

Sherlock Holmes and the Matchmaker Case



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My carriage trundled down the street, the horses hooves cracking rhythmically on the ground, slowing as we increasingly neared 221B Baker Street. I fetched my hat from the opposite seat and slid the door open; the sounds of the street were no longer muffled to me as I clambered down for my hansom carriage hastily paying the driver.

My knuckles rapped softly on the oak door emblazoned 221B and I awaited a response for no more than 10 seconds before I heard a steely voice reply, "Watson, do come in." I stood awkwardly between a gently smiling Holmes, huddled tightly in his upholstered armchair and nervous looking man of whom I would expect to look quite as uncomfortable as me. "My dear Watson, to what do we owe the pleasure?", smiled Sherlock. I could spot myself in the mirror behind him - surrounded by guttering candles and an ornate clock, I looked quite sleep deprived and as pale as I had feared. "Ah Holmes, I was just passing through on my evening rounds. I can come back later though as I see that you are currently occupied."

"Oh never mind that Doctor, come in, take a seat." Holmes gestured to a chair opposite the strange man. "Mr. Edward Lords was just explaining his case to me. Please repeat the account of the morning that your wife was found dead for my old friend, would you Mr Lords." The man looked up, his eyes wide and wet, wringing a dirty handkerchief through his fingers. "It was horrible" he said, radiating an infectious sorrow. "I was running late for work and went down into the kitchen to retrieve my hat and she was there laying face down on the floor. The window was smashed and whoever had killed her, killed MY wife, was long gone down the street." His ragged voice caught in his throat as he blew his nose vigorously.

"And at what time was this?" asked Holmes, completely oblivious to the suffocating sadness that filled his cluttered living room.

"Around six thirty I think" sniffed Mr. Lords.

"Thank you Mr Lords that will be all. Call round at luncheon tomorrow. Meanwhile Dr. Watson and I have some catching up to do. Goodbye." Holmes ushered the dazed man out of the door with a half-hearted handshake.

"Now, Watson what do you make of it all?" Sherlock said turning to me with the crazed eagerness in his eyes. "I make nothing in particular of it all apart from the fact that this widower is fresh with grief from the loss of his wife. Supposedly murdered wife too" I said, shocked at my friend's blatant lack of empathy.

"Doctor Watson I would trust even you to see that there is much more to make of this case than that." Holmes sat on the edge of his seat, hands clasped tightly together.

"Well, then you tell me."

"Firstly, I suspect that our client's current occupation is that of an Apothecary, and was formerly a matchmaker; his wife did not love him for a long period of time before her untimely death; he has recently visited the Northumbrian coast and was knocked over by a horse as he made his way to me."

“My God! You really have an answer to everything don't you Holmes!?” I exclaimed, amazed at my friend's intelligence. “But, pray tell, how have you acquired this information?”.

“Given the strong scent of herb around him, I deduce that he was either a botanist or an Apothecary; given his beautifully tailored coat I suspect the latter. He also has washed out traces of blood on his handkerchief, a product of a chest infection caused by the constant exposure to chemicals as a child. The edges of his handkerchief are also frayed and it lacks embroidery. This suggests that his wife ceased to love him enough to make him presentable - also seen in the uncollected lint on his coat. Worn, dusty knees and hay stuck on his collar would indicate a recent blow from behind on the street, a blow so strong that it brought him off his feet and on to the ground. Finally, a slightly bronzed appearance, sun bleached hair and granules of sand stuck on his shoes suggest a recent visit to the Northumbrian coast. To be more specific, Bamburgh Beach” Holmes finished dramatically.

“But however would you know which particular beach!?”

“The type of sand of course, only found on Bamburgh beach”, he said as if it were the most simple thing on earth.

“You shall never fail to amaze me Sherlock” I smiled, utterly bewildered at what I had just witnessed. “I am flattered Watson, but if you will excuse me, this seems like a two pipe problem.” He tucked his gangly limbs into his chest and turned away from me, pipe swaddled snug between his finger and thumb.