

## "HOBBY HORSE"

*"this is my special hobby" [HOUN]*

*There is a line in "The Copper Beeches" that doesn't get enough attention.*

*When Violet Hunter investigated the uninhabited wing of the house, she was confronted by Jephro Rucastle. She questioned him about the locked room and he responded:*

*" 'Photography is one of my hobbies,' said he. 'I have made my dark room up there.' "*

*This seems to be a strange claim to make, and it makes us wonder whether Mr. Rucastle had thought this through. Perhaps he was just as startled to find Miss Hunter snooping around as she was when he confronted her, and in such a circumstance he simply blurted out what seemed to be a logical explanation for an isolated and locked room.*

*However, there was a flaw in his hastily-told lie: hobbyists — particularly those who dabble in a pastime that produces some kind of art — typically like to share the fruits of their labor.*

*Looking around the walls of the Copper Beeches, Miss Hunter would have been able to immediately discern that Rucastle's supposed hobby was a ruse. For if he were indeed an amateur photographer, wouldn't he have proudly displayed his work around the home?*

*continued*

*Baron Gruner saw through Dr. Watson's ruse in "The Illustrious Client," as Watson claimed work kept him from researching a piece of Chinese pottery supposedly in his collection:*

*"If a man has a hobby he follows it up, whatever his other pursuits may be."*

*The natural follow-up to having a dark room for photography would have been to print and display photographs.*

*While Rucastle warned Violet Hunter away from the room by threat of dog, had he been a little more clever, he would have known that his ruse was about to be exposed.*

*Let's see what the boys at Baker Street Elementary were able to expose in the way of hobbies...*

**BY TOMORROW, BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN TO  
THE CLASS IF YOU HAVE A HOBBY OR PASTTIME...  
IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS OF THE HOBBY.**

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**MA'AM DO YOU HAVE A HOBBY YOURSELF ?**

**YES, I ACTUALLY TEACH  
SOAP CARVING TO YOUNG  
CHILDREN... SUCH AS  
HORSES AND CATTLE.**



THAT SOUNDS LIKE A TERRIBLY  
BORING PASTTIME TO TAKE UP.



**IT IS... BUT MOST TEACHERS KNOW, THE  
BEST WAY TO ENJOY YOUR DAILY JOB AND  
DEAL WITH STUDENTS EVERYDAY, IS TO  
HAVE A HOBBY THAT IS EVEN MORE BORING!**

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