

## Self-fill of Prompt #1: G.A.B.O.S.

by mazaher

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While reading MARK FORSYTHE, *The Horologicon. A day's jaunt through the lost words of the English language*, London: Icon, 2012, I found this at pp. 124-125 and 247:

G.A.B.O.S. is an acronym for Game Ain't Based On Sympathy. [...] In fact, nobody is quite sure what The Game is based on at all, yet all agree that the Game Ain't Based On Sympathy. [...] I was introduced to the term by a Special Adviser to Her Majesty's Government, who said it was commonly used round their way. [...] [It] has no currency outside [...] the Palace of Westminster.

...Mycroft?

This is the result of the chance encounter. Unbetaed. Additional notes at the end.

Speculative writing, will become AU with episode 1 of series 3.

Set a few hours before Moran's capture in *The Empty House*, BBC-style.

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"SM date ton 23 - 224 NW1 5RT - 2 fl. Yes, this should be enough. Encrypt by protocol H-jr-827 and text to mobile number 14/L with the usual scramble. An answer is unlikely, but, if any, don't pass it through Decryption. I want to be informed without delay."

Euryale (she was Lachesis last week, will be Asterope the next) raises her tastefully made-up eyes from the keyboard of her most essential implement, incongruously named after the fruit she likes the least.

"Shall I add your wishes, sir?"

"No need to waste his time with that. He would not appreciate. My wishes... or should I say ours? are not going to make a difference anyway. What a pity. But, you know... G.A.B.O.S."

"Yes, sir. The Game Ain't Based On Sympathy. I heard it said."

"Oh well, this time tomorrow it will be over. One way or the other."

The tall sad man behind the desk gives a small sigh. His face is composed to calm regret, but she's hearing the lightest of taps from under his chair, a heel clad in a perfect hand-tooled leather shoe beating a worried rhythm of its own, which the rest of the body disavows. She has long since learned how to rein in her desire to comfort him. His whole life is like walking on a tightrope. Her sympathy is irrelevant. He doesn't need distractions. There are other things he needs from her.

"What's next?" he asks.

"The updated file on the Maldivian situation. Would you like to have it now, sir?"

"Yes, please. And a cup of Ti Kuan Yin."

*For luck*, he doesn't say.

But she hears it all the same.

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### Notes:

-- "SM date ton 23 - 224 NW1 5RT - 2 fl" = Sebastian Moran, appointment tonight at 11 pm, at no. 224 NW1 5RT (the street code for that section of Baker Street), second floor.

-- H-jr: Holmes, junior. Mycroft is being cheeky.

-- Ti Kuan Yin (Iron Goddess of Mercy) is the name of a variety of semifermented tea, originally grown in the gardens of Anxi in the Chinese province of Fujian. According to legend, the plants came from a shoot found in a ruined temple where an iron statue of the goddess still stood.