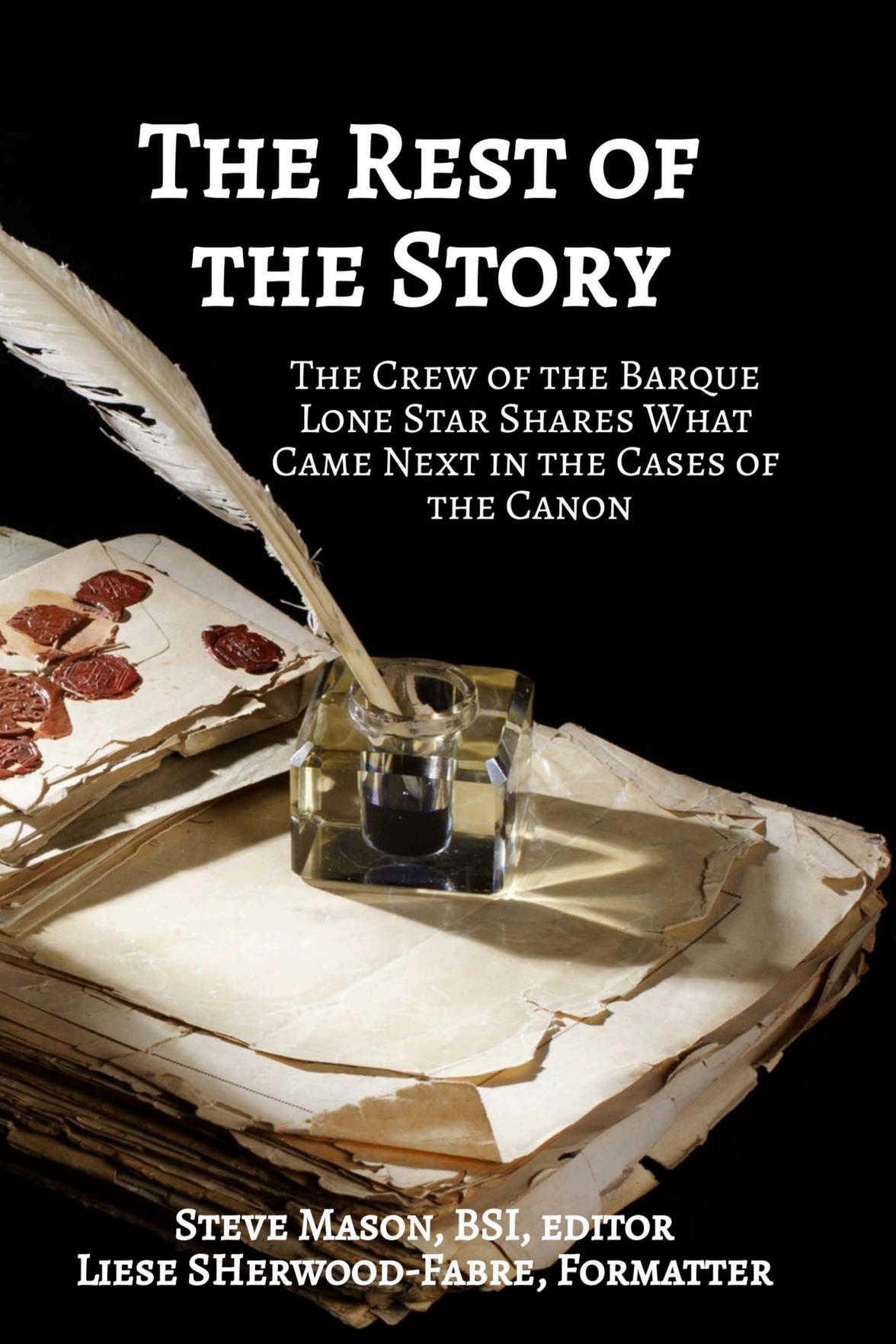


THE REST OF THE STORY

A quill pen is positioned diagonally across the frame, its tip resting in a clear glass inkwell. The inkwell sits on a stack of aged, yellowed papers. Some of the papers have red wax seals, some of which are broken. The background is dark, making the light-colored papers and the quill stand out.

THE CREW OF THE BARQUE
LONE STAR SHARES WHAT
CAME NEXT IN THE CASES OF
THE CANON

STEVE MASON, BSI, EDITOR
LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE, FORMATTER

THE REST OF THE STORY

Where Watson Left off, or Left out, of the Stories of the Canon

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 part of our 50-year celebration, the Crew and other Sherlockians have contributed to a number of volumes, showcasing their talent in pastiches, limericks, and essays. This volume provides yet another collection from our talented Crew and Passengers that spans the gamut of creative works. In all cases, the pieces add to “the rest of the story” behind something in the life of Sherlock Holmes or Arthur Conan Doyle.

For more information on the Crew of the Barque Lone Star, check out the website: <http://www.dfw-sherlock.org>

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THE CREW OF THE BARQUE LONE STAR TOAST

Richard Krisciunas, Deckmate/CBLS © 2022

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.

221A BAKER STREET

Bruce D. Aikin © 2022

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Hotel

London, S.W.

To Mrs. Hudson

221 Baker Street

London, S.W.

Dear Mrs. Hudson,

I HAVE REMOVED from my rooms in flat A of your establishment. My leaving has nothing to do with the excellence of your meals or the rooms. I can stand that infernal Holmes in flat B no longer! I have put up with his so-called playing of his violin at all hours of the day and night, the stench of his chemical “experiments” and all manner of strange visitors coming and going past my door, but I have finally reached my limit!

For several months I have been courting a lady of a refined nature and have been considering proposing marriage to her. I had invited her to my sitting room with the intention of asking her to marry me when I was suddenly interrupted by gunfire coming from Holmes’ apartment! We both fell to the floor despairing for our very lives. The shots continued for some time and finally subsided long enough for me to gather my courage and pound on Holmes’ door. He answered the door in good spirits. On my asking him the cause of the gunfire, he said he was adorning the wall with a tribute to Her Majesty. He showed me the “V R” he had shot into the wall. He had only stopped because he ran out of cartridges after the second letter and as soon as he got the other box he had he would finish the “I” for Empress of India. I informed him that if he fired one more shot, I would call the police and have him arrested for reckless endangerment of my lady friend and me. He was very put out about this and said that I obviously was a red republican – whatever that means. I informed him that I would be leaving my flat

soon and was happy to no longer be near him. I said that poor Mrs. Hudson would be unable to find another lodger and that he should rent my flat and have it outfitted as a chemical laboratory to conduct even more complex analyses for his cases. He clapped his hands and said, "Capital idea! When are you leaving?" At that I said that I would be out as soon as possible.

I have since proposed to my lady and despite the harrowing interruption we had suffered she has done me the honour to accept me as a husband in prospective.

I cannot wait in my flat until my marriage and have moved to a hotel near the residence of my bride-to-be.

I can only wish you luck and pray for your safety if you keep Mr. Holmes under your roof.

I respectfully ask for the return of my deposit to the hotel upon whose stationery I have written to you.

Yours most Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Name and location withheld for reasons of privacy.

A PIP OF AN IDEA

Cindy Brown, Deckmate/CBLS, & Steve Mason, BSI, ASH,
Deckmate/CBLS

Prologue

FOR REASONS which shall become apparent as readers work through this story, Holmes and I determined it was not prudent to place the final outcome of this case in the public eye until certain milestones had passed. As the reader will see, the last milestone occurred earlier in 1921. To ensure everyone who had direct involvement in this tragedy can no longer suffer the consequences, I am concealing the following until approximately fifty years have passed. I hope the ultimate recipient of this narrative will know how to proceed in its publication with compassion and sincerity.

Dr. J. Watson
September 1921

It was just a week since the tragic events involving John Openshaw, the KKK, and the orange pips had unfolded unusually for this time of the year; I had no patients scheduled for the day, so I determined it would be considerate to check in on my friend to see how he was holding up. As I entered my old lodgings, I took a quick detour to the kitchen to give my best wishes to Mrs. Hudson. I did not expect the welcome I received.

“Dr. Watson, I am thrilled to see you. You simply must go upstairs and do what you can for that poor man. I have seen him in some miserable states, but the last few days are the worst I have witnessed.”

A man without a war wound may have taken the steps two at a time, but I took my time, hitting each tread on my way to the sitting room. I found Holmes staring out the window onto the street below.

“Good to see you, Watson. Join me for an early pipe before Mrs. Hudson assaults us again with a massive breakfast.”

Being of Scottish ancestry, cooking fabulous meals was never Mrs.

Hudson's long suit, but her fare was constantly filling and acceptable. However, her scones were beyond compare. Whoever taught her to make such wonderful delights would have been pleased to see how my eyes lit up whenever she entered the room with her tray piled high.

"I assume our landlady has beseeched you to attempt to remove me from a foul mood. Before you say a word, you must know no entreaties on your part will help at this point. I will work through this on my own. As I said last week, this hurts my pride."

"Holmes, you have had a week to consider and reconsider the entire episode. What has this self-reflection and assumed self-incrimination exposed to you?"

"An interesting and innovative method of improving my mood, I must grant you. But I have concluded there was simply nothing I could have done to keep our client, Mr. Openshaw, from his demise on that rainy night. The forces behind the captain and his two cohorts would not rest until they had accomplished the deadly task of removing him from our plane. They could not allow an Openshaw, even one who may have been completely removed from this entire story, from surviving and possibly making public the punishment his father and uncle had received."

We paused to consume the victuals. I prefer adding syrup to the top of my scones, while Holmes prefers them plain. I may have bested my personal record, finishing off four of the biscuits. I justified my gluttony by not wanting the extra scones to be wasted, though Holmes quickly pointed out the dog downstairs might have enjoyed a morsel thrown his way.

After finishing the meal, Holmes returned to the window. I found my old chair next to the fireplace, which sat dormant on this mild autumn morning.

"While I fear justice may be slow in transpiring, I have faith the American justice system will take action once the trio returns to America."

I sat for several minutes, trying to decide if I should say more, or simply allow things to settle where they seemingly had when he broke the silence himself.

"Hmm. this is interesting,"

He said suddenly.

“What is?”

“There is a gentleman across the street, most definitely of a nautical nature. He periodically glances at our residence while furtively looking to the right and left to ensure no one is watching him. Well, now he has made up his mind and is crossing. I expect we shall have a visitor. Maybe he would enjoy a scone or two.”

At this point, two sets of steps could be heard on the stairs, and Mrs. Hudson returned to our room, stating there was a male visitor for Mr. Holmes.

“Show him in. And please, Mrs. Hudson, would you be so kind as to refresh our tea unless our caller would appreciate something a little stronger, such as rum or other drink, appropriate for a sailor.”

“What led you to that conclusion,” our perplexed guest asked as soon as he joined us.

“It was simple enough to determine your trade from the tar stains on your hands which resulted from handling tarred rope. Other than that trifling observation, I have not set out to deduce any other items about you.”

“I’m duly impressed. My name is Franz Mueller. The landlady indicated I have found the residence of Mr. Holmes, whom I have been seeking since daybreak.”

“You have found him. And this is my esteemed friend and colleague, Dr. Watson. You can speak freely in his company. His knowledge, loyalty, and determination may prove an asset to your situation.”

I am still not sure the slight cough that emitted from my throat was not an involuntary choking back of my emotions.

Muller was a small but strong man, with bright eyes and wiry rusty colored hair. His skin, wind-worn and sun-scorched for many years, gave Mueller a much-aged appearance than his actual age.

“I am presently holding the position of ‘interim Captain’ on a sailing ship, but for years I was... and am... the Third Mate of the Barque Lone Star, with which I believe Mr. Holmes should be familiar,” Mueller said.

“That’s simply not possible,” I blurted out. “We were informed your ship had departed and is presently on course back to America.”

A Pip of an Idea

“Watson, I am genuinely as shocked as you are at this revelation, but I suggest we hold our thoughts until Captain, or Mister, Mueller has related his tale, Holmes interjected. I suspect he has much to tell us about what has actually happened since the death of John Openshaw.

“Mr. Holmes, random thoughts may sometimes escape my brain and spill out of my mouth before my brain has a chance to catch them. Such loose thoughts could possibly cause me harm in this case. It would be in my, and possibly your, best interests to choose my words most carefully.”

I poured a snifter of rum for our visitor. Holmes declined the offer for himself, and not being a fanatic for that strong of a spirit, I chose brandy from one of the three decanters in the tantalus on the sideboard. In my mind, I knew it was a little early for a drink, but I reminded myself somewhere in the world it was evening.

“Mr. Holmes, Mr. Watson, I have learned from a friend in the local shipping office you have done some investigating of this incident in the past, so I will not bore you with the nature and history of our ship. I will start from the point where you will get enough salient facts to determine the right course of action. “Just two days after the Lone Star left London, headed back to our homeland, following the death of John Openshaw, the Second Mate of the ship, a Mister Sutterman, became ripping drunk that night and admitted to me the true mission of the captain, the first mate, and the second mate of the ship. As I believe you have discovered, these three men were not the regular officers of the ship, but had replaced the previous officers a few years ago, in the fall of 1884. They had laid their plan long in advance and were on a mission to carry it out no matter the outcome. They were absolutely ruthless, and determination was their driving force.

“After another sip of the rum, these officers were, in actuality, assigned the mission of retrieving documents held by Elias Openshaw, which were a record of the more heinous activities of the Ku Klux Klan, or as you may know it, the KKK, in the United States. The documents included the names and positions held by the highest members of the society. Their attempt at retrieving the records from Elias Openshaw met with disdain, as he responded tersely that he would never return the

documents. He felt the documents were security from any actions that the organization might try to take against him.

“Thus, Captain Calhoun, in March 1887, directed an emissary in Pondicherry, India, to send Openshaw an envelope containing five orange pips. Thus, for Openshaw, his days were numbered. “The Pondicherry, India postmark was designed to give Openshaw a false sense he had much more time to take precautions to keep himself safe.

“Elias Openshaw’s life was taken in just seven short weeks after the Lone Star reached port in Portsmouth, and the three officers had gone to Horsham in Sussex. The dastardly trio ensured the death appeared a suicide, or even accidental, as I believe was ultimately ruled. As you can guess, the society was cunning and not about to be thwarted.”

At this point, Mueller took a long drink of the biting liquid before continuing his narrative. Not once did Holmes or I feel the need to stop him with a comment or question.

“The Lone Star then departed from England and made several cargo stops between the continent, Scotland, Ireland, and northern England. The captain and the first and second mates continued to lay their plans to retrieve the documents, no matter what the cost.

“In late December 1884, the ship landed in Dundee, Scotland. The three officers disembarked and headed south to Portsmouth. And, again, a letter was dispatched to Horsham a couple of days later from Dundee, asking for the relevant papers to be placed on the sundial of the Openshaw estate.

“Once the captain found Elias’ brother, Joseph Openshaw, had not complied with the directive, as no papers were found at the sundial. He and the other two officers pursued Mister Openshaw and ensured he also met his death in a seemingly accidental fashion. A careless footfall into a chalk pit had resulted in a smashed skull, and Joseph Openshaw had died, without uttering another word, in just a few short days.

“And the inheritance of this evil was now passed down to John Openshaw, the last surviving male heir.

“The Lone Star immediately departed and made runs between England, the Far East, and Africa for the next two and one-half years, and the three officers maintained a low and insignificant profile in every port they entered.

A Pip of an Idea

“In September 1887, the Lone Star once again arrived in London, and a letter was dispatched to young Mister Openshaw, again demanding the return of the papers. Openshaw, however, seems to have reacted to this mystery in a different manner than his uncle and his father. He took the ominous warning seriously.

“On September 28, the Lone Star arrived in Horsham, and the three officers were again frustrated to find no papers were left on the sundial.

“They followed John Openshaw to London on the following day, trailing him to this very front door. It was quickly determined it was the residence of a private detective, Sherlock Holmes. The trio decided they must take decisive action immediately and without recourse. They overtook Openshaw shortly after he left your home. Openshaw’s body was recovered from the river near the Waterloo Bridge within a few hours. Since there were no signs of violence, it was doubtful the police would pursue any conclusion other than death by misfortune.

“And here, Mr. Holmes, is where the story takes an unexpected turn. Before young Openshaw was thrown into the river, he claimed all the papers had been destroyed by his uncle, Elias, in the family residence’s fireplace. However, the lad was unaware of one crucial piece of information. Elias Openshaw had personally kept one list of names from being destroyed. He believed this single page would protect his family from further persecution and had hidden the list somewhere on the grounds of the estate. Mr. Sutterman did not disclose how this secret was obtained.

“After relating this tale of terror to me, the second mate had returned to his cabin and promptly passed out for the night. Knowing the captain and first mate were also dead drunk. I pulled together the rest of the crew and passed on the information I had gained from Sutterman. As you can imagine, the crew were horrified to learn their captain and his first and second mates were involved in such an undertaking.

“Though seamen have a reputation for not being saints, I can promise our crew is one of the most honorable. After much discussion, the crew voted unanimously to mutiny and took control of the ship from the captain. The three scoundrels were aroused from their slumber, and a speedy trial was held. They were found guilty of disgracing the Lone Star, as we felt we had no real authority to try them on the

charge of murder. But we also recognized if the three were returned to the States, the powers that had placed them on our ship would ensure they never were held responsible for their actions in England. As a matter of fact, I believe if you were to check with the Georgia Registry of Ships, you would find no mention of our barque, as the name has been scrubbed from the lists. The captain actually laughed in my face when I told him we would return him to England for trial. We quickly recognized the only way to carry out any proper punishment would involve sailing out in the direction of the open sea. The decided penalty, though harsh, was to put the three offenders overboard, allowing Providence to determine their fate.

“We would have then proceeded homeward, but for one final item, which brings me to your door. While inebriated, Sutterman indicated there was one last family member to be dealt with. This individual would not receive the luxury of a warning or direction but would be killed so the captain could search the house for the final list with no impedance. I told Sutterman, just before I personally tossed him overboard, that our actions would at least save one innocent soul. Calhoun repeated his chuckling, boldly stating there was a confederate in England who had been given this final mission.

“So our actions aboard the ship would be for naught. Once the punishment was meted out, the crew voted to return to London, and I acceded to the task of warning you of the impending fate of the final family member.”

I had to admit at this point, I was a little confused. “Who is this remaining family member. Another son or brother?”

“Neither Dr. Watson. John Openshaw left behind a widow and a small child. There are no other living relatives in England.”

It was evident from Holmes’s reaction this was news to him as well as myself.

“Mr. Holmes, what do we do next?”

“My course of action is apparent. I shall waste no time in departing for the rail station. Watson, will your practice allow you a day or two to accompany me? Good, then that is settled. Mr. Mueller, please return to your ship and immediately leave London. Follow your original plan to return to the United States. Land at Galveston under the name “The

Lone Star.” By the time you arrive, I hope to be able to transmit news this issue has been successfully solved.”

“Thank you for that advice. We shall depart this afternoon. The crew will be grateful to finally return to their homeland – the Germans to the Central Texas area, and the Finns to the midwestern part of the States.”

“Come, Watson,” said Holmes, “we have no time to spare.”



Not even taking time to pack any belongings, Holmes and I caught the first hansom cab we could flag down on Baker Street. Fortunately, the precipitation I had noted earlier in the morning had dissipated entirely. A sovereign ensured record-setting time to Waterloo Station, splashing through numerous mud and water puddles along the way, where we caught the first train to Horsham. Our arrival before lunch was followed by a short, hired trap ride to the Openshaw household. A black mourning wreath greeted us at the front door of the two-story residence. One could forgive the beginning signs of neglect on the house and the surrounding ground.

A knock at the door was answered by a kindly, but saddened maid. We were then escorted to the study, where we awaited the mistress of the house. Mrs. Openshaw was a tall, fair woman with very kind eyes, although it was evident -- with her dress made of simple black bombazine and trimmed with crape, which I knew to be very coarse and scratchy -- she was in deep mourning.

Holmes proceeded to give Mrs. Openshaw a full account of all that had transpired, including what John Openshaw had said in the preceding week.

“Mr. Holmes, this is just so overwhelming. While my husband had discussed his beliefs on the deaths of his father and uncle, many of the details concerning the KKK, and my uncle’s role, were left out.”

“With the deaths of the captain and his two comrades, the threat to you may have subsided or completely dissipated. Maybe the confederate left behind will have second thoughts”, I suggested.

“Dr. Watson, while I wish that were true, it would not explain what I received just a couple of hours ago by post.”

Holmes sprang from his chair, took the cream-coloured envelope from her grasp, and moved to the window to examine it carefully.

“A Portsmouth postmark. No other identifying marks on the outside. Though I can presume, let’s see what the interior contains. I believe this to be similar to what your husband and his relatives received. Yes, a message on the inner flap... ‘Leave your house by midnight and never return unless you want harm to befall you and the child. This includes all staff. Do not solicit any assistance from outside forces. Take only what you need to survive, and leave all items belonging to the previous residents of the house.’”

Holmes turned the envelope over, and five orange pips settled onto his open hand.

“Mr. Holmes, what should I do at this point?”

“Ma’am, you are showing amazing resilience considering what you have endured to this point. From what I gathered from Mueller, the powers that be in the United States will not rest until they obtain the list of names for which they so desperately are searching. Our priority should be to focus on your family’s safety and finding that list. Please search your memory. Is there anything your father-in-law or husband may have said, even in passing, that could lead us to the list?”

“I have no idea of such a list, or where my uncle would have hidden it. I know my late husband and father-in-law had found a brass box in the attic which may have contained the papers these creatures are searching for. My husband subsequently destroyed the other papers found in the attic over a year ago. I place the safety of my child in your hands.”

“Take the next several hours to prepare for a departure by sunset, as directed in the missive. We will accompany you to London, where we will determine the best course once you have been removed from immediate danger. While you make your preparations, Watson and I will search the house to see if we may gain any insight into what garners so much attention.”

Mrs. Openshaw left us to tell the two staff members left in the house of the impending plans.

A Pip of an Idea

“Watson, I believe we can discard any search of the outside of the house and surrounding grounds. I presume the trio has already picked over those to ensure nothing was secreted away in an outbuilding or other concealment. Fortunately, the house is not extremely large, with a minimum of rooms. A quick search of each room should be accomplished within a few hours.

Though the home, which was at least two hundred years old, had been on the Openshaw estate since the early 1700s, there were surprisingly few nooks and crannies where a one-page document could be hidden. After two hours, our search had not produced any document.

As we stood on the stairwell leading to the upper floor, Holmes glanced at the framed photos and other documents hanging on the wall. As his gaze fell on one framed set of papers, he quickly scanned them and then moved on, only to return to the frame in question. After a minute or two, a small enigmatical smile crossed his countenance.

“Watson, early in our acquaintance you compared me to Dupin from Poe’s literary work. I believe I remarked Dupin to be a very inferior fellow at the time, though he did have some little analytical genius to support his work. While I still hold that opinion, I will give him one slight credit when he determined the perfect hiding place for an object may be to leave it in full open view for all to overlook.”

Holmes removed the frame from the wall and carried it to a desk.

“Holmes, do you recognize the document?”

“I do not. It is titled ‘The Cornerstone Address.’ Does that ring a bell for you, Watson?”

“As a matter of fact, it does. If I am not mistaken, that was a speech given by Alexander H. Stephens, Vice President of the Confederate States of America, in March 1861. The speech laid out the rationale for the secession of the southern states from the Union. I believe the speech was delivered extemporaneously a few weeks before the Civil War began, defending slavery and explaining the fundamental differences between the constitutions of the Confederate States and the United States, enumerating contrasts between Union and Confederate ideologies, and laying out the Confederacy’s rationale for seceding from the United States.”

Holmes removed a pad and pencil from the desk drawers and asked

for an hour of quiet to focus on the words in the frame. He suggested I check on Mrs. Openshaw and ensure the two staff members were also progressing well in their efforts.

In just under an hour, Holmes called me and revealed a list with 32 names of men, all presumably in the United States and of some import.

“Once I recognized the importance of this speech to what we were searching for, it was fairly easy to produce the intended list. Take a look at the framed speech, and tell me what you can determine from it.”

I took the frame from Holmes, which held two sheets of tiny typed print. After a few minutes, I started to hand the document back to Holmes.

“I read through the entire speech, and I honestly did not discern any clues to which you have obviously found.”

“Let’s try it again. But this time, do not scan your eyes over the entire words of the text, as most routinely do, but as I have told you so many times, focus on the little things, such as the individual letters.”

Within a minute, I began to understand what Holmes had identified.

“Many of the letters are different from the others.”

“Correct. Let’s look at the first paragraph. You have noted several letters are of a different font than the rest of the letters in the paragraph.”

Thus the paragraph ran this way:

*When **p**erfect quiet is restored, I **s**hall proceed. I cannot speak, so long as **t**here is **a**ny noise or confusion. I shall take my time I feel quite prepared to **s**pend the night with you if necessary.*

“As you can see,” Holmes explained, “from just these first two lines, I have been able to pull out the letters that are different.”

P E T E R H A L L D E H E N R Y M E I E R P A

“Once I determined the underlined letters indicated the end of the word, it was easy to piece together the list of 32 names.

Peter Hall, DE
Henry Meier, PA

“I would find it extremely surprising and disappointing if this list does not represent persons in the States who hold significant positions without it being publicly known of their previous affiliations.”

“Holmes, while most of the names are found in six southern states, there is a handful from two northern states, including the first two. I thought the KKK was contained within the South.”

“From my research, it was, but after its sudden demise in 1869, many members left the South to begin again in the North, hoping their anonymity would shield them from their past sins.”

“Holmes, when this is over, I insist on absolute rest once we get back to Baker Street and ensure Mrs. Openshaw and her daughter’s safety. I am not convinced you have completely recovered your self-inflicted efforts to ‘kill yourself’ which resulted in the successful apprehension of Dr. Culverton Smith.

“Holmes, you have done brilliantly. Let me take the list, place it in a waterproof pouch, and place it on the sundial, ending this nightmare for the family once and for all.”

“I appreciate your willingness to do so, but I am not convinced releasing the list will remove the danger to Mrs. Openshaw or her daughter. Let me take a little more time to consume some tobacco and mull over the various options afforded to us, if any. In the meantime, I will replace the speech in its former place.

“We must not forget there is still someone who knows of the family and the details of their lives. Otherwise, how was the KKK still able to stay on their trail after so many years after Elias left the United States? Even after the deaths of all the male family members, they continue to pursue the surviving members. Why would they even care anymore, after so many years? It is obvious the powers behind all of this mayhem still fear her as a threat to them, and will continue to be such as long as she breathes. She may have even made several copies of the list for all they know before she deigned to return it to their dirty clutches. For now, let’s leave our little discovery to ourselves.”

While Holmes was hanging the frame in question, I proceeded

upstairs to retrieve Mrs. Openshaw, lying quietly by her daughter in the little girl's bed. Even though exhausted, I could see her eyes were wide open, repeatedly glancing at the small bedroom window. We were soon seated with Holmes at the worktable in the warm cozy kitchen. She showed herself to be a very strong person, not easily frightened, and with good judgment. Holmes, I could see, was genuinely touched by her complete trust in his protection, thus possibly relieving him a little of the guilt for his perceived failure to protect her husband.

Our discussion was interrupted by the maid, who announced the arrival of another gentleman.

“Oh my goodness, I am so sorry Mr. Fordham, with all that has occurred this morning, I completely forgot your intended visit. Mr. Holmes, Dr. Watson, this is the family's solicitor, Mr. Fordham. He has been helping me settle my husband's will and the potential sale of the house and land.”

“Mr. Holmes, it is indeed a pleasure to meet you and your partner, though I wish they could have been under better circumstances. May I ask what brings you to Horsham and to the home of Mrs. Openshaw?”

Holmes gave a very brief summary of our involvement to this point, including the visit earlier this morning by Mueller, as well as the delivery of the envelope and directive to the Openshaw residence this morning.

“This is distressing news. However, I cannot but admire the actions of the crew. Their actions may indeed help bring this entire story to a conclusion.”

“Indeed, sir. It was brought to my attention that you received a visit from the murderous trio the very afternoon of John Openshaw's death.”

“I did. They were very straightforward, telling me they knew I had connections to the family, and what did I know concerning any remaining papers Elias Openshaw may have kept. I initially was not going to yield any such information. Still, it was pointed out that while I did not have any close relatives here in England, family members back in the United States may suffer consequences if I did not relent. Fortunately, all I knew was Elias had kept a list of names and locations of some very powerful people in the States, and he had never revealed to me the

location of the list. The trio seemed to accept this and left, after binding me with a promise to not discuss the matter with anyone and to take no action to dissuade their course. Severe repercussions would result in a violation of this pledge. I felt the death of John Openshaw, which I read about a few days later, would be the end of this tragedy. I am so sorry, Mrs. Openshaw. It appears the web has entangled you into its threads.”

The four of us discussed our next moves, which involved Holmes and I taking Mrs. Openshaw and her daughter to London, where we would secure her in a hotel for the night before secreting the two out of town. Once the estate was sold, and all transactions finalized with the support of Mr. Fordham, the funds would be used to permanently relocate the surviving members of the Openshaw family onto the continent where they could start life afresh.

“Watson, the mother, daughter, and I will leave at sunset. The two staff members will have the house completely closed up, their personal effects packed, and able to leave by no later than eight o’clock. This should appease our unknown ‘confederate.’”

“Should we alert the local constabulary of what is occurring?” interjected Fordham.

“No, the note was very clear on this point. I do not want to jeopardize the safety of our charges by violating the provisions of the demand. Mrs. Openshaw, after we leave this place, remove it from your mind, never consider revenge on those who have caused such injustice to your family – as I advised your husband, and raise your daughter to believe the deaths were accidental, and nothing more.”

“Mr. Holmes, those are words of wisdom,” replied Fordham. “Ma’am, I will do everything within my power to ensure you stay protected, your needs are met, and you can find a place to raise your daughter safely. Mr. Holmes, I will contact you the day after tomorrow to pass on the details of the will and potential buyers.”

“Before you leave, may I look at the will left by John Openshaw, which I assume you have in the pouch you are carrying. It may be useful for me to understand the basics of the provisions of the will.”

Fordham pulled out the document and handed it over to Holmes.

“His handwriting seems very clear... it does not appear he was under

any undue stress at the time he wrote it. Oh, I see it was dated a few weeks before his death.”

“Actually, he asked me to write out the will, as his handwriting skills were, in his own words, ‘abysmal.’ That is his signature at the bottom, as well as the signatures of witnesses who he had brought to my office. It is all in order, and we should have no problem finalizing its resolution.”

“Oh, I agree. It is all in perfect order. It should help resolve this mystery sooner than later.”

“How so?” I asked. “Oh never mind, just a slight rambling on my part. Pay no heed.”

Once Fordham had tucked the document back into the pouch, he took his leave to return to his office. Holmes then proceeded to call in the maid to discuss what was transpiring and the next steps to be taken. It was apparent she was totally loyal to her mistress and was willing to follow what instructions Holmes could provide.

I need not provide too many details on our departure from the house, but just before sunset, the four of us were on the road back to Horsham. We arrived at the train station just as the first stars appeared in the darkening sky. I obtained tickets for a private car for the first train to depart the station while Holmes busied himself dispatching at least two telegrams.

Once Mrs. Openshaw and her daughter were safely seated, Holmes turned to me and gave me another surprise, not the first of the day.

“Watson, our job is not completed here. Mrs. Openshaw, I must apologize, but we will be secreting ourselves off the train, in case anyone is watching. I have wired my landlady, who will have a hansom cab waiting for you at the station in London. The cabbie will have instructions to deliver you safely to a hotel, where you and your daughter will stay the night. Do not worry about expenses, all that has been taken care of. We will meet you in time for lunch or dinner tomorrow at the hotel. I believe this incident will be resolved by that time.”

“Holmes, how can we ensure they will be safe at the hotel.”

“I have made provisions to ensure the front and back doors of the hotel will be watched at all times, as well as two sets of eyes watching their room throughout the night and the next day. Trust me, the Irregulars will ensure a very rough go of it for anyone trying to reach them.”

A Pip of an Idea

With that, we made our way to the back of the train and exited to the side opposite the station. With darkness now enveloping the entire area, no one could have espied our departure.

“Watson, forgive me, but I believe we must go by foot at this point. Attempting to secure any type of conveyance could jeopardize my plans. I know you have been a trooper to this point, forgoing both lunch and dinner. I hope Mrs. Watson’s scones are still sustaining you. I vow to make up your lack of nourishment tomorrow.”

Fortunately, it was only approximately three miles to the house from the station, and so in less than one hour we were crouching behind a set of hedges near the driveway. A few lights could still be seen in the lower windows. A manned dog-cart sat just outside the front door.

“Good, we have arrived before the staff have left. Once they have secured the house and left, we shall proceed.”

“Proceed to what?”

“Probably wait for a few hours, but be prepared to snare our ‘unknown confederate.’”

True enough, the last light was extinguished just before eight o’clock, and I could barely make out the maid and cook leaving from the front door. Two or three small valises were loaded, the passengers climbed aboard, and the cart made its way down the driveway to the main road, disappearing from sight.

“Quickly, Watson, let’s make our way to the rear of the house, where we should be able to gain access.”

Using the hedges as cover, we proceeded to secret ourselves to the back.

“I assume you shall do a little lockpicking again, as you have done in the past?”

“No, this time it only took a whisper to the maid.”

Holmes opened the door, which had been left unlocked for us to gain quick entrance to the premises. Once inside, we moved to the sitting room near the stairway.

“I do not believe we will have long to wait, but I shall ask we stay fairly quiet and out of sight behind these items of furniture. Holmes had brought a dark lantern, which he closed once we gained position and would be able to be reopened when needed.

As always, Holmes's assumption was correct, and within approximately 30 minutes I could hear a key being used on the front door. Once the door was opened and closed, a small light (I assumed a small lantern) gave off sufficient light for our visitor to locate and light a few table lamps.

The intruder headed directly to the staircase and proceeded to remove the frame and speech from its place. As his focus was on the prize he had worked so hard to obtain, he did not notice Holmes quietly walk up from behind with a pistol drawn from his coat pocket.

"Mr. Fordham, this simply will not do. Slowly place the frame on the stairs, put your hands up, and back into the sitting room. No, do not try to run or bull-rush us! Fine, now take a seat. We have a few minutes to ourselves."

"How could you possibly know my involvement? You have no evidence to support any half-baked theories you may have."

"Simplicity itself. Your name is on the list. I suspected you would take whatever action necessary to retrieve the list to protect yourself and your compatriots. Look at paragraph 2, and look closely at the letters, as I suggested to Watson here earlier today."

Seven *States* have within the last three months thrown *off* an *old* government and formed a new. This revolution *has* been signally marked, up to this time, by the *f*act of its having been accomplished...

STEVEN FORDHAM FL

From his puzzled expression, it was easy to see Fordham couldn't imagine how anyone could possibly have known all this. With his mind racing on how to escape from this trap, he did not even take the time to wonder how Holmes knew his name was on the list.

"This proves nothing. Just because my name is somehow marked into a speech given years ago. As a solicitor, I can tell you your evidence is flimsy at best."

"You may be correct. However, you have provided us with the best evidence yourself. Watson will tell you I have developed a small mono-

graph on the use of handwriting in determining a guilty party. Though a more thorough examination could prove it, I am sure, but a quick perusal of the will today, which you admitted, was in your own hand. It was extremely similar to the writing on the envelope received by Mrs. Openshaw this morning. I assume you traveled down to Portsmouth to post the letter in the past day or two. This was extremely sloppy work on your part, but after assisting in three previous failed attempts, I am sure the people you are working for in the U.S. are becoming slightly impatient with no successful results.

“Watson, if you will open the front door, I believe representatives of the local force have arrived to take Mr. Fordham into custody. We may be too late to catch a train back to London tonight, but I believe we can be back in time to keep our appointment for lunch with our clients.”



After the constable took our prisoner into custody. Holmes gave him a brief outline of the actions of Mr. Fordham, suggesting he be held for now on a charge of breaking and entry. Not once did Fordham open his mouth, choosing to stay quiet and hoping to secure his freedom through legal maneuvers in the near future.

Later that evening, Holmes and I sat down to a very late supper at a small tavern and inn in Horsham.

“Alright, Holmes, you must now share with me how you knew what was transpiring today, and who was involved?”

“I hate to disappoint you, dear friend, but this case will not involve any ‘tricks up my sleeve,’ slick deductions, or mystical surprises. I was just as much in the dark as you were until we discovered the speech and the list embedded within the text. Once I discovered Fordham’s name was included, it simply made sense he was our ‘unknown confederate.’ I believe not only had Elias Openshaw told Fordham of the list, but where to find it. Notice how he went directly to it once he entered the house this evening, though we had not told him of its secrets.

“Once I had determined Fordham’s name was indeed on the list and was from the same state Elias had immigrated from, I suspected he would not allow much time to elapse before trying to retrieve it. A few

years ago, I had mused, ‘...When a doctor does go wrong, he is the first of the criminals. He has nerve, and he has knowledge.’ I append it to suggest that when a solicitor becomes crooked, he is the second of criminals. He has the trust of his clients and can harm them for life.”

The following midday found us at the small restaurant within the hotel Holmes had chosen for the Openshaws. The young daughter was at 221b Baker Street, enjoying Mrs. Hudson’s kitchen treats. Holmes had assured Mrs. Openshaw they were now safe, and the child and Mrs. Hudson were under the watchful eyes of several Irregulars.

As lunch progressed, the three of us spoke about finding the list and the actions of the British government since the list’s discovery. Mrs. Openshaw expressed disappointment over the involvement of her husband’s uncle in such a degrading society as the KKK and was happy to see this list might yet assist in putting an end to this type of activity in the United States.

“I must admit I am surprised at finding out who the mysterious man was. Mr. Fordham had been such a long-time family friend and solicitor for the family. I should have been suspicious of his strong interest in our family affairs, especially those concerning the house, since John’s death. He constantly called on me and asked questions I felt were somewhat inappropriate and intrusive, even for a family solicitor and friend. I am much relieved to hear he will no longer be bothering my family.”

“Mrs. Openshaw, unless I have completely lost my ability to determine the outcome of certain actions, I believe your worries should be over in all manner regarding this mysterious document.

I visited an associate within the Foreign Ministry early this morning, who was able to bring the matter to the attention of the Foreign Minister. That very powerful individual is reaching out to counterparts in the United States via telegram. Both countries agree the matter should have their utmost and immediate attention. I have been assured a proposed solution will be forthcoming and acceptable to both nations.

“As I had surmised the night we found the list hidden within the infamous speech, the 32 names on the list represented men who held positions of power from a local district attorney to a lieutenant governor. Why were they on the list? Each was a KKK member but only

secretly and had never publicly announced an affiliation with the organization.

“Almost all men were in areas where such a revelation would not be favorable for their careers, especially since the South had failed to secede from the Union. The nation continues to attempt to heal from the wounds of bigotry and inequality.

“I have assurances each of the 32 men will be receiving a letter from an appropriately high-level person within the U.S. government, suggesting a certain list is now securely in the hands of the British government, where it will stay safely locked away, providing a few conditions are met.

“First, Mrs. Openshaw and her daughter are to be released from all concerns of further persecution, and sufficient compensation afforded them for the misery they have suffered as a result of the actions of those in the United States.

“Second, each of the 32 men must accept unconditionally that all other papers held by Elias Openshaw have been destroyed, so no other efforts should be initiated to retrieve such papers.

“Third, all crew of the Barque Lone Star are allowed to return to the United States to their respective homes, with no threat of reprisals, and with sufficient compensation to return to a normal life.

“If any of these conditions are breached in the future, all agreements are voided, and the list will be made available to those in the United States with the power and authority to deal with the matter promptly and severely.”

The one condition Holmes did not discuss in front of Mrs. Openshaw was regarding Mr. Fordham. He had been such a scoundrel with the matters at hand and had placed Mrs. Openshaw and Victoria’s life in danger a number of times; Holmes wanted to be sure he was dealt with sufficiently. Holmes had made arrangements for Fordham to return to the United States under guard. But once he reached Galveston, he would disembark a free man. However, Holmes also made sure his confederates within the States knew precisely where Fordham would be disembarking and at what time. Holmes was sure they would not be pleased with Fordham’s performance, being the final person to let them down by not delivering the list, and

was in a very small part responsible for the ultimate crumbling and demise of their society's power over certain parts of the South. Holmes indicated they could do with Fordham what they saw fit. I do not believe Holmes ever felt any pangs of guilt for being instrumental in ensuring this last condition was met swiftly and permanently.

Epilogue

I must provide a few closing items to this narrative.

First, months after the conclusion, Holmes was informed by the State of Georgia that all mentions of the *Lone Star* had been mysteriously redacted or removed from all shipping registries within the state.

It was not until several years later Holmes revealed to me the identity of his source in the government who assisted Holmes after we had retrieved the coded names and the capture of Fordham. It was none other than his older brother, Mycroft Holmes, who had brought the entire matter to the attention of the Home Secretary, where it then received full attention from the highest level of government on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the summer of 1921, I received a copy of a letter sent from Fayette County, Texas, USA.

To Whosoever May Find This:

As I lay here breathing what is most likely my last, I find it essential to set straight the story of my ship and its crew. I have placed this manuscript in this battered tin sea chest, one of my last remaining possessions. For you see, I am not a man of wealth, but I am a man who must set the record straight.

I have read the great detective's adventures, as they have been made available through the Strand Magazine and others. I have held an especially keen interest in these stories by John H. Watson, as I was a small part of one of the tales he sets forth.

The Barque Lone Star did not come to an end as told in the "Adventure of the Five Orange Pips."

He tells the story as the public generally believes it happened. My shipmates and I are the ones who spread that story, in the hopes it

A Pip of an Idea

would be generally regarded as the truth. With the publication of the good doctor's story, we were home free.

I have been reluctant to tell this story before, as it starts with mutiny on the high seas. A mutiny in which I was a part. But, it has preyed upon my conscious such that my dying breaths must reveal the truth.

It started with the third mate. He was tall, thin, and had a profile like a bird of prey. What's more, he was good with his fists and was never known to back down from a fight.

This is important because I am not sure exactly how it all began, being just a seaman myself. But the end result found Captain James Calhoun and his two mates killed during our mutiny.

The third mate brought the ship to Texas. He gathered a small crew of volunteers as a scuttling crew and set to sea. The rest of the crew, we Germans and some Fins, set ashore on the coast of Texas. He and the scuttling crew sailed the Barque into an ocean current that would carry the wreckage far away and scuttled it with explosives. The third mate and the scuttling crew made it back to Texas, and ever since, it has been the first duty of the Third Mate to find the lost members of the crew of the Barque Lone Star.

Written by my hand, on this day, the seventh of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and twenty-one.

Franz J. Mueller
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Final Note

Early in 1970, at the University of Texas at Arlington, a young lady working as the reference librarian, discovered a trifling monograph on German settlements in Texas in the rare archives section. The pamphlet, enclosed in a bound leather satchel, had been tucked behind several other books, almost as if done on purpose.

Francine Morris took the monograph back to her desk within the library to see what little nuggets she might find within its pages. And what a nugget she found contained in the satchel, along with the monograph.

Tucked between two pages was a rumpled and stained letter, obviously written by an elderly person. You can only imagine how Francine's eyes grew as she read through the missive, written 50 years earlier, which gave an account of the disappearance of the Barque Lone Star and its crew in 1887.

In addition, the manuscript above, penned in Dr. Watson's own hand, Francine surmised, had been placed in the satchel, and finally a copy of the speech in which the names (in code) was included. Francine believed the speech to be in Sherlock Holmes's own writing (or possibly that of Mycroft Holmes).

As you can probably guess, the letter, manuscript, and coded speech stirred a new passion in Francine Morris. With the assistance of John Bennett Shaw, one of the pre-eminent Sherlockians of his generation, soon held an organizational meeting to discuss the possibility of creating a Society dedicated to the reuniting of the descendants of the crew of the Barque Lone Star. Two other avid Sherlockians, Bill Beeson and Bullitt Lowry, met with Francine and became the founders of the society.

So, on a Friday night, the 6th of November 1970, the Crew of the Barque Lone Star set sail for the first time in almost 80 years. The meeting was held at the Farmer's Daughter restaurant in Fort Worth, thus reuniting the descendants of the Barque Lone Star.

Finally, in 1979, the Texas Legislature recognized the bravery of the crew members in 1887, by officially placing the *Lone Star* in the Texas Navy, and admitting all past, present, and future crew members as part of the Texas Navy. The text of the resolution is included in this documentation.

We believe the time has finally come to provide the public the full details of the "Five Orange Pips" and the creation of the Crew of the Barque *Lone Star*.

THE CREEPING MAN STANDS UP

Ann Caddell, Deckmate/CBLS © 2022

I SEE THAT FOOL, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, and his even more foolish friend, that quack Watson (I refuse to call him “Doctor”), have decided to release my story (or their idiotic version of it) to the world. They claim to want to dispel the ugly rumors of twenty years ago in the “learned” societies of London – as if the men of those societies could ever lay claim to any true learning. They are at least as foolish as Holmes and Watson, but thankfully with a much smaller audience.

From beginning to end, the fools were unable to grasp the significance of my quest. They thought that I was so captivated by that simpering little china doll, Alice Morphy, that I would go to horrifying lengths to win her hand. As if such nonsense could have any sway over a man of science! No, my objective was far more important, and as I stand on the brink of achieving it, I intend to set the record straight.

In all my years of study of physiology at Camford, I returned again and again to the question of why man must inevitably age and die. The simple unfairness of it nagged at my very soul. It was there that I began my life’s quest, for the key to immortality – conducted in secret, of course, under cover of the more conventional work for which I was so justly celebrated. As I entered my sixth decade, while I knew that I was at last closing in on a solution, I also felt “time’s winged chariot hurrying near” and resolved to take my inquiries to the next level. I had been experimenting with various primate extracts for years, with mixed success, but always hampered by the scarcity of experimental material – largely thanks to the short-sighted, stupidly sentimental restrictions imposed by the university and the government. My trip to Prague was the result of my resolve to take matters entirely into my own hands henceforward. And for a while, I achieved some success, although marred by unpleasant side effects.

But then, that pair of bumblers, aided by the treachery of my own secretary, put a stop to my latest supply of materials and I feared that I was at the point of starting over. However, my trip to Prague had brought another potential line of research to my attention. Only a few

years previously, that other stupid scribbler, Bram Stoker, published his own idiotic account of strange goings-on in Transylvania and England. Inept and distorted though the story was, thanks to my sojourn in Prague I was able to discern a grain of truth in the miasma of nonsense. From the hints, whispers, and innuendo I heard among the less-enlightened inhabitants of an already unenlightened area, I reconstructed a thread of truth running through the silliness of Stoker's novel. Yes, there were undying creatures in the hinterlands of the Transylvanian alps, and yes, they had been known for centuries without coming into view of the "civilized" authorities. I decided to stop mucking about with langurs and chimps and go in search of the men (if indeed they could still be called men) who had already discovered the secret of immortality.

As soon as I recovered from the mauling given to me by my bloodhound, Roy, I made my arrangements for my continental expedition. My route adhered fairly closely to that of Stoker's Jonathan Harker, taking me through Bistritz and the Borgo Pass. I found the scenery and folkways to be remarkably like Stoker's descriptions – perhaps he knew more than I gave him credit for.

Regardless, after traveling through this benighted region, I was more willing to give credence to Stoker's story, but no closer to finding what I sought. What with the language barrier and their native ignorance and superstition, the peasants in the isolated villages I visited were unable or unwilling to assist me, and in fact seemed to want to actively hinder my search. I was running out of both patience and ready cash, and I had been deserted by all but one of my hired guides and porters. He and I were struggling over the latest of a series of rugged mountain passes, leading our exhausted horses, when the darkness overtook us and we were forced to make camp and wait for daybreak in an inhospitable crack in a huge boulder next to the path. As we settled in amid the gathering gloom, we began hearing the sound most feared in that area – the distant but approaching howling of wolves. We stoked up our fire to a roaring blaze, but our supply of firewood was dwindling fast, and there was no way to gather more without exposing ourselves to the ever-approaching pack. As the flames began to subside, and the wolves grew ever closer, I drew my revolver, prepared to make a last stand, when another thought occurred to me.

The Creeping Man Stands Up

How much good had this last guide really done me? He had been of little use in my quest so far, but might be of tremendous use in prolonging my life. Turning my revolver on him, I informed him that he had two choices – be shot and thrown to the wolves, or take his chances running away and hopefully leading the pack with him. It took only a little time – and one wasted bullet – to convince him that I was serious. He sensibly decided to take the course that offered at least a slim chance of survival, and headed off into the darkness at full speed. The wolf pack immediately followed, but unfortunately a few of the stragglers decided that I was easier prey and turned back towards my boulder. As the fire died down and the wolves drew closer, I spent my last few shots taking out the leader. The remainder closed in, and I was convinced that my quest for immortality was ironically leading to an early death. As the lead wolf gathered himself and leaped on me, I began to fall into a swoon when I heard a strange, commanding voice shouting in some half-familiar language. The last thing I saw before losing consciousness was the wolf cringing away, the others turning tail, and the last remnants of my fire dying out completely.

Some unknown time later, I slowly regained consciousness. My surroundings were swimming about me, and my throat felt oddly sore. Had the wolf managed to sink his fangs into me? As my eyesight slowly cleared, I realized that I was lying on a bed in a room, lit by flickering candles, with a tall, cadaverous-looking stranger in black gazing down at me. When he perceived that I was awake, he spoke in strangely accented but perfectly correct English: “What are you? I have tasted your blood, and it is not quite human, but it is close. I would know what you are before I kill you.”

Upon hearing this, it dawned on me like a thunderclap that my search had in fact succeeded! The strange-looking gentleman who took exception to the taste of my blood must be one of the undead described by Stoker – perhaps even Dracula himself, if he had not perished at the hands of that fatuous band of adventurers at the end of the novel. As quickly and coherently as possible given my depleted condition, I described my lifelong researches into the secret of eternal youth, my near-success followed by frustration at the hands of a self-styled “detec-

tive,” and my resolve to seek out those who had already obtained the key which I sought.

My host, for such I had decided to consider him, seemed repulsed at the idea of mingling the essence of lower animals with humanity. While I might gain immortality of a sort, it would be at the expense of that elevated nature which belongs only to man, the true crown of creation. However, he was sufficiently impressed by my ingenuity and determination that he decided to let me live at least a bit longer. (The unpleasant taste of my blood may have contributed to his decision as well.) He even agreed to enlighten me as to his own story:

“Yes, I am that Count Dracula who was so basely slandered in Stoker’s penny dreadful. Although he claimed that Jonathan Harker and his blundering band of adventurers had put an end to me, that is a damned lie! Jonathan only slit my throat, he didn’t cut my head off. Of course at the first touch of the knife I vanished into mist, as my kind is able to do when threatened. If Harker could not tell the difference between that and true disintegration, so much the worse for him.

“Unfortunately, that half-mad Dutchman Van Helsing really did kill my beloved wives, slaughtering them in cold blood as they lay helpless in their coffins. And he calls himself virtuous! A cowardly sadist is what he is! And now, bereft of companionship, and with the countryside turned against me, I am reduced to cowering alone in the ruins of my ancestral castle, with only the bats, rats, and wolves for company. I who once enjoyed the adulation of my countrymen and the pick of the peasant girls for sustenance! How the centuries and the meddling of outsiders have brought me low!”

Hearing this recitation of woes gave me an idea. The count had tried to move to England once and been foiled – perhaps he would jump at the chance to try again, with the assistance of a worthy collaborator. I pointed out that the lies Stoker had spread in his novel could be a blessing in disguise. The public – and Van Helsing and company – believed that Dracula had been permanently dispatched. The meddling Holmes believed that he had put an end to my experiments. My years of scientific research had taught me how to be discreet when exploring avenues that the hide-bound bunglers of the academic world found objectionable.

The Creeping Man Stands Up



Upon my return to England, I could ensure that my treacherous secretary and my daughter would shortly wed and move to a home of their own, leaving me in sole possession of a substantial house with laboratory facilities. What better conditions could there be to pursue our joint researches in peace?

Although the count, who was used to being the undisputed master of all he surveyed, had some misgivings about going into partnership with a mere mortal, he soon saw the advantages that could be derived from modern scientific research - and access to the teeming life of modern London. Our plans were soon laid for me to return home openly, while the count took a more discreet - and more carefully planned - route to England. No more deserted ships crashing into the shore, but rather a neatly packed box of "scientific instruments" shipped by a respectable carrier and overseen by myself until safely in Camford.

It has been nearly twenty years since the beginning of our joint endeavour, and the years have brought both setbacks and triumph. But at last, the end is in sight and I foresee ultimate success and my total vindication before the scientific community that has so unjustly spurned me. At that point, this memoir will be made public, and all England will acknowledge the reign of the new immortals!

THE CASE OF THE RAIN IN SPAIN
Dean Clark, BSI, Deckmate/CBLS © 2022

Dean Clark is one of the founding members of the Afghanistan Perceivers. He is a regular contributor to the Perceiver Literary Supplement and is a noted aficionado of the theater. He confesses to a life long fascination with Sherlock Holmes and Broadway musicals. Here he combines his obsessions into a very funny radio play of My Fair Lady or Pygmalion if you prefer.

Announcer

Dr. John H. Watson

Sherlock Holmes

Shinwell Johnson

Irene Adler

Violet Westbury

Announcer: Good evening again, ladies and gentlemen, and congratulations on finding the spot on your radio dial where you can listen to Dr. John Watson reminisce about his famous collaboration with the great detective Sherlock Holmes. Dr. Watson will join us in a minute but first a word from one of our sponsors... This message is to the men in our audience who want to do something special for the woman in their life. Well, nothing specifically spells special better than Rosa's Roses, the one-stop shop where the motto is flower power to the people. When I visited, the aroma that arose from rows of Rosa's Roses rapidly aroused a repose radiating from toes to nose. So, men of all ages, take a tip from me. Don't wait and be too late; ambulate to Rosa's Roses gate and create a template for a great date.

Dr. Watson: Sound advice, but arriving about a century too late for Sherlock Holmes to impress the woman in his life.

Announcer: Well, ladies and gentlemen, as you just heard, Dr. Watson has joined us in the studio. But, doctor, I, and I'm sure our radio audience, have no idea what you're talking about.

The Case of the Rain in Spain

Dr. Watson: Well, it's Halloween, young man. So, it wouldn't take Sherlockian sleuthing to discern that I'm talking about Halloween. Halloween of 1920 to be exact which some simple mathematics informs was exactly ninety years ago.

Announcer: I'm assuming you are about to tell us another adventure in which you and Sherlock Holmes...

Dr. Watson: Partially correct, sir. It did indeed start, as many of our cases did, with an unusual request from Holmes but solving a crime was, in this case, just a byproduct.

Announcer: That sounds very intriguing. I'm sure that all of us are anxious to hear more.

Dr. Watson: Recall that, by 1920, Holmes had been retired from detective work for several years and was not living in London but on his bee farm in Sussex. I had seen him only a couple of times since returning to London after the Great War ended in 1918. So, obviously, I was delighted when he showed up unexpectedly, on a cold night in early October, at our old lodging at Baker Street where Mrs. Hudson and I were then the only residents....

Holmes: It's been too long, Watson, and I can see by the dust on your walking stick that my absence has not been good for your exercise regimen. You should come to the country and visit me. That will soon put you back in the pink.

Dr. Watson: Holmes, at my age, a sedentary life is more appropriate.

Holmes: Well, you are the doctor. But, I am sincere about my invitation. I have a plan....

Dr. Watson: Holmes, you and particularly I are too old for chasing criminals around the country. It's a young man's game, no matter how much your foot wants to get afoot.

Holmes: Right you are, Watson. But I have something else in mind....a play. Pygmalion, in fact.

Dr. Watson: That piece of derivative drivel!

Holmes: I'm quite aware of how you feel about it, that Shaw stole the personalities of his main characters from you. But, if that is true, shouldn't it be I who is most offended. Certainly, I am nowhere near as arrogant and uncaring about the feelings of others as Higgins.

Dr. Watson: Oh, I don't know....

Holmes: So, that is why we must do it....to set the record straight, as it were. And, it will be relatively easy because, as you point out, Shaw has been so transparent in his theft. Professor Higgins is obviously based on me and Colonel Pickering on you, so those parts are easily cast.

Dr. Watson: And I can play Pickering as a proper gentleman, not as a simpleton who is dominated by an overbearing prig. I don't think I can ever forgive Shaw for painting that portrait of me.

Holmes: Quite so and now is your chance. Shinwell Johnson would be ideal as Alfred P. Doolittle. Mrs. Hudson will be Mrs. Pearce. Wiggins, who has matured into quite a handsome man, will be Freddy and some of the old Irregulars will be Doolittle's friends and the aristocratic toffs. The Countess of Morcar will be Higgins' mother and the three Violets can be the Covent Garden girls and the society snobs. It will be almost a family reunion in addition to a play.

Dr. Watson: But, Holmes, who will be Eliza?

Holmes: Why, Irene, of course. I thought that would be obvious.

Dr. Watson: Holmes, Irene Adler, although brilliant on stage, is now a middle-aged woman and Eliza is barely out of her teens.

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Holmes: You are forgetting the magic of the theater, Watson. You and I were in attendance in 1914 when the part was played by Mrs. Campbell, who was then nearly 50, and there was no difficulty in suspending our disbelief.

Dr. Watson: You are right. She was wonderful.

Holmes: And Irene has always been prettier and a better actress than Mrs. C.

Dr. Watson: I agree and I agree doing the play is a good idea. It might be just the thing we need to cheer us up. The war has been over for two years but many of us still haven't recovered emotionally. Almost every family in the country suffered the loss of a loved one and, no matter how awful, we have to try to move on with life. Halloween will be as good a time as any. Too bad there isn't a part for our friend Conan Doyle. He has been devastated by the war and it has been sad to see that vigorous soul, so indefatigable on the athletic field and in all areas of life, suddenly become almost a caricature of an old man.

Holmes: But, understandably so. Conan Doyle lost a brother, a son, a nephew, and two brothers-in-law to the war directly or indirectly. And his case was hardly unusual. That's another reason for doing the play. Virtually every family in England lost someone. You and I, Watson, are not members of large families but we certainly were close to many who did not return. The invaluable Wiggins keeps track of these matters and he'll make certain that all living members of what I think we can term the Holmes-Watson family are invited. This will be an opportunity for us to help them shake off the recent horrors and constructively continue with their lives.

Dr. Watson: I'm convinced. When do we start?

Holmes: The play will be performed on the afternoon of Halloween Day. We'll have a party afterward to celebrate the performance and the

season. Since many in the cast, including you and me, will essentially play ourselves, we shouldn't need extensive rehearsal. I suggest starting in the middle of October. Can you be there then? Of course, you will stay with me.

Dr. Watson: I don't think I've failed you in forty years of friendship. I'll be there.

Holmes: Many thanks, my oldest and most reliable friend. Now I must be off to find Wiggins and get him started on tracking down our other cast members.

Dr. Watson: What about Irene? Can Wiggins find her? She has been out of the public eye for decades. In fact, most people think she died long ago, thanks to my description of her, at your request, as "the late Irene Adler" in *A Scandal in Bohemia*.

Holmes: Wiggins won't have to worry about that. I've already taken care of it.

Announcer: So, Sherlock Holmes has been in contact with Irene Adler. I don't know about you, but I find that incredibly interesting. I'm also interested at this time of year, when the holiday season begins, party follows party and dining discipline disappears, in paring pounds from my paunch. Well, the best plan to battle the bulge is to replace your favorite calorie-laden dessert with a pair of Paris pears, that perfectly piquant product of the Provence. And there's more good news. There're easy to fix. I swear a fair au pair with flair can prepare a pair of Paris pears faster than the pickiest pedant'll parse a polemic paragraph. So, ladies and gentlemen, repair to your preferred provider of provender, purchase a pair of Paris pears, and prepare to pleasantly placate your palate and produce a profile that your French friends will *parle parfait*. And now, back to our story. Did this production of *Pygmalion* live up to expectations?

Dr. Watson: Yes and no. Rehearsals went quite well because, as we

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knew, many of us in the cast were the models for the roles we played and therefore didn't have to spend any time "getting into character" as the theater folks say. Holmes and Irene Adler both had lots of theatrical training and experience and their professionalism helped the rest of us probably perform at a level that was beyond our talents. Shinwell Johnson, in particular, was a revelation. I think he may have missed his calling. He was particularly good in the scene in the second act where Alfred P. Doolittle, the unemployed dustman, confronts Professor Higgins and Colonel Pickering about Eliza's status in Higgins' house.

Johnson (as Doolittle): Well, the truth is, I've taken a sort of fancy to you, Governor; and if you want the girl, I'm not so set on having her back home again but what I might be open to an arrangement. Regarded in the light of a young woman, she's a fine handsome girl. As a daughter, she's not worth her keep; and so I tell you straight. All I ask is my rights as a father; and you're the last man alive to expect me to let her go for nothing; for I can see you're one of the straight sort, Governor. Well, what's a five-pound note to you; and what's Eliza to me?

Dr. Watson (as Pickering): I think you should know, Doolittle, that Mr. Higgins' intentions are entirely honorable.

Johnson: Course they are, Governor. If I thought they wasn't, I'd ask fifty.

Holmes (as Higgins): Do you mean to say that you would sell your daughter for fifty pounds?

Johnson: Not in a general way I would; but to oblige a gentleman like you I'd do a good deal, I do assure you.

Dr. Watson: Have you no morals, man?

Johnson: Can't afford them, governor. Neither could you if you were as poor as me. Not that I mean any harm, you know. But if Liza is going to have a bit out of this, why not me too?

Holmes: I don't know what to do, Pickering. There can be no question that as a matter of morals it's a crime to give this chap a farthing. And yet I feel a sort of rough justice in his claim.

Johnson: That's it, Governor. That's all I say. A father's heart as it were.

Dr. Watson: Well, I know the feeling; but really it hardly seems right....

Johnson: Don't say that, Governor. Don't look at it that way. What am I, Governors both? I ask you, what am I? I am one of the undeserving poor; that's what I am. Think of what that means to a man. It means that he's up against middle class morality all the time. If there's anything going, and I put in for a bit of it, it's always the same story: "You're undeserving, so you can't have it." But my needs is as great as the most deserving widow's that ever got money out of six different charities in the same week for the death of the same husband. I don't need less than a deserving man: I need more. I don't eat less hearty than him; and I drink a lot more. I want a bit of amusement, cause I'm a thinking man. I want cheerfulness and a song and a band when I feel low. Well, they charge me for everything just the same as they charge the deserving. What is middle class morality? Just an excuse for never giving me anything. Therefore I ask you two gentlemen not to play that game on me. I'm playing straight with you. I ain't pretending to be undeserving. I'm undeserving; and I intend to go on being undeserving. I like it; and that's the truth. Will you take advantage of a man's nature to do him out of the price of his own daughter what's he brought up and fed and clothed by the sweat of his brow until she's growed big enough to be interesting to you two gentlemen? Is five pounds unreasonable? So I put it to you; and I leave it to you.

Holmes: Pickering, if we were to take this man in hand for three months, he could choose between a seat in the Cabinet and a popular pulpit in Wales.

Dr. Watson: What do you say to that, Doolittle?

Johnson: Not me, governor, thank you kindly. I've heard all the preachers and all the prime ministers—for I'm a thinking man and game for politics or religion or social reform same as all the other amusements—and I tell you it's a dog's life any way you look at it. Undeserving poverty is my line. Taking one station in society with another, it's—well—it's the only one with any ginger in it, to my taste.

Holmes: I suppose we must give him a fiver.

Dr. Watson: He'll make bad use of it, I'm afraid.

Johnson: Not me, Governor, so help me I won't. Don't you be afraid that I'll save it and spare it and live idle on it. There won't be a penny left of it by Monday: I'll have to go to work same as if I never had it. It won't pauperize me, you bet. Just one good spree for myself and the missus, giving pleasure to ourselves and employment to others, and satisfaction to you to think that it's not been thrown away. You couldn't spend it better.

Holmes: This is irresistible. Let's give him ten.

Johnson: No, Governor. She wouldn't have the heart to spend ten; and perhaps I shouldn't neither. Ten pounds is a lot of money: it makes a man feel prudent like; and then goodbye to happiness. You give me what I ask you, Governor; not a penny more and not a penny less.

Dr. Watson: Why don't you marry that missus of yours? I rather draw the line at encouraging that sort of immorality.

Johnson: Tell her so, Governor: tell her so. I'm willing. It's me that suffers by it. I've no hold on her. I got to be agreeable to her. I got to give her presents. I got to buy her clothes something sinful. I'm a slave to that woman, Governor, just because I'm not her lawful husband. And she knows it too. Catch her marrying me! Take my advice, Governor:

marry Eliza while she's young and don't know no better. If you don't, you'll be sorry for it after. If you do, she'll be sorry for it after; but better her than you, because you're a man, and she's only a woman and don't know how to be happy anyhow.

Holmes: Pickering, if we listen to this man another minute, we shall have no convictions left.

Announcer: Well, Dr. Watson, I can understand your problems with the characters in *Pygmalion* but I think that scene is one of the funniest written for the English stage.

Dr. Watson: I must agree that Shaw, despite his shortcomings, had a flair for creating comic moments with his wordplay, although he and Wilde were helpless at describing actual action. That's why their best writing is plays where the characters essentially just sit around and talk. Our audience that afternoon certainly enjoyed that scene, thanks to Johnson's wonderful performance as Doolittle. But things began to take a different tone after that.

Announcer: What do you mean?

Dr. Watson: The scene between Doolittle, Higgins, and Pickering is in the second act and Eliza is still early in her stay at Wimpole Street, and still uncertain about her ability to master what Holmes wants her to learn, and she's also uncertain of her place in the household and in the new world she's suddenly become part of.

Announcer: Yes, I agree that is correct.

Dr. Watson: But, as the play goes on, Eliza shows us, and herself, that she is quite intelligent and capable of functioning very efficiently in this upper class household despite her lack of breeding and education. In addition to learning to speak proper English and conduct herself with all the proper social graces, she quickly becomes, in effect, Higgins' exec-

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utive assistant and seems to have almost an equal say in running the household as the formidable Mrs. Pearce.

Announcer: I believe I see where you are going.

Dr. Watson: By the time we get to Act 5, Eliza has very good reason to feel that, in fact, she does many important things, and virtually all things of practical importance, better than Higgins. And that paralleled the play within the play that was going on in front of my eyes in our production in 1920.

Announcer: Meaning?

Dr. Watson: That Irene Adler felt herself, with justification in my view, to be the equal of Sherlock Holmes and....and....

Announcer: And, I believe you are saying that you think there had been a relationship between them at some point in the intervening years and that one, or both, was hoping the intimacy provided by the play would spark back to life whatever had brought them together in the past.

Dr. Watson: I am an ordinary man and not expert in many things. But I have had enough experience with the opposite sex to consider myself something of an expert in the realm of upper-class romance. I think there was no question about it and my suspicions were heightened when I asked Wiggins, who undoubtedly would have been an intermediary between Holmes and Irene, about it and he pled ignorance in a very unconvincing manner.

Announcer: So when did you begin to suspect that Holmes might have had an additional motive for staging this production of *Pygmalion*?

Dr. Watson: I thought it was obvious shortly after the start of rehearsal, when Holmes and Irene were so stiffly formal in each other's presence, that there had been some level of romance in the past and that both were hoping it would resume....but....

Announcer: But?

Dr. Watson: But, the forced togetherness required by being in the play wasn't working and, in fact, seemed to be working in reverse. Instead of rediscovering what they loved about each other, they relearned what they loathed about the other.

Announcer: And that came out during the performance?

Dr. Watson: Yes, but the tension built steadily, in tandem with Eliza's evolution from flower girl to belle of the ball. I first noticed it in the third act when Eliza is ready for what was her final examination.

Announcer: At the great reception where the elite of high society would be present.

Dr. Watson: Precisely. In that scene, Higgins, Pickering, and Eliza arrive in evening finery but Eliza is wearing an opera cape over her dress. She goes to the women's cloak room to get rid of it and returns a few seconds later...and...

Announcer: And, doctor?

Dr. Watson: When she came out of the door without the cape, I am afraid that I gasped. I have had the honor to be presented to royalty in nearly all of the European countries but I have never seen, before or since, anything so elegantly regal. I hope the audience thought my gasp was just part of my performance.

Announcer: But surely you had seen that elegance in the dress rehearsal?

Dr. Watson: No, I hadn't.

Announcer: I don't understand.

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Dr. Watson: Irene wasn't wearing the dress she had on in our rehearsals. She had switched to one of her own dresses, one that she must have known, from previous experience, had devastating effect. She was also wearing fabulous jewels, her own – probably gifts from previous lovers, perhaps including the loathsome King of Bohemia.

Announcer: So why do you think she made the switch?

Dr. Watson: She was playing her trump card. My guess is that she had concluded the reunion with Holmes was not working and this was her final attempt to salvage the situation.

Announcer: And it didn't work.

Dr. Watson: No, and the play didn't help. You recall that Eliza's appearance at the ball was a magnificent success, a triumph well beyond what could have been expected by Higgins at his most optimistic. Eliza was the most beautiful and most beautifully spoken woman there, so devastatingly attractive that the mysterious Miss Doolittle was identified as a Hungarian princess in disguise! Then, after the ball, Higgins and Pickering indulge in mutual admiration, ignoring Eliza to the point that she finally throws Higgins' slippers at him and collapses to the floor in tears, obviously in distress. But neither Higgins nor Holmes was aware of the problem.

Holmes (as Higgins): What on earth? What's the matter? Is anything wrong?

Irene (as Eliza): Nothing wrong—with you. I've won your bet for you, haven't I? I don't matter, I suppose.

Holmes: You won my bet! You! Presumptuous insect! I won it. What did you throw those slippers at me for?

Irene: Because I wanted to smash your face! I'd like to kill you, you

selfish brute. Why didn't you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter? You thank God it's over and now you can throw me back there again, do you?

Holmes: The creature is nervous, after all.

Announcer: I remember in the play that at this point Eliza charges Higgins and attempts to scratch his face. Surely,....

Dr. Watson: Surely, yes, young man. I was watching from the wings, transfixed, and I really think that Irene meant to scratch his eyes out, but pulled back at the last second.

Announcer: I see what you mean by the tension building.

Dr. Watson: Of course, Holmes was tall and very strong and Irene was, as I wrote accurately in *Scandal*, something of a dainty thing although with great presence. So, Holmes had the physical advantage there, even if Irene had physically attacked him. But, in the final scene, both parties were seated, the battling was entirely verbal, and Eliza was more than able to hold her own.

Announcer: This is after Eliza, furious after being ignored by Higgins after the ball, runs off in the middle of the night. Higgins and Pickering finally track her down the next afternoon at the house of Higgins' mother.

Dr. Watson: Right you are. And then, Higgins and Eliza, more or less standing in for Holmes and Irene, meet as equals who, despite their great abilities, cannot find common ground. Eliza, showing that she is now a complete master of cutting small talk, cleverly begins by talking to Holmes indirectly. She addresses her opening salvos to Pickering, but Higgins is the real target.

Irene (as Eliza): Will you drop me altogether now that the experiment is over, Colonel Pickering?

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Dr. Watson (as Pickering): Oh don't. You mustn't think of it as an experiment. It shocks me somehow.

Irene: Oh, I'm only a squashed cabbage leaf...

Dr. Watson: No.

Irene: ...but I owe so much to you that I should be very unhappy if you forgot me.

Dr. Watson: It's very kind of you to say so, Miss Doolittle.

Irene: It's not because you paid for my dresses. I know you are generous to everybody with money. But it was from you that I learnt really nice manners; and that is what makes one a lady, isn't it? You see it was so very difficult for me with the example of Professor Higgins always before me. I was brought up to be just like him, unable to control myself and using bad language on the slightest provocation. And I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen did not behave like that if you hadn't been there.

Holmes: Well!

Dr. Watson: Oh, that's only his way, you know. He doesn't mean it.

Irene: Oh, I didn't mean it either, when I was a flower girl. It was only my way. But you see I did it; and that's what makes the difference after all.

Dr. Watson: No doubt. Still he taught you to speak, and I couldn't have done that, you know.

Irene: Of course. That is his profession.

Holmes (as Higgins): Damnation!

Irene: It was just like learning to dance in the fashionable way. There was nothing more than that in it. But do you know what began my real education?

Dr. Watson: What?

Irene: Your calling me Miss Doolittle on that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self respect for me. And there were a hundred little things you never noticed, because they came naturally to you. Things about standing up and taking off your hat and opening doors...

Dr. Watson: Oh, that was nothing.

Irene: Yes: things that shewed you thought and felt about me as if I were something better than a scullery maid: though, of course, I know you would have been just the same to a scullery maid if she had been let into the drawing room. You never took off your boots in the drawing room when I was there.

Dr. Watson: You mustn't mind that. Higgins takes off his boots all over the place.

Irene: I know. I am not blaming him. It is his way, isn't it? But it made such a difference to me that you didn't do it. You see, really and truly, apart from the things that anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins because he always treats me as a flower girl and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady and always will.

Dr. Watson: Well, this is really very nice of you, Miss Doolittle.

Irene: I should like you to call me Eliza now, if you would.

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Dr. Watson: Thank you, Eliza, of course.

Irene: And I should like Professor Higgins to call me Miss Doolittle.

Holmes: I'll see you damned first!

Dr. Watson: Why don't you slang back at him? Don't stand for it. It will do him good, a lot of good.

Irene: I can't. I could have done it once, but now I can't go back to it. You told me, you know, that when a child is brought to a foreign country, it picks up the language in a few weeks and forgets its own. Well, I am a child in your country. I have forgotten my own language and can speak nothing but yours. That's the real break off with the corner of Tottenham Court Road. Leaving Wimpole Street finishes it.

Dr. Watson: Oh, but you're coming back to Wimpole Street, aren't you. You'll forgive Higgins.

Holmes: Forgive! Will she, by George. Let her go. Let her find out how she can get on without us. She will relapse into the gutter in three weeks without me by her elbow.

Dr. Watson: He's incorrigible, Eliza. You won't relapse will you?

Irene: No, not now. Never again. I have learnt my lesson. I don't believe I could utter one of those old sounds if I tried.

Holmes: Well, Eliza, you've had a bit of your own back as you call it. Have you had enough and are you going to be reasonable?

Irene: You want me back only to pick up your slippers and put up with your tempers....

Holmes (loudly): I haven't said I want you back at all.

Irene (calmly): Then what are we talking about?

Holmes: About you, not about me. If you come back, I shall treat you just as I have always treated you. I can't change my nature and don't intend to change my manners. My manners are exactly the same as Colonel Pickering's.

Irene: That's not true. He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess.

Holmes: And I treat a duchess as if she were a flower girl.

Irene: I see. The same to everybody.

Holmes: The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any particular sort of manners, but behaving in the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in heaven and there were no third-class carriages and one soul is as good as another.

Irene: Amen. You are a born preacher.

Holmes: The question is not whether I treat you rudely, but whether you ever heard me treat anyone else better.

Irene: I don't care how you treat me at all. I don't mind your swearing at me. I shouldn't mind a black eye. I've had one before this. But, I won't be passed over.

Holmes: Then get out of my way for I won't stop for you. You talk about me as if I were a motor bus.

Irene: So you are a motor bus, all bounce and go, and no consideration for anyone. But I can do without you; don't think I can't.

Holmes: I know you can. I told you could.

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Irene: I know you did, you brute. You wanted to get rid of me.

Holmes: Liar!

Irene: Thank you.

Holmes: You never asked yourself, I suppose, if I could do without you.

Irene: Don't you try to get around me. You'll have to do without me.

Holmes: I can do without anybody. I have my own soul, my own spark of divine fire. But, I shall miss you, Eliza. I have learnt something from your idiotic notions. I confess that humbly and gratefully. And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them, rather.

Irene: Well, you have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got not feelings to hurt.

Holmes: I can't turn your soul on. Leave me those feelings. You can take away the voice and face. They are not you.

Irene: Oh, you are a devil. You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her. You don't care a bit for me. What did you do it for if you didn't care for me?

Holmes: Why, because it was my job.

Irene: You never thought of the trouble it would make for me.

Holmes: Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble.

Eliza: I'm no preacher and I don't notice things like that. I notice that you don't notice me.

Holmes: Eliza, you're an idiot. I waste the treasures of my Miltonic mind by spreading them before you. Once and for all, understand that I go my way and do my work without caring twopence what happens to either of us. So you can come back or go to the devil.

Irene: Oh, if I could only go back to my flower basket. I should be independent of you and all the world. Why did you take my independence from me? Why did I give it up?

Holmes: Don't worry about it. You could always marry Pickering.

Irene: I wouldn't marry you if you asked me. That's not what I want, and don't you think it. That's not the sort of feeling I want from you. And don't you be too sure of yourself or me. I've seen more of some things than you. Girls like me can drag gentlemen down to make love to them easy enough. And they wish each other dead the next minute.

Holmes: Of course they do. Then what in thunder are we arguing about?

Irene: I want a little kindness. I'm not dirt under your feet. What I did was not for the dresses and the taxis. I did it because we were pleasant together and I came to care for you.

Holmes: Well, of course that's how I feel.

Irene: That's not a proper answer to give me.

Holmes: It's all you'll get until you stop being a common idiot. You find me cold, unfeeling, selfish, don't you. Very well. Be off with you to the sort of people you like. If you can't appreciate what you've got, you'd better get what you can appreciate.

Irene: Oh, you are a cruel tyrant. I can't talk to you. You turn everything against me. I'm always in the wrong. You think I must go back to

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Wimpole Street because I've nowhere else to go. But don't be too sure that you have me under your feet to be trampled on and talked down to. I'll marry Freddy, as soon as I'm able to support him.

Holmes: Freddy! That young fool who couldn't get a job as an errand boy. Don't you understand I've made you a consort worthy of a king?

Irene: Freddy loves me. That makes him king enough for me. I'll be a teacher. I'll teach what you taught me, phonetics. I'll offer myself as an assistant to that hairy-faced Hungarian.

Holmes: What! That imposter. Teach him my methods and discoveries. Take one step in his direction and I'll wring your neck.

Irene: Wring away. I knew you would strike me one day. Aha, you can't. Now I know how to deal with you. What a fool I was not to think of it before. You can't take away the knowledge you gave me. I'll advertise in the papers that your duchess is only a flower girl and I can teach any other flower girl to be a duchess in six months. When I think of myself crawling under your feet and being trampled on and called names when all the time I was just as good as you....

Holmes: You damned impudent slut....but, by George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you and I have. I like you like this. Five minutes ago, you were a millstone around my neck. Now you are a tower of strength. By the way, tomorrow, buy me a pair of gloves, number eights, and a tie to match that new suit of mine. You choose the color.

Irene: Number eights are too small for you, if you want them lined. You have three new ties that you have forgotten. What you are to do without me, I cannot imagine.

Announcer: Eliza exits the stage after that, as I recall.

Dr. Watson: Indeed and, in this case, Eliza, or rather Irene, just kept going right out of the theater, and right on the train, and right out of Holmes' life forever. It was probably a good thing, too, that she left. The

anger that had developed on both sides had escalated and I thought one or both might get out of control in that final scene. I was watching from the wings and prepared to come back on stage, to say that I had forgotten my hat or something like that, if I felt things were really getting dangerous.

Announcer: What an awful conclusion to something that had such a promising beginning.

Dr. Watson: Yes, and a conclusion that was obvious to all, on stage and in the stalls, when Irene did not appear for her curtain call. Shinwell Johnson saved things by saying that she had suddenly been taken ill and then led the applause for her. That was the second remarkable thing he did that day. The third would immediately follow at the cast party where Holmes proved that, even though he'd lost his touch – if he ever had one – in matters of romance, he still was the master when it came to detective work.

Announcer: And we'll here about that in just a minute, but now a word from one of our sponsors. It's time to start thinking about Thanksgiving and, if you think like me, then you're tired of turkey. A lot of friends have told me they're tired of turkey on Thanksgiving but don't know what else to serve. I say do what I do, serve pheasant. They like the idea but don't know where to get a pheasant. That's the easy part. Just google Crescent's Pheasants on the Internet and go directly to where the people in Provence surf for haute cuisine. I actually went there last month and a pleasant peasant presently presented a Crescent pheasant pristinely preserved to promptly produce prandial perfection. So, ladies and gentlemen, do what I did. Contact Crescent's Pheasants and nobody will be able to call your Thanksgiving Dinner a turkey. And now back to our story. You were saying, doctor, that Shinwell Johnson saved the day.

Dr. Watson: Yes, with Irene having bolted a la Eliza, Holmes, our nominal host, just retreated to a corner and silently worked his way through a bottle of vintage champagne, one that he'd probably been

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saving for his reunion with “the woman.” It certainly seemed to set the stage for a very morose cast party. But Johnson, unbidden as far as I could tell, just took over the duties of host and everybody had a good time, except Holmes and the self-exiled Irene, of course. I must say that I had definitely, perhaps snobbishly, underrated Johnson. As I believe I said earlier, he definitely missed his calling. If he hadn’t made it on the stage, he certainly could have in the music hall. He just got up and started talking as glibly as any I ever heard at the old, now alas gone, Roxy...

Johnson: Well, ladies and gentlemen, we’ve all just done a play that, in essence, is about the English language and some of the more curious manifestations thereof. So, of course, isn’t it appropriate that the first production was in Vienna in German. I don’t know about you but I find that astonishing. How do you translate cockney? Beats the ‘oly ‘ell outta me, guvnor. But, let’s face it, our native language doesn’t make a whole lot of sense. I’ll never understand why such a logical mind as Professor Higgins decided to devote his life to the study of English. There are just too many paradoxes. For example: Why do slow up and slow down mean the same thing, but oversee and overlook mean the opposite of each other? Well, at least over look and look over, which are verbal inverses, have opposite meanings...well, most of the time, at least. But, on the other hand.... Why is a wise man admirable but a wise guy annoying? Why do some, otherwise seemingly intelligent, people invest their savings with a broker? Why is infancy innocent but adultery something else? Why is a package that you send by car called a shipment, but if you sent the same package by ship it would be cargo? Along those same lines, why do we drive on a parkway but park in a driveway? How can a person be pretty ugly? Why is the word bra singular but panties plural? Why are some places called stands when that’s where we’re supposed to sit? Why do we get on a bus but in a car? Why do stress and distress mean the same thing? Would you be upset if you won a door prize and it turned out to be a door? And, finally, why is sin tax something designed to keep a man with a lower-class accent from buying as much beer as he would like, but his syntax is something that could keep him from being elected to Parliament where he could change the law?

Our language can be insane and inane. Just think of those words. The opposite of insane is, logically sane, but the opposite of inane is....ane? That's both insane and inane. The worst offenders, in my opinion, are the words that can simultaneously have opposite meanings. Take cleave, which can mean cut or cling... Left which can mean go somewhere or leave something somewhere... Reservation which you make when you know what you want to do or what you have when you don't know what you want to do.... Sanction can mean to support an action or to be punished for taking that action... Secreted can mean releasing something or hiding it.... Buckle can mean hold together or collapse... Citation can mean a good or bad report.... Clip can mean attach to or trim off.... Bound can mean leap forward or be tied up and unable to move at all... And, finally, fix can mean make work properly but your pet might disagree.... But, enough of those conundrums, let's give our brains a rest and listen to the beautiful and talented Violet Westbury sing some Gilbert and Sullivan.

Violet (singing): Some Gilbert and Sullivan.

Johnson: You know, Violet, I was delighted to see you here, and in such good voice, because only a couple of weeks ago, your ears were severely burned. How in the world did that happen?

Violet: Well, I was ironing when the phone rang and I accidentally picked up the iron instead of the phone.

Johnson: Understandable, quite understandable. But how did you burn the other ear?

Violet: They called back.

Johnson: I see, but it seems like you had a good doctor. I didn't have that kind of luck. Last year, I broke my arm in two places and my doctor...

Violet: Told you to stay out of those places.

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Johnson: It looked to me, Violet, like you enjoyed doing the play as much as I did. I really enjoyed all the analysis of our language and I started to read some books about it. Lots of them claim that “I am” is the shortest sentence in English. But I can’t find the longest.

Violet: Oh that’s easy.

Johnson: Really, what it is?

Violet: I do.

Johnson: You may have a point. But shifting back to the logical failings of our language, why are lawyers disbarred instead of publicans, and clergymen defrocked instead of couturiers? If our language were logical, then an ex-electrician would be

Violet: Delighted...

Johnson: And a tone deaf musician...

Violet: Denoted...

Johnson: A convicted cowboy....

Violet: Deranged....

Johnson: An inept tree surgeon, or a dog with laryngitis...

Violet: Debarked....

Johnson: A drug-dependent dry cleaner...

Violet: Depressed...

Johnson: A chardonnay-swilling Chinese...

Violet: Disoriented.

Johnson: A divorced lady...

Violet: Remiss.

Johnson: A retired actor...

Violet: Departed.

Johnson: Not to be confused with a retired sailor who would be...

Violet: Deported.

Johnson: A clerk who just got the ax...

Violet: Defiled.

Johnson: The fiery finale for a femme fatale...

Violet: Vampire.

Johnson: A felon's handwriting....

Violet: Conscript.

Johnson: A bankrupt German or the former Mrs. Anthony...

Violet: Unmarked.

Johnson: Ah, Violet, that's what I like about you, your mind.

Violet: I thought you liked what I didn't mind.

Johnson: Well put that mind to work on this interesting question, Violet. Would you be more satisfied with a million pounds or six children? Now take your time.

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Violet: That's easy. I'd be more satisfied if I had six children.

Johnson: Why?

Violet: Because if I had a million pounds, I'd want more.

Johnson: Good point. Then, answer this one. Why do people sing "Take me out to the ball game" when they're already there?

Violet: Haven't the foggiest. But maybe you can answer this question I've pondered for years. Why do they put pictures of wanted criminals in the post office? Are we supposed to write to them?

Johnson: Violet, you're the most alluring lady I've met in years. Let's go to dinner after the party. But, tell me, do you shrink from kissing on the first date?

Violet: If I did, I'd be about two-feet tall.

Dr. Watson: I think they could have gone on like that for...

Announcer: I agree. That didn't seem spontaneous, but rather well rehearsed.

Dr. Watson: Apparently, very well rehearsed for it seems that while I and many others were fervently waiting for the Holmes-Adler romance to rekindle, we failed to notice the actual love affair that was occurring. They, unlike Holmes and Irene in *Pygmalion*, obviously enjoyed playing off each other in the skit and, as I was saying, would have gone on for some time if they were not interrupted by a policeman who suddenly burst into the room with a telegram for Sherlock Holmes.

Announcer: That must have brought the proceedings to a stop.

Dr. Watson: Actually just for a moment. The telegram was from Lestrade...

Announcer: Inspector Lestrade? Surely he had been long retired.

Dr. Watson: He was and that is why Holmes had contacted him.

Announcer: You have lost me.

Dr. Watson: Holmes was aware that John Clay, the brilliant criminal who had come so close to robbing the City and Suburban Bank, had just been released from prison. Holmes also knew that the Countess of Morcar had recently moved permanently to London and that Clay, aware that she would be in Sussex for two weeks to take part in the play, would not be able to resist the lure of the Blue Carbuncle...

Announcer: And would try to steal it. That I can understand. But why contact Lestrade? As you just said, was retired.

Dr. Watson: That was precisely the reason Holmes contacted him. I know it is hard to believe but Holmes had been retired for several years and, despite his fabulous career, was regarded by the new breed at Scotland Yard as an anachronism whose methods, state-of-the-art though they might have been in the past, were now well behind the times. So Holmes contacted someone who knew better....

Announcer: But Lestrade, to put it mildly, does not come off as the model of efficiency in your chronicles.

Dr. Watson: That, well, is sort of a trade secret that I suppose it is safe to reveal after all of this time.

Announcer: Again, you've lost me.

Dr. Watson: The bumbling Lestrade in my chronicles is something of a charade. His less than impressive intellect was just a bit of literary

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legerdemain to put Holmes' genius into greater relief. The real man, Inspector Les Trade, was one of the Yard's most competent detectives and he actually preferred, or so he claimed, my unflattering verbal portrait because he said it was much easier to catch criminals who thought they were dealing with a dunce.

Announcer: So, after Holmes mentally put John Clay and the Morcar jewels together...

Dr. Watson: He contacted Inspector Trade, who was straining at the bit to get back into action and who, unlike the younger set now in residence at the Yard, had the time to watch the Morcar mansion in Mayfair. Sure enough, Clay appeared on schedule. Despite his long years in prison, he hadn't lost his charm and had managed, in only a couple of days, to become engaged to one of the upstairs maids. She gave him a key to the servants' entrance and he'd stolen the livery of one of the regular delivery men.

Announcer: And Trade caught him red-handed, an appropriate fate for the creator of the Red-Headed League.

Dr. Watson: Not quite. After glancing at the telegram, Holmes read it aloud. It said Trade nicked Clay just after he had opened the door. Holmes then remarked that, since Clay had not yet committed a crime – using a key couldn't be construed as breaking and entering – and since Trade was no longer on the force and had no official standing, that we should, in the spirit of the season, let Clay go as long as he...

Announcer: As long as he promised to give up crime for good.... **Dr. Watson (laughing):** No. As long as he actually married the maid without delay. Holmes, just fresh from his own romantic disappointment, said that would be worse than going back to prison and that he would make sure that Clay went through with it by personally serving as one of the witnesses. And, with that, he excused himself and the party quickly roared back into high gear....stayed that way for quite a while and I admit that I have only faint memories of the next week or so.

Announcer: Did Holmes ever discuss any of this with you subsequently?

Dr. Watson: No, not a word. I have thought about it often, of course, and I've concluded that the Higgins-Eliza relationship parallels that of Holmes and Irene.

Announcer: Meaning?

Dr. Watson: Higgins thinks that he was solely responsible for making Eliza, to use his own words, "a consort worthy of a king." But he never realized that part of her metamorphosis, a very big part, was due to the pure luck of just happening to be working with the only flower girl in London, maybe the only woman in London out of the millions and millions of candidates, who had the determination and the innate gifts to make the transformation. This resulted, of course, in one of the ultimate ironies. Higgins had, via his knowledge and skill and with a little bit of luck, ended up with the one woman in the world who was perfect for him. But, for whatever reason, he, the great dialectician and expert in the English language, could find neither the words nor the verbal nuance to express his feeling without coming across in a way that Eliza would not immediately interpret as demeaning.

Announcer: And likewise, Holmes....

Dr. Watson: ...despite his great intellect, could not come to mental grips with the fact that he had, by pure chance, been thrown together with his ideal romantic partner. When faced with the possibility, something he had scoffed at all his life, he didn't know what to do or, if he figured it out, what to say and how to say it without coming across as overbearing and unfeeling. It cost him dearly.

Announcer: I think there might have been another parallel. Irene Adler was born in New Jersey and grew up in New York where she undoubtedly learned to speak in one of those awful accents so prevalent in that

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city. So, like Eliza, she had to learn, probably painfully and without an expert teacher, how to speak her native language properly before she could hope to start her operatic career. Since George Bernard Shaw's first job as a professional writer was as a music critic, he was probably aware of this and used Irene's past as the model for his greatest dramatic creation, the magnificent Eliza Doolittle.

Dr. Watson: I think you are on to something there, sir. Bravo, Miss Eliza Doolittle. Bravo, Miss Irene Adler.

Announcer: There is something more that needs to be said. Just as Sherlock Holmes was ever unaware of his luck in meeting Irene Adler, so he was in the matter of the man who so perfectly fulfilled the vital functions of companion and chronicler. Imagine the truly horrific consequences if young Stamford had introduced him to Shaw instead on that fateful day in 1881. They would either have killed each other or one of them would have ended up in the dock charged with murder. So, since Sherlock Holmes could never find the appropriate words, I will say them for him. A third bravo. Bravo Dr. John Watson, most faithful of friends and, even if not the wisest man that Sherlock Holmes ever knew, in so many, many ways the best. And that is all the time we have this week. Thanks to our sponsors – Rose's Roses where the aroma radiates from toes to nose, Paris pears to placate the palate and pare the paunch, and Crescent's Pheasants produced by peasants for perfect prandial pleasure. And, until we meet again next week, here's my personal wish that, between now and then, all your problems be elementary.

The End

LAST LAMENT OF INSPECTOR LESTRADE

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Sound Effects:

Door Slam
Loud Click
Whispers
Door Opens

Music:

Don't Go Into the Cellar Theme (intro)
Uninvited to Baker Street (outro)

Lights Cues:

Blackout
Lights Slowly Fade Up
Lights Slowly Fade to Blackout

Costumes:

Blanket covering Lestrade up to his neck
See Below*

Image:

See Below**

(BLACKOUT)

(PLAY DON'T GO INTO THE CELLAR THEME)

***(LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE UP – REVEAL DON'T GO INTO
THE CELLAR LOGO)***

(SLOWLY FADE OUT THEME & LOGO – LIGHTS ON FULL)

Last Lament of Inspector Lestrade

(Lestrade is revealed covered up to his neck in a blanket. His chin is against his chest. He is asleep)

(after some silence) **(PLAY DOOR SLAM. PLAY LOUD CLICK)**

(IT IS NOT the door slam but the loud click that makes Lestrade snap awake. He makes a loud cry when he does. He has a strange, far-away look. Then he looks around and sees that he is not alone. He is shivering)

(Lestrade does not gesture with his hands at all, and he remains under the blanket until the end)

(to the camera/Doctor) D’you believe in déjà vu?
How’d you get in here? Well isn’t *that* a trick.
How did *I* get here? I... I really don’t know...
Can’t you turn up the heat, Doctor? - no? All right...
(replying to the Doctor) Yes... I will begin at the beginning...
excellent advice, Doctor.

I had consulted your friend on more than one occasion. But it wasn’t until that bloody murder – if you’ll pardon the pun - on Brixton Road – I saw him in *action*.

He seemed to see... *everything*. He had a strange, far-away look when he... *saw*. I’ve seen that look one other time – when someone was under the influence of hypnosis. He had an eerie laugh. He often used it on me and on Inspector Gregson. When he was on the scent... yes, on the *scent*... he reminded me of an *animal*... a cold-blooded *animal*.

It wasn’t until just before he left the crime scene that he told us *everything*. He knew *everything* about him. The murderer behind it all. His approximate age, his height. The size of his feet. His boots and his cigar. How he had arrived there. He and, o’course, his victim. The kind of cab they used - *down to the horseshoes*. All this, and much more. It all fit the man who would prove to be our murderer – one Jefferson Hope.

(replying to the Doctor) Yes, I read the story. Where Holmes explained his conclusions. From the clues he'd found. But here's the thing, Doctor: well... half of those clues... well, *they just weren't there*. I was there, *too*, as you will remember, good Doctor. There *were* some muddy prints. But they were *too* muddy. Too muddy to reveal anything. Not the way Holmes described. That gave him his deductions.

And yet... how's it *possible*?... He was right all along. Right about *all of it*. And every damned time after. But I *swear* to you – *HE COULD NOT HAVE KNOWN!*

(replying to the Doctor) Yes, Doctor, I do apologize... I promise to control myself.

Where was I again, Doctor? Yes - *A Study in Scarlet*. As you well know, Doctor, the story became a sensation. Your friend became so famous... everyone assumed each word published after that was the truth.

(replying to the Doctor) No, I mean no offense. But I remind you, Doctor. We only had Holmes' word. Which was backed up by his remarkable results – but still – we only had his *word*.

You see what I'm saying? It was all a... *story*. I don't care how much of a genius Holmes was. The detail, the specificity of... *everything* he claimed to see... well, *I saw it all*. And it *just wasn't there*.

But he had an abnormal... understanding... of everything around him. And an abnormal influence over *everyone* who was around him.

(replying to the Doctor) Example? – that murderer – Brixton Road? Holmes sent advertisements in all the papers about a ring. A wedding ring that we found at the murder scene. Holmes knew that the murderer would want the ring back. What does the murderer do? He rightly suspects a trap. Sends an accomplice – in disguise. However, later, Holmes merely *summons* him to 221B Baker Street. And the murderer himself appears! To the same address he avoided - earlier that same day!

As you already know, I was there, my good Doctor. *It was as if the murderer were under a spell*. It wasn't until Holmes snapped the cuffs upon him.

(PLAY LOUD CLICK)

(*Lestrade flinches*) that he snapped out of it. It was the “click,” y’see. Like the loud clap that suddenly ends an hypnotic trance. For it was only *then* that the devil did try to escape from his cage!

(*Lestrade has a strange, far-away look*) The devil... try to escape... to escape from his... cage...

(*snapping out of it*) My apologies, my good Doctor. And where was I again? Oh, yes – the hypnotized murderer. For how else could you explain *walking into a trap*?

But Holmes has this strange... power... over *minds*, it seems. Hell, even *you* told me he’s read your thoughts, Doctor. And when he miraculously reveals the identity of the criminal, what does the criminal do?

Tells Holmes *everything* he wants to know – *a full confession*. I have been around enough criminals and solicitors to know - you should keep your mouth *shut*, especially when you’re guilty. And they do around *me*. But *not* around *Sherlock Holmes*.

(*replying to the Doctor*) Was I jealous of him? Yes... I will admit it. I did deny it once. But yes, I *was* jealous. His skills as a detective... were the likes of which I had never *seen* before. He had some 5,000 criminal cases stored *in his memory*. Ability to identify nearly 150 different types of tobacco ash - all from *his naked eye*. He could read the mud stains from any location within *50 miles* of Baker Street. *Not* from a microscope – from the *sole of a shoe*. From *across the bloody room*.

It was as if all of my training – all *anyone’s* training – were all for *naught*. I spent *years* studying the nascent science of fingerprints, Doctor. It’s the *future* of *detection*. When I found a thumbprint – one that Holmes didn’t see – in that Norwood builder case - I *KNEW* I had scored! Over Holmes, the Great Detective! I had my revenge from the house on Brixton Road!

But Holmes had little to no knowledge of the science. And what did it matter? He never needed it, Doctor! In fact, he immediately knew the fingerprint was yet another blind – just like Brixton Road!

(*replying to the Doctor*) My apologies – I seem to be getting ahead of myself. I am trying to explain. But don’t you see the strange coincidences that *I* see?

And it wasn't just all the *coincidences* that were strange. *Everything* about Holmes was strange. His five senses, for example. *He could see in darkness*. And his other heightened senses – hearing and smell – made me think he possessed a *sixth*. Doctor, even *you've* told how you thought he was something more... and less... than *human*.

But the... strangeness seemed to influence – *permeate* - those around him. (*eyeing the Doctor*) For example, a mysterious war wound from a jezail bullet. That seems to move from one story to the next. Then the wife dies abruptly and mysteriously with no explanation. (*responding to the Doctor's reaction*) No, Doctor, I don't mean to accuse, nor to offend. But do you not *see*? The *strangeness* of it all?

No one seemed to notice this strangeness as time passed. As story came after story. Now, I may not be a genius like Sherlock Holmes. But, despite what all the stories said about *me*, Doctor – (*eyeing the Doctor*) "an incompetent, sallow rat-faced, dark-eyed fellow" *indeed* – but! - *I'm still a good detective*. And *I* observed it *all*.

I had had *enough*, Doctor. Scotland Yard deserved *answers*, Sir! All the readers deserved answers! And *I* deserved answers, too!

I stormed up the steps to 221 B Baker Street – landlady Mrs. Hudson wasn't happy – and burst into Holmes' rooms.

And then – (*shocked gasp*) *I saw it*.

You weren't there, good Doctor. But as you've taken Holmes' word for *the gospel truth* – *I beg you* to do the same for *me*, Sir.

On Holmes' table before him... lay the strangest book *ever*. I later found out it was called a... a... grimoire. A book of... of... *magick*.

(*replying to the Doctor*) How do I know this? The book was *open*, Doctor. Open to a... a... *picture*. I will *never* forget it. It was a code wheel. One of those circles used to decode ciphers - secret messages. Scrawled through its center was... one of those strange shapes... triangles made from five points... what they call a *pentagram*. The pentagram was upside down, the way cultists draw it. And can you guess what was used to draw it?

It was blood, good Doctor! Even from the doorway, I... *I knew it was blood!*

Holmes was huddled over it! At first, he didn't even know I was

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there, Doctor! It was as if he were in a trance himself! He was chanting five words!

(PLAY WHISPERS)

Over and over and over! I could hear the cursed chanting from his lips – but also from within my *mind!*

What did it all *mean?* And this is the gospel truth – I have never been more terrified in my life! Could barely breathe or move! Thank God for my training – my brain didn't know what to do, but my hand – my hand somehow did, Doctor.

I drew my gun, aimed at him and cocked it!

(STOP WHISPERS. PLAY LOUD CLICK)

(Lestrade flinches) And Holmes snapped out from whatever spell had held him! *(shocked gasp)* I had shrieked, but that wasn't it, my good Doctor! It was the click of my gun pointed at him! Like the click of the handcuffs on Jefferson Hope's wrists!

And Holmes *glared* at me. My *God*, I'll never forget... that *look* from his *eyes*. His eyes of blue coal were now a... *bright red*. Like the sides of the pentagram in his strange... book. Good *God*, those eyes still *haunt me in my dreams*.

And then he chanted something... *else entirely*... as he stared. Stared into *my very soul*. He chanted five *different* words. Then he closed the book. And then his eyes... *returned*. To their normal *cold gray*.

And into the gray these... memories *faded* from me, Doctor. Dear God, they're only coming back to me right *now*. Maybe it was your injection. Maybe it's my time *alone* (looking around him). But I'm beginning to *remember*.

Holmes began talking to me. As if *nothing had happened*. And sure enough, I started... to forget that anything *had*. I put my gun away... *and forgot I drew it*.

And now I believe this has happened - *more than once*.

(shaking his head) More than once! – how many? How many times

bad he manipulated me in this way? Was it every time I came to him with suspicions? When things didn't add up?

Didn't add up (*laughing*)... ADD UP (*laughing*)...

(*replying to the Doctor*) Yes, Doctor, I do apologize... I promise to control myself.

But this brings me to the most important thing I wanted to tell you about. That day on Brixton Road.

There were four of us, as you already know, Doctor. There was myself, Inspector Gregson, Holmes and (*eyeing the Doctor*) his stalwart companion. I wanted to prove to *everyone* that I was *good*. That I had *earned* my esteemed place in Scotland Yard.

So when I discovered the word "Rache" on the wall – I had felt so... *triumphant*. I had finally scored one over that pompous Inspector Gregory. But, more importantly – over *him*. The Great Detective *missed* it. *But not I, Inspector Lestrade!*

I was convinced that "Rache" was the beginning of "Rachel." Then Holmes *ruined* it *all*. Another example of his wealth of trivial knowledge that always somehow related to the crime. (*imitating Holmes*) "Rache' is German for 'revenge.'" It was as if he had gotten revenge on *me*.

I read in the story that Holmes knew it wasn't even real – just a blind. Like the Norwood builder case. (*imitating Holmes*) "The 'A,' noticeably, was printed somewhat after the German fashion. Real Germans print in Latin, so this was not written by one, but a clumsy imitator who overdid his part."

I saw the *lovely* illustration. It looked like it was done by a *professional calligrapher*. *But that's the thing, Doctor!* 'Twas nothing of the kind! It was scrawled in *blood!* And with only a fingernail! By a man dizzy with murder and loss of blood! Who had a heart condition! *No way* this bleeding message – if you'll pardon the pun – could have communicated such detail! Not the way it appears in *A Study in Scarlet!* Not the way *Holmes* claimed! I saw it *myself*, Doctor!

And when *Holmes* saw it – *My God, I'll never forget*. Everyone was looking at me. And the word I found. So *they* didn't see *him*. But *I* did... I DID! Holmes' eyes flashing bright red! Just as they did when I

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caught him huddled over that book with the pentagram! 'Twas as if he had some connection to human blood!

And when I saw that – that flash in his eyes – I saw – no, I *felt* – that we were *not alone!* That there was a *fifth!* Holmes, Doctor, Gregson and me – there was a... *feminine* presence! A woman of... *extraordinary influence!*... *in the house with us!*...

(replying to the Doctor) How *can* I describe it? I'm *not* a superstitious man. "No ghosts need apply," no? But as sure as I *see you...* I *felt her.* And her presence... and blood... it all had something to do with... Holmes' *extraordinary* powers. Don't ask me how I know this, but I think Holmes was chanting to *her!* When I caught him with that book and that pentagram!

(replying to the Doctor, laughing) Who was she, you ask? I wish I *knew,* Doctor. But I will say *this:* Hope brought his victim to the Brixton Road house because he blamed him for the untimely death of his lover. A girl named Lucy Ferrier. And as he did so, Hope *swore* he could see *her* there with them both. Just like I *felt...* *someone.*

I've learned how important names are in rituals of magic. That's magic with a "k." "Lucy Ferrier" – see how easily it becomes something else *entirely?* *(laughing)* "Lucy Ferrier"... becomes... "Lucy Fer..."

Don't you see it, man? The blood... the five points of the pentagram in the grimoire at 221B Baker Street... now the *five* of us in that haunted house where for me it all began... all my suspicions of *him...*

ALL OF IT IS CONNECTED! *(laughing)* YES, ALL OF IT, DOCTOR! *(laughing more)*

(suddenly stops laughing, staring past the Doctor) My God – HE IS HERE! *(replying to the Doctor)* No, not THERE – OVER THERE! He's THERE - beyond the bars! He's just outside my cell! Turn around – you'll see him! That Doctor partner-in-crime!

No, not YOU, Doctor Freud! Doctor WATSON – HE'S BEHIND YOU! CHANTING THE SAME FIVE WORDS!

(PLAY WHISPERS)

"FORGET, INSPECTOR LESTRADE! FORGET ALL!"

"FORGET, INSPECTOR LESTRADE! FORGET ALL!"

My God, YOU MISSED HIM! HE'S TRYING TO MAKE ME FORGET EVERYTHING I TOLD YOU! NO, DOCTOR FREUD, I DON'T WANT MORE COCAINE – I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE! *(shaking off his blanket, revealing his straight jacket)* I WANT TO GET OUT OF THIS BLOODY STRAIGHT JACKET! I KNOW THE TRUTH, DOCTOR! RELEASE ME BEFORE I FORGET!

(STOP WHISPERS. PLAY DOOR OPENS)

(seeing the orderlies enter, then jostled violently) ALL OF YOU, GET AWAY! I DON'T NEED THE ORDERLIES! *(seeing the syringe)* I DON'T NEED THAT SYRINGE!

(his body jerks as he reacts to the syringe being plunged into his arm) GET IT OUT OF ME! I NEED TO GET OUT! BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

BEFORE IT IS... too late... before... it is... too late...

(PLAY DOOR SLAM)

(Lestrade slows down his breathing. His eyelids slowly close. His jaw slackens. His head droops slowly, then completely. His chin is against his chest. He is unconscious again)

(after some silence) ***(PLAY LOUD CLICK)*** *(the door locks again)*

(Lestrade makes a loud cry and snaps awake. He has a strange, far-away look. Then he looks around and sees that he is not alone. He is shivering)

(to the camera) D'you believe in déjà vu?

(Lestrade continues to stare into the camera)

(LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE TO BLACKOUT)

Last Lament of Inspector Lestrade

***(PLAY “UNINVITED TO BAKER STREET” – SHOW
WATSON PENTAGRAM CODE WHEEL - FADEOUT)***

(BLACKOUT)

THE END

***Costumes:**

Straight Jacket



THE GASFITTER'S DAUGHTER

Margie Deck © 2022

MY DEAR MR SHERLOCK HOLMES,

I've planned it very well, very well indeed. By the time you receive this letter, I will be beyond their reach and you will be beyond any action to protect them. It is a satisfying thought.

You knew, Mr Holmes. You knew and yet you did nothing to protect me from their treachery. I placed myself in your hands and you failed me. Oh! How you lied. It was a lie by omission but a lie, nonetheless. I had trust when you said, "I shall glance into the case for you and I have no doubt that we shall reach some definite result." Now I see my calling at Baker Street was a fool's errand—one of many foolish decisions I made due to the evil influence in my own home.

He told me of your meeting. Once he had betrayed his own secret, he talked quickly enough of my mother and of you and your empty threats of punishment. He laughed and he laughed—at me and at you with your hunting crop. It is hard for me to think that you knew him to be guilty and you confronted him in Baker Street the following day after my visit. Baker Street! Where I had sat not so many hours before pleading for your help. You never sent any word to me. Did you laugh about me as well, Mr Holmes? You and your also silent confederate, Dr Watson?

Had it not been for the man's own sloppiness, I might never have known of the web he and my mother spun for me. Their game was lost with his utterance of the phrase, "your dreams of traveling to Athens," at our breakfast table.

That fateful morning, I mentioned I wished to read and memorize a collection of Lord Byron's poetry, including the somewhat rakish "Maid of Athens." My stepfather laughed and said, "What a ridiculous thought. You are too excitable and it is not appropriate for a maid such as yourself to read his work. The idea is as ridiculous as your dreams of traveling to Athens."

The Gasfitter's Daughter

I froze, my teacup halfway to my mouth. You see, Mr Holmes, I wrote about my dream of visiting Athens in one of my letters to the man I believed to be Hosmer Angel. I had never mentioned it to my mother or my stepfather. I knew they would deem any dream of mine to be the foolish imaginings of a young girl. While his words died in the air, I suddenly saw it all. I saw through the tinted glasses, the bushy whiskers, the insinuating whisper, the cold typewritten signatures. The woman I have become saw Hosmer Angel standing before me as clearly as if you had laid the deception out for me, step by step.

How my mother cried when I confronted him, pleading with me for understanding and forgiveness. Understanding? How could I grant what I have never been given? I am hot with anger and humiliation. How could I recover from such humiliation? I was taken in completely. There is no forgiveness in me.

For six weeks, I have lived as silent as a ghost in this house. I have not spoken to my mother or her husband. Nor shall I ever speak to them again in this life. Or to you, once this letter is posted.

It is ironic I met Mr Hosmer Angel at the Gasfitters' Ball as today I will act as the gasfitter in 31 Lyon Place, Camberwell. I shall be quick and resolute. I am the daughter of a plumber in the Tottenham Court Road. My father was a tidy man with a tidy business. I learned some things from him—a few turns here and a match there, and the four of us (for Hosmer was real to me) will perish. Perhaps I will speak with my father again today. Or, perhaps with Lord Byron.

**Maid of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh, give me back my heart!
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest!**

Do remember me,

Mary Sutherland
Camberwell
—15 June 1890

THE MISADVENTURE OF THE BLUE CARBUNCLE

Joseph J. Eckrich, BSI © 2022

AS WITH MANY SHERLOCKIANS, I have always considered “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” one of my favorite stories. For one thing, it is considered a Christmas story. Christopher Morley famously called it “a Christmas story without slush”. I am a sucker for Christmas and anything having to do with Christmas. Every December I watch all of the Christmas movies I can find and I periodically reread Dickens’ “The Christmas Carol”. And, of course, every December I reread “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle”. However, I have to admit there are several aspects of the story that have always confused and/or concerned me and I have decided it is time to take a closer look at the story.

First let’s briefly review the case. Commissioner Peterson brings a goose and a battered hat to Holmes. The goose is taken home by Peterson and Holmes is left to make deduction from the hat as to its owner. While doing so Petersen returns with a bright blue carbuncle that had been found in the crop of the goose. (I have no intention of going into the whole issue of whether a goose has a crop.) Holmes recognizes the gem as having been stolen from the Countess of Morcar. The robbery took place at the Hotel Cosmopolitan and a plumber, John Horner, was arrested for the crime.

The story would have certainly been very interesting if only for the deductions Holmes makes from the hat, but there is so much more. There are the unforgettable characters Henry Baker and Breckenridge (no first name given), the Alpha Inn and the journey through London on a cold winter’s night with Holmes and Watson. I won’t include the character of James Ryder who I consider to be a rather pitiful individual. I am not certain I agree with Holmes’ assessment that he won’t go wrong again.

“The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” is considered by many to be among the best of the Holmes short stories, even though it wasn’t among those chosen by Doyle himself. It just might be that Doyle recognized there were some problems with this case and again I’m not

The Misadventure of The Blue Carbuncle

talking about whether a goose has a crop or whether a carbuncle is blue.

Let's begin with Henry Baker. We are told that "shillings have not been so plentiful with me as they once were". For a number of months he contributed to the goose club in order to obtain a goose to bring home to his wife. Whether from a monetary or a marital matter the goose was important to him and yet he runs off and leaves it as well as his hat.

Next, let's take a look at Ryder. A poorer criminal you couldn't find in fiction, let alone real life as we know these stories to be. The planning of the crime, with the aid of the Countess' maid, Catherine Cusack, and putting the blame on Horner is ok, but then everything falls apart totally due to Ryder and his abnormal fear of being caught. It is quite clear he hasn't the temperament to be a successful criminal. As he himself says, "I went out...and I made for my sister's house.... All the way there every man I met seemed to me to be a policeman or detective, and, for all that it was a cold night, the sweat was pouring down my face before I came to the Brixton Road." He arrives at his sister's house and, knowing he is to receive one of her geese, he immediately forces the carbuncle down the throat of a particular goose. Is this the action of a rational or even semi-intelligent person? Not only doesn't he realize there is another goose similar to the one he chose but why take the chance in the first place? He doesn't know for sure which particular goose his sister intends for him. Wouldn't it make more sense to first obtain the goose and then, after leaving, put the carbuncle into the goose? One would think so given that you were crazy enough to dispose of it in that manner in the first place. Then, having discovered he took away the wrong goose, and that his goose was cooked, what makes him think he can trace the correct goose and get it back before the new owner realizes what he has got? As I said, it is rather confusing.

Up to this point I would consider Holmes' role to be exemplary. His deductions from the hat are spot on (aren't they always?), he causes Henry Baker to appear and tell his story and he successfully tracks the goose backwards. He correctly identifies Ryder, gets him back to Baker Street and hears his story. Then even Holmes begins to go wrong. In the spirit of the season he literally forgives Ryder of his crime and sends

him on his way. Fine, but what about Horner, a man with a family who is lingering in goal? It is one thing for Holmes to claim “I am not retained by the police to supply their deficiencies,” but he goes on to say “this fellow (Horner) will not appear against him and the case must collapse”. But will it? There was obviously enough evidence against him to result in his arrest and there is still the testimony of Cusack. In the meantime Horner is in jail and his reputation will certainly take a hit even if he is not prosecuted. In letting Ryder off of the hook, he is also exonerating Cusack and the Countess of Morcar will never know she has an untrustworthy maid who no doubt will find another opportunity to plot against the Countess. Finally, there is the question of what Holmes intends to do with the blue carbuncle. Will he return it to the Countess? Will he claim the reward for himself? If he returns it, how will he explain how he obtained it?

While this may be considered a Christmas story, if only for when it takes place, I am not so sure it is a good one.

THE UNTOLD CASES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

Mark Hanson © 2022

SHERLOCKIANS KNOW in 1947 Jay Finley Christ provided a wonderful service to us all. In order to facilitate the study of Sherlock Holmes, Christ took the 60 stories and reduced their titles to four letters. His abbreviations were built on a simple rule: take the four first letters of the title, ignoring "The ... of". For example:

The Adventure of the Devil's Foot was **DEVI**; The Adventure of the Copper Beeches was **COPP**; and The Problem of Thor Bridge was **THOR**.

There were some exceptions to this rule:

The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton was **CHAS** because the first name Charles was often reduced to Chas. in English; and The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb is **ENGR** because "enr" is the usual abbreviation for "engineer" in USA.

Christopher Redmond, BSI, ASH, Mbt, had suggested the idea of developing a similar way of reducing all the untold stories of the Canon (The Rest of the Stories!) to facilitate their usage in the future.

With Chris' approval, Mark Hanson has developed such a list that could be used for all Sherlockians in the future.

- **2COPT** The Case of the Two Coptic Patriarchs (**RETI**)
- **ABBAS** The Abbas Parva Tragedy (**VEIL**)
- **ABERG** The Abergavenny Murder (**PRIO**)
- **ABERN** The Dreadful Business of the Abernetty Family (**SIXN**)
- **ADDLE** The Addleton Tragedy and the Singular Contents of the Ancient British Barrow (**GOLD**)
- **ALUMN** The Singular Affair of the Aluminium Crutch (**MUSG**)
- **AMATR** The Adventure of the Amateur Mendicant Society (**FIVE**)
- **ARCHI** The Case of Archie Stamford, the Forger (**SOLI**)

- **ARNSW** The Arnsworth Castle Business (**SCAN**)
- **ATKIN** The Tragedy of the Atkinson Brothers at Trincomalee (**SCAN**)
- **BACKW** A Service for Lord Backwater (unconfirmed) (**NOBL**)
- **BERTS** The Case of Bert Stevens, The Terrible Murderer (**NORW**)
- **BISHP** The Bishopgate Jewel Case (**SIGN**)
- **BLACK** The Blackmailing of One of the Most Revered Names in England (**HOUN**)
- **BOGUS** The Bogus Laundry Affair (**CARD**)
- **BROOK** The Brooks Case (**BRUCE**)
- **CAMBR** The Camberwell Poisoning Case (**FIVE**)
- **CARDS** The Famous Card Scandal of the Nonpareil Club (**HOUN**)
- **CARRU** The Locking-Up of Colonel Carruthers (**WIST**)
- **CIRCM** The Circumstances Attendant on the Death of Van Jameson in Utrecht in the Year '34 (**STUD**)
- **COINR** The Case of the Coiner's Cuff (**SHOS**)
- **COMMN** A Very Commonplace Little Murder (**NAVA**)
- **CONKS** The Conk-Singleton Forgery Case (**SIXN**)
- **COUNT** The Saving of Count Von und Zu Grafenstein (**LAST**)
- **CUTTR** The Case of the Cutter Alicia (**THOR**)
- **DARLI** The Darlington Substitution Scandal (**SCAN**)
- **DOWSN** The Case of Old Baron Dowson (**MAZA**)
- **DUNDA** The Dundas Separation Case (**IDEN**)
- **ENGLI** The English Charters (**3STU**)
- **ETHER** The Case of Mrs. Etherege's Husband (**IDEN**)
- **FARIN** The Case of Mrs. Farintosh and the Opal Tiara (**SPEC**)
- **FASHN** The Case of the Fashionably Dressed Young Girl (**STUD**)
- **FERRS** The Case of the Ferrers Documents (**PRIO**)
- **FISHM** The Case of the Fish-Monger (**NOBL**)

The Untold Cases of Sherlock Holmes

- **FORGE** The Forged Cheque on the Crédit Lyonnais (**MAZA**)
- **FORRS** The Domestic Complication of Mrs. Cecil Forrester (**SIGN**)
- **FRANC** François Le Villard's Case Concerning a Will (**SIGN**)
- **FRENC** The Matter of Supreme Importance for the French Government (**FINA**)
- **FRIES** The Shocking Affair of the Dutch Steamship Friesland (**NORW**)
- **GIANT** The Case of Matilda Briggs and the Giant Rat of Sumatra (**SUSS**)
- **GREYH** The Case of the Grey-Headed, Seedy Visitor (**STUD**)
- **GRICE** The Singular Adventures of the Grice Patersons in the Island of Uffa (**FIVE**)
- **GROSV** The Little Problem of the Grosvenor Square Furniture Van (**NOBL**)
- **HAROL** The Death of Old Mrs. Harold (**MAZA**)
- **HENRY** The Case of Henry Staunton, whom Holmes Helped to Hang (**MISS**)
- **HOBBS** The Simple Matter of Fairdale Hobbs (**REDC**)
- **HOLLA** The Mission for the Reigning Family of Holland (**SCAN**)
- **HURET** The Arrest of Huret, the Boulevard Assassin (**GOLD**)
- **ISADO** The Case of Isadora Persano and the Remarkable Worm (**THOR**)
- **KINGS** The Case of the King of Scandinavia (**NOBL**)
- **LEECH** The Repulsive Story of the Red Leech and the Death of Crosby the Banker (**GOLD**)
- **LITTL** The Little Turns with John Clay (**REDH**)
- **MABER** The Trifling Matter of Mortimer Maberley (**3GAB**)
- **MANOR** The Manor House Case (**GREE**)
- **MARSE** The Intricate Matter from Marseilles (**IDEN**)

- **MATHW** The Case of Mathews (**EMPT**)
- **MCDON** The Two Successful Cases of Alec McDonald (**VALL**)
- **MERRI** The Case of Merridew of Abominable Memory (**EMPT**)
- **MONTP** The Case of the Unfortunate Mme. Montpensier (**HOUN**)
- **MOORE** The Dramatic Introduction of Dr. Moore Agar (**DEVI**)
- **MORGN** The Case of Morgan the Poisoner (**EMPT**)
- **MORTL** The Mortal Terror of Old Abrahams (**LADY**)
- **NETHR** The Whole Question of the Netherland-Sumatra Co. and of the Colossal Schemes of Baron Maupertuis (**REIG**)
- **PANCR** The St. Pancras Case (**SHOS**)
- **PAPER** The Case of the Papers of Ex-President Murillo (**NORW**)
- **PARAD** The Adventure of the Paradol Chamber (**FIVE**)
- **PECUL** The Case of the Peculiar Persecution of John Vincent Harden (**SOLI**)
- **PERKN** The Killing of Young Perkins Outside the Holborn Bar (**3GAB**)
- **PHILL** The Disappearance of Mr. James Phillimore (**THOR**)
- **POLIT** The Case of the Politician, the Lighthouse, and the Trained Cormorant (**VEIL**)
- **RAILW** The Case of the Railway Porter in his Velveteen Uniform (**STUD**)
- **REFUS** The Case for which Holmes Refused a Knighthood (**3GAR**)
- **REPEL** The Most Repellant Man (**SIGN**)
- **RICOL** The Case of Ricoletti of the Club Foot and His Abominable Wife (**MUSG**)
- **ROYAL** The Case Where Holmes Was of Assistance to the Royal Family of Scandinavia (**FINA**)

The Untold Cases of Sherlock Holmes

- **RUSSI** The Adventure of the Old Russian Woman (MUSG)
- **SAUND** The Case of Sir James Saunders (BLAN)
- **SAVAG** The Fate of Victor Savage (DYIN)
- **SLIPS** The Case of the Slip-Shod Elderly Woman (STUD)
- **SMITH** The Smith-Mortimer Succession Case (GOLD)
- **SOPHY** The Loss of the British Barque Sophy Anderson (FIVE)
- **STEVE** Bert Stevens, The Mild-Mannered Murderer (NORW)
- **STEW** The Death of Mrs. Stewart of Lauder (EMPT)
- **SULTN** The Commission from the Sultan of Turkey (BLAN)
- **TANKR** Major Prendergast and the Tankerville Club Scandal (FIVE)
- **TARLE** The Record of the Tarleton Murders (MUSG)
- **TIDEW** The Case of the Tide-Waiter (NOBL)
- **TIRED** The Adventure of the Tired Captain (NAVA)
- **TOSCA** The Sudden Death of Cardinal Tosca (BLAC)
- **TRAIN** The Robbery in the Train-De-Luxe to the Riviera (MAZA)
- **TREPO** The Case of the Trepoff Murder in Odessa (SCAN)
- **VAMBR** The Case of Vamberry, the Wine Merchant (MUSG)
- **VANDE** The Case of Vanderbilt and the Yeggman (SUSS)
- **VATIC** The Little Affair of the Vatican Cameos (HOUN)
- **VENOM** The Case of the Venomous Lizard or Gila (SUSS)
- **VICTR** The Case of Victor Lynch the Forger (SUSS)
- **VIGOR** The Case of Vigor the Hammersmith Wonder (SUSS)
- **VITTR** The Case of Vittoria, the Circus Belle (SUSS)

- **WARBR** The Case of Colonel Warburton's Madness (ENGR)
- **WARRN** The Complete Life-History of Miss Minnie Warrender (MAZA)
- **WHITE** The Case of the Old White-Haired Gentleman (STUD)
- **WILL** The French Case Concerned with a Will (SIGN)
- **WILSN** The Case of Wilson the District Messenger (HOUN)
- **WILSO** The Arrest of Wilson, the Notorious Canary-Trainer (BLAC)
- **WINNG** The Most Winning Woman (SIGN)
- **WOMAN** The Case of the Woman at Margate with No Powder On Her Nose (SECO)
- **WOODH** The Woodhouse Case (BRUC)
- **WOODM** The Tragedy of Woodman's Lee (BLAC)

THE VANISHING OF MARY SUTHERLAND

Naching T. Kassa © 2022

THE YEAR 1890 brought many a puzzle to the door of Sherlock Holmes. Some have been published in the Strand, while others remain unseen by the public eye. These cases have been collected and deposited into a certain dispatch box in the vaults of Cox and Company due to the sensitive nature of the problem and to the persons involved.

It has long been my practice to retain complete discretion where Holmes' clients are concerned, and only with permission have these cases been published. One such case, a problem involving a former client, may now see the light of day due to the deaths of certain persons involved.

It all began on a temperate May morning, where, having finished my rounds and finding myself strolling down Baker Street, I decided to pay a call on my friend. I found him in his rooms, seated amid a scattering of morning papers, the oily black clay pipe clamped between his lips.

"Good morning, Watson," said he as I stepped into the room. "I see Mrs. Watson has gone to visit Mrs. Forrester once again and you've had nothing nourishing but a cup of coffee. Would you care to partake of breakfast? Mrs. Hudson has gone through some trouble to prepare it."

I stood in some astonishment, glancing down at my attire, and searching for signs of what might have led Holmes to deduce my current situation.

"How did you know?" I asked, at last.

Holmes chuckled and rose to his feet. He directed the stem of his pipe toward my hat.

"When your wife is at home, she brushes your hat with great care and assures you have a good breakfast before you go about your rounds. I have often observed the stray marmalade stain on the cuff of your sleeve and toast crumbs upon your lapel. Today, there are no such signs, only the coffee stain upon your shirt, just there. And, as it is unlikely your wife has ceased to love you and no longer cares as to how you appear in the street, she must be absent. As she is known to visit Mrs.

Forrester during the first week of the month, one may infer that she has gone there.”

I shook my head. “It really is quite elementary.”

“Indeed.”

The rumble of a hansom cab interrupted us then, and Holmes crossed the room to peer out the window. I joined him and we both observed the woman who alighted as the cab drew to a halt. She wore a broad-brimmed straw hat, with a large curling red feather in it. I had seen the hat before but could not quite place it.

The woman moved with purpose toward Holmes’ door, and the bell rang below. Within moments, Mrs. Hudson appeared with a card on a salver. Holmes took it, and after urging Mrs. Hudson to show her in, handed it to me.

“Mrs. James Windibank,” I read aloud, and all at once the memory of the hat and the singular name sparked a memory in my head. “She is the mother of Miss Mary Sutherland.”

Holmes nodded in reply as the lady herself entered the room.

Mrs. Windibank stood a head shorter than Miss Sutherland, our former client, and possessed none of the vacuousness of her daughter. Rather, her expression was a calculating one, somewhat like that of a spider contemplating a fly in its web. She was stout and dressed in a rather ill-fitting purple dress.

Holmes greeted her congenially and bade her sit upon the settee. She sat and stared at me with a frown.

“My companion is the soul of discretion,” Holmes said. “You may speak before him as you would me.”

Mrs. Windibank snorted and turned her gaze on Holmes. “I am not a woman of means, Mr. Holmes,” she said. “I pay for the work that’s done and nothing else. That must be clearly understood before I tell you of my problem.”

“Certainly,” Holmes replied. “Your income as a typist will be taken into consideration.”

The woman’s mouth grew wide with surprise, and it was in this expression that I recognized her daughter at last.

“I noticed the lines upon your sleeves,” Holmes said. “They match those made by a typewriter meeting the table. There is also a smudge of

ink upon the palm of your right hand, and, as I recall, your daughter was also employed as a typist.”

“I see I have come to the right man,” Mrs. Windibank replied. “For it is Mary who has brought me here. The girl has vanished!”

I had expected some concern when the lady finally announced the reason for her visit to Holmes, and I was surprised by the lack of it. Indeed, Mrs. Windibank seemed more vexed than anything else.

“Pray, begin at the beginning,” Holmes said. “I would like all the facts before me if I am to find your daughter.”

“Well...I suppose it all began January last, when Mr. Windibank abandoned us,” Mrs. Windibank said with some heat. “He took all the money we had and absconded. I informed the police, but they still have yet to find him.”

“You should have come to me,” Holmes said. “I had some experience with the blackguard.”

“I did not think of it then.”

Holmes stared for several seconds. Then he sat opposite her and said, “Were you aware that your husband came to these very rooms to speak with me regarding Mr. Hosmer Angel?”

Mrs. Windibank blanched at these words. For a moment, I thought she might faint. I poured her a small glass of brandy, which she quickly downed.

“I did not know he had come to you,” she said in a hoarse voice.

“I don’t wonder he didn’t,” Holmes replied. “I suppose he did not wish to tell you I had laid a hunting crop across his back. Yes, Mrs. Windibank. I know everything there is to know about Mr. Angel, and the part you took in it. If I had thought Miss Sutherland would listen to me, I would have advised her to be done with the both of you.”

Holmes’ declaration caused a marked change in Mrs. Windibank. Gone was the vexed attitude, the imperious air. She became obsequious, rather like a child caught in the doing of some misdeed.

“It was only a jest,” Mrs. Windibank moaned. “We did not know she would take it so seriously.”

“And yet you were a willing participant in this swindle in order to keep her money at hand. Hardly the work of a loving mother. Did Miss Sutherland finally learn of your deceit?”

Mrs. Windibank nodded. "I was angry when Mr. Windibank left us, and I confessed all to her."

"She disappeared then?"

"No. We had a dreadful row, but she forgave me in the end. We were on quite good terms before she disappeared."

"And when was that?"

"A fortnight ago. She went out shortly after breakfast and she didn't come back. After she'd been gone a week, I had to take up typing in order to make ends meet."

"And you informed the police?"

"I did. They've found no trace of her."

"Had she fostered any new friendships? Had anyone new come into her life?"

"Only her clients. A gentleman called Chiselford had a great deal of work for her. He would come by with sheets for her to type once or twice a week. She seldom saw anyone else."

"Did you meet this Chiselford?"

"No. I was not at home when he came by."

"Did Miss Sutherland speak of him? Did he show an inordinate interest in her?"

Mrs. Windibank laughed. "Mary said he was a handsome and genteel man. I'm afraid he would have little interest in her."

Holmes rose to his feet. "I should like to see Miss Sutherland's room. Would it be agreeable if my friend and I were to visit you this afternoon?"

"I suppose so. The address is—"

"I know the address." He helped the woman to her feet and guided her toward the door. When she had gone, he began to pace the room.

"Do you remember what I said when we first encountered Mr. Windibank, Watson?"

"You said he'd rise from crime to crime until he ended on the gallows."

"I am afraid that assessment still rings true."

"You think him involved in Miss Sutherland's disappearance?"

"I think it probable. Mrs. Windibank, by her own admission, did not know this Chiselford. It may very well be Mr. Windibank in yet

another disguise. We will know more when we've visited 31 Lyon Place in Camberwell. You will, of course, accompany me?"

"I should not miss it."

"Good. Let us have our breakfast, then."



We arrived at the home of Mrs. Windibank sometime after two. She answered the door of the rather modest brick home and led us inside.

"We had a maid once," Mrs. Windibank said as we mounted the stairs. "But when the money from my first husband's business was spent, we had to do without."

"Your first husband was a plumber of some repute, was he not?" Holmes said.

"He was. He lacked in ambition though. If he'd had more of it, we might have afforded a home outside of Camberwell."

She led us into Miss Sutherland's room. "Here it is. Such as it is."

The room was a small one, but not uncomfortably so. Sunlight streamed through a window which looked out on an unkempt lawn. A desk stood before the window and a typewriter sat upon it. Across the room, beside the bed, was a small nightstand covered with two stacks of books, mostly romances. A large wardrobe sat beside the door. Holmes approached it first and threw it open.

Several dresses of varying styles and questionable taste hung within. Three pairs of boots lined the floor and several broad-brimmed hats sat on the shelf above. I recognized the hat Mrs. Windibank had worn that morning among them.

Holmes moved from the wardrobe to the bed. He peered beneath it for several seconds. Then rose and, by accident, brushed the books off with his right hand. They tumbled to the floor along with a small vase of rather dried flowers. The vase shattered on the floor, sending shards every which direction.

"Good heavens!" Mrs. Windibank cried. "You've made a right mess. No, no, leave it. I'll sweep it up. I don't want your blood on the floor as well." She hurried from the room.

“Watch the door, Watson,” Holmes said, scrambling under the bed. I did as he bade me, cracking the door and peering into the hall.

Seconds later, he reemerged with an envelope clutched in his hand and an expression of triumph on his face.

Mrs. Windibank’s steps sounded upon the stair, and I hissed a warning to Holmes, who thrust the envelope into his pocket. We resumed our task of restacking the books.

Mrs. Windibank entered and, after shooing us out of the way, began sweeping up the glass. Holmes moved onto the desk and the drawers. He studied them for several seconds before turning his attention to the window, which he stared through for several minutes. At last, he turned to Mrs. Windibank.

“I believe I have observed all that I can here, Mrs. Windibank. You may subtract the cost of the vase from my fee. Come, Watson, let us go.”

“You’re leaving? What about my daughter?”

“I have more inquiries to make, but I do believe I shall have a solution to this mystery soon. You will hear from me, Mrs. Windibank.”

We descended the stairs and hurried out into the street where Holmes hailed a cab. Soon, we were on our way back to Baker Street.

“You will remember, Watson,” Holmes said, “our case in Reigate and the incident involving the oranges?”

“I do indeed,” I said with a smile. “And I see you have employed that method of distraction once more. You wished Mrs. Windibank to leave the room?”

He withdrew the envelope from his coat pocket. “I did not wish her to see this.” He opened it and quickly read the contents, then handed it to me.

“It is a letter from Chiselford,” I said. “Dated the sixth of March and of a rather personal nature.”

“Not something one would expect of a client, don’t you think?”

I nodded. “It appears Miss Sutherland has once again fallen prey to the machinations of James Windibank.”

Holmes chuckled. “My theory, I am glad to say, is incorrect, Watson. Note the nature of the letter. James Windibank composed the letters as Hosmer Angel, using the typewriter where he worked. This letter is handwritten, meaning the author is not attempting to hide his identity.

The Vanishing of Mary Sutherland

It seems Mr. Chiselford did possess an affection for Miss Sutherland, and that affection was returned.”

“Then what has become of Miss Sutherland? Her clothes were not missing from the wardrobe, and I find it unlikely that she should leave everything behind.”

“A very good observation, old fellow! Yes, she did leave her clothes behind. Had you inspected them, however, you would have found that most were quite old and somewhat moth-eaten. The boots too were worn, and the hats were of a bygone style. I submit that Miss Sutherland no longer wanted them and so left them behind. Did you happen to notice the state of the desk?”

“I did not,” I admitted. “My attention was on Mrs. Windibank.”

“You would have found the desk mostly empty. One drawer, though locked, had been forced open. I believe that was Mrs. Windibank’s doing. Judging by my observations, she has searched that room several times. You no doubt recognized the hat she wore this morning.”

“Yes, I did. And I must confess, it baffled me. Why should she wear her daughter’s clothes?”

“Who can say?” Holmes replied with a shrug. “It is not much of an inference to imply that she may have used her daughter’s things at one time or another, affording her little to no privacy.”

“I see now why the letter was hidden. She did not wish her mother to see it, let alone meet her suitor. However, the question remains. Where is Miss Sutherland?”

“I hope to have that answer by this evening,” Holmes said. He paused and then said, “Do you find it curious, Watson, that a home such as Mrs. Windibank’s should possess such an unkempt lawn?”

“She confessed that she could no longer afford a maid. Perhaps she cannot afford a gardener as well.”

“That may be,” Holmes conceded. “However, even without the attention of a gardener, the yard seemed a strange place. The grass was tall and green but seemed greener and lusher at the center.”

We arrived at Baker Street but a moment later, and Holmes bid me good day. He asked me to return later that evening and I agreed.

With no wife at home and no patients to serve, I decided to spend the rest of the afternoon at my club. Time seemed to pass slowly there,

and I was glad when the hour of six arrived and I could once again visit my friend.

Holmes was seated in his chair near the dormant fireplace when I arrived. He welcomed me eagerly.

“Ah, Watson! I am glad you’ve come at last. I feared my visitor might leave before you arrived. He has information concerning Miss Sutherland. Keep the door open, if you would. I believe he is on his way up.”

A few moments later, a tall, thin man dressed in a dark suit entered the room. He peered at us through a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles, and though his firm handshake and rough hands marked him as a man of the working class, his speech seemed more like that of a gentleman. Holmes introduced himself and invited the man to sit.

“Would you mind if I stand, sir?” the fellow replied. “I told my wife I’d be home by a quarter of seven. She worries if I’m late.”

“I promise to be brief. You are Charles Chiselford of 323 Cadogan Lane, are you not?”

“I am, sir.”

“And you are a plumber?”

“Yes, and proud of it. I am my own master, you see, and owing to no one. If you don’t mind my asking, sir, is that why you’ve called me here? The messenger said you wanted to speak with me but didn’t say why.”

Before Holmes could answer, the door flew open, and a tall woman swept into the room. She wore a maroon dress and a veil to match. Chiselford rose as she entered.

“Mary!” he cried. “What has brought you here?”

The woman raised her veil. Her expression was no longer vacant but noble, much like the one I had glimpsed the last time she had visited Baker Street.

“A messenger, Charles,” the lady said. “When he told me who had sent the message—I knew I had to come. Mr. Holmes has found us and soon, mother will too.”

Holmes held up a hand. “It is true I have been engaged by your mother and charged with finding you, but I will reserve my judgement until I have heard your story. Will you sit?”

The man and wife took their place upon the settee. It was she who asked the question first.

“How did you find us?”

He produced the letter from his coat pocket and handed it to her. “The paper is of a particular bond, often used by tradesmen. A few inquiries as to men with such a name led me to two—one a carpenter and the other a plumber. Knowing that your father had been a plumber, I investigated your husband first. Clearly, that was the correct choice. Now, if you will be so kind, why have you left your mother’s house without a word?”

Mrs. Chiselford turned to her husband and clutched his hand. “In March, following the departure of my unlamented stepfather, I learned of my mother’s deception regarding the matter of Hosmer Angel. And, though I tried my best to forgive her, her treachery drove a wedge between us. I could never see her in quite the same light again. Small things which I had once found charming now infuriated me. What’s more, I found myself a prisoner in my own home with nothing but a bleak and loveless future to look forward to. And then, I met Charles. A former client, pleased with my past work, recommended me to him.”

“I am out of my element when it comes to typewriters,” Chiselford said, somewhat ruefully.

“We struck up an acquaintance, which soon became more,” Mrs. Chiselford continued. “And because ours was an unconventional love affair, we kept matters secret. It wasn’t until we became engaged that I decided to reveal all to my mother. Unfortunately, this was not to be.

“As you know, Mr. Holmes, I inherited a substantial sum in New Zealand stock from my Uncle Ned. I may take what interest I may, and for years I have given said interest to my parents, preferring to live on the income I earn from typing. I had been saving that money for our wedding and kept it in a locked drawer in my desk. You can imagine my surprise, when one evening a fortnight ago, I found my mother in my room with a knife in her hand, forcing the drawer. She took some of the money out and while she replaced the rest, I retreated from the doorway and hid down the hall.

“It was the last straw, Mr. Holmes. I found I could no longer live with my mother. Upon seeing her later, I pretended a headache and went to bed. I waited until I was sure she had gone to sleep and then I stole from the house, taking all that mattered to me.”

The lady fell silent.

“We do not wish ill on Mrs. Windibank,” Mr. Chiselford said.

“But we no longer wish to continue a relationship with her,” Mrs. Chiselford added. “I am content to allow her the interest from my inheritance as long as she never darkens our door again.”

Holmes, who had remained quiet during the couple’s tale, leaned forward, and said, “I will honor your wishes. However, I do not believe it necessary that you provide her with an income. She has taken up typing and has become more than self-sufficient.”

Mrs. Chiselford’s face brightened. “Thank you, Mr. Holmes. I am most grateful.”

“Tell me,” he said, as the couple rose to their feet. “When your stepfather disappeared, did your mother inform the police?”

“No. I don’t believe she did.”

“She did not seem concerned?”

“She said we were well-rid of him. Apparently, she had caught him with our maid, Agatha, the previous week. I believe I told you he was only five years my senior and fifteen years my mother’s junior. I suppose it was to be expected.”

“You said this took place in March. Surely, you mean January?”

“Oh, no. I remember the weather had just begun to warm when it happened, and I met Charles the following month.”

Holmes paused as though in thought and then said, “Thank you for your candor. May I offer you both my heartiest of congratulations? I wish you only the best of luck.”

When the couple had gone, in far better spirits than those in which they had come, Holmes said, “The hour grows late, Watson. Is your wife returning soon?”

“She will return on tomorrow’s evening train.”

“Capital. Would you consent to staying here tonight? I would like to make for Camberwell as early as possible tomorrow morning.”

“But Holmes! You gave your word—”

“Tut, tut, old fellow! I have no intention of betraying the happy couple. I have business with Mrs. Windibank. Business, which may keep her away from her daughter for good.”

The Vanishing of Mary Sutherland

We arrived at the Windibank home at half-past eight. To my surprise, Inspector Hopkins of Scotland Yard stood outside, waiting for us. We exchanged greetings and then Holmes knocked upon the door of the house.

Mrs. Windibank opened the door a few moments later.

“Have you word of my daughter?” the woman asked, casting a suspicious eye on Hopkins.

“She is well. Nothing evil has befallen her.”

“Then why isn’t she here?”

“She what you did,” Holmes replied. “From her vantage point upstairs, she saw you use the knife.”

Mrs. Windibank’s face grew pale at these words, and she dropped to the floor like a stone.

“Watson! Hopkins! Quick!” Holmes said. We rushed inside and together, lifted the woman into the sitting room. We set her upon the settee, and having loosened her collar, I administered a bracing sip of brandy from my flask. She soon sputtered to life and opened her wide and wild eyes.

“She saw it?” Mrs. Windibank cried hoarsely. “How I stabbed him in the garden?”

“You buried him there, didn’t you? At the center?”

She nodded. Her face, which had flushed due to the whisky, grew gray again. “I found him with Agatha, the maid. When I sacked her, he laughed. Said it wouldn’t stop him. That he only married me for my money. I waited a week, until the soil warmed, and I could dig. Then I walked him out there and...” She fell quiet. “I wondered if she saw. She was so different after I told her about him.”

When the uniformed police arrived, and the back lawn had been excavated, Hopkins took Mrs. Windibank into custody. We watched the wagon take her away and then hailed a cab.

We spoke little on the way, for Holmes was in a reflective mood. It was not until we reached his rooms and he had settled into his chair that I broke the silence.

“How did you know he had been stabbed, Holmes? Mrs. Chiselford did not see the murder, only the robbery.”

“It was a bluff, Watson. Either way, we would have caught her in a

crime. The lies she told about the disappearance of her husband would have strangled her, eventually.”

“But how did you know he’d died?”

“The lush green grass, old fellow. As you recall, the center was greener than the surrounding area.” He paused for a moment and with a sigh, said, “I fear I have done Mrs. Chiselford a disservice.”

“I would say just the opposite,” I replied. “You have freed her. Mrs. Windibank was a treacherous murderer. She is well out of her sphere of influence.”

“Unfortunately, my dear Watson, I was not speaking of this case, but the previous one. I should have made a greater effort to free her. Should have revealed the deception to her. It is a mistake I regret, Watson. And not one I intend to make again.”

END

**SHERLOCK HOLMES: PHYSICIAN AS DETECTIVE /
DETECTIVE AS PHYSICIAN**

Robert S. Katz, MD, BSI, ASH, Deckmate/CBLS © 2022

EARLY IN THE CANON, Sherlock Holmes describes himself as a consulting detective. In fact, he's the world's first consulting detective. While that's very impressive, it's also quite problematic. Given his intellectual skills, Holmes can be seen to have been "born" to detection. But in reality, no one successfully embarks upon a career without some degree of education, formal or otherwise.

In this modern age, there are ample opportunities for the study of police work and detection. For decades, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice has educated generations of New York Police officers and criminal justice personnel in all aspects of their profession. Uninformed officers have gone there to study for the exams required to become a detective. Police academies throughout the world offer formalized programs covering all aspects of law enforcement and forensic studies.

Yet, none of these institutions existed when young Sherlock Holmes decided upon a career path. Somehow, Holmes needed to obtain the training and education needed to not only enter a profession but also in fact to invent it. How did he accomplish this? Characteristically, Holmes does not divulge those details to the reader. But throughout the Canon there are hints and actions, which give us a sense of the direction that Holmes followed.

In a *Study in Scarlet*, Watson is dining with Stamford and we first learn of Sherlock Holmes. Watson asks: "A medical student, I suppose?"

Stamford replies: "No...as far as I know, he has never taken out any systematic medical classes."

Later on, Watson again asks: "And yet you say he is not a medical student?"

Again, Stamford replies: "No."

As will be subsequently noted, Stamford may have provided the most misleading information in the entire Canon.

What clues does Sherlock Holmes provide about his own background and where do they lead?

In fact, the first of those clues comes as soon as Watson is introduced to Holmes. He famously observes that Watson is of a medical type, has an unnatural tint to his skin, a haggard face, and holds his left arm in a stiff and unnatural manner. Watson is hardly a criminal and Holmes is not investigating a crime. He is, however, making several medical observations and diagnoses.

Another example of the diagnostic ability of Sherlock Holmes comes in “The Adventure of the Dying Detective.” Holmes brilliantly mimics the signs and symptoms of an obscure tropical disease. He pulls this off so effectively that he fools both Watson, a trained physician, and Culverton Smith, who is an expert in this particular disorder. This is a masterpiece that requires the skills of both an actor and insightful physician.

In “The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier,” Holmes seeks out the diagnostic opinions of the renowned Sir James Saunders. This eminent physician makes a considerable journey to render a diagnosis. Specialists of his rank seldom needed to leave their own consulting rooms. Patients came to them and they usually saw only the most interesting and unusual cases. But Saunders takes the case because, as Holmes mentions, “I was once able to do him a professional service.” Of course, Holmes might have provided some type of detective service to Saunders, but he is not specific about this. In addition, Holmes goes directly to the top. A layperson might seek the consultation of a dermatologist, but it’s generally someone local. Physicians directly seek the opinion of the leaders in their fields. Perhaps Holmes regarded Sir James as something of a colleague and had once assisted Saunders with a diagnostic issue of his own.

Things become even more complex in “The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist.” There is a shooting, and “the injured man was laid on his bed, and at Holmes’s request I examined him.” This is indeed unusual. Watson was a trained surgeon. A may lay wounded and perhaps dying. Most physicians would rush to offer care. Yet Watson waits until Holmes, in effect, gives his permission. Why would a doctor await the approval of a non-medical colleague before rendering care? Perhaps it was Holmes who had the real skill and training and he made the decision that Watson could handle things on his own.

Throughout the Canon, Holmes continues to offer subtle clues as to his educational background. In “The Adventure of the ‘Gloria Scott,’” Holmes looks at Old Trevor and notes the peculiar flattening and thickening of Trevor’s ears, the callosities on his hands, and the blurring of the tattoo. Modern readers regard this as another of Holmes’s deductive magic tricks. In fact, it’s basic physical diagnosis, taught to all medical students early in their education. Observation and inspection of the skin and outward appearances is but the start of any physical examination. The observations rendered are not those of a crime scene or criminal investigation. They are part and parcel of a medical consultation.

Holmes not only demonstrates an unusual command of medical diagnosis, but also shows a research interest that is far more medical than forensic. As he is introduced to Watson, he announces “I have found a reagent that is precipitated by haemoglobin and by nothing else.” The identification of blood is surely of significance in criminal investigation. Yet, for every forensic use of a test for the presence of blood, there are thousands of times when it is needed in a purely medical context. Physicians seek the presence of blood in urine, feces, and other body fluids and tissues far more often than detectives.

Finally, in “The Adventure of the Empty House,” Holmes tells us that he spent time undertaking research into coal tar derivatives at a laboratory at Montpellier. To this day, coal tar remains an important dermatologic therapeutic. It’s still used as a treatment for dandruff and other skin conditions. Again, this is a subject of more medical import than criminal. Perhaps Sir James Saunders once sought advice from Holmes on this use of a coal tar derivative as a treatment for one of his patients. This could be the “professional service” once rendered by Holmes.

It should be noted that lay personnel don’t just show up at research laboratories, such as Bart’s or Montpellier, and commandeering space and facilities for their own projects. Meaningful professional qualifications are needed to gain access to hospitals and universities of this or any renown. Holmes must have had substantive credentials in medicine to undertake these researches.

In an era when training as a detective was non-existent, Holmes

seems quite skilled and sophisticated, but as a physician who has directed his skills towards criminal investigation rather than patient care. From the above, it should be clear that Holmes did seek a rigorous education in order to become a detective. Since police academies were not available, Holmes went to medical school instead.

But is there any canonical evidence to indicate where Holmes obtained a medical degree? There is but one suggestion, but it must not be ignored. While on the Great Hiatus, Holmes decides to do some research with coal tar. Although the center of organic chemistry research in the late nineteenth century was in Germany, Holmes chooses to go to France. His choice of Montpellier is significant, as it is the location of the world's oldest continuously operating medical school. Nostradamus was noted alumnus. A stranger could not have simply appeared and obtained the run of the laboratories. But what of an alumnus of the school who also happened to be a world-famous detective, in fact the first consulting detective ever? This certainly would have opened doors to him. We also know that Holmes had French relatives in the Vernets. So, his going to Montpellier to obtain a medical degree would have been an easy choice. And his acquisition of a medical diploma makes Stamford's statement about Sherlock Holmes so very misleading. He tells us that Holmes was not a medical student. He was once but was not then. At a certain point, medical students graduate and become doctors. Holmes was not pursuing medical studies at Bart's because he had already completed them elsewhere.

Sherlock Holmes had extraordinary observational skills and research abilities. But they clearly reflected medical training and experience. Holmes chose not to practice medicine but used his education to create an entirely new profession. Doctor Sherlock Holmes would undoubtedly have been a great success as both a diagnostician and a researcher. Mister Sherlock Holmes, consulting detective, took his medical background and used it to become a legend.

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JOHN CLAYTON'S FAMOUS RIDE

Brad Keefauver, BSI, ASH, Deckmate/CBLS © 2022

In tribute to the Hansoms of John Clayton, of Peoria, Illinois

IT WAS ten o'clock when the colonel left his club that morning. It had been a *very* good night, and the colonel let the news vendor keep the whole pound note for a copy of the latest *Strand Magazine*. Sherlock Holmes did not appear to have returned to his Baker Street lodgings, but his doctor friend was still bally-hooing the detective's name every month.

The doctor never mentioned the professor, or his criminal empire, in his writings. The *Strand* tales focused on little social scandals and family problems like bad step-fathers. The colonel supposed he might be seen as a bad step-father, but those young idiots were Daff's problem.

At the cabstand, the colonel gave his address to the first cabbie in the rank and climbed into the hansom, then settled in and opened the magazine. Turning pages with the steady purposeful pace of the seasoned hunter closing on his prey, Moran found the newest record of the man he hoped to one day have in his sites. This one appeared to be something about a clerk in a stockbroker's office, of all things. Sherlock Holmes's life seemed to be a much more dull thing than he would have imagined from the man's obsessive campaign against the under-world in '91.

Colonel Moran heard the little trap door above him open and the cabman's bellow directed his way: "I see you're reading the latest Sherlock Holmes, sir. I just wanted to let you know that Mr. Sherlock Holmes himself has ridden in this very cab, if it would please you to know that."

Moran froze, his senses focused, and his mind — even after a sleepless night of cards and drink — became fully alert and puzzling over this sudden turn.

"Sherlock Holmes in this cab?" Moran asked, giving a quick check to his surroundings for any indication of a trap. "When was this?"

"Eighty-nine, sir. In the fall. I drove him around all day while he

followed two gentlemen who were staying at the Northumberland Hotel. When he found out what he wanted, he had me drive him quick to his train, probably to stop some crime or keep some poor girl's stepfather from mistreating her. This was before he got famous in *Strand Magazine* of course, but he still liked to tell you his name like he was famous."

"I see," Moran said, relaxing in his seat, but still trying to divine if there was anything of worth to be gotten from the driver. "Did you learn much of the man in driving him about. Any shops he frequented, that sort of thing?"

"Just that he didn't look like the magazine pictures, not at all. Had a black beard cut square at the end. I only remember that because some fellow asked me about it right after, and paid me a half-sovereign to tell him that. I swear it was the same man who seemed to be after Mr. Holmes earlier that day, but his coin was just as gold as any other. And no harm done, I can say."

The colonel was curious as to what this cabman had actually witnessed, but doubted that, after a five year remove, even the full story mattered much. He let the rest of the ride pass without encouraging the driver any further, but when he paid his fare, got one last bit:

"Just ask for cab 2704 and Mr. John Clayton, if you and yours ever want another ride in Sherlock Holmes's very own hansom," the driver said. "I can drive the same streets as if it happened yesterday."

"Thank you, I'll remember that," Colonel Moran said, knowing he would retain that knowledge about as well as this Clayton actually did of his encounter with a bearded Sherlock Holmes.



"I can't do it," Jim Clayton told his sister. "It's Christmas."

He dropped the December issue of *The Strand Magazine* on the table.

"Everybody is going to be talking about it. He's in *Strand Magazine*. After all these years, of talking about Sherlock Holmes, he's actually in one of Watson's accounts!"

Sarah was pulling a mince pie from the oven, her hands draped with

towels. The approaching holiday had kept her busy, and she looked at her brother with both a smile and a sigh.

“The old man is going to be destroyed by this. He’s spent ten years literally riding high on that time Sherlock Holmes was in his cab. This issue’s installment of Sherlock Holmes is called ‘Three Broken Threads.’ One of those broken threads is pa telling Sherlock Holmes about some guy in a fake beard riding in his cab. It wasn’t Sherlock Holmes that rode in his cab at all. He’s been telling every passenger he had a story that wasn’t even true.”

Jim’s sister gave a merry little laugh. Her brother was never the bright one.

“Did you say dad told Sherlock Holmes that the man in his cab wasn’t Sherlock Holmes?”

“Yes. It’s awful.”

“And Doctor Watson wrote the whole thing up in *The Strand Magazine*? How did Doctor Watson know dad told Sherlock Holmes?”

“Well, Holmes wired Shipley’s Yard and asked for cab number 2704, and had the old man to come up to 221B Baker Street. Dad went up, told them the story, and Sherlock Holmes gave him a half-sovereign. You know, his lucky day coin?”

Sarah put her hand to her forehead. “Ah, Jim. You poor dunderhead.”

“What? It makes him look like a fool!”

“Well, yes, because you’re both a couple of dunderheads. You know that.”

“And that’s a good thing?”

“Does it say cab 2704 in *The Strand Magazine*?”

“Well, yes.”

“And John Clayton, there in printed words.”

“Yes.”

Sarah dug into her apron pocket, and handed Jim a small bounty of coins. “Get down the street and buy every copy of that issue this will buy.”

“Sarah, we can’t afford to buy every copy to keep people from reading it!”

Her shoulders dropped and she just stared at her brother.

“What?”

“Just do it. I’ll tell dad about the magazine. He’s about to have a very good Christmas.”

Jim had long ago learned to just do what his older sister told him, so off he went, not quite understanding what she was up to. She was a lot like Sherlock Holmes that way, with her mysterious reasons for things. But somehow they always worked out.

He just hoped nobody wrote about *him* in *The Strand Magazine*.



After nine years in prison, the routines had gotten pretty . . . routine for the former colonel, the former hunter, the former assassin. The same jail cell. The same soup on Mondays. The same faces. Day followed day, week followed week, month followed month. The weather changed, but dates rarely mattered. October of 1903 wasn’t anything Sebastian Moran noticed or marked in his head as other men marked off days on their calendars. Just another day inside for Moran, in a life of such, stringing out ahead of him.

What Moran did notice as the weather turned the temperature and moistness of his cell in an Octoberish direction was that Jones the guard had developed a new chuckle whenever he passed Moran’s cell. There was nothing new about Moran himself that made him worthy of that chuckle. He was the same prisoner in the same cell he had been for years, and Jones the same guard walking by. And yet Jones was chuckling like there was now something that amused him about Moran.

A week into the chuckle-days, one of the new guards came on with the same chuckle, and Moran heard the words “Strand Magazine.” And Moran knew whence that chuckle came. The doctor had decided at last to tell Moran’s tale.

The prisoner wondered if Sherlock Holmes had been killed again, for Watson to be writing about the detective again. He thought about asking Jones as he passed on his rounds, but then Moran thought better.

If his story being told in *The Strand Magazine* was an indication that Watson thought Sherlock Holmes was dead again, maybe he was really dead this time. And guards could read of Moran’s perfect killing

John Clayton's Famous Ride

shot which unfortunately turned out to hit a replica of Holmes. And perhaps a cabman could tell his passengers that he had driven Colonel Sebastian Moran in the very cab they rode in, just like they talked about Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

It was a good thought, and one Sebastian Moran allowed himself a smile at, for that day and many a day after.

PISTOL PACKING WATSON

Dennis W. Keiser © 2022

IT WAS a cool morning that Saturday in late 1900. I had risen early to run an errand to one of the local businesses in the neighborhood and had planned to be back in time for breakfast. It was Sherlock Holmes's habit of getting up late on most weekends, so I knew I had plenty of time to complete my mission.

As I returned and entered our rooms, Holmes was already up, smoking his morning pipe and waiting for Mrs. Hudson's breakfast.

"I see you have been to Mr. Whitmoyers' Saddle and Harness Shop around the corner."

"How could you possibly know where I was at such an early hour?"

"Well, when you consider the amount of time since you left our rooms and returned, I could assume that you hadn't traveled very far. Furthermore, you smell of saddle soap and mink oil which is used for finishing fine leather products. Plus, the package that you have under your arm has the same smell, and it has oily stains from the mink oil.

"Furthermore, since you are not planning to purchase a horse or a wagon, I can only assume that your visit was of another nature. Plus, I can't help but notice that slight bulge under the left side of your coat."

"Well, you are correct, Holmes, on all those points. I had recently visited Mr. Whitmoyer in order to have him make a custom shoulder holster for my service revolver. In the past, you have always expected me to bring my revolver on our little adventures to the country with total disregard as to bringing your revolver. The recent incident at the Thor Bridge was very upsetting when you used my firearm to prove your theory about how Mrs. Gibson was murdered. You didn't think about it being damaged against the parapet when you reenacted the murder and let my treasured pistol fall in the Thor Mere. You didn't even offer to clean the pistol and oil it when we returned to Baker Street.

"I have ruined several coats carrying my service revolver in my coat pocket and had to have a tailor try to repair the pocket several times. Besides, it is unsafe to carry a loaded firearm in one's coat pocket.

"This small matter has concerned me as to what I should do, and

Pistol Packing Watson

then the answer came from Wiggins. As you might know, I have been helping him with his reading lessons in my spare time and together we have been reading Dime Novels about gunfighters of the American West. Wiggins had found some discarded copies of these Dime Novels and we have had great fun reading them together.

“One day as we were reading about Doc Holiday and Bat Masterson, I noticed that they didn’t wear regular cowboy holsters, but shoulder holsters. Wearing such a rig enables them to be able to shoot while sitting down at a gambling table and appear to be unarmed when walking in public.

“This became my answer to carrying firearms during our investigations in the field. And finally, Holmes, if you unwrap that parcel you will see that I had a shoulder holster made for your revolver.

“So, let’s partake of Mrs. Hudson’s lovely breakfast.”

**THE REST OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE IN LIMERICKS, OR
HE WAS A BETTER BUSINESSMAN THAN WE THOUGHT**

Sandy Kozinn, ASH © 2022

Jabez Wilson was feeling so sad,
For everything had turned out bad:
His sinecure lost
At no little cost,
And his helper, John Clay, was a cad!

He went to his cellar to see.
It was covered with dirt and debris.
There was too much to clean;
To hire workers would mean
He would have to pay someone a fee.

Jabez thought “Oh dear, what can I do?
This awful mess I’ve to work through.”
Then he had an idea,
Which brought him much cheer.
“I’ll make money from this – that’s my cue.”

The papers had told of the plan
To steal gold from a bank. The fan-
Atics who took
A much closer look
Would tell all their friends, to a man.

So he put up a sign: “If you’re willing
To give Mr. Wilson a shilling,
You can see how the crime
Didn’t net Clay a dime!”
Droves of folks then made Wilson a killing.

The Rest of the Red-Headed League in Limericks

Then Wilson hired help – at full pay –
While he took folks on tours every day.
Now he no longer weeps.
In his cash box he keeps
The fruits of Clay's labor. Hurray!

If you think you are going to fail,
There's a moral to this little tale:
Use your head, as you should,
And it's likely you could,
Make money, and never more wail

WAS BEPPO GUILTY OF MURDER?

Rich Krisciunas, Deckmate/CBLS

IN THE ADVENTURE of the Six Napoleons, Sherlock Holmes is asked by Inspector Lestrade to help solve a series of mysterious thefts involving busts of Napoleon. What makes the case interesting is that the busts are destroyed after they are stolen and the body of an Italian man, Pietro Venucci, with connections to the Mafia, is found near the scene of one of the burglaries. In his pocket, the dead man had a photo of Beppo, who had worked where the busts were made. Eventually we learn that someone has hidden the valuable black pearl of the Borgias in one of the busts. Holmes then concluded that Beppo, who Holmes, Lestrade and Dr. Watson caught breaking into another home, must have been the one who smashed all of the stolen busts and that Beppo killed Venucci.

The story ends with Lestrade taking Beppo to Scotland Yard leaving every reader with the belief that Beppo was charged, convicted and hanged for his crimes.

In the sixty stories in the Canon, we never read about Sherlock Holmes testifying in court. Frequently, the case ends with Holmes solving the case and the criminal confessing his guilt and being taken to Scotland Yard. Other stories ended in one of two ways; Holmes dispensed justice and let the criminal go free or the criminal who, initially eluded Holmes, met his end in a sinking ship, or died in a hotel in a foreign country. The reason an author provides a confession is to prove the detective was right in his deductions and there isn't enough time for a trial. In real life, when cases are tried in court, convictions, without confessions, are harder to secure. Proving someone guilty beyond a reasonable doubt is not easy because legal rules of evidence govern when testimony and exhibits are admissible. Normally, witnesses must have personal knowledge of events before they can testify. Speculation and conclusions by consulting detectives are generally inadmissible. In court, Holmes' conclusions and deductions would be subject to the scrutiny and objections by a learned barrister.

So what happened to Beppo after he was arrested?

Insp. Lestrade took Beppo to Scotland Yard where he was placed in a

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small, dank cell where he sat for two hours before being taken out. Lestrade told him to sit on a chair behind a table and Lestrade began to interrogate him. Beppo's hands were still secured by the metal restraints that Lestrade had placed on his wrists after he was arrested and he had shackles securing his ankles.

"Well, Beppo. We've got you. You were caught in the act, stealing that bust of Napoleon. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were with me and we witnessed it all. We also know you killed that Italian fellow Venucci the night before because you had the knife you used and it still had his blood on it. This is your chance to talk and tell us why you did it."

Beppo sat motionless and stared forward and had no reaction. It was as if Lestrade wasn't even in the room. After a minute of silence, Lestrade slammed his hand hard on the table and spoke again. "You're going to the gallows Beppo. This is your only chance to give your side of the story. Don't be a fool, man. Help yourself. Talk so the judge may sentence you to spend your time in Newgate prison instead of hanging from a rope."

Beppo sat quietly without blinking his eyes and his ugly face failed to react in any way. His body seemed to be frozen like a statue. It wasn't the reaction Lestrade had hoped for. Lestrade had wanted Beppo to confess his role and explain how he stabbed Venucci who had waited for him outside the house he had burglarized. But he didn't. After waiting in silence for almost five more minutes, Lestrade said, "Get up and go back to your cell." Beppo sat motionless.

"I said get up, man." Beppo moved for the first time. His face remained expressionless and he rose from his chair and slowly made his way back to his cell. Lestrade picked up his papers and left the station and made his way to the office of the Crown attorney to explain the evidence against Beppo. Lestrade had hoped for a confession but felt he still had a strong case.

Insp. Lestrade connected with Holmes and they both made their way to the office of the Crown counsel, Sir Baxter Winthrop, who worked for the Attorney General's office. Winthrop was a barrister in his sixties who had tried many of the most infamous cases heard in the halls of the criminal court, the Old Bailey. He had a large office near the cour-

thouse that overlooked Newgate prison. He was tall, with white hair and his face bore the wrinkles of years of experience, practicing law in stressful conditions. He was meticulous, wearing a clean, black suit and his shoes had been recently polished. He had a reputation for successfully defending some of the most notorious criminals in London. A year ago, he defended a doctor accused of poisoning his mistress and obtained an acquittal. Four months after the verdict, the doctor was charged with murder again. Winthrop refused to defend him and gave up his defense practice and decided to become a public prosecutor. The doctor was later convicted of poisoning his young daughter and his mother-in-law whose life he had insured for six figures.

Lestrade and Sherlock Holmes were escorted into the office by a young clerk. "Good afternoon, inspector, what do you have for me today?"

"My name is Insp. Lestrade, sir. This here is Mr. Sherlock Holmes. I'm here to seek a warrant for a murder committed by an Italian criminal that I arrested. He killed a man on Kensington two nights ago after he just got out of gaol for stabbing another man last year. We caught him committing a burglary last night on Laburnam Lodge. Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson will be witnesses."

"Holmes and Watson, eh? I've read their stories in the Strand," he said softly looking at Holmes, "but I don't remember ever seeing either you or Watson in court. Gentlemen, have a seat."

"We had a series of break-ins and thefts of busts of Napoleon," Lestrade continued. "The odd thing is that the perpetrator would smash the busts that he stole. As a result of my investigation, I suspected that this Italian, whose name is Beppo, was responsible and Holmes and Watson were with me when we saw him go into a house and come out with another Napoleon bust. He tried to run away but we caught him after he smashed the bust. He still had the knife he used to kill the poor bloke the night before. His blood was still on the knife."

"What did Beppo say when you interrogated him? Did he confess to the murder?"

"No. He didn't make a peep. I told him we had him on his way to the gallows and I was going to give him a chance to say his peace but he refused."

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“You must be getting older and softer, inspector,” said the prosecutor with a tinge of sarcasm. “That’s fine. So tell me about the man who was murdered. Who was he?”

Lestrade ignored the slight. “His name was Pietro Venucci. He was originally from Naples and one of the greatest cut-throats in London. He is connected with the Mafia. Inspector Hill identified his body. I found a photograph of the accused in his pocket. We think Beppo must have broken the rules in some fashion so Venucci went looking for him and that’s when Beppo knifed him to death.”

“And Holmes and Dr. Watson saw Beppo stab the man?”

“Well, no. Holmes and Dr. Watson saw him commit the burglary earlier this morning. A journalist, Mr. Horace Harker, from the Central Press Syndicate, whose house was burglarized found his body in a puddle of blood just outside his house.”

“So he saw the stabbing?”

“No. He was in his den around 3:00 a.m. when he heard a horrible yell. He came downstairs and saw his window open and his bust had been stolen. He grabbed a poker and went outside and fell over the body of the dead man whose throat had been slashed.”

“So he never saw the thief or the altercation?”

“No.”

“Did anyone witness the stabbing?”

“Not really.” said Lestrade, whose concerned voice seemed to drop in confidence.

“So, why do we think this Beppo killed the Mafia cut-throat?”

“Well, Sherlock Holmes deduced that he is the killer and he is very confident that he’s our man.”

“Hmm.” said the Crown counsel. “Tell me more about these break ins. What evidence do we have that this Beppo is the one who did them?”

“Well, it started last week at Morse Hudson on Kennington Road. Beppo grabbed one of the busts and smashed it in the store and ran away. That was the first of several he did.”

“Did he smash the bust in front of the staff?”

“Well, no, actually he smashed it after the assistant left the shop. Several people saw him run away.”

“Who are these witnesses who were outside?”

“Well, sir, we don’t have any names. According to the assistant, although several passers-by declared that they had noticed a man run out of the shop, he could neither see anyone nor could he find any means of identifying the rascal.”

“You said there were other burglaries?”

“Yes.” answered Lestrade quickly. “There were two burglaries involving a doctor who lived on Kensington, down the road from Morse Hudson. Dr. Barnicot bought two busts from Morse Hudson. Three nights ago, his house was broken into and a bust stolen and smashed outside and later that morning when he went to his surgery in Lower Brixton he found that the second bust he had there also met the same demise.”

“Did Dr. Barnicot see who broke into his house?”

“No,” answered Lestrade a bit sheepishly. “It happened while he was sleeping and when he woke up in the morning he discovered that his bust was missing.”

“That doesn’t sound like too strong of a case. If I recall correctly, aren’t you the same Scotland Yard inspector who brought in that attractive danseuse who you said had killed Lord St. Simon’s bride on her wedding day?”

Lestrade’s face reddened but he didn’t speak.

“Yes. I remember now. That was a fine one. Then the bride showed up alive with her rich American husband. I had a great time with the Home Office explaining why I had wanted to charge her with murdering a person who was never killed. I think I had better tread carefully with you.”

Lestrade coughed uncomfortably, “In addition to the one where the murder happened, the last one was on Laburnum Lodge. It was the house of Josiah Brown. That’s the one where Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson and I caught him red-handed.”

“Thank God for that one,” the senior barrister smiled. “And so what is our theory about why Beppo is the same person who broke into all of the other places?”

“Well,” said Lestrade, “He used to work at Gelder & Co. over in Stepney and that’s the place where all of these busts of Napoleon were

made. Gelder & Co. sold three busts to Morse Hudson and three busts were sold to Harding Brothers on High Street. Apparently, a jewel was stolen from the Princess of Colonna's room at the Dacre Hotel. It was the famous black pearl of the Borgias."

Lestrade continued, "We found the pearl inside a bust that Mr. Holmes bought from a man who purchased it at Harding Brothers. We think Beppo had hidden the stolen jewel in one of the busts before he went to prison. When he got out, he tracked them down one by one. Beppo was breaking into these houses trying to find the bust that he hid the pearl in."

"Ah," smiled the Crown counsel, "Now we're getting closer. Who at Gelder & Co., is going to testify that they saw Beppo hide the pearl in the bust of Napoleon?"

"Well, we don't have an eyewitness to that," stammered Lestrade. "It's circumstantial."

"Who is the Italian employee who discovered the persons who purchased the busts?"

Lestrade shook his head again. "We don't know for sure, sir."

"Was Beppo the only person who made these Napoleon busts?" asked the Crown Counsel.

"No," responded Lestrade as he looked down at his feet. "But, he is one of several Italians who worked at Gelder. You see, they were probably all working together."

"Probably?" responded the barrister, as he stood up and placed his hands on his desk, his voice rising. "Probably? Inspector, we don't deal with probabilities and guesswork. When I go to court I need hard evidence. Eyewitnesses. Someone with personal knowledge who can connect the dots so I can convince the jury that Beppo is guilty. My burden of proof is beyond a reasonable doubt, not probably. I know the arguments the defence will make to the jury. Let me ask you this, what evidence do we have that Beppo was the same person who stole the jewel and broke into all of these houses?"

The barrister returned to his chair and Lestrade sat quietly and turned his head and looked at Holmes to get his help.

Holmes spoke up, "What about the pearl?," said Holmes, "By a connected chain of inductive reasoning, I traced it from the Prince of

Colonna's bedroom at the Dacre Hotel, where it was lost, to the interior of the last of the six busts of Napoleon which were manufactured by Gelder & Co., of Stepney. You will remember, Sir Baxter, the sensation caused by the disappearance of this valuable jewel and the vain efforts of the London police to recover it. I was consulted upon the case. Suspicion fell upon the maid of the Princess, who was an Italian, and she had a brother in London. The maid's name was Lucretia Venucci and there is no doubt in my mind that this Pietro who was murdered two nights ago was the brother."

Holmes moved forward to the edge of his chair and spoke with passion and confidence, "Beppo had the pearl in his possession. He may have stolen it from Pietro, he may have been Pietro's confederate, he may have been the go-between of Pietro and his sister. It is of no consequence to us which is the correct solution. The main fact is that he HAD the pearl, and at that moment, when it was on his person, he was pursued by the police. He made for the factory in which he worked, and he knew that he had only a few minutes in which to conceal this enormously valuable prize, which would otherwise be found on him when he was searched."

"This is pure speculation by you, Mr. Holmes" said the barrister. "With all of the other Italians working at Gelder & Co. why wasn't it just as likely that someone else stole the pearl? Did one of the thieves who stole from Dr. Barnicot ask Beppo to break into Harker's home? Everything you suggest is pure speculation."

The prosecutor lowered his voice and spoke slowly while repeating Holmes' words for emphasis, "You said, 'Beppo had the pearl in his possession after the stabbing. He may have stolen it from Pietro, he may have been Pietro's confederate, he may have been the go-between of Pietro and his sister.' He may have, he may have, he may have. You have no clue as to what really happened. In court, witnesses are not permitted to guess or speculate, in court the defendant's barrister will object to your speculations and none of your conclusions will be heard by the jury."

Holmes eased back slowly in his chair with a look of disappointment on his face.

"Let me ask you this, what other evidence is there to be sure that

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Beppo was the same person who broke into Harker's house and Beppo was the same person who stabbed Venucci?"

"Who else could it be?" asked Lestrade, shaking his head.

"Any of those other Italians who worked at Gelder & Co. Someone he met in prison who told him about the busts. Someone who stabbed Venucci and then asked him to break into Brown's house because he didn't want to get caught. There are a number of possibilities that we can't disprove. Our burden at trial is to convince twelve jurors not that he might have done it or probably did it but beyond a reasonable doubt that he killed Venucci."

The prosecutor rose from his chair again as he spoke, "Isn't it just as possible a different person, working with Beppo stole the bust from Harker? Is it equally plausible that someone else killed Venucci? If Venucci was a Mafia assassin, isn't probable that he has made several enemies who might have been looking to get even with him? What if the person who killed Venucci planted a photograph of Beppo in the dead man's pocket to divert attention from himself? Just because Beppo stole a bust from Brown's house doesn't necessarily mean he broke into Harker's house and doesn't mean he killed the man whose body was found outside Harker's house."

"But sir," answered Lestrade, "What about the knife I found in Beppo's pocket. There was blood on the knife. I believe the knife was the same knife he used to stab Venucci."

"Whose blood was on the knife?" said the Crown counsel with an exasperated voice. "There's no way of identifying blood on a knife, wouldn't you agree Mr. Holmes?"

"That is true," said Holmes. "I read recently that the Germans are developing a scientific procedure to definitively identify a person's blood but, unfortunately, it's not ready, yet."

"For all we know that blood came from a goose he killed for dinner last night?" said the barrister. "If he killed a man with the knife, don't you think he'd wash off the blood? Who kills a man and doesn't worry about wiping the knife clean? The jury will laugh me out of court if I charge this Beppo with murder. The chief justice will probably instruct the jury to find the man not guilty."

"One more thing I've been thinking about Lestrade," added the

barrister. “You said the man who died was a Mafia cut throat? Why did he look for Beppo?”

Lestrade spoke confidently, “We think Beppo probably has broken the rules in some fashion. He had the photo of Beppo in his pocket probably so that he may not knife the wrong person. He dogged the fellow, saw him enter Brown’s house, waited outside for him, pulled out a knife to stab Beppo and in the scuffle he received his own death-wound. We found him lying in a pool of blood with a knife next to his body.”

“So that’s what you both suspect?” asked the barrister.

“Yes sir.” said Lestrade in a voice barely above a whisper as Holmes nodded his head.

“And you found a knife in the blood next to the dead man?”

Lestrade nodded his head. The barrister sat back down in his chair and lit a cigar that he pulled from a box in a drawer in his desk.

“Well that sounds like it was self-defense to me. A Mafia assassin, tracks down Beppo, finds him and decides to mete out Mafia justice in the middle of the night for something that happened back in Italy. He pulls out his knife and tries, unsuccessfully, to kill Beppo and, as you put it, ‘receives his own death-wound.’ If Beppo killed that journalist while he was trying to stop him from completing a burglary, that would be murder, but from what you tell me, he had a right to defend himself from an attack by Venucci and had a right to repel the attack with deadly force.”

The barrister rose from his chair and walked to the window and blew out smoke from his cigar as he spoke softly, “The only thing we really have in common is that several busts of Napoleon were stolen but that doesn’t mean that Beppo was same man who stole all of them. I have made my decision. We would be better off simply charging this man with a single count of burglary for the break-in that you witnessed. We can get him convicted of that for sure and he’ll be sentenced to Newgate Prison for a good number of years.”

“I’ll prepare the warrant for you, Lestrade, and we will notify you about testifying in court Mr. Holmes. Thank you for coming. Please give my regards to Dr. Watson.”

The case was tried in the courthouse of the Old Bailey two months

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later and the jury returned a guilty verdict of burglary in fewer than five minutes. Because of his prior criminal record, Beppo was sentenced to 14 years in prison but he didn't live long enough to complete his sentence. Beppo was found strangled in his cell. It was suspected that a cousin of Venucci was responsible but that was never proven. And now you know the rest of the story.

AND THEN...

“THE THREE STUDENTS”

David L. Leal, ASH, Deckmate/CBLS © 2022

St. Luke’s College

IN JUNE OF 1900, my friend Sherlock Holmes and I were happy to spend several days in Camford, that great university town.

The reason for this visit was the annual Remembrance of Benefactors Dinner of St. Luke’s. In light of our service to the college, the Warden thought it appropriate to honour us with an invitation to the special evensong and high table. What I mean by “our service,” of course, is that Holmes solved not one but two mysteries, which it was my honour to record. While neither has yet been published, as more time must pass before they can be revealed to the world, Holmes had prevented what every Victorian individual and institution most fears – a scandal in the public press.

At the suggestion of Mr. Soames, Tutor and Lecturer at the College of St. Luke’s, we substituted furnished lodgings in town for rooms in the college. We arrived on Friday around one o’clock and were comfortably ensconced on the first floor of D staircase in Surrey Quad, directly above Mr. Soames. As the remembrance events were scheduled for later that evening, our afternoon was free. I wandered down to the Green to watch the ‘Varsity cricket team play MCC, while my friend visited the library to continue his researches on monastic charters.

We met back at our rooms at four-thirty and walked downstairs for tea with Mr. Soames. His outer green baize door was open, signifying that he was present and available, so we knocked on the inner oak door, which he opened almost immediately.

“It is so good to see you, Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson” he exclaimed with enthusiasm. “Welcome back to St. Luke’s. I hope you had a pleasant train journey. I am looking forward to the evensong and high table tonight. We have invited a distinguished group of former students and friends of the college. Many have influential positions in politics, the church, journalism, academia, and commerce.” With a smile, he

added "Perhaps you will find that some are in need of a discrete solution to a distressing problem?"

My friend replied "We are indeed honoured by the invitation and look forward to meeting the other guests." With good humour, he added "And I will certainly not refuse any professional request that is made, especially over a single quinta vintage port."

"We have each had an enjoyable afternoon in this most special part of England. I am never happier than when I am exploring an archive, and I have hopes that my manuscript on charters will soon see the light of day."

I added that I spent several pleasant hours watching the last day of the 'Varsity match against MCC. "And to top it off, the home side won by three wickets, with one man hitting a century and another man his first half century. I also saw a very nice partnership by two men on the MCC side in the final inning, but it was not enough to overcome the 'Varsity lead."

The scout then arrived with the tea. As our lunch had only consisted of pork pies at King's Cross, Holmes and I looked forward to the repast. I recalled from our last visit, which is described in my narrative titled "The High Table Hallucination," that the scout was Smithson and had replaced Bannister some years ago.

After a few minutes, Soames brought up the topic that was once so painful to him. "While we enjoy this tea, I'm sure you will be interested to hear more about those three students in Dr. Watson's narrative. I am glad you have not yet published it, but I enjoyed reading the draft you kindly sent me."

"Your text, Dr. Watson, ended rather abruptly, with young Gilchrist about to depart for the colonies and Daulat Ras and Miles McLaren soon to take the Fortescue exam. Other students in the college also sat for it, of course, although you did not meet them. Gilchrist, Ras, and McLaren all lived on my staircase, as you will recall, and they regularly passed by my door. Any of them might have seen the key in the hole and perceived an opportunity. We know it was Gilchrist, of course, but additional details have since come to light that you might find interesting. I have also learned something about their lives since they went

down, and I am happy to enlighten you, although I'm afraid the news is not all good."

Soames poured the Darjeeling into three fine bone china cups. Holmes and I began to eat the small sandwiches, sponge cakes, scones, and other savories with relish.

The First Student: Young Gilchrist

"I distinctly remember Gilchrist as a fine, manly fellow" I reminisced.

"Yes, indeed he was, and it was most unfortunate that he was the guilty party. I must add that your story was not entirely complete, although that is no fault of your own. You see, Gilchrist had been in my room and betrayed our trust by copying the exam. Future readers of the story may think this absurd, especially those who benefitted from a classical education. Gilchrist would have immediately discovered that the text was a chapter of Thucydides, whose writing is well known to all public school boys and university students. None would have encountered it for the first time at a scholarship exam. However, as I mentioned to you during your last visit, I assigned for the Fortescue exam what I believe to be the long lost chapter of Thucydides. It had lain dormant in the Camford archive for many years, and no student would have seen it previously. Copying this document word-for-word would have been necessary to anyone determined to gain an unfair advantage."

"Our young gentleman, who suffered all the indignities common to the poor student, must have then yielded to an additional temptation. My pocket watch, a treasured inheritance from my grandfather, was nowhere to be found. My fear is that Gilchrist stole it, although I cannot prove it. I reported its loss to the police, and about a year later, it was recovered. The identification was through the marks on the inside; my grandfather had rather a reckless youth and consequently pawned it multiple times before settling down and becoming a respected judge. As you described in *The Sign of Four* – wait, I have the Spencer Blackett edition right here, let me see – "It is very customary for pawnbrokers in England, when they take a watch, to scratch the number of the ticket

with a pin-point upon the inside of the case. It is more handy than a label, as there is no risk of the number being lost or transposed."

"I had taken note of those marks and so I was able to share them with the police. Scotland Yard had long suspected a certain London pawnshop of receiving stolen goods, and when it was raided, my watch was identified through the marks. The pawnbroker, James Winter by name, denied all knowledge of how it came into his possession. His lack of memory about my watch, and the many other objects in his collection, did him no good. Mr. Winter is currently enjoying the hospitality of Her Majesty at Dartmoor. I understand that he is no stranger to the establishment."

"At that point, Gilchrist was already in uniform with the British South Africa Police, which you called the Rhodesian Police in your story. I did not want to scupper his new career without evidence, and no good could come from an accusation that might not be true. It was theoretically possible that one person copied the exam while another stole my watch. I did not tell you about this at the time because I did not miss the watch until after you left Camford."

"To tell the truth, I am rather glad that Gilchrist left when he did. His upbringing was difficult enough, and to even be accused of cheating, let alone of theft, would have wrecked all his prospects. You quote me in your study as describing him as 'hard working and industrious,' and that was true. He was also very popular among the other students, and an excellent athlete. He may not have been quite the 'fine scholar' I generously described, but he was indeed 'hard-working and industrious.' I doubted that he had much chance of winning the Fortescue competition, but he needed the money, so I could hardly prevent him from entering."

"And the colonies have long been used by families as a second chance for wayward youth. Many a young man of good family has been sent to a distant outpost until he is ready to rejoin society. How we would feel about the colonies sending us their troublesome youth is a question I dare not entertain, but colonial rustication is something of a tradition at Camford."

"As you must have guessed, he had applied for a police commission well in advance of the unfortunate incident. This showed much fore-

sight, as I believe he understood it would be financially difficult for him to complete all three Camford years. I later learned that his application had the support of our Warden and several of his late father's friends. He departed immediately to Africa and consequently never took his exams or received a degree."

"The track and field team was left shorthanded, of course, and they lost to Oxbridge that year. He also missed the famous Camford-Oxbridge-Harvard-Yale competition, which was held at the Queen's Club in London. That would have been a fine trans-Atlantic test for our college's best athlete in recent years."

"Shortly thereafter, to the surprise of nobody, Bannister gave up his scout position and followed the young man abroad. He was quite upfront about his intention to continue serving the lad wherever he might go, and I have no doubt that Gilchrist continues to receive fatherly advice. The head porter has received several letters from Bannister with updates, and by all accounts, Gilchrist is doing well."

"You will be particularly happy to hear that he shipped his collection of *Strand* magazines to Rhodesia and is using your stories, Dr. Holmes, as a type of textbook. He is trying to replicate the methods of Mr. Holmes in his police work. While the locations are very different, of course, your skills in observation and deduction undoubtedly apply across the globe."

"He is taking an interest in geography and language, and the facts he is amassing are proving invaluable. For example, Bannister recounted an incident that could have been one of your cases. A soldier in the new Rhodesia Regiment was killed while off duty, and the suspect was a man recently arrived from England to take up farming. The suspect denied being at the scene of the crime, but the mud-stains on his new boots told otherwise. Gilchrist had noticed the variations in soil as he rode across the territory. The man broke down when confronted with this fact. He admitted playing cards with the soldier and shooting him in anger when he discovered the man was cheating. That was no excuse, of course, and he was hung within a month. Care for some more tea?"

I could see that Holmes was flattered by his new acolyte in the colonial police. He said "I did tell the young man 'Let us see in the future how high you can rise' and it appears that he will indeed go far. I hope

you keep me informed about any new developments in his career. My friend Watson might be interested in writing up one of his cases. His stories with an imperial connection are always popular with the reading public, although I myself do not understand why anyone would leave England unless under duress. Let us hope that never happens to us."

The Second Student: Daulat Ras

As Soames poured us more tea, I inquired as to the fate of the Indian student. "I recall him pacing in his rooms, undoubtedly trying to learn something by heart. He was also very polite, allowing us into his rooms without complaint. I must say that you described him in a rather stereotypical manner, 'a quiet, inscrutable fellow, as most of those Indians are.'"

Soames had the good grace to be embarrassed by my comment, and Holmes broke the awkward silence by asking "Did he win the scholarship? He was by far the most likely of the three we met."

"Mr. Ras did not win, but the outcome was very close. He was among the most able students at St. Luke's in his time, and was in fact studying for his second BA. As you know, students who possess a BA from another university can study for an additional degree here. For example, the famous literary and cultural figure Oswald Wilder first received a BA from Dublin College and then studied for a second BA at Magdalene College, Oxbridge. The Rhodes Scholars at Oxbridge typically study for a second BA, although it must be said that some never bother to finish."

"Mr. Ras had already received his BA from the University of Bombay, one of the three Indian universities created by the Raj in 1857. At Camford, he received a first in Classical Mods in 1896 and went on to become one of the first Indian fellows of a college. He could not remain at St. Luke's because we already had several classics fellows, but there was a vacancy at St. Crispin's College, so he taught there for several years."

"Just recently, he resigned his fellowship and returned to India. He had become interested in the politics of his home nation after making the acquaintance of the scholar and political leader Dadabhai Naoroji,

the first Asian to become a Member of Parliament. Mr. Naoroji was also a founding member of the Indian Congress Party and twice served as its president. He is well known for his 'drain theory,' first proposed in a lecture titled 'England's Duty to India' to the East India Association of London in 1867. He argued that the British were draining the Indian continent of much of its wealth, which has had a great deal of influence in certain circles, although I need not tell you that it is controversial."

"Mr. Naoroji later served on the Welby Commission, which was formed in 1895 to investigate such issues. It is looking into British administration in India and particularly the fairness of colonial civil and military expenditures and the charges imposed upon India. It should be issuing a report very soon."

"After reading about these ideas as a student, Mr. Ras sought out Mr. Naoroji, who until 1895 was a Liberal Party MP. Our former student became increasingly involved with the Indian community in London, especially those who were questioning aspects of British rule. After several years of reading, talking, and corresponding, he believed he needed to be in India and participate directly in events."

"As you may recall, the first meeting of the Indian National Congress took place in his native Bombay. His family had long ruled one of the larger princely states, as is the case for many of the young Indian men who study in Camford. He came to believe that this new national movement was the path to greater self-determination and improvements in administration. I must admit that some of the fellows were puzzled by this change in his life's direction, but he always struck me as thoughtful and serious."

With more than a touch of pride, he added that "The more St. Luke's men who enter politics and government, the better. While I know little about India, I have no doubt that Mr. Ras will play a leading role in shaping its destiny."

Soames then continued: "His departure is nevertheless a loss for Camford. He was a remarkable linguist and was familiar with quite a few modern and ancient languages. His scholarly work on Latin inscriptions and monumental architecture was poised to make a mark. I understand that he will try to obtain a position at his old university, so

he may be able to continue his scholarship even as he becomes more involved in politics.”

I asked “Are there any other St. Luke’s men in India?”

“Few of which I am aware. In prior decades, our students sought commissions in Indian Army regiments and positions with the Indian Civil Service, but this is far less common today. The growth of our industrial economy means that many students would rather work in business than in government. The jobs pay well, which is important to both aristocrats with declining fortunes and an ambitious middle class that seeks to push into the higher echelons of society.”

Holmes expressed his agreement. “Yes, I regret that so many men of ability are siphoned off from public service. Consider what my brother Mycroft could have earned in business. His great brain could transform any firm and reconfigure any industry, but he remains true to his duty to Britain.”

Holmes then turned to me and asked “Speaking of India, why have you never returned to the subcontinent? Your experiences there were formative, but I rarely hear you discussing it. To my knowledge, you have never considered a visit, nor have you sought a colonial appointment. Are you not curious about the lands and people that shaped you?”

I was somewhat embarrassed by the question. “Well, Holmes, it is not always pleasant for me to think about my experiences. As you may have noticed, I only discuss Afghanistan and the war when I am trying to comfort a client in distress, such as Percy Phelps or my dear departed Mary. It brings no comfort to me to relive times of war and illness.”

After a moment, Holmes replied “I should have known better than to ask such a question.”

He continued, “In any case, Mr. Soames, I am sure we are both grateful to you for providing such interesting accounts of Mssrs. Gilchrist and Ras. Can you now tell us about the last student, McLaren? I believe I may be able to add something to your story, as he has come to the attention of myself and Inspector Lestrade in recent years.”

The Third Student: Miles McLaren

I was surprised to see our friend Soames blush a distinct shade of crimson. “I am sorry to hear these words, as they suggest he is continuing the scandalous behavior that began in our college. At first, we were quite embarrassed and the Warden and Dean did all they could to hush it up. We thought about consulting you, but it seemed best to remain silent and hope the problem would go away. McLaren did eventually leave the college, albeit in dishonourable circumstances that I will describe.”

“We never heard from him again, but we feared the worst, and I am not surprised he has attracted your professional attention. I should have known that nothing of importance can be unknown to you, Mr. Holmes, so I will tell you what we know about McLaren’s time at St. Luke’s.”

“He was indeed ‘one of the brightest intellects of the University’ but also very much ‘wayward, dissipated, and unprincipled.’ If his name is familiar to Scotland Yard, then he must have risen far in the underworld, which would not surprise me in the least.”

“The trouble began in his first year, when he was almost sent down because of a card scandal. I mentioned this to you during your first visit, but I never described it. McLaren organized a cheating scheme of considerable scale. He began by marking playing cards in a very devious but, I must admit, clever manner. There are surreptitious card games in every college, of course, and McLaren found his way to their tables. He won a respectable amount of money, but he realized he could make even more by organizing the card games himself. He spread the word that various games would be played at certain rooms at certain times on certain days. He first trained a few accomplices in his cheating methods, and no hands were ever won legitimately, if you can call it that.”

“Some of the students suffered heavy losses and had to pawn valuable items, which is how his scheme came to our attention. The local police keep a close watch on these establishments, and they became suspicious when many gentlemen revealed themselves to be in need of money. The police do not believe in coincidences, and an inspector was

assigned to watch the shops. One day, he spied a student trying to pawn a ring and questioned him closely. The man admitted that he needed to pay a gambling debt and revealed that McLaren was the reason."

"The Warden and Dean were initially determined that we dispense with his services, as they say in the business world. However, that would require explanations to his family, and then the truth would be out of our hands. It would become a hideous scandal – the talk of the university, the city, and even society. I may seem overly sensitive on this point, but you know what honour means in our age. If word spread of a great scandal, fathers might stop sending their sons to the college and our graduates would not be able to hold up their heads."

"We ultimately allowed McLaren to remain in the college on the condition that he return the money he poached from so many student pocketbooks. We could not be certain of the amounts, however, and we suspect he only refunded half of what he owed."

Holmes pondered this story for a moment. "I do not discount the gravity of the situation; sneaking a peak at a chapter of Thucydides is one thing, but to organize a cheating ring is quite another."

Soames continued with his story. "And that was not the worst of it. McLaren was quiet for some time, but he was idling and paying little attention to his studies. The reports from his tutors were not encouraging, and his moral tutor considered him a lost soul."

"As you know, he entered his name for the Fortescue scholarship, likely because he was running out of funds. We suspect he continued to gamble, but due to his reputation, he would have been watched very carefully as he played. He likely suffered losses and hoped for a scholarship. He could not appeal to his family for a larger allowance without providing a reason."

"I need hardly say that he was unsuccessful in the Fortescue contest. His was ill prepared, and if he remained at Camford until his final examinations, he would have been lucky to secure a third class degree, and a fourth was more likely."

"At this point, he decided to increase the scale of his criminal ambitions. He had learned of your visit to the college and expressed regret that he had not met you. I later saw him reading your *Strand* stories in

the college library. At first, I thought he might be inspired by the honourable life of Dr. Watson or the distinguished work of Mr. Holmes, but I later understood that he sought to learn more about crime and criminals. He was using your stories as a textbook, but in the opposite manner of Gilchrist.”

“It was the story titled ‘Silver Blaze’ that pointed his way to the turf. As you know, horse racing has long attracted the criminal element, and McLaren saw an opportunity in ante-post betting. As Dr. Watson will know, this is when punters place bets on horses before the formal odds are established. The ante-post odds are usually better, but if the horse does not run, they lose their money. McLaren’s strategy was to bet on a horse likely to show but not win, and then to nobble the favorite. To discuss this in terms of the characters in your story, his goal was not to become a Fitzroy Simpson but rather a John Straker in the guise of Hunter, the groom. He had a youthful appearance and could enter stables unchallenged under a crepuscular sky. Rather than use a cataract knife, he would spread a powdered drug over a horse’s hay. He had learned well from your story, indeed.”

“He began at the nearby Cambridgeshire and later expanded to other meetings. As you can imagine, this was audacious and he was eventually caught trying to drug “Serendipitous Scholar” at Goodwood. The stable boys did their best to teach him a lesson, and enthusiastic instructors they proved to be. McLaren was reported by the horse’s owner to the Warden, but he spent several months in hospital before he could return to the college.”

The Warden did try to redeem McLaren, lecturing him on the dark path he was taking and urging him to reconsider before it was too late. I’m afraid that his old-fashioned moralizing was not quite the right tone, and when he received only smirks for his troubles, the Warden sent him down. He then had McLaren’s name erased from the college registry, as if he had never been a student. This was the collegiate equivalent of a regiment cutting the buttons off the uniform of a deserter in wartime and shooting him at dawn.”

“At that point, McLaren disappeared from our ken. We fear to know what he is doing now, and whatever it may be, we pray that he is not besmirching the reputation of our college.”

Holmes had listened to this story with great interest, although his furrowed brows indicated that it was not to his liking. He said to Soames, "I believe I can fill you in on his subsequent path. Have no illusions, it is a dark one."

"As you know, the great criminal masterminds are always on the lookout for new recruits. McLaren's expulsion from your college was an excellent testimonial for an aspiring young criminal. You have undoubtedly read Dr. Watson's story about John Clay and the Red-Headed League. Mr. Clay was recruited after his expulsion from Oxbridge by his fellow Etonian Colonel Sebastian Moran. Clay then served as a subaltern in the army of the Napoleon of crime, Professor Moriarty, the great leader of the London criminal world. This was interrupted by a term of penal servitude at Dartmoor after he was caught in the basement of the City and Suburban Bank, but he behaved himself and was released in a few years."

"While McLaren's incident at the track was hushed up in polite circles, it became known in the criminal world. The Warden may have convinced the horse's owner and the hospital director to be discreet, but stable boys will talk. John Clay soon got word of your prodigy, and I later heard some talk about this addition to the Moriarty side, but I did not realize it was the McLaren I almost met previously."

"Over the last few years, McLaren has shown a dedication to his work that he never gave to his studies. He has consequently been entrusted with greater responsibilities and now serves as one of the main lieutenants of Colonel Moran. His breeding and background give him a usefulness that distinguishes him from the average ruffian. He is at home in a country house, an exclusive club, and a society ball. Nobody who sees him would doubt that he belonged in these settings, such is his elegant demeanor and pleasing conversation. But he is likely casing the country house, meeting with an enemy agent at the club, and blackmailing a noble lady at the ball."

"I can give you a recent example of his work. As you may be aware, many of our great scientific achievements have military applications. London is saturated in spies who would pay a great deal to obtain these secrets, and the Moriarty gang is happy to sell whatever it can obtain. They pay careful attention to political gossip and have absolutely no

patriotic sentiment. They recently heard rumors about new developments in the manufacture of explosives. The minister responsible for Army appropriations was unfortunately rather lax in his arrangements, and McLaren was able to visit his London home several times during the season. He just walked in during receptions and parties; nobody would think of questioning him or demanding to see an invitation. He was able to search the minister's private study and found correspondence with clues to the new process. Moriarty then arranged for a small team of underworld experts to break into a certain laboratory, and a number of scientific documents were soon in foreign hands."

Soames was visibly shocked by this example of not only criminality but also treason. I doubted it would be in good taste for Holmes to continue this discussion, and he appeared to have the same thoughts. Holmes said to Soames "I am sorry to bring you bad news, but I think you already knew that McLaren would bring the college no credit. The only silver lining is that word of his deeds will likely remain within criminal and police circles, as most of the concerned parties have every incentive to maintain as much secrecy as possible."

Evensong

For a few moments, we finished our tea in silence as we pondered these varied stories. How the lives of our three students will further unfold, whether they will ultimately end in triumph or tragedy, is in the hands of fate. I reflected that Gilchrist had a brush with disgrace but departed St. Luke's with his honour mostly intact. He is making the most of his second chance. Ras will undoubtedly become a leader of the Indian national movement, and perhaps one day of a colonial government that has power over its own affairs.

On the other hand, McLaren is wasting his natural abilities and could grow into one of the notable criminals of our age. However, no soul is beyond redemption, and a prodigal son can return home. The same goodness of providence that gave us the flower may also set McLaren on the right path.

Soames rose and looked at the clock on the mantel. "Now that we

And Then... "The Three Students"

have finished our tea, and the hour of six approaches, may I suggest we attend evensong before high table? We have much to consider, and I can think of no better place to contemplate the mysteries of life than our college chapel."

**THE REST OF THE YARN OF THE LONE STAR -
THE BARQUE THAT WAS WORSE THAN ITS BIGHT**

David R. McCallister, ASH © 2022

AFTER SHIPPING out of London's Pool, with a load of machine parts, the Lone Star headed out of the Thames, through the English Channel and on to Brest, France.

In Brest, the Captain received news from the one-time Confederate agent, an officer from the famous Alabama which had lost its battle with the Kearsarge so long ago. One of its officers decided to stay in France and become a ship's chandler. Being a Creole from New Orleans, he had accented French, and being the quartermaster, had experience with naval supplies.

The news was passed on through the network of old CSA agents and operatives who had a fraternal bond to keep each other free and independent.

That the famous Sherlock Holmes was on the track of the Lone Star did not bode well. Of course,

Captain Calhoun was not impressed. As an experienced blockade runner, he had faced down the worst

the Yankees had to offer; not to mention the Ku Klux Klan. His mind was at last at ease, having achieved his vengeance against the despicable Colonel Openshaw of Jacksonville and the rest of his ilk- the

brother, and the nephew. The Openshaws paid the price for the deaths of his wife and daughters at the

hands of the KKK long ago in St. Augustine. His destination was now that same home port, after unloading in Savannah first.

Being advised that the Georgia authorities would undoubtedly be on the lookout for the Lone Star at this Holmes person's request, he thought it best to dispose of the Lone Star altogether.

"I never liked the name, said Cpt Calhoun, we were originally the Bonnie Blue, flying the secession flag which was itself based on the flag of the Republic of West Florida. Too recognizable as an ex-

Confederate. Even the name change to the Lone Star marked us as rebel born for most folks."

The Rest of the Yarn of the Lone Star

Thus it was that arrangements were made, and after the strategic exchange of a leather bag of Confederate gold coin, to register the ship in Brest and fly the French Tricolor. A load of wine was

laded on after a short trip to Bordeaux. Subsequently, two weeks now past Lands End, the erstwhile

Lone Star was transformed into the Orange Blossom. Still a barque, but with a different silhouette

achieved by rearranging the spars and masts. The final touch was the exchange of the stern name-board

Lone Star for a newly painted Orange Blossom.

Unfortunately the distinctive wooden naval stars -three feet across - which decorated the bow as

figureheads, port and starboard, had to go, too, along with the cabin-boards bearing the initials LS. The

ship's carpenter began chipping away on a suitable citrusy floral figurehead. Later it was discovered that

the jetsoned name board was found at sea, and the barque put down at Lloyds and Charleston registers

as a loss due to weather, a hurricane crossing Maury's transatlantic route lines just then. All the better

for Captain Calhoun, who signed the log book now as Captain McAdam.

A crate of the French wine was brought out and the bottles broached for a quick christening under the

new name.

The Lone Star, which had been scheduled to appear in Savannah, put in at Charleston as the

reincarnated vessel, the Orange Blossom, just bought in France. This raised no eyebrows as a number of

former blockade runners from the War years had had multiple identities, flags, and countries of origin

since. If there were any questions, arguments of a golden hue quickly solved the matter. The crew,

which was actually made up of Floridians and Georgians rather than Finns and Germans, as reported

was thought in London, were equally chameleon-like.

"Just as well they've got us all wrong. F's and G's! We're about as Finnish and German as the

Shenandoah's crew was Alabamians and Carolinians, " Captain McAdam snorted to general merriment.

"But them thinking that keeps us all out of the maritime courts for piracy."

The remaining crates of bottles of French wine were eagerly bought at quay-side auction by the factors as soon as the stevedores could unload it. The machinery was destined for pulp mills on the St John's.

Taking on a mixed load of timber and cotton, added to the machinery, the Orange Blossom headed out of Charleston harbor, past Ft. Sumter, to tact against the Gulf Stream for its next port of call, Jacksonville, then on to St. Augustine and home; and new adventures under Captain McAdam and his Southron crew.

The Blue Carbuncle 20 Years Later: A Proposed Epilogue

J. T. Page Jr. © 2022

HOLMES and I were quietly seated at breakfast in the flat at 221B Baker Street. We barely nibbled our cold and poorly prepared food.

I had risen early and travelled from my London apartment to join Holmes. He struck me as rather depressed the previous day at the church service and burial. My good wife suggested I join my friend to try and cheer him. I readily agreed.

It was our first breakfast since Mrs. Hudson had passed away following a brave struggle with pneumonia.

We both wore black mourning bands and would do so for the next six weeks to honor our housekeeper's memory. Other than my previous two wives, it was the only time Holmes or I had so openly expressed sadness for a passing.

There was a knock at the drawing room entranceway. Before either of us could respond, the door opened. It was the young maid who had served as temporary housekeeper the past few months during Mrs. Hudson's illness. She breezed in toward Holmes holding a small silver platter with an envelope on top.

"Telegram just arrived for you, Sir."

Holmes briefly stared at her, looked down at his breakfast plate and, with a touch of scorn, said "That will be all." He looked away from her but thrust out his hand to receive the telegram. The maid wordlessly placed it in his palm, turned toward the door, and quickly marched from the room holding the tray as if something were still on it.

After grabbing the unused butter knife, Holmes opened the telegram and read it to himself. His sullen countenance turned to a look of satisfaction which, of late, had been absent for far too long.

After a long silence, I became understandably impatient for a response. My friend's proclivity for drama had apparently returned but I could wait no longer for an explanation.

"Goodness, Holmes! What did the telegram have to say?"

"It is but a trifle, Watson" was the reply. But he then scanned the

telegram once more before handing it over for me to read. "See it for yourself."

I quickly studied the brief statement:

SAD TO LEARN OF MRS. HUDSON'S PASSING. STOP
THE ASSISTANCE YOU AND SHE GAVE US WILL NEVER BE
FORGOTTEN. STOP JOHN AND JENNY HORNER

It took me a moment, but the tumblers on my aging memory began to fall into place.

"Horner, John Horner. Wasn't he part of the business with the Blue Carbuncle adventure?"

"Quite correct, Watson. Do you recall any of the particulars which you documented in your scribblings?" responded Holmes.

"Give me a moment." I paused to think. "Why, yes...it is starting to come back to me. Wasn't Horner the plumber who was arrested for the theft of the Blue Carbuncle?"

"Correct again, Watson. Anything else to offer?"

"I seem to recall that he was wrongfully arrested after being falsely accused."

Holmes stood up and began walking the room as his amazing ability to recall facts churned into high gear.

"James Ryder was the name of the actual thief and was the grasser who falsely pointed the police to John Horner. You may recall that Horner was still a young man at the time...mid-twenties. But he had served prison time for a previous minor robbery. The police took him to the Assizes. Horner was overwhelmed by the false charge and fainted dead away when he was bound over to the jailer pending a further hearing."

"If I remember correctly, Holmes, you let Ryder get off scot-free after confronting him with the truth."

"I cannot say otherwise," Holmes responded. "But please recall that it was the Christmas season and Ryder was clearly remorseful. It was not my job to do the police force's work for them. And, in the two decades or so that have passed, may I ask if you ever heard another word about James Ryder?"

"I must admit that I have not."

"Then the issue is closed," Holmes flatly stated. He strode to the

fireplace, took up his pipe from the mantel, scooped tobacco from the Persian slipper, and then sat in his chair as he confidently crossed his legs in victory.

“Not quite closed, Holmes!” I trumpeted with a degree of authority that surprised even myself. “Who is Jenny Horner and what connection does all this have with our dear Mrs. Hudson?”

“If you must know,” began Holmes, “then take a seat opposite me and I will do my utmost to enlighten you.”

I moved from the breakfast table toward the fireplace and then sat as my friend requested.

“Do you recall when we first met?” Holmes stated casually.

“Of course, I do. It was at Bart’s Hospital on New Year’s Day... 1881. Our mutual acquaintance Stamford introduced us and we agreed to meet here at Baker Street the very next day.”

“Honestly, Watson,” interrupted Holmes, “your memory seems to improve with age.”

I almost blushed since compliments from my friend were so rare. He was becoming more animated which was a welcome development. I silently reasoned with myself it would be best to let Holmes talk while I listened.

He continued without any encouragement other than my silence.

“Now I must ask you to reach deeper into your memory banks. Do you recall that Mrs. Hudson had procured a maid when we first moved to 221B?”

This gave me pause. I of course knew Mrs. Hudson when we initially arrived over 20 years ago, but there was only the faintest memory concerning a maid. Something made me recall different foot-steps at night on the stairs leading to the upper floor. I remembered a light step, probably that of the young but non-descript maid. This was later followed, I believe, by the somewhat heavier but more familiar trod of Mrs. Hudson.

“Yes,” I finally said. My memory of the maid is not vivid...but I do remember a young maid’s presence for a time.”

“That young lady was Mrs. Hudson’s niece” continued Holmes. “Her name was Jenny Hudson. She was the daughter of Mrs. Hudson’s brother who lived in the Wilton-Salisbury area. He in fact attended

yesterday's services for Mrs. Hudson. While not important to our discussion, it is of passing interest to note that the family farmhouse was located in a pasture quite close to the Stonehenge monument. But I digress. The brother wanted his daughter to experience London but wished her to be kept as safe and protected as possible. The end result was to send Jenny to live and work with her aunt who could keep watch over her while also teaching her basic housekeeping skills."

"Quite so, quite so," I injected.

"But in time," said Holmes, "Jenny met and fell in love with John Horner. He was honest with her from the start about his prison experience. And his promise to remain on the straight and narrow was all Jenny needed to stand by him. They secretly married and, after a few months, she revealed the relationship to her aunt. You can imagine that Mrs. Hudson was less than enchanted. It was only a month or so later when John Horner was wrongfully arrested and put in jail. That is when Mrs. Hudson privately confided in me and asked for any counsel I could provide.

"I recall, Holmes, once the case was solved, that you were certain the charges against Horner would be dropped since Ryder was never going to testify against him."

"That was indeed my initial thinking," Holmes replied. "But, once Mrs. Hudson approached me and asked for my help, I decided to speed the process by contacting Inspector Lestrade. As you know, he has frequently been in my debt and I had little trouble convincing him of John Horner's innocence. Shortly thereafter I returned to 221B and met privately with Jenny Horner who, with her aunt, was anxiously awaiting any news. I advised that her husband was in the process of being released. The women were both exceptionally grateful. Jenny Horner then freely shared with Mrs. Hudson and myself her own news. Earlier that very day, young Mrs. Horner had learned she was expecting a child."

"Well done, Holmes. I am so glad you decided to act immediately rather than wait for the episode of Horner's wrongful imprisonment to solve itself."

"Indeed, it was for the best," replied my friend. "After Mrs. Hudson asked me to assist, I quickly realized that I had done more for the guilty

Ryder than for the innocent Horner. And, remaining in that same frame of mind, I further consulted with Mrs. Hudson once Horner was safely out of jail. We pooled our resources and provided passage for him and his wife to the United States. Their first child, a girl, was born there and they named her Martha after Mrs. Hudson. Then came their first son who was named after Jenny Horner's father. Their third child was a girl who was named after Horner's mother and their fourth child, a boy, they named Sherlock for some reason."

"By Jove, Holmes. What a capital story and an excellent result. But why not reveal all of this to me earlier? I would have been glad to assist as well."

"Good old, Watson. You are assuredly aware that my methods and motives were pure. And I know you have a grand gift for silence. But I had promised Mrs. Hudson, at least as long as we both were alive, that I would never breathe a word about this...even to you, my dearest friend."

I knew that Holmes, as always, was quite correct in his explanation and reasoning. But, when it came to the adventure of the Blue Carbuncle, I still wondered about one thing.

"A final question, Holmes. What of the Blue Carbuncle? Do you still have it?"

"I do. It is safely in a bank and, in my final will and testament, I clearly stated its deposition. I have directed that the Horner family, in the memory of Mrs. Hudson, be given the Blue Carbuncle. This will secure their financial future and, in some small measure, act to recompense them for all their unnecessary suffering."

I sat in silence for a moment...but then leapt up to shake my friend's hand and clap him on the shoulder. Holmes looked his old secure and confident self. He smiled slightly and, if he had any additional thoughts, he kept them to himself as he lit his favorite pipe and reached for the daily paper.

He had demonstrated, once again, to be the best and wisest man I have ever known.

-The End-

AFTERWORD

For several reasons, the Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle is one of my absolute favorite stories from the Canon. It is a marvelous tale and has a host of great characters. Holmes and Watson are at their best. Plus, there's a red herring or two and the story reflects the warm influence of the Christmas season. But there is much for Sherlockians to chew on such as the final disposition of the Blue Carbuncle itself.

The one-thousand-pound reward offered by the Countess of Morcar for the gemstone's return was certainly sizable. However the stone, according to Holmes, was worth more than twenty times that amount. Did Holmes actually keep it for himself? By all accounts, it appears that he did (and without so much as a "by your leave" to a rather hapless Commissionaire Peterson who was the one who actually recovered the gemstone). But Holmes keeping the stone is only one of the issues which troubled me. Other nagging concerns included the non-prosecution of James Ryder (the actual thief plus false accuser of John Horner) and the rather casual attitude of Holmes toward John Horner's timely release from jail. Holmes can be forgiven for being generous in light of his basic reasoning for letting Ryder off the hook... but I was especially troubled about Horner languishing in jail for a second longer than necessary.

After reading the story a few more times and watching the wonderful Granada TV re-creation, I decided to focus on the fate of the innocent John Horner and build something around that character. I thought it interesting to add the special connection involving Mrs. Hudson who, despite her physical absence, had a bit more attention than usual. The Granada version took a few Canonical liberties (such as introducing the character of Jenny Horner and two small children) and I took a few of my own in this proposed version. In the event of finding anything objectionable, I pray that you, dear reader, will be in a forgiving mood much like our beloved Master was in this unique and timeless adventure.

-JTP

The Enduring Legacy of Arthur Conan Doyle

Barbara Rusch, BSI, ASH, MBt, Deckmate/CBLS © 2022

[Ed. Note: During the period of August 2020 to March 2022, the Crew conducted a series of eighteen presentations on the Life and Times of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle during our monthly Crew meetings]. Each of the speakers did a wonderful job, being both informative and entertaining. Barbara Rusch closed out the series with a fabulous talk on the legacy of ACD]

Friends, please join me as we gather at the graveside of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to offer a fitting eulogy. I feel called upon to do so, as I've always been struck that the day of his passing, July 7, is also the day of my birth, though not in the year 1930. Let us, therefore, begin at the end. The epitaph inscribed on his monument reads, "Steel True Blade Straight Arthur Conan Doyle Knight Patriot Physician & Man of Letters." But is this a comprehensive assessment of his contributions or even an adequate distillation of his life? He was indeed knighted by King Edward VII in 1902 (though I wish it had been just a few years earlier so a Certain Gracious Lady might have performed the honours), with some misgivings, really more to please the Ma'am, his mother, than for personal aggrandizement. Like his inimitable creation, his work was undertaken for its own sake. Nevertheless, accolades he garnered, and his **knighthood** was awarded, not for his authorship of the Sherlock Holmes tales, but for a slim pamphlet titled "The War in South Africa, Its Cause and Conduct," for his praise of the mother country during the Boer War, and for his work in a field hospital in Bloemfontein. Whether or not the cause was a just one is quite another matter. His loyalty certainly qualifies him as a **patriot**.

Physician – there can be little argument here, studying medicine



and ophthalmology at both the University of Edinburgh and in Germany, though had he been more successful at his profession, he might never have picked up his pen while waiting for patients to be escorted by some real-life Billy into his consulting rooms. It is to his association with Dr. Joseph Bell that we owe a debt of gratitude, that distinguished professor's unique diagnostic methods serving as the inspiration for those of his student's archetypal detective.

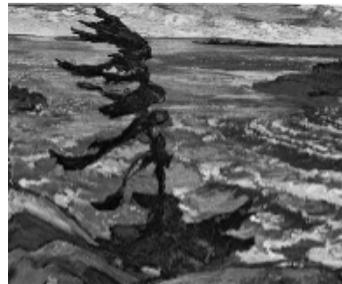


Man of Letters – it's in this category that I wish to focus our attention.

What makes Conan Doyle's accomplishments all the more remarkable is the diversity of genres in which he excelled. His fiction includes horror, adventure, the detective story, historical romance, mystery, science fiction,

fantasy and the supernatural, undertaken in plays, poetry, short stories, novella and full novel form. Amongst his contributions to non-fiction are literary criticism, essays, political and historical analysis (he wrote volumes on WWI), travel writing, and a variety of journalistic endeavours, including war correspondent and Olympics sports commentator. Was there another writer of the late 19th- and early 20th centuries so adept at such a wide range of literary styles? His output was prolific.

As a playwright, a number of his theatrical works were based on his short stories: "The Speckled Band," "The Crown Diamond," based on "The Mazarin Stone," and *Fires of Fate*, taken from his story "The Tragedy of the Korosko." There were, in fact, few genres he did not take on, with varying degrees of success,



though in one in particular I believe he has been consistently underrated. In my opinion, his poetry is inspirational, full of pathos and emotion. In 1914, Conan Doyle travelled across Canada at the behest of the Grand Trunk Railway on a promotional tour. In the west, he wrote a poem called "The Athabasca Trail," which might well qualify as an

The Enduring Legacy of Arthur Conan Doyle

unofficial anthem, a literary treasure extolling the untrammelled beauty of the Canadian wilderness. It stirs patriotic feeling in much the same way as the renowned visual art of the Group of Seven, with their celebration of our picturesque mountain ranges, virgin forests and pristine rivers and streams.

My life is gliding downwards; It speeds swifter to the day
When it shoots the last dark canon to the Plains of Far-away,
But while its stream is running through the years that are to be,
The mighty voice of Canada will ever call to me.
I shall hear the roar of rivers where the rapids foam and tear,
I shall smell the virgin upland with its balsam-laden air,
And shall dream that I am riding down the winding woody vale,
With the packer and the packhorse on the Athabasca Trail.

I'll dream again of fields of grain that stretch from sky to sky,
And the little prairie hamlets where the cars go roaring by,
Wooden hamlets as I saw them — noble cities still to be
To girdle stately Canada with gems from sea to sea;
Mother of a mighty manhood, Land of glamour and of hope,
From the eastward sea-swept Islands to the sunny western slope,
Ever more my heart is with you, ever more till life shall fail,
I'll be out with pack and packer on the Athabasca Trail.

This paean is a picture postcard to the majesty of Canada's virgin landscapes.



It seems Conan Doyle was very affected by the sinking of the *Titanic*, engaging in a war of words with George Bernard Shaw in the press as to what extent Captain Smith ought to be held accountable for the tragedy. He wrote a moving poem, entitled “Ragtime,” which he dedicated to the brave musicians who went down with the ship:

Ragtime! Ragtime! Keep it going still!
Let them hear the ragtime! Play it with a will!
Women in the lifeboats, men upon the wreck,
Take heart to hear the ragtime lilting down the deck.

...

Brace against the bulwarks if the stand's askew,
Find your footing as you can, but keep the music true!

There's glowing hell beneath us where the shattered boilers roar,
The ship is listing and awash, the boats will hold no more!
There's nothing more that you can do, and nothing you can
mend,
Only keep the ragtime playing to the end.

Don't forget the time, boys! Eyes upon the score!
Never heed the wavelets sobbing down the floor!
Play it as you played it when with eager feet
A hundred pair of dancers were stamping to the beat.

Stamping to the ragtime down the lamp-lit deck,
With shine of glossy linen and with gleam of snowy neck,
They've other thoughts to think to-night, and other things
to do,
But the tinkle of the ragtime may help to see them through.

Shut off, shut off the ragtime! The lights are falling low!
The deck is buckling under us! She's sinking by the bow!
One hymn of hope from dying hands on dying ears to fall—
Gently the music fades away—and so, God rest us all!

The lilt and tilt of his verse beats to the rhythm of the clip clop of horses' hooves and the buoyant tunes of the doomed band, making us feel as though we too are riding along the panoramic vistas or sinking slowly beneath the waves. One of his stirring odes, "The Song of the Bow," was even set to music, which is entirely appropriate, as his tributes in rhyme have a distinctive melodic, lyrical quality. It is my belief

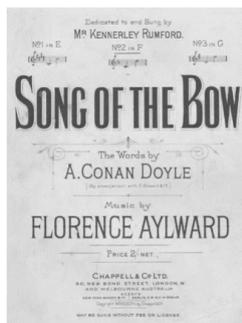
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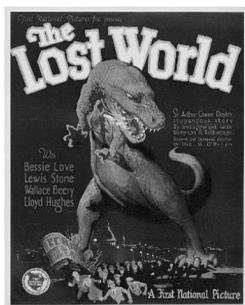
that poetry, more than any other genre, should evoke emotion, and Conan Doyle's does all that. So haunting and uplifting do I find his poems, they very nearly bring tears to my eyes. They arouse nearly every sense – sight, sound and smell, and perhaps most of all, that indefinably sensuous quality of imagination.

Ironically, it is his novels of medieval chivalry, *Micah Clarke* and *The White Company*, which have least stood the test of time, having long ago faded into obscurity, likewise a series of novels featuring Brigadier Gerard and his adventures in the Napoleonic Wars. Would Conan Doyle have been disappointed that his most enduring gifts to the world are neither his plays, his histories nor his novels of swashbuckling heroism? No doubt. And yet, none of us gets to choose our own legacy.

Despite his huge success as a writer of popular fiction, it seems clear that Conan Doyle has been excluded from the pantheon of literary luminaries of the 19th and 20th centuries, consistently marginalized, while hovering at the periphery of greatness. So to what extent may he be regarded as a truly important “man of letters”? Many of his horror stories (aside from *The Hound of the Baskervilles*) have been long forgotten, while those of Edgar Allan Poe are revered. His tales of adventure are largely ignored, while those of Robert Louis Stevenson live on. His historical fiction, while splendidly researched, are mostly history themselves, while the stories of Sir Walter Scott have become classics. His tales of fantasy have been lost in the mists of time, while those of Lewis Carroll have risen to legendary status. If Conan Doyle has been side-stepped by posterity and underrated in the academic world, perhaps it is because he has been eclipsed by his own characters, most notably Sherlock Holmes, who has become a staple of popular culture, so indelibly is he etched into the public consciousness. But somehow the legacies of Carroll, Poe and Scott have managed to survive and co-exist comfortably alongside their literary creations, so why not ACD?

Arguably, *The Lost World*, featuring Professor Challenger, has remained a minor classic, only to have its cachet yanked away by *Jurassic Park*. In a movie-loving world, why has Michael Crichton's *The Lost*





World stolen the limelight while Conan Doyle's earlier novel of the same name is relegated to a footnote in a television abomination of some years ago? Equally inexplicably, with the ongoing craze for mummy films, it is astonishing that the world has overlooked the fact that the first one, starring Boris Karloff, was inspired by ACD's chilling horror story, "The Ring of Thoth."

So was Arthur Conan Doyle a second-rate hack or has his Sherlockian and non-Sherlockian writing been unfairly marginalized? Was he an author of literary merit or did he merely pen popular fiction? While undeniably a great writer of detective stories, was his genius of a lesser wattage by comparison with the brighter lights of his time? And of what lasting literary value, if any, are the Sherlock Holmes tales?

Perhaps his beleaguered reputation within the halls of academe is not so remarkable and the Holmes canon has not been taken as seriously as it might have, when Conan Doyle himself conspired with all the tenacity of Professor Moriarty to kill off his most beloved literary creation. He was, in fact, Moriarty come to life. He believed it was the chivalric heroes of his historical novels, Micah Clarke and *The White Company*, Alleyne Edricson and Sir Nigel Loring, who had earned immortality. But in the end it is posterity that makes the final judgment, and it is Sherlock Holmes who is the last man standing.

So just what are the determining factors of great literature?

Certainly they must include a gripping narrative, cogent character development, evidence of abstract thought, and an elevated use of language. There is no argument on the subject of gripping narrative. His plots are as absorbing as may be imagined, the very definition of the page-turner. As to character development, I submit that despite the fact that Watson refers to him as a "calculating machine" and an "automaton," over the course of the sixty stories, Sherlock Holmes emerges as a man of flesh and blood, with all his failings, a man of lofty ideals, seeing beyond the principles of law and order to the essence of justice, a force for good with feet of clay, an evolving, complex and often

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contradictory character who continually surprises us with such philosophical turns as his disquisition in “The Naval Treaty”:



What a lovely thing a rose is ... There is nothing in which deduction is so necessary as in religion. It can be built up as an exact science by the reasoner. Our highest assurance of the goodness of Providence seems to me to rest in the flowers. All other things, our powers, our desires, our food, are really necessary for our existence in the first instance. But this rose is an extra. Its smell and its colour are an embellishment of life, not a condition of it. It is only goodness which gives extras, and so I say again that we have much to hope from the flowers.

Here indeed is evidence of the development of abstract thought. Again, for an automaton, Holmes displays a remarkably spiritual side in “The Cardboard Box.”

What is the meaning of it, Watson? What object is served by this circle of misery and violence and fear? It must tend to some end, or else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable. But what end? There is the great standing perennial problem to which human reason is as far from an answer as ever.

In many ways Sherlock Holmes is more profoundly human than the cardboard knights of Conan Doyle's medieval novels. Yet it must be conceded that many of the characters in the Sherlock Holmes tales are mere caricatures, their proclivities revealed in the set of their chin, the space between their eyes or, worst of all, the colour of their skin. There is an unsavoury whiff of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and misogyny running through the Canon's otherwise aromatic scent of roses, in the form of Steve Dixie, Tonga, Sam Brewer and all women of Hispanic descent, though by no means limited to them. Women, with one or two exceptions, are nothing more than pathetic victims, deceitful sluts or hot-tempered seductresses. "They are not to be trusted," he maintains, "not the best of them." But just whose voice is this? Sherlock Holmes's, Watson's or Conan Doyle's? Difficult to say. This is intended neither as an apology nor a reprimand, though "it is our duty to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it." Such examples of bigotry were pandemic in 19th- and early 20th- century culture, cringeworthy for readers of the 21st, though one might have hoped that three great men, for whom justice was a byword, might have risen above the prejudices of their time. But let us not linger here.

Undoubtedly, the beauty and command of language is another factor in determining literary merit, though I challenge the conclusion that Conan Doyle's writing lacks these requisites. Despite the fact that the Holmes stories are mainly plot-driven, there are a number of brilliant descrip-



tive passages, an elegance to his prose consistent with great literature which any of the great novels of the day would be hard-pressed to improve upon, as well as a great facility for metaphor, for which he has

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been largely unappreciated. Pen and ink poised above foolscap as an artist might brandish brush and paint over canvas, Arthur Conan Doyle creates a sweeping visual panorama. Indeed, there is a distinctive aesthetic component to his narrative. Part of the reason the stories continue to resonate in the public imagination is their power to conjure up in word and thought the gritty, gas-lit streets of late Victorian London, a world in which it is always 1895. Consider this compelling passage (one of my favourites) in *The Sign of the Four*:

It was a September evening and not yet seven o'clock, but the day had been a dreary one, and a dense drizzly fog lay low upon the great city. Mud-coloured clouds drooped sadly over the muddy streets. Down the Strand the lamps were but misty splotches of diffused light which threw feeble circular glimmers upon the slimy pavement. The yellow glare from the shop windows streamed out into the steamy, vaporous air and threw a murky, shifting radiance across the crowded thoroughfare. There was, to my mind, something eerie and ghostlike in the endless procession of faces which flitted across these narrow bars of light – sad faces and glad, haggard and merry. Like all humankind, they flitted from the gloom into the light and so back into the gloom once more.

This haunting portrait of the London fog, a vivid tableau of alternating bars of dark and light, suggestive of the prison cell that holds fast both the criminals of “that great cesspool” and its victims, is quite as evocative as any Dickensian prose, and underscores the thin veneer of civilization, the tenuous dividing line, blurred and faded, which obscures the monstrous from the mundane.

In addition, Holmes’s many pithy remarks, cogent insights and compelling observations cannot be surpassed. “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.” Such potent axioms have entered into the public discourse, becoming part of the popular lexicon precisely because they capture some elusive, elemental truth. The “curious incident of the dog in the nighttime,” with the punchline that “the dog did nothing in the night-

time,” has become incorporated into legal jargon and is the title of a novel and a recent Broadway play.



THE DEATH OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

The deceptive simplicity of the stories belies a complexity of thought which far exceeds the majority of detective fiction, though ACD for all intents and purposes created and defined the genre. The tales go beyond the charting of a crime committed and the perpetrator discovered and brought to justice through the exceptional analytical mind of a great detective. The Holmes stories continue to encapsulate detective fiction precisely because they transcend it to tackle the

struggles of the human condition, the juxtaposition of good and evil, the distinction between justice and law and order, and to what extent that justice is subject to conscience and personal interpretation. Who is Holmes at the precipice of the Reichenbach, overlooking that vast chasm separating salvation from damnation, if not the Archangel Michael, High Priest and commander of Heaven’s armies, interceding between G-d and humanity and accompanying the righteous to Paradise?

This hero of biblical proportions is locked in mortal combat with Moriarty, Satan incarnate, in a desperate attempt to cast him from Heaven. The “great standing perennial problem to which human reason is as far from an answer as ever” is this: are we not all hovering at the brink of that precarious ledge with an arch nemesis, doing battle for our eternal soul – against the evil that lies within each of us.



Moreover, as crafted by Conan Doyle, the detective story is a lens through which the social evolution of the late Victorian and Edwardian period brought on by unprecedented advances in industrialization and expanding urbanization may be viewed, a unique genre which features philosophical discourse, abstract thought, metaphysical constructs and moral paradigm. The pacing and structure of the tales are finely tuned,

and in their narrative style are, much like their protagonist, perfectly calculated machines.



In terms of themes, ACD tackles an assortment of issues which preoccupied many of the great writers of his day and from whom he no doubt takes his inspiration. Does the handsome and dashing Baron Gruner of “The Illustrious Client” not call to mind Oscar Wilde’s *Dorian Gray* in all his

seething malevolence, stepping out of the parameters of his picture frame? Professor Presbury, the salacious creeping man, scaling the side of his house in the dead of night with the intentions of assaulting his fiancée, “his dressing-gown flapping on each side of him, looked like some huge bat,” and more than a little reminiscent of Bram Stoker’s *Count Dracula*, the greatest sexual predator in all of literature. Fairy tales provide more grist for ACD’s mill. Who is Alice Rucastle, a maiden held captive in her tower by a cruel and rapacious father, her luxuriant chestnut locks shorn, her lover down below, longing to rescue her, if not Rapunzel? All shocking examples of domestic violence, freely adapted from 19th-century popular literature. Bad science and the degraded scientists who practised it were a focal point of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and H.G. Wells’s *The Invisible Man*. Conan Doyle’s take on the question might have resulted in a story of somewhat lesser merit, but Sherlock Holmes’s observation, as he concludes his dealings with Professor Presbury, captures in a single powerful thought the ominous warning implied in all these cautionary tales, that man has no business attempting to play G-d.

When one tries to rise above Nature one is liable to fall below it. The highest type of man may revert to the animal if he leaves the straight path of destiny ... There is danger there – a very real danger to humanity. Consider, Watson, that the material, the sensual, the worldly would all prolong their worthless lives. The spiritual would not avoid the call to something higher. It would

be the survival of the least fit. What sort of cesspool may not our poor world become?

Whether or not one agrees with his thesis (and personally I do not, finding it approaches dangerously close to the theory of eugenics), one would have to agree that the profundity of the subject far exceeds the construct of the standard detective story, encompassing and delineating timeless metaphysical inquiries and eternal truths.

And perhaps most evil of all: What does Grimpen Mire represent but Dante's *Inferno*, sucking the murderer of one's kin, reimagined as Jack Stapleton, down through the muck into the lowest circle of Hell?

While borrowing from the inspiration of others, ACD has provided it for so many writers of horror, adventure and detective tales to follow. No other author has spawned an entire industry of pastiche and parody to whom homage continues to be paid, both to his style of writing and to his most celebrated character, in hundreds, perhaps thousands of facsimiles and simulated versions modeled after the ultimately incomparable sixty originals nearly a full century after the last one was penned.

In the end, perhaps academia is not the appropriate forum to judge Conan Doyle's writing. For millions of readers, film buffs, television viewers and theatre audiences, his quintessential characters have survived and thrived and morphed into other media forms, while the legacy of those acclaimed as great writers have at times remained trapped within the pages of dusty volumes to be appreciated solely by scholars. Accessible and adaptable to changing times, the Sherlock Holmes stories continue to speak to successive centuries of readers. Just as there is no man more eminently fitted to represent a British jury than Dr. Watson, perhaps no better judge of what constitutes great literature may be found in the verdict of those unfettered forces which drive popular culture, the grass roots judgment of generations through time.

One shudders to contemplate the possibility that our own Sherlockian movement, with its peculiar conceit of "playing the game," relegating Conan Doyle's role to that of Literary Agent, may have unwittingly robbed him of the literary laurels that are rightfully his.



Perhaps it is time to put aside this precarious diversion, reassess his many contributions and allow his legacy as a writer to be rehabilitated.

Sherlock Holmes observes in "The Copper Beeches" that "To the man who loves art for its own sake, it is frequently in its least important and lowliest manifestation that the keenest pleasure is to be derived." Though the detective story may be regarded as a somewhat lowly manifestation in the literary hierarchy, the world has derived the keenest pleasure from the tales ACD has bequeathed to us. Whether on the big screen or small, on stage or in worshipful pastiche, we pay tribute to his brilliance, in his own time and for all time.

So, Arthur Conan Doyle, literary luminary or mere teller of tales? Once again we make our way back to the stories themselves for the answer. In *A Study in Scarlet*, Holmes remarks, "They say that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains." In *his* infinite capacity for taking pains, in the methodical, workmanlike fashion in which ACD constructs his narratives, he is indeed a consummate story teller. But surely his writings contain more than a spark of genius, or they would not have endured well over a century since the first was penned in 1887. Nor would we Sherlockians continue to dedicate ourselves to keeping his memory green. As a writer of the first water, there is little doubt that he has earned his place in the pantheon of literary luminaries.

But what additional descriptors capture the essence of this great man that were inadvertently left off his headstone? We might add Conan Doyle the architect, who designed the wing of a hotel, a talent perhaps inherited from his father, a draughtsman and talented artist; Conan Doyle the sportsman, an enthusiast of boxing, cycling and cricket, and who helped promote the sport of cross-country skiing in Switzerland, but perhaps more importantly, practiced good sportsmanship, who wrote, "To give and to take, to accept success modestly and defeat bravely, to fight against odds, to stick to one's point, to give credit to your enemy and value your friend – these are some of the lessons which true sport should impart"; Conan Doyle the philosopher, who wrote, "The ways of Fate are indeed hard to understand. If there is not some compensation hereafter, then the world is a cruel jest", and "The chief proof of man's real greatness lies in his perception of his own smallness. It argues, you see, a power of comparison and of appreciation

which is in itself a proof of nobility;” Conan Doyle the theologian, whose aphorism, “The example of patient suffering is in itself the most precious of all lessons to an impatient world,” perhaps ought to be elevated to the eleventh commandment.



We would be remiss, in our admittedly inadequate checklist of merits, if we neglected to enumerate the many fine qualities and endearing values of Conan Doyle the man: one of integrity and principle, a reformer who championed the rights of women subjected to the harsh penalties of the divorce court (though, sadly, he was not a proponent of women’s suffrage); a paradigm of the moral imperative, of compassion and humanity, who vehemently advocated for the falsely accused and underrepresented – George Edalji and Oscar Slater; who defended the cause of spiritualism for which he suffered not only the loss of public esteem, but a cherished friendship with Harry Houdini, who made it his mission to essentially repudiate everything ACD espoused. His belief in fairies was based not on faith, but to his mind on irrefutable scientific evidence, some of which, unfortunately, derived from séances and spirit photography. Whatever our thoughts are on this score, we must concede that his resolve remained steadfast, while he remained undeterred in the face of the mockery he endured. This ought not to detract, but augment, his status in our eyes. He was, after all, a man of flesh and blood, a complex personality, one of the towering figures of his time, a fixed point in a changing age, a visionary, both provocative and evocative, aspirational and inspirational. If ever a person has earned the title of Renaissance man, it is Conan Doyle. Despite his failings, his shadow is long, his footprint, like that of a certain gigantic hound, deep, and like his detective hero, a force for good with feet of clay. We began this discussion at the end. At the end, I should like to return to the beginning. In response to our original query, the epitaph inscribed on his monument was indeed well cast: his steel was true, his blade was straight.

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The final word goes to Sherlock Holmes, the last and highest court of appeal, at once Conan Doyle's nemesis and the source of his immortality: "I know what is good when I see it." Likewise, we know good stories when we read them and a good man when we meet him, one whom we shall ever regard as the best and the wisest man whom we have ever known. Such is his enduring legacy, and to him this tribute.



The Baker Street Irregulars Go to War

Bob Sharfman, BSI © 2022

THE BAKER STREET Irregulars are known by many over the entire globe. If you are a casual reader of the Canon of Sherlockiana: “Being a Reprint from the Reminiscences of John H. Watson, M.D., late of the Army Medical Department” you have met “the Baker Street division of the detective police force”...“half dozen of the dirtiest and most ragged street Arabs...” (STUD) “These youngsters go everywhere, and hear everything and are sharp as needles.” Their number grew from a half dozen in “Study in Scarlet” to a dozen in “The Sign of Four.”

Except for Wiggins the only name of any Irregular disclosed in the Canon was Simpson (CROO).

If you are a more avid reader of all things Sherlock and made it your hobby (addiction is a better word), The Baker Street Irregulars are a social gathering of a group of individuals centered around the Sherlock Holmes stories.¹ This group began in 1934. The Victorian version in the Canon of the Irregulars seemed to already be well organized by the time of Watson’s first published story so their birth year is somewhat clouded.

This meager effort is about a group of individuals also known as the Baker Street Irregulars. And, like their Victorian namesakes, were sharp as needles and went everywhere and heard everything. All they needed (as with the Victorian group) was organization and a cause. Their cause was to save Britain, and Europe, and the Allied cause during World War II. This story is true and is about a group that all of us can be thankful for. Without them England would not be England yet...

The year was 1940 and the war was in its second year. Winston Churchill was elected Prime Minister and had—to say the least—a full plate of bad situations. A small list will do for one to get the idea:

1. France was about to fall to the Germans.
2. Unrestricted submarine warfare isolated the British Isles.
3. Norway and Denmark had been invaded.
4. Belgium and Holland surrendered.

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5. Domestic problems from high-ranking politicians who wanted to “deal” (appease) Hitler. And, not the least of the partial list:
6. The United States was, by law, neutral and the Americans isolationist.

Churchill knew Britain was lost without help, but would it come in time? No regular armed force was possible without equipment or money. What was the answer? Churchill had a partial answer come to mind, but an important one nonetheless.

Hark and draw near and learn about the post-Victorian Baker Street Irregulars of WWII. Given this name because of their headquarters on Baker Street, across the street from the Baker Street Tube station² they were officially known as Operation Strategic Executive (OSE). They were known by other government acronyms: MI(R), MOI, SO2, but the best unofficial name (other than BSI) was “The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare” or “Winston’s Toy Shop.”

Directed by Winston S. Churchill, a great leader albeit one with serious personal problems³, and Victorian by birth, these Irregulars *inter alia* accomplished the following:

1. Caused more damage to the German war effort’s production of war material than the U.S. Eighth Air Force and RAF combined.
2. Planned the attack on St. Nazaire which neutralized the German super battleship *Turpitz* leading to her ultimate sinking without her ever firing a volley.
3. Destroyed the Peugeot factory halting the German production of trucks and other war material.
4. Planned the attack on the Norsk Hydro plant in Norway which denied Germany the ability to produce heavy water for the development of nuclear weapons.
5. Set up and ran espionage and intelligence networks in France, Norway, and even the U.S. (more about this later).⁴

This is about this wonderful group of patriots, inventors, killers,

bombers, and abnormally brave individuals who were dedicated to the Allied cause. Who are they? Well, it is beyond the scope of this effort to pretend to name them all, or even most of the thousands who were “invested” into this group. However, I do have my favorites and here they are:

Winston Churchill—The Sherlock Holmes of the group. He called them together, cried out “Tention,” and gave them their orders. A rather simple order: “Set Europe ablaze.” Here are my favorites among this herd of cats, or should I say street urchins.⁵

Hugh Dalton

I place Churchill as the director of the Irregulars. A post-Victorian Sherlock Holmes. He (WSC) “found” his Wiggins in Hugh Dalton and placed him in charge with his famous instruction: “And now set Europe ablaze.”

Dalton was a man of great energy and questionable personal skills. Without detailing the gossip from rivals and friends, I will just set forth one assessment from a rival: “The biggest bloodiest shit I’ve ever met.”⁶

His actual contributions to the Irregulars is not described in any detail in the sources I have used, but it seems that his greatest action was to recognize his limitations and appoint Colin Gubbins as the Chief Operations Officer of OSE. Gubbins received the baton and took off.

Ergo: we have Dalton as our Wiggins receiving orders from Sherlock Holmes (WSC) and Gubbins *et al.* did the rest.

Virginia Hall

My nominee for “Spy of the Century.” Simply put: James Bond on steroids, and—oh yes—a woman. An American socialite who instead of country club tea killed, wounded, and otherwise put out of action many German military personnel, destroyed factories making equipment for the enemy and ran a very proficient resistance network in France. All this while avoiding the Gestapo, informers, and Klaus Barbie (the Butcher of Leon) and getting along with her wooden leg (happened while hunting as a civilian) that she named “Cuthbert.” She just escaped

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Barbie's grasp by walking over the Pyrenees Mountains to Spain in waist-deep snow.

Oh, did I forget: The only civilian woman to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (from William "Wild Bill" Donovan) and the MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for her service to the war effort as a member of OSE.⁷

Joan Bright (later Bright-Astley)

The "head" of Baker Street and chief herder of cats. Acted as Colin Gubbins' aide de camp, but was most effective in her own right. All they needed was organization. She was the organizer!

Colin Gubbins

Planned the attack on St. Nazaire, which neutralized the super battleship *Tirpitz* leading to her ultimate sinking without her ever firing a shot;⁸ destroyed the Peugeot factory halting the German productions of trucks and other war material; and also planned the attack on the Norsk Hydro plant in Norway which denied Germany the ability to produce heavy water for the development of nuclear weapons.

Sir Millis Jefferis

Inventor of the "W Bomb" for use in blowing up bridges over water and shipping; the Hedgehog anti-U-boat mortar (with Clark and Macrae); delay fuse; and the anti-tank rocket (which we call the bazooka); and the "sticky bomb" having various uses but really good for tanks and other vehicles.

Cecil Clark and Stuart Macrae

The inventors of what is now known as the Limpet magnetic mine used to blow up ships, tanks, railway bridges and other assorted obstacles. Originally constructed from two pie tins, a bunch of magnets, a dose of explosives, and a detonator all held together by a condom.⁹

Clark also invented the bomb that killed Reinhard Heydrich, the “Butcher of Prague”; the spigot motor later renamed hedgehog and used to neutralize the German submarine threat; a bridge laying machine and other “funnies” designed to advance the Allied cause.

Ronald Dahl

A wounded REF pilot turned “diplomat.” We could hardly attribute to him the deeds of daring the others mentioned here were involved with. He did not destroy enemy property, kill any enemy or live a life stripped of all the comforts. Dahl was to “property born,” public school educated, assigned to the “right regiment (RAF)” etc., etc., which characterized most of the English war effort. His headquarters was Rockefeller Center, New York, and various high-end locations in Washington, D.C. So what did he do to deserve this mention?

His task was to organize a British “Spy Ring” in the U.S. whose task was to convince an isolationist population and their political leaders that supporting England was in America’s interest. In short, to bring the U.S. into the war against Germany. Did he succeed? Well, if you read the history of the war, he was brilliantly successful. Yes, he had lots of help from his English associates and even the American President who—it is said—gave his tacit approval to this effort. Hitler’s declaration of war against the U.S. after Pearl Harbor obviously made the job a “slam dunk.”

So there you have it. From street urchins to physicists, chemists, killers and, well, you can just imagine. What these people had an overabundance of—imagination. Does any connection exist between the Canon’s Irregulars and Churchill’s version? Well, the geneticists will have to do the lineage to see if any gene pool was present in both groups. It is easy to say, however, “England would not be England yet” if it were not for these later-time Baker Street Irregulars.

¹ Phillip Bergen, *A Brief History of the Baker Street Irregulars, Explorations*, The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, Inc., Fall 2021.

² The office was across the street from the Baker Street Tube station: then Norgeby House at 64 Baker Street. See: *Sherlock Holmes Journal*, Vol. 35 No. 3 (Winter 2021). Wigmore Street Postbag, letter from Calvert Markham.

³ Churchill's mental problems and drinking have been mentioned in nearly all accounts of his life. I felt the best "defense" of his drinking was by a friend who, when overhearing a remark that Churchill was an alcoholic, remarked: "He could not be an alcoholic, he is a drunk. An alcoholic could never drink so much." Wheatcroft, p. 156

In fact Churchill was a very real connection to Victorian England. Born in 1874 during Victoria's reign, his first twenty-five years—the most influential years of one's life—were spent living, in a very real way, the Victorian ethos for all its good and not so good. However I make no claim NOW that WSC was a direct descendant or may be a member of the Canon's Irregulars. I leave that to others.

⁴ In addition to these, they had to their credit: the demolition of bridges and railways; 7,500 successful air sorties; ran effective guerrilla movements in Greece and the Balkans and certainly not least, the tying down of fifty enemy divisions during the most critical phase of the war. Milton, p. 300

My favorite success of the BSI (WWII) was in the Pacific when the Irregulars were testing the Hedgehog for battle and came upon Japanese "super subs" being readied for attack against the U.S. aircraft carriers (1944). After engaging the Japanese submarines and hearing the exploding charges (Hedgehogs did not explode unless they hit a target—unlike depth charges) the Japanese admiral had to report to his superiors, "We have no submarines." My bet is that somebody was very upset to receive this report and it wasn't the Irregulars!

⁵ Holland discusses the possibility that British armies during the early years of WWII may have been better served if they were led by a "broad mix of people from different backgrounds" than the tradition-bound

Coldstream Guards or Black Watch. I do not enter into this discussion, but hasten to point out that the two most important and successful United States leaders were MacArthur, with a most aristocratic upbringing, and Eisenhower, a farm boy from Kansas, famously known as the “goat” (last) of his class at West Point.

Let us say that the modern version of The Baker Street Irregulars had every kind of off-center characters as well as aristocratic chaps. While not a member of the OSE, the contributions to the war effort of Lord Beaverbrook, aka William Maxwell Aitken, (WSC considered him one of his “ungentlemanly warriors) could fill volumes.

However, “eccentric” would be a description accurately used to describe these modern street urchins. I am thankful that they were on our side.

⁶ An unusual choice. Although possessed of unbounded energy, he was a bully, abrasive and had a terrifying way about him. A rival said he was “the biggest bloodiest shit I’ve ever met.” Milton p. 88

The king also had expressed a desire to see much less of Hugh Dalton and refused to appoint him Foreign Secretary after the war. Wheatcroft, p. 342

⁷ The Germans having intercepted Hall’s transmissions saying “Cuthbert is acting up” put out a “wanted” poster for Cuthbert. See also A Call to Spy, HBO (available on DVD; Code Name Badass, Amazon. Movies of her story.

⁸ Several movies have been made showing the daring nature (“outrageous” is probably a better word) of this operation. “Behind Enemy Lines” (Netflix); Jeremy Clarkson: “Greatest Raids of All Time”; The Great Raid” (available on DVD from Amazon).

⁹ “Thus it was that two middle-aged gentlemen found themselves walking around Bedford (a small community) going from chemist to chemist, buying up their entire stocks of condoms and earning them-

The Baker Street Irregulars Go to War

selves an undeserved reputation for being sexual athletes. Macrae neglected to record whether nine months later Bedford experienced any short-term spike in its birth rate.” Milton, p.12

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Lady Frances Carfax: The Rest of the Story
Liese Sherwood-Fabre, Deckmate/CBLS © 2022

“ARE you aware of the old Oriental saying about saving a person’s life?” the Lady Frances Carfax asked.

The woman sat on the edge of the basket chair my friend Sherlock Holmes always reserved for clients, her spine as rigid as a soldier’s at attention. Many of those who sought his assistance would slump forward or recline backward, appearing unable to bear the weight of whatever misfortune had befallen them. The Lady Frances’ breeding, however, ensured her composure didn’t waiver, regardless of life’s vicissitudes.

Holmes had been silent to this point, listening with his fingertips pressed together as she outlined her predicament. Now, he drew in a breath and asked, “You mean the one about the savior having responsibility for the victim for the rest of his or her life?”

“Precisely.” If possible, she pulled herself even straighter in the chair. “*You* saved my life.” She raised her hand to prevent anyone from protesting the fact. “I know the police were involved, and Dr. Watson here supervised my immediate recovery, but had you not stopped the Shlessingers—”

“You mean Henry Peters and Annie Fraser,” he said, focusing on her over his fingertips.

She glared back at him. “You will excuse me if I find it hard to recall their true names. I only ever knew them as Shlessinger. Even after...” She gulped, the first crack in her self-control, no doubt based on her memory of lying in a coffin with a dead woman. “After everything.”

With a deep breath to re-establish herself, she continued. “The police have been unable to locate the Shle—er, Peters and Fraser—or recover my jewels. Those two thieves have left me nearly penniless. You saved my life then; now, save me from my current existence. My choices are few: throw myself on the mercy of my cousin—the current Earl of Rufton—who doesn’t even answer my letters; move in with my old governess Miss Dobney; or seek some means to support myself on my own.”

After a pause, he stated her true request. "You wish me to find your jewels."

"It is your responsibility. Your duty. To me. Otherwise, any misfortune that overtakes me will fall on your shoulders."

I shifted uneasily in my own seat, recalling my friend's observation about an unmarried woman with means being helpless. The statement, made when he first took the case, now carried even greater insight into a single woman's fate. With funds, she was almost entirely defenseless against those who would part her from her fortune. Without them, she lacked even the most rudimentary capacity to care for herself.

"What of the pieces recovered from the pawnbrokers? Your bank account?" I asked, hoping she might have sufficient funds to keep her in a very modest lifestyle.

"The pieces were minor and if sold, along with what is left in my bank, I might be able to live in a hotel for perhaps six months, but then...."

She raised her hands, palms up, as if questioning her future.

"You haven't mentioned the Hon. Philip Green," he said.

"And I won't." Her voice displayed a tinge of disdain toward her former suitor. "Money can't cure all ills. He may have found good luck in South Africa, but that doesn't polish his manners. He is a ruffian and will be for the rest of his life."

He pulled himself from his seat and offered a hand to assist the woman from hers. "Very well, Lady Frances. As you have pointed out, I do have a responsibility in this matter. Please allow me a day or two to resolve some of my current cases, and I will consider how best to proceed with regard to your situation. Where can we reach you at present?"

"You can contact me at Miss Dobney's residence. I understand you have the address. She was kind enough to nurse me through my recovery after I left the hospital. I must economize, given my present state."

Following her exit, I watched a smile play on my friend's lips. "We're in a most curious situation. While I might be able to find Peters and Fraser, and even reclaim her jewels, I'm not certain that her condition would be improved. Are we not only setting her up as bait for some other devious thief? Perhaps there is a better approach...."

“Train her for some employable position?” I asked and recalled the cases where we had encountered those making their own way in the world. “I suppose she might find work as a governess. Or perhaps she could learn to be a typewriter?”

He waved his hands as if to wipe away my words. “Etiquette lessons. The woman would be perfect for helping the less adept at learning proper manners. And I already have her first pupil.”

“You’re not considering...? Surely, she’d refuse to tutor...?” I couldn’t even complete the thought. I shook my head. “The poor man.”

“I’d hardly call Philip Green ‘poor.’ ‘Rough,’ perhaps. He comes from good stock and made a fortune in South Africa. Like the diamonds from that region, he just needs a little polish. All Green and the Lady Frances require is a reason to refine his manners, which I will give them.”

I would have chosen a much stronger word than “rough” to describe the man. He’d nearly throttled me to death.

“A *lot* of polish if you ask me,” I muttered.

“At least half of our task is done. He has already professed his feelings toward the lady and would be quite willing to do whatever is asked of him, especially if he can be close to the Lady Frances. Of course, neither can suspect they are being manipulated. The first step is a visit to the telegraph office and then Scotland Yard.”

Lestrade scratched his head when Holmes put the question before him. “Why are you so interested in this pair? We haven’t heard from them since they got away from us while we were reviving the Lady Frances.”

“The victim has employed me to find the rest of her jewels. They hold both monetary as well as sentimental value for her. I feel some moral responsibility for their loss when the thieves made their escape.” He met the inspector’s gaze. “You have no clues as to their whereabouts?”

“At the time, I told you they most likely left the country. We did check the passenger’s logs and found no one named Peters or Shlessinger listed, but that doesn’t mean they couldn’t have used another name. They could be anywhere. The Continent. Australia. Who knows?”

“I beg to differ,” Holmes said, a grim smile on his face. “It’s not as

easy as one would assume to create a new identity for leaving the country. It takes funds, and while they may have Lady Frances' jewels, these have not appeared in any pawnshops. I've checked. I have, however, placed advertisements in all the major regional papers seeking to purchase such jewels. We may have to wait a day or two, but I have no doubt this pair is reaching the limits of their current funds and have a strong desire to replenish them."

Two days later, both Mr. Green and the Lady Frances were seated next to each other on a couch in 221B. Holmes and Mrs. Hudson had tidied and prepared the room, even setting a bowl of jasmine and lavender blossoms on the table in front of the sofa. The flowers' scent was a pleasant change from the room's normal aroma of stale tobacco. The Lady Frances had given a little sniff when she'd been directed to the spot next to her former suitor, but the man simply smiled in response. Despite my rather rocky introduction to the man, I did have to admit a more loyal fellow to a former lover could not be found in the whole country.

"While I have agreed to take on the task of recovering Lady Frances' jewels, I've asked you here today to request your assistance in this endeavor. My current caseload is very demanding, and I will need your assistance in completing a subterfuge that I am certain will result in their return. I am pleased to report I have located Henry Peters and Annie Fraser. I placed an advertisement in all the major newspapers seeking antique jewels for purchase. While I had several respondents, only one, a Mr. Burton of Birmingham provided a description of the type of jewelry that seemed to fit the missing pieces. After additional correspondence, Mr. Burton agreed to come to London to show them to a Mr. Ronald Henderson, antique enthusiast and collector of rare gems. Burton and his sister will be here in three days. Because Peters and Fraser know my identity, as well as Dr. Watson's, we require another man to pose as Mr. Henderson. I'm asking for your help, Mr. Green. Are you up to the task?"

"I'm game," the man said, rubbing his hands together. "I can't wait to get my hands on those villains. They won't leave in one piece unless they cough up them jewels."

At this pronouncement, the woman stood and pointed to him.

“This charade will never work. How can you expect a man of this...this course nature to pass as a refined gentleman of taste? They will see right through the scheme, disappear, and I’ll lose all hope of my independence.”

She might as well have slapped him. Instead of disputing her depiction of him, he dropped his head in humble acceptance. Before I could go to his defense, my friend spoke up.

“I have learned that manners are one of the more easily adjusted traits and will create an illusion that most unsavory characters will never penetrate. We have three days in which to transform our Mr. Green. And you, Lady Frances, will play a key part in his instruction.”

“I?” the woman asked, pulling back her chin. After a moment’s thought, she said, “I suppose I *am* the most knowledgeable about proper manners. That is, if Mr. Green will agree to accept my tutoring.”

The man nodded vigorously. “Of course. I will do my utmost to become the gentleman you desire.”

The lady gave a small noise of derision in the back of her throat but didn’t protest.

“Dr. Watson and I will ensure he looks the part. We’ll visit a tailor to outfit him, and, with a proper shave and haircut, I daresay even his own mother wouldn’t recognize him.”

Green opened his mouth as if to object, glanced at the love of his life and snapped it shut. His willingness to endure any and all vexations for her was beyond admirable.

By the day of the meeting with Mr. and Miss Burton, all had been arranged. True to his word, Holmes and the Lady Frances had created a physical transformation of the ruffian into a stately gentleman. Other than his broad shoulders, the man had little in common with the one who’d accosted me on the streets of Montpellier.

Could he, however, deceive a deceiver? Or would Peters/Burton see through the polished veneer he now displayed?

The proof, as they say, would be in the pudding.

Holmes had arranged for a suite in a hotel near Baker Street. The Lady Frances, Holmes, and I hid behind the door to an inner room to listen to Green’s meeting with the thieves. At first, all occurred as Holmes had predicted and rehearsed with Green.

“You can see these are quite beautiful pieces,” Peters said, bringing out one for Green to examine.

“Yes, and quite old,” Green said. “But I was taken to believe you had more and larger items.”

“This is just a sampling, of course. I have a full list here for you to review.”

“I would like to have another jeweler examine them to ensure their value. Do you mind if I keep this piece to do so?”

“These are quite special pieces, as you can see,” Miss Fraser/Burton said, speaking for the first time. “They have been in my family for generations.”

At this remark, the Lady Frances drew in her breath, most likely from the brazen lie her former captor pronounced. The three of us froze, fearing those in the other room had heard her. Mr. Green, to his credit, was able to distract them with a cough of his own.

“I can see that,” he continued. “If you do not want to part with this piece, perhaps I can arrange for a jeweler to join us, say tomorrow? I would be interested in the whole set, if you could bring them then.”

“I believe that can be arranged,” said Peters.

A rustling suggested the man and his “daughter” were re-wrapping the jewelry for transport. When things were quiet again, he asked, “Might I suggest we retire to the restaurant below for a meal?”

The Lady Frances shook her head violently, perhaps out of fear that Green’s manners might not withstand the scrutiny. Of course, we had no way to signal him to decline. We all held our breath, listening for his response.

“An excellent idea,” Green said, with more enthusiasm than a person in his position usually expressed.

The Lady Frances appeared aghast at the prospect of Green making it through an entire meal in his new persona. We could only hope he would be able to continue to deceive the rascals.

After the three left for the restaurant, we followed at a discreet distance and sought some vantage point from which we could observe them without being seen. To do so required both distance and some hotel greenery, making it impossible to follow any conversation. The Lady Frances spent her time chewing on her lower lip to the point I

feared she would draw blood. Through her clenched teeth, she mumbled directions to him.

“Take the cup delicately by the handle. That’s right. Use that fork for the fish. Dab the mouth, don’t swipe....”

“You have done an admirable job, Lady Frances,” Holmes said after the waiters took away the first course. “And in only three days. His willingness to take on this task speaks volumes not only of his character, but his devotion to you.”

While she didn’t take her gaze off her old suitor, I noticed a slight coloring in her cheeks. For the first time, I wondered if Holmes had more than one objective with his current client.

When the waiter rolled out a cart with after-dinner liquors, the woman groaned.

“We haven’t had time for more than a cursory discussion of the proper after-meal drinks. Don’t order a beer, don’t order a beer...”

When Peters’ eyes rounded, Green’s choice became obvious. To make matters worse, the alcohol forced delicate cracks in his façade. By the time he ordered a second glass, both of his companions were shifting in their chairs and glancing toward the waiter as if to signal the meal was over.

As soon as the waiter appeared, the couple stood, took their leave from Green, and hurried away.

“Quick,” said Holmes, “Watson and I will follow them. Lady Frances, please collect Mr. Green and return to our place at Baker Street.”

By the time we returned to our flat, Green and the Lady Frances were on opposite sides of the room. The man sat in my chair by the fireplace, his shoulders slumped low. The Lady Frances was enjoying a cup of tea at our small table, her back to the man.

“I have good news,” said my friend as he helped himself to his own cup. “We were able to trail the two back to their hotel. Not the best part of the city, but respectable enough I suppose.”

“And how is that good news?” asked his client. “Mr. Green most certainly chased them away. They’ll not be returning with my jewels for a second meeting.”

“But we can be assured they do have the jewels with them. Their

discussion with Mr. Green about bringing the rest tomorrow means they most certainly have the whole collection,” he said. “Given the type of hotel, I doubt they would trust the staff to keep them in the hotel safe, which means they are most likely in their rooms. The appropriate search should find them. All we need do is wait for them to leave the room.”

“And how are we going to get them to do that?”

“I have a plan to draw them out. But we must act quickly. Given Mr. Green’s performance at dinner, they may have become suspicious and decide to leave at any moment.”

The Lady Frances’ gaze slid sideways to study Green, who dutifully sank lower in his chair. “What makes you think we will be able to find my jewels?” she asked.

“I am familiar with the most common places thieves hide such items. Between the two of you, these can be checked in a relatively short period of time. You should be able to recover your missing fortune before they return.”

With a sigh, followed by a sip of tea, she nodded. “As long as we don’t get caught.”

The plan was a rather simple one. Holmes, in the disguise of an elderly rare coin collector would attempt to open their hotel room, appearing to have mistaken it for his own. After showing them the collection in a set of heavy cases, he would convince them to help carry them to the lobby where he was to meet a potential client. The pair would hardly pass up an opportunity to relieve this gentleman of some of his coins for their own gain.

As with Green’s deception, Holmes’ ruse aroused the interest of Peters and Fraser immediately. They volunteered to help the man with his trip to the lobby and offered to carry his cases for him. Holmes’ most brilliant move was to prevent their door from locking, allowing the Lady Frances and Mr. Green quick access.

My role was to remain in the hallway and signal when the three reappeared. So great was the responsibility I bore—to ensure no one was caught in the deception—my heart thrummed in my chest. I feared its beat was loud enough for all the guests to hear—not to mention almost drowning out the sound of any footsteps on the stairs.

Too soon, I heard voices drifting up the stairwell.

“I must say,” Holmes said in his elderly collector’s voice, “I don’t understand my confusion. How could I have mistaken the day I was to meet with the gentleman?”

“It happens,” said Peters.

With no hint of annoyance in his voice, I decided he and his accomplice must have relieved Holmes of some of the coins he carried. I didn’t hear any more of the conversation because I was already down the hall and knocking on the door to signal the culprits’ return.

A crash on the stairs suggested at least a few of the cases had made their way out of Holmes’ arms and down the steps. The tinkling that followed signaled that some of the coins had also escaped the cases, providing yet another chance for Peters and Fraser to pocket one or more of the coins. Holmes was obviously hoping to buy us a few more precious seconds to make our own escape. I heard more clatter and some frustrated sighs drifting up the stairwell, indicating he continued to have problems with the collection.

The Lady Frances and Mr. Green slipped out of the room. The bag they had brought to secrete the recovered jewels hung limply in the Lady Frances’ hand. It was obvious they hadn’t found her inheritance, but I had no time to ask them about the search. We barely made it to the servants’ stairs at the end of the hall.

“Thank you so much for your help,” Holmes said, his voice now echoing down the corridor.

He got a pleasant farewell in response (most likely due to the coins now in their possession) before the door to their room shut behind them.

When my friend joined us in the stairwell, he straightened himself and spoke in his usual voice to his clients. “Any luck?”

They shook their heads slowly. “We checked all the places you suggested.”

“Let us retire to Baker Street and consider our next move, which must occur quickly. They mentioned leaving tomorrow. Perhaps now is the time to alert Inspector Lestrade of their presence.”

“What about my second appointment with them?” Green asked.

“Isn’t it obvious?” the Lady Frances asked. “They are no longer

interested in selling to you. Your behavior at the restaurant made them suspicious.”

“How many times must I apologize? No one told me it was the wrong after-dinner drink.”

“An oversight on our part,” Holmes said. “We must review our options to see how we might still identify where they have hidden the jewels.”

Once outside the hotel, Holmes hailed a cab. As we turned the corner, Mr. Green suddenly ordered the cab to stop.

“What are you doing? Where are you going?” the Lady Frances asked in a shrill voice when he stepped onto the pavement.

“We’ve tried your methods, Mr. Holmes,” he said. “I think it’s time to try another.”

Our client, wide-eyed with panic, stared first at me and then my friend. “Stop him before he does something foolish.”

Holmes held open the door to address the man. “I would suggest you reconsider this tactic. These are desperate people who have shown no mercy in the past. Not to mention any number of legal ramifications for you. If you were to confront them physically—”

“I’ll take my chances,” he said and closed the door.

“Are you just going to let him go?” the Lady Frances asked. “What if he gets hurt?”

Holmes glanced at me, and I shrugged. While I had no desire to get into a physical altercation, we certainly had the numerical advantage. He sighed and glanced down at his old coin collector’s disguise. “I suppose the outfit might add some advantage should we need to confront them. As long as hotel security doesn’t become involved...”

By the time the cab was able to turn around and pull up to the hotel, Mr. Green was nowhere to be seen. We immediately moved up the stairs to Peters’ room. To our dismay, the door was slightly ajar, but no sounds came through the opening. Holmes put his finger to his lips to warn us to remain silent as he pushed the door wide enough for us to enter.

The two thieves cowered in a corner with Mr. Green standing menacingly over them. Peters’ mouth was already swelling, and Miss

Fraser had wedged herself between him and the wall. When she heard us enter, she whimpered something about mercy.

Her remark called Peters' and Green's attention to our presence.

"Mr. Holmes, so glad you joined me," Green said. "This man was about to tell me where we can find the jewels, but I had no way to get them without allowing these crooks to possibly slip away. Again."

"And where would the hiding place be?" Holmes asked.

The Australian raised a shaking finger toward a set of valises on a stand near the bed. "The big one. It has a false bottom. You'll find them there."

The Lady Frances rushed to the indicated bag, and I followed to assist her in retrieving her inheritance. She gasped as the bottom was removed and her jewelry revealed.

She spun about to the four behind us. "It's all here."

In several swift moves, she deposited them in the bag she had brought with her earlier.

"Now, Lady Frances," Holmes said, "if you would be so kind as to return to the lobby and request a police officer. I'm certain Scotland Yard would be glad to relieve Mr. Green of his prisoners."

Once Inspector Lestrade and his officers had escorted the culprits from the hotel, the Lady Frances stepped toward Mr. Green, and with an almost timid gaze, smiled at the man. "Thank you, Philip. You were able to retrieve that which even the great Sherlock Holmes could not."

Her former suitor's face flushed, whether from the compliment she paid to his effort or to her use of his given name, I couldn't be certain.

"Lady Frances," Mr. Green said, raising her hand to his lips, "I would have gone through the fires of Hephaestus to return them to you."

"I believe you would," she said, meeting his gaze.

I opened my mouth to protest her dismissal of Holmes' efforts, but he shook his head to stop me. A slight twitch in his lips suggested he wasn't displeased with the result, despite the misplaced credit.



Having finally brought full justice to the Lady Frances, Holmes and I celebrated the next evening with an excellent claret with our dinner.

I raised my glass to him. "I have to say, you were very generous in letting Green take the credit for the return of the Lady Frances' jewels."

"My dear Watson, I didn't *let* him claim the victory. It was my intention all along for him to retrieve the jewels, and with it the heart of the woman." After taking a sip from his own glass, he broke into a smile. "I could have easily fooled the thieves with my own disguise as the gem collector. After all, they never questioned me as the coin enthusiast. You also know my present caseload wasn't overly demanding. But the bit of incompetence on my part made Green shine all the brighter, don't you think?"

I stared at him. Did he mean what I thought?

"You know my concern about an unmarried woman of means and her vulnerability to the unscrupulous. I considered it mandatory to attach her to an appropriate companion and protector. And who better than the Hon. Philip Green. I used your own romance with Miss Mary Marston as a basis for developing this attraction between the two."

"I hardly believe you can equate—"

He raised his hand to still my protest. "While I solved the case of the sign of the four, you fell in love with Miss Marston, and she reciprocated. By employing Mr. Green and the Lady Frances as our assistants in this case, I deduced a similar mutual interest should develop between them. To increase the probabilities of success, I manipulated the situation—the flowers were selected for their aphrodisiacal properties, seating them next to each other on the couch to create greater proximity, refining Green's manners."

While I had grown accustomed to my friend's rather brusque observations and theories, in referencing my own courtship, he had gone too far. To say that my love and admiration for the lovely creature who became my wife was due simply to solving the theft of the Agra treasure completely dismissed the deep feelings shared between us. My cheeks grew hot the more I reflected on his observation.

"Now see here, Holmes, I resent your suggestion that Mary and I only wed because of that case."

"It is *only* because of the case you met and wed. This city is teeming

with single women. You would not have met her without her seeking out my help to determine the origin of the pearls she'd been receiving. You can't deny that fact."

This comment silenced the next retort on my tongue. I couldn't disagree with that point. The possibility that we would have met otherwise was quite remote. At the same time...

"There have been other single women who have passed through these doors and whose cases we have addressed, and I haven't married them."

"Really, I didn't say it was the only factor. We already knew that Green was devoted to the Lady Frances, but she held some deep-seated abhorrence to the man's comportment. Hence, the pretense of refining his manners. But the true shift in her attitude came from allowing him to be the hero in the recovery of her jewels. Here again, I took a page from your rapid courtship of Miss Marston. Her first words of gratitude were to you, not me. Don't protest, I know you corrected her, but all the same, it was your close encounter with a poisonous dart that caused her to pale."

His rather clinical description of the moment I knew Mary held feelings similar to mine renewed the heartache of my loss.

Oblivious to my pain, he continued. "I deduced Green's heroics were bound to have a similar effect on the Lady Frances. Her concern over his safety when he returned to the hotel and his display of masculine prowess when he confronted the thieves most certainly transformed her opinion of him. The result should be a productive future together for them both."

"If I'm not mistaken," he said, cocking his head to one side, "We are about to confirm whether my conclusions are correct."

Before we could set our glasses onto the table, Mrs. Hudson escorted the Lady Frances and Mr. Green into our rooms.

"I'm terribly sorry to disturb your repast, but we simply couldn't wait to share our news," the Lady Frances said.

After glancing in Holmes' direction, I said, "Let me guess. You are here to announce your impending nuptials."

Despite her upbringing, the woman's mouth dropped open in sheer amazement. "Nuptials?" She glanced at Green, whose face now carried a

wooden expression that suggested he didn't share the same shocked opinion of such a future prospect. "Well, I suppose—I mean I am fond—"

"We're going into business together," Green said, his voice as wooden as his expression. "We're becoming detectives."

"Yes. After working with the two of you, we feel we've learned enough about how to deal with criminals that we will be able to do it ourselves," the Lady Frances said, her excitement returning.

"Don't you worry, though," Green said. "We plan to work in South Africa."

Holmes raised his glass, "I pity the lawbreakers there. I'm sure you'll be a formidable opponent. I wish you all the luck."

After toasting to their future endeavors and bidding them farewell, Holmes sank into his chair by the fire and studied the flames there. More to himself than to me, he mumbled, "I was so certain my deductions..."

"Come now, there was no way you could have foreseen this course of events."

"I return to my earlier observation about love. It is emotional and opposed to cold reason, which I value above all. In the future I shall keep to my study of the criminal element where my skills are well-honed and logic prevails. As for the realm of sentiments and passions, I'll leave those to the magpies in the agony columns."

The Bishopgate Jewel Case

Adriana Zayia © 2022

FROM THE MOMENT when Stamford showed me into Holmes' laboratory, I was aware of an intellectual prowess far greater than my own. At the same time, I saw an individual with unique interests and abilities to whom I was instantly drawn and desired to befriend. Our mutual desire for affordable lodging enabled me to experience the world in a way that I would never have seen exploring on my own, tending to my medical practice and generally keeping to myself. With Sherlock Holmes, I met some of the wealthiest members of English society and some of the poorest, all while satiating my thirst for mystery and adventure for years to come.

As I review my case files for the various mysteries that Holmes has solved, I realize that I have neglected to include more elements of our friendship, especially with respect to those first few cases that he and I investigated together. My explanations of Holmes' cases focused primarily on the facts and details relevant to Holmes' discoveries, and my accounts were written with a public desirous of information about Holmes, rather than myself, in mind. However, there is an earlier case I had neglected to include in my casebook, one which united Holmes and myself in both a professional and a personal sense and allowed me to glimpse the potential of the world's first consulting detective, a man whom I considered and still believe to possess inhuman capabilities. This case occurred after the account of the Musgrave Ritual, which Holmes undertook as a student, but before the infamous Study in Scarlet that began Holmes' career.

I will now recount the case of the infamous Bishopgate Jewel, for which many sacrificed but few were satisfied. One may wonder why this case did not precede the aforementioned Study in Scarlet in my publications, and it is for one very simple reason: the client in this mystery was none other than Ms. Agatha Brower, second cousin of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who invoked his assistance as such. At the time of this case, I consulted Holmes to ask whether or not I should record the details of the case for the future, and we both felt it acceptable to exclude Ms.

Brower's identity and the nature of the case from my manuscripts, even if they were to remain unpublished. Of course, Holmes has since become more open to my memorialization of his cases, but he has only allowed me to provide this account of the Bishopgate Jewel Case in view of Ms. Brower's recent passing.

As Holmes and I sat down to tea on a brisk Tuesday afternoon in late Autumn, a polite knocking at our door awakened Holmes from his musings.

"I'll get it, Watson," he said, with the air of one expecting a visitor. I glanced at him for an answer as to who the visitor might be, but his face remained as placid as ever as he opened the door.

"Agatha! How have you been? I haven't seen you in some time." Holmes placed his hands on the shoulders of the visitor, a petite woman of no more than forty years with dark, wiry hair and a sharp nose like that of Holmes. The woman's darting eyes and restless manner further cemented the idea that she must be a relation of Holmes.

"Not well, Sherlock. But I shall explain my worries soon." She stepped into our apartment, and I rose to shake her hand.

"My name is John Watson, Holmes' roommate of roughly two weeks now. I apologize if it seems a bit forward, but may I ask how you know Sherlock?"

Holmes stepped in to answer me. "Watson, I would like you to meet my second cousin on my mother's side of the family—Ms. Agatha Brower." I was both surprised and comforted by this information. Holmes was usually not forthcoming about his personal life, especially when we first met, but this news cast him in a more human light. Vulnerability was never his strong suit, but Holmes shared more personal details once I came to know him better.

By the time I had recovered from my surprise, Holmes had returned to his armchair, and Ms. Brower had seated herself next to him. I returned to the seat I had occupied before our visitor's entrance.

Ms. Brower turned to Holmes. "As you likely gathered from my telegram, the circumstances in which I find myself are most unusual. Two weeks ago, on Saturday morning, I placed an ad in the *Morning Herald* requesting a maid to assist with household chores and offering room and board with a small salary. I have taken a new job, you see, and

am unable to look after my rooms as I once did. Around noon that day, I received an answer in the form of a letter from one Georgina Ridmore stating that she could begin work the very next day. You can imagine my excitement at that. I wrote back to request an interview later that day to explain in greater depth the responsibilities that she would have as my maid, and we agreed to meet at a nearby park.”

Holmes watched Ms. Brower intently as she told her story.

“I met Ms. Ridmore as agreed upon at the park, but I felt something off as soon as I saw her. Though her dress was well-worn and her shoes faded, her necklace featured a beautiful emerald the size of a small cherry that looked quite expensive. When I complimented it, Ms. Ridmore hurriedly said it was a family heirloom and changed the subject of conversation. We then began talking about the jobs with which I needed help—laundry, dusting, and the like. She seemed attentive throughout my explanation of her duties but brightened ever so slightly when I mentioned that my apartment is on the ground floor of my building. I thought nothing of it at the time, but I feel it may be a clue to discovering what she wanted with my apartment. We confirmed that she would begin working the next day, and that was the end of the meeting.”

“For the first few days, I found no fault with Georgina’s help. She was efficient, quiet, and polite. However, at the start of her second week of employment, this week, that is, I noticed a sharp decline in the quality of her work, which I attributed to her fascination with my sitting room.” Ms. Brower paused to smooth her dress.

“Please proceed,” my companion urged.

“I never entertain often. In fact, I consider myself something of a recluse, which is why I found it strange that Ms. Ridmore spent so much of her time organizing the sitting room. I took my meals and occasionally read the paper there, but my maid’s enthusiasm for that portion of the house led to neglect of her other duties. Nothing extreme, of course, but I noticed small things that together warranted my concern, such as dirty silverware and wrinkled laundry. I spoke to her twice regarding this, but no changes ever occurred, and I was forced to let her go yesterday. Strangely, she seemed almost expectant of my decision and left with her belongings shortly after I delivered the news.”

The Bishopgate Jewel Case

“This morning, I visited my elderly neighbor, Ida Taylor, because she often feels lonely. I mentioned to her my loss of a maid the day before, and she explained that the boy she had engaged to do her grocery shopping, tidy up, and provide company had unexpectedly left the day before as well, around the same time as Georgina did. You can imagine my confusion when I learned of this, and I naturally suspected something crooked. I suggested she check her valuables and note anything missing. I did the same but found nothing amiss in my belongings. Neither of us can think what the two might have wanted, and that is why I ask for your help. I am sure that their connected arrival and departure is not a coincidence, but I am powerless to discover why they appeared and cannot go to the police on a simple suspicion. I have a hansom waiting outside if you are ready, and I ask you to come to my apartment to help me discover the answer to this mystery.”

“Thank you, Agatha.” Holmes turned to me, his eyes twinkling. “Watson, I believe we have ourselves an adventure, if you are willing to join me.” We grabbed our coats and accompanied Ms. Brower to the hansom.

Roughly thirty minutes later, we arrived at Ms. Brower’s apartment and began surveying the rooms. I strolled around, glancing generally at everything, but Holmes applied himself to the task of examining each and every object in the apartment with great enthusiasm. He pored over the furniture, examined the carpeting, and sniffed the air. I could not tell if he had discovered something significant because his face remained as passive as ever while he was engrossed in a case. It was only later that I gained the ability to sense when Holmes was on the verge of solving a mystery or had already done so.

Holmes finished his sleuthing exactly one hour following our arrival at Ms. Brower’s apartment and sat down with Ms. Brower and myself.

“Watson, I believe I’ve solved the case.” While Holmes worked, I had tried to formulate theories regarding the matter of the missing servants but was unsuccessful in producing a viable solution to the problem. I knew that Georgina had not come to work for Ms. Brower by accident, but I could not figure out the objective of her rapid arrival and departure, even after conducting my own search of the sitting room

that so completely occupied Georgina's time. I was, of course, eager to hear Holmes' answer.

"Pray, tell us what you have found," I urged.

"Watson, as you must already know, I am an avid reader of tobacco and drug-related materials. I seldom read legends or folklore intentionally, for I find them frivolous, but it was purely by chance that I discovered the legend of the Bishopgate Jewel while reading *The Origins of Opium in Europe* by one Mr. Alfred Button." Ms. Brower and I listened intently.

"Some hundred years ago, there was a well-known group of smugglers in London called the Bishopgate Bandits that primarily smuggled tea from the Middle East into England but occasionally made trips with other materials, such as spirits. On one such atypical trip, this group was given a large quantity of opium to deliver to several suppliers in England for selling at a reduced price. As compensation for delivering what is today thought to be the largest smuggled opium batch to enter England, the group received a diamond equal in size to a large chestnut. Its exact value is unknown because it was naturally never appraised, but it is thought to be worth approximately six or seven thousand pounds today. As the legend says, the Bishopgate Bandits were leaving England after delivering the opium to obtain coffee, I believe from America, when a severe storm wrecked their boat. All but one Bandit drowned, but the diamond was rescued before the ship sank."

"Oh, my," said Ms. Brower.

"The last remaining Bandit swam back to London because the ship had not travelled very far and was arrested shortly after arriving in England. He managed to escape the authorities for long enough to hide the diamond, hoping to return later, and left a map with his now deceased wife. However, he died while in prison and was unable to retrieve the diamond. Many have searched in vain for the Bishopgate Jewel, but none have been successful. That is, until now, for I believe that Georgina Ridmore and your neighbor's servant have stolen this diamond from your sitting room, Agatha, and plan to leave England. The last thing I need from you is a description of Georgina and her accomplice, and we shall have the criminals very soon."

"Of course. Georgina was quite tall. Nearly as tall as you are, Sher-

lock.” Ms. Brower smiled. “She had long brown hair, but it was tied back when I met her, bright blue eyes, and a small scar above her left eyebrow. Ida’s servant was also tall and had short, dark hair. Both looked to be around thirty years old.”

“Thank you.”

“Holmes,” I asked, “how did you know that the Bishopgate Jewel in particular was here out of all places? And how did you know that Georgina and the other servant were searching for it? I must confess I am astounded.” Holmes held up the corner of what looked to be a map and moved aside a piano that Ms. Brower had against her sitting room wall to reveal a hole large enough for a crouched person to enter.

“Throughout my examination of Agatha’s apartment, and the sitting room in particular, I smelled a faint trace of gunpowder, which can be used as an explosive if carefully controlled. I also noted plaster particles on the floor and in the carpeting near the piano. You will remember that Georgina seemed excited that Agatha’s apartment is on the ground floor. When the last Bandit hid the diamond, this building was not yet built, so it is entirely possible that the diamond was buried here. I suspect she created a small explosion while Agatha was out, taking care that Ms. Taylor in the next apartment would not hear it. I did not realize the extent of her search until I moved the piano just now. This map corner, discarded during Georgina’s exit, contains the initials B.B. and a diamond with a dot in the center, which was the identifying symbol said to be used by the last Bishopgate Bandit.”

“Well, I believed you have covered every detail of this case, Sherlock,” Ms. Brower said with a laugh.

“Agatha, I assure you that I will insist on proper compensation for damages to your apartment once I deliver the criminals and the diamond to Scotland Yard, which will be shortly.” I accompanied Holmes to the telegraph office while he wrote a message for Inspector Athelney Jones of Scotland Yard. He sent another telegram but did not tell me to whom it went.

We returned to 221B excited but exhausted and left again once Holmes received answers to his telegrams—I to Ms. Brower’s apartment to await Holmes’ arrival and Holmes to an errand relating to the case for which he deemed it best I not be present.

Thirty minutes after my arrival at Ms. Brower's apartment, during which time she and I speculated as to Holmes' whereabouts, Holmes burst through the door in the company of a man, a woman, and a police inspector, with a triumphant grin on his face.

"Agatha, Watson, I present to you Georgina and John Hughes and Inspector Athelney Jones, whom you may already know. John is the grandson of one of the Bishopgate Bandits, and Georgina is his fiancée. He is a smuggler in his own right who received the map to the Bishopgate Jewel from his mother, while Georgina was simply his accomplice in this matter. Together, the two discovered the diamond's location, engaged themselves in positions that would allow them access to the diamond, and retrieved the object of their goal. They had hoped to leave England and sell the diamond overseas, but Inspector Jones captured them just as they were boarding their ship with this in their luggage."

Holmes held up a brilliant diamond larger than any jewel I had seen before.

"On the way here, I explained to Inspector Jones my methods of deduction and discovery after he told me that Georgina and John have been wanted criminals for the past several months on unrelated smuggling charges."

"Scotland Yard is eternally grateful to you, Mr. Holmes," said Inspector Jones. "We appreciate your assistance in this ongoing investigation."

The way Holmes held his head seemed to indicate that he played a larger role in apprehending the criminals than he expressed. I later learned that the second telegram Holmes sent was to a friend of his who worked at a dock and knew the comings and goings of nearly every ship arriving in or leaving London. The friend detained Georgina and John based on Holmes' descriptions of them, and Inspector Jones arrived just after this to arrest them. In Holmes' mind, the only possible method of travel for the couple was by sea if they hoped to sell the diamond.

Holmes turned to his cousin. "Agatha, I have arranged with Inspector Jones to provide you with fifty pounds with which to repair your apartment once the diamond is cut down and sold after the trial. If you find this amount insufficient, please let me know."

"Sherlock, that is more than the repairs will cost. Thank you."

The Bishopgate Jewel Case

At the time, I found Holmes' attitude towards publicity and fame to be somewhat strange. A man as brilliant as Holmes deserved credit for his victories, but his chief enjoyment came from the case itself, rather than the praise associated with it. For this and other reasons, so many of Holmes' cases I have published after their occurrence, sometimes years after, and sometimes not at all. Many such cases will unfortunately reach the public only by name, for their details are too sensitive to reveal. However, I hope that, through this account, I have brought to light one of Holmes' early successes in a manner that shows the impact that Holmes had on me, so soon after our chance meeting.

