

Elementary, My Dear Spock

A Long-Suppressed Memoir
by
John H. Watson, M.D.



**As Edited by
Mary W. Matthews
and
Y. S. Pascal**

*For Katy,
who knew that
the only words
you have to remember
are, “I love you.”
I miss you, little sister.*

*For Stacy,
who knows that
the best way to say
“I love you”
is with a smile.*

Elementary, My Dear Spock, © Mary W. Matthews and Y.S. Pascal, 2012

“Star Trek” and its characters are copyright © Paramount Pictures, a subsidiary of Viacom, Inc. All rights reserved. “Star Trek” and all related marks are registered trademarks of Paramount Pictures.

The characters Sherlock Holmes and John H. Watson, M.D. are based on works written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle between 1887 and 1899. *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*, written in 1927, is still under copyright in the United States, thanks to the assiduous efforts of Sonny Bono before his death. The names “Sherlock Holmes” and “John Watson” are trademarks owned by the Conan Doyle estate.

Disclaimer:

Elementary, My Dear Spock is not produced or endorsed by Paramount Pictures or by the owner(s) of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s literary estate. This work of fan fiction complies with fair- or acceptable-use principles established in U.S. and international copyright law for the purposes of review, study, criticism, news reporting, research, scholarship, and parody.

Pastiches are a form of parody and fall under the purview of the fair-use provisos of copyright law.

This is a work of fan fiction, written out of love and free of charge.

Table of Contents

Editors' Foreword
Prefatory Remarks
Chapter One: The Mystery Begins
Starfleet Log 1
Chapter Two: Murder in Whitechapel
Starfleet Log 2
Chapter Three: The Villainy in Bart's Dissecting-Room
Chapter Four: Music at Midnight
Chapter Five: A Lively Police-Station
Chapter Six: Sherlock Holmes Discourses
Chapter Seven: An Amazing Story
Starfleet Log 3
Chapter Eight: The Journey Into Sussex
Chapter Nine: A Second Murder
Starfleet Log 4
Chapter Ten: An Intriguing Luncheon
Chapter Eleven: In Quest of a Solution
Chapter Twelve: Encounter With a Widow
Chapter Thirteen: At the Red Lion
Starfleet Log 5
Chapter Fourteen: An Astonishing Evening
Chapter Fifteen: A Tragic Discovery
Starfleet Log 6
Chapter Sixteen: In Which a Treasure is Found
Chapter Seventeen: A Remarkable Woman
Chapter Eighteen: What Archibald Petrie Had To Tell
Chapter Nineteen: Shangri-La
Epilogue
Starfleet Log 7
End Matter
 Appendix A: Spring-Heeled Jack
 Appendix B: Bhrounq's Starfleet Logs
 Appendix C: Editors' Original Foreword
 Appendix D: Bibliography
 Appendix E: A Study in Scarsdale, by Y.S. Pascal

Editors' Foreword

The discovery of the manuscript that follows is a story likely to be most interesting to archivists and literary historians, and in future we may document our procedures and methods of its unearthing and analysis in the appropriate peer-reviewed scholarly journals. (A longer, chattier version of this foreword can be found in [Appendix C](#).)

Sherlockians and Trekkers, however, may be better satisfied with this brief summary, and therefore more quickly able to proceed to "the game."

- The manuscript was found locked in a rusted box in a trunk that belonged to Charlotta Watson Gillette, daughter of John H. Watson, M.D. It was in relatively good condition, and cited as its author "Dr. John H. Watson."
- Found buried in the middle of Dr. Watson's manuscript was a square yellow-gold "postage stamp." This then-mystifying object was made of an as-yet unidentified polymer of great strength and durability. Because it is meant to be inserted into a slot rather than plugged into a port, we call it a "disk."
- The editors formed the theory that if Dr. Watson's manuscript were accurate, and the makers of the yellow "disk" were indeed from an era far more technically evolved than ours is today, they would make the "disk" as simple as possible to use. Y.S. boldly tried the experiment of inserting the relatively tiny "disk" into her own computer's DVD/CD drive. It worked! The "disk" is full of terabytes' worth of data, most of it unreadable video, but a healthy amount of audio. The exciting discovery was that the audio track that accompanied the video could be isolated and heard. While not wholly analogous, the audio corresponds closely enough to MP3 to make it accessible even to our primitive 21st-century technology. We have listened to hundreds of hours of material, and selected the excerpts that are pertinent to Dr. Watson's story.

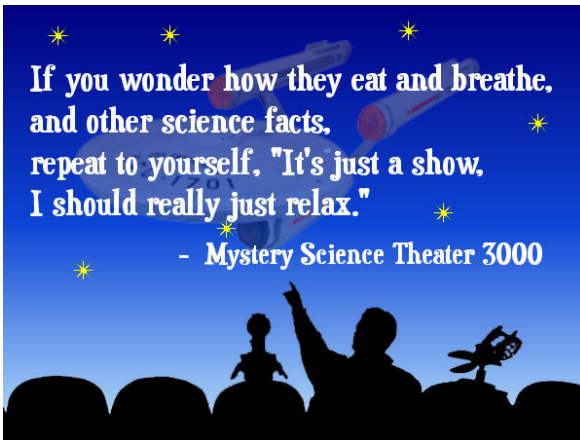
— The editors consented to delay publication of the "disk" data until both Dr. Watson's manuscript and the "disk" text were reviewed and authenticated by canonic experts in Sherlockiana and Treckdom. This has been done.

We believe that publication of these materials will be a remarkable addition to the literary universe of Sherlock Holmes and John H. Watson, and to the literal universe of Captain James T. Kirk and his valiant crew. (From clues in both Dr. Watson's text and Capt. Kirk's logs, we believe this adventure took place during the fourth year of the Enterprise's first five-year mission under Kirk's captaincy, when he was in his late 30s. We also believe that the Kirk, Spock, and McCoy who appear here may be "original timeline" rather than "reboot timeline" — but we are *totally* open to the idea of a movie made in the reboot timeline.)

For the benefit of our readers, we are presenting Dr. Watson's manuscript in its entirety, interspersed with logs unencrypted from the yellow disk. We hope that students of one or both universes will find the adventure that follows not necessarily elementary, but infinitely fascinating. Enjoy!

Mary W. Matthews and
Y. S. Pascal

...





Prefatory Remarks

Not placing my confidence in even the vaults of Cox's Bank at Charing Cross, nor even in my literary agent, Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle, the renowned writer and ophthalmologist, I have entrusted this manuscript to my daughter, Charlotta. I have charged her with the utmost stringency not to allow the opening of the dispatch box which contains it until after my death, and not to divulge its contents unless the climate of opinion then prevailing would be appropriate for its reception.

The reader may wonder at the lengths of the precautions I describe. Be assured that I consider them imperative. I am about to describe events so extraordinary, so unbelievable in the lives of myself and Mr. Sherlock Holmes that the credulity of even the most indulgent of readers must be strained to the limit. I have no wish, after so many years of faithfully reporting our adventures and being accused over even the most prosaic of them of romanticising or of focusing on the glamorous, to be thought at the last to have gone mad or to have departed from the strict veracity to which I have always devoted myself. I know that the average human mind will not believe what it cannot grasp. I do not propose being stood in the pillory by public opinion and held up as a liar or a lunatic when I am neither mad nor prevaricating.

The events which I am about to describe are all true and happened as I report them. I record them because no account of the doings of Mr. Sherlock Holmes could be considered complete which did not include these incredible events. It is some small consolation to me to know that, although my peers could not believe what I write, succeeding generations will rise which shall acknowledge my account as nothing more than the unadorned truth.

John Hamish Watson, M.D.
London, 18 September 1913



Chapter 1: The Mystery Begins

“I believe, Watson,” said Sherlock Holmes as we sat on either side of the fire in his lodgings at Baker Street, “that you should take Mr. Chesterton up on his offer.”

“My dear fellow!” I exclaimed. “I have told you that Chesterton asks me to participate as one of a series of lecturers to the general public on modern medicine. Can you doubt that his true purpose is to exploit the reflected glory which I possess as your biographer?”

“Not at all,” replied Holmes placidly.

Somewhat exasperated, I threw down the letter from my wife which I had been reading.

“Do you not then agree that, should I accept the offer, the general public would attend my lecture not with the intention of learning about the pituitary or the pineal gland, but rather in the hopes that I would impart sundry sensational details about some one or more of your cases?”

Holmes seemed amused. “My dear Watson, although your lit-

erary talents are certainly praiseworthy, I think perhaps you may exaggerate the interest which the general public takes in our little cases. Moreover, it has been several years since you have returned to the civil practice of medicine, and although you have attained a mild celebrity as my biographer, you must certainly aspire to a similar fame for your own accomplishments. What better means of doing so could there be than to appear before the public as an authority on some facet of your profession? I know that among your professional interests are the organic structures of the brain, nervous lesions, and ophthalmology, as well as the newest surgical techniques. If you speak on one of these subjects, in a forum peopled by the leading figures of your profession, you will become associated in the public's mind as being among those leaders."

"Almost you persuade me."

"It is indubitable that the vulgar herd will come to your lecture because they hope to hear something sensational. That should be of no consequence to you; after all, of the cases in which you have been kind enough to interest yourself, a good proportion do not treat of crime at all, so the issue of sensationalism cannot arise. Moreover, others will attend who are genuinely interested in modern medical practices, and it is they to whom you will address your remarks. And finally, it is possible that your name, because it is coupled with mine in many people's memories, will attract listeners to the lecture series who might otherwise never have heard of it."

"All right!" said I, laughing. "I am persuaded. I shall wire Chesterton to accept his kind invitation; and when the lecture is finished, I will lay you Carlton House to a Charley's shelter that the first question from the audience shall be, 'What is Mr. Sherlock Holmes's favourite brand of shag tobacco?'"

Holmes lay back in his chair with a weary, heavy-lidded expression, and said languidly, "Then you must answer, 'The pineal gland'."

* * *

Thus it was that I found myself, three weeks later, in one of the public lecture-rooms at St. Bartholomew's hospital. Holmes, alas, could not attend, although he had had every intention of doing so.

On the very afternoon of my lecture, however, he had come down with the symptoms of a violent head-cold which to my practiced eye bore every evidence of being about to descend on the lungs.

“My dear fellow, you must stay indoors tonight, and not exert yourself in the slightest.”

Coughing deeply, Holmes protested, “But to-day is your lecture!”

“That is as may be. It is a certainty that you will endanger your health further if you were to venture out of doors. Doubtless it would be a waste of breath for me to prescribe bed rest, but you must stay in, stay quiet, and above all, refrain from your ... usual ... ah, absolutions.” As Holmes appeared about to demur, I added sternly, “If you disregard my instructions, if you expose yourself to unwholesome elements, I may find it necessary to prescribe a course of, say, Dover's powder, ipecachuanha, paregoric, bitters with chalybeates, powdered charcoal—”

Laughing and coughing at the same time, Holmes raised his hands in surrender and said, “I am cowed, Doctor. I shall obey you.”

I had prepared and rehearsed my speech, which concerned recent advances in medical thought (an appropriate topic, I thought, with the twentieth century only ten years in the future), so thoroughly that I discovered that a good portion of my attention was free. As I spoke, I found myself looking out over the podium at my audience and musing on the characteristics of its members. Holmes had often said to me that matters of the greatest moment might hang on a bootlace, a watch, or a thumbnail. What, I wondered, might Holmes make of the men who sat before me?

Of them all, I knew only Chesterton, the administrator of the great hospital who had invited me to deliver the lecture, and young Stamford, who had been a dresser under me during my early association with the hospital and who was now the house pathologist. These two sat together at the front, near the door. But there were a good many others in the audience to whom I might apply such ratiocination as I could, and as I lectured I set myself to my self-imposed task with some interest.

First, of course, were the obvious medical students, perhaps twenty in number. These were quite young men, with their fingers

stained by carbolic acid and smelling of iodoform, and they paid me the compliment of attending closely to my speech.

Next, and also obvious, were the members of the public who had attended my lecture in the hopes that my speech would figure the doings of Mr. Sherlock Holmes in no small part. These were sundry stout, florid, respectable members of the class which reads *Beeton's Magazine*, the *Strand*, or the *Ack-Emma* as its literature of preference. The men, on finding that the topic of the evening's lecture was, as advertised, medicine, rather than Holmes, sat for the most part quietly enough, some perspiring gently and breathing through their mouths in their attempts to follow my remarks; others to all appearances asleep. Their wives, however, showed a marked inclination to whisper together, apparently indignant at what they considered a deception. Luckily, I discovered that if from time to time I bent a cold and austere eye in their direction, their whispering would abate.

In the highest row of the hall, back among the shadows of the room, was a man I was glad not to be able to see better, for rarely had I encountered a face so hideously coarse. Most of the face was concealed behind big, black whiskers; but the nose was both huge and malformed, resembling nothing so much as a pig's snout, while the eyes were so small and deep-set as to become difficult to perceive at all. The man's dress was careless and badly sized, with the coat being too loose in the shoulders and the shirt-sleeves protruding too far beyond the coat cuffs, while the vest positively strained across a massive abdomen. I puzzled over this man's occupation and reasons for attending my lecture for some minutes before regretfully acknowledging to myself that, although Sherlock Holmes might instantly be able to deduce these, I was not so skilled.

In the front row were two men about whom I felt much more comfortable in making deductions. One, with auburn hair, had removed his hat and lain it so that I could see the six-inch cylindrical stethoscope concealed within. Thus I could feel confident that, like myself, he was a medical man.

Next to the red-headed man — though apparently not with him, as they never spoke — was another, older man, with dark brown hair. He was dressed in a black frock coat some ten years

out of date in style, although it appeared of recent manufacture, by which I decided that he was of old-fashioned tastes. He was not, I decided, a physician, like the man beside him. His hands appeared smooth, bearing none of the roughness which frequent contact with harsh chemicals such as carbolic acid or iodoform would impart, and his mien was neither grave nor staid. His hands also bore none of the callosities which would betoken any manual labor — even the minor calluses which would result from toil in an office. That he was not a peer of the realm I decided from his expression of benevolent geniality; which, by the lines, of his face, seemed habitual. It appeared evident to me that here was one whose life had been cushioned so much that he had never had to turn his hand to a day's work or face even a moment's danger.

Something about the appearance of this man struck me as odd, and I found my gaze returning to him several times in some perplexity before I realized that he had shaved his sidewhiskers so that they came forward on his cheeks to a sharp point. Well; but perhaps a slip of the razor had compelled him to cut both sidewhiskers in the same way so as to match them up. Having discovered in the sharply pointed sidewhiskers the reason for my perplexity cheered me, commending to me as it did my own powers of observation.

No, I decided, as I turned to the last page of my speech; the members of the audience were absurdly commonplace, and would not merit even a moment of Sherlock Holmes's attention.

"Descartes believed that the pineal gland, a pea-sized organ shaped rather like a pinecone and located on the roof of the mid-brain, was the seat of the human soul," I read. "Others have believed that this gland was the source of clairvoyance, or second sight, since in some respects it resembles a vestigial eye. To-day's medical scientist knows that the pineal gland is as worthless as is the vermiform appendix, having no known function in the human body. This organ is, in fact, more properly referred to as the pineal body.

"It is easy for foolishness to masquerade as wisdom, as we have seen. As recently as two years ago, doctors were performing ovariectomies upon women solely in the belief that such an operation would render the women more tractable. I might sug-

gest that the merest *threat* of such an operation would render most women more docile! Other men, who merely call themselves doctors, are still encouraging patients to quack themselves with nostrums which are at least unsafe, and often lethal. Until only recently, some physicians gained their skill through apprenticeship; they were required neither to attend a medical college nor to acquire experience in hospital. The important work of Pasteur and Lister was not properly attended to, and you are all well aware of the furor which Darwin's work has evoked. And finally, there was great ignorance about the human anatomy and nervous system.

"Modern medical practice has advanced far beyond the days of witchcraft, voodoo, and shamanism — days when moldy bread was thought to cure a wide range of ills and willowbark tea with raw rum or gin was prescribed for headaches. Now that the miracle of anaesthesia has been achieved, there is almost nothing left to be learned in medicine. I would predict that by the coming of the centennial, only ten short years away, man's knowledge of medicine will be complete, and there will be nothing left to be learnt."

As I spoke my final sentences, I was annoyed to see that the dark-haired man with the pointed sidewhiskers considered them so amusing that he was having trouble maintaining his composure. That, coupled with my belief that many of my listeners were not interested in medicine at all, but only in my relationship with Holmes (indeed, one of the women, a massive lady in an astonishing hat, was already waving a copy of the *Strand* at me in a furious bid to get my attention), finished me. Without waiting for a question-and-answer period, I gathered together my notes and departed the lecture hall.

Close behind me came Chesterton and young Stamford, both smiling broadly and full of exclamations of praise.

"Capital!" cried Chesterton, clapping me on the back. "Simply capital!"

"You are as careful in your lecturing as you are in your incisions," Stamford added sincerely. "I have learnt as much from you to-night as I used to over the operating table."

"Why did you not stay for your applause? It was well earned, I assure you."

"I did not care to," I replied. "It would prick the bubble of my

conceit to learn that my audience had come merely to hear something of Sherlock Holmes.”

Chesterton graciously said, “Pooh! Nonsense!”

“How is Holmes?” asked Stamford. “I don’t think I have seen him since the afternoon of your wedding.”

“We are back in digs together. My wife has been called north to Edinburgh for a few weeks. The headmistress of her old boarding school, a woman to whom she had become much attached, has fallen ill, and my wife has gone to attend her sickbed.”

“I wonder you did not accompany her.”

“My practice has become more demanding at present. In any event, one of my old preceptors, Dr. Joseph Bell, is attending the case, and I am confident that Miss Rathbone is in the best of hands.”

“By the way, speaking of Mr. Sherlock Holmes,” interpolated Chesterton, “Stamford has something down in the dissecting-rooms which I think Holmes would be interested in seeing — something quite in his line. It is a body, its head mutilated in a most unusual and horrible way. I believe that—”

I was not destined to learn Chesterton’s belief, for at that moment a dirty and ragged little street Arab came up to where we were standing and said importantly, “I ’as a note for you, Dr. Watson.”

“Young Wiggins, is it not?” I asked.

“Yes, sir.”

I handed him a sixpence, saying, “Thank you, Wiggins. Now be off with you. Mr. Chesterton is concerned to keep his hospital clean.”

“Yes, sir. Fank you, sir.” The shabby little scarecrow took to his heels down the long corridor, with its vista of whitewashed walls and mysterious doors, as if eager to be free of an alien, frightening environment.

“One of Holmes’s ‘Baker Street Irregulars,’” I explained to Chesterton and Stamford, as I opened the missive.

“Indeed,” noted Stamford drily.

The note was from Holmes, as I had thought. It said, *As soon after your lecture as you are able, meet me in Ship’s Alley, in Whitechapel, not far from the intersection of Aldgate High Street*

and Brick Lane. Lestrade has just wired; he has a case which, he says, we may find of interest.





Editors' Note

When we first found the hand-written manuscript that has since been authenticated as a previously unknown memoir by Dr. Watson, we found an odd object with it, a yellow square about the size of a postage stamp. [Appendix C](#) tells the exciting story of how we discovered that the yellow square was a portable disk drive full of inaccessible (so far) video and, amazingly, accessible audio.

The editors have listened to and transcribed hundreds of hours of audio information: captain's logs, both official and personal; other officers' logs; recordings of briefings; bridge and sickbay logs; and even one personal conversation that took place when Captain Kirk apparently put down his tricorder and forgot to pause his recording. Considering that our best guess is that these recordings "were" made around 2270 CE, the language, called "Standard," is remarkably similar to English.

Most of this audio is boring. Some of it we wish we hadn't heard; it's tough to listen to a hero belch or break wind (or worse), just as if he were an ordinary mortal. It has been a lengthy and arduous process to arrange hundreds of hours of audio into more or less chronological order, particularly when we do not understand the algorithms of the "stardating" system, which will apparently be introduced between 2161 and 2265. Apparently stardates are calculated through a complicated equation that takes into account relativistic effects, the expansion of the Universe, and the effects of gravity upon time and space. Our best guess is that there are approximately 1,000 stardate "units" in one year. (If you're interested in learning more, *Memory Alpha* may be helpful to you.)

Below, and in the other "Logs" that will occasionally be interjected between Dr. Watson's chapters, we have chosen excerpts from the yellow square's audio that we hope will help put Dr. Watson's memoir into

perspective for a 21st-century audience.

*Mary W. Matthews and
Y.S. Pascal*



Starfleet Log One

Enterprise Intercom / Com Log, Stardate 6185.7

Uhura: Sorry to interrupt your workout, Captain, but I have a Confidential Priority One message for you from Io.

Kirk: [*distant*] Time out. [*louder*] Who is it, Uhura?

Uhura: Admiral Sandame Ballorane, Commandant of the Sarah April Medical Center at April Base.

Trainer: [*distant*] That wasn't bad. Tomorrow we'll crank up the gravity to three gees.

Kirk: [*distant*] Ouch. I'll make sure I wear a helmet. [*louder*] Patch him through, please, Lieutenant.

Uhura: Aye, Captain.

Ballorane: Hello, Jim?

Kirk: Hello, Sandy. Priority one *and* confidential? What's going on?

Ballorane: We have a ... situation.

Enterprise Briefing Log, Stardate 6187.1

Kirk: Good morning, everyone. I was just briefed by Admiral Sandame Ballorane, Chief of the Sarah April Medical Center on Io. First, the good news. After this mission's over, we'll be close enough to Earth to arrange some down-home R & R for us all.

[staff reaction redacted]

Kirk: You may have heard about Project Hi-Q. It's an experimental research program to repair injured brains, headed by Admiral Ballorane and T'Temar of Vulcan. According to Sandy, the project is a success. They've managed to increase the brain function of their study volunteers by ten to forty percent. He tried to explain what they were doing, but—

Spock: If I may, Captain? Simply put, segments of stem cell DNA from highly intelligent donors are injected into test subjects. The injected stem cells are then permanently integrated into the test subjects' DNA to enhance brain function and intelligence.

McCoy: As if we didn't learn anything from the Eugenics Wars!

Spock: As you know, doctor, the Hi-Q project has been operating from a therapeutic perspective. Without past regenerative research, for example, you would not today be able to cure quadriplegia.

McCoy: Rehabilitating an injured brain is one thing. But creating a population of supergeniuses — well, maybe *you* would like that, Spock.

Spock: I do not advocate for this type of research, doctor, although Admiral Ballorane and T'Temar are highly respected. However, improving brain function *on the Enterprise*, I would not find unwelcome.

Kirk: Gentlemen ... We're here because a crisis came up with one of the volunteers in the study. Her name is Bhrounq*—

Chekov: Gesundheit, keptin!

Kirk: Levity, Mr. Chekov? No, I didn't think so. ... Lt. Bhrounq is a Tellarite female, one of the very few females to leave Tellar for any significant length of time. She joined Starfleet eight years ago, sailed through the Academy, and became a skilled pilot. In fact, they designed a run-about specifically for her hoof-hands.

About a year ago, Lt. Bhrounq was in an accident that left her with apparent brain damage, and she was placed on medical leave. Admiral Ballorane thought she could be helped by Project Hi-Q, and he was right — preliminary assessment showed an increase in brain function of close to 40 percent.

**Ed. note: We transliterated “Bhrounq” as best we could. The name actually sounds more like a cross between “bronc” and a pig’s snort, said by someone suffering from a juicy head-cold. The final “q” should be pronounced like the guttural in “Bach,” “Chanukkah,” or “Q’plah.”*

For more information about Tellarite physiology, including an anatomical drawing of a male Tellarite with no genitalia, consult the [Starfleet Medical Reference Manual](#).

Now, here’s why the Sarah April Medical Center has called for help from the Enterprise. About five months ago, the Tellarite Consul from the Alpha Quadrant paid Bhrounq an, uh, *extended* visit.

McCoy: When is she due?

Kirk: They’re not sure. She wasn’t showing a week ago, anyway. That’s when she knocked out the security guard on the test ward, stole her runabout, and disappeared. It took all this time for T’Temar and her team to translate enough of the obscure Tellarite dialect that Bhrounq wrote her personal logs in to scare them into calling us.

Scott: I dinna understand, captain. This seems like a matter for Starfleet Criminal Investigative Services to handle, not the flagship of the fleet.

Kirk: There’s more, Mr. Scott. ... Let me begin by saying that the Hi-Q team were pretty well stumped by most of Bhrounq’s personal logs. After a week of trying, they got the bare outline of their translation. It took Lt. Uhura about an hour to figure out the details that T’Temar and her crew missed. Thank you, lieutenant.

Uhura: When I was at the Academy, I took a course on Old Tellarite. It really wasn’t T’Temar’s fault she couldn’t translate it, it’s a very difficult language.

Kirk: I’m still impressed. Would you please play your translations of the relevant log excerpts?

Lt. Uhura plays the five log excerpts. In the final excerpt, Lt. Bhrounq tells her personal log about her immediate plans. (See [Appendix B](#) for a full English translation of Lt. Bhrounq's personal logs.)

Kirk: There, that last log entry. *That* is why Starfleet wants us to handle it. Not only did Lt. Bhrounq steal every single vial of the stem cell DNA that Project HiQ had, not only did she steal a one-of-a-kind Starfleet runabout — the worst part is what you just heard her say in that last log entry: She was planning on using the slingshot effect to travel in time.

A week ago, about six hours after Bhrounq stole the runabout, Starfleet Astro saw an object enter the solar system at about 85 degrees from the ecliptic. It was traveling so fast they had only been aware of it for a few seconds when it disappeared into the sun. Starfleet initially assumed it was a meteorite that burned up. When T'Temar finally got that last log entry half-translated, Sandy Ballorane had Starfleet go back and look at its records again. The object had *looked* as if it burned up, but when they looked more closely, they saw that it passed close to the sun, on the other side from Earth, and never reappeared — but it did *not* get close enough to burn up.

We have to assume that Bhrounq did what she wrote she was going to do: She used the slingshot effect to travel in time to 19th-century England.

Scott: Why 19th-century England?

Kirk: We think she chose that era to hide out in so she could impersonate a legendary monster, Spring-heeled Jack. If Spring-heeled Jack was anything more than a popular delusion, he has to have been an alien from a heavy-gravity planet — a planet like Tellar, for example.

Not counting Bhrounq, the Enterprise is the only ship, and we are the only people, who have traveled in time via the “slingshot effect.” ... At least, the only people who used the slingshot effect *and come back again*.

Editors' Note: See the historical documents “The Naked Time,” “Tomorrow Is Yesterday,” “Assignment: Earth,” and “Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home.” See [Appendix A](#) for more about Spring-Heeled Jack.

McCoy: So what are you saying? Starfleet wants us to risk our lives, *again*, to go back in time to 19th-century Earth just to catch a thief? *Why?* It's not as if anything has changed!

Kirk: Starfleet chooses its officers carefully, doctor. This kind of behavior is out of character for Bhrounq. T'Temar is concerned that the stem cell DNA they've been injecting might have some repercussions on her pregnancy.

Uhura: Or vice-versa, Captain! Being pregnant affects a woman's body chemistry. Maybe being pregnant altered the way the stem cell DNA worked on Bhrounq's brain, making her act, well...

McCoy: Come work for me, Nyota. Uhura's right, Jim; medically speaking, Bhrounq could be cuckoo for Khitomer.

But I'm with Mr. Scott. *Why* does Starfleet want us to go back in time and catch her? Look around! It's not as if she did *one single thing* to change history!

Spock: Your reasoning is faulty, doctor. If Bhrounq changed history, *how would we know?*

McCoy: Our modern world hasn't changed, that's how we know!

Spock: But if the past changed, history would change too. Your memories would change. If in the 19th century Bhrounq killed the English inventor Sir Joseph Swann, today you and I would remember only the American Thomas Alva Edison.

McCoy: Who?

Spock: Another inventor of the light bulb. Perhaps in the original timeline, the one we were in *before* Bhrounq changed the past, you were not a doctor at all, but instead you were a bricklayer, a magician, a coal miner, an engineer, or a moon-shuttle conductor. How would you know, today? In a world in which Bhrounq did *not* travel in time, you and I might even be nothing more than characters in someone's entertainment video or novel.

Uhura: I think I understand, Captain. We have the original timeline, the one we started out in. We have the timeline we're in right this minute, stardate 6187, approximately three hundred years after the era Bhrounq headed for, which may or may not be the same as our original timeline. But then there's a *third* timeline, where Bhrounq goes back in time *but we don't*. In *that* timeline, Bhrounq uses her 23rd-century technology in the

19th century and changes history. She could use her phaser to kill Queen Victoria. She could lose her tricorder and have someone invent the portable imager three hundred years too soon. She could fly that runabout of hers into Big Ben and destroy it, and when they recovered her body, they'd think she was just a pig. She could cause unimaginable disasters. It would be the opposite of the Prime Directive!

Spock: The lieutenant is correct, doctor. It is possible that Bhrounq failed in using the slingshot effect, for example by burning up or by going a thousand years too far into the past. But we cannot afford to assume that she failed. If Bhrounq succeeded in traveling to 19th century England, it is probable that Bhrounq did not change history only because *you* and Captain Kirk prevented her from doing so.

Kirk: And *you*, Spock. I need both of you with me on this mission.

Spock: Captain, the presence of a Vulcan on Earth in that era—

Kirk: Bones, I need you because Bhrounq is a pregnant Tellarite and you're a doctor. Spock, I need you to help me find Bhrounq to begin with. Lower that eyebrow. You managed several weeks on Earth in 1930, you can manage a few days in the 1800s.

Spock: As you wish, Captain. My analysis suggests that late October of 1890 will provide the greatest chance of success.

Kirk: Then 1890, here we come.

Captain's Log, Stardate 6203.1

Pursuant to orders from Starfleet Command, Commander Spock, Lieutenant Commander Leonard McCoy, and I are commencing a confidential, Code Yellow rescue mission. In our absence, the acting captain of the Enterprise will be Lieutenant Commander Montgomery Scott, and the acting first officer will be Lieutenant Nyota Uhura.

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate 6241.3

We have arrived at Zyga II, the home of the Guardian of Forever Historical Institute, and Spock has been going over the timeline to determine the exact instant we need to jump to get to London in 1890. In case our Universal Translators fail, he, Bones, and I have been taking a crash course in nineteenth-century English, which doesn't seem too different from Standard. I'm sitting here wearing five layers of flannel, cotton, and wool, all exact replicas of period clothing, and it feels like a straitjacket.

An *itchy* straitjacket. No wonder the Victorians were so glum. All three of us have replica suitcases with more replicas of 1890 trappings we'll need, not to mention plenty of replica money.

If everything works out as planned, we should return to our own present at the exact instant we jumped, just as we did when . . . we went to 1930. But if something goes wrong, Scotty will hightail it home, swing around the Sun, and come get us. Chapel has planted subcutaneous transponders in each of us, just to be on the safe side.

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate Unknown Earth Date Tuesday, October 21, 1890 - 14:11:57

As expected, we landed in London, in a grimy alley thick with fog. Now I'm grateful for the wool. It's cold, even for October — no more than five to seven degrees [*Ed.*: 41-45° F.].

Since we don't know how long our search will take us, we've rented rooms from a Mrs. Warren in Great Orme Street. A hotel it's not. No central heating, no electricity, no refreshers, no dryklers. It's nowhere near as comfortable as 1930— Never mind.

McCoy: Looks like a good time for me to interrupt you, Jim. I brushed up on Tellarite physiology before we left, so I could stock up my black bag — and I have to tell you, having a *real* black bag of my very own is a dream come true. Anyway, pregnant Tellarites need to ingest large quantities of a substance that's very similar to our hormone called melatonin. In the Tellarite equivalent of our vermiform appendix, melatonin converts to di-hydro-sulfa-oxy—

Kirk: Okay, Bones, I get the picture. Bhrounq needs a substance like melatonin. And?

McCoy: Until she delivers, she needs to get human melatonin regularly. Melatonin is secreted by the pineal gland, in our brains. She'd need to kill someone to get it.

Kirk: Spock, put down that newspaper and help us out here.

Spock: I believe this newspaper contains information that will help us. Look at this advertisement.

[*pause*]

taged and almost forced
to sign a treaty pre-
sented to them by the
by Congre... which
they gave up a valuable
portion of their reserva-

pled
gover
fulfil
pact,
increa
sonab
sup
con
and
and
the
lands,
govern
positive
they int
different
the future.

**The Faculty of Medicine
St. Bartholomew Hospital
present
Neuro-Ophthalmology
Seminars**

21 October 1890

Guest Lecturer:

**John Hamish
Watson MD**

**Recent Advances in
Modern Medicine
with particular emphasis on
the Pineal and Pituitary Glands**

John Snow Auditorium

8.00 pm

**Murder
Foun.
Smith**

Body Horrifying

Police con
routine patro
day, October
horrified by
ery of the
man who he
tally moud.

The di
made by
stable Eric
lice Cons
Gilliam. Th
man's head
ripped off and
had been seen
and removed
scene.



Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, 1939-46

Chapter 2: Murder in Whitechapel

Upon arriving in Whitechapel, I found that Ship's Alley, dirty and distasteful as it was in the daylight, had at least the advantage then of being crowded with humanity, whereas at almost ten o'clock at night on a week-day, it was semi-deserted, and exposed mercilessly the degradation and poverty of the East End. Aldgate High Street is always filled with carts lit with flaring oil-lamps and lined with public-houses ablaze with gas and aglitter with mirrors, and sausage and fish shops sending out broad rays of smoky light and the odour of burning fat; and it is usually teeming with people seeking out the bargains which can be found for five shillings or the entertainment which goes for fourpence a seat. The back lane in which I now found myself was one of a network of streets as intricate and filthy as the great network of sewers which stretches beneath them, and was in contrast dark, empty, and daunting.

The day had been a dreary one, and the evening was no better. A dense, drizzly fog lay low upon the city. Yellow clouds drooped over the muddy byways, and although the few lamps available

to this forsaken backwater were lit, what light they emitted was feeble and murky. The flare from the few lighted windows shed an eerie, shifting radiance, so that human forms flitted through the fog like ghosts materializing and dematerializing in a sombre graveyard.

Even in the dank fog, however, it was not difficult to discover Sherlock Holmes. He and Inspector Lestrade, the wiry, rat-faced little police detective who so often in the past had availed himself of Holmes's assistance, stood at the entrance to one of the many small cul-de-sacs which branched off of Ship's Alley, cordoned by a small knot of police constables from the view of the occasional curious passers-by.

"Ah, Watson," said Holmes. "I am glad you have arrived so quickly. You are hard on my heels — I have not been here above five minutes." Unlike my own, his spirits, usually the more sensitive, seemed wholly unoppressed by our surroundings, the night, and the weather. Indeed, there was a kind of exhilaration about his manner which suggested that he had discovered a case to challenge his formidable abilities; his gray eyes were kindled and there was a slight flush upon his thin, hawklike countenance. I was pleased, though astonished, to discover that Holmes had thrown off the symptoms of the head-cold which had troubled him earlier in the day as completely as though he had never had it.

"I came directly I received your message."

"It is a most singular case," said Holmes. "There is a corpse, the victim of a violent murder; perhaps you would care to examine it?"

"Indeed yes."

"I must warn you, it is a peculiarly horrible crime, and quite sickening."

"I am prepared."

The dead man was probably a typical denizen of the East End, dirty and shabby — the sort which goes perpetually from one public-house to another, beginning each evening with too much to drink and ending it in a fight. But this conclusion may have been merely inference, for the large, well-muscled body had been stripped naked, and its clothes tossed into an open dustbin, such that one sleeve lay across the rim. Nearby, an unopened bottle of

bitter ale lay flung to one side, with a fried sole wrapped in paper just beyond it — evidently the unfortunate man had been on his way home with his evening meal.

One glance was enough to demonstrate to me that my presence as a physician was superfluous. The man had been brutally murdered. The top of his head had been crushed and torn off, much as one might pluck off the back of a hard-cooked egg if one were not overly concerned with what happened to the contents. It lay next to the dustbin, as though tossed there by someone too lazy to dispose of it respectfully.

To add to the horror, it was immediately apparent that most of the man's brains had been scooped out and removed from the scene, for they were nowhere in evidence.

I shuddered with disgust.

"You have not got me here for my medical skill; that much is plain."

"No," said the Inspector. "We have the victim and we have the killer. I have been telling Mr. Holmes that, after all, your presence here is unnecessary; the murder is solved, and we are about to take the murderer to gaol. A bit of smart detective work has been all that was needed."

"You have the killer!" exclaimed I.

"Look there."

I looked beyond the knot of constables on the other side of the body, and saw a man in handcuffs. The brute was a sandy-haired man of middle size and years, with a well-muscled, limber frame; and although he stood quietly, the constables who surrounded him treated him with considerable respect, as though his strength or his fighting ability were such as to render him far more dangerous than he appeared. The murderer had evidently resisted capture, for his face was bruised, his rather outdated dark-grey frock coat was torn and dirty, and he had lost his hat, leaving nothing but rumpled, sandy hair, cut slightly shorter than was the current mode.

I noticed with some astonishment that, like those of the man I had seen earlier in the lecture hall, this man's sidewhiskers came forward on his cheeks to a sharp point. Was it some new fashion?, I wondered.

“This is fast work, Lestrade,” I exclaimed. “Yet it seems that the killer must have put up a terrific struggle with the constables who arrested him. Was he apprehended in the act?”

“No; but within moments afterward. You are right; he fought ferociously,” replied the inspector. “The two constables who discovered the crime were attracted to the alley by the sounds of a violent altercation between three men, one of whose voices sounded as hoarse as a boar grunting, they said. As they approached the mouth of the alley, they say they heard a horrible laugh, and saw a bright blue-white light, like the striking of a match but brighter even than one of those new gas streetlamps. However, when they were able to see the length of the alley, all they saw was this man and another.

“The constables have reported that the moment he saw them, this man cried to his companion, ‘Rumspach! That’s an order!’ He and his companion are evidently Teutons. Rumspach immediately took to his heels, pushing one constable into a dust-bin as he ran past. The two constables report that they have never in their lives seen a man so fleet-footed; he was gone even before they could shout to him to stop, although they blew their whistles loudly.

“But though we lost the companion, we have the murderer; that is the important thing. He is evidently of feeble intellect, for now that we have taken him, he is prattling wild, nonsensical babble.”

“No doubt our friend the Inspector finds such speech easy to recognize,” murmured Holmes sardonically.

“Now, how would *you* have it, Mr. Holmes? In my own hearing, this man said, ‘Tomorrow is yesterday, for the world is hollow and I have touched the sky.’ Do not you agree that these are the ravings of a madman? He is a homicidal lunatic, who has recently escaped from his confinement,” Lestrade said firmly. “Mark my words, Mr. Holmes, if that does not turn out to be the case.”

“And his companion? Also mad, that he should abet this lunatic?”

“No; merely a criminal, in cahoots with this man.”

Holmes turned away, murmuring, “I am persuaded that you shall go far, Lestrade. In what direction one hesitates to predict, but you shall go far.”

“You have examined the area already, Holmes?” asked I.

“Yes, briefly,” replied he. “At first glance, I imagined a herd of buffaloes had been by. With so many heavy-footed policemen trampling about, most of the evidence must have been destroyed within moments. Now that you have arrived, I propose to institute a more thorough search of the area. Let us start with the body, which Lestrade has obligingly left untouched.”

Lestrade shuddered. “You may examine the body with my good will, Mr. Holmes. For my part, I find no mystery in how this poor man died.”

While Lestrade spoke, Holmes was bent over the body, his nimble, slender white fingers flying here, there, and everywhere. Next, he turned to the discarded clothing in the dustbin, along with a small pile of papers that had been tossed away among the clothing; and, finally, to the gruesome tonsure on the ground beside the dustbin. All the while, his hard, bird-like eyes wore the vacant, lack-lustre expression which in Holmes always denotes mental abstraction.

A moment later, he straightened.

“You may take the body to the morgue now,” said he; “there is nothing more to be learned.”

“And what have *you* learned, Mr. Holmes?”

“Nothing pertinent to our investigation, I fear. The man’s name was Bill Williams; he had been out of work for several weeks, largely due to his lamentable fondness for brandy. He had been planning to ship out within the week as an ordinary seaman — until his luck left him completely. Pray excuse me, Lestrade; I wish to look over the rest of the area, now, before your enthusiastic but ill-guided colleagues destroy whatever evidence remains.”

With this, Holmes turned and, taking out his lens, began to canvass the alley, hunting about for I knew not what. So swift and silent were his movements and so intent was his scrutiny that I was forcibly reminded of a trained bloodhound on the scent. His brows were drawn into two hard, black lines, and his steely eyes glittered, while the veins stood out like whipcord in his sinewy neck. At one point he went down on one knee next to the body of the unlucky Mr. Williams. After examining the trampled ground there intently, he next moved to examine the soles of the shoes that were next to the body, muttering to himself under his breath

as he judged their length and width with his tape-measure.

It was evident, when Holmes finally returned to us, that he was dissatisfied with the results of his search.

“Well, Mr. Holmes,” remarked Lestrade patronisingly, “have you accomplished anything beyond the ruination of your trousers?”

“Has anyone but ourselves been allowed into this part of the alley?”

“No one.”

“And did you yourself conduct a search of the area?”

“There was nothing for which we needed to search.”

“Nothing? Where then are the unfortunate Mr. Williams’s brains?”

“They were taken away by the accomplice.”

“Nonsense!” replied Holmes shortly. “If he had done so, would not at least one of the constables have remarked the grisly burden?” This checked the unhappy Inspector, who made no reply.

“You no doubt saw instantly, Watson, that this man’s neck was broken before his body was stripped and mutilated. That is why there is so little blood, when one would otherwise expect to see a great deal of it. Then the murderer stripped off his own clothes, stripped the dead body, and put on the victim’s clothing and shoes. You can see that these clothes that were in the dustbin do have some blood on them, but they are noticeably too small and too torn to have been the property of Mr. Williams. Only after the exchange of clothing had been accomplished did the murderer remove the top of his victim’s skull.”

“Bah! Easily explained!” cried the Inspector. “The accomplice Rumspach was a taller man than this Kirk; it is he who is wearing the dead man’s clothing. I will not let you deprive me of this arrest, Mr. Holmes.”

“Ah, the convenient accomplice Rumspach. Doubtless he too was the one who uttered the ghastly laugh that so alarmed the constables?, and for some unknown reason pretended that he had two voices, so that the constables thought there were three men arguing? ... But tell me, Lestrade, how did Rumspach create the bright blue-white light that the constables reported seeing?”

After a pause, Lestrade replied, “Perhaps there was no blue-

white light; perhaps it was a trick of the fog.”

Sherlock Holmes compressed his lips. “So constables Brett and Cumberbatch did *not* notice that this man’s companion was wearing the clothing of a man considerably larger than himself. They did *not* notice that the accomplice was carrying a man’s bloody brains in his hands. They *did* hear three men arguing, when in fact there were only two men present. And they *did* notice a bright, blue-white light that never flashed, being a trick of the fog. If your suppositions are accurate, Lestrade, Scotland Yard have become miserable bunglers in their selection and training of police constables.”

Taking pity on Lestrade, who was quite naturally speechless, I asked, “What next?”

“I think it would be well for us to talk with the suspect,” replied Holmes. “Perhaps we may induce him to tell us something which Inspector Lestrade could not.”

“As you wish, Mr. Holmes,” relied Lestrade, sourly. He gestured at his constables, who, as we approached, saluted Holmes and withdrew to either side of their captive. The sandy-haired man presented no aspect of fear or danger as we neared, but rather regarded us with an air of bemused interest, intermingled with some slight element of morose rebelliousness.

“Inspector Lestrade tells me that you will only tell your name, and other than that, you will only babble nonsense,” said Holmes.

“I reside at Table Mountain, and my name is Truthful James; I am not up to small deceit, or any sinful games,” replied the prisoner. His accent made it clear that he was not British, although I puzzled over whether he was Australian, Canadian, or from the United States.

“You are ... ‘Truthful James’?”

“My name is James T. Kirk, an it please your honour.”

“What can you tell us about this crime?”

“In the game of Fizzbin, each player receives six cards, except for the dealer, who receives seven cards, except on Tuesdays. A Royal Fizzbin consists of two jacks, two aces, a king, and a deuce, except after dark, when the king and deuce are exchanged for a queen and four. Except on Tuesdays.”

“You do yourself no good by this attitude, but rather consider-

able harm. Will you not explain yourself?”

“I can’t explain myself, I’m afraid, sir, because I’m not myself, you see. Never go down a rabbit-hole unless you’re being chased by a tiger or you’ve been run through by the Black Knight. My brother’s name was George, but I always called him Sam. Sam I am, green eggs and ham, on the lam in Anna’s Siam.”

“Do you wish us to believe that the mere sight of this dead body was enough to deprive you of your sanity?”

“Bestow five half-crowns in your watch-pocket, and the rest of your money in your left trouser-pocket. It will balance you so much better like that. Indeed I cannot think why the whole bed of the ocean is not one solid mass of oysters, so prolific the creatures seem. The old guaiacum test was very clumsy and uncertain. Are they blood stains, or mud stains, or rust stains, or fruit stains, or what are they?”

“You see!” exclaimed the Inspector. “It is all the most arrant farrago of nonsense.”

I cleared my throat with some diffidence, and Sherlock Holmes looked at me inquiringly. “One of the benefits of having had weak health is that one is allowed of a great deal of leisure time. You may recall that I am a member of a lending library?”

“I have seen some of your selections,” responded Holmes drily.

“Well, here is where I may be of some value to you, my dear Holmes. I cannot speak to Mr. Kirk’s strange ramblings about fizzbins and green eggs, but his remark about ‘Truthful James’ was penned by the American writer Bret Harte, and his remark about not being able to explain himself was quoted from *Alice in Wonderland*, an odd little tome by an Oxford don named Charles Dodgson. And in his remarks about guaiacum tests and various stains, Kirk was quoting *you*, Holmes.”

Sherlock Holmes seemed considerably startled. “I beg your pardon?”

“Not three years ago, *The Strand* published my first memoir about you, ‘A Study in Scarlet’. Do you remember, when we first met in 1881, your first words to me were about your new test for blood stains that was better than guaiacum?”

Mr. Kirk murmured, “Oops.”

I had noticed that, when I first used Holmes’s name, the pris-

oner had started and glanced round him, almost as though he wished to flee. Then for a few moments he appeared distracted, as though he were doing sums in his head.

Sherlock Holmes turned and favoured the prisoner with a gaze of sardonic interest. "What have you to say to that, Mr. Kirk?"

The prisoner smiled wryly, and raised and lowered his manacled hands in a gesture acknowledging the dropping of a pretense. "I suppose you won't settle now for 'Poor Tom's a-cold'?"

Both Holmes and I burst into reluctant laughter, while Lestrade regarded Kirk with angry suspicion.

"Now, sir, you seem less addled than poor Lestrade would have had me believe," said Holmes.

"I'm not crazy, if that's what you mean."

"Then why have you put on the appearance of madness?"

"Well, first, I am not a native of — your city."

"I am aware of that. While you are certainly a native speaker of English, your accent has a number of unusual features which make it difficult to place, although I believe you may have spent some time in the United States." Holmes appeared a trifle vexed at his inability to place Kirk's accent. "Be that as it may: You are a stranger to London. Why therefore did you pretend to be mad? You thought perhaps to blend in more closely with your surroundings?"

The prisoner smiled with boyish ruefulness, shrugged, and raised his manacles again, as though mutely to remind us of his captivity. "I was walking along that street back there when I heard a scream. I ran up and found this man lying there dead. Nobody else was around, even though this alley is obviously a dead end. I kneeled down by the body and rolled it over — that's how I got the blood on me —, and saw that most of the poor guy's head was gone. To tell you the truth, it made me a little sick. Right then, these two cops" (here Kirk indicated two of the constables who were guarding him) "started blowing their whistles and ran up, shouting something like, 'Why did you do it?' So I got a little scared. Cops tend to pin crimes on whoever's available that they can catch — it makes things so much easier for them."

"You neglect to mention your companion, the one whom the constables heard you call 'Rumspach'," remarked Holmes.

A fleeting grin crossed Kirk's face, to be instantly replaced by an expression of gravity. "He didn't have anything to do with the murder either. He can just run faster than I can."

"You have also forgotten to mention that you resisted arrest most strenuously," added the Inspector.

"What else could I do? I was caught there, at the scene of the crime, and literally red-handed. I figured that the cops were going to shoot first and ask questions later, and I didn't want to be around when 'later' came."

"We are not quite so American as *that*," said Lestrade contemptuously.

Kirk shrugged. "Anyway, the truth is that I didn't kill this man, and here I am standing in chains and surrounded by enough cops to keep an elephant under control, while the *real* killer is probably clicks— kilometres away from here by now. Laughing."

"Come, come, my man," said the Inspector. "You know that we have the real killer here with us now — and that he is you."

"I am afraid you are mistaken, Lestrade," remarked Holmes.

"Begging your pardon?"

Holmes turned to the two stout constables whom Kirk had indicated as his captors. "You are Brett and Cumberbatch, are you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did Mr. Kirk's companion look like?"

"Tallish, sir," said Brett, with Cumberbatch nodding agreement. "About your height. And slender, sir, like yourself. Dark hair, clean-shaven. Sort of greenish-looking, not but what he might have been taken ill looking at that there corpuss. Wearing a brown overcoat and hat and carrying a little black box, like."

"How big was the box? Big enough to carry a man's brains in?"

"No, sir. About two inches by four by eight, it were, sir."

Holmes turned to the Inspector and smiled gravely.

"You have done so well here that it would be a pity for me to interfere, but I think I must, if only to prevent the miscarriage of justice which should result from the arrest of Mr. Kirk. The real killer is at least six feet four inches tall, weighing at least twenty stone, with enormous hands, and of amazing physical strength. He is wearing shoes which do not fit him, being both far too long

and far too tight. He is wearing seaman's clothing, at least for the moment, and no hat or overcoat. He has bushy black false whiskers, and despite his height and weight he is a man of remarkable agility and coolness."

"Come, come, Holmes, this is too much," said I with astonishment. "You cannot know these things."

Lestrade glared angrily at my companion. "Possibly you were in the alley and watching?"

"Surely my deductions are simplicity itself," replied Holmes. "It has been raining or drizzling all day. Look there, by the victim's body: There is a footprint which cannot belong to any of us present. Look at the length of it! — a good twelve inches long. Yet see how the weight is dispersed, extremely deep toward the heel, quite light at the toes. See also the smudges to the left and right — how the foot bulged over the sole, as though the shoe were too narrow. The murderer was bending over his victim. When one bends forward, upon what part of one's foot does the weight fall? The ball of the foot. Therefore, the ball of the murderer's foot cannot fall where it would if his feet were as long as his shoes. The footprint indicates both the weight of the murderer and the condition of his feet inside his shoes."

"That seems easy enough," said I; "but how about the murderer's height and strength?"

"You have seen the victim. No weapon did that. The top of his skull was crushed and ripped from his body, thus." Here Holmes placed his right hand over his left fist in demonstration. "The murderer's hands must be of an enormous size, and his grip enormously strong. No ordinary mortal could accomplish such a crime. His height I deduce by two avenues. First, a man who has both huge feet and hands and is of such a weight is almost certainly also tall to match. Second, it would be almost impossible for a short man to commit this crime, since the skull was ripped both *off* and *up*."

"And his clothes and whiskers?"

"In the pile of papers that were tossed aside with the murderer's first set of clothing were Mr. Williams's seaman's papers, showing that he meant to set sail upon the *Cynthia Rushworthy* in a few days' time. That the assassin was disguised in black whiskers which are probably false I infer by this tuft of hair near the

body's right shoulder-blade. Even without picking it up, one can see that the tuft is coarse and matted, looking like horsehair, as with cheap false whiskers. Yet you will note that Mr. Williams had brown hair. Since he was attacked from behind, it would seem a fair inference that the tuft was pulled from the rest of a false beard, without the murderer's knowledge, and during the attack."

"What of the murderer's agility and coolness?"

"This street has no outlet, as Mr. Kirk himself observed to us a few moments ago. Assume that he and his companion, Rumspach, heard the victim's shriek and at once ran to his aid; yet when they arrived, there was no sign of the murderer. The murderer could only have escaped by clambering up that drainpipe over there, a feat which would call for remarkable agility, especially when one considers that the murderer also carried Mr. Williams's brains. The only other means of egress the murderer might have had would be to leap straight up onto the rooftop, but I think we may dismiss that hypothesis as rather too fanciful. Now, consider: A man conscious of imminent pursuit who continues with his crime, removing his victim's skull and brains while looking about him for a way out and discovering none, and who then exits by means of a dangerously slick and unsteady drainpipe, must therefore be a man of singular coolness."

Mr. Kirk had been listening with the utmost attentiveness to Holmes's exposition. He appeared to derive little satisfaction from the exercise, even though Holmes was clearly exonerating him of the crime. Now he raised his right hand, as though to rub the back of his neck, and only when his manacles clinked and his left hand was also raised did he seem to notice once again the blood drying on his palm and his own captivity.

"There wouldn't be any chance that you've convinced Inspector Lestrade of my innocence, would there?"

"Your complicity in this crime is obvious," said Lestrade severely. "You attempted to run from the crime; you resisted arrest; and once arrested, you pretended to be a lunatic. Only when Dr. Watson revealed your deception did you assume some semblance of candour."

"Since both you and the two constables report that the sight of the murder victim made you and Mr. Rumspach ill," said Holmes,

“it is probable that you are not accomplices to the crime. It would appear that the most of which you and your friend can be convicted is criminal stupidity.”

Holmes motioned to Lestrade and drew him to one side. “I can unequivocally state, Inspector, that although the extent of his involvement is unclear, this man is innocent of the murder. I believe that he may be more valuable to us in finding the murderer as a free man, though whether as a Judas goat or as a lodestone, I cannot yet say.”

“What do you recommend, Mr. Holmes?”

“That Watson and I leave.” As Lestrade started to smile, Holmes continued, “After we have gone, wait a few moments, and then release Mr. Kirk. He knows more than he is admitting. We shall let him show us what he knows: I shall follow him.”

Lestrade began an expostulation which Holmes cut short. “Tut, Lestrade. Following a suspect as unusual as this one is a task for which I am much better suited than anyone on the official police force.”

“As you wish,” said Lestrade sullenly. “I still believe that we have the murderer in our custody. It seems foolhardy to release him to perhaps kill again.”

“You must accept my assurance, Inspector, that this man is not a murderer. I have done you out of an arrest tonight, but pray bear me no ill-will. It shall surely be soon that I shall be calling upon you to arrest the true murderer.”

As we withdrew, nodding to Lestrade, Holmes murmured, “Mr. Kirk has a most unusual manner of expressing himself, would not you say?”

“He is, after all, a foreigner.”

“Even so, there are facets of his discourse which are most unusual. This man troubles me, Watson. Many of his speech mannerisms are American; yet the method by which he produces his vowels is unique. And what is his trade? His bearing is that of a military man, but his carriage is not, and he has none of the distinctive habits which the military tends to inculcate — his boots are not properly shined, his linen is not immaculate, his handkerchief is not in his sleeve. Moreover, his sidewhiskers are most certainly not regulation — did you remark them?”

“I have been wondering whether it is some new fashion,” said I; “I saw another gentleman shaved that way this very evening, at my lecture.”

Holmes seemed much struck by my observation. “That may be of great significance,” replied he thoughtfully. “Once is happenstance, and twice may be coincidence. But if the mysterious Rumschach has also shaved himself in this manner, we may suspect the existence of some sort of gang.”

“I take it that we are to follow Mr. Kirk?”

“Not we, Watson; I.” As I began to protest, he cut in. “Your assistance is always invaluable to me, my dear fellow — but where one may follow invisibly, two are bound to be remarked upon. Moreover, you have been on your feet and active for several hours now, in weather which is both damp and cold, and your old wound is paining you.”

As this was true, I reluctantly gave up the battle.

“Take care, then,” said I; “I confess I am full of alarm over this evening’s happenings.”

“He shall never know that I am following him, even if he sees me. Perhaps I might trouble you to exchange overcoats with me for the remainder of the night?”

“My dear Holmes, even though we are much of a height, I doubt I should be able to get my shoulders into your coat.”

“Then you shall toss it casually over your shoulders, like a toff on his way home from the theatre. See how much it alters my appearance to have an ill-fitting coat on! Lend me your handkerchief, now, and take my hat.” Thus saying, he took off his cravat and tied my handkerchief loosely round his neck in its place. “Well! It would be better if your handkerchief were not so decorously plain, but there! — you were not to know I should be wanting it.”

“You ought to be grateful that I have not used it to-night.”

“I am, Watson, I am.” Before handing his overcoat to me, he took a crushed cap from its pocket and settled it on his head. “There! What do you think?”

“Most disreputable.”

“Thank you. I venture to say that, with a change of posture to go along with these small changes in my appearance, I shall be unrecognizable indeed — if, as I say, he sees me at all.”

“Take good care, Holmes,” I said again.

“I always do,” replied he simply. Then, as Kirk appeared at the mouth of the cul-de-sac, Holmes nodded at me in farewell and soundlessly disappeared into the fog.

Starfleet Log Two

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate Unknown

Earth Date Tuesday, October 21, 1890 - 16:20:24

The Guardian on the Edge of Forever deposited us in an alley in London about two hours ago. The first order of business was to find a place to stay. We eventually found rooms with a Mrs. Warren in Great Orme Street, who runs what I'd call a rooming house. She says she'll feed us one, evening meal a day. The room that the three of us are sharing is all right, but the bed is lumpy.

Captain's Log, Stardate Unknown

Earth Date Tuesday, October 21, 1890 - 10:16:48

Before we left our own era, Dr. McCoy, working with Dr. T'Temar and Cmdr. Spock, calculated that Lt. Bhroung would need a quantity of melatonin found in 2.3 average adult pineal glands every week of her pregnancy. As we feared, she has already started obtaining the melatonin by killing people. Cmdr. Spock and I found her just after she had killed a big man and stolen his clothing; but before we could take her into custody, we were distracted by the London police. Lt. Bhroung escaped capture and is still at large.

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate Unknown

Earth Date Tuesday, October 21, 1890 - 10:17:39

Spock and I found Bhroung just after she had killed a big man by ripping the top of his head off. When we first saw her, bits of brain tissue were glommed on to what looked like an obviously fake beard, and a rim of blood circled her lips. I've faced vicious predators on many planets in my career, but but I *never* expected that the vicious predator would be an *officer in Star Fleet*. I don't care whether Bhroung under the influence of some strange combination of experimental drugs and Tellarite hormones. This was inexcusable. *Inexcusable*.

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate Unknown Earth Date Weds., October 22, 1890 - 00:14:37

It's been a busy day. We traveled a few hundred years, found ourselves in London in 1890, found a rooming house to stay in, got unpacked, and spent a few hours getting oriented. This is even more primitive than 1930, and what with the British accents all around me, I have even more trouble *not* thinking about Edith. Then after all this, our *working* day finally began.

After we ate what Mrs. Warren fondly imagined was supper, the three of us went out. McCoy headed for Dr. Watson's lecture on the pineal and pituitary glands, while Spock and I started the hunt for our fugitive.

Finding Bhrounq turned out to be as easy as we thought it would be, given that there's only one Tellarite on the entire planet. But that was the *only* part that was easy.

We found Lt. Bhrounq almost as soon as we started looking for her, at about 7:30 in the evening. She was standing over the body of the man she had just murdered. She had stripped the body and put on its clothes, and when Spock and I found her, she had just finished tearing off the top of the poor guy's head, scooping his brain out, and eating the whole thing. It was ... sickening. I can understand a non-human not being able to tell what part of a human brain is the pineal gland, but I cannot understand the mentality of treating another sentient creature as if he were nothing more than meat. *Inexcusable*.

I drew my phaser and told Lt. Bhrounq she was under arrest, and I started dressing her down for violating the Prime Directive. She grunted back that she'd already left Star Fleet, which made me even madder. When Spock tried to intervene, Bhrounq opened her mouth, and out came this blue-white flame that singed a streak into the top of the cap Spock was wearing and damn near set me on fire. I fell back, and, just as two constables started blowing their whistles from down the alley, Bhrounq leaped from the alley to the roof of the building behind her, a good thirty feet or more.

Okay, the leaping I get. Tellar Prime's gravity is at least three times Earth-normal, maybe more. But no one warned me about any blue flames! When Spock and I finally got back with McCoy, McCoy told me that Tellarites have two stomachs, a ruminant stomach and a rennet stomach. When they eat something, the food goes to the ruminant stomach first, where bacteria breaks it down. Then they regurgitate the food and it goes to the rennet stomach, where the gastric juices do their thing. One of the by-products of the bacteria in the ruminant stomach is methane gas. When Tellarites are frightened or in danger, they can set the gas they've just burped up on fire, like dragons.

Ed. note: In the historical document "Bounty," the Tellarite Skalaar tells Jonathan Archer, the first captain of the Enterprise, that Tellarites consider canine flesh (i.e., Archer's dog, Porthos) to be a delicacy. The editors believe that Tellarites are primarily herbivores, and Skalaar was lying to Archer to bust his chops.

So here we are in the alley, Spock, me, and a dead body, and these two police constables come running towards us, blowing their whistles as if blowing could bring the dead guy back to life. I yelled, "Run, Spock! That's an order!" I knew there was no way that both of us could get away, and I also knew there was no way we could explain *both* a dead body *and* Spock's ears. So I started a fight with the two gendarmes long enough for Spock to get away.

Naturally, the police jumped to the obvious conclusion — that *I* was the murderer. I read somewhere a long time ago that security was a lot lighter in mental hospitals — asylums, they called them — so I decided to play nuts and hope for the best. I wasn't getting very far with the local honcho, when who should appear like a *deus ex* but Sherlock Holmes, the famous detective. Absolutely the *last* person we wanted to meet up with in this time period.

About 15 or 20 minutes later, Dr. Watson arrived. Which let me know that Watson's lecture was over, and McCoy would be heading back to Great Orme Street to meet up with me and Spock. I was worried that McCoy would have to bail me out of jail, but Sherlock Holmes lived up to his reputation. He proved to the satisfaction of the police that the murderer had to be larger and stronger than any Terran alive in this era — though I hope he didn't know that's what he was deducing. For the time being, he cleared me with the police, and they let me go. Still, it didn't take a genius to figure out that Holmes doesn't trust me as far as he can throw me.

Sherlock Holmes — as if we didn't have enough tribbles in our grain! Talking the local police into letting me go was good. But he didn't stop there. I linked up with Spock again, and we picked up McCoy. The three of us walked around London for a couple of hours, trying to get another fix on Bhrounq with our tricorders. Several times, that exceptional Vulcan hearing of Spock's caught some unusual noises, which Spock deduced had to be Sherlock Holmes, following us. When you consider that we tried to shake whoever was tailing us and couldn't, I'd bet every credit I've got that it was Holmes.

Come to think of it, we may have used our tricorders within Holmes's hearing once or twice. I wonder what he made of them?

If Sherlock Holmes gets too interested in who we are and where we came from, our goose is going to be cooked. And if he gets a good, close look at *Spock*...!

Captain's Personal Log, addendum

This is it. I've had it — I'm ready to pack it in right now. We could never have survived in this culture. What we take as simple, everyday conveniences, these people have never even heard of.

In all the excitement, neither Bones nor I remembered to do our beard-suppressing before we left. (Spock did, of course; he remembers everything. I wonder if it's a court-martial offense not to remind your commanding officer about something that obvious?)

And naturally, both Bones and I are at the end of our cycles. That means that in a few days our facial hair will start growing again, and we're going to have to find some way to get rid of it. Considering how primitive this culture is, whatever method we use will be hazardous, to say the least.



Edward Hardwicke and Jeremy Brett, 1986

Chapter 3: The Villainy in Bart's Dissecting-Room

I arose betimes the next morning, only to discover that Holmes had never returned home at all. This caused me less concern than it might one whose fellow lodger kept more regular hours, for it was the peculiar duality of Holmes's nature to vary between periods of languour, during which he might repose all the day with his violin upon his knee or a book in his hand, hardly moving save from sofa to table, and outbursts of passionate energy, during which he would perform astonishing feats of physical endurance. It was only when he lacked for mental stimulation that Holmes turned to cocaine. When he had a case, nothing could exceed his diligent ardour, and he had been known to work fifteen or more hours a day — indeed, days at a stretch — in the pursuit of the solution to some puzzle.

Under the assumption, therefore, that Holmes was still following the mysterious Mr. Kirk, and that he would wire me as soon as

he needed me, I put most of my worry about him from my mind. As I breakfasted, I recalled Chesterton's parting words to me on the evening before: "Stamford has something down in the dissecting-rooms which I think Holmes would be interested in seeing ... a body, its head mutilated in a most unusual and horrible way."

I had had no chance to relate Chesterton's comments to Holmes, but the suspicion could not but obtrude that the two crimes, the murder of the evening before and the mutilation of the body, might in some way be related. Thus it was that, immediately after breakfast, I returned to Bart's in hopes of acquiring information which Holmes might find instrumental in bringing a foul murderer to justice.

At Bart's, I first sought out Chesterton. Upon learning that he was in the City, I determined not to wait upon his return, but to visit alone the dissecting-rooms, where I might hope to find young Stamford in his role as house pathologist. This was familiar ground to me, since I had been house surgeon at Bart's until, in a fit of patriotism occasioned by the late Afghan war, I had enlisted in the Army.

I needed no guide but my memories, most of them pleasant, as I ascended the bleak stone stairway and made my way down the long corridor, with its vista of whitewashed walls and dun-coloured doors. The Long Vacation was due to end within the week, but meantime, the hospital, usually bustling with house doctors, students, dressers, and nurses, seemed close to empty. Certainly I saw only two people as I made my way to the dissecting-room, a busy Matron and an incurious sweeper.

The dissecting-room, like the operating-room, was high-ceilinged, with the illumination provided by a skylight. Again like the operating-room, the walls of the dissecting-room were lined with wooden benches and glazed cupboards, in which were kept the surgical instruments, which were made of forged steel, with wood or ivory handles. In the center was a narrow, wooden table, much stained by the chemicals and blood of hundreds of dissections. I had spent many hours here as a young man, learning anatomy and pathology and insisting, over young Stamford's sometimes sullen objections, that a dropped instrument needed to be resterilized, whether or not that was the practice of my preceptors.

As I entered the dissecting-room, I saw that I was not the first to be interested in the body Chesterton had spoken of. A dark-haired man, whom I assumed to be Stamford, stood bent over the corpse, which appeared to be unclothed under the sheet which covered it. Hearing me as I entered, the dark-haired man began to straighten and turn to greet me.

However, it was at that moment that my attention was transfixed by the figure which lay upon the table. The back and top of the skull had been sawn tidily off, and had, I saw with horror, been lain upon the breast in the body's clasped hands, in a vilely disgusting parody of the more usual practice of folding the hands around a lily or a Bible. Within the yawning cavity which remained, I saw that the dead man's brain had been removed with surgical neatness down to the cerebellum — and, like the brain of the victim of the evening before, was nowhere in evidence.

A moment later, my shock and agitation increased, for the man who had bent over the body was not, as I had first surmised, young Stamford. As he turned I saw that it was the dark-haired man whose pointed sidewhiskers had aroused my curiosity at my lecture the evening before. With this memory in the forefront of my mind, the tone of my next question was both cold and brusque.

“What, may I ask, are you doing here?”

“I was lookin' for Dr. Stamford, who doesn't seem to be around right now. Then I saw this body. An interestin' case, eh? I'd say the body was mutilated at least a day after death, after the rigour wore off — I'd guess that put it some time in the early hours of Sunday mornin'. Notice the lack of bleedin' in the cranial vault and the characteristic livor and Tardieu spots.” Here he pointed, helpfully, as he spoke. I confess that my experience of violent death in Afghanistan had still not reconciled me to a crime as cruel as this one, although my reaction was irrational: The body could have felt nothing of its mutilation. Dr. McCoy continued, “What I'd like to know is, who choked this guy to death, and why?”

I attempted to match his detachment.

“Very probably it was a street crime. The attacks on people in London are a disgrace to the town. Some few have even taken to wearing spiked dog-collars in the hopes that they shall be a deterrent to choking.”

“Well, it wouldn’t have taken much to kill this poor guy, with his oral see-ay this advanced. See that fungatin’ mass down at the base of the throat, where the trachea starts? Bet you anything that’s a laryngeal sarcoma. His doctor was criminal not to treat his tobacco addiction.”

My mind was in a whirlwind. My faith in Sherlock Holmes was so complete that, on his word, I had in my mind exonerated Mr. Kirk of the murder. Moreover, I had been most favorably impressed by Dr. McCoy’s manner and bearing, and there could be no doubt as to the expertise with which he had examined the unfortunate remains upon the dissecting-table. While I could not but remember Holmes’s observations on the subject of how often the most innocent face might hide a savage soul — how the most charming woman he knew had poisoned three children, while the most physically repulsive man he knew was a great philanthropist — I yet could not credit that Dr. McCoy, whose face in repose showed numerous lines of the sort caused by a perpetual good-humoured cynicism, might be connected with the loathesome monster whom Holmes had described so vividly to Lestrade on the evening before.

And yet, Holmes’s observation that Kirk’s and McCoy’s pointed sidewiskers might be the mark of membership in a criminal gang had struck me most forcibly, and I could not but consider it likely that the similarity of Dr. McCoy’s speech to that of Mr. Kirk was another indication of a relationship between them. I could not deny that I had discovered each man apparently innocently in the presence of a corpse which was missing a large portion of its brain. What, I wondered, would Holmes do in my situation? Upon reflection, I determined that he would interrogate McCoy, and that, having learned as much as he could, he would follow McCoy to learn whether he was, indeed, connected with the mysterious Kirk and the elusive Rumschach. To that end, I put on the guise of geniality, and said, “I hear by your accent that you are not native to London.”

“No, I grew up in Atlanta, Georgia. ‘You can take the boy out of the country’ — or as we would say, ‘but y’awl cain’t take thah country outta thah boy’. I’m here in London to do research on the organic structures of the brain. I take it that your lecture last night

represented the state of today's knowledge about the brain? I was especially interested in the part on the pineal gland. I'd be curious to know what you think about the mellitonin' reactions in the synthesis of whore moans."

The disgusting crudity of his language was in such sharp contrast to the professional detachment of his manner that I was taken quite by surprise. I suppose that my utter revulsion at this crudeness, added to my incomprehension of the relevancy of his question, must have been reflected on my face, for he quickly added, "That's h, omicron, r, m, omega, n, hormone, from the Greek. A substance formed by an organ and carried by a bodily fluid to another organ or tissue. Like adrenalin?"

I shook my head, recognizing the word only in its relationship to "renal." McCoy persisted. "Testostereaune? Mellitonin'? ... Ohhh-kay ... I, ah, guess none of those words've crossed the Atlantic yet."

Dr. McCoy seemed deeply disappointed that I did not recognize the words he tossed at me. I said, "It sounds as though our American brothers have stolen a march on us indeed. Yet it would seem that my ignorance of these astounding medical advances dismays you."

He forced a smile.

"I was sort of hopin' I'd learn more from the medical community." He glanced at the clock which hung on the wall beside the door. "Mercy, look at the time. Well, Dr. Watson, it's certainly been a pleasure chattin' with you, but I've got to run. Thanks very much — good-bye."

I responded with the appropriate formalities and, pursuant to my plan, allowed him to depart secure in the belief that I suspected nothing. I waited a few moments, and then followed him, through the low, arched passageway, along the long corridor, down the stone staircase, and out the great Renaissance gateway designed by Gibbs in 1702.

The street here was crowded with carriages of every description, and the pavement on either side was thick with pedestrians and mendicants. Dr. McCoy plunged into the maelstrom of the street with a fine disregard for his personal safety, and made his way with agility in the direction of the British Museum. I confess

that, heedless of my old wound, I likewise plunged into the street and clung doggedly to his pursuit.

For some time, we negotiated the crowded and narrow thoroughfares of London, Dr. McCoy apparently unaware of any pursuit. From Charterhouse to High Holborn was but a moment, and Southampton Row came soon thereafter. McCoy seemed to have no notion of hailing a hansom, although he paused once or twice and seemed to gaze at the traffic in mild perplexity. He seemed also unused to city streets, with their plenitude of horse-drawn conveyances, for more than once he stopped to clean his boots against a kerb, his attitude one of exasperation. He frequently jostled or was jostled by other passers-by, giving rise to no little annoyance as he did so; but for the moment he had relinquished plunging headlong into the street, for which I was grateful.

A few minutes later, we were elbowing past a group of loafers and into Montague Street, near the British Museum, where Holmes had lived before transferring his lodgings to Baker Street. Soon we debouched onto Tottenham Court Road, and it was here that disaster struck. Tottenham Court Road is at the best of times crowded, and at the time of which I write it was a great swirling sea of humanity and horses, with cabs, drays, and omnibuses all vying for dominancy with the push-carts of peddlers, the outdoor stalls of shopkeepers, and milling crowds of pedestrians.

Dr. McCoy, however, seemed to have little concern for the intactness of his skin. Disregarding the infuriated snarl of a drayman whom he was discommoding, he strode into the street and began to cross it. I am not entirely positive as to what transpired next, although I am certain that I gave a cursory glance around me before grimly plunging into the busy street in Dr. McCoy's wake. The next that I knew, however, there was a confused scene involving an angrily shouting hansom driver, a frightened and rearing horse, and tangled traces. I, however, by the grace of the strong arm of a passing ostler, was safely back at the side of the road, no worse than shaken.

My rescuer was a jaunty young horse-coper with bristling side-whiskers, a slightly inflamed face, and a dirty white handkerchief tied loosely around his neck. With a good deal less than approbation, I suddenly realized that the soiled and disreputable overcoat

he wore, at least two sizes too large for him in the shoulders, was mine.

“Come, Watson,” said the well-remembered voice. “I really cannot allow you to risk yourself in this unseemly fashion. That horse very nearly had you, and his owner would not have thanked me for the trouble of attending to your funeral arrangements. We have lost them; let us go home to lick our wounds and consider our next course of action.”



Peter Cushing and André Morell, 1959

Chapter 4: Music at Midnight

Once more safely in our lodgings in Baker Street, Holmes excused himself for a few minutes. When he returned to the sitting room, wearing his old tweed suit, the disheveled ostler had disappeared and Holmes was once again the respectable English gentleman.

“I have given your overcoat to Mrs. Hudson to clean,” said he with a twinkle. “She was much shocked that you should have allowed it to get into such a state.”

“That is all very well, Holmes,” I began severely; “but you are aware—”

“That you paid a tidy sum for the coat, not a month ago? I am indeed. You should have a care at the tailor’s receipts you allow to remain in your pocket. I am even aware that the coat was bought at Mrs. Watson’s behest. The cut is a trifle more dashing than you are yourself wont to choose. If the damage to the coat is irreparable, I shall, of course, replace it. But you, my dear Watson — what prompted you to dash out into the street just ahead of that

hansom? I was never more shocked.”

“I was pursuing the third man of Mr. Kirk’s gang, Dr. McCoy.”

“Indeed! You have been diligent today, my lad. Pray tell me how you managed to find him — omitting not the slightest detail.”

I proceeded to relate to Holmes my activities of the morning — my visit to Bart’s and my discovery of both the nude, mutilated body and how I had found it in Dr. McCoy’s possession. To the account I added my observations and deductions concerning Dr. McCoy’s sidewhiskers and his evident sophistication in medicine. So interested was Holmes that I had to repeat some of my story twice, adding such further details as he required, before he was satisfied.

“Illuminating!” was his comment at the end of my recitation. “You are correct, Watson. Dr. McCoy is associated with Kirk and Rumspach. He had just made a rendezvous with them when you had your unfortunate near-mishap; it was they whom I had been following. That we no longer know their whereabouts is annoying. ... However, it cannot be helped.”

Unhappily aware that it was my actions which had caused Holmes to lose sight of his quarry, I could only answer, “It is my belief, Holmes, that we have not seen the last of Mr. Kirk. He is hardly the sort of man who can long escape notice.”

“Undoubtedly true,” agreed Holmes. The thought seemed to mollify him, and he favoured me with a kindlier gaze. “Well, Watson, since you have been so good as to tell me your morning’s adventures, let me reciprocate by relating to you what has happened on my end since I saw you last.

“I followed Mr. Kirk down Aldgate High Street and then Fenchurch Street. At Crutched Friars, he was joined by a slender man in a brown overcoat and a low-crowned brown hat, whom I assume to be Rumspach, since what I could make of him through the fog fitted the description given by P.C. Brett. The two spoke together in low tones for a moment and then set off again, soon attaining the Viaduct. At Gray’s Inn Road, they turned north. Not long thereafter, we were in Great Orme Street.

“The house in which Mr. Kirk is residing is a thin, four-storied, yellow brick boardinghouse in Great Orme Street, which is a narrow thoroughfare at the northeast side of the British Museum.

Kirk and his companion disappeared into the entryway, and a few moments later I saw a shadow upon the curtains of the window at the first-story left.

“I waited. After an hour had elapsed, Kirk and Rumspach appeared again, accompanied by the dark-haired man whom you have identified as Dr. McCoy. They retraced Kirk’s steps to Ship’s Alley. At the scene of the crime, now deserted, they commenced a very curious ritual. Rumspach, who was again carrying the black box of which Reynolds spoke, would lean over it, and, manipulating it in some manner which I could not see, cause it to produce a series of high-pitched musical tones. The group would then walk a block or two and Rumspach would again cause the box to produce its musical notes. They repeated this manoeuvre twenty-nine times. It was well after midnight when they halted their activities outside the Central London Meat Market in Smithfield.

“During all this time, I was forced to hang well back in the fog to avoid being seen or heard, and consequently I was able to catch little of their conversation. I did overhear Rumspach address Kirk as ‘Captain’ upon at least one occasion. The man whom you name as Dr. McCoy addressed Mr. Kirk as ‘Jim’ on another occasion; since we know his Christian name to be ‘James,’ it is entirely possible that the two are half-brothers. I heard the word ‘triangulate’ once, and later the word ‘enterprise’; but you will agree that both words out of context are essentially valueless.

“The black box perplexes me. I at first conjectured that it was some sort of musical instrument. Two points are against that argument, however. First, the range of tones which the box produced was severely limited, and seemed to follow no musical motif. Second, even men as illogical in their behavior as these three must have had some overpowering reason for wandering about London in the early hours of the morning, and producing musical tones upon a small black box does not seem to me to be a compelling motive. Upon further reflection, I have concluded that the black box might be some sort of compass, although unlike any I have ever encountered. The three of them appeared to be searching for some one or some thing. If one accepts that by ‘triangulate,’ they meant it in the surveyors’ sense, to determine locations by mapping, it may be that they used that word in relation to a search. It

would be no bad method of searching to establish a grid as a basis for proceeding.”

“Whatever their reasons for roaming the town, when the three men stopped outside the Central London Meat Market, it was evident that they were sorely disappointed. Rumspach said something in a low voice, and Kirk responded loudly, ‘Pigs?!’ The reply was inaudible, but I heard Kirk make a noise like the snort of a boar, saying angrily, ‘I know what (snort) is.’ Dr. McCoy now also said something, and again it was too low for me to hear, but again I could hear Kirk’s reply: ‘That’s just terrific. We spend half the night wandering around London and end up with *pigs*’ .”

“Most singular!”

“Yes, was it not? And next, Watson, came an unexpected turn of events: By some means unknown to me, the three men had somehow become aware that I was following them. Now Rumspach again said something inaudible, and Kirk replied, ‘I don’t care if he is tailing us. I’m going home to bed. Pigs!’ He turned on his heel and walked straight past where I lay concealed, followed by Rumspach and McCoy. They returned to Great Orme Street by the most direct route they could, rather than by the meandering route they had used previously, and disappeared once again into the first-story room.

“The next morning, the party split up. Dr. McCoy went, as you now tell me, to St. Bartholomew’s Hospital. Kirk and Rumspach returned to the East End, where they performed manoeuvres similar to those of the previous night, with the difference that they were far more furtive in their manner, and produced the musical tones on their box only when they believed they were out of ear-shot of any passer-by. At noon, they ceased their perambulations and walked by a fairly direct route in the direction of Tottenham Court Road, where I found you. The rest you know.”

“Their actions are most bewildering,” I commented.

“Yes; it is quite a three-pipe problem. I have had a fairly extensive walking tour of some of the more unpleasant portions of London, to no purpose which I can perceive.” Holmes rose and went to stand at the window for a few moments, gazing with a vacant eye upon the busy scene below. Then he turned to his pipe rack and selected the old and oily black clay pipe which he was wont to

use when engaged in profound thought. "I have much to ponder over, Watson," said he; "do you attend to your professional duties this afternoon. Perhaps upon your return, things shall have become a little clearer."

As I made to leave, Holmes added, "When you pass by Bradley's, would you be kind enough to ask him to send up half a pound of his most powerful shag tobacco?" It was with an unaccustomed twinge of hesitation that I assented and obediently departed for my small surgery in Paddington. I could not but recall Dr. McCoy's comments concerning the effects that tobacco addiction had had on the body which we had seen that morning.

Contrary to my expectation, several minor cases were awaiting my attention, and I found no difficulty in passing the time until I might return to Holmes. Solitude was a necessity to my friend for those periods during which he developed the theories by which he later astounded us all; I knew that he would spend the hours intervening in the deepest thought, examining every particle of evidence, consulting his enormous file books of similar crimes, constructing and discarding alternative theories, and determining which bits of evidence were vital and which superfluous.

It was after five o'clock when I returned to Baker Street. Upon entering the sitting-room, I found that Holmes must have spent the entire afternoon in the most furious cogitation, for the air in the room was so thick with tobacco smoke as to make it impossible to see more than indistinct shapes through the haze.

Coughing, I crossed to the window and threw it open. "Really, Holmes," I expostulated; "this atmosphere is perfectly foul. I have had occasion before to speak to you about your self-poisoning by tobacco and cocaine. Do you know that it is the opinion of Dr. McCoy that the death of the unfortunate gentleman whose remains I examined this morning was perhaps hastened by a cancerous laryngeal tumor, whose cause, McCoy felt, was tobacco smoking?"

"Indeed, Doctor?" Sherlock Holmes replied coldly. "But perhaps you are in need of relaxation after your professional exertions this afternoon. Your pipe and Arcadia mixture are there upon the table."

Recognizing the justice of his reproof, I fell silent, contenting myself with fanning the worst of the clouds of smoke out of the

window. Presently the air cleared enough so that I could see him. He lay curled up in his chair, with his thin knees drawn up to his hawk-like nose, and his face bore an expression of angry chagrin which perturbed me deeply.

“Your meditations have borne no fruit?”

“My dear Watson, your detective powers improve daily. In a word, they have not,” he replied, with no little vexation. “I admit to being as perplexed as when I began. I have formed and discarded dozens of theories as to the murderer and his relationship with Kirk and his gang, and I confess that I am as much at a loss now as when I began.

“If you have no more pressing engagement, let us talk the problem over. I have stated on other occasions my belief that as a rule, the more bizarre a thing appears when it is first encountered, the less mysterious it proves to be when its tale has been told. Now, however, we are faced with two related situations, and I am hard put to it to determine which is the more *outré*; and yet after several hours of close thought, I find that the problem seems to become more rather than less bizarre. It may be of value to me if I may use you as a sounding-board. Are you agreeable?”

“If it would be of service to you, of course I am.”

“Very well, then. First, what do we know? A brutal murder has been committed, and a mutilation of a corpse. In each case, the dead body was stripped of its clothing and the brain was removed. Why? Obviously in each case it was the brain which was the object of the crime, and the clothing was of secondary importance. The clothing which we found near the naked body in Whitechapel was too small to have belonged to the dead man, and in addition was torn, particularly in the coat back and armholes. Assuming that the clothing originally belonged to the man whose body you saw at St. Bart’s, it seems plausible that the murderer chose his second victim at least in part because he was such a large man.

“The murder was committed in haste, and by such rough and ready means as an ordinary man must find impossible to execute. The murderer is taller, heavier, stronger, and more agile than anyone in England; and what is more, the mutilation of the body, which was committed at leisure, demonstrates that he has at least an adequate grasp of the niceties of post-mortem procedures, if

not of the dignities due to any human remains. That would imply above-average intelligence. But why the brain? What profit lies in abstraction of the brains of these men, the one, prosperous, the previously deceased victim of a choking, the other, the opposite of prosperous, the living victim of a crushing grip?

“To these assessments we may add our observation that the accents of these men are also foreign. On the other hand, both Mr. Kirk and Dr. McCoy appear to be native speakers of English, and both claim to be Americans. The name ‘Rumspach’ appears to be Teutonic. While neither of us has seen the gentleman, let us postulate tentatively that he is of German extraction, although somehow in a class with his two friends. What does this denote? It can only mean that Kirk and McCoy, and possibly Rumspach as well, have lived for many years in a country which is foreign to them, so that their natural accents have been overlaid with this other accent.

“What else? The country is a foreign one whose styles are ten years behind our own. Perhaps in this foreign country from which they come, it is the fashion to wear one’s sidewiskers cut so amazingly. What is odd to our eyes may not be odd to theirs. But what country could this be? Let us leave aside our preconceptions formed by what we consider to be the styles of cutting whiskers in these countries and base our considerations on other evidence. It is not a Germanic country; none of them has the guttural ‘ch’ or the Germanic vowels, and none of them forms his sentences with the verb at the end. Thus we may rule out Prussia, Bavaria, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Finland, and Lapland. It is not France, or Italy, or Spain, or any of the Latin countries; these men have not the rolling R’s, the nasal N’s, or the Spanish lisp. Their accent is not Greek, Middle European, or Russian, for many similar reasons.

“A final point, and a most telling one, is that whatever distant land they hail from, it is not a country where cabs are much in use. You will have observed that these three gentlemen have walked everywhere they have been, even if it has been a considerable distance and there have been plenty of hansom to choose among. While it is possible that they have some preference for exercise or some aversion to other modes of transportation than the pedes-

trian, I consider it more likely that they are simply unaccustomed to the idea of hailing a hansom and riding. Well; we have ruled out Great Britain, Europe, Iceland, North America, South America, and Australia. What is left?"

"India; Africa; the far East."

"No good, no good!" cried he, slapping his hand on the arm of his chair in frustration. "If India or Africa, they would be deeply sunburnt. Similarly, if they had lived among the Inuit, or Esquimaux, they would bear the marks upon their teeth and their persons and in their manner of moving. And no Europeans are allowed into the Orient; we have no reason to believe that they may have successfully defied this proscription.

"I fear we must leave their place of origin as a mystery, Watson; they are from nowhere.

"What else is there? Neither Mr. Kirk nor Dr. McCoy bears any evidence of a trade on his hands; both have hands as soft as though they had never worked at all. And yet you say that Dr. McCoy appears to you to be very knowledgeable. Do you doubt that he is in fact a doctor?"

"No. On the contrary, he seemed well up on the latest medical advances. In fact, he had even heard of some new advances in the United States which have not yet been reported in my medical journals."

"I have said that I believe Mr. Kirk to be a military man, despite all of the evidence to the contrary. It was clear that upon last night's expedition, Mr. Kirk was the leader. If indeed Rumspace did address him as 'Captain', that would add further weight to my theory. But in what military did Mr. Kirk serve, and what is the relationship between him and his companions? The British Army is the greatest in the world, but Mr. Kirk has certainly never served in it. The Americans have recently concluded a terrible war and now are continually fighting skirmishes with the red-Indian, but I would stake a great deal on Mr. Kirk's seldom having been astride a horse during the last five years. It is certain also that he is no seaman; he has nothing whatsoever of the mariner about him. In any event, we have established that he and his companions are all recently from some foreign land which we cannot identify.

"What is the answer, Watson? I confess I am at a loss."

Holmes had risen and was striding restlessly about the room as he spoke. I do not recall ever before having seen him in such perturbation of spirit.

“If logical thought avails *you* nothing, then the case is hopeless indeed. We must find Mr. Kirk again and persuade him to solve the mystery for us.”

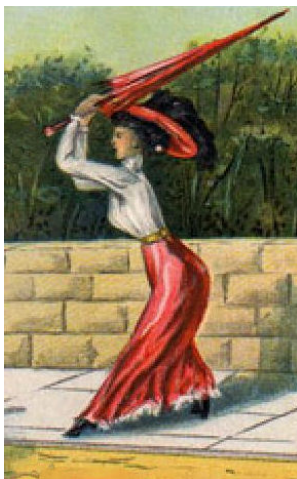
“Yes; or his companions. Perhaps if you returned to Bart’s and kept a watch for Dr. McCoy, while I—”

At this moment, a knock on the door presaged the entrance of a police constable with a note for Holmes. He tore it open with an impatient motion and then gave a cry.

“Listen to this, Watson!

Come at once to the police substation on Edgware Road. There has been an occurrence which you ought to find of interest. Lestrade.

“There has been some fresh development — though it is not another murder, or our old friend Lestrade would not be so coy. Whatever it is, it must shed light upon our problem. Where is your coat? — I should prefer to be off at once. Come, I shall procure a hansom and wait for you below.” And before I could finish struggling into my coat, Holmes had run out the door and was gone.



Chapter 5: A Lively Police Station

Rattling down Baker Street in a hansom, I noticed that the various rival newsagents were already hawking the evening editions of the various papers, and that accounts of last night's slaying in Whitechapel were prominently featured. The headlines ranged from the quiet "EXTRAORDINARY CASE" in the *Times* and the reasonably decorous "MYSTERIOUS BUSINESS AT WHITECHAPEL" in the *Standard* to the vulgar "LOST HIS HEAD — WHO IS SALOME?" in the *Ack-Emma*.

Holmes caught my grimace of distaste over the latter headline.

"I fear, Watson, that the boldness of the *Ack-Emma* displeases you."

"It panders to all that is lowest in human nature."

"And to man's love of the dramatic and bizarre. No, I do not defend it; it is a filthy rag which would rather pay out a few pounds in libel damages to gain hundreds of pounds in increased circulation. But you yourself are not immune to a charge of favouring the dramatic and bizarre, my dear Watson. Detection is a science

which ought to be treated in the cold and unemotional manner in which a mathematician approaches an equation, and yet those little accounts of our adventures which you have published have invariably been tinged with romanticism. You are better than the *Ack-Emma*, Watson — but how much better?”

I confess that I was annoyed, both at his criticism of my work and at his likening it to the product of the vulgarest of London’s newspapers. I remained silent, however, until we arrived at our destination.

The Edgware Road police-station was a low, red-brick edifice of uncompromising utilitarianism. A short flight of stone steps led to a wide steel door flanked by two large gas lamps. Inside was a large foyer which presented an ill-lit vista of drab green paint, mahogany wainscoting, and grimy wood floors. There was a high sergeant’s desk of dirty and unpolished walnut, and, on the other side of the hall, two or three low desks, equally ill-tended, flanked by Windsor chairs for visitors.

We were met at the door by Inspector Lestrade, who at once apologized for the peremptoriness of his note to Holmes. “I knew, however, that you would wish to hear the old gentleman’s story for yourself.”

“What is it, then? Not another murder, I take it?”

“No; but a murderous attack, preceded by an attempted robbery. But I shall not steal your enjoyment of a story — and a personage — which you shall find of exceeding interest. He is over here.”

The victim to whom Lestrade introduced us was a very large old gentleman, whose broad shoulders were encased in a beautifully cut frock coat at least twenty years out of date. His hat, which he held in his hands, was equally out of date, and must once have been dashingly rakish, but now was dirty and crushed. The old gentleman’s appearance recalled that of an inebriated satyr: Half-concealed by magnificent, flowing silver whiskers, his mottled cheeks and prominent nose were florid and heavily veined, and his malevolent dark eyes were bloodshot.

“Mr. Holmes, Dr. Watson, this is General Sir Harry Flashman.”

A flash of recognition crossed Holmes’s features, to be instantly replaced by the blandest courtesy. He bowed slightly. “General,

Inspector Lestrade tells us that you are the victim of a robbery.”

“It’s a d—ned outrage!” cried the old gentleman. “I’ve been robbed often enough, aye, and manhandled and left for dead — I’ve even been sold for a slave, in Madagascar once and again in Mississippi, though that’s neither here nor there — but never once, never I say, sir, have I been molested in the streets of London, not since ’42, and in any event those were bobbies, not some d—ned great badmash Thuggee.”

I confess that I could only stand and blink at the vehemence of the old gentleman’s tirade. Luckily, Holmes was made of sterner stuff than I. He returned, “Perhaps, General, you would be kind enough to relate to us the details of the crime.”

“Not much to tell. I was on my way home to Berkeley Square — ’d been visiting one of those little establishments on Serpentine Avenue, hey? — and there’s no getting round it, I’d punished a fair bit of brandy. Dashed easy to forget yourself in a place like that, with plenty of distractions about, and all of ’em willing to give you whatever you please, food or drink or aught else you’ve a fancy for, bless ’em. Anyway, I’d decided to walk home, try to clear my head a little, and halfway down Finchley Road I was accosted by this d—ned great brute. Now, gentlemen, you’ll agree that I’m not a small man, but I give you my word, this fellow had four inches on me — *and* the weight to back it up; could have made two of me. Ugly d—ned brute he was, with tiny, glaring eyes, great bushy black whiskers that grew halfway down his shirt-front, and a nose like a snout.”

“Holmes, it was last night’s murderer!” I exclaimed.

Lestrade preened. “You must acknowledge that I have not got you down here on a wild-goose chase, Mr. Holmes.”

“No, indeed, Lestrade, not a goose at all,” said Holmes meditatively. “Pray continue your most intriguing narrative, General Flashman.”

The General turned a glittering old eye towards me from under his great brow. “A murderer, you say? Shouldn’t doubt it, he d—ned well tried to murder *me*. Yes, you may stare! Walked smack up to me, cool as you please, and said, ‘Give me—’. Horrid voice he had, sort of hoarse and growly, as though he were unaccustomed to talking. Told him to be off. Well, I said I’d taken a few too many

— pot-valiant, of course. So the next thing he does, by Gad, he reaches out and snatches the hat from my head with a bl—dy giant paw and throws it into the gutter.

“‘Bl—dy hell,’ says I, pretty sharp, and still not thinking of danger, ‘that hat cost me two guineas not a month ago, my lad, so you just trot along and bring it back to me before I start hollering for the bogies.’ And what does the b—d do but reach out and grab me by the top of the head, with a hand that was like an icy-cold great claw, and start squeezing! Well, I soon put a stop to that — I kicked him, pretty hard, and when he let go I lit out like one John Smith. D—ned if he didn’t start laughing when I ran, like some sort of maniac!

“Well, I don’t know whether I should have got away from him, but for a couple of bobbies and Lestrade here coming round the corner as I reached it. I shouted and turned to point back, but the brute was gone, God knows how. Must have either run like the blazes or jumped straight up to the rooftops, because there wasn’t an alley or an entryway anywhere along there he could have ducked into. The peelers thought I was beastly p—ed — and I’m not so sure I wasn’t, myself — but Inspector Lestrade insisted that I wait until you came along so I could tell the story again to you.”

Holmes chuckled and rubbed his hands together. “A most singular story, General. You did not by chance notice any passers-by?”

“Yes,” added Lestrade eagerly; “for example, a man, of middle height, with sandy-coloured hair?”

General Flashman rounded on the two constables. “Did *you* see anyone else about?” Startled, the two policemen looked first at each other, and then at Lestrade, before shaking their heads. “That’s right; you didn’t!” concluded the old gentleman triumphantly. “Now, Inspector, I’m an old man and I’ve got the deuce of a headache, though whether thanks to that Thug or to the brandy, I can’t say. It certainly hasn’t helped telling my story over and over to whatever trumpery Jacks-in-office you care to produce. At any rate, I’ve still got my wallet and what’s left of my hat, so unless you have any more people queued up and waiting to hear my story yet again, I’ll take myself off.”

Inspector Lestrade turned to Holmes with a rather piteous

look. Holmes smiled coldly. “Your story has been very clear, General, and most enlightening. It might interest you to know, however, that you have had a narrow escape. This blackguard murdered someone last evening using much the same trick. Unless you seek further adventures, I should strongly consider using a cab in the future to get about the city.”

The old gentleman shrugged. “I’ve had dozens of narrow escapes in my life, my boy, and I can’t say I enjoyed any of ’em ... barring that time in—” Here he seemed to recollect his company, for he glanced at Lestrade from under his shaggy brows and then rose. “Been a pleasure meeting you, though, Mr. Holmes. Read a great deal about you in the penny press, not that I believe most of it. I’m sure you’ll catch the b—d before he’s much older, and d—ned if I don’t almost feel sorry for him when you do.” And at this the astounding old gentleman bowed briefly and strode away.

Holmes turned to Lestrade. “The incident occurred on Finchley Road?”

“Yes, not half an hour ago.”

“Then we may take it that our murderer has changed his locus, at least for the present.”

“I’m sure I didn’t believe you last night, Mr. Holmes, what with all your fanciful stories about a giant with black whiskers and a grip like iron; but General Flashman’s story changes the look of things. Yet I can’t but believe that Mr. Kirk had something to do with last night’s crime. Did you learn much when you followed him? Where is he now?”

“I learned a great deal, Inspector,” replied Holmes. “Mr. Kirk is living with not one companion but two in rooms in Great Orme Street. The three of them are physical culturists who are fond of music, and they may be involved in the international theft and smuggling of prize swine. As for the murderer of the ill-starred Williams, it is obvious that he—”

Holmes’s comments were brought to an abrupt end when, at this moment, a small crowd irrupted into the room. At the head of it was an angular lady of middle years, dressed in the mannish style of the suffragette, who brandished in great dudgeon a bent umbrella with a mahogany handle. There followed a pretty young girl of about sixteen, dressed in colours too garish and clothes too

scant for the season, whose spirits appeared to be gay. Behind her, a constable escorted a rather bedraggled prisoner. With no little astonishment, I observed that it was the man of whom we had just been speaking, Mr. Kirk, once again hatless. Bringing up the rear was yet another constable escorting a second man, who was simply attired in an old-fashioned dark brown overcoat and an oddly made bowler covering the tops of his ears, under which hat I saw that two pointed sidewhiskers obtruded. I had no time to notice more, for the angular lady was marching up to Lestrade and demanding, "You, constable — are you in charge here?"

He stiffened. "I am Inspector Lestrade, madam."

"Very well. I want this ... *beast* arrested immediately." She indicated Mr. Kirk, who bore several fresh bruises and a look of rueful amusement which immediately changed, when he saw Holmes, to the look of calculation which he had acquired the evening before when he had discovered Holmes's identity. He turned at once to the man in the brown overcoat and tipped him the wink.

"And what has been your difficulty, madam?" Lestrade was asking.

"This man is a Monster, and if he is allowed to go free it shall be the greatest crime imaginable."

"I don't believe we can file charges against a man's being a Monster, madam. Marwood, do you have a report?"

The constable who was escorting Mr. Kirk, a big, fair-haired Yorkshireman, snapped to attention and said, "Yes, sir. We was—"

The angular lady here interrupted P.C. Marwood with considerable force.

"The charges are public obscenity, insulting a lady, and inciting to riot — to start! You must lock this Monster up and throw away the key! He insulted me in the most grievous manner, and I shall not tolerate it."

The pretty young slattern here nodded vigorously. "'E insulted both'n us, 'e did. Oi never 'eard the like, no, not in all me days."

"This should be interesting, Watson," said Holmes quietly in my ear. "What could Mr. Kirk possibly offer that young person which she would construe as an insult?"

"If I could just explain for a minute—" began Kirk.

"Do not allow that Monster to speak!" cried the angular lady,

and brandished her umbrella again. Mr. Kirk quietly edged away, as though reluctant for any further contact with the umbrella.

“Madam—” began Lestrade.

“I do not understand why you are waiting about,” said the angular lady, turning on Lestrade and snapping out her words with great decision. “I have told you the complaint; it is your duty to see justice done. Moreover—”

“Madam—” Lestrade said again, loudly. “If you will allow me to consult with these constables, no doubt we shall be able to oblige you. First, may I enquire your name?”

“I am Miss Elizabeth D. Pankhurst. I work at the Augustus Kilburn Mission House on Edgware Road. It is my duty to help unfortunate women like this young person here — *when* I am not being insulted by Monsters in the guise of men!”

“Thank you, Miss Pankhurst. That was very succinct. Marwood, what is your report?”

P.C. Marwood coughed slightly and glanced at his fellow, and then, warily, at Miss Pankhurst. That lady, though, merely settled back with barely concealed contempt, apparently at any moment ready to irrupt anew. As P.C. Marwood began to speak, I noticed that Sherlock Holmes’s gaze was fixed on the brown-coated man (who was presumably Kirk’s accomplice, Rumspach) with the same intensity which he usually gave some particularly important clue. Familiar as I was with his methods, I attempted to emulate him, but at the distance from which I stood, and with several persons between, I could discern little about the man beyond three facts of some interest. The most unusual shape of his sidewhiskers, which he shared with Kirk and McCoy, I have mentioned earlier. I also noted that he had a vague look of illness. Third was his eyebrows, which were wholly remarkable, as they rose steeply upward in an unsettlingly satanic way.

Marwood coughed a second time and then began. “Gilliam and I was proceeding down Elgin Avenue, sir, at abahnt a quarter past five, when we ’eard a disturbance, sir. We proceeded to the location of the disturbance and discovered this lady a-beatin’ on the gentleman with her umbrella, sir, and a-screechin’ like — well, and screechin’, sir. She wouldn’t say just ’ow the gentleman insulted her—”

“I should hope that phrases so vulgar shall never in my life cross my lips!” interjected the lady, angrily.

“ — But bein’ as ’ow it were a disturbance, sir, and ’ow this young person ’ere were also mortal angry, *and* more than likely no better than she should be—”

“Oi never!” cried the girl, taking her cue from her preceptress. “No, never, an’ don’t yer ferget it, yer big dumb lummo! Ow, that yer should treat a poor girl so!”

“ — We deemed it proper to bring the whole boilin’ lot of them in and get it sorted out ’ere, sir.”

“And what has this gentleman to do with the *mêlée*?” enquired Lestrade, indicating Rumpspach, who lifted one of those satanic brows with an expression of utterly cold, detached interest. I saw that the detachment was in all probability superficial, however, since he was evidently unwell, having a slightly greenish cast to his skin, as though he were in the grip of nausea or some mortal illness.

Marwood glanced again at his fellow.

“As we came up, sir, ’e took the lady’s umbrella away from her, so as she wouldn’t be beatin’ on the other gentleman no more. That’s ’ow it got bent, sir, Miss Pankhurst not bein’ willin’ to let go of it, but him a-takin’ of it anyway. It made ’er powerful angry, sir.”

“I paid seven shillings for that umbrella,” Miss Pankhurst said crisply. “It is made of the strongest materials available, oiled silk with a mahogany handle and a steel shaft. I expect full restitution to be made for the damage this man has done to it.”

“If we’re talking about *damage*—” Kirk began, putting his hand to his head as though in pain.

“Monster!” cried Miss Pankhurst.

A small hub-bub arose, as Lestrade attempted to restore order between Miss Pankhurst, the slatternly girl, Mr. Kirk, and the two constables.

“This has all the makings of a comedy,” Holmes murmured in my ear. “It is very evident that Lestrade is in a little over his head; we must rescue him.” He moved forward, which caused Miss Pankhurst to swing her attention around to him.

“And who might you be?”

“I am Mr. Sherlock Holmes, madam — at your service.”

“Ah. You are the consulting detective. I have read some of the stories which Dr. Watson has written about you for the *Strand*. Sentimental hogwash, by and large, but according to his reports of your mental capabilities, you may have a glimmer of common sense.”

“You do me too much honour, madam.”

She glared at him. “Perhaps, then, you can explain to me why this pathetic little bobby stands here shilly-shallying about instead of arresting that Beast.”

“We have not yet ascertained the extent of the Beast’s crime, Miss Pankhurst,” said Holmes soothingly.

“Nor shall you from me; I will not repeat such vile language, and I will certainly not tolerate its being repeated in my presence!” she replied instantly.

“Nor shall you be asked to. Inspector, perhaps the ladies would like a cup of tea in another room?”

Lestrade looked for a moment a trifle startled, and then seized on Holmes’s suggestion with gratitude.

“An excellent idea, Mr. Holmes. Miss Pankhurst, if you and the, er, young person—”

“Miss Rose Montague-Forbes,” said the slatternly girl, with a toss of her head. It took no great knowledge of human nature to conclude that the name was an alias, picked probably because the pathetic child had thought it sounded “grand.”

“Quite. If you two ladies would care to follow P.C. Tyler — room C, Tyler —, some tea shall be brought you shortly. Marwood, you will no doubt oblige?”

“Yes, sir.”

Not at all mollified, Miss Pankhurst demanded, “And how am I to be sure that you shall not immediately release this Monster to go back out and offend other decent people?”

Sherlock Holmes inclined his head.

“Believe me, Miss Pankhurst, this gentleman and I have quite a bit to discuss, and a high priority shall be his conduct towards you. I shall see that these men are not released until justice has been done.”

Holmes reached out and drew Mr. Kirk and his companion aside to let Miss Pankhurst and the young person pass. When they

had gone, he began, “Now, Mr. Kirk — Would you care to introduce me to your colleague, Mr. Rumspace?”

The colleague, who had been silent and impassive up to this point, like some devilish Buddha, now spoke.

“Merely ‘Spock’ will do.”

Even from those few words, I could perceive that, like those of Mr. Kirk and Dr. McCoy, his accent was not that of a native Briton; but, although it also had that indefinable quality which defied analysis — something about the vowels, Holmes had said —, his accent was not precisely similar to theirs. Having been privileged, during one of Holmes’s cases, to converse with the King of Bohemia, I realized that the man was not, as we had supposed, of Teutonic extraction; but I found it impossible to guess what his origin might be.

“I see,” said Holmes, and again favoured him with an intently measuring gaze, muttering something under his breath.

“Sorry, Holmes; I did not catch that.”

“Rachel, Watson, Rachel.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“I shall explain later. Well, Mr. Kirk. Now that we are mercifully left to gentlemen only, let us hear from your lips what has occurred to upset Miss Pankhurst so.”

“I’m not sure I know myself,” said Mr. Kirk, again looking rueful. “We were walking down the street when the younger woman came up to me and told me her name was Rosie. She invited me to go to her room with her for a ‘party.’ I was pretty sure that a ‘party’ meant something else, a little more....” He wagged his hand expressively.

“You understood correctly,” said Lestrade, sniggering.

“So, before I could even answer yes or no, that Miz Pankhurst there interrupted us and started shouting something about the Kilburn House, and saying that I wasn’t going to lead another of her poor lambs astray with my vicious masculine ways, or something like that.”

Holmes’s mouth twitched. Kirk grinned at him, sharing the joke, and continued, “So I told her that I didn’t have any intention of leading anyone astray. I said I could tell that the girl was a professional prostitute, even though she did look a little young to

have gotten her dighting license already; but anyway, as long as the girl was a licensed, professional dighter, she — Miz Pankhurst, I mean — didn't have any right to tell the girl how she ought to run her business, and the girl could probably sue her for restraint of trade. I also said that she had absolutely no right to assume that my intentions were automatically carnal just because I was a man, and in fact, I wasn't even interested in having my engines tuned right then, either by the girl or at the Kilburn House of Joy. That's when Miz Pankhurst lost her temper and started hitting me with her umbrella."

There was a short, appalled silence. I glanced at Holmes, and discovered that, rather than the expression of outrage which I had confidently expected to see, his face bore an expression of slightly puzzled, intense concentration.

It fell to Lestrade to break the silence. He asked, "Dighting license? What is 'dighting'?"

"You have had an insufficient education, Inspector," replied Holmes coolly. "The word is very old and very — shall we say, Anglo-Saxon? The Wife of Bath uses it in one of Chaucer's more regrettable tales."

The light slowly dawned on Lestrade's ferret-like face. "You mean—? Well, you certainly don't need a license for *that*," said he, with a fat chuckle.

It was Kirk's turn to look surprised. "Then who regulates the activities of sex workers? You have to have a licensing commission to regulate things like fair pricing structures, health code violations, regular health check-ups, things like that. Otherwise anyone could just start turning tricks, and the next thing you know you've got pimps and madams and bordellos, epidemics of sexually transmitted disease—"

"Stop!" cried I, feeling nauseated. Kirk turned and looked at me with some concern. I took a deep breath and attempted to compose myself, but could not shake off my revulsion at his effrontery. "The immorality of your language is exceeded only by its vulgarity. These are matters which *gentlemen* do not discuss."

"Dr. Watson is correct," observed Holmes, with a face of granite. "Your conduct has been deplorable. I see that Miss Pankhurst was temperate in her behaviour. If she had but had a gentleman

with her, or indeed if even Miss Rosie's protector had been at hand, you should not have escaped with these few paltry bruises, Mr. Kirk."

"A few bruises! You should feel the goose-egg I've got on the side of my head!"

"I have no sympathy."

Inspector Lestrade straightened and said formally, "Mr. Kirk, you are charged with public indecency, immoral conduct, insulting a lady—"

"Now, *wait* a minute—"

"You will please remain with Mr. Holmes while I file the charges. Mr. Holmes?"

"He shall not leave."

Lestrade left the room. Mr. Kirk turned to Mr. Spock and with considerable bitterness said, "Oh, *great!*"

Mr. Spock raised a demonic eyebrow. He had been silent all this while, as impassive as a red-Indian though of more daunting a countenance. Now he quietly turned to Holmes. "Excuse me, Mr. Holmes; what is the accustomed procedure in these cases?"

"In a few minutes, your companion shall be taken before the police magistrate and tried. Mr. Kirk, it is my advice to you to plead guilty to the charges on which you shall be brought. If you repeat in court the words which you related to us just now, it shall go very hard with you; but if you plead guilty, you shall probably get off with nothing worse than a fine."

Vigorously, Mr. Kirk protested, "But *I* was the one who was assaulted—"

Mr. Spock interjected, "Thank you, Mr. Holmes, a fine would be most satisfactory." Mr. Kirk glared at his companion, obviously fuming. Without the slightest discomposure in his demeanour, Mr. Spock responded to his glance. "Sir, Mr. Holmes is evidently very knowledgeable concerning the customs here. May I strongly suggest that you follow his advice?"

Lestrade, reentering the room, now said, "It is time for you to go before the magistrate, Mr. Kirk."

Holmes turned to him. "Who is the magistrate who is on duty today?"

"Harrison."

“‘Hangman’ Harrison?”

“The same.”

“Terrific,” muttered Mr. Kirk. “Just terrific.”

Holmes said kindly, “Judge Harrison is not terrifying, Mr. Kirk; merely strict in his interpretation of the law.”

As Holmes had foreseen, the information about the magistrate quickly decided Mr. Kirk to follow his advice, albeit grudgingly. The session before the magistrate’s bench was short and swift, marred only by Miss Pankhurst’s freely voiced disgruntlement that Mr. Kirk was fined only ten pounds for his ungentlemanly behavior; it was clear that she should have far preferred it had the magistrate lived up to his cognomen.

“Madam, if it were in my power to do so, I should send this man to Dartmoor,” responded the magistrate warmly. “As it is, I have imposed the maximum fine which I am allowed to have done; I can do nothing more under the circumstances. Mr. Kirk, you shall pay the fine to my clerk. If I were you, I should pray that I never have reason to come before this bench again, on any charge whatsoever. You owe this lady a profound apology. Your conduct has been so shocking as to be a disgrace to all decent men.”

During this speech, a policeman had quietly entered the room and delivered a note to Inspector Lestrade. Lestrade now made a muttered comment which was inaudible to me and left the room.

Mr. Spock now leaned over and said something in a low voice to Mr. Kirk. After a moment of reflection, that gentleman nodded agreement and turned to address Miss Pankhurst.

“I’m really sorry I upset you, Miz Pankhurst. I didn’t intend to offend anyone — but I, er, was a little unfamiliar with your customs.” Mr. Kirk smiled charmingly. “Maybe we can try to forget the whole thing?”

Miss Pankhurst sniffed loudly, glared at Mr. Kirk, and, without replying, swept out of the room. Her dramatic exit was spoilt, however, for Mr. Kirk’s friendly apology had not been lost on Miss Rosie, who advanced on him with a coquettish smile and began to address him. Only the indignant, though anticlimactic, re-entrance of Miss Pankhurst, who grasped the young person’s wrist firmly and bore her from the room, prevented P.C. Marwood from having to make another arrest.

Mr. Kirk paid Judge Harrison's clerk without even a murmur as to the size of his fine — and ten pounds was exorbitant; more than a fortnight's worth of what my officer's half-pay had been. He seemed to have difficulty with the money, however, as so many visitors to Britain have done, for he carefully checked the denomination of each bill and coin and whispered twice to Mr. Spock, who answered, "Twelve," and "Twenty."

Next Mr. Kirk bent over to sign the clerk's register. The shame of his trial must have rattled him, for he had a good bit of trouble with the pen until, in a fit of impatience, the clerk grasped Mr. Kirk's hand and guided it forcibly to the inkwell. The discomfited Mr. Kirk seemed to handle the steel pen as though he had rarely before encountered such an everyday instrument. As Kirk rejoined his companion, I saw Holmes move quietly to the clerk's desk and glance at the register. He then exchanged a few words with the clerk, *sotto voce*, and took a bit of blotting-paper which the clerk handed him and folded it carefully into his notebook.

While this was occurring, Mr. Kirk had stood conversing in low tones with Mr. Spock. Only a few of the words they spoke floated to me as I stood by the door: "We're in way over our heads," said Mr. Kirk at one point; and a few sentences later Mr. Spock concluded, "—It is the only logical course of action."

While Kirk and Spock conversed, Holmes approached me.

"What was that comment of yours about 'Rachel,' Holmes?" asked I.

He smiled briefly.

"Do you remember that case of ours several years ago in which the word 'Rache,' the German for 'revenge,' was written upon a wall in blood?"

"Of course — the 'Study in Scarlet'! Lestrade was set to comb London for a woman named 'Rachel' until you corrected him."

"I would venture to say that we were guilty of a similar mistake last night."

"I confess I still do not understand."

"Recall that the police constables had thought they heard the German name 'Rumspach.' But to-night, Mr. Kirk's companion stated that he wished to be called merely 'Spock.' Under what circumstances did the constables hear the name? It was called out at

a moment when Mr. Kirk had chosen to attempt to fly the danger which confronted him. Obviously, therefore, Mr. Kirk was calling to his companion, 'Run, Spock'."

"You make it seem simplicity itself, Holmes."

Now, as we spoke, Mr. Kirk approached us and nodded in a conciliatory way to my companion. "I guess I ought to thank you, Mr. Holmes," said he, smiling gratefully. "That's two I owe you."

"I am not in the habit of keeping a tally, Mr. Kirk."

"You've probably picked up that we are, er, not exactly at home here in London. I think we'd like to ask for your help — as a detective, I mean. We'd be happy to pay for your services — anything you want."

Only I, who knew my friend so well, could correctly have interpreted Holmes's expression as pleasurable anticipation. However, he replied merely, "Before I can assist you, I must learn all the truth about you. Many confessions have been made before the magistrate's bench, no doubt, but nevertheless, a police-station is not the place for such confidences as I feel certain you shall decide to impart. Let us retire to my rooms in Baker Street."

We turned to depart. The evening's adventures were not yet over, however, for as we descended the stone steps outside the police-station, Holmes and I were set upon with a rush and a yell by a man whom I recognised a moment later as Dr. McCoy. I could not help but exclaim, "You again!"

Holmes, as I have had occasion to remark, was a champion boxer in his youth, but even I could see that he pulled his punch when he returned Dr. McCoy's attack. There was no time for more, for Mr. Kirk said sharply, "Bones! That's enough! They're on our side. We were just on our way to Sherlock Holmes's place in Baker Street for a nice little talk."

Dr. McCoy blinked, as though the mere name "Sherlock Holmes" conveyed a world of information to him, not all of it palatable.

"Sorry, Jim. I thought you were in trouble."

"You are Dr. McCoy?" inquired Holmes.

"That's right."

"Ah! Then our little party is now complete. I have invited these gentlemen to my lodgings in Baker Street, Dr. McCoy, there to

discuss of what further assistance Dr. Watson and I can be to your party. If you would care to join us, I think I can safely promise an evening of considerable enlightenment.”



*General Sir Harry Paget Flashman,
V.C., K.C.B., K.C.I.E, 1822-1915.
This 1856 portrait, taken on
his return from the Crimean War,
shows him in the uniform of the 17th Lancers.*



Chapter Six: Sherlock Holmes Discourses

In the foyer of 221b Baker Street, Mr. Spock declined to part with his hat and coat. “I am susceptible to cold,” he explained laconically.

Holmes gazed at him narrowly, but said merely, “As you wish.”

In our sitting-room above, Holmes waved our visitors to chairs and opened the tantalus. Mr. Kirk and Dr. McCoy each accepted whisky, McCoy adding some genial comments upon the distilling of bourbon whiskey in the American South. Mr. Spock, though, declined all offers of refreshment. All three of our visitors also refused the offer of tobacco, Kirk and McCoy exchanging quizzical grimaces, as though they thought the offer in bad taste.

After he had attended to our guests’ comfort, Holmes began the conversation with his usual courteous directness. “Now, gentlemen; how may I serve you?”

When it came to the point, Mr. Kirk was evidently reluctant to begin. As he hesitated, Holmes said, “Come, come. I cannot assist you if you will not confess either your difficulty or the reasons for which it exists.

“Perhaps it would be more comfortable to you if I were to be-
gin. It is obvious that the three of you are strangers to London
— and dangerously out of your element at that. You insult decent
gentlefolk, albeit unwittingly; you must needs walk everywhere
rather than taking a hansom or the Underground; and you are un-
familiar with our currency and orthography.”

I noticed that, as he spoke, Sherlock Holmes could not keep his
gaze from returning to Mr. Spock. The man had a peculiar fascina-
tion for him, much as a snake might have for a bird.

“Let us start, then, with why you are in London. I believe that
you wish to find the murderer of last evening’s unfortunate victim,
as I do. But I also believe that you know more about last night’s
murder than you have so far told. While I shall help you, it is a
condition of my aid that you tell me something of yourselves, your
backgrounds, your motives, and your recent activities, and of
what you know about the murder and the mutilation, at the scene
of each of which, one of you was found.”

Mr. Kirk began, rather uncomfortably, “We’re old friends,
Americans, who are touring Europe together. Just ordinary trav-
ellers. One of our party, a man who doesn’t speak much English,
has gotten lost. That’s all. It’s quite a coincidence that twice now
you found us at the scene of related crimes, but that’s all it is — a
coincidence.”

Holmes glared at him. “You are not telling me the truth, Mr.
Kirk; or at any rate, not the whole truth,” said he sternly. “None
of you is an ‘ordinary’ man, for one thing. And you are being less
than forthright with regards to your actions while in London. You
do not, for example, mention your journey about the East End last
night, during which I followed you.”

“We know.”

Holmes raised his eyebrows. “Yes; and I should be most inter-
ested to know how you learned it. Without false modesty, I may
say that I am unequalled in the art of following someone without
detection. How was I discovered?”

Mr. Kirk nodded towards Mr. Spock. “Mr. Spock has excel-
lent hearing; he heard movements, and he deduced that they were
probably yours.”

Holmes started violently, as though suppressing an impulse to

leap from his chair. “He *deduced* it!”

To Mr. Kirk, Mr. Spock now interjected, “Actually, Jim, it was inductive reasoning.”

With a smile almost of anticipation, Kirk said, “Spock, why don’t you tell Mr. Holmes how you figured out he was following us?”

Mr. Spock raised one of his demonic eyebrows reprovingly at his companion. He then said calmly to Holmes, “When you persuaded Inspector Lestrade to release Mr. Kirk last night, Mr. Kirk overheard Dr. Watson call you ‘Holmes,’ and realized that you must be the well-known detective Sherlock Holmes. Thus, when I became aware that we were being followed, I naturally came to the only logical conclusion. I do not believe that such effective methods of concealment are part of the repertoire of the local police force in this era; therefore the only person who could have followed us was you.”

“That is excellently reasoned, Mr. Spock,” admitted Holmes. His gaze throughout our interview continually had swung back to Spock, as though the fascination with his appearance continually grew. Now I saw that to the concentrated attention had been added a marked degree of respect.

“However, Mr. Kirk, I still have numerous questions concerning your statement that you and your two associates are ‘ordinary travellers’ who are ‘looking for a friend.’ First: When I followed you last night, I heard your companions address you as ‘Captain’.”

“We have travelled together; I was the leader of the, er, expeditions.”

“Then yours is not a military rank?”

“Well, it is, more or less. I’m not in the service today.” I thought I heard the faintest of pauses before the word “today.”

“I see. For how long have you known each other?”

“I’ve known Dr. McCoy for about te— twenty years.”

“And Mr. Spock?”

“Oh, he’s known McCoy for about twenty years too.”

“Indeed!” Holmes was not amused. “I also, in your journey last night, observed Mr. Spock several times manipulate a small black box which produced a series of musical tones; and yet, due to the lateness of the hour and the dearth of listeners, one could hardly

believe that you were setting up as street musicians.”

Mr. Spock stirred in his chair, replying, “You can think of the box as a sort of compass.”

“And for what purpose did you use it?”

Captain Kirk seemed to grow impatient. “Look, I told you, we’re looking for a friend of ours who’s lost. We’re exactly what I said we are: old friends, Americans, who are travelling together. Why would you think we’d be anything else?”

Holmes’s eyes glittered; although he did not move, his energy seemed to increase. “The question might rather be, why should any one not be surprised at your remarkable behaviour and proclivities. First: The speech patterns of each of you are unique. I have made a special study of the relationships between accent, intonation, and dialect — in fact, I have written a small monograph on the subject. It would have been obvious, even if he had not told Dr. Watson, that Dr. McCoy was reared in the American state of Georgia, for his speech has many of the linguistic traits of that area. But, like yourself, Captain Kirk, he also has many of the speech characteristics of North America in general, including elements I have heard in natives of Boston, New York, Montreal, Iowa, San Francisco, Toronto, Houston, and Seattle.

“While it is possible that one of you might have acquired such a *mélange* of accents, I find it impossible to believe that all of you lived in all those places. Moreover, while Mr. Spock speaks English well, he does so with a far more formal diction and with a different and more unplaceable accent than do yourself and Dr. McCoy, and he employs far fewer of the *outré* idioms with which you and your companion sprinkle your speech. Thus, while it is possible that you and Dr. McCoy are native speakers of a very unusual dialect of English, it is my belief that Mr. Spock has been a more recent student — he speaks the language too well for it to be his native tongue. It is probable, I believe, that you all acquired English from the same tutor (who himself may have lived in all the places I mentioned earlier)—” here Holmes paused “—perhaps at the military academy of a small, obscure foreign country — though it is no sort of military academy of which Watson or I have ever heard.”

Kirk was plainly startled, as most people are when confronted

for the first time with Sherlock Holmes's methods of deductive reasoning. "Why do you say that?"

"You own to a military title, sir; and your bearing is that of a military man. Although all three of you wear civilian clothes, the relationship between you is that of a commander and those whom he commands. Moreover, the clothes of each of you are of old-fashioned styling and cut, but of recent manufacture, and you wear them as though unaccustomed to them, both of which facts lead me to suppose that the garb to which you are accustomed is quite different — as a uniform should be.

"Now, where do men whose relationship is military acquire the same speech habits and similar accents? Obviously, at a military academy. I must admit, Captain Kirk, that I am stymied as to what sort of academy it is, and in what nation's service you have attained your title. In the Army, the rank of Captain is not an exalted one; and you are clearly accustomed to a high station. And yet, I can scarcely believe that your rank was attained in the Navy; even setting aside for a moment your lack of any of the indicia of the maritime, you are far too young to have had the responsibility for a naval vessel of any significant size.

"It might have been possible for me to identify which military academy you attended by way of your ring; the graduates of military academies are justly proud of their rings. But none of you wears a ring. It is possible that you might have the ring but not wear it; perhaps you are all three allergic to gold — a theory which is possible, if implausible. However, it is evident that you have not even removed your rings because you wish to conceal your origins; none of your fingers bears the indentation or the lack of colouration which long years of wearing a ring impart. I can only conclude that the ring is not part of your traditions.

"On the other hand, if the ring is not part of the custom of your military, the exceedingly odd way in which all three of you wear your sidewiskers must be so. Most organized bodies of men demand certain hair stylings as identifying marks. Religious men may be identified by their tonsures; the fierce Sikh warriors do not cut their hair at all; the troops of General Burnside copied his 'muttonchop' sidewiskers and called them 'sidebar whiskers,' or sometimes 'sideburns.' No ordinary man would deliberately shave

his whiskers in such a manner as the three of you have done. Thus it must be a fashion which has been imposed upon you.

“I have said that the academy you attended was a most unusual one, and so I believe. For although your bearing is military, Captain Kirk, your posture is not. Neither the bearing nor the posture of your two subordinates is military. Your boots are not highly polished, a matter to which a military man pays close attention; you do not wear your handkerchiefs in your sleeves, another military habit so strong that you will notice that Dr. Watson, who has not served for many years, still does so. And the hands of none of you bear the calluses or scars which are peculiar to the military trade as Dr. Watson and I understand it.

“The military academies each leave their mark, Captain Kirk; so that I may once glance at a man and say, ‘Sandhurst’ or ‘Saint Cyr’. The mark of the academy you attended is indeed there; but it is completely unfamiliar to me. It is a mark which is not a mark. It is an enigma.

“Let us summarize, then: We have three gentlemen who claim to be Americans, all of whom speak with a diction which has no regionalisms or all regionalisms. There is evidence of a military or quasi-military relationship between the three of you, and yet it is not the military of any known power.”

Holmes now sat back in his big armchair with the weary, heavy-lidded expression which veiled his keen and eager nature. It was evident to me that he had arrived at the climax of his exposition; although he was almost motionless, the intensity of his concentration was such that it gave the impression of the vibrations of some powerful machine.

“There remains one final issue,” said Holmes, turning to face the most unsettling of our three unusual visitors; “which may be summed up in the person of — Mr. Spock.”

It is difficult to convey in what sinister manner Mr. Spock affected me. In the comfort of our sitting-room, it was possible to observe him more narrowly than I had been able to at the police-station, but the more closely I looked, the greater my unease became. It was not merely the satanically slanting eyebrows, or the unhealthy greenish tinge of his skin. His rapid, shallow breathing was in stark contrast to the utterly cold emotionlessness of his de-

meanour, which imparted a sensation which became cumulatively terrific.

Mr. Kirk could no longer ignore the fascination which Mr. Spock's appearance held for both myself and Holmes, for he now said to us, "I see you've been looking at Mr. Spock. Well, you're right, he's not originally an American; he's from — China. He was raised by missionaries, so he's not really what you'd call *Chinese*."

Though reasonable, Captain Kirk's explanation did not satisfy me. Holmes must have felt similarly, for he rose from his chair and strode around the room, and it was apparent to me that, with his nervous energy too great to be contained, his agitation was strong.

"No; no!" cried he. "You continue to tell me untruths! What is it about Mr. Spock which demands concealment and prevarication from all three of you? You say that Mr. Spock is from the Orient. This is clearly not so. He is inches taller than the tallest Chinaman of whom I have ever heard. His eyes lack the epicanthic fold which is characteristic of the Oriental. His skin tone is not yellow; in fact, I should have said that his skin has a distinctly greenish cast to it.

"A green skin tone would indicate severe ill-health. In the police-station I contrived to touch Mr. Spock, and his body heat is extraordinarily high, perhaps as much as a hundred and five degrees, indicating a high fever."

"An ordinary man with a fever that high ought to be in the throes of delirium," I agreed. "If sustained over an extended period, such a fever is life-threatening."

"And yet Mr. Spock bears no other symptoms of sickness," Holmes continued. "His eyes are not feverish, his skin is not clammy, and his respirations, though rapid, are not laboured. His pulse is tumultuous, perhaps as much as two hundred beats per minute — this in a man who displays no manifestations of distress. Although the observed facts support the theory that his health is weak, he bears no other symptoms of sickness. His actions and speech are eminently rational. Indeed, he proves himself to be remarkably observant and possessed of an intelligent mind and a highly developed logical faculty. Tell me, Mr. Spock — logically — to what conclusion ought I to come?"

This question was clearly rhetorical, for now Holmes rounded

suddenly on our three visitors and said with suppressed ferocity, "The manners of none of you are those which civilized men exhibit. Your diction is impure; you insult both ladies and gentlemen, however unintentionally; and Mr. Spock has not even the common good manners to remove his hat when he is in his host's sitting-room!"

As he spoke, Holmes made a swift movement, as though he intended dramatically to snatch the hat from Mr. Spock's head. But for all Holmes's speed, Mr. Spock was swifter. His hand shot up, and he caught Holmes by the wrist in a grip which must have been of iron, for Holmes is no weak man.

Now began what was evident to all as a contest of strength. We three bystanders had all sprung to our feet, Dr. McCoy placing a restraining hand on Captain Kirk's shoulder, for it was plain that Kirk had meant to take a part in the struggle which would have been *de trop*.

I had once, during the early days of my association with Holmes, watched him straighten out a bent poker of forged steel with no more than a sudden effort. Now my appalled gaze fell upon a scene in which Holmes was exerting all of his considerable strength, and to no avail. The muscles stood out like cords in Holmes's sinewy wrists and neck, the veins likewise at his temples, while his face slowly acquired a dark flush, and the hand in the other's grasp trembled with the force of his efforts. Mr. Spock, on the other hand, might have been at rest, so effortless did his mastery of the contest appear to be; and while Holmes had begun to breathe in rapid gasps, Mr. Spock's breathing remained unaltered.

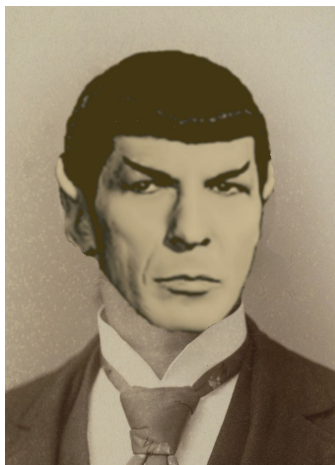
Slowly, Mr. Spock straightened his arm and applied it in a downward arc towards the chair next to him, so that Holmes was forced to seat himself. Once seated, Holmes abruptly ceased his resistance to Mr. Spock's pressure; at that precise instant, Mr. Spock released his grip upon Holmes's arm and sat back in his chair. Their gazes remained locked, though Holmes's left hand went unconsciously to nurse his right forearm.

For several moments there was no sound in the room but that of breathing. Finally Holmes said quietly, "Would you care to remove your hat, Mr. Spock?"

With an expression almost approaching a smile, Mr. Spock inclined his head. With great deliberation, he reached up and slowly raised his hat and placed it on his knee.

What was revealed beneath quite literally took my breath away: I found myself gasping for air. With one part of my mind, I noticed that Mr. Spock's eyebrows were even more infernal than they had appeared under the partial concealment of his hat, and that he had close-cropped black hair cut in a most unusual fringe.

The predominance of my stunned attention, however, was taken up by the ears which the removal of the hat revealed. Mr. Spock's ears were those such as no man has seen before. Rising up to a curled point, his ears were the ears of the elves of legends — or of Satan. They were demonic, horrible, and sinister. They were not the ears of any human being who has ever lived. My feelings and premonitions of evil seemed confirmed, and it would have come as no surprise to me had I smelled brimstone or heard the wicked laughter of the Archfiend himself.



Chapter Seven: An Amazing Story

Gazing upon Mr. Spock's devilish ears, I found myself imbued with a strong feeling of suffocation. I had tried to say "My God!", but I could not find enough breath to do so. Gasping, I made a few choked utterances which were, I fear, unintelligible. I had a feeling of impending doom, with a deep, excruciating pain in my chest and the sensation that my heart was pounding abnormally fast and hard.

Seeing my distress, Captain Kirk said sharply, "Bones!" Immediately on his feet and at my side, Dr. McCoy swiftly reached into one of his pockets and pulled out a small device, a palm-sized cylinder apparently made of glass which, as he manipulated it, glowed like a dark-lantern and emitted a high-pitched whistling, like the cheeps of a small bird. This he held about a foot from my chest and studied intently for a few seconds as he moved it across my heaving breast. "Heart," he said briefly to Captain Kirk, and then to me, "I'm goin' to give you a vasodilator; hang on." He returned the cylinder to his pocket and took out a silvery ampoule

which looked like the body of a hypodermic syringe without the needle. After holding the ampoule up to the light and quickly twisting its stem, McCoy placed this contraption against my arm for a moment and made some sort of hissing adjustment to it. At once my breathing recommenced. Dr. McCoy turned to Kirk and said, "I'd like to use the tricorder on him, Jim."

Kirk shrugged. "Holmes said that he saw Spock use his tricorder last night, and they've seen everything else. Why not?"

Taking that as permission, Dr. McCoy produced from the pocket of his overcoat a black box similar to the one Holmes had described to me. He manipulated this in such a way that it produced a musical tone for a few moments, rather like the cooing of a dove; he then returned it to his pocket and again took out the silvery ampoule, twisted it, applied it to my arm, and made a hissing adjustment to it, explaining as he did so, "It was a mild myocardial infarction; I'm giving him something to take care of the thrombus and the spasm."

"Great, Bones. Now, what does that mean in English?"

"A small clot of blood had formed in one of the arteries of Dr. Watson's heart. The shock of seein' Spock's ears must have triggered the artery to close off. His heart was strainin' to push the blood through, unsuccessfully. The lungs need blood to work, so he started suffocatin'. The first shot opened up the artery, and the second shot dissolved the clot and took away the pain."

Betraying little of the utter astonishment which I was sure he must have shared with me, Holmes murmured, "You are well, my dear fellow?"

Shaking my head in wonderment, I replied, "I am wholly recovered. In fact, I feel fitter than I have since before the war."

Holmes's eyes returned to the ampoule in Dr. McCoy's hands, with a curious intensity in his gaze, so that quite suddenly I wondered whether he was recollecting the innumerable puncture-marks which dotted and scarred his left arm from his thrice-daily habit of injecting himself there with cocaine. "That is certainly a most remarkable contrivance, Dr. McCoy," Holmes remarked. "May I see it?"

"Actually, I'd prefer that you didn't," Dr. McCoy replied, returning the ampoule to his pocket. "Like most tools, a hypo like

this can be dangerous in lay hands.”

Holmes bowed. “As you wish. You are certain that you have recovered, Watson?” I nodded, touched by his anxiety on my behalf. “A remarkable contrivance, and a remarkable cure. I was convinced that but a moment ago you were seriously ill, Watson; perhaps on the brink of death.”

“So was I.”

“So what do we have here, gentlemen? I perceive that I was quite right when I became convinced that you three were not what you seemed — that there was a mystery which had to be investigated. I have already discussed at length the reasons for which I consider you three to be far other than you seem. One point only remains to be explored.”

Holmes took from his pocket-book the slip of blotting-paper which I had seen him accept from Judge Harrison’s clerk. “This paper, Mr. Kirk, was used to blot your signature on the court register. Watson, I believe you may find this of considerable interest. If you hold it such that you can see its reflection, you shall be able to read the words as they were written, rather than reversed by the blotting.”

Holmes was correct. Upon doing so, I beheld the words, “Jāmz T. Kurk,” in a firm, masculine hand. The style of the handwriting was unique; rather than the Spencerian characters favoured by virtually all teachers of handwriting, it looked almost like typography. My eyebrows rose in astonishment.

Captain Kirk said uneasily, “That isn’t how you’d spell my name?”

“That is not how any educated man would spell your name,” returned Holmes. “It is not, you will grant, a difficult one. And yet your handwriting does not lack character.”

“Thanks a lot.”

Slowly Kirk came to a decision. “All right; I guess we should tell you the truth.”

Dr. McCoy leaned forward and stretched his hand towards Kirk warningly. “Jim, aren’t you forgettin’ the Prime Directive?”

“The time for dissimulation is past, Doctor,” retorted Spock emotionlessly. “The Prime Directive is for non-interference in a culture; not for torturing members of that culture with conjec-

tures. However, I do agree with you that it is unfortunate that Mr. Holmes is both more observant and more logical than any man I have ever met. His observations and inferences have brought him to the edge of knowing who and what we are — or as close as he can come with the limited data in his possession.”

“I beg of you, gentlemen,” said Holmes, “to be perfectly plain with us. You may rely on our discretion utterly. I have often said that when you have discarded all the theories which are impossible, whatever is left, however implausible, must be the truth. But as Mr. Spock has said, I *cannot* believe the conclusions to which my reasoning leads me.”

Captain Kirk threw a worried glance in my direction, and I said, “Indeed, Captain Kirk, the restorative which Dr. McCoy gave me a few moments ago has convinced me that wherever you come from, the medicine practiced there is as far beyond the medicine I know as the sun is beyond the Earth. Please tell us what you are and where you are from. I also guarantee my silence.”

Finally, Captain Kirk made up his mind and smiled. “All right.” He threw a most curious glance at Dr. McCoy, an admonitory little smile from under his brows which appeared to indicate a desire for McCoy not to speak. To my colleague, he said, “You’re wrong on one point, Mr. Holmes; Dr. McCoy and I are both Americans — I have an apartment in San Francisco, though I was born in Iowa.

“Dr. McCoy and I come from a small party of international explorers,” continued Captain Kirk. “There were seven of us; I was the leader of the expedition, which is why McCoy and Spock both call me ‘Captain.’ McCoy here was our doctor.

“We were convinced that there was a lost civilisation somewhere in the Himalayas. We’d heard reports of a land of untold riches, and we were determined to find it. But you know, you could spend a lifetime exploring and still not learn the secrets of those wild and mighty mountains. So we bought ourselves a hot-air balloon and used it to begin our search, flying from Seattle over the Bering Strait and down China and Russia to the Himalayas.

“Every day we’d go up in the balloon, dragging an anchor so that we wouldn’t be blown who knows where by the howling, treacherous winds of the high mountain passes, and we’d search for the lost civilisation. We were sure it was there. Then one day,

the rope that tied us to our anchor snapped in a strong gale. We were blown into the clouds of Everest, the highest of the Himalayas — Spock, how high is Mount Everest?”

Mr. Spock had raised his eyebrow soon after the beginning of Captain Kirk’s narrative, and the intensity of his gaze as Kirk spoke reflected the intensity of his interest. Now, although his face was as impassive as always, Mr. Spock seemed to me to show a curious reluctance to be drawn into participation in Captain Kirk’s narrative. “The mountain is eight point eight three nine two kilometres high. The natives call it ‘Chomolungma’, or ‘Goddess Mother of the Earth’.”

“Pray excuse me,” I interjected. “Britain did not sign the *Convention du Mètre* in 1875. We prefer our own standards of measurement. I confess that like most people, I think in inches, feet, and miles.”

“Mount Everest is three hundred and forty-eight thousand inches high, or twenty-nine thousand feet, or five point four nine two miles,” Mr. Spock replied. Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy exchanged a speaking glance, as though they found my preference for the proper standards of measurement quaint.

“Right,” said Captain Kirk. “Anyway, we didn’t dare take the balloon down, since that high up it’s freezing cold, and the air is so thin that we wouldn’t have made it. Only our small portable stoves and our bottles of compressed oxygen kept us alive in the balloon, and even so one of our party got frostbitten.

“So we kept floating, lost in those clouds, for more than a day. When we finally broke through the clouds, we found we were high above a long, thin valley of incredible beauty. We discovered later that the valley was twenty clicks long and seven clicks wide, and was called by its inhabitants Shangri-La.”

Here Mr. Spock interjected, “Nineteen point nine zero three kilometres by six point seven zero six kilometres, Captain.” To Holmes and myself, Mr. Spock added, “Captain Kirk is describing a valley that is twelve point three six seven miles long and four point one six seven miles wide,” Mr. Spock replied. “In inches, that would be—”

“Thank you, Mr. Spock. Anyway, Shangri-La is not totally unknown,” continued Captain Kirk. “Many of the inhabitants are

lost European travelers who've joined a monastery founded by a French priest, Father Perrault. The valley is served by a village of Tibetans, and other Tibetans bring in through a hidden mountain pass whatever goods the valley can't provide for itself.

"By a miraculous stroke of fate, our expedition had found the lost civilisation we'd been looking for — Shangri-La. It was even more beautiful than we'd heard. But in fact our discovery was even more amazing than we'd ever dreamed — because the inhabitants of the valley were like Mr. Spock here. We hadn't just found a lost civilisation; we'd found another, hidden race of humanity. The Tibetans call them 'yetis', and respect and fear them. But Shangri-La is a peaceful land, and the members of this strange race, who call themselves 'Vulcans', practice moderation in all things. Their only wish is to be left alone to pursue their study of logic.

"As you've observed, Mr. Holmes, Vulcans have many differences from humans. There are the obvious ones: the eyebrows, the ears, and the greenish look to their skin. Also, their pulse rates are higher, their temperature is higher, and their blood pressure is almost nonexistent. Philosophically, too, they're very different from humans. They've devoted their lives to logic and its study, and they've developed their logic to such a high art that you, Mr. Holmes, with all your talents, would practically be considered a kindergartener in their culture.

"It took us almost a year to learn even the basics of their language, and Spock will tell you that even now, after fifteen years among his people—" I could not help but notice that at this juncture Mr. Spock's eyebrow went up again "—we still aren't very good at their language."

Holmes had been sitting forward in his chair, his fingertips pressed together, listening with every fibre of intensity in his being. Now he said, "I should be grateful to hear a few words in Mr. Spock's language."

"Sure thing," said Kirk cheerfully. He turned to Spock and said carefully, "*Kohlinahr ketiftor, Spohckaam.*"

Mr. Spock, normally as impassive as a red-Indian, now achieved an expression of something closely similar to mild astonishment. "Very creditable, Captain. *Tiftor kesbeausmah, Kirkaam.*"

Kirk turned to Holmes, with a smile like that of a student who

has pleurably surprised his tutor. "That was a greeting. In it, the participants exchange wishes for each other's peace, long life, and prosperity."

"But wait; I do not understand; you cannot have been twenty years in Shangri-La, Captain Kirk!" exclaimed I. "You would have been but a child when you left Seattle, for you look no more than thirty-five now."

"That's quite a compliment, Dr. Watson," replied Kirk, smiling genially. "As it happens, I'm fifty-eight, and Dr. McCoy here is sixty-four."

Dr. McCoy had been taking a sip of whisky as Kirk spoke. Now he began to cough suddenly and had to be pounded on the back. "Sorry," explained he hoarsely when he could once again speak; "my drink went down the wrong pipe."

"I'll explain more about our ages in a second," continued Kirk. "Anyway, to continue my story: Mr. Spock, a native of Shangri-La, was the one who was appointed to be our teacher, interpreter, and guide. He taught us his language, and we taught him ours. As you can see, he learned much faster than we did. But that's why our accents sound strange to you — because over the twenty years we lived in Shangri-La, we almost always spoke Mr. Spock's language — that is, as much as we could.

"Thanks to the practice of yoga and the truly amazing properties of a fruit called the tangatse berry, which grows in Shangri-La and nowhere else on Earth, most Vulcans live for hundreds of years; Spock's father, Sarek, is a hundred and five, and looks like a man of forty-five. Dr. McCoy, I, and the rest of our party also ate the tangatse berries, and our aging slowed too. That's why Dr. McCoy and I look so much younger than we are. We've been away from civilisation as you know it, and immersed in the civilisation of Shangri-La, for so long that we've completely lost track of what the outside world is like.

"The civilisation of Shangri-La is incredibly advanced — beyond anything you could dream of. And because they're totally devoted to logic, they have no war, no crime, and no social problems. What's more, the natives are happy to teach what they know about their miraculous advances. They taught Dr. McCoy medical and surgical techniques that are so far beyond what Western civilisa-

tion now knows that it would be an almost hopeless job to try to describe them. They taught all of us secrets of science, philosophy, and art that are undreamed of outside that small valley. They gave us our tricorders — these magic black boxes — and taught us how to use them. With them, we can know more about the world around us than you can imagine. For example — well, Bones, can you give an example of something your tricorder told you about Dr. Watson that we couldn't know any other way?"

Dr. McCoy, recovered from his earlier choking fit, had been listening to Captain Kirk's story so intently that this question startled him; but he quickly composed himself, saying, "Sure, Jim."

He again took out his black box, held it a foot from me, and caused it to produce its musical tones. "As a child, Dr. Watson had mumps, measles, chicken pox, scarlet fever, and whoopin'-cough; and he had typhoid fever as an adult — a pretty bad case of it, too, I'd guess about ten years ago." He replaced the tricorder in his pocket. "Oh — and he's got a small piece of lead lodged in him that must give him the Dickens of a time whenever the weather changes."

Staring, I replied slowly, "The phrase 'typhoid fever' is unfamiliar to me."

"The symptoms are a sudden, generalized, severe headache, malaise, anorexia, abdominal discomfort, and vomitin', followed by an irruption of maculopapular exanthem over the abdomen — that's a rose-spot rash, Jim, which quickly appears and disappears —, persistent fever of about forty degrees Celsius—"

"About one hundred and four degrees Fahrenheit," Mr. Spock interjected.

"Thank you," said Dr. McCoy. "Where was I? Rose-spot rash, high fever, increasin' weakness, bloody diarrhea, and delirium. In later stages, if left untreated, the patient can have extensive gastrointestinal bleedin' or rupture. Luckily, about two weeks on antibiotics will cure typhoid fever with no problem."

Utterly confounded, I said, "You describe enteric fever, which I had a very severe case of ten years ago. What are ... anabolics?"

"A, er, Vulcan medicine."

I shook my head. "Your other observations are also completely correct; I suffered those childhood diseases and no other, and I

have a Jezail bullet in one of my limbs. The power of that, er, ‘tri-corder’ is astounding.”

Captain Kirk smiled at us, as though to say, “This verifies my claims,” and resumed his story. “After many years among the Vulcans, I began to get restless. I’d started the expedition to find both the lost civilisation and riches. Now that I’d gotten them, I wanted more and more just to go home. The other members of the expedition stayed, but I finally persuaded Dr. McCoy to leave Shangri-La with me. Mr. Spock, who was our teacher and interpreter, wanted to learn more about Western culture and civilisation, and we gladly agreed to bring him with us and show him what the world outside his little valley was like. We arrived in London two days ago.

“Mr. Spock brought a servant with him, a man by the name of Jack Tellar. This is the man who’s lost. He got separated from our group, and we’re worried about him. He can’t speak more than a few words of English, and he’s very ugly — repulsive-looking to Western eyes. He has no skills that this country would want to pay him money for. We’re afraid that he’s the one who committed the murder and the mutilation.”

“But why?” I exclaimed. “Why should he make off with those two men’s brains?”

“A — religious ceremony, Dr. Watson. The members of Jack Tellar’s sect worship Chomolungma, Goddess Mother of the Earth. She is a dark goddess, like Kali Ma of the Hindus or Tanit of the Carthaginians, and she demands many strange rituals and sacrifices that would seem barbaric to you and me. To be honest, I don’t know any more about it than that.” He turned to his companions. “Do you two know any more?”

Dr. McCoy nodded. “We should add that their, er, religious ceremonies require the use of a, er, extract from the pineal gland, called mellitonin’. I was askin’ Dr. Watson about that this mornin’. They don’t synthesize mellitonin’ in London, Jim.”

Although absorbed in Captain Kirk’s singularly remarkable account, I had been noticing for some time that Holmes’s left hand would frequently return to his right forearm, there to move gently over the place where Mr. Spock had gripped it in their earlier confrontation. It also appeared to me that the further the evening progressed, the more drawn my companion’s features became.

Now I could keep silent no longer. I burst out, “My dear Holmes, your arm is giving you pain.”

“It is nothing.”

“Indeed it is something. Pray allow me or Dr. McCoy to attend to it.”

“I tell you it is nothing!”

Without prompting, Dr. McCoy rose and, taking the glowing palm-sized cylinder from his pocket, held it in the air about a foot above Holmes’s arm and listened for a moment to its cooing.

“What you’ve got here, Mr. Holmes,” said he, “is a cute little fracture of the ulna. Why didn’t you say something earlier instead of just sittin’ there and lettin’ it hurt?” As he spoke, he replaced the glowing cylinder and took out the silvery ampoule. After a deft twist, he applied the ampoule to Holmes’s forearm and made the same hissing adjustment to it as he had twice performed for me.

A look of astonishment spread over Holmes’s features. “The pain is gone!” cried he. “What is this? What have you done?”

“I fixed it,” said McCoy simply. “It’ll take a few hours for the bone to regenerate completely, so don’t go breakin’ it again in the meantime — but it’s permanently fixed, if that’s what you’re askin’; you won’t be needin’ any more pain-med or anythin’.”

“My sincere apologies, Mr. Holmes,” interjected Mr. Spock. “I had no intention of breaking your arm. Your musculature is so strong that I was deceived as to the strength of your constitution.”

“With cures like those which Dr. McCoy has provided for Dr. Watson and myself, you have little need for apologies, Mr. Spock,” responded Holmes. “Certainly I might have had severe difficulties in accepting Mr. Kick’s wild phantasy about mysterious valleys in Tibet, life-prolonging berries, and lost civilisations, were it not for such unquestionable evidence as that provided by your physiognomy and by Dr. McCoy’s medical miracles.”

A knock at the door at this moment startled us all, for it was quite late and Mrs. Hudson had gone to bed long since. I went downstairs to answer it, and found a commissionaire with a reply-paid telegram for Holmes. I was upstairs again a moment later.

“Would you be so kind as to read it to me, Watson?” This is the telegram which I read:

To Mr. Sherlock Holmes: There has been another murder. Come at once. The village of Hand Cross is in Sussex, not far from Horsham. The Red Lion will put you up. Come without fail. I shall meet the 7.10 from London, which arrives here at about 9.30. Lestrade.

“We must certainly oblige him, Watson,” remarked Holmes, scribbling a reply for the commissionaire. “There can be no question of his anxiety. You and your companions had better come to Hand Cross with us, Captain Kirk. If this murderer is indeed Mr. Spock’s servant, you must in some part bear the responsibility for his actions.”

“You bet we’re coming too,” replied Captain Kirk grimly.

“Excellent! Then we shall meet at Waterloo at six to-morrow morning. That will give you ample time for the morning ablutions which I am sure you are eager to make, for it is certain that you shaved in darkness at a very early hour this morning.”

Captain Kirk acquired a look of unease. “What makes you say that?”

“Forgive me for mentioning it, my dear Captain Kirk; but it would almost appear that you and Dr. McCoy had not shaved at all. You gentlemen will certainly wish to repair the omission.”

“Thank you,” replied Captain Kirk. I fancied I heard a slightly hollow tone to his voice, but that was probably my imagination.

Starfleet Log Three

Captain's Log, Stardate Unknown Earth Date Wednesday, October 22, 1890 - 05:54:18

Our search for Bhrounq continues. A second murder with the same M.O. in another town may mean Bhrounq has left London. We've had no luck finding her ourselves, so we've joined forces with Sherlock Holmes and are following the trail to Hand Cross, a small village halfway between London and Brighton.

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate Unknown, Earth Date Wednesday, October 22, 1890 - 05:54:43

Spock and I spent the day yesterday looking for Bhrounq, with little success. Tellarites are almost indistinguishable from the family *Suidae* — as in pigs and swine. Every time that the tricorder showed evidence that we were on Bhrounq's trail, investigation turned up another pig market or butcher shop. I have had less frustrating days.

To complicate matters, Sherlock Holmes once again spent the morning following us. We managed to shake him off at midday, local solar time. Temporarily.

While Spock and I searched, Bones discovered that this era knows almost nothing about medicine, and thinks the pineal gland is as worthless as the appendix. We will obtain no assistance from that quarter. And neither will Bhrounq. That makes it even more critical that we find her right away.

As the perfect end to an annoying day, I managed to get into trouble — again. A rather obvious young woman (what in our own time I'd call a socialator) propositioned me. In attempting to put her off, I unintentionally insulted some sort of social worker, who started hitting me with her umbrella. She got in some good whacks that've given me one hell of a headache.

Insulting a woman must be a serious offense in this era — Spock and I were immediately marched off to the local police station. (Bones luckily managed to hide in the crowd and pretend not to know us.) And who should be at the police station but Sherlock Holmes.... The guy is everywhere.

For the second time in less than a solar day, Sherlock Holmes convinced the local power structure that while we were unusual, we weren't criminals, and they let us go with a small fine. Spock and I quickly came to the conclusion that we didn't know enough about this culture to achieve our goal, and if we continued the way we've been going, we'd keep getting into trouble. So we decided to solve two problems at once: We'd get Sherlock Holmes to both help us find Bhrounq and keep us out of hot water.

To that end, we went back to Holmes' apartment with him and Dr. Watson. All those stories about Sherlock Holmes were right. He'd noticed everything different about us there was to notice, including Spock's body temperature and pulse — not to mention the ears.

Needless to say, he was a little too curious, so I told him a big, fancy fairy tale about how we were all three from Shangri-La. He ought to buy it, considering that *Lost Horizon* wasn't written until some time in the twentieth century. (You should have seen Spock's face! Holmes and Watson couldn't tell anything was different of course, but you could've knocked Spock over with a feinberger. I thought I'd hurt myself, I was trying so hard not to laugh.)

The only part I'm not sure about is the line I threw in about the local Tibetans calling Vulcans "yetis." I'm sure nobody has heard of the Abominable Snowman yet, but maybe I was pushing things a lit—

What's that?

McCoy: That, Jim-boy, is your shavin' kit.

Kirk: My *what*?

McCoy: Your shavin' kit. Courtesy of Mrs. Warren's page-boy.

Kirk: Shaving kit? *Shaving*?

McCoy: Shavin'. As in cuttin' off all those little tiny hairs on your face that're standin' between you and respectability, son.

Kirk: Are you serious?

McCoy: You betcha.

Kirk: But I haven't shaved since Edith— since New York in 1930.

Three years ago. And even then, it was a safety razor. ...You've got to have something in your medical kit — are you *sure* you didn't bring any Beardaway with you?

McCoy: Here's your mug, the soap, the strop — and of course, your razor.

Kirk: Oh, no, I'm not using *that* — I'd slit my own throat! Don't they have something a little safer?

Spock: The safety razor will not be invented until 1901, Captain.

Kirk: Thanks, Spock. (*scratching sound*) Hmmm ... 1901 minus 1890 ... I think I can go another eleven, twelve years, don't you?

McCoy: Let me put it this way, Jim: You keep rubbin' your face like that, and you're gonna sandpaper off all the skin on your hand.

Kirk: ... So, what do we do here?

Spock: I believe that the first step involves creating an emollient paste, consisting of an emulsification of stearic acid, saponified, hydrolyzed fatty acid and glycerol, and hydrogen dioxide, Captain.

Kirk: You're trying to tell us to mix the lather?

Spock: I believe that is what I said, Captain.

McCoy: Then I guess you put some water and the soap in the bottom of the mug, and then you use the brush to whip it up with.

(*misc. sounds*)

Kirk: So far, so good. Just brush it on like this, hunh?

McCoy: Yeah, all around the chin. (*misc. sounds*)

Kirk: Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas!

Spock: I beg your pardon, Captain?

Kirk: A mythic figure from Earth's past, who — Oh, never mind, Spock; it loses something in the translation.

McCoy: Hey, want me to shave you, Jim? You know, surgeons always used to be barbers too.

Spock: Doubtless that is the etymological source of the word "barbarian."

McCoy: Now, look, you pointy-eared—

Kirk: Bones, let's get on with it. What are these belt things for?

Spock: I believe that they were used to sharpen the razors, Captain.

Kirk: You're enjoying this, aren't you, Spock?

Spock: /, Captain?

McCoy: You strop the razor, like this. I saw how it was done in an old holo. And then you check to make sure the razor's sharp enough.

Kirk: Ow! It's sharp enough.

McCoy: Ready?

Kirk: You first.

McCoy: Why, sure, Jim-boy, anythin' you say. Nothin' to it. (*pause; misc. sounds*) Ouch! No, don't worry, it was just a little slip of the wrist. No problem at all. Go on, go on, you try it.

(*pause; misc. sounds*)

Kirk: Ow! Frak! Ow! (*sounds of McCoy laughing*) That's not funny, Bones.

McCoy: Sorry, Jim. Here, let me look at that.

Kirk: Leave it, *leave* it. (*pause; misc. sounds*) You know, I think I'm getting the hang of — ow!

McCoy: It's all in the wrist, J— ouch!

Spock: Gentlemen, if I might offer my—

Kirk: No, Spock, this is a matter of — ow! — pride. Damn, that smarts! If my ancestors could do it, I can do it.

McCoy: Ouch!

Kirk: The ol' barber/surgeon, hunh? Last time I ever let you operate on *me*.

McCoy: My ol' mama told me a story once, somethin' about a pot and a kettle. Now, what was it?

Kirk: (*pause*) Ah! ... There. Not bad, if I do say so myself. What do you think, Spock?

Spock: The lacerations seem superficial, Captain. Your performance

will doubtless improve tomorrow.

Kirk: Tomorrow! — we have to do this *every day?! Oh, great! Wonderful thing to look forward to when I get up in the morning — ripping my face to shreds.*

Spock: *That you have done creditably, Captain.*

Kirk: Thanks. ... Okay, Sawbones, what've you got to stop the bleeding?

McCoy: Here.

Kirk: What's this?

McCoy: What does it look like? A styptic ... towel. Oh, all right, hold still while I get the plastiseal. (*pause*) Here, at least let me put it on for you.

Kirk: Physician, seal thyself.

McCoy: Very funny.

Spock: Gentlemen, the hour is growing late. If we are to arrive at the train station on time, we should leave here no later than four point two minutes from now.

Kirk: Thanks, Spock. Bones, how fast will that seal-o-plast stuff of yours heal the cuts?

McCoy: About two hours. We'll be cutting it close, so to speak.

Kirk: (*groans*)

Captain's Personal Log, Addendum

Although I believe that the account I gave Sherlock Holmes of our origins and the reason we are in England will hold him for now, I'm convinced he's going to keep sniffing. Frankly, he presents the most serious danger to date that one of us may change Earth's timeline. I will not make the mistake of underestimating him.



Chapter Eight: The Journey into Sussex

The next morning, Holmes and I met Captain Kirk and his party at Waterloo Station promptly at 7.00 a.m. Both Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy bore a number of small lacerations on their faces, primarily about the nose and chin, which resembled cuts from a badly stropped razor.

Responding to the unasked question in Holmes's quizzical glance, Captain Kirk said merely, "That's what we get for trying to shave in the dark. Five o'clock is just too early in the morning."

Holmes fixed him with a hard gaze; but said only, "Dr. Watson had a similar complaint to make."

I shook my head in sleepy acknowledgment. "If the Deity had meant man to rouse himself at this unseemly hour, He would have made it later."

"It is the Celt in you, Watson," remarked Holmes. "None of the Celtic races find early rising congenial."

“It is my understanding,” retorted I, “that in Ireland, the cows are taught to be milked not at dawn, but at ten o’clock — a far more reasonable hour.”

Mr. Spock lifted one of his satanic eyebrows. “I do not understand, Doctor. Time, whether hour or minute or day, cannot be reasonable or unreasonable. That is not logical.”

“It may not be logical, Spock, but it’s human,” returned Dr. McCoy, testily. “Dr. Watson was sayin’ that it’s unreasonable to get up while it’s still dark unless you have to.”

“If we are talking about the unreasonable, Doctor, I acknowledge that you are an expert on the subject,” retorted Mr. Spock. “But it does not seem to have anything to do with how late or how early you get up. In fact, it has been my observation that the more sleep you get, the more emotional are your outbursts of illogic.”

“You imply that late-sleeping makes one irascible?” I interjected. “I cannot credit it. I myself prefer to sleep in, and I am the most inoffensive of mortals.”

“After you have had your tea,” said Holmes, with a smile.

As Lestrade’s wire had indicated, the train into Sussex was scheduled to leave London at 7.10. Our entry to the train was interrupted by a family party which was drowsily disembarking. It consisted of a pretty young wife with barley-gold hair, a somnolent husband, and, in the possession of a benevolent nanny, a toddling lad still in dresses and a babe in arms; there was also a footman, busily attending to the party’s luggage, which bore the arms of the ducal house of Denver. As our party passed this small obstruction on the platform, the baby broke into an enraged wail, and the little wife flew to the nurse’s side.

“Honoriam!” expostulated her husband.

“Nonsense, Mortimer,” the lady responded firmly. “Peter always quiets down better for me, and Nurse doesn’t mind.”

Stepping into the now-vacated carriage, Holmes chose a seat next to the door into the carriage corridor, indifferent to the receding cries of the baby as it was borne away. The fixity of concentration which Holmes could display had always impressed me. When faced with a problem or puzzle, he was like a terrier going after a rat, and he ignored every distraction — such as the wailing baby — as though it were nonexistent.

“Perhaps, Mr. Spock, you would be good enough on our journey to tell me more about this strange Vulcan culture of yours; for I confess I find myself quite fascinated.”

“Of course, Mr. Holmes,” replied Mr. Spock, seating himself beside my friend. Captain Kirk chose the seat next to the window, by Mr. Spock, and jostled his colleague as he sat down. “Captain?”

“Nothing, Spock.”

I seated myself in the center of the seat facing them, and Dr. McCoy sat next to the window, facing Captain Kirk.

Holmes turned eagerly to Mr. Spock.

“I believe that Captain Kirk said that your country is within a day’s journey from Mount Everest?”

“Captain Kirk uses the name he is accustomed to. We call our highest peak Mount Selaya.”

“And you, er, Vulcans inhabit various monasteries in the valley of Shangri-La?”

“Captain Kirk explained that the monastery of Shangri-La was founded by a Frenchman, Father Perrault, for the benefit of lost European travelers. The Vulcan habitation from which I come is not allied with any religious sect.”

“What are your religious beliefs?”

“The Vulcan philosophy is not so much a religion as an ethos. We believe that logic is the only rational way to approach the universe.”

“How could a race so different from Man have evolved in your one small valley and remained unknown to the outside world?”

“Isolation of a gene pool can produce many genetic anomalies over the millennia.” I suppose I must have looked as mystified as I felt, for Mr. Spock was quick to add, “A monk named Gregor Mendel studied inheritance beginning in 1853 and first published his theories in 1866, although they did not reach wide acceptance for many years. Mendel’s word ‘essence’ was later superseded by the word ‘genes’ to describe discrete units of inheritance, such as hair colour, eye colour, skin colour, or right- or left-handedness. A ‘gene pool’ consists of the complete set of genetic forms available to a given population.”

Holmes would not allow his attention to be distracted. “And eating the, er, ‘tangatsé’ berry prolongs your lives indefinitely?”

“Diet is of course a major factor in longevity. However, you must also take into account exercise, mental attitude, and genetic predisposition. I do not believe that my life will be significantly longer than the life of the average Vulcan.”

“And your entire race is devoted to the study of logic?”

“Let us say, to the practice of the principles of logic.”

“Your *entire* race — women and children too?”

“Certainly.”

“But women and children are hardly capable of rational thought.”

Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy here exchanged uncomfortable looks, as though Holmes’s innocent remark had somehow embarrassed them. Mr. Spock, however, very seriously replied, “That has not been our observation. It has been our experience that females are not only fully as capable as males of drawing a correct conclusion, but can often make inductive inferences more quickly and decisively. In fact, T’Kara, possibly the greatest of all Vulcan thinkers, was female. As for children, while naturally one would not expect a child to be familiar with Boölean syllogisms or set theory, even a child young enough to only recently have acquired language is capable of distinguishing truth functions and constructing elementary tautologies.”

As he spoke, the train pulled out of the station with a cry from its whistle and another bellow of steam. Captain Kirk leaned back against his seat-cushion, grinning at Dr. McCoy, and said irrelevantly, “What, me worry?”

“I beg your pardon, Captain Kirk?” I asked.

“I was saying, it’s going to be a beautiful day; don’t you think so, Dr. Watson?”

Holmes and Mr. Spock had subsided into a low-voiced conversation concerning logic which both found absorbing. However, after hearing Mr. Spock make a remark about “the conversion of prenexes”, I turned my attention to Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy.

These two gentlemen were evidently accustomed to their companion’s vagaries, for they were occupied with gazing out the window and commenting upon the scenery. It was a perfect day, with a bright, early-morning October sun striking sparks from the dew and a few fleecy clouds in the heavens. The trees were turn-

ing color, so that we saw green and russet and yellow-gold in the autumn leaves.

“What are those pole things linin’ the tracks with the wires on them?” asked Dr. McCoy.

“Telegraph poles,” said I, staring. Even had he been in Shan-gri-La twice twenty years, Dr. McCoy ought surely to have seen such poles many times since the invention of telegraphy in the first half of the century.

“Oh, sure,” said he quickly. “Don’t know where my mind is goin’, these days. Ever since I got out of med school, I can’t seem to remember much beyond basic anatomy.”

I saw that Dr. McCoy’s question had briefly caught Holmes’s attention, who now glanced at his watch. “Telegraph poles upon this line are sixty yards apart,” Holmes remarked. “Alas, that this train is not an express, in which we could reach quite a prodigious speed, over fifty-three miles per hour. But thirty-four and a fourth miles per hour between stations is quite acceptable.”

“Thirty-four point two eight five seven miles per hour,” corrected Mr. Spock. “The calculation is a simple one.” Dr. McCoy rolled his eyes and grimaced expressively at Captain Kirk as Mr. Spock continued, “However, Mr. Holmes, naturally your matrix must be free of quantifiers; that point is elementary. Moreover—”

Misliking the expression on Holmes’s face, I returned my attention to Dr. McCoy. “Where did you train?”

“Yale. Bunch of d—n Yankees, but a good enough school, I suppose. And you?”

“St. Bartholomew’s, where we met.”

We commenced a conversation which began with our respective medical training and slowly led to an animated discussion of great Americans — Dr. McCoy, to my surprise, had never heard of Henry Ward Beecher, although he was familiar with the famous book written by his sister, Mrs. Stowe —, recent scientific discoveries and inventions, and our modern modes of travel. As the conversation progressed, Captain Kirk, who in the beginning had borne an equal part, subsided more and more, only putting in an occasional comment and allowing Dr. McCoy to make the preponderance of the observations.

It was more than an hour later that I noticed that the move-

ment of the train appeared to have made Captain Kirk ill: His face was drawn, and he had become quite as green as his friend Mr. Spock. I nudged Dr. McCoy, who had been turned towards me, talking now about American farming, and nodded in Captain Kirk's direction.

McCoy glanced at Kirk, and his face took on an expression of concern. He moved over on the seat, leaned forward, and said, "What's up, Jim?"

"Oh — Bones. Nothing. I've just got the devil of a headache. Miss Pankhurst got in some pretty good cracks with that umbrella of hers. I'll be all right."

"Turn your head toward the window and let me see your eyes." As Kirk obeyed him, I saw that while the pupil of his right eye contracted against the bright morning sunlight, the pupil of his left eye contracted much more slowly, and in the end remained noticeably larger. To himself, Dr. McCoy muttered, "Oh, boy."

McCoy's expression became grim. From his pocket he now withdrew the palm-sized, glasslike cylinder which I had seen the evening before. Holding it near Kirk's head, he caused it once again to glow like a dark-lantern and emit its high-pitched whistles.

Mr. Spock now broke off his conversation with Holmes and said, "Is something wrong, Doctor?"

Giving Mr. Spock a minatory glance, Dr. McCoy shook his head briefly and said, "When we get to Hand Cross, I'll take Jim to the hotel so he can have a little lie-down. He'll be fine by lunchtime. No problem. You-all just go on back to whatever you were talkin' about." He returned the device to his pocket.

"Bones, I'm okay. It's just a headache," protested Captain Kirk. "Give me one of those little red pills of yours, and I'll be fine."

"You listen to your kindly ol' family doctor, now, Jim-boy," returned McCoy firmly. "Those little red pills aren't goin' to touch that headache of yours, although you can have one if you want. We're goin' to the hotel as soon as the train pulls into the station, and I don't want to hear anythin' more about it."

It was a measure, I believe, of how ill Captain Kirk felt that he ceased his protestations, and merely leaned back against his seat and shut his eyes with a gesture of weary acquiescence. Dr. McCoy obtained a cup of tea for him from the carriage attendant and

handed him a small red pill to swallow, but, as he had predicted, its effects seemed negligible.

In a low voice, almost whispering, I said to Dr. McCoy, "The condition of the pupils of Captain Kirk's eyes would seem to indicate some species of intracranial bleeding or subdural haematoma."

"Oh, you saw that too?"

"It is a life-threatening condition."

McCoy smiled briefly. "Not that serious. I can take care of it pretty quickly once we get off this moving train and into the hotel."

I confess that I was amazed at the nonchalance of his reply. Only a very few surgeons of whom I had heard had ever attempted any sort of brain surgery; and of that tiny elite, fewer still could boast of a patient's surviving the operation. And yet Dr. McCoy spoke of a procedure I had never heard any man's daring to attempt as lightly I should speak of lancing a boil. This Shangri-La knew medical miracles indeed if Dr. McCoy could discuss so perilous an operation in such a carefree manner.

"May I offer you my assistance?" I asked eagerly.

"That's very kind of you, Doctor, but I won't impose. I really will be able to take care of it in two shakes."

There is no denying that I was disappointed by his refusal to allow me to assist him. Something in his tone, however, warned me that it would be fruitless to entreat him further. Swallowing my chagrin as best I could, and reflecting that Dr. McCoy might yet come to trust my discretion better in the fullness of time, I acquiesced with as good a grace as I could muster, and even responded suitably when he returned to our conversation about American farming; although I did, from time to time, look over at Captain Kirk to be sure that he was not about to slip into a coma. Unlike his habit before I had raised the alarm, Dr. McCoy now also glanced occasionally in the captain's direction, doubtless with a similar motive. Neither of us saw anything troublesome, however, over the remainder of the journey, although Dr. McCoy was now significantly quieter and seemed a trifle distracted.

When we pulled into the station at Hand Cross, Inspector Lestrade was, as promised, waiting for us on the platform, wearing the light-brown dustcoat and leather-leggings which were his

town-dweller's concession to the pastoral scene around us. He seemed no little astonished to discover Captain Kirk and his associates in our company.

"You are surprised, Lestrade," observed my friend. "But I can assure you that I am perfectly convinced that Mr. Kirk is innocent of any complicity in these shocking affairs. Allow me to introduce to you Mr. Kirk's intimate friends and colleagues: You have met Mr. Spock, and this is Dr. McCoy. Gentlemen, Inspector Lestrade. Inspector, these three gentlemen have graciously consented to assist us in our investigation."

"Yes," added Dr. McCoy, "but in our two cases, we'll have to help a little later. Jim and I are going to take everyone's baggage and check into the hotel. We'll meet you ... around lunchtime."

"I'm all right, Bones, really."

"That's an order, Jim," said McCoy, fiercely. To Lestrade, he continued, "My friend has a, er, migraine."

In an undertone, I said to Dr. McCoy, "You are certain I may not be of some assistance? I should be glad to be of whatever help I am able. Surely you shall need a dresser, at the very least?"

"You're very kind, Doctor, but I wouldn't dream of imposing," McCoy returned firmly.

I swallowed my disappointment once again. "Then I shall at least procure a cab for you," said I.

"I've got the only one," intervened Lestrade. "This is a small village. The Red Lion's landau is large enough to take Doctor McCoy and Captain Kirk, along with your entire party's baggage. Doctor McCoy can bespeak rooms for the five of you, though you will probably have to share. Meanwhile, the groom can return to the station for us." He turned, and called peremptorily, "Clem! Here!"

As McCoy and Kirk left us, with Kirk still protesting that his health was unimpaired, I thought I overheard McCoy say, quietly but with great vehemence, "Don' be a dimbulb, Jim. You godda horrendioma. I godda surgerize, stat." But doubtless I was mistaken.



Clive Brooks, 1932

Chapter Nine: A Second Murder

The cabman, Clem, returned for us from the Red Lion within a fshort time, and Holmes, Lestrade, Mr. Spock, and I rattled off in the comfortable landau in a southwesterly direction, towards where, Lestrade told us, the body of the second victim, Abernethy Ludovic Shield, Lord Lavenham, lay in a small clearing a few hundred yards southeast of the stables attached to his warehouse.

“His warehouse?” asked Holmes.

“Lord Lavenham was an unusual peer,” said Lestrade. “In his youth, while he was plain Mr. Abernethy Shield, he traveled widely, and I am told was something of a black sheep. He spent a number of years abroad and sowed a good many wild oats before, at the age of thirty, establishing a successful business importing exotic seafoods from the Mediterranean. When he succeeded to the title and estate, he continued and expanded the business. The western boundary of the estate abuts on the river Rodran, so Lavenham built up his dock and built a warehouse there, with a private road between the warehouse and the train station, so that the exotic seafoods he sells to London merchants may arrive ex-

peditionously.”

“Had he enemies?”

“No more than the usual complement of a public man.”

At this moment, a startled hare burst from the underbrush to our left and shot across the road and into the field on the other side. The horse shied violently, causing the coachman to utter a curse which reached our ears even within the protection of the landau. After a moment, however, equilibrium was restored, and our journey recommenced.

“The reaction seems excessive for what must surely be a rather commonplace sight,” remarked Holmes.

Lestrade shrugged.

“These rustics are all in an uproar these days, because it is said that Spring-heeled Jack is in the area.”

“Spring-heeled Jack?”

“A legendary monster, Mr. Spock,” Lestrade explained. “There have been wild reports of Spring-heeled Jack and his supposed powers any time these fifty years. He is purported to be a hideously ugly figure, with claws instead of hands and hooves instead of feet, of more than average height, who breathes flames and travels literally by leaps and bounds, being capable of springing from the ground to a rooftop or bounding as much as forty feet through the air.”

Mr. Spock raised an eyebrow. “Indeed?”

“Hysterical nonsense, of course,” opined Lestrade. “But the countryside is certain that he is here. There are several reported incidents, all of equal trumpery. In the most absurd of them, one of Lady Lavenham’s servant girls, a silly creature named Molly Stevenson, claims that she was accosted by a man in a close-fitting white suit with a horned helmet, who grasped her by the head with an ‘icy claw’ and began to pull her by the hair. She screamed, and was heard by her sweetheart, with whom she had had an assignation to meet on the sly. When he came running up, shouting, the two of them claim that her attacker vomited a blue-white flame in order to check the lover’s assault. The ruffian then supposedly bounded away into the night, laughing maniacally as he went.”

“Extraordinary!” exclaimed I.

“The incident is almost identical to one reported in London in

1838,” said Holmes thoughtfully. “There were dozens of reports of Spring-heeled Jack and his activities during the ensuing decade, and all repeated the story of the maniacal laughter, the blue-white flame, and the ability to jump huge distances. In 1855, the people of South Devon awoke one morning after a snowstorm to discover several miles of tracks in the snow where a hooped being had traveled by great leaps across fields and rooftops, along the tops of walls, and over ponds. They called them the Devil’s Footprints. In the 1870’s, the Army — a hardened set of veterans of the Crimean war — was mobilized for some months, as Spring-heeled Jack had at that time taken to attacking them in their guardposts or springing onto the tops of the sentry boxes and, as usual, laughing maniacally and leaping off in great fifty-foot bounds. Or so the soldiers said.”

“It is all absurdity,” said Lestrade; “the silly imaginings of silly people. Pretty Molly, for example, was without a doubt the victim of an over-ardent lover, and invented this story as an alibi so that her mistress should not turn her off without a character.”

“There are other possibilities,” said Holmes cryptically.

I shook my head. “England abounds in eccentrics. It is conceivable that some one of the queerer of these eccentrics has invented a sort of seven-league boot and has been deliberately perpetrating these incidents in order to create a sensation.”

“You may be correct, Watson,” Holmes returned. “However, it is not a theory upon which I would be inclined to rely. *Entitia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem.*”

“You quote Occam’s Razor, the maxim made popular by your William of Ockham, circa 1280 to 1349,” remarked Mr. Spock. “The philosopher T’Kara, whom I mentioned to you on the train, Mr. Holmes, had a similar precept: ‘Prefer the simplest theory that accounts for all the facts.’ I have noticed, however, that many of your philosophers tend to adopt only half of her precept — usually, but not always, the first half — and forget the other half.”

Holmes seemed much struck by Mr. Spock’s observation. Before he could respond, however, his attention was diverted.

The long, winding lanes of Sussex clay that twisted through the Forest between Hand Cross and Lavenham Court, our destination, had given way to a low stone gateway, through which we now

turned. A few feet brought us into a spacious stableyard.

Not unnaturally, the current Lord Lavenham had chosen to build his seafood warehouse convenient to the river Rodran, cloaked from the view of the manor house by a stand of trees. He had widened the rough road north of his estate and turned it into a separate entrance to Gold Shield Imports.

Next to the warehouse stood the stable block, which looked to have been moved from its original location to suit the convenience of the enterprise. Beyond the stable block were some neat cottages, built for the convenience of employees whose families excused them from living above the stables.

As we passed through the gate, we saw a clot of people standing on the other side of the yard, close to its southwest corner, where an ornamental path led into a copse of trees. A uniformed police constable and a tall, neatly dressed man with a waxed moustache, whose attire proclaimed him the constable's superior, were attempting to prevent a slender woman in her middle age from entering the copse, while several stable boys stood by, watching the confrontation.

The woman must have been supremely beautiful in her girlhood, but age and grief had ravaged her. Her large eyes were puffy with weeping in an olive-skinned face drawn by stress. She wore a narrow-skirted walking suit of dark grey, whose Eton jacket had a short peplum and modest sleeves, doubtless the most sombre attire in her wardrobe until she should have the opportunity to order her blacks; but she had omitted a hat, presumably out of a perfectly understandable agitation. Judging by the expressions on the faces of the police officers barring her way, the lady's composure had long since surrendered to her anguish.

"I beg of you, madam," said the taller policeman. "Your husband's body is no sight for a lady."

"Then allow me to have my husband's body taken up to the house, where it may be made into a sight for a lady," cried she. Her voice had such a charming accent that even I could tell that her native tongue was Spanish.

"Inspector Lestrade was most insistent that no part of the murder scene be disturbed until his colleagues from London were able to examine it. Look, his carriage has arrived."

Lady Lavenham — as it was easy enough to infer — spun on her heel to face our small party. She addressed Holmes.

“You are the London policemen of whom Sergeant Gray has told me?” demanded she.

“I am Mr. Sherlock Holmes, madam,” replied my friend. “In my company—”

“Which are the London policemen?” interrupted she, impatiently.

“I am Inspector Lestrade, madam,” replied the little detective. I fancied that his quick, sidelong smile at Holmes held something of malice in it, as though he enjoyed the lady’s palpable ignorance of Holmes’s identity. “And you, I take it, are Lady Lavenham?”

“*Si*. You shall override Sergeant Gray’s orders,” the countess commanded.

“My lady?”

Slowly, as though she were speaking to a backward child, Lady Lavenham said, “I must have my husband’s body. It has not yet received its final dignities. It is bad enough that Sergeant Gray will not allow me to bring my husband home, but he will not even allow Father Huxtable into the clearing to give the last rites. Even at this moment my husband’s soul may be in jeopardy!”

“Sergeant Gray has acted very rightly, madam,” observed Holmes. “Surely the delay caused by our examining the body ought not to add appreciably to whatever penance you believe your husband’s soul must incur.”

“*Madre de Dios!*” exclaimed Lady Lavenham, her eyes flashing. From her lips now passed a furious tirade. Although I have never studied the Spanish tongue, its similarity to French is enough that I could be glad I did not understand it better.

The policemen could speak Spanish no better than I, and though Lestrade attempted to break in once or twice, the three ended up bearing the lady’s tirade with stolid incomprehension. Holmes too, I believe, had never studied the Spanish tongue; but of course his grasp of the romance tongues was far better than my own, and thus his comprehension of her diatribe equally outstripped mine. Interestingly, it seemed that, alone of us all, Mr. Spock understood her perfectly, for his eyebrow went up once or twice when the lady seemed particularly vehement. Whether or

not he understood her, however, he made no attempt to stem the tide of her eloquence, but listened to her with much the same tolerance which an adult might have in humouring the outpourings of a distraught child.

Finally, it appeared that the lady's wrath was spent. She stopped speaking, her breast heaving with emotion.

Holmes now spoke, coldly.

"Lady Lavenham, each minute that my companions and I are delayed here is one more minute during which you might have had your husband's body to do with as you please."

There was a moment's short pause. Then, "*Diablo!*" cried she. Her hands formed into claws, and a snarl of rage distorted her lovely, grief-wracked face. She sprang toward Holmes like a pantheress, with the apparent intention of attacking him physically, and with no apparent regard for the policemen beside her or for myself and the emotionless Mr. Spock, who stood almost between the two of them.

The two police officers sprang to interpose themselves in Lady Lavenham's attack on my friend, and for a brief moment only, a confusion of thrashing limbs and feminine shrieks reigned.

Holmes might chide me for my negligent skills of observation, but it seemed to me as though at the height of the commotion, Mr. Spock laid his hand gently upon the unfortunate widow's neck, not far from where the sternocleidomastoideus muscle meets the trapezius. Upon the instant, the countess fainted. I sprang to catch her inanimate form before the lady fell into the stableyard, and the putative cause of her faint was for the moment forgotten.

"Doctor!" exclaimed Holmes.

"Lady Lavenham's very natural grief appears to have overpowered her," I replied, shifting the unconscious form in my arms to make my burden more secure.

"You cannot stand here in the stableyard and hold her above the dirt all day," said Lestrade. "You there, boy — how did Lady Lavenham arrive here from the manor house? That dogcart? Let us lay her body on its seat."

"Will she recover from her faint?" asked Holmes. He appeared to address me, but I saw his eyes upon Mr. Spock.

Once her ladyship's insensible form was suitably disposed on

the narrow seat of the dogcart, I took her pulse. "It seems a natural swoon," I replied, "although the suddenness of its onset perplexes me."

"I have encountered this phenomenon before," said Mr. Spock coolly. "She will sleep for several hours. When she awakens, she will experience a certain lethargy for a time; but she should be fully recovered by the end of the afternoon."

"Then we will allow this boy to walk her horse back to the manor, where she can be laid upon her own bed. I should prefer to have you with me, Watson, unless you believe Lady Lavenham requires your attendance."

I fixed Sherlock Holmes with an expressive glance as I replied, "I am willing to accept Mr. Spock's assurance that Lady Lavenham will recover after a natural sleep."

"Excellent!" Holmes replied.

Lestrade sent off the boy leading Lady Lavenham's dogcart to the house, then sent a second boy scampering ahead to warn her ladyship's domestic staff of what had happened, concluding, "Tell her ladyship's butler and maid that Dr. Watson will call later today to ensure that her ladyship has suffered no hurt."

Holmes now turned to our companions. "I believe I overheard Lady Lavenham address you as 'Sergeant Gray'?"

"Of the Sussex Constabulary," our new acquaintance nodded. "And this is P.C. Freeman. He is the constable for Horsham, the nearest town of any great size."

"There are no flies upon Sergeant Gray," said Lestrade with satisfaction. "Having read in the London papers about the Whitechapel murder, he recognized at once that Lord Lavenham's death was probably related and telegraphed me upon the instant. As soon as I had had the chance to view the body, I concurred with his opinion of the situation, and sent immediately for you."

"Then, Sergeant Gray, you have no objections to associating with me in your investigation?"

"I should be proud to feel that we were acting in concert, Mr. Holmes," replied the sergeant, earnestly.

The ornamental path that Gray and Freeman had barred Lady Lavenham from entering lay before us. According to Sergeant Gray, the late earl's estate was a relatively small one, of approxi-

mately six hundred acres. Not unnaturally, Lord Lavenham had situated his seafood warehouse on the river, as far from the manor house as was feasible, building a new stable block that was arguably more convenient to the warehouse than it was to the manor. Two roads united the two corners of the estate, one skirting the northern and eastern boundaries, the other following the path of the river on the west before turning south to approach the manor house. Between the manor and the warehouse at the opposite corner of the estate an ornamental path meandered along an imaginary diagonal, wandering among several stands of trees, a conservatory, formal gardens, several pools, an orangery, and a gazebo, while a sweeping lawn gave the manor house a magnificent view of the river.

Sergeant Gray now led us along the beautifully maintained brick path. Approximately a hundred yards into the copse, the ornamental path curved deeply to the west around a picturesque tree-ringed pool, perhaps fifty feet in diameter. To the northeast lay a narrow, beaten footpath that the gardeners must have given up hope of forbidding, a shortcut to the house through the ancient trees.

Another hundred feet along this second, impromptu path led us to a small clearing. Here Holmes stopped us, lifting a sinewy arm to bar any further progress. Near the centre of the clearing was the dead body. Even with all my wartime experience, I was ill-prepared for the scene of violent death which greeted me, and I was hard put to it to repress an exclamation of shock. The body lay supine, the features of its upturned face contorted into such an expression of horror as I have never seen before, and its clothes were liberally besplashed with a mud which seemed horribly red. The entire back of its head had been crushed and ripped away, and, as with the other two bodies I had seen, the brains were nowhere to be found.

“Has anything been moved or touched?” asked Holmes.

“No, sir,” replied Sergeant Gray. “Immediately upon my seeing the resemblance of this murder to the London tragedy, I took it upon myself to order that no one enter the clearing until higher authorities should have been contacted, and posted these two constables to ensure that no one deny my prohibition. Not a living

soul — saving only Inspector Lestrade, of course — has ventured closer to the clearing than we are now.”

“That is well done,” said Holmes, with considerable satisfaction.

Evidently this area, like London, had had some light rain during the afternoon before, for the clearing was sloppy with churned reddish soil and dead leaves, as though an army had marched over it. Here and there the damp, clayey soil held an isolated footprint at the perimeter of the clearing, and I could even see a few hoofprints — as if, bizarrely, a wild boar had wandered through. The area was so disturbed that I could not see how my companion could hope to learn anything from it. Still, I well knew that his perceptive faculties were far beyond my own, and I did not doubt that he would discover much which was hidden from me.

Sergeant Gray had the good sense to allow my friend to do things in his own fashion. Holmes began by circling the clearing, walking slowly behind the bushes and trees which encircled it and intently examining each portion of the clearing’s perimeter without actually entering it. No longer the quiet thinker of Baker Street, Holmes now displayed glittering, steely eyes, lips compressed into a thin line, and nostrils flared like a hound’s on the scent; I could see that there were very many things to be read upon the clay and mulch which were invisible to us who watched.

At one point on his circuit, Holmes stopped before a narrow opening between two bushes and informed us that he had discovered another small path. Upon asking where it led and being told by Sergeant Gray that it returned to the southeast shore of the pool we had just passed, he grunted abstractedly and made a note on his cuff before continuing with his examination of the clearing’s perimeter. Later, behind an exceptionally large bush which concealed him so well that I could not see him, I heard Holmes utter an expression of satisfaction.

“An excellent ambushade, Watson,” cried he. With a swift rustle, he sprang onto the path behind me. “As you can see, one may lie in wait unperceived and then trap one’s victim before he has had the chance to realise it.”

Next Holmes briefly disappeared down the southern path to the pool, enjoining us not to enter the clearing in his absence.

Only when he had returned, a few moments later, did he finally enter the clearing himself, taking great care to tread only on those portions which had been churned so thoroughly that they retained no individual footprints. Again he circled the clearing, paying particular attention to those areas which he had not been able to scrutinise closely from outside the area and to the bases of each tree trunk.

Only when he was satisfied with his examination of the clearing did he approach the dead man who lay supine before us. As in the case of the body in Whitechapel, Holmes was unhesitating in his scrutiny of the grim, motionless figure. That which had been Lord Lavenham was a man of middle years, perhaps fifty or fifty-five, and middle size, with slightly narrow shoulders. He was dressed in a brown greatcoat, brown broadcloth frock coat and waistcoat, and dun-coloured trousers; his hat was nowhere in sight. Most ghastly was the dreadful expression on his narrow, pock-marked face, upon which I have already remarked. It seemed to me that it bore an expression of the most profound terror, combined inextricably with either hatred or loathing: His dull dead eyes stared sightlessly at the canopy of autumnal leaves above him as though they were all the most malignant fiends of Hell, to be despised as well as feared.

However, it was the condition of his skull which drew the attention most rivetingly — or, rather, the absence of a large area of his skull. The entire back of his head, from crown to occiput, had been smashed and removed, with the remaining flesh and sandy-brown, bloodied hair displaying great jaggedness, as though it had been hacked at with a dull knife. As with the other two bodies I had seen, the brains had been scooped out, although in this instance the remains displayed the hurried carelessness of the Whitechapel murder rather than the surgical neatness of the body at Bart's.

Holmes knelt and went over the body with painstaking thoroughness, his long, slender fingers investigating each pocket and recess with rapid care, and in the process ruined another pair of trousers, for the ground around the dead man appeared to comprise as much blood as mud. From the victim's hands he pried a huge ruby ring, a gold talisman ring of intricate and cunning design, and a plain gold wedding-band.

Sherlock Holmes then bent closely over the dead man's face, taking his magnifying glass from his pocket, the better to scrutinise the features which were frozen in such a dreadful expression of fear, and paying particular attention to the mouth and nose. Next, from the body's pockets, he produced a pince-nez, a pocket-book, a cigarette case, a gold watch and chain, and a purse; laying all the objects which I have enumerated on the victim's waistcoat until, gathering them all up, he rose. His final action was to examine the bemired soles of the dead man's patent leather boots.

"Robbery was obviously not the motive," remarked Holmes as he rejoined us, handing all but the pocketbook into P.C. Freeman's keeping. "Lord Lavenham's purse seems quite heavy, and his personal jewelry alone, quite obviously heirlooms, would support a thief in luxury for many years." As he spoke, he opened the pocketbook and examined its pages. "Hum! 'Two gross oysters ... Norton, 10.30 ... Findley, ice shipment ... Ernestina, Rundell and Bridges, anniversary ... Wire Prince Albert ... Seventeen pounds of shrimp ... Ice tongs....'"

"It would seem," I commented, "that Lord Lavenham did not much trust his memory. Certainly he appears to have forgotten the demise of the Prince Consort thirty years ago, since he intended to telegraph him."

A smile crept into Holmes's eyes. However, he merely agreed, "That does seem remarkable, does it not, Watson?"

All us had watched Holmes's actions in silent absorption, Sergeant Gray with the attention an apprentice might give his master, Lestrade with a sort of patronizing curiosity, and Mr. Spock with great interest, his cold, dark eyes following Holmes's every move as though he not only understood it but even anticipated it.

Now Holmes asked Gray, "Who was the last person to see Lord Lavenham alive?"

"According to his secretary, it was his solicitor, a Mr. Norton, who met with Lord Lavenham yesterday morning. However, Mr. Holmes, you may be interested to hear that directly after his final interview with Lord Lavenham, the young solicitor disappeared. No trace has been seen of him since he departed Lavenham Court."

An alert light of interest came into Holmes's keen gray eyes. "A suspicious circumstance, Gray, I grant you. Has he a wife? What

has she to say to his disappearance?”

Sergeant Gray shrugged.

“What all wives say. That he could not possibly have committed the murder; that I ought to devote my energies to finding him immediately, in case he is in danger from the real murderer.”

Holmes now turned to another tack. “Who found the body?”

“William Findley, Lord Lavenham’s second in command in his import business.”

“Ah! That would be the fifth set of tracks. Lord Lavenham’s boots have pointed toes, and he moved around the clearing but little. One set of tracks was made by a pair of boots whose heels are slightly exaggerated, and since Lestrade wears such boots, and since Sergeant Gray says Lestrade has examined the clearing, it requires no great deductive insight connect these events. You are to be congratulated, Lestrade, on not moving the body, although I could have wished for rather less zest and enthusiasm in your gyrations around the clearing.”

The little inspector flushed up angrily at these words; but he made no reply.

“Two sets of tracks,” continued Holmes, “were made by square-toed boots, one set consisting of one track into the clearing and one out, made with boots of middle size. This set would therefore be the footprints of Mr. Findley, who found the body. The second set of tracks, of which there are many in the clearing, were made by a very large pair of boots which fit quite badly, being too tight for the wearer.”

“Ah!” I cried. “Then you believe the murderer to be the same who murdered the man in the East End?”

“The indications in that area are not conclusive, but they are suggestive. You were not present, Sergeant Gray and Mr. Spock, when I described the murderer of the man in London as being very tall and heavy, extraordinarily strong, agile, and cool under fire, with a black beard, and wearing boots too tight and too long for him. To that description I may now add that he is recently arrived from South Africa and is capable of premeditated murder as well as of spontaneous violence.”

“I believe, Mr. Holmes, that while the mutilation of the head was premeditated, the death of Lord Lavenham himself was un-

planned,” Mr. Spock returned.

“Upon what do you base that inference?” asked Holmes sharply.

“The condition of Lord Lavenham’s clothing.”

Holmes paused and thought reflectively for several moments. “Yes, Mr. Spock; that theory accords more closely with the facts. I am sure you are right.”

“I, however,” I interjected, “am all in the dark.”

Holmes smiled at me.

“Look here, Watson, behind this bush: There is a small, tidy pile of four cigarette stubs. On the other side of the clearing are the remains of another cigarette. As you know, one of my monographs is entitled, ‘Upon the Distinction Between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccos.’ In it I examine a hundred and forty forms of cigarette, cigar, and pipe tobacco. Tobacco ash may occasionally be of supreme importance as a clue, and to the trained eye, there is as much difference between the black ash of a Trichinopoly and the white fluff of bird’s-eye as there is between a frog and a peach. Knowing what I do about the subject, I may state with every confidence that these cigarettes have been formed from an expensive South African tobacco. The consistency of the ash is conclusive.”

“The fact that the pile of four butts is placed neatly,” added Mr. Spock, “would seem to indicate that the first pile was created while the smoker was waiting for someone.”

“By way of contrast,” continued Holmes, “the cigarette remains on the other side of the clearing are almost perfectly intact. This suggests that the smoker took one or two puffs and then cast the cigarette aside.

“Now, look at the ground under this tree: the smoothness and lack of footprints,” continued Holmes. “It is evident that someone has been sitting here. That would imply that murderer and victim had a discussion lasting for some period of time lengthy enough that one of them, probably the victim, needed to sit.”

“It was certainly the victim,” remarked Mr. Spock. “Recall, Mr. Holmes, the rope burns on the victim’s wrists and the ring of dirt on his pants cuffs.”

“Indeed. So; murderer and victim had a lengthy conversation, with the victim bound hand and foot. Now, the expression of hor-

ror on the victim's face is certainly remarkable. Mr. Spock has pointed out the unfortunate condition of the victim's attire, which, coupled with this, makes the conclusion that the victim died of sheer terror an elementary one."

"I am afraid that you will think me very slow, Holmes," said I; "but I confess I still do not understand."

"Nor I," added Sergeant Gray.

"You have observed the condition of the victim's dress, sergeant?"

"Rather disgusting, if I may say so," replied he.

"You were on the front lines of the Afghan war, Sergeant Gray. Tut, man, the clues are obvious. While in the heat of battle, did you ever remark anything similar?"

"Now that you mention it, Mr. Holmes, I did."

"When in extremity, either in fear or in their death throes, many animals will experience a failure of the bodily sphincters," observed Mr. Spock. "It is a last-ditch defense mechanism designed to throw off predators, and it is usually evoked by profound terror."

Holmes nodded in assent. He continued, "Therefore, it seems logical to conclude that Lord Lavenham smoked three cigarettes while he waited for his murderer to arrive for their appointment. Most likely the first few minutes of their interview were civilised; Lavenham gave his murderer a cigarette and smoked a fourth one himself. But then, presumably, he said the wrong thing. The villain overpowered him and trussed him up.

"Thereupon came a prolonged passage during which the two men had much to say to each other, while the villain paced back and forth. It would seem fair to infer that whatever they discussed led inexorably to the murder.

"Here is where the mystery grows darker. There is evidence that the villain made some sort of attack on Lavenham, who bucked vigorously, even bound as he was. But now come the tracks of some sort of beast like a wild boar. The mire is so churned up that I may say nothing unequivocally; nevertheless, if it were not impossible, I would say the beast went about on two legs rather than four.

"At the far side of the clearing we find what may be a fifth set

of tracks; or they may have been laid by Lavenham. If it was a fifth man, he evidently walked up to a position of semi-concealment at the edge of the clearing, stood there for a few minutes, and then vanished.

“After killing Lavenham, the murderer went down to the pool we just passed, where he washed his face and hands.”

“And succumbed briefly to nausea,” interjected Mr. Spock.

Holmes looked at Mr. Spock with some slight surprise. However, Mr. Spock said merely, “Your handkerchief, Mr. Holmes. My sense of smell is excellent.”

Holmes took his handkerchief from his pocket, looking at it as though he had never seen it before. One corner was indeed stained a brownish color, which might have been caused by human *disjecta*. Looking thoughtful, Holmes folded the handkerchief and returned it to his pocket.

“Indeed! ... Well. The murderer succumbed briefly to nausea and then washed his face and hands, and finally, before he left, rolled the body over onto its back and used his wet handkerchief to wipe off the dead man’s face.”

“This is all very clever and smart, Mr. Holmes,” said Lestrade; “but it gets us no closer to an arrest.”

“On the contrary. You know what the murderer looks like — I say ‘murderer’ because even if Lord Lavenham’s death was caused by an apoplexy or a seizure, it was certainly brought on by his reaction to whatever his oppressor had to say to him. You have heard my description of this man. It should not be difficult to lay your hand on him.”

Lestrade shrugged. “I am a practical man,” said he, “and while your fancy theories are impressive, if I were to go about the country enquiring for a giant, acrobatic man with bushy black whiskers and ill-fitting shoes who smokes South African cigarettes and steals men’s brains, I should quickly become the laughing-stock of Scotland Yard.”

“That is your choice,” returned Holmes quietly. “Sergeant Gray, you may have the body taken away now; I have learned all I can from it. Watson and I shall return to the Red Lion, and then we shall send the landau back for you. Lestrade, I take it that you are staying near the police station at Horsham?”

“Yes, but—”

“Then doubtless we shall see much of each other until this tragic case has been solved. This afternoon I shall talk to Mr. William Findley.” With a twinkle in my direction, Holmes added, “There is also the mystifying matter of Lord Lavenham’s note to send a telegram to the late Prince Consort. Perhaps you, Inspector Lestrade, would be willing to look into this little matter at the Post Office this afternoon?”

“I believe that you and Sergeant Gray would also do well to learn from the coroner whether the theory of Mr. Spock and myself concerning how this unfortunate nobleman has died is borne up by the facts, although I have no doubt that the medical findings shall confirm our postulation.

“Now, Watson — and Mr. Spock, of course — I think that we shall find that we have a long and difficult afternoon’s work before us. I should be glad, Lestrade, if you and Sergeant Gray could make it convenient to meet us at the Red Lion at six o’clock this evening. Until then, good-bye and good luck!”

Such was the quiet mastery of my companion’s tone and words that the policemen bowed themselves away without so much as a murmur at leaving Holmes in sole charge of the scene of a crime. Within moments, we three were alone.

“Now, Mr. Spock,” said Holmes, turning to our unusual companion. “It was my belief that you would not have wished me to mention your ‘tricorder’ device in front of the policemen.”

“Your belief was correct, Mr. Holmes.”

“Now that we are temporarily alone, however, you shall certainly wish to use your device to learn something more of the dead man, much as Dr. McCoy used his to learn something of Dr. Watson last night.”

“A logical conclusion, Mr. Holmes.”

Mr. Spock now removed his tricorder device from the pocket of his greatcoat and, bending over it, caused it to emit its high-pitched musical notes. After a few moments, he straightened and returned his device to his pocket.

“Well, Mr. Spock?”

“Lord Lavenham did in fact die just as we postulated he must have,” replied Mr. Spock. “He was frightened to death. The actual

physical cause was a massive brain hemorrhage from a ruptured aneurysm in the basilar artery loop.”

“And the murderer?”

Mr. Spock lifted one of his demonic eyebrows. “The tricorder is not quite so miraculous as you seem to imagine, Mr. Holmes. I can tell you nothing more than you have already inferred.”

“Then the murderer was your servant, Jack Tellar?”

“That is unclear. The murderer of Lord Lavenham was, as you described, tall, heavy, strong, and agile. In that, the murderer resembles the one called Jack Tellar. However, the one called Jack Tellar has never to my knowledge been in South Africa or smoked tobacco. Therefore, the possibility exists that Jack Tellar is innocent of this particular crime. In coming to Hand Cross, my friends and I may have been — what is your idiom? — pursuing a wild chicken.”

“Goose,” I said involuntarily. As Mr. Spock turned to me, raising a devilish eyebrow, I added, “The phrase is, a wild goose chase.”

“Ah. Thank you, Dr. Watson.”

“If this is a wild goose chase, then I take it that you and your friends shall be returning to London, Mr. Spock?” asked I.

After an infinitesimal pause, Mr. Spock replied, “The possibility that our presence here is futile is only a possibility — not confirmed fact. As long as the chance exists that this murder was committed by the one called Jack Tellar, Mr. Holmes, my friends and I would like to continue assisting you with your investigation.”

“That is excellent,” replied Holmes decidedly. “Well, then, gentlemen: The hour has grown quite advanced. I believe that something nutritious would not be out of place, and you, Mr. Spock, are doubtless anxious to discover how your friends are faring. Let us proceed to the Red Lion.”

As we left the clearing, two young, strong grooms came hurrying up with a stretcher.

“Such is mortality!” remarked Holmes meditatively as he turned to watch them. “For all the grandeur and mystery which we would impart to Death, in the end there is only the prosaic business of tidying up and going on, as though Death presented no greater enigma than the raking of the autumn leaves.”

“But is that a bad thing, Mr. Holmes?” asked Mr. Spock, quietly. “It is evidence of the eternal fabric of life. No death can be the ultimate, for good or ill, because somewhere in the universe, life always goes on.”

Holmes laughed. “I suppose that is a comforting thought, Mr. Spock — at least, for those who go on living. But can Death really be so trivial?”

“No more nor less than any part of life is trivial. Birth, childhood, marriage, parenthood, old age, death: It is all a cycle, a whole that cannot be divided so that you say, one part is more important than the other.”

“Is that part of your Vulcan philosophy, Mr. Spock?”

“It is merely logical, Mr. Holmes.”

Starfleet Log Four

Captain's Log, Stardate Unknown

Earth Date Friday, October 24, 1890 - 14:33:32

The slight injury I sustained from an attack by an overzealous social worker proved to be more serious than I had thought — a subdural hematoma. Dr. McCoy operated this morning, and I'm completely recovered. This afternoon we will continue the search for Bhrounq.

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate Unknown

Earth Date Friday, October 24, 1890 - 14:33:54

Bones is a great surgeon and a better friend. He fixed the subdural hematoma quickly. I wish I could have told him that my headache didn't go away, but he probably would have confined me to quarters.

After he finished operating, we remembered that we hadn't eaten anything since yesterday evening, not counting some ... beverage that Holmes and Watson insisted on drinking at the train station at O-dark-hundred this morning. They called it "tea," but it was nothing like the tea that we're used to. In fact, it was so strong that I think it probably could have gotten up and walked away under its own power. Forcing myself to drink it was painful, but I had no wish to offend Victorian sensibilities again so soon after my last run-in.

So anyway, I was feeling up for something to eat, and Bones and I went downstairs to what they called a "private lounge" to see what we could get. That was our first mistake: The only thing available was something they called "tiffin," which turned out to be — tea. Then the landlord gave Bones a copy of the inn's menu.

"Deep-fried herring and oatmeal," he read, puzzling out the weird

spellings they used to use. “Cock-a-leekie soup. Cullen skink. Cloutie dumpling. Spotted dick. Pork pies. Jellied eels. Blood pudding. Faggots in gravy. Sheep’s lights — what are they?”

“Lungs,” said the landlord, looking at us as if we were hicks from the outback of the Benecia Colony. Bones looked like he’d been handed a lemon to suck.

“Haggis. What’s — no, I don’t want to know. Pig’s cheek. Fried kidneys. Stewed sheep’s tongue. Boiled beef. Bloaters. Fried smelts. Toad in the hole. Baked stuffed sheep’s heart. Tripe. Stewed ox liver. Soused pilchard. Trotters. Curried pigeon. Sweetbreads. Why do I think that’s not bread? Bangers and mash. What are bangers and mash?”

“Sausages on mashed potatoes.” Not just hicks — *veruul* hicks.

“Oh, no,” I said. “Not a chance. No sausages, no ham, no pork pies, no pig’s cheek, no bacon, no pork chops, no loin, no prosciutto, no paté, no chorizo, no spare ribs, no pulled pork. Nil. Zip. *Nada. Rien.*”

“Don’t mind him,” McCoy said to Nye. “He had a pet pig when he was a boy. Named, uh, Miss Piggy.”

Veruul hicks who were mentally unbalanced. I was surprised that Nye didn’t start edging toward the door.

“The curried mutton looks like our best bet,” McCoy said. “What do you think, Jim?”

I voted for the mutton too. Since we expected Spock, Holmes, and Watson soon, we ordered enough to feed six, with extra veggies for Spock. Never hurts to be prepared.

Just then there was a sound from the coffee-room across the front hall, and a woman’s voice called, “Mr. Nye?” Our landlord moved toward the lounge door, just in time to greet the most beautiful woman I’ve seen ... since 1930.

Or maybe *ever*. She was standing in the doorway with one hand resting lightly on the jamb, and the noonday light from the window behind us made her look like an angel from one of those romantic painters, like Rossetti, or that guy who painted the ballet dancers. Bright green eyes, soft, reddish-brown hair, and from what I could tell through the layers of armor they call clothing here, a terrific body. I’m no expert on female attire of the 1890s, but she looked “loaded for bear” — more prepared to meet Queen Victoria in a fancy drawing-room than to wander around a small village buried in the heart of Nowheresville, Sussex. And those poofy sleeves made her waist look tiny, which was probably the whole idea.

Funny how my headache suddenly disappeared. I’m glad Bones wasn’t using the tricorder on me just then — my vital signs would’ve made it light up like a Christmas tree . . . I felt plenty vital!

“Mrs. Norton?” said Nye. “How may I help you?”

"I was wondering whether you had a guest named Sherlock Holmes, Mr. Nye," said the Vision.

"Excuse me," I interrupted. "He hasn't come in yet, but we've reserved him a room, and we expect him shortly."

"Mrs. Norton, may I introduce Mr. Kirk and his friend Dr. McCoy?" said Nye. "Mr. Kirk, Dr. McCoy, this is Mrs. Godfrey Norton, who lives near here. Mrs. Norton's husband is a lawyer. He worked closely with the late Lord Lavenham."

Yeah, yeah, *hands off, she's taken*. I get it, already! "We're working with Sherlock Holmes," I said, and gave her a warm smile. "Can we help?"

"Perhaps," she responded softly. "My husband has disappeared. Mr. Holmes is an acquaintance, and I hope to enlist his aid in finding him."

"I'm sure there's nothing Mr. Holmes would like better."

"Oh, you are," muttered McCoy.

"Why, thank you, Bones," I said. "Why don't you and Mr. Nye go talk details, hmm?"

Bones finally took the hint. "All right, Jim, but just promise me you'll keep your haggis out of the tripe, okay?"

Don't I always?



Chapter Ten: An Intriguing Luncheon

Upon inquiry at the Red Lion, we found that Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy had indeed bespoken rooms for us, and were awaiting our return in the private lounge. While we were talking to the landlord, Dr. McCoy came out of the private lounge, and, seeing us, at once approached.

“How did it go?” he inquired.

“A fruitful morning, Doctor,” replied Holmes. “And you? I trust your surgery upon Captain Kirk was also successful?”

Dr. McCoy appeared taken aback. “How did you know about that?”

“Tut, Dr. McCoy. As a surgeon himself, Dr. Watson would not have been nearly so eager to assist you if you had merely been intent upon Captain Kirk’s having what you termed ‘a little nap’. Moreover, you have a small spot of blood upon your left shirt-cuff.”

Reflexively, Dr. McCoy looked at his sleeve. Then he musingly replied, “Well, since you ask, it went fine.”

“Excellent.”

Holmes now turned to Mr. Spock. “Sir: You doubtless have realized that were you to dine in any company other than our own, the wearing or the removal of your hat would, either one, occasion a great deal of remark.”

“That thought had occurred to me, Mr. Holmes.”

“On the other hand, your native headdress might be retained under circumstances where a hat could not. I presume that you have brought your turban with you? Why not wear it, at least for those occasions on which you might otherwise be expected to doff your hat?” Momentarily, Mr. Spock appeared blank. Dr. McCoy, however, was not so slow.

“A *turban*, Spock. . . . What a great idea!”

“Doctor, Vulcans do not wear—”

“I know. But it’ll keep your ears warm.” McCoy laid just the slightest emphasis upon the word “ears.”

Mr. Spock thought consideringly for a space. Then he turned to my friend. “You are correct, Mr. Holmes. The wearing of a turban is an excellent idea. If you will excuse me, I will check into the rooms that Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy have engaged and see what I can find.”

Mr. Spock nodded to us and strode quickly toward the stairs. Holmes stood staring abstractedly after him for a moment. Then he shook his head, as though to clear it, and said to me, “Come, gentlemen; let us see how Captain Kirk is faring.”

Dr. McCoy evinced some slight hesitation about reëntering the private lounge. Momentarily, I was puzzled by his reluctance. However, upon entering the private lounge, this distraction immediately left my mind. The lounge was deserted save for Captain Kirk — and one fair visitor, whom I instantly recognised, with no little shock and surprise, as Mrs. Godfrey Norton, *née* Irene Adler.

I had seen this celebrated adventuress upon only one prior occasion, but it was not difficult for me to recognize her this second time. The cabinet photograph which she had once given Holmes had done her less than justice, for she was quite the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life, before or since; rightly had Holmes described her as “the daintiest thing under a bonnet on this planet.” Certainly no contemplation of colourless photographs could prepare one for the subtle, delicate charm and the beautiful colouring of that exquisite head. Although at the time of which I write she must have been some one- or two-and-thirty years old, her skin was as transparent and flawless as that of a girl half her age, like burnished ivory tinted with the palest of tea-rose

flushes. A wealth of thick chestnut-coloured hair set off to perfection the flash and fire of her large, green eyes. Her presence was queenly — tall, graceful, and intensely womanly; and her figure was superb. I could at last begin to understand why a royal king had once involved himself with her, in a liaison which might have been his ruin.

Nevertheless, I was also no little astonished. That this young person, of all others in the world, should seek out Sherlock Holmes (for I could not doubt that Mrs. Norton had come to the Red Lion knowing that Holmes would be here, and had in fact come with the purpose of interviewing him) argued something beyond audacity; it argued amazing effrontery and brazenness.

It had been two and a half years gone that Mrs. Norton, then Miss Irene Adler, had bested Sherlock Holmes in a contest of wits — the only person, male or female, whom I have ever known to have done so. At that time, she had retained in her possession a number of indiscreet letters and a photograph of herself in the company of the King of Bohemia, and was threatening to publish them, the which publication should have brought the downfall of his intention to marry his betrothed, a woman of his own station. Apparently it was her contention that the King had offered her a morganatic marriage; the King's, that her history as an adventuress was too well known for even morganatic marriage to be contemplated.

After having surprised his beautiful antagonist into inadvertently revealing the hiding place of the incriminating photograph, Holmes had formed the intention of forcing her to relinquish it. Before he could do so, however, she, with quite admirable perception and logical reasoning rivaling Holmes's own, had divined his plans and fled. She took with her the photograph, along with Mr. Godfrey Norton, whom she had summarily married (possibly to save herself from a violent counterstroke on the part of the King's agents) several hours before. In a letter addressed to Holmes, though, she had promised not to publish the photograph, but merely to conserve it as insurance against the possible reprisals of the King or his agents. And indeed, she had been as good as her word, for the King's marriage plans had received no check from her.

For the whole of my acquaintance with him, Sherlock Holmes has had no use for the tender passions, nor indeed for women in general. He has frequently spoken with a gibe of women's untrustworthiness and of the unfathomable workings of their minds, and, before his acquaintance with Irene Adler Norton, he was even used to make merry over their capacity for cleverness. Since this episode, however, he has been silent on the matter of women's intelligence. And there has been but one woman to him, whom he has always referred to under the honourable title of *the woman*.

Mrs. Norton looked up as we entered the room. Beyond a direct, searching look for Holmes — whom she had seen before only in disguise —, she betrayed no consciousness of the amazing temerity of her position. She had been in close converse with Captain Kirk, and remained next to him on the settle; but it was clear that she had turned the preponderance of her attention to my companion.

Sherlock Holmes paused on the threshold of the room with the briefest of checks, and then continued until he was opposite Captain Kirk's exquisite visitor, to whom he raised his hat and inclined his head.

"Mrs. Norton," said he quietly, with his characteristic easy courtesy.

"Mr. Holmes," responded she, smiling slightly. Her low voice was thrilling, a contralto as warm and soft and sweet as a summer's day. It was not difficult to understand the brilliance of her career as the *prima donna* of the Imperial Opera of Warsaw, with such a voice and form as she possessed. Indeed, my only puzzlement was that she should have renounced the operatic stage at all.

"I should scarcely have recognised you, Mr. Holmes," the lady continued. "Your present garb suits you much better than the cloth of an elderly Nonconformist clergyman."

"You, madam, on the other hand, I should have recognised anywhere," returned Holmes. "I see that you have already made the acquaintance of Mr. Kirk, and, I presume, Dr. McCoy."

"Irene and I were just getting to know each other," said Captain Kirk, easily. The hint in his tone was as plain as though he had said in so many words, "Go away; you are infinitely *de trop*."

Deliberately not understanding him, Holmes continued,

“Then, Mrs. Norton, may I present my friend and colleague, Dr. Watson?”

“I am so pleased,” she murmured, bestowing upon me a nod and sparkling smile. I have always believed that the true essence of charm is the ability to convey to one’s listener that he himself is charming. This quality Mrs. Norton possessed in great abundance; and in her presence I began to forget that she was an adventuress, of at best dubious reputation, who at worst should present Holmes with some unforeseen but nevertheless real peril.

“Irene has been telling me that the police think her husband murdered Lord Lavenham, Mr. Holmes,” observed Captain Kirk.

“Has she, indeed?” murmured Holmes, raising his eyebrows — the only indication that his astonishment was as deep as my own. I did not know at which to be more astonished: that a former antagonist should have reappeared, without so much as a blush for anything that had gone before, or that the lady stood on terms of such intimacy with Captain Kirk upon only a few minutes’ acquaintance that she had already made him free of her Christian name.

“Well, then; this lounge, however private in name, is no place to receive a lady’s confidences. Perhaps you would honour us by taking dinner with us, madam?”

I could see that Holmes had issued his invitation from a combination of civility and curiosity, and that he still felt a good bit of angry suspicion towards our beautiful visitor — he had by no means forgotten the outcome of their last encounter, even though it had taken place two and a half years earlier. Evidently the lady also saw this reluctance, for she now began a demurral. This was not, however, to be allowed; I joined my supplications with those of Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy, and she allowed herself to be persuaded.

“How could I refuse so delightful an invitation?” said she, smiling. “I am sure that this shall be a charming meal.”

The Red Lion was too small an inn to possess a dining room; and so we took dinner in a small room which opened off the private lounge, and in which the landlord set up a table for us. I was quite pleasantly surprised, upon seeing the menu, to find the best of British cuisine prominently featured, and commented upon it

to the landlord.

“Aye, my wife’s a grand cook,” replied Mr. Nye. “We don’t get many folk stopping in here this season in the general way — in fact, you’re the only guests in the house. So she’s tedious glad to have such as your honours here to cook for. These other gentlemen have already ordered the mutton — I hope that will be agreeable to you?”

“Assuredly,” said I; “and then perhaps we may have the lights for our supper.”

At the landlord’s assent, Dr. McCoy coughed. When Holmes and I turned to him in concern, he said, with a surprising lack of enthusiasm, “That’s ... just great.”

Mr. Spock reappeared and was introduced as we sat down, wearing a snowy white turban fastened into place with an unusual pin, a deep-red circle pierced at the lower right side by a gold triangle. He was described merely as a “gentleman from Tibet”, which briefly intrigued Mrs. Norton. However, Mr. Spock’s characteristic coldness apparently extended to an imperviousness to feminine attractions, and Mrs. Norton soon returned her attention to my friend and to Captain Kirk.

Our dinner was country-house fare — red pottage, curried mutton with Yorkshire pudding, buttered carrots, peas and turnips mashed together, jacket potatoes, and cabbage. Holmes waited until after the landlord had served us to begin. As soon as Mr. Nye had departed, however, Holmes turned the full force of his concentration upon our lovely visitor.

“So, Mrs. Norton: I confess that it had not occurred to me that the Mr. Norton who was Lord Lavenham’s angry young solicitor might be the same Mr. Norton who figured in our last encounter with each other. And now your husband has had the ill judgment first to quarrel violently with his employer and utter threats against him, and then to disappear just as that same employer is brutally murdered? ... Yes; I know all about it; I have my information from Sergeant Gray.”

“I agree that the quarrel was ill judged,” replied the lady, with a demure look; “but I cannot allow that the disappearance was also ill judged. For all that we know, much careful thought and many valid reasons lie behind it.”

“I was thinking, Mr. Holmes—” began Captain Kirk.

“Always an excellent beginning.”

Captain Kirk flushed and pressed his lips together; but after a moment’s pause, continued, “I was thinking that since Mr. Norton is a prime suspect in the murder, he’s going to have to be found — so why shouldn’t we look for him while we’re looking into the murder?”

Holmes smiled bitterly.

“I think it fair to say that our last encounter can scarcely have given Mrs. Norton the highest opinion of my talents.”

Mrs. Norton laughed softly. “On the contrary, Mr. Holmes; I have nothing but the liveliest regard for your penetration. Had I not, at the time, felt compelled to fly the country, I have no doubt that our contest would have been a spirited one.”

“Then you two know each other?” asked Captain Kirk, with a dark look.

Mrs. Norton twinkled engagingly. “Let us say rather that we have met before, under somewhat less auspicious circumstances — since on that occasion, Mr. Holmes led me to believe that he had set fire to my house. A sad trick to play upon a bride on her wedding-day, do not you agree?”

Captain Kirk appeared nonplussed, and said merely, rather faintly, “Very.”

“Perhaps you might tell us, Mrs. Norton, why you married and left the country in such desperate haste,” remarked Holmes. “I find it intriguing that you now tell us that at that time you felt compelled to do so.”

“Doubtless the King told you that on five occasions, he sent either housebreakers or highwaymen to attempt to rob me?”

Holmes nodded, coolly. “And one hotel-thief.”

“Did he also tell you that he had an agent make an attempt on my life?”

There was a general outcry of horror.

“It happened the night before we met, Mr. Holmes. Luckily, I am something of a crack shot; I managed to protect myself. Mr. Norton felt strongly that my marriage to him should afford me some protection against further murderous attacks, and I was shaken enough to allow him to persuade me. When, however, a

few hours after the wedding, *you* entered the picture, Mr. Holmes, I decided that I was finally outgunned, and that the better part of valour would be to fly the country.”

“And you never sought to harm the King through the use of the photograph which you held,” I commented.

She looked at me levelly. “I said that I would not. Are women not allowed a word of honour?”

“And now, Mr. Holmes,” said Captain Kirk, recovering his tongue, “Mrs. Norton’s husband is suspected of having murdered Lord Lavenham.”

“I have not said that *I* suspect him,” returned Holmes, sharply. “It is a capital mistake to form theories before one has ascertained all the facts.”

“The facts are d—ning enough,” Mrs. Norton said drily. Neither in this nor in the following speech did she betray any womanly consciousness or confusion at the blasphemous words she used; but rather spoke as coolly as though she had been commenting upon the weather.

“My husband was Lord Lavenham’s solicitor, and intimately acquainted with his business affairs. The two of them had an appointment yesterday morning, and were closeted together for an hour, during which time several members of Lord Lavenham’s staff claim to have overheard angry words between them. At the end of the interview, Mr. Norton came out of the office in what was evidently a violent temper. Lord Lavenham’s secretary heard him say, ‘Oh, so your next appointment is more urgent than your *prior engagement*, the one that will merely decide the course of the remainder of your life. Which may well end upon the gallows. You can go to Hell!’

“He then left. Lord Lavenham ran after him, crying, ‘Norton! D—n you, Norton, I am not finished with you!’; but the only reply which the secretary heard was, ‘But *I* am finished with *you* — and you are finished!’

“That was the last time Lord Lavenham was seen alive, and the last time my husband was seen at all. Sergeant Gray undoubtedly regards the combination of intimacy in business affairs, the final quarrel, and my husband’s disappearance as questionable at best.” Her words displayed not the least hint of the womanly agi-

tation which might be expected from one whose husband found himself in such a predicament.

“It certainly is less than auspicious,” agreed Holmes.

“Oh, come on,” interjected Captain Kirk. “That’s all just circumstantial evidence.”

“True,” replied Holmes coldly, fixing Captain Kirk with a gaze which, had I borne the brunt of it, should at once have abashed me.

Captain Kirk, however, seemed invulnerable to any discomfiture. “Then shouldn’t we be concentrating on finding Mr. Norton and seeing what his side of the story is?”

“You will perhaps allow me to finish ascertaining what facts Mrs. Norton can offer?” returned Holmes, even more witheringly. Captain Kirk turned his palm up and moved it, as though mutely to say, “By all means, continue.” Holmes turned again to Mrs. Norton. “How tall is your husband?”

“About six feet.”

“He is a slim man?”

“No; in fact, he has become rather portly in the years of our marriage.”

“What colour are his whiskers?”

“He is clean-shaven. His hair is a very dark brown — Dr. McCoy’s colour.”

“And can you tell me his whereabouts for, say, the last week?”

“Now, wait a minute,” interrupted Captain Kirk. “You’re asking these questions as if you believe that Godfrey Norton is the murderer.”

Holmes turned to Kirk with a steely look, and there was a whiplash in his voice. “Captain Kirk, I will not tolerate these continual intrusions into my inquiry!”

“Then stop trying to torture Mrs. Norton!” retorted Kirk, with equal anger.

Dr. McCoy laid a warning hand upon Captain Kirk’s shoulder. “Jim—!”

Mr. Spock had been silent until this moment; looking, in his turban, even more like a devilish Buddha than I had grown accustomed to seeing him. Now he spoke, and his words were like a cold shower-bath.

“Logic would dictate that the most successful inquiry is also the most dispassionate.”

“For once I agree with Spock,” added McCoy, sternly.

There was a short pause, during which Holmes and Kirk glared angrily at each other. The silence was finally broken by Mrs. Norton, whose lovely voice held just the faintest hint of amusement. “I have no objection to answering any question, since candour can only aid me. No matter how damning the evidence against my husband, he is innocent. To answer your question, Mr. Holmes, my husband had been in London for the sennight past; he returned to Hand Cross only yesterday, in time for his appointment with Lord Lavenham.”

“Which was, we know, at 10.30,” said Holmes. “Therefore Mr. Norton must have left London by the 7.10 train, as we did the next day. Considering the physical description which you and others have given us, I believe that, whatever his other activities, he cannot have made the murderous attack upon General Flashman.”

Dr. McCoy now spoke. “I’m sorry; I don’t understand. What attack, when?”

“The presence of Dr. Watson and myself in the Edgware Road police-station yesterday afternoon was no mere coincidence, Doctor,” returned Holmes, his normal suavity restored. “We had been summoned there to hear the deposition of a man who had been assaulted in what I suspect was exactly the same manner as had the Whitechapel murder victim. By a stroke of luck, however, this gentleman survived to tell about it.”

“*Exactly* the same way? — Please, tell us about it,” Captain Kirk said sharply.

In a few brief words, Holmes relayed General Flashman’s account of the giant, black-whiskered brute who had attacked him. At the end of his recitation, Captain Kirk locked gazes with Mr. Spock and said slowly, “I’ve been forgetting to ask you, Spock, how it went this morning.”

Responding to Kirk’s unspoken words, Mr. Spock said, “We made no error in coming to this place.”

Captain Kirk continued to stare at his friend for a few moments. Then he sighed softly, looked over at Mrs. Norton, and smiled with great charm. “No, we sure didn’t.”

Holmes now reassumed command of the conversation. “Mrs. Norton, I have a question of some delicacy to ask you. What were the relations between yourself and your husband?”

“Polite,” replied she, coolly. “It is no use my attempting to conceal that our marriage has not been ideal; all our neighbours would tell you so, even were I to attempt to deny it.”

“And yet you exert yourself to exonerate your husband from suspicion.”

She raised her lovely eyebrows at him. “Surely a regard for justice must take precedence over personal indifference? No innocent man should suffer injustice — and my husband is innocent. He is incapable of such a crime. Or crimes, since you imply that he might also have committed the murder in London.”

“Upon what grounds do you base your conviction, madam?”

“Mr. Norton is the gentlest of men. Although he is not lacking in character, he has not even enough hardness in his nature to break a horse to bridle — he cannot bear to cause another living creature discomfort. How then should he attack another man violently? Moreover, he is the sort of person who faints at the sight of blood. Could such a man be responsible for crimes such as these?”

“It would appear not,” said Holmes, drily. He had finished his meal, and now cast an abstracted gaze over the table. Our companions had clearly enjoyed the delicious foodstuffs before us, save for Mr. Spock, who had partaken only of the carrots, peas, and other vegetables. Coming to a decision, Holmes now said, “As you are doubtless aware, Mrs. Norton, I am in Hand Cross to assist the police with their investigation into Lord Lavenham’s murder — which, as you have just implied, may be related to the murder in London two nights ago. However, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the disappearance of your husband is somehow also related to the murder of the unfortunate Earl.

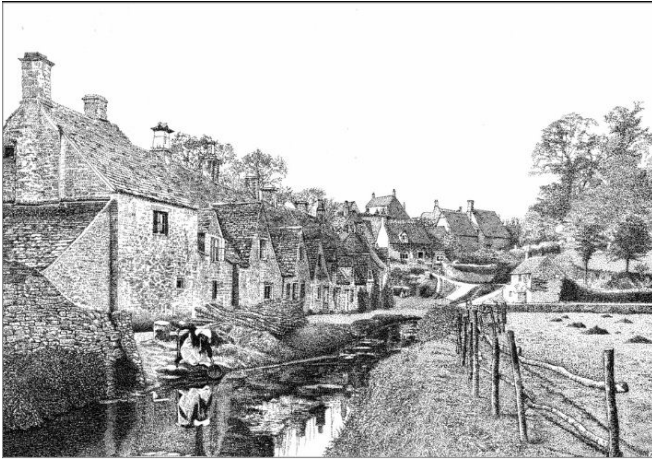
“I will undertake to make inquiries into the matter of your husband, Mrs. Norton, at the same time as I investigate the problem of Lord Lavenham. I feel it my duty to warn you, however, that I cannot suppress any evidence which comes my way, even should it be damaging to your husband’s case.”

“You are all goodness, Mr. Holmes,” replied Mrs. Norton. The sweet softness of her low voice robbed her tone of any possible

irony. “Since Mr. Norton is innocent, his case cannot be damaged — at least, not to *point non plus*. I am very grateful to you, sir.”

Holmes nodded in response as Captain Kirk took the beautiful Mrs. Norton’s hand and pressed it. “We’ll do everything we can, don’t worry.” Kirk told her, smiling warmly.

As she returned Kirk’s smile, I noticed Holmes’ hand tighten its grip on his serviette. Now he stood abruptly. “Come, gentlemen; we have a good bit of work to do. Let us see Mrs. Norton to her carriage and be off.”



Chapter Eleven: In Quest of a Solution

The village of Hand Cross is a tiny cluster of flint, brick, and tile-hung cottages in the heart of Sussex. It has for centuries continued unchanged, and seems likely to remain so for centuries to come. Flanked on one side by the great Sussex Downs, those rolling hills of chalk clothed with springy turf, and on the other by the edge of the great Weald forest which for so long held the Saxon invaders at bay, the village survives in a sleepy anonymity so profound that when coaches on the Brighton road stop to change horses and their passengers alight to stretch their legs, they find no signs of modernity beyond one or two small shops and the Post Office. Horsham, the nearest town of importance, is about five miles to its west, and provides most of the services which the city-dweller has come to regard as *sine qua non*, but which the country-dweller usually disdains.

Five miles southwest from Hand Cross, standing in an ancient park and separated by a kind of haha, are two sixteenth-century

houses, Lavenham Court and, perhaps a quarter-mile to the north, its attendant Dower House. Each residence is surrounded by some very fine clipped yews; and while purists might prefer the propriety of taste with which the formal gardens of the Dower House are laid out, the rhododendrons, camellias, and magnolias of the Court's own formal gardens have been much admired. The Court was built by the second Baron Lavenham, and the Dower House by the third. The eleventh Baron, who late in life was created first Earl of Lavenham, restored and remodeled much of the Court in the early years of this century, while leaving intact the flavour of the original building, which was sober as Sunday.

Both Lavenham Court and its Dower House are approached by a narrow, hedged lane outside a stone gate. Once inside the main gate, a short carriage-sweep branches as I have previously described: the fork on our left leading to the manor house at the southeast and the southern border of the estate, the fork on our right leading to the Dower House and the northern border of the estate. The river Rodran forms the western border.

Outside the estate, a narrow lane meanders through the Forest from Hand Cross directly to the separate entrance to Gold Shield Imports which we had used earlier in the day, and to which we now returned. Although it had obviously been broadened and smoothed in the name of Commerce, the ancient and noble trees through which we rode were evidence to the meanest intelligence that the drive must have evolved from deer path to footpath to rutted road to lane.

The warehouse serving Lord Lavenham's importing business had been built twenty years earlier by the third Earl — the Earl whose remains were now being presided over by the Sussex corner. When it was built, oaken weather-boarding pegged to timber framing was chosen to protect the building from the elements, thus avoiding the brick taxes, and creosote was chosen as the wood preservative. To the south of the warehouse are the stables, as well as a cluster of cottages that looked to have been built at the same time.

Upon our return journey to Lord Lavenham's demesne to see Mr. William Findley, Sherlock Holmes provided our three peculiar associates with a *résumé* of the morning's activities, supple-

mented from time to time by observations and emendations from Mr. Spock. Captain Kirk heard this exposition for the most part in frowning silence, interrupting only to ask for further detail on this point or that; his illness of a few hours earlier a thing of the past but for a small bandage peeping out under his hat behind his left ear. I also suddenly noticed, with mild surprise, that the numerous small lacerations which Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy had borne on their faces this morning at Waterloo station had all vanished.

At the end of Holmes's exposition, Captain Kirk sat for a moment lost in thought. Then he turned to his enigmatic companion. "What is your evaluation, Spock?"

Mr. Spock hesitated. Finally, he replied, choosing his words with care. "The English language lacks the precision to convey certain concepts, Captain. I wonder if Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson would consider it overly rude if we spoke for a moment in another tongue?" Both Holmes and I indicated our somewhat reluctant accedance to this request.

Now Spock said to Kirk and McCoy, "*Trykreddin indix mohsa pineal zhelleia todavia en Lord Lavenham.*"

"*Whia? Th'n nine apokting de b— a'tellarite?*" asked Captain Kirk. "*Ma, beef, yewssed—*"

"*Hava,*" continued Spock, "*trykreddin eldee indix dye-lithium emshun-tresses sow-eh, proxaklick.*"

"Oh!" The look which Captain Kirk shared with Dr. McCoy mirrored their mutual surprise at whatever revelation Mr. Spock had imparted. "*Ha-ba'ow trykreddin onna tellarite?*"

"*Toekweelaht cercano.*"

Editor's note: Translated into English from Standard, this conversation goes:

Spock: Tricorder readings indicate that Lord Lavenham's body still has most of its pineal gland.

Kirk: What? So he wasn't killed by B— the Tellarite? But before, you said—

Spock: However, long-distance tricorder readings show traces of dilithium emissions approximately one kilometer southwest of here.

Kirk: Oh! . . . How about tricorder readings on the Tellarite?

Spock: [Unknown word] nearby.

“Well, well, well.” Captain Kirk thought this strange conversation over. “So, as Mr. Holmes said earlier, your recommendation is that we stay in the area until we know for sure whether Jack Tellar killed Lord Lavenham or whether we’re on a wild goose chase.”

“That is correct, Captain.”

“I am still not sure that I understand,” remarked Holmes, “why you know so little about your servant’s religious practices, Mr. Spock.”

“Or,” I added, “why he should suddenly start molesting men’s brains merely because he is lost in England.”

“The one called Jack Tellar is not a Vulcan, Mr. Holmes,” replied Mr. Spock; “and our philosophies are worlds apart. That race is quarrelsome, violent, and emotional, and Vulcans find all three characteristics difficult to deal with. However, religious freedom is a logical necessity of any advanced civilisation, no matter how distasteful the religion or its practitioners might be to the majority. As to the actions of this person in the last few days, I can only postulate that they arise from a psychogenic disorder. No one of my acquaintance would commit such crimes unless impelled to do so by severe mental disturbance.”

“You are saying that you believe Jack Tellar has a nervous affliction?”

Before Mr. Spock could respond, Dr. McCoy cut in. “That’s what he’s saying, all right.”

As Dr. McCoy spoke, our carriage deposited us outside the warehouse where we hoped to interview Lord Lavenham’s second in command.

The warehouse for Gold Shield Imports was a tall, stately wooden building whose architect had not been content merely to design something utilitarian, but who had obviously been given free rein with a not inactive imagination. The massive entry doors were flanked by columns in the Greek mode, and the few high windows were Palladian. The effect, however, was not of the opulence

which had evidently been desired. Instead, these embellishments served to give the building the look of a slattern in full Court dress — the appearance was well enough, but one could not forget the *déclassé* being beneath the finery.

Finding the main entry-door locked, we entered the warehouse at the back, where there was a small courtyard and, to the west, a small pier where was tied a river craft which bore the eccentric name, *Karroo*. The great doors on this side of the warehouse, fifteen feet high and equally wide, were closed, but a smaller door set into one of the larger doors was unlocked, and through this we entered.

Inside, a large docking-bay gave onto a very large, high-ceilinged room where the air was heavy with the redolence of fish and other seafood. Perhaps the odour would have been less unpleasant had other materials been used in the construction of the warehouse; but woods of various sorts had been used throughout, and it appeared to me that the fish oils causing the piscine reek had been inextricably absorbed and imbued into the very timbres of the building.

While we stood looking round, a boy in an apron came from behind a partition, pushing a large broom and whistling softly through his teeth. He was perhaps sixteen years old, tall and gangling, with straw-coloured hair and a reddened, spotty complexion. At the sight of us, he stopped abruptly in surprise, and then came forward.

“No one here,” said he. “We’m closed. Out o’ respect for the late lord.”

Holmes clicked his teeth in annoyance.

“We have come here today seeking an interview with Mr. William Findley,” said he. “Perhaps you would be able to advise us as to where he might be found.”

“Oh, Mr. Findley will be along directly,” replied the lad, cheerily. “We got the funeral meats back in the smoking room, and he said he wanted to attend to them personal-like, being as how there’ll be a dunnamany grand folk at the Court. If you masters would care to wait...?”

“We would indeed,” said Holmes, decisively. “If you think Mr. Findley will not be long delayed?”

“Happen it’ll be half an hour or so, sir. There bain’t no place to sit, though, sir, as the office is locked up — lessen you was wishful of going up to the Court.”

Instinctively, I shook my head, and saw that Holmes was doing the same. For myself, I trusted Mr. Spock’s prediction that Lady Lavenham would sleep for a few hours, after which she would experience a period of lethargy; in neither state would a call from us prove welcome.

“Maybe you could show us around while we wait,” suggested Captain Kirk. When the lad looked blank, he added, “You know, the different rooms and what they’re for. What you do.”

“I’d be glad to oblige you, sir, surely,” said the lad, looking dubious. Setting his broom against the wall, he wiped his hands on his apron.

“What’s your name, son?” asked Kirk.

“Ned, sir. Ned Kettering.”

“Well, Ned, what’s that little room over there used for? The one with the big window?”

“That’re the cutting room, sir. Where we filet the fish and cut ‘em up, like.”

“And over here?” asked Kirk, gesturing at a large, heavy steel-walled enclosure just beyond the cutting room.

“That’re the main cooler,” said Ned. He led us over and slid the wide steel door open with a practiced heave. Beyond was a dark room, about twenty feet long and thirteen deep, which was crowded with open shelving of black metalwork; upon the shelves were piled various seafoods. I found myself shivering slightly in my greatcoat as the lad said, “There’s plaice over there, against the wall, and shrimp here, and squid, and them’re oysters. Not much in, right now, but we’m expecting more.”

“What is the temperature in this place?” asked I.

“Thirty-eight, sir.” Ned showed us a thermometer by the door.

“It’s not any—” began Dr. McCoy, protestingly.

“Fahrenheit, Doctor,” interrupted Mr. Spock. “It is three point three on the centigrade scale.”

“Oh.” McCoy looked somewhat abashed.

“How is it kept so cold?” asked Holmes.

The lad’s face brightened. “Wi’ a dential fine machine, sir. I’ll

show you.” As we left the cooler, Ned slid the door carefully shut behind us and led the way around a corner, past a short flight of steps that led up to an open half-garret, in which I could see that bags of applewood chips were piled high. Against the wall behind the cutting room were stacked a number of boards of varying widths and lengths. Just beyond them was an open area between a metal wall and a metal-walled enclosure which seemed identical to the cooler whence we had just come.

In the midst of the open area, a large steam-engine was in noisy operation. “There she be, sir,” said Ned, with loving enthusiasm. “I misdoubt she’s the rarest fine invention you ever seen. The wall on the left is the back of the cooler, where we just was, sir, and the room on the right is the freezer, which I’ll show you in a minute. Them’re both kept cold by Fanny here.”

“Fanny?” asked I.

The lad looked embarrassed. “That’re just my pet name for her, sir. It’s a frigeratory machine.”

“Fascinating,” Mr. Spock murmured to Captain Kirk. “A primitive ay-see plant.”

“It bain’t primitive!” exclaimed Ned indignantly. “Begging your pardon, sir, o’course, but Fanny here is the rarest good frigeratory machine there be. In the world!”

“How does it work?” asked Holmes, looking interested despite himself.

“This engine supplies power to them two compressors,” the lad said proudly. “They make the cold air for the two rooms. It goes in through those two pipes there, and comes back out this road, through these pipes down here.”

Sherlock Holmes looked less than satisfied with the vagueness of this explanation.

“The vapour compression system,” observed Mr. Spock. “It is based on two principles: that that which is cold absorbs heat; and that heat expands, while cold contracts. The refrigerant is carried in a liquid medium at its earliest stage. When this liquid enters the evaporator, which is hot, the liquid absorbs the heat, boils, and turns into a gas. A compressor removes the hot vapour from the evaporator and creates the correct vapour pressure. The compressor then sends the compressed vapour to the condenser, which

dissipates its heat to the circulating medium and returns it from vapour to liquid. The condensed, now-liquid refrigerant is then sharply reduced in pressure in the expansion valve, which readies it for its return to the evaporator, thus completing the cycle.”

“The evaporator, then, keeps the room cold by absorbing the heat from the air?” asked Holmes.

“That is correct.” Mr. Spock turned to Ned. “What is the refrigerant for your system?”

“It’re ammonia, sir.”

“Ammonia!” exclaimed Dr. McCoy.

“A popular refrigerant at this time,” said Mr. Spock, repressively. “Its use was pioneered by Ferdinand Carré in 1859. The liquid medium would be a mixture of ammonia and water.”

“Reckon you’m right, sir,” agreed Ned. Motioning for us to follow him, he slid open the door of the freezer and entered. This was a room of about the same size as the cooler; but, as implicit in the room’s name, the air inside was significantly more hyperborean. The freezer contained a few sets of black shelves bearing stacks of frozen seafoods; it also contained a number of large drums.

“What is the temperature in this room?” asked Holmes.

“Minus twenty, sir.”

Dr. McCoy turned to Mr. Spock with an inquiring look. “Minus twenty-eight point eight centigrade, Doctor,” said Mr. Spock.

“That’s plenty cold enough for me,” observed Dr. McCoy, shivering. “Let’s get out of here.”

We returned to the main room. As Ned heaved the freezer door shut, Holmes asked, “What was in the drums which were against the freezer wall?”

“Ice, sir,” replied Ned. “We freeze it in those gurt big containers, as you seen, sir, and then we saw it into a dunnamany blocks of ice. When we sends a shipment to London, or anywheres, we use the ice blocks to keep it cold; we also sells it to local folk for their pantries. We builds our own crates — them’re the lumber, there, that you see a-leaning against the wall, sir — and we use the sawdust to insulate the ice, so it don’t melt so tedious fast.”

“Why not just use a refrigerated, er ... vehicle?” asked Doctor McCoy.

“Using ammonia as the refrigerant, Doctor?” asked Holmes,

sarcastically. "Would you care to take the contaminated food after an accident to the equipment?"

"Er, no," replied Dr. McCoy, again looking disconcerted.

"Nor would I."

Now Captain Kirk gestured at a padlocked door on the wall to the right of the freezer. "What's in there?"

"That're the melter, sir. When we gets a shipment in, from Greece, like, or wherever, we puts the seafood into the cooler or the freezer, and we puts the ice there to melt."

"Why? Why not just re-freeze it?"

"All the sawdust, sir. The ice bain't as good if it's full of sawdust and suchlike. It melts faster. There's screened drains in there, and filters, so the water runs off w'out all t'other stuff to muck it up."

"Why is the room kept locked?" asked Holmes.

The lad looked embarrassed. "I dunno, sir."

Captain Kirk now turned to a door behind us, opposite the door to the freezer. "Well, what's that room?"

"That're the smoking room, sir," said Ned, looking more cheerful. He led us into a room where the previously omnipresent fish reek was blessedly absent, the air instead being redolent with the fragrance of apple wood. At the far end of the room was an enclosure similar to a large closet. Ned threw open the door and revealed a space containing numerous metal racks above a banked fire of applewood chips. Upon the racks were several joints of meat and a large number of fish.

"There's ham, sir, and two legs o' lamb, and halibut, and oysters. All for the funeral, sir." The lad reached into a sack near the door and added a handful of applewood chips to the fire before carefully closing the door again.

"A most intriguing display," remarked Holmes, as we left the smoking room. "I shall remember this the next time we dine at Overton's, Watson."

Rounding the corner into the main shipping area in which we had begun, we unexpectedly encountered a heavyset, black-haired Yorkshireman of middle years and sallow complexion. At the sight of us, his face darkened still further.

"What the hell are you doing here?" asked he, with a scowl.

"They come looking for you, Mr. Findley," said Ned, looking

frightened. "I was just a-showing them around, whilst they were waiting, like."

"Get back to work, you young good-like-naught," ordered Findley, curtly. "I'll deal with you later. And you," he said to us, "get out. We're closed today. There's been a death."

"We are aware of that, Mr. Findley," replied my friend. "I am Mr. Sherlock Holmes. I have been brought from London to investigate the murder of Lord Lavenham, and I wish to ask you a few questions."

This information, I could see, brought the inimical Findley up short. He rocked back on his heels for a moment, and then said gruffly, "I don't know nothing."

"It is my information that you were Lord Lavenham's second in command."

"Aye."

"And that you found the body."

"Aye."

"Then you must know a great deal."

Findley reddened. "Happen I do, I don't know of no laws saying I got to tell anything to any fancy gentleman who comes around saying he's Sherlock Holmes from London and kiss me hand. What proof do I even have that you're working with the police, any road?"

"You have the word of, as you term it, a gentleman," retorted Holmes. "It will go a great deal easier with you if you merely answer my questions now, rather than requiring me to ask them through Sergeant Gray."

"Ask, then," said Findley sullenly.

"At what time did you last see Lord Lavenham?"

"I disremember. About ten o'clock."

"And when did you find the body?"

"About two."

"What were you doing in the clearing?"

"Taking the short cut between the warehouse and the manor."

"Why were you going to the manor?"

"To see his lordship."

"Did Lord Lavenham have any enemies?"

"I disremember."

“Business rivals?”

“I disremember.”

“Business difficulties?”

“I dis—”

“Come, come, my man,” said Holmes, sharply. “You were Lord Lavenham’s second in command. You must have been in his confidence. These continual denials only obstruct my investigation.”

Findley again lost his precarious hold on his temper.

“Well, Mister Fancy London Detective, that’s just too bl—din’ bad, ain’t it? I’ve had enough of the lot of you, and that’s a fact. I’ve answered all the questions I’ve a mind to, so you can all just bl—din’ get out. Now.”

There was nothing more to be said; in any event, Findley was in no state of mind to have listened to any reasonable argument. With as good a grace as we could muster, we departed.



Chapter 12: Encounter With a Widow

Upon leaving the premises of Gold Shield Imports, the five of us foregathered in the yard between warehouse and stables; none of us satisfied with the outcome of our encounter with the unamiable Findley. It was left to Dr. McCoy to ask, “Well, what do we do now?”

Mr. Spock now spoke. “If I may make the suggestion, Mr. Holmes, perhaps we should see Lady Lavenham at once. It is after four o’clock, and you have asked Inspector Lestrade and Sergeant Gray to meet us at the Red Lion at six. Since the only transportation available to us is the carriage in which we arrived here, it will take us considerable time to return to Hand Cross.”

“An excellent point, Mr. Spock,” replied Holmes, still gazing thoughtfully at our odd companion. “Let us go up to Lavenham Court immediately. I think we must attempt again to interview Lady Lavenham.”

As our small group boarded the Red Lion’s landau for the brief

drive across the estate, Captain Kirk asked, “Again? And ... ‘at-tempt to’?”

“Mr. Holmes, Dr. Watson, and I first encountered Lady Lavenham at ten-oh-eight this morning, Captain, just after we arrived here,” responded Mr. Spock, with his customary calm. “After Mr. Holmes insisted upon viewing Lord Lavenham’s body where it was, instead of allowing her to remove it from the clearing in which it was found, Lady Lavenham delivered herself of a highly emotional tirade.”

“For God’s sake, Spock,” said Dr. McCoy, “her husband had just died — getting a little upset is only human.”

“Precisely my point, Doctor,” replied Mr. Spock, somewhat obscurely.

“What kind of a tirade, Spock?” asked Captain Kirk.

“Personally abusive, Captain,” responded Mr. Spock, reluctantly. “Lady Lavenham is evidently deeply religious, and much of her tirade appears to have had its roots in the Christian Bible. For example, she expressed the hope that we would be broken in the place of the dragons, swept with the broom of destruction, and devoured by she-bears, all of which I believe are Biblical references.”

Captain Kirk acquired a very odd expression at this juncture, pressing his lips firmly together and reddening slightly.

“Psalms, and Isaiah,” said I, identifying Mr. Spock’s references.

“Indeed, Dr. Watson. She also expressed the opinion that we were the spawn of someone she called the Lord of the Flies. Is that also a religious reference?”

As I hesitated, Holmes supplied, “That is the literal translation of the Hebrew word ‘Beelzebub,’ which is one of the names of the Devil. Tell me, Mr. Spock, where did you learn to speak Spanish?”

There was a short pause. “Actually—” began Mr. Spock.

“Actually,” interjected Captain Kirk, “one of the members of the expedition to Shangri-La was Mexican. A Mr. Perez. She taught Mr. Spock the rudiments of Spanish — just enough to get by on.”

“She?” asked Holmes, quizzically.

“What did I say? He — yes, he. From Mexico City.”

“Mr. Perez is from Taxco, Captain,” interjected Mr. Spock. “About a hundred kilometres from Mexico City.”

“Whatever,” said Captain Kirk, with some impatience.

“Your associate Mr. Perez is to be complimented, Mr. Spock,” said Holmes slowly. “Your command of idiomatic Spanish is apparently as complete as is your command of English.”

“Some concepts are universal,” said Captain Kirk, “and need very little by way of a translator.” It may have been my imagination, but it appeared that he laid a tiny extra stress upon the words “universal” and “translator,” while looking in a rather admonitory way at Mr. Spock.

“That is very true, Captain,” agreed Mr. Spock. “In any event, Mr. Holmes responded to Lady Lavenham by making a logical statement. His implication that it was she rather than he who was standing in the way of what she desired infuriated her enough that she attempted to attack him physically.”

“You’re kidding!” exclaimed Dr. McCoy.

“As you are well aware, doctor, I would not know how.”

Captain Kirk interrupted what appeared to be a regular exchange between the two. “So then what happened?”

Mr. Spock regarded his friends serenely. “A moment after she accidentally brushed against me in her path to attacking Mr. Holmes, Lady Lavenham lost consciousness.”

Captain Kirk made a sound that I interpreted as indicating his entertainment with some implication of his companion’s narrative. With some asperity, I said, “A sudden faint in a middle-aged woman could be a symptom of stroke, heart disease, *diabetes mellitus*, *paralysis agitans*, or even amyloidosis. I see no cause for amusement.”

“You’re right, Dr. Watson,” said Dr. McCoy. “Let’s go visit the lady and make sure it was just a case of ... nerves.”

* * *

Lavenham Court, as I have said earlier, is a sixteenth-century manor house surrounded by some very fine clipped yews. It could have taken no small outlay to maintain the strange, peaked roofs and quaint, overhung gables, the magnificent Elizabethan doorway, the deep-set, mullioned windows, still with the original, wavy, slightly greenish glass, and the coats of arms scattered here and there among the ivy. To the north, beyond the famous topiary

yews, I could see a tennis lawn, and behind it a few small out-houses — gardening sheds and the like.

As it was autumn, the rhododendrons and magnolias no longer bloomed, which made the Court seem less resplendent than it must at a more propitious season. However, the chrysanthemums, nasturtiums, geraniums, and late-blooming climbing roses which were planted around the Court provided a compensatory touch of gaiety which seemed slightly incongruous in this house of grief. I could see two gardeners and six undergardeners busying themselves about the formal garden that lay to the west of the house, the yews, and the rolling, immaculate half-mile sweep of lawn between manor house and river. A wreath made of yew and adorned with black ribbons hung on the door, and several grooms prepared to put up the exterior black hangings which would signal Lady Lavenham's bereavement.

"There's money here, Watson, if there is nothing else," remarked my friend.

"Lady Lavenham had best be grateful that Parliament has not yet taken up Sir William Harcourt's proposal to replace our current estate taxes with a more punitive scheme of death duties," I commented. "Perhaps some of the estate will remain to the *new* Lord Lavenham."

Holmes rang at the front door, where a mournful butler told us in sepulchral tones that Lady Lavenham was not at home to visitors, there having been A Death.

"This is Doctor John Watson," Holmes replied, "and this is his colleague, Doctor Leonard McCoy. These physicians are here in their professional capacity to enquire into Lady Lavenham's health after her unfortunate swoon this morning. My name is Sherlock Holmes; these are my associates, Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock. We also take a keen interest in the state of Lady Lavenham's health."

The butler was apparently impressed enough to take my card to her ladyship, but not so impressed as to show us immediately into her drawing room. While we stood in the hall waiting, I looked round me with interest. The entry hall was a fine Jacobean apartment, large and lofty, lit by a central lamp and by the high, thin windows of old glass which we had seen from without. At one end was an enormous stone fireplace, fully ten feet in width, and

encased by wood paneling featuring fine strap-and-jewel carving. A maid was engaged in sweeping the Oriental carpet which took up the centre of the hall, while two liveried footmen polished the numerous suits of armour which stood about the peripheries, and a third adjusted the black hangings of a house in mourning from the balustraded gallery above.

Within a few minutes, the butler returned and showed us into the drawing room, informing us that Lady Lavenham would join us there shortly. Once our party was alone, Holmes turned to me.

“We have seen with our own eyes eight gardeners, six grooms, a butler, three footmen, and a housemaid; and it seems fair to assume that this is a chance assemblage of the staff, rather than its entirety.”

“You said earlier that there is money here. There must be, to keep up the building and grounds and to pay all these servants’ wages.”

“There is more than money here, Watson; there is wealth — great wealth. It would be interesting to learn whence it came, for I cannot believe that a small fish-importing business could make a man rich as Croesus within the space of twenty years.”

Lady Lavenham’s drawing room was a large, high chamber, with a carved oak ceiling, oaken panelling whose section joints were masked by carved pilasters and dado-rails, and an impressive array of artwork around the walls — further evidence of the wealth which lay behind Lavenham Court. In every nook and corner were arranged autumnal flowers, attesting to the lady’s sensibilities and bringing the rich scent of the garden into the room. At the further end from the door was a high French window, with three smaller windows on the left-hand side. On another October afternoon the insubstantial sunlight would have led one’s eye to the shimmer of the river, but naturally on *this* day, the curtains were drawn in this house of grief.

On the right side of the drawing room was a large fireplace with another massive, overhanging oak mantelpiece, upon which were several vases and delicate Meissen figurines as well as a clock. The mirror was draped with black gauze, and the clock had been stopped.

Lady Lavenham came to us within fifteen minutes of our ar-

rival, leaning on the supportive arm of a round-faced, portly gentleman in clerical garb. She still wore the dark-grey walking suit in which she had begun the day; but now her hair was covered with an exquisite black mantilla. Although she was very pale and red-eyed, the lady's greeting to us was perfectly composed. After we had introduced ourselves, she indicated the clerical gentleman and said, "This is Father Huxtable, my confessor. He has been kind enough to put aside his other duties to his parish to support me in my hour of need." Her voice was low and muted, as colourless and grief-stricken as her appearance.

Addressing his patroness, Father Huxtable concluded remarks that had begun before he entered the room. "We have sent a wire to Eton, summoning the new Lord Lavenham and his younger brother, Mr. Shield, home again. Her ladyship may not be comfortable again, but perhaps in a day or two, in the presence of her sons she may be a little comforted. We shall have the funeral on Monday, the twenty-seventh. I am already working on my sermon." From the tone with which the countess thanked him, I could hear that his remarks had very little interest to her other than as a momentary distraction from her overmastering sorrow.

"Lady Lavenham, we apologize for this intrusion, especially at such a time," said Holmes suavely. "My colleagues and I hope to take as little of your time as we can. But first, may Doctor Watson assure himself that you have taken no hurt from your swoon this morning?"

"It would be a kindness," replied her ladyship wanly. I stepped up to her with a few reassuring words, and she sat still while I took her pulse and temperature. She said, "Indeed, I am perplexed. *Verdad*, it is the first time in my life I have ever fainted."

Returning the lady's wrist, I asked, "Is your skin always this dry, madam?" Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Dr. McCoy look up sharply.

"I did not use my creams this morning, as I usually do. It is all *vanidad*—vanity. Why should I try to preserve my youth when my heart is dead?" The lady dabbed her handkerchief at her eyes.

I asked, "May I touch your neck?" Dr. McCoy unobtrusively rose and came to stand at my elbow. As I gently palpated the base of Lady Lavenham's throat, where her thyroid was located, I saw

her eyes stray from mine and come to rest on the man beside me. "This is my colleague, madam: Dr. Leonard McCoy."

As I straightened, Dr. McCoy said to me, "No goiter?"

"None." Moving my head slightly in the lady's direction, I said, "Her exhalations smell of strawberries that have been left slightly too long on the vine."

Doctor McCoy now addressed the countess. "Ma'am, would you allow me to smell your breathing?"

"Of course," she replied. I could see a mild puzzlement struggling to make its way through the black grief that shrouded the lady's spirit. In reply to her unspoken question, I said, "I am happy to say that your ladyship's thyroid gland is in excellent health."

I glanced at Dr. McCoy, who said to me, "You were right: keto-acidosis." To the countess, I now continued, "Lady Lavenham, Dr. McCoy and I suspect that you might be in the early stages of what is known as 'the wasting disease,' *diabetes mellitus*. It is incurable, and physicians cannot agree on the best course of treatment."

"This cannot be!" cried Father Huxtable. "Her ladyship's strength of constitution is well known. No matter how lengthy my sermons, she remains my most devoted parishioner." His round, rosy face became even pinker, and I found myself regretting on his behalf the strictures that prevented Roman Catholic priests from enjoying the comforts available to all other mortal men. It seemed to me that, had he been free to do so, Father Huxtable would have been glad to console her ladyship within a closer relationship than that of mere priest and patroness.

"If Dr. McCoy and I are correct, the disease is in its earliest stages. It may be possible to slow or even arrest its progression. Your ladyship's best recourse is a sparing diet that is high in vegetables, grains, legumes, and fruits, and low in fats and simple sugars, like alcohol or sweet desserts."

"Increased physical exercise will also help," said Dr. McCoy. "A daily walk, perhaps. We suggest that when you are able, you consult your own doctor and have him confirm our diagnosis. Be sure to tell him if you experience blurred vision or excessive thirst."

Lady Lavenham thanked Dr. McCoy with a continued lack of vitality that I easily attributed to her grief. Like every man present save only Holmes and Spock, my heart went out with pity to the

dear little woman and the fortitude with which she bore her sorrow, like a queen bee around whom her courtiers buzzed.

“Could this disease have been what caused me to faint, this morning?” the countess asked me.

I saw Dr. McCoy’s eyes fly to Mr. Spock, who for his part remained as impassive as a red-Indian. Evidently there was a conclusion to be leapt to concerning the cause of Lady Lavenham’s swoon. However, it seemed politic to me to forbear referring to the lady’s violent attack upon Sherlock Holmes, or to the connexion I suspected between her sudden, inexplicable loss of consciousness and the presence of Mr. Spock’s hand upon her neck immediately preceding it. I replied, “Father Huxtable is right. Despite the possibility that you are in the early stages of a grave disease, I see only strength of constitution *now*. It is my belief, your ladyship, that your swoon this morning was caused by a combination of your very natural grief and the unnatural stress of your being prevented the rights of the widowed to tend to their loved one. I foresee no lasting ill effects.”

My prophecy was pleasing to most of those present. Mr. Spock, of course, remained impassive as ever. Holmes, however, was made of sterner stuff.

“In the meantime, Lady Lavenham,” said Sherlock Holmes, “my associates and I have been called into Sussex to assist Scotland Yard with further investigation into your husband’s death. It would be of considerable help to us, madam, if you could find it in yourself to answer a few questions.”

The lady bowed her head for a moment, and despite my brave words moments before, I was concerned by her pallor. But she looked up, and replied, with a bravery that won my admiration, “Certainly, if I am able.”

“First: I have noticed that you are not native to these shores. From Madrid, originally, I think?”

“How did you know that?” asked she, opening her eyes wide.

“Ah! — that was something of a bow drawn at a venture. Your mantilla, which is very fine and quite old, is of a lace peculiar to that part of Spain. Moreover, upon your mantel is a porcelain vase which has the word ‘Manzanares’ in small letters upon its base, and ‘Manzanares’ is also the name of the river of Madrid. And fi-

nally, you speak Spanish with a sort of lisp which is so particularly of central Spain that it is known as the Castilian dialect.”

“It is *maravilloso*,” said she, amazed.

“Elementary,” replied Holmes, though he looked pleased. “To continue: How did you come to meet Lord Lavenham?”

“When I was a young girl, my mother died, and my father, having heard of the fortunes to be made in South Africa, decided that we should remove ourselves to that place. Lord Lavenham — then he was just Mr. Shield, *ustedes comprendeis* — was there also. What more is there to say? We met, we loved, we married.” She brought a lace handkerchief gently to the corners of her reddened eyes.

“South Africa ... You begin to interest me exceedingly,” murmured Holmes. “How long have you been in England?”

“Almost twenty years.”

“And when did Lord Lavenham start his business of importing exotic seafoods?”

“Almost immediately upon our arrival here. He came into the title while we were on board ship, and dealing with the Will caused some small delays.”

“Did you know much about Lord Lavenham’s business affairs?”

She shrugged, still wan. “I knew nothing.” I saw Father Huxtable open his eyes at these words; but he made no remark.

Mr. Spock now unexpectedly spoke.

“The police believe that Mr. Godfrey Norton may be implicated in the death of your husband. What do you know of Mr. Norton? Do you agree with their opinion?”

“Mr. Norton?” After favouring Mr. Spock with a long, speculative look — for certainly a man with sharply slanting eyebrows, wearing a turban, who appears so unwell as to be positively green, is not the popular idea of a detective — Lady Lavenham paused to consider this idea. “But he is such a gentle young man.”

“Mr. Norton had a violent quarrel with Lord Lavenham very shortly before he died,” interrupted Captain Kirk. “Others overheard Mr. Norton make angry threats.”

“Mr. Norton did? This is certain?” Lady Lavenham appeared frankly amazed. “All things are possible, I suppose; but I find it

most difficult to believe. Mr. Norton is just a lamb. He would hurt no one.”

“Has there been anyone else after your husband?” asked Captain Kirk.

After a tiny pause, Lady Lavenham said smoothly, “A man in business has many who would wish to emulate his success. Alas; I know the names of no business associates who would have wished harm upon my husband.” I saw that the delicate lace handkerchief, which she still held, was in some danger from the tightness of her grip upon it.

“Have you noticed anything unusual in the last few days or weeks, Lady Lavenham?” asked Holmes; “strangers in the village, a change in Lord Lavenham’s demeanour, any sort of departure from the ordinary?”

“No,” said she, quickly. Once again it seemed to me as though Father Huxtable considered speaking, and then thought better of it.

“Lord Lavenham did not seem unusually tense, or worried, or upset over anything?”

“Why should he? ... No, he was himself.” Now the countess made play with her handkerchief, dabbing the corners of her eyes with sweet frailty.

Abruptly, Holmes changed tacks.

“What were your own relations with your husband, Lady Lavenham?”

“I loved him, of course,” said she, bringing the handkerchief to her eyes yet again. “That is the duty of a wife, is it not?”

“There were never harsh words between you?”

“He was very kind to me.” As she spoke, the tears — which had never, during our interview, been very far from the surface — sprang forth, and Father Huxtable hurried to her side, with a reproachful glance at my colleague.

“My apologies, Lady Lavenham,” said Holmes quickly. “I did not mean to distress you.” As he spoke, the clock on the oak mantel struck five. “We must leave you now. However, I would still be grateful for the opportunity of examining some of Lord Lavenham’s papers.”

“You may return,” said Lady Lavenham, once more making

play with the lace handkerchief, her hand shaking slightly with the suppressed intensity of her emotion. “But perhaps ... ah, how shall I say? ... five men is a great number, *verdad?* Perhaps only one or two of you shall come back?”

“Certainly, Lady Lavenham; we wish to impose as little as possible.”

As we left Lavenham Court, Captain Kirk remarked, “Did you notice how she started lying when we got to the part about whether Lord Lavenham had any enemies?”

“Certainly,” replied Holmes, coldly.



Jeremy Brett and David Burke, 1984

Chapter Thirteen: At the Red Lion

Upon our return to the Red Lion, we found Inspector Lestrade and Sergeant Gray awaiting us in the entry hall. It was at once obvious that, while Sergeant Gray was merely pleased with his afternoon's work, Lestrade was big with news: His face was flushed with victory, and his manner, at no time wholeheartedly civil, had become grossly triumphant.

"I have important fresh evidence which puts the seal upon the case," said he, with a pleased little crow. "It is now as plain as a pikestaff. I know who the murderer is, and why the crime was committed. What is more, I shall be able to lay my hand upon the cur within twenty-four hours. I advise you to abandon your efforts here and go home, Mr. Holmes."

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Dr. McCoy put his hand upon Captain Kirk's arm. Their eyes met, and it seemed as though they shared feelings of some consternation.

"Dear me!" replied Holmes, mildly. "You are very certain."

“I have cause to be.”

“Well, what is this fresh evidence?”

“First, before I tell you, I must lay a little groundwork. You must know that, at your suggestion, I spent much of this afternoon at the Post Office, looking into the matter of Lord Lavenham’s wire to Prince Albert.”

“From your expression, Lestrade, I should judge that you discovered that it was Lord Lavenham’s frequent habit to send telegraph messages to Prince Albert,” remarked Holmes, mischievously.

Inspector Lestrade acquired a look of chagrin, while I expostulated, “But, my dear Holmes—!”

“If the person to whom a telegram is sent is no longer living, one must next ask whether that person was famous enough to have a location named after him or her,” Mr. Spock said coolly.

“You have it in a nutshell, Mr. Spock,” agreed Holmes. “No one has yet imputed to Lord Lavenham either madness or an absent-mindedness so extreme that he should fail to recall the death of the Prince Consort thirty years ago; thus, I knew at once that the reference was not to a man but to a geographical locus. My own conjecture was that Prince Albert is the name of some village or town. Further, I believe that the town is probably located somewhere in South Africa.”

The stare with which Inspector Lestrade favoured Holmes was enough to assure us that his inference had been correct.

“Well enough, Mr. Holmes, but have you deduced the latitude and longitude?” asked the little detective, bitterly.

“Was not South Africa the spot where a great stratum of diamonds was recently discovered?” returned Holmes.

“In 1870,” said Mr. Spock.

“Then, while I cannot specify the precise latitude and longitude, I may say that I should not be surprised should the location of Prince Albert turn out to be somewhere near the Kimberley diamond fields.”

“I do not know,” said Lestrade sullenly. “We must procure an atlas.”

“You say that Lord Lavenham frequently sent telegrams to South Africa. What was their content?”

“You have not deduced that as well? You astonish me, Mr. Holmes. The telegrams all concerned his business affairs — what fish to send, in what quantities, upon what vessel, and how much ice upon which to chill them.”

“Disappointing,” said Holmes. “Have you copies of these wires?”

From his pocket, Lestrade produced a thick yellow bundle, tied together with string. “I need hardly remind you to have a care with these, sir.”

“I shall not allow them out of my possession,” promised my friend. He then turned to Sergeant Gray. “I believe that your afternoon was likewise successful, sergeant?”

“I spent the afternoon in the company of the Sussex coroner, Mr. Holmes. His conclusion supports your opinion of this morning: that Lord Lavenham was frightened to death. An artery in the base of the brain exploded, causing almost instantaneous death.” He fumbled in his pocket, and produced a small bit of paper, from which he read, “Ruptured aneurysm of the basilar arterial loop, for you medical gentlemen. The coroner found no poison, no signs of asphyxiation, no broken bones; nothing more than a few bruises which were caused by his being bound hand and foot. The horrifying mutilation of the skull and the removal of the brain were both performed after the death, as was evidenced by the fact that the wound bled hardly at all.”

“How was the mutilation accomplished?” asked Mr. Spock.

“Accomplished?”

“Was there any evidence of whether some tool or tools was used, and if so, of what sort?”

“Ah,” said Gray, his brow clearing. “There were a few flakes of ferrous oxide caught in between the forehead and the skull, such as might have been left by a rusty saw. However, the greater part of the damage was done by some means beyond the coroner’s experience.”

“That is very significant,” said Holmes. He turned to the little inspector. “But we have not heard your great news, Lestrade — the fresh evidence which, you say, has given you the name of the murderer and his motive; and the arrangements you have made by which you will lay your hand on him within the day.”

At once Lestrade resumed the grossly triumphant manner which had so offended me earlier.

“Allow me to present the following ideas,” said he, with a smirk. “Merely from the argument on the fatal day, we know that Mr. Godfrey Norton had the motive to kill Lord Lavenham: All of Lord Lavenham’s office staff heard his threats. We know that he matches the description you gave of the killer, Mr. Holmes: tall, heavy, strong, and dark-haired. And finally, we know that he had the opportunity to commit the crime. No other man matches the criteria for the killer so perfectly. Moreover, he has disappeared, which is surely conclusive proof of his guilt.”

“By the same reasoning, if one incurs a tooth-ache, one’s most recent meal must be responsible — for it has had the most recent contact with the victim, and it too has disappeared,” remarked Holmes, sardonically.

“Those are the facts which we all knew earlier today,” returned Lestrade, with no abatement of his cock-a-hoop manner. “This afternoon, while looking through the copies of recently sent and received wires, I came across one more which you may find of interest. It is addressed, sir, to Mr. Godfrey Norton, and was received by him yesterday morning, shortly before his fatal quarrel with Lord Lavenham. It reads as follows: ‘In response to your wire of the 17th inst., please be advised that all details about which you enquired are confirmed as accurate.’ It was sent, gentlemen, from a law firm in Prince Albert, South Africa.”

“That is extraordinarily interesting,” said Holmes. “What is the text of Mr. Norton’s original wire, the one of October 17th?”

“On that day, Norton was in London. I have set the Yard to enquiring at all of the area’s telegraph offices, and doubtless we shall have the original telegram shortly.

“The realisation that Mr. Godfrey Norton was in London all this week past — during which time, the man in Whitechapel was murdered and the body at Bart’s was mutilated so shockingly — prompted me to have the Yard begin to trace his activities during that week. You may be interested to hear, Mr. Holmes, that so far from having an alibi for either of the two London crimes, Mr. Norton’s movements place him in their vicinity, and his time is unaccounted for during the critical periods.”

“That also is extremely interesting,” said Holmes, thoughtfully. I could see that Captain Kirk and his friends were not displeased with Inspector Lestrade’s statement — which, indeed, seemed on the way towards exonerating Mr. Spock’s servant, Jack Tellar, of guilt in these affairs.

“Of Mr. Norton’s movements which Scotland Yard has traced thus far, one seems what I daresay you will agree is of paramount importance,” continued the little inspector, gloatingly. “On the twenty-first of October — the day before yesterday — Mr. Norton visited no fewer than four shipping offices, where he enquired into the dates and departure times of all ships bound for South Africa. At nine o’clock yesterday evening, the *Cynthia Rushworthy* set sail for Cape Town, South Africa. One of the passengers of the *Cynthia* is listed on the manifest only as ‘Norton’. And finally, the shipping office told a detective from the Yard that this ‘Norton’ is a man, tall and heavy, with black or dark brown hair.”

“That does appear conclusive,” agreed Holmes.

“You must acknowledge that we have been a little in front of you this time, Mr. Holmes,” crowed Lestrade. “Godfrey Norton is responsible for the death of Lord Lavenham, and all theories to the contrary are the merest moonshine.”

“Well, moonshine is a brighter thing than fog,” returned Holmes.

Something in his tone caught my ear, and I turned to look at him. It seemed that he was making desperate efforts to restrain a convulsive attack of laughter, for his eyes shone, and his lips quivered with inward merriment.

“Dear me! Dear me!” he said at last. “Well, now, what is your plan of action?”

“It is already begun. A launch has been sent after the *Cynthia Rushworthy*, which, luckily, is of British registration; and Mr. Godfrey Norton will be issued a pressing invitation to return to London with the police and explain himself. I myself leave immediately, so as to meet the boat when it returns. Sergeant Gray can do no more, and he must stay within his country bailiwick; but if you, Mr. Holmes, and Dr. Watson should care to accompany me, I should be pleased to have it so.”

“No, no,” said Holmes, laughing. “Even though your new evi-

dence is impressive, I am by no means persuaded of Mr. Norton's guilt. Do you go to London, inspector; we shall stay here; and we shall see which of us gets to the bottom of the matter first."

"Very well, Mr. Holmes," returned Lestrade, obviously angered by Holmes's somewhat cavalier dismissal of his evidence. "I have wasted time enough. I believe in hard work and not in sitting by the fire spinning fine theories. I have the honour to wish you gentlemen a good evening." And with these words, delivered very much in the grand manner, the little detective strode out of the room.

Gazing after him, Holmes murmured, "*Le monde est plein de fous, et qui n'en veut pas voir, doit se tenir tout seul*."

"*Et casser son miroir*," remarked Mr. Spock, unexpectedly. To my surprise, Holmes flushed slightly.

Sergeant Gray now said, apologetically, "I am afraid that I do not understand the French tongue."

"A rough translation," I replied, "might be, 'The world is full of fools, and he who wishes not to see any should live alone.'"

"—And smash his mirror'," added Dr. McCoy. "It's an old French proverb."

The moment might have proven awkward, for Holmes was favouring both Mr. Spock and Dr. McCoy with a speculative stare, but now a police constable entered the parlour and touched his hat to Sergeant Gray.

"Begging your pardon, sir," said he; "but there's a problem at Farmer Huggate's, sir, as you should be seeing to yourself."

"Well? What is it?"

"Spring-heeled Jack, sir. Seemingly he's killed one of the cows, sir. Three of the farmhands is there, sayin' as how they seen Spring-heeled Jack kill the animal, and then pick it up in his arms and go bounding off in great fifty-foot leaps, as though he was wearing seven-league boots. They say as how he was laughing fit for Bedlam, sir."

"I shall have to go and attend to it, I suppose," said Sergeant Gray, looking annoyed. Once again, Captain Kirk appeared about to speak — perhaps to volunteer to accompany Sergeant Gray. This time, however, it was Doctor McCoy who prevented him.

"Evening chores can be tough on a working farm, especially at

this time of year,” opined the doctor. “Feeding the livestock and the dogs, checking the pastures, that kind of thing. Plus, the cows must be really upset, which means the second milking won’t go very well. We’d be mighty in the way if we went now. Let’s wait until tomorrow.”

“My apologies, gentlemen,” Sergeant Gray said. “Mr. Holmes, with your permission, I shall do myself the honour of calling upon you tomorrow. Although Inspector Lestrade is convinced that Mr. Godfrey Norton is the culprit in this unhappy affair, your reputation is too eminent for me to rest easily upon the finality of Lestrade’s word, and I am by no means persuaded that he is right.”

“Nor am I,” responded Holmes, cordially. “By this time tomorrow, however, I hope to have this case solved for you. I shall look forward to seeing you then.”

Our evening meal was cheerful. When he chose, Holmes could talk exceedingly well, and that night he did choose. Nor were our companions uncommunicative. The talk ranged over a quick succession of subjects, from Stradivarius violins and the effect of the Black Plague upon the mediaeval *commedia dell’arte* to the controversial theories of a young Viennese nerve specialist, Dr. Freud. Somewhat later, Captain Kirk argued passionately in the defense of the American president during its Civil War, Mr. Lincoln, after Holmes had made a casually denigratory remark about that gentleman’s contribution to the history books. When the talk turned to the warships of the future — one of Holmes’s favourite subjects, about which he spoke as though he had made a special study of it — I could see that for some reason two of our companions were hard put to it to suppress their smiles, although all three were unfailingly polite. For myself, I found Holmes’s gaiety infectious, and smiled quite as much as any one. None of us alluded during our meal to the dark cause which had brought us to Hand Cross.

After supper, Holmes announced his intention of returning to Lavenham Court with no further delay. “For,” said he, “while Lady Lavenham is disposed to be gracious, I believe we should seize our opportunity. I should wish to have Mr. Spock accompany me, for I believe his powers of observation to rival even yours, Watson. In obedience to Lady Lavenham’s wish that not so many of us visit her again, however, do you remain here with Captain Kirk and

Dr. McCoy. If I may suggest it, an evening spent in the bar may be helpful; it must certainly be the centre of country gossip.”

I saw Holmes’s reasoning at once, for we had spoken together privately on the subject earlier in the day. Holmes was loath to allow us to be both parted from our unusual companions, lest they disappear as suddenly as they had appeared, and before he could discover the mystery beneath their undeniably odd mannerisms and behaviour. Thus I allowed Holmes to depart with Mr. Spock with no more than one small pang at the thought of the masterly pageant of ratiocination which I should be missing.

Left to our own devices, the three of us turned to the public bar of the Red Lion (for, in a village and an inn so small, there was no private bar). This was a bright, white-washed room crowded with oaken tables and benches, and having a settle in front of the fire similar to that in the coffee room. Any number of day labourers sat relaxing over their pints of stout, talking in a Sussex burr so broad that I felt deep indeed in the countryside. At the bar, one lone old man stood hunched over a glass of gin, and from the almost visible miasma of alcohol which hung around him, had evidently been there for no little time.

My two companions were apparently fastidious in their requirements for their potations, but willing to be flexible in the one public house of a small village. They joked each other over “Aldebaran brandy” and “Finnegan’s follies” (somewhat to my puzzlement, for I had never heard of either drink, and had always thought that Aldebaran was a star of some sort); but in the end, both allowed themselves to be guided by my recommendation, the landlord’s own home brew. “For merely in the fourteen years since he published *Etudes sur la Bière*, M. Pasteur has revolutionized the brewing of beer, both fermentation, which of course he has studied since 1860, and filtration and purification of the water used, but most especially doctrines in the prevention of souring that are supported by purely scientific researches of the highest value. We even call his remarkable new technique ‘pasteurization,’ in his honor. I believe this new process to be preeminent, awaiting only the sanction of time for its universal adoption.”

As we seated ourselves at our table, Dr. McCoy said, “So, where do you think we stand?”

“Beats me,” returned Captain Kirk. “All we really know right now is that Lord Lavenham was killed a lot like the way the guy in London was killed, and that Lady Lavenham knows more than she’s letting on.”

“It sure doesn’t look good for Godfrey Norton,” said his friend.

“I can’t believe he did it, though,” said Kirk. “I trust Irene Norton’s instincts on this one.”

“What do you think, Dr. Watson?” asked Dr. McCoy.

“I am all in the dark.”

“Do you think Mr. Holmes knows more than he’s saying?”

“Unquestionably, though what his conclusions may be is more than I can even dimly imagine. I have noticed that when Holmes is off the trail, he generally admits as much. It is when he is on a scent and is not absolutely sure yet that it is the right one that he is most taciturn.”

At this moment I was interrupted by a shout from the bar. The old man who had been standing there had evidently reached the bellicose stage of his drunkenness, for he suddenly emerged from his silence and began a loud, ranting tirade which seemed largely concerned with the vicious selfishness of the upper classes. He was a tall, powerfully built ancient with a deeply seamed, craggy face visible above a remarkably bushy, ragged beard, in which the tangles of black were only lightly interspersed with grey. His stooped shoulders and trembling hands gave him the appearance of decrepitude, but his enormous shoulders and arms seemed to point to a physical strength which would not have shamed many a younger man. Taken all in all, he was a magnificent ruin.

“D—n them all!” cried the old man, waving his glass. “There’s not a one of them that would not deal double with an honest man as soon as look at him. Lords, they call themselves! Snakes, I say!” He coughed, and took another deep draught from his glass. The barman, who had rushed from the room as soon as the old man had begun his tirade, now reappeared, in the company of Mr. Nye, the landlord. The two of them hustled the old man from the room with the skill of long practice, and after a moment the buzz of voices recommenced.

“A little early to be getting that drunk, isn’t it?” remarked Captain Kirk.

“You’re forgettin’, we’re in the country,” returned Dr. McCoy, with amusement. “Early to bed and early to rise, *et cetera*.”

Captain Kirk nodded. “And the early bird gets the hangover. That old geezer’s going to have a beaut tomorrow. I’ve only felt that way once or twice in my life, thank goodness — that was once or twice too many.”

“Why, Captain,” said McCoy, twinkling; “are you sayin’ that you’ve been guilty of abusin’ a recreational drug?”

“Considering that last time, *I took you home*—”

“Slander, suh, slander!” cried McCoy. “Last time, Spock took us both home, remember?”

I was not displeased that the conversation had turned to Mr. Spock, for I confess that he intrigued me quite as much as he intrigued Holmes.

“I have often said that all emotion is abhorrent to Holmes’s cold, precise nature, and that Holmes is the most logical man I know. Having met Mr. Spock, however, I believe I must revise that opinion, for surely there can be no man more logical or more emotionless. I have yet to see Mr. Spock display any human reaction whatsoever — not even a very natural human concern when Captain Kirk became ill upon our journey here.”

Captain Kirk smiled. “Well, emotion isn’t logical.” When Dr. McCoy snorted, Kirk added, “Bones is always after Spock, trying to get him to show some emotion.”

“Suppressin’ emotion isn’t healthy,” said McCoy dourly.

“Have you ever seen Mr. Spock display emotion?” asked I.

“Once or twice,” replied Captain Kirk, with a grin. “Like the time after he thought he’d killed me — he was definitely glad to see me alive again, wouldn’t you say, Bones?”

“Definitely,” returned McCoy, laughing.

“Usually when he shows emotion, though, it’s because he’s suffering from some kind of chemical influence.”

“Drugs?” asked I, interested. “That is another similarity between our two friends, then. The only human frailty to which Holmes will freely confess is his occasional use of cocaine.”

“Cocaine!” exclaimed Captain Kirk, while Dr. McCoy added, with a concerned expression, “Doesn’t he know how dangerous the drug can be?”

“Certainly; for I have told him so, often. He says he must have the stimulation to his mental faculties. It is my hope to wean him from the pernicious influence of the drug by degrees.”

“Why not just threaten to turn him in?”

“I beg your pardon?”

“Why not just threaten to turn him in? Tell the police that he’s using cocaine.”

“I do not understand you,” replied I, perplexed. “What purpose would that accomplish? Cocaine is not illegal.”

Captain Kirk seemed disconcerted. Seeing this, Dr. McCoy interjected, “Tell us about Sherlock Holmes. Has he always been a consulting detective?”

I shook my head. “No. Soon after he was graduated from University, he spent a year or so touring America as an actor.”

“An actor!”

“You may possibly have heard of him, since he must have been there before you left for Shangri-La. His stage name was William Escott.”

“Why didn’t he just use his own name?” asked Captain Kirk.

I raised my eyebrows. “Holmes is a gentleman.” Seeing that this explanation did not entirely satisfy my two companions, I added, “And, if one were to be perfectly strict, he did use his own name. His given name is William Sherlock Scott Holmes.”

Captain Kirk nodded. “Oh, sure — ‘William S. Scott,’ William Escott.”

“Why did he give up acting? To become a detective?”

“We have never discussed why he left the stage, but I surmise that it was because it must not have provided sufficient exercise for those formidable mental gifts with which he has been endowed. If I may judge by disguises I have seen him assume and roles I have seen him perform since I have known him, he must have been quite a brilliant actor. I do know that while he was in America, he became associated for a short time with a Mr. Pinkerton, who operates a detective agency there. I imagine that the experience showed Holmes his true *métier*, so that when he returned to England in 1879, he became the first (and only) consulting detective.”

“He must have been just a kid!”

I was a trifle taken aback at Captain Kirk’s unorthodox termi-

nology, since to my mind my friend could have been nothing like a goat; but I replied merely, "He solved his first case as a student at University, when he was but twenty; although it was not until five years later that he set up his consulting business in Montague Street, in London. The early years were, of course, difficult."

"They always are," said Captain Kirk. "I remember my first command — one part nervousness and one part sheer exhilaration. You wonder if you'll ever live through it. You do, of course."

"On my first day as an army surgeon, at Candahar," said I, "I came in at the end of a battle with the fanatic Ghazis, after a long ocean journey and a two hundred and fifty mile trip by rail and camel caravan through unbearable conditions — blistering heat and the constant tension of surprise attacks by the enemy. I had just barely alit from my camel when I was summoned to a makeshift tent, where I was needed to amputate the leg of a mere youth — no more than eighteen years old. You are right, Captain Kirk; beginnings are always difficult."

"I'll never forget my first night in the E.R.," said Dr. McCoy. "They brought in a man who was supposed to have had a heart-attack. But that wasn't the reason for his symptoms. When we examined him, it turned out that he'd been run through with a sword."

Both Captain Kirk and I laughed appreciatively, as McCoy had intended we should. "I daresay it was one of your easiest diagnoses," said I. "By the way, what is an E.R.?"

"Emergency room."

"I assume you refer to a place within a hospital where doctors deal with medical emergencies? A casualty area? What a sensible innovation." Dr. McCoy blinked, as though I had somehow astonished him. "This Shangri-La of yours must be an amazing land, particularly for medical men. Certainly the techniques which I have seen you use have been so far advanced as to appear almost to be miracles."

"If you two are going to start talking doctor talk, I'm leaving," threatened Captain Kirk humorously.

"Okay; see you," replied Dr. McCoy, looking absent-minded. To me, he continued, "No miracles. I've sometimes wished for some — I'm sure you have, too. But who's that lucky?"

“You know, I sometimes think about how primitive medicine was for so many thousands of years. Workin’ by guess and by golly, barely knowin’ anatomy, knowin’ next to nothin’ about body chemistry . . . cuttin’ and stitchin’ people like garments. ... and the pain....”

Captain Kirk rose and clapped his friend on the shoulder, saying, “I’ve heard this before. I’ll see you later, upstairs.” He smiled at me as an adieu and left the room.

“What do you think about germ theory?” I asked Dr. McCoy, signalling to the barman for another round.

“Germ theory?”

“Certain medical scientists are beginning to believe that some infections and diseases may be caused by tiny animalcules too small to be seen, thus sometimes called *microbiota*, or germs. Pasteur and Lister have both done some impressive work on the subject. I myself am inclined to take germ theory quite seriously.”

Dr. McCoy appeared amazed. “Germ theory,” he repeated, shaking his head over and over. “Germ *theory*. Oh, boy.”

“Then you do not believe in the existence of *microbiota*?”

“Oh, yes,” replied he, laughing slightly. “Let me try one on you, now: What does the word ‘virus’ mean to you?”

“It is a Latin word, meaning ‘slimy liquid or poison,’” I replied, puzzled by the sudden shift in the conversation.

“Oh, boy,” repeated my companion, shaking his head again, but offering no word to explain his amazement. “Dr. Watson, where I come from, the existence of germs is an established fact — there’s no ‘theory’ about it. Germs are accepted as being just as fundamental as vaeta-mins are.”

“Indeed! ... What is a vaeta-min?”

Dr. McCoy stared at me for a moment, and then shook his head as if to clear it, and laughed.

“It’s a kind of essential nutrient — like good whiskey.”

It is always pleasurable to exchange reminiscences with a like-minded soul, and when he shares one’s profession, the pleasure is redoubled. Holmes, for all his wisdom and knowledge, had never dug a bullet out of a screaming soldier or watched by the bedside of a dying woman. Dr. McCoy and I had shared the grief of death, the joy of life, as few others could; we spoke the same language.

We sat over our drinks for quite some time, I recalling such adventures as the time I had treated a young engineer who had had his thumb roughly amputated in a murderous attack, and the time I had aided the recovery of an old school-chum from a siege of brain-fever, about which I have written elsewhere as “The Adventure of the Naval Treaty”; and Dr. McCoy in turn relating to me an incident when he had been faced with the grim necessity of conducting a serious operation on a ship while it was engaged in battle. An excellent understanding arose between us over the course of this genial evening, for I soon discovered that, despite all his oddities, Dr. McCoy was a deeply humanitarian man, who masked with a crusty exterior a heart as tender as a woman’s. Dr. McCoy sampled stout for the first time during the evening, pronouncing it to taste like beer which had turned bad; I also persuaded him to try some of my own favourite whisky, Glenmorangie. He in turn was wishful of persuading me to taste American bourbon whiskey, and mildly indignant when the barman told him the Red Lion purveyed only true whisky, from Scotland and Ireland.

All in all, it was a more convivial *rencontre* than I had been a part of in no short time. When finally the evening ended, I was conscious of some small regret, along with perhaps the slightest unsteadiness of motion. I bade Dr. McCoy a good night at the door of his room, and entered mine, a little further down the hall. A moment later, I heard a knock on Captain Kirk’s door, next to McCoy’s. I had only removed my coat in preparation for bed when a second knock came at my own door.

“Jim’s not in his room,” said McCoy, looking anxious. “I wouldn’t worry about it, except for his surgery this mornin’. He shouldn’t be seepin’ any more — I’m sure I sealed off all those capillaries — yes, I know I did — but he might have knocked against somethin’ accidentally and started it bleedin’ again, or—”

“Doctor, you are sounding perfectly distracted,” said I, putting on my coat once more. “We shall go after Captain Kirk, but I assure you, the strongest likelihood is that he is merely taking the night air.”



*William Shatner as George Stapleton
in 1972's The Hound of the
Baskervilles, a failed TV pilot.*

Starfleet Log Five

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate Unknown Earth Date Thursday, October 23, 1890 - 00:37:52

After dinner, Bones, Watson, and I went into the Red Lion's bar and talked for a while. Then Bones and Watson got started on their medical studies, and I suddenly realized what a long day it'd been.

I went back to my room and hit the sack ... and I had a dream, that Irene Norton was married to Gav, the Tellarite ambassador who was killed aboard the Enterprise a couple of years ago. Hoo. Tellarites on the brain!

I woke up with a start, thinking about Godfrey Norton. The dream reminded me that Sherlock Holmes was so busy solving the murder of Lord Lavenham that he seemed to be ignoring Norton's disappearance, or putting it on the back burner anyway.

I am convinced that Godfrey Norton's disappearance is connected somehow with Lavenham's murder. Lady Lavenham started lying the minute I asked if anyone was out to get her husband. You can always tell. She lied when she said she hadn't noticed anyone hanging around, and she lied when she said Lord Lavenham didn't seem unusually worried or

upset about anything. What if whoever was out to get Lord Lavenham missed, and got Norton, before he got Lavenham?

And what's more, Godfrey Norton — Lavenham's lawyer — had gotten upset and started having shouting matches with Lord Lavenham very suddenly. Maybe he'd stumbled across something when he was going through Lavenham's papers or books that indicated that Lavenham had been mixed up with something criminal. Watson was right, Lavenham had obviously been rolling in money. Where did he get it? And did he get it legally?

I began to feel strongly that Godfrey Norton held the key to the whole mystery, if only we could find him. I also thought Holmes wasn't paying the proper attention to Norton's disappearance — almost as if he were reluctant to have anything to do with Irene. Maybe he's holding a grudge over whatever she did to him when they met each other before.

And, worse — what if *Irene* is mixed up in this whole mess!

No, that doesn't make sense. There isn't the slightest crumb of evidence that she is. And if she was, she'd know better than to get Sherlock Holmes involved.

Still, it seemed to me that there were a lot of questions that Holmes ought to have asked Irene, and hadn't. It wasn't all that late in the evening, so I decided to visit Irene Norton and ask her some of them myself. Unfortunately, I think I once again managed to offend some Victorian sensibilities. The landlord at the Red Lion didn't want to tell me where she lived, and then her butler gave me a very frosty answer when he finally answered my knock. Not only that, he seemed to have some kind of hearing loss — I had to repeat myself several times, and loudly, before I got through to him. But I finally managed to persuade him that *Irene* should be the one to decide whether she should see me, and he went off to find her, walking as slowly as if it hurt him to move.

She came out to the hall to greet me, and I was struck once again by how beautiful she was. All I said, though, was, "Your butler seems to think I'm a dangerous character."

She smiled. "It is not the custom for a single gentleman to call upon a married woman at this hour — particularly when the woman's husband is missing. I should not be surprised if my reputation in the village has already been irretrievably smirched."

"You don't seem to be very upset by the possibility," I answered.

"It is easier for a woman to defend her virtue from a man than it is for her to defend her reputation from a small community. I do not concern myself unduly about matters over which I have no control." She dismissed her butler with a quick movement of her head, even though he was still waiting to take my hat and overcoat. To me, she said, "Come into

the drawing-room.”

She led the way into a big, airy room that, for a change in this era, wasn't crammed with furniture and knick-knacks. As we sat down, she said, “Now — how may I serve you, Captain Kirk?”

“You told us at lunch that your husband disappeared right after he'd had an angry confrontation with Lord Lavenham,” I said. “Did he tell you anything about what made him so angry? Or do you have any suspicions?”

She sat looking at me steadily for a few moments. Then, abruptly, she stood up again, saying, “Today we have what you Americans call an ‘Indian summer,’ and it is still warm. Let us go into the garden.”

We went outside, Irene throwing on some kind of cape, and onto a patio and then a small path. And I have to admit, the garden was very pretty in the moonlight, although “warm” was definitely an exaggeration. There were still a few late-summer flowers holding on, including what looked like goldenrod. I asked, and sure enough, that's what it was. She seemed so proud of it that I didn't have the heart to mention I'd always thought goldenrod was a weed.

“About your husband's fight with Lord Lavenham—” I finally began.

She stopped me with a gesture, and looked back at the house. Then, in a low voice, she said, “My housekeeper is walking out with Lady Lavenham's butler.”

Quoting one of Spock's favorite lines, I said, “That would appear to be a problem.”

“It means that anything I say in my servants' hearing — which is to say, withindoors — about Lavenham Court, will be all over the village within hours. ... To answer your question: Yes. Mr. Norton had found evidence that Lord Lavenham was involved somehow with smugglers.”

“Why didn't you mention it at lunch, when we were with Sherlock Holmes?”

She gave me a measuring, sidelong look before she answered. “For the same reason we just came into the garden, Captain Kirk. Lord Lavenham is — was, a very powerful man; particularly in Hand Cross. One does not pull the tail of a tiger unless one is a tiger oneself. Or one has a safe place to run to.”

“Did your husband think there was going to be any danger in confronting Lord Lavenham about the smuggling?”

“It would not have mattered. For all his gentleness, he had a very strong moral nature. ... Of course, it is easy to be moral in the country.”

I turned to face her. “Where is he, Irene?”

Her fine brows drew together. “I do not know. You must understand that Lord Lavenham was a very generous employer to my husband, and

that may have caused Godfrey to be a little more uncritical than he ought. It had always seemed to me that Lord Lavenham had a good deal more money than he could easily account for; the Shields have not historically been notable for their wealth."

"The Shields?"

"The Lavenham family name. At any rate, I said nothing about my doubts, since they seemed to be mere tail-pulling, and I had no more evidence than a feeling. Then, about a month ago, an old man came to live in Hand Cross — a Mr. Petrie. My husband made Mr. Petrie's acquaintance, and almost at once became suspicious and angry. I believe that Lord Lavenham kept two sets of accounting ledgers, and a hint that Mr. Petrie let fall led Godfrey to uncover the second set. ... I had thought that after his row with Lord Lavenham, my husband would have gone to visit Mr. Petrie, but Mr. Petrie has told me that if he indeed set out to do so, he never arrived there."

"But was Petrie telling the truth?"

She paused, and her eyes widened. "How odd," she said. "Now that you mention it, I do not believe he was."

"How long has Godfrey had a—" I began. Then I looked down into those glorious eyes of hers, and I forgot what I'd been about to ask.

After a moment, I said, "You are ... breathtakingly lovely, Irene."

She smiled. "I have a left shoulder-blade that is a miracle of loveliness. People come miles to see it. My right elbow has a fascination that few can resist."

"That's from 'The Mikado,' isn't it?"

"It is," she agreed demurely, "...but how unkind in you to point it out."

"I'm sorry," I said, grinning. "What can I do to make amends?"

"Tell me something about yourself. Where are you from?"

"I've done a lot of traveling in the last few years."

"You are evading my question, Captain Kirk."

"I was born in Riverside, Iowa."

"And you are still evading my question."

Well, why not tell her the (partial) truth? She wouldn't believe it, anyway. "If you really want to know, I'm a little green man from Alpha Centauri. It's a beautiful place; you should visit there some time."

"A little green man? Hardly an accurate description, I should say."

Good work, Jim, I thought. *Quote an idiom from the wrong century, why don't you?* "It's a, uh, catch phrase where I come from. Don't worry about it."

"And where is Alpha Centauri?"

"You can't see it this far north; it's a star in the southern sky — right near the Southern Triangle, in fact."

She smiled quizzically.

"You don't believe me," I said, smiling down at her. "But every star is a sun like ours, you know."

"And does every star have a world like ours orbiting round it?"

"Well, no."

"And even if this Alpha Centauri had a world like Earth, and even if I had one of Monsieur Verne's imaginary flying machines, how long would it take me to reach that world? ... I will be generous, and allow you some unreachably fast speed — say, ten miles a minute."

I laughed. "At ten miles a minute, it would take almost five million years."

"Precisely so. Now," she added, "if we are finished joking, I wish you would tell me something about yourself. You really are quite out of place here, you know. Are you in trouble, perhaps? If so, I might be able to help you."

I had a sudden, painful flash of memory — Edith Keeler in the moonlight, saying much the same thing. And then a terrible feeling of being out of synch, since Edith Keeler won't even be *born* for another five or ten years. I looked down into that beautiful face, and smiled, and said, "If it comes to that, you're also out of place. You should be governing an empire ... exploring uncharted territories."

"What were you thinking of, just then?" she asked, acutely. "You had the saddest look on your face."

"Someone I knew once," I answered, after a pause. "Someone who dreamed about a better world. She died." That was true, or as close to the truth as I could come. She died in 1930, forty years from now, and I'll carry the scars of that with me until I die myself.

"I'm sorry. She obviously meant a lot to you."

I shook myself out of the mood. "Meanwhile," I said, smiling at her again, "here I am in a moonlit garden with the most beautiful woman of the explored galaxy, where it would be inexcusably rude of me to dwell on the past. We were talking about you."

"We were? I had the distinct impression we were talking about you, Captain Kirk. Or rather, that I was trying to, and that you were evading my questions."

"I wish you would call me Jim, Irene."

"I shall call you James," she said. "Provided, that is, that you are more forthright with me. If I am associating with a felon, I wish to know it. Ignorance is bliss only for those who are easily amused. For myself, I find it cramps my conversation."

"What do you want to know? Shall I tell you about growing up in Iowa? — I know how to milk cows, muck out barns, feed chickens, fix—"

"Now you are boasting," she said severely. "Moreover, if you are a farmer, then I am a milkmaid. Mr. Holmes introduced you as 'Mr.' Kirk, but when he was angry with you, he called you 'Captain' Kirk — and it has been my experience that anger rivals only alcohol as the motivation behind unwitting honesty. What is more, you have not even thought to deny it when I have called you 'Captain' this evening. Thus, you are quite accustomed to being called 'Captain.' Tell me, James — is it army or navy?"

"I ... have a vessel," I answered.

"I suppose that is as direct an answer as I can hope for," she said wryly. "What is the name of your 'vessel'?"

"*Enterprise.*"

"So; you are a mariner. Or perhaps a pirate. Interesting. I suppose that—"

"You know, I'd rather talk about you," I said. "You didn't answer my question, if it comes to that. What's a beautiful woman like you doing in a little backwater like Hand Cross?"

"Rusticating," she said, with the ghost of a laugh.

"Seriously."

"Doing my duty," she said. "I keep my promises, no matter what the cost — and my vows. I could certainly wish for rather less 'whither thou goest,' and more 'O thou fairest among women' ... but *c'est la vie.*"

"O thou fairest among women..."

She laughed. "This is charming," she said. "I have not been flirted with in ages."

Remembering Edith Keeler again, I said, "About a hundred and fifty years from now, a novelist on Mintaka IV will write a poem for you." Translating in my head as best I could from Orion to Standard to English, I quoted:

*Let me reach out and eat the stars like candy.
Let me take the Universe, all of it,
And pour the glittering stars, like crystallized sugar, into your hands,
And as each sparkling grain floats down, it will be
A pale reflection of the memory of your eyes.
Let me give you the stars, full of the sweetness of hope.
They are yours anyway.*

After a pause, she asked, "Where is Mintaka IV?"

I took the opportunity to put my left arm around her as I pointed Mintaka out in the sky. "See it? It's one of the stars in Orion's Belt — the one on the far right."

"You know, James, you really are the oddest man," she said. "Alpha Centauri, Orion's Belt, a poem that will not be written for a hundred and

fifty years . . . Are you a madman only when the wind is north-north-west, or are you mad all the time?"

"Little old me?" I asked. "Crazy?"

"Ah, of course; you are sane, and you have actually been to Alpha Centauri, and Orion's Belt, and very likely the Moon as well."

"You wouldn't like it on the Moon," I said, shaking my head. "No atmosphere." She laughed again.

In our strolling, we had come to a little ornamental building, set back about fifty feet from the house. It had a cushioned bench in it, and a pretty view of the moonlit garden, the house, the sky, and a little ornamental pond. We sat down.

"You can't call me crazy for talking about the stars," I said. "People have been dreaming about the stars for centuries."

"But very few claim to have been there," she countered. "You are mad, James — for talking as if you have traveled among the stars. And very likely I am mad, for teetering on the edge of believing you."

I smiled down at her. I've always been a sucker for intelligent women, and this one had both brains and beauty. Those green eyes of hers looked huge in the moonlight, and she smelled wonderful, and her skin was soft, and she was standing there laughing at me for talking seriously about things that her time knew were total nonsense, and all of a sudden I felt my circuit-breaker trip with a snap and a bright light as I went into sensory overload. "Why, sir," she murmured, sounding very prim and proper, but looking up at me with laughter in those beautiful eyes, "I do believe that you are about to commit osculation."

If it hadn't been for the Universal Translator whispering in my ear, I wouldn't have had the faintest idea what she was talking about. As it was, I put my other arm around her and confirmed her suspicion, or invitation, or whatever it was — I kissed her.

Interlude: A Random Sampling of Captain Kirk's Kisses



This work of fan fiction complies with fair- or acceptable-use principles established in U.S. and international copyright law for the purposes of review, study, criticism, news reporting, research, scholarship, and parody. **Pastiches are a form of parody and fall under the purview of the fair-use provisos of copyright law.**



This work of fan fiction complies with fair- or acceptable-use principles established in U.S. and international copyright law for the purposes of review, study, criticism, news reporting, research, scholarship, and parody. **Pastiches are a form of parody and fall under the purview of the fair-use provisos of copyright law.**



This work of fan fiction complies with fair- or acceptable-use principles established in U.S. and international copyright law for the purposes of review, study, criticism, news reporting, research, scholarship, and parody. **Pastiches are a form of parody and fall under the purview of the fair-use provisos of copyright law.**

Chapter Fourteen: An Astonishing Evening

“Great heavens!”

A sight which shocked and offended was before us: Captain Kirk and Mrs. Norton, locked in an illicit embrace. It was I from whom the exclamation had been wrested, but I know that Holmes, who stood beside me in the garden of Briony Manor, was equally stunned; and Dr. McCoy and Mr. Spock, who stood a little way behind us, were speechless.

It had been a short time before that Dr. McCoy and I, on retiring for the night, had discovered that Captain Kirk was not in his room; and Dr. McCoy, instantly fearing that some mishap had befallen his friend, had insisted that we go in search of him.

“I assure you,” I had said, “the strongest likelihood is that he is merely taking the night air.”

“At this time of night? And where would he be?”

“Hand Cross is no metropolis,” I replied, calmly. “There are not over-many places where he could be. He would not, for example, have gone back to Lavenham Court, because Holmes and Mr. Spock are there.”

Dr. McCoy stood stock-still for a moment, and I could see that a terrible idea had taken possession of him. “He’s gone to Miz Norton’s,” said he, definitely.

“Surely not!” I replied. “Mrs. Norton is a notorious adventuress, but—”

Our eyes met.

Captain Kirk could not have known of Mrs. Norton’s reputation of seeking social advancement by unscrupulous means, and would have been attracted by her undeniable beauty and charm. And, being an adventuress, Mrs. Norton would have suffered no natural feminine misgivings at receiving a male caller alone, in the evening, and while her husband was missing; and thus would not

have immediately sent him away.

“You are right, McCoy,” said I; “he has gone to Mrs. Norton’s. We must go there at once. Only let me drink a few cups of strong black coffee, first; for I fear that our evening’s dissipations, however enjoyable, have rendered me unfit to call upon a lady.”

“Oh, don’t worry about that—” returned McCoy, cheerfully. He dug into his pocket and produced two small red pills, handing one to me and swallowing one himself. “Here, take this.”

After a moment’s hesitation, I followed his example. The sensations produced by Dr. McCoy’s pill were extraordinary. I immediately experienced a rushing sensation, rather as though a waterfall’s torrent had been unleashed inside me. The torrent proceeded to course through my head, arms, torso, and legs, producing a not unpleasant but highly peculiar tingling at each spot it touched. Within thirty seconds, I felt as though I had not been near an alcoholic beverage in a week.

I gave my head an amazed shake and turned to Dr. McCoy. Seeing my expression, he laughed gently. “The medication works in two steps. First, it neutralises the effects the alcohol has already had on your brain. At the same time, it turns the alcohol in your stomach and bloodstream into simple glucose.”

“Each time that I believe I have gotten the measure of Shangri-La,” I replied, still amazed, “you produce yet more for me to marvel over.”

Nye, our landlord, seemed delighted to direct McCoy and myself to the modest residence that Mr. and Mrs. Norton had hired, a short walk from the Red Lion that was made easy by the fact that the moon wanted but a few days before it had reached the full, and the weather was much warmer than it had been in London, perhaps as much as 50 degrees even this late at night. As Dr. McCoy and I came out of the inn, Holmes’s four-wheeler came bowling smartly up the road and stopped before us.

“This is an unexpected *rendezvous*, Watson,” said Holmes, raising an eyebrow at me.

“I might say the same to you, my dear fellow. Dr. McCoy and I had a most pleasant evening, but Captain Kirk retired early. When we went upstairs, he was not in his room. Dr. McCoy and I are concerned that he may be suffering aftereffects from his operation

of this morning.”

Although neither of our auditors had been informed of the seriousness of the operation which Dr. McCoy had conducted earlier in the day, both had evidently surmised it. Mr. Spock now asked Dr. McCoy:

“I take it, Doctor, that the Captain’s operation has nevertheless caused no serious damage to his health?”

“No — and that’s what I’m afraid of.”

“Stop a moment, then,” replied Holmes, “and let me give this four-wheeler to the ostler, so that Mr. Spock and I may accompany you. In going through Lord Lavenham’s desk, Mr. Spock and I happened upon some legal papers and other correspondence, upon which we feel Mrs. Norton may shed some light. The matter is of too great an importance to allow it to rest until morning.”

Briony Manor was a good-sized square house of white stone, standing back a little from the road. A double carriage sweep, with a neatly maintained autumnal lawn, stretched down in front to the two large iron gates which ordinarily closed the entrance, but were at the moment standing ajar. On the right side was a small wooden thicket which led into a narrow path between two sculpted hedges stretching from the road to the kitchen door, and forming the tradesmen’s entrance. On the left ran a lane which led to the house’s stables. The silence of the night was absolute, so that the lightest footfall seemed to ring out like cannon fire, and our voices naturally became hushed and our spirits subdued.

“Lots of lights,” remarked Dr. McCoy, almost whispering. “At least someone’s home.”

But although we rang several times, and also knocked loudly, no response came from the shadows to our summons.

“This is very odd,” said I. “Mrs. Norton is obviously at home. Why does not her butler answer?”

“Something is wrong,” said McCoy, anxiously. His voice seemed unnaturally loud in the gloom of the evening.

“It is possible that there is some crisis,” observed Mr. Spock. Even in the brilliant moonlight, his face appeared as eerie as a demon’s.

“Yes,” I agreed, quickly. “There may be an illness among the servants, for example.”

“We cannot reason without any data,” said Holmes, firmly. “It is probable that Mrs. Norton’s butler is merely deaf. We are here, after all, because we believe that Captain Kirk has come here before us; if there were an illness, surely we ought to have already overtaken him.”

“Perhaps if we walked around the house, we might discover an answer,” said Mr. Spock, practically.

This seemed to us, in our innocence, to be a reasonable plan, and so we put it into execution. It was not until we had walked through a moonlit autumn garden of great beauty, though, and had happened to glance at the gazebo tucked away between two towering elms and a small pond, that we realized the depth of the iniquity across which we had stumbled.

“Great heavens!” I ejaculated.

Upon my exclamation of horror, the guilty couple withdrew from each other’s arms and looked in our direction. Then Mrs. Norton stood up — unhurriedly, and without even the slightest evidence of shame; although her complicity in the crime we had all witnessed was unquestionable.

“Well, gentlemen. This is certainly an evening for unexpected encounters.” She stepped forward lightly, placing a graceful hand on the doorway as she descended the few steps of the gazebo.

After directing a look of burning reproach at his two friends, Captain Kirk followed her, coldly saying to them, “You have something to report, gentlemen?”

“I trust, madam,” Holmes said to Mrs. Norton, stiffly, “that our visit at such a late hour does not incommode you.” There was a world of sarcasm in his voice.

She smiled. “Hardly, Mr. Holmes.” Her gaze swept over the four of us, and one delicate brow arched. “Might I hope that you four gentlemen are here to bring me news of my husband?”

“Mr. Holmes and I have just been visiting Lady Lavenham,” replied Mr. Spock, who, alone of us all, seemed unaffected by the subterranean currents of the difficult scene in which we were participating. “Our only news of your husband is indirect. We have discovered some information among Lord Lavenham’s papers that may help us find your husband, but we will need your help in interpreting it.”

“In that case, let us go into the parlour, gentlemen. A moonlit garden is not the ideal spot for examining written material.”

As we turned to go indoors, Holmes replied, bitterly, “You appear to know the advantages of a moonlit garden well, madam.”

Mrs. Norton’s parlour was a large, well-lit chamber, furnished simply, in a style almost suggesting that the Manor’s occupants had only recently moved in, and largely devoid of the supplementary adornments which one is accustomed to finding in the residences of those of comfortable means. However, there were flowers arranged daintily in every nook and corner, and this to some extent offset the Spartan bareness of the chamber.

As we entered, Mrs. Norton said, “Forgive my staff for not showing you a proper welcome. Reid has a bit of a problem with his hearing — and I find that the problem becomes exacerbated as the evening grows advanced, until eleven o’clock, when he becomes completely deaf.”

“Our ring was not answered, no,” I replied. Mrs. Norton laid her mantle on top of the piano, and then did the same with all of our overcoats and the hats worn by four of us.

Sherlock Holmes did not seem inclined to exchange social pleasantries with Mrs. Norton. His face was stern, and as rigid as granite. “Your husband has been missing for more than a day, madam,” said he, coldly. “Yet, oddly, you appear almost unconcerned.”

“Mr. Holmes, it is not unusual for Mr. Norton to be away for days on end,” she replied, ringing for her butler before gracefully seating herself. “The distress which brought me to you earlier today was generated in large part by my husband’s unusual agitation and uncharacteristic behaviour prior to his meeting with Lord Lavenham.”

“Yet you yourself show no unusual agitation over this undeniable disturbing state of affairs.”

“I care for my husband; I do not own him.” After a short pause, she added, “Nor he, me.”

Captain Kirk now spoke. “From our meeting with Lady Lavenham earlier to-day, we’ve gathered that Lord Lavenham was also acting out of character. Apparently there’s been a stranger hanging around the village the last month....” Mrs. Norton gazed at

Captain Kirk silently for a few moments, and an unvoiced communication appeared to pass between them, for he added, "It can't hurt to talk about it, Irene. Lord Lavenham is dead, and you can handle Lady Lavenham."

"It is not Lady Lavenham whom I fear." She reached a decision. "The only stranger to the village is an old man: Mr. Petrie."

"From what Irene has been able to gather," added Captain Kirk, to us, "this Petrie told her husband that Lord Lavenham was involved in some sort of smuggling operation." From the look which Holmes bestowed upon Captain Kirk, it was clear that he was in no mood to listen with complacency to anything which Kirk had to say.

Hastily, I interjected, "It seems shocking indeed that a peer of the realm could have involved himself with anything criminal."

Mrs. Norton smiled. "It is odd, is it not, how much we are shocked by crime; but how we are almost always very little shocked by vice? If it had been said that Lord Lavenham was addicted to gambling, should we have been so shocked?"

"Of course not, ma'am," returned Dr. McCoy, smiling at her with Southern gallantry.

"Perhaps it is because vice is merely virtue on holiday," she decided. "Hatred is reprehensible at most times, but virtuous during times of war. Lust is distasteful in the street, but affection between married persons is both expected and desirable. Gambling is a notorious vice; but facility with numbers during working-hours is called accountancy, and is often commended." She turned to Holmes, and added, "It is my belief that somehow, most likely through Mr. Petrie, my husband learned that Lord Lavenham's business kept two sets of accounting ledgers, and that through some hint which Mr. Petrie let fall, Mr. Norton found the second set of books. It is also my belief that this second set of books is in some way related to the final quarrel between Lord Lavenham and my husband."

"You are undoubtedly right, madam," replied Holmes. "It is due to Mr. Spock's discovery of these same secret ledgers that we have visited you at such a late hour of the evening."

"I cannot believe that Lord Lavenham would not have hidden his secret ledgers most carefully," said Mrs. Norton. "Allow me to

compliment you on your discernment, Mr. Spock.” As she spoke, she rang for her butler a second time.

“They were in a drawer of his desk that had a false bottom,” replied Mr. Spock, emotionlessly. “It was a simple matter of comparing depths between inner and outer drawers.”

“Would it not be charming if persons could be judged so easily?” said Mrs. Norton, smiling; “— if one could say, ‘What a most particularly deep young man that deep young man must be! It is a simple matter of comparing depths between inner and outer man’. Dr. McCoy — surely you must know of some yardstick which one might use to accomplish so desirable a goal.”

“I wish I did, ma’am.” Dr. McCoy replied. Captain Kirk appeared about to speak, but Dr. McCoy trod upon his foot, with a tiny jerk of his head in the direction of Holmes’s stony profile.

“Perhaps Mr. Spock knows. He looks so like an enigmatic Buddha that I declare I am quite frightened of him. At any moment he may pass bodily from us, into a state of Nirvana.”

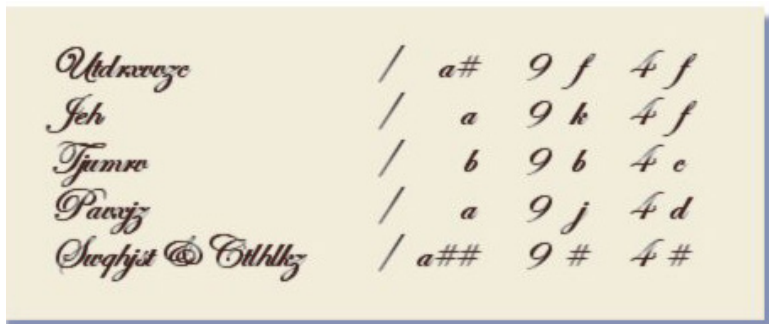
“That statement is not logical,” replied Mr. Spock, coldly.

“Ah! I am chastised,” said she, with a lovely, low laugh.

“We were talking, I believe, about Lord Lavenham’s account books,” said Mr. Spock, refusing to be charmed.

“The account books were written in an elementary cipher,” Holmes now said. “I have copied out a few of the relevant lines, so that you may see what they looked like.”

He now held up a sheet of paper from his notebook. Upon it was written this:



"I am tolerably familiar with all forms of secret writings," continued Holmes, "and am myself the author of a trifling monograph upon the subject, in which I analyse one hundred and sixty separate ciphers. Having applied the rules which guide us in all forms of secret writings, and with the assistance of Mr. Spock, whose mind, I may say, is very strongly mathematical, it was easy enough to discover the solution."

"A simple substitution code, Mr. Holmes," explained Mr. Spock. "The only difficulty that presented itself was in unraveling the English monetary system, which seems strangely illogical."

"How can you say so, Mr. Spock?" asked Mrs. Norton, with a mischievous smile. "I am sure that there can be nothing simpler. Farthing, ha'penny, penny, threepenny bit, groat, sixpence, shilling, florin, half-crown, crown, noble, pound—"

"Oh, come on!" exclaimed Captain Kirk.

"— guinea, sovereign. Twelve pennies to the shilling, two shillings to the florin, two and six to the half-crown, five shillings to the crown, six shillings to the noble, twenty shillings to the pound and the sovereign, twenty-one shillings to the guinea. What could be simpler? I do not see that any stranger to our shores should have the slightest difficulty with the English monetary system."

"Oh, you don't?" retorted Dr. McCoy. "Well, let me tell you, young lady—"

"Mrs. Norton makes the matter seem unduly complicated," interposed I, laughing. "Remember penny, shilling, and pound, and you cannot go far wrong."

"'Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery,'" quoted Mrs. Norton.

"I always wondered what that meant," remarked Captain Kirk.

"Once again, we are straying from the point," said Mr. Spock, with a minatory glance for Captain Kirk, as though he had been guilty of an indiscreet utterance. "Ah, yes — the code which you deciphered," said Mrs. Norton. "Well, I am very sorry to have diverted you, Mr. Spock. Pray let us continue. I am all agog to learn what the code, once deciphered, must mean."

"You shall have your wish, madam, unless your liveliness again

interrupts us,” said Holmes, with a slight unbending of his rigid disapproval. “I have with me the text which Mr. Spock deciphered.”

<i>Transport</i>	£	10	s	6	d	6
<i>Ice</i>	£	1	s	11	d	6
<i>Shrimp</i>	£	2	s	2	d	3
<i>Oysters</i>	£	1	s	10	d	4
<i>Rundell & Bridges</i>	£	100	s	0	d	0

“It remains to be seen, of course, why Lord Lavenham kept his account books enciphered,” continued Holmes. “However, it is indubitable that several pages are missing from these account books. Not only do torn fragments of paper cling to the spines of these books, but also, the spines themselves are damaged. These missing pages, once found, may tell their own story.

“The point of perhaps greatest interest is that only two persons could have had access to these secret ledgers: Lord Lavenham ... and, Mrs. Norton, your husband.”

“Are you perhaps accusing Mr. Norton of acceding to criminal behaviour, Mr. Holmes?”

“Certainly the opportunity was there—”

“However,” interrupted Mr. Spock, “it would be more logical for us to consider an alternate hypothesis: that Mr. Norton may have taken the missing pages.”

“The items here,” said Dr. McCoy, “all seem to be pretty straightforward stuff that have to do with Lord Lavenham’s business. All except that last one, Rundell and Bridges. What are they, a law firm?”

“Rundell, *Bridge*, and Rundell was a famed jewellery shop in London,” said Mrs. Norton, coolly. “They held the Royal Warrant to be gold- and silversmiths to the monarch from late in the last

century until perhaps fifty years ago; but they closed a few years after the death of Mr. Bridge, the last living founder.”

“I don’t understand,” said Dr. McCoy. “How could Lord Lavenham spend so much money at a jewellery shop that no longer exists?”

“I can think of several possibilities,” the lady replied, with a trace of amusement. “For example, perhaps Lord Lavenham was the victim of a gang of plausible rogues. In his recent novel, Mr. Mark Twain featured characters known as the Duke of Bridgewater and the rightful King of France; but unlike young Mr. Finn himself, no *reader* believed in the *bona fides* of these impostors.”

“Was Lord Lavenham that naïve?” asked Captain Kirk.

“In business, no,” replied she. “However, I should say that he doted upon his countess. Perhaps his heart obtruded on his judgment.” As she spoke, she rang for her butler a third time; continuing, “If indeed Lord Lavenham was the victim of plausible cheats, the name Rundell and *Bridges* would be a good way to persuade the gullible that they were dealing with Rundell and *Bridge*. This necklace, in fact, was designed by Philip Rundell in 1822.”

The necklace of which she spoke comprised several large diamonds of the first water, clustered around a brilliant yellow carbuncle of unusual size, and was assuredly no mean bit of trumpery.

“Your husband is remarkably generous, madam,” said I.

“As it happens, this necklace was a gift from ... the Count Von Kramm.” As she spoke, Mrs. Norton directed a look at Holmes which I can only call mischievous; she referred, of course, to one of the principals in our previous encounter with her. Holmes and I had been sworn to secrecy concerning the affair for a period of two years; but now that that period is done with, I intend to write an account of the adventure — a singular one, as I have said before, as being the only occasion on which I have ever known Holmes to be outwitted, by man or woman.

Our three unusual companions could of course have known nothing of this encounter; and so I was rather surprised to see Mr. Spock raise one of his demonic eyebrows, looking almost as though he had somehow managed to read my account before I had ever written it. He had no chance to speak, however, for Dr.

McCoy now said:

“Well, whoever gave you the necklace, it’s beautiful — almost as beautiful as you are, ma’am.”

“Why, thank you, kind sir,” said she, twinkling.

“I hope you’ve had your portrait painted. It’d be a shame not to let posterity know how beautiful you are.”

“‘O! sir I will not be so hard-hearted’,” she quoted, with a smile. “I shall leave bits and pieces of myself behind in my Will. *Item*, Two lips, indifferent red; *Item*, Two grey eyes with lids to them; *Item*, One neck, one chin, and so forth’.”

“A gruesome thought,” said Captain Kirk.

“Why, no; how can you say that? I have always longed to be called a woman of parts. I daresay, however, that Mr. Spock would call that choplogic.”

“Assuredly,” said Mr. Spock, raising his eyebrow, “if by that word you mean absurd and specious statements.”

“It would certainly appear that you have a strong sense of the ridiculous, madam, as well as a praiseworthy lack of vanity,” remarked Holmes, looking upon Mrs. Norton with a kindlier eye than previously.

“Mere beauty is ephemeral,” replied she, with a shrug. “Ten years ago, a looking-glass would last me indefinitely; now one lasts only several months; in another ten years, I daresay a looking-glass shall last but a day.”

Captain Kirk grinned. “Now I understand what the British mean when they say someone looks smashing.”

In the ensuing laughter, I saw that the pretty compliment was very welcome to Mrs. Norton, but that Holmes was not over-pleased. Apparently, although he had unbent towards Mrs. Norton, his feelings towards Kirk had not softened. He had no chance to speak, however, for Mr. Spock would still not allow himself to be diverted from the purpose of our interview with Mrs. Norton.

“The police have confirmed what you told us at lunch — that your husband spent the last week in London. Was his behaviour at all unusual before he left?”

“I should describe it as agitated. But he was also singularly uncommunicative on the subject. He would say only that he would explain himself fully upon his return.”

“You have also told us that you were accustomed to his absences. Why then did you go to the Red Lion this morning?”

“To answer that question requires something of a history, Mr. Spock. I may begin by saying that Mr. Norton wired me yesterday. He told me that his decision had been made, and that all should be set right. He asked me to meet him at the Red Lion when he arrived on yesterday afternoon’s train at 4.30. I went there, as he had asked, and waited. He never appeared. I know now that he had caught the first train, and gone first to the Post Office, and from there straight to Lord Lavenham’s place of business.”

“What did you do next?”

“Supposing that he had missed his train, I went to the Post Office and asked whether he had wired me — that is how I learned that he had been there earlier. Finally, I returned home.

“A few hours later, I received a call from Sergeant Gray, who told me about the parting scene between Mr. Norton and Lord Lavenham, and that Lord Lavenham had been most brutally murdered. Late in the evening, I received a call from Inspector Lestrade, who was apparently wholly convinced that my husband had murdered Lord Lavenham, particularly after hearing that he had just come from London. This morning’s newspapers were full of the killings in Whitechapel, so that I could not pretend not to have understood his meaning. I asked Inspector Lestrade what possible motive my husband could have had for committing the murder in Whitechapel, but he replied only that motive was the least important part of a murder investigation; that method and opportunity were the elements needed to fix a case for prosecution.”

“How like Lestrade,” said Holmes, drily.

“It did seem a remark calculated to agitate me,” agreed the lady. “At any rate, early the next morning — this morning —, I paid a call on Mr. Petrie. It struck me that here was the missing element I needed, since Mr. Petrie was the catalyst which had set the whole affair into motion.”

Sherlock Holmes had begun this passage leaning back in his chair, with his eyes closed and his hands in his pockets. During the last few minutes, however, he had evidenced signs of mounting interest in her tale. Now he leaned forward, and his eyes were

bright.

“Pray describe Mr. Petrie to us.”

“He is quite old; he has the appearance of a man of seventy. His posture is stooped, but I should put him at above the average height. Despite his age, his hair and beard are primarily still dark. He coughs incessantly, and attempts to conceal a tremble of infirmity in his limbs. I should say that he is less robust than he would wish people to suppose.”

“You say he has a beard. Please describe it.”

“Black, with a little grey, as I just said. It is quite bushy and tangled, as ragged as though he were not at all concerned with its appearance.”

“And his skin? What is the appearance of his skin?”

“Rough, and deeply weather-beaten.” Mrs. Norton paused; but Holmes had again leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes, as though he had abandoned interest in Mr. Petrie.

After ringing for the butler yet again, Mrs. Norton returned her attention to Mr. Spock. “I had thought that, since Mr. Petrie and my husband shared some knowledge which was hidden from me, Mr. Norton might have gone to him after his quarrel with Lord Lavenham. Mr. Petrie, however, insisted to me that he had not seen my husband. But his mien was furtive and ashamed as he spoke, and I now, upon reflection, believe that he knew more than he would admit. It was after this interview that I first began to feel seriously alarmed. Mr. Norton had wired to ask me to meet him at a particular time, and then had taken an earlier train, which was not like him; he had arrived in Hand Cross and had not sent to inform me of the fact, which was also unlike him; he had quarreled violently with Lord Lavenham, which was very much out of character; and finally he had disappeared, which was uncharacteristic in the extreme.

“Inspector Lestrade had informed me during his visit last evening of his intention to send for Mr. Sherlock Holmes. As I told you at luncheon today, Mr. Holmes and I have ... encountered one another on a previous occasion. So, to answer your question, Mr. Spock: I went to the Red Lion today to seek Mr. Holmes’s assistance, both in finding my husband and in proving his innocence in the matter of Lord Lavenham’s murder.”

“You seem to have been remarkably certain that you would obtain that assistance,” remarked my friend, not wholly pleased.

Mrs. Norton made no verbal reply, but sat and smiled charmingly at Holmes, as though she were fully conscious of the effect which her beauty had upon men.

After a moment, Holmes laughed. “*Touché*, madam. I understand you, I believe.”

“I knew that you would,” she agreed. “You are not at all slow.”

“A gracious compliment, from one master to another. However—”

“‘However’! Ah, we come to the qualification. ‘He gave me a good character, but said I could not swim’.”

“I am afraid you will think me very slow,” said I; “but I do not at all follow you. How did you know that Sherlock Holmes could be persuaded to add the search for your husband to his efforts to discover the killer of Lord Lavenham?”

Mrs. Norton turned her beautiful head and smiled at me with ineffable sweetness. “The first words which ever I heard of Sherlock Holmes in my life were a warning against him. The man who warned me told me that the only thing which Mr. Holmes valued above his honour was British justice.”

“Who, may I ask, was the conveyor of this gratifying warning?” enquired Holmes.

“A rather horrid man,” replied she. “I never knew his name, but I believe him to have been an academic of some sort. It seemed to me that in appearance he looked much as a turtle might look without its shell — very pale and ascetic, but with a head which oscillated from side to side, and deep-set eyes which never blinked. It seemed to me that he knew you well, Mr. Holmes, although perhaps only by repute. I confess that I detested him on sight, and so had as little to do with him as possible.”

“I know of whom you speak,” said Holmes, grimly. “You did well to avoid him; he is without doubt the most dangerous man in England.”

“Mrs. Norton,” now said Mr. Spock; “we have discussed Lord Lavenham’s secret account books, and the fact that several pages appear to be missing from them. It is Mr. Holmes’s belief, with which I concur, that Mr. Norton may have been responsible for

their absence. Did you ever see them?"

"No. Mr. Norton carried a leather satchel with him when he went to London, but I never saw its contents."

"He did not leave anything with you for safekeeping?"

"No. Our valuables are all kept in a safe-deposit box at Cox's Bank, at Charing Cross. But these comprise only our wills, family heirlooms, and other ... memorabilia, too important to be left to the uncertain security of daily living."

"Could Mr. Norton have carried the missing ledger papers with him in the leather satchel?"

"Assuredly he may have. I, however, never peeped inside, so I can provide no certain information on the subject."

"I wish to hear more of Mr. Petrie," said Holmes, with decision.

"He arrived in Hand Cross approximately one month ago," replied Mrs. Norton, obediently. "I believe that he may work as a day-labourer for Farmer Huggate, whose properties march with Lord Lavenham's; at any rate, he has a cottage on Mr. Huggate's land, near the river. In my encounters with him, he has always appeared sullen and withdrawn. It was only after Mr. Norton met him, though, that my husband's suspicions of Lord Lavenham became active, and therefore I believe that Mr. Petrie knows more than he will admit. As I have told you, I do not believe that Mr. Petrie could have been an active danger to Lord Lavenham; in appearance he was feeble, and in the living of his life he was too meek. Lord Lavenham was not one to tolerate those who displeased him, or allow them to continue long in our adjacency; and if Mr. Petrie had displeased him, Mr. Petrie should have long since been invited to seek his fortune elsewhere."

"Where is this cottage which you describe?"

"It is on an inlet known as the Gentlemen's Cove, perhaps half a mile south along the Rodran from Lord Lavenham's estates. The children like to go there to play during the summer."

"The Gentlemen's Cove — what a strange name," commented Dr. McCoy.

"The gentlemen' was a term for smugglers a hundred years or so ago," the lady explained. "At that time, there was a heavy tax on liquor, so that smuggling it seemed very attractive, and run goods far less expensive. The term had nothing to do with the smugglers'

breeding, and little to do with the breeding of the class which drank the liquor they brought in.”

“If I understand you correctly,” said Mr. Spock, “you are saying that a gentleman may be a criminal, but it is less likely that a criminal may be a gentleman. A simple tautology.”

“I have always longed to be a rhetorician,” replied she, twinkling. “Yes, Mr. Spock, you have it in a nutshell. The difference lies in how much money a man has before he begins, and in how much he takes. A poor man who wishes to rob his neighbour is called a thief, a rich man who wishes to rob his neighbour is called a company. If a poor man steals a hen, he is a thief, if a rich man steals thousands, he is a businessman; if a government steals millions, it is an empire.”

“You are a harsh critic,” said I. “But an accurate one.”

Sherlock Holmes had begun our interview with Mrs. Norton in a state of anger so great it almost approached rage. Now, however, he regarded our hostess with complete amity, if not some profounder emotion.

“It would appear that I may return your compliment,” remarked he. “It seems that you also have a deep regard for justice.”

“One must always love that which is rare and beautiful,” she replied. “I daresay that if justice were commonplace, we should give it no more regard than we give the daisies.”

The little clock upon Mrs. Norton’s mantelpiece struck eleven, and, startled at the lateness of the hour, we rose almost as one man to depart. Almost simultaneously, the butler finally appeared in the doorway in answer to Mrs. Norton’s repeated rings.

“Mrs. Norton, you have answered our questions with admirable completeness,” said Mr. Spock, “and at a time which I believe must be difficult for you. Thank you.”

“I hope that I have been helpful to you,” replied she, gravely. “Reid, please show these gentlemen out.”



Chapter 15: A Tragic Discovery

Whatever the strained relationships between Sherlock Holmes and Captain Kirk caused by our evening with Mrs. Norton, I soon discovered that an excellent understanding flourished between himself and Mr. Spock. After a day which had begun before five and was ending well after midnight, I found myself longing for my bed. Holmes, however, was a man who, when he was confronted with an unsolved problem, would go for days, even as long as a week, without rest, viewing the problem from all angles, restating and rearranging his facts, and considering every hypothesis. It quickly became clear that Mr. Spock shared Holmes's iron constitution when, a few moments after we had all retired, I visited Holmes's room to retrieve my toothbrush from his valise. Holmes had taken off his coat and waistcoat and donned an old violet dressing-gown; he now sat in a large, deep armchair by the fire, his old briar pipe in one hand, and on the table next to him an ounce of shag tobacco and a box of matches. Also next to him was the bundle of telegrams with which Inspector Lestrade had

entrusted him, from Lord Lavenham to Prince Albert, South Africa. With him, sitting in the window-seat, was Mr. Spock, who was wearing a long black tunic embroidered with strange, runic characters. Since he had discarded his turban, thus revealing the demonic upsweep of his ears, this gave him the appearance of an oddly elfin medieval troubador.



As I entered, Mr. Spock was saying, “If you insist upon smoking tobacco — a most illogical practice, since it is injurious to the health of all those who breath the fumes —, you must allow me to sit by the window, and have it open a little.”

“The night air is also injurious to the health.”

“That statement is illogical. The air is the air. It does not suddenly become toxic because the sun is no longer in the sky.”

“Moreover, you are peculiarly susceptible to the cold. You yourself have said so.”

“If the cold affects me, I will borrow a blanket from your bed.”

“No; that should not suffice you. Very well. I shall abate my

tobacco-smoking this evening, for your sake, although I do not promise to give it up altogether.”

It was evident to me that Holmes and Mr. Spock were preparing for a long discussion. I bade them good-night, marvelling inwardly at their stamina (for I myself was so weary that I was rocking on my feet), and returned to my room next door. Through the wall, I could hear the low rise and fall of their voices. As I lay between the sheets, I was irresistibly reminded of trips I had taken with my family as a small boy. Save that my brother did not lie beside me, and that both of the voices next door were masculine, I might almost have been six years old again, being lulled to sleep by the voices of my parents from the next room.

So it was as I dropped off to sleep, and so it was when I awakened, with the weak October sun shining in between the curtains: The voices still rose and fell next door, apparently unfatigued by a night of talking. I was annoyed to discover that my pocket-watch had stopped during the night; and was surprised when the maid who brought in my tea-tray informed me that it had gone nine o'clock. I noticed, as I looked in the hall, that Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy had both forgotten to leave their footgear in the hall for the boots, for my own freshly blacked shoes were the only ones in evidence.

Dressed and refreshed, I tapped on the connecting door between my room and Holmes's, and at his invitation entered. After having heard the conversation of the night before, I was only mildly surprised to find that, unlike other all-night sessions Holmes had conducted in the past, his room was not full of a dense tobacco haze. He and Mr. Spock were in much the same attitudes as I had left them in; the only difference that I could discover was that at some point during the night Holmes had discarded his neckcloth.

“I am glad to see you awake, Watson,” said Holmes. “It is time to be up and doing.”

“Then you and Mr. Spock have had a fruitful night?”

“You may say so, if you choose. I begin to get a glimmer, my dear fellow; decidedly, a glimmer. Look you here.” He handed me a note, saying, “We found this last night in the secret drawer of Lord Lavenham's desk, along with the account ledgers. Read it aloud.”

The note said, "*Meet me at 4.30. You know where. If you fail, you know what the consequences shall be.*" It was unsigned.

"Lord Lavenham's body was discovered at six," I remarked. "This is an important clue, for it must have been written by the murderer."

"Excellent, Watson! I agree with you. But the note itself. What do you deduce from it?"

I carefully examined the note, and the paper on which it was written.

"The man who wrote it was the opposite of well to do," I said, doing my best to imitate Holmes's methods of deduction. "This paper is of the poorest quality, and the ink is muddy. Moreover, the hand is rough and ill-formed. I should say that the writer is a man of little or no education."

"Good!" said Holmes.

"I think also that he is most probably a day-labourer from one of the farms in the vicinity, quite young, and not over-intelligent."

"Why so?"

"The paper is both poor, which argues that the writer can afford no better, and it is dirty, which argues that the writer himself was dirty when he wrote it. There are not that many occupations in this part of the world which would produce both those results. It must be day-labour. That is no occupation for grey-beards; it requires physical strength. It does not, however, require mental agility."

"Perfectly sound!" said Holmes. "It is unfortunate that the writer is a well educated and cultured man who has had the ill luck to come down in the world, is quite old, and is above average in intelligence, for you have really learned to apply my methods to admiration, Watson."

I was mortified. "Pray tell me, then, where I have strayed."

"I should hazard a guess that you based your conclusion that the writer was ill-educated and unintelligent in large part upon his handwriting, which is indeed an uncomely scrawl. And yet, Doctor, your own handwriting, particularly when you are hurried, would lead no one to suppose that you are highly educated. Ah! — I see I have scored a hit."

"A palpable hit," I answered ruefully.

“Now, look, on the other hand, at the letter E in the note. You see that it is formed like the Greek epsilon, rather than like the E’s which Mr. Platt Rogers Spencer taught in his famous penmanship course. Only those of some education and refinement, those who revere the culture of ancient Greece as the wellspring of Western civilisation, form their E’s in this fashion. Surely one who has studied the civilisation and language of ancient Greece must be above average in intelligence.

“Moreover, when one is young and poorly educated, and thus unused to writing, one’s handwriting is quite large and rounded and adheres fairly closely to the model one has learned in school; it shows few individual characteristics. This handwriting, on the other hand, is quite small and spiky, and shows numerous quirks of personality. Notice particularly how thin the letters are, how high the capitals are, how his initial letters begin at the right and swing left back in on themselves, and how the crossbar of the T slants downward, beginning thick and growing thin.”

“What of the writer’s age?”

“You have surely noticed how the words tremble. The handwriting of the young rarely trembles; in the old, it often does so. To be sure, a tremor is also one characteristic of someone with an illness, such as palsy or St. Vitus’s Dance, or a man who is a drunkard. However, in both those cases the handwriting would tend to be larger and more uncontrolled than it is here. No; this is the hand of a man of fifty or more.”

“And the writer’s having come down in the world?”

“Ah! — Here is where I must agree with you on one point. It seems very probable that the writer is indeed working as a day-labourer. For a man of age and education to work as a day-labourer would seem strongly to suggest that he no longer enjoys a position in the monied classes.”

A knock had come at the door as Holmes spoke, and Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy had entered, in time to hear his last few remarks and to glance at the note from Lord Lavenham’s desk. As with the day before, I noticed in passing, each man had several small razor cuts on his face about the nose and chin. Dr. McCoy, who was holding Lord Lavenham’s mysterious note, now spoke.

“That sounds like the guy Mrs. Norton was talking about — Mr.

Petrie.”

“I was thinking, when she described him,” said Captain Kirk, “that it also sounds like the old geezer we saw in the bar last night. What’s more, the guy in the bar was ranting and raving about how rotten the nobility was — at least, how rotten lords were. It wouldn’t surprise me if he especially had something against one lord — Lord Lavenham.”

“Doubtless an invaluable clue,” said Holmes, coldly.

“Well, it’s one more reason for us to go see Mr. Petrie,” remarked McCoy, practically. “Yes, Doctor. I believe that our first business this morning should indeed be a visit to the Gentlemen’s Cove, where we may hope to find him. Yesterday we were given to understand that the Red Lion’s landau had previously been hired out for today. Perhaps you and Captain Kirk, since you have performed your morning ablutions, would be kind enough to bespeak us a trap at the local livery.”

“A what?”

“Or a fly, a growler, or a four-wheeler.” When none of our three visitors gave any sign of comprehension, Holmes added, “A carriage, Doctor. A conveyance. Transportation.” A glance my way showed me that Holmes shared my surprise at the ignorance of at least two of our companions. While Mr. Spock might be expected to know little of the ways of Western civilisation, this was not the case for Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy, who claimed to be Americans born and reared.

“Oh. Sure, be glad to.” As they turned to go, McCoy muttered to Captain Kirk, “Why didn’t he just say so in the first place?”

“I think he did.”

In the event, the doctor managed to procure a very respectable four-wheeler for our use, poled up to a team of strong-looking bays. We trotted down the first of a succession of narrow country lanes towards the cottage in which Mrs. Norton had said Mr. Petrie resided on Gentlemen’s Cove. Holmes rode in silence, his chin sunk on his breast, and looked as though his thoughts were not pleasant ones, despite the crisp beauty of the autumn morning. Whenever Captain Kirk ventured any remark, my friend responded sharply, with the air of one who is not best pleased with his company.

Huggate Farm was not difficult to find; nor were its inhabitants loath to direct us to the cove, although all seemed still to be full of their excitement of the day before with Spring-heeled Jack. He had snatched up the cow into his arms, all insisted, and bounded off into the river-marsh which formed the border between Mr. Huggate's property and that of Lord Lavenham, laughing like the Devil himself. On enquiry, the cow proved to be a heifer, only a few months old and weighing no more than five hundred pounds. This fact, however, made the case seem only marginally the less bizarre, particularly when one of the farm labourers showed Holmes three large footprints, each forty feet and more from the next, each of which had fallen so deeply in the soft ground of the fields that, had it rained, it could have collected a good three inches of precipitation.

Having seen the footprints, it seemed to me that Holmes became even more quiet and thoughtful than he had been. But when I pressed him, he would reply only, "These are deep waters, Watson. It is a dark case — very dark. I have never seen a stranger, nor one more full of difficulty."

* * *

Gentlemen's Cove is, as I have said, an inlet off the river Rodran, perhaps half a mile south from Lavenham Park, and bordered on the north by a stretch of fenny ground so wet as to be well-nigh impassable. The residence inhabited by Mr. Petrie was not, as Mrs. Norton had described, a cottage. Rather, it was little more than an ancient shack, constructed of old boards and tar-paper, without even a well; its inhabitant had perforce to rely upon the river for water. Combined with the unhealthy airs which emanated from the marsh behind, the area seemed an insalubrious site for a man of Mr. Petrie's advanced years.

"I must say, I am not taken with the smell from the fen," said I.

"Yes," agreed Holmes; "and it is likely that the aroma withindoors will be worse. I do not imagine that Mr. Petrie considers housekeeping his forte."

"There is one smell that is out of place," remarked Mr. Spock. "I believe it is roast beef."

I could smell nothing but the dead water and decomposing

plant life of the marsh around us. Holmes stared frowningly at Mr. Spock for a moment, before shrugging and turning to the flimsy door to the shack.

Several sharp raps elicited no response. Finally, with another shrug, Holmes put his hand to the knob. The door opened easily, as might be expected from the home of someone who had nothing of value to protect. Inside we found a single dark, ill-ventilated room, indescribably filthy, with a cot in one corner, a stove in another corner, a sink containing several dirty dishes near the stove, and a rough deal table in the centre of the room.

"I fear we may be too late, gentlemen," remarked Holmes, as we viewed this desolate scene. "It is possible that the bird has flown."

"I should tend to doubt it, however, Mr. Holmes," said Mr. Spock, coolly. "If Mr. Petrie's condition last night was as intoxicated as has been described, he will today be feeling much too unwell to travel far."

"The stench, Holmes—" began I, with a strong shudder.

"Yes; our prognostication outside was correct. Let us see whether Mr. Spock's sense of smell was also correct." And, crossing to the cold stove, Holmes threw open the oven door to reveal a huge roast of beef, which had been roughly cooked and was now minus several slices.

"'Curiouser and curiouser'," murmured Dr. McCoy.

"Last night's dinner," remarked Holmes. "I believe we may safely hazard the guess that we have found Spring-heeled Jack's hotel-keeper."

"But where is the rest of the cow?"

"I believe that if we look behind the shack, we may find some form of primitive larder. We may as well do so; there is no more information to be found in this miserable hovel, and perhaps behind it there shall be further clues, either to Spring-heeled Jack's whereabouts or to those of Mr. Petrie."

Holmes proved correct in his prophesy. Behind the shack was a large, metal-lined bin which, upon examination, revealed that portion of the heifer not in the oven or, presumably, inside Mr. Petrie and his reputedly monstrous houseguest. This discovery did not occupy our attention long, however, for, also behind the

shack, we discovered a hurriedly dug grave.

“Where there is a grave, there must also have been a tool with which to dig it,” declared Holmes. A quick return into the shack revealed a set of tools beneath the cot, including a pick, shovel, light sledgehammer, crowbar, and gardening fork.

A few minutes’ work with the shovel — for the grave was very shallow — revealed a horrifying sight: the remains of a plump young man in his thirties, dressed soberly in black frock coat, high collar, and waistcoat, with a folded top-hat between his hands. Like the other three bodies which I had seen in the last four days, the young man was missing the top part of his skull and most of his brains; and, as with the body in Whitechapel, the crime had been committed with crushing force, as though the young man’s head were no more than a hard-cooked egg. Someone had closed his eyes, but his face still bore an expression of enormous fear, as though, at the last, he had seen his fate and understood it only too well.

Also in the grave, but separate from the body, was another, slightly deeper hole, in which we discovered the tops of not one but two skulls — one with dark, brown-black hair, which was very evidently that of the young man in the grave, and the other with light, sandy brown hair.

“I find that I have conceived an overwhelming desire to meet Mr. Petrie,” said Holmes, after a short pause. “There can be no doubt that this man is Mr. Godfrey Norton — you will recall, Watson, that I have met and talked with him — and I am all but certain that the sandy-haired skull belongs to Lord Lavenham. Indeed, to whom else could it belong?”

Unbidden, Mr. Spock had withdrawn his tricorder, and was using it to scan both body and skulls. Dr. McCoy looked over his shoulder, and he obligingly lowered the tricorder so that they both could look into the small window on its top.

“Well, Spock? Bones?” asked Captain Kirk.

Dr. McCoy looked up at his friend and, frowning at him slightly, answered, “Come look at it.”

As Captain Kirk took Dr. McCoy’s place, the doctor saw Holmes’s gaze upon him and said shortly, “Godfrey Norton died the same way the man in London did — from having the top of his

head ripped off.”

“Did Mr. Petrie kill him?” asked I.

Our three mysterious companions looked at one another. Then Captain Kirk replied, “It sure *looks* like it.”

“However,” Mr. Spock added, painstakingly, “as I told you yesterday, the tricorder is not constructed to provide such information; it is fundamentally a sensory and recording device.”

“We shall have to send one of the farm labourers for Sergeant Gray,” remarked Holmes. “Let us trust that this second summons does not give him a distaste for Farmer Huggate’s vicinity.”

It took us some little time to arrange to have a groom sent to the police, for we had first to meet Mr. Huggate and show him what we had found. The jovial farmer, a Pickwickian gentleman whose hairless crown shone in the autumn sun, seemed to feel that the events of the past three days had been designed expressly to cause him difficulty. “First the old lord, then Spring-heeled Jack, and now this,” he lamented. “I won’t be getting any more work out of my lads today, and that’s a fact.”

“Did Mr. Petrie work for you?” asked Holmes.

“No, not any more. Saturday last, he gave notice, and he hasn’t worked for me or anyone else since then. He does pay his rent for the cottage promptly each week, and since he gave notice, I hardly ever see him. Barring a week last Tuesday, the first time I seen him this month was last night, and even then I didn’t see him — only heard him, singing a loud song in some heathen tongue and arguifying with himself. He’d been downing a few too many at the Red Lion, if you ask me, for he’s been very quiet as a rule.”

Eventually, we were able to induce the worthy Mr. Huggate to return to his farming, and we ourselves returned to the shack to await the arrival of Sergeant Gray. Unwilling as we were to endure the unpleasant aroma inside, we went round in the back once again, where Mr. Spock brought out his tricorder.

“Problem, Spock?” whispered Captain Kirk.

“Merely an unusual reading the last time I used the tricorder, Captain. I wish to see whether I can duplicate the reading, or whether it is evidence of some possible flaw in the instrument.”

As he spoke, the mechanism in his hands gave a loud chirping wail. Mr. Spock swung it around toward the marshy ground

behind the shack, where the cry settled slowly into a distressed whistle.

“What’s up, Spock?” demanded Captain Kirk.

“Dye-lithium, Captain. At three twenty-five, mark ... one ten.”

All three men looked briefly into the marsh to the northeast of us.

“Down?” exclaimed Captain Kirk, frowning.

“Down, Captain.”

“Speakin’ as an ol’ Georgia boy, Jim, I can tell you that there’s no place like a swamp for getting’ rid of somethin’ you don’t want to see again.”

“So she burned her bridges behind her....”

“I am afraid that I do not understand,” interjected I.

“Oh, nothing. It’s not important,” he responded quickly.

“I hesitate to contradict you, Captain Kirk,” Holmes said with the barest trace of irony, “but from the expression on your face, it appears to be of considerable importance.”

“Not to your investigation, I assure you.”

Holmes appeared distinctly unconvinced. “We have found the body of Mr. Godfrey Norton, and just now you spoke of a ‘she’, by whom I presume you mean Mrs. Norton: and you have found the evidence of a substance you call ‘dye-lithium’ — of which we have never before heard — in the swamp. In addition, you were less than forthcoming a while ago when you used the tricorder on Mr. Norton, yet obviously equally perturbed. Is it possible, gentlemen, that this Mr. Petrie is in actuality Mr. Spock’s servant, Jack Tellar, in disguise?”

“Anything’s possible,” replied Captain Kirk slowly. “We’re not sure yet.”

“Perhaps you should consider that it is inconceivable that there should be two murderers at large who not only could kill by such a method, but who also should have such an *outré* motive — for I can only deduce, from your reaction to the message from your tricorder earlier, that the body of Mr. Norton is missing its pineal gland, the object in which Jack Tellar shows great interest.

“By all reports, Mr. Petrie could easily fit the description of Mr. Spock’s servant, if Tellar were to have disguised himself as an aged man.”

“Your reasoning appears logical, Mr. Holmes,” Mr. Spock added noncommittally.

“But what is dye-lithium, and why does it concern you?” Holmes continued to pressure. “And why should Mrs. Norton have burnt her bridges behind her?”

“Dye-lithium is a mineral unique to Shangri-La,” replied Captain Kirk, with much the air of a man who has come to a reluctant decision. “Finding traces of it is proof that Jack Tellar has been in this area. It is possible that he has disguised himself as this Mr. Petrie. I suggest that we find Mr. Petrie as soon as we can. This will let us know whether your theory is correct.”

“I must repeat, Captain Kirk: Why should Mrs. Norton have burnt her bridges behind her? What possible connection can she have with your missing servant or with Shangri-La?”

“Well — none,” responded Captain Kirk, after a pause. “I wasn’t talking about Mrs. Norton; I was talking about ... someone back in Shangri-La. The reference would take a lot of explaining, and I can only repeat that it isn’t really relevant to your investigation of who killed these people here. You’ll just have to trust me on this one, Mr. Holmes.”

Dissatisfied, Holmes was about to speak again. At this juncture, however, Sergeant Gray arrived, with two police constables behind him, and Holmes was obliged to divert his attention to presenting the matter of the most recent murder to the authorities.



Starfleet Log Six

Captain's Log, Stardate 6237.4 Chief Engineer Montgomery Scott, Recording

On the last occasion that Captain Kirk and the others used the Guardian of Forever time portal, they were gone no more than a moment. It has been two hours since they departed on their most recent assignment, and I must conclude that some unforeseen difficulty has kept them from completing their mission and returning.

In accordance with Captain Kirk's final orders before leaving on this mission, I am proceeding to the Sol system to attempt to launch the Enterprise back in time to 19th-century Earth, and either assist with Captain Kirk's assignment or complete it ourselves.

Chief Engineer's Personal Log, Stardate 6237.42

Takin' the whole *Enterprise* back in time means that we'll ha' to use the slingshot effect around Earth's Sun that we used back in stardates 1704 and 3113. And e'en though the last time, we did it under Starfleet orders — some infarnal skelloch about learnin' how it was that Earth survived w'oot blowin' itself up — we still didna know much more than that we *cuid* do it, or whether we'd e'en survive ourselves.

Na'theless, everich time, it puts a horrific strain on the engines. Goin' home the last time, I thought for sartain we'd shear off the port nacelle, and back a'port, the dilithium crystals in the engines were functionin' at maybe 37 percent efficiency.

Forbye, we maun gae and rescue the Captain and the ithers; tha' is oor duty. But, och, me puir wee bairns....



Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman, 2011

Chapter 16: In Which a Treasure is Found

It was early afternoon before Sergeant Gray and his men could dispense with our services, and I confess that I had been thinking of my luncheon for some time. Sherlock Holmes, however, was of another mind.

“It is of the utmost importance that we locate Mr. Petrie without delay,” said he. “The testimony given by Mrs. Norton has established that Mr. Petrie knew more of Lord Lavenham and his business than any stranger to Hand Cross could possibly have learned. I suggest, gentlemen, that we therefore visit Gold Shield Imports again and endeavour to ascertain what the connexion may have been between Mr. Petrie and Lord Lavenham.”

The journey between Huggate’s Farm and Lavenham Park was a short one. On the way, Holmes and Mr. Spock related to us the conclusions to which they had come the night before concerning the telegrams which Lord Lavenham had sent to Prince Albert,

South Africa.

“There were two hundred and forty-seven telegrams in all,” observed Mr. Spock. “Of those, one hundred and eighteen mentioned fish of one sort or another, and one hundred and twenty-one mentioned crustaceans; eight mentioned both fish and shellfish. The most intriguing feature of the telegrams is that all two hundred and forty-seven of them mentioned ice. Two hundred and six of the telegrams asked that more ice be sent, or that the ice that was sent be of better quality. Only forty-one of the telegrams stated that the shipment had arrived wholly fresh and that the customers were pleased with how the fish had been iced. That is sixteen point five nine *per cent.*, which must certainly be considered low.”

“But ice?” asked Dr. McCoy. “Why ice? That’s a little mundane to be sending telegrams about, isn’t it?”

“Certainly, Doctor,” replied Holmes. “However, we have already remarked upon Lord Lavenham’s secret account ledgers, which were written in a simple cipher. There is nothing to bar him from sending telegrams in code. For example, ‘send more ice’ may be a coded message for anything from ‘overthrow the government’ to ‘long live the Queen.’ Mr. Spock and I have analysed the telegrams, and it is our belief that Gold Shield Imports is a false front for some other business, probably criminal, having to do with South Africa.”

“Spock, when was gold discovered in South Africa?” asked Captain Kirk.

“In 1884.”

“I thought so. And wasn’t there a war that—”

“That also was the year,” said Mr. Spock, repressively, “that the Boers of South Africa first claimed their independence, which is what you may be thinking of. It would not be surprising if, in the future, a conflict were to again break out between the Boers and the British Empire.” I could not be certain, but it seemed to me as though Mr. Spock added a small stress to the phrase, “in the future.”

“Well,” said Captain Kirk, and paused. “Anyway, maybe Lord Lavenham is stealing gold from South Africa and smuggling it into England.”

“Anything is possible,” remarked Holmes, unamiably. “However, it is the height of foolishness to theorise before one has data.”

Even I, who must confess to a partiality for my friend, could not fail to notice his new coldness toward Captain Kirk since the evening before, and the sarcasm with which he treated even the lightest of the other’s remarks. Had we not arrived at Lavenham Park scant moments after this last comment, the atmosphere between Holmes and Kirk should have grown tense indeed.

I had expected to find the warehouse as deserted as it had been the day before. Although a number of days would pass before Lord Lavenham’s funeral, to-morrow was Saturday, and upon the sudden death of its owner the business had been closed for more than a day; it seemed reasonable to infer that the business would not re-open until the late earl’s estate had been to some degree settled. While young Ned Kettering, the lad who had shown us around the day before, was absent, I was therefore surprised to see any number of men in the vicinity of the warehouse — not, it is true, working, but lounging in the open doorway of the loading bay or on the little dock near the warehouse which I had noticed on our previous incursion.

Findley, too, was on the premises. He appeared promptly, only a few moments after we had enquired for him. His black brow was again lowering at the sight of us, and his sallow features wore an expression as hostile as it had been the day before.

“Mr. Findley, we are looking for a man named Petrie,” said Holmes, briskly. “Perhaps you may be able to assist us in finding him.”

“Aye, and chance it happen I won’t, think on.”

“He is a tall man, heavy and powerfully built, with grey hair and a black beard shot through with grey. He is perhaps sixty years of age, with a stoop, a craggy complexion, and hands which tremble.”

“Ain’t seen no one like that here.”

“And I believe that you have,” returned Holmes calmly. I noticed, uneasily, that the men who had been lounging about outside were now beginning to appear behind us, in the doorway of the loading area.

“You can call me a liar all you choose. I still say I seen no Mr.

Petrie hanging abaht, nor no one else I should talk of to you and your kind, choose how.”

Holmes now favoured Findley with a cold stare, and appeared to change the subject. “What did the late Lord Lavenham — and you — keep behind the locked door of the melting room?”

“I don’t like questions like that,” replied Findley, heavily. The crowd of men behind us began a hoarse murmuring of sympathy with Findley which served only to increase my sense of unease.

“It matters little what you like or dislike, so long as you do not obstruct justice.”

“In fact,” continued Findley, with a menacing calm, “we talked it over, me and my lads, and we decided as how we don’t much like them as comes meddling into what don’t concern ’em.” His face now was flushed with anger, and his beetling brows were knotted over his dark, sunken eyes. “We don’t like it at all.”

Suddenly, and with a most fearful yell, he sprang at Holmes like a tiger. A moment later, the men in the doorway had rushed to attack the rest of us, and there commenced a terrific conflict. The reader must forgive me if my account here becomes a trifle confused, but figures were rushing here and there, blows were being dealt and received, and bellowing cries like those of an enraged bull were being made. I have no notion as to how many men took part in the fray, but it should not surprise me to be informed that the odds against my friends and me were four to one.

Luckily, in my younger days, I played Rugby as a defensive back for the Blackheath club, and had always been accounted a good man in a scrum. The first man who attacked me I sent reeling with a roundhouse punch to the jaw, and the second I hit so hard that he fell, and rolled over twice like a shot rabbit — thereby, I am glad to say, impeding the progress of two other of our attackers.

Holmes, as I have written elsewhere, had a great proficiency in the good old British sports of boxing and singlestick, and this proficiency stood him in good stead to-day. He had an admirable straight left, along with a graceful stance wherein his rapidly moving feet seemed in marked contrast to those of our two American friends, who for the most part stood as solidly as trees while they were using their fists.

I must, however, report that Captain Kirk during this *mêlée*

showed himself as one of the finest fighters I have ever seen. He had evidently never studied boxing, for he lacked all the grace and style in this art which Holmes evidenced. Nevertheless, there could be no doubt that he was a past master of many of the disciplines of combat. At one point during the fracas, I saw Captain Kirk perform an amazing feat against no fewer than three attackers. Against the first, he gave a bound onto his left foot, and his right foot came up like the release of a coiled spring to strike the unfortunate man full upon the jaw, knocking him cold. Seemingly as part of the same movement, Kirk then spun round and with the same right foot kicked sideways solidly into the abdomen of the man who was lunging at him from that side. The man on his left had somewhere found one of the short, vicious knives which are used for the scaling of fish, and was running at Kirk with the knife above his head. As the knife flashed down, Kirk reached underneath it to grasp the man by his wrist. The next moment, the man was leaning far over, his head almost touching his knees, while Kirk held his wrist high in the air and twisted. A wail of agony and a dropped knife signalled some overmastering injury to the man's wrist. A moment later, the wail was broken off as Kirk sliced his stiffened hand down across the man's neck and he collapsed.

The most remarkable member of the *mêlée* was, as usual, Mr. Spock, who, without appearing to exert himself in the slightest, managed to wreak far more devastation than the rest of us. The enormous strength which we had seen him use to a small extent in Baker Street was now fully unleashed, and he performed such feats as picking up two of our attackers simultaneously and sending them flying across the room, into two others, as casually as I might toss a football.

He also made use of a trick which, the first time I observed it, forcibly reminded me of the "swoon" which had overcome Lady Lavenham. Mr. Spock would place his hand on a man's neck and, with what appeared to be a gentle squeeze, render him instantly unconscious. In this manner he disposed of any number of our attackers, often at a most expeditious moment — as when Dr. McCoy seemed in danger of being choked to death by a red-whiskered ruffian in a leather waistcoat. Mr. Spock simply placed his hand on the ruffian's neck, and the man released his grip on Dr. McCoy and

dropped like a felled ox.

It seemed to me, during the very few moments when I had the leisure to observe it, that Findley bore some personal grudge against Holmes, for almost every time I looked round me, Findley was there, attempting to injure Holmes in some manner. Moreover, he fought like a berserker, as though in the grip of a blind rage.

Only on one occasion, however, was I seriously alarmed for my friend. Holmes's attention was being occupied by a tall, thin young blackguard whose resemblance to Findley was so strong he might have been his son, when Findley himself rushed in from behind Holmes. His hand closed round Holmes's neck, and he bore him back relentlessly, choking him cruelly. I saw that Captain Kirk was momentarily free of attackers, but that he was unaccountably hesitating to come to Holmes's aid. Then, with the bound of a tiger, Kirk was on Findley's back, and his right arm was crooked round Findley's neck in a half-Nelson. Findley gave a muffled curse, released Holmes, and attempted to shake Kirk loose, but the Captain would have nothing of it.

The tall young blackguard who might have been Findley's son now appeared behind Captain Kirk, a large, empty wooden crate in his hands. He lifted it above him, preparatory to bringing it down with a crash onto Kirk's head. He never completed the manoeuvre, however; for, with an oath, Holmes grasped the young man's arm in two places, spiraled him up somehow, and, with a flip, sent him flying.

At that moment, a small, thin man with a pock-marked face attempted to gain my attention with the aid of a thick wooden plank, and I lost track for the time being of any other portion of the fray. I sprang at him, and pinioned his arms against his body. He writhed and cursed, and I rushed him towards the nearest wall, where a sudden impact gave him, I hope, a severe headache all the next day. At any rate, there was a thud and a groan; his eyes turned up in his head, and he fell to the floor as bonelessly as a rag doll.

And then, as suddenly as it had begun, the fight was over. Almost all of our attackers lay about the warehouse, and all who were there were unconscious; I presume that the others had fled at some point during the turn-up. From the amount of blood which

lay about, from bloodied noses or cuts over eyes, the place looked almost like a charnel house. With relief, however, I saw that none of my friends had been injured to the extent of bleeding; only our attackers had been punished that severely.

We stood for a moment breathless and panting from the struggle — all save Mr. Spock, who might have recently risen from an evening of reading the papers for all the change in his demeanour. I noticed that Mr. Spock had somehow managed to acquire a spattering of green paint upon the knuckles of one hand; but Dr. McCoy handed Mr. Spock something with which to wipe it off, and I thought no more about it.

Now Captain Kirk, wiping his mouth, said, “Friendly folk you’ve got here in Hand Cross.”

“Indeed, Captain,” said Spock; “they seemed remarkably anxious to discourage us from continuing our investigation.”

“Thanks for getting that guy off me, Holmes,” continued Kirk. “What was that move you used, anyway? It looked a little like *yokomenuchi iriminage*.”

“I have some knowledge of baritsu, or the Japanese system of wrestling,” agreed Holmes, with a glint. “You also are no stranger to the Oriental arts of self-defense, I see.”

“I’ve never heard of baritsu,” admitted Captain Kirk. “I’ve studied Jew-doe, kah-rah-tea, and eye-key-doe, but I’ve never gotten beyond second-degree black belt in any of them. No time, I’m afraid.”

“Whatever the name of the discipline, I should imagine that your studies have more than once been very useful to you.”

Kirk laughed. “You could say that.”

“We should certainly have come to very ignominious grief today without each of us having a proficiency in some form of combat. I saw Watson, for example, level several men with the use of a Rugby tackle which would be the pride of many a younger man. Dr. McCoy also,” Holmes added kindly, “I saw use a right cross which was far from contemptible.”

Dr. McCoy grinned. “I’m a doctor, not a fighter.”

“And of course there is Mr. Spock, whose method of fighting is quite as remarkable as his appearance. What is the name of the discipline which you were practicing, Mr. Spock?”

“It is called *v’asumi*.”

“And can that laying on of hands with which you so quickly were able to render your opponents unconscious be taught to others?”

“I have tried to teach Captain Kirk, many times. I am afraid that the technique calls for a combination of physical strength and mental ... concentration, that appears to be beyond most humans.”

“Well,” remarked Holmes, surveying the carnage around us; “while our opponents are temporarily out of commission, let us turn our investigation to the realm of the practical. I find that, particularly after our recent sparring exercise, I have acquired an intense curiosity as to the contents of the ‘melting room’ which young Ned showed us yesterday.”

Suiting action to words, Holmes picked up a crowbar which one of our attackers no longer needed, and inserted it between the steel hasp and wooden doorway of the melting room. A quick wrench divested the door of its padlock, and a moment later we were inside.

As Ned had told us the day before, it had been several days since a shipment had arrived, and there were no great blocks of ice to be seen. However, the remains of the ice could be seen, all but melted, upon the filters which occupied the tiny room: two or three rectangular chunks, about as big as books; a litter of sawdust and straw; and dozens of ice-chips scattered among the straw.

“Why on earth should Lord Lavenham wish to keep this room locked? There is nothing here worth protecting!” I exclaimed.

“Nothing, Watson? I wonder.” Holmes leaned over and picked up one of the ice-chips. It glittered as Holmes held it up to the light.

“Ice in the ice,” said Kirk, with a smile of triumph.

“I beg your pardon?”

“‘Ice’ is an American slang word for diamonds. Those are diamonds, aren’t they?”

“They are indeed. I fancy that we have discovered that which Findley and his cohorts were so anxious to protect. I also fancy that we have discovered why Lord Lavenham kept two sets of books.”

“Why would anyone want to smuggle diamonds?” asked Dr.

McCoy. “Couldn’t they make a decent enough profit honestly?”

“The passage of South Africa’s Illicit Diamond Buying Act limits the diamond trade to licensed buyers,” responded Holmes. “It also imposes severe penalties on the white man who is unable to prove the legality of his possession of the diamond — or on the Colored man who possesses a diamond at all. What is more, a company called De Beers Consolidated Mines, Limited, created by Mr. Cecil Rhodes and Mr. Barney Barnato, has had a monopoly over the diamond mining industry in South Africa since last year. No; the smuggling of diamonds is the least surprising portion of Lord Lavenham’s activities, once one has accepted the idea that a peer of the realm should have criminal propensities at all.”

“So what do we do now?”

“We must find Sergeant Gray again,” responded Holmes, “and hand over to him all the diamonds which we have found here, along with the telegrams, the coded account books, and the other evidence which we have discovered. Doubtless he is still at Hugate Farm, so he ought not to be difficult to find.

“We are none of us the better for our recent encounter; and so afterwards, I think it should be best if we were to return to the Red Lion and procure a change of raiment.”

“And some luncheon,” added I.



Chapter 17: A Remarkable Woman

By the time we returned to the Red Lion, it was past three o'clock; and thus, after changing our linen and refreshing ourselves, we decided to settle for an early tea instead of a late luncheon. During this repast, we discussed where next we might seek Mr. Petrie.

"He quit his job at Huggate's Farm," observed Captain Kirk; "but he doesn't seem to have gotten another one, or Mr. Huggate would have known about it. And he wasn't at the warehouse — that's for sure. There wasn't a man there over forty."

"Barring yourselves," said Holmes, demurely.

Captain Kirk appeared momentarily at a loss. Seeing this, Mr. Spock interjected, "I believe that Mr. Holmes was complimenting you and Dr. McCoy, Captain. Your fighting skills are much better than would be expected for a man of fifty-eight."

"Oh — oh, yes. Well, Mr. Holmes, I don't think of myself as anywhere near fifty-eight, of course."

"Of course," agreed Holmes, sardonically.

"I still think you're right, Jim — that Petrie is the guy we saw in the bar last night, getting drunk as a skunk," remarked Dr. McCoy, rather hastily.

"You said, I think, that the old man you saw last night matched the description which Mrs. Norton gave of Mr. Petrie?" asked Holmes.

"Either him or his twin brother."

"Well, there is an easy way to discover whether they are the same man," said Holmes. He rang for the landlord. When a moment later Mr. Nye entered the room, Holmes asked, "What is the name of the old gentleman who got drunk in your public bar last night, and had to be ejected by the barman and yourself?"

"That were a Mr. Petrie, sir."

Captain Kirk gave a satisfied nod.

"And does he get drunk often?" continued Holmes.

"That's hard to say, sir," admitted the landlord, running his hand across his mouth. "He's been a-coming in here every night since he's been in Hand Cross, generally around sevenish. But it's only been the last two weeks or so that he's been getting drunk as a lord, as the saying goes, and making trouble. I'm one as doesn't take much notice what a man does, as long as he does it decent-like. But as for shouting out things and starting fights, that's what I don't hold with, and never did."

"And do you expect Mr. Petrie to come in again tonight?"

"Aye, no doubt he'll be in at seven, and drunk again by eight and having to be taken home in a barrow."

"I see. Thank you, Nye." After the landlord had left, Holmes remarked, "We seem to be at an impasse until seven."

"Well, as long as we've got some time to kill, I think I'll go out for a while," said Captain Kirk, putting down his teacup with an odd gesture, one almost of distaste.

"Where?" asked Dr. McCoy.

Captain Kirk frowned at his friend. "I thought I'd go see Irene Norton, if you really want to know."

Raising a demonic eyebrow, Mr. Spock said, "Captain, do you think that is entirely wise?"

"The poor woman has lost her husband," answered Kirk, not altogether patiently. "And I don't think she has too many friends

in this village. I think she'd be glad to see a friendly face, that's all."

"You are correct, Captain Kirk," remarked Holmes. "I shall accompany you."

Captain Kirk looked as though he were not best pleased at this offer. But he said nothing.

As Kirk and Holmes rose to go, Holmes asked, "Coming, Watson?"

"If you are sure you wish me to, I should like nothing better."

"A word with you, Captain, if I may," now said Mr. Spock. He drew his friend aside. In a low voice, he continued, "I hesitate to bring up a subject that must be painful to you, but I trust you have not forgotten the last time you and I—?"

Captain Kirk's smile was slightly twisted as he replied, after a pause, "No, I haven't..."

Dr. McCoy piped in solicitously, "You want some company?"

Their eyes met briefly, and then Captain Kirk shook his head, saying a simple "No" before turning toward us at the door.

* * *

As with the night before, we elected to walk the short distance to Briony Manor. For the first few minutes, we walked in silence. Then a decidedly uncomfortable thought occurred to me.

"Holmes," I began, hesitantly. "I am wondering what we should say to this dear little woman if she should chance not to have been informed of her husband's death."

"I have been wondering that myself," admitted Holmes. "She does not go about much in the village, and as Captain Kirk observed, the only other person here of her set is Lady Lavenham. If Sergeant Gray has not been able to visit her, I do not see how our grim news can have reached her."

In the event, we need not have worried; Mrs. Norton was all in black, and from the first moment it was obvious that she knew that her husband was dead. In her greeting to us, she appeared self-possessed to a remarkable degree. It is true that her lovely face was drawn and pale, like that of one who has endured a great shock; its effect, though, was to make her eyes seem even larger and more lustrous. Her manner was perfectly poised, and the dainty hand which she extended to us in welcome was as steady

as my own; so that I suddenly remembered what the King of Bohemia had said: "She has the face of the most beautiful of women, and the mind of the most resolute of men." Whatever her feelings might be, Irene Adler Norton was the mistress of herself.

"It is very good of you to call," she said. "Sergeant Gray has not yet been able to spare the time to visit me, and I am a little in the dark as to some of the details of my husband's death; perhaps you gentlemen would be willing to enlighten me."

"But if Sergeant Gray has not called upon you, how did you learn of Mr. Norton's death?" asked I, puzzled.

Mrs. Norton's mouth quirked. "This is a small village; news travels very fast. In this particular case, Sergeant Gray's aide, P.C. Jones, told his young lady, Daphne, who works on the next farm over to Mr. Huggate's. Daphne quickly found the occasion to visit her bosom-friend Myrtle, two farms over, and told her. Myrtle in turn told Mrs. Twitchell, the green-grocer's wife, while she was buying two pounds of new peas and a bag of flour. Mrs. Twitchell then told her son Bob, who is one of Lord Lavenham's grooms; Stevens, the Lavenham butler, told Mrs. Babbacombe, who is my housekeeper, and with whom he has an understanding. Such is the efficiency of the village grapevine that I knew that Mr. Norton was dead an hour after you yourselves did."

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed I.

"No, not really," said Captain Kirk. "The smaller the community, the faster news gets around. I've lived where there weren't more than about four hundred people; I know what Mrs. Norton is talking about. For a place this size, an hour is even a little slow."

"You apparently did not send for Sergeant Gray at once, but instead had to deal with Mr. Huggate."

"Of course," said he, with a quick smile. "That would explain it."

"Unfortunately, the grapevine being what it is, the more sensational a bit of news is, the further it becomes distorted with each new telling," continued Mrs. Norton. "I should be grateful to hear the plain facts, Mr. Holmes, for the story which my housekeeper brought to me was not designed to make comfortable hearing."

Holmes hesitated. "Even without distortion, it is not a comfortable story, madam."

"I have been told that Spring-heeled Jack kidnapped my hus-

band, took him to Mr. Petrie's shack, and roasted him alive, before eating his brains for dinner. I cannot believe that what you have to tell me could be worse than that."

"It is not; but it is very little better."

Mrs. Norton reached forward and placed her slim hand on Holmes's, fixing him with a keen glance. Holmes betrayed no signs of consciousness or unease at this unaccustomed contact with the fair sex; but held her hand and her gaze with a gentleness which he seldom revealed to the world.

"Please, tell me what happened," the lady said, quietly. "I am not given to hysteria, and I never faint."

"Very well, madam." But here again, Holmes hesitated.

Mrs. Norton, perceiving the delicacy of his tact, now had the kindness to assume command of the interview.

"You found my husband's body at Mr. Petrie's shack, and it was missing its brain. This much of the story I heard I believe, for it is similar to what happened to the man in Whitechapel and to Lord Lavenham."

"It is true, madam."

"He was murdered?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Norton paused, looking very white. True to her word, she did not swoon; though her grip on Holmes's hand tightened. However, her next remark showed that she retained at least some of her characteristic wit.

"A somewhat final means to prove to the police that he was not the killer! Was he murdered by the same man who killed Lord Lavenham, and earlier the victim in the East End?"

"I believe so."

"By the same method?"

Holmes paused before replying carefully, "Lord Lavenham died of fright, and his body was mutilated after death."

Mrs. Norton closed her eyes and took a deep breath. Then, again fixing Holmes with her keen glance, she said, "And when did my husband meet his death?"

Holmes glanced at me. "From indications on the — on your husband's body, I should estimate that he died within an hour or so after Lord Lavenham's death," said I, reluctantly.

Mrs. Norton turned her attention from Holmes only long enough to acknowledge my response with a grave nod of thanks; she then resumed her interrogation.

“Mr. Petrie knew more about Lord Lavenham than any stranger could have; and what he knew was damaging. When he is drunk, Mr. Petrie makes slanderous remarks about certain unspecified members of the peerage. Mr. Petrie denied that my husband went to see him after Lord Lavenham’s death, and I believe his denial was untruthful. My husband’s body was found in a shallow grave behind Mr. Petrie’s cottage.”

“You have stated the facts as you know them correctly. I might also add that Mr. Petrie had an appointment to meet Lord Lavenham at 4.30 yesterday afternoon.”

“Indeed! ... You therefore suspect Mr. Petrie of culpability in these murders.”

“That is so, madam.”

“But you have not found him.”

“No.”

“Then perhaps he has fled?”

“That is one possibility, although not one upon which I should be inclined to rely. We expect to bring him to justice later to-day.”

“And if it turns out that he is exactly what he appears to be: an old man, too old and infirm to have committed these crimes?”

“Mr. Petrie is not our only suspect.”

“I see. ... Mr. Holmes, I should be grateful if you would be so kind as to visit me when you have apprehended the true murderer, and allow me then to satisfy my curiosity fully.”

“It would be my pleasure, madam.”

“It is very odd,” said she, meditatively; “my marriage was not an ideal one, and I have never pretended it was. And yet, now that my husband is dead, I feel almost as shaken as though we had been some old Darby and Joan, happily married for many years. And I feel very alone, and very uncertain. I hope that I may call upon you for advice, Mr. Holmes; for just at this moment, I do not at all know how I shall go on. I should feel so much stronger if I felt that you were at the back of me.”

“Then pray do so, dear lady. I am yours to command at any time.”

For a moment, Mrs. Norton sat wordless, her large, beautiful green eyes fixed upon Holmes as though in mute query. Evidently what she read there satisfied her, for a moment later she released her grip upon Holmes at last and rang for her butler — who, to my surprise, appeared almost at once. “Tea for four, Reid,” she told him; adding, to Captain Kirk, “The English regard tea as a sovereign remedy for almost any ailment imaginable, and even for some which haven’t been thought of yet. It is for them the one true panacea. I am amazed that no-one has attempted to patent it.”

“Frankly, my own inclination would be to throw it into the harbour,” replied Captain Kirk, with a rueful smile.

“Ah — you *American* gentlemen,” said she, twinkling a little. “That is a famous incident on both sides of the Atlantic, but I imagine for different reasons. To so maltreat tea is here regarded almost as sacrilege. I shall spare you the effort, James — and us the affront to our sensibilities. The whisky is on the sideboard.”

“You’re one in a million, Irene,” returned he, smiling down at her.

Mrs. Norton turned again to us. “I am more grateful to you than I can say, gentlemen, for coming to me at once with your news.”

“To speak truthfully, madam, we had been hoping that Sergeant Gray would have been before us,” I admitted.

“Sergeant Gray,” said she, drily, “would have been much shocked at what he perceived as my callousness in questioning him so rigorously as to the manner of my husband’s dying. You were not.”

“I myself was not,” returned Holmes, glancing at me with a smile. Mrs. Norton looked at me anxiously. “Dr. Watson?”

“Shock takes different people in different ways,” I replied, preserving an appearance of calm.

“And you believe that I am in shock?” said she, acutely. “I suppose that is very possible.” As her butler entered, she added, “And that is yet another ailment for which tea is a sovereign remedy.”

I confess that it did my heart good to see how quickly Mrs. Norton had become mistress of herself once again. True, she was still very pale; but I had no concern that she might lose command of her faculties, as had earlier seemed possible.

“I ought also to thank you, James, for coming with Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson to tell me about my husband,” she now said. Not for the first time, I marveled at the rapidity with which she and Captain Kirk had become so intimate as to have exchanged Christian names.

“I thought you might want a friend,” said he, simply.

“That is very kind. The only good to come of any affliction is that one learns who are one’s true friends.”

It now appeared that Kirk had come to a sudden decision, for he put his brandy-snifter onto the sideboard and came forward to where Mrs. Norton sat on the sofa.

“One of the reasons I came this afternoon, Irene, was to say good-bye to you,” said he, quickly.

This appeared to startle Holmes as much as it startled me. Captain Kirk must, I thought, be very sure that Mr. Petrie was indeed Spock’s servant, Jack Tellar, in disguise, and that we should find him to-night in the public bar of the Red Lion and arrest him.

Mrs. Norton was also unprepared for Captain Kirk’s announcement. “Good-bye!” exclaimed she. “You are leaving, then?”

“Yes — my friends and I are going home soon. We were only in England for a short visit, anyway.”

A second glance at Holmes showed me that he was not, as I thought he might be, displeased at the news that Kirk and his mysterious companions would soon be departing, without having allowed Holmes the chance to unravel the mystery of their odd speech and behaviour. Mrs. Norton stood, and went over to face Captain Kirk. “When do you leave?”

“Probably to-night or to-morrow.”

“That is too soon, James. You have been known to me for only a day.”

Kirk smiled and shook his head, saying, “Is that all?”

Her mouth quirked. “You know very well that that is all. When do you return?”

“Not for a long time — if ever.”

“And there is no way to stop you?”

He shook his head. “I’ll miss you,” said he. “You’re a wonderful woman — the best in England.” As she looked up at him, he added, softly, “In this world.”

Her eyes danced. “And you are, by your own admission, a much-travelled man; which makes the compliment even handsomer. Well; if I cannot stop you from leaving England when you have barely arrived, there is nothing more to be said. But it seems very hard.”

Her eye alighted upon her writing-table, upon which sat, among other objects, a small photograph of herself, *carte de visite* in size. She picked it up and handed it to him.

“A memento of your stay in Hand Cross.”

“Thanks,” said he. “I’ll treasure this.”

Mrs. Norton suddenly acquired a mischievous look.

“You said you were going home. Shall you be returning to Alpha Centauri, then?”

Kirk shot a quick glance at Holmes, as though embarrassed by her question. Then he turned back to her, shaking his head with the smile of one sharing a private joke. “No — even farther than that.”

“Ah,” said she, twinkling. “I had forgotten that you are an explorer. Doubtless you are destined to go where no man has gone before.”

Kirk laughed. “I couldn’t have put it better myself.”

* * *

When we returned to the Red Lion, we were met almost in the doorway by Dr. McCoy, who seemed excited, and by Mr. Spock, who did not — but then, for all the emotion which Mr. Spock was in the habit of displaying, he might have been more machine than man.

“You’re back!”

“An unarguable statement, Doctor,” returned Holmes. “Look here.”

McCoy produced a note, written on cheap, dirty paper. On the outer side were subscribed the words, “*For Mr. Sherlock Holmes.*”

“This came in while you three were at Miz Norton’s. A boy brought it.”

Holmes had unfolded the note and read it as McCoy spoke. Now he handed it to me, and I read it aloud.

“*Meet me at 6.30. You know where.*”

Like the note which had been sent to Lord Lavenham, it was unsigned. That it was also in the same hand was incontestable; it was easy to recognize the thin letters, the slanting crossbars of the T's, and the high capitals which began at the right and swung left back in on themselves.

"What does he mean, 'You know where'?" complained Dr. McCoy. "I don't know where."

"He must mean either the clearing behind Gold Shield Imports, or the warehouse itself," returned Holmes. "He could not mean his cottage, for Sergeant Gray is bound to have stationed a constable there, to apprehend him should he return."

"He probably means the clearing," remarked Captain Kirk. "Didn't you tell us he'd found himself a good place to ambush someone there?"

"He had indeed. We, therefore, shall go to the warehouse immediately, and await his arrival. That, I fancy, shall provide us, rather than him, with an ambushade of our own."



Leonard Nimoy as Sherlock Holmes in 1980

Chapter 18: What Archibald Petrie Had to Tell

Our intention to lay an ambush of our own had not deprived us of our common-sense. It was late in an October day, and by the time we had reached Lord Lavenham's warehouse, it would be full dark. Before we had even summoned the carriage, we had procured dark-lanterns. Holmes and I had considered also bringing along my service revolver; but neither of us felt that there could be any danger to the five of us from one old man, however much a murderer he might be.

In the event, our precautions with regard to the dark-lanterns were justified. The few windows in the warehouse were small and set quite high, so that the last few strands of daffodil-coloured light were quite lost, and the gloom was as complete as though it were already full night.

We waited until Holmes had secured the man-sized door set into the great doors of the loading bay before we unshuttered our dark-lanterns; but the beams they cast were so quickly swallowed up by the vast darkness of the large, high-ceilinged shipping area that we almost need not have taken the precaution.

This was the field which we had left in the possession of our vanquished foes only a few hours before. It was, I saw, no longer a shambles; the fallen bodies had picked themselves up, and even cleaned away most of the bloodstains which were the trophies of our conflict.

As Holmes rejoined our small group, Dr. McCoy asked, "What now?"

Before he could reply, however, Mr. Spock had raised an imperative hand for silence. He stood slightly apart from us, with his head cocked. The mixture of shadows and light cast by the dark-lanterns, throwing the slanting eyebrows into sharp relief, made him appear as sinister and Mephistophelian as ever I had seen him.

After a moment, he said calmly, "There is someone in the cooler."

"I beg your pardon?" said I, startled.

"I hear the sounds of a man in pain."

I could hear nothing of the sort. I looked at Holmes, who was gazing narrowly at Mr. Spock. Holmes replied merely, "Well, let us investigate."

We crossed the room quickly, and Captain Kirk threw open the massive sliding steel door of the cooler with an easy heave. Inside the cooler, we could all now hear what Mr. Spock had heard: a low, choking respiration which was also a moaning, emanating from the far corner of the cooler.

Hurrying over, we found a pitiable sight. The old man whom Captain Kirk, Dr. McCoy, and I had encountered in the tap-room of the Red Lion the night before lay huddled on the floor, bound and gagged, wearing nothing more protective against the cold than his vest. He was in a deep swoon, and reacted neither to the light of our dark-lanterns nor to our horrified exclamations of concern. His body was racked with shuddering, and retained the stoop we had observed the evening before even now that he was ill.

Mr. Spock picked up the old man, suffering Holmes to take his feet, and carried him out of the cooler and, after a quick consultation, into the aromatic smoking room. There, after untying him, we wrapped him in our greatcoats and laid him gently on the floor before the applewood fire, which, though banked, still emitted a steady warmth along with its delicious smell. After Holmes forced some of the brandy from my flask through his teeth, the old man's shuddering decreased, though it did not at any time during the ensuing conversation disappear altogether.

A racking cough shook the old man, and I pressed my handkerchief against his mouth. It came away stained with yellowish sputum and blood. I looked up at Dr. McCoy, and saw in his eyes that he shared my gloomy prognosis as to the old man's prospects for living beyond the evening.

"Tuberculosis," said he to me, quietly.

"Unquestionably consumption," I agreed, equally quietly. "I should also venture on *paralysis agitans*."

"Parkinson's disease?" He took from his pocket his small, glowing cylinder and held it above the old man, making it emit its characteristic cheeping noise. Still deep in his swoon, the old man did not stir, but merely continued to tremble, his respiration still stertorous and choking.

Replacing the cylinder, McCoy said grimly, "You're right, Doctor." Captain Kirk touched his shoulder. Their eyes met, and Dr. McCoy shook his head slightly.

"Can you at least bring him around, Bones?" asked Kirk. Dr. McCoy hesitated.

"If, as you believe, he is dying," said Holmes, "then it becomes imperative that we learn from him the truth about his involvement in this affair. I must urge you, Dr. McCoy, to use your skills to bring this man to consciousness."

"I can bring him around for a while, I suppose," said McCoy, reluctantly. "Not for long, though."

Dr. McCoy now withdrew his silvery ampoule from his pocket, adjusted it by the light of Captain Kirk's dark-lantern, and pressed it against the old man's arm, causing it to hiss briefly. After a few moments, the old man's breathing eased; the choking breaths changed to a regular rasping. He opened his eyes and looked

round him, puzzled, seeming to know neither where he was nor his own condition. We none of us pressed him, but allowed him to regain his orientation undisturbed.

Finally, it seemed to us that the old man had regained his senses. His gaze rested upon Holmes, and he frowned slightly.

“Mr. Archibald Petrie, late of South Africa, I believe,” said Holmes, not ungently. “I am Mr. Sherlock Holmes, a consulting detective; these men are connected with me in my investigation. Who has done this to you — left you, bound and gagged, to die in the frigeratory machine?”

“Don’t — know his name,” the old man gasped. “Big, ugly fellow; couldn’t talk well. Every time I’d ask his name, all he’d do was grunt. I called him Bronc. He showed up on my doorstep about a week ago, wearing burnt-looking rags. Said he’d been in an accident. I took him in, made him presentable, shared what food I had. You learn to do that when you’re on the tramp. Didn’t know I was taking a d—ned snake to my bosom.”

Here Petrie attempted to spit, to demonstrate his disgust with the ungrateful Bronc. Instead, he coughed — a cough which came in deep, wrenching spasms and left further blood upon my handkerchief.

“This man,” said Holmes. “Was he *quite* big — six foot four, twenty stone? With footwear which fit him badly, and a black false beard?”

“Aye, that’s Bronc.” Petrie paused and blinked up at my friend. “Holmes, you said you were? If you’re Holmes, then he has some grudge against you — you and the men you’re with. ‘Won’t go back,’ he’d say, over and over. ‘Die first. Or kill.’ Wouldn’t surprise me if you were all peelers, and Bronc on the run. He knew that you were after me, and he thought to use me as bait so that he could catch you. He forced me to write that note to you, and then he brought me here.” A shudder swept over the old man, almost as though he felt himself still in the wintry grip of the frigeratory machine.

“You are correct; we have been after you,” said Holmes, sternly. “I have been on your trail since not long after your encounter with Lord Lavenham. This is very likely your last chance to clear your conscience: Will you not make a clean breast of it?”

Although the old man was warmer now, and conscious, and, under the influence of Dr. McCoy's potion, articulate, he could by no stretch of the imagination have been called well. At Holmes's words, he emitted a sigh which seemed unutterably weary.

"I do not know by what means you have arrived at the conclusion that I killed Lord Lavenham," said he, hoarsely. "Nor do I know what business it is of yours."

"It is my business to see that justice is done. You do not deny your implication in Lord Lavenham's death?"

"Oh, I killed him, right enough — though I shot no gun, nor used any violent means save words. But even so, Mr. Holmes — even though I was the hand of the Dark Angel, no jury in the world would hang me once it had heard my story." He paused, and rolled his head in pain, and coughed again. "At the time, I did not mean him to die — I only meant for him to pay some small part of his debt to me — to be remorseful, if one so evil as he may be capable of remorse.

"No, Mr. Holmes, I do not regret what I have done. ... Abernethy Shield ... A villainous viper, he was. ... Hard, that a man so evil should bring infamy upon so old and honourable a name. The world is well rid of him."

I give Petrie's remarks as a whole, and shall not attempt to indicate how they were interrupted by the man's racking coughs and violent tremblings. Each breath was a tremendous struggle, and it was pitiable to see how violently his aspect had changed from the night before.

"Certainly your conscience does not appear to trouble you overmuch," remarked Holmes, coldly.

"If you saw a scorpion beneath your heel, ready to strike at any moment and destroy all, unto your very life, would you not crush it?" cried the old man, passionately.

Dr. McCoy swiftly stood and, grasping Holmes by the elbow, said in a fierce whisper, "D—n it, man! Can't you see he's dying?"

Holmes might have answered McCoy with some sternness, but I looked up at him and shook my head warningly. Petrie had little enough time to live, and that time would be wasted by any altercation. In the event, Holmes merely said, gently, "Unhand me, Doctor. My sole interest lies in seeing that the cause of justice is

served.”

“Then maybe you should try for a little humanity,” retorted McCoy.

Captain Kirk murmured, “Bones—,” and put his hand on his friend’s shoulder.

Holmes flushed, and his lips thinned. He did not reply, however; but after a moment turned to Petrie and said, “We are anxious to know the right of this affair. I shall spare you having to recite the known facts; but I should like to ask you to enlighten us with a few further details.”

The old man coughed rackingly. When the spasm was finished, he said, “What could you know? No one knows all — not even Ernestina.”

“I know a good deal more than you seem to think,” retorted Holmes. “You first met Lord Lavenham in South Africa, twenty years ago. At that time, you both were involved in the mining of diamonds. One of you — probably you, Mr. Petrie — contrived a scheme for smuggling diamonds into England which involved the use of Lord Lavenham’s lands and influence in society. Some incident occurred which resulted in you, Mr. Petrie, being put in gaol for most or all of the years intervening between then and now, while Lavenham alone enjoyed all the ill-gotten fruits of your scheme. Immediately you were able to, you hunted Lavenham down and demanded your share of the profits from the last twenty years. During that interview, something you said caused Lavenham to become so frightened that he died. You were very upset, but after time to reflect determined upon a bold course: You would make it appear that Lord Lavenham had died by the same hand as that which murdered the victim in Whitechapel two nights ago.”

“You have the bones of it,” said Petrie, with a bitter laugh which turned into another cough. “I see that there isn’t very much I need tell you, except to put the meat on the bones.

“In 1870, I was seeking my fortune in that incredibly rich diamond field they found where Kimberley now stands. I was the younger son of a younger son, and knew from the start I should have to earn my living. But I had no taste for scholarship, and so was barred from the law or the clergy; and likewise I had no taste

for soldiering or sailing. In short, after a brief and unprofitable sojourn at Sandhurst, I determined upon becoming an adventurer.

“It was astounding how thick in diamonds the soil was, in that great deposit at Kimberley. Each prospector was entitled to a square of land, thirty-one feet to a side. He could dig as deep as he liked, but he had to leave a footpath on his land for other miners to use. To stand from afar and look at the mines was to believe one had stumbled upon some mad dream of Ariadne’s, for the dozens of ropes and cables that led from the mine to each individual holding were like nothing so much as a huge spider’s web.

“I was a young chap then, hot-blooded and reckless, ready to turn my hand to anything. I don’t need to tell you gentlemen that there were as many ladies of the evening in South Africa at that time as there were diamonds, but that there were d—ned few females in that benighted country worth more than an evening’s dalliance. I found one of them — one of the few. My heart was lost to a true lady ... Ernestina Velasquez-Romero.”

Here the old man stopped, again racked by his deep, hacking cough. At a gesture from me, Captain Kirk retrieved my flask, and we gave him another drink. This indeed seemed to strengthen him, for after a moment he continued his story with slightly renewed vitality.

“Ernestina ... beautiful Ernestina,” muttered Petrie. “She lived with her father in a town called Prince Albert, in the southern part of the Great Karroo. Ernestina was the daughter of a farmer — you would call him a Boer, save that he was Spanish, rather than Dutch or Huguenot. He guarded her, as fiercely as Iberians have always guarded their daughters, and rightly, for we were all rough fellows, and I fancy that the rougher of us should have treated her like a Sabine had they dared.

“I was a good-looking lad in those days — big and broad, and with a go-to-the-devil look to me which the ladies seemed to like. You might stare, seeing me so infirm, to know that I am but fifty-five years in age; but so it is. Hard times have done for me. ... Aye, I was a good-looking lad, as much in love with Ernestina as I could hold. Those dark, mysterious eyes of hers — that lustrous hair! ... Her father was a poor man, and that chafed me, for there

she was wearing the same two dresses until they were like to turn into rags, when I wanted nothing so much as to see her in satin and lace, decked out with jewels, looking like a dusky, bright-eyed queen. She *was* a queen — to me.”

Petrie appeared to have become lost in his reminiscences, for his voice now trailed off, and his eyes were focused upon some distant scene which he evidently found far more to his taste than the reality round us.

Gently, Holmes said, “Mr. Petrie—”

The old man blinked, and looked at Holmes, and coughed. “You had the right of it, Mr. Holmes; it was I who invented the scheme to smuggle diamonds into Britain. And for what? For what did I sell my honour? Only to be able to make a home for Ernestina a little sooner. I feared — ah, this is a rich jest! — I feared that if I waited, I might lose her to another.” He coughed again, deeply, and again blood appeared on my handkerchief. “I was hot at hand, over-eager to be off; and I paid.”

“You proposed the scheme to Lavenham, who was then known as Shield,” said Mr. Spock, as emotionlessly as though he were reciting a statement of accounts. “After Lavenham had agreed to it and the scheme was well under way, you introduced him to Miss Velasquez.”

“Aye, fool that I was, I did just that. Poor Ernestina knew nothing of the scheme; she has always been an innocent. My plan was that I should mine the diamonds, from my holding, and then send them to Athens to be cut and polished and turned into jewels. There they should be frozen into blocks of ice, and used to keep seafood cold until it reached England.

“Lavenham’s part of the scheme was to provide the needed connexions in England — the land for the warehouse, the sales of the seafood, the purchasers for the diamonds. Oh, God! God! Curse me for a fool! God!”

At this last cry, Petrie started up briefly, and then relapsed into a swoon. Dr. McCoy at once had his glowing cylinder in his hand.

“It’s not good, Jim.”

“You’ve got to revive him a little longer, Bones,” said Kirk, urgently.

“I *can’t*,” returned McCoy, in a passionate undertone. “It’d

probably kill him.”

“How much longer does he have to live? Will he even last the night?”

Kirk and McCoy locked eyes. After a moment, McCoy said, reluctantly, “No.” Then, after another pause, “D—n it, Jim, can’t you let the poor guy have some peace?”

“Dr. McCoy,” intervened I, gently. “It is not merely the Roman Catholics who find that the confession of sins confers a sense of peace. Will you let him go to his death with all his sins upon him, lacking even the shriving which we poor Protestants could give to his soul?”

Dr. McCoy could not deny the force of my argument. He shook his head mutely, and with what seemed to be a heavy heart, took his ampoule from his pocket and caused it to hiss once again against Petrie’s arm.

After a few moments, Petrie returned to consciousness, once again with difficulty, seeming to take longer to regain his orientation and quiet his rasping respiration.

“You are weak, Mr. Petrie,” said Holmes. “Allow me to tell the story; you may merely correct me or emend my tale where I go astray. You introduced Abernethy Shield to Mr. and Miss Velasquez, and he lost no time in fixing his interest with both of them.”

Petrie nodded. “He fell in love with her instantly, as I had. He did everything to try to fix his interest with her. Told them ... he was due to come into the title soon. ... That he had money, and would use it to help both of them — father and daughter.”

“And he arranged to have you thrown into gaol.”

“He did everything to fix his interest with her, but it was no use — although she liked him very well, it was I whom she loved. And so he did the last thing left for him to do — he murdered her father, and made it appear that I had done the deed in a fit of jealous rage.

“He wanted the diamond mine, and he wanted Ernestina. ... He would stop at nothing to obtain either one. ... Because of his ruthlessness, I spent the better part of ten years in prison. I was released in order that they make me a soldier — an irony, that; that I, by that time more South African than British, should fight on the side of the hated foreigners ... and, with them, lose. My

health and my hope of life, I had lost in prison. ... Oh, yes, I know consumption for what it is.

“It took me close on to another ten years, after we lost the war, to make my way back to England, to find Lavenham and to make my presence known to him. ... I made my living as a day-labourer — I, who had once dreamed of playing King Cophetua! Is it not a bitter jest?”

Every inhalation the old man made was now a rattling, rasping triumph against the disease and the exposure which, combined, were killing him. It was rapidly becoming patent that Petrie was weakening moment by moment, and even with the aid of Dr. McCoy’s elixirs, could not last much longer.

“Finally, you tired of waiting,” said Holmes. “You sent a note to Lord Lavenham, demanding that he meet you. You waited in ambush for him, and when he came, you surprised him, overpowered him, and bound him.”

“I spent ten years in chains. I wished him to experience — if only for a brief period — what he had done to me.”

“You demanded restitution for your trials of the last twenty years. You threatened to expose him if he did not give you your share of the money from your own scheme. What killed him, Mr. Petrie?”

“I had started out intending to be quiet and rational,” said the old man, with a rattling sigh. “But a twenty years’ score is no paltry thing. ... As I spoke, I grew ever more passionate — and threatening. I forgot that I wanted the money. I remembered only the betrayal, the false imprisonment, the years of suffering. ... It was when I threatened to tell all to Ernestina that it happened. I described exactly what I should say — that her husband had murdered her father in order to be rid of her lover. ... His eyes started from their sockets. Then he gave a terrible, strangled cry — and he was dead.”

“And you, once you had collected your wits, determined upon quite a daring scheme. You made it appear that Lavenham had been murdered by the same madman who had killed in Whitechapel two days earlier. You smashed in the top of his head, using some heavy object—”

“A sledgehammer.”

“ — and then you removed his brains and took them away in Lavenham’s own hat, burying them behind the shack in which you have been living.”

“That is the whole truth of it. — Mind you, if he had been alive when I knocked his brains out, it would have been the death called for by a just Providence. ... He blasted my life, that devil. I had no more compunction in confronting him with his wickedness — and then, after he was dead, trying to save what I could of my life — than if it had been some foul and venomous beast whose body I was attacking.”

The old man paused again, and this spasm of coughing was the most tormented of all, and the blood he coughed up came in a great gout.

“I am dying,” cried he, when finally he could speak again. “I charge you, by all that you hold dear, to say nothing more of this to Ernestina than you must, save only that I still love her — have always loved her.”

I expected another bout of coughing; but here I was wrong. Petrie sighed deeply, closing his eyes ... and never inhaled again.

Dr. McCoy touched the old man on his neck, putting his fingers unerringly on the carotid artery, and then looked up at Captain Kirk.

“He’s dead, Jim.”

I lowered Petrie’s body to the floor, and slipped my arm from beneath his shoulders, resisting the urge to flex and rub it after its long stint supporting the old man. As always in the presence of Death, there was a moment of solemnity, wherein each man silently contemplated the touch of mortality and the frustration of the human struggle. Finally, Captain Kirk said quietly, “Well, that’s that.”

“I think not, Captain,” returned Holmes.

“What do you mean? You don’t believe Petrie’s story?”

“Oh, I have no doubt that Lavenham’s death was exactly as Petrie described. But what of the others? — the mutilation of the corpse at Bart’s; the murder of the man in Whitechapel; the attack upon General Flashman; and the murder of Mr. Norton? If indeed Petrie was telling the truth, as I believe was the case, then he is innocent of those crimes.”

“What, then?” asked I. “Is it Mr. Spock’s servant, Jack Tellar?”

“Very possibly. We know that the murderer was at least six feet four inches tall, weighing at least twenty stone. We know that he had great strength in his hands — which General Flashman described as like ‘icy claws.’ We know also from both General Flashman and Petrie that he is an ugly man, and that he is inarticulate. We know that his footwear, although large, was too narrow for him — and too long. And finally, we know that either he was amazingly agile, able to swarm up a wet, cold drainpipe essentially one-handed” — Holmes paused—”or that he was capable of leaping from the pavement to a rooftop in a single bound.”

“You describe Spring-heeled Jack!” cried I.

“Precisely, Watson. Before the start of this adventure, I should have said that Spring-heeled Jack could not exist. A man who can leap forty feet through the air, breath flame, and snatch off the top of a man’s head as though it were the shell of an egg? Implausible! However, you and I have first-hand knowledge, thanks to Mr. Spock, that a man very different from most men may live and breathe. It has been demonstrated to us that Mr. Spock’s auditory and olfactory powers are far more acute than our own, and that he is far stronger. Perhaps Jack Tellar has gifts of his own which make him capable of feats impossible for ordinary men. It is far-fetched, I agree, but once you have eliminated the impossible, whatever is left, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.”

“Then Spring-heeled Jack is Jack Tellar? This murderer is from Shangri-La?”

“Shangri-La!” said Holmes, with a bitter laugh. Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy exchanged uneasy looks as he continued, “I have thought much about this wild phantasy of Captain Kirk’s over the last two days. There are certain occasional glimpses of truth in it, I will grant you. For example, that Jack Tellar is our culprit, and that he is—”

At this moment, Holmes was interrupted by a heavy footfall from behind us where no footfall ought to have sounded. We all turned to look.

Behind us now stood a man whom I had no difficulty in recognizing as Jack Tellar, for his appearance was just as Holmes had described. He was massively tall, and more obese than a sideshow

freak. Behind spreading, bushy black whiskers, his nose was both huge and malformed, resembling nothing so much as a pig's snout, while his eyes were so small as to become difficult to perceive at all underneath his bushy black brows. Rarely have I encountered a face so hideously coarse.

But before I could wonder where I had seen him before — for his face was indeed familiar — my attention was distracted something completely astounding. Jack Tellar had discarded the ill-fitting boots about which Holmes had spoken, and we could now all see why the boots fit him so ill: Like some malevolent incarnation of the Greek god Pan, he had not feet at the ends of his legs, but hooves. Satanic, demonic, malevolent, horrid! — far beyond any intimation of evil I had ever felt from Mr. Spock — yes, surely this was a very a different kind of creature from ordinary men.

In his paw, Jack Tellar grasped a small contrivance which he aimed at us as though it were a pistol, though I could perceive no firing chambers, nor, indeed, thumb-trigger. Nevertheless, at the sight of the device, Captain Kirk grew very still. When Holmes made as though to stir, Kirk quickly laid a warning hand on his arm.

“Don't move, Mr. Holmes,” ordered he, quietly. “That thing may not look like much, but it could easily kill you.”

“Won't,” said Jack Tellar, in a deep, hoarse, grunting voice. “Not with this, kill. Mellitonin' first get. Stun now. Later, kill.”

He lifted the pistol-like device, and despairingly I wondered whether any of us could be fast enough to evade his bullets and wrestle the device from him. I had long since ceased to distrust Captain Kirk; and I saw a grimness in him as he looked at Jack Tellar and his weapon which sent a chill through my heart.

As Tellar aimed, Captain Kirk cried, “Wait! You're going to stun all of us, then take us back to the shack and keep us alive until you need the mellitonin' in our brains; then you'll kill us, one by one. Right?”

A pause. “Yes.”

“How were you planning to take *five* of us back? Two at a time? Without being noticed? Without having the rest of us wake up from the stun beam and get help?”

The giant hesitated. Kirk appeared to relax, and said, his tone

almost casual, “Don’t you think it would be better to only stun, say, two of us? Then you could make the rest of us carry the stunned ones. We couldn’t abandon a friend; it’s not in our nature.”

“Jim — !” began McCoy explosively.

“Shut up, Bones!” said Kirk, in a fierce undertone. To Jack Tellar, he continued, still in that low, relaxed voice, “In fact, I think you should choose the two to be stunned and have us tie them up first, before you stun them. It’ll be much easier, and it’ll save you a lot of time.”

The giant thought this over for a moment. Then he nodded abruptly and pointed his device first at Mr. Spock, then at Holmes. “Him, and him. Now go, get. Rope. In corner by ... ay-see place.”

The giant backed out of the smoking room, still aiming his weapon at us; we, perforce, followed him into the area beneath the applewood loft, bounded by the back of the freezer, the cooler, and the entryway into the loading bay — Holmes and I still taking our cues from our companions, who took the threat of Tellar’s toy-like weapon very seriously indeed.

Moving easily, Captain Kirk set down his lantern and began to walk past Tellar toward the coil of rope which, as he had indicated, was lying by the frigeratory machine. Then, with a motion almost too quick to be described, Kirk spun round on one leg and kicked the pistol-like contrivance out of Tellar’s hand. Following through, he warded off a blow from Tellar’s great paw with his left forearm and punched him solidly upon the jaw, eliciting a boar-like squeal of rage and pain and a roundhouse swipe from Tellar’s other paw which Kirk ducked, but incompletely, evidently receiving a stinging blow upon the same area where he had been hit by Miss Pankhurst and later operated upon by Dr. McCoy. Kirk reeled back, shaking his head dazedly.

At Kirk’s first sudden movement, however, his friends had not rested idle. Dr. McCoy had pounced for the pistol-like device, and now held it in a resolute but uncertain grip, as though he knew only theoretically how to use it. Mr. Spock, moving as swiftly and silently as a cat, had slipped round behind Tellar. Holmes took up the cudgels on Kirk’s behalf, and, his fists at the ready, invited Jack Tellar to take a taste of some home-brewed. The only response which this defiant invitation elicited, however, was a blank

look of incomprehension.

Before Holmes could strike Tellar or Tellar could strike Captain Kirk a second time, Mr. Spock reached up from behind him, laid his right hand upon Tellar's shoulder at the point where shoulder met neck, and appeared gently to squeeze. Tellar dropped like a felled ox.

"Are you all right, Jim?" inquired Mr. Spock, paying no further heed to his victim.

"Hoo! ... Ye', I'm fine," replied Kirk, putting a hand gingerly to his head. "My reflexes must be slipping. Let's get old 'Jack' here tied up before 'e comes to, all right?"

"An excellent idea, Captain."

As they turned, they caught sight of Dr. McCoy, still holding the pistol-like device as though at any moment it might burn him. Captain Kirk began to laugh. "Put that thing down, Bones; you make me nervous just looking at you."

Dr. McCoy grinned at him, putting the device carefully into his pocket. "You're nervous? I'm a doctor, not some d—n sharpshooter."

"Don't we know it!"

Captain Kirk now proceeded to use the rope Tellar had meant for us to bind Tellar himself. The giant was so fat that his arms would not reach behind him, and so Kirk was forced to tie his wrists together in front. Thoughtfully, he bound Tellar's ankles, and then passed a length of rope from ankles to wrists, so that Tellar could not even hop without overbalancing. In passing, I noticed that, despite Holmes's conclusion that Kirk was no sailor, the Captain used a number of tidy sailor's hitches which would have passed muster on any of Her Majesty's vessels.

This operation completed, I fancy we all felt a marked relief. Holmes said formally to Captain Kirk, "Your assistance in apprehending this man has been material. I am certain that Scotland Yard shall be grateful."

"I'm sure they would be," returned Kirk equably. "But I think it'd be better all around if we just quietly took him back with us."

"Let me remind you, Captain Kirk, that the law has been broken," responded Holmes sharply. "Three murders have been committed; one mutilation of a body; one murderous attack; and the

assault upon ourselves made only in the last few minutes. Justice demands that this murderer stand his trial. The Crown must mete out a fair reckoning.”

“Oh, he’ll get fair treatment, Mr. Holmes,” retorted Kirk. “We’ll see to that. He probably has a better chance with us in our own t—”

“Captain,” interrupted Mr. Spock firmly.

“British justice is the most impartial—” I began.

“Dr. Watson,” said Mr. Spock, just as firmly. “Gentlemen, the issue here is neither justice nor partiality. We—” At this moment Mr. Spock’s head went up, and he appeared to sniff the air. Then abruptly, he swung around to where Jack Tellar had lain.

Tellar was once again on his feet. A smouldering pile of ropes on the floor and tiny flames still licking at the clothes at his wrists and ankles testified as to the rough-and-ready means Tellar had used to free himself of his bonds. Kirk cried sharply, “Bones! The fazer!”

Apparently he meant the weapon, for Dr. McCoy now withdrew the device from his pocket and pointed it in Jack Tellar’s general direction.

Jack Tellar laughed a hideous, grunting laugh, and a blue-white flame came from his mouth in a spurt which reached almost to McCoy’s hand. With a cry of pain, McCoy dropped the device. For a moment, I stared at it as it lay upon the floor. No longer pistol-shaped, it was now a molten mass of silverish material, slightly shiny and completely useless.

The flame from Tellar’s breath also set fire to some of the lumber beside Dr. McCoy, that lumber which yesterday young Ned had told us was used for the building of crates. Flames were also crawling up the wall from the discarded pile of ropes which had bound Tellar.

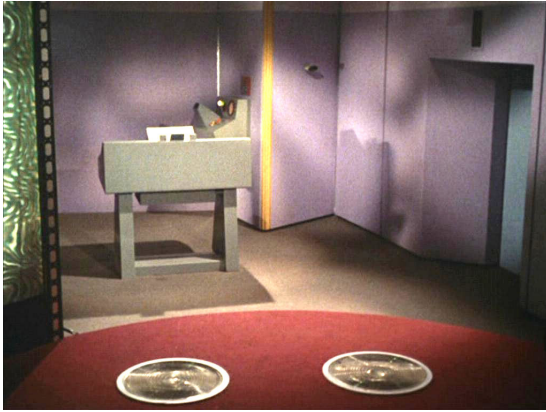
Tellar leapt for Captain Kirk, his great paw swinging back to deliver another roundhouse blow. On this occasion, none of us was idle; we set down our dark-lanterns and entered the fray at once. While none could match Holmes’s skill at boxing, none also could match Captain Kirk’s skill at what he called kah-rah-tea, and Holmes baritsu; and none could match Mr. Spock’s amazing physical strength, which I verily believe was that of two ordinary men. Nevertheless, Jack Tellar’s strength was not inconsiderable,

and for all his massive size, he moved as lightly as a child. He had little difficulty in fending off the attack of the five of us, but rather seemed to be deliberating how best to press an attack of his own.

Meanwhile, the fire caught a small pile of burlap sacks which lay next to the lumber, and apparently found a line of spilled oil, for it blazed up and ran with a whoosh around the corner behind us in the direction of the office. Had my attention not been distracted by the *mêlée* with Jack Tellar, I would have found myself astonished at the rapidity with which the blaze was spreading.

Holmes battled in and attempted to mill Tellar down, but the giant appeared to notice his attack as little a man might notice a yapping spaniel, merely serving him a mighty backhanded blow which sent him reeling into Kirk's arms, narrowly avoiding a line of flame behind them. Mr. Spock was once again attempting to perform his magical laying on of hands, but on this occasion Tellar was aware of the danger, and would not allow Spock to get near him. Meanwhile, Dr. McCoy had withdrawn his ampoule and was seeking an opportunity to use it against Tellar; I presume he intended to inject a soporific of some sort. The fracas was such, however, that he also could not get near enough to press his attack.

The fire which Jack Tellar had started with his breath was beginning to rage, and we could do nothing to combat it, for the fight was on, and it was all too obviously to be a fight to the death.



Chapter 19: Shangri-La

The flames rose up about us as quickly as wildfire. The timbers and flooring of the warehouse were heavily imbued with both creosote and fish oils; the half-garret contained nothing but bags of applewood chips; and the walls were lined with empty crates and lumber. All these materials were themselves ready fuel for the conflagration, which within moments was beyond control.

Our attention was not focused on the fire, however. Jack Tellar fought us like a madman, and although all five of us joined in the battle with him, it was evident that the struggle was an equal one. The smoke billowed round us, and I found myself coughing deeply as I launched myself from a crate and grasped Tellar's left arm with the desperate tenacity of a mongoose fighting a cobra. Captain Kirk was riding Tellar's back and attempting to place his neck in a half-Nelson, but he was the only one I could see through the thickening clouds of black, oily smoke. With a rush and a roar, the flames shot up in a solid sheet across the threshold of the loading bay behind us, our only exit, and I knew we were trapped in a place which would imminently become an inferno. Death was only moments away.

Jack Tellar shook me off his arm with a snorting grunt, much as one might shake off a mosquito, and I fell heavily onto floorboards which were palpably hot. As the flames licked closer, Sherlock Holmes appeared at my side and gave me his hand to help me rise.

“My criminal antagonists have frequently predicted that my destiny would feature flames,” said he with grim gaiety; coughing, as I was, in the smoke. “I am sorry to have brought you with me to this end, Watson.”

I shook my head at him, unable to speak, and gripped his hand with emotion. A crash and an oath in Dr. McCoy’s voice behind us proclaimed that the struggle with Tellar continued, and we turned as one to rejoin it, leaping over a line of flame to do so.

The blaze was herding us into a far corner — somewhat ironically, between freezer and melter — but I saw that there could be no escape; and even as Holmes and I joined the attack upon Tellar with renewed force, the conflagration burst forth on the wall behind us, one of the ceiling beams falling with a crash and a shower of sparks onto the very spot where but a moment before I had lain.

At this moment, when Death seemed a hairsbreadth away, came an uncanny occurrence, one which even now I am not entirely certain was not a dream. In the midst of sweltering heat and flame, I found myself momentarily paralysed in the grip of a lightly tingling sensation almost like coldness. The billowing smoke, the bright, roaring flames — indeed, the entire room — dissolved before my unbelieving eyes into a shower of brilliantly coloured sparkles, as though the entire space around me had transformed itself into a waterfall or a huge Roman candle. A thousand dazzling colours swept before my eyes in a sweet humming sound and a lovely cascade of light.

When the colours dispersed, I was no longer struggling in the burning warehouse, at the point of death by fire. Instead, I was standing on a low platform in a small room filled with a pleasant, bright light, although I could not discern whence the light came. The platform, which was of some strange red-brown metal, had six silver disks, each about two feet in diameter, set into the floor, with each disk overhung by a curious silver cylinder depending from the ceiling and submounted by red glass. The platform gave

into a small, blue-walled room which featured little beyond a high blue podium with a red top which was covered with innumerable buttons, levers, and tiny, flashing electrical lights. The podium gave off a cooing noise, as though a hundred doves were trapped within.

Standing by the podium were three men, one behind the desk and two beside it, identically (and very oddly) dressed in red velours shirts, black pants, and boots, with each shirt bearing a curious, arrowhead-shaped insignium made of some metallic fibre.

Upon realizing that his surroundings had changed, Jack Tellar let out such a monstrous bellow of rage, hate, and disappointment as I have never heard from a human throat. He leapt for the podium in a superhuman bound. However, two of the men in the velours shirts were quicker. They had been holding pistol-like contrivances in their hands, and as Tellar leapt, they fired. From these weapons now came an odd, high-pitched whining sound and twin beams of brilliant green light, which struck Tellar and outlined and bathed him in the glowing colour.

Tellar collapsed in mid-air. The two who had fired now put up their weapons and, with a few words in a language which I did not recognise, hailed the members of our party.

“Scotty!” cried Kirk, jumping lightly from the platform on which we stood. The third man, a middle-aged, dark-haired gentleman who looked like the Scot Kirk had named him, acquired an expression of mild apprehension, as though he expected Kirk to remonstrate with him. Kirk did not. “Scotty! — What took you so long?”

I am an old campaigner who has braved many dangers, both in the late war and with Holmes; but I am not ashamed to say that, confronted with this succession of such miracles as no human man can ever have faced, for the first time in my life, I fainted.

When I came to myself, I found myself lying upon a bed, fully clad, save that my shoes had been removed and my collar loosened. It was still night, as attested by the flickering lamp beside the bed and the darkness outside the window, but for all that I knew my loss of consciousness could have lasted a few minutes or many hours.

My first moment or two were disoriented, and I confess that

my first thought was to wonder whether I were dead. On the other hand, there was a water-spot on the ceiling above me in the shape of a mangel-wurzel, and I could not believe that either Heaven or Hell would have any use for water-spots, or indeed ceilings.

I sat up, and discovered that I was alone in my room in the Red Lion. It was exactly as I had left it — there were my razor and shaving-mirror upon the marble top of the mahogany nightstand, my little traveling clock upon the mantelpiece, and, standing open on the luggage rack, my valise, with my spare collar just visible within its recesses. My shoes sat neatly by the side of the bed, just where I myself might have left them.

A dream, then; certainly it had all been a dream. I quickly discovered, however, that whatever had happened had left its irrefutable traces in its wake: My clothes smelt of both fish and smoke, there was an oily black smut on my left hand, and the knuckles of my right hand had been scraped. My hand stole towards my old wound, and I found that the spot was tender, as though I had managed to bruise it during the fray with the monstrous “Jack Tellar.”

Now I did not know what to think. One did not need to be Holmes to be able to deduce that I had been in a fight, and that there had been a fire near enough and large enough to have left its reek upon me. These, then, had been no dream. But the aftermath...?

I had come close to persuading myself that my few seconds in the blue room were either a dream or an hallucination, and that my memories could most charitably be called unreliable, when Dr. McCoy let himself quietly into the room, bearing a covered tray. Seeing me awake, his face lit up with simple pleasure, and he set the tray upon the little breakfast-table near the door, saying, “You’re up, Dr. Watson! How are you?”

“Completely mad,” replied I.

He laughed. “It must seem like it, I agree. But you’re okay, I promise.”

“And Holmes?” asked I, anxiously. “Is he all right?”

“He’s fine. He’s with Jim and Spock.”

“The little blue room...” I began, hesitantly. “Jack Tellar—”

“I’d rather let Jim explain it all to you, if you can wait for a few

minutes.”

“But—”

“You were there,” said he, gently. “And there’s nothing whatsoever the matter with you. After you had your syncopal episode, I gave you a complete physical to make sure there was nothing organically wrong. I even took out that piece of lead that you had lodged in your—”

He was interrupted at this moment by the door opening softly, and Captain Kirk putting his head in. When he saw that I was awake, he smiled with apparently sincere delight, and entered the room.

“We were worried about you, Doctor,” he said to me. “He all right, Bones?”

“Fit as a fiddle,” McCoy assured him cheerfully. “He thinks he’s crazy, though.”

Kirk laughed. “After what he’s been through, I’d think I was crazy too. Don’t worry, Dr. Watson. You had a couple of bad moments, but it’s all over now.”

“Where are Spock and Holmes?” McCoy asked.

Kirk grimaced at him, giving a peculiar upward jerk to his head, but said merely, “They’ll be here in a minute or two.”

McCoy frowned. “Are you sure he should be—?”

“No, I’m not. But *you* try arguing with him.” This apparently caused the two to recall a private joke between them, for McCoy lifted an expressive eyebrow at his friend, and they both burst out laughing.

“It is evident,” said I, feeling an odd mixture of diffidence and pique, “that you gentlemen have found nothing at all to marvel over in this evening’s events. I, on the other hand—”

Just then, I heard a strange, high-pitched whine from Holmes’s room next door, rather like the shimmerings of a dozen harps. A moment later, there was a tap at the connecting door between our rooms, and I heard my name called. That incisive, ironical voice could belong to but one man in all the world.

“Holmes!” I cried— “Holmes!”

On my words, Holmes entered the room, followed by Mr. Spock, and I was at once on my feet. His gray eyes danced with amusement as they met mine.

“You are fully recovered from your late indisposition, I see,” said he, coolly.

“And you?” replied I, with awful politeness. “I trust that I find you well?”

“Confess, Watson — you have been thinking any time this last hour that you are either dead or mad.”

“It is a very calming thing to be mad,” I retorted. “One can accept everything which is said to one and remain serene in the knowledge that none of it matters, because one is *non compos mentis*. I am only surprised to find that you are in Bedlam with me; I should never have thought it possible.”

“You must not deny the evidence of your senses, Doctor,” remarked Mr. Spock. “They are all one has with which to confront the world.”

“It is the evidence of my senses which leads me to believe that I have gone mad, Mr. Spock.”

It must have been apparent to all that, for all the good humour with which I had been speaking, I was in some distress; for Dr. McCoy now remarked, “Someone once said that you can turn a situation from a tragedy into a comedy just by sittin’ down.”

“Good idea, Bones,” replied Captain Kirk, and gently but firmly pressed me into the window seat. Holmes sat beside me, while McCoy and Mr. Spock disposed themselves at the little occasional table at which I had eaten my breakfast, and Kirk himself perched on the end of the bed.

“We didn’t mean to make light of your feelings, Doctor,” said Kirk. “I was serious when I said that if I were in your situation, I’d think I was crazy too.”

Somewhat plaintively, I replied, “I wish that someone would explain to me precisely what happened.”

Captain Kirk hesitated for a moment. “What exactly do you remember as having happened?”

“We were about to die in the fire — and then we were not in the fire, but in a small room, with three men. They killed Jack Tellar with some strange weapons, and—”

“No, no,” Dr. McCoy interpolated. “He was just, er, immobilised. He’s all right now too.”

“Holmes,” I said, turning to my friend; and I know that there

was a note of appeal in my voice. “Surely you must understand what happened. Cannot you explain it to me?”

Holmes hesitated, glancing at Mr. Spock. Mr. Spock, however, merely raised his demonic brows at Holmes, his expression saying clearly, “You are the best judge of what to reply.” Finally, Holmes said to me, “We were in Shangri-La.”

“I had rather believe that we are in Bedlam.”

Holmes laughed.

“I might remind you,” said I, with a touch of asperity, “Captain Kirk told us that Shangri-La is in Tibet. Tibet, unless the facts of geography have changed, is some seven thousand miles from here.”

“And yet, we were there.”

“And just how did we come to be there?”

“The people who inhabit Shangri-La have a magical device which they call a ‘transporter.’ It can snatch one up bodily and remove one to another location in a twinkling — *literally* a twinkling, as you and I discovered.

“They also have telescopes of amazing discrimination, which can not only see but also acquire other information over long distances. One of them, a Mr. Scott, used his telescope to find Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, and Dr. McCoy. When he discovered through the telescope that our party was in imminent danger of perishing in the fire, he used his ‘transporter’ device to whisk us to Shangri-La.

“After you fainted, you and Jack Tellar were taken to their hospital facility. Then, once Dr. McCoy had ascertained that there was no physical cause for your faint, but merely what he referred to as ‘sensory overload,’ Mr. Scott once again used the ‘transporter’ device to bring you and Dr. McCoy here. I stayed behind, and Mr. Spock was kind enough to guide me round Shangri-La. It is filled with such miraculous devices and unusual people that had I not the firmest conviction of my own mental powers, I should be prone to believe that I had gone quite mad.”

“‘Magical’; ‘amazing’; ‘miraculous’ — you sound rather as though you will next tell me that the inhabitants of Shangri-La are capable of witchcraft.”

“Just about, Doctor,” interjected Captain Kirk, with a grin. “A writer named Arthur C. Clarke once wrote that, once it reaches a

certain level, science becomes indistinguishable from magic. How do you think a primitive tribe in Africa would react to your gun, or a locomotive, or telegraphy?"

"They would think it was magic," I admitted. "You are telling me, then, that these feats which Holmes and I have witnessed are the results of an advanced science, rather than of anything mystical or occult."

Dr. McCoy laughed. "Can you imagine anything like a ghost or a wizard daring to operate around anyone as logical as Mr. Spock?"

"Hardly," replied I, also laughing.

"I now firmly believe," said Sherlock Holmes, "that there are things which we are not ready to know, my dear fellow; and that the inhabitants of Shangri-La, who have pursued and obtained this knowledge, travel a very dangerous road. I intend to forget all that I have learned at the first opportunity. Indeed, I feel the knowledge leaving me already."

"Do not mock me, Holmes."

"Never," said he, with such emphatic sincerity that I could not but believe him. Seeing the last shadow rise from my face, he relapsed at once into the half-humorous, half-cynical vein which was his habitual attitude to those about him, saying, "This has been the strangest adventure we have ever had, has it not? Next we shall doubtless be called upon to investigate warlocks in Worcester or vampires in Horsham."

Mr. Spock stirred now, and said, "Captain, we should be aware of the time."

Holmes nodded at him in agreement, saying, "The hour grows advanced. While the telescopes of Shangri-La are excellent, the telescopes of England are also not so paltry as to be ignored."

This apparently meant more to our three companions than it did to me, for Captain Kirk quickly said, "You're right; we ought to be going."

"You are returning to Shangri-La?" asked I, still feeling somewhat bewildered.

Kirk nodded.

"How shall you go, then?" I asked. "Your 'transporter'?"

All four men turned to look at me. I spread my hands, saying, "You have been at some pains to convince me that I am not in

Bedlam. Surely you may use your ‘transporter’ with no fear from me — for should I attempt to tell anyone at all about the events of this day, I would in fact be locked into some lunatic asylum very quickly, and doubtless they would throw away the key.”

Captain Kirk smiled warmly at me. Then he turned to Holmes. “It’s been a honour knowing you and Dr. Watson,” said he. “We couldn’t have accomplished our mission without your help.”

“I entirely agree, Mr. Holmes,” added Mr. Spock. “The experience has been most rewarding.”

“We shall meet again, Mr. Spock,” returned Sherlock Holmes. “I am determined upon it.”

“I shall look forward to the encounter.”

Dr. McCoy smiled at me. “Don’t drink any more ‘bad beer’, Dr. Watson.”

I returned his smile, remembering with rueful amusement the evening to which he alluded. “Medicinal brandy only, Dr. McCoy?” said I.

“I’m sure not touching any more of that Glenmorangie of yours.”

“Very wise.”

Rising, Captain Kirk now took a small box from his pocket. The box looked rather like those metal or bone affairs in which some ladies carry face-powder, and the resemblance was strengthened when Kirk flipped open its hinged lid.

Opening the box caused it to chirp like a bird. Then my jaw dropped as a woman’s voice from nowhere said the word, “Enterprise.”

Seeing my astonishment, Captain Kirk said, “Stand by,” into the box, and to me, “It’s a kind of two-way ray diode, Dr. Watson.” When I did not evince any comprehension, he turned to Mr. Spock in some perplexity.

“Guglielmo Marconi,” Mr. Spock said cryptically. “Ninety-five. Alexander Graham Bell, seventy-six.”

Captain Kirk stared blankly at his friend for a few moments. Then, suddenly, a look of comprehension came over him, and he gave a laugh. He turned to me. “Dr. Watson, it’s a device of Shangri-La. It’s like a telephone, but without wires.”

I spread my hands again, feeling helpless. “Of course,” said I,

faintly.

Speaking into the little box, Captain Kirk now said, “Three to beam up, Uhura, on my signal.”

The woman’s voice from nowhere replied, “Standing by, Captain.”

“Good-bye, gentlemen,” said Captain Kirk. As he spoke, Mr. Spock and Dr. McCoy rose to stand behind him.

“Let us say rather, *au revoir*,” returned Holmes, and he repeated the words Captain Kirk had said for us in Baker Street two days earlier: “*Kohlinahr ketiftor, Spohckaam.*”

An expression almost like a smile lightened Mr. Spock’s usually stern features, and he bestowed upon my companion an odd salute, raising the palm of his hand high and creating a V between his middle and ring fingers. “*Tiftor kesbeausmah, Holmesaam.* Live long and prosper.”

The three men assumed a grouping which they must have done hundreds of times before, a shallow triangle with Captain Kirk at its apex. Kirk spoke into his little box again, saying one word: “Energize.”

The same noise of harps which I had heard coming earlier from Holmes’s room now began again. Before my eyes, Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, and Dr. McCoy became outlined in three columns of golden sparkles. As I watched, the golden sparkles began to disperse, and the images of our three visitors began to fade as well. A moment later, the sparks had dispersed completely, the humming noise had ceased, and Kirk, Spock, and McCoy had vanished. Holmes and I were alone.

I stood blinking for a moment, gazing at our simple, homey surroundings — the wallpaper flocked with moss roses, the text in woools above the bed, the china bowl and pitcher upon the nightstand — as though I had never seen them before. When I finally turned to Holmes, he too was looking about the room as though he were a stranger to it.

“Was it a dream, then, Holmes?” I asked, tentatively.

At this Holmes’s head came up, and he smiled at me briefly. “I agree, this ‘transportation’ is a far more impressive phenomenon to watch than it is to undergo,” replied he. “But if it was a dream — my dream — then you, Watson, could not have dreamt it as well.

As Mr. Spock would say, that would not be logical.”

Then he turned his head and gazed out the window, into the distance, as though he were looking all the long way to Shangri-La. Finally, he said merely, his voice a murmur, “If it was a dream....”



Epilogue

It was almost a fortnight later, in early November. During the period following our return from Hand Cross, I had been kept very close at work, and had seen little of my friend; for I was too busy to visit Baker Street, and Holmes seldom went anywhere himself save upon professional business. Moreover, my wife had at last returned from Scotland. The combined duties of medicine and matrimony claimed the preponderance of my attention — the latter most pleasurably, since my wife and I had been married but a short while, and our separation had been burdensome upon us both.

But although I had seen little of Holmes, I could not be said to have lost touch with him, for the papers were full of his activities. Almost immediately upon our return from Hand Cross, Holmes had become engaged in two matters of immense significance, in the first of which he had extricated Miss Harriet Vavasour, the daughter of the cabinet minister, from her unfortunate entanglement in the affair of the brass monkey, while in the second he had exposed the crown prince of a Balkan nation as the originator of the shocking Florin Tontine. He had also — almost, it seemed, as an afterthought — returned to Hand Cross to give evidence in the enquiry into the deaths of Lord Lavenham, Godfrey Norton, and Archibald Petrie.

On 6th November, I was summoned early to the home of a lad

who had rather overdone it at a Guy Fawkes celebration the day before; and this being in Gloucester Street, I afterwards naturally took the opportunity to step round one street over and pay a call on my friend.

I found Holmes lounging before the fire in his sitting room, having just breakfasted, and greatly cheered by the successful outcome of his recent labours on behalf of British justice; he was quick to invite me to break my own fast. This emboldened me to at last put forward the subject of the mystery of Spring-heeled Jack. I had waited with barely reined patience for the opportunity, for I knew that Holmes would never permit his cases to overlap; nor would he permit his attention to be drawn from his present work to dwell upon the past. Now, however, the time seemed ripe.

“Lestrade was quite disgruntled over Petrie’s death,” remarked Holmes, after I had broached the subject. “The ‘Norton’ who sailed on the *Cynthia Rushworthy* turned out to have been an Edward Norton, who, recently married, was enjoying a honeymoon trip with his wife, Beatrice; and so Lestrade’s trip to London proved quite fruitless.

“By way of contrast, my account of Petrie’s dying confession established to the coroner’s satisfaction that Petrie was responsible for the death of Lord Lavenham. I felt it to be most discreet not to supplement the evidence implicating him in Godfrey Norton’s death with the evidence implicating Jack Tellar; so Lestrade was convinced that in Petrie he had discovered the Whitechapel murderer as well, and that the arrest of Petrie would have brought him almost as much fame as if he had arrested Jack the Ripper. He might even have disputed my evidence that Petrie’s body was consumed in the fire at the warehouse, but luckily, Petrie’s pocket-watch and a few other of his possessions survived the conflagration, at least enough so that they could be identified as his.”

“How did you explain *our* having survived the fire?” I enquired.

“In the only way I could. I said that we had left the warehouse almost at once after Petrie died — which is true; and that as soon as we arrived in Hand Cross, we went immediately in search of Sergeant Gray — which is also true. I omitted entirely any awkward mention of our adventure with Shangri-La. When informed that a conflagration had burnt the warehouse to the ground, I dis-

played surprise, but made no remark. Thus, I fear that, while I spoke nothing but the truth, the effect was that of prevarication. But really, had I told the story of our sojourn in Shangri-La, I should have been locked up as a dangerous lunatic.”

“Did Lestrade ask any questions about Captain Kirk and his colleagues?”

“Oh, yes,” replied Holmes. “Even now, he is not entirely convinced of Captain Kirk’s innocence in the first murder. I, however, told the simple truth about them as well.” I saw that Holmes had something of a glint in his eye. “I said that, they having found the lost companion they had been in search of, we parted company, and that I had not the slightest idea where they are now.”

“But surely they are in Shangri-La!” I exclaimed. “Certainly,” Holmes agreed. “And where is that?”

“We are agreed that it is somewhere in Tibet...” I began. My voice trailed off as I realised what Holmes was implying.

“Precisely, my dear Watson,” returned Holmes, sardonically. “Somewhere in Tibet? And yet we ourselves were there, and Tibet is, as you have had occasion to remind me, some seven thousand miles from here. I fancy that Lestrade would have no little difficulty in finding our three friends had he to rely upon either you or myself to give him the direction of Shangri-La.”

After a short pause, I said, “Since we returned, my mind has reverted often to that last day, and to Shangri-La. I still cannot completely convince myself that the whole case was not all an hallucination.”

“It was a sort of *folie à deux*, then, since I shared the experience,” Holmes returned. “My mind, however, is not given to hallucination, and I assure you, my dear fellow, the experience was quite real.”

As he spoke, he withdrew a silver cigarette-case from the pocket of his dressing gown. It was new to me and, my attention momentarily diverted, I commented upon it.

“That is a handsome thing. New, I take it? I do not believe that I have seen it before.”

Holmes looked down and turned the case in his hand, a shadow passing over his face. “It is a keepsake, Watson, from a most unusual lady, in remembrance of the Hand Cross affair.”

Only two ladies had been involved in the Hand Cross affair; and I doubted that Lady Lavenham was the sort to give Holmes an expensive souvenir of that sort. I said, "Then you saw Mrs. Norton again when you returned to Hand Cross to give evidence at the inquests?"

Holmes nodded, brusquely.

"She is well? What are her plans?"

"With the loss of her husband, Mrs. Norton no longer has any ties to hold her in England," he replied, shortly. "She is returning to her American birthplace, a small town called Grayson, in New Jersey, within the fortnight. I do not anticipate that she will return."

Seeing that Holmes was not impervious to this news, I forebore any reply, confining my attention rather strictly to the ham and eggs before me to allow Holmes what privacy I was able. After a moment, he sighed softly, and opened the cigarette-case. As he selected a cigarette, his eyes fell onto a small square of what looked like bright gold, and he smiled suddenly, and showed it to me with a look of mischief.

"What is that?"

"Another memento. But in this case, a memento of an hallucination. This object should erase your doubts as to the reality of Shangri-La." He handed the square to me. "What do you make of that, my dear Watson?"

I turned it over curiously in my hands. Although its colour was yellow-gold, the little square — no taller than a postage stamp, and no more than a sixteenth of an inch in thickness — was made of some light, flexible material which I had never seen before, neither wood nor metal nor *pâpier-maché*; the closest I can describe it is as though someone had taken some shiny enamel paint, added enough gold to turn it into gilding, and then painted layer upon layer of it onto some surface which was then removed, leaving behind a glittering piece of material somewhat lighter and seemingly more malleable than wood. Though devoid of writing or of artistic representations, the golden object was not entirely blank, but bore the faintest of striations over its entire surface, which caused it, when it was moved in the light, to show a subtle *moiré* pattern.

Seeing my bewilderment, Holmes said, "Mr. Spock called it a

‘smart disk.’ When I asked him why — seeing that it is neither sentient or circular — Captain Kirk replied that it was a corruption of a very old Vulcan word, much as our word ‘dandelion’ is a corruption of ‘*dent de lion*’.”

“But *what* is it?”

“Merely another memento,” Holmes replied, smiling. “Captain Kirk, in one of his humorous veins, claimed that it was a copy of his diary of the events of those four days in October. I suspect that it is in truth something more plausible, perhaps a devotional object from Shangri-La, like a rosary or a prayer wheel. Whatever it may be used for, this little ‘smart disk’ is quite an amazing object; for I have tested it, and whatever is the unusual material of which it is made, it can be neither cut nor burnt nor broken — it has been unaffected by any test to which I have put it. In short, it is indestructible evidence that Shangri-La exists — and that neither of us is mad.”

“Proof,” said I, turning the “smart disk” so that it glittered in the firelight. “That is something of a comfort, at any rate. I confess that I had been leaning to the *folie à deux* theory myself, until I saw this thing. Still, it is a little disquieting to think that our whole sanity might rest in this little object.”

Holmes paused, reflectively. “If ever I find the time in my life to travel, I shall certainly seek out Shangri-La once again.”

“But if it is not in Tibet, how shall you find it?”

“Oh, Tibet shall do for a starting-place,” said he. “We do not know that we were *not* in Tibet; and where else on Earth could a race as singular as the Vulcans have arisen without having been discovered long since?”

“The Himalayas are an inhospitable hunting-ground.”

“But I fancy that I should be able to survive at least as well as Dr. McCoy.”

I continued to turn the mysterious little object over meditatively in my hands. “Such a pity that Captain Kirk was joking, and that this is not his diary. If this little square could talk, what stories might it not tell?”

“Nevertheless,” returned Holmes, “it is a *souvenir* of a most intriguing case, is it not? ... But enough of this divagation. We all have our enterprises to return to.”



Starfleet Log Seven

Captain's Log, Stardate 6240.7

Pursuant to our orders, a team from the U.S.S. Enterprise has captured the person of interest Bhrounq. We have turned her over to Starfleet Command, where she will be charged with theft, assault on superior officers, attempted murder, the murder of three human beings in 1890, and the 1890 mutilation of a human corpse after death.

A visiting team from the Sarah April Medical Center consulted with Dr. Leonard McCoy, and has determined that former lieutenant Bhrounq's actions occurred while under the influence of an experimental agent she was given as a test subject in Project Hi-Q. This experimental drug interacted negatively with Bhrounq's undisclosed pregnancy and resulted in a neuro-chemical imbalance that affected her mental health. Medical treatment is in the process of restoring the subject to a normal state of health.

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate 6240.7

Once we got Bhrounq back to our own time, we could provide the necessary treatment to get her body chemistry back under control — including the hormone she needs, *porjmelv*, that she was using human melatonin to substitute for. Bones says that in about a year, she'll have a fine litter of four healthy babies. I'm glad for *their* sake that the stew of chemicals in their mother's blood is not expected to cause any long-term damage.

Bones insists that Bhrounq's behavior was that of a mother doing whatever she needed to do to care for her babies. If her body needed human melatonin, she would obtain melatonin even if she needed to kill

to get it. I'm the first person to admit that sometimes you have to break the rules for a good cause, but, in my book, murder is wrong no matter how extenuating the circumstances. However, I've have sent a message to my old attorney, Samuel T. Cogley. He may be able to get Bhrounq's charges dropped or modified on grounds of temporary insanity due to the experimental drugs in her system. But, if not, I hope she can at least be sent to a rehabilitation colony, like the asylum at Elba II, where she can raise her family in peace.

Captain's Log, Stardate 6240.8

Before leaving this era, we will retrieve the spaceship that Bhrounq sank into the swamp and conduct a routine survey to make sure that neither Bhrounq's presence nor our own has had any negative effects on the time stream that we ought to correct before we return to our own century. I do not anticipate any difficulties.

Captain's Log, Stardate 6241.5

The prototype spaceship stolen by then-Lt. Bhrounq has been recovered. No anomalies have been found in the library computer's historical records for Earth in 1890 that could have been caused by the presence of Bhrounq or of myself, Mr. Spock, and Dr. McCoy in rescuing her. All of Bhrounq's extra-human activities seem to have been dismissed as those of Spring-heeled Jack — and Jack to have been dismissed as modern folklore. Before leaving, we will conduct a routine survey to make sure that neither our or Bhrounq's activities had any negative effects on the time stream that we need to correct before we go back to our own century. I do not anticipate any problems or concerns.

Captain's Log, Stardate 6241.9

As usual, time travel is like camping out — uncomfortable, occasionally dangerous, and ultimately exhilarating. This time—

[*Beep of intercom*]

Kirk: Kirk here.

McCoy: Jim, can you come down to sickbay? I have somethin' important to show you.

Kirk: I thought we didn't change any history.

McCoy: Well, we didn't.

Sickbay Log, Stardate 6242.0

Kirk: What is it, Bones?

McCoy: According to our records analysis, about six weeks after we beamed up, Irene Norton moved to the United States to be with family in New Jersey. Our records show ... Computer?

Computer: Norton, Irene, died July 31, 1891

McCoy: I'm sorry, Jim.

Kirk: Irene... Bones, that's only ten months after we left!

McCoy: I know. Not that it's any help, but remember it all happened ten months plus some three hundred years ago.

Kirk: And "golden lads and girls all must, as chimney-sweepers, come to dust." What happened?

Computer: Died giving birth to one healthy son, 8 pounds, 4 ounces, William Scott." Father unknown.

Kirk: It wasn't me, Bones...

McCoy: I can still count up to nine, thank you.

Kirk: Then who—?

McCoy: Sherlock Holmes.

Kirk: You're kidding. He's as likely to be a father ... as I am.

McCoy: I'm not kidding, Jim, it is — was Holmes. We matched the DNA...

Kirk: DNA?

McCoy: Remember we recorded both Irene and Holmes' DNA sequences on the tricorder?

Kirk: I know, but don't you also need to have a DNA map on a descendant...?

McCoy: I do. Computer: descendants of Irene Adler Norton.

**Computer: Genealogical Search 44758913
IRENE ADLER NORTON and Descendants
With Notations of Relevant Contributions
(All Planetary Dates Old Reckoning)**

Norton, Irene Adler. b. 24 October 1858, d. 31 July 1891, Grayson, New Jersey.

Grayson, William Scott. b. 31 July 1891, d. 3 March 1951. Professor of astronomy, Princeton University. Publications include "Dynamics of an Asteroid' Reconsidered."

Grayson, John Witherspoon. b. 14 April 1915, d. 13 December 1987. Professor of mathematics, Smith College.

Grayson, Marianne Witherspoon Norton. b. 13 May 1944, d. 12 January 2017. Astronaut.

Grayson, Christopher Elliott. b. 20 June 1980, d. 30 May 2062. Husband of Kathryn Scott, astronaut/explorer.

Grayson, Thomas Churchill. b. 23 October 2103, d. 9 Tiko 29 (28 February 2100). Leader, Martian Colony One, Mars.

Grayson, David Woods. b. 2 Siva 3 (21 February 2052), d. 6 Ch'ang-o 49 (18 November 2136). Founder, Mars University. Husband of Phoebe Hunter, holo artist.

Grayson, Samuel Pressly. b. 17 Hecate 25 (1 May 2093), d. 7 Thor 65 (30 April 2168). Professor of mathematics, Mars University. Husband of Charity Stemple, First Citizen of Mars ('48-'58).

Grayson, Amanda Stemple. b. 4 Hecate 48 (12 June 2135), Martian Colony One, Mars. Married Sarek of Vulcan. One of the first interspecies marriages between humans and Vulcans.

Spock, S'chn T'gai Grayson. b. 6 Tasmeen 503 (6 November 2168), ShiKahr, Vulcan. Product of first successful interspecies genetic fusion surgery (Vulcan/human).

Captain's Personal Log, Stardate 6241.8

... I've decided not to tell Spock. He knows his Vulcan ancestry back to the days of Surak, but I don't think his human ancestry has quite the same importance to him. If he ever looks it up, he's quite capable of figuring out for himself what the implications are.

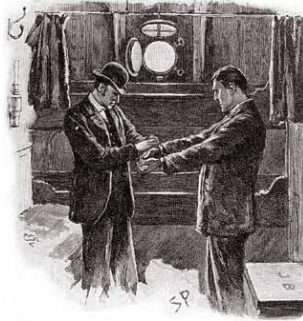
Then again, maybe he knows already. Maybe he knows.

From "A Scandal in Bohemia":

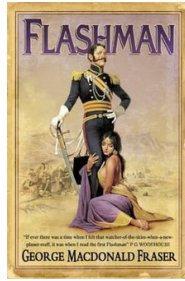
To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the* woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. ... And yet there was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler....

What Happened Next...

If you've read this far, you're already familiar with what happened next to Holmes, Watson, Kirk, Spock, and McCoy. Here is what happened next to some of the other characters:



Although **Inspector G. Lestrade** is often portrayed as a fool, Sherlock Holmes described him as “the best of a bad lot” of policemen. In appearance, he was “a little sallow rat-faced, dark-eyed fellow” (“A Study in Scarlet”) and “a lean, ferret-like man, furtive and sly-looking” (“The Boscombe Valley Mystery”). In his one portrait by Sidney Paget, arresting a suspect, he appears to have been born between 1840 and 1860. His last appearance in the canon is “The Adventure of the Three Garridebs,” set in 1902 and published in 1924. Despite having a French name (“the raised platform”), he shows no knowledge of the French language in the Conan Doyle canon.



General Sir Harry Paget Flashman, VC KCB KCIE, 1822-1915, first appeared as a minor character in *Tom Brown's School Days*, a semi-autobiographical 1857 novel by Thomas Hughes. Between 1969 and 2005, Flashman was the protagonist of an excellent, heavily researched and footnoted series of novels by George MacDonald Fraser. General Flashman's encounter with Bhroung came a month after his adventures in *The Subtleties of Baccarat*, one of the novellas collected in *Flashman and the Tiger* (1999). General Flashman encountered Holmes and Watson for the second time in 1894, along with Col. Sebastian "Tiger Jack" Moran and Oscar Wilde, in *Flashman and the Tiger*.



Miss Elizabeth D. Pankhurst (1844-1921) devoted the youth of her professional life to the Society for the Suppression of Vice and to the Rescue Society, an organization devoted to redeeming "fallen women." In 1890, she had worked for two years at the Kilburn House, a refuge for abused and battered women as well as for prostitutes.

Miss Pankhurst, though unbeautiful and unloved, was not a stupid woman. After she overcame her outrage at Captain Kirk's blunt language, Miss Pankhurst spent several years thinking about fair pricing structures, women's health, sexually transmitted diseases, and the sexual exploitation of young girls by venal adults. Eventually, the Kilburn House was renamed Tamar's Refuge, after the biblical character who had pretended to be a Canaanite priestess in order to serve the levirate laws of Yahweh (Genesis 38). Little is known about what went on inside Tamar's Refuge, except that every woman saw a physician frequently and none was exploited.

The high point of Miss Pankhurst's life came in 1918, when after almost 50 years of efforts by suffragists, England graciously conferred the right to vote upon female property owners who were 30 years old or older.



Miss Rose “Montague-Forbes” Tyler (1873-1910), inspired by Miss Pankhurst, soon departed the life of a prostitute. In 1892, she met and married Alfred P. Doolittle, a trash collector or “dustman” who cheerfully acknowledged himself as being, like his wife, one of “the undeserving poor.” In 1895, Rose and Albert named their oldest daughter Elizabeth in honor of Miss Pankhurst, nicknaming her “Eliza.” Alas, Rose did not live long enough to see her husband in 1912 attempt to sell her “flower-girl” daughter into prostitution for fifty pounds (roughly \$14,000 in 2012 dollars).



Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1942 named his presidential retreat “**Shangri-La**,” after the utopian community in Tibet described in James Hilton’s 1933 novel *Lost Horizon*. Today FDR’s retreat is known as “Camp David,” renamed by President Eisenhower in honor of both Eisenhower’s father and his grandson. (The younger David Eisenhower is still married to Julie Nixon, the daughter of Eisenhower’s vice president.)



Lord Peter Death Bredon Wimsey, 1890-?, was the second son of Mortimer, 15th Duke of Denver, and the former Honoria Lucasta Delagardie. In a collection of superb novels and short stories by Dorothy L. Sayers, Lord Peter displayed a first-class intelligence and sense of style, becoming the “best-dressed” detective on whom many later detectives, like Roderick Alleyn, Albert Campion, Adam Dalgleish, Thomas Lynley, and even Peter Gunn were based. (The photo here is of Roy Ridley, the Oxford don upon whom Wimsey’s description was said to have been based. Ridley

was said to have been the only priest who ever celebrated Mass while wearing a monocle.)



Ernestina, dowager countess of Lavenham (1844-1919), remarried exactly one year after her bereavement, explaining to her two sons that she was a relatively young woman, thus making the title of *dowager* countess peculiarly abhorrent. Her second and third husbands were both elderly noblemen who doted on their beautiful acquisition before they died, leaving poor Lady Ernestina to conclude that to excite a man's love was a death sentence for him.

Ernestina's elder son, **Eustace Shield, fourth earl of Lavenham**, lost his most prized possession, an ancient heirloom known as a talisman ring, playing cards at the Cocoa-Tree.

(The authors hope that fans of Georgette Heyer who enjoy *The Talisman Ring* will recognize that the liberties taken with the Lavenhams in the century after Heyer's novel takes place are meant as a loving homage.)



Lieutenant Bhrounq (Blitznak 16, 3112 - Smeg 4, 4568; photo is from her graduation from Starfleet Academy)

No female Tellarite has ever been depicted in a movie or television episode. According to the *Starfleet Medical Reference Manual* (http://en.memory-alpha.org/wiki/Star_Fleet_Medical_Reference_Manual), male Tellarites average 1.8 meters in height and 80 kilograms in weight (5'10" and 176 pounds), while females Tellarites average 2.2 meters in height and 150 kilos in weight (7'2" and 331 pounds). By these averages, Lt. Bhrounq's lover Henglaar is right in dismissing Bhrounq as puny.

At her trial, Lt. Bhrounq was convicted of theft, assault on superior officers, and attempted murder. Thanks, however, to an inspired *ad litem* defense by Samuel T. Cogley, her crimes in 19th-century England were set aside, after the establishment of the absence of *animus nocendi*. Physicians from the Sarah April Medical Center provided supportive testimony that Bhrounq committed her alleged crimes because she had been taking an experimental drug during her undisclosed pregnancy that resulted in a neurochemical imbalance that destroyed her mental health, and Cogley had little trouble convincing the jury to rule not guilty by reason of temporary insanity. The Starfleet Tribunal remanded Bhrounq to the Sarah April Medical Center for rehabilitative treatment, and the Project Hi-Q physicians were able to restore her to normal Tellarite neuropsychiatric balance.

After her discharge, Bhrounq returned to Tellar, and, after 19 months' gestation, delivered four healthy shoats of such prom-

ise that Henglaar's interest in his former paramour was revived. While there is no record of Bhrounq's exact words in response to Henglaar's invitation that she join his harem, Lt. Uhura's rough translation of the dialect seemed to indicate that Bhrounq invited Henglaar to screw his corkscrew-shaped penis into that one of the Mothers who most closely resembled a wine bottle.



After remaining in Hand Cross only long enough to sell her house and settle her affairs, **Irene Adler Norton** moved to Grayson, New Jersey. She died July 31, 1891, while giving birth to a son, whom she named William Scott Grayson. William Scott Grayson was the great-grandfather of Christopher Elliott Grayson; Christopher Elliott Grayson was the great-grandfather of Samuel Pressly Grayson; and Samuel Pressly Grayson was the father of Amanda Grayson and the grandfather of S'chn T'gai Grayson Spock.

Appendix A: An Explanatory Note About Spring-Heeled Jack

He came bounding out of the night, his eyes glowing like balls of fire, his hands icy claws and his mouth spitting flames. For more than 60 years, this terrifying figure, reputedly able to leap over high walls or on to roofs with superhuman ease, held England in a grip of fear.

At first, in the 1830s, tales of a frightening devil-like figure bounding through the air were treated as hysterical nonsense. ... In January 1838, this strange creature received official recognition. At London's Mansion House the Lord Mayor, Sir John Cowan, read out a letter from a terrified citizen of Peckham. It described the phenomenal jumping feats of a demoniacal figure. There was an immediate uproar.

Other complaints flooded in from people who until then had been too afraid of ridicule to report their encounters with the creature who had become known as Spring-heeled Jack.

Polly Adams, a pretty farmer's daughter from Kent, who worked in a South London pub, had been savagely attacked several months earlier while walking across Blackheath. The attacker fled, leaping great distances into the air....

[Another] victim was Jane Alsop, [who reported being attacked by] ... a terrifying figure clad in a horned, close-fitting helmet and a tight, white costume. ... Help arrived, but before any of the startled rescuers could grab him, the figure bounded away into the darkness.

Jane later described her attacker to the authorities: "His face was hideous, his eyes like balls of fire. His hands had icy-cold great claws, and he vomited blue and white flames."

Her colourful description was to be echoed repeatedly by other terrified — and presumably hysterical — victims....

During the next few years, Spring-heeled Jack roamed the

country. Sightings ranged from the back streets of London to remote villages.

In February 1855, the mystery spread to the West Country, where the folk of five South Devon towns awoke to find that there had been a heavy snowfall — and that mysterious footprints had appeared overnight. The footsteps ran along the tops of walls, over rooftops, and across enclosed courtyards. The frightened inhabitants labelled them the Devil’s Footprints ... [and] attributed them to ... Spring-heeled Jack.

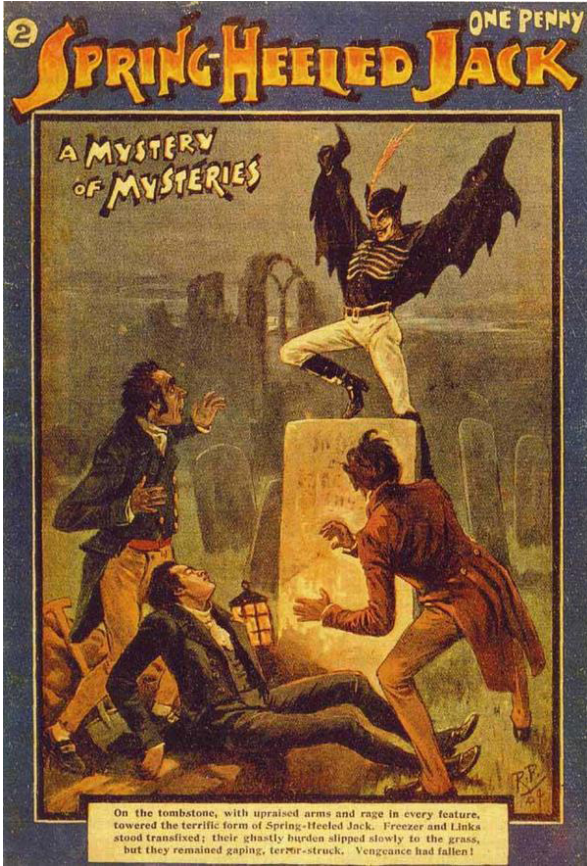
Spring-heeled Jack was still bounding around the country in 1870. The army certainly took him seriously and organized a plan to trap him. The move was forced upon the authorities after sentries, many of them hardened veterans of the Crimean War, had been terrorized at their posts by a weird figure who sprang from the shadows to land on the roofs of their sentry boxes or to slap their faces with icy hands.

In Lincoln, the townsfolk, wild with fear and anger, tried to hunt him down with guns. As always, he disappeared into the night with a maniacal laugh.

—Excerpted from Nigel Blundell, *The World’s Greatest Mysteries*. New York: Exeter Books, 1982. (First published in USA in 1984.)

[Click here to return to Log One.](#) (Or use your “back” button.)

This lurid cover dates from 1904:



On the tombstone, with upraised arms and rage in every feature, towered the terrific form of Spring-Heeled Jack. Freezer and Links stood transfixed; their ghostly burden slipped slowly to the grass, but they remained gaping, terror-struck. Vengeance had fallen!

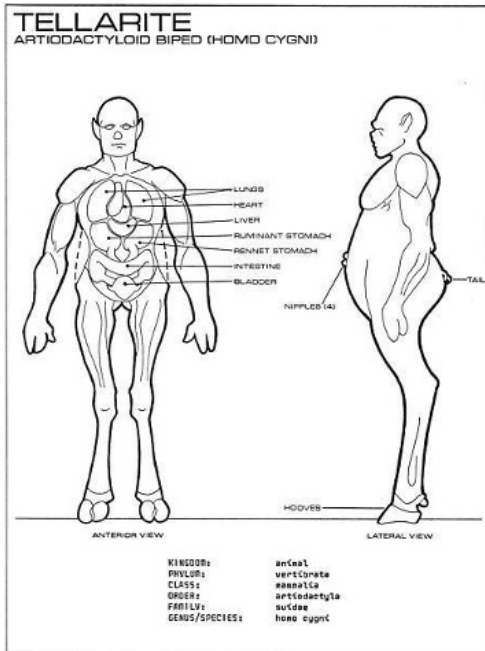
Another book cover from the early 20th century:



This is the only book cover I was about to find that shows the alleged flaming breath:



This work of fan fiction complies with fair- or acceptable-use principles established in U.S. and international copyright law for the purposes of review, study, criticism, news reporting, research, scholarship, and parody. Pastiche is a form of parody and fall under the purview of the fair-use provisos of copyright law.



This is the drawing of a male Tellarite from the Star Fleet Medical Guide, available online at the Memory Alpha Web Site. Notice that males are much shorter than females and appear to have no external genitalia.

Appendix B: Bhroung's Star Fleet Logs

Editor's Note: Mary thought the following recordings belonged in Log 2, in which Kirk introduces the adventure to his crew in one of those classic conference room scenes in which the

most exciting thing that happens is, everyone sits around a big desk. Y.S. thought they belong here.

Personal Log of Lt. Bhrounq, lo, Stardate 5578.4

Henglaar say I stupid. I not stupid! I lieutenant in Starfleet! Henglaar say I puny. I not puny neither! Plenty of sows smaller me! When I make pilot, Star Fleet must build special runabout big enough me, controls made for good Tellar hands, not squiggle-snake hands. Now I am only officer in Star Fleet who can fly it. It is prototype. Why Star Fleet go such trouble for one Tellarite pilot if she too stupid even for make litter with fiancé?

Admiral Ballorane say accident not my fault. He say, I volunteer for his research project, he make me smarter. I will! Then Henglaar will love me again.

Personal Log of Lt. Bhrounq, lo, Stardate 5771.4

Admiral Ballorane introduced me to his associate, Dr. T'Temar of the Vulcan Science Academy, who ran me through a number of tests before confirming that I was an ideal subject for their project. I can never remember the full name; everyone just calls it "Project Hi-Q." Ostensibly, the project is rehabilitative, and if I had never had my little "accident," I might not have been considered a worthy subject. Now that I have had several treatments, I suspect that I would have been considered a worthy subject merely because I am a Tellarite, and a female Tellarite at that — few of us females are interested in venturing off Tellar Prime, away from the mud baths, and oh, that delicious, delightful *gravity*. (Starfleet keeps its artificial gravity at Earth-normal, which is fine if you happen to be a simpering pink weakling with a tiny little dot where your snout ought to be.)

And that, of course, is the other reason so few of the Mothers ever leave Tellar Prime. The little boys can play their silly games, hunting and arguing and fighting and measuring whose penis is curlier. The Mothers have a planet to run!

I was right about one thing: Henglaar was deeply impressed. We had a wonderful time on his shore leave.

Personal Log of Lt. Bhrounq, lo, Stardate 5913.2

Perhaps Henglaar and I had *too* good a time on his shore leave. I am with litter, just as I had hoped to be before the "accident." But if I tell T'Temar that I am pregnant, she will almost certainly compel me to leave the study. I am due for another treatment in two Earth-days. (Why does

Starfleet insist on adhering to Terran customs of chronology? Tellar Prime was one of the original founders of the United Federation of Planets, back in Earth year 2161! Why shouldn't we use *hwunqs*, like civilized people?)

Personal Log of Lt. Bhrounq, Io, Stardate 6113.2

Henglaar. Oh, Henglaar. I did everything for you! Even though I am taller than the average sow, you said I was puny — so I gained 50 kilos, just to please you. When you said I was stupid, I arranged a little “accident” for myself so I could get into Project Hi-Q.

And now, Henglaar, *now* you are saying that my ancestry isn't good enough for you. I am descended from Skalaar, the bold captain who captured Jonathan Archer in Earth-year 2163! How much nobler can you get than arresting a war criminal who escaped from Rura Penthe?

It is clear that Henglaar is inventing lame excuses, presumably so that he does not have to fulfill his promises to me. I'm going to have to think of something, and fast. In another Earth-year, it will be impossible for me to conceal my pregnancy any longer.

Personal Log of Lt. Bhrounq, Io, Stardate 6327.2

I have it! Originally I was annoyed that the April research facility is on Io, this cold, cold ball of nothing. But Io is just a roll and a wallow from Earth itself. As any fool could tell you, even though Tellarite encountered these annoying pink *eeknongghs* in 2153, in fact, a Tellarite visited Earth at least twice, in Earth years 1837-38 and 1890. They called him “Spring-heeled Jack.”

Most humans today, if even they know about Spring-heeled Jack, think he was the product of mass hysteria, like the witch craze of Earth's early middle ages or the “space aliens” craze of its late middle ages. But I majored in history when I was in school. The “bogeyman” was Gavnir, the great-great grandsire of Ambassador Gav, who performed so brilliantly in the Coridan matter that they made him governor of Plegghnar.

Two or three years ago, back in 3114, the U.S.S. Enterprise discovered a way to travel in time. You head directly for the nearest star at warp three. You keep accelerating until your chronometer starts to run backwards. Just as you reach the breakaway point, you slingshot around the star and engage the engines at maximum. Maximum warp plus the enormous energy provided by the star's gravitational field and *voilà!* — forward time-travel.

So that's what I'll do. I'll head for Sol at warp three, and I'll keep accelerating until my chronometer starts to run backwards. Then just as I

reach the breakaway point, I'll slingshot around the star and engage the engines at maximum. Then when I get to 1837, I'll stop. I'll go to Earth. Spring-heeled Jack was seen in England dozens of times, in London, in Sheffield, in Liverpool.

The records say that Spring-heeled Jack was a man, but they don't say anything about his being a small "man." Human men are grotesquely tall, almost as tall as we sows, and much taller than the proper height for a boar, which is no taller than 1.7 meters. [*Ed.: About 5'7".*] Maybe it will turn out that I, Bhrounq, am Spring-heeled Jack, and Gavnir has merely gotten the credit for my actions!

After I have my litter, I can think about returning to my proper time period. Even if I steal every vial of "nous-juice" the Project has, I'll have to run out someday. T'Temar speculates that the changes wrought by the treatment are permanent, but I don't want to take any chances.

Or perhaps I will decide to stay on Earth and return to my former intelligence, which was brighter than the average Tellarite and far brighter than the average *eeknonggh*. With the technology I have available in my runabout, I can say, "Behold! I am the Archangel Bligareggh!" and have them worship me as a goddess.

Or perhaps I will stay in 1837, but go to Tellar Prime and kill Henglaar's great-great-grandam. Then Henglaar will never be born, and I will have a good revenge. . . .

[Click here to return to Log One.](#) (*Or use your "back" button.*)

Appendix C: Editors' Original Foreword

Following is the introduction to the story we wrote long ago, in the “good old days” before we decided it would be better just to let Watson and Kirk tell the story. Most of the following pages were written by Yoli, a considerable improvement on my original draft. —MWM

* * *

The phone rang just before eight a.m. “Hope I didn’t wake you up,” murmured a voice from my past.

“Yoli! What are you— it must be five a.m. in L.A.! Are you all right? Is something wrong with Tasos or one of the kids?”

“We’re all fine. I just needed an emergency consultation.”

“From me? You’re the doctor.”

“And you’re the specialist ... on the English language, that is. Feel like some warm California sunshine?”

* * *

Yoli and I have known each other since our teenaged years in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., when we used to hang out and watch sci-fi TV shows after school — she liked the romantic heroes (read Kirk), and I liked the cerebral heroes (read Spock). We’ve kept in touch ever since, through career changes, name changes, marriages, births, deaths — everything but bridal nights. Yoli eventually moved to Los Angeles, where she met and married the love of her life; my own true love and I chose St. Petersburg, Florida, where people are less likely to make boring jokes about earthquakes causing one’s home to slide into the ocean. [*And more likely to make boring jokes about hurricanes causing the ocean to slide into one’s home—Y. Pascal*]

The one thing I could be certain of was that Yoli would not

ask me to drop everything and fly three thousand miles across the country if whatever she was being so discreet about on the phone wasn't hugely important. My husband Jerry made our reservations, and by the end of the day, we were sitting snugly in Yoli's Prius and crawling up the infamous 405 Freeway.

What with getting settled in Yoli and Tasos' guest room, exclaiming over the world's three most gorgeous, wonderful, high-achieving kids, and decompressing, it was after supper before Yoli finally got around to the reason Jerry and I had had to travel all the way across the country. "You remember my sabbatical a couple of years ago?" she asked.

"You mean the one postcard from Buckingham Palace?"

"Come on. I really put in the hours. St. Bartholomew's has one of the top gerontology centers in London."

I smiled. "I forgive you."

"Anyway, I just got a delivery yesterday from Hanover and Marks."

"The department store?" offered Jerry.

"You're thinking of Marks and Spencer. I'm talking about the law firm. You know I've always been fascinated by the history of medicine. One of my patients in London was a 98-year-old widow — I'd spent a couple of nights on the ward nursing her back from kidney failure, and we'd talk. Seems her father was a doctor around the turn of the century. The last century. Anyway, unfortunately, she died last year—"

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"Me, too. She was a really nice lady." Yoli paused. "Well, they've finally settled her estate. She willed me her father's trunk."

"No kidding ... that trunk over there?"

I pointed at the trunk that was sitting on the floor next to Yoli's brand-new Dell laptop. About the size of a child's footlocker, the trunk looked to be well over a hundred years old. On top was an ancient copy of the *London Times*, with the headline, "Spring-heeled Jack Terrorises Sussex."

"Yep. It's a treasure trove of notes about nineteenth and early twentieth century cases, some incredibly old textbooks, Victoriana. And guess what I found, hidden at the bottom?"

"A million bucks? I mean, pounds?"

“Nope. Something a bit more valuable, I’d say.” Yoli’s tone made it clear that this was the understatement of the century — like saying that a first-edition Gutenberg Bible was “a bit” more valuable. “A manuscript. And something else I’ll show you in a minute. I made a photocopy of the manuscript — here, that’s for you to take home with you and work on, if you decide you want to.”

Yoli handed me a fresh photocopy of a two-inch thick manuscript in a scrawling Victorian hand. On the first page, this line leaped out at me:

I am about to describe events so extraordinary, so unbelievable in the lives of myself and of Mr. Sherlock Holmes that the credulity of even the most indulgent of readers must be strained to the limit.

Sherlock Holmes! I sat there for a moment with my mouth hanging open. “Yoli, who was your patient again?”

“Charlotta Gillette. Charlotta Watson Gillette.” She added softly, “Daughter of John H. Watson, M.D.”

* * *

Well, that was it for the next few hours. Even though it was long past our bedtimes, Jerry and I read this amazing manuscript feverishly, with him virtually snatching each page out of my hand as I finished it and occasionally making remarks about certain unspecified wives who couldn’t read as fast as their husbands. Yoli or Tasos would look in on us every now and then, keeping our coffee coming. When Jerry and I were down to the last few pages, they came back in with their own coffee.

I said to my hostess, “Yoli, that is without a doubt the most amazing thing I have ever read in my life.”

“I thought you might be interested.”

“You thought I — zowie! A brand-new, genuine Sherlock Holmes story! What an uproar there’s going to be in the literary community!”

“Oh ... maybe not just in the literary community.” Yoli got up and went over to her desk, where she rummaged around for a moment in a drawer full of old floppy disks.

“You don’t still use any of those old floppies?” Jerry teased.

“You’d be surprised,” Yoli said. She handed me what I first took to be a postage stamp. It was a small gold piece of square plastic, completely featureless, and maybe an sixteenth of an inch thick.

Tasos laughed gently at the dumbfounded expression on Jerry’s face, which probably mirrored my own. Well, but Yoli and Tasos had had days to get used to the implications of their find.

I asked, “That’s the ‘smart drive’ that Watson talks about in his last chapter, isn’t it?”

Yoli said, simply, “We think so.”

The four of us stared at it. “Holy smokes,” I finally breathed. “If that is really a smart drive, then ... !”

“We’d only have proof positive,” Tasos sighed. “If we could only figure out how to access what’s on it.”

Pointing at the computer on Yoli’s desk, I said, “My Dell desktop was a Christmas present. It’s the one time in my life I got cutting-edge everything, and don’t spare the horses. As you two have probably already found out the hard way, there are Windows 95 and 98 programs that Windows 7 just point-blank refuses to run, even though they still run fine on ‘old’ computers. If this gold thingie were some kind of floppy disk, trying to get a modern-day computer to read it would be like trying to get a Victrola to read Vista.”

“What’s a generation in computer years, about 18 months?” interjected Jerry. “If our first computers twenty years ago were generation 1, then our computers today are generation 13, more or less — and this little puppy is probably generation 200. Or more.”

“I took the ‘smart drive’ to the University Medical Center and put it under the electron microscope,” Yoli said, “and there’s data on it, all right. I could see the magnetic patterns. But I can’t think of one single way to access whatever data is on this thing in any meaningful way.”

The four of us sat for a while and just stared glumly at the gold square.

“It’s still a huge discovery,” I finally said. “The manuscript, I mean. I don’t think a genuine Watson manuscript has been found since 1927.”

“Right,” Yoli said. “Assuming we could get anyone to believe it wasn’t just another cheesy pastiche.”

Silence. We kept staring at the gold square.

More silence.

Finally, Jerry came up with an idea. “Wait a minute. Let’s suppose for a moment, just for fun, that the Watson manuscript is genuine and that the events he describes actually happened. What does that imply?”

“It’s pretty clear that ‘Spring-heeled Jack’ was actually one or more aliens from another planet,” Yoli returned, earning a frown from Tasos.

“And it’s pretty clear that the characters Kirk, Spock, and McCoy are from the future,” I added. “They quoted Arthur C. Clarke on how high technology is indistinguishable from magic, but Arthur C. Clarke was born in nineteen-something, long after the events in this book take place.”

“Not to mention all the high-tech apps Watson mentions,” Yoli said. “Boy, wouldn’t I just love to get my hands on one of those medical tricorders.”

“Run with me on this,” Jerry said. “You remember that old sci-fi story ‘The Marching Morons?’” Tasos and I did, but Yoli had been much more into Asimov and Heinlein. “The basic idea of the story is that some time in the far future, technology is going to be way beyond anything we’ve got now, but the general population has gotten so brain-atrophied that society has become divided into the ‘wolves’ and the ‘sheep,’ with the ‘wolves’ acting as the ‘sheep’s’ baby-sitters. And the ‘wolves’ have to make the technology so simple a moron could use it.”

“Like that cartoon I saw in the newspaper the other day,” Tasos chuckled. “A pocket calculator with labels like one finger, two fingers, three fingers....”

“Exactly,” Jerry said. “They made a ‘Twilight Zone’ episode out of the ‘Marching Morons’ story. A high-tech doctor’s ‘black bag’ accidentally gets sent back in time to the 1960s, and the people who find it can use it to do what we’d consider miracles — at least until one of the ‘wolves’ notices the bag is missing and turns it off.

“Yoli, are you brave? Brave enough to put that ‘smart drive’ into your DVD drive, just to see what might happen?”

“That’s not going to work,” I said. Jerry gave me The Look. You married folks know which Look I mean. But I persisted. “And, you

may totally bleep up your DVD-drive. Like that TV commercial where the toddler put the slice of pizza into the VCR.”

“What’s a VCR again?” Yoli winked at me, before booting up her computer. “Okay, I’m game.” After the Windows 7 desktop appeared, she opened the cap of her attached DVD drive, rested the “smart drive” on the turntable, and, with a grunt, snapped the top shut.

The Dell’s screen went black.

“That computer is brand-new—” Tasos’s tone had a definite hint of panic.

But then, at the top of the screen, appeared these words:

“A:\> Identifying operating system: Windows 7, installed 1/6/2010.”

After about a minute, more words appeared. “A:\> Emulation mode Windows 7, uploading data.” Then for about two minutes, nothing.

During this time, Jerry said, “If this works the way I think it’s going to work, we’ll see something. My thinking was, since technology improves exponentially, the people who made this ‘smart drive’ are as far ahead of us as we are ahead of the Dark Ages. And, just like the story ‘The Marching Morons,’ people in the future are going to make things as self-operating as possible. I’ll bet if we even turned on a record-player and just rested the needle on the ‘smart drive,’ we’d get something.”

Nobody made a move to turn on a record player.

And then . . .

Here is a screen-capture image of what we saw:

This first screen stayed up for several moments. Then it disappeared and was replaced with a second screen:

“Wow,” Yoli breathed.



“Look at that sidebar!” I exclaimed. “Highest technology available, 2012. Video unavailable: Cannot adapt to prechronous tech-



This work of fan fiction complies with fair- or acceptable-use principles established in U.S. and international copyright law for the purposes of review, study, criticism, news reporting, research, scholarship, and parody. Pastiche is a form of parody and fall under the purview of the fair-use provisos of copyright law.

nology. Satellite uplink unavailable: No satellite detected. Unet unavailable without satellite uplink.”

“‘Unet,’” I murmured.

“So, the Internet is still around, two or three hundred years in the future,” Tasos said.

“And look at that — ‘Emulation of N.A. English.’ ‘N.A.’ must stand for ‘North American.’ Yoli, the ‘smart drive’ must have looked at the files on your computer and chosen the most-used language. ... And look at the other options, Standard, Spanish, French, Greek, what are those other languages?”

“Beats me,” Yoli said. “But do you suppose one of those really whack-looking other languages could be—?”

We all chorused, “Vulcan!”

Jerry and I went home the next day, me with my precious photocopy of the Watson manuscript and a drive — an ordinary, 21st-century flash drive — containing copies of every text “log” that was on the “smart drive.” The original Watson manuscript is safe in a bank vault with the right air pressure, the right humidity, everything else that’s needed to safeguard it. Yoli says the “smart drive” is in the bank vault too, but I’m not sure I believe her. If it belonged to me, I’d want to keep it somewhere safer than any darn bank. I’d keep it where no one in the Universe but me would even think of looking for it.

Yoli and I don’t expect you to believe us. Until you have sat in front of a brand-new computer and had your economic life flash before your eyes, and then seen for yourself technology so advanced it might as well be magic, you’re going to be skeptical. But we’ve decided to publish the manuscript anyway. We’ve interspersed Dr. Watson’s account of the adventure with “logs” from the Enterprise’s five year mission reproduced from the “smart drive,” as seems appropriate. We also have included an appendix with more information about Spring-heeled Jack, who really did terrorize England in the 19th century.

We’ll leave it up to you, the reader, to decide whether the story — Dr. Watson’s manuscript and the interspersed sections from the gold-plastic manuscript — is bogus or not. I know what I think. I’m going to stop worrying about nuclear winter and “The End of Civilization As We Know It.” The human race will still be going

strong, 300-odd years from now. If I could survive that long, this is a story I could listen to my many-greats grandchildren tell *me*.

Mary W. Matthews
July 4, 2012

[Click here to return to the Editors' Foreword; or click here to return to the editors' introduction to Log 1.](#)

Appendix D: Bibliography

For those who are interested, we found the following references books helpful in editing *Elementary, My Dear Spock*.

Sherlock Holmes

Baring-Gould, William S., editor. *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Clarkson N. Potter Inc., 1967.

—————. *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street*. A Life of the World's First Consulting Detective. New York: Clarkson N. Potter Inc., 1962.

Doyle, Adrian M. Conan (with John Dickson Carr). *The Exploits of Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Random House, 1954.

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*. With a preface by Christopher Morley. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1930.

Guy, Patricia. *Bacchus at Baker Street: Sherlock Holmes and Victorian Drinking Lore*. New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2007.

Hardwick, Michael and Mollie. *The Man Who Was Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1964.

Hardwick, Michael. *The Private Life of Dr. Watson*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1979.

Sherlock Holmes: My Life and Crimes. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1984.

The Sherlock Holmes Companion. London: John Murray, 1962.

Harrison, Michael. *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Frederick Fell, Inc., 1960.

Roberts, S.C. *Holmes and Watson: A Miscellany*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953.

Starrett, Vincent. *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*. New

York: The Macmillan Company, 1933.

Tracy, Jack, with Jim Berkey. *Subcutaneously, My Dear Watson: Sherlock Holmes and the Cocaine Habit*. Bloomington, IN: James A. Rock & Co.

Star Trek

In addition to the 79 episodes, the many movies, and the dozens of Star Trek novels, including anything by Vonda McIntyre (we are also indebted to Barbara Hambly's *Ishmael* for giving me Spock's full name), I found the following Star Trek reference books helpful:

Blair, Karin. *Meaning in Star Trek*. New York: Warner Books, 1979.

Goldstein, Stan, and Fred Goldstein. *Star Fleet Spaceflight Chronology*. New York: Pocket Books, 1980.

Palestine, Eileen, editor. *Star Fleet Medical Reference Manual*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1977.

Trimble, Bjo. *The Star Trek Concordance*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1976.

* * *

Our deepest thanks also go to:

"I don't care if it is a good line — Watson would never say it": *Carol Williams Matthews, Samuel W. Matthews*.

"I don't care if it is a good line — Kirk would never say it": *David P. Matthews, and especially Thomas E. Matthews, whom I would deep-fry at McDonald's — except he was right*.

"They just didn't do that in 1890": *Carol Williams Matthews*.

"I hate science fiction — but I loved your book, dear, and I'm not just saying that because I'm your mother": *Kathryn P. Matthews*.

Jerry A. Merchant, simply for existing.

Anastasios G. Chassiakos, Anastasia Chassiakos, George Chassiakos, Alexander Chassiakos, and E.G. and Effie Stassinopoulos, for your love and support.



Appendix E: A Study in Scarsdale The Memoirs of James Wilson, M.D.

by Y.S. Pascal

I hadn't seen Stamford in years. I might not have another chance. I swung the car to the right and skidded onto the off-ramp from the I-95. Who knows when I'd be back this way again.

The town was as boring as I'd remembered. I suppose I could've taken the offer ... but I owed something to Boston. And it wasn't settling for tree-lined streets and gray flannel houses. Nope, the Big Apple beckoned, with its serpentine avenues and concrete phalluses. It didn't take me long to get back on the turnpike. Good-bye, Stamford, good-bye, Connecticut. This boy's goin' to New Yawk.

Finding an apartment wasn't going to be easy. I'd been scouring the *Times* for weeks, but everything affordable was rented long before the ads came out in the paper. The scrap with my aunt's phone number was still crumpled in my pocket. But, I was now a free man — and I wasn't going to find the action I was looking for

in Scarsdale.

NYU's housing office gave me a several-generations-photocopied list of potential sites. I could probably mooch a couple of nights in one of the call rooms until I checked them out. The young man who'd given me the addresses had a word of advice, "Call before you go. They're probably all rented already."

I nodded as I looked at his nametag. "Thanks, uh, Bart."

As I turned away, Bart shot up from his chair. "Hey. I got an idea."

I waited.

"I know this guy..."

This wasn't starting out well....

"No, really. He's a little weird, but..."

Score for me. I still waited.

"He's a doctor, too. Maybe you could hang with him." Bart handed me an address he'd scribbled on a Post-It.

"Sure. Thanks." I stuffed the note into my pocket with Aunt Brenda's. I was going to be spending a lot of time in the call rooms, and not just for my heme-onc fellowship.

I got busted in two days. Apparently I wasn't the first house officer to use the hospital as my house. I was given an ultimatum: Find a place to live before my next shift if I wanted a shift after that one.

I was looking for quarters in my pockets for the laundry when I stumbled across the crumpled notes. I tossed Aunt Brenda into the trash with a perfect rim shot, and was aiming the Post-It when the doctor's name caught my eye. "House." *Now, that's funny.* "Is there a House in the house?" *No wonder the guy is weird.*

What the hell ... As Thoreau once said, "What is called resignation is confirmed desperation." I put the quarters in the pay phone instead.

In less than an hour, I was standing outside Montague's Bar and Grill on 3rd. I searched for the side door and finally found it halfway down a dark alley that stank of roses and carnations. How much of our tax money was Giuliani spending on these beautification efforts, anyway?

I rang the doorbell several times before I was buzzed in. I was panting well before I reached the 6th floor. The door was at the

end of the hall. I waited a few minutes to catch my breath before knocking.

Expecting to hear the symphony of clicks that identify the column of bolt locks on New York doors, I was surprised to simply hear a gravelly voice shout, "Come in, it's open."

I gingerly inched the door open and peeked inside.

* * *

A skirt. A black skirt, covering a firm, rounded—"You Wilson?" the gray-haired woman asked in a deep voice as she stood back up and faced me, her broom poised to attack.

I hesitated. "Yeah..." A housekeeper's outfit...

She picked up her dustpan and nodded as she looked me up and down. "All right." Pointing to a recliner on one side of the room, she added. "Sit."

I sat.

"He'll be out in a minute. I got work to do," she said as she turned and walked out of the room without waiting for my response.

I quickly gave up on the polite smile and settled back in the lounge to wait. The living room was large and completely dominated by an enormous grand piano in its center. To one side lay an acoustic guitar surrounded by confetti of picks. Over the fireplace hung a colorful display of assorted motorcycle helmets and a banner with the cryptic letters "CUBC" and the number "80." The color TV to my right was muted on ESPN. Not being a fan of monster trucks, I got up and tried to change the channel, but could neither spy a remote, nor locate the missing channel buttons that seemed to have been pried off of the set.

I wandered over to the obligatory bookcase that took up one wall. Yes, there were the obligatory Harrison's *Textbook of Medicine*, Nelson's *Textbook of Pediatrics*, a book of collected Frank Netter illustrations, and, of course, *Gray's Anatomy*. *What a great title for a medical TV show*, I mused for a moment ... "Netter's Models," *that's the ticket*.

"It'll probably be canceled in 13 weeks." The growl came from behind me.

I spun around. "H-how—?" I asked the tall, lanky man who

now faced me.

He leaned against the wall and chuckled. He had a few inches on me at least, and about ten years. A full head of dark brown wavy hair, piercing blue eyes, and — well, maybe it was the jeans. I guess I could just describe him as lugubriously sexy, like a well-hung eel, but then you'd think I was gay.

"A magician never gives away his tricks, Wilson," the eel finally returned. He waved me towards a rickety stool as he slithered gracefully onto the recliner.

"Who's Wilson?" I asked innocently.

The eel sat up, seemingly startled for a moment. I couldn't keep a straight face. "Gotcha."

How the stool broke at that moment I'll never know. I guess I must've put on a little weight. I got up with as much dignity as I could muster and extended my hand. "House?"

The eel shook it firmly, and directed me to a more solid-looking folding chair next to the lounge. He grabbed a yellow tennis ball from the side table and started throwing it in the air and catching it with a syncopated rhythm. "You'll lose the baby fat after a few weeks going up and down those stairs."

I sat down more carefully this time, as he continued. "I'll have Ms. Hudson put you on the Zone."

"Your housekeeper?" I pointed towards the hallway.

"The Head Nutritionist." House shook his head. "Come on, you're a Fellow — you actually think you'll have time to eat any meals here?"

Score for House. I shrugged, "Just looking for a place to rest my head."

House studied me for a moment, then smoothly tossed the ball into a helmet lying upside down under the piano. "Okay, Wilson, you're in."

* * *

I got the nickname "Black Cloud" after only two weeks on the service. It had nothing to do with my heritage — 1/8th Cherokee — but with my demonstrated talent in attracting torrents of patients on my ward every night I was on duty. I managed to wend my way home — well after midnight, and only on the days I wasn't on call.

I wasn't doing much head-resting in House's house, or anyone else's, for that matter — my expectations for an active social life having been dashed as I dashed from patient to patient trying to get out from under that black cloud.

I found myself longing for the relative sanity of my workload as Chief Resident in Medicine at Mass General. 110-hour workweeks were looking mighty good now that I was working 168-hour weeks. The one occasion Beth and I had time to ourselves in the call room, Harrison crumped and we spent the rest of our shifts thumping his chest. *No score for me...*

I woke up Monday morning with a headache. And a fever. That hasn't stopped me from going to work in the past — but the terrible vertigo was a deal-breaker. I lay back down in my bed and waited for the walls of my bedroom to stop spinning.

I quickly ascertained that I'd be spending at least the next few hours in bed. I reached for a journal, but found that my burning eyes turned the words into gibberish. *So much for reading ... I've got to get a TV ... One that gets channels beyond ESPN ...* House's tastes in shows were certainly ... eclectic, that's for sure. I'd perused the videotapes on his bookshelf in a moment of insomnia earlier this week, and seen not only archives of monster truck meets, baseball games, and motorcycle races, but Jerry Springer shows, Steve McQueen movies, and something called *Blackadder* that must've been one of those hideously dull nature programs they always run on the Discovery Channel.

I snorted. Over a week rooming with the guy and I didn't even know his specialty. I shook my head, and instantly regretted the action. My eyes focused on the dingy ceiling light until the nausea faded. Maybe he's a gastroenterologist — that would certainly help now. Or a neurologist ... who'll cure my headache ... if it's not a brain tumor ... with mets ... like Harrison ... *Stop it*, I scolded myself, reminding myself of the old med school adage, "if you've read about it this week, you don't have it." *It's just a virus. And you're getting delirious. Enough.*

Fuck! House is probably a psychiatrist. Great. I wonder how long it'll take him to figure out my—

The phone on the night table jangled loudly.

I groaned and reached for the receiver. "Yeah."

“House?” said a raspy voice on the line.

“Not home,” I answered, not particularly brightly. “You can page him at the hospital.”

“I don’t have an hour,” the voice continued, “just tell him I want to consult him on a case.”

“And you are?”

“Less. With one S.” The man hung up before I could ask for his number.

I was truly stunned. It was unheard of — doctors usually guarded their home phone numbers with their life. To give a patient those precious digits ... I had to find out what House’s game was — and quickly. Mustering all my strength, I endeavored to sit up in bed. Nope, bad idea. Better idea ... I pulled over the phone and dialed.

“You’ve reached New York University Hospital. If you have a true emergency, please hang up and call 9-1-” I hit “O” — and got zero response from the automated system, which must have been installed in 1978 and never updated.

Five minutes later, I pressed “7” and asked for the Hospital Directory, Dr. Gregory House. I could hear a keyboard clacking on the other end of the line before the operator gave me the extension.

“And his department?”

More clacking. “Infectious Disease.”

I lay back in bed with a broad smile. Ah, the benefits of modern technology. At the task of psyching out my roommate, I’d beaten Dr. Watson by at least a week. Then I phoned House to pass on the message that “one-S Les” had left.

* * *

I must’ve slept for hours — it was dark when I finally realized I was awake. My head was still throbbing, but, I was happy to note when I gingerly sat up, I was no longer dizzy. I stood slowly, and, wearing only my tattered Browns T-shirt and Pikachu boxers, shuffled out of my bedroom in search of a glass of water.

“I commend your fashion sense, Wilson. Your dance card should fill up quickly.”

I winced, but kept aiming towards the kitchen. “I’m sick, you

know.”

“Not for me to judge.” House cleared his throat, and added. “You may want to say hello to our guest.”

Damn. I instinctively ran a hand through my hair and turned slowly, my face flushed.

Sitting across from House was a small, ferret-faced man wearing a herringbone tweed suit. House turned to his visitor with an apologetic shrug. “You’ll have to excuse Wilson, Inspector. He’s usually the epitome of couth.”

I favored House with a withering gaze, then extended my hand. “James Wilson. You’re a co— policeman?”

The visitor didn’t seem eager to shake — instead, he reached into one of his pockets and, making sure to avoid any skin-to-skin contact, handed me his card.

It read: *New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Inspector Les Trade, Food Service and Restaurant Sanitarian.*

Les — with one S! “You’re the one who called — nice to meet you, Mr. uh, is it ‘trayde’ or ‘trahd’?”

“I’ve heard both,” he grunted. “But most people pronounce it ‘tra-DAY,’ like I’m some fruity singer.”

I nodded politely and decided to be more direct. “What do you prefer to be called?”

“Inspector.” With a curt nod, he turned back to House. “The concierge found the body at 10 a.m. The M.E. puts the time of death at between midnight and 3 a.m. Sir Geoffrey insists that she was feeling well when she went to bed around eleven.”

House frowned, “And you’re certain the stomach contents were—”

“Body? What body?” I interrupted.

“Much of the salmon hadn’t been digested. It seems open and shut.” Les Trade insisted.

“Uh, excuse me?” I tried again. “Body? Dead? Hello?”

House looked at Trade and sighed. “86-year-old female, found dead this morning at the Plaza, several hours after eating at the Lauriston Garden at the Park. The Inspector suspects the cause of death was,” House coughed, “salmonella in the salmon.”

“You obviously don’t agree,” I deduced without difficulty.

“It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the test results, Wilson.” Referring to the old diagnostic saying about hoofbeats and horses, he added, “Think of all the zebras you’d miss.”

“Then what do you suggest, Dr. House?” The Inspector’s frustration was visibly growing.

“That Wilson put on some clothes.” House stood up, signaling an end to the consultation, and directed Les Trade toward the door. “We’ll meet you at the Plaza in half an hour, Les. I’ll need to learn a lot more about Dame Jean.”

I waited til the door had closed behind the Inspector. “That’s the victim’s name?”

House clapped me on the shoulders. “Wilson, your astuteness never ceases to amaze me.”

He then slid onto the piano bench and began a syncopated riff, to which he soon added the somewhat off-key and very astonishing lyrics: “She shuffled off this mortal coil, the victim Dame Jean Conan Doyle.”

I made a beeline for the bathroom. I wasn’t going to let House know that my nausea had returned in full force.

* * *

House parked his bike in the hotel loading zone, and, keys in hand, flew past the valet, who futilely began haranguing me about calling a tow truck.

“*No hablo Ingles.*” I shrugged, pulled down my visor, and, gathering my jacket around my hunched shoulders, followed my roommate up the steps into the hotel.

The lobby of the Plaza was strangely quiet, save for the sporadic yapping of an occasional overfed Shi Tzu. The few self-absorbed British peers who wandered about the marble stoa seemed oblivious to the fact that one of their peers had met her maker within these very expensive American walls.

House had already found the concierge desk, and seemed to be getting directions to the victim’s room. He waved me to the elevators, and we boarded for the 7th floor. The doors opened to reveal a cacophony of chaos. Yellow police tape lined much of the hallway, through which a horde of blue-uniformed investigators paraded back and forth carrying what looked like portable toolboxes.

I snorted. “We’ll never learn anything here. If a herd of buffaloes had passed along there could not be a greater mess.”

My words floated unheard into the humidity. House had already sped down the hall towards a tall, bearded man sporting a Hasselblad. “Grissom!”

“House!” The man turned and greeted him warmly. “You were right on the money. We just I.D.d the strain as *Salmonella schwarzengrund* — non-pathogenic.”

House did not look surprised. “So the cause of death...?”

“Gel permeation chromatography of her stomach contents identified an L-isomer protein isolated from the stems of the *Lavandula agustifolia*.”

House nodded. “English lavender.”

“And we got a couple of microns of carbon polymer on flash.”

“Poisoned.” House shook his head, muttering. “Twenty thousand allopathic physicians in this town, and people still take homeopathic medicines.”

A grave-looking middle-aged man with a receding hairline walked past and interjected solemnly, “Hilda Doolittle once said, ‘The elixir of life, the philosopher’s stone, is yours if you surrender sterile logic, trivial reason’.”

“Gideon is always such a ray of sunshine,” Grissom chuckled. To House: “You’ll want to check out our books?”

House shook his head. “No. I want to see *her* books. Come, Wilson.”

To my amazement, House seemed to show no interest in the area where the victim’s husband had discovered her body. Instead, he dragged me from room to room throughout the suite and had me note the contents of every drawer, medicine cabinet, suitcase, bookshelf, and desk.

I had diligently documented four paper clips, a pair of tweezers, three empty bottles of herbal medicines, a Soft and Dri deodorant stick, five letters from solicitors, a letter from her lawyer — six letters from “solicitors,” House joked — a tube of Ben Gay, a roll of Tums, and two unopened packages of cinnamon-flavored Trident sugarless gum. I could detect no possible value to the items on my list, though I was tempted to pop a Tums to settle my still-churning stomach.

The small bookcase held an unusual collection of texts, however. Among them were August Derleth's *The Adventures of Solar Pons*, Maurice LeBlanc's *Arsene Lupin vs. Herlock Sholmes*, and *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, by Adrian Conan Doyle. "That's odd," I opined. "Every one of these books is kind of a Sherlock Holmes pastiche."

"Write that down, Wilson," House ordered. "Even the smallest item may end up being of profound significance."

I opened one of the books and leafed through it quickly. Then another, and another. "That's peculiar."

"Put it on the list."

"No, I mean, each of the books has a gold nameplate on the inside of the front cover. These books all belong to a Mister Thaddeus Wilde."

House froze for a moment, then with forced casualness added. "Thanks, Wilson. You have effectively proven my point."

* * *

It took us about 20 minutes to get to the Village. House found a space to squeeze in his bike just north of Pieces on Christopher Street, and we set off on foot to find Wilde.

"We really should hold hands here, Wilson," House teased, after we'd passed more than a few affectionate same-sex couples along the sidewalk.

I glowered at him, and stuck my freezing fingers deeper into my jacket pockets. "How much farther is it?"

"Ah, Wilson, think how many slash writers you've disappointed..." House finally stopped outside a renovated brick building with a large scarlet door. "Here we are."

Our bell was opened by a tall, gangly, goggle-eyed butler, who, in a musical high-pitched English accent, advised us to call him "Wooster." I found it difficult to conceive of any situation in which I would call him at all. Wooster led us up a narrow flight of stairs to the second floor, which for some unknown reason he called the first floor. "Mr. Wilde is in the study," he finally squeaked, and pointed us in the direction of another red door.

Our knock was answered with a twittering "Enter, gentlemen," and we walked into a room that was enveloped in every shade of

red known to man — or woman, since I, as a man, officially refuse to learn anything more than the names of the primary colors.

In the center of the room, sitting on a settee — *SITTING, gosh, I like the way that sounds* — was a large man. A very large man. His hair was brown and lay gently on his shoulders in soft curls. He was dressed in, well, a long silk dressing gown, whose hem tickled his hairless ankles. From his accent, or maybe the scent of his soap, I determined that he was probably Irish.

“Welcome to my humble abode, House.” Wilde favored me with a warm smile, and added, “And thank you for bringing me your adorable little friend. What’s your name, son?”

“This is my roo— colleague, James Wilson,” House responded politely.

The man nodded and gushed, “Thaddeus Wilde, at your service.”

I chose to ignore the invitation. “What kind of a name is Thaddeus, anyway?” I muttered, not *sotto voce* enough.

“It’s Austrian for Sebastian,” Wilde replied, then waved his arm to one side to indicate that we should take our seats on a nearby fushcia ottoman — I mean, a red ottoman. “Would you like some tea?”

House yawned, “Coffee, no cream, no milk, no sugar.” He looked at me.

Not wanting to be impolite, I hesitated. “Coffee would be good, but tea is fine, too.”

“Wooster!” Wilde shouted, then wagged a thick finger at House. “You always pick submissive ducklings, ducks, tsk-tsk.”

Wooster, leaning precariously like an unstable Gumby, appeared at the door. House eyed Wooster up and down with a look of distaste, and nodded to Wilde, “And the company *you* keep...?”

Wilde ignored him. “Wooster, run down to Pieces, dear, and get Dr. Wilson a cup of American tea.” As the wide-eyed butler shambled off, Wilde added, “That’s the last we’ll see of him tonight.”

House’s voice hardened, “Okay, Wilde, quit stonewalling. You know why we’re here.”

Wilde looked intently at House before sighing, “Poor, dear Dame Jean...”

House picked up several medicine bottles on the settee's end table with a practiced sweep. He read, "Gingko biloba, hoodia, horny goat weed, Tongkat Ali, Tribulus, English lavender, passion flower." He looked up at Wilde with a smirk.

Wilde brushed aside the implication. "My ignition is fine — these just help me recharge the batteries more quickly."

I didn't want to think about either analogy. Fortunately, House continued his offensive press. "She was poisoned."

A single tear rolled down Wilde's puffy cheek.

"When was the last time you saw her, Taddy?"

Wilde's expression was suddenly cold. "1975."

House looked surprised. "And the books?"

Wilde hesitated, before answering softly. "Gifts."

House frowned for a moment, then broke into a chuckle. "Did you give Sir Geoffrey the English lavender oil, too?"

Wilde looked insulted. "Certainly not! He gave it to me!"

* * *

I can't say I was too unhappy to be weaving my way through traffic back to mid-town. Even though House's motorcycling skills seemed to have been adopted from Evel Knievel. I just grabbed him around the waist and held on tightly. On second thought, maybe I should've just taken a cab.

We arrived at our alley near Montague's to find Inspector Les Trade waiting at our door.

House disappeared into the kitchen while the Inspector and I caught our breath. House came out after a few minutes carrying a tray of sugared jelly doughnuts and placed them on the table in front of us. I noted that a little white powder still clung to House's upper lip, and handed him a napkin, gesturing for him to wipe.

House pointedly said, "Thanks, Wilson. The strawberry jam is especially delicious!" He then turned to Les Trade, and quickly continued, "You talked to Grissom?"

"Yes, but he still insists on moving back to Vegas. Mac, his new deputy, just let us know they identified English lavender in the dishwasher drain at the Lauriston Gardens. Dame Jean had dinner there with Sir Geoffrey and their attorney last night."

"You think she was poisoned at the restaurant, then?" House

added, with renewed excitement.

“Well, isn’t it obvious?” the Inspector sneered. “We’ve arrested Sir Geoffrey — and confiscated his bottles of lavender.” He folded his hands and gave us a self-satisfied nod.

To his dismay, House burst out laughing. “Really, Les, you have outdone yourself this time. Were there no other patrons at the restaurant?”

The little man looked quite angry. “Well, of course, but none of them had motive or means. Or opportunity.”

“And what about the staff?”

“Ditto. We interviewed and searched everyone and everything that evening, from Head Chef Sophie Witherspoon to Manuel, the waiter who served Dame Jean. They were very busy — and never alone. And, none of them even knew Dame Jean was there, much less had the poison on hand.” He glared at House. “Anyway, why would they want to kill her?”

“Why would Sir Geoffrey want to kill her? *That*, my dear Les, is the correct question.” Without another word, House ambled over to his piano and began playing a medley of what sounded like Keith Jarrett tunes. We had been dismissed.

I checked my watch: almost one. Time for me to go to back to bed.

* * *

I felt marginally better the next day, and “Black Cloud” was on call the next two nights — I spent most of Tuesday catching up on the wards, and Wednesday at Billingsley’s bedside. I took his death harder than most — he was close to my age, and the islet cell carcinoma had metastasized far too quickly. As the sun came up on Thursday, Beth found me in my call room, staring at the wall, my eyes red.

I covered my face with a pillow. “How’s the NICU?” I mumbled through the linens.

“Haven’t slept all night,” she observed, “And, apparently, neither have you.” She pulled the pillow off my face, and gently stroked my hair. “Would you like me to help?” she cooed.

I was a little slow shifting gears, but I soon convinced myself that I could best honor Billingsley’s death by celebrating life. I sat

up and smiled eagerly. "I'm ready."

"Great." She walked over to her purse on the desk, and opened it. To my dismay, instead of a condom, she pulled out a bottle of pills and poured two into her hand. "Melatonin. They had a special at the health food store. Should I go get you some water?"

I lay back on my bed, put the pillow back over my face, and growled, "No thanks, I'll get to sleep by myself." *Literally, no score for me...*

* * *

I had to escape. The gas was filling the OR and I only had a few moments left. The smoke detector was beeping louder and louder. My eyes were tearing, and my breaths were coming in shorter and shorter gasps. If I could only make it to the door in time. Drawing on my last reserves of energy, I lunged for the door, landing squarely against it with a grunt of pain. It didn't give. Desperate, I wiped the ashes off the door's window-and froze. Beyond the danger, on the other side, I glimpsed my ex-wife's sneering face. The last sound I heard was my own scream....

I finally identified the beeping as my pager. I lay quietly in my bed for a few minutes, shivering and drenched in sweat, then reluctantly opened my eyes to find my call room bathed in sunshine. Uh-oh. I was supposed to get up at 6 to check in on my patients before morning rounds. What the hell time was it, anyway?

9:30! Great — I was in deep shit with Shore, for sure. Some attendings tolerated the occasional lapse in discipline. Shore, unfortunately, wasn't one of them. I bounced out of bed, and made a quick run to the can and the sink. Shaving would have to wait til my morning break.

Still dressed in yesterday's scrubs, I ran to the ward and slid into Guerboian's room without being spied by the team of fleas gathered at the other end of the hall. If I could look occupied by some aspect of the comatose man's care, I might be able to convince the group that I'd been busy at his side all morning long.

The rounders reached Guerboian's room fairly quickly. Shore was leading the heme-onc team, along with a few stragglers. I recognized Siva from G.I., McKesson from Pulmonary, and, for I.D.

— House!

I greeted Shore confidently and took a deep breath, ready to launch into a professional summary of my dedicated morning duties with Mr. G, when House piped up, “Hey, Rip Van Winkle, did you snore through my page?”

I tried not to look at House’s smirk — or Shore’s frown — as I attempted, not very successfully, to continue my presentation. House later told me I had turned redder than a kid with scarlet fever. After I’d started talking to him again.

* * *

Shore’s lecture about the virtues of punctuality and integrity was mercifully brief, albeit public and humiliating. I was beginning to see that House shared a couple of unpleasant traits with my ex-wife, so I wasn’t exactly thrilled when he pulled me aside after rounds and insisted I meet him in his office.

House’s office was a small room at the end of one of the hospital’s yet-to-be-renovated wings. A dirty window filtered in some shards of sunlight to brighten the room’s dingy, flaking walls. An unvarnished wooden desk near the far wall was smothered in books, papers, and journals. The center of the room was dominated by a large portable whiteboard whose tray precariously held towers of erasable markers.

I was grateful that House didn’t waste time with the niceties. I was still angry at his betrayal and in no mood for anything but business. “So, what do you want?” I said coldly.

“List time.” He walked over to the board and picked up a black marker, drawing a line down the center and making two columns: “Findings” and “Suspects.”

Dame Jean. Wounded by Billingsley’s death and my 10 a.m. near-firing, I had totally forgotten Dame Jean’s murder. *Now, where did I put that list?* I found the wrinkled papers among my scrip pads in the pocket of my white lab coat — in my haste to do House’s bidding Monday, I had written my notes on the backs of several prescription blanks.

House jotted down the items we had identified first, then listed potential suspects. The letter from Dame Jean’s attorney basically read “They’re willing to settle,” with the defendant’s name. House

wrote *Attorney* under the “Suspects” column.

“And the defendant?”

I snorted. “It’s Paramount.”

“Obviously it’s important. Well, come on, who’d she sue?”

“No, Sue’s playing right field.” I threw up my hands in frustration before trying again. “The defendant in Dame Jean’s case is Paramount Pictures.”

House looked surprised. “Really?” He stared off into the corner, his brow creased. “Universal, Granada, MGM...” He shook his head. “Nope, I don’t think *they* did anything with Sherlock Holmes. A singularity. Okay, next.”

“English lavender oil” led to the “Suspects” listing “Attorney, Sir Geoffrey, and Thaddeus Wilde.” House promptly drew a line through the latter two names, and asked me for the attorney’s name and number. I looked back at my notes and identified the lawyer as Jonathan Binder, of Crane, Poole, and Schmidt’s Manhattan office.

* * *

“Mr. Binder will see you now.” Aimée’s perky voice shook me out of my extended reverie. I gave her my warmest smile as we walked past her desk. *Aimée Stassinopoulos Wilson, nice cadence...*

House’s elbow dug into my ribs. I quickly extended a hand to greet the dynamic attorney. Binder motioned for us to sit in two very expensive leather chairs across his very expensive cherry desk. Leaning forward, he folded his very expensive hands and rested them on his very expensive blotter.

“Billable or non-billable?”

I waited for House to answer that one. “We work with Les Trade.”

Binder made a face. “*Barely* billable.” He waved his hand around the plush suite. “Not exactly County rates...”

“Dame Jean.” House said succinctly.

“I already talked to Grissom and Taylor. We had some matters to discuss, decided to get a bite to eat, chose the Lauriston ’cause it was close, ate, discussed, went home.”

“You didn’t see Sir Geoffrey ... or another diner...?”

Binder shook his head.

“And you?” House kept firing.

“Dame Jean was very ... billable. Wouldn't have been me.”

“Matters—?” House probed.

“Not anymore, she's dead,” Binder returned. “We were expecting a pretty big settlement from Paramount for using the character Moriarty without her permission on *Star Trek Next Gen*.”

“Which episode was that?” I jumped in impulsively. “Season 3 or Season 4—?”

“Wil-son is a Trek-kie,” House sang in a hoarse whisper until my elbow found his ribs.

I cleared my throat. “You don't think that Paramount could've—?”

“Barry and I are like this,” Binder crossed his index and middle finger. “No. Besides, they had plenty of warning after the book thing.”

“The book thing?” I asked.

Binder turned to his computer and pulled up a series of files. “I think it was '85...” He pulled out a Post-It and scribbled a name and address.

House and I looked at the note: *John Stern, Editor, Pocket Books, Simon and Schuster*.

* * *

I was amazed to find that there was actually a Star Trek office at Simon and Schuster. And that under their Pocket Books banner, they published over a score of original Star Trek titles every year. These included not only new science-fiction stories, but spacecraft construction plans, reference book, concordances, and dictionaries for alien languages like Klingon. Apparently, I discovered, there was enough reader interest that most of those volumes became best sellers. I shook my head — it seemed unbelievable that fans of a not-that-great 1960s TV series and its spinoffs could be so obsessed.

Editor Stern was due out of his meeting a half hour ago. House yawned, then grabbed my wrist and pulled down my cuff to see my watch. “What does the big hand on the Enterprise logo say?” he grumbled.

Annoyed, I brushed him away. "It's not even 5:30. You know, 'A handful of patience is worth more than a bushel of brains.'"

"Not in my book." House reluctantly picked up a hardback copy of *Spock's Sacrifice* from the end table and started leafing through it with an expression of polite revulsion.

"Five weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list," John Stern announced proudly as he walked up to us.

House snapped the book shut and threw it back on the table. "I'm more a Len Deighton kind of chap."

Stern shrugged. "I don't do *Deep Space Nine*. That's Kevin Palmer's side."

The editor led us into his office. "So what can I do you for, guys?"

"Jonathan Binder suggested we talk to you about 'the book thing,'" House explained.

Stern leaned back in his chair, nodding. "Ah. Sad. Very sad."

We waited. Stern finally sat forward and motioned for us to move closer. He whispered, "Damn Jean Conan Doyle."

Okay, I was lost. "What?"

Stern shook his head. "That's what they called her. It was a terrific manuscript, you know."

House's turn. "What?"

Stern sighed. "About ten years ago, one of the literary agents we work with gave us this great manuscript. It was a terrific story — Kirk, Spock, and McCoy meet Sherlock Holmes."

"Oh, fan fiction," I nodded.

"No, this was *good*," Stern continued. "The characters were really on target — no Mary Sue shit — the plot was exciting — Holmes, Spock, and Kirk chase Jack the Ripper in Victorian England. Who was really a Tellarite named Spring-heeled Jack. A little Kirk action with Irene Adler. Some great humor with McCoy and Watson. And, a terrific twist at the end. A great package. We not only agreed to publish, but thought we'd run a big campaign with *Star Trek IV* coming out in '86 — the same year as the 100th anniversary of the first Holmes story in the *Strand*."

"So what happened?"

"Damn Jean. There had been some great Holmes books out those past few years. Nick Meyer's *Seven-Percent Solution* —

Holmes and Freud — Michael Dibdin, Holmes and well, himself, and even Holmes and Fu Manchu. But Damn Jean hated science fiction. *Hated* it. All of a sudden, Her Lordship decides she doesn't want to allow any more pastiches — ” Stern tapped the side of his head, “and no amount of begging — or cash — could change her mind. So, we scrapped the book.” He threw up his hands.

“The author must have certainly been ... disappointed,” I suggested.

House looked pensive. “Name, please.”

“Hillary Queen.”

I was astonished. “I didn't know Ellery Queen was still writing in the 1980s! Or were, you know, 'cause there were *two*—”

Stern held up a hand. “‘*Hillary*,’ not ‘*Ellery*.’”

House interrupted. “Names, please.”

Stern checked in his file drawer and pulled out a yellowed paper from which he read: Liz Ambrose and Sofia Withers.

House stood up suddenly, knocking his chair back a few feet and startling both me and Stern. “Wilson, come on!” House shouted, grabbing my arm. “The game is a foot from the goalposts, and I just caught the ball!”

* * *

Les Trade and Mac Taylor met us at the Park. House had been very tight-lipped about his inspiration — any hopes that he would confide in me had been dashed when he put on his shades and earphones and turned on his Walkman. We'd spent an uncomfortable 30-minute cab ride looking out our respective windows at the abominable city traffic.

The ferret-faced Inspector seemed very annoyed. “I see no reason why you've brought us back here,” he complained.

House merely said, “Motive, means, and opportunity.”

We walked down the garden path towards the Lauriston's kitchen and entered through a side door used by the staff. The kitchen was bustling with a plethora of preparations for the evening rush — *six pots a-steamin', five grills a-cookin', four ovens baking, and a partridge in a pear sauce* ... you know the words.

Supervising the chaos from the center of the room was the head chef, her tall and attractive figure barely disguised by a small

apron that framed her luscious chest. House headed straight for her, and we followed ... well, like ducklings. "Excuse me, can we talk to you for a second? Privately?"

She looked around at the pending platters and winced. "Now?"

House nodded. Shrugging, she led us to a storage pantry behind the main kitchen, and waited for House to begin.

"Hillary Queen?"

She looked surprised for a minute, then burst out laughing. "I haven't been called that in a while. But, yes. Half of her, anyway."

"Author of the manuscript *Elementary, My Dear Spock*?"

"Yeah, well, the book was better than the title," she said ruefully.

Taylor favored her with a piercing gaze. "You hated Dame Jean, didn't you?"

She gazed back at him, then sighed. "Look. Sure. We were pissed. But it's been ten years. More. I've got a great gig here. I'm not even into Star Trek any more."

Sophie looked directly at each of us, one by one, almost pleading. "I did not kill Dame Jean. I didn't even know she was *here* until after—"

"I'm starved — what's on for tonight?" came a voice from behind a door that opened to reveal a small bathroom. The occupant was drying her hands on a paper towel, and was visibly startled to look up and see that so many of us were in the room. But not as startled as I was — for right in front of my eyes stood my hospital colleague, Dr. Beth Ambers.

"Beth," I exclaimed. "What—?"

Beth had stepped back several feet upon seeing me and House — her expression a mix of anxiety and fear. Her eyes momentarily darted toward the exit door, by which Mac Taylor was now leaning.

"Liz Ambrose?" House inquired gently.

Beth nodded dully.

Les Trade narrowed his eyes. "You eat here a lot, don't you?"

Sophie jumped in, "We always have leftovers. Medical residents don't make a lot of money."

House said softly, "It wasn't the money."

Beth's gaze focused on her Nikes. "The road not taken?" House

continued.

Beth nodded again, her eyes still downcast.

Les looked at House. “What, *her*?”

House nodded. “I don’t think you planned it. But I think you came in that night, exhausted and famished, and saw Dame Jean. Dining luxuriously at a restaurant you can’t even afford. And it all came back....”

Beth turned her back to us and began to cry.

“You must’ve had the lavender oil with you. It would be easy to pour it into Dame Jean’s soup. Give her a night of abdominal pain and diarrhea ... less than she deserved....”

Beth’s sobs grew louder.

“Maybe you didn’t think it was going to kill her. Maybe you just wanted yours back....”

Beth spun around, her tear-streaked face now overcome with anger.

“I’ll tell you what I wanted back. *My book* — published. Out on the shelves, on the best-seller list.” She laughed hoarsely. “We could’ve swung that book into a writing deal for *Next Generation*. I could be living in LA, with a house like O.J.’s in Brentwood. My own TV series after *Star Trek*. Maybe I could’ve written the screenplay for *Star Trek V* — *anything* would’ve been an improvement. Nick Meyer did it after *Seven Percent Solution* — and our book was *better* than his! I might even have married and divorced Patrick Stewart! Instead, I have *this*—”

She reached into her purse (Mac eased out his gun), pulled out a latex rubber glove, and held it up, wagging in our faces. “Poop, pee, rectal exams, prostate massages, pap smears, phlegm, and vomit!” she shouted. “I could’ve spent my days and nights in Hollywood — and instead I spend them in *shit*!”

Mac briskly took the glove out of her hands and pulled her arms back to put on the handcuffs. I stood motionless, frozen, only dimly aware of House’s self-satisfied smile and Les Trade’s expression of disgust. *Damn! Another one like my ex-wife... No score for me....*

* * *

“Because, Wilson, eliminate all other factors and the one which

remains must be the truth.” House said obscurely as he downed the last drops of his vodka tonic.

I opened a new bottle of Heineken. “But—”

“Tut — the simple truth is that you don’t *have* a ‘type.’ You fall for every woman you meet who isn’t a candidate for a retirement home or a rehab clinic.” House poured some of my beer into his glass. “You just remember the crazy ones.”

House took a swig of the beer. “I on the other hand have standards. I won’t go out with them unless they’re crazy.” He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

“I haven’t seen you ‘living large’ lately,” I teased, before adding, “Or me ...”

“Well, my dear Wilson, we gotta do something about that.” House bounced off his chair and picked up a motorcycle helmet from atop the grand piano. “I have a front-row table with my name etched in it at Scores. Have you seen Angelica’s show? Meetcha downstairs in five minutes, and we can stop at Artie’s Deli for a bite on the way.”

“Scores,” *huh? Sounds like a winner. Score for House, and for me.*

The End

Since eels don’t have external genitalia, have you been wondering about Wilson’s I-swear-I’m-not-gay description of House as a “well-hung eel”? (In 1876, the young Sigmund Freud dissected *hundreds* of eels, searching for an eel penis. He finally had to admit failure and give up!)

In February 2009, *Playboy* Magazine interviewed Hugh Laurie. Here is the pertinent quotation:

“**PLAYBOY:** Your Cambridge cohort and former girlfriend Emma Thompson once described you as “lugubriously sexy, like a well-hung eel.” What exactly did she mean?

“**LAURIE:** It’s quite a confounding image, isn’t it? I mean, are eels even hung at all? Those were blissful days, I must say. We

couldn't even imagine a life in Hollywood back then. Hollywood was as distant and impossible as El Dorado. It was all about fun. Watching Emma was like watching the sun or wind or some other elemental force. Her talent even then was inescapable. I remember she once did a monologue as a sort of gushy actress winning an award. I still remember the first line: "This award doesn't really belong to me." We thought, This woman is so gifted, she will win an award like that one day, maybe even an Oscar."

Read the whole interview here:

<http://www.zimbio.com/Hugh+Laurie/articles/48/Hugh+Laurie+in+Playboy>