The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

The Red-Headed Club, and other stories
And a big thank-you to Aine Cassidy for helping our staff learn the desktop publishing skills to prepare the book, and to Candice for careful proofreading of the English.
The Red-Headed Club
and other stories
by Arthur Conan Doyle, illustrated by Ounla Santi
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The Red-Headed Club, and other stories
by Arthur Conan Doyle
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In 1887, readers in London, England, met a fascinating man: Sherlock Holmes. They read about his adventures regularly in a London magazine. Within five or six years, Sherlock Holmes was one of the most famous people in England. And yet, he never existed.

Sherlock Holmes was an imaginary detective, created by a Scottish writer named Arthur Conan Doyle. He solved mysteries by using what he called his “powers of deduction.” He looked carefully at everything, and saw details that other people didn’t see. Then, from those details, he...
could form conclusions about things that had happened in the past. By putting those conclusions together, Sherlock Holmes solved crimes and found the answers to mysteries that had puzzled the police.

Although Conan Doyle wrote the stories, he pretended they were written by another imaginary person: Dr. John Watson. Dr. Watson shared an apartment with Holmes, and often accompanied Holmes to investigate a crime. After Holmes explained his chain of reasoning in a case, Watson often said it seemed easy. But neither Dr. Watson nor anyone else could match the abilities of Sherlock Holmes.

Conan Doyle wrote 56 stories and 4 novels about the adventures of Sherlock Holmes. They take place in London, England, late in the 19th century. London was one of the world’s great cities, but it was different from the cities of today. Cars had not been invented yet; people traveled on trains, or underground trains, or in horse-pulled carts. The people in Holmes’s London had no televisions, or radios, or telephones; they sent messages by mail, or by telegraph.
over a wire.

The Sherlock Holmes stories have been translated into many languages. Today, although there never was a real Sherlock Holmes, he is the most popular detective in the world.

About this series: *The Red-Headed Club* is the first in a series of Sherlock Holmes stories that Big Brother Mouse will publish. In each book, we will revise the original English, to make it easier to understand. Some of the harder words are defined at the end.

In the next book, when we revise the original English, we’ll use some new words. Each new book will be a little more difficult than the one before it. By reading the books in order, you can improve your English reading skills, and also enjoy the world's most famous detective stories.
I went to visit my friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, one day last year. I found him at his home on Baker Street, talking to a big man with a pink face and red hair. I started to leave, but Holmes pulled me into the room, and closed the door behind me.

“You came at a very good time, my dear Watson,” he said, and he smiled.

“I was afraid that you were busy,” I said.

“Yes, I was. I was very busy.”

“Then I can wait in the next room,” I told him.

“Not at all.” Holmes turned to his visitor. “Mr. Wilson, I would like you to meet my friend, Dr. Watson. He
The tall man stood and smiled at me. But in his small eyes, I could see a questioning look.

"Please, be seated," said Holmes. He sat in his chair, and put his fingers together, as he often did when he was thinking.

"My dear Watson, I know that you share my love of all that is unusual. That, I believe, is why you have written about so many of my little adventures."

"Yes, your cases have been of great interest to me," I said.

Holmes went on: "As I said just the other day, real life itself is always far more interesting and unusual than anything we can imagine."

"And I said I did not believe that was true."

"You did, Doctor, but one day you will agree with me. If you don’t, then I will show you more and more examples, until you will agree that I’m right. Now, Mr. Jack Wilson has been good enough to come and visit me this morning. He began to tell a story that I think will be one of the most unusual that I have heard for has helped me in many of my cases, and I think he will be very helpful in your case, too."

He sat in his chair, and put his fingers together, as he often did when he was thinking.

"My dear Watson, I know that you share my love of all that is unusual. That, I believe, is why you have written about so many of my little adventures."

"Yes, your cases have been of great interest to me," I said.

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“Mr. Wilson, would you be so kind as to hear me remark that the strangest and most unusual things are very often connected with the smaller crimes, not the larger crimes. From what I have heard already, I cannot say if Mr. Wilson’s case is connected to a crime or not. But it is a very interesting and unusual story.

“Very long time. You have heard me
to begin telling your story again? I ask you not only because my friend Dr. Watson has not heard the beginning, but also because the strange nature of the story makes me want to have every detail from your lips. Often I am able to solve a mystery, after I have heard a few details, by remembering the thousands of other similar cases that I already know about. In Mr. Wilson’s case, I have never heard of any similar case.”

The chest of our big visitor grew a big larger, as if Holmes had said something very good about him. Then he pulled an old, dirty newspaper from the pocket inside his coat.

As he looked at the advertisements, with his head down and the paper sitting on his knee, I took a good look at the man. My friend, Sherlock Holmes, had a reputation for his ability to learn many things about people just by looking at them carefully. I tried to do the same. I studied our visitor. I looked carefully at his clothes, and his face. But I could not learn much. Our visitor seemed to be an ordinary worker. He was wearing a coat that was a little dirty. One shirt sleeve was shiny. A
A square piece of metal was hanging from a pocket. An old hat lay on a chair next to him. There was nothing remarkable about the man except his red hair.

Sherlock Holmes saw what I was trying to do. He shook his head with a smile as he noticed my questioning looks. “Beyond the obvious facts that he has at some time worked with his hands, that he has been in China, and that he does a lot of writing these days, I can see nothing else.”

Mr. Jack Wilson quickly straightened up in his chair. His finger was still on the newspaper, but his eyes were on my friend. “How did you know all that, Mr. Holmes?” he asked. “How did you know, for example, that I worked with my hands? It’s true, for my first job I built things on a ship.”

“You hands, my dear sir. Your right hand is much larger than your left. You have worked with it, and I can see that it is stronger.”

“Well, then, what about the writing?”

“What else could I learn from seeing that the right sleeve of your shirt is very shiny for five inches, while the left sleeve has a smooth spot, where you rest it on the desk.
As for China, your fish tattoo could only have been done in China. I have studied tattoo marks. I have even written about them. The fish in your tattoo is colored with a pink that is only used in China. I also saw a square Chinese coin hanging from your pocket.”

Mr. Jack Wilson laughed. “Well, I never!” said he. “I thought at first that you were very smart, but now I see that there was nothing in it, after all.”

“I begin to think, Watson,” said Holmes, “that next time, I will not explain everything. It is not good for my reputation. Can you find the advertisement, Mr. Wilson?”

“Yes, I have got it now,” he answered. His thick finger pointed to the middle of the newspaper. “Here it is. This is what began it all. You may read it for yourself, sir.”

I took the paper from him and read: “TO THE RED-HEADED CLUB: There is now an opening for a new person in the Club to be paid 4 pounds a week for very little work. All red-headed men who are in good health, and who are above the age of twenty-one years, may apply. Apply in person on Monday, at 11:00, to
Duncan Ross, at the offices of the Club, 7 Pope’s Court, Fleet Street.”

“What does this mean?” I asked after I had read the unusual advertisement two times.

Holmes laughed, as he often did when he was in a good mood. “It is a little strange, isn’t it?” he said. “And now, Mr. Wilson, please tell us all about yourself, and how this advertisement
has changed your life. You will first make a note, Doctor, of the newspaper.”

“It is The Morning Times of April 27, 1890. Just two months ago.”

“Very good. Now, Mr. Wilson?”

“Well, it is just as I have been telling you, Mr. Sherlock Holmes,” said Jack Wilson. “I am a shopkeeper. I have a small store in London. It’s not a very large shop, and these days I do not make much money. In the past, I could keep two assistants, but now I only keep one. And I have enough to pay him only because he is willing to work for half of the ordinary pay, because
he wants to learn the business.”

“What is the name of this young man?” asked Sherlock Holmes.

“His name is Vin Singer, and he’s not so young, either. I don’t know his exact age. He is a very smart assistant, Mr. Holmes. I know that he could earn twice as much as I am able to pay him. But, after all, if he is happy, why should I suggest that to him?”

“Why, indeed? You must be glad to have an assistant who will work for so little. That is unusual these days. I would say that your assistant is as unusual as your advertisement.”

“Oh, he’s not perfect,” said Mr. Wilson. “He is very excited by photography. He is often taking pictures, when he should be working. Then he runs down the steps into the cellar, to work on his pictures. Yes, the time he spends on his photography is sometimes a problem. But most of the time he’s a good worker.”

“He is still with you, is that right?”

“Yes, sir. He and a young girl, who does some cooking and cleans the house. That’s all I have in the house. My wife is dead, and I never had any children. We live very quietly, sir, the three of us. Then that advertisement
appeared. Singer came down into the office, just eight weeks ago, with this very paper in his hand, and he said: ‘I wish, Mr. Wilson, that I was a red-headed man.’

“Why?” I asked.

“Because,” he said, ‘here’s another opening in the Red-Headed Club. It will pay a lot of money to any man who gets it, and there are more jobs than there are men. So they don’t know what to do with the money. If my hair would only change color, I would apply.”

Mr. Wilson looked at Holmes and me, to be sure we were listening. Then he went on. “You see, Mr. Holmes, I spend most of my time in my home and shop. My business comes to me, so I often go for many weeks without leaving the house. I didn’t know much of what was going on outside, and I was always glad to get some news.

“Have you heard of the Red-Headed Club?” Singer asked, with his eyes wide open.

“Never,” I answered.

“Why, I’m surprised to hear that, for you could apply for one of the jobs.”

“And what do these jobs pay?” I
“Well, you can easily understand that I was very interested in all this,” Mr. Wilson went on, “for my business has not been good these days. Another two hundred pounds a year would have been very helpful.”

“Tell me all about it,” I said.

“Well,” he said, showing me the advertisement, ‘you can see for yourself that the Club has an opening. It tells where you should apply. As I understand it, the Club was started by an American who was very rich, but also quite strange. He was himself red-headed, and he wanted to help all red-headed men; so when he died, he left all of his money to make easy jobs for men whose hair is of that color. From what I hear, it is very good pay and very little to do.’

“But,’ I said, ‘there are millions of red-headed men who would apply.’

“Not as many as you might think,’ he answered. ‘You see, it is only for men who live in London, and who are grown men. This American had started in London when he was
“Now, as you can see, my hair is a bright red. I thought that I had as good a chance as any man to fill this opening. Vin Singer knew so much about it that I thought he might be useful, so I told him to close the shop for the day and to come with me. We locked the door and went to the address that was given in the advertisement.

“I don’t think I will ever see such a sight as that again, Mr. Holmes. From north, south, east, and west every man who had any red in his hair had come into the city to answer the advertisement. Fleet Street was filled with red-headed men. I never knew there were so many red-headed men in the whole country! Yet a single advertisement brought them all here. Every kind of color could be seen, some dark young. Also, I have heard that the club is not for men whose hair is light red, or dark red, or brick red, or anything but real bright red. Now, if you want to apply, Mr. Wilson, you can just walk in. But I know that you are a busy man, so maybe it is not a good use of your time, just for a few hundred pounds.’
“red, some light red. But, as Singer had said, there were not many men who had my true, flame-red.

“When I saw how many were waiting, I would have given up hope; but Singer would not listen when I said we should just go home. He pushed and pulled until he got me through
the crowd, and right up to the steps, which led to the office. There were two lines of people on the steps, some going up in hope, and some sad faces coming back down; but we pushed in and soon found ourselves in the office.”

“Your experience has been a most interesting one,” remarked Holmes as our visitor stopped talking for a minute. “Please keep on telling your story.”

“There was not much in the office – just a couple of wooden chairs and a small table. Behind the table sat a small man with a head of hair that was even redder than mine. He said a few words to each man who came up to apply, and then he always found some reason to send them away. Filling this opening did not seem to be such a very easy thing, after all. However, when our turn came the little man was much more interested. He closed the door as we entered, so that he could talk to us without the others listening.

‘This is Mr. Jack Wilson,’ said my assistant, ‘and he is willing to fill an opening in the Club.’

‘And he is quite well suited for it,’ the other answered. ‘I cannot think of a time when I have seen hair so fine.’
He took a step back, and looked at my hair. Then suddenly he stepped forward, took my hand, and said he would like me to fill the opening.

“But, I am sure you will understand that I must be careful,’ he said, and then he grabbed my hair in both of his hands, and pulled until I cried out in pain.

“There is water in your eyes,’ he said as he let me go. ‘I see that all is as it should be. But we have to be careful of our reputation. Two times we have been tricked by hair that was not real, and once by paint. I could tell you stories of tricks that would make you sick.’ He stepped over to the window and shouted at the top of his voice that the opening was filled. Sounds of disappointment came up from below, and the men all walked away in different directions until there was not a red head to be seen except my own and that of the director.

“My name,’ said he, ‘is Mr. Duncan Ross, and I am myself one of the men who has gotten an easy job from this Club. Are you a married man, Mr. Wilson? Do you have a family?’

“I answered that I had not. His face fell in disappointment.
“Dear me!” he said, ‘that is very serious indeed! That is not good news. The Club was formed, of course, to see that more red-heads were born, as well as to help those already living. It is very unlucky that you are not married.’

“This sounded like bad news for me, Mr. Holmes. I was afraid that I was not to have the opening, after all. But after thinking it over for a few minutes he said that it would be all right.

“In the case of another man,’ said he, ‘we might have to tell him no, because he was not married, but we must try very hard to help a man with such a head of hair as yours. When will you be able to begin your new job?’

“Well, it is a little difficult, for I have a business already,’ I said.

“Oh, never mind about that, Mr. Wilson!’ said Vin Singer. ‘I can look after that for you.’

“What are the hours?’ I asked.

“Ten to two.’

“The mornings are not usually busy for me, Mr. Holmes. Also, I knew that my assistant was a good man, and that he would take care of my business.

“That would suit me very well,’
said I. ‘And the pay?’

“You will be paid 4 pounds a week.’

“And the work?’

“It is not difficult. You have to be in the office, or at least in the building, the whole time. If you leave, you give up the whole job. The rules are very clear about that.’

“It’s only four hours a day. I should not need to leave,’ I said.

“No reason will be accepted,’ said Mr. Duncan Ross. ‘Even if you are sick, or you have important business, you must stay in the building or you will lose your job.’

“And what is the work?” I asked.

“Your job is to copy the Encyclopaedia Britannica. You must bring your own pen and paper, but you can use this table and chair. Will you be ready tomorrow?’

“Certainly,’ I answered.

“Then good-bye, Mr. Jack Wilson. Let me say, again, how happy I am that you have accepted this important job.’ He led me out of the room and I went home with my assistant. I did not know what to say or do, I was so pleased at my own good luck.

“Well, I thought about the
matter all day, and by evening I felt sad again; for I had decided that this must be some trick, although I could not solve the mystery of why anyone would spend so much time and work to play such a trick. Yet I could not believe that anyone would pay so much money for me to do something so simple as copying out the Encyclopedia Britannica. Vin Singer did what he could to make me feel better, but by the time I went to bed I was still unhappy.

“However, in the morning I decided to go and see what happened. So I bought a pen, and some paper, and I started off for Pope’s Court.

“Well, to my surprise, everything was right. The table was sitting there, ready for me, and Mr. Duncan Ross was there to see that I got to work. He started me off with the letter A, and then he left me; but he would drop in from time to time to see that all was right with me. At two o’clock he said he was happy to see how much I had written. He said good-bye, walked me out, and locked the door of the office after me.

“This went on day after day,
Mr. Holmes, and on Saturday the director came in and gave me four gold coins for my week’s work. It was the same the next week, and the same the week after that. Every morning I was there at ten, and every afternoon I left at two. After the first week, Mr. Duncan Ross started coming in only once each morning, and then, some days, he did not come in at all. Still, of course, I never left the room for a moment, for I was not sure when he might come, and the job was such a good one, that I would not risk losing it.

“Eight weeks passed like this. I had written about Aardvarks and America and Apples and Armor, and hoped with enough work that I might get to start the B’s before long. And then suddenly the whole business came to an end.”

“To an end?”

“Yes, sir. Just this morning. I went to my work as usual at ten o’clock, but the door was shut and locked, with a little square of paper in the middle of the door. Here it is, and you can read it for yourself.” He held up a piece of heavy white paper. It read: ‘THE RED-
HEADED CLUB HAS STOPPED.
October 9, 1890.’

Sherlock Holmes and I looked at the paper and the unhappy face behind it, until we could not help but see the funny side of the whole business. We both started laughing, very hard.

“I cannot see that there is anything very funny,” cried our visitor. His pink face got even pinker, right up to the base of his flaming hair.

“If you can do nothing better than
laugh at me, I can go somewhere else.”

“No, no,” cried Holmes, pushing Wilson back into the chair from which he had started to stand. “I really wouldn’t miss your case for the world. It is most unusual. But there is still something just a little funny about it. Please tell me, what did you do after you found the card on the door?”

I was quite surprised, sir. I did not know what to do. I went to the other offices near mine, but no one in the other offices seemed to know anything about it. Finally, I went to the owner of the building, who lives on the first floor, and I asked if he could tell me what had become of the Red-Headed Club. He said that he had never heard of any such club. Then I asked him who Mr. Duncan Ross was. He answered that the name was new to him.

“Well,” said I, ‘the man in room number 4.’

“What, the red-headed man?”

“Yes.’

“Oh,’ said the owner, ‘his name was William Morris. He was using my room just for a few months, until his new office was ready. He moved out
“Where could I find him?” I asked.

“‘Oh, at his new office. He did tell me the address. Yes, 17 King Edward Street.’

“I went to that address, Mr. Holmes, but when I got there it was a small shop. No one in it had ever heard of either Mr. William Morris or Mr. Duncan Ross.”

“And what did you do then?” asked Holmes.

“I went home, and I did as my assistant had suggested. But he could not help me in any way. He could only say that if I waited, I would probably get a letter about it. But that was not quite good enough, Mr. Holmes. I did not wish to lose such an easy job. I knew your reputation for helping people, so I came right away to you.”

“And you did the right thing,” said Holmes. “Your case is a very interesting and unusual one, and I will be happy to look into it. From what you have told me, I think it is possible that very serious problems might be connected to this case.”

“It is already serious enough!” cried Mr. Jack Wilson. “Why, I have lost four pounds a week.”
“Actually,” remarked Holmes, “I do not see that you have any good reason to say that you were treated badly by this unusual club. Quite the opposite. You are, as I understand, richer by about 30 pounds. In addition, you have learned a lot about aardvarks and apples and every other subject that begins with the letter A. You have lost nothing because of the club.”

“No, sir. But I want to find out about them, and who they are. I want to understand why they played this trick – if it was a trick – on me. It was a pretty expensive trick for them, for it cost 32 gold coins.”

“We will try to answer those questions for you. But first, Mr. Wilson, I have one or two questions for you. This assistant, who first showed you the advertisement – how long had he been working for you?”

“About a month then.”

“How did he come?”

“He applied in answer to an advertisement.”

“Was he the only person who applied?”

“No, twelve people applied.”

“Why did you pick him?”

“Because he seemed smart, and would come cheap.”
“At half-pay, in fact.”
“Yes.”
“What is he like, this Vin Singer?”
“Small, strong, very quick in his ways, no hair on his face, though he’s at least thirty years old. He has a white spot above his eyes.”

Holmes sat up in his chair and looked very excited. “I thought so,” he said. “Have you ever seen that his ears have holes, for earrings?”
“Yes, sir. He told me that it was done for him when he was a boy.”
“Hmm!” said Holmes. I could see that he was again back in deep thought. “He is still with you?”
“Oh, yes, sir; I have only just left the shop.”

“And has your business been going well while you have been away each day?”
“Quite well, sir. There’s never very much to do in the mornings.”
“That will do, Mr. Wilson. I will be happy to give you an opinion on the subject in a day or two. Today is Saturday, and I hope that in two days I can give you some answers.”

“Well, Watson,” said Holmes when our visitor had left us, “what do
you make of it all?"

“I make nothing of it,” I answered. “To me, it is all a mystery.”

“As a rule,” said Holmes, “the more unusual a problem is at first, the less difficult it is to solve it. It is your ordinary, common crimes that are really the hardest, just as an ordinary face is the most difficult to remember. But I must be quick over this matter.”

“What are you going to do, then?” I asked.

“To smoke,” he answered. “It will take three pipes to solve this problem, so I ask that you please not speak to me for an hour.” He sat back in his chair, with his thin knees up close to his sharp nose. Then he sat there with his eyes closed, and his black pipe sticking out like the bill of some strange bird.

I thought he was sleeping, and I was feeling sleepy myself, when he suddenly jumped out of his chair like a man who has made up his mind. He put his pipe down. “There is a music concert at St. James’s Hall this afternoon,” he remarked. “What do you think, Watson? Are there any patients you must see during the next few hours?”

“I have no patients today.”
“Then put on your hat and come with me. I am going through town first, and we can eat on the way. I see that there will be a lot of German music at the concert, which I like better than French music. German music helps you think and I need to think. Come along!”

We traveled on a bus as far as we could, then a short walk took us to Coburg Square, where our morning visitor had his shop. It was a small place, where four lines of old two-floor brick houses looked out over a small field of grass. On the corner, a sign said “JACK WILSON” in white letters. That was where our red-headed visitor ran his business.

Sherlock Holmes stopped in front of the building. He turned his head to one side and looked at it carefully, with his eyes shining brightly. Then he walked slowly up the street, and then down again to the corner, still looking carefully at the houses. He returned to the shopkeeper’s house and hit the sidewalk with his stick two or three times. Finally, he went up to the door and rang the bell. It was opened by a bright-looking, smooth-faced young man, who asked him to step in. “Thank you,” said
Holmes, “I only wished to ask you how to go from here to the Park.”

“Take the third right, then the fourth left,” answered the assistant, closing the door.

“He’s a smart man,” said Holmes as we walked away. “He is, I believe, the fourth smartest man in London. And as for being bold, I believe he may be number three. I already know something about him.”

“It seems,” I said, “that Mr. Wilson’s assistant is an important figure in this mystery of the Red-Headed Club. I am sure that you asked your way just so that you could see him.”

“Not him.”

“What then?”
“The knees of his pants.”
“And what did you see?”
“What I expected to see.”
“Why did you hit the sidewalk with your stick?”

“My dear doctor, this is a time for looking at things, not for talk. We are in an enemy’s country. We know something about Coburg Square. Now, let us look behind it.”

As we walked around the corner from quiet Coburg Square, we found ourselves on a much busier road. It was one of the main streets from the city to the north and west. The road was busy, while the sidewalks were full of people on foot. It was hard to accept that just behind these fine shops and large, important businesses were the old homes and shops of Coburg Square.

“Let me see,” said Holmes, standing at the corner and looking forward, “I would like to remember the order of the houses here. I enjoy learning as much as I can about London. There is the fish shop, the little newspaper shop, then the City Bank, a small food market, and the hat shop. That’s
all there is on this part of the street. And now, Doctor, we’ve done our work, so it’s time to play. We’ll have something to eat, and then we’re off to the concert, where for a few hours we can forget the mystery of the Red-Headed Club.”

My friend always loved music. All afternoon, we sat together at the concert. I could see he was lost in the most perfect happiness, gently waving his long, thin fingers in time to the music. His smiling face and his dreamy eyes were completely unlike those of the Sherlock Holmes I saw when he was looking for the answer to a mystery.

I often thought that my friend’s sharp, intelligent mind, and his attention to detail, were a necessary change from the quiet mood into which he sometimes fell. He could suddenly change from doing nothing, to showing great energy. I knew he was never as strong as when, for days on end, he had been reading and sleeping in his chair. At those times, he could be filled with a love of the chase, and his great intelligence would shine through, until people who did not understand the way he thought would decide he must not
be human. When I saw him that afternoon, listening to the music at St. James’s Hall, I felt there would be bad times coming for those he had prepared to catch. “You want to go home, no doubt, Doctor,” he remarked as we left the concert.

“Yes, I believe we should.”

“And I have some business to do which will take several hours. This business at Coburg Square is serious.”

“Why is it serious?”

“A big crime is about to take place. I believe that we will be in time to stop it. But today being Saturday makes it harder. I will want your help tonight.”

“At what time?”

“Ten o’clock will be early enough.”

“I will be at your home on Baker Street at ten.”

“Very well. And, Doctor, there may be some little danger, so please put your army handgun in your pocket.” He waved his hand, turned around, and soon disappeared into the crowd.

***

I do not think that I am any less intelligent than my friends, but I often felt stupid when I was working
with Sherlock Holmes. I had heard what he had heard; I had seen what he had seen. And yet from his words, I knew that he understood not only what had happened, but also what was about to happen, while to me the whole thing was still a strange mystery.

As I drove home I thought over all of it, from the unusual story of the red-headed writer, copying the Encyclopedia Britannica, down to our visit to Coburg Square, and the words Holmes had said before he left me. What was this night-time adventure, and why should I bring a handgun? Where were we going, and what would we do?

Holmes had suggested that this smooth-faced shop assistant was more important than he looked – a man who might lay complicated plans. I tried to understand it all, but I could not. I stopped trying to solve the mystery by myself, knowing that the night would bring an explanation.

It was a quarter-past nine when I started from my home. I went across the park, then on over to Baker Street. Two cabs were standing at the door, and as I entered the hall
I heard voices above me. When I entered his room, I found Holmes talking with two men. One of the men I had seen before; he was Peter Jones, a policeman. The other was a long, thin, sad-faced man, with a shiny hat and an expensive coat.

“Ah, Watson! Our group is complete,” said Holmes, picking up a heavy walking stick. “Watson, I think you know Mr. Jones already. This other man is Mr. Martin, who will
also join us in tonight’s adventure.”

“I am afraid that our adventure may end with nothing more than a lost evening,” said Mr. Martin, with an unhappy look on his face.

“Mr. Holmes has a good reputation, sir,” said the policeman with a smile. “He has his own little ways of doing things, which I agree are often strange. But he is a smart man. In fact, once or twice, he has been quite helpful to the police.”

“Oh, if you say so, Mr. Jones, it is all right,” said Mr. Martin. “Still, I miss my card game. It is the first Saturday night in 27 years that I have not played cards.”

“I think you will find,” said Sherlock Holmes, “that tonight you will play a game for more money than you have ever done yet, and that for each of you the play will be more exciting. For you, Mr. Martin, the money at risk will be some 30,000 pounds. For you, Jones, we will see if you can catch a man you have been chasing for several years.”

“John Clay, the killer and robber,” said the policeman. “He’s a young man, Mr. Martin, but he has a reputation as one of the city’s most dangerous criminals. I would rather have my
handcuffs on him than on any other criminal in London. He’s a remarkable man, he is, this young John Clay. His grandfather was a royal prince, and he himself has been to the best schools in England. His brain is as quick as his fingers, and though we often see signs of him, we never know where to find the man himself. He’ll rob a bank in Scotland one week, and be raising money to build a school in London the next. I’ve been on his track for years and have never set eyes on him yet.”

“I hope that I may have the pleasure of helping you meet each other tonight,” Holmes remarked. “I have also crossed paths once or twice with Mr. John Clay, and I believe he is as dangerous as you say he is. It is past ten o’clock, however, and time that we started. If you two will take the first cab, Watson and I will follow in the second.”

Sherlock Holmes did not say much during the long drive. Instead, he lay back in the cab, and he seemed to be remembering the songs we had heard in the afternoon. We drove through several narrow streets.

“We are almost there now,” my
friend finally said. “This man Martin is a bank director, and so of course has a strong interest in the matter. I thought we should have Jones with us also. He is not a bad man, though remarkably stupid when it comes to his job. But he is never afraid to do his job. Here we are, and they are waiting for us.”

We had reached the same busy street that we had walked on in the morning. Our cabs drove away. Then we followed Mr. Martin down a narrow road between two buildings and through a side door, which he opened for us. Inside there was another small hall, which ended in a large iron door. This also was opened, and led down a set of winding stone steps, which ended at another thick door. Mr. Martin stopped to light a lantern, and then led us down a dark brick hall, with a strong smell of wet earth all around us. Finally, after opening a third door, we walked into a large room, with stone walls, filled with large boxes.

“It would be hard for anyone to come here from above,” Holmes remarked as he held up the lantern and looked around.
“Nor from below,” said Mr. Martin, hitting his stick on the flat stones that lined the floor. “Why, dear me, it sounds like there’s an empty space down below,” he remarked, looking up in surprise.

“I must really ask you to be a little more quiet!” said Holmes sharply.

“You have already added to our risks tonight. Now, please, just sit down on one of those boxes, and do not make any more noise.”

Mr. Martin sat on a box, with a very hurt look on his face, while Holmes got down on the floor. With the lantern and a magnifying glass, he began to carefully look at the lines between the stones. After a few seconds, he jumped to his feet again and put his magnifying glass in his pocket.

“We have at least an hour to wait,” he said, “for they cannot begin until Mr. Wilson is in bed. Then they will not lose a minute, for the sooner they do their work, the more time they will have to escape. Right now, Doctor – as you probably have guessed – we are in the cellar of one of London’s largest banks. Mr. Martin is one of the owners of the bank, and he will explain to you why the bolder criminals of London have a special interest
It is our French gold,” the director said softly. “We have reason to believe that someone might try to steal it.”

“Yes. Several months ago we received 30,000 pounds from the Bank of France. Somehow, it has become known that the money is still in our cellar. The box on which I sit contains 2,000 gold...
coins. This is much more than we usually keep at a single office, and the directors have been afraid something might happen to it.”

“They had good cause to be afraid,” remarked Holmes. “And now it is time to make our plans. I expect that within an hour, things will get quite busy. While we wait, Mr. Martin, we must cover that lantern.”

“And sit in the dark?”

“I am afraid so. I brought some cards in my pocket, and I thought that maybe you could play cards tonight, after all. But I see that the enemy is well prepared. We cannot risk letting them see a light.

“First of all, we must choose our positions. These are daring men, and though we will take them by surprise, they easily might hurt us if we are not careful. I’ll stand behind this box. You must each hide behind those boxes. Then, when I shine a light on them, close in quickly. If they fire, Watson, shoot them down.”

I placed my handgun on top of a wooden box, then I hid behind the box. Holmes closed the front of his lantern, and left us in darkness
— a complete darkness such as I have never before experienced. I could smell the hot metal of the lantern, so I knew that it was still lit, ready to light the room again whenever Holmes opened the door.

To me, with excitement and some fear running through my blood, there was something sad in the sudden darkness, and in the cold, wet air of the room. “They have only one way to escape,” said Holmes in a quiet voice. “That is back through the house into Coburg Square. Jones, have you done what I asked?”

“I have three policemen waiting at the front door.”

“Then we have stopped all the holes. And now we must be silent and wait.”

How long it seemed! Later, when we looked at a clock, we saw it was only an hour and a quarter, but it felt as if the night must have almost ended, and that the sun would be rising outside. My arms and legs hurt, because I was afraid to change my position, for fear I might hit something or make a noise.

But my body was tight. I heard everything clearly; I could not only hear the gentle breathing of the
others, but I could hear the difference between the deeper, heavier breathing of the large-bodied Jones and the thinner sounds of the bank director. From my position I could look over the box in the direction of the floor.

Suddenly my eyes caught a thin line of light. At first it was just a small spot. Then it got longer until it became a yellow line, and then, without any sound, a hand appeared, a white, almost womanly hand. It moved around in the center of the small spot of light. For a minute the hand felt around on the floor. Then it disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared, and the cellar was dark again except for the single spot of light.

Soon the hand reappeared. I heard a sound of stones rubbing against each other, then one of the flat, white stones turned over and left a square hole. Light from a lantern came through the hole. A clean-cut, boyish face came up through the hole, looked around, and then, with a hand on either side of the hold, raised itself until one knee rested on the edge.

In another moment he stood at the side of the hole and was pulling up another man, small and thin like
himself, with a white face and a head of very red hair. “It’s all clear,” he said. “Do you have the bags? What! Jump, Archie, jump, and I’ll slow them down!”

Sherlock Holmes had jumped out and grabbed the young man by the sleeve of his shirt. The other man jumped down the hole, and I heard the sound of cloth tearing as Jones grabbed at his shirt. The light shined on a
handgun, but Holmes hit the man’s arm with his walking stick, and the gun fell onto the stone floor.

“It’s no use, John Clay,” said Holmes coolly. “You have no chance at all.”

“So I see,” the man answered, also in a cool voice. “I expect that my friend is all right, though I see you tore off a piece of his shirt sleeve.”

“There are three men waiting for him at the door,” said Holmes.

John Clay pulled his head back. “Oh, indeed! You seem to have done your work very well. You have earned your reputation.”

“As you have earned your own reputation,” Holmes answered. “Your Red-Headed Club was a very bold idea. It almost worked.”

“You’ll see your friend again soon,” said Jones. “He’s faster at climbing down holes than I am. Just hold out your arms so I can put on the handcuffs.”

“I ask that you will not touch me with your dirty hands,” said our prisoner as the handcuffs closed on his arms. “You may not know that I have royal blood in me. Have the goodness, also, when you speak to me, to always say ‘sir’ and ‘please.’”
“All right,” said Jones with a bit of a smile. “Would you please, sir, march up the steps, where we can get a cab to take you to the police station?”

“That is better,” said John Clay quietly. He walked quietly with the policeman.

“Really, Mr. Holmes,” said Mr. Martin as we followed them from the cellar, “I do not know how the bank can thank you. There is no doubt that you have stopped one of the boldest plans for a bank robbery that I have ever known.”

“I have had one or two past fights of my own with Mr. John Clay, and I am happy to have caught him at last,” said Holmes. “I have spent a little money on this matter, which I ask the bank to pay me, but beyond that it is enough that I have had such an interesting and unusual experience, and to have heard the remarkable story of the Red-Headed Club.”

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“You see, Watson,” said Holmes later, as we sat at his home on Baker Street, “there is no reason any club would pay someone to copy the Encyclopedia Britannica.
It was perfectly obvious from the beginning that there was only one possible reason anyone might have placed the advertisement for the Club, and made such a job. Clearly, they wanted to get this shopkeeper, a rather stupid man, out of his shop for a number of hours every day. They found a curious way to do it, but, really, it would be difficult to think of any better way.

“John Clay probably got the idea for the Club because his friend’s hair was the same bright red color as the shopkeeper’s hair. The 4 pounds a week was an easy way to interest him, and it was a small amount to them; they were planning to steal thousands of pounds. They put in the advertisement, one of them took the office for a few months, while the other man made certain that our shopkeeper saw the advertisement, and came to ask for the job. Together, they made sure he was away from the shop every morning. As soon as I heard the assistant was working for half pay, it was obvious that he had some strong reason to want to work at the shop.”
“Had there been women in the house, I would have thought he was simply in love. That, however, was out of the question. The man’s shop was a small one, and there was nothing in his house that could explain such a complicated plan, or such an expensive one. Therefore, it had to be something out of the house. What could it be?

“I thought of the assistant’s interest in photography. He went into the cellar often. The cellar! He was doing something in the cellar – something that took many hours a day, for
at least two months. What could it be? I could think of nothing except that he was digging a tunnel to some other building.

“That is when we went to visit the shop. I surprised you by beating on the sidewalk with my stick. I wanted to know whether the cellar stretched out in front, or behind. It was not in front. Then I rang the bell, and, as I hoped, the assistant answered it. We have had some small fights, but we had never actually seen each other before. I didn’t look at his face much. The knees of his pants were what I wanted to see. You yourself must have noticed how worn and dirty they were. From those knees, I knew he had spent many hours digging a tunnel.

“The only remaining question was what they were digging for. Where did the tunnel go? I walked around the corner, saw the City Bank on the other side of Mr. Wilson’s shop, and felt that I had solved my problem. When you drove home after the concert, I called on the police at Scotland Yard, and on the bank director, with the result that you have seen.”

“And how did you know they
would do it tonight?” I asked.

“When they closed their Club offices, that was a sign that they no longer cared about Mr. Jack Wilson’s being in his shop – in other words, they had finished their tunnel. But they needed to use the tunnel soon, as it might be discovered, or the gold might be taken to another place. Saturday would suit them better than any other day, because it would give them two days for their escape. For all these reasons I expected them to come tonight.”

“You thought it out beautifully,” I said, with true delight. “It is so long a chain, and yet every piece of the chain leads, without doubt, to the next piece.”

“It saved me from being bored,” he answered, rubbing his eyes. “Ah! That feeling is already closing in on me. My life is spent trying to escape from ordinary day-to-day life. These little mysteries help me to do that.”

“And you make life better for all of us,” I said.

“Well, perhaps, after all, it is of some little use,” he remarked. “‘The man is nothing, the work is everything,’ as Gustave Flaubert wrote to George Sand.”
To Sherlock Holmes she is always THE woman. I have rarely heard him speak of her under any other name. It was not that he felt anything like love for Irene Adler. All human feelings, and most of all love, had no place in his mind. He was, I believe, the most perfect thinking machine that the world has seen, but I don’t think he ever fell in love with anyone.

On the rare times that he spoke of the softer feelings, he showed clearly that he had no use for them. They were important things for him to watch, very good for understanding why men acted as they did. But for the detective to
let such feelings into his own delicate mind would have made it more difficult for him to think perfectly clearly. It would have been like putting sand into a clock. And yet there was but one woman for him, and that woman was Irene Adler.

I had seen little of Holmes recently. After my marriage, our lives had gone in different directions. My own complete happiness, and the home-centered interests that rise up around the man with a new wife, were enough to take all my attention, while Holmes, who did not like the small talk of dinner parties, remained in our home on Baker Street. He spent his time reading his old books. One week he seemed only to sleep. The next week, he would suddenly become full of life as he tried to solve a new case. He was still, as ever, deeply interested in the study of crime. Again and again, he used his great intelligence to investigate evidence that others would never have seen, and to solve mysteries that the police had decided were impossible to solve. From time to time I heard stories of his work: of his trip to Italy to solve a crime, or the sad case of two brothers in
Egypt, and finally of the mystery that he had solved so delicately and successfully for the king of a small country. Except for these signs of his work, however, which I wrote about for all the readers of the newspaper, I knew little of my old friend.

One night – it was on the 20th of March, 1888 – I was returning from a visit to a patient (for I had now returned to my old job as a doctor) when my way led me along Baker Street. As I passed the door to the home we had shared, and where Holmes now lived alone, I felt a sharp desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was using his unusual powers. His rooms were brightly lit, and, even as I looked up, I saw his tall, thin figure pass twice, lit from behind. He was walking up and down the room quickly, eagerly, with his head down on his chest and his hands behind him. To me, who knew his every mood, his manner told its own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his dreams and was chasing a new problem. I rang the bell and was shown up to the room, which
had once been in part my own.

His did not smile. He did not often show great pleasure; but he was glad, I think, to see me. Without a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to a chair. Then he stood by the fire and looked me over in the way that only Sherlock Holmes could do.

“Marriage is good for you,” he remarked. “I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you.”

“Only seven!” I answered.

“Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a little more, I believe, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you planned to start working as a doctor again.”

“Then, how do you know?”

“I see things, I make conclusions. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet recently, and that you have a servant girl who is not careful with your things?”

“My dear Holmes,” said I, “this is too much. You would certainly have been burned, had you lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I had a country walk a few days ago
and came home quite dirty. But I have changed my clothes, so I can’t imagine how you knew it. As to my servant girl, she is terrible, and my wife is about to replace her, but there, again, I fail to see how you work it out.”

He laughed to himself and rubbed his long hands together.

“It is simple,” he said. “My eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the light of the fire hits it, the outside of the shoe is cut by six straight lines. Obviously the cuts were made by someone who was not careful as they ran a knife along the edges of the shoe in order to remove hardened dirt from it. So, you see, I could draw two conclusions: That you had been out in poor weather, and that you had a very bad servant girl. As to your job, if a gentleman walks into my rooms smelling of the chemical iodoform, I must be stupid, indeed, if I do not know that he is a doctor.”

I could not help laughing at how easily he explained how he reached his conclusions. “When I hear you give your reasons,” I remarked, “the thing always appears to me to be so absurdly simple that I could do it myself quite simply, though at each step in your chain of reasoning I fail to understand
The man will not understand that I think otherwise. He knows that every detail is a symptom of something else. He has developed the habit of observing everything. He is very observant.

"Quite so," he answered, sitting down in a chair. "You see, but you do not observe. The difference is clear. For example, you have often seen the steps that lead up from the hall to this room."

"Often."

"How often?"

"Well, hundreds of times."
“Then how many steps are there?”

“How many? I don’t know.”

“Quite so! You have not observed.

And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know that there are 17 steps, because I have both seen and observed. By the way, since you are interested in these little problems, and since you are good enough to write about one or two of my small experiences, you may be interested in this.” He threw over a piece of thick, pink paper that had been sitting open on the table. “It just arrived today,” he said. “Read it.”

The note was without either a name or an address.

“There will call upon you tonight, at a quarter to eight o’clock,” it said, “a gentleman who desires to ask for your advice on a matter of the very deepest importance. Your recent services to one of the royal houses of Europe have shown that you are one who may safely be trusted with matters that are of great importance. This description of you we have from all people received. Be in your home then at that hour. Your visitor will wear a mask.”

“This is indeed a mystery,” I remarked. “What do you imagine
I have no information yet. It is never a good idea to make a theory before you have information. If you make a theory too soon, then you begin to change facts to fit your theory, instead of looking for a theory which fits the facts. But look at the note itself. What do you conclude from it?

I carefully looked at the writing, and the paper upon which it was written.

"The man who wrote it was probably rich," I remarked, doing my best to copy my friend's way of thinking. "This paper must be expensive. It is a strange paper, indeed."

"Strange – that is the very word," said Holmes. "It is not an English paper at all. Hold it up to the light."

I did so, and saw in the paper a large "E" with a small "g," a "P," and a large "G" with a small "t."

"What do you think of that?" asked Holmes.

"The name of the writer, no doubt; or rather, the first letters of his name."

"Not at all. The 'G' with the small 't' stands for 'Gesellschaft,' which is the German word for 'business' or 'company.' It is like when we use 'Co.' to say 'Company.' The 'P,' of course,
stands for ‘Paper.’ Now for the ‘Eg.’ Let us glance at our book of businesses in Europe.” He took down a heavy brown book. “Here we are: Egria. It is in Bohemia, a German-speaking country not far from Germany. The book says it is ‘Remarkable for its many paper-making companies.’ Ha, ha, my boy, what do you make of that?” His eyes got brighter.

“So the paper was made in Bohemia,” I said.

“Yes, exactly. And the man who wrote the note is a German. Do you note the unusual way he wrote one sentence – ‘This description of you we have from all people received.’ A Frenchman could not have written that. Frenchmen, like Englishmen, put their verbs in the middle of their sentences. It is only the Germans who put their verbs at the end of their sentences. All that remains, therefore, is to discover what is wanted by this German who
writes on paper from Bohemia and
who wishes to wear a mask so that
we won’t see his face. And here he
comes, I believe. We will soon know
for sure.”

As he spoke there was the sharp
sound of horses’ feet and of wheels
rubbing against the stones outside,
followed by a sharp ring of the bell.

“A pair of horses, by their sound,”
he said. “Yes,” he went on, looking
out the window. “A nice little car
and a pair of beautiful horses. They
would cost 150 pounds each. There’s
money in this case, Watson, if there
is nothing else.”

“I think that I had better go,
Holmes.”

“Not a bit, Doctor. Stay where you
are. I am lost without you. And this
promises to be interesting. It would
be sad to miss it.”

“But your client—”

“Never mind him. I may want your
help, and so may he. Here he comes.
Sit down in that chair, Doctor, and
give us your best attention.”

A slow and heavy step, which
had been heard in the hall, stopped
immediately outside the door. Then
we heard someone at the door.

“Come in!” said Holmes.
A man entered who was at least six feet six inches tall, with a wide, strong chest. His clothes were rich in a way which would, in England, seem to be in bad taste. The deep blue cloth which was thrown over his shoulders was lined with flame-colored cloth and joined at the neck with a single, bright red stone. He carried a hat in his hand, while across the upper part of his face he had a black mask. He must have just pushed up the mask before coming into the room, for his hand was still raised as he entered. From his face, he appeared to be a man of importance, a man who expected others to do as he said. He did not look like a man who changed his opinions easily.

“You had my note?” he asked with a deep strong voice, clearly marked with a German sound. “I told you that I would call.” He looked from one to the other of us, as if uncertain which to speak to.

“Please take a seat,” said Holmes. “This is my friend, Dr. Watson, who is from time to time good enough to help me in my cases. Whom have I the honor to address?”

“You may address me as the Count von Kramm, here to speak for the king of Bohemia. I understand that this
gentleman, your friend, is a man of honor, whom I may trust with a matter of the greatest importance. If not, I would like to talk with you alone.”

I rose to go, but Holmes caught me by the arm and pushed me back into my chair. “It is both, or none,” he said. “You may say before this gentleman anything that you may say to me.”

The Count nodded. “Then I must begin,” he said, “by asking you both to keep this a complete secret for two years; at the end of that time the matter will be of no importance. At the present time it is not too much to say that it is of such weight, it may change the course of European history.”

“I promise,” said Holmes. “And I.”

“I am sorry to appear in this mask,” went on our strange visitor. “The important person who pays me wishes that I be unknown to you, and I may admit at once that the name by which I have just called myself is not actually my own.”

“I already understood that,” said Holmes dryly. “This case is very delicate, and we
must do everything we can to stop what might grow to be a great scandal and seriously risk the honor of one of the royal families of Europe. To speak plainly, the matter involves the great House of Ormstein, the kings of Bohemia.”

“I already understood that, as well,” said Holmes, making himself comfortable in his chair and closing his eyes.

Our visitor glanced with some apparent surprise at the loafing,
sleepy-looking figure of the man who, no doubt, he had been told was the best detective in Europe. Holmes slowly opened his eyes again and looked at his big client.

“If your Majesty would please explain your case,” he remarked, “I would be better able to help you.”

The man jumped from his chair and walked up and down the room with a very unhappy look on his face. Then he tore the mask from his face and threw it on the floor. “You are right,” he cried; “I am the King. Why should I try to hide it?”

“Why, indeed?” said Holmes. “Even before Your Majesty spoke, I knew that I was addressing the King of Bohemia.”

“But you can understand,” said our strange visitor, sitting down once more and putting his hand to his face where the mask had sat, “you can understand that I am not used to doing such business in my own person. Yet the matter was so delicate that I could not give it to anyone else without putting myself in his power. I have come from Bohemia, without telling a single person, in order to ask for your advice.”

“Then, please ask,” said Holmes, shutting his eyes once more.
“The facts are these: Some five years ago, during a long visit to the city of Warsaw, I met Irene Adler. The name is no doubt known to you.”

“Kindly look her up in my papers, Doctor,” said Holmes without opening his eyes. For many years he had been keeping thousands of newspaper stories about subjects that might one day be of interest. It was difficult to name a subject or a person on which he could not at once give information. Very soon, I found her life story, between that of a French artist who painted using only the color green, and that of a man who had written a short book about the deep-sea fishes.

“Let me see!” said Holmes. “Hmm! Born in America in the year 1858. A singer, in Warsaw – yes! Stopped working as a singer – ha! Living in London – quite so! Your Majesty, as I understand, became involved with this young person, wrote her some letters in which you said more than
you should have, and you now wish to get those letters back.”
“Exactly so. But how–”
“Was there a secret marriage?”
“None.”
“No papers?”
“None.”
“Then I fail to follow your Majesty. You are worried that this young person could threaten to show your letters to the newspapers unless you give her money. But I don’t see the problem. Couldn’t you just say they are not real, that you and she were never involved, and that someone else wrote the letters and put your name on them?”
“There is the writing.”
“No problem! You can say someone copied your writing.”
“They are written on my note-paper.”
“You can say someone took it from you.”
“My photograph is with them.”
“Anyone can buy your photograph.”
“We were both in the photograph.”
“Oh, dear! That is very bad!”
“I was not thinking well. I had lost all my senses.”
“You have made some serious problems for yourself.”
“I was only a prince then. I was young. Even now, I am still only 30.”
“We must get it back.”
“We have tried and failed.”
“Your Majesty must pay. It must be bought.”
“She will not sell.”
“Steal it, then.”
“Five times we have tried to steal it. Twice I have paid men to break into her house. Once we looked in her things when she traveled. Twice she has been stopped and searched. There has been no result.”
“No sign of it?”
“No. None.”
Holmes laughed. “It is quite a pretty little problem,” he said.
“But a very serious one to me,” replied the King.
“Very serious, indeed. And what does she plan to do with the photograph?”
“To hurt me. To cause a scandal.”
“But how?”
“I am about to be married.”
“So I have heard.”
“To the daughter of the King of Scandinavia. You may know about her family. Any doubt as to my past would bring the matter to an end.”

“And Irene Adler?”

“Threatens to send them the photograph. And she will do it. I know that she will do it. You do not know her, but she has a soul of steel. She has the face of the most beautiful of women, and the mind of the strongest of men. Rather than let me marry another woman, she would do anything – anything at all.”

“You are sure that she has not sent it yet?”

“I am sure.”

“And why?”

“Because she has said that she would send it on the day when we made public our plan to marry. That will be in three days.”

“Oh, so we have three days yet,” said Holmes. “That is very good, as I have one or two matters of importance to look into just at present. Your Majesty will, of course, stay in London for the present?”

“Certainly. You will find me at the Langham Hotel under the name of the Count Von Kramm.”
"Then I shall drop you a line to let you know how we are doing."
"Please do so. I will be worried."
"Then, as to money?"
"Spend whatever you need to spend."
"Whatever I need?"
"I tell you that I would give half of my kingdom to have that photograph."
"And for present costs?"
The King took a heavy bag and laid it on the table.
"There are three hundred pounds in gold and seven hundred pounds in notes," he said.
Holmes wrote the amount received on a piece of paper from his notebook and handed it to the King.
"And the woman's address?" he asked.
"She is at the Brian Hotel, Riverside Street, St. John's Wood."
Holmes took a note of it. "One other question," he said. "Was the photograph pocket-sized, or large?"
"It was large."
"Then, good night, your Majesty, and I trust that we shall soon have some good news for you. And good night, Watson," he added,
as the wheels of the royal car rolled down the street. “If you will be good enough to come tomorrow afternoon at three o’clock I would like to talk about this little matter with you.”

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At exactly three o’clock I was at Baker Street, but Holmes had not yet returned. The owner told me that he had left the house shortly after eight o’clock in the morning. I sat down near the fire, planning to wait for him, however long he might be. I was already deeply interested in his investigation, for, though it was not strange in the same way as the two crimes that I have already written about, still, the fact that his client was a king made this case very special.

It was almost four o’clock before the door opened, and a badly dressed man, with his face red from drinking, walked into the room. Although I was quite used to my friend’s surprising ability to change his appearance, I had to look three times before I was certain that it was indeed Sherlock Holmes. With a nod he disappeared into the bedroom. He came out five minutes later, nicely dressed, as of old. Putting his hands into his pock-
ets, he stretched out his legs in front of the fire and laughed heartily for some minutes.

“Well, really!” he cried, and then he laughed again until he had to lie back, helpless, in the chair.

“What is it?”

“It's quite too funny. I am sure you could never guess how I used my morning, or what I ended up doing.”

“I can’t imagine. I suppose that you have been carefully watching Miss Irene Adler.”

“Quite so; but what came next was rather unusual. I left the house a little after eight o’clock this morning, dressed as a farmer out of work. Men who work with horses quickly make friends with one another. If you are one of them, you will know all that is to know. I soon found the Brian Hotel. It has a garden at the back, but the front comes right up to the road, two stories high. It has a strong lock on the door. There is a large living room on the right side, with long windows almost to the floor. Behind there was nothing remarkable, except that the hall window could be reached from the top of the house in back. I walked around it and looked at it closely.
from every point of view, but without noting anything else of interest.

“I then slowly walked down the street and found, as I expected, a smaller street that runs down along one wall of the garden. I helped the men rub down their horses. In return, they gave me a little money, a bottle of beer, and as much information as I could desire about Miss Adler. They also told me a great deal about six other people in the neighborhood in whom I was not in the least interested, but whose life stories I was forced to listen to.”

“And what of Irene Adler?” I asked.

“Oh, she has turned all the men’s heads down in that part. She is the most delicate, beautiful thing on this earth. That’s what every man on Riverside Street thinks. She lives quietly, still sings now and then, drives out at five every day, and returns at exactly seven o’clock for dinner. She rarely goes out at other times, except when she sings. She has only one man visit her, but he visits quite often. He is dark and handsome, never calls less than once a day, and often twice. His name is Mr. Godfrey Norton.”

I talked to a man who had driven
him home ten or twelve times, and knew all about him. See how useful it is to have a cab driver to give us information! When I had listened to all he had to tell, I began to walk up and down near the Brian Hotel once more, and to think over my plan.

“This Godfrey Norton was apparently an important person in the matter. What was the reason for his repeated visits? Was Irene Adler his client, or his secret lover? If she was his client, she had probably given him the photograph to keep it safe. But if they were involved as a couple, then she probably kept the photograph to herself. I needed an answer to this question. That would tell me whether I should keep doing my work at the Brian Hotel, or turn my attention to the gentleman’s rooms. It was a delicate point, and it made the field of my investigation wider. I fear that all these details bore you, but I have to let you see my little problems, if you are to understand everything.”

“I am following you closely,” I answered.

“I was still thinking the matter over when a cab drove up to the
Brian Hotel, and a gentleman jumped out. He was a remarkably handsome man, with dark hair and a sharp nose – apparently the man of whom I had heard. He appeared to be in a great hurry. He shouted to the cab driver to wait, and walked past the servant who opened the door with the air of a man who was quite at home.

“He was in the house about half an hour, and I could see him in the windows of the sitting-room, walking up and down, talking excitedly, and waving his arms. Of Irene Adler, I could see nothing. Finally he came out, looking even more excited than before. As he stepped up to the cab, he pulled a gold watch from his pocket and looked at it carefully. ‘Drive fast,’ he shouted, ‘first to Hankey’s Shop on Hill Street, and then to the Church of St. Monica. I’ll give you a silver coin if you do it in twenty minutes!’

“Away they went, and I was just wondering if I should follow them when up the small street came a cab, the driver with his coat half open. It hadn’t pulled up before the woman shot out of the hall door and into the cab. I only caught a glance of her
at the moment, but she was a beautiful woman, with a face that a man might die for.

“The Church of St. Monica, John,’ she cried, ‘and two silver coins if you reach it in twenty minutes.’

“This was quite too good to lose, Watson. I was just deciding whether I should run for it, or whether I should sit behind her cab and get a ride where she couldn’t see me. But then another cab came down the street. The driver looked twice at such a poor man as I, but I jumped in before he could say anything. ‘The Church of St. Monica,’ said I, ‘and two silver coins if you reach it in twenty minutes.’ It was twenty-five minutes to twelve, and of course it was clear enough what was happening.

“My driver drove fast. I don’t think I ever moved faster, but the others were there before us. The cabs with their horses were in front of the door when I arrived. I paid the driver and hurried into the church. There was not a soul there save the couple whom I had followed and a minister, who was talking with them. They were all three standing in a group in the front of the church. I leaned up against a wall like any other loafer
who has dropped into a church. Suddenly, to my surprise, the three up in front turned to face me, and Godfrey Norton came running as hard as he could towards me.

"Thank God," he cried. ‘You'll do. Come! Come!’

“What then?” I asked.

“Come, man, come, only three minutes.’

“I was pulled up to the front of the church. Before I knew where I was, I found myself repeating words that were quietly spoken in my ear. I said that I knew about things of which I knew nothing, and generally helped in the marriage of Irene Adler to Godfrey Norton. It was all done in an instant, and there was the gentleman thanking me on the one side and the lady on the other, while the minister smiled at me in front. It was the most absurd position in which I ever found myself in my life, and it was the thought of it that started me laughing just now.

“It seems that there had been something wrong in the papers that the couple needed to marry, and that the minister would not marry them without a witness of some sort. My lucky appearance saved Mr. Norton
from having to go out into the streets to look for a witness. The woman gave me a silver coin, and I mean to wear it on my watch-chain to remember the evening.”

“Well, I found my plans very seriously threatened. It looked as if the pair might go away immediately. In that case, I would have to quickly do something. At the church door, however, they went in different directions. He drove back to his rooms, and she to her own house. ‘I shall drive out in the park at five as usual,’ she said as she left him. I heard no more. They drove
away in different directions, and I went off to make my own plans.”

“Which are?”

“Some cold meat and a glass of beer,” he answered, ringing the bell.

“I have been too busy to think of food, and I will probably be even busier this evening. By the way, Doctor, I need your help.”

“I will be delighted.”

“You don’t mind breaking the law?”

“Not for a good cause.”

“Oh, the cause is a very good one!”

“Then I am your man.”

“I was sure that I could count on you.”

“But what do you want me to do?”

“When Mrs. Turner has brought in the food I will make it clear to you. Now,” he said as he turned hungrily to the simple food that the owner of our house had brought us, “I need to talk about it while I eat, because I don’t have much time. It is nearly five now. In two hours we must be ready to act. Irene Adler returns from her drive at seven o’clock. We must be at the Brian Hotel to meet her.”

“And what then?”

“You must leave that to me. I have already set up everything that
is to happen, and I’ve spoken with everyone who will be involved. There is only one thing you must promise. You must not get in the way, no matter what happens. You understand?”

“I must do nothing?”

“Do nothing at all. There will probably be some small unpleasantness. Do not join in it. Then I will be carried into the house. Four or five minutes afterwards the sitting-room window will open. I want you to stand close to that open window.”

“Yes.”

“You are to watch me, for I will be where you can see me.”

“Yes.”

“And when I nod my head – like this – you must throw into the room the stick that I will give you to throw. At the same time, raise the cry of fire. Do you follow me?”

“Yes, very well.”

“It is nothing very difficult,” he said, taking a long stick from his pocket. “This little stick will produce smoke when you pull off the end. Your job is simply to pull off the end, throw it through the window, then shout ‘Fire!’ Your cry of fire will be repeated by quite a number of
people. You may then walk to the end of the street, and I will join you again in ten minutes. I hope that I have made myself clear?"

“I am to do nothing, to get near the window, to watch you, and at
the sign, to throw in this stick, then to raise the cry of fire, and to wait for you at the corner of the street.”

“Exactly.”

“Then you may completely trust me to help.”

“Very good. I think, perhaps, it is time for me to prepare for my job.”

He disappeared into his bedroom and returned in a few minutes in the clothes of a friendly-looking minister. His wide black hat, comfortable clothes, friendly smile, and pleasant appearance were such that anyone would have trusted their soul to this kindly-looking man. It was not just that Holmes changed his clothes. His look, his manner, his very soul seemed to have changed, as well.

It was a quarter past six when we left Baker Street, and it was still ten minutes before seven when we found ourselves on Riverside Street. It was already getting dark, and the street lights were just being lit as we walked up and down in front of the Brian Hotel. The house was just as I had pictured it from Sherlock Holmes’ description, but the street appeared to be busier than I expected. In fact, for a small street in a quiet neighborhood, it was remarkably busy. There
was a group of badly-dressed men smoking and laughing in a corner, a knife-sharpener with his wheel, two policemen who were smiling and joking with a young woman, and several well-dressed young men who were loaﬁng about.

“You see,” remarked Holmes, as we walked in front of the house, “this marriage should make matters simpler. Now, the photograph could hurt her, as easily as it could hurt our client. The chances are that she would be as afraid of its being seen by Mr. Godfrey Norton, as the King is of its being seen by the woman who will soon be his wife. Now the question is, Where are we to ﬁnd the photograph?”

“Where, indeed?”

“It is most unlikely that she carries it about with her. It is too big. Too large to be easily hidden in a woman’s dress. She knows that the King is able to have her stopped and searched. Two tries of the sort have already been made. We may take it, then, that she does not carry it about with her.”

“Where, then?”

“She may have trusted it to someone else. There is that possibility.
But I think not. Women are naturally secretive, and they like to keep their secrets to themselves. Why should she hand it over to anyone else? She could trust herself. Also, remember that she had planned to use it within a few days. It must be where she can quickly lay her hands on it. It must be in her own house.”

“But her house has twice been broken into and searched.”

“Meaningless! They did not know how to look.”

“But how will you look?”

“I will not look.”

“What then?”

“I will get her to show me.”

“But she will never do that!”

“Oh, I think she will. But I hear the sound of wheels. It is her car. Now carry out my orders to the letter.”

As he spoke, I could see the side-lights of a car come around the corner of the street. Soon a cab rolled up to the door of the Brian Hotel. As it pulled up, one of the loafing men at the corner ran forward to open the door in the hope of earning a little money, but he was pushed away by another loafer, who had run up with the same plan in mind. A fight broke
out. The two policemen only made it worse: They both took sides with one of the loafers, while the knife-sharpener was equally eager to help the other side.

One man hit another, and in an instant the lady, who had stepped from her car, was the center of a little group of fighting men, who hit at each other with sticks. Holmes ran into the crowd to protect the lady; but just as he reached her he gave
a cry and dropped to the ground, with blood running freely down his face.

At his fall the policemen ran off in one direction and the loafers in the other, while a number of better-dressed people, who had watched the fight without taking part in it, crowded in to help the lady and the hurt man. Irene Adler, as I will still call her, had hurried up the steps; but she stood at the top with her beautiful figure clearly lit against the lights of the hall, looking back into the street.

"Is the poor gentleman badly hurt?" she asked.

"He is dead," cried several voices.

"No, no, there’s life in him!" shouted another. "But he’ll be gone before you can get him to a doctor."

"He’s a daring man," said a woman. "They would have had the lady’s money and watch if it hadn’t been for him. They were a gang, and a rough one, too. Ah, he’s breathing now."

"He can’t lie in the street. May we bring him in?"

She nodded. "Surely. Bring him into the sitting-room. There is a
comfortable place for him. This way, please!"

Slowly he was carried into the Brian Hotel and laid out in the main room, while I still observed everything from my place by the window. The lights were on, and I could see Holmes as he lay resting. I do not know whether he had any second thoughts at that moment for the part he was playing, but I know that
I never in my life felt worse about myself than when I saw the beautiful woman against whom I was working, or the kindness with which she waited upon the hurt man. And yet Holmes had trusted me to do a job, and I had made a promise to him. I hardened my heart, and took the smoke-stick from under my coat.

After all, I thought, we are not hurting her. We are just stopping her from hurting another.Holmes had been sitting, and I saw him move his head to his chest, like a man who is in need of air. A servant ran across and threw open the window. At the same instant I saw him nod his head in my direction, and I threw my stick into the room with a cry of “Fire!” The word was no sooner out of my mouth than the whole crowd, well-dressed and ill-dressed —gentlemen, farmers, and servants — joined in a general cry of “Fire.” Thick clouds of smoke came through the room and out the open window. I glanced at the running figures, and a moment later I heard the voice of Holmes from within calling out that it was a false alarm. Slipping through the shouting crowd I made my way to the running figures, and hardening my heart, I took the smoke-stick from under my coat.
my way to the corner of the street, and in ten minutes was happy to find my friend’s arm in mine, and to get away from the scene of the fight. He walked quickly and quietly for some few minutes until we had turned down a quiet street.

“You did it very nicely, Doctor,” he remarked. “Nothing could have been better. It is all right.”

“Do you have the photograph?”

“I know where it is.”

“And how did you find out?”

“She showed me, as I told you she would.”

“I still don’t understand.”

“I do not wish to make a mystery,” he said, laughing. “The matter was perfectly simple. You, of course, saw that everyone in the street was helping me. I paid them all to work for me for the evening.”

“I guessed as much.”

“Then, when the fight broke out, I had a little red paint in my hand. I took a step forward, fell down, hit my hand to my face, and looked like I was badly hurt. It is an old trick.”

“That also I could guess.”

“Then they carried me in. She
had to let me in. What else could she do? And into her sitting-room, which was the very room where I thought the photograph was hidden. It was either there, or in her bedroom, and I needed to see which. They laid me down, I showed that I needed air, they were forced to open the window, and you had your chance.”

“How did that help you?”

“It was all-important. When a woman thinks that her house is on fire, she will at once hurry to the thing that she thinks is most important. It is a strong feeling, and I have more than once been able to make use of it. In the case of the French scandal it was of use to me, and also in the business of the killings up north. A married woman grabs at her baby, for example. Now it was clear to me that our lady of today had nothing in the house more important to her than what we are looking for. She would hurry to save it. The alarm of fire was well done. The smoke and shouting were enough to scare anyone. She acted just as I expected. The photograph is in a space behind a thin piece of wood just next to the door. She was there in an instant, and I only had
When I cried out that it was a false alarm, she put it back, glanced at the smoking stick, ran from the room, and I have not seen her since.

I got up, and, explaining that I had to leave, hurried from the house. I thought for a moment; should I try to get the photograph at once? But the driver had come in, and he was watching me carefully. It seemed safer to wait. A little over-eagerness, and we could lose everything.”

“And now?” I asked.

“Our search is nearly finished. Tomorrow I shall call on her, with the King, and with you, if you care to come with us. We will be shown into the sitting-room to wait for the lady, but it is probable that when she comes she may find neither us nor the photograph. His Majesty might be happy for a chance to get it back in his own hands.”

“And when will you call?”

“At eight in the morning. She will not be up, so that we shall have a clear field. Also, we must be quick, for this marriage may mean a complete change in her life and what she does. I must wire to the King immediately.”
We had reached Baker Street and had stopped at the door. He was searching his pockets for the key when someone passing said:

“Good night, Sherlock Holmes.”

There were several people on the sidewalk at the time, but the voice appeared to come from a thin young man in a long coat who had hurried by.

“I’ve heard that voice before,” said Holmes, staring down the badly-lit street. “Now, I wonder who in the world that could have been.”

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I spent the night at Baker Street that night, and we were eating our morning meal when the King of Bohemia ran into the room.

“You have really got it!” he cried, grabbing Sherlock Holmes by both shoulders and looking eagerly into his face.

“Not yet.”

“But you have hopes?”

“I have hopes.”

“Then, come. I am eager to be gone.”

“We must have a cab.”

“No, my car is waiting.”
“Then that will make things simpler.” We started off once more for the Brian Hotel.

“Irene Adler is married,” remarked Holmes.

“Married! When?”

“Yesterday.”

“But to whom?”

“To a man named Norton.”

“But she could not love him.”

“I hope that she does.”

“And why do you hope that?”

“Because then your Majesty has no need to fear any future problem. If the lady loves her husband, then she does not love your Majesty. If she does not love your Majesty, then there is no reason why she should get in the way of your Majesty’s plan.”

“It is true. And yet – Well! I wish she had been of my own station! What a queen she would have made!” He grew silent, and we did not speak again until we arrived.

The door of the Brian Hotel was open, and an old woman stood on the steps. She watched us with a sharp eye as we stepped from the car.

“Mr. Sherlock Holmes, I believe?” said she.
“I am Mr. Holmes,” answered my friend, looking at her with a questioning and rather surprised look.

“Indeed! My lady told me that you would probably call. She left this morning with her husband by the 5:15 train to go to France.”

“What!” Sherlock Holmes stepped back, white with surprise. “Do you mean that she has left England?”

“Never to return.”

“And the papers?” asked the King softly. “All is lost.”

“We shall see.” Holmes pushed past the servant and ran into the drawing-room, followed by the King and myself. The chairs had been thrown about in every direction, as if the lady had hurriedly searched through everything before she left. Holmes ran towards the door, tore back a thin piece of wood, and, putting in his hand, pulled out a photograph and a letter. The photograph was of Irene Adler herself in evening dress, the letter was addressed to “Sherlock Holmes, To be left till called for.” My friend tore it open and we all three read it together. It had been written the night before and ran in this way:
“My Dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes,

You really did it very well. You took me in completely. Until after the fire alarm, I had no idea what you were doing. But then, when I realized that I had let you see where I hid the photograph, I began to think.

“I had been told about you months ago. I had been told that if the King used a detective
it would certainly be you. And your address had been given me. Yet, with all this, you were able to learn my secret. Even after I began to have doubts, I found it hard to think badly of such a dear, kind old minister. But, you know, men's clothes are nothing new to me, either. I often dress as a man because it frees me to go where I wish. I sent John, the driver, to watch you. Then I ran up the steps, got into my walking clothes, as I call them, and came down just as you left.

"Well, I followed you to your door, and so made sure that I was really someone of interest to the well-known Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Then, I wished you good night, and went to see my husband.

"We both thought that when chased by such a strong enemy as yourself, the best idea was to run. So you will find the room empty when you call tomorrow. As to the photograph, your client may rest in peace. I love and am loved by a better man than he. The King may do what he wishes. Though he has hurt me,
I will do nothing to hurt him. I keep the photograph only to protect myself from anything that he might do in the future. I leave a photograph that he might care to own; and I remain, dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes,

“Very truly yours

“Irene Adler Norton”

“What a woman – oh, what a woman!” cried the King of Bohemia, when we had all three read this letter. “Did I not tell you how quick and strong she was? Would she not have made a very good queen? Is it not sad that she was not on my level?”

“From what I have seen of the lady she seems indeed to be on a very different level to your Majesty,” said Holmes coldly. “I am sorry that I have not been able to bring your Majesty’s business to a better end.”

“Just the opposite, my dear sir,” cried the King. “Nothing could be better. I know that I can trust her word. The photograph is now as safe as if it were in the fire.”

“I am glad to hear your Majesty say so.”
“Please tell me in what way I can thank you. This ring—” He slipped a gold ring from his finger and held it out in his hand.

“Your Majesty has something that I should like even more,” said Holmes.

“You have but to name it.”

“This photograph!”

The King stared at him in surprise.

“Irene’s photograph!” he cried.

“Certainly, if you wish it.”

“I thank your Majesty. Then there is no more to be done in the matter. I have the honor to wish you a very good morning.” Turning away without seeing the hand that the King had stretched out to him, he set off in my company for his rooms.

And that was how a great scandal threatened the kingdom of Bohe-mia, and how the best plans of Mr. Sherlock Holmes were beaten by a woman’s sharp mind. He used to make fun of the intelligence of women, but I have not heard him do it of late. And when he speaks of Irene Adler, or of her photograph, he always speaks of her as “the woman.”
My friend Sherlock Holmes had been working quietly for several hours. His long, thin back was bent over a glass bottle. In the bottle, he was heating some chemicals with a bad smell. His head was resting on his chest.

From where I sat, he looked like a strange, thin gray bird.

“So, Watson,” he said suddenly, “you do not plan to invest in any South African gold mines?”

I raised my head in surprise. Although I had often seen the results of Holmes’s wonderful mind at work, I still could not explain how he knew what I was thinking.
“How on earth do you know that?” I asked.

He turned around, with a bottle in his hand. From the sparkle of his eyes I could see that he was enjoying himself.

“Now, Watson, admit that you are completely surprised,” he said.

“I am.”

“I should make you sign a paper to that effect.”
“Why?”
“Because in five minutes you will say that it is all absurdly simple.”
“I am sure I will say nothing of the kind.”
“You see, my dear Watson” – he placed his bottle back on the table – “it is often easy to form a chain of conclusions, in which each conclusion leads to another one. Each step in this chain may be simple in itself. If, after making such a chain, I simply state the starting point and the conclusion, without explaining the steps in between, I may surprise you. Now, it was not difficult, after I saw the space by your left thumb, to feel sure that you did NOT plan to invest your money in the gold mines of South Africa.”
“I see no connection between my thumb and South Africa.”
“Probably not. But I can quickly show you a close connection. Here are the missing pieces of the very simple chain of conclusions that I formed: 1. You had chalk between your left finger and thumb when you came home from the club last night. 2. You always put chalk there when you play snooker. You use the chalk to hold the stick. 3. You only play snooker with Thurston. 4. You told me four weeks ago that Thurston
had a chance to buy some South African gold mines. He wanted you to buy some also, but you had to decide within a month. 5. Your checks are locked with my papers, and you have not asked for the key. 6. Therefore, you do not plan to invest your money in South African gold mines.”

“How absurdly simple!” I cried.

“Quite so!” he said, a little annoyed. “Every problem seems easy after the hidden connections are explained. Here is an unexplained problem. See what you can make of that, my friend.” He threw a piece of paper on the table and turned again to his chemical investigations.

I looked at the absurd drawings on the paper. “Why, Holmes, it is a child’s drawing,” I cried.

“Oh, that’s your idea!”

“What else could it be?”

“That is what Mr. Hilton Cubitt, of Ridling Thorpe Manor, Norfolk, wishes to know. This little puzzle came just this morning. He said he would follow by the next train. I hear the bell ring, Watson. I would not be surprised if this is him.”

I heard a heavy step on the steps. A moment later a tall gentleman
entered our room. His clear eyes and red face told us that he lived far from the cloudy gray skies of London. He seemed to bring a smell of strong, fresh, sea air with him. He shook hands with each of us, and he was about to sit down when his eye fell on the paper with the curious mark, which I had just looked at.

“Well, Mr. Holmes, what do you make of these?” he asked. “They told me that you are a detective who likes puzzling mysteries, and I don’t think you can find a stranger one than this. I sent the paper on before me, so that you would have time to begin your investigation before I came.”

“It is certainly a curious paper,” said Holmes. “At first, it looks like a child’s drawing. There are a number of absurd little figures dancing across the paper. Why would you think it is important?”

“I never would, Mr. Holmes. But my wife does. Fear is killing her. She says nothing, but I can see terror in her eyes. That’s why I came to you.”

Holmes held up the paper so the bright sun fell on it. It was a page
Holmes studied it for some time. Then he carefully put it in his notebook.

“This looks like it will be an interesting and unusual case,” he said.

“You gave me a few details in your letter, Mr. Cubitt. Now, would you
“I'm not good at telling stories,” said our visitor. “Please ask me about anything that I don’t make clear. I'll begin at the time of my marriage last year; but I want to say first of all that, although I am not a rich man, my family has lived at Ridling Thorpe for five centuries. There is no better known family in the County of Norfolk.

“Last year I came to London. I stayed at a guesthouse in Russell Square. There was a young American lady there, named Elsie Patrick. We became friends, and by the time I left, I was as much in love as a man could be. We were quietly married, and we returned to Norfolk as a married couple. You'll think it very strange, Mr. Holmes, that a man from a good old family would marry a wife, without knowing anything about her past or her family. But if you saw her and knew her, it would help you to understand.

“She was very honest with me about something, and she gave me every chance of getting out of the marriage if I wished to do so.
‘I have known some very bad people in my life,’ she said to me. ‘I wish to forget all about them. I would rather never talk about the past, for it is very painful to me. If you marry me, Hilton, you will marry a woman who has done nothing that was wrong. But you will have to believe me about this, and let me be silent about all that happened in my life up to the time when I married you. If that is too difficult, then go back to Norfolk and leave me to the life in which you found me.’ It was only the day before we were married that she said those words to me. I promised that I would believe her, and that I would not ask questions about her past. I have kept that promise.

“We have been married now for a year, and we have been very happy. But about a month ago, at the end of June, I saw the first signs of trouble. One day my wife got a letter from America. She turned white, read the letter, and threw it into the fire. She said nothing about it afterwards, for a promise is a promise. But from that moment she has never been happy or comfortable. There is always a look of terror in her face. She looks as if she is expecting
something bad to happen. I wish she would trust me. She would find that I was her best friend. But until she speaks, I can say nothing.

“She is an honest woman, Mr. Holmes. Whatever trouble she might have had in her past life, I am sure it was not because she did anything wrong. I am only a simple Norfolk man, but there is not a man in England to whom family honor is as important as it is to me. She knows that, and she knew it before she married me. She would never hurt my reputation – of that I am sure.

“Now I come to the puzzling part of my story. About a week ago – it was Tuesday of last week – by a window, I found a number of absurd little dancing figures, like the ones on this paper. They were drawn with chalk. I thought the farmboy had drawn them, but the boy said he knew nothing about it. They had appeared there during the night. I
had them washed off, and I only told my wife about them afterwards. To my surprise she took it very seriously. She asked me, if any more came, to let her see them.

"None did come for a week. Then, yesterday morning, I found this paper on the sun-dial in the garden. When I showed it to Elsie, she turned white and fell down. Since then she has looked like a woman in a dream, with terror always showing in her eyes. That was when I sent the paper to you, Mr. Holmes. It was not a thing that I could take to the police, for they would have laughed at me, but I hope you will tell me what to do. I am not a rich man; but if there is any danger facing my little woman I would spend all of my money to protect her."

He was a fine man, this man of the old English earth, simple, straight, and gentle, with his great, blue eyes and wide, handsome face. His love for his wife, and his trust in her, were clear in his face. Sherlock Holmes listened to his story with great attention, and now he sat in silent thought.

"Don’t you think, Mr. Cubitt,"
he said, at last, “that your best plan would be to appeal to your wife to share her secret with you?”

Hilton Cubitt shook his large head.

“A promise is a promise, Mr. Holmes. If Elsie wished to tell me, she would. If not, it is not right for me to make her say things. But I have a right to look for answers on my own – and I will.”

“Then I will help you with all my heart. First, have you heard of any strangers being seen in your neighborhood?”

“No.”

“This must be a very quiet place. Would any fresh face cause people to talk?”

“In the neighborhood near me, yes. But we have several small bars not far away. And sometimes workers and travelers stay with the farmers.”

“These dancing men seem to have a meaning. They are a code, of some sort. If it is a difficult code, it might be impossible to solve. But if it is a simple code, and a man in the same position always stands for one letter of the alphabet, then I believe we can solve it."
“However, the piece you sent me is very short, and the facts that you have told me are not enough to help me solve it. We cannot do anything yet. I think you should return to Norfolk, and watch for more messages. Make a good, clear copy of any new dancing men that appear. I wish we had a copy of those that were drawn in chalk by the window, they could be quite useful. Also ask your neighbors if they have seen any strangers around. When you have some fresh evidence and information, come to me again. That is the best suggestion I can give you, Mr. Cubitt. If anything happens that you think I should know about immediately, send me a message. I will run down and see you in your Norfolk home.”

The meeting left Sherlock Holmes very thoughtful. Several times in the next few days I saw him take the paper from his notebook and study the curious figures drawn on it. He said nothing about the case, however,
until one afternoon about two weeks later. I was going out when he called me back.

“You had better stay here, Watson.”

“Why?”

“Because I had a message from Hilton Cubitt this morning – you remember Hilton Cubitt, of the dancing men? He expected to arrive in London at one-twenty. He may be here at any moment. I understand from his message that some important things have happened.”

We did not have to wait long. Our visitor from Norfolk came straight from the train station as fast as a cab could bring him. He was looking worried and sad, with tired eyes and lines on his handsome face.

“It has been a very difficult time for me, Mr. Holmes,” he said, as he sat into a chair. “It’s bad enough to feel that an unseen, unknown person wants to hurt you. When, in addition, you know that it is slowly killing your wife, then it becomes almost impossible to live. She’s wearing away from it – just wearing away before my eyes.”

“Has she said anything yet?”

“No, Mr. Holmes, she has not. At times, I have been sure that the poor girl wanted to speak about it, but
was not quite strong enough to start. I have tried to help her; but I did it badly, and she was afraid to say more. She has spoken about my old family, and our reputation in the county, and our honor, and I always felt she was about to talk about the important things; but somehow she always stopped before we got there.”

“But you have found out something on your own about this mystery?”

“A good deal, Mr. Holmes. I have several fresh pictures of dancing men for you to see. And, more important, I have seen the man.”

“What, the man who draws them?”

“Yes, I saw him at his work. But I will tell you everything in order.

When I got back home after my visit to you, the first thing I saw the next morning was a fresh set of dancing men. They had been drawn in chalk on the black wooden door of the toolhouse, which is next to the grass. We can see it from the front windows. I made an exact copy, and here it is.”

He laid a piece of paper on the table. Here is a copy of the drawings:

![Image of dancing men drawings]

“Wonderful!” said Holmes. “Wonderful! Please go on.”
“When I had made the copy, I rubbed away the marks; but two mornings later, new marks had appeared. I have a copy of them here.”

Holmes rubbed his hands and laughed with delight.

“Our base is growing quickly,” he said.

“Three days later a piece of paper was put under a stone on the sun-dial. Here it is. The dancing figures are, as
you see, exactly the same as on the last one. After that I decided to lie in wait; so I got out my handgun and I sat up in my study. From there, I can clearly see the grass and garden. At about two o’clock in the morning I was seated by the window. It was dark except for the moonlight outside. Then I heard steps behind me. It was my wife. She asked me to come to bed. I told her that I wanted to see who it was that played such absurd games with us. She answered that it was probably just a joke, and that I should not pay any attention to it.

“If it really annoys you, Hilton, we should go and travel, you and I, and so miss all of this.’

“What, be driven out of our own house by a joker?’ I said. ‘Why, everyone would laugh at us.’

“Well, come to bed,’ said she, ‘and we can talk about it in the morning.’

“Suddenly, as she spoke, I saw her white face grow even whiter in the moonlight. Her hand got tighter on my shoulder. Something was moving near the toolhouse. I saw a dark figure, which came slowly around the corner and stood
in front of the door. I took my handgun and started to run out, when my wife threw her arms round me and held me strongly. I tried to throw her off, but she held on to me. At last I got free, but by the time I opened the door and reached the toolhouse, he was gone.

"Afterwards, however, I found that he had left a sign of his visit. There on the door were the very same dancing men that had already appeared twice, and which I have copied on that paper. There was no other sign of the man anywhere, though I looked all over. And yet the strange thing is that he must have been there all the time, for when I looked at the door again in the morning, he had written more of his pictures under the ones I had already seen."

"Do you have that fresh drawing?"

"Yes; it is very short, but I made a copy of it, and here it is."

Again he produced a paper. The new dance was in this form:
“It was on a different part of the door.”

“Wonderful! This is by far the most important of all, for us. It fills me with hopes. Now, Mr. Cubitt, please tell us the rest of your interesting story of what happened.”

“I have nothing more to say, Mr. Holmes, except that I was angry with my wife because she held me back when I might have caught the man. She said she was afraid I might be
hurt. For a moment I wondered if perhaps she was really afraid that HE might be hurt, because clearly she knew who this man was and what he planned when he left these puzzling messages. But there was a sound in my wife's voice, Mr. Holmes, and a look in her eyes, and I am sure that she was worried about me. So that is everything that happened, and now I want your advice about what I should do. My own opinion is that I should put five or six of my farmboys in the bushes, and when this man comes again, tell them to give him such a beating that he will leave us in peace.”

“I am afraid it is too deep a case to be fixed so simply,” said Holmes. “How long can you stay in London?”

“I must go back today. I do not want to leave my wife alone all night. She is very afraid. She asked me to come back.”

“I think you are right. If you could have stayed in town, I might have been able to return with you in a day or two. Meanwhile, please leave me these papers. I can probably come visit you soon, and at that time I should understand more about your case.”
Sherlock Holmes remained quiet until our visitor had left, although it was easy for me to see that he was very excited. The moment that Hilton Cubitt had disappeared through the door, Holmes hurried to the table, and put all the slips of paper with dancing men in front of him. For two hours I watched as he wrote figures and letters on one piece after another. He was so interested in his work that he seemed to have forgotten I was in the same room. Sometimes he was making progress, and he would sing at his work. Sometimes he was puzzled by the mystery, and would sit for long spells with an empty look in his eyes.

At last he jumped from his chair with a cry of delight. He walked up and down the room, rubbing his hands together. Then he wrote a long message to Mr. Hilton Cubitt. “If my answer to this is what I hope for, you will have quite an interesting case to add to what you have already written, Watson,” he said. “I think we can go down to Norfolk tomorrow, with some answers for our friend about his problem.”

I admit that I was filled with curiosity, but I knew that Holmes liked to explain his investigations at his
own time and in his own way, so I waited until he decided to tell me everything.

But it was two days before we got an answer to the message. Holmes wanted to hear some news, and he looked up every time he heard the bell ring. On the evening of the second day, we got a letter from Hilton Cubitt. There was nothing new, he said, except that a long message had appeared that morning on the sun-dial. He sent this copy of it:

```
elsiEpr3par#
tOme3TthYgod
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Holmes bent over this strange message for several minutes. Then he suddenly jumped to his feet with a cry of fear and surprise.

“We have let this case go far enough,” he said. “Is there a train to Norfolk tonight?”

I looked at the timetable. The last train had just gone.

“Then we will eat early and take the very first train in the morning,” said Holmes. “We are needed immediately. Ah! Here is the message I have been expecting. This message makes it even more important that
we should not lose an hour in telling Hilton Cubitt what we know. It is a dangerous business in which this simple Norfolk man is caught.”

So, indeed, it was. As I come to the terrible ending of a story which at first I had thought was only a strange child’s game, I feel once again the terror which I felt then. I wish I had a brighter ending to tell to my readers, but this is a story of fact, and I must honestly describe the strange chain of events which for several days made Ridling Thorpe Manor known everywhere in England.

As soon as we got off the train in Norfolk, and said where we were going, the station-master hurried towards us. “I suppose that you are the detectives from London?” he said.

Holmes looked annoyed. “What makes you think such a thing?” he asked.

“Because Inspector Martin from Norwich has just passed through. But maybe you are the doctors. She’s not dead – or wasn’t dead yet, from the last I heard. You may still be in time to save her – though if you save her now, she will still be hanged
Holmes’s face was dark with worry. “We are going to Ridling Thorpe Manor,” he said, “but we have heard nothing about what happened there.”

“It’s a terrible thing,” said the station-master. “They are shot, both Mr. Hilton Cubitt and his wife. She shot him and then herself – that’s what the servants say. He’s dead and her life is in danger. Dear, dear, one of the oldest families in the County of Norfolk, and one of the most honored.”

Without a word Holmes hurried to a cart. During the long seven miles’ drive he never opened his mouth. Rarely have I seen him so sad. He had been uneasy during all our trip from London. Now, learning that his worst fears had come true, he was very sad. He sat back in his seat, lost in his thoughts. At last the sea appeared over the green edge of Norfolk, and the cart driver pointed to a roof that could be seen above the trees. “That’s Ridling Thorpe Manor,” he said.

As we drove up to the door I saw in front of it the black toolhouse and the sun-dial, about which we
had heard such strange stories. A neatly-dressed little man, with a quick manner, had just gotten out of a cart. He said that his name was Inspector Martin, of the Norfolk Police, and he was surprised when he heard the name of my detective friend.

"Why, Mr. Holmes, the crime only took place at three o’clock this morning. How could you hear of it in London and get here as soon as I did?"

"I expected it to happen. I came in the hope of stopping it.”
“Then you must have important evidence that we don’t know about, for they were said to be a very happy couple.”

“I have only the evidence of the dancing men,” said Holmes. “I will explain the matter to you later. Meanwhile, since it is too late to stop this terrible thing, I want to see that the killer is found. Will you work with me in your investigation, or do you wish me to work on my own?”

“I would be proud to feel that we were acting together, Mr. Holmes,” said the inspector.

“In that case, I would be glad to hear the evidence. We should look at the house and yard as soon as possible.”

Inspector Martin was smart enough to let my friend do things his way, while he himself just made careful notes about the results. The doctor, an old, white-haired man, had just come down from Mrs. Cubitt’s room. He told us that she was badly hurt, but might not die. The bullet had passed through the front of her brain, and it would probably be some time before she would be conscious again.

When he was asked whether she had been shot or had shot herself, he
would not give an opinion. Certainly the bullet had been fired from a very close distance. There was only one gun found in the room. Two shots had been fired from it. Mr. Hilton Cubitt had been shot through the heart. It was equally possible that he had shot her and then himself, or that she had done the shooting, because the handgun was on the floor between them.

“Has he been moved?” asked Holmes.

“We have moved nothing except the lady. We could not leave her wounded on the floor.”

“How long have you been here, doctor?”

“Since four o’clock.”

“Has anyone else been here?”

“Yes, the policeman.”

“Have you touched anything?”

“No, nothing.”

“You have acted very well. Who called to tell you about the shootings?”

“The house servant, Saunders.”

“Was it she who called everyone?”

“She and Mrs. King, the cook.”

“Then I think we should hear their story at once.”

A large room in the house had been turned into a court of investigation. Holmes sat in a large chair, his bright
eyes shining out of his tired face. I could read in his eyes that he would spend the rest of his life, if necessary, to find the killer of the man whom he had failed to save. Inspector Martin, the old country doctor, myself, and a village policeman made up the rest of that strange group.

The two women told their story clearly. They had been awoken from their sleep by the sound of a loud shot from a gun, which had been followed a minute later by a second one. They had been sleeping in two rooms next to one another, and Mrs. King had run into Saunders’s room. Together they had gone down the steps. The door of the study was open and a candle was burning on the table. The owner of the house lay on his face in the center of the room. He was quite dead. Near the window sat his wife, her head against the wall. She was badly hurt, and the side of her face was red with blood. She was not conscious. The hall, as well as the room, was full of smoke and the smell of gunpowder.

The window was certainly shut. It was locked on the inside. Both women were certain about this. They had immediately called for the doctor and for the police. Then, with the help
of the farmboy, they had carried the unconscious woman to her room. She was wearing her dress. Nothing had been moved in the study. As far as they knew, there had never been any fight between husband and wife. The servants had always looked upon them as a very happy couple.

These were the main things that the servants said. In answer to Inspector Martin, they repeated that every door was locked on the inside, and that no one could have escaped from the house. In answer to Holmes, they both remembered that they could smell gunpowder from the moment they ran out of their rooms on the top floor. “This fact is important, I suggest you write it in your notes,” said Holmes to the Inspector. “And now I think that we should make a careful search of the room.”

The study was a small room, lined on three sides with books. A writing-table faced a window, which looked out on the garden. The first thing we saw was the large body of the unlucky Hilton Cubitt, which was stretched across the room. From the way he had dressed, we could see that he had quickly gotten out of bed. The bullet had been fired at him from the
The bullet had gone through his heart, then remained in his body. His death had certainly come quickly, and without pain. There was no mark of gunpowder either on his clothes or on his hands. The country doctor said that the lady had marks on her face, but none on her hands.

“The fact that she has no gunpowder on her hands means nothing, though if we had found such marks, they could mean everything,” said Holmes. “Except if the gunpowder from a badly-fitting bullet happens to jump back, a person can fire many shots without getting any gunpowder on their hands. Mr. Cubitt’s
body may now be taken away. Doctor, have you been able to take out the bullet that wounded the lady?"

"Not yet. I'll need more help to get the bullet out. But there are still four bullets in the handgun. Two have been fired and we see two wounds, so we know what happened to each bullet that was fired."

"That's how it looks at first," said Holmes. "But what about the bullet that hit the edge of the window?"

He had turned suddenly. Now, his long, thin finger was pointing to a hole in the lower part of the window, about an inch above the bottom.

"Oh!" cried the inspector. "How did you ever see that?"

"Because I looked for it."

"Wonderful!" said the country doctor. "You are certainly right, sir. Then a third shot was fired, and so a third person must have been here. But who could that have been? And how could he have got away?"

"That is the problem that we are now about to solve," said Sherlock Holmes. "Inspector Martin, the servants said that when they left their room they could immediately smell gunpowder. Do you remember, I said this fact was a very important one?"
“Yes, sir; but I admit I did not quite understand why.”

“It tells us that at the time the guns were fired, both the window and the door of the room were open. If they had been closed, the smell of gunpowder could not have been blown through the house so fast. A small wind in the room was necessary for that. Both door and window were only open for a very short time, however.”

“How do you know that?”

“Look at the candle. If there had been a light wind for more than a few minutes, we would see all the wax on one side.”

“Wonderful!” cried the inspector. “Wonderful!”

“I felt sure that the window had been open at the time of the terrible event. So I decided that there might have been a third person in all this, who stood outside the window and fired through it. If someone inside tried to shoot at that person, their bullet might hit near the window. I looked, and, sure enough, there was the bullet mark!”

“But how was the window shut and locked?”

“The woman’s first thought would be to shut and lock the window. But,
It was a small lady's handbag, which sat on the table. Holmes opened it and put everything that was inside onto the table. There were twenty 50-pound notes of the Bank of England. Nothing else was in the handbag.

““This must be kept. It will be important,” said Holmes, as he handed the handbag and the money to the inspector. “Now we must try to understand more about this third bullet. We can see, from the way the wood broke, that it was fired from inside the room. I would like to see Mrs. King, the cook, again.” The woman was brought in. “You said, Mrs. King, that a LOUD noise woke you. When you said that, did you mean that it was louder than the second one?”

“Well, sir, it woke me from my sleep, and so it is hard to say. But it did seem very loud.”

“Do you think that it might have been two shots fired at almost the same instant?”

“I don’t know, sir.”

“I believe that it was so. I think, Inspector Martin, that we have now learned all that this room can teach us. If you will please step around with me, we will see what fresh evidence look! What is this?”
A bed of flowers grew under the study window, and we all cried out as we got close to it. Someone had stepped on the flowers, and there were many marks left by feet in the soft ground. They had been made by large feet, long, pointed men’s feet. Holmes looked through the grass and leaves like a dog going after a wounded bird. Then he bent forward and picked up a small round piece of metal.

“I thought so,” he said. “It was a kind of handgun that pushes out the empty shell after a bullet is fired. Here is the third shell. I think, Inspector Martin, that our case is almost complete.”

The country inspector’s face had shown his surprise at the fast progress of Holmes’s investigation. At first, he had sometimes wanted to give his own opinions; but now he was ready to follow the detective without question.

“Who do you think is the killer?” he asked.

“I’ll talk about that later. There are several points in this problem which I have not been able to explain to you yet. Right now, it’s best for me to just
keep going. Then I’ll explain everything when it is finished.”

“Just as you wish, Mr. Holmes. I just want to get our man!”

“I am not trying to keep secrets, but it is impossible right now to take time for a long explanation. I now understand what has happened. Even if this lady can never talk to us, we can still know what happened last night and be sure that the killer pays for his crime. First of all, I want to know if there is a guesthouse in this neighborhood known as ‘Elrige’s’?”
The servants were asked. None of them had heard of such a place, but the farmboy remembered that a farmer named Elrige lived several miles away.

“Is his farm far from other people?”
“Very far, sir.”

“Is it possible they have not yet heard about the things that happened here during the night?”
“Maybe not, sir.”

Holmes thought for a short time, and then I saw a curious smile come over his face.

“Get a horse ready, my boy,” he said. “I want you to take a note to Elrige’s Farm.”

He took the pieces of paper with the dancing men from his notebook. He put them in front of him, then worked for some time at the table. At last, he handed a note to the boy. He told the boy to put it into the hands of the person to whom it was addressed, and not to answer questions of any sort. I saw the outside of the note. Holmes had written the address in badly-shaped letters, very different from his usual writing. It was addressed to Mr. Abe Slaney, Elrige’s Farm, Norfolk.

“I think, Inspector,” Holmes said,
“that you should send a message to ask for two more policemen. If my conclusions are right, you may soon have a very dangerous prisoner. The boy who takes this note could probably also take your message.” Then Holmes turned to me. “If there is an afternoon train to town, Watson, I think we should take it, because I want to finish my chemical investigation. This case is progressing quickly. It will soon end.”

When the boy had ridden off with the note, Sherlock Holmes told the servants what to do. If any visitor came and asked for Mrs. Hilton Cubitt, nothing should be told to the visitor. Instead, the visitor was to be taken at once into the living room. Holmes repeated these points to the servants, to be sure they understood. Then he led the way into the living room. The business was now out of our hands, he said; we must just wait and see what happened. The doctor had left. Only the inspector and myself were left.

“I think I can help you to pass an hour in an interesting manner,” said Holmes, pulling his chair up to the table. In front of him, he spread all the papers with pictures of the dancing
As to you, my friend Watson, I am sorry that I have left your questions unanswered for so long. To you, inspector, this should be quite an interesting case to study.

“I must tell you first of all about what Mr. Hilton Cubitt said when he visited me on Baker Street in London.” Holmes then told the inspector about those visits. “I have here in front of me these puzzling papers. They might make us smile, if they had not led to such a terrible event. I have studied many kinds of codes and secret writing. I myself have written a short paper about the subject, in which I look at 160 different codes, but this one is quite new to me. I believe that whoever made this code wanted to hide the fact that the dancing men contain a message. The person who made the code wanted anyone who saw the pictures to believe that they were nothing more than the drawings of children.

“But once I was sure that the dancing men each stood for a letter, then I could use the rules that I have used before to read other codes. The same rules can be used to understand many codes. It
was easy enough to solve this code. The first message that Mr. Cubitt brought to me was so short that it was impossible to solve it. But I was able to decide that the symbol $\mathbb{F}$ probably stood for the letter E. As you know, E is the most common letter in the English alphabet. It is so much more common than other letters that even in a short sentence, it usually appears the most often. Out of 15 symbols in the first message, four were the same, so I decided that symbol was the letter E. It is true that in some cases the figure was holding a flag and in some cases it was not holding a flag, but I decided from where the flags were placed that they were used to break the sentence up into words. “But now things become more difficult. The order of the English letters after E is not clear. One letter may be a little more common than another, but in a single short sentence, the less-common letter will sometimes
appear more often. After E, the most common letters of the alphabet are T, A, O, I, N, S, H, R, D, and L, in that order; but T, A, O, and I are about equally common. It would take too long to try each combination until we found a meaning. Therefore, I waited for a new message.

“In my second meeting with Mr. Cubitt, he gave me two other short sentences and one message. Since the message had no flag, it was probably just one word. Here are the symbols: 

**never**

Now, in the single word, I already knew there were two E’s coming second and fourth in a word of five letters. The word might be ‘sever,’ or ‘lever,’ or ‘never.’ This was an answer to an appeal, and we knew it was probably written by the lady, so the word ‘never’ was the most probable answer. If we decided that this word is ‘never’, we are now able to say that the symbols nvr stand for N, V, and R.

“I still had trouble, but a happy thought helped me make progress with several other letters. These appeals probably came from someone who had been close to the lady in her early life. In that case, a combination that contained two E’s with three
letters between them might be the name ‘ELSIE.’ One message had been repeated three times. When I looked, I found this combination at the end of that message. It was certainly an appeal to ‘Elsie.’ Now I knew which characters stand for L, S, and I.

“But what appeal could it be? There were only four letters in the word which came before ‘Elsie,’ and it ended in E. Surely the word must be ‘COME.’ So now I had the letters C, O, and M, and I could try to read the first message once more. This time I broke it into words, and put periods for each symbol that was still unknown. Soon I had this:–

.M .ERE .E SL.NE.

“Now the first letter must be A, which is a useful discovery, since it appears three times in this short sentence. It is also clear that the second word must begin with H. Now it becomes:–

AM HERE A.E SLANE.

“Then it was easy to fill in the two missing letters in the name:–

AM HERE ABE SLANEY.
the second message. I had these letters:

A. ELRI.ES.

“Here I could only make sense by putting T and G for the missing letters. I decided that the name was the name of some guesthouse where the writer was staying.”

Inspector Martin and I had listened with great interest to the full and clear story of how my friend had produced his results.

“What did you do then, sir?” asked the inspector.

“I had every reason to think that this Abe Slaney was an American, since Abe is an American name, and since the trouble had all started with a letter from America. I had also every reason to think that there was some criminal secret in the matter. The fact that the lady had talked about problems in her past, and that she would not tell her husband anything about those problems, both pointed in that direction.

“So I sent a message to my friend, Wilson Hargreave, of the New York Police. I have helped him many times when he had questions about London crime. I asked if he

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knew the name of Abe Slaney. Here is his answer: ‘The worst criminal in Chicago. A dangerous man.’ On the same evening that I got that answer, Hilton Cubitt sent me the last message from Slaney. After I filled in the known letters, it looked like this:—

ELSIE. PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.

“I could easily see that adding the letters P and D completed the message:—

ELSIE. PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.

“Now I knew that the man was moving from appeals to threats. I knew enough about the criminals of Chicago to believe that he might very quickly do what he threatened to do. I came to Norfolk at once with my friend, Dr. Watson, but, unhappily, we arrived only in time to find that the worst had already happened.”

“I am very proud to be working with you on this case,” said the inspector, warmly. “But I hope I may speak honestly to you. You need to answer only to yourself, but I have to answer to my boss. If this Abe Slaney, living at Elrige’s, is indeed the killer, and if he has escaped while I am seated here, I will certainly get into
You need not worry about your boss. He will not try to escape.

"How do you know?"

"To escape would be the same as to say that he was the killer."

"Then let us go to get him."

"I expect him here any instant."

"But why should he come?"

"Because I have written and asked him."

"But this is very strange, Mr. Holmes! Why should he come because you have asked him? I think such an appeal would just make him try to escape, wouldn't it?"

"I think I knew what to say in the letter," said Sherlock Holmes. "In fact, I believe this is the gentleman himself coming to the house."

A man was walking up the path to the door. He was a tall, handsome man, wearing a gray suit and a hat. He had a large nose, and he waved a walking stick as he came up the path. He walked up to the door as if he owned the place, and he rang the bell.

"I think, gentlemen," said Holmes, quietly, "that we should take up our position behind the door. We must be careful when dealing with such a serious trouble."

dangerous man. You will need your handcuffs, inspector. You can leave the talking to me.”

We waited quietly for a minute – one of those minutes that one can never forget. Then the door opened and the man stepped in. In an instant Holmes put a handgun to his head and Martin slipped the handcuffs over his arms. It was all done so quickly that the man was helpless before he knew that he was caught. He looked at us with a pair of black eyes. Then he laughed angrily.

“Well, gentlemen, you got me this time. But I came here in answer to a letter from Mrs. Hilton Cubitt. Don’t tell me that she is in on this? Don’t tell me that she helped you catch me?”

“Mrs. Hilton Cubitt was seriously hurt. She is unconscious, and is at death’s door.”

The man gave a cry of sadness which rang through the house.

“It can’t be!” he cried loudly. “It was he that was hurt, not she. Who would have hurt little Elsie? I may have threatened her, but I would not have touched a hair of her pretty head. Take it back – you! Say
"She was found badly wounded by the side of her dead husband."

He sat slowly into a chair and put his face in his handcuffed hands. For five minutes he was silent. Then he raised his face once more, and spoke with a cold voice.

"I have nothing to hide from you, gentlemen," he said. "If I shot the man, he first shot at me, and it's no crime to shoot back. But if you think I could have hurt that woman, then you don't know either me or her. There was never a man in this world who loved a woman more than I loved her. I had a right to her. She was promised to me years ago. Who was this Englishman? What right did he have to come between us? I tell you that I had the first right to her. I was only coming to take what was mine."

"She broke away from you when she found what kind of man you are," said Holmes. "She ran from America to escape from you, and she married a fine gentleman in England. You followed her and made her life unhappy because you wanted her to leave the husband that she is not hurt!"
she loved and respected in order to live with you, whom she feared and hated. You have ended by bringing about the death of a good man and driving his wife to kill herself. That is what you have done, Mr. Abe Slaney, and you will answer for it to the law.

“If Elsie dies, I don’t care what becomes of me,” said the American. He opened one of his hands and looked at a note balled up in his hand. “See here,” he cried, with a sparkle of doubt in his black eyes, “if the lady is hurt as bad as you say, who was it that wrote this
“Does he have one?” asked a man in the crowd.

“I wrote a message for him to read later,” said Holmes.

“You wrote it? There was no one on earth outside the Gang who knew the secret of the dancing men. How could you write it?”

“What one man can create, another can discover,” said Holmes.

“The police are coming to take you away, Mr. Slaney. But, meanwhile, you have time to make up, in a small way, for what you have done. Do you know that the police believe Mrs. Hilton Cubitt may have killed her husband? If you love her, you should tell the whole world that she in no way caused her husband’s sad end.”

“I ask nothing better,” said the American. “I guess the very best thing I can do for myself is to tell the truth.”

“I must tell you that it will be used against you,” cried the inspector.

“I’ll take that chance,” Slaney said.

“I have known this lady since she was a child. There were seven of us in a gang in Chicago. Elsie’s father was the boss of the gang. He was a smart man. He was the one who made that code, which looked like a child’s drawings if you didn’t know the secret to it.

note?” He threw it on the table.

“I wrote it to bring you here.”
"Well, Elsie learned about what we were doing, and she didn’t like it. She had a bit of honest money of her own, so she ran out one night and went to London. She would have married me, I believe, if I had taken an honest job; but she would have nothing to do with a crime gang. It was only after her marriage to this Englishman that I was able to find out where she was. I wrote to her, but got no answer. After that I came over, and, as letters were no use, I put my messages where she could read them.

“Well, I have been here a month now. I lived on that farm. I had a room on the first floor, so I could get in and out every night, and no one knew it. I tried all I could to get Elsie to come back to me. I knew that she read the messages, because one time she wrote an answer under one of them. Then I got angry, and I began to threaten her. She sent me a letter then, asking me to go away. She said it would break her heart if anything should hurt the reputation of her husband.

“She promised to come down when her husband was sleeping at three in the morning, and to speak
with me through the window, if I would go away afterwards and leave her in peace. She came down and brought money with her, trying to pay me to go. This made me angry, so I took her arm and tried to pull her through the window. At that moment the husband ran in, holding a handgun. Elsie had fallen down on the floor, and we were face to face. I had fallen, too, and I held up my gun so he would let me get away. He fired and missed me. I fired my gun almost at the same instant, and he fell to the floor. I ran across the garden, and as I went I heard the window shut behind me.

“That’s the truth, gentlemen, every word of it, and I heard no more about it until that boy came riding up with the note that made me walk in here, like a simple-minded bird, right into your hands.”

The police had driven up while the American was talking. Two policemen were waiting outside. Inspector Martin rose and touched his prisoner on the shoulder.

“It is time for us to go.”

“Can I see her first?”

“No, she is not conscious.” Then he turned to my friend and said, “Mr.
Sherlock Holmes, I only hope that if I ever again have an important case, I will have the good luck to have you by my side.”

We stood at the window and watched the police drive away with their prisoner. As I turned back, my eye caught the ball of paper that the prisoner had thrown on the table. It was the note with which Holmes had made him come to us.

“See if you can read it, Watson,” he said, with a smile.

It contained no word, but this little line of dancing men:

“\ldots” Sherlock Holmes, I only hope that if I ever again have an important case, I will have the good luck to have you by my side.”

We stood at the window and watched the police drive away with their prisoner. As I turned back, my eye caught the ball of paper that the prisoner had thrown on the table. It was the note with which Holmes had made him come to us.

“See if you can read it, Watson,” he said, with a smile.

It contained no word, but this little line of dancing men:

“\ldots”
"Street in time for dinner."

Only one last word: The American, Abe Slaney, was put in prison for the rest of his days. As for Mrs. Hilton Cubitt I only know that she is now healthy again, and that she has never married again, and now spends all of her time caring for the poor.
Vocabulary

aardvark: NotNull
able: NotNull
absurd: NotNull
adventure: NotNull
advertise: NotNull
advertisement: NotNull
advice: NotNull
affair: NotNull
afterwards: NotNull
ah: NotNull
alarm: NotNull
alphabet: NotNull
annoy: NotNull
apparent: NotNull
appeal: NotNull
appearance: NotNull
apply: NotNull
April: NotNull
armor: NotNull
assistant: NotNull
awoken: NotNull
bake: NotNull
bedroom: NotNull
beer: NotNull
Bohemia: NotNull
bold: NotNull
bore: NotNull
boss: NotNull
boyish: NotNull
breathe: NotNull
brick: NotNull
bullet: NotNull
bus: NotNull
bye: NotNull
cab: NotNull
candle: NotNull
cart: NotNull
cellar: NotNull
chalk: NotNull
chase: NotNull
cheap: NotNull
chemical: NotNull
Chicago: NotNull
China: NotNull
Chinese: NotNull
client: NotNull
clock: NotNull
cloth: NotNull
club: NotNull
cob: NotNull
Coburg Square: NotNull
code: NotNull
coin: NotNull
combine: NotNull
complicate: NotNull
concert: NotNull
involve: ผิดข้อ, ผิดผิด
Italy: ประเทศอิตาลี
joke: ตลก, คอมเมดี้
June: เดือนบิสซัน
kingdom: ประเทศกิไน
lantern: โคมไฟ, ไฟมืด
lean: หันไป, อยู่
lever: ลิฟต์
lit: ใส่, อยู่ (มีแสง)
loaf:  לחם, ปิ้งค์
London: ลอนดอน
luck: เลข
lucky: โชค
magnifying glass: กระจกขยาย
Majesty: พระสิทธิราช, จักรพรรดิ
manor: บรรดาศักดิ์, อัง
 Kathy, เพชร
marriage: แต่งงาน
mask: หน้ากาก
meaningless: ไร้ความหมาย
meanwhile: ในขณะนี้
message: ข้อความ, ข้อผิด
minister: ใจดี, ใจดี
Monday: วันจันทร์
mood: แย่มืด
moonlight: แสงจันทร์, แสง
 Mr.: ท่าน
Mrs.: ท่านท่าน, ท่าน
mystery: ความผิดปกติ, ความมหัศจรรย์
neighbor: ใกล้เคียง, มีบ้าน
neighborhood: มีบ้านให้
New York: นิวยอร์ก (เมืองที่ใหญ่ที่สุดในอเมริกา)
newspaper: ข่าวสาร
nod: ยิ้ม, ยิ้ม
notebook: สมุดบันทึก
obvious: แจ่มแจ้ง, รุ้งจ้า
October: เดือนตุลาคม
ordinary: ธรรมดาที่สุด
ourselves: มีอยู่
paid: จ่ายแล้ว (มีจ่าย)
pants: กางเกง
patient: ผู้ป่วย, ผู้ป่วย
photography: ภาพถ่าย, ภาพถ่าย
pink: สีชมพู, สีชมพู
pipe: ท่อ, ท่อ
place: สถานที่
plain: ดิน
pleasant: สุขช่วย
police: ตำรวจ, ทหาร
policemen: ตำรวจ
progress: ยิ่งขึ้น, กำลัง
_progress
protect: ป้องกัน
proud: ภูมิใจ, ภูมิใจ
puzzle: ปัญหา, ปัญหา
rang: กิจกรรม (มีจาก)
ring: แหวน
realize: ที่รู้, ที่รู้
reappear: ปรากฏขึ้นใหม่
remark: ข้อความ
remarkable: ข้อความ
repute: ชื่อเสียง, เศรษฐกิจ
royal: รัชวิถี
rub: รูบ, รูบ
riverside: แม่น้ำ
rob: ทุจริต, โจร
robbery: ลักลอบ
rub: รูบ, รูบ
Russell Square: รัชดาธิวาส (ตื่นนอนยุ่งในตอนนอน)
Saturday: วันเสาร์
scandal: เลือกล้อหายยาซ้ำ
Scandinavia: สวีเดน ฮอลแลนด์ นม (นมมี 3 ประเภท: ม้า, สัตว์, เบิร์น, เบีทเชก, บางที่เดิ่ง
ฝั่งโค, ฝั่งแอลและ ไอส์แลนด์)
scare: สี่ขา
scene: สีตา
Scotland: สกอตแลนด์ (ตีป
พนกันผู้ใหญ่ งูผู้ใหญ่
สะดวกดีอามำจีจิ้ว
หัก)
Scotland Yard: สกอตแลนด์
ถ่าน (สำนักงานใหญ่ของ
กิมลังโวโร่เลย่)
sever: ตัด, แยก, ตัดออก
จากทั้ง
sharpen: เลื่อนชิ้น, คิม
ซ้าย (ขั้ว: ซ้ายมือ เป็นเดี่ยว)
shell: บ๊วยลูกปิด
shine: ส่องสว่าง
shirt: เสื้อเชิ้ต
shook: ติด (มาจาก shake)
shoot: ยิง
shopkeeper: เจ้าของร้าน
sidewalk: ข้างถนน
sleepy: ดึกดำาม, ตื่นเต้น
sleeve: แขนเสื้อ
smooth: ทั่วไป
snooker: สนุกเกอร์
solve: แก้ไข
sorry: ขอโทษ, ถูกต้อง
spoken: เพื่อ (มาจาก speak)
scare: จ้องเป็น
steal: สั่งสั่ง
stupid: ขี้เกียจ, ถูกต้อง
successful: สำเร็จ
symbol: สัญลักษณ์
tattoo: ลายสัก, มือ
terrible: ใช้บั้ง, ร้ายระหว่าง
terror: ความน่ากลัว
thoughtful: มีความคิด
threat: ขึ้น, ถูกต้อง
threaten: ขึ้นอยู่
thrown: โยน, ạchเดิ่ง, ยำหลัง
(มาจาก throw)
thumb: นิ้วชี้, นิ้วบิน
thy: หลักบุรุษเชื้อ: เจ้า, พระเจ้า ( saldırıแล้ว
แจกใบสิทธิ์ล็อกตัวที่
เข้า เตรียมยุ่ง)
timetable: กำหนดเวลา
toolhouse: เลือกใช้ของไม่
เรื่อม
tore: จีบ, ฉลั้ง (มาจาก tear)
treat: ประดิษฐ์, ได้
trick: อยู่บ, อยู่ใน
Tuesday: วันอังคาร
tunnel: บุก
unanswered: ตอบไม่ได้, ยิม
สกดอย
understood: ตื่นใจ (มาจาก understand)
unexplained: อาจที่จะยังไม่
ยิมสกอตติช
unless: ขาดจากทั้ง, ทุ่ง
unpleasantness: ความรู้สึก
เป็นที่นิยมชั่วคราว, สิ่ง
ที่ไม่ข้างเคียง
verb: วิจิตร
Warsaw: วอร์ซอ (เมืองหลวงดี
ประกอบในแอม)
wax: ซีซีร์
whenever: เมื่อใดก็ตาม
whoever: ใครก็ตาม
witness: ทะเบียน, สิ่งที่ิตะ
วาม
woke: ตื่น (มาจาก wake)
worn: บุก, ริ (มาจาก wear)
worry: หัวใจ, เป็นอย่าง
worse: ชื้น, ร้าย, ร้ายใน
ทางบั้ง (มาจาก bad)
worst: ชื้น, ร้าย (มาจาก bad)
តារារបការពឹងមួយពីប្រភេទពត៌មាន
អាហារបោឆ្នោត និងវីត្រូវអីម្ម

ប្រាកដើម្បីសម្រេចបានប្រការប្រភេទពត៌មានជាពេលប៉ុន្តែមានធាតុដែលជាមួយមានក្នុងប្រភេទពត៌មានដូចជា:

- សំណើរធាតុដ៏អស្ចារ្យបំផុត;
- សំណើរប្រភេទនៃពត៌មានដែលមិនមានវិធីបញ្ចូលបានក្នុងសំណើរ.

ស្ត្រាលប្រការពឹង ដោយ PDF ដែលត្រូវបានចាត់ទុក;

ប្រាកដពេញនិយមស្រូបប្រភេទពត៌មានប្រការប្រភេទដែលមានធាតុដែលមានធាតុដ៏អស្ចារ្យបំផុតត្រូវបានបំផុតបានក្នុងសំណើរប្រភេទពត៌មានដែលមានវិធីបញ្ចូល.

ការប្រឈមប្រការពឹងមានប្រយោជន៍ដែលត្រូវបានបន្តិចដោយប្រឈមប្រការពឹងដែលមានធាតុដ៏អស្ចារ្យបំផុតត្រូវបានបំផុតបានក្នុងសំណើរប្រភេទពត៌មានដែលមានវិធីបញ្ចូល.

ការប្រឈមប្រការពឹងដែលមានធាតុដ៏អស្ចារ្យបំផុតត្រូវបានបំផុតបានក្នុងសំណើរប្រភេទពត៌មានដែលមានវិធីបញ្ចូល

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ឈីឡាលា យុស

បានដំណើរការទឹកកកឡើងឈីតប្រាំពាក្យ។ នៅពីតំបន់យុសយុងយាយតាមទីក្រុង វៀ្ុជាស៊ីយ៉ា. ក្រុមតាមតំបន់យុសឆ្លាយពីដើម្បីផ្លាស់ប្ដូរសមត្ថភាព បើសេរីដ៏មានប្រភេទប្រឈមប្រាក់តាមតំបន់យុស ជាច្រើនប្រភេទ។ សមត្ថភាពដ៏បង្កើត នៅសេរីដ៏ពាក្យដ៏សំខាន់។

សមាជិកសមាជិកឈីឡាលា យុស បែបប្រការីមុនតូចតូចមានដ៏តឹងតាមតំបន់យុស ហើយអំពីក្រុមតាមតំបន់យុស។ ក្រុមតាមតំបន់យុសមានការប្រការីដ៏ធំបំផុត។ មាន... ក្រុមតាមតំបន់យុសប្រការីដ៏ធំបំផុត។ ឈីឡាលា យុស ជាសមាជិកអស់ចំនួនមិនៈ។ តើប្រការីដ៏ធំបំផុត នៅប្រការីដ៏ធំបំផុត ជាសមាជិកសមាជិកឈីឡាលា យុស?