

# The Bilge Pump

Vol. 10, No. 09 - September, 2022

*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the  
Barque Lone Star - founded November, 1970*



## PLEASE NOTE: **October 02, Meeting** NOTICE

We will be conducting our next monthly meeting virtually on October 02 at 1:00 pm central. I will send out the link for the meeting the week before the meeting. The story for the month is "The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist".

**Bob Katz, BSI, ASH**, will lead the discussion on the story of "The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist".

**Rich Krisciunas** will look at the legal aspects of the story.

**Cindy Brown** will be our featured guest speaker, and will speak on of the greatest Sherlockians and her contributions to our passion.

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### Who dunnit:



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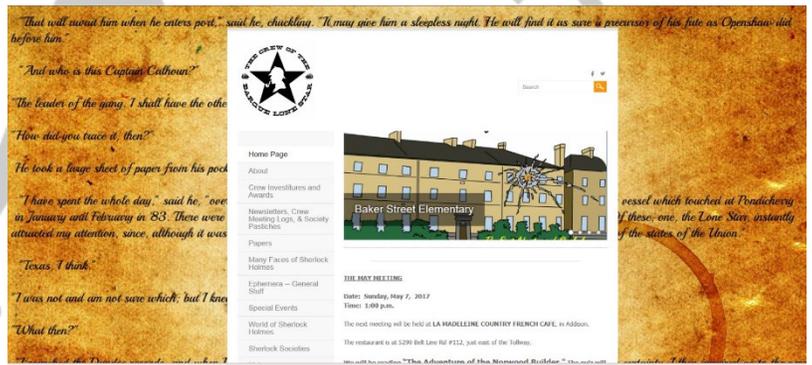
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# SEPTEMBER 04 SUMMARY

Cindy Brown

There were 75 in attendance at this ZOOM meeting, including representatives from 7 different countries.

Sandy Kozinn, then gave us a limerick based on "The Adventure of the Dancing Men".

Next, we had our quiz on the story, "*The Adventure of the Dancing Men*".

The Crew then recognized our Deck Mate, Nicholas Utechin, with a Burial at Sea eulogy. Mr. Utechin was a great Sherlockian, BSI, Deck Mate, and friend to many in attendance, and he will be greatly missed.

Bob Katz, BSI, ASH, then led a wonderful discussion on "The Adventure of the Dancing Men".

A thanks to Greg Ruby, for leading The Hound Mania on the internet that took place on Saturday, September 3, 2022.

We then heard a wonderful presentation from our featured speaker, Russell Merritt. Dr. Merritt spoke on "Sir Arthur's Excellent Adventure in Constantinople: Holmes, Submarines, Satire, and the Red Sultan".

The Dallas conference, *Lone Star Holmes: The Past, Present, and Future*, is scheduled for May 26-28, 2023.

We then closed the meeting with the poem written by Rich Krisciunas, dedicated to The Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

Next month the story will be "The Adventure of the Crooked Man", and the featured speaker will be Cindy Brown, who will present on Edith Meiser, BSI.

*As always, thanks so much to Cindy Brown for keeping the notes of the meeting.*

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# LIVING ON LONDON'S MEAN STREETS

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD, Lone Star Deck-Mate

Holmes introduced Watson to the Baker Street Irregulars in their first adventure, *A Study in Scarlet*. At that point, however, Watson referred to them in a common term of the period—“street arabs.” Not until *The Sign of the Four* did Holmes provide Watson with their official title: The Baker Street Irregulars. These young boys—six in the first case and a dozen in the second—represented only a small portion of the 35,000 estimated to be living on the London streets in 1902. (1)



The nineteenth century saw London's population explode—from 1 million in 1800 to 6.5 million at its end. This teeming metropolis strained the city's resources, especially in the area of housing. Charles Dickens and Henry Mayhew chronicled the lives of those without housing and barely surviving to raise awareness of the problem, particularly among the young. (2) Around this time, the term “street arab” appeared to describe such homeless children and their nomadic existence. (3)

Those as young as three or four supported their existence either through selling wares, such as shoe blacking, newspapers, or flowers; mudlarking (searching the Thames for refuse during low tide); costermongering (hawking fruits or vegetables for a stall owner); or, perhaps most often, resorting to some criminal activity. (4)

Among the lawbreakers, a hierarchy existed. Those at the bottom stole foodstuffs. Sneak thieves were higher on

the chain, but below the shoplifter. At the top were the pickpockets and housebreakers. Most were arrested and sent to prison but would be released a while later, only to be arrested again. Prisons did not separate the populations by age, and as a result, younger inmates learned new tricks from older ones. As children continued in their criminal education and career, judges often sentenced those who had been arrested numerous times with increasingly serious offenses to transportation to Australia. (5)

Eighteen fifty-four provided an alternative to imprisonment for juveniles: the Reformatory School. Magistrates could grant a pardon to criminal offenders under the age of 16 if they agreed to spend two to five years at a certified reformatory school after spending 15 days in prison. These schools, primarily run by private charities or religious groups, provided education, trade skills, and, depending on the institution, sports or other recreational activities. (6) Approximately 1000 juveniles were sentenced to reformatories each year during the second half of the 1800s.

An additional 9000 per year were admitted to Industrial schools. (7) Created by reformers through the Industrial Schools Act of 1857, these children were admitted to such institutions without the two-week imprisonment requirement. The schools focused on younger children not sentenced for criminal offenses but at risk for such



activity in the future. By 1875, England and Wales had 54 reformatory schools and 82 industrial schools. (8)

The schools were also required to follow those leaving the programs for up to three years. While some appeared to have achieved a proper trade following release, other attendees reported harsh treatment. Corporal punishment was prohibited in new schools created after 1876, but existing schools could continue the use of caning and other disciplinary actions. (9)

The last mention of the Baker Street Irregulars in the Canon identified a new leader for the group. Six years after *The Sign of the Four*, in “The Crooked



Man,” Simpson was the head Irregular, with no mention of Wiggins’ fate. (10) Given the various options a magistrate or judge had before him, one can

speculate Wiggins might have spent time in a reform or industrial school. He most probably was arrested and released several times, and given his leadership skills, might even have been selected for transportation to Australia or another British colony.

Some of the boys sent to Australia, Canada, or South Africa created good lives for themselves in these new countries, and Wiggins might have been among those who forged a productive life after leaving the Irregulars, perhaps with even a little help from his mentor, Sherlock Holmes.

- 1) <https://leftfootforward.org/2016/03/homelessness-has-retuned-to-1900s-levels/>
- 2) <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/who-do-you-think-you-are-magazine/20170926/281655370250960>
- 3) [https://www.wordsense.eu/street\\_Arab/](https://www.wordsense.eu/street_Arab/)
- 4) <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/who-do-you-think-you-are-magazine/20170926/281655370250960>
- 5) J.J. Tobias, *Crime and Police in England 1700-1900*. New York: St. Martin Press, 1979.
- 6) <http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/Rfy/>
- 7) <https://theconversation.com/victorian-child-reformatories-were-more-successful-than-todays-youth-justice-system-85634>
- 8) <http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/Rfy/>
- 9) [https://ora.ox.ac.uk/catalog/uuid:a551dd78-6ebc-4b0d-a2fe-693e74d5e19c/download\\_file?file\\_format=application%2Fpdf&safe\\_filename=602354922.pdf](https://ora.ox.ac.uk/catalog/uuid:a551dd78-6ebc-4b0d-a2fe-693e74d5e19c/download_file?file_format=application%2Fpdf&safe_filename=602354922.pdf)
- 10) Steve Doyle and David Crowder, *Sherlock Holmes for Dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2010.

# The Cold Lonely Death of Margaret Denniston Starrett

Karen Murdock

Published in *The Petrel Flyer* (Vancouver, British Columbia) Volume 17, number 4 (Summer 2005)

They were so unlike one would hardly think they were even distant relations, much less a mother and her first-born child. Vincent Starrett was never one to profess any religion; if pressed on the subject, he would assert that he was a Somnambulist, which seemed to satisfy people who did not know that a somnambulist is a person walking in his sleep. His mother, though, held her Christian religion as the most important thing in her life.

She was born Margaret Denniston Young on March 11, 1864. In his autobiography, *Born in a Bookshop*, Vincent wrote, of his mother

*She was as Scotch as my father was Irish, although both were born in Canada. She had been a schoolteacher (a good one, I believe) but after her marriage she devoted herself exclusively to Dad, who needed a lot of looking after.*

Margaret and her husband, Robert Polk Starrett, were living in Toronto when their first child, Charles Vincent Emerson Starrett, was born on October 26, 1886. They moved to Chicago when little "Charlie" was four. Their three other sons (Stanley, Harold, and Robert) were all born in Chicago, and first-born Charlie, who later decided to go by his second name, Vincent, was to spend almost all the rest of his life

in this city of ferment and energy, even if he sometimes wished he were elsewhere.



His mother did end up elsewhere—and that is the reason for the publication of this special issue of *The Petrel Flyer*. She ended up back in her native Canada. To quote again from Starrett's autobiography:

*Mother was a good woman and a brave one, and frequently she was an unhappy one. But much of the time, too, she was a happy woman who found her happiness in her church. She had several churches. Although born a Presbyterian, in Chicago she attended first a Congregational church, then a Methodist, and finally an Evangelical chapel, where for the first time, I believe, her troubled spirit found something it had been seeking.*

*She had the missionary spirit and would have been a missionary in foreign lands if opportunity had permitted. For a time, in her last years, she was actually a missionary among the Indians in western Canada, and at the time of her death, in 1935, was on her way to a waterside mission in Vancouver, British Columbia.*

There is no hint in this passage that Margaret Starrett died from drowning, or that the drowning was a suicide. This may have been too painful a thing for the author to admit, even all those decades

later. It is odd, however, that Vincent Starrett—who got his start in writing as a newspaper reporter, where accuracy in such things as dates is important—got the year of her death wrong. In fact, the death of his mother occurred in 1933, and in case Starrett had forgotten the date, he had the full documentation about the event in his possession until the day he died. It is currently in the Vincent Starrett Archives at the University of Minnesota, which is where I came across the file.

Apart from the paragraphs quoted above, Vincent Starrett wrote little about his mother in his autobiography, and he lied to his biographer about the manner of her death. Peter Ruber, then a young man in his twenties, got to know Vincent Starrett well in the early 1960s and published a tribute volume to him, *The Last Bookman*, in 1968 through his own imprint, The Candlelight Press of New York City. This book includes numerous tributes to Starrett by his friends and a lengthy biographical sketch of the great Sherlockian by Ruber. Here is how the death of Starrett's mother is told in *The Last Bookman*:

*Lastly, she joined the Evangelical Chapel, where her troubled spirit seemed to find the comfort it had so long been seeking. She returned to Canada to take up missionary work among the Indians in Vancouver, British Columbia. She died*

*in 1935 while en route, by ferry, to a waterside mission. When the ferry docked at its destination all that remained of her person was a coat and handbag. As Vincent told it to me: "I presume that while she stood by the rail and watched the water foam and swirl beneath her feet, she imagined Christ approaching and went out to meet him. Her love for Him must have been very great. It is a sad, yet strangely beautiful ending, and I have always believed that she was serenely happy that night."*



Starrett told this account to Ruber some thirty or more years after his mother's death and by then he may have himself come to believe that she met her end "serenely happy." This was not, however, what he or his brothers or anyone else thought at the time. They believed her death was a suicide and that her mental state just before her death may have warranted institutionalization.

Vancouver is a water city.

Canada's great Pacific port, the city is deeply embayed and consists of numerous inlets and peninsulas. In the days before the Lions Gate Bridge opened in 1938, the North Shore of Burrard Inlet was mainly accessed by ferry boat. From one of these, Ferry #3 between Vancouver and North Vancouver (foot of Lonsdale Avenue), Margaret Starrett went overboard on the night of Tuesday, October 3, 1933.

The *Vancouver Daily Province* reported the incident the next day under the headline “Woman Is Missing From Inlet Ferry”:

*Search is being made by city and North Vancouver police for Mrs. M. Starrett, 2861 West Third, who disappeared Tuesday evening from a North Vancouver ferry. Her handbag, containing clothing and papers, was found on the boat. [ . . . ]*

*Members of the crew of a northbound ferry saw a woman answering Mrs. Starrett’s description on board and noted that she did not land at North Vancouver. They saw her again while the ferry was making its return trip to Vancouver and watched for her to leave the boat here. When she failed to do so they searched and found her handbag.*

*Friends notified Vancouver police and said they thought she had met with misadventure.*

Hugh Miller of Vancouver, a second cousin to Vincent and a friend of the 69-year-old Mrs. Starrett, had the sad task of telephoning Vincent Starrett with the news of his mother’s disappearance. He must have done this on October 4th or 5th. Vincent, true to his calling as a writer of mystery stories, jotted down some questions he had about this mysterious death and incorporated some of these into a letter he wrote to Hugh on the fifth of October:



*Dear Hugh:*

*Your telephone account of the unhappy situation, a few hours ago, was so complete that there is little more to ask; but one or two things have entered my mind.*

*[ . . . ]*

*Are you quite satisfied with everything the police have done? At this distance it is difficult to visualize all that must have happened. For instance, was it an easy matter for her to go overboard from the ferry, without being seen, if that was what she wanted to do? [ . . . ] Is there, in short, the slightest reason to suspect foul play? And we wonder why she put her hat in her bag—*

*and what else the bag contained— and whether everything found has been unquestionably identified as hers— and so on. I presume it was dark on the water when she made the trip? We wonder why she did not land, but instead decided to make the return trip. Was there any money in her bag— enough, anyway, to pay her fare? It seems remarkable that no one saw her go overboard, if that is what she did; but it may seem remarkable to us only because we do not know anything about the ferries? Are the*

*police satisfied with what the ferry people say? Are you?*

*[ . . . ]*

*If she is not overboard, by any chance, but wandering or, for some reason that we do not know, hiding, she would be likely to be in mission surroundings, I think. She used to speak of the Four Square Mission and similar places. [ . . . ]*

*I enclose on a separate page a statement authorizing you to act for us [Vincent and his three brothers, who all lived in Chicago] in whatever manner you may deem fitting or necessary, in Mother's behalf. [. . .]*

*Faithfully,*

*Vincent Starrett*

This must have been the hardest letter Vincent Starrett ever wrote.

Subsequent investigation revealed that Margaret had taken Ferry #3 to North Vancouver to visit some friends. She left Vancouver at 6:20 p.m. The ferry docked at North Vancouver at 6:40. Margaret did not disembark but, apparently, hid in the ladies room. Ferry #3 returned to Vancouver and it was on this return voyage Margaret Starrett finally left the ferry and this world. No one saw her go overboard. The boat docked at Vancouver at 7 p.m. A deckhand found Mrs. Starrett's overnight bag on a coil of rope in the car alley—but Mrs. Starrett was gone.

Margaret Starrett left no suicide note behind to explain why she took her life. But there are strong indications that she had become both despairing and detached from reality near the end of her life and that, had she lived, she might have had to be institutionalized. She had been "acting peculiarly" in the days just before her death, wrote Hugh Miller in a letter. In fact, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, before he had heard of Margaret's disappearance, Hugh had sent a telegram to his cousin Alex L. Young in Toronto saying that Margaret

HAS DELUSIONS ACTING VINDICTIVELY MENTAL  
CONDITION CRITICAL REQUIRES LOOKING AFTER.

He advised that one of her sons should come to Vancouver and asked for Alex's advice.

In a letter to Vincent dated November 4, 1933, Hugh Miller wrote, "for the past two years or more your mother maintained that she was psychic and able to talk with God almost at will." Her last letters to her eldest son reveal that she was sure that the end of the world was close at hand. Her next-to-last letter to the son she always called "Charlie" spoke of recent storms on the West Coast heralding the Second Coming and "the opening of the Sixth Seal, which is the beginning of the day of God's wrath, because of the widespread apostasy."

Margaret Starrett's last letter to Vincent was dated from Vancouver on September 27, 1933. "We are in the closing days of this era," the letter began. "Christ is coming almost at once." She urged "Charlie" and his brothers to get together at once and repent of their sins. "See the terrible earthquakes, floods, apostasy. You have barely a chance, time is so short. Hurry I entreat you, before it is too late." It was signed "Mother." It was the last communication her son ever had from her. It is quite possible that he received it in the mail after he had learned by telephone of her death.

In the weeks and months after her disappearance, Vincent Starrett and his brothers must have wondered often what really had happened to their mother. Her Vancouver relatives petitioned the court to declare her dead so that they could settle her estate. The petition was granted and the official decree of Margaret's death was handed down on 23 March 1934.

Over a year after Margaret went overboard, her body was finally recovered. A telegraph message to Vincent Starrett on October 25, 1934 must have been, for him and his brothers, both a tragedy and a relief.

CORONER REPORTED CHARACTERISTICS OF BODY TAKEN FROM INLET YESTERDAY AGREEING WITH YOUR MOTHER HEAVILY BUILT ELDERLY FEMALE FIVE FEET FOUR PROMINENT CHEEKBONES TRACES GREY HAIR IN WATER ABOUT YEAR NO CLOTHING EXCEPT FRAGMENT BLACK OR BLUE SERGE YOUR MOTHER WORE BLACK SERGE COAT NO DENTAL IDENTIFICATION POSSIBLE STOP REQUESTED MEDICAL EXAMINATION FOR BADLY SET FRACTURE RIGHT WRIST RESULTING IN ENLARGED JOINT WHICH SHE HAD STATED RESULTED FROM OLD FRACTURE BUT WOULD LIKE YOUR CONFIRMATION OF ITS POSITION WILL SEEK IDENTIFICATION OF CLOTH IF POSSIBLE STOP IF NOTHING CONTRA APPEARS CONSIDER EVIDENCE STRONGLY PRESUMPTION SHALL I CLAIM AND ARRANGE PRIVATE BURIAL DO NOT SUGGEST ANYONE COMING EXTERNAL IDENTIFICATION IMPOSSIBLE

HUGH MILLER

The next day brought confirmation of the discovery in another telegram to Vincent Starrett in Chicago from Hugh Miller in Vancouver.

MOTHER RECOGNIZES CLOTH AND IDENTIFIES FRACTURE I VIEWED BODY HEAD AND CHEEKS FORMATION AND GENERAL BUILD LEAVE NO DOUBTS TAKING OTHER EVIDENCE INTO CONSIDERATION STOP CORONER OFFICIALLY CONFIRMS IDENTIFICATION STOP TENTATIVELY ARRANGING INTERNMENT WESTVANCOUVER

CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE TOTAL EXPENSE ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS SATURDAY IF YOUR CONFIRMATION THIS RECEIVED BY EIGHT AM HERE OTHERWISE MONDAY OR LATER IF REQUESTED NO MONEY PRESENTLY NEEDED WILL ARRANGE FLOWERS SONS

HUGH MILLER

And so the mortal remains of Margaret Starrett have rested in West Vancouver—in peace, finally—for the past seventy years. The story is not quite over, though. As soon as I came across the documents on Mrs. Starrett’s death, I knew that the Stormy Petrels would be interested in hearing about their local connection to that great Canadian-born Sherlockian, Vincent Starrett. I therefore emailed Len Haffenden, who greeted my message as “BIG NEWS” for the Stormy Petrels. The very next day, Len and Elsa went to the West Vancouver Cemetery and located Mrs. Starrett’s grave. They reported this discovery in the June issue of *The Petrel Flyer*. Len decided to dedicate the next issue of the *Flyer* to Vincent Starrett and that is why I am writing this piece.

It seems appropriate that Margaret Denniston Young Starrett, a daughter of Canada, should rest for all eternity beneath Canadian soil. She has surely found in her final resting place that peace which she did not find in life. I am happy to think that, because of this discovery, Sherlockians now and in the future may visit her grave and honour a woman who gave the world one of its greatest Sherlockians.

# A Face of Identity

Warren Randall, *The Holmes-Watson Report*, January, 2004

In "A Case of Identity," the faces of three individuals tell the story in Dr. Watson's inimitable style. He describes the faces of Mary Sutherland, James Windibank, and Sherlock Holmes. Although Mr. Windibank makes only one appearance, it does seem that within the space of a single speech by Holmes, his face is both pale and ghastly and the sneer upon his face is first cold and then bitter. His insolent demeanor results in Holmes's face "flushing up" and his reaching for his hunting crop. Miss Sutherland is more modest: a flush steals over her face when asked about Mr. Hosmer Angel.

Holmes's face does not light up, but only has a "look of infinite languor" after he lights his old and oily clay pipe. (This should not be confused with Lowenstein's "black-faced langur" in "The Creeping Man.") Dr. Watson does not suggest what was in the bowl of the pipe at the time that would induce such a reaction, but we may hazard that it was neither plug nor dottle.

However, it is the third party in the case, Miss Mary Sutherland, who faces not too kindly a treatment by Watson's remarks. Within her brief appearance, Watson twice describes her face as "vacuous," adding it was "broad" and "good-humoured."

It could have been worse, as we consider the facial imagery" used by Watson in other selected cases:

1. Monkey-faced - Jonathan Small, called by Holmes a "wooden legged man," but whom Mrs. Smith calls "a brown, monkeyfaced chap." (SIGN)

2. Puffy-faced - Violet Smith, "The lotherl Solitary Cyclist," describes the young Mr. Woodley as a coarse, puffy-faced, red-moustached young man who is apparently the most odious and perfectly hateful person she ever met. Later, as a groom, he

is reported as brutal and heavy-faced, and still with a red moustache.

3. Rat-faced - In Watson's first case with Holmes, "There was one little sallow, rat-faced, dark-eyed fellow, who was introduced to me as Mr. Lestrade, and who came three or four times in a single week." Then there was James Ryder, the cringing little rat-faced fellow standing in the centre of the circle of yellow light at the stall of Breckinridge, in "The Blue Carbuncle." Mr. Norlett, seen at "Shoscombe Old Place," was a small rat-faced man with a disagreeably furtive manner.

4. Sharp-faced - Mike Scanlan, the fellow member whom .McMurdo had met on the train to Vermissa Valley, was sharpfaced, nervous, and enjoyed a glass or two of whisky (VALL).

5. Vulture-faced - The secretary of the lodge, Harraway, was a vulture- faced old graybeard in *The Valley of Fear*.

6. Red-faced - Athelney Jones, a red-faced, burly, and plethoric Scotland Yarder, is known to Holmes and *vice versa* in *The Sign of Four*. Mr. Frankland, of Lafter Hall, is an elderly, redfaced man (HOUN). Shinwell Johnson, of "The Illustrious Client," is huge, coarse, and red-faced.

7. Acid-faced - Hudson is the acid-faced seaman who held Trevor senior in a grip of fear in "The Gloria Scott."

Watson does mention a number of others with hyphenated faces and pleasanter dispositions:

1. An old gentleman representing the railway company is red-faced and courteous (BRUC).

2. Sir Henry in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* receives a salute from the hard-faced coachman.

3. "Inspector Forrester is official, smart, and keen-faced, despite the Cunninghams and their the "The Reigate Puzzle."

4. The official who processed Jefferson Hope at the police station; Bannister, the servant in "The Three Students"; the hard-breathing Constable Walters, of "The Wisteria Lodge"; Inspector Gregson in *A Study in Scarlet*; and the young lady,

Violet Westbury, in "The Bruce-Partington Plans" are all white-faced.

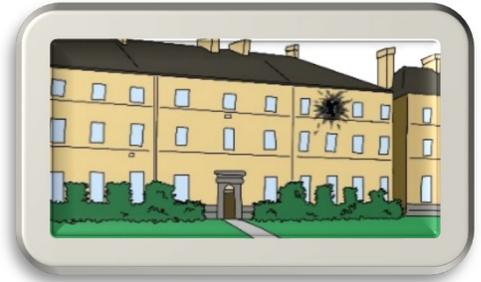
5. However, in *The Sign of Four*, a very angry Jonathan Small rails against "every cursed black-faced policeman who loved to take it out of a white man."

There is one truth I am happy to convey to the reader - within the entire Canon, with its murderers, assassins, felons, thieves, frauds, imposters, charlatans, and Napoleons of crime, there is not one *barefaced* or, to the author's great relief, one *bald-faced* liar to be found.



# Baker Street Elementary

Created by: Joe Fay, Rusty & Steve Mason



BAKER STREET ELEMENTARY  
NUMBER 417 - 09/11/2022

FAY, MASON & MASON

**MASTER STAMFORD, HAVE YOU FINISHED  
YOUR GRAPH ON HOW YOU SEE YOUR  
ACADEMIC TRAJECTORY AS A STUDENT  
THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER?**

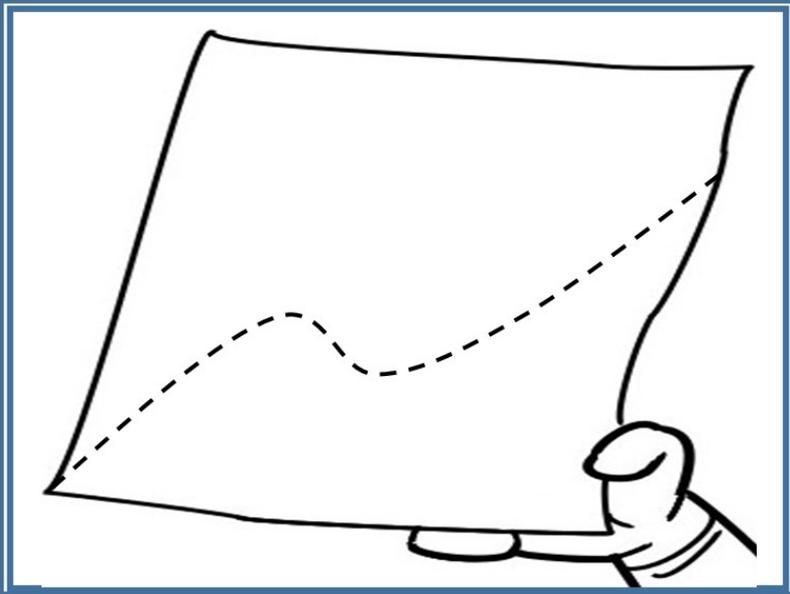


THE FIRST ADVENTURES OF HOLMES AND WATSON

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**YES MA'AM... I BELIEVE IT TO  
BE VERY ENTERPRISING...**





MAY I ASK WHAT THE DIP IN THE MIDDLE REPRESENTS ?



I FORGOT TO STUDY FOR THE SCIENCE TEST TODAY... WHO KNOWS HOW THAT MAY AFFECT MY ENTIRE ACADEMIC LIFE...

MAY EXPLAIN WHY MY GRAPH IS A STRAIGHT HORIZONTAL LINE...

