

Watson's Quick Mysteries

The Case of Death in the Drawing Room

by Angie M. Lai

It had been a fairly quiet Friday in Baker Street.

Holmes had spent much of the day cross-indexing his records of crime, while I finished chronicling another of our cases.

Now, as we sat in armchairs opposite each other, discussing events found in the day's newspaper, Mrs. Hudson's knock came at our door.

"Come in!" Holmes called.

Our landlady entered.

"A telegram for you, Mr. Holmes," she said, and withdrew.

"It's from Lestrade," he commented. "'Come at once to 23 Hill Street. Woman murdered.' Well, Watson, grab your coat and come! The game is afoot."

We soon arrived on the scene.

Inspector Lestrade greeted us at the front door of the victim's house.

"A bad business, this," he said. "Messy, too. The poor woman's head has been shattered like an eggshell. Here's the murder weapon."

He held out a revolver, its handle and the napkin which he held it in bloody.

"Have you any suspects?" Holmes asked.

"None at present, Mr. 'Olmes," answered the little inspector. "We talked to the servants. They'd been given the night off and were out the 'hole time. They just came back and found the woman like this."

"Did she have a husband?"

"Yes. The servants said that 'e usually is at 'is club untillate, but we 'ave summoned 'im to return 'ome. It looks like it was a burglar who killed 'er."

"What makes you think an intruder did this?"

"There's a 'orrible mess in there --- things broken all over the place," Lestrade replied.

"Hmmm," Holmes murmured.

"May we inspect the premises?"

"Certainly."

Lestrade led the way into the house.

In the middle of the drawing room floor lay a body, covered with a sheet.

Holmes gingerly lifted the sheet from her face.

He flinched slightly and carefully laid the sheet down again.

"Whoever did this possessed great physical strength," he commented. "There is certainly severe damage to her skull."

He began to inspect the area around the dead woman's body, looking for clues, oblivious as to anything going on around him.

Presently we heard the constable outside speaking with a newcomer, a man.

"Please, I beg you...what is going on? What is the meaning of this?"

Lestrade went to the door.

Holmes and I followed.

"Mr. George Warren?" Lestrade asked.

"I am. What is the meaning of this?"

"Let 'im go, Constable, let 'im go," Lestrade said to the young officer who was restraining the man.

"Thank you, sir. Could you please tell me why the police are here? Is everything all right? Is it--oh, Mary! My beautiful Mary! Is she all ---"

"I regret to inform you, Mr. Warren, that your wife is no longer with us," Holmes said quietly.

"Please come with us sir," said the inspector.

We entered the house.

When Warren saw the mess, and the white sheet-covered body, he completely broke down.

"Now, then, Mr. Warren. If you'll cooperate with us and answer all our questions, we will be much obliged."

"Yes. Yes, sir."

He never took his eyes from the murder weapon which Lestrade held in his hands.

"Where 'ave you been all evening?"

"At...my...club," Warren replied, his eyes welling with tears again.

"Oh, please, sir! Find the monster who beat my poor Mary to death!"

Holmes looked sharply at the man.

"We shall try our best, my dear sir," I said.

"And after what you just said, we shall have to look no further," Holmes declared.

"What do you mean, Mr. 'Olmes?" Lestrade asked, surprised.

The Answer to the Mystery is on the next page.

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Answer to the Quiz

"Allow me to explain, Inspector," my friend answered. "You hold the murder weapon in your hands, correct?"

"Why, yes," he replied.

"Mr. Warren has not as yet been informed as to the manner of his wife's death, correct?"

"Yes."

"Therefore, he could not have known right away that she had been beaten with the gun and not shot. He is your killer, Lestrade."

"How dare you!" Warren shouted. "I'm sorry, but Mr. 'Olmes 'as been right on occasion," Lestrade said. "I 'ave no reason to doubt 'im now."

And with that, he snapped a pair of handcuffs on George Warren.

"Well, Watson," Holmes said, taking out his pipe and lighting it, "we seem to have cleared up this little matter rather quickly, wouldn't you say?"