

# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES MYSTERY SERIES

A Series of 10 Stories (Pastiche in the worst way)

By Jack Brazos III

## LITERARY PURPOSE

This is a fun writing distributed to the Sherlockian fans of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star for teaching, scholarship, and research of the writings of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The nature of the work is distributed solely for nonprofit Educational and Instructional Purposes and is not for commercial publication.

## TRIBUTE

This work is Pastiche honoring the writings of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the sixty Sherlock Holmes creations collectively identified as the "Canon". This "Sherlockian Pastiche" is in appreciation for his contribution to the literary world that has helped fill the empty lives of world-weary souls with entertainment, suspense, surprise and bewilderment around the globe.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A special debt of gratitude is owed to the Members of The Diogenes Club of Dallas and Crew of the Barque Lone Star, who so generously and graciously helped, assisted, and encouraged with editing, commentaries, suggestions and recommendations toward this humble effort.

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# THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE YOU

## 1st In a Series of "The Ten Commandments of Sherlock Holmes Mystery Series"

A monotonous gloom had crept into the overcast morning outside the confines of 221-B Baker Street. Nothing moved outside as I peered through the foggy window into the lifeless street below. Trees, birds, flowers and foliage were frozen in time.

Inside, Sherlock Holmes was riveted to the front page of The Daily Telegraph which with all of its journalistic fervor was intent upon sharing the graphic demise of one of its own. The well-liked and very popular Vernon Longstreet had fallen victim to foul play. At least that was the source-less rumor that was being passed around. Scotland Yard had no comment, leading legitimate sources to speculate that law enforcement did not really know what had caused the death of the well-known writer. Vernon Longstreet, above all, was a storyteller. He was a writer, author and reporter for most of the newspapers in London at one time or another. He spoke out and wrote articles and short stories that made his readers laugh, enjoy life and feel good about themselves. His articles and books endeared him to children and young people because they were so wholesome to read that the Municipal Action Committee placed his name into the contest for "Writer of the Year" three years running.

Vernon's memorable story of Dirk, the famous War Dog, the first of the OOK's and his heart-tugging relationship with Sarah, an orphaned young teenage girl and their adventures in southern Louisiana, was his breakthrough story that made The London Times bestseller list for ten weeks in a row. His trademark brush mustache and ready smile were distinctive anywhere. How could this unforeseen tragedy have occurred? We were on our after-breakfast second cup of coffee when we heard Lestrade in the hallway. Unhappy with the way the prosecutor was handling one of his cases, he could not seem to let it go. Sensing the magnitude of his anger and not wanting to experience his foul mood, Holmes acted swiftly.

"Mrs. Hudson, would you bring more coffee and some breakfast for Inspector Lestrade. Apparently his morning is not going well and he certainly has not had time for refreshment."

"I think you are right Mr. Holmes," she said walking toward the kitchen.

"Make yourself comfortable, Inspector. As Watson and I are not busy at the moment, how may we be of assistance?"

Looking away, toward the window, I could not help but smile. Holmes was itching to get into the Longstreet matter as for some reason he could smell murder all over it. Holmes already knows something about the recent death, I can sense it in the way his eyes lit up when he heard Lestrade's voice. His face flushed, his jaw clenched, his grip on his clay pipe tightened and he sat straighter in his chair.

"I have just come from the crime scene and am on my way to court where the prosecutor will tie me up for hours. Someone needs to act quickly on the writer's death," explained Lestrade. "During the brief time I was allowed there I did not turn up much. I would like your assistance and I would like it quickly before anything else gets mucked about."

"You sound as though you suspect foul play," suggested Sherlock Holmes.

"I can sense it, but there is not one shred of evidence and apparently there is no motive at all."

Holmes smiled. "We shall be glad to consult," he said dryly.

We arrived at Vernon Longstreet's home which was still being treated as an active crime scene. It was a comfortable office where he obviously did most of his work and subsequently died. Luckily, with all of the traffic, news, curiosity seekers, pedestrians milling around, lack of evidence and leads, nothing much had happened since Lestrade left the scene.

"Watson, do not let them move or touch anything," shouted Holmes.

"Holmes, Inspector Dobbs and other constables are in charge here," I reminded him.

Holmes was already hovering over the body. He pushed, probed, poked and peered from multiple angles. Using a special device he pulled from his coat pocket, Holmes pried open the mouth and looked as far down into the throat as possible, jiggling a magnifier glass at the same time. He spent considerable time examining the nose of the deceased. Working closely and carefully with his high quality magnifying glass, Holmes discovered slight evidence of thickened skin, together with small lesions and discoloration of the skin already damaged. The skin, especially a skin rash on the hands and facial region raised the need for further inspection that revealed some evidence of occasional vomiting. There was a slight garlic odor, around the mouth and nose of the corpse. Holmes extracted several tiny samples of skin which he insisted on tasting minuscule fragments ever so carefully. There was no evidence of blunt force trauma, knife or bullet wound nor any signs of strangulation.

Not satisfied, he called over young Investigator Dobbs and advised him that he should like to be present when the Medical Examiner performs his examination of the corpse.

"I want a Marsh Test performed upon this corpse. I shall be there to assist," Holmes stated firmly. Dobbs looked at him blankly.

"What is a Marsh Test?" I asked, puzzled at the term.

Annoyed, Holmes methodically finished with his examination, then turned to me.

"It is a test perfected by James Earnest Marsh, a chemist. It is a sensitive test for the presence of arsenic when a solution or sample is treated with hydrogen and gaseous arsine is formed and then decomposed to a black deposit of arsenic (as when the gas is passed through a heated glass tube) and was used successfully in court around 1836."

Holmes then shifted his focus to the office itself. He surveyed the room with a critical eye beginning with the chair behind the writing desk in which Longstreet died. The writing desk and chair were arranged in an angular position so that the early-rising sun radiated through the large double windows into this corner of the room unimpeded. The view had a naturally rich luster with trees, foliage, a scattering of flowers with the fresh light being magnified by the small clear lake in the not-too-distant background. It was a perfect place for inspirational writing. The desk was large, carved of plain wood and nothing special, the same as many in London at the time. There was a large area for drafting, two containers of ink wells, and a dozen pens for continuous use. A stack of foolscap, blotters with ink stains accompanied by torn partial pages and wadded up sheets of discarded paper were present. It appeared the writer could write for hours on end without need of stopping for supplies.

A man could write here comfortably for years without human contact. Sherlock Holmes seemed particularly interested in the inkwell which contained a popular brand of India ink. The consistency of this particular brand and color, manufactured in Northern England near the Scottish territories seemed to be frustrating to Sherlock Holmes.

"This is not right! This is not right! How can that be?" were the muffled phrases that symbolized Holmes frustrated curiosity concerning this particular ink.

"Watson, your bag please. I must have samples of this." Several of the samples he smelled and tasted with great care.

Inspector Dobbs had long since departed this part of the grounds feeling that there was nothing helpful and moving on to another part of the crime scene investigation.

Holmes was down under the desk. He was pulling, poking, patting and fondling every part of the desk as though he expected something to leap from the surface clutching a material fact. He was under the desk for a very long time. Rising from his cramped position, Holmes then proceeded to examine the contents.

Opening the top drawer, he noticed two envelopes protruding from the back of the shallow drawer. Holmes removed the envelopes and examined the contents of each. The first contained a letter from one Robert Ellington complaining bitterly that he had been given no credit for work done on Longstreets recent best selling investigative publication. Ellington also mentioned other publications where his contributions were ignored and three complaints of direct insults. Inside the second envelope was an uncashed cheque. The cheque was payable to one "John J. Cornwallis."

"Who is John J. Cornwallis and what is his cheque doing in Vernon Longstreets' desk?" I asked.

In the back of the bottom drawer, Holmes discovered a file marked "CONFIDENTIAL". It was a large bulky file with material and papers spilling out past the bindings. We could see among other things, the file contained material exposing "The Dominion Theology Church" as an "evil organization" intent upon using violence to conquer the world as we know it and prepare it for the second coming of Christ. There was information about "The Dominion Theology Church" organization preparing plans to "seek out" and "find" the slandering parties and "punish them under Old Testament Law."

"The Dominion Theology incorporates a Crusader mindset. It teaches that it is our Christian duty to take over the world, in a political sense, and if necessary, in a military sense, in order to impose Biblical rule. Christ will not return, (they say), until the church has "risen up" and "taken dominion" over all of the world's governments and institutions. Dominionists affirm that this is not a matter for us to discuss. As they see it, this is a direct unequivocal mandate from God. We are not to wait upon God. They want to build their own hierarchies with themselves installed at the top. Carnal Christians often show themselves quite willing to resort to violence to fulfill their dreams of dominion. They are determined to achieve success in their goals. "It is the responsibility of the Church to destroy the wicked and establish the Kingdom on earth."

As Holmes departed the scene to accompany the body to the morgue for further examination, I noticed a middle aged man fitfully arguing with one of the constables while trying to enter the home.

"..... I work with him every day.

"I am his friend and colleague.

"I demand to know what has happened here.

"I am Robert Ellington, what has happened?"

"His wife is at her sister's, I must see Vernon."

Noticing the disturbance, Holmes made a detour.

"Mr. Ellington, my name is Sherlock Holmes and I am consulting on this case. If you will provide me with your address, I will be glad to share our findings with you later today," Holmes stated in a consoling voice. "Please provide my colleague, Dr. Watson with the necessary information, I must go." And Holmes disappeared among a group of police officers and medical personnel.

Sherlock Holmes share information with a possible suspect? I smiled to myself. That will happen when the Queen abdicates the throne. "Good morning, I am Doctor Watson and as Mr. Holmes stated, we are assisting Scotland Yard on this case," I explained.

"How may I help you?" asked Ellington.

After a half-hour of wrangling, screaming, complaining, fragmented statements and general slander with Robert Ellington, it appeared that Vernon Longstreet had a week-long bitter fight with his wife, Veronica, and had severely tried the patience of everyone he knew. Ellington had barely escaped a fist-fight with him and Veronica had thrown several pieces of expensive pottery at him very narrowly missing sending him to Charing's clinic. It seems Veronica and Vernon Longstreet had not gotten along well for the last year.

Shouting to interrupt Ellington's fit of rage, I managed to verify that Veronica Longstreet was staying with her sister and a street address where we might speak with her. Ellington just could not stop spewing hateful things about Vernon. And then there was the tirade about the several threatening letters that Vernon had received this past year. This is going to take some time, I thought wearily and then suddenly it was all over.

"Call me if you need me," Ellington said curtly handing me his card. He turned and stormed out the door.

"Talk to his wife," he bitterly shouted over his shoulder.

Interesting idea, I thought watching him disappear among the carriages. I shall pass this along to Holmes, making a mental note while studying his card.

## VERONICA LONGSTREET

Tall, thin and ravishing. That is the way I remember Veronica Longstreet and that is the way I shall always remember her. Her blond hair floated like spun gold, in her mid-twenties with flashing white teeth and an engaging smile. When she walked, it was like a small fast schooner under full sail. Her eyes sparkled as she entered the foyer at her sisters home not expecting to be confronted by someone investigating her husband's death. Non-the-less, life with Vernon in recent years had been troublesome to say the least.

"We apologize for the abrupt intrusion but Scotland Yard has a sudden rash of homicides," explained Sherlock Holmes.

"Homicide? What on earth are you talking about?" replied an obviously shocked wife.

"Madam," began Holmes, "there has been talk about lengthy quarrels between yourself and your husband. We....."

"Of course there have been quarrels, misunderstandings, fights and near brawls. So What? That is the way we lived, not unlike the Royal Family, if you would look behind the palace doors," she retorted in a dismissive manner.

"Now, what did you really want to ask me Mr. Holmes? Did I kill Vernon?"

"No. Even though some days it seemed like a good idea. By the way, what makes you so sure he was murdered? Maybe the fool just worked himself to death trying to be famous."

Those dark green eyes flashed like an electrical storm as I tried to figure just how she meant that last statement.

"Mrs. Longstreet," said Sherlock Holmes in his most sympathetic manner, "We have burdened you too much." he stated while taking her hands in his and calmly consoling the young widow. He carefully studied her hair, nails and skin. His piercing black eyes probing every detail like a human microscope adjusted to maximum strength. She withdrew her hands frankly stating:

"Scotland Yard will want to ask me where I was last night, at the time of his death. Oddly enough, I was right here." she responded effortlessly.

"Thank you for your time," said Holmes turning to leave.

And then we were on the street, searching for a cab. He glanced at me with a half smile, "Watson, you know she is now very wealthy." The cab ride back to our rooms was lonely as Holmes pondered the circumstances in silence.

Back at 221-B Baker Street after our evening meal, Holmes finally decided to speak. The meditation exercises that he learned in the Far East seemed to help him manage his temperament.

"Watson, let us see where we are on this case. Vernon Longstreet, writing under a pen name, and incidentally unknown by anyone except the publishers, wrote a harsh and bitter criticism of the "The Dominion Theology Church" in the popular book "THE EVIL WORLD OF THE DOMINION THEOLOGY CULT".

"The book was widely received as a tell-all expose' of the religious fanatics who seek to conquer the world and subdue every living thing in preparation for the Second Coming of Christ. It was a highly critical book saying some very bad things about people we really do not know much about. The book was on the London Times best seller list for five straight weeks and was well received in New York. It was rumored that "The Dominion Theology Church" had threatened to kill the author. However, they did have trouble finding John J. Cornwallis.

"Perhaps someone found him," I ventured.

"Should that be true, I still need more information " Holmes stated grasping his pipe and reaching for the Persian Slipper.

"We still do not know for certain how he was murdered," I complained.

"Patience," counseled Holmes lighting his clay pipe and then he began to stare out of the window in silence once again.

### INTERVIEW

Robert Ellington's housekeeper instructed Holmes and I to wait for him in his study as he was busy with a local gardener in the back yard over his Winter Rose.

"The (Helleborus) which is actually not a rose at all, but a low ground cover with shy, nodding flowers." mentioned Holmes as he entered the study. The house-keeper smiled at Holmes regarding his appreciation of flowers in the winter as she departed to continue with her normal duties.

"I've been collecting them for years. I fell in love with their muted plum and green nodding blooms, pretty spotted markings and papery texture." continued Holmes as he disregarded the several chairs available for seating and began to examine Robert Ellington's library collection. Holmes quickly determined Ellington's library was arranged alphabetically by subjects and he immediately focused up the subject of "arsenic poisons".

"Hellebores are easy to grow and not demanding. Plant them in soil enriched with compost or manure and give them light-dappled shade."

Holmes continued speaking on the subject of winter flowers while he rapidly rifled through Ellington's books, paperwork and anything else lying about. He took special notice of several scraps of form paper which were undoubtedly receipts for items purchased at a local pharmacy. Robert Ellington walked into the room immediately making apologies for the delay.

"It has been a very rushed day for me," he commented.

"That is quite alright Mr. Ellington," replied Holmes.

"We only have a few brief questions and we will be out of your way."

His questions were broad and insignificant and by that time I could tell that Sherlock Holmes already had what he wanted and was deliberately misdirecting the interview.

"Please let me know if you need anything else." Ellington said as we began our way out.

"Thank you" replied Holmes as we turned to search for a cab.

"Driver, please take us to the nearest pharmacy."

"That would be Johnson's Pharmacy," the driver replied.

### INVESTIGATION

The crippled drifter hobbled toward the seedy shacks that lined this area of the river front. Tall, with a slender muscular frame covered by a ragged cap and shabby long coat, he actually moved well for a man with a noticeable limp. The use of a worn out Penang Lawyer helped considerably. The two hooligans that had been following him for the last few blocks decided that he should be a near-helpless target. As they moved in closer for the paralyzing strike, the limping drifter suddenly tripped and fell. Going down, they quickly moved in and came with arms reach moving too fast to stop. Only then did they sense that this robbery might be a mistake. The drifter hit the ground rolling with his long coat billowing into the faces of the two attackers. Rolling up into a crouched fighting position, he swung the heavy cane with unanticipated force breaking the first attacker's nose as he slid into a jujitsu defensive maneuver lasting only a few seconds then planting his back foot and thrust forward resulting in the second attacker suffering a ruptured ear drum. He then quickly delivered the second series of blows to both men. The third blow placed the taller first man flat on his back with his bald head in the dirt. The fourth blow rendered the second man on his hands and knees, dizzy and disoriented. The point of the heavy cane held both men helpless, on the ground and unable to move.

"Gentlemen, your valuables please," commanded a deep raspy voice.

"All of it," the harsh voice barked.

"We were only trying to make a living" the bald man protested as they handed over their purses.

Quickly rifling through the booty, the drifter stripped out currency, coin and jewelry. Responding to the bald man's comment, the drifter threw a shilling each into the laps of the bewildered hooligans.

"This is your "living" he snarled in the deep raspy voice.

"For another shilling, you can answer a question," the raspy voice continued.

"I am searching for "The Dominion Theology" organization. Where do I find them?"

"Why?" asked the shorter second man.

"Just tell him," said the bald man noticing the revolver tucked in the belt of the drifter. "We're members mate, both of us. So?"

The drifter stared hard for a moment. "I have heard of them and I am considering joining but I must know more."

"What do you want to know?"

"I am not interested in robbing people. Is this the way you support yourselves?"

"No. This is just something we do ourselves once in a while," the bald one replied sheepishly.

"You are mere thugs! When is your next meeting? I plan to be there," barked the raspy voice.

"Tonight," the bald one said. "Sundown. Sorry about our little misunderstanding." The drifter stared fiercely.

"Sundown it is." Then he turned and limped away.

### **"THE DOMINION THEOLOGY CHURCH"**

The Post Commander called the meeting to order stating the time, place and date. The Commander led the pledge of allegiance to the flags. First, to the British flag with the nationally accepted pledge. Second, the salute to the ARMY OF GOD.

"We pledge allegiance to the flag of the Army of God. We pledge on our lives to defend, fight for and continue forward and if necessary even to death, to prepare the earth for the second coming of the Lord. All the earth is the battlefield and every living thing must be conquered. THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE YOU! We go, for he will come quickly. In Gods name, Amen."

The OATH is administered:

"I THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME!  
I believe there is but one God.

I love the Lord my God with all my heart, my soul, my mind, my strength. "The fear I hold close is that I will not have the earth ready when the Lord comes. He will return with a sword. We must have the battlefield ready. We must begin now for he will come quickly. This day I will renew my battle for the Gates of Heaven. There is no other God before me. This will be done by any means necessary. Death to the unbelievers."

They broke ranks sharply, each moving toward some apparently designated place. There seemed to be men of all ages everywhere.

The drifter started to look around and then realized the two men who tried to rob him earlier that day were on each side of him. The bald one offered his hand, "I am brother John, welcome." The shorter of the two stepped forward extending his hand, "welcome, I am brother Michael. This is the Camp of Job and is divided into six different companies. We are assigned to Company "C". Please come with us," as he turned and walked in a northerly direction fully confident that the two men behind him would follow. The drifter realized that for better or worse, he was deep inside the bowels of "The Dominion Theology Church" and it's ARMY OF GOD.

As they moved toward Company "C" section of the building, the crippled drifter was shocked at the number of women present at the meeting. Small children played in a way they would at a Sunday afternoon church function. Company "C" settled in a room with not enough seating, leaving some of the men standing. The women and children seemed to roam around as they pleased, but were very quiet in doing so. There was a certain reverence in the air.

"And what shall we call you, stranger?" John asked the crippled drifter.

"Thomas," he replied quietly.

A huge map of London hung on the wall behind the speaker's podium. The entire city was sectioned off into Holy Attack Zones.

Everyone listened closely to the speaker. Relaxed they were all respectful and comfortable. The speaker began.

"Fellow Warriors, good evening," he began.

"Good evening, Captain," the congregation responded in unison.

"As you know membership is not growing as fast as we would like. One Sunday service did not even fill the Sanctuary Hall. Our message is not getting out as well as it should. We must improve our Bible Study recruitment at every opportunity. More hand bills are being printed this week. Company "C" has actually done better than the other five and that is thanks to each of you doing the Lords work and doing it well. There is but one God and we are but an instrument of his will, Amen."

"AMEN" was the response in unison from all in the room.

"I understand brother John and brother Michael have a new guest requesting membership. Brother John and brother Michael report that their initial meeting was under unusual conditions. We shall see if this new candidate can meet the necessary requirements for the first level of membership. Will you please introduce your guest Brother Michael?" requested the Captain. Brother Michael rose and faced the twenty or so people before him.

"This is Thomas. He comes forth requesting inspection and questioning as to his character, motives and beliefs." The Captain spoke.

"This will be a lengthy process Thomas, as we know little about you and you know little about us. You will be given ample time to prove yourself. At this time, you may say a few words to tell us something about yourself and why you would want to join our group." Thomas rose, leaning heavily on his Penang Lawyer, straightened himself as best he could and stated in his deep raspy voice,

"It is my intent and interest to seek out criminals and get them off the streets of London. I seek to do this by any means necessary -- within the Law." And then he sat down unsteadily. The Captain replied,

"We too have plans for lawbreakers--we have that in common."

The meeting went on for an unspecified time discussing various scheduling and assignment matters. Thomas turned to brother Michael and said. "I have a matter of concern that I would like to discuss." Brother Michael waved brother John over.

"Please begin and we will listen." The discussion between the three went on for half an hour. An extended time later the organization meeting came to a close and then ended with a prayer.

" THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE YOU! Oh Lord God of Israel, there is but One God. He commands that we take command over every living thing for your return. We will do this with The ARMY OF GOD--Onward Christian Soldiers. Amen."

"AMEN", the group replied in unison.

And then the meeting was over. The crippled drifter looked around, John and Michael were no where in sight. He was ignored as he limped out the door with everyone else. A block away, he realized no one had said anything about his taking the money and jewelry from John and Michael in their foiled robbery attempt.

### **221-B BAKER STREET**

I heard Mrs. Hudson shriek in the hallway. "Who are you and what are you doing up here?" There was a muffled response and

then I recognized the barely familiar voice of Sherlock Holmes as it changed pitch and returned to near normal. The door opened and I was shocked. "Holmes? Why on earth are you dressed like that and why are you limping?"

"Investigation, dear Watson, investigation," still having trouble with his voice.

"I am sorry for confusing you, Mrs. Hudson," he replied trying to ease the shocked look on her face.

"I still have some biscuits and I will make tea," Mrs. Hudson said, shaking her head and moving toward the kitchen.

"I hope this was worth it," I commented. Holmes smiled slightly.

"We will talk in the morning, I am going to bed," I said, closing the door.

## CONCLUSION

Investigator Lestrade was in no mood to waste time. He had been in court all day, not his favorite place to be, as he much preferred the gritty streets of London even though he will never admit it. The short notice he received from Sherlock Holmes insisting on this meeting did not help his disposition. He settled into the nearest chair with an expectant look on his face. Cigarette in hand, Holmes began to summarize his findings.

"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE YOU" is the motto of "The Dominion Theology Church". A book entitled "THE EVIL WORLD OF THE DOMINION THEOLOGY CULT" written by John J. Cornwallis was on the London Times bestseller list for five straight weeks. While the book was hugely successful, it was a scathing denunciation of the Church and harshly critical of its members. Allegedly, members of the Church threatened to kill the author, but there is no evidence that the Church or any of its members actually made any threats or attempts. There is no evidence that The Dominion Theology Church ever came near Vernon Longstreet."

"Careful investigation revealed that John J. Cornwallis is a nom de plume. The true author was none other than Vernon Longstreet. The un-cashed check in his file payable to John J. Cornwallis is one of his royalty payments for writing the book."

"Vernon Longstreet died from arsenic poisoning by inhalation, carefully and methodically administered by lacing the inkwells on his writing desk with small portions of arsenic. The metallic particles in the ink, together with the substantial poison in the ink wells within close proximity, coupled with poor air circulation over an extended time period finally overcame him.

When arsenic is inhaled and enters the lungs, about eighty percent is absorbed into the bloodstream that carries it throughout the body. The effects, difficult to detect, are evidenced by skin lesions, rash, garlic odor on the breath and a darkening brownish appearance on the skin, all which were present for the Medical Examiner's determination of cause of death.

In this case, with the windows closed much of the time, the arsenic elements in the air are a continuous hazard. Lungs are not the same as skin, the fumes of arsenic particles can clog the lungs. Also ink is motionless and it is very hard for the lungs to remove ink particles, especially if exposed over an extended continuous period of time."



"At this point it should be said that it is widely known that Vernon Longstreet and his wife, Veronica have quarreled viciously for the last two years. But that in fact, was just what it was. Nothing more, nothing less."

"The real killer of Vernon Longstreet was none other than Robert T. Ellington, one of his friends and a favored long-time colleague. Robert had done considerable investigative and literary work helping Vernon with his enormously popular books, but over the years received only casual mention in a few acknowledgments and footnotes. Robert had done all of the interviews, legwork, and gathered all of the research in addition to taking all of the physical risks for the widely acclaimed expose' about the "The Dominion Theology Church." He then discovered that he would receive mere mention in two minor footnotes. He felt ruthlessly cheated. Robert Ellington finally snapped."

"Retribution by Robert T. Ellington was carried out by arsenic poisoning inhalation executed by lacing the ink wells with arsenic on a regular basis. The UK Pharmacy Act of 1868 did little to prevent any tradesman from selling arsenic. A trip to the nearby pharmacy and a short visit with the proprietor determined that Robert Ellington had been a steady customer of arsenic for over a year. The discovered scraps of paper from Ellington's study consisted of receipts for arsenic purchases from nearby Johnson's Pharmacy."

"Robert Ellington had the means, manner, motive and opportunity to poison Vernon Longstreet with arsenic.

It was easy. He had the Means: a record of regular purchases of arsenic from Johnson's Pharmacy for over a year. Manner: the simple lacing of the inkwells was convenient because he was meeting constantly and frequently with Longstreet to present material for the author's ongoing multiple writing projects. Motive: for committing the act was that Ellington had been simply cheated out of the hard-earned and properly due credit for work that he had done for Longstreet over the years. Opportunity: This was easiest. He already had ready access, they had worked together for years and Ellington was in and out of Vernon's office at all hours, even when Longstreet was out of town. It was really similar to another case of "the dog that did not bark." In this case he didn't even wake up."

"What alerted you to Robert Ellington?" Lestrade asked.

"The cause of death," replied Holmes.

"The ARMY OF GOD is training for battlefield action by force with guns, knives and armament. They knew very little about poisons. Their enforcement of The First Commandment is beyond the scope of this unfortunate murder. Veronica Longstreet provided no evidence that she knew anything about arsenic in any form. Robert Ellington, on the other hand, had worked with Vernon on many books and in several of them poison was either used or mentioned. Ellington's hands and nails showed very slight symptoms of regular handling of arsenic. Plain and simply, he had been cruelly cheated and he was angry."

"The real difficulty was in detecting the remnant traces of the arsenic poisoning. It is very hard to find and even more difficult to prove. The Marsh Test was an important breakthrough in arsenic poison cases."

"Again gentlemen, when you have all of the evidence, deductive reasoning is very basic."

"Come Watson, we still have time for the Symphony at the Palace."

# THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGES

2nd In a Series of "The Ten Commandments of Sherlock Holmes Mystery Series"

## PROLOGUE

It was a cold, wet, blustery morning in London. Sherlock Holmes stared sleepily out the window of 221-B Baker Street, watching the figures move about on the street below like pawns in a larger game in which he felt he was denied participation. The telegram lying on the table beside him promised some degree of relief from his present purgatory. I was finishing my second cup of coffee while reviewing a bleak patient schedule for the next few weeks when the sound of footsteps broke through the sleepy morning atmosphere.

At the sound of the rustle in the hallway, Sherlock Holmes arched his crane-like neck toward the door expectantly. It opened suddenly and then a figure was in the room.

## The Guardian

"I am Professor Lawrence K. Higgins, Guardian of *The Department of Gifts and Favors of the Royal Kingdom of Norway*. I assume that you are Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

"Yes."

"I report to *The National Security Administrator* who answers directly to the King. There are matters of delicate concern that I desperately need help with. Reliable parties assure me that you are discrete."

"I am. We are. This is my associate and colleague, Dr. John Watson."

I rose to greet him but was cut off in mid-sentence ".....Yes, I was told that you would likely assist. I..., we, must have your help."

Professor Higgins looked as though he had come straight out of Central Casting for the London Theater Guild. Mid-forties, he was tall and handsome with the bearing of a man born to dominate whatever room he entered. Higgins was a tailor's dream, well-proportioned with an athletic build that required tennis twice per week. Blue eyes shown from under a high forehead were crowned by a full head of dark hair. His high cheek bones rose above a strong jaw with perfect white teeth. An erect military carriage revealed natural confidence. His suit was made of an expensive, well-tailored, dark conservative English wool. It was obvious he enjoyed lavish jewelry. The head of his walking stick was finished with gold leaf and half way down an engraving displayed his initials. It was evident, the gentleman liked to dress. Today however, he looked tired and very worried.

"These pleasantries are nice Professor, but your message failed in detail. Exactly what is the purpose of you seeking my services?" asked Holmes.

"I, as Guardian of *The Department of Gifts and Favors of the Royal Kingdom of Norway* and designated by *The Wealth Committee of Five*, am charged to guard, protect and maintain all gifts given to *The Kingdom* and *The Royal Family*," he announced proudly.

"It is my responsibility to care, clean, polish and occasionally refurbish all jewelry and gifts including *The Crown Jewels*. I will confess that over the years of being close around and caring for the gifts and jewelry, I have developed a very deep affection for these cherished items, their condition and welfare. I enjoy being around them and when I am not in their presence, I feel lost, almost lonesome. I

classify, store and maintain all gifts of value that come to *The Royal Family* and *The Kingdom*."

"You have excellent personal taste in jewelry," noted Holmes as he carefully surveyed the luxurious watch, chain, rings, tie pin and bracelet worn by Professor Higgins, all expensive and of good taste.

"I admit that I do, though I have limited funds of my own, I gather an occasional piece myself. It is a slow process for me," Professor Higgins replied.

"Professor, your concern please," prompted Holmes.

"Yes, I suspect that someone is taking some items of gifts given to the Royal Family. I suspect that many of the gifts are being taken but I do not know when or how, nor do I know what to do about it, hence my request for this meeting."

"Particular items? Quantity? Dates of occurrence?" posed Holmes.

"It has been difficult to ascertain. At first I thought it was an accounting error, perhaps something misplaced or some mix-up in inventory dates."

"As it turns out, things are physically missing. I simply do not know."

"Your people cannot count?" suggested Holmes.

Professor Higgins glared at Holmes sternly for a moment, then continued. "The Wealth Committee of Five" in my opinion, has complicated things by issuing this opinion," he stated producing a document and handing it to Holmes.

A tersely written statement marked CONFIDENTIAL stated that The Wealth Committee of Five "has found that no member of the staff is involved in the inquiry concerning missing jewelry."

"Who has access to your area of responsibility?" asked Holmes.

"All members of the Royal Family and also a *Mrs. Martha J. Fontaine*, liaison between The Business Development Committee, a private organization representing the Business Community of Norway and the *Kingdom of Norway*. She has unrestricted and frequent access to *the Offices* and working area of the Wealth Committee. She can come and go as she pleases; she is an old friend of the Royal Family."

"Then, of course, there is Lady Phyllis Wilmington."

"Who do you think is taking the jewelry? What is your opinion as to what has been happening?"

"We, that is I am simply not certain at this point. I just do not know."

"Very well, as you represent *The Royal Kingdom of Norway*, I shall look into this matter of missing gifts and jewelry," stated Holmes.

"Tell me about the people who have access to these secure areas surrounding the office and area of *The Wealth Committee of Five*."

"Well there is myself, Lady Phyllis Wilmington, an elderly widow who has unusual political acumen, Mrs. Martha J. Fontaine widow, a respected business woman, who is the liaison official between the business community and the Kingdom. "

"As the 'Guardian,' I feel that you should provide me with the residence address of Mrs. Fontaine and Lady Wilmington."

"Of course."

"I would like to visit with you at your residence in Oslo as soon as we arrive," continued Holmes.

"Here is a draft that may be drawn upon the Royal Bank of Norway that should cover the expenses of yourself and Dr. Watson. You shall have my full cooperation," agreed the Professor as he prepared to leave."

Watching the departure of Professor Higgins through the window, Holmes asked; "Watson, would you be free to accompany me to Oslo for an investigation into the affairs of *The Royal Kingdom of Norway?*"

"I think I would find that interesting," I replied.

"It appears that we may examine the biblical quotation, '*Thou Shalt Not Make Unto Thee Any Graven Images,*'" observed Holmes for no apparent reason. Arriving in Oslo five days later, Sherlock Holmes arranged for several rooms and set up our center of operations at The Viking Royal Hotel.

## INTERVIEWS

### Professor Lawrence K. Higgins

Sherlock Holmes' decision to interview Professor Lawrence K. Higgins at his home in Oslo rather than his government office proved to be a different experience than their first meeting a few days before at 221-B Baker Street. As it was late in the evening, the Professor was tending to some government social matters with a currier in another room, so his housekeeper ushered us into his library and left to prepare tea. I was seated in a comfortable chair and enjoyed the rest. Holmes, on the other hand, could not stay still.

After studying items on the top of the desk, his eyes went directly to the bookcase and began examining everything on it. Mental notes recorded as his dark eyes flashed like a hunting dog that had just picked up a fresh scent. What was frequently used, what was never used and what was never touched quickly sorted itself out.

"Show me what a man reads and I will show you what a man thinks about," was the message in this exercise. Upon close inspection, he did have a point.

The Professor's books were largely about precious gems, gold and silver. All of the finer techniques of appraisal, histories of cutting, finishing and re-finishing gold and silver objects of all sizes and qualities. Shoved off in one corner was a stack of brochures with a partially visible title '*The Celebration*'. Gemstones occupied one entire shelf. One of the books on the second shelf was titled "*The Principles and Practices of Inventory Control*". Interestingly, Holmes took time to pull it down and quickly skim the table of contents. Not satisfied, Holmes studied the desk again more carefully. Notes were scattered about in all manner and means.

A few small brochures were shoved under a large dictionary. Holmes indulged himself in the repugnant chore of delving into the personal notes of another in what I thought was a rather ghoulish fashion. Watching the door out of the corner of his eye, Holmes pilfered through every piece of paper on top of the desk and even made a quick inspection of the trash containers.

"I was admiring your book collection, Professor," said Holmes as the host and maid appeared with tea. "You truly enjoy your work."

"Yes, it is quite compelling. Now, if you gentlemen are comfortable, how may I help you?"

The interview proved to be less fruitful than expected. The Professor did not seem to know much more than discussed upon their initial interview. We did however, have the luxury of observing his residential quarters.

## Lady Phyllis Wilmington

Sherlock Holmes and I knocked upon the door of Lady Wilmington's flat after working hours. Holmes had left word with her secretary earlier in the day so she was expecting us.

Lady Phyllis Wilmington was a beady-eyed old woman, shriveled up and hard as nails. When she looked at you it was like a hungry vulture leering from an uncomfortably close perch, contemplating attack. Her firm jaw clenched yellowish slightly uneven teeth that could spit ridicule or remarkably persuasive compliments that surprise and unsettle most in her presence. Her late husband, naval hero Commander "Full-Sail" Wilmington, gave her the limited standing with the Royal Family that she made good use of.

Lady Wilmington had one redeeming quality which endeared her to the Royal Family. She was a brilliant political strategist and had the ability to predict the outcome of very complicated matters of the Kingdom at home and in foreign affairs.

She also had a well known uncontrollable taste for expensive jewelry. What she could not beg, borrow or mooch, she promised unbelievable things that shocked her few friends and limited acquaintances. She had come dangerously close to promising things in the past, that nearly placed the Kingdom into very embarrassing political positions. All of this over her uncontrollable worship of gold, silver and diamond jewelry of all sizes and shapes.

As she opened the door to us, Lady Wilmington was relaxed and actually quite charming. The old girl was sly, I will give her that.

"Good evening gentlemen, please come in," greeting us smoothly as she swept across the hallway of the foyer to welcome us in a most diplomatic manner. She literally dripped precious stones from the peak of her head to her painted toenails.

"Would you like coffee?"

"Thank you for your hospitality, but we shall try to inconvenience you as little as possible," replied Holmes.

"Well, at least sit down and make yourselves comfortable," ushering us into a comfortable sitting room. I noticed the corner of a small brochure with part of the title '*Celebration*' showing.

"This is Dr. Watson, my colleague, and we are investigating the missing of precious stones and jewelry from *The Department of Gifts and Favors*."

"We, that is I have a special interest in precious stones and I shall be happy to help in any way I can," she replied in an engaging manner.

"You know of course that a special magical and symbiotic connection has always existed between human beings and unique gems. Gemstones have been used for healing far back before Christ. The Chinese, Egyptians, Sumerians, Greeks, Romans and Medicine Men have used gemstones for healing in numerous forms," she continued. I saw Holmes steal a sly glance at a corner of a small brochure with the partial inscription showing '*The Cel...*'

"The precious stones have been made into powders or elixirs and worn or carried and placed on the body during ceremonies and rituals. This wisdom has been passed down from one generation to the next and to us today. I personally use precious stones in the *Feng Shui* manner, developed over four thousand years ago. There is great respect for all of nature including the movement of wind (Feng) and water (Shui). The Chinese art of creating positive and harmonious surroundings by working with the natural energy are beneficial within the home. This includes the use of Rough and Smooth Gemstones. I use, for example: Fame and Reputation Improvement; by working with the gemstones to have the courage to

try something new, gain support & respect from family, friends and strangers, and improve business by increasing attractiveness and improvement of financial skill by use of:

"Gemstone: Garnet & Carnelian and Colors, Red & Orange, then Light-catcher for *Feng Shui*."

"This is very interesting, Lady Wilmington, but do you know anything about the missing precious stones and jewelry?" inquired Holmes trying to steer the conversation back to our purpose for being there at this time of night.

"Heavens no. I am a true believer that precious stones are both magical and healing."

"Similar to the belief in '*Graven Images*'?" inquired Holmes.

"I suppose one could say that," she responded indifferently.

And then she made a further disclosure that I found shocking. It was unbelievable, this ugly old woman had made it a habit, a ritual, to line the edge of her bed near where the bedclothes touched and sleep on the small items of gold, and silver. Apparently the diamond items were too hard. It was a sickness! With all of that, we bid Lady Wilmington good evening and upon the street summoned a carriage.

"This woman worships precious stones." Holmes said as the carriage carried us back to The Viking Royal Hotel. This time I had nothing to say, still recovering from what I had just heard.

### **Mrs. Martha J. Fontaine (Office Interview)**

Mrs. Martha J. Fontaine, liaison between The Business Development Committee, a private organization representing the Business Community of Norway and *The Kingdom of Norway* was a position she has held for the last five years.

She has unrestricted and frequent access to the Offices and working area of the *Wealth Committee*. She can come and go as she pleases; she is an old friend of the Royal Family. Her husband, a solicitor, died of consumption three years ago. This was the summary that Professor Higgins had given us about Martha Fontaine. Holmes had done some homework himself. Martha Fountain is an experienced, hard working and well-respected businesswoman.

She had spent most of her professional life in the trade and exchange area of business and commerce. The fact that she had been caught in an affair with a young executive from a competing company barely made a ripple in the trade papers and did little more than create an aura of mystery about this seemingly ordinary business woman who lately appeared to be everywhere. As we approached her office, Holmes posed the question.

"Why would a business woman, even though a friend of the family, be given free access to the Offices and working area of the *Wealth Committee*?"

"Perhaps we could ask her," I suggested with a half-smile.

That warranted no response as we knocked on the door of Mrs. Fontaine's business office well aware that we were calling without an appointment. Her secretary advised Mrs. Fontaine of our unscheduled arrival. She quickly shuffled her schedule and her secretary showed us in with only a few minutes wait.

Medium height with steel blue eyes and her hair pulled back into a business-bun, Mrs. Martha Fontaine was an average looking conservatively dressed businesswoman with one unusual characteristic. That was high energy. She simply radiated action in a manner that affected everyone around her. A few minutes around her and that energy rubbed off. It made you want to do things.

"Gentlemen, please come in. I understand you are investigating something. That is what Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson do,

correct?" she smiled offering her hand to Holmes. She wore no jewelry.

"Thank you for seeing us without notice. I apologize," Holmes replied blandly as he quickly looked over her office. A rapid scan of our surroundings revealed nothing more than standard commercial furnishing, really a bit austere for my taste but it seemed to fit Martha Fontaine perfectly. Then Holmes took a surprising tact.

"Mrs. Fontaine, I would like your opinion on something. Your confidential opinion."

"Of course," she replied, then waited quietly.

"What is your opinion of the Inventory Control Policies at The Department of Gifts and Favors?"

"Oh," she blinked, surprised at the directness of the request.

Narrowing those steel blue eyes, you could almost feel the thought processes working.

"I have never given the inventory any thought over at 'G & F', she said speaking slowly in deep concentration.

"As I recall, on the surface it appears pretty sketchy which would lead me to believe that there is much tighter control in the background, unseen," then leaping ahead - "but should you not be talking to Professor Higgins?"

"But then, you are asking me," she smiled broadly answering her own question. Then more serious.

"Frankly, we, I have always been too busy to pay any attention."

"Sorry gentlemen," she concluded.

As she showed us to the door, an afterthought occurred; "If I wanted to know something about the management of *The Kingdom*. I would ask 'Silent Sam,' the butler, she said handing me a card. Not likely that you will get anywhere, but he is very smart and he is very loyal. Good day, gentlemen."

Half-way to the street, Holmes suddenly changed his mind. Back up the stairs we went and puzzled, I watched as he advised Ms. Fontaine's secretary that we would like to talk further with her at her residence. The secretary scheduled us to meet with Ms. Fontaine at her residence three days from now. And then we were on our way to hail a carriage back to the hotel. I very much doubted that Holmes would allow Ms. Fontaine the luxury of a scheduled meeting. Sherlock Holmes was too much in favor of the element of surprise.

### **'Silent Sam' Simmons**

'Silent Sam' Simmons, butler is what the card said. I was still fiddling with it half an hour after Mrs. Fontaine handed it to me. Holmes was deep in thought.

"He is the butler at the home of the Queen. How is he connected to The Department of Gifts and Favors?" I asked.

Holmes was still deep in thought. As was becoming more frequent lately, the remainder of the cab ride back to our hotel was in silence with Holmes staring out the window, his mind far away.

The following morning I had a message for me upon my arrival in the breakfast room at The Viking Royal. The hurried note from Holmes told me that he was "doing research" this early morning and would return soon. I shrugged and settled into the reading of newspapers from three different countries while enjoying the hotel grounds and nearby shopping area. Sherlock Holmes arrived around noon and we settled into a discussion about the case.

"It appears that we have a new player in this mystery within the Kingdom. We must visit with this mysterious participant." That would result in a trip to see the now known "Silent Sam" Simmons.

"You know Watson, he is called "Silent Sam" because during the *Crimean War* he was briefly captured and interrogated. He gave them nothing. Due to this act, at a particular time in the battle, he saved the lives of several hundred men driving forward from an unexpected direction in the maneuvers. I think we should visit with this war hero this afternoon. He is located at the Royal Residence."

Sherlock Holmes and I arrived at the Royal Residence in the early afternoon. Silent Sam was surprised to discover that we were there to interview him rather than the Royal Family. His butler attire was flawless. An expensive gold watch chain hung from his vest and a solid gold bracelet encircled his wrist. Shoes shined to perfection as the toes looked like highly polished mirrors. He wore a single military medal attached neatly in his lapel.

The coveted Royal Combat Badge with a single battle star glistening in the sunlight. His military bearing came from years of experience. Twenty years and retired as Master Sergeant.

"We are working with Scotland Yard. It was suggested that we interview you based upon your expansive knowledge of the inner working of the Royal Family matters," stated Holmes to a very suspicious guardian of the 'Family'.

"Can you give us any information concerning the missing precious stones?"

"Only that I have heard some loosely stated rumors," replied Sam cautiously.

"Oh?" replied Holmes, displaying his most disappointed look.

Looking us over suspiciously, Sam replied,

"Look, this is not the first time rumors like this have circulated around the Kingdom. Then the inventory is re-examined, all of the valuables are accounted for and then we are on to some other crisis. At least that is what I have seen in the past. That is all that I can say. Besides, the household here keeps me busy," gesturing with a wave of his hand. A hand weighted with a very large ring mounted with an elegant emerald stone.

"I see you served in the *Battle of Cetate*," observed Holmes.

"Yes"

"Your military service is admirable," continued Holmes

Silent Sam stared silently. In the carriage on the way back to our hotel, Holmes finally spoke.

"Did you notice Watson, I did not mention INVENTORY, Silent Sam did."

### **Mrs. Martha J. Fontaine (Residence Interview)**

Martha Fontaine was not expecting us.

"I apologize Mrs. Fontaine. There have been some abrupt changes in our investigation necessitating our appearance unannounced," Holmes explained quickly.

Mrs. Fontaine was dressed casually but her appearance was much improved. Her hair was down and well brushed to a rich luster. An expensive lounging gown, hinted makeup and fully adorned gold jewelry, rings, bracelets, earrings, belt, gold trimmed shoes and completed with a golden tiara of blinding beauty. Unlike her business regalia, she now looked very feminine. Tables and chairs were arranged in a manner that made it obvious that she was expecting several guests. Adjusting quickly to unforeseen circumstances, the experienced business woman took matters in stride.

"That is quite alright Mr. Holmes, how may I help you?"

"As discussed before, we are investigating the perplexing question of the missing jewelry and thought you might feel more at liberty to speak freely outside the office. We are pondering the theory

that an outsider has found a way to penetrate the Kingdom's security system" continued Holmes causing me to raise an eyebrow questioningly. I also noted that Holmes was also surveying the reception and sitting rooms with great interest.

On the edge of a small table was a small brochure entitled, *The Celebration*, "the intense study of precious stones and metals, Gods most durable asset." There was an altar in the corner of the sitting room. The decorations were glorious. A wooden cabinet with doors that enclose to protect various items on display was made of a combination of highly polished cedar with elaborate mahogany trim, lined and trimmed with gold. The doors were partially open, like someone had been rearranging the display. The top of the lavish cabinet had a series of levels similar to a tower on a temple and my limited view enabled me to see part of the display. It was filled with some of the most beautiful gold, silver and precious stone displays that I have ever seen. The furnishings were luxurious.

"Is there any way that you can think of that an outsider could penetrate the Kingdom's security?" Holmes asked her directly.

"Not that I can think of" she responded easily.

"Then too, security is not something that I think very much about."

Sherlock Holmes graciously thanked her and we departed. A block down the street, we stopped and waited. Five minutes later, carriages began arriving at Martha Fontaine's home.

"The term *"Graven Images"* seems to be rising to the surface yet once again," noted Holmes.

As usual, Sherlock Holmes was silent on the way back to our hotel. Upon arrival, it was also a silent walk to our rooms as he was still in deep thought. As I departed for my room, he stopped me.

"Watson, we shall present our findings to *His Majesty* tomorrow. I shall desire your presence."

"Of course, it should be interesting. Good evening."

### **CONCLUSION**

The doorman acknowledged the arrival of Holmes' telegram to the Royal Residence late last evening and showed us into a magnificent receiving room. His Majesty arrived shortly thereafter and following a courteous exchange of greetings, bid us to proceed with our business.

"Your Majesty, the problem came to me by inquiry from one Professor Lawrence K. Higgins, Guardian of *The Department of Gifts and Favors of the Kingdom*, concerning the disappearance and unaccountability of several items from The Department," began Sherlock Holmes.

"A short inquiry into the movements of the Royal Family assured me that they never personally visited The Department of Gifts and Favors."

"Of the people who have unrestricted access to matters of *The Kingdom*, Professor Higgins is the one who came forward to complain about items thought to be missing from The Department. Perhaps it was loyalty and dedication to the Kingdom, or a shrewd ploy designed to deflect blame from acts that would eventually be discovered. The Professor clearly has an appetite for expensive jewelry and is experienced in the finer techniques of appraisal, cutting, finishing and refinishing of precious stones as well as gold and silver. He is also particularly well versed on the subject of Inventories, Inventory Control and Management. It is a fact that he fanatically enjoys the presence and possession of precious jewels, gems, and the precious metals themselves. He literally worships

precious stones and metals and is familiar with the inner workings of The Department of Gifts and Favors security system and inventory control. There is also evidence that he is an active member of the '*Celebration Cult*', a cult that worships precious jewels, precious gems and precious metals," explained Holmes.

"During the investigation it became immediately apparent that the intruder was very familiar with the security system responsible for the protection of the Kingdoms' precious jewelry and gifts. Further inquiry revealed that 'Silent Sam' Simmons had upgraded the system several years ago and that upgrade proved to be a considerably improvement. Interestingly, it is also a fact that Sam's military pension is so small that he came into your Majesties Service almost penniless.

Sam had fought in the *Battle of Cetate* during the *Crimean War*, as Norway had sought to improve their treasury by lending a voluntary contingent to the Russian Campaign. Ottoman forces under Ahmed Pasha advanced to attack Cetate, which was held by a Russian detachment and supported by the Norwegian Expeditionary Company. The Russian force, including the Norwegian forces were driven from the town with heavy losses. Simmons fought bravely to no avail. Compensation proved to be almost non-existent from the Russians and the Treasury of Norway was extremely limited with only token amounts for retiring veterans.

They were literally dumped upon a society that had no taste for war or veterans, a little known chapter of their history. Not their finest hour. Silent Sam was one of these 'Social Victims'. This may well be a partial explanation for his 'out-of-character' behavior. 'Silent Sam' is unquestionably loyal to his Majesty and the Kingdom but, he does have this weakness. He kept his associates informed as to the inter-workings of the Royal Family as a dependable member of '*The Celebration Cult*', pointed out Sherlock Holmes.

"Lady Phyllis Wilmington unquestionably has a well-known, uncontrollable taste for expensive jewelry," continued Holmes.

"She has a reverent, unabashed worship of precious stones and is likely one of the stronger and more active members of the '*Celebration Cult*.' She is not secretive of her worship of precious jewelry, precious gems and precious metals," continued Holmes.

"Mrs. Martha Fontaine is perhaps the smartest and most sophisticated of the four," reasoned Holmes.

"Her worship of graven images is deliberately private. However, her private activities are skillful to the point that she is likely the leader of the cult activities. Mrs. Fontaine's business experience make her the likely moving force in rituals, customs, meetings and how they are best used to access The Department of Gifts and

Favors and yet remain supportive of *The Royal Kingdom*. She is very smart. In this case, your Majesty, the two women are most dominant in this cult," he continued.

"All had easy access. All "Worshipped" the gold, silver and precious Jewels of the Kingdom. In this case more specifically, the gold, silver and precious jewels that gifts and favors bestowed on and given to, *The Kingdom of Norway*.

"Which of these people is the guilty party?"

"Your Majesty, all four of these individuals are involved in the manipulation of The Department of Gifts and Favors and the inventory thereof. They are all in this together. They are all members of a conspiracy. They all love jewelry. They all love gold. They all love silver. They all love diamonds. They are virtually addicted to them. They all worship them. They all worship jewelry uncontrollably, without reservation or inhibition. They are obsessed. They have made unto themselves graven images!"

"The four of them; Higgins, Wilmington, Fontaine and Simmons founded a cult. A precious jewelry cult; '*The Celebration Cult*'.

"They have regular meetings. They even have a creed. They have a ceremony, a ritual. They take turns taking the different stones home and enjoying them in private -- if one of the members just couldn't bear to let go of the item, they kept it for an unlimited period of time. The next time another member could do the same. Each and every member literally and physically worships the precious stones; they are obsessed," stated Holmes, driving home the seriousness of the matter.

"They actually believe that they, these four, are designated by God to be the conduit between humans on this earth and the Supreme Being. And, designated to be the caretakers of the precious stones of Norway while on this earth. They have made unto themselves graven images!" he concluded forcefully.

"Professor Higgins' idea of contacting me was a bold decision. If they could say that I investigated and found nothing, then who would ever question them again?"

"The problem is now yours, Your Highness. My work is done."

"Come Watson, our ship weighs anchor with the evening tide."

#### Addendum

Two months later, a special delivery folder arrived bearing the Royal Markings of *The Kingdom of Norway*.

As Holmes unwrapped the folder, I detected the corner of a draft payable to Sherlock Holmes, on *The Royal Treasury of Norway*.

Sherlock Holmes merely smiled.



# THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN

## The 3rd of The Ten Commandment Mystery Series

### INTRODUCTION

Part way through the year and with weather finally modest in London, Holmes and I enjoyed the open windows of our rooms. As a mild breeze mingled with the stale interior air, my first black coffee was interrupted by the unmistakable sound, probing its way across the waking city, of a loud boisterous, vulgar male voice cursing, swearing, angry and belligerent, expressing the vilest thoughts man could imagine in his sickest hour.

A man is seen, in the House of Worship, swearing profanely, angrily and belligerently. He continues with the vilest and most abusive language, abusing Gods' name in every way, on and on without end. Then there was a small rumbling sound that became louder and then louder until it was an unbearably thunderous crescendo and then it seemed the sky fell and the earth shuddered.

The two-hundred year old temple of the Church of God the man was standing in the vestibule of, collapsed. It simply fell down killing him with it. It was the weirdest thing, almost like it was ordained. Many of the congregation shrank with fear. Some ran. Some simply prayed. It was really odd. Yet for some reason the smaller children and youngest of the adolescents were not afraid. It was really strange. This was the story Scotland Yard listened to over and over with most of the people giving the same explanation almost word for word. It was an unusual investigation. Holmes continued undaunted and comfortable, reading the morning issue of the *Times*.

"Does that not annoy you, that filth floating about the city?" I asked.

He looked up and then away for a moment, then quoted from *A Study in Scarlet*:

*"London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained."*

"I am surprised such a pedestrian matter would upset you, Watson. But listen, it appears to have stopped. Yes, that did sound like a terrible crash."

And then Holmes calmly returned to his paper, yet once again. I remembered something he had said one time; *'Life is stranger than anything the mind can invent'*. With that recollection firmly in mind, I finished my coffee and departed upon the morning trek to my office.

### CLIENT

Several days later, with the weather still pleasant, I arrived for breakfast and noticed Holmes had been up for some time. The telegram resting on his desk indicated something new was now before that curious and restless mind. His focus seemed to be on some recent activity that had aroused his curiosity.

"Your aggravation of a few mornings past is apparently of more significance than I initially thought," he stated without looking up. I waited.

"The young widow of Walter Presswood shall arrive shortly," declared Holmes.

Then, predictably Mrs. Hudson knocked and announced the presence of a Mrs. Presswood. An attractive, fashionably dressed young woman entered our quarters. Her normally sparkling eyes

reflected a painful personal tragedy. As Holmes guided her to the sofa, her unsteady gait revealed the true weight of her loss.

"My husband is dead," she whispered without hesitation.

"I see," responded Holmes "And you think we may be of some assistance?" Only then did she notice my presence.

"I am very sorry for your misfortune, Mrs. Presswood, I believe it is?"

"Yes, I... I... I am... please forgive me, I have not been myself lately. I have even forgotten to properly introduce myself to you gentlemen."

"That is quite understandable. Mrs. Hudson is coming with tea. Please relax and collect yourself. We shall continue in due time. This is Dr Watson, my colleague. You are among friends."

I smiled. The calming voice and unruffled manner of Holmes seemed to soothe Mrs. Presswood. As we quietly sipped tea, I began to observe our young visitor. The color began to return to her cheeks and life began to restore itself into bright energetic eyes.

A delicate face with an inviting smile was framed by flowing brown curls tumbling down to her shoulders. Our visitor began to regain her grip on life. Then she attempted a smile indicating we might renew the consultation.

"Simply tell me what circumstances caused you to contact me," Holmes began.

"My husband and I have been married only a short time. He was several years older than I, twenty-two years to be exact. I was raised in the Church of England. But he was the product of a much more disciplined sect of the Essenes from which he eventually broke away and departed. Although my husband came to believe the Essences were not for him, many of the core beliefs remained a part of his life. Specifically, he grew uncomfortable with the 'Common Purse' doctrine. The Essenes are very strict."

"I am familiar with the beliefs of the Essenes concerning piety, celibacy, the absence of personal property, money, the belief in communality and strict observance of the Sabbath," stated Holmes.

"It was the communality of property and money Walter became unable to accept, everything else he embraced and enjoyed," added Mrs. Presswood.

"He broke away from the belief, went into the timber business and became wealthy in a short time. We met two years ago at the Church of God. We enjoyed each other's company, adjusted quickly to the age difference and fell in love. We have been married only a few months," she continued.

"We are getting closer as to why you are here today, I believe," interjected Holmes guiding the conversation back to the present.

"Walter found something very wrong at the church. He would never tell me what it was. He said I should not be burdened by it but lately he was constantly fighting with the Elders, bitterly I mean. Swearing, angry conversations, hostile to the point of almost physically fighting. Lately it seemed to have taken over his life. I am convinced his death was no accident. He was murdered! I know it!"

"And Scotland Yard," suggested Holmes.

"Inspector Lestrade says it was an accident," she continued." The Medical Examiner lists death by accidental roof collapse. There appears to be no motive, no reason and no leads for the police to pursue. The roof simply collapsed on Walter. I do not believe it. That

building was two hundred years old. It was and is very strong. I have some money and am willing to pay you. Inspector Lestrade said you were very competent."

Sherlock Holmes smiled. Mrs. Presswood opened the bag she was carrying. "This is all of the clothing that was returned to me by the Medical Examiner. He was wearing this when he died. I have gone through all of his things in our home and found nothing unusual or even remotely related to his death. There is however, one thing I cannot explain. This."

She pulled out a stub for a railway ticket found in one of the pockets of the clothing returned to her by the police.

"This does not make any sense. I know nothing about it. There was never a discussion about any railway trip. Nothing. There are letters scribbled on it. I have no idea what they mean," she said handing the stub to Holmes.

He held in his hand, an ordinary railroad ticket stub from London to Liverpool with the following letters scribbled thereon: **YHIYWOS**

Holmes held the stub in his hand turning it over and over studying it closely. In a hazy background he vaguely heard Mrs. Presswood asking once again if he would accept her case. He looked out the window for a long time, almost in a trance. Then he turned. "This has all of the elements of a challenging case."

"Watson, is your schedule accommodating?"

"Yes, I shall have time."

"Mrs. Presswood, we shall take your case. Leave me an address and I shall contact you in due time. This concludes this consultation," stated Holmes rising from his chair.

Once more gazing out the window as Mrs. Presswood hailed a cab in the street below, Sherlock Holmes turned to his sole piece of physical evidence; the train ticket stub to Liverpool and the code-like inscription on it. Holmes turned it over and over in his fingers, pacing the floor, standing still, smoking his pipe he continued studying the stub and the inscription. He was still doing this when I went to bed.

The next morning Holmes awakened late in the day.

"Would you like to accompany me to the accident scene at the Church of God?"

He asked in a rather good mood.

"Yes, the scene of a tragedy is always helpful," I agreed.

As the hansom weaved its way through traffic, I probed Holmes about this particular case.

"Buildings falling down is a bit away from your interest, is it not?"

"A man swears and a two hundred year old roof falls down, killing him. How convenient. The time honored question is; 'Who is now better off?' replied Holmes.

"That will be easy, the widow no doubt," I concluded.

### TRAGIC SCENE

His response indicated a mild form of agreement but I could tell he sensed something else he did not care to discuss at this time. And then, we arrived at the Church of God. This being Saturday, I expected the grounds to be vacant, but to my surprise some form of business meeting was just ending and many of the congregation were lingering socially before returning to their domestic activities.

We managed to locate one of what proved a "moderate" Elder John Belcher, who not surprisingly wielded less power than the ruling cadre known as the "Trinity", so he insisted in advising us. John Belcher gave us a brief history of the current congregation, known also as the "flock".

"The Church of God, a branch of the Church of England and a diminished progeny of the Essenes, still managed to cling to many of the "old beliefs". The Essenes had strict discipline. In its days of origin, those of the flock caught in grave faults, would be expelled from the camp, many dying of starvation. Their judgments were exact and impartial as well as irreversible. They were very generous in their care for their very own and for those in need."

"The sick, the elderly, travelers and anyone in need were cared for from the "Common Fund." A special diet, exercise, hard work, and their much disciplined life enabled many of the Essenes to live over one hundred years. The Essenes were certain living a life of self-denial and daily activity, was for the common good. They asked much of everyone for the common good and as a result individually, they had no money and no luxuries. Most of these ancient beliefs were ignored by the modern congregation. The younger of the flock simply considered all of this history that had little to do with their present lives."

"Walter Presswood was well known and generally well liked up until recent months when his behavior toward the leadership of the Church changed radically. Lately he had begun, what many called , throwing profane tantrums in the Worship Hall and directly toward the leadership, specifically the *Trinity*. A direct violation of, *Thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain*."

The congregation says; AMEN! This seemed to be the opinion of many of the flock. "When Walter Presswood came over here, I knew he was going to throw one of his '*Profane Fits*'. It is always very nasty, just plain filthy. People despise him," explained David Stevenson, one of the Junior Elders in the church.

"Does this happen often," asked Sherlock Holmes from a nearby corner.

Few of the people knew who Holmes was, only that a tall thin hawk featured man seemed to be investigating something. This rather crane-looking person with a tall, thin frame, pronounced nose and dark piercing eyes seemed to hover over the accident scene as though he were attempting to absorb the very soul of an unfortunate tragedy.

"Oh yes, all of the time. The pastor has admonished him frequently, well really it seems like he has cautioned Walter Presswood on a regular basis; *Thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain*. He cracks down on him severely and Walter will stop for a week or so. Then suddenly there is another outburst," volunteered one of the flock who decided to join in.

The next time I looked for Holmes he was climbing around on the remnants of the roof. It was unusually interesting, as well as entertaining watching him, like a ballet dancer twist, arch and balance himself to examine every centimeter of every shred of the still-existing roof of the partially destroyed Worship Hall. While up there he took extensive notes. The roof was as old as the building. Well-constructed over two hundred years ago from stone, it evidenced hardly any wear at all except for some form of mildew stain around the area where the flatter section extended over the entrance way. This section of the roof was built in the form of a portecochere or vestibule style entrance way and was the area that collapsed killing Walter Presswood. This was only visible by physically being on the roof. I managed to climb the interior ladder far enough to hear him partially describe what he had found. There was a mildew type exterior stain which partially covered the cracks that encircled even more of the surviving roof.

It was a well-disguised indentation that had been either pounded or perhaps chemically injected something into the stone purposely,

that had weakened the roof. The weather-like stain had been carefully camouflaged. Holmes spent another few minutes gathering samples from one of the sections abutting the crack and concluded he had what he was looking for.

"I shall need a few moments with the maintenance man," he ask of Elder John Belcher.

"Of course, here is Henry crossing the side yard right now.

Holmes had that look in his eye, like an old hunting dog that has just picked up the scent. His quiet self-confident manner convinced me he had already formed a theory which explained all of the facts. The trip back to Baker Street began with Holmes reorganizing his field notes. The hansom plodded through thick patches of traffic and finally broke into the clear about the time Holmes decided to re-engage with the rest of society, consisting at the moment solely of myself.

"This case is becoming more interesting. Would you be free to accompany me to Liverpool, perhaps two days from now? I have some laboratory research and references I must first investigate. The Liverpool trip should take several days."

"Why yes. No doubt you have had time to study the meaning of the letters on the train ticket stub," I probed.

"**YHIWIOS** was not much of a mystery if you are aware what you are looking at. "**YE HOLE IN YE WALL**" is Liverpool's oldest pub. Established in 1726 at the beginning of the whaling era, it is located at 4 Hackins Hey where the citizens of Liverpool, known as "*Liverpudlians*" have enjoyed "*Scouse*" and drink for decades. **OS** is a section of the city of Liverpool."

And with that we arrived at 221-B Baker Street in time for Mrs. Hudson's freshly prepared supper. Late the following evening, Holmes returned from his inquiry and examination of the stone samples removed from the accident scene and chose to share the following information.

"Examining the deterioration of building stone requires long time frames of study," he began. "It is however, the subject of numerous publications. Formal studies tell us the factors to be considered among the leading causes of the building stone deterioration are; salt crystallization, aqueous dissolution, frost damage, microbiological growth, human contact, and the original construction itself," he recited like a school-boy in front of the class.

"Some types of bacteria, fungi, algae, and lichens produce acids and other chemicals which can attack carbonate and silicate minerals. Under certain environmental conditions attack by microorganisms can be a serious problem. However, it seems many conservators feel such instances are uncommon and microorganism growth usually takes place in stone which had been partially deteriorated by other processes."

"It is these 'other processes' I fear we are confronted with," explained Holmes.

"The frost susceptibility of a stone is largely controlled by its porosity and pore size distribution. Of stones with a given porosity, those with the smallest mean pore size will generally be the most susceptible to frost damage. Frost resistance also generally decreases with increased available porosity, i.e., pore volume which is accessible to water and which has nothing to do with the indentation and unique stains on our accident scene," clarified Holmes.

"One example of the use of poor quality sandstone in the original construction is the *Cathedral of Cologne* which presents acute conservation problems. A second example of a poor quality dolomite limestone in original construction the *British Houses of*

*Parliament* which eventually must be replaced with a more durable limestone," he continued.

"All of this we expected to see and would be considered normal. We however, in this case, are looking for something out of place, unusual and unexpected. The mildew type exterior stain which partially covered the cracks that encircled even more of the surviving roof is what I am concerned about and the well-disguised indentation that had been either pounded or perhaps chemically injected by something into the stone purposely, that has my curiosity aroused."

"Tomorrow we should leave for Liverpool. Is that satisfactory with your schedule, Watson?"

"I shall be ready."

## LIVERPOOL

The distance between London and Liverpool is approximately 217 miles by rail and the trains run regularly. Once settled onboard The Blue Express for Liverpool, I pressed Holmes further about **YE HOLE IN YE WALL**.

"It is really widely known in pub circles," he noted.

"The popularity is helped, of course, because of their reputation for serving a very tasty dish of *Scouse* which actually originated in Scandinavia. Their recipe of the popular stew attracts loyal *Scousers* of all ages. Inhabitants of Liverpool are referred to as *Liverpudlians* but are also colloquially known as '*Scousers*'. The people are also singular in that Liverpool is one of the only English cities where male and female versions of the regional accent sound different from each other," he concluded.

Holmes and Watson arrived at **YE HOLE IN YE WALL** hungry and thirsty. Tea and *Scouse* opened an interesting conversation with Joe, the bartender.

"Bring my friend his first bowl of *Scouse*, will you please," Holmes asked the barkeep.

"Your first eh?"

"Yes, in all of my travels, this is something I have missed," I readily admitted.

"Where are you gentlemen from?"

"London, we have some friends who have visited here before," I replied.

"According to the papers, a friend of ours died accidentally a few weeks ago," replied the barkeep.

"Oh?"

"Yes, part of a church fell on Walter Presswood and killed him. Do you know him?"

"As a matter of fact, yes we do know Walter."

"Nice guy. Belonged to the same church as those other characters. He was here on serious business however, not like Larry, Moe and Curley," the barkeep chuckled.

"This is interesting because we are here assisting in an investigation related to the death of Walter Presswood. This is Mr. Sherlock Holmes who works directly with Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard," I responded.

At this point Holmes decided to take a more active interest in the discussion.

"We have some questions about how the alleged accident occurred. If you would not mind, we would have a few questions about both Mr. Presswood as well as the other three gentlemen," stated Holmes.

"That is easy enough," replied the barkeep. "Presswood left a folder here with instructions to turn it over only to *someone of*

authority investigating Church of God money', if something happened to him. You gentlemen appear to be such. He paid me a substantial bailiff's fee. I will get the folder for you. Just a moment."

The result of this conversation and substantial rounds of drinks for the bar on into the evening, resulted in the discovery of some very interesting information. First of all Walter Presswood did his investigation very well. He even discovered a post office box the culprits used for mortgage payments and tax statements. Once the Liverpool connection is made, the rest is easy. As Holmes described so eloquently on the return train trip to London:

"Once you enter the door of the popular old establishment, the "Trinity", *Larry, Moe and Curley* are quite well known. Quite the party boys it seems and very free with a shilling," Holmes described with a hint of a smile.

"Once we made it known we were acquainted with *Larry, Moe and Curley*, we were welcomed as a free-spirited party lads, 'Sportsmen'. It is amazing, they are actually known as "*Larry, Moe and Curley*" on the party circuit in Liverpool. They are virtually part of the pub world in Liverpool night life. 'OS' is an abbreviation for *Old Swan*, a section of Liverpool where our free spenders own three buildings, two office buildings and one apartment building containing fifty flats Walter Presswood detailed in his investigation so very well. It was a nice touch, his discovering the post office box they used for mortgage payments and tax statements. Once the Liverpool connection is made, the rest is easy. Deeds and records are in the culprits' names."

Holmes could hardly keep from smiling. He could only shake his head at the crass childishness of grown men away from home and squandering someone else's money.

## CONCLUSION

The meeting Holmes scheduled with Lestrade the following evening also included an invitation to Mrs. Walter Presswood. Sherlock Holmes settled his guests with tea and biscuits after a long day for everyone. Lestrade and young Investigator Don Dobbs, the best and the brightest of several new detectives just promoted, were pressed for time. The detective was tired and had no interest in opening an investigation into what he considered a simple accident. Holmes began his explanation as to why this was more than an accident.

"The deceased, Walter Presswood must have felt like God had forsaken him. The more powerful cadre of the Elders, the "Trinity" committee rule the church. The other elders are just symbolic titles. The "Trinity", Lawrence Alfredson, Moreno Beck, and Curlano Leopard, are jokingly known among the congregation as *Larry Moe and Curley*."

"Unknown to the congregation, the "Trinity" had been skimming money from the church funds for years, swindling and dividing their stolen spoils among the three of them and then *Larry Moe and Curley* were off to Liverpool where they enjoyed the pleasures of the flesh, wine, women and song. With stolen church money, they were rich. They had investments, paramours, and call girls for girlfriends. They enjoyed luxury transportation, fine wines, expensive meals, lavish clothes and women.

"Walter discovered what they were doing, made a thorough investigation and told them to stop. He discovered what they were doing, where they were doing it and also developed a list of assets they had accumulated. He insisted the three stop and give the money back to the church and confess their sins:

"He made it clear what they were doing was wrong in every sense of the word and demanded they step aside. Their wrongful acts could not continue. Instead the "Trinity" panicked and decided to murder Walter --- how to do it and how to escape blame.

"The congregation, the flock, simply did not understand. Walter is throwing these profane laced tirades, hysterical temper tantrums and swearing like a madman. Many times he is beside himself, profanely uncontrollable. It was tough for the people to deal with. Most people liked Walter, they just don't like his intense swearing in the church. Think about it. He caught the Trinity, *Larry, Moe and Curley* stealing from the church. God and Walter caught them, he felt. He wanted them to turn themselves in and plead for mercy and give back the money. They would never stand for that. Walter had to go! He had to be gotten rid of!

"The solution is simple, kill Walter in a way it looks like God has punished him and the congregation will blame *Providence*.

"This was simply a 'Planned Structural Failure'. The murderers know if properly provoked, Walter Presswood would become upset and get loud. His booming voice was well-known. If he were placed in the right location and then adequately provoked... he would become angry -- shouting would begin... and then if further aggravated... he would get much louder and for a longer period of time, long enough for the 'now -weakened-ceiling' and walls to begin to vibrate and the movement, enhanced by the implanted cracks, would cause them to give way and collapse. It would appear as Divine intervention, Old Testament punishment for a terrible biblical sin. The members of the flock would feel relieved, they took no part in the administration of justice. They would simply be spectators. No one would question anything. *Thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain*. God had spoken.

"The chemicals they used is an interesting combination I had not seen before. Two of them imported from China. However, my lab tests prove that properly mixed they can be very damaging to stone. Close questioning by your detectives at the station about the substances should provide information we can both use.

"The number of times *Larry Moe and Curley* were up on the roof was to the point they were beginning to annoy the maintenance man, Henry Kline. He wanted to know why they kept going back up there when there was nothing wrong with the roof and no reason.

"A copy of Walter Presswood's complete and thorough investigation is here as left in care of the proprietor of the '**YE HOLE IN YE WALL**' for any London Investigator. Detectives, I assure you it is, persuasive, comprehensive and conclusive.

"Gentlemen, as you have the address of the Church of God, I should turn my attention to the evenings violin concert."

As the detectives were leaving, I turned to Holmes.

"I did not know you were familiar with the Bible."

"I am acquainting myself quickly, thank you," was the cool reply I received.



# THOU SHALT REMEMBER THE SABBATH TO KEEP IT HOLY

## The 4th of The Ten Commandment Mystery Series

### INTRODUCTION

Six days he had been in this heat. How long was this brutality supposed to go on?

Digging in the ground like an animal and for what? I know, I know .....to satisfy someone's else's ego, wants, desires or whatever-the-hell they would think up next. This is a twisted way to live. And finally the seventh. Yuch! That was even worse. You spent all day long repairing the equipment that you had broken during the previous six days. Then, when you got that done, you had to sew, mend, shine and repair your own clothes that were breaking apart by the stitch and by the seam. But that is right, I almost forgot, the seventh was my day of rest. How did I ever forget that? With all of this filth, disease, pain and sorrow, this was the day the people and the land were to rest. Then the week starts all over again. We were still in this heat, but soon the winter would be coming on and that would be even worse. This was not even a decent purgatory. No more. No more no matter what the price. It just is not worth it.

That was the end of the page. No signature. No letterhead. No marks at all. Zero. Sherlock Holmes placed on the desk what was apparently a single page from a diary and peered quietly out the window into the early morning. This solitary item of evidence had arrived by special messenger well before dawn this morning from his old friend *Wilhelm II, last German Emperor and King of Prussia*. Half German and half English, *Wilhelm II* understandably sought a balance of power between the two countries. However, in many ways *Wilhelm II* was a man of contradictions.

Gifted with a quick grasp of matters before him, he was sometimes hasty and restless, in pursuit of modern technology and science while lacking the desire for hard work or completing significant projects that he began. Applause and success seemed most important to him. Like many of his predecessors, he was afflicted by disease, his being *Erb's Palsy*, which may have been instrumental to his sometimes erratic behavior. This is a paralysis of the arm caused by injury to the upper group of the arm's main nerves. Based upon the numerous reference books, newspapers and multiple manuals scattered all over three desks and much of the floor, this was the world that Sherlock Holmes had stepped into this morning and was temporarily escaping as he continued to stare silently into the crisp dawn.

The early winter was always an interesting time at 221-B Baker Street. Every step taken by the pedestrians on the sidewalks below leaves a fresh, crisp footprint in the snow, as if they were the only person to have ever been here. Holmes was totally absorbed in his puzzle as I donned my hat and coat and moved toward the door. I looked forward to the snowflakes gently falling, tempting me to try to catch one with my tongue while strolling toward the medical office to fulfill my fragmented patient schedule. Knowing Dirk would await me, I smiled. My ex-war dog always gave me comfort.

### THE DIOGENES

*"There are many men in London, you know, who, some from shyness, some from misanthropy, have no wish for the company of their fellows. Yet they are not averse to comfortable chairs and the*

*latest periodicals. It is for the convenience of these that the Diogenes Club was started, and it now contains the most unsociable and unclubable men in town. No member is permitted to take the least notice of any other one. Save in the Stranger's Room, no talking is, under any circumstances, allowed, and three offences, if brought to the notice of the committee, render the talker liable to expulsion. My brother was one of the founders, and I have myself found it a very soothing atmosphere."*

----- The Greek Interpreter

The coded message came into the Diogenes Club just after Mycroft arrived.

*"We must get him out of there. We are going to have to get him out fast. This is urgent. He already has the information. It is probably all that is available anyway. We must get him out now! He can not last much longer! He's been in that drawing room every night for three months. He knows the working drawings, the parts, the materials, the test results and has virtually watched them build the Air Ship. Do you think there is anything that he does not have or has not seen? Send the signal. Tell the boat to get underway as soon as ammunition is loaded."*

### ASSIGNMENT

"You did WHAT to that young engineer?" Sherlock Holmes voice echoed off the walls of the Strangers Room of the Diogenes Club louder than I have heard a human voice on that entire city block.

"If he gets caught, you will never get him back. He is not trained for that kind of work and you know it," Holmes ranted at his brother. Two heads turned in the narrow hallway as I hunkered down for the onslaught. Oddly, none came. Mycroft Holmes' presence, as usual, overshadowed all else.

"Not to worry Sherlock, that is where you come in," Mycroft calmly continued.

"I am a consulting detective, not an espionage agent."

"You are very good at disguise, stealth and acting. You should have no trouble," Mycroft continued unconcerned. Holmes looked more unsettled than I have ever seen. As Mycroft rose and turned toward the interior of the Diogenes, he looked back over his shoulder and said, "just get our young agent back, take Dr. Watson with you if you like." Holmes clenched his jaw so tightly that the muscles and blood vessels protruded grotesquely from the sides of his giant head. I thought for a short moment the sheer force of his glare might actually set the hardwood door ablaze as it closed behind Mycroft Holmes. Nothing was said until we were in the hansom and en route to 221-B Baker Street.

"Are we going somewhere?" I gently probed.

"It appears that I am going to Germany," Holmes replied staring blankly out the window of the hansom. The remainder of the trip was in silence. Once Holmes was back in our rooms at 221-B Baker Street, he seemed to recover a bit from the encounter with his brother.

"Without raising some frustration, what is the sudden interest in Military Balloons by the British Government," I asked.

"It is something that is being reported all across the diplomatic front," Watson.

"It seems that all of the European countries are interested in this sort of military strategy and also there has been noticeable interest in the Americas."

After settling in with coffee and biscuit, Holmes suddenly began to speak rather thoughtfully. "Mycroft is convinced that the British Empire is falling behind in the development of Military Airships. He has what can only be called a fixation on the danger that Germany is going to leap ahead of us in something he identifies as 'Air Superiority'.

Much of his interest centers around a highly regarded and well-known German General, one *Ferdinand Adolf Heinrich August Graf von Zeppelin*, English translation; *Count Zeppelin*, who is devoting much of his time to the development of airships. *Count Zeppelin* has ideas for large dirigibles and a new type of construction for them. His concept involves a large rigidly-framed outer *envelope* containing a number of separate *gasbags*."

"The principle of how a balloon works is that warmer air rises in cooler air because hot air is lighter than cool air and has less mass per unit of volume. The balloon, identified as an *envelope* by engineers, has to be large because it takes a large amount of hot air to lift it off the ground. The textbook example is that in order to lift 1,000 lbs. of weight, about 65,000 cubic feet of hot air is required. In order to keep the balloon in the air and rising, the hot air must be propelled upward into the *envelope* using a *burner* to mix *propane* with air to produce a *flame*. The pilot must keep firing the burner at regular intervals all during the flight in order to keep the balloon stable. Hot air will not escape from the hole at the bottom of the envelope because hot air rises. Second, the buoyancy feature keeps the envelope moving up. Piloting is easy:

Move the balloon up: turn up the burner that increases the flame up into the envelope. Move the balloon down: let hot air escape which decreases inside air temperature. Move the balloon horizontally: simply ascend and descend to the altitude that the wind is blowing in the direction you desire to travel. Wind blows in different directions at different altitudes," Holmes smiled concluding his lesson in aeronautics.

"*Count Zeppelin* has numerous scientists working for him and has hired another engineer for testing of special materials and special light weight engines. Mycroft wants the best aeronautical engineers, scientists and chemists that he can attract. Parliament is not so interested. The 1st Sea Lord is very much interested as Admiral Kline can visualize airship and balloon reconnaissance operating from sea-based support vessels. As a result, Mycroft has launched '**Operation Night Owl**'."

### OPERATION NIGHT OWL

After securing his pipe and more tobacco, Holmes continued to brief me on the matters at hand.

"Mycroft and Admiral Kline were both acutely aware that this era was a time of tremendous scientific progress and ideas. These two men shared one single fear. This mutual fear, some said, had grown into an obsession. That obsession was that Germany would develop the German Military to be so far superior to all other European nations that the other countries would never be able to catch up. Germany has very good engineers, scientists and chemists. Many say the best in the world. This is beginning to be known as the 'Age of Progress' because of the many scientific and

mechanical developments, in addition to new inventions around the world. Larger ships are being built, the first steel bridges constructed, and huge machinery for factories are being designed. Airplanes are being designed and tested. Telegraph lines are helping start other developments. The sewing machine has been invented and is being used. A new device called the telephone is being experimented with. The population of England is growing rapidly. Scotland is growing and Ireland is struggling. The Royal Engineers, eventually caught the attention of senior British officers and in 1863 experimental balloon ascents for reconnaissance purposes were conducted, but, even though successful, they were found too expensive. The Royal Engineers did manage to establish the *Balloon Equipment Store*. The need to produce hydrogen in the field by portable apparatus and finding the necessary materials for the envelope of a war balloon have been solved."

"A School of Ballooning was established in Kent and balloons were first deployed by the British Army during expeditions to Bechuanaland and Suakin in 1885," he continued.

"Mycroft and Admiral Kline were simply fearful that England would be left behind in the area of Military Balloon Warfare. Their anxiety is real."

"The Construction and Experimental base lay far back into the Rhineland. It is lightly guarded as it is located so far into the central farm country and so sparsely populated, that strangers would be spotted easily and other towns are so far away that a person can be easily seen coming for miles in the distance. Our British agent, codename '*Night Owl*' works in the fields of the nearby adjoining small farms, as a day laborer and farmer. *Night Owl* had done so many favors around the small towns and helping people out, he has built up a considerable amount of goodwill. He has no difficulty moving about unquestioned. Some of the Experimental Work is done at Night. The Germans are getting more secretive by the week, so much you would think they were preparing for a war," Holmes explained, finally getting to the present day issues.

"Every night, *Night Owl* is able to slip onto the base, get into the drawings, examine the materials, working drawings, parts and materials test results and has virtually watched the Germans build the Combat Air Ship that is of the most recent design," said Holmes finishing his summary of the problem.

"All I have to do is figure a way to smuggle a mentally exhausted, scared young engineer past several villages full of suspicious German farmers."

"Sounds complicated," was all I could think of to say.

"I leave for Germany tonight."

"Do you wa"....."Alone!" Homes interrupted forcefully.

### INSIDE THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

The young engineer had the plans laid out with adequate lighting, yet close enough to the drawers that at the slightest alarm he could replace them exactly as they were stored for the next day's work, with no sign he had ever even been there.

"Interesting are they not?" came a soft voice from directly behind him. He froze. Paralyzed, he could not move. He could not breathe. Defeated, lost, he thought he was dying. If he had a pistol, he would have killed himself. He did not know what to do. He felt like he was going to cry.

"You have been in here every night for over a month. You should have most of the important information," the voice continued.

So this is what dying is like, the young engineer thought. And then he began to shake, uncontrollably then progressing toward violence.

"Stop!" The soft voice suddenly became hard and forceful.

"You are going to tear the papers." He dropped the papers.

"Get a grip on yourself!"

"You are going to leave soon and you are going to take me with you," the hard voice said bluntly as it moved to where the young engineer could see the speaker.

"Yes, I look just like you. But, I am desperate and I will stop at nothing. I am John Von Goth, a University trained chemist working on the airships and I must escape this horrid Germany. I want to go to England and work on the airships. It is my career. You will take me with you or I will kill you where you stand."

Recognizing that circumstances were changing, the engineer replied, "If you kill me, I cannot take you anywhere," recovering some of his composure. Then suddenly fear began to show in young Von Goth's eyes. He felt terror.

"Please, I must get out of here. I cannot stand it. I hate it. Please, I beg you, take me with you."

"Well, it may be a bit crowded, but it is better than where I was two minutes ago," he replied.

"That better mean yes," young Von Goth responded as his fists began to double up and the feeling of helplessness returned.

"It means yes," the young engineer answered, wondering how he was going to explain this to his superiors.

"Good. How much more of this data do you need and when do we leave?"

"Sunday, two weeks from today. All of the village people will be in church.

All we have to do is get to Olbe."

"That is about seven miles away," said Von Goth.

"Do you know anything about that traveling minister that has been preaching in the area lately?"

"No. Just another preacher. So what?"

"Ugh."

### THE TRAVELING MINISTER

The Traveling Minister is in town for just a few days. He will preach this Sunday at Shinburg. He seemed moody for a minister and withdrawn which made him look somewhat gaunt since he was over six feet tall and very lean with a hawk-like nose. His strong chin and jawline reflected determination and resolve. Those dark penetrating eyes held a constant searching sensation.

His crane-like appearance sometimes seemed awkward but his movements were well-coordinated and his touch so delicate that it was a pleasant surprise, he could easily hold the attention of the congregation. The billboard announced; The Message for this Sunday will be "*Thou Shalt Remember the Sabbath to Keep it Holy*" by Minister Sherman Hollins, visiting. And so, the Sunday came.

"The message will be from The Book of Leviticus," the Minister began.

"Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

"And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the

land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.

"And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. And I set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

"But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.

"And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me. Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

"And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

"Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odours.

"And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her Sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your Sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none

pursueth. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up."

That was the central message of the Sunday Service after which the regular Pastor officiated over the remainder of the service. The message was well received and many of the congregation stopped to visit briefly with the pleasing but passing minister. The Wednesday evening prayer meeting at Anklburg similarly referenced the remembrance of the Sabbath. Minister Hollins spoke in a quiet and persuasive voice. The congregation seemed to enjoy his content and style of preaching even though his tall crane-like build and fiercely dark and penetrating eyes would allow none to doze off.

## ENCOUNTER

"Aye Minister," the farmer haled, recognizing the tall crane-like Traveling Minister.

"Aye Brother," the limping man of God haled a reply greeting.

"I see that you have a fellow traveler with you," the weary farmer said, seeing an excuse for a mid-day break and leaning on his plow. He removed his battered hat to wipe the sweat from a gritty, wrinkled brow.

"Traveling up from Kneeburg in the South with the teachings of the Friends of God and I am truly glad to make your acquaintance dear Sir," replied the younger man.

The three of them stood and visited for a few moments as the local farmer looked over his shoulder and checked his watch. As they stood under a fir tree making friendly conversation about the weather, the prospect of rain and the time of sun-rise, a young lad appeared from the tree line to the east and came steadily toward them.

The farmer smiled, "Ah, right on time."

The young lad driving a dog-cart pulled by a large German Sheep Dog finally arrived before the three men.

"My young son, Jonathan, gentlemen. Jonathan, these are Traveling Ministers of the Word of God."

"Mr. Jonathan," the two men greeted offering welcoming handshakes.

The young man greeted them with an affable smile.

"Gentlemen, please join us in a drink of water and a bite of biscuit."

"You are very generous" the older man replied accepting the refreshments, as did his companion.

"A moment of blessing and a short scripture if you like," the older man offered.

"That would be a nice break," motioning the boy to sit for the brief message.

The message was short and uplifting. The farmer and his son seemed to take pleasure from it. The two missionaries enjoyed the cool water and the bit of bread. It was a short, friendly and fulfilling exchange among four souls as each passed the other on the road of life, each on his own voyage, each set at his own task like four ships passing near one another on a large ocean, acknowledging and all continuing on their respective way.

"Half a day to Olbe," said the older man.

"John Von Goth is ahead of us, where does he hide until we get there?"

"He is to be seen covered in sackcloth and reading and praying as a young intern awaiting his Supervising Minister. We will get assistance once we get to Olbe."

"It seems like a thousand miles."

"This too shall pass," said the older man doggedly moving ahead. Quietly, the younger man trudged forward, struggling to keep up.

## CONCLUSION

Mr. Sherlock Holmes began addressing us sharply at 4:00 PM in a private room at the Diogenes Club arranged especially for this purpose. Unusual for this facility, Mycroft and The 1st Sea Lord, Admiral Kline were accompanied by Inspector Lestrade and young Inspector Don Dobbs of Scotland Yard.

"*THOU SHALT REMEMBER THE SABBATH TO KEEP IT HOLY* was the underpinning of this liberation of information and talent," Sherlock Holmes began.

"The initial communiqué giving birth to our involvement in this matter, arrived from one *Wilhelm II*, King of Prussia. Also, a letter from Fleet Admiral Thomas Kline, 1st Sea Lord, explained that a lecture given by one *Heinrich von Stephan* on the subject of *World Postal Services and Air Travel* detailed a discussion of large dirigibles and their construction.

"Specifically there was discussion of the principles of using a large rigid framework as an outer envelope and a number of gas bags. The success of airship *La France* prompted *Ferdinand Adolf von Zeppelin (Count Zeppelin)* to send a letter to the *King of Wurttemberg* about the military necessity for dirigibles and the lack of German development in this field.

"Mycroft Holmes and Admiral Kline were both aware of this letter," Holmes continued.

"*Count von Zeppelin*, had hired a talented young engineer, *Theodor Kober* to begin testing and further refining rigid framework design and this information is what Mycroft Holmes and Admiral Kline so desperately want. These developments are what prompted Mycroft to send this young engineer as an undercover agent into the heart of the German countryside on behalf of the British government," Holmes continued the explanation.

"Preaching sermons on *Observing the Sabbath to Keep it Holy*, smuggling young John Von Goth out after his rejection of a horridly repressive regime right through the middle of the villages, liberating our young engineer and then getting both of them out of danger should no doubt fulfill my obligations to all concerned. With no bodies washing up on our shores, this should enable you to close any files Scotland Yard might have surrounding these affairs." Sherlock Holmes concluded.

"If there are no questions, this meeting is concluded and let me introduce to you our brave young undercover engineer and also chemist Jon Von Goth, our newest enrollee and employee of the British Government."

Later in the street below, Wiggins on standby should Holmes need him, noticed John Von Goth walk by. He nudged his partner.

"Wonder what that German Intelligence Agent is doing in London?"



# THOU SHALT HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

## The 5th of The Ten Commandment Mystery Series

The crash of the tree against the front of the building at 221-B Baker Street awakened Sherlock Holmes with a start. Watson, easily distressed by flashbacks from the brutal battlefield of Afghanistan was already awake, robe tossed on and scurrying about assessing the abrupt change in the elements and any consequent damage.

"A tree? Watson, we do not have that many trees close by. How could that happen?"

"Apparently there was unusual turbulence in some gales blowing off the North Sea made their way up the river Thames with just the unique direction change. It is highly unusual those very gales would clutch one of the only two trees across the street in the park on this entire block. It is very singular," I replied as I satisfied myself this was but a harmless commotion. DIRK, the first and the finest of the '00K's', who was bunking with me for the time being as he was tiring of guarding the Surgery Office all of the time, had been aroused by everyone stirring around but was not annoyed by the upheaval of the weather. He just did not want to miss anything. Holmes remained bothered and turned toward the tobacco in the Persian Slipper and thereafter his comforting clay pipe. "As you are already awake, this message came sometime last evening. Mrs. Hudson placed it upon your sideboard."

It was from an old friend, retired vice counsel to the Crown, Sir Charles Hutchinson II. Holmes had fond memories of Sir Charles and his wife Mary. Truly decent people, the kind that were the foundation of the British Empire and everything it stood for, I have heard Holmes repeat almost every time their name came up. During the several occasions Sir Charles, working with Mycroft, had employed the services of Sherlock Holmes and myself, I had also come to know the Hutchinson family well. They were a delight to be around. We had heard however lately they have had some difficulty with the two children, the boy had been shipped off to Military School and Girls school for the daughter. Simply growing pains for teenagers Holmes had assumed. Any misbehavior is highly unusual in this family. As Holmes shared the contents of the message with me, it became clear that misfortune had befallen Charles and Mary. Sir Charles has called Sherlock Holmes to help with the mysterious theft of a very rare and expensive family heirloom. The heirloom has been in the family over three generations. A Faravahar necklace dated back to the days of the Persian Empire has been stolen. A theft of this scale is absolutely shocking. Rather than notifying the police and involve the public and the newspapers, Sir Charles has asked Sherlock Holmes to investigate the theft in a more discreet manner and pursue the discussion of a possible reward.

Charles and his wife are very religious. Their life centers around the Church of England. The beliefs and rituals of other people never affect our Consulting Detective as long as their activities do not interrupt his reasoning and deduction; therefore these matters were never an issue with the Hutchinson family or any pedestrian activities surrounding them.

"I am sure this has upset Mary considerably for as I recall that particular item was passed down from her side of the family; considerable nobility involved," noted Holmes thoughtfully.

"How do you plan to handle this?" I asked, taking the liberty of assuming there was no question he would honor the request of an old friend. Holmes did not reply immediately taking his time to adjust

to the fact this sort of thing does not normally happen to people like Charles & Mary. Slowly repacking his clay pipe from the Persian slipper, Holmes sank into deep meditation. One third of a pipe and he chose to speak.

"We should find out where the children are and what they are doing," he speculated out loud as it was obvious his inquisitive mind was formulating a strategy we could act upon.

"We leave for Southend-on-Sea tomorrow morning, if you are free Watson."

### INQUIRY

"So tell me how the children are doing these days," inquired Sherlock Holmes of his old acquaintance in a friendly yet probing manner.

"They are both away at school," responded Charles in a truthful but uncomfortable manner. Mary immediately began to fuss with the coffee cups unnecessarily. Even I could tell there was something disconcerting when the conversation came around to their offspring.

"Charles, you asked me for help. We should inquire into everything associated with your family," Holmes stated gently.

"They barely speak to us anymore," lashed out Mary.

Unfortunately, this was not to be a simple solution as apparently both children had proven to be dangerously rebellious, unruly and much embarrassing to their parents. The children had become physically violent, completely uncharacteristic of the Hutchinson family traits, horribly disrespectful to their parents and impossible to deal with. They were estranged from their parents and on the verge of being disowned. Could Mr. Sherlock Holmes with all of his unusual mental skills offer some guidance to this impossible state of affairs? This is what Sir Charles pled.

Charles and Mary's church activities were frequent and ongoing, especially since they had retired and moved to Southend-on-Sea about forty miles outside London. I remember distinctly one of his many presentations, both at home and before groups; an extensive discussion of the Commandment; Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother'. Honor means love, respect, obedience, and reverence. Sir Charles, in compliance with both the Catholic and Reformed sides of the Church of England explained how the 4th Commandment of the Catholic Decalogue and the 5th Commandment of the Angelica Decalogue address Honoring of thy Father and thy Mother.

This is the first commandment that addresses the obligations to Men. This Commandment has three unique features:

The commandment is given to children, stating their obligation toward their parents. The term 'father' and 'mother' is the same as 'parents.' There is no age requirement for children to honor their parents. There is no particular action required.

This commandment is addressed expressly to children in their relationship to their father and mother simply because this relationship is the most common and readily recognized. It is the foundation of the way an individual fits into a family, a religious group, a community, a society and a nation. It is the basis of faith, hope and charity as taught in the New Testament. It is a far higher thing to honor than to love.

"Charles, Mary, let us look into these matters for you. We will get a current accounting of your children's activities and pursue the return of your priceless jewelry. I suspect we will have to pay a reasonable reward for the return of the jewelry to ensure it does not leave the country."

"I will leave that entirely in your hands Sherlock," replied Charles.

As we departed Southend-on-Sea Holmes immediately began planning strategy.

"This is a job for the Force. I will send for Wiggins."

"Watson, are you in the mood for some undercover work?"

"I think it would be a change," I foolishly replied.

Wiggins managed to hold the Force at bay down on the street while Holmes outlined the issues of this assignment.

"We are sure these novice brats have stolen and are trying to sell the FARAVAHAR for money and will become involved with some rough characters. See what you can find out. A shilling a day and bonus for something unusual of value. Let me know when you have something," instructed Holmes.

Wiggins and his band disappeared into the streets of London.

### INVESTIGATION

"Get out of the way, you fools!" The hansom driver screamed as he skillfully maneuvered his coach around the scraggly old men staggering on the very edge of the street. These two 'beer sots' looked as though they had been living in the street and alleys for a year without a bath.

"I'll run you down next time, you scum!" One of the drunks shook his fist, the other just stared as the dog barked half-heartedly.

"Bloody help Sis, we are going to have to walk past them again," said Rickie.

"Oh, let them alone, we have more important things to deal with," said the girl.

"Stacey, it seems like we see these two men and that ugly dog everywhere we go."

"They do drink a lot, do they not?" One of the drunks managed to beg 'a shilling for a pint' as the tradesman paid them with the agreement they "stay away from the front of his store for the rest of the year." They immediately headed for the "Windjammer" tavern, the gangster's destination.

"Rickie, I'm getting tired of this creepy place, all these old men looking at me."

"How long are we going to have to keep this up?"

"Not long, only a few more days."

"I do not care for hanging around all of these dirty people," Stacey continued to complain.

"Even if you do think it is a good place to hide. Thinking about it that way, what are we hiding from?"

"Soon, soon," responded her brother, tired of her constant complaining. This was her idea and granted, she had never backed away, but Richard had not counted on hour by hour complaining. His next foray into the edge of the law would be without the constant problems of bringing women into the venture.

"Look, they are leaving, Stacey!"

The two drunks made it to the door without falling into anything. The three stairs in front of the building did prove to be a problem however. Three days later Wiggins was on his way up to report to Holmes with the entire band beside him noise, ragged clothes, chatter and all.

"Eie' Mr. 'Olms, found your brats. Th bird shs crazy. Black John at the Windjammer has the FARAVAHAR and is trying to sell it. I know Black John, he'll take the money and the bird will get nothing. He'll sell it again."

"Mr. 'Olms, we have 'Bonus Facts' you will like," smiled Wiggins.

"By all means, let us hear," replied Holmes.

"The wimpy son, Richard, has hired a man to kill his parents, promising a big payday. The mate they hired is bad, from Afghanistan, they call him the "Disciple". I don't think they know who they are messing with. This mate is bad. They promised him lots of money out of the inheritance."

"You are right, that is Bonus Facts. This should do it," said Holmes as more money changed hands.

And then The Baker Street Irregulars disappeared as quickly as they had appeared, melting into the teeming streets of the big city.

"Thank goodness," I commented. 'I am not fond of this undercover and disguise business. I do not like feeling dirty,' I stated in no uncertain terms.

"It seems the daughter is focused on the FARAVAHAR and it is the son who has become so dangerous. He wants it all!" observed Holmes.

I nodded my head, looked for a cup of coffee and something for DIRK to eat, relieved we would do no more undercover work. Stacey was angry. The rage had built up over the years seemed to finally explode all at one time.

"I hate them! I hate them!" Stacey screamed again, her face turning frighteningly red.

"I wish they were dead!" She continued to scream.

"Do something Rickie. You are supposed to look out for me! Do Something! All I hear about is how lucky we are, how fortunate we are to have the choice to stick my head in a book. How lucky I am to be able to learn manners. Like I want to be nice to those old fools."

Her young, attractive face was bright red, contorted from her rage and grossly twisted by her abnormal view of her privileged life.

"Now I want that necklace and I want it now! It is supposed to pass to me someday anyway. I do not want to wait! I want that Faradahar now!" She screamed even louder than before. Richard was sick of the whole thing. Dad worked all the time and Mom constantly entertained a bunch of snobs that actually hated her.

"I am selling the Faradahar! Rickie, you stay the hell out of my way!"

Richard 'Rickey' Charles Hutchinson III was tired of it all. His father was gone almost all of the time. His sister was right, it was either the church, politics or work for their parents with the children left to 'appreciate' how lucky they were. In his young life, he had met thieves and jailbirds who had more "family" than he and his sister did. Being in good standing in Boarding School was not exactly a walk-in-the-park. He was drawn into a fight in the first week.

By the third week he could handle himself just fine. By the sixth week, Richard could take care of himself. He had changed a bit. It was a good feeling, knowing he was his own man. You have to have force beyond the backdrop. By the time he was graduating from high school, Richard thought, actually thought he was in charge of his own life. Street thugs begin to show him a different look. Richard 'Rickey' Hutchinson was working out a way to leave.

Earlier that day on the way back from the Windjammer, DIRK recognized a mercenary on the street, apparently one he encountered in Afghanistan in the past under severe conditions. Before I could stop him, he attacked and "took him down" and held him at bay until I was able to arrive and take charge.

"He did all this by instant recognition and instinct," I explained to Holmes as I untangled the mess.

"As you can see he really wants to kill this suspect. Although, I am firmly against torture, I am seriously considering letting Dirk 'have his way' with the suspect," I said with some satisfaction.

"I shall make their man aware of my pondering. I need to let this idea 'soak in' so to speak," I smiled evilly at Holmes. "The difficulty with Dirk is, he really wants to kill this suspect." I could not seem to stop smiling.

The plot presently developing is more direct than we suspected. Our suspect, with his life truly in danger from DIRK, reached an agreement to leave the country and never return. He revealed the plot that he had been hired as a profiteer to murder Sir Charles and Mary in return for 100,000 £s. from the family fortune young Stacey and Richard will inherit upon the death of Sir Charles & Mary.

"This confirms it is the son who has become so dangerous," noted Holmes.

"DIRK has a very direct way of convincing people of things," I persisted.

"If I may have my assassin," I smiled.

"And this would be reported as only an unfortunate tourist being attacked by an angry wild dog," I continued to smile as Holmes looked me up and down in a different way than he had in the past.

"Watson, you can be a very brutal man when necessary, almost savage," Holmes noted, looking over the top of his long nose.

"It is simple. He was attacked by a wild dog, yes wild, right here on the streets of London. Such things still happen," I noted slyly.

"Those winds, feel the air, the turbulence. There is a storm moving rapidly toward us," noted Holmes.

## TWO TOWNS AND A DISASTER

Turbulent winds gusted as dark clouds swirled and formed from gales blowing in off the North Sea. As the storm worked its way toward shore, it's immediate goal appeared to be the mouth of the River Thames and it seemed to be taking dead aim at Southend-on-Sea. Time and circumstances find Charles & Mary Hutchinson & family friend Mrs. Irene visiting together in Southend-on-Sea. Their children, Stacey and Richard were presently housed in a flat in Burnham-on-Crouch. The storm is howling outside. Stacey and Richard are safe in the flat they have rented for the month. A friend of the family, Leonard comes to them to warn them their parents are in danger.

"The storm is horrible outside, your parents are in danger over in Southend-on-Sea. You must go to them."

"It is dangerous, we could drown," Stacey protested.

"If you fail to go to them, they will surely perish," argued Leonard

"There is too much rain and wind."

"You will lose them, they will drown."

"It is treacherous out there, I should stay here where it is safe. They will be alright.

"This is bad. They are going to die if you do not go to them. Do something!

"I am afraid. I'm going to stay here. They will be okay where they are.

"No! You idiot!" Leonard screams as he is becoming upset with their indifference. "They are in danger of dying where they are if someone does not help them."

"I'm scared. I'm staying right here in Burnham-on-Crouch. That's final."

"You coward! You will regret this someday," yells Leonard as he storms out the door totally disgusted with their selfish and unfeeling attitude toward their parents.

"Rickie, you know we can't leave here. We are to make contact with a buyer for the FARAVAHAR tonight and I want to sell it now. I want to sell it as soon as possible. We certainly cannot tell Leonard anything about this. Him or anyone else. Mom and dad will have to do the best they can. Besides, what did they really ever do for us? I mean really? They are just a bunch of rich people showing off their pretty kids. I mean we are just pawns, show pieces, something for them to brag about."

"Stacey, you are mean. I mean, what you say is true, but do you have to be so mean about it?"

"Oh, grow up Rickie! Put on some long pants. I know girls that have more spine than you do sometimes."

"I mean....."

"Shut up Rickie! This will be over in a little while and we can do whatever we want to do and anytime."

"It would be nice not to have some old man leaning over my shoulder all the time. It seems like if it's not dad, it's one of his friends or some old government guy. What a drag."

"See if you can find us something to drink besides this grape juice," instructed Stacey trying to get his mind off the frustrations at hand.

The storm raged even more violently destroying all before it. Charles and Mary had left their home to go and care for their 80 year old neighbor. They could not move her. She was too ill.

"Go Mary, save yourselves," Mrs. Irene said. "Save yourselves."

"The only way we will go is to take you with us. We are not going to leave you," said Mary.

"It's too rough out there to go anywhere anyway," said Charles.

"We're all better off here anyway."

"Lord, you are such brave people," Mrs. Irene said with a hopeless tone in her frail voice.

"Well, right now it is just common sense to stay here anyway.

"Whatever is to happen will happen," said Charles, looking out the window as the raging storm became even more violent.

"Here, I'll make some more coffee. Mary and I brought plenty of coffee if nothing else," he smiled. "Something warm will make us all feel better."

"I suppose you are right. We should probably get some rest anyway."

"The last message said gale force winds would reach 100mph," Charles said to no one in particular.

The storm raged on at gale force. Trees were up-rooted, debris was flying everywhere, pieces of roofs were pulled off nearby buildings by the turbulence. A coop blew down, but the chickens had moved up under a nearby house with an opening. Portions of poorly built buildings were flying through the air in all directions. It was a real storm. The three of them found solace with each other. About three hours later each of them dozed off, exhausted from anxiety and the realization matters were truly beyond their control. About two in the morning Charles was awakened by a noticeable change in the winds. The winds had changed directions and appeared to be relenting in force. Mary woke up.

"What is happening Charles?"

"It appears the storm is changing directions. It is moving away from us. This is the change that was predicted might happen. The storm is headed away from us. Look, the wind is not blowing so hard outside. We may be out of trouble," he cautiously predicted.

"We're out of trouble?" Mrs. Irene repeated, apparently awakened by the change in the wind and the conversation at hand.

"Hopefully the worst is over," repeated Charles.

"Thank God," said Mary.

"You can say that again," said Mrs. Irene and Charles practically in unison.

"Wonder which way the storm is headed now?" pondered Mary.

"Not sure, but it looks like it is headed directly toward Burnham-on-Crouch.

Yes, Burnham-on-Crouch, but that's just a guess," said Charles.

The dishonoring children stayed in Burnham-on-Crouch, refusing even to try to help their parents in distress in Southend-on-Sea, or making any attempt to help their parents, selfishly looking after their own welfare and were killed in the storm that changed directions and came after them destroying all of Burnham-on-Crouch. The storm killed every living thing. Only the cows survived. They broke through the fences and simply walked away, some as far as the next borough where they were taken in by friendly farmers.

If the children had "honored their mother and father" they would have been safe in Southend-on-Sea with their parents and survived the storm. But, they failed to Honor their Father and Mother and the elements turned against them and their "long life" was cut short. Old Testament justice is swift and severe! Black John pulled the shirt down over most of his tattoos. The shirt was worn out and barely covered his beefy upper body, but it had to make do for the time being. Soon he would get a new sweatshirt with a logo of the WEST END CLIPPERS on it. He had money on his favorite soccer team to win this weekend. They were a sure thing for him. How much just depended on the spread. He had the odds fixed as best his musclemen could. His buddies had talked to everyone that came to see the only two "turf accountants" in this section of the borough.

This rich bird and her wimpy little brother and their sale of jewelry should turn a pretty good profit. Especially since he planned to cheat them first one way and then the other. He had already talked to Two-Beers Tommy and they figured they could pull it off with just the two of them. First, they were not going to pay the spoiled little witch anything in the first place. Just grab the necklace and let Tommy scare the hell out of them while Black John walked off and got on his motorcycle. Then he and Two -Beers would call the parents and tell them they had "come into the possession of" the necklace and would be happy to "reward it" back to them in good condition for whatever they could get. He really needed to get a better estimate of the value of that old thing. Should be pretty good, he began to speculate. All in all, this should be a pretty good month.

He moved away from the bar to get closer to the pool table. Here came those two old drunks that needed a bath. They stank. They're using my bar for a part-time hotel. They buy a cheap beer and then just sip, sip, sip. It's that sip, sip, sip that drives Black John crazy. He should be able to use them for something, but every time he tried to talk to them, one of them fell down. They are really just sloppy drunks. That dog is ugly. Somebody needs to run them off, but

nobody wants to get close enough to them to do so. They stink too bad. I've got to get Ruddy to kick them out, he thought to himself. Yet, here they are again.

## RECOVERY

Sherlock Holmes closed in on one side with Dr. Watson on the other. The Pawn Broker was pulled to the side by Inspector Gregson. Lestrade stood at the door with two constables behind him. Sherlock Holmes was in Black Johns face before he knew it.

The necklace you hold in your hand is stolen from a government official. He is offering a substantial reward for its return in good condition. You have a choice to make of accepting the reward of 100 £s right now or, Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard standing at the door, will arrest you for theft. Think quickly now because the next words you speak will determine whether or not you are a concerned citizen helping restore property to its true owner or a thief and go to jail now. Think Black John; walk out the door with money in your pocket or go to jail with nothing. Here is what the money looks like." Holmes said, holding bills where Black John could see them.

"100 £s. and walk away?"

"You are looking at the money with your own eyes. Look over my shoulder and you can see Scotland Yard eager for a newsworthy arrest. Choose wisely Black John."

"I'll take the money. Who are you?"

"Good choice. My name is Sherlock Holmes. Thank you."

Black John moved out the door as quickly as possible without another word said. Lestrade however, had a few things to say.

"I suppose you are going to hold this over our heads for a while."

"Hardly Inspector, hold your press conference tomorrow and explain to the press Scotland Yard has returned stolen jewelry to a member of the British Government without altercation and has once again provided service to the citizens of London without incident."

"Come Watson, we have a client to visit."

## SUMMARY

It appears that the children of Charles and Mary had fallen in with a gang of hooligans. Ruffians and louts seemed to be their choice of friends. Clearly, these ne'er-do-wells put some dreadful ideas into their young minds. They plainly disobeyed the Commandment:

Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother' The central passage on honoring parents is that found in the Ten Commandments: Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16. Honor means love, respect, obedience, and reverence.

"Holmes, after all this discussion of biblical commandments I have to ask, have you ever considered going into the priesthood?" I inquired with a smile.

"Confessionals do involve an extensive amount of crime," he replied thoughtfully.



The Faravahar,  
WikiProject Zoroastrianism



# THOU SHALT NOT KILL

## The 6th of The Ten Commandment Mystery Series

### PROLOGUE

The pain cut through my shoulder like a knife. Memories of that bloody mess in Afghanistan flashed before my eyes and then played hide and seek inside my mind until I was ready to scream. The smell of death was all around. Everywhere I looked there were only dead and dying. Would this never end? And then, as quickly as it came, it went away. I wiped the perspiration from my drenched brow, blinked my eyes repeatedly and instinctively checked pulse and breathing. It was just another nightmare; at 9:00 AM in the morning, no less.

Sherlock Holmes had seen this before and while he hardly moved, he took careful note of every response and every reaction his friend had experienced. Holmes signaled Mrs. Hudson for fresh coffee and biscuits. Not all days began like this at 221-B Baker Street, I reminded myself trying to regain control of my emotions and at the same time determine whether or not Holmes had noticed my little flare-up. I could make nothing of his expressionless features other than his bored anticipation of fresh coffee. Then I noticed the message in his hand scribbled on cheap Scotland Yard stationary.

"Something interesting from Scotland Yard?" I inquired.

"I would say laughable rather than interesting. They think they have a murder, but they have no body, no corpse," Holmes replied discarding the note to the back of his pile of papers.

"I swear Watson, those detectives are sometimes like abused children. They cannot recognize the most elementary of challenges. They are apparently trying to solve a non-crime," and with that dismissed the entire matter with disdain.

Three hours later, Lestrade was at our door showing signs of stress and irritation.

"The 1st Sea Lord had his personal assistant in my office two hours ago. He is convinced Lady Hutchison's nephew is dead. There is no body. She wants us to investigate an alleged murder that has no body. Missing person, possibly; murder? Hardly. We need to have someone dead before we can have a murder and we have no corpse. This should be a missing persons case," complained Lestrade.

Holmes stared at him silently and without expression. Lestrade grew more frustrated.

"I do not have time for this. I want you to look into this matter and get Lady Hutchison settled down," he said glaring at Sherlock Holmes.

"I am a consulting detective, not a family nurse," sniffed Holmes indignantly.

"I need this done Holmes, and you will be serving the British Government," admonished Lestrade as he walked out the door.

"A murder, but no corpse," mused Holmes to himself. "I suppose that might pose a stimulating puzzle."

I observed silently, curious as to how he would approach this quandary. Silence, then a flash and glitter in those once again penetrating eyes.

"They want a murder, Watson? A murder they shall have."

"But how? What?" -----"We shall treat the matter as a murder," Holmes responded, cutting my question off in mid-sentence. And that is how we found ourselves in the vestibule of Lady Hutchison's home the following morning.

### INTERVIEW WITH LADY HUTCHISON

Her piercing black eyes and stern manner were a preview of what was to come.

"Yes Mr. Holmes, I know of you and Dr. Watson. Please come in."

Lady Hutchison was very religious. She was in attendance every time the church door is open. She was baptized in the Church of England at the age of three months. While her husband Arthur was alive, and not away on Her Majesty's affairs, he accompanied her in all of her church activities and felt as strongly as she does. The church is as much of her life as breathing.

"Thou shalt not kill! Murder is prohibited by the Ten Commandments. My nephew Oliver was murdered. I want the killer found; it is that simple."

That is the way she began the interview and that is the way she would end it. "The old testament of the Christian bible is full of killing," observed Holmes. "However, we should stay with the matters at hand. When was the last time you heard from Oliver J. Perry?"

"Seven weeks ago, Thursday, when he stopped by for a brief visit shortly before some 'interview' that he had with someone whom he was preparing a research paper on he said. All very hush-hush for some reason."

"Had he mentioned any person in that group he was preparing a research paper on recently?"

"There was something to do with a branch of anthropophagy. I think he said, yes, I'm sure that was it. The whole thing sounded rather dark and gloomy to me, but he seemed excited about it. That is all I really know he had to say about it.

Oliver J Perry is my closest male relative, other than 1st Sea Lord John Mason. I fear young Oliver has fallen in with some unsavory characters."

"And what unsavory character might that be, pray tell?" inquired a bored but curious Holmes.

"It is a group of scientists over at *Royal Polytechnic Institution*."

"Singular," commented Holmes. "What were they doing?"

"They would never tell me, said it was confidential."

"And their field of study?"

"Anthropology, but I think that they took it a bit too seriously."

"The names of these associates?"

"James Sable, Michael Fay and Timothy King."

"These three lads and Oliver were attempting to create a *School of Anthropology* inside the *Royal Polytechnic Institution*. The intent of this effort was to broaden the appeal of the institution so that it would not be looked upon as solely 'an exhibition of scientific gadgets and contrivances'. During the process of this endeavor, Oliver and Timothy became fascinated with Anthropophagy, the eating of human flesh. In-depth research went on night and day and then they discovered a small colony of "*Caribs*," I think they called them, right here in a slum section of London. Amazed at their finding, Oliver and Timothy began spending all of their spare time trying to get to know the '*Tribe*.' Raw research data was being gathered in unorthodox ways and in large volumes. The two were ecstatic. Soon James and Michael began to pay more attention but not with the high degree of expectancy that prompted Oliver and Tim."

"Then, with no warning, there was an abrupt change in behavior. Neither Oliver nor Tim were seen for over a month. Tim came by one day looking ill. He was around a couple of days, looked pale and not himself, then said he had to return home for a few weeks and would be back, packed a few things and departed. He has not been seen or heard from since. Oliver on the other hand, has not been seen or heard from since much earlier in time. Last anyone has heard from him, he had left for a meeting with this odd group identified as the 'Caribs'. No one has seen him since. 'Thou shalt not kill!' Murder is against the law of the Ten Commandments. These savages murdered Oliver. I want the killers found. It is that simple."

And with that, the interview was concluded.

### ATTEMPTED INTERVIEW WITH JAMES SABLE

The secretary at the main desk was at a loss. Her itineraries were all out of date. "These Graduate Professors have been difficult to keep up with lately. They are all doing Primary Research and much of it is in the field. James is usually in his laboratory, but the hours are constantly in a state of flux. And James, he is so absent minded. Go to his lab, if he is not there, he should show up shortly. The door is probably open."

James Sable was known in the group as the genius. He was perfectly happy to do in-house research, had no intent in involving himself directly with the people and was actually afraid to deal with live human beings. He was a pure introvert. Categorizing him as such was just fine with James. He was about to request that he not be disturbed so that he could continue on his private research without delay. Everyone else thought he was working on some type of 'crop-yield production' formula when all the while research information piled up in various areas of pharmacy, investigating how and under what circumstances the eating of human flesh might be used as, and I quote: "*Power Aetiology*". The door to his lab was open and we walked in. With no one to talk to, we wandered around and made ourselves at home. Files were open, sloppy and appeared to be purposely left this way for easy access of young James Sable.

"Holmes, if this young man is actually doing what these working papers right here in this laboratory verify, James is actually conducting live tests using human flesh as a "*Power Aetiology*". He has some open tests remaining for '*disease-of-muscle*', *bio-ingredient*, another as some form of *horns-treatment* and this file here shows studies for a just plain "*SuperAetiology*" (The word is derived from the Greek word *aetologia*, '*giving a reason for*') We waited for close to an hour, grew weary and then left leaving a note stating that we would like to interview him in person.

### INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL FAY

Michael was the girl-chaser. If it had a skirt on it, he would chase it back in time thousands of years. Or if alive, into the nearest bedroom. Michael's social activities were such that it is difficult to determine when the man actually works. His laboratory was open during University hours, so Holmes and I walked in and wandered about examining several files that were unlocked and partially open. One was marked "Confidential".

"Holmes, this young man is studying the courting, breeding, mating and general perpetuation of the human race. This fellow has a study, no less, going on about everything related to the perpetration of the human race."

"Hello gentlemen," exclaimed a loud, friendly voice as a handsome young man virtually swept his way into the room as though he were making a grand entrance onto the London Stage."

"You have the flair and charisma of a stage actor, Mr. Fay," observed Holmes.

"Thank you my good man," the handsome youth responded.

"I confess, it is my hobby, when I have the time," he said, bowing deeply as though he had just finished a well-received performance.

"And whose company do I enjoy at this time?" he inquired in a friendly and welcoming voice.

"I am Sherlock Holmes. This is..."

"The famous Dr. Watson," interjected Michael Fay with a flare of exuberance. I am so fortunate to finally meet the two of you. Really, this is really great. I try to follow your adventures when time allows me. It seems you gentlemen lead exciting lives. The people that you meet must be fascinating. I am glad you stopped by. How can I help?"

"One of your associates, Mr. Oliver Perry is missing. His aunt is very concerned about his well-being. She fears foul-play We have been asked to look into the matter."

"Aha....yes, Oliver." Michael consulted his calendar.

"Yes, he should return in three weeks from tomorrow. He is trying to finish-up the completion of a study. He feels that it could possibly become a book. He has put in quite a lot of time on this project."

"I see," replied Holmes.

"Was there anything else?" Michael inquired, smiling but obviously wanting to move on to other matters as he considered this one closed.

"I see that you have a busy schedule. We shall be going." replied Holmes.

"Thank you for stopping by and I am glad to have met both of you." He smiled broadly as he walked us to the door. As we turned the corner at the end of the hall, I glanced back toward Michael's laboratory and briefly caught sight of a young, attractive blond girl entering his doorway, smiling. Back on the street, Holmes stood quietly in thought as I summoned a hansom.

"Well, we do not have a current address for Timothy King, his laboratory is locked and Michael Fay says Oliver will return in three weeks, where should we now turn for evidence?"

"Mr. Fay is lying. The Confidential File tells us that Michael Fay does not know where his comrade is. Perhaps he is fearful that everything we suspect may be in progress. Perhaps he is trying to establish considerable distance between the time Oliver disappeared and anyone realizes Oliver may be the victim of foul play. Perhaps Michael Fay fears that he himself may be blamed in some way. At any rate, he is concealing something. Remember Watson, it is dangerous to form a hypothesis before you have all of the facts."

"221-B Baker Street," I announced to the driver when the cab arrived. As we traveled across the city, Holmes shared an observation. "The Confidential file in Fay's laboratory also contains the dosage for a treatment called '*SuperAetiology*'."

*'One full shot-glass full of the Aetiology ingredient taken at bedtime with two full glasses of water.'*

"This is an *Aetiology* solution that gives Michael Fay such vigor that he appears to have the stamina of a man eighteen years of age."

Our journey continued with Holmes in deep meditation.

## INTERVIEW WITH TIMOTHY KING'S LABORATORY ASSISTANT

"Tim and Oliver were the two who wanted to study the 'modern' tribes, the live descendants and cannibalism," stated Henry Clay Jr.

"Being Tim's laboratory assistant is an interesting but sometimes lonely job. Believe me, I am happy to have a coveted position like this, but I feel like I am in the dark much of the time. I think some professors like it that way, but I am lucky. I really enjoy anthropology and am free to do my own independent research but other times all I do is tell people I do not know where he is. I have to be here four hours each day for five days a week. Keep the store open so to speak."

"So you do not know where Timothy is or when he will return?" asked Sherlock Holmes beginning to feel like these four Anthropologists were operating in a surprisingly shadowy world. Secrecy about research is one thing, but this seems a bit extreme.

"Correct."

"Do you know how to get in contact with Oliver J Perry?"

"No. He stops by from time to time, but I have not seen him for several weeks."

"Have you ever heard the term *Aetiology* used?"

"Yes. It is something that they are all working on but I know no details or anything about it. I just recognize the term."

"I will leave my card. Please ask either Timothy or Oliver to contact me at the address provided. Thank you."

"Come Watson"

"These people are like shadows." I commented to Holmes as we once again returned to the street empty-handed.

## INTERLUDE

Lotoya noticed the young man at a distance. His medium size and build were nothing out of the ordinary for a young male in his mid-twenties, but this one had an energetic spring to his step that caught her eye. A full head of brown wavy hair needed a trim, but it blended well with his boyish face. He was one of dozens of young men that the virginal dark haired beauty passed every day, but on this day she sensed something unique.

Oliver J Perry had the afternoon off, was caught up on his studies, had no personal matters on his afternoon calendar and it was a warm day in London. Not a care in the world or a thought on his mind. He glanced to the left and suddenly in the middle of a temporary third-rate market in the seedy part of London, his eyes fell upon an attractive dark haired girl with flashing black eyes. Her slender figure molded itself into a bright blue floral print dress. She smiled ever so slightly. He tripped. Stumbling awkwardly, he caught himself on a nearby chair. His gaze broken, he looked up, searching for his lost prize and found himself motionless as she stood before him, her broadening smile displaying perfect white teeth. Her flawless, youthful face dazzled him.

Oliver did not have a sweetheart and was not looking for one. This changed in an instant. For an indescribable moment, time stood still. He tried to talk and his voice failed. She giggled.

"It is funny, is it not?" She continued to giggle and nodded.

"Well," he said, getting control of himself, "I should be better at this. I am good at everything else."

She continued to smile with an amused look.

"Please say something, I am beginning to feel like a fool."

"What would you have me say?" she asked playfully.

"Will you walk through the park with me?"

"Yes, but only the park." The smile faded. He looked puzzled.

"It is a big park," she reminded him smiling once more.

"What is your name?" he asked gently taking her hand.

"I am called Lotoya."

"That is a beautiful name," he responded clearly infatuated with this lovely creature.

"My name is Oliver." She smiled and held his hand tighter.

And so they spent the afternoon strolling slowly through the park.

"Will I see you tomorrow?" he asked.

"No. My parents are very strict. Besides, I have classes.

"At the University?"

"Yes."

"I do advanced work there." She looked puzzled.

"In anthropology, we study present and ancient people."

A week later Oliver noticed Lotoya at the University and approached her.

"Would you like to walk in the park again?"

"Yes," she said eagerly, "but we must be careful."

Oliver looked puzzled, but chose not to pursue the matter.

## INVESTIGATION

The crippled beggar in the street seemed lost. He continued going around and around like he was trying to find his way out of the very private part of falling down houses and unsanitary dwellings but ended up back behind the Cockpit Restaurant. The Caribbean food at this place was not all that good to begin with, so this bum must surely be lost. Sammy, the manager had seen this before, but not often. There were much better restaurant back doors to beg from in London. The bums all knew it. This lost soul must be new in town and likely brain-damaged. Well, Sammy thought, I do not want him dying at my place. I do not need those mean British policemen poking around here. They usually steal something if they think they can eat it. I just do not want them around.

"Here, take this. Go away!"

"Thank you my good man," the bum replied. His tall crane-like head with piercing eyes looked Sonny over from head to toe.

"Where might a man rest for the night?" the beggar inquired.

"Down the street at *Mary's*". She sometimes lets strangers flop there for the night."

Silently, Sammy congratulated himself for dumping the bum on *Mary*. It will be good for her. She should have paid me the four quid that she owes me from three years ago.

He watched the bent-over beggar hobble with the aid of a heavy cane, down the street towards *Mary's*. Idly Sammy thought, we do not see many white men down this way. Probably crazy, thought Sammy, and then he went back to washing dishes.

"Why do you want to know about *Caribs*? What do you care?"

"No, don't tell me that. You do not know any of us or you would not have to ask. Get out! Go away!" "Enough of you!"

'Good thing I waited until morning to ask a question', thought the beggar to himself. Trying to understand the broken language from the *Cockpit Country* of Jamaica left him with fragmented parts of conversations. Four days around here had gained him little, so he ended up in the church. The Catholic priest was of some help. He would re-visit here at a later date.

The crippled beggar turned the corner and looked for a place to sit down. Rather than a place of rest, what he saw was a feeble old man being beaten and robbed right before him. The beggar cast a

cautious eye all about before deciding to enter the fray. The two robust young hooligans were both greeted with a crack across the back of the head with the loaded end of the ever-present *Penang Lawyer*. Surprise is always helpful.

"Run!," he shouted to the old man. A hard thrust jammed the bulbous end of the walking stick directly into the chest-bone of the first thug taking him straight to the ground and another crossing blow to the second slower one staggered him into the side of the building. One more blow shattered his knee-cap. He turned back to the first.

"No more! No more!, please."

Leaning heavily on his cane the dirty beggar turned and trudged wearily in the same general direction in which the old man had disappeared. It would be a short time before the young hooligans could walk steadily. Some few blocks away the tired beggar had found a bench to rest. He had regained his breath and rested a short time. About to rise, he heard something in the brush. There was a rustle nearby --

"Thank you." The beggar had difficulty locating where the sound came from.

"You saved my father from being severely beaten and robbed."

"You are welcome," the beggar replied, looking into the shadows for the speaker.

"It looked a bit one-sided. But I must go and seek a place to sleep tonight."

"Come with us."

"Who are you?"

"We are a West Indian family. We are nearby. My father is one of the elders. We have room for you as a guest."

"That would be helpful, I have little money," said the beggar.

"Marlo, who is this stranger you have brought among us?," the fierce looking man asked suspiciously.

"He calls himself *Jonathon*," replied the son as he began to tell the story of their father being attacked.

"We are just beginning the evening meal, *Jonathon*, please accompany us. You are our guest for the evening."

The meal was delightful. The 'family' extended to about thirty people who were mutually interested in the attack, rescue and escape of their father.

Early in the evening, a very beautiful, but sad looking young girl came to the table. She looked lonely and depressed, was introduced by one of the men as his daughter, sat quietly and almost motionless throughout the meal. Near the end of the dining hour, she politely excused herself and left the room. The guest never saw her again.

"You are fortunate to be present this evening *Jonathon*, as we have a special dish for this meal. This is a special occasion since you prevented our father from receiving a severe beating. I have heard of these young men and they are bad."

The dish was passed all round.

"What is this dish? It is very tasty, especially with either potatoes or rice."

"It is called *Yangeo*. It is the dish of warriors."

"The dish is quite good. Your *Yangeo* has *'the taste of veal'*."

*Jonathon* is celebrated and recognized for his bravery in saving their father.

"*Jonathon*, you have been given special recognition for your bravery and you will always be known as *'Friend'*. Always welcome to visit. Stay the night, but tomorrow you must go. It is our way. You must go. We are a very private society"

"I understand."

\*\*\*\*\*

Ten days later, Sherlock Holmes was at the same church. The priest shared considerable information while attempting to help Holmes locate his brother who coincidentally looked very much like him, was crippled and likely begging in the street. Yes, the priest remembered someone with a similar description, lost, dirty and asking very intruding questions. Encapsulated within the inquiry about his brother, were questions searching for information about the *Carib* tribe.

"Yes, the *Caribs* are known for practicing cannibalism, but you will never observe them engaging in the ritual. They are very good neighbors. Trustworthy, men of their word and self reliant. From time to time they have provided assistance to me when some of our most stalwart men were away. They are friends of both Catholic and Protestant. They just keep to and abide by their own beliefs, practices and rituals. As I mentioned, they are good neighbors," explained the priest.

"Thank you for your assistance, Father. I must go now."

"Go in peace my friend."

A block away, Holmes summoned a hansom and gave directions to 221-B Baker Street.

### CARIB

His dressing gown pockets stuffed with tobacco that had bulged over from the Persian slipper and his clay pipe heated and charred from the constant smolder of one of his special cuts of tobacco, Sherlock Holmes had been wandering around our rooms since far before dawn.

Prompting a glance of concern from me was the fact that on every vacant space, including the floor was paper, information, material and some bizarre forms of gadgetry pertaining to cannibalism.

"Good lord Holmes, have the savages taken over all of your time and interest?" I asked. Then, as they were lying openly on every table and many on the floor. I glanced at the notations that he was reviewing.

#### Note Packet #1

*Reasons to eat the corpses of the dead:*

*There is a belief that corpses can be used for medicinal purposes and can be ingested as medical treatment.*

*Another belief is that human flesh was to be an aristocratic diet. A belief that to eat the corpse of the enemy was to 'completely destroy him'. Another belief is that to eat the flesh of another was to take on the qualities and characteristics of the deceased.*

*Sometimes it was a part of the grieving process. A way of guiding the souls of the dead into the living.*

#### Note Packet #2

*The Anthropological Society of London, founded 1863, was one of a number of organizations studying the development and culture of man, race and the differences thereof. These organizations were constantly forming, growing, dying and experiencing the break-away of factions, sub-clusters and splinter groups. Carib Karibna meant "person" and was linked to the eating of war enemies. Caribs were known as a vicious and violent people.*

*Black Caribs originated from inland Africans who were marooned from shipwrecks*

*They were skilled boat builders and sailors  
Caribs were displaced by the Europeans with great loss of  
life.*

*The brain was eaten immediately (first) while still warm  
Human flesh is said to sometimes have 'the taste of veal.'  
Cannibalism as a form of criminal justice.*

#### Note Packet #3

*The Cannibal Club was founded by Sir Richard F. Burton and  
Dr. James Hunt. The name is thought to originate from Burton's  
fascination with Cannibalism.*

*There are reasons to believe some of the members, including  
Oliver, became over-infatuated with cannibalism and sought out  
groups such as the Caribs and in this case may have paid for it  
with his life.*

*The Caribs are unique. These people are like shadows. They  
float in and out. They are there, then you look and they are gone.*

#### Note Packet #4

*Was Oliver guest or enemy?*

*Was it murder?*

*Did he participate willingly?*

*Was it by his own hand?*

*Was it part of their life?*

*Murder or ritual?*

*Murder or custom?*

*Murder or acceptance into the tribe?*

### CONCLUSION

"Let us get started Holmes," instructed Lestrade. "I am having the stenographer make a recording of your report to be delivered to the 1st Sea Lord. He will relay the findings to Lady Hutchison in a manner he feels appropriate."

Sherlock Holmes began.

"I have been tasked with investigating the disappearance of one Oliver J. Perry, nephew of Lady Hutchinson. Oliver Perry, James Sable, Michael Fay and Timothy King were attempting to create a *School of Anthropology* inside the *Royal Polytechnic Institution*. Oliver studied *Anthropology*, and as a derivative became interested in and then fascinated by *Antropophagy* (the practice of eating human flesh) which led to the study of *Cannibalism* and the beginning of frequent trips and times into the 'territory' of a West Indian tribe known as the *Caribs* located here in London. He and his close associate Timothy King examined their quarters, scrutinized their living and working places and analyzed everything they did. The *Caribs* felt intruded upon. Oliver visited more frequently than Timothy. More and more the tribe discouraged him from his intrusions. They encouraged him to stay away. They told him to stay away-- he became more intrigued. Then they demanded that he stay away. This only ignited his curiosity. He invaded their culture. They

felt threatened and imposed upon. Violated. Exposed. Oliver and Timothy intruded too close to the tribes private affairs.

Timothy is now confined in a sanitarium after being found wandering on the streets of Liverpool babbling incoherently, his mind no longer in contact with this world. We can only speculate how this condition came about. Dr. Watson's diagnosis is something along the lines of severe mental shock. Probably he witnessed something so horrible to him that it will be some time, if ever, that he might recover enough to even communicate with other humans.

Oliver, on the other hand is even more difficult. He is gone. Disappeared. There is no trace. No evidence. Nothing except murmurs from odious shadows. There is a whispered rumor, only a rumor that there was some form of justice proceeding by the tribe. References and research surrounding the Islands tell of folk-stories that run along the lines of the following.

The *Caribs* are unique. They are a 'Closed Society.' The *Carib* tribe is a branch of the West Indies tribes who has a long history and reputation for practicing cannibalism which extends to many parts of the world. Cannibalism is rare, but not illegal in most countries. Interestingly, it has been tested by anthropologists attempting to determine what is *acceptable* vs. *unacceptable* human behavior. Oddly, this tribe is not a danger to the general public. Strangers are not welcome. They do not want you, your possessions, your wealth or your company. They want to be left alone. They ask for nothing but anonymity. They are truly a 'Closed Society'."

"He was not one of them. They did not know whether to worship him or to kill him. They listened patiently to everything he had to say, and then they cooked him and they ate him. This was a solution. They crushed his bones, ground them up and ate them to acquire unto themselves, his favorable qualities and characteristics. Some bones, they boiled and made into jewelry, though this is likely folklore."

"THE QUESTION OF MURDER? Was there a murder, an acceptance, something else?

*These are the facts - and they are undisputed.*

No corpse

No confession

No person or persons accused

No sign of foul play

No witnesses

The one fact is; Oliver is not here today!

Perhaps: 1 'Person or persons' unknown killed him OR

Perhaps: 2. Six months from now he turns up on the South of France with a new girlfriend.

*These are the facts- and they are undisputed.*

In the matter of Oliver J. Perry, was murder done?

Speculation tells us that this is scientific research gone awry.

Evidence at this point is non-existent.

I fear that we will never learn with certainty, what fate befell young Oliver.

Watson, it is time for us to go. And gentlemen, be wary of where you travel."



# THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

## The 7th of the Ten Commandment Mystery Series

### PREFACE

A bullet screamed past my right ear as I dove behind a dirty gray-brown boulder. Why the color of some rock stuck in my mind at this moment, I cannot answer. More bullets flew over my head as I frantically tried to burrow into the gritty, hard ground that was nature's gift to Maiwand. The boulder was too small, I felt like an open target. I could see the horses, I just could not get to them. Murray signaled me to run, he had a horse ready. I had to get out of here. There was a pause in the firing, I crouched and then began to sprint toward Murray and the horse. Silence, then an explosion and suddenly my shoulder shattered. Everything went black.

Drenched in sweat and gasping for breath, I looked around trying to gather my senses. The familiar dresser, my clothes, my nightstand and the single picture on the far wall of a vase and yellow flower, told me that I was in my bedroom at 221-B Baker Street. Another one of those bloody nightmares. The second this week, I noted. I looked at the clock beside my bed. Time for me to get up and prepare for the day anyway. As I dressed, I considered that these flashbacks from the second Afghan War were occurring just before I wake up in the morning. A short time later, I joined Sherlock Holmes for one of Mrs. Hudson's ample breakfasts. Intently focused upon something in the Daily Telegram, Holmes never looked up. A few minutes later, he spoke.

"Another flashback?"

"Yes, how did you know?" I grudgingly answered.

"That is the second one in the last ten days," his eyes never leaving the paper.

I was about to respond with a fiery comment when Mrs. Hudson arrived with breakfast and coffee.

"Good morning, gentlemen."

After breakfast, Holmes looked at his papers, shuffled them, then began speaking.

"The fragile and frequently ill daughter of the Third Sea Lord of the British Navy, Virginia Turner, is married to Lawrence Thorndyke, maker of the 'Thorn' Gas Engine. I met her brother Samuel, a few years ago when working on a case involving the habits and customs of Cannibals. Quite a prickly matter as I recall. I have not much interest in domestic relations matters," yawning as he briefly glanced at the telegram and discarded it to the back of the pile of incoming mail.

"Holmes, you wanted a case; here is one!"

"Her husband has a mistress. It is not uncommon in some circles. In this case, it is a fact, not a mystery," Holmes replied curtly and was silent for a moment.

"Her husband is the owner of THORN ENGINE COMPANY. With the expiration of the OTTO PATENT in England, Lawrence Thorndyke is getting rich very fast. Only the Germans are progressing as rapidly as Thorndyke is."

"Lucky man."

"Not quite that simple," Holmes noted.

"Many engineers in several countries were and still are, working on designing a gasoline internal combustible engine. Nikolaus Otto stood out more than any other. Otto invented the 'Otto Cycle Engine', the first 4-stroke internal combustion engine in 1876, however, his

patent was invalidated in favor of a previous patent held by a French engineer, Alphonse Beau de Rochas, dated 1862. Gottlieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach left Otto's company and took Lawrence Thorndyke with them. Thorndyke was a bit of a bully, which was helpful at times. His two strongest characteristics were arrogance and selfishness, but he was an excellent engineer.

Thorndyke thought that Daimler's vision of the combustion engines for transportation was the best idea for the future, but at heart, he wanted his own manufacturing company. A year later he did just that and THORN ENGINE COMPANY was born. In 1889 more than 50 companies were manufacturing Otto design engines with THORN leading all of them. Through arrogance, selfishness and chicanery, Lawrence Thorndyke was and is, on his way to untold wealth."

It was at that point that I saw that one corner of the telegram had some marking of the British Government.

"That is what this is. Mycroft wants something," I blurted.

"When Mycroft wants something, you have to say yes," I repeated for effect.

Holmes was silent for some time. He was considering something that involved me I suspected, but experience told me that he would tell me soon enough. Still looking out the window, he finally spoke.

"He wants you too, you know."

This was not good for me. It would entail a trip to the Diogenes Club and I seem to be the subject of discipline each time I visit there, talking in the wrong place or perhaps staring at some stuffed shirt of a retired dignitary.

"Am I really necessary?" I asked in almost a begging voice.

"Watson, you know my methods and you know Mycroft. And besides, we are due at the Diogenes within the hour."

And that is the way I found myself, with no benefit or satisfaction, involved in adultery.

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"We have no interest in the least whether or not this man is cheating on his wife," Mycroft began. "It is the woman that he is cheating with that is of interest to us. She is an enigma, which would ordinarily escape our attention, except that she keeps showing up in the upper circles of English commerce in the company of wealthy tradesmen and inevitably government circles and then government officials. It is her background that is much too obscure. Intelligence, both internal and external have turned up nothing of any real value. It is like she has no background at all and you know how dangerous that can be. The adultery gives us an excuse to investigate her, unofficially of course," Mycroft explained.

I decided to insert myself into the issue since it appeared to me that we were going in circles.

"So, the mystery woman is hardly someone you can run a random security investigation on as it could involve a body of people, powerful people I suspect, who do not welcome intrusion into 'personal matters' and you want us to thrash around anyway."

"That is one way to sum up the matter, Dr. Watson."

Mycroft has always enjoyed my company, at least I told myself that each time I intruded into his domain of interest.

Holmes looked bored, but resigned to the fact that we were on the case, so to speak.

"We will need some security clearances Mycroft," Holmes stated as he probed to discover just how deeply concerned his brother is in the adultery matter.

### LAWRENCE THORNDYKE

Sherlock Holmes had no interest in investigating domestic relations affairs. It was past boring for his high-intensity mind. It seems, however, if the subject is singular enough, with a few twists and turns to rise above the rudimentary, it can hold his attention for a moderate length of time. Later in the week, he shared with me some of the information he had found which is reflected in the notes below.

"Lawrence Thorndyke is a very talented engineer, industrialist, and well known manufacturer of Engines. Successful in his own right, his two strongest characteristics are arrogance and selfishness. He has never missed a chance to display either of them. Lawrence's wife, Virginia Turner, is a very sensitive and delicate woman who can be hurt easily. She was the fragile and frequently ill daughter of the Third Sea Lord and Controller of the British Navy. Lawrence Thorndyke's mother had a nervous breakdown when he was a small child and was 'taken away'. He has never seen her since and does not know what happened to her. I shall continue to investigate this prominent industrialist," stated Holmes.

Each morning, Lawrence walked out of his front door at 6:30AM sharp. His precise engineering mind dictated that this be the same exact time every morning in thought and deed. It was. You could set your railroad watch by his personal schedule. His private carriage delivered him to his office at exactly the same time each morning, enabling him to be on the shop floor at exactly 7:00AM in time to inspect the Midnight to 800AM Graveyard shift as it began preparation to hand off the assembly line to the Morning 8:00 AM to 4:00PM shift. Needless to say Lawrence had a rigorous work ethic.

This meticulous schedule and his nimble creative skills enabled him to radically change the invalid patent design of the Otto engine into a new and completely redesigned combustion engine that was a drastically improved Internal Combustion Engine, 'Thorn Engine No.1,' that he patented and was very popular. Presently, his even newer improved engine, the 'Thorn Deluxe' already had back orders enough to lease the building next door, hire workers and set up yet another assembly line. Life was good. If only his wife would see it the same way. She married him because he was successful in his own right, yet constantly complained because he worked to keep it that way. Lately, some nights it was just easier to spend the night at the factory.

He needed something fresh in his life. Being married to the sickly and ultra sensitive daughter of the Third Sea Lord was not easy. Lately it has been a full time job in itself. And this is where the conversation was at the Colony Bar in the Spencer Lodge this evening.

"Lawrence, you need a girlfriend!"

John, one of his social companions and often times drinking mate, viewed life in simple terms. He was also direct. Two nearby colleagues at the bar nodded their approval. John Drake was a high-powered, hard working salesman of machine tools, nuts, bolts and gaskets. The truth was, he could sell anything and the more expensive the item, the better he was. He once sold all necessary tools to an entire country, it was too bad they lost their civil war.

"There is nothing like a mistress to put some 'life' back into your regimented existence," John always said.

"You will feel like a new man. A young man!" he winked.

Lawrence opened his mouth to respond.

"Do not bother! "Look around the room," John waved toward the twenty or more career men and women relaxing in various degrees of social interaction.

"Now pick out the ones that are happy."

He did not quite get the connection; but he continued to look and listen to what John had to say even though he had heard this argument before. This was not the first time that friends or acquaintances had discussed this matter of mistresses.

John was happily married, but his energy level demanded that he have at least two or even three other women somewhere in the background. Lawrence did not see how he did it.

"Not to worry," John counseled, "Your time will come. Bartender, another round of drinks."

Lawrence was about ready to leave when he noticed several of the men stood a little straighter, adjusted their coats and the bar chatter died down just a little. Then he saw her. Even across the room, Lawrence could tell that she was indeed unusual. Rather a small woman, she carried herself as though she owned the room. The rough edge came off the routine barroom conversation. And then she began to walk slowly across the room. Most of the men glanced her way, at least three stared, one of whom was Lawrence. Everyone seemed to know her, nothing really stopped, it just seemed to be more refined. She was near middle age and carried it well. From where he stood, she had near perfect facial features, green eyes, high forehead, a perfect mouth and firm jaw. Her hair was a honey brown and as her coat slid off her shoulders onto the back of a chair, a trim figure captured every man's attention. She saw John and smiled, he tipped his glass. Her eyes rested briefly on Lawrence and then moved on. Suddenly a much older woman moved hurriedly across the room and sat down beside her with no introduction. Both women were very well dressed with expensive accessories and now fully engaged in conversation.

"Who is that?" Lawrence asked without hesitation. John smiled broadly.

"She is someone special. It is interesting that you should ask," as his smile became broader. John looked a second time himself.

Lawrence realized the he was staring at the woman and tried to refocus on John and his drink.

"Really, who is she?"

"Her name is Pliar. She is very social, very engaging and very smart. She says that she holds a low level job in the government, but she never says what it is or where she actually works. I have no idea what she actually does. She did finally say that it is here in London. I think there is more to it than that. She is good company and has the knack of making you feel good without doing anything at all."

"Sounds like a puzzle."

"It is."

"Have you been out with her?"

"Oh yes."

"And? Come on John, give!"

"I find this very revealing that you are interrogating me like a detective. The fact of the matter is that she is delightful to be with, but I came away realizing that I knew absolutely nothing about her."

"Intimacy?"

"Yes, she decided to make love to me on the second date. She was delightful and afterward I realized that she was extremely complex and would remain a mystery."

"Strange way to put it. Would you go out with her again," he pressed.

"Look at you, Lawrence, suddenly you have become quite the social 'Hawk'.  
The honest answer is; I do not know."  
And with that, it was Lawrence Thorndyke, who ordered a round of drinks.

### THIN ICE

"Would you like to meet her?"  
Lawrence caught his breath, it was reality time. He has always found older women very appealing, more so after such a younger wife, he fantasies to himself. She is a very attractive older woman who evidently likes to live on the edge, a risk taker. Dare-devil! He is mystified by her and for some reason feels very comfortable in her presence, like he had known her before.

Catching his breath, his mind races. Are you going to act or not? Risk or more of the same boredom. What could it hurt? Just take her to dinner. You take clients and associates to lunch and dinner all of the time. After all, it is just a meal.

Or was it? Why was your pulse racing at the thought of being alone with her? Was it the intrigue, the mystery, the risk or simply the thought of danger? The idea of doing something you knew you were not supposed to do. The thought that you could get caught. Somebody will know, somebody always knows. Maybe you could get away with it or, maybe you would perish. Like walking on thin ice.

"I am glad to meet you, Lawrence," she smiled warmly. Those magnificent green eyes bore directly into his very soul. Lawrence felt his mouth go dry as he straightened his shoulders, trying to look taller.

"So you are a friend of Johns, are you?"

"Yes, we have known each other for sometime now. Quite a fellow."

"And now I am leaving," said John, smiling.

"Tell me about yourself, Lawrence." Those rich green eyes continued to look all of the way through him.

"I am in the engine business, internal combustion engines. But that is boring and I do not want to bore you."

She smiled again and raised her chin just a fraction. She made the movement that men could never resist. A body-language movement as an ever-so-slight invitation to move closer. It never failed.

### ADVENTURE

"I have always been fascinated by men who make things. As I understand the most recent research, the engineers are having some difficulty with that 4th stroke, the Exhaust stroke on the combustion design. The problem of slightly negating the Power stroke. What are you doing about that?"

"That is very technical," Lawrence responded, surprised at her question.

"Oh Lawrence, it is just cocktail chatter so I do not have to be alone without having something to chat about. I am harmless." She smiled and then wrinkled her nose. Lawrence was taken, no doubt, and did not know exactly how to respond.

"Lady, you are a breath of fresh air." They talked on for hours. Finally, she glanced at her watch.

"I must go. Work tomorrow, you know." Suddenly aware of the time, Lawrence agreed.

"Why do we not go to dinner tomorrow night?" he suggested. She smiled and patted his arm.

"I would like that."

"Where and when may I pick you up?" he asked.

"It will have to be after six PM. I do not have time to go home. How about the Kings Restaurant around the corner from Whitehall?"

"Alright, it is a date," he confirmed happily.

And so their rendezvous began. Three times a week after work. No one ever mentioned the weekends. They met, they dined, they drank and then one evening, then ended up at Lawrence's town flat. It was not a sudden event, it just naturally happened, like it was meant to be. The intimacy was stormy, new and exciting. She a giving lover, he in mature male aggression. It was as exciting to Pilar as it was to Lawrence. They talked about art, the sciences, music, engineering. Lawrence found himself talking about engines and Pilar trying to act interested. When he slowed down she usually asked some innocent open ended questions and then Lawrence would talk on for hours about his designs, modifications, setbacks and breakthroughs.

Then one day a strange thing happened. Lawrence impulsively decided to buy Pilar a very fashionable purse that she had mentioned on several occasions. He knew she wanted it and so he went by the store, purchased it and had it delivered to the home address that Pilar had given him some time back. Strangely, the gift was returned marked "Undeliverable" No such address! Puzzled and naturally curious, he decided that he would investigate. The following day, when he was caught up at the factory, he summoned his carriage and driver and sought out 320 Concord Lane. It proved to be a part of town, he was not familiar with.

"Sorry Sir, I do not think we are going to do any business here," the driver stated as they looked out upon and abandoned and falling down structure.

"Are you sure you were given this address?"

"Yes, there is no mistake the numbers are correct; 320 Concord Lane."

"Sir, might I suggest further inquiry?" suggested his driver.

"Yes, yes, let us return to the factory, James."

"Very good, Sir."

Later that evening, when he raised the issue with Pilar, she brushed the address matter off with a flip of the wrist.

"Lawrence, that was a very thoughtful thing that you did. I am truly touched. I am so sorry for the confusion. It is something that my boss does. Has something to do with difficulties they have had with competitors. Not to worry," as she held his cheeks, kissed him gently and then seamlessly moved on to another subject which happened to be the weather. Later in the evening they returned to Lawrence's town flat.

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Her warm skin was pleasing against his body. They drifted gently in the tender after-glow of their turbulent lovemaking. It had never been this way with his wife. With this woman, it was excitement every moment. It was strange, he really did love his wife, but this excitement, this life, this adventure with Pilar, it was an adventure every time he was with her. As he floated in the cloudy afterglow, he realized that he could not live without her. Pilar had filled such a large empty void in his life, he could not imagine it without her.

She rose from the bed and walked toward the shower, her nude body moving smoothly across the room like a youthful girl, one third her age. He really enjoyed her uninhibited freedom in his presence, like a nymph from the warm waters of some tropical paradise. She

returned and wrapped her warmth around him. He was half awake and totally relaxed when she began to softly speak. At first he could not put the words together.

"I do not understand."

"I know dear, it must seem a surprise. I thought it was a bit abrupt, but it did happen to me once before, a long time ago. I guess it is just fate. I know you can adjust. I know I will have to. I am not happy about it either."

"A bit abrupt! What is the matter with those people? he shouted, now fully awake.

"I have influence. I will pay a visit to a few people," he ranted now getting fully wound up.

"Transfer you with such little notice? Who are these barbarians?"

Then there was a knock at the door.

"A telegram----for who---- yes, Ms Pilar Isabella. She signed for and quickly read the telegram. Her face changed. She looked worried.

"I must go! I must go now!" she stated almost frantically.

"Whaa....." sputtered Lawrence.

"I have to go now," a severe look upon her face.

"I ..... James is gone for the evening," he managed to say.

"I can get a hansom at the corner of the park."

Pilar dressed quickly and within minutes she was on the street rousing a sleepy eyed driver into action.

"This address please!"

"Aye madam," he responded, shaking the reins to awaken the horse. And then passenger and driver disappeared into the night.

Well, after all, Lawrence did have a wife at home and Pilar, she really seemed to work so much of the time.

### MORE ADVENTURE

The next morning at the factory, a telegram awaited from Lawrence's solicitor instructing him to come to his office "with all due haste."

Lawrence poured a cup of coffee. What was happening here? First his mistress has to leave in the early evening like a sudden unexpected whirlwind. Now he is instructed to report to his solicitor's office immediately This needs to settle down. I am certain it will, he thought.

Lawrence finished his coffee, put on his hat and coat, summoned his driver and proceeded to the office of J. J. Harrington II, his solicitor. Grimfaced as always, you would think that J.J. Harrington carried the weight of the world on his shoulders. Today he did.

"Sit down Lawrence, and try to get as comfortable as possible. I have distressing news."

"I would think so, with all the rush" repeated Lawrence innocently.

"I have been paid a visit," began J.J. "by not one but two parties concerning your ` new mistress."

"Virginia has nothing to worry herself about," Lawrence began, but J.J. cut him off.

"Virginia, that poor soul, is the least of your worries."

"A Mr. Sherlock Holmes, at the request of the British Government, has discovered some startling facts. Startling facts about your mistress, Ms Pilar Isabella. Most of it is confidential and we will never find out all the details, however, one striking fact stands out that was found in the Liverpool Medical Records.

"Yes, Liverpool, my old home town. I was born there.

"Without a doubt," J. J. droned on. "The official Medical Records in Liverpool conclusively reveal that Pilar Isabella, your mistress, is also unquestionably your birth mother."

Lawrence looked like one of his own engines had fallen upon him.

"Wha....."

"There is no question. She is your mother. This is but one of many things that Mr. Holmes has discovered, together with other branches of government concerning the activities of Pilar Isabella. It will do well for you to review any activities and conversations that you had with Ms Isabella."

"She is my birth mother???" Lawrence began to gasp.

"Breathe, breathe, Lawrence, here, take a drink of this whiskey.

"What, how,.... what else?"

"Take it easy. Get a grip. What I need to do is review each and every detail of what was said or done with that woman since the day, hour that you met her. We need to review all of your business matters. So then, let us get started."

And thus began a very long day. Lawrence's' mind kept locking-up, then denial, then fear, anger then back to disbelief. That night, the flashbacks set in. Deep into the night, his mind began to play tricks. This is bad.

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The reaction of the Minister of British Intelligence was the most eloquent.

"Do you mean the only time this fool decides to have an affair, he has it with his own mother? Who was also a secret agent for the Spanish Government?"

"Find that wench and throw her under the Tower of London!" he screamed.

"I want her head on a platter! If I could, I would hang her!"

"And what the bloody devil is the rest of this staff doing with this mess?"

"Minister, we have three staffs working 'round-the-clock," advised his aid.

### INQUIRY

It had been several weeks since I had seen Sherlock Holmes. He was gone when I began my day and if he did return to 221-B Baker Street, it was long after I had retired. Approximately a month later into his investigation, he came down for breakfast one morning and was in a garrulous mood.

"I have some interesting discoveries regarding our adultery case, Watson. Do you have any interest in discussing them now?"

"Yes, of course. I was beginning to think you had forgotten me."

"I shall also soon require your assistance."

"Thank you.

"Deep in the records, there are some interesting details.

Lawrence Thorndyke's father was a Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, his mother was from a wealthy aristocratic Spanish family. The newlyweds lived in Liverpool. Old confidential records show that Lawrence's father was killed at sea in an explosion, shortly after his parents were married.

Lawrence Thorndyke's mother was "taken away" at an early age as a result of a "nervous breakdown" is the explanation in England. She left the country. Old records yielded information that the "nervous breakdown" requiring a "Convalescent Center" on the southern coast of Spain, was actually an emergency transfer out of England before it was discovered that Lawrence's mother was a

Spanish Intelligence Agent tasked to steal the design of a new "machine" called a "Gyroscope", a 'Whirling' or 'spinning top' that was used as a level to locate the horizon in foggy or misty weather conditions. The 'Gyroscope 100'. In other words, a "navigation aid."

"As a result of many wars, expeditions, and expansive explorations, the Spanish Navy was in poor condition. With a citizenry disinterested and not wanting to spend money to keep up and maintain their fleet, the Spanish Government and its Navy were left to their own devices, including corruption and in the intelligence world, outright theft. This is when Lawrence's mother comes onto the scene. A summary of her file provides the following details."

"Pilar Maria Cortez Isabella holds the title of Director of Reconnaissance Unit 1, a Special Purpose Unit under GRUPO Especial de Operaciones (GEO) which operates under the Higher Police Force of Spain (secret police) Her specialty areas are listed as; Disguise, Deception and Actor.

Born into and a member of the powerful ruling class family of CORTEZ (Castilian Aristocracy), her family is one of traditional wealth and power. Pilar is a ragingly gorgeous and highly intelligent sociopath. She is known as 'a natural.' The best schools, the most talented tutors, she was a quick study and things 'came easily to her'. When tested, she was found to be highly intelligent, quickly learned four languages, has a photographic memory and is equally adaptable to martial arts. At 14 years of age, she was performing basic intelligence assignments. From puberty on, she quickly developed into a beautiful, intelligent young woman that had the talent to get men of all ages to do her bidding with little effort. I.e. Men will do anything for her and seemingly at any time. She is good at intelligence work, is a dedicated agent and most importantly; she likes it!"

"Her residence is Costa de Sol, and her hobbies are chess, martial arts, swimming and skiing. She is recommended for Fast-track advancement, No limit, and is considered a High-Value Asset of the Spanish Government."

## ENCOUNTER

"Watson, I am at a point in our investigation that I need your presence. Actually, I shall need you and your revolver."

"Then I take it that 'the game is afoot,' I smiled. I was eager to contribute something to this cluttered matter. After all, Mycroft had drawn both of us into this sordid state of affairs and I had done nothing but sit on the sidelines and take notes.

"It is the matter of this address."

Holmes and I visited the address provided; 320 Concord Lane. The house was empty and boarded up. Working from his notes, Holmes knocked on the door across the street.

"Pardon me, but I am trying to deliver a parcel to 320 Concord Lane. Could you advise me of the whereabouts of the people who live there?"

An old crippled man peeked through the door,

"I am 'Uncle George'. I pick up the mail 2 days each week and hold it until 'The Lady' picks it up from me or has me deliver the incoming mail to another address or she simply meets me.

"What does she look like?"

"I do not know."

"What do you mean, you said that you meet with her on occasion?"

"Yes, I do, but she is always dressed as a traditional Muslim woman."

"Do you mean in a Burka?"

"No, not the Afghan Burka, the Shia required Jilbab and Hijab, head to toe."

"Oh, I saw a woman whom she said she worked for late one evening, but it was only once when we made the Agreement."

"What was the Agreement?"

"I cannot say, that is part of the Agreement and this is all I can say. And now gentlemen, I have to go and take my medicine, high blood pressure you know."

Then the old man closed the door.

The ride back to 221-B Baker Street was punctuated with fragmented conversation and periods of silence.

"That is a bewildering way of handling mail in London in this day and time," I observed. Holmes merely nodded his head. I finally dozed off.

## INTERLUDE

I was in bed, sound asleep with no difficulty for a change. Sherlock Holmes had stayed up late reviewing his files and planning the order of work for the following day. There was a rustle at the windows that attracted his attention. He laid down the clay pipe, stretched to his full height, then walked over to the window and looked out briefly. When he turned back, there was an old and shabby elderly woman standing before him dressed in rough work clothing.

"Mr. Sherlock Holmes, a moment of your time, please," were the words spoken with perfect diction and an aristocratic tone and manner. Stunned, Holmes glared.

"Apparently, yes madam."

"A short message and then I must go."

"Yes, please continue," Holmes replied.

"Your leadership of country is tepid and drifting, your military is best described as 'Lions led by lambs', and your case is in the fireplace. Look there!" she ordered. Holmes looked toward the fireplace as she gestured. When he looked back, the aging hulk was gone. Holmes checked the fireplace, rolled up his sleeves and methodically sifted through every centimeter of soot and refuse.

"Nothing but ashes."

Half a day and a bottle of whisky later, Holmes looked at me.

"She shared her opinion of the Empire and deliberately showed me that she could come and go unfettered and at will."

"Identification?"

"She is almost as good as I at disguises. I still do not know what she looks like."

## SUMMARY

Inspectors Lestrade, Gregson and young Don Dobbs from Scotland Yard are gathered to be briefed on discovery conducted by Sherlock Holmes.

"Mycroft asked that I update Scotland Yard by way of summarizing this quandary," explained Sherlock Holmes. "221-B Baker Street is hardly an administrative office, but it does function well as an operational field office."

"It does seem that this would be a good time to review the 7th Commandment, Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery."

"Pilar Isabella is no doubt everything that her dossier says she is. We have found her to be a highly intelligent, well trained sociopath. Based upon the records we have managed to locate, she came to

England as a very young girl to study at Oxford and a nurse training program. While on our shores she met a young Royal Navy Officer, Sub-Lieutenant Martin Thorndyke. They fell in love and quickly married. Unfortunately, only a few days into the marriage, Lieutenant Thorndyke was killed in an accident at sea. Soon after, young Lawrence was born. His father dead and his mother deeply involved in her own career, Lawrence was handed over to an old Viking cousin known only as 'Uncle George' and his wife. From there things are a bit sketchy. The old couple raised Lawrence with love and care, but Pilar dropped off the map along with the design plans for the Gyroscope 100. The Spanish Government created the story and supporting files of the nervous breakdown. This was very early on. No one heard of Pilar Isabella for decades. Meanwhile the son, Lawrence Thorndyke grows up and into a very talented design engineer."

"Time passes. Wars are won and lost and then Pilar Isabella is back in England with yet another 'appropriations task'. This time the Spanish Treasury is a mess and the Government Departments including the Navy, are left to fend for themselves. And here we are.

Lawrence thinks he needs a mistress. Pilar Isabella needs access to successful internal combustion engine designs. The first visit here, she gives birth to him and steals the Design Plans for the Gyroscope 100, then disappears. Now, on her second visit decades later, she seduces him and steals the Design Plans for the THORN DELUXE Engine. She continues to elude our capture. This is where we are at the present time. At this point I am unsure what it is Mycroft wants. I suspect, the next few months will tell us. Thank you gentlemen and good day."

## AFTERMATH

Fellow lodge members stood in a circle sipping whiskey on the Rooftop Lounge of the Spencer Lodge. The lodge member that had witnessed the demise of Lawrence Thorndyke gave his version of the regrettable incident.

"The medical records they confronted him with were conclusive. He had a copy in his hand that he kept reading over and over. The woman with whom he was having an affair, was his own birth mother. To make matters worse, she is an Intelligence Agent for the Spanish Government."

"Poor devil, took it very hard. He went totally, completely insane; thrashing and running wildly, raving mad. Bungled over one of the tables, ranting like a mindless lunatic, he did not slow down, crashed over the ledge, limbs flaying and shrieking incoherently all the way down to the unforgiving stone roadway below. I will never forget that horrid sound. Dead on impact! He was gone. All that was left behind was a bible on the table where he had been sitting, open to the passage; THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY!"

Across town, an attractive, well-dressed mature woman stepped from the carriage as a porter managed her luggage. Minutes later, she was comfortably seated on the 5:30 PM train to Paris. A well dressed businessman searching for a place to sit, approached the open door of the compartment.

"Is that seat taken?" he asked innocently.

Three weeks later, a new Internal Combustion Engine, designed by 'Sol Engines, Ltd.' received patent approval from the Spanish Patent Office and was subsequently filed with every patent office in Europe including Great Britain, of course.



# THOU SHALT NOT STEAL

## The 8th of The Ten Commandment Mystery Series (Pastiche at its worst)

### PROLOGUE

The sunlight crashed through the window like an avenging angel. Night sweats from the war, that had roused me much earlier, were swept away by the all engulfing rays of the sun. The shaking dissolved, my hands steadied and suddenly I was hungry. The Army doctors had promised me that this would get better with time. It would certainly be nice if they were right. I was ready to get well, but apparently my body was slow to catch up with my wishes. Almost on queue, Mrs. Hudson came through the door with fresh coffee.

"Are you ready for breakfast, John?"

"Yes, please."

Hearing another human voice, especially that of a female, seemed to make things better. I could feel my body relax. Maybe it was the fact that daylight was here. With Sherlock Holmes out of the country, I looked forward to a more relaxed schedule and more time to write. Little did I know.

### MATTERS AT HAND

Relaxed and on my second cup of coffee, I was deep into the Times when Mrs. Hudson announced that there was a mother and her child to see Dr. Watson. Puzzled, I said to show them in.

The child, a young boy, looked upset. His mother was flustered, out of sorts and appeared to be desperate. Since they were already here, I asked them to be seated. Managing to get herself together, the mother stated in an excitable voice;

"I am Mrs. Rogers and this is my son, Henry. Please forgive me for imposing upon you at home, but something terrible has happened to Henry and my neighbor is familiar with your work with Mr. Holmes and thought you were the only one who could help me. She did not know the address of your Surgery, but knew this address. We need your help badly."

"Alright," I responded cautiously, not yet understanding why I was in demand on whatever this matter might be.

"My child, Henry, is considered Deaf and Dumb. One of the members of the British Deaf Association, Charles Masterson is helping him with sign language. I know this is very controversial at this time, but otherwise the boy is very smart. He has managed to tell me that his dog Bingo has been taken."

Following along the distressed conversation as it progressed, it seemed to be emerging that I was being consulted over a child's lost dog. Not exactly what BARTS had prepared me for, but yet here we are.

"Who is your neighbor?"

"Mrs. Milton Jamison III, widow of Sir Charles Jamison III, Second Sea Lord."

Some of Holmes' influential associations, no doubt. I wonder why she did not request Holmes himself.

"Mrs. Rogers, Sherlock Holmes is out of the country at the moment. I am sure that he will be glad to meet with you when he returns."

"I am not making myself clear Dr. Watson, it is you whose council I seek."

The blank look on my face must have prompted her to explain further.

"Doctor, the quandary of puzzling circumstances I find myself in, require a doctor familiar with severe stress cases and one experienced in criminal investigation. You satisfy both of these requirements. Please hear me out."

"The missing dogs of children are something in which I have little experience, Madam," I muttered doubtfully.

"There is more to it than that," she persisted.

"Then please make yourself comfortable and proceed."

"As I mentioned, my son Henry is considered Deaf and Dumb. His missing dog 'Bingo' is a purebred, expensive, award winning hunting dog with a pedigree going back to the family of Lord Nelson. Henry would not leave Bingo anywhere. When Henry came home last night, he looked like he had been in a fight. Something happened at his friend George's house, 523 Wilmont Road. As the mother of a deformed child, I see things differently, things that other people miss. I am convinced that there is much more that Henry was involved in. There is something he is trying to tell me, but unable to do so. It has him traumatized. He can read lips very well and at great distances. This has been so stressful that he has blurted out an entire short sentence vocally. That in itself has never happened before."

"Mrs. Rogers, other than being the boys pet, what is so special about this dog?" She gave me a motherly look and began.

"Doctor Watson, 'Bingo is a Harrier. A Harrier is similar to a Foxhound, but smaller. The breed was developed primarily to hunt hare. The nose of the dog is considered excellent in the field as it is wide with open nostrils. The medium sized ears are low, wide-set and rounded at the tips. The legs are long with round cat-like feet. The Harrier became popular in England due to their slower pace because hunters were better able to keep up with them while hunting on foot. They have superior stamina in the field. The reason Bingo is so expensive is that he is considered a classic specimen of what a Harrier should look like and how he should behave. He has perfect features and is registered in his class. There is an ancient legend from the 11th century in the valleys of Wales that 'only an Alborium can bring down a Harrier when in pursuit of a hare.' Of course that is just folklore, probably made up by hunters in the pub." Mrs. Rogers explained.

I reached for my bag and began taking Henry's vital signs. The boy now seemed tired. There were numerous scratches and surface marks that were beginning to turn blue, but no broken bones. He was physically fit, well fed and healthy. The Deaf and Dumbness were an entirely different matter. I would need more recent information.

"As you mentioned, Henry appears to have been engaged in some kind of physical scuffle and possible a concussion. Rest is the best treatment, however, wake him every two hours and have him walk around to be sure he has not gone into a coma or is acting strangely. No strenuous activity during the day and apply ice on bumps and bruises. Bring the boy to my surgery tomorrow at 2:00PM."

Tracking down Investigator Don Dobbs was not easy. As his investigative skills continually improved, his case load increased even faster, which made it more difficult to schedule time for information sharing.

"Where is Holmes?" he asked, zipping up a body bag as he prepared to move on to his next case.

"He is out of the country. Something about Russia is all I have been able to find out."

"Hmm," he muttered as he stretched deeply, trying to get the soreness out of his shoulders.

"I see you have spent most of the morning arched over bodies and evidence causing stiffness in your shoulders and an ache in your back."

"How true. Any recommendations Doctor?"

"Stretch more, stand up straight as much as you can, keep your legs directly under whenever possible and tell me what you know about a case last week on Wilmont Road involving a deaf child as a witness."

He stopped and looked at me for a long moment, then shrugged.

"Not all that much to tell," he replied cautiously. "There was a dwelling house burglary in which the family jewelry collection was taken and the mother of the child thinks the boy saw it all but we could not make much of that part of it. At the time I interviewed him, the child looked scared to death. I have yet to establish what the boy was doing there or how he happened to see what he saw, if anything. That is where the case is today, open without much to go on. What is your interest?" he asked, eyeing me carefully.

"The mother brought the child to me for treatment and I am trying to find out what traumatized him."

"Did the mother tell you that the burglars also took the coveted 'Remington Pearl Collection?'"

"What is that?"

"The Remington Pearl Collection' is a collection of pearls from every country, kingdom, colony, territory, commonwealth or protectorate that the United Kingdom has reigned over past or present. All of the pearls are of superior quality. It is arguably the premier pearl collection in England."

"Let me know if you find out anything, Dr. Watson. I must go."

And he was off to another crime scene, still trying to stretch the soreness out of his shoulders. Having extracted all that I could from Scotland Yard, I hailed a hansom.

"523 Wilmont Road, driver."

We had traveled only a block when I began to consider bringing the child back to the crime scene. This was, indeed, quickly becoming a challenging case. I must make full use of Sherlock Holmes' Deductive Reasoning. Once we arrived and I surveyed the crime scene, I realized that a re-enactment would be more helpful than simple questioning. On the return trip, I stopped at the Megatheriam Club to research what information was available about children and deaf and dumbness. More curious, what were the most recent studies and information concerning deaf and dumb children and their treatment.

### **SOCIAL FINDINGS**

The deaf and dumb are suffering greatly in Victorian England. It is a sad state of affairs. A few have prospered, but most fight for survival and simple respect. The root of the problem seems to be communications, that is if you can find anyone who will pay attention. Ambivalence seems to be the order of the day. This is supported by fear, discomfort and pity. As a matter of fact, several religious advice pamphlets advise that we ought to pity them. Deaf-mutes cannot be regarded as rational beings is one viewpoint. Another view is that

raising the deaf and dumb above the animal state is difficult as they have been condemned by divine judgment.

The unfortunate judgment of these people is due to the fact they are disabled intellectually because they have no means of communication with other people. However, there are exceptions. Sign Language is in infancy as is Lip-Reading. These two methods of communication are successful to a degree. There is, however, the printed word. You can be deaf and dumb and still read. Therefore, there is great promise in this area. The problem is in many schools, children who cannot speak or hear are excluded and some schools refuse to hire Deaf and Dumb teachers. That is because neither teacher nor student could function "under ordinary circumstances," generally meaning, lack of oral skills.

There are, however, London Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb founded in 1792 and the Victorian College for the Deaf (VCD), located in Australia and is Victoria's oldest deaf school, opened in 1860.

There is much misunderstanding on the subject of the Deaf, Dumb and Mute.

The underlying principle of Lip-Reading is simple. When any person pronounces a word accurately, every person makes exactly the same movements with their lips as every other person. So, even if they make no sound, you can closely watch the movements of their lips and understand what they are saying.

Muteness is a speech disorder in which a person lacks the ability to speak or is not willing to speak. Patients who are mute may have problems with the parts of the body necessary for speaking which include the mouth, tongue, throat, vocal cords and lungs. A mute person can hear but cannot talk.

The Sign Language used by the deaf communities in Britain is considered a simple collection of gestures and pantomime. Deaf people in Britain were Signing as early as in the 1600's. It is a language that is completely unrelated to the English spoken language. There is no universal Sign Language. Most countries have their own Sign Language so they are all different. There are even differences across the generations. British deaf people who want to write something will do so in English.

With no marked changes in the world of Deaf and Dumb, I elected to retire to 221-B Baker Street and began again on the morrow.

### **EXAMINATION & TREATMENT**

As requested, Mrs. Rogers and her son Henry, arrived as scheduled.

"Mrs. Rogers, this will be uncomfortable for both of us and I pray that you understand that all I do in any fashion will be done in the best interests and benefit of my patient, your son young Henry."

"I fully understand the circumstances we are in. I know your reputation and have full confidence in you. Let us get started." she responded.

"I plan, at some point to return him to the crime scene and as much as possible, have him take us through his unfortunate experience step by step. This will be difficult for you and I and traumatic for him. He will have to re-live the event."

"It is probably the only way we can really find out what happened, and I am prepared for the risk as well as the uncertain results. It cannot be worse than what he is going through now." she replied, obviously resigned that almost any risk must be taken.

"Most of the time I will ask you to be present. If something arises that would help if you were not present, I will alert you." She nodded her head in agreement.

I began the examination of young Henry Rogers. As I anticipated, his physical health was generally good, with the exception of the hearing, muteness and a general raspiness in his difficult speech. The mental examination was a slow process.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF: (Including Notes)

Henry Rogers, a 12 year old Caucasian Male.

Physical Examination

Normal: Height & Weight, Blood Pressure & Pulse Rate

Vision: Excellent

Heart, Lungs & Spine: Good

Eating Habits: Normal for healthy 12 year old male

Physical Hygiene, Good

Sleeping Habits: No abnormalities stated or detected

Teeth: Good

Physical Activity: Normal for 12 year old male

No presenting diseases

Growth & Development

Signs of puberty present; testicle enlargement, penile lengthening, early stages of pubic hair. Signs of oily skin.

Hearing

Impaired. Patient born to hearing parents. Born hearing limitations - undetermined.

No apparent Central Hearing loss.

Peripheral Hearing loss -- transmission of sound through the external or middle ear is partially blocked.

Likely caused by middle ear infection. Both ears.

This is a common birth defect caused by complications during childbirth

Muteness

Impaired. Patient has difficulty with use of mouth, tongue, throat and weak vocal cords.

NOTE: The danger of the heavy blow suffered during the burglary and theft that patient witnessed as a victim of, may have caused some Sensorineural hearing loss that involves the transmission of sound from hair cells deep in the ear to the nerve that sends sound information to the brain. Mute person can hear but cannot talk.

Mental & Emotional Examination

At age 12, does not normally connect actions with future consequences.

The patient seems to have begun developing early in this area.

As normal, he is eager for acceptance by peers and has a desire for independence

Has beginnings of concern about personal appearance

Impact of burglary and theft of his dog has had a marked effect upon his emotional condition and development. Result and outcome yet to be determined.

Intelligence - Limited intelligence examination results: High for age and impaired condition

The patient has remarkably overcome most side-effects of limited deafness and muteness

Damp conditions are partial impairment. The patient can talk in limited raspy voice. This is under constant development and improvement.

Speaking skills are presently being stressed severely. Number of words uttered are expanding and number of speaking engagements are increasing. Voice ragged and raspy.

Long-term impact of victimization in the burglary and loss of the dog is yet to be determined.

His physical and mental condition were all entangled with the traumatic event he had experienced. Patience and concern were most important in the present doctor-patient relationship. On a positive note, the boy had things he wanted to tell us and was determined to do so. This came forth in fragments, bits and pieces, but even with the haphazard tumbling out of information, a message began to take form. His mother had been correct. This was much like the combat soldiers that I had attempted to treat while in the hospital and then in my subsequent practice.

"Henry, as best you are able, please tell me what happened on the evening Bingo was taken from you. Take your time and if you get tired, let me know. If you want to stop, let me know. We will proceed

slowly, only when and at the speed that you are comfortable." I explained.

"laaaaa wnt t tll yu wha hapnnd," was the strained raspy reply, as he struggled to speak.

"That is very good Henry, I have some warm water here for you to drink that might settle and help your throat," I smiled, encouraged by his sheer will power.

And so it went, fragmented and staggered for days.

The examination covered a period of three days, with Henry enduring crying spells, sympathy, comfort, pity, anger, rage, the presence of a consoling mother and a concerned doctor trying desperately to keep all of this in balance. Two trips back to the crime-scene and agonizing re-enactment sessions helped Henry get most of the details of his story out. He was mad, he was sad, and he was still having crying spells. I managed to glean the following information and place it in a generally sequential form.

Henry Rogers, with impaired speaking and hearing that he has, scored high on intelligence tests, has superior eyesight and can lip-read at long distances.

They stole his dog. That is the gravamen of his present frustration. They stole his dog right in front of him, drugged the dog, personally attacked him, knocked him down with a hard blow and he personally participated in all of it. It is logical that Henry is in a state of shock.

The traumatic events appeared to occur as described below in narrative form.

A twelve-year old boy, Henry and his dog Bingo were on their way home. Henry on his bicycle and Bingo trotting along beside him. As they passed 523 Wilmont Road, home of his friend George, they noticed a single light. Georges father, Commander Remington in the Royal Navy, owned a substantial collection of jewelry. As jewelry was a passion of George's mother, Colleen Remington, the family also owned the coveted 'Remington Pearl Collection'. Henry knew that George and his family were on vacation at

Southend-on-Sea. As was their custom, Colleen had taken the butler and housekeeper with them and locked up the dwelling house. Henry likes George because he does not tease him about his hearing and speaking limitations as he had been around several of his father's fellow-officers who have injuries suffered while serving onboard the ships-of-the-line.

The single light they saw was shining through one of the front windows.

Henry and Bingo decided to investigate the unexpected single light. Henry parked his bicycle against the low wall and they proceeded to the gate only to discover it was damaged and open. They slipped in and staying behind the low hedge row, crept up close enough to see two men dressed in rough clothing in what appeared to be a heated discussion. Crouching behind the hedge, they had a clear view into the house and the two men through the open window. There was a large pile of jewelry on the table before them. One of the men, the shorter of the two, had his back to the window. Henry could only see the back of his head and shoulders and his black and gray cap. He had big protruding ears. The other man, the taller one, was facing directly toward the open window and Henry had a good unobstructed view of the tall man and his features. This person appeared to be the leader, giving instructions and making plans.

Using his lip-reading skills, Henry easily lip-read; 'Remember, we meet at Charing Cross Station on May 27th at 12:00 o'clock noon. We take the 12:30PM Train to Liverpool. Bring the other things, I will

have the Pearl Collection with me. When we get to Liverpool, we will arrange for a shipping berth to Stockholm.'

Perhaps sensing something, the tall man stared intently through the window toward Henry and Bingo. One of the men did something or made some movement and Bingo went after him. Bingo froze on the leg of the nearest man, but the other recovered quickly.

"What have we here?"

"I do not care what you have, get this thing off my leg!" the other screamed.

"I recognize this breed of dog. This is a very expensive hunting dog. Dog people will pay a lot of money for him. This is a real windfall."

"Get him off me, I do not care what he is worth!"

Quickly the taller man opened his bag and pulled out some kind of rag. He shoved the rag onto the dog's nose and mouth and Bingo just went to sleep.

"What took you so long?" the short one complained at his unsympathetic friend.

"Shake it off quickly, we must go. I will carry the dog and the pearl collection, you grab the rest. We need to go now."

Henry saw what happened to Bingo and instinctively went after his dog. The burglars were surprised.

"What is this?" the tall one uttered.

"Get out of the way kid, or I will slit your throat!" the tall one shouted at Henry as he slapped him hard. The blow did severe damage as it threw Henry into shock with his head spinning and so disoriented he fell several times before finally trying to get up.

"We go now, right now!" instructed the tall one.

"What about the kid?"

"He is deaf and disabled, can you not tell? As they all watched Henry, trying to stand, falling, disorientated, staggering and falling into furniture and floor.

"He will remember only shock, and besides, even at that he cannot tell anybody anything. He is deaf and dumb." And with that, the men ran.

I was very impressed by the detailed description he gave of the leader of the two men whose face, he had stared directly into while Lip-Reading the plans of the thieves. Everything, every detail, including the beating, the theft, the harm to Bingo, all of it was burned into his memory bank and he could not wait to identify the thugs before and in the presence of the Scotland Yard Investigators. His mind was clearly made up. Nothing would satisfy him but the men be caught and arrested and he fully intended to be there when it happened. He wanted his dog back!

His feelings were so strong that on the second day of examination, he brought a Bible and showed me the passage in both Exodus and Deuteronomy; THOU SHALT NOT STEAL!

I am sure we will add more to this summary continually, I noted to myself. I felt the boy had made considerable progress. And, I clearly understood his firm and deliberate message: STEAL MY DOG AND I WILL COME AFTER YOU!

I felt it was time for more investigation and research. As I sipped whisky later in the day, I made plans for tomorrow.

"Mrs. Hudson, should anyone call for me, I shall be away most of the day."

'Of course I will John.' She smiled as I began a day of research beginning at the much-returned-to-crime scene and reminding myself, Sherlock Holmes would have done all of this on the first occasion.

Yet again, another walk-through of 523 Wilmont Road provided me with a good visual idea of where boy and dog were located when this debacle occurred. A brief and diligent search yielded the tracks of the near-by-waiting carriage that whisk the criminals into the murky sink-hole of London's lower world. Satisfied that this should suffice for now, I summoned a hansom and proceeded to the Megatherium Club. I needed to know more about pearls. The Megatherium Club is a treasure-trove of information if a person knows how to use it. Sufficient research revealed the following about pearls.

There is no official quality grading system for pearls, however, there are several ways to distinguish real from fake. Real pearls are like your hand print, each is unique with distinctive markings. Real pearls have flaws. They are heavy and are cold to the touch of human hands. The overtone color that floats on the surface of a pearl should have several different overtones in a string as each pearl is special in itself.

An old and popular test is to rub the pearls gently against your front teeth, the real pearls will be gritty or sandy.

One of the ways to determine the quality of pearls is by the luster which is the amount of light a pearl reflects from the surface glow and from the inner light. This should be a deep reflection. The better the iridescent internal layer of a mollusk shell, the better the luster. Another way to help determine the quality is the slight blemishes and minor marks that are present on the surface of a natural pearl. These imperfections are bits that creep into a live oyster and move against the pearl as it grows. Higher quality pearls have fewer flaws. Perfectly round pearls are the rarest and most valuable. Colors range from cream, black, green, blue, pink and gray. An evenly distributed rich color is most important, regardless of choice of color.

Size and color are two different things as the larger size of a good quality pearl commands a higher market price. Pearls are measured in millimeters. Types of pearls are generally categorized by where they come from. The well known locations around the world are the Conch Pearls from the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, the Freshwater Cultured Pearls from the lakes and rivers of China, the South Sea Golden Cultured Pearls, the Black South Sea Cultured Pearls from the waters off Tahiti and Okinawa and the Akoya Cultured Pearls produced by Japan's Akoya oysters.

These different kinds, colors, sizes and qualities are dependent upon the type of oyster that produced them.

I should now better understand how all of this makes 'The Remington Pearl Collection' a superior quality collection and arguably the premier pearl collection in England.

May 27th was right around the corner and I must be ready. More importantly, I must have Henry ready as so much of this encounter depended solely upon him.

Part of the treatment of this patient was going to be very unique. A twelve-year old boy was going to help us catch the criminals. As discussed earlier, Henry made himself very clear on this matter.

## CLOSING THE CASE

"Take a child, a deaf and dumb child on a Scotland Yard apprehension and arrest? Are you insane?" roared Inspector Dobbs.

"No matter how ridiculous it appears, you need someone to identify the suspects in order to capture them, recover the dog, the stolen jewelry and 'The Remington Collection.' Remember, at 12:30PM, May 27th, someone will board that train to Liverpool. This is not only your best or your worst option, Inspector. It is your only

chance to recover one of the better collections in the United Kingdom known as 'The Remington Pearl Collection'," I stated firmly.

Inspector Dobbs stared silently at me for a very long time. Sensing that I should say more, I made a medical treatment appeal.

"Inspector, preposterous as it sounds, this experience is part of his rehabilitation, somewhat like a soldier returning to a battlefield location after the war. The boy is very angry and rightfully so. This is his revenge. The capture of the wrongdoers by the famous Scotland Yard, with him leading the attack. From a safe position, of course."

"Well, I do need him for identification," Dobbs considered reluctantly.

"I will have him ready," I stated firmly, hoping I would really be able to do so.

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We arrived at Scotland Yard headquarters at the designated time. I could not tell the frame of mind my patient was in. He was of course silent, almost meditating. We were placed in a carriage, myself, Henry, his mother, and a large Constable. And then we were off to Charing Cross Station and whatever fate lay in wait for us there. Inspector Don Dobbs was in charge. He had assembled plenty of manpower.

A large Constable was assigned to Mrs. Rogers and Henry. Every step she took that day and at the Ticket and Boarding Platform, there was a Constable on each side with me in the background.

So involved I was with this young man, my feelings harked back to Afghanistan, which I immediately tried to put from my mind. I had more important things to concern myself with than flashbacks. The performance of this young man, my patient, would be a hallmark day in all of our lives. And then from that point on, Scotland Yard took charge and we simply followed instructions as they were given.

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I was stunned by the clarity of his voice. It was almost like a different person. Strong, mature, experienced. Henry calmly looked over the many people on the Boarding Platform and selected with adult precision, the two men who had stolen his dog and assaulted and battered him.

The strength of his voice amazed me. He looked right at the tall one that he had viewed for so long. A tall man, well built with an aristocratic features, Roman nose, blue eyes and black hair about six feet tall. Athletic with a pencil thin moustache, long sideburns and no beard.

A slight dimple in his right cheek was noticeable when he smiled, which was seldom. Black Ulster with a red and gray scarf and bowler worn cocked slightly to the right side. It matched perfectly, the description that he had given Inspector Don Dobbs earlier in the week.

There was never any doubt in the boy's mind or in his actions. The short thief with big protruding ears and black and gray cap whose lips, he could not see or read, was less detailed, but Henry had described earlier how he tilted his head to the right, like he had been injured sometime in the past and how he habitually leaned forward as his natural stance. He described the back of his head

perfectly. I could hardly believe how calm this young man was, under pressure.

With the criminals positively identified by young Henry, and Bingo sensing that we were near, the hostile action exploded in earnest.

Two of the Constables immediately secured the larger luggage containing most of the treasure. Other Constables charged the thieves with force.

We had help. Bingo heard us coming, got excited and broke out of the travel cage and went after the two thieves before Scotland Yard Constables could get to the culprits. He stirred up a fight that German Wolfhounds would have been proud of. Causing enormous confusion, Bingo almost tore the leg off one of the thugs and Henry, in his eagerness to rescue his dog, physically knocked the shorter thief to the ground and swung something he pulled from under his shirt knocking the shorter thief out cold.

Trying to escape with at least some of the booty, the tall one fell over Bingo and never fully recovered. The Constables and Detectives had no trouble overcoming the resistance of the two men and readily placing them in handcuffs. I was beginning to wonder why we brought Scotland Yard at all. But that is just me humorously speculating.

Mother, dog and son were whisked from the location as quickly as possible by the large Constable. Smiling, Henry with his family intact, told me in a raspy, difficult to hear voice, that he would see me next week for continued treatment.

A private carriage delivered them safely home. As was the custom of Sherlock Holmes, I left the details and press reports to Inspector Dobbs. I summoned a hansom to 221-B Baker Street.

As I relaxed and wound-down from the excitement on the ride home, I could not help but remember the Bible quotation presented to me by Henry during one of our original treatment sessions. THOU SHALT NOT STEAL! As I drifted off for a short nap, I also recalled; STEAL MY DOG AND I WILL COME AFTER YOU!

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Later, at Scotland Yard headquarters, it was revealed that the thieves were also carrying the stolen Relief of Vladimir II Monomakh, property of the Russian government.

This was a missing Russian museum piece, searched for all over Europe, worth millions and missing for years.

The next morning when I came in for coffee Mrs. Hudson had just prepared, Sherlock Holmes was present, having finally returned from Russia.

"I understand you have been busy in my absence," he observed nonchalantly."

"Just a bit," I responded with a slight grin.

"I do believe Watson, that you are beginning to understand my methods."

I laughed and when I looked his way, amazingly there was a whisper of a smile on that long and haunted face.

Footnote: The condition, treatment and attitude toward the Deaf and Dumb in the U.K. has improved dramatically over the years.



# THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS

The 9th of The Ten Commandment Mystery Series (Pastiche at its worst)

## PROLOGUE

She winked. I know she winked. I have been winked at before. Besides, I was looking directly at her. She was staring right into my eyes. From all the way across the room, she was looking straight at me. And then she winked at me. I am Dr. John Watson. I know when I have been winked at by a woman. Granted, not many as attractive as this one, but... and then she rose from her seat, a striking woman in appearance, stood briefly and then elegantly, she was walking toward me, carefully weaving in and out of the chairs and tables of the lounge section of the Criterion Bar. As she came close, her expectant smile faded, then a concerned look, then her eyes began to roll back into her head as she fainted, falling into my now outstretched arms. What a way to meet a lady, I thought later.

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"You make a lasting impression on women, do you not Dr. Watson?" observed Inspector Gregson. We were in the waiting room at Charing Cross Hospital. I had managed to get the woman into a taxi and a fast trip to Emergency Reception had likely saved her life.

"Since you stayed with her and brought her in, what was the cause of her sudden illness?"

Before I could answer, a hospital surgeon appeared.

"Doctor Watson, our patient has expired. She never regained consciousness and died on the examining table. Our limited diagnostics indicate the patient had many of the elements of some form of slow acting poison. We will know more when laboratory tests and cultures are completed and reviewed. I am sorry."

And with that, my promising encounter with a very attractive young woman ended.

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The following morning, Holmes was already on his second cup of coffee when I arrived for breakfast.

"Gregson tells me you met a new woman."

"Then you know it was a brief affair."

"That is not like you, Watson."

"Then you will understand when I ask you to help me find out why this woman, whose name I do not know, began to die in my arms." Holmes smiled.

"Her name is Linda Morrison. According to papers in her traveling bag she had with her, she was a Nurse, presently employed at Foundling Hospital."

"How do you know that? I do not know that." I asked. Holmes again smiled.

"Gregson is a better Investigator than I sometimes give him credit for. Linda Morrison had checked her coat and traveling bag upon entering the Criterion Bar and Restaurant. Personal papers yielded her identification and other pertinent information."

"This does not sound exciting enough for you to even take her name, Holmes. Something has pricked your curious nature," I ventured. The partial smile disappeared and the somber expression returned to his long face.

"There was a poison-pen letter in her bag and there is reason to believe this is not the only one."

"A poison-pen letter, what on earth about?"

And then I realized this is what had snared the curious mind of Sherlock Holmes. Perhaps enhanced by something Gregson had said. Holmes was focused on his recall of the letter he and Gregson had briefly discussed earlier. He rolled this information over and over in his mind.

## INQUIRY

Standing in the evidence room at Scotland Yard the following day, Holmes carefully examined the letter addressed to Nurse, Linda Morrison. He held the letter almost reverently, like a delicate, antiquated heirloom, as though it was to be cherished.

"You are correct, Watson. It is to be cherished," he said quietly reading my mind.

"It will yield evidence to help prosecute this misguided soul."

"What is that smell? That smell, I cannot place it."

"I do not sme..."

"This is a special writing paper, commonly used only in the meat processing industry," Holmes declared cutting me off in mid-sentence.

"It is the smell of pork and this is 3rd grade billing paper used for billing orders in the meat markets. The writer of this letter has easy access to the meat-processing industry. Quite likely works or has worked in the industry."

## 'The Letter'

I am watching you. You shall be punished. You, Linda Morrison are evil. May the snakes of Hell wrap themselves around your every limb, poke your eyes, and slowly squeeze, ever so slowly squeeze, until every life force is methodically wrung from your sordid body and wicked soul. I am watching you. I know what you are doing.

You shall be punished.

The Angel

We picked up a copy of the Medical Examiner's Report, which gave the cause of death as 'POISON: Arsenic, probably slow acting'.

"Assuming the Examiner is correct, it may be difficult to pin-point exactly when or by whom the deadly solution was administered to our victim," I muttered.

"The question we should focus upon is, who is Linda Morrison and why is this 'Angel' writing her this poisonous letter? Answers to those questions will better assist us in finding the culprit responsible for her death," stated Holmes.

The journey back to 221 B Baker Street consisted of a detailed discussion of what form of poison could have caused the extended death of my short-lived female acquaintance.

We were still wrangling over the various mixtures of arsenic and their delayed effect on the human body when we reached the top of the stairs to our rooms. There before us was a young woman visiting with Mrs. Hudson.

"Here they are now, I am glad you decided to wait," said Mrs. Hudson to the young woman. Holmes studied the two of them for a brief moment.

"I am glad you have made friends with a nurse, Mrs. Hudson. You never know when you will need one. I am Sherlock Holmes, madam."

"I had guessed," replied the woman with a slight smile.

"I am Rachel Rogers. And you must be Dr. Watson," she stated fixing her gaze on me.

"Let us move out of this hallway," suggested Mrs. Hudson.

As I opened the door into our sitting room, I noticed that Sherlock Holmes was doing a complete appraisal of our unexpected guest. She squirmed under Holme's intense scrutiny, like she was being measured for slaughter. Finally, he spoke.

"You work as a nurse, You have been a nurse for approximately not more than one and one-half years. You work in an asylum. You do not like it there and are actively seeking employment elsewhere, but are constrained by lack of University Training. You will continue your search."

"How did..." her voice drifted off in amazement.

"Elementary, madam. Please sit down and make yourself comfortable."

"The conditions of your relative new shoes and skirts reflect heavy use under harsh conditions," continued Holmes.

"Your carriage reflects a certain unsophisticated display of strength and expectation of those around you. The harsh conditions reflect that of an asylum rather than at home or hospital service that cause most Asylum nurses to leave their position within a year, but you are still there, building your experience and skills on the job while continuing to search for a better position."

"Now, the real question is why you are here?"

"Why are you here, Ms Rogers?"

The woman shifted uncomfortably as she collected her thoughts and prepared to speak while I began to ponder the sudden encounters with nurses had crossed my path in recent days.

"My friend, Nurse Linda Morrison has not come home, nor reported for work in two days. This is highly unusual for her. There are five of us who have taken a flat together to save money on living quarters. We all worked together at Spriggins Infirmary and Asylum. Three months ago Linda found a position at Foundling Hospital, a much more desirable position than we have at Spriggins. There is considerable turmoil at Spriggins and all of us plan to move on when better positions make themselves available to us.

"But back to Linda, I am worried. It is not like her to just not come home or report to work. She and I are very close. She mentioned she planned to try to contact a Dr. Watson, whom she knew through someone at Charing and he was doing some work with a private detective named Holmes. I spoke briefly with a detective Lestrade at Scotland Yard who hurriedly gave me this address."

Holmes looked at me with a disquieting expression and I recognized he preferred I speak up.

"Ms. Rogers, I have some bad news. Linda Morrison has passed away. Unsettling to me, she practically died in my arms. I managed to get her to Charing Emergency, but sadly, there was nothing they could do. I am sorry."

## MEDICAL CARE IN LONDON

Medical care in the Victorian Era was a grizzly matter. Hospitals more often were viewed as 'gateways of death' with over crowding, surgery performed without anesthesia and a high risk of contacting a fatal disease, virus or infection. Wealthy citizens called a doctor and were treated in the privacy of their own home. Poor citizens lived in a

different world. The Charitable Hospitals and Workhouse Infirmaries were run by charitable organizations or the local authorities for the benefit of the poor. Voluntary Hospitals did not pay their doctors. Specialist, Cottage Hospitals, Poor Law Infirmaries, Hospitals for Infectious Diseases and Asylums for Mentally Ill were founded for particular purposes. Cottage Hospitals serviced rural areas. Specialist and Cottage Hospital patients were accepted on a basis determined by a doctor who many times had an interest in a particular medical issue. This helped develop further inroads into medical research and the value thereof.

The 1834 Poor Law stated all that wanted public relief must enter a Workhouse. Poor Law Infirmaries are hospitals within Workhouses. Doctors were paid, but only visited one or two times per week, leaving Nurses to do the work of daily care. This is where the incurably ill, poor and the aged found themselves. The Hospitals for Infectious Diseases did not charge the patients, but kept them in isolation away from the public. Asylums were paid for by public funds provided in the County Asylums Act of 1808 and made mandatory in 1845 legislation. In order to prevent abuse, Lunacy Commissioners were appointed and they made regular inspections across the county. The image of the Asylum Nurse was poor. Asylum Nurses were viewed as those with limited or no training. Unpleasant work, long hours and strict discipline resulted in half of the nurses leaving within the first year. Some of the Asylum Nurses with limited training found opportunities in asylum work and made careers that fit their skills. Nurses working at Founding Hospital in London wore distinctive uniforms consisting of a soft crinoline skirt with a full apron. Pinafores, still collars, puffy sleeves, and removable cuffs describe the required uniform.

Wet Nurses were used often. The Times regularly carried advertisements for their services. When a woman resided in a Workhouse and gave birth, the parish officers recommended her for a position as 'wet nurse', in hopes someone would hire her, as this was the usual way of providing for unfortunate women who found themselves in these conditions. Unfortunately, nursing had a reputation of being associated with alcoholism and prostitution. Some nurses indulged themselves with the patients, some did not.

As there was no electricity, it was necessary for nurses to carry a lamp when it was dark. Tripping over a multitude of objects in bad lighting was a constant distraction. Florence Nightingale, 'The Lady with the Lamp' and her services in the Crimean War gave nursing a more favourable reputation. Lock Hospitals, were created for the treatment of syphilis. Lazar Houses were named after Lazarus the patron saint of lepers and as leprosy declined the hospital provided maternity and gynecology services. Lock Asylums were created for the reformation and instruction for wayward or 'fallen' women.

The term 'lock' refers to the "locks", or rags, which covered a lepers' lesions. The 1875 Public Health Act comprehensively encompassed housing, sewage and drainage, water supply and contagious diseases and provided Britain with the most extensive public health system in the world

Spriggins Infirmary and Asylum was located on the edge of Southend-On-Sea. Founded by John Spriggins in 1865 at the end of the U.S. Civil War, it had been modestly profitable as there was no shortage of infirm and mental patients. While catering to both categories, the Mental Patients section was by far the largest section needing the most manpower and gobbled up most of the annual budget. There were numerous lunatics in the London area. John Spriggins' son Adolph, was big, muscular and employed as an Orderly at "Spriggins", as it was known in the trade. During that time

he managed to gain the reputation among the female employees as a 'Pig'. Adolph made romantic overtones toward the female employees to the point he was openly criticized for harassment. All of the female employees, especially the Nurses were openly critical of his abusive behavior. Several of the nurses had personally witnessed him abusing the patients and several times physically beaten him off of intimidated patients. All of the occurrences of abuse of patients and most of the personal abuse and harassment of the Nurses had been duly reported in a timely manner. Each time, a Hearing was scheduled and each time Adolph tries to blame the Nurses, they are the guilty parties, but he is found 'Guilty of Misconduct' every time. Most of the time he was placed on temporary suspension for anywhere from 1 to 4 weeks time, at which time he worked at the 'Big Pigs Processing, Ltd' hence the nickname 'Pig', for more than one reason. He tenuously held the position only because of his father. Adolph was 'On Report' or 'On Suspension' almost every month throughout the year.

Mary Ann took up more space than he thought she would. It was really difficult to hold her in a sitting position while he closed the door. Her head was heavier and harder to handle when she was totally unconscious. She just kept sliding around. He managed to hold her body with one knee and push with her upper body and finally get the closet door closed and locked. Lord, the price you pay to have someone in your life. Well, it was better than being alone. He sat down for a moment to catch his breath. A rag, a bone, a hank of hair; that is what some men thought of women, but Adolph saw them differently. Adolph Spriggins knew how to treat women. They liked strong men, no matter what they said. You had to be strong. Take charge. They all wanted you to take charge at all costs. They would become accustomed to his manliness. They just needed time to adjust, that's all. Mary Ann would do fine. She just needed time. She would be awake when he returned from work and they would start again. Just the two of them. The others had managed to leave too soon. Shame, it really was a shame, thought Adolph as he dozed off in his small apartment, just around the corner from 'Spriggins Infirmary and Asylum'.

## THE INCIDENT

Rough hands grabbed her when she was not looking. Emma Fay was lost in her childlike dreams of an imaginary perfect childhood of pink frilly dresses and lots of candy when she played dress-up all day long. The coarse grasp of her youthful body was alien to her and her instinctive reaction was to shout and throw off the intruder but to no avail. He persisted, groping and clawing her body. She fought, then fought more trying to repel him, screaming at the top of her lungs all the while trying to fight him off. Her shrill voice penetrated the entire floor of the asylum. There was a sharp blow. It hurt badly. She could not move, then another blow, she almost passed out from the pain, but still managed to shriek once more. Then everything went black. She faintly heard voices.

"Give me that bat, you animal!"

Emma Fay heard a sound like a heavy object hitting a sack of wet laundry. Then another thud.

"Stop, I will not do it anymore!"

"I know you will not," responded a harsh female voice, the like of which she had never heard before. There were more sounds of the heavy thudding sound like a heavy object hitting that sack of wet laundry, again and again. There were more male screams and pleading for the pounding to stop.

"I will not do it again. Please stop." More thudding sounds.

"That is enough nurse, you will kill him." A strong male voice, then a sigh.

"This never happened. Go back to your station, I will take it from here."

Emma Fay recognized her friend, Jami. She knew everything would be alright. She heard another voice in the background and recognized Head Nurse Louise McKinney.

"See to Emma Fay, Jami is protecting her. Get Linda back to the Nurses' Station."

What happened?"

"Not sure, but it appears Linda found Adolph molesting and beating Emma Fay, ripped the bat out of his hands and was in the process of beating Adolph senseless when Jami separated them. Adolph does not look so good."

"Let us get this mess cleaned up."

"One more thing. Write up the report of the attempted rape by Adolph. Leave everything else out."

The floor lapsed into complete silence with everyone back in their rooms.

"How did Jami get out of his room?"

"Not sure, he had special training with the Royal Marines. He is no problem most of the time, but when the headaches hit him, he becomes very violent. He is a time bomb."

This was the unofficial narrative Holmes and I listened to as provided in a surreptitious interview with Nurse Louise McKinney. She agreed to talk to Sherlock Holmes anonymously. He stood and smiled.

"Thank you for the information."

"Thank you, Mr. Holmes. As you have noticed, my circumstances in the last few years have improved considerably." Holmes merely smiled and continued toward the street.

"How did you get this nurse to give you this kind of information?" I asked on the way out. "Evidently you knew this person sometime in the past."

Holmes barely answered, mumbling something about a long-ago indiscretion.

"Watson, something about this story does not seem quite right."

"Do you mean she gave the information a little too freely?"

"Perhaps hoping we would seek no further inquiry." He said as an afterthought.

I dozed in the cab on the trip back to 221-B Baker Street as Holmes carefully considered everything we had just learned.

"Good morning, Doctor." Holmes greeted as I sat down for breakfast the next day. I could tell he was in a talkative mood for a change.

"As this case appears to center around nurses and nursing facilities, would you be available to take an active part in dealing with the nurses and hospital facilities?"

"Of course, I know a person at Foundling that is familiar with the various asylum facilities around the London area. There are some interesting rumors in this corner of our society," I replied.

We arrived at the flat occupied by the five nurses Rachel Rogers provided and Holmes knocked on the door.

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Sarah Smith was suspicious as to who we were and what we wanted until Holmes convinced her it was the poison-pen letters we were investigating.

"We all received the letters. We could only speculate, but since none of us had troublesome male friends, we knew it was not from

something in our personal lives, not we have time for personal lives, as the only place we go is work and church. It had to come from something at work. We suspected there might be repercussions from the incident where Linda took the bat away from Adolph. We all knew about that. But he did not seem bright enough to write a letter and if he did, he would likely reveal himself. Adolph was constantly pressuring us for romantic favors, his version of romantic. Frankly, I think he is an animal. Sometime ago, a nurse who does not work here anymore managed to get a few minutes with John Spriggins and told him all about Adolph. The old man broke down and cried. He did not know what to do with his son. No one else would hire him except BIG PIGS PROCESSING and that was only because John had taken care of their aunt up until she died. BIG PIGS is temporarily letting him work on a day-to-day basis. Hence the nickname; 'PIG!'

"You should ask Head Nurse McKinney. She keeps an unusually close eye on Adolph in all of his shameful activities. Nurse McKinney seemed to know everything. I met a two orderlies last year who had worked with her in Liverpool years ago. It appears the Head Nurse had quite a reputation, was into everything."

"In what way?" asked Holmes.

"Sorry, that is all I will say. I have to work here, under her supervision."

And then Sarah Smith stopped talking.

It was too bad about Linda Morrison, he dreamed. He did not have a chance to really get to know her. The mixture must have been too strong. He did not plan on her dying. Just daze her so he could guide her to his apartment. He did not understand how she made it to the Criterion Bar and Restaurant and then collapsed into that man's arms. That should have been his arms, not those of some stranger, he thought sluggishly. Sleep continued to overwhelm him.

Shirley O'Neal was very blunt. She did not like Adolph Spriggins and did not care who knew it.

"Everybody knew Linda took the bat away and beat the hell out of Adolph. Beauty that she was, she was also tough as nails. After she broke his arm, then went to work on his kidneys, it was a wonder that freak sadist would ever walk anytime soon. The marine probably saved his worthless life. Too bad about what they did to him in Afghanistan. It is a shame. You know Jami is a real hero, with a chest full of medals. I am pretty sure he handled the 'party night'. But I would never say a word under any circumstances."

"Yet you are discussing it with me," Holmes pointed out.

"You strike me as being interested in justice more than any set of rigid rules."

"Besides, I have you figured as a character that would 'bend' a few rules himself, if it was truly necessary. Strong moral character and all that," allowing herself a half smile. "I will bet you have never 'born false witness' against a good and decent person." Sherlock Holmes was silent.

"I understand no one knows any of the details about this rumored 'party night'. That is, there is a rumor, but no one knows anything for sure except they heard Adolph is dead," probed Holmes trying to return to the investigation.

"That is what I hear." And with that, Shirley O'Neal went silent.

These people do not understand. They just do not understand. Pity, he would be so good for them. And all of the time, they continued to do it. BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST him. The things they were saying, all wrong. Thou SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, and it was his duty to punish them. They just did not understand.

## THE DISCLOSURE

Doris Drake was not comfortable. At first she refused to talk to Holmes at all. I had received her record and talked to her at length about her qualifications and her future career. I saw real qualities of natural nursing skills.

"As a doctor, I am going to ask you to help us with this investigation, Nurse Drake. As I have explained, we are not the police, but private consulting detectives." I explained.

"What Dr. Watson is saying, I am in a position to report to Scotland Yard only what is necessary to seek justice and that is all. My version, you understand." stated Holmes.

"I think so. You must understand, we have enough difficulty to begin with."

"I understand perfectly, but I need all of the facts to render a fair analysis, it is my choice of words, you understand."

"Alright, but you must understand my position is very delicate for a number of reasons. On this particular night, as I recall I heard the screams of Emma Fay, but could not leave my patient Lois, for the woman was having a horrible nightmare and needed my attention to prevent her injuring herself."

Nurse Drake explained that this was but one of many incidents that took place regularly.

"Let me give you an example of one of the outbursts of which I made careful notes. It went like this:

### FALSE WITNESS

"Well, I did not do that. That was Nurse Morrison. She is mean and rough. She did that."

Linda Morrison's face turned red with anger. This thuggish incompetent was at it again.

"Adolph, you animal. Mary Ann pointed directly at you in front of four witnesses and identified you as the person forcing himself upon her, fondling her and abusing her in no uncertain terms. You have tried to force yourself upon all of us, every chance you get. You are going On Report. You are physically dangerous. I am filing charges against you."

"And I against you. It is your fault. You did it." Adolph angrily replied. "Do not do this to me. You are evil," he screamed.

"What is going on out here?" asked the Head Nurse.

"She did it, she did it, and now she is trying to blame me. I know what is going on around here," Adolph kept repeating.

"I do have to take his statement," the Head Nurse said.

"I know what you are doing! I know! I know!" Adolph continued to shriek.

"Adolph, the only reason I am making a record of this is the house rules require me to do so. You have 'born false witness' against every female inside this asylum. I shudder to think what you do elsewhere."

"I will write it up, but I do not believe it," the Head Nurse said reluctantly.

"Linda, your Charge Report will be duly filed."

"Occurrences like this took place all of the time. Sometimes it happened several times per week."

"As far as that matter of the prostitution ring you asked about, the only thing I ever did or say was, 'maybe next time.'"

Doris Drake spoke for almost three quarters of an hour clarifying and tying up many loose ends we had come upon in this very singular investigation. On our way to the street, I was silent. I was well aware any nurses dealt with male patients in a variety of ways,

but the details this relatively young nurse described were hard for me to recognize.

"Wake up Watson, the cab is here," brought me back to the present.

"You must realize Holmes, what we are dealing with in this matter. There are generally regarded four categories of Nurses and all have limited or no skills. The Assistant or Day Nurses, who are made up of working class women, charwomen, domestics who clean the ward and do some nursing. Then there is the "Night-watch," the Night Nurses, usually chosen from the cleaning staff. Then there are the Sisters or Head Nurses who have some real nursing skills and care for the patients. Finally, there are the Hospital Matrons; who are housekeepers that clean the wards, the linen and the furniture. The Doctors see the patients are properly 'Nursed.' Most of these nurses would not be able to work in a Military Hospital because of low moral principals." I noted.

"If Doris Drake is reasonably correct, four of the women we have been investigating are running a well-organized and managed prostitution ring. The recruiting and training of the women to operate a ring of prostitution within Spriggins Infirmary and Asylum is shocking. Oddly enough, there seems to be something to what Adolph was trying to say." I concluded.

Holmes was silent for a short time. He seemed to be mentally wrestling with something.

"Watson, I will return within three hours. I have one more detail to confirm."

## FINDINGS

Sherlock Holmes decided he would present his findings only to Inspector Lestrade and Inspector Gregson.

"This Janus faced paradox has twin culprits," Holmes began.

"First, the twisted son of Spriggins Infirmary and Asylum founder, Adolph Spriggins, was harassing and abusing the female staff and then began to write poison-pen letters to several of the nurses. The nurses on the other hand, were quite busy perfecting their own prostitution ring, arguably the largest in the British Isles. Four of the targeted nurses have participated in running the sordid ring throughout London hospitals and asylums. One of the five residents of the flat maintains she never directly participated, but likely helped indirectly.

"Adolph Spriggins was found dead, caused by person or persons unknown. It is difficult to say since there are no witnesses and the only evidence is of Adolph's corpse. No one is talking and there is no

hard evidence. If you search for those with motive, the suggested list seems to have no end.

"However, it is not Adolph Spriggins who is responsible for the death of Linda Morrison. It is Head Nurse Louise McKinney, who poisoned Nurse Morrison. It seems the Head Nurse, upon arrival at Spriggins, began to form and very efficiently manage a prostitution ring made up of the willing nurses within hospitals and asylums she managed to control. Linda Morrison became too independent and outspoken. Though she provided prostitution services to the organized ring at first, over time she began to refuse and especially after she received the position at Foundling, with the help of a recommendation from Nurse McKinney. When McKinney found out she was going to visit Dr Watson, who worked with Sherlock Holmes, that was too much. She was no longer controllable. Something had to be done, which resulted in the poisoning."

"Jami Holt, is a mentally unstable ex-Royal Marine and a patient at 'Spriggins'. Medically discharged as a result of a battlefield head injury, he suffers severe splitting headaches during which time he frequently becomes violent and dangerous. He has been moved from hospital to clinic to asylum all over the London area and as a last resort, ended up in 'Spriggins'. Sadly, he went into that theater of war a mere boy, he came back a near homicidal maniac.

"The nurses at 'Spriggins'; Rachel Rogers, Sarah Smith, Shirley O'Neal, Doris Drake; and of course the late Linda Morrison have all received poison-pen letters. At one time or another, they have been attacked by Adolph Spriggins and all have been molested by him in some form."

"The asylum nurses at Spriggins, with low pay, long hours and little future before them, felt they had enough of Adolph. Before they could decide what to do, one of the more lucid patients, rumor has it, Jami Holt corralled a number of the fellow patients for a 'party'. The same rumor implies a select few of the patients slipped out of their rooms one evening and sought out Adolph. The next morning the body of Adolph Spriggins was found beaten to death by person or persons unknown.

"There was a crudely scrawled sign tacked to his body with the inscription,

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS."

"Scotland Yard investigated and found no evidence, no witnesses, no leads; only a dead body. The crudely scrawled sign was of no significance. The Yard cannot find enough evidence to prosecute anyone and remains so to this day.

"Gentlemen, my interest in this matter was the poison-pen letters and their origin. The remaining clutter is for Scotland Yard to sort out.

"Watson, we have another appointment. Gentlemen, good day."

