



## The Return of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure XXXI – The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist

A lovely heroine...bumbling bad guys...a virtue threatened...with a happy ending. Our new story, *The Solitary Cyclist*, is part fairy tale and part grand opera! To get us started, here are my questions and comments for the week:

Young, beautiful, tall, graceful, queenly, with a spirituality about her face, lots of admirers, yet still charmingly modest — Violet Smith is so perfect! Does this woman have any negative qualities whatsoever?

Violet's father was an orchestra conductor at a theater, a position which would require him to read music and lyrics with ease. How was it that his brother, Violet's Uncle Ralph Smith, was illiterate?

Williamson, the defrocked clergyman, was notable for his frequent swearing. As Watson observed at one point, "The old reprobate with the surplice burst into a volley of bad language." Exactly what sort of "bad language" did Victorians use? Are there examples from contemporary literature? Let's suggest some Victorian dialog to fill in the blankity-blanks Watson tastefully deleted!

Was a bicycle crucial to the plot? Couldn't the story work just as well if Violet and her follower walked, or rode horses?



SOLI is filled with plants: trees, hedges, shrubbery, flowers. Some were specifically mentioned by name, like the grove of ancient oaks that surrounded Charlington Hall. Others were veiled, such as the reference to ferns in the OE place name “Farnham.” Even our heroine was named for a little bloom! There was, in fact, such an abundance of plants in SOLI that their use must be a deliberate literary device. Why? What purpose do these plants and trees serve?

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