

Baker Street Elementary

Year Seven

*Created by Joe Fay,
Rusty Mason & Steve Mason*

Introduction by Monica Schmidt



*The first adventures of
Sherlock Holmes, John Watson, & Stamford*

Baker Street Elementary

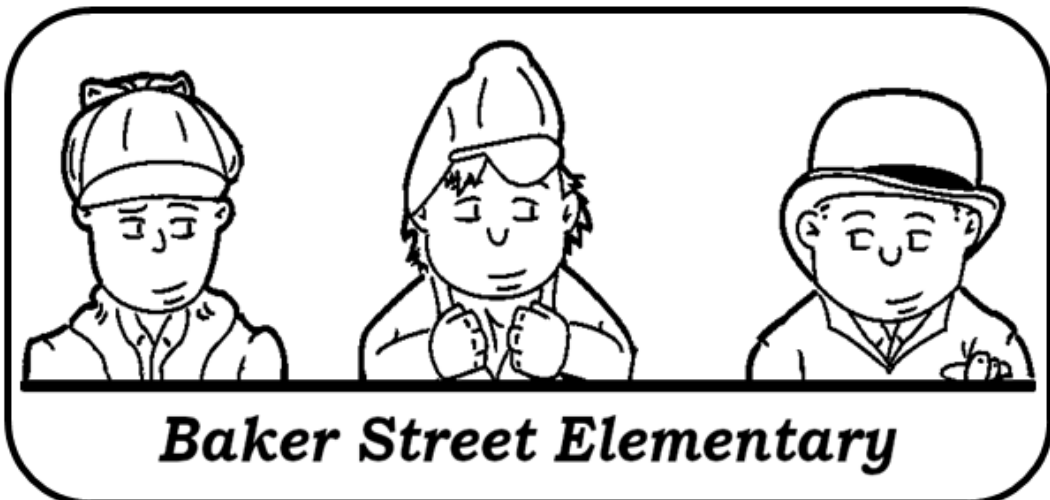
Year 7

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PUBLISHED IN DENTON, TEXAS

STRIPS # 308-370

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INTRODUCTION

BY MONICA SCHMIDT, BSI, ASH ("JULIA STONER")

GROWING UP IN SCHMIDT HAUS, MY SUNDAY AFTERNOON TRADITION WAS TO SIT ON THE COUCH WITH MY FATHER AFTER CHURCH (AND BEFORE MILWAUKEE BREWERS OR GREEN BAY PACKERS GAMES) AND READ THE COMICS IN THE NEWSPAPER TOGETHER..

AS A CHILD, I CONSUMED A WEEKLY DIET OF CALVIN AND HOBBS, DOONESBURY, PEANUTS, AND BLOOM COUNTY, AS WELL AS ABOUT TWO DOZEN OTHER COMIC STRIPS.

EACH WEEK, MY DAD WOULD QUIZ ME ON THE NAMES OF THE AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS OF THE VARIOUS

STRIPS... A MENTAL CHALLENGE OF MEMORIZATION I TOOK DEADLY SERIOUS.

AND OVER 30 YEARS LATER, I CAN SEAMLESSLY RECALL RANDOM FACTOIDS LIKE JOHN CULLEN MURPHY WAS THE ILLUSTRATOR OF THE LONG-RUNNING PRINCE VALIANT STRIP AND THAT WIZARD OF ID WAS CREATED BY BRANT PARKER AND JOHNNY HART. MORE THAN ANYTHING, READING THE SUNDAY COMICS WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BOND WITH MY FATHER... AND THE SOURCE OF MANY HAPPY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES.

LONG BEFORE I UNDERSTOOD THE SUBTLE (AND SOMETIMES NOT-SO-SUBTLE) SOCIAL COMMENTARY FEATURED IN MANY COMIC STRIPS, I LAUGHED AT THE SURFACE LEVEL HUMOR EVIDENT TO CHILDREN WHO LACK THE MENTAL SOPHISTICATION AND EXPERIENCE TO GRASP THE UNDERCURRENT OF SATIRE.

AS I GREW OLDER, MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD AROUND ME DEVELOPED, AND THE STRIPS TOOK ON A WHOLE NEW (AND DEEPER) MEANING.

READING THE COMICS INSTILLED IN ME AN APPRECIATION FOR THE POWER OF ART... THAT ART COULD ALWAYS ENTERTAIN, BUT OFTEN COULD ENGAGE, ENLIGHTEN, AND ENHANCE, AS WELL AS HOLD UP A MIRROR TO SOCIETY AND SHINE A LIGHT ON ITS MANY BLIND SPOTS. IN MY ADULTHOOD, I CONTINUED TO SEEK OUT ART FORMS WILLING TO CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO, INCLUDING GRAPHIC NOVELS BY SUCH LUMINARIES AS ALAN MOORE, MARJANE SATRAPI, FRANK

MILLER, ART SPIEGELMAN, AND NOELLE STEVENSON.

READING THESE COMICS/GRAPHIC NOVELS GEARED TOWARDS MORE ADULT AUDIENCES IS PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY DARK AND TWISTED SENSE OF HUMOR, AS WELL AS MY DEEP COMPASSION FOR HUMANITY.

BAKER STREET ELEMENTARY CONTINUES THE TRADITION OF THE SUNDAY MORNING COMIC, OFFERING AN ALWAYS ENTERTAINING, OFTEN ENLIGHTENING, AND FREQUENTLY ENGAGING SOCIAL COMMENTARY ABOUT THE STATE OF THE WORLD SURROUNDING OUR LITERARY SOCIETY, HOBBY, OR LIFESTYLE (HOWEVER YOU WANT TO DEFINE IT).

WHILE MANY OF US HAVE DISPENSED WITH THE PHYSICAL NEWSPAPER, THIS STRIP CONVENIENTLY APPEARS

EACH WEEK DIGITALLY IN OUR INBOXES, OR THROUGH THE I HEAR OF SHERLOCK EVERYWHERE WEBSITE.


THUS, EVERY SUNDAY MORNING BEGINS WITH READING A COMIC STRIP, ECHOING MY BELOVED CHILDHOOD RITUAL. BUT, THIS TIME, I DON'T NEED MY FATHER TO QUIZ ME ON THE NAMES ATTACHED TO THE COMIC I AM READING. I'LL NEVER FORGET FAYE, MASON, AND MASON, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT ONLY THE CREATIVE MINDS BEHIND THE STRIP, BUT THEY ARE WONDERFULLY AMAZING SHERLOCKIANS WHOM I ALSO CAN CALL MY FRIENDS.

ADDITIONALLY, DURING THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC, **BAKER STREET ELEMENTARY** HAS SERVED AS A FAMILIAR AND CONSISTENT GROUNDING POINT FOR OUR TIGHT-KNIT AND EXTREMELY BOOKISH COMMUNITY. IN TIMES OF TROUBLE, SOCIETY LOOKS TO THE ARTISTS AND ENTERTAINERS TO PROVIDE US WITH A LITTLE LEVITY AND LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.


SO... JOE, RUSTY, AND STEVE: THANK YOU FOR GIVING OUR SHERLOCKIAN COMMUNITY A REMINDER THAT

EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THE MODERN CHAOS, THAT SOMEWHERE, AT AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, IT IS STILL 1895.

HOW GREAT WOULD IT BE IF WE COULD BE INVISIBLE WHENEVER WE WANT.

A line drawing of three young boys sitting at a desk. The boy on the left is wearing a fedora and looking down at a notepad. The boy in the middle is wearing a cap and looking up with a thoughtful expression. The boy on the right is wearing a cap and looking down at a notepad.

IMAGINE IF YOU WERE A BURGLER... YOU WOULD NEVER LEAVE ANY FINGERPRINTS.

A line drawing of three young boys sitting at a desk. The boy on the left is wearing a fedora and looking down at a notepad. The boy in the middle is wearing a cap and looking up with a thoughtful expression. The boy on the right is wearing a cap and looking down at a notepad.


BUT YOU WOULD ALWAYS BE SUBJECT TO ARREST FOR 'FAILING TO APPEAR'.

IT IS AN INTERESTING IDEA, BUT I AM NOT SURE I 'SEE' THE POINT.

A line drawing of three young boys sitting at a desk. The boy on the left is wearing a fedora and looking down at a notepad. The boy in the middle is wearing a cap and looking up with a thoughtful expression. The boy on the right is wearing a cap and looking down at a notepad.


CONSIDER, IF YOU WERE INVISIBLE, AND YOU MARRIED AN INVISIBLE WOMAN, YOUR KIDS WOULD BE 'NOTHING TO LOOK AT'.

I WONDER IF YOU WOULD WEIGH LESS?

A line drawing of three young boys sitting at a desk. The boy on the left is wearing a fedora and looking down at a notepad. The boy in the middle is wearing a cap and looking up with a thoughtful expression. The boy on the right is wearing a cap and looking down at a notepad.

WELL, I STILL THINK IT WOULD BE VERY BENEFICIAL AT TIMES, SUCH AS ESCAPING A PLAYGROUND BULLY.

TRUST ME, IT'S NOT ALL THAT IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE.

A line drawing of three young boys sitting at a desk. The boy on the left is wearing a fedora and looking down at a notepad. The boy in the middle is wearing a cap and looking up with a thoughtful expression. The boy on the right is wearing a cap and looking down at a notepad.

MASTERS OF THE OBVIOUS

"Our learned friend's nerves are somewhat out of order" [CREE]

We've all had an experience with a friend or colleague who states the obvious as if they discovered fire. In college, when someone displayed this kind of ridiculousness, we'd mockingly fire up everyone's favorite game show, 'Masters of the Obvious,' and introduce them to the crowd.

In recent years, Captain Obvious has become a part of our collective consciousness, in his role as mascot for Hotels.com. Attired in a fake naval-military outfit, he points out the commonsensical things associated with using their service.

In "The Boscombe Valley Mystery," Sherlock Holmes warns Watson: "There is nothing more deception than an obvious fact."

But does this fly in the face of Holmes's stating the so-called 'obvious' in other circumstances? For example, in "The Red-Headed League," Sherlock Holmes draws up these conclusions after looking at Jabez Wilson:

"Beyond the obvious facts that he has at some time done manual labour, that he takes snuff, that he is a Freemason, that he has been in China, and that he has done a considerable amount of writing lately, I can deduce nothing else."

Manual labor would seem obvious at first glance; but we need to look beyond the obvious, as Holmes counsels. Was it that Wilson's enlarged hand had other causes: an injury, or perhaps a birth defect? Another example comes from "The Blue Carbuncle," when Holmes was examining Henry Baker's hat:

"That the man was highly intellectual is of course obvious upon the face of it...it is a question of cubic capacity."

The size of the cranium and intelligence are very weakly associated, if at all. It would be obvious to assume Mr. Baker was intelligent, but should we trust that? What about a potential birth or growth defect that may have afflicted Henry Baker?

"...beyond the obvious facts that you are a bachelor, a solicitor, a Freemason, and an asthmatic, I know nothing whatever about you."

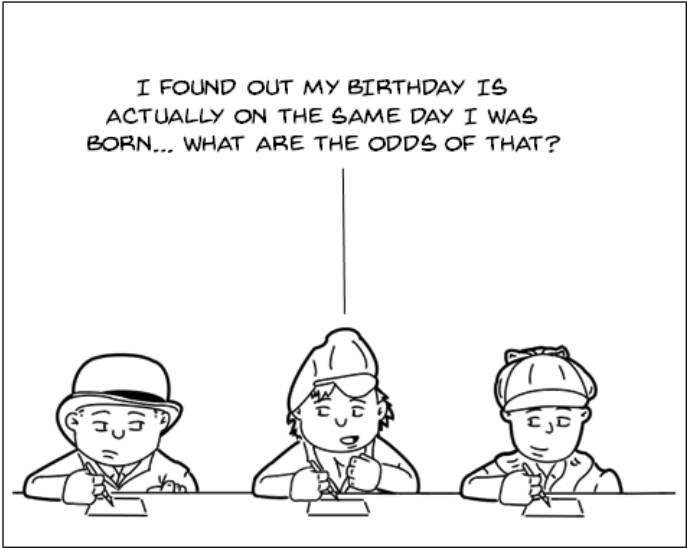
Very similar to the situation above in "The Red-Headed League," don't you think? And yet, we can find a fault in Holmes's very first observation

Disheveled clothing may obviously point to bachelorhood, but Holmes tells us not to trust the obvious. Mr. McFarlane had just come from an overnight at Anerley Arms (not at home) and rushed to Baker Street, which could have happened whether he was married or single.

So, should we trust the obvious in the Canon? Clearly not when Holmes is explaining himself.

Isn't that obvious?

*Perhaps Holmes developed his distaste for it in his earlier years at **Baker Street Elementary**...*



WHAT WISDOM ARE YOU PASSING ON TO US TODAY?




ALL PEOPLE CHANGE, EVEN AGAINST THEIR WILL... BUT THE CHANGE IS SO MINOR, THEY DON'T NOTICE IT.

SO, MA'AM... YOU'RE SAYING I'M NOT THE SAME PERSON I WAS LAST YEAR, MONTH, OR EVEN LAST WEEK?




THAT'S CORRECT.

ONCE AGAIN, I ASSUME YOUR MOTHER IS THANKFUL FOR SMALL FAVORS.



WAIT, IS THAT A COMPLIMENT OR AN INSULT?

MY DAD SAYS MOM HAS SPENT 10 YEARS TRYING TO CHANGE HIM, AND THEN COMPLAINS HE'S NOT THE SAME MAN SHE MARRIED.



MORE RAPID THAN EAGLES

"reckless youngsters who were as elated as if it were a deer-hunt" [VALL]

Every fortnight, the Fay/Mason team drops a series of panels in a shared drive for us, giving us something to consider for the "**Baker Street Elementary**" entry here on the site.

And every fortnight, we look forward to the challenge it presents, as we craft an essay that in some way makes a connection to the Canon. Occasionally, it's a small bit of scholarship, other times it's a historical look at the scholarship of others, and possibly it's just an observation. A trifle, if you will.

At this point, we're out of steam—it was a challenging year for all. So we must leave you with an effort that feels incomplete (how very 2020!), as there were only five connections to Santa's famous reindeer that we could find, rather than the full eight (or nine, if you prefer):

- Dasher: "he had availed himself of a cab so that he could loiter behind or dash past them and so escape their notice." [HOUN]
- Dancer: "Round and round the room she danced, her hands clapping, her dark eyes gleaming with delighted wonder" [REDC]
- Prancer: "In an instant it reared up upon its hind legs with a snort of rage, and pranced and tossed in a way that would have unseated any but a most skilful rider." [STUD]
- Vixen: "A haze lay low upon the farthest sky-line, out of which jutted the fantastic shapes of Belliver and Vixen Tor" [HOUN]
- Comet: "Then Sherlock Holmes cocked his eye at me, leaning back on the cushions with a pleased and yet critical face, like a connoisseur who has just taken his first sip of a comet vintage." [STOC]
- Cupid: "Lord St. Simon, who has shown himself for over twenty years proof against the little god's arrows, has now definitely announced his approaching marriage with Miss Hatty Doran, the fascinating daughter of a California millionaire." [NOBL]
- Donner: "Not only was his body that of a giant but everything about him was grotesque, gigantic, and terrifying. His voice was like thunder in our little house." [REDC]
- Blitzen: "'Very good.' He suddenly sprang up, and darting like lightning across the room he flung open the door." [ENGR]

And for the completists out there, Rich Krisciunas suggested this:

- Rudolph: "A red-veined nose jutted out like a vulture's beak, and two fierce gray eyes glared at me from under tufted brows." [BLAN]

On behalf of the team at I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere and **Baker Street Elementary**, we have the honor of wishing you compliments of the season.

STAMFORD CAN YOU NAME
SANTA'S EIGHT REINDEER. _____

NO MA'AM I CAN'T... THEY ALREADY HAVE NAMES.



FIRST, THERE IS DASHER, THE FASTEST IN
THE HERD... BUT HE HAS A HABIT OF RUNNING
INTO CHIMNEYS ON THE ROOF-TOPS.

DANCER IS THE
MOST EXTROVERTED. _____



PRANCER IS VERY VAIN,
WITH HIGH SPRINGY STEPS.



VIXEN, WELL SINCE THIS IS
A GRADE-SCHOOL CLASS,
WE'LL SKIP OVER HIM.



COMET, NOT VERY POPULAR
WITH THE DINOSAURS, I
WOULD GUESS.

CUPID HAS A SECOND
CAREER WHICH KEEPS
HIM BUSY IN FEBRUARY.

DONNER, OR 'DUNDER'
WHICH MEANS
THUNDER... HE'S KINDA
GRUMPY AND VERY LOUD.



BLITZEN LIKES
ALCOHOL JUST A
LITTLE TOO MUCH.

AND WHAT DOES A REINDEER SAY
RIGHT BEFORE HE TELLS YOU A JOKE?

THIS ONE'S GOING
TO SLEIGH YOU.



HAVE A
**Merry
Christmas**
& HAPPY NEW YEAR



Some Ponderings on New Years

WELL, IGNATIUS, WHAT IS YOUR
PRIMARY RESOLUTION FOR THIS YEAR?

TRY TO
FORGET LAST
YEAR.



AFTER MUCH REFLECTION, I DO BELIEVE I
HAVE CHANGED FROM LAST YEAR.



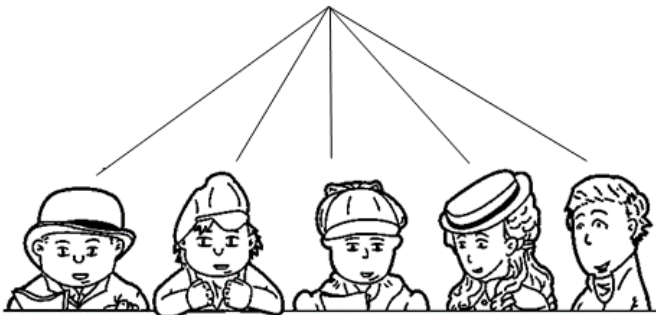
DID YOU CHANGE FOR THE BETTER?



MORE SLEEPING, MORE SNACKING LESS
STUDYING... I HAVE SET REASONABLE
GOALS I CAN FINALLY ACHIEVE.



PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE!!
HAVE A SAFE AND
FRIENDLY NEW YEAR!



HOLY COW

"There is nothing in which deduction is so necessary as in religion" [NAVA]

In "The Sussex Vampire," Sherlock Holmes remarks, "The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply." That got us to thinking: did Holmes also include the Holy Ghost? Given that this is a Sunday comic (although not yet colorized), humor us for a moment.

Much has been made of Sherlock Holmes and religion over the years. First, by Edgar S. Rosenberger in "Was Sherlock Holmes Religious?" (The Baker Street Journal, Vol. 3, No. 2 (OS), 1948). He opens with a litany of Holmes's sins:

"Was Sherlock Holmes religious? Offhand, no. He smoked, drank, swore, gambled, took dope, and pursued women of dubious virtue—the last not, as every reader knows, on the common earthly plane, but in the intellectual stratosphere in which he lived.

"He once took part in a barroom brawl, once threw a man over a cliff, once threatened to horsewhip a man, gave another a black eye, five times burgled a house, and once, with the aid of Watson, shot a man dead in cold blood. There is no evidence that he danced, played cards, or told off-color stories, but he lied, cheated, and blackmailed."

Now, that behavior doesn't mean he didn't believe in the Almighty.

He effectively demonstrated his knowledge of the Bible with his eventual recollection of the story of David and Bathsheba in "the first or second of Samuel," inferring that he must have had religious education somewhere along the way.

But what do we make of his disguise in the very first short story? Holmes's choice of a clergyman to appeal to Irene Adler's sympathy is clever but questionable. Recall that this was a Nonconformist clergyman, not an Anglican one. He knew that impersonating a minister from the Church of England was a legal offense; he found a loophole by instead assuming the visage of a religious man from outside the Church. Legal? Yes. Ethical? You tell us.

Does this tell us anything about Holmes's religious beliefs? Probably not. Knowing Sherlock Holmes as we do, he likely viewed religion through the lens of his work: something to understand, to account for, and sometimes to exploit for his purposes.

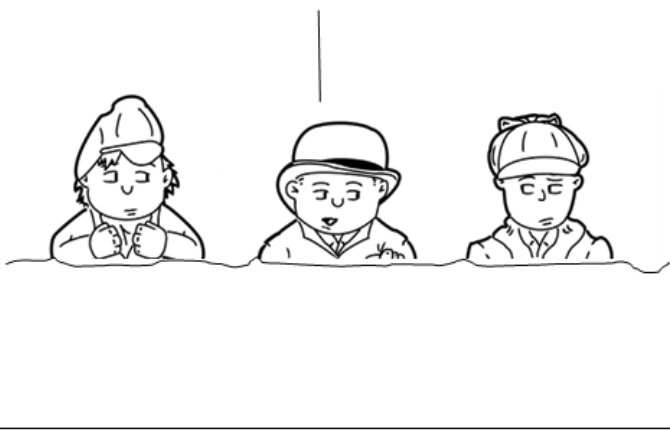
He admits as much in "The Naval Treaty":

"There is nothing in which deduction is so necessary as in religion," said he.

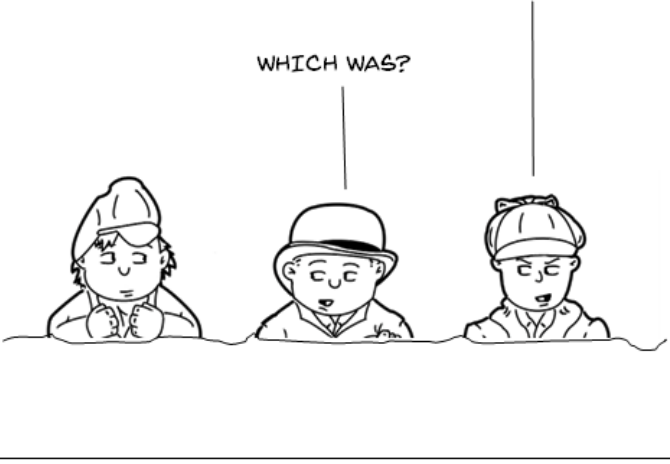
Oh, and perhaps you missed an early episode of *Trifles*, where we talked about religion in the Canon: *Sherlock Holmes: Trifles · 9 - A Matter of Faith*

Meanwhile, we have a glimpse of what the boys at **Baker Street Elementary** are praying for these days...

I HATE THE COLD WEATHER AND ALL THE SNOW... WHEN IS IT GOING TO GET WARMER?

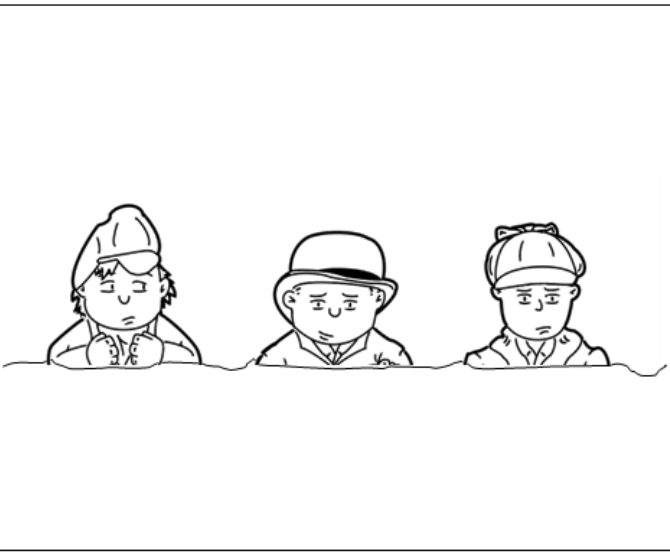
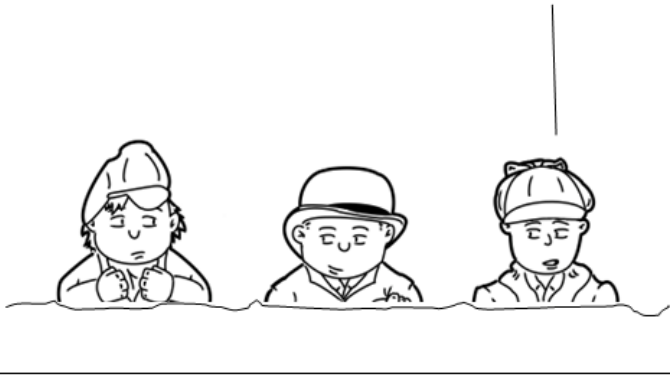


MY MOTHER HAD AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION.

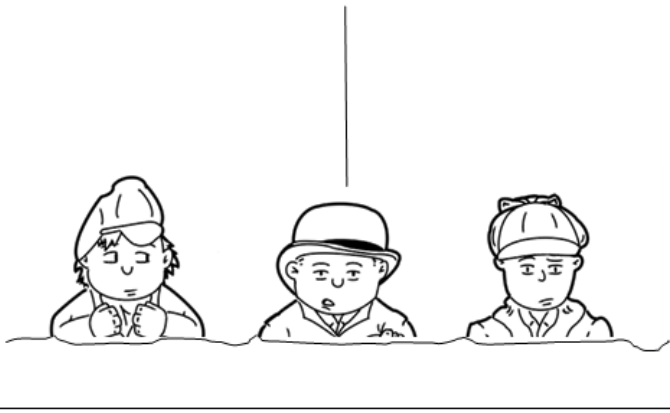


WHICH WAS?

SHE SAYS UNLESS YOU CAN COMPLAIN TO THE PERSON WHO CAN ACTUALLY FIX THE PROBLEM, IT'S PROBABLY JUST WHINING.



ARE YOU LISTENING UP THERE? A LITTLE SUNSHINE BY MONDAY WOULD BE NICE.



HOW ARE YOU AT A LITTLE REPORT CARD 'REPAIRING'?



EXPLAIN THE THRILL OF 'BRUNCH'... I SKIP
BREAKFAST, THEN EAT WAY TOO MUCH TO
CATCH UP, SO I'M TOO FULL FOR SUPPER...
AND WHY THE HECK DO PEOPLE GET SO
EXCITED OVER A MIMOSA PLANT?



SO, AMERICA IS STILL IN THE THROES OF
POLITICAL UPHEAVAL, RACIAL STRIFE, NATURAL
DISASTERS, AND WIDESPREAD-ILLNESS?




I ASSUME THEY WILL BE THRILLED
WHEN THE 1860S ARE OVER.

DO YOU THINK THEY WISH THEY HAD
STAYED PART OF THE EMPIRE?




I TOLD MY PARENTS THIS WEEKEND I SAVED UP ENOUGH ALLOWANCE MONEY TO GET A TATTOO.

Three cartoon characters, two boys and one girl, are sitting at a table. They are all wearing hats and looking down at papers in front of them. The boy on the left is wearing a fedora, the girl in the middle is wearing a cap, and the boy on the right is wearing a cap.

HOW DID THAT GO OVER?


MY PARENTS WOULD TELL ME I WAS GETTING TOO MUCH ALLOWANCE.

Three cartoon characters, two boys and one girl, are sitting at a table. They are all wearing hats and looking down at papers in front of them. The boy on the left is wearing a fedora, the girl in the middle is wearing a cap, and the boy on the right is wearing a cap.

MY DAD SAY I COULD GET A TATTOO THAT SAID, 'THIS IS THE LAST THING I DID BEFORE MY ALLOWANCE WAS CUT-OFF'.

Three cartoon characters, two boys and one girl, are sitting at a table. They are all wearing hats and looking down at papers in front of them. The boy on the left is wearing a fedora, the girl in the middle is wearing a cap, and the boy on the right is wearing a cap.

LET'S JUST SAY WHOEVER SAID, 'MONEY IS FREEDOM' DID NOT HAVE PARENTS.

Three cartoon characters, two boys and one girl, are sitting at a table. They are all wearing hats and looking down at papers in front of them. The boy on the left is wearing a fedora, the girl in the middle is wearing a cap, and the boy on the right is wearing a cap.

THE SIGN OF LORE

"in the vain hope of seeing some signs" [STUD]

One topic that has fascinated Sherlockians for years is the date of Sherlock Holmes's birthday. The year is fairly well established, as he was referred to as "a tall, a gaunt man of sixty" in "His Last Bow," set squarely in 1914. But the day and month are less certain.

We discussed Sherlock Holmes's birthday on a recent episode of Trifles: Sherlock Holmes: Trifles · Sherlock Holmes's Birthday

Christopher Morley, in "Clinical Notes by a Resident Patient," (The Baker Street Journal, Vol. 1, Nov. 3, 1946), described the selection of January 6:

"So the B.S.I. never had any strictly formal organization; and since the disappearance of the early memoranda, no one remembers who were the founding fathers. It is sad to record that Miss B. married a man who, so far as we know, has no special interest in Sherlock.

The first dinner was held June 5, 1934. Mr. H. G. Wells, who had been in New York about that time, should have been there, but admitted that he could not pass the examination. One member, of a horoscopic bent, announced that zodiacal and astrological study indicated Sherlock's birthday as probably January 6, 1854. This pleased me as it coincided with the birthday, in 1894, of the 2nd Garrideb, Dr. Felix Morley. So we decided to hold the annual meeting, if possible, some time during January."

But when it comes to Holmes's zodiacal sign, Nathan Bengis took a different view ("What Was the Month?" The Baker Street Journal, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1957):

"For consider: if Sherlock Holmes was born on January 6, he comes under the sign of Capricorn; but if in May or June, he must be assigned to Taurus, Gemini, or Cancer. Now to denominate the Master as a Goat is simply ludicrous; a Bull, patently absurd, and a Crab, a rank insult. So that, by the end of the much vaunted Sherlockian process of elimination, he must be a son of Gemini, the very sign within which Mr. Boswell's date of June 17 falls!

What is more, Sherlock Holmes has precisely — with possibly one exception — the virtues commonly attributed to this most amicable of the signs: to quote from a book on the subject, "Scientific, judicious, fond of reading, ambitious of fame, moderate and temperate in eating and drinking, generally respected and good members of society."

It's highly unlikely that Holmes himself subscribed to (or was even aware of) the "science" or superstitions of the zodiac, as his knowledge of astronomy was "Nil" and he didn't take things like spectral hounds or blood-drinking vampires seriously.

Then again, things at **Baker Street Elementary** are always a little different...

IN THE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER, MY HOROSCOPE...
BY THE WAY, I'M A SCORPIO... SAYS FOR ME TO
BE 'LESS EARTHY'... WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



TAKE MORE BATHS.



AS A GEMINI, MINE SAID TO STOP LOOKING
DOWN ON PEOPLE... HARD TO DO WHEN YOU
ARE THE TALLEST STUDENT IN SCHOOL.

BEND YOUR KNEES MORE.



WHAT IS YOUR SIGN, IRENE?

I'M A TAURUS... WE LOVE CONFLICT...
IF NOTHING IS WRONG, THEN THAT
IN ITSELF IS SOMETHING WRONG.



WE LEO'S ARE SUPPOSED TO BE VERY
STRONG IN NATURE... MY HOROSCOPE SAYS
I SHOULD COLOR-COORDINATE MY
CLOSET... I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THAT
MEANS... ALL I HAVE IS GREY AND BROWN.

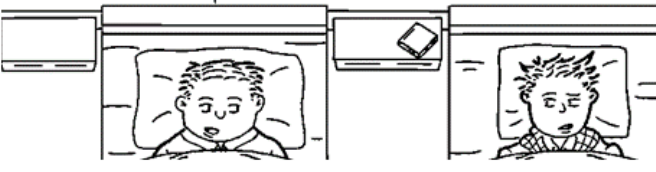


AS YOU MAY GUESS, I DO NOT SUBSCRIBE
TO SUCH, BUT I CAN ONLY GUESS A
CAPRICORN WAS THE FIRST TO SAY, 'NO I
AM NOT ANGRY... JUST DISAPPOINTED.'




WATSON, YOU SAW MY TOES EARLIER...
DID THEY LOOK SWOLLEN TO YOU?

LIKE A BUNCH OF CHUBBY SAUSAGES.



THAT'S A LITTLE HARSH FOR SOMEONE
WHO WANTS TO BE DOCTOR SOMEDAY.

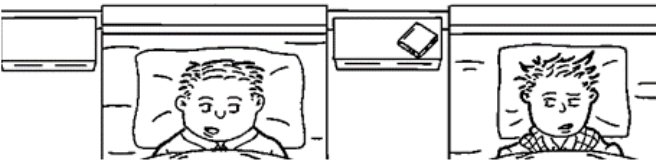
YOU MIGHT WANT TO WORK ON
THAT REASSURING, POSITIVE
BEDSIDE MANNER.



OK HOLMES... LET'S TRY IT AGAIN.


WATSON, DO MY TOES LOOK
SWOLLEN TO YOU?

I CAN ASSURE YOU THEY
POSITIVELY LOOK LIKE SAUSAGES.



ONCE I AM IN PRACTICE, I PLAN ON THIS
STRATEGY... TELL THE PATIENT THE GOOD
NEWS THAT SOUNDS BETTER THAN IT IS,
THEN TELL THEM THE BAD NEWS THAT
SEEMS WORSE THAN THEY EXPECTED.

KEEP SHARPENING
YOUR WRITING SKILLS.



BURP!

EXCUSE ME.



BREAKFAST TASTES JUST A LITTLE
DIFFERENT THE SECOND TIME AROUND.



IF A LION OR TIGER BELCHED ALL THE TIME,
I BET THEY WOULD RECONSIDER THEIR DIET.



ICKY... CAN YOU IMAGINE A POOR BIRD HAVING
TO RETASTE BUGS OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

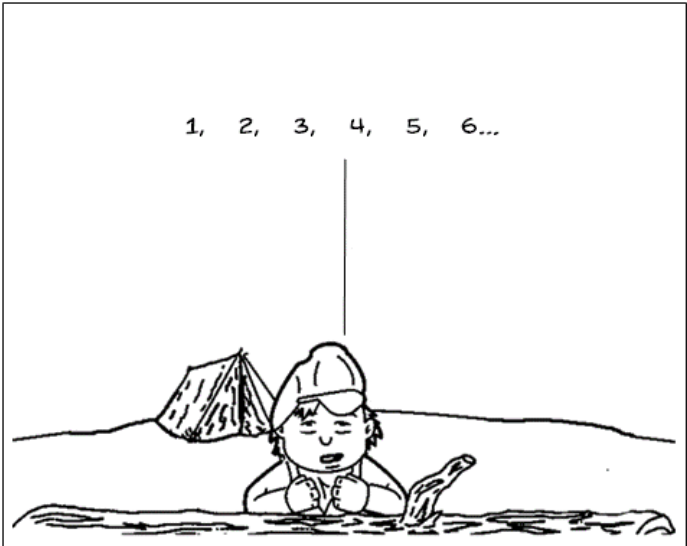
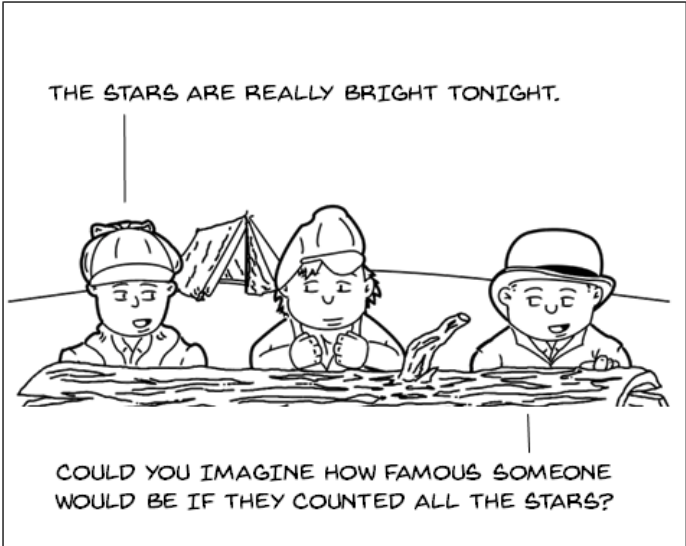
EVEN WORSE... THEY HAVE NO
TOOTHBRUSH TO REMOVE THE TASTE.

HMMM... OH, NEVER MIND.



IN MY OPINION, THERE ARE SO MANY
THINGS WE EAT EACH DAY THAT SHOULD
ONLY BE TASTED ONCE... LAST NIGHT'S
SUPPER WOULD HAVE BEEN ONE OF THOSE.





PETS PEEVED

"it was his pet fad" [3GAR]

Pets are a central part of many people's lives. Whether the standard cat or dog, or goldfish or hamsters, or even something more exotic, domesticated animals are a comforting part of existence. They're also a window into our souls. As Holmes observed in the opening of "The Creeping Man":

"Whoever saw a frisky dog in a gloomy family, or a sad dog in a happy one? Snarling people have snarling dogs, dangerous people have dangerous ones. And their passing moods may reflect the passing moods of others."

For years, Sherlockians have debated the presence of a pet dog when Watson said "I keep a bull pup" in A Study in Scarlet. The debate is whether he meant he literally owned a dog, if it was a reference to a kind of pistol, or if it was a euphemism for having a short temper.

That aside, we know that Holmes and Watson didn't keep a pet while at 221B Baker Street. However, there was a canine present in A Study in Scarlet—one that was in the care of the unnamed landlady:

"Now would you mind going down and fetching that poor little devil of a terrier which has been bad so long, and which the landlady wanted you to put out of its pain yesterday."

Other pet dogs didn't fare so well in the Canon (see this key to the four-letter abbreviations):


- Jephro Rucastle's dog Carlo went hungry: "We feed him once a day, and not too much then, so that he is always as keen as mustard." [COPP]*
- Sir Eustace Brackenstall was a brute to his wife's dog: "There was a scandal about his drenching a dog with petroleum and setting it on fire—her ladyship's dog, to make the matter worse—and that was only hushed up with difficulty." [ABBE]*
- Another dog named Carlo was mistreated but this time with poison: "That's what puzzled the vet. A sort of paralysis. Spinal meningitis, he thought." "And the dog! If one were to use such a poison, would one not try it first in order to see that it had not lost its power?" [SUSS]*
- The hound was maltreated in order to make it more ferocious and menacing: "The beast was savage and half-starved. If its appearance did not frighten its victim to death, at least it would paralyze the resistance which might be offered." [HOUN]*

There's no record of cats being mistreated in the Sherlock Holmes stories, although there were only two instances on record of cats being kept as pets (aside from Dr. Roylott's cheetah):

- Milverton's household had one: Something rushed out at us and my heart sprang into my mouth, but I could have laughed when I realized that it was the cat. [MILV]*
- And Holmes's elderly housekeeper Martha, "a dear old ruddy-faced woman in a country cap. She was bending over her knitting and stopping occasionally to stroke a large black cat upon a stool beside her." [LAST]*

No signs of penguins, though. Not that Baker Street Elementary didn't attempt it...

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE IDEA OF GETTING A PET FOR OUR RESIDENCE AREA?



A comic panel showing three men wearing different styles of hats (a fedora, a flat cap, and a bowler hat) sitting behind a horizontal line representing a table. They are all looking down at a small notepad or piece of paper in front of them. A speech bubble from the man in the bowler hat asks the question.

A SMALL DOG MIGHT BE NICE.

NOT SURE I WANT A CRITTER THAT SNIFFS OTHER DOGS' REAR ENDS AND MY CROTCH.



IT'S OUR GREETING.

A comic panel showing the same three men at the table. The man in the bowler hat has a speech bubble. The man in the flat cap has a speech bubble. The man in the fedora has a speech bubble. A small dog is visible on the right side of the table. A thought bubble from the dog says "IT'S OUR GREETING."

WHAT ABOUT A CAT?


AND I'LL FIND A DEAD BIRD OR MOUSE ON MY BED EACH NIGHT AS A PRESENT.



NOT LIKELY.

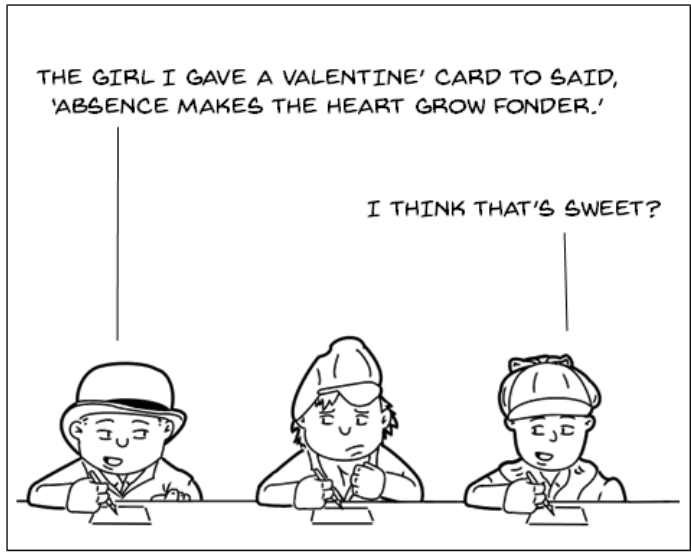
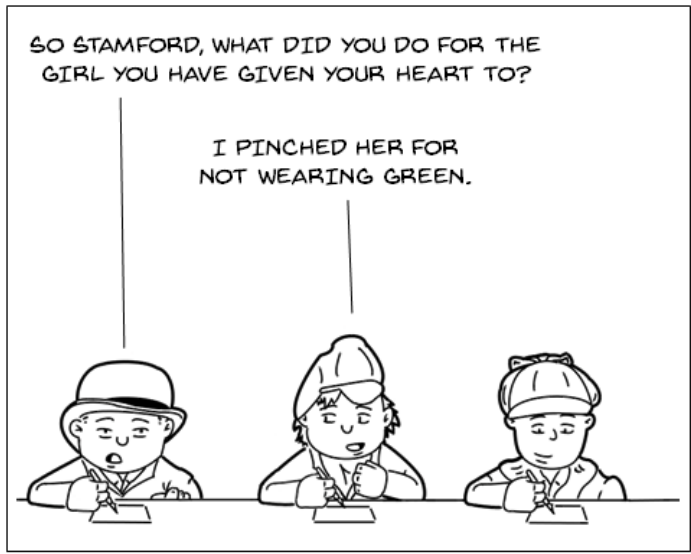
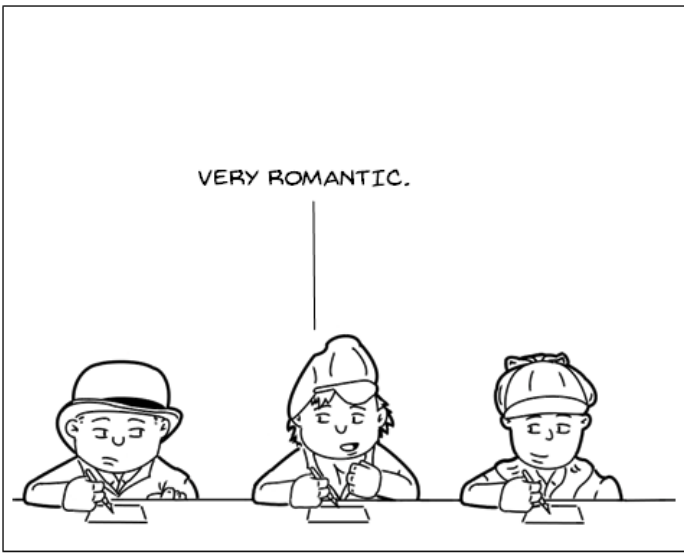
A comic panel showing the same three men at the table. The man in the bowler hat has a speech bubble. The man in the flat cap has a speech bubble. The man in the fedora has a speech bubble. A small cat is visible on the right side of the table. A thought bubble from the cat says "NOT LIKELY."

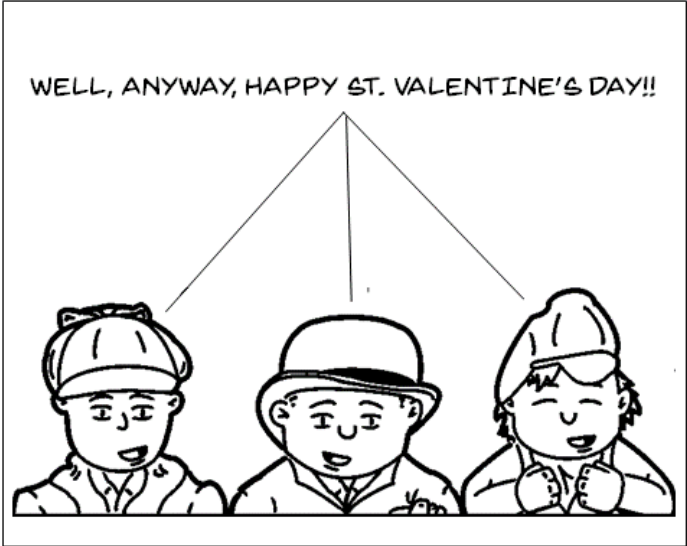
I GUESS A PENGUIN IS OUT OF THE QUESTION.



I WOULD REQUIRE TWO POUNDS OF FISH, KRILL, OR SQUID EACH DAY... AND A VERY SMALL ICE FLOE.

A comic panel showing the same three men at the table. The man in the bowler hat has a speech bubble. The man in the flat cap has a speech bubble. The man in the fedora has a speech bubble. A small penguin is visible on the right side of the table. A speech bubble from the penguin says "I WOULD REQUIRE TWO POUNDS OF FISH, KRILL, OR SQUID EACH DAY... AND A VERY SMALL ICE FLOE."





ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTE

"not aware of the substitution" [REDC]

As we look through the Sherlock Holmes stories, we find a fair number of governesses or live-in tutors who are responsible for the education of young children in the English countryside.

Violet Hunter was tasked with this role in "The Copper Beeches," as were Grace Dunbar in "The Problem of Thor Bridge," Miss Burnet in "Wisteria Lodge," Mary Morstan in The Sign of Four, and Violet Smith in "The Solitary Cyclist."

We looked at the issue of governesses in Episode 110 of Trifles.

But when it comes to teachers, one in particular stands out. One who, despite the way he is treated, takes his job as guardian of the children in his care quite seriously.

We're referring to Herr Heidegger, the German master in "The Priory School." We're told "he was a silent, morose man, not very popular either with masters or boys."


And yet, when Lord Saltire stole away from the school, lured by his kidnapper, it was Heidegger who pursued him with such haste and vigor that he left his shirt and socks behind, climbed down the ivy, and gave chase on his bicycle before meeting a grisly end.

Despite his lack of popularity and his semi-misanthropic nature, he went beyond the call of duty to safeguard one of the school's resident students.


This is the kind of dedication and care we hear about by many teachers across the world. These employees of (mostly) public entities who are woefully underpaid take their charge seriously, as they are tasked with molding the minds and character of the next generation. We owe them a great debt.

*Although it looks like the teaching staff at **Baker Street Elementary** was outmatched at times...*

STAMFORD, DID YOU COMPLETE THE READING ASSIGNMENT I TASKED YOU WITH YESTERDAY? _____



NO, BUT THAT WAS ONLY BECAUSE I WAS FINISHING UP THE GEOGRAPHY REPORT YOU ALSO ASSIGNED ME FOR MISSING CLASS LAST WEEK.



ARE YOU TRYING TO EVADE ONE RESPONSIBILITY BY CLAIMING ANOTHER?
THINK IT WILL WORK?




MA'AM, I AM CONCERNED MY LACK OF BEING ABLE TO HANDLE MULTIPLE TASKS AT ONE TIME MAY BE A REFLECTION ON YOUR ABILITY TO TEACH ME PROPER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES...



...THIS FAILURE MAY RESULT IN CONTINUED STRIFE THROUGH MY ADULT LIFE... CAN YOU LIVE WITH THAT RESPONSIBILITY?



ANYONE ELSE NOTICE WE SEEM TO BE GETTING MORE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS THIS YEAR?
I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY. _____



MY PARENTS TOOK ME TO A PLAY THIS WEEKEND...
IT HAS INSPIRED ME TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS
ON OUR OWN SPRING PERFORMANCE.


SUCH AS?



IF ALL OF THE CAST MEMBERS BRING
SNACKS FROM THEIR HOMES, WE CAN MAKE
A KILLING OFF THE CONCESSION STAND...



...AND FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE LESSON WE
GAINED LAST YEAR... THOUGH IT IS IMPORTANT
TO MEMORIZE YOUR LINES, RECITING THEM IN
THE PROPER ORDER APPEARS TO BE JUST AS
VITAL TO THE AUDIENCE AND CRITICS.



EMPIRICAL FORMULA

"which extends over many nations" [SIGN]

In the very first issue of The Baker Street Journal, Rolfe Boswell took on a geographical challenge in "In Uffish Thought."

He noted that there was no island of Uffa listed in any kind of reference book in the New York Public Library. This was of course in reference to this excerpt from the opening of "The Adventure of the Five Orange Pips":

"The year '87 furnished us with a long series of cases of greater or less interest, of which I retain the records. Among my headings under this one twelve months I find an account of the adventure of the Paradol Chamber, of the Amateur Mendicant Society, who held a luxurious club in the lower vault of a furniture warehouse, of the facts connected with the loss of the British barque "Sophy Anderson" of the singular adventures of the Grice Patersons in the island of Uffa..."

While there was no island mentioned, Uffa did warrant two entries in the Encyclopedia Britannica:

"Tradition tells that Uffa, who probably threw up the earthworks called the Castle Hill, established the capital of East Anglia at Thetford about 575."

"According to tradition, Uffa made a fortification at Norwich about 570."

Boswell very cleverly determines that the mound and castle could be considered like an island and therefore might very well be the reference.

In his Sherlockian Atlas, Julian Wolff identified it in Plate IV: "The Map That Was Wanted: THE ISLAND OF UFA (sic) As Charted by the U.S. Navy.

He noted that it was part of the Solomon Islands, specifically the Russell Islands Eastern Part: Ufa Island (now called Ufaon). Based on its remote location in the South Pacific, the Grice Patersons must have had some remarkable adventures indeed while there.


*But the minds at **Baker Street Elementary** seem to be wandering a bit...*

LET'S MAKE A LIST OF WHAT
THE BRITISH EMPIRE IS
PRESENTLY COMPOSED OF...
CAN ANYONE START US OFF?



NOT A CHANCE... THIS IS A TRICK QUESTION.

WE'RE AN EMPIRE?



THE SUN NEVER SETS ON OUR EMPIRE... IN
NO PARTICULAR ORDER, WE HAVE...
BAHAMAS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, NATAL,
PROVINCE OF CANADA, VICTORIA, STRAITS
SETTLEMENT, NORTH-WESTERN TERRITORY...



...BENGAL, VANCOUVER ISLAND, ASCENSION
ISLAND, MAURITUS, BIGHT OF BIAFRA, CAPE
COLONY, GAMBIA COLONY, NATAL, SIERRA LEONE
COLONY, WALVIS BAY, ISLE OF MAN, DUTCH INDIA,
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEWFOUNDLAND, BARBUDA,
MALDIVES, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, RUPERT'S
LAND, LEEWARD ISLANDS, WINDWARD ISLANDS,
BAY ISLANDS, BRITISH HONDURAS, CAYMAN
ISLANDS, DOMINICA, JAMAICA, REDONDA...



...BENGAL, VANCOUVER ISLAND, ASCENSION ISLAND, MAURITUS, BIGHT OF BIAFRA, CAPE COLONY, GAMBIA COLONY, NATAL, SIERRA LEONE COLONY, WALVIS BAY, ISLE OF MAN, DUTCH INDIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, NEWFOUNDLAND, BARBUDA, MALDIVES, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, QUEENSLAND, SANDWICH ISLANDS, TRINIDAD, RUPERT'S LAND, PITCAIRN ISLANDS, NEW ZEALAND...



...LEEWARD ISLANDS, WINDWARD ISLANDS, BAY ISLANDS, BRITISH HONDURAS, CAYMAN ISLANDS, DOMINICA, JAMAICA, REDONDA, TRINIDAD, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS, BRITISH GUIANA, LOWER BURMA, HONG KONG, BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY, ENGLAND, GUERNSEY, HELIGOLAND, IONIAN ISLANDS, UNITED KINGDOM, BRITISH COLUMBIA, JERSEY, MALTA, SOUTH ORKNEY, SOUTH SHETLAND, VICTORIA LAND, BERMUDA, FALKLAND ISLANDS, SAINT HELENA, SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS...



...SEYCHELLES, COCOS ISLANDS, NOVA SCOTIA, BONIN ISLANDS, LORD HOWE ISLANDS, NEW SOUTH WALES, NEW HEBRIDES, AND TASMANIA.



WHAT THE...??

AMAZING, HE CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER TO TIE HIS SHOES IN THE MORNING.

HOW DID YOU REMEMBER ALL OF THOSE?

MY OLDER BROTHER TAUGHT ME TO SING IT TO THE TUNE OF 'KNEES UP, MOTHER BROWN'.



PROBABLY NOT APPROPRIATE, BUT WHATEVER WORKS FOR YOU.

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED A CHILD'S
GREATEST DREAM ALMOST ALWAYS EQUATES
TO A MOTHER'S WORST NIGHTMARE?



DEBRIEF

"I shall be brief, and yet exact" [FINA]

Writing an essay can be difficult, particularly when left with little to the imagination.

*Such is the case here at I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere. Thankfully, the **Baker Street Elementary** team gives us something to ponder every two weeks.*

This time, our thoughts turned to Sherlock Holmes and the number of words that Conan Doyle used in each story.

*While we didn't unearth a source of word counts of each story in the Canon [Our mind hazily recalls such a reference; any feedback from our readership on where we might find such a reference would be most welcome. - Ed.], the shortest story would have been in the realm of the **Baker Street Elementary** assignment.*

When we include the Apocrypha (those stories that Conan Doyle wrote outside of the traditional 60 stories), his custom story for Queen Mary's dollhouse is the clear winner. "How Watson Learned the Trick" comes in at just 503 words.

*Of course, it may take you longer to read, as you might need to locate a strong magnifying glass first. Squint a little bit and see if you can make out the short essay at **Baker Street Elementary**...*

TODAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

WRITE A 200-WORD ESSAY ON
'WHAT EASTER MEANS TO YOU'



THEY SAY A PICTURE IS
WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS...



PLEASE CREDIT THE OTHER 800
WORDS TO FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS!



SHERLOCK, YOUR SOLVING OF 'THE ADVENTURE OF THE MISSING BUTTER KNIVES' WAS SIMPLY AMAZING.



THE HEADMASTER IS VERY APPRECIATIVE.



WITHOUT GIVING AWAY ALL MY SECRETS, THE CASE HINGED ON THE PARSLEY / BUTTER MIXTURE SPREAD ON THE SUPPER BREAD.



MRS. HUDSON DOES NOT MIX PARSLEY WITH OUR BUTTER.



MAYBE IT WAS GARLIC.



NOPE... SEVERAL STUDENTS HAVE A LOW TOLERANCE TO GARLIC... MRS. HUDSON WOULD NOT SUBJECT THOSE STUDENTS TO THE SUBSTANCE... I WONDER WHAT THE GREEN MATERIAL MEANS?

IT MEANS THE LOCAL BAKER REALLY NEEDS TO PUT AN EXPIRATION DATE ON HIS LOAVES OF BREAD.



IT MEANS I AM GLAD I EAT AT THE GIRL'S SCHOOL.

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT BREAD PUNS?

WHAT?

THEY NEVER GET MOULD.



I UNDERSTAND IT IS HARD TO FIND A RELIABLE BAKER.

WHY IS THAT?

THEY TEND TO LOAF AROUND TOO MUCH.



WRITE AWAY

"Why do you not write them yourself?' I said, with some bitterness."

The "game" that Sherlockians pursue is shrouded in the belief that the true author of the Sherlock Holmes tales is Dr. John H. Watson. Not that we ought to think otherwise, since the very first story, A Study in Scarlet, opens with these words:

(Being a reprint from the reminiscences of
John H. Watson, M.D.,
late of the Army Medical Department)

In our fun tradition, the lesser role is given to Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle, whom we assign the role of "literary agent" on behalf of Dr. Watson. It's all tongue-in-cheek, but makes for interesting thought experiments on everything from determining the chronology of the stories to squaring inconsistencies from tale to tale.

Occasionally though, we find stories that are not narrated by Watson. "The Blanched Soldier" is a fine example, in the collection of stories called The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes.

Published in 1926, it comes from Sherlock Holmes's own pen, opening thusly:

"The ideas of my friend Watson, though limited, are exceedingly pertinacious. For a long time he has worried me to write an experience of my own. Perhaps I have rather invited this persecution, since I have often had occasion to point out to him how superficial are his own accounts and to accuse him of pandering to popular taste instead of confining himself rigidly to facts and figures. "Try it yourself, Holmes!" he has retorted, and I am compelled to admit that, having taken my pen in my hand, I do begin to realize that the matter must be presented in such a way as may interest the reader."

We see that even as early as their years at **Baker Street Elementary**, there was already some jockeying over authorship...

SHERLOCK, IRENE AND I REVIEWED YOUR
WRITE-UP OF THE 'CASE OF THE MISSING
BUTTER KNIVES' FOR THE SCHOOL PAPER.



THE TERM 'TOME' CAME TO MIND.

IGNATIUS, I BELIEVE I COVERED
THE IMPORTANT FACTS OF THE CASE
IN A VERY SUCCINCT MANNER.



SUCCINCT WAS NOT THE WORD I
WAS GOING TO EMPLOY.

QUITE HONESTLY, IT WAS DRIER THAN OUR
LATIN VOCABULARY PRIMER.



OUR DISSECTION MANUAL HAS MORE DRAMA.



HAVING A TOOTH PULLED IS
SLIGHTLY LESS PAINFUL.

SO WHAT YOU ARE SUGGESTING...

YOU SOLVE THE
CASES, LET JOHN
CHRONICLE THEM.



I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND.

AND I CAN GIVE JOHN A FEW WRITING
TIPS IF HE EVER NEEDS THEM.




I NOTICED YOUR LATEST PUBLISHED ADVENTURE
IN THE SCHOOL PAPER HAD THE BYLINE 'JOHN
WATSON'... IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK TO NORMAL.



NORMAL? DO YOU NOT RECOGNIZE HOW
EXTREMELY COMPLICATED THIS CASE WAS?

YES, IGNATIUS, DO
YOU NOT SEE THAT?



ONLY MY ABILITY TO OBSERVE THE MINUTE
AMOUNT OF STEAM ARISING FROM THE HORSE
MANURE ALLOWED ME TO BETTER DETERMINE
THE TIME OF THE KIDNAPPING.



I WOULD NOT HAVE LOOKED FOR STEAM.

DOES A HORSE RECOGNIZE THEIR MANURE
FEEDS THE SOIL, THE SOIL FEEDS THE
GRASS, AND THEY THEN EAT THE GRASS?



THAT WOULD PUT ME OFF MY FEED.

MY MOTHER HAS A FAVOURITE SAYING, "MANURE HAPPENS".



IF YOUR JOB IS TO SHOVEL MANURE ALL DAY, WHEN YOU USE THE PRIVY, DO YOU HAVE TO WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE YOU RETURN TO WORK?



ARE YOU SUPPLEMENTING THE COMPANY?

AFTER 40 DAYS AND NIGHTS, I BET NOAH WENT INTO THE FERTILIZER BUSINESS ONCE THEY LEFT THE ARK.



WE'RE LOSING SIGHT OF MY ACCOMPLISHMENT.

IN THIS CASE, I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO KEEP MY EYE ON THE PRIZE.



THE GAME'S AFOOT

"the scholarship is a very valuable one" [3STU]

For over a hundred years, Sherlockians have pursued "the game" — the pseudo-scholarly effort to understand the Sherlock Holmes stories as having been written by John H. Watson, MD rather than by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

This was first undertaken by Monsignor Ronald Knox in a paper delivered at Oxford University in 1911. Michael Crowe covered it extensively in his Ronald Knox and Sherlock Holmes: Origins of Sherlockian Studies, published by Wessex Press (now out of print, but occasionally available from other sellers).

Dorothy Sayers summed up the hobby in Unpopular Opinions in 1946, demonstrating the application of Higher Criticism to the Canon had

"the aim of showing that, by those methods, one could disintegrate a modern classic as speciously as a certain school of critics have endeavoured to disintegrate the Bible. Since then, the thing has become a hobby among a select set of jesters."

Further, she specified:

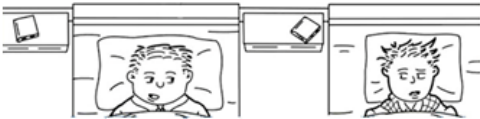
"The rule of the game is that it must be played as solemnly as a county cricket match at Lord's; the slightest touch of extravagance or burlesque ruins the atmosphere."

And so, we acknowledge Conan Doyle's important role—that of literary agent—and Watson's eternal contribution to the world of detective fiction (fact?).

*And to think that it all began at **Baker Street Elementary**...*

HOLMES, I HAVE SOMETHING
TO CONFESS TO YOU.

I KNOW YOU TOOK THE LAST
CHOCOLATE OUT MY BED
STAND... I FORGIVE YOU.



THANKS, BUT THAT WAS NOT IT... AS YOU KNOW,
THE SCHOOL PAPER HAS PUBLISHED 12 TALES OF
YOUR EXPLOITS, WITH ME LISTED AS THE AUTHOR.



I MUST ADMIT, I WAS NOT ACTUALLY
THE WRITER OF THE STORIES.

WATSON, I HAVE KNOWN
THAT SINCE THE FIRST ONE
WAS PUBLISHED.



HOW COULD YOU
POSSIBLY KNOW THAT?

EASY... I HAVE HELPED YOU WITH MANY OF
YOUR SCHOOL ESSAYS AND THEME PAPERS.



WHILE YOU ARE ABOVE AVERAGE IN WRITING
TALENTS, YOU ARE NOT CAPABLE OF TURNING A
PHRASE AS EVIDENCED IN THE SCHOOL STORIES.




THE ACTUAL AUTHOR OF THE EXPLOITS IS...

...I AM ALSO AWARE IT IS
OUR ESTEEMED FRIEND,
MASTER DOYLE.




AGAIN, HOW DID YOU FIGURE THAT OUT?

ONLY MASTER DOYLE USES THE TERM 'SINGULAR' AS FREQUENTLY AS USED IN THE PUBLISHED TALES.



AND WHILE CATCHY, I DO NOT BELIEVE I HAVE USED THE PHRASE, 'THE GAME IS AFOOT'.



IS IT SCOTCH-HOPPERS?


IS WHAT?

A GAME INVOLVING A FOOT?



GOING FORWARD, ALL THE STORIES WILL LIST DOYLE AS THE AUTHOR.

HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?




I WILL CONTINUE TO CHRONICLE YOUR EXPLOITS IN MY JOURNAL... THEN I WILL TAKE MY NOTES TO DOYLE, WHO WILL TURN THEM, ALONG WITH MY OWN THOUGHTS, INTO THE ADVENTURE TO BE PUBLISHED...



OF COURSE, YEARS FROM NOW, PEOPLE WILL PROBABLY STILL THINK I ACTUALLY WROTE THE TALES, ASSUMING YOU MAKE THIS YOUR CAREER.

THAT WOULD MAKE FOR A FUN GAME.



THIS WEEKEND I ASKED MY DAD IF HE COULD EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A RADIUS, DIAMETER, AND CIRCUMFERENCE OF A CIRCLE.



MY PARENTS NEVER HELP ME WITH MY MATH HOMEWORK.



YES, I HAVE LEARNED I GET HIGHER GRADES BY SIMPLY GUESSING THAN USING MY PARENTS.

INSTEAD, HE ASKED ME... WHAT DO YOU GET IF YOU DIVIDE A PUMPKIN'S CIRCUMFERENCE BY IT'S RADIUS?


PUMPKIN π



HE THEN SAID 3.14% OF SAILORS ARE 'PI -- RATES'... ONCE AGAIN, MY MON HAD TO HELP WITH THE HOMEWORK.




MY PARENTS TOOK ME TO A BALLET
AT THE THEATER LAST NIGHT.

Three cartoon characters are sitting at a table, looking at papers. The character on the left is wearing a hat and a suit. The character in the middle is wearing a hat and a suit. The character on the right is wearing a hat and a suit.

AFTERWARDS, MY MUM SUGGETED MY FATHER
SHOULD TAKE ME TO MORE CULTURAL EVENTS TO
BROADEN MY KNOWLEDGE AND TASTES.


Three cartoon characters are sitting at a table, looking at papers. The character on the left is wearing a hat and a suit. The character in the middle is wearing a hat and a suit. The character on the right is wearing a hat and a suit.

MY FATHER OFFERED TO TAKE ME TO A
BURLSQUE SHOW NEXT WEEKEND.

Three cartoon characters are sitting at a table, looking at papers. The character on the left is wearing a hat and a suit. The character in the middle is wearing a hat and a suit. The character on the right is wearing a hat and a suit.

WHAT'S A BURLESQUE SHOW?

THEY NEVER EXPLAINED, BUT DID
YOU KNOW A FATHER CAN BE SENT
TO BED WITHOUT SUPPER?

Three cartoon characters are sitting at a table, looking at papers. The character on the left is wearing a hat and a suit. The character in the middle is wearing a hat and a suit. The character on the right is wearing a hat and a suit.

THE BEESPECTACLED BAND

"He peered at me with great curiosity" [FINA]

For a set of stories that was written by a physician who himself was a failed ophthalmologist, it's comforting to see his former profession creep into the Canon.

One entry in the Sherlock Holmes stories, "The Golden Pince-Nez," even scores a title that was directly associated with Conan Doyle's former field of study. But what about other appearances of corrective lenses in the works?

Here's a quick accounting of some of those who required glasses:

- Mr. Sherman, the animal proprietor, had "stooping shoulders, a stringy neck, and blue-tinted glasses." [SIGN]
- Mary Sutherland wore pince-nez and her stepfather, James Windibank "wore tinted glasses against the glare." [IDEN]
- John Openshaw entered 221B Baker Street, saying "'I owe you an apology," he said, raising his golden pince-nez to his eyes." [FIVE]
- A more grandiose entrance came from Lord Robert St. Simon, who "advanced slowly into the room, turning his head from left to right, and swinging in his right hand the cord which held his golden eyeglasses." [NOBL]
- Jephro Rucastle "sat at [Miss Stoper's] elbow with a pair of glasses on his nose, looking very earnestly at the ladies who entered." [COPP]
- Wilson Kemp "was a little gentleman, with glasses, thin in the face, but very pleasant in his ways, for he was laughing all the time that he was talking." [GREE]
- One of the other famous pairs of glasses in the Canon was worn by Charles Augustus Milverton, whose "grey eyes, which gleamed brightly from behind broad, golden-rimmed glasses." [CHAS]
- Dr. Mortimer had "a long nose like a beak, which jutted out between two keen, gray eyes, set closely together and sparkling brightly from behind a pair of gold-rimmed glasses." [HOUN]
- John McMurdo's "gray eyes gleamed with sudden and dangerous anger from behind his glasses." [VALL]
- "Our client [Nathan Garrideb] shone with pleasure and his eyes gleamed from behind his big glasses." [3GAR]
- Professor Presbury "appeared at the front window, and we were aware of a pair of keen eyes from under shaggy brows which surveyed us through large horn glasses." [CREE]

We're grateful that Conan Doyle wasn't so completely turned off by the study of the ocular that he gave up thinking about such things entirely.

One of the reasons the Canon worked well at the time and remains popular today is its reality.

Look around: we're surrounded by people who wear glasses.

Meanwhile, **Baker Street Elementary** brings this into focus for us...

MEANWHILE,
IN THE U.S...

BURT, HAVE YOU WORN
GLASSES ALL OF YOUR LIFE?

AS FAR BACK AS I CAN REMEMBER.



MY EARLIEST MEMORY IS MY DAD TAKING ME TO
GET THE GLASSES... LIFE BEFORE THAT IS A BLUR.



MY PARENTS HAVE TRIED TO CONVINCE ME
THEY ME LOOK SMARTER... NOT NECESSARILY
THE LOOK I AM GOING FOR IN SCHOOL.



DO I LOOK ANY MORE INTELLIGENT?
OR SEXIER? GOOD GRIEF, HOW DO YOU
SEE ANYTHING WITH THESE ON?


HEY SCOTT, GIVE THOSE BACK!!



IT'S AMAZING HOW OFTEN THIS HAPPENS.




WHAT DID YOU THINK OF MY ART PROJECT, MA'AM?



IT'S DIFFERENT. _____

DEFINE DIFFERENT.



IT HAS A LOT OF IMAGINATION AND ENERGY. _____

DOES SHE EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS?



SHOULD I TELL HER I DROPPED MY PAINT PALETTE ON THE PAPER, AND SHE'S LOOKING AT THE RESULT?

THINK SHE'LL HANG IT ON THE WALL IN THE HALLWAY?



ONLY IF THEY RENAME IT THE 'HALL OF SHAME'.

THAT SMARTS

"I am a farcical bungler" [EMPTY]

Every student of comedy film history knows Young Frankenstein, the Mel Brooks / Gene Wilder farce that picks up two generations after the original story.

It debuted in 1974 to great acclaim, starring Wilder as the young Froederick Frankenstein, with Marty Feldman as Igor, Madeline Kahn as Frankenstein's fiancée, Teri Garr as Frankenstein's assistant, Peter Boyle as the monster, and Cloris Leachman in a send-up role as Frau Blücher.

According to Wilder, he had been wanting to do a film about Sherlock Holmes for some time when, during the filming of Young Frankenstein, his friend, producer Richard Roth, asked him if he ever thought about Holmes as a basis for film comedy.

Once a week for the past year," Wilder said. (Deerstalker! Holmes and Watson on Screen by Ron Haydock, The Scarecrow Press, 1978)

Thus was born The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes's Smarter Brother. The film brought Wilder, Feldman, and Kahn back together, as Sigerson Holmes, Orville Sacker, and Jenny Hill, respectively.

Sigerson was Sherlock's younger and insecure brother, and Sacker (whose name was inspired by Conan Doyle's first choice of name for Dr. Watson: Ormond Sacker), who had a phonographic memory - a perfect recollection of the spoken word.

Interestingly, Wilder's first choice to play Sherlock Holmes in that film was Keith McConnell (who had played Holmes in Schlitz Malt Liquor commercials!). McConnell had also played Holmes in the famously-deleted scene in Neil Simon's Murder By Death.

Because of the change in venue from Hollywood to London and because of a shift in scheduling, McConnell was unable to play the role in Smarter Brother — a role that had been much more prominent before a rewrite.

Sherlock Holmes, of course, would go to none other than Douglas Wilmer. Meanwhile, **Baker Street Elementary** has some ab(by)normal activity in its theatre department...

I HAVE SCRIPTED OUR SUMMER PLAY,
WHICH WILL BE A BLOCKBUSTER.



WE WILL BE PRESENTING THE WONDERFUL
GOTHIC HORROR STORY, 'FRANKENSTEIN'.



STAMFORD, YOU WILL BE PLAYING 'IGOR'.

I BELIEVE IT IS
PRONOUNCED 'EYE-GOR'.



JUST REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR
HUMP ON THE PROPER SIDE.

WHAT HUMP?



WILLIAM, YOU WILL PLAY 'THE MONSTER',
AND SHERLOCK, YOU WILL PORTRAY
'VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN'.



WHILE NOT IN THE NOVEL, I THINK IRENE SHOULD
PLAY 'INGA', VICTOR'S YOUNG ASSISTANT..



OR MY FATHER'S OLDER
ASSISTANT, 'FRAU BLÜCHER'??

NEIGH

WAS THAT A HORSE?



I FORGET... IS IT 'AB-NORMAL'
OR 'ABBHEY-NORMAL'?



SOUNDS MORE LIKE A COMEDY THAN
A GOTHIC HORROR PLAY TO ME.


AUUGH!!

WE'RE GOING BACK TO
'ROMEO AND JULIET'.




HOW DID YOU SPEND THIS WEEKEND?

MY FATHER TOOK MYCROFT
AND I FISHING... WE ATE
TROUT FOR 2 DAYS.

A line drawing of two young boys sitting at a table. On the table are a laptop and a tablet. The boy on the left is looking towards the other boy, and the boy on the right is looking down at the tablet.

MY FAMILY HAS AN INTERESTING PROVERB...
GIVE A WATSON A FISH, AND THE FAMILY WILL
EAT ALL DAY... TEACH A WATSON TO FISH, AND
HIS FAMILY WILL LIKELY STARVE TO DEATH.

A line drawing of a young boy sitting at a table. On the table are a laptop and a tablet. The boy is looking towards the viewer.

THE WOMEN IN OUR FAMILY HAVE A SIMILAR
SAYING... GIVE A MAN A FISH, AND WE WILL
EAT ALL DAY... TEACH A MAN TO FISH, AND
YOU'LL BE RID OF HIM ALL WEEKEND.

A line drawing of a young boy wearing a hat, sitting at a table. On the table are a laptop and a tablet. The boy is looking towards the viewer.

A MARKED MAN

"on the down grade" [VEIL]

Thinking about the actions in "The Three Students," where we find that the tutor Hilton Soames is concerned because someone has disturbed papers on his desk, we have to wonder.

Students who were going for the Fortescue Scholarship had to submit an exam that included "a large passage of Greek translation."

There is no indication that the students would have had knowledge beforehand of exactly which work from the classics would be the subject of their translation.

The proofs of "half a chapter of Thucydides" arrived at Soames' rooms, and were left out when Gilchrist happened to stop by. Now, he wouldn't have had to copy the entirety of the paper (nor would he have had time to do so) while Soames was out. But all he had to do was to verify which chapter the excerpt was from.

Then, Gilchrist could retire to his room and study the chapter in question.

But here's our question: if Soames had to review the proofs for accuracy, then perhaps he could have used them to his advantage.

That is, if they were taken from a different text than the students had in their possession, variations or inaccuracies might have been helpful.

That is, had Soames left any errors in the text in place, they would have acted as a mountweazel of sorts and indicated who was translating the proofs in hand versus who was copying from his text.

*Meanwhile, a weasel of a different sort is lurking at **Baker Street Elementary...***

MASTER STAMFORD, DID YOU MISS
SOME OF YOUR CLASSES YESTERDAY? _____

NOT REALLY.



**IN 100 WORDS OR LESS, EXPLAIN
YOUR VIEW ON THE MONARCHY.**



MASTER STAMFORD, I HOPE I DID
NOT JUST SEE YOU LOOKING ONTO _____
MASTER WATSON'S PAPER.

I HOPE YOU DIDN'T SEE ME EITHER.



CLASS, I AM A LITTLE CONCERNED
THAT SOMEONE MAY HAVE HAD
ACCESS TO THE QUIZ LAST WEEK
AND COPIED DOWN THE ANSWERS.



DO YOU BELIEVE IT WAS ME, MA'AM?



STAMFORD, AFTER GRADING YOUR
QUIZ, I AM CONFIDENT YOU DID
NOT ACCESS TO THE ANSWERS.




THERE ARE TIMES I DON'T THINK I
DESERVE THE LOW GRADES YOU GIVE ME.



I DON'T EITHER, BUT THEY ARE THE
LOWEST I AM ALLOWED TO GIVE YOU.

MOTHERS SOMETIMES
JUST DO NOT HAVE MUCH
OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR.

DO TELL.




A comic panel showing two boys sitting at a desk. The boy on the left is speaking, and the boy on the right is responding. There are small book-like objects on the desk in front of each boy.

LAST WEEKEND, I COULD NOT FIND MY
KNUCKLEBONES... I TOLD MY MOTHER THEY
WERE NOT WHERE I HAD LEFT THEM.




A comic panel showing a single boy sitting at a desk, continuing the conversation. There are small book-like objects on the desk in front of him.

SHE SUGGESTED IF I PUT THEM UP
AFTER I PLAYED WITH THEM, I
WOULD KNOW WHERE THEY WERE.



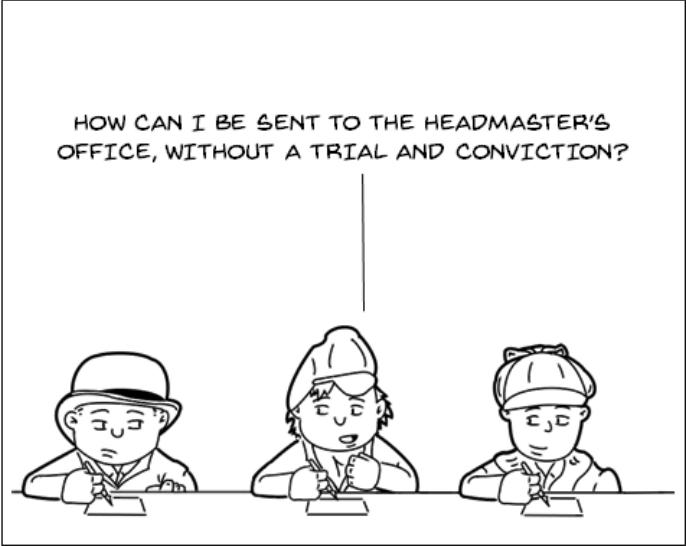
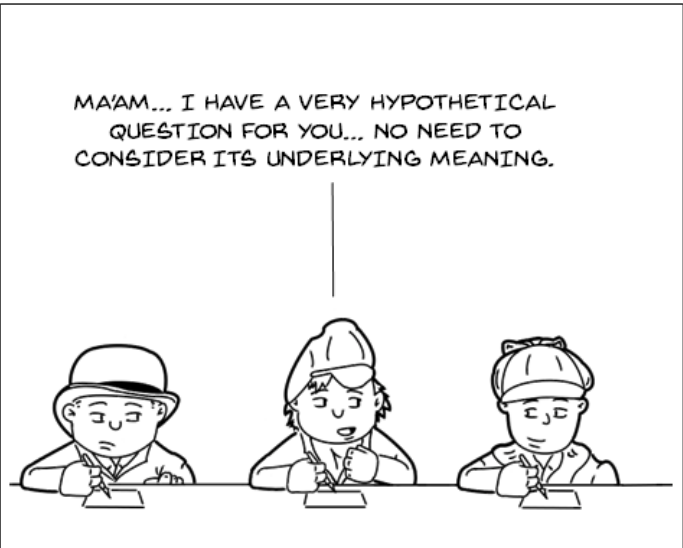
A comic panel showing a single boy sitting at a desk, continuing the conversation. There are small book-like objects on the desk in front of him.

I TOLD HER I KNOW WHERE I LEAVE
THINGS, IT'S WHEN SHE PUTS THEM UP
THAT THINGS GET MESSSED UP.



CAN'T IMAGINE SHE DID NOT
LAUGH AT THAT SUGGESTION.

A comic panel showing two boys sitting at a desk. The boy on the right is speaking. There are small book-like objects on the desk in front of each boy.



HOW DID YOU EVER FIGURE OUT MR. WOODHOUSE WAS CHEATING THE SCHOOL?

A black and white line drawing of three boys wearing different styles of hats (a flat cap, a bowler hat, and a flat cap with a band) looking over a low brick wall. The boy on the left is speaking, with a line from his mouth to the text above.

IT WAS FAIRLY SIMPLE... THE DISEASE HE CLAIMED TO HAVE CAUGHT ON A SCHOOL-FUNDED TRIP TO AFRICA WAS FAKE.

FAKE?

A black and white line drawing of the same three boys looking over the brick wall. The boy in the middle is speaking, with a line from his mouth to the text above.

YES... HE CLAIMED TO HAVE CONTRACTED LEPROSY BY COMING IN CONTACT WITH CONTAMINATED BLOOD DURING A VISIT TO A COLONY LAST YEAR.

A black and white line drawing of the three boys looking over the brick wall. The boy on the left is speaking, with a line from his mouth to the text above.

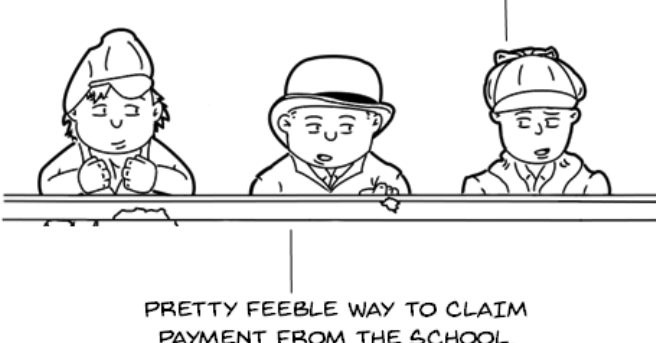
MAKE UP AND OTHER ACTOR'S TRICKS HELPED HIM PULL OFF THE SYMPTOMS... THOSE TRICKS MAY COME IN HANDY SOME DAY.

I SHOULD HAVE SEEN THROUGH HIS DISGUISE.

A black and white line drawing of the three boys looking over the brick wall. The boy on the right is speaking, with a line from his mouth to the text above.

TWO PROBLEMS... THE DISEASE IS NOT SPREAD THROUGH BLOOD... AND THE COLONY HE CLAIMED TO HAVE VISITED CLOSED DOWN ALMOST 5 YEARS AGO.

PRETTY FEEBLE WAY TO CLAIM PAYMENT FROM THE SCHOOL.

A black and white line drawing of the three boys looking over the brick wall. The boy on the right is speaking, with a line from his mouth to the text above.

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU COULD SAY MR. WOODHOUSE BECAME A 'LEPER -- CON'...GET IT??

A black and white line drawing of the three boys looking over the brick wall. The boy on the left is speaking, with a line from his mouth to the text above.

NATURALLY SUPER

"no ghosts need apply" [SUSS]

We have very few "ghost story" elements in the original Sherlock Holmes stories. As Holmes reminds us in "The Sussex Vampire,"

"This agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain."

And yet, we were led to believe—through creative storytelling and incredulous observers—that the supernatural was present:

In The Hound of the Baskervilles, when Dr. Mortimer suspects the hound of being supernatural, he follows up with "Since the tragedy, Mr. Holmes, there have come to my ears several incidents which are hard to reconcile with the settled order of Nature."

Later, when Holmes mentions something about the devil's work, Dr. Mortimer wonders if Holmes believes in the supernatural. Holmes answers, "The devil's agents may be of flesh and blood, may they not?"

In "The Devil's Foot," the vicar Roundhay burst into Holmes's cottage, screaming "We are devil-ridden, Mr. Holmes! My poor parish is devil-ridden! Satan himself is loose in it! We are given over into his hands!"

And in "The Sussex Vampire," the title itself gives us to believe that there are supernatural elements afoot. Holmes, from the very outset, is skeptical of anything of the sort, reminding Watson, "The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply."

Not that Conan Doyle didn't have experience with stories that were other-worldly. "J. Hababuk Jephson's Statement" is a fictional version of the Mary Celeste incident; "Lot No. 249" is the original mummy story; "The Horror of the Heights" makes us wonder what lurks in the skies above; and "The Terror of Blue John Gap" puts our thoughts to what lurks in the earth below.

His ability to create believable scenarios and build suspense through the eyes of his narrators made him a superb storyteller indeed. Perhaps we were never quite so frightened when reading the Sherlock Holmes stories because Watson, our narrator, is fairly fearless.

Fortunately, most feet remain flat-footed on the ground at **Baker Street Elementary**. And some students remain flat on their backs...

HOLMES, DO GHOSTS EXIST?

NOT AT THIS SCHOOL.

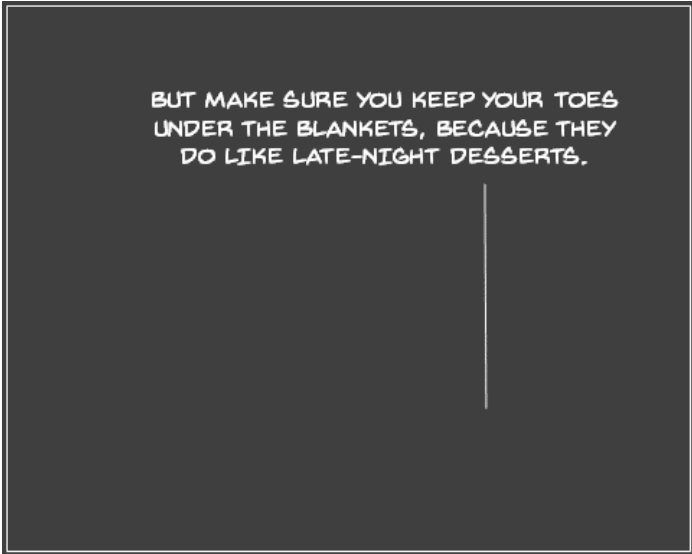
THAT'S A RELIEF... I WOULD NOT HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO SLEEP... WAIT, WHY DID
YOU SAY NOT AT THIS SCHOOL?

IT'S A BIG WORLD,
WATSON... WHO KNOWS
WHAT IS OUT THERE.

THIS SCHOOL STANDS ON FIRM
GROUND... I DON'T SEE ANY GHOSTS
APPLYING TO BE STUDENTS HERE.

WHAT ABOUT MONSTERS
UNDER YOUR BED?

DON'T WORRY STAMFORD, I FED THEM
BEFORE WE RETIRED FOR THE NIGHT.



BURT, MY DAD SUGGESTED AMERICA SHOULD CONSIDER A NATIONAL HOLIDAY TO HONOR FATHERS... IT WOULD CELEBRATE ALL THAT FATHERS DO AROUND THE HOUSE AND IN REARING THE CHILDREN.



MY MOTHER ALMOST HAD A FIT, SHE WAS LAUGHING SO HARD.



MANY COUNTRIES AND RELIGIONS ALREADY HONOR THEIR MOTHERS AND FATHERS, SUCH AS MOTHERING SUNDAY AND SAINT JOSEPH'S DAY.



IF WE DID SUCH A HOLIDAY, I ASSUME WE WOULD HAVE TO BUY THE FATHERS A GIFT, SUCH AS A TIE OR PAIR OF SOCKS.



SCOTT, WHERE WOULD YOU GET THE MONEY TO BUY YOUR FATHER A GIFT?

UHHH... FROM MY DAD.



I HAVE AN IDEA... MAYBE ALL THE DADS SHOULD GO BUY THE GIFTS THEY WANT THEMSELVES, AND SKIP THE MIDDLEMAN.



SOME LONG GREEN

"luxuriant vegetation" [HOUN]

While the latest strip focuses on money — which is where we'll spend a little time — as you'll see in the final panel below, it takes a little twist. A twist that caused us to reconsider the topic of this fortnightly essay.

In our weekly podcast *Trifles*, on which we discuss a variety of topics in the Sherlock Holmes stories, we've talked about money a number of times:

There's Episode 226: "Money Woes," in which we chronicled the panicked crimes committed under the pressure of financial ruin.

And Episode 121: "Old Money," where we discussed the various denominations of coins used in Victorian England.

We talked of expense reports and billing clients in Episode 75, "The Administrative Side of Baker Street."

And of Holmes's professional fees in Episode 76, "Nummi in Arca, or The Fiscal Holmes."

But for all the talk of money, there's less talk in the Canon about another kind of green: vegetables.

Sherlockian society dinners have relatively little from which to choose when it comes to side dishes. We can count on peas or pea soup because "the landlady babbled of green peas at 7:30," as quoted in "The Three Students."

So in Season 4 when we were recording a monthly feature on food, we did something risky. In keeping in the spirit of *Trifles*, we did an entire episode on one passing reference in "The Red-Headed League" that mentioned a vegetarian restaurant:

Episode 163: "Victorian Vegetarians."

Meanwhile, let's hope the boys at **Baker Street Elementary** don't enter a vegetative state while being asked to write an essay...

**IN 200 WORDS OR LESS,
EXPLAIN THE PHRASE, 'MONEY
IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL'**



AND HERE I THOUGHT THE PHRASE WAS,
'MONDAY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL'.



IF IT IS EVIL, I WONDER WHY THEY
COLLECT IT IN CHURCH EACH WEEK?

ANOTHER
MYSTERY OF LIFE.



ACTUALLY, THE PHRASE IS, 'THE LOVE
OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL'.

THAT DOES CHANGE THINGS.



OF COURSE, MY MOTHER SAYS, "IF MONEY IS
THE ROOT TO ALL EVIL, WE MUST BE THE
NICEST FAMILY IN THE WHOLE WORLD".



WOULD BE A CLOSE RACE WITH MY FAMILY.

AND DAD SAYS, "IT MAY BE THE ROOT, BUT
IT STILL DOES NOT GROW ON TREES".

I WOULD BE HAPPY IF IT GREW
INSTEAD OF VEGETABLES.



YOUR GOOSE IS COOKED

"a collector of fairy tales" [HOUN]

If you ask the average person (and let's face it: readers of *I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere* are above average people) about Humpty Dumpty, they'll inevitably conjure up an image of a giant humanoid egg, sitting on a wall.

The nursery rhyme had its origin in 1797, but doesn't make mention of an egg:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Cannot put Humpty together again.

However, it was the fanciful illustrations for Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* by John Tenniel in 1872 that popularized the ovoid version of Humpty Dumpty.

There are many suppositions attached to the origin of the rhyme, including a more modern myth that it referred to a cannon.

To bring it back to Sherlock Holmes, the legendary William S. Baring-Gould, BSI ("The Gloria Scott"), author of *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, also wrote a similar tome: *The Annotated Mother Goose*.

It is listed as "Fascinating footnotes to the common and less common rhymes, telling of each rhyme's origin in the days when "children's" literature did not exist."


Meanwhile, at **Baker Street Elementary**, the study of literature goes on...

BURT, MY FATHER BOUGHT US
FIREWORKS TO SHOOT OFF TONIGHT...
BUY 1, GET 10 FREE... WHAT A BARGAIN.

A hand holding a lit firework, a dog, and a Uncle Sam character.

WHO WOULD COME UP WITH SUCH
A WEIRD SALES SCHEME?

SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE ALL HIS
FINGERS AND TOES TO COUNT WITH.

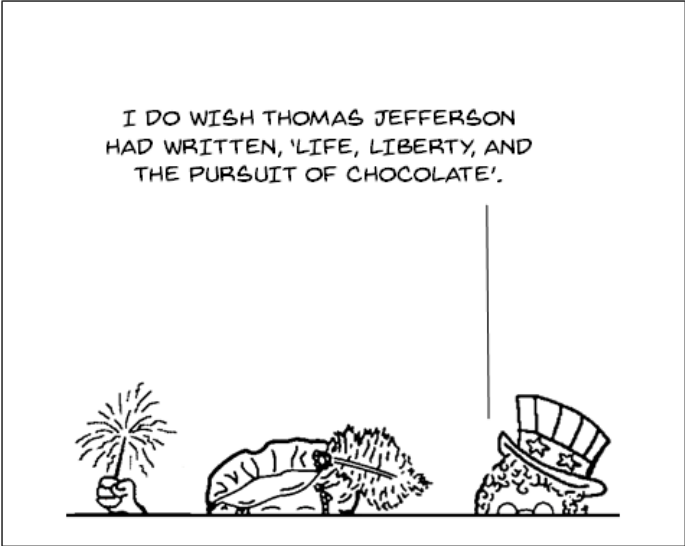
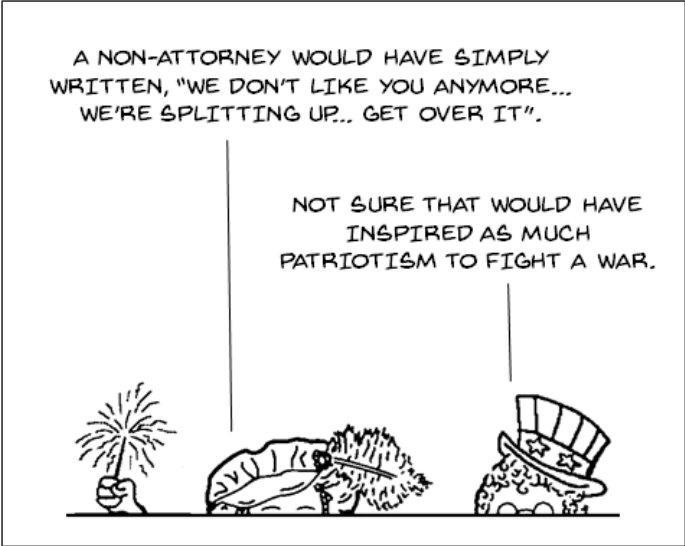
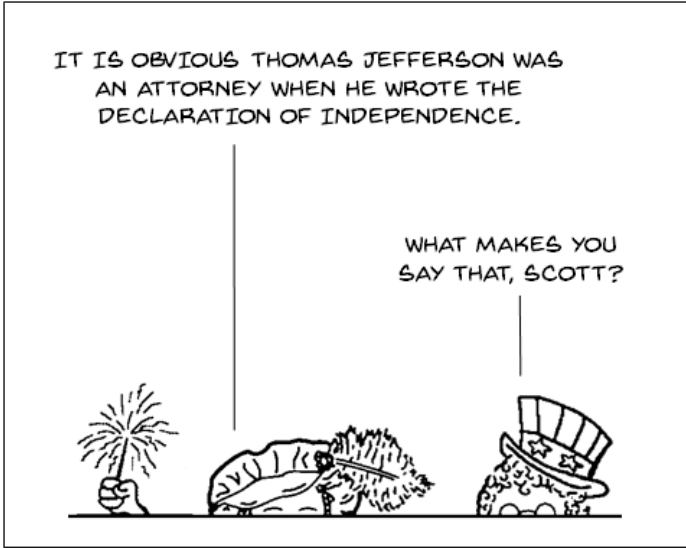
A hand holding a lit firework, a dog, and a Uncle Sam character.

I RECEIVED A CONGRATULATORY LETTER
FROM JOHN WATSON IN ENGLAND,
WISHING US A HAPPY 4TH OF JULY.

A hand holding a lit firework, a dog, and a Uncle Sam character.


HE SAID SHERLOCK HOLDS OUT HOPE SOMEDAY
OUR TWO COUNTRIES WILL RE-UNITE UNDER
ONE STARS AND STRIPES AND UNION JACK.

A hand holding a lit firework, a dog, and a Uncle Sam character.



...COULDN'T PUT HUMPTY TOGETHER AGAIN... ANY QUESTIONS? _____

I HAVE SEVERAL.




WHAT KIND OF EGG WAS HUMPTY DUMPTY? _____



THE NURSERY RHYME DOES NOT SAY. _____

I AM GOING WITH A GOOSE EGG.

HE WAS PRETTY LARGE... I WOULD WAGER HE WAS FROM AN OSTRICH.




I BELIEVE HE WAS FROM THE CHICKEN WHO CROSSED THE ROAD.






MA'AM, WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE
DRAWING I SUBMITTED YESTERDAY
FOR THE CLASS ASSIGNMENT?




MASTER STAMFORD, I AM STILL
ASSESSING IT, BUT... UHHH... IT SHOWS
A LOT OF IMAGINATION, ARTISTRY,
AND... UHHH... ENERGY ON YOUR PART.



JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY, CAN YOU
TELL ME WHAT IT EVEN IS?



I HATE IT WHEN
STUDENTS ASK THESE
TYPE OF QUESTIONS.



LET'S TAKE AN EARLY
LUNCH TODAY STUDENTS...
CLASS DISMISSED.



WHAT GASTRIC DISTRESS IS THIS TODAY?

A black and white line drawing of two boys sitting at a table, eating from bowls. The boy on the left is wearing a beanie and a jacket, looking down at his food. The boy on the right is wearing a fedora and a jacket, looking up and speaking. The background shows a simple building with windows and a balcony.

MRS. HUDSON CALLED IT 'TORTELLINI E ZUCCHINI CON CANNELINI'... IS THAT ITALIAN OR GREEK?



EITHER WAY WE ARE IN BIG TROUBLE.


A black and white line drawing of two boys sitting at a table, eating from bowls. The boy on the left is wearing a beanie and a jacket, looking down at his food. The boy on the right is wearing a fedora and a jacket, looking up and speaking. The background shows a simple building with windows and a balcony.



ANYTIME SHE NAMES SOMETHING WITH LOTS OF '-INI-' TERMS, IT MEANS WE'RE GETTING SLIMY VEGETABLES.

A black and white line drawing of two boys sitting at a table, eating from bowls. The boy on the left is wearing a beanie and a jacket, looking down at his food. The boy on the right is wearing a fedora and a jacket, looking up and speaking. The background shows a simple building with windows and a balcony.

SHE'S VERY TRICKY.



IT'S EVEN WORSE WHEN THE NAMES ALL END IN '-OLI'!

A black and white line drawing of two boys sitting at a table, eating from bowls. The boy on the left is wearing a beanie and a jacket, looking down at his food. The boy on the right is wearing a fedora and a jacket, looking up and speaking. The background shows a simple building with windows and a balcony.

PUN MY WORD

"a certain unexpected vein of pawky humour" [VALL]

Those who frequently use puns are frequently derided by many people. Some consider puns to be the lowest form of humor. We disagree; we can find many other forms of humor that are low. (Many happen daily in our household that includes two teenage boys.)

When you consider it, a pun - also known as paronomasia, a form of word play that exploits multiple meanings of a term, or of similar-sounding words - is a high form of humor, as it requires not only an understanding of the English language, but also a quick wit when sparring with other punsters in real-time.

We've run across a number of Sherlockians who enjoy torturing entertaining others with their puns. The sport seems to have two elements: self-satisfaction in being so deft with words, and the pain inflicted on unsuspecting and unwilling participants.

There is even a level of competition, as punsters try to one-up each others. We once entered ten puns in a contest, hoping one would win. But no pun in ten did.

Take care, as you never know where a pun may hit you (hopefully your funny bone). As you seek them out and happen to get hit in the head with a book, you'll only have your shelf to blame.


A late Baker Street Irregular, Norman Davis ("The Grosvenor Square Furniture Van") used to issue a newsletter called Pun My Word from The Pawky Humorists.

You can probably find mention of it in past issues of Peter Blau's newsletter Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press (which itself is a pun).


And the astute searcher might even be able to find old copies of Davis' book Amusing, Holmes!, filled with all kinds of Sherlockian humor.

*Meanwhile, the boys are yukking it up at **Baker Street Elementary**...*

MA'AM, DID YOU APPRECIATE MY USE OF
A PUN FOR THE ANSWER TO QUESTION
NUMBER 2 ON THE QUIZ TODAY?



ACTUALLY MASTER STAMFORD, I AM
A PROPONENT OF THE STATEMENT,
'PUNS ARE THE LOWEST FORM OF
HUMOUR,' UNLESS SOMEONE CAN
CONVINCE ME OTHERWISE.



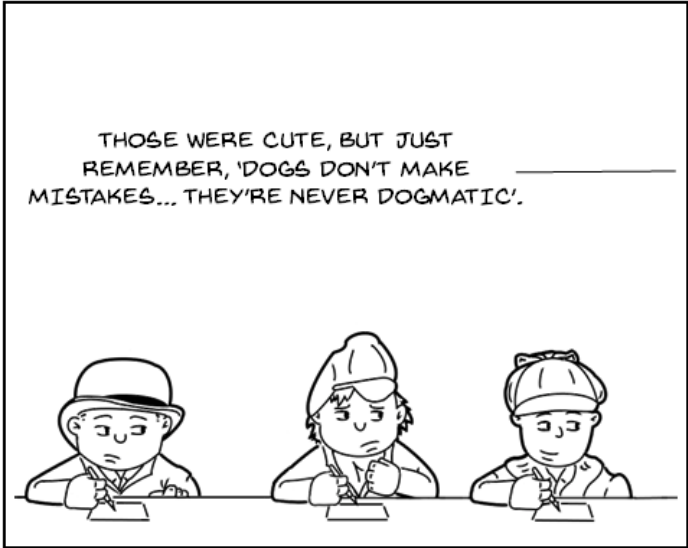
MA'AM, I BELIEVE OTHERS SUBSCRIBE
TO THE THEORY ONLY THOSE CAPABLE OF
CREATING 'GOOD PUNS' APPRECIATE
PUNS TO THEIR FULLEST EXTENT.

THAT WOULD BE ME.



ALRIGHT, MASTER SHERLOCK, PROVIDE
ME WITH YOUR BEST EXAMPLE OF A
'PUN' AND I WILL DETERMINE IF IT IS
COMEDIC OR NOT.






MY PARENTS WILL BE CELEBRATING THEIR ANNIVERSARY NEXT WEEKEND.




MOM SAYS MARRIAGE IS LIKE A DECK OF CARDS... IN THE BEGINNING, ALL YOU NEED IS 2 HEARTS AND A DIAMOND...



AFTER 10 YEARS, YOU MAY WISH YOU HAD A CLUB AND A SPADE.

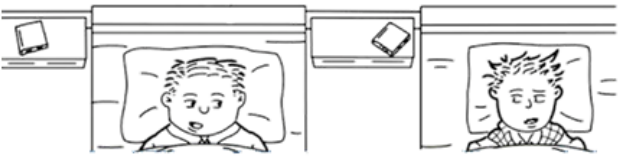
MY DAD SAID THEY HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR 12 YEARS...

THAT'S IMPRESSIVE.




...AND AT LEAST 5 YEARS HAPPILY MARRIED.


OUCH!



MY DAD FINDS IT INTERESTING ANNIVERSARY CARDS ARE USUALLY NEXT TO SYMPATHY CARDS AT THE STORE.



MY DAD DID SAY ONE THING THAT MADE MY MOM CRY... A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE REQUIRES FALLING IN LOVE MANY TIMES, ALWAYS WITH THE SAME PERSON.



A LITTLE TOO SCIENTIFIC

"Now we have the Sherlock Holmes' test" [STUD]

From the moment we first meet Sherlock Holmes, we know he feels at home in a laboratory.

When Watson asked Stamford who the person was who said he was looking for comfortable rooms at a reasonable price, Stamford answered, "A fellow who is working at the chemical laboratory up at the hospital."

He goes on to describe Sherlock Holmes:

"Holmes is a little too scientific for my tastes—it approaches to cold-bloodedness. I could imagine his giving a friend a little pinch of the latest vegetable alkaloid, not out of malevolence, you understand, but simply out of a spirit of inquiry in order to have an accurate idea of the effects. To do him justice, I think that he would take it himself with the same readiness. He appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge."

And of course, over the course of his time with Watson, Holmes continued pursue knowledge via experiments.

The opening scene of "The Naval Treaty," for example, finds Holmes at work on a chemical investigation at his side-table:

A formidable array of bottles and test-tubes, with the pungent cleanly smell of hydrochloric acid, told me that he had spent his day in the chemical work which was so dear to him.

"Well, have you solved it?" I asked as I entered.

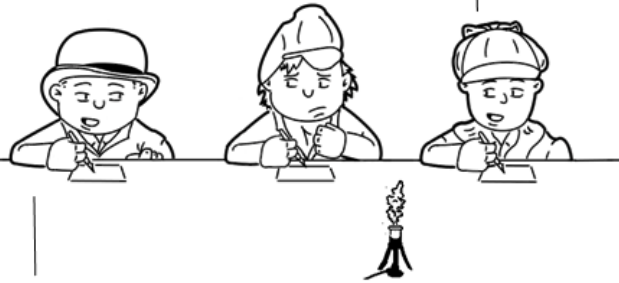
"Yes. It was the bisulphate of baryta."

And we should never forget the self-experimentation inflicted upon Watson and himself that Holmes undertook in "The Devil's Foot."

Holmes was a creature of habit, as Watson observed. And he simply could not kick himself of the habit of experiments.


*Meanwhile, at **Baker Street Elementary**, the boys discover that if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the precipitate...*

OUR EXPERIMENT IS JUST ABOUT COMPLETED.



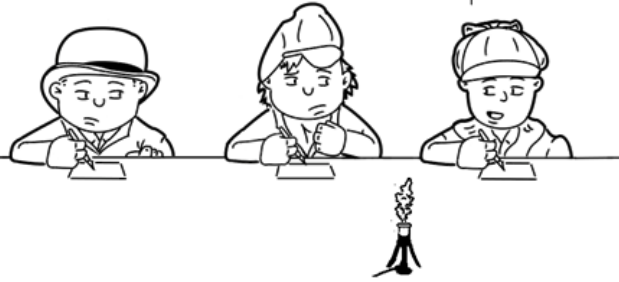
PLEASE REMOVE ME FROM THE PHRASE, 'OUR EXPERIMENT'.

YOU HAVE ALREADY BLOWN UP TWO LABS AND SINGED OFF EVERY HAIR OFF OUR HEADS IN THE PAST.




SCIENCE IS PAINFUL.

REMEMBER THE TENETS OF ALL GREAT CHEMISTS... 'IF AN EXPERIMENT IS SUCCESSFUL, SOMETHING HAS GONE TERRIBLY WRONG'... 'WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, AT LEAST DO IT NEATLY'...



...ADDITIONALLY, IN CASE OF DOUBT, MAKE IT SOUND CONVINCING... DO NOT SIMPLY BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, RELY ON THEM... AND FINALLY, A FAILED EXPERIMENT CAN SERVE AS A NEGATIVE EXAMPLE.



IMAGINE IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL IN
IDENTIFYING HÆMOGLOBIN FROM BLOOD.



IMAGINE IF YOU TWO ACTUALLY DID
THE ASSIGNED EXPERIMENT, CREATING
A LIQUID SOAP, MASTER HOLMES.

IT IS STARTING TO BOIL VIOLENTLY.



OH WATSON, DON'T OVERREACT...
NO PUN INTENDED.




HOW LONG WOULD YOU ESTIMATE
I WILL BE BLUE-TINTED?



MAYBE WE COULD MAKE
THE SOAP AND SEE IF
THAT DOES THE TRICK.


MY DAD HAD AN INTERESTING
IDEA THIS WEEKEND.

CUTTING OFF
YOUR ALLOWANCE.




HE SUGGESTED WORKERS SHOULD HAVE
A DAY CELEBRATING THEIR EFFORTS.

MY FAMILY DOES NOT REALLY
CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS.




MOTHER AGREED, BELIEVING IT WOULD BE
APPROPRIATE TO RECOGNIZE HER DAILY TOILS.

UH, OOOH!




DAD ASKED WHEN SHE HAD
ENTERED THE WORKFORCE?

WHEN'S THE FUNERAL?



I GIVE DAD CREDIT... HIS REFLEXES ARE
STILL SATISFACTORY... THE PORRIDGE BOWL
JUST NICKED THE TOP OF HIS HEAD.

TELL YOU MOM TO
ALWAYS AIM LOWER.



MY MOM CALLS THE DAYS HER CHILDREN
WERE BORN, 'LABOUR DAYS'... SHE DOES
NOT WANT TO HAVE ANY MORE.



A SIXTH SENSE

"That's common sense" [SIGN]

The methods that Sherlock Holmes applied, when not apparent to those around him, seemed almost magical. Even Inspector Stanley Hopkins, no stranger to Holmes and his methods, said this about him:

"I believe that you are a wizard, Mr. Holmes. I really do sometimes think that you have powers that are not human." [ABBE]

When Holmes took the effort to explain his reasoning—to a client like Jabez Wilson in "The Red-Headed League," for example—the magic vanished and it approached common sense:

"I thought at first that you had done something clever, but I see that there was nothing in it, after all."

When it comes to terminology, however, it is interesting to note that Sherlock Holmes himself never refers to his own methods as simply "common sense."

Indeed, as we look across the Canon, the term "common sense" is applied—almost universally—as a pejorative when pointing out the official police and their methods.

In The Sign of Four, Athleney Jones self-identifies with that thread of thought:

"Well, well, if it was fastened the steps could have nothing to do with the matter. That's common sense. Man might have died in a fit; but then the jewels are missing. Ha! I have a theory. These flashes come upon me at times...Let us apply common sense to the matter."

Ironically, it was Jones who called the master "Mr. Sherlock Holmes the theorist" just a few moments before that statement.

Sergeant Wilson of the Sussex Constabulary is with Mrs. Douglas and Cecil Barker at the scene of the crime in The Valley of Fear, his "slow, bucolic common sense was still pondering the open window."

Later, Inspector MacDonald can't seem to wrap his head around the facts:

"Oh, man, it's just inconceivable! It's clean against common sense! I put it to you, Mr. Holmes, judging it by what we have heard."

To the unnamed inspector in "The Three Gables," Sherlock Holmes remarked, "What rugged common sense!"

Holmes valued common sense in his own realm, but was hailed for his analytical reasoning. By putting his professional competition on the plane of common sense, he was able to devalue it and make them seem less capable (not that they needed help) by calling them out for their pedestrian thinking.

Meanwhile, at **Baker Street Elementary**, we find the non-sensical accompanying the common sensical...

WHAT IS THAT SMELL?

I SAID I WAS SORRY!!



NOT THAT... THE WHOLE ROOM SMELLS
LIKE WE ARE IN THE DINING HALL.

STAMFORD, DID YOU SNEAK SOME
FOOD BACK TO THE ROOM?



JUST SOME GARLIC... TO WARD OFF VAMPIRES.



I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN AFTER THAT
STORY THE TEACHER READ TO US TODAY.

STAMFORD, YOU DO REALIZE
VAMPIRES DO NOT REALLY EXIST.



continued

CAN YOU SCIENTIFICALLY PROVE THAT?



EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, COMMON SENSE CAN BE JUST AS IMPORTANT.

WHY IS IT CALLED 'COMMON SENSE' IF SO FEW PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE IT?



HOW DO YOU DEFINE 'COMMON SENSE'?

JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN DO SOMETHING DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD... IT'S THAT SIMPLE.




FOR MYSELF, ANY TIME COMMON SENSE AND CURIOSITY HAVE AN ARGUMENT WITHIN MY HEAD, IT NEVER SEEMS TO END WELL.




HMMM... MAYBE KEEPING A LITTLE GARLIC IN THE ROOM MAKES SENSE.

DO YOU THINK YOU WILL EVER BE FAMOUS?




I BELIEVE IT IS BETTER TO BE CREDIT-WORTHY IN LIEU OF NEWS-WORTHY..

THEY SAY EACH PERSON MAY GET 15 MINUTES OF FAME AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIFE.



SADLY, MOST PEOPLE'S 15 MINUTES ARE AFTER THEY ARE GONE.

I WOULD SETTLE FOR 5 MINUTES OF INFAMY.



A MINOR CONCESSION

"some concession might be made for your personal effects" [3GAB]

Did Sherlock Holmes ever appear on the stage?

We know that plenty of actors have played the great detective on the boards, beginning with Charles Brookfield in the musical parody "Under the Clock." Of course, William Gillette immortalized both himself and Holmes in his legendary appearances.

But what about Holmes himself? We know that he had the ability. In The Sign of Four,

Inspector Athelney Jones remarked:

"You would have made an actor, and a rare one."

Perhaps Holmes had been an actor. In "A Scandal in Bohemia," Watson wrote:

"The stage lost a fine actor, even as science lost an acute reasoner, when he became a specialist in crime."

We could take this to mean that Holmes had indeed been employed on the stage at some point.

We know for certain that Neville St. Clair, "The Man with the Twisted Lip," had been an actor, which made his disguise as Hugh Boone so convincing. This barely noticeable line gives us the origin of his facility with makeup:

"I travelled in my youth, took to the stage, and finally became a reporter on an evening paper in London."

Sherlock Holmes, a fellow actor, would have seen through this disguise had he met Hugh Boone in person. It was only by eliminating all other possibilities that he came to his conclusion; when he arrives at the Bow Street station, Gladstone bag in hand, that was his first meeting with Boone.

Once he is exposed, Holmes lightly scolds St. Claire, saying he should have trusted his wife. When St. Claire breaks down over his children potentially being ashamed of him, we see a very understanding and compassionate response:

"Sherlock Holmes sat down beside him on the couch and patted him kindly on the shoulder."

We put it to you: does this not seem like the reaction of a fellow thespian? One who could understand the rigors, sacrifices, and feelings associated with risking a reputation by playing make-believe?

It seems only logical to concede that Sherlock Holmes did spend some time on the stage.

[BONUS: for additional material regarding Holmes and the stage, follow this link.]

Meanwhile, at **Baker Street Elementary**, the play's the thing...

GREAT NEWS GUYS... THE TICKETS
FOR OUR FALL PLAY GO ON SALE
THIS WEEK... SPREAD THE WORD.



ACTUALLY, MASTER BLAU, ARE YOU
SURE A SHAKESPEAREAN HORROR
COMEDY WILL BE SUCCESSFUL?

YES, THE TAMING OF FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER
SEEMS A VERY STRANGE COMBINATION.



JUST CURIOUS, WHEN DO WE GET OUR CUT OF THE
PROCEEDS? I BELIEVE WE ARE ALL ENTITLED TO
A SMALL SLICE OF THE BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS.

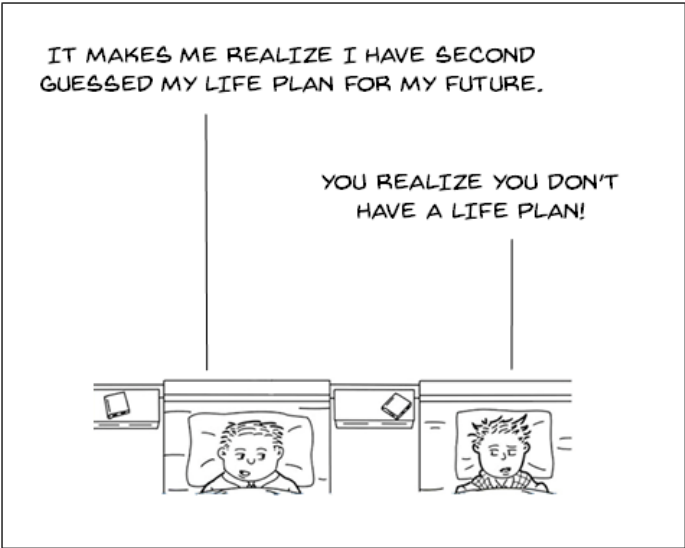
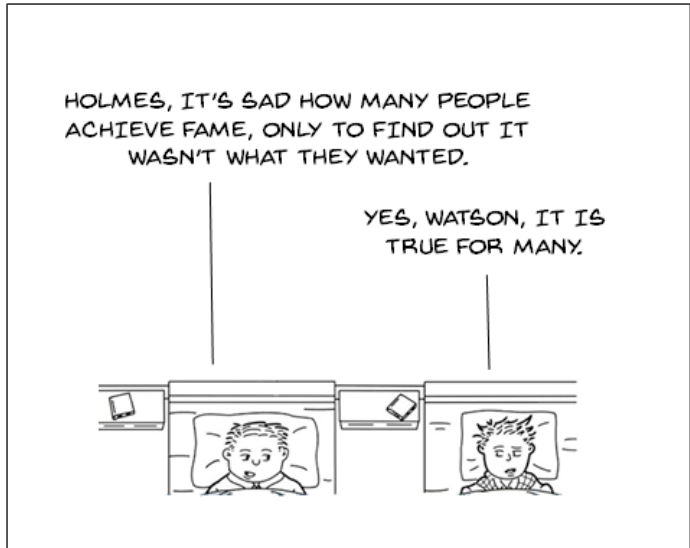
YOU KNOW, IGNATIUS DOES HAVE A
POINT... WITHOUT US PERFORMING, NO
SHOW... NO SHOW, NO TICKETS.



SHERLOCK, DO YOU EXPECT TO GET
PAID OUT OF THE RECEIPTS ALSO?



ACTUALLY, AS THE STAR OF THE PLAY,
I WAS EXPECTING A PERCENTAGE OF
THE CONCESSION STAND.



WHAT MAKES ICE FLOAT ON TOP OF WATER,
SUCH AS ICEBERGS IN THE OCEAN?



EASY, ICE MISSES BEING WATER...

...SO, IT RISES OUT OF THE
WATER... WHEN IT GETS CLOSER TO
THE SUN, IT MELTS BACK TO WATER.




THAT MAKE'S SENSE.



REMEMBER, HE MAY BE
RUNNING THIS _____
COUNTRY SOME DAY.

SO, IF A SHIP PAINTED RED HIT AN
ICEBERG THAT HAD A BLUE TINT TO IT,
WHAT COLOUR WOULD THE PASSENGERS BE?



MAROONED, OF COURSE!!



SECRET INGREDIENT

"he could see a great deal that was hidden from me [STUD]"

When he created Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle knew immediately that he needed to show how the sausage was made.

Or perhaps, given his background, how the haggis was made.

He didn't create the genre of detective fiction, but he did popularize it. Greats such as Edgar Allan Poe and Wilkie Collins preceded him, but Doyle wasn't particularly fond of their heroes' abilities, as told by the authors.

In a 1929 movie reel, he expressed his initial dissatisfaction:

"Well, first of all, about the Sherlock Holmes stories.

"They came about in this way: I was quite a young doctor at the time and I had a course of scientific training, and I used to occasionally to read detective stories, it often annoyed me how in the old-fashioned detective story the detective always seemed to get at his results either by some sort of lucky chance or fluke, or else it was quite unexplained how he got there. He got there but he never gave an explanation to how. Now that didn't seem to me quite playing the game. It seemed to me that he's bound to give his reasons why he came to his conclusions."

So, he set out on a different path. A path that was not only possible but plausible, thanks to Dr. Joseph Bell, a professor at Edinburgh University, who taught Conan Doyle:

"But when I began thinking about this, I began to think of turning scientific methods, as it were, onto the work of detection. And I used, as a student to have an old professor his name was Bell, who was extraordinarily quick at deductive work. He would look at the patient, he would hardly allow the patient to open his mouth but he would make his diagnosis of the disease, and also very often of the patient's nationality and occupation and other points, entirely by his power of observation."

"So naturally I thought to myself, 'well if a scientific man like Bell was to come into the detective business, he wouldn't do these things by chance, he'd get the thing by building it up, scientifically.'"

"So, having once conceived that line of thought, you can well imagine that I had as it were, a new idea of the detective and one which it interested me to work out. I thought of a hundred little dodges, as you may say, a hundred little touches by which he could build up his conclusions and then I began to write stories on those lines."

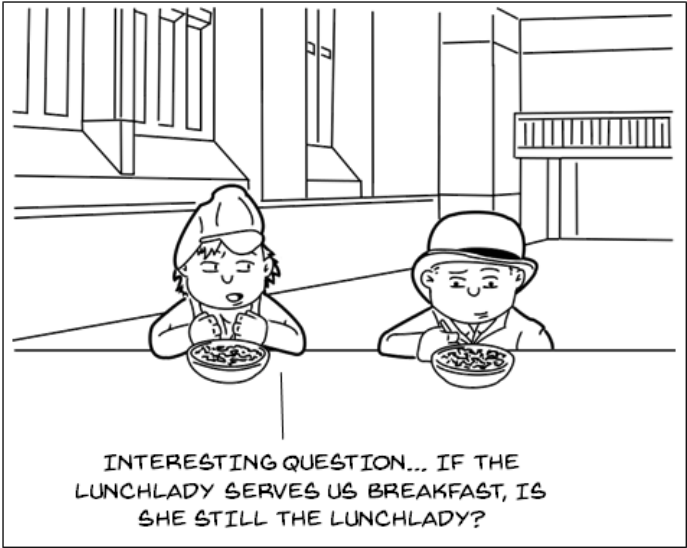
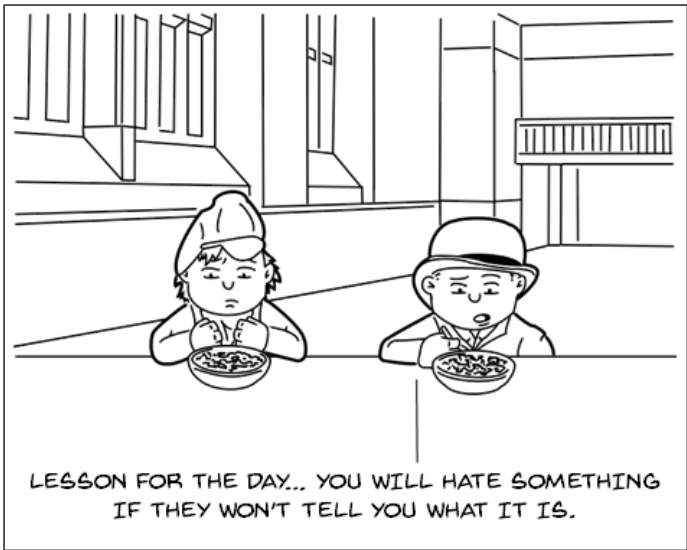
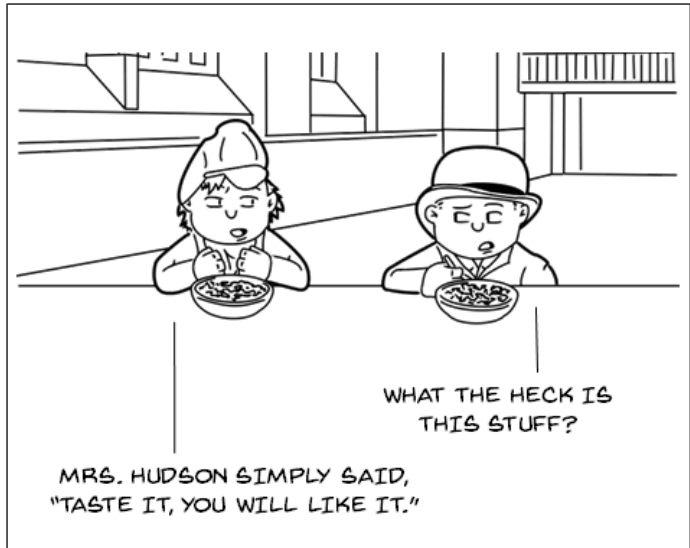
In "The Red-Headed League," Sherlock Holmes said "'Omne ignotum pro magnifico,' you know," which means everything unknown is perceived as grand.

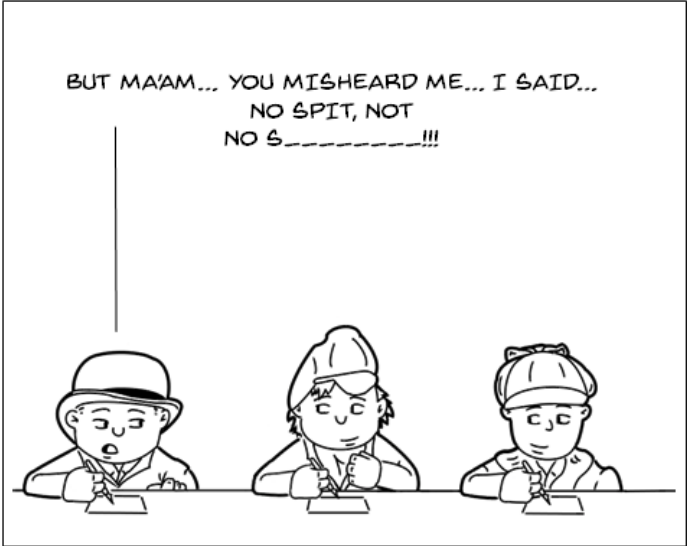
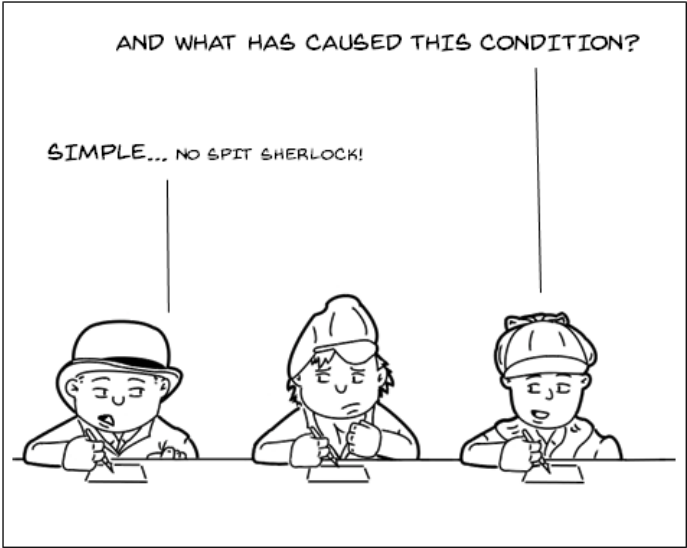
Holmes was protective of his reputation and his wizard-like powers that constantly astounded clients, the official police, and even Watson himself.

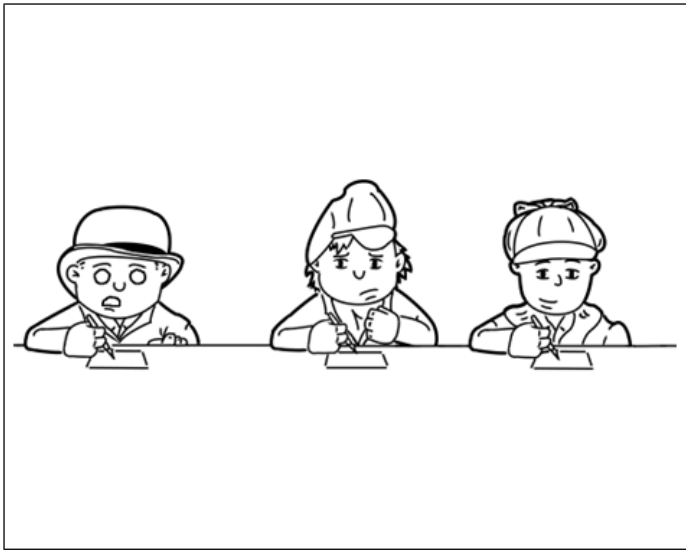
And yet, in his storytelling, Doyle managed to demystify the mysteries and place Holmes on the same level as we mere mortals at the same time elevating him to a hero worthy of our admiration.

Maybe haggis isn't so bad after all.

Meanwhile, at Baker Street Elementary, it's time for some mystery meat...







WE ARE HERE TO NOT ONLY ENTERTAIN, BUT
TO EDUCATE... YOU NOW KNOW THE ORIGIN
OF THAT SIMPLE BUT ICONIC PHRASE.



I CAN STILL TASTE SOAP IN
MY MOUTH!!



CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

"they will soon receive a more than sufficient punishment" [BERY]

When we think of boarding school education in Victorian England, it's easy to conjure up the usual stereotypes: old drafty buildings, horrible food, stern teachers, and the like.

One of the hallmarks of the educational system at the time was corporal punishment, typically administered with a cane or piece of rattan.

Boys were usually caned on their backsides and girls were either beaten on their bare legs or across their hands.

A pupil could receive a caning for a whole range of reasons, including: rudeness, leaving a room without permission, laziness, not telling the truth, or playing truant.

A harsh penalty for a harsh time.

Or was it?

In our research we discovered that the Dickensian nightmare scenario, the physical torture of children at the hands of teachers, was not outlawed in England until... 1985.

More about boarding schools can be found on Trifles Episode 127.

*Meanwhile, at **Baker Street Elementary**, the boys are considering how to lessen the likelihood of punishment...*

JUST ONCE, I WOULD LIKE TO
RECEIVE A GRADE I COULD NOT
POSSIBLY GET ON MY OWN.



ANY SUGGESTIONS?



MAYBE YOU SHOULD
LEARN SOMETHING THAT
INTERESTS YOU.

I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN HOW TO GET A
GOOD GRADE WITHOUT STUDYING.



STAMFORD, IF YOU CAN'T RAISE YOUR
GRADES, PUT THEM UP FOR ADOPTION.




I THOUGHT MY GRADES WERE REALLY
GOOD UNTIL I LEARNED THE ALPHABET...
WHO KNEW A 'D' WAS LOWER THAN A 'B'.

MY DAD SAID IF MY GRADES DON'T
IMPROVE, SOMEONE MAY GET PUNISHED...
I'M NOT SURE HOW SPANKING THE TEACHER
IS GOING TO HELP MY GRADES.



DID YOU FINISH THE LIST OF ALL THE BOOKS YOU WANTED TO READ THIS YEAR?

I STARTED IT, BUT ALL I HAD WAS A CRAYON TO WRITE WITH.



SUCH A LIST DESERVES A LITTLE MORE PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE.




THE COLOUR OF THE CRAYON SHOULD DETERMINE WHETHER THE LIST IS AMATEURISH LOOKING OR NOT.




SO I STARTED A LIST OF THINGS I NEEDED TO COMPLETE MY BOOK LIST.

THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THE CRAYON SCRIBBLING ON YOUR SHIRT CUFF.



I ASSUME PENCIL AND PAPER WERE AT THE TOP OF THE LIST.

YOU KNOW A SHIRT CUFF IS A GOOD PLACE TO WRITE LITTLE NOTES TO YOURSELF.



POOLED RESOURCES

"Some Freaks of Atavism" [HOUN]

The conversations at Baker Street must have been fascinating. Watson doesn't share everything with us, naturally — there must have been too many discussions to document.

But Watson does give us a wonderful example from one summer evening's conversation that he says was all over the place:

"[T]he conversation...had roamed in a desultory, spasmodic fashion from golf clubs to the causes of the change in the obliquity of the ecliptic, came round at last to the question of atavism and hereditary aptitudes. The point under discussion was, how far any singular gift in an individual was due to his ancestry and how far to his own early training."

Ah, the old nature vs. nurture argument. Unsurprisingly, Sherlock Holmes gave credit to both his bloodline and his focused application of his studies. But given his admiration for and introduction of Mycroft, he makes it clear that he puts more weight on heredity.

Indeed, heredity is at least a factor in the background of the character and actions of certain criminals he encountered.

Consider the penchant for violence in the Roylott family, as relayed by Dr. Grimesby Roylott's stepdaughter, Helen Stoner in "The Speckled Band":

"But a terrible change came over our stepfather about this time. Instead of making friends and exchanging visits with our neighbours, who had at first been overjoyed to see a Roylott of Stoke Moran back in the old family seat, he shut himself up in his house and seldom came out save to indulge in ferocious quarrels with whoever might cross his path. Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather's case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics."

Sherlock Holmes admired the intelligence of his arch-nemesis Professor Moriarty, but acknowledged in "The Final Problem" that the professor fell victim to his genetics:

"At the age of twenty-one he wrote a treatise upon the Binomial Theorem, which has had a European vogue. On the strength of it he won the Mathematical Chair at one of our smaller universities, and had, to all appearance, a most brilliant career before him. But the man had hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind. A criminal strain ran in his blood, which, instead of being modified, was increased and rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental powers."

continued



And we find that the criminal in The Hound of the Baskervilles was discovered because of a family portrait. Holmes pointed out the portrait of Hugo Baskerville to Watson, who saw something of Sir Henry in it. But when Holmes covered Hugo's hat and hair with his arm, it became clear who it resembled:

"Good heavens!" I cried, in amazement.

The face of Stapleton had sprung out of the canvas.

"Ha, you see it now. My eyes have been trained to examine faces and not their trimmings. It is the first quality of a criminal investigator that he should see through a disguise."


"But this is marvellous. It might be his portrait."

"Yes, it is an interesting instance of a throwback, which appears to be both physical and spiritual. A study of family portraits is enough to convert a man to the doctrine of reincarnation. The fellow is a Baskerville—that is evident."

When it came to the measure of his criminal counterparts, Sherlock Holmes appreciated the role of genetics to point him in the right direction.

*Now let's dive into the gene pool at **Baker Street Elementary**, where as usual, we find Wiggins in the shallow end....*

BIOLOGY CLASS WAS DEPRESSING TODAY... WE DISCUSSED HEREDITY.



A row of five cartoon characters with various hairstyles and hats, all looking down with sad or depressed expressions.


DO YOU THINK WE INHERIT TRAITS FROM OUR PARENTS AND ANCESTORS?

THAT'S WHAT DEPRESSES ME!!



A row of five cartoon characters, the same as in the previous panel, looking down with sad expressions.

I DON'T KNOW... MY PARENTS WERE SINGERS, AND I HOPE I HAVE THEIR VOICES IN ME.



A row of five cartoon characters, the same as in the previous panels, looking down with sad expressions.

YOU SING VERY WELL, IRENE... I WOULD SAY THE TRADITION CONTINUES.

THANKS SO MUCH, IGNATIUS.



A row of five cartoon characters, the same as in the previous panels, looking down with sad expressions.

MY FAMILY HAS A LINE OF ILLUSTRATORS, BUT I HOPE I CARRY ON MY MOM'S STORY-TELLING SKILLS.

WE HAVE ARTISTS IN MY FAMILY,
GOING BACK TO VERNET.



I BELIEVE THAT ART IS IN THE BLOOD, BUT
THAT IT MAY TAKE THE STRANGEST FORMS.

SO, IF MY PARENTS ARE SO SMART,
HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN MY GRADES?



SOMETIMES TRAITS MAY SKIP A
GENERATION... YOUR CHILDREN
WILL PROBABLY BE BRILLIANT!



MAYBE I SHOULD JUST TELL MY PARENTS I
AM WORKING WITH WHAT THEY GAVE ME.



I MISS GETTING KISSED ON THE
CHEEK BY MY MOTHER EVERY NIGHT.



NOT HAPPENING HERE.

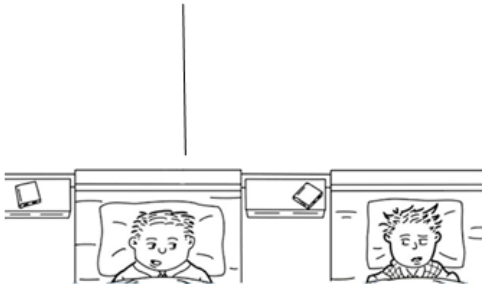
WE COULD ASK MRS. HUDSON
TO COME IN AND TUCK YOU IN.



WHAT I DON'T MISS MY MOM WOULD THEN SAY,
'HAVE SWEET DREAMS'... JUST AS I AM
FALLING ASLEEP, AND SHE ADDS ADDITIONAL
RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY LIFE.



YOU KNOW, I AM CONTINUALLY
MESSING UP THE ASSIGNMENTS GIVEN
TO ME BY THE TEACHERS HERE.



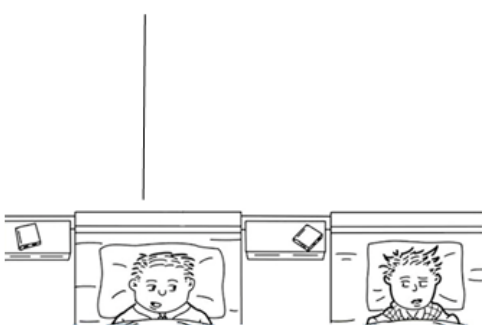
MY GRADES COULD BE A LOT BETTER...
HALF THE TIME I DON'T EVEN UNDERSTAND
WHAT THE TEACHERS ARE TALKING ABOUT.



I KEEP FORGETTING MY STUDENT
NUMBER... SERIOUSLY, HOW HARD IS IT TO
REMEMBER '31'... AND MOST DAYS, IF IT
WAS NOT FOR MY STOMACH RUMBLING, I
WOULD FORGET WHAT TIME LUNCH STARTS.



HOW IS IT THAT GOING TO SCHOOL
SEEMS TO ME FEEL STUPIDER THAN
STAYING AT HOME?



FIRST THINGS FIRST

"I have been fooled in this way" [STOC]

In our previous Baker Street Elementary installment, we explored the concept of atavism, or of the expression of certain attributes throughout generations of families.

As one of the examples—the portrait of Sir Hugo Baskerville and his stunning likeness in the form of Stapleton—Sherlock Holmes makes it clear that he instantly saw the connection upon seeing the painting, due to the skills he honed as a detective:

"My eyes have been trained to examine faces and not their trimmings. It is the first quality of a criminal investigator that he should see through a disguise." [HOUN]

The first quality. As in table stakes. The bare minimum. What you would expect from a professional consulting detective..

And yet...

In the very first novel, A Study in Scarlet, Sherlock Holmes is fooled by an actor who visited Baker Street in the costume of an old woman:

"Old woman be damned!" said Sherlock Holmes, sharply. "We were the old women to be so taken in. It must have been a young man, and an active one, too, besides being an incomparable actor. The get-up was inimitable."

This wasn't a terribly confidence-inspiring performance by the young detective, so full of himself in front of Watson with his Book of Life ego and his you-have-been-in-Afghanistan-I-perceive smugness.

And then, when he was introduced to readers of the Strand Magazine in "A Scandal in Bohemia," once again we find the Sherlock Holmes fooled by a disguise, although this time it was a woman dressed as a man:

"I've heard that voice before," said Holmes, staring down the dimly lit street. "Now, I wonder who the deuce that could have been."

There would be other disguises in the Sherlock Holmes stories — James Windibank as Hosmer Angel, Neville St. Claire as Hugh Boone, Arthur Pinner as Harry Pinner, Sir Robert Norberton as Lady Beatrice Falder — all of which Holmes is able to detect.

So his statement in The Hound of the Baskervilles was consistent with the image he wished to present to the world.

"What you do in this world is a matter of no consequence," returned my companion, bitterly. "The question is, what can you make people believe that you have done." [STUD]

While Holmes would have us believe that he could never be fooled by a disguise, we know the truth. As Holmes himself tells us in The Sign of Four:

"How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?"

You never forget your first. Now on to more frightening things at **Baker Street Elementary**...

HOLMES, AT THE HALLOWS EVE PARTY
TONIGHT, HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY
IDENTIFY EVERY STUDENT?

IT WAS FAIRLY SIMPLE.



IT IS THE FIRST QUALITY OF A
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR HE SHOULD
SEE THROUGH A DISGUISE.



IT DIDN'T HURT MOST OF US HAD ON
NAME TAGS... SERIOUSLY, I COULD
PULLED OFF THE IDENTIFYING TRICK.



I'M SURPRISED THE SCHOOL MADE
US WEAR MASKS THIS YEAR.

LET'S NOT GO THERE.



SHERLOCK, WHY WERE YOU NOT SCARED
WHEN THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER
WALKED IN? EVERYONE ELSE SCREAMED.



AFTER THE PAST 2 YEARS, A MONSTER OR
GHOST JUST DOESN'T SEEM AS SCARY.

TOO SOON HOLMES!



IS IT TRUE WE ARE ALL SPECIAL AND UNIQUE?



A row of five cartoon characters: a boy in a fedora, a boy in a flat cap, a boy in a flat cap, a girl in a flat cap, and a boy with curly hair. They are all looking thoughtful, with their hands near their faces.

AND WE EACH HAVE WORTH.

HOW MUCH?



A row of five cartoon characters: a boy in a fedora, a boy in a flat cap, a boy in a flat cap, a girl in a flat cap, and a boy with curly hair. They are all looking thoughtful, with their hands near their faces.


YOU CANNOT PUT AN EXACT PRICE ON YOUR WORTH.



A row of five cartoon characters: a boy in a fedora, a boy in a flat cap, a boy in a flat cap, a girl in a flat cap, and a boy with curly hair. They are all looking thoughtful, with their hands near their faces.


I JUST HAD AN ACNE OUTBREAK,
WHICH IS NOT SPECIAL.

DOES A PIMPLE INCREASE OR
DECREASE YOUR VALUE?



A row of five cartoon characters: a boy in a fedora, a boy in a flat cap, a boy in a flat cap, a girl in a flat cap, and a boy with curly hair. They are all looking thoughtful, with their hands near their faces.

SO, DO YOU BELIEVE IN FATE OR PREDESTINATION?



IT WOULD SPEED THINGS UP WHEN YOU REACH THE PEARLY GATES.


HOW SCARY TO THINK ALL THINGS ARE INEVITABLE.




IN MY CASE, I CAN ONLY IMAGINE A HIGER POWER LOOKING DOWN FROM UP ABOVE AND SAYING, 'I DIDN'T SEE THAT COMING'.




IN MY LIFE, IT WOULD BE, 'THAT'S NOT WHAT I PUT IN THE SCRIPT'.



SO, WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF PRE-DESTINATION?



DARNED IF I DO, DARNED IF I DON'T!



THE AGE OF INFORMATION

"the hope of getting some information" [SILV]

Libraries are fascinating places. And while the modern library is a wonder of digital access and interconnectedness like never before, libraries have their origins in ancient history.

The Library of Alexandria was the center of the ancient world, containing scrolls and documents of knowledge accumulated and created up until that time. We often wonder how the world might have been different had the Library of Alexandria survived.

By the mid-1800s, Victorian lending libraries had come into existence, giving the populace an opportunity to expand their knowledge with access to books they might not otherwise have in their households.

Throughout the Sherlock Holmes stories, we catch glimpses of private libraries that appear in country houses, university libraries, and other references to books in collections.

Here's a little quiz: see if you can identify which Sherlock Holmes story is associated with these quotes about libraries. Answers are at the bottom of the page.

1. "...a man should keep his little brain-attic stocked with all the furniture that he is likely to use, and the rest he can put away in the lumber-room of his library, where he can get it if he wants it."
2. "I regret that I have kept you waiting," said I, sitting down in my library-chair.
3. "There was excellent wild-duck shooting in the fens, remarkably good fishing, a small but select library, taken over, as I understood, from a former occupant, and a tolerable cook, so that he would be a fastidious man who could not put in a pleasant month there."
4. "Brunton, the butler, was in the library. He was sitting, fully dressed, in an easy-chair, with a slip of paper which looked like a map upon his knee, and his forehead sunk forward upon his hand in deep thought."
5. "The thieves ransacked the library and got very little for their pains. The whole place was turned upside down, drawers burst open, and presses ransacked, with the result that an odd volume of Pope's Homer, two plated candlesticks, an ivory letter-weight, a small oak barometer, and a ball of twine are all that have vanished."
6. "We were residing at the time in furnished lodgings close to a library where Sherlock Holmes was pursuing some laborious researches in early English charters."
7. "Mortimer had stayed to dinner, and he and the baronet played écarté afterwards. The butler brought me my coffee into the library, and I took the chance to ask him a few questions."
8. "Finally, I drove to the London Library in St. James's Square, put the matter to my friend Lomax, the sublibrarian, and departed to my rooms with a goodly volume under my arm."

Now let's hit the books at **Baker Street Elementary**...

Quiz answers

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. "The Five Orange Pips" | 5. "The Engineer's Thumb" |
| 2. "The Gloria Scott" | 6. "The Musgrave Ritual" |
| 3. "The Reigate Squires" | 7. "The Three Students" |
| 4. <u>The Hound of the Baskervilles</u> | 8. "The Illustrious Client" |

DID YOU EVER WONDER HOW OLD
YOUR PARENTS REALLY ARE?

OLDER THAN DIRT, I
WOULD GUESS.



I ASKED MY MOTHER TO HELP WITH THE ESSAY
WE HAVE TO WRITE ON THE 'WAR OF THE ROSES'.



SHE SUGGESTED A TRIP TO THE
LIBRARY WOULD PROBABLY GET ME
ALL THE INFORMATION I NEEDED.



I REPLIED THERE WAS NO REASON
FOR THAT TRIP, WHEN SHE COULD JUST
GIVE ME A FIRSTHAND ACCOUNT.



GOOD WAY GETTING OUT EATING
SUPPER THAT NIGHT... NEVER
DISCUSS AGE WITH YOUR MOTHER.


I HAVE FIGURED OUT ONE TRUISM... WHEN YOUR
PARENTS TELL YOU TO ACT YOUR AGE, WHAT THEY
REALLY MEAN IS... ACT LIKE SOMEBODY A LOT
OLDER THAN YOU ARE, LIKE AN ADULT.




HAVE ANY OF YOU USED ONE OF THOSE FANCY NEW FLUSHABLE TOILETS?



I WAS SCARED TO DEATH I WOULD FALL IN AND GET SUCKED DOWN INTO THE PIPES.



DID YOU PUT THE SEAT DOWN WHEN YOU WERE FINISHED?




THERE'S A SEAT?

WAS THERE ANY PAPER THERE??

NO WALLPAPER, JUST BLANK WALLS.



ACTUALLY, THE PAPER IS FOR WHEN YOU ARE... ..DONE.



I HAVE TO READ ENOUGH IN CLASS... I'M NOT ABOUT TO READ IN A PUBLIC TOILET.

MY MOTHER SAYS THESE NEW TOILETS WILL BE LIKE ANNIVERSARIES... MEN WILL PROBABLY MISS BOTH.

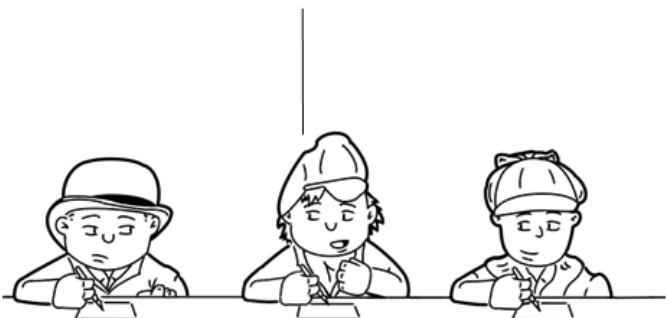


AND PLEAD INNOCENCE FOR BOTH.

MA'AM... WOULD IT NOT MAKE SENSE
FOR US TO JUST TAKE THE NEXT
MONTH OFF BEFORE CHRISTMAS?



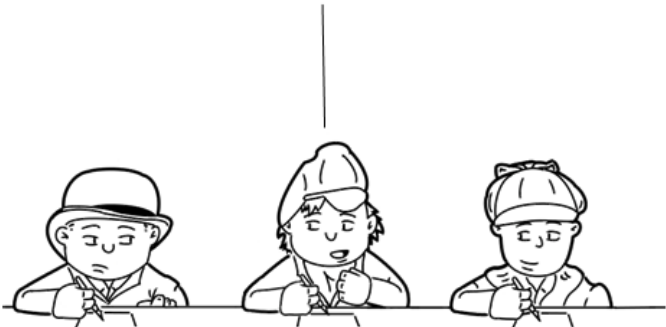
WE ARE DISTRACTED BY THE THOUGHT OF
PRESENTS TO COME, SO OUR WORK WILL
BE BELOW AVERAGE AT BEST.



MASTER STAMFORD, IF YOU SPENT
AS MUCH TIME ON YOUR CLASSWORK
AS YOU DO ON WAYS TO GET OUT OF
IT, YOU COULD PROBABLY _____
'MATRICULATE WITH HONOURS'.



SOMETIMES, I CAN'T TELL WHETHER SHE IS
TRYING TO BUILD ME UP, OR TEAR ME DOWN.



I BELIEVE WE CAN NEGOTIATE THE
AMOUNT OF WORK I SHOULD ACCOMPLISH
TO JUST 'METRICULATE'... NO NEED TO
WORRY ABOUT THE 'HONOURS' PART... I
THINK 10% SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO PASS.



IF YOU WATCH HER EYES VERY CLOSELY,
YOU CAN SEE THE EXACT MOMENT
WHEN THE HEADACHE STARTS.



WHEN TALKING TO STAMFORD,
IT'S LIKE CLOCKWORK.



Home of the Hounds

