

Chapter Four:

Sherlock and Watson Return

Written by: Jay Mosher

It's almost midnight. The car windows are dark as the empty streets and forest paved roads roll past. I turn up the heat and pull my jacket tighter around myself in the passenger seat. Clay's spotify plays softly in the background, serenading me with the voices of Elton John and Billy Joel.

I don't know what to think. This was supposed to be a normal evening. I would get out of work, and Clay would get out of rehearsal. We would both go home and eat leftovers on the couch while Hershey begged for scraps. I would ask if Clay was nervous about opening night and plan what kind of flowers to buy them.

It would be quiet and perfect.

Instead we are wrapped up in another theatre related murder.

"You're very quiet," Clay says gently. "Is everything alright?"

I sigh heavily, and they reach across the car dashboard to hold my hand. "Doesn't this remind you of the dinner party?"

They frown. "A little bit."

"It's another theatre themed murder," I laugh bitterly, rubbing a hand across my burning eyelids. "What are even the possibilities of that? We get wrapped up into another crazy, impossible mystery."

"It's just a coincidence, Park." Clay bites their bottom lip. "I'll admit that it's weird and a poor reminder of our past, but it's just another roadblock to get through."

"Our lives used to be so normal." I sigh.

"Well, I wouldn't exactly use the word *normal*." Clay smiles, giving me a knowing look. "Do you remember in college when I was convinced that Professor Hardwin was stealing tuition money?"

I shake my head. "Yes, and we went on a bunch of late night watches to try and catch him in the act. Which led to him calling the cops on us and we spent the night in the police office waiting for your mom to bail us out."

“That was awful, wasn’t it?” They laugh. “The place smelled and that drunk guy kept singing-”

“Oh, I remember,” I giggle. “It was Home on the Range but all the lyrics were wrong.”

“Yes!” They grin, shaking their head. “But at least my intuition was right. Professor Hardwin *was* stealing tuition money.”

“*And* having a relationship with a student.” I sigh again. My chest feels a little bit lighter. “You’ve always been good with your intuition.” I turn to look at them. “Do you think we’ll really be able to find Lewis’s killer?”

“I have to think so,” they reply. “It’s the only notion that keeps me going.”

I trace circles across the armrest. “You’re okay, right? I know that memories of the dinner party are still hard to deal with--*for both of us*. I don’t want you to overdue it.”

“I’ll be okay.” They squeeze my hand. “I’ll take care of myself.”

“Good.”

They’re quiet for a moment. “I think we should go talk to Lewis’s wife tomorrow morning.”

“Absolutely not!” I sit up straight in my seat. “Clay! We are not going to visit a grieving woman the morning after her husband was murdered.”

“We have to. She might know something that can help with the investigation.”

I massage my temples. “She is not going to want to answer a bunch of stranger’s questions. She was probably bothered by the police already.”

“They deemed it an accident, so she probably wasn’t.”

I inhale sharply. Clay has a point, but I still don’t like the idea of bothering someone after their spouse just died. However, I know I can’t talk them out of it. “Fine. I’ll make a sympathy casserole before we go to bed tonight.”

“We’re private investigators, we can’t bring her a casserole.”

“It’s polite, and we are bringing her a casserole.”

“Fine, fine. We’ll bring a casserole.”

They fall silent again. I glance at them to find that their hands are wrapped tightly around the steering wheel, and their knuckles are white.

“Clay?” I reach over and touch their shoulder. “What’s wrong?”

Their facial expression is tense. “Opening night is in only two days. We don’t have much time to figure out who the killer is. Especially if they’re planning on hurting anyone else.”

“It’s okay. We’ll figure it out. We always do.”

They nod reluctantly, but their face is still set. “I’m sure you’re right.”

I let out a small breath. I know that there’s nothing else I can say to reassure them, so I turn up the radio and let them continue driving us home.
