

SHERLOCK Stock and Barrel

The cast of the world premiere season by Encore Theatre Inc.

From left Dr Watson [Gareth Wilding-Forbes], Miss Adler [Catherine Munday],
Sherlock Holmes [Kirk Alexander]. Mrs Hudson [Joanne Gabriel] and Professor Moriarty
[Chris Gaffney]



Back in October I commented favourably on Cenarth Fox's latest theatrical extravaganza, Sherlock Stock & Barrel, though I was only able to read the script. Now I've heard the show on CD and can report that it works beautifully. To recap: five actors set out to tell all sixty stories in eighty minutes. Kirk Alexander, Gareth Wilding-Forbes, Chris Gaffney, Joanne Gabriel and Catherine Munday only manage twenty-five, and the result, necessarily played at a frantic pace, is dramatic, tuneful, ingenious, and above all very funny.

Roger Johnson *Sherlock Holmes Society of London*

SHERLOCK Stock and Barrel

Some amazing adventures of
Mr. Sherlock Holmes

**THIS IS A PREVIEW SCRIPT AND CAN ONLY BE USED FOR
PERUSAL PURPOSES. THE COMPLETE PACKAGE INCLUDING
THE MUSIC IS AVAILABLE FROM FOX PLAYS**

Words and Music by Cenarth Fox

Creator of *The Real Sherlock Holmes* and *The Schoolboy Sherlock Holmes*

Starring

*Mr. Sherlock Holmes, Doctor John Watson, Mrs. Hudson
Professor James Moriarty, Miss Irene Adler
and dozens of dynamic dandies and damsels*

“Life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent.”

Sherlock Holmes

*Cenarth Fox would have to be one of our most knowledgeable writers on the life and works of Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes', having written 5 Schoolboy Sherlock Holmes novels, the "The Real Sherlock Holmes " and now this almost vaudevillian romp "Sherlock Stock and Barrel" which covers many of Holmes' greatest adventures and some 73 characters all performed by 5 actors. It is a very enjoyable piece and the audience on opening night caught on to the stories and performance style right from the start. It's a bright show which entertains, is a crowd pleaser and would be a great way to finish off a theatre year. To sum up, lots of fun and well worth a look see. **John Gunn Curtain Up***

*The actors succeeded very well and the play was a great success with the audience. **Peter Kemp***

This fast-moving comedy is particularly a wonderful feast for all Sherlock Holmes fans.

Cheryl Threadgold Melbourne Observer

*A non-stop comedy, a hansom cab gallop through 25 of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, a night of mystery, mayhem and mirth as you witness the chilling classics that include, The Hound of the Baskervilles, The Speckled Band, The Valley of Fear, The Empty House, and The Sign of Four. There are only 5 actors playing 73 different characters. This entertaining play had you chuckling all night from curtain up to curtain fall. Apart from a wonderful script, Cenarth Fox has included some very catchy tunes. On opening night the auditorium was near a full house and everyone was talking about the show in the foyer after the show. That is always a very good sign that people have enjoyed their evening's entertainment. **Brian Amos Radio Eastern 98.1***

Sherlock, Stock and Barrel

Some amazing adventures of Mr. Sherlock Holmes

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Introduction

Sherlock Holmes was the world's first consulting detective. His initial case was published in 1887 and sixty of his cases were recorded, nearly all by Dr. John H. Watson, who became a close friend and colleague of the famous sleuth.

One of the most amazing aspects of the life and work of Sherlock Holmes is his widespread and on-going popularity. Almost as soon as his adventures became known, Holmes became a much-loved character. Well over a century after his first appearance, the tales of the cases have been translated into almost every language known to exist and today the interest in Sherlock Holmes continues apace.

A simple internet search engine query using the words *Sherlock Holmes* will reveal the extent of his popularity. Films, plays, books, magazines, illustrations, broadcasts, podcasts, essays, paraphernalia and more are produced, read, reported on and discussed.

The many cases featuring Holmes, known as the Canon, are the basis of this play. It is a serious attempt at a somewhat less-than-serious journey through many of the stories.

First Performance

Sherlock, Stock and Barrel received its world premiere in Melbourne Australia with a production by Encore Theatre Inc beginning on August 31, 2007. Directed by the playwright, the cast was as follows; Sherlock Holmes [Kirk Alexander], Dr Watson [Gareth Wilding-Forbes], Moriarty [Chris Gaffney], Mrs Hudson [Joanne Gabriel] and Irene Adler [Catherine Munday].

Script

Parts of the script contain words from the stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Characters

Sherlock Holmes – a consulting detective [plays 2 other roles]

Dr John H. Watson – friend of Holmes and a fellow detective [plays 1 other role]

Mrs Hudson – housekeeper for Holmes and Watson [plays about 14 other roles]

Irene Adler – young woman [plays about 21 other roles]

Professor James Moriarty [MOR'ITY] – middle-aged man [plays about 35 other roles]

Sherlock Holmes is 40 plus. In the adventures as written by Dr Watson, Holmes is tall and thin with a narrow face. Hundreds of actors have portrayed the role for a century and each actor has been different.

John Watson is perhaps a few years older than Holmes and, like Holmes, has been played on stage and in films by many actors from thin and intelligent to portly and dim.

Mrs Hudson is anywhere from middle-aged to elderly. Like her tenants she has been portrayed by a variety of actresses including English and Scottish as anyone from timid and respectful to lively and forthright.

Irene Adler is a real character in the Canon and was an opera singer born in New Jersey who moved to London. The actress playing Irene plays many women in this play including Dr. Watson's spouse.

James Moriarty is a real character in the Canon and was a middle-aged man, a criminal and the major enemy of Sherlock Holmes. The actor playing Moriarty plays many roles both goodies and baddies.

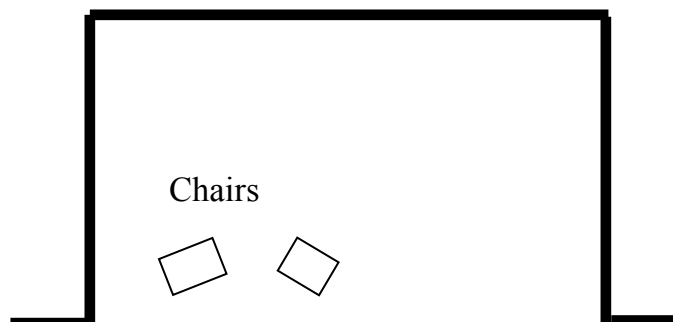
Accent and Appearance

The main characters of Holmes, Watson and Hudson are expected to be English. The many one-off characters should use an accent as befits their person. A well-educated young woman will speak with a refined accent whereas a kitchen-maid will sound like a kitchen-maid. A middle-aged member of the aristocracy or a German royal will look and sound as such. The description of many characters will be impossible or pointless to replicate e.g. freckles for Miss Hunter, but are included as listed in the tales by Sir Arthur.

The stories occur during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. It is expected that each character will have one basic outfit which is topped up or altered using hats, coats, gloves, etc and simple props.

Set Design

Because there are dozens of settings, the suggestion is to have no set; surround your performing space with black curtains and/or flats. Create different locations by lighting different parts of the stage. The sitting-room at 221B Baker Street and Dr Watson's surgery are one and the same. Bring on a chair or three and the room is created. The costumes, props, lighting and special effects are the add-ons for the storytellers. The action moves from interior to exterior scenes, from London streets to a cellar, to the sitting-room in Baker Street to a hansom cab, motor-launch or rural setting in a trice so any attempt at realism seems counter-productive. Let the costumed characters tell their tales.



The Script

The script is based on the Canon, the Sherlockian tales as recorded by Dr John H. Watson with Mr Holmes lending a wee hand here and there. Editorial advice has been provided by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

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[If possible and affordable, have your theatre lit with mock Victorian gas-lamps or simulate this effect so that patrons enjoy the Victorian atmosphere. Pre-show music from the Victorian era could include Knock'd 'Em in the Old Kent Road, My Old Dutch, The Man That Broke The Bank At Monte Carlo, Two Lovely Black Eyes, I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside, The Boy In The Gallery and The Man On The Flying Trapeze.

As the time for the play to begin approaches, fade the pre-show music. The house lights dim with a slow fade to black. As soon as the slow fade starts, the introduction to the opening song begins. MUSIC BEGINS]

Song Number 1 Mister Sherlock Holmes

[Once the house lights are down, slowly bring up a shafts of light from above the stage so that only when someone steps into the shaft of light can they be seen. But because there is no lighting in front of the stage, we cannot clearly see the actors' faces.

The five actors enter upstage and form a line. When it's their turn, each steps into the shaft of light to speak their line then, once their short speech is over, the actor moves to one side into the stage darkness. They only enter the light as they start to speak – the audience gets no warning of their approach. Each actor is a spruiker, a teller of tales and not their character in the play. The next five speeches are spoken or rather, spruiked]

WATSON Victorian England when the sun never sets on the great British Empire.

ADLER A time for change, invention, science and adventure.

MOR'ITY With Darwin, Dickens, Disraeli and Jack the Ripper.

HUDSON With Florence Nightingale, Mrs Beeton and good old Queen Victoria.

[Major lighting change. Kill overhead spots and hit HOLMES C with spot from out front]

HOLMES But mainly – with me.

[COMPANY give cry of glee as solo spot is killed and lights come up on company as they sing]

COMPANY *He's the greatest man who never was
Mister Sherlock Holmes [Spoken by Holmes – "That's me!"]
Many mysteries are solved because of
Mister Sherlock Holmes [Spoken by Holmes – "Elementary!"]
To him a trifle's a treasure and details divine
With observation and knowledge see sleuth Sherlock shine
Yes he's the greatest man who never was
He's Mister Sherlock Holmes
[The song is repeated sotto voce whilst Holmes delivers the following speech]*

WATSON *He needs a chum
A friendly face
A number two to check each clue,
Transcribe each case.*

HUDSON *He needs a cook
On lowly pay
A busy drudge to clean each smudge
Both night and day.*

MOR'ITY *He needs a foe
A nasty crim
A tough law-breaker who can
Make a fella swim.*

ADLER *He needs romance
And Cupid's dart
A woman in his life to melt his heart.*

COMPANY *He needs a chum
A friendly face
Transcribe each case.*

*He needs a cook
On lousy pay!*

*Both night and day.
[They boo and hiss]
[More booing etc]*

*The rotten swine!
Ahhhh [Sighs]
[More sighs]*

HOLMES *[Spoken at the audience over repeat of chorus]* I've never claimed to be the first detective, simply the best. I'm fabulously famous, my hat and pipe are icons and my name part of our language. Other crime-solving chaps cannot even hope to compete with the world's superior sleuth. They fade into obscurity whereas the boyo from Baker Street is here to stay. Just call me a "living legend". Come on, I challenge you - who *hasn't* heard of Sherlock Holmes? *[Shocked]* He's what? Fictional? *[Scoffs]* Never! Just look at me! I'm not only famous, I'm alive!
[The chorus is sung again with a coda and the company finish in formation as the audience applauds. Before the applause has finished, MORIARTY yells loudly]

MOR'ITY Enough! *[Group separates]* Stop this false bravado. *[Hubbub/distress from OTHERS]*

HUDSON *[Reprimanding him]* Professor, behave.

MOR'ITY Without me there'd *be* no Sherlock Holmes.

WATSON I say, Moriarty, this is a bit

MOR'ITY I'm not Moriarty. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*

OTHERS What?

Song 2 Playing Someone Else

MOR'ITY *I'm playing someone else*

OTHERS *He's playing someone else*

QUINTET *I'm/He's playing someone else.*

MOR'ITY *I'm* Stamford.

OTHERS *[Shocked. They're sure he's Moriarty]* Stamford?

MOR'ITY I'm on page one of story one. But where's the recognition I made that famous introduction?

ADLER *[Realises]* Oh, you're the young man who brought our friends together. *[Clasps his arm with affection]* Bless you, Mr Stamford.
[Pregnant pause as the angry STAMFORD is overwhelmed by the beautiful IRENE]

MOR'ITY Ah, yes ... *[Indicating]* Dr Watson ... Mr Sherlock Holmes.
[Women collect a chair each and place them C]

HOLMES *[Moving towards WATSON as they shake hands]* You, sir, have been to Afghanistan

WATSON *[Astonished]* How on earth did you know that?

MOR'ITY *[As Stamford to HOLMES]* My friend here *[meaning WATSON]* wants to take diggings.
[MORIARTY exits]

HOLMES I have my eye on rooms in Baker Street.

HUDSON *[Indicating chair for WATSON who sits]* Welcome gentlemen, I am Mrs Hudson.

ADLER *[Maid has imaginary note for HOLMES]* An' 'ere's an' imaginary note for Mr 'olmes.
[HOLMES sits and reads imaginary note]

WATSON And thus began the case I called *A Study In Scarlet*.

HUDSON Your very first murder, gentlemen.

HOLMES Scotland Yard has a body but no-one to arrest.

WATSON *[Standing]* Shall I go and order you a cab?

HOLMES *[Standing]* By all means, Watson; a taxi for two.

WATSON *[Delighted, surprised]* Holmes, you wish *me* to come?

HOLMES If you have nothing better to do.

[They swap seats which is 'climbing' into a hansom cab. HUDSON stands behind them and holds imaginary reins. ADLER stands beside HUDSON with real or imaginary coconut shells]

WATSON I say.

HUDSON Giddy-up. *[She drives; ADLER provides sound effects saying "Clip, clop" or using shells]*

WATSON *[Riding in cab]* So, Holmes, what is your theory on this case?

HOLMES *[Riding in cab]* It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. *[Suddenly yells]* Driver, stop! *[HUDSON mimes reining in the horse. FX stop]*

[WATSON and HOLMES alight from cab. Women exit with chairs. We are in a house]

WATSON *[Looking around without walking]* Is this the right house? *[MORIARTY hurries forward and lies on the floor in front of WATSON who is still looking]* Where's the body?

HOLMES Watson, you have not yet developed your skills of observation. *[Points to body]*

[WATSON shocked at discovering body at his feet. HOLMES kneels and examines the body]

WATSON *[The storyteller, to audience]* Sherlock Holmes examined the body.

MOR'ITY *[As American, sits up leaning on elbow]* I'm a Mormon from America. *[Dies]*

WATSON I say, Holmes, are all your dead bodies so helpful?

HOLMES *[Examining]* This blood belongs to a second individual.

WATSON *[Looking offstage]* Suddenly we were interrupted by a police inspector. *[Pause. HOLMES "secretly" indicates the stiff. The penny drops for WATSON who then gently kicks MORIARTY who twigs. He is offered WATSON'S hand and stands]*

MOR'ITY *[As Mormon]* Thanks Doc. *[Aside as exits]* It's a very small cast. *[Dashes offstage]*

HOLMES *[Rising, turns to face LESTRADE]* Ah, Inspector Lestrade.

MOR'ITY *[Re-enters as LESTRADE]* Mr Holmes, another Mormon has been murdered.

WATSON Two bodies!

HOLMES Watson, it's time for the flashback! *[HOLMES and MORIARTY exit. HUDSON enters]*

FX *Country and western music suggesting tumbling tumbleweeds begins*

WATSON *[Storyteller moves to one side as narrator]* Let us travel to the deserts of America where coyotes howl ... *[HUDSON gives mournful wail]* and Mormons marry.

HUDSON *[As an American spruiking]* Come on down to Salt Lake City, folks. Seven brides for seven ... *[Correcting herself]* Make that seven brides for *one* brother.

WATSON A man and a young girl were lost in the desert. *[Enter MORIARTY and ADLER as JOHN FERRIER and LUCY]* Death was near when miraculously they met some meandering Mormons. *[MUSIC fades]*

HUDSON *[American]* Food and water over here, folks. *[MORIARTY and ADLER go to HUDSON and are made welcome]*

WATSON Many years went by and little Lucy grew into a beautiful woman. *[LUCY parades]* She met her hero, Jefferson Hope, and they fell in love. *[LUCY swoons blows kisses]*

OTHERS *[Sigh as in ain't that sweet]* Ahhhh.

WATSON But two nasty Mormons fancied Lucy for their harems.

MOR'ITY *[Quick aside-American]* I was one of them Mormons playing that stiff back in London. *[Winks, gives thumbs up then retreats to former position]*

WATSON To escape the evil men, Jefferson helped Lucy and her step-father escape ... *[MORIARTY and LUCY tippy-toe to one side towards HUDSON]* but the murderous Mormons had other ideas.

HUDSON *[Steps towards FERRIER and fires imaginary gun]* Bang! *[FERRIER is shot and falls dead]*

ADLER *[Melodramatic]* Step-father!

WATSON Those brutal baddies shot the step-father and kidnapped Lucy.

ADLER *[Screams miming being grabbed by the baddies]* Help! Let me go! Help! *[Continues]*

- WATSON** *[Miming not being subtle. Whispers]* Get off! Get off! *[LUCY gets the message and exits still screaming]* Lucy's lover, Jefferson Hope, was distraught as his darling girl died of a broken-heart. Jefferson swore revenge on the murderous Mormons. *[LIGHTING closes to restricted area which is the fireplace at 221B. HOLMES enters. HUDSON enters with chair talking as she goes even if in darkness. MORIARTY exits]*
- HUDSON** *[Announcing]* And now let's visit the famous Baker Street home of the world's greatest consulting detective and his friend, Doctor Watson. Your chair, Doctor.
- WATSON** *[Moving to small lit area and sits]* Thank you Mrs Hudson.
- HUDSON** And gentlemen, please don't take all night. We're still on the first story. *[Exits]*
- HOLMES** So, Watson, a brief summary if you please.
- WATSON** For years Jefferson tracked the Mormons who stole his Lucy. Across America to Russia, Paris, Copenhagen and now London where you, Holmes, discovered that *[Slower with emphasis, crescendo]* both Mormons were murdered by
- HOLMES** *[Indicating imaginary door]* Mr Jefferson Hope.
- MOR'ITY** *[Enters as HOPE]* Gentlemen. I wish to confess.
- WATSON** *[Offering HOPE his chair]* Sit man, you look ill enough to die.
- MOR'ITY** *[Sits, upset]* Well so would you. *[Counts on fingers]* I was poisoned in the house, shot in the desert and now I'm about to have a heart attack. Not happy, Doc!
- WATSON** Holmes, you should publish an account of this case. If you won't, I will.
- HOLMES** You may do as you like, Doctor, but remember there are still fifty-nine to go.
- TRIO** *[Facing front, aghast]* Fifty-nine! *[Unison foot-stamp]*
[BLACKOUT. MORIARTY exits. HOLMES sits and WATSON stands nearby in darkness]
- HUDSON** *[Solo light]* At last we get to the second mystery – *The Sign of Four*.
Solo violin music [This music is used at different times to establish the setting of the sitting-room at 221B Baker Street. Lights up slowly. Concentrate on the men in Baker Street sitting-room where HOLMES, mimes injecting himself and WATSON unhappily observes]
- HUDSON** Now I'm a respectable landlady but some of the things going on under my roof *[Tut-tuts, shakes head and exits. Solo spot fades]*
- WATSON** Which is it today, Holmes, morphine or cocaine?
- HOLMES** Cocaine. Would you care to try some?
- WATSON** Indeed not! But tell me, have you a new case?
- HOLMES** None, hence the cocaine. I cannot live without brainwork. *[MUSIC fades]*
- HUDSON** *[Enters]* A visitor, Mr Holmes – a Miss Mary Morstan.
[HUDSON exits, HOLMES adjusts his clothing and he and WATSON are standing]
- MORSTAN** *[MORSTAN played by ADLER enters. She is young and, according to WATSON, an absolute stunner]* Gentlemen, I have lost my father.
- WATSON** *[Starting to leave]* I'll leave you two alone.
- MORSTAN** *[Stopping WATSON]* No, sir. *[To HOLMES]* I would like your friend to stay.
- WATSON** *[Chuffed]* Oh really? I say, jolly good. *[Offers his seat to MARY who sits]*
- HOLMES** *[Sitting]* So Miss Morstan, when did you lose your father?
- MORSTAN** Ten years ago he went out one night and never came back.
- HOLMES** Tell me of his friends.
- MORSTAN** Only one; a Major Sholto, father of twin boys.
- HOLMES** This is a singular case.
- MORSTAN** Six years ago I received a valuable pearl and have done so every year since. *[MARY indicates pearls at her throat. WATSON inspects]*
- WATSON** They are the finest pearls *[Sappy, romantic]* worn by the finest woman.
- HOLMES** *[Peeved]* Yes, all right, Watson.

MORSTAN *[Gives WATSON eye-fluttering look then back to business, mimes handing letter to HOLMES]*
I received this strange letter today.

HOLMES *[Mimes reading]* Be outside the Lyceum Theatre at 7 o'clock with two friends.

WATSON *[Excited]* Two friends! Holmes, that could be us.

HOLMES Let us follow the instructions and meet a coachman *[Light C as HOLMES moves there]* who will drive us to a strange house in South London.

WATSON *[MORSTAN takes his arm and they follow HOLMES]* May I tell you tales from Afghanistan?

MORSTAN Oh please do.

HOLMES And here we are.

MORSTAN *[The lovers have their ardor dampened]* Oh.

WATSON *[Looking around]* Goodness, it's very dark.
[Instant lighting change to eerie glow. MORIARTY enters as SHOLTO who is 30, bald with red hair, nervy and speaks with a high-pitched voice]

SHOLTO Your servant, Miss Morstan. I am Thaddeus Sholto.

MORSTAN You know of my father, Captain Morstan?

SHOLTO Our fathers served in the army but sadly both now are dead.

MORSTAN *[Saddened]* I knew it. *[WATSON comforts her]*

SHOLTO Ten years ago our fathers argued, Captain Morstan had a seizure then fell and struck his head on a treasure-chest.

TRIO Treasure-chest!

SHOLTO Six years ago my father told an amazing tale.

WATSON *[Fumbling for imaginary notepad]* I'll take some notes.

SHOLTO Our fathers purloined a vast treasure which my father hid in his London home. Part of this treasure was for Captain Morstan's daughter.
[WATSON and MORSTAN react]

MORSTAN *[Shocked]* But I'll be the richest woman in Britain.

WATSON *[Love-struck]* And still the prettiest. *[HOLMES rolls his eyes]*

SHOLTO But the treasure was hidden. All we had was one coronet encrusted with

QUARTET *[MORSTAN clasps pearls]* Pearls.

SHOLTO You were sent one a year until yesterday when

OTHERS Yes?

SHOLTO We found the vast treasure. *[Reaction]*

HOLMES Then let us away to the jewels.
[COMPANY moves as if to travel. SHOLTO crosses OTHERS who face the other way]

WATSON *[Pleased]* During which I can tell more tales of

SHOLTO *[Indicating imaginary house]* Pondicherry Lodge.

MORSTAN *[Looking around]* Oh, it's beautiful in the moon light.
[Instant lighting change to moonlit night]

HUDSON *[Offstage gives shrill, sad, pitiful whimper of a frightened woman. WATSON takes MORSTAN'S hand]*

SHOLTO That's the housekeeper. *[Exiting]* You can't get the staff, you know. *[Exits]*

HOLMES Watson, you're holding Miss Morstan's hand.

WATSON *[Poetic at MORSTAN]* I know, Holmes. It must be love.

SHOLTO *[Enters terrified, blubbing, carrying chair]* There is something amiss with my twin brother Bartholomew. Come and look through the keyhole.
[MORSTAN exits. SHOLTO places chair DC then sits. HOLMES and WATSON are either side of SHOLTO and bend facing one another as if looking through a keyhole.]

[Suddenly bright light (the overhead spot from the opening) shines on SHOLTO – who is now his twin brother BARTHOLOMEW – and HOLMES and WATSON recoil in horror as SHOLTO is revealed with a horrible, fixed smile, head sunk upon his left shoulder]

- WATSON** Why it's ...
- TRIO** *[Even the dead can speak]* Bartholomew Sholto.
- HOLMES** Note his twisted limbs.
- WATSON** He's been dead for hours.
- HOLMES** *[Emphatic]* Twisted limbs. *[SHOLTO twists. HOLMES indicates imaginary note]* And this note is important.
- WATSON** *[Reading imaginary note]* The sign of the four.
- HOLMES** *[Pointing to SHOLTO'S ear]* And here; a poisoned dart.
[Light killed on SHOLTO who comes alive and leaps up]
- WATSON** *[Stunned]* My God! He's alive.
- HOLMES** No, that's his twin brother, Thaddeus.
- SHOLTO** *[Thaddeus again; hysterical]* The treasure is gone, my brother is dead and the police will blame me! *[Exiting with chair, convulsing]* Oh, I know I'll go mad!
- HOLMES** *[Exiting]* I'll investigate the crime-scene Watson and you ...
- WATSON** Of course, Holmes. *[Announcement a la BBC]* It's time for the flashback.
- FX** *Indian music begins.*
[Lighting to one spot for WATSON who steps into the spot and narrates]
- WATSON** A wealthy rajah in India was robbed by three Sikhs and an Englishman with a wooden leg – *[Indicating]* Mister Jonathan Small.
- SMALL** *[MORIARTY enters as SMALL sans red wig but with a wooden leg and stands in new spot of light]* Us four thieves was sent to jail but told no-one about our stolen treasure.
- WATSON** The men in charge of the prison were Major Sholto and Captain Morstan.
- SMALL** I told *them* about the treasure on condition they got me outa jail. *[Fade MUSIC]*
- WATSON** But Sholto double-crossed them and took the treasure to England where Morstan tracked him down, argued and died *[Emotional]* leaving my dear, sweet Mary *[Blubbers]* an or-phan.
- SMALL** *[Catches the pathos. Distressed]* Did, did, did you say an or-phan?
- WATSON** *[Crying, nodding]* Yes, a beautiful, pearl-encrusted or-phan. *[The men blubber]*
- HUDSON** *[Calling roughly from offstage]* Get on with it.
- SMALL** *[Suddenly back as before]* I escaped and years later came to England where my little native friend Tonga *[ADLER enters as midget black native and mimes firing dart. Costuming may prove interesting here]* fired his blowpipe at Bartholomew Sholto.
- FX** *Nautical music – Drunken Sailor begins and continues through river chase*
- WATSON** *[Crank up the speed]* Small and Tonga grabbed the treasure, *[TONGA mimes grabbing treasure and lines up with SMALL who pretends to steer their imaginary boat]* jumped aboard a fast boat and raced down the Thames to freedom.
[Lights change to eerie light and we are now on the Thames. SMALL and TONGA are on one boat and HOLMES and WATSON are about to board another]
- HOLMES** *[Enters wearing sea-captain's cap. WATSON leaps aboard]* Come Watson, chase them, full speed ahead. *[HOLMES and SMALL steer their respective boats]*
- SMALL** *[Calling as he steers his boat]* We're too fast, Mr Holmes. You'll never catch us!
- HOLMES** *[Calling and steering]* Heap it on stokers. Burn the boat if you must!
- SMALL** Shoot them, Tonga! Use your blowpipe! *[TONGA prepares to fire imaginary dart]*
- WATSON** Look! The native has a poisoned dart.
- HOLMES** Fire if he raises his blowpipe! *[TONGA takes aim]*

WATSON *[Aims imaginary pistol]* Bang! *[TONGA screams, falls overboard and exits]*
SMALL You'll never take me alive. I'll run aground. *[FADE MUSIC]*
[SMALL hops off boat but his wooden leg sticks in the mud. He is furiously hopping in a circle]
HOLMES His wooden leg is stuck in the mud. Quickly Watson, save the treasure!
[WATSON leaps onto other imaginary boat and searches]
HUDSON *[Enters in rush]* Save the show more like. It's time for the next mystery.
WATSON It's gone! *[HUDSON exits in frustration]*
SMALL You're too late, Mister Holmes. The jewels are on the bottom of the Thames.
[Hysterical laugh from SMALL who exits. Major lighting change. Light centre where HOLMES is joined by WATSON. Peaceful]
FX *Violin music for 221B*
WATSON Well Holmes, not only did we lose the treasure, I fear you've lost your partner.
HOLMES *[Upset]* Watson, no, I am nothing without my Boswell.
WATSON Three's a crowd, old man and Miss Morstan and I are soon to wed.
HOLMES Then good luck, Doctor. But I should never marry lest I bias my judgment.
WATSON Life seems unfair, Holmes. The police get the credit, I get the girl and ...
HOLMES *[Rolling up his sleeve]* I get the cocaine.
[BLACKOUT. MUSIC continues. WATSON exits. HOLMES moves to study]
HUDSON *[Enters 221B and lights come up there. Annoyed]* Mr Holmes? *[Louder]* Mr Holmes?
HOLMES *[Peeved wanders into light in 221B]* What is it now, Mrs Hudson?
HUDSON Dr Watson is married and your next case is *A Scandal in Bohemia*. *[WATSON enters. HUDSON indicates HOLMES]* Tell him he needs the love of a good woman.
[Exits. MUSIC FADES]
WATSON *[Briefly confused at HUDSON'S advice]* I was passing, Holmes and saw your light.
HOLMES *[Greeting his long-lost chum]* Watson, I say, wedlock suits you.
WATSON Thank you, old chap, but have you a new case?
HOLMES Indeed I do and it involves the aristocracy *[Indicates door]* from Europe.
KRAMM *[MORIARTY as Bohemian nobleman wearing a mask. He is 30, solid, tall and beautifully dressed enters. German accent]* Gentlemen, I have ein terrible German accent und meine Name ist Count Von Kramm.
HOLMES I know who you are ... *[Slight bow]* your Majesty.
WATSON *[Shocked]* The King!
KRAMM *[Removes mask]* Ja, I am za Kink *[sic]* und soon to marry but I fear za former lover.
HOLMES A beautiful woman threatens to tell all. *[WATSON fumbles for imaginary notepad]*
KRAMM Za stunning Irene Adler is ein [h]opera-singer here in London. She vill ein photograph send of za two of us to my new fiancée, a Scandinavian princess.
WATSON *[Is lost]* What came after "terrible German accent"?
HOLMES And you have searched Miss Adler's house?
KRAMM High und low but za photograph ist nowhere found to be. Bitte, Herr Holmes; find zat photograph. *[KRAMM and HOLMES exchange bows. KRAMM exits]*
HOLMES *[HOLMES beckons to WATSON who moves closer]* Watson, here is the plan. *[HOLMES whispers in WATSON'S ear]*
WATSON *[Surprised and not a whisper]* A smoke-bomb?
HOLMES Shhh, the audience may be listening. *[Lights up as ADLER enters]* Look, there is the beautiful Miss Adler. Quick, Watson, strike me.
WATSON Righto. *[WATSON mimes punching HOLMES in face]* Biff!
[HOLMES staggers and half-collapses and ADLER moves to him]
ADLER *[Distressed]* Oh sir, you are hurt. Please, come into my house.

- [HOLMES follows ADLER “inside” then waves to WATSON]
- HOLMES** [Unsubtle whisper] Now Watson!
- WATSON** [Aside to audience] That’s my cue for the imaginary smoke-bomb.
[WATSON mimes tossing smoke-bomb]
- HOLMES** [Hopping about, pointing, calling] Fire! Fire! [Continues]
- ADLER** [Panics then aside to audience] Oh I must save the photograph of the King and I.
[ADLER mimes finding photo and exits. WATSON joins HOLMES]
- WATSON** [Gushing] Holmes, what a stroke of genius.
- HOLMES** When a woman thinks her house is on fire, her instinct is to save the thing she values most.
- HUDSON** [Enters] Gentlemen, enough chit-chat. We’re up to case number four, *The Red Headed League* which begins when Mr Jabez Wilson comes to Baker Street.
[Pause. Points] It’s over there [here].
[HOLMES and WATSON move to study. HUDSON exits. Lights concentrate on 221B. WILSON played by MORIARTY enters and greets the detectives. WILSON is stout, elderly, pompous, slow and florid-faced with red hair]
- HOLMES** Ah, Mr Wilson. Tell us your fascinating story.
- WILSON** I answered a job advertisement for red-headed men. I was paid four pounds a week to copy the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. I worked between 10 and 2 every day and my assistant looked after my shop.
- WATSON** What a fine fellow.
- WILSON** But now the *Red-Headed League* is no more.
- HOLMES** An intriguing case, sir. [Stands] Please allow us to investigate.
- WILSON** [Taken aback] But I’ve hardly given you any information.
- WATSON** It’s our housekeeper; she wants us to get a move on.
- WILSON** Oh, right you are. Well, good-day, gentlemen. [Exits]
- HOLMES** Now Watson, let us journey to the scene of the crime. [Men move C to darkness]
[ADLER as maid and HUDSON as herself enter]
- HUDSON** [Sitting. Weary] Come and take the weight off, Missy.
- ADLER** [As maid, sitting] Ooo Mrs ‘udson, do you fink we should?
- HUDSON** Dr Watson took his army revolver so they’ll be gone for hours.
- ADLER** [Shocked] ‘is revolver! Should we call the police?
- HUDSON** Shhh. [Whispers] We’re upstaging the other actors. [Indicating]
[Lights dim on women but come up a little where HOLMES, WATSON and MERRYWEATHER – a bank official played by MORIARTY – creep into position. The women turn and observe. The men whisper]
- HOLMES** Are we inside the bank vault, Mr Merryweather?
- M’W’THER** We are Mr Holmes and it’s packed with gold bullion.
- WATSON** And this bank is located beside the shop owned by Jabez Wilson.
- HOLMES** Excellent scene-stting, Watson; now, let us wait quietly in the dark.
- HUDSON** [Pause. Suddenly remembers. Stressed] Oh my lord!
- ADLER** [Worried] Mrs ‘udson. Wot’s the matter?
- HUDSON** We’re playing the bank robbers.
[Women noisily scurry towards the men. Kill lights on fireplace]
- HOLMES** [Still whispering] Have your revolver ready, Watson.
[HUDSON slowly appears behind WATSON]
- WATSON** Righto. [Nervous] I say, Holmes ... [MUSIC BEGINS]
- HOLMES** What now?

Song Number 3 There's Someone Here

WATSON
WOMEN
QUINTET

I think there's someone's here
They think there's someone here
We think there's someone here.

HOLMES That'll be Mrs Hudson and the maid playing the bank robbers.
[Scream from robbers as HOLMES leaps up and overpowers HUDSON]
It's no use, John Clay. Give up! *[Scuffle as robbers are caught]*

HUDSON *[As criminal]* Orright, guv'nor. It's a fair cop.

M'W'THER The police will take them now. This way.

[Women and MERRYWEATHER exit. HOLMES and WATSON stand C as lights come up]

FX *Solo violin music begins*

WATSON Simply amazing Holmes. How ever did you solve that mystery?

HOLMES It was Wilson's assistant. He was very keen for his employer to attend the phony Red-Headed League.

WATSON Yes but why?

HOLMES Once alone, the shop assistant could tunnel into the bank next door.

WATSON But how did you know the assistant was digging?

HOLMES Scruffy knees, Watson. One should always look at trousers.

WATSON You astound me, Holmes. Your powers of deduction are simply brilliant.

[Music fades]

HUDSON *[Enters in a flap]* Gentlemen, it's time for number five – *A Case of Identity*.
[HUDSON weary - throwaway] As if anyone cares.

[Starts to exit; stops when HOLMES calls]

HOLMES Mrs Hudson, do I detect a wearisome tone in your voice?

HUDSON *[Thinly veiled sarcasm]* Oh very observant, Mr Holmes. Perhaps it's due to me getting all the crappy jobs.

WATSON *[Mild rebuke]* Language, Mrs Hudson.

HUDSON *[Complaining]* Answer the door, tidy your mess, fetch the supper – I'm even doing the bloody play introductions - and there's you, smoking revolting tobacco, snorting coke and entertaining every weirdo in London.

HOLMES *[To WATSON. Intimate]* You haven't made mention of her 'strange behaviour' in your writings?

WATSON *[Intimate]* Wouldn't dream of it, old man.

HOLMES Good show. *[To HUDSON. Normal]* Right you are, Mrs H. Send in the next weirdo.

HUDSON *[Still not pleased]* Miss Mary Sutherland. *[HUDSON exits. LIGHT 221B, men cross]*

S'LAND *[ADLER enters as another Mary – this time SUTHERLAND - young spinster, large woman, wearing heavy fur boa, wide brimmed-hat with large red feather, hat tilted, gloves, wearing odd boots. She is shown to a chair]* Gentlemen, I have lost my fiancé.

WATSON That's remarkable. We had another Mary before only she'd lost her father.

HOLMES The facts, Miss Sutherland.

S'LAND I live with my mother and stepfather who is almost my age. I became engaged to Mr. Hosmer Angel but on the day of our marriage, my fiancé vanished.

HOLMES Tell me about your young man.

S'LAND He is shy and prefers to walk in the evening. He has swollen glands, speaks in a whisper and wears tinted glasses.

HOLMES And what do your parents think of your fiancé?

- S'LAND** Mother is all in favour and told me not to worry about my step-father.
- WATSON** But what happened on your wedding day?
- S'LAND** Mother and I travelled in the first cab with Hosmer in the second. At the church we discovered the second cab was empty and I've never seen my beloved since.
- HOLMES** Miss Sutherland, you have been shamefully treated.
- S'LAND** *[Emotional]* Oh Mr Holmes, you are very kind. *[Stands]* Goodbye. *[She exits]*
- HOLMES** I shall write to the step-father. *[Hears sound]* That was quick. He's here already. *[WINDIBANKS played by MORIARTY enters. He is 30, sturdy, clean-shaven, with a bland insinuating manner]*
- W'BANKS** Forgive my step-daughter. I don't like our dirty linen being washed in public. Besides, you'll never find Hosmer Angel.
- HOLMES** But I have already.
- W'BANKS** *[Shouting]* What! Where?
- HOLMES** Oh it won't do, *Hosmer*, really it won't.
- WATSON** *[Has no idea]* Who's Hosmer?
- W'BANKS** *[Collapses in chair. The game is up. Groans]* It all began as a joke.
- WATSON** What joke?
- HOLMES** You pretended to be your step-daughter's suitor.
- WATSON** *[Stunned]* I say!
- W'BANKS** *[Recovering]* I have done nothing illegal and if you keep me here, you lay yourself open to an action for assault and illegal restraint.
- HOLMES** *[Stepping aside]* I ought to lay a whip across your shoulders. By Jove! *[Moving to fireplace]* And here's a hunting-crop to do just that. *[WINDIBANKS flees in fear and bumps into HUDSON about to enter]*
- HUDSON** *[Offstage]* Oi! *[Enters wearing an Australian hat with dangling corks]* You have some very strange visitors, Mr Holmes. *[And she's one of them]*
- HOLMES** *[Referring to HUDSON]* Strange indeed, Mrs Hudson. *[To WATSON]* Come Watson, what is different about our house-keeper?
- WATSON** *[Can't see the bleeding obvious]* Ah, she's ... not wearing gloves. No, she ... she has a new apron!
- HUDSON** *[Collecting HOLMES]* Come Mr Holmes. We'll leave Dr Watson to chat with his new wife while we get on with the next case. *[HUDSON and HOLMES exit across stage into the darkness both calling as they go]*
- HUDSON & HOLMES** Coo-ee. Coo-ee.
- HUDSON** *[Just before she exits]* *The Boscombe Valley Mystery.* *[She and HOLMES exit. We're in the home of Doctor Watson. He is seated reading the paper. ADLER, as the new Mrs Watson, enters wearing an apron and attends to her husband]*
- MRS W** Well John, this makes a nice change.
- WATSON** *[Half reading]* I'm sorry my dear?
- MRS W** Most of your cases begin at Baker Street with you and Mr Holmes having a chat.
- WATSON** How observant you are and how nice to enjoy breakfast with my lovely wife.
- MRS W** So is Mr Holmes working on a new case?
- WATSON** I'm sure he ... *[Looking across stage as lights come up]* Good heavens, there he is.
- HOLMES** *[Enters, waving, calls]* Watson, hello!
- WATSON** *[Standing, calling]* Holmes, you seem far away. *[MRS WATSON helps hubby prepare for a trip]*
- HOLMES** I'm in the west country. Have you a couple of days to spare?
- MRS W** I think the change would do you good, my dear.

WATSON *[Standing]* Then off to the west country I'll go.
[WATSON kisses wife who exits. Lighting concentrates on HOLMES. WATSON crosses to him]

HOLMES It's murder, Watson. The victim was Charles McCarthy who made his money in Australia. *[Calling to wings]* Could we have the body please? *[To WATSON]* Chair, Watson. *[WATSON fetches chair]*

HUDSON *[Enters wearing bush hat with corks and is not a happy camper]* You really are pushing your luck, Mr Holmes. *[Pause]* Well, where do you want me?

HOLMES *[Indicates]* Just there. *[HUDSON sits]*

WATSON *[To HUDSON believing 'him' to be McCarthy]* I hope you're comfortable, sir.

HOLMES Now the unfortunate Mr McCarthy has a fractured skull.

HUDSON *[Sarcastic]* Charming.

HOLMES And the police have arrested his son.

HUDSON *[Scoffs]* He didn't do it.

HOLMES *[Unhappy with her comments]* Thank you, Mrs Hudson.

WATSON What does the son have to say?

HUDSON *[Spoken quickly]* *Coo-ee* and - a rat.

HOLMES *[Annoyed]* Mrs Hudson, please.

HUDSON Look there's another fifty plus cases to get through so why not cut to the chase?

WATSON Mr McCarthy's right, Holmes. Let's just have your brilliant explanation.

TURNER *[MORIARTY enters as elderly John TURNER who made his money in Australia]* Allow me. I'm John Turner and I'm responsible for murdering this *[Pointing at HUDSON and spits venom]* bootlegging, blackmailing blackguard.

WATSON *[Now defending a lady's honour]* How dare you sir. That is no way to speak to a lady.

TURNER In Australia I became a bushranger and *[Moving to HUDSON]* held up a gold convoy. *[Uses his finger as a gun]* I placed my pistol at the head of the driver *[Puts finger to HUDSON'S head]* – this vile creature.

HUDSON I wish you had shot me. At least then I wouldn't be wearing this ridiculous hat.

TURNER Back in London, McCarthy clocked me and the blackmail began. I paid 'till he asked for what I could not give – my daughter.

HOLMES But why confess now?

TURNER Because I'm dying and I cannot allow his innocent son to suffer.

WATSON And the words *Coo-ee* and *a rat*?

TURNER *Coo-ee* is an Australian greeting.

HUDSON And *a rat* is short for *Ball-arat* where we met in the Aussie goldfields; now can we please get on?

TURNER *[To HOLMES]* What do you intend to do, Mr Holmes?

HOLMES In view of your health, nothing.

TURNER Then thank you and farewell. *[Assists HUDSON exit. HUDSON takes chair]* Come on, McCarthy.

HUDSON *[Doesn't like him]* Don't you touch me.

TURNER Look I'm sorry I had to kill you.

HUDSON It's a bit late for sorry. *[They're gone]*

HOLMES Watson, London is calling.

WATSON *[HOLMES and WATSON head to 221B]* Then back to Baker Street we go. *[Lights up in 221B and fade on detectives]*

- O'SHAW** *[ADLER enters as John Openshaw, 22, well-groomed, refined]* Mr Holmes, *[The men cross and lights crossfade. MORIARTY enters in the darkness]* I am John Openshaw. One day my uncle opened a letter and nearly died. It had five orange pips.
- WATSON** This must be the case of *The Five Orange Pips*.
- ELIAS** *[MORIARTY is lit as the elderly, drunken ELIAS and acts alone away from the others. He shrieks]* Ahhhh! It's the K.K.K! *[Slumps to his knees]*
- O'SHAW** Insanity came upon my uncle. He would rush into the garden.
- ELIAS** *[Stands, runs on the spot screaming]* I am not afraid of any man.
- O'SHAW** One night he fell in a pond and drowned.
[ELIAS screams and collapses. Kill light on ELIAS who exits]
- HOLMES** A remarkable story. Continue.
- O'SHAW** Then my *father* opened a letter containing five orange pips and *he* died. Now a third letter has arrived with five orange pips and the letters K.K.K.
- HOLMES** *[Anxious]* So tell me, what have you done?
- O'SHAW** I told the police but all they did was laugh.
- HOLMES** *[Shaking clenched fists]* Incredible imbecility!
- O'SHAW** But Mr Holmes, what should I do?
- HOLMES** *[Serious concern]* Follow their instructions. Now go man, go!
- O'SHAW** *[Taking flight]* Thank you, sir. Good night. *[Exits]*
- HOLMES** Watson, this case is fantastic.
- WATSON** Indeed so, Holmes, but I haven't the foggiest.
- HOLMES** Have you never heard of ... *[Lowers voice]* the Ku Klux Klan?
- WATSON** I have and tomorrow's newspaper brings terrible news. *[Announcing]* "John Openshaw drowned near Waterloo Bridge."
- HOLMES** *[Saddened]* Oh Watson, he came to me for help and I sent him away to his death.
- HUDSON** *[Enters]* Excuse me gentlemen. This story has run overtime and what with Mr Holmes being a cry-baby, perhaps I could deliver the denouement.
[Upset HOLMES just nods]
- WATSON** That's jolly decent of you, Mrs Hudson.
- HUDSON** *[Storyteller]* So the Ku Klux Klan geezers who murdered the uncle, father and son, sailed back to America but the ship sank and all the baddies died the end *[sic]*. And now, *[Announcing]* *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*. *[She exits but stops]* Oh and Merry Christmas gentlemen.
- FX** *Christmas music begins*
[HOLMES and WATSON brighten]
- WATSON** Merry Christmas, Holmes. And what is your latest case?
- HOLMES** A battered hat, Watson, tells us so much.
- WATSON** You know, we haven't had a flashback for a while. May I?
- HOLMES** By all means. *[MUSIC fades, single light only, fade lights elsewhere]*
- WATSON** *[Steps into spot as storyteller]* A young thief stole a valuable jewel and took it to his sister's house where she made geese fat for Christmas.
- HUDSON** *[Enters and is lit]* A group of geese is known as a gaggle.
- WATSON** The sister promised her thieving sibling one free goose.
[HUDSON flaps her elbows a la a goose]
- HUDSON** *[Not amused]* Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat.
- WATSON** The jewel-thief chose his goose – a fine, plump bird ripe for the plucking.
- HUDSON** *[Sarcastic, flapping wings]* Yes, it's me, I'm part of the gaggle, gaggle, gaggle.

- WATSON** The thief grabbed the goose [*HUDSON reacts as if being grabbed*] and thrust the jewel down its throat.
- HUDSON** [*As if the stone is in her throat*] Goggle, goggle, goggle, [*Stops struggling or guggling*] or, if you're on-line – google, google, google.
- WATSON** The thief departed and a Mr Henry Baker arrived.
- BAKER** [*MORIARTY enters as Henry BAKER. Pointing at HUDSON*] I fancy this goose. At home, I'll give her a really good stuffing.
- HUDSON** [*Aside*] Men get all the best parts.
- WATSON** [*BAKER escorts HUDSON around the stage*] So Mr Baker walked home with his new goose but was [*Quicker*] suddenly attacked by thugs.
[*BAKER yells in fright as he mimes being attacked and HUDSON – who technically is dead – flaps her wings and flies away. Two following lines are spoken ad lib and simultaneously*]
- HUDSON** Gaggle, gaggle, gaggle! [*Exits*]
- BAKER** Get off! You rotters! Begone! [*Exits*]
[*Lights up back at 221B. WATSON returns to the fireside*]
- HOLMES** And so Mr. Baker's lost hat and goose were brought here to Baker Street.
- WATSON** Giving your observation skills a chance to shine.
- HOLMES** The man who owns this hat once was rich but now is poor, has just had a haircut, wears lime-scented hair-crème and hasn't got the gas connected to his house.
- WATSON** Amazing, Holmes. No-one can hold a *candle* to you.
- HOLMES** The thief begged for forgiveness and, in order to save a soul, I let him go.
- WATSON** [*Clapping*] Bravo.
[*BLACKOUT. HOLMES and WATSON exit. ADLER enters*]
- HUDSON** [*Steps into her solo light*] And now for another animal story where I change from a goose to a monkey in [*Dramatic*] *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*.
[*HUDSON exits. Her light fades. Bring up lights at 221B. ADLER as HELEN STONER is alone in the room. She is young, attractive, dressed all in black including a veil. She is nervous and pacing the room*]
- HOLMES** [*Enters followed by WATSON. Cheerily*] Good morning, young lady. I observe you are shivering.
- STONER** It is not the cold, sir. It is fear. It is terror.
- HOLMES** Please be seated. [*STONER sits and lifts veil*]
- STONER** My name is Helen Stoner and I live with my drunken step-father who has a pet baboon.
- HOLMES** And what of your family?
- STONER** Two years ago, just before her wedding, my sister died suddenly. She gave a terrible scream and said, "It was the speckled band!"
- HOLMES** Was she poisoned?
- STONER** The doctors found nothing.
- WATSON** But that was two years ago.
- STONER** And now *I* am to be married and because of renovations, am sleeping in the room where my sister met her horrible death.
- HOLMES** We shall visit your house tonight.
- STONER** [*Standing*] Oh sir, my heart is lightened already. [*Replacing veil*] Goodbye. [*Exits*]
- HOLMES** Come Watson, we will hide and observe. [*Kill lights on 221B. Men move centre*]
- WATSON** It's quite dark here in the garden.
[*Sudden light change to very dim*]

FX *Night sounds – an owl, insects, etc*

HOLMES *[Pointing out front]* Look! There is our signal.
[They creep forward and kneel peering into the night looking over the audience. Suddenly HUDSON, wearing a gorilla mask, bounds in and pauses behind them]

WATSON *[Whispers]* My God, Holmes. I swear I just saw Mrs Hudson.

HOLMES *[Still looking out front]* That was the baboon.

HUDSON *[Behind WATSON. Threatening]* And if you say, “What’s the difference?” you’re dead. *[HUDSON bounds off. Fade FX]*

HOLMES Come Watson, into Miss Stoner’s bedroom. *[HOLMES starts to move]*

WATSON Stop! *[Stopping HOLMES]* I can’t, Holmes. I’m a married man.

HOLMES Oh come now, Doctor. This is Victorian England. It’s every married man’s duty to have a mistress.

WATSON Fair enough. *[Mimes climbing into room with HOLMES]* But the room is empty.

HOLMES And ready for death. *[Snaps]* Quiet. *[Pause. Suddenly HOLMES starts thrashing an imaginary snake. Yelling]* You see it, Watson? You see it? *[Stops thrashing]*

WATSON No but I can hear that scream.

MORIARTY *[As wicked step-father, offstage, gives horrible cry of pain before death]*

HOLMES It’s over, Watson. The stepfather sent the deadly snake to kill his stepdaughters to control their money. *[MORIARTY enters in the darkness]*

WATSON You drove the snake back where it killed the stepfather.

HUDSON *[Enters and is lit]* Oh Doctor, there’s a bandaged bloke in your surgery.

WATSON Ah, it must be time for *The Adventure of the Engineer’s Thumb*.
[Lights up on 221B. MORIARTY is seated there. WATSON enters 221B which is now his surgery. MORIARTY is Victor Hatherley, 25, engineer, tweed suit with right hand heavily bandaged is seated and anxious]

VICTOR Doctor, I had an accident during the night.

WATSON Good heavens! *[Examines bandaged hand]*
[WATSON attends to wound during following speeches]

VICTOR A man offered me fifty guineas to repair a machine.

WATSON And I must repair your hand.

VICTOR I did the work but found the people were forgers.

WATSON Criminals?

VICTOR I tried to flee and was hanging from an upstairs window when I was struck with a cleaver.

WATSON *[Horrorified]* You horrify me.

VICTOR I jumped but parted company with

WATSON Yes, yes. No need for the gory details.

VICTOR But now I wish to leave the task of exposing the criminals to Mr Holmes.

WATSON *[Finishes treatment]* I’m sorry but micro-surgery comes in the *next* century.

VICTOR Then thank you, sir and good-day. *[Exits as HUDSON enters]*

WATSON All done, Mrs Hudson; over to you.

HUDSON *[Excited]* That was brilliant, Doctor; the fastest story yet and you know why?

WATSON *[Shaking head]* No, sorry, not a clue.

HUDSON *[Intimate]* Mr Sherlock Bloody Holmes wasn’t in it.

WATSON Well actually he was; I used the cleaver to make some judicious cuts.

HUDSON But can’t you see, we’ll finish early if we dump the detective.

WATSON *[Outraged]* Dump the detective!

HUDSON *[Knows she’ll never win. Shaking head]* All right, all right, keep your shirt on.

*[Grumbles and announces] The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor. [Exits]
[HOLMES enters and joins WATSON warming himself before the fire at 221B]*

FX *Solo violin music*

HOLMES And you say, Watson “The bride simply vanished during the wedding breakfast”?

WATSON The husband, Lord Robert St Simon, has suffered a great deal.

HOLMES *[Turning]* And, right on cue, here is His Lordship. *[Fade MUSIC]
[MORIARTY enters as SIMON, 41, pleasant, cultured, yellow gloves, top hat, white waistcoat]*

SIMON A most painful matter, Mr Holmes. *[He sits]*

HOLMES Your runaway bride is American?

SIMON And extremely rich. As we walked down the aisle, Hatty dropped her bouquet which was picked up by a strange man.

HOLMES *[Thinking about ADLER]* I was once enchanted by an American woman.

SIMON *[Standing]* I could tell you more but apparently we’re running late.

HOLMES We are, Lord Simon, but I will surely solve your problem.

SIMON *[Handshake]* Thank you, gentlemen. *[Exits]*

WATSON That was quick, Holmes. Mrs Hudson *will* be pleased.

HOLMES But I refuse to omit the epilogue. The flashback, please Doctor.

WATSON *[As narrator]* Years ago, the missing bride married an American who went to seek his fortune. Newspapers reported his death at the hands of Apache Indians and years later the widow married Lord Robert St Simon. Imagine how she felt walking down the aisle with her second husband when there in the church was husband number one.

HUDSON *[Enters]* Well done, gentlemen; short ‘n sweet, but please don’t allow these toffy visitors to drag out the cases.

WATSON Toffy visitors, dear lady?

HUDSON Well you’ve just had Lord So-and-So and now it’s a son of Queen ...

HOLMES and WATSON *[Loud]* Mrs Hudson!

HUDSON *[Shocked]* What now?

HOLMES Discretion, please.

WATSON We must respect the client’s privacy.

HUDSON *[Snorts with derision]* Well tell that to the geezer outside in ... *[Announcing]* *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet.*

[HUDSON exits and MORIARTY enters as Alexander Holder, 50, tall, portly, banker, black-frock-coat, grey trousers. He is puffing, twitching and highly distressed]

HOLDER *[Enters in a flap]* Gentlemen, God knows I have trouble!

HOLMES Pray compose yourself, sir.

HOLDER *[Deep breaths]* I am a banker and yesterday, a person with one of the highest, noblest and most exalted names in England asked me for an immediate loan of fifty thousand pounds.

WATSON *[Staggered]* Fifty thousand!

HOLDER *[Mops sweaty brow]* I know, but what could I say? The man is the Queen’s ...

HOLMES Stop! *[Pause]* No names.

HOLDER *[Acknowledges the need for secrecy]* Then the client offered security of one of the Empire’s most precious public possessions.

WATSON Not the crown with thirty-nine enormous jewels called beryls?

HOLDER *[Shocked]* How did you know that?

WATSON It’s the name of the case.

- HOLDER** *[Realises]* Right. *[Continues]* So I gave *[Waves hand]* what's-'is-name fifty grand and took the crown home for safety. At two a.m. I awoke to discover my son holding the crown with three of its jewels missing.
- WATSON** *[Medico speaking]* Most young men have problems with their family jewels.
- HOLDER** I have lost my honour, the gems and my son. What shall I do?
- HOLMES** Your son is innocent and the jewels will be recovered.
- HOLDER** *[Thrilled but confused]* Really? But how?
- WATSON** Alas we do not have time to explain. Our housekeeper is cracking the whip
- HOLDER** *[Exiting]* Oh, right you are. *[HOLDER exits]*
- HUDSON** *[Enters]* Well done gents but please keep it moving.
- WATSON** Relax Mrs Hudson, *[Proud]* we have reached the final case.
- HUDSON** *[Correcting WATSON]* The final case, Doctor, in the *first* collection.
- WATSON** *[WATSON stunned]* What?
- HUDSON** You've still got forty-six to go.
- TRIO** *[Shocked]* Forty-six! *[Unison foot-stamp]*
- HUDSON** And what is it with you middle-aged men and young women?
- HOLMES** Now, Watson, the fair sex is your department. *[WATSON is speechless]*
- HUDSON** So here is yet *another* young woman, Miss Violet Hunter. *[ADLER as Violet HUNTER enters]* Not yet. *[HUNTER exits. Announcing]* *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches.* *[HUDSON moves to door]* Right, you're on. *[HUNTER enters. She is young, plainly but neatly dressed with freckled face. HUDSON exits]*
- HUNTER** Sir, I've had a very strange experience.
- HOLMES** Pray be seated, Miss Hunter. *[She sits]*
- HUNTER** I was offered the position of governess at the most generous salary of one hundred pounds a year.
- WATSON** *[Impressed]* One hundred a year!
- HUNTER** I am to care for the couple's young son but wear a blue dress and cut my hair.
- WATSON** But your hair is luxuriant.
- HUNTER** I declined the position so now they offer one hundred and twenty and I have several bills outstanding. What do you advise, Mr Holmes?
- HOLMES** Take the position, Miss Hunter, but at any time, day or night, a telegram would bring me down to your help.
- HUNTER** *[Standing]* You are most kind. Goodbye gentlemen. *[Nods and exits]*
- HUDSON** *[Enters]* A telegram just arrived from Miss Hunter.
- WATSON** That was quick.
- HUDSON** It reads, "Do come! I am at my wit's end."
- HOLMES** *[Pointing to Hampshire]* Watson, Hampshire awaits. *[HUDSON exits and HOLMES and WATSON move centre. Lights concentrate there]*
- WATSON** *[Pointing at imaginary house]* So that is *Copper Beeches* the home of Mr and Mrs Rucastle, their small son and his governess, Miss Violet Hunter.
- HOLMES** Excellent scene-setting, Watson. Now, let us observe. *[HUNTER enters with MORIARTY in the house where she lives and works. MORIARTY is RUCASTLE, 50, very stout, heavy chin, glasses on end of nose]*
- RUCASTLE** We are delighted you have become our governess, Miss Hunter.
- HUNTER** And you want me to wear a blue dress, cut my hair and laugh a lot.
- RUCASTLE** *[Offers chair]* We do indeed. Let's rehearse. *[HUNTER sits facing front]* It's important you are *seen* to be laughing. Now then. *[Goes into routine as music hall comic]* And the duck said to the salesman, "Just put it on my bill". *[HUNTER is amused]*

“You say this chimney is free?” asked the customer. “Yes, sir, it’s on the house!” [*HUNTER laughs*] “But where will I go to post my loaf of bread?” she cried. “Why, the Toast Office!” [*HUNTER laughs uproariously. Suddenly RUCASTLE stops being a comic, runs behind HUNTER and mimes drawing the blind*] Draw the blind! There’s a strange man outside.

WATSON [*Stage whisper*] What’s happening, Holmes?

HOLMES [*Stage whisper*] Some very unpunny jokes.

RUCASTLE [*Taking HUNTER to one side*] Now Miss Hunter, I want you to meet [*HUDSON enters*] my ferocious hound, Bruno.

HUDSON [*Enters as pooch - feeble attempt*] Grrr, grr, woof, woof, grrr. [*HUNTER afraid*]

RUCASTLE I let Bruno loose at night and God help any trespasser. [*More pathetic barking/growling from HUDSON*] He only gets fed once a day; don’t you Bruno?

HUDSON [*Aside, deep voice*] Chance’d be a fine thing. [*As HUDSON*] Just keep it short. [*Exits with chair*]

HUNTER [*Defiant*] Sir, I know there’s a locked room in your house.

RUCASTLE [*Snaps*] Photography is one of my hobbies.

HUNTER I believe Mr Sherlock Holmes will discover your adult daughter’s a prisoner.

RUCASTLE [*Explodes*] Sherlock Holmes!

HUNTER [*Indicating*] And there he is!

RUCASTLE [*Furious*] Bruno, attack those trespassers. [*HUDSON enters and tamely savages her owner*] Not me! Them! [*Continues. RUCASTLE exits being “savaged” by BRUNO*]

HOLMES Miss Hunter, you are safe now.

HUNTER Oh thank you, Mr Holmes.

HOLMES Your summary, please Watson.

WATSON I defer to Miss Hunter.

HUNTER Well the dreadful Mr Rucastle survived the ferocious Bruno and his imprisoned daughter was set free to marry her young man.

WATSON Jolly good, first class. [*Looking around*] Now where is Mrs Hudson?

HUDSON [*Enters and moves to men*] I’m here trying to start the next case. [*MORIARTY enters and joins the group*]

MOR’ITY And speaking of cases, did you know Holmes investigated almost a *thousand*?

ADLER [*Shocked*] A thousand!

WATSON But I only recorded about sixty.

MOR’ITY So we’re not even halfway there. [*MUSIC BEGINS*]

ADLER Mrs Hudson’s worried.

Song Number 4 Cut To The Chase

HUDSON *We must cut to the chase*
QUINTET *We must cut to the chase*
We must cut to the chase.

HUDSON I have an idea. Let’s speak fewer words only twice as fast. For instance, “Come, Watson, come. The game is afoot” would become ...

ADLER [*She understands the idea*] “Watson game afoot”.

HUDSON It’s Sherlockian shorthand.

WATSON *[Upset]* No, no, no. You can't rush my accounts. One should savour the brilliance of Holmes.

MOR'ITY *[Sneering]* Poppycock. The man is vastly overrated. *[Tension in the air]*

HOLMES I'll thank you, sir, to keep a civil tongue in your head.
[Dramatic pause. Mexican standoff. ADLER suddenly intervenes]

ADLER *[Remembers]* Oh I almost forgot. There's a message from F.O.H.

WATSON *[Excited]* F.O.H.! Holmes, it's the Foreign Office Head here in London.

HOLMES No, Watson. It's the *Front of House* here in Clayton.*
*[*Insert name of suburb in which play is being staged]*

ADLER The message is, "Kettle's boiled – supper's served".

HUDSON But Mr Holmes, you've still got a dozen cases before interval.

WATSON *[Upset]* Good heavens, Holmes, whatever shall we do?

MOR'ITY *[Taunts him]* Yes Mister Smug Detective, this is not one of your pathetic fictional cases. This is real life. There's no author to plot your every move. You're on y'own, Sherlock.
[OTHERS look at HOLMES who pauses to think then steps forward]

HOLMES *[Addressing audience]* My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen - I believe it only fair one should control one's own destiny. Therefore your vote please on whether we continue with more of my brilliant adventures - in which case your coffee will be cold and the best bikkies bitten, or, should we retire forthwith for intermission? Those in favour of the former

MOR'ITY *[At HOLMES]* Hang on, hang on. You're trying to rob me of my starring role.

HOLMES I'm sorry. You are?

MOR'ITY What about *my* story, *my* solo, *my* day in the sun?

WATSON He's right, you know, Holmes.

MOR'ITY *[Defending his position]* This is my one chance to truly take centre-stage.

HUDSON We're wasting time.

MOR'ITY *[Now angry at everyone]* You lot got the full treatment. Why can't I?

HOLMES Hmmm. I can never resist a touch of the dramatic. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*

Song Number 5 Let's Go to Switzerland

HOLMES *Let's go to Switzerland*

MOR'ITY *Let's go to Switzerland*

QUINTET *Let's go to Switzerland.*

HUDSON *[Announcing]* And now, *The Final Problem*.
[Ensemble foot-stamp. BLACKOUT. All exit except HOLMES and WATSON. Lights up C as the two detectives converse]

HOLMES Watson, it's time to confront the Napoleon of crime.

WATSON *[Surprised]* Moriarty is French?
[MORIARTY as himself enters and stands slightly apart from the room in half light]

HOLMES I was in my room today when who should call but Professor Moriarty.
[MORIARTY is lit spookily and WATSON is nervous between the two calm enemies]

MOR'ITY It is a dangerous habit to finger loaded firearms in one's pocket

WATSON Said the criminal mastermind.

HOLMES "You're finished, Moriarty."

WATSON Replied my friend.

MOR'ITY Stand clear or be trodden under foot
HOLMES Then he turned [*MORIARTY turns and exits*] and walked from the room.
[Light killed on MORIARTY who exits in darkness]
WATSON Holmes, you must hide 'till the danger is past.
HOLMES No, Watson. Meet me at Victoria Station where I'll be disguised as an elderly Italian priest. [*Crosses behind WATSON*]
FX *Steam engine whistle then sound of steam train*
WATSON [*WATSON turns and sees a priest*] Father. Allow me to help you.
HOLMES It's me, Watson. We don't have time for the disguise.
WATSON [*Shocked*] Holmes! You startled me.
HOLMES Moriarty will track us through England and then to the Continent. He has murder on his mind.
FX *Yodelling sound*
WATSON What was that?
HOLMES [*Alighting from imaginary first-class compartment*] Switzerland.
[Sunny outdoor lighting comes up]
WATSON [*Alighting and admiring scenery*] Oh how beautiful.
HOLMES [*Pointing*] And the spectacular Reichenbach Falls.
FX *Sound of a waterfall*
[They move to one side. Lighting changes to create an eerie look. They look up at the falls]
WATSON [*Awestruck*] A terrifying place. The torrent plunges to an awful abyss.
HOLMES This narrow path is treacherous. [*Turns and points*] Look! Professor Moriarty.
[MORIARTY enters followed by HUDSON and ADLER]
WATSON And with him the entire female chorus.
[MUSIC BEGINS]
MOR'ITY [*Greeting*] Mr Holmes.
HOLMES [*Greeting*] Professor Moriarty.
MOR'ITY Do you come here often?
HOLMES Only in the jumping season.
MOR'ITY Then, sir, prepare to fly!
HOLMES Break a leg, fiend!

Song Number 6 Swim in Switzerland

QUINTET *Oh it's swell to swim in Switzerland
In the famous Sherlock Show
You'd do well to swim in Switzerland
It's the fashion, don't you know?
First you climb up the mountain almost to the top
Leap for a landing of a belly flop
Oh it's swell to swim in Switzerland
In the famous Sherlock Show.
Dip your tootsies in the tide, test the water
With your bucket and your spade it's a snorter
What a scoop for an on-the-spot reporter
On the hikin' track, Reichenbach Falls
Oh it's swell to swim in Switzerland
In the famous Sherlock Show.*

[During the dance break, ADLER and HUDSON fetch a chair each which are placed opposite about two or three metres apart. The pugilists, HOLMES and MORIARTY, move to their chairs. Naturally HUDSON is the second for HOLMES who is in the blue corner. WATSON is the referee who calls the boxers to the centre of the “ring”, gives brief instructions, the boxers “touch gloves, WATSON calls “Seconds out”, the bell sounds and the match begins. The men box in time to the music. The seconds fan their charges when they return at the end of the round and the fight continues. It’s a tie and the song is reprised.

The end of the song sees a chorus line of performers stepping out to exit with HOLMES the last to leave the stage and a look of horror appears on his face just before he departs.

BLACKOUT. Music tag plays. It ends and house lights come up]

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Song Number 7 Entr’acte

[As Entr’acte fades, house lights dim and curtain opens on an eerie moonlit night. Is there mist on the moor? In the darkness, HUDSON enters on one side and WATSON the other]

FX

Fearful wail of hound

HUDSON

[Solo light hits HUDSON who speaks as Dr Mortimer] “Mr Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound.” [Speaks as herself] And no prizes for guessing who plays the pooch in ... [Announcing] The Hound of the Baskervilles [Kill HUDSON’S spot. HUDSON exits and WATSON is lit]

WATSON

[Narrator] And so begins arguably the best-known and most-loved case of Mr Sherlock Holmes.

HOLMES

[Enters in gloom] Watson, I want you to investigate this case. [Kill WATSON’S spot]

WATSON

[Moves to HOLMES] Me? On my own?

HOLMES

Pack your pistol, depart for Devonshire and send me your sentences. Now what do we know so far?

WATSON

[Confident] Sir Charles Baskerville died of fright and his nephew Sir Henry Baskerville has just arrived from America.

HOLMES

Excellent. And what of the red herrings?

WATSON

[He’s been studying them] Well there’s the beekeeper at Baskerville Mall.

HOLMES

Hall, Baskerville Hall.

WATSON

[Carries on regardless] A Mrs Butterfly who staples Barrymores.

HOLMES

Mrs Barrymore’s the housekeeper. Stapleton collects butterflies.

WATSON

Her mother is a poisoner.

HOLMES

Her brother is a prisoner.

WATSON

[Still thinks he’s right] And that’s about it.

HOLMES

Excellent. But remember Dr Mortimer has a cocker spaniel, Mr Frankland of Lafter Hall a telescope, his daughter Laura is a typist with freckles and Miss Stapleton is really Mrs Stapleton with a curious lisp and a heaving bosom.

- WATSON** *[Just confirming]* So, Dr Cocker has a spaniel called Mortimer, Mr Telescope's laughing at his daughter's freckled typewriter and Mrs Stapleton is furious with her somewhat bristling Bristols.
- HOLMES** Bravo. *[Pats WATSON on shoulder]* Well good luck, old chap. *[Exiting]* I'm off back to London. *[Stops at edge of stage]* The case is all yours. *[Exits]*
- WATSON** *[To audience]* I can't believe Holmes would trust me to work alone. Me, all by myself on the moor where suddenly it's daytime.
[Daylight lighting comes up. ADLER as BERYL STAPLETON enters in a hurry, distressed. She is slim, elegant, tall, perfect figure, brunette]
- BERYL** Go back! Go straight back to London, instantly.
- WATSON** *[Thrown. He wasn't expecting this. Sotto voce]* Ah, not yet. I haven't solved the case.
- BERYL** *[Desperate]* For God's sake go back and never set foot upon the moor again. *[Suddenly changes character]* Hush, my brother is coming. *[All sweet and light]* Would you mind getting that orchid?
- S'TON** *[MORIARTY enters as STAPLETON. Puffing]* Ah, I see you two have met. Dr Watson, this is my sister, Beryl. *[WATSON raises hat or bows]*
- BERYL** *[Shocked]* Dr Watson? I thought you were Sir Henry Baskerville.
- WATSON** No, he's the chap whose uncle was recently scared to death by the hound of the Baskervilles.
- S'TON** Indeed he was. *[Taking BERYL]* Now come along, sister. *[They exit. Evil undertone]* Take care, Doctor.
- WATSON** *[Back as Narrator]* Now where was I? *[Counts using fingers]* The legend? Sir Charles dying of fright? His nephew Sir Henry? *[Hand to head]* Oh dear, I'm confused.
- LAURA** *[ADLER enters as LAURA LYONS. Extreme beauty, freckled, a very handsome woman. Angry]* Really, sir, what an extraordinary question.
- WATSON** *[Thrown again]* Miss Stapleton, please.
- LAURA** Miss Stapleton! I am Laura Lyons, typist, and author of the letter to Sir Henry Baskerville asking him to meet me the night he was frightened to death by that gigantic hound!
- WATSON** *[Despairing]* Oh madam, I'm confused.
- LAURA** Is there no such thing as a gentleman? *[Storms off]*
- WATSON** *[Upset]* I knew this would happen. Holmes entrusted the case to me and I've made a meal of it. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is a dog's breakfast.
- FX** *Fearful wail of hound*
- WATSON** What was that? *[Sees something]* There's that spy out here on the moor. *[Draws gun which is a pointed finger. Hears something]* Footsteps. *[Crouches. Pause. Impatient]* Come on, come on.
- HOLMES** *[Offstage]* It's a lovely evening, my dear Watson.
- WATSON** *[Stunned]* Holmes? *[Rises as HOLMES enters. WATSON delighted]* Holmes!
- HOLMES** And please be careful with that revolver.
- WATSON** *[Finger put away. They shake hands]* I never was more glad to see anyone in my life.
- HOLMES** Or more astonished.
- WATSON** *[Despairing]* Oh Holmes, this hound mystery is too much for my nerves. What is the meaning of it all?
- HOLMES** Murder, Watson – cold-blooded murder.
- MOR'IITY** *[Offstage gives a terrible scream, a prolonged yell of horror and anguish]*
- WATSON** The hound!

HOLMES Come Watson, come.
[HOLMES and WATSON jog on the spot. MORIARTY as escaped convict SELDEN enters, hurries centre and lies face down at their feet facing the audience]

HOLMES *[Puffing as he jogs]* Stapleton has beaten us, Watson. He's let the hound kill again.
WATSON *[Puffing as he jogs]* No, no, surely not! *[Stops. Points at SELDEN]* Hark! What is that?
[HOLMES kneels and makes discovery]

HOLMES *[Saddened]* It's Sir Henry Baskerville.
WATSON *[Distraught]* That brute, Stapleton! I shall never forgive myself.
SELDEN *[Head up, stage whisper]* Psst. I'm not Sir Henry.
HOLMES I am more to blame than you, Watson.
WATSON And we heard his scream – my God, that scream.
SELDEN *[Still stage whisper. Insistent]* I'm Selden, the escaped convict.
WATSON *[Wants revenge]* Where is Stapleton? He shall answer for this deed.
HOLMES He shall. I will see to that.
SELDEN *[Louder stage whisper]* I'm wearing Sir Henry's old clothes.
[HOLMES re-examines the body]

WATSON What can we do? *[HOLMES suddenly smiling and happy. Shocked]* Holmes?
HOLMES *[Leaps up and is deliriously happy. He dances, claps, laughs]* Oh glee, oh rapturous joy.
WATSON *[Stunned]* Holmes, are you mad?
HOLMES *[Pointing at SELDEN]* A beard! A beard! This man has a beard!
SELDEN *[Actually he doesn't. SELDEN has forgotten his beard, mutter]* Sorry. *[He reaches in his pocket and produces a false beard which he hurriedly holds on his face before dying – again]*

WATSON *[Thrilled]* Yes! He has ... he has ... *[Waiting for beard to be put in position]* a beard!
HOLMES It's not Sir Henry. It's the escaped convict, Selden. *[Delighted duo dance]*
SELDEN *[Aside to audience]* And they call themselves detectives. *[Dies again]*

WATSON I'm so glad you're here, Holmes. You'll know what to do next.
HOLMES *[Indicates one way]* We'll go to Stapleton's house and rescue his beautiful wife.
WATSON Is this the part where we help the woman with the heaving bosom?
HOLMES *[Indicates another way]* However, first we need to warn Sir Henry. *[Exiting]*
WATSON *[Tagging along]* But couldn't we rescue Mrs Stapleton first? Holmes?
[They exit and lights change to 221B setting. SELDEN exits. HUDSON enters and arranges chairs, dusts etc]

FX *Solo violin music begins*

HUDSON *[Thinking aloud]* Come on, Mr Holmes. It's no use you swanning round Devonshire when there's still a mountain of cases to get through.
HOLMES *[Enters]* Mrs Hudson, I'm back.
HUDSON *[Glad he's back]* Ah Mr Holmes. Do you realise ...
WATSON *[Enters very happy]* Mrs Hudson, isn't it wonderful? *[WATSON kisses her hand. She has no idea why]* Wonderful.
HUDSON *[Confused]* Er, yes. *[Looks at HOLMES who shrugs]*

FX *Solo violin music fades*

WATSON It is simply the best news ever. *[Indicating HOLMES]* Mr Sherlock Holmes is alive and back in the bosom of his family.
HUDSON *[Uncertain, still]* Well the Baskerville beast certainly was life-threatening.
WATSON *[Scoffs]* Not that pesky little pup. I'm talking about surviving the mighty Reichenbach Falls. *[Pause. The OTHERS don't know how to tell him. WATSON now confused]* What? *[Can't believe they've forgotten]* Have you forgotten Moriarty?

HOLMES I tried to explain, Watson. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* occurred *before* we left for Switzerland.

WATSON *[Stunned]* Before? You mean just now, we went back in time? *[They nod. He despairs]* No! No! *[Breaks down and is helped to sit]* Tell me it's not true.

HUDSON Come along, Doctor. Life goes on – *[Sarcastic]* if not this show.

WATSON But we have to stop the case of *The Final Problem*.

HOLMES *[Touching his arm]* Must dash old man. Chin up, there's a good fellow. *[Exits]*

WATSON *[Calling]* Holmes, wait! Don't cross the Channel. *[Louder]* Avoid Switzerland. *[His head slumps as he fails to save his friend]*

HUDSON Now then, Doctor; time you went back to your wife in Kensington. *[Helping him stand]* Up you get now. *[Quiet announcement]* *The Adventure of the Empty House*. *[HUDSON exits. General lighting for late afternoon comes up. WATSON narrates]*

WATSON *[Recovering]* And so life went on without my friend. Three years after his tragic demise I remain a humble GP yet still with a passion for solving mysteries.

FX *Street sounds of London in 1894. Crowd, horses, etc*

WATSON *[Wanders]* The latest occurred here in Park Lane. The victim was found dead in his locked room. *[Indicating]* There's the murder scene where the man's head was horribly mutilated. *[HOLMES as OLD MAN enters. He is a deformed – bent over – elderly bookseller wearing a top hat. He carries some imaginary books]*

WATSON This crime made me think, if only Holmes were here. *[Crash. WATSON accidentally bumps into the OLD MAN who cries out and drops his books. WATSON immediately picks them up and hands them back]* Oh I'm most terribly sorry, sir. Permit me to collect your books. *[OLD MAN snarls, takes books and exits. WATSON narrates again]* I had a good look at the murder mansion and then made my way home. *[Lighting changes to 221B although we're in the study of WATSON'S home in Kensington]*

MAID *[ADLER enters]* Dr Watson, a man with a very bad disguise wishes to see you.

WATSON Oh very well. *[Could sit at imaginary desk]* Show him in.

MAID Yes, Doctor. *[MAID exits and OLD MAN enters carrying books]*

OLD MAN *[Strange croaking voice]* You're surprised to see me, sir.

WATSON I am.

OLD MAN I came to thank the kind gentleman for picking up my imaginary books.

WATSON A mere trifle, sir.

OLD MAN With five volumes you could just fill the gap *[Nods in direction of imaginary bookshelf]* on that second shelf. *[WATSON turns to look at the imaginary shelf. OLD MAN removes topper and stands tall. WATSON turns back and is stunned]*

WATSON *[It's incredible]* Holmes? *[WATSON faints. HOLMES moves and helps him to sit]*

HOLMES *[Calling]* Mrs Hudson! *[Louder]* Mrs Hudson!

MAID *[ADLER enters]* I'm sorry, sir but we're in Kensington an' Mrs 'udson lives in Baker Street. You'll 'ave to yell much louder than that. *[Exits]*

HUDSON *[Bursts in puffing]* I ran all the way. *[Catches her breath. Sees WATSON is poorly]* Oh Doctor, what have you done *this* time? *[She attends to him]*

WATSON *[Almost delirious. He's talking about HOLMES]* I can't believe it. Is it really you?

HUDSON Of course it's me. Who'd you think it was?

WATSON Did you really miss that Swiss abyss?

HUDSON Pardon?

HOLMES I think he means me.

HUDSON *[Looks at HOLMES for the first time]* Oh. *[Realises and screams. Let's go of WATSON who slumps again]* Mr Holmes! *[Gets very excited and goes to give him a hug]* Oh Mr Holmes, is it really you? *[HOLMES not comfortable with all this affection]*

WATSON *[Has recovered so queues for a cuddle]* It is, Mrs Hudson, it is. *[Joins in – it's a group hug]* It really is my dear old friend.

HOLMES Steady on; *[Louder causing the hug to break up]* the pair of you.

HUDSON *[Suddenly back to normal]* Gentlemen, we're running very late. *[Serious]* We must move to the next case.

WATSON Mrs Hudson, we need to hear how Holmes survived the murderous Moriarty.

HUDSON But there are still many cases and *[Sees WATSON'S pleading eyes]* ... oh, all right, but kindly relate the short version, Mr Holmes.

HOLMES Harken unto history. *[They settle as HOLMES recalls the tale. Lighting fades to a spot only on HOLMES. Pause for the dramatic presentation]* On that precarious path, a heartbeat from death, I faced the murderous monster.

WATSON *[Spellbound]* I say.

HOLMES Moriarty's venomous visage flared before me.

HUDSON I did say 'short', Mr Holmes.

HOLMES *[Pause then quick denouement]* We fought, I feigned, he fell.

WATSON *[Hugely impressed]* Magnificent.

HUDSON Excellent. Now can we please ... *[Goes to move but is stopped as HOLMES continues]*

HOLMES Then an idea; criminals must think I was dead. I scaled the cliff and fled to foreign parts until, *[Accelerating]* three years later, I read of the Park Lane murder and here I am.

[Lighting back to the 221B scene]

WATSON *[Impressed]* Simply amazing.

HUDSON *[Standing, ready for business]* Well done, Mr Holmes, Now to the next case.

WATSON *[Protesting]* But we haven't solved this one.

HUDSON Gentlemen, please. *[They stare at her. She relents. Despairs]* Oh I give up. *[Snaps her announcement]* *The Adventure of the Empty House – Part Two.*

[Lighting dims to night. Quite dark. HUDSON exits. HOLMES leads WATSON on journey]

HOLMES Come, Watson – a journey through London.

WATSON But where are we going? *[They stop upstage]*

HOLMES To this empty house. Come inside. Shhh.

[They creep downstage as they move through the house to its front]

WATSON It's pitch-black in here.

[Lighting dims even more. They creep downstage towards an imaginary window, which is lit, on the apron of the stage. They whisper their speeches]

HOLMES *[Whisper]* Look through this imaginary window and tell me where we are.

WATSON *[Peers through window]* Righto, Holmes but ... *[Shocked]* Baker Street!

HOLMES We are opposite 221B.

WATSON But why?

HOLMES *[Pointing]* Look up at our old sitting-room.

WATSON *[Looks up. Startled]* Good heavens! It's you!

HOLMES It's a model.

WATSON *[Startled]* But it just moved.

HOLMES Every few minutes Mrs Hudson handles me from behind to confuse the watching criminals.

WATSON *[Thinking]* I'd be confused if Mrs Hudson handled me from behind.

HOLMES Hush, Moriarty's co-conspirator, Colonel Sebastian Moran, is about to enter.
[MORIARTY enters as MORAN and creeps downstage towards the DUO who move to either side of window. MORAN is elderly, bald with a grizzled moustache. He wears an evening dress shirt under an open overcoat. He carries an imaginary rifle. He stops between the two men]

MORAN *[Gruff whisper]* Now Mister Sherlock Holmes, this bullet's for you. *[Crouching, MORAN aims rifle at model in 221B opposite]* Cheerio. *[Fires rifle]* Bang!
[Sudden light on scene as HOLMES grabs MORAN who struggles and cries out – "Hey!" etc]

HOLMES *[Calling]* Police! *[HOLMES could blow a police-whistle or it's blown off-stage]*
[HUDSON and ADLER rush in as thinly-disguised police officers – remember it's very dark]

LESTRADE *[Played by HUDSON, deep voice]* We're here, Mr Holmes.

HOLMES Inspector Lestrade.

LESTRADE It's good to have you back in London, sir.

HOLMES I think when you find the bullet just fired at my *dummy* ...

MORAN Dummy! *[Vicious]* You cunning fiend, Holmes.

HOLMES You'll find it matches the bullet which killed Ronald Adair in Park Lane.
[Angry roar from MORAN]

LESTRADE Very clever, Mr Holmes.

ADLER *[Pathetic attempt at deep voice]* Yes, very clever, Mr 'olmes. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*

Song Number 7 Back In Town

WATSON *Our boy is back in town*
QUINTET *Our boy is back in town*
Our boy is back in town.

[HUDSON and ADLER escort the grumbling murderer away but stop when HOLMES speaks]

HOLMES And don't take all night, Lestrade. Mrs Hudson's in a flap about being late.

HUDSON *[As herself]* You can say that again.
[HUDSON, ADLER and MORAN exit. HOLMES and WATSON head back to 221B]

FX *Solo violin music*
[Lights come up in 221B. It's evening. HOLMES and WATSON enter or are already there]

WATSON I say Holmes, did you know Inspector Lestrade is really a woman?

HOLMES All I know, Watson, is that Mrs Hudson is about to enter this very room.

HUDSON *[Enters agitated]* Gentlemen, we have a crisis. There are still thirty-three cases left.

FX *[FADE MUSIC]*

DUO *[Shocked]* Thirty-three!

HUDSON I've been thinking. Why don't we tell more than one case at a time?

WATSON *[Aghast]* Mrs Hudson that is preposterous.

HOLMES Tricky but possible.

HUDSON It's definitely possible and I'll prove it in *[Announcing]* *The Adventure of the Norwood Builder*.

M'LANE *[MORIARTY enters as 27 year old solicitor with flaxen hair, John McFARLANE. Distressed]*
Mr Holmes, I'm John McFarlane and am about to be arrested for murder.

HUDSON *[Indicating McFARLANE]* This man is innocent.

WATSON Oh Mrs Hudson, please don't interrupt. We're going as fast as we can.

HUDSON *[Indignant]* Hudson? I'm Mrs McFarlane, the mother of this fine, young man. *[To son]* Don't worry my boy. *[To HOLMES]* The murdered man was a beast who hated me because I once spurned his advances.

M'LANE But Mother, the police found my thumbprint in the murdered man's house.
WATSON *[Remembers]* Of course! The house where Holmes made us shout very loud.
HOLMES Kindly join in the cry of 'Fire'? One, two, three.
TUTTI *[Loud]* Fire!
HOLMES Again.
TUTTI *[Louder]* Fire!
HOLMES Once more.
TUTTI *[Louder still]* Fire!
HOLMES Then a door *[Pointing]* will open to reveal a wizened old man.
[General day lighting comes up]
[ADLER as ELSIE CUBITT, young American wife in dressing-gown rushes to McFARLANE who hasn't a clue what's going on. She is distraught]
ELSIE No, Hilton, stay here! Put your gun away. Forget this terrible business. Stay!
M'LANE Madam, who are you?
HUDSON *[As HUDSON]* She's Elsie Cubitt.
WATSON She's not in this case.
HUDSON She is if we tell two tales at once
M'LANE *[As the actor]* Do you want me to skip to where I'm Hilton Cubitt, a Norfolk farmer with a young American bride?
HUDSON Yes, keep moving. *[Announces]* *The Adventure of the Dancing Men.* *[Exits]*
CUBITT *[MORIARTY is CUBITT, tall, ruddy, clean-shaven. To his wife]* We'll return to Norfolk, my dear, and let Mr Holmes sort out those funny drawings.
ELSIE *[Exiting with her husband]* Oh Hilton, please don't ever leave me alone again.
[Couple exit and HOLMES moves centre followed by a bewildered WATSON]
WATSON I think this is where we catch the train to Norfolk.
HOLMES *[Turns suddenly to WATSON]* Only to learn that Mr and Mrs Cubitt have been shot.
WATSON *[Remembers]* Yes! The police reckon she shot him and then herself.
HOLMES It's about those stick figure drawings – the dancing men. Each figure is a letter of the alphabet.
WATSON And you've cracked the cipher, Holmes.
HOLMES I'll write a note in code to the other man involved in the shooting.
WATSON That will lure him to us. *[Pointing]* And here he is.
[Not quite. MORIARTY enters as JONAS OLDACRE the old man who tried to fake his own murder in The Adventure of the Norwood Builder. He is wizened, crafty, odious, shifty]
O'ACRE *[Coughing]* The smoke, the smoke. There's a fire! *[Continues coughing]*
WATSON That's not him.
HOLMES It's Jonas Oldacre the man who faked his own murder in the *The Adventure of the Norwood Builder.*
O'ACRE I heard you all cry 'Fire'!
WATSON Go back. We've already done your case.
O'ACRE *[Arguing]* I come on when everyone calls "Fire!"
HOLMES Kindly leave. This is Norfolk not Norwood!
O'ACRE *[Exiting, angry]* Well somebody definitely yelled 'Fire'! *[Exits]*
[ALDER enters riding a scooter. This 'modern yet old' model has a bell and she rings it. ADLER is Miss VIOLET SMITH, a tall, graceful, young music teacher]
SMITH Mr Holmes, I am Miss Violet Smith, a teacher of music.
WATSON *[Minor panic]* No, you're too early.
HOLMES In the country, I presume, from your complexion.

HUDSON *[Enters, announces] The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist. [Exits]*

SMITH I'm being followed by a bearded man who disappears.

HOLMES I'm a tad busy at the moment.

WATSON *[Only just remaining sane] You're busy!*

SMITH Whenever, Mr Holmes. *[Pedalling/pushing off] Toodle pip. [Exits ringing bell]*

HOLMES Help me out here, Watson.

WATSON *[Struggling] Ah, we travel to Surrey to rescue Miss Smith from a forced marriage to Mr Woodley who has just been shot by Mr Williamson who plays the violin. [MORIARTY staggers in distressed. Has he been shot?]*

HOLMES And here he is.

WATSON That's not the wounded bridegroom.
[MORIARTY is Dr HUXTABLE THORNEYCROFT, a large pompous man]

T'CROFT Help me, help me. *[Half-collapses and is attended to by WATSON]*

HOLMES It's Dr Huxtable Thorneycroft.

HUDSON *[Enters, announces] The Adventure of the Priory School.*

WATSON *[His medical diagnosis of Thorneycroft] Absolute exhaustion.*

HUDSON *[Goes to and assists THORNEYCROFT to exit] It's not easy for anyone, Doctor. We're all under pressure. Come along, sir. [They exit]*

ELSIE *[ADLER in dressing-gown bursts in] I've been shot. It's all those dancing men. [Exits]*

HOLMES Watson, I think I'm lost.

WATSON Well one of Dr Huxtable's pupils has been abducted.

HOLMES Then let us examine the Derbyshire moors.

WATSON *[Finds some tracks] Here! The trail of a bicycle.*

HOLMES *[Inspecting] But not the bicycle. This is a Dunlop. We seek a Palmer.*

SMITH *[Enters scooting. She rings her bell] See you in Surrey, Mr Holmes. [Exits]*

WATSON She's taking the long way home.

HOLMES Come Watson, on to the *Fighting Cock Inn*.

WATSON Refreshments?

HOLMES *[Starts to move] That's where the abducted boy is hidden.*

HUDSON *[Enters holding up a hand] Stop! [Detectives freeze. HUDSON announces] The abducted boy is safe but not so the women in The Adventure of Black Peter. [Suddenly HUDSON, as the wife of Peter CAREY, starts screaming and rushing around the stage. ADLER, as CAREY'S daughter, enters screaming and runs to her mother. Women are chased by CAREY played by MORIARTY who enters in a rage. CAREY is a retired whaling ship captain, a drunkard who beats his wife and daughter. CAREY mimes brandishing a stick]*

CAREY *[Violent] Come here you rotten women. [The women use HOLMES and WATSON as a shield] I'll flog you within an inch of your life!*

HUDSON *[In-between running, hiding and screaming] Do something, Mr Holmes. [WATSON is confused thinking about the cases]*

HOLMES *[Help me out here, old chap] Watson?*

CAREY I'll kill the both of you!

WATSON Is this the drunken captain of a whaling ship who beats his wife and daughter?

WOMEN Yes!

WATSON Apparently he gets harpooned in his shed. *[Unison foot-stamp]*
[CAREY suddenly freezes, faces front and holds his arms out as the imaginary harpoon rips into his chest. His eyes and mouth are wide open. He was harpooned in the story. Face grotesque. The WOMEN take one arm each and drag him off]

HUDSON *[As she exits, announces] The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton. [Lights change to 221B and HOLMES and WATSON go home]*

FX *Solo violin music*

WATSON But, Holmes, who is this Milverton?

HOLMES The worst man in London, the king of all blackmailers.

WATSON Then why is he coming here?

HOLMES Because I represent a beautiful woman soon to marry an Earl; but the marriage will not take place unless Milverton is paid for letters she wrote long ago.

WATSON I think I hear him now.

FX *Music fades*
[MORIARTY enters as MILVERTON, 50, plump, perpetual frozen smile, gold-rimmed glasses]

M'TON Mr Holmes, is the lady prepared to pay seven thousand pounds?

HOLMES She can only afford two thousand.

M'TON *[Scoffs]* Then the Earl gets her letters. The marriage is off. *[Starts to exit]*

HOLMES *[Action man]* Watson, stop him!
[WATSON and HOLMES move but freeze when MILVERTON produces an imaginary gun]

M'TON Not very original, Mr Holmes. *[Exits laughing]*

WATSON We have failed the lady, Holmes. The blackmailer has won. *[Shocked]* Holmes?

HOLMES *[Putting on burglar's mask]* I mean to burgle Milverton's house tonight.

WATSON *[Produces his own mask]* When do we start?

HOLMES *[Slaps/pats WATSON'S arm]* Good show, old man. The raid is afoot.

FX *Music of With Cat-Like Tread from The Pirates of Penzance*
[Lighting changes to dark night and whole stage is so lit. In time with the music, HOLMES and WATSON of Burglars Inc creep centre into MILVERTON'S house. They whisper their lines]

WATSON And you're sure we're in Milverton's house?

HOLMES Yes.

WATSON And you're sure he's asleep?

HOLMES Shhh. Someone's coming.

FX *Music fades*
[MORIARTY as Jonas OLDACRE rushes in]

O'ACRE *[Loud]* Where's the fire? The fire?

H & W *[Meaning HOLMES and WATSON together]* Shhhh.

O'ACRE *[Whispering]* Sorry. *[Desperate whisper]* Where's the fire? The fire?

WATSON Get off! You're in the wrong case.

O'ACRE *[Exiting, whispering]* Well somebody yelled 'Fire!'

SMITH *[Scooting through the house and rings her bell]* I love your mask, Mr Holmes.

HOLMES *[Touch peeved with WATSON]* Any more cases, Watson?

WATSON *[About to cry]* I don't think so.

HOLMES I'll break into Milverton's safe. *[Moves a little]* You watch the door.
[WATSON moves towards imaginary door but is suddenly startled]

WATSON Look out! It's Milverton!
[The men scamper together and pretend to hide behind an imaginary curtain]

HOLMES Quick! Behind this imaginary curtain.
[MORIARTY enters as MILVERTON wearing a dressing-gown]

M'TON *[Normal voice]* Well, you're nearly half an hour late.

WATSON *[Whispering still]* We weren't late.

HOLMES *[Whispering]* Not us. Her.
[ADLER enters as society LADY, unnamed in the Canon, who is yet another of MILVERTON'S victims. She wears a full-length cape with hood]

LADY *[Normal volume]* It is I, another woman whose life you have ruined.

M'TON Don't think you can bully me. I could call my servants and have you arrested.
LADY You will ruin no more lives as you have ruined mine. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
HUDSON *[Enters whispering]* Gentlemen!

SONG NUMBER 9 She's Got a Gun

HUDSON *Look out! She's got a gun*
ADLER *Look out! I've got a gun*
QUINTET *Look out! She's got a gun.*
[HUDSON exits]

M'TON *[Fearful]* No! Don't shoot!
LADY *[Points finger]* Take that, you cad! *[Points finger as if firing]*
H & W *[Normal volume]* Bang. *[MILVERTON claps his chest after each 'Bang' as the bullets strike]*
LADY And that.
H & W Bang.
LADY And that.
H & W Bang.
LADY And that.
H & W Bang.
LADY And that.
H & W Bang.
[MILVERTON collapses then struggles to his feet]
H & W Bang.
LADY *[Reprimanding the firing-squad]* I haven't fired it yet.
HOLMES *[Whispering]* Sorry.
WATSON *[Whispering]* I think I'm out of ammo.
LADY And that.
H & W Bang. *[MILVERTON collapses]*
LADY *[Exiting]* Nice mask, Mr Holmes.
[OTHERS freeze. Spot HUDSON who enters and kill all other lights. The three males exit in the darkness. HUDSON wears a Napoleon hat and tucks one hand inside her jacket a la Bonaparte 'imself. Announces]

HUDSON *[French accent]* *The Adventure of the Six Napoleons* or *Le aventure les six Napoleons*. *[Under solo spot becomes the narrator with lousy French accent]* Someone was stealing busts of za famous French emperor. Five busts were stolen then smashed. One man was murdered. Monsieur Holmes purchased the sixth bust in which was hidden za famous black pearl of za Borgias. And now *[Announces in normal voice]* *The Mystery of the Second Stain*. *[Exits]*
[Lights up on 221B. HOLMES and WATSON enter]

WATSON *[Excited]* Holmes, can it be? Our visitor is the British Prime Minister.
[MORIARTY enters as the PM. Stiff bows]

PM Gentlemen, a letter from the Kaiser has been stolen.

HOLMES Have you informed the police?

PM Good Lord, no. We must keep the matter secret otherwise it means war.

WATSON I say.

HOLMES There are three secret agents who would steal this letter. One has just been murdered by his mad French wife. That is the clue to solve this mystery and maintain peace in our time.

PM *[PM delighted and claps]* Bravo, Mr Holmes.

HUDSON *[Enters]* Yes bravo indeed but now ... *[Announcing]* *The Adventure of the Abbey Grange.* *[HUDSON and the PM exit]*

WATSON Another murder in Kent, Holmes.

HOLMES Come, Watson, come! The game is afoot!
[General daytime lighting comes up as HOLMES and WATSON move centre into the house where the murder took place]

WATSON *[Quietly thrilled]* I've been dying for you to say that.

HOLMES Sir Eustace Brackenstall had his head knocked in with a poker.
[ADLER enters as LADY MARY BRACKENSTALL. She is Australian from Adelaide and only came to Britain 18 months ago. MARY is blonde, has a graceful figure and a beautiful face except for a black eye seen as an eye-patch]

LADY B Gentlemen, I am the unhappy widow.

HOLMES You have injuries, madam?

LADY B I grew up in Australia but the prim English life is not for me. My maid will tell you so. *[Calls]* Coo-ee.
[HUDSON enters as the elderly maid THERESA wearing her Aussie bush hat complete with dangling corks. She stands beside her mistress]

WATSON And is your maid also from Australia? *[Everyone looks at WATSON]* What?

HOLMES Pray tell exactly what happened.

LADY B Three men burst in, bound and gagged me then attacked and killed my husband.

THERESA *[Strine]* I even saw the flamin' bushwhackers from m'bedroom window.

HOLMES Thank you, ladies. I will make further inquiries.
[The parties move apart with both pairs lit]

LADY B Do you think Mr Holmes believed me?

THERESA Course he did. *[WOMEN freeze]*

HOLMES Three wine glasses but only one with beeswax; the bell-pull cut and the ice on the pond is broken.

WATSON Brilliant Holmes; *[Pause]* but what does it mean?

HOLMES I'll know when I meet Captain Croker.
[MORIARTY enters as Captain CROKER, very tall young man, golden moustache, blue eyes and sun-tanned from many years at sea]

CROKER And here I am.

HOLMES Give us a true account of everything that happened at Abbey Grange last night.
[Lights up on women]

THERESA It's Captain Croker I feel sorry for.

LADY B *[Distraught]* He was the only man I ever loved. *[WOMEN freeze]*

CROKER I fell in love with Mary but she married Lord Brackenstall who beat her. I went to see Mary last night. The drunken husband burst in and struck her. I fought him in a fair fight and my blow did him in.

LADY B *[Despairs]* Oh.

CROKER So will you call the police?

HOLMES Let us use the great British jury. Do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty?

WATSON *[Definite]* Not guilty, m'lud.
[MARY and THERESA thrilled. CROKER crosses to MARY and they embrace. Fade lights on them as they exit. HUDSON removes her hat and joins the men at 221B]

HUDSON *[As herself]* I must say, Mr Holmes, there are times when you ‘forget’ to report certain incidents to the police.

HOLMES I am not the law, but I represent justice so far as my feeble powers go.

WATSON Despite your denials, Holmes, there *is* a touch of emotion in your soul.
[All are amused]

HOLMES And what a pleasant note on which to conclude our case-review.

HUDSON *[Upset]* Conclude?

WATSON Yes Mrs Hudson, we’ve finally reached the end.

HUDSON Can’t you two count? There are still twenty-one to go.

TRIO *[Shocked]* Twenty-one? *[Unison foot-stamp]*

HUDSON Yes but I have an idea. Over the years, Mr Holmes, I’ve met most of your visitors. I could mention their names to see if you can identify their case?

HOLMES A test, by Jove.

WATSON Well really, Holmes, I have the advantage as I recorded the cases.

HOLMES *[Indicates]* Perhaps Professor Moriarty should join us.

MOR’ITY *[Enters]* Perhaps he should, Holmes. But beware of the criminal *mastermind*.
[TRIO line up across the stage as if on the set of a TV quiz show]

HUDSON Now gentlemen, hands on buzzers and remember, one point for a correct answer and one point off if you’re wrong. Question one.

ADLER *[Dramatic entry and cries]* Stop! *[OTHERS turn and face her]* How dare you!

HOLMES Ah, Miss Adler, where would a quiz show be without the token floozie?

ADLER *[Angry]* How dare you turn these literary gems into some tawdy circus.

WATSON It’s only a quiz, madam, in pursuit of matters trivial.

ADLER Trivial pursuit! Have you no respect for classic mystery fiction and the great man himself?

HUDSON Look Missy, without some radical pruning this show’ll run past midnight.

ADLER You are treating Sir Arthur with contempt.

MOR’ITY Sir Arthur?

HOLMES I believe she refers to the long dead Arthur Conan Doyle.

WATSON Oh please, he was some mediocre literary agent who helped promote my riverting tales.

MOR’ITY He’s the rat who pushed me off a cliff.

ADLER The cases solved by Sherlock Holmes and recorded by Dr Watson must not be dismissed in so cavalier a fashion.

HUDSON Thank you, Miss Adler or is it now Mrs Norton?

ADLER These marvellous accounts of forensic deduction should be saluted with dignity.

WATSON *[Has changed his tune]* Well said, madam.

ADLER You’ve omitted many and skimmed over the rest.

HUDSON Look, the car park closes in ten minutes.

ADLER You’ve made Dr Watson a figure of fun.

WATSON Yes but it’s friendly satire.

ADLER And you’ve ignored the vibrant melodrama of the work.

HOLMES Women are never to be entirely trusted.

ADLER Let us present at least one authentic re-telling of a case investigated by the world’s greatest consulting detective?

OTHERS Hear, hear! *[Unison foot-stamp]*

HUDSON *[Back as announcer]* And now, finally and most sincerely, *The Valley of Fear*.

- FX** *Dramatic chords*
[MORIARTY, HUDSON and ADLER exit. Lighting changes to centre area where it's a sunny winter's day. We are in Sussex and HOLMES and WATSON move centre]
- WATSON** *[Indicating imaginary house]* So this is the ancient manor house of Birlstone.
HOLMES The scene of a brutal murder. *[Indicates imaginary body]* And here, the body.
[HOLMES then WATSON look down at an imaginary body]
- WATSON** Good heavens. His face is unrecognizable.
HOLMES A sawn-off shot-gun, Watson, would make a mess of any face.
WATSON His pyjamas suggest he was about to retire. *[Looks off]* Someone's coming.
[MORIARTY enters as BARKER, 45, tall, clean shaven, thick, strong body, black eyebrows]
- BARKER** Gentlemen, I am Cecil Barker, a close friend of the deceased, Mr Jack Douglas.
HOLMES The facts, please, Mr Barker. *[WATSON moves to imaginary window]*
BARKER It was near midnight when I heard a muffled sound. I rushed in and poor Douglas was lying as you see him now.
- WATSON** The murderer has slipped out this window and waded across the moat.
HOLMES I wonder how he entered the house with the draw-bridge raised?
WATSON *[Spots print]* Look! A footprint made in blood.
HOLMES *[Examining body]* How strange. His wedding-ring is missing and there's a symbol burnt upon his arm.
- BARKER** That was from his time in America.
HOLMES *[Moving to one side]* And what have we here; *one* dumb-bell.
BARKER Mrs Douglas is ready to be interviewed.
HOLMES And did you know Mrs Douglas before her marriage?
BARKER No.
HOLMES But you have seen a good deal of her since?
BARKER *[Getting angry]* I have seen a good deal of *[Pointing at body]* him, since.
[ADLER enters. She is Mrs DOUGLAS, 30, tall, beautiful, reserved, composed]
- WATSON** *[Informing HOLMES with nod of head]* Holmes; the widow.
[HOLMES and WATSON move to ADLER]
- MRS B** Have you discovered anything?
HOLMES Did your husband speak of America and any danger he faced?
MRS B Rarely but I knew by the way he looked at unexpected strangers, he had powerful enemies.
- WATSON** Was there one thing he mentioned?
MRS B He used to ask, *[Imitates husband]* "Are we never to get out of the Valley of Fear?"
HOLMES Thank you, madam. We will detain you no longer.
[She bows then makes a sweeping exit with BARKER following]
- WATSON** She's a beautiful woman, Holmes.
HOLMES They're lying.
WATSON Lying? Who's lying?
HOLMES They claim the assassin had less than a minute to remove the wedding ring and leave a note and footprint before escaping across the water.
- WATSON** But there *are* no footprints beyond the water.
HOLMES And the one on the windowsill was put there deliberately to fool the police.
WATSON But what of Douglas being afraid and this *Valley of Fear*?
HOLMES An invention by the widow and her lover.
WATSON Holmes, can you prove these claims?
HOLMES I can with the aid of your umbrella.

- WATSON** Umbrella?
[Lights change to night. HOLMES leads WATSON to one side]
- HOLMES** *[Whisper]* Crouch in these bushes, Watson and keep quiet.
- WATSON** *[Crouching, whispering]* It's the middle of the night and I'm freezing.
- HOLMES** Using your umbrella I hooked a parcel from the moat.
- WATSON** Is that why Barker was sent a note about draining the moat?
- HOLMES** *[Pointing]* And there he is. Come on.
[MORIARTY as BARKER enters and is lit. He mimes leaning out of a window and dragging in an imaginary parcel. HOLMES and WATSON burst in on BARKER who is angry]
- BARKER** What the devil is the meaning of this?
- HOLMES** The bundle you've just retrieved was weighed down by a dumb-bell and contains boots, clothes and a knife, Mr Barker. Kindly explain.
- BARKER** I will say nothing.
- MRS B** *[Enters]* Yes, Cecil, you have done enough for us.
- HOLMES** I strongly recommend, madam, that you ask *Mr Douglas* to tell his own story.
[OTHER males stunned]
- WATSON** *[To HOLMES]* I say, old chap, Douglas is dead.
- MRS B** Tell them, Jack. It's best this way.
- BARKER** *[Nodding]* I'll tell you the story of The Valley of Fear. *[Lights dim but come up on BARKER]* I have done nothing to be ashamed of but there are men who hate me and want me dead. Last night one sprang at me with the sawn-off shot-gun. We struggled, both barrels exploded and the killer lost his face.
- MRS B** It's all true.
- BARKER** We dressed the body in my night-clothes and buried his in the moat. We hoped the world would believe I was dead allowing us to slip away with a new identity. And that, gentlemen, is the tragedy at Birlstone Manor.
[Lights fade and HUDSON enters and is lit. OTHERS exit and change costumes]
- HUDSON** *[Announcing]* And now the final flashback. In the freezing winter of 1875, rural Pennsylvania was a harsh land with much violent crime. Men formed brotherhoods but some were more interested in greed and corruption; murder was rife. The police were powerless, the citizens afraid and woe betide any member of the brotherhood who betrayed their Lodge.
[MORIARTY enters and is lit. The actors in this mini play are McMURDO – Moriarty, ETTIE – Adler, McGINTY – Watson, BALDWIN – Holmes and STANGER - Hudson]
One day a stranger came to town which is where we begin our tale with Jack McMurdo looking for a boarding-house.
[Lights down on HUDSON who exits. Lights up on small area a la 221B. This is the interior of the home of Jacob Shaftner and his daughter ETTIE. McMURDO enters well wrapped against the cold. He approaches the imaginary door and knocks. ETTIE enters and mimes opening the door. ETTIE is 19, blonde, beautiful and of German extraction]
- McMURDO** *[Touch of the Blarney]* Well, I never did see a more beautiful picture.
- ETTIE** I thought it was father. Come in. I expect him back every minute.
[McMURDO enters house and continues to admire ETTIE]
- McMURDO** I'm Jack McMurdo and your house was recommended. I thought it might suit me – and now I know it will.
- ETTIE** *[Smiling]* I'm Miss Ettie Shaftner and I run this house. *[Couple freeze]*
- HUDSON** *[Is lit – announces]* And now let us meet two Scowrers, the nastiest men in town.
[HUDSON exits. Lights up elsewhere as McGINTY and BALDWIN are lit]
- McGINTY** What do you know of this new fella, McMurdo?

BALDWIN He's on the run from the police because he killed some guy in Chicago.

McGINTY Good. The Scowrers need men like him. Where's he staying?

BALDWIN With old Jacob.

McGINTY With your Ettie? You're a trusting mug. If McMurdo's as flash as people say, he'll steal your Ettie from under y'nose.
[BALDWIN seethes and lights fade coming up on the couple in the house]

McMURDO Ettie, acushla, you have won my heart.

ETTIE Hush, Jack. You only met me yesterday.

McMURDO I love you, Ettie and I'll go on saying so until you say 'yes'.

ETTIE My father will not approve.

McMURDO Let me take you back home to the sweet valleys of County Monaghan.

ETTIE No, Jack. And you must be wary of Ted Baldwin and the Scowrers.

McMURDO *[Kneels and takes her hand]* No harm shall ever come to you, Ettie.
[Suddenly BALDWIN enters and frightens ETTIE]

ETTIE *[Backing away]* Mr Baldwin, you're early.

BALDWIN *[Snarling and indicating the kneeling suitor]* Who is this?

ETTIE He's a new boarder, Mr McMurdo.

BALDWIN Maybe Miss Ettie has told you how it is between us.

McMURDO I didn't understand there was any relationship.

BALDWIN *[Threatening]* Well it's a fine evening for a walk.

McMURDO I'm in no humour for a walk.

BALDWIN Then maybe for a fight.

McMURDO *[Springing to his feet]* That I am.

ETTIE For God's sake, Jack.

BALDWIN Oh, it's Jack, is it?

ETTIE Oh, Ted, be reasonable.

BALDWIN *[At McMURDO]* I'll get even with you. You'll wish you never set foot in this house. *[To ETTIE]* As to you, Ettie, you'll come back to me on your knees. D'ye hear me, girl? *[LIGHTS fade on house. BALDWIN exits]*

FX *Hubbub of men talking. Drinking*

HUDSON *[Lit as announcer]* The initiation ceremonies of the Scowrers are not for the feint-hearted. You have been warned. *[Light fades, she exits]*
[LIGHTS come up on McGINTY at a Scowrers meeting. BALDWIN enters]

BALDWIN I tell you, I don't trust McMurdo.

McGINTY Well the new policeman reckons McMurdo shot that fella in Chicago.

BALDWIN What of it?

McGINTY The men look up to a killer. And I want him as part of the Scowrers. *[BALDWIN scowls and McGINTY addresses the imaginary men]* Brothers.

FX *Hubbub sounds fade*

BALDWIN Come forward, McMurdo. *[McMURDO enters]*

McGINTY John McMurdo, are you already a member of the Ancient Order of Freeman?
[McMURDO nods] Is your Lodge No. 29, Chicago? *[McMURDO nods]*

BALDWIN Dark nights are unpleasant.

McMURDO Yes, for strangers to travel.

BALDWIN The clouds are heavy.

McMURDO Yes, a storm is approaching.

McGINTY Well, brother, are you ready to be tested?

McMURDO I am.

BALDWIN Can you bear pain?

McMURDO As well as another.

McGINTY Test him.

[Using some special effect, or mimed, McMURDO'S bare arm is branded with a pretend-hot iron. BALDWIN is the brander and really enjoys inflicting pain. We watch McMURDO as the searing heat takes effect. He makes as if to faint, bites his lip and clenches his fists]

McMURDO I can take more than that.

McGINTY *[Applauding]* Welcome brother McMurdo. *[Helps remove blindfold. McMURDO examines his new tattoo]* You are now one of us. *[Addressing gathering]* Brothers, there's one man in this town that wants trimming up. The newspaper editor has opened his mouth against us again. Who will volunteer for the job?

McMURDO I should take it as an honour to be chosen to help the Lodge.

McGINTY I don't want him killed. Just give him a pretty severe warning.

BALDWIN Right, come on. McMurdo, you stand guard.

[Lights dim on meeting and come up C where HUDSON is lit as a man called STANGER. As this is a "serious" re-telling, HUDSON plays this role straight]

STANGER The honest citizens in this town are afraid to speak up. I hope my editorials will give them courage. But attacking the Scowrers is risky.

[BALDWIN enters with imaginary club and attacks the old man. McMURDO stands nearby]

BALDWIN Right, Stanger, reign of terror is it? *[Mimes striking STANGER]*

STANGER *[Is frail and no match for BALDWIN]* Help! Help me! *[Continues to plead]*

[One-sided, violent fight takes place. Chair is knocked over. BALDWIN is ruthless and brutal]

BALDWIN How's this for law and order, hey?

McMURDO *[Races in and calls]* You'll kill the man! Drop it!

BALDWIN *[Shocked and angry]* Curse you! Who are you to interfere? Stand back!

[BALDWIN raises his club to attack again]

McMURDO *[Produces gun and points it at BALDWIN]* Stand back yourself! I'll blow your face in if you lay a hand on me.

[Tense moment as BALDWIN stares down McMURDO. BALDWIN backs down and runs out. McMURDO goes to help old man]

STANGER What kind of a Scowrer shows mercy? Leave me and thank you.

[HUDSON exits. McMURDO goes home and mimes reading/writing a letter. ETTIE enters, tip-toes forward and touches him lightly on the shoulder. She gets the fright of her life as McMURDO leaps up and grasps her throat. First McMURDO is astonished and then he is filled with joy but ETTIE has seen a dark side of the man she loves]

McMURDO It's you! Come, my darling, let me make it up to you.

ETTIE *[Backing away]* What's come over you, Jack? Why were you so scared of me?

McMURDO Sure, I was thinking of other things.

ETTIE No, no, it was more than that, Jack. Let me see the letter.

McMURDO Ah, Ettie, I couldn't do that.

ETTIE *[Despairs]* It's to another woman, your wife!

McMURDO I'm not married, Ettie, I swear it.

ETTIE Well then why will you not show me the letter?

McMURDO Acushla. It's the business of the Lodge and I'm under oath not to show it. Sit here by me, then. *[She sits and he kisses her]* Now your mind is easy again, is it not?

ETTIE How can it ever be easy when I know you are a criminal among criminals? McMurdo the Scowrer.

McMURDO Well dear, it's not as bad as you think.

- ETTIE** *[Despairs]* Give it up, Jack. For my sake, for God's sake, give it up. *[Falls on her knees]* I beg it of you on my bended knees.
- McMURDO** Sure, my darlin', you don't know what you're asking. You don't suppose the Lodge would let a man go free with all its secrets.
- ETTIE** We could run away; to Philadelphia or New York or to England. *[Jack amused]*
- McMURDO** *[Serious]* The Lodge has a long arm but give me six months. I'll work it out so I can leave without being ashamed.
- ETTIE** *[Hugs him]* Oh Jack, that's wonderful. That's a promise now.
[He nods, she exits. MCMURDO studies the letter then moves to see the Scowrers. Lights dim and come up on narrator HUDSON]
- HUDSON** *[Is lit]* But what was in that letter? Does Jack McMurdo really love his Ettie? And is there murder afoot?
[Lights up on Scowrers as McMURDO enters]
- McMURDO** Worshipful Master, I have information that powerful organizations in this State have bound themselves together for our destruction. *[OTHERS react]* At this very moment there is a detective, Birdy Edwards, at work here in our valley collecting the evidence which may put a rope around our necks. *[More reaction]*
- BALDWIN** I've heard of Birdy Edwards. He's the best.
- McGINTY** Does anyone know him by sight?
- McMURDO** I do. *[Smiling]* I met Birdy Edwards and he said he's a reporter for a New York paper and wants information on the Scowrers and their outrages. I gave him some details and ...
- BALDWIN** You did what?
- McMURDO** I made it up to string him along and now he wants more.
- McGINTY** So what's your plan?
- McMURDO** I'll get Edwards to come to my house tonight and give him some fake papers. Once he starts reading, I'll grab his pistol arm and yell for you.
- McGINTY** It's a good plan. The Lodge will owe you a debt for this. Right, let's go.
[Lighting down on the SCOWRERS and up in McMURDO'S house. Men cross into the lit area]
- McMURDO** Now you brothers wait here.
- BALDWIN** Maybe he won't come. Maybe he'll get a sniff of danger.
- McMURDO** He'll come. He is as eager to come as you can be to see him.
- FX** *Three loud knocks on the door*
- McMURDO** Hush! Not a sound for your lives!
[SCOWRERS take out their guns as McMURDO moves out of the light or exits. We hear a murmur of conversation. Suddenly McMURDO re-enters and puts a finger to his lips]
- McGINTY** *[Whispers]* Well? Is he here? Is Birdy Edwards here?
- McMURDO** *[Slowly]* Yes, Birdy Edwards is here. I am Birdy Edwards.
[Stunned silence. Pause. Suddenly ETTIE appears pointing rifle/gun aimed at the Scowrers. McGINTY threatens then cowers and falls back]
- McMURDO** I was chosen to break up your gang and thank God, I am the winner. I never killed a man in Chicago. I pretended the law was after me.
- McGINTY** You blasted traitor!
- McMURDO** Never again will I set foot in the Valley of Fear.
[Lights fade on the Scowrers who exit. Lights up on HUDSON as herself and the narrator]
- HUDSON** Not long after, Miss Ettie Shafter and Mr Birdy Edwards were wed and spent several happy years together until Ettie died. McGinty met his fate upon the scaffold and eight of his chief followers suffered the same.

But those Scowrers who went to jail were eventually freed and then the hunt began. Across the world they looked for Birdy Edwards who had remarried, changed his name to John Douglas and gone to live in Birlstone Manor in Sussex, the place where our story began. And Birdy's rival, Ted Baldwin, was the chap who had an accident with that shotgun.

[Light fades on HUDSON who exits but come up on WATSON in 221B]

HOLMES *[Offstage, calling]* Watson, have you seen my copy of The Times?

WATSON *[Calling back at him]* It's over here by your violin.

HOLMES *[Enters]* That's yesterday's. And where's my tobacco pouch?

[MUSIC BEGINS] Mrs Hudson?

WATSON *[Joins the chorus]* Mrs Hudson?

[The men could continue looking and softly calling her name]

HUDSON *[Enters and addresses audience]* You may have noticed how extremes call to each other, the spiritual to the animal, the cave-man to the angel. *[Shrugs, opens hands]* Everything comes in circles. It's all been done before, and will be again.

[Calling] Coming Mr Holmes. *[All players enter for the finale]*

Song Number 9 The End and the Beginning

QUINTET *Oh it's the end but the beginning of Sir Arthur's famous tomes
Those classic tales with justice winning
Through the skill of Sherlock Holmes
In many nations the stories in book, film and play
Are loved and lauded, applauded and more so today
Oh it's the end but the beginning of the famous Sherlock Holmes*

HOLMES *[Spoken over the song]* You know I first came to light way back in 1887 and here I am today more popular than ever. Sir Arthur only penned sixty of my tales but now there are literally thousands. I have millions of fans around the world and some *still* write to me at Baker Street. I've been in more plays, books and films than any other fictional character. My name and fame live on and will always do so because, the game's afoot!

[Song is repeated and finishes. Company takes company bow then begin the Curtain Calls during which individual bows are taken]

Song Number 10 Curtain Calls

Permission to perform

Sherlock, Stock and Barrel can only be performed after first obtaining written permission from FOX PLAYS.

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