A Streetcar Named Deduction

by ThreePipeProblem (7percent)

Summary

Holmes and Watson arrive at an abandoned house to solve the murder of the late Ms. Blanche DuBois a wealthy southern belle from Laurel, or so it seems-

Notes

This is actually a piece of fiction I wrote for a school assignment. It hasn't been beta'd so any mistakes you find are my own. Also it is a pastiche of Tennessee Williams' 'A Streetcar Named Desire' I recommend it.

The exterior of the two room flat in central London was eerily quiet as white flecks of frozen rain fell onto the frosted window pane. Baker Street was usually filled with life but on the frostbitten December evening nothing seemed to be alive.

Holmes was in a darkened mood. An aura of indigos and a shadow of black surrounded him. It was not an unusual occurrence in Baker Street but as Holmes' eyes met mine in a fierce glare I knew that I was not to bother him. Holmes sat in his usual chair, brown housecoat draped over his frail form, fingering at one of his beloved smoking pipes. It was then that he looked away and took a long inhale from the instrument only to release a sea of smoke from his lips. A sight so life wrecking yet sadly beautiful. It had been weeks since our last case and as each day slowly passed and winter slowly decayed all life of the city, Holmes became increasingly more bored. The small holes embedded into the walls still haunt me. The bold letters of our queen stand out amongst the scarlet walls that Holmes had favoured. Ironic really.
Slowly the room filled with the warm breath of pipe debris and the subtle warmth of the winter fire. A soft knock came from behind me.

“Ah, Lestrade! Do you apes at the yard finally admit that you may need my help after all?”

“Do you want the case or not?” Lestrade stood at the door, soaked from the blustery winter weather.

“Judging by your shoes I can deduce that the scene of the crime is approximately in a one mile radius.”

“Brilliant!” I exclaimed “But how on Earth could you know that Holmes?”

“Simply my dear Watson, the harsh winter snow hasn’t melted into the leather boots that Lestrade here is wearing. This suggests that the detective inspector hasn’t been too far away from here as he would have taken a streetcar should the distance have been further. If he has taken the streetcar back to Baker Street then there would be a lot less snow forming a crust along the circumference of his boots.” Holmes looked around the room, boredom easily slipping back into his bloodstream. A small huff of cold air escaped his lips, a sigh of contentment. “After you, Lestrade.”

The detective inspector spun on his heel only and edged towards the black door located at the bottom of a large staircase. With each step both men took the wood would release a whine under their weight. As I stood at the top of the stairs I could see the excitement enter Holmes once again. Finally after the weeks of temptations to inject himself with liquid pleasure I was able to see that Holmes was back to his energetic self. The consulting detective removed his brown housecoat revealing his frail figure. It was almost sickening to see his clothes hang off his frame and his skin so translucent. He grabbed a more suitable coat and our eyes met once again. His pale lifeless eyes sparked with joy as he bellowed out to me from the bottom of the rickety staircase.

“Come along Watson, the game is on!” The staircase protested under my weight as I caught up with Holmes and Lestrade. The door squeaked as it opened, and the winter decay of central London waltzed into the flat. White breath escaped from my nose and lips. The warmth escaping my body as the cold winter air slipped inside of my body and filled my insides with an icy decay. I quickly grabbed my long woollen coat, a gift from a friend of mine from Afghanistan, and headed out into the city.

The cobbled pavements glistened softly as we stepped out onto Baker Street. The scene in front of us was eerily quiet, three lost souls standing in the middle of a usually busy street. We walked north towards the crime scene. As we edged closer towards the scene the stench of iron became more repulsive. With each step Holmes would smirk to himself, he had been waiting for an interesting crime for weeks and this may just be the one to get him back into solving crime. It wasn’t that my flatmate was uninterested in the crimes that happen on a daily occurrence in London, he was just interested in the more obscure crimes committed by a minor part of the criminal class.

The scene of the crime happened to be in an abandoned building, fairly new in design. The exterior of the two storey building was bland, walls made of solid grey cobblestone brick with the occasional decoration of a glass window peering into the building. A light covering of snow dusted the building’s exterior giving it a feel of innocence. The building stood alone, no connections to any of the other houses that surrounded it. Holmes had said that ‘the occupier of the building didn’t want to feel connected to the community. The occupier of the household was most likely not from this area, or they would have found it easier to become part of the local community.’ There was a long brick fence surrounding the house, keeping strangers away and keeping the occupiers trapped.

Lestrade held open the wooden door at the side of the building and waiting and Holmes and I entered the parlour. The room was shadowed by the darkness of the winter afternoon and was lit by small wax candles which decayed slowly with time, much like the victim that lay in a pool of scarlet warmth. In the centre of the parlour was a small table with a set of cheap cards that could easily be picked up from any street corner. The cards were set for a game of bridge, a game I
didn't play but I found some fascination when staring down at the playing cards on the dark mahogany table. A lonesome Luckie's cigarette sat by the deck of cards, Holmes was able to tell it was a Luckie's due to the rich unique scent that the tobacco had given off, a warm breath of a brown river he had said. Surrounded by inspectors at the yard was a woman, she was around thirty in age and wore scandalous clothing such as fox pieces and rhinestone tiaras.

“lt was the brother in law.” Holmes' baritone voice sliced through the silence. “It's simple. You can see she didn't light the house well, using only candles, I can deduce from this she didn't want her true self to be seen by others. The papers scattered across the room are all from an American housing plantation in Laurel, so she was hiding something. The brother in law wouldn't believe that she had lost the plantation and since then took a disliking to her.”

“How could you possibly know that she wanted to hide herself Holmes?”

“Lestrade do I have to explain everything to you apes! She doesn't have a single mirror in this entire room apart from the small hand mirror, she wasn't proud of who she was, she had secrets. Liquor bottles are scattered all over this place, she was an alcoholic, something a woman of her age would be shunned for. She wears extravagant pieces of clothing, fox pieces, rhinestone tiaras and dresses made of turquoise silk, she wanted to give a false illusion of herself, those are not normal clothes that a woman would wear, they are party pieces.

As to how I know it was the brother in law, it's elementary. The broken bottle. I'm sure if you dusted it for prints you would find the grubby little paw marks of our culprit. Now do you have a more interesting case or should I leave you to your simple puzzles?” Holmes sighed and turned to walk back out into the icy afternoon of central London.

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