

September Morn

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A young painter, Selena Chartier, has been abducted and forced to replicate the famous painting "September Morn" from a photo. Having escaped, she now must seek the help of Basil of Baker Street to catch the un identified culprit before he hidden pl

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September Morn Note: Selena's last name is pronounced Shar - tea - ay; the painting referenced in this is real, you can see it if you search it up; I highly recommend it; it's gorgeous! And the song, 'La Valse D'amelie' is also real. Download it to hear it! If you want this man to help you Selena, your going to have to trust him; Edith looked sternly at Selena. You can't let this ruin the rest of your life.. You have to be open again; Selena didn't respond, but let her eyes drop to the floor mat. It occurred to her that it didn't say 'Welcome' like most others that she had seen. It was difficult to listen to Edith, though Selena knew that she meant well. Of late it has been difficult to listen to anyone; she felt as if her body were full of dark matter, too full to take in anything else. Approaching footsteps sounded from the other side of the door. Selena felt Edith take her hand in what she assumed was meant to be a comforting manner. The door opened to reveal a kindly looking older man. Shorter than both women, he had a large mustache and light fur; his expression was immediately concerned. 'How may I help you?' His voice was fatherly. 'Is this the home of Basil of Baker Street?' Edith asked. 'Indeed it is, madame.' The gentleman replied. 'But he currently isn't home; would you like to come in and wait? Your certainly welcome..' 'Yes, thank you very much' Edith replied hastily, tightening her grip on Selena's hand and pulling her into the flat. Selena was anything but put at ease by the appearance of this room; all manner of oddities were strewn about in every which place. A pistol tossed carelessly onto the sofa, a stuffed bear hung awkwardly over the back of a chair ; pages and pages of written material lay strewn about the floor, along with another miscellaneous paraphernalia. 'I'm sorry everything is such a mess,' the man with the mustache began. 'It always manages to get so..' He gestured towards the sofa with the pistol. 'Please make yourselves comfortable.' 'Oh, and excuse me for not introducing myself,' he hurried over to where the two women were just sitting down and held out his hand to both in turn. 'I am Dr. David Dawson.' 'I am Edith D'Aubigne, and this is Selena Chartier,' Edith said curtly, taking his hand. 'A pleasure to meet you both,' he replied smiling. 'Unfortunately I can't wait with you - I have an appointment.' He made his way towards the door where he pulled a blue over coat off of the coat hanger. 'Oh, do you not mind us being here alone?' Edith asked. 'Oh not at all.. Though I am very sorry I have to rush off , you caught me just on my way out. Please, make yourselves at home .. though I'd advice you not to touch anything.' He thrust both arms through the sleeves and opened the door. 'Basil should be home soon.' 'Thank you.' Edith smiled. Mr. Dawson nodded his head hurriedly and closed the door behind him. Selena breathed deeply. How sickened by the whole ordeal she was. She continued to convince herself that she wasn't ready to do this; Edith had insisted that the crime were to be investigated immediately. She admitted however that it was her own doing not to involve the police. She noticed a small paper package on the table beside her and wondered if it could be rosin. She remembered hearing mystery stories as a child and was reminded of how the detectives always seemed to play violin. 'Darling,' Edith began cautiously. 'You are going to have to try and be a little more talkative. I'm sure he's going to have a lot of questions..' Selena took a deep breath. 'I don't want to talk to anyone. Especially men; I've had quite enough of them.' 'Selena, they're not all bad..' Suddenly Selena turned to face the older woman. Her long dark hair hung loosely over her shoulders. The gray fur around her eyes was slightly wet. She spoke in a whisper despite the urgency in her face.

How can I ever trust any one again?? How, Edith? The older mouse could only lower her eyes. It was the person I trusted most who did this to me. I'm ruined! I'm ruined! Edith started as the door burst open. The resulting draft caused the papers about the room to lift and swirl. A tall, lean mouse raced in, so intent on something that he failed to notice the two strangers sitting on his sofa. He strode just past them, rummaged in his pockets, produced a small scrap of paper, and, seemingly excited, wheeled to face the two women. Ah! he cried, startled. Good lord, I hadn't noticed you two.. Edith rose immediately. Oh, we're very sorry to have startled you. She held her hand out to him. I am Edith D'Aubigne. She gestured to the sofa as he slowly took her hand. And this is Selena Chartier. We met Mr. Dawson on his way out. Ah.. the younger mouse replied, seeming distracted, despite his surprise. Releasing Edith's hand he stepped past her and to the sofa, where he addressed Selena. Terribly sorry - but would you mind.. He gestured to the left with his hand. Selena immediately scooted over, producing the pistol she had noticed earlier. Thank you. He hummed to himself as he carried it quickly to his desk at the opposite wall, regarding his scrap of paper. Excuse me, Edith began, slightly taken aback. A serious crime of sorts has taken place. We need your help! After a brief examination, Basil set the gun and paper down on his desk. He turned to approach them, his hands folded behind his back showing a gentlemen's refinement he had not yet shown them. Addressing them both, he asked, What has happened? He noticed Selena shudder. He turned to her then, more readdressing the question towards her. Edith answered. She was abducted. By her own uncle. She was missing for a week before she returned to us, beaten and crying. I was taken underground, I believe, blindfolded. Selena began. The softness of her voice startled Basil. I was locked in a small room, and forced to replicate a painting I was shown a photo of. She looked straight ahead as she spoke, staring at nothing. She was raped! Edith added urgently. Many times - by this man's men... He threatened to let them have me if I didn't do the painting well enough. If I ever refused or made a mistake... Selena continued to stare. Her voice was dim. The man wore a mask... Edith added. ... no one was identified? Basil asked. Edith looked sadly at Selena, looking for an answer. She won't tell me any more. That's all she has said. Basil moved to where Selena sat and crouched so that he could look into her face. Again, he was taken aback for a moment. He hadn't noticed how beautiful she was when she had her face down. What became of your uncle? He spoke very quietly. He was the one who abducted you? Selena squeezed her eyes shut but wouldn't reply. She escaped somehow. Edith started again. She says they are looking for her.. She refused to notify the police. She stepped closer to Basil. Whoever he is that horrible man is plotting something.. and we don't even know who he is! Her pace quickened and she neared the edge of hysterics. He's looking for her and we don't know who he is! He has minions in our own family!! We can't trust anyone!! Basil stood and was quiet for a moment. It's obvious that he is planning on stealing the artwork; he may be planning to use the copy as a temporary replacement to lengthen his escape... Addressing Selena, what was the painting? Selena only shook her head. Basil turned towards Edith. Where are you planning on staying? It's quite a ways from Cannes.. Edith was surprised by his assumption that they were from Cannes, and was hesitant to answer. I can't stay, she replied finally. I have to return home. You see, I am- The house keeper. Basil interrupted. ...yes, and I have been charged with the care of Selena's grandfather. He is nearing his end you see, and he can't be left alone... when Basil didn't speak she continued. I'm was going to leave once we found Selena someplace here she could stay- There are people looking for her and

you are going to leave her alone?"; Basil asked in disbelief. "She wouldn't have it any other way..."; "She can't be left alone," Basil said sternly. Selena listened distantly. She could feel herself trembling. How disgusted she was with herself - portraying herself as a small, frightened, defenseless creature.. She refused to appear as small as she felt. She would not let on how afraid she really was. She glanced up at the young man speaking sternly with Edith. "You'll have to trust him, she had said. Selena was almost surprised at how impossible that seemed. Hadn't she learned that no one could be trusted? Even those who you believe love you? "I'd rather she stayed here, actually," she heard Basil say. "...Well.. I don't know..." Edith looked to Selena with a worried expression. "She would be much safer here with people to look after her - it also may aid us in finding the culprit." Selena refused to show her fear. She didn't protest, but found that she couldn't say anything. "...I think I should speak with Selena about this..." she heard Edith saying. "Mr. Basil, would you mind leaving us for just a moment.?" Basil nodded his head and stepped out of the room. Edith sat down next to Selena and took her hands. "Selena, we mustn't be rude to this man," Edith used the same tone she had used out on the doorstep. "He is the best detective there is, he is being very kind if he agrees to help us on such notice; even if we do pay him for his services." Selena lowered her eyes to her hands and nodded stiffly. "Will you be able to stay here with out me?" Edith asked. "You don't have to if you don't want to, we can find you a motel -though I do think you will be safer here.." "Oh Edith," Selena suddenly burst out. "I'm afraid! I don't think I'm ready to be alone.." "You won't be alone, Mr. Basil and that nice man Mr. Dawson will be here.. and the house keeper, I'm sure she will be friendly.." Her tone softened. "You've got to be strong, Selena." Selena nodded. "...I will be." She raised her eyes to meet Edith's, feeling some of her old spirit returning. "Go home, Edith, go take care of grand dad." Edith smiled and kissed her. "Now don't you worry about a thing," she said reassuringly. "This will be an adventure for you." She paused, planning her next words carefully. "...And Mr. Basil seems rather amusing, to say the least.." She waited for a reaction, but received none. "He will be good to you." Edith teared slightly in a brief good bye. Selena was left standing in the doorway, watching her hurry off down the dimly lit sidewalk. She felt more angry now than frightened. How she wanted those awful men to suffer. She felt her fists clench. Feeling awkward, she returned to her place on the sofa, uncomfortable with Basil's eyes on her. The night progressed quickly. Selena found her self constantly on the defensive, not wanting to answer Basil's questions. She desperately wanted to let her mind rest without the constant torture of memory. The situation brought some life to her, however. It wasn't often Selena had found herself matched in wit; she surprised herself by noticing and almost admiring how quick Basil was at getting answers she didn't at all intend to give. She wore out quickly. It was difficult for her to linger so long on such a painful subject without rest or consolation; she could sense her visage` of strength melting away. She thought briefly of the painting she had replicated. She thought of the woman standing in water. Water that was the mountains; water that was the sky. She began to wonder, as she often had, who the woman was; was she cold in the water? "Selena..." she heard Basil speak her name. It was the first time he hadn't called her ms. Chartier, and it called her back to attention. "The man." he looked straight into her eyes. It made her uncomfortable. "You've told me almost nothing about him." Selena thought back to the towering dark creature. His wild eyes behind the white leather mask. She shuddered; the thought chilled her. Again she thought of the water woman. She was shocked and ashamed when she felt wetness around her eyes, dampening her fur. Basil lowered down in front of her and moved to touch her shoulder. Selena cried out, startled by his contact, and quickly turned away. Embarrassed and ashamed, she started to cry. Basil stood and turned his back. He was at loss as to

what to do. He'd never dealt with someone as difficult as she to question. He longed to comfort her; to speak of other things. He wondered how Mme. D'Aubigne had given her the strength she had. His experience had taught him to treat and use a person as he would a clue; and to be baffled by a clue was something he had virtually never experienced. He turned back to her awkwardly. "I'm sorry if I upset you." He glanced at the non-existent watch around his wrist. "It is getting late. Would you like to try and sleep? Sleep? Sleep sounded like a fairy tale. She was, indeed, exhausted, but the discomfort of this unfamiliar place, her distrust of her host and her generally agitated state all made the notion seem impossible. She felt herself shaking her head, though privacy did seem appealing. She lifted her gaze when she heard Basil crossing the room. He pulled an old record off of the book shelf and blew the dust off of it. He placed it on the record player and made his way back to her. "La Valse D'amelie" began to drift through the room. It at least, was familiar, and it soothed her somewhat. Basil sat down beside her. He sat with his elbows propped on his knees and his chin resting on his hands, studying her in a way that made Selena uncomfortable; and yet, it amused her slightly as she felt she was being seen in a way she had never been before. "I think I startled Mme. D'Aubigne," he said. His smile made him appear almost boyish. "How did you know?" Selena asked steadily. "- that we're from Canes and that she is a house keeper?" "She ties her hair in that funny way." Basil said matter of factly. Selena was shocked when she almost giggled; she had always teased Edith about her hair. As a child it had reminded her of an old face. She would make her younger brother laugh by saying that Edith could see from behind as well as front. "It's the same twist used to fold a napkin, or twist the dough of pain de petit déjeuner. It would take a practiced hand to twist that from behind and on your head. She must have had to do it often." Selena saw where he was going with this, though she considered his assumption rather vague, though it had been correct. "You take chances with your deductions, I think." Basil smiled openly and seemed to Selena more than ever like a young boy; as if he were explaining mathematics to his mother who would have long since forgotten. "Elementary." he said simply. Selena studied him openly for a moment before turning away. She was reminded of her uncle. How much she had loved him. How she had trusted him. "I think I would like to rest for tonight." She said quietly. Basil looked at her a moment longer before rising and walking quickly across the room and disappearing into the one opposite. He returned minutes later behind a plump and kindly looking woman, dressed only in a night shift and looking rather irritated. She started when she saw Selena. "Oh my!" she began, washing off any previous fatigue and rushing to her. "You poor little dear!" She took both of Selena's hands in hers. "I wish I had been informed you were here! Look at you.... exhausted!" She shot an angry glance at Basil. "Mr. Basil!" she exclaimed. "What are you thinking, keeping this poor dear up and about when she needs a cup of tea and a warm bed..." Basil maintained an unaffected composure. "Here, come with me," she said kindly lifting Selena from the chair. "I'll put you in our guest room with some clean sheets and some nice warm tea." "Thank you.." was all Selena could think to say. The woman led her upstairs and out of sight, fussing continuously over her. Basil pulled his pipe from his vest pocket and lit it as he watched them disappear. "Now..." he began quietly to himself. "-all one needs, is time to think.." he strode to his arm chair and sat down, losing himself in the action he did best. ~chapter 2~ When the clock down stairs chimed three times, Selena had still not slept. She had risen from her bed and sat at the night stand, looking at herself in the mirror. Her dark auburn hair seemed black in the dark. It felt heavy and hot. It reminded her of the darkness she had felt inside her, and was startled with the image that she had grown so full of it, it was coming out of her head and covering her face. The desire to get it off of her shoulders and back urgently washed over her. She desperately dragged her fingers through it. It was matted and damp. She was so exhausted - the heat of her hair seemed to be

suffocating her. Enraged, she pulled the drawer of the night stand out and onto the floor. She rummaged in the dark and found a pair of scissors. Climbing to the mirror, Selena made a clumsy jab with the open shears at her hair. Her vision was blurred with tears; the inconvenience only irritated her to a greater extent. She caught the edge of her night shift. Again she pulled the scissors back for a second thrust. Rigid arms darted around her and grabbed her wrists, pulling them back towards her shoulders. The too familiar feeling of overpowerment overwhelmed her. She screamed and dropped to the floor along with the shears. Again she cried out as she scrambled up against the wall, feeling lost in her hair.

“Shhhhh! Shhhh..” she heard Basil’s voice urge in the dark. She felt his hands, more gently this time, cautiously come to rest on her shoulders. She flinched and he quickly lifted them. Embarrassment, shame and a sense of pure brokenness came immediately over her. She hid her face in her hands and sobbed. After a moment of silence, Basil’s voice sounded harsh amidst the quiet. “Let me help you..” he whispered. Selena held her breath as she felt his fingers touch lightly behind her ears. He pulled her hair up and off of her face. She turned the back of her head towards him slightly. She felt him pull his fingers through three times, and then begin to braid it tightly. How embarrassed and disgusted she was with herself. A mess on the floor that needed cleaning up. How could she ever face him again after this? Gathering all the courage she had left, she managed a weak “thank you”. Basil stood and helped her up in a swift motion. He guided her gently to the bed, and lowered her onto it. He crouched before her on the floor. “The Painting is called ‘Matinee de Septembre.’” he said quietly. Selena closed her eyes and nodded. “Its beautiful, I think.” “Do you think she's cold.” Selena asked, barely audible. Basil was quiet for a second. “Only for a moment.” he said gently. “The sun is rising.” Selena’s exhaustion overwhelmed her and she lay back in the bed. She barely had energy to acknowledge Basil’s eyes upon her. She fell asleep to the sound of his breathing. I hope you like it so far - more chapters in a few days!