

Baker Street Elementary

Year Six

Created by Joe Fay,

Rusty Mason & Steve Mason

Introduction by Julie McKuras



The first adventures of

Sherlock Holmes, John Watson, & Stamford

Baker Street Elementary

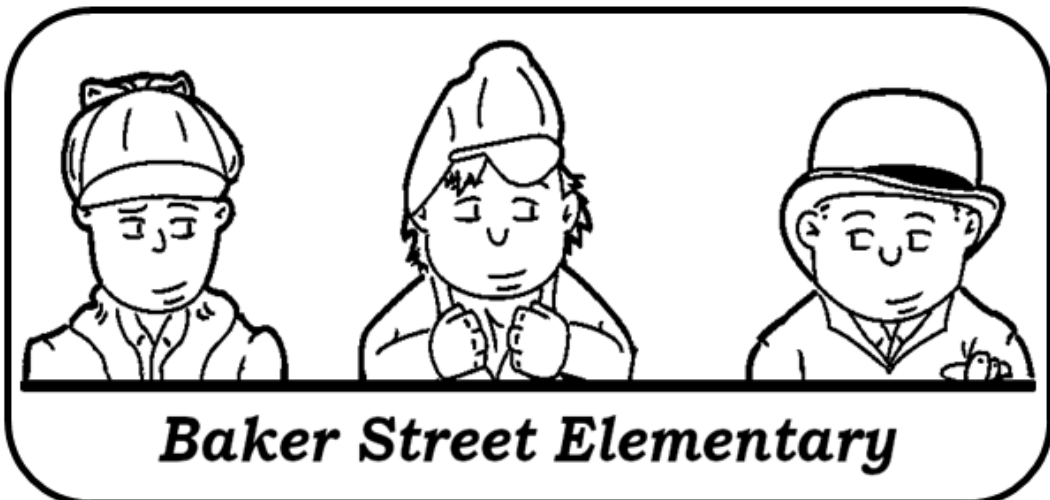
Year 6

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PUBLISHED IN DENTON, TEXAS

STRIPS # 248 -- 307

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INTRODUCTION

BY JULIE MCKURAS, BSI, ASH

("THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE")

FOR MANY OF US, OUR YOUTHFUL LITERATURE DU JOUR INCLUDED COMIC BOOKS FEATURING SUPERMAN, WONDER WOMAN, SPIDERMAN, AND FLASH, TO NAME A FEW.

AS MUCH AS THOSE COMICS WERE READ AND ENJOYED, AND AS MUCH AS READERS WISHED THEY COULD PERFORM THOSE FEATS OF DARING-DO, WE UNDERSTOOD NONE OF US POSSESSED THE SUPERHUMAN POWERS ALLOWING A FICTIONAL CHARACTER TO FLY, WIELD A GOLDEN LASSO, SPIN SPIDER WEBS, OR RUN WITH SUPER SPEED.

THEY ARE MEANT TO ENTERTAIN WHILE SENDING THE MESSAGE GOOD TRIUMPHS OVER EVIL. BUT AT SOME POINT, YOU ENCOUNTERED SOMETHING NEW.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME YOU FOUND YOURSELF WALKING THROUGH THE STREETS OF LONDON IN THE COMPANY OF THOSE TWO IMMORTAL MEN OF LITERATURE, SHERLOCK HOLMES AND DR. JOHN H. WATSON, SWIRLING FOG SO THICK THE GAS LAMPS WERE ONLY VAGUE POINTS OF LIGHT IN THE DISTANCE?

EVEN IF THE CANONICAL TIME PERIOD IS LONG PAST, AND THE STORY SITES FAR AWAY FROM MANY READERS, THERE IS AN INSTINCTIVE UNDERSTANDING HERE ARE TWO REMARKABLE MEN GROUNDED IN A REALITY WE COULD ENVISION.

THE LACK THE SUPERHUMAN POWERS FOUND IN COMIC BOOKS, BUT ON SOME LEVEL THE END RESULT WAS THE SAME; GOOD TRIUMPHS OVER EVIL NOT THROUGH A GOLDEN LASSO OR SPIDER WEBS, BUT THROUGH THEIR ABILITIES AND HUMANITY.

WE STILL MARVEL AT THE TALENTS OF THE GREAT DETECTIVE AND HIS BOSWELL, RE-READING THE STORIES WE RELISH, MEMORIZING THE DETAILS, STUDYING DR. WATSON'S DISCREPANCIES, AND THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE CASES.

YET, BEYOND THOSE QUESTIONS OF DATES, DISGUISES, AND IDENTITIES, SOME INTANGIBLE FACETS BECOME DEEPER AND MORE EVIDENT.

HOLMES AND WATSON ARE HUMAN BEINGS, WITH GIFTS AND FLAWS, READY TO ASSIST THOSE WHO NEED HELP,

BE THEY RICH OR POOR, YOUNG OR OLD, MALE OR FEMALE. WHO DOESN'T ADMIRE THAT EGALITARIAN BELIEF.

EQUALLY IMPORTANT, THE TWO INHABITANTS OF 221B BAKER STREET, DIFFERENT AS THEY MAY BE, TRUST AND VALUE EACH OTHER AND THEIR FRIENDSHIP.

THE YEARS THAT SEPARATE THEIR INTRODUCTION AND THEIR LAST DOCUMENTED ADVENTURE ONLY SERVE TO SOLIDIFY THIS.

WHEN YOU BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH THESE 'TWO MEN OF NOTE', AS VINCENT STARRETT DESCRIBED HOLMES AND WATSON, THEY WERE ADULTS, LACKING ANY SUBSTANTIVE BACKSTORY.

THEY SPRANG FULLY GROWN TO THE PAGE, SIMILAR TO ATHENA SPRINGING FROM THE HEAD OF HER FATHER, ZEUS, IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY.

WITH THE FIRST ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES AND JOHN WATSON, JOE FAY, STEVE MASON, AND RUSTY MASON, WE NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE YOUNG BOYS WHO WOULD GO ON TO RESIDE AT 221B BAKER STREET.

WE CAN SEE THE SEEDS OF THE MEN THEY WILL BECOME WITH FLASHES OF INTELLIGENCE, A PAWKY HUMOR, A SOMEWHAT CRITICAL EYE, THEIR FRIENDSHIP, AND MUCH MORE. IT IS APPROPRIATE TO THE NUMBER THREE FREQUENTLY OCCURS IN THE CANON.

WE HAVE 'THE THREE GABLES', 'THE THREE GARRIDEBS', 'THE MISSING THREE-QUARTER', 'THREELEGGED STOOLS', 'THREE TEETH', AND MORE.

ON OCTOBER 25TH, THE THREESOME COMPRISED OF JOE, STEVE, AND RUSTY SHARED THEIR THREE HUNDREDTH STRIP OF **BAKER STREET ELEMENTARY**.

ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US WHO READ, ENJOY, LAUGH, AND PONDER THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THEIR WORK, I SAY 'THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU'.

WELL, WE HAVE REPLACED THE TENT.

NO MORE OPEN FLAMES
INSIDE THE NEW ONE.



IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY... I CAN'T
WAIT TO GET SOME SLEEP.

I HOPE NEITHER OF YOU SNORE
TONIGHT... I AM EXHAUSTED.



JUST CURIOUS, DO EITHER ONE OF
YOU EVER HAVE NIGHTMARES ABOUT
A BOOGEYMAN ATTACKING YOU?





BEFOGGED IN MIND

"they don't have days of fog in the Latin countries" [SUSS]

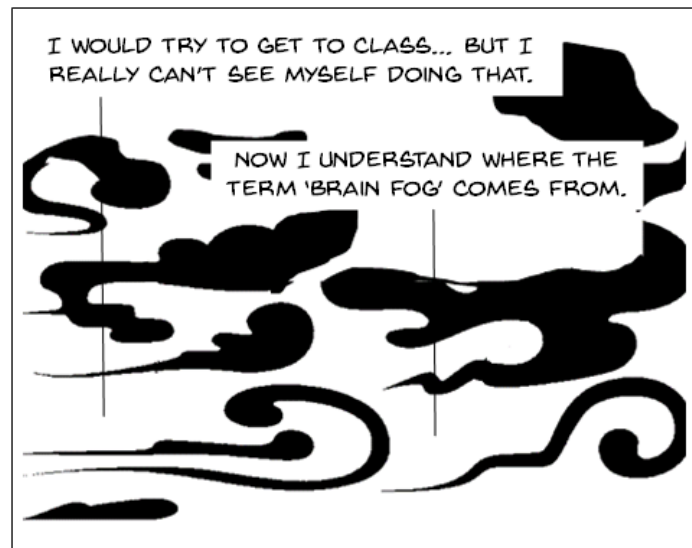
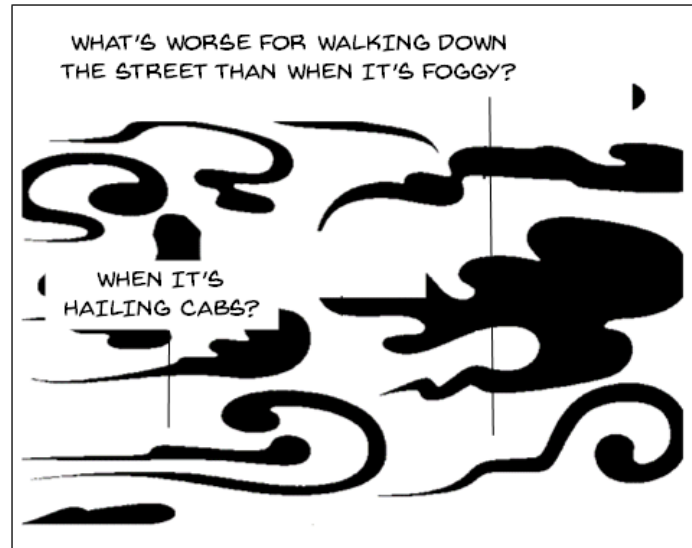
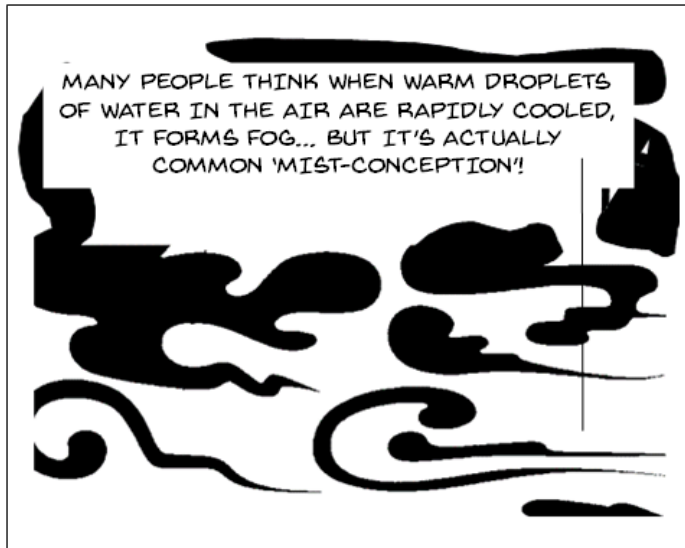
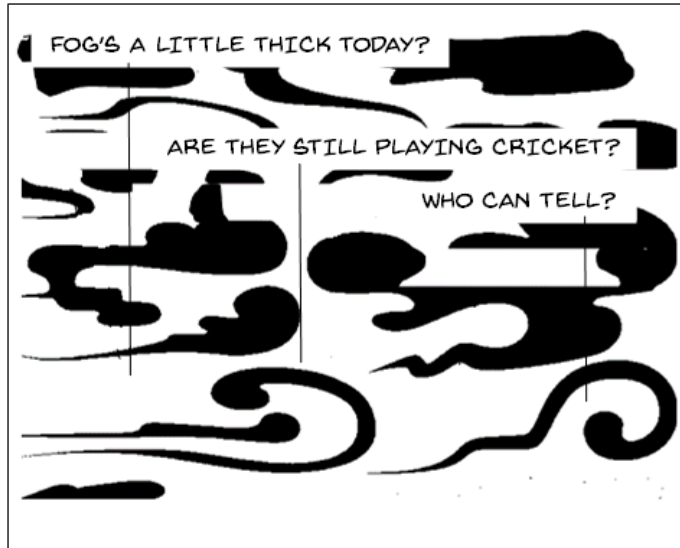
To us, one of the most iconic fogs in Baker Street lore is the opening of 'The Bruce-Partington Plans,' in which Watson very clearly sets the scene...

"In the third week of November, in the year 1895, a dense yellow fog settled down upon London. From the Monday to the Thursday, I doubt whether it was ever possible from our windows in Baker Street to see the loom of the opposite houses."

And to remind us that this was not just a weather phenomenon, but an industrial-influenced condition, he described "the greasy, heavy brown swirl still drifting past us and condensing in oily drops upon the window-panes."

It sets the scene for what we're about to read: a story that isn't just a simple murder, but one that involves espionage and top-secret government plans. It's as if the industrial forces responsible for creating the Bruce-Partington submarine are foreshadowed by the industrial fog.

*Meanwhile, the fog at **Baker Street Elementary** is concentrated more on young minds than on young eyes, and is quite revealing...*



AH! THE FIRST DUSTING OF SNOW THIS YEAR...
A LITTLE LATE IN THE SEASON IF YOU ASK ME.



IN MY OPINION, HOLMES, I BELIEVE
CHRISTMAS IS MUCH MORE ENJOYABLE WHEN
THE LANDSCAPE IS COVERED IN SNOW.



DID YOU KNOW SNOW HELPS INSULATE THE
GROUND, WATSON? IT HOLDS IN THE HEAT
COMING FROM THE GROUND, AND...



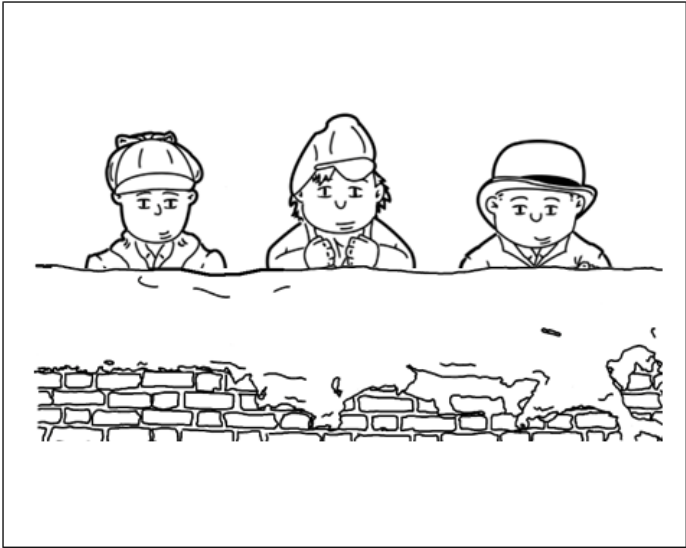
...YOU JUST CAN'T ENJOY
THE MOMENT, CAN YOU?

WELL, THEN, STAMFORD, TELL US OF YOUR
FACTS ABOUT SNOW, SINCE WATSON
APPEARS TO HAVE GROWN TIRED OF MINE.



I BELIEVE OUR LOVED ONES THAT HAVE
PASSED ON ARE WATCHING ABOVE US IN
HEAVEN... AS WE GATHER WITH OUR FELLOW
MAN, AND GIVE THANKS, OUR LOVED ONES CRY
TEARS OF JOY... AS THOSE TEARS FALL TO THE
EARTH BELOW, THE COLD FREEZES THOSE
TEARS, WHICH GIVE US SNOW... A SIMPLE
REMINDER OF THOSE WATCHING OVER US.

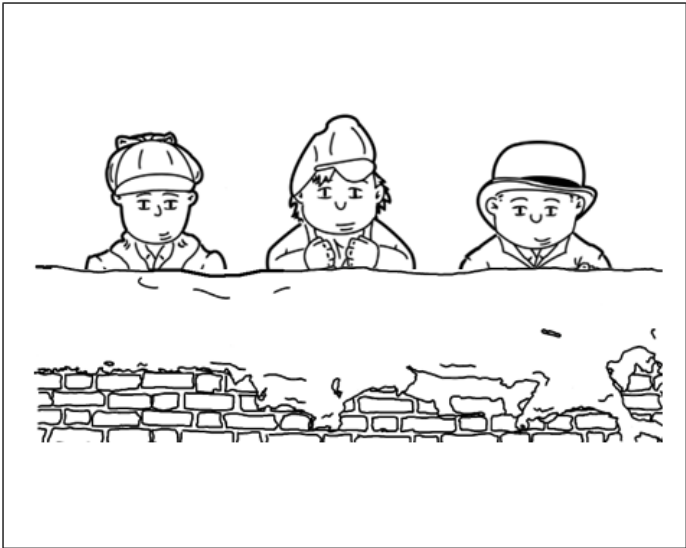




WAIT, HOLMES... YOU ARE NOT GOING TO CORRECT STAMFORD? YOU GET YOUR JOLLIES FROM CORRECTING PEOPLE.



OH COME NOW WATSON... HE IS HALF RIGHT, WHICH IS GOOD FOR OUR FRIEND HERE... AS THE NEW WELSH MELODY STATES, 'TIS THE SEASON'.



IF THAT IS THE CASE, HOLMES, THEN 'TIS THE SEASON'.





THIS POISONOUS ATMOSPHERE

"a good medicine" [GOLD]

We've come across a few poisons in the Sherlock Holmes stories. From South American alkaloids to prussic acid to charcoal and more, there have been a handful of poisons that have caused irreparable damage or death to the victims.

But in most of these instances, there was one thing that we lacked: an antidote. Think about that for a moment: in each case where poison was concerned, there was no antidote for a lethal dose. The victims all expired.

In the occasional instance of victims receiving a non-lethal dose, they either had the poison removed in some fashion (SUSS) or removed themselves from the environment before more damage could be done (DEVI).

However, Watson's medical bag wasn't completely devoid of solving harrowing cases. He of course carried his universal specific everywhere. That's right: brandy.

Meanwhile, here's an interesting trivia question. You might want to try this out at your next gathering:

There is only one antidote mentioned in the Canon. What is it and where did it appear? (Answer below.)

The poisonous atmosphere at **Baker Street Elementary** may provide some light on this kind of medicine...

*Answer to the trivia question: the only antidote mentioned in the Canon is work.

When Holmes returned from his hiatus in "The Adventure of the Empty House" and learned of Watson's "own sad bereavement," he said,

"Work is the best antidote to sorrow, my dear Watson."

WELL, I HOPE EVERYONE HAD A MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND RECEIVED EVERYTHING THEY ASKED FOR FROM SANTA.



I AM STILL CONFUSED... IF TODAY IS BOXING DAY, THEN IS YESTERDAY CONSIDERED 'CHRISTMAS' OR 'BOXING DAY EVE'?



MY PARENTS INTERCEPTED MY LETTER TO FATHER CHRISTMAS... SO I RECEIVED WAS COAL IN MY STOCKING THIS YEAR.



WHAT COULD YOU HAVE POSSIBLY SAID IN THE LETTER TO DESERVE PUNISHMENT?



LET ME READ IT TO YOU... 'DEAR FATHER CLAUS... I HAVE BEEN NAUGHTY THIS YEAR, BUT IT WAS WORTH IT... LEAVE LOTS OF PRESENTS...'



'...OR I WON'T TELL YOU THE ANTIDOTE FOR THE POISON I PLACED IN THE GLASS OF MILK YOU JUST DRANK...' MY PARENTS DON'T APPRECIATE MY HUMOUR.



YES MA'AM, I FINISHED THE BOOK...
THANK YOU FOR DIRECTING US TO READ
SUCH AN INTERESTING TOME.



IT WAS AN EXHILARATING EXPERIENCE... I
AM SURE I AM A MUCH BETTER PERSON FOR
HAVING COMPLETED IT... PLEASE CONTINUE
ASSIGNING US SUCH WONDERFUL WORKS.



HOW DO YOU DO THAT WITH A STRAIGHT FACE?

LOTS OF PRACTICE
WITH MY MOTHER.



THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT

"opticians are not very numerous" [GOLD]

The year 2020 is upon us, and you've probably seen your fair share of 20/20 references, as humans are all too predictable to resist a tired cliché.

Since that brings to mind the "vision thing" (to quote George H.W. Bush), we're going to take a look back (thank you, hindsight) at a rather vexing error in one of the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Arthur Conan Doyle began his medical career as an oculist, or a physician specializing in treating diseases of the eye. The term oculist dates to 1598, but today we're more accustomed to the term ophthalmologist, optometrist, or optician — not to be confused with an optimist. (Although to be clear, opticians are more concerned with providing corrective lenses than treating disease.)

Conan Doyle gave up his medical career to pursue writing — gradually at first, while he was waiting for patients, but then completely, as his writing career took off. And while early influences of Dr. Joseph Bell, his medical school professor, gave us the basis of Sherlock Holmes's methods, there was only one instance of Conan Doyle's medical specialty creeping into the Sherlock Holmes stories.

It wasn't until 1904 when he wrote 'The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez' that we read about an eye-related disorder and its connection to crime.

In the story, the victim was found stabbed to death, holding a pair of golden pince-nez in his hand. By carefully observing the eyewear, Holmes was able to make the following deductions about the perpetrator...

"[A] woman of good address, attired like a lady. She has a remarkably thick nose, with eyes which are set close upon either side of it. She has a puckered forehead, a peering expression, and probably rounded shoulders. There are indications that she has had recourse to an optician at least twice during the last few months. As her glasses are of remarkable strength and as opticians are not very numerous, there should be no difficulty in tracing her."

Sherlock Holmes explained how he was able to determine her physical appearance:

"You will perceive, Watson, that the glasses are convex and of unusual strength. A lady whose vision has been so extremely contracted all her life is sure to have the physical characteristics of such vision, which are seen in the forehead, the eyelids, and the shoulders."

The term "convex" is something that attracted immediate attention at the time of publication. The Journal of the American Medical Association had a notice in its December 3, 1904 issue, and the New York Medical Journal and Philadelphia Medical Journal: A Weekly Review of Medicine on November 12, 1904 both took issue with the lenses being identified as convex rather than concave, as would have been appropriate for a near-sighted patient.

Shortly thereafter, a letter to 'The Bookman's Letter Box' in the January 1905 edition of The Bookman: A Magazine of Literature and Life also pointed out the error. (Ref. 'A Vexing Error: Ophthalmology in 'The Golden Pince Nez' by Richard J. Sveum, MD in The Wrong Passage, BSI Press, 2012).

While this error appears in the manuscript and in the Collier's edition, the editors corrected it to 'concave' in the Strand Magazine. Later, when The Return of Sherlock Holmes was published in England by George Newnes, Ltd. and in the United States by McClure & Philips (both 1905), and The Complete Sherlock Holmes by Doubleday (1932), the correction was there as well.

It turns out hindsight really is 20/20.

And the boys at **Baker Street Elementary** learn a way to use hindsight to their advantage this week...

TWO WEEKS IN, AND I HAVE ALREADY BUSTED ALL OF MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS.



Thanks to Jacquelynn Bost Morris for the inspiration for this week's strip.

MINE ONLY LASTED 3 DAYS.

I CAME UP WITH A BETTER IDEA FOR MY RESOLUTIONS.



NOT DO THEM AT ALL?

I DO NOT ANNOUNCE MY RESOLUTION UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR... AND ONLY FOR THOSE I ATTEMPTED TO KEEP FOR THE ENTIRE 12 MONTHS... SEEMS TO KEEP ME FOCUSED.



I AM CHANGING MY STRATEGY... SIMPLY WING IT THIS YEAR AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

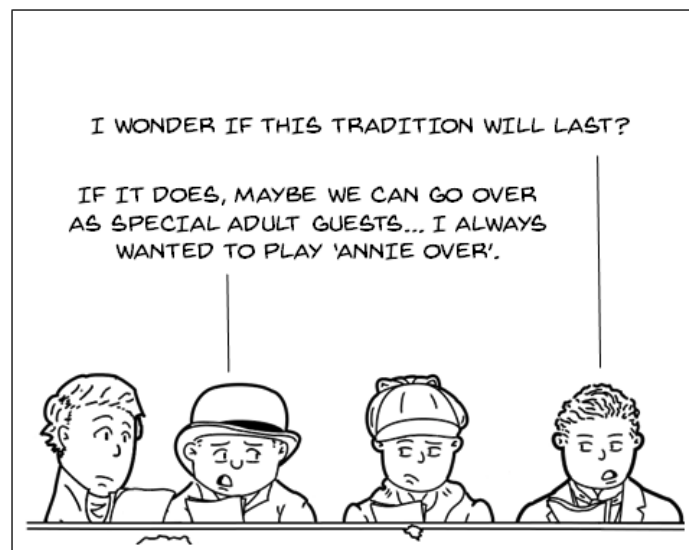
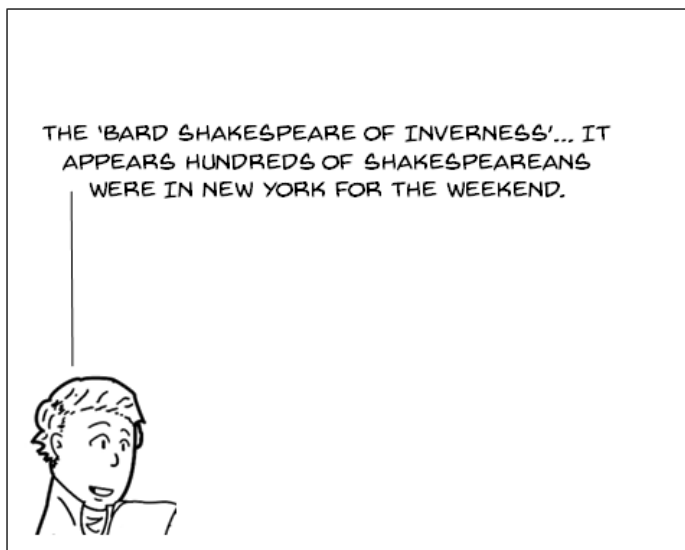
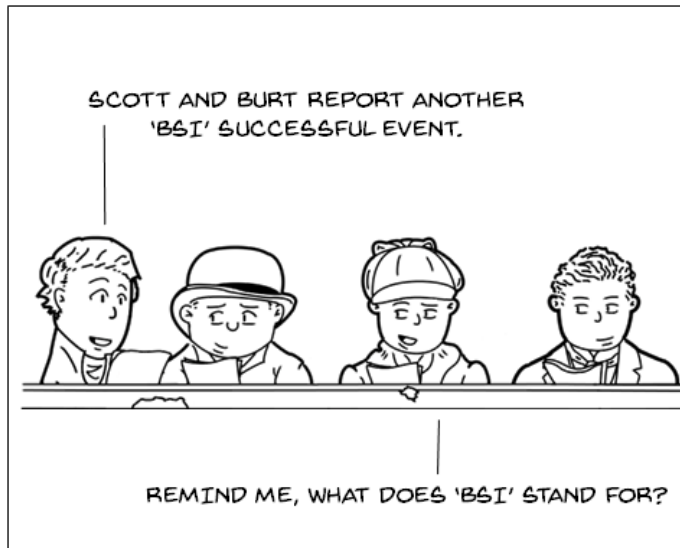


THAT'S INGENIOUS.



I WONDER IF THAT WOULD WORK FOR ME ON A DAILY BASIS?





FRESH BLOOD

"he is keen on a case" [MAZA]

At the annual dinner of the Baker Street Irregulars, the organization's 'Wiggins,' Michael Whelan, turned over leadership to his replacement, Michael Kean, BSI ('General Charles Gordon').

The last time leadership changed was when Tom Stix, Jr. left the post in 1997. He inherited the role from Julian Wolff in 1986, who had assumed command after the untimely death of Edgar W. Smith in 1960. Smith led the BSI beginning in 1940, after he convinced Christopher Morley to bring the group back after a three-year hiatus of its annual dinner.

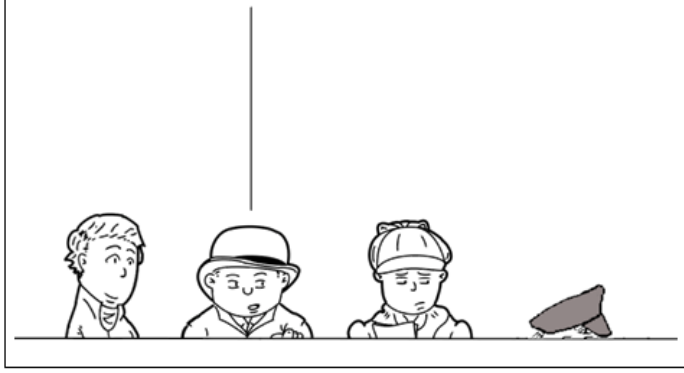
Having only six leaders in an 86-year period is remarkable for any organization. And with the elevation of Kean to the role of Wiggins, the BSI is in good hands, particularly with regard to its publishing activities.

He is a retired publishing executive and has served the BSI Press for many years, now as Co-Publisher.

Expect to hear more from the new Wiggins on I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere this year.

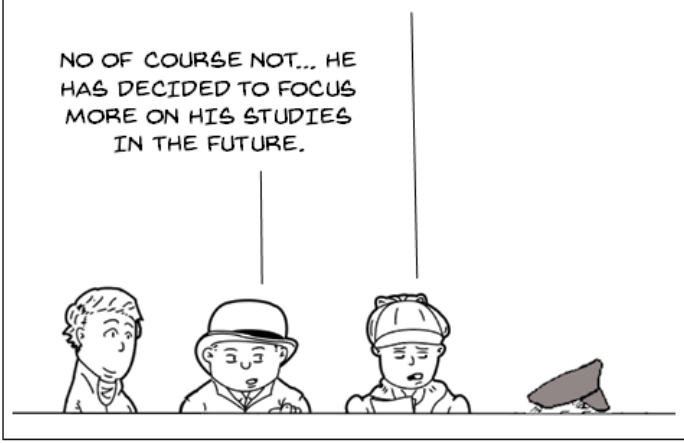
*Meanwhile, we can hear from him at **Baker Street Elementary**...*

I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE MICHAEL KEAN-WIGGINS... HE IS THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF WHELAN-WIGGINS, AND HE IS THE NEW LEADER OF THE YOUNG'UNS.



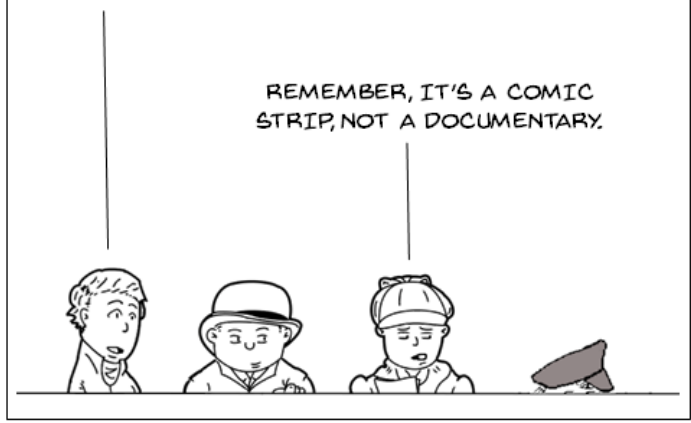
WHAT HAPPENED TO WHELAN-WIGGINS... HE DIDN'T GET EXPELLED?

NO OF COURSE NOT... HE HAS DECIDED TO FOCUS MORE ON HIS STUDIES IN THE FUTURE.

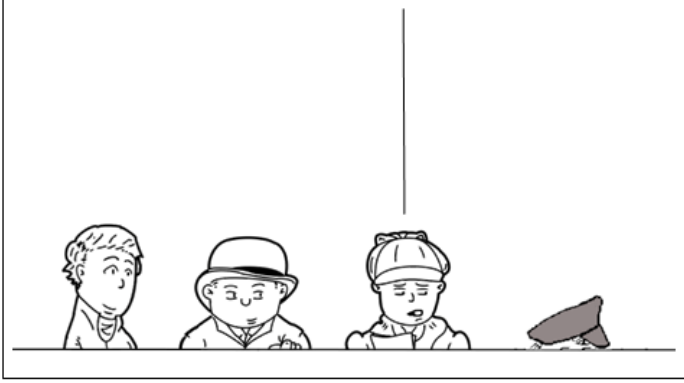


IF THEY ARE BROTHERS, SHOULDN'T THEY HAVE THE SAME LAST NAME?

REMEMBER, IT'S A COMIC STRIP, NOT A DOCUMENTARY.



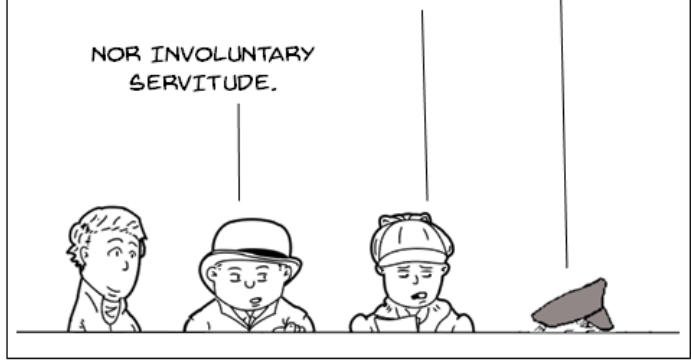
FOR YOUR KNOWLEDGE, YOUR PAY IS UPON A FIXED SCALE... I DO NOT VARY IT, SAVE WHEN I REMIT IT ALTOGETHER.

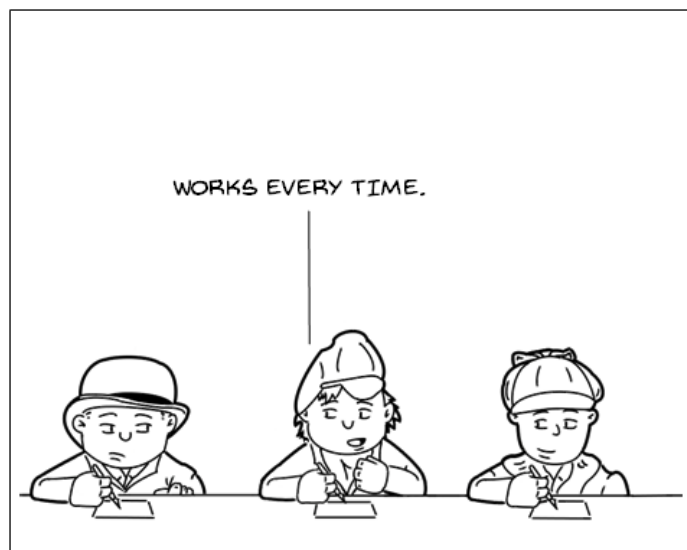
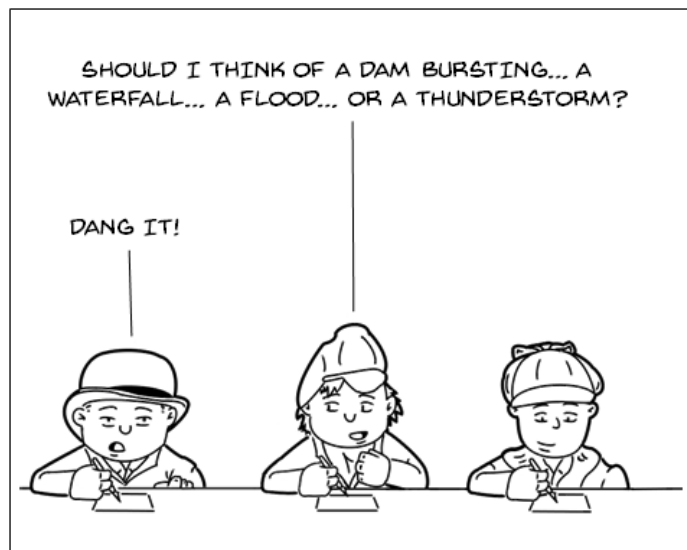
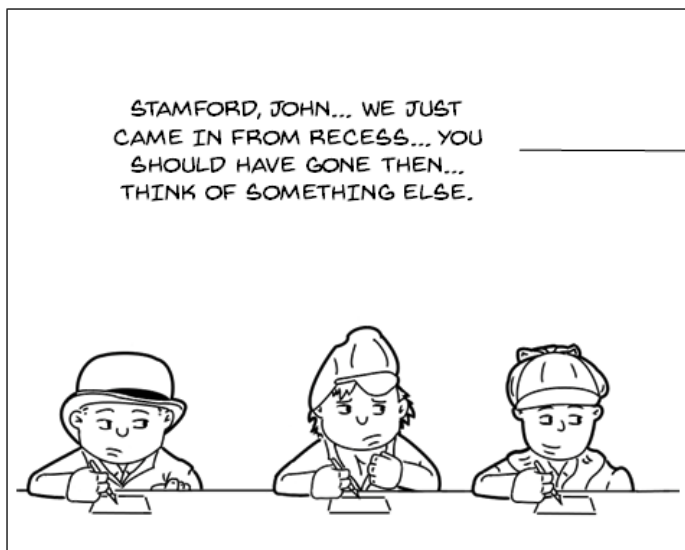


WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

VOLUNTEERISM IS NOT A LOST ART.

NOR INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE.





HELP WANTED

"a cloud of newspapers" [NOBL]

It's not an understatement to say that we don't see print editions of newspapers as widely distributed as in years past. Subscriptions have dropped and many local papers have gone from daily to semi-daily to even weekly publications in response to lower advertising revenue and fewer subscribers.

The digital era not only means that we can find news for free, but that digital subscriptions have been more common. To make matters even more fraught, we've seen a drop in newsroom employees, as publishers have had to lay off staff to keep from hemorrhaging money.

But there was a time when not only were newsrooms and newspapers flourishing, but there were typically morning and evening editions of papers.

Most major metropolitan areas had morning papers, evening papers, and even papers that ran both. It seems odd, but in the heyday of print, such operations meant something closer to a 24/7 news cycle.

It was of course in this environment that Sherlock Holmes found himself using the advertising services of papers like the Globe, Star, Pall Mall, St. James's, Evening News, Standard, Echo, and any others that came to Commissionaire Peterson's mind in 'The Blue Carbuncle.'

*We wonder how Holmes would have tracked down Henry Baker in modern era. Perhaps Wiggins' dog could have brought him by **Baker Street Elementary**...*

CAN ANYONE TELL THE PRIMARY
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MORNING
AND EVENING EDITIONS OF THE
MAJOR NEWSPAPERS? _____



YOU NEED A CANDLE TO READ
THE EVENING PAPER.



MY DAD TRAINED MY DOG TO BRING
IN THE NEWSPAPER EACH DAY.



MANY DOGS CAN DO THAT... WHAT'S
SO SPECIAL ABOUT YOURS?

WE DON'T SUBSCRIBE
TO ANY PAPERS.

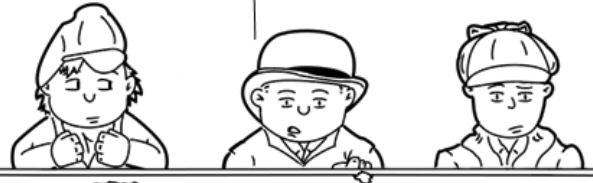


SO, I HAD SOMETHING ON MY MIND LAST NIGHT THAT KEPT ME UP FOR HOURS.



WHAT FASHION STATEMENT TO ATTEMPT TO MAKE TODAY?

NO... WHEN YOU DIE AND GO TO HEAVEN, ARE YOU GRADED STRICTLY ON THE NUMBER OF GOOD THINGS YOU DID IN LIFE, OR DO YOU THINK THERE IS SOME SORT OF CURVE?



OH, THAT ONE'S EASY... IT'S A CURVE.

WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE ABOUT THAT?



IT'S EASY TO BE SURE ABOUT SOMETHING WHEN IT'S YOUR OWN OPINION, AND NO ONE CAN DISPROVE YOU.



PHYSICIAN HEAL THYSELF

"he who would heal others" [STOC]

We're guessing you're familiar with the phrase, "Physician, heal thyself."

Early references to this saying include the Luke 4:23 in the New Testament, in which Jesus is heard saying, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, 'Physician, heal thyself.'"

But it goes back even further than that. There's a similar proverb in Genesis Rabbah 23:4:

"Physician, Heal thine own limp!"

Such proverbs also appear in literary Classical texts from at least the 6th century BC. The Greek dramatist Aeschylus refers to one in his Prometheus Bound, where the chorus comments to the suffering Prometheus, "Like an unskilled doctor, fallen ill, you lose heart and cannot discover by which remedies to cure your own disease."

If these strains sound familiar to Sherlock Holmes fans, you may recall that in the opening of "The Stock-Broker's Clerk," Watson wrote about his practice in the Paddington district...

"Old Mr. Farquhar, from whom I purchased it, had at one time an excellent general practice; but his age, and an affliction of the nature of St. Vitus's dance from which he suffered, had very much thinned it. The public not unnaturally goes on the principle that he who would heal others must himself be whole and looks askance at the curative powers of the man whose own case is beyond the reach of his drugs."

In the case of old Mr. Farquhar, it's likely that his case wouldn't have been treatable with drugs, as St. Vitus's dance (or more commonly, Sydenham's chorea) was a neurological disorder brought on by streptococcus. Adult onset was rare and responds to modern steroid-based drugs, with about 50 percent of cases resolving themselves without intervention.

But the point is clear: we have a bias toward harshly judging those who try to instruct or solve for things with which they themselves have no experience.

Which takes us to **Baker Street Elementary**...

MA'AM, ONCE AGAIN, I MUST DISAGREE WITH YOUR TEACHING METHODS ON THIS SUBJECT.



A HANDS-ON APPROACH WITH PRACTICUM WOULD BE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN SIMPLY A LECTURE.



INTERESTING MASTER HOLMES... AND HOW MANY CLASSES OF STUDENTS HAVE YOU ACTUALLY TAUGHT? _____

YOU KNOW THE ANSWER IS NONE.



SO, YOU'RE SIMILAR TO AN UNMARRIED MARRIAGE COUNSELOR? _____

POINT WELL TAKEN.



THERE ARE TIMES I
WONDER WHY WE HAVE
TO SPEND SO MUCH
OF OUR LIVES IN
THIS CLASSROOM.



THERE IS SO MUCH OF
THE WORLD WE COULD
GO EXPLORE IF WE
COULD JUST ESCAPE
THESE PRISON WALLS.



YOU ARE CORRECT MASTER STAMFORD...
WHY SHOULD YOU WASTE SO MUCH TIME
LEARNING NEW THINGS WHEN
IGNORANCE IS INSTANTANEOUS?

WOW... I DID NOT
THINK YOU WOULD
AGREE WITH ME
SO EASILY.



POOR HELPLESS WORMS

"I wish you luck with your worm" [VALL'

Dr. Watson is famous for the number of tantalizing unpublished cases he mentions throughout the Sherlock Holmes tales.

We actually had a monthly feature on our discussion show regarding some of the unpublished cases. In the opening of 'The Problem of Thor Bridge,' we come across a three particularly tantalizing stories...

"Among these unfinished tales is that of Mr. James Phillimore, who, stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world. No less remarkable is that of the cutter Alicia, which sailed one spring morning into a small patch of mist from where she never again emerged, nor was anything further ever heard of herself and her crew."

"A third case worthy of note is that of Isadora Persano, the well-known journalist and duellist, who was found stark staring mad with a match box in front of him which contained a remarkable worm said to be unknown to science."

The final case is one of the most extraordinary allusions Watson has ever made.

It has been the subject of numerous pastiches, the earliest of which, 'The Adventure of the Remarkable Worm' by Stuart Palmer, was part of The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes, edited by Ellery Queen. It is a brilliant and ingenious take on the mystery.

If you had the opportunity to see The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes, the story of Isadora Persano was central to the mystery that visitors are asked to solve.

Meanwhile, we need to see how the worm turns at **Baker Street Elementary**...

MASTER STAMFORD, IT IS PERFECTLY NATURAL TO BE A LITTLE SQUEAMISH ABOUT DISSECTING A WORM.

Yuck!



THINK HOW IT WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND HOW SUCH A SIMPLE CREATURE CAN EXIST.

I THINK I AM GOING TO THROW UP!



OR IT MAY HELP IN YOUR FURTHER STUDIES.

SO MUCH FOR LUNCH TODAY.



AND OF COURSE, HOW JEALOUS MASTER HOLMES WILL BE FOR NOT GETTING TO DISSECT ONE.

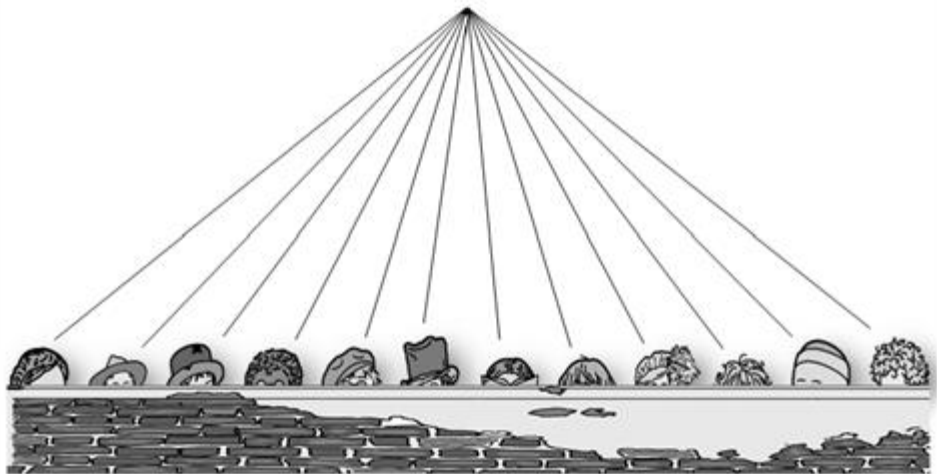
CAN I TAKE IT TO HIM WHEN WE'RE DONE AND SHOW HIM?



WHERE IS EVERYBODY? I
THOUGHT WE HAD A QUIZ TODAY?



PLEASE TAKE CARE YOURSELF
AND EACH OTHER !!



SWEET DREAMS

"Then indeed you would have had him at your mercy" [HOUN]

We hope you had a chance to read our announcement yesterday about the live recording of Trifles. With any luck, you'll be able to follow along; even if you can't watch live, it will be recorded for watching on demand, and the audio will be used as the basis of our show this week.


Over the years, we've been fortunate to hear from listeners who've shared the various ways they listen to us: on roadtrips in the car, while gardening, during a commute, while walking, during work, etc. One refrain that has always amused your editor is when listeners tell us they listen to the show while going to sleep.

*Now, we're not sure if that means we bore people so effectively that they nod off, or that they're lulled into slumber by our mellifluous voices. With any luck, our conversation on Monday will be stimulating and will be peppered with your own ideas. Meanwhile, the boys at the **Baker Street Elementary** exchange school are contemplating nap time...*

...MEANWHILE,
IN THE U.S...


BURT, I SUGGEST WE CONSIDER DOING A LIVE DISPATCH TOMORROW.

I HAVE NO CLUE HOW THAT WOULD BE CONDUCTED.




SIMPLE, I'LL TALK AND YOU WRITE.

DO YOU THINK OUR FOLLOWERS WILL ENJOY THIS?



I'M SURE THEY WILL... MANY OF THEM ARE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO KEEP BUSY.

WHAT WILL BE DISCUSSING?




KIDNAPPING IN SCHOOL.

THAT SOUNDS VERY SERIOUS.

IT IS... AFTER MILK AND BISCUITS, 10 MINUTES IS JUST NOT ENOUGH FOR A NAP.

DID I JUST HEAR A DRUM?



CLASS, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS HOW WE HAVE HANDLED RECENT EPIDEMICS...



...SUCH AS THE CHOLERA OUTBREAK OF 1854, WHERE 600 OR SO LONDONERS PASSED AWAY...



CAN ANYONE GIVE ME A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEN AND PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES?



THEY COULDN'T HOARD TOILET PAPER.

WHAT'S TOILET PAPER?



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

"No doubt you think that you are complimenting me" [STUD]

*One of the joys we have of making updates on this site is sharing the **Baker Street Elementary** comic strip every other Sunday.*

In a time when we can all use an extra dose of joy, that was the focus of our most recent episode of Trifles, where we talked about 'Upbeat Moments in the Canon' (ihose.co/trifles170).

If you're following along at home, that's our 170th Trifles episode. Not a particularly memorable or celebratory number, but it's a happy thought nonetheless, that we can continue providing some levity and edutainment for all interested Sherlockians.

Another happy episode was 'Why Thank You' (ihose.co/trifles131), which was all about compliments in the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Can you think of any off the top of your head?

MASTER HOLMES, I APPRECIATE YOU
TAKING THE TIME TO MEMORIZE SOME
PARTICULAR HISTORICAL FACTS...



...HOWEVER, THE 1ST AMENDMENT OF
THE U.S. CONSTITUTION DOES NOT
REALLY APPLY IN THIS CLASSROOM.



DID YOU NOTICE THE TEACHER WROTE
'GIFTED' ON MY LAST PROGRESS REPORT??



DID YOU NOTICE IT WAS FOLLOWED
WITH 'AT DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR'.

TAKE YOUR COMPLIMENTS
WHERE YOU CAN GET THEM.



MA'AM... WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN A TEACHER AND AN EDUCATOR?



IN MY MIND, MASTER HOLMES...
A TEACHER TRIES TO TEACH _____
STUDENTS...



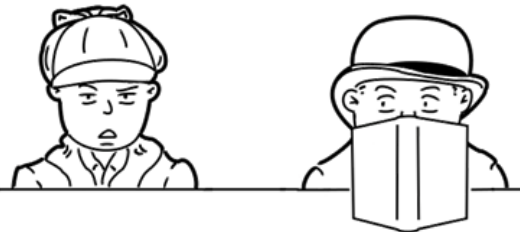
SOUNDS REASONABLE.

AN EDUCATOR SUCCESSFULLY
TEACHES STUDENTS. _____

SO, WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU
WILL BECOME AN EDUCATOR?



SO LITTLE TIME, SO MANY TIMES
TO THE HEADMASTER'S OFFICE.



HOW WAS THE WEEKEND VISIT BY THE PARENTS?



THE TEACHER SHOWED
MY PARENTS MY GRADES.

I REMINDED THEM THEY HAD SAID,
'DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE GRADES,
AS LONG AS YOU DO YOUR BEST.'



THEY MUST HAVE FIBBED TO ME... I
THINK MY DAD'S HEAD EXPLODED.



SCHOOLROOM OF SORROW

"one dear little romper" [COPP]

Home schooling is not for the faint of heart, as many of us are discovering in the age of Covid-19 (either by direct experience or through harrowing tales shared over social media).

This might be why the governesses we run across in the Sherlock Holmes stories are all strong women. They have to deal with the children (and let's face it, they're usually children from well-to-do families, which may contribute to their 'sparkling' personalities), all while cooped up in a home environment.

Take Grace Dunbar, for instance. She looked after the Gibson children in 'The Problem of Thor Bridge.' When Watson first saw her, he described the how he felt...

"I can never forget the effect which Miss Dunbar produced upon me. It was no wonder that even the masterful millionaire had found in her something more powerful than himself."

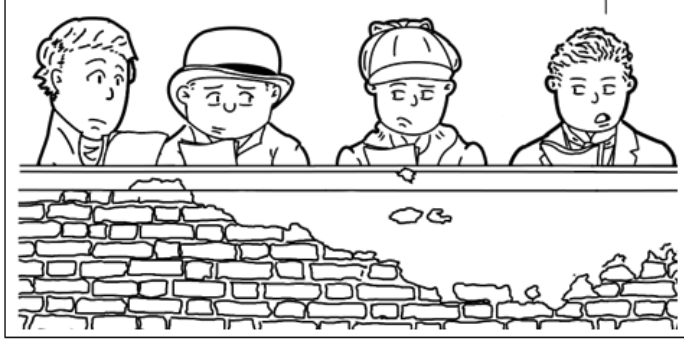
We can only imagine how she must have commanded a classroom at home, and how that may have translated to Neil Gibson, the U.S. senator and so-called 'gold king.'

As Holmes says in the closing paragraph, "the financial world may find that Mr. Neil Gibson has learned something in that schoolroom of sorrow where our earthly lessons are taught."

These days, the "schoolroom of sorrow" might be any home around the country where parents are taking on the role of teacher.

Even Baker Street Elementary is not immune...

THE LATEST DISPATCH FROM SCOTT AND BURT IS AN INTERESTING SUMMARY OF HOME-SCHOOLING THEY ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING.



SCOTT TOLD HIS 'TEACHER' HE TALKS TO EVERYONE... MOVING HIM TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DINING TABLE WILL NOT HELP.



BURT INDICATES HIS 'TEACHER' IS HOLDING 5 FIRE DRILLS OUTDOORS EACH DAY.

SCOTT HAS BEEN SENT TO THE 'HEADMASTER'S STUDY' FOUR TIMES FOR SAYING, "THAT'S NOT HOW OUR REAL TEACHER DOES IT".



FOR SCIENCE ON THE 5TH DAY, THEY STUDIED THE EFFECTS OF GODFREY'S CORDIAL* ON STUDENTS.



BURT'S 'TEACHER' MAY BE SUSPENDED FOR DRINKING ON THE JOB.

* A very strong sedative used to calm and sedate children.

SCOTT'S PARENTS HAVE SUDDENLY REALIZED 'MAYBE THE REAL TEACHERS AREN'T THE PROBLEM.'



BURT'S PARENTS RECOMMENDING RAISES AND COUNSELING FOR THE 'REAL TEACHERS'.

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I LAID UP THIS WEEKEND TRYING TO FIGURE SOMETHING OUT... WHEN DO WE GET OUR SOUL? IS IT WHEN WE ARE BORN?



NO, OF COURSE NOT... YOUR PARENTS BUY IT AT A STORE RIGHT AFTER YOU ARE BORN.



ALONG WITH YOUR INTELLIGENCE AND EMOTIONS.

THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY MY FATHER KEEPS TELLING ME, "YOU SHOULD BE THANKFUL SOME STORES HAVE A 'NO-RETURN POLICY'".



YOU JUST SET HIM BACK ANOTHER FEW MONTHS, I WOULD GUESS.



I WONDER IF MY PARENTS PAID WHOLESALE OR RETAIL?

WHEN MY MOTHER ASKED THE NEXT MORNING WHY I LOOKED SO TIRED, I TOLD HER I HAD BEEN UP ALL NIGHT, THINKING VERY WEIGHTY THOUGHTS...



...SHE TOLD ME I WAS TOO YOUNG TO BE STRESSED OVER LIFE-ISSUES, AND TO SIMPLY FOLLOW MY DREAMS... SO, I WENT BACK TO BED.



SPELLBOUND

"he soon dispelled the idea" [STUD]

We've seen occasional confusion in the Sherlock Holmes stories, such as the changing dates in 'The Red-Headed League' (from April to October) and Watson's wife calling him James instead of John. So, it's interesting that there was a spelling error in 'The Cardboard Box' that helped Holmes narrow down the identity of the culprit.

The box was addressed to 'Miss S. Cushing, Cross Street, Croydon.' Holmes makes the following observations about the writing...

"Done with a broadpointed pen, probably a J, and with very inferior ink. The word 'Croydon' has been originally spelled with an 'i', which has been changed to 'y'."

He then concludes...

"The parcel was directed, then, by a man—the printing is distinctly masculine—of limited education and unacquainted with the town of Croydon."

Without the spelling error, where would that have left us? The handwriting would have still shown whatever "masculine" qualities Holmes saw in it. Would a properly-spelled "Croydon" have eliminated his conclusion about the man's education, though?

Or was it the handwriting itself, absent the spelling error, that gave Holmes the impression that the man was not highly educated?

*We can draw our own conclusions about the state of affairs at **Baker Street Elementary**...*

MASTER STAMFORD, HOW WOULD YOU
SPELL THE WORD 'CROCODILE'? _____



K -- R -- O -- K -- O -- D -- I -- A -- L.



THAT IS NOT THE CORRECT SPELLING. _____

YOU DIDN'T ASK FOR THE CORRECT SPELLING,
YOU ASKED HOW I WOULD SPELL IT.



HILARIOUS... SINCE YOU BELIEVE
IT STARTS WITH A 'K', NAME
ANOTHER ANIMAL WHOSE NAME
BEGINS WITH A 'K'? _____



KOALA?



VERY GOOD... NOW ONE THAT
STARTS WITH A 'T'?

TWO KOALAS?

NOT SO FUNNY... ONE
LAST CHANCE...
WHAT ABOUT AN 'M'?

MAYBE A KOALA?



I THINK SHE'S READY FOR THE SUMMER
BREAK... HER HEAD IS ON THE DESK AGAIN.





WATSON'S WOUND(S)

"your hand stole toward your old wound" [CARD]

One of the most commonly debated topics in the Sherlock Holmes canon is Dr. Watson's wound.

When we first meet him in *A Study in Scarlet*, Watson tells us about his war injury, his subsequent convalescence, his arrival in London, his spending habits that outstripped his wound pension, which in turn led to his rooming with Sherlock Holmes.

And thus was born one of the great literary duos of history. All because of Watson's injury.

In that first appearance Watson tells us that it was his shoulder that took the bullet; Sherlock Holmes's observation makes it clear...

"His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and unnatural manner."

But in the very next story, *The Sign of Four*, Watson claims his leg has sustained the injury...

"I made no remark, however, but sat nursing my wounded leg. I had a Jezail bullet through it some time before..."

Is Watson trying to throw us off the scent? Perhaps he intentionally misleads us in order to create confusion.

Could it be that he is also attempting to cloud the enquiries of the British Army, which might be interested to know about Watson's wound as it relates to the pension he receives?

If the army discovered that Watson's wound(s) was/were more—shall we say 'delicate'?—than he initially indicated, they might have revoked his pension.

On *Trifles*, we discussed a couple of competing theories, one of which had a very original and creative solution to the mystery of the two wounds.

Then again, perhaps it was an old school injury first sustained at **Baker Street Elementary** that came back to haunt Watson...

HOLMES, YOU LOOK PUZZLED...
CAN I HELP YOU WITH AN ISSUE?

WATSON, I NOTICE YOU WERE
LIMPING THIS MORNING... IS THE
COLD WEATHER AGGRAVATING
YOUR OL' CRICKET INJURY?



AGAIN, I WILL POINT OUT THAT IGNATIUS'
SHOT HIT JOHN IN THE SHOULDER, NOT
THE LEG... THUS, HIS STIFF SHOULDER
DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.



SETTLE IT ONCE AND FOR ALL... WHERE DID
YOU GET HIT... THE LEG OR SHOULDER?

THERE IS A THIRD POSSIBILITY
YOU TWO DID NOT OBSERVE.



THE BALL OF IGNATIUS' BAT FIRST STRUCK ME ON
THE INNER KNEE... IT THEN SKYROCKETED UPWARD,
HITTING ME IN THE NOSE, BREAKING IT...

MISSED THAT PART.



BEING WOZZY, I FELL WRONG, SLIGHTLY
DISLOCATING MY SHOULDER.

THAT WOULD EXPLAIN
THE SLING YOU WORE.



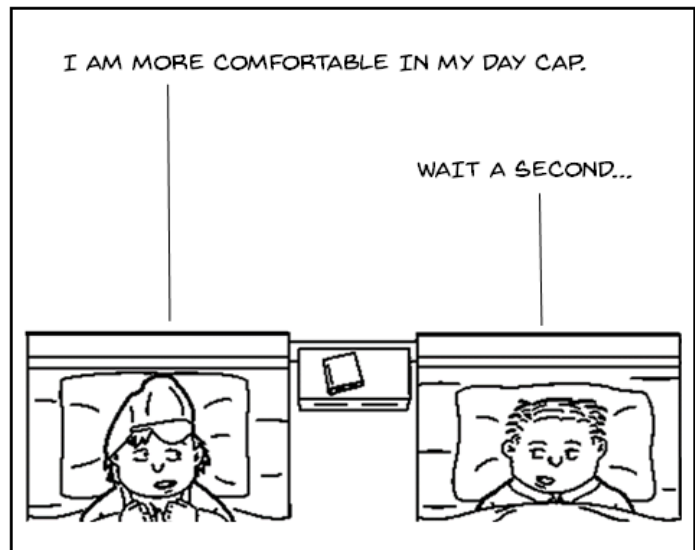
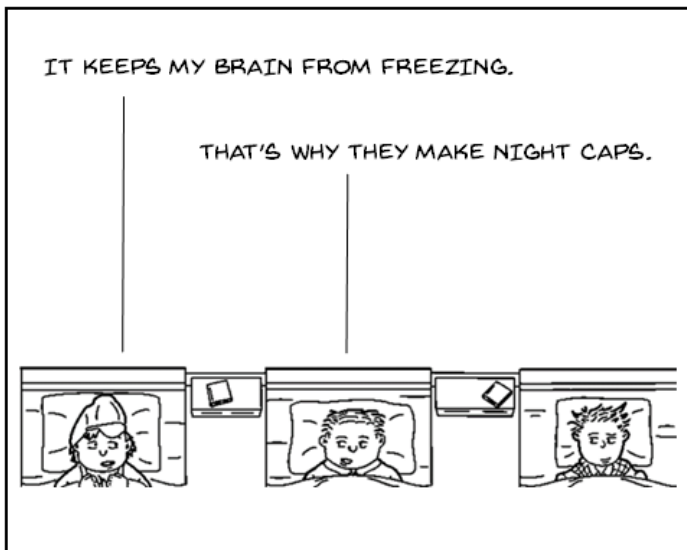
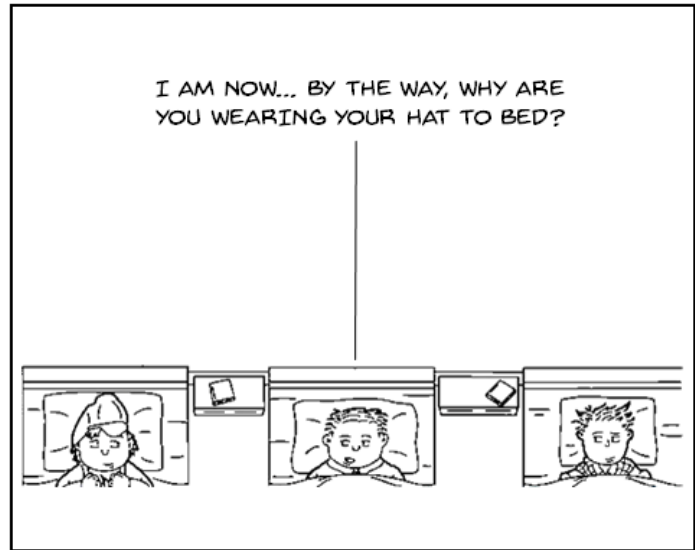
WHILE THE NURSE DID NOT BELIEVE THE
INJURIES WERE LIFE-THREATENING, SHE BELIEVES
I WILL BE REMINDED OF THEM PERIODICALLY
WITH SMALL PANGS, EVEN INTO ADULTHOOD.



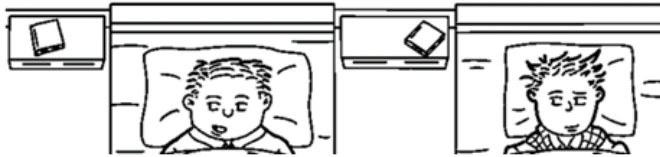
TRY TO KEEP THEM STRAIGHT WHEN YOU
REMINISCE ABOUT THEM IN THE FUTURE.

IF I WAS YOU, I MIGHT TURN THEM INTO WAR
WOUNDS... SOUNDS A LITTLE MORE HEROIC THAN
THREE INJURIES CAUSED BY ONE CRICKET BALL.





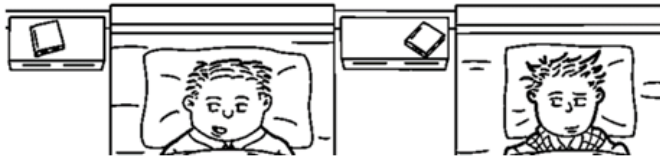
BY ANY CHANCE, IN ART AND CRAFTS CLASS TODAY, DID YOU ACCIDENTALLY GLUE YOUR HAT TO YOUR HEAD AGAIN?



NO... NO... WELL, MAYBE.



I NOTICED DURING YOUR BEDTIME PRAYER YOU ASKED GOD TO MAKE BOSTON THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES... WHY WOULD YOU ASK THAT?



BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT I PUT ON TODAY'S SURPRISE QUIZ.



YOU CAN'T HAVE ANY PUDDING...

"Death from some powerful vegetable" [SIGN]

There are plenty of instances of animal flesh on the side-board at 221B Baker Street, whether it's a couple of brace of grouse, Henry Baker's Christmas goose, or a joint of beef. But when it comes to vegetables, we don't hear quite so much.

Yes, the parsley sank into the butter, but that was at the Abergavenny household.

However, there are clues to the consumption of vegetables in and around London. For example, in 'The Man with the Twisted Lip,' Holmes and Watson were on the road early and saw evidence of activity...

"A few country carts were stirring, bearing in vegetables to the metropolis."

And in 'The Beryl Coronet,' there was a romance brewing between Francis Prosper and the maid of the Holder household...

"Oh, yes! he is the green-grocer who brings our vegetables round. His name is Francis Prosper."

The presence of a green-grocer meant that the family had fresh fruits and vegetables delivered to the house on a regular basis. But other than the landlady babbling "of green peas at seven-thirty," [3STU] no other greens warranted specific mention as part of a meal.

On Trifles, we had an opportunity to talk about vegetarians in Victorian England, the connection between the Sherlock Holmes stories and vegetarian restaurants, as well as the few mentions of vegetables in the Canon.

Meanwhile, the boys at Baker Street Elementary have another repast to consider...

JOHN, SHERLOCK, SEE IF I HAVE THIS STAIGHT.

NO!!



SNOW WHITE WAS POISONED BY AN APPLE.

OH, WHERE IS HE GOING?



JACK WAS TERRORIZED BY A GIANT, DUE TO HIS BEANS... OF COURSE, ALICE WAS TRAUMATIZED BY EATING A MUSHROOM...



...AND, THAT WHOLE STORY OF PETER PUMPKIN EATER JUST CREEPS ME OUT...



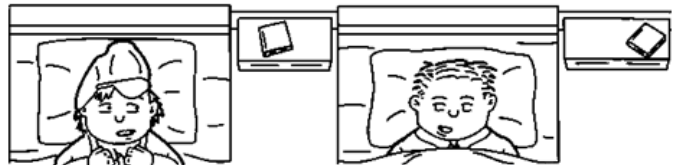
SO, EXPLAIN WHY LUNCH-LADY MRS. HUDSON THINKS I NEED TO EAT MY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES?

MAYBE SHE'S TRYING TO GET RID OF YOU.



I THINK I WILL JUST BE A CARNIVORE.

SHOULD WORK OUT... WE ARE HAVING MEAT SURPRISE FOR LUNCH TOMORROW.



OK, PEOPLE, TONIGHT IS THE
OPENING OF OUR NEW PLAY.



IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE TO SEE
ALL OF YOU GROW AS ACTORS...
THROUGH ALL THE UPS AND DOWNS.



IT WILL BE OK IF SOMETHING GOES
WRONG... SOMEONE MAY FORGET THEIR
LINES, FAINT, OR PEE THEIR PANTS.



BUT A TRUE PROFESSIONAL DOES NOT
CRY, BREAK DOWN, OR FALL APART.



AS THE DIRECTOR, THAT'S MY JOB... ONE
FINAL THING... DO YOU KNOW WHY THEY
TELL ACTORS TO 'BREAK A LEG?'



BECAUSE EACH STAGE PLAY HAS
A CAST... OH, I KILL MYSELF.



SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

"Even my limited sense of humour could evolve" [MAZA]

Charles Darwin was a man of science. His observation of various species of animals led to his theories on natural selection so famously referenced in his book On the Origin of Species. He was a man who turned from religion to science.

Arthur Conan Doyle seemed to do just the opposite, as his most famous creation was focused on the scientific method. Indeed, Sherlock Holmes even once remarked, "Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science." [SIGN]

When the old bookseller showed up in Watson's consulting room with a copy of The Origin of Tree Worship, was it a nod to Darwin's work? Or perhaps Professor Presbury's devolution into a simian-inspired night stalker was one as well?

One minor point: Conan Doyle and Charles Darwin were related. They were 14th cousins, one time removed. Meanwhile, over at **Baker Street Elementary**, you can't make a monkey out of Stamford...

SO, THIS WEEKEND I ASKED MY MOTHER WHERE WE COME FROM?



I CAN'T IMAGINE THIS GOING WELL.



SHE SAID, "WE BELIEVE ADAM AND EVE HAD CHILDREN, WHO GREW UP, AND ALSO HAD CHILDREN UNTIL I FINALLY SHOWED UP."

SEEMS TO ME THERE ARE SEVERAL GAPS IN THAT EXPLANATION... SO I WENT TO MY FATHER AND ASKED THE SAME QUESTION.



HE SAYS RECENT DETERMINATIONS INDICATE WE CAME FROM MONKEYS.



I WONDER WHY MONKEYS AND NOT POLAR BEARS?



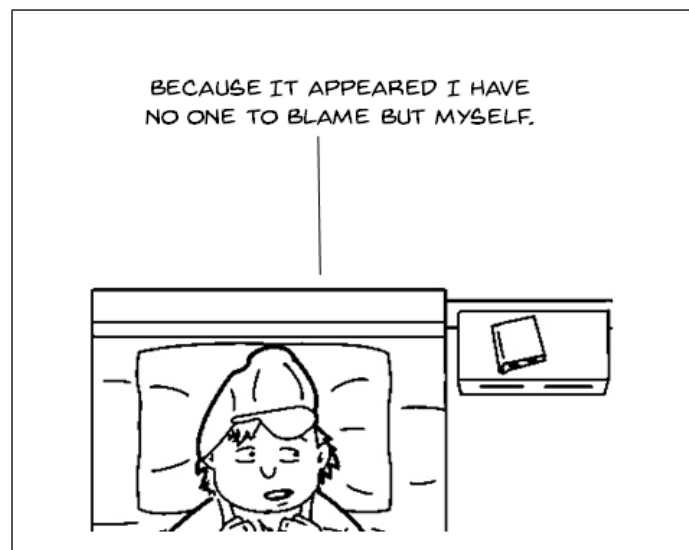
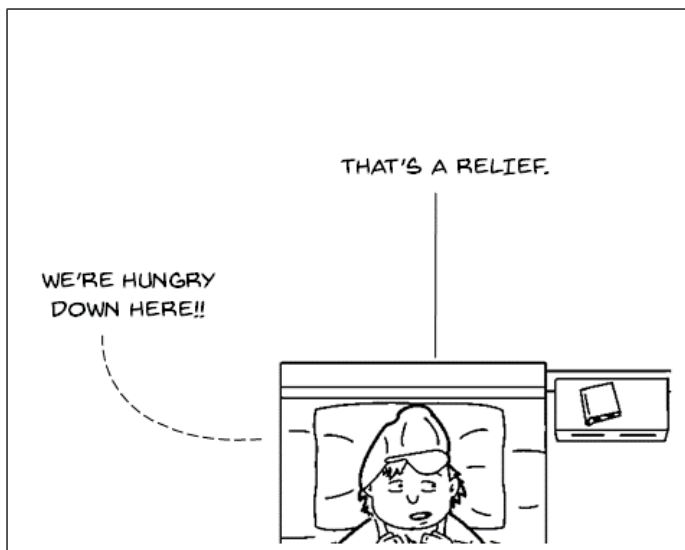
SEEMS LIKE BOTH EXPLANATIONS HAVE
THEIR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

I WENT BACK TO MY MOTHER AND TOLD HER
SHE HAD NOT TOLD ME THE TRUTH, AND THAT
FATHER EXPLAINED WE CAME FROM MONKEYS.



SHE STATED, "WELL, YOUR FATHER WAS
TALKING ABOUT HIS SIDE OF THE FAMILY."





HOLMES, WHY DO YOU INSIST
ON SUCKING YOUR THUMB?

IT HELPS ME WHEN I AM THINKING.

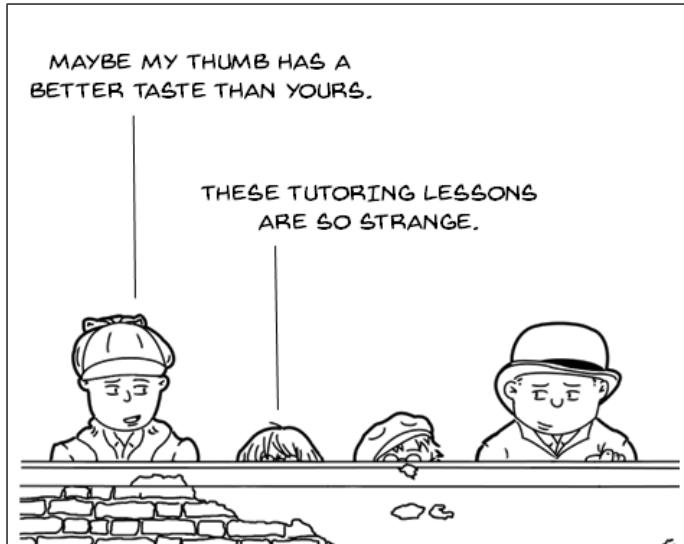


I TRIED TO SUCK MY THUMB
ONCE... IT MADE ME NAUSEOUS.



MAYBE MY THUMB HAS A
BETTER TASTE THAN YOURS.

THESE TUTORING LESSONS
ARE SO STRANGE.



TONGUE IN CHEEK

"if I could but silence that foul tongue" [BOSC]

"You have a grand gift of silence, Watson," Sherlock Holmes told Dr. Watson in 'The Man with the Twisted Lip.'

The context was that Holmes was driving out to The Cedars in Lee, taking Watson with him on the case.

"Holmes drove in silence, with his head sunk upon his breast, and the air of a man who is lost in thought." He appreciated Watson's willingness to allow him to think to himself and expressed it after complimenting Watson's gift... "It makes you quite invaluable as a companion."

It's clearly something Watson is comfortable with. In 'The Yellow Face,' he mentions another extended silence in Holmes's presence...

"For two hours we rambled about together, in silence for the most part, as befits two men who know each other intimately."

Silence proves useful for Sherlock Holmes in a number of instances as he ruminates on details and conversations.

In "The Five Orange Pips," Watson tells us Holmes...

"sat for some time in silence, with his head sunk forward and his eyes bent upon the red glow of the fire. Then he lit his pipe, and leaning back in his chair he watched the blue smoke-rings as they chased each other up to the ceiling."

After a visit from Lord Bellinger and the Right Honourable Trelawney Hope in 'The Second Stain,' Holmes needed to consider all angles of attack...

"When our illustrious visitors had departed Holmes lit his pipe in silence and sat for some time lost in the deepest thought."

Sherlock Holmes took his business seriously. After listening to Helen Stoner's harrowing tale...

"There was a long silence, during which Holmes leaned his chin upon his hands and stared into the crackling fire."

And then there are instances of Holmes and Watson waiting in silence... standing together "in the darkness" awaiting Moran [EMPT]; "for a minute," as they expected Abe Slaney's imminent entrance [DANC]; "crouched among the bushes" outside of Peter Carey's cabin [BLAC].

In some cases, Holmes needed silence to affect a particular outcome, such as in 'The Three Gables,' when he listened for Susan, wheezing at the door...

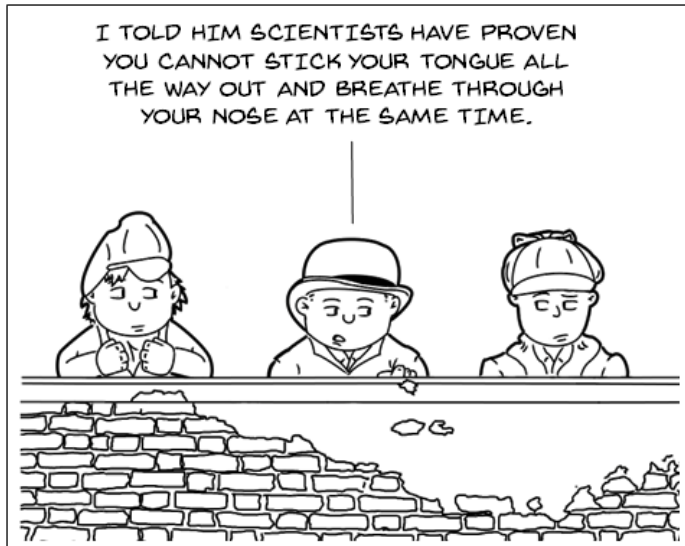
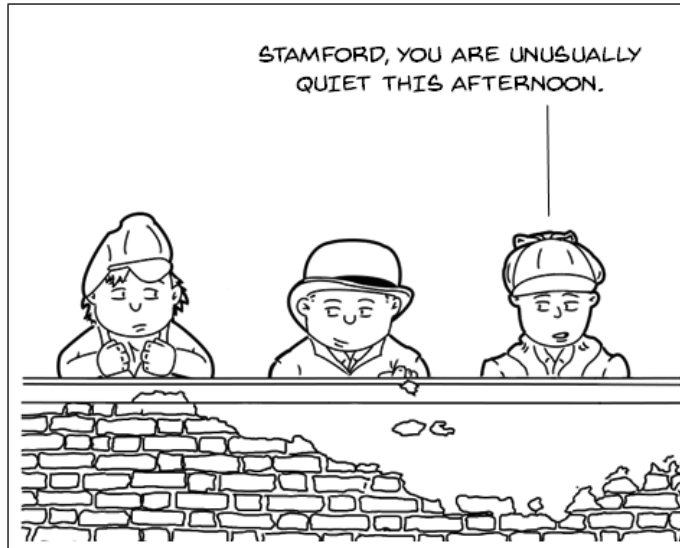
"Holmes raised his hand for silence. Then he strode across the room, flung open the door, and dragged in a great gaunt woman whom he had seized by the shoulder."

And probably the most famous bit of silence in the Canon was the dog who did nothing in the night-time in 'Silver Blaze.' Holmes explains his reasoning...

"Before deciding that question I had grasped the significance of the silence of the dog, for one true inference invariably suggests others. The Simpson incident had shown me that a dog was kept in the stables, and yet, though some one had been in and had fetched out a horse, he had not barked enough to arouse the two lads in the loft. Obviously, the midnight visitor was some one whom the dog knew well."

Meanwhile, the cat hasn't got Stamford's tongue.

*It's another kind of silliness going on at **Baker Street Elementary...***



HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED...



IF YOU CONSIDERED IT, I PROBABLY HAVE NOT.

WHAT IF IT SNOWED YEAR-ROUND... NOT JUST DURING THE WINTER MONTHS?



THINK ABOUT IT... WITH THE LONGER DAYS, WE COULD BUILD MORE SNOWMEN AND HAVE MORE SNOWBALL FIGHTS... AND OF COURSE, WE COULD PLAY IN SHORT SLEEVES, AND NOT HAVE TO BE SO BUNDLED UP.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?



I THINK YOUR SUMMER DAYS MAY BE TOO FILLED WITH SUMMER SCHOOL TO BE PLAYING IN THE SNOW.

WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS

"a rainy night had been followed by a glorious morning" [SOLI]

As Londoners, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were no strangers to inclement weather. From the stormy night that Watson writes about in 'The Five Orange Pips' ("the wind cried and sobbed like a child in the chimney") to the torrents in 'The Golden Pince-Nez' (requiring "overcoats and cravats and galoshes, and every aid that man ever invented to fight the weather"), it's simply part of the accepted climate of England.

In 'The Resident Patient' though, we find them curled up in the confines of Baker Street as the October weather whips around outside. In that opening, we find this lovely paragraph...

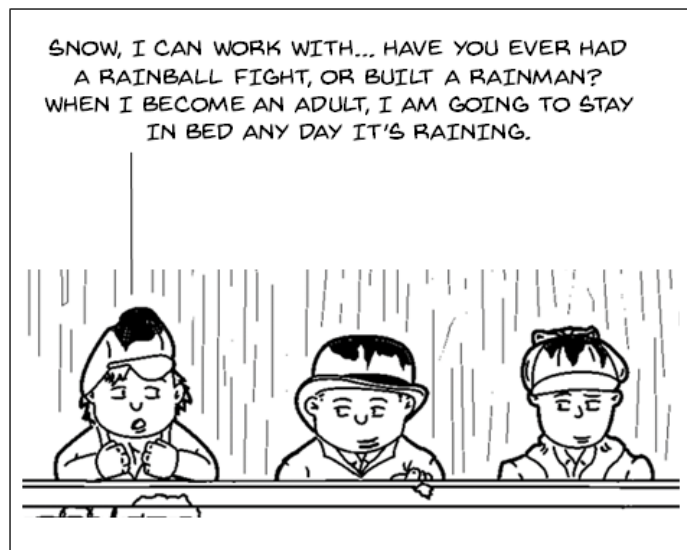
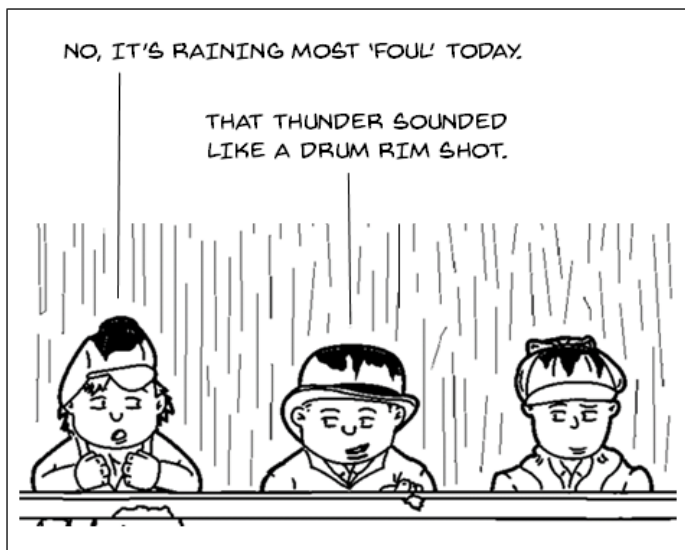
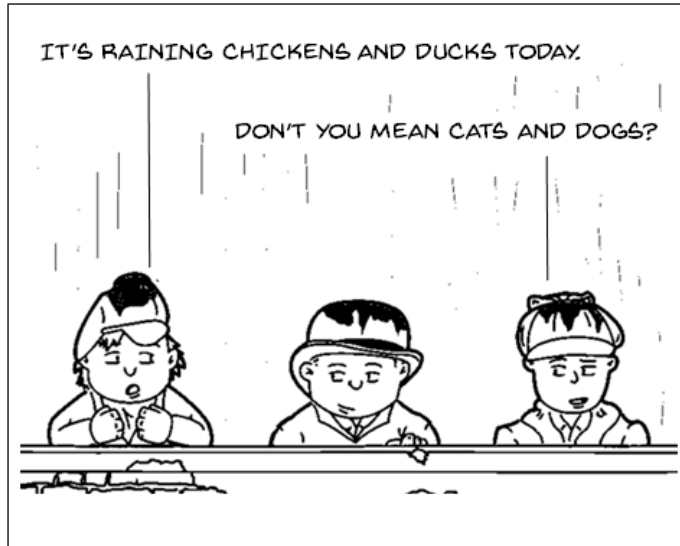
"I cannot be sure of the exact date, for some of my memoranda upon the matter have been mislaid, but it must have been towards the end of the first year during which Holmes and I shared chambers in Baker Street.

It was boisterous October weather, and we had both remained indoors all day, I because I feared with my shaken health to face the keen autumn wind, while he was deep in some of those abstruse chemical investigations which absorbed him utterly as long as he was engaged upon them. Towards evening, however, the breaking of a test-tube brought his research to a premature ending, and he sprang up from his chair with an exclamation of impatience and a clouded brow.

'A day's work ruined, Watson,' said he, striding across to the window. "Ha! the stars are out and the wind has fallen. What do you say to a ramble through London?"

There's an interesting asterisk that goes with this opening, however: if you're reading the book version of 'The Resident Patient' as found in The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes, you'll note that the famous 'mind-reading scene' from 'The Cardboard Box' is included (it was added to RESI when The Memoirs went to print, as CARD was omitted due to concerns over its risqué content). The paragraph above comes from the Strand Magazine version of the story.

On to the rain-soaked students at Baker Street Elementary...



I JUST NOTICED... WHERE IS SHERLOCK? HE'S NOT IN HIS BED.



I JUST NOTICED... WHERE IS SHERLOCK? HE'S NOT IN HIS BED.



YOU DON'T REMEMBER... EARLY THIS MORNING, WHILE WAS STILL DARK, YOU WHACKED HIM SEVERAL TIMES WITH IGNATIUS' CRICKET BAT.

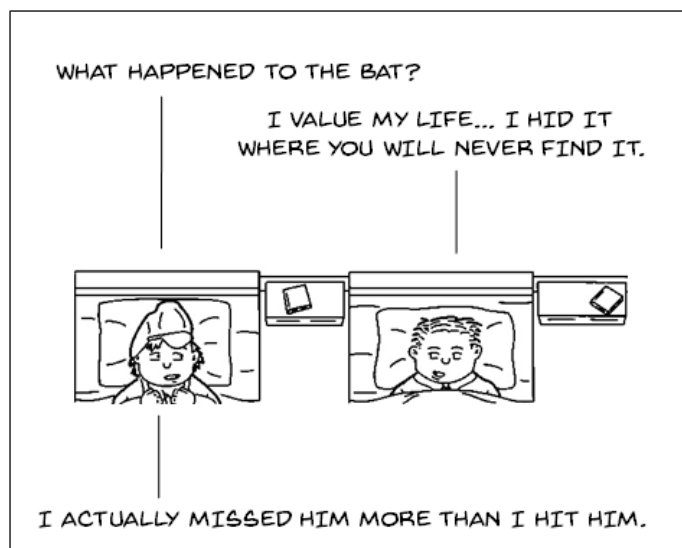
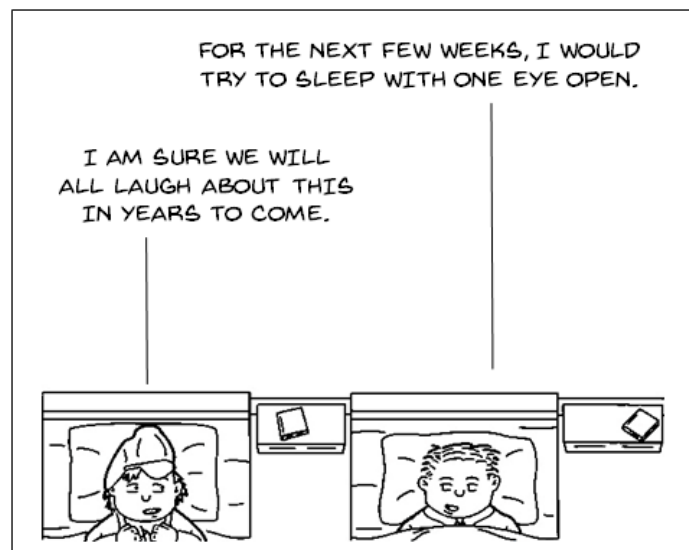
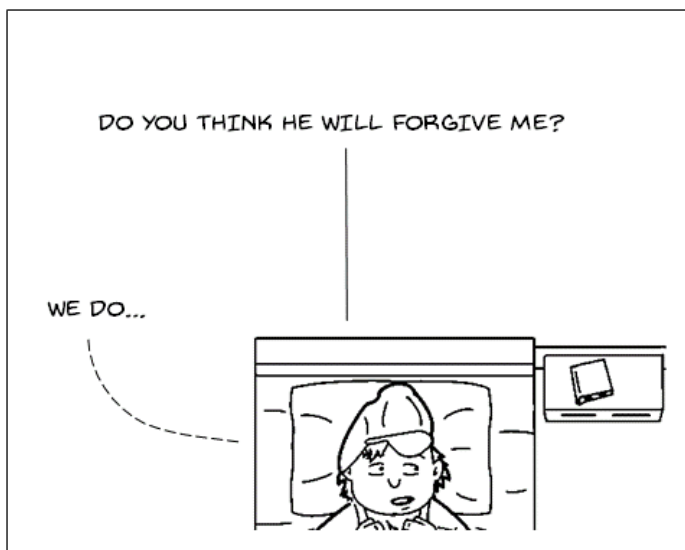
OH, THAT'S RIGHT.



I HAD A NIGHTMARE ABOUT MONSTERS UNDER MY BED... I THOUGHT HE WAS ONE OF THEM.

WE'RE NOT VERY BIG...





INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN STUPID

"I was feeling drowsy and stupid" [NAVA]

Sherlock Holmes faced a number of clever adversaries, but were any of them so sloppy in their methods that they could be considered stupid?

On the contrary, most of them were extraordinary clever, such that either the traditional police were stumped and had to call for Holmes's assistance, or Watson himself could discern neither the motive nor the mode of the crime.

Consider in 'The Speckled Band,' after a visit to Miss Stoner's room at Stoke Moran:

"Well, there is at least a curious coincidence of dates. A ventilator is made, a cord is hung, and a lady who sleeps in the bed dies. Does not that strike you?"

"I cannot as yet see any connection."

"Did you observe anything very peculiar about that bed?"

"No."

"It was clamped to the floor. Did you ever see a bed fastened like that before?"

"I cannot say that I have."

"The lady could not move her bed. It must always be in the same relative position to the ventilator and to the rope—or so we may call it, since it was clearly never meant for a bell-pull."

Recall that in 'The Blue Carbuncle,' Holmes asked Watson for his impression of Henry Baker's hat, and Watson could make nothing of it...

"I can see nothing," said I, handing it back to my friend.

"On the contrary, Watson, you can see everything. You fail, however, to reason from what you see. You are too timid in drawing your inferences."

The challenge is when one is in proximity to a shining beacon of light, one is likely to seem dim in comparison. Watson makes it clear that he himself is not stupid, but when compared to his companion, his intelligence pales...

"I trust that I am not more dense than my neighbours, but I was always oppressed with a sense of my own stupidity in my dealings with Sherlock Holmes." ['The Red-Headed League']

Of course, there are still some out there who'll seem dim, regardless of their proximity to intelligence.

*Such as some of those at **Baker Street Elementary**...*

...MEANWHILE,
IN THE U.S...

BURT, JOHN HAS SENT US HIS LATEST
CHRONICLING OF ONE OF HOLMES' ADVENTURES.

WHAT DID HE SOLVE THIS TIME?



A FIFTH YEAR STUDENT, PATCHKIN,
HAD BEEN TAKING OTHER STUDENTS'
LUNCHES FROM THEIR CABINETS.

SHERLOCK WAS ABLE TO DETERMINE WHO
HAD STOLEN THE LUNCHES, BASED ON A VERY
INTERESTING ITEM... PATCHKIN WAS THE
ONLY ONE WITH SARDINES ON HIS BREATH,
WHICH WAS THE LUNCH STOLEN THAT DAY.



HOW DID PATCHKIN REACT WHEN CAUGHT?

HE DID NOT ADMIT IT FOR HOURS.

WHEN THE HEADMASTER ASKED HIM WHY HE DID
NOT ADMIT TO IT UP FRONT, AND SAVE THEM ALL
THAT TIME, PATCHKIN STATED, "I THOUGHT I WAS
INNOCENT UNTIL I SAW THE EVIDENCE SHERLOCK
HAD FOUND..." WATSON CONCLUDES PATCHKIN IS
NOT THE 'SHARPEST PENCIL IN THE BOX...'



I CAN'T SLEEP... I'M TOO STRESSED OUT ABOUT TOMORROW'S SHOW AND TELL.

TRY COUNTING SHEEP.



HOW HIGH CAN A SHEEP COUNT?

JUST IMAGINE A LINE OF SHEEP JUMPING OVER YOU IN THE BED, AND COUNT EACH OF THEM.



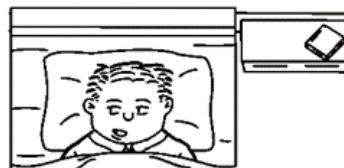
WHAT DO SHEEP COUNT WHEN THEY CAN'T SLEEP?

LAMB CHOPS WOULD BE TASTY RIGHT NOW.



1... 2... 3... 4...

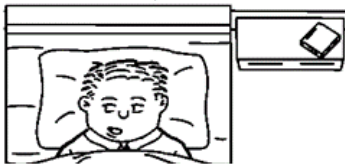
IT WORKS BETTER IF YOU COUNT QUIETLY, TO YOURSELF.



HEY, WHY ARE YOU STOPPING?
KEEP MOVING...

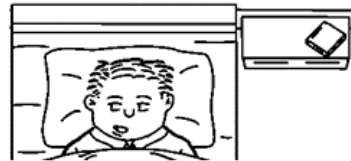
EEEEKK!!

WHAT HAPPENED?



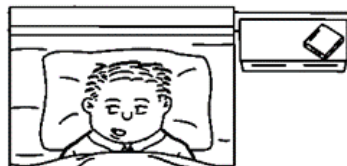
ONE OF THEM PEED ON MY BED...
MY BLANKET IS SOAKED!!!

OH, GOOD GRIEF!



ARE YOU SURE IT WAS THE SHEEP?

IN CASE ANYONE IS
INTERESTED, I'M
SLEEPING OUTSIDE!



PICKED CLEAN

"that cat-like love of personal cleanliness" [HOUN]

One of the scenes in the Canon that has always confounded us in when Watson found the hut in which the "man on the tor" was hiding (spoiler alert: he discovered that the man was Sherlock Holmes).

Watson thought the place was abandoned, but soon found evidence to the contrary...

"But there were ample signs that I had not come upon a false scent. This was certainly where the man lived. Some blankets rolled in a waterproof lay upon that very stone slab upon which Neolithic man had once slumbered. The ashes of a fire were heaped in a rude grate. Beside it lay some cooking utensils and a bucket half-full of water. A litter of empty tins showed that the place had been occupied for some time, and I saw, as my eyes became accustomed to the checkered light, a pannikin and a half-full bottle of spirits standing in the corner.

In the middle of the hut a flat stone served the purpose of a table, and upon this stood a small cloth bundle—the same, no doubt, which I had seen through the telescope upon the shoulder of the boy. It contained a loaf of bread, a tinned tongue, and two tins of preserved peaches."

When Holmes arrived (much to Watson's surprise), the doctor observed...

"He was thin and worn, but clear and alert, his keen face bronzed by the sun and roughened by the wind. In his tweed suit and cloth cap he looked like any other tourist upon the moor, and he had contrived, with that cat-like love of personal cleanliness which was one of his characteristics, that his chin should be as smooth and his linen as perfect as if he were in Baker Street."

And herein lies our question about how Holmes was able to affect such a pristine appearance in the wilderness of Dartmoor, set up as he was in a stone hut. Being clean-shaven in such a situation is not difficult to achieve, but but the linen always puzzled us.

He mentioned Cartwright as supplying him with "a loaf of bread and a clean collar," but wouldn't there be more to his appearance than a clean collar? Perhaps having a clean-shaven face framed by a clean collar was enough to throw Watson off the scent.

Then again, Holmes called the hut his "occasional retreat." Was there another place on the moor where he had a hideout? Perhaps he surreptitiously rented a room in Coombe Tracey. Or ingratiated himself with Laura Lyons.

Down at Baker Street Elementary, there's one student whom we know was not interested in such trifles...

...AND, THUS, WE MUST BE CAREFUL TO NOT 'THROW THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATHWATER'... THANK YOU.



VERY WELL EXPLAINED,
MASTER HOLMES.

YOU KNOW, I HAVE NEVER QUITE UNDERSTOOD
WHAT THAT EXPRESSION MEANS.



IT'S AN OLD WIVES' TALE... POORER PEOPLE
WOULD TAKE A BATH ONCE A WEEK OR LESS...

...USING THE SAME HOT BATH WATER FOR THE
ENTIRE FAMILY... THE WATER WOULD GET PRETTY
MUCKY BY THE TIME THE BABY WAS WASHED...

YUCK!



THE WATER MIGHT BE SO OPAQUE, THE
BABY MIGHT NOT BE SEEN WHEN THE
WATER WAS THROWN OUT.

DOUBLE YUCK!



THAT IS SIMPLY ASTOUNDING.



WHAT, THAT THEY WOULD USE THE
SAME WATER OVER AND OVER AGAIN?

NO... THAT PEOPLE WOULD
VOLUNTARILY TAKE A BATH EACH WEEK.



UHHH... BEEN MEANING TO
TALK TO YOU ABOUT THAT.

SO, HAVE ALL OF YOU STARTED SELECTING
YOUR CHOICE FOR UNIVERSITY?



MEDICAL SCHOOL FOR ME.

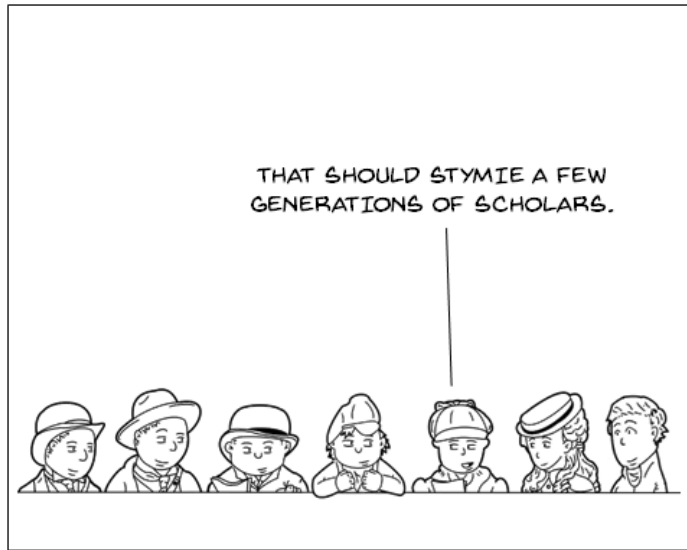
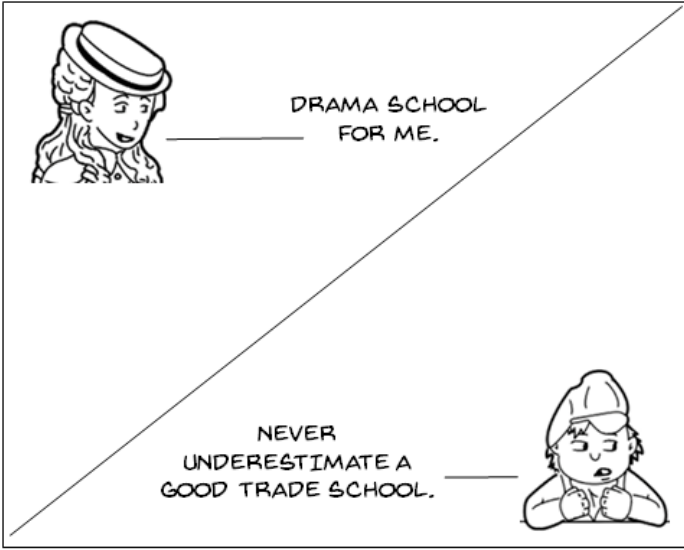


CAN I GET OUT OF GRADE SCHOOL FIRST???



I AM LEANING TOWARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
ALSO... EDINBURGH IS DRAWING ME.





THE FRECKLED BAND

"the freckles started out on the lady's face [HOUN]

Quick: how many times are freckles mentioned in the Canon? We'll have the answer for you in just a moment, but first, some background.

Freckles are common enough. You probably know someone with them, or someone who'll get them. Did you know that no one is born with freckles? That's because freckles are the result of exposure to the sun: they are pigment-producing cells that get revved up due to exposure to the sun.

Liver spots are freckles that are acquired by older people who have been exposed to the sun over long periods of time. This is why they're sometimes called "age spots."

With fair-skinned people more likely to get freckles, it's surprising we don't hear more about them in the Sherlock Holmes stories, given the fair-skinned beauties we come across. In fact, there are only two instances of freckled ladies that we know of. Do you know who they are?

One is Laura Lyons, the typist and friend of Sir Charles Baskerville in The Hound of the Baskervilles. Watson met with her and was taken by her beauty:

"The first impression left by Mrs. Lyons was one of extreme beauty. Her eyes and hair were of the same rich hazel colour, and her cheeks, though considerably freckled, were flushed with the exquisite bloom of the brunette, the dainty pink which lurks at the heart of the sulphur rose."

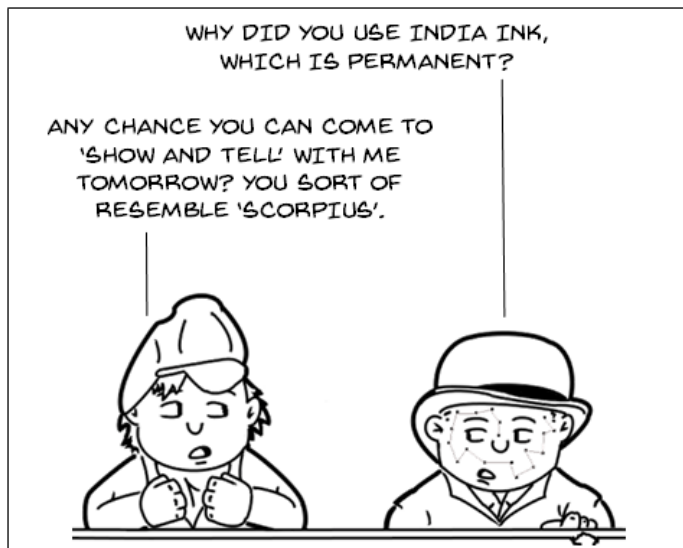
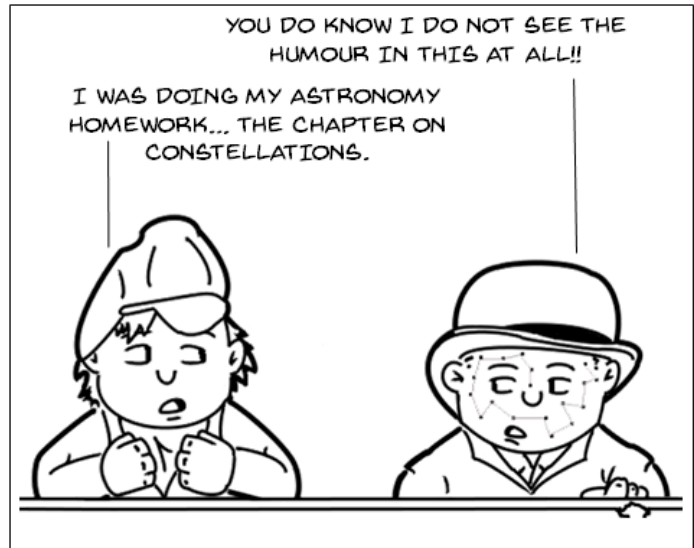
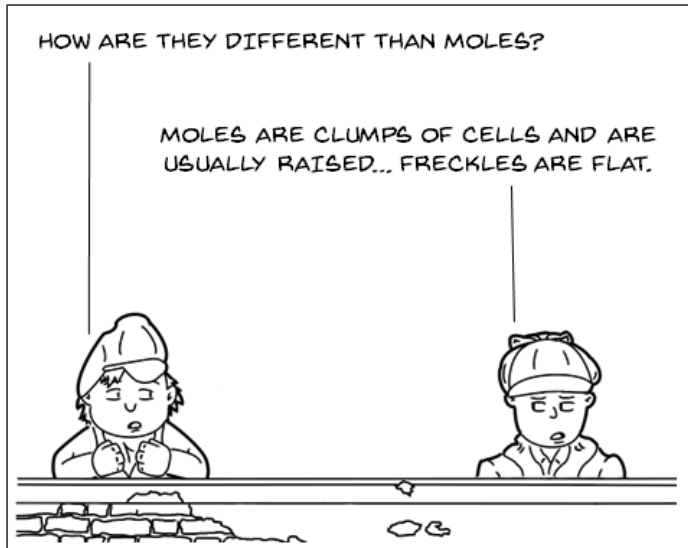
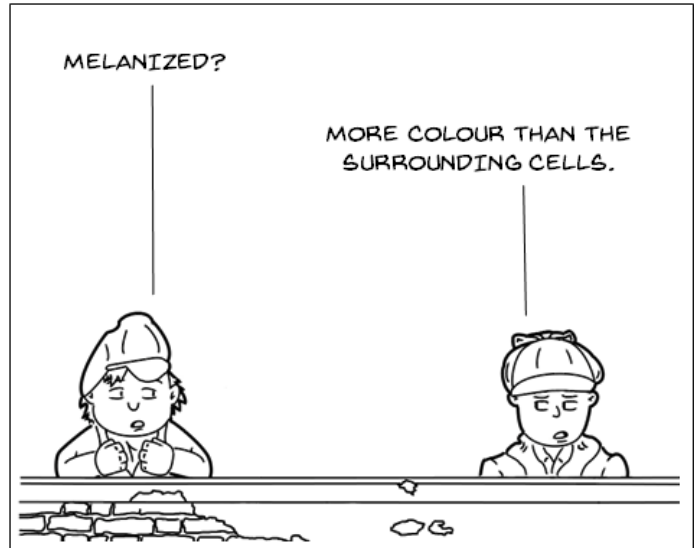
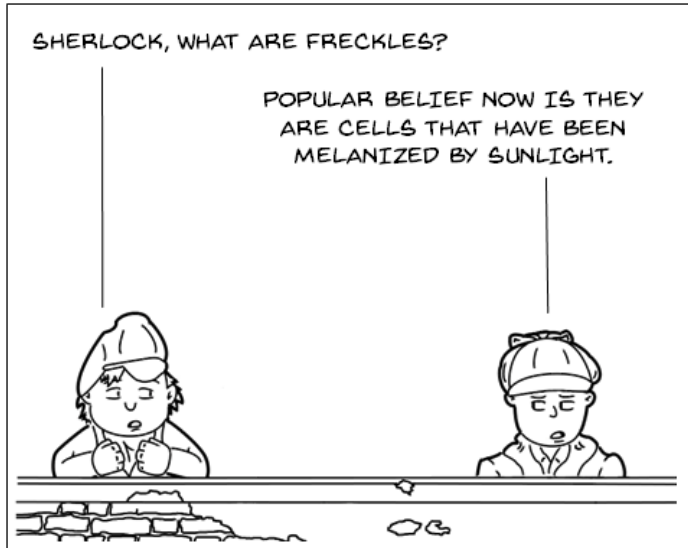
The other is Violet Hunter, the brave young lady who serves as a governess to the Rucastle family and is forced to cut her hair short and wear an electric blue dress as she sat in front of a window. Watson described her entrance to 221B Baker Street:

"She was plainly but neatly dressed, with a bright, quick face, freckled like a plover's egg."

Interestingly, Wikipedia describes a plover's technique... "Plovers engage in false brooding, a type of distraction display. Examples include... pretending to change position or to sit on an imaginary nest site."

To change position or sit in an imaginary nest site. This seems exactly what Miss Hunter was doing to distract Mr. Fowler, the fiance of Alice Rucastle, when Jephro Rucastle asked her "to sit here, or sit here, that would not be offensive to you?"

*Meanwhile, there seems to be some distraction down at **Baker Street Elementary**...*



ONCE AGAIN, I WAS ABLE TO FOOL THE
TEACHER ENOUGH TO PASS THIS ESSAY...
STAMFORD, WATSON, HOW DID YOU DO?



I BELIEVE THE APPROPRIATE PHASE IS
'BY THE SKIN OF MY TEETH'...

PLEASE LORD, LET ME
PASS THIS ONE PAPER.



DID IT WORK?

I BELIEVE THIS HOW
STUDENTS BECOME ATHEISTS.



MA'AM... I ASSUME YOU KNOW IN AMERICA
THEIR BILL OF RIGHTS GUARANTEES THE
FREE EXPRESSION OF IDEAS.



AND YOUR POINT? _____

THIS RIGHT PROVIDES A PERSONAL
PROTECTION FROM EXAGGGERATED
CENSORSHIP, NOT TO MENTION THE
SUPPRESSION OF ONE'S VIEW OR OPINION...



BUT PROPOSE ONE MINOR
IMPROVEMENT ON HOW SOMEONE COULD
IMPROVE THEIR TEACHING ABILITIES.

HEA
MC

A CASE RIGHT OUT OF HISTORY

"hinted at prehistoric strife" [DEVI]

When Sherlock Holmes said "this agency stands flat-footed upon the ground" in 'The Sussex Vampire,' he was referring to ghosts and the other-worldly. There's no evidence he was talking about dinosaurs. You might think the Canon is devoid of mentions of human history that pre-date the spans of crime that Sherlock Holmes studied. And yet, there are a handful of mentions of prehistoric man.

Interestingly, they all occur in stories related to the moors. Southwest England contains beautiful, rugged, and primordial landscapes that are very much the same today as they must have been thousands of years ago. Landscapes that saw our human ancestors struggling for survival.

Two such stories take us to the moor... The Hound of the Baskervilles and 'The Devil's Foot.' Both use the moor as a gothic setting to give us a sense of the supernatural: in one case a spectral hound from hell; in the other, mysterious deaths in a "devil-ridden" parish.

In the first, Watson observes stone circles and wonders what they were. Stapleton informs him they were "the homes of our worthy ancestors. Prehistoric man lived thickly on the moor."

Watson paints a wonderful image for us, based on his observations and reflections of the remnants of previous inhabitants of the moor...

"When you are once out upon its bosom you have left all traces of modern England behind you, but on the other hand you are conscious everywhere of the homes and the work of the prehistoric people. On all sides of you as you walk are the houses of these forgotten folk, with their graves and the huge monoliths which are supposed to have marked their temples. As you look at their gray stone huts against the scarred hill-sides you leave your own age behind you, and if you were to see a skin-clad, hairy man crawl out from the low door fitting a flint-tipped arrow on to the string of his bow, you would feel that his presence there was more natural than your own."

"The strange thing is that they should have lived so thickly on what must always have been most unfruitful soil. I am no antiquarian, but I could imagine that they were some unwarlike and harried race who were forced to accept that which none other would occupy."

In 'The Devil's Foot,' we see the duo as far west as Cornwall, on the coast of Southwest England. The landscape is much the same as they explore it, yet Watson's assumptions about the people turn more violent than his initial take in The Hound of the Baskervilles.

"In every direction upon these moors there were traces of some vanished race which had passed utterly away, and left as its sole record strange monuments of stone, irregular mounds which contained the burned ashes of the dead, and curious earthworks which hinted at prehistoric strife. The glamour and mystery of the place, with its sinister atmosphere of forgotten nations, appealed to the imagination of my friend, and he spent much of his time in long walks and solitary meditations upon the moor."

While man has always had a predilection for violence among his own species, he never had a chance to do battle with prehistoric ancestors that went even farther back in the epochal timeline. Namely, dinosaurs.

That is, until Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's The Lost World came along. And later, Michael Crichton's Jurassic Park, which was dedicated to Conan Doyle. Or that time that Sherlock Holmes battled a T-Rex.

What?

Yes, that's right. One of the all-time campy favorites of devotees of the entertainment mockbuster powerhouse Asylum Studios is Sherlock Holmes, where Victorian London was the setting for a dinosaur.

*We'll leave the rest to your imagination (or your Amazon purchase) and head over to a gay old time at **Baker Street Elementary**...*

THE TEACHER INTERCEPTED ANOTHER OF MY NOTES TODAY... MAYBE WE SHOULD DEVELOP A CODE FOR THE NOTES WE WRITE.



THAT WOULD BE GREAT... THEN THE TEACHER WON'T BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND US AT ALL.



WHAT MAKES YOU ASSUME SHE UNDERSTANDS ANYTHING WE DO NOW?

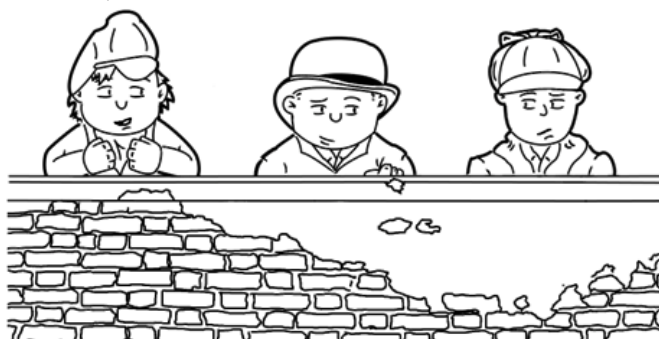


YOU DO KNOW HOW A T-REX DINOSAUR WRITES NOTES?

HERE WE GO AGAIN...
OK, I'LL BITE.



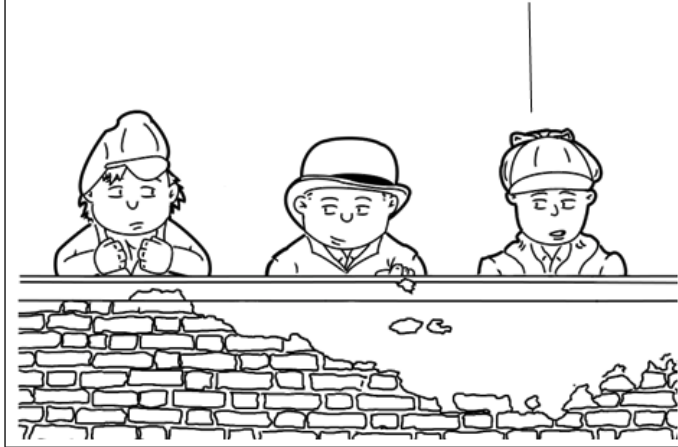
SHORT-HAND, OF COURSE.



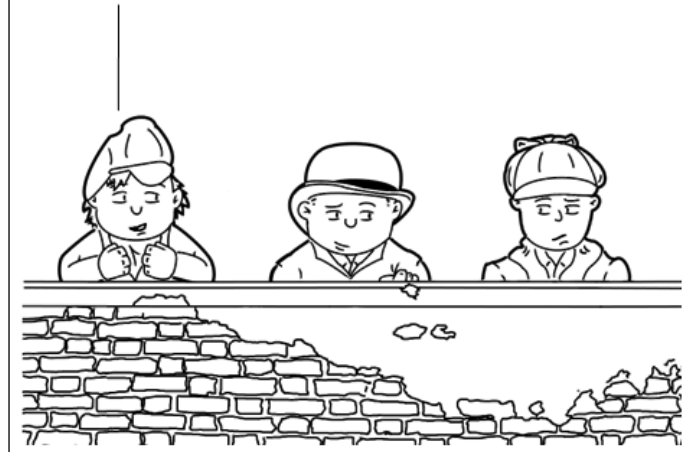
SO, SHERLOCK, WHY CAN'T WE STAY UP AS LATE AS OUR PARENTS OR TEACHERS EACH NIGHT... IT DOESN'T SEEM FAIR.



I HATE TO BE THE BEARER OF BAD NEWS, STAMFORD, BUT LIFE IS NOT FAIR.

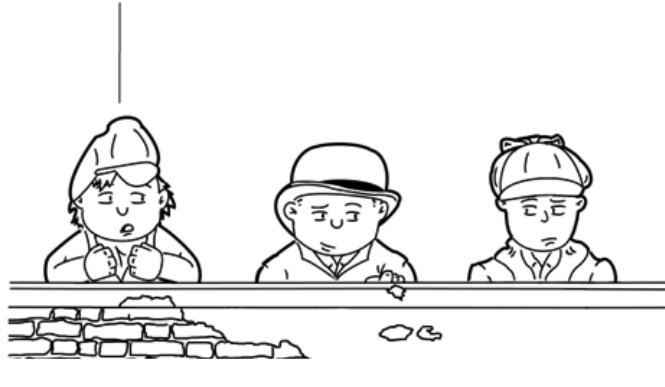


BUT WHY IS IT ALWAYS FAIR TO EVERYONE ELSE BUT ME?

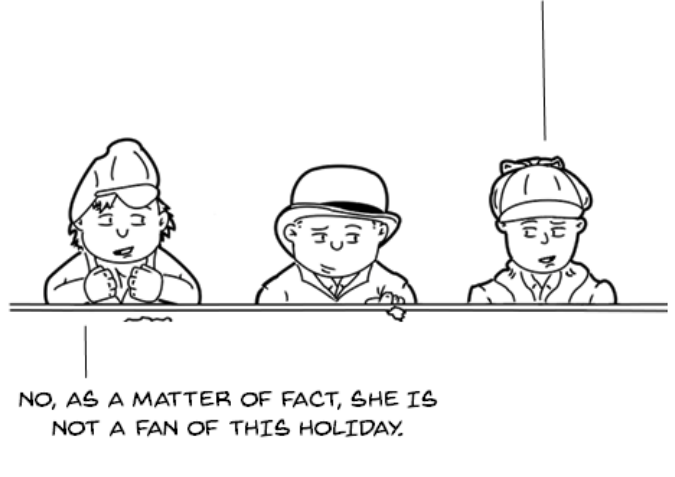


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I TOLD MY GRANDMOTHER I WAS GOING TO DRESS UP AS A MUMMY FOR HALLOW'S EVE THIS YEAR.



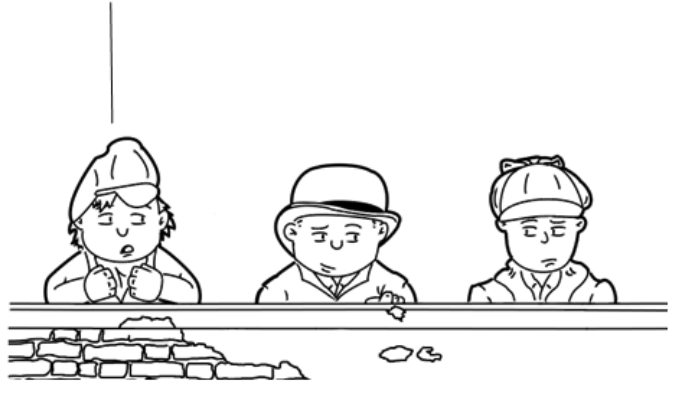
IS SHE WILLING TO HELP WITH THE COSTUME?



WHY NOT?



THEN MY YOUNGER BROTHER ASKED HER IF SHE WAS OLD AND LONELY ENOUGH TO BE THE SUBJECT OF A GHOST STORY HERSELF?



WE WILL NOT BE ASKING FOR CANDY AT HER HOUSE THIS YEAR.



WHY DON'T I HAVE ANY MEMORIES BEFORE THE AGE OF THREE OR FOUR?



DID YOU DO ANYTHING MEMORABLE ENOUGH TO REMEMBER?

NOTHING THAT I KNOW OF.



IT COULD SIMPLY BE YOUR BRAIN WASN'T TURNED ON UNTIL AGE FOUR.



THERE'S A BRAIN-BUTTON?

YOU DIDN'T THINK YOUR NOSE WAS JUST FOR SMELLING THINGS?

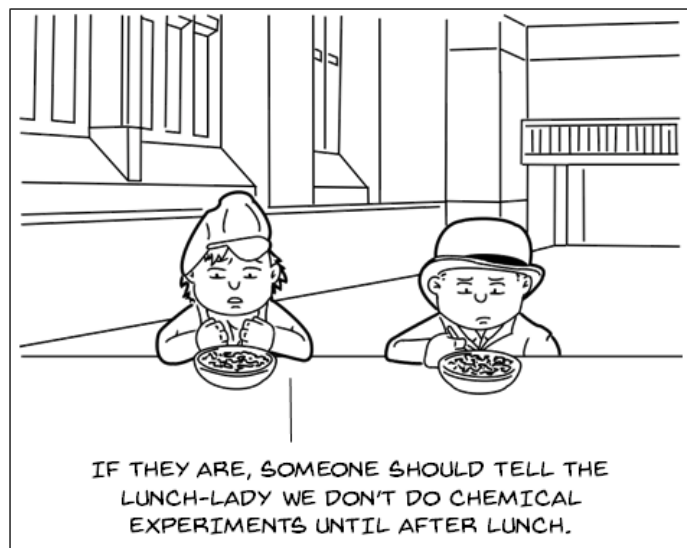
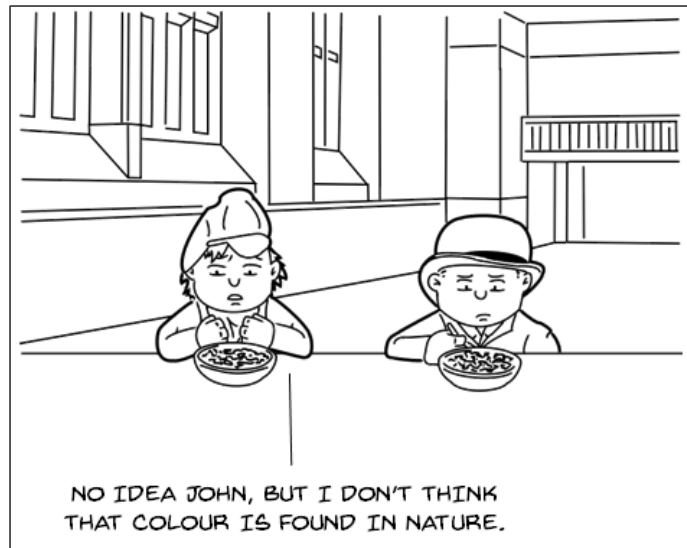


IT'S POSSIBLE THEY TURNED YOUR NOSE BACKWARDS... WOULD EXPLAIN THE LOSS OF MEMORY.

IS THAT FIXABLE?



I BLAME YOU TWO FOR HIS GRADES THIS YEAR... I'M NO LONGER RESPONSIBLE.



THE RETORT COURTEOUS

"Chemistry. - Profound" [STUD]

When Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson first meet (by the way, what were the very first words Holmes said to Watson?*), Holmes is engaged in a chemical experiment in A Study in Scarlet...

"This was a lofty chamber, lined and littered with countless bottles. Broad, low tables were scattered about, which bristled with retorts, test-tubes, and little Bunsen lamps, with their blue flickering flames. There was only one student in the room, who was bending over a distant table absorbed in his work. At the sound of our steps, he glanced round and sprang to his feet with a cry of pleasure. "I've found it! I've found it," he shouted to my companion, running towards us with a test-tube in his hand."

Before they agreed to living arrangements, Holmes warned Watson of his habits...

"I generally have chemicals about, and occasionally do experiments. Would that annoy you?"

And after moving into Baker Street, Watson observed that sometimes Holmes "spent his day at the chemical laboratory."

So when did Sherlock Holmes begin doing chemistry experiments at home?

By the time we reach The Sign of Four, Holmes is very much settled in with his equipment in Baker Street...

"He would hardly reply to my questions, and busied himself all evening in an abstruse chemical analysis which involved much heating of retorts and distilling of vapors, ending at last in a smell which fairly drove me out of the apartment."

The Adventures saw only two instances of Holmes at work with his chemistry experiments, in 'A Case of Identity,' where "he had spent his day in the chemical work which was so dear to him," even though it had nothing to do with solving Mary Sutherland's conundrum.

And in the final story in that series, 'The Copper Beeches,' Watson describes a scene that was not unusual...

"The telegram which we eventually received came late one night just as I was thinking of turning in and Holmes was settling down to one of those all-night chemical researches which he frequently indulged in, when I would leave him stooping over a retort and a test-tube at night and find him in the same position when I came down to breakfast in the morning."

The idea of his experiments completely capturing his attention came up again in 'The Resident Patient,' where Watson told us about "those abstruse chemical investigations which absorbed him utterly as long as he was engaged upon them."

But it was not just Holmes's attention that was affected.

In 'The Musgrave Ritual,' Watson describes how this hobby become part of the physical make-up of 221B Baker Street...

"Our chambers were always full of chemicals and of criminal relics which had a way of wandering into unlikely positions, and of turning up in the butter dish or in even less desirable places."

And again in 'The Mazarin Stone,' as he referred to familiar artifacts such as "the scientific charts upon the wall, the acid-charred bench of chemicals."

Indeed, when Holmes returned from his hiatus in 'The Empty House' and he and Watson reunited in Baker Street, readers hearts must have fluttered upon seeing the old surroundings, including "the chemical corner and the acid-stained, deal-topped table."

What's the deal with deal, you ask? It's a type of fir or pine, native to Scotland. One can imagine that over time, the wood must have physically degraded as well as had its color stained by acids.

Oh, and speaking of quiz questions, the answer to the trivia question above (about Holmes's first words to Watson) is not "You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive." He said, "How are you?"

How are the boys at **Baker Street Elementary**? Someone's struggling with a chemistry test. We'll let you guess who...

Oh, and if you're into Sherlock Holmes and chemistry, join us on Episode 67 of Trifles.

WEEKLY SCIENCE QUIZ:

Identify each compound, either actual or fake, for naming practice...

(1) $\text{Ba}(\text{Na})_2 = \text{yellow fruit}$



(2) $\text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{u-j-k-l-m-n}$

(3) $\text{K}_9\text{P} = \text{dog urine}$



(4) $(\text{H}_2\text{O})^3 = \text{ice}$

(5) $(\text{He})_2 = \text{small laughter}$



(6) $2(\text{Na}) = \text{lunch fish}$

(7) $(\text{HOH})_3 = \text{Santa is close by}$



I THINK THE TEACHER IS TAKING PITY ON ME... THIS IS ONE OF THE EASIEST EXAMS SHE HAS EVER GIVEN.



I HAVE BEEN READING THE PERSONAL
ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE TIMES,
FROM THE SCHOOL LIBRARY.



AND WHAT HAVE YOU DISCOVERED?

PEOPLE ARE WEIRD!!

REALITY IS INFINITELY
STRANGER THAN ANY
FICTION WE COULD READ.



...HMMM...THAT IS CATCHY, YOU
MAY HAVE TO REMEMBER IT.



MANY OF THE ADVERTISEMENTS ARE IN CODE.



YES, I DE-CYPHER TWO OR THREE EACH DAY
AS AN EXERCISE TO HONE MY SKILLS.



AND WHAT HAS THE DECODED
MESSAGES TOLD YOU?

PEOPLE ARE WEIRDER THAN
YOU CAN POSSIBLY IMAGINE.



FIT TO BE TIED
"any singular gift" [GREE]

The great debate about Sherlock Holmes's birthday comes up every year.

When we celebrated Holmes's 166th birthday in January 2020, we reviewed the debate, as we do every year: the reason January 6th is the generally accepted date is because of some internal evidence in the Canon—and a personal reason by the founder of the Baker Street Irregulars.

Incidentally, the Baker Street Irregulars weekend will be virtual this year, rather than in person in New York City. This means that at least one event—the Distinguished Speaker's Lecture—will be entirely open to the public. Stay tuned for more on that.

*Meanwhile, you might consider what you'll wear for a Sherlockian video call. We can highly recommend a bow tie or two — listen to our interview with the president of Beau Ties Ltd., Cy Tall. Meanwhile it's time to think about gifts over at **Baker Street Elementary**...*

I ORDERED YOUR PRESENT EARLY TO ENSURE IT IS HERE BY YOUR BIRTHDAY.



I BET YOU CAN'T GUESS --

I HAVE DEDUCED IT IS A BOW-TIE.



HOW THE HECK COULD YOU KNOW THAT?



YOU SAW A SKETCH OF YOUR FRIEND, MASTER MONTY FROM THE U.S., SPORTING A BOW-TIE, AND YOU SIMPLY GUSHED OVER IT...

YOU HAD TO ORDER IT EARLY ENOUGH TO ARRIVE BY MY 'BIRTHDAY', SO I DETERMINED IT WAS PROBABLY COMING FROM ACROSS THE POND...

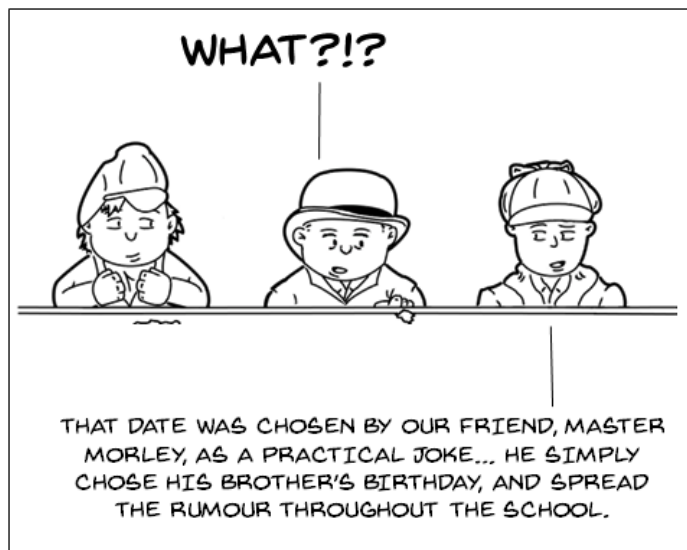
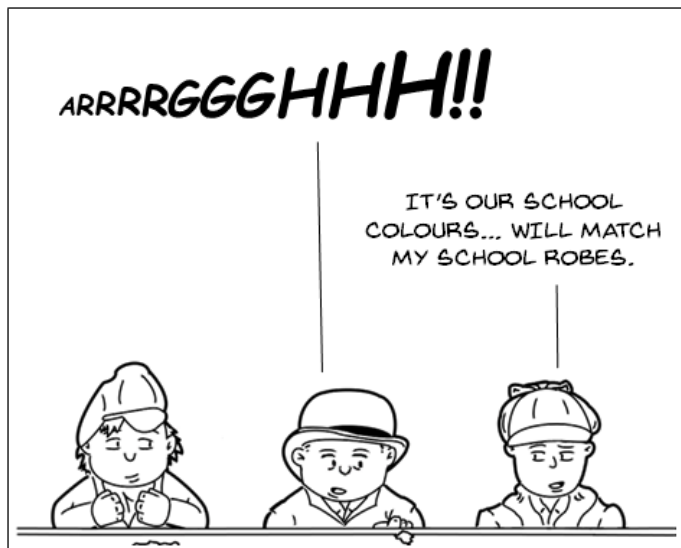
TA -- DAAH!!



WELL, AT LEAST YOU WON'T KNOW WHAT COLOUR...

BLUE, PURPLE, AND MOUSE-COLOURED.





SO, WHAT IS YOUR COMPLAINT FOR THE DAY?



REPEATEDLY, THE TEACHER FAILS TO
RECOGNIZE THE GENIUS OF MY SCHOOL WORK.

NOT UNLIKE THE REST OF US.

I ASSUME IT IS PROBABLE I
HAVE MORE BRAINS THAT I
CAN USE AT THIS TIME.



THAT HAS NOT BEEN MISSED ON THE
REST OF US EITHER... FEEL FREE TO
SHARE THE EXTRA'S AT ANY TIME.



MIND OVER MATTER

"what does it matter to me" [STUD]

What is Matter?—Never mind.

What is Mind?—No matter.

Sherlock Holmes only pursued those passions and interests that fueled his profession. He didn't have time for superfluous facts and figures, as we see in A Study in Scarlet, when he professed his ignorance of the Earth revolving around the Sun...

"Now that I do know it I shall do my best to forget it."

There's another figure in the Canon, who, in the pursuit of his hobby, is notable for the opposite reason. Namely, he doesn't care.

We're of course referring to the crotchety Mr. Frankland from The Hound of the Baskervilles—or "Frank the crank," as we like to call him. You'll recall that Frankland is known for his litigiousness...

"His passion is for the British law, and he has spent a large fortune in litigation. He fights for the mere pleasure of fighting and is equally ready to take up either side of a question, so that it is no wonder that he has found it a costly amusement."

He was so involved in this "costly amusement" that he allowed his daughter, the divorced Laura Lyons, a "pittance." Watson relayed the following conversation with him.

"Look it up in the books, sir. It will repay reading—Frankland v. Morland, Court of Queen's Bench. It cost me 200 pounds, but I got my verdict."

"Did it do you any good?"

"None, sir, none. I am proud to say that I had no interest in the matter."

From Sherlock Holmes leaving aside topics because they're not central to his focus to Mr. Frankland, who took them up simply to make a point. In each case, the ignoring or accepting of superfluous facts helped the individual reach his goal. At **Baker Street Elementary** today, Stamford has an idea of how to quickly find relief...

BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...

BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...

BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...



BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...

BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...

BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...

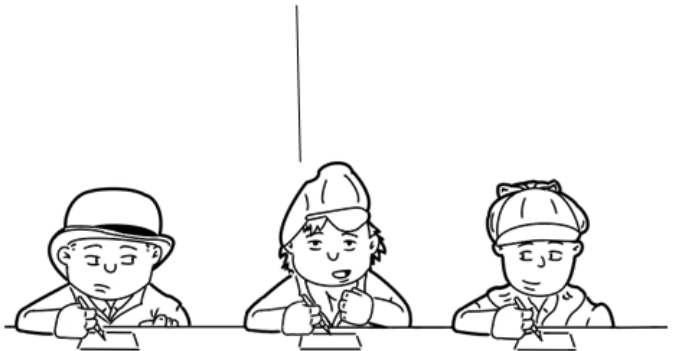
HOW MUCH LONGER IS THIS LECTURE
GOING TO GO? I REALLY NEED TO PEE...



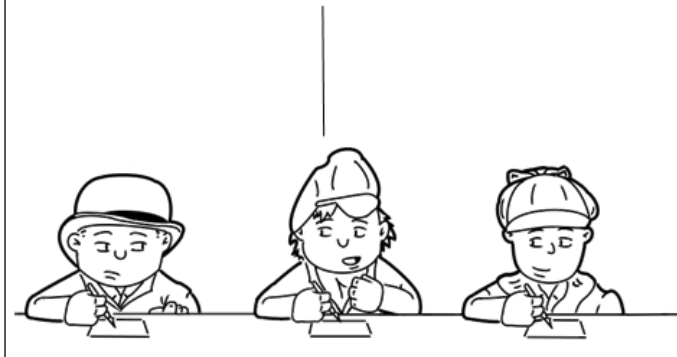
STAMFORD, WHAT DO YOU CALL
A PERSON WHO KEEPS TALKING
LONG AFTER HIS AUDIENCE IS
NO LONGER INTERESTED?



A TEACHER?



AT LEAST I CAN STOP BY THE PRIVY ON
THE WAY TO THE HEADMASTER'S OFFICE.



MASTERS MONTY AND WOLDER INDICATE THEIR COUNTRY IS PREPARING FOR THEIR ELECTIONS IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS.

I HAVE WONDERED ABOUT THAT MYSELF.



AMERICA'S ELECTIONS?

NO, OURS... SO, WE HAVE AN 'ELIZABETHAN ERA', A 'GEORGIAN ERA', AND NOW A 'VICTORIAN ERA'.



IF I WAS ELECTED KING, WOULD IT BE KNOWN AS THE 'STAMFORDIAN ERA'?

UHHH...



STAMFORD, DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU ARE TO THE RIGORS OF A 'KING CAMPAIGN'?



MASTER HOLMES, WATSON... I
DON'T CARE HOW, BUT FIX HIM...

NOW!!

YES MA'AM.



SORRY, OL' BOY, BUT BEFORE YOU
CAN BE ELECTED TO KING...

...YOU HAVE TO FIND A SWORD
AND A STONE.

OH!



THIS WILL BE TOUGHER TO
BECOME KING THAN I SUSPECTED.



THAT'S NOT FIXING HIM!

MAYBE I SHOULD RUN FOR 'PRINCE' OR 'DUKE'
FIRST... HOW DO YOU APPRENTICE AS A 'KNIGHT'?

DON'T LOOK, BUT SHE
JUST PUT HER HEAD
ON THE DESK AGAIN.



WHEN YOU HAVE ELIMINATED THE PLAUSIBLE

"he is plausible and cunning" [THOR]

Sherlock Holmes is renowned for his ability to slip in and out of costume, donning disguises that are so effective, they fool even Dr. Watson (but not Irene Adler!).

Over the course of his recorded tales, he is an aged seafaring man (SIGN), a groom and a nonconformist clergyman (SCAN), a common loafer (BERY), a registration agent (CROO), an opium addict (TWIS), an Italian priest, an old bookseller (EMPT), a plumber (CHAS), wrought with disease (DYIN), and his ultimate disguise that he donned for a year: Altamont, the Irish-American spy (LAST).

You can listen in to a discussion of Holmes's disguises on Episode 96 of Trifles. But Holmes wasn't the only one who was a master of disguise.

In the very first story, A Study in Scarlet, he was fooled by a young man disguised as an old woman. Beards were used by Stapleton (HOUN) and Bob Carruthers (SOLI) as they made their way around familiar targets.

After a night of contemplation and smoking as he sat on his hastily-assembled Eastern divan, he finally deduced the location of Neville St. Claire and the identity of Hugh Boone (TWIS). And Holmes encouraged others to disguise themselves as well: Watson, in a mask (CHAS), Mycroft as a cab driver (FINA), and his housekeeper Martha (LAST).

Episode 148 of Trifles has a discussion of the disguises of other people in the Canon.

*But we're always the most amused when Holmes himself puts his makeup and wardrobe skills to work, as he does this time at **Baker Street Elementary**, much to the chagrin of those around him...*

WELL, ARE YOU SATISFIED?

I WOULD SAY, 'MORE IMPRESSED.'



I KNEW MY COSTUME WAS GOOD, BUT I THOUGHT SHE WOULD MAKE IT TO HER DESK BEFORE FAINTING.



NO, I BELIEVE SHE MADE IT TWO STEPS INSIDE THE DOOR.

NOW, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



I WANT TO SEE HOW THE HEADMASTER REACTS.

WHAT DO I SAY WHEN SHE WAKES UP?



CONVINCE HER IT WAS ALL A HALLUCINATION.

I BET I GET TO LEARN THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF 'GUILT BY ASSOCIATION'.



YOU SHOULD ALSO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH 'PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY'.

ON ALL HALLOW'S EVE, MY MOM READ ME AN ABRIDGED 'FRANKENSTEIN'.

DID IT SCARE YOU?



NO, BUT THERE WEREN'T A LOT OF BRIDGES IN THE STORY.

ANOTHER VOCABULARY WORD FOR YOU TO WORK ON.



WHO KNEW THERE ACTUALLY IS A STORE WHERE YOU CAN BUY REPLACEMENT BODY PARTS.

UHHH...



SEEMS HARSH TO CALL HIM A 'MONSTER' WHEN HE WAS SO NICE TO EVERYONE.

UHHH...



AND THANKFULLY NO ONE WAS HURT AND EVERYONE LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

UHHH...

LEAVE IT... HE'S HAPPY.



NEXT, MOM IS GOING TO READ ME POE'S ABRIDGED, 'TELL-TALE HEART'... I BELIEVE IT IS A ROMANTIC SHORT STORY WHERE TWO PEOPLE MEET ON A BRIDGE.



THE WHOLE TOOTH

"Holmes smiled and rubbed his hands" [WIST]

Sherlock Holmes was no stranger to the dentist's chair.

He was able to draw inferences by observing teeth. He lamented that the great unobservant public "could hardly tell a weaver by his tooth," indicating that he of course could. In 'The Stockbroker's Clerk,' he observed the tooth stuffed badly with gold in both of the Pinner 'brothers' that gave away the ruse.

Holmes was careful about dental hygiene: as he and Watson prepared for an overnight visit at Stoke Moran in 'The Speckled Band,' he suggested Watson bring his revolver. "That and a tooth-brush are, I think, all that we need."

And of course, he must have visited a dentist after his altercation with Matthews, "who knocked out my left canine in the waiting-room at Charing Cross."

That would have been some years before Holmes's 1891 confrontation with Professor Moriarty, as the reference was in Holmes's index in 'The Empty House,' after his return to London.

The visit to the dentist that Matthews caused likely resulted in the dentist taking an impression of Holmes's mouth in order to reset the tooth or replace it with an apparatus. While Holmes was in the chair, he must have remarked on the quickness of the setting of the preparation and immediately determined that he could apply it to his own work. Recall in The Sign of Four (dated by chronologists as taking place in 1888), he demonstrated his familiarity with casts of footprints...

"Here is my monograph upon the tracing of footsteps, with some remarks upon the uses of plaster of Paris as a preserver of impresses."

It's quite likely that Holmes got the dentist's formulation and adapted it for his own purposes. However, there's no indication that Holmes considered teeth as unique as footprints or fingerprints in his practice though. Had he done so, his work on 'The Norwood Builder' would have been more conclusive, as there would have been distinctive human teeth left behind in the ashes.

Meanwhile, at Baker Street Elementary, there's another impression that's been left regarding teeth...

I HAD A TOOT' FALL OU' DURING
BREAKFAS' 'DIS MORNIN'.



LEGEND HAS IT, A FAIRY WILL TAKE THE TOOTH
AND LEAVE A TOOTH FEE, NORMALLY A HA'PENNY.

PUT IT UNDER YOUR
PILLOW TONIGHT.



SO, WHOD HERE
BELIEVETH IN
FAIRIES?



VAMPIRES, YES...
FAIRIES, NO.



THE WORLD IS BIG ENOUGH FOR
US. NO FAIRIES NEED APPLY.



DO YOU BELIEVE IN FAIRIES, IGNATIUS?

I THINK WE SHOULD KEEP AN OPEN
MIND ABOUT EVERYTHING.



'DIS IS CREEPY... WHAT IF 'DE FAIRY
'DAKES ALL MY 'DEETH WHILE I SLEEP?

YOU'LL HAVE MORE
BARK THAN BITE.

LESS TIME BRUSHING...
GO TO SLEEP.



SO, THEY ARE CELEBRATING
THANKSGIVING IN AMERICA THIS WEEK.



IF IT'S THE DAY FOR GIVING THANKS, WHAT
DO TURKEYS HAVE TO BE THANKFUL FOR?

VEGETARIANS.



SO, IF APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY
FLOWERS, WHAT DOES MAY FLOWERS BRING?

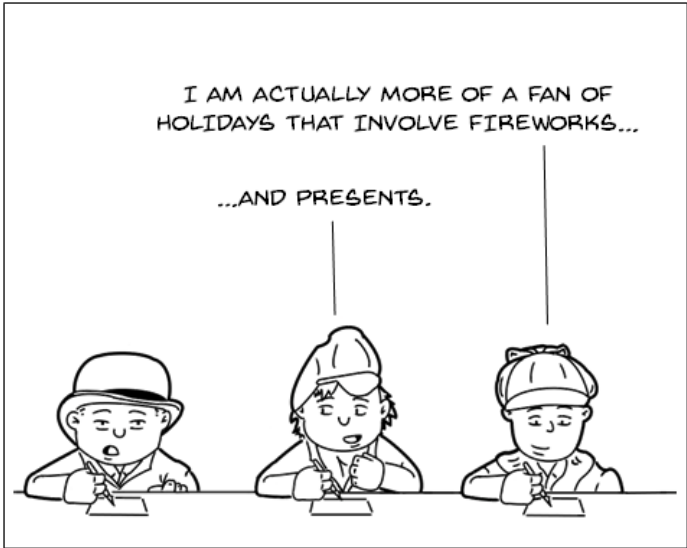
I'LL BITE... WHAT?

PILGRIMS.



SO, IF AMERICANS BELIEVE THANKSGIVING IS
THE SEASON FOR GIVING THANKS, WHEN DO THEY
CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF TAKING THANKS?





THE TEACHER ANNOUNCED SHE WANTS US TO DEVELOP AN ALMANACK FOR OUR CLASS.

WHAT'S AN ALMANACK?



IT'S A PUBLICATION LISTING OUT A SET OF EVENTS FORTHCOMING IN THE NEXT YEAR, LIKE 'THE FARMER'S ALMANAC'.



SO, IT PREDICTS THE FUTURE LIKE A CRYSTAL BALL OR SPIRIT WRITING BOARD?

SORTA... THE ALMANACK ALSO RECORDS EVENTS FROM THE CURRENT YEAR.

I WANT NO PART OF IT THEN.

WHY NOT?



MY PAPA RECORDS EVENTS IN HIS PERSONAL JOURNAL, AND HITS ME WITH IT IF I GET WITHIN 3 FEET OF IT... I DON'T NEED ANY MORE BRUISES FROM AN ALMANACK.



PSST... WATSON, WHAT IS A STORMY PETREL...
THAT'S HOW THE TEACHER DESCRIBED ME
ON MY LAST PROGRESS CARD.



I BELIEVE IT DENOTES SOMEONE
WHO CAUSES STRIFE OR DISCORD.

WHAT HAPPENED TO JUST 'PASS'
OR 'FAIL' ON THOSE REPORTS?



SHE ALSO TOLD MY PARENTS IF I DON'T BUCKLE
DOWN, I MAY NEVER SUCCEED PAST 4TH FORM.



I'M SURE YOU PARENTS
WEREN'T THRILLED, STAMFORD.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

EASY... I TOLD THEM ALL THAT WHEN I GROW
UP I WOULD TEACH 3RD FORM, SO THAT'S
ALL THE EDUCATION I WOULD NEED... I
THINK THE TEACHER AND I WILL BE USING
THE SAME THERAPIST FROM NOW ON.



OH, YOU'D BETTER WATCH OUT

"If there is not some compensation hereafter, then the world is a cruel jest" [VEIL]

In 'The Sussex Vampire,' we get a clear glimpse of Sherlock Holmes's attitude toward the supernatural...

"This agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply."

In The Hound of the Baskervilles, after hearing Dr. Mortimer recount the legend of the hound, Holmes clearly doubted the...

"Do you not find it interesting?"

"To a collector of fairy tales."

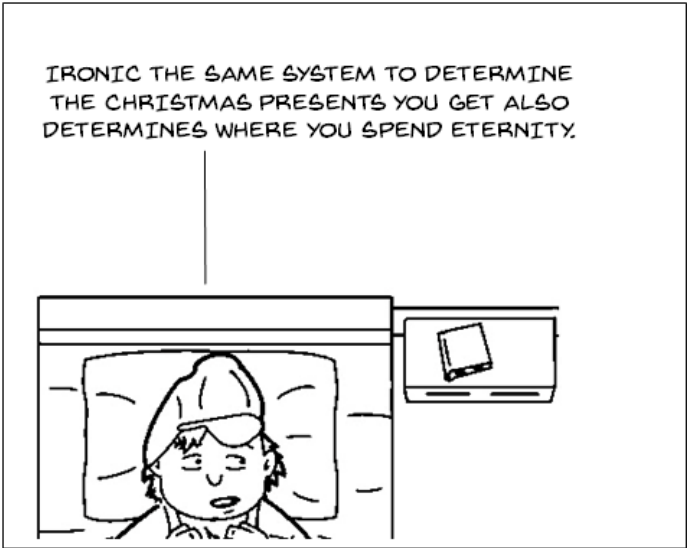
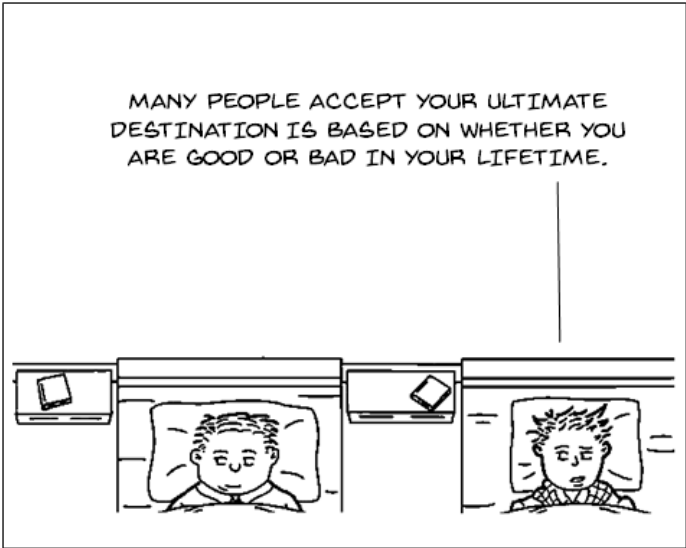
So, it's fascinating that we see him showing so much interest in the well-being of Mrs. Ronder in 'The Veiled Lodger,' who showed some signs of taking her own life. Holmes warned her "Your life is not your own," and to "Keep [her] hands off of it."

For all of his non-belief in the supernatural, Sherlock Holmes seemed more than willing to put his belief in the spiritual, as he remarked...

"If there is not some compensation hereafter, then the world is a cruel jest."

Holmes seemingly could put his trust in God, but had no patience for the fanciful. Perhaps this is part of his highly tuned sense of justice that he himself administered many times.

*It's not at all unlikely that he attained some degree of faith after having spent a hard childhood at **Baker Street Elementary**...*



BUT WHERE DO WE END UP?

DORSET, IF YOU'RE GOOD.

MANCHESTER IF YOU'RE BAD.

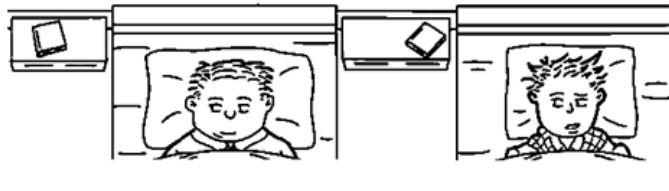


WHEN I DO GO, I WANT PEOPLE TO SAY, 'HE WAS RESPECTED BY ALL.'



I WANT PEOPLE TO SAY, 'HE CARED FOR EVERYONE HE TOUCHED.'

I WANT PEOPLE TO SAY, 'LOOK, HE'S STILL MOVING.'





Home of the Hounds

