## 20. Threats and Secrets

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L"  I blinked up at him, breathing heavily. What was he going to do now? Call his henchmen and have me killed?  To my surprise I saw him not where he had been a moment ago. He had retreated a few steps. The ice had gone out of his eyes, and he was standing in a slightly awkward position, his hands tugged into the pockets of his waistcoat as if he didn't know what to do with them.  "Um here," he muttered. Pulling one of his hands out of the pocket, he handed me a clean white linen handkerchief.  "You just threatened to kill me and now you're o ering me a handkerchief?" I asked, tearfully.  He shrugged, and the awkwardness vanished as he fixed me with his eyes again. "I can hardly question you further while you are leakinglike this. It is noisy and messy. Put an end to it. Now!"  Taking the handkerchief, I blew my nose in a noisy and not very ladylike manner. Then I held it out to him.  "Here."  He shook his head.  "You don't want it back?"  "Are you mad?" he demanded. "Of course I do! That thing cost three shillings and tuppence! I would simply be very obliged if you washed it before giving it back, though."  "Oh err of course I will." I paused. "If you don't kill me, that is," I added, as an a erthought.  "Oh err of course I will." I paused. "If you don't kill me, that is," I added, as an a erthought.  "Oh., that." He shi ed uncomfortably for a moment. Mr Ambrose, uncomfortable? What was this?  Finally he, waved deprecatingly. "I have thought of a better way. A way I can determine whether you are guilty or innocent."  "Well, I'm very glad to hear it."  "I magine so." Straightening into his usual erect pose again, Mr Ambrose clapped his hand. "Karim!"  He hadn't even called very loud, and there was a locked door in the way.  There was no way the big bearded lellow could have heard him.  "You called, Sahib?"  Well, a yelp, I sprang back and whirled to see the Mohammedan stand right behind me, towering in the safe doonway.  With a curt wave, Mr Ambrose was as economical with his words as with	
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reasoned, his gaze wandering up and down my body in a strange manner. "I do not believe you are capable of cracking a safe. Ergo, if you took the file, you must have done it today. And if it is not in your o ice, you must still have it on	
"And?" I asked. "What do you intend to do now?"  His gaze went up and down my body again. "As I said," he repeated, his dark,	198 145
sea-coloured eyes intent. "You must have it on you." He stepped closer to me.  And suddenly, I understood.  My hands shot up to shield me. "Oh no. No, nononono, Mister! Don't even	
Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen!  I've started getting quite a few inquiries from some among you, my fabulous fans, regarding when & where exactly this story of mine takes	<b>3</b> 6K
place. So I concluded I should take a little bit of time to give you some background information regarding "Storm and Silence". All those of you who are up for a lesson in nineteenth-century geopolitics, sit up & listen. The rest of you, my dear Ladies & Gentlemen, please go ahead and plug	<b>3</b> 6K
your ears! ;-)  "Storm and Silence" is set in the a named the "United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland", a 19th-century nation that no longer exists today in the same form as it did back then, because it has been split into two di erent	5 5 156
nations. Its main legal successor is called the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and NORTHERN Ireland" (please note the "northern") because the larger (and southern) part of Ireland successfully seceded from the United	5 5 156
Kingdom and declared its independence a few decades a er the Victorian  Era was o icially over. This southern portion of Ireland is nowadays  known as "The Republic of Ireland".  The 19th-century United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was	5 5 156
composed of Ireland (well, obviously) and of Great Britain, which in turn consisted, as it still does today, of the following countries: England down in the south, Scotland up in the north, and Wales in the west. All those	26K 25 25
dierent countries were unified under the rule of Queen Victoria, who also ruled over vast areas of the globe in other parts of the world. These were known as the British Empire. They were under British rule, but were not part of the United Kingdom or Britain itself.	26K 25 25
Now, everyone who hasn't fallen asleep yet, raise their hands please! ;-) You are the only ones who shall escape my terrible punishment! ;-) All the others shall be beaten with birch twigs, as was the custom in Victorian	26K 25 25 27
Ahahahahaha (Evil Victorian Teacher Laugh!!)  Your Victorian schoolmaster ;-)	26K 25 25 25 27 27
Sir Rob	36K 57 156 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17
By Jove: "By Jove" is a British English expression of surprise. Jove was an alternative name for the Ancient Roman good Jupiter. Why exactly the British Victorians, all good Christians, used the name of an Ancient God who hadn't been worshipped for thousands of years to express their	56 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
surprise is one of the mysteries of history. My personal theory is that Christianity in Victorian times was all pretense, and secretly, the whole country still worshiped the Olympian Gods, meeting in midnight orgies in	56 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
the vaults of the Bank of England. (←Example of Heavy Sarcasm!)	26 41 20 33 80 25 31 31 32 31
Continue reading next part □	56 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
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