

The Return of SHERLOCK HOLMES

By A. CONAN DOYLE

Author of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," "The Hound of the Baskervilles," "The Sign of the Four," "A Study in Scarlet," Etc.



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It struck me that the fellow must be some poor bibliophile who had disappeared among the throng.

My observations of 427 Park lane did little to clear up the problem in which I was interested. The house was separated from the street by a low wall and railing, the whole not more than five feet high. It was perfectly easy, therefore, for any one to get into the garden, but the window was entirely inaccessible since there was no water-pipe or anything which could help the most active man to climb it. More puzzled than ever, I retraced my steps to Kensington. I had not been in my study five minutes when the maid entered to say that a person desired to see me. To my astonishment it was none other than my strange old book collector, his sharp, wrinkled face peering out from a frame of white hair, and his precious volumes, a dozen of them at least, wedged under his right arm.

"You're surprised to see me, sir," said he in a strange, croaking voice.

I acknowledged that I was.

"Well, I've a conscience, sir, and when I chanced to see you go into this house as I came hobbling after you, I thought to myself I'll just step in and see that kind gentleman and tell him that if I was a bit gruff in my manner there was not any harm meant and that I am much obliged to him for picking up my books."

"You make too much of a trifle," said I. "May I ask how you knew who I was?"

"Yes, sir. If it isn't too great a liberty I am a neighbor of yours, for you'll find my little bookshop at the corner of Church street, and very happy to see you, I am sure. Maybe you collect yourself, sir. Here's 'British Birds' and 'Catalina' and 'The Holy War'—a bargain, every one of them. With five volumes you could just fill that gap on that second shelf. It looks untidy, does it not, sir?"

I moved my head to look at the cabinet behind me. When I turned again Sherlock Holmes was standing smiling at me across my study table. I rose to my feet, stared at him for some seconds in utter amazement, and then it appears that I must have fainted for the first and the last time in my life. Certainly a gray mist swirled before my eyes, and when it cleared I found my collar ends undone and the tingling after-taste of brandy upon my lips. Holmes was bending over my chair, his flask in his hand.

"My dear Watson," said the well remembered voice, "I owe you a thousand apologies. I had no idea that you would be so affected."

I gripped him by the arms.

"Holmes!" I cried. "Is it really you? Can it indeed be that you are alive? Is it possible that you succeeded in climbing out of that awful abyss?"

"Wait a moment," said he. "Are you sure that you are really fit to discuss things? I have given you a serious shock by my unnecessarily dramatic reappearance."

"I am all right, but indeed, Holmes, I can hardly believe my eyes. Good heavens, to think that you—you of all men—should be standing in my study!" Again I gripped him by the sleeve and felt the thin, sinewy arm beneath it. "Well, you're not a spirit anyhow," said I. "My dear chap, I'm overjoyed to see you. Sit down and tell me how you came alive out of that dreadful chasm."

He sat opposite to me and lit a cigarette in his old nonchalant manner. He was dressed in the seedy frock coat of the book merchant, but the rest of that individual lay in a pile of white hair and old books upon the table. Holmes looked even thinner and keener than of old, but there was a dead white tinge in his aquiline face which told me that his life recently had not been a healthy one.

"I am glad to stretch myself, Watson," said he. "It is no joke when a tall man has to take a foot off his stature for several hours on end. Now, my dear fellow, in the matter of these explanations, we have, if I may ask for your co-operation, a hard and dangerous night's work in front of us. Perhaps it would be better if I gave you an account of the whole situation when that work is finished."

"I am full of curiosity. I should much prefer to hear now."

(Continued on next page.)

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J. Q. Willis
Lakeview, Ore.

TIMBER LAND NOTICE

United States Land Office Lakeview, Oregon, July 31, 1905. Notice is hereby given that in compliance with the provisions of the Act of June 3, 1878, entitled "An act for the sale of timber lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory," as extended to all the Public Land States by act of August 4, 1892, the following persons have this day filed in this office their sworn statements, to-wit:

Mrs. Lizette Mayer, of Portland, county of Multnomah, state of Oregon, Sworn Statement No. 2566, for the NW 1/4 Sec. 27, and W 1/4 NW 1/4, SE 1/4 NW 1/4 Sec. 34, Tp. 35, S., R. 17 E.

Margaret Ryan, of Marquet, state of Michigan, Sworn statement No. 2567, for the purchase of the NW 1/4 Sec. 28, Tp. 35, S., R. 17 E.

Martin Ryan, of Marquet, state of Mich., Sworn statement No. 2568, for the purchase of the E 1/2 NE 1/4, NW 1/4 NE 1/4, NW 1/4 SE 1/4, Sec. 27, Tp. 35 S., R. 17 E.

That they will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes and to establish their claim to said land before Geo. T. Baldwin, Co. Judge, at his office at Klamath Falls, on Tuesday the 22nd day of Sept., 1905. They name as witnesses: Margaret Ryan, of Marquet, Mich., Oliver Siffer, of Woodland, Wash., Martin Ryan, of Marquet, Mich., C. W. Embold, of Portland, Oregon, C. E. Peterson, of Stevenson, Wash. and Albert Peterson, of Stevenson, Wash.

Any and all persons claiming adversely the above-described lands are requested to file their claims in this office on or before said 22nd day of Sept., 1905.

J. N. Watson, Register.

Final Proof

Land Office at Lakeview, Oregon, July 31, 1905. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver at Lakeview, Oregon, on the 14th day of August, 1905 viz: Anna M. Whetstone, widow of Amos Whetstone Hd No. 2185 for the NE 1/4 SE 1/4 and Lots 1 and 2 Sec 33 Tp 39 S., R 20 E W M. He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon and cultivation of said land, viz: F. M. Duke, Hurley Vernon, A. S. Down and Chas. Eccleston all of Lakeview, Oregon.

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This latest and best work of Dr. Doyle is now running serially in the Lake County Examiner.

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and up-to-date Newspaper in Eastern Oregon.

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A. H. RISING, Acting D. F.
and P. A. Reno, Nevada.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC

The Adventure of the Empty House

Chapter I

It was not long, but not more, that I was a considerable one, and such a one could not in any way affect him. He had played nearly every day at one or other, but he was a cautious player and usually rose a winner. It came out in evidence that in partnership with Colonel Moran he had not only won as much as £120 in a sitting game weeks before from Godfrey Miller and Lady Balmoral. So much for his recent history as it came out of the mouth.

On the evening of the crime he returned from the club exactly at 10. His mother and sister were out spending the evening with a relative. The servant (I confess that she heard him on the 23rd) was in the second floor, commonly used as his sitting room, smoking in a fire, and as he smoked she unobtrusively opened the window. No sound was heard from the room until 11.20, the hour of the return of Lady Maynooth and her daughter. Desiring to say good night, she attempted to enter her son's room. The door was locked on the inside, and no answer could be got to their cries and knocking. Help was summoned and the door forced. The unobtrusive young man was found lying near the table. His head had been horribly mutilated by an expanding revolver bullet, but no weapon of any kind was to be found in the room. On the table lay two bank notes for £10 each and £17 lbs. in silver and gold, the money arranged in little piles of varying amount. There were some figures also upon a sheet of paper, with the names of some club friends opposite to them, from which it was conjectured that before his death he was endeavoring to make out his losses or winnings at cards.

A minute examination of the circumstances served only to make the case more complex. In the first place, no reason could be given why the young man should have fastened the door upon the inside. There was the possibility that the murderer had done this and had afterward escaped by the window. The drop was at least twenty feet, however, and a bed of crouches in full bloom lay beneath. Neither the doorknob nor the switch showed any sign of having been disturbed, nor were there any marks upon the narrow strip of grass which separated the house from the road.

Apparently therefore it was the young man himself who had fastened the door. But how did he come by his death? No one could have climbed up to the window without leaving traces. Suppose a man had fired through the window, he would indeed be a remarkable shot who could with a revolver bullet so deadly a wound. Again, Park lane is a frequented thoroughfare. There is a cab stand within a hundred yards of the house. No one had heard a shot. And yet there was the dead man and there the revolver bullet, which had mushroomed out as soft-nosed bullets will, and so inflicted a wound which must have caused instantaneous death. Such were the circumstances of the Park lane mystery, which were further complicated by entire absence of motive, such as I have said, young Adair was not known to have any enemy, and no reason had been made to remove the name of valuables in the room.

On the 4th I turned these facts over in my mind, endeavoring to hit upon some theory which could reconcile them all and to find that line of least resistance which my poor friend had deduced to be the starting point of every investigation. I confess that I made little progress. In the evening I strolled across the park and found myself about 6 o'clock at the Oxford street end of Park lane. A group of beggars upon the pavements, all staring up at a particular window, directed me to the house which I had come to see. A tall, thin man with colored glasses, whom I strongly suspected of being a plain clothes detective, was pointing out some theory of his own, while the others crowded around to listen to what he said. I got as near him as I could, but his observations seemed to me to be absurd, so I withdrew again in some disgust. As I did so I struck against an elderly, deformed man who had been behind me, and I knocked down several books which he was carrying. I remember that as I picked them up I observed the title of one of them, "The Origin of Tree Worship," and it struck me that the fellow must be some poor bibliophile who either as a trade or as a hobby was a collector of obscure volumes. I endeavored to apologize for the accident, but it was evident that these books which I had so unfortunately unattended were very precious objects in the eyes of their owner. With a snarl of contempt he turned upon his heel, and I saw his

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These were points about this strange business which would, I was sure, have specially appealed to him, and the efforts of the police would have been supplemented or more probably anticipated by the trained observation and the alert mind of the first criminal agent in Europe. All day as I drove upon my round I turned over the case in my mind and found no explanation which appeared to me to be adequate. At the risk of telling a twice told tale I will recapitulate the facts as they were known to the public at the conclusion of the inquest.

The Hon. Ronald Adair was the second son of the Earl of Maynooth, at that time governor of one of the Australian colonies. Adair's mother had returned from Australia to undergo the operation for cataract, and she, her son Ronald and her daughter Hilga were living together at 427 Park lane. The youth moved in the best society—had, so far as was known, no enemies and no particular vices. He had been engaged to Miss Edith Woodley of Carstairs, but the engagement had been broken off by mutual consent some months before, and there was no sign that it had left any very profound feeling behind it. For the rest the man's life moved in a narrow and conventional circle, for his habits were quiet and his nature unemotional. Yet it was upon this easy-going young aristocrat that death came in most strange and unexpected form between the hours of 10 and 10.20 on the night of March 30, 1891.

Ronald Adair was fond of cards, playing continually. But never for such stakes as would hurt him. He was a member of the Baldwin, the Cavendish and the Bagatelle card clubs. It was shown that after dinner on the day of his death he had played a rubber of whist at the latter club. He had also played there in the afternoon. The evidence of those who had played with him—Mr. Murray, Sir John Hardy and Colonel Moran—showed that the game was whist and that there was a fairly even fall of the cards. Adair might