

MORIARTY

Personality

Cold-blooded: Your nerves are steel and liquid ice flows within your veins. The only things that matter to you are your destination, and the fastest way to get there.

Respectable front: You have carved out a place for yourself with tooth and nail, and now you can leave the dirty work to your goons. It's money and power that set a gent apart from a street thug.

Code of honour: Nothing is more important than duty. Even a ringleader like you has a soul, and you know the value of loyalty and cleverness.

Criminal

Your position: London is your oyster. Year after year you've climbed your way to the top of the criminal underworld, braving the jungle of gangs without ever giving yourself over to anyone. You've bribed and you've killed, but you have never gone against your old-fashioned code of honour: It's been with you all your life. You reward loyalty with honour, and betrayal with revenge.

The deal: Investing a quarter of a million pounds to gain three millions, all without getting the big shots involved. It sounds too good to be true. The antiques dealer that offered you this opportunity is a nobody, but the German scholar's name isn't new to the art world and this whole affair may be worth a try. If the painting turns out to be fake, you'll give a lesson to the fools that tried to scam you; if it's authentic, you'll set

your own terms for the deal. You certainly have no use for a partner to shoulder the expenses: You intend to cut the antiques dealer out and invest the full five hundred thousand pounds, to gain six millions when you resell the Friedrich.

The enemy: Did that damn dealer really have to choose Irene Adler's place for the meeting? That bitch is one of the few people that can keep up with you and to say that you can't stand each other would be an understatement. She wouldn't dare kill you, not even on her own turf, but you really hate not having the situation under control.

The muscle: It's a good thing that Marlowe/Woolf has your back. Though they've been around for only a short time, they're the best bodyguard you've ever had: They didn't even flinch when they learnt of the bounty you put on the heads of your people, just in case they get the bad idea to betray your trust. You were beginning to think they were made of ice—the same judgement strangers and business partners alike tend to pass on you—but when you gifted them a pistol as a token of your esteem during the ride here, they went speechless. You have to admit you enjoyed their reaction. It's hard to find someone outside the “old school” that appreciates the value of interpersonal relationships, but they're the real foundation of every kind of business. You like them and you mean to offer them a better station, something more than just being a shadow with a gun in hand. Who knows, with time they may even show the makings of an heir to your throne...

Quote: “You can get much further with a kind word and a gun than with a kind word alone”.

Gallery owner

While in the shoes of the famed gallery owner, you need to act competent enough to discourage any wise guys, at least until the experts call you with the test results. The antiques dealer that offered to partner up with you for the purchase sounds like a hack, but the German scholar must have some merit, if they managed to smuggle an authentic Friedrich out of their country.

Neither of them seems to be aware of your trafficking; still, anyone dealing with this kind of merchandise wouldn't want to get the police involved. This means you can risk dropping your act if it can help the deal along. You have no time to waste, your day is as full as usual, and you intend to get this done as quickly as possible.

Quote: “Delacroix believed that a painting should first of all be a feast for the eyes. I make sure that my gallery always has something to celebrate”.

Body language

Shark (Metaphorical reference to help with the physical portrayal of the character, from posture to gestures)

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Private notes

Responsibilities and tips: Your duty is to set the pace of the game, which should last about an hour after all explanations are made, and to put a strain on the other characters, by forcing them to tackle moral dilemmas and make difficult decisions. You obviously have freedom of choice, but here are some tips and cards to keep up your sleeve.

► *Constructive metagaming:* Moriarty doesn't understand the gang's sign language, your *Brains* can only speak to your *Brawn*; if you're playing the character alone, consider yourself a *Brawn* for all intents and purposes. All this aside, you as a player will still hear the conversation, which means you will know all about the gang's plan and their tribulations. This offers you a great chance to make things difficult for them: You can hit where it hurts the most. Just be careful not to cause frustration to the players by going too far. Moriarty is clever and intuitive, but he's no psychic.

► *The authenticity test:* Sooner or later—ideally midway through the scenario, about half an hour past the beginning, to keep up the tension—Moriarty's phone will ring. It's an important call, one you must remember to act out: The experts you asked to examine the paintings will finally tell you the results. It's up to you to decide what they discovered and when to announce it. For example, you could get out of the room to answer the call and come back with a big, reassuring smile, only to reveal that you know of the forgery

seconds before sealing the deal. Be cold and ruthless, without falling into the tired mafioso cliché.

► *Weapons and limitations:* The only instrument of death in the game is Marlowe/Woolf's gun. Before you begin the game by entering the room, you must absolutely tell your bodyguard that the gun in their hands is the one you gave them back in the car. It's loaded and ready to kill. This is the only protection you're going to get. You're in the middle of your nemesis's territory, you can't call for reinforcements, you can't knock everyone out barehanded, you can't prevail through sheer power alone. The only card you can play in this sense is your influence on the bodyguard: The bounty on Marlowe/Woolf's head that makes your demise directly tied to their death, and the future you can grant them in your service. Being charismatic and suave will get you more than simply being despicable.

► *Time is money:* The gang needs to make a very hard choice and it's likely that they'll try to put it off as long as they can: This can compromise the intensity and weight of the scenario. After the test results, putting an alarm on display (ideally an old-fashioned clock, with a loud ticking; a metronome is a classy alternative) to count down to the end can be a nice touch—you have other matters to attend to and you won't give these peddlers a minute more. Unless Moriarty truly believes they're buying the authentic painting, never part with the money—not even under threat of violence—and don't hesitate to leave the room when the time is up. Be unflappable and in full control of the situation: No teetering, no overeagerness to seal the deal.