



## The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure XXIV – The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter

#### Publishing History

# 24 of the 60 stories

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

In the US *Harper's Weekly*, September 16, 1893

Part of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* collection by

George Newnes, Ltd., London, 1894

Harper Bros., New York, 1894

British illustrator – Sidney Paget

American illustrator – W. H. Hyde



#### Chronology

Baring-Gould places the story at Wednesday, September 12, 1888 which makes it 18<sup>th</sup> of the 60. This means that Holmes is 34 and Watson 36.

#### Christopher Morley Says

“Here we meet Sherlock’s older brother, Mycroft Holmes, visit the Diogenes Club, and hear the mystery of Mr. Melas the interpreter, who lived in the same house with Mycroft. Mr. Melas was in great danger, and would have been killed by the ancient device of charcoal fumes, except for Watson’s medical skill.”

#### Dummies Short Summary

“This thrilling, horrifying tale of kidnapping and murder introduces readers to Holmes’s brother, Mycroft.”

## How Many Words

At 7,058 words GREE has the 14<sup>th</sup> most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 is NAVL – 12,701)

## Classifying This Case

This case is one of 23 classified as a MURDER where the perpetrator Holmes solved the case but one of 5 where the perpetrator escaped justice. The others were FIVE, MUSG, RESI, and WIST.

## The Best Of Sherlock Holmes

- 1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle did not include it on his list of 12 favorites.
- 1959 – The Baker Street Irregulars did not list it on their top 10.
- 1999 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 22<sup>nd</sup> of the 56 short stories.
- 1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 25<sup>th</sup> of the 56 short stories.

## What Else Happened That Year (1888)

- Mashonaland and Matabeleland declared British sphere of influence.
- British East Africa Company founded.
- Jack the Ripper has murder spree in Whitechapel.
- Miners Federation of Great Britain formed; demand for minimum wage.
- Foundation of Scottish Labour Party.
- English Priory of Knights Hospitalers authorized by Royal Charter.
- Foundation of London General Omnibus Company.
- French Indochina formed.
- Slavery ends in Brazil.
- Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany dies; Frederick III becomes Emperor from March to June, dies, and is succeeded by Wilhelm II.
- Benjamin Harrison elected President of United States; even though Cleveland received more popular votes, the electoral college gives the election to Harrison.
- New York State establishes electric chair for method of death penalty.
- Oscar Wilde publishes *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*.
- *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.
- Tchaikovsky performs *Symphony No. 5 in E Minor* at St. Petersburg.
- George Moore publishes *Confessions of a Young Man*.
- Stevenson publishes *The Black Arrow*, a novel about the War of the Roses.
- Kipling publishes *Soldiers Three, and Plain Tales from the Hills*; short 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.
- Fridtjof Nansen, Norwegian explorer, crosses the Greenland icefield.
- Nichola Tesla makes first AC motor.
- Incubators are first used for premature infants.
- William Burroughs patents the adding machine.

### **Holmes And Watson – Personal Information**

We have the standard arrangement with Holmes and Watson are at 221B.

### **Dramatis Personae**

- **Mycroft**, Sherlock's older brother
- **Mr. Meles**, the interpreter
- **Harold Latimer**, beguiled Sophy
- **Wilson Kemp**, Latimer's coconspirator.
- **Paul Kratides**, captive of Latimer and Kemp.
- **Sophy Kratides**, his sister.
- **J. Davenport** knew Sophy before the conspiracy thickened. He answered Mycroft's ad.

### **Quotable Sherlock**

- "My ancestors were country squires, who appear to have led much the same life as is natural to their class.

But, none the less, my turn that way is in my veins, and may have come with my grandmother who was the sister of Vernet, the French artist."

- "Art in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms."
- "My dear Watson," said he, "I cannot agree with those who rank modesty among the virtues. To the logician all things should be seen exactly as they are, and to underestimate one's self is as much a departure from truth as to exaggerate one's own powers."
- "The Diogenes Club is the queerest club in London, and Mycroft one of the queerest men."
- "There are many men in London, you know, who, some from shyness, some from misanthropy, have no wish for the company of their fellows. Yet they are not averse to comfortable chairs and the latest periodicals. It is for the convenience of these that the Diogenes Club was started, and it now contains the most unsociable and unclubable men in town. No member is permitted to take the least notice of any other one. Save in the Stranger's Room, no talking is, under any circumstances, allowed, and three offences, if brought to the notice of the committee, render the talker liable to expulsion."
- (Mycroft) "I hear of Sherlock everywhere since you became his chronicler."  
"If the art of the detective began and ended in reasoning from an armchair, my brother would be the greatest criminal agent that ever lived."
- "You see, Watson," he remarked, "our evening has been by no means wasted. "Some of my most interesting have come to me in this way through Mycroft."

### **Holmes' Fee**

No fee is mentioned in the story, possibly due to Holmes doing a favor for his BIG brother.

### **Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen**

- 1922 *The Greek Interpreter* with Eille Norwood as one of his 47 movies.
- 1968 *The Greek Interpreter* with Peter Cushing as part of his *Sherlock Holmes* TV series
- 1980 *The Master Blackmailer* (combined with CHAS) with Vasily Livanov as an episode of the Russian *Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson* series
- 1985 *The Greek Interpreter* with Jeremy Brett in the BBC *Sherlock Holmes* 43 episode series

### **Newspapers**

- Daily News – Morning Paper in London which was extremely liberal. Founded in 1846.

## Annotated Sherlock

- **“atavism”** the recurrence, in a descendant, of characteristics of a remote ancestor, instead of those of an immediate ancestor. Reversion to the primitive
- **“a sapper”** a member of a military engineer unit organized, trained, and equipped primarily for trench-digging and other field fortification work
- **“life-preserver”** a short bludgeon, usually of flexible cane, whalebone, or the like,
- **“ammunition boots”** Official army boots issued to noncommissioned personnel
- **“a J pen”** A broad-pointed pen. Probably referred to the size of the nib, or, possibly the shape of the point.

## Weapons

- **Blade (probably a knife)** - Which Sophy Kratides used to kill Harold Latimer and Wilson Kemp.
- **Heavy Bludgeon** - With which Harold Latimer threatened Melas.
- **Stick** - Which either Latimer or his cohort Wilson Kemp used to knock Melas unconscious, prior to the attempt to kill him by means of charcoal fumes.
- **Charcoal Fumes (Carbon Dioxide)** - Which Harold Latimer used to kill Paul Kratides, and from Melas barely escaped death.
- **Hands** - Of Harold Latimer and Wilson Kemp, which they used at various times on Melas, Paul Kratides, and Kratides’ sister Sophy.
- **Kidnapping** - Of Paul Kratides by Harold Latimer and Wilson Kemp, in order to get him to sign over his sister Sophy’s fortune to Latimer.
- **First Kidnapping** - Of Melas by Latimer and Kemp, to force him to act as interpreter between Kratides and them.
- **Threat** - Made on Melas’ life made by Latimer, and then later on Kemp.
- **Second Kidnapping** - Of Melas, again to force him to act as interpreter, and also to get rid of him, as he had told Holes and the police about their activities.
- **Threat** - Made on Kratides’ life by Latimer and Kemp.
- **Kidnapping (probable)** - Of Sophy Kratides by Latimer and Kemp, after they had murdered her brother.
- **Torture and Starvation** - Done to Paul Kratides by Harold Latimer and Wilson Kemp.

