

HOLMES AND ME

REFLECTIONS ON THE WORLD'S
GREATEST CONSULTING DETECTIVE

BY

THE CREW AND PASSENGERS OF
THE BARQUE LONE STAR

EDITED BY STEVE MASON, THIRD MATE
FORMATTED BY LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE, DECK-MATE

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*We dedicate this book to all those who keep the memory green and keep Sherlock
alive.*

Foreword

The Crew of the Barque Lone Star was founded as a scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars in April 1970. Through the years, the society has been home for many authors of fiction, Sherlockian criticism, and other non-fiction pieces of work.

As we continue to celebrate our 50th anniversary of existence (extended indefinitely due to the Covid-19 Pandemic), it just seemed appropriate to have present members provide personal reflections on what Sherlock Holmes has meant to them throughout their lives (how they discovered Sherlock, what he has meant to them during the Pandemic, what Sherlockian friendships have been formed through the years).

Thanks for your efforts.

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CREW OF THE BARQUE LONE STAR TOAST

RICH KRISCIUNAS, BARQUE LONE STAR DECK-MATE © 2021

Since 1970, deep in the heart of Texas
Friends have gathered from near and far
to study stories of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.
We're the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

Bullet Lowry, Francine Morris and Bill Beason
launched our group with a warm spirit that still survives
of kinship, community, and scholarship
about three men who lived back in 1895.

Arthur Conan Doyle, a doctor and author.
Sherlock Holmes, detective, son of a country squire.
Dr. John Watson, trusted biographer.
This famous trio gives us so much to admire.

They've taken us along on their many adventures.
We've ridden in hansom cabs, dog carts, and trains.
We've warmed ourselves by the fire inside their lodgings
While outside, fog grows, the winds blow, and it rains.

We Deck Mates welcome all those who visit,
and are most cordial and inviting hosts,
Known for cartoons and informative meetings
With presentations, quizzes, and toasts.

Please raise your glasses one more time
and toast all the special friends we've made,
To Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson
and to the game that we've all played.

Until we meet again.

HOLMES AND ME

Melissa Aho © 2021

Where does my fascination with Holmes begin? It seems he has always been there, lurking in the background, just out of eyesight waiting to be noticed or remembered or read. I vaguely recall *The Great Mouse Detective* with Holmes, sorry Basil, Watson, Queen Victoria, and Toby, but my earliest solid memory is watching Sherlock Holmes on *Mystery!* on the local PBS channel in the late 1980s. I am sure it was in color, but for me, the memories of the show are always in sepia color, and I am still surprised to this day to find that London exists in glorious technicolor on the big and small screen, as well as in person. I was an Anglophile as a teen (I am sure Holmes is to blame) and a book reader, so besides the canon, I stumbled upon the Nicholas Meyer and Carole Nelson Douglas pastiches very early.

While working at Waldenbooks in the early 1990s I came across Laurie R. King's Mary Russell. For some reason, I resisted reading her, even though co-workers recommend the book and the story looked interesting. For a year *The Beekeepers Apprentice* would glare at me as I tidied the mystery section and read other mystery books. I eventually broke down and read the book. It was amazing! Why did I wait so long? Here was a smart female teen who was easily a match for Holmes. Yes, I totally get it. In 1997 I would drag my sister and friend to a local mystery bookstore to meet Laurie in person and get an autograph. I remember dragging three very heavy *Annotated Sherlock Holmes* books down to the University of Minnesota in 2008 to be autographed by Leslie S. Klinger.

Here is the secret to the Sherlockian book world, you cannot read just one. One book will follow another. I also learned over the years that good and bad Sherlockian movies and TV shows would be consumed as soon as possible and let's be honest, often the bad ones are more fun than the good ones. A few years ago, I joined my first Sherlockian society and that one was soon followed by a few

HOLMES AND ME

others because you can't belong to just one. Where would the fun in that be?

Then in 2018, I read the biography of a Sherlockian which stated that he reads at least one Sherlock Holmes related book a month and had been doing this for years. For years! Here was a reading goal worthy of the gods and I thought, yes, I can do that and so my Holmesian reading has gone to at least 12 a year. For me, Holmes is like coming home. A remembrance of years and events past - wonderful books, memories with family and friends, new adventures big and small, and a love for an individual who lived in London over 100 years ago in a sepia-colored world.

HOW SHERLOCKIANA HAS HELPED ME THROUGH COVID-19

Rudy Altergott © 2021

Sherlockiana has helped me get through the past year and a half since the pandemic began.

I had begun my Sherlockian involvement in December 2017, was admitted into my first scion, Hugo's Companions, in November 2018 (after surviving a dreaded Oral Tripos examination), and attended my first BSI Weekend in January 2019. I went again the following January and attended the virtual one this past January. But it was not until the 2021 Weekend that I had the courage to introduce myself and get to know some of the names I have recognized but, in some cases, felt too timid to introduce myself to. A few weeks before the last Weekend, on Boxing Day 2020, the day after Christmas, I attended a Zoom discussion of Poe's short story, 'The Purloined Letter' (1844), and became formally introduced to a mentor and one fixed point in a changing age, Dr. Bob Katz. In the case of Julie McKuras, we bonded not so much over Sherlock as *Bad Santa* (2003) and the universal wisdom known as the '3 B's' (in the interest of decorum, I would suggest that the curious/unfamiliar reader look that up rather than have me elaborate). There are so many others like these with whom I have become close even in the last seven or so months, and I would say that is because I have felt my Sherlockianism intensify since attending at least the virtual Scintillation of Scions XIII of last year.

The Scintillation, which for many years was run by my friend Jacquelynn Bost Morris, was the first scion meeting I attended via Zoom after the pandemic began. For about three months prior, I was living in rather strict isolation for fear of contracting COVID-19 what with a pre-existing condition (psoriasis), and being on an immunosuppressant biologic medication that specifically left me vulnerable to upper respiratory infections. Regarding the Scintillation, I left feeling like I was on 'cloud nine', having exchanged quotes and puns and jokes for the first time in the Zoom chat func-

tion, another phenomenon I have come to relish since the pandemic began. The fact is that Sherlockians are among the most intelligent people I have ever met, and the sign of a first-rate intelligence is a first-rate sense of humor. What puts Sherlockians even closer to my heart is the fact that they are among the kindest and most gracious people I know as well.

Empathy is important in an age when it feels as though the world really has gone all awry, to allude to one of my inspirations, the late Chicago-based bookman, journalist — not to mention Sherlockian — Vincent Starrett. It would be easy to say that Holmes was often without empathy. Maybe not all the time. It is common among those of such staggering and almost superhuman intellect such as that of Sherlock Holmes to experience what is perceived by others as a coldness. This has not been my experience with Sherlockians. To the contrary, many of them have almost literally given me the shirt off their back, if not simply encouraged my writing in general, such as this essay, and my study of the Canon in particular, not to mention my pursuits outside of the Grand Game.

Sherlockians are among the cheering section in my life, people who are always in my corner for whom I try to reciprocate such essential moral and physical support. Indeed, the very genesis of this article was an invitation from Steve Mason, a Sherlockian extraordinaire. It turns out that his family has lived for generations in the same county where my alma mater, Wabash College, is situated (Crawfordsville, Indiana), proof that we not only hear of Sherlock everywhere but that it is a small world where bridges, as in our relationships and connections with others, should be built and maintained and not 'burnt', to continue the metaphor. One never knows when one might encounter a friend or when one might be given the opportunity to serve as one. And as the old saying goes, to have a friend, one must be a friend. I am blessed to have a friend like Steve and the others I have mentioned and not mentioned.

Sherlockians also are among the most interesting folk I have ever encountered. From former secret intelligence officers to dedicated collectors of various minutiae to artists to writers to actors to historians and academics to physicians, etc., there is no shortage of

things to learn from the Sherlockians one meets in this community. Wabash College exacerbated my lifelong curiosity about the world around me, instilling in me a desire for lifelong learning which I have gone after in the years since receiving my sheepskin diploma. Sherlockians are among the best aids in this endeavor, the best companions. It is an apt label. A companion is someone who accompanies or complements another, and to complement something or someone, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is defined as 'to add something in a way that improves it or makes it more attractive'. Knowing my fellow Sherlockians has certainly improved me and continues to do so. And for them and for this hobby, I am grateful. Like I said, they have helped me through these past months of plague time.

WHY I GO BACK: REDISCOVERING SHERLOCK HOLMES

Curtis Armstrong, BSI © 2021

I'd like to begin by relating a story that goes back many years, shortly after my marriage to my first wife, Cynthia Carle. Before Cynthia and I met touring a play, she had been involved in a long-term relationship with another actor, Guy Paul. We were all living in New York at the time, though Guy had been working out of town for a while. When he returned for good, Cynthia decided it was time she introduced us, so she invited him over to our apartment for dinner.

It was an awkward situation fraught with possibilities, under the circumstances. Alcohol was called for and consumed in significant quantities. At one point, Guy asked about all the Sherlock Holmes stories on my shelves. Almost before I could answer, Cynthia jumped in.

"Oh, he's a Sherlockian. Totally obsessed. If you went through those stories and picked out one sentence, he could tell you what story it was from and who said it."

"Really?" said Guy, reaching for my Doubleday Omnibus.

"Yeah," she said. "Test him. He's amazing!"

Now I had told Cynthia about the Baker Street Irregulars—an organization at that time I could only dream of belonging to—and told her about the Constitution and Buy-Laws, specifically the article about members having to buy drinks for members if challenged to identify a quote from the Canon, and failing. Somehow, Cynthia believed that I was capable personally of doing this.

So while we got dinner ready, Guy started flipping through the book. He'd think he'd found one, but then shake his head and continue searching. More drinks were poured. It seemed to take forever. Finally he closed the book with a bang. "Okay! Got one," he said.

"Right," I said. "What is it?"

"Two, please!" he said. Pause.

“Two, please?” I asked, frowning. “Just ‘Two, please?’”

“Just ‘Two, please,’” he said. Long pause.

“Wait, really, that’s it? The whole sentence? ‘Two, please?’”

“That’s it,” he said. “‘Two please.’”

Well, dinner came and went, the whole evening and into the late watches. I couldn’t for the life of me imagine what story “Two, please” was from. I finally asked him to tell me.

“That’s no fun at all,” he said. “You’re going to have to find it yourself.”

I started the next day, combing through the Canon for the quote. It was obviously an obscure quote. I started inventing scenes in my mind in which “Two, please” could make sense. Holmes and Watson going into Goldini’s before burgling a house.

“How many in your party, Mr Holmes?” asks the maître d’.

“Two, please,” says Holmes. But, no. Or “How many tickets for the second first class carriage from the front, sir?” asks the man at the ticket booth. “Two, please,” says Watson, as he waits nervously for Holmes to arrive during their flight from London in “The Final Problem”. But no. For a moment, I thought I had a breakthrough in *The Sign of the Four*: “I was annoyed at this criticism of a work which had been specially designed TO PLEASE him!” But in my heart of hearts I knew that wasn’t it. For hours over the next couple of days, I searched, to no avail. Honestly, it wasn’t punishment. I found my search taking up more and more of my day, and I could almost envision myself a true, legitimate Sherlockian scholar doing important research, rather than someone partaking in an extensive drinking game. After combing the canon beginning to end, I called him and admitted defeat.

What story, I asked him, was “Two please,” from?

“Oh,” he said, “I just made that up.”

There’s a lesson there. I just can’t put my finger on it at the moment.

But more to the point of this talk, here is a question many of us have been asked by puzzled friends since childhood: Why do we keep going back to the adventures of Sherlock Holmes? It’s sixty stories. Not all of them top tier, by the way. We know them by heart.

What is the appeal? And does it really matter if you can identify any given quote?

And we all have answers, and not all the same. Many will just answer that it is that we are irresistibly drawn to the time, the atmosphere, the foggy London streets, or barren moors; many of us are drawn to the Great Friendship, the indelibly drawn characters for the Doctor and the Detective. Some of us return for research. Or just for comfort. During the pandemic, I re-read not just all the Holmes stories, but started on a first-time exploration of Doyle's Historical novels: *Micah Clarke*, *The White Company* and *Sir Nigel*.

But Sherlockian culture, like nerd culture in general, evolves and obviously much has changed since the 1930s, the unspecific period assigned to the birth of the organized Sherlockian movement. Much to the bafflement and even outrage of some of our more hidebound members, the original Canon is no longer sufficient nutrition for many. And it's a golden age for those who choose to go outside the Doyle stories for their regular doses of the great detective. I seldom go there myself, but I get it. Since Granada Television introduced us to Jeremy Brett, David Burke and Edward Hardwicke in the 1980's, the adaptations and appropriations have been legion compared to the old days. Film and television, graphic novel, parody and pastiche, straight, queer, all have contributed significantly to someone's appreciation for the stories.

I get it because I have a good memory. The original Canon wasn't sufficient for me, either, or for most of us, of any generation, if we really want to be honest about it, at least once we realized there were other fountains to drink from to quench the thirst for Holmes and Watson. Plays and films were always part of the equation, from William Gillette, Arthur Wontner, Basil Rathbone onward, even if by comparison they almost always fell short. People who tolerated Gillette or H.A. Saintsbury on stage would draw the line Rathbone on the radio.

I discovered Sherlock Holmes during the mid-sixties in, of all places, Switzerland. My father had given me his ragged mongrel set of the stories to read, and I was a devoted convert from that moment. You can only imagine my stunned excitement when I got

to “The Final Problem” and realized I was sitting only hours from the scene of the final battle between Holmes and Moriarty! There was a period, I think, during which I didn’t care if I ever read anything else again. But I also remember talking—babbling about *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to my father as he was shaving and, and the moment when, toweling off the remains of shaving cream, he said, casually, “Wait till you see the movies.” He went on to talk about the actors, Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce but all I could hear was the sound of the blood rushing in my ears. Movies? There were movies?? What brave new world was this?

Of course, I finally saw them, but it wouldn’t be until after I returned to the States. And this is where my appreciation for the extra-Canonical form comes from. From the first film I saw—1939’s *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, through a blizzard of poor reception on the local channel—I loved the Rathbone-Bruce movies beyond expression. How bad did I have it? I’ll tell you a story I don’t believe I’ve ever told anyone, and then I’ll get back to my point.

There was a local affiliate in Detroit at the time—actually the affiliate in Windsor, across the river—that had acquired the Universal Sherlock Holmes films as a package and would show them at night after the 11:00 news which was great, except my parents were reluctant to let me stay up late on school nights to watch them. But the movies only showed then, so what was I to do? To me, in 8th grade at the time, the answer was obvious: call the local affiliate and pretend to be Nigel Bruce. I know: A bold choice. But I did imitations of famous people at the time—James Mason, Donovan singing “First There Is A Mountain”, and of course George Takei as M. Sulu—but Nigel Bruce was one of my best. As the veteran actor—long dead, of course, but I figured they wouldn’t know—I would explain that my grandchildren lived in the Detroit Metropolitan area (why?) and would love to see their grandfather in these movies, but they were too young, you see, to stay up so late, so perhaps they might consider showing them at an earlier time, say Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

So, I did this. With all the undeserved confidence and aplomb at my disposal, right there and then, in the kitchen as my mother was

making dinner, I called the affiliate. The woman who picked up asked me if she could help.

“Yes, my dear,” I said, “This is Nigel Bruce, don’t you know, umm, co-star of the Sherlock Holmes films that aired on your channel after the news and I wanted to speak to whoever was in charge. Fuff, fuff, extraordinary...”

“Um....just a minute, Mr. Bruce,” she said, and put me on hold.. Someone else picked up. I launched into my schtick, “Hello, uff-fuff-fuff, this is...Nigel Bruce calling, fuff-fuff-fff!”

They put me on hold again. This happened several times. I turned excitedly to my mother.

“It’s working!” I said in a stage whisper. “They keep putting me through to other people!”

My mother, stirring the spaghetti sauce, replied, “I think they just think it’s funny that a schoolboy is pretending to be Nigel Bruce to get them to air the movies earlier. They’re just passing you around so everyone can hear it.”

So, mid-elevator music, I hung up. But my determination to bring about real change by imitating a dead English character actor did have one positive effect. My parents decided anyone willing to make that big of a fool of himself in front of strangers deserved to stay up when the Sherlock Holmes movies aired, which I did ever after.

What does all this have to do with Re-Discovering Sherlock Holmes? Well, for one thing, every time someone puts out some new interpretation of Sherlock Holmes, I am intrigued if not compelled to see what they do with it. It may be brilliant or it may be terrible. As is so often the case, it may start off brilliantly and become terrible but I’m always interested to see how someone else is interpreting these characters. But it’s almost never not interesting. As far as I’m concerned the only mistake anyone can make in adapting Sherlock Holmes to other media is to make him boring.

But the truth is, I don’t re-watch the Rathbone-Bruce movies that often anymore. Nothing will ever diminish the love I felt for them when I was young, or when on Sunday mornings decades later, I would share them with my daughter Lily when she was

young. I haven't seen an episode of the Jeremy Brett series in years. It's not that I suddenly thought, these are terrible adaptations; they're great, most of them. I watched "A Study in Pink," the first episode of *BBC Sherlock* twice in one night, the second time because I couldn't believe how good it was. That passion faded pretty quickly, but I understand why people still love it. I saw *The Great Mouse Detective* in the theatre the night it opened and went on to see it many times, with undiminished pleasure. But it's been a while. And I love *Enola Holmes* but that has everything to do with Enola nothing to do with Sherlock.

Will the fans of the various literary and cinematic adaptations return to re-discover them, over the decades? I don't know. I continue, though, returning to the original Canon at least every other year. Relishing all of it, the characters, the atmosphere, the thrills; seeing the stories now not as the boy in Geneva did but as the person I am now does. When I was young, Holmes and Watson seemed to me to impossibly mature and worldly. As I've gotten older, I find myself drawn to them, in part, because now Holmes and Watson are younger than I am, sometimes a lot younger, and I can see the youthful hopefulness as well as the arrogance, the light and darkness, the faults and cracks of their personalities better than I did as a young man. So, why do I go back? It's a little like the "Two, please," story. Obviously, on some level I knew that in no story did Holmes or Watson ever say "Two, please!" But what if they did? And that's what makes re-discovering Sherlock Holmes fun.

CONFESSIONS OF A LOCKDOWN SHERLOCKIAN

Anna Behrens © 2021

Typically, Sherlockians reveal that they read their first Sherlock Holmes story when they were tweeners, or perhaps in high school or even college. Or, depending upon their generation, they may have come to Sherlock Holmes through the Basil Rathbone movies or the Jeremy Brett Granada series. I confess here that I was nearly 48 years old before I read my first Sherlock Holmes story and watched my first Jeremy Brett adaptation. That was ten years ago, when I was brought into the Sherlockian world by my husband Richard. We met later in life and married when I was 47, and he, 45.

I did not realize it at the time, but Richard was a Sherlockian of sorts. He deeply appreciated Conan Doyle's works and grew up reading the stories and watching film and television adaptations. He owned quite a few Sherlock Holmes books, and he even owned the first (and only) issue of a 1970s Sherlock Holmes comic book, which he bought when he was barely a tweener. Richard was himself a writer and had just published his first mystery when we first met. As I re-read his mysteries, this time through a Sherlockian lens, I realize how much Conan Doyle's writing influenced Richard. His mysteries are sprinkled with homages to the Canon, and as I discover each one, I am reminded of why I fell in love with Richard.

His wry stories take a fictionalized teen-aged Lizzie Borden, and place her in a very real Fall River, MA setting, contemporaneous to the Victorian London of Baker Street. Richard filled his clever mysteries with quirky characters that reveal his terrific sense of humor. He wrote in several genres, but nothing surprised him more than his becoming a mystery writer. He did not set out to write mysteries, but his *Lizzie Borden, Girl Detective Mysteries* remains some of his most popular writing. Of course, Richard did not resent his popular character as Conan Doyle did Holmes, but his detective fiction took up much of his precious writing time, leaving little for some of the other projects he wanted to complete.

On our third wedding anniversary and in celebration of moving to lovely New England, my husband gifted me the Blu-ray box set of the Granada series. The crisp images and Jeremy's embodiment of Holmes made me completely fall in love with Jeremy, er, I mean Sherlock. From then on, I was hooked, and I read and listened to audio versions of all the stories. I never did warm to the Rathbone films, Nigel Bruce was too much of a buffoon to be believable as Watson, but Richard made sure to show me the best of those films. Richard and I had read about the mythic Sherlockian world, so we decided to join a scion group. However, we could not find one in our area so instead we started our own Scandalous Bohemians group in our town of Keene. It was the happiest times of our lives, until the darkest time came.

Richard's stage IV cancer diagnosis was an unimaginable kick in the gut, with a heart-wrenchingly brief life expectancy of 18 months. An experimental drug gave us a few more precious years together before he was gone. Almost miraculously, we fit in a trip to London just six short months before he passed away. We had so many "must see" places on our list, including some Sherlockian locales such as The Sherlock Holmes Museum and Baker Street, The Sherlock Holmes Pub, and, stumbling upon it accidentally, St. Bart's Hospital, which still had the *BBC Sherlock* fan graffiti of *Sherlock Lives*, something that has stayed with me as I knew Richard would go on living in my precious memories.

Months after his death, somehow, I slowly picked up the pieces of my life and resumed meetings of the Scandalous Bohemians. It was not easy at first, but my loyal group's enthusiasm kept me going. Our group met in my large living room, where I projected that month's story presentation onto a screen and followed it up with a viewing a Jeremy Brett adaptation, or some other Sherlockian film. If there was no adaptation, our theatrical group read aloud the story, truly bringing it to life. It was all the socializing I could muster for a while, as mostly I was still mourning my profound loss.

Then, an all-too short time later, the pandemic changed everything *again*. I knew I had to find a focus for myself otherwise I would sink into a dark depression being so isolated and alone without

Richard. Fortunately, the Scandalous Bohemians were agreeable to meet virtually, and I rebranded my group as The Monadnock Sherlockians, even, to my delight, obtaining Scion status from the BSI. Monadnock is our New Hampshire region, named for the single isolated mountain that looms over our town. I loved the alliterative rhyme of The Monadnock Sherlockians, and of course it holds a more personal meaning as I, too, was single, isolated, and standing alone.

Each week during lockdown, I found myself delving deeper into the Sherlockian world that had by this point become fully virtual out of pandemic necessity. I started a Facebook blog called “The Monadnock Sherlockian”. Much to my own surprise, I wrote my first Sherlockian article, which combined my work as a Speech Pathologist with the works of Conan Doyle. I listened to Sherlockian podcasts, subscribed to Sherlockian journals, and attended virtual conferences and meetings of various scion groups. The thing that kept me returning is that Sherlockians are tremendously welcoming, kind, generous, and helpful. And most precious to me of all, they remind me so much of my late husband. Sherlockians tend to be well-educated, voracious readers, have amazing personal libraries, many are talented writers or podcasters, and most, like Richard, have a great sense of humor.

Richard and I met at a time when we were both, like Watson, wounded and limping toward recovery, not from any Afghani war, but from leaving our respective unhappy first marriages. To say that I was Watson to Richard’s Holmes is perhaps stretching the metaphor a bit too far, however, Richard and I influenced each other’s lives in a profound way. Richard was not grounded, despite being extremely intellectually gifted and a very talented writer, he needed my help to give him a solid foundation on which he felt free from uncertainty to explore his creative side. He preferred, even needed, my company when he would tour places to gain background for a piece he was writing. He relied on my listening to his story ideas and offering feedback. He did not always take my advice, but somehow felt more confident having had it. In Richard, I appreciated for the first time that I had a life companion, one who helped

me grow and understand in ways totally new to me. I think this was the dynamic of the Holmes-Watson relationship. They simply needed each other, certainly in different ways, but Watson gave Holmes the grounding he needed to function as a consulting detective, helping to smooth over his prickly social skills, and to help Holmes understand how others see him, while Holmes provided Watson with a sense of purpose as he wandered a bit aimlessly after the army. Their friendship grew out of necessity into a deep caring relationship.

Richard, like Holmes, was brilliant but moody and prone to depression at times. To keep depression at bay, I would propose a road trip or some other adventure to keep his mood merry. Sound familiar? We even made a trip to the “valley of fear”, a charming PA town called Jim Thorpe that not only is the final resting place of the great Olympian, but also where the Molly Maguires were hanged due to the lies of a Pinkerton agent, and the Old Prison is still there, available for tours as a museum. We listened to an audio recording of *The Valley of Fear* on the way, keeping the story fresh in our minds. Richard’s career as a software engineer helped to make him quite a sleuth on the internet and he was able to solve some minor mysteries for friends from his computer chair, perhaps more like a modern-day Mycroft. My husband also had a life-long interest in the occult and in Freemasonry, rivaling that of Sir Arthur himself.

Richard once asked me why I had not read any Sherlock Holmes in my younger years, when a high school friend reminded me that our AP English teacher nixed the research paper topic of a classmate who chose Sherlock Holmes, because it was “not literary.” Clearly that stuck with me, and being an impressionable high schooler, I thought I had to stick with classic literature and not the “low brow” Sherlock Holmes.

Rightly, there is a new appreciation for Conan Doyle as a writer, and I am on a fast track of becoming a Doylean as well as a Sherlockian as I am reading other ACD works and listening to audio versions of non-Sherlockian ACD short stories. To my surprise, middle school students are reading the Enola Holmes book in their English class at the school where I work as a Speech-Language

Pathologist, and I am utilizing a collection of Holmes stories leveled for my low readers to help build their language skills, and they are really loving the stories. My professional world and my Sherlockian hobby worlds are colliding, and I am enjoying every minute of it.

The pandemic is at last, seemingly, winding down, and I feel like a fledgling Sherlockian emerging from the ashes of widowhood. Like Watson, who endured (at least) one death of a spouse, I have been helped through my grief, or at least distracted from it, by Sherlock's manic adventures. I miss Richard immensely, and like Watson's sentiment about Holmes, I shall ever regard him as "the best and the wisest man I have ever known". I will be forever grateful to Richard for so many things, not the least of which for leading my way into the Sherlockian world, one where it is just nearly possible to imagine a life without him.

THE TALE OF THE WOLF HUNT

Barbara Brannon © 2021

I have been accused before of “excellent pastiche.” This, from a laureate whose verse form I so admired that I wrote a response to his call, and sent it to him; when his reply arrived with the above description I fretted for weeks over whether I had committed a compliment or a crime.

I harbored similar misgivings about falling in with the long march of re-visioners of Sherlock Holmes. Just who did I think I was, upstart crow of a poet and editor, to lift the master’s *Hound of the Baskervilles*—my favorite Doyle tale since childhood—and plunk it down on the Texas frontier circa 1891? I wasn’t a fiction writer. I harbored no extraordinary degree of fan devotion. Hell, I wasn’t even a true Texan, having earned my stripes during a stint at a university press in Lubbock and learned my Lone Star history by speed-reading *Texas*, Michener’s doorstop of a novel, on the plane trip there.

I’d like to think the inspiration was a brilliant and honorable one. That I had first availed myself of the essential essays in *Beyond Baker Street*, or read the full canon, or delved more thoroughly into the storied tradition of Holmes homages before attempting my own.

But no, here I was one spring Saturday, out for a red-dirt ramble through a part of West Texas so sparsely populated it’s been dubbed “The Big Empty,” and noting the road’s rugged twists and turns through dramatic canyon breaks. The setting sun glinted over a low-water crossing whose bottom looked uncertain for pickup or pack horse. The way back out defied the map; at dusk, at last, a fence line strung with the rotting pelts of unlucky coyotes gave onto the paved highway. This desolate landscape, I was certain, could match the moors chill for chill, and from that trip through the Croton Breaks sprang the vision of a creature chained there by an outlaw posing as a researcher, and the plight of his comely female relation.

I began “The Wolf Hunt” that night, hewing closely to *The Hound* by reworking portions of Doyle’s original text. I read and

reread the source to analyze plot twists, characterizations and clues, red herrings. I threw my late-night energies into a reimagined opening scene. I nicked a passage or two straight out of Doyle as a rap artist might sample glittering riffs from another song.

Spurred on by the positive feedback of my critique group, I persevered. Empowering Fort Worth consulting detective Derrick Miles to inveigle Dr. Frank Hooper into overseeing the death of rancher Basil Wolverton in remote Dickens County, I assembled scene upon scene. For a year I traveled nightly to that invented world, inviting into it episodes of my own creation and fictionalized figures of Texas history—and ornamenting it with a few more gems from the mother lode—until I had produced a full, original story that I hoped captured the Sherlockian spirit.

No embarrassment for this stepchild work led me to choose a pseudonym for publication when a paying contract was extended; on the contrary, I was quite proud of my counterfeit *Hound*, and opted to fly under the flag of male authorship only as a smart marketing strategy for the Western fiction category. Will Brandon's *The Wolf Hunt: A Tale of the Texas Badlands* appeared in April 2021, delayed six months thanks to Covid-19 bookstore and library closures, and took its place in the long progression of Sherlockian pastiche.

Also in a strategy of sincerest imitation, I had at my disposal a tool employed often by the Victorians: serialization in periodical form. As co-owner of a series of West Texas newspapers, I could bloody well run as many excerpts as the audience might bear—or at least as the publisher would permit.

Here, for the Crew of the Barque Lone Star's 5th anthology, I offer a portion of Chapter 1, "The Wide-Awake," with map and illustration (also sincere imitations) by the author. Honorable tribute or shameful sham? Reader, you be the judge.

The Wolf Hunt
A Tale of The Texas Badlands
by Will Brandon
A Derrick Miles Mystery

When reverence for classic literature combines with excellent writing and a knack for atmospheric description, the inevitable result is great reading.

Holmes and Watson themselves would approve—and so will you.

—JEFF GUINN, 2018 Western Writers of America
Spur Award
winner for Best Traditional Novel



THE WOLF HUNT *runs at the head of the pack as a great read.*

—MIKE COX, author of *Gunsights and Sites in Texas Ranger History*

IN THE RUGGED, DESOLATE CROTON BREAKS OF WEST TEXAS a spectral creature with a six-inch pawprint has spooked livestock of late. When British-born cattle baron Basil Wolverton is found dead outside his own ranch gate, cowhands and nesters alike whisper of an ancestral curse, the dire wolf of legend.

Sir Basil's executor Wesley Barlow knows what he must do: catch the next train for Fort Worth, where consulting detective Derrick Miles and his assistant Dr. Frank Hooper are his best bet to figure out whether there's been a crime committed . . . or some diabolical force at work.

If the story sounds familiar, it should. Transporting the Sherlock Holmes classic *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to Dickens County, circa 1891, author Will Brandon reimagines Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's thrilling tale with a Texas twist on a murderous beast, a fugitive

outlaw, greed and grit, affairs of the heart, and a landscape yet untamed. In the popular tradition of serial publication The Texas Spur has obtained exclusive rights to run excerpts of this new novel, timed with its revised April 2021 release in book form.

In the heyday of Charles Goodnight and Quanah Parker—and one of the craftiest stalkers on the frontier—*The Wolf Hunt* traces Hooper's solemn pledge to solve the vexing case with which Miles has entrusted him and protect the Wolverton heir in his charge. But will bullets and iron bars bear out against the embodiment of evil? In this high Victorian adventure, the answer is anything but elementary.

CHAPTER 1
The Wide-awake
*{In which Capt. Derrick Miles and Dr. Frank Hooper
discuss guns, hats, and boots. }*

IN THE FIFTEEN YEARS during which I have been acquainted with Captain Derrick Miles, I have admitted him to be of a peculiar sort—prone to bouts of profound meditation triggered by the partaking of tea extracted from a certain cactus found in the Chihuahuan Desert, for instance, or excitable in the extreme when a moment of epiphany is visited upon him, say, in the bathtub.



But nothing prepared me for the distressing sight that greeted me late on a blustery autumn afternoon—the twelfth of October, I well recall—upon my return to our shared bachelor quarters above the bootmaker’s shop.

“Good God, man, don’t do it!” I shouted instinctually and almost lunged at him, before wiser caution caused me to step back. “Why don’t you . . . hand me . . . the gun?” I said in a more measured tone.

Derrick Miles, seated almost in profile to me at the teak-and-brass campaign desk as I stepped through the doorway, continued to hold the weapon at arm’s length with its barrel pointed toward the center of his face, which appeared so thin in the shadows as to be almost cadaverous. He made no move for several long seconds. I held my breath. He inched the muzzle closer and squinted his eye toward it in the waning light.

“Miles, please—”

“Bring that lamp over here, would you, Hooper?”

I hesitated to shift my gaze from the scene, as though by my very

force of will I might hold all the parts of it frozen and forestall disaster.

“That oil lamp, yes, please. And light it.”

I abandoned my vigil for long enough to fetch the lamp. I slipped a friction match from the box on the table, cranked up the wick, and struck the match, keeping Miles in my sights. I lit the wick and moved closer, shining the glow on the firearm whose business end was situated a fingerbreadth from Miles’s eyeball.

“Aha, I knew it!” he exclaimed, so suddenly I almost lost my grip on the lamp.

“Knew what?” I asked in relief, as he lowered the gun.

“A hardened residue of varnish impregnated with grains of black powder.”

“As one might expect to find inside the barrel of a gun?”

“As one might expect to find inside the barrel of a gun that hasn’t been fired in some months—or years.”

“You had some concern on that score?”

“At least we know there’s no chance our visitor was a Ranger.”

Miles continued to dangle my duller intellect just out of reason’s reach, a not infrequent circumstance in our exchanges. “We’ve had an unanticipated visit. Our caller, Hooper, does not appear to have been a Texas Ranger. And that is very good indeed, since, where there is a Ranger, there also is trouble.”

“Ah, certainly.” I struggled to keep up. “You had a caller while I was away at the hospital, but did not see him?” Had Derrick Miles benefited from even the slightest contact with any stranger, he would surely have swiftly deduced the man’s occupation, birthplace, age, nationality, and more. Such were his estimable powers of detection.

Miles rose slowly from his seat and indicated the door through which I had come. “That is correct; I was out for the day as well, attending the mayor’s meeting with members of the state Railroad Commission, about which I will enlighten you later. While you and I were gone a man lingered long enough in the upstairs corridor to have dropped crumbs from his biscuit. But he also left behind two valuable possessions. The gun—a six-chambered Colt revolver commonly known as the ‘Peacemaker’—and this.”

Still holding the gun, Miles stepped over to the hat rack beside the door. From amid a row of pegs on which hung his favorite Boss-of-the-Plains Stetson, a plaid Scottish hunting cap he sometimes wore in adverse weather, an ancient and stained cavalry hat, and my own second-best black bowler, he lifted an old-fashioned, wide-brimmed sort seldom seen these days in Fort Worth, Texas.

I removed my preferred bowler from my head and rested it on the vacated peg, smoothing my hair back from my brow and brushing the dust from my moustache. I hung my overcoat, also dusty from the streetcar ride across town, on the hook beneath it. Miles motioned me to the velvet settee beside the hearth, where Mrs. Simpson's boy had set coals to burn in the grate. I welcomed the warmth after the shock I'd experienced at first seeing Miles with the gun.

"Take a look, Hooper," he said, turning the hat so I could inspect its inside. There I read, stamped in gold, "BOLLMAN | PHILADELPHIA | 1871."

"What do you deduce from this information?" he asked, standing with his back to me, hands clasped behind him.

"Our visitor was a gentleman and a Yankee?"

He turned to warm his other side. "Perhaps. One of sufficient age and thrift as to have held onto his hat for two decades, and to have preserved it all the way West. You might recall, as I do from an advertisement in an old issue of *Puck*, that the renowned haberdasher was established in sixty-eight. And something else."

I peered closely to examine the napless black felt of its manufacture, which appeared to me to be of superior quality but scuffed; the wide silk hatband, which was glossy but soiled; and the sweatband inside, where I noted a small paper label tucked in. "Six and seven-eighths! The owner must have a rather small head. Do you concur?"

"Indeed, my dear Hooper. You'll catch on yet. But you have failed to note one matter of some importance."

"I have?"

"Run your fingers across the crown, and lean in and use your olfactory sense as well. What do you detect?"

I did as instructed, and my fingers immediately picked up traces

of dark particles, a whiff of which revealed the smell of—coal smoke. “The owner has arrived on the train—rather recently, I suppose.”



For more information and availability concerning the above pastiche, contact the author at Barbara Brannon barbara.brannon@gmail.com

SHERLOCK HOLMES WAS MY FATHER

Alexander E. Braun

(a.k.a., Murray, the Courageous Orderly) © 2021

This is no idle boast. Sherlock Holmes *was* my father. When I was a small boy, much like the early Orson Welles, my father was a producer, writer, and performer on the radio. He directed a company of actors and did many radio theater plays and series—some original, others adaptations of classics like *Dracula*, *The Time Machine*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and many others.

I have no clear recollection of those, but I do remember when he began broadcasting a new series, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Every week a new adventure would air, and there would be Holmes, effortlessly unraveling the most complicated mysteries much to the surprise and astonishment of Doctor Watson and Scotland Yard's chagrin.

And the Great Detective spoke in the rich deep baritone of my father's microphone voice.

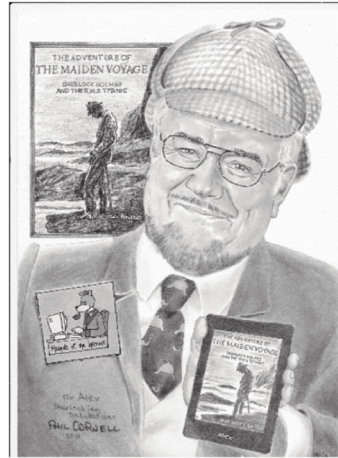
At home I would sit on the floor in my pajamas wrapped in a warm blanket, in front of our massive Zenith console radio, its green "Magic Eye" giving unblinking assurance that the station had been accurately tuned, and listened as my father was told in a tremulous falsetto that, "Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!" The next day, over breakfast, I would query him how he had managed to solve all those conundrums.

Although he would always kindly attempt to point me to the reality of the situation, secretly I think he was gratified by his small son's confusion. It would not be until years later that Basil Rathbone's face would replace my father's whenever I visualized Holmes. I deeply regret that.

Early in elementary school I discovered that 221B did not solely exist in the ether. In one of my forays to the school library, I found a set of single stories. The first one I ever read was "The Crooked Man." Soon afterwards, much to my delight, I discovered that

Doctor Watson's literary work existed in book form and that firmly set me on the Canonical studies road.

Throughout my life, the Great Detective and his redoubtable biographer have opened uncounted doors for me. They led me to want to learn more about their time, and I discovered the Victorian world and its inhabitants. I read books that many of my classmates would have found intolerably boring; but not for me, because I was literally following on the footsteps of Sherlock Holmes! Passing mentions from our erudite detective pointed me to Ancient



Greece and Rome, German philosophy, currencies (their exchange rates and value, especially napoleons!), and later to the study of logic and ethics. In spite of the efforts of several harried housemasters, it was Holmes who imbued in me the ideal of the English gentleman. And, to be candid, it was Doctor Watson who first personified for me what loyalty is.

Not many can boast of having had Mr. Holmes as father and mentor!

Over the years, I have given many presentations to various groups about the “World and Times of Sherlock Holmes.” I am ever surprised how interested these audiences, many of them young people, are in learning more about the Great Detective. Although questions usually tend to orbit around the seven-percent solution, Professor Moriarty, as well as the true relationship of Holmes to the notorious adventuress Irene Adler, many more are enchanted as I am by the glimpse he provides into 1895, a time when everything seemed to have had its place and purpose, and the world gracefully flowed in three-quarter time.

Small wonder that 23% of the people polled in a 2008 survey believed that Winston Churchill was a literary creation while 58% thought that Sherlock Holmes was real!

For over a dozen years now, I have been the discussion leader—or, as I like to refer to myself, the “Master of Hounds”—for The Hounds of the Internet, the oldest Internet scion society. Every week I post for discussion a newsletter covering one of the 60 cases which is, to be honest, a labor of love.

My two friends have given me so much and still do, that I am urged to give back a little of what they have favored me with for, literally, a lifetime.

WHAT SHERLOCK HOLMES MEANS TO ME

Cindy Brown, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

When I got involved with the Crew of the Barque Lone Star about 12 years ago, I thought it would be, well...fun. What I didn't realize was how involved I would end up being and enjoying every minute of it.

It turned out that I would meet some amazing people and would have some really interesting experiences. At least interesting to me. I realized right away that the other Sherlockians, like myself were really into reading and loved to talk about the minute details of the stories in the Canon. But then I found out, sometimes the hard way, that these people wanted to pick apart and dissect the stories to a degree I had never thought about. It never occurred to me that some might view Arthur Conan Doyle as racist, or that Dr. Watson might be considered somewhat of a womanizer in many nations and at least three separate continents, or Sherlock Holmes might be bipolar. How dreadful for all of us.

In some of the meetings and seminars that I have been lucky enough to attend, I have learned about the common crimes of Victorian England, and those that weren't so common. The English laws that kept women of the late 1800's from owning their own property or even retaining their salary from whatever job they were allowed to hold. I mean, are you kidding? The laws of the time decided that the man (master of the house) would be the responsible parent if there was a divorce, in nearly every circumstance. Poor kids!!!

Like many of us, the best thing about Sherlock Holmes is the unbelievable friendships that come from the scions. I often wish I had known these people for the last 50 years rather than just the last twelve. And of course, with the pandemic, those friendships have deepened and expanded based on our common goal to get through this and make the most of it.

Sherlock Holmes has got me involved with the Beacon Society, whose goal it is to help educate children about Sherlock Holmes and

even more importantly, to take a serious interest in a most fun subject. Reading is such a wonderful pastime. I believe anyone who reads can learn things he/she never dreamed of, and best of all, he/she will never be alone or without friends. So, to become the committee chair of the grants committee for the Beacon Society has been an honor for me, and I hope to be involved in this great trust for a long time to come.

Because I really like to meet new people and spend a lot of time at the Sherlockian conferences chatting up anyone and everyone, this has served a unique benefit to our society, especially during the pandemic. I have met so many wonderful people over the past twelve years, that once the pandemic hit and the world went virtual, I reached out to friends near and far, and came up with some amazing speakers, really titans of the Sherlockian world to come virtually and visit our Dallas scion society.

But for me one of the side benefits of knowing Sherlock Holmes is the fact that it has taught me that I CAN do presentations, I CAN speak in front of a large group of like-minded people, and best of all, is that I CAN actually write a pastiche, a toast, or an article. What fun for an accountant to discover that life is more than just living inside the box! As a career accountant and Certified Public Accountant, I was told in college that creative accountants often go to jail. And I did and still believe that, as far as doing financial work is concerned. However, Sherlock Holmes truly has opened up a part of my being that, based on my profession and my belief, never allowed me to expand, and grow, and learn.

So, Sherlock Holmes taught me to not only look outside of myself for new interests, but to also look inward.

HOW I MET SHERLOCK

Anne Caddell, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

Here, on my shelf, dwell many books of note
Whose hold upon my fancy will not die.

Our first encounter now seems so remote:
A bored teenager happening to spy,

While browsing through a stack of hefty tomes
For books to while away long summer days,

A massive, well-thumbed “Complete Sherlock Holmes”
That somehow caught my idle, wand’ring gaze.

Now, ever since, through London’s yellow haze,
I roam with Holmes and Watson at my side,

Or late at night, with gas lamps all ablaze,
We take a sudden, urgent hansom ride.

Forever will imagination thrive
Where it is always eighteen ninety-five.

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND ME

Carol Cavalluzzi, ASH, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

I met Sherlock Holmes one summer when I just turned nine years old. We did not have air conditioning in our home, but my mother knew how to keep us cool in the hot afternoons. As the sun moved around our house, she would open and close windows and drapes keeping the cooler air in and the hot air out. Each afternoon, she would spread a cool cotton sheet on the living room floor in front of our TV, with its 10", black and white screen. Drapes and windows closed to the afternoon sun, my brother and I would watch Sherlock Holmes movies. I fell in love with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, as well as the stories. As TV programming improved, I lost touch with Sherlock Holmes. Fast forward 30 + years and I now lived in Syracuse, NY and I worked for Syracuse University in the Geology Library. Eileen Snyder was my boss and she was a little dynamo. She recruited anyone and everyone to join the various groups she belonged to and believe me she was involved in a lot. Come to find out she was the Corresponding Secretary and one of the founding members of the Mycroft Holmes Society of Syracuse, a Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars. She asks me if I like Sherlock Holmes and, of course, I answer yes, and she tells me I will go with her to the meeting—like now. Eileen set up all the meetings and attendees brought snacks to pass. She arranged for speakers on a special topic or a member would present a paper. I was hooked and even if I wasn't, Eileen would have dragged me anyway. These meetings opened up a whole new world for me. Sometimes Eileen needed help to send out meeting notices in the member provided, self-addressed envelopes (we didn't have email then) and I helped—after all she was my boss. I soon learned the procedure and many times I was composing the letter notices from her notes. When Eileen died in 1993, I addressed the members, asking them if they intended to continue meeting, if they did I would send out the notices and continue, with their help, to keep the group alive. I became the Corresponding Secretary and I am still. If joining the

MHS society opened my world, becoming Corresponding Secretary opened my universe. Fellow Mycroftians suggested I attend the BSI Birthday event in NYC with them and what fun we had. I have attended many Conferences in different states. I have also attended almost all the big BSI Conferences--Jim Thorpe, PA, Salt Lake City, UT, Los Angeles, CA, and Harvard, MA. I've gone to the Boot-makers Anniversary Celebration, and to Montreal for two conferences at McGill University. I have made friends wherever I go, when Sherlock is the center of conversation.

I thought, with the close-downs due to Covid-19, people would be drifting away from meetings and gatherings related to Sherlock Holmes. Boy was I wrong! I've been to more meetings than I ever expected to attend, thanks to Zoom. I have been to Texas, different parts of NY, Minnesota, and Iowa to name a few places. Zoom is both a blessing and a bane. A blessing to be able to be at these far away meetings and still be with friends in my own scion. A bane because there is just so many I would love to attend, but I've run out of time and energy.

Sherlock Holmes is always there for me and I have gained so much from the stories, the movies, but most of all the people. I've never met a Sherlockian who wasn't friendly and inclusive. I have never met a Sherlockian I didn't like.

WHAT HOLMES MEANS TO ME

A Remembrance in 5 Parts

Micah Cover © 2021

With Special Thanks to Krystal Kurio

(Written by Doctor John Watson, found in the Tin Box within the Cox & Co Bank vaults some time after the London Blitz of 1941)

Part 1: Ascending and Descending

I was once asked what Sherlock Holmes meant to me. While my 5-word answer is simple, it demands an explanation to honour it truly.

There are some adventures with my good friend Sherlock Holmes that I simply cannot share. Some are for political reasons. Some to protect the innocent.

The following story protects me... although I'm far from innocent.

It was some time after the adventure which I entitled "The Sign of the Four." I had done my "homework:" both "Hs" in my life – Mrs. Hudson and Sherlock Holmes – were gone for the night.

Holmes was off aiding Inspector Gregson on another case – from the details I heard, I was considering entitling it, "The Adventure of the Severed Hand."

One of Holmes' own Irregulars offered all this vital information. Which I was able to sift from her judgmental rambblings. The only other occupant of 221B Baker Street had already moved out some time before – to marry his Magical Mary.

Was I betraying My Mary? To make this clandestine meeting? I am ashamed to admit – I pushed her out of my mind as I escaped the thunderstorm and ascended the 17 steps up to 221B.

When I opened the door, the first thing I noticed was the thick, smokey aura. While this was not surprising – Holmes loved to fill the air with his black shag – it did make me wonder. Had he been here more recently than I had calculated?

The second thing I noticed was the infamous jack-knife trans-fixed into the center of the wooden mantelpiece Holmes used to fasten his unanswered correspondence. Holmes was well known for his speed in arriving at the scene of the crime, but this rapidity did not apply to his replying habits. Normally, a full stack of letters would be impaled there; tonight, only a single letter was penetrated by its blade. And its handle seemed to waver with an eerie... glow?

But these impressions immediately left my mind as I realized – despite all my precise calculations – I was, indeed, not alone.

“Welcome, my good Doctor Watson.”

Part 2: Adversary in 221B

A burst of lightning illuminated the room for an instant. A crackle of thunder followed. Reality seemed to shift around me like Holmes' accursed smoke. Here I was, being welcomed to my old, familiar rooms – but now, this time, not by my old, familiar friend.

“You're early, Mordred,” I replied.

“On the contrary, dear Watson,” Mordred rasped through a voice shackled by years of tobacco. “You are, in fact, late. Have you not learned anything from your partner-in-crime?”

As much as I loathed the man, he was right: even my instincts as a soldier should have informed me. And certainly training with Holmes. When meeting enemies, always appear earlier than you are expected. The information you may gain from preparatory reconnaissance may make the difference between loss and victory – even life and death.

I had arrived early, in fact – but, unfortunately, not for any of the right reasons.

It was not early enough.

“Do you have my money?” he pressed, continuing to rasp through the almost impenetrable smoke.

“All that I may say has already crossed your mind,” I replied to the creature.

“Then my answer's crossed yours,” he whispered through a cough.

I had a vague notion of what that answer was. Perhaps blows to each kneecap. Perhaps the unceremonious removal of a toenail or a fingernail. And, as a medical man, I was acutely aware of the serious damage they'd cause.

I must be someone special. I saw none of his lackeys within, and Mordred never did his own dirty work. Furthermore, he never left his gambling dens, to be plucked by some lucky, patrolling constable. I must be an exception. This was personal to him.

He had years of violence stacked against my cumbersome injury. Could I overtake him nonetheless?

Meanwhile, despite my efforts to banish her from my thoughts, they returned – as they always did – to My Magical Mary. Just how could I explain any of this to her? God help me, what kind of husband had I become?

My adversary sat in Holmes' favorite chair – the one he used to listen to clients. This man – and I use the term loosely – was even smoking Holmes' favorite black shag. The smoke got even thicker.

Beyond the smoke, I searched for any signs of humanity. The eye patch still covered half of his loathsome face. Scars crisscrossed his twisted visage – souvenirs from countless knife battles. His weapon of choice when claiming debts from his countless opium dens and gambling halls. Holmes' addiction and my own medical experience had given me strength to resist the former; but my virtue wasn't vast enough to resist the latter.

I thought I was clever choosing an empty 221B Baker Street for our final discussion. One of Holmes' own Irregulars inspired me with the idea. The familiar surroundings might give me an advantage – and had I but arrived early enough, I could ransack the rooms for any hiding places Holmes might have left spare funds. And it was far away from the eyes of Mary.

This was the state my addiction had reduced me to.

But all my plans were for naught as I peered past the smoke into his steely eyes of blue coal. I saw them flash, despite the smoke – and my terror.

Now I must pay this piper – in paper, or pain.

“Shall we play one final game – and winner takes all?”

Lightning, then even more thunder. As if on bloody cue. Even with his distance, even without my paralyzing fear, I doubt I could outrun him – down 17 steps to freedom. And, knowing this villain, he was armed in a way I could not even see.

What choice did I have?

Shamefully, I nodded my head.

Part 3: The Game Begins

From the void, a deck of cards was tossed to me, and I was grateful to discover my reflexes had not abandoned me yet – I might need them, very soon. I snatched the box as it spun in the air. As if in a trance, I rested my cane against a nearby chair, discarded the box and produced its contents. 52 cards rested between my trembling hands – a condition I hoped Mordred could not see. I began to shuffle them, expertly – a habit formed from my addiction that superseded any anxiety exhibited in my fingers. I inspected the cards as they flashed by – they didn't seem to be marked, eliminating the possibility of Mordred cheating during our game of chance. But the distance between us and the growing smoke precluded the use of marks anyway.

I looked at the cards. My mind flashed to Mary. The way she'd use Tarot cards to tell people's fortunes.

"Think of your best friend," the almost disembodied voice cracked.

"Beg your pardon?" I replied, but the name flashed anyway.

"Beg all you want, Watson," the evil voice then cackled, "but first follow my rules. Think of your best friend. Their name shall dictate the moves in our little game."

"When does our 'game' begin?" I shouted through the thunder.

"It already has, good Doctor. You shuffled the deck already, and I see from your posture you've made a choice. However many letters your friend's name has, that is the number of cards we'll use. But as you can see, the choice is yours only. Can't be fairer than that," he chuckled through the smoke.

I held the appropriate number of cards in my hands. I discarded the rest onto the seat of the chair.

“Look at the bottom card,” the eerie voice then continued. “And you shall remember it. I bet I can tell you what the card’ll be. All or nothing, Doctor Watson.”

Again, as if in a trance, I nodded my head.

“What is the card, villain?” I growled toward his form.

“My game, my rules, Doctor,” he almost spat in reply. “Spell the name - the top card represents each new letter. Move each top card with each letter to the bottom. Stop when the name stops.”

Doing what I was told, I took the top card to the bottom and spelled the name one card and one letter at a time.

“Good, Doctor – one last step,” he cackled, enjoying his “game.” “We will eliminate all the cards until we have one. Toss the top card here.”

With spite, I hurled the top card in his direction.

“Now place the new top card to the bottom again.”

Like a puppet, I obeyed.

“Toss the top card here,” he continued beyond the smoke.

We played his strange game. Step by step, I tossed the top card to him, then I dealt the new top card to the bottom... until I had one card left in my shaking hand.

I stared at its back. My mind flashed through years of gambling and its lessons. There wasn’t any way he could call my final card. Not even a professional cheat could know from this distance. And not through this smoke.

“I repeat, what’s the card?” I growled, knowing the game – and my time – was up.

“The same as before, Doctor,” he replied amidst the gloom.

I didn’t understand his meaning – then I flipped the card.

It was indeed the same. The same bloody card I had memorized at the beginning.

My mind shrieked, But how?

Frantically, my brain searched for some kind of saving grace. A loophole within his game.

“You told me you could identify my final card, Mordred!” I howled in furious desperation.

“I told you I’d tell you what the card’ll be!” he shrieked through his coughing. “You lose, dear Doctor Watson. Along with everything else you hold dear – your income, your friends, your Holmes – your Mary.”

And thunder roared outside again.

“DO NOT SPEAK HER NAME,” I screamed to the smoke.

“Admit it, now, Watson,” the figure said as it began to emerge from the haze. “That your addiction has won.”

“I WILL ADMIT NOTHING, MORDRED,” I shrieked in defiance, but my body told another tale. I crumbled to the ground.

“Say it, Watson – say it,” the figure whispered, coming nearer.

“NO... No... no... no... no...” My desperate cries were dying – within my throat, and cracking my already guilty, pounding heart. The figure produced a pistol. Tears clouded the vision of the pistol coming ever closer.

Before, when I had nothing to live for, at the Battle of Maiwand, when the enemy fired upon me, I was gripped with fear - true. But it was nothing compared to this – when I realized I had everything to lose.

In one more flash of lightning, I saw it all. I saw Mary’s crying visage. The tears she tried to hide whenever I went gambling. Now mingling with my own. They reminded me of the sadness I felt each time Holmes produced his cocaine syringe. I saw them both staring at me with shame – disgust.

The thunder shattered the sky. I felt my heart burst. “YES... YES... I ADMIT IT! God help me, I do.” I could only whisper this.

I looked up at my adversary...

And the rogue fired.

ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR! FIVE!

I screamed in time with the raging thunder – and with the gunfire - my eyes closed...

And then, I opened them.

Somehow, I was still alive. I heard the rain against the window, but

something else. I heard gurgling behind me. I turned around and looked down, where I should be. Mordred was sprawled there, a blood blossom growing from his leg, another from his shoulder. The jack-knife from the mantle dropped from his hand. I looked up in shock.

There - standing next to me with a smoking pistol in his hand - was Sherlock Holmes.

“Good to see you, Watson,” he calmly said to me. “I believe our Mr. Mordred could benefit from your attentions.”

My military training overtook me. I bent down to my would-be killer-now-patient. “I’ll dress the wounds, but this man needs a hospital.” My hands were shaking again. “I do not understand, Holmes. I... I do not understand...”

“All will be revealed, Doctor. And speaking of revelations, I see the cavalry has arrived.”

Inspector Gregson appeared in the doorway – behind him, a determined Mrs. Hudson, with a shotgun.

“No need for that, Mrs. Hudson,” Holmes said to her. “All’s well that ends well. Gregson, you have your man. Charges can include attempted murder. He has creosote on his hand – the same kind as the handle of the knife. It took force to remove the knife from its origins. This suggests malice of intent. And I am witness to his attempt to murder Watson. And if you search Mordred on his way to the hospital, Gregson, you’ll find many records of illegal gambling transactions. I count no less than 5 that I can observe poking from his pockets now. And names may be included. Speaking of which, I’m hoping you were able to round up some of his gang? Yes? - This should give plenty to strengthen his sentence for the assizes when they come. Well done, my good Inspector. We shall make an effective detective out of you, yet.”

Three other constables then appeared, and Mordred was whisked away on a gurney, spewing forth a litany of colorful profanities. Gregson saluted, tipped his hat then descended the 17 steps. Mrs. Hudson mumbled something about bullet holes and more blood as she shuffled back downstairs. Holmes was a flurry of activity around me, discarding the elements of his disguise, opening windows, waving away the smoke.

I collapsed into a chair. The same chair where I placed the cards moments ago. They spilled onto the bloodstains. I watched as the blood soaked into the cards' faces.

The rain drums reminded me of my exhaustion, creeping closer.

And then, apparently, I fainted.

Part 4: Revelations and Resolutions

Sometime later, I awoke. The thunderstorm had finally gone. I proceeded to diagnose myself. Despite severe shock and confusion, I was none the worse.

I stumbled from my former – now current – bed, and found Holmes staring into the fire.

“Ah! You have joined the land of the living, Watson!” Holmes said to me, accompanied by his familiar, eerie laugh.

I slumped into a chair. “Time you told me what the devil’s been going on!”

“Indeed,” Holmes replied, turning to me for the first time. “Despite the fact that you no longer shared my quarters – despite your best efforts to hide your activities from me – during my own thorough investigations into the underworld of London, I observed you were falling helplessly into Mr. Mordred’s power.”

I started to protest, but Holmes merely waved it away. “You cannot deny the facts,” Holmes said, turning away again. “Your own accomplice turned traitor.”

Then I heard 5 knocks on the door, and, without waiting for a response, one of Holmes’ Irregulars walked in.

She was the only female Irregular that I knew of. However, under the grime, their sex couldn’t always be determined. Furthermore, many young girls adopted the role of boys for livelihood - and even mere survival. This ragamuffin held her own, and, for that, my heart always went out to her.

It was my admiration for her that first inspired me to avail her of her services as a gambling courier. She would send my money – and my hopeful wager – straight to Mr. Mordred’s gambling dens.

As it was never myself making the transaction, the anonymity suited my needs, and the payment each exchange suited hers. Most Irregulars preferred a shilling. She preferred payment in food. And, for special requests, she requested – and received – chocolate brownies. She was reliable, industrious, eccentric – like possessing a love of Shakespeare – and, of course, brownies. A uniquely curious girl – and for this, I gave her a nickname, which she liked.

And here she stood, in the middle of our rooms at 221B Baker Street, with an undeniable expression of embarrassment – but mixed with undeniable defiance.

She was looking at me.

“Ain’t no one to blame but ye’self, Governor,” Kurio said. “I do like your brownies good enough, that I do. But enough was enough, Doctor. For you was slipping away.”

I sputtered and stood up. How dare this street urchin say such things to me? I glared at Holmes – he continued staring into the fire. I stared back at Kurio. Her accusation hung like... smoke.

I slowly sat back down. I thought of My Mary.

“You’re correct, Kurio, of course,” I whispered – mostly to myself.

“It was getting’ bad, y’see. If the situation were reversed, wouldn’t you want me to accept the help from you? But you wouldn’t listen, Governor. I had to tell Mr. Holmes what was goin’ on. Turns out, he knew most of it already, he did. The rest – like suggesting the place for you two to meet – and the inner workings of it all – was me.”

“You are a brave soldier in my Irregular Army, Kurio,” Holmes said to her, beaming. “I would not have asked you for so much information were I not assured I would bring about Mordred’s fall. And lo, fallen he has. This could not have succeeded without your invaluable assistance, Mademoiselle.” (Kurio giggled at the address).

“Here,” Holmes said to her. And, like a magician, Holmes produced a wrapped packet of 5 brownies from thin air. He tossed it to her.

She snatched the parcel as it spun in the air. As deftly as a pick-pocket – which I knew she was – she unfolded the translucent wrap-

per, tossed one brownie down her gullet, while saving the others. Those disappeared into her coat.

“My necessities are embark'd: farewell!” she announced, and then disappeared. The door slammed behind her.

I marveled at the talented, Hamlet-quoting urchin we employed. And at her digestive talents. “Could be a sword swallower,” I said with a grin.

“You evidently have not seen her act at Trafalgar Square,” Holmes grinned back to me. “Already swallowing three swords at a time – I believe she is working up to 5. A genuinely luminescent performance, that. One may even say crystalline.” He gazed at the door in admiration, then to me. “But what I said was true; she told me everything. The workings of Mordred’s operations. How he never left his den, with only dire exceptions. And your addiction became one.”

Shamed, I lowered my gaze. “How long have you known?” I could barely get out.

“Long enough, my good Doctor,” Holmes returned, and he was back to the consummate detective. “Between Kurio’s data and my own investigations, I knew Mordred would soon come after you. He then demanded a meeting. It was Kurio who came up with the idea of our rooms at Baker Street. Kurio would deliver the false information our rooms would be empty, including dear Mrs. Hudson. As if on cue, this inspired you to suggest... here.” Here, Holmes outstretched his arms, indicating our current, familiar environs.

“This offered a home advantage. My plan started to emerge. I could see it all. You had exceeded a total he had fixed, you see. So Mordred himself would deal with you and your debts. But his minions would form a perimeter around Baker Street. These are the tactics he has used in the past for such... direly indebted clients. With these tactics, he can perpetrate his crimes, then be escorted away in relative safety. In fact, last time, he used his attack to send a message to his debtors. Perhaps you are aware of the severed hand found by Inspector Gregson himself so recently.”

My blood then turned cold. The rumours of the case were becoming more real – their implications inching closer to myself.

“I knew it was Mordred. He was going to use the dismemberment as a warning. I believed he planned to share this warning with you during last night's dangerous endeavors - tell you it was he, and you'd receive similar treatment to that poor man's fate. But I could prove none of it - I needed evidence. You bringing him here allowed me to catch him red-handed, with my own eyes. My reputation is growing among the police and the courts. My testimony alone could send him away for many years.”

“And the knife?” I asked.

“Ah, yes, Doctor, the knife. I wanted more than just my testimony, you see, Watson. Mordred is a clever criminal. He never comes to these “meetings” with arms upon him. This way, if something were to go awry, and he may be searched, the police would find nothing obviously incriminating. The records of debt - those are his weapons he wishes to keep upon his person.”

“Then how does he effect his... warnings?” I asked, terrified.

“That is the theatrical genius of it, Watson,” Holmes replied. “The man could have been an improviser upon the stage. He uses the objects about him, then secrets them away when the deed is done. You know my methods, Doctor. I attempt to think like the criminal - get inside his head - anticipate his next move. What's the most obvious weapon such a man might use to commit an improvised attack - and within our humble abode?”

“Of course, the jack-knife you use for your correspondence.”

“I thought it would be a nice touch - so to speak - to use the same creosote we used during ‘The Sign of the Four’ - the case that brought you Mary - upon the jack-knife's handle. Its residue on Mordred's hand - a fitting irony - proves he removed it, with necessary force. I was inspired by a monograph upon the subject of the emerging science of fingerprinting. Perhaps one day I shall avail myself of its potential.”

My mind drifted to another curiosity of my good friend. Fingerprinting did indeed become the future of forensics and detection. And yet, the Greatest Detective of all time - who was always at the forefront of such things - never used it. He never even studied it, as far as I knew. Even to this very day, I could never reconcile this.

But my friend was continuing his narrative, and I needed to hear and understand everything. My mind suddenly snapped back.

“My point is, the creosote and force suggest his guilt,” Holmes continued, tenting his hands. “Supporting the case that he intended to use the weapon.”

“I noticed there was only one letter on it then.” I looked to the mantle.

I was momentarily proud of my observation, then I looked back and realized I had missed another moment as before. As if out of nowhere, the letter was already in Holmes’ hand, outstretched toward me. I took it from him. But I immediately forgot I was even holding the paper once Holmes continued his explanations.

“I assured your Mary that, between my pistol and Inspector Gregson waiting outside, you were in no real danger – and the crisis could exorcise the addiction from you for good. Like the crisis you, Mary, Kurio, Mrs. Hudson and Doctor Freud concocted for me when you freed me from cocaine.”

I shuddered to remember all the lengths we 5 went to, to produce such results. But I could not argue with them – I never saw Holmes use cocaine after that. I had always wondered how much of its success was due to our own exertions, and how much to his endless reserves of inner strength. But that was another story. How strange and ironic it was that such extreme measures should be exercised upon me.

“And so you made me believe my life was indeed in danger – you impersonated Mordred.”

“With Mordred’s disfigurements, and his damaged voice, all combined with the effects of the smoke, I could camouflage myself well. I gambled – please pardon the use of the word, Doctor – that you would not be able to tell the difference.”

I marveled for the second time at the almost inexhaustible talents of those around me. The stage had lost a brilliant actor – but their loss was a grateful justice’s gain. Holmes used his talents to trap the wicked – but this time, I was the bait.

“Please forgive me, old friend,” Holmes said, reading my mind. “Your success with my own addiction convinced me that something

similar might help you, Watson. Doctor Freud agreed as well. And it allowed me to catch Mordred in my net. And, with some luck, some of Mordred's perimeter henchmen, as Inspector Gregson has thankfully confirmed. I could rid you of your addiction - and its source. All at the same time. The opportunity was too perfect. I must play the game, and you must lose it."

With a flash, memories returned. "Game - what was the purpose of the card game, Holmes?"

"I could not know the exact moment Mordred might appear. The game bought me time. As luck would have it, just as the trick ended, Mordred finally made his appearance. You were kind enough to leave the door open, Watson. You did not hear Mordred sneaking in among the thunder. He could not see me due to the thickening smoke. He thought you were alone. He saw the knife and took his chance upon you."

"And you fired - 5 times?"

"One to the shoulder, one to the leg - I had to incapacitate him but keep him alive for our case. And I must admit, Watson, I had misread his motives. I believed he'd use the severed hand as a warning. 'Twas more of a beginning. Victim One owed enough for Mordred to make an exception to his rule of never doing his own dirty work, and yet he made the same exception for you, Doctor. This means he had two clients who owed him so much that he was willing to take such extreme measures. And thus his rage grew. When he arrived, Watson, he was not going to warn you or even injure you. For I saw him right behind you, raising the knife. He meant to kill you."

I saw now the full danger my ignorance had not. "Is that what happened to the poor wretch with the severed hand - it was a warning - but also a murder?"

"Indeed - with the help of Toby, that wonderful mongrel from 'The Sign of the Four,' Gregson and I found his body floating in the Thames. I wasn't certain I'd need the pistol last night, but I'm glad I had it."

I shuddered, then snapped back. "What of the other three?"

“The other three shots? - ornamentation – something I wanted to fix.”

He pointed, and I turned my gaze to its direction. There was the “VR” – “Victoria Regina” - Holmes had made with bullet holes into the wall – but now with three more. With anyone else, I would demand satisfaction for shooting a gun in my general direction. But Sherlock Holmes always had a strange power over me. For I had to admit, the VR was now clearer. Indeed, I admired his marksmanship. Mrs. Hudson, conversely, would not.

“A neat trick, Holmes – but back to your card trick – it literally worked like magic. In all my card playing, I was not familiar with such a game – tell me, where did you learn it?”

“After I received consent from Scotland Yard and Freud, I needed it from one more. She discovered the mathematical method while experimenting with Tarot Cards. And, risky as it was, she consented to my game. If I included her game. I got it in writing.”

I looked at the skewered paper still in my hand. It was in Mary’s handwriting. It said exactly 5 words:

WHATEVER IT TAKES, MR. HOLMES

“Whatever name you chose, I wanted you to think upon that name – so you would remember you were not alone.”

This time, the voice wasn’t Holmes’, but just as familiar.

I looked up, and there was Mary, looking at me. I hadn’t noticed her entering, either – but I forgave myself. It had been a night of unexpected and confusing distractions. But I was more than happy to be distracted now.

She held out her hand, and, in that bright moment, she was all I saw.

“Let’s go home, James,” she said, using the name she kept for moments of kindness. It came from my middle name – something I don’t think even the Great Detective knew.

I followed her - as I would always - but I looked over my shoulder upon leaving. Holmes was again staring into the fire, his brain undoubtedly turning over the facts of another case – this adventure disappearing from his mind like rain.

Part 5: Epilogues and Endings

But it shan't from mine. Hence this document I write.

If you are reading this, I may already be gone. I'll place this within my Tin Box for others to read for years to come.

But one detail I didn't share with Holmes that I will share with you now.

When the figure I thought was Mordred challenged me to think of only one name, two names could have emerged. And since that fateful night, I have played the game. Many times – with my own deck, and even Mary's Tarot. It always works with the name "Mary" – every single time.

But the name that struck my mind like a lightning bolt that night was "Sherlock."

He never asked which name I chose, and I never told him – but he knew.

But there were other unshared secrets regarding that dramatic evening. For I did ask him once about the coincidence of the thunderstorm that strange night. It made my experience all the more terrifying... and effective. He always told me he did not believe in coincidences. But how could this apply to the vagaries of weather? He wasn't some supernatural being who could influence the elements. But when I did ask, he did not answer, but the spark in his eyes of blue coal was unmistakable. Perhaps he had a secret – and we may never know.

While he could be secretive, he was also much more: a champion of justice to those who had none; arbiter of things right and good. An expert in disguise; a sword stick, boxing, fencing and self-defense master; unparalleled at breaking mysterious codes; a brilliant logician, scientist and penetrating psychologist.

But when I think upon him, I reflect on our shared crosses that we bore – his cocaine and my gambling. As Freud would attest, one night – no matter how dramatic – would not erase my addiction. Not completely – it was only the beginning of my journey.

I am ashamed to admit that, in "The Adventure of the Dancing Men," for instance, Holmes had to intervene again. It would not be

the only time this would happen. But when it was necessary, he would always be there.

And that is why – that night and all nights following - I think of him first and foremost as one thing:

He was my best friend.

John H. Watson, MD, London

Editor's Note: The card game that Holmes used on Watson does indeed work – either with the names “Mary” or “Sherlock.” Any reader at any future date can try it themselves. Tarot Cards work as well. Watson – and his Magic Mary – have left us with a card trick that exceeds the boundaries of time and space.

Strangely, the word “Brownies” also works - “For Kurio” as well. And, fittingly, “Brownies for Kurio.”

Special thanks to magicians Joe Diamond and Jordan Jonas for Mary Watson's Tarot Card Game



Kurio, the only known female of Holmes' Baker Street Irregulars

According to history, she became “The Toast of Trafalgar Square”

Fittingly, she also loved toast

For Krystal
I love you



The Watson Tarot Card from Artist and Magician Holly Hammond

GET YOUR HAT

Margie Deck © 2021

'However, we may as well go and have a look. I shall work it out on my own hook. I may have a laugh at them if I have nothing else. Come on!'

He hustled on his overcoat, and bustled about in a way that showed that an energetic fit had superseded the apathetic one.

'Get your hat,' he said.

'You wish me to come?'

'Yes, if you have nothing better to do.'

A minute later we were both in a Hansom, driving furiously for the Brixton Road.

—A Study in Scarlet

One fall night a few years ago, I walked up to the door of the local Ford dealership with a large box of raffle prizes for the husband's car club meeting in my hands when a woman beside a desk in the service department rushed over to open the door for me. I started to thank her when she cut me off.

"Sherlock!" she said excitedly. "Cumberbatch is great! Dr. Watson!"

"Yes!" I said cheerfully back to her. "I do like Sherlock and Dr. Watson, but how did you know? Is it oozing out of my pores now?"

She laughed and told me she had spotted my license plate frame when the husband dropped me off at the door before he drove on to search for a parking spot. We had a short, lovely chat about BBC *Sherlock*, Jeremy Brett, and the Arthur Conan Doyle Canon, of which she had only read a little but planned to read more. I never saw her again but I hope she got her hat. "Get your hat" is the only way I can think of describing that initial jump off into the greater Sherlockian world, that point when casual interest becomes an avocation.

It happened to Dr. Watson. The point in *A Study in Scarlet* when Holmes changes from "I" to "we" and issues Watson his original invitation to come along ("...we may as well go and have a

look...Come on!”) has always stood out to me. Watson misses it totally until he is told to “get your hat.” Watson had not learned yet to pay attention to nuance in Holmes’s speech but he would learn in time. Despite many movie scripts to the contrary, once Watson gets his hat, he quickly becomes Holmes’s “partner and confidant.”

I got my hat in the fall of 2006 when I attended my first Sound of the Baskervilles gathering in Seattle. The SOBs were (and are) a delightful group of Holmes aficionados, knowledgeable, friendly, funny and chatty. I immediately felt at home although I knew I had a lot to learn about Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. My previous three years of reading about Holmes and lightly chatting with the Welcome Holmes group on Yahoo were a solid jumping point into the face-to-face world of Sherlockian friendship and scholarship.

Once the hat was comfortable, the world got larger: one year, a trek to New York for the inaugural Gas Fitter’s Ball, then on to a long-term relationship with The John H Watson Society, then onto finding many Sherlockian friends via Twitter, meeting The Story Petrels of BC, volunteering for the Left Coast Sherlockian Symposium, and on and on. Like all human associations, this world has its challenges, but, mostly, it is a delightful place to inhabit.

Now, more than 15 years into my hatted inhabitation of Holmes’s world, sometimes I get weary and contemplate a break. Then something always happens to remind me of the rest of the conversation after Watson was told to get his hat: “You wish me to come?” he asked Holmes, who then replied “Yes, if you have nothing better to do.” *If you have nothing better to do.* Of course, at that moment, Watson had nothing better to do, emphasis on *nothing*.

He could hardly weigh one experience against another as he had not shared the world of Holmes’s investigations before. His experience with *A Study in Scarlet* taught him that while he might enjoy life in many other ways he would always return to Holmes because he had nothing better to do, emphasis on *better*. I find that statement to be true for me even when I’m a little weary of Holmes.

I, like Watson, invariably return. I'm willing to wager most people who get their hat are much the same. We wax, we wane, we return.

During a recent bout of weariness, the universe offered the perfect opportunity. I was invited to be a co-moderator for a Good Reads group, The Baskerville Pups, an online forum for novices in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. The group of first-time readers planned to read a book a month. I was intrigued. These are new Arthur Conan Doyle Canon readers. They might possibly become new Sherlockians; some might decide to get a hat. I certainly had nothing better to do.

The opportunity to see Watson's words through the eyes of new readers was an offer I could not refuse. I remember how much fun can be found in that first read. I looked forward to reading *A Study in Scarlet* again—to be “irresistibly drained” into Watson's world.

I made sure to post about the “Get your hat” conversation should any first-time reader miss it—like Watson did when the invitation was first issued. I hope some of them will be like Watson and say yes to the invitation. Many of Watson's readers do become hat getters. I've read long papers and listened to entertaining programs about the phenomenon but it can be explained rather simply, as Alexander E. Braun did when writing for *The Hounds of the Internet* in 2019:

“Holmes continues to call to every generation because we would all like to be like him: wise, observant, and logical, and inhabit an orderly world in which everything had its place and where with our help justice always prevailed. Of course, this is not possible, so we are all content with emulating Watson.”

Once these new readers decide they have nothing better to do, they, too, can join Holmes and Watson (and a whole bunch of other Sherlockians) “...in a Hansom, driving furiously for the Brixton Road.” And beyond.

Let's go! I'll get my hat.

SHERLOCK, PAUL AND ME

Denny Dobry, BSI © 2021

Unlike most Sherlockians, I was not much of a reader in my youth. However, in Junior High School, we were assigned to read “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” and something clicked. I can vividly remember sitting in the classroom and saying to myself: “This is fun!”

The ‘click’ didn’t mature into anything immediately, but a seed had been planted. I was soon back to filling my time playing baseball, football and being a teenager.

The seed didn’t start to grow roots until I was in college and had my own television in my frat house room. Late one night after a weekend party, I flipped on the TV and there was Basil Rathbone. After that first encounter, and every Saturday night thereafter, I watched and enjoyed all 14 of the Rathbone/Bruce classics over and over again.

Life however interfered again with graduation, the start of my career, marriage, children and a social life devoid of readers. None of our friends were interested in reading in general, much less anything to do with Sherlock Holmes. My life was taken up with volunteer work with the Jaycees, Boy Scouts, Little League and dancing lessons (my daughter’s, not mine).

Then in 1987 the local newspaper ran a full-page article on the centenary of the publication of *A Study in Scarlet*. The article began with a brief biography of Doyle and then went on to describe the doings of Sherlockians, including the existence of the Baker Street Irregulars and other scions.

The seed that was planted many years earlier finally spouted. It was off to the library and a copy of the Baring-Gould’s Annotated. I dedicated a corner shelf in a small room in the basement and purchased a copy of *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*. In a tobacco shop (at the time I was an avid pipe smoker) I found an Esco statue of Holmes, which soon graced the shelf in the basement. I read the Canon, finally, in its entirety.

I had no one to share my enthusiasm with, and life again interfered with my pursuit of Sherlockiana. Circumstances with my employer became unbearable and I started to look for another job. Fortunately, I was offered a great position, but unfortunately it required us to relocate, not once, but twice over a several year period. However, during that unsettled time I managed to expand my book collection to include other works of Doyle, but I was still lonely Sherlockian.

We finally settled down in 1994 in Reading, Pennsylvania, and I was determined to find other Sherlockians. Through “The Hounds of the Internet” I discovered Watson’s Tin Box scion in nearby Baltimore and arranged to attend a meeting. I was nervous, apprehensive and excited.

It was on that occasion I met the gentleman who would shape my Sherlockian career. Before the meeting, I was taken to the home of Paul Churchill. I was immediately blown away, because Paul had re-created the sitting room in his home. It had never occurred to me to pursue collecting artifacts from the stories, and now I was really hooked.

Paul and I became very close friends and he encouraged me to create my own sitting room. We shared ideas and the excitement any time either of us found a ‘little treasure’ to include in our rooms. My wife said she was grateful we lived 3-hours away from Paul, because if we lived closer, she would never see me. We spent many hours on the phone and then on e-mail when Paul finally got online.

My Sherlockian course was now set, but it received a tragic blow one night when I got a call from Paul. He told me he was dying with cancer and after his death, asked to liquidate his collection for the benefit of his son.

PAUL PASSED away on November 7, 2008. I think about him every day. His photograph is displayed in my sitting room and in my office. I still communicate with his son Mark who has visited me several times from his home in Nebraska. If I had never met Paul, I

doubt I would have risen to the enthusiasm as Sherlockian that I did.

Paul Churchill was the best and wisest Sherlockian whom I have ever known.

MY LIFE WITH HOLMES
or
I REGRET I HAVE ONLY ONE LIFE TO GIVE TO
SHERLOCK

Joe Eckrich, BSI © 2021

At this time of life I am not certain whether I first met Holmes through the Basil Rathbone films, which are still among my favorite, or in the pages of the Garden City one volume *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*. I suspect it was the films first and the book not too long after. I attended a Catholic grammar school which had a small library, and I'm sure there was not one Sherlock Holmes book in it. The closest public library, Buder Library, was in the basement of a St. Louis public school about 20 blocks from my home. I was in the seventh grade at this time and I would periodically ride my bike to the library to take out books. Unlike Morley I did not read them on my ride home. I already had an interest in mystery and detective books, and then I ran across *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*.

I began reading the stories and, like so many others, I was hooked. I continued to take out the book from time to time until I had read all of the stories it contained. Looking back I can't recall any specific memories of favorite stories or of being frightened when I read *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, but I obviously enjoyed them and never really lost interest the stories or the character. However, watching the Rathbone films and the Ronald Howard shows whenever they appeared on television and reading the stories was all I did. I finished college, went into the Army and to Viet Nam and got married without much more involvement with Holmes. Then in 1974 Nicholas Meyer published *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* and the flood gates opened. I found books by Michael Harrison and Michael Hardwick, both of whom I later met and spent time with, and many others. There were actually books about Sherlock Holmes. I had no idea how many until I found a remaindered copy of Baring-Gould's *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street*, a book I can't really recommend except for Appendix II, "The Bibliographic Holmes: A

Selective Compilation.” I was hitting the bookstores frequently in those days and buying every new book about Sherlock Holmes I could find. I didn’t realize it at the time but I was on my way to becoming a collector.

I still didn’t know about the BSI or scion societies. It wasn’t until Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, Illinois across the river from St. Louis held some sort of event with different groups having booths. One of those partaking was The Noble Bachelors, the local scion society. I totally missed the event but fortunately my father was an engineer at the local CBS station and they had run a segment on it, including the Noble Bachelors. After he told me about it I tracked down Philip Shreffler, the founder and head of the society, and I was invited to a meeting. That first meeting was in January 1977, and I had to drive through a snow storm to make it but it was worth it. It was my first real step into this Hobby of ours and I haven’t stopped yet.

I became active in The Noble Bachelors and, when Phil Shreffler decided to step down, I took over the group. I’m still not sure what the title was or if there even was a title. Unfortunately I eventually moved to Chicago with my job and, although I tried running the group from there, it soon became evident it was not going to work and I stepped down. I was only in Chicago for a year and when I returned I continued to attend The Noble Bachelor meetings. At the time there were no other groups in the immediate St. Louis area. They met for dinner meetings 2 or 3 times a year with a group too large to discuss anything Sherlockian in detail, although there was a Sherlockian program at each dinner meeting. I eventually wanted to meet in a smaller group to discuss the stories, so in 1988 I founded The Parallel Case of St. Louis which, under Rob Nunn, is still going strong today. The name was taken from a mention in *The Sign of Four*, one of only two mentions of St. Louis in the Canon.

I attended my first John Bennett Shaw workshop in 1983 at Benedictine College in Lisle, Illinois and once again my Sherlockian world expanded. I met Sherlockians from around the country, many

of whom are still friends today. I also met John Bennett Shaw, a major influence in my Sherlockian life.

Thereafter I attended two more Shaw workshops, and one at which he was the major draw. In 1984 I attended the Shaw workshop at the University of Dubuque in Dubuque, Iowa. It was here I met and became friends with David Hammer and such Sherlockians as Gordon Speck and Bill Cochran who became lifelong friends. It was also the first time I met Michael Harrison, who would later become a guest in my home and a long time correspondent.

In 1987 I attended the Shaw Workshop at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, and then in 1990 I attended Holmes on the Range in Kansas City, Missouri. For anyone who did not have the opportunity to attend one of Shaw's workshops, it is hard to explain just how much fun they were and how much they added to one's enjoyment of Sherlock Holmes. Today's conferences are directly related to Shaw's Workshops and owe him a great debt. I have attended numerous conferences in Minneapolis, Toronto and Dayton as well as the various Sherlock Holmes Review and Gillette to Brett conferences and the BSI Conferences: Valley of Fear in Pennsylvania, A Study in Scarlet in Salt Lake City and the BSI Trust Lily Library event as well as both Nerve and Knowledge events in Indianapolis.

In 1984 I attended my first BSI Dinner at the Regency Hotel under Julian Wolff. I continued to attend the dinners in the late 1980's and early 1990's and then in 1993 I received my investiture, "The Stockbroker's Clerk" from Tom Stix. Throughout this time I was holding meetings of The Parallel Case and attending meetings of The Noble Bachelors, The Occupants of the Empty House, The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn and The Chester Baskervilles. I even attended a meeting of The Alkaline Plainsmen in Kansas City just to meet Michael Hardwick, the speaker. It turned out someone was needed to drive him to his next event in Omaha, Nebraska and I volunteered even though it was in the opposite direction from St. Louis. The trip took a little over three hours and the conversation was delightful.

I was still collecting various books on Sherlock Holmes, new as well as any older items I could find. At some point, one of my Sherlockian mentors and charter member of The Parallel Case, Dr. Bartlett Simms, BSI, was getting ready to move from his home to an apartment and desired to sell his Sherlock Holmes collection. He offered it to me, and we worked out some terms, and I became the owner of a very large and wonderful collection. This was either the start of something great or my downfall. I am still not sure which it was. However, once I had this collection I was determined to add to it. Looking to John Bennett Shaw as an inspiration I intended to be a completist, and I did make the effort. At some point it became clear I had to either specialize or declare bankruptcy. I chose to specialize on the “writings on the writings,” which was where my interest was anyway, and I have been much happier since. That doesn’t mean those are the only books I collect. Heaven forbid. I also collect Arthur Conan Doyle, Vincent Starrett, Michael Harrison and Jack the Ripper among many others not directly related to Holmes. In addition to Holmes books and other memorabilia, I collect autographs of actors and actresses appearing in Sherlockian films, plays and television programs.

The pandemic put a stop to attending meetings in person for quite a while but, thanks to Zoom, I was able to attend quite a number of meetings I would not otherwise be able to attend, such as those of The Sherlock Holmes Society of London and The Bootmakers of Toronto, among others. In fact, these meetings helped me and other Sherlockians get through this time of isolation and fear.

I believe Sherlock Holmes and my involvement in Sherlockian activities have greatly added to my enjoyment of life. I have made enumerable friends, met interesting people, and had a great deal of fun. I wouldn’t have missed it for anything, and I would do it all over again if I could. In the meantime, I am still going stronger than ever.

TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

Kerry Entrekin © 2021

My Dearest Sherlock Holmes,

I am writing to express my sincerest appreciation to you for all you have provided to me over the years.

From reading my first case “The Red-Headed League” in middle school to recently completing the entire Canon many years later, it is through you I owe my deepest gratitude of sharing your intellect, wisdom, passion, and, of course, the art of deduction.

During the COVID pandemic, I have found time to revisit reading my favorite cases as well as watching episodes and movies portraying you. Nothing compares to the original, I must say. I truly believe Irene Adler was a fool to have disappeared from your grasp in the “Scandal in Bohemia”. The two of you would have made quite the sleuthing duo.

So it is with my greatest honor, I bestow upon you the credit you so rightfully deserve.

May you live forever in the Canon and remind all of us what a rare treasure you are! “The Blue Carbuncle” gemstone has got nothing on you, my friend.

Do take care and always be aware of the evil Moriarty lurking in the shadows. Say hello to your most loyal and devoted companion Dr. Watson, your ever elusive brother Mycroft, and last, but not least, the lovely Mrs. Hudson.

My Best,

Kerry Entrekin & Pusheen
Holmes



HOME IS WHERE THE HOLMES IS

Beth L. Gallego © 2021

Part A: Circa 1986

I don't remember how old I was when I first met Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

I do know it happened in the house we lived in until I was 11. I remember my green room, the hardwood floor, and the scattered toys, stuffed animals, and many, many books.

Someone had given me a box set of abridged classics from Playmore's Moby Books imprint: small, chunky paperbacks, perhaps four or five inches square and half an inch thick, with an illustration on nearly every second page.

Tucked in that box with *Oliver Twist*, *Ben-Hur*, and *Great Expectations* was *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. "The Speckled Band" grabbed my attention and lodged in my brain, the root of an unreasonable suspicion of bell pulls. Were the pictures I remember so vividly really there, or have I retroactively incorporated the Pagets I encountered later? I can't say for sure; I'm still searching for a new copy of that little book. Mine disappeared somewhere in the following years, lost and nearly forgotten.

When people ask how I got interested in the world of Sherlock Holmes, I tell a story from decades later that involves knitters, podcasts, and the BBC. It was only well after the events of that story that I remembered my real first meeting with Holmes, there in the pages of the abridged *Adventures*.

Part B: 2013-2019

In the summer of 2013, on the advice of some online friends and acquaintances, I watched the BBC's *Sherlock*. It didn't take long; there were only six episodes then. "The Reichenbach Fall" had aired in early 2012, and "The Empty Hearse" would air in January of 2014.

I was immediately hooked. I skipped right over casual enjoyment and plunged into deep obsession. I needed more Sherlock Holmes. I set to reading the original stories, in no small part so I might catch whatever bits and pieces appeared in future episodes.

Not content with my own thoughts, I went in search of kindred spirits to talk about my newfound infatuation. In addition to those online friends who originally encouraged me to watch the show, I found the Curious Collectors.

The Curious Collectors of Baker Street, my local scion society. I joined just in time for their 25th anniversary. The members welcomed me with open arms and good humor. Their events were highlights of my calendar: a showing of *The Great Mouse Detective*; a dinner and discussion of Holmes's education; a talk on beekeeping, and the annual Medal Quiz.

Stamford introduced Watson to Holmes. Holmes and Watson, in turn, brought me to new friends and new adventures.

By the end of 2019, I was eagerly anticipating the next year.

Then, the world broke.

Part C: 2020 and Beyond

The year 2020 sounded so full of promise. Great things were coming. At home, the Curious Collectors' 30th Anniversary Dinner was scheduled for March.

That didn't happen. In the face of COVID-19's wildfire spread, restaurants closed. Offices closed. Schools closed. Virtual work became reality.

Weeks of Safer at Home turned into months. Small events were postponed indefinitely. Conferences and conventions were cancelled.

For many of us, home became our entire world.

And then, clever Sherlockians used the same software they depended on professionally to take their local societies international.

From my desk in Los Angeles, I sat in on meetings in Seattle and St. Louis. I attended Scintillation of Scions without spending six hours on an airplane. I joined the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

I wasn't the only one longing to "break the monotony of my

daily existence” with an expanded virtual world. People from all over the globe gathered again and again, familiar faces appearing in those tiny boxes week after week. When all was chaos outside, we could still talk and laugh together.

Sherlockians have long been experts at finding each other across the distance. We show up for the Great Detective and the Good Doctor, but we keep coming back for each other.

Though it may look different these days, for me, Sherlock Holmes means community.

HOLMES AND JAY

Jayantika Ganguly, BSI © 2021

My first introduction to Sherlock Holmes was at the age of twelve – and since then, he has been an integral part of my life in pretty much every way I can think of. Holmes has been a friend, a mentor, a confidante, a hero – and so much more. I go to him for advice for pretty much everything, even now, and he lends a patient ear to most of my ramblings and rantings. Sherlock Holmes is so much more than a character or a research subject for me. He’s a large part of my way of life – not just with random Sherlockian knick-knacks I keep picking up, or the pastiches I keep writing, or the Sherlockian activities and events I engage in, but also in my head. Besides my family, he is the biggest mental support system I have when facing a difficult situation. What started out as a young girl’s infatuation eventually morphed into full-fledged grown-up adoration. And now, a decade and a half later, I can only look back to the day my dad gave me “The Return of Sherlock Holmes” to read with gratitude and joy. That was my first introduction to the man who has influenced me as much as my father or my mother.

Now, we Indians have a tendency to deify things/people – and I’ve tried with our dear Mr. Holmes, too – but he’s simply too resistant. He’s somewhat tolerant of my random ideas like “collective Sherlockian consciousness” and the strange stories and situations I come up with, but he doesn’t hesitate to put me right when I stray too far. After all, Sherlock Holmes is my voice of reason. Not only that, he’s been my ray of hope, and my last tether to rationality during some very difficult years of my life. He’s influenced my way of thinking, my habits – both in good ways and bad. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say at times, he’s kept me alive. He’s connected me, a woman from a third world country, with so many wonderful people all over the world (definitely more than three continents!) – and he’s found me amazing friends I’d never have had a chance to meet in my life. He’s taken me to places I’d never have wanted to visit otherwise - why else would I head to Meiringen the moment I

step foot into Switzerland instead of doing the usual rounds of Zurich or Geneva, or wander around in the lanes of Karuizawa, Japan, or find myself in the little village of Hindhead, UK? Honestly, if not for Holmes, I'd never have found myself making annual trips to London or New York (well, at least until before the pandemic changed our lives) or having strange but fun (for me, at least) conversations with immigration officers across the world.

If I had to sum up my relationship with Sherlock Holmes, it'd boil down to: *Nisi Holmes frustra.*

HOW I MET SHERLOCK HOLMES

Karen R. Haynes © 2021

I guess I have my father to credit (or blame) for introducing me to Sherlock Holmes.

As a child, I was an avid reader. I particularly liked detective stories and read things like Nancy Drew and the Dana girls. When I got a bit older, I started reading adult mysteries Agatha Christie and Ellery Queen were among my favorites.

In 1967 my father got a job transfer, and my family moved from West Virginia to Connecticut. One of my favorite stores in downtown Stamford was Caldor. I was always in the downstairs book section going through the paperbacks for something to read. My father picked up one of the books and said, "Why don't you read these. They're classics." It was a paperback of a dozen favorite Sherlock Holmes stories by Arthur Conan Doyle.

I suppose I had heard of the character but not much else. Well, I read the book and was hooked. At that point I had to get a book with all the stories. I'm not sure why I was hooked on this detective and not others. I guess it was because the characters were so finely drawn, the atmosphere of Victorian England seemed so real, and the plots weren't bad either.

From then on I have been looking for anything Holmes related. I have read many pastiches and parodies. My father bought me the box set of William S. Baring-Gould's *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes* when it was first published. Around that time there was a TV station out of New York we could get (WOR). They played a lot of old films. Among them were the Sherlock Holmes films made by Universal starring Basil Rathbone as Holmes. I loved those films, and Rathbone has always been for me the ideal Holmes. My father also liked to watch them.....he remembered seeing some of them in movie theaters when he was a young man serving in the Navy in WWII.

Since that time, until today, I am still a Sherlock Holmes fan. I have collected many Sherlock Holmes books, seen a number of

Holmes films in movie theaters and TV (the first Holmes movie I saw in a movie theater was Billy Wilder's 'The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes'), and have many Sherlock Holmes knick-knacks.

In my daily life I have never run into anyone else who is a Holmes fan. My father wasn't a fan but seemed amused and indulged me. My late husband wasn't a fan, but I remember him watching the Jeremy Brett Sherlock Holmes series on TV with me. I struck out getting my kids interested in the character. They think I'm crazy. I have four grandsons. The two older ones are teenagers and are into other things, but I still might have a chance with



the two younger ones. I have bought them the Lego Sherlock Holmes alphabet book and books from the *Basil of Baker Street* series. Grandson Xavier has a small fish tank in his room, and I got him to name two of his fish 'Sherlock' and 'John'.

In more recent times, in 2008 I became a widow and moved in with my daughter and her family. I didn't know what to do with myself for a while. My daughter urged me to get out and travel. I got a passport and traveled around Europe with tour groups. I've been to London twice.....even though it wasn't on the itinerary I managed to walk down Baker Street and go to the Sherlock Holmes Museum and see the Sherlock Holmes statue at Baker Street station. In 2016 I flew out to see my son and his family in Washington state (he lives just outside Seattle). The trip was planned not only to see him but also to go to the Sherlock Holmes Exhibition which was in Seattle at the time.

By chance on the web I found 221B Con and have been flying from Virginia to Atlanta to attend the conference since 2016. While at the first conference, I met Steve Mason and became a member of the Beacon Society. I have taken the Fortescue Scholarship Exams and in 2020 became a Crew Member of 'The Crew of the Barque

Lone Star' (online). If those in charge of this anthology accept this essay , I will actually be published (in a way), adding my tiny part to Sherlock Holmes fandom.

There have been resurgences of interest in Sherlock Holmes since I first discovered him in 1967. At that time Basil Rathbone was still considered the classic Holmes. There were a few motion pictures and TV movies from that time but it wasn't until the 1980's when Jeremy Brett portrayed him in a long-running TV series there was real interest in the character again. There was another long lull until the first Robert



Downey, Jr. Holmes movie came along followed by BBC 'Sherlock' with Benedict Cumberbatch and CBS's 'Elementary' with Jonny Lee Miller. At this time the cycle seems to be at low ebb again.

There's not much else to tell. I consider myself a traditionalist in Sherlockiana but can appreciate pastiches and parodies of the character if they're well done. A lot has changed since I was first introduced to the character in 1967. It's been a mixed bag along the way but always interesting.

My small room in my daughter's house is pretty much a Sherlock Holmes shrine, full of pictures, collectibles, lots of books, DVDs and CDs all related to the detective. Some people may think I'm a bit crazy, but it makes me happy and that's all that counts.

HOLMES AND ME

Eleanor Hébert, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

As Doyle once stated, “It is a great thing to start life with a small number of really good books which are your very own.” I first met Sherlock Holmes among my family's book collection. I owe my many years of friendship with the beloved Detective to my parents, who always encouraged a love of classic literature in our home and school.

From the first pages of the Speckled Band, I was hooked and became a dedicated admirer of the Detective. I wore a tweed coat and deerstalker one Halloween, I had a Sherlock Holmes-themed birthday party as a young teenager, and I was most excited about visiting the famed 221B on a family trip to London several years ago.

According to Doyle, “The love of books is among the choicest gifts of the gods.” My favorite place to get to know Holmes was at the library, where I voraciously soaked up the abridged adventures for children. It was there I was introduced to the Detective's fan club at a symposium held in his honor.

The Crew of the Barque Lone Star welcomed me with open arms. Joining the society as a student was an immense privilege and it is something of which I am proud to be a part. I enjoy the book club aspect of the meetings and grasping a deeper understanding of the stories from the quizzes and the accompanying discussions each month.

It was at one of my first meetings a fellow Crew member gifted me my first complete Canon in one edition, with original Paget illustrations sprinkled throughout the text. This book has become a prized possession to me, filled with my notes and annotations in preparation for the quizzes or as I try my hand at cracking a case with techniques learned from time spent with the Detective. The Canon is an item I wouldn't be caught on a desert island without, something I would retrieve in a fire, and something that has brought me comfort often.

At the meetings, gatherings of Sherlockians, is where I feel the most connected to Holmes. When we take quizzes, discuss the stories, and share our research and insights with each other is when I most feel Holmes' presence. I picture him joining us at our table, enjoying a cup of tea, listening intently, and silently observing the participants. Other times, I imagine Doyle himself joining us, listening and writing scrupulously.

While the current pandemic upended so many social activities, my experience in the Sherlockian community, on the contrary, is one that has only been enhanced by the present global pandemic. From the outset of the pandemic, I was an eager proponent of virtual society meetings to adapt with the unique times in history. The Zoom meetings have been a pleasant experience and have allowed me to attend more regularly. Living far away from the Crew's monthly meeting location had previously limited how often I was able to attend. Because of the convenience of the Zoom meetings, I now rarely miss a meeting and can even tune in remotely during travel. I have felt no less connected on these virtual meetings but instead even more a part of the community.

Throughout the current pandemic, I have corresponded regularly with other Sherlockians and made new friends in the group, have been able to participate in such events as the national R. Joel Senter Sr. Memorial Essay Contest, the Crew's annual book, presented at the meetings, provided content for Sherlockian publications, attended other societies' virtual meetings and events across the country, and even became a Deck Mate in the Crew, a great honor. I have met remote and international members and have learned from their unique research and perspectives, an opportunity I would not have enjoyed without the changes the pandemic has made to the Sherlockian community. I believe it has brought Holmes even closer to each of us. Now, he seems to sit right beside me at each virtual Sherlockian event or as I participate in opportunities from the comfort of my own home. In contrast to how it has transformed so much else, the pandemic has made me feel more connected to the Sherlockian community and has provided myriad opportunities to be involved remotely, something I never envisioned before 2020.

As a high school junior last spring, I helped at a very intimate homeschool graduation, the same one at which I will be graduating next spring. Each senior was given a display table for various memorabilia of her hobbies, interests, and academic achievements. Most students included a stack of books that have influenced their lives and mean a lot to them. As I observed each table and started considering the items I will display on my own table, the Canon, a deerstalker, and a magnifying glass were among the first items that immediately came to mind, as they represent an important aspect of my youth and something I will carry with me into adulthood. Let the reader rest assured that of the items I will take with me to college, my copy of the Canon will have a prominent position. As Holmes points out, "Education never ends, Watson. It is a series of lessons, with the greatest for the last," something that inspires me to never stop learning beyond my college years.

Sherlock Holmes has been a true friend to me; he has given me so much. Without him, I wouldn't be a part of such an enriching Sherlockian community or have enjoyed so many memorable experiences. Like Mr. Senter, whose memory lives on vividly through the student essay contest, Doyle's memory survives through his brilliant creation. The Detective's adoring fans keep his memory alive. I am gratefully apprenticed to these caretakers, to learn from them as part of the next generation of Sherlockians and to keep their memory alive as much as the memory of the Greatest Detective himself.

HOW I BECAME A SHERLOCKIAN

Wendy Heyman-Marsaw, MBt © 2021

I quite simply was born into it. My dad was an anglophile, an early Sherlockian and a wonderful inspiration. The New York City apartment I grew up in had a Victorian décor: red flocked wallpaper, simulated gaslight chandelier and a violin hung upon a wall.

Dad, born in 1914, could very well have read original Canon tales. He smoked pipes, and his specially blended tobacco notoriously smelled like elephant dung. He wore the only deerstalker on the New York City subway system. His tweed overcoat looked like it came from Basil Rathbone's dressing room.

When I was five, I went on my first of several visits to Gillette's Castle. I was given a paperback copy of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* at the age of 8. Dad and I would discuss the stories. On my 13th birthday I was treated to my first Broadway play, "Baker Street", starring Fritz Weaver as Sherlock Holmes. If a Nigel Bruce and Basil Rathbone movie was on TV, the entire family would gather round our television set.

When I was in university, I had the opportunity to spend 1972 in London, England studying at the London Polytechnic founded in 1838 (now the University of Westminster). While there I steeped myself in as many Sherlockian influences available at the time. I joined the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, visited Baker Street and locales where stories were set, and frequented The Sherlock Holmes Pub as often as a student's pocketbook permitted.

My first job was at WOR-TV in New York City where I was fortunate to meet the late Chris Steinbrunner, BSI and co-author of *The Films of Sherlock Holmes* (Citadel Press, 1978). Chris and I formed a friendship and he regaled me with stories about BSI meetings, and we enjoyed many story discussions.

Work necessitated a move to Toronto, Canada. I was unaware of The Canadian Sherlock Holmes Society, known as "The Boot-makers". I did maintain my membership in the London Society,

however, and watched Granada's Jeremy Brett productions religiously.

In 2004 I moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia. I discovered the local society, The Spence Munros, founded by Mark Alberstat, BSI, MBt. Mark and his wife, JoAnn edit the Canadian Sherlock Holmes publication, *Canadian Holmes*. I pitched the idea of a regular Mrs. Hudson column about her tenants and Victorian life in general accompanied by related recipes. After 5 years and membership in the Bootmakers I was awarded the title of Master Bootmaker. That same year MX Publishing, London, proposed a book featuring all my Mrs. Hudson columns. The title is *Memoirs from Mrs. Hudson's Kitchen* and was edited by Mark and JoAnn. I also began a quarterly blog, www.mrshudsonskitchen.com. Subsequently, I was invited to write several scholarly articles for books, many reviews, and had editing assignments as well.

So what began as a youthful indoctrination has now become an all-consuming passion. I feel I have finally earned the right call myself a true Sherlockian.

WHEN I BECAME A SHERLOCKIAN

Donald Hobbs, ASH, BSI, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

There are hordes of Sherlockians and Holmesians scattered around the globe. Ask most of them when they became a Sherlockian or Holmesian and most will give the vaguest of answers. They will tell you about reading the Canon as a child or young adult. They may talk about attending a meeting at some time or another. I might be the only Sherlockian who can give the exact date of when I became a Sherlockian.

Like so many others, I read the stories at a young age before moving on to other writings. Eventually I discovered girls and forgot all about the Master. As time wore on, I rediscovered the Canon and eventually began collecting Sherlockiana. Like so many before me, I started out with the vacuum cleaner approach, sucking up anything closely resembling Sherlock Holmes. That is why today, I still have about a bazillion books worth about a nickel apiece. I learned how to play the game we all love so dearly. I was a Sherlock Holmes enthusiast but still not a Sherlockian.

Time and my collection progressed, eventually amassing over 500 Sherlockian related books. Then one day, God calls me. Well, maybe the person on the other end of phone call was not the Biblical God but to a Sherlockian, it was close enough. The voice on the other end of the line was John Bennett Shaw. Sherlockians need no introduction to John Bennett Shaw. He is the greatest Sherlockian of all time. Just prior to receiving his call, I had read he was adding over 500 items a month to his collection. That number surpassed the number of items in my entire collection, and he was calling moi!

Much to my delight and surprise he invited me to attend the Un-Happy Birthday Celebration in Moriarty, New Mexico. Along with that invitation, he also asked if I would like to come to his home and see his collection. When I picked myself up off of the floor, I accepted his kind offer to both invitations. I promptly booked a flight to Albuquerque from Dallas, secured a place to stay and

impatiently waited until it was time to travel. I arrived as scheduled, on Tuesday, November, 3, 1992.

As I picked up my rental car at the airport, the first thing I heard on the car radio was Los Angeles Laker Magic Johnson was retiring from professional basketball due to being HIV positive. This is the reason I remember the date so vividly. I followed the story on the radio as I drove to Santa Fe, where John and Dorothy lived on Fort Union drive. I had made arrangements to visit John the following day. When I arrived, I had no idea what to expect, so it was with great trepidation I walked up and knocked on the door.

I was greeted by massive barking from two dogs and a lovely white-haired lady, John's wife Dorothy. She welcomed me in by name and walked me back to The Library. To Sherlock Holmes, Irene Adler will always be the Lady, and to me, John's will always be The Library. All of my fears melted away in an instant. John was like your grandfather and favorite uncle rolled into one. Right from the beginning I felt at ease and at home. He first showed me around The Library and offered me a seat, a drink, and then asked me Sherlockian questions, personal questions, and professional questions. All the while never seeming to pry and at the same time actually caring about my answers.

During the tour, John stopped in front of his foreign language section. At that time he had translations in 60 different languages. Just before my visit, I had purchased my first 2 foreign translations of the Canon. One in Spanish and the other in Polish. To my utter amazement, The Library did not hold a copy of the Polish edition. I was well aware of John's axiom-'If you have one of something, gloat; if you have more than one, share it.' I promised on the spot if I ever found another copy of that book, I would immediately send it to The Library.

At the time, I was still a Sherlockian collector not a Sherlockian. It was there on the spot I decided I wanted to collect foreign translations of the Canon. I mean how difficult could it be? I already had 2 of the languages and just needed to find 58 more. Well, in the 30 years since that day in The Library, I managed to find 56 of those 58 language. Kazakh and Sindhi have eluded me to this day. But

along the way, I discovered 73 additional languages with translations of the Canon bringing the total to 113 different languages that have at least a partial canonical translation.

The following evening, Thursday, November 5, 1992, I drove the 50 or so miles from Santa Fe to the town of Moriarty where the Un-Happy Birthday Celebration would be taking place. I walked into the Frontier Saloon where all of the heads turn in my direction when I walked through the doors. I was not dressed like any of the other patrons. One of the many cowboys standing at the bar said, “You lookin’ fer the Sherlock folks? They’re in the room back there” and pointed in that direction. I thanked him and walked to the indicated room. What a difference a few steps can make. I had stepped into a time warp.

Upon entering, ‘Queen Vickie’ greeted me and asked where I was from, then told me to go mingle. This I did. Several people, including Queen Vickie, were in costume but most were not. The celebration was a pot-luck affair so I simply made a cash contribution for my lack of bringing along a dish. Soon I was in conversation with Saul Cohen, Dick Miller, and guy named Ron. Ron turned out to be Ron De Waal. I ended up giving Ron a ride back to John’s house then the both of us ended up at the local Denny’s talking all things Sherlockian until the sun came up. But I am getting way ahead of myself.

As the celebration continued, I met John Farrell from Los Angeles. John was co-author with Sean Wright of *The Sherlock Holmes Cookbook*. I learned that at the end of the Un-Happy Birthday Celebration, those still standing would go outside to the parking lot and stand around a bonfire made of manure. Un-Happy Birthday (Moriarty You Bastard) was sung. This was the grand finale of the celebration. On this particular evening, I learned John Farrell had written letters to 50 governors and 100 senators, asking for contributions for the manure pile. John proceeded to read some their replies.

These were some of the funniest letters I ever heard. The Colorado Governor sent a box of coprolite – petrified dinosaur dung. A Washington State senator sent cricket crap from a research lab and another senator’s letter stated that any of his speeches were

considered to be pieces of s**t, so he enclosed several of them. The hilarity of the letter and their replies made a lasting impression on me. I knew from that moment I wanted to friend and associate with these people.

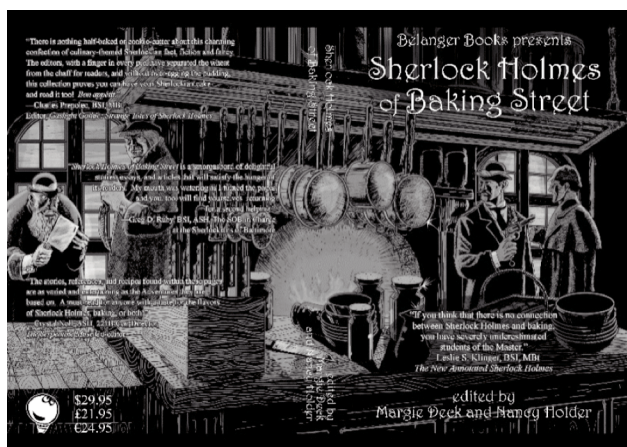
This was the moment I became a Sherlockian. Thursday, November 5, 1992. A date for me that will live in infamy.

BECAUSE I LOVE SHERLOCK HOLMES: A BAKER'S DOZEN OF MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

Nancy Holder, ASH, BSI, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate

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Because I love Sherlock Holmes...wonderful things have happened to me. Co-editing *Sherlock Holmes of Baking Street* with my good friend Margie Deck must top the list. *SHoBS* is not a cookbook (although it does contain ten recipes). Rather, it is a bakehouse full of mystery fiction, articles, and memoirs that often abstractly explore the subject of baking, as was our intention. Proceeds from the book go to the Beacon Society rather than our generous writers, our publisher, and our artist, and we are very grateful to them for their work.



I COULD EASILY FILL out the remainder of my list with Sherlockian memories and adventures, but in the spirit of our anthology, I will go sideways. So here are a dozen neat things that have happened to me because I love Sherlock Holmes:

1. I read Michael Crichton's account of his own exorcism (successful).
2. I saw the preserved wreck of the *Mary Rose*, a warship of Henry VIII.
3. I attended an evening of H.P. Lovecraft plays in a pub in London.
4. I wrote and sold a short story featuring a Cuban Marxist detective in Victorian era Ybor City, Florida.
5. I saw Edgar Allan Poe's cottage in the Bronx.
6. I ate breakfast in a diner that was used in *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*.
7. I met an artist who lives on an island near me, who completely covered a piano in colorful panes of glass.
8. I went to a kangaroo sanctuary in Australia.
9. I discovered the wonderful world of Italian TV cop shows.
10. I have a career as a comic book writer and graphic novelist.
11. I wrote a letter of protest about the judges' horrible decision on *The Great British Baking Show*. (Iain!)
12. Tyler Posey made me a cappuccino in the green room at a comic convention.

NONE of these things would have happened to me if I didn't love Sherlock Holmes. But I do, and so they did, and I'm looking forward to my next baker's dozen!

HOLMES AS 'YOOPER': OR, LOST IN THE NORTHERN WOODS WITH S. HOLMES

Valli Hoski © 2021

My personal recollection of Sherlock Holmes begins neither at 221B Baker Street nor in the Sussex Downs. Rather, it starts with my discovery of Mr. Holmes as a Yooper, found in the northern woods of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. While on the traditional family vacation 'up north' to escape the Midwest's muggy, hot summer, I made the acquaintance of Mr. Holmes. Not on the shores of Superior or at the Tahquamenon Falls, the introduction occurred in a drugstore in Paradise just outside the state's forest lands.

A voracious reader of the age of 12, I'd packed far too few books for the annual vacation. Sand, shore, woods, and mosquitoes were not a satisfying alternative to getting lost in literary adventures. There was no local library or bookshop to provide a solution.

A diversion presented itself – a drive into town with my father to shop for supper supplies and the daily news. Food was procured; the newspapers required a visit to the drugstore. Wandering past the tube testing station (an essential feature of American drugstores in the 1950s era of tube-based electronics), I was drawn to the solution for my bibliographic desert - a rotating rack filled with paperbacks. Browsing the mix of titles, my curiosity was raised by a book's cover with an odd hat, intense face, and snarling dog; the back cover promised a thrilling adventure.

In that paradisiacal setting, Mr. Holmes and I made our acquaintance in the exhilarating tale of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. This and many other adventures have since been taken with Mr. Holmes; each strengthened my intellectual curiosity and reading avocation.

Jump ahead to the start of my library 'career' at age of 12 – the teaching sisters assigned me to be team manager of my school's student library. This was quite a role to grow into, especially for a middle-schooler who was friendly, helpful but definitely not a viva-

cious school queen. The library was comprised of all the books that fit into the single classroom lined with shelves. Titles ranged from approved, traditional fiction, fortunately including A.C. Doyle's stories of Holmes and Watson, and 'suitable' nonfiction, including a surprisingly academic book on aeronautics and astronautics. One Holmes title alluded to in various tales was missing in the collection – "The Art of Detection." My search for this tome would carry on throughout high school and college.

Some years passed before Mr. Holmes reappeared in my basket of enthusiasms. Now a full-fledged information professional, I discovered the intellectual creativity and collegiality of Sherlockian (or Holmesian) scions. While at an American Library Association annual convention, a rather fanciful-sounding program caught my eye – a meeting of The Sub-Librarians Scion of the Baker Street Irregulars. Marsha Pollack earned my heartfelt gratitude with her invitation to the traditional librarians' gathering and dinner. Wherever career and family have taken me, a new Sherlockian scion has beckoned, from the Criterion Bar in Chicago, the Red Circle Society of D.C, DFW'S Diogenes Club as well as Crew of the Barque Lone Star, to the White Rose Irregulars in Harrisburg, Sherlockians of Baltimore and several more.

Mr. Holmes is traditionally depicted as an independent intellectual, with few close friends; he is logical, analytical and aloof in manner. Contrary to the character's depiction, each scion provides its members a welcoming, intellectual, societal and social home for a true 'meeting of the minds'. From puzzles, quizzes, and discussions of curious matters to the raising of toasts that never die, each scion continues the legacy of Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes in their sitting rooms and social gatherings.

Meeting Mr. Holmes on a 'Yooper' vacation gave an extraordinary start to my discovery of and affection for Sherlockian literature and scion friendships. The mind and heart of this now-mature young lady are still captured by the spirit, thrill, and call of adventure of the Hound's tale found at that U.P. drugstore bookstand. Alas, Mr. Holmes' original tome of *The Art of Detection* still eludes my library collection.

LIFE WITH SHERLOCK HOLMES

A Free Verse Poem by B. Sivley Hutchison,
Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

Sunlight warmly glows. The leaves
Filter yellow dapples across the lawn.
The girl and boy play make-believe in his grandmother's
backyard.
"We can play Kirk and Spock," he says. Then quickly adds,
"I'm Kirk."

She shakes her head to quietly shout, "No!"
Then, pensive, she grows still.
He finally asks, "Who do you want to be?"
"I want to be Sherlock Holmes," she declares. "You can be Dr.
Watson."
Smiles brighten.

HOLMES AND WATSON HAVE AN ADMIRABLE FRIENDSHIP.

The girl sits on a chill green hassock.
Mom's handmade teak bookcase offers a good selection.
It is summertime in Texas; school is out; there is little to do.
She wriggles closer to the shelves seeking a remedy for her
boredom.

Back in the elementary school classroom,
She delights in a novel about three young investigators.
The girl presently spies two gray and green volumes by A.
Conan Doyle.
A difficult read for her, she aspires to discover Sherlock
Holmes and his world.
She does her best.

HOLMES IS A HERO.

The music builds from the den's old TV set.
The window air conditioner's thrum competes.
The rolling fog shot pans to Rathbone and Bruce in a thrilling
start.

Heart pounding, the girl curls legs and
Nestles bare feet into the upholstered chair.
It is a rather old black and white movie, but her first one in the
series.

She watches Holmes and Watson investigating beyond the
times of Victorian London;
Yet, she wants to see them all.

HOLMES IS A CELEBRATED WORLDWIDE FIGURE.

The girl feeds her Sherlockian cravings through the decade.
Through the years, she blooms as a young lady.
Her first year of University passes and the break offers
diversions.

As a young Victorian lady in cream-colored blouse with
touches of lace,

A long black skirt with black bow on the back, and
Grandmother's round pin at neck, she prepares for an
adventure.

At a Dallas restaurant in August 1977,

The Crew of the Barque *Lone Star* and Mr. Beeson, Third
Mate,

Meet Miss Brenda Sivley.

HOLMES IS AN ADVENTURER.

Christmas Eve draws a sibling home.

Dad shifts the gifts beneath the tree while Mom completes the
feast.

Brenda's brother Fred gives her memorable gifts.

Brown plaid deerstalker hat and Calabash pipe of gourd.

Her first deerstalker conceals a surprise,

A bill lies beneath tape on the lining.

Some cash to buy books.

Sherlockian works by Baring-Gould, De Waal, Starrett, and
Tracy.

HOLMES INVESTIGATES AND RESEARCHES;

SHERLOCKIANS INVESTIGATE AND RESEARCH.

At the crossroads of Center and Division,

Brenda and her future match first meet.

The police have the parties exchange information

Little realizing the actions lead to dates and eventual
engagement.

She requires a year for her degree,

He accepts the delay with aplomb.

In September 1980, they vow to be husband and wife,

1986 baby boy and 1992 baby girl.

*HOLMES IS A HUMAN BEING, AN IMPERFECT ONE AS ARE
WE ALL.*

Some unpleasant facts of Life,

In hindsight, always intervene.

Children grow to adulthood; adjust their familial roles.

Beloved elders fade or slip to depart our earthly existence.

Marriages either deliciously mellow or

Become overripe, no matter love or desire.

Following thirty years of marriage oozes a divorce.

June 29, 2011.

HOLMES IS AWARE OF THE FOIBLES OF HUMANITY.

HOLMES SEEKS TRUTH AND JUSTICE.

We learn that Grief advances in stages.
Well, Healing is its stalwart companion.
Brenda finally braces to depart her cocoon; she reaches out
 To spread fresh butterfly wings.
 The arrival of Jim's response marks her course,
 "The Game is still afoot."
She joyously ends her personal great hiatus from Sherlockian
society,
The Diogenes Club of Dallas on September 2, 2012.
The barque resurfaces and there are two societies to visit.
The Crew of the Barque *Lone Star*, July 7, 2013.
Brenda reports on the tragic Battle of Maiwand.
*CAMARADERIE WITHIN SOCIETIES DRAWS US TOGETHER
AND SUPPORTS EVERYONE.*

One day, these two societies unite and
We all tread the deck of the barque.
On Brenda's first anniversary, she gives to meeting attendees
"An Archive of Cases and Events Pertinent to the Perpetual
Lifetimes of
 Mr. Sherlock Holmes and
 Dr. John Watson".
On February 4, 2014, The Crew of the Barque *Lone Star* gains
her as a Deck Crew member.
*HOLMES SAYS, "... THE NAME IS THAT WHICH IS GIVEN TO
ONE OF THE STATES OF THE UNION."
"TEXAS, I THINK." (WATSON)
"I WAS NOT AND AM NOT SURE WHICH; BUT I KNEW THAT
THE SHIP MUST HAVE AN AMERICAN ORIGIN."*

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In 2014, the society is active
At the Perot Museum in Dallas,
The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes,
The Afghanistan Perceivers 40th Anniversary in Oklahoma
 And for a while Brenda eagerly reads, edits, or proofs
 For free, respect, promise.
She begins working as a secretary to assist Cindy and Pam on
June 7, 2015. She resigns the position in June, 2021.
HOLMES WORKS HARD FOR HIS CLIENTS.

Brenda's "The Hound of Pinchin Lane" is
A game built around the mystery of a dognapping.
A brief story reinforces Holmes's affection for Toby the dog.
This game play takes place at two of the society's Sherlock
Holmes Symposiums.
 And though hospital-bound, artist Diane draws
 Toby for a coloring page so
 The children can take Toby home.
One notable joy arises from a little girl's smile at the
conclusion.
HOLMES IS A GENTLEMAN; HE CAN BE A GENTLE MAN.

For the Fiftieth Anniversary of
The Crew of the Barque Lone Star,
Writings from members appear in five anthologies, as of this
writing.

My work appears in only three: *A Grimm Holmes* and
The Canon: Five Lines at a Time.

This modest tome is the third.

Friends, please note that I sign my written works as B. Sivley
Hutchison.

*LET US COMMEMORATE THIS SOCIETY'S 50th
ANNIVERSARY.*

The trifling mysteries of my writer's name are four.

First, a Sherlockian can do little better for the fun of it than

Follow A. Conan Doyle's example.

Second, Mom's avid genealogist perceptions require
consistency.

Legal recordkeeping and the trail of evidence justify
'Hutchison' remain due to our children.

Third, I honor my dear departed parents by again embracing
my maiden name.

I use 'Sivley' out of family pride and a deep longing for
times past.

And lastly, a Sherlockian can playfully deduce from the
initials B. S. H.,

BE SHERLOCK HOLMES!



THE ADVENTURE OF THE UNEXPECTED PATHOLOGIST

Robert S. Katz, ASH, BSI, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

I may be one of the few Sherlockians who can state without hesitation or equivocation that my choice of career, in particular, and with it so much of my life, in general, was due to my reading of the Canon. I started reading the Holmes stories when I was in my early teens, perhaps just before the start of high school. By the time I was ready to enter college, I had gone through the Doubleday edition, cover to cover, at least four or five times.

Throughout high school, my plan had been to attend college, major in history, and then continue with my studies through a PhD in history. I anticipated a career in historical research and teaching. During the summer following high school graduation, I spent most of my time going to the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan, watching old film after film in their screening room. One afternoon I sat in the cool darkness of the auditorium watching Robert Donat in “The Citadel”. I am not normally the type to become very emotional during film screenings. But when this movie ended, I found myself in tears and trembling. I left the museum and walked up Fifth Avenue to the old Brentano’s bookstore and bought a paperback copy of Cronin’s novel. By the time I got off the subway at my home stop, I felt an emotion that was both powerful and puzzling.

Later that night, I picked up the Canon and started on page one of *A Study in Scarlet*. A reading of the 60 stories always clarifies thought. On that first page, Watson talks about his earliest days as a physician. Suddenly my mind cleared and everything made sense. For years, I had been studying the Canon, exposed to the logical and deductive methods of Sherlock Holmes. Just as in the study of history, details count, and often count for everything. Observation overrides mere vision. The emotion of seeing that marvelous film forced me to reconsider my own goals and understand my own motivations.

I now realized that my fascination with history reflected my interest in using deduction to understand events of the past. After all, Dr. Joseph Bell heavily influenced the Literary Agent, and the stories are narrated through the eyes and the pen of a physician, John Watson. Holmes uses the same intellectual approach to solving crimes that a doctor uses in diagnosing and understanding disease. Not surprisingly, two of my favorite books from that period in my life were Altick's *The Scholar Adventurers* and *The Historian as Detective*, by Winks. Both describe historians solving mysteries using Holmesian approaches. I knew I was not smart enough to be Sherlock Holmes (who is, after all?), but maybe I could be Watson-like and apply his methods in making a career in diagnosis.

Again, Sherlock Holmes soon appeared in my path. As summer ended, I matriculated at Haverford College, in the suburbs of Philadelphia. Only upon arrival did I realize that I was attending the alma mater of Christopher Morley, founder of the Baker Street Irregulars, and, perhaps more importantly at that time, the author of the wonderful introduction to the Doubleday edition of the Canon, which I had reread so often.

I stayed with my original plan of majoring in history, as I still found it fascinating. In addition, I took the requisite courses in chemistry, biology, and physics that were required for admission to medical school. Holmes was undoubtedly a better chemist than I was, but I did well enough to gain acceptance at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, located in the scenic South Bronx of New York City. As I recounted in *Irregular Stain*, the BSI Manuscript Series book I co-edited with Andy Solberg, the Haverford College librarian let me see the "Second Stain" manuscript, which Morley had donated to the school, just before graduation day. One can't ask for a better send-off.

I spent the summer between college and medical school editing a paper I had written during my senior year for a class in the history of science and medicine. The paper dealt with the unusual distribution of deaths in the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919. The article was eventually published in a Johns Hopkins-sponsored medical journal. I titled the paper "A Study in Mortality". I think all Sher-

lockians will see this as my bit of homage to my own first exposure to the Canon and my early foray into publication.

Medical school was a whirlwind of reading and rounds. While rotating through vascular surgery, I did have to present a case of aortic aneurysm and created quite a stir by quoting Watson's description of Jefferson Hope's case. But then came the point when all medical students, on the verge of becoming doctors, must choose a specialty. I thought of the wise Sir James Saunders and considered dermatology. I did an elective at one of the hospitals and enjoyed the experience, but it just did not click for me. Then I remembered that Watson was introduced to Holmes in the pathology laboratory at Bart's. If a pathology laboratory was congenial to Sherlock, maybe I should think about it as well. I signed up for an elective in pathology at the hospital and, within an hour of arriving, was taken to the autopsy suite by one of the residents. I not only witnessed an autopsy but I was allowed to assist.

In the few short hours it took to complete the case, my life's path was determined. The chairman stopped by to review the case and pointed out to me that pathology was really the only specialty of medicine where the physician spends the entire day just making diagnoses. Holmes making deductions from bits of evidence was, to my thinking, like diagnosing disease from clues and data. It fit. All that had preceded coalesced, and I finished the day knowing what I must do with my career.

Medical school allows for but little leisure time. I did manage, however, to make one trip from the Bronx to nearby White Plains, New York, for a meeting of the Three Garridebs, which I learned about through my newly acquired *Baker Street Journal* subscription. I met several people, including Peter Blau, who later became life-long friends. I was unable to attend another Sherlockian scion until a few years later, but I knew that I was with kindred spirits.

My time in the Bronx was fun, but I decided I needed a change of scenery. The pathology chairman told me that the hospital of the University of Pennsylvania had a fine residency program. I still had friends from Haverford in the area and always liked downtown Philly. I filled out the application and was summoned for an inter-

view. There was a line on the application form that asked about hobbies and other interests. I just put the two words “Sherlock Holmes”. When I got to the interview, the chairman at Penn, Dr. David Rowlands, started by asking me where I thought Watson had been wounded. It turned out that he was not only a Sherlockian but also a member of the Sons of the Copper Beeches, the venerable Philadelphia scion society. I like to think that my academic record was the major determining factor in the near-immediate acceptance that I received. Of course, Holmes and Watson might just have put in a word on my behalf.

When I started my training, Dr. Rowlands mentioned that Dr. Marvin Aronson was the Chief Medical Examiner for the City of Philadelphia. He was also a member of the Copper Beeches and a Baker Street Irregular. One day I had some spare time, and I walked down the street to his offices. I told his secretary to say that I had come from Maiwand to meet him. Dr. Aronson bounded out of the office and greeted me warmly. During the course of my residency, I had the opportunity to observe and help a bit with forensic examinations. I suspect that I am the only Sherlockian who has performed an autopsy with another member of the Baker Street Irregulars.

As a resident, I had at least a small amount of free time and finally had a chance to actually join a scion society. The Copper Beeches had a long waiting list in those days, but the Master’s Class was accepting new members. I had stationery with a rather primitive Sherlock Holmes letterhead and sent a request to Michael Kean for information about the group. Mike called me within a few days and warmly invited me to join the group. I got a follow-up call from Sherry Rose (not yet Bond) asking me to come to a private screening of the soon-to-be-released “Seven Per-Cent Solution” film. I met Sherry, Mike, Steve Rothman, and Bev Woloy, amongst others. It was one of the most enjoyable of evenings and the direction of my social life was set.

As I continued my residency training (1976-1980), I became increasingly active in scion activities. I became a regular attendee at the Red Circle in Washington and enlarged my role in the Master’s

Class, eventually becoming one of the chairs and editing their publication, *Holmeswork*. In January of 1979, I attended, along with Chris Redmond, the first co-ed Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes dinner in New York City.

Once I became a full-fledged pathologist, I moved to Baltimore and things got busier and busier. The Six Napoleons was the local scion, and I eventually became its Gasogene. I helped co-found the Clients of Sherlock Holmes in Philadelphia, and also got off the waiting list and became a Master Copper Beech Smith of the SOCB. In 1981, I had the thrill of attending my first annual dinner of the Baker Street Irregulars, at the Regency Hotel.

But medicine continued to intertwine with Sherlock Holmes and his world. In 1983, Dr. Julian Wolff awarded me the Irregular Shilling with the investiture of “Dr Ainstree”, who is mentioned in “The Dying Detective” as the greatest living authority on tropical disease. In addition to my teaching obligations at Johns Hopkins, I helped to supervise the clinical laboratories at Baltimore City Hospital (shades of Bart’s!). The microbiology laboratory was part of the operation, and any time a new case of malaria was suspected, I had to review the blood smear and decide which species was causative. I assumed that Dr. Wolff took this interest in tropical medicine into account when choosing my investiture. A few years later, I figured out that Dr. Ainstree was the only physician name not already awarded in the BSI. Even though I suppose I drew the last straw, I still love the investiture.

In 1987, I moved from Baltimore to Morristown, New Jersey, where I practiced until my retirement in 2011. It was a wonderful experience and a fine institution.

Throughout all the years of practice, however, the lessons of the Canon were always just over my shoulder. In pathology, every detail matters. In fact, what others pass off as trifles are often the defining factors in making a difficult diagnosis. I also learned never to theorize in the absence of facts or data. A snap judgment made in haste can have serious adverse consequences. I spent a great deal of my time looking at slides through the microscope. Over the years I realized that what might be absent can be as important as what is

present. The diagnosis might have to be made through the absence of some otherwise expected findings, rather like the dog in the night-time. Perhaps most important, I learned that no matter how improbable, nothing is impossible in medicine.

And there were fun moments. Since I performed a great many autopsies, I frequently found myself presenting the findings at educational or mortality conferences. I must admit to taking particular glee at going through all the details of the case and then, with an inability to resist a touch of the dramatic, presenting a diagnosis that was both unexpected and startling to the audience. The startled reactions of the white-coated audience would have been music to the ears of the Master. After a few years, this became known in our hospital as “Dr. Katz pulling a Sherlock Holmes”. I loved it!

With the advent of retirement, I avoided becoming a lounge and idler by turning even more attention to Holmes. I founded the Epilogues of Sherlock Holmes here in New Jersey in 1990 and, as one of the few scions with an all-discussion format, that group continues to this day. I was also able to return to writing and have co-edited books in the BSI Manuscript Series, with Andrew Solberg and, once, with Steve Rothman. Andy and I recently put our collective health care experience to work in co-editing *Nerve and Knowledge*, which presents a series of articles on medicine and doctors in the Canon. Again, vocation and avocation intersected.

My family has been my greatest joy and honor. But my career in pathology and medicine and my Sherlockian activities have been hugely important, fulfilling, and cherished. The friendships continue to this day, and so many are like family to me. I practiced medicine with, hopefully, the attention to the most minor of details, as did Holmes when pursuing a case. Above all, the process of making a diagnosis is the process of assembling clues, collecting data, and only then drawing conclusions... or deductions, as I preferred to call them. None of this would have happened for me had I not had that early exposure to the Canon. Should he have desired it, Holmes could have had a great medical career. I hope, to some small degree, he would have approved of mine. I know he would have understood the choices I made. I daily thank him for that guidance.

. . .

ONE FINAL NOTE – I have been fortunate to be the co-editor of several volumes in the BSI Manuscript Series and the BSI Press volume *Nerve and Knowledge*, and hold the office of Billy the Page in The Baker Street Irregulars.

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ADVENTURES

Brad Keefauver, ASH, BSI © 2021

The *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* may be the title of the book. But 'tis the adventures *with* Sherlock Holmes is what has made the life of at least one Sherlockian. I say “at least one,” because I’d hate to speak for anyone else, even though you and I both know it’s not just the one. Because Sherlock Holmes takes us all on adventures.

This isn’t about those journeys through the magic door of fiction, as one fine fellow referred to it. No, this is about searching for a lost city. This is about international smuggling. This is about stopping a suspected murderer from committing crime.

Did I do all of those things thanks to Sherlock Holmes?

Yes, I did.

I may be making the facts more colorful in leaving out the details. Maybe the “lost city” was a spot on the map that never really had people in it. Maybe the “international smuggling” was simply not declaring a box of Japanese books ready for mailing at cheaper domestic rates in the U.S. than Canada at the border. And maybe the crime was minor property damage and the suspected murderer was . . . well, let’s not get into that guy.

But here’s the thing: Without Sherlock Holmes I would have never travelled to two-thirds of the places I’ve been to in my life. New York City? Nope. Santa Fe, New Mexico? Nope. Atlanta. Indianapolis. Minneapolis. Nashville. Tampa. Toronto. Denver. Dayton. Dallas. Not a one of those cities would have been lured out to, were it not for Sherlock Holmes.

I have never been, by nature, a traveler. A reader and a writer, I’m very content with my own company and the little nest of entertainments I’ve built up around myself. But Sherlock Holmes, and that undefinable spirit of him that lives in every Sherlockian, is worth going to visit. And visit him, I did.

Sherlock Holmes’s face might have not been what Paget drew or some movie star portrayed. He might have shape-shifted into a Texan or a New Yorker or a Canadian. But he was there all the

same, just because the people who really *got* him were there, and while one hates to use such a common metaphor as “moth to a flame,” the blaze of Sherlock Holmes’s spirit just makes one that moth.

At least in my case.

I think I might have been happy just as a shy kid who grew into a shy adult. I might have been perfectly okay not having the little adventures that led to bigger adventures. I might not have missed those little



tests of courage like speaking to a crowd of twenty that led to the ability to comfortably speak before a crowd of a hundred. It’s not all exploring Tibet, this adventure thing.

For some of us, adventure is just what it was for John H. Watson — following Sherlock Holmes into a place you never thought you’d see, meeting people you never thought you’d meet. Maybe we don’t risk Adaman poison darts, African powder vapors, or . . . well, American bullets might still a concern . . . but we do have what are, for us, real adventures.

Adventures with Sherlock Holmes.

May they never end.

HOLMES AND ME

Timothy A. Kline, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

My name is Timothy A. Kline, and I am a Sherlockian. Ever since my brother gave me a copy of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at 10 years of age, being an avid reader, I quickly became enamored with the enigmatic detective and the fascinating Victorian world of Sherlock Holmes. I started collecting games and playing cards and anything I could get my hands on relating to Sherlock Holmes and all the characters. Moving around the country as a military brat and later a soldier on foreign soil, I kept the memory green by always searching for the latest Holmes books, games, or movies. I can remember finding the book *Enter the Lion* that was a brand-new Sherlock novel when I was a teenager at the grocery store and had to have it. Going to see *Young Sherlock Holmes* at the Sage theatre with my brother was the greatest until I got to see the *Seven Per-Cent Solution* on VHS video.

Looking for Sherlock items in Germany and finding a glass needle and syringe at a medical supply store. Returning from my own military stint overseas to Austin to join Sherlockians at my first Society meeting and events and searching the small used bookstores where finding patishes such as *The Earthquake Machine*, *Death by Gaslight*, *The Ectoplasmic Man*, *The Masquerade Murders*, *The Return of Moriarty*, *The Seven Per-Cent Solution* and many others gave me hours of delight and gave me an education in detection and crime. Finally landing in Dallas Texas, I found a collector and mentor (Don Hobbs) who encouraged me to focus on a niche as one could not collect everything related to Sherlock Holmes as he and his friend John Bennet Shaw had tried and found it was impossible. Now I had a purpose and determination and chose games as my focus, but the Sherlock world has a way of exploding in new directions with art, figures, movies, television, and events. Luckily I was introduced at this time to the world of Ebay, online auctions and bookstores that made collecting much easier for someone just starting out as a serious collector.

Above all else I am dedicated to surrounding myself with as many different images of Sherlock as possible. I am fascinated with the way the world depicts Sherlock Holmes. From the very formal top hat, wearing pressed suits and spats, to the skinny spindly bodies or bulbous faces of the caricatures of Holmes and Watson that showcase artists' wild imaginations. While my focus is collecting mostly Sherlock games, I have a large collection of books, coins, miniatures, advertising, art, mugs, matchbooks, lighters, lapel pins, movies, buttons, playing cards, character cards, glasses, wine, chess sets, chocolates, jigsaw puzzles, slide puzzles, puzzle books, escape room books, theatre programs, travel brochures, restaurant menus, stickers, stamps, magazines, Society publications, stuffed animals, Christmas and greeting cards, pens and pencils, magnifying glasses, pipes, deerstalkers, swizzles sticks, postcards, teapots, Matryoshka dolls, dartboards, tobacco holders, statues, figures, bottles and syringes. My collecting is not limited to Sherlock Holmes memorabilia. I also collect items on Houdini, Faberge, H.P Lovecraft, Dracula, Jack the Ripper, JFK assassination, skulls, worldwide currency and coins, playing cards, business cards, relics, keys, and dust.

As I sit in my library surrounded by these many items, some old and some brand new, it is my hope to someday share this in a museum type setting with my fellow Sherlockians locally and worldwide. Being a member in a Sherlock Society is most rewarding. As I look back on my first society I joined, it was The Crew of the Barque Lone Star of Austin, Texas. I moved to Dallas, Texas and the name of the Club was The Crew of the Barque Lone Star. This Society changed its name to the Diogenes Club of Dallas for a



period of time then back to The Crew of the Barque Lone Star. As a passionate speaker at Sherlock events in Austin and Dallas, I enjoy

sharing what I have learned and bringing joy to my fellow Sherlockians but also listening to learn more about the way others see Sherlock.

I have met fellow Sherlockians in person while traveling in Florence, Venice, London, as well as on Facebook and even more in Zoom meetings. So with this being said it is really talking and sharing with my Sherlock friends that's most exciting as we can discuss the latest books, movies and television shows, artwork or anything relating to Sherlock Holmes. I never knew I would be part of a 50th Anniversary celebration relating to Sherlock Holmes, a ship in the Texas Navy, or a friend with over 11,000 foreign Canonical books. The journey is still magical and hopefully continues for 50 more years.

A TOAST TO FRIENDSHIP

Sandy Kozinn, ASH © 2021

Wherever, world wide, a Sherlockian roams,
There's always someone who likes to read Holmes.
They meet and they talk, and before the day ends,
They find much in common. They find they are friends.

Some meet often in person, others talk on the net.
Some even get married, long after they met.
Some jibe at each other with speech that offends,
But forgiveness is there. They still remain friends.

Some grow a bit older, with hair gray – or red.
Some confide in each other about lives they have led.
An author writes kindly in books that he vends.
There are multiple strands to Sherlockian friends.

They laugh at bad jokes, they cry over losses,
Rejoice at a triumph, bemoan ghastly bosses,
Delight in the good things that life sometimes sends.
They share with each other, because they are friends.

It starts with the stories, but it doesn't end there.
There's something in Holmes that makes people care.
There's an aura in the Canon that subtly sends
A message: We're all one, Sherlockian friends.

From Holmes and from Watson, and, yes, even Lestrade,
We take cues from the Canon. Connections are made,
And from those connections come ties without ends.
Now, friends, raise your glasses: To Sherlockian friends.

SHERLOCKIAN FRIENDSHIP

Rereading the Canon does tend
To offer education with no end.
But what is much more
Than the stories galore
Is each wonderful Sherlockian friend.

HOLMES IN A TIME OF COVID

If staying inside is endemic
'Cause you're faced with a nasty pandemic, Read Holmes – go to
Zoom.
Have fun in each room
Where new friends are the only epidemic.

HOW I JOINED THE LEGION OF ZOOM

Rich Krisciunas, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

I first met Sherlock Holmes when I was young, watching “Bill Kennedy’s Showtime” on my black and white TV. The weekly show was broadcast on CKLW-TV, a Canadian TV station in Windsor, Ontario that I could watch across the border from my Detroit, Michigan home. I was intrigued by “*The Hound of the Baskervilles*” with its gothic background, mysterious curse, foggy moor, and heroes who solved the case, portrayed by Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. Kennedy, the host, was a former actor who showed classic movies starring Humphrey Bogart, William Powell, Fred Astaire, Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney. Every other month there was another adventure where Holmes fought Prof. Moriarty, Nazi spies, and saboteurs. I was impressed by how Holmes, coolly, used logic and common sense to solve each case. I wasn’t aware of Arthur Conan Doyle’s books as I spent my time reading sports fiction and biographies. The Holmes movies planted a seed that laid dormant for several years.

I grew up playing different sports; baseball in summer, football in fall, hockey in winter and had little time for recreational reading in college and law school. I worked as a prosecuting attorney in Detroit and was busy trying rapes, robberies, and murders with little time for reading until the week after Christmas when the courts were closed. When I married, my wife, a librarian, bought me a different pastiche every Christmas. The first was *The Seven Percent Solution* and it rekindled my Sherlockian interest. Then she gave me a subscription to the Baker Street Journal. That’s when I learned that Sherlock Holmes was real. One year, she bought me the Baring-Gould annotated two-volume set. I was in heaven.

I mentioned my gift to another lawyer at work who invited me to a meeting of the *Amateur Mendicant Society of Detroit* where its members discussed the stories and took a quiz on their trivial points. I enjoyed the meetings but stopped attending after I was promoted

to being a special prosecutor handling felony murder cases. Through the years, however, I continued to receive Sherlockian gifts from my wife.

After I retired from the full-time practice of law in 2018, I had more free time. I was surprised to discover that the *Amateur Mendicant Society* was still meeting. I attended a dinner meeting at The Commonwealth Club with close to 50 members. The reception was warm and welcoming and I yearned for more. Fortunately, I sat at a table with Regina Stinson and her husband Sam and learned that Regina was the head of the *Ribston-Pippins* and I started to attend their bi-monthly meetings, held at the Royal Oak Historical Museum.

On the Internet, I discovered Sherlockian.net with links to Sherlockian websites and other scions. In Michigan, I found that the *Greek Interpreters of East Lansing* met at Michigan State University and drove to their meetings 70 miles away.

As my appetite grew, I discovered Sherlockian podcasts, especially “I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere,” hosted by Scott Monty and Burt Wolder, where I found over 200 podcasts in their database. I listened to different episodes when I took my morning walks. I learned so much historical information about the Baker Street Irregulars, collectors, authors, and the key people involved in the hobby. I discovered weekend conferences where Sherlockians met and gave presentations about the stories and related topics.

I attended the Silver Blaze race sponsored by the *Bootmakers of Toronto*. I went to *Holmes, Doyle and Friends* sponsored by the *Agra Treasurers* in Dayton, Ohio where I had dinner with Cindy Brown from Texas and Rob Nunn from St. Louis and was impressed with their warmth and knowledge of the game. At the conference, I heard wonderful presentations by Scott Monty and Bob Katz. Katz logically presented his belief that Dr. John Watson had lived in the United States when he was young. How “Jack” Watson ran away from home and joined the 20th Maine of the Union army as a drummer boy and was present at a key battle at Gettysburg where Watson was wounded in his ankle which explains why in “The

Cardboard Box”, Watson was daydreaming about the American Civil War. It was brilliant.

Katz’ talk lit the fire of my imagination. I was a journalism major in college and with my background in criminal law, I started writing articles and giving presentations about how the Crown would prosecute Sherlock Holmes and others in the Canon for the crimes they allegedly committed; how Baron Adelbert Gruner was “The Most Misunderstood Man in the Canon” why “Beppo was Not a Murderer” in “The Six Napoleons” as well as, “The Real Killer of Charles Augustus Milverton.”

In 2020, I had planned to attend conferences in Dayton, St. Louis and Baltimore, but the pandemic hit. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise. I know, many people lost their lives and their businesses and were forced to stay home but I enjoyed sitting comfortably in my quarantined space in my library. I began visiting Sherlockians around the country to discuss the Master’s works via Zoom. It seemed that there was a virtual meeting somewhere, several nights a week and every weekend. That’s when I befriended Steve Mason of the *Crew of the Barque Lone Star* who was kind enough to let me know about upcoming meetings around the country. The two of us showed up everywhere, attending multiple scion meetings virtually; as many as four meetings a day on weekends. We were joined by Greg Ruby the leader of *The Six Napoleons*, *Fourth Garrideb* and the *Sherlockians of Baltimore* (SOBs) who labeled the three of us, “The Legion of Zoom.” On Saturdays afternoons, Monica Schmidt virtually hosted weekly Sherlockian movies at her new scion, “*Theater Goes Homeward Bound*.” At each meeting, I was able to make a new friend.

To prepare for every new meeting, I had homework to do. Instead of binge-watching old TV shows and documentaries on Netflix, I’d read my annotated Baring-Gould and Leslie Klinger’s wonderful three-volume set that I had added to my library. I found Sherlockian.net and other websites, blogs and podcasts that offered literary criticism of each story. Trapped in my home during the pandemic, with no concern for the clock, I’d find myself reading and writing until 2:00 a.m. Having read so many articles about each

new story, I challenged myself to write something from a different angle that hadn't been written before. When I courted my wife, I always enjoyed writing poetry to her so I wrote poetic toasts and summaries of the stories to deliver at Zoom meetings. I wrote toasts to people who probably had never been toasted; Mary Sutherland, Miss Edith Woodley and Susan Tarlton, the maid who threw water in the face of James Willoughby who was murdered in "The Golden Pince-Nez".

I became a Deck-Mate of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star. I joined and made presentations to the *Cesspudlians of London* (Ontario), the *Bootmakers of Toronto*, the *John Openshaw Society* of Houston, Texas, The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn of St. Charles, Missouri, *The Tankerville Club of Cincinnati*, *The John H. Watson Society* and *Watson's Tin Box*. I have become a Certified SOB (*Sherlockians of Baltimore*) and was invested into *The Six Napoleons*. I have written articles for *Canadian Holmes*, *The Watsonian*, *Sherlock's Spotlight*, a quarterly newsletter for young readers published by the Beacon Society and I have ideas for several more. I passed all of the exams of the Fortescue Scholarship.

Other virtual highlights include presenting a paper on "What Mycroft Holmes Did During the Hiatus," at a meeting of *The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes*, attending The Scintillation of Scions Conference, the Left Coast Conference and, for the first time, the BSI's virtual January meetings in New York. I made a presentation to the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. The bottom line is that as a result of my new hobby I have been able to make dozens of new friends in Dallas-Fort Worth, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., St. Louis, Cincinnati, Chicago and Peoria, Illinois, New Jersey, Seattle, London, Ontario, and Vancouver, BC, France and England. I know that if I ever visit one of those cities, I would definitely look forward to having dinner with a Sherlockian friend.

If you're interested in enhancing your enjoyment of the hobby, I recommend subscriptions to various publications including *The Baker Street Journal*, *Canadian Holmes*, *The Watsonian*, *The Newspapers* and *The Sherlock Holmes Magazine*. My favorite podcasts include "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere," "Trifles" and "I Grok Sherlock."

My only hope is that once we return to normalcy and meet in person, scions will figure out a way to continue to meet virtually.

My new hobby of playing the game is one that has not only introduced me to the writings of ACD but, more importantly, has introduced me to people who have played the game for over 40 years and who I am happy to call friends.

WHY I PREFER PETER CUSHING AND HIS ACTING AS MY SHERLOCK HOLMES IN MY HEART AND MY HEAD

Ron Lies © 2021

I give all my respect to every one's beliefs as to their favorite actor to play Holmes is. All the actors, with every few exceptions, who have tried to play Holmes have done so with skill and great acting ability.

My belief in Cushing goes back to when I first read the Canon. I have always seen Holmes as one who knows and projects that he is right and why is everyone else so wrong and so far back of him in solving the case?

Yet, at the same time and the further into the cases I read, I picked up the feeling that Holmes did question his own infallibly. To me that comes out more clearly in the later cases. But to me it is always there and one reason why Holmes is so attractive to me.

Peter Cushing in his acting style and the use of his exquisitely sculptured facial features and his eyes gives me the same feeling about the Holmes he is portraying. The way he treats Watson is the same to me in the written cases and in the very few times we see Cushing on screen in his Holmes reaction to Watson as to what he has done or not done to fit what Holmes wanted. The criticism is balanced with an almost loving acceptance and a desire to help but not hurt Watson no matter how it appears.

This a shortened version of my thoughts and offers no proof outside of my own beliefs. It is the first time I have set what I feel on paper.

Thanks for taking the time to read, Ron in Denver, One for whom the Game is and always be Afoot.

MY ONE FIXED POINT IN A CHANGING AGE

Diane Gilbert Madsen © 2021

Destiny. \ 'de-stə-nē / n. a predetermined course of events often held to be an irresistible power or agency. That's the definition according to Merriam-Webster. According to me, my Destiny was predetermined by that irresistible power called Sherlock Holmes. In a rapidly changing and challenging world, Holmes has been my one fixed point, and he has taken me through many adventures of my own.

THEY SAY everyone remembers their first love. That's how I feel about the first Sherlockian story I read, "The Musgrave Ritual." To be precise, I never exactly fell in love with Sherlock Holmes - I wanted to BE him. His super intelligence and quiriness immediately captivated me, and I eagerly devoured the other stories. Soon I found myself using him as my touchstone in life. Whenever something happened, I'd wonder what Holmes would do - how would he handle it. This game plan has frequently paid off. Like the time I watched a TV report about a bloody murder in my Chicago suburb. Later that day I happened to walk past the Police station and saw several articles of clothing strewn on the ground being blown about by the wind. At closer look, the clothes were all reddish, soaked with what looked like blood. Could these be the murder victim's garments? What were they doing on the ground? It was nearing dinner hour: not a cop in sight. Another blast of wind wafted the clothes nearly into the street traffic. What would Holmes do? I took tissues from my purse and lifted each piece by a corner. I entered the station and the Desk Sergeant named Fitzsimmons jumped up and was about to take the clothes when another cop grabbed his arm. "Don't touch those," he shouted. "That's evidence in a murder case." He told Fitzsimmons that he had laid out the clothes in the sun to dry. Fitzsimmons gave him a dirty look. I pointed to the tissues and explained about the wind. Both cops scanned me with

that look only cops can give you, and Fitzsimmons said, “So you think you’re Sherlock Holmes, eh?” I nodded affirmatively.

Friends, relatives and of course my parents knew I was an avid Sherlockian. One year my Dad gave me a magnifying glass for Christmas, and I carried it everywhere in my purse. I think I wanted a crime to be committed so that, like Holmes, I could pull it out and investigate. Another fan of Sherlock Holmes was my brother Al, now a noted wildlife artist. He sketched out a scene based on a drawing in *Collier’s Magazine* depicting Holmes and Watson in 221B Baker Street. All our friends saw it, and it encouraged them to read and talk about the adventures.

Meanwhile my patient parents, much like Mrs. Hudson, let me mess up the house fooling around with scientific experiments. Forget about Barbie dolls and dating: for me the thrill was writing a monograph on regeneration in Planaria and going to the State Science Fair with them. Soon I started assembling my own agony column of bizarre and unusual events based on my fascination with the agony column in the *Times* that Holmes faithfully read and sometimes utilized. Friends and relatives still send me curious articles to include in it.

My first checking account was with Barclay’s Bank in Chicago because they offered special Sherlock Holmes checks. With my first job, I bought the two volumes of Baring-Gould’s *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, well-worn and still on my shelves. And yes, I happily collected Sherlockian statues, Christmas ornaments, and posters of Holmes and his London. When my husband Tom and I joined Chicago’s Criterion Bar Association, we won Cri Bar mugs for our presentation on Outrageous Theories with a genealogy proving that Sherlock and Mycroft were the last of the Stuarts.

Two other Chicagoans, Ely M. Liebow and Thomas J. Joyce, both great Sherlockians, expanded my interest and knowledge of Conan Doyle, Dr. Joe Bell, and all things Sherlockian. It was always a joy to get together and discuss the enigmatic, unique and arcane in the Canon.

Here’s where we get back to Destiny. My M.A. was in English Literature specializing in the 17th century based on – you guessed it

- my early interest in the Stuarts, the English crown, cavaliers, puzzles, and mysteries from “The Musgrave Ritual.” Together with my M.A. and my interest in murder and mayhem, it was my Destiny to become a mystery writer. I wrote the DD McGill Literati Mystery Series which uses real life events in famous authors’ lives and projects the results out to current crimes in current times to be solved by heroine DD McGill. Tom Joyce, who owns Joyce & Co. Rare Books & Appraisals in Chicago, is a continuing character in the series, and I’ve used items from my agony column in the stories. For my third mystery, my husband and my brother Al both suggested I use Arthur Conan Doyle as the Literati figure. So I tackled the mystery of why Conan Doyle never investigated the identity of Jack the Ripper who caused a worldwide sensation in 1888 with his awful crimes. Doyle was 29 at the time and beginning to get his name known. I felt certain he read about the crimes and would have been greatly interested in the case. I assembled a series of clues that I felt Conan Doyle and Dr. Joe Bell – and by extension Sherlock Holmes – would have used to help solve the crimes. My friend Ely Liebow wrote a book on Joe Bell, and I used information from it to help develop the plot of *The Conan Doyle Notes: The Secret of Jack the Ripper*.

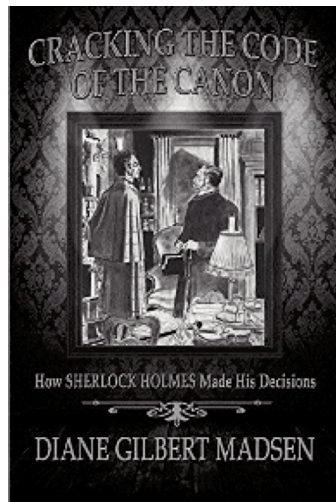
Then Destiny struck again. After accumulating a lot of research on *The Conan Doyle Notes*, I decided to write a non-fiction book based on the wide variety of the Sherlock Holmes plots, the crimes, the criminals and the different outcomes of the crimes. In the stories, although some villains and villainesses face the law for their crimes and are punished, others - including murderers - escape or are forgiven by Holmes. I was also amazed at the number of crimes that Holmes and Watson commit in their quest for justice. Thus *Cracking the Code of the Canon: How Sherlock Holmes Made His Decisions* came to be published.

When Bob, a friend of my brother Al, told me he had saved my brother’s high school sketch of Holmes & Watson in 221B, and he kindly sent it to me, I heard Destiny again knocking on my door. My publisher, Steve Emecz of MX Publishing in London, agreed to use my brother’s sketch as the jacket cover for *Cracking*

the Code, and thus my brother's early Holmes sketch came full circle.

While writing *Cracking the Code*, I wondered what might have happened to Sherlock Holmes if Agatha, the housemaid he got engaged to in "Charles Augustus Milverton," tried to find her new fiancé. I wrote a Holmes pastiche, *Sherlock Holmes and the Queen of Hearts*, in which Agatha knocks on the door of 221B and asks Sherlock to help find her vanishing fiancé.

Can you change your Destiny? One dark and snowy night as I was walking home from the train, I suddenly stopped. The falling snow muted any sounds, and the absolute quiet was eerie. I turned. A figure in black was running at me, head down. He was just a few feet away. He was going to tackle me. No time to run. What would Sherlock Holmes do? Baritsu! I turned sideways. The attacker rushed at me. I screamed and slammed him as hard as I could across his chest with my briefcase. He fell. I was still standing. I swore at him, brandishing my briefcase with its now broken handle. He made no sound as he scuttled away. I kept cursing as I rushed home in the stillness of the empty street, thanking my lucky stars for Mr. Sherlock Holmes who, I was convinced, had literally changed my Destiny.



HOLMES AND ME

And I'm glad he did, because recently, through Zoom, I've been able to make many more wonderful friends around the globe by sitting in on their association meetings and sharing all things Sherlockian.

[ED. NOTE: Diane is the award winning author of "Cracking the Code of the Canon: How Sherlock Holmes Made His Decisions," and the DD McGill Literati Mystery Series including "The Conan Doyle Notes: The Secret of Jack the Ripper," which won Honourable Mention at the London Book Fair. A lifelong Sherlockian, she has contributed to many anthologies and published numerous articles.]

THE ADVENTURE OF A SIDEKICK

Judith Margolin © 2021

Yes, I am nicknamed “Saint Judy” the trusted companion of collector Jerry Margolin. This story is not about him, but the one adventure that stands out in my tag along experiences. Roughly 20 odd years ago, Jerry and I had the honor of spending a day with Richard Lancelyn Green at his flat in London. I was living with a collector of 10,000 plus rare books and memorabilia housed in our library composed of floor to ceiling bookcases, but this paled in comparison. Every nook and cranny of Richard’s home was crammed with cardboard boxes, drawers and shelves with the rarest of treasures, of course the most sought-after books, but what dazzled me most was the collection of personal scrapbooks telling the history of the Doyle family. Behind each photograph Richard told a story allowing you to enter the personal life of Arthur Conan Doyle’s childhood and later years. I was in a museum!

Richard also opened the door to how his own childhood led to the creation of the series of books, *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis. His storytelling reminisced on visits from C.S. Lewis and the bedtime stories his father, Roger Lancelyn Green, told Richard and his siblings about a lion, a witch and a wardrobe, before nodding off into deep dreams. These stories so impressed C.S. Lewis that he stored them away to later embellish on them to create his literary writings.

Prior to visiting Richard, Jerry and I had an adventure to undertake. We set off to St. Bartholomew’s Hospital in London in search of “the plaque “ commemorating the first meeting between Holmes and Watson. We never realized the complexity of our mission. The plaque was displayed in the office of the pathology museums curator’s office, and no one, yes no one, was permitted to enter that section of the hospital. Ahh, the game was a foot! Jerry using his ever-convincing skills of inquiry, convinced a group of nuns to call their superior and arrange for us to have a quick peak of the plaque- it worked! We were guided through the forensic labs filled

with containers of specimens floating in formaldehyde solutions, quite spooky. They opened the door to his office, and we were able to walk up to the plaque in awe. Caught red handed as the curator walked in and was shocked to see 2 Americans in his office. It turned out that he was a Sherlockian at heart, and though he didn't appreciate how we were guided into his office, undercover, he shared his passion for the great detective. It is no longer housed in his office, wonder why? Nuns were at fault for this misadventure. To quote Holmes, "How often have I said to you when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?" (*The Sign of the Four* 1890).

MY INTRODUCTION AND CONTINUED LOVE OF MEN WHO SOLVE MYSTERIES

Pamela Mason, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

Unlike many other Sherlockians, I did not start reading or watching Sherlock Holmes until later in my life.

As a teenager and into my 20's, I was into the normal younger *Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew* mysteries. I admit, I did watch Shaun Cassidy portraying one of the Hardy boys; and yes I did have a schoolgirl crush on his older brother, David Cassidy, first. That 'puppy love' probably led me into reading, and then watching, *The Hardy Boys*. I was simply hooked on the mysteries and how one goes about solving them. I was naturally attracted next to *The Nancy Drew Series*, both reading the books and watching the television series. But, I must admit, I leaned toward the two brothers' interaction with each other during their unique way in finding solutions to the mysteries presented to them.

When I married Steve, he was already involved with a gentleman named Sherlock Holmes. Many times, Steve attempted to get me to read the stories written by Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, or as I have come to learn, Dr. Watson's literary agent, who helped get the stories published in the *Strand Magazine*. While I tried to read a few of the stories from the Canon, as I became an adult, I found I really did not enjoy reading as much.

Fast forward to 2005. Steve was working for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the emergency response program.

At the end of August, a category 5 hurricane, Katrina, slammed into the New Orleans area. Steve was "activated" and deployed to assist in the response to the millions of pounds of hazardous chemicals and waste released as a result of the storm. It turned into a very long 7-month assignment. Around the same time, I had broken a bone in my right foot. Even after healing, there continued to be pain around the ankle. Finally, doctors were able to determine that a

tendon had split, which required surgery. I was then required to stay completely off my feet for six weeks.

After I had worked my way through all the DVDs in our home collection, I found Steve's complete Sherlock Holmes collection starring Jeremy Brett. In addition, there were all of the Basil Rathbone movies, as well as Peter Cushing, Ronald Howard, and many others to fill in my six weeks of recuperation.

As I worked my way through Steve's entire collection of Sherlock Holmes, I began to see why he was so enamored with the great detective. Holmes' ability to observe what others could not see, as well as determine a person's occupation and other traits or characteristics, astonished me.

During a short break, Steve was able to return home. He compiled several CDs (those circular discs between cassette tapes and thumb drives) containing hundreds of Sherlock Holmes radio plays for my use. These 30-minute performances gave me the ability to follow the adventures of Holmes and Watson while driving in my car, especially those times I drove down to meet Steve in Baton Rouge during his deployment.

In the summer of 2010, a new incarnation of Sherlock Holmes was initiated, the *BBC Sherlock* series. An unknown actor to me at the time, Benedict Cumberbatch, was simply amazing in the role of Sherlock. Between this novel approach to his deductive abilities, as well as the slick production of the shows, had me hooked. I had found one my favorite Sherlockian actors.

Soon after, CBS Television began showing their own version of Sherlock Holmes, *Elementary*, starring Johnny Lee Miller and Lucy Liu. While this was a complete change from the traditional Canonical detective I had been watching and listening to, it still worked for me. Holmes' ability to deal with the issues of a modern world and his own inner demons (as well as Watson dealing with her own), while being able to work through two or three varied premises each week, was entertaining and engrossing.

On the big screen, Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law, brought about another way to see Holmes' ability to work through issues,

using slow motion and his inner thoughts as a prequel to the actual action taking place. While all Sherlockians knew the Master did not die during his struggle with Moriarty on the palace's balcony, the scene was still very dramatic and believable.

In 1999, Steve had started attending Sherlock Holmes scion society meetings in the Dallas area, and I decided it would give us a chance to do something together as a couple, so I chose to go also. There we met many wonderful people, including Jim Webb, Don Hobbs, Herb Linder, Brenda Hutchison, and others.

Whenever possible, we would attend Sherlockian plays performed in the Dallas-Fort Worth area with other society members. These plays were so much fun, we began traveling to other cities in the State, and even to Oklahoma, to watch them.

Steve became more and more involved with the activities of the society, which is named "The Crew of the Barque Lone Star", as we went along, and our son Rusty began coming to the meetings also.

Not only did this give our family a chance to do things together, it brought Rusty and Steve closer, which am I grateful for. In 2013, Steve became the leader of the Society, and I volunteered to help with the Secretarial duties when needed. Rusty has become the webmaster for the Society's website, which is considered one of the best in the Sherlockian world.

So, Sherlock Holmes has become a major part of our family's life. New pastiches, conferences, meetings, and plays will continue to expand our love for our Victorian heroes. While I may never be as knowledgeable as many Sherlockians (I probably will never win one of our monthly quizzes), I am extremely grateful to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle for creating a character that has given Steve and I so many common experiences and the chance to learn together more about the life and times of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.

In my life, I have had the Hardy Boys, who worked together to solve the mysteries posed to them; Sherlock Holmes and Watson, who became best friends and partners during the hundreds of adventures they participated in; and Steve and I, who have been lucky enough to have common interest in which we can enjoy and grow as a couple together.

HOLMES AND ME

I know Sherlock Holmes will always be a part of this family in some manner. And I am perfectly OK with that. To ACD, I would simply state, “I confess, my dear fellow, that I am very much in your debt (HOUN).”

A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO YOU SIR

Steve Mason, ASH, BSI, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate

© 2021

**(Interior shot of the Sitting Room at 221b Baker Street)
(Outside – Present day and time; Inside – It’s Always
1895)**

HOLMES:

Please come in and take a seat by us – with this warmer than usual September heat, it seems to be a little cooler near the window. Though I do not know your name, I can ascertain that you once served in your country’s armed forces, presumably a navigator for the United States Air Force

MASON:

Mr. Holmes, my name is Rex Mason, and though I have known of you for years through the writings of your friend and chronicler, Mr. Watson – my thanks to you Mr. Watson – I must admit a slight surprise that you were able to determine my past career so quickly.

HOLMES:

Watson, you know my methods – would you like to explain to Mr. Mason how I was able to do another “trick” as many people have called it?

WATSON:

I must admit, I too am mystified.

HOLMES:

Then it is up to me to remove the mystery. Mr. Mason, it was easy to see you served in the United States Air Force by the ring you wear on your right hand, which unless I am truly mistaken, is a graduation ring from an Officer’s Cadet School with the USAF emblem on the side of the ring. Your choice of sunglasses, hanging

from your shirt pocket, indicate you were probably an aviator of some type. So, were you a pilot or a navigator? Two things lead me to believing in the latter. First, you arrived at our house ten minutes before your scheduled appointment, and graciously stood on the front stoop until it was time to ring the outer bell. I believe navigators have a certain motto – “To be on time is to be late... to be early is to be on time.” Secondly, I see a map projecting out of your coat pocket. In today’s world, most everyone who rents a car – which you arrived in and parked outside near the curb, take advantage of an electronic navigation device, either on their cellular phone or installed in the car. You chose to use a physical map, and have drawn your route from the airport to Baker Street with a highlighter. That is a preference and habit of a career navigator.

MASON:

As we would say back in Texas, where I have resided the past 22 years or so, ‘you done good’. I am duly impressed

WATSON:

May I ask the purpose of your visit? Are you requesting the services of my partner with some sort of difficulty you are currently experiencing?

MASON:

Actually, no, I simply wanted to extend my gratitude to what you have meant to my son, as well as to myself, for so many years.

HOLMES:

I must admit, this does not happen that often.

MASON:

It should. I am sure there are thousands, if not millions, who owe a hearty thank you to you. I thought you would enjoy a little of our story. My first exposure to you was when my parents bought me a copy of the 1949 paperback edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

WATSON:

I believe that is the one with the lurid artwork of Miss Stapleton tied to the post. I was never much enamored with that cover.

HOLMES:

Oh, I don't know. I believe it helped sell more copies.

MASON:

Anyway, imagine eighteen years later, my youngest son, Steve, finds that exact book in my old bedroom when he visited the family farm in Indiana in 1967. He was only seven years old at the time, so much of the book was over his head, but he understood the basic plot – a vicious hound, a dark scary setting on the Moors, and you were able to solve the case. That was enough to hook him for life. Though, like many “Sherlockians”, he also had a science-fiction phase in junior high and high school.

HOLMES:

I have found the writings of Arthur C. Clarke and Robert Heinlein to be quite interesting.

MASON:

As did my son, though he also enjoyed reading the *Riverworld* series by Farmer over and over, as well as *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien.

For Steve, though, once he found the Sherlockian world in 1999, when he attended his first Scion Society meeting, he has read almost exclusively Sherlockian pastiches, essays, and other reference works.

Of course, since being a teenager, he reads all of your original 60 adventures every two or three years.

WATSON:

What was his first society meeting?

MASON:

He was very fortunate to go to a Red Circle meeting in Washington, D.C., where he met one of the greatest Sherlockians of all time, Peter Blau. Peter has advised Steve for over 20 years on all things Sherlockian, and Steve considers Peter one of his best Sherlockian friends. He soon found there was a Society in Dallas, and thus became a member of *The Crew of the Barque Lone Star / Diogenes Club of Dallas* in 1999.

WATSON:

That Society was named for the ship in “The Five Orange Pips”?

MASON:

Yes, since it was the one reference to the State of Texas in the entire Canon. In 2013, Steve was asked to become the leader of the Society, as well as to join the Beacon Society, which helps educate students about the two of you. My biggest regret is that neither Steve nor I recognized the other’s passion toward the stories, and what you represent, until around 2010

HOLMES:

I glad you finally were able to make that connection.

MASON:

Yes, and Steve convinced me to finally put on paper an idea I had for years about an adventure you two shared, called “A Suicide Revisited”, which I self-published in 2013.

HOLMES:

Just in time, it appears.

WATSON:

I read the story on the *Crew's* webpage. It was very well-written, though there was a couple of very small details I could have clarified for you. It was one of the more interesting cases Holmes and I shared, traveling to Vienna and points in-between

MASON:

And finally, in terms of his Sherlockian life, my son had his proudest moment this past January when he received his investiture into the Baker Street Irregulars, as “The Fortescue Scholarship”.

HOLMES:

I am not one who goes into much pageantry, as you can guess by my declining a knighthood, but I do enjoy hearing about the annual BSI Dinner and all the other events during the weekend. Maybe someday I will actually be invited to the Dinner, or at least be the Distinguished Speaker.

MASON:

I know your time is precious, so I simply wanted you to know how much your adventures have meant to my son. It has provided him friendships with many wonderful people, allowed him to escape into your world on a regular basis, and to better understand how to cope with issues that crop up into his own life. For that I will always be sincerely grateful.

HOLMES:

It appears both of you may have benefited from my efforts. You are welcome. Give my warmest regards to your son.

(Mr. Mason rises and walks out through the open door to the stairway).

WATSON:

That was a very gracious man. To make a trip all the way to London to simply thank you for having such an effect on his son.

HOLMES:

Yes, it's obvious not only did Mr. Mason distinguish himself during his service to his country, he had the respect of everyone who ever met him.

WATSON:

I am curious though, when he mentioned chronicling one of our adventures in 2013, you commented, it was just in time. What did you mean by that?

HOLMES:

When Mr. Mason first indicated he was coming to visit us, I decided to use that iPad Mrs. Hudson bought me for my birthday, and did a little research on the internet, I believe it is called. It seems Mr. Mason passed away not too long after publishing the story of our efforts.

WATSON:

What? You can't be serious?

HOLMES:

I can be. So see Watson, he may not have had so far to travel after all. I would not be surprised to find he resides near here. For many, this room you and I currently occupy may be the closest thing to heaven for them. Let's take a trip to Simpson's for the prime rib. I don't know about you, but I could use a drink also.

MY JOURNEY WITH SHERLOCK HOLMES

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

I don't remember if it was a dark and stormy night as I sat in the living room of my childhood home in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The lone light that Saturday evening came from the television, which was running a black and white film, one of a series of mystery movies broadcast by a local television station. While the years have blurred some of the details, I believe there was only one other person in the room with me. His name was Sherlock Holmes.

Some of the detectives in the mystery movies I'd seen on the program proved mildly entertaining but my attention was drawn to the 14 Holmes films with Rathbone and Bruce. I was frightened (but not enough to turn the channel or close my eyes) by "The Scarlet Claw," the deadly Grimpen Mire in "The Hound of the Baskervilles," and by Rondo Hatton as "the creeper" in "The Pearl of Death." The villainous women in "The Woman in Green," "Spider Woman," and "Dressed to Kill" were intriguing, and Nigel Bruce's often bumbling Dr. Watson provided some humorous moments in shadowy situations. Rising above all of the characters was Sherlock Holmes. He was smarter than anyone he encountered, loyal, and relentless in solving whatever crime he was investigating. When the station ran through the entire series and I realized there were no more, disappointment set in but the discovery that there were actually original stories about Holmes written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was enough to lift the fog. It wasn't long before I completed the Canon and at the age of 12, acquired a life-long fascination. That appeal had a few hiatuses with college, a career, a family, and several relocations but it was always there, lurking in the background. During one of those relocations, while browsing in a used bookstore in Easton, Pennsylvania, I happened upon the 1980 Gaslight Publication *The Sherlock Holmes Book of Quotations*. Reading those well-remembered sayings by and about Holmes made me feel like I was 12 again only this time with the perspective of an adult.

Not long after we moved back to the Twin Cities in 1992, during

a parent-teacher conference one of my daughter's teachers mentioned the Norwegian Explorers as I had complimented him on the Sherlock Holmes books he had on display. A week later, while wandering around a mystery book store I found a brochure for The Norwegian Explorers, the local scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars. It seemed like a sign and within a few weeks I'd joined the group. The dormant interest in Holmes was now fully awakened. Like many people new to organized Sherlockian activities there was a concern that the other members would discover how little I knew but happily, they were too kind to tell me that. It was a friendly group with a combination of new and experienced members and appealing meetings. At that time E. W. McDiarmid and Bryce Crawford, two of the five co-founders of the group and friends since the late 1940s, were still active. Getting to know them was a gift as they exemplified all that I've come to enjoy and respect about our shared pursuit; they were extremely intelligent and accomplished but never condescending, fun and funny, and didn't seem to take themselves too seriously. They didn't talk about themselves endlessly, were generous with their compliments, and treated everyone as equals. I found many of the other members exhibited those same traits and it wasn't long before I came to think of them as more than fellow members. It was from them that I learned about other scions and the Baker Street Irregulars, conferences, and books to add to my burgeoning library. Before long I was a member of both the Explorers and The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections boards, and working on conferences and over the years, I've joined a number of other scions. I've tried my hand at two things which initially intimidated me; writing and making presentations. They've both been positive, and it's been very rewarding to research a subject and see your work in print.

With my husband Mike, we've attended conferences, meetings, and dinners in St. Louis; Chautauqua, NY; Dallas; Jim Thorpe, PA; Los Angeles; Portland, OR; Salt Lake City; Boston; Dayton, OH; Philadelphia; Washington, DC; Chicago; San Francisco; and Baltimore. Internationally, we've visited Prague; London; Florence, Italy; Copenhagen and Alborg in Denmark; and several locations in

Switzerland. While in Europe for those we extended the trips for a chance to see Madrid, Barcelona, Lake Como, Milan, and Vienna with friends. Our cruise of the Baltic Sea with the Sherlock Holmes Society of London included stops in Copenhagen; Oslo; Tallinn, Estonia; Helsinki; Stockholm; and St. Petersburg, Russia. We've visited famous museums, crossed swinging bridges, been to the top of Switzerland's Jungfrau and London's Tower Bridge, ridden trains and trolleys, seen the Reichenbach Falls, and had tea and dinner at the House of Commons or the House of Lords, depending on which government member was the sponsor that year. We've met a lot of people who we're proud to call friends from all over the world, and some I was quite excited to see if only from a distance. I'm sure I've told everyone I know that together with a few members of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London we saw Paul McCartney in the lobby of London's Savoy Hotel. It's certain that 12-year-old girl from Fort Wayne wouldn't have thought any of that was possible.

The appeal of Holmes and all that comes with him hasn't waned, but we realize that if all you were interested in were the stories, you could stay home alone and read. We want the companionship of those who love the stories as much as we do. Fortunately most of those involved in societies aren't singularly focused on Holmes and have a wide variety of interests which makes them fine companions. There's been a few disappointments along the way, which we can say about most experiences, but they pale in comparison to the good things. The constant factor that's kept me involved has been the people who have become a part of my life. Working on projects and traveling have allowed me to meet those who might not have crossed my path but would soon become my friends. Our collective interest has been a great equalizer. And as happens, we lose people who were important to us along the way but what we've gained from them remains.

During this pandemic we haven't been together in person, and I miss those times but know one day they'll return. The virtual meetings have not only kept us in touch but allowed us to see those we don't normally get to interact with or may have wanted to meet. It may not be a perfect solution but someday it's the only contact we

have with the outside world. And as I think back to my early days with the Explorers I realize how much more I value what people like Mac McDiarmid and Bryce Crawford had to share. They wanted to insure that what they established would live on and those who followed them would have the same kind of pleasurable experiences and companionship that they had. So as we look to the future I hope that we can convey that same sense of excitement, amusement, and equality to those who follow us and welcome them to the Grand Game. I'm sure Mr. Holmes would approve.

IT IS A SERIES OF LESSONS

Rob Nunn, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

The average person will spend one third of their life at work. I'm lucky because I enjoy my job as a fifth-grade teacher. But every now and then I have the ability to ratchet up that joy an extra notch. One tried-and-true method for me is being able to inject Sherlock Holmes into our curriculum.

Thanks to a generous grant from The Beacon Society, I've been able to teach a two-week unit introducing my students to Sherlock Holmes and the mystery genre every year since 2014. We are living in a great time for public knowledge of Sherlock Holmes. While previous years' introductory lesson would introduce Holmes to these ten year-olds as someone their parents may have watched on CBS's *Elementary*, Netflix's *Enola Holmes* has made Sherlock Holmes familiar to most of the students. (And although most of us think of Robert Downey Jr. and Benedict Cumberbatch as recent versions, if it didn't happen in the last three or four years, it's ancient history to most kids.)

Before we get into how I use the stories in my class, I think it's important to note that the Canon is well-beyond a fifth-grade reading level, and all of the versions of the stories that I use are true to the Canon, but adapted so that the average ten or eleven year-old will be able to understand what's happening in the stories. My goal is to make these stories accessible to the students so they can enjoy the adventures for the great stories that they are!

We read five stories as a whole class: "The Blue Carbuncle," "The Red-Headed League," "The Speckled Band," "The Copper Beeches," and "A Scandal in Bohemia." The first three of these stories each get two days of instruction. The first day is a whole-class read-through, stopping to discuss key plot points and character traits. On the second day, students reread each story with partners and have three open-ended questions to discuss, such as what they think about Holmes letting Ryder go at the end of BLUE or how Doyle uses details to create a mood of suspense in SPEC.

Each story also allows me to focus on particular literary elements. For BLUE, we talk about the role of a narrator and why Watson is so important to readers. The discussions around REDH focus on the use of details, specifically when Holmes is able to deduce so much about Jabez Wilson. When discussing SPEC, we focus on character traits specific to detectives and their antagonists.

After six days of text analysis, we switch things up with a graphic novel version of COPP. This allows the students to move through the story quickly, and we are able to follow that up with mapping the rising action of the story. Finally for SCAN, I pose the question up front to the class, “After reading these stories, do you think Sherlock Holmes can be beaten? If so, what type of person would it take?” Unlike the previous stories, I only stop once for discussion, asking the students how they would get the photograph from Irene Adler. I don’t want to interrupt the flow of a great mystery and am always gratified to see smiles on so many faces when the story is over.

However, this unit isn’t just about reading. The kids also write their own Sherlock Holmes mysteries! After days focusing on brainstorming, first drafts, revisions, and editing, some really enjoyable final drafts are turned in. Over the past seven years, I’ve read stories about Sherlock Holmes in space, Holmes on a football team, dozens of missing jewels, lots of celebrities and sports stars needing help, lost pets, and plenty of sidekicks who are just as smart as Holmes and happen to have the same names as students in my class! These stories are typed up and bound in a book that joins our class library.

During the writing process, we do one of my favorite lessons, which is a modified version of “The Game is Afoot!” from the International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes. Each group of students is given a coat from different teachers in our school. The kids aren’t told who the coats came from, and they have to deduce things about each coat’s owner by paying close attention to the object. After examining the coats, groups present their findings and have to explain how they made their inferences. The coats’ owners are often identified as being pet owners, parents, short or tall, and

the students are always quick to judge if their coat was owned by a clean or messy person!

Getting to share a passion of mine with my students always makes going to work more fun, but the real joy is seeing them pick up canonical stories and pastiches written for young readers. After all of these lessons, the kids still haven't read about the giant hound stalking the moor, Sherlock's older brother, Professor Moriarty, and so much more! The Victorian world of the Sherlock Holmes stories still has more surprises for them, and I can only hope that they have a fond memory for Sherlock Holmes once they get older and can really explore the Canon.

SHERLOCK HOLMES: STRAND-UP COMIC?

J. T. PAGE JR. © 2021

“When was the last time you said to yourself, I’m in need of a real laugh – so I’ll read a Sherlock Holmes story?”

The source of the above quote (David Stuart Davies) continues by answering his own question:

“Not often, I guess – but actually there is a great deal of humour in the Holmes tales. This derives either from the detective’s dry, sarcastic wit or Conan Doyle’s impish sense of humour.”¹



Introduction

During the late 1960s, my salad years in college, among the wonders I discovered was Sherlock Holmes. It actually started with a single book (*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*) which I picked up on sale during a semester break while home in Chicago. I immediately enjoyed reading about The Master and easily time warped back to 1895 London. But the Sherlockian fire really started when I caught an old movie on TV (*The Hound of the Baskervilles*) starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. Rathbone certainly thrilled me in all the Holmes’ films, but rarely did he make me smile. In any event, I raced to devour all 56 short stories and 4 novels. I recalled being rather amused on occasion while reading the Canon for the first time, but the notion of humor (comedy likely being too strong a word) rarely surfaced.

Fast forward a few decades and, speaking for myself, two important events occurred.

First, by sheer chance, I discovered *The Complete Brigadier Gerard*

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. What an interesting and fun read! It involves over a dozen short stories written by Doyle during the post-Reichenbach Falls period (1893) and the ultimate return of Holmes in 1905. Anyone who believes Sir Arthur incapable of writing humor has not experienced Etienne Gerard. Once I was finished enjoying the Brigadier and his many adventures, I immediately re-read the Canon with a more practiced eye. I discovered, many times over, the frequent humor missed the first time through.

The second event occurred in 1985 thanks to the *Baker Street Journal*. I learned of a new TV program about Sherlock Homes. It starred an actor named Jeremy Brett. I knew I had to see this new British series even though I was living and working in Germany at the time. I ordered the DVDs as they became available and, well... this was not a portrayal of Holmes I had seen before. Despite polished and effective efforts to remain true to the original stories, this Holmes laughed, shouted, and chewed up the scenery as he solved problematic crimes. Thanks to Jeremy Brett, I experienced new depths being plumbed by The Great Detective. Here was not just a profound thinking machine, but a man full of energized life, grace, and knowing smiles which, it seemed to me, he often shared simultaneously with both Watson and his TV audience.

During a 1988 interview, Jeremy Brett noted the following:

“But you see, when you are reading a thriller you don’t laugh... If I’ve done anything I’ve brought in a little humour, which, I believe, people are grateful for.”²²

Amen, brother!

The Trailblazers of Canonical Humor

Sherlockians, notably the Baker Street Irregulars, have always been eager for fun and friendship since their very beginnings in 1934. Notable humor surrounds them and the legions of scion societies who so love the stories and the Victorian era. One has only to scan the original BSI Constitution and “Buy” Laws to get a sense of their special humor as they sought to maintain 1895 London in their hearts and cheer one another with their toasts. The tasty

particulars are found on the “I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere” website edited by Scott Monty.³

Two of the must-read books for every Sherlockian are 1944’s *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes* (edited by Ellery Queen) and 1984’s *The Baker Street Reader* (edited by Philip A. Shreffler). The former contains parodies of The Great Detective written by the likes of Vincent Starrett, Agatha Christie, Ellery Queen, Sir James Barry, Bret Harte, O. Henry, and some fellow named Mark Twain to name a few. The latter involves original writings from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, T.S. Eliot, Mark Van Doren, Marshall McLuhan, several noted Sherlockian scholars and stalwarts, and even Honorary BSI member...President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Both collections have contributed mightily to The Grand Game and have kept the twin flames of whimsy and scholarship burning for Sherlockians everywhere.

The Baker Street Journal has also promoted humor as noted in a search of its archives.⁴ And happily, we have had the great pleasure of Scott Bond’s “Art in the Blood” features for over three decades.

Sherlockian and writer Amy Thomas has also addressed the subject of Canonical humor in one of her online blogs:

“The one major thing that stood out to me when I re-read the Sherlock Holmes Canon in 2010: the humor. My first exposure to Holmes was before the age of 10, and during childhood, I was able to absorb the suspense and excitement, but the prevalent dry humor eluded me. As an adult re-reading the stories, I was delighted to find a great deal to giggle over in stories that were very familiar but at the same time not familiar at all because I was looking at them with mature eyes.”⁵

Meanwhile Back at the Canon...

Following a rather exhaustive and (I dare say) singular review of the Canon, I have arbitrarily selected several quotes which are among the catalysts for this article. They are not necessarily a bunch of knee-slappers but mostly one-liners and comments that keep The

Master and other characters alive to me and, hopefully, to you as well, dear reader. (NB: I actively avoided including any fun quotes from movies or TV series, which are many, and have listed only those taken directly from the Canon.) Context aside, I believe they “spark joy” and stand on their own. Unless otherwise noted, all are spoken by Sherlock Homes in the driest of his dry humor:

“Come at once if convenient—if inconvenient come all the same.” (CREE)

“It’s quite exciting,” said Sherlock Holmes, with a yawn.” (SCAR)

“You have a grand gift for silence, Watson. It makes you quite invaluable as a companion.” (TWIS)

From a discussion between Inspector Forrester and Dr. Watson:

“The Inspector shrugged his shoulders. ‘I don’t quite know, sir. Between ourselves, I think Mr. Holmes has not quite got over his illness yet. He’s been behaving very queerly, and he is very much excited.’

“I don’t think you need alarm yourself,” said I. “I have usually found that there was method in his madness.’

“Some folks might say there was madness in his method,’ muttered the Inspector.” (REIG)

“Watson here will tell you that I never can resist a touch of the dramatic.” (NAVA)

“It was a straight left against a slogging ruffian. I emerged as you see me. Mr. Woodley went home in a cart.” (SOLI)

“Her cuisine is limited but she has as good an idea of breakfast as a Scotchwoman.” (NAVA)

“You are developing a certain unexpected vein of pawky humour, Watson, against which I must learn to guard myself.” (VALL)

“Honestly, I cannot congratulate you upon it. Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid.” (SIGN)

Holmes chuckled heartily. "Your conversation is most entertaining," said he. "When you go out close the door, for there is a decided draught." (SPEC)

"She had several lovers, and Douglas Maberley, one of the most striking men in London, was one of them. It was by all accounts more than an adventure with him. He was not a society butterfly but a strong, proud man who gave and expected all. But she is the 'belle dame sans merci' of fiction. When her caprice is satisfied the matter is ended, and if the other party in the matter can't take her word for it she knows how to bring it home to him." (3GAB)

"Mrs. Merrilow does not object to tobacco, Watson, if you wish to indulge your filthy habits." (VEIL)

"I can understand. There is a mystery about this which stimulates the imagination; where there is no imagination there is no horror. Have you seen the evening paper?" (STUD)

"Sorry to see that you've had the British workman in the house. He's a token of evil." (CROO)

When Gregson, or Lestrade, or Athelney Jones are out of their depths - which, by the way, is their normal state - the matter is laid before me. (SIGN)

"Circumstantial evidence is occasionally very convincing, as when you find a trout in the milk, to quote Thoreau's example." (NOBL)

"Your morals don't improve, Watson. You have added fibbing to your other vices." (MAZA)

"I listen to their story, they listen to my comments, and then I pocket my fee." (STUD)

A worried Watson shows concern to Holmes:

"By heaven, Holmes," I said, half rising, "I believe that they are really after us."

"No, it's not quite so bad as that. It is the unofficial force - the Baker Street Irregulars." (SIGN)

Conclusion

Dr. Watson writes of Sherlock Holmes' bright humor" (SIGN)

and describes Holmes as laughing in no less than 16 adventures of the Canon. It is hoped that future readings of Watson's timeless works will be approached with a bit more twinkle in our mind's eye. And as earlier noted, comedy may be the wrong word to associate with The Great Detective but, in my view and as personified by Jeremy Brett, the aspect of humor serves to round out and complete Mr. Sherlock Holmes.



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SHERLOCK HOLMES: MY INSPIRATION

Barbara Rusch, BSI, ASH, MBt,
Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

For nearly four decades I have been devoted to exploring the Sherlock Holmes stories on a variety of levels, from their literary and cultural components to psychological and socio-sexual perspectives, in addition to the life of their creator, which I find equally captivating.

I read my first Holmes tale as a teenager, when my grandmother's tenant, Mr. Ash, passed away, leaving his library behind, and along with it a legacy of incalculable value. Amongst the books was a slim volume of *The Adventures*, and I recall "The Speckled Band" as the first story I read, inducing a terrifying nightmare of a whistling snake slithering down the wall and into my bed. Whether this was no more than a Freudian dream sequence brought on by puberty or a frightening re-enactment of a Sherlockian vision, it was no less horrifying. In addition to the enthralling mysteries, I found the Paget drawings riveting, their fifty shades of gray dissolving at the edges, leaving me to wonder what might have been happening just beyond the margins.

Years later, when I was pregnant with my son, and suffering from morning sickness 24 hours a day for 3 months, I went looking for a book – any book – to take my mind off my condition. I may be the only person for whom Sherlock Holmes is a prescription for nausea, but by the end of the first trimester, I had finished off all 60 tales and was feeling a good deal better, in addition to having discovered a lifelong superhero.



In 1983, I was doing some research on 19th-century ephemera as a reflection of consumer culture. The librarian at the Toronto Reference Library, Janice McNabb, suggested that I might find *The Bootmakers of Toronto*, the Sherlock Holmes Society of Canada, of interest, since it explores all aspects of Victorian and Edwardian life. At the first meeting I attended, the speaker was modelling Victorian women's clothing, which she was removing layer by layer, stripping down to her corset and knickers. This is the group for me, I thought. My husband, Donny Zaldin, was in perfect agreement. And the rest, as they say, is history – at its finest.

As thrilling as the countless films, television series and pastiches may be, nothing can surpass the magic of the original canonical tales which Arthur Conan Doyle has bequeathed us. I'm particularly drawn to those intriguing stories which lead down unexplored paths. Just what was "revealed" in that infamous photograph of Irene Adler and the King of Bohemia? Surely it couldn't be a simple image of the two of them posing sedately together. Upper class gentlemen, including royalty, married or not, were notorious rakes, and an armload of mistresses was a sign of virility rather than notoriety. King Edward VII, the reputed "Illustrious Client," never allowed his marriage to Princess Alexandra to interfere with his love life. So what did that photograph contain of so scandalous a nature? My opinion is that it was not simply scandalous, but salacious, perhaps better suited to a French postcard than a royal memento. I'd love to have a copy of it in my collection.

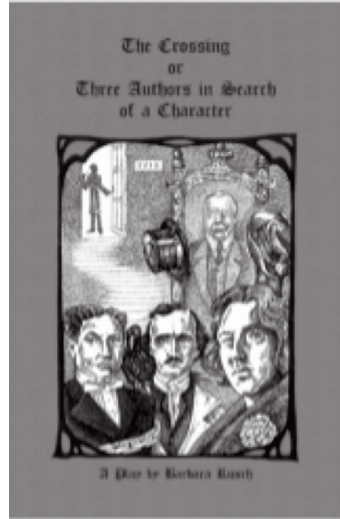
Aside from the captivating stories themselves, anything that resonates of 19th- and early 20th-century protocols is of interest to me. The Holmes tales are, as Watson observes, "a perfect quarry for the student not only of crime but of the social and official scandals of the late Victorian era." For me, they serve as touchstones to Victorian and Edwardian material and social culture, providing inspiration for my own writing. An examination of "Black Peter" led to an analysis of domestic violence in Victorian England, while "The Creeping Man" forged an unexpected connection to eugenics and the subject of the monster in Victorian literature.

I have enjoyed immensely researching a variety of Sherlockian



subjects. Unlike *Seinfeld*, which was “a show about nothing,” the Canon is a treasure trove of *everything*, both the starting point and an outlet for my insatiable curiosity for all things Victorian. As Nathan Garrideb

expressed it, “I am, in fact, the student of many subjects, and you may be surprised at the universality of my interests. The general effect is amiable though eccentric. One day a profession might be made out of what up to this time has been the merest hobby.” For the past three years I have been pleased to contribute a regular column in *Canadian Holmes*, the quarterly journal of The Bootmakers of Toronto. “The View from the Bow Window” is an examination of various aspects of Victorian and Edwardian life as they relate to the Holmes tales, often illustrated with treasures from my collection. As our detective himself observes, “To anyone who wishes to study mankind, this is the spot.” The subjects I’ve explored include: pipes, brandy, the London Underground, cursed gems, the history of wax figures, Prince Albert watch chains, the pugilistic arts, commonplace books, Stradivarius violins – and, of course, bow windows.



Sherlock Holmes certainly provided the inspiration for my play, *The Crossing: Three Authors in Search of a Character*. Edgar Allan Poe, Oscar Wilde and Harry Houdini, three literary and cultural titans with enormous egos, all have unresolved conflicts with Conan Doyle. What I



could not have imagined when I embarked upon this journey was just how much they had in common – how similar their narratives, their insecurities and their recriminations. It began to feel as though they were always meant to find themselves in a room together (in this case a barren chamber in the afterlife), engaging in witty and acrimonious dialogue, their resentment and appreciation for Arthur Conan Doyle their common point of intersection. A Mystery Interloper who smokes shag tobacco only adds to the tension and suspense.

Moreover, it was very gratifying to be able to incorporate relevant images from my ephemera collection into the text.

I'm also enchanted by Conan Doyle's belief in Spiritualism and what led him to place his trust in two young girls who claimed to have taken photographs of fairies at the bottom of their garden. I've written a YA novella on the subject of the Cottingley Fairies, beautifully illustrated by Laurie Fraser Manifold, for which I'm currently searching for an appropriate publisher.

The stories have also provided grist for my collecting mania. My fascination for the period led naturally to amassing objects, mostly of paper, and representative of their time. Their significance cannot be overstated. In 1988, Maurice Rickards, founder of the Ephemera Society UK, wrote in his landmark book, *Collecting Printed Ephemera*, "In every fragment of ephemera resides the *genius papyri*, the spirit of the paper – the abiding essence of its message, origin and content." It presupposes that the paper is somehow possessed of its own DNA – and an immortal soul. My treasures began with a collection of printed ephemera – advertising trade cards, calendars, and posters – then progressed to photo albums, valentines, and holographic material such as illustrated friendship albums, private



journals and personal letters, anything pertaining to the life and reign of Queen Victoria (who, after all, was the centrepiece of the age to which she lent her name), Houdini, and, naturally, Sherlock Holmes and ACD. Like Horace Harker, “All my life I have been collecting other people’s news.”

An appreciation of the Sherlockian tales lends itself perfectly to the collecting and study of Victorian ephemera. To offer a few examples of some of my favorites, I, like Sherlock Holmes, “will dive my arm down to find something a little *recherché* ... a small wooden box, a crumpled piece of paper and an old-fashioned brass key.” The wooden box features a brass plaque on the lid which identifies it as a gift proffered in 1872 by ACD’s mentor and the inspiration for the great detective, Dr. Joseph Bell, to his prized pupil, Edwin St. George Baldwin, a medical student from Toronto attending the University of Edinburgh, and contains a gruesome-looking set of surgical knives.



The crumpled piece of paper? Some original correspondence penned by ACD: a letter to Bram Stoker, reaching out on the subject of a project together (which feels somewhat fancifully like correspondence between Sherlock Holmes and Dracula); another to a friend

of Houdini’s stating that he and his Spiritualist crew were foretold of his impending death and stating categorically that some of his “tricks” were undoubtedly psychic in nature; and one to Sidney Paget sending greetings and regrets that the artist wasn’t illustrating his next story after all. A particularly cherished item is a cheque signed by Charles Dickens two weeks before his untimely death in 1870, sent by his granddaughter to famed actor William Gillette, with compliments on the success of his Sherlock Holmes play, and requesting in exchange a signed photograph.

Other precious nuggets unearthed from my Agra treasure chest include: a menu from the Meiringen Hotel from 1888, possibly the model for the Englischer Hof; a playbill from the Gillette play *Sherlock Holmes* in London c. 1905; a photograph featuring an advertise-



ment for Conan Doyle's play *The Speckled Band* on the side of a London double-decker bus in 1910; and an advertising card for a Troy, NY menswear shop featuring a sad-looking pooch and Sherlock Holmes in shadow.

The old-fashioned brass key is an easy one: for many years I have worn one of Houdini's handcuff keys around my neck. How it came into my possession is a mystery in itself. Whether or not it helps me escape from tight spaces and dangerous situations is anybody's



guess, but as a good luck charm it sure beats a rabbit's foot, and serves as yet another reminder of the contentious relationship between the famed magician and the acclaimed author. And I would be remiss if I didn't at least make mention of my collection of eclectic undergarments, specifically the oversized knickers of "a certain gracious lady," and a boxful of Lady Conan Doyle's intimate apparel culled from a drawerful of drawers at Windlesham, Crowborough. Strange as it may seem, the undergarments were the inspiration for a pastiche published in the 2020 anthology of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

As grateful as I am to the Sherlockian movement for affording me a platform for my creative urges, I am even more appreciative of the numerous meaningful friendships I have forged on this journey. Over the years, my circle has expanded from Toronto Bootmakers to members of the BSI, ASH and those of other scion societies. They are invariably wonderful, intelligent people with varied talents and astonishing gifts.

Of course, it's never sufficient to simply enjoy the contributions of others. It's been my honor to serve as Meyers (President) of the Bootmakers, and I continue in my long-standing role as Vice-Chair of the Friends of the Arthur Conan



Doyle Collection at the Toronto Public Library, one of the foremost Doylean and Sherlockian repositories in the world. In 2011 I chaired the international conference *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Study in Scandal (SinS)*, and I've been pleased to speak at a number of conferences over the years, all immensely gratifying experiences.

Above all, though I don't always appreciate his attitude toward women, Sherlock Holmes represents, as John Bennett Shaw expressed it so well, "the finest

expression of the urge to trample evil and set aright the wrongs with which the world has been beset." He is the universal muse, the master of wit and wisdom, and a bastion of justice in a world gone all awry. He is in the truest sense the last and highest court of appeal, a lighthouse of luminosity and the one fixed point in a changing world. A more admirable model of decency in an often indecent world cannot be imagined, a compass point guiding us to enlightenment. Above all, he has taught me that education never ends, but is a series of lessons with the greatest for the last. For me, Sherlock Holmes is more than a mere role model. He is a life coach and an unending source of inspiration. We would do well to heed his wisdom and emulate his many qualities.



SHERLOCK AND THE NERD

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate

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My attraction to Sherlock Holmes originates, in part, from his relatability. He was smart, used logic and his intellect to solve problems, and had only a few friends.

In a word, he was a nerd before the term existed, and I could totally connect with him on this level.

While numerous definitions and descriptions of nerds exist, all include some basic characteristics: an intellectual component (enjoy thinking about things); an interest in science and/or math; and a preference for study. These traits are sprinkled throughout the Canon: Holmes knew all about dirt, ash, and bees, among other things - enough to write treatises on such topics for others to study and use. He had an intellectual bent, the desire to study, and a preference for science (and some math).

Such cerebral pursuits often come with a price: awkward social skills. Theories suggest such skills atrophy in nerds beginning at an early age. Somehow in childhood, nerds failed at early social interactions, and shifted their attention to those areas where they had more success - science or math, for example - and once withdrawn from such interactions, continued down that path.

Holmes' preference for being a social recluse (brought about from being less adept at social interaction) is illustrated in "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott." Holmes relates to Watson how he made one friend during his two years at college. Instead of hanging with his classmates at the local pub or playing team sports, he preferred to spend his time alone, thinking. Despite Holmes' obvious reticence (he tells his flat mate of this one friend before he ever shares that he has a brother), he and Watson did forge a close bond. A single telegraphed request to come at once, and Watson would be off to assist his friend.

The term "nerd" didn't enter our daily lexicon until almost a century later. I distinctly recall the first time I heard the term

“nerd.” Not the day and time, but the event. An episode of the TV show *Happy Days*. Set in the 1950s at a midwestern high school, one of the boys referred to another boy as a nerd, as compared to the motorcycle-riding greaser nicknamed Fonzie who everyone agreed was “cool.” The moniker “nerd” was hurled at one or the other as an insult throughout the series. Being one of the most popular TV shows of its time, the term soon appeared as the preferred insult to those earlier labeled “dorks” or “spazzes.” It gained its pinnacle when the movie *Revenge of the Nerds* premiered in 1984.

About the time the word appeared, I figured out I was one. I always leaned toward math (not so much science), liked to think about things (always looking for the practical application of some theoretical idea), and enjoyed taking classes, reading about new ideas, etc. I’m in love with numbers - mostly in the statistical form. As a former employee of the US Census Bureau - among other positions - nothing pleases me more than a chance to sink my teeth into a database and discover some relationship between variables. In the words of the great detective, “Data! Data! Data!...I can’t make bricks without clay.” Of course, the data to which Sherlock referred were the evidence left at the scene of a crime in “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches,” but the connection between Sherlock and me is clear.

Unlike the term *nerd*, I cannot identify when I first read a case from the Canon, but I do recall being very aware of any character (including those in cartoons) who put on a deerstalker hat and carried a magnifying glass as imitating the detective who appeared in the old black and white Basil Rathbone movies.

And he fascinated me.

Not so much the cartoon characters, but the fast-talking, clue-seeking Basil-Rathbone-Sherlock who could find all sorts of information from the minutia left at the scene of the crime. He also knew stuff, often considered trivia - like being able to identify the type of air pistol that shoots poison darts in *Terror by Night* or various camera lenses in *Sherlock Holmes in Washington*.

I could relate to so much of Holmes and could easily put myself into his shoes as he went about collecting information and forming

his conclusions. It was a race. Could I review his data and solve it before the end? Unfortunately, now I know the tales too well for it to be a fair competition, but the calm application of the information in his brain attic is still captivating.

Today many argue nerds are the *cool* ones, having morphed into the brainiacs who create the microchips and computers that run the world, and among them, the first truly cool nerd: Sherlock Holmes.

MY LIFE WITH SHERLOCK HOLMES

Dr. Jim Webb, BSI, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021



I remain firmly convinced that a life without Sherlock Holmes is not really a life well-lived.

Strong words to begin an essay, I know. Yet as I think back on all of the delightful times and friendships that I have gained through this close-knit world, I shudder to think of how life would have progressed without him.

I first met Sherlock Holmes in middle school, junior high school to some, and the 6th grade to others.

The English teachers always encouraged us to purchase select offered books for our Summer reading. I thoughtfully perused the list and immediately gravitated toward the types of books that boys of that age typically sought – action adventures and westerns. Yes, westerns, I am from Texas, after all.

It was then that I heard a girl remark about the extraordinary adventures of Sherlock Holmes. I cannot remember her name. And, yes, she was one of the cutest girls in my class. Did I pay attention to her? Of course, I did. All of the boys did. She had that sort of personality. Did I mention she was also cute? When she pointed out to me that *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was a great read, how could I not respond with enthusiasm? Perhaps we could read it together? Of course, in those days, reading a book together was about as intimate as middle schoolers got. The free love of the '60s had not made it to our little town quite yet.

Did we read the book together, you ask? Alas, no. But she did introduce me to a greater love.

After absorbing the Hound of the Baskervilles, I was hooked. I needed to have more. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (the Canon)

quickly followed. A few years later, I managed to be accepted to West Point. The Academy would not let you bring much with you, but they did recommend bringing one book. Naturally, I carried my edition of the Canon to my new home. While they managed to keep me pretty busy over the next four years, between rigorous academics and intense military and leadership training, I did manage to find the occasional hours of escape back to 1895.

I graduated from West Point and became a Special Forces Officer. Unfortunately, parachuting into some situation in the middle of the night did not provide a lot of time for reading Sherlock Holmes, not to mention the extra weight required to carry such a book in my already equipment-laden rucksack. So, for a while, we drifted apart.

My active duty military obligation compete (I did stay in the reserves, but no more phone calls in the middle of the night to report in one hour), brought me to Dallas to work in scientific research. My girlfriend pointed out that a group in Dallas met once a month to read and discuss Sherlock Holmes stories. Naturally, I had to marry that girl. I also started attending the Crew of the Barque Lone Star, led by Bill Beeson. I was now completely hooked.

At the time, the Hounds of the Internet was the online place to be, and I also stumbled upon a group called The Franco-Midland Hardware Company out of England. Bill Beeson had a high opinion of their leader, Philip Weller, so I took a great interest. They billed themselves as an international study group and provided certifications at different levels based on scholarship. I dove in and eventually rose to their highest level, the Master of Holmesian Studies. This required having articles published in numerous periodicals and completing their Master's thesis – which I must admit (now that I am a university professor) had the same academic rigor as a university dissertation. After that, Bill Beeson found his health declining and asked me to take the reins of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star. I considered it an honor.

After a while, it became evident that the Crew of the Barque Lone Star had turned into more of a social club than a literary society. Don Hobbs and I created the Diogenes Club of Dallas as a separate entity to focus on scholarship. The Diogenes Club eventu-

ally took over as the primary Sherlockian group in Dallas. I was very grateful to John Bennett Shaw, who managed to call me whenever I was frustrated with running a society. How he always knew when to call is beyond me. I led that group for twenty years until turning the reins over to Steve Mason, who preferred to resurrect the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

During those years, I dragged my family around the world while engaging with the Franco-Midland Hardware Company and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. We visited London and Baker Street.



Reichenbach Falls 1995

We traced the path of Homes and Moriarty from London through Brussels, Paris, walked the Gemmi Pass, and hiked up to the Reichenbach Falls.

We spent a few weeks in Dartmoor searching for a hound. My children grew up with quite a few very literary aunts and uncles due to those adventures.

My investiture in the Baker Street Irregulars came in 2020 as *The Curious Incident of Sherlock Holmes in Japan*. Perhaps you are wondering why? I lived in Japan at one point and conducted a lot of business there over the years, and I have many friends who are members of the Japan Sherlock Holmes Club. I also trained extensively in the martial arts at the Kodokan, where Judo was founded. It was an honor to have this investiture name as the previous holder was Dr. Kohki Naganuma, the Finance Minister of Japan (1949 - 1951).

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND ME

By Janice L. Weiner, ASH © 2021

I was introduced to Sherlock Holmes when I was ten years old. An adapted “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” was in a Reader’s Digest book for children that I received for my birthday. I remember I thought the story was scary, but it was a true story about a runaway train I really thought was spooky. Hmmm? What was I thinking? It was years later, after I graduated college, that I picked up the Canon and started to read it. And, I noted a familiar tale. It was still a chilling story.

One time my father went to his bank. I was reading the Doubleday Canon while he talked to a banker. The banker noticed me and asked if I liked Holmes. I said yes and he mentioned he read the stories too. He also said something about other people who liked the detective. I am shy and didn’t get his full name nor did I really catch what he said about others who liked Holmes. Much much later I used to go to Scotland Yard Books, a mystery bookstore, in a Chicago suburb. When the owner of the store started sponsoring seminars about the Canon, given by Thomas Joyce, I decided to go to them. Not something I would have usually done. But I liked Holmes and pushed myself to attend the seminars. I remembered that that banker had mentioned Holmes devotees and realized the people attending the sessions were some of those people. I began to make Sherlockian friends. When some of those folks, under the sponsorship of the bookstore, decided to start a new Holmes scion I came to the first organizational meeting in 1988. I had, surprisingly to me, become president of my district’s teachers’ union. Something in that event pushed me to help start the new scion. I have been involved in The Scotland Yarders ever since. I first worked on the newsletter with other members and I helped with other things. I took over the newsletter in 1991. I don’t even remember when I actually took over the leadership of the scion, but it seems I’ve been Commissioner of The Scotland Yarders forever.

Along the way I have become a member of other scions and attended many Sherlockian events.

When the pandemic caused a lockdown in Illinois and restricted travel a Sherlockian friend and I became a “pod” and attended many Zoom scion meetings together. I know this helped me keep on an “even keel” during that time. I live alone and might never have socialized in any serious way if I didn’t have those Zoom meetings to attend



and a friend to talk with. I was able to see/meet some people I had heard about and enjoyed a number of interesting talks.

When I look back on my experiences with the Sherlockian world I realize how many people I have met that I likely would never have met if not for Sherlockian events. Not only from professions much different from my own teaching profession, but just folks that I never would have met at all. I have made some very good friends and expanded my world. If it wasn’t for Sherlock Holmes, I might be rather isolated, retired with few friends to see and watching reruns of old sitcoms. I have a better life now because of Sherlock Holmes.

HOLMES AND ME – A RELATIONSHIP

Vincent W. Wright, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

The Discovery

The way that Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, and The Canon came into my life is something I've discussed many times. Lots of people have heard it, so there's really nothing new to tell, but the short version goes something like this...

When I was in junior high in the early 1980's I met a new classmate, Chris, whose father was involved with a local college and had an amazing library in their house. Chris and I became good friends, and I spent a lot of time at his place. I was always amazed at his dad's collection, and one day while browsing the shelves I came across the two-volume *Annotated Sherlock Holmes* by William S. Baring-Gould.

Chris let me borrow them to browse...and I still have them. I guess in time he just forgot I had them, or he trusted that one day I'd return them. Well, after high school, Chris and his family moved away. I lost complete track of him and have only heard rumors as to where he ended up. However, I know he has no wish to be found, so I have not pursued him. I am indebted to him as those big green volumes served me well for a couple of decades before I bought my own copies. His are packed away in my office closet and await the day when I can put them back on their rightful shelf.

I knew of Holmes before the books, of course, but only from the occasional yard sale paperback that I'd pick up here or there as a kid. I don't recall ever seeing a movie or TV show about the detective, but all of that changed one night in the late 80's. Where I grew up Channel 8 was the local PBS station, and on Fridays (I think) they would show old horror and comedy movies back-to-back. On that fateful night the movie wasn't a horror, but a mystery. A Sherlock Holmes series that starred someone named Jeremy Brett. I was absolutely hooked. To me he was the perfect embodiment of the man I'd read about. It was not the beginning of my life

as a Sherlockian, however. That came after I moved to Indianapolis in 1996.

That move had me living near a bookstore with an entire Holmes section. One day I picked up a copy of *Encyclopedia Sherlockiana* by Matthew E. Bunson. In the back were listings of Sherlock Holmes societies, and I saw that Indianapolis had one. I contacted them but didn't venture out to an actual meeting for over a year. Once I did, in the summer of 1997, I became a member of The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis and have been one ever since.

The Hobby

When my wife and I married in 1998 we had little money. We survived, but there were times we struggled. I'm telling you this to relate that I wanted to do so much more in the hobby but couldn't. I heard about other gatherings and groups while knowing I had to wait to experience them for myself. I remained a "social Sherlockian" for over a decade but worked behind the scenes on ideas I had. I typed out papers and articles on an outdated desktop computer in the hopes that someday I might be able to do something with them. I photocopied other people's chronology books because I couldn't afford my own. I salivated over other's libraries and hoped that one day I would have one, too. I bided my time.

A few years later I got a call from fellow Client Steve Doyle letting me know that complete sets of *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* by Les Klinger were available. Life had gotten much better, so I gathered the required cash and drove to Steve's to buy them. These were amazing works, and the level of research that went into them deserves a statue or something. In the back of each volume was what I wanted most – a listing of about a dozen chronologies and the dates those chronologists had for each case.

It was during my first venturing out to a conference in Dayton, OH, in May of 2009 with some fellow club members that I found a copy of *I Remember The Date Very Well* by John Hall. The book was one listed in the back of *The Reference Library*, so I bought the copy for my small but growing collection. I had made it a point to find

every chronology available, but I could not have predicted where it would take me. I'd been dabbling with a blog I'd created called Historical Sherlock but didn't really have a plan laid out for it. I had something to say, and I knew it was chronological in nature, but I wasn't there yet. In time, and after a few fresh coats of paint, I got it headed in the direction I wanted, and people really seemed to enjoy it.

In May 2010 I received an answer to an email I had sent to an east coast lady named Jacquelynn Bost Morris. I'd heard of a gathering she put on every year out in Maryland, how it was really growing, and how she might need speakers. I had requested to do just that even though I had nothing to actually talk about yet. Her response that May morn told me that I was welcome to give a talk. I told the Facebook world about it, probably did the Arsenio Hall fist pumps in the air, and then settled in to write my first paper to give to a room full of strangers.

The paper, titled 'Page 15 Line 41', was a hit. It concerned the true location for 221b Baker Street based on the simple idea of Holmes finding it from an ad in the paper. The place, 23 Baker Street, fit all the needed requirements, and it looked like I had really done some convincing work to solve a longstanding Sherlockian mystery. I had never had such an exhilarating experience in front of a crowd, and I loved it. More than that, though, was how much I loved the research that went into my work...and I wanted more of all of it.

Within a few years I had given 'Page 15 Line 41' in four other states. Turns out, though, that I'd made a huge mistake in the paper and eventually had to retire it. (The last time it was given was with the corrected information.) By then my name had been firmly established on the speaking circuit, and people were talking about Historical Sherlock. I applied much fervor to more papers after finding myself often being requested to speak. Since then, I have been lucky enough to present somewhere at least once every year. It's an amazing feeling to be asked, and I am always surprised and honored. As such, I do my best to make my stuff as entertaining and

educational as possible. I also pay respect to Jacquelynn every chance I get for the opportunity she gave me.

The chronological niche had grabbed hold of me strongly in those early days. I enjoy lists and charts and graphs and tinkering with this part of the hobby means I get to see (and create) lots of those. Historical Sherlock turned out to be the perfect place to talk about all of it. The purpose of it is to chronologically tie Holmes and Watson and all things canonical to actual Victorian history. I get to do a lot of research, not to mention scouring the globe looking for other chronologies. As of this writing I have collected thirty-three of them and am always looking for more. I maintain what has been called the world's largest Sherlockian chronological database. It contains hundreds of articles and news clippings and papers and photographs and facts and figures, and I hope it will continue to grow. The best part is that people want the information, and I'm happy to give it. The fun never ends.

Historical Sherlock has a corresponding Facebook page of the same name with over 2,400 fans. I post on there at least once a week with some sort of interesting tidbit concerning this little subset of The Game. It keeps me in my vintage office chair behind my vintage office desk looking at some website searching for that next little factoid which may help in the dating of a case. It's a true labor of love.

The Gift

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his creations have given me more joy than most other hobbies I have had. There are other things I dabble in, but Holmes is certainly the one who gets the most attention. I have met some wonderful people, gone to some great places, and had some incredible experiences because of Holmes, and I'm certain he will be a part of my life until I draw my last breath.

HOLMES AND ME

D. Leilehua Yuen © 2021

I sat in my four-poster refuge propped against a pile of pillows, knees drawn up, head resting on them as I struggled to breathe. My damp hair clung to me in wads, scratchy against my back and neck, wrapped around my arms, stuck to my face. I was too tired to brush it away again.

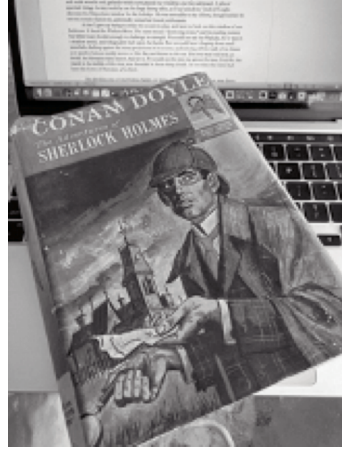
I'd always been a sickly child. At various times my maternal grandmother would swoop in and remove me to her own home to, as she thought, better care for me. She bought my grave to be ready for me, as while still an infant I had suffered two bouts of pneumonia, and then was afflicted again when I was a toddler. There was quite the row when my atheist family learned the doctor had called for a priest. One aunt was Catholic, and so approved, but the others were adamantly against such ecclesiastical meddling. None seemed to think it worthwhile to explain to the terrified child who these strangers were, and why the family was focused on them, and not on comforting the toddler in her struggles to breathe. But, I did recover and finally was returned to my mother's care. My parents had divorced, and my father had returned to Hawai'i. My mother kept me in California.

One evening, my mother came into my bedroom to refresh the Vicks she rubbed into my chest every hour or so. "How are you, my darling?" She really spoke like that. "I've brought you something." A stack of books was cradled in her arms.

"I thought you might enjoy these. They were my favorites when I was your age." I'd already been through *Wind in the Willows*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*, and all of the Burgess series. This stack contained fairy tales, well known and loved, but with the most marvelous art deco illustrations. It also contained a genre I had never before encountered.

I saw a thick book with heavy yellowing pages and a torn cover depicting a man with a looking glass wearing a deerstalker cap.

Intrigued, I pointed to it. My mother set the stack of books on my night table and drew out the one to which I had pointed. She laid it beside me on the bed and unbuttoned my nightgown so she could apply fresh Vicks to my chest. As the scent engulfed me, the light shining through my bedroom windows faded. The streetlights came on and cast shadows of trees on the wall to my right. My mother patted my chest and buttoned up my nightgown, then rose. She turned on my bedside lamp, bent down, and kissed my forehead. “Nighty-night, my love.” She stepped out and closed the door.



I can't say I immediately fell in love with the book. But I was intrigued. I read it through the night, and in the morning my mother explained the difficult bits. When I finished, I set it aside and read the fairy tales with their beautiful illustrations.

The next time my asthma kept me up, I read the book again, and understood a bit more. Over time, Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson came to be my dear friends and companions. They helped me navigate the changes in my life as the adults around me shifted their alliances and I was moved from household to household, finally ending up sent to Hawai'i, where I joined my father in the household of my paternal grandparents.

From the fourth grade until I graduated from high school, I probably read the adventures of Sherlock Holmes each year, each year understanding a little more as my understanding of the world events of the late 19th Century grew.

After graduation, my path and the path of Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson diverged, and I did not enjoy their company for some time. I became a teacher, artist, and writer. Most of my writing was devoted to science journalism and historical documentation. I had

no time for fiction. Time passed, I divorced, my daughter grew up and moved away.

One day my father called to ask if I would be interested in taking on the family home, or if I preferred that he should sell it. I moved home. It needed a thorough cleaning.

As I pulled the books from the library shelves and set them aside, I saw a thick book with heavy yellowing pages and a torn cover depicting a man with a looking glass wearing a deerstalker cap. I opened the book and greeted my old friends.

Hours later I rose from the floor, stretched my stiff legs, and took the book into the kitchen where I brewed a pot of coffee and then, warmed by the drink and the memories, continued to read.

As a teacher of Hawaiian history, culture, and art, it is a great frustration to me that people will much more happily believe fiction about our islands than they will actual fact. In 2018 I was laid off from one of my contract jobs, and decided to use the time pursuing something I had been considering for a while – I would write Hawaiian history as fiction. I would trick people into reading real history! But, what would be my vehicle? What better than taking the lead of my old friends, Holmes and Watson. Thus Kamaka Holmes and Fevronia Watkins came to be.

It was during the time I was starting to restore my family home that I had begun reconnecting with my mother. Among the things I learned was that among her many contributions to the world was the writing of culinary mysteries. My mother and I often remarked how our lives so often paralleled at our different ages. She had encouraged me to pursue a career as a writer, and when I began the Holmesian pastiches was delighted that I had decided to work in her favorite genre.

In November of 2019, we learned my mother had inoperable lung cancer. I set my own work aside and with the financial help of my husband, cousins, brother, and daughter spent her last three months with her. Among the tasks she wanted to accomplish was to turn over her cooking website and her manuscripts to me so that I could carry on her work. After spending the day working together, we would make a nice pot of tea and watch Basil Rathbone as Sher-

lock Holmes. When she was too tired to watch, I read to her from my manuscript of *He Huli Ula'ula*, my first Sherlock Holmes pastiche.

I was so pleased that she enjoyed it.



MY SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH SHERLOCK HOLMES

Donny Zaldin, ASH, BSI, MBt,
Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

My father was a salesman of men's clothes and my mother a saleslady of women's clothing. Following in their footsteps, my older brother, my identical twin brother, Ronald (yes, our forenames rhymed) and I each studied, graduated and practised law in Toronto, Canada – as barristers (called trial attorneys in the U.S.) for about forty years. To me, our profession was essentially another form of sales or marketing – not of things, but of people or positions.

In the 1980s, as a change of pace, I took up non-legal writing for scholarly journals and public speaking on:

- history;
- ephemera (the study of handwritten or printed documents of a transient nature intended for a specific, usually short-term purpose, and then disposal – but which somehow survive and take on a second life as part of the historical record); and
- Sherlock Holmes, to whom my wife Barbara Rusch and I were introduced in 1983 when we joined The Bootmakers of Toronto.

When I was in primary school (grades 1-6) and learned the five “Ws”: who, what, why, where and when, my favorite was “why.” So, whenever I read a Sherlock Holmes story, I wonder why the idea of a crime or mystery came to the mind of Conan Doyle. Was it from his knowledge of “sensational literature?” Or from a person he knew, place he visited or event he experienced or learned about? Or from his own imagination? To wit: what led Conan Doyle to base his canonical adventure stories on a spectral, hellish beast and a legendary family curse (*The Hound of the Baskervilles*), a cipher of stick

figures (“The Dancing Men”), or a genetic trait of hair color (“The Red-headed League”)?

This curiosity has propelled me to write: “The Cipher in ‘The Dancing Men’: A Study in Sources” in the 2016 BSI manuscript series volume, *Dancing to Death*; why Conan Doyle wrote about the sea, ships and sailing time and again in his Sherlockian and non-Sherlockian writings, in the 2018 BSI manuscript series volume, *Deadly Harpoon*; about the source of the stratagem of a substitution scandal in “Silver Blaze,” in the 2019 BSI series volume, *Upon the Turf*; and on the origin of ACD’s fascination with tigers, which he featured in many of the Sherlock Holmes tales, in *Magic Door*, the quarterly journal of The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Public Library

I have also been honored to write an ongoing regular column for several years in *The Serpentine Muse*, the quarterly journal of The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes – which I recommend to readers with enquiring Sherlockian minds. My column is titled, “What the dickens?”, which traces the sources or bases of plots and characters, such as *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Professor Moriarty, and Charles Augustus Milverton.

In his 1961 inaugural address, John F. Kennedy spoke his most famous words in the form of an antimetabole (a literary device that repeats words in successive clauses but in transposed order): “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,” calling on the American public to do what is best for the greater good. I reject any suggestion that my writings on the writings are more about what I have done for Sherlock Holmes than what Sherlock Holmes has done for me. As Holmes informs Watson in “The Norwood Builder,” “The work is its own reward” and our relationship is one of mutual benefit.

My brothers and I are all retired now from the practice of law – but I still write and speak about my iconic literary hero, the “Grand Game” notwithstanding.

IF YOU GIVE A GIRL THE CANON

Adriana Zayia, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate © 2021

If you give a girl the Canon,
How happy she will be,
At home with Holmes and Watson
Inside 221B.

Introduced to Sherlock by her dad,
She loved the stories from the start.
They challenged her to understand more deeply
And from her reading level to depart.

She learned new words,
Some useful, others not,
And broadened her mind
With tales like *Gloria Scott*.

Not long went by before her dad
Brought her to Sherlockians,
And she was glad.
She joined the Torists and soon became
Their youngest member to play the Game.

A few years passed,
And she wrote her essay
“A Study in Contrasts”
For the Beacon Society.

She then passed from there and into the Crew,
Where she became a deck-mate,
Which was altogether new.

HOLMES AND ME

She continues to learn more about the Canon,
And appreciates the opportunities
Which she has been given.

And so goes the story
Of this girl's journey,
From the first page to the last
In a Sherlockian flurry.

No matter her age,
She will always enjoy
The flip of the pages
That brings so much joy.

Baker Street Elementary

Joe Fay, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate
Rusty Mason, Barque Lone Star Deck-Mate & Steve
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