

Impossible

By

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Excerpt from mystery screenplay modeled after BBC's
"Sherlock" to experiment with suspense and mystery.

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9 INT. DIEBOLD INDUSTRIES RETIRED WORKSHOP - NITE

Jim enters the old Diebold Industries building. The building is pitch black, lit up occasionally by lightning from the storm.

Jim walks carefully into the open room in the middle of the building. He picks up a piece of broken wood from the ground to carry with him. The floor boards creek as he walks on them, the whole building moans as the wind and rain push against it.

JASPER TUCKE waits for him in the shadows, invisible, even with the lightning. His voice echoes eerily throughout the building, a horrible melancholy with the rumbles of thunder. He speaks his riddle with terrible joy, the same joy a child would have when playing with their toy.

JASPER

The most valuable thing this pathetic world knows, and deadly to all with just one small dose. The symbol of beauty you wear on a finger that snuffs out your light should you choose to linger. The strongest material to ever be found, that suffocates you and puts you in the ground.

JIM

I've already solved it. It's carbon. Now where is she?!

JASPER

'Nobody knows anything, but I, knowing nothing, am the smartest man in the

world.'

JIM
Socrates?

JASPER
(He giggles, a spine chilling
sound)
The smartest man in the world.

JIM
Where. Is. She.

No response. Lighting lights up the room but Jasper still cannot be seen.

JASPER
A secret's not a secret if everyone
knows.

JIM
(His voice trembles with anger)
Tell me where she is!

JASPER
Cheaters never prosper.

JIM
I'm not cheating!

JASPER
He who follows the rules, wins the
prize.

A large strike of lightning lights up the room for a couple moments, revealing a case in the middle of the room which holds the Hope Diamond.

JIM
The diamond.
(Calling out to the voice)
Tell me how to play.

JASPER
(Giggles threateningly)
The most famous puzzle known to man is
the one that can't be solved.

JIM
But this puzzle can be solved, can't
it? I just have to figure out how you

did it? Then you'll let her go and I
can walk out of here with the diamond?

Jasper giggles, his voice echoing from behind Jim, making Jim
turn. Lightning lights up the room again revealing no-one
behind him.

JIM
(To himself)
I'll take that as a yes...
(Calling out to the voice)
What happens if I don't solve it?

JASPER
(Nothing more than a whisper
that's loud as a scream)
The silent killer, comes at night.
Into the children, he instills such
fright. No crying out, nothing to say.
They sit dwelling in agony on their
very last day.

JIM
(To himself, fear wavering in his
voice)
You'll kill me too...
(To the voice)
Carbon monoxide. Just like Jeffery
Post. He could've gotten you caught so
you had to get rid of him.

JASPER
(Giggles)
WRONG!

Glass shatters somewhere, Jim jumps, startled.

JASPER
(Singing to the tune of "Take me
out to the Ball Game")
One, two, three strikes - you're out!
You are out. Of.
(Less singing, more screaming)
LUCK.

JIM
Ok, ok, that wasn't what he did. He
helped you?

Jasper giggles, signaling the right answer.

JIM

He helped you. You were in it together.

JASPER

The perfect criminal must never be caught.

JIM

He told you that. He was afraid you would do something rash that would get you both caught. But, you wanted to be caught. Just completing the impossible crime wasn't enough for you. It didn't prove to the rest of the world that you were the smartest man alive. They had to know you did it.

JASPER

Great minds think alike.

JIM

So you killed him. You had to. He wouldn't let you leave other clues. He wouldn't let you send the ransom note.

JASPER

Why. Why. Why. Why.
(Terrifying scream)
WHY.

JIM

Why? Because, you needed to be smarter than the FBI. The detectives. You had to make the world fear you. You had to make me fear you.

JASPER

Works, it does.

JIM

But why kill him then?

JASPER

(Singing again)
One. Two. Three-

JIM

Ok, ok.
(He takes a shaky breath)
You killed him three months

ago...because you knew he would try to stop you. But then, why bring him on in the first place?

JASPER

(Giggles)

Two minds are better than one.

JIM

You couldn't do it without him... You needed his connections to steal the gem. Then when he did his part, he wasn't necessary.

(He pauses, clenching his jaw)

But how did he do his part three months before the gem was stolen?

Lighting lights up the room as Jim has a sudden realization. His mind flashes back to the crime board to show the last time the gem was taken out of the case to run experiments, experiments Jeffery Post helped with.

JIM

(To himself)

Because the gem was already stolen before then.

(Calling out)

You switched the gems.

Jasper begins to cackle. Jim tries to talk over him.

JIM

You switched the gem for a fake without anyone realizing the difference. But...how did you get the "I" in it's place?

JASPER

No difference in us, not one to be seen. Both shimmer and sparkle, with our glittering sheen. Just like my twin, but stronger and new. The only flaw is my shimmering hue. Though calm to the eye, unsettled I rest. The most unstable being, that passes all tests. You might think I'm my twin, cause you've heard it before. But step out of the box, if you want to learn more. Your time's running short, there's so little left. Find out the truth or else you face death.

The door Jim came in through closes with a loud thud, startling Jim. He turns to look but no one is there.

JIM
Is that a clue?

Jasper giggles.

JIM
No difference...but unstable.

AVA
Cubic Zirconia.

Jim turns with a start to find Ava standing behind him. She snuck in when Jasper was stating his riddle. Jim runs to her side, breathing heavily.

Jasper cackles.

JASPER
A new little mouse has come in from the cold, but the big fat cat sits waiting to scold.

JIM
(Stunned)
Ava? You're alright? He, he said you were-

JASPER
Was a lie, but now it is true. Solve it, or else you'll both turn quite blue.

AVA
Of course I'm alright. I was heading home but I remembered a kind of unusual fact I found while researching the Diebold employees. I came back to the office no one was there. And then there was this weird message on your computer. A map, with this building highlighted and a riddle on it.

JIM
The one that said you were kidnapped.

AVA
What? No. What do you mean I was kidnapped?

JIM

What? He left a ransom note saying he was going to kill you.

AVA

How stupid are you?

JIM

Well how was I supposed to know he was faking it?!

AVA

Not about that! You came here alone just to save me when you know very well I can take care of myself!

JIM

Take care of yourself?! YOU'RE JUST A KID! I shouldn't have involved you in this case in the first place! It's to risky.

AVA

Risky?! You're the one who came here without a backup plan. You always just walk into danger and-

JASPER

TICK. TOCK. TICK. TOCK.

Ava is startled by his voice.

AVA

(Nervously)

There was another riddle. The one he just sang. I wasn't sure what it meant but you were missing and I panicked. I thought he was going to kill you. But I solved it, the riddle, it's just basic chemistry. Cubic Zirconia is the material used to make fake diamonds.

JIM

(Nodding, realizing she's found the right answer)

You heard her. It's Cubic Zirconia.

JASPER

(Singing harsher than before)

TWO. THREE STRIKES - YOU'RE OUT. YOU ARE OUT. OF. LUCK.

AVA
(Fear taking over her voice)
What does that mean?

JIM
We're one step closer to...

AVA
(Terrified, barely a whisper.)
Death...

Jim nod's silently. Ava breathes heavily.

AVA
And if we solve it?

JIM
We get to live. And the diamond's
here. I saw it.

AVA
He'll let us take it?

JIM
It's not about the gem for him, it's
about the crime. He needs to prove
he's the smartest man in the world.

JASPER
TICK TOCK. TICK TOCK.

JIM
(To Ava, a little panic in his
voice)
Okay, so it's not Cubic Zirconia, what
else could it be?

AVA
Nothing. There's nothing else like it
that would be able to fake a diamond
enough to get it in a museum.

JIM
"Step out of the box".

AVA
What?

JIM
The last line. "Step out of the box".
Think outside the box.

Jasper cackles.

AVA

I am!

JIM

Get inside his head!

AVA

(Ava screams, panicking and angry
at Jim)

It's fake. There's no real element
that fits the description.

JIM

There has to be, Ava. Think harder.

JASPER

TICK TOCK. TICK TOCK.

AVA

There isn't! He's playing us! He's...

Ava trails off, realizing something. Lightning lights up the
room.

AVA

He created it.

JIM

What?

AVA

(Calling out to him)

You created it. You altered Zirconia
to create an element so unstable it
would react with just the slightest
alteration to it's pressure. An
element that could look just like
diamond.

JIM

"It was on fire".

AVA

What?

JIM

The child, the one I interrogated. He
said it was on fire. He must've seen a
little of the residue from the

reaction.

(Calling out again)

The change in pressure caused when the diamond retreated into the safe when danger was sensed, that's what set off the reaction.

Jasper cackles.

JASPER

Sing, little birds.

JIM

(Calling to the voice)

You replaced the diamond the last time it was taken out of it's case six months ago-to be tested by the head of the chemistry department, Jeffery Post, and you, his assistant. It was the perfect plan. The diamond was set to react the next time it sunk into the pedestal because of danger, when it retreated in less than a second. You wouldn't need to be near the scene when it disappeared, you wouldn't even need to trigger the diamond's retreat. And the element you created didn't need to pass all of the tests, just the few tests always performed before returning the diamond to it's case. The tests Jeffery Post was in charge of. He covered anything that could indicate that it was a different gem, and had it placed in it's case, undetectably different. Waiting to be triggered.

JASPER

(Sing-song-y)

The smartest man in the world.

JIM

But Jeffery got in the way. He said you'd know you were the smartest people, and the crime would be spoken of forever, even if the world didn't know it was you who did it. So you killed him. You used your knowledge of chemistry to make it look like an accident, as if he had just measured something wrong. With him out

of the way, the world could know it was you. You had to see if the smartest detectives could outsmart you. That's where I came in. I've solved more cases than any member of the FBI. I'm the "smartest man in the world". You had to see if I could outsmart you. And I did. We did. We found the gem. We solved the crime.

Jasper cackles.

JASPER

Why. Why. Why. Why. WHY?!

AVA

Because you knew it was the impossible crime.

JASPER

(Singing again)

One, two, three strikes you're out...

JIM

(Talking over the singing)

He wants more detail than that.

AVA

(Trying to get the voice's attention)

You knew it was the impossible crime since you were a boy. Since your father was the head designer at Diebold industries; the head designer who built the very case to hold the Hope Diamond.

Jasper giggles menacingly.

JIM

His father built the case?

AVA

It was the unusual fact. The one I only realized meant something when I was heading home. When I searched the people who worked the case, Glenn Tucke, head designer, was one of the few workers with any family. He had a wife and a son named Jasper Tucke; the very same Jasper Tucke who would

become Jeffery Post's assistant.

JIM
You didn't bring this up before?

AVA
I was a little too busy talking to a sociopath!

JIM
Toché.

JASPER
BORED NOW.

Lightning and thunder cracks. The whole building shakes.

AVA
(Slightly panicked)
Finish the story.

JIM
Right.
(Calling out to the voice)
You triggered the power failure,
knowing it would be blamed on the
storm.

AVA
But why wait six months before
triggering it?

JIM
Because Jeffery Post threatened to
kill him. Jasper was always supposed
to be the brains of the operation, but
after the diamond was switched, Post
started to take over. He said it was
best to wait until the next time the
diamond retreated because of danger on
it's own; if they triggered it they
could get caught.

Jasper cackles.

JASPER
The tables can turn with just the slip
of a finger.

JIM
(Calling out to him)

But then you took him out. You made Post's death look like an accident. And then you started your plan. Then you started your game. You gave us 48 hours to figure it out on our own, but when it reached midnight tonight, our time was up. You sent us our next hint. Our last chance to find the diamond. We had all the clues, we were just looking in the wrong places.

AVA

But why would he have the diamond here?

JIM

Because it's a game. There had to be stakes or we wouldn't play. He knew we would see through his lie, he needed a reason to keep us playing. He just didn't plan on us winning.

Jasper cackles. Police sirens can be heard in the distance.

JASPER

The smartest man in the world.

Lightning lights up the room to reveal the figure of a man in front of the window. The light fades and glass shattering can be heard as the thunder gets louder. Police lights start to light up the scene. Jim and Ava breath sighs of relief and turn to face the doors where the police lights are coming through.

CLOSE-FOCUS: FOCUS ON THE HOPE DIAMOND, WITH THE FIGURES OF JIM AND AVA AND THE POLICE LIGHTS IN THE BACKGROUND.

10 INT. JIM'S OFFICE - DAY

Ava sits talking with Mrs. Hemmer in the front office. Ava smiles pleasantly but looks bored out of her mind.

MRS. HEMMER

And so my husband bought it for me on our 15th anniversary.

She gently takes the necklace off the desk to show it to Ava. She hands it to Ava gently.

AVA

It's beautiful, Mrs. Hemmer.