



The Return of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XL – The Adventure of the Second Stain

A murder in Westminster, compromising letters, desperate women, and a frantic foreign secretary: Sherlock Holmes has his hands full in this week's story, *The Adventure of the Second Stain*. The weekly questions and comments from me to you:

Is Lady Hilda pregnant? She's "intensely womanly" and achieves emotional extremes beyond the pale of her "caste." Watson frets about her feeling faint, and Sherlock Holmes makes her sit down "because you will hurt yourself there if you fall." Did the cloak that covered her "down to her feet" conceal the next generation of Trelawney Hopes?

What became of SECO's third stain, the blood which must have gushed all over the killer's clothing? Like O. J. Simpson's sweatsuit, these stained clothes had to be disposed of. When and where?

Trelawney Hope would have judged Lady Hilda's impulsive, loving letter to be "criminal." Criminal is a pretty strong word! Shall we gossip? What on earth did she write?!



(Authors find inspiration for names in oh-so-many places. Is it possible that the following news item got filed away in somebody's brain attic and was recalled when SECO was written a few years later?) On January 9, 1900, at London's Newgate Prison, a young woman named Louise Masset went to the gallows. She'd been found guilty of suffocating her young son, Manfred, and dumping his tiny body in the women's lavatory of a train station. She'd fallen in love, you see, with someone who absolutely hated children. The name of Masset's lover...one Euduore Lucas.

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