

CLEANING UP THE EAST END

Written by

Aunt Agonist

Ceiling Fan, Park Ranger, Bathhouse, Historical

"The hero is the villain"

FADE IN:

EXT. DOCK ENTRY LOCK - NIGHT

Pre-dawn in Victorian London where the warehouses and smokestacks behind them are quiet, but the drunken SAILORS are anything but as they wander back onto their ships.

SUPER: St. Katharine Docks, London, UK - 29 September 1888

Docker EDDIE HEWITT (26) sits on the seawall with a basket beside him, takes a bite from a meat pie and nods at a passing CONSTABLE (39).

Once the Constable rounds a corner, Eddie opens the basket, tosses out a man's worth of severed bodyparts into the water.

INT. PUBLIC BATH - DAY

A large, busy establishment with many partitioned private baths next to a large washroom full of basins. Most of the bathers are male, almost all of the washers are female.

SUPER: The Model Baths and Washhouses, Whitechapel

Eddie emerges freshly bathed, makes his way to the washroom to give his wife JEMMA HEWITT (25) a peck on the cheek. There is quite a lot of red going down the basin drain.

EDDIE

Sorry for the stains, Love, but
rest assured that cad will never
again lay a hand on your bum... or
anyone else's.

She kisses him back, then nods toward another washer, BESSIE (19) lugging a full basket.

Blocking her path stands a well-groomed man in nothing but a towel, PRESCOTT REEVES (31).

JEMMA

Not everyone's got a man around to
defend her honour.

Eddie scowls in Prescott's direction.

JEMMA

That's Bessie. Husband's off with
the Royal Navy, months at a time.

PRESCOTT

Why don't you join me at Greenwich Park? I'm on the ranger detail. I can get you in any time you'd like.

Before Eddie can storm over, Bessie slips under Prescott's arm and makes her escape.

EDDIE

Not right, just 'cause her man's at sea. Not right at all.

Jemma nods toward a businessman who just entered, the bathhouse's DIRECTOR (62). He takes off his spectacles because they fogged up immediately.

JEMMA

Not now, Eddie. Here he is, here's your chance.

Eddie straightens his shirt, strides over to the Director.

EDDIE

Director! Edward Hewitt, may I have a moment of your time?

The Director stops and nods.

EDDIE

I've got an idea that will make this fine business ten times as popular. I know of a shipment of ceiling fans from America, but the order was cancelled. Imagine bathing and washing in comfort--

DIRECTOR

This place is too crowded as it is. And you expect me to bring electricity in here? No, sir.

Crestfallen, Eddie steps aside, then his eyes follow the fully-dressed Prescott as he leaves the building.

EXT. GREENWICH PARK - DAY

Eddie stands before the Royal Observatory showing a haughty ASTRONOMER (55) a ceiling fan he brought in a wheelbarrow.

SUPER: Greenwich Park, London - 29 September 1888

EDDIE

--more comfortable for you men of letters, and better for the machinery I'd think. The building's already electrified.

ASTRONOMER

I will ask the Astronomer Royal. Please return tomorrow morning and I will have your answer then.

EDDIE

Thank you, milord.

Eddie is about to ramble on, but spots Prescott in uniform and takes his leave, wheels over to the park ranger.

EDDIE

My good sir, you got any weight with the brainy gents in there? See, the dandy trying to unload these things is desperate. If they buy, I could get one 'round the side for your post. Hear me?

Prescott looks at the contraption and smiles.

EDDIE

Let me see if you got the wires for it. Where's your post?

Prescott leads Eddie to a tiny building.

EDDIE

Let's have a look 'round back. You do your part, and you are going to make me a very happy man.

Prescott circles around the building. Eddie picks up a tool from the wheelbarrow and follows.

THWACK.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

Eddie, standing over the soft earth of a shallow grave, changes from his blood-stained clothes to another outfit.

He stuffs the old clothes in the wheelbarrow under the ceiling fan's crate, whistles as he pushes off.

INT. PUBLIC BATH - DAY

Eddie emerges freshly bathed, heads to the washroom. Jemma is far down the aisle washing blood out of Eddie's clothes.

On the way Eddie stops near a MAN (30) also washing bloody clothes. This Man dresses shabby-genteel, as in one who desires fine clothes but cannot afford fine materials.

EDDIE

You'll stop making eyes at my wife
if ya know what's good for ya.

MAN

My apologies. I was simply admiring
her skill at removing stains.

EDDIE

Hmm, fisticuffs?

MAN

Uh, yes. Quite right.

EDDIE

The trick is you don't use the hot
water, and... if you don't want
more blood spilled... you won't
make eyes with another man's wife.

The Man grimaces, looks purposefully down at his washing.

EDDIE

Alright, sorry, that was a bit
much. Haven't seen you here before.
My name's Eddie.

MAN

People call me Jack. Nice to meet
you, Eddie.

Eddie gives a friendly nod, makes his way to Jemma, gives her a peck on the cheek.

EDDIE

It's three pence I wasn't planning
on spending, but I'm always willing
to do my part for the Navy.

(hushed)

What I don't get is: that's five
blokes now who didn't see two
sunrises after coming to
Whitechapel. What's it take for the
police to see a pattern?

JEMMA

Count yer blessings. I guess if
they all keeled over right inside
this district, someone'd notice.

Eddie chuckles, helps Jemma fold the clean shirts.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The street is packed with men clamouring for newspapers from hawkers, and dozens of constables question anyone they find suspicious, which is mostly anyone who looks foreign.

HAWKER

Read about the Whitechapel murders!

SUPER: Goulston Square, Whitechapel - 30 September 1888

Panic-stricken, Eddie and Jemma carry their laundry away from the constables.

They come next to a man waving newspapers. Eddie quickly presses a coin in the hawker's hand, takes a paper.

Headline reads "Two More Women Found Dead in Whitechapel - £500 Reward for Man Police Now Calling 'Jack the Ripper'"

EDDIE

Jack, you bloody idiot.

FADE OUT.