



The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XVII – The Adventure of the Yellow Face

Publishing History

17 of the 60 stories

First published in *The Strand Magazine*, February, 1893

In the US *Harper's Weekly*, February 11, 1893

Part of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* collection by George

Newnes, Ltd., London, 1894

Harper Bros., New York, 1894

British illustrator – Sidney Paget

Chronology

Baring-Gould places the dating of the story at Saturday, April 7, 1888, which makes it 17th of the 60.



Christopher Morley Says

“Holmes asked to be reminded of this case if he ever showed himself overconfident. Except for the opening deductions based on the visitor’s pipe it is one of the least satisfying of the tales.”

Dummies Short Summary

“Another strange tale with little detection and no crime. And yet, the surprising conclusion pays off.”

How Many Words

At 7,540 words YELL has the 22nd most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 if NAVL – 12,701)

Classifying This Case

This case is one where Holmes comes to the wrong conclusion but his actions cause a happy ending.

The Best Of Sherlock Holmes

- 1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle did not include in on his list of 12 favorites.
- 1944 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it #8 on their worst list.
- 1959 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 58th on their list of favorites.
- 1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 42nd of the 56 short stories.

What Else Happened That Year (1888)

- Convention of Constantinople: Suez Canal declared open to ships of all nations and free from blockade.
- British East Africa Company founded.
- Jack the Ripper has murder spree in Whitechapel.
- Miners Federation of Great Britain formed; demand for minimum wage.
- Final report on Commission on Elementary Education Acts in England.
- Foundation of London General Omnibus Company.
- French Indochina formed.
- Slavery ends in Brazil.
- Benjamin Harrison elected President of United States; even though Cleveland received more popular votes, the electoral college gives the election to Harrison.
- Unemployment demonstration in Rome suppressed by the military.
- New York State establishes electric chair for method of death penalty.
- Van Gogh in Arles, Holland, paints Sunflowers, Portrait of Armand Roulin, La Mousme, and Drawbridge at Arles.
- Casey at the Bat is recited publicly for the first time.
- John Phillip Sousa composes the military march Semper Fidelis for the U.S. Marine Corp.
- Rimsky-Korsakov composes Scheherazade.
- Kipling publishes Soldiers Three, and Plain Tales from the Hills; 20 stories of India.

- Dunlop's pneumatic tyre developed, principle still unproven.
- Clinton Merriam establishes the National Geographical Society and they release their first magazine.
- Drinking straws are invented.
- George Eastman perfects the "Kodak" box camera, which uses photographic paper roll-film.
- Emile Berliner improves the gramophone.
- Nichola Tesla makes first AC motor.
- Incubators are first used for premature infants.
- William Burroughs patents the adding machine.

Holmes And Watson – Personal Information

The guys are where every one always wants them – 221B Baker Street.

Dramatis Personae

One of the smallest cast of characters in all the stories. Maybe the least memorable.

- **Grant “Jack” Munro**, A dealer in hops.
- **Effie Munro**, his wife.
- **John Hebron**, former husband of Effie. Now deceased.
- **Lucy Hebron**, daughter of John and Effie.
- **Lucy’s Scotch Nurse**, who accompanied her from America.

Quotable Sherlock

- "Pipes are occasionally of extraordinary interest," said he. "Nothing has more individuality, save perhaps watches and bootlaces."
- "Any truth is better than indefinite doubt."
- "Watson, if it should ever strike you that I am getting a little overconfident in my powers, or giving less pains to a case than it deserves, kindly whisper ‘Norbury’ in my ear and I shall be infinitely obliged to you."
- "I can see that you have not slept for a night or two. That tries a man’s nerves more than work, and more even than pleasure."
- "If you wish to preserves your incognito, I suggest that you cease to write your name upon lining of your hat, or else you turn the crown towards the person whom you are addressing."

- “There’s blackmail in it, or I am much mistaken.”
- “There is something very attractive about the livid face at the window.”

Holmes’ Fee

There is no mention. Draw your own conclusions if you are a Sherlockian.

Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen

Only once has YELL appeared on a screen, perhaps because it is a dull story and on a topic people don’t like to talk about.

- 1921 The Yellow face with Eille Norwood was the 4th of his 57 tales on the big screen. The National Film and Television Archive at the BFI has viewing copies of this film but it has not been released

Fainting In The Canon

In this story, Effie Munro almost faints.

Annotated Sherlock

Only one term needed to be translated to the 21st century.

- “a brown wide-awake” a soft broad-brimmed felt hat

Weapons

This is one of the 3 stories in the 60 story collection that has nothing to be perceived as a weapon. The others were CREE and 3STU.

Frank Mentzel