



The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XLIX – The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone

PUBLISHING HISTORY

49 of the 60 stories

First published in *The Strand Magazine*, October 1921

In the US *Hearst's International*, November 1921

Part of *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes* collection by

John Murray, London, 1927

George D. Doran, New York, 1927

British illustrator – A. Gilbert

CHRONOLOGY

Baring-Gould places the date of the story as “One day in the Summer of 1903” which makes it 57th of the 60. This means that Holmes is 49 and Watson 51.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY SAYS

“This narrative, reported by some unknown hand, is so singular a mixture of several plots and persons already familiar, that many experts have wished to exclude it from the Canon altogether. Even the arrangement of the Baker Street rooms is different from what we expect. The effect is of a story written on hearsay by some sensational journalist who had no personal knowledge of the facts.”



DUMMIES SHORT SUMMARY

“This story was adapted from a stage play by Doyle called *The Crown Diamond*. Holmes uses several tricks, including a wax dummy and a record player, to extract a confession and recover a stolen jewel. It’s definitely the weakest story in the canon.”

HOW MANY WORDS

At 5,716 words MAZA has the 3rd most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 if NAVL – 12,701)

CLASSIFYING THIS CASE

This case is one of 4 classified as a theft of gems. The others were BERY, BLUE, and SIXN.

THE BEST OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

It is pretty much agreed by all that this not Doyle’s best effort.

1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle did not have it on his list of 12 favorites.

1959 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 60th on list of least favorites-- last place. 1999 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 55th of the 56 short stories.

1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 45th of the 56 short stories.

WHAT ELSE HAPPENED THAT YEAR (1903)

Just for the heck of it, here is one or two items each month since I had a six page list.

- **Jan 2nd** - Pres T Roosevelt shuts down post office in Indianola Miss, for refusing to accept its appointed postmistress because she was black
- **Jan 7th** - Start of Sherlock Holmes "Adventure of Blanched Soldier"
- **Feb 22nd** - Due to drought the US side of Niagara Falls runs short of water
- **Feb 23rd** - The US and Cuba sign an agreement by which Cuba releases Guantanamo and Bahia Hondo to the US for naval stations
- **Mar 22nd** - Niagara Falls runs out of water because of a drought
- **Mar 23rd** - Wright brothers obtain airplane patent
- **Apr 14th** - Dr Harry Plotz discovers vaccine against typhoid (NYC)
- **Apr 20th** - 7th Boston Marathon won by John Lorden of Mass in 2:41:29.8
- **Apr 29th** - Limestone slides at Turtle Mountain kill 9 (Frank, Alberta)

- **May 20th** - Britain's House of Commons begins a debate on the charges of poor administration and ill treatment of natives in Belgium's colony in the Congo Free State
- **May 29th** - May coup d'etat: Alexander Obrenovich, King of Serbia, and Queen Draga, are assassinated in Belgrade by the Black Hand (Crna Ruka) organization.
- **Jun 10th** - In Belgrade, Yugoslavia, a military coup d'etat- led by the Queen's brother-in-law and other offices - kills King Alexander I of Serbia, Queen Draga, and many officers
- **Jun 16th** - Pepsi Cola company forms
- **Jun 16th** - Roald Amundsen commences the first east-west navigation of the Northwest Passage by leaving Oslo, Norway.
- **Jul 1st** - 1st Tour de France bicycle race begins
- **Jul 17th** - The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party meets, first in Brussels and then London because their leaders have been forced into exile by the Russian Government
- **Aug 2nd** - Unsuccessful uprising of Macedonians against Turkey
- **Aug 4th** - Cardinal Giuseppe Sarto of Venice elected Pope Pius X
- **Sep 9th** - 6 km long Engadin-railroad tunnel of Switzerland inaugurated
- **Sep 15th** - Queen Wilhelmina calls railroad strikers "criminals"
- **Oct 1st** - 1st baseball World Series, Pittsburgh Pirates vs Boston Pilgrims (Red Sox)
- **Oct 10th** - The Women's Social and Political Union was formed by Emmeline Pankhurst to fight for women's rights in Britain.
- **Nov 3rd** - Colombia grants independence to Panama
- **Dec 9th** - Norwegian parliament votes unanimously for female suffrage
- **Dec 13th** - Wright Bros make 1st flight at Kittyhawk
- **Dec 16th** - The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower hotel opens its doors to guests

HOLMES AND WATSON – PERSONAL INFORMATION

It was pleasant to Dr. Watson to find himself once more in the untidy room of the first floor in Baker Street which had been the starting-point of so many remarkable adventures.” Sounds like he was visiting, not residing there. Billy the page is on the job.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **Billy**, the page
- **Prime Minister (Arthur Balfour 7-11-02 to 12-05-05, Conservative)**
- **Home Secretary (Aretas Akers-Douglas 7-12-02 to 12-11-05 Liberal)**
- **Lord Cantlemere**, pompous lord who had no faith in Holmes' ability and was opposed to hiring him.
- **Count Negretto Sylvius**, half-Italian, big game hunter, the thief
- **Sam Merton**, a boxer, confidant to Sylvius
- **Straubenzee**, made the air gun.
- **Van Sedder**, ship captain who planned to take the stone to Amsterdam and cut it into smaller stones.
- **Taverner**, French model maker who made the mannequin of Holmes.
- **Yonghal**. One of the Scotland Yard men that Holmes tells Watson to contact. He is with the C.I.D.
- **Ikey Sanders**, a diamond fence.

Quotable Sherlock

- “The faculties become refined when you starve them. Why, surely, as a doctor, my dear Watson, you must admit that your digestion gains in the way of blood supply is so much lost to the brain. I am a brain, Watson. The rest of me is a mere appendix. Therefore, it is the brain I must consider.”
- “Yes, the great yellow Mazarin stone. I’ve cast my net and I have my fish. But I have not got the stone. What is the use of taking them? We can make the world a better place by laying them by the heels. But that is not what I am out for. It’s the stone I want.”
- “Yes, you can, Watson. And you will, for you have never failed to play the game. I am sure you will play it to the end”

Holmes’ Fee

There is no mention in the story but given who the illustrious clients were, Holmes probably got a bundle. By now Holmes should be quite wealthy.

Disguises

Holmes does double duty in this tale - - both stag and drag in one day. He was both an old man AND an old woman

Unrecorded Cases

- Old Baron Dowson, who said of Holmes, “What the law has gained, the stage has lost.
- Old Mrs. Harold. She left Count Sylvius the Blymar estate. The count quickly gamble it away.
- Miss Minnie Warrender, who was done in by Count Sylvius.

Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen

- 1923 *The Stone of Mazarin* with Eille Norwood was one of his 47. The National Film and Television Archive at the BFI has viewing copies of this film but it has not been released
- 1994 *The Mazarin Stone* with Jeremy Brett as one of 43 episodes in his *Sherlock Holmes* TV series
- 2001 *The Adventure of the Mazarin Chip* as an episode in *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century* (Animated TV series)

Annotated Sherlock

- **“Home Secretary”** Head of the Home Office, responsible for the maintenance of the peace and administration of the police, judicial, and penal systems. Aretas Akers-Douglas, 1st Viscount Chilston was Home Secretary from 1902-1905 when **MAZA** occurred.
- **“gasogene”** Is used to produce seltzer water. In spite of connection to Holmes, is only mention here and in **SCAN**.
- **“gudgeon”** A small fresh-water fish used for bait. To “swallow a gudgeon” mean to be bamboozled by the most palpable lie, as silly fish are caught by gudgeons.
- **“the waiting room”** Billy, the page boy, says Sam Merton was there. It is the only mention of a waiting room in the Canon.

Weapons

- **Air-Gun** - Of Count Negretto Sylvius, made by Straubenzee, by which Holmes had every expectation of being shot at.
- **Revolver** - Which Sylvius took with him on his visit to 221B Baker Street.
- **Thick Stick** - Which Count Negretto Sylvius had with him on his visit to Baker Street for the express purpose of bashing Holmes' skull in, and was nearly successful in wrecking Holmes' mannequin.
- **Fists** - Of Sam Merton, unused but nevertheless a ready weapon.

Frank Mentzel