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Murder In Whitechapel

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SUPER: WHITECHAPEL 1888.

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A lurid sky, brought about by its omnipresence, fills the air with a fiery miasma.

A PEREGRINE flies high above the smoke filled clouds.

Down below - a rapid downpour saturates luckless blower ANNIE NICHOLS, while she stands at the entrance to *The Frying Pan* drinking house.

She holds her position, wearing a tweed jacket, skirt, and spring clipped boots.

The rain drips off the brim of her black bonnet as she presses to stop it blowing off her head.

A COALMAN approaches.

COALMAN

Get out the bleedin' way!

He barges past her with his broad shoulder, then stumbles into the dimly lit drinking den.

ANNIE

Oh, sod off! Dontcha like me new bonnet, then? I'm wearing it just for you, you know. Pig!

This reaction causes shrilling cackles, and a rumpus inside the drinking den, with the stamping of feet and the clashing of tankards.

LADYBIRD V.O

Yeah and a thousand others, more like!

Despairingly, she trudges away.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON CHARITY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Under the umbrella of darkness, the solitary, unmasked figure of JACK (AKA ELEPHANT MAN), stares down in reverie at the sodden flowerbeds.

FLASHBACK: INT. BLOOMSBURY HALL - DAY

Jack stands stark naked in front of a large group of young MEDICAL STUDENTS as they make notes concerning his grotesque physicality.

DOCTOR TREVES V.O

"The most striking feature about him is his misshapen head. On the top of the skull are a few lank hairs. The osseous growth on the forehead almost occludes one eye. From the upper jaw there projects another mass of bone; It protrudes from the mouth like a pink stump. The nose is merely a lump of flesh."

END FLASHBACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOSS HOUSE - NIGHT

Annie Nichols rallies in raucous dispute with the heavily bearded DEPUTY OWNER.

DEPUTY OWNER

Now stay out! And don't think about coming back here, unless you've got your doss to pay for a bed!

ANNIE

Oh, don't be like that. Please! G'rn, save us a bed wontcha? I'm begging ya, for gawd's sake.

He turns his back and marches back inside without further ado, then slams the door shut in her face.

She stares helplessly at the closed door with her bonnet in hand.

ANNIE (CONT'D) ASIDE

Oh never mind. I'll soon get me doss.
See what a jolly bonnet I've got now.

She looks up at the sky, then trudges off into the rain filled night.

Beat.

As she bounces off the wall, she bumps into EMILY, a respectful older lady.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(Slurring)

Oh, 'ullo, M. Where you off to, then?

EMILY

Home, duck. I've just been down to watch those fires down at the docks.

ANNIE

Well I'm out to get me doss.

EMILY

You be careful, duck. There's a rowdy mob just around that corner, that's all I'm saying. You ain't seen nothing like those fires down at the river, duck.

Pauses.

Folk wantonly fighting for anything they can lay their filthy hands upon.

Annie pays her little attention as she continuously bounces off the wall, drunk.

ANNIE

Aye, you'll never guess what, M? I've had me doss three times already tonight. Spent it all on gin, I 'av'. I'm a silly girl, ain' I?

Emily shakes her head at her in disgust.

EMILY

You just make sure you get to bed, that's all, duck. You don't wanna be stuck out here. Smell that stench!

She whiffs the air in distaste.

ANNIE

Nah, I'll be alright, M. I've got m'self a new bonnet, see. And I don't mind sharing with anyone tonight, either.

She tilts her bonnet and cackles.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

'ark at me!

CU: The Brewery clock chimes one-thirty.

EMILY

Aw, is that the time? I must dash, duck. You take care, especially if you're stuck out here all night long.

ANNIE

Yeah, yeah, alright, M. See ya, doll.

Emily scurries away.

Annie Nichols tries to regain her steadiness.

BACK TO:

EXT. LONDON CHARITY HOSPITAL

Jack wanders beyond the gardens onto the busy main thoroughfare.

He spots her in the glow of a single gas lamp. He observes as she lifts her skirt to passers by.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Business, sir? Oh c'mon darlin,' what's the matter, cantcha get it up for a pretty girl, then? I'm clean, you know! Pig!

He hides inside a dark shadow as he continues to watch her.

FLASHBACK.

INT. BEDSTEAD SQUARE - DAY

JACK sits at his desk facing a sash cord window as the door opens and the tall, slim DOCTOR TREVES enters.

DOCTOR TREVES

(Upbeat)

So, how are we feeling this morning, Jack?

JACK

(Splutters)

I'm still having those horrible nightmares. And those whores still disturb my sleep. You said you would fix them.

DOCTOR TREVES

I will personally show you how to remove their breasts, should you have the desire to do so, Jack.

The Doctor unclips his bag, then lifts out a copy of his own medical book and places it down on the table.

DOCTOR TREVES (CONT'D)

Jack, this is my medical book. I urge you to read through it carefully. You'll soon discover just how to begin a mastectomy using a steady hand. And I see you have a steady hand, since your incredible workmanship with your model of St. Philip's Church, opposite.

END FLASHBACK:

Annie Nichols masquerades under the flicker of the gaslight as she drinks from a wine glass, before she stumbles and falls down.

Jack pulls his cloak over his head in discomposure as she cackles wildly at herself, before she climbs to her feet and begins to hum a tune badly.

DOCTOR TREVES V/O

Go and get her, Jack. Quickly. Go, before it's too late. She's waiting for you, Jack.

JACK (ASIDE)
But I am not supposed to leave the grounds of the hospital, Doctor.

DOCTOR TREVES V/O
Go and speak with her, Jack.

JACK (ASIDE)
But what if she screams? Oh, oh, oh.

He manoeuvres himself away.

Beat.

INT. BEDSTEAD SQUARE - NIGHT

He enters, then grabs his hood with a peaked cap attached from behind the door, before he picks up his knife from under his pillow. He grabs a handful of blackberries from the fruit bowl, then stuffs them into his cloak pocket.

Beat.

STREET.

Annie Nichols trudges carelessly along the pavement.

Fishmonger JOE BARNETT (40's), spots her, then immediately approaches, gesticulating and fist waving as he bobs and weaves back and forth, his eyes blinking uncontrollably whilst highly vexed.

He is a tall, broad shouldered and fearsome looking man. His penetrating eyes deeply set inside black holes. His heavily chapped lips the colour purple, and his prickly moustache soiled with stale food crumbs and snot. He wears a deerstalker and a sheepskin coat.

He confronts her as she stands inside the porch of the old greengrocer's shop.

JOE BARNETT

Oi Nichols! I've been looking for you.
I say, I've been looking for you. You
still owe Pearly for the garb - not to
mention that bleedin' bonnet I see you
wearing.

He soils the pavement, before wiping his mouth on his crusty
jacket sleeve.

ANNIE

Ah get off, will ya, Joey? Leave us
alone for gawd's sake.

She cowers inside the doorway, as his huge frame towers over her
like an almighty dark shadow.

JOE BARNETT

Well, pay up!

ANNIE

Tell'r she'll get her bleedin' money
when I've earn't it proper. I can't
even get me doss... and that's with this
bleedin' bonnet sitting on me head. You
might as well take it, for all the
bleedin' good it's doin' us. I can't
even give it away, let alone sell
m'self for a few bleedin' penny
'aypnies.

JOE BARNETT

Well, if you didn't spend it all on
gin, you'd have it by now. And your
doss, I say... You bleedin' well heard
what I just said, Nichols.

ANNIE

I'll see Pearly m'self tomorra.

She attempts to keep her balance upon noticing his withdrawal.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Besides, it ain't nuttin' to do with
you, so keep ya bleedin' nose out of
it. G'rn, piss off! Leave us alone for
gawd's sake!

JOE BARNETT

Well, she ain't 'appy with you. I'll tell you that for nuffink. I say, I'll tell you that for nuffink, Nichols. She wants 'er money for that jacket an'all. And when I tell 'er, I've seen ya tonight, she'll be 'oppin' mad I didn't collect, ya get me? I say, ya get me, Nichols, do ya?

ANNIE

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JOE BARNETT

You just watch y'self, Nichols.

He wags his finger in a wasted fury, before he marches off.

Beat.

Jack navigates the two steps outside his room, then negotiates the pavements in search of Annie Nichols.

She stands inside the porch of the old greengrocer's shop.

Jack spots her and scurries around to the rear of the shop, where he lets himself inside through the back door.

INT. GREENGROCER'S SHOP

He manoeuvres through the empty darkness and unlocks the latch to the main entrance of the shop.

STREET.

As she continues to stand inside the doorway, she falls back and stumbles into the darkness.

INT. GREENGROCER'S SHOP

She cautiously closes the door behind her and enters the darkness.

SFX: Bronchial purring.

She turns her head as the door locks behind her with a click.

Behind her and in the shadow of darkness the diminutive figure of Jack stands unmasked, holding a lit Bunsen Burner in his left hand.

He reaches out to her as he places his large diseased hand upon her tiny shoulder.

She gasps and buckles as he purrs into her ear.

JACK

Please do not turn around. I don't want to frighten you.

ANNIE

Well who is this, then? What'd ya want?

JACK

I am badly disfigured.

ANNIE

Yeah, well, I don't frighten easily. And I don't mind tellin' ya that for nuffink either.

JACK

Thank you, because I am not going to hurt you.

ANNIE

Good. So what'd ya want, then?

He carefully places the Bunsen burner down upon the floor, then brings out his knife from inside his cloak.

With his diseased hand filled with blackberries, he brings directly under her nostrils.

She looks down at them with intrigue.

JACK

I brought these for you. I thought you might like to have them.

She stuffs them into her mouth and scoffs as the juice escapes, then runs down her chin towards her neck.

JACK (CONT'D)

I saw you under the gaslight. I thought you looked beautiful.

ANNIE

Oh yeah?

JACK

I used to live inside here. It isn't very nice, is it?

ANNIE

No, it's cold... and it stinks of rotten potatoes. And so do you.

JACK

I sleep here when I am lonely. Are you lonely?

A protracted silence.

ANNIE

You're not that elephant freak everybody's talkin' about, are ya? Is it business you want, then?

She twists her neck to look at him, as he stands in all his unholy glory; his eyes aflame, magnetised under the reflection of the steel blade in hand.

She attempts to scream as he brings his knife down upon her in continuous downward strokes, ripping into her flesh like a piece of rotten meat, until she collapses to the floor in a crumpled heap.

DOCTOR TREVES V/O

*She's all yours now, Jack. Take her!
Take her! Take her! Take her!*

He kneels down and parts her legs, then lets his cloak slip from his tiny shoulders, before he inserts himself in search of warmth.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. RECEIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Doctor Treves bandages the foot of an elderly Patient, before he checks his pocket watch, then walks out of the building.

He stands upon the steps and looks up at the bright red sky, before he walks off.

Beat.

INT. BEDSTEAD SQUARE.

The Doctor pokes his head inside the door of the unlit room and notices Jack's empty bed.

He checks beneath Jack's pillows, then hurriedly exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENGROCERS SHOP - NIGHT

The Doctor stands inside the darkness and strikes a match.

DOCTOR TREVES
Jack, are you in here?

Silence.

He steps further into the empty space, striking another match, until he stumbles upon a small bundle of dead flesh.

DOCTOR TREVES (CONT'D) *Aside.*
Lord Heavens!

He kneels down beside the cadaver, then strikes another match, before he covers his mouth with a handkerchief.

He climbs to his feet and grits his teeth in anger.

DOCTOR TREVES (CONT'D) *Aside.*
Jack?!

Upon the silence he hurriedly exits.

Beat.

HOSPITAL YARD.

The Doctor climbs upon a vacant horse and carriage and races towards the old greengrocer's shop.

Beat.

OLD GREENGROCER'S SHOP.

He wraps Annie's cadaver inside a blanket, then lifts her over his shoulder and carries her towards the door.

STREET.

He puts her into the carriage, then rides off into the smoke.

Beat.

He removes her body from the carriage, then lies her down upon a back street pavement, before he rides off again.

Beat.

INTERCUT:

RECEIVING ROOM:

The Doctor bares a look of angst as he prepares to carry out the rest of his nightly duties.

BEDSTEAD SQUARE

Jack snores to the sound of ten men as he sleeps upright against his plumped up pillows situated upon his bed.

Beat.

BEDSTEAD SQUARE (CONT'D) - DAY

A NURSE with tormented eyes and a face like thunder enters. She stops and looks at Jack sleeping. His bronchial purring, a reminder of what she has to put up with as she grimaces.

NURSE

Jack, it's time to wake up! It's eight o' clock. C'mon, it's time for your bath.

She sniffs the air in distaste.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Now c'mon, Jack!

She steps towards his bed and pushes her face into his huge earlobe.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Now, c'mon! This is not a flippin' doss house! Now wake up!

She opens the window, before she makes her way into the adjoining room, where she returns with a bath towel hanging over her arm.

She's caught out by the Doctor standing inaudibly inside the door frame. His mischievous dark eyes narrow upon her, before he scans the room with purposeful intent.

His thick moustache neatly trimmed, his hair waxed into a defined centre parting.

His garb: A black astrakhan coat. He clutches a felt hat in his left hand - his Gladstone bag held in t'other.

The red seal of the *Royal College of Surgeons* hangs delicately from a thick gold chain inside his waistcoat pocket.

He checks his solid gold timepiece, clipped to his lapel, whilst the morning journal figures under his arm.

He deliberately loosens his grip upon his bag and it falls to the floor with an almighty crash. His surgical instruments ching as they dance around upon impact.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Oh, excuse me, Doctor T, but you half frightened me to death standing there like that. I wasn't expecting you this morning. Jack hasn't had his bath yet.

DOCTOR TREVES

That's all right, nurse. I shan't be a moment. I just want to speak to him in private, if I may. Would you be so kind as to give us a few minutes?

NURSE

Certainly, Doctor T. Just give me a shout on your way out.

She closes the door shut upon her exit.

He grins inwardly, then steps forward and places his hat and journal down upon the desk in front of him, before he inspects Jack's cloak and hood hanging upon a hook on the back of the door.

FLASHBACK:

THE OLD GREENGROCER'S SHOP - 1884

The Doctor stands awestruck at the sight of the *ELEPHANT MAN* chained inside a cage, dressed only in a pair of oversized trousers, and a lit Bunsen burner placed on a small table behind him.

CU: A sign written in red paint upon a sheet reads: **The Deadly Fruit Of Original Sin.**

Owner, MR. NORMAN stands proud of his exhibit as he cracks a whip at the cage.

DOCTOR TREVES

(Concernedly)

Do you have to be so cruel?

MR. NORMAN

It's for his own safety... as well as the safety of others.

DOCTOR TREVES

Why do you say that? He's hardly going to threaten anybody whilst chained to bars.

MR. NORMAN

Look here, even his own mother abandoned him, because she thought she'd given birth to a monster?

END FLASHBACK:

Bts.

Jack opens his eyes, then shifts awkwardly to lift himself up.

DOCTOR TREVES

So, you're finally awake, then?

JACK

I had the most terrible nightmare again, Doctor T. It was the most wretched nightmare I have ever had in my entire life.

DOCTOR TREVES

So, what happened?

Jack climbs off the bed and searches helplessly for his slippers. The Doctor assists him by placing them at his feet.

JACK

Oh, I was that bird of prey. It was such a vivid nightmare.

DOCTOR TREVES

Which bird of prey, Jack?

JACK

Oh, I cannot say. Maybe a vulture. I am not sure.

DOCTOR TREVES

A peregrine falcon, maybe?

JACK

Oh, I am not sure what that looks like, Doctor T. If you can show me a picture, I might be able to say.

DOCTOR TREVES

A peregrine falcon is a big powerful bird with long pointed wings and a very short tail.

JACK

Oh I am not sure.

The Doctor places his hand upon Jack's shoulder and sighs.

DOCTOR TREVES

Would you sit down at your desk for me,
Jack?

JACK

Yes. But what is it, Doctor T?

He sits down upon the wooden chair in front of his desk and
stares out of the window.

DOCTOR TREVES

This morning, at approximately
three-thirty, can you enlighten me as
to where you were, and what you were
doing?

JACK

At three-thirty?

DOCTOR TREVES

Yes. Precisely.

JACK

Oh, I couldn't sleep at all, because of
my nightmare. I walked around the
hospital gardens.

DOCTOR TREVES

I see.

Pauses for thought.

So, in that case, what time did you
finally get to rest?

JACK

I think it was about that time shortly
after I remember climbing onto my bed.
I recall the church clock striking the
hour.

DOCTOR TREVES

And which hour would that be, Jack?

JACK

Oh, I cannot say. The sky was red, and
it was raining so hard. To say, I mean,
it was frightening to see the sky lit
up like that.

DOCTOR TREVES

Because of the fires down at the docks. The stench will linger for days, I expect.

Pauses.

Besides, a blower woman was savagely mutilated during the early hours of this morning. It just so happens you were spotted in the grounds by one of the porters during the approximate time of this woman's murder. The porter, when asked, said he saw you again returning to your room at three o'clock. Did you not see, or hear a scream, or squeal... anything that may have caused you to be concerned?

JACK

No. I did not hear anything, other than the usual disturbances.

DOCTOR TREVES

Thank heavens for that. I was quite worried, because my first point of plan this morning, after I spoke with Dr. Llewellyn, was to check to see if you were sleeping. Obviously, you must have retired very late, since you were in deep slumber when I checked.

JACK

I am sorry if I have caused you any embarrassment, Doctor T.

DOCTOR TREVES

Well, Dr. Llewellyn informs me that the injuries inflicted upon this unfortunate woman were likely to have been committed by a left-handed person. And, well, your functional hand is your left hand, is it not, Jack?

Short silence.

DOCTOR TREVES (CONT'D)

Also, according to Dr. Llewellyn, the knife used to cut her open was not such a sharp knife.

Pauses.

Incredibly, they have moved her body over to the greengrocer's shop. I'm going over there later to examine her injuries for myself, because her body was found by a constable in Bucks Row, during the early hours. Just a stone's throw from the receiving room.

Short silence.

DOCTOR TREVES (CONT'D)

Stand up for me please, Jack.

He wiggles himself out of his chair.

DOCTOR TREVES (CONT'D)

Now, just so that you know I've decided I'm going to be calling in on you more frequently. I realise I've been very busy of late with my workload... not to mention the lectures with the students.

Pauses.

I made a solemn promise to look after you when I brought you here, so I shan't shut you out any longer.

JACK

Can I continue shaping my model of Saint Philip's, Doctor T?

DOCTOR TREVES

Yes, of course you can. But I will be seeing you this coming Sunday.

JACK

Thank you.

DOCTOR TREVES

By the way, which book are you reading at the moment, Jack?

The Doctor picks up his bag.

Jack claps his hands with excitement.

JACK
Frankenstein.

DOCTOR TREVES
And have you managed to read any of the chapters from my surgical book?

JACK
No, it is too complicated for me.

DOCTOR TREVES
Fair enough. I shall take it with me.
One of my students wants a copy.

Jack picks up the book from the small stack on the table and hands it to him.

JACK
Please don't take my Frankenstein novel away. I haven't finished reading it.

DOCTOR TREVES
No, I'm not going to take your book, Jack. Stop panicking.
(Thoughtfully)
Switzerland is a very beautiful country - very beautiful indeed. Iceland too. Two of the most scenic places I can think of right now.

JACK
(Excitedly)
Oh, can we go, Doctor T? I want to go to Switzerland. Oh, how wonderful it would be to meet Victor Frankenstein.

The Doctor laughs hysterically at the possibility of meeting a fictional character.

DOCTOR TREVES
No, I'm afraid we cannot meet Doctor Victor Frankenstein, Jack. However, I will take you to see Fort William if you wish, though not in the immediate future, since I am far too busy with my

work overload. I have patients queuing for me in the receiving room at this very moment.

Pauses.

Oh, and by the way, I've arranged your holiday for November. I have some very dear friends residing in Northumberland. They would like you to stay with them for a week or two. They will treat you as one of their own. And the fresh air will be very good for your bronchitis.

Pauses.

All right, nurse. I've finished with this young scholar. He's all yours.

He exits.

Jack picks up the morning journal and reads the front page headline:

**CU: HORRIBLE MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL! WOMAN SHOCKINGLY MUTILATED!
HEAD NEARLY CUT OFF!**

He turns away in horror.

JACK (ASIDE)

Oh, you poor, poor thing.

Nurse enters carrying a large jug of water. She immediately marches into the bathroom and begins to fill the bathtub.

JACK (CONT'D)

May I see the chaplain after my bath?

NURSE

(Abruptly)

Why, what have you done?

JACK

I just feel sad.

NURSE

C'mon, let's get you washed and dressed. You smell awful this morning.

He hobbles towards the bathroom.

FADE TO BLACK:

End.

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