

IRENE. Oh. That was you. You were staring at me.

HOLMES. Was I?

WATSON. Incessantly.

HOLMES. Watson.

(*To IRENE.*) But why are you here?

IRENE. I'm here to track down a man named Moriarty and kill him. What about you?

WATSON. About the same, I believe.

HOLMES. Miss Adler, we have a great deal to discuss. Will you join us at Baker Street for a few days?

WATSON. Baker Street!

HOLMES. For her safety.

IRENE. Fine! I will if you don't make any more bone-headed mistakes. But remember, Moriarty is mine.

(*IRENE strides from the room.*)

HOLMES. American.

WATSON. Well, obviously, but Baker Street?

(*To us:*) I will admit to being shocked and quite suddenly...jealous. I know it was irrational, but there it was: my best friend forging a new alliance. We had a guest room of course, but still.

Also, I couldn't help wondering what happened to Mrs. Barabas when she gave the Professor the counterfeit packet of letters that Holmes had prepared.

(*We hear a blood-curdling scream from MRS. BARABAS.*)

MRS. BARABAS. (*Offstage.*) AHHHHHHHH!

WATSON. That morning, in Baker Street, Mrs. Hudson was in a state of shock.

Scene Eight: 221B Baker Street

(*MRS. HUDSON appears, her mouth agape, as though Martians just landed in her drawing room.*)

MRS. HUDSON. Dr. Watson. He brought home a woman.

WATSON. Indeed he has.

MRS. HUDSON. A woman! At his age. He's over forty! And he says she can sleep in the spare bedroom! I haven't changed the sheets in that room since the Crimean War.

(*HOLMES enters in his dressing gown.*)

HOLMES. Good morning, Mrs. Hudson. Thank you for taking care of Miss Adler. I'm certain she appreciates it.

IRENE. (*Offstage.*) *There's no hot water in this house! How can you live in a house with no hot water?! It's like the Middle Ages!*

MRS. HUDSON. (*Hurrying out.*) Oh dear.

WATSON. Things got even more complicated when Miss Adler realized she no longer possessed the King's letters.

IRENE. (*Offstage.*) *Mr. Holmes, are you a common THIEF?*

WATSON. Our cat Nefertiti was so frightened she jumped out the window.

NEFERTITI. *Meeeeeeeeewww.*

WATSON. Nefie!

IRENE. (*Entering.*) Mr. Holmes, your client, Otto von Ormstein, sent those letters directly to me, which is why I own them!

HOLMES. Wrong. The letters belong to my client who wrote them.

IRENE. Wrong. They were in my possession.

HOLMES. Wrong. The case is Chase versus *The Telegraph*, September 1890, Civil Division.

IRENE. *Well who the hell cares?* And how did you get them? I was sleeping with them. They were tucked in my nightgown.

HOLMES. I apologize. It was dark, I assure you.

IRENE. You hypocrite. Sherlock Holmes, the great detective, who has never even looked at a woman except when she drops her lace handkerchief.

HOLMES. You're a challenging person.

IRENE. Because I'm right, now give them back.

HOLMES. Why are they so important to you? You promised to discuss it this morning. I'm waiting.

IRENE. Oh, fine. It's not the letters themselves that are important. It's Moriarty. Yes, I had a...friendship with Otto while I was on the Continent. We shared a bed. Does that shock you?

HOLMES. No.

IRENE. I didn't know he was royalty, we just liked each other. I went back to London, he wrote me some letters, and some people found out about them. They tried to buy them from me, and when I said no, it turned into threats, so I thought it best to hide the letters, and I sent them to my sister Alice back in America.

Then somehow these...these *people* found out about them, and they went to her and tried to *get* the letters and they

(Her voice falters.)

I suppose they got angry and they...they killed her.
THEY KILLED MY SISTER.

THEY KILLED MY SISTER FOR A PACKET OF LETTERS!

(She flings herself onto HOLMES's chest and weeps. HOLMES has no idea what to do with his arms.)

Sorry. Stupid.

HOLMES. Did the police find anyone?

IRENE. No one. Nothing. So I've spent the past several months trying to find out who they are and it's led me to the man I mentioned. His name is James Moriarty, and he was a professor of mathematics. That's all I know.

HOLMES. It's all anyone knows.

IRENE. Then you've heard of him?

HOLMES. He's a monster. What I *don't* understand is why he wants the letters so desperately. Oh yes of course he can blackmail the King and there's money in it. But he blackmails people every day. There must be something else in the letters that only he is aware of.

IRENE. Have you met him?

HOLMES. Yes indeed.

IRENE. Do you know where to find him?

HOLMES. No idea, which is infuriating.

IRENE. Then what do we do now?

HOLMES. "We"?

IRENE. Yes, we! I lost a sister, so don't pretend I'm not involved in this, now what do we *do*?

HOLMES. ...My goal is to flush him out, and to do it I need to find his *list*.

HOLMES. A list of all his confederates around the country. I have learned that he carries it exclusively on his person, in his coat pocket. Once I find it, my plan is to alert Scotland Yard, then coordinate a series of arrests, one at a time but very quickly, so that he doesn't know what hit him. He will see the circle closing around him relentlessly, he will panic, and *I will have him!*

IRENE. You seem obsessed with the man.

HOLMES. I don't have obsessions.

IRENE. Ha!

HOLMES. I beg your pardon.

IRENE. Do you always set your sights so high?

HOLMES. Yes.

IRENE. As do I. In everything?

HOLMES. Yes.

(Now he is talking about her, and they both know it.)

(WATSON enters. He sees the intimacy of the look between HOLMES and IRENE and he is slightly taken aback.)

WATSON. Excuse me, Holmes. Sorry to "bother" you. But you won't believe who's at the door right now.

HOLMES. Tell me.

WATSON. Your brother Mycroft.

HOLMES. Good God.

IRENE. Why the astonishment?

HOLMES. He hasn't left the Diogenes Club in two years. A planet might as well leave its orbit. I'll see what he wants.

(HOLMES exits.)

IRENE. He has a brother? There are two of them?

WATSON. Yes, of course. He appears in my chronicles in the *Strand Magazine*. Don't you read them?

IRENE. I'm afraid I haven't.

WATSON. Oh.

IRENE. Sorry. I didn't mean to insult you. I've heard that the stories are marvelous. And very touching.

WATSON. Thank you. I will admit I put my heart and soul into them. Anyway, Holmes does have a brother, Mycroft, who is equally brainy, if not more so.

IRENE. Is he also distant?

WATSON. Yes. Though I doubt if anyone is quite as distant as Holmes.

IRENE. So I noticed. Whenever I try to provoke him, he puts on those hooded eyes of his and chews on his pipe. I told him there was no hot water in the house and it was unacceptable, and all he said was: *(Imitating Holmes.)* "You are presumably a grown woman, so learn to deal with it." *How do you talk to a man like that?!*

WATSON. We are old friends. We have our own language.

IRENE. Well, teach me some. I have a feeling he's worth knowing.

WATSON. Oh he is, I promise.

IRENE. Is it a deal?

WATSON. Deal.

(They shake hands.)

Would you like to meet his brother, Mycroft?

IRENE. I sure would. Thanks. I'll join you in a minute.