



Adventure I – A Study in Scarlet

Publishing History

1 of the 60 stories written

First published in *Beaton's Christmas Annual*, 1887

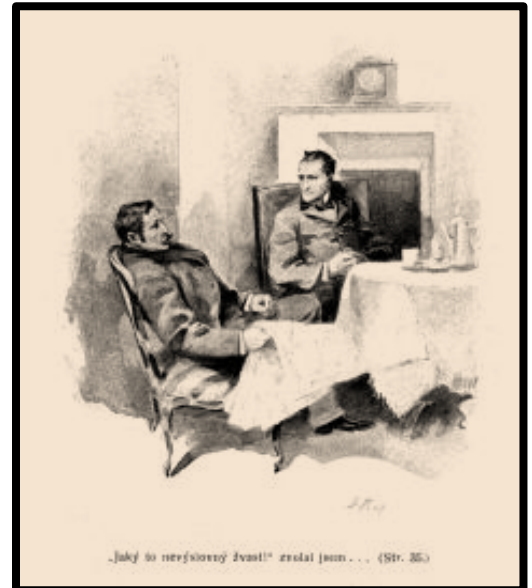
The illustrations in the first edition were by Charles Doyle – Arthur Conan Doyle's father

Interesting Fact

The struggling young doctor Arthur Conan Doyle received a lowly £25 for the story giving all rights to the publisher. He never earned one more pence in royalties.

Chronology

William Baring Gould places it as Friday, March 4 to Monday, March 7, 1881, which makes it 3rd in time. This means that Holmes is 27 and Watson is 29. They are much younger than they are usually portrayed.



Christopher Morley Says

“A very unpleasant American is found dead in an empty house on a small street in London. There were no signs of a wound, yet the word RACHE was scrawled in blood on the wall Dr. Watson's first introduction to the sordid and gruesome details of violent crime.”

Dummies Short Summary

This is the longest “short summary” in the book, but there is a lot to cover.

“First published in 1887 by Ward, Lock & Co. in *Beeton’s Christmas Annual*, this novel is the first Sherlock Holmes story. In this landmark adventure, Dr. John Watson is looking for a roommate, and when he’s introduced to Sherlock Holmes, their immortal partnership begins. As they take up residence together, Watson begins to wonder about the weirdo he moved in with. What’s with the mysterious chemical experiments? The endless parade of unusual visitors? What is his line of work? The mystery involves a case of revenge, murder, and obsession that dates back 30 years to the Mormons in Salt Lake City, Utah. Not a bad start!”

How Many Words

At 43,483 words *STUD* has the 58th most words (#1 is *VEIL* – 4,499, #56 is *NAVL* – 12,701)

Classifying This Case

This case is one of 23 classified as a MURDER and one of 14 where the perpetrator was either killed, arrested, or otherwise satisfactorily handled.

The Best of Sherlock Holmes

- 1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle did not put it on list of his 12 favorites.
- 1959 – Baker Street Irregulars did not put it on their list of 10 favorites.

WHAT ELSE HAPPENED THAT YEAR (1881)

- Sudanese Revolt under Mahdi, war in the Sudan (1881 - 98).
- India reaches 253 million.
- Stanley founds Leopoldville in the Congo.
- Flogging is banned by the British Army and Navy.
- Tsar Alexander II of Russia accepts Melikov's proposal for a Consultative Committee for reform, is assassinated on the same day.
- James A. Garfield, 20th U.S. President, shot and wounded; died two months later.
- The Barnum and Bailey *Greatest Show on Earth* Circus is created.
- National Society of the Red Cross is established.
- De Lesseps and Gustave Eiffel, French engineers, begin construction of the Panama Canal.

- U.S. Supreme Court establishes income tax is constitutional.
- Revised Version of the *New Testament*.
- Carlos Finlay of Cuba develops theory that mosquitoes carry yellow fever

Holmes and Watson – Personal Information

Holmes and Watson meet and take up residence at 221b Baker Street – a world famous address. Watson had been living in a private hotel on the Strand and Holmes on Montague Street. Then young Stamford introduced them to each other at “Barts” and they move to 221B Baker Street.

Dramatis Personae

- **Murray**, Watson’s orderly who saved his life at Maiwand
- **Young Stamford**, a former dresser under Watson who introduced him to Holmes
- **Enoch J. Drebber**, murdered at Lauriston gardens
- **Joseph Strangerson**, secretary to Drebber
- **Gregson**, Inspector of the Yard
- **Lestrade**, Inspector of the Yard
- **John Rance**, Patrolman on duty who discovered the body at Lauriston Gardens
- **Harry Murcher**, fellow constable to Rance
- **Tom Dennis** \
- **Sally Dennis** | - fictitious people invented by Stangerson
- **Mrs. Sawyer** /
- **Madame Charpentier**, ran a boarding house where Drebber stayed.
- **Alice Charpentier**, daughter to Madame
- **Arthur Charpentier**, brother to Alice.
- **Jefferson Hope**, the murderer.
- **Lucy Ferrier**, beloved of Jefferson Hope
- **John Ferrier**, foster father of Lucy

Quotable Sherlock (We have so many to choose from – just a few)

This being the first tale, memorable quotes from Holmes abound.

- "How are you? You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive."
- "I suppose I am the only one in the world. I'm a consulting detective, if you can understand what it is."
- "It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment."
- "London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained."

Holmes' Fee

Holmes told Watson: "Supposing I unravel the whole matter, you may be sure that Gregson, Lestrade, and Company will pocket all the credit. That comes of being an unofficial personage." For Holmes there can have been little reward save the experience.

Unrecorded Cases

Holmes and Watson regularly make references to cases and don't give any details. This is pure torture to Sherlockians. No torturing of the readers as yet.

On the Big Or Little Screen

STUD is one of the most popular and has been done by several actors.

- 1914 – *A Study in Scarlet* with James Braginton as Holmes (it is lost)
- 1933 – *A Study in Scarlet* with Reginald Owens as Holmes
- 1934 – *The Triumph of Sherlock Holmes* with Arthur Wontner as Holmes
- 1968 – *A Study in Scarlet* (TV) with Peter Cushing as Holmes
- 1979 – Part of 2 episodes for *Russian Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson* (TV) with Vasily Livanov
- 1983 – *A Study in Scarlet* (TV-cartoon) *A Study in Scarlet* with Peter O'Toole as Holmes
- 2010 – *A Study in Pink* (TV) in *Sherlock* series with Benedict Cumberbatch as Holmes

Fainting In The Canon

In this tale, the "boots" at Stangerson's hotel almost faints. Jefferson came close to fainting also.

Newspapers

- **Daily News** - Morning paper in London which was extremely liberal. Founded in 1846.
- **Daily Telegraph (and Courier)** - Morning paper of London which was Liberal until the middle of the 1880's

whereby it became Unionist. It became very popular for the middle classes. Established in 1855. Is considered the country's "other paper of record."

- **Echo** - London evening paper that was liberal in politics and near bankruptcy throughout its short career.
- **Standard** - One of the more popular papers. It was of a Conservative nature. Had a distinguished staff of writers in journalism and literature.

Annotated Sherlock

- "**an income of eleven shillings and sixpence a day**" was the equivalent of \$2.87 U.S. This comes to £200 which was the same as an Army surgeon's pay.
- "**I always smoke 'ships' myself**" refers to naval tobacco which was an Arcadia mixture.
- a "**commissionaire**" refers to a uniformed messenger of the Corps of Commissionaires founded in 1859 employing pensioned soldiers and sailors who perform their tasks for "a consideration."
- a "**Trichinopoly cigar**" is one made of dark tobacco grown near Trichinopoly in the Madras district of India. It was usually open at both ends.
- a "**Parthian shot**" is a concluding retort because the ancient calvary of Parthia used to shoot backwards as they fled.
- the term "**a four of gin hot**" was fourpence (8 cents) worth of gin with hot water and lemon
- "**Houndsditch**" derives from the old fosse which once encircled the quarter of the City and formed a depository for dead dogs.
- "**The Vehmgericht**" was a system of secret courts in Germany of the Middle Ages to execute punishment and revenge.
- "**the boots**" was a servant at an inn or hotel who blackened boots and did minor offices for the guests.
- "**the mews**" were stable yards or a back lane or alley leading to the stables.
- "**jarveys**" was Cockney slang for coachmen or cabdrivers. The term may have come from Saint Gervase, whose emblem was the whip.

Holmes The Author

Holmes shares, or plans to share, his research via publishing it as a monograph. In this story there is a publication on the science of deduction called *The Book of Life*.

Weapons

This case is filled with weapons too many to list here, but an interesting few are:

- **Jezail Musket** - of a murderous Ghazi, a bullet from which struck Watson in the shoulder, tore through his leg (after grazing the sub-clavicle artery), and into his Tendo Achilles, causing a wound (or wounds, rather) that would trouble the good doctor on and off for some time afterward.
- **Service Revolver** - Dr. Watson's and is mentioned in 13 cases.
- **Rusty Old Shotgun** - Of Ferrier, which he cleaned and loaded in case of a Mormon raid on his home.
- **Knife** - Which Jefferson Hope used to force Enoch Drebber into a little game of modified Russian Roulette with his poison pills and which he latter used to kill Joseph Stangerson, after he refused to participate in Hope's little game.

Frank Mentzel