



The Return of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XXXVIII -- The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter

There is a period of inactivity and Watson fears that Holmes may turn to drugs, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

Watson tells us that over the years he has managed to wean Holmes off drugs but as there has now been such a sustained period without work, he fears there will be a relapse. As I have said before in previous blogs, I don't think Holmes used drugs because he was bored, but because his mental processes could overwhelm him if he had nothing to channel them into – like voices he needed to drown out.

But Watson takes a rather more conventional view and is relieved when a case comes their way in the form of a missing rugby player. I confess I had no idea what a three-quarter was and presumed it was a coin of some sort when I first read this story. Holmes didn't have the foggiest either when team captain Cyril Overton started whittling on about Godfrey Staunton, the famous rugby player, who has disappeared the day before a crucial match with Oxford. Surprised at Holmes' ignorance he exclaims: "Good Lord! Mr Holmes, where have you lived?"

My husband regularly says things like that to me when his sporting talk is met with a blank expression.

This is a very enjoyable story and Holmes comes up against a worthy adversary in the form of the sinister Dr Armstrong who he states could even fill the gap left by the late Professor Moriarty, if he so inclined. But, actually the doctor turns out to be the hero of the story protecting the missing young man's secret wife who sadly dies at the end of the tale, with the rugby player weeping at her bedside.



It is a clever writer who can take you from humour to tragedy as smoothly as Conan Doyle does. On the one hand you have the comical Cyril Overton and his boisterous rugby talk, the brilliant use of Pompey the sniffer dog and, of course, the hilarious old miser Lord Mount-James, the missing boy's only relative and the reason for the concealment of his marriage. But then we discover the sad young death at the end and everything takes on a deeper meaning.

A simple but clever story with a great twist that draws you in very quickly and doesn't quite let you go for some time afterwards – well worth 7 out of 10.

Charlotte Anne Walters

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