The Big Sleep

by mydogwatson

Summary

Sherlock is a detective. One day a blond walks in.

Notes

Well given the title, what else could I do? And, honestly, I sort of love it. Hope you like it as well.

See the end of the work for more notes

Things only become cliché because they happen so often, right? Which fact doesn’t really explain how my whole life had become nothing but a bloody giant cliché. I have everything a broken down private dick is supposed to have. [Note: although I have tried to persuade the world, including my interfering git of a brother and the idiots at Scotland Yard, that I am actually the world’s only consulting detective everybody still insists upon calling me a private eye.]

Anyway: my life. I have the requisite rundown office above a cheap chippy, a secretary who seems to think that she only works part time, considering how often she fails to turn up, fewer clients than hoped for, and a bottom drawer in my desk that holds a secret stash. Mine, of course, is not cheap whiskey, but a perfectly respectable 7% solution.

So here I was, nothing but a walking, talking cliché, so bored that I was considering shooting holes in the wall. Again. Might have done, but the landlady had threatened to kick me out if it happened one more time. Maybe it was the day to open that bottom drawer.
And then the trope continued.

A blond walked into my office. Well, I say ‘walk’. What he really did was march in, straight by the desk where a secretary would have been sitting had she bothered to turn up that morning. There was a cane in his hand, but he seemed to only use it sporadically. A psychosomatic injury, obviously. He came a stop and assumed the parade rest position in front of me. I gave him the once over. Then I gave him a second look. The hair was not just blond it seemed, but a rather interesting mix of blond and brown, with a few greys sneaking in. His face was lined, but I thought he was younger than he looked. “Mr Holmes?” he said.

I nodded. It was time to impress him.

“Iraq or Afghanistan?” I said in a lazy tone, propping my feet on the desk and staring up at him. Not far up, because he was on the short side of average.

He looked properly surprised. “Afghanistan, but how--?”

I quickly listed all the ways I knew that he had been a soldier and that he had seen action, so Afghanistan or Iraq. Then, as I studied him more, I threw in the fact that he had been a medic.

His eyes brightened. “That was amazing,” he said.

“Was it?” My curiosity was real.

“Of course it was.”

I shrugged. “Not what people usually say.”

“What do they usually say?”

“Piss off,” I drawled.

He grinned at me and I couldn’t help returning it with a smile of my own. “Why are you here?” I asked. After all, I had a business to run. I waved him into the client chair. “Let’s start with something simple. Who are you?”

He sat. “John Watson. I, uh, saw your ad in the laundrette.”

Can’t afford to be proud, so I stick those things up wherever I can.

There was a pause. His tongue flicked out to touch his lower lip just briefly. [It is my job to notice things like that.] “It’s about my wife. Mary. She ran off.”

Well, it surprised me a bit that he would have something as boring as a wife named Mary. Didn’t seem the type. It was, frankly, disappointing. “Did you have a fight or something?” I asked flatly.

Watson took a deep breath. “There is a bit of a story.”

There always was. “Tell me.”

“When we met, I was at a very low point. Just back from the war, injured. She seemed just the thing to help me get my life back on track. Sweet, lovely, funny.”

I made a ‘hurry up, this is starting to bore me’ hand gesture.

He glared at me, but then only shrugged. “But after we were married, I started to find out that
most of what she’d told me about her life wasn’t true. She wasn’t really a nurse. And there were some very odd characters hanging about. Then, a couple of days ago, I found a gun she had hidden in her lingerie drawer. With a silencer."

I watched him as he told the tale of his marriage. Interestingly, he was watching me as well. “So, Mr Watson,” I murmured, “Or may I call you John?”

He nodded.

“And I am Sherlock.” There was no logical reason for my next question, but I asked it anyway. “So, John…do you want me to find this woman?”

After a moment, John Watson shook his head. “You know, Sherlock, I don’t think that will be necessary.”

“Good,” I said. “If your marriage is over, you don’t need that boring semi in the suburbs. How do you feel about the violin? Flatmates should know the worst about each other.”

I could see the various questions he wanted to ask flicker across his face. How had I known about the boring semi? What did a violin have to do with anything? And who said anything about being flatmates? But he didn’t ask any of them. Instead, he just nodded.

So maybe some clichés are not so bad. After all, one day a blond walked into my office and that was very good.

* 

End Notes

Title from: The Big Sleep by Raymond Chandler

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