

Scotland Yard 2017-2018
Compiled Mysteries (Without Solutions)

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Story A- The Strange Abduction of Kanan Hiremath

On Sunday, February the 28th 2010, sometime late in the morning, Kanan Hiremath went missing from his home in Bangalore. The Missing Person report, however, was not filed until the next morning, when his neighbour, Dr Ezekiel Philip, contacted the police informing them of a call that he had received at dawn, demanding a ransom of 54 lakh Rupees for the release of Mr Hiremath. Dr Philip was questioned further on the victim, his features and his personality. Kanan Hiremath was the son of a businessman who ran a firm selling machine components for several industries, and had taken over the business after his parents' untimely death. He was between 30 and 35 years in age, and stood around 5'10" tall, with a muscular frame. He had been involved in the freak road accident which had killed his parents five years ago, and whenever the subject came up he would get visibly uncomfortable and try to avoid talking about it. Mr Hiremath had inherited his house, a massive colonial villa from his parents. He generally lived in isolation, mostly only commuting to and from work. Dr Philip then described the ransom call; the voice had sounded like that of a middle-aged male, somewhat deep and rough. It had also sounded familiar to him. Moreover, the voice demanded a strangely exact amount of money and gave Dr Philip instructions on where the money was kept in the victim's house, and how to get it, which lead the police to speculate that the culprit was someone that both the doctor and Mr Hiremath knew. On tracing, the ransom call was found to have originated from a PCO payphone 27 km away from where the abductee was last seen in the neighbourhood.

A1:

The first suspect that the police decided to interrogate was Dr Ezekiel Philip himself. He admitted that he knew that the victim was not at home that day since around ten in the morning, but did not report it at the time because he thought that Mr Hiremath had gone out. He had also tried to check in on him, but no one had answered the doorbell and the door was locked. However, he did not have a clear answer as to why he did not inform the police even when the victim had not returned at night. He also confessed to having prescribed sleeping pills for the victim when he had complained of suffering from severe insomnia. But further probing did not yield much result, other than that the doctor had an afternoon outpatient shift at the hospital where he worked on Sundays, for which he left his house at around 11am, and returned at 5pm. Moreover, Mr Hiremath seemed to have a cordial relationship with Dr Philip. The doctor also gave the police a bit of information that he thought was relevant: as he was getting ready to leave for the hospital, he saw from the window of his room a man in a blue uniform walking to the front door of Mr Hiremath's house, and although he could not see clearly, he guessed that the person must have been the postman.

A2:

Based on the info that the doctor had given and his description of the postman- appearing around 25 to 35 years old, around 5'9" and well built- the police continued their search. When they enquired about the new suspect at the post office, they found out that the postman who delivered the letters in the abductee's neighbourhood did not match the description given, being old and rather short and scrawny.

The postman in question had taken a leave that day, and so the investigators went to his house. Upon reaching the location, they realized that the postman's house was on the same street as the payphone from which the ransom call was made. While questioning the postman, they found that he had taken a leave because his wife was ill and was admitted in the ward at a nearby hospital. When asked about his whereabouts on the fateful day, he said that he had not done his rounds that day, Sunday not being a working day, or on the day after, as he was in the hospital with his wife, and had in fact just returned home from there. This claim was supported by the other people living in Mr Hiremath's neighbourhood. He also had hospital bills with the dates given on them as proof of the same. However, he admitted to struggling and spending most of his earnings to pay off the bills. When asked what he knew of the victim, he said that he had an eccentric personality; sometimes he would be pleasant, but at other times he would be secretive, and accuse the postman of plotting to steal his money. The postman had also seen him standing at a lottery ticket shop next to the payphone when returning home a few days ago, and they had talked for a while. According to him, the victim seemed to be friendly at first, but as he talked about his house and family, Mr Hiremath began to act strange, and abruptly walked off.

A3:

An investigation into the victim's background found that Mr Hiremath had a sister named Karuni who lived in Shimoga with her husband and children. She was a shareholder in the family business, and drove over to Bangalore to visit her brother occasionally. The siblings once had a dispute over the inheritance of their family property. The police also found that the evening before the victim had disappeared, Ms Hiremath and her family had visited him. The fact that the kidnapper seemed to know the house and the victim well gave them more reason to suspect her. When they contacted her though, she told them that she hadn't gone to his house since that evening and that they had returned to Shimoga by car the next day itself, but there was no way to confirm this claim. On further questioning, she told them about the accident that claimed their parents' lives, and how he had felt responsible for it. She remembered him talking about how he would be punished for 'killing his parents and taking what was theirs.' Mr Hiremath had frequent nervous breakdowns after this incident, and had undergone psychotherapy for a few months on his sister's insistence.

A4:

The last suspect that both Dr Philip and the postman had talked about was the maid who worked in Mr Hiremath's house during the weekend. The postman claimed to have heard her when he came to deliver the post on Saturdays. The day before the abduction, he had heard her talking to herself. She had a deep voice, 'which sounded more male than female', and she had sounded angry. The way she talked, the postman believed that she was fighting with someone, but he could not hear anyone else other than her. According to him, she had kept demanding a raise in wages, and that if she didn't get it, she would cause trouble. The doctor also said that he had seen her silhouette at the window upstairs, and that she seemed taller than the average woman. Both men gave her name to be Kashi, but on searching, they found that the woman did not exist.

A5:

Three days after the victim was reported missing, Dr Philip called the police station to say that he had suddenly come back home. Mr Hiremath was given a medical examination which showed that he had no signs of injury. When questioned, he did not remember what had happened to him. He also said that he had bought a lottery ticket for a prize worth Rupees 54 lakh around a week before, and ever since then had been receiving voice mails from a man who kept threatening him saying that he knew all about him and would punish him for his sins if he did not give him money. The day Mr Hiremath disappeared, he had woken up as per his regular schedule, and was reading the paper when he found out that he had won the lottery. Then, he had heard the bell ring, and everything blacked out.

What had happened to Mr Hiremath? Who abducted him, and who was the voice making the threatening phone calls? Is this a tale of crime for money, or does it go much deeper than that?

Story B- F.R.I.E.N.D.S No More

The New Year's Day of '09 wasn't a happy one, as the world-renowned actor, Joey Tribbiani, had been found murdered in his villa in Las Vegas. The famous detective Gunther had been called upon to crack the case. On talking to Joey's assistant Janice, he learned that, all through the previous year, Joey had been stalked, blackmailed and had even received death threats. Upon investigating the crime scene, he determined that the stalker (who was the murderer) was someone, who was a very close friend of Joey, as there were no signs of a struggle. He caught the next flight to New York, to interrogate Joey's famous friends.

B1:

Monica, who was already annoyed that Gunther had brought flight germs into her house, said fiercely, "Listen, detective, I had nothing to do with Joey's murder. Hell! I didn't even leave New York as I was busy managing my restaurant." When asked if she had been in touch with Joey, she said, "Well, whether I talk to my friends or not, should be none of your concern!"

B2:

Chandler, gobbling tic-tacs, jokingly said, "Did he eat himself to death?" When asked about his whereabouts in the past year, he replied, "Well, I did visit him a couple of times....". Gunther interjected, "May I ask about what, the two of you discussed?" Chandler dodged the question by saying, "Instead of answering, can I offer you a sarcastic comment?" Gunther smiled and moved on to the next person.

B3:

Phoebe, without much change in her expression, said, "Well, whenever I used to think of Joey, I used to hear these voices in my head, saying not to trust Chandler. Also, there were times, when his (Chandler) aura felt as though he would bring about a major catastrophe." When asked about her activities, the past year, she exasperatedly gave her diary saying, "Look! I haven't missed a single entry. If you want, you can go through all three sixty-five of them! It will prove that I haven't left New York in the past year!"

B4:

Ross, who looked very uneasy, said, "See, I'm a very busy man. I have to give a presentation on fossils today...". Gunther a bit annoyed, replied, "Sir, please stick to answering the question at hand: Did you or did you not meet Joey in the last few months?" "Well I do wish I could have met Joey, but as I said, I am a very busy man. I have to give a presentation on fossils today..."

B5:

Rachel, who worked as a fashion designer said, "Look pal, let's forget about Joey for a second and look at your clothes instead! They are very out of fashion, detective! If I may suggest, lose the hat, it doesn't suit you." Gunther, biting his teeth, replied, "Madam, you haven't gone to work, the past few months. May I ask, why?" Rachel hesitatingly replied, "Maternity leave."

After taking in the statements, Gunther sipped some coffee and smiled, for he had figured out who the real killer was. Can you?

Story C- The Murder of Ms Wilkinson

One eerie night at Miss Peregrine's home for Psychiatric persons, lit by the dim yellow hue of the only light in the room, lay Ms. Wilkinson's cold, lifeless body surrounded by a group of pseudomaniacs; Tom McCarthy, John Doe, Macey Quill, Eva Adams and Marcus Sanders, eagerly waiting to falsely claim to having committed the crime of killing their warden. The murder as investigated by Alan Ston, the best detective and cryptographer in town, was clean, sophisticated and perfectly planned with absolutely no evidence left behind except a note that flashed the question "You Ever Care About Me?" While searching through Ms. Wilkinsons files, Mr. Ston found a note containing the ID (D-1-3-5-19) for the patient who was eligible to have been discharged two weeks back. Now, Mr. Ston had the impossible task of interrogating a bunch of pseudomanics and finding out who the actual culprit was.

C1:

Moving ahead with the interrogations, first up was Tom, a man in his early 50's, a patient at the ward for the last 6 years. Interrogations revealed that Tom and Ms. Wilkinson were unnaturally close and as she was planning to transfer out of the facility, Tom got paranoid about the fact that she could just let go of him, didn't even care about his emotions and he was just stuck there. He claimed to have poisoned her by coating her water glass with a layer of bromodialone and she being unaware of this, had a sip and died of a seizure. And this was the end of his interrogation.

C2:

Almost having been there for a decade, former billionaire John was next in line. Before being admitted, John's last investment banking venture went haywire because of which he seemed to have developed this mental illness. He says that the ward authorities, being in debt, were sucking every penny that remained of his though everyone thought he was ready to go. He knew Ms. Wilkinson was the deciding head and came to the conclusion that if he silently suffocated her to death, he could leave this wretched place and that being in jail or giving up on life is better than being a lab rat here. By doing so he also wanted to bring out the truth about the authorities. This is how his interrogation session ended.

C3:

Certainly known for being very silent, composed and level headed, Macey was up next. Her history records being issued a death sentence for a murder she claimed to have committed as a pseudomaniac. She claims during her interrogation that she was never a psuedomaniac and only pretended to be one as an escape route from her impending death. She also said that Ms. Wilkinson was the only one who found out about this two weeks back and was soon going to report it to the police. As she obviously did not want to get out and succumb to her sentence, she said she killed Ms. Wilkinson by exchanging her vitamin supplements with a mild dose of morphine tablets which led to her slow and unexpected death two weeks hence.

C4:

Eva, a famous French drug lord's wife and a very observant woman, was admitted 4 years ago because she had developed this illness due to drug overuse. Recently, her health had been deteriorating and she hadn't eaten in days. She also had a visitor who snuck in a newly synthesized drug which cured the

person of his or her pseudomania but could prove to be lethal for those who did not suffer from it. Mr.Ston's next question was; "So, are you telling me you injected Ms. Wilkinson with the drug?" She says, "Yes, and the truth is a weapon...." and passes out on the table.

C5:

Yet, after four of the suspects were done with their interrogation, Mr.Ston was still clueless as to who the culprit was. Marcus was Ms. Wilkinson's abandoned son. His childhood had been deprived of all the joys provided by a mother just because she didn't want him. Once he was admitted here, he found out that this was his real mother, a wave of vengeance lashed over him and all he sought for since that day was revenge. His interview wasn't very fruitful. All he repeatedly said was "You never cared for me" over and over again. Though the last interrogation didn't hint at much, Mr.Ston knew exactly who the murderer was.

Story D- Darkness of Light

It was a cold night in December. In the house at the far end of the street, a woman was found lying outside on the cold brickwork in a pool of dark crimson blood. Inside the house, another woman was found dead on the sofa. But there was no blood around her. All that was there was a face twisted in pain and a lifeless body trying to match the coldness of the weather outside. The first woman was Alice, a rising supermodel in the industry. The one inside the house was Dinah, who used to be one of Alice's closest friends before some unfortunate events tore them apart. There were three other people in the house at that moment. First was Connell, who was Alice's live in relationship partner and Dinah's former boyfriend. Next, there was Bernard Peterson, the short-tempered designer who found Alice and mentored her for 10 years, taking her to the top of the industry. And finally, Rosy, the maid who had been in Alice's employ for the last 8 years. The police, lead by DI Joe, arrived at the scene and so began the investigation into the events of that dreadful night.

D1:

Almost a year ago, Alice, Dinah and Connell used to be really close friends. At that time Dinah and Connell were in a relationship. Alice always had a thing for Connell though. Dinah and Alice used to be small time models then, under the mentorship of the designer Bernard, striving to carve a place in the industry. After Alice got her breakthrough in the fashion industry and her popularity increased, Connell used his charm and became really close with Alice. Dinah wasn't so lucky and the fact that Connell started running behind Alice wasn't much help either. After a few months, Alice and Connell moved in together which infuriated Dinah to no end. It turned out that Connell had OCD, and that too a very severe case of it. Alice slowly realized that Connell was a really jealous person and at the same time she met Carl Robertson, an influential and successful actor. This, combined with everyday issues with Connell, made her drift towards Carl. Rumour had it that they were remarkably close and tension arose between Alice and Connell as a result. Meanwhile, Carl persuaded Alice to join the film industry which upset Bernard who had always prided himself on Alice's accomplishments and liked to take credit for her success. Caught amidst all this, Alice had decided to have a reunion of sorts to mend all these broken fences. This was how everyone came together that fateful night, although Carl turned down the invitation since it clashed with an important shoot.

D2:

The police began their investigation by examining the bodies. The death of Alice seemed to have happened as a result of a fatal wound she sustained due to a fall from the balcony above. One entrance to the balcony was from inside the house, on the first floor. There was also a metal ladder on the other side which acted as a fire exit and connected the balcony to the outside of the house. From her condition, Dinah appeared to have died from some kind of poison. After a thorough search of the crime scene, a bottle of arsenic was found near Alice's body, close to the ladder. A bottle of cyanide was also found hidden in Dinah's dress. The police also noted four glasses of wine kept on the four corners of the table in the living room. One of the glasses was half empty while the rest were full. They were immediately sent to the lab for examination. Then DI Joe sat down to take the statements of the people present in the house.

D3:

Connell: "Day before yesterday, Alice and I decided to call everyone here and sort out the issues we had. Rosy, the maid has been in Alice's service for the last 8 years and was very dear to her. She trusted her with her life. Today, Dinah came 20 minutes late. Typical of her! But still earlier than Bernard. To be honest I wasn't really in the favour of this meeting but I just went along with her decision. Bernard brought a bottle of wine for the evening. I never really liked that guy. He's a mean son of a bitch, always taking credit for all of Alice's work. As for Dinah, she was really pissed off with both Alice and me. I think she was really jealous of the fact that Alice became successful and she didn't. She was always like that. Anyways, so we all sat down and talked for a while and then Bernard walked into the next room with Rosy to pour out the wine. I excused myself for a piss and went upstairs. I came out of the washroom and umm... felt like checking the windows and doors since it's so cold outside. It took me around 10 minutes to get to the door to the balcony since it's in the other corner. I heard a scream and then this thud. I ran to the railing and saw Alice lying on the floor below. I was startled. It felt like I couldn't move. As soon as I regained my senses and came down running, shouting at the top of my voice for someone to call an ambulance and ran out the main door. I remember Bernard shouting and searching for his phone frantically. Rosy was beside him covering her mouth in horror. I ran to Alice's body and oh my God I knew right then that I'd lost her."

D4:

Rosy: "I don't know what to say. Miss Alice was the kindest person I ever met. She told me about the evening gathering yesterday. Mr Bernard and Miss Dinah are both frequent visitors and they feel quite at home here. After everyone arrived, Mr Bernard came to the kitchen to pour out the wine. A glass fell from his hand and broke and I had to clean up the mess. While I was doing it, we heard shouting from the living room. Miss Alice and Miss Dinah seemed to be having an argument. I heard Miss Dinah saying that she wished Miss Alice was dead. Mr Bernard rushed out to the living room. I went there after some time and found Miss Dinah sitting alone in the room without any sign of either Miss Alice or Mr Bernard. I asked her if she wanted some wine and she nodded. So I brought her the wine tray. I left the tray there and went back to the kitchen to prepare the dinner. The next thing I heard was loud banging on the main door. I ran to respond to it and Mr Bernard just burst into the room. He told me to call an ambulance, that Miss Alice fell down from the balcony. I looked at Miss Dinah and she was surprisingly quiet. I tried shaking her and she just tumbled to one side. I checked her pulse frantically and my blood froze. There was no pulse. Then I saw a glimpse of Mr Connell rushing towards the main door. He was also shouting. I called the Ambulance and Police. She also said that Connell has some really weird habits. She has seen him numerous times opening and closing windows and doors. And that she heard Mr Bernard and Miss Alice argue a few days back. They were talking about how close Miss Alice and Mr Carl were and Miss Alice said that Mr Carl is a really nice guy."

D5:

Bernard: "He killed her! Connell - that bastard! The guy's insane! Okay, I will start from the beginning. I came here because I'd had enough of all these arguments. I know I was pissed off with her because it was me, ME, who took her from streets and turned her the supermodel she was. I invested so much in her, and for what? For her to ditch me for some manipulative hotshot actor? Simply leave me like that! Anyways we shouldn't speak ill of the dead. I feel really sorry for her. I was in the kitchen when I heard

Dinah shouting at Alice, threatening to kill her. I went in to intervene but Alice started shouting back at me. The situation didn't improve much and I rushed out of the main door to get some fresh air and calm myself down. I saw Alice going towards the stairs in a fit of anger. I went out and was just leaning against my car when I heard a shriek and a thud. I ran round the corner of the house and saw Alice lying on the brickwork, her head smashed. I looked towards the balcony and saw Connell standing near the balcony door. I ran back to the house and banged on the door, but, no one responded so I ran to the window. It was terribly cold outside and the window was foggy. I wasn't able to see anything inside. I tried wiping the window and peered inside and I saw Connell peering nervously down the stairs. Then, when Rosy opened the door, I rushed inside and called the ambulance. "

The next day the reports came back from the lab. It stated that Dinah had died from arsenic poisoning. They had also detected cyanide in the wine in one of the glasses. DI Joe saw the report and exclaimed, "Now we know exactly what happened!"

How did the two murders happen? And who was the culprit?

Story E- The Late Night Death

It had been a very cold couple of nights at the Braavos Asylum, ever since winter was here. The chilling winds at night had been giving a hard time for the guards around the asylum especially at night. And the inmates' rooms had no proper heating system and that made quite a few inmates to go sick thanks to the cold. And on 13th of September, it was a night just like that. A cold night, and there had been a cold-blooded murder as well. The head guard of the Asylum had been murdered in the dim night light. He had been murdered right on his office chair, right around 3 in the night. The murder weapon was right next to him, his baton. The officer had decided to catch his regular late night nap and dozed off on his chair. The lights had been out since 10 in the night due to a power failure. As soon as the head guard had dozed off the murderer got in and used the baton lying on his table and smashed the officer's head. No fingerprints on the door, on the baton or anywhere around the room because most of the members of the asylum wore gloves due to the extreme cold. There are 5 rooms in the same corridor. 3 of them belong to the inmates, one belonging to the room of the Deputy Head Guard and the final one is that of the Chief Psychiatrist. As Detective Tyrion of WCPD rolled into the asylum he knew, that these were the 5 major suspects he had to look into.

E1:

The Deputy Head Guard Varys was the first suspect. A man standing about 5'6 inches and stout. Had been a working guard at the Asylum for the last 22 years. Was next in line for the post of Head Guard. He was one of the first people to find Head Guard Davos lying dead on the table. Immediately notified the whole security force about it. He found the body around 4 in the morning and he was on the upper floor on patrol duty along with Sergeant Greyworm at the supposed time of murder. Had been behind the position of the Head Guard for quite a while. Detective Tyrion had an animated conversation with Varys on his relationship with Davos and Tyrion casually remarked that being in an Asylum like this could turn the sanest of people insane.

E2:

Arya. Or the girl with many faces. Suffers from Multiple-personality Disorder (MPD). Had gone around on a murder spree around the city claiming she was somebody else. Each time a different person. She is locked up in the room adjacent to that of the Head Guard. However, she was sleeping at that point of time and even the room is locked from outside and the keys were with the Deputy Head Guard. Has often had a stifled relationship with the head guard as she tried to attack him claiming he was responsible for her brother's death. She claims that she heard nothing.

E3:

Hodor the sleepwalker. A Homicidal sleepwalker. Has a record of having killed over 20 people, sleepwalking right through all of them. Claims that he has little or no memory of any of those murders and was acquitted of all the murders as he was supposedly hypnotised into killing these people by a crazy hypnotist Bran 'The Raven'. Was sound asleep most of the time and only one other person has access to his room, the official psychiatrist.

E4:

Daenerys. A schizophrenic young girl, who goes around fantasising about Dragons and believes she is

the descendant of some famous dragon Dynasty. Had burnt her whole family down and claimed that her dragons did it. Is mostly locked up in her room where she spends a lot of sleepless nights chanting about being the queen of imaginary lands. Has had violent bursts of anger against various employees of the asylum including Davos.

E5:

Melisandre, the Chief psychiatrist of the asylum. Has worked here at the Asylum for quite a while and tends to most of the patients at the Asylum. Usually goes for a round at night around in the rooms to check in on the vitals of the patients. Is also a trained hypnotist. Head Guard Davos never has had full faith on her because of her uncanny ways with the patients and has tried to get her ousted a couple of times. Was also quite interested in the works of Bran 'The Raven'. Claims that she was up in her room and was listening to the Beethoven's Fifth Symphony on her Home Theatre Set and hence heard nothing from the Head Guard's room.

Detective Tyrion had a walk around the corridor and went over the statements of each of the 5 suspects a couple of times. He finally came to a conclusion as to who the killer was and how they went about doing the crime.

Who is the murderer? How did they go about it?

Story F- The Secret

The cool September breeze ruffled and brushed apart the red and white rose petals strewn artistically on the aisle leading to the altar. The wedding guests, impeccably dressed in suits and dresses, sat motionless, gripped with shock. The air between them was as grim as the look on Edward Patterson's face. He had just heard the news. His fiancé, Alayna Kingsley was found dead in the woods a mere six miles from the resort. A white handkerchief, a hair band and a small, disheveled piece of paper was all that was found beside the decked-up body at the crime scene. Even dead, she looked beautiful, what with the make-up accentuating her features. She was last seen at breakfast the previous morning. Edward was visibly shattered. His fiancé was a lean woman with beautiful pale skin, friendly blue eyes contrasting her strong, sharp features. Her pixie haircut had grown just long enough to flow over to her lower neck. She worked as an analyst in Gray Holdings Inc., where she'd met Edward. He loved her immensely.

F1:

Patrick Reed was a successful senior manager at Gray Holdings Inc. He was a brooding man; his wealth and his love for extreme sports, coupled with his sweet talking and suave mannerisms was what drew freelance writer, Amelia Kruger to him. Her regular job had her closing deals and brainstorming over them, so Patrick was an easy getaway. She had an enchanting dimpled smile, highlighting her perfect sharp features and strawberry blond short hair. They had a wild lust and a comforting love for each other. Except for the occasional drunken outbursts from Pat and the fights that ensued because of his insane jealousy for Amelia's ex- boyfriend, things were going smooth. Until a month ago. Amelia had abruptly left him. He knew she had gone back to her ex. He had seen their text messages on her phone the morning she left.

F2:

Tony Kahill and Valentina Prescott were madly in love with each other. The lean, charming, blue-eyed Tony was much too good-looking for a guy. He pulled his slightly long hair back in a small pony. He worked at Gray Holdings Inc., and it was at a company get-together that he'd met the gorgeous Miss Prescott. She worked at a prestigious pharmaceutical company as a research intern. Her commendable confidence and brains matching her beauty was what clinched the deal for Tony. In no time, they bonded over the same tastes in music, books and traveling. Their love grew to the point where Antony had even considered proposing marriage, which Valentina secretly knew of. Which was why the shock was immense when he suddenly broke up with her while on one of his flying tempers, and left for good. She was heartbroken and devastated. Her straight-faced demeanor though, betrayed none of the hatred she suddenly felt.

F3:

Detective Ethan Sawyer ushered in Ira Lawton to questioning. She was Alayna's maid of honor and Edward's best friend. Though the wedding came as an unwelcome reminder that she could never have Ed, she found solace in the fact that it was her own closest friend Alayna who'd get him.

"Where were you, at say, 7pm last night Ms. Lawton?" enquired Detective Sawyer.

"There were some last-minute changes with the floral arrangements and Alayna had agreed to meet me at the florist's, but she didn't turn up, and then later I headed over to the spa" a shaken Ms. Lawton confirmed.

He needn't know about the deep conversation with Ed the previous morning, or her drive through town with Alayna, she thought to herself.

F4:

Patrick Reed was brought into questioning. His was one of the last calls dialed from Alayna's phone.

"How did you know Ms. Kingsley, Mr. Reed?" began Detective Sawyer.

"She was a junior at the office we worked at together, Detective" replied Patrick.

"And what exactly do you have to say about the phone call to you the night she died?"

"Alayna had a troubled demeanor for a while. She suspected that her fiancé might have been cheating on her. We were pretty good friends despite being at different positions in the company hierarchy. She said she'd wanted to talk and would come by my place."

"Where were you at around 7pm, Mr. Reed?"

"I was at a restaurant drinking with my girlfriend, but I was feeling a little queasy, so I went over to a druggists' and bought a few meds; I'd told Alayna we couldn't meet". He showed the prescriptions.

F5:

Valentina Prescott, who'd found the body while walking by the woods, besides being Patrick Reed's half-sister, was next to be questioned. Sawyer knew what they said about the person finding the body.

"What were you doing near the woods Ms. Prescott?"

"My colleague and I had had an intense thesis debacle and I was out walking trying to calm my mind, when I heard gagging sounds. I went looking and to my horror, found the body, frothing through her mouth. It was too dark for me to see anything else clearly. I immediately called the police"

Upon further investigation, it was found that the small paper read "We Know, AK".

Who committed the murder, and how?

Story G- Dirty Old Town

Ridley's Station was a quaint little town nestled in the imposing Rocky Mountains. The town got its name from being the spot where searchers used to alight from packed trains in the search for gold during the gold rush. The town used to bustle with traffic and trade but like any mining town it was doomed to be abandoned when the mines ran dry, and they soon did. The few remaining residents too changed their character as their homes became dilapidated shacks, their valuables became detritus and ambitions became a mere memory. Some brave souls started new ventures to keep some sense of self-importance. Daniel Mason was one such soul until his lifeless body was found, hogtied, scalped and mutilated in the middle of the town square one winter morning

Below his cold dead body, a placard read:

"My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will not belong to the council of my people or be listed in the records of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the sovereign lord."

-Ezekiel 13:9

G1:

Mr Mason was a great man in a dirty old town. A teetotaler amongst drunkards. His only vice was religion, and yes, religion was a vice in this town. Mason was the self-appointed protector of this town. No drunk sheriff could ever challenge his absolute authority, Justice under Mason was swift, harsh and Christian in nature. The pastor lost his importance and the local church became just another building. Daniel Mason was a leader, a shepherd of his own cult. So when he was shot, half of the town descended into grief and the other half roared with joy, no more prohibition for the drunkards and the brothel madams would see their now empty dens come back to their former glory. "Frankly, anyone in the town could have killed that son of a bitch, myself included.." thought the sheriff, when he heard of Mason's death.

The bar was full of crooks and thieves; it was ironically also the sheriff's favourite watering hole. The same people he threw in the jail cells were his drinking buddies, that was just the nature of this town. However there were some new faces here: dim-witted gunslingers brought in from the nearby towns by the mayor to protect his interests. "These boys wouldn't be half as terrifying without their guns,.." thought the sheriff. The mayor's muscle had started its reign of terror soon after Mason's death. The sheriff would have loved to nail one of them for the murder, if only he wasn't on the mayor's payroll himself.

The sheriff dreamed to go back to his mining days, there were rumours of new unexplored deposits near the town but they were just that, rumours. The town seemed to thrive on rumours like these, rumours which gave them hope and you could even forgive the residents for believing them, because the truth used to be whatever Mason said, and now someone had killed truth itself.

G2:

Mason had many enemies because of the life he led. He had angered the town's peaceful pastor with his quest for violent retribution. Chambers, the owner of the town's liquor store and the former account man in the mines had a grudge against Mason too. Even Aretha, the madam of the local brothel,

despised him. She was a strong woman, physically and mentally, never educated but intelligent, her stare could scare the strongest men but she had a soft side too, the one only her girls had the privilege to see. Aretha's grudge was personal, ever since Mason married Rose, Aretha's hardest working and most favoured girl. Mason had done so in a quest to save Rose, or at least that's what he claimed he was doing. Rose hardly needed to be saved, she was a smart woman in a world of dumb men, she knew her Bible better than Mason ever did or ever would, but as Mrs Mason, her bruised and beaten body told a different story. It seemed like poor Rose had wilted under Mason's shadow.

Everyone knew that Mason's wrath extended to his family. Billy, his oldest son lost his middle finger because he once made the mistake of displaying it to his father. Now, estranged, Billy was well known for threatening to return his father the favour.

Mason's biggest foe, however, was The Mayor himself. The Mayor was a former supervisor at the mines and a unionist who had found his calling in politics, and to be honest the mayor did look better in silk suits than in dirty overalls. This new life had made the once strong mayor, soft, and he had a bulging belly to show for it. He rarely got his hands dirty these days. The Mayor used to enjoy Mason's reign of terror initially, Mason's call for prohibition meant bootlegging became a valid side business for the Mayor. However, as word spread that Mason may contest the next election, his view changed rapidly.

G3:

The sheriff was an institution of incompetence himself. He indulged in the same activities he was meant to stop. Seeing him almost made you think the town needed people like Mason. If the sheriff even bothered asking he would have known that Billy had spent the night Mason was murdered, with one of Aretha's girls and that the Mayor had invited a local mob boss to provide even more muscle for the upcoming elections. He would also have known that Rose was spotted going to the church frequently. Rose often visited the Mayor's office too, especially the land registrar's, but she often bumped into the Mayor. The old friends talked to each other for hours in the, behind locked doors and at odd times.

Chambers too was spotted meeting the pastor of late. When he was not at the church he would roam around the old mines. Sometimes he came back home with old rusty tools, it seemed that he had found new purpose again. He recently gained a new reputation of quoting from holy books on random occasions.

Someone had seen the pastor clean his old tools a few days back. "They are meant for gardening," the pastor said. Although how much gardening one can do with tools meant for breaking rocks was a different question entirely. This small congregation at the church meant little to anyone except to those who attended it. What was discussed in these meets was unknown and no one ever cared to find out either.

Aretha was the only one aloof to it all. She was busier these days. The previously empty brothel was now buzzing with business, but not the party she was used to. She thought about her days in the mines, when she was the only woman working in those dark pits and now she was facing the dark world again, all alone, with no Mason to stop her from getting ahead.

G4:

The sheriff looking at the number of suspects he had and he did something he rarely did, he resorted to rational thought. Solving this crime wouldn't be as easy as pinning it on a poor black bum but would require proper detective methodology. Mason was attacked with a pickaxe, something commonly come

across in a mining town, however, the nature in which the said weapon was wielded was a cause for worry. The wounds were precise, the blows were deep, surely the work of someone with prior experience with it. It took strong men to wield it properly, such wounds could not be inflicted without strength. But that wasn't the end of it, when he took a close look at Mason's left hand he noticed a missing finger. The middle finger specifically. The sheriff inhaled sharply and realised what had to be done.

G5:

Billy Mason was on his seventh drink when the sheriff walked into the bar. The younger Mason put forward his right mutilated hand to greet the sheriff but was met with a pistol butt to his face.

"Why did you kill your own father, Billy?"

It took a moment for the young kid to realise what was happening. "It wasn't me. I swear I hated that swine of a man but I wouldn't kill a fly."

"Don't lie, kid, the noose awaits your neck."

"I swear; it wasn't me it could have been that shit-stain of a Mayor. Even Ma wanted to kill him. Ma and the Mayor were real close when Pa and the Mayor used to work together, they had more reason to kill him than I did. I would never hurt my own blood, I'm better than my father."

Billy could have pleaded all he wished but the truth is after Mason's death, Justice in the town was the sheriff's will and it was all that mattered.

Modern day criminologists still hold a divided stance over this, some say Billy was innocent others support the rationale for choosing him as the suspect. So the question remains unanswered to this day, who killed Mason, and why ?

Story H- The Murder of Nikola Tesla

Year 1851

Amidst heavy rains and violent thunderstorms, Nikola Tesla lay dead in his London apartment. He lay on the ground like Da Vinci's Vitruvian man, hands and legs spread to the farthest possible. Blood came bubbling down his mouth and the smell of fleas inhabiting his dead body was unbearable. All in all, it was a gruesome sight to behold.

H1:

Thomas Edison was the first person to see his best friend drenched in blood as he came to pay an occasional visit. He informed the police at the earliest. Upon further inspection of the crime scene, the police found traces of a white powder which was later confirmed to be arsenic. Post mortem revealed that it was arsenic poisoning that killed Mr Tesla. After a comprehensive investigation, the police decided to question four people.

H2:

Edison - A close friend of Tesla, Edison was heartbroken by his untimely demise. He happened to show up at Tesla's doorstep for a visit but instead was greeted by a dead Tesla lying on the ground. Being the first one to spot the murder, he immediately informed the police. He added further that on his way to Tesla's house he had met his servant Westinghouse at the grocery market. Upon being asked about the arsenic, he said he wasn't very aware of the powder in Tesla's house.

H3:

Westinghouse - The servant was grocery shopping while Tesla's death occurred, as confirmed by Edison. He informed the police that Tesla was taken to the hospital earlier for a suspected case of food poisoning but was discharged after nothing seemed to be particularly wrong after. When asked about the arsenic, he said he didn't know much about it except that it was used by his employer in his experiments. He further claimed that it was one of the other three suspects who is the murderer. Throughout the testimony, his speech was inarticulate and his rambling tone made it hard to decipher what he was trying to convey.

H4:

Roentgen - A relative of Tesla's, he emphasised how Tesla craved for isolation and that death was his enemy. He said that they hadn't met for a long time, but the night before Tesla's death, he had called him. Tesla told him there was something troubling him and that he wanted to talk about it. The time for their meeting was around the same time as Tesla's death. When he reached Tesla's place he was 30 minutes late and saw a fretting Edison and realised Tesla was dead. Further, on checking the records, Roentgen was revealed to be in possession of huge quantities of arsenic.

H5:

Einstein - A junior of Tesla, he was informed by his superior that he was to attend the meeting with Roentgen. He declined citing his mother's poor health. The police later confirmed that the arsenic was

registered in Einstein's name. Einstein confirmed it stating that it was bought for preventing rat infestation at Mr Tesla's place. He further added that the servant occasionally forced Einstein to buy Arsenic because Mr Tesla refrained from doing so.

One of the following is a murderer suffering from a mental illness. Identify the culprit and the illness, and you are good to go.

Story I- The Missing Emeralds

Lincolnshire, England.

It is the year 1860, the cold morning breeze blows past the Harlaxton Manor as the snow slowly collects on its walls. The occupants of the mansion are extremely busy as they prepare for the Sunday Luncheon. The family currently residing in the Harlaxton Manor are the Scrimgours. Brutus Scrimgour is the patriarch of the family. He is a very wealthy man and is very influential; earning a bulk of his wealth through trade with India. Today the Duke of Wellington was stopping by for lunch and so he wanted everything in the house to be perfect. The responsibility of this fell squarely on the shoulders of Martha Scrimgour.

"Thomas, where have you been" yelled Martha. A man in his early 40's put down the vase he was dusting and turned to address Martha. He was wearing a dress coat with formal trousers and a black bow tie. His name was Thomas Rhett and he was the butler. Thomas replied "I had gone to collect the mail Ma'am". "Forget about the mail" replied Martha. "Have the flowers come in yet?" "I am not quite sure about that, I will check up on that" said Thomas. "Go quickly and I want those flowers to look perfect" said Martha. Thomas left with a curt nod. Martha quickly made her way to the kitchen and found the chef coating the lamb with a mix of rosemary and basil. She was pleased to see that her chef Harry was finally working hard. But just as soon as Harry had completed coating the meat he turned and picked up the pipe lying on the counter and started to smoke. This gesture infuriated Martha and she stormed into the kitchen and snatched the pipe and screamed "I saw you working hard and thought that it was bad of me to fire you. But now I am sure of what I am doing. This is the last dish you will ever cook in this house, after this I want you out".

Martha stormed out of the kitchen and entered into the gardens for a bit for fresh-air. She noticed her gardener Sam, removing the snow from the garden. He saw her and greeted her. She smiled back and she then took a deep breath and walked back into the house. She saw her servant Paula exiting the kitchen with a glass of water. As soon as Paula saw her she quickly came in front of her and said "Ma'am I have finished arranging and setting your clothes and the emeralds have also been polished and kept on the bed". Martha nodded and slowly climbed up the stairs to her bedroom. As she reached the top she heard the doorbell, the door was answered by Paula and Brutus walked in and took off his coat and boots. He looked at his wife and exclaimed "Honey get dressed, the Duke will be here any minute now". Martha promised that she would be ready as soon as possible and then opened the door to her bedroom. As she looked at the clothes arranged on her bed, she noticed something missing. The shining green emeralds her husband had got her from India were missing. She screamed as loud as she could. Hearing her screams the entire household entered the room. She then looked at Brutus's face and said "Someone has stolen the emeralds" as tears rolled down her face. Brutus looked at her and then to his working staff and said "Paula shut the doors, the thief is among us. Nobody is to leave until we catch the individual and send a telegram to Hercules Pirate and ask him to come here now. Only he can solve this now".

I1:

Hercules Pirate the renowned detective appears on the scene and he starts interviewing the staff of Mr. Scrimgour. The first person to be interviewed is Paula, the maid.

H.Pirate:- Have a seat Paula and tell me about the events that transpired today.

Paula: - I came to work at 7:30 and Miss Scrimgour asked me to start cleaning up the house and after I was done, to get her clothes sorted out and to polish her pearls. I finished cleaning the house by around 9:00 and then entered her bed chambers, unlocked the safe and polished the jewels. I locked the door after that and left the room.

H.Pirate:- Is it true that apart from Miss Scrimgour, only you know the combination lock to the safe?

Paula: - Yes it is. But I would never steal the jewels. The Scrimgours are very nice to me and I have been working with them for years. I would never do such a thing.

H.Pirate:- Where do you live?

Paula: - I live in Yorkshire with my husband Todd.

H.Pirate:- What does he do?

Paula: - He is searching for a job. He lost his job with the East India Company after their acquisition by the crown.

H.Pirate:- Okay Paula you may leave.

I2:

The next person to be interviewed by Hercules Pirate is the chef.

H.Pirate:- Please have a seat Harry and tell me what were you doing during the robbery?

Harry: - I came to work at around 7:30 and Miss Scrimgour asked me to get the food ready for today's luncheon so I prepared the spice mix and baked the potatoes. A little over 9, I left the house to pick up the rosemary and basil needed for the cooking from the garden. I spoke to Sam, the gardener, for a short period of time and then got back to work.

H.Pirate:- This is your last week here isn't it? Thought of leaving with a bang eh?

Harry: - The main reason I am being fired is because of my smoking. I am a chain-smoker, I will admit that. I have been trying to quit but I can't. But that doesn't make me a criminal.

H.Pirate:- But here is the rub in the story. You mentioned the rosemary and basil needed for the cooking. The plant grows next to a window right below the stairs in the house. Is that just a coincidence?

Harry: - It is just a coincidence, I had nothing to do with that. I promise.

I3:

The next person to be interviewed by Hercules Pirate was the butler.

H.Pirate:- Have a seat Thomas and tell me, what were you doing during the robbery?

T.Rhett:- I woke up at 7 in the morning and got dressed. Then I waited for Mr Scrimgour in the foyer as he had some errands to complete and I was to assist him. I returned to the manor at 9 and started on my chores. I collected the mail, cleaned the cutlery, set the table for the luncheon and polished the vases.

H.Pirate:- Is it true that you weren't exactly a butler and this is a profession you took up quite recently?

T.Rhett:- Yes, I was a stage performer before this, but I was not able to succeed in that profession not because of my bad acting capabilities but because the directors in England love to sideline true talent. I cannot deal with them as they were never pleased with my acting which I am sure was the best they had ever seen. It is all nepotism I tell you! They hire their children to keep the money flowing in the family.

H.Pirate:- So why become a butler?

T.Rhett:- Well I was quite experienced with all the duties of a butler because I had to care for my siblings. And I offered my services to the Scrimgours and I was happy when they accepted my services as they are an influential family. But they also treated me with a lot of kindness and I would never do anything to them.

I4:

The next person to be interviewed was Sam the gardener.

H.Pirate:- Have a seat Sam and tell me what you were doing during the robbery.

Sam: - I came to the house at 9. Then went to the storeroom to collect the gardening materials. I then left to clear up the snow. After a while Harry came out to have a smoke. We chatted for a while, then I got back to work. I then entered the kitchen to have a glass of water. I noticed Paula and Harry talking.

H.Pirate:- What were they talking about?

Sam: - Well from what I heard I think Harry has been fired because Paula was consoling him telling him that he could always get a job in a better place and that he must really quit smoking and turn a new leaf.

H.Pirate:- The storeroom is very close to the bed chambers. Did you notice anything?

Sam: - Nothing it all looked normal to me. The door was unlocked with the key on the door.

H.Pirate:- How is that usual?

Sam (laughs):- Paula is quite absent-minded I am sure she must have forgot to lock it. She gets reprimanded a lot for it.

I5:

After interviewing the suspects, Hercules Pirate enters the bedroom and takes a look. He notices the furniture in the room has been wiped and there is a gleam to it. There are some water stains on the floor and the dress that Miss Scrimgour was supposed to wear is on the bed. Hercules paces about the room processing the information he acquired.

Hercules Pirate suddenly gets a brainwave. He has got the culprit. It was right there all along. A small mistake but that's all it took.

Story J- Vanity turns Dark

If vanity could be described as an object then nothing would describe it better than the White Mansion. Its wide archways with huge supporting pillars and the interiors filled with exquisite furniture from all around the world, scream false pride. But the most outrageous of them is the dog house. A two-storeyed building filled with all sorts of mad eccentricities, up to date with the latest trends. This morning though, the atmosphere was filled with a solemn silence of the unexpected. A girl was found dead in the woods surrounding the mansion grounds. How and why an unknown girl scaled the walls of this place in the dead of the night, no one knows or so they say. Forensics have confirmed the reason for death as multiple, fatal animal bites, probably by a dog.

Considering their high social status and immense fortune one would assume that the Whites are highly sociable and amicable. Quite to the contrary, they happen to be a bunch of social misfits consisting of an old mother, two widowed daughters and a trusted servant. None of them have ever been spotted at social gatherings. Narcissa White, the old mother suddenly came into possession of the huge fortune following the demise of her husband, Dr Nebula White.

J1:

Seated in a room filled with the world's most exquisite clocks, Narcissa White denied outright, recognising the girl and asked for a quick clear up of the entire affair. "Oh, this is so scandalous, what will be left of our family were all this to be printed in the papers. How that scum of a girl got in here is past me. Girls these days, I tell you, are up to no good. That watch there is a real beauty Inspector, must have cost you a fortune." Upon being asked about her possible involvement in the crime she said, "Due to severe rheumatism, I am confined to my chair. I need help to even get to my bed. That fellow Rufus takes care of me very well. He is a nice boy." "Oh, I almost forgot I remember hearing Diana, our dog barking sometime around midnight, though who could have let her off chains beats me. Now if you will excuse me, I have a bad headache, I need to rest."

J2:

Lisa White the older of the White sisters looks smug and sly as she answers, "Well it definitely is a mystery how she got in, but serves her right for trying to trespass into our grounds. I would have preferred a more humane punishment though. What puzzles me is why she would want to wander in here. I mean she doesn't look like a cat burglar. Seems to be from a well-bred family, although of course, appearances can be deceptive. I was at the lawyer's trying to sort out some financial matters, the entire day yesterday. I came back at night and immediately went to sleep"

J3:

Elaine White, Lisa's younger sister was a bag of nerves. "This is really scary, I have been telling mom to do something about the security but all she is bothered about is looking after our dog and providing it with all kinds of nonsensical luxuries. All it does is tear everything apart. That dog needs to be checked not let out. Anyway, that's another issue. What if this girl meant to attack us? EEK's! What was that? Oh,

it's just you Rufus. You gave me such a scare. I had a headache the entire day yesterday, so I was confined to my quarters, I didn't even bother getting up for meals. You can ask Rufus here."

J4:

Rufus seemed more refined than an ordinary servant. "The matter looks like a mere burglary incident to me sir, there are way too many things that would sell for a huge fortune. Well, the girl had rotten luck I should say. I was busy with the household work. It's hard to manage a house of these dimensions single-handedly. I helped Lisa madam with a huge parcel of supplies, late into the night and then proceeded to lock all doors. It was pretty late by the time I retired to bed and yes, I do remember hearing Diana bark sometime around midnight, though I didn't think much of it at that time."

J5:

ALL PURPOSE MYRA SHOES A GROWING TREND

Whether you are a sports enthusiast or someone who likes lazing around, you live in the Sahara or the Amazon, Myra shoes are tailor-made to suit your needs. This wonder polymer that can handle all weather conditions and intense wear and tear, is a comfortable fit for any activity. The young Myra Sogndal has created a wave in the shoes market by creating the first ever self-healing polymer. Her simple outer appearance masks the genius that resides inside her. The characteristic smell of polymer is evident even at a distance. This image melts away when one approaches her, as she is extremely amicable and loves talking about her project. Her business strategy is 'Stay passionate about your dreams, they will grow wings and fly' She is planning to expand her business into other fields soon enough. She is an inspiration to other spirited inventors.

- An article from the 'Inventors Inspiration' dated a month ago

THEFT AT MYRA STORE

A large number of goods were stolen from Myra store last night. The theft was discovered this morning by Myra herself. There have been reports of spotting heavy set woman with a gruff voice, on the premises of the incident, around the time of the theft. The police feel that this incident might be connected with a series of minor thefts that have occurred in the neighbourhood during the past month. But none of the other incidents were of this magnitude. Myra Sogndal, the owner of the 'Wonder Polymer Store' seemed very agitated with the incident. She said that she wouldn't rest until she got to the bottom of this.

- Report in 'Daily Times' dated a week back

Story K- Murdering Little Devils

Habib Tariq admired the picturesque beauty of his surroundings. He was a guest of the Anale Owa tribe that occupied the Upper Guinea forests of Southern Guinea. An ethnobotanist by profession, he had set out on a journey to study and learn the relationship of tribal communities with their forest.

Today Habib was in the midst of a group of people waiting outside the hut of the Abenaki family. Timiska Abenaki was giving birth to her first child and everyone was excited and jubilant. The crowd began to whoop as the midwife came out; probably to give the news of a successful delivery. The cheers however, began to dissipate at the sight of her grim expression.

"The chin is divided," she proclaimed. A hush fell over the crowd followed by a wave of frantic whispers.

K1:

Within the space of an hour the chief of tribe Odawa arrived, flanked by his subordinates, Mika and Kadoha. The man on the left, Mika went straight for the hut. Habib listened in terror, the sound of a woman's agonized shrieks and Mika yelling. As Mika came out of the hut and walked into the wilderness Odawa and Kadoha followed suit.

K2:

Habib was perplexed and horrified.

"It is the devil. They will leave it in the clearing and the great spirit will destroy it," said a woman on his right.

"Who are you?" Habib asked.

"I am Dakota, the healer," she stated.

"We have to make it stop! This is inhumane!" he shouted, "Wrong!"

She frowned and shook her head.

K3:

Habib made his way towards the hut. Timiska cried through the evening as her husband tried to comfort and chastise her halfheartedly. As night fell Odawa ordered Mika to bring the child and Kadoha to make preparations for the cremation. Mika returned with the dead child swathed in a cloth in his arms and set him on the floor. Timiska stretched her arm forward and straightened the head of her child. The creaking sound that accompanied this action sent her into another fit of sobs. Kadoha returned with news that all the preparations had been made. He looked at the tiny cadaver and then to Timiska. His eyes were filled with rage and he struck her across the face.

"Why did you touch!" he exclaimed "Shame! Shame! Shame!"

K4:

The following day Habib decided to confront the chief.

"These people are uneducated," he thought to himself, "They actually believe this cock and bull story. Maybe if I talk to the chief and make him see reason he will call for an investigation on the matter."

The meeting however, couldn't have been further away from his hopes and expectations. As soon as he approached the matter the chief went into a fit of rage. "We have accepted you as a guest," he warned,

"but do not try to meddle in our matters. It has been this way since the past few years and shall remain until the great spirit desires it to be so. Do not mock our traditions."

K5:

Habib had taken it upon himself to get to the bottom of the matter. He visited Abenaki's hut and promised Timiska he will avenge the death of her son.

"No," she replied simply, "it was the will of the great spirit. I have been bad, very bad."

"You will have to shave your head to atone for your sins Timiska," said her husband.

At this point Habib had given up on getting help from any of the tribals. He decided to take refuge in his headspace and contemplate on everything he had seen. Can he find the killer?

Story L- Until Death Do Us Part

Mr.Fletcher raised his arms and stretched. Another pile of papers to score and his job here was done.

"I'm going to miss this place," he thought to himself "Pretoria will be great but it's hard to leave all this behind. Mr. Sutachan might be a bit crude and domineering but he's a good man; all the children, especially Danyal and Tanya have come such a long way; and Maria-

The chain of his thoughts were interrupted by a knock on the door. He got up, opened the door and beamed.

"It's you," he said, "Come in.."

L1:

At fifteen minutes past four, a group of police officers swarmed around the small room with parquet flooring that was once Mr.Fletcher's office. His body lay flat against the ground, arms and legs spread out. A faint chlorine like smell pervaded the room. His fingers, once clenched with pain, were now somewhere between opened and closed. The blow on his forehead was as apparent as the look of utter shock on his face. The weapon of murder was nowhere to be found. The murder was tentatively estimated to have occurred 3:30 that afternoon.

Right outside the room stood a throng of curious onlookers, some were teetering on the balls of their feet, trying to get a better view, while others stood still, carrying expressions of anguish and fear on their faces. Mr.Sutachan was being interrogated as was Mrs.Fletcher who was sobbing hysterically. Mr.Fletcher's favourite students Tanya and Danyal stood towards the front of the crowd but Mrs.Maria Galbraith was nowhere to be found.

L2:

A large crowd of parents, students and teachers had gathered at the school courtyard for Mr. Brent Fletcher's memorial service the next morning. People spoke in hushed whispers, looking towards the man standing on the podium in anticipation.

"Good Morning," Mr.Sutachan boomed, "As the principal of this school I would firstly like to thank you all for making it here. Mr.Fletcher was not just a colleague, he was a dear friend. An exceptional lecturer, he possessed a heart as beautiful as his mind. I will miss our ice fishing trips and our long conversations. Thank you Brent for your gentle love, friendship and kindness. We will always remember you for the inspiring, positive person you were."

L3:

"My name is Tanya Varghese," one of the girls said, "and I was one of Mr.Fletcher's students. Mr.Fletcher was more than just a teacher to me. He was the most compassionate, kind man. When I was going through a really rough patch and didn't have anywhere to go for help, Mr.Fletcher listened to my woes and comforted me. I will never be able to repay the kindness he showered me with. We all knew he was leaving Eastwood but nobody was prepared for what happened. To think that we were swimming when he was- he was-

Mr. Sutachan rushed to the stage as Tanya began to weep.

L4:

A light discussion was taking place in a loosely formed circle of faculty members.

Out of nowhere Mrs.Fletcher's shrill voice screamed "You lunatic! You murderous wench! It was too hard for you, wasn't it? You couldn't bear the fact that Brent didn't give a rat's ass about you! I don't care what anyone says-"

"Please Mrs.Fletcher," interrupted Mrs.Maria, her chin held up,"I will not have you throwing absurd accusations at me in a public place. Brent was a great friend and I will let this slide for the sake of his *memory*." Her voice broke at the last word and she lost composure. Tears now streamed freely down her cheeks. She looked around once as if daring someone to mock her, then stormed away. Everyone watched her with bewildered expressions for she was a woman who always maintained a composed persona.

L5:

Below the right corner of the stage Mr.Sutachan was in conversation with Danyal.

"...really hard for me" Danyal lamented, "I mean, I *did* initially loathe Mr.Fletcher when he brought me to your office and informed you about my drug addiction. I was so reckless and spoilt back then. It was after he tried so hard to convince you to not report me that my life turned around. I've found so much purpose and meaning in life. I get good grades and I've developed passion for music, in fact I was at band practice just yesterday afternoon.."

Story M- Murder in the Newsroom

On a chilly Thursday morning, Greg Daniels was found dead. He was the senior journalist for The Scranton Chronicle based in Scranton, Missouri. Private Investigator Billy Macklin was called at 8AM to the Chronicle's newsroom.

Said the janitor, "I came in a little later after 7:30AM and got right to cleaning. Mr. Greg's office is at the other end so by the time I started to clean his room, it should have been 7:50AM. I opened the door and I immediately saw his body lying in a pool of blood on the floor. By that time, Mr. Steve and Mr. Frank had come to the newsroom. I yelled out to them and we checked his pulse even though he was clearly dead. Steve decided to call you to avoid any bad press."

M1:

Steve and Frank said they carpool to work and they reached the newsroom at about 7:40AM. They corroborated what Darryl, the janitor, said regarding what happened when he found the body. Steve had met Billy several times at his office regarding work but it was the first time Billy would be returning the favor. Steve is the City Reporter and Frank is a freelance photographer on a 1 year contract.

M2:

Pete Hawkins, the Editor-in-Chief arrived at 8AM. For an editor who lost his Pulitzer-winning journalist, he was doing alright. "This is gonna look great on the cover page – Pulitzer-winning journalist found dead in newsroom. Get on it Steve; this isn't a day off." It wasn't too hard to figure why no one liked Pete.

No one liked each other really – they just worked together. After winning the Pulitzer, Greg was given his own office and a hefty bonus. Said Frank, "I get that the Pulitzer is a big deal but you don't have to be an arrogant prick to all your colleagues. He really rubbed people the wrong way."

M3:

Billy had reached at 8:30AM and interrogated all the employees. Darryl mentioned something interesting - he had found a Sheaffer pen with the initials W.M when he found the body. Could those be the initials of the killer? Although he still had a few questions left, he had an idea of how the murder happened according to the employees- Greg was working late, finishing, according to Pete, an article he thought would win him another Pulitzer. It was 11PM and Pete was the last to leave. The murderer entered the newsroom after this time and charged into Greg's office, firing two bullets in his chest from a Colt 1911 before leaving the same way he came. Bill slowly smiled and quietly said to himself, "Solving this case is going to make me famous".

M4:

His thoughts were interrupted by a loud argument outside the conference room. Frank yelled at Pete "How do we know you're not the killer, boss? You were the last to leave, weren't you?" "You're one to talk, Frank. Everyone here knows you hated Greg for receiving the Pulitzer Prize when you didn't get one

for your 'breath-taking' photo." Frank gritted his teeth. "So you think I would kill him for that? Since we're getting personal, why don't you tell everyone that Greg used to date your wife and that she still has a soft spot for him?"

M5:

Steve broke in. "Alright, that's enough. Stop accusing each other." But Pete yelled back, "And just so you know, I left at 11PM and I reached home at 11:30PM and that's how long I always take." Billy asked him, "Where do you live?" "At Garrison's Circle." Billy replied, "Checks out. I stay there too and it took me this long both times." "Oh so you just strike his name off the suspect list?" scoffed Frank. "And have you even done a background check on Darryl? These ghetto guys always get into stuff like this. Some PI you are." "Back off, you bloody idiot. You have no idea how difficult it is being a PI", screamed Billy.

With tensions rising and new revelations, a new light is cast on the situation. But in a case where everyone seems to have a motive, who is the real killer?

Story N- The Murder at Blueberry Manor

I woke up in the middle of the night to the sound of my phone ringing. 11:35pm; another call from the department. They wanted me at Blueberry Manor right away. Blueberry Manor was owned by the wealthy Mr. Jeremy who had hit a jackpot in business after college and had come across loads of money. I was quite shocked to hear that Mr. Jeremy had been found dead at the Manor at around 11:30pm. I drove faster than usual and reached the crime scene at 11:55pm.

N1:

The constables from the department arrived at the scene on the basis of a tip off from a certain Mr. Daniel at 11:20pm. Daniel informed them that his roommate Ben had rushed out in an agitated state after a heated discussion about their old friend Jeremy with his car keys and Daniel's pocket knife, locking him in the room. The caller said that his friend might have gotten into trouble since he wasn't answering his calls, and asked the department to check the premises of Jeremy's house, Blueberry Manor. On reaching the Manor, the constables found Jeremy's dead body with blood gushing from a wound in his neck and Ben standing over him in a blood-soaked shirt, knife in hand. They immediately arrested Ben and called Detective Stanley. A pocket knife, grease stained gloves, a heavy spanner, car keys, room keys and a lighter, along with some crumpled paper, was found on Ben.

N2:

Ben vehemently protested his arrest even though all facts pointed to him clearly. When asked about his whereabouts, he narrated his day with intermittent sobs; "Being a mechanic at the local garage shop, I usually come back to the room late and today was no different. I came back from a hectic day at work at around 10:30 pm, went to the fridge and poured myself the usual glass of milk. But a few seconds later, I started to get the fuzzy feeling I get just before a panic attack. I left for a drive with no particular destination in mind, just to get some fresh air. I don't remember anything that transpired after that. Not unusual considering the Dementia I suffer from." When asked about his relation with Jeremy, he said that he, Jeremy and Daniel had been college mates who started a business together. Because of a rash and unexplained business decision, Daniel caused a loss in the business. Soon, this developed into a rift in his friendship with Jeremy, and he left, advising Ben to do the same. Ben subsequently sold off his shares and left too. Later, Jeremy struck gold as the business turned profitable. When being asked about the possibility of an affair between Jeremy's girlfriend Nicole and him, he agreed to having had a crush on her in college, but there was nothing more to it than that.

N3:

Daniel came to the manor at 12:00 am, claiming to have broken down his locked door and rushing to check what had happened. He testified that he was having a rather long discussion about Jeremy's business with Ben after work since about 9pm over tea. Things quickly got heated when Ben got one of his attacks, leading to him leaving the flat angrily, locking Daniel in, muttering something about making Jeremy pay. He informed the police that Ben suffered from Dementia, and had been undergoing treatment for a long time. He also said that Ben hadn't been taking his pills properly since the past few weeks, which made him moody and resulted in frequent smaller attacks that had never before

manifested itself so dangerously. He is not too surprised on learning about the murder of Jeremy.

N4:

Nicole, Jeremy's girlfriend, arrived at the Manor soon after. She broke down looking at the corpse of her beloved. When asked about her whereabouts when the crime occurred, she said she was at a kitty party with their lawyer's wife. The detective asked dryly whether it is the same lawyer who had written Jeremy's will a few days back, leaving her the entirety of his wealth. She fumbled and affirmed. Nicole also informed them that she hadn't heard from Ben or Daniel ever since they left the business. She didn't quite like Daniel, considering he was the silent, aggressive one in the group who always got Jeremy into trouble. Between fresh sobs, she said that she didn't believe Ben could have committed the crime, and was quite sure that it was the work of her jealous ex-boyfriend Frank, a drunkard drug dealer. She was let off and the detective returned to the police station with Ben in custody.

N5:

Frank was brought to the station at 12:50 am, evidently drunk and irritated with being woken up this late in the night. When asked for an alibi, he said that he had gone to a bar alone at around 8:40pm. The bar he spoke of was quite close to the crime scene, putting him not very far from the events. He spent the entire evening there, and one of his friends dropped him home in his car at around 11:50 pm, after which he was picked up by the police. On further questioning, it was revealed that Ben had approached him for higher doses of antidepressants and antipsychotics than prescribed by the doctor, and he had helped him get the drugs. He then started pleading that he didn't do anything illegal as the drugs were still prescribed and that he had no hand in the murder of Jeremy even though he had a difficult break-up with Nicole, who had left him for his excessive drinking habits.

The detective now knew for sure who the person behind the murder of Mr. Jeremy was. Who do you think killed Jeremy?

Story O- A Dark Dilemma

It's another gloomy morning in Seattle. The traffic gridlock on Elliott avenue St. is driving everyone impatient including Ava Maria Vasquez, a thirty-something psychiatrist; tall, attractive brunette with doe eyes so black, with the depth of someone wise beyond her years. But she was more than beautiful; she also possessed the powerful gift of understanding those whom the world considers "mad", "crazy" or "psychotic", and a strong willingness to help and make people's lives better. As she checks the time on her watch; which belonged to her deceased father, she realizes she might not make it in time for her appointment with Sam. The last few days have been hard on her as the more she found out about Sam, the more she realized how many similarities they shared; intellectually and physically. 'Sam is special' she wonders. There is something about her which makes Ava feel an instant connection every time they meet. She instantly rings up Martha; the receptionist at her office, and requests her to keep her client engaged until she arrives. As she is on the phone with Martha, she sees that the traffic has come to a standstill because of the presence of police vans and an ambulance. She could also spot the media at a distance. Although she wants to know what's happening, she tells herself that she could use this time to work on another ongoing case; that of 13-year old Matilda. She opens the diary and starts reading from the page she stopped at last night. Somehow it is always a difficulty to figure this out as she falls asleep, almost after every read.

O1:

This morning I woke up and had to rush to the bathroom. I threw up. I think I am sick. I told dad about it and he said it must've been the tuna we had last night for dinner. I believed him, like I always do. Dad tells me that I am a kid and I don't know how cruel this world can be, especially to a pretty girl who always tries to help others, and that I am lucky I have him to take care of me. 'You are so innocent it shows in your eyes.' He always says. He is by my side almost all the time, but not when I am at school. Somehow, I feel safer at school than I do with him at home. I don't like to be touched. No one touches me at school and no one makes me do things I don't want to do. In fact, every time dad touches me I want to take a hammer and hit his head. I don't think real dads would make their daughters feel this way. He tells me that I was born to be touched by him. Is that true? I always wonder where my mom is and whenever I ask him about her he tells me that she left the both of us when I was a baby and never came back. I want a mom. I am so jealous of the other kids at school who always talk pleasant things about their moms. I'm sure things would've been different if she were here. Oh God, I feel so sick, I feel like throwing up again. Please make this go.

O2:

Ava startles and wakes up to the loud sound of honking from behind her. She quickly starts her car and starts moving towards her office. 'Shit, I fell asleep yet again' she fumbles as she pulls over in front of her office building. As she makes her way across the hallway, her phone rings. Its Dominic.

She isn't sure if she wants to talk to him especially after the fight they had last night when he was being a total jerk about the situation at hand. Dominic calls her again only to be cut off by her. He is beyond annoyed that the situation is not under his control now. He left his boring but devoted wife, Ava's best friend, Catherine for her. He needed the money and status more than anything. Adopting Sam would

ruin all his chances at acquiring Ava's wealth and status. A few seconds later his phone rings. Its Catherine. He wonders if she is calling to discuss the age old 'how could you leave me' story and decides to ask her to stop it now. He picks up the call. Catherine's voice sounds rather uncanny. He asks her what the issue is. 'I know everything, Dom. I know why you left me for that bitch. It's her money, isn't it? but now you can't have it, because she wants to adopt the kid. "How do you know this Cathy?" 'I have my sources. Now listen, I will help you get rid of this kid, if you promise me that you will leave Ava and come back to me.' "Cathy are you out of your mind?" 'No Dom, think about it. If this kid is out of the picture, you can marry Ava and get a good share of her wealth. Then you leave her and come back to me. It's a win-win situation for the both of us.'

O3:

Ava always wanted to be a mom. When she proposed this idea to Dominic he laughed; which was quite an insensitive reaction. 'Are you serious? Just because you feel connected to your patient doesn't mean you are ready to be a mom' he said. She couldn't deny the connection she shared with Sam. Sam needs her help. She is the only one Sam trusts. Sam couldn't sleep. Not because she is an insomniac but because she always landed up in a different place every time she closed her eyes. Once she closed her eyes, she could feel herself drift away from the cruelties of this world. She could watch her soulless body move around aimlessly like a zombie. All this makes Ava realise that Sam needs her, not as a doctor but as a mother. She was never lucky to have the presence of a motherly figure all her life. All she has and can remember from her childhood is her sadistic uncle. Antonio Vasquez; her father's brother, was her guardian after her parents were killed in a car crash years ago. Her parents left behind immense wealth all in her name and so Antonio took up the custody of Ava after her parent's death. All he cared for was her parent's money which he would invest in dirty businesses. She is happy that she doesn't have to live with him anymore.

O4:

As Ava cuts Dominic's call for the second time she realises that maybe Dominic wasn't in love with her anymore. Things worsened especially after the failure of his business. He has become completely dependent on Ava. Ava realises that maybe Dominic is insecure about adopting Sam because then her attention would be divided between the two.

As these thoughts pass by she quickly gets into her cabin and checks the time; 9:45 am but no sign of Sam. She asks Martha about it and Martha informs her that the orphanage hasn't been receiving her calls for the past hour. Just as Martha leaves Ava's cabin she is startled by the presence of Antonio Vasquez. She informs Ava about the unexpected visitor.

O5:

Antonio Vasquez had something to share with Ava. 'What brings you here, uncle Tony?' she asks him. he cringes and takes a seat in front of her table.

'I'm assuming you've seen the news this morning'. "What about it?" Ava asks. Antonio grabs the remote on the table and switches on the TV. '17-year old brutally murdered. Police have identified her as Samantha from St. Helens home for girls. She had been missing for over 12 hours until her body was

found in a dump yard right across Elliott Avenue Street.' Ava was beyond shocked. 'There's something more I have to tell you '. "What?" 'Samantha was your daughter. Because she was born when you were really young, I had to give her away to a girl's home. I'm sorry I didn't mention this before' "You ungrateful bastard, I gave you all the money you wanted for your inhuman activities but you never bothered to tell me I had a daughter. Is it because that would mean no share for you in my dad's wealth. Wait, are you the one who killed her?'