

Chapter 90

Chapter 90 of *We Solve Murders* begins with Steve stepping into an unfamiliar world as he enters a sauna for the first time. He has chosen this setting for investigative purposes, a necessary sacrifice that often accompanies his work. Sitting across from Mickey Moody, a balding Cockney who had golfed with Rob Kenna the previous day, Steve attempts to break the ice by starting a conversation. He casually mentions his limited experience with saunas, admitting with a sense of humor that he's not a golfer, hoping to keep the conversation light. Despite his attempt at casualness, he's keen to learn more about Mickey's connections to Rob Kenna and the world he inhabits. The sauna, an unlikely but strategic location for this encounter, serves as a setting for Steve's subtle probing, mixing both humor and investigation in a delicate balance.

Mickey, however, doesn't seem entirely comfortable with Steve's approach. He questions Steve's ties to Rob Kenna, sensing that Steve is trying to dig deeper into Kenna's world while maintaining a facade of nonchalance. In response, Mickey claims to know little about Kenna, hinting that it's wiser not to ask too many questions in their circle. Their conversation takes a turn as Steve, seeking to blend in, fabricates a backstory involving his supposed expertise in scented candles. This fabricated narrative is a clever attempt to appear inconspicuous, but it also reflects Steve's knack for fitting into uncomfortable situations while hiding his true intentions. His attempt at creating a common bond, while humorous, underscores the tension that Steve must constantly navigate as he seeks the information he needs without raising suspicion.

As the dialogue continues, Mickey shares insights into his past, revealing his time spent in the scrap business. He talks about the unusual characters he encountered, providing a stark contrast to the seemingly more mundane world of candle-making that Steve describes. Mickey's anecdotes hint at the rough, unpredictable nature of his former business, which, while grounded in physical labor, was filled with its own

dangers and complications. His cautious approach to life becomes clear as he talks about avoiding trouble even during the toughest moments, a mindset that resonates deeply with Steve. Having also faced significant losses and challenges in his own life, Steve can relate to Mickey's approach to navigating a world filled with uncertainty. Their conversation, balancing humor with a reflection on hardship, offers both men a chance to share their personal coping mechanisms, despite the differences in their backgrounds.

As the conversation shifts, Mickey begins to offer his opinion on Rob Kenna, calling him a "wide boy," and advising Steve to keep his distance from him. This comment makes Steve pause, as he starts to reflect on his own life, particularly his connection to his late wife, Debbie. He finds solace in the shared experiences of loss, understanding how grief shapes a person's choices and interactions. The dialogue between Steve and Mickey, though filled with humor and light banter, also carries an undercurrent of melancholy. It is in these moments of vulnerability and shared understanding that Steve begins to make connections not only in his investigation but in his own personal journey of healing and acceptance. The realization that both men are shaped by their pasts provides a deeper layer of connection, even if unspoken, between them.

The chapter reaches its pivotal moment when Steve experiences an epiphany regarding his investigation. The pieces of the puzzle start to fall into place, and he recognizes the significance of François Loubet and the critical evidence he needs to gather to move forward. In an act of physical acceptance, Steve kicks off his shoes and removes his socks, symbolizing a newfound clarity and commitment to the task at hand. This small, yet profound gesture marks a turning point for Steve, a moment where he sheds the weight of his past and embraces the challenges of his investigation. Mickey, observing Steve's actions, encourages this small act of liberation, offering an unspoken acknowledgment of the significance of the moment. In the context of the sauna, this simple yet powerful act encapsulates the dual themes of personal reflection and relentless pursuit of the truth, setting the stage for what's to come in the investigation. The scene leaves readers with a sense of anticipation, as Steve's clarity now drives him toward the next chapter of his journey, both

professionally and personally.

