

His Last Bow

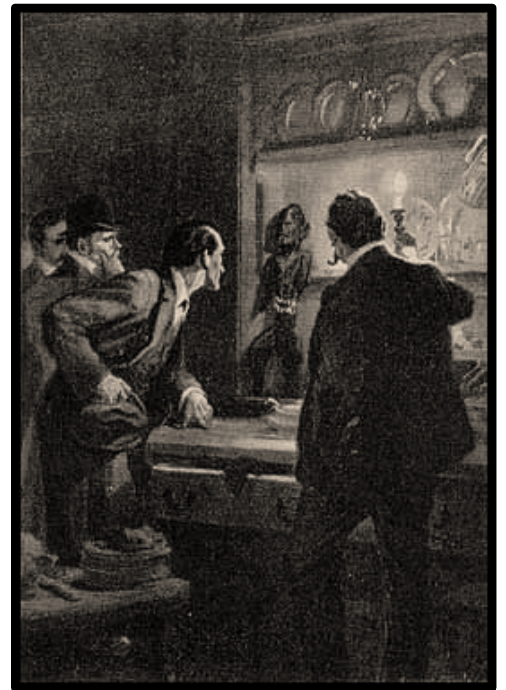
Adventure XLI -- The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge

This is the first story in the compilation titled 'His Last Bow' and starts with a brief description of Holmes' current situation.

Watson tells us that Holmes is alive and well, though occasionally troubled by bouts of rheumatism. He is living on a small farm upon the Downs near Eastbourne enjoying his retirement. The story of Wisteria Gables pre-dates this and is set in 1892. I feel somewhat let down by the story. I want to hear more about Holmes' retirement and why he has let Watson continue to write about him when The Second Stain was meant to be the last one. What has happened to Watson once Holmes has retired? Has he gone back to medical work? Has he remarried? I have tried to look at some of these things in my own novel, and interestingly have named the house in which Watson ultimately ends up living in as Wisteria Gables – a mix of Wisteria Lodge and The Three Gables.

This story is really not one of my favourites, too long and complicated in my opinion.

It's basically a tale, inexplicably split into two parts, about a nasty dictator who fled from his country taking great wealth with him and goes to hide in England. A gang have been following him trying to seek revenge and some of its members are staying in a nearby house. They enlist the services of a woman whose husband was killed by the dictator and she gains employment in his household as a nanny. Here's where the problems start for me – why didn't she just kill him herself as she hated him so much? Why did they wait so long to make the



attack? Anyway, the leader of the gang befriends a respectable fellow and arranges for him to stay at his house, changing the times on the clocks so that he can provide an alibi, but the dictator gets wind of the planned attack and kills his would-be murder first. Gosh, it is far too much coming-and-going for a short story.

For once, the police are on the right track, and the promising Inspector Baynes reaches the same conclusion as Holmes. This is a first, a big change from all previous stories. Holmes is able to deliver the crucial witness, the nanny, but still justice cannot be done as the villain escapes. There is a report years later which tells of his eventual murder but the whole thing seems unfinished to me.

I just didn't enjoy this one and wanted to know more about the central characters rather than some bonkers dictator.

**It's a 4 out of 10 I'm afraid – here's hoping that the rest
of His Last Bow scores a little better.**

Charlotte Anne Walters

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