing
lately.

And Claverhouse's eyes go wide at this--

CLAVERHOUSE
Mr Holmes, did--? I mean, I'd
heard that you could--

Holmes smiles, satisfied. He glances at Watson, and is
somewhat disappointed to see Watson still slouched in his
chair looking listless.

CLAVERHOUSE (CONT'D)
I mean, it's as true as gospel --
I began as a ship's carpenter,
but how did you know?

HOLMES
(smiles)
The observation of a few simple
facts. Your right hand, for
example--

WATSON
(quiet)
Several sizes larger than your
left, with the muscles considerably
more developed.

Holmes glances sideways at Watson, amused.

HOLMES
Well observed, Watson.

WATSON
And the shiny right sleeve explains
the writing, where it rests on
the desk.

Claverhouse glances from one to the other, then absently
checks his sleeve. Watson still looks listless, but his
curiosity's now got the better of him and he looks up at
Holmes for the first time.

WATSON (CONT'D)
But still - China, Holmes?

HOLMES
The simplest of all.
(nods at Claverhouse)
The tattoo on Mr Claverhouse's
left wrist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claverhouse stops in the middle of checking his sleeves, notices that his wrist is visible. There's a small tattoo of a fish there.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

That trick of staining the scales with blue dye is quite peculiar to China.

Watson considers this for a moment. Holmes glances back at Claverhouse, who's looking utterly bewildered.

WATSON

You've gone and done it again, Holmes.

Holmes gives Claverhouse a reassuring smile.

HOLMES

You'll have to forgive us, Mr Claverhouse, it's only our way. Now perhaps you'll fill me in on what troubles you.

CLAVERHOUSE

Very well sir. Have you ever heard of an organisation known as the Red Headed League?

A glance between Holmes and Watson. Nothing there.

HOLMES

Pray continue.

CLAVERHOUSE

Well sir ... I run a small pawnbroker's business in Coburg Square--

HOLMES

Profitable business?

CLAVERHOUSE

I get by.

(Holmes nods)

Still, not as young as I was, and I had to take on some help recently, lad called Spaulding. Hard working, but there never was such a fellow for photography--

HOLMES

Mr Claverhouse.

CLAVERHOUSE

Of course.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAVERTHOUSE (CONT'D)
 Anyway, it was Spaulding who put
 me onto this whole wretched
 business...

CUT TO:

INT. CLAVERTHOUSE'S SHOP -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Dark and cluttered, packed to the rafters with junk and
 bric-a-brac, vaguely dusty air. Claverhouse and SPAULDING
 (20s) behind the counter as Spaulding lays out a newspaper.

SPAULDING
 ...see this, Mr Claverhouse?
 'Famous Red Headed League.'

CLAVERTHOUSE
 Never heard of it.

SPAULDING
 No, neither had I until I read
 this.
 (reads)
 "At the bequest of the late Ezekiah
 Hopkins, American millionaire,
 the League is taking on new
 members. All men with red hair
 are eligible. Apply to Mr Duncan
 Ross at the offices at Hammersmith
 no later than one pm this
 afternoon. Great financial rewards
 await."
 (glances up at
 Claverhouse)
 Tell you what, Mr Claverhouse -
 this lot are supposed to be loaded.
 If I was a redhead like yourself
 I'd be down there like a shot."

On Claverhouse as he considers:

HOLMES (prelap)
 So you went, then?

CUT TO:

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Where Claverhouse looks surprised.

CLAVERTHOUSE
 I did, sir, how did--?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

The tale would surely be
exceedingly dull if it ended there.
And what happened?

CLAVERHOUSE

Well, sir--

EXT. HAMMERSMITH -- DAY

*Where a huge queue of men with RED HAIR waits outside the
League offices, getting funny looks from passers-by.*

CLAVERHOUSE (V.O.)

*I went. And I swear, the entire
street looked like the contents
of a costermonger's orange barrow.*

*Claverhouse among them, looking more than a little
uncertain.*

INT. RED HEADED LEAGUE OFFICE -- DAY

*Claverhouse manages to get to the front of the queue where
DUNCAN ROSS (40s, red headed) practically leaps from his
chair at the sight of him).*

ROSS

*Mr Claverhouse, sir, what a head!
What a shade!*

CLAVERHOUSE

*(bewildered but
flattered)*

Thank you, sir, but--

ROSS

Permit me--

*And he grabs hold of Claverhouse's hair and TUGS.
Claverhouse looks outraged but Ross gives an apologetic
smile.*

ROSS (CONT'D)

*Forgive me, Mr Claverhouse, I had
to check. We've had people trying
it on today, twice with wigs and
once with paint. I could tell
you tales of cobblers' wax that
would disgust you with human
nature. Please, take a seat.*

Claverhouse sits down opposite Ross, who smiles, amiable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS (CONT'D)

Now sir, you're a well known and respected fellow and for a shade like yours, an interview hardly seems necessary. The job's yours if you want it, four pounds a week no less.

CLAVERHOUSE

And what exactly would I be doing?

CUT TO:

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

CU Claverhouse:

CLAVERHOUSE

Copying out the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Holmes and Watson exchange a look: what?

CUT TO:

INT. RED HEADED LEAGUE OFFICE -- DAY

Claverhouse sits at the desk, alone, writing away feverishly.

CLAVERHOUSE (V.O.)

I left Spaulding in charge of the shop in the afternoons and I went to work at the League offices. I wrote about abbots and archery and armour and armadillos - I thought I might even get to the Bs before I retired. But then, this morning...

EXT. HAMMERSMITH -- DAY

Claverhouse makes his way to the door of the League office -- and stops dead at the sight of something. A sign on the door.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Claverhouse digs into his pocket, hands a piece of paper over to Holmes.

CLAVERHOUSE

I brought it with me, Mr Holmes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holmes takes it, reads aloud:

HOLMES

"The Red Headed League is hereby dissolved."

(glances up at Claverhouse)

That's all? And that was this morning?

CLAVERHOUSE

Yes sir. I went into the building and asked, but no-one in there had ever heard of either Duncan Ross or the League itself.

(beat)

Mr Holmes, I have a feeling I've been made a fool of--

Holmes raises his eyebrows -- really?

CLAVERHOUSE (CONT'D)

--but this has been six months, sir. I need to know what was going on, what this was all for.

(beat)

Do you think you can help me?

Pause. Then Holmes smiles.

HOLMES

This would seem on the surface to be a trifle...

CU on Watson, his expression still listless, looking like he's having a hard time concentrating.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

...but not without a certain intellectual appeal.

Back to Holmes:

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Yes, sir, I will take off your case.

Claverhouse looks hugely relieved.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

And now, Watson--

WATSON

(abrupt)

Excuse me...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And he gets up and exits, hurriedly. Holmes and Claverhouse look surprised -- for a moment Holmes is completely thrown, but he covers magnificently and turns his attention back to Claverhouse again.

HOLMES

Now sir, tell me about your pawn-
broking business.

EXT. LONDON STREETS -- DAY

Finding Watson trudging his way through the streets at speed, head down, walking fast, muffled by his greatcoat and a long scarf. His boots tramp through the snow, expression completely bewildered.

CRANE SHOT: looking down onto the streets, following Watson. One fast-moving man in a sea of top hats.

CUT TO Watson as he rounds a corner, still lost in thought.

And Watson COLLIDES with someone emerging from a carriage -- a fashionably dressed YOUNG WOMAN, who nearly topples backwards. Watson reacts instinctively, grabbing her and keeping her upright.

WATSON

Oh, please forgive me Miss, that
was--

YOUNG WOMAN

It's quite -- Doctor Watson?

Watson looks up; he knows that voice. MARY MORSTAN: mid twenties, brown hair, beautiful. A mischievous smile. And Watson reacts in delight.

WATSON

Miss Mary Morstan!

MARY

(smiles, pleased)
I see you remember me.

WATSON

After that business with the Sign
of Four, how could I not?
Compliments of the season.

MARY

Thank you, and you.

WATSON

You look very well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

And you look troubled. What's wrong, Doctor?

Watson looks surprised. Sees the sympathetic look Mary is giving him.

EXT. PARK -- DAY

A small ornamental park in the city. Watson and Mary make their way down the path, past pedestrians in all directions. In the background, some young children are having a snowball fight.

MARY

After everything we went through, it's fair to say I owe yourself and Mr Holmes my life.

WATSON

It was nothing.

MARY

No it wasn't.

Watson glances sideways at her, sees her smile.

WATSON

No, you're right, it really wasn't.

A laugh passes between them.

WATSON (CONT'D)

Your inheritance seems to have suited you.

MARY

I've hardly touched any of it. I'm still teaching music.

WATSON

(surprised)
Really?

MARY

(shrugs)
The pay isn't all that, but it gives me all I need. There's only mother and I, after all. But enough about me. What about yourself, Doctor Watson?

WATSON

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Well perhaps you could start by telling me why you seem to be aimlessly drifting around London, looking like Hamlet with a hangover?

And Watson actually laughs at this. Mary's smile gets deeper.

MARY (CONT'D)

See? That's more like it.

WATSON

I think you could say I've got a lot on my mind.

MARY

I'd like to hear it.

Watson stops, turns to look at her. Sees the look in her eyes. And realises that he'd like to tell her.

WATSON

Alright. Do you know Marchini's, in Davidov street?
(she nods)
Let me buy you lunch, later in the week.

And Mary smiles.

MARY

Really, Doctor Watson ... after everything that happened last time, it should surely be me buying you lunch.

Watson's smile mirrors Mary's.

EXT. BAKER STREET -- EVENING

Darkness is beginning to fall, the light of the gas lamps reflecting off the snow.

Watson makes his way back to 221-B through the throng of pedestrians. Except now there's a noticeable spring in his step, and he looks considerably more cheerful than he did when he left.

He makes his way up the steps to the front door.

RACK FOCUS to reveal a light burning in the upper window of the flat, and a figure.

Holmes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Watching Watson intently.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- EVENING

Holmes stays where he is, continuing to watch the street. And just for a moment there's an expression of deepest regret on his face.

The door opens and Watson enters. Holmes doesn't move.

HOLMES
Good evening Watson.

WATSON
Holmes, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have walked out like that--

Holmes waves it away with one hand.

HOLMES
Water under the bridge, my dear fellow, and a point of discussion for some other time. We would appear to have a client.

WATSON
Mr Claverhouse?

HOLMES
Apart from him.

He finally turns, picking up a piece of paper from the table and handing it over to Watson.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
It arrived an hour ago, by special messenger.

Watson takes the note.

WATSON
(reads)
"There will call upon Mr Sherlock Holmes tonight a visitor who wishes to avail himself of his services. Mr Holmes' recent service to one of the royal houses of Europe--"
(nods at Holmes, impressed)
"--has shown that he can be trusted with discretion in matters of the utmost importance. He is not to take it amiss if his visitor wears a mask." No signature.

Watson looks up at Holmes again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON (CONT'D)

What can this mean, do you suppose?

HOLMES

Well you can see as clearly as I can. What do you make of the letter itself?

Watson looks down at the paper. A frown. He rubs his finger and thumb over the texture.

WATSON

Somewhat queer paper--

HOLMES

Queer's the word. It isn't English paper. Hold it up to the light and have a look at the watermark.

Watson does so. Several letters come into view:

E g / P / G t

HOLMES (CONT'D)

G t standing for--

WATSON

Gesellschaft. The German for 'company'.

HOLMES

The 'P' is for 'papier' of course.

WATSON

And E g?

HOLMES

For 'Egria'. The only town in all of Germany where the principle factories are paper mills.

WATSON

And the client's going to be wearing a mask--

Holmes makes another dismissive gesture.

HOLMES

A needless obstacle, given that I think I already know who is going to be calling on us.

(pause)

In fact...

His head's tilted on one side. Watson listens, then hears it too - HOOFBEATS from outside.

EXT. BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

A handsome cab draws to a halt -- and not your average handsome, this is a luxury carriage driven by two magnificent horses, the 19th-century equivalent of a Bentley or a Rolls Royce.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Where Holmes and Watson regard the cab from Holmes' previous vantage point at the window. Holmes' eyes are on the horses.

HOLMES

Fifty guineas apiece, those horses
and I'm no judge.

(grins at Watson)

There's money in this case if
there's nothing else.

Down on the street, the door of the cab opens and a MAN gets out -- tall and imposing, dressed in black with a long travelling coat, a wide-brimmed hat, and a black MASK covering his eyes. A sinister sight to behold.

Watson glances up at Holmes, who's eyes are fixed on the figure. A grim expression there.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Holmes and Watson stand facing the masked man. He regards them both for a moment in silence before his eyes settle on Holmes.

MASKED MAN

(heavy German accent)

You had my note, Herr Holmes?

HOLMES

I have indeed, sir. And may I
know whom I have the honour of
addressing?

MASKED MAN

You may refer to me as the Count
von Cramm.

(sideways glance
at Watson)

I would speak to you in private,
Herr Holmes, for the matter is of
the utmost discretion.

HOLMES

Dr Watson here is my friend and
partner, and these days it's almost

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES (CONT'D)
impossible for me to operate
without his assistance.

Watson fires a sideways glance at Holmes, surprised.
Flattered?

MASKED MAN
I am not in the habit of discussing
my affairs before a stranger.

WATSON
Well in that case maybe I ought
to--

HOLMES
Stay where you are, doctor.
(to the masked man)
You will consult with both of us,
or neither ... Your Majesty.

The man's eyes go wide behind the mask and Watson looks
shocked.

MASKED MAN
What? Why should--?

HOLMES
Watson, please take His Majesty's
mask, it is a needless
inconvenience.

The man looks from Holmes to Watson for a moment, then
pulls the mask off in annoyance. It is indeed WILHELM,
King of Bohemia, a strong-jawed man with intelligent eyes,
though at the moment he looks amused.

WILHELM
You are right. I am the King.
Why should I attempt to conceal
it from your sharp eyes?

HOLMES
Why indeed sir? Your majesty had
hardly uttered a word before I
knew beyond all shadow of a doubt
I was addressing Wilhelm Gottsreich
Sigismund von Ormstein, Grand
Duke of Cassel-Falstein and
hereditary king of Bohemia.

WILHELM
Then I suppose I will have to
place myself in your hands, Mr
Holmes.
(to Watson)
Both of your hands, gentlemen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

Good. And now that we've sorted that, let us be seated.

CUT TO:

INT. SAME -- LATER

Holmes and Watson occupy their familiar chairs either side of the fire, facing Wilhelm on the sofa.

WILHELM

The facts are these, then, gentlemen. When I was in Warsaw, five years ago, I made the acquaintance of a woman who's name may be familiar to you. The adventuress Irene Adler.

Holmes and Watson exchange a glance; Watson looks as though he's drawing a blank, but Holmes knows it.

HOLMES

'Adventuress?' I have heard of the celebrated Prima Donna--

WILHELM

And 'adventuress', sir, the word was chosen very carefully.

HOLMES

I see. I take there was a ... shall we say, clandestine affair between yourself and this ... lady?

Wilhelm looks slightly taken aback by this, but:

WILHELM

There was.
(sighs)
I was young, I was only the Crown Prince at the time.

HOLMES

And I assume there are some compromising letters that you wish me to recover?

WILHELM

Again, yes. How did--

HOLMES

(dismissive)
That's usually the way these things go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wilhelm doesn't know how to take that. Silence for a moment. Holmes lights his pipe, thoughtfully.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

There was no secret marriage or anything of that sort--?

WILHELM

No.

HOLMES

Then I fail to see the problem. If Miss Adler means to produce these documents for blackmail purposes, your majesty can simply deny all knowledge and that's the end of the matter.

A cold smile from Wilhelm.

WILHELM

You think I have not told her as much already?

CUT TO:

INT. SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Flashback.

IRENE ADLER sits on a sofa. In person she's just as stunning as she was on stage. Her voice is a deep contralto with a smooth American accent.

She's smiling, amused, at Wilhelm, who's pacing up and down, angry.

IRENE

But your writing, Wilhelm, it's so distinctive--

WILHELM

I would swear it had been forged!

IRENE

Your private notepaper, Wilhelm--

WILHELM

Stolen!

IRENE

Your seal, Wilhelm--

WILHELM

Imitated!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

(smiles)
Your photograph, Wilhelm.

WILHELM

Bought!

He rounds on her, facing her from behind an adjacent sofa.

WILHELM (CONT'D)

I will swear it all, Irene, and
you are without a case!

But Irene smiles, a magician playing a trump card.

IRENE

But you forget, Wilhelm - we are
both in the photograph. Together.

And this stops Wilhelm in his tracks. Irene's smile grows bigger.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You remember now, don't you?

And Wilhelm now looks desperate. He runs his hands across his face.

WILHELM

Irene, you can't...

He crosses the room, sits down on the sofa opposite her.

WILHELM (CONT'D)

Please ... you must understand
... I am to be married--

IRENE

So I hear. To the second daughter
of the king of Scandinavia.

(bitter smile)

A most politic match.

WILHELM

You can have half of my fortune--

IRENE

You promised me that already.

WILHELM

Then what do you want? You have
nothing to gain from this--

Irene gives him a very hard look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

No? But I may consider myself to have been deeply wronged. And I tell you now: this will not stand.

There's a steely resolve in her eye; this woman isn't playing games, she means it.

WILHELM (prelap)

And she will do it.

CUT TO:

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Wilhelm faces Holmes and Watson, with just a tinge of that same desperation in his eye.

WILHELM

Believe me. She has an iron will, and there are no lengths she would not go to in order that I shall not marry another woman.

WATSON

I assume your majesty has already made an attempt yourself to recover this photograph?

WILHELM

Five, Herr Doctor. Even going so far as to waylay her carriage as she returned to London last night. Nothing. She has eluded my very best agents at every turn, now I am at a loss.

(to Holmes)

You are my last hope, sir.

Holmes looks thoughtful behind a cloud of pipe smoke. Eventually:

HOLMES

When is your majesty due to marry?

WILHELM

In five days time. Right here in London.

HOLMES

Which doesn't give us a lot of time.

WILHELM

You must place yourself entirely at my disposal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILHELM (CONT'D)

That my marriage should take place
is of political significance for
all of Europe.

HOLMES

I should be perfectly happy to
serve all of Europe.

WILHELM

But do you promise me success?
(a hard look)
Your manner is somewhat causal, I
may say.

Holmes says nothing for another long beat, wreathed in
smoke. Watson looks uncomfortable. Finally Wilhelm gets
to his feet.

WILHELM (CONT'D)

Then I shall take up no more of
your time.

He's about to head out, when--

HOLMES

How can I contact your majesty?

Wilhelm turns, looks back at Holmes in surprise. He hasn't
moved.

WILHELM

You will find me at the Langham,
under the name von Cramm.

HOLMES

And the ... price?

Wilhelm pulls out a leather bag and places it on the table.
The clink of coins comes from within. Watson looks amazed.
It barely registers with Holmes.

WILHELM

That should be enough to cover
immediate expenses. Goodnight,
Herr Holmes, und auf wiederseh'n
Doctor Watson.

Without another word he heads out. From downstairs we
hear the door slam. Watson looks at Holmes.

WATSON

Well well, Holmes--

HOLMES

Well well indeed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pause. Then Watson sees a smile around the corners of Holmes' mouth. That old excitement is back.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCOTLAND YARD -- MORNING

Tracking with TWO CONSTABLES as they haul a STRUGGLING PRISONER up the steps.

PULL BACK to reveal the building in all it's glory.

LESTRADE (prelap)
The Red Headed League?

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - LESTRADE'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Holmes and Watson stand facing Lestrade, who's going through papers in a box file.

LESTRADE
I hate to be the bearer of bad news, gentlemen, but it would appear that someone has been feeding you a wrong 'un.

WATSON
You've nothing on the League?
Nothing at all.

LESTRADE
I sent some men round to that office you suggested, nothing. Never heard of it, and there's no record of the organisation in any of the papers I can get my hands on, nor of this Duncan Ross bloke you mentioned.
(grins)
Is this Sherlock Holmes at a loss, for once?

HOLMES
No.

Lestrade looks miffed.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Our client's been made a fool of, that much is obvious, the question is why? For what end? And why would someone go to such a great deal of trouble?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTRADE

If you're looking for answers
I've none to give you, I'm afraid.
Anything else we can do for you?

HOLMES

What can you tell us about Irene
Adler?

This gets Lestrade's attention.

LESTRADE

The opera singer?

HOLMES

Just so.

LESTRADE

Well, now you're asking. Talk of
the town, that one. She's singing
La Traviata at the Royal Opera
House at the moment, five nights
a week, a sell out. The papers
can't get enough of her, nor can
the public by the looks of things.
(interested)

Why? Is she connected with this
Red Headed business?

HOLMES

(shakes his head)
Something else.

WATSON

Another client.

LESTRADE

A client who's had a ding-dong
with Irene Adler? Lucky bloke.

HOLMES

I'm not entirely sure he sees it
that way.

Lestrade's starting to look annoyed.

LESTRADE

This is one of your private jokes,
isn't it?

HOLMES

(smiles)
Good morning, inspector.

Watson throws Lestrade an apologetic look as he follows
Holmes out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTRADE
(calling after
them)

One of these days you're going to
have to let me in on this!

The door slams shut.

EXT. SCOTLAND YARD -- DAY

As Holmes and Watson make their way down the steps and
back into the city.

WATSON
If Miss Adler really is the talk
of the town, makes her a strange
person to be blackmailing the
king.

HOLMES
The case has some features of
interest, certainly.

WATSON
Oh, it's straightforward enough,
surely--

HOLMES
Straightforward doesn't equate to
uninteresting, Watson, you know
that as well as I do.

He stops, his eye catching something. Watson spots it
too; a series of posters plastered to a nearby wall, all
showing Irene Adler. A moment while Holmes considers.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
I think an evening at the theatre.

Watson doesn't look surprised.

WATSON
And in the meantime?

HOLMES
Stroll?

He walks off, heading into the crowd. Watson watches as
he goes.

WATSON
You're not serious?

But Holmes keeps moving, and after a moment Watson hurries
after him, having to jog to catch up to him.

EXT. LONDON STREETS -- DAY

The bustling hubbub of inner city Victorian London, all top hats and handsome cabs.

DROP OFF on Holmes and Watson as they make their way through the streets. Watson keeps his eyes straight ahead, still looking moody, which Holmes notices.

HOLMES

Are you ever going to tell me what's on your mind?

WATSON

You wouldn't understand.

HOLMES

Come now, Watson, I'd like to think I know you better than that.

WATSON

Are you sure?

HOLMES

Watson--

WATSON

What if I told you ... what if I told you I was thinking of giving it all up?

HOLMES

Giving what up?

Watson glances at Holmes.

WATSON

This life. All of it. The investigations, the fighting crime ... all of it.

And this genuinely takes Holmes by surprise. He looks at Watson, amazed.

HOLMES

My dear fellow, what other life is there?

WATSON

The life I originally wanted for myself.

(beat)

You remember Dr Joseph Bell?

HOLMES

Your old tutor, works from a practise in Paddington if I recall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON

He's retiring early next year,
which means his practise is coming
up for sale.

Holmes turns his eyes away, looking straight ahead.

HOLMES

And you're thinking about buying
him out.

WATSON

He made me a tempting offer.
Initially I wasn't going to, but--

HOLMES

(understanding)
Then you got injured.

WATSON

It's not just that. Please,
Holmes, don't be like that, you
know this is hard for me.

HOLMES

But you're resolved?

Pause.

WATSON

Not yet, no.

Holmes looks somewhat reassured by this.

HOLMES

You really think I could manage
without my Boswell?

Watson smiles, ironic.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

You hate me referring to you as
such, don't you?

WATSON

The same way I know you're utterly
embarrassed with my published
accounts of your cases.

HOLMES

A different matter entirely - as
I've told you before, the only
feature of note in any of my cases--

WATSON

(heard it all before)
--Is the deduction itself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES
Everything else is frippery.

WATSON
My readers would disagree.

HOLMES
Well then. You can't disappoint
your public.

Now it's Watson's turn to look surprised.

WATSON
I haven't decided anything yet.

HOLMES
Of course not.

But there's a disappointed tone in Holmes' face and voice that isn't lost on Watson. Holmes glances up at something.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Ah. We've arrived.

They round a corner.

EXT. COBURG SQUARE -- DAY

Starting on a street sign identifying this as COBURG SQUARE before we PULL BACK to reveal the bustling district in all it's glory. There's a Christmas market in the centre of the place, bustling with traders, hot chestnut sellers, and shoppers.

CARROL SINGERS (O.S.)
*"God rest ye merry gentlemen, may
nothing you dismay, remember Christ
our Saviour was born on Christmas
day..."*

CUT TO Holmes and Watson as they make their way around the periphery. Holmes nods at something OS:

HOLMES
Our friend's shop, Watson.

Watson looks up at the slightly dusty shop across the way. The sign over the door bears the legend: JOHN CLAVERHOUSE, PAWNBROKER.

WATSON
What on earth do you hope to find
out here?

HOLMES
If I'm right, a great deal. Come
now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They make their way through the throng, arriving outside the door. Watson moves to knock on the door but Holmes gently steps in front of him, barring the way.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Not yet. We are spies in an enemy country.

WATSON

I've heard that before. It's been true more than once.

HOLMES

Now now...

Pause. Then, to Watson's amazement, Holmes STAMPS his foot three times on the pavement.

WATSON

Holmes...

Holmes holds up a hand for silence. His head's on one side, listening intently. HOLD on this for a moment.

Then he looks up, scanning the distance. His eyes rest on something for a moment, his expression blank.

WATSON (CONT'D)

(irritated)

Holmes--

Holmes suddenly turns and grins, then raises his fist and KNOCKS on the door of the pawn shop. Before Watson can react the door opens and a man we recognise as SPAULDING sticks his head out.

SPAULDING

(abrupt)

Yes?

HOLMES

Oh, good morning, I was wondering if you could direct me to the nearest underground station.

SPAULDING

Third left, fourth right. Good day.

And he slams the door in their faces. A clicking of locks from the other side. Holmes chuckles.

HOLMES

Admirable.

(glances at Watson)

That would have been Spaulding, Mr Claverhouse's assistant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON

Yes yes, and I assume that was all because you wanted to see him?

HOLMES

Not him, Watson - the knees of his trousers.

WATSON

What?

But Holmes has turned and started making his way off. Watson again has to hurry to catch up.

EXT. STREET OPPOSITE COBURG SQUARE -- DAY

Watson hurries around the corner to catch up with Holmes -- finding him stood still, looking at something on the wall.

WATSON

Holmes, are you ever going to tell me what you've--

HOLMES

Later. Once I'm satisfied I'm on the right lines.

WATSON

And until then?

Holmes doesn't answer, just keeps his eyes fixed on the wall. Watson follows his gaze.

REVERSE ANGLE

to reveal what Holmes is looking at: the same poster of Irene Adler we saw earlier.

Holmes turns to look at Watson.

HOLMES

Until then, my dear fellow, I think it's time we had a look at this adventuress Miss Adler for ourselves.

And he looks back at the picture. Watson notes his interest.

EXT. BAKER STREET -- EVENING

Starting to get dark. On the door of 221-B, Watson - in evening wear - takes a letter from a MESSENGER, who tips his hat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MESSENGER
Merry Christmas, sir.

WATSON
Merry Christmas.

He hurries off and Watson retreats inside.

INT. BAKER STREET HALLWAY -- EVENING

Watson is about to start up the steps when something stops him: the sound of VIOLIN MUSIC coming from the flat upstairs. He remains where he is and looks at the letter; it's addressed to DR JOHN H WATSON, 221-B BAKER STREET.

He opens the envelope, scans through the contents of the letter. His eyes fall on the signature.

Mary Morstan.

Watson raises the scented paper to his nose. Inhales deeply. Then smiles broadly.

The music stops from upstairs.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- EVENING

Watson enters the flat to find Holmes (also in evening wear) putting the violin back in it's case.

HOLMES
Anything important?

WATSON
Nothing. A letter.

There's the barest trace of something about Holmes' face, but he covers it instantly and Watson never sees it. Holmes straightens up.

HOLMES
Ready?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROYAL OPERA HOUSE -- NIGHT

Holmes and Watson emerge from the back of a handsome, which drives off. Reveal the Royal Opera House in all it's glory behind them, with crowds of people streaming in.

WATSON
Quite a turnout.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

If Miss Adler is as much the talk
of the town as Lestrade reckons,
it doesn't surprise. Come on.

The two of them join the throng heading inside.

A second handsome cab draws up -- and this one is almost
as flash as Wilhelm's, decked out with a coat of arms.
The COACHMAN opens the door to allow the single occupant
to step out.

LORD CARROW: in his late forties, very handsome and dashing
with a sharply-trimmed goatee beard, white blond hair and
an air of absolute command about him. He walks with an
ornamental cane and an opera cape swishes behind him,
giving him a dramatic appearance.

CUT TO Holmes and Watson, among the queue of those waiting
to get in. A murmur of excitement passes up the crowd,
and they look up in time to see Carrow being escorted in
past the queue, where the doorman bows him inside.

DOORMAN

Welcome back, your lordship.

CARROW

Thank you, Stevens.

The doors close behind him. Watson watches Carrow, his
expression thoughtful.

INT. ROYAL OPERA HOUSE -- NIGHT

And we recognise the setting as the theatre from the
opening sequence. The crowds are just about all seated.

CUT TO Holmes and Watson, settling into their box. They
only just get sat down in time as the lights dim. Watson
just has time to catch sight of Carrow, taking his seat
alone in a box just opposite theirs.

WATSON

Who's that chap, Holmes?

But Holmes shushes him quiet.

APPLAUSE from the whole theatre as the red velvet curtain
rises to reveal the stage beyond ... and a single female
figure stepping forward, smiling, utterly beautiful and
totally in command of the hall.

IRENE ADLER.

She bows to the crowd for a moment, then the music begins
and opens her mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her voice is utterly stunning, reducing the size of the theatre to the size of a small room.

CUT TO Holmes' face as he watches. initially his expression is unmoving, but after a few moments he begins to smile. He's enjoying it.

And Watson looks surprised when he sees the expression.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROYAL OPERA HOUSE - STAGE DOOR -- NIGHT

Holmes and Watson stand in the shadows by the stage door, which is in a side-street behind the theatre. In the distance behind them we can hear the murmur of the crowd as they emerge from the main doors, all seeming suitably impressed.

HOLMES

I suggest we spend tomorrow finding out everything there is to know about the young lady--

WATSON

Can't, I'm afraid, I have a lunch engagement.

HOLMES

(nods)

Miss Morstan. Of course.

And Watson's head flicks up in complete amazement.

WATSON

How on earth--?

HOLMES

I can only think of two people who'd write a letter to you that you wouldn't wish to read in my presence, and I doubt that Dr Bell uses the same charming scent on his letters that I recall from Miss Morstan's previous correspondence.

(glances at Watson)

I seem to recall you took something of a shine to her.

WATSON

Stop it.

HOLMES

And her to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON
Holmes, really--

Watson's angry retort is cut short by the arrival, at the other end of the street, of Carrow's carriage.

Holmes and Watson remain in the shadows as the stage door opens and Irene emerges, still stunning even out of stage clothes, accompanied by a STAGEHAND.

STAGEHAND
Goodnight, Miss Adler.

IRENE
Goodnight.

As the door closes Irene makes her way to the waiting carriage. The door opens to reveal Carrow sat inside, a charming smile in place.

CARROW
Irene, another superb performance.

IRENE
Why thank you, your grace.

Carrow descends enough to help Irene into the carriage and close the door behind her. With a click of the whip the coach moves off.

CUT BACK TO Holmes and Watson, eyes fixed on the retreating coach.

EXT. ROYAL OPERA HOUSE -- NIGHT

As Holmes and Watson emerge from the side street and rejoin the throng pouring out of the theatre.

WATSON
And the fellow in the carriage was...?

HOLMES
Unless I'm very much mistaken, Lord Hector Carrow.

WATSON
(impressed)
The Earl of Suffolk?

HOLMES
Just so. And he seemed rather familiar with Miss Adler.

WATSON
An acquaintance?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

(shrugs)

It's possible. Then again, he's well-known as a patron of the arts, so it's entirely possible he's organised the funding for her show.

WATSON

But you don't think so?

HOLMES

I've no data yet, and it's a fundamental mistake to speculate without any data. So we return to the original point; we need to know as much about Miss Adler as possible.

Watson looks slightly embarrassed.

WATSON

Holmes--

HOLMES

Oh don't concern yourself, my dear fellow; I'm sure I'm more than capable of investigating this myself.

Now Watson looks mortified. He glances at Holmes' stony expression and doesn't dare say any more.

EXT. LONDON STREETS -- NIGHT

Tracking with Lord Carrow's carriage as it makes it's way through the darkened streets.

CARROW (prelap)

We would seem to have a problem.

INT. CARROW'S CARRIAGE -- NIGHT

Irene looks across to where Carrow sits with his back to the coachman.

IRENE

Wilhelm is in London, isn't he?

CARROW

(nods)

We must consider the fact that he'll attempt to recover the photograph.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

(smiles)

He's tried already, as I knew he would. Five attempts, all of them unsuccessful.

CARROW

He's a man of persistence. It's making the others worried.

IRENE

I won't fail.

CARROW

I know that.

(beat)

The others need ... some reassurance.

Irene looks annoyed.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- NIGHT

A street of highly respectable, upper-class houses. The carriage comes to a halt outside the most impressive of house of all. The doors open and Carrow emerges, turning back and offering his hand to help Irene down. She looks up at the house.

CARROW

Not what you were expecting?

(off her look)

It does me while I'm in town.

Shall we?

They make their way up the steps towards the house. The door opens and the butler, BEECH, appears there.

BEECH

Good evening your lordship.

CARROW

Good evening Beech. The others?

BEECH

Awaiting your arrival downstairs.

CARROW

Very good.

They enter the house and Beech closes the door behind them.

INT. SANCTUM -- NIGHT

A low fire burns in the grate. The area is lit by hundreds of candles, all arranged around a circle of high-backed armchairs.

Sat in the chairs: TWELVE MEN AND WOMEN, all of them cloaked in long dark robes and hoods, wearing white gloves, Venetian-style MASKS covering their eyes but leaving mouths and chins visible. Their black cloaks are embroidered with gold designs. The whole air of the place is vaguely Masonic.

One man stands, and by his bearing and voice we can tell him to be Carrow.

CARROW

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for coming. This meeting of the Glove is hereby called to order.

He rings a small bell by the arm of his chair, the effect being that of a gavel being banged. One member (through the mask we can tell it's a man in his sixties) leans forward to address the circle.

MEMBER 1

What news of the proceedings?

CARROW

All happening entirely on schedule. With the help of Miss Adler, we are now ideally placed for the scheme to be enacted.

He inclines his head slightly to the member seated beside him. Through the mask we can tell her to be Irene.

MEMBER 2

We have but five days until the wedding.

CARROW

Precisely. His Majesty is now completely in our power, he just doesn't realise it yet.

MEMBER 1

Really?

CARROW

You have something to add, Standevan?

Member 1 (STANDEVAN) fixes Carrow with a hard look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDEVAN

The King will surely make an attempt to recover the photograph--

IRENE

Five such attempts have been made already, Sir John, and all of them have proven fruitless.

STANDEVAN

So far.

IRENE

Wilhelm continues to underestimate my resolve.

STANDEVAN

And what of his resolve?

CARROW

Come to a point.

STANDEVAN

My sources in the foreign office tell me the King arrived in the country this morning under a false passport and must even now be resident in London.

IRENE

And what concern of ours is--?

STANDEVAN

(hard)

It occurs to me that the king's purpose in taking such a huge risk, of coming here incognito with all the implications that could mean, must surely be to consult professional help.

CARROW

The King has many agents in Bohemia--

STANDEVAN

But none as dangerous as Sherlock Holmes.

At the mention of the name a murmur of worried conversation flutters around the circle. Everyone's clearly nervous -- all except Carrow, who remains resolute.

CARROW

What proof have you of that?

STANDEVAN

None so far--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARROW

That is a dangerous accusation to make with no evidence--

STANDEVAN

Where else can he turn? To inform Scotland Yard would be to inform the public, which the king does not want. We also know that Holmes has done some very high profile work for various other European royal families, he has proven himself to be a dangerous adversary.

(hard look at Carrow)

As we ourselves found out five years ago.

All eyes are fixed on Carrow. He ignores them, keeps his own gaze fixed squarely on Standevan.

CARROW

And what would you have me do?

STANDEVAN

Remove Holmes as an adversary before--

CARROW

Are you suggesting we kill him?

Nasty silence. Standevan meets Carrow's gaze evenly.

STANDEVAN

I know someone who would be more than happy to do the job. Holmes got far too close to us once--

CARROW

But not close enough.

He gives a hard look around the circle.

CARROW (CONT'D)

Right now all you are doing is feeding your own doubts. If Sherlock Holmes comes up against us, we will deal with him. For now, Irene's plan is the one we're sticking to, but if she should fail--

IRENE

I won't.

Everyone turns to look at her. She looks back across the circle, defiant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE (CONT'D)

I won't fail, gentlemen, you can be assured of that.

All eyes on Irene. She glances sideways at Carrow, who offers a reassuring smile, before turning back to the room at large. Absolute confidence in her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- MORNING

Snow falls in sheets outside, visible through the window.

Holmes sits in his chair, alone in the small room. He's absently playing with a THROWING KNIFE, tossing it up in the air and catching it with a huge amount of speed and skill, but it's not the focus of his attention. He's staring into space.

Thinking.

Utterly lost in thought.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MARCHINI'S -- DAY

The window of an expensive-looking restaurant somewhere in a nice area. Through the glass we can see Watson and Mary sat at a table near the back.

INT. MARCHINI'S -- DAY

The two of them are caught in peals of laughter, Mary holding her handkerchief to her mouth in a mixture of horror and amusement.

MARY

That's horrible!

WATSON

It got a lot worse than that, believe me.

MARY

So what did Holmes do?

WATSON

Nothing.

(off her look)

Well there was nothing we could do, what Windibank did wasn't actionable or strictly illegal in any sense--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

It was still wrong.

WATSON

Rest assured I had half a mind to take a horse-whip to the man, and if that girl had a brother or a friend that's exactly what they would have done.

MARY

I can quite believe it.

She smiles and shakes her head. Watson laughs.

WATSON

What?

MARY

Some of these stories are positively scandalous.

WATSON

I know, and that's the question I ask myself every time I put pen to paper to record them.

MARY

But the stories themselves are true?

WATSON

Mostly.

Mary smiles, amused.

MARY

So you've elaborated? For character, and flavour--

WATSON

Actually no - in most cases I've had to tone down the truth so as not to scandalise the whole of London.

(beat)

Or at least those parts of London that read the Strand magazine.

MARY

Is that the only reason?

WATSON

Well, apart from the changing of dates and names so as not to bring scandal down onto real people--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Like me.
 (smiles)
 The soul of discretion.

Watson considers for a moment as he takes a drink.

WATSON

Always that.
 (beat)
 Miss Morstan--

MARY

Mary.

Watson glances up, and she smiles at him.

MARY (CONT'D)

I think we're a little beyond the
 'Miss Morstan' part now, Doctor.

WATSON

John.
 (off her look)
 If we're past that part.

MARY

(smiles)
 John.

Watson smiles slightly, startled by this change of events -
 but liking it all the same.

WATSON

Well ... Mary ... I might be moving
 back into medical practise.

Mary gives him a sympathetic look; understanding that
 this is what the meeting has been leading toward.

MARY

You're wondering if it's the right
 thing to do?

WATSON

I'm wondering if I've simply lost
 my nerve to carry on with Holmes.

MARY

Never that.
 (off his look)
 It takes a very brave man to walk
 away and begin something anew,
 John, so I'd never consider it
 losing your nerve.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON

Holmes would.

MARY

In my experience Mr Holmes wouldn't know what to do with any life other than the one he's already leading.

WATSON

(smiles)

Heaven help him when he eventually retires.

MARY

Exactly.

(beat)

But if it's not the right thing for you--

WATSON

Do you think I should do it?

Pause.

Then Mary reaches over the table, takes his hand in hers.

MARY

I think you should do whatever feels right for Doctor John Watson. Nobody else.

Their eyes meet. A shared moment between the two of them. Watson seems to draw strength from that of this remarkable woman.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Watson enters, thoughtful -- and stops, surprised for just a moment at the sight of Holmes sat at the table, in the process of removing his disguise of a drunken-looking horse-groom.

WATSON

Eventful day?

HOLMES

Somewhat. Take a seat and I'll tell you all about it.

Watson shrugs off his coat and sits down as Holmes gives him an appraising eye.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

And how eventful was your day?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON

Interesting.
 (off his look)
 I'll tell you later. So who were you?

HOLMES

Eh?
 (glances at his attire, laughs)
 Oh, yes, the inebriated Bert Stevens, cab driver. If you'll bear with me I'll send him away.

WATSON

Then back to Sherlock Holmes?

HOLMES

Yes ... for now, but I need to sort out a disguise for this evening. Can I count on your help?

WATSON

Why? What's happening this evening?

HOLMES

Well if everything works out the way I believe it will, we should be able to give His Majesty some very good news in the morning. First I'll need to attire myself as something else...
 (considers)
 ...yes, an amiable, simple-minded nonconformist clergyman, I think.

WATSON

(grins)
 And I suppose you're going to want me to serve as your curate. Even more absent minded.

HOLMES

No, only as yourself Watson--
 (realises, laughs)
 Oh, my goodness, forgive me my dear fellow.

Watson doesn't look amused.

WATSON

Yes, well, you were going to tell me about your exploits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

Yes, of course. So, allow me to set the scene. There was I, Sherlock Holmes, got up as a horse driver--

INT. PUB -- DAY

A somewhat rowdy bar full of working men. Holmes, in full disguise complete with side-whiskers and beard, stands at the bar, his eyes on something over the road: an impressive looking distinctive white house.

HOLMES (V.O.)

--situated in the pub opposite, watching Miss Adler's residence at Briony Lodge.

The LANDLORD pours two glasses of beer. Holmes pays, takes them and hands onto his companion, a red-faced fellow CAB DRIVER.

HOLMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I stood the local cabbie to a beer, and soon I knew everything I needed to know.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Watson hangs on every word as Holmes removes the side-whiskers.

WATSON

About Miss Adler?

HOLMES

About Miss Adler. She's the daintiest thing under a bonnet it seems, she's turned the head of every man in the neighbourhood.

WATSON

Does she get a lot of male visitors?

HOLMES

Ah, now that's the interesting bit. Only one of any note; a solicitor by the name of Godfrey Norton, a wonderfully dark and handsome fellow according to the regulars. Anyway, at that very moment...

INT. PUB -- DAY

The cabbie points OS. Holmes turns to look as a cab draws up and GODFREY NORTON emerges, pays the driver and charges up to the house. His expression wild and urgent.

ON Holmes as he considers this.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Holmes removes his wig.

HOLMES

Clearly urgent, whatever it was,
because--

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- DAY

Holmes is now outside, lurking near the front of the house as Norton charges into a waiting cab, yelling as he goes:

NORTON

*Drive like the devil, cabbie!
Harding Brothers jewellers in
Regent Street, then the Church of
Saint Monica in the Edgeware Road -
half a sovereign if you do it in
twenty minutes!*

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Holmes is warming to his story.

HOLMES

And scarcely two minutes later,
Miss Adler herself called a cab.

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- DAY

As Irene hurries into her own waiting cab:

IRENE

*The Church of Saint Monica in the
Edgeware Road, and half a sovereign
if you reach it in ten minutes!*

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Watson's now hanging on every word:

HOLMES

At which point, Mr Sherlock Holmes
called a cab--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He glances down at his disguise and laughs.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
 --in spite of his own somewhat
 disreputable appearance. And
 what do you think I found when I
 got to the Edgeware Road?

INT. CHURCH OF SAINT MONICA -- DAY

Holmes enters, still in disguise. Stops dead at the sight of:

A SURPLICED CLERGYMAN, stood at the altar, with Irene and Norton stood before him, looking desperate. All eyes flash to Holmes as he enters -- and Norton rushes down the aisle, grabs Holmes by the arm and hauls him up toward the altar:

NORTON
 (utter desperation)
*Quick, quick my man, you'll do,
 only another five minutes and the
 license expires--*

HOLMES
But sir--

NORTON
*We need a witness to a marriage,
 man!*

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

And Watson looks on in utter disbelief as Holmes smiles in triumph:

HOLMES
*A witness to a marriage, my humble
 self.*

WATSON
You're joking!

HOLMES
*I most certainly am not, all done
 in about five minutes, and a
 sovereign as a tip from the bride
 which I shall wear on my watch
 chain forever in honour of the
 occasion.*

Watson's expression suggests a man who could be knocked down with a feather.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON
So then what happened?

HOLMES
Well, it was somewhat of an anti-climax.

EXT. CHURCH OF SAINT MONICA -- NIGHT

Holmes lingers near the door of the church as Norton and Irene speak quietly:

IRENE
Do you have to go?

NORTON
The arrangements need making.
Don't concern yourself, my dear,
I will take care of everything.

IRENE
You'd better.
(beat)
I'll drive in the park as usual
this evening.

NORTON
Then I shall see you tomorrow.

Pause. He kisses Irene's hand. Then he heads off into the street. Irene watches him go with a sad expression.

CUT TO Holmes, watching all of this.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

As Holmes rips the last of the disguise from his face.

HOLMES
And this gives us our opportunity
for tonight.
(sharp glance at
Watson)
You don't mind breaking the law,
do you?

Watson grins ruefully.

WATSON
Always a dangerous question with
you, Holmes.

And Holmes laughs to himself.

EXT. LONDON STREETS -- NIGHT

Tracking with a handsome cab as it makes it's way through the night-time streets. It rounds a corner, passing a group of CAROL SINGERS in full swing.

INT. HANDSOME CAB -- NIGHT

Holmes sits with Watson, both dressed for the cold -- and in Holmes' case, in disguise as the clergyman (baggy trousers, long white beard and wig, egg-stains on the whiskers).

HOLMES

When we get to Briony Lodge I think we'll find some little to-do happening outside ... quite possibly a fight among some drunken guardsmen.

WATSON

They'll be confederates of yours, I take it?

HOLMES

Naturally.

(grins)

You know, Watson, what with the King paying for this operation we find ourselves with considerable resources - I think I've engaged just about every out of work actor in London. At any rate, it'll be enough to get me inside the house.

WATSON

How?

HOLMES

(grins)

Leave that to me.

And Watson smiles -- in spite of himself, he's still slightly amazed by this part of their life.

WATSON

So what do you want me to do?

HOLMES

A small but crucial role. Take this.

He hands Watson a small PARCEL wrapped in brown paper, about twice the size of a deck of cards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Handle it gingerly if you don't mind.

WATSON

Why? What's in it?

HOLMES

A kind of bomb.

WATSON

(alarmed)

A kind of WHAT--?

HOLMES

(equally alarmed)

Well pray don't drop it!

Watson composes himself with some effort, eyeing the little box with some concern, which makes Holmes smile.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Nothing to be alarmed about, it's just an ordinary plumber's smoke rocket, fitted with a cap to make it self-lighting when it's thrown.

(grins)

More smoke than fire.

He evidently meant that to reassure Watson, but it doesn't help. Watson looks at the thing like it might explode at any second.

WATSON

I see. And where do you want me to throw it?

HOLMES

I want you to station yourself in the shelter of a laurel bush you'll find growing under the window of the drawing room. The window will be open, I'll make sure of that, and you'll be able to hear me say "All I want is a glass of water, please."

WATSON

My cue, I take it?

HOLMES

Exactly - and when you hear it I want you to throw the box in through the open window as hard as you can and start to shout 'fire'.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES (CONT'D)

There will be a lot of confusion, so as soon as nobody's watching you slip away and meet me at the Goat and Compasses around the corner, and we'll have what we came for.

WATSON

Which is?

HOLMES

The location of that photograph.
(off Watson's look)
Miss Adler will have shown it to me.

And Holmes grins even more at the sight of the dumbfounded look on Watson's face.

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- NIGHT

The area is bathed in the glow of the gas-lamps, reflecting orange off the snow.

Watson crouches awkwardly behind the laurel bush, holding the package with some care. He's able to get a good look at

THE STREET

and the pub opposite: where, indeed, Holmes' GUARDSMEN are staggering around outside, spectacularly drunk. Snatches of angry speech ("Who'd you think you're shoving?!" etc) come across the road.

Watson allows himself a small smile at the sight.

Then a carriage draws up -- Watson recognises Irene in the back, along with her MAID. It pulls up outside the gates of the lodge -- but when Irene tries to descend the way is blocked by the guardsmen and their argument.

Holmes appears from nowhere, playing the role of the simple-minded reverend, trying to clear the way for Irene. The scuffle intensifies for a moment -- then Watson watches Holmes keel over, blood all over his face!

The guardsmen leg it at the sight of the blood. Watson looks horrified for a moment, but the look turns into one of amazement as Irene and her maid proceed to help the bleeding Holmes up the garden and into the house.

Holmes glances at the laurel bush, catches Watson's eye.

He winks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And Watson can only smile in amazement as Irene helps Holmes inside the house.

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Irene helps Holmes lie down on the sofa with the assistance of the maid (ELSIE).

IRENE

Easy, sir, you'll be alright--

HOLMES

Thank you, thank you, you're very kind...

IRENE

Don't try to talk, sir.
(to maid)
Elsie, open the window.

ELSIE

Yes, ma'am.

She rushes to open the window.

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- NIGHT

Watson looks up in surprise as the window opens:

HOLMES (O.S.)

...thank you, thank you, I'm better now...

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Irene sits down opposite Holmes, offers him a reassuring smile.

IRENE

Just sit quietly for a moment, sir. I've sent for the doctor.

HOLMES

It looks worse than it is, I promise you. All I want is a glass of water, please.

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- NIGHT

Watson pulls the package out of his pocket. Now or never.

IRENE (O.S.)

Certainly, I'll have someone fetch it for you--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And Watson jumps to his feet and HURLS the package through the window.

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

SMASH! The parcel is hurled in through the window and hits the ground. There's the sound of GLASS BREAKING and THICK BLACK SMOKE fills the air--

WATSON (O.S.)
Fire! Fire! Fire!

From outside SCREAMS and the cry of 'FIRE!' can be heard. Irene leaps to her feet in horror--

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- NIGHT

Watson crouches back down behind the bush. Smoke BILLOWS out of the window. He glances up to the street, where POLICE CONSTABLES and a MOB come charging up toward the house to help.

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Holmes bolts upright, eyes alert, as Irene rushes over the the bookcase.

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- NIGHT

Watson keeps low and makes a stealthy exit around the side.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOAT AND COMPASSES -- NIGHT

Watson waits outside the pub, leaning against a wall. His face is flushed, his eyes shining with the thrill of what's just happened.

He shakes his head; in spite of himself, he's genuinely enjoyed that.

A cab draws to a halt in front of him; the door opens to reveal Holmes sat there, still in disguise but without the beard and wig, and he grins at Watson.

Watson returns the grin. That same thrill. He gets into the cab and it drives off.

EXT. BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

The street is quiet, just a few people making their way through the snow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holmes and Watson come into view at the top end of the street, trudging back toward 221-B.

HOLMES

Now I think that went rather well.

WATSON

(rueful smile)

So you got it back then? The photograph, I mean.

HOLMES

No, not at all.

(off Watson's look)

That was never the plan for tonight, but it worked to a T. I now know precisely where the photograph is hidden in the house. I told you, Miss Adler herself showed me.

Watson's looking utterly baffled.

WATSON

But how--

HOLMES

The simplest thing in the world, Watson; when a woman thinks her house is burning down, she immediately rushes to the thing she values most in all the world. A married woman grabs her baby, an unmarried one her jewellery box. In Miss Adler's case--

WATSON

(getting it)

The photograph.

HOLMES

Exactly.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Holmes watches as Irene grabs for a false panel in a recess behind the bookcase. Holmes gets a fleeting glimpse of the photograph itself.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Holmes turns away from Watson back to the street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

Which means we're almost at the end of this little caper. I think I'll drop His Majesty a line asking him to meet us tomorrow at Briony Lodge.

(smiles at Watson)

I think he'd enjoy being there at the moment of victory, wouldn't you?

WATSON

Capital idea. Now, what about some late dinner?

HOLMES

A capital idea of your own, Watson.

They're about to head up the step to 221-B when:

BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)

Goodnight Mr Holmes.

They both glance up - a raggedy looking BOY of about seventeen makes his way up the street away from them.

HOLMES

Who was that?

WATSON

(shrugs)

Probably Wiggins, or one of the Irregulars.

Holmes doesn't look convinced.

WATSON (CONT'D)

Holmes?

Holmes is jarred out of his thoughts.

HOLMES

Coming, my dear fellow.

CUT TO a long shot from further down the street, subjective POV. Watching as Holmes and Watson make their way into the flat.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Later. Holmes and Watson sit beside the fire in their armchairs. Watson's writing in his journal.

Holmes looks vaguely listless. He fingers something on his watch chain; the silver sovereign.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His eyes are lost in thought.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- MORNING

A fresh layer of snow covers the ground. Holmes, Watson and Wilhelm (hat pulled down well over his eyes) make their way up the path towards the front door.

WILHELM

And you tell me she is really married, Herr Holmes?

HOLMES

To the English lawyer Norton, your majesty.

WILHELM

This is better than I could have hoped for, gentlemen.

They've reached the front door. Watson rings the bell.

WILHELM (CONT'D)

I have to confess I was somewhat concerned about your attitude, Herr Holmes, but now--

HOLMES

Think nothing of it, your majesty. Now, Miss Adler will surely not be up at this hour, so we'll be ushered into the sitting room, and when she comes down she will find us gone and the photograph as well.

WILHELM

Perfect--

The door opens to reveal Elsie, the maid from the previous night.

ELSIE

Yes? Can I help you, gentlemen?

HOLMES

Good morning - we are here to see Miss Adler.

ELSIE

Your are Mr Sherlock Holmes, yes?

Surprise radiates from all three of them--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

I am, how did you know?

ELSIE

Miss Adler told me you would be coming, and she asked me to tell you that she and her husband left early this morning for the continent.

WATSON

(amazed)

She's left the country?

ELSIE

(smiles)

For good.

WILHELM

(alarmed)

Herr Holmes, the photograph!

HOLMES

Out of my way!

And he shoulders past Elsie and into the house, Watson and Wilhelm following.

ELSIE

Mr Holmes--

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Holmes bursts in, his eyes going to the bookcase ... but the false panel has been opened. Watson and Wilhelm enter in time to see Holmes reach the panel.

HOLMES

It seems we've been out fought,
your majesty.

He hands over the contents of the panel - a photograph, but showing Irene alone, no sign of Wilhelm. Wilhelm takes it in horror.

WILHELM

Then you mean--?

HOLMES

There was this, too.

He holds up a letter.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Addressed to me, dated midnight.

(reads)

"My dear Mr Sherlock Holmes--"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE (V.O.)
You really did it very well.

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Finding Irene sitting at a table, dressed for travel, writing the letter.

IRENE (V.O.)
I had been warned that the King
might approach you and I thought
I had adequately guarded myself
against any more attempts.

She pauses, smiles slightly to herself, and continues.

IRENE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I confess that even afterwards, I
couldn't bring myself to think
ill of such a sweet old clergyman,
and I have to say that the stage
has missed a major talent in you,
Mr Holmes. But don't forget, I
have been trained as an actress
myself, and male costume is nothing
new to me.

EXT. BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

*The previous night. We see the boy who wished Holmes
goodnight - only closer in we can see that it is, in fact,
Irene.*

IRENE (V.O.)
I slipped it on while the 'bomb'
still smouldered, and followed
you and your companion to Baker
Street, thus confirming my
suspicions. I even imprudently
wished you good night.

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- NIGHT

*Various, as the servants pack trunks hurriedly for a speedy
departure.*

IRENE (V.O.)
Given that I face such a formidable
adversary, we decided that flight
was the best course of action.

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- NIGHT

Norton helps the servant load the luggage onto the coaches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE (V.O.)
*I have taken the photograph solely
 to guard myself...*

Norton helps Irene up into the carriage. With a crack of the whip it begins to drive off.

INT. CARRIAGE -- NIGHT

Irene and Norton in the back. They share a smile of triumph.

IRENE (V.O.)
*...but your client can rest assured
 I will never use it, and tell
 Wilhelm I give him my word on
 that subject. I love a man far
 better than he will ever be.*

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Irene again pauses during the writing of the letter, allowing herself a small smile of victory.

IRENE (V.O.)
*Did you know that too? I wonder,
 Mr Sherlock Holmes. So instead I
 leave behind another photograph
 of myself alone, as a memento for
 his majesty...*

INT. BRIONY LODGE -- SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Back to the present, as Holmes continues reading:

HOLMES
 (reading)
*...and to you, Mr Holmes, I remain
 always yours very truly, Irene
 Norton, nee Adler.*

He lowers the paper. Pause - Wilhelm and Watson's expressions look worried. Then Holmes starts to chuckle.

WATSON
 Holmes?

HOLMES
 (laughing)
*Why, she's actually fooled me -
me, Sherlock Holmes!*

WILHELM
*What a woman, what a woman - she
 would have made such a queen had
 she only been on my level.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

I think I can assure your majesty that Miss Adler is on an entirely different level to all of us.

WATSON

Your Majesty, I can only apologise, we've been soundly beaten--

WILHELM

(smiles)

No, Herr Doctor. She will not break her word. Fear of Mr Holmes and yourself will see to that.

He looks at Holmes, triumph in his eyes.

WILHELM (CONT'D)

You have succeeded, Herr Holmes, and it would seem I owe you my kingdom. How can I ever repay you? This emerald ring, for example--

HOLMES

Thank you, your majesty, but you have something that I would value more highly than anything else.

WILHELM

Name it.

HOLMES

That photograph, sir.

Wilhelm and Watson glance at the photograph in amazement.

WILHELM

Irene's? Take it, Herr Holmes, with my thanks.

Holmes reaches out to take it.

HOLMES

Thank you. Then in that case, your majesty, I have the honour of wishing you a very good morning. Come, Watson.

EXT. BRIONY LODGE -- MORNING

Holmes and Watson make their way down the path back to their waiting coach. Watson sees the grin on Holmes' face, mirrors it.

WATSON

You enjoyed that, didn't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES
 Immensely. But now, after
 everything we've been through, I
 would suggest we're due a hearty
 breakfast.

WATSON
 (smiles)
 Indeed, Holmes, indeed.

They clamber into the coach.

EXT. CARROW'S TOWNHOUSE -- DAY

Seen in daylight, the house is even more impressive. To
 establish.

INT. CARROW'S TOWNHOUSE - DINING ROOM -- DAY

Where Carrow is having breakfast while reading the paper.
 He looks up as the door opens and Beech enters.

BEECH
 Sir John Standevan here to see
 you, milord.

Carrow looks as though it's an unwelcome interruption,
 but:

CARROW
 Fine. Send him in.

BEECH
 Milord.

He bows and exits. Carrow pours himself another cup of
 tea as Standevan is ushered in by Beech. Without his
 mask we see him to be a man in his sixties with greying
 hair but a clear, cold intelligence about him.

CARROW
 Sir John. Good morning.

STANDEVAN
 We have a serious problem.

INT. CARROW'S TOWNHOUSE - SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Carrow and Standevan are in the window, looking out across
 the snow-filled back garden, talking in hushed tones.

CARROW
 She's gone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDEVAN

(nods)

Absconded with the photograph and that lawyer she's married, Norton.

CARROW

And where are they?

STANDEVAN

Somewhere on the continent, possibly France, she has friends there.

(looks at Carrow)

This is Holmes' doing.

Carrow looks dismissive.

CARROW

We have no way of knowing for certain that Holmes is involved--

STANDEVAN

Who else would the King turn to if not Holmes?

CARROW

This may have been Irene herself. The motives of women are so inscrutable.

STANDEVAN

Either way, it causes an obstacle.

(beat)

Do you want to call a meeting?

CARROW

No. We can handle this by ourselves, there's no need to bother the others.

(beat)

Carry on as normal. But get hold of Mr Avery?

STANDEVAN

Why? Why in god's name would you want that--?

CARROW

I may have work for him.

Standevan gets it. A look of horror for a moment, which then resolves itself upon seeing Carrow's steely expression.

STANDEVAN

The others won't like it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARROW
They'll cope. Desperate times,
desperate measures.

Pause.

STANDEVAN
Very well.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Carol singers with "The First Noel" as
we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OXFORD STREET -- NIGHT

Snow falling, Christmas shoppers in all directions.
Vendors selling hot chestnuts. A picture-postcard
Victorian Christmas scene.

Among them: WATSON, making his way through the show with
a bag of parcels slung over his shoulder.

WATSON (V.O.)
In the days that followed, as the
papers began to fill with stories
of the impending Royal wedding,
Holmes sunk into another of his
melancholy periods...

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Holmes sits by the fire, behind a cloud of pipe smoke.
Lost in thought.

WATSON (V.O.)
...and I knew from long experience
that the best thing to do in these
circumstances was simply to leave
him alone.

Holmes' eyes stray to something on the table; Irene's
photo. A slight smile from Holmes.

EXT. OXFORD STREET -- NIGHT

Still with Watson as he trudges through the snow.

WATSON (V.O.)
In the meantime, I found myself
going over my options in my head
over and over again, debating
what I should do for the best.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Watson is shown around a suite of plush-looking offices by DR JOSEPH BELL (60s, smiling). it's an impressive looking place.

WATSON (V.O.)

Dr Bell had made me a very fair offer, and Mary's advice to do whatever was right for me seemed like the best option.

Dr Bell looks at Watson, his eyes expectant; he wants an answer. Watson looks slightly stricken.

EXT. OXFORD STREET -- NIGHT

Back with Watson as he hails a handsome cab.

WATSON (V.O.)

The problem in this situation, though, was trying to decide what was, in fact, the best thing for me...

He gets into the cab, which drives off into the busy streets.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Watson gets in, finding Holmes on his feet and energised, loading his revolver and pulling on his coat.

WATSON

Holmes--

HOLMES

(noticing)

Ah, Watson, perfect timing, come on, man, we don't have all night--

And he's spun Watson around and hurried him back to the door before Watson's fully caught up--

WATSON

All night for what? Holmes, what's going--?

HOLMES

To solve the mystery of the Red Headed League, now come on.

The slammed door cuts off Watson's sounds of protest.

EXT. COBURG SQUARE -- NIGHT

Just as bustling as Oxford Street with Christmas shoppers. Holmes emerges from a handsome with an irritable Watson behind him.

WATSON

Really, Holmes, I must--

HOLMES

All in good time.

(looking OS)

Ah, Lestrade!

Watson looks even more annoyed as Holmes crosses to where Lestrade stands in a shop doorway, huddled against the cold.

LESTRADE

This had better be worth my time,
Mr Holmes.

HOLMES

Oh it will be, I assure you.

Let's go inside.

LESTRADE

Best idea I've heard all night.

They head in, Watson still looking both irritated and intrigued.

INT. BANK LOBBY -- NIGHT

Watson follows Lestrade and Holmes into what, to Watson's surprise, turns out to be lobby of a bank. Watson looks around, thrown.

WATSON

Holmes--

HOLMES

I'll explain later, my dear fellow.

MERRYWEATHER (O.S.)

Mr Holmes, good evening.

They all look up as MR MERRYWEATHER (50s, portly) emerges from a flight of steps. Holmes shakes his hand.

HOLMES

Good evening to you. Watson,
permit me to introduce Mr
Merryweather, the manager of the
Coburg Square branch of Capital
and Counties Bank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MERRYWEATHER
Delighted to meet you at last,
Doctor Watson.

They shake hands.

LESTRADE
(warning)
Holmes--

HOLMES
Yes, of course. Well, let's get
down to it, shall we? Mr
Merryweather?

MERRYWEATHER
This way, gentlemen.

He leads them down the stairs.

INT. BANK VAULT -- NIGHT

The only light comes from a couple of lanterns held by Holmes and Lestrade. Watson, Lestrade and Merryweather sit on packing cases while Holmes roams the place, checking things.

HOLMES
You're sure you've cut off all
possible routes of escape?

LESTRADE
(nods)
My best constables on all the
exits.

HOLMES
Excellent. And if things go the
way I think they're going to,
within a few short hours you'll
have your man, Lestrade.

LESTRADE
(dark)
John Clay, murderer and thief.
Nothing I wouldn't put past him.
(snorts)
It'll be swindling a widow in
Manchester on Monday and then
murdering a man for twenty pounds
on Tuesday with him.

HOLMES
This time it's bullion in Coburg
square.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He sees the baffled look on Watson's face and smiles, sympathetic.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Oh, do forgive me for keeping you in the dark, my dear fellow.

(sits down)

And now, since we seem to have some little time to wait, perhaps Mr Merryweather would be kind enough to fill us all in on what Clay's target is.

MERRYWEATHER

Well, d'you see, it's our French gold, Doctor Watson--

HOLMES

SHHH! Keep it down, they could be here at any time.

MERRYWEATHER

(lower voice)

Our French gold, Doctor Watson.

Holmes turns down the lantern, as does Lestrade. The room is now almost totally shrouded in darkness.

WATSON

French gold?

MERRYWEATHER

(nods)

We'd occasion to borrow some in order to strengthen our reserves. That crate you're sitting on contains some twelve thousand in Napoleons.

Watson looks amazed, glances down at his perch.

HOLMES

(bored)

The case Lestrade sits on contains twenty thousand.

LESTRADE

You are sure it's going to be tonight, Mr Holmes?

HOLMES

It's the first opportunity since Mr Merryweather took delivery. In fact...

He's got his head cocked on one side, listening intently. Everyone strains to hear -- and after a moment they all

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

hear it too. A SCRAPING SOUND coming from the floor nearby.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Be ready.

He snuffs out the lantern, as does Lestrade. The room is now in almost total darkness. Watson sees Holmes draw his pistol from inside his coat, and a moment later Watson does the same.

Give it a moment. Then another. And another.

And then...

With a SCRAPING SOUND, a square section of floor RISES UP, revealing an opening and flickering light below. There's a moment--

--and then a MAN'S HEAD emerges into the room, and even in the faint light we recognise him as SPAULDING, from Claverhouse's shop. He flashes the lantern around--

--and stops dead at the sight of Holmes, Watson, Lestrade and Merryweather.

Pause. Both sides just look at each other.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

(serene)

Good evening.

And Spaulding's hand WHIPS UP, carrying a pistol--

--Holmes is on the man in seconds, wrestling the gun out of the way. There's a BANG as the gun goes off and the bullet THUDS into the wall--

SPAULDING

(yelling)

Ross! Run for it Ross, they're here!

From below there's the sound of running feet. Spaulding tries to wrestle his way clear of Holmes grip but Holmes is too strong, HAULING Spaulding out of the hole. Watson brings up his pistol and is about to drop into the tunnel after the accomplice--

LESTRADE

Forget it, Doctor--

But Watson's already gone.

INT. TUNNEL UNDER BANK VAULT -- NIGHT

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ross (whom we recognise from the Red Headed League, only now with brown hair) charges odd down the tunnel, tripping over the uneven ground--

--Watson comes out of nowhere, RUGBY-TACKLING the man to the ground. Ross is fast, though -- an elbow connects hard with Watson's face, throwing him off. Ross tries to scramble to his feet again--

Watson grabs Ross's ankle, HAULING backwards. Ross overbalances and drops to the ground. Watson is on top of him immediately, thrusting his pistol in the man's face--

WATSON

Stay where you are!

SHRILL POLICE WHISTLES sound from OS and Watson looks up to see several CONSTABLES running up towards them. Watson stands up, looking annoyed. Absently touches his nose, feels blood there. He dabs it with a handkerchief.

INT. BANK VAULT -- NIGHT

Watson emerges from the tunnel, bloody handkerchief held to his nose. Holmes holds a still-struggling Spaulding on the ground. He grins up at the arrival of Watson.

HOLMES

Are you alright?

WATSON

(quickly)

Fine.

Holmes doesn't hear the tone in Watson's voice.

HOLMES

Nicely done.

LESTRADE

Nicely done to both of you, gentlemen. Now then Mr Holmes, Doctor Watson, let me introduce you to John Clay, alias Spaulding, a first-degree toerag if ever I saw one.

Spaulding/Clay looks up at Holmes in surprise.

SPAULDING/CLAY

Holmes? Sherlock Holmes?

Holmes nods. Clay looks impressed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAY

Well, I've never met you before,
Mr Holmes, but if I had to be
caught by anyone, I'm glad it's
you--

(glares at Lestrade)

--rather than some common low-
class flatfoot.

LESTRADE

(had enough)

Alright, Sonny Jim, there's a
nice clean cell waiting for you
down at the Yard.

And he grabs Clay and hauls him to his feet.

EXT. COBURG SQUARE -- NIGHT

Holmes and Watson wait in the doorway of the bank as
Lestrade's constables sort the remainder of the gang out.

HOLMES

...so as I say, it was obvious
that the sole purpose of the so-
called 'Red Headed League' could
only be to get our not over-bright
pawnbroker friend out of his office
for long and regular periods of
time. It was the colour of the
fellow's hair that gave him the
idea, and with the support of
that accomplice of his who called
himself Duncan Ross, who was either
a redhead himself or accomplished
those miracles with cobblers wax
that were to disgust us all with
humanity--

WATSON

And it never once occurred to you
to include me in any of this?

And Holmes is thrown by the angry retort.

HOLMES

Eh?

WATSON

Or is it simply that you want me
to be the appreciative audience
who just needs to tell you how
bloody clever you are or something?

He rounds on Holmes, anger in his face. Dried blood
covering the bottom half of his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON (CONT'D)

I thought we were supposed to be partners.

HOLMES

Watson--

WATSON

Do you want a partner or a stooge? Because until you've made up your mind, I don't know what you want from me.

He looks away, angry. Holmes is for once completely baffled, unable to understand what's just happened.

His gaze falls on to where two constables manhandle Clay onto a waiting police carriage, with Lestrade supervising.

CLAY

...get your hands off me! I doubt if a bunch of cretins like you could possibly understand this but I have royal blood in my veins!

LESTRADE

Then in that case would you please care to ascend to the carriage, your highness, so we can escort your serene nobility to the nearest nick?

CLAY

(smirks)
That's better.

LESTRADE

(to constables)
Get him in there.

As they haul Clay into the carriage, something catches Holmes' eye--

HOLMES

Stop!

The shout catches everyone's attention as Holmes rushes over to Clay. Watson, curious in spite of himself, follows.

LESTRADE

Mr Holmes--

CLAY

What are you--?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holmes ignores all of this, grabbing Clay's wrist and hauling his sleeve up.

There's a tattoo inset on his wrist, just above the handcuffs.

A flower.

WATSON

Holmes?

Holmes ignores him, continues to stare at the flower. Then he looks Clay in the eye. The man smiles.

CLAY

Something I can do for you, Mr Holmes?

Pause.

Then Holmes steps back, taking his hands from Clay.

HOLMES

Get him out of here.

Lestrade looks puzzled, but signals to the constables who shove Clay into the back of the carriage. As it drives off, Lestrade and Watson both turn to Holmes.

LESTRADE

And what in the name of God's holy trousers was that all about?

Holmes says nothing. PUSH IN on his face, full of concentration.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Holmes enters at a rush, heading straight for the bookshelf. Books and papers are sent flying in all directions as Holmes searches.

A moment later, Watson enters, pulling off his coat and scarf.

WATSON

Holmes, are you ever going to tell me--?

HOLMES

There!

And he hauls a small book out of the pile. He flips through the pages at speed, until he finds it.

A moment. Holmes just stares. Then hands the book to Watson. Watson takes it, looks at the picture inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sees the same flower that was tattooed on Clay's wrist.

WATSON
A foxglove?

HOLMES
(nods, grim)
A foxglove.

Watson still looks baffled, unable to comprehend Holmes' worry.

WATSON
But what does it mean?

Holmes moves to another cabinet, pulling out a small wooden box.

HOLMES
It means our true enemy has not yet revealed himself.

WATSON
Holmes--

He stops as Holmes places a small bottle down onto the table. The label reads: 'seven percent solution.'

Watson knows what that means. With a look approaching disgust he turns and exits the room. Holmes takes no notice as he rolls up his sleeve, then draws a dose into his syringe.

INT. BAKER STREET HALLWAY -- NIGHT

As Watson makes his way back to his room, not even bothering to hide the look of disgust now.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

As Holmes collapses back into his chair, left sleeve rolled up. The syringe falls from his hand, drops to the floor.

His eyes lose focus.

New angle - Holmes' face, in profile. We slowly PUSH IN as

INSERT: The picture of the foxglove...

Still pushing in...

INSERT: The foxglove tattoo on Clay's wrist...

Closer still...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSERT: John Claverhouse's fish tattoo on his wrist...

Closer...

INSERT: Fast images, coming in a jumble -- cloaks and masks -- the masonic inspired meeting -- masked faces -- many wrists bearing the same tattoo -- a GUNSHOT RINGS OUT--

Holmes' eyes snap open, fully alert. He glances at the window. DAYLIGHT streams in.

Holmes looks a mess. But with some difficulty he hauls himself to his feet. Looks up as the door opens and Watson enters, finishing tying his tie.

WATSON

Ah, Holmes--

HOLMES

(urgent)

What time is the wedding this morning?

Off Watson's look of bafflement we CUT TO:

EXT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL -- DAY

The imposing dome of the cathedral under a clear, crisp winter sky.

CAMERA TILTS DOWN to reveal the doors -- and the place is absolutely packed. SOLDIERS, DIGNITARIES, CROWDS OF ONLOOKERS all jostling to get a look.

A massive turnout for the royal wedding.

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL -- DAY

Inside is just as packed as the outside, filled with the great and the good, all dressed for the cold.

Carrow is among the dignitaries, dressed in his best. He glances over his shoulder -- Standevan is there too, a few rows back.

A barely perceptible nod from Standevan.

Carrow turns his eyes back to the front of the cathedral. Allows a small smile to play over his lips.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ST. PAUL'S -- DAY

The pedestrians outside all jostle for a better view, held back by the GUARDSMEN in full dress uniform.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUT TO the other side of the street, where Holmes and Watson stand in the shelter of a shop doorway. Holmes is unshaven, scruffier than usual, but his eyes are everywhere, and for the first time we see he's looking nervous as hell. It's not lost on Watson.

WATSON

What is it? What's happening?

HOLMES

An intuition ... a feeling...

WATSON

What manner of intuition?

HOLMES

That something is going to go
very wrong here, Watson
(beat, grave)
Very wrong indeed.

Across the road, a carriage draws up. A FOOTMAN opens the door and Wilhelm emerges, dressed in ceremonial robes of state, complete with a crown.

HUGE APPLAUSE and some CHEERING for the crowd. Wilhelm waves to acknowledge the attention before making his way up the steps of the cathedral.

INT. DARK ROOM -- DAY

A case is slammed to the floor, then opened. MACHINE PARTS inside.

HANDS in BLACK GLOVES enter frame, beginning to assemble something.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ST. PAUL'S -- DAY

Holmes is still looking around, uneasy.

WATSON

This is about that tattoo, isn't it?

(no reply)

Holmes, for god's sake, are you ever going to answer--

HOLMES

(sharp)

I don't know what that tattoo represents, Watson, or what it's doing here. As soon as I know for certain, I'll tell you, now is that acceptable?

INT. DARK ROOM -- DAY

The gloved hands slam pieces into place.

We see the object taking shape.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ST. PAUL'S -- DAY

The rebuttal catches Watson by surprise -- but he also knows it's a measure of how serious this could be.

WATSON

Perfectly.

He fingers the army revolver in his pocket.

INT. DARK ROOM -- DAY

The handle is jammed into the stock.

And now we see what the object is. The back half of a RIFLE.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ST. PAUL'S -- DAY

MORE APPLAUSE. Holmes and Watson look up as a second carriage approaches.

On the steps, Wilhelm watches the approach. He smiles.

INT. DARK ROOM -- DAY

The barrel of the rifle is slammed into place.

REVEAL the gunman: AVERY, 40s, hard, a cruel air about him.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ST. PAUL'S -- DAY

The carriage pulls to a halt, and the footman opens the door.

A WOMAN steps out from inside - HELENA, Wilhelm's bride-to-be, beautiful and demure.

More applause rings out as the guardsmen escort Helena up the steps, to where Wilhelm waits.

CUT TO Holmes and Watson, watching intently. Holmes looks more nervous than ever.

INT. DARK ROOM -- DAY

As Avery stands up, rifle in hand, we see that he's high up in a building directly opposite St Paul's!

He brings the rifle up to his shoulder and takes aim.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ST. PAUL'S -- DAY

Wilhelm smiles as Helena ascends the steps towards him. Their eyes meet and she smiles too.

Then something catches Wilhelm's eye -- a REFLECTION, light flashing. He looks up--

BANG! -- a gunshot rings out--

ALL SOUND drops out. All movement becomes SLIGHTLY SLOW MOTION.

ON WILHELM, face contorting in horror...

CUT TO HOLMES, grim understanding dawning on his face...

CUT TO WATSON -- what the hell is going on...

CUT TO HELENA, as she looks down ... and RED BLOOD is staining the front of her dress.

Pause.

Then Helena KEELS OVER. Wilhelm catches her as she descends, but she's a dead weight, pushing him over backwards.

CUT TO Holmes. HOLD CLOSE on his face as he takes everything in at incredible speed: Wilhelm on the ground, Helena's dead body in his arms, the guardsmen looking around in horror, the shot in Helena's back...

And Holmes rushes out into the middle of the road, eyes following the path the bullet must have taken, right up to the bell tower opposite St Paul's ... and he sees the muzzle of the rifle retracting.

SOUND SLAMS BACK IN -- screams, shouts, general chaos in all directions, but Holmes has seen it. He points.

HOLMES

Watson!

And he charges off, with Watson in hot pursuit.

INT. BELL TOWER -- DAY

Avery retracts the rifle and begins to disassemble it.

EXT. BELL TOWER -- DAY

Holmes and Watson skid around the corner, and Holmes' eyes fall onto a locked door.

HOLMES

This is it!

He tries the door, but it's locked--

WATSON

Together!

Holmes looks at Watson and nods. They both take a run at it and kick the door.

INT. BELL TOWER -- DAY

Avery's head comes up at the sound of the CRASH from downstairs.

EXT. BELL TOWER -- DAY

Holmes and Watson SMASH into the door again. The wood splinters.

INT. BELL TOWER -- DAY

Avery slams the stock back into the rifle again.

EXT. BELL TOWER -- DAY

SMASH! This time the door splinters beneath the assault and the door smashes open. Holmes and Watson charge inside.

INT. BELL TOWER -- DAY

Holmes and Watson charge into the tower--

BANG! A GUNSHOT whistles past them, thudding into the wall -- Avery's fired at them -- Holmes and Watson dive in opposite directions, missing the bullet by inches--

Avery brings the gun up, pointing it at Holmes. Holmes LAUNCHES himself forward, grabbing Avery's hands. His thumb JABS into a pressure point -- Avery screams out and drops the gun--

Holmes tries to grab Avery but the man brings his head forward, SMASHING his forehead into Holmes' face. As Holmes recoils back, Avery rushes to the window ledge, climbs out--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATSON

Holmes!

Watson rushes to Holmes' side, but Holmes is already on his feet and moving. His eyes spot something OS--

HOLMES

There!

He runs to the window, with Watson right behind him. He looks out to--

EXT. ROOFTOPS -- DAY

--where Avery is attempting to slide himself across to the next rooftop.

INT. BELL TOWER -- DAY

Holmes draws his pistol, aims. Watson follows suit.

HOLMES

(yelling)

You there! Stop!

Avery turns, sees the pistols--

BANG! A shot from below -- a guardsman down on the street has taken a shot at Avery! It misses by a mile but the shock distracts Avery enough to make him lose his hold--

HOLMES (CONT'D)

No!!!

Too late. Avery loses his grip and falls from the building, SCREAMING all the way down.

On Holmes and Watson as the screaming CUTS DEAD with a horrible crunch.

Pause.

Then the sound of running feet as someone thunders up the steps. Holmes and Watson whirl, pistols raised--

--As the King's HONOUR GUARD charges in, pointing their muskets right at the two men!

HONOUR GUARD 1

Hold it right there!

Holmes and Watson exchange glances. They raise their hands.

EXT. BELL TOWER -- DAY

Lestrade rushes around the corner, his face like thunder.
To someone OS:

LESTRADE

What do you think you're doing?

Holmes and Watson sit on the ground, hands cuffed and under heavy guard. Watson looks miffed, while Holmes is agitated in the extreme.

HONOUR GUARD 1

They said they were--

LESTRADE

Word in your shell-like, my friend.

He takes the guard by the arm and hauls him out of frame. Watson glances at Holmes; he's staring into space, mind whirring.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ST. PAUL'S -- DAY

Avery's body lies broken on the ground. Holmes crouches down to get a look. Behind him, Lestrade and Watson watch.

LESTRADE

Is that our shooter?

Holmes is looking at Avery's wrist. A sad expression on his face. Watson glances up, sees recognition in Lestrade's face.

WATSON

Do you know him?

Lestrade nods sadly.

LESTRADE

His name's Walter Avery. Sir
Walter Avery.

(beat)

He's the Captain of the Queen's
guard.

HOLMES

He was a good deal more than that.

Lestrade and Watson look down at him. Holmes' eyes are fixed on Avery's body, his expression blank; was he talking to himself there?

WATSON

Holmes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No answer. Watson squats down beside the body, cranes his neck to see what Holmes is looking at. Avery's wrist. Watson's eyes boggle at the sight.

A foxglove, tattooed on his wrist.

EXT. SAME -- MOMENTS LATER

Holmes and Watson make their way over to where Lestrade has organised a police coach for them.

HOLMES

I want everything you can give me on this affair, Lestrade, no matter how seemingly insignificant.

LESTRADE

Why? What do you think's going on?

HOLMES

Well--

STANDEVAN (O.S.)

Mr Holmes!

They all look up as Standevan comes hurrying over, shoving his way through the crowd.

STANDEVAN (CONT'D)

Mr Holmes, I thought that was you.

(extends his hand)

I'm--

HOLMES

(shakes the hand)

Sir John Standevan, of the Queen's secret service.

Standevan looks taken aback for a moment, then nods.

STANDEVAN

Might I have a word?

HOLMES

Of course.

INT. POLICE CARRIAGE -- DAY

Holmes and Watson sit facing Standevan. The carriage isn't moving; through the window we can see Lestrade stood outside, looking irritable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDEVAN

We need answers, Mr Holmes. Why Avery would commit such a crime--

HOLMES

I assume your office will be conducting your own investigation, sir--

STANDEVAN

We will, but that's not the point. The King is furious, and coupled with the international implications we may not have much time.

WATSON

Implications? You're talking about war?

Standevan gives Watson a hard look.

STANDEVAN

I don't have to remind you just how unstable Europe is at the moment, Doctor Watson. An incident like this could push us over the brink.

(to Holmes)

Which is why I've come to you, Mr Holmes - someone independent, someone who's opinion can't be bought, and someone who's opinion will count in these matters. We need to know why Avery did what he did, and who was behind it.

(beat)

Maybe then we'll be able to avoid disastrous consequences for the whole world.

ON HOLMES as this all settles with him ... and he looks even more worried than he did before.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS -- NIGHT

An establishing shot of a famous skyline, the presence of the Eiffel Tower leaving us in no doubt as to where we are.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

The moonlight coming through the open curtains provides the only light, but it's enough for us to make out two figures lying in bed, fast asleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUSH IN on the bed and we recognise Irene, lying asleep. The figure of Norton sleeps beside her, his back to her.

Silence for a moment.

Then, from OS, a barely discernible THUMP.

And Irene's eyes SNAP OPEN.

TILT UP to reveal TWO SHADOWY FIGURES stood on the other side of the bed. They wear long robes and masks, and they're looking down at the couple in the bed in total silence.

On Irene. Terrified, trying to stay silent and unmoving.

Then something glints in the darkness. A KNIFE. Held by one of the robed figures. It rises into the air before descending--

--Irene's out of the bed in seconds as the knife comes down -- stabbing Norton right through the chest!--

The masked assailants look up--

BANG! A gunshot rings out - Irene's holding a small pistol! One of the figures goes down, and Irene uses the distraction to run for her life. The second masked figure runs after her.

HOLD for a moment on the bloodied image of Norton in bed, unmoving, the knife protruding from his chest.

He's dead.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

The masked figure rushes down the corridor -- a terrifying spectre in the half darkness. He looks around. No sign of Irene.

A moment. Then he moves off further down the corridor.

PAN ACROSS to reveal Irene flattened against the wall of the entrance to a service stairway, controlling her breathing, looking terrified out of her wits.

A moment while she composes herself. Then she turns and hurries off down the stairs, into the darkness.

MEMBER 2 (prelap)
Are you insane, Carrow!

CUT TO:

INT. SANCTUM -- DAY

The Glove are assembled, cloaked and hooded. The serenity of the previous meeting has gone -- the members are outraged, Carrow and Standevan sitting with resolved expressions.

Irene's seat is conspicuously empty.

CARROW

I assure you--

MEMBER 2

Your assurances count for nothing!

MEMBER 3

You cannot take unilateral action, Carrow - we act as one, those are the rules--

CARROW

And one of us has broken the rules already.

All eyes flicker to Irene's seat for just a moment.

CARROW (CONT'D)

And without her, the plan could not succeed. I did what was necessary.

(beat)

Now. Permit me to tell you what I plan to do next.

EXT. BAKER STREET -- DAY

The snow is coming down in sheets; the whole street is whited-out in all directions.

VIOLIN MUSIC on the soundtrack.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- DAY

Holmes paces, scraping the bow across the violin, agitated. Working himself into a later.

HOLMES

It can't be a coincidence, not two in two days--

WATSON (O.S.)

Holmes...

Watson is sat in his chair, looking edgy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

There's something I'm not seeing here--

WATSON

Then why don't you tell me what you know for sure, then maybe I can--

HOLMES

No. Not until I'm I know for certain?

WATSON

So you can dazzle me with your deductive powers and show how bloody clever you are again?

Holmes ignores that, moving away, striking the bow again. Hold on Watson for a moment. He opens his mouth, closes it again ... and in this moment we see him make a decision.

WATSON (CONT'D)

Holmes?

No answer. Watson gets to his feet, moves over to Holmes and snatches the bow out of his hand.

WATSON (CONT'D)

Holmes, for God's sake--

HOLMES

(alarmed)
Watson, what do you--

WATSON

You aren't listening to a word I'm saying, are you?

HOLMES

Whatever's got into you?

WATSON

The same thing that's been into me for weeks and you've been too self-absorbed to see it. After this--

HOLMES

After what?

WATSON

(angry)
After we saw an innocent woman get murdered right in front of us, that's what!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And the shout catches Holmes by surprise. Watson looks as though he regrets saying it, but now he's committed. He looks Holmes in the eye.

WATSON (CONT'D)

I've made a decision. I can't keep living like this, Holmes, not any more. I'm going to take Bell's offer and go back into medicine.

HOLMES

This is because of her, isn't it?

WATSON

If you mean Mary--

HOLMES

I thought so.

WATSON

(quiet)

I'm going to ask her to marry me.

Holmes is once again stopped in his tracks. Watson backs off slightly, looking as though he's searching for the words ... then, on impulse, he collects his hat and coat.

WATSON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I've ... I can't deal with this, not right now. I'm sorry Holmes.

Holmes isn't even looking at him. A tense moment. Then Watson walks out of the flat.

Pause.

Holmes moves to the window, looking out across the snow-covered Baker Street. He sees Watson making his way up the street away from him, pulling a scarf around his face.

Hold on Holmes' expression for a moment. As if struggling to deal with this. For a moment, he looks utterly dejected.

Then his head comes up sharply.

HOLMES

No.

And he puts the violin down and hurries out of the door.

EXT. SCOTLAND YARD -- DAY

Snow is blowing horizontally past camera as we establish.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTRADE (prelap)
You want to see Clay?

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - LESTRADE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Lestrade faces Holmes with some surprise.

LESTRADE
At a time like this you want to
bother with a pestilential little
nuisance like--

HOLMES
Clay may be the key to this thing.

He says it quietly, but the conviction in his voice makes
Lestrade shut up and take notice.

LESTRADE
Alright.

He gets to his feet, crossing around the desk to join
Holmes as the two of them head out.

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
By the way, where's Watson?

A telling beat before:

HOLMES
He's got other things to worry
about.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - CELLS -- DAY

Close on the cell door. A key turns in the lock and it
swings open, admitting Holmes and Lestrade.

LESTRADE
Alright Clay, rise and shine,
you've got--

And he stops dead, as does Holmes beside him. Staring in
horror at something OS.

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
Good lord...

RACK FOCUS to reveal something dangling at the edge of
frame. A pair of legs.

REVERSE ANGLE

to reveal Clay, hanging by his leather belt from the
ceiling, eyes bulging, face deathly pale. He's dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUT TO Holmes, as he takes this in. The impression of a man who's whole world is crashing down around him.

EXT. SCOTLAND YARD -- DAY

The snow's coming down even heavier now -- it's a blizzard.

FOUR MEN in black coats carry the body out on a stretcher, covered by a sheet. They place it into the back of a waiting coach.

Holmes and Lestrade emerge from the front doors. They watch as the coach drives off into the snow.

LESTRADE

Suicide?

Holmes shakes his head.

HOLMES

You don't believe that for a minute, and neither do I.

He happens to glance down; someone's waiting, sat on the low wall with his back to the railings.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

(to Lestrade)

Excuse me.

He makes his way down the steps to where the figure waits. It's Watson, his coat buttoned right up against the cold, his eyes fixed on the carriage. He doesn't look up as Holmes approaches.

WATSON

I went back to the flat. Mrs Hudson told me you'd taken a cab to Scotland Yard.

Silence from Holmes. Watson keeps his eye on the coach.

WATSON (CONT'D)

Clay?

HOLMES

Just so.

Watson turns his head to face Holmes for the first time.

WATSON

I'm sorry I walked out.

HOLMES

I'm sorry I didn't tell you everything.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES (CONT'D)

(beat)

I said once that we were partners,
in this to the death. I seem to
have forgotten that, and for that
I'm sorry.

(beat)

I should have trusted you properly,
the way you trust me.

Silence for a few long moments. Then:

WATSON

I still want to help sort this
out.

(beat)

That is, if you need my help.

Pause.

Then, just for a moment, Holmes allows himself a grin.

EXT. LONDON STREETS -- EVENING

Night has begun to fall as a handsome cab makes it's way
through the streets.

INT. BACK OF CAB -- EVENING

Watson listens attentively as Holmes speaks:

HOLMES

About six years ago now, I became
involved in a case of some
international intrigue. A secret
society had arranged for a robbery
in Paris, a big one too. A
detective, my good friend Monsieur
Dupin, called me in and I was
able to render them some
assistance, and we broke the
organisation and stopped the
robbery.

WATSON

But?

HOLMES

But we soon discovered that the
thieves themselves were only part
of the equation. The secret
society in question had provided
logistical support, as well as
specialists and equipment to enable
the thieves to accomplish the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES (CONT'D)
 theft. We caught one of their
 members, but the group themselves
 faded back into the shadows.

WATSON
 What sort of society are we talking
 about?

HOLMES
 You understand the way a Masonic
 Lodge works?
 (Watson nods)
 They had modelled themselves after
 such a group, indeed I believe
 many of their members came from
 within the craft.
 (beat)
 The group called themselves the
 Glove. And their symbol was the
 foxglove, which they wore tattooed
 upon their wrists.

Silence for a moment as Watson processes all of this.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
 It's too much of a coincidence,
 Watson, that Clay should have
 that tattoo, and Avery, and at
 this time, with everything going
 on.

WATSON
 From robbery to political
 assassination, it's a bit of a
 step up.

HOLMES
 The Glove always seemed too
 organised to simply be troubling
 themselves with robberies.

WATSON
 Then where does that leave us?

Pause. Holmes shakes his head.

HOLMES
 We have a beginning. A way in.
 Nothing more.
 (beat)
 That's what's troubling me.

He looks back out of the window. Watson watches his friend
 for a long moment, considering what to do.

EXT. BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

The cab drives off as Holmes and Watson make their way up to the door of 221-B.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Holmes and Watson enter, mid conversation:

WATSON

...can be done without nutrition,
a late supper and then we'll--

He stops, and so does Holmes. The lights are on, the fire is lit.

IRENE (O.S.)

Mr Holmes.

A figure rises from one of the chairs, turning to face Holmes and Watson.

Irene.

And the two men can see she's in a state - her eyes are red from crying, and she looks emotionally drained.

Silence for a moment. Irene seems to be working up the courage to say something.

Then:

IRENE (CONT'D)

...I need your help.

INT. SAME -- LATER

Watson pours brandy into a glass, moves over to where Holmes sits talking with Irene.

IRENE

...what with everything else going
on I didn't know where else to
turn.

Watson hands over the brandy glass. She accepts gratefully.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Thank you, Dr Watson.

She takes a drink, her hands trembling. Holmes lets her have a few moments before continuing.

HOLMES

And this was when?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

Last night. I managed to slip
back into the country this morning.

(beat)

Mr Holmes, I knew this might be a
consequence--

HOLMES

You were the one who suggested
blackmailing the king?

IRENE

You have to understand, I never
thought they'd get as serious--

HOLMES

These are some very serious people.

IRENE

I know.

(beat)

After this, I've nowhere else to
turn. I need your help, Mr Holmes.
I'm not safe until they've been
destroyed.

HOLMES

Then help me do just that. Put
an end to this whole affair once
and for all.

(beat)

Who is in charge of the Glove?

(beat)

Is it Carrow?

Pause. Then Irene nods.

IRENE

Carrow, Standevan, Evans, Mulrooney
... all of them. This society is
well placed.

HOLMES

And?

Irene looks him in the eye. All fear gone now, just steely
determination in her face.

IRENE

And I can tell you where they
will all be tomorrow morning.
Your chance to utterly destroy
them, Mr Holmes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holmes and Watson exchange glances. Knowing the resolve she's now showing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WILHELM'S HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Wilhelm stands in the window, looking out across the snow-covered city. Anger in every line of him. A steely look in his eyes.

A knock at the door. Wilhelm turns to see a FOOTMAN enter.

FOOTMAN
(German, subtitled)
Your Majesty - Lord Carrow to see
you.

Wilhelm looks surprised, but:

WILHELM
(German, subtitled)
Very well. Send him in.

The Footman nods and exits. A moment later the door opens again and Carrow enters. He bows.

CARROW
(German, subtitled)
Your majesty.

Wilhelm looks at him with deepest suspicion.

INT. SAME -- LATER

Wilhelm and Carrow sit talking.

CARROW
The government is keen to find an
answer and end the investigation
as soon as possible, they want
this business ended more than
they want the truth.

WILHELM
But why should they--?

CARROW
They fear a war in Europe more
than anything else, and a situation
like this could cause a downhill
spiral that could cause a war.
Nobody wants that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARROW (CONT'D)

But at the same time, you have friends here, Your Majesty, friends who want to see the truth uncovered and the true architects of this conspiracy dragged into the light.

(beat)

That is why I'm here.

Wilhelm looks at Carrow with deep suspicion.

WILHELM

And what would you have of me?

A small smile from Carrow.

CARROW

My pleasure is simply to serve, Your Majesty, in any way I can.

EXT. THE DOCKLANDS -- DAY

The following morning.

The snow on the ground has turned to ice, but the dock workers are still hard at it, unloading goods brought in from all corners of the empire.

CUT TO one ship in particular; a ROYAL NAVY DESTROYER docked away from the merchant vessels. The hull bears the name: HMS TRAFALGAR.

A light burns in one of the main staterooms.

INT. HMS TRAFALGAR - STATEROOM -- DAY

Where men and women are gathered, drinks in hand. There's an almost cocktail-party atmosphere in the air. Among the crowd we recognise Standevan and other faces -- these are the senior members of the Glove.

Standevan makes his way over to where Carrow stands near the back, drink in hand, surveying the assembly with a slight smile.

STANDEVAN

I just heard back from our agent in Paris.

CARROW

Irene?

STANDEVAN

(shakes his head)

She's still out there somewhere.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDEVAN (CONT'D)

Our agent promises he'll track her down.

CARROW

See he does.

EXT. THE DOCKLANDS -- DAY

PULLING BACK from the main body of the docks, around a corner, to where a small army of POLICE CONSTABLES wait, surrounding several carriages.

Lestrade is in charge. He glances around the corner, then back to the constables.

LESTRADE

Right lads. Keep it quiet until I give the signal, understood?
(nods all around)
Good.

He makes his way over to one carriage, opens the door and clambers inside.

INT. CARRIAGE -- DAY

Lestrade joins Holmes, Watson and Irene sat within.

LESTRADE

Well Mr Holmes, we're as ready as we're going to be. But surely Standevan should have been told--

HOLMES

(shakes his head)
This stays between us, Lestrade.
(grins)
Don't want the Secret Service getting all the credit for this, do we?

Lestrade mirrors the grin.

LESTRADE

Come on then, now or never.

He gets out of the carriage, with Watson following right behind him. Holmes moves to follow -- then stops, turning back to Irene.

HOLMES

Whatever happens, you stay here.

IRENE

I want to help--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES

You've done more than enough.

Irene smiles.

IRENE

Is this gallantry from the great
Sherlock Holmes?

HOLMES

(warning)

Stay here.

He gets out of the carriage, closing the door behind him.
The smile vanishes from Irene's face, replaced with a
look of frustration.

EXT. THE DOCKLANDS -- DAY

Holmes joins Lestrade and Watson at the head of the line
of constables. Lestrade glances over at the ship.

LESTRADE

I hope you know what you're doing,
Mr Holmes -- you know damn well
we've got no evidence to support
this.

HOLMES

When have you ever known me to be
wrong?

LESTRADE

Silver Blaze.

HOLMES

Apart from that.

(grins)

I'm sure we'll think of something--

WATSON

(spotting something

OS)

Holmes!

They all look where Watson is pointing -- across the docks,
a familiar-looking carriage is drawing up alongside the
Trafalgar.

As it gets there, the Footman opens the door and Wilhelm
emerges, wide-brimmed hat pulled down over his eyes. He
makes his way up the gangplank into the ship itself.

CUT TO Holmes, Watson and Lestrade -- who looks amazed.

LESTRADE

Was that who I think it was?

INT. HMS TRAFALGAR - CORRIDOR -- DAY

A SERVANT leads a grim-faced Wilhelm down a passageway.

INT. HMS TRAFALGAR - SECOND STATEROOM -- DAY

A rap at the door. Carrow looks up from the table.

CARROW

Enter.

The door opens and Wilhelm enters. Carrow stands and bows.

CARROW (CONT'D)

Your majesty.

The servant opens the door, leaving Carrow alone with Wilhelm.

WILHELM

Your grace, I have little time for pleasantries. What do you have for me?

CARROW

(smiles)

The way to save your kingdom.

INT. CARRIAGE -- DAY

Irene watches through the window as the constables all scurry off, out of sight.

A thoughtful look from her.

WILHELM (prelap)

If this is a joke, your grace--

INT. HMS TRAFALGAR - SECOND STATEROOM -- DAY

Where Wilhelm paces, angry as hell:

WILHELM

--then it is surely in very poor taste.

CARROW

And poor taste is something your majesty knows everything about.

WILHELM

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARROW

Or have you forgotten your ...
friendship with Irene Adler?

And that stops Wilhelm in his tracks. He turns to face Carrow who smiles, triumphant.

CARROW (CONT'D)

Thought not.

WILHELM

What are you talking about? You
have nothing--

CARROW

You think the photograph was all
I had on you, your majesty?

He puts down his drink, strides forward to get right in Wilhelm's face.

CARROW (CONT'D)

You underestimate the reach of my
organisation. I have agents
surrounding you at all times,
agents even in your home country.
When all's said and done, political
assassination seems rather crude
by comparison.

WILHELM

(dangerous)
You killed her--

CARROW

And nobody can ever prove it.
That's how dangerous I am.

(beat)

So now let me explain how we're
going to proceed from here. Your
Majesty has just become a very
good friend of mine, and from
time to time I may ask for ...
favours from my friends.

WILHELM

You would blackmail me?

CARROW

I would destroy you utterly if
the mood struck, me, your majesty.
Because they're right about one
thing, there is a war coming. An
unimaginable cost in terms of
lives, resources, money ... by
the time the war is over, I don't

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARROW (CONT'D)
 want Great Britain to be some forgotten nation. So let me explain what will happen. You will be forced to retaliate for your bride's murder, and when our armies march to war, I think we both know which nation will fall.

Wilhelm shifts slightly and Carrow smiles, triumphant.

CARROW (CONT'D)
 Bohemia's surrender will make it a protectorate of the British Empire, giving us the strategic advantage over Prussia and Austria-Hungary. And like that, the fate of the world changes.
 (smiles)
 You underestimate my vision, your majesty.

Pause.

WILHELM
 (cold)
 No, your grace.
 (beat)
 You underestimate me.

And the side door opens to reveal Holmes, Watson and Lestrade. Carrow looks on in amazement as Holmes brings up his pistol, points it right at Carrow's face.

HOLMES
 Superbly timed, Your Majesty.

CARROW
 Who the hell are--?

HOLMES
 My name is Sherlock Holmes.

WILHELM
 (smiles)
 It would appear you have been out-fought.

And before Carrow can say another word Wilhelm SLUGS him in the face, sending Carrow sprawling to the ground. Holmes grins at Wilhelm, who smiles back grimly.

WILHELM (CONT'D)
 You were right, Herr Holmes. It did feel good to deal with him myself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holmes can't help but smile as Carrow glares up at him, spitting blood.

EXT. HMS TRAFALGAR -- DAY

The police constables lead the members of the Glove down the gangplank in handcuffs. The whole thing's been done quickly and quietly, in and out in five minutes.

CUT TO the deck of the ship, where Holmes, Watson, Lestrade and Wilhelm escort Carrow toward the gangplank, flanked by four SPECIAL CONSTABLES.

WILHELM

Once again, you have the gratitude of myself and my country, Herr Holmes, if there is anything--

HOLMES

The chance to serve my country is payment enough, your majesty.

LESTRADE

Although if there's any money in the offing, I'll take it sire.

This actually makes Wilhelm laugh. Holmes finds Carrow studying him quietly.

HOLMES

Something the matter, your grace?

CARROW

Seems I was wrong to underestimate your resources or your tenacity, Mr Holmes.

HOLMES

Indeed.

CARROW

I was warned about you.

(beat)

Our mutual friend the Professor was rather complimentary about you in his own way.

INT. CARRIAGE -- DAY

A knock on the door -- a young CONSTABLE pokes his head inside--

CONSTABLE

Miss Adler, are you--?

He stops dead. The carriage is empty.

EXT. HMS TRAFALGAR -- DAY

As before. And though it goes over the heads of both Lestrade and Wilhelm, Holmes and Watson understand Carrow's meaning immediately; Holmes rounds on Carrow--

HOLMES

What did you say?!

Carrow smiles slightly.

CARROW

Thought that might get your attention.

And at that moment all four constables whirl, bringing their pistols up -- to point right at Holmes, Watson, Lestrade and Wilhelm.

WATSON

What the--

CARROW

(smiles)

Well now. Isn't this civilised?

HOLMES

Your grace--

CARROW

Enough, Mr Holmes. Keep smiling, we don't want anyone down on the dock to think we're having anything other than a friendly chat, do we?

Holmes glances around -- the constables all face them, their expressions deadly serious. Holmes turns back to Carrow.

HOLMES

Your confederates, I presume?

CARROW

Mr Holmes, and here was me thinking you were a deductive genius.

The mocking tone annoys Holmes.

EXT. THE DOCKLANDS -- DAY

The Glove members are being herded into the waiting carriages.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUT TO the ground beneath the gangplank, where Lestrade's SERGEANT looks up at the deck -- seeing Holmes and the others apparently having a quiet conversation.

SERGEANT

What the hell are they playing at?

EXT. HMS TRAFALGAR -- DAY

As before. Holmes fixes Carrow with a hard look.

HOLMES

So what's it to be now?

CARROW

Now we wait.

WATSON

You must know you'll never escape--

HOLMES

And that there's no corner of the world I won't travel to in order to track you down--

CARROW

Enough.

He glances down at the water. A POLICE LAUNCH is drawing up behind the boat.

CARROW (CONT'D)

I shall leave you now, gentlemen.
(to Wilhelm)
And you're coming with me, your majesty.

WILHELM

But--

CARROW

I said that's enough. You may have forced me to rethink things a little, gentlemen, but rest assured--

BANG! -- a GUNSHOT rings out--

--and one of the constables drops to the ground, hit in the hand, SCREAMING in pain--

--and IRENE ADLER stalks onto the scene, smoking pistol held at the ready, eyes like daggers on Carrow--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

You and I have unfinished business,
your grace!

And Holmes sees his chance -- he's on Carrow in seconds,
wrestling him backwards--

Watson shoulders one of the other constables--

Carrow WRENCHES Holmes off him and charges for the launch--

HOLMES

Carrow!

And before any of the constables can react Holmes has
dropped and run, drawing his pistol, firing a warning
shot after Carrow--

BANG! -- a gunshot misses Irene by inches -- one of the
constables has fired -- Wilhelm is hit in the shoulder--

WATSON

Get down!

And he tackles Irene into cover behind some packing cases,
Lestrade and Wilhelm following moments later--

CARROW

rushes for the aft of the ship -- the police launch is
just below him. He's about to jump for it when--

BANG! -- Holmes' shot misses him by inches -- Carrow
overbalances, falls behind the cabin. Holmes charges
after him just as Carrow draws his own pistol. He fires
off a shot -- Holmes ducks into cover behind some ropes
as a second shot thuds harmlessly into the heavy folds--

WATSON

risks a look up -- only for his hat to be BLOWN CLEAN OFF
by a shot from one of the constables. He ducks back down--

LESTRADE

I think it's fair to say these
men mean business.

SHOTS THUD into the packing cases -- WOOD SPLINTERS all
around them--

WILHELM

We can't stay here!

WATSON

I'm open to suggestions, your
majesty!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUT TO HOLMES

as he continues to trade bullets with Carrow. He ducks to avoid a shot, looks up -- sees an OIL LAMP burning above Carrow's head.

An idea occurs to Holmes.

Carrow squeezes off a shot, goes to retreat into cover --

--Holmes is on his feet in seconds, firing at the lamp! It hits the deck -- HOT OIL catches fire--

--Carrow yelps in fear as the oil splashes near him -- Holmes is out of his cover and on him in seconds, grabbing Carrow's wrists and pulling them away from his body. Carrow yells in pain as Holmes puts pressure on his wrist and Carrow's gun goes flying, clattering harmlessly away--

BANG! -- someone from the police launch has taken a shot at Holmes! He drops and rolls, going into cover and pulling Carrow with him -- but he loses his grip--

--Carrow TWISTS violently out of Holmes' grasp, KICKING out -- his boot making contact with Holmes' chest! All the wind goes out of Holmes and he hits the ground--

Carrow leaps to his feet, grabs a length of ROPE from the ground, yanks it around Holmes' neck in a chokehold! He puts his knee against Holmes' back and PULLS -- HOLMES CONVULSES, his hands going to his throat, trying to shift the rope but it's no use, Carrow's got too strong a grip--

CUT TO THE SPECIAL CONSTABLES

still in cover, firing off shots to where Watson, Lestrade, Irene and Wilhelm crouch. One of them looks up -- sees a HAT emerge from the side of the crate--

SPECIAL CONSTABLE 1

There! Round there!

They all open fire -- the hat is BLOWN TO PIECES --

--just as Watson leaps to his feet, squeezing off two shots, both of which hit one Constable full in the chest! He goes down hard -- fleetingly sees Lestrade behind the crate, holding Watson's destroyed hat on the end of his stick--

--before the other constables have chance to react Watson is on them. He downs one of them with a clout from the pistol to the back of the head -- whirls to see the final Constable, the one with the bleeding hand, approaching him, murder in his eyes!

Watson brings up his pistol--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLONK! -- the Constable goes cross-eyed and hits the deck.
REVEAL IRENE stood behind him, boat-hook in hand.

A look passes between Watson and Irene - a barely perceptible nod of thanks. Then Watson glances up to the plume of black smoke, knowing Holmes is still fighting Carrow.

WATSON
Protect the king!

And he grabs his pistol up and charges off. Irene rushes back around the case, to where Lestrade is helping Wilhelm into cover. She joins in. The two of them meet eyes--

WILHELM
Just like ... old times, no?

And Irene can't help but laugh.

CUT TO HOLMES

still fighting with Carrow, his face red from the strain. He's starting to go woozy - he's going to pass out any second.

HOLMES' P.O.V.

scrabbling around, wildly, for anything that can help ... and his eyes rest on a LENGTH OF CHAIN across the deck.

CUT TO WATSON

as he charges across the deck -- he can just make out Carrow's form, strangling Holmes--

WATSON
Carrow!

He brings up his gun--

--a SHOT misses him by inches -- one of the constables down in the launch has taken a shot at him. Watson ducks into cover--

CARROW

looks up at the shout, distracted for just a second--

--and it's all the opening Holmes needs. He launches himself BACKWARDS -- overbalancing Carrow for a moment--

--Holmes kick out, hitting a lever -- and the chain he spotted earlier begins to draw out -- it's the anchor--!

Holmes spins Carrow around, throwing the rope over the lever -- Carrow's still holding it--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE ANCHOR

hits the water with a heavy SMASH -- the shockwave being enough to overbalance the police launch and CAPSIZE IT -- the Glove constables fall straight into the drink!

Holmes collapses to the ground, winded, struggling to get his breath back. He looks up just in time to see Carrow approaching. His face is bloody and he's angry as hell. He charges in at Holmes--

--only to meet Watson's fist coming the other way! Watson lands Carrow a juicy one on the jaw, sending him sprawling to the deck.

And suddenly it's all over.

Holmes struggles back to his feet, awkward, surveys the situation. Carrow, on the deck, bleeding from a cut down the side of his face, a black eye forming. Watson stood over him, massaging some life back into his hand.

WATSON (CONT'D)

So that's why they tell you never
to hit a man in the face.

Holmes' eyes meet Watson's. Holmes smiles, deprecating.

HOLMES

Excellent timing--

WATSON

--as always.

Pause. Then both of them burst out laughing. A moment as they both drink it in, giddy from the success. Then Holmes reaches down and grabs Carrow, hauling him to his feet.

HOLMES

And now your grace, I rather
suspect you have some very serious
questions to answer.

Carrow doesn't resist.

EXT. THE DOCKLANDS -- DAY

Lestrade waits as Holmes and Watson escort Carrow down the gangplank. Lestrade turns to his Sergeant.

LESTRADE

Take him in.

The Sergeant walks forward and slaps cuffs onto Carrow's wrists. Lestrade gives Holmes a rueful look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTRADE (CONT'D)

The next time you feel like just seeing what happens, don't invite me, understood?

HOLMES

Good to see you're alright too, Lestrade.

LESTRADE

Someone wants a word with you.

CUT TO WILHELM, stood over by his carriage. Holmes and Watson approach and Wilhelm smiles.

WILHELM

It seems I need to thank you gentlemen again. You have spared my kingdom from war--

HOLMES

You have spared our kingdom from war, your majesty, it's I who should be thanking you.

Wilhelm smiles, bows slightly.

WILHELM

Merry Christmas, gentlemen. And remember - you will always have friends in Bohemia. Both of you.

HOLMES

Merry Christmas, your majesty.

WATSON

Merry Christmas.

Another smile from Wilhelm as he gets into his carriage. It drives off. Holmes and Watson share a look.

HOLMES

Not every day you hear that from a king.

And Watson laughs.

CUT TO Lestrade, opening the door of the police coach for Carrow.

LESTRADE

Your carriage awaits, milord?

CARROW

You're enjoying this, aren't you inspector?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTRADE

Believe me, you've no idea--

BANG! Another gunshot -- everyone ducks reflexively, Holmes and Watson drawing their pistols--

And Carrow looks down at his shirt. Blood is spreading across his chest. He looks up to see

IRENE

stood in front of him, smoke rising from the barrel of her pistol.

Pause. Irene and Carrow meet eyes.

And Carrow keels over, hitting the ground with his eyes open.

He's dead.

And the police are on Irene in seconds. She doesn't resist, holds out the gun by the barrel to let them take it. She keeps her eyes fixed on Carrow's body, hatred and tears in her eyes.

IRENE

(quiet)

That was for Godfrey Norton.

Then the police haul her off. She catches Holmes' eye for just a second -- sees the dark look in his face -- before allowing the constables to lead her off.

Lestrade gives Carrow's body a look of 'this is all I don't need'. RACK FOCUS to Holmes and Watson, watching from the sidelines.

WATSON (V.O.)

It had to be.

EXT. BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

As the snow continues to beat down. The CAROL SINGERS make their way down the street, again singing 'Oh Come all ye Faithful.'

WATSON (V.O.)

The news of Lord Carrow's plot to blackmail the king never made the London papers, Holmes and Lestrade made sure of that between the two of them. It was recorded that he died suddenly of heart failure at his home in Suffolk.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Where Watson is packing some books into a box. He glances around the flat -- his half of the contents is slowly being packed up.

A wistful look from Watson.

WATSON (V.O.)

It had been more than four years since I first came to Baker Street - and in those four years, these small rooms had become more of a home than anything I had known since my parents died.

He looks up as the door opens and Holmes enters.

WATSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Leaving would not be easy.

Watson spots Holmes' expression -- there's a small smile on his face. He's holding a piece of paper in his hand.

HOLMES

Watson, Watson...

WATSON

Holmes? What happened at the Yard?

HOLMES

Lestrade and I went to interview Irene Adler--

WATSON

And--

Holmes looks him in the eye. Smiles. Admiration in his face.

HOLMES

And she wasn't there.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - CELLS -- DAY

The door opens and Lestrade enters -- to find the cell completely empty.

He looks down at the bed. A small piece of paper rests there, addressed to Mr Sherlock Holmes.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Holmes hands the paper over to Watson.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES
She left me this.

Watson takes the note. Two words:

Well fought.

Watson looks up to see Holmes shaking his head.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
The woman, Watson. The woman.

Watson hands the note back to him.

WATSON
For you, maybe.

HOLMES
Mary?

WATSON
I'm meeting her for dinner.
(awkward beat)
Would you ... care to join us?

Holmes shakes his head.

HOLMES
You'll get on better without me.

Watson grasps the meaning in his words. He glances around the rooms.

WATSON
I'm going to miss this place when
I move out.

HOLMES
Not as much as it'll miss you.

Pause. Then Watson extends his hand.

WATSON
Merry Christmas, Holmes.

Holmes accepts the hand, shakes it warmly.

HOLMES
Merry Christmas, my dear friend.
And my warmest congratulations.

INT. SAME -- NIGHT

Through the window, Holmes watches as Watson gets into a waiting handsome cab.

INT. HANDSOME CAB -- NIGHT

Mary is waiting inside, smiling radiantly at Watson.

MARY
Are you--

WATSON
I am fine.

MARY
And Holmes?

Watson glances up at the window. Sees Holmes' silhouette in the window.

WATSON
He will be.

Pause. Then Mary takes Watson's hand and she smiles. Watson bangs on the ceiling.

WATSON (CONT'D)
Drive on.

EXT. BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

As the cab drives off, we RACK FOCUS to Holmes in the window. He watches until the cab is out of sight, then turns back into the flat, closing the curtain behind him.

PULL BACK to reveal we're watching this scene from over someone's shoulder.

REVERSE ANGLE

to reveal the watcher. And it's Irene. A moment while she watches the window of 221-B. Then she smiles, turns and walks off, vanishing into the night.

INT. 221-B BAKER STREET -- NIGHT

Holmes surveys the room. Watson's possessions all neatly packed.

And for just a moment there's a reflective look bordering on the melancholy in Holmes' face.

Then -- KNOCK KNOCK. Holmes pulls himself together, then looks up.

HOLMES
Come in.

The door opens and Lestrade enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Ah, Lestrade, any sign--

LESTRADE

(shakes his head)

We'll keep looking.

HOLMES

You won't find her.

LESTRADE

What makes you say that?

HOLMES

She doesn't want to be found.

(beat)

Now, what do you want at this time of night, inspector?

LESTRADE

Something a bit strange. What do you know about Napoleon busts?

Pause.

Then a smile crosses Holmes' face. The thrill of adventure. He can't help it.

FADE TO BLACK.

SHERLOCK HOLMES

AND THE SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA

STARRING

CHRISTIAN BALE

JOHN SIMM

KENNETH BRANAGH

ROBBIE COLTRANE

RUFUS SEWELL

GEMMA ARTERTON

AND SCARLETT JOHANSSON
AS IRENE ADLER

BASED ON THE STORIES OF
SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

PRODUCED BY
ANTHONY J. BLACK

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY
ADAM SCOTT

BACK ROOM
PRODUCTIONS



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