

The Chocolatier

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. OSBORN STREET - DAY

SUPER: LONDON 1888

The cobblestone streets teem with life. CHILDREN play amongst the SHOPPERS, and horse-drawn carriages transport the wealthy.

One carriage stops. FRANK, mid forties, tall and rounded, and bearded, exits. EDWARD, early twenties, slighter build with a moustache, quickly follows.

Both men wear long coats and top hats. They stride with purpose amongst the bustle, cross the road and turn down a narrow side street.

EXT. OSBORN STREET - SIDE STREET - DAY

The two men stop outside a small shop. The sign above reads *STILES' CHOCOLATE HEAVEN*.

Frank lights up a cigarette.

INT. CHOCOLATE SHOP - DAY

The bell above the door rings as Frank and Edward enter.

Although cramped, the display counters house numerous chocolate designs. Chocolate rabbits and love heart designs are present.

A number of large truffles, sculpted beautifully, sit on a tray placed on the counter top. An attached note reads *'The best in London, please try one'*.

Edward's eyes scope every corner of the shop.

Frank puffs out a cloud of smoke and ruffles his beard. His eyes the tray of chocolates.

He nudges Edward and gestures toward the truffles, but his colleague declines with a turn of his nose and shake of his head.

With a shrug, Frank pops a truffle into his mouth.

JACOB STILES, late forties, porky and clean shaven, enters the shop from a back room. Standing behind the counter, he wears a chocolate stained apron..

JACOB
Good morning, gentlemen.

Frank chews quickly.

EDWARD
Good morning, sir.

Frank swallows and clears his throat with a gravelly cough.

FRANK
Good morning, Mr. Stiles?

JACOB
Yes.

Jacob glances down at the empty chocolate tray.

FRANK
I am Detective Logan and this
is...

JACOB
Ah, Detective Logan, I didn't
expect such a hasty response to
my letter. I know it is no 'Dear
Boss' but it does contain more
truth than such a piece of
fiction.

Frank glares at Jacob.

FRANK
You sent it to Whitehall, for my
specific attention, but the
particulars were somewhat
lacking.

JACOB
So it was curiosity, Detective?

Frank, his cigarette now back between his pursed lips,
removes his hat and sets it down on the counter beside the
empty tray.

FRANK
Perhaps, Mr. Stiles. It did
mention that you have something
important to tell.

JACOB
That it did, Detective.

Jacob wipes the chocolate from his hands onto his apron.

A moments pause. Everyone waiting for another to talk.

Edward removes his hat and holds it under his arm. He
gently rubs his moustache, itching to speak.

Frank removes his cigarette and exhales.

FRANK

Mr. Stiles, we don't make a habit of following such letters as yours. We have no time for hoaxers and the incurable.

Edward stares, his eyes cut deep into Jacob's.

EDWARD

No time at all, Mr. Stiles. As you well know we have a madman on the loose, not to mention the Irish and Jew problem that stains our over-populated city streets.

Jacob makes eye contact with Edward.

JACOB

I can assure you, I am of sane mind and was born in this very place.

Jacob slides the tray aside and leans forward on the counter.

JACOB

Was it indeed the best in London?

Frank ignores Jacob.

A confused look falls on Edward's face.

FRANK

Does your information have any connection with the atrocities of September thirteenth?

Jacob stares back.

JACOB

I would think not, Detective.

Edward shakes his head.

EDWARD

Perhaps we are wasting our time here?

He pops his hat back on, ready to leave.

FRANK

Please, Mr. Stiles, we do not wish to waste our day. Do you have something of importance to say or not?

JACOB

I do. But first I must ask if it was indeed the best you have tasted?

Frank looks down and sighs. Tiresome of the situation.

FRANK

Mr. Stiles, you test my patience, and I am a patient man. If you have nothing to say, we must bid you farewell, but leave you with a stern warning about wasting police time.

Frank snatches his hat and turns to leave, as does Edward. Opening the door, Frank blows smoke out into the street.

JACOB

But I do have something to say. I requested you as I didn't want to tell an average Peeler such a thing.

The two Police Detectives stop but refrain from turning.

FRANK

What such thing?

JACOB

Such a thing as murder.

Both detectives slowly turn to face Jacob.

EDWARD

And who has been murdered, Mr. Stiles?

Jacob unties his apron.

JACOB

My wife, Detective.

A shared shocked glance flashes between Frank and Edward.

Jacob removes his apron, carefully folds it and places it down on the counter.

FRANK

Your wife, Mr. Stiles?

EDWARD

You show little emotion about this dreadful event?

JACOB

Why would I show any, or indeed feel any, after all it was I who murdered her.

Frank drops his burnt out cigarette to the floor and covers it with the sole of his shoe. He ruffles his beard, disbelief across his face.

FRANK

You know such a confession will have you hanged?

Jacob smiles and nods in agreement.

FRANK

Then I suggest we continue this discussion more formally, Mr. Stiles.

JACOB

Jacob, please.

INT. WENTWORTH STREET - HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Small, damp and dingy, with a single bed at its centre. A single candle lantern provides light from a bedside table.

Clothes are strewn across the wooden floor.

Two FIGURES, panting heavily, roll around the bed in a passionate embrace. The covers hiding their identities.

INT. POLICE STATION - MORGUE - DAY

Dark and unclean, with two large slabs at its centre.

The naked body of a WOMAN lays on one of the slabs. Her throat slit from ear to ear and a large gash in her abdomen.

WALTER DICKINS, late fifties and bald headed, stands over the body with a scalpel in hand.

Frank stands beside Walter, a grimace on his face.

Edward stands in the corner a few feet away, looking very uncomfortable.

Walter slides the scalpel down the chest of the woman with consummate ease.

Edward places his hand over his mouth.

Frank watches intently as Walter opens the body up.

EDWARD
(muffled)
Well, should I inform Abberline?

Walter slides his hand inside the corpse.

WALTER
I wouldn't trouble him with this one, Frank. She's internally intact from what I can tell.

Edward slowly, and tentatively, lowers his hand.

FRANK
Just another murdered whore.

WALTER
One of many. Too many it seems these days.

FRANK
I'm still in no doubt the press will print Martha Coleman as another victim.

Walter removes an organ and tosses it into a dish.

Edward again covers his mouth and turns in disgust.

EXT. WHITEHALL - POLICE STATION - DAY

The large commanding building hides behind a sturdy wall.

A horse and carriage passes through its gates and into the Station's courtyard.

Frank and Edward escort Jacob from the carriage and into the building.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

A single window provides little light.

Jacob sits at a table, his hands cuffed.

Edward sits opposite.

Frank hovers nearby, a cigarette hangs from his lips.

FRANK
Well, we best start at the beginning, Jacob. When did you murder your wife, if you did at all?

JACOB

I wonder why you find it so hard to believe me? Do you get many who willingly hold up their hands to murder?

Jacob holds his cuffed hands above the table.

EDWARD

You would be surprised.

Jacob lowers his hands.

FRANK

Very well Jacob, I believe you. When did you commit this murder?

JACOB

I can't be specific, Detective, but I would make a guess at sometime this morning.

Frank inhales deeply and exhales a large plume of smoke.

FRANK

This morning? The Desk Clerk said we received your letter last night, Jacob. Are you claiming to this murder before it happened?

EDWARD

Perhaps you would be more comfortable in a different room, Jacob? One that more meets your needs?

Edward grins.

JACOB

I did not witness the murder, Detective, that is why I cannot be more precise.

Frank leans over the table, his hands supporting his frame.

FRANK

I don't understand, Jacob, how could you have not been there?

JACOB

I didn't say that, Detective, I said I did not witness the event.

FRANK

Then how can you be so sure that this murder even took place?

JACOB
Temptation.

Frank stares deep into Jacobs empty eyes.

JACOB
My wife was so easily tempted,
Detective.

Frank smirks at the comment.

EDWARD
By the hands of another man?

JACOB
Among other things...

Despite the restriction of his cuffed hands, Jacob grabs Frank by the collar, causing his burned down cigarette to drop from his mouth.

Jacob pulls Frank close and whispers in his ear.

JACOB
...My wife was a cheating whore.

Edward springs from his chair to assist but Frank wrestles free, lashes out and punches Jacob in the mouth.

Flustered, Frank straightens the cut of his jacket.

FRANK
Manhandle me like that again, Mr.
Stiles and you will find yourself
in Hanwell.

Jacob's lip bleeds a little, but he smiles back at Frank without a care for the pain.

JACOB
You too are easily tempted,
Detective Logan?

Frank picks up his cigarette butt.

INT. CHOCOLATE SHOP - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

A single room incorporates a living space, kitchen and a bed. The decor is in dire need of attention.

ROSE, mid thirties with short blonde hair, sits at a dresser and stares into the mirror. She turns her head from side to side and inspects her own profile.

She smiles without conviction.

Picking up a worn brush, she gently runs it through her hair.

INT. THE BLIND BEGGAR PUBLIC HOUSE - NIGHT

Tremendous noise from the alcohol fueled PUBLICANS, their singing and shouting deafens.

Rough looking MEN sit at every table, beer and spirits everywhere, compensated by WOMEN of various ages and beauty.

Frank sits at a table in the corner, his hat his only companion. A small glass clutched in his hand, he stares intently at TESS, early twenties and in need of fresh clothes.

She dances between the men, draping her frame across their lap and offers each a smile.

She approaches Frank. A black smile across her face, she throws her arms around his neck and falls into his lap.

TESS
Evening, sir.

Their eyes meet.

TESS
Would you like...

Frank bolts from his chair, causing Tess to fall to the floor with a hefty bump.

He snatches his hat and leaves the pub in haste.

TESS
Pig!

She stands and dusts herself down.

EXT. BERNER STREET - NIGHT

A layer of mist conceals the cobbles below. The street lights glow orange in the darkness.

The door to the Blind Beggar opens and the hustle and bustle from inside rings out. Frank strides out onto the street and pats his hat down firmly.

Tess flings the door open, gestures towards Frank and spits with disgust into the gutter.

Frank walks from the scene with an air of composure, and lights up a cigarette.

Casual PROSTITUTES and seedy MEN hide in the dark corners and back streets.

Frank pulls his long coat tight around him and walks with confidence.

LIZ, mid forties with curly dark hair, stands in a doorway. Her features half hidden in the shadows.

LIZ
Hello handsome, want some fun?

Frank passes her by.

FRANK
Not tonight thank you.

LIZ
Any pleasure you desire, sir.

Frank stops and ponders. He turns and confronts Liz in the dark doorway.

FRANK
And who is it that offers me this pleasure?

Liz slinks her arms around Franks neck and pulls him close.

LIZ
They call me Long Liz, sir.

INT. CHOCOLATE SHOP - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Cluttered chaos, bowls and jars of assorted sweets fill every shelf. A single table stands in the centre of the room.

Jacob sits over a large cake on the table. He pipes white icing around the edges with masterful skill. A confident smile across his face.

A door slams (O.S.)

Jacob pauses for a moment. His smiles wilts to a frown.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Frank sits down next to Edward, opposite Jacob, and sighs.

He lights up a fresh tobacco filled cigarette.

FRANK
And what temptation have I befell, Jacob?

JACOB

I think too many. But my wife,
just one.

FRANK

So she was tempted by another
man, and you saw fit to punish
her accordingly.

JACOB

That I did, Detective.

Edward leans forward.

EDWARD

You murdered your wife because of
her infidelity?

JACOB

The price on her head for
threatening my reputation.

Edward leans back on his chair in astonishment.

Frank puffs on his cigarette and exhales a smoky laugh.

FRANK

Your reputation! You talk of
yourself as a Lord or Doctor.
You make chocolate, Mr. Stiles,
you are not of such a social
status as to have a reputation.

Jacob crunches his face, as anger swells in his eyes.

JACOB

My chocolate is much revered, by
nobility I hasten to add. I
offer pleasure to the taste buds
of the city, whether they be of
wealth or destitute, I have no
prejudice.

Frank and Edward both laugh.

FRANK

Now I am in no doubt that you
would be best suited to a stay in
Hanwell.

EDWARD

Indeed. I will ready the
carriage.

Jacob is not amused, his nostrils flare and his eyes
narrow. Rage building inside his body.

JACOB
 My wife laughed as you do,
 Detectives, but she does not now.

Frank and Edward compose themselves again.

FRANK
 Mr. Stiles, where is your wife?

EXT. FLOWER STREET - NIGHT

A foul and depressing scene. A DRUNK lies in the gutter, and mumbles to himself.

Another large MAN appears from a side street and zips up his trousers. A satisfying smile beams across his face.

He snorts his nasal fluid into his mouth and ejects it with force, before striding away.

Rose calmly passes by him. She shows confidence in such a slum.

EXT. DUTFIELDS YARD - NIGHT

The area is quiet and deserted, almost pitch black.

A large cart wheel hangs above the entrance of the cobbled yard.

Frank is crouched over, his coat hiding his feet and his interest. His body sways from his frantic movement.

The sound of a horse and cart approaches (O.S.)

Frank stands with a jolt and turns, a glistening blade in his hand.

He quickly departs the scene.

The body of Liz lays on the cold cobbles.

A MAN rides the cart into the yard and stops a few yards from the body. He climbs down and struggles with his vision in the darkness.

MAN
 You there. Move yourself I will
 be sure to run you over.

The man tentatively nears the body of Liz. He takes out a match and strikes it for light.

MAN
 Hey, do you hear me...

The man leans over Liz, the match quivers in his hand.
Her throat slashed and still gushing with blood.
The man covers his mouth and retches.

EXT. MITRE SQUARE - NIGHT

Small and dark, the square has several narrow entry points.

CATHERINE, mid forties with dark hair, stands alone.

She puffs on a cigarette with confidence, unnerved in her surroundings.

Frank enters, breathing heavy and flustered.

CATHERINE

Evening sir. Looking for some
pleasure?

Frank stares back with a blank expression. He composes himself and slowly smiles at Catherine.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Jacob remains seated, Edward opposite and Frank again stands in the corner of the room.

JACOB

You will find my wife as and
where I left her. I have not
touched her in such a long time,
I didn't wish to start now.
Besides, she was not looking her
best.

FRANK

So your wife is at your home,
Jacob?

JACOB

Above the shop, yes.

Jacob fidgets with his cuffs.

EDWARD

How did you kill her, Jacob?

Jacob's eyes light up and he draws a smile.

JACOB

She came in late as usual, but
for the last time.

INT. CHOCOLATE SHOP - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob mixes a bowl of melted chocolate, smiling as he works.

He takes out a small jar from under the work top, opens it and digs a knife in. He removes it carefully, a powder coats the blade. He sprinkles a small amount into the bowl and gives it a stir.

INT. CHOCOLATE SHOP - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

A single lantern provides a little light.

Jacob lies asleep in the bed with the covers pulled high.

The door creeps open and Rose enters.

She sits at the dresser and looks at her reflection.

She reaches for her brush and notices a small chocolate box. A card attached reads 'Rose'.

She slides off the lid and takes out a single chocolate, then turns and looks over at Jacob.

ROSE

(whispering)

You know the way to a woman's heart, my dear. It's a shame you don't know the way to anything else.

She smiles and pops the chocolate into her mouth.

Rose picks up the brush and slowly runs it through her hair.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Frank puffs on a fresh cigarette, while Edward sits with his head in his hands.

Jacob stares at the two detectives.

EDWARD

So you poisoned your wife, Mr. Stiles? That's why you can't be more precise about when it happened?

JACOB
Everyone loves chocolate, it's so
tempting. Isn't that right,
Detective Logan?

Frank takes a slow draw of his cigarette.

JACOB
Finally I can be sure where the
whore is.

A wicked smile beams across Jacob's face.

INT. CHOCOLATE SHOP - DAY

Frank and Edward stand in silence.

A large truffle, sculpted beautifully, sits alone on a tray
placed on the counter top. An attached note reads '*The
best in London, please try one*'.

Edward's eyes scope every corner of the shop.

Frank puffs out a cloud of smoke and ruffles his beard.
His eyes catch sight of the lone chocolate. With a shrug,
he pops the truffle into his mouth.

Jacob enters the shop from a back room.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Frank stubs out his fresh cigarette, his mind ticking over
his previous actions.

JACOB
I imagine it wasn't pleasant.

Rubbing his stomach, Frank winces and steadies his frame
against the wall.

JACOB
Most painful I assume, as she
even woke me at one point.

Edward looks at Frank with confusion.

INT. CHOCOLATE SHOP - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Rose continues to brush her hair.

The chocolate box almost empty.

A loud rumble from her stomach and winces a little.

She looks down at the box and glances quickly over Jacob, who remains sound asleep.

Looking back into the mirror, a trickle of blood runs from her nostril. She quickly sniffs and runs her finger under her nose to catch the fluid.

Her finger stained red, she sniffs again. She pauses the brush for a moment and looks at her reflection.

Another drop of blood runs from her nose.

Again she sniffs, but the blood begins to flow with more purpose.

She jumps from her chair and rushes to the sink. She hangs her head over the basin as blood streams from her nose.

Jacob stirs and groans in the bed.

Rose winces and holds her stomach, buckling over in pain, she falls to her knees.

Desperately she tries to stem the flow. Her hands cup the blood but it begins to spill over.

She starts to shake with panic as blood oozes from her eyes. Every blink pumps a fresh stream down her skin.

She winces and coughs, spewing blood across the floor.

She doubles over in pain and her muscles spasm.

Blood seeps from every orifice.

She convulses in agony, coughs and chokes. Her legs kick out and her arms swing wildly as she rolls around the floor in agony.

Her movements slow, she gurgles and falls silent.

INT. WENTWORTH STREET - HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The single candle lantern flickers.

Rose sits up in the bed, the sheets pulled around her naked body. A wry smile on her face.

A handful of coins are scattered on the night stand.

EXT. WENTWORTH STREET - ALLEY - NIGHT

Dark and dingy, the moon is the only source of light.

Heavy breathing and the shuffle of feet are heard.

A door swings open and a dark FIGURE emerges.

Stepping into the alley, the figure stops and takes out a cigarette. Striking a match against the wall and brings it up the cigarette, where it illuminates the face of Frank.

He discards the match and walks off into the night.

A moment later, Jacob emerges from the dark and follows Frank's footsteps down the street.

EXT. DORSET STREET - NIGHT

The echo of dogs barking and the distant voices of drunken men.

Frank puffs on his cigarette as he strides along the empty street.

MARY, mid twenties with long red hair, steps from a side street and confronts Frank.

Jacob stops and watches from afar.

MARY

How about it?

FRANK

Not tonight, Mary, I've had my fun with another.

Frank walks away.

MARY

Half price then...for you.

Frank stops.

FRANK

An offer I can't refuse.

He walks back to Mary, and together they disappear into the dark side street.

Jacob scowls and leaves the scene.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Frank stares at Jacob.

He clutches his stomach and winces. Blood trickles from his nose.

Edward stands and rushes to Franks aid.

JACOB

No one can resist the best
chocolate in London, can they,
Detective Logan?

Jacob smiles.

EXT. DORSET STREET - MILLERS COURT - DAY

A small archway leads through to the court.

A large crowd are gathered, each member pushing for a
better view. Police Officers fight to hold them back.

A horse and carriage approaches and stops behind the
intrigued onlookers.

EXT. MILLERS COURT - DAY

A ring of small houses, dingy and run down.

Edward exits one of the houses, situated at the rings edge.

His face pale, he gags and coughs. He places his hand
against the wall as his legs wobble.

Frank enters the court.

EDWARD

This one's worse. A real mess.
I wonder how long and how many
more before we catch him?

Frank stares at the house.

FRANK

You best get Abberline down here
then.

Edward nods.

FRANK

We have our own matter to attend
to. A letter requesting my
attention, that I hope has
precious little in common with
this.

Frank leaves the court, followed by a pale looking Edward

FADE OUT.